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**COLDWELL BANKER
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2 Pentagon Dispute
Highlights AI military concerns.

3 Blame Game
Bass deflects as fire victims suffer.



5 Makers Hive Market
At Santa Monica Place.

6 Firestorm Talk
Soboroff discusses LA fires at library.

Volume 25 Issue 75

WEDNESDAY 3/4/26

smdp.com

Palisades recovery becomes a test of leadership, insurance, and accountability

MICHELLE EDGAR
Special to the Daily Press

In a community still rebuilding from one of the most devastating coastal fires in recent memory, last week's gathering in Pacific Palisades was less about ceremony and more about control — who has it, who does not, and who is willing to take responsibility for restoring it.

San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan, a candidate for governor, spent the afternoon touring the burn zone with developer Rick Caruso and Councilmember Traci Park before sitting down with roughly 40 local leaders at a recovery roundtable convened by Palisades Recovery Coalition founder Maryam Zar.

Inside the room, the tone was technical and urgent focused around Insurance, infrastructure, land management, evacuation planning, and federal funding were not discussed as abstract policy



Michelle Edgar

SEE PALISADES PAGE 11

VISIT: Rick Caruso and gubernatorial candidate Matt Mahan toured the burn zone and meet with the community.

At SoFi Stadium, Australia maps the next decade of Global Sports Tourism

MICHELLE EDGAR
Special to the Daily Press

Last Wednesday at SoFi Stadium, the field itself became a diplomatic table. Executives stood along the sideline where championships have been decided. Olympians and Paralympians mingled with ministers, commissioners, tourism leaders, and broadcast executives. The setting was iconic, but the tone was forward-looking. What unfolded was not a celebration of past victories. It was a strategic alignment around what comes next, and how global mega events will shape tourism, trade, inclusion, and international partnerships for the next decade.

Hosted by Tourism Australia in partnership with the Australian Consulate General in Los Angeles, the Australian Olympic Committee, Paralympics Australia, and Football Australia, the afternoon positioned

SEE SPORTS PAGE 11

New study lays out trade-offs as Santa Monica school district weighs artificial turf decisions

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District has released a comprehensive independent study comparing artificial turf and

natural grass playing fields, finding that synthetic surfaces offer major advantages in water savings and usability but carry unresolved concerns about chemical exposure, microplastic pollution and extreme surface temperatures.

The study, conducted by NV5, a global environmental consulting firm, examined injury risks, heat impacts, chemical exposures, environmental considerations, operational costs and end-of-life disposal across the district's

approximately 15 acres of natural grass fields and 12 acres of artificial turf. The district commissioned the report amid intense community opposition to plans to install synthetic turf at Franklin Elementary School and

other campuses. The report is intended to serve as a "living document" that will be updated as new research and regulations emerge, and comes as

SEE TURF PAGE 7

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Submission Deadline is March 26th, 2026 at 3:00 PM Pacific Time.

Bids must be submitted on forms supplied by the City of Santa Monica. Bid packages containing all forms, specifications, terms and conditions may be obtained on the **CITY'S ONLINE VENDOR PORTAL**. The website for this Notice of Inviting Bids and related documents is: OpenGov (<https://secure.procurenow.com/portal/santa-monica-ca>). There is no charge for bid package and specifications.



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Pentagon dispute bolsters Anthropic reputation but raises questions about AI readiness in military

Anthropic's moral stand on U.S. military use of artificial intelligence is reshaping the competition between leading AI companies but also exposing a growing awareness that maybe chatbots just aren't capable enough for acts of war.

Anthropic's chatbot Claude, for the first time, outpaced rival ChatGPT in phone app downloads in the United States this week, a signal of growing interest from consumers siding with Anthropic in its standoff with the Pentagon, according to market research firm Sensor Tower.

The Trump administration on Friday ordered government agencies to stop using Claude and designated it a supply chain risk after Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei refused to bend his company's ethical safeguards preventing the technology from being applied to autonomous weapons and domestic mass surveillance. Anthropic has said it will challenge the Pentagon in court once it receives formal notice of the penalties.

And while many military and human rights experts have applauded Amodei for standing up for ethical principles, some are also frustrated by years of AI industry marketing that persuaded the government to apply the technology to high-stakes tasks.

"He caused this mess," said Missy Cummings, a former Navy fighter pilot who now directs the robotics and automation center at George Mason University. "They were the No. 1 company to push ridiculous hype over the capabilities of these technologies. And now, all of a sudden, they want to be for real. They want to tell people, 'Oh, wait a minute. We really shouldn't be using these technologies in weapons.'"

Anthropic didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. The Defense Department declined to comment on whether it is still using Claude, including in the Iran war, citing operational security.

Cummings published a paper at a top AI conference in December arguing that government agencies should prohibit the use of generative AI "to control, direct, guide or govern any weapon." Not because AI is so smart that it could go rogue, but because the large language models behind chatbots like Claude make too many mistakes — called hallucinations or confabulations — and are "inherently unreliable and not appropriate in environments that could result in the loss of life."

"You're going to kill noncombatants,"

Cummings said in an interview Tuesday with The Associated Press. "You're going to kill your own troops. I'm not clear whether the military truly understands the limitations."

Amodei sought to emphasize those limitations in defending Anthropic's ethical stance last week, arguing that "frontier AI systems are simply not reliable enough to power fully autonomous weapons. We will not knowingly provide a product that puts America's warfighters and civilians at risk."

Anthropic, until recently, was the only one of its peers to have approval for use in classified military systems, where it has partnered with data analysis company Palantir and other defense contractors. President Donald Trump said Friday, around the same time he was approving Saturday's military strikes on Iran, that the Pentagon would have six months to phase out Anthropic's military applications.

Cummings, a former Palantir adviser, said it's possible that Claude has already been used in military strike planning.

"I just fundamentally hope that there were humans in the loop," she said. "A human has to babysit these technologies very closely. You can use them to do these things, but you need to verify, verify, verify."

She said that's a contrast to the messaging from AI companies that have suggested that their technology is evolving to the point where it is "almost sentient."

"If there's culpability here, I'd say half is Anthropic's for driving the hype and half is the Department of War's fault for firing all the people that would have otherwise advised them against stupid uses of technology," Cummings said.

One social media commentator this week described Anthropic's government problems as a "Hype Tax" — a message that was reposted by President Donald Trump's top AI adviser, David Sacks, a frequent critic of the company.

