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Body found 10 days after swimmer disappeared

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

A body was recovered on the Santa Monica beach last week, but officials have not yet linked it to a swimmer who disappeared off the coast 10 days earlier.

Los Angeles County Lifeguards found a body on the 1200 block of the beach at about 3:49 p.m. on March 22 and notified the Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD) who called in the County Coroner. Officers said there was no obvious cause of death but according to SMPD, the identity of the victim is still unknown and the Coroner is currently conducting an investigation.

Lifeguards, the Coast Guard, Sheriff's deputies and local emergency responders spent three days combing the water off the Santa Monica beach after a lifeguard saw a man disappear below the waves on March 12. The swimmer was about 110-120 yards offshore between Towers 9 and 10 near the California Incline.

Boats, helicopters and dive teams searched the area but were unable to locate anyone.

SMPD Lt. Saul Rodriguez said a man visiting the area from Ireland was reported missing later in the week and some property was recovered from the beach. However, Rodriguez said no connection has been officially drawn between the swimmer, the property and the body.

"We haven't been able to determine if that swimmer is indeed the same person who went missing," he said. "I don't think that link has been made yet and we won't until the Coroner's Office can determine what we're looking at."

editor@smdp.com







Tanya Barcessat, Andrew Narvaez and Conner Savage

MARATHON: The Los Angeles Marathon ended in Santa Monica on Sunday. Elisha Barno (Kenya) and Askale Merachi (Ethiopia) won their divisions and beat more than 20,000 runners to the finish line.

Bloom discusses pending rent control legislation

MADELEINE PAUKER
Daily Press Staff Writer

The state assemblymember representing Santa Monica introduced a bill earlier this month to expand rent control to all buildings older than 10 years old, including single family homes, with an exception for small landlords.

Richard Bloom revealed Assembly Bill 36 alongside a suite of other tenant protection bills that call for policies that Santa Monica has already put into effect, such as just-cause evictions and a rental registry. The proposals follow last year's defeat of Proposition 10, which would have repealed the Costa-Hawkins Act and paved the way for rent control across California.



Photo:

ASSEMBLYMEMBER BLOOM:

The Daily Press spoke with Bloom about his bill, why he thinks it can pass and what opposition it will face.

SMDP: Why do you feel

SEE **BLOOM** PAGE 7

New accusations describe second child abuser at PAL

MADELEINE PAUKER
Daily Press Staff Writer

A new lawsuit against the Santa Monica Police Activities League (PAL) accuses a second person of sexually abusing children in the program, joining existing complaints related to the Eric Uller case.

In the past two weeks, a total of nine individuals have filed claims or complaints against the City of Santa Monica and PAL that allege both institutions failed to take action when children and volunteers warned that Eric Uller was sexually abusing young boys he met through the program. Uller, a former City employee, molested more than 10 boys in the 1980s and 1990s while he volunteered at PAL and was found dead in his apartment last November shortly before he was

SEE **ABUSER** PAGE 6

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO BE HELD BY
THE SANTA MONICA ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

DATE/TIME: 10:30 a.m., April 9, 2019
LOCATION: Council Chambers, Room 213, Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica

A Public Hearing will be held by the Zoning Administrator of the City of Santa Monica at the above noted time and place in regard to the following requests:

FENCE WALL HEDGE MODIFICATION 18ENT-0377, 3129 5th Street. The applicant requests approval of a height modification for a hedge ranging in height from 5'-5" to 6'-8" along the front (west) parcel line and a wood fence ranging in height from 5'-3" to 6'-3" along the front and side (south) parcel lines within the front yard setback. The subject property is located in the Ocean Park Low Density Residential (OP2) zoning district. Pursuant to Santa Monica Municipal Code (SMMC) Section 9.21.050(A)(1), fences, walls, and hedges cannot exceed a maximum height of 42 inches within the required front yard setback as measured from the lowest finished grade adjacent to either side of the fence, wall, or hedge. Pursuant to SMMC Section 9.04.050(D), in the cases of fences, walls, or hedges that are parallel to and within 5 feet of a public sidewalk, grade shall be the elevation of the closest point on the sidewalk. SMMC Section 9.43.080(B) allows an applicant to request a modification to these height limitations in the front, side, and rear setbacks. [Planner: Ivan Lai] **Applicant: Brady Thurman. Property Owner: Thurman Family Trust.**

MINOR USE PERMIT 18ENT-0402, 2001 Main Street. The applicant requests approval of a Minor Use Permit (MUP) to allow for a Group Residential use within an existing one-story multi-tenant commercial building. The applicant is proposing to convert a 2,438 square foot commercial tenant space into shared living quarters on a parcel that is zoned Neighborhood Commercial (NC). Pursuant to Santa Monica Municipal Code (SMMC) Section 9.11.020, review and approval of an MUP is required for a Group Residential use. [Planner: Michael Rocque] **Applicant: Podshare Inc. Property Owner: Jim Prause, c/o Assaf Raz, Dogtown Realty.**

MINOR USE PERMIT 19ENT-0023, 2120 Wilshire Boulevard. The applicant requests approval of a Minor Use Permit (MUP) to modify an existing wireless telecommunications facility on the rooftop of an existing four-story commercial office building within the Mixed-Use Boulevard (MUB) zoning district. The project consists of: (1) the removal and replacement of four panel antennas located at two different sectors behind existing FRP screening structures (2) the removal and relocation of a sector 5' back from the front of the building on the rooftop consisting of five panel antennas located behind a new 6' high FRP screening structure and (3) installation of twelve new remote radio units (RRU's). The proposed antennas and associated support equipment will be arranged behind both the existing and new screen walls designed to match the existing rooftop screening. Pursuant to Santa Monica Municipal Code (SMMC) Section 9.32.040(A), review and approval of an MUP is required for all personal wireless facilities except for those that are exempt under SMMC Section 9.32.040(B) or that are governed by SMMC Section 9.32.040(C). [Planner: Michael Rocque] **Applicant: Norman MacLeod, Agent to Verizon Wireless. Property Owner: National Facilities Corporation.**

HOW TO COMMENT

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

Any person may comment at the Public Hearing, or by writing a letter to the City Planning Division, Room 212, P.O. Box 2220, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2220. Plans are available for public review at the City Planning Division. For more information, please contact the City Planning Division at (310) 458-8341. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 64009(b), if this matter is subsequently challenged in Court, the challenge may be limited to only those issues raised at the Public Hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Santa Monica at, or prior to, the Public Hearing. The meeting facility is wheelchair accessible. For disability-related accommodations, please contact (310) 458-8341 or (310) 458-8696 TTY at least 72 hours in advance. Every attempt will made to provide the requested accommodation. All written materials are available in alternate format upon request. Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Lines #1, #2, #3, Rapid 3, #7, #8, #9, Rapid #10, and #18 service City Hall and the Civic Center area. The Expo Line terminus is at Colorado Avenue and Fourth Street, a short walk to City Hall. Public parking is available in front of City Hall and in the Civic Center Parking Structure (validation free).

*Esto es un aviso sobre una audiencia publica para revisar applicaciones proponiendo desarrollo en Santa Monica. Esto puede ser de interes para usted. Si desea mas informacion, favor de llamar a Carmen Gutierrez en la Division de Planificacion al numero (310) 458-8341.

