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**2 Oil prices**  
Will increase

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Trump's impact



**5 Pepperdine presents**  
Award winning musical

**6 Gas Prices**  
Where to fill up

Volume 25 Issue 100

WEDNESDAY 4/8/26

smdp.com

## L.A. County Supervisors move to combat Home Health, Hospice fraud amid nationwide crackdown

**MATTHEW HALL**  
Daily Press Editor

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted Tuesday to strengthen oversight and enforcement against fraud in the

home health and hospice industry, advancing a motion that calls for greater coordination between local, state and federal agencies as prosecutors describe Southern California as the epicenter of a national crisis in Medicare fraud.

The motion, introduced by Supervisors Lindsey P. Horvath and Kathryn Barger, directs the county Department of Public Health to report back with recommendations

SEE **HOSPICE** PAGE 11

## Knife wielding man arrested at the Pier

**MATTHEW HALL**  
Daily Press Editor

Santa Monica police arrested a man Monday night on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon and criminal threats following a confrontation at the Santa Monica Pier.

Officers responded at approximately 9:30 p.m. to a report of an assault near the Bubba Gump stairway, where witnesses said a man had been behaving erratically, yelling at bystanders and confronting people without

SEE **STABBING** PAGE 8

## Wild Birds Unlimited store up for sale as founder plans retirement

**MAAZ ALIN**  
SMDP Staff Writer

A beloved nature-focused small business is looking for a new owner to carry on its mission of connecting the community with the natural world.

Julie Rensink Hanson, owner of the Wild Birds Unlimited franchise in Santa Monica, has announced she is selling the store after more than eight years in operation. Hanson, a 25-year Santa Monica resident, said she is planning to retire but hopes the business will continue under new ownership.

"We bring people and

nature together and we do it with excellence," Hanson said. "Customers love to come into our store and watch our live-feed nature cams."

The store, which Hanson opened in 2018, has built a loyal following among both experienced birders and those new to backyard birdfeeding. It serves customers across the greater Los Angeles area, from apartment dwellers to homeowners on larger estates. Hanson said a typical customer might be a retiree discovering a new hobby, someone working from

SEE **BIRDS** PAGE 8 **SALE:** Wild Birds Unlimited Santa Monica seeks new owner as founder retires after 8+ years.



Courtesy photo

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# Stopgap measures aren't enough to halt rising prices as the world scrambles for more oil

Global leaders have been scrambling to contain the rising cost of oil and gasoline since the start of the Iran war, which took a record amount of oil off the market when tankers full of crude were stranded in the Persian Gulf and military strikes damaged refineries, pipelines and export terminals.

Hoping to ease some pain for consumers, President Donald Trump and other heads of state have been pulling on various levers, launching more oil on the market in a bid to calm the chaos.

A group of 32 nations that are members of the International Energy Agency began releasing the largest volume of emergency oil reserves in its history: 400 million barrels. Trump is tapping into oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve while lifting sanctions on Russian and Iranian crude and temporarily waiving the Jones Act, a maritime law that requires ships carrying goods between U.S. ports to be U.S.-flagged.

But despite those maneuvers, crude oil has soared well past \$100 a barrel and gasoline is selling for \$4.14 a gallon on average in the U.S. While the stopgaps are helping, they're not adding up to enough oil to replace what's stranded, experts say.

"They're all incremental," said Mark Barteau, professor of chemical engineering and chemistry at Texas A&M University. "You're talking about these different patches being at the level of maybe 1 to 2 million barrels a day each, and you've got to get to 20, so it's hard to see those actually adding up to the numbers that are needed. And then the

“

But all of that spare capacity is also bottled up inside the Persian Gulf right now and it can't get to market either

- Jim Krane

”

question is, how long can you sustain those?”

## TRAPPED OIL

Before the war began, roughly 15 million barrels of crude oil and 5 million barrels of oil products passed daily through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, amounting to about 20% of global oil consumption, according to the International Energy Agency.

In addition to that loss, some oil producing nations in the Middle East have halted oil production because they can't ship fuel out of the Gulf and their storage tanks are full. That's taken about 10 million barrels per day off the market, the IEA said.

Then there are the eight countries around the Persian Gulf that together hold about 50% of global oil reserves. Under normal circumstances, they coordinate closely to raise or lower their output to keep prices steady, said Jim Krane, energy research fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute. Usually Saudi Arabia steps in to bring spare oil to market and calm things down, he said.

"But all of that spare capacity is also bottled up inside the Persian Gulf right now and it can't get to market either," Krane said. "So the main emergency response system that we have is also blocked."

The IEA said in its recent report that "the resumption of transit through the Strait of Hormuz is the single most important action to return to stable oil and gas flows and reduce the strains on markets and prices."

Barring that, world leaders are grasping for ways to free up more oil.

## LIMITATIONS OF SHORT-TERM FIXES

Some nations have found workarounds to move oil out of the Gulf. Saudi Arabia is using its East-West pipeline, which stretches from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, to transfer about 5 million barrels per day out of the Gulf, said Michael Lynch, distinguished fellow at Energy Policy Research Foundation, a non-

partisan institution focused on energy and economics. But the nation was already using that pipeline to transport oil, so it doesn't have a lot of spare room to move oil from stranded tankers.

Trump also temporarily lifted sanctions on approximately 140 million barrels of Iranian oil that was already in transit. But that didn't add oil to the market — it just widened the pool of potential buyers, said Daniel Sternoff, senior fellow at the Columbia Center on Global Energy Policy.

Typically, most Iranian oil was bought by private refiners in China, who purchased it at a steep discount, Sternoff said. But with sanctions lifted, others could scramble to buy the oil, which in turn raises its price to the benefit of Iran, he said.

"As soon as you are moving to waive sanctions on your adversary with whom you're fighting a military conflict, to do something in their benefit, it just shows you that you are running out of options to try to prevent a rise in the price of oil," Sternoff said.

The decision to lift sanctions on Russian oil could have more impact, because Russia had been storing unpurchased oil in tankers, Sternoff said. "By waiving sanctions, it will allow those barrels to clear."

