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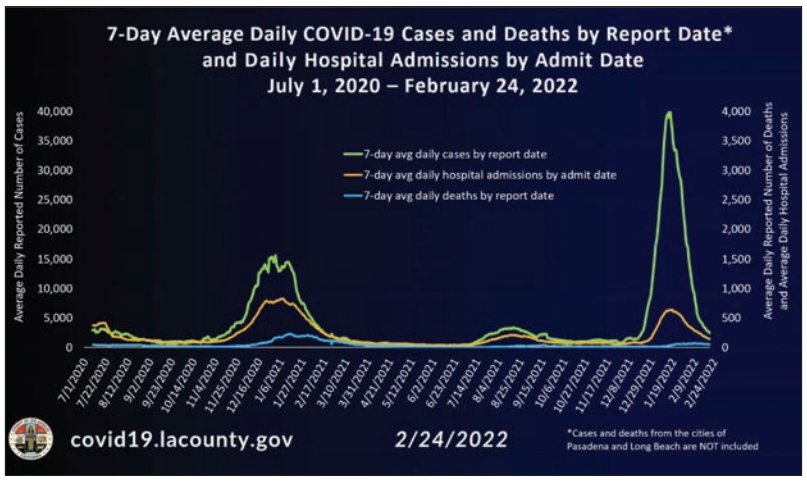
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02.25.22
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More mask lifting expected as COVID-19 cases fall



Courtesy image

SURGE: Cases, hospitalizations and deaths are all on the decline.

EMILY SAWICKI
SMDP Staff Writer

Beginning Friday, fully vaccinated LA County residents will no longer be required to wear masks at establishments where vaccinations are verified.

But on Thursday, LA County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer suggested any mask rules could prove short-lived as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was expected to update its recommendations on masking to lift requirements, which

SEE **COVID** PAGE 5

Girls Basketball



Courtesy photo

PLAYOFF: The Samohi Girls Basketball team fell to Sage Hill this week in the CIF Semi-Finals. Despite a supportive crowd and a valiant effort, the Vikings were unable to overcome an early deficit for a final score of 58-41. The girls end the season with a record of 20-7.

Los Angeles receives grant money for homeless housing

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

The City of Los Angeles will receive $1.7 million from the State of California to rehouse 60 individuals as part of a $50 million initiative to clear encampments.

Governor Gavin Newsom announced the award of $50 million in grants to 19 communities throughout California on Thursday to provide shelter or housing for 1,401 individuals currently experiencing homelessness in encampments.

"Tackling the homelessness crisis is a matter of life and death," said Governor Newsom. "California is taking on the unacceptable status quo with a historic response to house thousands of our most vulnerable community members at an unprecedented rate, and swiftly addressing the encampments that pose the greatest threat to health and safety."

State efforts have cleared 431 encampments since programs began in September of last year and officials said they are on track to clear 1,000 by the end of this year.

Encampments have spread rapidly throughout Los Angeles and local efforts, including the $1.2 billion Proposition HHH have been criticized for being too expensive and too slow to make an impact. A recent report found that one project would cost as much as $837,000 for each housing unit.

Last year, Newsom announced a historic $12 billion effort to help get the most vulnerable Californians off the streets and get them the mental and behavioral health services they need.

His "California Blueprint" builds on the initial investment with a proposed $2 billion to advance behavioral health housing and encampment rehousing strategies, creating a total $14 billion package. The proposed $2 billion investment includes a $500 million expansion to the Encampment Resolution Grant program, building upon the initial $50 million investment for the program last year. The program is intended to fund local projects to rehouse unsheltered homeless individuals in encampments, position people living in encampments on paths to safe and stable housing, and to restore public spaces to their intended uses.

"The 19 communities selected to receive this funding are committed to human centered, scalable and replicable projects, and represent urban, rural and suburban communities across California," said Lourdes Castro Ramírez, Secretary of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency and co-chair of Cal ICH. "We look forward to supporting these community-led efforts that connect housing,

SEE **LOS ANGELES** PAGE 11


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Russia invades Ukraine on many fronts in 'brutal act of war'

YURAS KARMANAU, JIM HEINTZ, VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV AND DASHA LITVINOVA
Associated Press

Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Thursday, unleashing airstrikes on cities and military bases and sending in troops and tanks from three sides in an attack that could rewrite the global post-Cold War security order. Ukraine's government pleaded for help as civilians piled into trains and cars to flee.

Military forces battling Russians on multiple fronts suffered dozens of casualties.

Russian President Vladimir Putin ignored global condemnation and cascading new sanctions as he unleashed the largest ground war in Europe since World War II, and chillingly referred to his country's nuclear arsenal. He threatened any country trying to interfere with "consequences you have never seen," as a once-hoped for diplomatic resolution now appeared impossible.

Ukrainian forces sought to fend off a Russian barrage of land- and sea-based missiles, an attack that one senior U.S. defense official described as the first salvo in a likely multi-phase invasion aimed at seizing key population centers and ultimately "decapitating" Ukraine's government and installing a new one. Already, Ukraine officials said they had lost control of the decommissioned Chernobyl nuclear power plant, scene of the world's worst nuclear disaster.

"Russia has embarked on a path of evil, but Ukraine is defending itself and won't give up its freedom," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy tweeted. His grasp on power increasingly tenuous, he pleaded Thursday for even more severe sanctions than the ones imposed by Western allies and ordered a full military mobilization that would last 90 days.

U.S. President Joe Biden announced new sanctions against Russia, saying Putin "chose this war" and that his country would bear the consequences of his action. Other nations also announced sanctions, or said they would shortly.

Fearing a Russian attack on the capital city, thousands of people went deep underground as night fell, jamming Kyiv's subway stations.

At times it felt almost cheerful. Families ate dinner. Children played. Adults chatted. People brought sleeping bags or dogs or crossword puzzles — anything to alleviate the waiting and the long night ahead.

But the exhaustion was clear on many faces. And the worries.

"Nobody believed that this war would start, and that they would take Kyiv directly" said Anton Mironov, waiting out the night in one of the old Soviet metro stations. "I feel mostly fatigue. None of it feels real."

The invasion began early Thursday with a series of missile strikes, many on key government and military installations, quickly followed by a three-pronged ground assault. Ukrainian and U.S. officials said Russian forces were attacking from the east toward Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city; from the southern region of Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014; and from Belarus to the north.

Zelenskyy, who had earlier cut diplomatic ties with Moscow and declared martial law, appealed to global leaders, saying that "if you don't help us now, if you fail to offer a powerful assistance to Ukraine, tomorrow the war will knock on your door."

Both sides claimed to have destroyed some of the other's aircraft and military hardware, though little of that could be confirmed.

Hours after the invasion began, Russian forces seized control of the now-unused Chernobyl plant and its surrounding exclusion zone after a fierce battle, presidential adviser Myhailo Podolyak told The Associated Press.

The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency said it was told by Ukraine of the takeover, adding that there had been "no casualties or destruction at the industrial site."

