2 **School Board**
Meeting Thursday.

3 **SMPD thwarts burglary**
Real Real targeted again.

5 **Busy Day**
It's a two-event Wednesday.

6 **Who Do You Love?**
Vote for Most Loved today!

smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

Volume 23 Issue 64 WEDNESDAY 2/14/24 smdp.com

"Air taxi" start-up to operate from Santa Monica Airport and expects to be flying by 2025



Archer Aviation

TIME TO BUZZ THE TOWER: Breakthrough electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft could be whisking you around Los Angeles for less than the price of an equivalent ride in an Uber.

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

Archer Aviation, an electric aircraft start-up company, has announced a partnership with Atlantic Aviation and together the two companies will begin the development of electric aircraft infrastructure at Atlantic's existing assets, including Santa Monica Municipal Airport (SMO).

San Jose-based Archer has been developing electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft since 2018 and Texas-based Atlantic is a leading fixed-base operator (FBO) network and aviation services provider. With their combined resources, they aim to establish an air taxi service that utilizes existing assets at specific locations. Early launch markets will focus on highly congested cities such as Los Angeles, New York and Miami.

Atlantic and Archer anticipate launch of service across these initial locations in 2025 and subsequent expansion of services to other locations across Atlantic's portfolio as availability of Archer's eVTOL aircraft increases.

"We're building a vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, capable of carrying four passengers and a pilot plus a little bit of luggage and it's 100% all-electric," Nikhil Goel, Chief Commercial Officer at Archer Aviation says. "It can take off vertically, like a helicopter, but then it flies forward on a wing, just like a normal airplane. The reason that's really important is that helicopters are very loud and they're tremendously expensive. The aircraft we're building, they're 100 times quieter than helicopters," he added.

"They're fully redundant, meaning there's no part on the aircraft that if it were to fail would cause the flight to fail. And so that allows it to be much safer than a helicopter. And it's very affordable. So a flight from Santa Monica to Malibu for example, or Santa Monica to Orange County would cost just as much as an Uber if not a little bit less," Goel says.

Initial routes will be "trunk" routes from airport to city center, as there is known demand and strong willingness to pay. The

SEE **AIR TAXI** PAGE 8



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Special Education and LCAP goals return for discussion



Photo by Thomas Leffler

SCHOOL BOARD: The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) Board of Education will hear updates on subjects like disproportionality and LCAP goals during Thursday's meeting.

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) Board of Education will finish off its first round of discussions related to addressing disproportionality in special education during its Thursday meeting.

During the meeting, the board is scheduled to be informed that district administrative regulations (ARs) related to the disproportionality plan have been updated, with a host of language revisions keeping the ARs in alignment with mandated and optional updates from the California School Boards Association. In November 2023, the board unanimously approved of a plan to address disproportionality, which is defined as "the overrepresentation of a specific race or ethnicity" with students identified for special education.

According to the California Department of Education, SMMUSD was found "significantly disproportionate" from the 2019-20 school year through the 2021-22 school year, particularly with identification of Latinx and Hispanic students for special education based on learning disability. To remedy this, the board's approved plan will work to fix root causes of disproportionality, such as increased clarity of districtwide support system framework and increased cultural competency with inclusion and relationship-building with students and parents.

During the board's Feb. 1 meeting, SMMUSD Assistant Superintendent Dr. Mark Kelly and Director of Special Education Victoria Hurst provided the AR updates, updated to align with CSBA mandates and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulations. A total of seven ARs and Board Policies were updated, including several sub-points within a few of the ARs. Kelly said that many of the language revisions were reflections of things the district is already doing with respect to special education.

> Many of them are guided by regulations, laws, both at the federal level and at the state level
> - Dr. Mark Kelly, SMMUSD Assistant Superintendent

"Many of them are guided by regulations, laws, both at the federal level and at the state level," Kelly said at the Feb. 1 board meeting. "It's very difficult for a district on its own to track all of these changes. We want to make sure that our board policies reflect the philosophies of the board, but also are compliant with the law. That is very difficult for anyone to track … we're doing as much as we can to have fidelity with the board policies and regulations."

Updated ARs and Board Policies include the Comprehensive Local Plan for Special Education, the Local Control

SEE SMMUSD PAGE 6

RealReal designer retail store broken into for the second time in 10 weeks

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

On the evening of Thursday, February 8, at approximately 2:30 a.m. the Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD) responded to a 911 call regarding a burglary attempt at the RealReal retail fashion store at 200 26th Street.

According to Lieutenant Erika Aklufi of the SMPD, the first officers on scene observed the suspects fleeing the area and a foot pursuit ensued. Three suspects were apprehended nearby. Officers established a perimeter and with the help of K9 officers and air support from the Los Angeles Police Department, two additional suspects were also taken into custody.

The following individuals were booked for attempted burglary and resisting arrest:

Ryan Sims of Los Angeles (18 years old)
Julio Mendoza of Los Angeles (18 years old)
Isaiah Lloyd of Los Angeles (18 years old)
Mikel Nicholson of Carson (19 years old)
A juvenile who was cited and released

In an email to the Board and residents of the North of Montana Association (NOMA), Police Chief Ramon Batista said, "The report indicated that multiple subjects were actively attempting to break into the business. The burglary attempt was foiled due to the quick handling and dispatching of the call by OEM/911 dispatchers, followed by our officers' timely and coordinated response."

Just 10 weeks ago, SMPD officers were called to the same location on November 27, at about 10:55 a.m. after four masked suspects entered the luxury resale store and forced their way past the front door security. Once inside, they used hammers to smash multiple display cases containing brand-name purses worth over $50,000. The suspects then fled the scene in a waiting vehicle.

Batista is set to present the 2023 annual crime report update to City Council this evening (Tuesday). During the City Council meeting on September 12 of last year, he declared that the rate of serious crime in Santa Monica had now returned to pre-pandemic levels as he presented the Council with an analysis of recent crime statistics comparing the first eight months of 2023 to previous years.

Moreover, just 10 days ago, Los Angeles County, District Attorney George Gascón announced that "approximately 200" organized retail theft cases involving adult and juvenile defendants have been filed by the office.

