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**Volume 25 Issue 47****THURSDAY 1/22/26****smdp.com**

Council repeals, reaffirms and redirects housing decisions

MAAZ ALIN

SMDP Staff Writer

The City Council was forced to revisit a series of housing votes last week following a ruling that Councilman Jesse Zwick has a conflict of interest on development issues.

The multi-part decision allows the Planning Commission to examine whether increased development standards—including additional height, density or reduced setbacks—could facilitate larger family-sized homes and generate contributions to the city's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. However, the motion also directs staff to explore options that stay within state law.

"I personally choose to continue pursuing two or three bedroom townhomes and condos for families that the middle class can afford," Hall said during the meeting. "I do not want skyscrapers in our neighborhoods. I do not want more McMansions, and I do not want housing at the airport when it closes."

The revote stems from an FPPC advice letter issued Dec. 8, 2025, which concluded that Zwick should prospectively recuse himself from housing production matters due to his employment with HAC. While the FPPC did not invalidate prior votes or find wrongdoing, city staff proactively identified five housing-related items approved between Aug. 12 and Oct. 28, 2025, in which Zwick participated.

City Manager Oliver Chi

SEE COUNCIL PAGE 8



SMDP Photo

LIBRARY: Santa Monica's Fairview and Ocean Park branch libraries have expanded from self-service to full-service operations three days weekly. The expansion, part of the city's two-year Realignment Plan approved last year, restored librarian staffing, technical assistance, and programming. The \$60 million plan included service restorations, street improvements, and safety investments. Fairview Branch opened Tuesday-Wednesday noon-8 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Ocean Park Branch opened Wednesday-Thursday noon-8 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Celebration events welcomed patrons Jan. 20-21. The plan outlined further expansion to four days weekly by July 2026, increasing total full-service hours from 108 to 154 weekly across five locations.

Homeless woman gives birth on Main Street sidewalk highlighting homelessness crisis as county launches annual count

MATTHEW HALL

Daily Press Editor

A newborn infant discovered on a Main Street sidewalk last week has underscored the human cost of the region's homelessness crisis, even as thousands of volunteers prepare to fan out across Los Angeles County for the annual homeless count that

began Tuesday.

Santa Monica Police Department officers responded to the 2900 block of Main Street at approximately 8:27 p.m. on Jan. 16 after witnesses reported a bleeding woman was walking down the street without clothes. Officers arrived within two minutes and located a conscious, breathing infant who they said had

just been delivered at that location.

Santa Monica Fire Department personnel provided immediate medical care before transporting the infant to a local hospital where the newborn is currently reported to be in good health and receiving appropriate care.

Officers subsequently located the infant's mother nearby experiencing

a medical emergency. She was also transported to a hospital for treatment. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services has been notified and will coordinate next steps with medical staff. The investigation into the birth remains ongoing but it serves

SEE HOMELESS PAGE 8

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The logo for the Santa Monica Daily Press, featuring the letters "smdp" in a stylized orange and blue font, with "Santa Monica Daily Press" in smaller text below it.

Newsom touts gains against EBT theft as Trump presses blue states on benefits fraud

Two years after a wave of public benefit thefts that left low-income Californians scrambling to pay rent and afford food each month, Gov. Gavin Newsom is touting a significant decline in the reported amount stolen.

The thefts still amounted to more than \$4 million a month last fall in both the CalFresh food assistance and CalWorks cash welfare benefits programs, according to a press release from Newsom's office. That's down from two years ago, when public benefits recipients were reporting \$20 million a month stolen from their accounts. The state uses taxpayer money to reimburse victims when they report theft.

Newsom credited the reduction to the state's rollout of anti-fraud technology such as more secure electronic benefit (EBT) cards with electronic chips.

"In California, we're leading the way by turning innovation into action by stopping theft and ensuring benefits reach those who truly need them," he said in a press release.

Newsom's office announced the improved theft numbers last week after the Trump administration ramped up threats to California over allegations of fraud in public benefits. The president has used a wave of prosecutions over social services fraud in Minnesota, some of it allegedly by immigrants, as a reason to send immigration agents to conduct aggressive raids in Minneapolis.

In California, we're leading the way by turning innovation into action by stopping theft and ensuring benefits reach those who truly need them

- Gavin Newsom, Gov.

Earlier this month the Trump administration froze some federal social services funding to five Democratic-led states, including California. A judge halted the freeze, which included funds for the CalWorks cash aid program, for now.

The kind of fraud in which Newsom was

touting reductions is not traditional "welfare fraud" perpetrated by recipients of public benefits, but rather theft by a third party. Local social services officials have said fraud by recipients is relatively uncommon.

Thieves have been taking advantage of California benefits recipients by using hidden "skimming" devices to steal card numbers from EBT cards loaded with CalFresh food assistance and CalWorks cash welfare benefits. They then duplicate the cards and drain them of cash or make large purchases using CalFresh, before the recipients have a chance to spend their own benefits.

California was particularly susceptible because of the size of the state's social safety net, with roughly 300,000 families receiving cash aid and 3 million receiving food assistance. CalMatters reported in 2023 that the state, previously focused on detecting fraud committed by recipients of the benefits, had also ignored warnings and delayed a proposal to introduce chipped EBT cards.

When the pandemic brought new benefits from the federal and state governments, such as boosted unemployment benefits and stimulus checks, thieves wielding card skimmers followed the money. EBT cards, which contained only a magnetic strip at the time, were among the most vulnerable to theft. Nearly 200 people have been charged across California in the EBT schemes, Newsom's office said.

Since 2023 the state responded to the

skimming crisis by issuing chipped EBT cards and introducing an app allowing recipients to freeze their EBT accounts to prevent withdrawals. Last year, Newsom said, the state began using a computer model to detect fraudulent withdrawals and forced resets of some CalWorks' recipients EBT card PINs.

But local welfare fraud investigators said the Newsom's numbers paint too rosy a picture of the theft.

Gregory Mahony, president of the California Welfare Fraud Investigators Association, said he believes the state's reported thefts are undercounted.

The figures are based on how much the state reimburses county welfare departments each month to return victims' benefits. But some recipients don't bother making a report, or report months of thefts but only get some of the money reimbursed, Mahony said.

He also criticized the California Department of Social Services for dropping a requirement in 2023 that victims file police reports each time their benefits are stolen in order to get a reimbursement. That's hurt the state's tracking of theft and fraud, Mahony said.

"This is not a systemic victory," he said in a statement. "It is a delayed and partial mitigation of a crisis long allowed to grow unchecked."

— Jeanne Kuang, CalMatters Capitol Reporter



YOUR 1-MINUTE GREEN BIN TIP

Consejo de un minuto para el bote verde



What goes in the green bin?
¿Qué va en el bote verde?



Wooden cutlery along with food scraps are allowed in your green bin.