Trump's temporary waiver of the Jones Act to allow foreign ships to temporarily transport goods between U.S. ports could potentially help ease natural gas prices by enabling companies to more efficiently ship

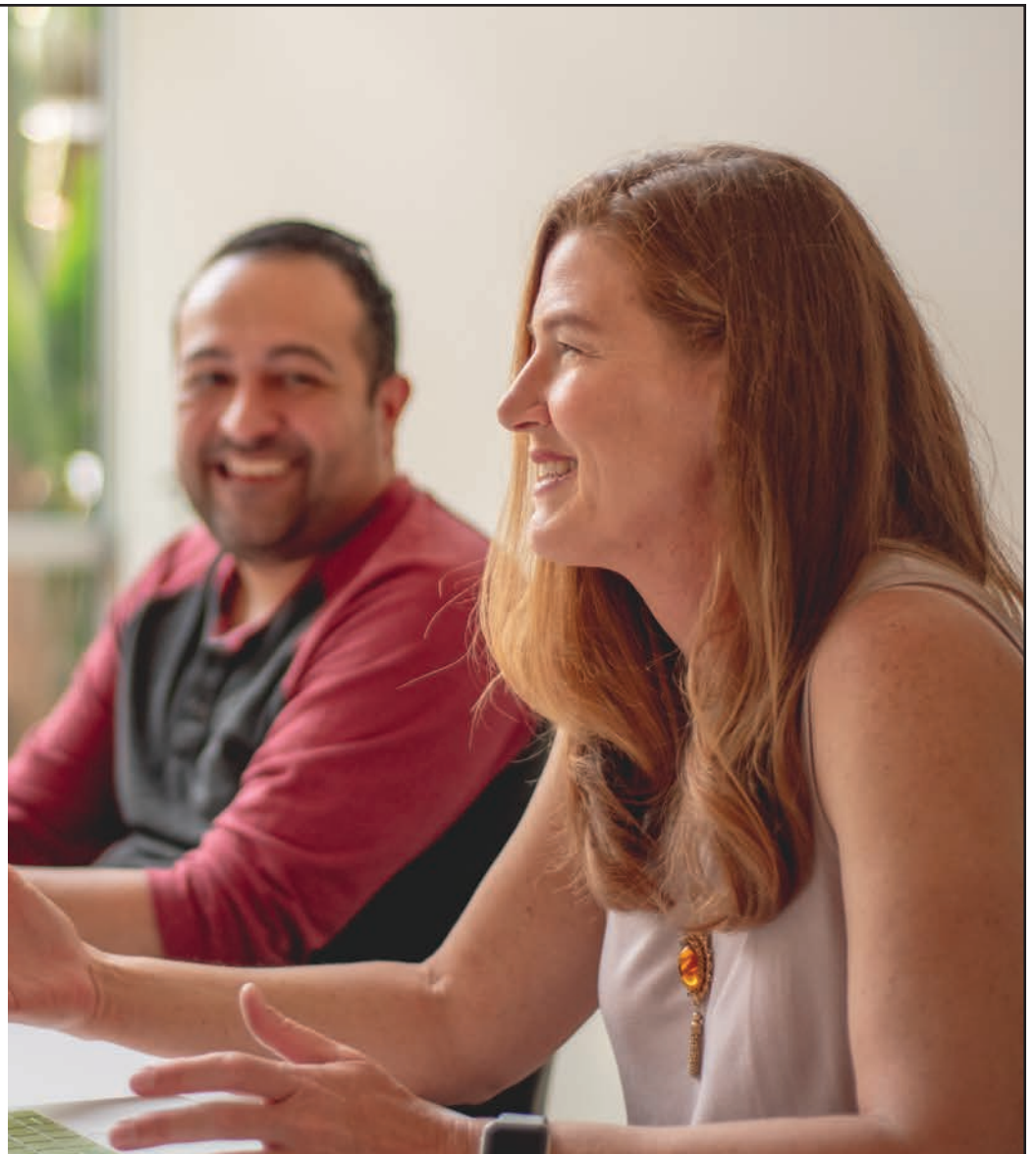
SEE OIL PAGE 8

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GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

# Trump endorsing Hilton may help keep California governorship in Democratic hands

For weeks, leaders of California's Democratic Party have worried aloud about having so many Democrats running for governor that two Republicans could finish first and second in the state's June 2 primary election, thus guaranteeing election of a GOP governor in November.

Late Sunday, Democratic worrywarts got some relief from an unexpected source — President Donald Trump.

Trump endorsed Republican Steve Hilton, a former television commentator, over Chad Bianco, the Riverside County sheriff, reducing the likelihood of a 1-2 GOP outcome, which would be the only way a Republican governor could be elected in deeply blue California.

"I have known and respected Steve Hilton, who is running for Governor of California, for many years," Trump said in a posting on his Truth Social. "He is a truly fine man, one who has watched as this once great State has gone to Hell. Gavin Newsom and the Democrats have done an absolutely horrendous job. People are fleeing, crime is increasing, and Taxes are the highest of any State in the Country, maybe the World. Steve can turn it around, before it is too late, and, as President, I will help him to do so!"

Hilton, of course, was pleased, reciting his own litany of woes about California in a statement and concluding, "I'm grateful for the president's support. Together, we can turn things around and make California truly golden again."

It is the latest chapter in what was already the weirdest campaign for governor in recent history. Who would have thought that Donald Trump would, perhaps unwittingly, help Democrats dodge the embarrassment of allowing a Republican to win the governorship?

The Democrats' own recent poll found Hilton and Bianco virtually tied, with percentage voter support in the mid-teens, while the eight serious Democratic candidates were no higher than 10% each. Given the size of field — there will be 61 names on the primary ballot — it was possible, although still not probable, that the two GOP candidates could each

garner about 20% of the June 2 vote to advance to November under California's top-two primary system.

Trump's intervention makes that scenario less likely because it will tend to consolidate Republican voters behind Hilton. But while it could help Hilton finish either first or second, without Bianco he would be an almost certain loser in November to whichever Democrat made the ballot.

Trump may have also relieved pressure on Democrats to surreptitiously help one of the Republicans to leap ahead, so as to avoid a 1-2 GOP outcome. That strategy is what Democrat Adam Schiff used in a U.S. Senate race two years ago, indirectly helping Republican Steve Garvey finish second in the primary, thereby avoiding a general election duel with Democrat Katie Porter.

"Trump's endorsement of Steve Hilton likely frees up tens of millions of dollars for Democratic groups who would have otherwise had to spend heavily to elevate one of the two leading GOP gubernatorial candidates to avoid a Democratic lockout," Rob Pyers, of the California Target Book, posted on X.

All of this maneuvering, however, does not absolutely close the door on a 1-2 GOP outcome in June. In a campaign as odd as this one, there are no sure things. Moreover, to fully exploit Trump's gift, Democrats must also sort out which of their candidates will carry the party's flag into a November victory.

At the moment, former Congresswoman Katie Porter, who's running for governor after losing the 2024 Senate race, appears to be tied with billionaire Tom Steyer and Congressman Eric Swalwell in the upper tier of the eight serious Democratic candidates.

However, the clock is ticking. Mail voting begins in about four weeks, and unless someone makes a breakthrough soon, it's still possible that Republicans could have a 1-2 finish, notwithstanding Trump's tactically foolish intervention.

Dan Walters, CalMatters Opinion Columnist



## Surf report WATER TEMP: 64.4

WEDNESDAY | SURF: 2-3ft  
FAIR | Thigh to waist

Waves on the small side with meager swell. Morning winds are light. Leftover S-SSE swell and a little NW windswell, for surf mainly running in the thigh-waist high range. Light/variable winds due most of the morning, followed by a light WW sea breeze in the afternoon.