What's Up Westside

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA

Tuesday, March 26

Write Away
Gain feedback and encouragement in your writing efforts from fellow writers in this supportive writer's meet-up. Fairview Branch Library 12 - 2:30 p.m.

Open Lab
Explore virtual reality and other emerging technologies during these informal sessions. 3D printing service is available to those who have successfully completed a 3D printing class at the Library. Questions can be directed to ideashappen@smgov.net Main Library Computer Classroom, 2nd Floor 5 - 7 p.m.

City Council Meeting
Regular Meeting of the Santa Monica City Council City Hall Council Chamber 5:30 p.m.

Mini Makers: Art Rubbings
Use pencils and crayons to make rubbing prints of textured objects. Ages 4-11. Library: Ocean Park Branch Library. 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Walk-in tutoring
Friendly volunteer tutors provide help with basic reading, writing, and computer skills; using the Internet to search for information; opening and using an email account; filling out online forms or applications; learning how to write a resume or cover letter; and more. Main Library. 1 - 3 p.m.

Wednesday, March 27

Computer Class: Appy Hour - Library Apps Workshop
Bring your smartphone, tablet or e-reader and get help with using library apps and your device. Ocean Park Branch Library 4 - 5 p.m.

National Crayon Day: Create with Crayons
Bring your old or used crayons to create a unique crayon inspired craft, learn fun facts, and enjoy a colorful treat. Limited space; registration starts, 3/13. GRADES K-5 in THE ANNEX Room. Friends Sponsored Pico Branch Library 4 - 5 p.m.

Meditation: An Escape from the Frantic World We Live In
The outer world floods our brain and senses with a continual stream of data input. Where can we find peace? Longtime meditator Doug Frankel shows how meditation can help promote calm and bliss in today's environment. Montana Avenue Branch Library 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

GED/HiSET Prep Class
Get prepared to take the Language Arts subject test of the GED or HiSET. Main Library Community Meeting Room, 2nd Floor 6:45 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.

Thursday, March 28

Manifesto Writing with Max King Cap
Say it Like You Mean It! Manifestos feature concentrated writing that exists to challenge, draw attention, and provoke. Choose a position, a mantra, an oath– then spell it out on a single sheet of paper. Whether you focus on content or font design, make every mark count! You can try a classic numbered-clause manifesto, make it short and sweet - a one sentence meme, or craft a mission statement that lays out the groundwork for your future. Explore the possibilities! Cost: $5 Register online or call 310.458.2239. Palisades Park 1 - 3 p.m.

Classic Film & Discussion: A Face in the Crowd (1957)
Film scholar Vivian Rosenberg screens and discusses this classic in which an Arkansas drifter is discovered by the producer of a small radio station and becomes an overnight media sensation, ultimately rising to great fame and influence on national television. (film run time 125 min.) Montana Avenue Branch Library 2 - 5 p.m.

Gallery Artist Talk
On and off the Street is an exhibition of street photography examining the blurred lines of overlapping public, private and personal space. Curated by M. Robert Markovich. Featured artists are Philip Adam, Cindy Bendat, Tommi Cahill, M. Robert Markovich, Douglas McCulloh, and William Purcell. Join us for a conversation with the artists and light refreshments. Annenberg Community Beach House Terrace Lounge 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Soundwaves Concert: Susan Svrcek PianoSpheres Preview
Contemporary piano music performed by Susan Svrcek. Main Library Martin Luther King, Jr. Auditorium 7:30 p.m.

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

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Downtown

Paul Stein and Leo Marcus perform Unknown Romantic Masterpieces by Delius & Reger

Santa Monica Public Library is proud to present Unknown Romantic Masterpieces by Delius & Reger performed by Paul Stein and Leo Marcus on Sunday, March 31, 2019, at 2:00 p.m. in the Main Library's Martin Luther King, Jr. Auditorium, 601 Santa Monica Blvd.

Violinist Paul Stein and pianist Leo Marcus present a program of sonatas written in the early 20th century by Frederic Delius and Max Reger, coping in different ways with the emergence of "modern" music out of the romanticism of the late 19th century.

Violinist Paul Stein was a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic for 36 years. He is Artistic Director for the chamber music series at the Arcadia and Cerritos Libraries. Leo Marcus studied piano with Sylvia Tannenbaum in Hollywood, with John Steele Ritter in Claremont, and with Alexander Tamir in Jerusalem. He is the director of the SoCal Chamber Music Workshop.

This program is free and all ages are welcome. Space is limited and on a first-arrival basis. This is included in the 50+ program series. For more information, visit smpl.org or contact the Santa Monica Public Library at (310) 458-8600. The Santa Monica Public Library is wheelchair-accessible. For disability-related accommodations, call Library Administration (310) 458-8606 one week prior to the event. The Main Library is directly served by Big Blue Bus routes 1, R10 and 18. The Expo Line and other bus routes stop nearby. Ride your bike. Bicycle parking racks are available at the library.

SUBMITTED BY JUDITH S. GRAHAM, PUBLIC SERVICES LIBRARIAN

Citywide

Ernest Marquez & Doris Sosin to Be Honored by Santa Monica Conservancy at Spirit of Preservation Gala

Ernest Marquez and Doris Sosin will be honored at the Santa Monica Conservancy's "Spirit of Preservation Gala" on Sunday, March 31 at 6:30 pm at the East Wing Music Hall in the Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center, adjacent to The Broad Stage.

Ernest Marquez is a descendant of early Mexican land grantees in the Santa Monica area. For over twenty years, he researched local and family history, amassing over 10,000 photographic prints, rare negatives and ephemera that record the development of Santa Monica and Los Angeles beginning from the 1860s. Recognizing the value of his impressive scholarship, The Huntington Library now houses The Ernest Marquez Photograph Collection. Additionally, Marquez is the author of several books, including the bestselling Santa Monica Beach: A Collector's Pictorial History. Learn more about Marquez here.

Doris Sosin co-founded the Santa Monica Conservancy in 2002 after working with other preservationists who successfully opposed a ballot measure that would have weakened the City's Landmark Ordinance. She also founded the North of Montana Neighborhood Association (NOMA), calling upon the City to restrict the size of the mega mansions being built that were changing the character and density of the neighborhood. She served on the City's Urban Forest Task Force and the Recreation and Parks Commission, where she conceived of and advocated for a long-range master plan. Learn more about Sosin here.

"We are delighted to be recognizing the lifelong accomplishments of our extraordinary honorees," said Carol Lemlein, President of the Santa Monica Conservancy. The "Spirit of Preservation Gala" will feature cocktails with classical guitarist Mauricio Ortiz followed by dinner and music by the Danny Meyer Trio as well as video profiles of the honorees. Proceeds from the event will support the Conservancy's work to protect our historic places. Gala tickets are $190 and sponsorship and tribute opportunities are available. To purchase, visit www.smconservancy.org. To leave a message for the Conservancy, please call (310) 496-3146.

For information on programs, membership and the Conservancy's Preservation Resource Center, visit www.smconservancy.org.

SUBMITTED BY CAROL LEMLEIN,

Pico Blvd.

Santa Monica College Stages "Shakespeare in Love"

The Santa Monica College Theatre Arts Department is pleased to present "Shakespeare in Love" March 29 - April 7 in the Theatre Arts Main Stage on the main SMC campus, 1900 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica.

