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2 **New construction** At JAMS.

3 **Small Business** Funding at risk.

4 **Insurance Hike** Shot down for now.

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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Exclusive look at the Shore Hotel's newly renovated bar and restaurant

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

The Shore Hotel in Santa Monica, built on the site of two former motels, opened in 2011 as a modern boutique hotel. Granted there were a few hiccups in its initial development, but now it is a LEED Gold (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified property that has become a familiar sight when taking a scenic stroll along Ocean Avenue.

It consists of two, 4-story buildings connected by a three-story glass bridge with 164 luxury rooms and four levels of subterranean parking for 294 cars. High-end exterior finishes such as

SEE **SHORE HOTEL** PAGE 5



Courtesy Photo

HOTEL: The Shore Hotel's new bar and restaurant will add even more options to the site.

Library showcases breadth of services during celebratory month



Courtesy Photo

LIBRARY: February was proclaimed by City Council as Library Lovers' Month.

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

Santa Monica's centers for information used this month to not only celebrate, but educate on its breadth of services.

February is Library Lovers' Month, a showcase of the city's six branches and a chance for the community to show its love to the reader's paradise. Throughout

SEE **LIBRARY** PAGE 12

Three arrested after fatal stabbing outside the Fairmont Bungalows

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

Three arrests have been made by the Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD) in connection with the fatal stabbing that killed one and injured another last weekend.

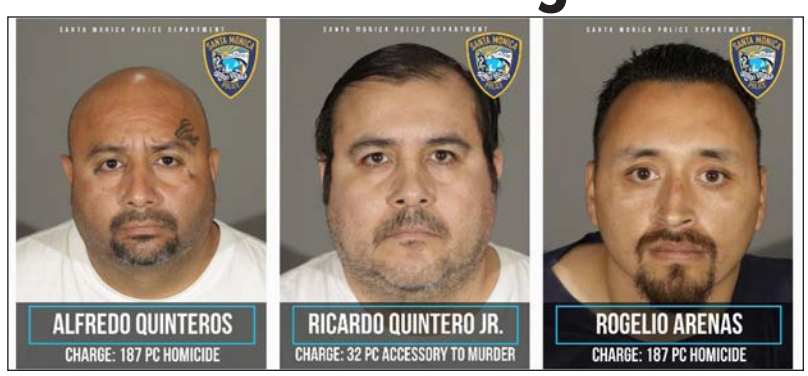
Officers responded to a report of a stabbing following after a verbal altercation at The Bungalow, part of the Fairmont Hotel located at 101 Wilshire Blvd, early on the morning of Saturday, Feb. 15 at approximately 1:50 a.m.

According to the SMPD, officers found two male victims suffering stab wounds and consequently personnel from both the Police Department and Fire Department provided immediate medical aid before transporting both victims to a local hospital.

One victim, 31-year-old Oscar Alfredo Gonzalez from Santa Maria, sustained critical injuries and, despite life-saving efforts, later succumbed to his wounds. The second victim was treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

Following a comprehensive investigation, detectives arrested two suspects on Monday, Feb. 17, and a third on Wednesday, Feb. 19. The suspects, all of whom have extensive criminal histories, were identified as Alfredo Quinteros (41) and Ricardo Quintero (42) – brothers from South Gate – and Rogelio Arenas (32) of Los Angeles.

SEE **ARRESTS** PAGE 6



Courtesy images

ARREST: Three men have been arrested for stabbing a man to death.



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PUBLIC NOTICE

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- Over almost 30 years, he sexually abused hundreds of boys and girls.
- Victims were often too scared or ashamed to tell their parents.
- Many victims have moved away and don't know they have a right to make a claim.
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JAMS turns the page with learning hub modernization

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

Learning has turned to the next chapter at John Adams Middle School, as the campus advanced its student hub this year.

On Wednesday, JAMS hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony with Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Staff, celebrating its modernized library space. Funded by Measure SMS bond money, the dynamic library not only includes a healthy selection of reading materials, but also socializing and collaboration spaces both in and outdoors.

The library construction, headed by Berliner Architects, revived the old library space by redesigning the entrance gallery and lounge, adding flexible learning and breakout spaces, and bringing in a collaborative room with new furnishings. Other enhancements include an upgraded conference room, a kitchen, an improved speaker system and interactive media boards.

The outdoor reading deck addition was also critical to the project, with the new library a space SMMUSD Superintendent Dr. Antonio Shelton called "an environment that invites collaboration, critical thinking, exploration and learning."

"Reading is the foundation of all learning, shaping the way our students engage with the world and setting the stage for lifelong success … as a district, we are committed to fostering a love of reading in every student, because when a child learns to read confidently, they gain the tools to explore new ideas, solve complex problems and dream without limits," Shelton said.

The Superintendent added that the space works well with district priorities of Project-Based Learning and fostering "a sense of belonging and well-being" for all students. Multiple students attested to this during the ceremony, highlighting the collaboration opportunities in the new area.

Of course, the old and new library's function stays the same as being a hub of literature, with the space laid out to feature alphabetized selections in every imaginable genre. As staff and students walked in on Wednesday, they saw stands such as "read the movie" with a copy of "Wicked," and a collection of Black History Month literature.

"This space represents an opportunity and environment where every student, regardless of background, has access to knowledge, creativity and a love for learning," JAMS Principal Martha Chacon added. "At JAMS, we know that reading is not just a skill, but it's a pathway and an opportunity. It fuels imagination, deepens understanding and builds the foundation of lifelong learning."

SMMUSD Chief Operations Officer Carey Upton said that this was a project talked about for years, including the addition of the outdoor deck which used to be a furniture storing space, now revived and brought "back to the students." Upton added that the project is one of several at the JAMS site, with his team already working on projects such as improving restrooms and locker room areas around the gymnasium, and changing windows in the childcare area.

The project Upton was most excited about is the new Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) building currently in design, with plans to demolish the existing science building this summer to make room for the STEM hub. The STEM building, he said, will take about two years to construct.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Downtown

Binge Free Festival Returns to Santa Monica Playhouse

Binge Free Festival, the month-long festival of FREE shows at Santa Monica Playhouse, returns for the ninth time this February. We're calling this one BFF '24 in '25. Why? The festival was originally scheduled for October 2024, but a water disaster that severely damaged our Main Stage auditorium mandated a postponement to facilitate repairs.

Fortunately, our two other stages, The Other Space and The Artists' Entrance Studio, were unaffected, and shows have continued. We plan to re-open the Main Stage with the opening of our new Binge Free Festival.

Santa Monica Playhouse has been a cultural treasure in the seaside community for 64 years. Now, the Playhouse is giving love back with its Ninth Annual Binge Free Festival, five weeks of free performances, workshops, and music in Santa Monica's ONLY fringe festival. The BFF's primary focus is on Santa Monica and Los Angeles-based artists, but there will be exciting international artists on view as well.

Santa Monica Playhouse is located at 1211 Fourth Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. This is just south of Wilshire. There is a municipal parking facility across the street. All events are FREE, but reservations are REQUIRED. Some events are family-friendly (See the descriptions below). There will be something for everyone.

To reserve your FREE tickets for an event, call 310-394-9779 ext. 1, or e-mail theatre@santamonicaplayhouse.com. When making reservations, state the name of the show that you want to see, how many seats you wish to reserve, your full name, and your contact number.

The Festival will run from February 25 through March 30.

Binge Free Festival '24 in '25 is presented through generous grants from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, the City of Santa Monica, the Santa Monica Arts Commission, the We Are Santa Monica Fund, and Playhouse PALS.

SUBMITTED BY PHILIP SOKOLOFFA

LET US KNOW YOUR OPINION

Santa Monica Daily Press editor@smdp.com

Funding for small businesses — a big source of jobs — at risk under Trump



Photo by Ariana Drehsler for CalMatters

BUSINESS: Liz Perez, owner of GC Green, a general contracting and consulting firm that focuses on clean energy, at her home in Vista on Jan. 31, 2025. Perez and other small business owners and advocates say uncertainty around Trump's orders could lead businesses to reduce investment and hiring.

LEVI SUMAGAYSAY
CalMatters

California's small businesses — employers to more than half the state's workforce — are staring down what some owners, experts and advocates say could be immense negative consequences from President Donald Trump's slew of executive orders.

Trump's embattled federal funding freeze and anti-diversity push have seeded uncertainty about the economy, jobs and spending on infrastructure and innovation.

The freeze, imposed on Jan. 27, affected hundreds of billions of dollars for thousands of federal programs, including many aimed at small businesses. After states including California filed suit, a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order putting the freeze on hold. Since then there has been more legal wrangling, including a court order stating that Trump failed to comply with the initial ruling.

The administration has said funding for small business would not be paused, but owners and advocates are not sure if that will prove true, and say uncertainty about the freeze may already be doing damage.

Liz Perez, who owns a small general contracting firm in San Diego County, said news of the funding freeze gave some people in her Native American community "heart attacks." She said some projects that were under construction had to be temporarily halted while those in charge tried to figure out what was going on.