Los cubiertos de madera, junto con los restos de comida, están permitidos en el contenedor verde.

SCAN HERE



Escanea Aquí

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GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Hate has no place in Santa Monica

At our City Council meeting last Tuesday evening, a member of the public made an antisemitic comment during general public comments. Like many in the room, we were shocked and deeply disturbed by what was said.

We want to be unequivocal: antisemitism – and hatred in any form – has no place in Santa Monica. We condemn it fully, and without reservation.

Some have asked why we did not interrupt or respond in the moment. That question is understandable, and it deserves a clear answer.

City Council meetings are governed by long-standing constitutional principles that protect even deeply offensive speech during designated public-comment periods. Under the First Amendment, cities are required to allow members of the public to express their views – including views that are hateful or repugnant – so long as the speech does not involve true threats, incitement to imminent violence, or disruption of the meeting itself. Courts have repeatedly held that government officials may not cut off or punish speech simply because it is offensive or because officials strongly disagree with it.

As elected officials, we take an oath to uphold the Constitution. That oath sometimes requires restraint, even when words spoken are painful, offensive, or just plain morally wrong. Interjecting during public comment to condemn a

speaker's viewpoint can expose cities to legal risk and, paradoxically, can elevate exactly the kind of provocation many such speakers seek.

But restraint in the moment does not mean silence in principle.

We reject the idea that defending free speech requires tolerating hate. Our commitment to constitutional protections exists alongside – and not in conflict with – our commitment to stand against all forms of bigotry.

We can simultaneously believe deeply in free expression, while also naming and calling out hate for what it is.

We are actively working with City staff to better clarify for the public the rules governing public comment, including when speakers may be removed for actual disruption or threats, and how the City can more clearly reaffirm its values without infringing on constitutional rights.

Santa Monica is a city built on inclusion, dignity, and mutual respect. Hate speech wounds communities, even when it is legally protected. We will continue to speak out against it, to support those targeted by it, and to uphold both our values and the Constitution we are sworn to defend.

Mayor Caroline Torosis, Councilmember Ellis Raskin, Councilmember Natalya Zernitskaya, City of Santa Monica.

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Surf report

WATER TEMP: **60.8**

THURSDAY
FAIR

SURF: 1-2ft

Knee to thigh

Easing but rideable surf for the small wave gear. Early tide push best. WNW swell mix trends down from the previous couple days. Better tide in the early morning (low-ish/incoming) and that should be the best time to find something rideable on the small wave gear. Wind looks like it will stay light most of - if not all of the day

FRIDAY
POOR TO FAIR

SURF: 1-2ft

Knee to thigh

Down in size to close out the week off blend of old/new WNW swells. Early tide push will be the best opportunity to track down something rideable but even for the small wave focal points that's going to be a tall ask. Old WNW swell leftovers are the primary swell source most of the day, some new WNW energy creeping in late.



Weather

Thursday: A 30 percent chance of showers, mainly before 10am. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 63.

Thursday Night: A 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 53. Northwest wind around 5 mph.

Friday: Partly sunny, with a high near 62. East wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south southwest in the afternoon.

Friday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 52.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2026/01/22	Thu	04:50 AM	1.79	L
2026/01/22	Thu	10:43 AM	4.98	H
2026/01/22	Thu	5:33 PM	-0.07	L
2026/01/23	Fri	12:07 AM	4.39	H
2026/01/23	Fri	05:46 AM	1.73	L
2026/01/23	Fri	11:29 AM	4.26	H
2026/01/23	Fri	6:00 PM	0.46	L
2026/01/24	Sat	12:45 AM	4.61	H
2026/01/24	Sat	06:57 AM	1.63	L
2026/01/24	Sat	12:29 PM	3.46	H
2026/01/24	Sat	6:30 PM	1.06	L
2026/01/25	Sun	01:31 AM	4.83	H
2026/01/25	Sun	08:36 AM	1.37	L
2026/01/25	Sun	2:06 PM	2.72	H
2026/01/25	Sun	7:04 PM	1.66	L
2026/01/26	Mon	02:29 AM	5.06	H

Daily Lottery

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the winning number information, mistakes can occur. In the event of any discrepancies, California State laws and California Lottery regulations will prevail. Complete game information and prize claiming instructions are available at California Lottery retailers. Visit the California State Lottery web site at <http://www.calottery.com>



Draw Date: 1/19
5 28 34 37 55
Power#: 17
Jackpot: 209 M



Draw Date: 1/20
7 8 13 22 28



Draw Date: 1/20
8 47 50 56 70
Mega#: 12
Jackpot: 266 M



Draw Date: 1/20
EVENING: 9 4 2
Draw Date: 1/20
MIDDAY: 0 2 3



Draw Date: 1/17
4 13 22 29 39
Mega#: 26
Jackpot: 21 M



Draw Date: 1/20
1st: 10 - Solid Gold
2nd: 02 - Lucky Star
3rd: 09 - Winning Spirit
Race Time: 1:43.51

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DBA

DBA

Name Change

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT File No. 2025284255. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: SUNNY KIDS PEDIATRICS, 903 14TH STREET, SANTA MONICA, CA 90403, County of Los Angeles. Registered Owner(s): CINDY TSUCHING HSU, 903 14TH STREET, SANTA MONICA, CA 90403. This business is conducted by: an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 12/2025. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true any material matter pursuant to Section 17913 of the Business and Professions Code that the registrant knows to be false is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000)). /s/ CINDY TSUCHING HSU, OWNER. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 12/24/2025. NOTICE: This Fictitious 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 before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or Common Law (See Section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 01/08/2026, 01/15/2026, 01/22/2026, 01/29/2026, 02/05/2026

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT File No. 2025286593. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: BUDDHABILITY, CULTURE OF PEACE PRESS, 606 WILSHIRE BLVD., SANTA MONICA, CA 90401, County of Los Angeles. Registered Owner(s): SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL-USA, 606 WILSHIRE BLVD., SANTA MONICA, CA 90401. This business is conducted by: a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 03/2010. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true any material matter pursuant to Section 17913 of the Business and Professions Code that the registrant knows to be false is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000)). /s/ MICHAEL BYNUM, VICE PRESIDENT. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 12/29/2025. NOTICE: This Fictitious 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 before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or Common Law (See Section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 01/15/2026, 01/22/2026, 01/29/2026, 02/05/2026

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DineLA is Back, Not So Dry January, & More!

SMDP's Weekly Guide to Food & Entertainment Goings-On In & Around Town includes DineLA is Back, Not So Dry January, Happy Birthday Marion Festival, Pizza and Bread Making Classes, and much more!



Courtesy photo

FOOD: Restaurant week returns to Los Angeles.