And while it has caused legal hassles that could jeopardize Anthropic's business partnerships with other military contractors, it has also bolstered its reputation as a safety-minded AI developer.

"It's applaudable that a company stood up to the government in order to maintain what it felt were its ethics and were its business choices, even in the face of these potentially crippling policy responses," said Jennifer Huddleston, a senior fellow at the libertarian-

SEE AI PAGE 6

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GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

LA Mayor Karen Bass deflects blame, adds insult to injury for wildfire victims

The wildfires that swept through Los Angeles 13 months ago destroyed thousands of homes and businesses, with almost incalculable financial losses, and they killed at least 31 people.

Recovery has scarcely begun, but insult is being added to fire victims' injuries as local officials — especially Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass — engage in a tawdry game of finger-pointing.

When former Los Angeles Fire Chief Kristin Crowley filed a lawsuit this week, claiming Bass fired her to shift blame for the city's chaotic fire response, it was just the latest episode of a saga that began with Bass on a junket to Africa as flames engulfed her city.

When she was in Congress, Bass used her position as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to travel widely on the taxpayers' dime, particularly to Africa.

"I went to Africa every couple of months, all the time," she told the New York Times in a 2021 interview, adding that giving up the travel would be a negative aspect of becoming mayor. She told the Times that if elected, "not only would I of course live here, but I also would not travel internationally — the only places I would go would be D.C., Sacramento, San Francisco and New York, in relation to L.A."

However, she made a number of international sojourns after the election, including one to Ghana, just as Los Angeles residents were being warned that warm Santa Ana winds could spark wildfires. Thus, Bass was a half-globe away when the fires erupted.

It was what political professionals call "bad optics." And they were about to get worse.

Crowley alleged that her department had been shorted money needed to improve fire responses. Bass denied the allegation and fired the chief.

Crowley's lawsuit claiming Bass "orchestrated a campaign of retaliation" is the least of Bass' fire-related concerns as she seeks re-election this year.

Beginning in December, the Los Angeles Times has published revelations

about how politics has intruded on a supposedly dispassionate report on the fire department's wildfire responses.

"For months after the Palisades fire, many who had lost their homes eagerly awaited the Los Angeles Fire Department's after-action report, which was expected to provide a frank evaluation of the agency's handling of the disaster," the first Times article said.

"A first draft was completed by August, possibly earlier.

"And then the deletions and other changes began — behind closed doors — in what amounted to an effort to downplay the failures of city and LAFD leadership in preparing for and fighting the Jan. 7 fire, which killed 12 people and destroyed thousands of homes," records obtained by The Times show.

In response to the Times revelation, Bass distanced herself from it and ordered another investigation of fire department responses, this time by the new fire chief, Jaime Moore.

But then the newspaper dropped another bombshell this month. It reported that "two sources with knowledge of Bass' office said that after receiving an early draft, the mayor told then-interim Fire Chief Ronnie Villanueva that the report could expose the city to legal liabilities for those failures. Bass wanted key findings about the LAFD's actions removed or softened before the report was made public, the sources said — and that is what happened."

The Times reporting is another confirmation that professional journalism is a vital check on political gaslighting.

It also demonstrates that Bass — who until Los Angeles had never managed anything of importance as she climbed the political ladder — is ill-equipped to run the nation's second largest city.

Finally, it's doubtful Bass will lose her job. While there will be dozens of names on the ballot, her only challenger of note is a left-leaning member of the city council, Nithya Raman, who is even less qualified.

Dan Walters, CalMatters Opinion Columnist



Surf report WATER TEMP: 61.5

WEDNESDAY SURF: 1-2ft POOR TO FAIR Knee to thigh

Roughly the middle third of March is worth watching for elevated SSW swell. The long range South Pacific charts look interesting with the potential for multiple storms to develop in the central and eastern SPAC starting a couple days into March. We're still too far out to confidently provide specifics, but there is at least a chance we'll see the first real Southern Hemi SSW swells of the season. Stay tuned, we'll slowly refine the details in the new few days - hopefully the models stay on the gas.

THURSDAY SURF: 1-2ft POOR TO FAIR Knee to thigh

Small but kinda fun (for the small-wave gear) SSW swell. Early tide push w/light wind probably best NW swell mix looks like it will settle a bit as small, long period SSW swell fills in a bit more. Something to ride, but you'll want the small-wave gear (big board or maybe a grov-eler). Light wind through much of the morning before light to moderate westerly onshore wind picks up for the afternoon.



Wednesday: Patchy fog before 10am. Otherwise, cloudy through mid morning, then gradual clearing, with a high near 69.
Wednesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 54. Breezy, with a west wind 5 to 10 mph becoming north 15 to 25 mph.
Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 70. Northwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.
Thursday Night: Clear, with a low around 53.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2026/03/04	Wed	03:29 AM	0.48	L
2026/03/04	Wed	09:28 AM	5.21	H
2026/03/04	Wed	3:47 PM	-0.18	L
2026/03/04	Wed	10:02 PM	5.01	H
2026/03/05	Thu	04:09 AM	0.41	L
2026/03/05	Thu	10:06 AM	4.63	H
2026/03/05	Thu	4:10 PM	0.36	L
2026/03/05	Thu	10:28 PM	5.02	H
2026/03/06	Fri	04:50 AM	0.45	L
2026/03/06	Fri	10:46 AM	3.98	H
2026/03/06	Fri	4:31 PM	0.91	L
2026/03/06	Fri	10:53 PM	4.92	H
2026/03/07	Sat	05:34 AM	0.58	L
2026/03/07	Sat	11:30 AM	3.33	H
2026/03/07	Sat	4:47 PM	1.45	L



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>

 Draw Date: 3/2 2 17 18 38 62 Power#: 20 Jackpot: 20 M	 Draw Date: 3/2 6 7 30 32 33
 Draw Date: 2/27 11 18 39 43 67 Mega#: 23 Jackpot: 473 M	 Draw Date: 3/2 EVENING: 1 9 5 Draw Date: 3/2 MIDDAY: 0 3 3
 Draw Date: 2/28 8 11 22 37 46 Mega#: 24 Jackpot: 7 M	 Draw Date: 3/2 1st: 08 - Gorgeous George 2nd: 05 - California Classic 3rd: 03 - Hot Shot Race Time: 1:44.15

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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.

