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Judge's ruling says City had time to plan for District based elections

MADELEINE PAUKER
Daily Press Staff Writer

Future City Council elections will be determined by a seven-district map drawn by the plaintiffs in the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) case because the City of Santa Monica did not propose its own map, the judge in the case wrote in her statement of decision.

The City argues that Judge Yvette Palazuelos's final ruling in the case, which requires City Council members to be elected in seven districts determined by a map drawn by plaintiffs Maria Loya and the Pico Neighborhood Association, undermines the democratic process. The City's lawyers say state elections code requires that voters deserve to have a say in how districts are drawn.

Judge Yvette Palazuelos, however, maintains the City had plenty of time to draw districts based on public input.

She wrote in her statement of decision, which was released after her Friday ruling, that the City had almost three years while the case was pending to hold a public input process to determine district borders. She also wrote that the City could have held that process as late as November of last year, when she issued her tentative judgment in the case.

"It could have held the initial public meetings required by (the elections code) by November 19, and the additional public meetings the week of November 26, completing the process in advance of its November 30 remedies brief," Palazuelos wrote.

The California Elections Code requires municipalities to hold two public hearings in a 30-day period before drawing election maps. After publishing those maps, the jurisdiction must hold two additional hearings over a 45-day period.

The City's attorneys said proposing a district map by November 30 would have left little time for public comment. In

SEE **STATEMENT** PAGE 6





File Photos

BASKETBALL: The Crossroads basketball advanced in their local tournament. See Page 3 for more information.

Possible soda tax returns for statewide discussion

MADELEINE PAUKER
Daily Press Staff Writer

The state assemblymember representing Santa Monica is introducing a bill that would tax soda and sugar-sweetened beverages – for the third time.

Richard Bloom, a Democrat who represents the Westside in the California State Assembly and served as Mayor of Santa Monica, announced yesterday that he is introducing legislation to tax soda sold in California as a way to tackle the state's diabetes and obesity problems. The revenue from the tax, which is intended to be a disincentive to purchasing soda and sugary drinks, will fund programs that

SEE **SODA TAX** PAGE 3

Storm brings snow to lower levels of California

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Snow fell at low levels in Southern California on Thursday with the arrival of the latest storm in a very wet winter that has almost eliminated drought conditions statewide.

The Los Angeles County Fire

SEE **WEATHER** PAGE 11

Isabel A. Ash Esq.
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What's Up Westside

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA

Friday, Feb. 22

Mat Pilates

Learn the techniques of Pilates, a system of controlled exercises that engage the mind and condition the total body. Montana Avenue Branch Library 3 - 4 p.m.

Fireside at the Miles; music and theatre by the historic fireplace

Jazz Singer Angie Wells brings her unique talents to fireside for the first time. Come and enjoy some classics and a few surprises with Angie and her Jazz Quartet. Part of Fireside at the Miles Series. Cost $5-$10 on Eventbrite. The Miles Memorial Playhouse 1130 Lincoln Blvd. 8 - 10 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 23

Discover The Real Santa Monica

Learn about the visionaries who founded a small community by the Bay. The two hour tours are every Saturday at 10 a.m. departing from Hostelling International at 1436 Second Street. For reservations: dwt@smconservancy.org or by phone at (310) 496-3146. $10 per person. $5 for Santa Monica or L.A. Conservancy members.

NOMA annual meeting

State Senator Ben Allen will be the featured speaker at the North of Montana Neighborhood Association's annual community gathering and celebration Saturday, Feb. 23, from 2-4 p.m. at the Aero Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave. SM Mayor Gleam Davis, the Samohi Jazz Combo, neighborhood issues of the day, and film of Santa Monica past and present will complete the program. Refreshments and free popcorn will be on hand at the neighborhood tribute. Doors open at 1:15 p.m., and all are invited.

Greens Festival

Join Virginia Avenue Park and the Parent Connection Group as they celebrate Black History Month with the annual Greens Festival. This year's festival theme is Young, Gifted and Black and will feature cooking demos with celebrity chefs, a community Greens cooking contest, a Black History exhibit, musical performances, book readings and more! Virginia Avenue Park 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Korean Maskmaking with DaEun Jung

Get a fun introduction to the origin and the purpose of Korean traditional masks. Make a mask frame and add wet paper to build up details. All materials provided; bring an apron if you can. Participants can leave their masks to dry and sign up for the following week to decorate their masks, or take the project home for drying. Cost: $5 Register online or call (310) 458-2239. Palisades Park 10:30 a.m. -12 p.m.

Get Started with 3-D Printing

Learn the basics of 3D printing and design by completing a guided project. To register, email ideashappen@smgov.net one week before event. For ages 7-12. Montana Avenue Branch Library 11 - 12:30 p.m.

VITA Tax Assistance

UCLA students from VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) provide FREE tax filing assistance for Federal and California income taxes. Appointments are limited and on a first arrival basis. Please bring a photo ID, your social security number, and the forms you'll need. Fairview Branch Library 11 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Ukulele Saturdays! for Teens & Adults

Bring your own ukulele or borrow one of ours. Space and instruments are limited and on a first-arrival basis. Main Library Multipurpose Room, 2nd Floor 3 - 4 p.m.

For help submitting an event, contact us at
310-458-7737 or submit to events@smdp.com

SODA TAX

FROM PAGE 1

prevent diabetes and obesity.

California is last in funding for diabetes prevention efforts, Bloom said. Nine percent of Californians are diabetic and 46 percent are prediabetic, he added. Two-thirds of prediabetics will develop the condition.

"Everyone would acknowledge that healthcare costs are skyrocketing, and one of the reasons why is our health is getting worse," he said. "Diabetes and obesity are going healthcare crises and we need to get serious about prevention."

Soda and sugary drinks are the largest source of added sugar in the American diet and added sugar contributes to diabetes, obesity and heart disease, said Susan Babey, co-director of the Chronic Disease Program at UCLA.

This is the third time Bloom is introducing a soda tax in the state assembly. His first attempt failed in the Assembly Health Committee by four votes in May 2015 and Bloom pulled his second bill ahead of its first committee vote in April 2016. Both bills proposed a tax of 2 cents per fluid ounce of soda, or about $0.66 for a liter bottle.

Bloom introduced Assembly Bill 138 alongside four other pieces of legislation targeted at reducing the amount of soda Californians consume, including bans on large drinks and displays of soda near checkout counters in stores.

The bills follow state legislature vote made under pressure from the American Beverage Association (ABA) to ban new local soda taxes until 2031. The ABA has spent millions of dollars around the country to defeat soda taxes and related legislation, but four California cities – Berkeley, San Francisco, Oakland and Albany – have passed taxes on sugary drinks.

Bloom said he is reintroducing the bill because people in cities that have passed soda taxes are purchasing and consuming less soda and generating revenue to fund health programs.

Babey said there is a small but growing amount of evidence that sugary beverage taxes reduce purchasing and other studies suggest they may reduce consumption, but not enough research has been conducted on how taxes affect consumption. Tobacco taxes have also set a historical precedent that taxes reduce consumption over time, she added.

Some experts, however, disagree. Michael Thom, a University of Southern California professor and an expert on tax incentives, said much of the research making the argument that soda taxes reduce consumption is based on statistical simulations, not real-world cases where soda taxes have been implemented.

"Real world studies come to a very different conclusion, and that's that soda taxes have little to no long-term effect on consumption or overall health. In fact, sometimes the taxes backfire," Thom said. "The authors of a study on Berkeley's soda tax found soda consumption dropped the equivalent of six calories per day following the city's soda tax, but that consumers added 32 calories per day from other un-taxed sugary beverages, like milkshakes."

