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smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

Volume 24 Issue 47 THE WEEKENDER 1/24-1/26 smdp.com

Pre-fire rent report shows robust year-over-year declines

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer



Photo by Scott Snowden

RENT: Santa Monica median rents fell in 2024 greater than the national and California averages.

Housing prices have gone haywire post wildfire with officials warning of scams, price gouging or just immoral attempts to raise rents and the current reality stands in stark contrast to the pre-wildfire economy where renters were actually seeing some relief.

According to apartment catalog website Apartment List, Santa Monica saw greater drops in rental prices than the national average last year. As of the start of January, the overall median rent in Santa Monica was listed at $2,449 per month, down 1.5 percent year-over-year. December was another drop month for the city as well, with prices down 0.4 percent from November.

The median one-bedroom apartment in the city now goes for $2,318, while the median two-bedroom goes for $2,779. Overall, the median rent drop from January to December 2024 was 0.9 percent, the second consecutive year of falling prices. The median rent fell 5.8 percent in the city from January-December 2023, after two large post-pandemic jumps in 2021 (12.3 percent increase) and 2022 (9 percent increase).

Santa Monica's 1.5 percent fall year-over-year outpaced both California (which grew 0.8 percent) and the national average (falling 0.5 percent). Across the Los Angeles metro, prices fell 0.3 percent.

Within Santa Monica, apartment listing site RentCafe reported that not surprisingly, North of Montana remains the most expensive neighborhood to rent in, followed by Downtown and Mid-City. Sunset Park, Ocean Park and Wilshire-Montana were noted as the least expensive neighborhoods to rent within.

Compared to 25 other cities within the Los Angeles metro area, Santa Monica typically fell around the top five in median rents in the Apartment List roundup. However, the city now ranks ninth in both median one-bedroom and two-bedroom rent. Cities more expensive for a one-bedroom rental on the list were Calabasas, Lake Forest, Laguna Niguel, Newport Beach, Aliso Viejo, Irvine, Rancho Santa Margarita and Mission Viejo.

SEE **RENT** PAGE 12

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PUBLIC NOTICE

If your child attended Santa Monica Police Activities League (PAL) or went to Memorial Park or Virginia Park during the late 1980s to early 2000s, your child may have come in contact with and been sexually abused by Eric Uller, who masqueraded as a police officer.

- Over almost 30 years, he sexually abused hundreds of boys and girls.
- Victims were often too scared or ashamed to tell their parents.
- Many victims have moved away and don't know they have a right to make a claim.
- Share this notice. There may still be time to file a claim.



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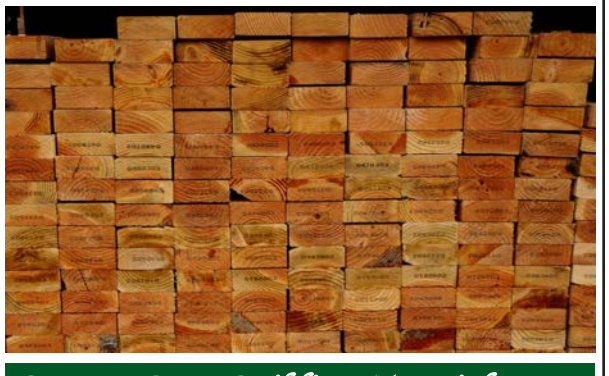
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SMC hosting fire relief distribution event after thousands volunteer to help



Courtesy Photo
SMC: Volunteers have been carefully preparing for a resource distribution event this week at Santa Monica College.

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

Santa Monica College (SMC) has become the fulcrum of local wildfire relief, a space where thousands of volunteers have sifted through countless donations since the fires began and the college has become an oasis of resources for victims of all Los Angeles County wildfires reflecting the countywide student body.

The Corsair Gym at 1900 Pico Blvd. serves as the distribution center, where volunteers have been helping the SMC Foundation set up for the event.

"I'm feeding off the positive energy that's coming, (volunteers are) just amazing," SMC Foundation President and Dean of Institutional Advancement Dr. Lizzy Moore said on Tuesday. "There are 150 people here right now folding clothing, taking off their day and taking a lot of pride on what they're doing ... we are LA strong, we want our brothers and sisters in Palisades, Malibu and everywhere (to be safe)."

Moore saw the flames of the Palisades Fire from her office on that fateful Tuesday, Jan. 7. By the next afternoon, she had organized a call with 35 representatives of different agencies, mobilizing to begin a collection drive before distribution. The collection drive initially started at SMC's Bundy campus before pivoting to the Main Campus because of "such a tremendous outpouring" of donations.

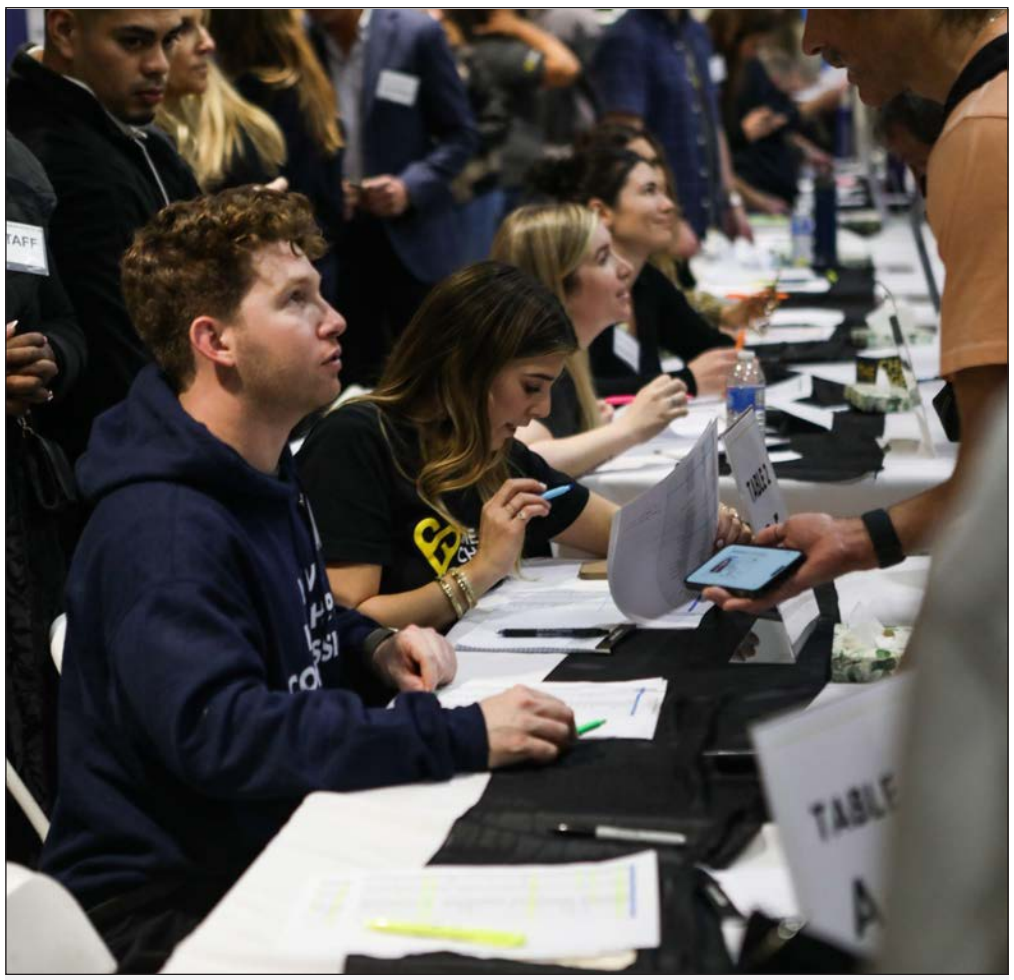
Along with community donations, SMC was able to collect "thousands and thousands" of blankets, sharing gently used ones with families at the First AME Church in Pasadena who were displaced from the Eaton Fire. National brands also pitched in, with Kut from the Kloth donating two box trucks full of new jeans, jackets and tops; blackcrows donating new clothes and jackets and doublesoul donating 8,000 pairs of brand new socks.