In August 2023, a rise in organized retail thefts prompted SMPD to join the Los Angeles Police Department in the formation of the Los Angeles County Organized Retail Crime Taskforce. This taskforce combines resources from various agencies to investigate and prosecute the organized retail theft rings that are frequently behind these crimes.

"At the onset of the high-profile retail theft cases in LA County last year, the Santa Monica Police Department preemptively joined the LAPD Retail Theft Task Force (TF) to bolster our resources and strengthen our investigative ability. Although Santa Monica had been spared of the scenes that unfolded in retail shopping centers in neighboring jurisdictions, we recognized the interrelated nature of these crimes/suspects," Batista said in the email.

> At the onset of the high-profile retail theft cases in LA County last year, the Santa Monica Police Department preemptively joined the LAPD Retail Theft Task Force (TF) to bolster our resources and strengthen our investigative ability. Although Santa Monica had been spared of the scenes that unfolded in retail shopping centers in neighboring jurisdictions, we recognized the interrelated nature of these crimes/suspects
>
> - Ramon Batista, Police Chief

"Thus far, the SMPD relationship with the LAPD TF has proven successful across LA County and Santa Monica. The work of determining our suspect's motives and/or any prior contacts in Santa Monica or neighboring jurisdictions is ongoing."

Anyone with information related to this individual or incident is encouraged to contact Detective Isaac Reyes or Detective Sergeant Lozano or the Watch Commander (24 hours) at 310-458-8427.

scott.snowden@smdp.com



Surf report

WATER TEMP: **59.0**

WEDNESDAY
POOR TO FAIR
SURF: 1-2ft
Knee to thigh
WNW swell mix from the start of the week looks to level off with small but rideable waves on tap. Wind outlook is favorable across the region.

THURSDAY
POOR TO FAIR
SURF: 1-2ft
Knee to thigh
Size is similar to Wednesday for the early AM. Possible refresh of mid period W/WNW swell through the afternoon. Wind looks favorable right now.

Weather

Wednesday: Patchy fog before 10am. Otherwise, cloudy, then gradually becoming mostly sunny, with a high near 61.
Wednesday Night: Increasing clouds, with a low around 48. West wind around 5 mph becoming northeast after midnight.
Thursday: Partly sunny, with a high near 64. North northeast wind 5 to 10 mph becoming southwest in the afternoon.
Thursday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 50.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted	(ft)	High/Low
2024/02/14	Wed	12:12 AM	5.16		H
2024/02/14	Wed	06:38 AM	0.77		L
2024/02/14	Wed	12:30 PM	3.65		H
2024/02/14	Wed	6:14 PM	0.99		L
2024/02/15	Thu	12:58 AM	5.14		H
2024/02/15	Thu	08:05 AM	0.78		L
2024/02/15	Thu	2:04 PM	2.82		H
2024/02/15	Thu	6:48 PM	1.76		L
2024/02/16	Fri	01:57 AM	5.04		H
2024/02/16	Fri	09:56 AM	0.55		L
2024/02/16	Fri	4:45 PM	2.58		H
2024/02/16	Fri	7:37 PM	2.42		L
2024/02/17	Sat	03:11 AM	4.96		H
2024/02/17	Sat	11:27 AM	0.09		L
2024/02/17	Sat	7:03 PM	2.98		H
2024/02/17	Sat	9:53 PM	2.80		L
2024/02/18	Sun	04:30 AM	5.01		H
2024/02/18	Sun	12:30 PM	-0.35		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: 2/12
17 36 43 53 67
Power#: 14
Jackpot: 285 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 2/9
17 22 29 46 69
Mega#: 1
Jackpot: 425 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 2/10
8 19 29 39 40
Mega#: 2
Jackpot: 9 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 2/12
1 6 10 16 22

Daily 3
Draw Date: 2/12
EVENING: 8 7 3
Draw Date: 2/12
MIDDAY: 0 1 7

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 2/12
1st: 08 - Gorgeous George
2nd: 07 - Eureka
3rd: 09 - Winning Spirit
Race Time: 1:42.37

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Santa Monica Daily Press

City of Santa Monica

CITY OF SANTA MONICA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Santa Monica invites sealed proposals for

RFP: # 2024-RFP-00004 Farmers Market Prepared and Pre-packaged Food Vendors Main Street and Pico Markets

- **Submission Deadline is March 14, 2024 at 5:00 PM Pacific Time.**

Proposals must include forms furnished by the City of Santa Monica. Request for Proposals may be obtained on the **CITY'S ONLINE VENDOR PORTAL.** The website for this Request for Proposals and related documents is OpenGov (https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/santa-monica-ca) There is no charge for the RFP package.

City of Santa Monica

CITY OF SANTA MONICA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Santa Monica invites sealed proposals for

RFP: # 400 Aging & Disability Strategic Planning

- **Submission Deadline is March 8, 2024 at 5:00 PM Pacific Time.**

Proposals must include forms furnished by the City of Santa Monica. Request for Proposals may be obtained on the **CITY'S ONLINE VENDOR PORTAL.** The website for this Request for Proposals and related documents is OpenGov (https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/santa-monica-ca) There is no charge for the RFP package.

City of Santa Monica

CITY OF SANTA MONICA
NOTICE INVITING BIDS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Santa Monica invites Contractors to complete and submit sealed bids for the:

Groundwater Injection Well SM-11i and Monitoring Wells MWi-2 & MWi-3
Drilling and Equipping
SP2678 - C

Bids will only be accepted through the CITY'S ONLINE VENDOR PORTAL, ProcureNow or https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/santa-monica-ca. They must be received by the specified date and time. Late bids will not be accepted. Please allow sufficient time for uploading of documents. The bid opening will be electronic, all submitted bids will be viewable by the public via ProcureNow immediately after bid close time.

MANDATORY PRE-BID JOB WALKS: (must attend at least one)
First Meeting: February 22, 2024 at 11:00am
Second Meeting: February 27, 2024 at 11:00am
Place: At the SM11i Well Site in City Yards 2500 Michigan Ave, Santa Monica, CA 90404

PROJECT ESTIMATE: $4,500,000 to $6,000,000
CONTRACT DAYS: 540 Calendar Days
LIQUIDATED DAMAGES: $2,200 Per Calendar Day

Bidding Documents may be obtained by logging onto the City's bidding website at: https://procurement.opengov.com/portal/santa-monica-ca The prime contractor is required to have an **A License** at the time of bid submission, and subcontractor performing the well drilling portion of the project is required to have a **C-57 License.** Contractors wishing to be considered must submit Bids containing all information required pursuant to the City's Request for Bids.