Strong Words at Socalo: Join us for dinner and drinks before the show at SOCALO and then sit down to a very special spoken word event with powerful back room storytelling. 7 fantastic storytellers will make their SOCALO debut with powerful new stories that will enthrall you. Jan. 24, 7:30p.m., 1920 Santa Monica Blvd. socalo.com/event/strong-words

Star Wars Immersive Dinner at Shoreside Restaurant: This is an interactive, immersive experience that includes the movie. Ticket Includes welcome Drink and 5-Course Prix Fixe Dinner. Sunday, Jan. 25, 5 - 9p.m., 1515 Ocean Ave. feastyoureyes.com

Happy Birthday Marion Festival: The SaMo Conservancy celebrates the life of silent film actress and socialite Marion Davies with a day of festivities including Natalie Jacob & The Vintage Quartet, magic by Tom Frank, a lesson in Social Dance steps of the 1920's with James Zimmer & Cynthia Harper, and tours of the historic Marion Davies Guest House. FREE. Sunday, Jan. 25, 1 - 3p.m. @ Annenberg Community Beach House, 415 Pacific Coast Highway. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/happy-birthday-marion-registration-1972837140996>

Soy Saucy Comedy Show at the Crow: The only stand-up comedy show featuring Asian and Latin comedians. Our love language is rice. Sunday, Jan. 25, 6:30p.m., 2525 Michigan Ave. <https://chinagona.mailerpage.io/soy-saucy>

Bread MakingClass at All'Antico Vinaio: Begin the evening with a refreshing Spritz on arrival, setting the tone for a delightful journey. You'll then roll up your sleeves and dive into a hands-on Schiacciata Dough-Making Class, where you'll learn the secrets of preparing our famous Tuscan schiacciata. Thursday, Jan 21 & 28, 1121 Abbot Kinney Blvd. <https://link.bucketlisters.com/fukd>

The Cube VR Reality Now Open: Third Street Promenade is becoming the home of experiences! Step into the future of fun at THE CUBE VR in Santa Monica! Battle zombies, crack mind-bending escape rooms, dominate laser tag arenas, and dive into ultra-realistic shooters. With thrilling games for kids and adults alike, THE CUBE VR is the ultimate destination for unforgettable adventures. Featuring stunning 4K and 5K visuals and bulk free headsets these games will transport you out of reality and into a world of possibilities. 1248 Third Street Promenade <https://www.thecubeevents.com/santamonicaexperiences>

ONGOING: "Two Bit Circus" Pop-Up; Museum of Illusions;

WHAT TO EAT & DRINK?
Neighborhood Seafood Boil at Weary Livers: We're bringing the flavors of Louisiana straight to Santa Monica with a classic outdoor neighborhood seafood boil hosted by

SEE AROUND TOWN PAGE 11

GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Would California voters actually support a wealth tax on billionaires?

In a sense, California has been taxing wealth since it became a state 175 years ago.

Well into the 20th century, the state relied on taxing land and buildings which, in that agrarian period, were major forms of personal wealth. The state eventually imposed other taxes and by the 1930s, property taxes exclusively financed local services.

Today, despite the limit on property taxes imposed by 1978's Proposition 13, levies on nearly \$9 trillion in taxable real estate, generate about \$98 billion in revenue each year. The money gets roughly split between school districts and local governments.

Despite those massive numbers, real estate no longer dominates Californians' personal wealth, which now tops \$30 trillion. About a third is residential real estate, with commercial real estate, investments, personal property and cash representing the rest.

It's believed that California has about 200 billionaires who collectively have about \$2 trillion in net assets, or approximately 7% of Californians' wealth — overwhelmingly business investments, particularly in technology.

So, should taxing real estate be supplemented by tapping other assets of the state's billionaires? Voters may decide this year because a wealth tax initiative is being circulated by a union representing health care workers. It would impose a one-time 5% tax, mostly on their investments, that would raise an estimated \$100 billion.

It's needed, Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West contends, to shore up vital health care services threatened by reductions in federal subventions and the state budget's own deficits.

The proposal carries multiple philosophical, economic and political aspects.

Taxing wealth can be dated back to ancient Egypt. Since California already taxes real estate, why should other forms of personal wealth be exempted?

Moreover, California already taxes incomes on a sliding scale with the highest rates on those with the highest incomes, so shouldn't a wealth tax be imposed using

the same rationale?

Most of the 200 or so Californians who would be taxed would probably answer "no" to those questions. A few have already fled for states such as Nevada, Texas and Florida that don't tax incomes.

In theory, those who haven't already migrated would still be subject to the wealth tax because it would be backdated to Jan. 1, 2026. However, the tax would likely face legal challenges, and targeted taxpayers who haven't already moved likely would argue that retroactive levies are illegal.

The sponsoring union could face opposition from unions representing other professions because they would see little or no benefit. Having it on the ballot could affect another measure, sponsored by public employee unions, that would continue a surtax on high-income earners that was first adopted in 2012 and later extended to 2030. It raises about \$10 billion a year.

Meanwhile, Gov. Gavin Newsom is loudly opposed, contending that a wealth tax would drive wealthy people out of the state. The top 1% of wealthy Californians pay nearly half of the state's income taxes.

Newsom last week called the measure "badly drafted," arguing that its revenue wouldn't be spread among other groups.

"It does not support our public educators," he said. "Does not support our teachers and counselors, our librarians. It doesn't support our first responders and firefighters. Doesn't support the general fund and parks."

While Newsom has long opposed wealth tax proposals, his obvious presidential ambitions surely play a role in his promises to lead an opposition campaign. The passage of a wealth tax could be weaponized in a presidential campaign.

Would California voters embrace a wealth tax on the ballot?

A poll commissioned by opponents and released Tuesday found that the measure obtained a bare plurality when a sample of voters was read its official wording, but declined when they heard a counterargument.

So who knows?