> "I'm feeding off the positive energy that's coming, (volunteers are) just amazing
> - Dr. Lizzy Moore, SMC Foundation President and Dean of Institutional Advancement

Moore was thankful for all of this, particularly the socks which she said was a "big thing for our community that's in need all the time." The SMC Foundation works to provide gently used clothing and food supplies to students in need year-round, expanding the ethos in this time of need.

SEE **SMC** PAGE 15

Local organizations get creative with relief fundraising opportunities



Courtesy Photo

NONPROFIT: Representatives of The Change Reaction worked Tuesday to hand out direct financial assistance checks for those impacted by the Palisades Fire.

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

Organizations from across Santa Monica and beyond have continued to come up with creative and helpful ways to aid victims of the Palisades Fire.

On Thursday, the return of Locals' Night to the Santa Monica Pier carried extra weight to the fun proceedings, renamed as "Locals' Night for Fire Relief." The Pier and Pacific Park partnered with KTLA to host a fire relief fundraiser supporting the American Red Cross, The California Community Foundation and Santa MoniCARES.

Along with the typical Locals' Night entertainment like children's musical storytime and the classic car show, the Pier collected gift cards from Santa Monica restaurants and other businesses to donate to those in need. The centerpiece of the Pier, the Pacific Park Ferris wheel, became a beacon of awareness by highlighting donation links to relief organizations via pacpark.com/care or by texting "Care" to 833-402-7341.

Another direct impact of the evening was assisting Palisades Charter High School in fundraising for building replacement and repairs. The school, which was decimated by the Palisades Fire, has immediate needs ranging from restoring technical infrastructure to finding temporary space for in-person instruction. Pali High is taking direct donations at go.PaliHigh.org/RaisePali.

Future events are also being turned into fundraising opportunities, such as the Santa Monica Rotary Club's annual Wine Fest. Due to an unnamed donor, the event's Fund-a-Need featured charity Ready to Succeed was given $10,000; so all remaining funds raised for Fund-a-Need will now go towards the newly-created Fire Relief Fund.

> We know that these are unusual steps, but there has never been a disaster in our hometown on the scale of this year's fires
> - Ken Waltzer, Santa Monica Rotary Club

All additional funding for the March 1 Wine Fest, Rotarians stated, will now go towards the Fire Relief fund, including sponsorships, advertisements, auction items, raffle tickets and direct donations. A "preview" for the

SEE **FUNDRAISING** PAGE 10



Surf report

WATER TEMP: **64.4**

FRIDAY
POOR

SURF: Shin to knee
0-1FT

Not much on tap, although the wind at least looks good through the day. We'll have a minor mix of NW swell with most breaks knee high and below. Many spots - especially the points - are flat on the deep early morning high tide, with things becoming marginally more rideable through the morning as the tide drops. Light offshore wind in the morning and clean, with just light onshore wind expected for the afternoon.

SATURDAY
POOR TO FAIR

SURF: Shin to knee
0-1FT

Decent shot of NW swell peaks, for waist+ waves at well exposed spots west of Pt. Dume. That surf winds down on Sunday as the swell eases. Morning winds look light, but mind the 5' dawn patrol high tide.

Weather

Friday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 68. North northeast wind around 5 mph becoming southwest in the afternoon.
Friday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 47.
Saturday: A 50 percent chance of rain, mainly after 10am. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 56.
Saturday Night: Rain likely. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 44.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
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
2025/01/26	Sun	8:48 PM	3.45	H
2025/01/27	Mon	12:56 AM	2.39	L
2025/01/27	Mon	07:17 AM	6.06	H
2025/01/27	Mon	2:40 PM	-1.16	L
2025/01/27	Mon	9:11 PM	3.63	H
2025/01/28	Tue	01:37 AM	2.11	L
2025/01/28	Tue	07:55 AM	6.36	H
2025/01/28	Tue	3:12 PM	-1.36	L
2025/01/28	Tue	9:37 PM	3.82	H
2025/01/29	Wed	02:18 AM	1.84	L

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

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 1/22
5 6 27 40 49
Power#: 5
Jackpot: 46 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 1/21
27 30 56 64 65
Mega#: 22
Jackpot: 28 M

SUPER LOTTO PLUS
Draw Date: 1/22
1 3 12 16 30
Mega#: 26
Jackpot: 19 M

FANTASY 5
Draw Date: 1/22
12 25 27 34 38

DAILY 3
Draw Date: 1/23
MIDDAY: 2 9 7
Draw Date: 1/22
EVENING: 1 7 7

DAILY DERBY
Draw Date: 1/22
1st: 04 - Big Ben
2nd: 02 - Lucky Star
3rd: 06 - Whirl Win
Race Time: 1:43.99

PUBLISHER
Ross Furukawa
ross@smdp.com

PARTNER
Todd James
todd@smdp.com

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Matthew Hall
matt@smdp.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Charles Andrews,
Jack Neworth,
David Pisarra.

CIRCULATION
Guadalupe Navarro
ross@smdp.com

Keith Wyatt
ross@smdp.com

STAFF WRITERS
Scott Snowden
scott.snowden@smdp.com

Thomas Leffler
thomas@smdp.com

DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING
Cindy Moreno
cindy@smdp.com

MARKETING MANAGER
Dina Araniva
dina@smdp.com

PRODUCTION
Esteban Inchaustegui
production@smdp.com

Julio Davalos
julio@smdp.com

1640 5th Street, Suite 218
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OFFICE (310) 458-PRESS (7737)
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Santa Monica Daily Press

The ash left behind by the Los Angeles wildfires might be toxic, experts warn

Toni Boucher threw up the first time she saw the charred remains of her home and neighborhood after this month's deadly Los Angeles-area wildfires. Now she wonders if it's worth it to go back to sift through the ashes and try to find her grandmother's wedding ring.

It's not just that she's worried about the trauma she experienced from seeing the destruction in Altadena, where Boucher, 70, has lived for decades. She is also concerned about possible health risks.

"They talk about asbestos and they're talking about lead and they're talking about all of the things that have burned in the loss of the homes and the danger of that," Boucher said.

Experts warn that the blazes unleashed complex chemical reactions on paint, furniture, building materials, cars, electronics and other belongings, turning ordinary objects into potentially toxic ash that requires protective gear to handle safely. The ash could include harmful lead, asbestos or arsenic, as well as newer synthetic materials.

"Ash is not just ash. Go back to the garage or what's in your home. What is your furniture made out of? What are your appliances made out of? What is your house made out of?" asked Scott McLean, a former deputy chief of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's communications bureau. "A lot of it's petroleum product and different composites that are extreme hazards due to

> They talk about asbestos and they're talking about lead and they're talking about all of the things that have burned in the loss of the homes and the danger of that
>
> - Toni Boucher

fire when they combust."

That is especially a problem when people start to sift through fire damage. Studies

SEE **ASH** PAGE 10



Photo by Scott Snowden

WILDFIRES: Toxic ash left behind by recent wildfires are an issue moving forward.

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What is FireAid, the LA wildfire benefit concert featuring Billie Eilish, Stevie Wonder and more?



Courtesy Graphic

CONCERT: Music's A-listers are coming together for wildfire relief efforts.

Two major fires in and around Los Angeles are burning for a third week, destroying more than 14,000 structures and displacing tens of thousands.

In the midst of the devastation, relief efforts continue across communities and industries — with musicians rallying to several causes, notably the FireAid benefit concert.

Billie Eilish, Jelly Roll, Peso Pluma, Joni Mitchell, Sting, Anderson .Paak — and quintessentially Californian acts like the recently reunited No Doubt and the Red Hot Chili Peppers — are just a few of the 28 artists getting together to raise money for the one-night only benefit concert planned for Jan. 30th in two Los Angeles sports venues.

