3 **High School Sports**
Track & Field results.

5 **Senate race**
Who will be top two?

6 **Grocery Merger**
New opposition.

7 **Singing the Blues**
At SMMUSD.

smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

Volume 23 Issue 72 TUESDAY 2/27/24 smdp.com

Potential job cuts necessitate special school board meeting

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education will have a special meeting on Tuesday night at the district offices prompted by an urgent need to retain or let go temporary employees.

The main purpose of the meeting, district staff states, is for the Board "to adopt annual time-sensitive resolutions regarding the notification of specific employees that their services might not be required for next year." The Board wrote a resolution pursuant to Education Code Section 44954 that the Board "may release a certificated temporary employee if the employee is notified before the end of the school year of the District's decision not to reelect the employee for the next succeeding school year."

A total of 11 employees on temporary contracts were not reelected for the 2024-25 school year. Additionally, the Board decided not to reelect two probationary employees and one probationary certificated administrator/manager position. The Board also chose to release one employee from an administrative position and salary placement at the end of this school year, and that employee will be reassigned to a teaching position for the 2024-25 year.

Another Board resolution deals with the reduction or discontinuance of particular kinds of classified services, determining it "necessary to reduce or discontinue particular kinds of classified services

SEE **BOARD** PAGE 4

Shell shock as pistachio eating contest goes nuts with new champion



Photo by Thomas Leffler

PISTACHIO: Major League Eating legend Joey Chestnut and Los Angeles Chargers linebacker Joey Bosa competed in the Wonderful Pistachios Get Crackin' Eating Championship at Pacific Park Monday.

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

A monumental feat was derived from the smallest of foods on the Santa Monica Pier.

Pacific Park presented pounds of pistachios as the competitors of Major League Eating cracked open over 1,600 nuts, including a new world record for consumption of the tiny snack. James Webb, the fifth-ranked eater in the world from Sydney, Australia, shattered the previous record of 188 pistachios in an eight-minute time frame with an astonishing 338 pistachios, taking home the Wonderful Pistachios Get Crackin' Eating Championship title and a $5,000 check.

Webb took the title from previous record holder and champion Nick

SEE **PISTACHIO** PAGE 7

Lawsuit challenges needle distribution program in parks

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

The Santa Monica Coalition has filed a lawsuit against County Health Director Barbara Ferrer, the Los Angeles County Health Department and the Venice Family Clinic in connection with the Needle Distribution Program, which has been conducted for a period of approximately four years at Reed Park, Palisades Park and Tongva Park.

In The Santa Monica Coalition, Inc., John Emil Alle Versus The County of Los Angeles, Barbara Ferrer in case number 24STCP00510, the Coalition alleges that on June 12, 2018, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Board of Supervisors authorized a needle distribution program, operated by RPI Venice Family Clinic, to prevent the spread of blood-borne viruses, including HIV. The program was initially approved for a three-year term, with options to extend for two additional one-year periods.

Petitioners claim that the authorization violated Health and Safety Code section 121349, pointing to several alleged infractions, such as failure to consult local law enforcement, exceeding the initial two-year operation limit and inadequate notice to law enforcement agencies.

Despite claims of legal violations, the suit says officials extended the program beyond the initially approved period. Allegedly, this was

SEE **LAWSUIT** PAGE 4

INGLEWOOD REALTOR
FROM YOUR FIRST HOME TO YOUR DREAM HOME

LOOKING TO BUY YOUR FIRST HOME?
LET ME SHOW YOU INGLEWOOD
• Close Proximity to Westside
• Entry-Level Pricing
• Faster Appreciation Rate Than Neighbouring Areas
• Centrally Located

RE/MAX ESTATE PROPERTIES
Shamim Khorsand
310-658-6426
shamim90291@yahoo.com
DRE# is 02042990
scan QR code for more information

Santa Monica celebrates with annual Greens Festival









Francine Lyness

FESTIVAL: Santa Monica celebrated Black History Month with the annual Greens Festival at Virginia Ave. Park on Feb. 25. The event included several performances, demonstrations and community booths.

FINDING A NEW DENTIST IS TOUGH!

(BUT WE MAKE IT EASY!!!)

If you don't like what we have to say we will give you a copy of your x-rays at no charge

DENTAL CARE WITHOUT JUDGEMENT!

WE OFFER UNIQUE SERVICES

*Nitrous Oxide available *No interest payment plans
*Emergencies can be seen today
*Our dentists and staff members are easy to talk to

AND OF COURSE WE DO

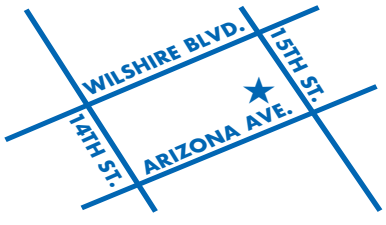
• Invisalign • Periodontist on Staff • Oral Surgeon on Staff
• Cosmetics and Implants • Zoom bleaching • and more

YOUR CHOICE

TRY OUR NO OBLIGATION
$20 EXAM INCLUDES FULL XRAYS
*Offer to non insured patients

OR

TRY OUR NO OBLIGATION
$99 EXAM AND CLEANING
For New Patients
INCLUDES FULL XRAYS
*Offer to non insured patients



SANTA MONICA FAMILY DENTISTRY | DR. ALAN RUBENSTEIN
1260 15th ST. SUITE #703 **(310) 736-2589**
WWW.ALANRUBENSTEINDDS.COM

Vikings, Mariners compete on Malibu track

SMDP STAFF REPORT

SPORTS SCORES:
SANTA MONICA BASEBALL:
Thursday, February 22:
Vikings vs Saint Monica
Vikings win 5-1
Saturday, February 24:
Vikings vs Hamilton
Vikings win 4-0
Vikings Record: 5-1
Next Game: Tuesday at Royal, 3:15 p.m.

SANTA MONICA SOFTBALL:
Friday, February 23:
Lady Vikings at Venice
Lady Vikings win 3-1
Lady Vikings Record: 4-2
Next Game: Wednesday vs Bishop Montgomery, 3:15 p.m.

SANTA MONICA BOYS VOLLEYBALL:
Tuesday, February 20:
Vikings vs Torrance
Vikings win 3-0
Wednesday, February 21:
Vikings vs Wiseburn- Da Vinci
Wiseburn- Da Vinci win 3-0
Friday, February 23:
Vikings vs El Segundo
Vikings win 2-0
Vikings vs Carlsbad
Carlsbad win 2-0
Vikings vs Warren
Vikings win 2-0
Saturday, February 24:
Vikings vs Buchanan
Buchanan win 2-1
Vikings vs Peninsula
Peninsula win 2-0
Vikings Record: 4-3
Next Game: Wednesday vs Brentwood School, 3:30 p.m.

SANTA MONICA BOYS LACROSSE:
Wednesday, February 21:
Vikings vs Mira Costa
Mira Costa win 6-5
Friday, February 23:
Vikings at Notre Dame (Sherman Oaks)
Notre Dame win 12-11
Vikings Record: 1-2
Next Game: Tuesday vs Crespi, 3:30 p.m.

SANTA MONICA GIRLS LACROSSE:
Tuesday, February 20:
Lady Vikings at Saugus
Tie 14-14
Lady Vikings Record: 0-1-1
Next Game: Wednesday vs Chaminade, 3:15 p.m.
Santa Monica Track and Field:
Saturday, February 24:
Marie Smith Malibu Invitational, Malibu High School
Mens 100 Meters Varsity Finals:
4- Charles Rusler (Senior), 11.51 seconds
8- Roman Nicodemus (Sophomore), 11.77 seconds
10- Logan Hanvey (Sophomore), 11.87 seconds
16- Talib Debose (Senior), 12.05 seconds
23- Arman Chibber (Sophomore), 12.38 seconds
Mens 100 Meters Freshman/Sophomore Finals:
11- Brooklyn Todd (Sophomore), 12.31 seconds
13- Jayden Butts (Sophomore), 12.40 seconds
17- Cedric Mogol (Sophomore), 12.62 seconds
18- Wyatt Brown (Sophomore), 12.68 seconds
28- Anderson Sparks (Sophomore), 13.26 seconds
Mens 400 Meters Varsity Finals:
1- Spencer Hotch (Senior), 49.25 seconds
5- Joshua Lesley (Junior), 53.27 seconds
Mens 400 Meters Freshman/Sophomore Finals:
7- Mario Ducille (Freshman), 59.20 seconds
11- Joseph Misfen (Sophomore), 1:01.06
Mens 800 Meters Varsity Finals:
2- Landon Kozmor (Junior), 2:02.47
19- Alex Gonzalez (Senior), 2:16.13
22- Jacob Ovadia (Junior), 2:16.51
23- Ajax Haendel (Senior), 2:16.89
29- Kenneth Walden (Junior), 2:22.46
Mens 800 Meters Freshman/Sophomore Finals:
1- Kingsley Lin (Freshman), 2:04.87
2- Leo Lucente (Sophomore), 2:06.16
3- James Faries (Sophomore), 2:06.73
5- Emerson Hill (Sophomore), 2:11.41
8- Gavin Bao (Freshman), 2:17.81
10- Ian Campbell (Freshman), 2:21.47
13- Senam Turner (Freshman), 2:22.13
14- Sean Milne-Morrow (Freshman), 2:22.28
16- Yungbihn Douglas (Sophomore), 2:22.85
19- Silas Tropea-Lester (Sophomore), 2:24.79
37- Rufus Ballatore (Sophomore), 2:48.07
Mens 1600 Meters Varsity Finals:
3- Landon Kozmor (Junior), 4:38.87
Mens 3200 Meters Varsity Finals:
20- Lucas Yarmand (Junior), 11:15.53
23- Alex Gonzalez (Senior), 11:22.80
Mens 3200 Meters Freshman/Sophomore Finals:
3- Lev Goldstein (Freshman), 11:00.09
4- Jackson Mayeda (Sophomore), 11:04.79
5- Tobin Palmer (Sophomore), 11:07.26
6- Phineaus Pitts (Freshman), 11:36.62
10- Daniel Ostrovsky (Sophomore), 12:05.00
Mens 300 Meter Hurdles Varsity Finals:
10- Dylan Fanselow (Senior), 49.13 seconds
Mens Shot Put Varsity Finals:
4- Alberto Villasenor (Senior), 38-09.50
26- Brody Strauss (Senior), 27-03.50
Mens Discus Varsity Finals:
3- Alberto Villasenor (Senior), 115-08.00