Bloom said he is optimistic about the future of the bill despite its failure in 2015 because support among legislators for soda legislation has grown, California has a new governor and more public awareness exists around the health issues caused by soda.

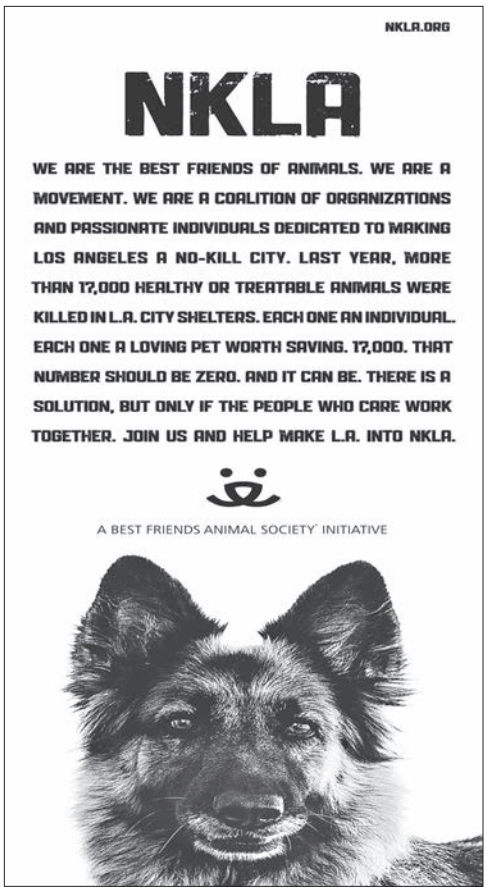
Critics of the bill's previous iterations have criticized it as a regressive tax on the poor.

"Most taxes like this have a disproportionate impact on the poor, no matter what product the government is targeting," Thom said. "If the product is something the poor are more likely to buy, like soda, then the regressivity is even worse."

Bloom said such criticism is misguided.

"Tobacco taxes are regressive too, but nobody today would argue it's a bad idea to have tobacco taxes to lower tobacco consumption," he said.

madeleine@smdp.com



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

San Francisco

Google to end forced arbitration for all worker disputes

Google said Thursday it will no longer require that its workers settle disputes with the company through arbitration, responding to months of pressure from employees.

The change will take effect March 21 and will apply to current and future employees. Employees that have settled past disputes won't be able to re-open their cases.

Google said last year it would end forced arbitration for sexual harassment and assault cases, and Thursday expanded that practice to all worker disputes. Google's parent company, Mountain View, California-based Alphabet Inc., has its nearly 100,000 employees.

The updated practices only apply to Google employees, and employees of Google projects such as Deep Mind and Access. Other Alphabet subsidiaries, such as Waymo, are not included.

Mandatory arbitration requires employees to settle their disputes with the company privately and outside of court. The practice, widespread in U.S. employment contracts, can lend itself to secrecy and has faced criticism recently.

Google workers who staged a walk out late last year have continued to press the tech giant to drop forced arbitration requirements. Protest organizers commended Google for Thursday's announcement, but wrote in a Medium post that they would not officially celebrate until the changes went live in employee agreements.

Google won't make all employees re-sign their work contracts, it said, but will post the policy change internally and update its contracts for new employees.

The company also said it would extend the change to its agreements with contract workers. But it will not require vendors to change their own contracts, meaning some workers could still be held to the previous standard.

Other tech companies including Facebook, Uber and Microsoft have recently ended forced arbitration for sexual assault and harassment claims.

Google Walkout organizers who are focused on forced arbitration issues said they would continue working on ending the practice at other companies. Members of the group plan to meet with lawmakers in Washington, D.C., next week to advocate for a federal law against forced arbitration.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Citywide

Crossroads basketball advances

Crossroads Girls Basketball hosted Cathedral City on Friday night with a trip to the 3AA CIF SS Championship on the line.

It was rainy and cold outside, but Crossroads fans piled into the gym and received their white 'Go Roads' tee shirts for the 'white out'. Cathedral City carried an impressive 24-2 record, having won 21 straight games coming into Friday night, with their last loss coming on November 26, 2018.

Cat City came out of the gates hot, scoring the first 6 points of the game. Crossroads maintained their composure and struck back on 2 free throws and a lay up by junior Mimi O'Neal. Cat City took a 14-13 lead early in the 2nd quarter, but then Crossroads really clamped down the defense, limiting Cat City to only 3 points in the 2nd quarter. Junior Taylor Plummer scored a layup on an offensive rebound to end the half, giving Roads a 25-14 halftime lead.

Senior co-captain Kennedy Martin commented, "Our lockup defense was a huge part of the game and it allowed the rest to handle itself. We wanted to win more and overall showed more heart."

Cathedral City came out of the locker room on a 9-0 run, cutting the deficit to just two points at 25-23. Roads responded with a quick 6-0 run on consecutive baskets by Plummer, senior co-captain Leily Martin, and junior Mia LaFayette. Mimi O'Neal showcased her soft touch with back to back 12 foot jumpers soon after helping to spread the Cat City defense. Roads held a 35-29 lead after 3 quarters. The Roadrunners increased their lead in the 4th before Cat City came rolling back in a fury behind 12 4the quarter points by #3 Nina Wallace.

Cathedral City took a 50-49 lead on 2 free throws and Crossroads was forced to use their final timeout with 26.8 seconds left. Out of the timeout, Leily Martin got the ball and took it hard at the rim, scoring a layup and giving Crossroads back the lead with 17 seconds remaining.

After a Cat City timeout, the Lions brought the ball down and Wallace received a handoff meaning the game would be in her hands. Despite suffering a knee injury earlier in the quarter, Kennedy Martin took to her defensive stance. As Wallace tried to make a move toward the basket, Kennedy slid her feet quickly and then Leily Martin swooped in to double team. Leily came away with the steal and went straight for the rim connecting on a layup to put Roads up 53-50 with just seconds remaining. Cat City threw up an airball three at the buzzer and Roads again celebrated at mid court!

After the game Leily said, "We worked cohesively the whole night. We held them to one shot, and continuously fought for the ball." Mimi O'Neal led all scorers with 18, Leily Martin had 16, and Mia LaFayette had 13. Kennedy Martin was the defensive stopper and Taylor Plummer played with passion all over the court. Freshman Althea Hill and sophomore Annika Blomquist provided solid minutes off the bench. Coach Ryan Wilde commented, "This team continues to grow and gain confidence. Our girls are embracing this tournament run, and they have no intention of letting up now. We will be ready for next Saturday."

Winners of their last 9 games, Crossroads advances to the championship on Saturday February 23 against Santiago from Corona, who beat #1 seed Brentwood 68-60. The game will take place at Azusa Pacific University at 10:30 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY TARA SHIMA

LOS ANGELES

Feds announce opioid crackdown in Los Angeles

An opioid crackdown in the Los Angeles area has led to the arrest of four doctors and other medical professionals, including one physician whose patient died of an overdose.

The U.S. Attorney's Office said Thursday that six people have been arrested in the past week as part of Operation Hypocritical Oath.

That includes a Corona doctor who prosecutors say was arrested Thursday on charges of illegally distributing hydrocodone. The investigation into Dr. Michael Simental began after one of his patients died in June.

Authorities also arrested Dr. Reza Ray Ehsan of Bel-Air on Thursday on charges he unlawfully sold controlled drugs to an undercover agent posing as a patient.

A message left at Simental's office wasn't returned while a woman who answered at Ehsan's office hung up on a reporter.

