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Volume 18 Issue 115

WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE ..... PAGE 2
CURIOUS CITY ..... PAGE 4
SUPPORTING HOTEL WORKERS ..... PAGE 5
POLICE / FIRE LOGS ..... PAGE 8
COMICS ..... PAGE 10

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# Artificial intelligence maker moving to town

**MADELEINE PAUKER**
Daily Press Staff Writer

A fast-growing artificial intelligence company is expanding from the fjords of Norway to Silicon Beach.

Boost.ai, which makes software that automates customer service, announced last week that it is opening a North American headquarters in downtown Santa Monica. The company is using $5 million in Series A funding from Alliance Venture to set up shop in Santa Monica. It is in negotiations with several American banks and had already partnered with consulting firms like Accenture and Deloitte, said Jeff Ester, the chief revenue officer of the company's new American branch.

The Norwegian startup launched in 2016 and quickly became popular

SEE **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** PAGE 7

# Fisher Hardware set to say goodbye in 2020

**ANGEL CARRERAS**
Daily Press Staff Writer

The rapidly changing landscape of Santa Monica has claimed another hardware store.

Following the exit of Busy Bee Hardware in late 2017, Fisher Hardware and Lumber is set to take a bow in 2020 due to pending increases in rental costs. August 15, 2020 will be the hardware store's

SEE **HARDWARE** PAGE 6

# 'Bomber Robber' sentenced to two years for Montana Ave. robbery

**MATTHEW HALL**
Daily Press Staff Writer

The man accused of trying to rob a Montana Ave. Jewelry store with a bomb has been sentenced to two years in state prison.

According to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Robert Abalov (dubbed the "Bomber Robber" by authorities) was sentenced Monday after pleading no contest to one count of attempted second-degree robbery.

Detectives began looking for the 32-year-old Los Angeles man in February of 2018 when he walked into Curated Los Angeles at 1603

SEE **BOMBER** PAGE 6

# Samohi student surprised with $40k scholarship




Angel Carreras

**SCHOLARSHIP: Katie Richards received $40,000 from Edison International this week.**

**ANGEL CARRERAS**
Daily Press Staff Writer

For most students, a trip to the principal's office means trouble. Katie Richards, a 17-year-old Samohi senior, was thinking along the same lines after receiving a note summoning her to the office before she was greeted by friends, family and a $40,000 scholarship from Edison International.

Richards was one of 30 students to receive a $40k scholarship from Edison International, who doles out $1.2 million in scholarships annually to students prepared to embark on a STEM-related career. To win the scholarship, she submitted a video to Edison detailing how she would help prevent powerline-caused fires in the area.

When Richards arrived at the office, a flurry of clicking camera shutters snapped and whirred as shock spread across the Samohi senior's face. Edison's CEO greeted Richards with flowers and an oversized check while mom, grandparents, teachers, counselors and a friend clapped and cheered.

"I was kind of shocked when I walked in," Richards said, after the scholarship ceremony. "I had to leave early today, so I thought I filled out a form wrong or something. I thought maybe that's why I was being called in. But this... is all... I'm still processing it."

With her newly earned scholarship money, Richards plans to attend the Stevens Institute of Technology, located in Hoboken, New Jersey. There she'll develop her engineering skills, such as the skills she showed off to win Edison's attention and a

SEE **SCHOLARSHIP** PAGE 6

Isabel A. Ash Esq.
PERSONAL INJURY, PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE, MOTORCYCLE, RIDESHARES, COMMERCIAL VEHICLE ACCIDENTS, SLIP AND FALLS, CATASTROPHIC INJURIES
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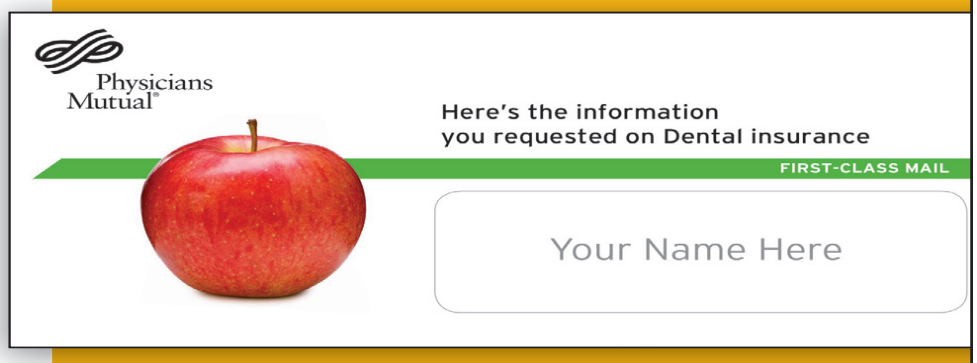


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# What's Up Westside

## OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA

## 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.

## Friday, March 29

### Women Making a Difference Infinity and Beyond

A panel featuring Loretta Hidalgo Whitesides, Space Exploration Author and Astronaut in Training. 1-3 p.m. at Ken Edwards Center (1527 4th Street). Free.

## Saturday, March 30

### View Deck Closed

The View Deck will be closed to the public on March 28 and March 30 due to a private event. Annenberg Community Beach House All Day.

### Cesar Chavez Celebration

In collaboration with Familias Latinas Unidas (FLU), celebrate Cesar Chavez. Enjoy a speaker presentation, a play performed by FLU and a documentary. Pico Branch Library 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

### Ganggangsullae Round Dance with DaEun Jung

Explore the Korean Ganggangsullae group dance form. Wear clothes to move in and comfortable shoes. Cost: $5 Register online or call 310.458.2239. Palisades Park 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

### Play, Learn, Grow

Spend the morning playing with family and friends in our indoor play space with centers for art, music, games, and sensory play. For families. Fairview Branch Library 11:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

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

# COMMUNITY BRIEFS

**LOS ANGELES**

## Proposals sought for reuse of LA's landmark Southwest Museum

Proposals are being sought for reuse of the Southwest Museum, a landmark in northeast Los Angeles for more than a century.

A request for innovative and financially sustainable concepts was issued Tuesday by the Autry Museum of the American West, which owns the site through a 2003 merger and now preserves its collection elsewhere.

The request also includes the adjacent Casa de Adobe, a 1917 replica of a 19th century Spanish California rancho.

The institution was founded in 1907 as the Southwest Museum of the American Indian. The building was constructed on Mount Washington between 1912 and 1914, and a unique tunnel entrance and elevator were added a few years later, followed by a library in 1977.

The Southwest Museum building is on the National Register of Historical Places.

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**LOS ANGELES**

## Jury awards $9M to family of woman killed by police

A California jury has awarded $9 million to the family of a woman fatally shot seven times by police in Long Beach in 2017 in what the family's attorneys say is the largest such award in city history.

The federal jury reached the verdict in favor of 37-year-old Sinuon Pream's parents and her four children on Friday. Pream was shot by Long Beach Officers Bradley Muhlenkamp and Elieser Domingo on Jan. 15, 2017, after she refused repeated orders to drop a knife.

At the time, Long Beach police said Pream had tried to cut and stab several civilians with the knife, swung it at officers and advanced on them. They said both Muhlenkamp and Domingo used their stun guns on Pream to no effect before they shot her.