SEE **SPORTS** PAGE 8

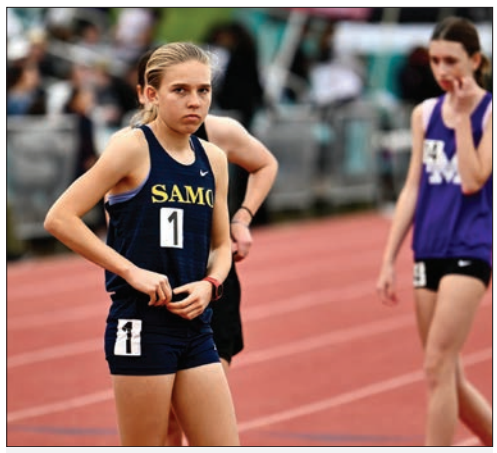


Photo Courtesy David E. Hunzicker Photography
TRACK: Samohi Track and Field's Phoebe Benun took home the win in the Womens 3200 Meters Varsity Finals in Malibu on Feb. 24.



Surf report

WATER TEMP: **60.8**

TUESDAY
FAIR
SURF: 2-3ft
Thigh to waist
New SSW swell nudges up the surf. Small NW swell at select spots. Light winds due most of the morning.

WEDNESDAY
FAIR
SURF: 3-4ft
Waist to chest
SSW swell lingers. Easing NW swell mix. Morning winds look light for a decent early AM window.

Weather

Tuesday: Mostly cloudy, then gradually becoming sunny, with a high near 64. North wind 5 to 10 mph.
Tuesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 49. West southwest wind around 5 mph becoming northeast after midnight.
Wednesday: Sunny, with a high near 66.
Wednesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 51.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted	(ft)High/Low
2024/02/27	Tue	04:29 AM	1.02	L
2024/02/27	Tue	10:21 AM	4.33	H
2024/02/27	Tue	4:33 PM	0.59	L
2024/02/27	Tue	10:53 PM	4.53	H
2024/02/28	Wed	05:08 AM	1.02	L
2024/02/28	Wed	10:56 AM	3.76	H
2024/02/28	Wed	4:49 PM	1.03	L
2024/02/28	Wed	11:17 PM	4.56	H
2024/02/29	Thu	05:54 AM	1.08	L
2024/02/29	Thu	11:38 AM	3.14	H
2024/02/29	Thu	5:01 PM	1.48	L
2024/02/29	Thu	11:44 PM	4.54	H
2024/03/01	Fri	06:55 AM	1.15	L
2024/03/01	Fri	12:41 PM	2.53	H
2024/03/01	Fri	5:05 PM	1.88	L
2024/03/02	Sat	12:21 AM	4.49	H
2024/03/02	Sat	08:38 AM	1.10	L
2024/03/03	Sun	01:21 AM	4.44	H
2024/03/03	Sun	10:34 AM	0.69	L
2024/03/04	Mon	03:02 AM	4.52	H
2024/03/04	Mon	11:41 AM	0.09	L

Daily Lottery

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the winning number information, mistakes can occur. In the event of any discrepancies, California State laws and California Lottery regulations will prevail. Complete game information and prize claiming instructions are available at California Lottery retailers. Visit the California State Lottery web site at http://www.calottery.com

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 2/24
3 8 40 53 58
Power#: 3
Jackpot: 391 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 2/23
4 6 40 41 60
Mega#: 11
Jackpot: 563 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 2/24
1 2 37 40 42
Mega#: 5
Jackpot: 13 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 2/25
2 6 12 37 38

Daily 3
Draw Date: 2/25
EVENING: 7 2 5
Draw Date: 2/25
MIDDAY: 4 1 1

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 2/25
1st: 04 - Big Ben
2nd: 03 - Hot Shot
3rd: 02 - Lucky Star
Race Time: 1:45.31

PUBLISHER
Ross Furukawa
ross@smdp.com

PARTNER
Todd James
todd@smdp.com

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Matthew Hall
matt@smdp.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Charles Andrews,
Jack Neworth,
David Pisarra.

CIRCULATION
Guadalupe Navarro
ross@smdp.com

Keith Wyatt
ross@smdp.com

STAFF WRITERS
Scott Snowden
scott.snowden@smdp.com

Thomas Leffler
thomas@smdp.com

DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING
Cindy Moreno
cindy@smdp.com

MARKETING MANAGER
Dina Araniva
dina@smdp.com

PRODUCTION
Esteban Inchaustegui
production@smdp.com

Julio Davalos
julio@smdp.com

1640 5th Street, Suite 218
Santa Monica, CA 90401
OFFICE (310) 458-PRESS (7737)
FAX (310) 576-9913

AWARD WINNER

Sustainable Quality Awards
WINNER

The Santa Monica Daily Press publishes Monday - Saturday with a circulation of 8,200 on weekdays and 8,000 on the weekend. The Daily Press is adjudicated as a newspaper of general circulation in the County of Los Angeles and covers news relevant to the City of Santa Monica. The Daily Press is a member of the California Newspaper Publisher's Association, the National Newspaper Association and the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce. The paper you're reading this on is composed of 100% post consumer content and the ink used to print these words is soy based. We are proud recipients of multiple honors for outstanding news coverage from the California Newspaper Publishers Association as well as a Santa Monica Sustainable Quality Award.

PUBLISHED BY NEWLON ROUGE, LLC
© 2023 Newlon Rouge, LLC, all rights reserved.

Santa Monica Daily Press

BOARD

FROM PAGE 1

due to lack of work or lack of funds for the 2024-25 school year." At the conclusion of this year, there will be reductions in both district physical activities specialists and media services coordinator positions.

The board will look to approve several independent contractor agreements, such as a contract for PS Arts to deliver in-person visual art lessons for 5th-grade students at Grant Elementary School.

Informational items are also on the agenda, such as a request for sexuality education for those with developmental disabilities. Parents of students in moderate-severe special education programs requested that students receive sex education, as the students do not take Freshman Seminar in high school, therefore not receiving a health/sex education curriculum.

The curriculum created by Katherine McLaughlin of Elvatus Training, LLC and Green Mountain Self Advocates focuses on topics like friendships, gender, consent, social media safety, healthy and unhealthy relationships, public vs. private, body parts, sexual acts, sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. The curriculum is created specifically for students with disabilities, and presentations will be given by the UCLA Title X team of health educators.

The district states that UCLA "has the capacity to build a multi-year partnership with (the district) to educate all students enrolled in moderate to severe (Life Skills and Social Skills, for example) classes in 6th grade through 12th grade." Administrators and certificated staff will identify which lessons will be presented to the classes, and teachers may also use the curriculum for presentations in the classroom throughout the school year. There will be no financial cost to the district for the curriculum, and materials will be provided through UCLA staff.

thomas@smdp.com

LAWSUIT

FROM PAGE 1

done without proper consultation and notice to law enforcement, further violating the Health and Safety Code.

The lawsuit says the County illegally authorized the program, allegedly utilizing taxpayer dollars for the unlawful initiative. The Petitioners request various forms of relief, including a writ of mandate to cease and invalidate the Needle Distribution Program, a permanent injunction against taxpayer funds for the program, a refund of expended funds, prejudgment interest, attorney's fees, costs, and any other just and equitable relief deemed appropriate by the court.

