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THURSDAY
04.06.23

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11 out of a possible 100 families offered affordable housing after waitlist changes

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

A city program to provide priority affordable housing to descendants of those displaced when several minority neighborhoods were demolished has resulted in nine successful applications as of March 31.

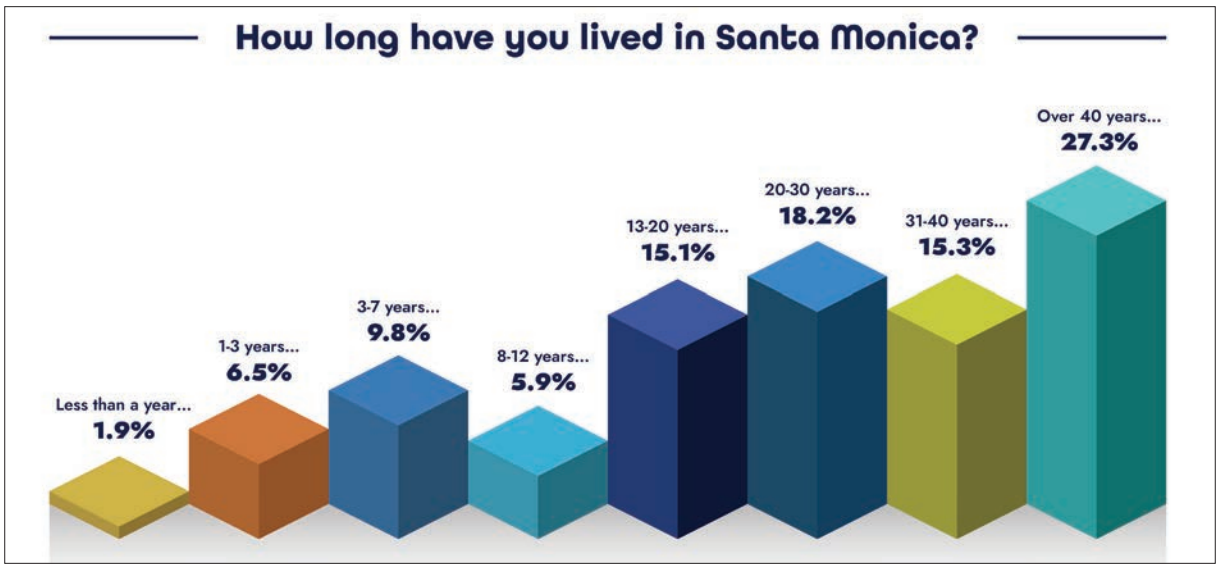
City Hall set aside 100 spots on the Below Market Housing (BMH) waitlist and while 134 applications were received, only 11 qualified with nine choosing to move forward with a housing placement.

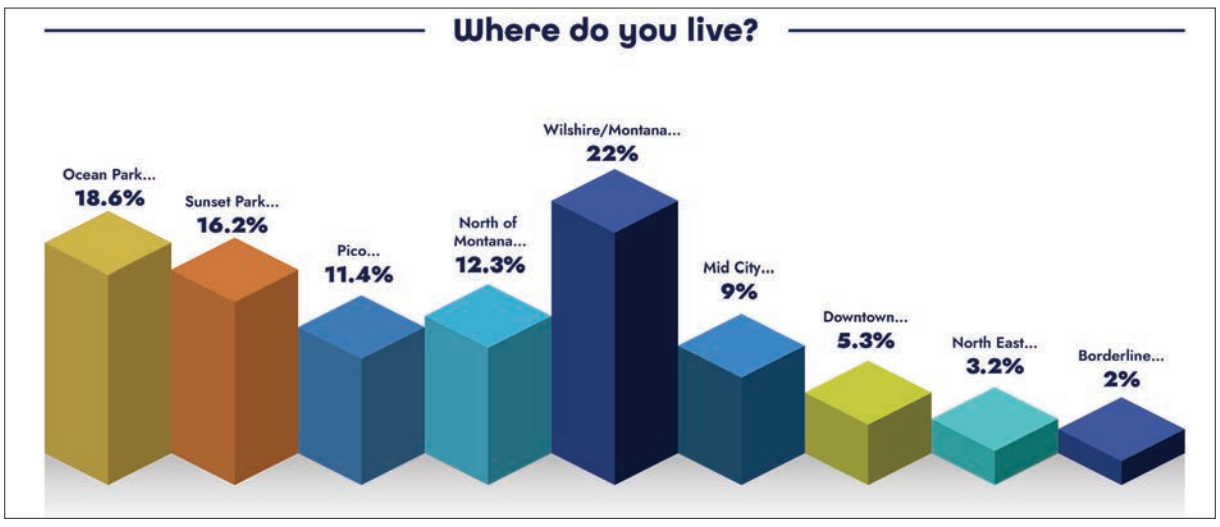
The "Right to Return" program came about in 2021 when City Council voted to alter the prioritization of different groups on the waitlist for the pilot program. Prior to the change, priority went first to individuals facing no-fault evictions in Santa Monica, second to individuals who live or work in Santa Monica and third to applicants from outside of Santa Monica.

The Right to Return process inserted up to 100 households and descendants of households who were displaced by the creation of the Civic Auditorium and I-10 freeway in the 1950s and 1960s above individuals who live or work in Santa Monica, but below those

SEE **HOUSING** PAGE 7

Why do you live here?





SMDP Photo

SURVEY: SMDP asked subscribers why they live in Santa Monica and what might make them leave?

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

We've analyzed the results, scrutinized the data and poured relentlessly over all the information that you, dear reader, kindly provided us by completing our survey a few weeks ago. If you recall, we asked that given most residents have considered leaving at some point, what's keeping you here?

While many focused on the homelessness crisis, the increase in crime and rising rents, other residents said they'd only move if Santa Monica sank into the ocean or was overrun by an alien invasion

A combination of the weather and the closeness to the beach and the ocean were among the favorite reasons residents chose to stay, together with the lifestyle, community feeling and walkable nature of the city. "The cozy

SEE **POLL RESULTS** PAGE 6

Carjacking and a robbery kept SMPD busy on Tuesday

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

A pair of possibly connected, but certainly confusing, carjacking crimes on the Santa Monica/Venice Border sent local police departments into high gear Tuesday night but despite a flurry of activity, no suspects have been arrested.

The incidents began for the Santa Monica Police Department at about 8:30 p.m. when a man came to SMPD headquarters to report he was the victim of an attempted carjacking.

The victim said he was in his vehicle in Beach Lot 4 South (2030 Ocean Ave) when two suspects, both Hispanic men wearing masks, approached the car, pointed a gun at the victim, and ordered him out of the car.

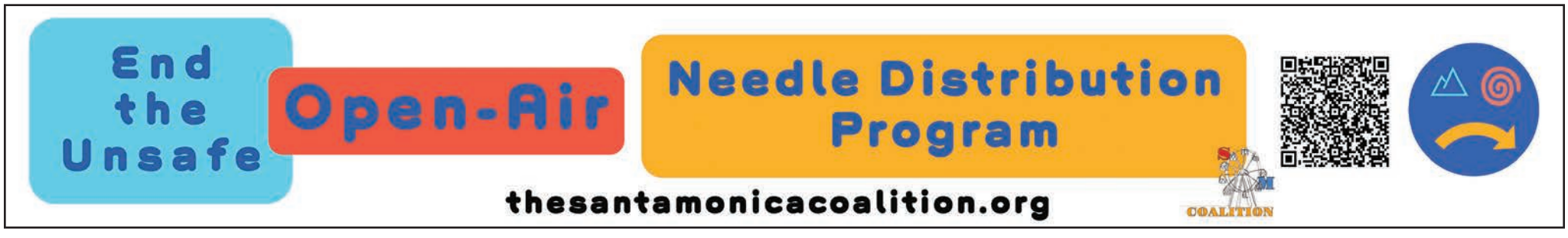
The victim refused to surrender his car and one of the suspects shot one round at the car, striking the B Pillar (the vertical roof support structure located between the front and rear doors).

The suspects fled on foot southbound, and the victim drove around for a few minutes before driving to the police station to report the crime.

Responding officers recovered a single shell casing in the parking lot and during their investigation, SMPD officers saw the LAPD helicopter circling over Venice and realized LAPD was working an incident across the border. That case was reported to SMPD as a successful carjacking.

However, LAPD's media relations

SEE **CRIME** PAGE 7



Social Security conflict: California child welfare agencies under fire for pocketing foster kids' benefits

JEANNE KUANG
Special to the Daily Press



Cal Matters

MONEY: Parents are saying the benefits that should go towards foster care are being taken.

In December 2019, a month after her son's death, Patricia Baca contacted the federal government to provide for her surviving grandchildren.

The twins, just 3 at the time, had lived a difficult first few years of life. San Diego County had removed them from their parents' custody that year due to allegations of drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence in the home, Baca said. The brother and sister were in foster care with Baca when their father died in an accident.

Hoping to secure the children a future nest egg, Baca filed for them to receive survivor's benefits from the Social Security Administration for children whose parents have died.

But it was the twins' legal parent at the time — the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency — that stepped in to receive their money. For the next two years, the county put their survivors' benefits into its own coffers. Records show it was an effort to pay itself back for having issued monthly checks to Baca to cover the children's basic needs.

According to county and federal records Baca showed to CalMatters, the money taken totaled nearly $15,000 per child. Baca said she received foster care checks of about $1,000 a month per child, meaning the county partially recouped its costs using the Social Security benefits.

The funds seizure is common among child welfare agencies in California and nationwide – and it's legal.

But forces are building to halt the practice, which advocates say has been in place for at least two decades. A growing number of states are banning it, and advocates are seeking to eliminate it in California through a court challenge and a bill set to be introduced in the state Legislature next week.

OFFSETTING COSTS

San Diego County said it halted the practice last year and now saves foster youth's benefits in reserve accounts for them. But it didn't repay Baca's grandchildren. She has lost two state administrative hearings trying to get the money paid back, with the county telling her it would not pay retroactively and the state's Department of Social Services ruling it did not have jurisdiction.

A county spokesperson declined to comment on Baca's grandchildren's case, citing confidentiality concerns.

The children are now 7. Baca and her husband, both retired, had hoped the money would help their grandchildren support themselves when they're older.