THURSDAY | SURF: 2-3ft  
FAIR | Thigh to waist

Peaky little swell mix for the small wave gear. Light wind early. Little bump in NW swell mix sets up peaky surf across the regions combo exposures as some modest SW swell blends in. The SW swell is modest/creeping up but there's rideable surf just about everywhere. Wind looks light for the morning, trending onshore from the S/SW through the afternoon.

## Weather

**Wednesday:** Patchy fog before 11am. Otherwise, cloudy through mid morning, then gradual clearing, with a high near 71.

**Wednesday Night:** Increasing clouds, with a low around 59. Southwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming light and variable.

**Thursday:** Mostly cloudy, with a high near 70. Light and variable wind becoming southwest 5 to 10 mph.

**Thursday Night:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 58.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2026/04/08	Wed	12:33 AM	4.38	H
2026/04/08	Wed	09:25 AM	0.67	L
2026/04/09	Thu	01:38 AM	4.06	H
2026/04/09	Thu	11:00 AM	0.58	L
2026/04/10	Fri	03:38 AM	3.90	H
2026/04/10	Fri	11:59 AM	0.36	L
2026/04/10	Fri	7:37 PM	3.35	H
2026/04/10	Fri	11:43 PM	2.87	L
2026/04/11	Sat	05:12 AM	4.04	H
2026/04/11	Sat	12:40 PM	0.16	L
2026/04/11	Sat	7:37 PM	3.63	H
2026/04/12	Sun	12:36 AM	2.33	L
2026/04/12	Sun	06:14 AM	4.27	H
2026/04/12	Sun	1:12 PM	0.02	L
2026/04/12	Sun	7:48 PM	4.00	H
2026/04/13	Mon	01:16 AM	1.70	L

## Daily Lottery

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

<p>Draw Date: 4/6 7 24 37 42 57 Power#: 5 Jackpot: 20 M</p>	<p>Draw Date: 4/6 4 5 20 21 39</p>
<p>Draw Date: 4/3 31 45 62 63 68 Mega#: 15 Jackpot: 100 M</p>	<p>Draw Date: 4/6 EVENING: 6 0 8 Draw Date: 4/6 MIDDAY: 3 5 6</p>
<p>Draw Date: 4/4 3 6 14 34 43 Mega#: 14 Jackpot: 9 M</p>	<p>Draw Date: 4/6 1st: 03 - Hot Shot 2nd: 07 - Eureka 3rd: 11 - Money Bags Race Time: 1:47.63</p>

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## DBA

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT File No. 2026051936. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: EMPATHY SYSTEM, EMPATHYSYSTEM.AI, EMPATHYSYSTEM, MPT.SOCIAL, EMPATHY SYSTEMS, 1014 BROADWAY SUITE 36, SANTA MONICA, CA 90401, County of Los Angeles. AI #ON 20260010389. Registered Owner(s): LUIS BARRERA CASTANON, 1014 BROADWAY SUITE 36, SANTA MONICA, CA 90401. This business is conducted by: a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true any material matter pursuant to Section 17913 of the Business and Professions Code that the registrant knows to be false is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000)). /s/ LUIS BARRERA CASTANON, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 03/09/2026. NOTICE: This Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or Common Law (See Section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 03/18/2026, 03/25/2026, 04/01/2026, 04/08/2026

## Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 26NWCP00101. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 12720 Norwalk Blvd., Room 101, Norwalk, CA 90650. Petition of Jacob Daniel Diaz for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner Jacob Daniel Diaz filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Jacob Daniel Diaz to Jacob Daniel Marin. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 05/11/2026, Time: 8:30, Dept: C, Room: 312. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 03/09/2026. David W. Slayton, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 03/18/2026, 03/25/2026, 04/01/2026, 04/08/2026

## DBA

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT File No. 2026036144. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: AMLI MARINA DEL REY, 4242 VIA MARINA, MARINA DEL REY, CA 90292, County of Los Angeles. Registered Owner(s): PPF AMLI 4242 VIA MARINA GP, LLC, 141 W JACKSON BLVD STE 300, CHICAGO, IL 60604. This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 12/2018. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true any material matter pursuant to Section 17913 of the Business and Professions Code that the registrant knows to be false is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000)). /s/ ALINA EVANGELOU, GENERAL PARTNER. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 2/17/2026. NOTICE: This Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or Common Law (See Section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 03/18/2026, 03/25/2026, 04/01/2026, 04/08/2026

## Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 26SMCP00157. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 1725 Main Street, Room 102, Santa Monica, CA 90401. Petition of Ariel Johanna Palin for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner Ariel Johanna Palin filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Ariel Johanna Palin to Ariel Johanna Bergh. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 05/15/2026, Time: 8:30 AM, Dept: K. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 04/01/2026. LAWRENCE H. CHO, Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 04/08/2026, 04/15/2026, 04/22/2026, 04/29/2026

## DBA

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT File No. 2026045407. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: THE LASER IMAGE, 1728 S CATALINA AVE #4, REDONDO BEACH, CA 90277, County of Los Angeles. Registered Owner(s): PURE AND REFINED INC., 1728 S CATALINA AVE #4, REDONDO BEACH, CA 90277. This business is conducted by: a Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 01/2026. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true any material matter pursuant to Section 17913 of the Business and Professions Code that the registrant knows to be false is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000)). /s/ DUYEN TRA, SECRETARY. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 02/27/2026. NOTICE: This Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or Common Law (See Section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 04/01/2026, 04/08/2026, 04/15/2026, 04/22/2026

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## GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to [editor@smdp.com](mailto:editor@smdp.com)

### *Sheriff Chad Bianco's ballot grab is a campaign stunt, not an investigation*

I have spent my career in law enforcement. I served as chief of standards at California's Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), the agency that sets the bar for every sworn officer in the state. I was a police chief and was elected Chief Sergeant-at-Arms for the California State Assembly.

Now I teach public safety and justice at the University of Virginia. I know how legitimate investigations are done. What Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco is doing with seized ballots is not legitimate.

In California specialized personnel are trained to handle special investigations. POST exists because policymakers recognized that competence requires more than good intentions and a badge. The commission has specific training standards for investigations of homicides, vehicle thefts, domestic violence and others.

Investigations require subject matter expertise, not just authority.

Election administration is no different. California law assigns oversight of elections to the Secretary of State and enforcement through a district attorney and/or the Attorney General, who holds concurrent jurisdiction over election crimes. The Elections Code establishes procedures for counts, recounts, and retention and preservation of records.

None of these authorities or processes run through county sheriffs.

What if we extend Bianco's logic? Would a sheriff seize tax records from the county assessor because a citizens' group believed too much or too little tax was collected? Would he impound medical records from a hospital because a neighborhood association suspected malpractice?