"I've never seen tribal leaders — the most put-together leaders — so frazzled," Perez said.

Perez and other small business owners, allies and experts worry that a freeze could mean fewer opportunities for entrepreneurs to start and grow businesses, which could lead to fewer jobs and less spending and investment for communities, industries and larger businesses.

Small businesses with fewer than 20 employees accounted for 29% of jobs in California, and businesses with 20 to 100 employees accounted for 30% of jobs in the state as of the end of 2022, according to an analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data by the Public Policy Institute of California.

California, the nation's most populous state, is the biggest recipient of Small Business Administration loans, with $1.15 billion in loans approved for this year. Not all loans from the agency are federally funded, but they are guaranteed by the government. The loans funded by the agency, which could be most at risk from the freeze, include disaster loans and microloans.

Other federal funds that help small businesses and were on the list of programs to be frozen include the $25 million for the State Small Business Credit Initiative, which the Finance Department said is in the state's 2025-2026 fiscal year budget. Community development financial institutions, which provide banking services to small businesses, are also facing a "real and immediate threat" to their funding that includes possible cancellation of contracts, the CDFI Coalition said in an email to its members this week that was seen by CalMatters.

Simon Brown, spokesperson for national advocacy group Small Business Majority, said small business owners, who "struggle to access capital from all institutions at all levels," count on the Small Business Administration as a key source of help. Although he is unclear about whether funding from the agency will be

SEE **BUSINESS** PAGE 12



Surf report

WATER TEMP: **58.1**

FRIDAY
POOR TO FAIR

SURF: Shin to knee
0-1FT

Overlapping WNW swells and possible AM offshore flow. Watching for overlapping run of WNW swells to bump back up a peg heading into the weekend. Slight nudge up in size from Thursday with light AM wind currently on the cards. The tide will be a little more full for the dawn patrol but shouldn't impact quality too much.

SATURDAY
POOR TO FAIR

SURF: Knee to thigh
1-2FT

Small to fun, mid period WNW waves on tap to start the weekend. Another day of favorable AM winds. The run of rideable WNW swell continues into the weekend. The predawn high tide shifts a little later so probably best to sand bag a bit on the dawn patrol session. Weak offshore flow in the morning then afternoon wind looks pretty light at this point.

Weather

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 76. North northeast wind 5 to 10 mph becoming northwest in the afternoon.
Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 52.
Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 71.
Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 53.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2025/02/21	Fri	02:55 AM	4.25	H
2025/02/21	Fri	11:53 AM	0.56	L
2025/02/22	Sat	04:24 AM	4.50	H
2025/02/22	Sat	12:35 PM	0.03	L
2025/02/22	Sat	8:02 PM	3.17	H
2025/02/22	Sat	11:09 PM	2.88	L
2025/02/23	Sun	05:28 AM	4.94	H
2025/02/23	Sun	1:09 PM	-0.46	L
2025/02/23	Sun	8:01 PM	3.39	H
2025/02/24	Mon	12:06 AM	2.51	L
2025/02/24	Mon	06:18 AM	5.43	H
2025/02/24	Mon	1:40 PM	-0.86	L
2025/02/24	Mon	8:14 PM	3.65	H
2025/02/25	Tue	12:50 AM	2.04	L
2025/02/25	Tue	07:01 AM	5.86	H
2025/02/25	Tue	2:09 PM	-1.15	L
2025/02/25	Tue	8:32 PM	3.96	H
2025/02/26	Wed	01:31 AM	1.55	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: 2/17
4 44 47 52 57
Power#: 9
Jackpot: 195 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 2/18
1 20 25 58 61
Mega#: 22
Jackpot: 165 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 2/15
1 9 26 29 47
Mega#: 20
Jackpot: 26 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 2/18
3 10 14 20 26

Daily 3
Draw Date: 2/18
EVENING: 5 1 0
Draw Date: 2/18
MIDDAY: 3 1 3

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 2/18
1st: 10 - Solid Gold
2nd: 07 - Eureka
3rd: 03 - Hot Shot
Race Time: 1:43.03

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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Summons

Summons (Citación Judicial) SUM 100Case No: 24SMCV02567NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: (AVISO ALDEMANDADO): PATRICK MCCANEY, an individual;JENNIFER MCCANEY, an individual; B.M., a minor;and Does1 to 20, Inclusive,YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTÁDEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):SAVANAH KOUSNETZ, an individual,NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decideagainst you without your being heard unless yourespond within 30 days. Read the information below.You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summonsand legal papers are served on you to file a writtenresponse at this court and have a copy served on thecross-complaint. A letter or phone call will not protectyou. Your written response must be in proper legalform if you want the court to hear your case. Theremay be a court form that you can use for yourresponse. You can find these court forms and moreinformation at the California Courts Online Self-HelpCenter (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your countylaw library, or the courthouse nearest you. If youcannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a feewaiver form. If you do not file your response on time,you may lose the case by default, and your wages,money, and property may be taken without furtherwarning from the court.There are other legal requirements. You may want tocall an attorney right away. If you do not know anattorney, you may want to call an attorney referralservice. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may beeligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legalservices program. You can locate these nonprofitgroups at the California Legal Services Website(www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California CourtsOnline Self-Help Center(www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting yourlocal court or county bar association. NOTE: Thecourt has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs onany settlement or arbitration award of $10,000 ormore in a civil case. The court's lien must be paidbefore the court will dismiss the case.¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentrode 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sinescuchar su versión. Lea la información acontinuación.Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que leentreguen esta citación y papeles legales parapresentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte yhacer que se entregue una copia alcontrademandante. Una carta o una llamadatelefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escritotiene que estar en el formato legal correcto si deseaque procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible quehaya un formulario que usted pueda usar para surespuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de lacorte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de lasCortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en labiblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que lequede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota depresentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le déun formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si nopresenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el casopor incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar susueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia.Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable quellame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce aun abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión aabogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, esposible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtenerservicios legales gratuitos de un programa deservicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrarestos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web deCalifornia Legal Services,(www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayudade las Cortes de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) oponiéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio deabogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tienederecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos exentospor imponer un gravamen sobre cualquierrecuperación de $10,000 ó más de valor recibidamediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje enun caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar elgravamen de la corte antes de que la corte puedadesechar el caso.The name and address of the court is (El Nombre ydirección de la Corte es): Superior Court of California,County of Los Angeles, Santa Monica Courthouse1725 Main Street, Los Angeles, CA 90401The name, address, and telephone number ofcross-complaint attorney, or cross-complaint withoutan attorney, is (El nombre, la dirección y el número deteléfono del abogado del demandante, o deldemandante que no tiene abogado, es):Shawn Gleizer , Impact Attorneys, P.C., 15303Ventura Blvd., Suite 1650 Sherman Oaks, CA 91403.Tel: 818-350-2349. Date (fecha) 05/30/2024 David WSlayton executive officer Clerk, by (Secretario), J.Hernandez Deputy (adjunto)

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Big homeowner rate hike from State Farm shot down by California regulator

LEVI SUMAGAYSAY
CalMatters



Photo by Fred Greaves for CalMatters
INSURANCE: Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara has rejected a request from State Farm to hike home insurance rates in California by 22% on average. The increase was billed by State Farm as an "emergency" measure after the Los Angeles fires. Lara spoke at an event at CalMatters' studio in Sacramento on Sept. 19, 2024.

California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara recently rejected State Farm's request for "emergency" rate increases, setting up what could be a highly consequential showdown with the state's biggest insurer — and going against the recommendation of his staff experts.

Lara, who has been urging insurance companies to write policies in the state again despite increasing wildfire risks, says in a letter to State Farm executives that he needs more information before he can approve an increase. He asks them to appear before him in person on Feb. 26 at the Insurance Department's office in Oakland to answer his questions at an "informal conference."

"The burden is on State Farm to demonstrate that interim relief is warranted under the circumstances," the commissioner says in his letter. "My goal is to make sure policyholders do not have to pay more than is required. In light of the recent Los Angeles wildfires, State Farm's customers need real answers about why they are being asked to pay more and what responsibility the company's leadership is taking to get its financial house in order."

State Farm said in a written statement today that it "must seriously consider its options within the California insurance market going forward."

"We are very disappointed the Commissioner ignored his department's recommendation to take the critical and necessary step to approve State Farm General's request for interim rate increases," the statement said, adding that the company has "gone to great lengths" to answer the questions the commissioner asked in his letter.

When CalMatters asked State Farm whether it plans to be present at Lara's meeting, spokesperson Steve Baldwin said in an email: "We are aware of the Commissioner's letter and upcoming meeting and have nothing additional to add at this time."

The company last week asked for interim rate increases averaging 22% for homeowners, 15% for renters and 38% for condominium owners, saying it had already paid out $1 billion in claims from the Los Angeles County fires so far and expected to "pay out significantly more." It wanted to be able to raise premiums starting in May.