In the popular rom-com, young playwright Will Shakespeare works on his latest comedy, Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter, and star-crossed lovers bite the forbidden fruit of Elizabethan theatre as a cast of historical players frolic in backstage antics. Based on the screenplay by Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard and adapted for the stage by Lee Hall, with music by Paddy Cunneen. The SMC production is directed by Terrin Adair-Lynch, with stage combat choreography by Mikael Mattsson.

Show times are 8 p.m. on Friday, March 29 and April 5, and Saturday, March 30 and April 6. Matinees are at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 31, and on Saturday, April 6, and Sunday, April 7. A preview is scheduled at 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 28.

Advance tickets range from $12 to $15 ($8 for preview), plus a service charge, and can be purchased by going to smc.edu/mainstage or by calling 310-434-4319 or 310-434-3005 Monday through Friday. Tickets are $3 higher at the door before performances. Parking is free on Friday evenings and weekends.

SUBMITTED BY GRACE SMITH, SMC PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

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What's the Point?

David Pisarra Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Women Entrepreneurs Are Rocking!

Over the past 20 years of practicing family law I've worked with many female lawyers. Most of whom were either their own bosses, or part of a small law firm. We don't often think of solo practitioners as entrepreneurs, but the truth is that any professional who hangs out a shingle, is in fact an entrepreneur.

I have coaching client who is a family lawyer and we're re-building her business, positioning her into a niche that will bring the clients she wants to work with, and can provide the revenue she needs to provide for her family. It's funny how these relationships develop, we met almost a decade ago in the Santa Monica courthouse on opposite sides of the table, but both fighting for the same thing, - the best thing for a special needs child. Family court is crazy sometimes, in this case the parents haven't gotten along for years, but the lawyers are great friends now!

The problem for most people in business is that they are never taught what they need to know about marketing, positioning and advertising and I dare say that it is probably worse for women who have a lack of female mentors and role models in business. But that is changing as more and more women are reaching higher levels of the corporate ladder and for those who are building their own businesses.

My friend Maggie Georgopoulos is the author of Up The Ladder In A Skirt which chronicles her experiences in the hyper-masculine world of engineering and the petroleum industry, and was written to help other women climb the ladder. She's an entrepreneur who is a global professional speaker on the topics of diversity and mental health in the workplace. I met her last year in Auckland when we were both presenting at the Global Speakers Summit. We then were in Johannesburg, South Africa speaking at the Professional Speakers Association of Southern Africa. As entrepreneurs we have travelled the world to create opportunities for ourselves, which is what entrepreneurs do.

I was reminded of that as I spoke this weekend with my friend Heather Wetlzer of CUECareer.com. She and her husband Nick Hare founded the Santa Monica based edu-tech company when she saw the opportunity to help students find and explore different career paths. Heather has volunteered for various education based non-profits, notably Black Girl Code, which teaches entrepreneurship and pitching in underserved communities. That experience led her to realize that there was a need to match students with internships. The twist that CUECareer.com puts on it is to work with the community of associations. In America there are over 100,000 associations that have training programs and opportunities for students to learn about potential careers – CUECareer.com is providing that information to schools and school districts at no cost through a model that provides the associations with a pool of candidates for their programs.

I asked Heather about the impact female mentors have had on her career and she said, "Coming from the Hearst family of publications, which was a very female heavy environment I had some wonderful female mentors who helped me learn how to navigate the corporate world. We need champions and to have other great women who believe in us. I've been very lucky in having great male and female mentors throughout my career."

Finding great mentors is not easy, and it can be even harder when we start screening for female entrepreneurs. Luckily my friend and fellow National Speakers Association member Jen Devore Richter was able to give me some insight, since she is a leading business coach for women. Her company BossWomenRock.com is designed to help women hit the ground running to build their companies with a solid foundation of a clear market dominating message. Jen runs three programs for women to position themselves for maximum success. She has an online course at BossWomenRock.com, that's a 52 week video training program which teaches the fundamentals of marketing. For those who want to "Git 'er done!" right away, there's the RisingInfluencer.com program which is either a One Day intensive influencer program or you can do that material on a one-on-one basis over 30 days.

"Helping women become the Boss Women they want and deserve to be is my life's mission. I took all that I have learned over the years from various mentors, and now share it with the women who want to succeed. I speak at Women in Business luncheons (of which there are a ton!) and always leave feeling like I've helped someone achieve their dreams. It doesn't get a whole lot better than that" she told me.

I have to agree with her. I know for me, helping people achieve their dreams, whether it's like my friend who wants to be a more successful attorney working with kids in the special needs community, or building a marketing company that specializes in medical non-profits like SixSecondStories.com, the gratification means more than the paycheck.

David Pisarra is a Los Angeles Divorce and Child Custody Lawyer specializing in Father's and Men's Rights with the Santa Monica firm of Pisarra & Grist. He welcomes your questions and comments. He can be reached at dpisarra@pisarra.com or 310/664-9969.You can follow him on Twitter @davidpisarra

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Coaches, others plead not guilty in college admissions scam

ALANNA DURKIN RICHER
Associated Press

Athletic coaches charged in a sweeping college admissions scam pleaded not guilty Monday to taking bribes from wealthy parents in exchange for helping students get into elite universities such as Georgetown.

They appeared in Boston's federal court nearly two weeks after they were arrested in what authorities have described as the biggest college admissions scheme ever prosecuted by the U.S. Justice Department , which also ensnared prominent parents like actresses Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin.

Authorities say the coaches were paid tens of thousands of dollars to help falsify student's athletic credentials and get them admitted as recruits for sports they didn't play.

They include longtime tennis coach Gordon Ernst, who's accused of getting $2.7 million in bribes to designate at least 12 applicants as recruits to Georgetown, as well as former UCLA men's soccer coach Jorge Salcedo, Wake Forest University women's volleyball coach William Ferguson and former USC water polo coach Jovan Vavic.

One by one, the suit-clad coaches stood before the packed courtroom before leaning into the microphone to say "not guilty."

Ernst, Salcedo, Vavic and their lawyers left the courthouse without commenting amid a crush of reporters shouting questions.

An attorney for Ferguson told reporters that his client is innocent and "does not belong in this indictment." Ferguson is charged with taking a $100,000 bribe to recruit a student who had been placed on the wait list. He's been suspended by Wake Forest.

"Two weeks ago, the U.S. attorney told you about a litany of abuses: phony test scores, unqualified students, falsified athletic profiles. Well I can't speak to what happened at any other school, but not at Wake Forest University," attorney Shaun Clarke said. "No one, no one was admitted to Wake Forest who didn't earn it as a student and as an athlete," he said.

Ernst, who also was the personal tennis coach for former first lady Michelle Obama and her daughters, left Georgetown in 2017 after an internal investigation found he violated admissions rules. He was later hired by the University of Rhode Island, which says it wasn't told about the admissions rules violations. The school said Saturday that Ernst has resigned.

Salcedo, a former UCLA All-American and national champion, also resigned after being charged with getting $200,000 in exchange for helping one male and one female applicant into the school.

Authorities say Vavic, who won 16 national water polo titles at USC, was paid $250,000 to designate two students as recruits. He has been fired by USC.