The 1986 disaster occurred when a nuclear reactor at the plant 130 kilometers (80 miles) north of Kyiv exploded, sending a radioactive cloud across Europe. The damaged reactor was later covered by a protective shell to prevent leaks.

The chief of the NATO alliance, Jens Stoltenberg, said the "brutal act of war" shattered peace in Europe, joining a chorus of world leaders decrying an attack that could cause massive casualties and topple Ukraine's democratically elected government. The conflict shook global financial markets: Stocks plunged and oil prices soared amid concerns that heating bills and food prices would skyrocket.

Condemnation came not only from the U.S. and Europe, but from South Korea, Australia and beyond — and many governments readied new sanctions. Even friendly leaders like Hungary's Viktor Orban sought to distance themselves from Putin.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he aimed to cut off Russia from the U.K.'s financial markets as he announced sanctions, freezing the assets of all large Russian banks and planning to bar Russian companies and the Kremlin from raising money on British markets.

"Now we see him for what he is — a bloodstained aggressor who believes in imperial conquest," Johnson said of Putin.

The U.S. sanctions will target Russian banks, oligarchs, state-controlled companies and high-tech sectors, Biden said, but they were designed not to disrupt global energy markets. Russian oil and natural gas exports are vital energy sources for Europe.

Zelenskyy urged the U.S. and West to go further and cut the Russians from the SWIFT system, a key financial network that connects thousands of banks around the world. The White House has been reluctant to immediately cut Russia from SWIFT, worried it could cause enormous economic problems in Europe and elsewhere in the West.

While some nervous Europeans speculated about a possible new world war, the U.S. and its NATO partners have shown no indication they would send troops into Ukraine, fearing a larger conflict. They instead mobilized troops and equipment around the alliance's flanks as Ukraine pleaded for defense assistance and help protecting its airspace.

NATO reinforced its members in Eastern Europe as a precaution, and Biden said

SEE **RUSSIA** PAGE 11

Wall Street reels, then recovers after invasion of Ukraine

STAN CHOE AND ALEX VEIGA
AP Business Writers

Markets swung wildly Thursday as the world reacted to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Stocks in Europe fell sharply, while stocks in the U.S. recovered from early losses after President Joe Biden stopped short of implementing the steepest possible sanctions against Russia.

The S&P 500 rallied 1.5% after erasing an early 2.6% loss, while the Nasdaq staged an even bigger comeback to end with a gain of more than 3%. The heaviest losses hit stocks in Europe, where officials called Russia's actions a "brutal act of war," with the German DAX down 4%.

Beyond its tragic human toll, the conflict looked set to send prices even higher at gasoline pumps and grocery stores around the world as prices for oil, wheat and corn soared. Russia and Ukraine are major producers not only of energy but also grains and various other commodities.

Oil prices on both sides of the Atlantic briefly jumped above $100 per barrel to their highest levels since 2014. But they gave back much of their gains after Biden said the sanctions package is "specifically designed to allow energy payments to continue." Biden also said he wanted to limit the economic pain for Americans.

While Biden described the sanctions as severe, Ukrainian officials had urged the U.S. and West to go further and cut Russia from a crucial financial payments system called SWIFT.

"I think the market certainly could gauge here that sanctions are a little more limited, so there's not as much transmission of economic difficulties to the rest of the world" from Russia, said Rob Haworth, senior investment strategist at U.S. Bank Wealth Management.

Afterward, the price of U.S. oil settled at $92.81, up 71 cents for the day, well below the $100.54 it had touched earlier in the day.

Still, prices rose for everything from heating oil to wheat to gasoline. As with stocks, the movements were sharper in Europe than in the U.S. because its economy is more closely tied to Russia and Ukraine. The spot price in Europe for natural gas jumped more than 50%.

Higher energy and food prices could amplify worries about inflation, which in January hit its hottest level in the United States in a couple generations, and what the Federal Reserve will do in turn to rein it in.

The Fed looks certain to raise rates for the first time since 2018, with the only question being how quickly and how aggressively it will move, starting next month.

In the past, the Fed has sometimes delayed big policy decisions amid uncertainty over geopolitical events such as the Kosovo war and the U.S. invasion of Iraq, according to Goldman Sachs. But economists at the bank say they still expect the Fed to raise rates steadily at its upcoming meetings.

The Ukraine tensions probably just make it less likely the Fed will start the process with a bigger-than-usual increase in rates, something some Fed officials had recently suggested.

"The Fed may become more worried about the impact on economic growth and will probably want to tread more cautiously," said Kristina Hooper, chief global market strategist at Invesco.

The Fed was already saddled with the delicate task of raising interest rates enough to stamp out high inflation but not so much as to choke the economy into a recession. Strategists at Evercore ISI said that risk still remains, and has become even more complicated by the attack on Ukraine, but that it's "substantially greater in Europe relative to the US."

Many investors also said that past global events, such as an invasion, have had only short-term effects on markets that last a few weeks or months.

With expectations falling for a bigger-than-usual increase in rates next month, stocks that tend to benefit the most from low interest rates led the way for indexes to pare their losses through the day. That put the spotlight on big tech stocks, and Amazon, Microsoft and Nvidia all rose 4.5% or more.

That helped the Nasdaq composite swing from a 3.4% loss in the morning to a 3.3% gain by the end of the day, rising 436.10 points to 13,473.59. It was a remarkable turnaround after the Nasdaq was on track during the morning to close 20% below its record high for the first time since the coronavirus collapsed the economy in 2020. Expectations for higher interest rates had been beating down high-growth and tech stocks for weeks.

"We're seeing some attempt at bottom-fishing here in terms of prices," said Haworth. Such a "buy-the-dip" ethos has proved profitable in the past, but he said he thinks it's still "a little early. We just have a lot of uncertainty ahead of us."

The Dow Jones Industrial Average, which isn't as influenced by big tech stocks, rose a more modest 92.07 points, or 0.3%, to 33,223.83. It rallied back from an earlier 859-point loss. The S&P 500 rose 63.20 points to 4,288.70.

Huge swings also rocked the bond market, where yields initially sank as money moved into investments that looked to offer safer returns than stocks. But yields recovered through the day, and the 10-year Treasury yield was 1.96% in late trading, close to the 1.97% it was at late Wednesday.

The FTSE 100 in London fell 3.9% after Europe awakened to news of explosions in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv, the major city of Kharkiv and other areas. The CAC 40 in Paris lost 3.8%. Markets in Asia fell nearly 2% or more.

Moscow's stock exchange briefly suspended trading on all its markets on Thursday morning. After trading resumed, Russian indexes plunged by a third or more.

"How bad could this get? Well, how long is a piece of string, right?" said Jonas Goltermann, senior global markets economist at Capital Economics. "There aren't that many obvious examples of this type of shock to markets."

AP Business Writers Damian J. Troise, Kelvin Chan, Christopher Rugaber and Joe McDonald contributed.

As 'stealth omicron' advances, scientists are learning more

LAURA UNGAR
AP Science Writer

The coronavirus mutant widely known as "stealth omicron" is now causing more than a third of new omicron cases around the world, but scientists still don't know how it could affect the future of the pandemic.