Pursuant to Public Contracts Code Section 22300, the Contractor shall be permitted to substitute securities for any monies withheld by the City to ensure performance under this Contract.

GET IT DAILY...

GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Will cataloging California's top policy issues inspire politicians to think long term?



Photo by Miguel Gutierrez Jr., CalMatters
WATER: The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta on June 22, 2023.

DAN WALTERS

California's public policy issues tend to stretch across multiple years or even decades, while the attention spans of politicians are abbreviated by election cycles and term limits. The short-term mentality of governors and legislators undermines the continuity that's needed to deal with long-term issues.

Many examples of the syndrome exist but a classic is a project that has been kicking around in one form or another, with multiple name changes, for at least six decades – moving water from the Sacramento River around, through or under the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to the head of the California Aqueduct.

It was touted as the last major link in the state's water system, and originally it was to be a 43-mile-long "peripheral canal" around the Delta when first proposed in the 1960s.

Fifteen years later, and after much angst, then-Gov. Jerry Brown – whose father had launched the state water plan – persuaded the Legislature to authorize it, but voters rejected it in 1982. Subsequently, two governors tried – and failed – to resurrect it as a "through-Delta" facility. In 2009, during Arnold Schwarzenegger's governorship, it was revived as twin tunnels.

Brown dubbed the tunnels as California WaterFix during his second governorship, but they were still pending when Gavin Newsom succeeded Brown in 2019. Newsom scaled it down to a single tunnel and renamed it again as the Delta Conveyance Project.

By whatever name, the project still lacks regulatory approvals at the state and federal level, and financing and will likely remain incomplete when Newsom's governorship ends three years hence.

Those outside the Capitol who deal with long-term issues constant lament their inability to persuade politicians to look – and act – beyond their abbreviated attention spans. However, a new report from the Legislative Analyst's Office – the Legislature's advisor on budget issues – could finally expand the political focus beyond the next election.

The head of the office, Gabe Petek, and his staff decided to catalog the major issues facing California as it moves more further into the 21st century, and suggest ways in which they could be addressed. The report collects dozens of specific issues into three broad categories: the state's economy, Californians' health and safety, and governance, including revenue and spending.

Each issue is defined, its trade-offs are detailed and its interaction with other issues is demonstrated.

There are no surprises. The document recognizes complex issues that most engaged Californians would mention if asked, such as having a globally important economy along with the nation's highest rates of poverty and homelessness.

They are also issues that outside groups have repeatedly attempted to raise and persuade the Capitol to respond, often to no avail.

"The list of issues was developed over time with input and feedback from across the office," the report explains. "As our work progressed, these topics were further defined, organized, and shared

SEE **GUEST COMMENTARY** PAGE 6

Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day fall on the same day this year. Here's what you need to know

HOLLY MEYER
Associated Press

Feb. 14 is a holiday heavyweight this year due to a calendar collision of events.

Yes, it's Valentine's Day, the fixed annual celebration of love and friendship, marked by cute couples, eager elementary school students — and critics who deride its commercialization. But it also happens to be Ash Wednesday, the solemn day of fasting and reflection that signals the start of Christianity's most penitent season.

WHY IS ASH WEDNESDAY ON VALENTINE'S DAY THIS YEAR?

Ash Wednesday is not a fixed date. Its timing is tied to Easter Sunday, and for most Christians, Easter will fall on March 31 this year.

Easter also moves annually, swinging between March 22 and April 25 based on a calendar calculation involving the moon.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops lays it out: "Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the Paschal full moon, which is the first full moon occurring either on or after the spring equinox (March 21). ... To find the date for Ash Wednesday, we go back six weeks which leads to the First Sunday of Lent and four days before that is Ash Wednesday."

This year, that happens to be Feb. 14.

WHAT HAPPENS ON ASH WEDNESDAY?

Not all Christians observe Ash Wednesday. For those who do, they typically attend an Ash Wednesday church service, where a priest or other minister draws a cross — or at least what is intended to look like one — of ashes on their forehead. The distribution of ashes underscores human mortality, among other themes.

It's an obligatory day of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. The abstinence restrictions are continued on Fridays during Lent, which is the period of repentance and penance leading up to Holy Week observances — most significantly their belief in the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection from the dead.

WHERE DO THE ASHES COME FROM?

Typically, the ashes are from the palms used on Palm Sunday, which falls a week before Easter, according to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Ashes can be purchased, but some churches make their own by burning the palms from prior years. For example, several parishes and schools in the Chicago Catholic Archdiocese plan to hold palm burning ceremonies this year.

CAN CATHOLICS CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY ON ASH WEDNESDAY?

In addition to the candy heart and chocolate-fueled secular celebrations, Feb. 14 is also the Feast of St. Valentine. But Ash Wednesday with its fasting and abstinence requirements is far more significant and should be prioritized, said Catholic Bishop Richard Henning of Providence, Rhode Island, in the diocese's official newspaper. His predecessor shared a similar message in 2018.

> Ash Wednesday is the much higher value and deserves the full measure of our devotion
> - Richard Henning of Providence, Catholic Bishop

"Ash Wednesday is the much higher value and deserves the full measure of our devotion," he said. "I ask with all respect that we maintain the unique importance of Ash Wednesday. If you would like to wine and dine your Valentine, please do so on the Tuesday before. February 13 is Mardi Gras, 'Fat Tuesday,' a perfect day to feast and celebrate!"

WHO WAS ST. VALENTINE?

The history of Valentine's Day and St. Valentine is a bit murky, but the holiday began as a liturgical feast day for a third-century Christian martyr, according to Lisa Bitel, a history and religion professor at the University of Southern California.