Former USC senior associate athletic director Donna Heinel, two college entrance exam administrators and other defendants accused of participating in the admissions scam also pleaded not guilty to racketeering conspiracy.

The charge calls for up to 20 years in prison, although defendants, especially first-time offenders, typically get far less than that.

At least nine athletic coaches and 33 parents, many of them prominent in law, finance, fashion, the food and beverage industry and other fields, have been charged in the case.

In addition to the athletic recruiting scheme, authorities say parents paid an admissions consultant to arrange for someone else to take college entrance exams on behalf of their children or correct answers for them.

Huffman, Loughlin and Loughlin's fashion designer husband Mossimo Giannulli are scheduled to make their initial appearances in the Boston court on April 3.

Stanford's former sailing coach John Vandemoer has already pleaded guilty and former Yale University women soccer coach Rudy Meredith is expected to plead guilty.

The consultant at the center of the scheme, Rick Singer, admitted to fraud and conspiracy charges on the same day the charges against the parents and coaches were unsealed. Singer secretly recorded his conversations with the parents after agreeing to work with investigators in the hopes of getting a lesser sentence.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A "Legacy" Of Cheating

Editor,

As a former teacher, principal, headmaster and college professor, I was not at all surprised by the practice of play for pay in regard to college admissions. What did unsettle me was its extent in regard to the amount of dollars sloshing around, and some of the ugly schemes generated by certain members of this digital culture (e,g., photo shopping the faces of unqualified candidates onto gifted athletes).

But let us not forget about the more acceptable, yet in my opinion, equally egregious practice of "legacy acceptances". Would George W. Bush have gotten into Yale or Harvard Business School on his own merits, with a far less than stellar record at the prestigious Phillips Academy School in Andover Massachusetts and an alleged history of substance abuse? Or consider Ted Kennedy, with his anemic grade point average at the Milton Academy, finishing 36th out of 56 students, not to mention being caught cheating, having had a classmate take his Spanish exam for him as well as engaging in a sophisticated scheme concocted by him and several classmates to copy answers from another student in a science class. Is THAT Harvard material?

The extent of this time worn practice over numerous unknown years has unquestionably prevented countless qualified students from pursuing their dreams as a result of being knocked off admission rolls. Who knows what contributions to the betterment of society have been lost by the corruption that cash or political and familial influence has had in our world of higher education?

The time has long arrived to tighten up and ensure that merit and not cheating, be it in ANY form, is the rock solid path for any young person striving to better her or his life and possibly the lives of us all through an honorable, equitable and universal educative selective process.

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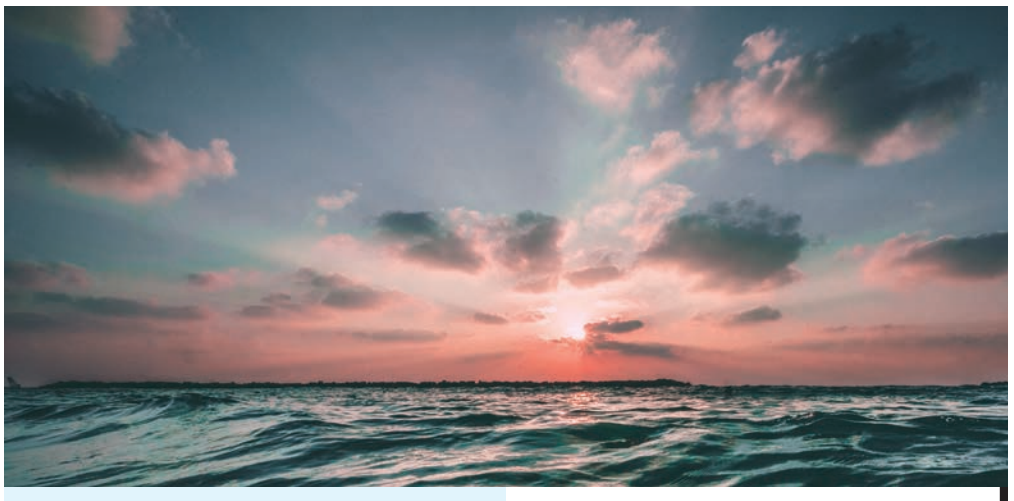
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ABUSER

FROM PAGE 1

scheduled to appear in court on multiple child molestation charges.

One of the victims, however, claims she was abused by a PAL employee, a complaint filed last week reveals.

Elizabeth Esquivias alleges she was repeatedly sexually assaulted by Fernando Ortega, who she claims was on probation at the time, when she was 12 or 13 years old in the early 1990s. Ortega was assigned to drive children home at night and would drive Esquivias home last in order to be alone with her. He assaulted her on at least five occasions, according to the complaint.

Ortega told Esquivias not to tell anyone what had happened or they would both be in trouble. Frightened by his threat, she did not tell anyone about the abuse until last summer when law enforcement began investigating an anonymous tip about Uller. Claypool said he is planning to file a fourth complaint on behalf of Esquivias' brother, whom Uller abused.

"There was not only another molester, but one with a criminal record," Claypool said. "The City and PAL weren't doing any reliable, diligent background checks on volunteers or supervising volunteers."

Esquivias' story is similar to the stories of the two men who have filed complaints through Claypool so far. Both Rogelio Monroy and Jose Zaldivar, who filed a complaint last week at the same time as Esquivias, allege that Uller groomed them by driving them home from PAL events and molested them at his father's medical offices under the pretense of giving them physicals.

The complaints assert that PAL staff should have prevented Uller and Ortega from spending time with children unsupervised and responded to claims that Uller was molesting young boys. Monroy's complaint alleges a boy in PAL called Uller a molester in front of PAL employees and was subsequently kicked out.

"If anyone was paying attention, they would see that these guys are driving kids home alone, which is completely inappropriate," Claypool said. "Uller and Ortega were grooming these kids."

The City launched an internal investigation late last year into allegations that City staff covered up Uller's crimes. It has retained Praesidium, an outside consultant, to review the policies and practices of current youth programs to ensure that best practices for preventing incidents of abuse are in place throughout City programs, said City spokesperson Constance Farrell.

"We are deeply disturbed by the claim filed with the City for alleged sexual abuse that occurred in the 1990s," said Farrell. "The City of Santa Monica is deeply committed to ensuring the health and safety of all children enrolled in City programs. Any allegation of crimes committed against our youth will be responded to with transparency and accountability."

The complaints ask for a jury trial and judgment against PAL. It seeks damages in an amount to be determined at trial. Claypool said he is also planning to add the City to the lawsuit.

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BLOOM

FROM PAGE 1

expanding rent control in the way you propose is the best way to address the housing crisis?

RB: The bill proposes some changes in rent control that are much more modest than what has been proposed in the past. Voters made a pretty clear statement on Prop. 10, which was a fairly blanket change in rent control law. This is a much more nuanced approach and part of that is going to be a serious negotiation with all sides so we can reach an accommodation that helps tenants stay in their units. The bill sets out a starting point for discussions with proponents and opponents.

There is a tremendous amount of pressure on tenants today given rising rents around the state. We see that in rising homelessness and lower quality of life for many Californians because they're spending more of their income on rent. Right now, anything built after 1995 is not permitted to be rent-controlled. As our housing stock ages and more units are built, less and less of the housing stock is rent-controlled.