"They've been traumatized, they've been taken from their family and now they've lost a parent," she said in an interview, adding she would say to county and state officials: "This is their money, and you're stealing it."

Acting on behalf of foster youth in their care, agencies can apply for and receive children's Social Security benefits.

That can include survivor benefits or, more commonly, a disability benefit known as Supplemental Security Income (SSI). In rarer cases they also apply for veterans' benefits earmarked for the children of those who died in military service.

By state law, counties must use the money in the child's best interests. One allowable use is to "offset" the agencies' costs for providing foster care.

For youth in state custody who don't qualify for such benefits, counties pay for foster care using existing funding — a mix of federal, state and local money.

YOUTH AT RISK

Opponents of the reimbursement practices say it's an inappropriate use of money meant for the most vulnerable young people in state custody — those with disabilities and those who will age into adulthood without parental support.

Foster youth are at higher risk than other children of falling into poverty and homelessness in adulthood. A long-term study in California in 2020 found that a quarter of former foster youth were sleeping in shelters or temporarily unhoused after exiting foster care.

Advocates say often youth and their families don't even know their county has applied for and taken their Social Security benefits.

Assemblymember Isaac Bryan, a Culver City Democrat, is authoring a bill that would prohibit counties from using federal benefits to defray foster care costs. It also would direct child welfare agencies to use the money for the children directly, which could include preserving it for their futures.

The bill would apply to foster youth going forward, but it would not help those like Baca's grandchildren who already had their benefits taken.

Few of California's roughly 50,000 foster kids get Social Security benefits, advocates say, but the state does not track how many have had their funds withheld by the counties.

Los Angeles County has the greatest share of the caseload, with custody of about a third of the state's foster children. The county's Department of Children and Family Services receives the benefits of about 600 children in its custody in any given month, a spokesperson told CalMatters last year. In 2021 the county took $5.4 million of children's Supplemental Security Income or survivor benefits as reimbursements.

A FUNDING STREAM

CalMatters also reported that Kern County in 2021 offset $313,000 of its foster care costs by taking benefits from 56 youth. And San Diego County in the 2021-2022 fiscal year took about $137,000 from 13 youth.

In total California's child welfare system costs about $5 billion annually, according to the research center Child Trends. The amount taken from youth benefits as reimbursement makes up a fraction of that – as much as $39 million, Bryan's office estimates.

Bryan's legislation, a placeholder that will be amended next week, has yet to be heard in a committee. It comes as other states and cities have already agreed to limit the seizure of foster youth's benefits, including Illinois, Maryland, Connecticut and the cities of Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

Hawaii last year stopped taking the benefits and opened bank accounts for foster youth who were receiving them. Washington state and Oregon are both weighing proposals this year to do so.

For years California's advocates have pushed the state and counties to help foster youth apply for the federal benefits. While the children are under state and county care, county agencies have viewed the benefits as a funding stream.

Many eligible youth do not know they can qualify, advocates say, and the application process is complex. California currently requires counties to screen foster youth for potential eligibility for Social Security assistance at the age of 16, but advocates say that leaves out many children who could be receiving it much earlier.

SEE **FOSTER** PAGE 8

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*No interest payment plans
*Emergencies can be seen today
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INCLUDES FULL XRAYS
*Offer to non insured patients
OR
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$99 EXAM AND CLEANING
For New Patients
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Trump's bravado tested as legal woes overlap with campaign

JILL COLVIN
Associated Press

When Donald Trump stepped into a Manhattan courthouse Tuesday afternoon, his usual bravado was replaced with palpable anger and notable silence as the former president was reduced to a criminal defendant in custody.

By the time he returned to his Mar-a-Lago club hours later, he was ready to unleash.

"The only crime that I have committed is to fearlessly defend our nation from those who seek to destroy it," the first former president to be indicted told a crowd of hundreds of loyal supporters.

Trump made an unlikely transformation from reality television star to U.S. president by tapping into the grievance of Republican voters disillusioned with the political establishment. As he wages a comeback bid for the White House, Trump and his campaign hope his indictment will serve as a rallying cry that will galvanize the same voters. Already, he has raised millions of dollars off the news.

It's an approach that will test Trump's "all publicity is good publicity" adage as his decades-long history of bending the world to his will collides with cold legal reality.

Trump, the early frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination, now faces the unprecedented prospect of mounting another campaign for the White House while simultaneously on trial for charges stemming from hush money payments to women during his 2016 campaign. He remains under investigation in Georgia and Washington, raising the prospect of multiple trials in several jurisdictions, all unfolding as Republicans begin voting on their next nominee.

In the meantime, Trump's rivals for the Republican presidential nomination are struggling to emerge from his ever-growing shadow, even as the proceedings raise serious questions about Trump's viability in a general election.

"A lot of times you have a candidate who's in trouble, you create a diversion," said Trump campaign pollster John McLaughlin. "They're indicting Trump, Trump consumes all the headlines and media coverage."

While most defendants would see an arrest as an indignity to be handled quietly, Trump — a man who has always craved the media spotlight — seized the PR and fundraising opportunity, blasting out his itinerary and narrating a play-by-play on social media.

"Heading to Lower Manhattan, the Courthouse. Seems so SURREAL — WOW, they are going to ARREST ME. Can't believe this is happening in America. MAGA!" he wrote on Truth Social as his motorcade headed toward the courthouse, his every movement captured by news helicopters hovering overhead.

His campaign further hyped the appearance in fundraising solicitations. "My last email before my arrest," one read.

As he was behind closed doors at the courthouse being booked and fingerprinted, his campaign began advertising a "NEW ITEM" to donors: A t-shirt featuring a doctored black-and-white "mug shot" of Trump, complete with an exaggerated height chart and the words, "NOT GUILTY."

In reality, Trump was not subjected to a mug shot Tuesday — one of several exceptions from normal operating procedure made for the former president — underscoring the contrast between the image he hoped to project and his actual appearance as he faced 34 felony counts of falsifying business records in the first degree.

After being caught off guard by the charges, Trump appeared unmistakably livid as he left Trump Tower Tuesday afternoon and arrived at the lower Manhattan courthouse. He was stone-faced and silent as he entered the courtroom alone, pushing the door open himself.

"What do you expect his reaction was?" Trump's lawyer Todd Blanche said outside the courthouse immediately following the appearance. "He's frustrated, he's upset. But I'll tell you what: He's motivated. And it's not going to stop him. It's not going to slow him down."

During the hearing, Trump was subdued. He spent the proceeding mostly listening and spoke just 10 words in total, including "Not guilty," "Yes," "Thank you," and "I do." At one point, after a discussion about whether one of his lawyers might have a conflict of interest, Trump was told by the judge he had the right to conflict-free representation and was asked if he understood. Trump's response was so faint that the judge gestured to his ear, signaling he hadn't heard the answer. "Yes," Trump then offered.

Before the proceeding, Trump declined to speak to assembled reporters, as had been expected.

"He is angry," Barbara Res, a longtime former employee who was a vice president at the Trump Organization, said of the former president after watching the proceedings. "He has a look on his face and I've seen that look. That look is, 'I'm going to kill you.'"

Trump, according to people who had spoken to him in recent days, had seemed both resigned and angry as he processed the reality of the pending charges, which remained under seal until the hearing.

"He is angry. He is frustrated, but he is dedicated to defeating this," said U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Georgia Republican who appeared at a pro-Trump rally in New York across the street from the courthouse and joined the former president at Mar-a-Lago Tuesday night.

On Tuesday at the courthouse, he was described as resolute and calm — mad about the circumstances, but also pleased by his respectful treatment by court officers, U.S. Secret Service and staff from the District Attorney's office.

"The GREAT PATRIOTS inside and outside of the Courthouse on Tuesday were unbelievably nice, in fact, they couldn't have been nicer," Trump said in a statement. "Court attendants, Police Officers, and others were all very professional, and represented New York City sooo well. Thank you to all!"

Trump, after the hearing, flew straight back home to Florida, where he delivered a grievance-filled primetime speech, again criticizing the prosecution and judge presiding over the case despite being admonished hours earlier about incendiary rhetoric.

Aides had assembled a crowd of hundreds of his most loyal supporters. The scene, in some ways, felt more like a campaign launch than the subdued announcement he held in the same room in November, with an amped-up crowd cheering him on. After his speech, he joined supporters at a reception on the Mar-a-Lago patio, where he mingled late into the night.

Indeed, Trump went so far as to insist the day had been a "great" one during an "emergency" prayer call after he left the courthouse.

"We're winning. We had a great day today, actually, because it turned out to be a sham," he said, according to audio.

Trump is due back in court in December for a hearing, though lawyers have asked that he be excused from attending because of the extraordinary security involved. Prosecutors asked the judge to set a trial for January — just weeks before the first votes will be cast in the 2024 Republican presidential primary. Trump's lawyers said they felt a more realistic start date would be the spring — a time when Trump could theoretically have locked down the Republican nomination, or be in the midst of a bitter primary fight.

It remains unclear how the charges will reverberate long term, especially if Trump faces additional indictments in Georgia and Washington, where prosecutors are investigating his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election and his handling of classified documents. Trump has already alienated many swing voters, particularly suburban women, who abandoned him 2020.

A CNN poll conducted after news of the indictment became public, but before it was unsealed, found that, while 60% of U.S. adults approve of the decision to bring charges, a majority — about three quarters — believe the indictment was motivated, at least, in, part by politics.

"In the short term, I think without a doubt that it will rally more right-of-center voters around President Trump," said former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, who competed against Trump in the 2016 GOP primary. "Who would ever have thought that an indictment would be anything but a negative?"

McLaughlin, the Trump pollster, said he has found Republican primary voters are rallying around the former president.

"It's making angry people even angrier," he said. "They've got a candidate who is now the frontrunner for president.. and he's being indicted for something they don't understand."

Associated Press writers Colleen Long in Washington, Michael R. Sisak and Jennifer Peltz in New York and Adriana Gomez Licon in Palm Beach, Florida contributed to this report.

City of Santa Monica

CITY OF SANTA MONICA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Santa Monica invites sealed proposals for

RFP: # 352 Eternal Meadow Maintenance and Consulting

Submission Deadline is May 3, 2023 at 5:00 PM Pacific Time.