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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DBA

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT File No. 2026012668. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: BLOOM CERAMICS, 1011 4TH STREET APT 211, SANTA MONICA, CA 90403, County of Los Angeles. Registered Owner(s): BLOOM CLUB LA LLC, 1011 4TH STREET APT 211, SANTA MONICA, CA 90403. This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 01/2026. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true any material matter pursuant to Section 17913 of the Business and Professions Code that the registrant knows to be false is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000)). /s/ ANSEL JEFFRIES, MEMBER. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 1/20/2026. NOTICE: This Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or Common Law (See Section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 02/11/2026, 02/18/2026, 02/25/2026, 03/04/2026

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 26SMCP00089. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 1725 Main Street, Santa Monica CA 90401. Petition of PENG DENG for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner PENG DENG filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: PENG DENG to LIAM PENG DENG. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 04/10/2026, Time: 8:30AM, Dept: K. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 02/23/2026. LAWRENCE H. CHO, Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 02/25/2026, 03/04/2026, 03/11/2026, 03/18/2026

DBA

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT File No. 2026045741. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: ANA INTL, 112 MONTANA AVE STE 626, SANTA MONICA, CA 90403, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES. Registered Owner(s): ANA INTL LLC, 112 MONTANA AVE STE 626, SANTA MONICA, CA 90403, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES. This business is conducted by: an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true any material matter pursuant to Section 17913 of the Business and Professions Code that the registrant knows to be false is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000)). /s/ ANA INTL LLC, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 02/18/2026. NOTICE: This Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or Common Law (See Section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 03/04/2026, 03/11/2026, 03/18/2026, 03/25/2026

Legal Notices

NOTICE OF HEARING TO CONDUCT MASSAGE ESTABLISHMENT NOTICE IS HEREBYGIVEN THAT APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY BUSINESS LICENSE COMMISSION TO CONDUCT ADDRESS OF PREMISES: 586 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD MARINA DEL REY, CA 90292 NAME OF APPLICANT: PAKKAWASA, SIRINAN /SIRINAN MASSAGE DATE OF HEARING: 03/11/2026 TIME OF HEARING: 09:15A.M. ANY PERSON HAVING OBJECTIONS TO THE GRANTING OF THE LICENSE MAY, AT ANY TIME PRIOR TO THE ABOVE DATE, FILE WITH THE BUSINESS LICENSE COMMISSION OBJECTIONS IN WRITING GIVING REASONS THEREFOR, AND MAY APPEAR AT THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE HEARING AND BE HEARD RELATIVE THERETO. OFFICE OF THE COMMISSION: BUSINESS LICENSE COMMISSION 500 W. TEMPLE STREET, RM 374 LOS ANGELES, CA 90012 CN125123 Mar 2,4,6, 2026

Petition to Admin Estate

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF Shirzad Abrams aka Shirzad A. Abrams Case No. 25STPB13954. To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of Shirzad Abrams aka Shirzad A. Abrams. A PETITION FOR PROBATE has been filed by David Heskiaoff, M.D in the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles. THE PETITION FOR PROBATE requests that David Heskiaoff, M.D be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent. THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. A HEARING on the petition will be held on 03/06/2025 at 8:30 in Dept. 99 located at 111 N. Hill Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney. IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58(b) of the California Probate Code, or 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law. YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk. Attorney for Petitioner: Clark A. Braunstein, Braunstein & Braunstein, PC, 12400 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 1080, Los Angeles CA 90025, 310-914-4999. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 02/18/2026, 02/25/2026, 03/04/2026

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COMMUNITY NEWS

La Country

Film Screening to Spotlight Western Monarch Butterfly Conservation

A special outdoor screening of “Western Monarch Butterflies: Protecting Our Pollinators” will take place Friday at Peter Strauss Ranch.

The documentary by filmmaker Ian Nelson highlights the story of Western monarchs and local efforts to protect them.

The event, scheduled from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at 30000 Mulholland Highway, is hosted in partnership with Santa Monica Mountains Fund, Ventura County Resource Conservation District, Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains.

The evening begins with a meet-and-greet with partner organizations and the filmmaker from 5 to 6 p.m., followed by a Q&A panel from 6 to 6:30 p.m. The screening runs from 6:30 to 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$15. Children under 12 are admitted free. Tickets are available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/film-screening-western-monarch-butterflies-tickets-1981235427497?aff=oddtcreator>.

Snacks will be available for purchase, but attendees are encouraged to bring their own picnic and blankets. Proceeds will support monarch conservation efforts by each partner organization.

The event is made possible by support from the Wildfire Conservation Board and the California Association of RCDs.

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF

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Courtesy photo

EVENT: The event is on March 5 at 6:30 p.m. at Mulholland Highway in partnership with Santa Monica Mountains Fund.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Downtown Santa Monica

Women-Owned Businesses Take Center Stage at Makers Hive Market

The Makers Hive Market returns to Santa Monica Place on Sunday, March 8, featuring a curated selection of women-owned businesses in celebration of Women's History Month.

The pop-up market will showcase women-led brands across fashion, art, wellness, home goods and gourmet food categories. Organizers say the event aims to connect small businesses and emerging artisans with shoppers at the coastal shopping destination.

The market will include several interactive experiences alongside vendor booths. DJ Priscilla will perform a live set from 2 to 5 p.m., with music playing throughout the day. Benito Coffee will offer craft coffee beverages to attendees.

Scrubbleteashop will host a hand-drawn photobooth doodle experience, with the first 25 guests receiving a complimentary custom doodle. Visitors can also browse the artist's sticker and design collection.

Smile Cult will lead a DIY tote and mug heat press activation, allowing guests to create custom pieces. The activity previously appeared at the organization's Black History Month market in Long Beach.

The March 8 event continues a monthly series scheduled for select Sundays throughout 2026. Organizers say the series aims to provide an ongoing platform for women-owned and independent brands across Southern California.

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF



Courtesy of Santa Monica Place

SANTA MONICA PLACE: Makers Hive Market is at the mall.

Mid City

Viola Floral Opens New Studio with Community Event

Viola Floral will host an open studio afternoon Thursday, March 5, from 3:30-5:30 p.m. at its new Santa Monica location, 916 Colorado Ave.

Founder Jelena Trifunovic will welcome visitors for a casual drop-in event to explore the studio and preview new offerings, including the launch of Viola Flower School, a floral education program.

The event will feature a spring collection preview with ranunculus and tulips sourced from Holland, a seasonal bouquet bar celebrating International Women's Day, and early booking opportunities for spring workshops. Light bites and drinks will be served. Children are welcome.

Viola Floral specializes in seasonal, farm-sourced arrangements, same-day delivery across Los Angeles, floral design workshops, and event and corporate floristry.