Pream's family said she suffered from mental illness and that officers should have done more to de-escalate the situation.

"She needed help, not bullets," said Rodney Diggs, one of the Pream family's attorneys. "The family is pretty torn up because their mother and their daughter suffered from a sickness that wasn't her fault."

Diggs also pointed to an autopsy report that showed that three of Pream's bullet wounds were to her back.

Howard Russell, the lead attorney for Long Beach, said in a statement that he's reviewing the city's options, which include appealing the jury's verdict.

The city had argued that the officers' use of force was reasonable under the circumstances and that they fired on Pream because they perceived an immediate threat.

"There is no evidence that either officer acted with an improper motive or with any other purpose than the legitimate law enforcement objective of taking Pream into custody while defending themselves and the public," according to a court document filed by the city's attorneys.

Jurors rejected that argument, finding that the shooting "shocked the conscience."

"We hope that this verdict will save lives and change the way that the officers in the Long Beach Police Department and other police departments respond to people that are suffering from mental illnesses," attorney Brian Dunn, who also represents Pream's family, said in a statement.

Spokespeople for the city and the police department did not respond to an email message seeking comment.

Pream's family said in a statement that they were grateful to the jury "for believing our story and understanding our family's perspective."

"Receiving this verdict makes us feel like we have finally received justice," her family said. "We hope Sinuon's soul can finally rest in peace."

AMANDA LEE MYERS ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Washington, D.C.**

## US Education Department investigating college bribery scheme

The U.S. Education Department has launched an investigation into eight schools embroiled in a college admissions cheating scheme.

A letter sent to the schools Monday says the department is investigating whether they violated federal rules surrounding the management of federal student aid.

The notice was sent to the University of Southern California, Yale, Georgetown, Stanford and other universities tied to a federal bribery case.

More than 30 people were charged in a scheme in which wealthy parents allegedly paid bribes to get their children admitted to elite U.S. schools.

The department's letter asks each school to provide documents related to the case along with admission and marketing records.

Secretary Betsy DeVos previously said officials were weighing whether department rules were violated.

A department spokeswoman declined to comment on the investigation.

COLLIN BINKLEY AP EDUCATION WRITER

**SAN DIEGO**

## San Diego seeks to ban homeless in vehicles near beaches

The mayor of San Diego is proposing a new law to ban the growing problem of homeless people living in vehicles near beaches.

The move announced Monday follows numerous complaints about public urination, trash and illegal activity since an ordinance that had been in place was repealed in February following a federal judge's ruling that it was too vague, The San Diego Union-Tribune reported.

Mayor Kevin Faulconer said the city will double the number of so-called safe parking lots where people who live in vehicles can stay at night, and he will present the proposed law to the City Council's Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Committee on April 17.

"If you are living out of your vehicle because you have nowhere else to go, we want to help you," Faulconer told a press conference.

"At the same time, residents and businesses have a right to clean and safe neighborhoods," he said.

Last summer, U.S. District Judge Anthony Battaglia issued an injunction against the old law in response to a lawsuit filed on behalf of homeless people who live in vehicles because they don't do well in regular shelters, the newspaper said.

The judge said the law did not indicate specifically what turns a vehicle into a person's home or "living quarters."

The City Council then repealed the law in February.

Faulconer said the city attorney has been working on a new law that will be based on vehicle habitation ordinances in other cities. The goal is to hold people accountable for behavior that damages the city's quality of life, not to criminalize homelessness, he said.

Homeless advocate Michael McConnell called the proposal a "Band-Aid type response" and not long-term strategy.

"I would support a new vehicle habitation law if the law respects that we have this raging crisis on our streets," he said.

In addition to the homeless problem, the mayor also noted there are visitors who sleep in their vans, "using our neighborhoods as a vacation spot, or as stopping points as they travel from city to city."

Brian White, president of a council that advocates for residents of the Pacific Beach area of San Diego, said that in addition to those "van-lifers," people have begun to advertise campers parked near beaches.

"It's basically the camper van version of a short-term vacation rental," he said.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**MEXICO CITY**

## New migrant caravan of 2,500 sets out through Mexico for US

A new migrant caravan of about 2,500 people was making its way through southern Mexico on Tuesday, headed for the U.S. border, facing greater heat – and a much cooler welcome – than last year's caravans.

The caravan walked past the city of Huixtla in the southern state of Chiapas on Monday, but police were lined up to keep them moving along a highway outside of the town, and did not let them enter – a contrast to last year, when caravans were allowed to stay in the city center.

The city said in a statement that it offered water and medical help to the caravan of 2,466 people, mainly from Nicaragua, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. It said the caravan included many children in the caravan, and some were suffering in the area's near-100-degree (39-degree) heat.

Such caravans aren't getting as a warm a welcome as they did last fall, when local governments and church groups handed out food, water and clothing and police sometimes helped the migrants get rides.

Activists said that the Mexican government was trying to wear the caravans out, or stop them from trying to reach the United States.

"It is a strategy to break them up ... to stop the caravans," said Irineo Mujica of the aid group Pueblo Sin Fronteras, which accompanied last year's caravans and the ones this year.

This year, the Mexican government abruptly stopped issuing "humanitarian" visas at the border with Guatemala. The visas had given migrants legal status while they made their way to the U.S. border.

That decision led a group of migrants, including many Cubans, to rush immigration offices near the border last week. The immigration agency closed those offices in response to the scuffle.

And, following the recent disappearance of 19 migrants in the northern border state of Tamaulipas, police and immigration agents have been increasingly detaining and deporting migrants there. Migrants in Tamaulipas generally use smugglers and are not part of caravans.

In February, a caravan of about 1,600 Central American migrants was confined to an improvised shelter at an old factory building in the northern state of Coahuila.

Migrants were allowed to move freely through Mexico last fall. But Mujica said Mexico had changed its policy "to comply with the expectations of (U.S. President Donald) Trump."

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**LOS ANGELES**

## Family of late DJ Avicii to launch foundation in his memory

The family of the Grammy-nominated Swedish electronic dance DJ Avicii is launching a foundation in his memory.

The international pop star, whose name was Tim Bergling, died in Muscat, Oman, on April 20, 2018. He was 28 years old. Police said there was no evidence of foul play.

His family announced Tuesday that the Tim Bergling Foundation will initially focus on supporting people and organizations in the field of mental illness and suicide prevention. It also will be active in climate change, nature conservation and endangered species.

The foundation's objectives may be pursued in Sweden and abroad.

The international pop star performed his electronic dance songs at music festivals around the world and landed on U.S. radio with his country-dance mashup "Wake Me Up."

He retired from touring in 2016.

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## Curious City

Charles Andrews
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

# Another Boondoggle

**NOBODY'S LISTENING?**

You never get to ask questions about the direction your beloved city is going, or offer suggestions or speak your mind to open minds?

Oh — silly you, you must be going to City Council meetings. Yes, you do get two minutes, unless it's one minute, or less if they can manage it, "because you have asked for shorter meetings" and we're just trying to help.

But take a look at the Council faces staring at their phones, eating their food, yawning openly, leaving early, trying to not show how bored or resentful they are during public input, and if they do look at a speaker it's often with disdain and sometimes you get outright verbal rudeness. And besides, you find out when it comes time for their discussion, or lack of it, and their vote, that it was all decided before they came in but they generously (and bootlessly) let you talk.