Dan Walters, CalMatters Opinion Columnist

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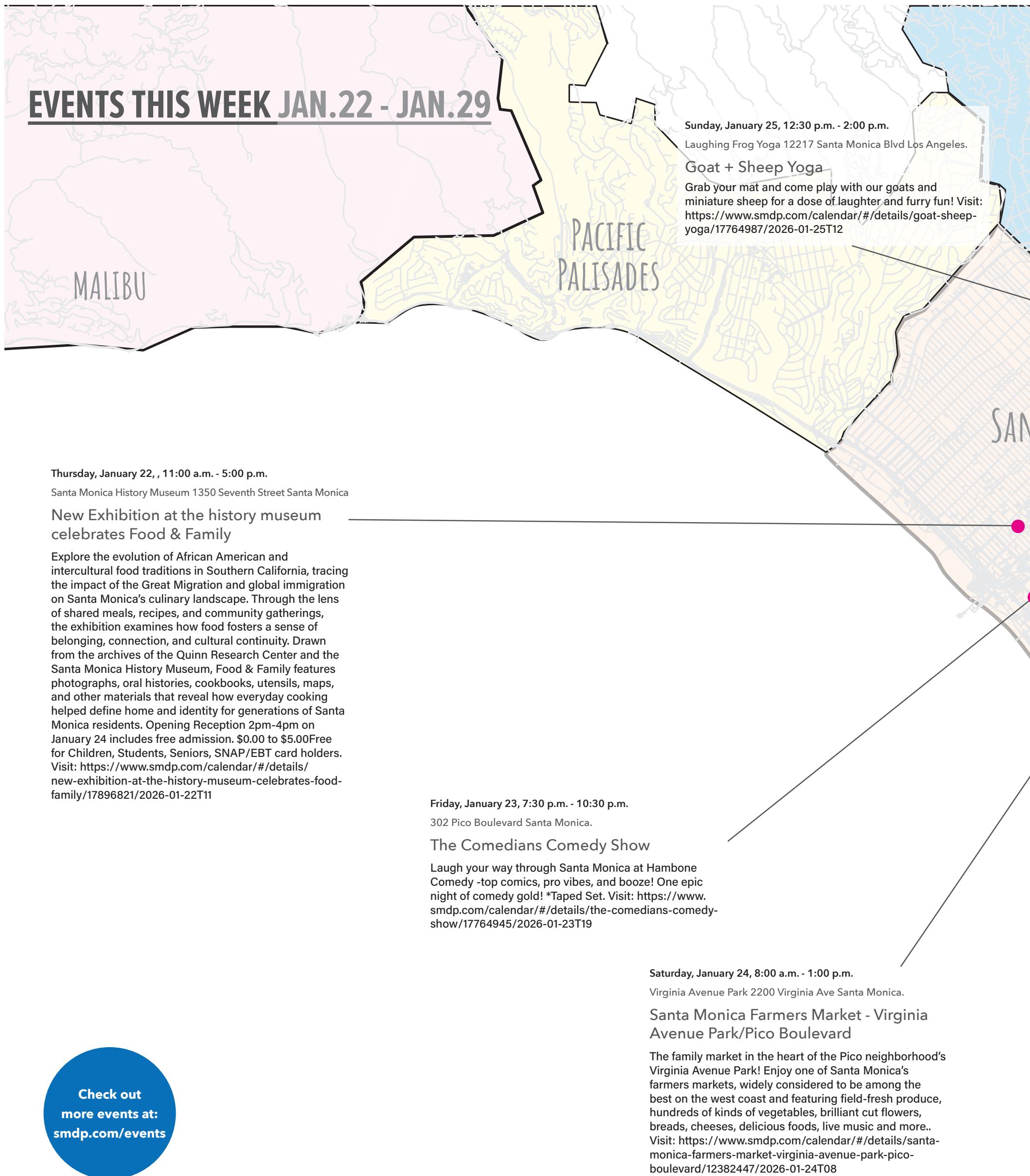


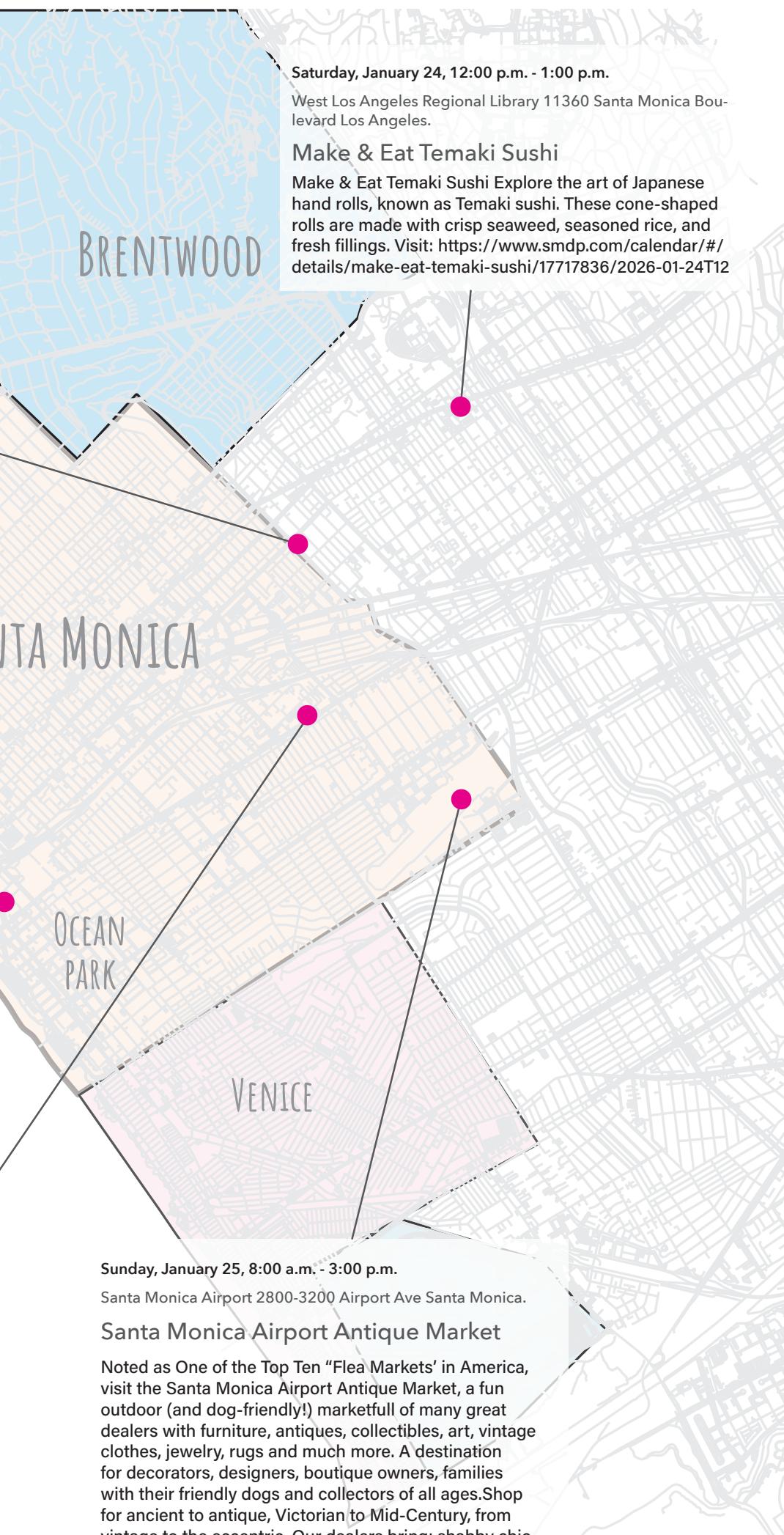




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Saturday, January 24, 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

West Los Angeles Regional Library 11360 Santa Monica Boulevard Los Angeles.