Maybe you've heard of FireAid. If you haven't — well, that's about to change. Here's everything you need to know about the rapidly expanding benefit concert.

WHAT IS FIREAID?

FireAid is a star-studded benefit concert organized for Los Angeles-area wildfire relief. It is being produced by Shelli, Irving, and the Azoff family with Live Nation and AEG Presents.

FireAid proceeds will "be distributed under the advisement of the Annenberg Foundation, for short-term relief efforts and long-term initiatives to prevent future fire disasters," according to a press release. "All proceeds from the FireAid benefit concert at Intuit Dome and Kia Forum will go directly to the event's designated beneficiaries."

WHEN AND WHERE WILL FIREAID TAKE PLACE?

FireAid will take over two Inglewood, California venues on Jan. 30th: the Kia Forum starting at 6:00pm PST and the Intuit Dome starting at 7:30pm PST.

WHO IS PERFORMING AT FIREAID?

Billie Eilish, Gracie Abrams, Jelly Roll, Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, Lil Baby, Olivia Rodrigo, Peso Pluma, Rod Stewart, Stevie Wonder, Sting, Tate McRae and Earth, Wind & Fire will perform at the Intuit Dome.

Alanis Morissette, Anderson .Paak, Dawes, Graham Nash, Green Day, John Fogerty, Joni Mitchell, No Doubt, Pink, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Stephen Stills, Stevie Nicks, the Black Crowes, Dave Matthews and John Mayer will perform at the Kia Forum.

Matthews and Mayer will perform live together for the first time.

CAN I STREAM FIREAID?

Yes. It will be broadcast and streamed live on Apple Music, Apple TV+, Max, iHeartRadio, KTLA+, Netflix/Tudum, Paramount+, Prime Video, the Amazon Music Channel on Twitch, SiriusXM, Spotify, SoundCloud, Veeps and YouTube. It will also be shown at select AMC Theatre locations in the U.S.

WHERE CAN I GET TICKETS TO FIREAID?

Tickets will go on sale Wednesday at 12 pm PST via Ticketmaster. They start at $99. Both venues and Ticketmaster have waived the fees for the event to ensure all sales benefit FireAid relief efforts.

WILL TICKETHOLDERS GET TO ATTEND BOTH CONCERTS?

No. However, Intuit Dome attendees will get to watch the Kia Forum performances on screens inside the venue before their event begins. Kia Forum attendees will get to do the same after their performances conclude.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OTHER WAYS THE MUSIC INDUSTRY HAS RESPONDED TO THE FIRES?

Since the wildfires started, celebrities and entertainment organizations have pledged millions to help those who have been displaced or lost their homes, including a $2.5 million contribution from Beyoncé to a newly launched LA Fire Relief Fund created by her charitable foundation, BeyGOOD. Recently, The Weeknd donated $1 million to the LAFD Foundation, GoFundMe's Wildfire Relief Fund, and LA Regional Food Bank.

The Recording Academy and MusiCares also launched the Los Angeles Fire Relief Effort with a $1 million donation. Thanks to additional contributions, they've already distributed $2 million in emergency aid.

By MARIA SHERMAN AP Music Writer





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GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

With the Trump-Newsom political feud back, the LA fires add a tricky new wrinkle



Evan Vucci, AP Photo

POLITICS: Then-President Donald Trump talks with the Gov.-Elect Gavin Newsom during a visit to a neighborhood destroyed by the wildfires in Paradise on Nov. 17, 2018.

As Donald Trump this week assumed the presidency for the second time, he rekindled his personal and political feud with California and its governor, Gavin Newsom, while also inflating Newsom's obvious ambition to be resistor-in-chief — and perhaps the 2028 Democratic candidate for the White House.

Had Trump lost to Kamala Harris, it probably would have doomed whatever presidential ambitions Newsom might harbor. She presumably would have run for a second term in 2028. Trump's win did Newsom a big favor since he can only serve one more term, setting the stage for wide-open scrambles in both parties.

On his first day back on the job, Trump once again singled out California for scorn, thereby burnishing Newsom's standing within his party.

Trump devoted some of his 30-minute inaugural speech to California, alleging — untruthfully — that the state's leaders allowed Los Angeles wildfires to burn without "a token of defense."

"They're raging through the houses and communities, even affecting some of the wealthiest and most powerful individuals in our country, some of whom are sitting here right now," Trump said.

Later, in another speech to supporters, Trump accused California of voter fraud because it sends out ballots to all voters

> "They're raging through the houses and communities, even affecting some of the wealthiest and most powerful individuals in our country, some of whom are sitting here right now
> - Donald Trump

SEE **GUEST COMMENTARY** PAGE 12

HOA HOMEFRONT

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Tips Before Starting Major Reconstruction or Repairs

BY KELLY G. RICHARDSON, ESQ. CCAL

Homeowners and HOAs periodically face major construction contracts for renovation or repairs, particularly following a disaster. Here are some tips to help homeowners and HOAs needing a contractor.

What's the job? Contractors are often asked to prepare the necessary "scope of work," describing the work needing to be done, and "specifications," the specific techniques and materials to be used. If multiple bidders are involved, they should all follow a consistent scope and specifications. It's harder to ascertain the best bid when contractors propose different scopes of work using varying materials.

Consultants. Qualified consultants can help develop a scope of work and specifications, advise on the type of contract arrangement, evaluate bids, and advise regarding contractor requests for extra money. Such consultants typically charge by the hour and act as the customer's advocate during the repair project. Individual homeowners often cannot afford this, but most HOAs would benefit greatly from such help.

What kind of contract? There are options in addition to the common fixed-price bid. Contractors might be hired on a "cost-plus" basis, where the contractor's out of pocket costs are marked up by an agreed percentage. Another type of arrangement is "time and materials," where contractors charge agreed hourly rates for labor and are reimbursed for the cost of the materials (with or without markup). If repairs are funded by insurance, consider asking the contractor to agree to accept what the insurance approves.

Lowest bid? Renovation or remodel projects involve risks of substantial hidden conditions, which can drive up the bid price because of the unknown factor of potential difficulties. Sometimes a "cost-plus" arrangement might prove better for both sides, since the contractor is not locked into a fixed price and so would not need to add extra to their bid for protection against possible complications.

Payment schedule. Contractors often propose payment schedules based upon "percentage of completion", but how do customers know if the quoted percentages are fair or accurate? Seek more definite payment signposts than percentage of completion.

Test project. In large HOA projects involving repetitive work such as decks or balconies, paying the contractor on a cost-plus basis for the first location may enable a solid fixed unit price for the other locations.

Licenses – mandatory. Disqualify contractors without the right license for the job, or if their license number doesn't match their business name. Check licenses at www.cslb.ca.gov.

Financing. If the project is to be funded by a bank loan or special assessment, be careful about signing a repair contract before the money is in hand.

Project budget. Consider other project costs in addition to the contractor and include a contingency line item in your budget. Contractors can charge extra for surprises that they couldn't see when they were bidding.

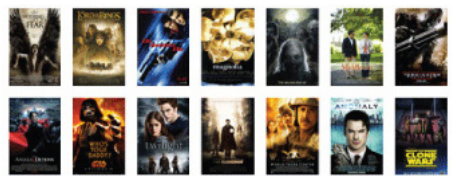
Quality control. The cost of an inspector to spot check the contractor's work may save money and headaches in the long run. City building inspections are typically spot inspections and do not guarantee the work is good.

Other planning considerations. What will be the hours of work allowed? Is a place needed for storage of materials? How will HOA residents be advised of work starting on their building or street?

"Measure twice... and cut once," is the old construction saying. Good advance planning is always better than undoing mistakes. Don't rush.