A spokesperson for the City of Santa Monica told the Daily Press, "We are aware of an announcement distributed by a local advocacy group today regarding the syringe exchange program funded and operated by the county of Los Angeles," adding, "The program that the coalition is referring to is not funded by the city and the city does not have oversight over the program.

"The City Council has taken a strong position on the program and conveyed that stance consistently to the county. The Council has taken action as far back as 2022 to urge the county to address concerns about program operations in Santa Monica. It is the city's understanding that the program currently operates one hour per week, out of mobile vans."

The lawsuit authors are longtime critics of City hall and the needle program.

In August 2023, the long-standing "Santa Monica Is Not Safe" sign that downtown business owner and Coalition co-founder John Alle hung at 1327 Third Street was replaced with another sign that said "Santa Methica Is Not Safe." It also said "Our City Manager supports the Needle and Meth Pipe Distribution Program in Our Parks. and Public Spaces" and even featured a picture of City Manager David White along with his name.

The program has also been opposed by Santa Monica officials. In September of 2022, in an open letter to Los Angeles County officials, then Mayor Sue Himmelrich called for a halt to the program and "immediately [move] this program to a service rich environment (preferably indoors) where individuals in need of substance abuse, mental health, and other services can coordinate and work directly with service providers."

The local lawsuit follows a similar action in Santa Cruz that prompted the City Council to take a new look at a local needle exchange program with an eye towards additional restrictions on local distribution. Consequently all seven councilmembers voted to direct the City Manager and City Attorney to investigate and analyze the processes employed by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and its syringe exchange program currently operating in Santa Monica.

The Daily Press reached out to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and the Venice Family Clinic, both of which declined to comment.

The Santa Monica Coalition also alleges two former mayors of Santa Monica, Sue Himmelrich and Gleam Davis, former City Manager Lane Dilg and current City Manager David White, "covertly acknowledged and approved the program" and "will be served separate lawsuits in Federal Court." No additional information regarding these has been made available yet.

scott.snowden@smdp.com

Buy Local SANTA MONICA
buylocalsantamonica.com
TM
Support your community!

COMMUNITY NEWS

Pacific Palisades

Chamber Music Palisades Concert

Enjoy an evening of Bach, Haydn, Vivaldi, Arnold, and Falla, all brought to life by acclaimed musicians with Chamber Music Palisades, Wednesday, March 13 at 8 p.m. Kristian Nyquist, harpsichordist, is coming from Germany to perform with our local musicians Roger Wilkie, violinist, John Walz, cellist, Leslie Reed, oboist, Laura Stoutenborough, clarinetist, and Susan Greenberg, flutist and Chamber Music Palisades Artistic Director. These talented performers play with the Los Angeles Opera, Santa Monica Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Long Beach Symphony and as studio musicians. Alan Chapman, KUSC host, will be our host for the evening, offering his fascinating program notes to enlighten our evening.

Music will flow from the old to the new: Baroque J.S. Bach, J.C. Bach, Scarlatti, Vivaldi; Classical Haydn; Arnold, a British composer (1952) and Falla, Spanish composer (1923).

Tickets will be available for $35 online at cmpalisades.org or at the door the evening of the concert at Saint Matthew's Parish, 1031 Bienveneda Avenue, Pacific Palisades. CMP offers free admission for full-time students with an ID.

SUBMITTED BY CHAMBER MUSIC PALISADES

Citywide

The SAM Initiative Completes Annual Giving Cycle with Milestone $320,000 in Grants to Four Local Nonprofits

The SAM Initiative recently completed its annual giving cycle, donating a total of $320,000 to four grantees. Now in its 11th year, SAM is a giving circle, started by Los Angeles philanthropist and nonprofit strategist Mindy Freedman. SAM's mission is to passionately pool charitable dollars to fund and support programs committed to driving social change and promoting nonprofit sustainability.

SAM is fueled by Freedman's personal motto: "We can do far more together than we can alone." Since its first giving cycle in 2014, SAM has granted more than $3.3 million to local nonprofits.

The primary focus for this most recent cycle was supporting local nonprofit organizations that work in mental health and food security. In a milestone achievement, SAM was able to fund each of the four grantees at $80,000 each:

Alzheimer's LA: Improving the lives of families affected by Alzheimer's and dementia by increasing awareness, delivering effective programs and services, providing compassionate support, and advocating for quality care and a cure.

LA Food Policy - With a mission to create a local food system free from hunger, LA Food Policy is rooted in equity and access, supportive of farmers and food workers, and guided by principles of environmental stewardship and regeneration.

Open Paths Counseling Center - Addressing the evolving mental health needs of the community through quality counseling for individuals and families at affordable fees Open Paths offers free therapy programs for at-risk children and youth in local schools; and a highly-respected therapist training program.

Teen Talk App - A mobile app that provides a free, anonymous, safe space for teens to request support from trained peers and learn from others with similar experiences.

SAM is appreciative and thanks the Jewish Community Foundation (JCF) for providing their expertise and advisory support to enhance SAM's process.

"SAM's support and generosity is inspiring and fills us with increased hope as we embark on Teen Talk App's new endeavors. Together, we are going to reach so many more teens during this heightened youth mental health crisis. We also want to thank you for fulfilling our funding request as it sets a precedent for future supporters while legitimizing our program, brand, and goals." - Kendra Singer, Director of Teen Talk App

"On behalf of SAM and our newest grantees, I want to express my heartfelt congratulations to our entire community for embracing the spirit of collective giving," says SAM Founder and President Mindy Freedman. "Every member, supporter, friend and grant recipient of SAM has played a role in making our community a better place."

> SAM's support and generosity is inspiring and fills us with increased hope as we embark on Teen Talk App's new endeavors. Together, we are going to reach so many more teens during this heightened youth mental health crisis. We also want to thank you for fulfilling our funding request as it sets a precedent for future supporters while legitimizing our program, brand, and goals
> - Kendra Singer, Director of Teen Talk App

The SAM Initiative serves as a catalyst to improve the lives of women, children, and families in Los Angeles through engaged philanthropy. As a giving circle, SAM members believe that through collaborative giving we can do far more together than we can do alone. As of 2023, SAM has given more $3.3 million in grants to the community. For more information, visit www.saminitiative.org and on social media @thesaminitiative.

SUBMITTED BY MICHELLE OHAYON, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

California's Senate primary could fell two prominent Democrats and elevate Republican Steve Garvey

MICHAEL R. BLOOD
AP Political Writer

California's Senate race was expected to be a three-way Democratic prizefight, but the possibility of a record-low turnout is elevating the chances of Republican Steve Garvey, a former baseball star, and could derail the congressional careers of two prominent progressives.

In a year headlined by a likely presidential rematch that many Americans are dreading, California voters thus far have been sluggish to return mail-in ballots that were sent to 22 million homes earlier this month. The relative trickle of ballots has tended to come from older, white, conservative-leaning homeowners, a sweet spot for Republicans such as Garvey, a one-time National League MVP who played for the Los Angeles Dodgers and the San Diego Padres.

For months, Rep. Adam Schiff has had the fundraising and polling edge in a crowded Democratic field. Garvey's ascent has imperiled the political prospects of Reps. Barbara Lee and Katie Porter. The top two finishers in the March 5 contest, regardless of party, advance to the general election in November in the liberal-leaning state.

"We're at a real risk of losing," Porter's campaign warned in fundraising emails. Without more financial support, the plea went, "Katie is out of Congress for good."

Schiff was a leading voice in the two impeachments of former President Donald Trump. Lee is a former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. Porter has drawn attention on social media with her sharp questioning of tech CEOs in Capitol Hill hearings.

After the death of Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein in September, all three entered the race. Porter is leaving her swing district in Southern California as Democrats try to regain control of the House, where Republicans now hold a slim edge.

Presidential elections usually drive Democratic turnout in California, but that hasn't been the case this year, with President Joe Biden and Republican Donald Trump on track for a second matchup in which both are viewed unfavorably by many voters.

"This is a low-interest, low-turnout kind of election cycle. That generally creates an electorate that is older, more conservative, whiter," said Paul Mitchell of Political Data Inc., a research firm that closely tracks voting trends and works with Democrats, independent candidates and academics.

While the dynamic could shift by the time primary voting ends, Mitchell said it's possible that Garvey ends up with the highest total as the Democratic candidates splinter votes on the left.

"I don't see a surge of Democratic turnout coming in the end, but there could be a surge of Republican voters in the end," Mitchell said. He said that could be driven by those voters influenced by Trump's unsupported claims of election fraud who will vote in-person rather than through the mail.

Schiff told reporters recently that he was concerned "for the sake of our democracy" about a low turnout. His campaign has sent 3 million texts and made over 50,000 phone calls to potential supporters so far.