Make & Eat Temaki Sushi

Make & Eat Temaki Sushi Explore the art of Japanese hand rolls, known as Temaki sushi. These cone-shaped rolls are made with crisp seaweed, seasoned rice, and fresh fillings. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/make-eat-temaki-sushi/17717836/2026-01-24T12>

Sunday, January 25, 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Santa Monica Airport 2800-3200 Airport Ave Santa Monica.

Santa Monica Airport Antique Market

Noted as One of the Top Ten "Flea Markets" in America, visit the Santa Monica Airport Antique Market, a fun outdoor (and dog-friendly!) market full of many great dealers with furniture, antiques, collectibles, art, vintage clothes, jewelry, rugs and much more. A destination for decorators, designers, boutique owners, families with their friendly dogs and collectors of all ages. Shop for ancient to antique, Victorian to Mid-Century, from vintage to the eccentric. Our dealers bring: shabby chic, architectural salvage and industrial furniture, paintings from listed European and American artists, original vintage prints, posters and lithographs, estate jewelry, vintage to couture fashion, books, candelabras, outdoor furniture and garden accessories, rugs from around the world, tribal and African art, sculpture and beads, exotic plants and more. Located next to the Museum of Flying. Occur every 1st and 4th Sunday of every month. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/santa-monica-airport-antique-market/15831601/2026-01-25T08>



THURSDAY | JANUARY 22

CLUB LATINO PARA ADULTOS MAYORES

11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Virginia Avenue Park 2200 Virginia Ave. Santa Monica. Venga, aprenda, y diviertase cada jueves de 11 AM a 1 PM el el salón 3 del parque Virginia. Cada semana será algo nuevo: Ejercicio, Hablando con amigos, Aprendizaje, Presentadores Invitados, Salud y Bienestar. Hay comida para los adultos mayores que participan durante las dos horas. Para más información llame al (310) 458-8688. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/club-latino-para-adultos-mayores/13943928/2026-01-08T11>

OAKWOOD ROOTS FARMERS AND WELLNESS MARKET

11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. 685 Westminster Ave Venice. Oakwood Roots Venice Farmers' and Wellness Market is a hub for local foods, wellness classes, and holistic healing. We are dedicated to fostering a strong community, supporting local businesses, and advocating for sustainable practices. Join us in creating a healthier and more connected neighborhood. This is part of a larger effort to revitalize the abandoned parking lots across the street from the park into a community hub, in partnership with Community Corporation of Santa Monica and Hoopbus. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/oakwood-roots-farmers-and-wellness-market/14548473/2026-01-22T11>

ADVANCED FLOWER ARRANGING WORKSHOP

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Viola Floral Studios 1639 11th St. Suite 162 Santa Monica. Join us for a one-of-a-kind advanced workshop where we will build on your existing skills and design an asymmetrical arrangement featuring the best stems of the season (in a custom vase). We'll use advanced techniques; prior floral experience or workshop attendance is encouraged. Viola Floral Studio: 1639 11th St. Suite 162, Santa Monica. Convenient parking in the back of the building. Please note that all workshops are non-refundable, but if something comes up, feel free to send a friend in your place — flower joy is always transferable. We'll be starting promptly at 3pm, so plan to arrive by 2:45pm to settle in, sip something refreshing, and get ready to bloom. Kit Included. Everything is taken care of by our amazing team, including fresh flowers, vases, floral shears, and guided instructions to create one stunning floral arrangement. Expect to leave with a breathtaking arrangement crafted by your own hands, enriched with newfound knowledge of florals and design. Light bites and bubbly will be provided. \$185.00. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/advanced-flower-arranging-workshop/17600698/2026-01-22T18>

FOOTBALL SHOWINGS AT THE WHALER!

101 Broadway CA 90401 Contact Info (424) 330-0166 [info@venicewhaler.com](http://venicewhaler.com) Does not apply on holidays Santa Monica. Enjoy food & drink specials during every football game! The Whaler shows every college and NFL game on all TVs every week all season! (Sound is only on if that is the only game playing). Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/football-showings-at-the-whaler-/17408731/2026-01-08T00>

FRIDAY | JANUARY 23

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>

HOW TO WRITE A COMPELLING TRANSFER ESSAY

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Santa Monica College 1900 Pico Blvd Santa Monica. Getting ready to transfer to the four-year of your dream can be a stressful process! Before you begin writing your answers to any university's application essays, do yourself a stress-free favor and attend this workshop. You'll receive tips and techniques that will help you showcase the uniqueness of "you" in areas such as your preparedness for advanced courses, leadership skills, strengths and weaknesses, obstacles and opportunities, and any noteworthy contributions to your campus or community. In this workshop, you will learn: How to develop concrete and specific details that will help you stand out and underscore your accomplishments and talents. How and why to explain academic or personal challenges and missteps. How to prove knowledge and understanding of the institution and department you are applying to. How to save time by repurposing ideas and paragraphs to use in essays for multiple schools. How to avoid pitfalls and clichés that weaken your responses. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/how-to-write-a-compelling-transfer-essay/17839519/2026-01-23T10>

LIVE MUSIC FRIDAYS AT THE SURFING FOX

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. 120 Colorado Ave CA Contact Info (424) 214-1830 matt.sedgwick@candrpr.com Visit thesurfingfoxsm.com to view menus and learn more Santa Monica. Erinn Alissa performs acoustic folk pop with her guitar Friday nights at The Surfing Fox. Enjoy a night of live music, tasty bites, and Foxtails! Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/live-music-fridays-at-the-surfing-fox/14385252/2026-01-23T18>

ANDREW'S GRILLED CHEESE AND WINE NIGHT

7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Andrew's Cheese Shop 728 Montana Ave Santa Monica. For this pop up dinner, we'll be pairing our famous grilled cheeses with some of our amazing and unusual wines. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/andrew-s-grilled-cheese-and-wine-night/17855931/2026-01-23T19>

DINE LA RESTAURANT WEEK 2026

Santa Monica Pier 200 Santa Monica Pier, Ste A Santa Monica. Dine LA Restaurant Week takes place twice a year and showcases Los Angeles as a premier dining destination while highlighting the diversity of culinary experiences L.A. has to offer. There are no tickets or passes required for Dine LA Restaurant Week. Simply dine out at a participating restaurant, ask for the Dine LA Restaurant Week menu, and try a new dish or enjoy an old favorite. Advance reservations are strongly recommended. There are currently 32 Santa Monica restaurants participating - check back as more join the list! Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/dine-la-restaurant-week-2026/17904427/2026-01-23T00>



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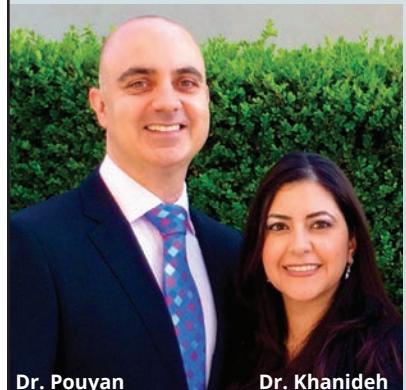
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LOCAL

COUNCIL

FROM PAGE 1

emphasized that "at every turn, what we saw from Mayor Pro Tem Zwick was that he wanted to seek advice," Chi said. "Mayor Pro Tem Zwick voluntarily provided [information]. There was no cover up."