Nothing is mandated by A.B. 36. It allows local governments to take advantage of these provisions if they want to. Some cities will, some won't, but it doesn't mandate adoption of a rent-control ordinance.

SMDP: Why did you decide on a 10-year mark for rent control and why did you decide to include single-family housing?

RB: Both of these provisions are commonly discussed by housing advocates as being provisions that will help stem the tide of spiraling rents over time.

SMDP: What do you think of the critique that your bill would incentivize landlords to get out of the rental business or developers not to build housing?

RB: We've seen that generally is not the case in rent-controlled jurisdictions. Developers have the Ellis Act they can use to address that issue, and while I prefer it not be used, they do have that opportunity. We see around the state where we have rent-controlled jurisdictions where housing production continues apace. Santa Monica is a good example.

I try hard to understand the opposition's point of view, but everyone agrees we have a crisis on our hands. All sides on the issue agree that we need to provide mechanisms for building more housing, but the 1.4 million unit shortage that needs to be made up is not going to happen overnight, so the question we're trying to address here is: How do we help those tenants who are faced with eviction today because of increasing housing costs? There are 160,000 families in California faced with eviction on an annual basis. That's in large part because they're unable to make rent because they've faced an unaffordable increase in rent, and for many, the next stop is the street.

All sides understand that, and that's why there's an interest in seeing if we can find common ground. I specifically crafted this measure to open those conversations and discussions will be moving forward in short order with groups on all sides.

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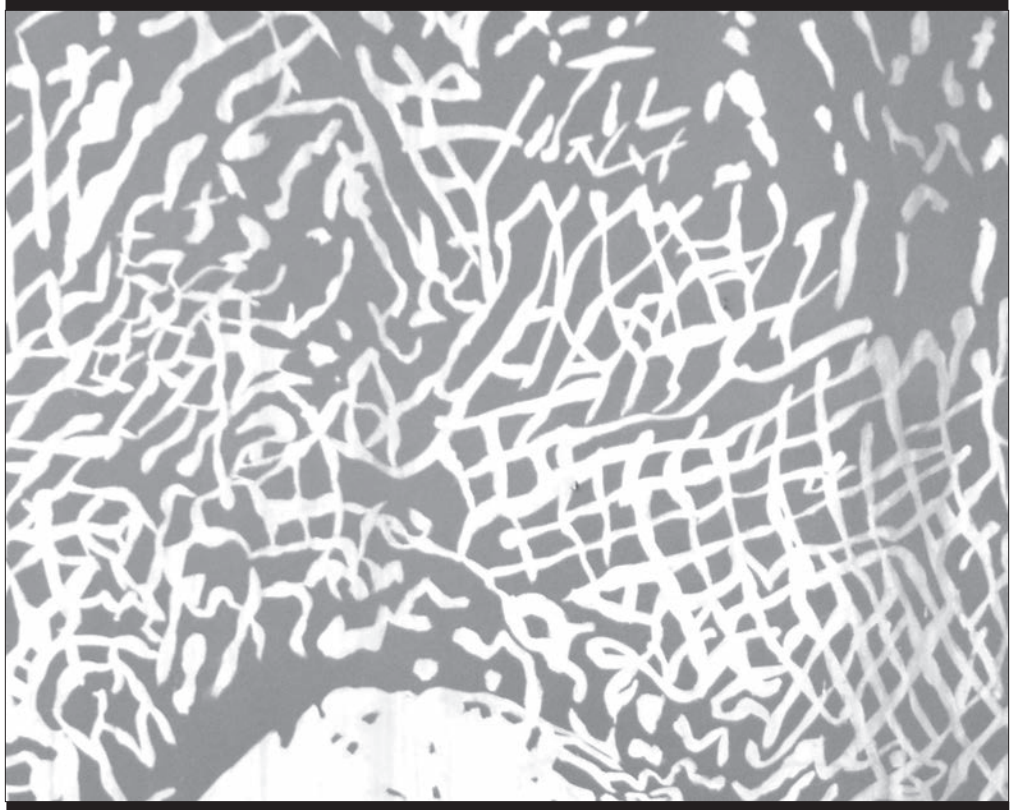
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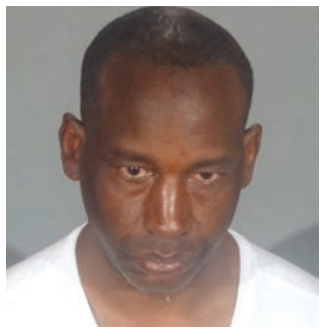
CRIME WATCH

BY DAILY PRESS STAFF

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

ON MARCH 14, AT ABOUT 9:23 P.M.

Officers responded to a radio call for service at Bloomingdale's - 315 Colorado Avenue - regarding a theft suspect in custody. Officers spoke with the store's loss prevention staff. Officers learned a male subject entered the store and selected several items - sweaters - from the sales floor. The subject concealed the merchandise in his backpack. The subject exited the store without paying for any of the merchandise. Loss prevention staff stopped the subject outside of the store. Staff recovered the clothing valued at over $1,000 from the subject's backpack. The store was desirous of prosecution. The subject was taken into custody for burglary. Eric Shaun Oliver. 53, from Los Angeles was arrested for burglary. Bail was set at $20,000.



File Photo

ERIC SHAUN OLIVER.

DAILY POLICE LOG

DAILY PRESS STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 342 ON MARCH 24

Strongarm robbery Lincoln Blvd / Santa Monica Blvd 1:43 a.m.
Shots fired 20th St / Georgina Ave 2:59 a.m.
Shots fired 2300blk La Mesa Dr 3:02 a.m.
Petty theft 1500blk Olympic Blvd 3:39 a.m.
Vandalism 1300blk 19th St 6:32 a.m.
Found senile person 20th St / Delaware Ave 7:15 a.m.
Failure to pay parking fee 1100blk Pacific Coast Hwy 8:36 a.m.
Lost property 2200blk Colorado Ave 8:58 a.m.
Burglary 100blk Strand St 9:13 a.m.
Vandalism 2000blk 20th St 9:16 a.m.
Vandalism 2200blk Lincoln Blvd 9:18 a.m.
Encampment 1400blk Olympic Blvd 9:29 a.m.
Construction noise 600blk 21st Pl 9:44 a.m.
Indecent exposure 1300blk 18th St 10:03 a.m.
Indecent exposure Ocean Ave / Arizona Ave 10:04 a.m.
Strongarm robbery 1400blk 3rd Street Prom 10:27 a.m.
72 hour psychiatric hold 14th St / Wilshire Blvd 10:33 a.m.
Strongarm robbery 1400blk 3rd Street Prom 10:46 a.m.
Vandalism 2200blk Lincoln Blvd 10:46 a.m.
Construction noise 700blk 21st Pl 10:53 a.m.
Fight 1100blk Lincoln Blvd 11:02 a.m.
Vandalism 2000blk Lincoln Blvd 11:06 a.m.
Vandalism 1200blk 17th St 11:07 a.m.
Traffic collision with injuries 1200blk Pacific Coast Hwy 11:10 a.m.
Auto burglary 700blk Pier Ave 11:28 a.m.
Vehicle blocking driveway 2500blk 6th St 11:34 a.m.
Traffic collision with injuries Cloverfield Blvd / Interstate 10 11:41 a.m.
72 hour psychiatric hold 1400blk Colorado Ave 11:42 a.m.
Strongarm robbery 1300blk Wilshire Blvd 11:52 a.m.
Abandoned vehicle 2300blk Oak St 12:22 p.m.
Vehicle parked in alley 600blk Santa Monica Blvd 12:41 p.m.
Bike theft 400blk Santa Monica Blvd 12:58 p.m.
Battery 1400blk 7th St 1:14 p.m.
Vehicle parked in alley 900blk Washington Ave 1:20 p.m.
Battery 500blk Olympic Blvd W 1:30 p.m.
Traffic collision - no injuries 1000blk 3rd St 1:52 p.m.
Petty theft 300blk Santa Monica Pier 2:01 p.m.
Auto burglary 1800blk 17th St 2:36 p.m.
Loitering 2nd St / Santa Monica Blvd 2:46 p.m.
Critical missing person Ocean Ave / Colorado Ave 2:51 p.m.
Burglary 900blk 11th St 3:20 p.m.
Threats 200blk Santa Monica Pier 4:09 p.m.
Person down Barnard Way / Ocean Park Blvd 4:14 p.m.
Traffic collision with injuries 1000blk Lincoln Blvd 4:16 p.m.
Traffic collision with injuries 700blk Washington Ave 4:16 p.m.