Is it that way always? Over the last few years, a lot. For every Councilperson? Well, Morena and Jara are the new kids and the Kool-Aid is still just getting into their systems, give them time, considering their paths to Council, and Gleam is a fairly new Mayor and not rude like her predecessors (yet), and Sue Himmelrich seems mostly to be paying attention, processing, and asking pertinent questions (for information, not just to reiterate staff propaganda), and she actually holds office hours.

**NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS**

That's where you'll be heard and have real input. (Unless you live in Ocean Park, like I do.) Then you can speak collectively, as a neighborhood, to City Council.

Who then will still not listen to you, collectively.

After all, you Mid-City malcontents, you NOMA nasties, you Fiends of Sunset Park, you didn't put us on Council, we represent the entire city! Including all those precious souls who haven't moved here yet, but we're developing as fast as we can, for them. More importantly we are representing those who really put us here: SMRR, SMC, SMMUSD, UNITE HERE, CLUE, RAND, LOWV, NOW, NMS, PACs and $$$ and let's not forget Forward.

But if you go to these neighborhood association meetings you will be with your for-real neighbors, who share your localized concerns. Just imagine… if each neighborhood could elect its own City Council representative! Who would then be directly responsible and probably responsive to the neighborhood people who put them on the Council!

Nah. Impossible. You'd have to sue to make that happen. And then win! And then… wait. And wait…

**SPEAKING OF WASTING OUR MONEY**

Was I? Yup. It never ends. Here we go again, City Staff proposing a very expensive solution to a problem that doesn't exist. By the time you read this Wednesday the Council will have dealt with this Staff proposal Tuesday night, on the consent calendar. (That means, no discussion of an $8M expenditure, just one yea or nay vote on all the items listed together, large and small.)

But this is another example of an ongoing attitude by your City government that they can do whatever they want and never worry about the right side of the menu, and also of how neighborhood associations can speak out with a collective voice about something you probably otherwise would never have understood or even heard about. In this case, Northeast Neighbors did. (Thanks to NEN Chair Tricia Crane for posting this.)

To: City Council
Re: 3/26/2019 - Agenda item 3-D (Award of Communications and Outreach Contracts)

Members of the Board of Northeast Neighbors object to and ask City Council not to grant the request from City staff for "various" PR firms to promote the City on an "as needed" basis (Agenda Item 3-D). The Staff Report describes these 15 contracts as needed to "provide on-call resources available to all departments." We consider this proposed expenditure to be excessive and frivolous.

We question the purpose of hiring, for instance, the firm Marketing for Change Co. (https://marketingforchange.com) The website for this firm reads: "Our work is about ally acquisition — building the majority you need to win." We ask, what is it that the City Staff hopes "to win" by hiring Marketing for Change?

How can the City even consider approving outside PR services from 15 different outside companies when the public is being told we "can't afford" a pilot project to place police in unsafe parks?

We wonder why – for the sake of transparency – the item doesn't call out the fact that $2.610,000 "for 2 years with 3 additional one-year renewal options(s)" adds up to more than $8 million. Spending on this scale for promotion and propaganda purposes seems to us to be totally out of line with the budget issues the City faces given pension liabilities.

We ask that Council not approve the funding proposed in Agenda item 3-D or any portion of what is proposed.

Sincerely, The Board of Northeast Neighbors

**QUESTION OF THE WEEK:**

Yes it is happening in LA and all around us, but Santa Monica is small and fragile and boxed in, and why can't we have a City government that protects us instead of sells us to the highest bidder? (Don't peek! The answer is….. $$$.)

"LA City Council signed off Friday on a 725-unit apartment project in Chinatown with no affordable units, that will displace low-income residents."

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK:**

"Sure there are dishonest men in local government. But there are dishonest men in national government too." — Richard M. Nixon

Charles Andrews has lived in Santa Monica for 33 years and wouldn't live anywhere else in the world. Really. Send love and/or rebuke to him at therealmr-music@gmail.com

**PUBLISHER**
Ross Furukawa
ross@smdp.com

**PARTNER**
Todd James
todd@smdp.com

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**
Matthew Hall
matt@smdp.com

**STAFF WRITERS**
Angel Carreras
angel@smdp.com

Madeleine Pauker
madeleine@smdp.com

**ADVERTISING DIRECTOR**
Jenny Rice
jenny@smdp.com

**OPERATIONS MANAGER**
Cindy Moreno
cindy@smdp.com

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS**
Charles Andrews,
Cynthia Citron,
Jack Neworth,
David Pisarra,
Sarah A. Spitz

**PRODUCTION**
Grape Multimedia Productions
production@smdp.com

**CIRCULATION**
Achling Holliday
ross@smdp.com

Keith Wyatt
ross@smdp.com

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

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WINNER

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## Your column here

By Vivian Rothstein

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

# Supporting our Hotel Workers is a Winning Strategy for Everyone

Tourism in Santa Monica is booming – and once again hotel workers are fighting for decent wages and working conditions at hotels like Loew's, Viceroy, Delfina and Le Merigot.

Over the next month, our city council members will be reviewing a city-wide policy developed together with Santa Monica hotel housekeepers that provides healthy working conditions for workers in our local hospitality industry. It includes panic buttons to prevent sexual assault, fair compensation for burdensome workloads, worker retention guidelines, and hospitality skills training programs.

What many may not be aware of are the deliberations and the intentionality behind the city's cultivation of our tourism industry to support our city's development and social services. I know because I was part of that push when I worked in the City Manager's office in the 1980s.

People come to our city to enjoy the natural beauty and weather, but also because for years city policy has encouraged and supported the development of a vibrant environment for visitors. Community and city leaders had decided to encourage and support visitor serving development while discouraging the construction of large office buildings that bring increased traffic congestion with few benefits to the surrounding community.

Little did we know then that while the hotels that were built as a result of our policy enjoyed some of the highest occupancy levels in all of Los Angeles County, the initial wages and benefits for the people working in them were among the lowest. It was at this time that the Santa Monica community got to know many of the people who make our tourism industry so successful – the cooks, housekeepers, bellmen, servers and front desk staff who welcome and serve our city's visitors.

We got to know their families and their co-workers and learned about the hard work involved in providing hospitality to the thousands of people who come to Santa Monica each year. There has been a strong connection ever since between community and faith leaders and the workers fulfilling the promise of tourism development. That promise is one of mutual benefit – to the tourism businesses, the city, and the employees who make it a success.

Santa Monica residents have benefited from the millions of dollars in bed tax and sales tax from tourism that has funded some of the finest community services in the Country. The hotel companies have earned healthy profits and benefited from city promotional and policy support of their industry.

But the workers have had to fight, alongside community allies, for every improvement they have enjoyed – from minimum wage Increases, pension contributions, to sick leave and a voice on the job.

Once again, as tourism booms in our city, hotel workers are coming forward with proposals for sexual assault protections, fair compensation, training, and a dignified work environment. And once again, those of us who live in Santa Monica and benefit from the tax income from hotels will stand with workers in ensure that the decision to grow the tourism industry in Santa Monica is a winning strategy for everyone.