No. Specialized investigators at the Franchise Tax Board and the Medical Board in the Department of Consumer Affairs are trained for exactly these scenarios.

A sheriff with a warrant and a hunch is laughable. Yet when the subject is ballots, we are supposed to treat the overreach as virtue.

Bianco says his deputies "know how to count." Secretary of State Shirley Weber noted that the claim is admirable, but counting is not the issue. Ensuring a proper election result requires specialized expertise.

And perhaps the clearest evidence that

Bianco lacks expertise is in the warrants themselves. According to Attorney General Rob Bonta's filings, the affidavits underlying Bianco's search warrants failed to identify a specific felony offense or a particular person believed to have committed a crime. These details are required.

Any serious investigator would know the first step is to identify the crime you believe occurred. Bianco apparently could not.

To be clear, this is not a critique of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. It is a professional organization with capable public servants.

This is about Chad Bianco's political theater. Let us not pretend this has nothing to do with the governor's race. Bianco is a candidate in a crowded primary. His "investigation" mirrors the playbook of election denialism that has spread rampantly since 2020.

He claims to have been investigating election fraud since 2022 yet has never advanced a single election fraud case through to prosecution with the Riverside County District Attorney, according to the San Francisco Chronicle. Four years. Zero prosecutions.

And he cannot name the crime he is investigating.

Recently Bonta filed an emergency petition with the 4th District Court of Appeal to halt Bianco's probe. The court declined, but not on the merits. The three-judge panel rejected the petition, saying it should have been filed in another court. The merits were not addressed.

Predictably, Bianco declared victory and announced that his deputies would resume counting. That was a Machiavellian trap. Bianco turned a procedural decision into a headline about the courts siding with him. They have not.

Nevertheless, the investigation and recount are on hold, pending resolution of the legal challenges.

Bianco's rhetoric doesn't qualify as a constitutional crisis, but his actions do. Every day the ballots remain in his evidence locker hardens the precedent of his overreach.

Bryon Gustafson is assistant professor of public safety and justice at the University of Virginia and a former police chief and chief of standards at California Peace Officer Standards and Training.

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### COMMUNITY NEWS

#### Malibu

#### Pepperdine Presents Tony Award-Winning Musical “The Light in the Piazza”

Pepperdine University’s Theatre Department will stage “The Light in the Piazza” from April 8–11, 2026, at Smothers Theatre on the Malibu campus — and the production carries special significance as the final directorial work of Cathy Thomas-Grant, who is retiring after 31 years with the program.

Set in 1953 Italy, the musical follows Margaret Johnson, a Southern woman vacationing with her daughter Clara, whose whirlwind romance with a young Italian man forces Margaret to wrestle with whether to reveal a family secret. The show won six Tony Awards in 2005, including Best Musical and Best Book.

“This musical really gives your heart a workout,” Thomas-Grant said. “There is a mirror up there for you somewhere. There is going to be somebody that you’re going to be able to relate to.”

Students received specialized coaching from Italian language director Brittany Tagliati Corbucci, who praised the cast’s dedication to authentic cultural portrayal.

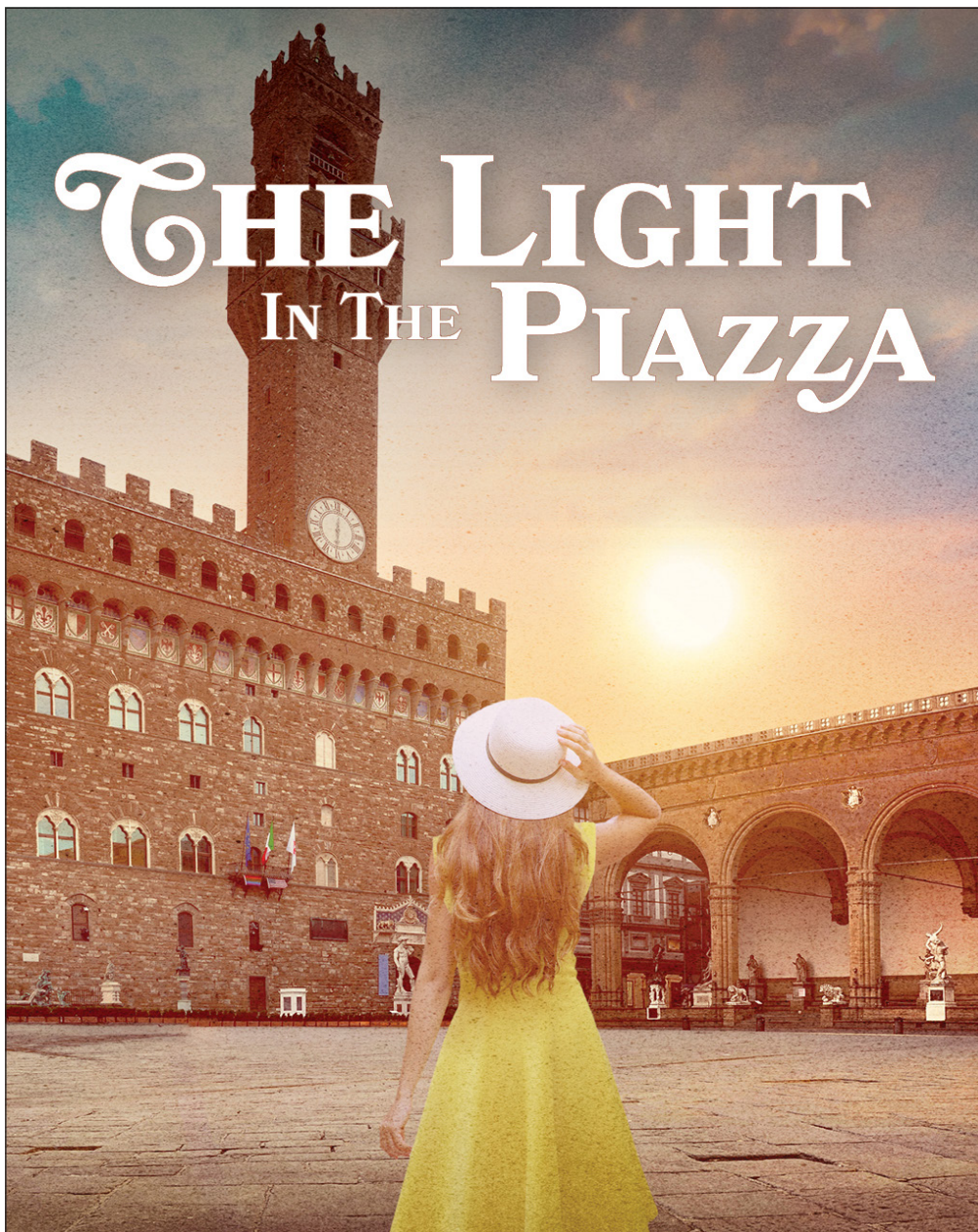
“They are so expressive that, despite the language barrier, they’re able to convey joy, love, anger, and especially make us laugh out loud,” Tagliati Corbucci said.