Last week, the council also voted to repeal an Emergency Interim Zoning Ordinance related to SB 1123, a state law permitting small lot subdivisions. The ordinance, which went beyond state requirements, has generated no applications and is currently subject to litigation.

Additionally, the council ratified adoption of the 2025 California Building Standards Code, which had been approved 7-0 in September and is already in effect for building permits.

The most heated debate centered on how to implement state housing laws. Councilwoman Negrete argued the city should not exceed state mandates, expressing skepticism that market-rate development would produce affordable housing.

"We're not building for the middle income," Negrete said. "I support affordable housing, but what is that? We haven't defined it. I don't support density for density sake, especially when the community is being asked to absorb significant impacts without seeing the affordability delivered at the same pace."

Chi clarified that the Resolution of

Intention does not mandate specific outcomes but rather initiates a public process. In some cases, the city's current regulations actually exceed state requirements and staff recommended aligning them with state law.

"The ROI details are also important. It's drafted very broadly. It does not consider or contemplate any specific amendments to the zoning code," Chi said.

Zernitskaya supported giving the Planning Commission latitude to analyze all options and return with recommendations.

"I don't want to presuppose what the Planning Commission is going to come back with," she said. "I want to make sure that we are fully utilizing the professional expertise and the knowledge of the folks that are on Planning Commission."

The Planning Commission, which previously expressed reluctance to recommend standards exceeding state law, will now conduct public hearings and develop recommendations for council consideration. No timeline was specified for returning with proposals.

Council's final vote was 4-2. Council Members Dan Hall, Ellis Raskin, Barry Snell and Natalya Zernitskaya voted yes on the substitute motion, while Council Member Lana Negrete and Mayor Caroline Torosis voted no. Mayor Pro Tem Jesse Zwick was absent.

maaz@smdp.com

HOMELESS

FROM PAGE 1

as a reminder of the perpetual homelessness crisis on local streets.

The incident occurred days before regional leaders gathered Tuesday night to launch the 2026 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count, the largest unsheltered point-in-time count in the nation.

"This year's Homeless Count comes at a pivotal moment for our region," said LAHSA Interim CEO Gita O'Neill. "Across Los Angeles, the homeless services system is undergoing major changes, from funding shifts and program transitions to the way outreach, shelter, and housing are delivered."

Thousands of volunteers will canvas LA County over three nights to count every person experiencing homelessness. The count is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and provides essential data that determines how federal, state, and local funding are distributed for housing, shelter, outreach and supportive services.

"When we count every person, we strengthen accountability and affirm the dignity of our unhoused neighbors," said Los Angeles County Board Chair and First District Supervisor Hilda L. Solis.

Tuesday night marked the first night of counting in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys and Metro Los Angeles. Wednesday's count covers the San Gabriel Valley and East Los Angeles, while Thursday encompasses the Antelope Valley, West Los Angeles, South Los Angeles and South Bay/Harbor areas.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority has implemented several enhancements for this year's count, including refined digital mapping tools, expanded technical support staff and streamlined volunteer training. Building on last year's

success capturing 100% of data digitally, the count's app-based collection process returns for a fourth year with improved maps developed in partnership with community stakeholders.

However, the count continues to face questions about its reliability. 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.

Technical errors have also undermined confidence in recent years. In 2022, an entire Venice census tract was initially reported as having zero unsheltered people, an error LAHSA attributed to spotty training and poor internet connectivity. An LAist investigation found LAHSA excluded more volunteer observations in 2024 than prior years, with only 81% of recorded sightings ultimately counted versus 87% the year before.

Both the city and County of Los Angeles have terminated contracts with LAHSA over concerns about its effectiveness, though LAHSA maintains recent decreases in the count were evidence that its programs work.

"With looming funding cuts at all levels of government, this will give us critically needed data to allow us to advocate effectively," said Amber Sheikh, chair of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Commission.

LAHSA currently has nearly 3,000 registered volunteers but aims for about 4,200 total. The agency is especially seeking volunteers in the San Gabriel Valley, East LA County and South Bay region. Volunteers of all ages are welcome, though those 17 and younger must be accompanied by an adult. To volunteer, visit theycountwillyou.org.

Results are typically released in late spring or early summer.

editor@smdp.com

Agnes



By TONY COCHRAN

Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

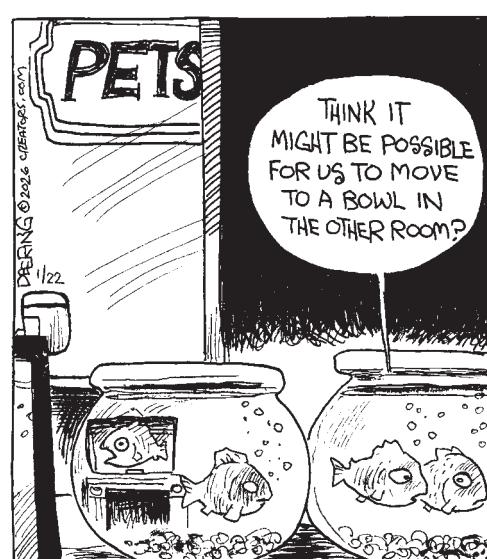
By PETER GALLAGHER

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING



"I'M GLAD OUR FAIRY GODMOTHERS GET ALONG."



FIND THE WORDS

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

© australianwordgames.com.au 6828

Growing native plants



Beds	Epiphyte	Insect	Pindan
Birds	Fern	Invasive	Rain
Booyong	Ficus	Kauri	Soak
Boree	Figs	Kentia	Soil
Bottle	Germination	Leggy	Soluble
Bract	Gums	Lime	Stringybark
Bush	Hakea	Loam	Telopea
Cane	Hoop	Mallee	Undergrowth
Cedar	Humus	Mulch	Wet feet
Coral	Huon	Pests	Pigface
Cover	Income		

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.

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Santa Monica Daily Press



TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 22)

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're not trying to be unique or edgy -- it just so happens that you resonate with topics that many people haven't even heard of yet. It will be fun and fortifying to connect with those who share your interest.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're starting to question your fit in an organization or a particular role. You're not exactly a fish out of water, but you may be a polar bear out of Alaska. The key here is to limit your time in the environment. Take lots of breaks. Is it possible to get a vacation?