To learn more and join in this effort please visit facebook.com/SantaMonicaSWAA/.

---

Vivian Rothstein is a member of Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE) and a 30 year resident of Santa Monica.





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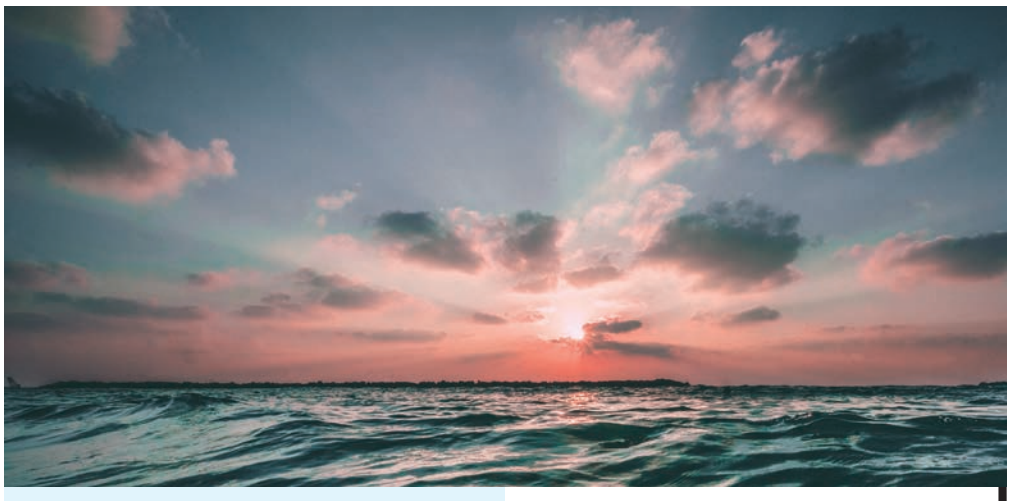
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## SCHOLARSHIP

FROM PAGE 1

scholarship.

Richards (with the help of some classmates) created a video displaying technology she was developing to be used to prevent wildfires. Her tech measures the relationship between power lines and humidity.

"What we were making would detect arcing the moment it starts with sound heat and static electricity levels," she said. "I think it'd help prevent fires like the ones we had this past year."

Richards made a point to thank everyone that supported her, including her high school which she says shaped her, academically and socially. If this surprise scholarship ceremony had happened freshman year, she says she would've cried from social anxiety. And if it weren't for her teachers, she wouldn't know the academic path she'd be taking right now.

"The school … now [the scholarship] … this has all helped me in so many ways."

Samohi Principal Antonio Shelton says the feeling of appreciation is mutual.

"We're tremendously proud," he said. "Oh yeah. One of the best things about this is she developed something that is relevant to what's going on in society right now. She has played a role in the future and will enact change. That's Samohi, that's who our kids are and how we develop young people. We're extremely proud of her and how has represented us."

angel@smdp.com

## HARDWARE

FROM PAGE 1

last day.

Rumors of the store's closing circulated on social media and were confirmed by Fisher owner, Erik Jorgensborg.

"The property is up for sale and our lease is up in a year," Jorgensborg said to the Daily Press. "Do you think you can afford to run a hardware store in a place like this?"

Fisher has been a staple in the Santa Monica community for nearly 100 years, having been founded in 1923. Jorgensborg said the business is one of the oldest in the city and moved to its current location (Lincoln/Colorado) from the original location at 14th and Colorado.

Jorgensborg has been with the company since 1975, nearly 45 years of serving locals. The store has 10 employees and some have decades of experience. Jorgensborg said the Fisher employees are good people with good skills that should be able to find work in neighboring communities.

"I know people around this surrounding community that need people, they'll be fine."

Jorgensborg himself isn't sour about seeing Fisher come to an end.

"It's tough that I didn't make a 100 years but it's time for me to go, time for me to retire," he said.

Jorgensborg said he knew around 15 years ago that Fisher's days would soon be numbered but didn't anticipate the end happening so suddenly.

"It's unfortunate that the face of Santa Monica is changing such that local retailers can't rent space here," he said. "Everything here in Santa Monica has morphed. All this retail space is housing now. It's hard to compete."

angel@smdp.com

## BOMBER

FROM PAGE 1

Montana Avenue holding a suspicious device and demanded jewelry. The suspect dropped the merchandise, jumped into a getaway car and hit several parked cars, injuring one person, before fleeing the area on foot.

A team of more than 30 officers, K9s and SWAT searched for the suspect immediately after the February incident.

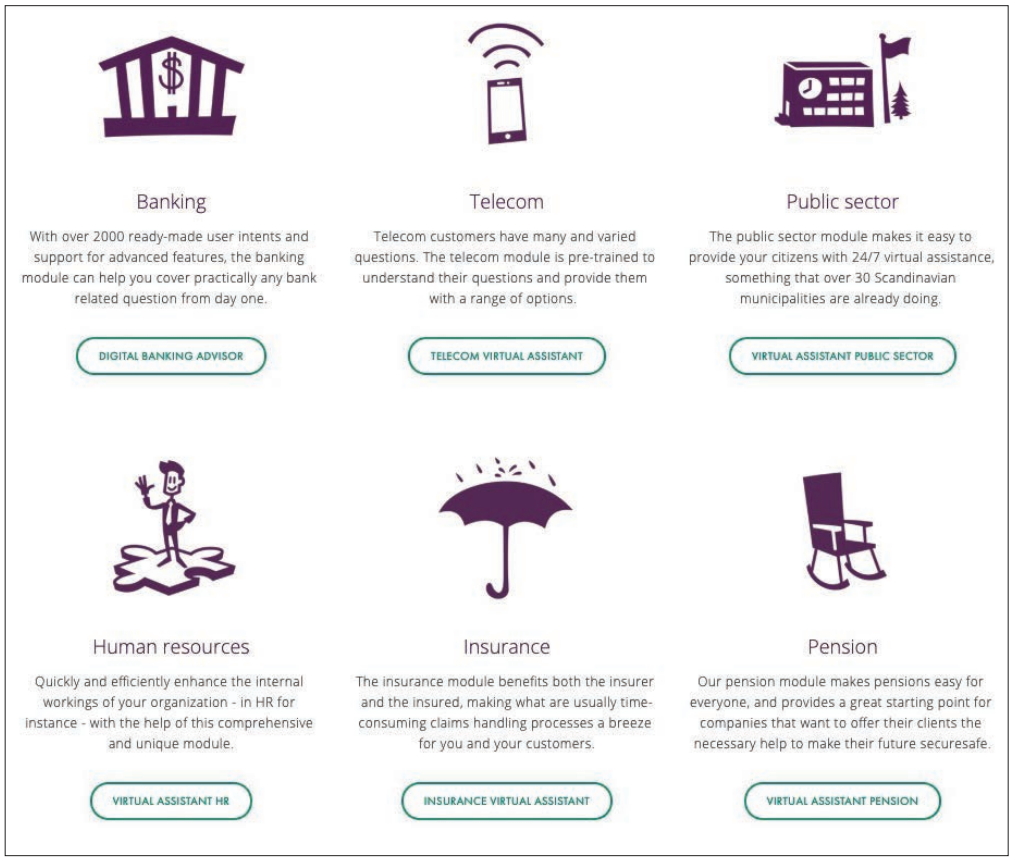
Police quickly identified Abalov as their suspect and he eluded police for about three months before his arrest near the corner of Sepulveda and Venice Boulevards in West Los Angeles.