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Laughing Matters
By Jack Neworth
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Security Guard Blues, Part 4


File Photos
MOVIE: Key romantic scene from "The Creature From the Black Lagoon"

I'd intended to write about this Sunday's Oscars but then it dawned on me I hadn't seen a single movie in 2018. Whoops. Actually, I haven't fully recovered from last year when "The Shape of Water" won Best Picture. Billed as a romantic drama between a woman and a fish, it only served to remind me of the nuance-challenged 1954 monster movie, "Creature From the Black Lagoon."

Meanwhile, rest easy, this will be the last of my Security Guard sagas for a while. This one features the late Johnny Ardolino, barrel-chested and hot-tempered who was in his mid-60's and lived in the Shores' South building. He was a headache for security as he often played music so loudly neighbors called the office. (I would pray he did so on someone else's shift.)

Colorful to the core, Johnny was a retired postal worker but always longed to be a famous singer. And he did achieve some notoriety as an opening act in nightclubs back east. To make a living, however, he worked for the post office and hated it. As it happens, Johnny was an excellent singer but was bitter about his failed singing career. Unfortunately, he took it out on me. Why?

Though I was a security guard at the Shores, I was still filled with optimism about making it as a writer. Unsolicited, Johnny predicted I wouldn't be as successful in my pursuit as he had been with his singing. Ouch.

Another unfortunate thing for me, and his neighbors, is Johnny had a penchant for alcohol. That eventually led to his placing speakers on the balcony and, with a microphone, singing arias late at night.

In addition to being rather drunk, Johnny was rather belligerent and rather tough. So knocking on his door as a Security Guard to tell him to knock off the music was not something I looked forward to. In fact I didn't rush up there as often Johnny would run out of steam fairly soon and I assumed just pass out in bed. Ultimately he would get evicted for his own late night version of America's Got Talent, but this was long after I was a Security Guard.

So there you have it. Johnny could be drunk and mean and didn't much care for me. Cut to many years later and my first and biggest job in "show business," writing a script for director Robert Aldrich to be produced by MGM.

The comedy project was entitled "For Export Only" and was set in Italy in the early 1950's. It had a "based on true events" aspect in that it depicted a rag-tag group of lower level Mafiosi being deported back to Italy as a result of the actual Kefauver Senate Hearings in 1950-19521 on organized crime. (The hearings were chaired by Senator Estes Kefauver D-Tennessee who would be Adlai Stevenson's V.P. in their failed 1956 presidential bid against incumbent President Dwight Eisenhower and his Vice-President, Richard Nixon who would go on to be a crook.)

I had a writing partner on "For Export Only," and one of the first things we did was decide who our characters were and what were their names. This was before the Internet so we used the phone book. (Actors attached to the project included: Anthony Quinn, Peter Falk, Burt Young, Tony Danza and Shelly Winters.) One of the names I suggested was Johnny Ardolino because it sounded so real. It had been years since I had seen Johnny and it didn't dawn on me there could ever be a problem.

I was sitting in the Shores lobby, script in hand, waiting for my writing partner to pick me up to go to the Ambassador Hotel to deliver the script to Aldrich. As fate would have it, Johnny came into the building to visit a friend. Surprise, surprise, he was inebriated. And he wasn't exactly thrilled to see me. Sarcastically, he asked how my so-called "writing career" was going.

I was delighted because it gave me the opportunity to mention Aldrich, MGM, and Anthony Quinn. Johnny's one word retort was "Bullsh--!" "Oh, really?!" I confidently handed Johnny the script and he immediately began pouring over it. Proudly, I was hoping for an apology but instead Johnny went berserk as saw his name as one of the characters! Uh oh.

He yelled, "I'll sue you, Aldrich, MGM and every other motherfu**er connected to this fu**ing project." I thought he was going to punch me. Just then my writing partner pulled up in front. I quickly grabbed the script, "Take care, Johnny" and jumped into the waiting car. As we drove off my stunned writing partner exclaimed, "What the hell was that all about?"

In retrospect, maybe I should have written about the Oscars. This year could be interesting because there'll be no host. (And, hopefully, no women falling in love with a fish.)

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Your column here

By Oscar de la Torre

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

One Councilmember We Can Trust is Better than Seven We Can't

Kevin McKeown and Ana Jara's letter to the editor is self-serving and deceitful. They argue that voters will lose the ability to vote for seven Councilmembers under district elections. The fact of the matter is that although we can vote for seven Council candidates in the unlawful at-large election scheme, the vast majority of Santa Monica residents do not trust that City Hall will put resident concerns and safety above all else. What good is voting for seven when you can't count on one? Clearly, Kevin and Ana are on the wrong side of history but their vote to appeal the historic victory against an unjust, unconstitutional and unlawful at large election scheme is so predictable. Also, with Greg Morena expressing his support for the illegal status quo in yesterday's SM Daily Press it is guaranteed that the Santa Monica City Council will decide to appeal Judge Yvette Palazuelos decision against the City's illegal election scheme.

As predicted by Maria Loya in her Op-Ed, Ana Jara is allowing herself to be used by Councilmember Kevin McKeowen to provide cover for his position that runs contrary to a great majority of Santa Monican's who want to change the culture of corruption that exists in our City Hall. Kevin is the longest serving councilmember who selfishly opposed term limits. However, in the last election voters approved term limits by a margin of 75%. Kevin used to be a champion for the residents but as he prepares to seek higher office he needs to lay the groundwork for larger campaign donations. Like the majority of our entrenched City Council members, he has become out of touch and disconnected from our reality.

No one in SM City Hall has even acknowledged what Judge Palazuelo's confirmed, that there was intentional harm and discrimination done under Santa Monica's at-large election system. Furthermore, Kevin goes as far as to blame the plaintiff's lawyers for more than $20 million of our precious public funds that was wasted on challenging the CVRA when it was the City Councilmembers who unanimously voted to move forward with their self serving attempt to challenge the CVRA lawsuit, knowing that no other City had prevailed. Why not blame the City's expensive lawyers for malpractice? History will show that Santa Monica's fake liberal establishment pursued an ego driven legal adventure that failed in thwarting a positive change in our election system. As an elected official, I understand fully that a governing board is the ultimate authority on spending public funds. I'm sure it embarrasses Kevin, as it should everyone sitting on the Santa Monica City Council, for the waste of public funds that could have been used to address crime, mental illness, education etc. Elected leaders should be held accountable when they fail to answer legitimate complaints regarding State law, fail to negotiate a settlement and instead spend our public funds with little regard. They wouldn't do that with their own money.

In their attempt to defend an election scheme that has been declared unlawful, unconstitutional, discriminatory and unjust, the Santa Monica City Council is revealing its true colors. They have totally lost their mind in declaring that justice will be served when the plaintiff's attorneys fail to be compensated! Who's justice are they talking about? Surely not the justice owed to Pico Neighborhood residents that have had to endure decades of marginalization and environmental dumping with no political representation in our defense. They fail to speak the truth because it doesn't serve them. Usually liberals like to talk about poverty, environmental injustice and marginalization but not here, not anymore in our City. The truth is that our City government has been overrun by powerful special interests and our residents, especially lower income renters, are at risk if the illegal at large election scheme continues.

No amount of misinformation and blame can hide what every resident sees daily. Irresponsible over-development is pushing long term renters and small businesses out of Santa Monica. The self-serving politicians that are blaming our successful CVRA lawsuit for taking away resident's right to vote for seven councilmembers are the same politicians who have supported policies that have eliminated rent control units, increased traffic and turned our City into an unsafe and unwelcoming environment for our seniors and children. We aren't blind and we see that district elections will break the stranglehold that special interests have on our government by making it less expensive to run for a seat on our City Council. District elections will decrease the influence of special interests and will increase the resident voice at the neighborhood level where it matters most. Every neighborhood being represented is a more inclusive government than what we currently have now where the wealthier North Side has a virtual monopoly on political power. As a lifelong resident, I intend to fight for the positive change our residents deserve and I urge everyone to get involved in this movement for transparency, accountability and an honest and inclusive government.