In the Conversation, her article titled, " The 'real' St. Valentine was no patron of love," explains there may have been more than one St. Valentine executed for their faith in the same time period, but none of them appear to have been romantics. The emphasis on love appears to have come later.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

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CHEVRON	1819 Cloverfield Blvd	$4.97
MOBIL	731 Santa Monica Blvd	$5.40
LINCOLN BLVD CAR WASH	1624 Lincoln Blvd	$4.99
WORLD	1801 Lincoln Blvd	$4.39
SHELL	1866 Lincoln Blvd	$5.10
SPEEDWAY EXPRESS	2555 Lincoln Blvd	$4.57
CHEVRON	1732 Lincoln Blvd	$5.09
ARCO	332 Pico Blvd	$4.89
SINCLAIR	1944 Pico Blvd	$4.85
76	2601 Wilshire Blvd	N/A

*Prices paying in card

SMDP and GasBuddy

Average gasoline prices in Los Angeles have risen 5.6 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging $4.69/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 2,135 stations in Los Angeles. Prices in Los Angeles are 8.2 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 7.7 cents per gallon higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has risen 6.9 cents in the last week and stands at $3.99 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Los Angeles was priced at $4.03/g while the most expensive was $5.85/g, a difference of $1.82/g. The lowest price in the state was $0.49/g while the highest was $7.79/g, a difference of $7.30/g.

The national average price of gasoline has risen 5.2 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging $3.17/g today. The national average is up 9.6 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 20.0 cents per gallon lower than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than 11 million weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the country.

Santa Monica Daily Press

SMMUSD

FROM PAGE 2

and Accountability Plan (LCAP), Staff Development, Suspension and Expulsion and Staff Development. Clarifications were added to the LCAP to state that it shall focus on improving outcomes for not only "unduplicated students," but also students part of any numerical significant subgroup at risk of underperforming. For Staff Development, language was added related to student well-being and mental health, as well as adding face-to-face, remote or hybrid instruction to the list of technology used for instruction.

Thursday's meeting will also hear several reports, including a supplemental report for an annual LCAP update and a mid-year report on outcome data related to LCAP metrics. The mid-year report dives into expenditure and implementation data on actions related to LCAP goals such as college and career readiness, English Learner proficiency and engaging students and families "in safe, well-maintained schools that are culturally responsive and conducive to 21st century learning."

The report notes actions that are both completed and in progress, including the completion of improving instructional outcomes through cycles of inquiry. "We have implemented and refined our Assessment Continuum PK-12 that consists of site-based formative assessments, district-wide interim, and diagnostic assessments that provide evidence of student learning and mastery toward meeting grade-level standards," the report states.

Other completed actions are the securing of financial and human resources to support Career Technical Education programs and innovations, as well as providing Bilingual Community Liaisons to assist families "particularly (in) underserved and historically under-participatory" with interpretation and transition support for accessing school site supports and other programs.

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GUEST COMMENTARY

FROM PAGE 4

with members of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee – the committee that oversees our office – in an effort to seek additional feedback.

"Throughout this process, we thought about the key factors affecting the current and future well-being of Californians with an eye towards possible legislative actions. Importantly, although this list reflects our office's attempt to identify the most important issues, it is not meant to be an exhaustive list of issues facing the state, nor does it necessarily reflect the priorities of the Legislature as a whole."

It's a noble effort and one might hope that having an arm of the Legislature formalize the state's major public policy issues – those that will determine California's future – would spur officeholders to at least begin acting on them. But overcoming their innate preoccupation with culture conflicts, buzzwords and temporary fixes will be difficult.

This article was originally published by CalMatters.

Time to vote for your Most Loved Businesses

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

Voting is now open for Santa Monica's annual Most Loved Contest at https://smdp.com/mostloved2024.

The event is an opportunity for locals to select the best of the city and share their love of Santa Monica.

This People's Choice Awards-style competition, established a decade ago, aims to foster connections among residents, visitors, and businesses while highlighting the city's vibrant business community. Launched in 2010 through a collaboration involving the Buy Local Santa Monica Committee, the Santa Monica Daily Press, the City of Santa Monica, business improvement districts, and other partners, the contest has expanded over the years to include categories such as Food & Drink, Automotive & Transport, Fitness, Shopping, Neighborhood Favorites, Personal Care, and Service.

Over the years, the competition has grown, with an increase in participants and the introduction of a two-phase voting process.

Voting, conducted in two phases, is free and open to residents, businesses, and visitors.

Cast your nominations now through Thursday February 29. Voters can nominate any business during the first phase of voting (provided they are in Santa Monica and are appropriate to the category). Nominations will be cut to the finalists and voting to determine the winner will run from March 18 through March 31. Winners are announced in June.

Santa Monica's Economic Development Director Jennifer Taylor said the event grew out of the city's Buy Local campaign.

"So we found that people really did want to share and celebrate their favorite businesses," she said. "And so this was a good way to really memorialize that and honor it."

She said winning is obviously a boon for local businesses who are recognized at the annual awards ceremony but she said even being nominated can be a benefit.

"So it's a great way to just get some fantastic, free publicity," she said. "And then what I also love about it is the locals love it and the visitors."

She said the Most Loved magazine that accompanies the winner announcement is distributed throughout Santa Monica providing a way for local gems to pick up new customers who may not know about their stores or services.

"And clearly the visitors want to go where the locals go," she said. "I've been here for 15 years, and I'm still learning some really cool businesses through the past Most Loved contests and like my husband found his eye doctor from previous Most Loved. So it's a great way just to learn more about our great, great neighborhoods and community here in Santa Monica."

editor@smdp.com



US inflation slows but remains elevated in sign that price pressures are easing only gradually

CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

Consumer inflation in the United States cooled last month yet remained elevated in the latest sign that the pandemic-fueled price surge is only gradually and fitfully coming under control.

Tuesday's report from the Labor Department showed that the consumer price index rose 0.3% from December to January, up from a 0.2% increase the previous month. Compared with a year ago, prices are up 3.1%.

That is less than the 3.4% figure in December and far below the 9.1% inflation peak in mid-2022. But the latest reading is still well above the Federal Reserve's 2% target level at a time when public frustration with inflation has become a pivotal issue in President Joe Biden's bid for re-election.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called core prices climbed 0.4% last month, up from 0.3% in December. On a year-over-year basis, core prices were up 3.9% in January, the same as in December. Core inflation is watched especially closely because it typically provides a better read of where inflation is likely headed.