Tickets are \$23 for the public, \$19 for Pepperdine faculty and staff, and \$13 for full-time students. They are available by calling (310) 506-4522 or at the event page: <https://arts.pepperdine.edu/theatre/>

“They are so expressive that, despite the language barrier, they’re able to convey joy, love, anger, and especially make us laugh out loud,

- Tagliati Corbucci

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF



Courtesy Image

**SHOW:** Pepperdine stages “The Light in the Piazza” April 8–11, director Cathy Thomas-Grant’s final show before retiring after 31 years.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

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	<b>SHELL</b> 1866 Lincoln Blvd	<b>\$6.19</b>
	<b>WORLD</b> 1801 Lincoln Blvd	<b>\$5.84</b>
	<b>CHEVRON</b> 1732 Lincoln Blvd	<b>\$6.29</b>
	<b>SHELL</b> 1802 Cloverfield Blvd	<b>\$6.39</b>
	<b>CHEVRON</b> 432 Wilshire Blvd	<b>\$6.39</b>
	<b>76</b> 1776 Cloverfield Blvd	<b>\$6.04</b>
	<b>CHEVRON</b> 1330 Santa Monica	<b>\$6.29</b>

\*Prices paying in card

SMC

SMC to Celebrate Earth Week 2026 with Free Events

Santa Monica College will mark Earth Week 2026 with a series of free events on its main campus at 1900 Pico Blvd., including a documentary screening, gardening workshop and sustainability fair.

The college, considered one of California's greenest campuses, has scheduled three events: On April 9, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. in Stromberg Hall, director Angelina Lee will screen her documentary "Making a Mini-Forest," which explores how urban communities use native plants to increase biodiversity and climate resilience. Pizza will be served beforehand at SMC's own mini-forest. A Q&A with Lee and an ecologist will follow the screening.

On April 22, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. near the Organic Learning Garden, the "Garden & Grow" workshop will offer hands-on instruction in seed-ball making and starting a garden.

On April 23, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. in the SMC Quad, "Sustainability Fest" will feature local clubs and community organizations focused on environmental protection. Food will be provided.

Events are subject to change or cancellation without notice, and additional events may be added. Sponsors include SMC Eco Action Club, Club Grow, Basic Needs, Bodega, Rising, SMC Sustainability Center and Associated Students of Santa Monica College.

For an updated schedule, visit [smc.edu/earthweek](http://smc.edu/earthweek).

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF

## SMC EARTH WEEK 2026

[www.smc.edu/earthweek](http://www.smc.edu/earthweek)



**Tuesday, April 9**

**Film Screening of "Making a Mini-Forest"**

Learn how urban communities are greening their neighborhoods with native plants, increasing biodiversity and climate resilience. Q&A after with filmmaker and an Ecologist. Free pizza served!

**When** 5:30pm—8:30pm

**Where:** HSS 165

**Wednesday, April 22**

**Garden & Grow**

Learn how to save and plant seeds for organic produce while celebrating fresh starts, sustainability and community growth. There will be workshops on seed-ball making and how to start a garden.

**When** 11:15am-12:45pm

**Where:** Organic Garden

**Thursday, April 23**

**Sustainability Fest**

Meet the clubs and community organizations that are leading the efforts to protect our environment. Food will be provided.

**When** 11:15am-12:45pm

**Where:** Quad lawn



Average gasoline prices in Los Angeles have risen 4.1 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$5.99/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 2,135 stations in Los Angeles. Prices in Los Angeles are 89.1 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand \$1.14/g higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has increased 20.7 cents compared to a week ago and stands at \$5.576 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Los Angeles was priced at \$5.09/g yesterday while the most expensive was \$7.25/g, a difference of \$2.16/g. The lowest price in the state yesterday was \$4.59/g while the highest was \$7.89/g, a difference of \$3.30/g.

The national average price of gasoline has risen 11.8 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.06/g today. The national average is up 65.1 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 85.0 cents per gallon higher than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than 11 million weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the country.

Courtesy image

**EVENTS:** Santa Monica College celebrates Earth Week with a variety of free activities and events April 9 and April 20-23.

**GET IT DAILY...**



### COMMUNITY NEWS

#### Pier

### Pacific Park Names Tim Defuria Director of Government and Community Affairs

Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier has appointed Tim Defuria as director of government and community affairs, a newly created role aimed at strengthening the amusement park's relationships with public-sector partners and local communities.

Defuria, a Santa Monica resident, most recently served as manager of last mile public policy at Amazon, where he led multi-state legislative strategies and worked with policymakers and regulatory agencies. Prior to that, he was vice president of government relations at Strategies 360 and director of government partnerships for Bird, where he secured operating permits across the Western United States. Earlier in his career, he worked in the office of Assemblymember Richard Bloom.

In his new role, Defuria will oversee government affairs, community partnerships and stakeholder engagement. He will also support Pacific Park's participation in the City of Santa Monica's efforts to reinvigorate tourism and economic activity.

"Tim's deep experience navigating complex policy environments and building trusted relationships across sectors makes him an outstanding addition to our leadership team," said Jeff Klocke, chief executive officer at Pacific Park.

"Pacific Park is not only an iconic destination, but also a meaningful community partner and a central part of the Santa Monica Pier experience," Defuria said.

Pacific Park is Los Angeles's only admission-free amusement park, featuring 12 rides, 14 midway games and several food and retail offerings. For more information, visit [pacpark.com](http://pacpark.com).

**“Tim’s deep experience navigating complex policy environments and building trusted relationships across sectors makes him an outstanding addition to our leadership team - Jeff Klocke, chief executive officer at Pacific Park**

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF



Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier

**PIER:** Tim Defuria, Director of Government and Community Affairs, Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier.

#### Downtown Santa Monica

### Santa Monica Place Announces Summer Season of Family Programming

Santa Monica Place is launching a summer season of family-oriented programming, including cooking camps, museum events, drive-in movie nights and free weekly kids' entertainment.

The Cayton Children's Museum will offer extended seasonal hours and its regular programming throughout the summer. Beginning April 30, the museum will host Drive-In Movie Nights every Thursday, opening with "Akeelah and the Bee." The museum will also present monthly BIG FEELINGS Weekends, themed events designed to help children explore emotions through play, storytelling and hands-on activities. Themes include Expression & Voice (May 23-25), Belonging (June 19-21), Joy & Wellness (July 3-5) and Remembering & Reflecting (Aug. 14-16). More information is available at [caytonmuseum.org](http://caytonmuseum.org).