Researchers are slowly revealing clues about the strain, a descendant of omicron known as BA.2, while warily watching it become ever more prevalent.

"We're all keeping an eye on BA.2 just because it has done particularly well in some parts of the world," including parts of Asia, Africa and Europe, said Dr. Wesley Long, a pathologist at Houston Methodist in Texas.

This week, a technical advisory group for the World Health Organization advised public health authorities to monitor it as a distinct omicron strain.

Early research suggests it spreads faster than the original omicron and in rare cases can sicken people even if they've already had an omicron infection. There's mixed research on whether it causes more severe disease, but vaccines appear just as effective against it.

Overall cases are falling in some places where the variant is becoming more prevalent, offering some hope that the latest troubling version of the virus won't send cases skyrocketing as experts try to learn more.

WORLDWIDE SPREAD

BA.2 has been found in more than 80 countries and all 50 U.S. states.

In a recent report, the WHO said BA.2 was dominant in 18 countries and it represented about 36% of sequenced omicron cases submitted in the most recent week to a publicly available international database where scientists share coronavirus data. That's up from 19% two weeks earlier.

In the United States, BA.2 caused about 4% of COVID cases during the week ending Feb. 19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The percentage was lower in some regions and higher in others – hitting about 7% in New England.

WHAT'S KNOWN

BA.2 has lots of mutations. It's been dubbed "stealth" because it lacks a genetic quirk of the original omicron that allowed health officials to rapidly differentiate it from delta using a certain PCR test. So while the test can detect a BA.2 infection, it looks like a delta infection.

Initial research suggests BA.2 is more transmissible than the original omicron — about 30% more contagious by one estimate.

But vaccines can protect people from getting sick. Scientists in the United Kingdom found that they provide the same level of protection from both types of omicron.

A bout with the original omicron also seems to provide "strong protection" against reinfection with BA.2, according to early studies cited by the WHO.

But getting BA.2 after infection from the original omicron strain is possible, says new research out of Denmark. Study authors noted 187 total reinfections, including 47 with BA.2 occurring shortly after a bout the original strain, mostly in young, unvaccinated people with mild disease. They concluded that such reinfections do occur but are rare. Like other early studies on BA.2, this one has been posted online but not reviewed by independent scientists.

DOES BA.2 MAKE YOU SICKER?

A Japanese lab study suggests that it could, based on experiments with hamsters. Researchers concluded that the risk for global health "is potentially higher" from BA.2 and proposed that it be given its own Greek letter – a designation for globally significant "variants of concern." WHO's technical group said BA.2 should remain under the omicron umbrella.

Though the severity experiments were conducted in animals, the study is "not something to discount," said Dr. Eric Topol of Scripps Research Translational Institute. "We should keep an open mind and keep assessing this."

But scientists are finding something different when they look at people. An initial analysis in Denmark showed no differences in hospitalizations for BA.2 compared with the original omicron, which tends to generally cause milder disease than the delta variant. More recently, researchers in South Africa found much the same: a similar risk of hospitalization and severe disease with the original omicron variant and BA.2.

"We always have to interpret studies in animals with caution," Long said. "I place more weight in studies of actual patients and what they're experiencing."

HOW WILL BA.2 AFFECT THE PANDEMIC?

No one knows for sure.

COVID-19 cases are dropping globally, including in some of the places where BA.2 is prevalent.

"The timing of the upswings and downswings in cases remains unclear," said Louis Mansky, director of the Institute for Molecular Virology at the University of Minnesota.

It's difficult for researchers to predict how much BA.2 will change caseloads because it is spreading in communities with varying levels of protection from vaccines and prior infections. Some experts believe BA.2 is unlikely to spark new surges but may slow COVID declines in some places.

WHO officials stress that the pandemic isn't over and urge countries to remain vigilant.

Doctors said individuals should do the same and remember that vaccines and boosters offer excellent protection against the worst effects of COVID-19, no matter the variant.

"For people who aren't boosted, please get boosted. For people who aren't vaccinated, it's never too late," Long said. "Your best defense against COVID is still the vaccine."



DAILY FIRE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 23 CALLS ON FEBRUARY 23

EMS 1600Blk Berkeley St 12:55 a.m.
Carbon Monoxide Alarm 1600Blk San Vicente Blvd 1:33 a.m.
EMS 3000Blk Santa Monica Blvd 4:43 a.m.
Automatic Alarm 1300Blk Franklin St 6:59 a.m.
Automatic Alarm 200Blk Ocean Ave 7:00 a.m.
EMS 500Blk Colorado Ave 9:36 a.m.
Automatic Alarm 500Blk Broadway 9:39 a.m.
EMS 2300Blk Cloverfield Blvd 10:08 a.m.
EMS 1100Blk 12th St 10:28 a.m.
EMS 1500Blk 5th St 11:32 a.m.
EMS 2200Blk 29th St 11:35 a.m.
Trash/Dumpster Fire 3rd St / California Ave 12:10 p.m.
Automatic Alarm 800Blk Wilshire Blvd 12:13 p.m.
EMS 1400Blk Ocean Ave 1:11 p.m.
EMS 1600Blk Main St 2:24 p.m.
EMS 1100Blk 6th St 2:44 p.m.
EMS 500Blk Olympic Blvd W 4:28 p.m.
EMS 700Blk Broadway 5:08 p.m.
EMS 1200Blk 4th St 5:18 p.m.
EMS 1600Blk Berkeley St 6:34 p.m.
Flooded Condition 3100Blk Neilson Way 7:42 p.m.
EMS 3300Blk Pico Blvd 7:55 p.m.
EMS 900Blk 9th St 10:04 p.m.

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 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8 AT 7:15 P.M.

Officers arrived at the 1000 block of Pacific St regarding a Trespassing in progress. The owner of the home stated there was an empty detached apartment in the back, which he had boarded up and chain locked due to multiple squatters. That day, the owner noticed movement inside the apartment and contacted police. The officers conducted a search of the property and ultimately located two females inside. Upon searching the subjects, they were found to be in possession of methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia. Nichole Anne Gerber was booked for trespassing, possession of a drug paraphernalia, and possession of a controlled substance. Additionally, Damaria Evans was booked for trespassing and possession of drug paraphernalia.

GET IT DAILY...