DAILY FIRE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 42 CALLS ON MARCH 24

Emergency Medical Service 500blk Arizona Ave 1:43 a.m.
EMS 900blk 12th St 1:47 a.m.
EMS 1300blk 15th St 5:28 a.m.
EMS 1900blk 19th St 8:00 a.m.
EMS 1800blk 21st St 8:58 a.m.
EMS 2200blk Virginia Ave 9:31 a.m.
EMS 1300blk 20th St 9:39 a.m.
EMS 500blk Colorado Ave 10:32 a.m.
EMS 1400blk Colorado Ave 11:30 a.m.
EMS 2nd St / Santa Monica Blvd 11:59 a.m.
EMS Euclid St / Wilshire Blvd 12:13 p.m.
EMS 1300blk Ocean Park Blvd 12:23 p.m.
EMS 1100blk Lincoln Blvd 12:42 p.m.
EMS 400blk Colorado Ave 1:29 p.m.
EMS 100blk Ocean Park Blvd 1:35 p.m.
EMS 5th St / Olympic Blvd W 1:56 p.m.
EMS 600blk Santa Monica Blvd 2:00 p.m.
Vehicle fire Stewart St / Pico Blvd 2:02 p.m.
EMS 1400blk 17th St 2:12 p.m.
EMS 1000blk 18th St 3:53 p.m.
EMS 900blk Santa Monica Blvd 4:09 p.m.
EMS 2400blk Beverley Ave 4:11 p.m.
EMS Barnard Way / Ocean Park Blvd 4:14 p.m.
EMS 1000blk Lincoln Blvd 4:16 p.m.
EMS 1300blk 3rd Street Prom 5:06 p.m.
EMS 1300blk 15th St 5:49 p.m.
EMS 2400blk Wilshire Blvd 5:55 p.m.
Automatic alarm 1300blk Pacific St 6:47 p.m.
EMS 800blk 19th St 7:05 p.m.
EMS 1300blk 10th St 7:12 p.m.
EMS 300blk Santa Monica Pl 8:00 p.m.

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POWERBALL calottery
Draw Date: 3/23
24 25 52 60 66
Power#: 5
Jackpot: $750 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 3/22
7 36 58 60 62
Mega#: 10
Jackpot: $57 M

SuperLOTTO PLUS
Draw Date: 3/23
11 24 25 45 47
Mega#: 22
Jackpot: $30 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 3/24
2 9 20 23 27

DAILY 3
Draw Date: 3/25
Midday: 2 7 0
Draw Date: 3/24
Evening: 2 4 9

DAILY DERBY
Draw Date: 3/24
1st: 6 - WHIRL WIN
2nd: 5 - CALIFORNIA CLASSIC
3rd: 8 - GORGEOUS GEORGE
RACE TIME: 1:47.78

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SURF FORECASTS

WATER TEMP: 61.3°

TUESDAY - **FAIR** - SURF: 4-5ft chest to head high
New WNW swell. Minor SSW swell.

WEDNESDAY - **FAIR** - SURF: 3-4 ft+ waist to shoulder high
Modest WNW swell. A little more SSW swell.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

Sudoku

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

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

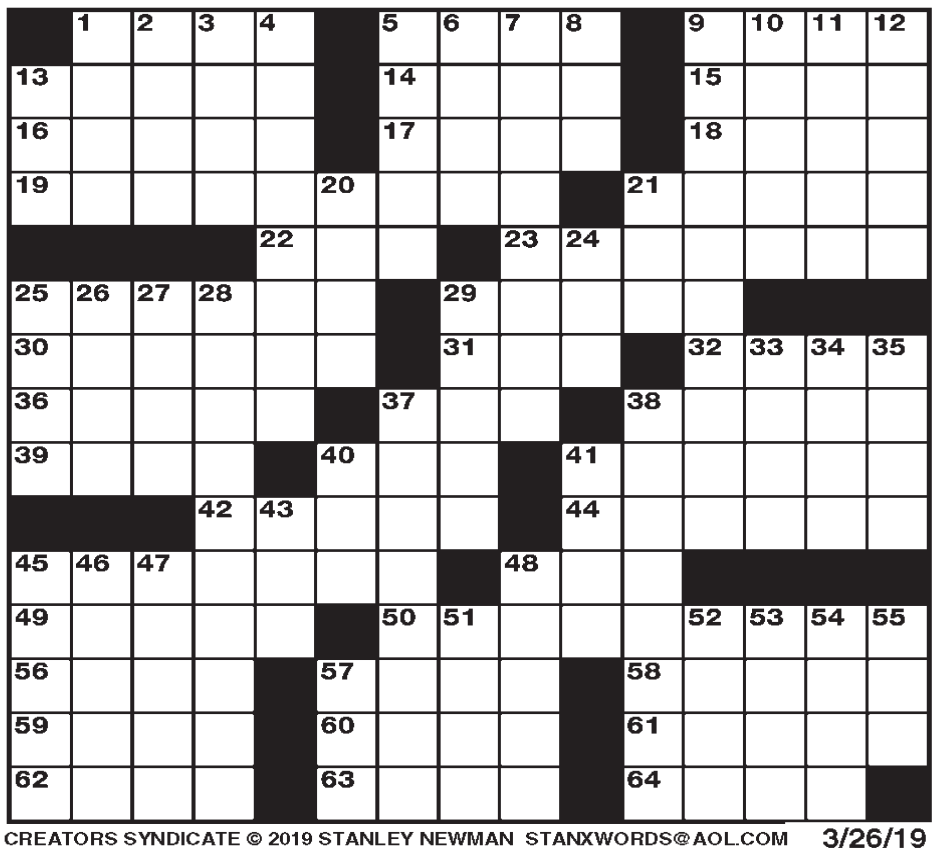
9	7			8			4	
4			1			6		
			5	6		7		
6			8					4
	3	9		4		8	2	
8					5			6
		5		2	8			
		4			9			8
	2			7			6	9