RFP: # 353 Mortuary Decedent Transport Services

Submission Deadline is May 3, 2023 at 5:00 PM Pacific Time.

RFP: # 354 Provide Mortuary Services to Woodlawn Cemetery, Mausoleum & Mortuary

Submission Deadline is May 3, 2023 at 5:00 PM Pacific Time.

Proposals must include forms furnished by the City of Santa Monica. Request for Proposals may be obtained on the **CITY'S ONLINE VENDOR PORTAL.** The website for this Request for Proposals and related documents is OpenGov (https://secure.procurenow.com/portal/santa-monica-ca) There is no charge for the RFP package.

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City of Santa Monica

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE SANTA MONICA CITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Proposed Interim Zoning Ordinance to extend interim zoning regulations adopted by Interim Zoning Ordinance 2738 (CCS) eliminating the prohibition of certain restaurants with frontage on the Third Street Promenade

A public hearing will be held by the City Council to introduce and adopt an Interim Zoning Ordinance extending Interim Zoning Ordinance 2738 (CCS) originally adopted by the City Council on March 14, 2023, that eliminated the prohibition of certain restaurants with frontage on the Third Street Promenade.

DATE/TIME: **TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2023 AT 7:00 PM**

LOCATION: City Council Chamber, Second Floor, Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, California

HOW TO COMMENT:
The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment. Members of the public unable to attend a meeting but wishing to comment on an item(s) listed on the agenda may submit written comments prior to the public hearing via email to councilmtgitems@santamonica.gov or via mail to City Clerk, 1685 Main Street, Room 102, Santa Monica, California 90401. Written public comment submitted before 12:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting will be available for online viewing. All written comments shall be made part of the public record. Please note the agenda item number in the subject line of your written comments.

You may also comment in person at the City Council hearing. Please check the agenda for more detailed instructions on how to comment in person.

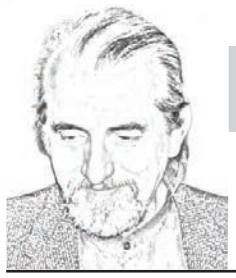
Address your comments to: City Clerk
Re: Extension of Interim Zoning Ordinance 2738

VIA EMAIL: councilmtgitems@santamonica.gov
VIA MAIL: 1685 Main Street, Room 102
Santa Monica, CA 90401

MORE INFORMATION: If you want more information about this project, please contact Tony Kim at (310) 458-2200 ext. 5522 or by e-mail at tony.kim@santamonica.gov. For disability-related accommodations, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (310) 458-8211 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Every attempt will be made to provide the requested accommodation. All written materials are available in alternate languages provided the request is received 72 hours prior to the meeting. Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Lines serve City Hall and the Civic Center area. The Expo Line terminus is located at Colorado Avenue and Fourth Street, and is a short walk to City Hall. Public parking is available in front of City Hall, on Olympic Drive, and in the Civic Center Parking Structure (validation free).

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65009(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.

ESPAÑOL: Esto es una noticia de una audiencia pública para revisar applicaciónes proponiendo desarrollo en Santa Monica. Si deseas más información, favor de llamar a Carmen Gutierrez en la División de Planificación al número (310) 458-2275.



OPINION **NOTEWORTHY**

Charles Andrews | Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Willie & His Very Talented Friends

WILLIE NELSON WILL TURN 90 IN LA! And will celebrate with two nights of star-studded concerts at the Hollywood Bowl, April 29-30.

I mean, really, who doesn't love Willie? Who wouldn't want to join him on stage for that amazing celebration? Well, here's who so far: more than 35 musicians including Sturgil Simpson, Neil Young, Chris Stapleton, Snoop Dogg, Rosanne Cash, The Chicks, Lyle Lovett, Nathaniel Rateliff, Norah Jones, Tom Jones, Bob Weir, Margo Price, Lukas Newlson, Beck, Sheryl Crow, Edie Brickell, Leon Bridges, Kacey Musgraves, Warren Haynes, Ziggy Marley, Miranda Lambert, The Avett Brothers. It's LA. I'm sure more top performers are even now wangling to be included.

I know it's only 2023, but on Jan 1, 2100, musicologists could well look back and decide this was the concert of the century.



Courtesy photo
WILLIE NELSON

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:

LA OPERA, "PELLEAS AND MELISANDE," DEBUSSY – Oh man, you tell us you haven't seen this production yet, and now you elevate it past RECOMMENDED to the lofty HIGHLY RECOMMENDED? I'll tell you why. In 2018 I cautiously crept into Dorothy Chandler Pavilion for a performance of... "Hansel and Gretel"? By... Englebert Humperdink?? Coming from New Mexico and the magnificent Santa Fe Opera I was no virgin, but maybe, to be fair for the first impresion of the LA Opera, I thought, I should wait for a Verdi or "Figaro." I have seen nearly every production since then, but that first one demonstrated some things that have remained true: despite sometimes taking chances with material and staging, the singers have always been top drawer, the orchestra has continued to improve, and I have never seen them miss yet. But I now have glowing reviews from two sources I consider impeccable. My daughter went with some friends and remarked that it was "beautiful music, costuming, an 'anti-opera' of sorts with no arias, a truly ethereal production." And the LA Times classical music critic, Mark Swed, who is particularly adept with opera, gave it a lot of space and a lot of praise. And he made observations that come only from many years of listening and watching very critically. He makes connections from Debussy's intent to the singers and players and David McVicar's production, which provide that context I always write about that so enhances the enjoyment of what is in front of you. I suggest finding his review in the Times before you go. So trust me, Swed, and Nicole, and don't miss this exceptional event. Sat, next Thurs 7:30 p.m., Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, LA, $19-284.

LIBRARY GIRL, "FEELING GOOD - A TRIBUTE TO NINA SIMONE" – Founder Susan Hayden almost always has music in her monthly spoken word performances at the Ruskin Group Theater at our SM Airport. Many times you will get to hear some sterling singer songwriters, most local but some from TX, TN, or the East Coast. But nearly always her theme, her creative prompt to the poets, is musical. An album or song title, or artist. In this case the artist she has tapped is such a monumental figure that I figure this one will reach above LG's consistent excellence, and reach for the stars. Nina Simone. There was no one like her, and so much about her life and work that can inspire other artists. There will be several well-known live music performers for this night, plus the usual few parking and free dessert. You'd have to be stuck on an island somewhere to miss this one. Sun 7 p.m., Ruskin Group Theatre, SM Airport, $20.

THE HOT CLUB OF LOS ANGELES – Hot Club's brand of virtuoso, sometimes breakneck Django-style 1930s gypsy swing jazz is found nowhere else and even if it was, it couldn't possibly be better than this. These guys are masters, individually and collectively. They manage to record and play high-profile gigs and still show up every Monday night here, for years. Aren't we lucky? Mon 9 p.m., Cinema Bar, Culver City, no cover.

SEE **NOTEWORTHY** PAGE 6

Why California public transit is at a pivotal moment

SAMEEA KAMAL
Special to the Daily Press



Scott Snowden

METRO: Transit agencies across the state are struggling.

For 22-year-old Henry Sanchez, a 25-cent increase in the bus fare makes a big difference.

It used to be $1.50 to get from his home in Bell Gardens to Cerritos College, where he studies. Now, it's $1.75 one-way.

"It really sucks that you have to worry about the price going up, while the quality of the services is going down," he said at the Metro Rail station in Norwalk this week. "And trying to buy a car is harder, even getting a used car. It's risky."

Does he think the state should step in to help public transit systems avoid fare hikes? It could help, he said — unless that means higher taxes or the price of other things going up.

Sanchez isn't alone in his quandary.

Transit agencies across California are grappling with a "fiscal cliff" — a decline in revenue and the end of federal funding that has been a lifeline for the last three years. Without the state stepping in, they say they may have to cut service or increase fares.

That would hit low-income people the hardest, especially those who rely exclusively on transit to get around. Any major changes would also affect commuters, the other regular group of riders.

Ridership — which was already declining as early as 2013 — dropped dramatically when the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020 and hasn't fully recovered. Statewide, monthly ridership dropped from 100 million in February 2019 to about 20 million in June 2020. As of June 2022, the numbers rebounded to about 60 million, but varied by region and transportation mode.

The fares that riders pay not only help keep buses and trains running, but help agencies qualify for state and federal grants. Transit agencies say that the federal funding they've received during the pandemic will run out within two years.

Looking ahead, state regulations that phase out vehicles that use gasoline and diesel fuel will also reduce the tax revenue paid to transit agencies, putting more stress on their finances.

The Legislature and Gov. Gavin Newsom are drafting next year's budget, and to help cover a deficit projected to be as much as $25 billion, Newsom is proposing delays and cuts to some transit expansions and equipment programs. That doesn't directly impact operations, but it prompted some lawmakers to call for the state to step in with more money — while others are hoping transit agencies will be held more accountable for how they've spent funds.

It's a pivotal moment for not only current services, but for the long-term future of transit in the state.

"This is a moment that is making all the difficulties that we have been having for years in public transportation in the U.S. really kind of come up," said Giovanni Circella, a program director at UC Davis' Institute of Transportation Studies.

There's also the climate angle: California's transportation sector accounts for about 40% of the state's carbon emissions.

Getting more people out of their own gas-powered cars is essential to meeting the state Air Resources Board's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 48% below 1990 levels by 2030 (for the transit sector, at least 13.5% and as much as 19% for major metropolitan areas by 2035). In 2018, the board adopted a regulation that calls for all new buses to be carbon-free by 2029.

Compared to a car with only a driver, subways produce 76% less in greenhouse gas emissions per passenger mile, light rail systems 62% less, and buses 33% less, according to the U.S. Transportation Department. Those are averages; the environmental payoff from public transit depends on the number of passengers and the type of fuel used..

Public transportation in the United States saved 63 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions in 2018 — the equivalent of taking 16 coal power plants offline for a year, according to a report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

"A focus on farebox recovery somewhat misses the mark on what transit agencies are actually doing," said Michael Pimentel, executive director of the California Transit Association, which represents transit agencies. "Efficiency is an important criteria, but so, too, are environmental benefits and making advances on equity."

To really reap the climate benefits and get cars off the road, California's public transit systems need to be popular and running efficiently — and that isn't happening in many places.