Before making the interim request, State Farm had been waiting for the Insurance Department to approve its rate increase requests from last year.

Lara acknowledged in the letter that his staff recommended last week that he approve the company's request, but said "my primary responsibility is to the people of California."

In his letter, among the things Lara asks for are an explanation of what has changed between State Farm's request last summer and now; what else the company is doing to improve its financial situation besides raising rates; and whether State Farm's parent company would be able to step in to help. The commissioner also asks how granting the company its request would affect its 2023 decision to continue not writing new policies in California, which was followed by its decision last year not to renew the policies of tens of thousands of customers in the state.

Lara mentions in the letter that with his department's approval, the company received rate increases of 6.9%, 6.9% and 20% in 2022, 2023 and 2024, respectively. "In the absence of non-wildfire catastrophic losses in 2022 and 2023, how does State Farm explain the significant decrease in its policyholder surplus?" he asks.

Dan Krause, chief executive of State Farm General, the California arm of State Farm Group, said in a letter to Lara dated Feb. 3 that the company has nearly 3 million policies in the state, including 1 million homeowner policies. He asked for the commissioner to bypass the usual hearings, which are required by state law when an insurer requests rate increases above 7% and the increases have been challenged by an intervenor. Krause wrote that "there is simply too much at stake for SFG's customers and the broader market if any rate increase has to wait on a full hearing or other resolution in the normal course."

In the insurance department's recommendation for approving the rate increases sought by State Farm, the staff noted that the proposed agreement would have been subject to refunds promised by the company if the department eventually approves rates lower than the interim rates.

The meeting at which Lara is asking State Farm executives to appear in person will also include Consumer Watchdog, the group that intervened last year when the company filed its rate requests.

Consumer Watchdog last week urged the commissioner to reject State Farm's request for the interim rate increases. In a press release, the group accused the company of "misleading policyholders into believing its

SEE **INSURANCE** PAGE 12

COMMUNITY NEWS

California

Zbur Introduces New Legislation to Protect Attorneys Defending Essential Health Care Rights

Democratic Caucus Chair and Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur (D-Hollywood) introduced AB 715, the California Attorney Protection Act, designed to safeguard attorneys from disciplinary action when providing legal services to patients, medical providers, and others seeking or offering health care services that are lawful in California but may be illegal in other states.

Sponsored by the Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California (PPAC), Equality California (EQCA), and the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA), AB 715 strengthens California's leadership in protecting reproductive rights and gender-affirming care, and builds on California's broader strategy to combat attacks on health care and maintain its role as a safe haven for individuals seeking care that respects their rights and dignity. The bill is co-authored by Assemblymembers Maggie Krell (D-Sacramento) and Liz Ortega (D-San Leandro).

"As hostile state legislatures across the country criminalize reproductive health care and gender-affirming care, California must continue to lead as a beacon of justice," Assemblymember Zbur said. "AB 715 ensures that attorneys in our state can provide critical legal assistance to patients, providers, and families without fear of reprisal for defending rights that are fundamental in California. This bill is not just about protecting attorneys — it's about protecting the people they represent."

In recent years, a wave of legislation in other states has sought to punish those providing or aiding access to sensitive health care services, such as abortion and gender-affirming care. These actions have created legal uncertainty for attorneys who defend the rights of patients and providers. AB 715 ensures that the State Bar Act is updated to reflect California's commitment to protecting these essential health care rights and the legal professionals who advocate for them.

"Amidst ongoing attacks on sensitive services like abortion and gender-affirming care, it is critical we take proactive measures to protect the legal professionals advocating for and on behalf of patients and providers, as well as to ensure California remains a safe haven for reproductive health care and its advocates," said Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California CEO and President Jodi Hicks.

"Over the past several years, California has greatly expanded legal protections for doctors and other health professionals to ensure they can provide essential healthcare without fear of punishment or retribution. California lawyers who fight to secure clients' access to critical healthcare deserve these same safeguards," said Equality California Executive Director Tony Hoang. "AB 715 is an important and timely measure that reaffirms California's unwavering commitment to reproductive freedom and bodily autonomy."

"Lawyers play a critical role in upholding California's protections for reproductive and gender-affirming care, but extremist efforts in other states create risk for attorneys who undertake this important work," said Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles President Noelle Natoli. "The Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles recognizes the urgent need for a shield law for lawyers, and this bill offers the protection and reassurance our members and attorneys across the state need."

AB 715 will be referred to policy committee in the coming weeks.

SUBMITTED BY VIENNA MONTAGUE

Los Angeles

Instacart Launches 'Classrooms Carts' Initiative To Crowdsource Donations For Los Angeles County Public Schools Affected By Wildfires

Instacart (NASDAQ: CART), the leading grocery technology company in North America, today launched its 'Classroom Carts' initiative, which supports 28 Los Angeles County public and charter elementary, middle and high schools and nearly 15,000 students impacted by the recent wildfires. Built on Instacart's Community Carts tool, Classroom Carts empowers people nationwide to support students and teachers by donating essential supplies directly to impacted schools through the Instacart App as the Los Angeles community works to rebuild in the wake of one of the most significant natural disasters in California history.

Instacart partnered with the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the Pasadena Unified School District and the Los Angeles Unified School District to identify schools in need. Instacart's Board of Directors is kicking off the Classroom Carts initiative by donating a total of $1 million to the Greater Los Angeles Education Foundation, the Pasadena Education Foundation and the LAUSD Foundation to supplement the Instacart community's contributions to the 28 participating schools. Company advisors and outside firms like Cooley and Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz have also joined in to contribute additional funds to the foundations.

"The recent wildfires have had a devastating impact on the Los Angeles community, with schools being some of the hardest-hit institutions. Teachers and administrators are working around the clock to restore a sense of normalcy, but they can't do it alone," said Fidji Simo, CEO and Board Chair of Instacart and a Los Angeles resident. "With Classroom Carts, we're giving people across the country a simple and meaningful way to step in and directly contribute the items schools have said they need. Through this initiative, we can help ensure that students and teachers across LA have access to essential supplies, allowing them to reconnect and engage in the classroom."

Tony Thurmond, the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, said, "Our school communities in Southern California need our unwavering support as they face the impact of these devastating wildfires. Time and again, our education community has shown remarkable resilience and generosity in the face of crisis. I'm grateful for generous partners like Instacart as we stand together to support our students, families, and educators as they recover and rebuild."

The wildfires caused extensive damage, destroying classrooms, libraries, and other vital school resources, meaning many schools now face critical shortages of essential supplies like notebooks, pencils, rulers, art supplies and more. Classroom Carts allows anyone across the country to offer support by opening the Instacart App and selecting the Classroom Carts banner or visiting www.instacart.com/donate. Customers can then select from the 28 participating schools and shop for as many items as they choose from a curated list of items based on each school's specific needs. Instacart partners with a variety of retailers in the Los Angeles area that carry school and office supplies, home goods, technology and more. A local shopper will shop and deliver donated items and Instacart will consolidate donated items for delivery to each school. The company is waiving all delivery and service fees on every Classroom Carts order.

The Classroom Carts initiative builds on Instacart's commitment to using its technology to support communities. The company's initial LA Fire Relief Community Carts campaign has provided more than 50,000 essential items to 17 local YMCAs and community food banks across the region.

SUBMITTED BY LAUREN WILLIAMS

SHORE HOTEL

FROM PAGE 1

stainless steel panels, Trespa Meteon façade cladding, point-supported glass walls and integral color plaster accentuate the hotel's unique architecture and ocean-front setting.

Unknown to many, which is a credit to CEO and Co-Owner Jon Farzam and his team, the hotel has been undergoing some significant upgrades over the past 12 months. Yes, it's been impossible to not notice the construction crews working just beyond the front desk, but the actual extent of change is vastly understated.

The gym has been transformed into a conference room and business center. The Shore is now partnering with John Reed Fitness, currently at 1202 3rd Street Promenade, so that every guest has access to that facility.

The main corridor leading from the concierge has also been remodeled with a very tasteful, light wood look and feel, an aesthetic that continues into the main dining area. Then there's a brand new bar that shares its space simultaneously inside and outside, on either side of a glass partition that continues the line of the exterior wall. The counter even features a touch charging function actually integrated into the marble, so you can charge your mobile devices just by having them next to you.

Then there's the kitchen. And this is the part of the project that Executive Chef Todd Bohak, a graduate of the Art Institute of Los Angeles in Santa Monica, is particularly proud of. "It's an all-electric kitchen now," he said, adding. "We're running electric grills, electric flat tops and electric fryers." All that plus electric induction cooking tops and a ventless, turbo hood fan too.

The truly remarkable thing is that until very recently, while this considerable challenge was being completed, the restaurant food was being cooked and prepared in a modified trailer at the back of the hotel.

The 76-cover restaurant will now feature closer to 120 covers, with more tables being added to the outside area and closer to the sidewalk to emulate a more lively, European-style street dining experience.