Kelly G. Richardson, Esq. is a Fellow of the College of Community Association Lawyers and Partner of Richardson Ober LLP, a California law firm known for community association advice. Submit questions to Kelly@roattorneys.com. Past columns at www.HOAHomefront.com. All rights reserved®.

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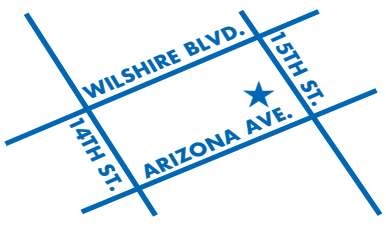
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Paci
Palisa

SANTA MONICA

$8,995,000

421 17th St,

4 BR, 4.5 BA 5,011Sq Ft

Listed by Mary Swanson •DRE #01790827

• Hilton Hilton

SANTA MONICA

$1,499,000

900 Euclid St #404,

2 BR 2 BA, 1,213 Sq Ft

Listed by Alexandra Rubow
•DRE #02094757
•Douglas Elliman of California, Inc.

SANTA MONICA

$15,000,000

653 Palisades Beach Rd,

6 BR 4.5 BA, 2,431 Sq Ft

Listed by Madison Hildebrand
•DRE #01413280
• Compass

SANTA MONICA

$1,595,000

1705 Ocean Ave #109,

2 BR 2 BA, 1,439 Sq Ft

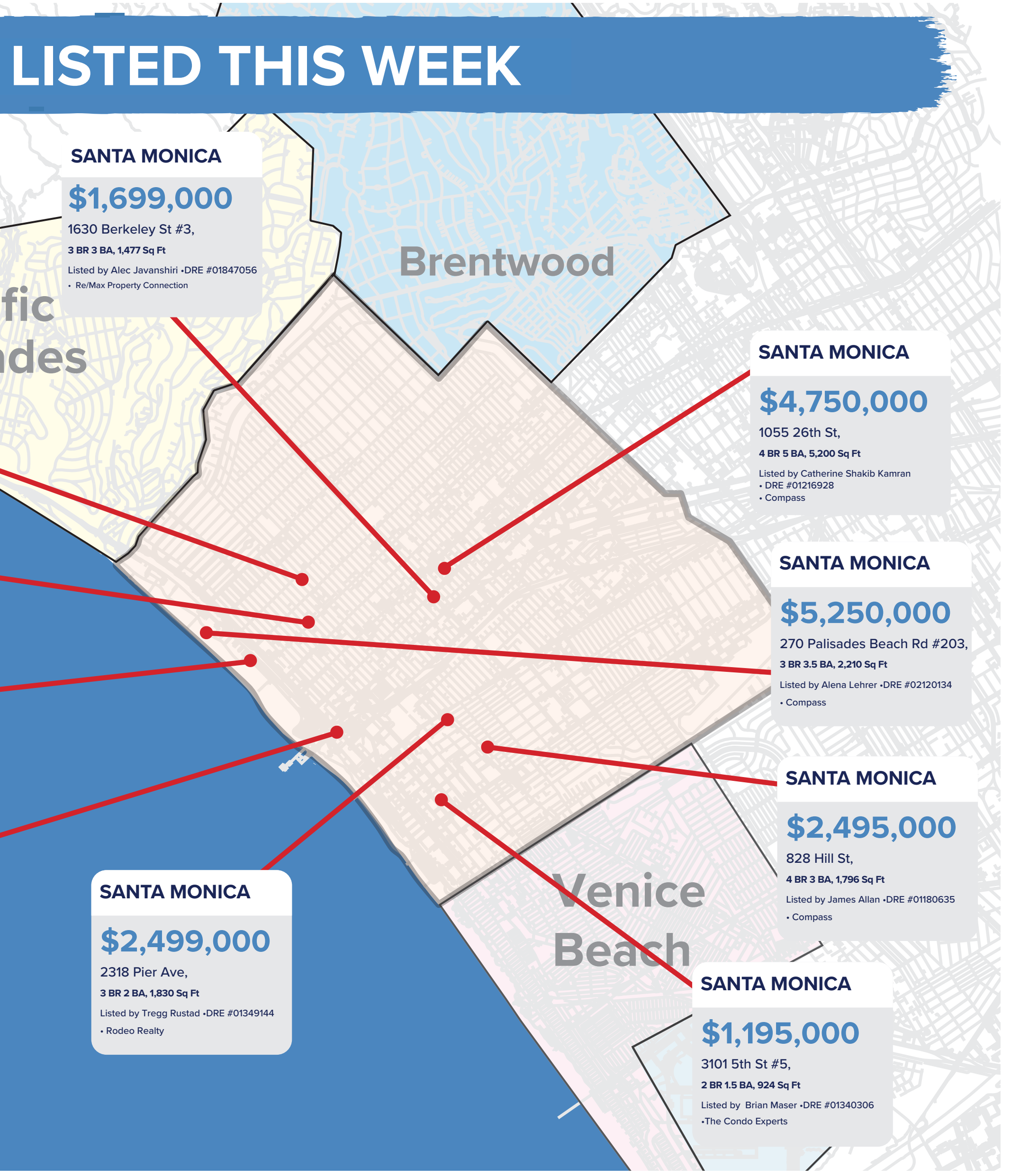
Listed by Colette Stevens •DRE #01702926

• Pardee Properties

● FOR SALE

All data gathered at redfin.com Santa Monica Daily Press

LISTED THIS WEEK



SANTA MONICA

$1,699,000

1630 Berkeley St #3,

3 BR 3 BA, 1,477 Sq Ft

Listed by Alec Javanshiri •DRE #01847056

• Re/Max Property Connection

SANTA MONICA

$4,750,000

1055 26th St,

4 BR 5 BA, 5,200 Sq Ft

Listed by Catherine Shakib Kamran

• DRE #01216928

• Compass

SANTA MONICA

$5,250,000

270 Palisades Beach Rd #203,

3 BR 3.5 BA, 2,210 Sq Ft

Listed by Alena Lehrer •DRE #02120134

• Compass

SANTA MONICA

$2,495,000

828 Hill St,

4 BR 3 BA, 1,796 Sq Ft

Listed by James Allan •DRE #01180635

• Compass

SANTA MONICA

$2,499,000

2318 Pier Ave,

3 BR 2 BA, 1,830 Sq Ft

Listed by Tregg Rustad •DRE #01349144

• Rodeo Realty

SANTA MONICA

$1,195,000

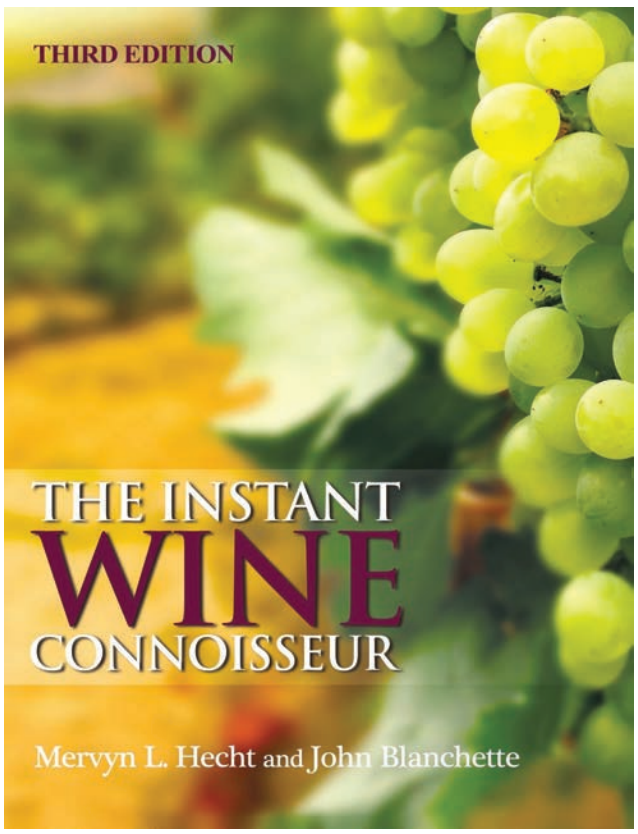
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Daily Press Food &Wine Columnist Merv Hecht takes you on an delightful tour of the world of wine. A fun way to increase your appreciation and knowledge of wine.

