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Santa Monica landlords accused of price gouging

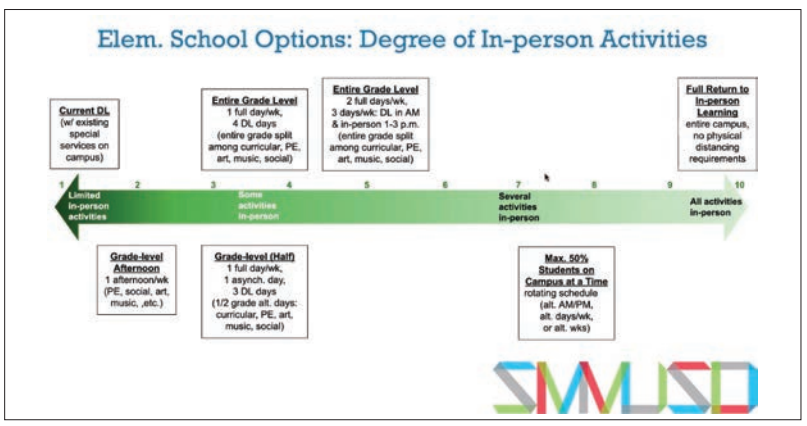
BRENNON DIXSON
SMDP Staff Writer

The Santa Monica City Attorney's Office has filed a criminal complaint against local landlords accused of unlawfully raising a tenant's rent by more than is allowed during the pandemic.

The criminal complaint levies three counts of price gouging against the owners of the local multi-unit apartment building located at 1433 Euclid Street in Santa Monica, City officials said in a news release Friday. "The landlords WS Communities, LLC and 1433 Euclid Street, LLC, are charged with unlawfully raising a tenant's rent by more than the allowed 10 percent during a declared

SEE **LANDLORDS** PAGE 11

SMMUSD will open to the "fullest extent possible" under pending union agreements



Courtesy image

REOPENING: The District is working on a deal to reopen schools.

CLARA HARTER
SMDP Staff Writer

As L.A. County approaches the new case count threshold for elementary school reopening, SMMUSD is working with the Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association and SEIU to reach an updated agreement for in-person programming.

Under new regulations from Governor Newsom, schools can reopen TK through Grade 5 when

SEE **SMMUSD** PAGE 3

Venice Art's Pathways Pilot breaks barriers to the entertainment industry



Credit: Venice Arts

ART: Past career development opportunities run by Venice Arts gave helped local students.

CLARA HARTER
SMDP Staff Writer

The entertainment industry is notoriously difficult to break into, especially for low-income young adults. A new training program run by Venice Arts plans on changing that.

The Film & Digital Media Career Pathways Program launches on Feb. 17 and strives to build equity in LA's biggest industry by dismantling the many barriers to entry for marginalized young people.

This first-of-its-kind pilot program provides skills training, hands-on projects, and internship placements to equip students with the confidence, experience, and connections necessary to find stable work in creative sectors.

"In addition to the systemic issues faced by women of all colors and people of color, there's no real meaningful pipeline that helps to develop and support young talent and gives them a job they can move into," said Venice Arts Executive Director, Lynn Warshafsky. "We'd like to see, as an outcome of this project, an easier pipeline for young people to enter early career roles."

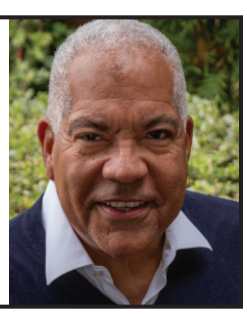
Funding is provided by Los Angeles County's Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services and enrollment is open to County residents ages 16 to 25 with priority given to individuals who are foster youth, out of work and not in school, homeless, and/or justice involved.

"We're bringing all of our expertise in creative development and media arts education and working with the County to build and scale a model that will reach young people throughout the five districts of the County and foster relationships with industry partners that will really make a difference in young people's lives," said Warshafsky.

The 100 hour program has four levels to help students build up a robust and competitive job ready skill-set.

'Level 1: Expose', provides education about career pathways in

SEE **ENTERTAINMENT** PAGE 11


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Pentagon deploys troops to fuel COVID-19 vaccine drive

LOLITA C. BALDOR AND RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR
Associated Press

The Pentagon will deploy more than 1,100 troops to five vaccination centers in what will be the first wave of increased military support for the White House campaign to get more Americans inoculated against COVID-19.

President Joe Biden has called for setting up 100 mass vaccination centers around the country within a month. Two of the five new military teams will go to vaccination centers opening in California. Coronavirus senior adviser Andy Slavitt said military personnel will arrive at those locations in a little over a week. Three additional centers are expected to be announced soon.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has asked the Pentagon to supply as many as 10,000 service members to staff 100 centers. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin approved the initial five teams, but the others will be approved in separate tranches as FEMA identifies the other site locations.

The military deployment comes as the nation is in a race against a virus that is spawning mutations which may make it spread more easily and inflict deadlier disease.

Only about 2% of Americans have received the required two-dose vaccination regimen that confers optimum protection with the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines currently available. To reach widespread, or "herd" immunity, the U.S. must vaccinate 70% to 85% of its population, according to Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert.

That would be roughly 230 million to 280 million people, compared to 6.9 million who are currently fully immunized with two shots.

More help could be on the way soon. Johnson & Johnson announced this week it is seeking emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration for its vaccine, which requires only one shot.

Each of the Pentagon's five military teams includes 222 personnel, including 80 who will give the vaccines, as well as nurses and other support staff. The teams would be able to provide about 6,000 shots a day.

The five teams represent a growing use of the active duty military to a vaccination campaign that already involves nearly 100 National Guard teams in 29 states across the country. National Guard leaders told The Associated Press that they are now considering training additional Guard members to give shots, so that they can also expand vaccinations in more remote and rural portions of their states.

Gen. Dan Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, said the Guard has the ability to field about 200 additional teams. Training other medical personnel to give the vaccination shots, he said, would potentially provide more.

"If we reach the point where we've fully implemented all of our folks who can (give shots), then they're looking at potential training opportunities if we're going to need more than that," said Hokanson. "We're going to do everything to make a difference and meet whatever that need is."

The Pentagon has said that the FEMA teams could be a mix of active duty, National Guard and Reserves. But Hokanson and Maj. Gen. Jerry Fenwick, director of the Guard's Office of the Joint Surgeon, said that at this point, the FEMA teams are more likely going to be filled largely by active duty troops. The Guard, they said, will probably be tapped by their governors for use in their own states. are more likely to be used in remote, rural locations.

Guard leaders said the close to 100 mobile vaccination teams already active are delivering more than 50,000 shots a day.

"As more vaccines come on line, there's surely going to be more demand for vaccinators," said Fenwick.

Pentagon officials have made it clear that they are being careful about tapping National Guard and Reserves, because in many cases those service members are already working in medical jobs in their civilian lives at local hospitals and medical centers. Hokanson noted that while the Guard could staff as many as 600 vaccine teams, he has to cut that number about in half because of those types of civilian job restrictions.

He said that so far Guard members are only operating in their own states, but could go to neighboring states if needed in the future, as long as they have enough teams.

Biden has compared the campaign against COVID-19 to a war. Alongside the troop deployment, he also invoked a Cold War-era law called the Defense Production Act to help bolster manufacturing of vaccines, at-home COVID-19 testing kits and nitrile gloves used by health care workers and vaccinators. Referred to as the DPA, the law in essence allows the government to assign missions to private companies during national emergencies.

Tim Manning, the White House's COVID-19 supply coordinator, said Friday the administration was looking to help drugmaker Pfizer clear a bottleneck around fill-and-finish capabilities with vaccine production by giving the drugmaker first priority to access needed supplies.