The Gourmandise School will offer weeklong summer cooking and baking camps beginning June 15 for kids ages 8-11 and teens ages 12-16. Camp themes include Cooking the Classics, Global Street Food, Classic Bakeshop, Baking Fundamentals, World Cuisines, Great British Bakeoff and a new session, Sweet & Savory Skills. Camps range from \$625 to \$695. Registration is available at [thegourmandiseschool.com/summer-camps](http://thegourmandiseschool.com/summer-camps).

The free Sounds of Santa Monica: Kids Club Edition series at Center Plaza on Level 1 will offer weekly live music, dancing, crafts and giveaways throughout April and May, with additional dates to be announced. For event details, visit [santamonicaplace.com/events](http://santamonicaplace.com/events).

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF

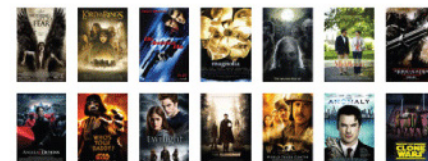


Santa Monica Place

**MALL:** Sounds of Santa Monica: Kids Club Edition at Santa Monica Place.

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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Announcements	Boats	Rent	Storage Space	Business	Lost and Found
Creative	Jewelry	Houses for Rent	Vehicles for Sale	Opportunities	Personals
Employment	Wanted	Roommates	Massage	Yard Sales	Psychic
For Sale	Travel	Commercial Lease	Services	Health and Beauty	Obituaries
Furniture	Vacation Rentals	Real Estate	Computer Services	Fitness	Tutoring

## Storage Auction Sale Notice

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION – ABANDONED PERSONAL PROPERTY Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to California Civil Code sections 1983–1991 and applicable California law, the personal property listed below is believed to be abandoned by Molly-Ann Leikin, and all other owners, occupants, partners, tenants, and/or subtenants at address: 241 Ramble Ridge Drive, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. Sale will occur only after expiration of the former tenant's statutory right to reclaim personal property. Property remains reclaimable until Tuesday, April 21st, 2026. If not reclaimed by that date, the property will be sold at public auction by the property owner/landlord, offered in bulk and/or bulk lots through a competitive online auction

facilitated by MEGA Auctions, conducted on Thursday, April 23rd, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. Auction access: WWW.MEGAAUCTIONS.NET Items to be sold are to include but are not limited to: Bakeware, Bags, Bathroom Caddy, Bed Frame & Mattress, Blu-Ray Player, Books, Bowls, Bric-A-Brac, Bucket, Candles, Cleaning Supplies, Coffee & Side Tables, Computer Cables, Cordless Phones & Answer Machine, Cups, Cushions, Décor, Dining Table with Chairs, Dressers, Dry Food, Drying Rack, Exercise Ball, Fire TV Stick, Floor & Table Lamps, Floor Mats, Framed Music Awards and Plaques (Molly-Ann Leikin), Framed Pictures & Album Art, Glassware, Grabber Tool, Handheld Blender, Hat Stand, Herman Miller Aeron Chair, HON Filing Cabinet, Humidifier, Hutches,

KitchenAid Artisan Mixer, Kitchenware & Utensils, Knife Block & Knives, Laundry Basket, Linens, Logitech H390 Headset, Microlife Blood Pressure Monitor, Monitor, Oven Mitts, Office Desk & Riser, Office Supplies, Pans, Plates, Potted Plants, Pots, Power Blocks, Rabbit Air MinusA2 Purifier, Remote Controls, Riccar R60 Vacuum, Roku Stick, RIAA Gold and Platinum Record Awards (Placido Domingo, Anne Murray), Samsung UN46D6000SF LCD TV, Shark UZ355H Vacuum, Silverware, Simplehuman Trash Can, Sofa & Armchairs, Step Stool, Stuffed Toys, Suitcase, Tablecloth, Towels, Travel Kit, Utensils, Wall & Framed Art, Wall Mirror, Walker, Women's Clothing, Yamaha PSR-330 Keyboard, Ziplock Bags, Various Unopened Items.

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**smdp**  
Santa Monica Daily Press

## BIRDS

FROM PAGE 1

home who sets up a feeder near their desk, or a parent browsing educational books and puzzles for their children.

Wild Birds Unlimited is a national franchise, and any prospective buyer would need approval from the parent company before taking over Hanson's territory. The sale includes current inventory, all equipment, the existing customer list and the franchise territory rights. Hanson said she will disclose full financial details to serious inquirers.

The store has been more than a retail outlet. Over the years, it has hosted talks and workshops on birds, native plants, wildlife photography and birding identification. Hanson also volunteered for three years with the Los Angeles Audubon Society, leading beginner birdwatching walks at Will Rogers State Park. She said the store regularly promotes area Audubon chapter birdwalks and fields daily conversations with customers about birds, squirrels, wildlife and conservation.

All store employees hold certification as Backyard Birdfeeding Specialists, a credential that underscores the shop's commitment to informed, education-driven customer service.

Among the store's more popular attractions are its live-feed nature cameras, including a feed of the widely followed Big Bear eagle cam — where, according to Hanson, one of the eaglets has begun to hatch.

Hanson said she has been preparing for retirement for the past couple of years and made the decision not to renew the store's lease. She emphasized, however, that the store will continue operating as usual until a buyer is found and that customers should expect no changes to service or product quality in the meantime.

"I am a long-time Santa Monica resident who, although planning to retire, would love to see the business continue with a new owner," Hanson said, "connecting people and nature together for years to come."

The store also operates an online shopping platform at [mywbu.com/santamonica](http://mywbu.com/santamonica), giving a new owner an established digital sales presence in addition to the brick-and-mortar location.

Anyone interested in purchasing the store or learning more can contact Hanson at 310-922-8153. Additional information about the Wild Birds Unlimited franchise model is available at [wbu.com](http://wbu.com).

[maaz@smdp.com](mailto:maaz@smdp.com)

## STABBING

FROM PAGE 1

provocation.

Witnesses told officers the suspect produced a pocketknife and advanced toward victims while making threatening statements. Additional witnesses described the man engaging in aggressive behavior toward multiple people prior to the incident, including verbal harassment and attempts to initiate physical confrontations. A physical altercation occurred near the stairs before officers arrived and separated the parties involved.

Elle Islas, 25, of no fixed address, was taken into custody without incident.

One witness requested medical evaluation for a condition aggravated by the incident. Santa Monica Fire Department personnel treated the person at the scene. No serious injuries were reported.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information is asked to contact Detective James McCoy at [james.mccoy@santamonica.gov](mailto:james.mccoy@santamonica.gov) or the watch commander at 310-458-8427.

[editor@smdp.com](mailto:editor@smdp.com)

## OIL

FROM PAGE 2

liquefied natural gas from the Gulf Coast to New England.

But experts don't expect the waiver to significantly impact the price of oil or gasoline. "It's helpful, but not a game changer," Lynch said.