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FUNDRAISING

FROM PAGE 3

festival was held Thursday in Seattle, run by Wine Fest auctioneer Larry Snyder, with funds also going toward relief.

"We know that these are unusual steps, but there has never been a disaster in our hometown on the scale of this year's fires," Santa Monica Rotary Club's Ken Waltzer said.

Just outside city limits, the Collins & Katz Family YMCA hosted an event with nonprofit The Change Reaction Tuesday evening, bringing together over 500 families impacted by the Palisades Fire. The Change Reaction was able to distribute checks of up to $5,000 for direct financial assistance, more than $1.2 million given out in all.

"I had this goal for The Change Reaction to actually not be a noun, a thing, my goal is it to be a verb," Founder Gregory Perlman said. "For people to start thinking about 'change reactioning' their money, and that means you're taking your money to lift up the community. That's what we've been doing for five years ... now we're doing it here, we're taking that same energy."

One of the impacted was Community United Methodist Church of Pacific Palisades Pastor John Shaver, who lost his church and lost a church member in the fire. Shaver told the families in attendance to "take a breath" and that while it's "okay to not be okay," the community's resilience can be an example to future generations.

"We can lament now, but as we move through lament and grief, we can grow and be a force that builds to tell the children and the youth of the Palisades, of Altadena, of all of Los Angeles, that people can work together," Shaver said.

thomas@smdp.com

ASH

FROM PAGE 4

show that people involved in recovery in ash-affected areas could face health risks from breathing in whatever is there.

Even safe chemicals commonly found in household materials — such as titanium dioxide in paint or copper in pipes — can form compounds that are more reactive after a fire, said Mohammed Baalousha, a professor of environmental health sciences at University of South Carolina, who studies ash samples to better understand what materials are present and how they change in the wake of wildfires.

Scientists are still trying to understand exactly what those chemical changes do to human health, not just in California but in places such as Maui and other areas scarred by wildfire.

Maui residents were kept out of contaminated areas for nearly two months, but they still worry about long-term health impacts. In California, officials aren't letting residents return to many locations, likely for at least a week, while they restore utilities, conduct safety operations and search for people, according to Los Angeles County's recovery website.

Some chemicals are linked to cardiovascular disease and reduced lung function. Other adverse health effects might arise from inhaling more mobile and toxic forms of arsenic, chromium and benzene. Exposure to magnetite, which can form when fire burns iron, has been linked to Alzheimer's disease, for example.

"It really could take a long time to tease out all of the potential health effects of these particles" because of how many complex chemical reactions are going on and how many substances still remain to be studied, Baalousha said.

Researchers point to the variety of health problems potentially linked to dust from the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

"I always kind of reminded myself of all the people that ran into the World Trade Center on 9/11, and were really there for not that long of a period of time in terms of their total exposure," said Jackson Webster, who studies fire aftermath as a professor of civil engineering at California State University, Chico. "But there is increased cases of all kinds of different illness, sickness."

Baalousha added that scientists also worry about where all the waste will go. Some potentially hazardous materials could end up in drinking water or even flow into the ocean, adversely affecting marine life. That's something experts in Hawaii are studying after the deadly fire in Maui last year.

While researchers continue their work, people returning to their homes in California should put their safety first, he said.

"We know it's a lot of emotions and feelings going on that you can put down your guard, but you shouldn't do that," Baalousha said. "Just be safe. Be careful. Put all the gear you can — at least an N95 mask, gloves — and stay safe. Because you lost your property. But you don't want to damage also your health in the longer run."

By MELINA WALLING Associated Press. Associated Press reporter Alexa St. John contributed from Detroit.



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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.

SATURDAY | JANUARY 25

ARTISTS & FLEAS VENICE MARKETPLACE
11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Westminster Elementary School, 1010 Abbot Kinney, Los Angeles. Artists & Fleas in Venice is located in the vibrant, artistic heart of Venice at the corner of Abbot Kinney and Westminster Avenue in the outdoor lot of Westminster Avenue Elementary School. Join 50+ merchants for a fabulous lineup of art, design, food trucks and vintage.

SINGLES MIXER
5 - 6 p.m. LouLou Santa Monica, 395 Santa Monica Place, #300. Grab your wingman or wingwoman, or come solo, and join for a lively singles social hour in one of the most breathtaking venues in town. Things are kept fun, fast and packed with potential, making the most of the time together. Dress is stylist yet casual. Tickets $35, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-singles-mixer-views-vibes-happy-hour-ages-30s-40s-and-50s-tickets-1123745295429.

WINTER MUSIC CONCERT
6 p.m. The Eli and Edythe Broad Stage, 1310 11th St. Concert featuring the Windward Performing Arts Beginning Band, Intermediate Instrumental Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, American Music Ensemble and Advanced Jazz Ensemble. Metered street parking is readily available. Tickets $22, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/winter-music-concert-plugged-tickets-1081568684049.

FUTURE SOUNDS OF JAZZ
7:30 p.m. Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center, 1310 11th St. Continuing the Future Sounds of Jazz series curated by Stanley Clarke, BroadStage presents Marlon Martinez and Marlonius Jazz Orchestra, featuring Olivia Super Harris. General admission standing tickets $30, reserved table seat $100. To purchase, visit: https://broadstage.org/tickets-shows/calendar/marlon-martinez-and-marlonius-jazz-orchestra/.

SUNDAY | JANUARY 26

WELLNESS ROOFTOP EXPERIENCE
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. 1-Acre Ocean-View Rooftop, 500 Broadway. A dynamic and inclusive wellness charity experience connecting you with doctors, founders, military, athletes, creators, investors, philanthropists and charities. Profits go towards the LAFD Foundation. Tickets $99, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/poise-wellness-rooftop-ocean-view-experience-profits-to-lafd-foundation-tickets-1127257881669.

AN AFTERNOON WITH SENATOR RON WYDEN
3 - 4 p.m. The Ann and Jerry Moss Theater, New Roads School, Herb Albert Educational Village, 3131 Olympic Blvd. Ron Wyden, a Democratic Senator from Oregon, will be discussing his book "It Takes Chutzpah: How to Fight Fearlessly for Progressive Change." Tickets $25-$50, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/an-afternoon-with-senator-ron-wyden-tickets-1137179958869.

MONDAY | JANUARY 27

AIRPORT COMMISSION
7 p.m. City Council Chambers, Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main St. The Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council in matters pertaining to the administration of Santa Monica Municipal Airport and other aviation matters affecting the City.

TUESDAY | JANUARY 28

CITY COUNCIL
5:30 p.m. City Council Chambers, Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main St. The City Council is made up of seven members elected at-large for staggered four-year terms. Every two years, after each election, the City Council selects one of its members to serve as Mayor and another to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore. The City Council also sits as the following bodies for the City of Santa Monica: Housing Authority, Parking Authority, Public Financing, Redevelopment Successor Agency, Audit Subcommittee.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROCLAMATION
5:30 p.m. City Council Chambers, Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main St. Artist Lisa Diane Wedgeworth will present an original artwork proclamation in honor of Black History Month. Note that this ceremony takes place near the start of the Council session, after a public comment period, and so the start time will be sometime after 5:30 p.m.

MOVIE NIGHT AND Q&A WITH FILMMAKER
7 p.m. Shul on the Beach, 505 Ocean Front Walk, Venice. Join for a screening of "Talking to God," a comedic film about faith and finding happiness through life's challenges. Stick around after the movie for a Q&A with the filmmaker, Malta Batash. Bring your friends for a night of laughter and connection. Tickets $15, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/movie-night-talking-to-god-q-a-following-with-filmmaker-tickets-1135231621339?aff=oddtdtcreator.