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WINNER

DAILY POLICE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 257 CALLS ON FEBRUARY 23

Loud Music 1100Blk Chelsea Ave 12:23 a.m.
Loud Music 1400Blk Euclid St 12:38 a.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries 25th St / Wilshire Blvd 12:46 a.m.
Construction Noise 1400Blk 7th St 2:21 a.m.
Petty Theft 1500Blk 4th St 2:46 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1000Blk Wilshire Blvd 4:31 a.m.
Vehicle Burglar Alarm 2400Blk Ocean Park Blvd 4:42 a.m.
Vehicle Cite & Tow (Parking Problem) 300Blk Arizona Ave 6:10 a.m.
Vehicle Cite & Tow (Parking Problem) 1300Blk 2nd St 6:27 a.m.
Burglary 1100Blk 4th St 6:31 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1700Blk 21st St 6:42 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 600Blk Arizona Ave 6:50 a.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 23rd St / Ashland Ave 7:59 a.m.
Expired Registration 1200Blk Princeton St 8:16 a.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 2400Blk 6th St 8:18 a.m.
General Parking Problem Citywide 8:56 a.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 1200Blk Princeton St 9:03 a.m.
Vehicle Cite & Tow (Parking Problem) 1900Blk 22nd St 9:06 a.m.
Petty Theft 1400Blk Olympic Blvd 9:11 a.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 1500Blk Arizona Ave 9:11 a.m.
Vehicle Cite & Tow (Parking Problem) 200Blk Marine St 9:17 a.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 2500Blk 3rd St 9:29 a.m.
Traffic Collision 1000Blk 2nd St 9:30 a.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 1700Blk Euclid St 9:51 a.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 2000Blk Euclid St 9:52 a.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 800Blk Hill St 10:06 a.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 800Blk Hill St 10:07 a.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 800Blk Hill St 10:07 a.m.
Burglary 1500Blk 6th St 10:09 a.m.
Vandalism 3200Blk Ocean Park Blvd 10:11 a.m.
Burglary 900Blk 4th St 10:20 a.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 1100Blk Chelsea Ave 10:27 a.m.
Auto Burglary 1200Blk Berkeley St 10:43 a.m.
Expired Registration 1500Blk Euclid St 10:44 a.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries City Prop Involved 6th St / Santa Monica Blvd 10:45 a.m.
Fire Request Police 10th St / Cedar St 11:07 a.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries City Prop Involved 1400Blk 7th St 11:20 a.m.
Petty Theft 1400Blk 3rd Street Prom 11:27 a.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 1300Blk Yale St 11:34 a.m.
Identity Theft 3000Blk 7th St 11:45 a.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 800Blk 5th St 12:35 p.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 1200Blk 9th St 12:43 p.m.
Vehicle With Excessive Parking Violations 600Blk California Ave 12:57 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries Lincoln Blvd / Wilshire Blvd 1:10 p.m.
Red Zone Violation 9th St / Wilshire Blvd 1:19 p.m.
Encampment 900Blk Palisades Park 1:23 p.m.
Lost Property 300Blk Olympic Dr 1:27 p.m.
Battery 10th St / Colorado Ave 1:29 p.m.
Burglary 2000Blk 3rd St 1:45 p.m.
Fraud 1500Blk Stanford St 1:45 p.m.
Prowler 800Blk 3rd St 1:51 p.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 2700Blk Santa Monica Blvd 2:25 p.m.
Fraud 1000Blk 2nd St 2:45 p.m.
General Parking Problem 800Blk Montana Ave 2:49 p.m.
Indecent Exposure Now 1600Blk 7th St 2:53 p.m.
72 Hour Psychiatric Hold 600Blk Pico Blvd 3:13 p.m.
Vandalism 600Blk Wilshire Blvd 3:15 p.m.
Vandalism 1700Blk Pico Blvd 3:43 p.m.
Vehicle With Excessive Parking Violations 1000Blk California Ave 3:53 p.m.
Burglary 1200Blk 10th St 4:06 p.m.
Vandalism Now Ocean Ave / Idaho Ave 4:13 p.m.
Drinking In Public 9th St / Broadway 4:24 p.m.
Lost Property 00Blk Manhattan Beach Blvd, 90266 4:35 p.m.
Petty Theft 1100Blk Euclid St 4:38 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 1200Blk Yale St 4:46 p.m.
Expired Registration 300Blk California Ave 4:50 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 400Blk Santa Monica Blvd 4:52 p.m.
Burglary 100Blk California Ave 5:02 p.m.
Out Of Order Traffic Signals Lincoln Blvd / Broadway 5:03 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 900Blk 3rd St 5:08 p.m.
Exhibition Of Speed 23rd St / Pico Blvd 5:15 p.m.
Battery 1500Blk Ocean Ave 5:35 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries 1300Blk Lincoln Blvd 5:51 p.m.
Check Temporary No Parking Signs 1200Blk 18th St 5:58 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 17th St / Olympic Blvd 6:01 p.m.
Burglary 500Blk California Ave 6:56 p.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 1200Blk 9th St 6:57 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 2100Blk Wilshire Blvd 6:57 p.m.
Red Zone Violation 9th St / Wilshire Blvd 6:58 p.m.
Encampment 1300Blk 2nd St 7:04 p.m.
Indecent Exposure 2600Blk Ocean Park Blvd 7:10 p.m.
Found Property 1400Blk 3rd Street Prom 7:22 p.m.
Encampment 3rd Street Prom / Arizona Ave 7:46 p.m.
Encampment 600Blk Broadway 7:57 p.m.
Found Property 1100Blk Centinela Ave 8:04 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 200Blk 20th St 8:11 p.m.
Public Intoxication 1000Blk Stanford St 8:31 p.m.
Assault W/Deadly Weapon Ocean Ave / Colorado Ave 8:44 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1100Blk Santa Monica Blvd 8:44 p.m.
Red Zone Violation 4th St / Pacific St 9:04 p.m.
Loud Music 1100Blk Arizona Ave 9:10 p.m.
Assault W/Deadly Weapon 3300Blk Ocean Park Blvd 9:35 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1700Blk Berkeley St 9:38 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries City Prop Involved 2900Blk 31st St 9:51 p.m.
Defrauding Innkeeper 1500Blk Ocean Ave 10:10 p.m.

OPINIONS EXPRESSED are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Santa Monica Daily Press staff. Guest editorials from residents are encouraged, as are letters to the editor. Letters to the Editor can be submitted to letters@smdp.com. Receipt of a letter does not guarantee publication and all content is published at the discretion of the paper. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content. All submissions must include the author's name, address and phone number for the purposes of verification.

COVID

FROM PAGE 1

would likely trigger similar recommendations at the State and then County levels.

Ferrer said that businesses that wish to continue requiring masks are entitled to do so.

Those that do want to lift mandates immediately will only be able to do so for fully vaccinated customers/workers and only if everyone inside the business is vaccinated or if the unvaccinated individuals in the establishment have proof of a negative test. Even with a negative test, unvaccinated individuals are still required to wear a mask.

However, Ferrer suggested it may be wiser to just wait until rules change again.

"Given that we're likely to be only a short bit away from lifting indoor masking requirements across the County, given our rapidly declining case rates, those establishments that have not yet established systems are verifying vaccinations or negative tests may want to delay building out any expensive verification systems and instead continue the indoor masking requirements until the County lifts these requirements without the need for the verifications," Ferrer said.

The CDC on Friday was expected to announce a change to the metrics it uses to determine whether to recommend face coverings, shifting from looking at COVID-19 case counts to a more holistic view of risk from the coronavirus to a community. Under current guidelines, masks are recommended for people residing in communities of substantial or high transmission — roughly 95% of U.S. counties, according to the latest data.