City of Santa Monica
Ordinance Number 2602 (CCS)
(City Council Series)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA DESIGNATING THE 11TH STREET BUNGALOW HISTORIC DISTRICT

The following is a summary of Ordinance Number 2602 (CCS) prepared by the Office of the City Attorney:

Ordinance Number 2602 (CCS) ("the Ordinance")

The Ordinance adds Section 9.56.320 to the Santa Monica Municipal Code and creates the 11th Street Bungalow Historic District, consisting of the properties located along the east side of 11th Street between Wilshire Boulevard and Arizona Avenue (1221-1253 11th Street) and the properties along the north side of Arizona Avenue between 11th Street and 11th Court Alley (1107-1115 Arizona Avenue).

Ordinance Number 2602 (CCS) was adopted on February 12, 2019, and shall become effective thirty days after adoption.

The full text of the above Ordinance is available upon request from the office of the City Clerk, located at 1685 Main Street, Room 102, Santa Monica. Phone: (310) 458-8211.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
BEFORE THE SANTA MONICA CITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Appeal 19ENT-0016 of the disapproval of Structure of Merit Designation 18ENT-0316
610 California Avenue
APPELLANT: Nina Fresco
PROPERTY OWNER: Gershon Gabel

A public hearing will be held by the City Council to consider the following request:

Appeal of the disapproval of an application for a Structure of Merit (18ENT-0316) for the property located at 610 California Avenue. The City Council will consider the designation application to determine whether the subject residence should be designated as a Structure of Merit.

DATE/TIME: **TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2019 at 6:30 PM**

LOCATION: City Council Chambers, Second Floor, Santa Monica City Hall
1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, California

HOW TO COMMENT

The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment. You may comment at the City Council public hearing, or by writing a letter. Written information will be given to the City Council at the meeting.

Address your letters to: City Clerk
Re: 610 California Avenue
1685 Main Street, Room 102
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Or email to councilmtgitems@smgov.net

MORE INFORMATION

If you want more information about this project or wish to review the project file, please contact Steve Mizokami, Senior Planner, City Planning Division, at (310) 458-8341 or by email at steve.mizokami@smgov.net. The Zoning Ordinance is available at the Planning Counter during business hours and on the City's web site at www.smgov.net.

The meeting facility is wheelchair accessible. If you have any disability-related accommodation requests, please contact (310) 458-8431 or TTY (310) 458-8696 at least three days prior to the event. All written materials are available in alternate format upon request Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Lines 1, 2, 3, Rapid 3, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 18 serve City Hall and the Civic Center area. The Expo Line terminus is located at Colorado Avenue and Fourth Street, a short walk to City Hall. Public parking is available in front of City Hall, on Olympic Drive and in the Civic Center Parking Structure (validation free).

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65009(b), if this matter is subsequently challenged in Court, the Challenge may be limited only to those issues raised at the Public Hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Santa Monica at, or prior to, the Public Hearing.

Español

Este es un aviso de una audiencia publica sobre una solicitud para remodilar un edifecio que tiene valor historico importante. Para mas informacion, por favor llame a Carmen Gutierrez en City Planning Division al numero (310) 458-8341.

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STATEMENT

FROM PAGE 1

addition, the City would have been proceeding without a final decision, as Palazuelos' Nov. 8 decision was only tentative, they said.

"If the City is required to move to districts, a wholesale overhaul of the election system adopted by the voters deserves a full and inclusive public process, as called for in the California Elections Code, and that's exactly what we proposed to the court," said Theodore Boutrous, an attorney for the City.

The City is considering appealing the decision in California's appellate courts, Boutrous said. City Council will hold a special meeting Thursday night to meet in closed session with its attorneys and hold public comment.

Kevin Shenkman, who is representing the plaintiffs, said he thinks Palazuelos made it clear in her tentative decision that the court had found the City's at-large election system to be illegal and offered the City a chance to propose its own district-based system. He said some cities threatened with CVRA lawsuits have used public input to create districts.

"They could have done a public process since late 2015 and nothing stopped them from doing that at any point," Shenkman said. "The court in its decision in November gave the City another opportunity to bring a proposed remedy, and they didn't."

madeleine@smdp.com







Evictions, rent hikes push Oregon to statewide rent control

ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press

Faced with a housing shortage and skyrocketing rents, Oregon is poised to become the first state to impose mandatory rent controls, with a measure establishing tenant protections moving swiftly through the Legislature.

Many residents have testified in favor of the legislation, describing anxiety and hardship as they face higher rents. Some have gone up by as much as almost 100 percent — forcing people to move, stay with friends or even live in their vehicles.

The Oregon housing shortage is getting worse because of a big influx of people moving to the state — lured by the state's job opportunities and its forests, mountains, coastline and relaxed lifestyle. Many move from California, where the cost of living is often more expensive.

Cities across the West Coast are struggling with soaring housing prices and a growing homelessness problem. The small southern Oregon city of Medford recently authorized churches to offer car camping for the homeless on their parking lots.

A state legislative House committee on Wednesday backed the measure, sending it to the full chamber for a vote as soon as next week. The state Senate passed it last week.

Gov. Kate Brown told reporters she expected the full House to approve the measure.

"I look forward to signing the bill," said Brown, a Democrat.

The committee rejected an amendment that would have exempted cities with populations under 150,000 and another that would have delayed the measure from becoming law until Jan. 1, 2020, instead of immediately after Brown signs it.

"We've waited too long as it is, and there are too many people living in tents. It is an emergency," said Rep. Tawna Sanchez, a Portland Democrat and member of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing that endorsed the legislation.

Lawmakers said Oregon will be a pioneer in statewide rent control if the measure becomes law. New York has a statewide rent control law but cities can choose whether to participate.

California restricts the ability of cities to impose rent control. Last November, voters defeated a ballot initiative that would have overturned that law.

"Homelessness and affordability have no boundaries," said Rep. Mark Meek, a Democrat from a Portland suburb. "We're going to be leading the nation now with this legislation."

Oregon's measure prohibits landlords from terminating month-to-month leases without cause after 12 months of occupancy and limits rent hikes to once per year. Those increases are limited to 7 percent above the annual change in the consumer price index.

Landlords can terminate tenancies only with 90 days' written notice and payment of one month's rent, with exemptions in some cases. A landlord can refuse to renew a fixed-term lease if the tenant receives three lease violation warnings within 12 months and the landlord gives 90 days' notice.

The Oregon Rental Housing Association, which represents small-scale landlords, said the measure protects good tenants while not encouraging landlords to leave the business and invest their money elsewhere.

"I believe most landlords will be able to adapt and operate within the parameters," said Jim Straub, the group's legislative director.

Eric Lint, who lives in Bend, one of the fastest-growing cities in the U.S., urged lawmakers to pass the protections because of spiraling rents. The medical lab where he works is chronically understaffed because potential hires say there is a lack of affordable housing.

Lint said his hourly pay has risen 8 percent over five years. Meanwhile, his rent has increased 66 percent. He plans to move away in the fall but did not say where in his testimony.

Anna Pena, a senior at the University of Oregon in Eugene who works full time, described living in a house smaller than 1,200 square feet with five roommates and spending over half her income on rent that then increased by 15 percent.

"Ultimately, housing insecurity has been one of the biggest setbacks for my education and personal health," she said.