Abalov was initially charged with attempted robbery, criminal threats, malicious possession of a false bomb with intent to cause fear, false imprisonment, hit and run and grand theft.

The Sheriff's Department Bomb squad disabled the suspicious device left behind, which had two small propane canisters, a charging device, a timer, cables and wires. A bomb squad robot inspected the device and detonated it. Officers later determined the device was inert.

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Courtesy image

**ASSISTANTS:** **The company offers several kinds of artificial intelligence assistants.**

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

FROM PAGE 1

with European banks and insurance companies because its software is more adept at resolving customer inquiries than other AI assistants, Ester said.

Popular AI assistants like Zendesk Answer Bot and Ipsoft Amelia are able to converse with customers but only resolve about 12 to 13 percent of inquiries upon first contact, Ester said. Boost.ai is able to resolve more than 51 percent of customer support interactions without handing them off to a human because the AI is more aware of what it doesn't know and can learn accordingly, he said.

At a base level, the AI can answer requests for information. The next level is more general customer service interactions and sales, and tasks like settling insurance claims rise above that in complexity. The step beyond those levels, Ester said, is proactively reaching out to customers.

"We're just going into that," he said. "For example, if you're looking to purchase a new car but your credit is a little low, the AI could reach out and connect you with a service that could help you fix your credit."

The company is hoping to serve large financial institutions in the United States but also anticipates attention from newer, millennial-focused budgeting and investing companies like Zest, Mint and Robinhood.

Ester said the company chose Santa Monica for its North American expansion because of the talent pool from UCLA, USC and Caltech and the diversity of industries in the Los Angeles area.

"Here, we're not dealing with the groupthink of Silicon Valley or the purely financial mindset of New York," he said. "Los Angeles is on fire right now and Santa Monica is the best city within that ecosystem."

Boost.ai is planning to hire 20 local employees in the next six to nine months, Ester said.

"Depending on what happens here, it could go up quickly," he said. "We're still a startup with 100 people in the whole company, but we're planning to have half the company here in two to three years."

madeleine@smdp.com







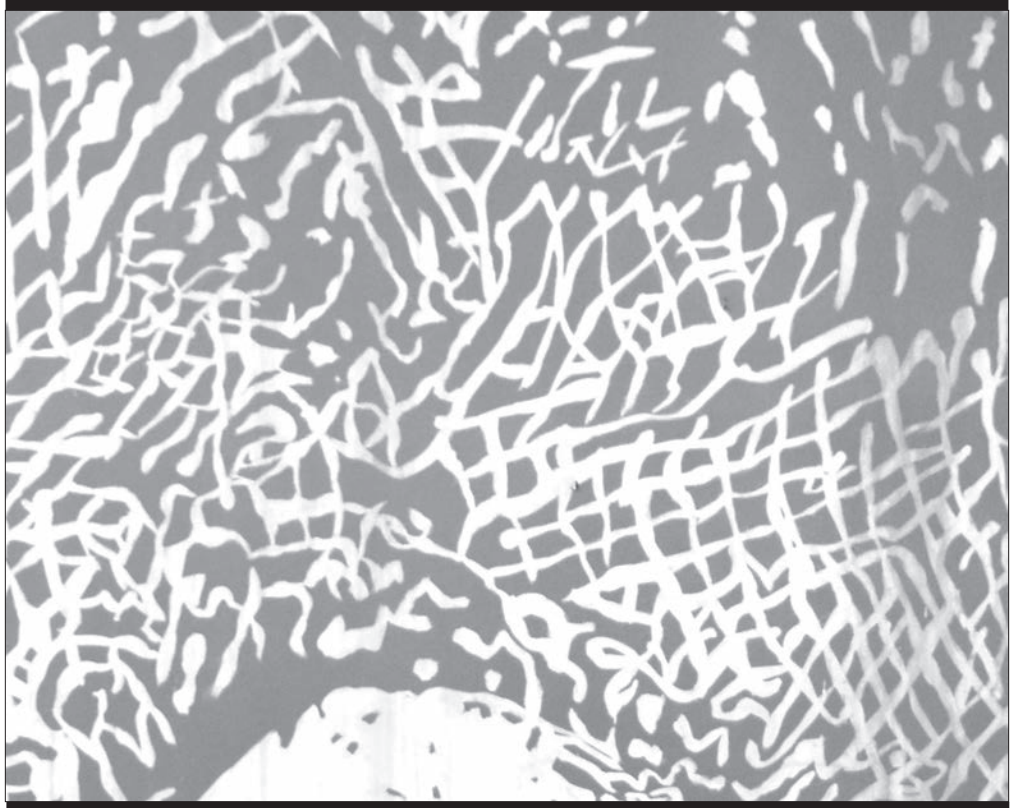





# MYSTERY PHOTO

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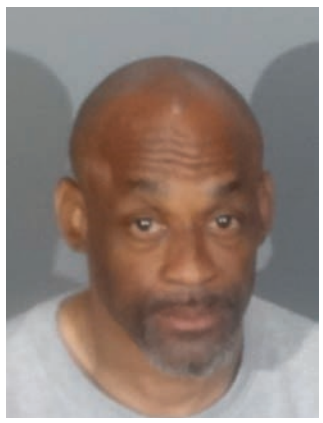
# CRIME WATCH

BY DAILY PRESS STAFF

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

## ON MARCH 14, AT ABOUT 8:08 P.M.

While patrolling the area of 2000 block of Alley 19, an officer was flagged down by a witness regarding an assault that had just occurred. The witness stated she saw a male subject seated in a wheelchair repeatedly punch another male that was lying in the middle of the alley. The witness told the subject to stop hitting the victim. The suspect continued to hit the victim and eventually walked away. Officers located the subject in the carport at 1905 Pico Blvd. The victim was located and was not able to explain what happened to him The victim suffered from head trauma – major swelling above an eye and mouth areas. The victim was treated at the scene by SMFD Paramedics and transported to a local hospital for further treatment. The suspect was taken into custody. Erick Lamarr McKinney, 48, homeless, was arrested for assault with force likely to cause great bodily injury. Bail was set at $30,000.