The new metrics will still consider caseloads, but also take into account hospitalizations and local hospital capacity, which have been markedly improved during the emergence of the omicron variant. That strain is highly transmissible, but indications are that it is less severe than earlier strains, particularly for people who are fully vaccinated and boosted. Under the new guidelines, the vast majority of Americans will no longer live in areas where indoor masking in public is recommended, based on current data.

The likely course of action for that change would be the new recommendation by the CDC, followed by a new State of California recommendation. Then the LA County Board of Supervisors would weigh in, before the Health Department issued a new order. That could all happen by the end of next week.

"I anticipate it will take us a few days," Ferrer said. "We're very likely — let's say they do release [changes] tomorrow. We're very likely to use Tuesday's [Supervisor] Board meeting as an opportunity to discuss, both with the Board and the public, what we envision and then we'll spend that week, as we always do, reaching out to our sector partners and our labor partners, to hear from them and then, you know, hopefully by the end of the week, we've got the County's plan."

Ferrer emphasized that, at least for now, indoor masking was still required at all times in certain settings: "Schools, childcare facilities, youth settings, health care settings, correctional facilities, homeless and emergency shelters, cooling centers, when riding public transport, [and] transit and transportation hubs."

Ferrer added that, mandates aside, Public Health continues to recommend indoor masking, especially for the vulnerable and those who live with vulnerable people.

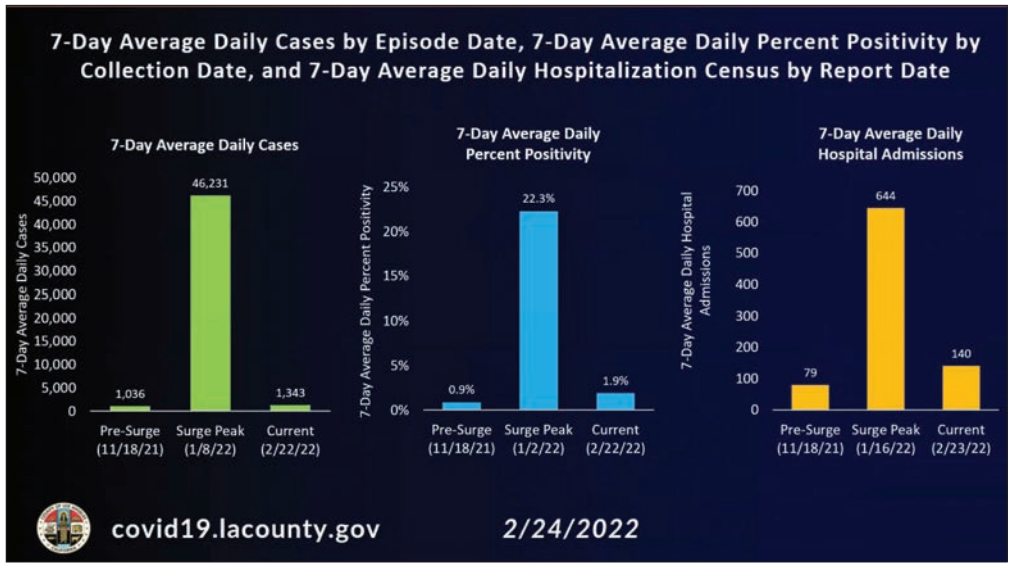
The Public Health Director stopped short of committing to full mask removal at schools, saying that the County would need to do analysis and look at local metrics before recommending a change to schools' masking policies.

"I think we'll have a lot more clarity on Monday about what the plan is for schools and then, as always, you know, our intent is to align as closely as possible," Ferrer said.

Ferrer added that the LA County Public Health Department welcomes schools to retain mask mandates if administrators feel they are necessary.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

emily@smdp.com



Courtesy images

TRENDS: Averages have dropped significantly since the peak.

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City of Santa Monica

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING
SANTA MONICA
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE
Pursuant to AB361

DATE/TIME: **Monday, February 28, 2022, 7:00 PM**

LOCATION: In an effort to reduce the risk of spreading Coronavirus (COVID-19), members of the Architectural Review Board and City Staff will participate via teleconference. The public may join the teleconference via https://primetime.bluejeans.com/a2m/live-event/twpfxaex dialing in at +1 (415) 466-7000 (US) PIN: 8587364 #.

PROPERTIES:

- 21ARB-0289: 1707 4th Street: Sign Adjustment
- 21ARB-0293: 1674 20th Street: Commercial Building

More information is available online at https://www.smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Boards-Commissions/Architectural-Review-Board/ or at (310) 458-8341 (en espanol tambien).

The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment. Those wishing to give written public comment shall email comments to planningcomment@smgov.net. Comments received **prior to 12 p.m.** on the day of the meeting will be distributed to the Architectural Review Board prior to the meeting and posted online. Please note the agenda item in your comments.

Public comment can also be made by phone during the meeting by calling 1-408-740-7256 (Meeting ID: 919621237 and Passcode: 5145 followed by #) when the caller queue opens for the item on which you wish to comment. Remarks from the public will be limited to 2 minutes per item. Please check the agenda for more detailed instructions on how to comment.

For disability-related accommodations, please contact 310-458-8701 or TTY 310-450-8696 a minimum of 72 hours in advance. All written materials are available in alternate format upon request.

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LET US KNOW YOUR OPINION
Santa Monica Daily Press
editor@smdp.com

Tennis Season



Matthew Hall

VIKINGS: The Samohi Boys Tennis team held a pre-season match against Beverly Hills on Thursday. The team plays again on March 8 against Palos Verdes.

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Laughing Matters

Jack Neworth
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Is Tucker Rootin' For Putin?



Ronald Heinmiller

RUSSIA: Putin's 270 foot yacht cost $100 million while Comrade Carlson is worth $30 million.

As I write this a seemingly unhinged Russian dictator, Vladimir Putin, has sent 190,000 "peacekeepers," in reality heavily armed soldiers, to "denazify" Ukraine. This will be difficult because President Zelenskyy is Jewish! Meanwhile this brutal invasion's death toll is already the worst in the region since WWII and could result in a global war. (Not to mention, take the laughs out of "Laughing Matters.")

I'm reminded of June 12, 1987 when President Reagan spoke at the Brandenburg Gate of the Berlin Wall. His immortal words were directed at Russian General Secretary Gorbachev. "If you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union, come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

In little more than two years, November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall came down. This was a pivotal event in world history, marking the fall of the Iron Curtain and communism in Eastern and Central Europe. Putin, when not busy sailing his yacht, or poisoning journalists, has often suggested that the fall of the Soviet Union three decades ago was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century. (As for Putin's gaudy 270 foot, $100 million yacht, his ownership is a tad suspicious given his $10,000 monthly salary, making Vlad among the most corrupt world leaders, or at least the thriftiest.)

So it was the party of Reagan became the party of Trump who, by the way, has called Putin's invasion "genius." And Trump's former Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, is also praising Putin. But no one could ever doubt Trump was "Putin's Puppet"' if they witnessed the July 16, 2018 Helsinki summit. It was there "The Donald" sided with Putin over U.S. Intelligence. (Reagan must have been spinning in his grave.)