Tuesday's report showed that the drivers of inflation have decisively shifted from goods, like used cars, gasoline and groceries, which are now falling in price or rising much more slowly, to services, including hotel rooms, restaurant meals and medical care. That shift could raise concerns for the Fed, because services inflation typically takes longer to cool.

At his most recent news conference, Fed Chair Jerome Powell singled out persistently high services prices as a concern and indicated the central bank's policymakers would like to see services inflation ease further before starting to cut their key interest rate.

> There's still some inflation in the system that's going to take some time to work through
>
> - Omair Sharif, founder of Inflation Insights, a research firm

"There's still some inflation in the system that's going to take some time to work through," said Omair Sharif, founder of Inflation Insights, a research firm. "This justifies the Fed wanting to wait and see how things are going to go."

Tuesday's unexpectedly sticky inflation data sent stock and bond prices tumbling, with financial markets now envisioning the Fed's first cut rates in June, rather than in May or March as many traders had previously expected. The S&P 500 was off nearly 1.2% in early afternoon trading, and the yield on the 10-year Treasury note jumped by a sharp one-tenth, to 4.28%.

Biden administration officials responded to Tuesday's report by noting that average hourly pay, adjusted for inflation, rose in January and is 1.4% higher than it was a year earlier. But the average work week has declined because some businesses have reduced their employees' hours, leaving weekly inflation-adjusted pay slightly lower than it was a year earlier.

"We understand there's more work to be done, but this is an economy that is in a much different place than it was a year ago," said Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary. "When you see eggs and milk and products like that at the grocery store going down, they're lower than they were a year ago, that's important."

Some economists cautioned against assigning too much weight to January's inflation data, noting that many companies impose annual price increases in the first month of the year, imparting a temporary boost to January's figures. The government seeks to seasonally adjust the data to account for such trends but doesn't always do so perfectly.

A raft of forward-looking data, in fact, suggests that inflation will continue to cool. The pace of wage growth has slowed, which reduces the pressure on companies to raise prices to offset higher labor costs. And consumers and business owners collectively expect lower inflation in the coming months and years, surveys show, a trend that can itself hold down price increases.

From December to January, average national gas prices tumbled 3.3%, the government said. Yet so far this month, the average price has climbed higher, rising 15 cents to $3.23 a gallon as of Tuesday, according to AAA.

Grocery prices rose 0.4% from December to January, the biggest such rise in a year, though compared with 12 months earlier, food prices are up just 1.2%.

But the costs of services — including auto insurance, apartment rents, and concert tickets — are still rising faster than they did before the pandemic and keeping overall inflation persistently high. The cost of car insurance has soared more than 20%, on average, compared with a year ago.

Such price spikes are causing heartburn for many consumers. Bill Milligan of Atlanta said he was stunned last month to find that

SEE INFLATION PAGE 11



AIR TAXI

FROM PAGE 1

first of these routes was announced in 2022 in partnership with United Airlines on the East Coast. That will connect United's hub at Newark Liberty International Airport to the Downtown Manhattan Heliport. Once the primary trunk routes have been established, "branch" routes will be developed to connect to surrounding communities.

Transportation technology is advancing all the time, however, electric cars and even autonomous vehicles have only seen a slow drip-feed-style acceptance by the masses, but Goel says that this is completely different. For starters, this will not be autonomous, a pilot is flying the aircraft at all times. And secondly, this is not about owning a vehicle and having to constantly find charging ports. This is, to all intents and purposes, a taxi service. And the concept is slowly popping up all over the world.

"That's why we're in this business, to be able to drive the noise down, which is a key issue to some of the key regional airports and some of the cities that are really important for us to serve," Goel says. "It enables us to be able to go build a reasonable amount of vehicles and serve anybody who wants to be able to get from A to B quickly. And then also driving the cost down to below the price of an Uber allows us to make this accessible."

The model of eVTOL aircraft that will be used is what Archer Aviation calls the Midnight. Powered by six independent battery packs, each supporting a pair of electric engines, it's capable of flying up to 100 miles at speeds of up to 150 mph and optimized for regular 20-50 mile urban trips.



Archer Aviation

AIRPORT: A conceptual image showing how the Atlantic Aviation and Archer Aviation collaboration might look on the north, business park side of Santa Monica Airport.

It's designed to accommodate a certified pilot and comfortably fit up to four passengers and luggage and typically flies at about 1500 feet. Plus the Midnight can perform back-to-back, 20 mile flights with only 12 minutes of charge time in between.

According to Goel, United Airlines has purchased a billion dollars worth of aircraft and in fact, they've invested in the company three times already.

"We can certainly see that the westside of Los Angeles is one of the most congested, but also the busiest. We think Santa Monica, in particular, is really interesting, because you've got such a rich and vibrant community here," Goel says.

Using a trip from Santa Monica to Malibu as an example, Goel says that it's approximately a 12 mile flight. However, traveling by road, that journey could take anywhere up to and over an hour. Flying by an air taxi, it would take about five minutes in the air and cost each passenger roughly between $30 and $40, which is less than what a rideshare vehicle would more than likely cost.

"You've also got a rich history of aviation, that airport's existed for a long time. And I understand that it's also caused a lot of controversy, we hope that we can partner with the city of Santa Monica, to enable that asset in a way that's really safe, in a way that's really quiet, in a way that's accessible to all and also make it a pillar of the community. Somewhere where the community can gather can appreciate the art of flying and can get excited about it," says Goel.