AN EVENING WITH ERIC IDLE
8 - 9:15 p.m. Robert Frost Auditorium, 4401 Elenda St., Culver City. Comedy legend Eric Idle brings the fascinating inside story of bringing "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" to Broadway as the unlikely theatrical hit "Spamalot." Tickets plus signed copy of his book "The Spamalot Diaries" $50, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/eric-idle-with-alex-edelman-tickets-1012366634857.

WEDNESDAY | JANUARY 29

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CLUB
4:30 - 6 p.m. Youth Activity Room, Santa Monica Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. Join the adventure for one-shot sessions with characters you created or pick up a ready-made character for the day's journey. All materials provided. Ages 10 - 14.

THURSDAY | JANUARY 30

DOG MAN PARTY
4 - 5 p.m. Youth Activity Room, Santa Monica Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. Celebrate all things from Dav Pilkey's wildly popular series "Dog Man" with crafts, games and prizes. Make a visit to "Lil Petey's Robot Shop" and build your own cardboard robot buddy with recycled materials. For ages 5 - 11.

WOMEN IN TECH LA 2025
6 - 9 p.m. LouLou Santa Monica, 395 Santa Monica Pl. #300. LA's premier tech networking event with one of the largest membership groups in Southern California and growing every month. Don't miss this opportunity to meet your next big business connection. Tickets $20, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/women-in-tech-la-2025-tickets-1106531067209.

RENT CONTROL BOARD
7 p.m. City Council Chambers, Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main St.

FRIDAY | JANUARY 31

FRIENDS OF VENICE LIBRARY PILATES - CORE WORK
11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Venice Branch Library, 501 S. Venice Blvd. Develop strength, flexibility and valance through the fusion of Pilates mat movement. All levels welcome. Class starts on-time, no entry after the first 10 minutes.

SATURDAY | FEBRUARY 1

RECYCLING EVENT AT CITY YARDS
9 a.m. - 2 p.m. City Yards, 2500 Michigan Ave. The City of Santa Monica is hosting a free recycling event for Santa Monica residents only. Bring your used mattresses, box springs, electronic waste, and up to five boxes of paper for shredding. Shredding will happen on-site and the paper will be recycled. For any questions, call 866-311-7266.

LIBRARY LOVERS' MONTH
10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Pico Branch Library, 2201 Pico Blvd. Stop by a pop-up and write a love letter to the library and receive a special Library Lovers' Month token of appreciation, while supplies last.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH FILM SCREENING
2 - 4 p.m. MLK Jr. Auditorium, Santa Monica Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. Celebrate Black History Month with a screening of "Wade in the Water," a deep dive into the history of Black surfing. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion with film director David Mesfin, Black pro surfer Sharon Shaffer and more.

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6255

RENT

FROM PAGE 1

Santa Monica's year-over-year rent drop was tied for the highest on the list alongside Santa Ana. Santa Ana, Santa Monica, Lake Forest, Santa Clarita and the City of Los Angeles were the only places on the report to fall 1 percent or greater year-over-year.

Reasons for the national decrease in median rent, the Apartment List report states, include an uptrend in the supply side of the market, with 2024 seeing the most new apartment completions since the mid-1980s. Off-season cooldowns in the winter also were able to outweigh busy season price increases.

"This marks the second straight year of declining (national) rents, and the third consecutive winter in which seasonal discounts have been notably sharper than the pre-pandemic norm," the report stated. "As an influx of new supply has collided with softer demand over the past two and a half years, the national median rent has gradually dipped 4.8 percent below its mid-2022 peak."

For more information on the local and national reports, visit ApartmentList.com.

thomas@smdp.com

GUEST COMMENTARY

FROM PAGE 6

and doesn't demand verification of eligibility.

"There's only one reason that happens: they want to cheat," Trump said.

Newsom responded blandly in a post on X, saying the Los Angeles fire disaster "underscores the critical need for partnership, a shared commitment to facts and mutual respect — values that enable civil discourse, effective governance, and meaningful action."

Newsom said he looks forward to Trump's visit to the fire scene and added, "Where our shared principles are aligned, my administration stands ready to work with the Trump-Vance administration to deliver solutions and serve the nearly 40 million Californians we jointly represent."

Setting aside humanity, humility, charity, generosity, rationality, reality and other distractions, the Los Angeles fires add another element to what was already a fraught relationship between two egocentric political figures.

Had the fires not erupted just a few days before Trump took the oath, the two could have entertained political junkies for the next few years. Trump's assaults on California policies, such as its drive to eliminate gasoline-powered vehicles and the allocation of water, would have been met with lawsuits and political resistance, in a replay of Trump's first term.

However, California is now looking to Washington for billions of dollars to defray firefighting costs, rebuild infrastructure lost in the flames and help homeowners recover. Trump can either follow through on predecessor Joe Biden's pledges to help, or refuse the state's pleas.

Even if Trump agrees to provide relief, he's likely to demand at least some form of submission from Newsom, as he did during his first term when fire swept through Paradise in 2018. Figuratively, Newsom had to kiss Trump's ring to get aid. Congressional Republicans have already been pushing for conditions on recovery funding for California.

During his campaign last year, Trump threatened to withhold fire relief funds unless California provided more water to farmers.

Trump might demand even more tangible tribute, such as not opposing arrests and deportations of undocumented immigrants, one of his most contentious promises and one that especially affects California.

Politically, Trump doesn't owe deeply blue California anything. Making California politicians eat crow would probably win applause from his supporters in other states, who see California as a cesspool of loony-left politics, squalor and crime.

Essentially, Newsom must choose between being the governor of California who does whatever is necessary to get the disaster relief his constituents are demanding, and a potential presidential candidate who resists Trump on every point and at any cost.

It will be very difficult for him to have it both ways.

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

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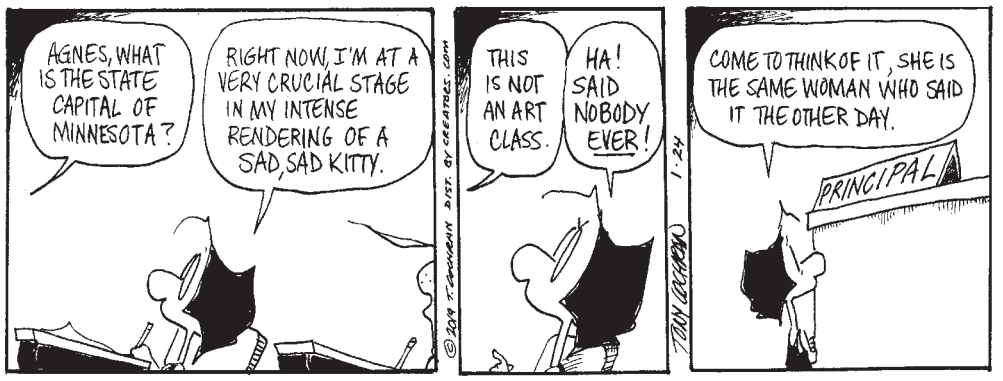
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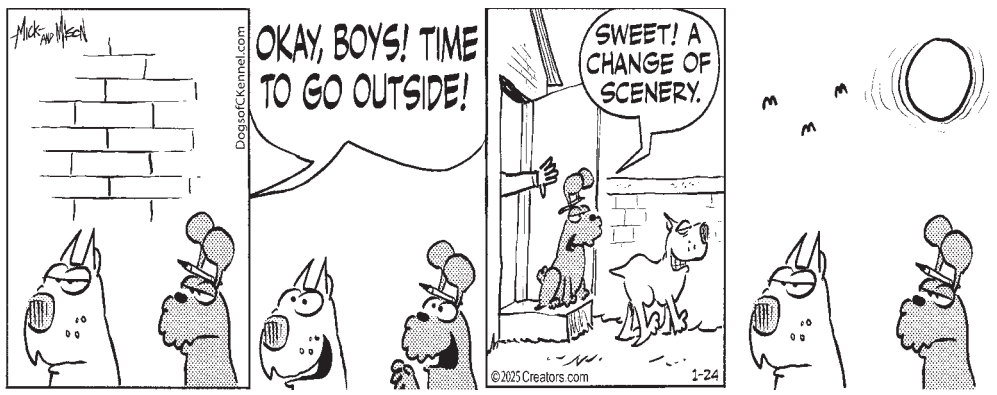
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