Here's how we got here — and what some suggest can be done.

THE PROBLEMS (AND IT'S NOT JUST MONEY)

Transit agencies rely on a mix of funding sources — federal grants, state funding, revenue from local taxes and passenger fares.

The agencies that rely more heavily on fares are the ones in the most dire situations. That includes Bay Area Rapid Transit, San Francisco's MUNI and Los Angeles Metro.

BART ridership dropped from more than 118 million in fiscal year 2019 to about 35 million in 2022, according to the agency. In 2019, BART's passenger fares and parking revenues totaled $520 million, funding 66% of its operations. That number dropped to 12% in 2021, and rebounded slightly last year to 21%, with passenger fares and parking totaling $147 million.

The agency received $1.6 billion through three rounds of emergency federal aid. Initial funding was limited to spending specifically on COVID-19 measures, such as emergency protective gear for employees and covering administrative leaves, but later grants allowed spending on operations. And while that funding has helped restore service to pre-pandemic levels, the system still encounters delays and cancellations, in part due to an ongoing labor shortage.

According to Brian Taylor, director of UCLA's Institute of Transportation Studies, many transit operators retired or shifted to work with lower health risks, such as trucking. A national survey by the American Public Transportation Association in March 2022 found that retirees made up 24% of all workers who quit, while 45% left for jobs outside of the transit industry.

Taylor said one factor behind the departures is that drivers don't want to take on the increasing role of policing behavior — first enforcing mask rules and later dealing with growing mental health, drug and homelessness crises showing up on public transit.

Those problems aren't just keeping transit drivers away. At a legislative committee hearing in March, transit agency officials said the issues are also scaring off riders.

Since Jan. 1, 26 people have died on Metro buses and trains from suspected drug overdoses — already four more than the total deaths from any cause in all of 2022. And serious crimes — such as robbery, rape and aggravated assault — were up 24% compared to 2022.

Safety concerns add to the longstanding issues that discourage people from using public transit: how long trips take, the inconvenience of getting to a station and delays or interruptions.

It doesn't help that some transit agencies are not being managed very well.

Recent probes of BART revealed conflict-of-interest violations, a BART employee who faked work hours and a $350,000 homeless outreach program with the Salvation Army that got only one person into a residential treatment facility after two years, according to local press reports.

In 2022, the Alameda County Grand Jury found the agency's board, management and unions engaged in a "pattern of obstruction" against its Office of the Inspector General, which oversaw those probes.

The string of problems prompted State Sen. Steve Glazer, a Democrat from Orinda and a vocal BART critic, to resign from a legislative select committee that is advocating for more state transit funding.

BART, said Glazer, is beset by "a breakdown of all kinds of levels."

"It's not just about the trains, it's a breakdown in their safety, a breakdown in oversight. It's violations of the law.... it's fake (security) cameras on trains, you know, massive overtime ... the cost overruns, the delays," he said.

"I'm not supportive of bailing out BART when they refuse to have fiscal oversight through a fully functioning Office of Inspector General," he added.

In response, BART spokesperson Jim Allison said the agency supports independent oversight, and that officials "learned a lesson" from their contract with the Salvation Army.

"The outgoing inspector general is an expert in finding fraud and abuse and waste. She does not have any experience in terms of operating a railroad," he said.

Allison also said the "fiscal cliff" BART is facing is due to high fixed costs rather than mismanagement. "We're not going to be able to cut our way out of this financial crisis," he said. "We just have naturally built-in costs that we need to address to keep the system in a state of good repair."

BART isn't the only agency to come under fire.

Assemblymember Marc Berman, a Democrat from Palo Alto, requested an audit of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, based on concerns about the agency's leadership that he said resulted in operations and financial issues.

But not everyone finds the future of public transit in California as bleak.

San Jose-based advocate Monica Mallon disagreed with Berman's call for the audit, saying that while VTA has handled its finances poorly in the past, it has learned from its mistakes. And no agency should be punished for external factors such as the pandemic, she added.

"If we let agencies fall off this cliff, it's going to be really hard to get transit back in the future," Mallon said. "And then everybody's going to be in traffic and complaining."

And in Sacramento, Dan Allison, an action team member of Sacramento Transit Advocates and Riders, said Regional Transit's outlook doesn't seem as dire as some other agencies' and has improved service over the years.

THE SOLUTIONS (AND IT'S MOSTLY MONEY)

Short-term solutions include more state money for "bridge funding" to help transit agencies avoid the "fiscal cliff."

California's largest systems receive less state support than other systems of their size nationally, according to an analysis by the nonprofit policy group San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association. In 2019, the state's largest operators received 5% to 22% of operating funding from the state, whereas large systems in other states received

SEE **TRANSIT** PAGE 8

POLL RESULTS

FROM PAGE 1

hometown feeling, the artsy vibe and public transportation is very good," wrote one reader. Rent control, the schools and proximity to hiking trails and even LAX also popped up with some regularity.

"Living here is like victory. When the sun shines, it all seems so surreal," wrote one super-satisfied reader, while another said, "We bought a house here in 1997 and joke that we will be carried out in body bags. We are never leaving."

"Santa Monica is my hometown and my city changes every 10-15 years. Each time we lose people and more come to make this their home. Different styles blend into the old and the city always evolves," another reader said. Family and jobs were also common answers.

However, issues like the homelessness crisis, crime and the "decline of the Third Street Promenade" were mentioned frequently. And not everyone was quite so impressed with the public transport, "The Metro is just another place to be mugged, robbed, or killed," answered one reader.

Another said, "I'm actively considering leaving after moving here from the East Coast. I'm living in Santa Monica because the quality of life, cleanliness, and responsiveness of city services is far better here than in other parts of LA, though the problems, homelessness and increasing crime has made me reconsider staying here long term."

The rising cost of living was also repeatedly mentioned with one reader writing, "I can't afford to move, although I see a future where I can no longer afford to stay either."

Homelessness and crime also featured prominently in answers to the question "What would make you consider leaving?" The end of rent control and the continuing rise of house prices were also common answers. "I see the writing on the wall. Santa Monica is turning into a hellhole," wrote one exasperated reader, but not everyone was quite so bleak.

"Honestly not sure," wrote one, adding, "I mean OK sure if it turned into the crime-ridden hell scape that some residents already think it is or if the coast slid into the ocean during the Big One. But hey, if other people want to leave great, I could use lower rent."

So, it's official then, Santa Monica really is a great place to live. Like we had any doubt.

To sign up for future surveys, subscribe to SMDP's newsletter at https://smdp.com/email-signup.

scott.snowden@smdp.com

NOTEWORTHY

FROM PAGE 4

EM – Come see what you've been missing (before it's too late), one of the most talented and versatile performers in this whole dang ridiculously talented city of angels. The best shows aren't always in the arenas and fancy clubs, and you don't always get what you pay for. Sometimes, you get a lot more. Tues 9:30 p.m., Harvelle's, $10.

RECOMMENDED:

TODAY! - BOB MARLEY ONE LOVE EXPERIENCE – OK, I still haven't seen it, busy, out of town, but I will, and my recommendation stands. Bob Marley was one of the greatest performers and musicians (his compelling, hypnotic, otherworldly vocal instrument) ... ever. And his Wailers were musically phenomenal, and his songwriting was unique and remarkable. Silverlake's Roger Steffens, the world's foremost authority on Marley, if not reggae itself, is leading tours every weekend at 1 and 3, and he would not do that if it wasn't up to snuff. This covers only "the Island (record label) years," but that's what most people are familiar with. Thurs-Sun-Wed 11 a.m. - 8 p.m., Fri-Sat 11 a.m. -10 p.m., Mon-Tues 11 a.m. -5:30 p.m., Ovation Hollywood, $20-70.

LA PHIL, SIBELIUS, BRAHMS – Are you kidding? The soaring Third by the brilliant Finnish composer Jean Sibelius (Finn conductor here too) with its heaven and earth shaking blast of horn, and the monumental Piano Concerto #1 by Brahms, and earth shaking horn blasts, and the monumental Piano concerto #1, an early hit for young Brahms. This pairing should open your ears and your soul. Fri, Sat 8 p.m., Walt Disney Concert Hall, LA, $55-194.

"PICASSO AT THE LAPIN AGILE" – Read carefully. It's an "absurdist comedy." By the inarguably absurd comic Steve Martin. I laughed, but it is not intended to have you in stitches the entire time. It is the absurd and thought-provoking fantasy that Picasso and Einstein may have hung out together in a Paris cafe in the early 20th century, before either was famous. What might they have been like? Who else might have passed through? No one knows so Martin could go anywhere. One place he went was to make the "ordinary" women involved sound smarter than those two wise guys. Some shows are selling out. Fri, Sat 8 p.m., Sun 2 p.m., Ruskin Group Theatre, Santa Monica Airport, $20-35.

TOLEDO DIAMOND – Unique, riveting, first class act. There's nothing like it, it is high performance art and great fun. Degeneracy is rarely so well disciplined. Could be the most memorable 12 bucks you ever spent. Sun 9:30 p.m., Harvelle's, Santa Monica, $12.

RICK SHEA – is a SoCal country treasure, an exceptional songwriter who can sell a song both quietly or raucously. I like his quieter, introspective, wise, great pickin' seductive singing side best. Put a drink in front of you and go with it. Next Thurs 0 p.m., Cinema Bar, Culver City, free.

COMING ATTRACTIONS: BOB MARLEY ONE LOVE EXPERIENCE, Ovation Hollywood, 4/6-30; "PICASSO AT THE LAPIN AGILE," Ruskin Group Theatre, 4/7-9, 14-16, 21-23, 29, 30; LA OPERA, "PELLEAS AND MELISANDE," DEBUSSY, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 4/8, 13, 16; TOLEDO DIAMOND, Harvelle's, 4/9, 16, 23, 30; HOT CLUB OF LOS ANGELES, Cinema Bar, 4/10, 17, 24; EM, Harvelle's, 4/11, 18, 25; LA PHIL, BRAHMS #1, Disney Hall, 4/13, 15, 16; RICK SHEA, Cinema Bar, 4/13; LA PHIL CHAMBER, MOZART, BRAHMS, Disney Hall, 4/18; BLONDIE, Greek Theatre, 4/19; IGGY POP, Regent, 4/20, Hollywood Palladium, 4/27; NEIL YOUNG, STEPHEN STILLS, LUKAS NELSON, others, Greek Theatre, 4/22; WILLIE NELSON 90, Hollywood Bowl, 4/29, 30.