### WHY U.S. OIL PRODUCTION CAN'T SOLVE THE PROBLEM

The U.S. is a major oil producer, and exports more oil than it imports. But like any other oil producing nation, it can't just ramp up production instantly to fill the void.

"If the U.S. were to try to make up the global shortfall, we would need to nearly double our production," Barteau said. "We couldn't drill wells that fast even if we wanted to."

Increasing domestic production by even 1 million barrels per day, a feat the U.S. accomplished during the shale boom, would be hard to duplicate, Lynch said.

"If we run every drilling rig right now, what happens a week from now when the war is over and the price goes back down \$20?" Lynch asked. "People don't want to develop long-term production based on a short-term price spike."

Halting exports and using that oil within the U.S. wouldn't bring down gasoline prices either, experts say.

For one, oil is traded on a global market, so events happening halfway around the globe

impact prices for everyone.

In addition, the U.S. doesn't produce enough of the type of oil its refineries process. It produced about 13.7 million barrels per day of oil at the end of 2025, according to the Energy Information Administration. And refineries processed about 16.3 million barrels per day that year, relying on imports to fill in the gaps, according to the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM), a trade association.

That's because nearly 70% of U.S. refineries are set up to process heavy, sour crude, according to AFPM. But much of the oil produced in the U.S. is light, sweet crude, which was unlocked during the shale revolution.

"They need different crudes than the ones that are being produced right next to them now," Krane said.

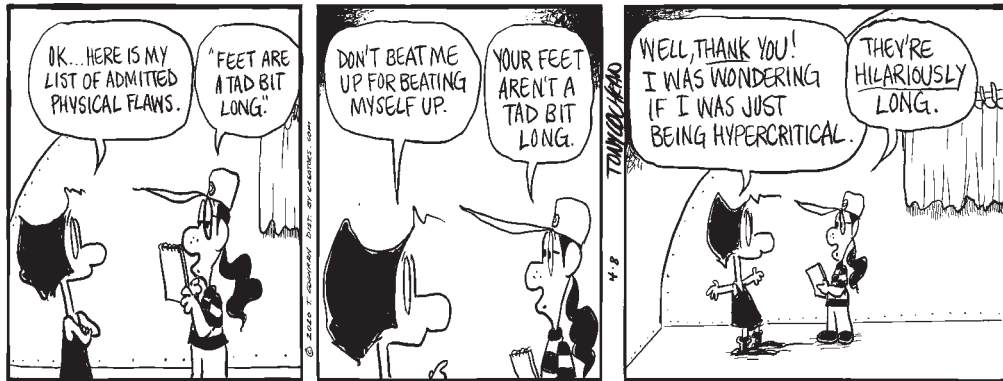
As a result, just 60% of the crude oil processed in U.S. refineries is extracted domestically, according to the AFPM. And retooling domestic refineries would cost billions of dollars, the group said. It also would require shutting down the refinery for a period of time, which generally raises gasoline prices.

"A lot of people like the IEA are making the point that this is the biggest oil crisis ever, which is partly true, partly an exaggeration, depending on how you count things," Lynch said. "A lot of it has to do with how long does this last ... if it goes on for another six weeks we get to be in some serious trouble."

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ Business Writer

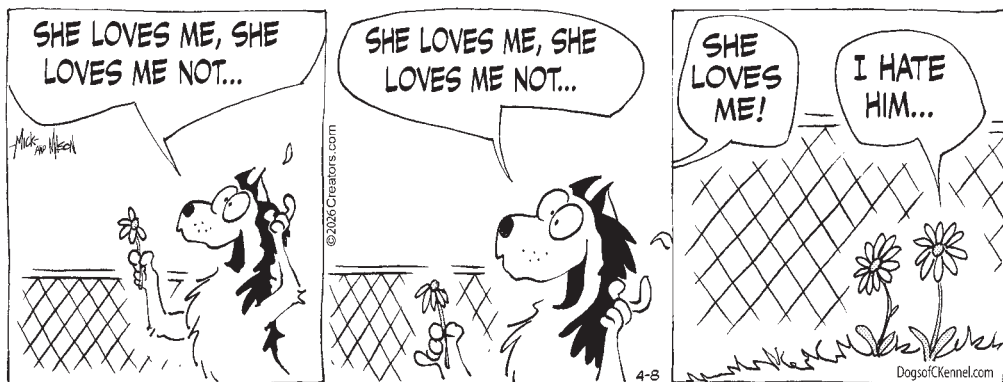
### Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



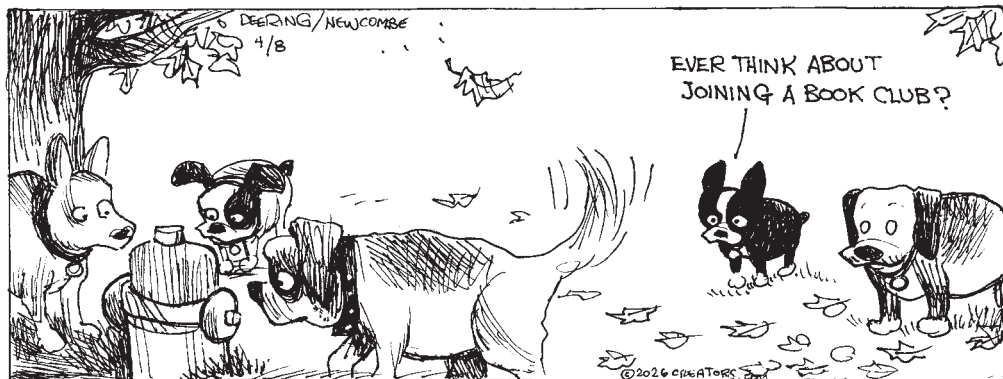
### Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



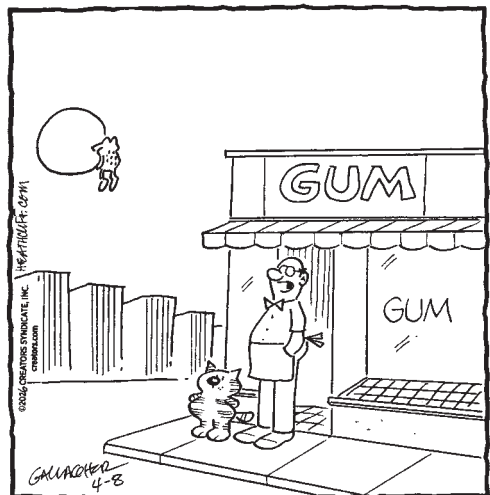
### Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



### Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



### Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING



# FIND THE WORDS

This is a theme puzzle with the subject stated below. Find the listed words in the grid. (They may run in any direction but always in a straight line. Some letters are used more than once.) Ring each word as you find it and when you have completed the puzzle, there will be 20 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle. © australianwordgames.com.au 6904

## Riverina foodbowl

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

- |          |            |              |            |
|----------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Abattoir | Gates      | Moama        | Storms     |
| Acres    | Gums       | Nets         | Tantangara |
| Beef     | Hardship   | Nuts         | Dam        |
| Bridge   | Heat       | Owls         | Temora     |
| Cabin    | Hospitable | Pears        | Trees      |
| Carp     | Illabo     | Profit       | Urban      |
| Citrus   | Insects    | Pulletop     | Vast       |
| Coots    | June       | Pumps        | Vegies     |
| Corn     | Lakes      | Rain         | Wine       |
| Crops    | Lamb       | Rural        | Wool       |
| Emus     | Marrar     | Selling      |            |
| Farmer   | Matong     | Silver perch |            |

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.