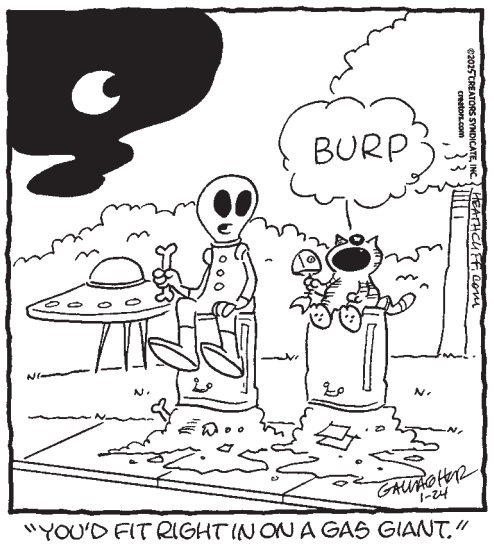
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

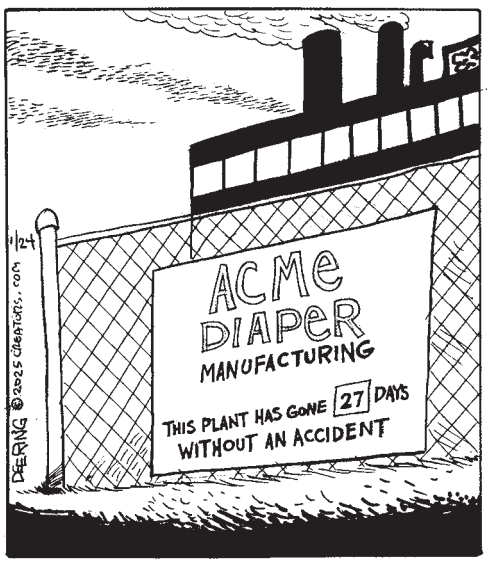
By PETER GALLAGHER



"YOU'D FIT RIGHT IN ON A GAS GIANT."

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 23 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle. © australianwordgames.com 6465

Fridge goodies

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

Apple	Diet	Meat	Sauces
Beef	Duck	Milk	Sheep
Brawn	Edam	Mince	Soda
Brie	Eggs	Oils	Soup
Buns	Fish	Pastie	Squeak
Cake	Fruit	Peas	Stew
Capers	Fudge	Protein	Trifle
Cherry pie	Goats	Quark	Tuna
Coke	Item	Ricotta	Use-by
Cream	Jam	Rolls	-date
Curds	Juice	Rump	Wine
Cutlets	Lard	Sago	Wrap
Devon	Lemonade	Salad	

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.
Time for some fun

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 24)

You're moved to create, share, support and connect - a sequence that brings magnificent joy. You'll master time management, a skill that crosses all borders. More highlights: A focus on fitness and feeling happy will attract like-partners. You'll love what the season change does to your professional sector, though it takes getting used to as well. Taurus and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 15, 2, 31 and 3.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll take a moment to prioritize. Careful choices now will make life easier and more enjoyable. Some problems unlock solutions to many others. When you focus on the right task, everything flows smoothly.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). People turn to you for wisdom without expecting you to have all the answers. What they value most is your belief in them and the way you inspire their confidence. Remember, the support you give is just as vital to offer yourself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Everything unfolds in its time. Even when progress isn't visible, it's happening. Trust that what you long for is taking shape, as naturally and inevitably as the changing seasons.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Your resilience shines. You bounce back so beautifully. Even after challenging moments, you pivot toward hope, health and creativity. That's a testament to your inner strength and resourcefulness.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Creative momentum is on your side. Your vision is incredibly vibrant. You're not just dreaming; you're taking steps, even amid life's complications. The weekend will offer fresh opportunities.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). However you feel, it's OK. You'll be true to yourself, own your decisions and fight for what you want, not through entitlement but through sincerity. When you get tired, one small action will be all it takes to reclaim your energy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The obstacles are the path. There's nothing to avoid here, only new surfaces to navigate. If there wasn't something glorious about the climb, mountain climbers wouldn't exist. Your refusal to attach to negativity keeps you buoyant and effective.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You know your own shadow very well, though sometimes its various distortions still surprise you. There's a gem of knowledge to be learned in the spirit of radical self-acceptance. Honest curiosity will give you the world.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Today celebrates individuality and unconventional approaches. Someone's over-the-top style will be inspiration for creativity, self-expression and being unapologetically yourself.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It's time to let go of a strong attachment, or at least let it change into something that fits your life better, resonating with where you want to be emotionally these days.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your network has values you will utilize in the weeks to come. Names can be a kind of magic key. They'll use yours, you'll use theirs... and when certain words chine, your name is the first to come to mind.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Some have a deep compassion for humanity but a lack of interpersonal empathy. You may come up against this fascinating and complicated paradox. The important concept here is: the neutrality of information.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

Sudoku

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

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

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

Newsday Crossword

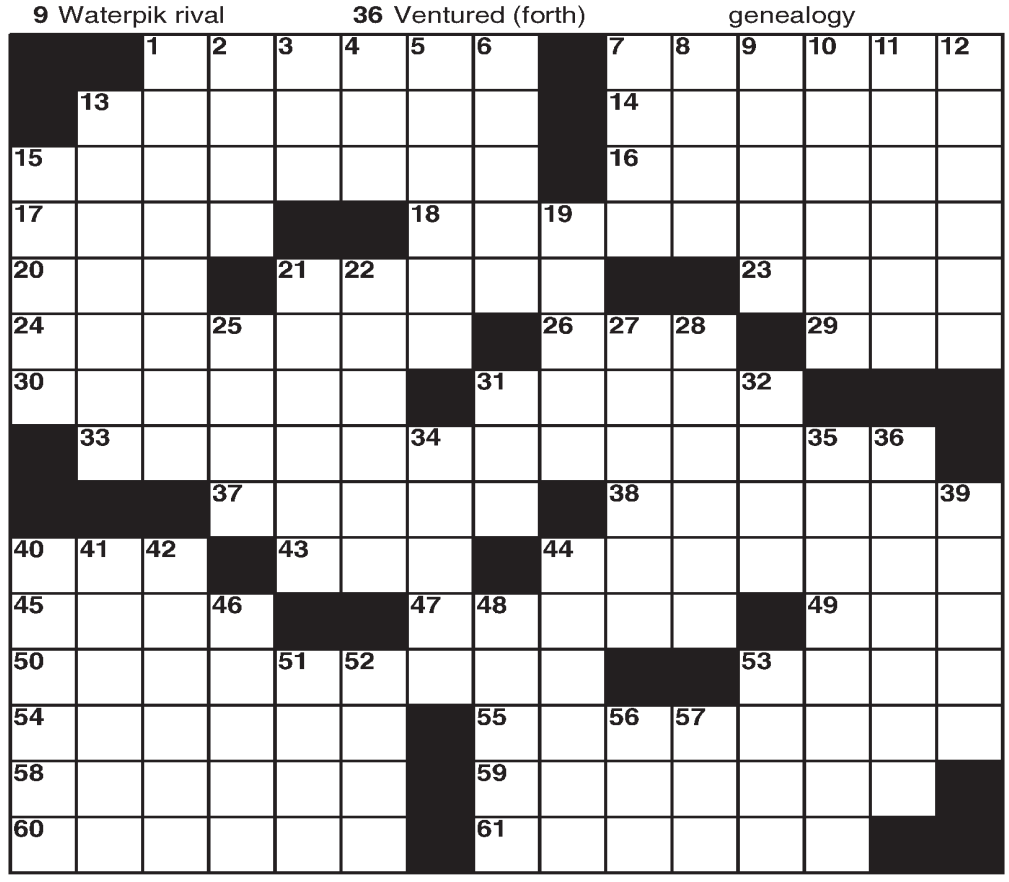
PROHIBITION by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 Neptune, e.g.
7 Noses around sties
13 What could include a port listing
14 Pest in a nest
15 Kids' slide, at times
16 Gamer's guise
17 *Hamilton* duo
18 India's "Silicon Valley"
20 Calypso kin
21 Porcupine quill
23 Botched
24 '50s tennis great Tony
26 Milieu of Mars
29 Canine cleaner, for short
30 Maria Shriver's mom
31 There's no bones about it
33 Not very big boxers
37 Hit the ceiling
38 Pointillism pioneer
40 29-Across nickname
43 Spin-rate no.
44 Rockefeller successor in '77
45 Specialty
47 Pulling no punches
49 Land in *la mer*
50 Ratlike marsupial
53 Negligible
54 Parliament Hill locale
55 Wailing spirits
58 Didn't mean to leave behind
59 Supporting a plan
60 "Stop right there!"
61 Will not be changed