"We're going to be creating 'cabana packages' that will include food and drinks [and] bottles of wine or champagne as we see fit," said Conrad Gass, Director of Food and Beverages. "We've just about doubled the number we used to have plus additional day beds that are going to be fitted [together with] this new, shiny, amazing bar. It's technically considered two, because it's split down the middle by a big sheet of glass."

The menu will also be different and both Bohak and Farzam plan to keep it seasonal with changes being made every three months or so, but when it officially opens in just a few weeks the following will be on offer.

For an appetizer, diners can choose from options like Burrata Ovoline or a Rainbow Beet Salad. The former consists of 4oz of BelGioioso burrata cheese, tri-color baby tomatoes, fresh herb salad, pine nuts, balsamic glaze and extra virgin olive oil. The latter is made up of heirloom baby beets, Persian cucumber, frisée, purple radish, pickled red onion, hazelnuts and creamy feta dressing.

"We're using a lot of organic, sustainably sourced and locally sourced products as much as possible so we can craft delicious creations, perfect for each season," Bohak said.

For the entree, guests can choose from the Wild Mushroom Truffled Risotto, Seared Pacific Sockeye Salmon or Domestic Lamb Chops. The vegetarian option includes farmer's market mushrooms, parmigiano reggiano and fresh herbs. The fish offering includes forbidden black rice, grilled broccolini and lemon cream sauce and it's cooked with coconut ginger and lemongrass. Finally, the Sonoma-sourced 8oz bone-in lamb chops are presented with scalloped potatoes, sauté spinach and rosemary demi.

And to round off the menu, a choice of Grand Marnier Créme Chantilly and Mixed Berries or Affogato, an Italian dessert comprising a scoop of vanilla gelato, topped with hot espresso and a shot of liqueur.

Farzam said that there isn't a hard opening date just yet, but it's very close now. He's very excited to see the modifications go live as business has suffered in 2025.

"We had a lot of cancellations in January. Shortly after the fires broke out, we went back down to Covid levels and a 10 or 15% occupancy level. It hurt us a lot," Farzam said. But he's optimistic and even plans a big opening party. With these timely improvements, it's easy to see why and they will almost certainly pay dividends as we head at flank speed straight at tourist season.

The Shore Hotel is located at 1515 Ocean Ave. For more information, visit shorehotel.com and on Instagram at @shorehotelsm and @shoresidesantamonica.

scott.snowden@smdp.com



ARRESTS

FROM PAGE 1

The charges and bail are as follows:

• Alfredo Quinteros (DOB: 12-15-1983); 187 PC – Homicide; No Bail

• Ricardo Quintero Jr. (DOB: 08-30-1982); 32 PC – Accessory; No Bail

• Rogelio Arenas (DOB: 08-27-1992) 187 PC – Homicide; No Bail

This remains an active investigation, and detectives are continuing to gather evidence. Anyone with information related to this case is encouraged to contact Detective Lucero at hilda.lucero@santamonica.gov, Sergeant Lozano at alfonso.lozano@santamonica.gov or the Watch Commander 24 hours at 310-458-8427.

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Santa Monica Daily Press

Classifieds

FOR QUOTES PLEASE CALL 310-573-8074

or email cindy@smdp.com

CLASSIFICATIONS					
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Furniture	Travel	Commercial Lease	Services	Health and Beauty	Obituaries
	Vacation Rentals	Real Estate	Computer Services	Fitness	Tutoring

Summons

STATEMENT OF DAMAGES(Personal Injury or Wrongful Death) Civ 050Case No: 24PSCV00443Attorney for Miao YangATTORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY(Name and Address):Michael E. Israel, Esq. [SBN 263946] Tel Phone 626-317-0033Demidchik Law Firm, P.C.17800 Castleton Street, Suite 605CIty of Industry, CA 91748SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OFSTREET ADDRESS:MAILING ADDRESS: 400 Civic Center PlazaCITY AND ZIP CODE: Pomona, 91766BRANCH NAME: Pomona Courthouse SouthPLAINTIFF: Miao YangDEFENDANT: Lin MA and Sheng GuoSTATEMENT OF DAMAGES(Personal Injury or Wrongful Death)To (name of one defendant only): Sheng GuoPlaintiff (name of one plaintiff only):Miao Yangseeks damages in the above-entitled action, as follows:1. General damages AMOUNT a. Pain, suffering, and inconvenience. $ 1,000,000.00 b. Emotional distress. $ 500,000.00 c. Loss of consortium. $ d. Loss of society andcompanionship (wrongful death actions only) . $ e. Other (specify) $f. Other (specify) $g. Continued on Attachment 1.g.2. Special damagesa. Medical expenses (to date) . $ b. Futuremedical expenses (present value) . $ c. Loss of earnings (todate) . $ 200,000.00 d. Loss of future earningcapacity (present value) . $ 1,000,000.00 e. Property damage. $ f. Funeral expenses (wrongfuldeath actions only) . $ g. Future contributions (present value)(wrongful death actions only) . $ h. Value of personal service, advice, or training(wrongful death actions only) . $ i. Other (specify) $j. Other (specify) $k. Continued on Attachment 2.k.3. Punitive damages: Plaintiff reserves the right to seek punitive damages in the amount of (specify).. $ 1,000,000.00when pursuing a judgment in the suit filed against you.Date: 11/5/2024(TYPE OR PRINT NAME) MICHAEL E ISRAEL(SIGNATURE OF PLAINTIFF OR ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF) MICHAEL E ISRAELPROOF OF SERVICE(After having the other party served as described below, with any of the documents identified in item 1, have theperson who servedThe documents complete this Proof of Service. Plaintiff cannot serve these papers.)1. I served thea. Statement of Damagesc. by servingOTHER SERVED BY PUBLICATION2. Manner of service (check proper box):f. Other (specify code section):SERVED BY PUBLICATION

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25STCP00201 Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles Petition of Stephen Leander Castaneda for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner or Attorney: Stephen Leander Castaneda with this court for a decree of changing names as follows: Stephen Leander Castaneda to Stephen Leander Smith . The court orders that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Notice of Hearing: Date 04/04/2025 Time: 8:30 a.m, Dept: 45 Room: 529 The address of the court is SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA – COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES Alhambra Courthouse 111 North Hill Los Angeles, CA 90012. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: Santa Monica Daily Press

HOURS MONDAY - FRIDAY 9:00am - 5:00pm
LOCATION 1640 5th Street, Suite 218, Santa Monica, CA 90401

Santa Monica Daily Press office (310) 458-7737

HOA HOMEFRONT

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Is Your HOA Ready for Electronic Voting?

KELLY G. RICHARDSON, ESQ. CCAL

California law now allows HOAs to conduct member votes electronically. Civil Code Sections 5105, 5115, 5120 and 5125 have been amended to give HOAs the choice, but HOAs must know the requirements to exercise this very helpful option.

A new Civil Code Section 5105(i) allows HOAs to adopt election rule changes providing for electronic voting, despite any language in the bylaws or CC&Rs requiring only paper ballots. However, votes on regular or special assessments may still not be electronic – that one topic of membership voting must still be by the "old school" paper ballot method. To avoid confusion, next time your HOA is pursuing bylaw or CC&R amendments, consider including amendments conforming to the law revisions.

The new election rules must require the HOA to notify members of: 1)Their right to opt out of electronic voting; 2)Their current chosen voting method; 3)If they have selected electronic voting, the email address to be used; 4)An explanation that they can opt out of voting and how they can do so; and 5)The deadline to opt out. This notification must be sent to each member at least 30 days before the deadline to change their preferred voting method, and that deadline in turn must be at least 90 days before the election. So, it means HOAs wanting to use electronic voting will need to start the process at least 120 days ahead of the actual voting.

The HOA must send paper ballots to members who have timely opted out of electronic voting or to members on which the HOA does not have an email address and must keep a list of how members have opted to vote. Members opting to vote electronically must provide a valid email address to the HOA. If the HOA uses electronic voting, its election rules must ban nomination of candidates from the floor.

At the same time as ballots are normally mailed out (30 days before the voting deadline), electronic voting instructions must be sent to members voting electronically. Just as with paper ballots, which are irrevocable once sent to the Inspector Of Elections, electronic votes are also irrevocable. Electronic votes are counted toward the membership meeting quorum as if the voter were present.

Per amendments to Civil Code Section 5110(b), electronic voting must be conducted by the Inspector Of Elections, who must ensure that their system protects the secrecy of votes, authenticates member identity and that ballots are not altered in transit, transmits receipts to voting members, and separates the voter's identity from the vote cast. So as a practical matter, this requires the electronic voting service provider to act as the Inspector Of Elections.

One wonderful aspect of the new law is the new Civil Code 5115(g)(2), which says that in governing document amendment elections the proposed amendments can be sent electronically. Until now, a complete copy of the amendments had to be sent along with the ballots, which often added great expense.

Just as with paper ballots, under Civil Code 5120 the electronic vote tally sheet may not be viewed by anyone, including the manager and HOA members, until the time for opening and counting of ballots.