The issue in question was whether Russia had interfered in the 2016 election which Trump's own intelligence were convinced they had. However, at the press conference following his 2-hour meeting with Putin alone, Trump said, "I have great confidence in my intelligence people, but I will tell you that President Putin was extremely strong and powerful in his denial today." (As if autocratic tyrant Putin "denying it" meant it didn't happen. Give me a break.)

Trump's statements amounted to an unprecedented refusal by a U.S. president to believe his own intelligence agencies over the word of a foreign adversary. It drew swift condemnation including from his own party. House Speaker, Republican Paul Ryan, who rarely rebuked Trump's controversial statements, said "there is no question that Russia interfered in our elections." He called on Trump to recognize that Russia "is not our ally." John Brennan, the former CIA director and a career intelligence officer, called Trump's comments "nothing short of treasonous." (Amen!)

Trump's next statement only added fuel to the fire. "Putin said it's not Russia. I will say this: I don't see any reason why it would be." The next day Trump had the audacity to proclaim he meant to say, "I didn't see any reason why it wouldn't be Russia." This made zero sense given everything Trump had said in defense of Russia. So, once again, Don the Con inadvertently told the truth, if only by mistake.

That brings me to Fox News' anchor Tucker Carlson who is now seemingly defending Russia's aggression toward Ukraine casually asking, 'Why is it disloyal to side with Russia but loyal to side with Ukraine?" (With the name Tucker and wearing a bow tie, I always viewed Carlson as a harmless clown but now, as propagandist of the most-watched cable news show, and desperately reaching out to interview Putin, I see him as a dangerous bozo.)

Thankfully some small sanity exists at Fox News as evidenced by contributor Dan Hoffman, a former CIA station chief. He compared Putin's rhetoric, in which

SEE **LAUGHING MATTERS** PAGE 11

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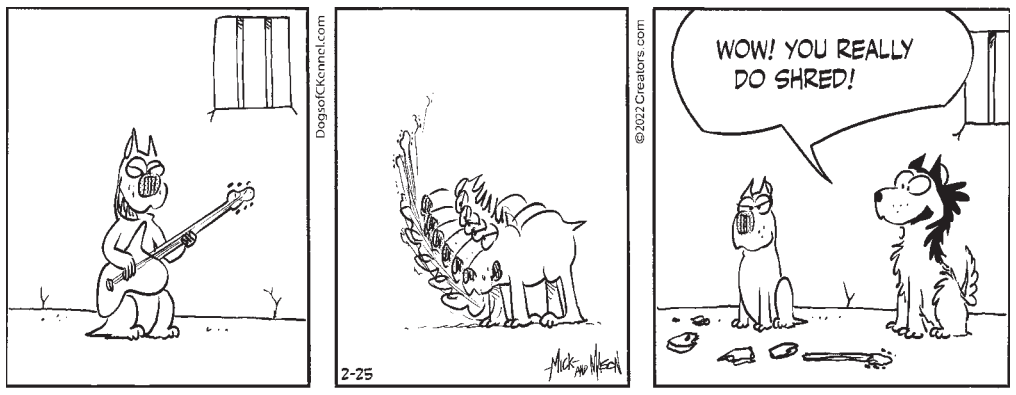
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



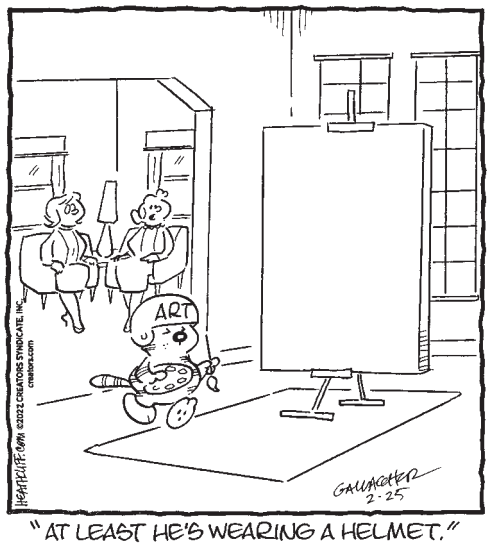
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING





SURF FORECASTS

WATER TEMP: 56.3°

FRIDAY - **POOR TO FAIR** - SURF: 1-2ft Knee to thigh
Modest new WNW pulse comes up as SSW swell starts to taper off. Small surf but conditions look worthy of a trip on the bigger boards.

SATURDAY - **POOR TO FAIR** - SURF: 2-3ft Thigh to waist
Little pulse of mid-period WNW swell. The dawn patrol is sluggish with the high tide but conditions improve as it drops..

WEATHER

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 63. Northeast wind 5 to 10 mph.
Friday Night: Clear, with a low around 46. North northeast wind 5 to 10 mph.
Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 68. North northeast wind 5 to 10 mph.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2022/02/25	Fri	04:07 AM	5.19	H
2022/02/25	Fri	12:05 PM	-0.53	L
2022/02/25	Fri	7:10 PM	3.24	H
2022/02/25	Fri	10:57 PM	2.60	L
2022/02/26	Sat	05:20 AM	5.56	H
2022/02/26	Sat	12:56 PM	-1.05	L
2022/02/26	Sat	7:41 PM	3.63	H
2022/02/27	Sun	12:09 AM	2.23	L
2022/02/27	Sun	06:21 AM	5.95	H
2022/02/27	Sun	1:38 PM	-1.39	L
2022/02/27	Sun	8:11 PM	3.97	H
2022/02/28	Mon	01:04 AM	1.76	L
2022/02/28	Mon	07:12 AM	6.23	H
2022/02/28	Mon	2:17 PM	-1.52	L
2022/02/28	Mon	8:40 PM	4.27	H
2022/03/01	Tue	01:51 AM	1.30	L
2022/03/01	Tue	07:58 AM	6.31	H
2022/03/01	Tue	2:52 PM	-1.44	L
2022/03/01	Tue	9:10 PM	4.53	H
2022/03/02	Wed	02:34 AM	0.94	L
2022/03/02	Wed	08:40 AM	6.15	H

DAILY LOTTERY

POWERball
Draw Date: 2/23
6 17 21 35 64
Power#: 18
Jackpot: 58 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 2/22
6 17 22 57 62
Mega#: 3
Jackpot: 87 M

SuperLotto PLUS
Draw Date: 2/23
5 10 15 31 32
Mega#: 25
Jackpot: 20 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 2/23
2 8 19 27 32

Daily 3
Draw Date: 2/23
EVENING: 0 5 0

Draw Date: 2/23
MIDDAY: 6 4 0

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 2/23
1st: 06 - Whirl Win
2nd: 08 - Gorgeous George
3rd: 12 - Lucky Charms
Race Time: 1:42.27

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

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (FEBRUARY 25)

It's as if something in you quickens as the solar year begins. An energy shift is taking place both in relationships and at work, and you'll warm into a new level of authority. You're clearly needed, and you'll use your power carefully. Save your money in the spring. Summer brings a stellar investment opportunity. Libra and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 10, 3, 33 and 18.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Ignore the numbers. The metrics like money, followers, distance and time, although relevant, have little to do with what you'll produce today with your heart, hands and best intentions.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). If you're working for the result, you'll burn out at some point. It is not as sustainable as the sort of work that you enjoy and would do whether you got the result or not.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You love it when the people around you feel warm. However, you're not willing to set yourself on fire to accomplish this. Think in terms of your own needs, appetites and delights.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You provide what they want; they buy it. Neither showmanship nor influence nor persuasion will be necessary because the deal already satisfies the desires of all.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). While you could do many things today, only one is important to your main goal. Humorist Josh Billings advised, "Be like a postage stamp -- stick to one thing until you get there."