Manning said also said the government is investing in six manufacturers to develop at-home and point-of-care COVID-19 tests, with the goal of producing 60 million tests by the end of the summer. Earlier in the week, the White House announced a $230 million contract with Ellume, manufacturer of an at-home test approved by the Food and Drug Administration. No prescription is required for the over-the-counter test.

"The country is well behind where we need to be in testing," said Manning. Due to contract issues, he said he could not yet reveal the names of the companies.

Another round of contracts will build capacity to produce surgical gloves in the U.S., including processing the raw materials for the gloves. There were widespread shortages at the start of the pandemic last year.

Manning said the goal is to produce more than 1 billion nitrile gloves domestically by the end of this year.

Tax forms help reveal extent of unemployment fraud in US

ADAM BEAM
Associated Press

Unemployment agencies across the country became lucrative targets for criminals when they were bombarded with claims last year as millions lost jobs due to coronavirus shutdowns.

Now, simple tax forms being sent to people who never collected unemployment benefits are revealing their identity was likely stolen months ago and used to claim bogus benefits that have totaled billions of dollars across the country.

In California alone, state officials say the fraud totaled at least $11 billion and likely much more.

Unemployment benefits are taxable, so government agencies send a 1099-G form to people who received them so they can report the income on their tax returns. States are mailing 1099-Gs in huge numbers this year after processing and paying a record number of claims.

In Ohio, Bernie Irwin was shocked two weeks ago when she opened the mail and found a 1099-G form saying her husband had claimed $17,292 in unemployment benefits last year. The only problem: Jim Irwin, 83, hadn't worked in 13 years.

Bernie Irwin, 86, had trouble reaching state authorities but was finally able to lodge a complaint. Her daughter-in-law and a friend also received the tax forms, as did Republican Gov. Mike DeWine, his wife, Fran, and Republican Lt. Gov. Jon Husted, even though none of them had claimed unemployment benefits.

Irwin said what bothered her the most was "the action that is taken against you without you being aware."

Nearly 26 million people requested unemployment aid in the initial months after states began ordering shutdowns . The unprecedented surge strained state unemployment offices that are governed by federal rules but administered in patchwork fashion by state governments, with many relying on 1960s-era software to process applications and issue payments.

The federal government, as part of its $2 trillion relief package approved in March, significantly expanded jobless aid, making it a richer target for fraud. By November, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General estimated states across the country had paid as much as $36 billion in improper benefits, with a significant portion obtained through fraud. In California, the state sent at least $810 million in fraudulent payments to prison inmates.

Now, overwhelmed unemployment agencies could face another onslaught — this time from people requesting corrected tax forms.

"It does open a can of worms," said Rob Seltzer, a certified public accountant in Los Angeles and a member of the California Society of CPAs. "It really depends upon how fast the (state) is able to send out a corrected form."

Ohio has set up a telephone hotline and created a website allowing residents to report identity theft. Once the state confirms fraud has been committed, taxpayers will receive a corrected 1099-G form. In the past two weeks, 62,000 people had filed a report, according to spokesman Thomas Betti.

"It's really easy for somebody to be like, 'This isn't my problem. They sent me the form, I've never been to Ohio.' Still, you need to take care of this," Betti said. "Every unemployment system in the country is dealing with this massive amount of fraud."

Last month, the IRS said it is likely that many victims won't be able to get a corrected tax form in time to file their federal taxes. In those instances, the IRS says taxpayers should ignore the 1099-G and file their taxes without reporting the fraudulent income.

Christina Elliott, owner of BEM Financial Services, worries that process could delay tax refunds for people who are counting on them to make it through the pandemic. She has two clients — one in California and one in Georgia — who say they received incorrect forms showing they received as much as $27,000 in unemployment benefits last year.

"They are literally going to have to investigate each one," Elliot said about the IRS. "These people already had their identity stolen that they didn't know about, here lies another problem where they will be waiting months just to get their (tax refunds) that are owed to them."

The problem could be most acute in California, where officials mailed close to 8 million tax forms last month — more than five times the number they send in a normal year. The state Employment Development Department said it has updated its website and hired another 300 agents for its call center, training them on how to handle questions about the 1099-G forms.

Rooting out fraud and identity theft has been an ongoing struggle for the agency. A state audit released last week showed that from April to October, it responded to less than 2% of fraud reports. By November, it had a backlog of more than 77,000 such reports.

That likely included a report by Greg Musson, who owns a business near Fresno. State officials contacted his company in September to let him know one of his employees had filed for unemployment benefits in March. Musson was surprised to learn that person was him. He put a freeze on his credit and filed a fraud report with the state unemployment department, but so far hasn't heard anything back.

"To know that somebody has my information and has been able to get really pretty personal with it, it's like your home being broken into," he said.

Carol Williams, chief deputy director of operations for the California Employment Development Department, said people who get incorrect tax forms should fill out a worksheet on the department website that will allow officials to determine if a fraudulent claim has been filed.

But state lawmakers worry the agency might not be able to handle the workload. Republican state Sen. Scott Wilk said one of his constituents was "dumbfounded" to get a notice that he owed taxes on $11,000 in unemployment benefits.

"In a time when we really need people to have confidence in their government, going through this pandemic and rolling out the vaccine, the last thing we need to do is additionally shatter their confidence in our ability to be competent," Wilk said.

Associated Press reporters John Hanna in Topeka, Kansas; Andrew Welsh-Huggins in Columbus, Ohio; and Christopher Rugaber in Washington contributed reporting.

DAILY POLICE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 220 CALLS ON FEBRUARY 4