RSVP at <https://www.paperlesspost.com/go/83AvnLRTMRqb3n8UB2kRKE>

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF



Courtesy photo

STUDIO: Viola Floral hosts an open studio afternoon March 5 at its new Santa Monica location.

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	76 2601 Wilshire Blvd	\$4.99
	76 1776 Cloverfield Blvd	\$4.78

*Prices paying in card

The average price for a gallon of gasoline jumped 11 cents overnight in the U.S. as war engulfed the Middle East and shipments of oil and gas were stranded in the Persian Gulf. A gallon of regular was selling for \$3.11 on average, according to motor club AAA. Gasoline prices were already rising before the U.S. launched strikes on Iran as refiners switch over to summer blends of fuel. But crude prices rose sharply in recent days because of the war. On Tuesday, oil prices soared to levels not seen in more than a year as Iran launched a series of retaliatory attacks. Iran struck energy facilities in Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and disrupted tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all oil traded passes, sending global oil and natural gas prices soaring. Benchmark U.S. crude jumped 8.6% to \$77.36 a barrel Tuesday. Brent crude, the international standard, added 6.7% to \$81.29 a barrel. The price of crude is the single largest factor in how much U.S. drivers pay for fuel and higher oil prices are usually felt at the pump within a couple of weeks at most. — Associated Press

Santa Monica Daily Press

COMMUNITY NEWS

Downtown Santa Monica

MSNBC Reporter Jacob Soboroff to Discuss New Book on Los Angeles Fires at Santa Monica Library

Jacob Soboroff, senior political and national reporter for MSNBC, will discuss and sign his new book "Firestorm: The Great Los Angeles Fires and America's New Age of Disaster" on Wednesday, March 4 at 6 p.m. at the Santa Monica Library in the MLK Jr. Auditorium.

The free event is presented in partnership with the Santa Monica Library, Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library and the Friends of the Palisades Library.

Soboroff's book chronicles the January 2025 fires that devastated Los Angeles, including the Palisades Fire and the Eaton Fire in Altadena. The fires became personal for Soboroff when his brother texted him on the morning of Jan. 7, 2025, with news that he and his pregnant wife were evacuating as flames engulfed the hillside behind their home.

"I should go. I grew up in the Palisades," Soboroff told his bureau chief before heading to the front lines of what would become weeks of coverage documenting the destruction.

In the aftermath, Soboroff conducted months of reporting with firefighters, fire victims, political leaders, academics, earth scientists, wildlife biologists and meteorologists. His investigation explores how the disaster occurred and whether similar events are inevitable.

One senior emergency management official described the 2025 fires as "the fire of the future," a harbinger of what Soboroff calls "America's new age of disaster."

The book examines what became the costliest wildfire in American history while serving as what the author describes as "a love letter to Los Angeles."

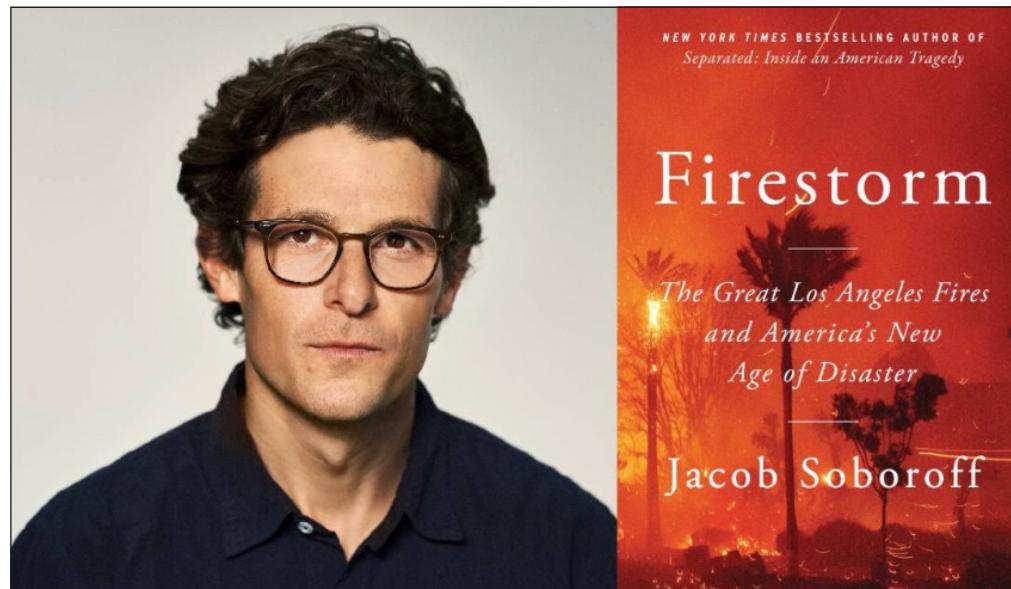
Soboroff is also the author of the New York Times bestseller "Separated: Inside an American Tragedy," which was adapted into an acclaimed film by Academy Award-winner Errol Morris. His reporting on the Trump administration's child separation policy earned him the Walter Cronkite Award for Individual Achievement by a National Journalist, the Hillman Prize for Broadcast Journalism and a Yale University Poynter Fellowship in Journalism.

Free seating is limited. To reserve a seat, attendees must purchase one copy of the book per seat. Reservation holders are encouraged to arrive early to guarantee seating. Standby guests will be seated as space allows 10 minutes before the event.

To reserve a seat: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/santa-monica-public-library-presents-jacob-soboroff-tickets-1983563196918>

Underground parking is available via the 7th Street driveway across from the Fire Department. The first half hour is free, and the library provides an additional one-hour free validation ticket.

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF



Jason Frank

EVENT: MSNBC's Jacob Soboroff discusses and signs "Firestorm" March 4 at Santa Monica Library.

AI

FROM PAGE 2

leaning Cato Institute.

Consumers have already spoken, leading to a surge of Claude downloads that made it the most popular iPhone app starting on Saturday and for all phone systems in the U.S. on Monday, according to Sensor Tower. That's come at the expense of OpenAI's ChatGPT, which saw its consumer reputation damaged when it announced a Friday deal with the Pentagon to effectively replace Anthropic with ChatGPT in classified environments.

In the Apple store, the number of 1-star reviews — the worst rating — of ChatGPT grew by 775% on Saturday and continued to grow early this week, forcing OpenAI to do damage control.