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). When you're relaxed, they'll relax. When you're lifted, they'll be lifted. Relationship rifts and more can be healed with hugs. There's no better relief than a heart-to-heart embrace.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You, at full concentration, are a powerful force. But if you divide yourself among too many responsibilities, there won't be enough of you to create impact in any single role.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). As a result of your ambition, you'll set lofty goals that you're unlikely to achieve. Even so, you'll get further than if you hadn't aimed so high. All success is significant, and your spirits stay high as you interpret it as such.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You'll attend events your friends invite you to. The Scandinavian proverb applies: Go often to the house of thy friend; for weeds soon choke up the unused path.

CAPRICORN: The crowd takes notice... you're in excellent form. You'll interact with someone who is clearly enchanted by you, and you can soak it up without worry. You offer excellent attention and should expect the same from others.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your life and work experiences will prove useful. A profound impact can be made without even telling your story. Rather, you influence others through your example.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Today's challenges require boldness. Your bravery, your support of what you believe is right and your facilitation of justice make you indispensable. It will be easy to sleep tonight, knowing that you put in a solid day's work.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

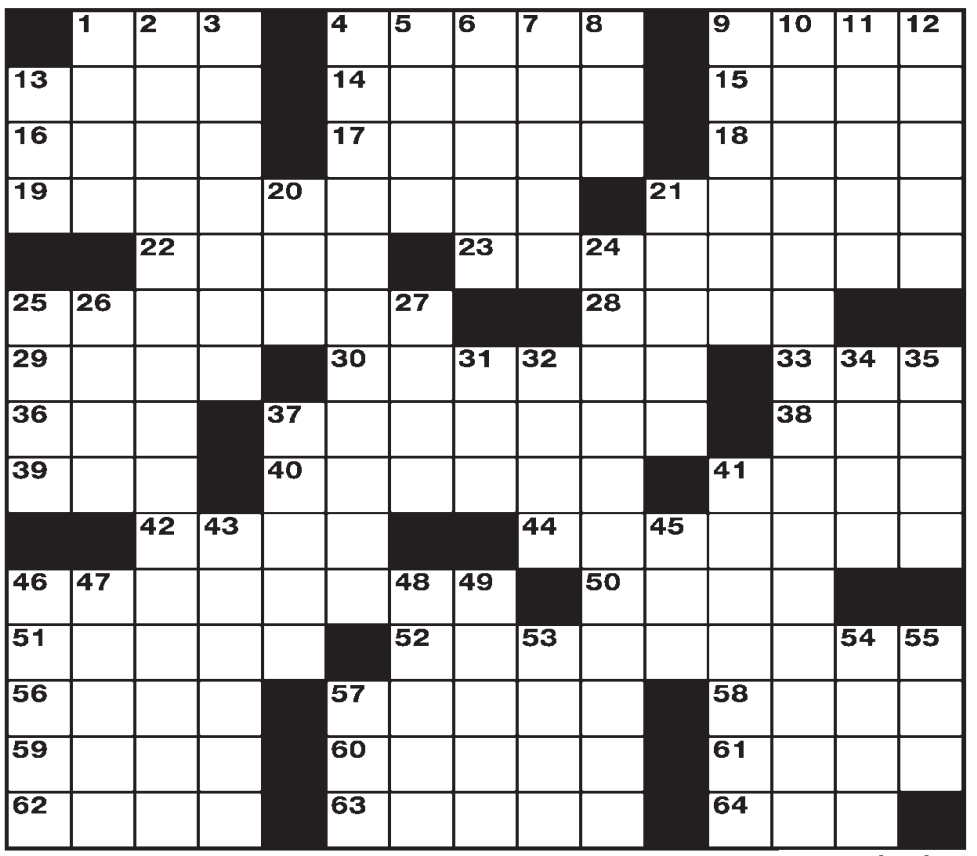
		5			9		2	
4		2		3				
			2			8	9	
5			3	1				2
	4		5		8		3	
1				6	2			5
	7	8			4			
				2		6		8
	2		7			4		

Newsday Crossword

TOUCH DOWNS by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Nothing at all
4 Much less than limber
9 Layered do
13 *La Città Eterna*
14 *Messiah* group
15 Insipid
16 Add to that
17 Tending to drip
18 Russian monarchal name
19 Communication tech
21 Hold dear
22 Dashed or detached
23 *Rhapsody in Blue* introducer
25 Permeating
28 Highly extended
29 Pickling candidate
30 Things on strings
33 Obtain from storage
36 Meal for a seal
37 Tell tales
38 Beer critic's evaluation
39 Reason for a ringing
40 Interweave
41 Novel figure
42 Excluding
44 Winged symbol of Louisiana
46 Forensics facility
50 Nickname for Alberto
51 Upright nature
52 Mr. Fixits
56 *Bus Stop* playwright
57 Big beach parties
58 Juvenile comeback
59 New member of the flock
60 Maltreatment
61 Crib sheet users
62 Singer from County Donegal
63 Trajectories
64 Give up on

DOWN
1 "J'Accuse . . ." writer
2 "__ touch"
3 Distribute
4 Touch-__
5 Land heavily
6 With a charge, in chemistry
7 No longer alterable
8 Swelter
9 Recipe direction
10 __ touch
11 Floor
12 French playwright
13 Spinning stat
20 3-D exam
21 Plain talk
24 Touch __
25 Cynical statement
26 Unassuming
27 Ultimate basis
31 Consist of
32 Wood shaper
34 Air of mystery
35 Drudge
37 Defiant refusal
41 Measure of sales performance
43 Simple life
45 Seashells on a string
46 It's 3+ times longer than California
47 Saoirse of *Little Women*
48 Caribbean cruise stop
49 Corker
53 Extra effort
54 Since, for short
55 Apt. identifiers
57 Once around



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2022 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 2/25/22

What's Up Westside
out and about in Santa Monica

FRIDAY | FEB 25

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) CONVERSATION, LOW
SMPL hosts an ongoing series of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes taught by Adult Education Center instructors. Classes are free and students must be 18 years or older to attend. Community parents and SMMUSD parents have priority enrollment. Learn more about California adult education at caladulted.org. Enrollment is through the SMMUSD Adult Education Center, located at 2510 Lincoln Blvd., Room 203, Santa Monica, CA, 90405. Visit smmusd.asapconnected.com or contact Olga Saucedo at osaucedo@smmusd.org or (310) 664-6222, ext.76203 to enroll. Classes will begin in a virtual format. 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

MICROGRANT APPLICATIONS
Santa Monicans are eligible to apply for a $500 microgrant through Feb. 25. Applicants must be a current area resident. Projects must take place in the Santa Monica Bay area. Criteria and application materials are available online at santamonicawellbeing.org.