Family Disturbance 1400blk Franklin St 12:03 a.m.
72 Hour Psychiatric Hold 300blk Bay St 3:41 a.m.
Vehicle Parked In Alley 900blk 4th St 6:37 a.m.
Grand Theft Auto 1400blk 16th St 7:08 a.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 800blk 3rd St 7:28 a.m.
Auto Burglary 200blk San Vicente Blvd 7:48 a.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 1200blk 22nd St 8:10 a.m.
Vehicle Parked In Alley 1300blk 9th St 8:14 a.m.
Battery 500blk 22nd St 8:49 a.m.
Auto Burglary 200blk San Vicente Blvd 8:49 a.m.
Threats /Investigations 1700blk Berkeley St 8:52 a.m.
Auto Burglary 700blk Idaho Ave 9:05 a.m.
Grand Theft Auto 1400blk 7th St 9:14 a.m.
Violation Of Posted Sign 7th St / Michigan Ave 9:24 a.m.
Found Property 900blk Palisades Park 9:39 a.m.
Grand Theft Auto 2800blk Neilson Way 9:40 a.m.
Vehicle Parked In Alley 800blk 2nd St 10:19 a.m.
Harassing Phone Calls 900blk Lincoln Blvd 10:31 a.m.
Trash Dumping 2000blk Cloverfield Blvd 10:32 a.m.
Vehicle Blocking Driveway 1400blk 6th St 10:49 a.m.
Violation Of Restraining Order 5th St / Colorado Ave 10:54 a.m.
Vehicle Parked In Alley 1800blk 14th St 10:58 a.m.
Indecent Exposure Now 800blk Euclid St 11:02 a.m.
Out Of Order Traffic Signals 20th St / Interstate 10 11:23 a.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 800blk Bay St 11:45 a.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 900blk 14th St 11:47 a.m.
Traffic Collision With Injuries 2000blk Broadway 11:54 a.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 1400blk 4th St 12:21 p.m.
Person With A Gun Lincoln Blvd / California Ave 12:22 p.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 1000blk 6th St 12:36 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 21st St / Georgina Ave 12:50 p.m.
Vehicle Parked In Alley 1600blk Ocean Park Blvd 1:08 p.m.
Auto Burglary 1900blk California Ave 1:21 p.m.
Encampment 2400blk Broadway 1:25 p.m.
Found Property 3200blk Airport Ave 1:29 p.m.
Assault W/Deadly Weapon 2000blk Lincoln Blvd 1:35 p.m.
Indecent Exposure Lincoln Blvd / Santa Monica Blvd 1:37 p.m.
Auto Burglary 900blk 10th St 1:40 p.m.
Auto Burglary 1800blk Ocean Ave 1:42 p.m.
Indecent Exposure Now 25th St / Santa Monica Blvd 2:00 p.m.
Indecent Exposure Now 2400blk Santa Monica Blvd 2:00 p.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 2100blk Alta Ave 2:11 p.m.
Panhandling 1500blk Broadway 2:15 p.m.
Exhibition Of Speed 2000blk Ocean Ave 2:20 p.m.
Exhibition Of Speed 2300blk Ocean Front Walk 2:21 p.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 1800blk Euclid St 2:34 p.m.
Grand Theft 800blk 4th St 2:40 p.m.
Bike Theft 800blk Idaho Ave 2:52 p.m.
Vehicle Blocking Driveway 1900blk Santa Monica Blvd 2:53 p.m.
Exhibition Of Speed 2000blk Ocean Ave 2:53 p.m.
Auto Burglary 1500blk 6th St 2:55 p.m.
Petty Theft Now 300blk Pico Blvd 3:04 p.m.
Grand Theft 2300blk 16th St 3:17 p.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 2900blk 3rd St 3:27 p.m.
Bomb Threat 3200blk Wilshire Blvd 3:44 p.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 1100blk 11th St 3:49 p.m.
Grand Theft 1300blk Centinela Ave 3:49 p.m.
Domestic Violence 2300blk 32nd St 4:12 p.m.
Burglary 2000blk Wilshire Blvd 4:20 p.m.
Petty Theft 1500blk 7th St 4:29 p.m.
Fraud 1500blk Franklin St 4:41 p.m.
Battery 2700blk Santa Monica Blvd 4:52 p.m.
Family Disturbance 1500blk Pacific Coast Hwy 5:02 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 17th St / Ocean Park Blvd 5:34 p.m.
Grand Theft Santa Monica Area 6:15 p.m.
Bike Theft 300blk Olympic Dr 6:32 p.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 800blk Bay St 6:41 p.m.
72 Hour Psychiatric Hold 2nd St / Ashland Ave 7:34 p.m.
Auto Burglary 2200blk Ocean Ave 7:50 p.m.
Threats /Investigations 1100blk Lincoln Blvd 7:52 p.m.
Attempt Armed Robbery 1800blk Lincoln Blvd 8:16 p.m.
Assault W/Deadly Weapon 1600blk Cloverfield Blvd 8:30 p.m.
Oversize Vehicle Violation 1000blk 6th St 9:19 p.m.
Party Complaint 1700blk Michigan Ave 9:23 p.m.
Indecent Exposure 1700blk Ocean Ave 9:43 p.m.
Public Intoxication 1200blk Montana Ave 10:52 p.m.
Assault W/Deadly Weapon 4th St / Idaho Ave 11:42 p.m.

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DAILY FIRE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 35 CALLS ON FEBRUARY 4

EMS 2600blk 29th St 12:04 a.m.
EMS 2200blk 27th St 2:49 a.m.
EMS 1400blk Ocean Ave 5:39 a.m.
EMS 1300blk 17th St 6:13 a.m.
EMS 2000blk Santa Monica Blvd 9:07 a.m.
Automatic Alarm 200blk Ocean Ave 9:38 a.m.
EMS 1100blk 3rd St 10:29 a.m.
EMS 2800blk 6th St 10:42 a.m.
EMS Ocean Ave / California Ave 11:06 a.m.
EMS 2500blk Main St 11:35 a.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury 2000blk Broadway 11:54 a.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury 2000blk Broadway 12:14 p.m.
Automatic Alarm 1400blk Ocean Ave 12:21 p.m.
EMS 2600blk Kansas Ave 1:00 p.m.
EMS 600blk Wilshire Blvd 1:32 p.m.
EMS 2500blk Santa Monica Blvd 2:07 p.m.
EMS 1200blk 3rd Street Prom 2:19 p.m.
Automatic Alarm 1500blk 14th St 2:26 p.m.
Automatic Alarm 900blk 12th St 2:30 p.m.
Automatic Alarm 200blk San Vicente Blvd 2:40 p.m.
Flooded Condition 1600blk 11th St 2:45 p.m.
EMS 1700blk Cloverfield Blvd 2:56 p.m.
Hoover Assignment 3200blk Wilshire Blvd 3:48 p.m.
EMS 2700blk Neilson Way 4:29 p.m.
EMS 2200blk Colorado Ave 4:51 p.m.
EMS 2300blk Hill St 5:07 p.m.
EMS 500blk Colorado Ave 5:19 p.m.
EMS 2800blk Kansas Ave 5:48 p.m.
Automatic Alarm 400blk California Ave 6:02 p.m.
Automatic Alarm 700blk California Ave 6:05 p.m.
EMS 1800blk Ocean Ave 6:31 p.m.
EMS 5th St / Arizona Ave 6:45 p.m.
EMS 2500blk Pico Blvd 8:16 p.m.
Automatic Alarm 800blk Broadway 9:46 p.m.
EMS 2100blk Hill St 10:57 p.m.

SMMUSD

FROM PAGE 1

County case counts reach 25 per 100,000 residents — with or without a teachers union agreement.

L.A. County is on track to pass this threshold in the coming weeks, however Superintendent Ben Drati does not currently intend to reopen for live instruction without agreements in place. The district currently offers some in-person services to special education, English learners and other groups.

"I don't want to have to do what Chicago did. That is no good for anyone," said Drati. Chicago Public Schools cancelled their reopening plan on Jan. 26 because their teachers union refused to send its members to work and the two parties are currently engaged in an acrimonious dispute.

Instead Drati is working closely with school administrators, teachers, and parents to develop site specific plans in the next two weeks for as much in-person programming as can be agreed upon within the 'Distance Learning Plus' framework.

In the immediate future this will include various levels of distance learning plus activities and instruction. All instructional blocks will remain online, but students may come on campus up to three times a week for extracurricular activities, social-emotional support, PE, and arts programming.

"The principals are working feverishly with their school site communities to develop these plans," said Drati. "Some schools will have activities or instruction one or more days per week. Smaller schools are more nimble, meaning they can rotate students faster, whereas the schools with higher enrollment have more of a challenge."

Drati is also developing a partnership with Saint John's Hospital for staff vaccination clinics as soon as they become eligible. L.A. County Department of Public Health predicts that this will begin in February and all teachers and staff will be offered at least one dose by the end of March.

"Teachers are looking out not only for the health of our members, but for that of our students and community. We know how hard this is for everyone, but the health and safety of every person that walks onto a campus should be our number one priority," said SMMCTA President Sarah Braff. "Getting the vaccine into our teachers and staff would make efforts to return possible, by giving staff the opportunity to review the safety plans and procedures."

Once teachers and staff are vaccinated, SMMUSD intends to scale up distance learning plus to include additional in-person instruction and activities following all safety protocols. For grades 6 through 12 this requires the County reach a case count of seven or less per 100,000 residents.

For some parents this is not soon enough. A coalition of community members have launched Open Up SMM Schools — a campaign calling on the District to reopen as much as they are allowed to in accordance with scientific advice.