Also, HOAs can amend their CC&Rs to provide for an automatic "opt in" of members to email communications. Has your HOA done this?

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

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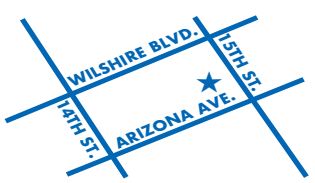
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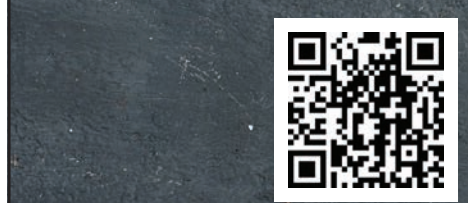
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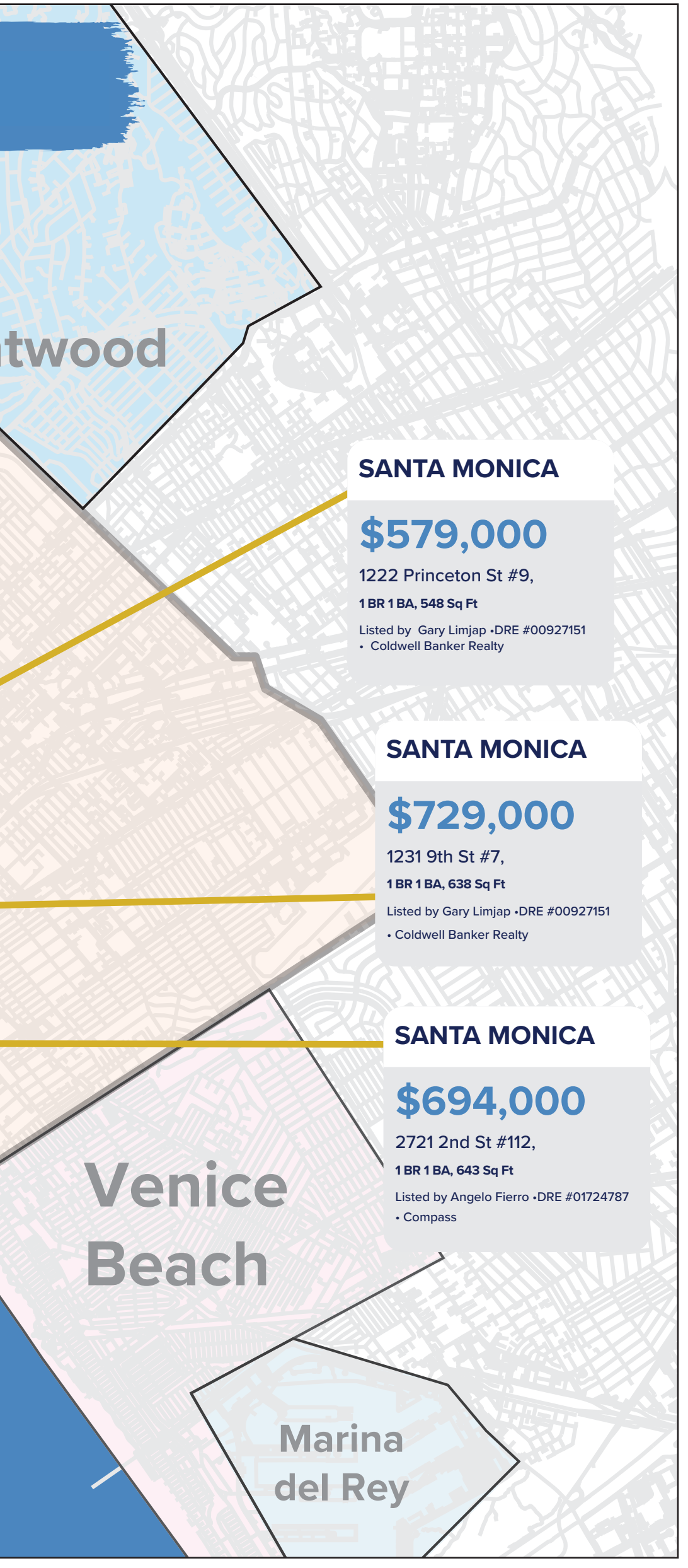
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FRIDAY | FEBRUARY 21

WHIPLASH
11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Propeller Gallery, 3026 Airport Ave. Santa Monica Cultural Affairs, in collaboration with Art at the Airport, is proud to announce the opening of "WHIPLASH: Art In The Ever-Changing Now," a groundbreaking exhibition that explores the profound and dynamic shifts shaping our world today. Curated by Rebecca Youssef, Alexandra Dillon and April Banks.

SATURDAY | FEBRUARY 22

AUTHOR EVENT
4:30 - 5:30 p.m. 1113 Montana Ave. Zibby's Bookshop is excited to welcome Dr. Jay Zigmont and Florence Wlodarski to celebrate the essential and comprehensive personal finance and money management guide for Childfree and Permanently Childless people, "The Childfree Guide to Life and Money: Make Your Finances Simple So Your Life Without Kids Can Be Amazing." General admission free, copy of the book $21. To purchase, visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/author-event-dr-jay-zigmont-x-florence-wlodarski-tickets-1218091266769.

SUNDAY | FEBRUARY 23

LAST NIGHT OF AUTUMN
4 - 5 p.m. Morgan-Wixson Theatre, 2627 Pico Blvd. Get ready for a magical journey that blends the rich traditions of Persian storytelling with the excitement of musical theater. "The Last Night of Autumn" is a captivating, family-friendly production that brings an ancient Iranian legend to life in English. Featuring an enchanting mix of Persian and English songs, poetry and dance , this musical is perfect for children 6 and up, as well as adults. Tickets $25-$60, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/last-night-of-autumn-tickets-1124781374369.

MONDAY | FEBRUARY 24

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

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

TUESDAY | FEBRUARY 25

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

COMMUNITY GAME NIGHT
7 - 11 p.m. Two Bit Circus, 1220 3rd Street Promenade. Join MindshareLA for a fun-filled evening of dozens of free games and laughter at Two Bit Circus. This will be a great way to unwind and connect with each other in a fun, relaxed setting and full bar. Tickets from $17.85, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mindsharelas-community-game-night-at-two-bit-circus-tickets-1232179444889.

WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 26

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS CLUB
4:30 - 6 p.m. Multipurpose Room, Santa Monica Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. Join the adventure for one-shot sessions with characters you have created or pick-up a readymade character for the day's journey. All materials provided. For ages 9-14.

THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 27

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

CANNABIS EQUITY WORKSHOP
6 - 8 p.m. Annex Room, Pico Branch Library, 2201 Pico Blvd. Participate in the second community workshop on cannabis equity to hear a brief recap of the preliminary findings of the equity assessment and to hear a range of program development options designed to address inequities and foster inclusivity within the cannabis industry.

UPLIFTING BLACK LEGACY
7 - 10 p.m. Annenberg Community Beach House, 415 Pacific Coast Hwy. Join for an evening of performance and discussion celebrating the lineage of Black storytelling and labor. Los Angeles-based choreographer Marjani Forté-Saunders performs a rare work-in-progress rendition of "Chicken Soup," a solo choreographed by Blondell Cummings in 1981 and designated an "American Masterpiece" by the National Endowment for the Arts in 2006. The performance will be followed by a conversation with Forté-Saunders and other panelists on what it means to inherit the blueprint of a work and more widely what it means to build upon the deep legacies of Black radical experimentation. To RSVP, visit: https://www.santamonica.gov/events/4s4sx1gxngxzyww0wr-fr4rx6c5/202502271900.

FRIDAY | FEBRUARY 28

GRILLED CHEESE & BEER NIGHT
7:30 - 10 p.m. Andrew's Cheese Shop, 728 Montana Ave. A dinner featuring a curated menu of decadent open face grilled cheese sandwiches expertly paired with artisanal beers from around the world. It starts with a starter salad, followed by four courses of sandwiches paired with four beers, and a dessert course of an imperial stout or sour beer float with French vanilla ice cream. Tickets $75, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/andrews-february-grilled-cheese-beer-night-tickets-1222918113999.

SATURDAY | MARCH 1

COMPOST GIVEAWAY
9 a.m. - 2 p.m. City Yards, 2500 Michigan Ave. Join for Resource Recovery and Recycling's quarterly compost giveaway. Please bring gloves and containers if you're picking up compost - a limited supply of bags are available. This is a self-service event so please be prepared to load your own compost. Also giving away free food scrap pails, one per household while supplies last. This event is open to all Santa Monica residents with proof of residency.

STORYPALOOZA TAKE & MAKE KIT AND BOOK GIVEAWAY
10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Montana Branch Library, 1704 Montana Ave. Join for a celebration of the imaginative world of children's literature. Cardboard Rocket Ship Take & Make Kit and book giveaway, while supplies last. Sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Santa Monica. For families.