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). These are stubborn conditions, and stubborn people populate the landscape. They have something to give, but you won't know what it is until you let go of what you want it to be. So instead of needing events to line up a certain way, you let go of expectation.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Socializing will be about answering the very human need to be seen and heard. Your story is an evolving one and you tell it differently depending on who is asking. Today, someone new will be curious about you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The mood at 10 a.m. is very different from the mood at 4 p.m. -- so different, in fact, you may feel like two different people. Does it help you to know it's not an uncommon phenomenon? The world asks a lot of "a.m. you," then "p.m. you" will ask a lot of the world.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll pull off complex plans with a simple approach: jump into and execute as you go. You're also well aware that not everyone has access to experiences like this, and you'll make the most of it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22). You're touched by what's around you and you'll reconnect with possibility and a sense of aliveness. Just remember, no one comes into their own doing whatever everyone else does. Your artful approach will set you apart in the best way.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your work will be better for the obstacles you face today. A lull will give you the chance to consider the part that you usually do automatically. This is just what you need to make things better than ever.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You want a feeling you felt before, but for some reason it's not there. Don't force it. This is the new you, not the old you, and you are sensitive in other ways you have yet to learn about.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It's nice to have assistance and support, but if you don't get it today, you'll get something even better. You'll learn what you're made of. You'll dig deeper for your own true grit, which is the abiding resource that will never leave you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The French culinary term "mise en place" will apply to your current project. Get all the elements ready for use. In cooking it means peeling, cutting and measuring your ingredients, but for your current project it's readying other resources, including your team.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your imagination is active and responsive. You'll gather a subtle impression from a situation, then let intuition guide your decisions without overanalyzing. The day will arrange itself in supportive ways.

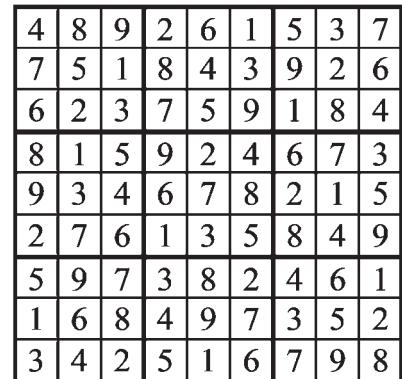
SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD



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

THEY HAVEN'T GOT THAT by Mark McClain
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 Rugged rock
5 Problematical
10 Air France merger partner
13 Table d'__ (fixed menu)
14 Chewy candy
16 Attention-getting starter
17 Plant with no roots
19 Altar assent
20 Drawer's device
21 Input/output software
23 Get __ (pass easily)
24 Novelist Carr
26 Head with no hair
30 Aussie's pal
34 Boy in a Menotti opera
35 "Give it __!"
36 Founding Father nickname
37 Sectors
38 Astronaut Jemison
39 Organic coolant
41 Tolkien goblin
42 Up to snuff
43 Stop it
44 Bakery bunch
46 Cat with no tail
48 __ the side of caution
50 Poetic contraction
51 Metallic money
54 Recyclable tech
58 Informal "facility"
59 Club with no members
63 Mt. Hood's locale

64 Genetic acquisitions

65 Real estate datum

66 Heating option

67 Haughty person

68 Assent in Twain

novels

DOWN

1 Liverpool lad
2 Cad
3 Envelope abbr.
4 Prize for a GPS-using hunter
5 Forensic facility
6 Org. with a five-ring logo
7 Pre-deal ritual
8 Self-regard

9 British cosmetics brand

10 Southern European capital

11 Abundant source

12 Secure, as a skiff

15 Rolls roller

18 Ultimate tests

22 HP rival

24 Language of Andorra

25 "You're on!"

26 Sort of blade

27 Atlanta campus

28 Performing art

29 Grass family crop

31 Draw __ on (aim at)

32 Trifle with

33 Sign up for

39 Bugs Bunny's
"bizarre"

40 Erode

42 Unpaid debt

45 NASDAQ regulator

47 Emulate Polo

49 Diplomatic squabble

51 Difficult journey

52 Law office pro

53 Party nights

55 Aching

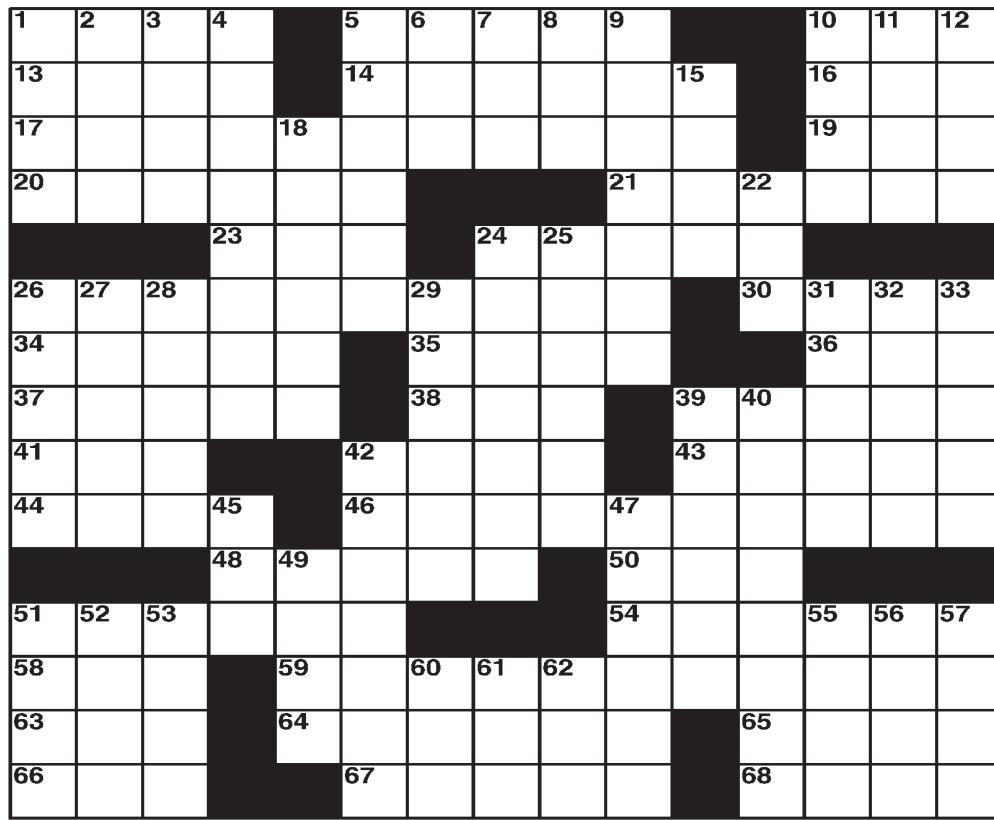
56 Ostrich's quartet

57 Cheese choice

60 Suffix for certain citizens

61 River of Argentina

62 Global commerce grp.



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01/22/26

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

AROUND TOWN

FROM PAGE 4

Crawdaddy Boiler at Weary Livers Bar. This is a true Southern-style feast — bold spices, fresh seafood, and communal tables made for cracking shells, sharing laughs, and getting a little messy in the best way possible. Friday, Jan. 23, 7:00 PM to 10p.m., 2819 Pico Blvd. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/neighborhood-seafood-boil-weary-livers-21-tickets-1978177257428>