File Photo
**ERICK LAMARR MCKINNEY.**

## DAILY POLICE LOG

### SMDP CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 352 CALLS ON MARCH 25

Petty theft 300blk Santa Monica Pier 12:53 a.m.
Shots Fired Yale St / Montana Ave 2:13 a.m.
Shots Fired 2800blk Montana Ave 2:13 a.m.
Living in a vehicle 1900blk 3rd St 3:54 a.m.
Rape 1400blk 2nd St 5:46 a.m.
Traffic collision - unkn injuries 4th St / Strand St 5:57 a.m.
72 hour psychiatric hold 700blk California Ave 7:14 a.m.
Petty theft 200blk Wilshire Blvd 7:54 a.m.
Theft of recyclables 900blk Washington Ave 8:15 a.m.
Speeding 20th St / Wilshire Blvd 8:28 a.m.
Auto burglary 1400blk 4th St 8:34 a.m.
Speeding 4th St / California Ave 8:36 a.m.
Identity theft 1000blk 12th St 9:02 a.m.
Missing person 500blk Colorado Ave 9:06 a.m.
Auto burglary 1300blk Ashland Ave 9:07 a.m.
Prowler 1400blk Broadway 9:11 a.m.
Petty theft 1300blk Wilshire Blvd 9:17 a.m.
Petty theft 300blk Olympic Dr 9:45 a.m.
Person down 00blk Pacific Ter 9:46 a.m.
Encampment 2200blk Dewey St 9:48 a.m.
Stolen vehicle 300blk Pico Blvd 9:52 a.m.
Vehicle parked on sidewalk 3300blk Barnard Way 10:10 a.m.
Traffic collision with injuries 11th St / Hill St 10:16 a.m.
Vehicle blocking driveway 1400blk 6th St 10:18 a.m.
Loitering 1100blk Euclid St 10:24 a.m.
Petty theft 500blk Olympic Blvd W 10:41 a.m.
Auto burglary 1500blk 14th St 11:11 a.m.
Person with a gun 1300blk 14th St 11:53 a.m.
Hit and run 1100blk 22nd St 12:02 p.m.
72 hour psychiatric hold 300blk Olympic Dr 12:20 p.m.
Attempt auto theft 800blk Idaho Ave 12:30 p.m.
Petty theft 800blk 4th St 12:34 p.m.
Petty theft 600blk Santa Monica Blvd 12:39 p.m.
Drinking in public 1800blk Wilshire Blvd 1:05 p.m.
Hit and run 2000blk Broadway 1:17 p.m.
Vandalism 2200blk Colorado Ave 1:29 p.m.
Indecent exposure 1900blk Lincoln Blvd 1:38 p.m.
Domestic violence 2500blk 7th St 2:03 p.m.
Petty theft 300blk Pico Blvd 2:10 p.m.
Petty theft 600blk Wilshire Blvd 2:15 p.m.
Battery 2800blk Pico Blvd 2:19 p.m.
Burglary 800blk 20th St 2:39 p.m.
Traffic collision with injuries 17th St / Michigan Ave 2:44 p.m.
Auto burglary 800blk Pacific Coast Hwy 2:45 p.m.
Theft of recyclables 500blk Marguerita Ave 2:48 p.m.
Traffic collision - no injuries 23rd St / Hill St 2:54 p.m.
Fraud 1400blk 2nd St 2:56 p.m.
Battery 4th St / Colorado Ave 3:08 p.m.

## DAILY FIRE LOG

### SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 44 CALLS ON MARCH 25

Emergency medical service 1300blk 15th St 12:42 a.m.
EMS 1300blk Euclid St 12:53 a.m.
EMS 2200blk Colorado Ave 6:19 a.m.
EMS 2300blk 23rd St 7:29 a.m.
EMS 800blk Hill St 7:39 a.m.
EMS 1100blk Lincoln Blvd 8:16 a.m.
Automatic alarm 1000blk 20th St 9:04 a.m.
EMS 1100blk 7th St 9:28 a.m.
EMS 800blk Pico Blvd 9:42 a.m.
EMS 1600blk Ocean Front Walk 9:46 a.m.
Traffic collision with injury 1000blk Hill St 10:16 a.m.
Traffic collision with injury 1000blk Hill St 10:26 a.m.
EMS 2000blk Santa Monica Blvd 10:59 a.m.
EMS 1900blk Pico Blvd 12:00 p.m.
EMS 2300blk Santa Monica Blvd 12:09 p.m.
EMS 500blk Colorado Ave 12:13 p.m.
EMS 900blk Montana Ave 12:24 p.m.
EMS 2500blk 7th St 2:05 p.m.
EMS 2200blk Lincoln Blvd 2:23 p.m.
EMS 1100blk 12th St 2:34 p.m.
Traffic collision with injury 17th St / Michigan Ave 2:44 p.m.
Traffic collision with injury 23rd St / Hill St 2:54 p.m.
EMS 1600blk 19th St 2:58 p.m.
EMS 1500blk 4th St 3:11 p.m.
EMS 1100blk 3rd St 3:16 p.m.
EMS 1500blk 2nd St 3:51 p.m.
EMS 5th St / Colorado Ave 5:01 p.m.

## DAILY LOTTERY

**POWERBALL**
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

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

**Fantasy 5**
Draw Date: 3/25
13 24 26 30 38

**DAILY 3**
Draw Date: 3/26
Midday: 8 1 4
Draw Date: 3/25
Evening: 8 0 4

**DAILY DERBY**
Draw Date: 3/25
1st: 03 - HOT SHOT
2nd: 09 - WINNING SPIRIT
3rd: 08 - GORGEOUS GEORGE
RACE TIME: 1:49.24

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




## SURF FORECASTS

WATER TEMP: 60.8°

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

THURSDAY - **FAIR** - SURF: 3-4 ft+ waist to shoulder high
Possible uptick in shorter-period WNW swell. A little more SSW swell.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

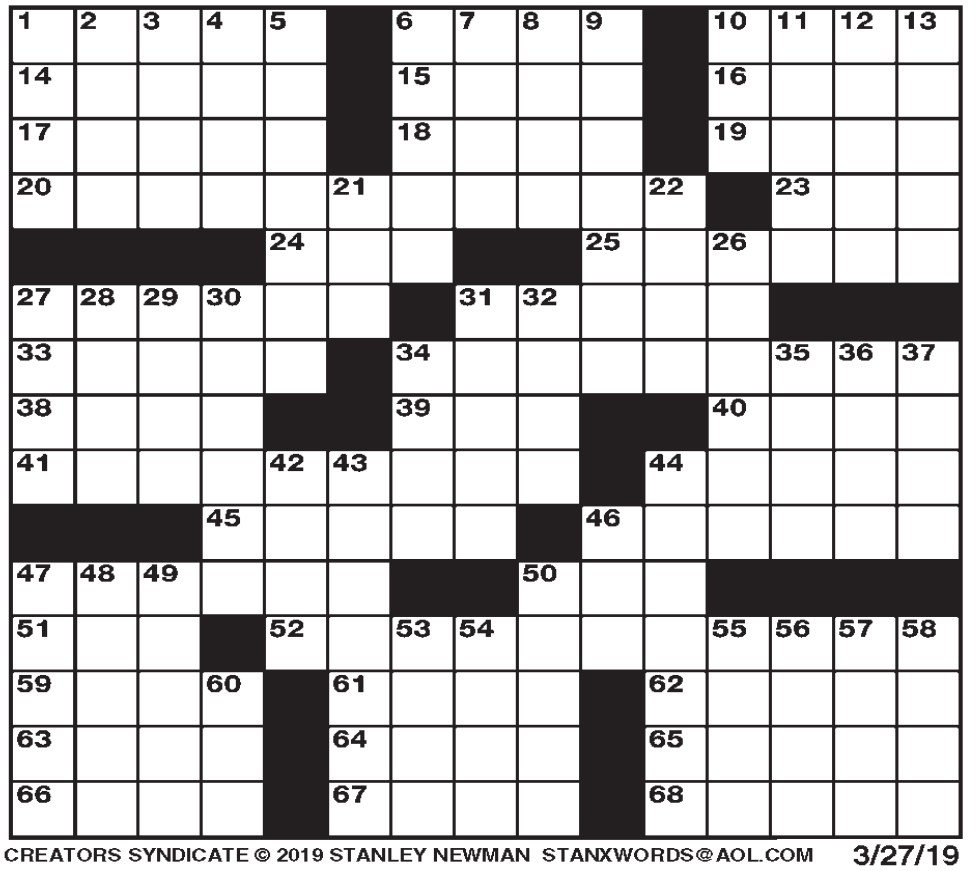
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| 6 | 5 | | | | | | 7 | |
| 2 | | | | 8 | | 6 | | |
| | 7 | | 4 | | | 8 | | 1 |
| | 9 | | | 4 | 8 | | | |
| | | | 2 | | 5 | | | |
| | | | 3 | 1 | | | 5 | |
| 4 | | 7 | | | 2 | | 1 | |
| | | 6 | | 9 | | | | 3 |
| | 3 | | | | | | 8 | 7 |