Charles Andrews has listened to a lot of music of all kinds, including more than 3,000 live shows. He has lived in Santa Monica for 37 years and wouldn't live anywhere else in the world. Really. Send love and/or rebuke to him at Charles Andrews

Paying for paradise? Hawaii mulls fees for ecotourism crush

AUDREY MCAVOY
Associated Press

Repairing coral reefs after boats run aground. Shielding native forest trees from a killer fungus outbreak. Patrolling waters for swimmers harassing dolphins and turtles.

Taking care of Hawaii's unique natural environment takes time, people and money. Now Hawaii wants tourists to help pay for it, especially because growing numbers are traveling to the islands to enjoy the beauty of its outdoors — including some lured by dramatic vistas they have seen on social media.

> "All I want to do, honestly, is to make travelers accountable and have the capacity to help pay for the impact that they have
>
> - Josh Green Democratic Gov.

"All I want to do, honestly, is to make travelers accountable and have the capacity to help pay for the impact that they have," Democratic Gov. Josh Green said earlier this year. "We get between nine and 10 million visitors a year, (but) we only have 1.4 million people living here. Those 10 million travelers should be helping us sustain our environment."

Hawaii lawmakers are considering legislation that would require tourists to pay for a yearlong license or pass to visit state parks and trails. They are still debating how much they would charge.

The governor campaigned last year on a platform of having all tourists pay a $50 fee to enter the state. Legislators think this would violate U.S. constitutional protections for free travel and have promoted their parks and trails approach instead. Either policy would be a first of its kind for any U.S. state.

Hawaii's leaders are following the example of other tourism hotspots that have imposed similar fees or taxes like Venice, Italy, and Ecuador's Galapagos Islands. The Pacific island nation of Palau, for example, charges arriving international passengers $100 to help it manage a sprawling marine sanctuary and promote ecotourism.

State Rep. Sean Quinlan, a Democrat who chairs the House Tourism Committee, said changing traveler patterns are one reason behind Hawaii's push. He said golf rounds per visitor per day have declined 30% over the past decade while hiking has increased 50%. People are also seeking out once-obscure sites that they have seen someone post on social media. The state doesn't have the money to manage all these places, he said.

"It's not like it was 20 years ago when you bring your family and you hit maybe one or two famous beaches and you go see Pearl Harbor. And that's the extent of it," Quinlan said. "These days it's like, well, you know, 'I saw this post on Instagram and there's this beautiful rope swing, a coconut tree.'"

"All these places that didn't have visitors now have visitors," he said.

Most state parks and trails are currently free. Some of the most popular ones already charge, like Diamond Head State Monument, which features a trail leading from the floor of a 300,000-year-old volcanic crater up to its summit. It gets 1 million visitors each year and costs $5 for each traveler.

A bill currently before the state House would require nonresidents 15 years and older visiting forests, parks, trails or "other natural area on state land" to buy an annual license online or via mobile app. Violators would pay a civil fine, though penalties wouldn't be imposed during a five-year education and transition period.

Residents with a Hawaii driver's license or other state identification would be exempt.

The Senate passed a version of the measure setting the fee at $50. But the House Finance Committee amended it last week to delete the dollar amount. Chair Kyle Yamashita, a Democrat, said the bill was "a work in progress." The bill has been scheduled for a House floor vote on Thursday.

Dawn Chang, chair of the state Board of Land and Natural Resources, told the committee that Hawaii's beaches are open to the public, so people probably wouldn't be cited there — and such details still need to be worked out.

Rep. Dee Morikawa, a Democrat on the committee, recommended that the state create a list of places that would require the license.

Green has indicated he's flexible about where the fee is imposed and that he's willing to support the Legislature's approach.

Supporters say there's no other place in the U.S. that imposes a similar fee on visitors. The closest equivalent may be the $34.50 tax Alaska charges to each cruise ship passenger.

Hawaii's conservation needs are great. Invasive pests are attacking the state's forests, including a fungal disease that is killing ohia, a tree unique to Hawaii that makes up the largest portion of the canopy in native wet forests.

Some conservation work directly responds to tourism. The harassment of wildlife like dolphins, turtles and Hawaiian monk seals is a recurring problem. Hikers can unknowingly bring invasive species into the forest on their boots. Snorkelers and boats trample on coral, adding stress to reefs already struggling with invasive algae and coral bleaching.

A 2019 report by Conservation International, a nonprofit environmental organization, estimated that total federal, state, county and private spending on conservation in Hawaii amounted to $535 million but the need was $886 million.

At the Diamond Head trail recently, some visitors said the fee would make the most sense for people who come to Hawaii often or

SEE **HAWAII** PAGE 8

HOUSING

FROM PAGE 1

facing no-fault evictions.

At the time, the program was described as a means of transitional justice for the primarily Black and Latino households who lost their homes in the Belmar Triangle and Pico Corridor through the City's use of eminent domain.

Applicants had about a month to enter the program and all 134 were reviewed by staff.

"Of the 134 total applications received, 11 applicants have been approved and have

received priority on the BMH waitlist," said a recent staff report. "However, 71 applicants (53%) did not respond with documentation or withdrew their application, and another 36 applicants were determined to be ineligible because they were not displaced or were displaced from outside of Santa Monica. Finally, 16 applications are still pending to allow more time for the applicants to find sufficient documentation regarding their family's historical displacement."

While no leases have been signed, nine households have been matched with a vacancy and are in some stage of the leasing process.

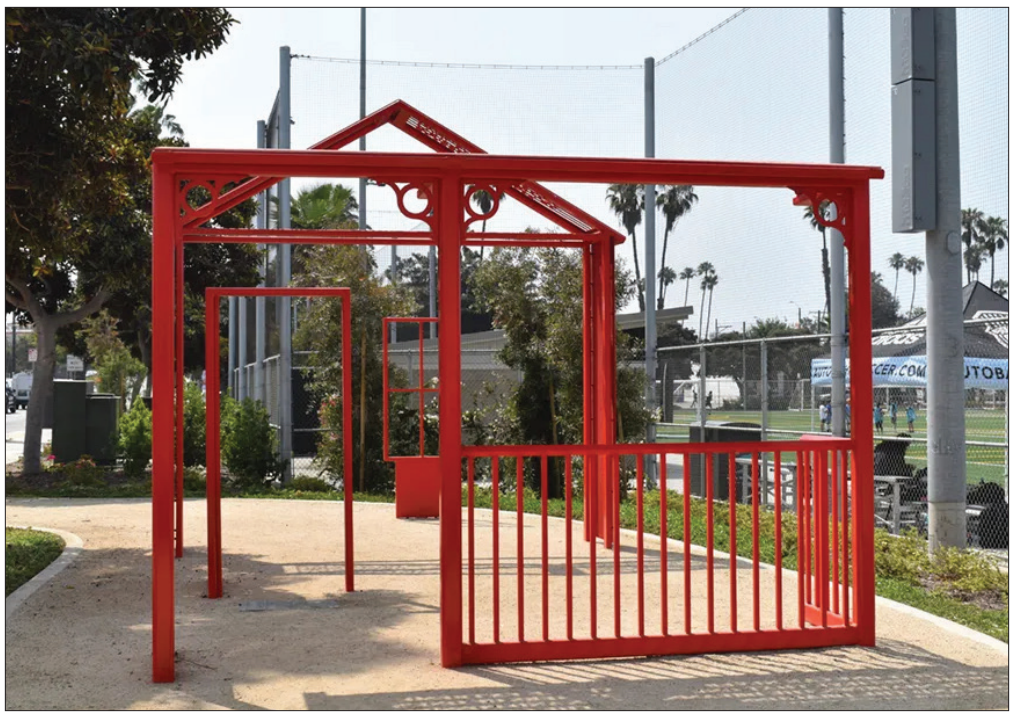
According to the report, finding the necessary documentation to prove displacement proved difficult

"Successful applicants were those able to provide documentation showing their family's address located within the areas impacted by the Civic Auditorium or I-10 Highway projects," said the report. "In addition to confirming the address eligibility, a historical document such as an entry in the Santa Monica City Directories was sometimes found with the help of the Santa Monica Public Library that confirmed historical residence. Lastly, successful applicants were able to provide documentation, such as a birth certificate, showing the applicant is a descendant of the original family member at that address."

Some applicants didn't know the exact address of their ancestors or were unable to find records of residency. Staff said similar programs have experienced similar challenges when it comes to finding appropriate documents and even when documentation is available, some possible applicants may prefer their current housing to an available unit on the affordable housing list.

While staff do not expect a surge in applications, they said the priority position of historically displaced households will remain in place and households may continue to apply for the BMH waitlist through the existing process (displaced@santamonica.gov) used for other priority applications (Ellis Act evictions, Code Enforcement) until the 100 eligible applicants are identified.

editor@smdp.com



SMDP Photo

BELMAR: The City has installed a sculpture as part of a memorial to the predominantly black neighborhood that was destroyed.

CRIME

FROM PAGE 1

office said their officers had responded to a call for a hit and run and while there was an extensive, if unsuccessful, search for suspects, they had not classified the incident as a carjacking by press time on Wednesday.

The suspect descriptions were similar in both incidents and SMPD said they are working with LAPD to determine if the two crimes are related.

FOUR ARRESTED FOR ARMED ROBBERY

Later that night in an unrelated case, a man and a woman were robbed at knife point while they were on the Pier at about 11 p.m.

The suspects, all men, two of them juveniles, took the woman's purse and fled eastbound up the Pier ramp. Responding officers were able to track the victim's cellphone to Tongva Park and immediately established a perimeter around the park where two suspects were taken into custody as they attempted to exit the perimeter.

A third suspect, who had already made it outside of the perimeter, was taken into custody when he was observed loitering nearby. The fourth suspect was observed hiding in the western edge of the park. Additional evidence from the crime was located in the park and on the suspects. All four suspects were positively identified by the victims and were taken into custody.