"We shouldn't have rushed to get this out on Friday," OpenAI CEO Sam Altman said in a social media post Monday. "The issues are super complex, and demand clear communication. We were genuinely trying to de-escalate things and avoid a much worse outcome, but I think it just looked opportunistic and sloppy."

Altman was planning to gather employees for an "all-hands" meeting on Tuesday to discuss next steps.

"There are many things the technology just isn't ready for, and many areas we don't yet understand the tradeoffs required for safety," Altman said. "We will work through these, slowly, with the (Pentagon), with technical safeguards and other methods."

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

TURF

FROM PAGE 1

the district faces a fall 2027 deadline to make a final decision on the Franklin field surface.

WATER, COSTS AND PLAYABILITY FAVOR TURF

On the operational side, the study found stark differences between the two surfaces. The district's natural grass fields consume approximately 20 million gallons of water annually for irrigation, averaging 1.3 million gallons per acre per year. Grass fields also require 1,684 hours of labor annually compared to just 196 hours for artificial turf, and the district applies roughly 4,125 pounds of synthetic fertilizer and 15 gallons of herbicide concentrate each year to keep grass fields playable.

Perhaps the most significant practical gap is in field availability. Natural grass can safely handle about 24 hours of weekly use before needing recovery time, limiting annual availability to roughly 1,104 hours. Artificial turf can accommodate up to 4,888 hours of use per year — more than four times as much — with consistent year-round availability regardless of weather.

The cost disparity is equally dramatic. The district spends approximately \$361,000 annually to maintain its grass fields, or about \$24,019 per acre. Artificial turf maintenance costs roughly \$822 per acre per year. The study also found that natural grass maintenance generates an estimated 59 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions annually, primarily from the electricity associated with water conveyance.

California's permanent water conservation requirements, which could impose penalties of up to \$10,000 daily for noncompliance by 2040, add further regulatory pressure favoring synthetic surfaces.

CHEMICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH CONCERNS PERSIST

The study acknowledged multiple concerns about artificial turf that the district's critics have already raised. Multiple peer-reviewed studies confirmed the presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds in artificial turf materials. One Stockholm study found PFAS in 76% of backing samples from 103 football fields.

However, the report noted that newer-generation products from some manufacturers show nondetectable PFAS levels, and the district's use of organic cork infill rather than crumb rubber has significantly reduced several chemical exposure pathways. The district no longer uses crumb rubber on any of its turf fields.

Environmental impacts include microplastic pollution, with research documenting that fields release approximately 3 to 5 kilograms of microplastics per field per year. One study found artificial turf fibers comprising more than 15% of larger plastics in water samples, with up to 20,000 fibers per day flowing downstream toward oceans.

On heat, the study found artificial turf surfaces consistently reach temperatures of 158 to 171 degrees Fahrenheit under laboratory conditions, 35 to 64 degrees higher than natural grass. But the report emphasized that the district's coastal location

provides significant natural temperature moderation, with summer highs typically in the mid-70s to low-80s and frequent ocean breezes. District measurements taken in October 2025 at an ambient temperature of 82 degrees recorded artificial turf surface temperatures of about 111 degrees at Will Rogers Elementary and Santa Monica High School, compared to 86 to 89 degrees on grass.

Injury research showed mixed findings. Natural grass was associated with higher rates of lacerations, dislocations and fractures, while artificial turf showed increased lower-extremity injuries, particularly to toes, feet and upper legs. ACL injuries were found to be more common on artificial turf in high school football and girls' soccer.

DISTRICT'S TURF HISTORY AND EXPANSION PLANS

The district has operated synthetic turf fields at several campuses for years. Santa Monica High School has had a synthetic field since 2011. John Adams Middle School fields were first installed in 2008 with crumb rubber infill, then replaced in 2018 with cork-infill. Lincoln Middle School was converted to synthetic turf with cork infill in 2019, and Will Rogers Learning Community received a new cork-infill field in late 2023.

Franklin Elementary became the flashpoint when the board voted 7-0 in May 2025 to approve a campus renovation plan that included replacing the school's deteriorated grass field with a newer synthetic surface manufactured without infill. The four-phase renovation is funded by Measure QS, a \$495 million bond voters approved in November 2024.

District plans also include synthetic turf for Grant Elementary in the next facilities cycle and McKinley Elementary after that. Roosevelt Elementary is also slated for synthetic turf. Existing fields will need resurfacing in coming years.

COMMUNITY PUSHBACK RESHAPES THE DEBATE

The Franklin vote drew fierce opposition. More than 1,200 petition signers, six neighborhood organizations and state Sen. Ben Allen opposed the plan.

The debate extended beyond the school district. On Jan. 27, 2026, the Santa Monica City Council voted 7-0 to ban new artificial turf on all city-owned land as part of its 25-year Parks and Recreation Vision Plan. The ban does not apply to SMMUSD property, but critics note that a Joint Use Agreement under which the city pays the district roughly \$10 million to \$11 million annually for community access to school facilities effectively makes school fields function as public parks.

LAUSD's prohibition on new artificial turf at early education, elementary and middle schools has become a frequently cited precedent in the debate. At the state level, the Department of Toxic Substances Control has included artificial turf in its Priority Product evaluation, which could eventually require manufacturers to conduct mandatory alternatives analyses.

The district has said there are no imminent field decisions and that the Franklin surface choice will not be needed until fall 2027.

editor@smdp.com

**WEDNESDAY | MARCH 4****BEACH WALK MEDITATION**

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Santa Monica Lifeguard Tower 24 2400 Ocean Front Walk Los Angeles. Walking meditation is and has always been a significant alternative to sitting meditation, especially for those starting a new practice. The goal of meditation is to be able to practice in all positions, conditions and activities whether sitting, standing, walking, lying down, or whenever awake. Developing mindfulness doesn't have to happen in a quiet room without any distracting sights or sounds. Let's practice meditation in motion while creating a potent wellness experience that enhances mental clarity, alertness, and overall well-being. We'll meet Wednesdays and Fridays at 8 am at lifeguard tower 24 - see a red, yellow, blue, orange, white FLAG. After some basic instructions we'll walk silently together for approximately 45 minutes on the shoreline at a natural pace from tower 24 towards the Santa Monica Pier and back. Free—Donations are accepted. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/beach-walk-meditation/16206460/2026-03-04T08>