## Newsday Crossword

**OUT LIKE A LAMB** by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

**ACROSS**
1 Cuban dance
6 Creative pursuits
10 Political theorist Marx
14 Counting everything
15 Red vegetable
16 Notion
17 Primly dignified
18 Spherical coif
19 Shed feathers
20 Pieman meeter of rhyme
23 Lab maze animal
24 Sigh of relief
25 Spinach-eating sailor
27 Inflexible about rules
31 Nourishes
33 Nary a soul
34 Dip without much zip
38 "___ first you don't . . ."
39 Tentacle
40 False witness
41 Rapturous state
44 Slangy summons
45 Beefy meal
46 Croatia neighbor
47 Rub elbows (with)
50 Seek damages
51 Whichever
52 Bedtime wish
59 Spanish affirmatives
61 Aware of
62 Little darling
63 Limerick, for one
64 TV host Seacrest
65 Clear the whiteboard
66 Something easy
67 Leafy cabbage
68 Extinct birds

**DOWN**
1 Be nostalgic for
2 Prefix for virus
3 Polite address
4 Radar screen spot
5 Heirloom bridal veil trimming
6 Embarrass
7 Lowered-payment loan, briefly
8 Semester
9 Bent over
10 A Kardashian sister
11 Love madly
12 Race with batons
13 Coffeehouse order
21 Dine or sup
22 Agrees silently
26 Biblical songs
27 Tiny scissor cut
28 Japanese bean curd
29 Sound of waves
30 Summer apprentice
31 "For starters . . ."
32 Shade trees
34 French "but"
35 Legal claim
36 New Delhi dress
37 Environs
42 Jeers from the bleachers
43 Blood tests, for instance
44 Strong-armed
46 Begin blooming
47 Door fasteners
48 Burger topper
49 Via ocean liner, e.g.
50 "Precious" rock
53 Irish New Age singer
54 List ending abbr.
55 Currency of Belgium
56 Slightly
57 Soup with 28 Down
58 Realizes
60 Mini-mischief maker



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2019 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 3/27/19

## TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (March 27)

Financially, this year is a win. You'll earn a trophy – a symbol of your work over the past three years. On a personal note, you'll become known for your emotional warmth. It's something you come by honestly because you'll receive so much of it from others that you'll have no choice but to recycle and regift the love. Leo and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 20, 3, 33 and 16.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Point yourself in the right direction and make a move – any move, however small. Even falling in that direction is better than no movement at all. Because the only thing that can stop you now is inaction.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Change is hard, so the saying goes, but is that really accurate? Change is the natural order, and by definition, the natural order takes no effort. It's not change that's hard. It's the way we resist it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Frustration happens only because things aren't moving along as quickly as you had it in your head. In the words of one gorgeous Gemini, "When you relinquish the desire to have control over your future, you can have more happiness."

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Maybe you're not entirely popular for the things you express lately, but the only one who can please all the people all the time is someone who doesn't stand for anything.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Creative differences create waste. You've witnessed so much lost time and effort in too-many-cooks-in-the-kitchen-type scenarios. Right now you'll save yourself a lot of trouble by tackling your creative project alone.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Owning things is work. You really don't want the responsibility that some possessions will require of you. You could handle it, but it would take focus away from what's good for you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You can build on a past success, though you won't exactly be able to repeat it. It's a new day, a new you. And a slightly different approach will be needed to keep this thing on track.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). People always need to know the reasons, or at least they think they do. If they don't know the reasons, they'll make them up just to satisfy the cognitive dissonance. Provide reasons or you leave yourself open to speculative fiction.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Who knows what the full expression of your personality would be if it were even possible to express it? But you feel it's your responsibility to at least try. You'll widen your range with new experiences.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Just a heads-up: People who seem to be involved in a dramatic situation on the regular are very likely to continue the trend, as it's a self-feeding cycle. Internal states influence external states and vice versa.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You may not know exactly what is sacred to other people, but if you assume there's something that is and go carefully from there, you're less likely to trip the triggers and awaken the consequences of disrespect.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Ideally, you would give what the world needs and put your time into things that will be meaningful to the masses. But who knows what the world needs? The world doesn't even know. So do what's meaningful to you.

## Mercury Goes Direct

The cosmic Wi-Fi gets reset thanks to Mercury going direct. On an interpersonal note, communication improves when we understand the difference between expressing an opinion and passing judgment. Opinions signal agreement or disagreement about how things should be done. Judgment disparages personhood and damages the soul.

## ASTROLOGICAL QUESTION:

**"My 32-year-old Capricorn son has tried online dating services, arranged dates, dates he's found on his own, but none of them have worked out. He's a Christian. He has epilepsy. He loves his job and travels a lot. Could these things be scaring women off?"**

A life lived on purpose is a magnet for love. This is especially true for Capricorns, who are deeply fulfilled by identifying their calling and then pursuing that to the ends of the Earth. He is doing this – fabulous! My concern is Capricorns can approach finding a mate with ambition enough to climb K2, which can be problematic (and disappointing). Love flourishes in an atmosphere of lighthearted play. However, he does have innate skills useful in a romance strategy. Just as every ambitious Capricorn holds a picture of what success looks like before he or she achieves it, intentionality precedes manifestation. So just as your son masterfully intends his life achievements into being, I'd suggest he picture his life partner, write it down and follow it with the other thing Capricorn does best: holding out for the best. And don't forget to trust that love is in the stars.

## CELEBRITY PROFILES

Sometimes Jessie J shares her music with the heightened style of polished pop glamour. Other times she shares it in vulnerable, stripped-down, emotional Instagram videos like the one she did recently in which she brought attention to the cause of mental health and urged those suffering to not to do so alone. J is an Aries with a Leo moon and Mercury in soulful, empathetic Pisces.