Miles Rogers, SVP of Marketing for Archer Aviation, will be giving a lecture as part of the epic Aviation Innovation series of talks held every month at the Museum of Flying. At 12 noon on Sunday, February 25 at 3100 Airport Avenue, Rogers will talk about the fascinating world of electric air taxis and urban aerial mobility, together with insights into sustainable aircraft systems, eVTOL and hydrogen-electric aircraft. Visit museumofflying.org for more information and tickets.

scott.snowden@smdp.com

ALL BIKES ON SALE



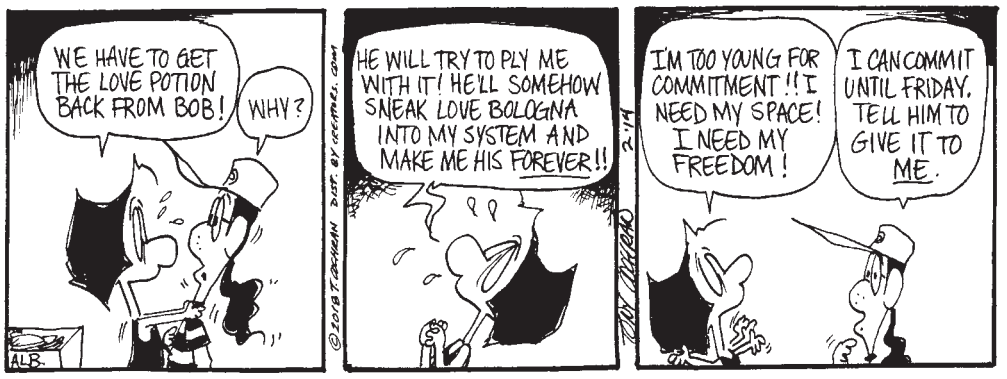
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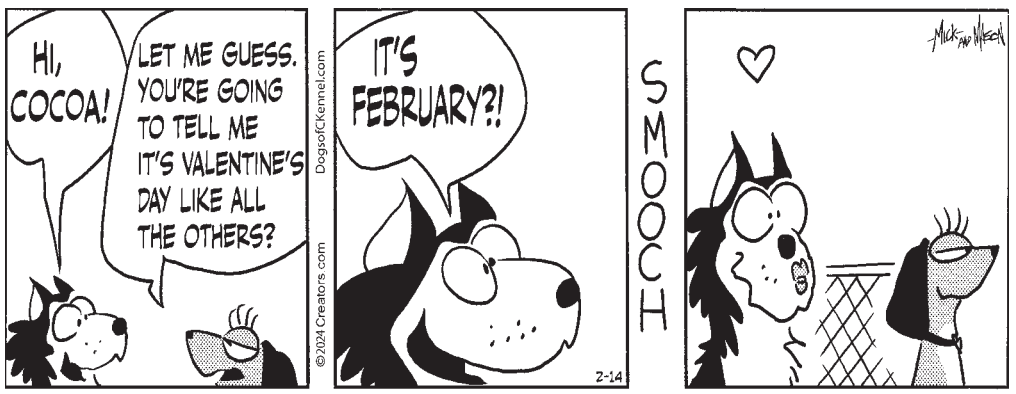
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



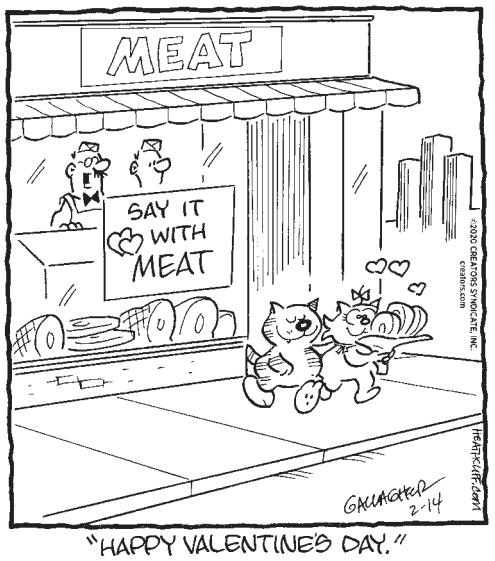
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



"HAPPY VALENTINES DAY."

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 25 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle. © australianwordgames.com.au 6120

Around Brisvegas

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

Annerley
Ascot
Bowen Hills
Bunya
Bush
City
Close
Cooparoo
Deception Bay
Development
Dugong
Eagleby
East
Facilities
Ferry
Freeway
Goodna
Inala
Ipswich
Ironside
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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 14)

You'll sync with the rhythms around you in this year of green lights and progress in business, creativity and pleasure (also logistics, like traffic!). More highlights: the opportunity your forebearers wanted for you, numerous difficult practices leading to a rapturous victory, and the heady buzz of finally landing a deserved position. Capricorn and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 37, 1, 29 and 15.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll have the opportunity to start from scratch with whatever you want another try at. It will be like this is your first time, shimmering with potential. And beginner's luck is on your side, so go for it!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Take action without worrying whether you'll win or lose. The action is the win. It won't matter if the idea is fully formed or the move goes as expected. Life will be different and better because you follow your heart's compass.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Each relationship is a chord formed by the combined notes of two or more people. You'll love the music you make with others today. Small groups make happy songs, but the best come in the form of a duet.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Sharing information is only a very minor aspect of today's communication, which is mostly about the exchange of emotion. You'll be especially good at conveying acceptance and love. Reassurance feels good to give and receive.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your psychic gifts are flowing, and you use them to pull in the more delicious parts of life, including creative expression. Inspiration whispers pure, fresh ideas into your ear. Later, you'll be thanking the muses.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You bring a sweet energy to every relationship. Whether it's a friendly interaction with a clerk or a conversation with your dearest, you'll raise the level of enthusiasm. You simply join people where they are, then turn things up a notch.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll be so effective because you consider your audience and cater your communication to go right to the heart. Once you get clear the impact you want to have, your creative instincts take over.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). People don't know what to expect from you, and the element of surprise is working for you now. You don't need an exciting plan because your mere presence invigorates with effervescence.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). It's wonderful to feel safe and wanted. You strive to give this feeing to others, creating a bubble of trust where sharing warmth feels natural. A new spark will make a special relationship burn brighter.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Good things happen when you simply say yes. You'll agree to work and play, responsibility and the reception of gifts. Tonight, taking care of small details will bring disproportionately substantial satisfaction.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). As much as you do not wish to wound the object of your affection, were you to ask cupid to pull back his bow, he would strike the target swiftly and precisely, as directed. The choice is really yours.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're a lover, not a fighter. When in doubt, you go for the hug. You're radiating beautiful vibes that go straight to the heart, change the emotional weather around you and draw people into the sunshine.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