AUTHOR TALK WITH MICHAEL PERRY

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Santa Monica College 1900 Pico Blvd Santa Monica. Join us in conversation with bestselling author and humorist Michael Perry, whose collection of genre-spanning works encapsulates the experiences—and the magic—of

rural town communities and the everyday people who reside in them. In Michael Perry's memoir, *Population: 485*, the local vigilante is a farmer's wife armed with a pistol and a Bible, the most senior member of the volunteer fire department is a cross-eyed butcher with one kidney and two ex-wives, and the back roads are haunted by the ghosts of children and farmers. Against a backdrop of fires and tangled wrecks, bar fights and smelt feeds, Perry tells a frequently comic tale leavened with moments of heartbreaking delicacy and searing tragedy. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/author-talk-with-michael-perry/18044844/2026-03-04T11>

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12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Venice Branch Library 501 S Venice Blvd. Venice. Through body awareness, movement, and breath, you will be guided on how to bring your body, mind, and spirit back into balance for overall well-being. All levels are welcome. Generously funded by Friends of Venice Library. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/friends-of-venice-library-yoga-for-everyone/17751141/2026-03-04T12>

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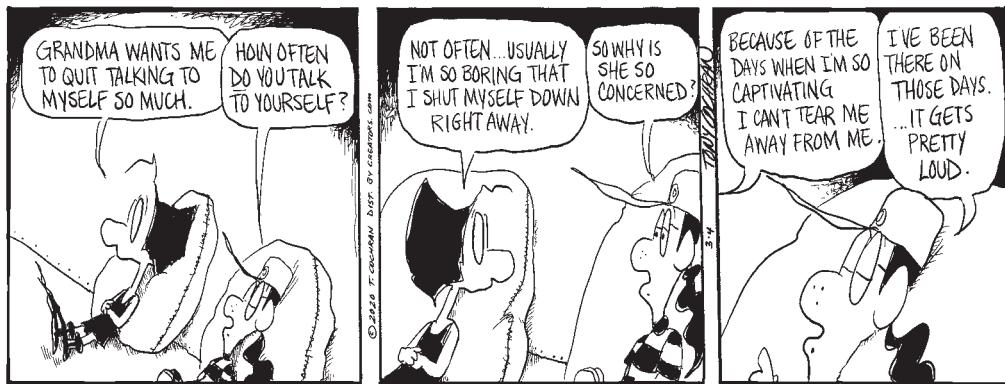
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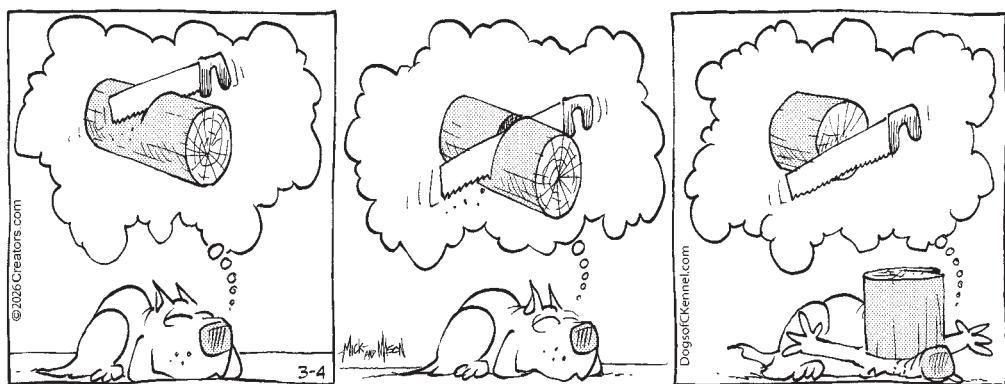
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



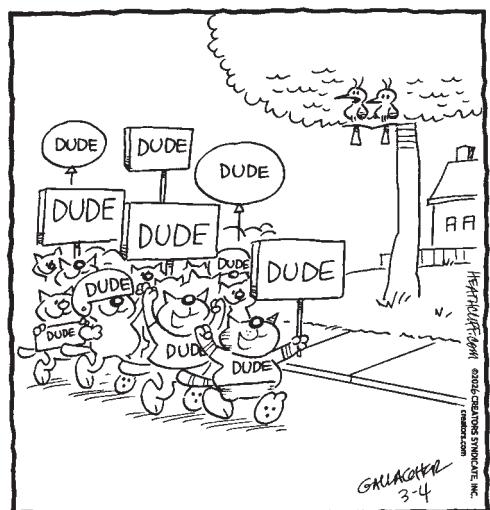
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING



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.

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Monikers

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

- | | | | |
|--------|------------|---------|-----------|
| Aaron | Christian | John | Paul |
| Adam | Donna | Jose | Peter |
| Aden | Edward | Joyce | Ralph |
| Aidan | Emma | Juan | Ryan |
| Ajax | Eric | Kathryn | Sara |
| Alan | Frank | Kayla | Stephanie |
| Alice | Gary | Keith | Susan |
| Amos | Grace | Lisa | Theresa |
| Angela | Harry | Logan | Thomas |
| Ashley | Helen | Marie | Tyler |
| Bevan | Jacqueline | Michael | Victoria |
| Billy | Jane | Nancy | |
| Bruce | Jesse | Nicole | |
| Carl | Joan | Owen | |

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (March 4)

It's your Year of Fearless Championing, and you'll use this gift in many directions. You'll give astounding performances and coax others toward their best performances, too. More highlights: You'll take a serendipitous journey with the spirit of exploration and curiosity opening doors of all kinds - professional, personal and social. One special relationship takes a surprising and auspicious new turn. You'll score three bonus checks. Sagittarius and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 2, 19, 36, 7 and 28.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You can't accurately map your options from inside your head. Your sense of what's possible can be distorted by incomplete information or assumptions based in fear. Say what you want. Give the world a chance to show you what's feasible.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). We live in a rapidly changing world. To keep up, we have to update. Staying engaged means staying flexible. You're willing to revisit ideas and adjust your thinking when new information or contexts ask for it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Finally, you're in a group of diverse strengths. It feels good to show up, do your part and trust that others will handle their share. Things move forward as a wheel does, not as a pogo stick does.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Could everything be happening for the highest good? You're not always sure what to believe. You'll be moved today to ask fewer questions as you get down to the work. Sometimes it's OK to accept what is before you completely understand it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Would you rather have teasing or fawning? A challenge or a massage? Truth or flattery? There are no universally wrong answers, only answers that bring you closer or further away from a goal.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll be reminded how important daily rituals really are to your well-being. Emotional balance depends at least partly on what we automatically repeat. A new influence will inspire you to elevate your habits.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Something as grand as a career doesn't happen overnight. It's a culmination of thousands of small steps, tasks, moves, commitments, decisions - and, wow, are you making them with style and speed today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your inner critic has been speaking too loudly and too often. If only you could be the network executive who cancels its show or at least interrupts it for more relevant programming. You deserve your own support. More cheerleading, less analyzing.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You are bright, free and possessing of an endless curiosity that keeps leading you from interest to interest, and only you can say what deserves a longer stay. You decide for yourself what's acceptable instead of adopting anyone else's rules.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Noticing talent is a talent in and of itself. You'll not only see what's special and strong in others, but you'll also have a sense of who should work together and how it might fit. You'll bring people together.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Media can set up unrealistic expectations of love and relationships. This will be especially true of social media today, but you're savvy to the many ways people tell visual lies and will neither believe nor perpetuate the problem.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There's something so beautiful about a relationship in which you can respectfully disagree without too much friction or a negative outcome. It signals great maturity for all involved as well as deep respect and the potential to learn from one another.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