Last spring, the race looked like it would revolve around Schiff, Porter and Lee, who are largely indistinguishable on policy but bring different backgrounds and styles to the contest. Garvey, after years of flirting with politics, entered the race in October and gave Republicans a recognizable name on the ballot. He retired from baseball nearly four decades ago, in 1987, and had to overcome the resurfacing of tawdry details about his private life, including having two children with women he wasn't married to, that had undercut the clean-cut public persona he cultivated in his Dodger days.

A Republican hasn't won a Senate race in California since 1988, and registered Democrats hold a 2-to-1 advantage over Republicans statewide.

In all, more than two dozen names will appear on the Senate ballot for the six-year term that begins next year. Many of those candidates are political unknowns.

The race was once anticipated as a showcase of Democratic rivalries on the party's left wing. That never materialized.

Schiff emerged as the establishment pick with endorsements from former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, most of California's congressional delegation and former Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer. His fundraising prowess — he had $35 million on hand at the end of the year — has allowed him to roll out a steady stream of TV and digital ads, backed by a barrage from supportive super political action committees.

According to data from media tracking firm AdImpact, Schiff's campaign has had almost a 2-to-1 advertising advantage over his nearest rival, spending $28.2 million through Wednesday, followed by Porter at $14.6 million. Lee had $1.3 million in buys.

Porter's campaign has accused Schiff and his supporters of running ads intentionally spotlighting Garvey to lift the former baseball star's profile with Republicans, on the premise that having a GOP opponent would presumably be an easier match for Schiff in the fall.

"Garvey himself hasn't run a single TV ad, but his name and face are all over California's TVs thanks to this cynical play," Porter's campaign said in an email.

Porter, who presents herself as a suburban soccer mom out to protect the middle class, has warned that "billionaires, establishment politicians and corporate special interests are trying to buy this race, and it looks like their plan might work."

SEE **ELECTION** PAGE 11



US sues to block merger of grocery giants Kroger and Albertsons, saying it could push prices higher

DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Business Writer

The Federal Trade Commission sued to block a proposed merger between grocery giants Kroger and Albertsons, saying the $24.6 billion deal would eliminate competition and lead to higher prices for millions of Americans.

The FTC filed an administrative complaint against the companies Monday, which will be considered by an administrative law judge at the agency. It also filed a lawsuit with the U.S. District Court in Oregon requesting a temporary injunction blocking the merger. That lawsuit was joined by the attorneys general of eight states and the District of Columbia.

Kroger and Albertsons, two of the nation's largest grocers, agreed to merge in October 2022. The companies said a merger would help them better compete with Walmart, Amazon, Costco and other big rivals. Together, Kroger and Albertsons would control around 13% of the U.S. grocery market; Walmart controls 22%, according to J.P. Morgan analyst Ken Goldman.

Both companies, immediately after the FTC announcement, said that they will challenge the agency in court.

Kroger, based in Cincinnati, Ohio, operates 2,750 stores in 35 states and the District of Columbia, including brands like Ralphs, Smith's and Harris Teeter. Albertsons, based in Boise, Idaho, operates 2,273 stores in 34 states, including brands like Safeway, Jewel Osco and Shaw's. Together the companies employ around 700,000 people.

> Kroger's acquisition of Albertsons would lead to additional grocery price hikes for everyday goods, further exacerbating the financial strain consumers across the country face today
>
> - Henry Liu, the director of the FTC's Bureau of Competition

But the merger, announced at a time of high food-price inflation, was bound to get tough regulatory scrutiny. U.S. prices for food eaten at home typically rise 2.5% per year, but in 2022 they rose 11.4% and in 2023 they rose another 5%, according to government data. Inflation is cooling, but gradually.

"Kroger's acquisition of Albertsons would lead to additional grocery price hikes for everyday goods, further exacerbating the financial strain consumers across the country face today," Henry Liu, the director of the FTC's Bureau of Competition, said in a statement.

The Biden administration has also shown a willingness to challenge big mergers in court. Last year, the Justice Department sued to block a proposed merger between JetBlue Airways and Spirit Airlines. A federal judge agreed with the administration and blocked the merger last month. The airlines have appealed.

The White House didn't comment Monday, saying it doesn't weigh in on pending litigation. But Jon Donenberg, deputy director of President Biden's National Economic Council, said that Biden supports "fair and vigorous antitrust enforcement."

"When large corporations are not checked by healthy competition, they too often do not pass cost savings on to consumers and exploit their workers," Donenberg said.

Kroger and Albertsons said customers will likely see higher food prices and store closures if the merger isn't allowed to proceed.

"Albertsons Cos.' merger with Kroger will ensure our neighborhood supermarkets can better compete with these mega retailers, all while benefitting our customers, associates, and communities," Albertsons said in a prepared statement. "We are disappointed that the FTC continues to use the same outdated view of the U.S. grocery industry it used 20 years ago."

"This decision only strengthens larger, non-unionized retailers like Walmart, Costco and Amazon by allowing them to further increase their overwhelming and growing dominance of the grocery industry," Kroger said.

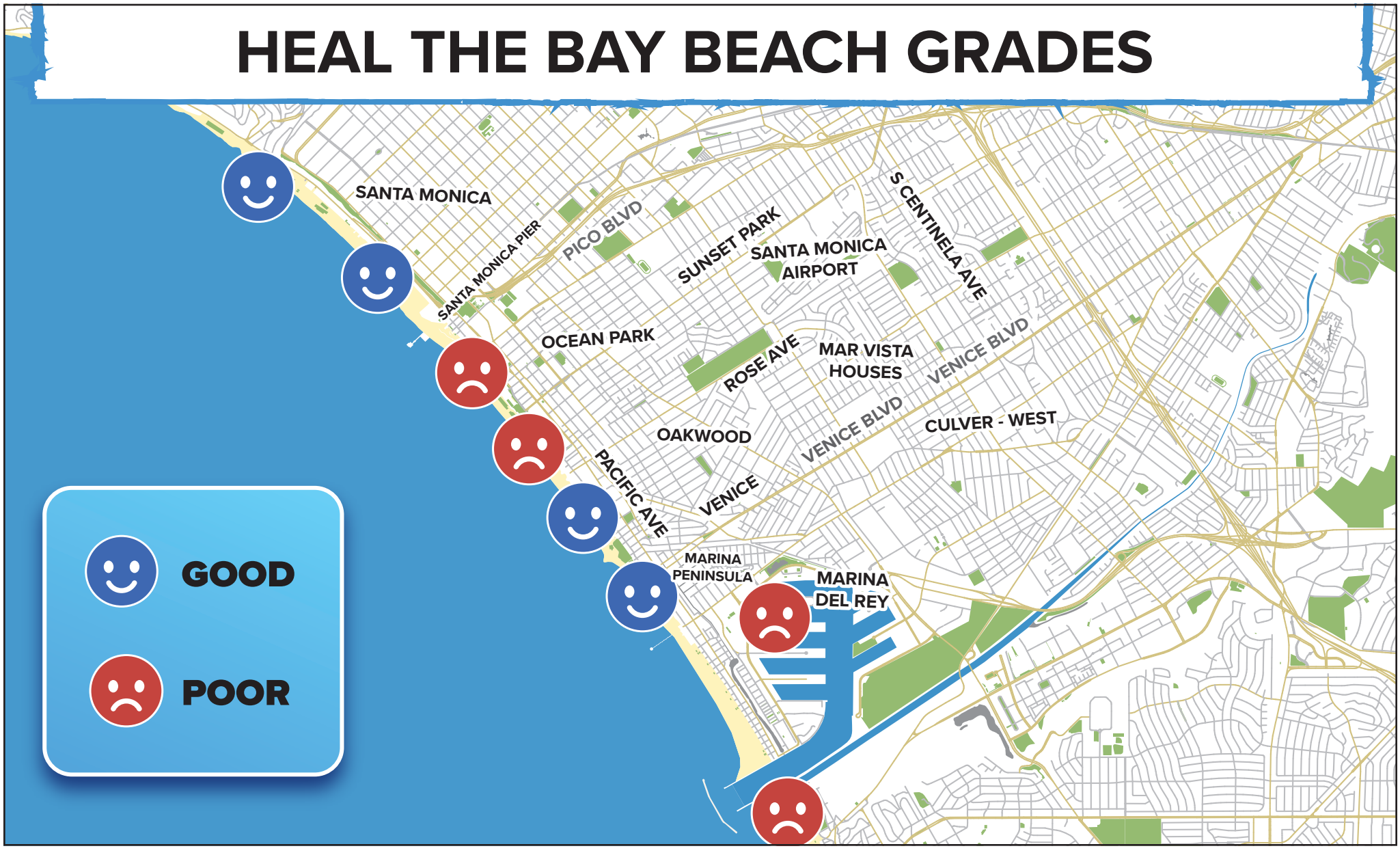
The FTC, which said the proposed deal would be the largest grocery merger in U.S. history, said it would also erase competition for workers, threatening their ability to win higher wages, better benefits and improved working conditions.