Newsday Crossword

ON THE WHOLE by Sally R. Stein
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Baby deer
5 Shine softly
9 Soak-in-the-tub activity
13 Prohibited thing
14 Vatican City surrounder
15 Olden days
16 Kagan of the Supreme Court
17 "What's ___ for me?"
18 Opera solo
19 With 28 Down, on the whole
21 Available from a keg
22 Lawn that's rolled out
23 Beach shoes
25 Home purrer
29 Computer image dot
30 ___ borealis (northern lights)
31 Fish eggs
32 Prefix for freeze
36 Have coffee or a cocktail
37 Guys
38 Air conditioner coolant
39 Soaks (up)
40 Distress signal
41 Common city park bird
42 Smooths out, as pants
44 Warns
45 Makes melancholy
48 Top poker card
49 Back to health
50 On the whole
56 Aroma
57 With 63 Across, "partridge in a" place
58 Like a lot
59 Fork prong
60 Deceive
61 Pork and beef
62 ___ the line (behaved)
63 See 57 Across
64 Concludes

DOWN
1 Harvest season
2 Eve's second child
3 Refuses to
4 Boat in Genesis
5 Pulverize, as pepper
6 ___ ago (olden days)
7 Something left out
8 Drenched
9 On the whole
10 Largest artery
11 Courtroom activity
12 Disorderly piles
13 Earl Grey or pekoe
20 Minuscule amount
21 Early afternoon
24 Wood chopping tool
25 Writing tablets
26 Money in Spain
27 Excursion
28 See 19 Across
29 Smooth out, as pants
33 ___-do-well (rogue)
34 Whistle sound
35 Rural hotels
37 French fellow
38 Computer document identifier
40 2 Down, to Eve
41 Wear a hole in the carpet
43 Color of Santa's hat
45 Francis ___ Key
46 Telecast's sound
47 Plane without a pilot
48 See eye to eye
51 Back of the neck
52 Adam's first home
53 Street or lane
54 Bachelor of ___ (kind of degree)
55 ___ *Misérables*
57 Summer clock setting in L.A.



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2019 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 3/26/19

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (March 26)

An adventurous mood kicks off this solar return, and you'll feel at home wherever your travels take you. Mementos from these experiences will be material, spiritual and social. Summer is about guiding others, and you could even start an instructional program. Bonds of friendship and love reflect in a year-end project. Cancer and Aries adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 19, 42, 3, 16 and 38.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). If justice is what you crave, you can get it within the confines of a game with consistent, unchanging and indifferent rules. So, basically a computer game. Real-world justice will be arbitrary by comparison.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Self-judgment does nothing for your motivation. It makes sense that you'd think it could help, in the way of a drill sergeant or a sports coach. But it won't. It only makes emotions get stuck inside you, where they'll do no good.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You thrive under the burden of responsibility as a weightlifter thrives through consistent lifting. Of course, in both cases, the trick is to push yourself without hurting yourself. Know when to back off.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There's comfort in believing that everything will be all right. It's when you require that to happen in one particular preferred way that things get stressful. Trust that it will work out, and don't worry so much about how it's going to.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The preachers aren't all in pulpits. They're ranting at lunch tables, exalting in boardrooms, condemning in newsrooms, declaring to anyone who'll listen. You know when the message is for you. When it's not, you stay out of it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Regarding that frustrating (or perhaps just terribly boring) situation in your life, decide definitively whether you are in or out. Next thing you know, it gets better.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). When it comes to enforcing the rules, you have your own bag of tricks for the job. Sometimes you use rewards, and other times you use your cunning. Then there are the times like today, when you enforce the rules by bending them.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When you sincerely misstep, giving an apology is appropriate. But to regularly apologize for minor things that are not your fault will only weaken your position.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Life is like the school play today. People get the roles they fit into. Not everyone is right for the role that has the most lines, so don't worry about who gets it. Happiness is in getting the role you'll be best in.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It's pretty much the job of older people to misunderstand the preoccupations and proclivities of the younger generation. Today's lucky move will be to resist the stereotype.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The sound of a foreign accent reminds you there is more of the world to experience. Dream, scheme and plan about the next time you'll go where people live and communicate differently.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). If only life came with more "do not disturb" features. Alas, you have to come up with your own strategy to keep from being interrupted all day. Then again, there's something good about being so needed.

Venus Changes It Up

The Venus shift into Pisces will come on gradually. Meanwhile, the moon in Sagittarius inspires the typical talk about growth, expansion, doing and making more. Keep in mind that "more" is only one idea of growth. What about the opposite direction? There's genius in simplification, letting go, being more by having less.

MERCURY RETROGRADE WIND-DOWN

These are the final days of Mercury's retrograde, and getting to the truth will be more straightforward in the weeks to come, especially when we understand the essential nature of truth.

Truth may be factual, but the truth isn't always the facts. For instance, a work of fiction can ring truer than a work of nonfiction. In fiction, an author can illustrate a point by executing an action through a make-believe person. Because the character is not real (and therefore not opening the author up to lawsuits and the particularities, responsibilities and repercussions of handling another person's story), the author can represent stark realities of the world more directly, acutely and honestly than might be possible in a work of nonfiction.

A broader definition of truth might liberate you to find it in more places. There are many kinds of truth – including the intangible, such as emotional, philosophical and spiritual sorts. Sometimes the most boring question one can ask of a story (as it pertains to a phenomenon, religion, performance, work of art, etc.) is the question, "Is it true?" When what you're going for is a deeper understanding of the world that allows for your participation, a more productive approach might be the request, "Help me experience the truth in this."

CELEBRITY PROFILES

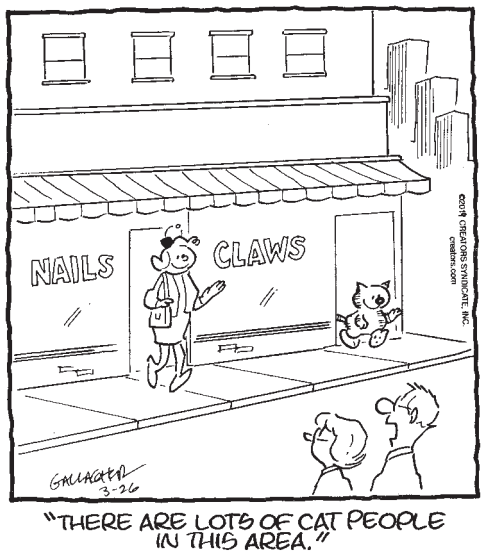
The child of actors, Keira Knightley had her first agent at age 3 and has been working at her craft ever since. The lithe and lovely Aries was born when Mercury and Venus were also in that high-energy sign. Her Gemini moon lends the gift of versatility, style and skill in regard to communication. Knightley stars in the recently released "Berlin, I Love You."

WORD UP!

Optics
noun [op-tiks]
the way a situation, action, event, etc., is perceived by the public or by a particular group of people.