Sen. Tim Knopp, a Republican from Bend, said before he voted against the measure last week that it does not address the housing supply issue.

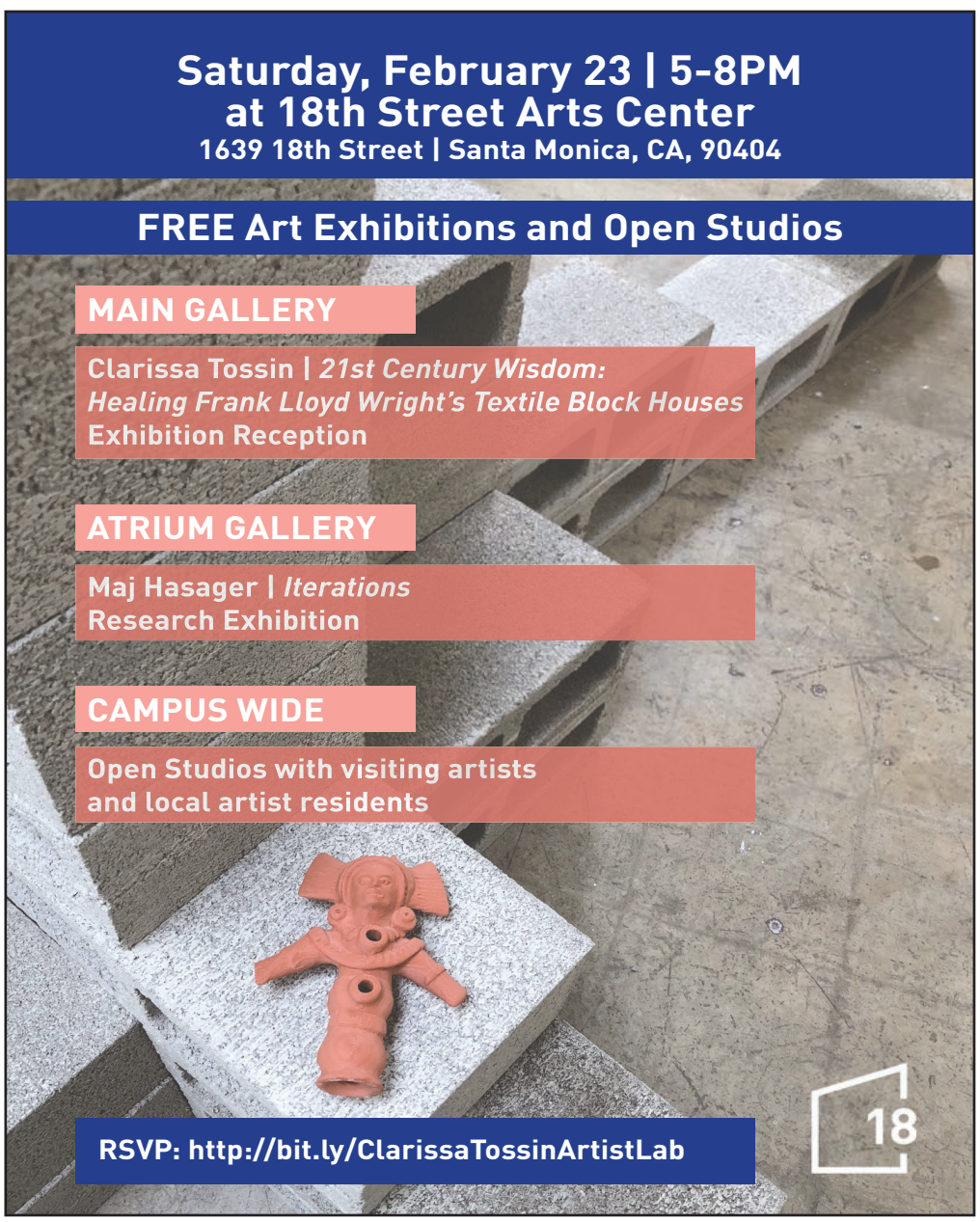
Another measure aiming to deal with that issue would require cities and counties to allow duplexes and some higher-density housing in lands zoned for single-family homes.

House Speaker Tina Kotek, a Democrat, said 30,000 housing units must be built per year to meet the state's current housing deficit and to build for the future as more people move to Oregon.

Oregon ranked second to Vermont as the top moving destination in 2018, according to a study by United Van Lines, the largest U.S. household goods mover.

About 60 percent of Oregon's new arrivals come for jobs or because they're looking for work, said Josh Lehner, a state economist. At least one-third of the new arrivals are from California, he said.



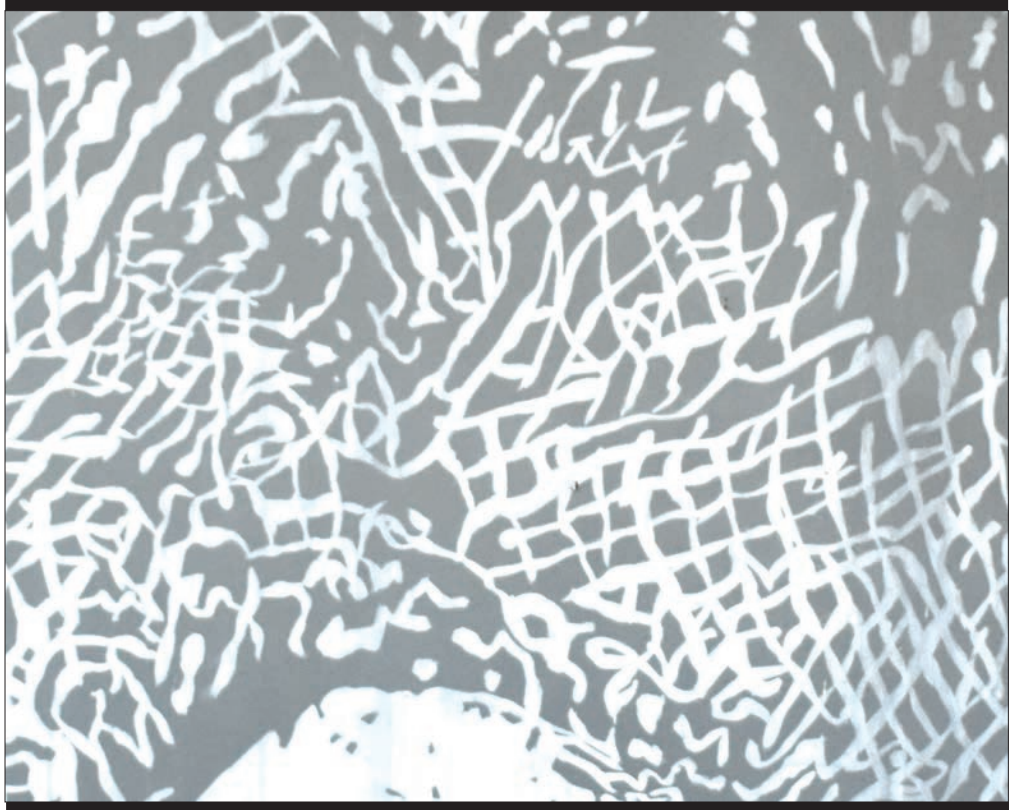


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MYSTERY PHOTO

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CRIME WATCH

BY DAILY PRESS STAFF

Crime Watch is culled from reports provided by the Santa Monica Police Department. These are arrests only. All parties are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

ON FEBRUARY 10, 2019 AT ABOUT 7:30 P.M.