Most Albertsons and Kroger employees are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, which represents 835,000 grocery workers in the U.S. and Canada. The union voted last year to oppose the merger, saying the companies hadn't been transparent about its potential impact on workers.

"Regardless of the next legal steps, we must never forget that Kroger and Albertsons are successful because of these incredibly dedicated workers, and no proposed merger should be allowed to endanger their jobs or their livelihoods," the union said Monday.

The union was also critical of a $4 billion payout to Albertsons shareholders that was announced as part of the merger deal. Several

SEE **MERGER** PAGE 11



District sings the blues alongside national group



Photo Courtesy SMMUSD

BLUES: National non-profit music organization JazzReach taught students at John Adams Middle School about the history of the blues genre during a February assembly.

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

Every great musician starts from somewhere, including today's crop of hip hop and R&B superstars. Artists like Kendrick Lamar and Bruno Mars are enormously talented in their own right, but there wouldn't have been a "To Pimp A Butterfly" or "24K Magic" without the magic of the blues.

In fact, R&B stands for rhythm and blues, with the latter permeating a plethora of genres over the past century. Blues music, with its trademark call and response schematics and lyrics dealing with themes of oppression and overcoming, has influence in hip hop, funk, rock and gospel, among other genres. Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) students found out all the facts of the blues form and function during a February partnership with JazzReach.

> The assemblies were more than just educational experiences; they were transformative journeys into the heart and soul of American music
> - Tom Whaley

As of SMMUSD's Black History Month education, district Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator Tom Whaley led efforts to secure grants for a four-day JazzReach visit to district sites. JazzReach is a national non-profit music organization based in New York City, established in 1994 and "dedicated to the promotion, performance, creation and teaching of jazz music." Of course, blues has a major influence on jazz as well, leading to JazzReach assemblies at SMMUSD middle schools entitled "Yes Indeed!," guiding fourth through eighth graders through the history of the genre.

"The assemblies were more than just educational experiences; they were transformative journeys into the heart and soul of American music," Whaley said in a district press release. "By delving into the rich tradition of the blues, we aimed to instill a greater appreciation, awareness and understanding of African American heritage among our students."

The assemblies included multimedia elements and live performances, with JazzReach Executive and Artistic Director Hans Schuman noting that the group attempts to "dissect" the blues by informing about its roots and heritage in the 19th-century American South and how the oppressive conditions gave birth to a "unique and indigenous" style of sound.

"It's a really comprehensive program that aims to celebrate our great American blues tradition," Schuman said of the program. "The overall program objectives are really to illuminate, as broadly as we can, what the blues are and the impact the blues has had on American music and other styles of music."

Debuting in the fall of 2014, the show conveyed how different styles of blues are played, as well as the music's role as a means of persistence and prevailing amidst problems.

"We're (really) trying to make sure that our young audiences understand that the blues isn't really all about woe and struggle, it's also about overcoming these things and the way in which the blues are used to express our will to

SEE **BLUES** PAGE 11

PISTACHIO

FROM PAGE 1

Wehry, who ate alongside Webb and six other hungry competitors. Joining in the event were Major League Eating's Webb, Wehry, Bartley Weaver IV, Darrien Thomas, Gideon Oji and Steven Hammond. The two biggest names, synonymous with the "Joey vs. Joey" tagline of the event, were the top-ranked eater in the world, Joey Chestnut, and Los Angeles Chargers linebacker Joey Bosa.

The new record holder joked that he had "no skin and half a nail" left over in his hands from the constant cracking, but was grateful for the chance to compete in Santa Monica.

"This (win) is definitely one to remember," Webb said after the victory. "Santa Monica Pier, it's famous, I'm from Australia (so) this is cool."

Webb added that he enjoys the rapid pace of pistachio eating because he didn't have to waste any time drinking water to down his food. He said that he began practicing with Australian pistachios, which are smaller than the Wonderful brand, and that Wonderful eventually sent him a kit to hone his craft with.

"I received it as I was leaving for the airport, so I packed it in my suitcase," Webb stated. "I've been practicing for three days straight in my hotel with the Wonderful Pistachios, I don't know if it was a blessing or a curse (at first), but obviously it's a blessing."

After the eight minutes were up, judges compared the ending weight of the competitors' pistachio bowls to where they began at, converting the weight into the number of the nut to determine a victor. The consumption was up across the board from last year's inaugural event, with four of the eight contestants besting the previous world-best mark.

A tie occurred for second-place behind Webb, with both Wehry and Thomas wolfing down 221 pistachios. Hammond finished in fourth with 191, followed by a tie for fifth between Chestnut and Weaver IV (167).

Chestnut, regarded as one of the most accomplished athletes in not just eating but all of sport, turned his training into results with a 46-pistachio jump from his 2023 performance. Though it didn't end with a top finish, the eating mainstay called the Pacific Park crowd "awesome" and said he was "ready to eat more" after the hectic eight minutes.

Bosa, a four-time National Football League Pro Bowl selection with the Chargers, more than held his own with a 152-pistachio performance, coming in seventh place out of eight eaters.

"It was great, it was fun, there was great support," Bosa told the Pacific Park crowd. "Thanks for the cheers, (though) I'm not sure which Joey it was for."

thomas@smdp.com



Photo by Thomas Leffler

PISTACHIO: The competitors of Major League Eating congratulated James Webb on his victory in the Wonderful Pistachios Get Crackin' Eating Championship.

City of Santa Monica
WOODLAWN
Cemetery
Mausoleum
Mortuary
FD #2101
Helping families honor, remember, and celebrate life.



• Traditional Burial • Green/Natural Burial • Cremation
• Funeral Planning & Mortuary Services
ALL IN ONE LOCATION
1847 14th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404 ▪ (310) 458-8717 (on-call - 24/7)
woodlawn.cemetery@santamonica.gov ▪ www.woodlawnsm.com

SPORTS

FROM PAGE 3

Mens Long Jump Freshman/Sophomore Finals:
4- George Frank (Sophomore), 16-05.00
Womens 100 Meters Varsity Finals:
7- Rickell Lewis (Senior), 13.82 seconds
21- Sara Gonzalez (Junior), 14.57 seconds
Womens 100 Meters Freshman/**Sophomore Finals:**
5- Kayla Yee (Sophomore), 13.74 seconds
7- Nyla Ryf (Sophomore), 13.93 seconds
11- Kamila Soto (Sophomore), 14.17 seconds
16- Kalea Oshidari (Sophomore), 14.56 seconds
Womens 400 Meters Freshman/Sophomore Finals:
2- Tessa Levine (Sophomore), 1:03.15
Womens 800 Meters Varsity Finals:
2- Matilde Martinez (Senior), 2:27.24
3- Cleo Topp (Junior), 2:29.33
4- Maeko Gross (Junior), 2:31.74
5- Hawene Alomayhehu (Senior), 2:34.94
7- Harper Snyder (Junior), 2:39.93
8- Siena Tovar Burke (Junior), 2:41.27
12- Josephine Kramarsky (Senior), 2:49.94
13- Olivia Rizzo (Senior), 2:50.73
14- Carla Santini (Junior), 2:54.29
Womens 800 Meters Freshman/Sophomore Finals:
4- Selin Kocataskin (Freshman), 2:32.29
5- Crystal Gaitan (Sophomore), 2:34.26
7- Sofia Santoyo (Freshman), 2:36.83
8- Addy Fiore (Freshman), 2:37.02
10- Makena Weybright (Sophomore), 2:43.78
11- Maggie McLaughlin (Freshman), 2:43.82
12- Ariella Castillo (Freshman), 2:44.06
15- Brooklyn Tarin (Freshman), 2:51.57
17- Ava Anaya (Freshman), 2:52.72
18- Vera Robinson (Freshman), 2:52.80
19- Rudy Rudgard (Freshman), 2:53.15
22- Lila Beal (Freshman), 2:58.67
Womens 3200 Meters Varsity Finals:
1- Phoebe Benun (Junior), 11:09.55
Womens 3200 Meters Freshman/Sophomore Finals:
1- Marina Shickler (Sophomore), 13:24.24
3- Brooke Merriam (Sophomore), 14:19.76
5- Priya Mevasse (Sophomore), 15:00.38
Womens 100 Meter Hurdles Varsity Finals:
1- Zinnia Weybright (Senior), 16.73 seconds
Womens 300 Meter Hurdles Varsity Finals
9- Rhian Bruce (Junior), 54.10 seconds
Womens 4x100 Relay Varsity Finals:
2- Rhian Bruce (Junior), Tessa Levine (Sophomore), Della Turner (Junior), Zinnia Weybright (Senior); 52.08 seconds
Womens Shot Put Varsity Finals:
7- Aurora Ahloo (Junior), 23-04.50
12- Sara Gonzalez (Junior), 20-07.00
15- Rickell Lewis (Senior), 17-10.50
Womens Discus Varsity Finals:
4- Aurora Ahloo (Junior), 63-07.00
12- Olivia Kim (Junior), 45-02.00
Womens Triple Jump Varsity Finals:
1- Zinnia Weybright (Senior), 34-00.00

SAINT MONICA BASEBALL:
Thursday, February 22:
Mariners at Santa Monica
Santa Monica win 5-1
Friday, February 23:
Mariners vs Oakwood
Mariners win 4-3
Mariners Record: 2-2
Next Game: Tuesday at Cathedral, 3 p.m.