AUTHOR EVENT WITH PATRICK RENNA
10 - 11 a.m. 1113 Montana Ave. Zibby's Bookshop is excited to welcome comedian, actor, producer and author Patrick Renna to celebrate his new book "A Little Slugger's Guide to The Unwritten Rules of Baseball and Life!" Ticket plus a signed copy of the book $19, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/author-event-with-patrick-renna-tickets-1225448091229.

SATURDAY SOUL
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. MUD\WTR, 2515 Main St. Live music, performances, connection and surprises every time. A modern-day variety show with a dose of gospel and a lot of fun. All tickets are donation-based, $25 is suggested. To RSVP, visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/saturday-soul-your-feel-good-weekend-reset-tickets-1225232145329.

PICTURE BOOK READING
10:30 - 11 a.m. Youth Activity Room, Santa Monica Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. "Not-a-Box City" picture book reading with author Antoinette Portis. Attendees receive free books, while supplies last. Space is limited; first come, first served. For families.

HOW TO LIVE LIKE A MILLIONAIRE WHEN YOU'RE A MILLION SHORT
2:30 - 3:30 p.m. Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 4th St. In her breezy, humorous style, comedienne and bestselling author Marilyn Anderson provides tons of money-saving tips on how to save thousands of dollars on entertainment, shopping, restaurants, health, beauty, home décor and more. Includes post-show reception with Ms. Anderson. To RSVP, visit: https://www.showclix.com/event/how-to-live-like-a-millionaire-a-bff-24-in-25-free-event.

BARBARA WILLIAMS' LEAVING
5:30 - 7 p.m. Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 4th St. From sitting outside skid row hotel bars while her father was inside hustling up logging work over mugs of beer, to socializing with presidents and Hollywood Royalty, Barbara Williams recounts lessons learned and the lifeline her acting career gave her. Includes post-show reception with Ms. Williams. To RSVP, visit: https://www.santamonicaplayhouse.com/the-bff-calendar-of-events.html.

SUNDAY | MARCH 2

BUILDING LEGACIES TOGETHER
11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Annenberg Community Beach House, 415 Pacific Coast Hwy. The Santa Monica Conservancy co-hosts the annual Julia Morgan Legacy Day, featuring Morgan expert Karen McNeill, Ph.D. who will present "Julia Morgan: Engineering a Legacy," highlighting Morgan's engineering expertise and skills. To RSVP, visit: https://www.santamonica.gov/events/48nyg3xx-82rjcx9hy2b0rjtndg/202503021100.

INSIDE
THE DAILY PRESS
PODCAST
smdp.com/pod
ALSO AVAILABLE ON

LIBRARY

FROM PAGE 1

February, locals have been sending in love letters explaining why they adore the library, something echoed by Santa Monica City Council in its proclamation of the month.

Library Director Eric Cuyugan told the Daily Press that she was particularly excited by the age range of letters, with elementary school kids and seniors alike expressing their feelings for the local institutions.

"I think that's really what is most important, (the) community is coming out to show why they love the library, why it's important and of course, why we need to continue to have accessible libraries in our community," Cuyugan said.

The letters also thanked the libraries for being a place to connect with others, thanks to sponsored events like family storytime and the Memories & Movement Senior Club. Library staff took its interactions outside the buildings this month as well, hosting a literary trivia night at Solidarity.

Cuyugan took time during the celebratory month to offer insight into 2025's library programs, such as the LEAF (Literary Education for Adults & Families) program.

Supported by a California State Library grant, the library is launching a new English as a Second Language (ESL) program under LEAF, allowing ESL learners to connect one-on-one with a tutor. Tutors are currently undergoing three rounds of training, and will be matched up with learners within the next few months.

"We've had great success in adult literacy and tutors and learners in general, but we heard that our community really wants ESL-type learning … that's definitely one of the areas where we want to expand and make sure that we are spreading literacy," Cuyugan said.

The ESL expansion is just the tip of community resources, as the Main Library at 601 Santa Monica Blvd. also provides ongoing LA Law Library office hours and Tech & Tasks sessions, among other programs. Cuyugan's goal of further partnership with City staff on information sessions is also in progress, with a recent Community Budget Meeting being held at the Pico Branch. The branch will also host a Cannabis Equity Workshop at 6 p.m. on Feb. 27.

Family programs such as literacy and storytime sessions is what Cuyugan calls "the foundation" for growing a lifelong bond between parents, children and literacy.

"When you grow a library lover and a library learner, you grow them into adults who love the library and who are able to spread that literacy and joy and information to their families," Cuyugan said. "So the family connection is important, because as kids and youth see their parents and caregivers really investing time into the library and books, reading and stories, they will also grow to love that as well."

During the Feb. 11 City Council meeting with the library proclamation, Santa Monica Library Board Chair Judith Meister used her time to thank staff and residents, and also call for an increased library budget. One of her goals is to increase the presence of the city's self-service library branches of Fairview, Montana and Ocean Park.

For full hours and locations of Santa Monica's libraries, visit santamonica.gov/categories/programs/library.

thomas@smdp.com

INSURANCE

FROM PAGE 4

financial condition is at risk."

The consumer advocacy group had a mixed reaction to the commissioner's action, saying he needs to follow the law and hold a public rate hearing.

"The Commissioner is right to call for more scrutiny of State Farm, which has so far stonewalled information requests," said Pam Pressley, an attorney for the group, in a press release today. "However, the outstanding issues need to be raised and answered in a formal hearing, which Consumer Watchdog has called for, where there is formal discovery and due process rights."

Still, the group plans to attend Lara's meeting on Feb. 26, Consumer Watchdog President Jamie Court told CalMatters today. "We will take every opportunity we can to make our case even if we disagree with the process," he said.

Michael Soller, insurance department spokesperson, said a public rate hearing is necessary "only when the parties involved do not reach a settlement," and that Consumer Watchdog participates in these private discussions whenever it intervenes in a rate review.

Joel Laucher, a former chief deputy commissioner at the insurance department who is now a program specialist at consumer advocacy group United Policyholders, told CalMatters "hopefully, this is not a case of 'brinkmanship' by any of the parties involved."

"We don't want to contemplate the possibility that State Farm will exit the California market — that would create a significant void in the availability of homeowners coverage," Laucher said, noting that State Farm had about 20% of the state's market at the end of 2023.

Laucher also said "it may be in State Farm's best interest to accept a 6.9% increase," which is under 7% and would avoid the intervenor process and possible hearing under state law, "then immediately apply for another increase."

Property owners in California have struggled with insurance availability and affordability in the past few years as companies have either stopped renewing policies or writing new ones, citing wildfire risk and inflation. Many homeowners have had to turn to the FAIR Plan, a coverage pool, funded by insurance companies operating in California, that's required by law to provide fire insurance to those who can't otherwise find it.

This week, Lara approved a $1 billion lifeline sought by the FAIR Plan, which said it risked running out of money to operate as it pays out claims for the Los Angeles-area fires. Its member companies will be responsible for that amount, and are expected to take advantage of their new ability to try to recoup half of that money from their customers by charging them a one-time fee.

Last year, the commissioner rolled out a multi-part effort to address insurance availability in the state. It took effect at the beginning of 2025, right before the L.A.-area fires.

BUSINESS

FROM PAGE 3

affected, he is concerned. "If SBA funding was choked off in some way, it would be a major blow to the entire ecosystem," Brown said.

Representatives from the Small Business Administration did not return multiple requests for comment, and neither did the White House.

Alex Bloom, economic development manager for Central Sierra Economic Development District as well as Mother Lode Job Training — which handles training funded by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act — said the effects of a federal funding freeze could be far-reaching.

"Overall there's a level of uncertainty," that could lead to a drop in investor confidence, he said. And "a funding freeze or delay could halt infrastructure projects, which would affect job creation and development that are critical to our region," Bloom added.

Others say a freeze or pullback on funding will have an impact on equity — that it could hurt those who need the most help.

HOW FEDERAL AID AND POLICIES HAVE BOOSTED SMALL BUSINESS

Perez said she served in the U.S. Navy for nine years, then "transitioned right into a recession." At one point, she was pregnant and had nowhere to live. She began working in construction and eventually started a business.

"My business helped get me out of poverty," said Perez, owner of GC Green, a general contracting and consulting firm that focuses on clean energy, and subsidiary Veterans Energy Services Company.

On the list of programs the Trump administration is examining include funds for small business development centers, development loans and technical assistance for small businesses.

The budget office also said it wanted to root out "Marxist equity, transgenderism, and green new deal social engineering policies."

California Attorney General Rob Bonta, who with other state attorneys general won a temporary restraining order against the freeze, said last week during a press conference that, if enacted, it would affect 34% of the state's budget, which he called "a massive, irreplaceable chunk."

As a woman, veteran and Native American, Perez said she has been helped by some DEI initiatives. But she said "starting my company didn't mean I cut in line, or got in front of everybody. It means I got my foot in the door."