SMPD

FEI QIN

Officers responded to a radio call for service at 1626 Wilshire Blvd -W.I Simonson Mercedes Benz dealership- regarding a subject sleeping in various vehicles and refusing to leave the business. Officers spoke with staff at the dealership and learned the subject had been in the dealership showroom for some time and had been sleeping in several cars. After several hours, staff told the subject he needed to leave the property. The subject refused to the leave. The dealership was desirous of prosecution. Officers found the subject in a locked bathroom refusing to exit. Officers opened the restroom door and placed the subject under arrest.

Fei Qin, 35, from Tuscon, AZ was issued a citation for trespassing with the intent to interfere with a business.

DAILY POLICE LOG

The Santa Monica Police Department Responded To Calls For Service.

SMDP STAFF SELECTED THE FOLLOWING LIST FROM 327 CALLS ON FEB. 20

Suicide 1600blk 20th St 1:18 a.m.
Hit and run 1700blk 22nd St 6:28 a.m.
Vehicle parked in alley 1300blk Ocean Ave 6:34 a.m.
Vehicle blocking driveway 1400blk 15th St 6:40 a.m.
Auto burglary 900blk 5th St 6:47 a.m.
Vehicle parked in alley 1600blk Lincoln Blvd 7:02 a.m.
Vehicle parked in alley 600blk Wilshire Blvd 7:03 a.m.
72 hour psychiatric hold 1700blk Ocean Front Walk 7:17 a.m.
Trash dumping 1100blk Pacific St 7:53 a.m.
Traffic collision - unkn injuries Princeton St / Santa Monica Blvd 8:01 a.m.
Traffic collision with injuries 26th St / Colorado Ave 8:17 a.m.
Defrauding innkeeper in progress 2300blk Main St 8:29 a.m.
Elder abuse 100blk San Vicente Blvd 8:33 a.m.
Traffic collision - no injuries 22nd St / Idaho Ave 8:34 a.m.
Fight Ocean Ave / Colorado Ave 8:57 a.m.
Elder abuse 1800blk 16th St 8:58 a.m.
Vehicle parked in alley 900blk Wilshire Blvd 9:21 a.m.
Fraud 900blk 10th St 9:28 a.m.
Hit and run 21st St / Olympic Blvd 9:53 a.m.
Vehicle parked in alley 1300blk 3rd Street Prom 9:57 a.m.
Grand theft 200blk San Vicente Blvd 10:15 a.m.
Speeding Nebraska Ave / Centinela 10:29 a.m.
Speeding 3100blk Nebraska Ave 10:32 a.m.
Vandalism 6th St / Wilshire Blvd 10:39 a.m.
Indecent exposure 1400blk 17th St 10:43 a.m.
Expired registration 900blk 10th St 10:47 a.m.
Petty theft 1200blk Georgina Ave 11:07 a.m.
Person with a gun 200blk Broadway 11:12 a.m.
Traffic collision - no injuries 1400blk Princeton St 11:22 a.m.
Sexual assault 300blk Bicknell Ave 11:42 a.m.
Vehicle blocking driveway 300blk Montana Ave 12:20 p.m.
Stalking 1600blk Main St 12:43 p.m.
Vandalism 1000blk 4th St 12:43 p.m.
Petty theft 1500blk Ocean Ave 12:56 p.m.
Hit and run 7th St / California Ave 1:03 p.m.
Hit and run 1400blk 4th St 1:23 p.m.
Elder abuse 2200blk 28th St 1:24 p.m.
Burglary 1800blk 16th St 1:30 p.m.
Vehicle parked in alley 1400blk 4th St 1:32 p.m.
Vandalism 2200blk Colorado Ave 1:42 p.m.
Oversize vehicle violation 18th St / Idaho Ave 1:53 p.m.
Petty theft 400blk Pico Blvd 1:59 p.m.
Hit and run Cloverfield Blvd / Delaware Ave 2:08 p.m.
Petty theft 1400blk 2nd St 2:21 p.m.
Battery 1400blk Wilshire Blvd 2:24 p.m.

DAILY FIRE LOG

The Santa Monica Fire Department Responded To Calls For Service.

SMDP STAFF SELECTED THE FOLLOWING LIST FROM 37 CALLS ON FEB. 20

Emergency Medical Service 20th St / Olympic Blvd 1:21 a.m.
EMS 500blk Ocean Ave 1:59 a.m.
EMS 1300blk Franklin St 4:39 a.m.
EMS 300blk Bicknell Ave 8:01 a.m.
Traffic collision with injury 26th St / Colorado Ave 8:17 a.m.
EMS 1100blk 7th St 8:32 a.m.
EMS 1900blk Pico Blvd 9:26 a.m.
EMS 1100blk 7th St 9:30 a.m.
EMS 700blk 7th St 9:46 a.m.
EMS 1100blk Pico Blvd 10:32 a.m.
EMS 700blk Pico Blvd 11:20 a.m.
EMS 7th St / Olympic Blvd W 11:43 a.m.
EMS 1700blk 18th St 11:56 a.m.
EMS Olympic Blvd / 26th St 11:56 a.m.
EMS 1300blk 20th St 12:44 p.m.
EMS 2000blk Santa Monica Blvd 12:50 p.m.
Automatic alarm 2100blk Marine St 1:58 p.m.
EMS 1000blk Pico Blvd 2:06 p.m.
Vehicle fire 2900blk Washington Ave 2:08 p.m.
EMS 400blk Santa Monica Pier 2:27 p.m.
EMS Main St / Ocean Park Blvd 2:31 p.m.
EMS 1700blk 18th St 3:17 p.m.
EMS 600blk Santa Monica Blvd 3:40 p.m.
Elevator rescue 2700blk Wilshire Blvd 4:05 p.m.

DAILY LOTTERY

POWERBALL calottery
Draw Date: 2/20
27 49 50 51 52
Power#: 2
Jackpot: $304 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 2/19
17 24 34 56 65
Mega#: 3
Jackpot: $224 M

SuperLOTTO PLUS
Draw Date: 2/20
9 18 35 40 46
Mega#: 4
Jackpot: $21 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 2/20
3 7 24 27 36

DAILY 3
Draw Date: 2/20
Midday: 3 0 3
Draw Date: 2/20
Evening: 2 7 7

DAILY DERBY
Draw Date: 2/20
1st: 12 - LUCKY CHARMS
2nd: 4 - BIG BEN
3rd: 10 - SOLID GOLD
RACE TIME: 1:40.58

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



SURF FORECASTS

WATER TEMP: 56.7°

FRIDAY - **FAIR** - SURF: 3-4ft+waist to chest high occ. 5 ft
Primary/fading NW swell-mix. Small SSW swell fills in. Conditions looking to improve for the AM.