SAINT MONICA SOFTBALL:
Thursday, February 22:
Mariners vs La Salle
Mariners win 10-0
Batting/Baserunning:
Bella Lopez: 0-1, K, HBP, Sac Bunt
Savanna Hernandez: 2-4, R, RBI
Sophia Lopez: 0-1, R, RBI, 2 BB, SB
Bella Urbina: 0-2, R, BB
Bella Hernandez: 1-3, 3 R, RBI, BB
Ali Vogler: 3-4, 3B, 2 R, 3 RBI
Katrina Olmedo: 1-3, RBI
Dylan Smith: 2-3, R, HBP
Megan Garcia: 2-3, 2 R, RBI, SB
Pitching:
Bella Urbina: 5.0 IP, W, 1 H, 0 R, 0 ER, 2 K, 0.00 ERA
Mariners Record: 2-1
Next Game: Tuesday at Ramona Convent, 3:30 p.m.

SAINT MONICA BOYS VOLLEYBALL:
Wednesday, February 21:
Mariners vs New Roads
New Roads win 3-1
Friday, February 23:
Mariners at Oakwood
Oakwood win 3-1
Mariners Record: 1-1
Next Game: Tuesday at Providence, 5 p.m.

SAINT MONICA GIRLS BEACH VOLLEYBALL:
Wednesday, February 21:
Mariners vs Crossroads
Crossroads win 4-1
Thursday, February 22:
Mariners vs Taft
Taft win 4-1
Mariners Record: 0-3
Next Game: March 6 vs Bishop Amat, 3 p.m.

SAINT MONICA TRACK AND FIELD:
Saturday, February 24:
Marie Smith Malibu Invitational, Malibu High School
Mens 1600 Meters Varsity Finals:
21- Niccolo Osti (Junior), 5:34.15
Mens 3200 Meters Varsity Finals:
29- Niccolo Osti (Junior), 12:00.74
Mens 4x100 Relay Varsity Finals:
6- Joshua Barnes (Senior), Elijah Wilson (Freshman), DeQuan Carter (Freshman), Anthony Mason (Freshman); 46.21 seconds
Mens 4x200 Relay Varsity Finals:
2- Joshua Barnes (Senior), DeQuan Carter (Freshman), Anthony Mason (Freshman), Elijah Wilson (Freshman), 1:36.21
7- Matthew Martinez (Freshman), Bradley Cassier (Freshman), Luke Griffin (Junior), Martin Tate (Freshman); 1:39.63
Mens 4x400 Relay Varsity Finals:
2- Matthew Martinez (Freshman), Bradley Cassier (Freshman), Luke Griffin (Junior), Martin Tate (Freshman); 3:45.55
7- Dylan Valenzo (Sophomore), Issac Nuno (Senior), Douglas Guevara Jr. (Freshman), Joshua Williams (Sophomore); 4:01.59
Mens Shot Put Varsity Finals:
11- Joshua Williams (Sophomore), 33-02.50
18- Alex Brook, 29-07.50
20- James Morva Jr. (Senior), 29-03.50
27- Dino Hidalgo (Sophomore), 25-08.00
30- Andreas Gonzalez (Freshman), 23-05.25
Mens Discus Varsity Finals:
11- Joshua Williams (Sophomore), 88-09.00
23- James Morva Jr. (Senior), 69-00.50
Mens Discus Freshman/Sophomore Finals:
3- Dino Hidalgo (Sophomore), 71-06.00
6- Andreas Gonzalez (Freshman), 62-01.00
7- Alex Brick (Freshman), 60-09.00
Womens Shot Put Varsity Finals:
10- Lily Rubio (Senior), 20-11.00
Womens Discus Varsity Finals:
3- Lily Rubio (Senior), 63-10.00

City of Santa Monica

Community Solutions Summit for Equity Plan

Learn about the top equity priorities the community wants the City of Santa Monica to address in the citywide equity plan and how to apply for a grant to help develop solutions



March 2, 2024
11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
1450 Second St. | Virtual option available

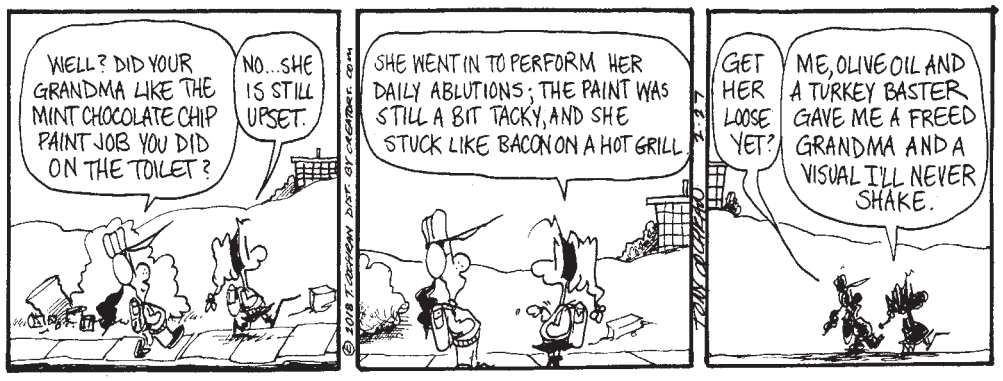


Featuring:
- Community feedback results
- Info on City programs that address community priorities
- Info session on $500 community solutions grants
- Educational session on turning ideas into solutions

RSVP required. Email socialjustice@santamonica.gov or call (310) 963-3547 to reserve your spot.

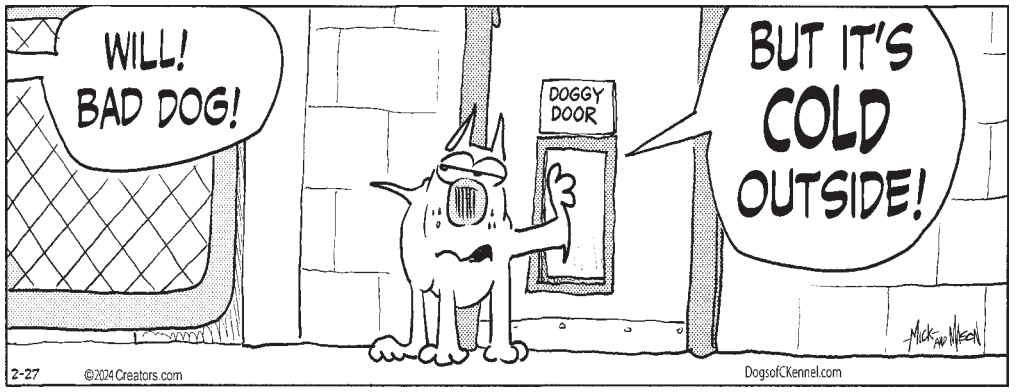
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



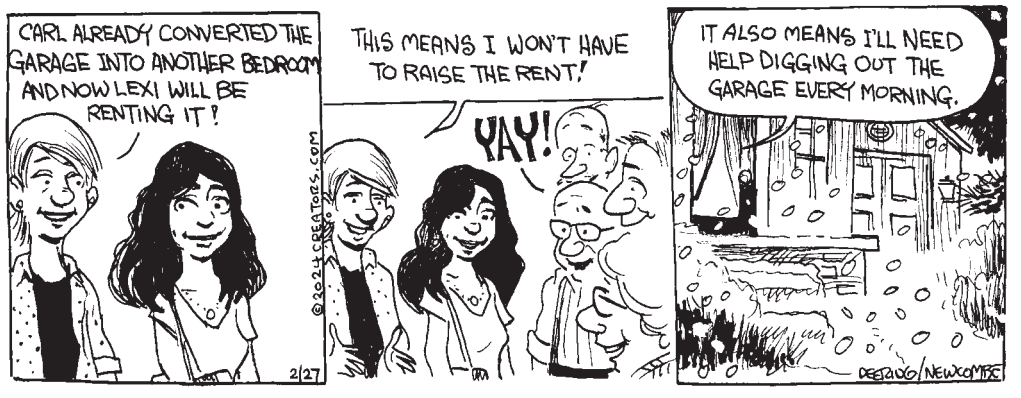
Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



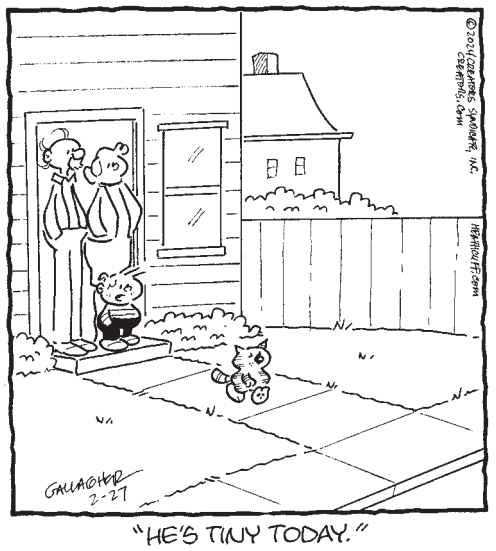
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



"HE'S TINY TODAY."