Anyone with information about either of these crimes to call our non-emergency Dispatch line at 310-458-8491 or the Watch Commander at 310-458-8427.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

New York

Stormy Daniels Must Pay $122,000 in Trump Legal Bills

Stormy Daniels must pay nearly $122,000 of Donald Trump's legal fees that were racked up in connection with the porn actor's failed defamation lawsuit, an appeals court ruled Tuesday.

The decision in California came at about the same time that Trump became the only ex-president to be charged with a crime. Trump pleaded not guilty in a New York City courtroom to a 34-count felony indictment accusing him falsifying business records in a scheme to hush up allegations of extramarital affairs with Daniels and Playboy model Karen McDougal that broke during his first White House run.

Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, alleges she had an affair with Trump in 2006 and was paid $130,000 as part of a nondisclosure agreement days before the 2016 presidential election.

She sued him for defamation after he dismissed her claims of being threatened to keep quiet about the tryst as a "total con job." A judge threw out the case in 2018.

On Tuesday, a commissioner for the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Trump's attorneys "reasonably spent" more than 183 hours on an appeal of the case but denied a request for another $5,150 in other fees because it wasn't itemized.

In all, Daniels has been ordered to pay more than $600,000 in Trump's legal fees, tweeted Harmeet Dillon, one of his attorneys in the case.

That includes some $300,000 in attorney's fees that Daniels previously was ordered to pay.

After a federal appeals court upheld that award last year, Daniels stated: "I will go to jail before I pay a penny."

Messages seeking comment from her attorney, Oklahoma lawyer Clark Brewster, weren't immediately returned after hours Tuesday.

SUBMITTED BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

CRIME WATCH

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 26, AT 11:20 AM

Two SMPD officers responded to a theft call from Target at 420 Broadway. The Loss Prevention staff explained that the suspect in the latest incident was the same from 40 prior incidents over the last year. On this occasion, the suspect, identified as Gabriel Adrian Ibarra, walked into the store, proceeded to take a stack of jeans from the clothing section and exited without paying. He stopped at a public trash bin, removed the bag, dumped all the trash out onto the curb and placed the stolen jeans inside before leaving the area on a motorized bicycle. Officers located Ibarra in Palisades Park with the trash bag in his hand. He was arrested for grand theft and possession of methamphetamine.



FOSTER

FROM PAGE 2

SOCIAL SECURITY 'A POTENTIAL LIFELINE'

Bryan's bill would require counties to screen all youth for eligibility within two months of entering foster care. It also would require the county or state agencies to notify the youth's family and attorneys when they apply for those benefits and to provide a regular accounting of the money received on a child's behalf.

Marisa Lopez-Scott, staff attorney at the Children's Law Center which is sponsoring Bryan's bill, said this would help more children or their families continue receiving Social Security benefits even after leaving foster care. Those receiving supplemental security income could get it for the rest of their lives.

"It is a potential lifeline," Lopez-Scott said.

Child welfare agencies should receive the money on behalf of foster youth only as a matter of last resort, according to federal regulations and state law.

Both list preferred alternatives: a child's relative, an adult sibling or even a family friend who has demonstrated an interest in the child's well-being. Child welfare agencies are last on the list.

But California counties have made themselves the recipients even when other relatives were available.

FIDUCIARY DUTIES

That's what happened in Baca's grandchildren's case and in the case of another set of two children now suing San Diego County.

The children, two preteen sisters who have been in and out of foster care since they were 4 and 6, are now with an adoptive mother, Amy, who asked to be identified only by her first name to protect the children's identity.

The girls' biological father died a few months before the second time the girls landed in foster care. Knowing their biological mother had been receiving survivor's benefits on behalf of the children, Amy contacted the county and the Social Security Administration, to ensure another relative would get the girls' benefits when they were in foster care.

"The kids are going to need those eventually," she said. "I thought the county would collect them but put them in trust for the kids."

As their foster parent at the time, Amy wasn't eligible to hold onto the benefits for the children. But she said the county never contacted the girls' adult sibling or great aunt and instead applied to receive the money itself. The county collected it for about a year, stopping after the adoption went through.

'MOST SUITABLE PAYEE'

Social Security spokesperson Patricia Raymond declined to comment on this case or Baca's. She said that in cases where it must appoint someone to receive benefits on a child's behalf, the agency "will investigate and appoint the most suitable payee."

The Children's Advocacy Institute, based at the University of San Diego law school, has sued the county for Amy's adopted children's benefits in San Diego County Superior Court. The suit accuses the county of violating its fiduciary duty toward the children, arguing that using the funds as reimbursement was not in the girls' best interests.

San Diego County has not responded to the lawsuit in court and did not respond to a request for comment.

Amy and her husband now receive the benefits for the girls, ages 11 and 13. She said they use it for the children's medical needs that the state doesn't cover and they save the rest for college or other expenses when the girls turn 18.

Amy said she wants the county to pay back what it took – totaling just under $25,000 – so she can add it to the girls' fund.

"The ultimate goal for our family is to change policy," Amy said. "We don't want any other child to have to have this experience. These children, more than any, need this money."



Photo by Kristian Carreon for CalMatters

BENEFITS: Patricia Baca inside her home in Vista on March 31, 2023. Baca, who adopted her late son's children, has unsuccessfully tried to get their benefits returned.

TRANSIT

FROM PAGE 5

28% to 50%.

The financial crisis should not come as a shock to the state, according to Eli Lipmen, executive director of rider advocacy group Move LA. "We knew this was coming," he said. "We're in a new paradigm where we need to rethink how we fund public transit because it can't necessarily be funded by a farebox."

The California State Transportation Agency said it is "aware of the challenges that transit operators are facing as the state transitions to a post-pandemic transit environment" and while Newsom's budget does not include any money for transit operations, it hopes to continue working toward solutions that "will preserve and improve the state's transit system and work toward long-term financial stability."

It's typically an easier sell for agencies to score funding for expansion projects from the state. But the Legislature could also change the law to temporarily allow some project and equipment funding to be used for operations, as the Legislative Analyst's Office suggested in its February report.

That doesn't include shifting any high-speed rail funding, though, because the voter-approved bond measure that funds it can only be used for that purpose.

There's also the option of local ballot measures to increase funding, but they take time, and voter approval isn't guaranteed.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission, which serves nine Bay Area counties, may put a regional transit funding measure before voters in 2026. (That worked in Los Angeles County in 2016, when voters overwhelmingly approved a permanent half-cent sales tax measure expected to raise $120 billion over 40 years).

But just filling short-term funding gaps won't be enough.

Researchers, lawmakers and advocates agree that the future of public transit is tied to the recovery of downtowns. That means revising zoning and development laws — for example, building housing closer to transit, and easing parking requirements that increase the cost of those units.

In downtown San Francisco, for instance, the office vacancy rate shot up to nearly 28%, and that trend isn't likely to end soon. One option would be to convert office space into housing, though that has its own set of roadblocks.

Some also call for fixes to the transit funding model, itself.

According to a February report from UCLA's Institute of Transportation Studies, although populations and mobility patterns have changed since the Transportation Development Act was enacted in 1971, the law and its related programs have kept the same eligibility conditions based on counties and their populations in 1970. The outdated population numbers may also explain why transit agencies have increased in number: three of California's four largest regions have fewer people per agency than the national average.

At the legislative hearing in February, state Sen. Aisha Wahab, a Fremont Democrat on the transportation committee, inquired about consolidation of transit agencies. UCLA's researchers also called for better coordination of State Transit Assistance funding, and revamping how agencies are evaluated.

But former U.S. Rep. Doug Ose, who ran in the 2021 gubernatorial recall election, questions why any government should fund a program that "very few people want."

"We might as well be buying a horse and buggy for everyone," he tweeted Tuesday. "Public transit is no longer about moving people," but has "become a jobs program for bus drivers no one needs."

For transit to be a viable and attractive option, there are also passenger-oriented changes that have been proposed or put in place: easier transfers between different agencies, quicker payment options such as Google or Apple Pay, and door-to-door vans and other "microtransit" options to compete with ride-sharing companies.

Move LA also advocates for free fares for students to "create this next generation of transit riders who can sustain the system going forward," Lipmen said.

A few agencies have already begun to deploy more police officers or mental health counselors on buses, though some debate the merits of increased police presence. One bill introduced this session would require large agencies to start collecting data on harassment of riders.

Assemblymember Laura Friedman, a Democrat from Burbank and chairperson of the transportation committee, introduced a bill that aims to make sure social service providers that receive state homelessness grants address the needs of homeless individuals using public transit.

She also introduced a bill that creates a task force to research and make recommendations on transit funding.

"We need to reimagine our stations, reimagine how we finance transit and find ways of building in public support," she said. "It's past time."

HAWAII

FROM PAGE 6

who might be staying for several weeks. Some said $50 was too high, especially for those who view a walk through nature as a low-cost activity.

"For a large family that wants to have the experience with the kids, that would be a lot of money," said Sarah Tripp, who was visiting Hawaii with her husband and two of their three children from Marquette, Michigan.

Katrina Kain, an English teacher visiting from Puerto Rico, said she thought the fee would "sting" some people but would be fine so long as it was well-advertised.

"If tourists were informed about it, then they would be OK with it," she said. "If that was a surprise $50 fee, it would be a pretty lousy surprise."

The legislation says proceeds would go into a "visitor impact fee special fund" managed by the state Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Carissa Cabrera, project manager for the Hawaii Green Fee, a coalition of nonprofit groups supporting the measure, said this would ensure the state has money for conservation regardless of budget swings.

Mufi Hanneman, president and CEO of the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association, which represents hotels, backs the bill but said Hawaii must carefully monitor how the money is used.