SATURDAY - **FAIR** - SURF: 2-3ft+waist to stomach high
New/small and inconsistent SSW swell tops out. Fading NW swell mixes in. Favorable AM wind conditions.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

Sudoku

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

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

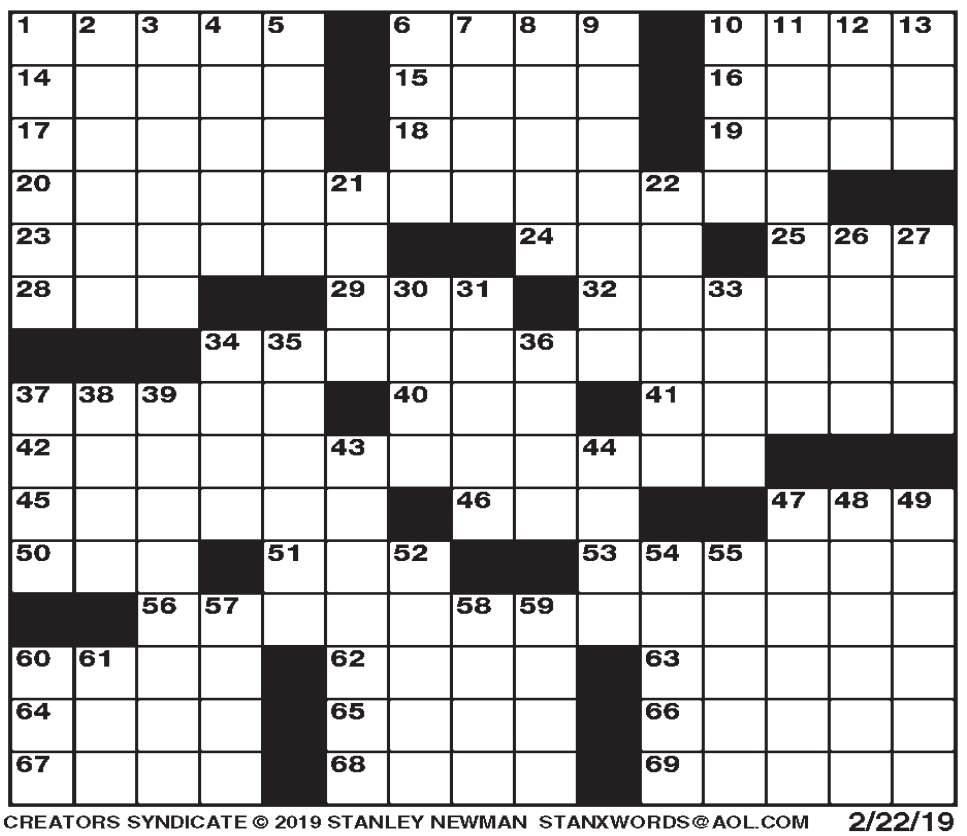
					4			
1		6		5				7
		9	7			5		6
7		8	3					4
	4			1			7	
2					7	6		5
8		3			9	1		
9				2		7		8
			4					

Newsday Crossword

BY GEORGE by S.N.
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Frat letter
6 Dent or scratch
10 Slender punchers
14 Annual Pamplona runners
15 10 mg, perhaps
16 Silicon Valley product
17 Roll with the punches
18 Within view
19 Systematic
20 Start of a George Washington [happy birthday!] quote
23 Single-file
24 Metric prefix
25 Energy Star co-manager
28 All-things-considered
29 Category
32 *Good Morning America* food correspondent
34 Part 2 of quote
37 Name akin to Adolph
40 Metaphor for disorder
41 Hall's singing partner
42 Part 3 of quote
45 Impressive assemblage
46 Low-lying cloud
47 Formal affirmation
50 "That's unexpected"
51 Ending for walk or drive
53 Eighth of a circle
56 End of quote
60 Baloney
62 Typesetting measure
63 Waist-high concavity
64 Ceramist's device
65 "Don't remove" instruction
66 Unrelenting
67 Early Antarctic aviator
68 Book before Nehemiah
69 Sponge holes

DOWN
1 Name literally "man of steel"
2 I, to Einstein
3 Try to snatch
4 Grump
5 It means "celestial"
6 Big Apple's "bravest," for short
7 MGM cofounder
8 Japanese beer brand
9 "Nothing more for us"
10 Teleplay opener
11 Common lab dweller
12 Spending cap
13 Intel accumulator
21 Woody fragment
22 Phrase applied to Venus
26 Toll road
27 Dark drinks
30 Judy's eldest
31 Updike's publisher
33 *Pennsylvanie*, for one
34 Frat letter
35 Alchemist's cure-all
36 Individual effort
37 Consequently
38 Insect eater
39 Extended-run show
43 Nervous-system node
44 Enthralled
47 Grade-A snoozefest
48 Undiminished
49 Plato's hometown
52 Malamute or elkhound
54 Hard and brittle
55 "Lone Ranger" coiner
57 Ward (off)
58 One finishing desserts
59 Analyst's numbers
60 Piece of work
61 Columbia, e.g.



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2019 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 2/22/19

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 22)

Nothing you've done to educate yourself has been a waste. Your excellent efforts will be appreciated, but so will your nonchalant efforts because you've earned "cool points" on your way to becoming a more evolved person. Promises and/or contracts get signed in May. Enjoy a lifestyle upgrade in July. Leo and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 20, 2, 13, 33 and 38.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
OK, it's not ideal, and yet there's something for you in this minor disaster – a quiet need being fulfilled inside the undesirable scenario. Figure out what the need is and address it another way.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Wisdom, strength, knowledge and courage: These are the everlasting qualities of greatness. Never do you feel more alive than when you are in the thrust of knowing what you do and doing what you know.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)
How seriously should you take the issue at hand? With the amount of seriousness that will allow you the greatest agility, as you'll need to move freely around this issue to make the most of it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)
Travel opens the mind, but it's not automatic. The mind has to be slightly ajar to begin with to let the foreign oxygen work its magic. There are those who travel mentally vacuum sealed. Pity, but there's little worth doing about it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
In an ideal world, you would ready yourself before you dared to wish, as it would be a shame to see your wish granted before you know what to do with it. Whatever the order, today is for getting ready.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Again, it would be a mistake to assume they totally understand you. They really only get a small part of what you're doing right now. They follow along anyway out of loyalty and respect. Keep explaining. Keep showing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)
So much thinking takes place in your mind that you share with no one. Politically, it's a good play, although emotionally, some airing out would do you good. A private diary would provide as much sounding board as you need.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)
A large part of compatibility has to do with logistics, such as schedules and proximity. Then there's chemistry, which tends to be a game changer. People will change their schedules and travel distances for great chemistry.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Whatever your disadvantage is, it is also your advantage, but only if you see, claim and use it. Don't see the advantage? Ask others for another perspective. This is money left on the table, waiting to be noticed and pocketed.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Some people around you are like bad journalists, listening for the soundbite they need to make a sensational story, context notwithstanding. For this reason, silence is a good option.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
While there's not a single thing in the world that is inherently boring, you can't be blamed for experiencing it as such, as finding something new in the same old things takes a conscious effort.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Everyone has filters and limits to what they can comfortably take in. If they are not hearing the breadth of what you have to express, it's because there's a filter in place, one that you likely have nothing to do with.

Aspects of Destiny

First, there's the Mercury and Jupiter square, which calls for discretion, diplomacy and, in most cases, silence. While the meaning of words can be spun in many directions, silence is much harder to manipulate. Next, a conjunction of Venus and Pluto fatefully touches relationships. We mix into one another's lives in ways that can't be undone.

WORD UP!

tabula rasa
noun [tab-yuh-luh rah-suh, -zuh, rey-]
a mind not yet affected by experiences, impressions, etc.

WELL NEWS BY SCOTT LAFEE

Observation

■ "Neurotic means he is not as sensible as I am, and psychotic means he's even worse than my brother-in-law." – American psychiatrist Karl Menninger (1893-1990)

Self-Exam

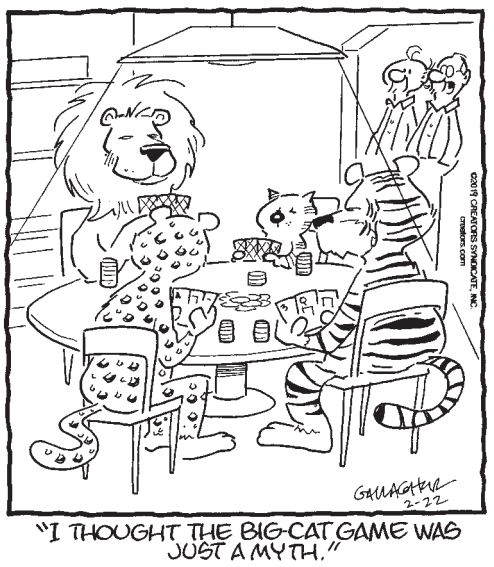
■ Q: Which finger is most sensitive?
■ A: The index finger, though people tend to be more sensitive about the middle finger. Never Say "Diet"

■ The Major League Eating record for baked beans is 6 pounds in 1 minute and 48 seconds, held by Don Lerman, who no doubt won with an explosive finish.