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING



FIND THE WORDS

This is a theme puzzle with the subject stated below. Find the listed words in the grid. (They may run in any direction but always in a straight line. Some letters are used more than once.) Ring each word as you find it and when you have completed the puzzle, there will be 19 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

© australianwordgames.com.au 6133

Coastal vibe

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

Airlie Beach	Bungan	Mermaid	Sawtell
Alva	Busselton	Nambucca	Sorrento
Avoca	Cable	Noosa	Squeaky
Bake	Coolum	Onslow	Surf
Barbecue	Corio	Palm	Swim
Bega	Eden	Play	Tides
Bluff	Hyams	Rest	Wanda
Boil	Iluka	Robe	Wollongong
Bondi	Kiama	Rock	
Bowen	Kirra	Rose Bay	
Bronte	Lorne	Sale	

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.
Electing new secretary

Covering the city by the bay since 2001.
To advertise, email cindy@smdp.com or call 310.458.7737
smdp Santa Monica Daily Press

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 27)

You do the work to make yourself into the person you want to be, and instead of thinking it's difficult, you're energized by the challenge. More highlights: You'll get deeply involved with a large mission. You'll gain fans of your work. You'll create unforgettable experiences for the ones you love. Sagittarius and Aries adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 8, 33, 38 and 2.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The ancient thinkers didn't see gravity as a force so much as a tendency for objects to sink toward the lowest point. The current take is that this relatively weak force is holding galaxies together. What gravitational pull are you under?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). When the stress is on, you smile, take deep breaths and pretend that you're relaxed, knowing that others will breathe easier when they sense that you are doing the same.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Conversational talents come forth today. You'll break the ice with those hard-to-reach types. Sure, you're stymied at first by the communication obstacles, but you won't be defeated. Your charm will melt them eventually.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The heat of charisma reaches beyond reason. Attraction has a way of making people behave in ways they normally would not. You're open-minded and curious. Temper it with caution. This is no time to go "all in."

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Relationships are like a deal you strike but then renegotiate at every turn. In certain moments, you think you're getting the better end of things. In others, you know you're getting it worse.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). When you're unwilling to pay the price of impulsiveness, you don't put yourself in the environment where those impulses happen. True, risks taken in the heat of the moment will have consequences. That doesn't necessarily mean you'll regret them.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The reason people pay money to parachute from a plane is because falling, for all its scariness, can also be pleasurable if one is reasonably sure that, at the bottom of it, there will be a soft place to land.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). It's like the work is testing you today. When you want it to go quickly, it seems to resist you on purpose. But you carry on through. Once the work sees that you're willing to slog it out, it will take pity on you and let up.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Is it wrong to want the reward you can get with the least energy expenditure? Only if you value hard work more than intelligence. Recognizing what's within your reach and going for the low-hanging fruit may just fall under the category of "smart."

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your conscience is clear, but sometimes when you want sleep, it doesn't come. Insomnia can be cured by writing in a journal. Empty out personal baggage.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll gravitate toward situations and relationships in which you're likely to pick up certain skills. The skills will prove to be the most valuable part of the arrangement. You have an idea that hasn't quite found its best use yet.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Seems a precarious proposition now, but it's said that before bubble wrap became packing material, it was marketed as wallpaper. Try your ideas in new arenas and see if novel solutions don't blossom.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

Newsday Crossword

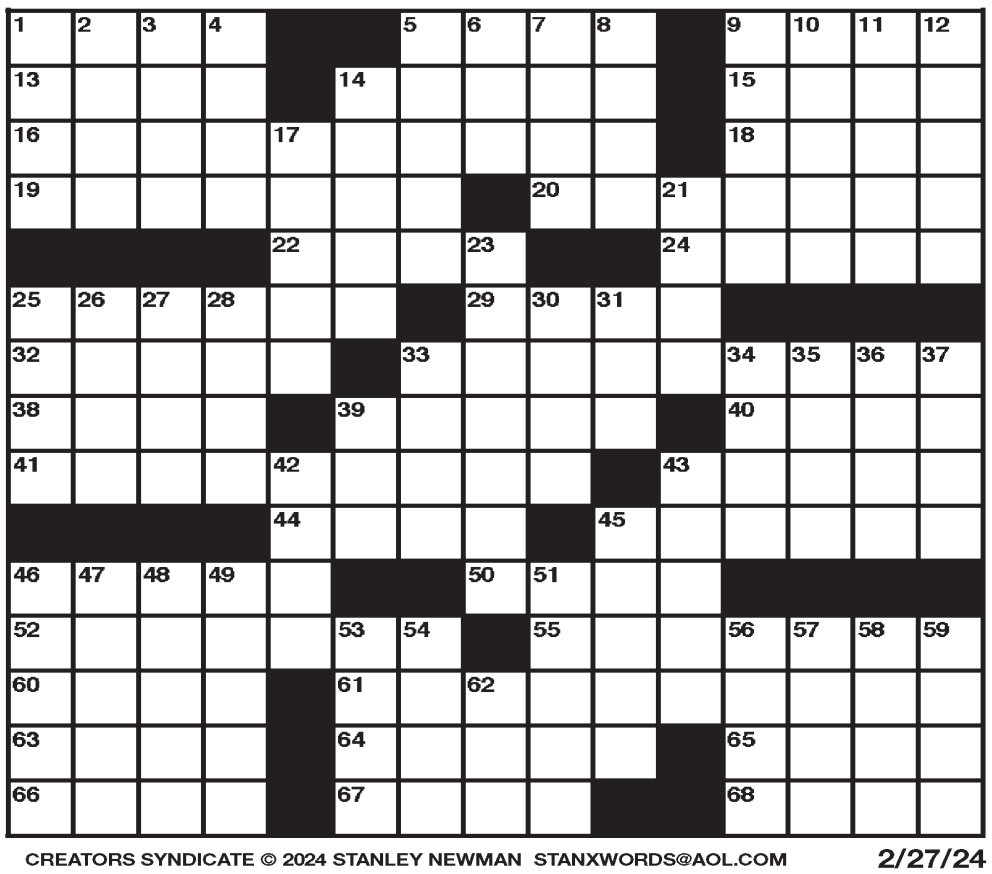
PASTA BAR by Stella Zawistowski
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 Regarding, in a memo
5 Joke around
9 Gush, as lava
13 British gentleman
14 Underneath
15 Biblical ark builder
16 Round, meat-filled pasta
18 Woman's choir voice
19 Go to sea
20 Diver's breathing tube
22 Snooty person
24 Wood-shaving tool
25 Made very happy
29 Not on time
32 Of farm life
33 Tubular cheese-filled pasta
38 Prayer's last word
39 Grade school glue
40 Null and __ (not valid)
41 String-shaped pasta
43 Hard roll with a hole
44 Have sore muscles
45 Weekly pay
46 Enjoy the taste of
50 Accomplishes
52 Great success
55 Tornado, informally
60 Very funny person
61 Ribbon-shaped pasta
63 Land surrounded by water
64 Crawl like a tot
65 Finds a sum
66 Bosc or Bartlett fruit
67 Fly high
68 Give a quiz to

DOWN

1 Performs in a play
2 Sneaker or moccasin
3 Little fruity pie
4 __ for (chooses)
5 Wiggly, see-through dessert brand
6 Yale student
7 Male children
8 Small bed size
9 Hair tangle
10 __ dots (fabric pattern)
11 All gone, as dinner
12 __ wheat bread
14 Venetian __ (window shade)
17 Artist's tripod stand
21 Oil cartel
23 Played very loud, as a radio
25 Major time periods
26 Imperfection in gravy
27 Neighborhood
28 Sharp flavor
30 "Opposed to" prefix
31 Even score
33 Arithmetic or algebra
34 Egg-shaped
35 Julius Caesar garb
36 Level of a theater
37 Sit __ by (do nothing)
39 Chest muscle, for short
42 Do damage to
43 Elementary
45 Clinch, as a deal
46 Piece of bacon
47 Stand up
48 Cello's smaller cousin
49 On the exterior
51 Furry river mammal
53 One-stripe soldiers: Abbr.
54 Wartime medal recipient
56 "Shoo!"
57 Motion of the ocean
58 Comes to a close
59 Take a breather
62 Coffee alternative



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2024 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 2/27/24

MORE OF STAN'S CROSSWORDS! Play FREE from Stan's archives of Easy, Hard and Sunday puzzles at: tinyurl.com/stan-newman-crosswords

ELECTION

FROM PAGE 5

Schiff defends his ads and told reporters that Garvey has attacked him in debates and interviews. "I'm not going to ignore him."