"Our community — teachers and administrators as well as parents and families — is growing increasingly bewildered at the reluctance of our district leaders to formulate a reopening plan in accordance with clear scientific advice and the urgent needs of our students," said Harriet Fraser, parent and doctor, and one of four coalition co-founders. "We need a unified voice pushing for science and reason to win out over fear and division."

The District is well aware of the campaign and Drati meets regularly with the parent leaders and other concerned community members.

Drati also meets frequently with the Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association and SEIU and is working to develop an updated reopening agreement within the next two weeks.

"I have the vantage point of being in a room with teachers who are fearful. I also have a vantage point of being with parents who are fearful," said Drati "We understand and are listening to all stakeholders and I hope that for our humanity we can find a way to move forward and I am confident that distance learning plus with the flexibility to ramp up is the way."

Clara@smdp.com



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Your column here

By Gail Pinsker on behalf of SMMUSD

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District generally chooses not to argue with citizens in the press or social media. However, the current misinformation campaign requires clarification. Astoundingly, the "Your Column Here" opinion piece, published on February 2, 2021 by SMDP with the statement "SMMUSD is Burning Through Our Bond Money. Again." introduces misleading and untrue statements before the first sentence is over. Opinions can differ but in order for our discourse to be of value, those opinions must be grounded in facts.

Fact: The district does have enough money to complete the projects promised in its bond campaigns. It is accurate to state that the district's overall facility needs exceed available funding, which is the case for virtually every school district in the state. The author, after becoming engaged in this topic in October during her failed campaign for a seat on the SMMUSD school board, inaccurately claims that the five-year old Samohi Campus Plan is wasteful because it does not keep the History Building, which is slated for demolition. The History Building has been conclusively determined not to constitute a historical resource, yet the author and a small band of people who oppose the district at every turn, continue to clamor for "adaptive reuse" of the building ignoring the needs of students.

Fact: Elementary and middle school campuses are not in a state of disrepair. As evidenced by the recent assessments and community campus planning process, elementary and middle schools do need improvements and better learning facilities, as does Samohi. Proclaiming that they are, or will remain, in disrepair is disingenuous, at the very least. Since 2015, the district has completed or is in the process of modernizing all campuses. Technology upgrades have been completed at every district campus, along with installation of a new IT "backbone" to support today's technology needs.

Fact: Modernization projects (called colloquially "Window, Paint, Floor, and Door") have been completed at Franklin, Grant, Juan Cabrillo (now part of Malibu High), Malibu Elementary (formerly Point Dume), McKinley, Roosevelt, Webster, and Will Rogers Elementary Schools, as well as at the Michelle and Barack Obama Center for Inquiry and Excellence (formerly Olympic High School). The final campus in this modernization process, Muir/SMASH, will begin this summer. In addition, new air conditioning has been installed at Franklin, Malibu Elementary, McKinley, Webster, John Adams Middle School, and the Obama Center. Air conditioning, is scheduled to be installed at Grant, Muir/SMASH, Rogers, Roosevelt, and Lincoln Middle School beginning this summer.

Contrary to the author's unsubstantiated accusations, SMMUSD does not have a track record of financial mismanagement. The opposite is true, as evidenced by years of positive audit results. The Bond Oversight Committee meets regularly.

In discussing the John Adams Middle School Performing Arts Complex, the columnist demonstrates a genuine lack of understanding by conflating the construction cost estimate of a smaller, theoretical, theater-only construction project to the total project cost of a larger project. The total project cost includes far more than just the cost of actual construction, such as design, permitting fees, geotechnical studies, hazardous materials investigations, inspection, construction management and new furniture, fixtures, and equipment.

The Innovation Building at Samohi that the columnist refers to as "now up to $93 million" was actually completed and occupied in August 2015. Incidentally, if anyone is interested in hearing from then-current students about how dramatically this building improved their Samohi experience, we suggest you check out the presentation and public comments from the January 21, 2021 school board meeting.

With respect to the Innovation Building, the columnist again, perhaps intentionally, conflates the construction cost with the total project cost. Obviously, there are project costs that go beyond the cost of actual construction, as described above. Facts: The original budget for the Innovation project was $84.7 million. There were some challenges, not unprecedented on a project of this magnitude, and the total project cost ended up at $93.2 million, an increase of $8.5 million, or 10%, not 69%. The original construction contract was $55 million, which is likely where the author got her ill-informed interpretation of the budget.

As is typical during most construction projects, there were change orders during construction. In addition, due to certain conflicts, there was a significant claim by the original contractor and its subcontractors, which the district settled in mediation. The final construction contract amount, including change orders and settlements, was $55,038,740. This is a net change to the contract of 0.07%.

The district began development of a master plan some 15 years ago, which was never finalized. Prior to completing that process, it was determined at that time the highest needs for Measure BB funding were a new campus for Edison Language Academy, which serves a high need sector of students in the district through its Spanish language dual-immersion program, and the Innovation Building at Samohi, which replaced the outdated and dilapidated science and technology buildings.

The author again erroneously claims that the district has some unspecified list of "promised" projects that it cannot afford to complete, which is ironic since she has now closely aligned herself with a group of perpetual district opponents who complained loudly during the last bond campaign that the district didn't even have a list of projects that it planned to complete. It's hard to square these two concepts, on the one hand claiming that the district had no idea what it was going to build, while simultaneously claiming that the district has promised a list of projects that it is now not building. This has in no way led to prioritizing expensive and unnecessary new construction over essential projects. The vast majority of the projects that the district has undertaken have been modernization projects, not new construction. SMMUSD

SEE **YOUR COLUMN HERE** PAGE 5

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YOUR COLUMN HERE

FROM PAGE 4

does consider the financial, environmental, and educational benefits of adaptive reuse, but it is clear that adaptive reuse cannot always be the answer, because it is not always in the best interest of student education.

The author, after seeing the resounding public support from more than 50 public speakers at the last school board meeting, attempts to belittle those who were willing to spend six-plus hours on a week night just to implore the board to move forward with the Samohi Campus Plan that the district has been implementing for the past five years. She compares this outpouring of passionate support to the online petition that she personally started in an effort to gain traction in her bid for a school board seat, which was "signed" by people who needed to do nothing more than click a button, and a significant portion of whom have no connection to Samohi.

The district's primary obligation is to provide the best education possible to its students and a major focus of that is providing the best educational spaces possible. To the author's point, SMMUSD campuses are ready for students to return to school safely. In spaces that have existing HVAC systems, those systems have all been upgraded with ionization systems to increase the filtering efficiency to capture airborne virus molecules. In spaces that do not have existing HVAC systems, the district has purchased and is installing stand-alone filtration units, as has been reported at more than one school board meeting.

The district welcomes community input into its projects and will continue to expand its efforts to gain a broader and deeper level of input. But, it will not be held hostage by a small, yet surprisingly loud minority who oppose the district at every turn and who petulantly proclaim that the district is doing something nefarious every time these naysayers do not get their way.

Submitted by Gail Pinsker on behalf of SMMUSD

Editorial

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Like an overeager 45 year old driving across state lines to wait outside a vaccine clinic, the debate over reopening schools is rapidly moving to the front of the line when it comes to COVID repercussions.

Cites are mounting a reopening push including the city of San Francisco suing its school district and at least one Los Angeles Councilman talking about a lawsuit here.

Some medical doctors are advocating for reopening classrooms and a local affiliate of the American Academy of Pediatrics said as much in a recent statement.

Santa Monica parents are also stepping up efforts to get kids back into classrooms with a recently launched website and campaign.