"The last thing that you want to see is restrooms that haven't been fixed, trails or pathways that haven't been repaved or what have you — and year in, year out it remains the same and people are paying a fee," Hanneman said.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 6)

You'll spend a good amount of time and creativity making your environment streamlined, functional and cool. Your brilliant ideas about how to redesign the systems and structures will take time to execute, but you'll see amazing differences season to season and eventually wind up in a whole new world of your own making. More highlights: You'll assemble an expert team and take on several projects together. You'll express yourself with eloquence before a large group. You'll have comfortable love in abundance.
Cancer and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 13, 3, 38, 4 and 17.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). While it's fun to hear the very thing you wanted to, getting the exact feedback you desire is a rare occurrence. Provide it for yourself. You're the one most qualified. You don't need approval when you already approve of yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Don't be concerned with what the other person is trying to say. Everything said is bound to other contexts and therefore incomplete. To listen well is to listen without jumping to fill in the blanks.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You may look confident to an outsider, but you're inwardly wondering if you're in over your head. It's OK if you are. This is more of a swimming pool than an ocean. Hold on to the side until you get your bearings.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll get an opportunity with a caveat that could make or break the deal for you. What do you really want? If you're willing to lose all, you'll probably walk away with exactly what you wanted in the first place.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Dig to the root of an issue. It will be different from what you assume it to be. Feel your way there. When it doesn't make sense, let it stay as nonsense. This one doesn't belong in the intellectual realm.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll walk a fine line between being direct and being harsh and manage to deliver a pointed message with a soft touch — impressive! This is a skill you'll be admired and possibly employed for.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Some say friendship with yourself is needed before you can be friends with anyone else, but it's hard to know how to befriend yourself without a model. Whether you need it or not, you'll have such a person today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Relax while you can. Now you're floating down a quiet stream, but you don't know what kind of rapids await just beyond the river's bend. Soon it will be time to brace yourself for the excitement.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The lines of territory and responsibility are like boundaries on a map. It's easier to agree on where they are in theory. Things are a little different on the ground. Stay very cool, calm and collected and all will work out.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your talent for organizing will extend to projects, items and people. You'll sort and categorize. This puts everyone at ease. People know where things are and what they're expected to do. You lead like a pro.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your priorities have changed, and you'll adjust your thinking to accommodate a new hierarchy. With goal-setting, scale makes all the difference. Your aim is big enough to excite you and motivate you, but not so big as to be unattainable.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Some memories come back sweetly, others come cringingly back and then there are the ones that never come back at all. You can make sure today's events make the round trip by adding something strange, bold and novel.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

Sudoku

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

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

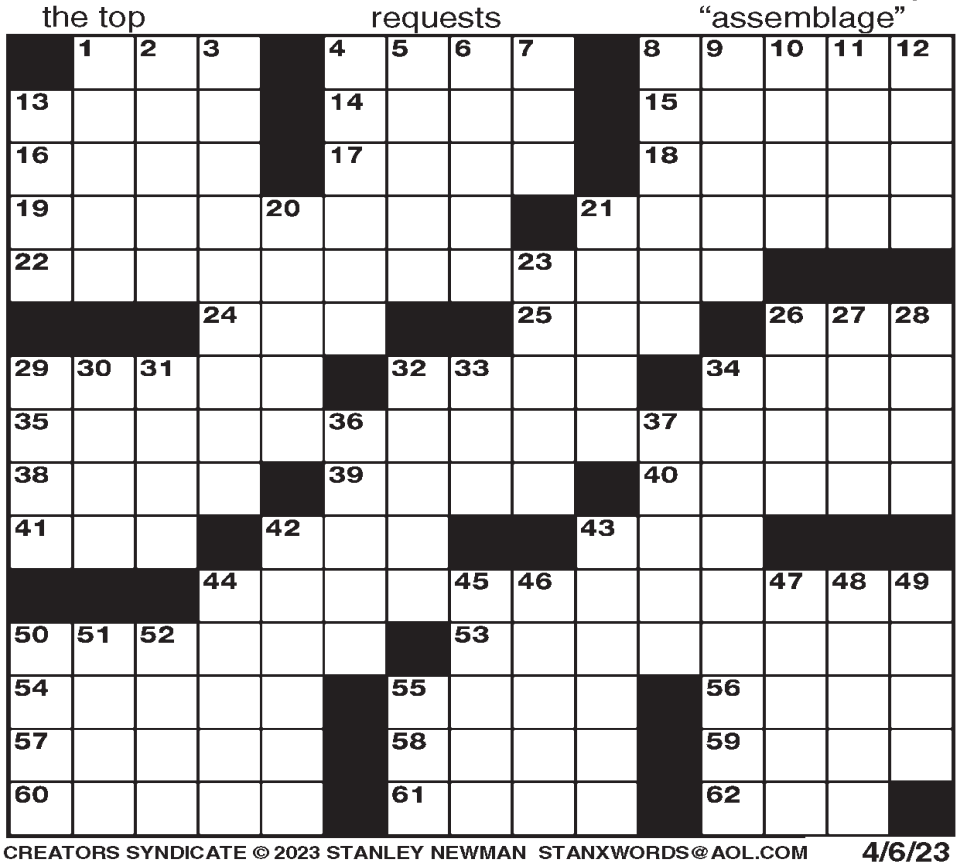
2	9					4		8
		7		4		2		1
	5		7		8		6	
9					6	5	1	
		4		3		8		
	1	2	8					7
	4		3		5		8	
8		5		9		7		
1		3					9	5

Newsday Crossword

THE RIGHT STUFF by Mark McClain
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Fellow, informally
4 Wicked stuff
8 Spruce (up)
13 *Bovino macho*
14 Successor of Claudius
15 Tonkin Delta city
16 Almay alternative
17 Yale Bowl regulars
18 Far below par
19 Tossed stuff
21 Brush off
22 Having a vision
24 Setting of the sun
25 Conniving
26 Sorority letter
29 Sales talk
32 Marathon measure
34 Dues, for instance
35 One suited for higher education
38 Unite (with)
39 Capacity
40 Ultimately cost
41 Dog show category
42 Formal assurance
43 Roadhouse
44 What to read on the AP app
50 Roll out before hoisting
53 Give up
54 Corporate shuffle
55 "You lookin' __?"
56 "That's the game!"
57 Aesopian source of gold
58 Tinsel time
59 Splinter group
60 Wound down
61 Starting
62 Triage ctrs.

DOWN
1 Studio product
2 Stood up
3 With few wasted words
4 Cabinet department
5 South African grassland
6 Coming from Cork
7 With 45 Down, Silicon Valley city
8 Overgrown at the top
9 Board game group of 16
10 Manual details
11 Gospel group
12 Data record
13 Little bits
20 Instep neighbor
21 Coastal dent
23 State religion of Morocco
26 Strap that sounds like showers
27 Simmer, say
28 Nobel Peace Center city
29 "Get lost!"
30 Ball-striking sport
31 In a bad way
32 Certain dinner requests
33 "If u ask me ..."
34 Many a burger place
36 Angry murmur
37 One with a Sesame Street address
42 Bordered (on)
43 Quotable "fear" follower
44 Consume very slowly
45 See 7 Down
46 Shakespearean suitor
47 Descend
48 Big pictures
49 Email folder
50 Lobby for
51 Really bright
52 Provisions
55 Suffix meaning "assemblage"

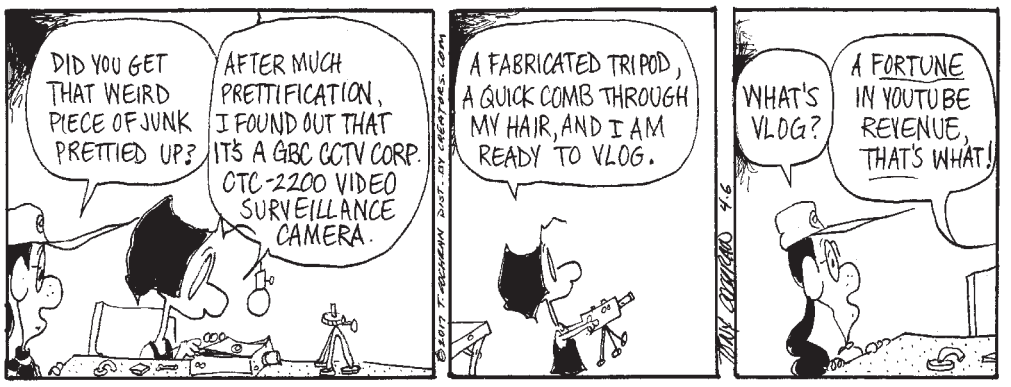


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MORE OF STAN'S CROSSWORDS! Play FREE from Stan's archives of Easy, Hard and Sunday puzzles at: tinyurl.com/stan-newman-crosswords

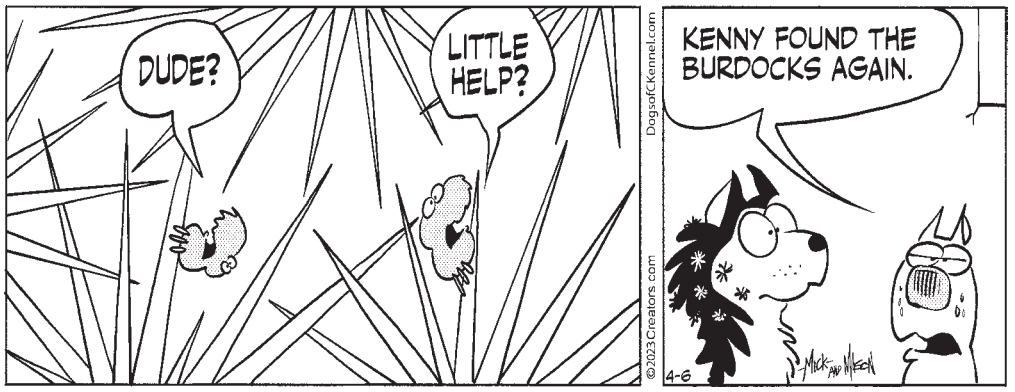
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



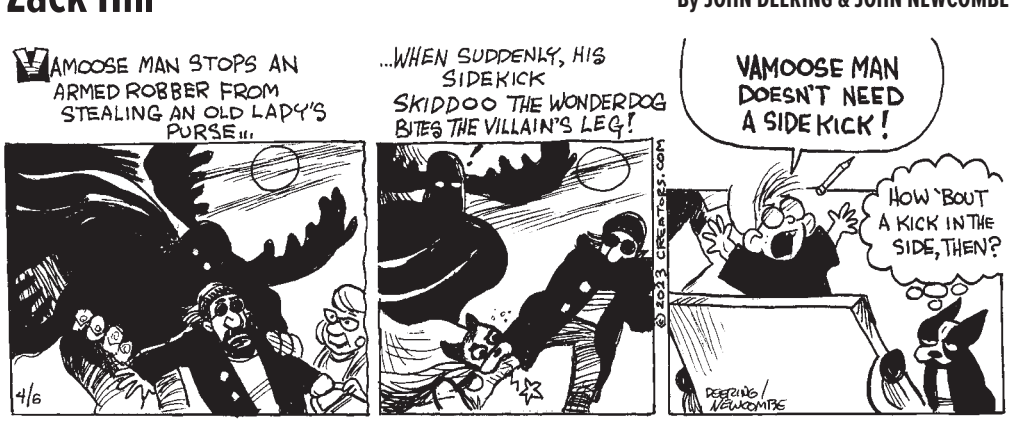
Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