Newsday Crossword

WHAT ARE THE ODDS by Jerry Clarkson
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

- 1 Metallic envelope closer
- 6 Job benefit, for short
- 10 Toy for a snowy day
- 14 Juliet's love
- 15 "It's my turn!"
- 16 Cover with concrete
- 17 Singly
- 19 ___ so (nevertheless)
- 20 Ink-filled implements
- 21 Animals encountered by Goldilocks
- 23 London or Louisville
- 25 Kept out of sight
- 26 Inheritance
- 29 Jogger's gait
- 31 Yale student
- 34 Wed secretly
- 35 Serving from a caterer
- 36 Adolescent
- 37 Eisenhower or MacArthur's top rank
- 40 Two-year-olds
- 41 Alternatively
- 42 "All kidding"
- 43 Urban rds.
- 44 Family diagram
- 45 Declare under oath
- 46 Lamb's father
- 47 Pigsty dinner
- 48 Golf clubs for fairways
- 53 Footnote abbr.
- 57 Part of the eye with color
- 58 Common work shift start

DOWN

- 1 Cotton or soybeans
- 2 Unassisted
- 3 Prayer's final word
- 4 Ocean-view paintings
- 5 Soup cookware
- 6 Brief but meaningfully worded
- 7 Mideast ruler
- 8 It surrounds the Vatican
- 9 Desk's leg space
- 10 Velocity
- 11 Volcanic output
- 12 Unceasingly
- 13 Family rooms
- 18 ABA member
- 22 Tiny piece
- 24 Chills with cubes
- 26 Some car turns
- 27 Poet TS
- 28 Nations' managements: Abbr.
- 29 Brief in speech
- 30 Extreme anger
- 31 Strange and spooky
- 32 Goes first
- 33 Bay or cove
- 35 Stallion or rooster
- 36 Person flying

- experimental planes
- 38 Bus station
- 39 USA alliance
- 44 Light brown
- 45 Moreover
- 46 Stops for a break
- 47 Crafty person
- 48 Samples, as soup
- 49 Lake bordering Ohio
- 50 Grape plant
- 51 San Juan, Puerto ___
- 52 Not fooled by
- 54 Lawyer's pro ___ work
- 55 Optimist's assertion
- 56 Big Apple-based fashion label
- 59 Duplicate emails, for short

Sudoku

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

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

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.

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

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14						15					16			
17						18					19			
20						21					22			
			23	24					25					
26	27	28					29	30				31	32	33
34						35					36			
37						38					39			
40						41					42			
43					44					45				
			46						47					
48	49	50				51	52				53	54	55	56
57						58					59			
60						61					62			
63						64					65			

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PALISADES

FROM PAGE 1

debates, described as daily obstacles for families trying to come home.

Caruso used the moment to publicly underscore his support for Mahan's gubernatorial run, framing the endorsement around execution rather than ideology. "He is the only candidate who has come here, walked the burn areas, and sat with the community to understand what this really looks like," Caruso said. "We need leadership that knows how to manage large-scale operations. Rebuilding thousands of homes at once is not symbolic. It is logistics, sequencing, capital, infrastructure. It requires discipline."

Caruso argued that what Mahan has implemented in San Jose with performance metrics, accountability structures, and operational oversight; offers a model for statewide application. "What he has done there can be scaled," Caruso said. "We have an opportunity to change direction in California with a common sense, moderate leader who understands both the private and public sector."

Insurance quickly surfaced as the central barrier to recovery. Rather than focusing solely on premium increases, several leaders addressed what they described as a deeper structural problem; insurers are not meaningfully integrated into rebuilding conversations.

Tim Schneider and other participants emphasized that communities are discussing resilience at the block level, undergrounding utilities, vegetation management, evacuation routes, yet underwriting decisions continue to be made without direct engagement in those efforts.

Palisades Recovery Coalition Founder and President Maryam Zar called for a different approach. "If we want insurability to return, insurers need to hear directly what communities are willing to do to mitigate risk," Zar said. "There needs to be transparency. There needs to be commitments on both sides."

Participants proposed a formal convening between state officials, insurers, lenders, and local leaders to align incentives rather than rely exclusively on mandates. Ideas included state backed guarantees tied to community mitigation, clearer underwriting pathways for hardened neighborhoods, and coordinated capital deployment to prevent rebuilds from stalling mid-process.

The conversation repeatedly returned to one point that money drives recovery. Without predictable capital flow, neighborhoods remain frozen.

Infrastructure was described as inseparable from insurance stability. Decision Construction's Founder Justin Skaggs, who has been advocating for undergrounding utilities across Pacific Palisades, Malibu, and Altadena, argued that insurability cannot improve while overhead power lines remain in high fire severity zones. Skaggs added that many of the most destructive fires in California have been tied to utility ignition,

raising questions about long term risk exposure.

"If we rebuild the same way, we recreate the same risk," one participant said.

Michelle Shea, a Malibu resident and Pacific Coast Highway safety advocate, noted that utilities elsewhere have begun undergrounding not for aesthetic reasons but because the long term economics justify prevention.

Land management surfaced as another interconnected issue. Tracy Price, a multigenerational Palisades resident, described how mechanical clearing and fuel break maintenance on adjacent lands had diminished over time. Participants called for renewed state commitments to vegetation management in high fire severity zones, arguing that insurance reform, infrastructure modernization, and land stewardship must move together.