Newsday Crossword

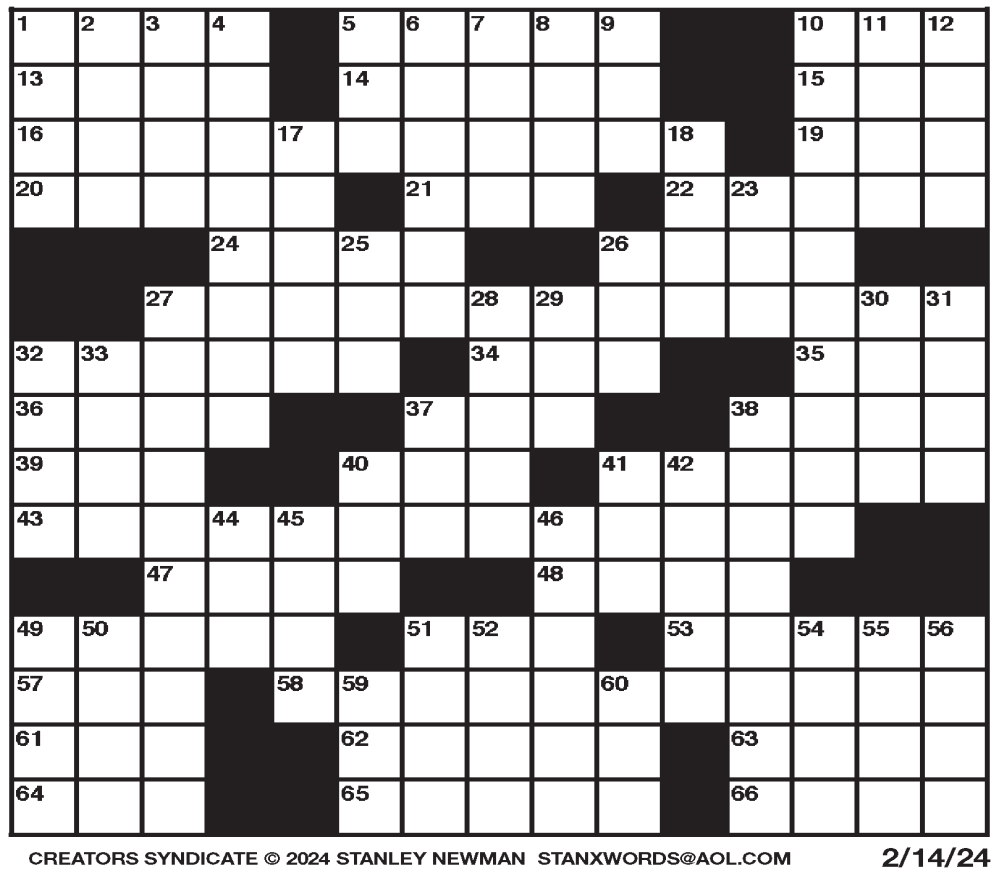
FOUR WITH A FLOOR by Mark McClain
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 Venerable British prep school
5 Move on hands and knees
10 After-tax amount
13 Christen
14 Specialized market segment
15 Earth-friendly prefix
16 Home's parlor
19 Slip up
20 Wristwatch holder
21 Rams and bulls
22 "My luck's gonna improve"
24 Manner of walking
26 Mideast airline
27 Tree-filled "This Land Is Your Land" locale
32 Extremely
34 Faux __ (minor mistake)
35 11th mo.
36 Large accumulation
37 Pig's home
38 Rule of thumb
39 Recipe amt.
40 Architect IM
41 Spanish celebration
43 Wall Street trading venue
47 Grim film genre
48 Worldwide: Abbr.
49 Black __ spider
51 Novelist Tan
53 Back in fashion
57 "Honest" president
58 Water around Sri Lanka
61 Common Christmas tree
62 Charming woman
63 Shorten slightly
64 NFL six-pointers
65 Joint near a heel
66 Level-headed

DOWN

1 Winds down
2 Sour-tasting
3 Actor Epps or Sharif
4 Crystal collectors, perhaps
5 Station founded by Ted Turner
6 Brit's "Sure thing!"
7 Square-mile fraction
8 "__ in charge here?"
9 Zodiac feline
10 Thin type of pliers
11 Light brown
12 Ripped (up)
17 Apple tablets
18 *Venus de* __
23 Scratch up
25 Battle of __ Jima
26 Letters before gees
27 First __ (32 Down, for instance)
28 Of eyes
29 Calendar rectangle
30 Put in a logical order
31 Certain cable show rating
32 CPR experts
33 Of great size
37 Census info
38 Pays no heed to
40 According to
41 Enthusiast
42 Opening statement
44 Dove's sound
45 Small fuzzy fruit
46 Down home greeting
49 Float in the air
50 Footnote abbr.
51 Port of Yemen
52 Cookies accompaniment
54 "Trillion" prefix
55 Wet forecast
56 "I'm paying!"
59 Pro hoops org.
60 Born, in wedding announcements



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INFLATION

FROM PAGE 7

the cost of insuring one of his cars had soared nearly 30% compared to six months earlier.

"I was going, 'What the hell is that?'" Milligan said he thought when he saw the charge on his bank statement.

Milligan, a 46-year-old software architect, called his insurance company, which confirmed that the price increase didn't reflect any recent tickets or accidents and said he was still receiving a discount for insuring several cars at once.

"And they're like, 'Yeah, sorry, it's just the price of everything is going up,' " Milligan said.

Milligan, who said he received a substantial pay raise last year, acknowledged that financially he is still doing fine.

"I can't complain about this," he said, referring to inflation overall.

But as with many Americans, higher prices have caused him to worry about the future. He wonders how his oldest of three daughters, who wants to become a schoolteacher, will live on an educator's salary with costs having risen so high.

The mixed data released Tuesday will likely reinforce the caution of Fed officials, who have said they're pleased with the progress in sharply reducing inflation but want to see further evidence before feeling confident that it's sustainably headed back to their 2% target. Most economists still think the Fed will start cutting its rate in June from its 22-year-high of roughly 5.4%.

Another driver of high prices has been housing costs, particularly the price of home ownership. It rose 0.6% from December to January, the biggest one-month jump since April. That measure is 6.2% higher than it was a year earlier.

But housing costs should slow in the coming months. The price of new apartment leases has been declining steadily as new apartment buildings have been completed. It can take months for the drop in new lease prices to feed through into the government's data.