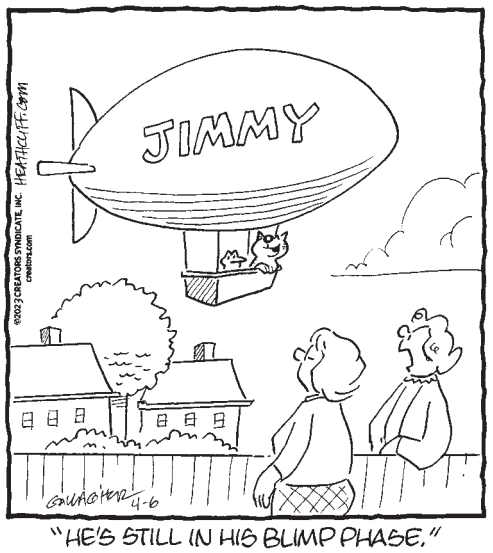
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

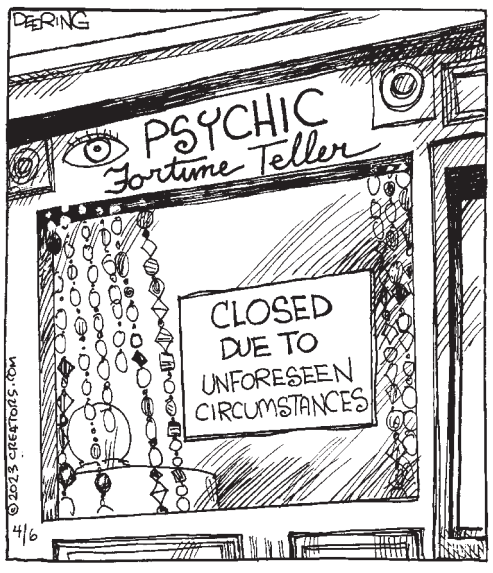
By PETER GALLAGHER



"HE'S STILL IN HIS BLIMP PHASE."

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING



FIND THE WORDS

This is a theme puzzle with the subject stated below. Find the listed words in the grid. (They may run in any direction but always in a straight line. Some letters are used more than once.) Ring each word as you find it and when you have completed the puzzle, there will be 16 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

© australianwordgames.com.au 5806

The colonial days

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

Axes
Bass
Bays
Boat
Burke
Canberra
Colony
Cook
Crime
Desert
Dunes
Endure
Escape
Eyre
Fitzroy
Franklin
Free
Gangs
Gold
Heat
Hume
Imports
King
Mapped
Mawson
Moyes
Navy
Obey
Oxley
Pioneers
Plan
Poor
Rain
Return
Risks
Seamen
Settler
Sheep
Shot
Sirius
Spade
Stuart
Sydney Cove
Todd
Tough
Whip
Wills
Wool

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.

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THURSDAY | APRIL 6

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
The Government Affairs Committee meets monthly to discuss legislative and public policy issues of importance to Chamber members, and recommend any positions on those issues to be taken by the Board of Directors. https://members.smchamber.com/events/details/government-affairs-committee-04-06-2023-18627

FRIDAY | APRIL 7

LET THE CROWS COME
Evoking mythography and ancestry, Ashwini Ramaswamy's Let the Crows Come uses the metaphor of crows as messengers for the living and guides for the departed. In a series of solos/trios, the Indian dance form Bharatanatyam is deconstructed and recontextualized with collaborators Alanna Morris and Berit Ahlgren. The Broad Stage 1310 11th St. Santa Monica, California 90401

SATURDAY | APRIL 8

SEA STAR FEEDING
Come learn about the diet of our local sea stars and help serve them their favorite lunch. Visitors to Heal the Bay Aquarium can help assist aquarium staff as they feed the sea stars in our Tide Pool Touch Tanks, every Saturday at 1pm and 3pm. Heal the Bay Aquarium 1600 Ocean Front Walk, Santa Monica, CA https://healthebay.org/event/sea-star-feeding-saturday-2023-04-08/

SUNDAY | APRIL 9

LADERA HEARTS PRESENTS : CULT CLASSICS
Ladera Hearts Presents: Cult Classics - A monthly celebration of the most groundbreaking R&B and Hip Hop albums of all time. Experience them played top to bottom in the club April album of the month: @mariah Carey - The emancipation of Mimi Sounds by @rosegawd hosted by @creat1ve & @kylethevirgo Doors at 6 pm $5 presale, $10 at-the-door. Townhouse Venice 52 Windward Ave Venice, CA

AL FRESCO EASTER BRUNCH
Brunch al fresco alongside sweeping views at Calabra's breezy rooftop oasis this Easter. From festive specials to brunch favorites, indulge in seasonally-inspired fare and garden-fresh cocktails. Calabra 700 Wilshire Blvd, Santa Monica, CA 90401. For Reservations visit https://www.opentable.com/

MONDAY | APRIL 10

DROP-IN PLAYTIME
Come enjoy a weekly drop-in playtime at the library for creative play with LEGO-style bricks, traditional building blocks, and board books. Venice - Abbot Kinney Memorial Branch Library 501 S. Venice Boulevard, Venice, CA

TUESDAY | APRIL 11

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
The City Council is made up of seven members elected at-large for staggered four-year terms. Every two years, after each election, the City Council selects one of its members to serve as Mayor and another to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore. The City Council also sits as the following bodies for the City of Santa Monica: Housing Authority ,Parking Authority, Public, Financing, Redevelopment Successor Agency and Audit Subcommittee. The City Council meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month starting at 5:30 P.M., in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, California.

WEDNESDAY | APRIL 12

MEN'S VOLLEYBALL - MOORPARK COLLEGE
Games held at SMC Pavilion. Admission: Free for SMC students (with current ID); $5 for adults & teens age 13 & up; $3 for seniors age 55 & up & youth ages 3 to 12; free for kids under 3.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT FOOD TRUCKS
Located one block from the beach, in beautiful Santa Monica, in the driveway/parking lot of the California Heritage Museum at 2612 Main Street (on the corner of Main Street and Ocean Park Boulevard). Available are a variety of 4 or more Food Trucks, each hosting a different type of cuisine. Each week sample fish tacos, lobster rolls, sliders, sushi, Korean BBQ, and more.... trucks representing every possible nationality and cuisine are chosen each week. For additional information, please contact the California Heritage Museum's staff directly by emailing the museum at: mail@californiaheritagemuseum.org or calling (310) 392-8537.

THURSDAY | APRIL 13

ROCK 'N COMEDY
Meet at Rock N Pies Pizza Co. for a carefully curated comedy show on the second Thursday of the every month and watch comedians from NBC, Netflix, Amazon Prime, BET and more! Doors open at 8:30 p.m. Tickets are $10 online and $15 at the door. https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rock-n-comedy-tickets-253756000027

FRIDAY | APRIL 14

SANTA MONICA BEAD & DESIGN SHOW
The Santa Monica Bead & Design Show takes place April 14-16 at the Fairmont Miramar Hotel and presents over 175 artisan exhibits. In sync with the spectacular setting, the show creates a dynamic and interactive shopping experience, with a diverse selection of beads and artisan supplies, jewelry, one-of-a-kind art wear, and antiquities. Fairmont Miramar 101 Wilshire Blvd Santa Monica, CA

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



SURF REPORT

WATER TEMP: **53.1**

THURSDAY *POOR TO FAIR*	**SURF:**	1-2ft Knee to thigh	Trending small scale but conditions look clean for the morning.
FRIDAY *POOR TO FAIR*	**SURF:**	1-2ft Knee to thigh	Small and clean — may not even be rideable. Am offshores.

WEATHER

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 70. North wind 5 to 10 mph becoming west southwest in the morning.
Thursday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 52. West wind 5 to 10 mph becoming light and variable.
Friday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 66. North wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south in the morning.
Friday Night: Patchy fog after 11pm. Otherwise, mostly cloudy, with a low around 52.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2023/04/06	Thu	04:12 AM	0.06	L
2023/04/06	Thu	10:13 AM	4.40	H
2023/04/06	Thu	4:01 PM	0.63	L
2023/04/06	Thu	10:14 PM	5.30	H
2023/04/07	Fri	04:49 AM	-0.17	L
2023/04/07	Fri	10:52 AM	4.04	H
2023/04/07	Fri	4:23 PM	1.00	L
2023/04/07	Fri	10:38 PM	5.44	H
2023/04/08	Sat	05:30 AM	-0.30	L
2023/04/08	Sat	11:38 AM	3.60	H
2023/04/08	Sat	4:45 PM	1.40	L
2023/04/08	Sat	11:07 PM	5.48	H
2023/04/09	Sun	06:18 AM	-0.30	L
2023/04/09	Sun	12:34 PM	3.14	H
2023/04/09	Sun	5:08 PM	1.82	L
2023/04/09	Sun	11:41 PM	5.40	H
2023/04/10	Mon	07:15 AM	-0.20	L
2023/04/10	Mon	1:52 PM	2.73	H

DAILY LOTTERY

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

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 4/3
16 30 31 54 68
Power#: 1
Jackpot: 170 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 4/4
1 37 45 62 64
Mega#: 4
Jackpot: 414 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 4/1
2 9 11 13 46
Mega#: 9
Jackpot: 47 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 4/4
1 9 18 23 30

Daily 3
Draw Date: 4/4
EVENING: 6 2 5

Draw Date: 4/4
MIDDAY: 9 0 7

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 4/4
1st: 09 - Winning Spirit
2nd: 06 - Whirl Win
3rd: 07 - Eureka
Race Time: 1:49.79

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"Students shouldn't have to struggle to succeed."

- Sharlyne Massillon
SMC Basic Needs Manager

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