Under state rules, Los Angeles County can't resume in class instruction yet due to our still high case counts but reopening advocates are right to say the numbers have begun to decline and it's possible we could cross the reopening threshold within weeks.

The sticking point is vaccines. Teacher unions generally want mass vaccination before reopening but many officials, including the Governor Newsom, have said that is not necessary and the tension is starting to rise.

Before this debate follows the modern trend line too far and becomes toxic, everyone should remember a few basic facts.

First: Teachers are absolutely vital to our society.

Teachers haven't always been given the respect they deserve in our culture. Jokes are made about them having the summers off, complaints are levied about the power of their union and prior to the pandemic, many a parent has thought or said, they could easily do that job.

If months trapped with our families has taught us anything, it's that kids need teachers. They need them for their mental health, for their actual education, for socialization and for emotional support. Teachers are also a lynchpin of the economy as many working parents are discovering just how difficult it is to work and have their kids around all day.

Advocating for schools to reopen is absolutely valid but any critique that belittles teachers, their commitment or persons should be squelched immediately.

At the same time, the science says we can safely reopen schools without full vaccinations and teachers need to make peace with that idea. Our world now has additional risk in it and we all have to come to terms with how we can function with that risk.

Grocery clerks, farmers, bus drivers, firefighters, doctors, sanitation workers and others are all at work in some capacity because without them, life would grind to halt. Teachers need to be added to the list of brave and valued individuals who are accepting additional risk in their lives for the betterment of others.

We're not saying all students in all grades need to be receiving in person instruction. Far from it. Starting with smaller groups of transitional age students makes a lot of sense. There are teachers more willing to accept the risks and maybe even some who have been able to get vaccinated and there has to be a way to allow those teachers who are willing to work to come back into classrooms.

There's a way to have this debate that recognizes the value of everyone involved but the political movement of our times is one of anger, recrimination and divisiveness. That movement will not yield positive results in this case not in the short or long term.

Immediately, teachers can just not return, via union negotiations, sickouts or ultimately a strike if need be and that doesn't do anything to get kids back in schools. Long term, an overly aggressive approach will push people out of the profession. We already lack enough teachers in general and should a wave of the most experienced teachers simply leave the profession, who would teach the kids in the reopened schools? What kind of education do you think kids will receive and what damage would be done to the community relationship?

We now have an incredibly crystal clear understanding of just how important those jobs are and honestly, how ill equipped many parents are to fill those shoes. So this debate needs to be had, it needs to come to a conclusion quickly and while we won't be returning to the old "normal" in any capacity, perhaps we can at least harken back to what seem like bygone times of discussion that wasn't destructive.

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TOGETHER, WE CAN DO THIS.

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9,698 KITTENS ENTERED L.A. CITY SHELTERS.
That's a 22% increase compared to last year.

22%

AN AVERAGE OF 1,212 KITTENS ENTERED THE SHELTER SYSTEM PER MONTH.
That's about 40 kittens each and every day.

40 /DAY

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NKLA.ORG/KITTENS

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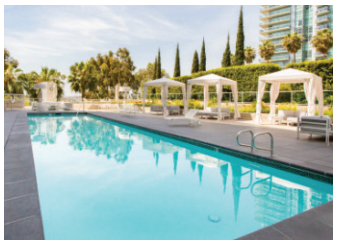
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Pet of the Week:



Martin Hernandez

PET: The Adoptable Pet of the Week is available from the Santa Monica Animal Shelter.

Bebe

Roses are red, violets are blue, I'm a 3-year-old female Pitbull named Bebe, and these days I'm howling at the moon 'because I want to be adopted and have a family too. Despite being a people-person and always up for tons of play, the months go by in shelter with no adopter in sight, even though I have great manners, like a good sit and stay. I'm no fan of other dogs, and small animals cramp my style. A social life with people is what I need, and long walks, kisses, and cuddles will always make me smile. Don't worry, I'm not needy, only independent and confident. With me it's drama free and sweating the small stuff will be of no consequence. So, roses are red, violets are blue, this Valentine's Day I hope to find my second chance, and I'm hoping it's with you. Will you be mine? Bebe, ID#A060344, is available for adoption at the Santa Monica Animal Shelter located at 1640 9th Street, Santa Monica CA, 90404. The shelter is closed to the public and adoptions are by appointment only by calling the shelter at (310) 458-8595.

PET TIP OF THE WEEK: FINDING QUALITY IN-HOME PET CARE

As the economy begins to reopen, many pet owners find that they are in need of care for their pets when they are away at work. But being away from pet owners can be one of the most stressful events for pets, especially those with unique needs. If you have been home during the COVID-19 Safer at Home order, this will be especially true for pets as it is a significant departure in their routine. What can support a healthy transition is acquiring in-home pet care that will customize the care of your pets to fit their daily routine, which will keep them better adjusted in your absence.

Internet searches will yield a long list of companies, but word of word-of-mouth is invaluable. Use neighborhood apps that offer an opportunity to engage with your community to get personal recommendations. It is also easy to trust the word of a friend and family member!

Read reviews. A client's experience will offer you a diverse point of view on their services.

Check out their website and look for information on their services, staff, rates, credentials, COVID-19 safety protocols, and how long they have been established as it will reflect their reputation. Companies that are insured, bonded, and have a staff that are fully vetted, background checked, certified in pet CPR and first aid, and have education and commensurable experience working with animals, offers assurances that your home and your pet will be protected at all times by professionals that are qualified, competent, loving, and trustworthy.

Schedule an in-home consultation to meet your pet care provider in person. Ask questions on their experience working with animals, their company policies, the process of using their services, and if they have alternate pet care providers if your primary pet care provider becomes unavailable. Have them collect your pet's detailed care and routine instructions thoroughly.

Accountability is a must! Most companies offer daily updates after every pet care visit which include photos, written reports, GPS timestamp of when your pet care provider arrived and left your home, and dog walking GPS routing so that you know where your dog was walked. Daily updates on pet care visits, and the disposition of your pet upon your return, will give insight as to whether your pet trusts and looks forward to their pet care provider.

Quality in-home pet care can provide your pet with a special relationship so that the experience away from you is an opportunity for a staycation. And most important, give you true peace of mind that your beloved pet is thriving while you are away!

Biden seeks to go big, fast and alone on COVID relief

JOSH BOAK
Associated Press

President Joe Biden laid out the case Friday for moving fast and without Republicans, if necessary, to pass $1.9 trillion in coronavirus relief, armed with new signs of economic strain brought on by the continuing pandemic.

The stakes for the county and economy were amplified on Friday morning, shortly after Senate Democrats cast a decisive vote to muscle the plan through the chamber without Republican support, a step toward final approval next month. January's jobs report showed that hiring had stalled to a pace that could hinder a return to full employment for several years—with 406,000 people choosing to leave the labor force as deaths from the pandemic surged.

"A lot of folks are losing hope," Biden said in a speech at the White House. "I believe the American people are looking right now to their government for help, to do our job, to not let them down. So I'm going to act. I'm going to act fast. I'd like to be doing it with the support of Republicans ... they're just not willing to go as far as I think we have to go."

The speech solidified a shift from a president who entered the White House pledging bipartisanship and met on Monday with 10 Republican senators who proposed a slimmed-down $618 billion alternative. But Biden concluded in his Friday speech that aid at that level would only prolong the economic pain.

His remarks came several hours after the Senate approved a budgetary measure that would let Democrats pass the plan without Republicans. Vice President Kamala Harris cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate, her first.

Senate Democrats applauded after Harris announced the 51-50 vote at around 5:30 a.m. The action came after a grueling all-night session, where senators voted on amendments that could define the contours of the eventual COVID-19 aid bill.