Not So Dry January at AJA Vineyards: We're SO over Dry January! Let's celebrate the new year rather than start off dreading it. Join us for a drink all day and a live DJ set from 4-7pm. We've got Sangria Specials (both Non-Alcoholic and with Alcohol!)—Must be 21 to enjoy both. Saturday, Jan. 24, 2p.m. - close, 1417 2nd St. <https://ajavineyards.com/visitus/>

Gourmandise School DIY Pizza & Calzone Party: Enjoy a special event with Doctor Dough! Learn how to make your own personal pizzas and calzones, and enjoy \$5 craft beer from The Curious Palate. For \$25 you'll get a 30-minute pizza/calzone lesson, custom pizza/calzone to eat on site or take home, and a discount coupon for your \$5 beer. Sunday, Jan. 25, 11a.m., 395 Santa Monica Place cookingschoolsofamerica.com/thegourmandiseschool/index.php?page=classes

Socalo restaurant, from chefs Susan Feniger and Mary Sue Milliken, to close next month: The Border Grill founders and stars of Food Network's "Too Hot Tamales" will close Socalo on Valentine's Day after multiple turbulent years for the restaurant industry. <https://www.latimes.com/food/story/2026-01-16/socalo-restaurant-susan-feniger-mary-sue-milliken-santa-monica-closing>

DineLA Restaurant Week runs 1/23 – 2/6 and nearly 50 SaMo restaurants are participating. Here are some examples:

BOA Steakhouse: They are offering a multi-course lunch (\$45) and dinner (\$75) menu with favorites like the Caesar Salad, Chicken Parmesan, Hamachi Crudo, and the Skuna Bay Salmon. 101 Santa Monica Blvd. discoverlosangeles.com/dinela/restaurant/1379

Citrin: They are offering a \$99 menu with such things as Citrus Cured Kampachi, tomato soup, and Snake River Farms filet mignon. 1104 Wilshire Blvd. citrinandmelisse.com/dine-la

Cosetta: For the \$25 lunch, the acclaimed modern Italian restaurant is offering their signature smoked Mozzarella Sticks along with Cosetta's sandwiches and wraps built on Pollack's house hoagie loaves and "pizza wraps". Come dinner, \$45 includes starter options of albacore crudo, white bean and emmer soup, or chopped salad, followed by a choice of eggplant parmigiana, porcini-rubbed wagyu tri-tip, or bbq prawns. Finish with either soft, comforting polenta almond cake or Joe's vegan chocolate cake. 3150 Ocean Park Blvd. discoverlosangeles.com/eat-drink/cosetta/dinela

FIG Restaurant: Enjoy local farm-to-table cuisine helmed by Executive Chef Joseph Cook. A \$65 3-course dinner menu includes persimmons and burrata, coffee braised short ribs, truffle gnudi, apple galette, and more. 101 Wilshire Blvd. discoverlosangeles.com/eat-drink/fig/dinela

Fitoor: A 3-course lunch menu is \$45/person and a 3-course dinner menu is \$70/person. Highlights include Sweet Chili Broccoli, traditional Chicken Seekh Masala, and the Chocolate Nemesis. 1755 Ocean Ave. discoverlosangeles.com/eat-drink/fitoor/dinela

Ghisallo: \$35 3-course dinners include antipasta, a pizza, and dessert. 1622 Ocean Park Blvd. discoverlosangeles.com/eat-drink/ghisallo/dinela

Lunetta: A 3-course weekday lunch menu is \$35/person and a 3-course dinner menu is \$68/person for Chef Raphael Lunetta's seasonal, California-driven cooking rooted in farmers market ingredients. Highlights include wild snapper tiradito, mushroom salad, red crab gnocchi, braised short rib, and chocolate whiskey truffle cake. 2424 Pico Blvd. discoverlosangeles.com/eat-drink/lunetta/dinela

Socalo: Enjoy their signature Baja-meets-California flair with a 3-course lunch for \$25 and dinner for \$45. 1920 Santa Monica Blvd. discoverlosangeles.com/eat-drink/socalo/dinela

Soko: Tucked away off the lobby of the iconic oceanfront Fairmont Miramar Hotel, the 8-seater sushi bar helmed by veteran Sushi Chef Masa Shimakawa is serving up some of the city's freshest and most authentic traditional Japanese sushi service. An \$85 3-course dinner menu includes a Sashimi assortment, Miyazaki wagyu beef, and more. 101 Wilshire Blvd. discoverlosangeles.com/eat-drink/soko-sushi/dinela



Courtesy image

FRIENDS: The social sports league for adults will be at Brew Works.

Sushi Roku: Offering a sushi plate for \$45 for lunch and dinner that includes tuna, salmon, albacore, yellowtail, shrimp, and albacore, choice of baked crab or spicy tuna cut roll, Brussels sprout chips, and a drink. 1401 Ocean Ave. discoverlosangeles.com/eat-drink/sushi-roku-santa-monica

Further Afield: Maydan in West Adams brings the heat—literally—with live-fire cooking inspired by the Middle East, North Africa, and the Eastern Mediterranean. Smoke-kissed kebabs, vibrant spreads, and warm house-made breads create a bold, communal dining experience that feels both festive and refined. Right now is a great time to check them out as they are offering one of the most approachable Dine L.A. options in all of LA: Lunch comes in at \$15 with a fire pit beef wrap or grilled chicken shish taouk wrap, both served with a side salad. For dinner, the \$55 menu offers a scaled-down version of their popular Tawle experience, starting with an abundant spread of mezze, followed by a choice of kebabs and bold, house-made sauces paired with comforting seasonal sides. 4301 W Jefferson Blvd. maydanmarket.com

More Further Afield: The Best Deals For Dine LA Restaurant Week, Winter 2026: The Infatuation published their guide to the best deals around town, including theinfatuation.com/los-angeles/guides/la-restaurants-with-dinela-specials

Looking Ahead: NBA All-Star Weekend (2/13-15); Lunar New Year at Santa Monica Place (2/21); Frieze LA Art Show (2/26 - 3/1)

If there's something you think is worth highlighting, you can reach out directly to me at sean@smdp.com. Let me know if you have any feedback on Around Town: DineLA is Back, Not So Dry January, & More!

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