Best Medicine

■ Insomniac: "I've tried everything. Nothing works."
■ Well-rested friend: "I'm sorry to hear that. Sleep just comes naturally to me. I could do it with my eyes closed."

Heathcliff
By PETER GALLAGHER



Strange Brew
By JOHN DEERING



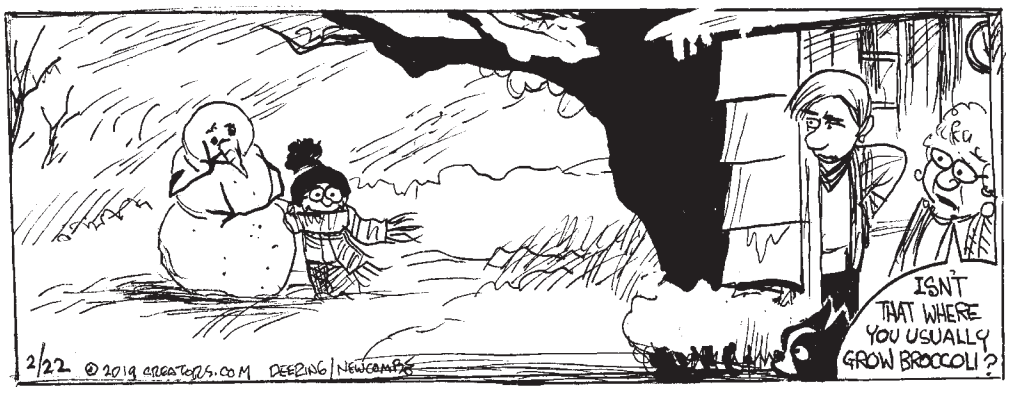
Agnes
By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel
By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill
By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



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White House ends California talks on mileage dispute

BY ELLEN KNICKMEYER AND TOM KRISHER
Associated Press

The Trump administration on Thursday broke off talks on vehicle mileage standards with California, increasing the chances of a court battle that threatens to unsettle the auto industry.

The White House, which has proposed freezing the standards, said it would now move unilaterally to finish its own mileage rule later this year "with the goal of promoting safer, cleaner, and more affordable vehicles."

The administration's action challenges California's decades-old authority to set its own, tougher mileage standards. California has used a waiver that Congress granted it under the 1970s Clean Air Act to help deal with its punishing smog. About a dozen states follow California's mileage standards; that group accounts for about one-third of U.S. auto sales.

Lawmakers and automakers had urged a settlement and warned that different standards could bring years of court battles and raise costs for automakers and consumers.

California officials and the administration accuse each other of failing to present any acceptable compromise. The dispute comes as President Donald Trump feuds with the Democrat-led state over his proposed U.S.-Mexico border wall and his threats to take back federal money from a high-speed rail project. California has taken a leading role in a 16-state lawsuit against Trump's declaration of a national emergency to get money for the wall after Congress refused to provide it.

"Another targeted attack on CA by the Trump administration," tweeted Gov. Gavin Newsom, D-Calif. "Clean air should be the most basic of human rights. This is a reckless political stunt that puts the health of MILLIONS of kids, families, and communities across America at risk."

The administration last year proposed freezing mileage standards for cars and light trucks after slightly tougher 2020 levels go into effect. Doing so would scrap an Obama-era rule that would have improved fuel efficiency in 2025 to a fleet average of 36 mpg on the road. The Obama standard would have raised fuel efficiency by 10 mpg over current levels.

Trump's move is one of a series of rollbacks targeting Obama administration efforts against pollution and climate change.

Janet McCabe, an acting assistant administrator for air at the Environmental Protection Agency under President Barack Obama, said California's years of technological and regulatory efforts to lower pollution have pushed the auto industry to make cleaner-burning vehicles.

The conservative American Energy Alliance asserted that the state's politicians long have taken a stand against "affordable, abundant energy, no matter the impact on California families."

The auto industry hasn't given up hope for an agreement on one national standard.

A major industry organization said automakers still support gradual increases in fuel economy that account for the shift from cars to SUVs and trucks.

"We encourage everyone to keep focusing on how we get there, because this is in the best interests of all parties, including consumers," the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers said in a statement.

Because it takes several years to design vehicles, automakers have been planning to meet higher mileage requirements under Obama-era standards, as well as those in other countries.

For the 2020 model year and beyond, automakers already are designing many cars, trucks and SUVs that can be powered by conventional gasoline engines as well as more efficient gas-electric hybrid systems, auto industry analyst Sam Abuelsamid of Navigant Research said.

For now, "essentially the industry is ignoring what Trump wants to do," Abuelsamid said. "We know at least until this thing gets settled in the courts, we have to deal with California and the other states and have product that can sell there as well as products that can sell overseas."

Krisher reported from Detroit. Associated Press writer Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, California, contributed to this report.

WEATHER

FROM PAGE 1

Department air operations section posted video of snow falling in the Santa Monica Mountains above Malibu Thursday afternoon. And actor Jerry O'Connell recorded video of himself as snow fell in nearby Calabasas.

The National Weather Service had said the snow level could lower to 1,000 feet.

Snow coated large areas of desert northeast of Los Angeles, temporarily halting traffic on various state routes.

"It's beautiful," said Kate Porter, a resident of the community of Joshua Tree.

A foot of snow was reported in the area at Pioneertown, the National Weather Service said. Similar amounts were reported in the upper elevations of the San Bernardino and San Jacinto mountains.

Rare "thundersnow" was observed at Big Bear in the San Bernardino range, where road closures were being reported.

Two heavily used major routes vital to trucking, commutes and travel — Interstate 5 over Tejon Pass north of Los Angeles and Interstate 15 over Cajon Pass to the east — remained open but with some slowing because of conditions.

At times California Highway Patrol units paced traffic to keep speeds down.

The quaint mountain town of Julian, an hour's drive east of San Diego, appeared coated in snow in webcam video on the Chamber of Commerce website.

The cold storm originated in western Canada and came into California over land rather than along the coast. The storm track was caused by a ridge of high pressure over the central Pacific that blocked storms from the tropics but allowed cold air from the north to dive southward, the National Weather Service said.

Elsewhere, showers fell in the Central Valley and on the Central Coast while northern parts of the state were drying out.

This winter's storms have almost washed drought conditions out of California.

The U.S. Drought Monitor said Thursday that more than 67 percent of the state is totally free of any level of dryness. That's the highest percentage since late 2017.

Just under 30 percent of California is now classified as abnormally dry, and less than 4 percent remains in either moderate or severe drought. The remaining drought conditions are confined to the far northern area along the California-Oregon border.

Three months ago, more than three-quarters of the state was in moderate to extreme drought and the remainder was abnormally dry.

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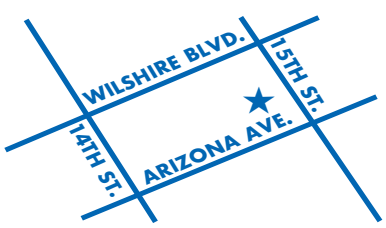
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