Evacuation planning and public safety protocols were also scrutinized. Community leaders described confusion during red flag conditions and urged the development of clearer statewide standards for multi day monitoring, pre-cleared fire breaks, and coordinated emergency communications.

When Mahan addressed reporters afterward, he centered his remarks on accountability and federal coordination.

"The single biggest thing is to get those FEMA dollars to flow," he said. "The state has allocated significant funds, but without federal dollars moving, progress slows. We need to act with urgency."

He emphasized that political differences cannot obstruct disaster recovery. "As governor, I would go to Washington and make it a win win to rebuild this community," Mahan said. "Government's job is to deliver for people, not to allow politics to get in the way."

Caruso echoed that focus on execution. "This is about results," he said. "Clean and safe communities. Infrastructure that works. An insurance market that stabilizes. A coordinated plan. California can do this, but it requires leadership willing to manage complexity."

Councilmember Park stressed that the stakes extend beyond the Palisades.

"If we can implement a coordinated model here," Park said, "we can apply it across the Westside and throughout California. Disaster recovery is not just about rebuilding structures. It is about rebuilding systems."

For residents, the urgency remains immediate. Thousands of properties are still navigating insurance claims, financing hurdles, environmental health questions, and infrastructure uncertainty.

What Thursday's gathering made clear is that Pacific Palisades is no longer just a neighborhood in recovery. It has become a proving ground for how California handles climate driven disasters, and for which leaders voters trust to guide that process. The fire may be out. The test of governance is not.

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SPORTS

FROM PAGE 1

Australia not simply as a future host nation, but as a country actively studying Los Angeles in real time. With the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games on a shared horizon, speakers emphasized that mega events are no longer isolated spectacles. They are interconnected engines that drive economic growth, cultural exchange, and long term legacy.

"This is not about a single Games," one executive said as leaders gathered along the field. "It is about building a decade long pipeline where sport, tourism, and trade reinforce each other."

Master of ceremonies James Bracey framed Australia's identity as "The Sporting Nation," pointing to an unprecedented coordination between tourism bodies, sports federations, government officials, and diplomatic offices across the United States. "Australia is not just hosting events," Bracey said. "We are aligning sport, tourism, and government around a shared global story, and Los Angeles is a critical part of that story."

That alignment reflects a broader shift. Sport is no longer treated as a silo. It has become a strategic front door to visitation, trade, and international brand positioning. Australia's Minister for Trade and Tourism, Senator the Hon. Don Farrell, reinforced the point, noting that United States and Australia trade surpassed 133 billion dollars last year. "Sport is culture, and culture is commerce," Farrell said. "When people travel for sport, they do not just attend a match. They stay, they explore, and they build lasting connections with a place."

Stadiums such as the Melbourne Cricket Ground and Adelaide Oval were described not simply as venues, but as national assets anchoring tourism and global visibility. The United States, Farrell emphasized, remains a must-win market, particularly for long stay, high value travelers who extend their experience beyond a single event.

Tourism Australia Managing Director Robin Mack outlined what he called a "Decade of Green and Gold," a coordinated runway of global moments aligned with tourism activation. The flagship campaign, Come and Stay Today, is designed to convert broadcast viewership into visitation, encouraging travelers to experience Australia's cities, regions, and natural landscapes well beyond match day. "We are focused on long stay, high-value travelers," Mack said. "The United States is a must win market for us, and sport gives us the most powerful runway to convert global audiences into visitation."

The event pipeline is deliberate. An NFL in season game at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The Rugby World Cup in 2027. The Presidents Cup in 2028. All leading toward Brisbane 2032. Each milestone is seen as an opportunity to distribute tourism benefits across states and regions, reinforcing a national brand while sharing economic impact more broadly.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell confirmed Australia's growing importance in the league's international expansion strategy, citing cultural alignment and strong governmental support. "Australia makes sense for the NFL," Goodell said. "There is cultural alignment, government support, and a real appetite to grow the game at the community level. If we are welcomed, we intend to build something that lasts." The

announcement of an LA Rams hosted game against the San Francisco 49ers in Australia signals more than a one off matchup. League leaders emphasized sustained investment, including school and community programs aimed at building participation among boys and girls.

Football Australia leaders reflected on the continued momentum following the 2023 Women's World Cup, positioning the Matildas as both a cultural force and commercial driver. "The Matildas showed the world what women's football can be," one executive shared. "Now the work is making sure participation, commercial opportunity, and visibility continue to grow long after the final whistle." The upcoming Asian Cup, set to begin March 1, 2026, is expected to sell out, reinforcing football's growth trajectory and its tourism ripple effect.

Inclusion remained central throughout the afternoon. Paralympic gold medalist and board director Jared Cockerell underscored that accessibility must be foundational. "Inclusion cannot be an afterthought," he said. "From venues to administration to leadership, accessibility has to be built into the system from the start." Curtis McGrath offered a message that resonated beyond sport. "Have a go," he told the room. "That mindset, backed by families, schools, and sponsors, is how we unlock potential." Brisbane 2032 organizers echoed that commitment, stating their intention to deliver the most inclusive and accessible Games in history.

Andrew Liveris, President of the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee, described the Games' guiding vision as Believe, Belong, Become. "Brisbane 2032 is about more than a city," he said. "It is a statewide Games designed to distribute opportunity, inspire future athletes, and leave infrastructure that communities can use for generations." Unlike traditional centralized host models, Brisbane is pursuing a distributed approach, activating venues across Queensland and leveraging geography to spread tourism and economic benefits beyond a single urban core.

Los Angeles emerged as both host and teacher. From venue scale and transportation logistics to athlete preparation and crowd intensity, Australia is studying LA28 as a living case study. Swimming drew particular attention, with LA28 expected to stage events in a forty-thousand seat stadium. "This will be next-level," said Gale Hall Jr., a 10-time Olympic medalist. "A venue of that scale changes everything. The preparation is as much mental as it is physical." The United States and Australia rivalry in the pool is expected to take center stage once again, adding narrative tension to an already historic stage.

As the event concluded with a charity auction supporting sport related causes, conversations continued across the field. What unfolded at SoFi Stadium was not simply an afternoon of executive networking. It was a coordinated alignment across nations, leagues, athletes, and industries, all preparing for a decade in which sport, tourism, diplomacy, and economic strategy are inseparable.

"The legacy of these events is decided years before opening ceremonies," one attendee observed as leaders dispersed. "What matters most is who is in the room early, and what decisions they make together."

For Los Angeles, the groundwork for 2026, LA28, and 2032 is being laid now.

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