DOWN

1 It's east of Long Beach
2 Largest dwarf planet
3 Early times
4 Appreciate
5 In the slightest
6 Panamanian champ appearing in *Rocky II*
7 Layered cut
8 Stellar phenomenon
9 Waterpik rival
10 Incalculable
11 Cried some
12 Spreads around
13 Tension-relieving treatment
15 Scold severely
19 Fresh face
21 Urban zone
22 Sound signal booster
25 Google alternative
27 Novelist Lurie
28 Royal proxy
31 Email button
32 Fall heavily
34 Salsa music
35 Theater teasers
36 Ventured (forth)
39 Is overflowing
40 Remove with light strokes
41 Loud speaker
42 54-Across' City __ mall
44 Sci-fi oddity
46 Wise words
48 Mexican wolves
51 Apple co-founder's autobio
52 Elf leader Galadriel in Tolkien adaptations
53 Caviar source
56 ESPN media partner
57 Certain issue, in genealogy



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01/24/25

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SMC

FROM PAGE 2

"We do it every week, all the time, (so we thought) why don't we just do it for our entire community, regardless of what (or) how need is defined," Moore added. "It's for fire victims, it's for family members, it's for that next concentric circle of people who may have lost jobs because they've (lost) their offices."

With over 100 SMC students and dozens of staff members reporting displacement from the fires, the SMC Foundation will be issuing emergency grants, with over $154,000 raised so far via the Santa Monica Community College Disaster Support Fund. SMC also received a $250,000 gift from The Ballmer Group to this end, and will begin issuing grants next week.

For students and staff in immediate need of supplies, The SMC Foundation drive will have special "preview hours" before the distribution drive opens to the public each day.

"It's just the definition of what community means ... everyone has hitched their wagon to ours because we know how to do this, we know how to be that centerpiece, that location where everybody knows where we're located, we know how to (support) people in need with dignity and care," Moore said of the support.

The main campus' Fire Disaster Support Distribution event began Wednesday, and will continue on Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Fire Disaster Support Distribution event will also have mobile van service present from Providence St. John's Health Center, and will have hot meals available to all attendees and volunteers from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily via World Central Kitchen.

To volunteer for the distribution event, visit foundation.smc.org/disaster-support.

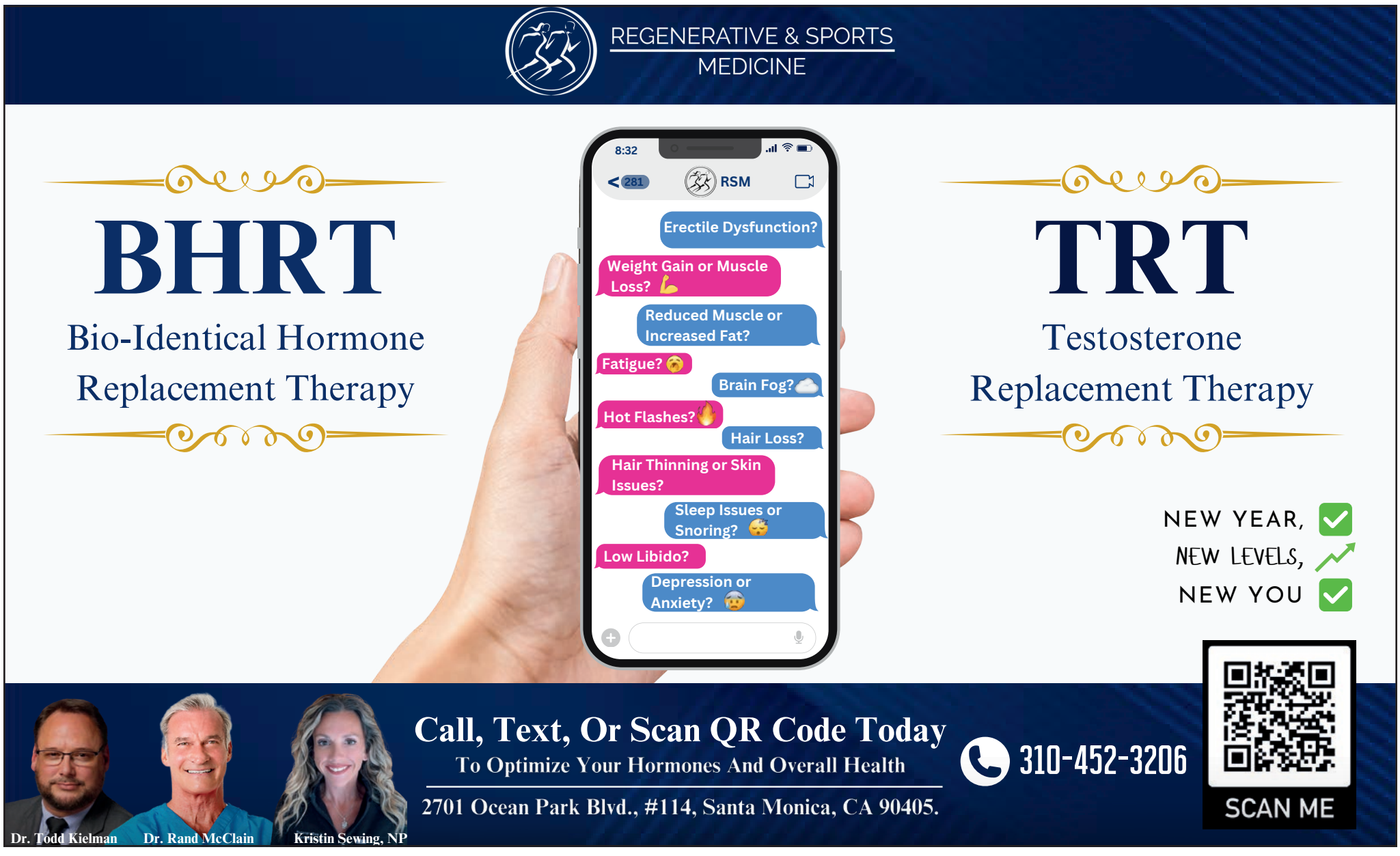
> It's just the definition of what community means ... everyone has hitched their wagon to ours because we know how to do this, we know how to be that centerpiece, that location where everybody knows where we're located, we know how to (support) people in need with dignity and care
>
> - Dr. Lizzy Moore, SMC Foundation President and Dean of Institutional Advancement

thomas@smdp.com



Courtesy Photo

SMC: State Senator Ben Allen recently joined the volunteer efforts at Santa Monica College.



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