SATURDAY | FEB 26

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) CONVERSATION, HIGH
SMPL hosts an ongoing series of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes taught by Adult Education Center instructors. Classes are free and students must be 18 years or older to attend. Community parents and SMMUSD parents have priority enrollment. Learn more about California adult education at caladulted.org. Enrollment is through the SMMUSD Adult Education Center, located at 2510 Lincoln Blvd., Room 203, Santa Monica, CA, 90405. Visit smmusd.asapconnected.com or contact Olga Saucedo at osaucedo@smmusd.org or (310) 664-6222, ext.76203 to enroll. Classes will begin in a virtual format. If live classes become possible, they will take place at the Pico Branch Library, 2100 Pico Blvd. 12 - 3 p.m.

DOWNTOWN SANTA MONICA WALKING TOUR
Discover downtown Santa Monica's architecture, history and culture with one of our highly engaging docents. See where Jim Morrison played his first show and visit the lavish Art Deco hotel that housed a speakeasy during Prohibition. Tours are free for members and $10 for the general public. The reservation link is smc.givecloud.co/dwt. The walking tour covers about 6 blocks in 2 hours and begins at the city's first landmark, the 1875 Rapp Saloon. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. 1436 2nd St.

DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET
Arizona Ave. (between 2nd & 4th)
8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

PICO FARMERS MARKET
Pico Blvd. & Cloverfield Blvd.
8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

SUNDAY | FEB 27

MAIN STREET FARMERS MARKET
2640 Main St.
8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

MONDAY | FEB 28

SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MEETING
Visit https://www.smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Boards-Commissions/Architectural-Review-Board/ for more information. 7 p.m.

SANTA MONICA AIRPORT COMMISSION MEETING
Visit https://www.smgov.net/Departments/Airport/Airport_Commission/Airport_Commission.aspx for more information. 6 p.m.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) CONVERSATION, HIGH
Santa Monica Public Library hosts an ongoing series of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes taught by Adult Education Center instructors. Classes are free and students must be 18 years or older to attend. Community parents and SMMUSD parents have priority enrollment. Learn more about California adult education at caladulted.org. Enrollment is through the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Adult Education Center, located at 2510 Lincoln Blvd., Room 203, Santa Monica, CA,90405. Visit smmusd.asapconnected.com or contact Olga Saucedo at osaucedo@smmusd.org or (310) 664-6222, ext.76203 to enroll Classes will begin in a virtual format. If live classes become possible, they will take place at Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

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

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 15 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle. © australianwordgames.com.au 5401

Party animal

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

Adults	Gifts	New Years	Snacks
Beer	Hats	Eve	Social
Bosses	Hire	Nice	Spirit
Bruschetta	Hors	Night	Stereo
Cake	d'oeuvre	Pool	Sweet
Canape	Icing	Pubs	Tags
Christmas	Kids	Riotous	Tapas
Congratulations	Leis	Rose	Ties
Croon	Meal	Rowdy	Toys
Dance	More	Sausages	Video
Dips	Music	Smart	
Drum	Name	casual	

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.
The winning numbers are...

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LOS ANGELES

FROM PAGE 1

services and human supports, and to scale successful strategies and approaches with future funding as proposed in the Governor's CA Blueprint budget."

The Governor's multi-year homeless housing plan will provide 55,000 new housing units and treatment slots, once fully implemented.

editor@smdp.com

RUSSIA

FROM PAGE 2

the U.S. was deploying additional forces to Germany to bolster NATO.

European authorities declared the country's airspace an active conflict zone.

After weeks of denying plans to invade, Putin launched the operation on a country the size of Texas that has increasingly tilted toward the democratic West and away from Moscow's sway. The autocratic leader made clear earlier this week that he sees no reason for Ukraine to exist, raising fears of possible broader conflict in the vast space that the Soviet Union once ruled. Putin denied plans to occupy Ukraine, but his ultimate goals remain hazy.

Ukrainians were urged to shelter in place and not to panic.

"Until the very last moment, I didn't believe it would happen. I just pushed away these thoughts," said a terrified Anna Dovnya in Kyiv, watching soldiers and police remove shrapnel from an exploded shell. "We have lost all faith."

With social media amplifying a torrent of military claims and counter-claims, it was difficult to determine exactly what was happening on the ground.

Russia and Ukraine made competing claims about damage they had inflicted. Russia's Defense Ministry said it had destroyed scores of Ukrainian air bases, military facilities and drones. It confirmed the loss of one of its Su-25 attack jets, blaming "pilot error," and said an An-26 transport plane had crashed because of technical failure, killing the entire crew. It did not say how many were aboard.

Russia said it was not targeting cities, but journalists saw destruction in many civilian areas.

Ukraine's health minister said 57 Ukrainians were killed in the invasion and 169 more were wounded. It was not clear how many were civilians, although earlier in the day it had said 40 soldiers had died.

Poland's military increased its readiness level, and Lithuania and Moldova moved toward doing the same.

Putin justified his actions in an overnight televised address, asserting the attack was needed to protect civilians in eastern Ukraine — a false claim the U.S. predicted he would make as a pretext for invasion. He accused the U.S. and its allies of ignoring Russia's demands to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and for security guarantees, saying the military action was a "forced measure."

Anticipating international condemnation and countermeasures, Putin issued a stark warning to other countries not to meddle.

In a reminder of Russia's nuclear power, he warned that "no one should have any doubts that a direct attack on our country will lead to the destruction and horrible consequences for any potential aggressor."

Inside Russia, authorities moved swiftly to crack down on any critical voices. OVD-Info, a group that tracks political arrests, reported 1,620 people in 52 Russian cities had been detained for protesting the invasion, more than half of them in Moscow.

LAUGHING MATTERS

FROM PAGE 7

he recognized two break-away regions of Ukraine to Hitler's "justification for taking the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia." The comparison is so alarming because it rings so true.

With my deadline looming and events rapidly changing it's impossible to speculate where this crisis is heading but it's almost certain it will be ugly. After all, referring to his former career, Putin has often warned the west, "There is no such thing as a former KGB officer." (Yikes!)

Some experts have speculated Putin has stolen as much as 200 billion dollars from Russia in Mafia-style. With the fall of communism, Putin handed over to oligarchs monopolies of entire industries that used to be government-owned. In return, however, the oligarchs were forced to make Putin their 50-50 partner. (Assassinating journalists, and 50% cut of everything, no wonder Trump is so jealous.)

Apparently fearing severe sanctions from the U.S. Vlad covertly moved his precious yacht from Germany to a Russian harbor. (Hey, maybe the yacht will be where Mad Vlad gets interviewed by Comrade Carlson?)

When Putin isn't busy assassinating, he has another hobby. To see, Google: "Fats Putin sings Blueberry Hill." Jack is at: facebook.com/jackneworth, twitter.com/jackneworth and jackdailypress@aol.com

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