The budget now returns to the House, where it will likely be approved again Friday to reflect the changes made by the Senate. The measure can then work its way through committees so that additional relief can be finalized by mid-March, when extra unemployment assistance and other pandemic aid expires. It's an aggressive timeline that will test the ability of the new administration and Congress to deliver.

"We have been focused like a laser on getting this done," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said after leading Democrats in the House met with Biden Friday. "We hope to be able to put vaccines in peoples arms, money in people's pockets, children safely in schools and workers in their jobs. That's what we are doing now."

The push for stimulus comes amid new signs of a weakening U.S. economy. Employers added just 49,000 jobs in January, after cutting 227,000 jobs in December, the Labor Department said Friday. Restaurants, retailers, manufacturers and even the health care sector shed workers last month, meaning that private employers accounted for a meager gain of 6,000 jobs last month.

"At that rate, it's going to take 10 years until we hit full employment," Biden said at an Oval Office meeting with House Democrats earlier Friday. "That's not hyperbole. That's a fact."

The unemployment rate fell to 6.3% from 6.7%, but there was a decline in the number of people who were either working or looking for a job in a sign that some people are dropping out of the labor force. The U.S. economy is 9.9 million jobs shy of its pre-pandemic level.

Biden, who has been meeting with lawmakers in recent days to discuss the package, welcomed the leaders of House committees who will be assembling the bill under the budget process known as "reconciliation." Money for vaccine distributions, direct payments to households, school reopenings and business aid are at stake.

The size of the package has been a concern for several Republican lawmakers and some economists. Larry Summers, a former treasury secretary during the Clinton administration, said in a column for The Washington Post that the $1.9 trillion package was three times larger than the projected economic shortfall. A separate analysis by the Penn Wharton Budget Model found the plan would do little to boost growth relative to its size.

The marathon Senate session brought test votes on several Democratic priorities, including a $15 minimum wage. The Senate by voice vote adopted an amendment from Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, opposed to raising the wage during the pandemic. Ernst said a wage hike at this time would be "devastating" for small businesses.

The Senate also passed an amendment 99-1 that would prevent the $1,400 in direct checks in Biden's proposal from going to "upper-income taxpayers." But the measure, led by Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and Joe Manchin, D-West Virginia, is ultimately symbolic and nonbinding and does not specify at what level a person qualifies as upper income.

And while Biden seemed willing to break with Republicans in his speech, White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters afterward that the reconciliation process approved by the Senate still allows for bipartisanship.

"The process enables for time for negotiations through committee work," Psaki said. "We certainly are hopeful that there will be opportunities for amendments from Republicans, amendments from others across the board to be a part of this process moving forward."

Associated Press write Zeke Miller contributed to this report.



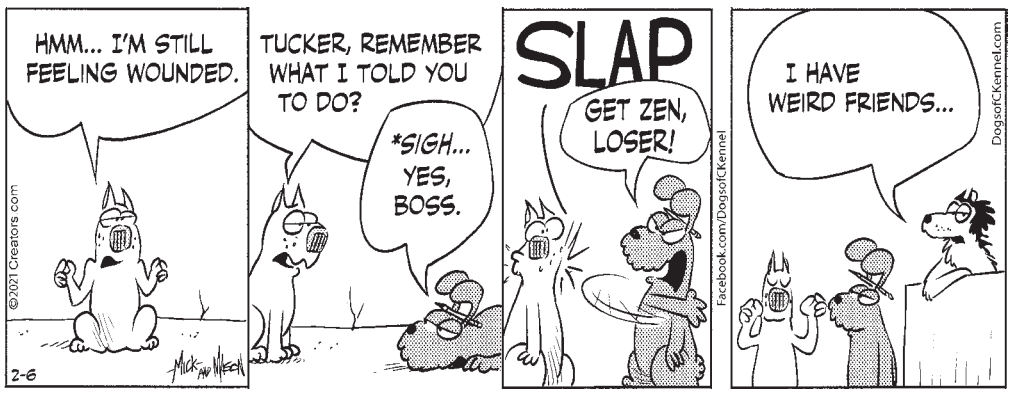
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



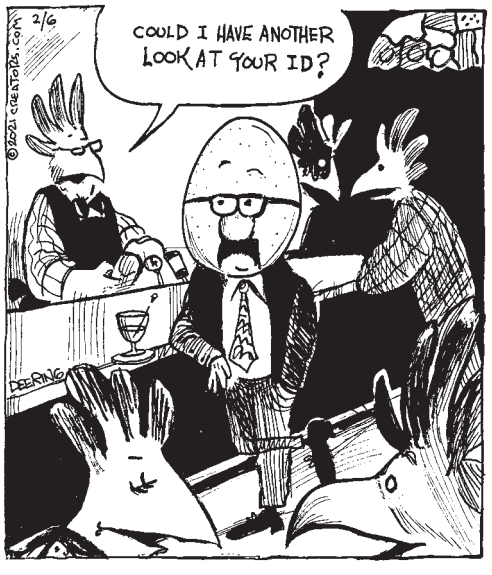
Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING





SURF FORECASTS

WATER TEMP: 57.2°

SATURDAY - **POOR TO FAIR** - SURF: 1-2ft Knee to thigh high
Small NW swell leftovers, small SSW swell. Wind looks favorable for a good chunk of the day, we unfortunately just don't expect much size.

SUNDAY - **POOR TO FAIR** - SURF: 1-2ft Knee to thigh high
Nice conditions possible but surf looks very small at this time.

WEATHER

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 68.
Saturday Night: Patchy fog after 10pm. Otherwise, increasing clouds, with a low around 50.
Sunday: Patchy fog before 10am. Otherwise, mostly sunny, with a high near 65.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2021/02/06	Sat	04:24 AM	5.39	H
2021/02/06	Sat	12:08 PM	-0.28	L
2021/02/06	Sat	6:53 PM	3.13	H
2021/02/06	Sat	10:53 PM	2.36	L
2021/02/07	Sun	05:27 AM	5.72	H
2021/02/07	Sun	1:02 PM	-0.86	L
2021/02/07	Sun	7:43 PM	3.49	H
2021/02/08	Mon	12:03 AM	2.27	L
2021/02/08	Mon	06:23 AM	6.02	H
2021/02/08	Mon	1:46 PM	-1.25	L
2021/02/08	Mon	8:21 PM	3.77	H
2021/02/09	Tue	12:59 AM	2.05	L
2021/02/09	Tue	07:12 AM	6.24	H
2021/02/09	Tue	2:26 PM	-1.43	L
2021/02/09	Tue	8:54 PM	3.97	H
2021/02/10	Wed	01:46 AM	1.80	L
2021/02/10	Wed	07:56 AM	6.32	H
2021/02/10	Wed	3:03 PM	-1.42	L
2021/02/10	Wed	9:26 PM	4.11	H
2021/02/11	Thu	02:27 AM	1.58	L
2021/02/11	Thu	08:35 AM	6.24	H

DAILY LOTTERY

POWERball
Draw Date: 2/3
5 37 40 64 66
Power#: 5
Jackpot: 30 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 2/2
13 37 38 40 67
Mega#: 10
Jackpot: 54 M

SuperLotto PLUS
Draw Date: 2/3
4 15 27 28 34
Mega#: 16
Jackpot: 18 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 2/4
2 11 16 19 24

Daily 3
Draw Date: 2/4
EVENING: 5 0 8
Draw Date: 2/4
MIDDAY: 1 3 8

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 2/4
1st: 01 - Gold Rush
2nd: 11 - Money Bags
3rd: 04 - Big Ben
Race Time: 1:40.92

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (FEBRUARY 00)