Lee, a longtime standard-bearer in the party's progressive wing, has struggled to raise money. The lack of cash has left Lee, who has proposed a $50-an-hour federal minimum wage and was the only member of Congress to vote against authorizing military force after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, lagging in polling.

Democratic pollster Ben Tulchin calls Lee and Porter "iconic liberal stars," but says Schiff's financial advantage appears decisive.

Porter spent nearly $29 million to defend her district in coastal Orange County in 2022, while Schiff was running in a safe Democratic district.

"You have three talented, impressive Democrats running," Tulchin said, "but only one can win."

MERGER

FROM PAGE 6

states, including Washington and California, tried unsuccessfully to block the payment in court, saying it would weaken Albertsons financially.

The action by the FTC follows lawsuits filed earlier this year in Colorado and Washington to block the merger. The states that joined the FTC lawsuit Monday are Arizona, California, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon and Wyoming, along with the District of Columbia. Eight of those attorneys general are Democrats; one, Wyoming's, is a Republican.

Brian Schwalb, the attorney general of the District of Columbia, said that Kroger-owned Harris Teeter and Albertsons-owned Safeway are now required to compete for customers in the city. Eliminating that competition would reduce choice at a time when many shoppers are already struggling, he said.

Kroger has promised to invest $500 million to lower prices as soon as the deal closes. It said it also invested in price reductions when it merged with Harris Teeter in 2014 and Roundy's in 2016. Kroger also promised to invest $1.3 billion in store improvements at Albertsons as part of the deal.

Last year, C&S Wholesale Grocers agreed to purchase 413 stores and eight distribution centers that Kroger and Albertsons agreed to divest in markets where the two companies' stores overlapped. C&S said it would honor all collective bargaining agreements with workers.

But the FTC said called the store divestiture deal "inadequate," The FTC said C&S — which is mainly a supplier to grocery stores and not an operator — is ill-equipped to deal with the "hodgepodge of unconnected stores, banners and brands" it would get as part of the deal and would not be a robust competitor to Kroger and Albertsons.

A message seeking comment was left with C&S.

Kroger and Albertsons had hoped to close the deal early this year. But the two companies announced in January that it was more likely to close in the first half of Kroger's fiscal year. Kroger's fiscal second quarter ends Aug. 17.

Kroger shares fell 1.5% in Monday afternoon trading. Albertsons shares were flat.

BLUES

FROM PAGE 7

overcome," Schuman said.

On the last day of JazzReach's visit, a professional combo from the organization performed with the Samohi Jazz Band during lunch at the Samohi Discovery cafeteria. Band students took notes from the clinicians on improvisation and working as a team, with the school's advanced jazz combo learning for three two-hour rehearsals prior to performance.

"We (wanted) to recognize the countless ways in which African-Americans have contributed to American culture and how they have led the way in advocating for civil rights, inclusion and racial equity," Whaley added.

The visit from JazzReach was lauded by students and staff alike for being a unique opportunity to connect with musical history and be a bridge to African-American influences in the arts.

"As we look back on this year's Black History Month celebration with JazzReach, we remain committed to fostering appreciation and understanding among our students," SMMUSD Superintendent Dr. Antonio Shelton said. "Through initiatives like these, we honor the past, inspire the present and shape the future."

thomas@smdp.com

SMALL BUSINESS
STARTUP?
LET ME HELP YOU SUCCEED
TAXES • BOOKKEEPING • STARTUPS • CORPS. • LLCS
(310) 395-9922
SAMUEL B. MOSES, CPA
100 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1800 • Santa Monica 90401



TUESDAY | FEBRUARY 27

OLIVE OIL TASTINGS
Learn how to taste extra-virgin olive oil for flavor and take note of its key characteristics: fruitiness, bitterness, and pungency. Each month, new olive oils will be introduced from California and the Mediterranean. Donald Bruce Kaufman - Brentwood Branch Library, 11820 San Vicente Boulevard, Los Angeles. 6:30 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
The City Council is made up of seven members elected at-large for staggered four-year terms. Every two years, after each election, the City Council selects one of its members to serve as Mayor and another to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore. City Hall, 1685 Main Street, 5:30 p.m.

VENICE BRANCH LIBRARY BOOK CLUB ONLINE
Join organizers on the last Tuesday of the month for a lively discussion of fiction and non-fiction, which will alternate each month. Copies of each month's selection will be available behind the Circulation Desk. New members are always welcome. February 27: Trust, by Hernan Diaz. Please email venice@lapl.org for the Zoom link.

SOCIAL SERVICE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY PROVIDENCE ST. JOHN'S COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM
Virginia Avenue Park in Partnership with Providence St. John's Community Health Program to resume Social Service Assistance. Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Ave, 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

BOOK GROUP OF THE SANTA MONICA BAY WOMANS CLUB
Join organizers for the February Meeting at this historic Santa Monica location (1210 4th St.). There will be a discussion of the novel "Master, Slave, Husband, Wife" by Ilyon Woo. For questions or to RSVP contact Susan Barry at sbarry1015@sbcglobal.net.

WEDNESDAY | FEBRUARY 28

COMPUTER BASICS - ONLINE SAFETY
Learn how to avoid scams and navigate safely online. For beginners. Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 29

FREE MOVIE SCREENING OF "THE WIZ"
Part of the city's Black History Month celebration, join a free screening of an unforgettable cinematic journey. Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

TECH & TASKS
Volunteer tutors provide help with reading documents or written tasks, using mobile devices, navigating government websites, filling out forms, using email, writing resumes, and more. Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. 2 - 4 p.m.

2024 SANTA MONICA STATE OF THE CITY
Join Mayor Phil Brock, Vice Mayor Lana Negrete and City Manager David White for the annual Santa Monica State of the City. If you're not able to make the event in person, watch live on the city's YouTube channel. John Adams Middle School (JAMS) Performing Arts Center, 2425 16th Street 5 - 7 p.m. RSVP online at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-santa-monica-state-of-the-city-tickets-789548830807

FRIDAY | MARCH 1

FREE MOVIE SCREENING OF "THE WIZ"
Los Angeles Wine & Food Festival, in conjunction with Frieze Week Los Angeles, is an unparalleled food and wine experience taking place in Santa Monica, March 1st-3rd, 2024. This event brings together an impressive lineup of 90 participating chefs, including 16 headliners, each contributing their unique culinary mastery to this celebration. Our festival holds a special dedication to showcasing the talents of female-owned restaurants in LA, with special thanks to our official non-profit partner, Regarding Her (RE:Her), a national non-profit committed to accelerating the growth of women entrepreneurs and leaders in the food and beverage industry. Los Angeles Wine & Food Festival isn't just an event; it's a celebration of California's places, people, and produce in collaboration with art and entertainment. $25 - $500. Santa Monica Pier, https://tickets.lawineandfood.com/e/los-angeles-wine-food-festival/tickets

SATURDAY | MARCH 2

MARINA DEL REY DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL
Enjoy the diversity and excitement of the Dragon Boats as they complete for the fastest team on the water! Watch as 40 teams compete for glory. Activies include arts and crafts, entertainment and food trucks. Burton Chace Park, 13650 Mindanao Way, 7 a.m.- 2 p.m. https://culturela.org/event/marina-del-rey-dragon-boat-festival/

STORYPALOOZA
Join with Read Across America to champion literacy and celebrate diversity of children's literature. Attendees receive free books, while supplies last. Sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Santa Monica. For families.
How to Fold a Taco reading with author Naibe Reynoso
10:15 a.m. / MLK Jr. Auditorium
Space is limited; first come, first served
Create a Reading Crown Craft
10:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. / North Courtyard
Bilingual Concert with Baila Baila
11:15 a.m. / MLK Jr. Auditorium
Space is limited; first come, first served.
Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd.

Submit your event online at smdp.com/events

MOST LOVED
2024
Santa Monica

LAST WEEK

to nominate your MOST LOVED BUSINESSES

Visit **smdp.com/mostloved2024**
to show your love

Nomination period
February 7-29

For any questions please contact
cindy@smdp.com

buylocalsantamonica.com Buy Local SANTA MONICA
Santa Monica CHAMBER of COMMERCE
City of Santa Monica
SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM
smdp Santa Monica Daily Press
MONTANA AVENUE SANTA MONICA
PICO BLVD Santa Monica
MAIN STREET santa monica
Downtown Santa Monica THIRD STREET PROMENADE
SANTA MONICA PIER