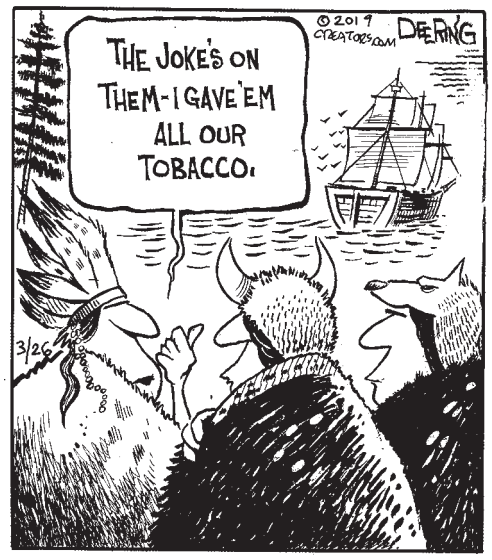
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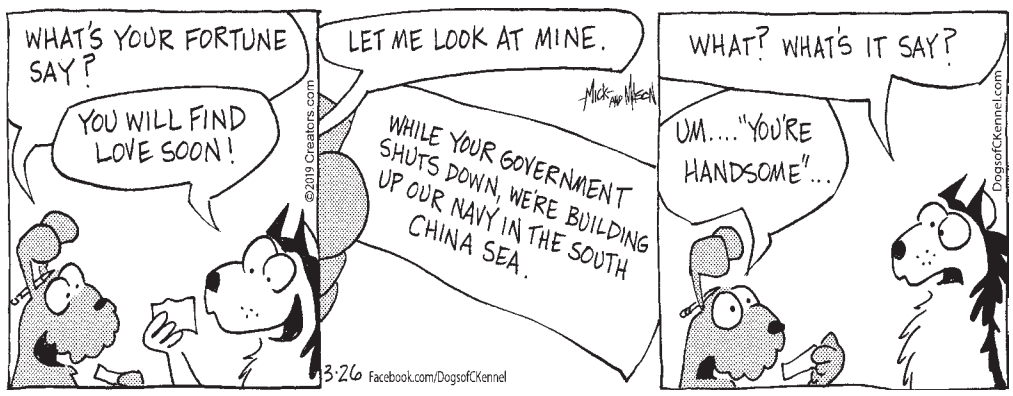
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More aging Americans are using pot to soothe what ails them

JOHN ROGERS
Associated Press

The group of white-haired folks — some pushing walkers, others using canes — arrive right on time at the gates of Laguna Woods Village, an upscale retirement community in the picturesque hills that frame this Southern California suburb a few miles from Disneyland.

There they board a bus for a quick trip to a building that, save for the green Red Cross-style sign in the window, resembles a trendy coffee bar. The people, mostly in their 70s and 80s, pass the next several hours enjoying a light lunch, playing a few games of bingo and selecting their next month's supply of cannabis-infused products.

"It's like the ultimate senior experience," laughs 76-year-old retired beauty products distributor Ron Atkin as he sits down to watch the bingo at the back of the Bud and Bloom marijuana dispensary in Santa Ana.

Most states now have legal medical marijuana, and 10 of them, including California, allow anyone 21 or older to use pot recreationally. The federal government still outlaws the drug even as acceptance increases. The 2018 General Social Survey, an annual sampling of Americans' views, found a record 61 percent back legalization, and those 65 and older are increasingly supportive.

Indeed, many industry officials say the fastest-growing segment of their customer base is people like Atkin — aging baby boomers or even those a little older who are seeking to treat the aches and sleeplessness and other maladies of old age with the same herb that many of them once passed around at parties.

"I would say the average age of our customers is around 60, maybe even a little older," said Kelty Richardson, a registered nurse with the Halos Health clinic in Boulder, Colorado, which provides medical examinations and sells physician-recommended cannabis through its online store.

Its medical director, Dr. Joseph Cohen, conducts "Cannabis 101" seminars at the nearby Balfour Senior Living community for residents who want to know which strains are best for easing arthritic pain or improving sleep.

Relatively little scientific study has verified the benefits of marijuana for specific problems. There's evidence pot can relieve chronic pain in adults, according to a 2017 report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, but the study also concluded that the lack of scientific information poses a risk to public health.

At Bud and Bloom, winners of the bingo games take home new vape pens, but Atkin isn't really there for that. He's been coming regularly for two years to buy cannabis-infused chocolate bars and sublingual drops to treat his painful spinal stenosis since the prescription opiates he had been taking quit working.

It was "desperation" that brought him here, he said, adding that his doctors didn't suggest he try medical marijuana. But they didn't discourage him either.

The dispensary is filled with the 50 people from the bus as they peruse counters and coolers containing everything from gel caps to drops to cannabis-infused drinks, not to mention plenty of old-fashioned weed.

Adele Frascella, leaning on her cane, purchases a package of gummy candies she says helps keep her arthritic pain at bay.

"I don't like to take an opioid," said Frascella, 70.

Fashionably dressed with sparkling silver earrings, Frascella confirms with a smile that she was a pot smoker in her younger days.

"I used to do it when I was like 18, 19, 20," she said. "And then I had a baby, got married and stopped."

She took it up again a few years ago, even investing in a "volcano," a pricey, high-tech version of the old-fashioned bong that Gizmodo calls "the ultimate stoner gadget." But these days, like many other seniors, she prefers edibles to smoking.

Renee Lee, another baby boomer who smoked as a youth, got back into it more than a dozen years ago after the clinical psychologist underwent brain surgery and other medical procedures that she said had her taking "10 meds a day, four times a day."

"And I wasn't getting any better," she said, adding that she asked her doctors if she might try medical marijuana as a last resort. They said go ahead and she found it ended her pain.

In 2012 she founded the Rossmoor Medical Marijuana Club in her upscale San Francisco Bay Area retirement community.

"We started with 20 people, and we kept it really quiet for about a year and a half," she said, noting that although California legalized medical cannabis in 1996, it was still seen in some quarters as an outlaw drug.

Her group has since grown to more than 1,000 members and puts on regular events, including lectures by pro-cannabis doctors and nurses.

People Lee's age — 65 and over — are the fastest-growing segment of the marijuana-using population, said Dr. Gary Small, professor of psychiatry and aging at the University of California, Los Angeles.

He believes more studies on the drug's effects on older people are needed. And while it may improve quality of life by relieving pain, anxiety and other problems, he said, careless, unsupervised use can cause trouble.

"We know that cannabis can cause side effects, particularly in older people," he said. "They can get dizzy. It can even impair memory if the dose is too high or new ingredients are wrong. And dizziness can lead to falls, which can be quite serious."

Richardson said Colorado saw an uptick in hospital visits by older users soon after the state legalized cannabis in 2012. The problem, he said, was often caused by novices downing too many edibles.

That's a lesson Dick Watts, 75, learned the hard way. The retired New Jersey roofing contractor who keeps a winter home at Laguna Woods Village began having trouble sleeping through the night as he got into his 70s. He attended a seniors' seminar where he learned marijuana might help, so he got a cannabis-infused candy bar. He immediately ate the whole thing.

"Man, that was nearly lethal," recalled Watts, laughing.

Now when he has trouble sleeping he takes just a small sliver of candy before bed. He said he wakes up clear-headed and refreshed.

"And I have it up on a shelf so my grandkids can't get to it," Watts said.

Associated Press Writer Krysta Fauria contributed to this story.

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