You'll pose 12 questions and get six affirmative answers -- enough to go forward and be prosperous. In general, do what gives you joy so you'll have more to forward. The love you contribute confidently will be received and utilized to fortify the good fight of improving matters beyond what you will ever know. Aries and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 42, 9, 13 and 7.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). People really don't appreciate the extent of what you do for them, but that's actually better for you. The attention would only slow you down. Besides, you're not doing it for them. This is your purpose!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Everyone's story begins in song. You'll contribute in kind to today's section of life, a bit of music to express what cannot be expressed as well any other way.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). It is tempting to, when moved by appreciation and affection, get hyperbolic. Just know that the largess of compliments of the "best ever," "amazing" and "awesome" variety could be trumped by small, lovely specificity.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You probably won't be aware of what you think when you're in the heat of the action but ponder later and much will come to you. Eventually, this gap in timing between action and awareness will narrow significantly.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). If you had to make a documentary of everything in the universe that occurred today at noon, then the runtime would be approximately infinite. Good thing you're supremely focused on tracking just your own business.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It will be a phenomenon like love at first sight today, except add a couple dozen viewings to the equation, since the object of your affection will be a person, project or endeavor you've been exposed to quite a lot already.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Considering Mercury's retrograde, today will be a remarkably straightforward equation in which it's easy to tell exactly how much fun you will have. Participation correlates exactly with pleasure.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You love everyone differently, but there are definitely similarities in the way you show up for friends, family, community and romantic prospects. Those commonalities are giving you a widespread reputation for generosity.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). When you'd rather not know, it's wise (and easy) not to ask. When you'd love to know, but it's none of your business, not asking takes enormous restraint and personal fortitude, which is what makes it the right move.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You do what's necessary. Sometimes it's a trudge through the muck to deliver a message no one wants to hear. But today, the delivery is as sweet and easy as a squirt of whipped cream to the top of a sundae.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Arguing can be fun when it's a spar against a worthy opponent, and it serves to sharpen both, regardless of the winner. Ill-matched arguments are as sad as any other unfair display.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). It is not every day that you find yourself at liberty to do as you please, write your ticket or take the form and make it your own. That is why, when you can, you must.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

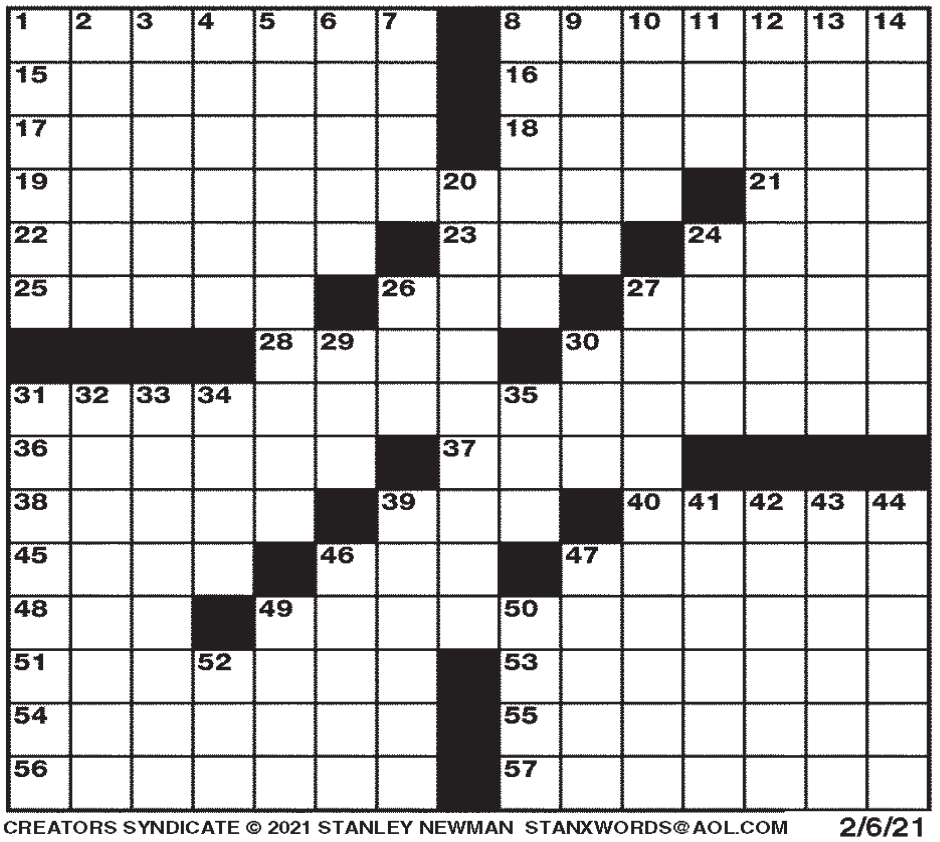
7					2			
	2			3			1	
		9	1		7	3		
				8		1		6
	6		2		4		8	
8		4		6				
		8	4		3	5		
	3			9			2	
			6					8

Newsday Crossword

THEMELESS SATURDAY by Greg Johnson
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Less-than-friendly encounters
8 Publisher sponsoring the National Spelling Bee
15 Dishes cooked to order
16 What silly ones play
17 Put in motion
18 Back-again book
19 Traversed a slippery slope
21 *Piccolo numero italiano*
22 Marriage that makes news
23 Means of entry
24 For each
25 Beast taken to battle
26 Additive found in algae
27 Leave, with "off"
28 Apt name for a gardener guy
30 One making up
31 Team of 10
36 Common rush-hour back-up place
37 He married Miley in 2018
38 Prefix for note in '90s Apple media events
39 Line on a dinner receipt
40 Impending distress
45 Low __
46 EU member not in NATO
47 Storage facility
48 Personal stat that's never negative
49 Cold cuts selection
51 Israelites' initial Exodus status
53 Keep the riding going
54 Converted to an MP4 file
55 Inform
56 Moves unsteadily
57 Deeply discounted, perhaps

DOWN
1 What bridges are built over
2 Place for a photo
3 Things to wear
4 Visible fingerprint
5 Question heard while leaving work
6 Sign up for
7 Sought compensation, maybe
8 How some like their coffee
9 Rubber bones, e.g.
10 Strap in a stable
11 They may not happen
12 Table at a meeting
13 Alternative to regular drip coffee
14 Some sofas
20 "I'm shocked" reaction
24 Attention-getter from a distance
26 Fields of desserts
27 Part of an FDR collection
29 Unproven mental power
30 US Space & Rocket Center's home
31 Had to pay up
32 Daughter of Oedipus
33 Trust placed
34 Glowing notice
35 Beaut
39 Fall suit selections
41 First Romantic symphony, to many musicologists
42 Motley
43 Touch off
44 Got support while standing
46 Raspy-voiced rocker who's sold 75+ million records
47 Cheese plate chunk
49 Commanded
50 Led to
52 What's the point?



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2021 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 2/6/21

Binary Puzzle

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1

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				0		0		0		1	1
		1	1								
		1			0		1		0	0	
	1			1		1		1			0



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

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FIND THE WORDS

This is a theme puzzle with the subject stated below. Find the listed words in the grid. (They may run in any direction but always in a straight line. Some letters are used more than once.) Ring each word as you find it and when you have completed the puzzle, there will be 16 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

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Around the Riverina

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

Albury	Environment	Merriwagga	Rice
Ariah Park	Euston	Moama	Sheep
Barham	Fruit	Murray	Tasty
Birds	Gates	Nature	Temora
Blanchetown	Goanna	Nets	Wine
Cabin	Grower	Nuts	Wool
Conargo	Gums	Owls	Yass
Coots	Illabo	Pickers	Yenda
Corn	Insects	Purnong	
Cowabbie	Junee	Rain	
Emus	Lagoon	Relax	

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.
Don't forget your anniversary

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Santa Monica Daily Press office (310) 458-7737

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 1

film, digital media, animation, and advertising, while 'Level 2: Explore' focuses on virtual job-shadowing and hands-on digital media content creation.