At the same time, economists say that inflation in health care services is likely to stay high. The cost of hospital services jumped 1.6% just from December to January. Doctors' services rose 0.6%.

Sharif said those increases likely reflected, in part, sharp pay gains in recent years for nurses and other in-demand medical workers, such as anesthesiologists and radiologists.

The Fed raised its key rate 11 times, from March 2022 to July of last year, in a concerted drive to defeat high inflation. The result has been much higher borrowing rates for businesses and consumers, including for mortgages and auto loans. Rate cuts, whenever they happen, would eventually lead to lower borrowing costs for many categories of loans.

Lower borrowing costs could boost economic growth. But a strong economy may also pose a challenge for the Fed because faster growth can accelerate wages and consumer spending. If businesses aren't able to keep up with greater customer demand, they typically respond by raising prices, which would worsen inflation.

AP Writer Josh Boak contributed to this report.

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WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 14

COMMUNITY SUPPORT EVENT

WIN-LA in partnership with Virginia Avenue Park and the City of Santa Monica will distribute diapers, cleaning supplies and groceries to the first 100 households on a first-come, first served basis while supplies last. Begins at 12 p.m. at Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Ave., Santa Monica. For more information, call 424-222-9237.

BEAR SUPPLY HOUR

Bear Supply, named one of "The 100 Best Things in Comedy" in 2016 by The Comedy Bureau, is a fast-paced sketch and long form improv team, performing at M.i.'s Westside Comedy Theater, 1232-A 3rd St. Promenade, Santa Monica, CA every other Wednesday at 9 p.m. Every show is accompanied by a live DJ, creating a high-octane, freakishly entertaining and one-of-a-kind improvised spectacle. Bear Supply (SF Sketchfest, Miami Improv Festival, Las Vegas Improv Festival) is led by a cast of veteran improvisors. Featuring Joey Green, Shaun Boylan, James Heaney and Caroline Cotter. Tickets $10 and can be purchased at: https://www.westsidecomedy.com/events/event/bear-supply-hour/.

DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET:

Widely considered to be among the best on the west coast. Runs from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Arizona Ave and 2nd St.

THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 15

LOCALS' NIGHT

Locals' Night returns to the Santa Monica Pier from 3:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. with a host of activities. There will be a Books & Cookies storytime at the Merry Go-Round Building at 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. A Disco Renegade's Silent Disco will take place in the Merry Go-Round Building from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Performances on the main stage include Syreeta Neal, BLVCK H3RO and Mighty Love. A Classic Car Show will also take place from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

LIFE'S A COMEDY

Enjoy a night of amazing stand-up comedy at the Bamboo Bar and Restaurant, 10845 Venice Blvd., with comedians like Dante Chang, Tim McCray, Katherine Yoon, Adam Richmond, Mammal and Charlton Brio. Lineup subject to change. Doors 5 p.m., open mic 6 p.m., show 8 p.m. Tickets $15, can be purchased at: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lifes-a-comedy-february-stand-up-tickets-803239730657.

AUTHOR TALK

Author Ed Zwick will be discussing his book "Hits, Flops, and Other Illusions: My Fortysomething Years in Hollywood," a memoir from the director of films like "Blood Diamond" and "The Last Samurai." Begins at 5 p.m. at The Ann and Jerry Moss Theater at New Roads School, 3131 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica. Joining Zwick will be award-winning writer and director Patty Jenkins, known for the blockbuster "Wonder Woman" and Oscar-winning feature "Monster." General admission tickets $25, tickets plus a signed copy of Zwick's book $47. Additional books available for purchase at event. Face masks recommended. Purchase tickets at: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ed-zwick-with-patty-jenkins-tickets-810380488857.

FRIDAY | FEBRUARY 16

TRANSFORMATION MEDITATION

Join Shaman Durek and immerse yourself in the transformative experience of "Energy Spectrum," a profound in-person meditation journey designed to harmonize your mind, body, and spirit. Guided by Shaman Durek's profound wisdom and expertise, and enhanced by the ethereal production and music by Natalia Alava, this meditation will embark you on a sacred exploration of vibrational frequencies. Begins at 7 p.m. at RA MA Los Angeles, 1729 21st St., Santa Monica. Tickets $45, can be purchased at: https://www.universe.com/events/energy-spectrum-meditation-with-shaman-durek-tickets-TPCY19.

THE NIGHT SKY SHOW

The Night Sky Show is a short program with the latest news in space exploration and astronomy. The program uses freeware sky visualization tools to show you the constellations planets and deep sky objects in the Southern California night sky. The show will last about 30 minutes followed by a short Q&A when guests can type questions into a chat box. Begins online on Zoom at 7 p.m. For more information, visit: https://www.smc.edu/calendar/index.php#event-details/7a27266e-426d-438e-89dc-be7db92574df.

WOMEN OF SPACE SERIES

There is a long list of distinguished (and often under-appreciated) women who have made critical contributions to astronomical research and significant advances in the fields of astronomy and space exploration. The show - the second installment of the Women of Space series - will shine a light on more of these often-hidden figures. Features lecturer Sarah Vincent. Begins online on Zoom at 8 p.m. For more information, visit: https://www.smc.edu/calendar/index.php#event-details/d3502855-f43d-4721-957f-49edd05c2eb5.

DANCE AT THE ODYSSEY

Odyssey Theatre Ensemble returns with its annual six-week celebration of contemporary dance that has established the company's unique "Dance at the Odyssey" festival as the go-to place to view new work by cutting edge companies and choreographers. Featuring Galiana & Nikolchev's "The Useless Room." Starts at 8 p.m. at the Odyssey Theatre, 2055 S. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles. Tickets $25. For more, visit odysseytheatre.com.

BLACK VALENTINE'S

Harvelle's Santa Monica, 1432 4th St., hosts a "Black Valentine's" event featuring funk music artist Cliff Beach. The Berklee-trained singer/songwriter/keyboardist and DC native has created a style of music he coins as "Nu-funk," a hybrid of soul, traditional R&B, funk and neo-soul which he performs regularly throughout Southern California. Begins at 9:30 p.m. Tickets $10, two drink minimum. For more, visit santamonica.harvelles.com.

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