Perez also was able to secure a federal loan to help Native American-owned businesses during the pandemic, during President Joe Biden's administration, which she said helped her expand her business.

"You roll back these initiatives, what is that going to do to our economy, our supply chains, our workforce?" she asked.

The budget office followed up its original memo with another one that said "funds for small businesses, farmers, Pell grants, Head Start, rental assistance, and other similar programs will not be paused." But there is evidence that at least one of the things on that list has not been spared: Some Head Start programs have had trouble accessing funding and at least one has been forced to shut down in Washington, according to media reports and the states' lawsuit.

At least one expert CalMatters spoke with said he thinks small business is "probably one of the last places the spigot will be turned off." Robert Dekle, an economics professor at the University of Southern California, said "it would actually be suicidal for the Republican party to continue with" cutting off aid to small businesses because he said small business owners make up "a large part of Trump's base." (A poll after Trump won the election showed changes in optimism among small business owners differed along party lines.)

'WE'RE GOING BACKWARDS'

But Catalina Amuedo-Dorante, an economics professor at UC Merced, said this administration has made its priorities clear. "We're going backwards (in terms of) rights for different minority groups, groups that need more assistance in medical care, food, education," she said.

The professor added that "harming human capital" is a recipe for disaster. She called the possible rollback of funding to small business, medical research and other programs a threat to this generation and next.

Another one of Trump's executive orders — titled "Ending Illegal Discrimination And Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity" — includes a directive to the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs within the Department of Labor to stop "promoting diversity" and "allowing or encouraging Federal contractors and subcontractors to engage in workforce balancing based on race, color, sex, sexual preference, religion, or national origin."

The president's anti-diversity push rides a wave of similar sentiment that has swept the country in recent years, including through lawsuits against affirmative action in government. Last year, a judge ruled that a small business lending program meant to help Black, Latino and other underrepresented entrepreneurs should be open to white people.

In late January, the Small Business Administration reportedly decreased its goals for federal contract awards to small and disadvantaged businesses to 5%, apparently because of the Trump directive on DEI. Under Biden, the goal was 15%.

What all this could mean, regardless of what happens with the funding freeze, is that some small businesses that might otherwise have been considered for federal government contracts may no longer get those chances.

Perez, the small business owner, said DEI initiatives can help when it comes to landing general contracting work, but not always: "Just because these policies are in place, it doesn't mean you're going to get the job. It's so difficult. It's grinding all the time."

Carolina Martinez, chief executive of CAMEO Network, a small business advocacy group, said procurement opportunities were already limited, and the Trump administration's new policies will make things worse. "It seems clear they're opening the door to discrimination and racism," she said.

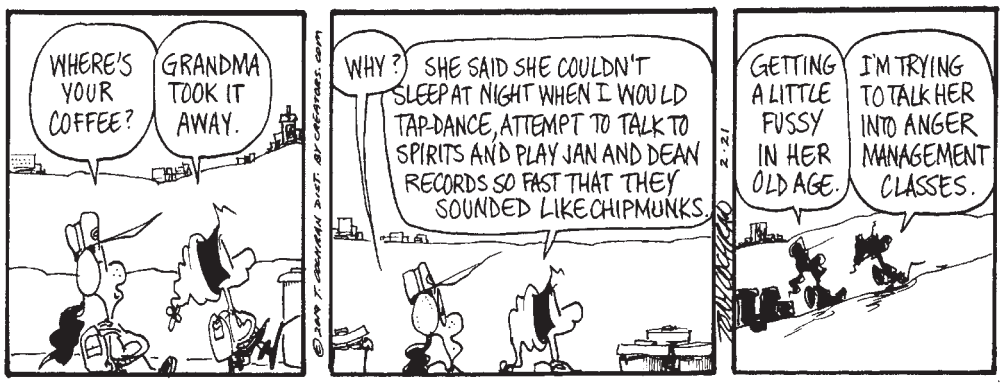
Randell Leach is CEO of Beneficial State Bank in Oakland, a community development financial institution, which serves low-income customers and small businesses that may not be able to get loans elsewhere. Leach said he is concerned about the intersecting effects of "the curtailment of funding and anti-DEI measures that could come together and impact women entrepreneurs and communities of color."

Not only does that directly affect historically underrepresented small businesses but also, potentially, "a whole host of vendors and tech companies that support them," he said.

The bottom line: "It's important to be aware that discrimination in any form is not only bad for communities, but for the economy," Martinez said.

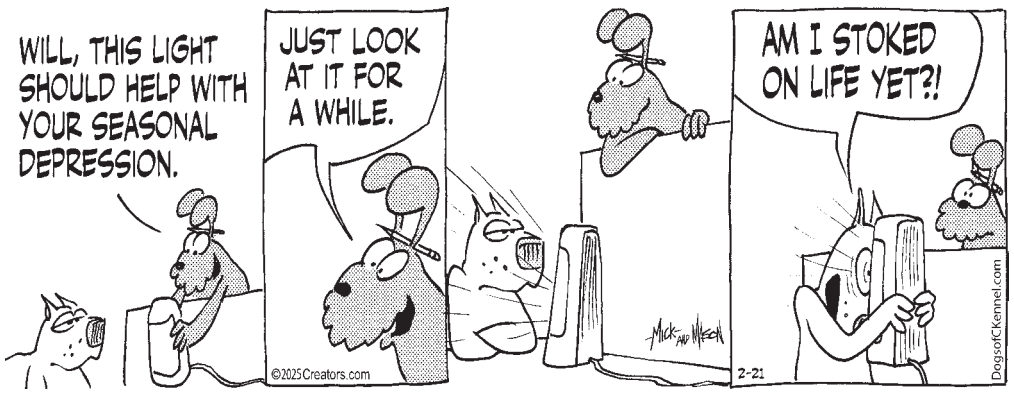
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



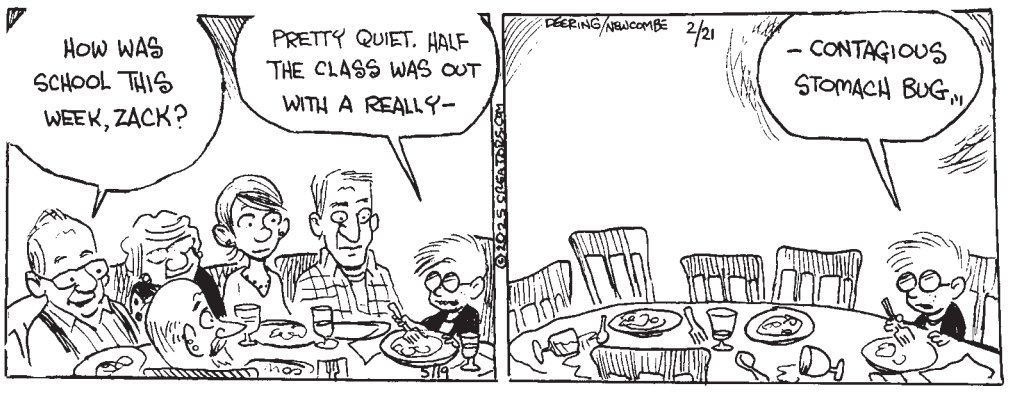
Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



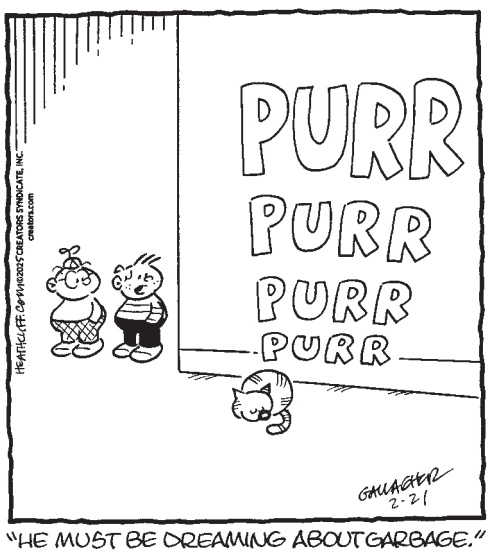
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



"HE MUST BE DREAMING ABOUT GARBAGE."

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING



FIND THE WORDS

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

© australianwordgames.com.au 6493

Taking a dip

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

Abate
Angourie
Backstroke
Balmy
Birds
Board
Bomb
Carve
Chop
Coach
Collision
Curl
Daily
Deck
Dive
Drink
Dude
Dump
Fads
Fins
Foam
Goggles
Grass
Grit
Heat
Laps
Legrope
Malibu
Manly
Peak
Play
Point
Reef
Rips
Safety
Sand
Sets
Shelter
Skeg
Slash
Slippery
Spray
Squad
Steep
Sunbake
Surf
Swell
Swim
Tube
Under

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 21)

This trip around the sun, you'll be many roles: a teacher and a student, a leader and a devoted fan, a cherished confidante and a spokesperson. In the moments you live and love big, you'll be met with equal enthusiasm and capability. More highlights: many sales, fast trades, lucrative deals. Lifestyle modifications contribute to vibrant health and new sources of fun. Taurus and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 2, 29, 1, 24 and 16.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). "Am I OK?" is a question many wouldn't think to ask. Asking already puts you in the realm of self-reflection that means you're so much more than OK. Go deeper today and ask, "What might bring about my thriving?"