Students who finish these levels will go on to small group, and hopefully in-person, sessions this summer for 'Level 3: Train', which prepares students to sit the Adobe Premier Pro Certified Associate exam, and 'Level 4: Opportunity', which connects them to paid internships.

Without such a program low-income young adults face a myriad of challenges in trying to gain employment in the creative world, which often necessitates a portfolio of completed work, industry connections, and the financial flexibility to accept low-paying or temporary job positions.

"They have to be really talented because they're often competing against young people who already have connections or who have had many resources in the development of their talent," said Warshafsky. "So they've got to somehow be a step above and they have to be able to navigate the uncertainty of job positions."

The Pathways Pilot focuses on technical digital media creation skills, which will help young adults land stable jobs in creative PR, communications, film/animation, and marketing roles.

With a foot in the door and a guaranteed income, young adults will then have a solid base from which they can choose to pivot into less stable creative fields like filmmaking or photography.

"This program includes creative development, but it really focuses on job ready technical skills, because we're interested in young people having sustainable work and a decent income," said Warshafsky.

Level 1 of the program will be entirely virtual and begins on Feb. 17. Interested young adults can apply at https://www.venicearts.org/fdm.

Clara@smdp.com



Venice Arts

STUDENTS: The next cycle of the program will be virtual and begin on Feb. 17.

LANDLORDS

FROM PAGE 1

emergency."

California law prohibits businesses and owners from advertising, offering, or charging a rental price for housing to existing or prospective tenants, that has been increased by more than 10 percent upon a proclamation of a state of emergency, or during a period the proclamation is extended by the President of the United States, Governor of California, or local officials.

In 2017, due to the devastating wildfires that caused massive property destruction, threatened homes, and required residents to evacuate, then-Governor Brown declared an emergency in various counties in California, the news release states. The emergency has been extended several times, including in December 2019 when Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an order extending price gouging protections related to the wildfire emergency to Dec. 31, 2020, in the counties of Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, Napa, Mendocino, and Butte.

Prior to the expiration of the extension, Newsom issued an order that further extended the price gouging protections of the wildfire emergency to December 31, 2021, which ensured rent gouging protections would remain in effect in Santa Monica and in the rest of Los Angeles County for the remainder of 2021.

Despite the protections, the complaint alleges that a tenant at 1433 Euclid Street was paying rent in the amount of $865 a month until the defendants increased her rent to $2,336 in February 2020, and $3,000 in March and April 2020, city officials said. "The tenant paid the increased rental amounts under protest."

A violation of California's price gouging law is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in a county jail up to one year, a fine up to $10,000, or both a fine and imprisonment. Additionally, a violation of the law is deemed to constitute an unlawful business practice and an act of unfair competition, which is subject to civil penalties of up to $2,500 per violation, injunctive relief, and restitution.

WS Communities was created as a spin-off of Neil Shekhter's NMS Properties in 2017. While NMS was mired in a legal fight with a former partner over ownership of several apartment buildings, WS Communities was able to secure several additional projects including six micro-apartment developments in the Downtown area.

The company has since put its entire 23-parcel portfolio, which is entitled for the development of over 2,100 units and more than 200,000 square feet of commercial space, up for sale.

The defendants are scheduled to be arraigned on March 24, in Los Angeles Superior Court, West Judicial District, in People v. 1433 Euclid Street, LLC, WS Communities, LLC, Case. No. 1AR 21055.

Brennon@smdp.com

Santa Monica Daily Press

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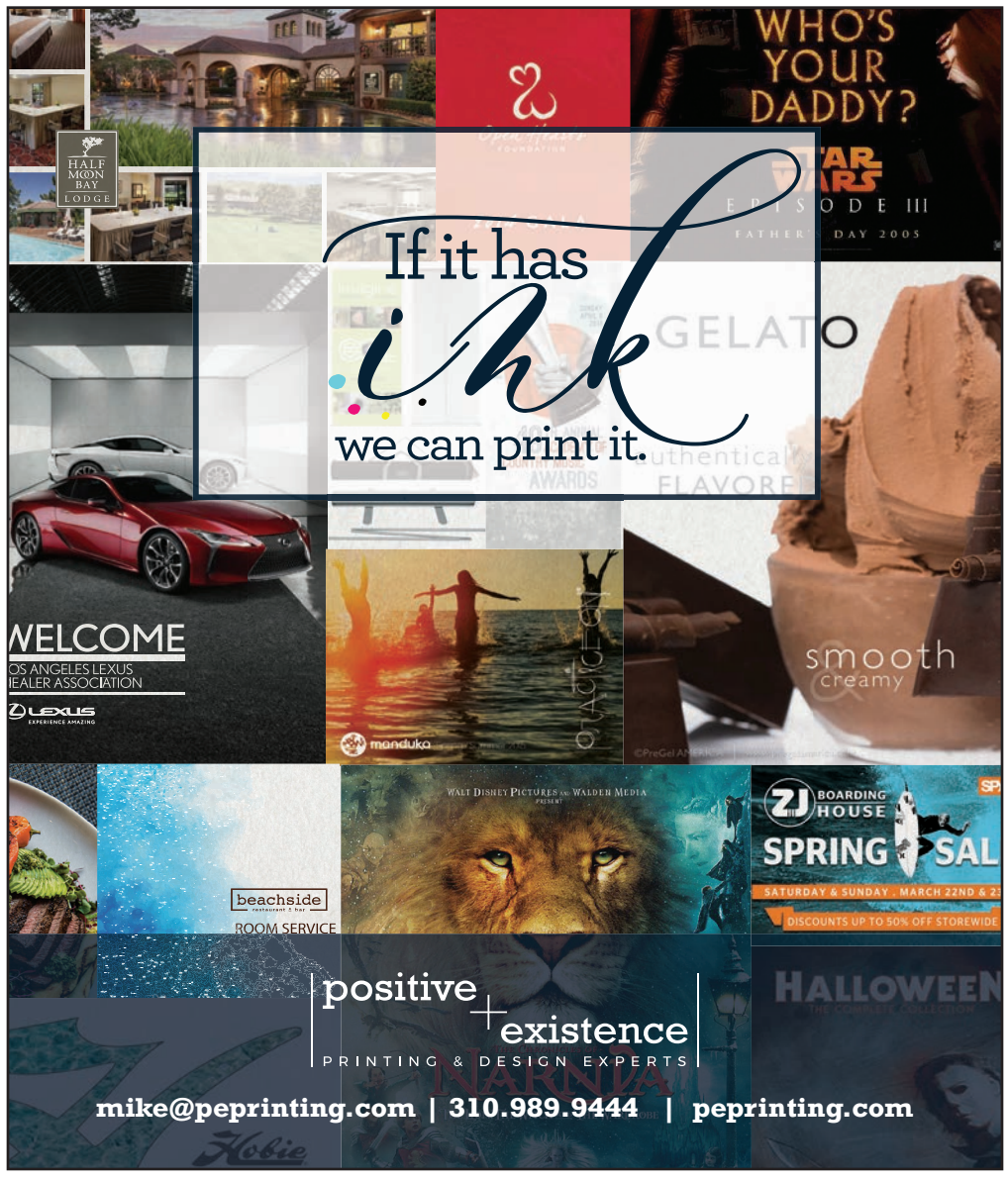
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*Civic Economics, 2008

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