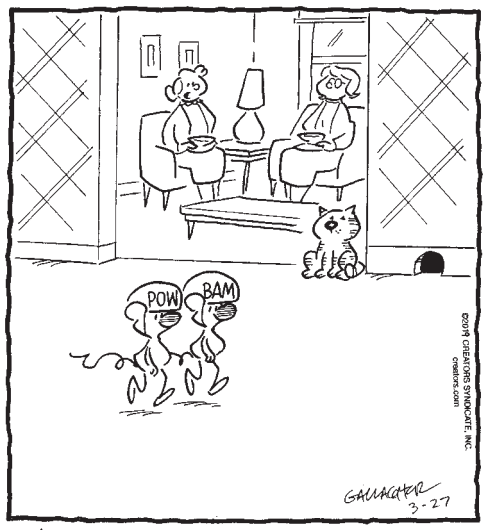
## WORD UP!

**Skimble-scamble**
adjective [skim-buhl-skam-buhl; skim-uhl-skam-uhl]
rambling; confused; nonsensical: a skimble-scamble explanation.



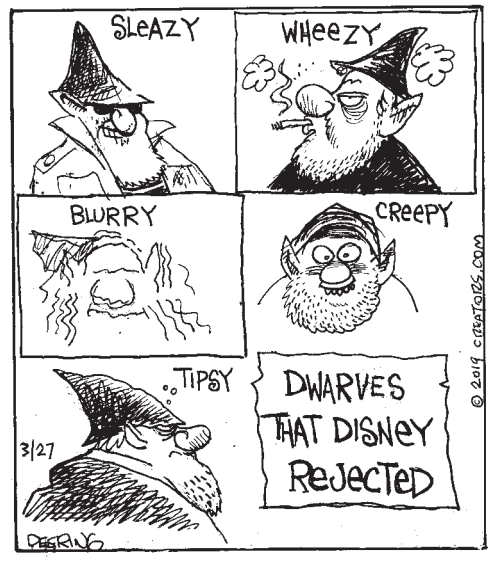
## Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



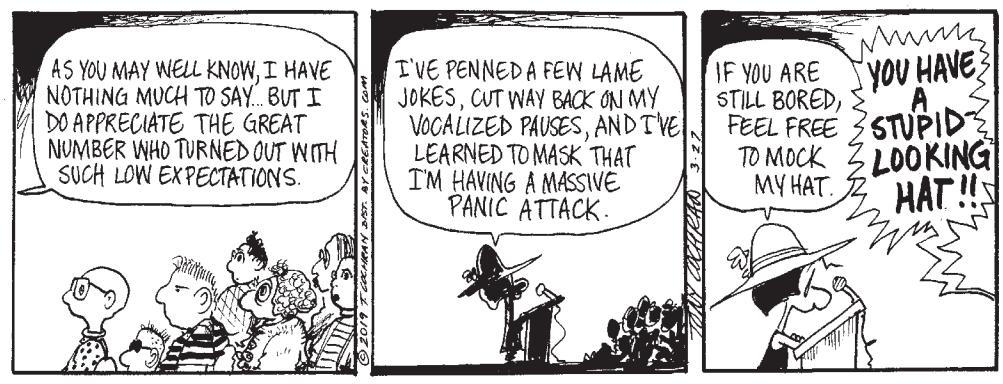

## Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING



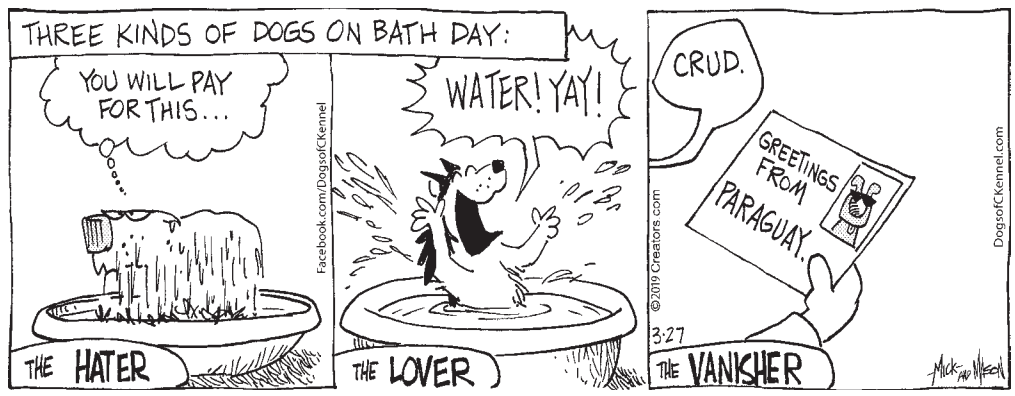

## Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN




## Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART




## Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE





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# California may toughen immunization rules to block measles

**DON THOMPSON**
Associated Press

California would give state public health officials instead of local doctors the power to decide which children can skip vaccinations before attending school under legislation proposed Tuesday to counter what advocates call bogus exemptions.

The measure would also let state and county health officials revoke medical exemptions granted by doctors if they are found to be fraudulent or contradict federal immunization standards. The proposal comes amid measles outbreaks in New York, Washington and elsewhere that are prompting states including Maine and Washington to consider ending non-medical exemptions.

California eliminated all non-medical immunization exemptions in 2016, as have Mississippi and West Virginia. The lawmakers want California to now follow West Virginia's lead in having public health officials rather than doctors decide who qualifies for medical exemptions. Doctors would send the state health department the reason they are recommending the exemption and would have to certify that they examined the patient.

The steps are needed to crack down on a few unscrupulous doctors who are helping parents avoid vaccinating their children by selling medical exemptions through word of mouth or online advertising, lawmakers and physicians representing prominent medical groups said at a Capitol news conference.

"They were monetizing their medical license by selling these exemptions ... putting our children and the public in danger for a quick buck," said Democratic state Sen. Richard Pan of Sacramento, a pediatrician who authored the current state law and the new proposal.

Several upset parents gathered in a Capitol hallway said the measure isn't needed because the immunization rate already is high under current law. A shouting match briefly broke out between opponents and one supporter of the legislation, reminiscent of the high emotions that surrounded the original bill and continue to haunt the issue.

Statewide immunization rates increased after the law took effect from less than 93 percent to more than 95 percent, enough to keep most outbreaks from spreading.

But the rate of medical exemptions has also tripled, according to the California Department of Public Health. Although it's still less than 1 percent of school children statewide, advocates said 50 schools have exemption rates of at least 15 percent, and more than half of students aren't vaccinated in at least three schools.

That means pockets of unvaccinated children who could spread illnesses like measles "because of the increase in bogus medical exemptions and by false information being spread on the internet," said Dr. Eric Ball, representing the American Academy of Pediatrics in California.

Federal guidelines say less than 1 percent of children should avoid vaccinations if they have a severe allergic reaction or impaired immunity such as from a liver problem, the HIV virus or chemotherapy.

But David Ball of Sacramento said his family will leave California if Pan's bill passes and he must otherwise have his 10-year-old daughter vaccinated when she reaches 7th grade. He said she started having rashes after her infant vaccinations, but more broadly he objects to state bureaucrats substituting their decision for that of his family doctor.

Amber Ebel of Sacramento said genetic counseling showed her two children, ages 6 and 10, would be poor candidates for vaccinations, though that's not enough to qualify for an exemption under federal guidelines.

"It would basically be like playing Russian roulette," she said. "You don't know somebody's going to have a reaction until you do it."

Shannon Primer, a board member of Educate. Advocate., which serves families with special needs, criticized Pan for what she said is a broken promise to maintain "a strong and robust medical exemption."




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