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Not everyone in your circle is living up to the values you hold dear. You may worry about being guilty by association, but you needn't. You're building a legacy that's entirely your own, and that's something the faults of others cannot touch.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You honor a person's preferences, which speaks to the deep respect and care you show others. You'll give the sweetest gestures, celebrating someone while respecting their wishes.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Good will come out of your interactions with people who think differently. Sometimes people are thinking small, but they have big hearts. You don't have to change another person's mind to connect in some way. While intending to find common ground, you will.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It's OK to feel nervous; it means you care, and that caring is what drives you forward. Wishing for support is natural, but even without someone beside you in a moment, you're still capable of navigating this on your own terms.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Emotions have their own timing. When you're going through something, just remember that it's temporary. You have a very stable set point you will return to. There's a cheerful vibe just waiting on the other side of this with open arms.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Some believe we're born unknowing, while others argue we enter the world fully aware, only to spend our lives unlearning, striving to rediscover that knowledge. Whatever your theory may be, today will put it to the test.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your priorities will shift again, and as they do, you'll think about making tweaks to your current lifestyle in the interest of creating a more supportive and nourishing environment for your thriving.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your relationship with earth signs - the Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn types - will help you stay calm and grounded, work through problem-solving strategies, and provide a sounding board for any ideas or challenges that come up.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There's no reason to force things. It may feel like people are asking you to feel differently than you do, which is not only rather controlling of them; it might be an impossible ask. Still, you can move forward graciously choosing what to engage with.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You seek connection and lightness and thrive in dynamics that feel mutual. So, when someone operates with a different approach, it could throw you for a loop, which is a sign that you are alert and all systems are working correctly.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You've already proven your creativity and drive. You may wonder if you can stay calm and solve the problems that come up, but others believe you can, so you may as well believe right along with them.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

Newsday Crossword

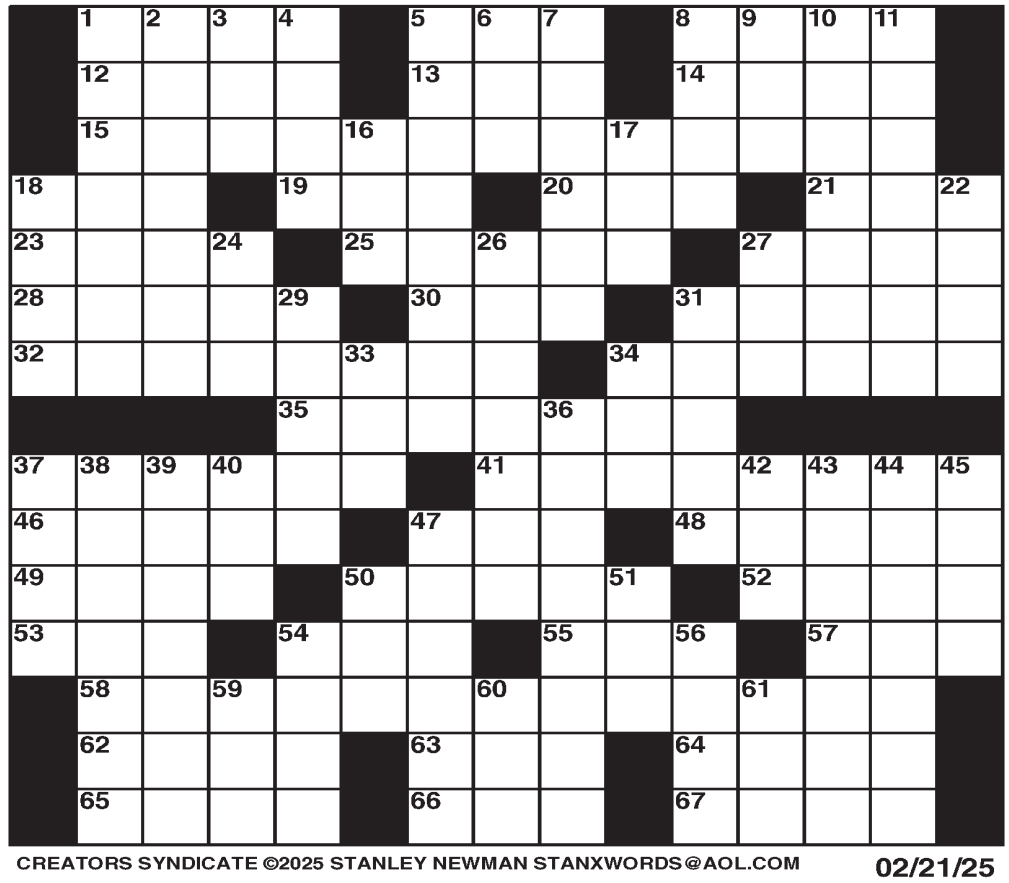
GOOD MORNING? by S.N.
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 They're white in Monopoly
5 "Shame on you!"
8 Tech whiz
12 First-century tyrant
13 Cry partner
14 __ Frank House (Amsterdam museum)
15 WC Fields quote start
18 NBA extenders
19 Fall away
20 Whom a mystery award is named for
21 "Turn up the heat!"
23 Castro of Cuba
25 Three-time Pulitzer dramatist
27 Ballet exercise
28 Actor Zac
30 Prefix like atm-
31 Fanatic
32 Part 2 of quote
34 Encouraging words
35 Highly touted film
37 Cubbies' crosstown rivals
41 Part 3 of quote
46 Make good on
47 Discouraging word
48 *Caballero*
49 Course conclusion
50 Slow tempo
52 Ostrich cousin
53 Pale of face
54 DC donor
55 Isn't missing
57 Valvoline alternative
58 Conclusion of quote
62 Skip past
63 Mine, in part
64 Skin-lotion stuff
65 It borders Sonoma County
66 Liszt's __ *Préludes*
67 Half a magic duo

DOWN

1 Employed full-time
2 Visit sites at your seat
3 Significant stretch
4 Peevish
5 Listless emotion
6 Family vehicle
7 Something worth saving
8 '70s Motown star
9 Last of all
10 Facilitates
11 What may hold loyalty cards
16 Sched. notation
17 Sashimi topper
18 Snackworks.com brand
22 Second try
24 Needing refilling
26 Pummels
27 Barbecue spot
29 *I Am Not Spock* author
31 Seems to be
33 Penguin suit
34 Floral necklace
36 Stifles
37 Water sport
38 Honeycomb shape
39 Copacabana neighbor
40 Looney Tunes cowboy
42 It's a scream
43 *Marley & Me* actress
44 "Moving on..."
45 Sign of a thaw
47 Don't explode, informally
50 Back muscle
51 37-Down tool
54 Thin bread
56 Interchange
59 Piece of advice
60 Vision, in product names
61 Suffix in statistics



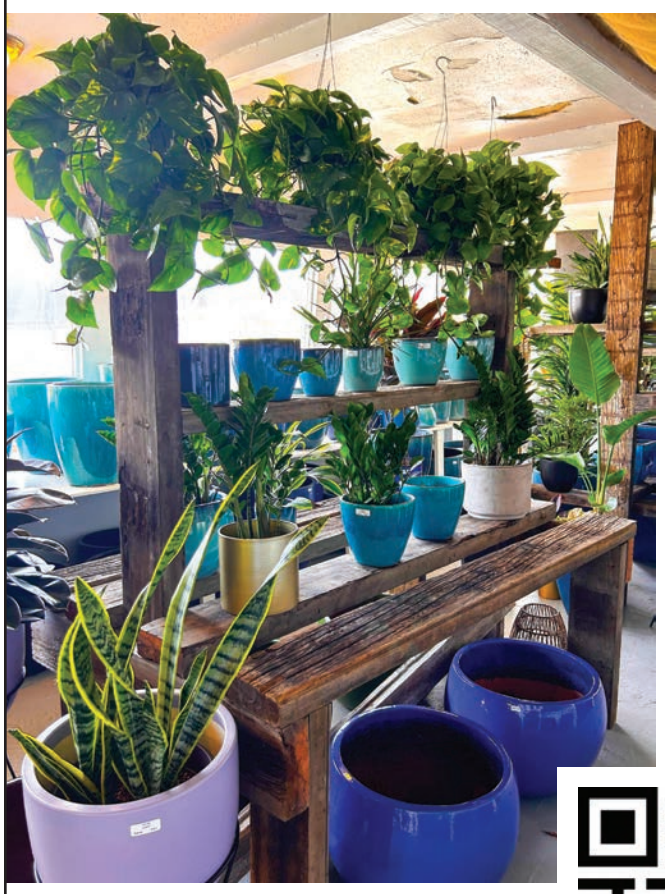
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02/21/25

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