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**TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 8)**

It's your Year of the Technicolor Sky when every time you "look up" by making optimistic aims, they are colored in vibrant hues of originality and creativity, fascinating you and pulling you forward into a more beautiful version of your life. More highlights: You'll be paid for your wild imagination. You'll adjust the domestic scene to include more of what's healthy for you, including new friends and influences. Family additions. Sagittarius and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 19, 3, 39, 27 and 35.

**HOROSCOPES**

**ARIES** (March 21-April 19). No need to meet the expectations of others. In fact, no need to meet your own expectations either. All improvement comes from joyfully handling what's in front of you - something you do naturally and unthinkingly. You can trust yourself.

**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20). No one seems to handle things the way you would today, and it may test your patience. Not every deviation is a mistake, though. Someone's different approach will reveal an outcome you wouldn't have considered.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21). Misunderstandings can happen in even the best relationships. Even someone who truly knows you well - someone who sees your layers and history - will occasionally misread you. That doesn't mean the bond is weak, it means you're both human.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22). Someone is bringing the fun and kindness to your world. Maybe this person is generally charming and engages in a similar way to just about everyone. Or maybe this is a burgeoning attraction.

**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22). You don't want to do anything that looks good on paper while making you miserable in practice. Why? Because you're wise, and your wisdom shines through the decisions you make to honor your mental and emotional health.

**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Today's quick fix only really works if it makes sense for tomorrow, too. You're looking ahead to make your future life sweeter. The long line of tomorrows that will be impacted by today's decision are worth heavier consideration.

**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Making others happy isn't enough for you because you want to do it with style. You want your signature on the effort, and, quite frankly, the recognition that comes with it. Being seen is a basic human need.

**SCORPIO** (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You get more done today because you stick to the basics. There's elegance in this - efficiency, economy and dignity. No extra drama, no getting pulled in five directions. Just one clear goal and steady effort.

**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Not every 'no' is a rejection. If someone passes on your idea, don't interpret that as a verdict. It could very well be a sizing issue. In a relationship context, the same idea applies. The "yes" comes when the chemistry and timing are right.

**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You're less attached to how things "should" be today and more open to how they actually are. If anything gets confusing, lead with love. Say it aloud. Love, unexpressed, might go unreceived. Love expressed will quickly smooth out misunderstandings.

**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Wild ideas are flying around today. Most are easy to dismiss, but one of them might be just strange enough to work. Keep listening. Inspiration has a funny way of showing up from unexpected places.

**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20). Some degree of tension keeps a relationship interesting. Arguably, some degree of tension keeps it alive. But when the tension is too much and unpleasant, the remedy is easy. Instead of struggling, give in. Instead of determining who is right, concede.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

**Newsday Crossword**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Middle-arm joint
- 6 Venomous snake
- 9 "You are not!" response
- 14 Feel with your fingers
- 15 Nothing
- 16 Be overly anxious
- 17 Concur
- 18 Historical period
- 19 Boat that's paddled
- 20 Begin spectacularly
- 23 Word before a maiden name
- 24 Musical aptitude
- 25 Waiting room reading
- 28 Extreme weight-loss plans
- 35 Had a bite
- 36 That woman's
- 37 Metal for recycling
- 38 Observes
- 40 Sharpshooter's magnifier
- 43 Ox harness
- 44 Decaf brand
- 46 Business school deg.
- 47 Liquid on leaves
- 48 Online message sent to a large group
- 51 Ballpoints
- 52 Actress Thurman
- 53 Do something with
- 55 Film-set recorder on a long pole
- 63 \_\_ asst. (office aide)
- 64 Korean automaker
- 65 Apple's tablets
- 67 Infomercial knife

**DOWN**

- 1 Airport screen abbr.
- 2 Fireplace fuel
- 3 Actor Reynolds or Lancaster
- 4 Dolphin habitats
- 5 "At what place?"
- 6 All over again
- 7 Apple devices' voice
- 8 Dinnerware dishes
- 9 Employee badges
- 10 Typical Saudi
- 11 \_\_ Lisa
- 12 Before you know it
- 13 Designer Cassini
- 21 PC support staff
- 22 "That's a laugh!"
- 25 En \_\_ (in a large group)
- 26 Squad of best players
- 27 '80s Oscar actress Davis
- 29 DVR remote button
- 30 Fragrance
- 31 Slick, as winter roads
- 32 Wear away
- 33 Unavailable, as a chair
- 34 Ejects, as lava
- 39 Glide on snow
- 41 *Antiques Roadshow*

**EXTREMELY LOUD** by Ron Ammirante  
Edited by Stanley Newman  
www.stanxwords.com

**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

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

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

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13	
14						15				16					
17						18				19					
	20					21				22					
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35						36						37			
38				39		40			41	42		43			
44					45			46					47		
48						49	50					51			
					52					53	54				
55	56	57	58				59	60				61	62		
63							64				65				66
67							68				69				
70							71				72				

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## HOSPICE

FROM PAGE 1

to improve investigative coordination across government jurisdictions. It also calls on the county to formally urge Sacramento and Washington to strengthen oversight and increase enforcement efforts against accrediting organizations responsible for monitoring the majority of providers.

“Fraud in home health and hospice care is not just a financial crime — it is a direct threat to the health and safety of some of our most vulnerable residents,” Horvath said. “Los Angeles County is doing our part and will not allow bad actors to exploit gaps in oversight while patients and families are put at risk.”

Barger echoed those concerns, describing fraud in the hospice and home health sector as a betrayal of the people who rely on end-of-life services.

“Hospice and home health care exist to serve our most vulnerable residents, so fraud in these industries is a profound betrayal of their trust,” Barger said. “We must work toward stronger coordination and accountability at every level of government.”

The board’s action comes as Los Angeles County grapples with a staggering concentration of providers. More than 4,700 home health and hospice agencies currently operate in the county — a figure that has grown dramatically in recent years and that federal officials say has made Southern California a high-risk environment for fraud.

### STATE BUILDS YEARS-LONG ENFORCEMENT RECORD

State officials say California has been ahead of the problem for years. Sen. Ben Allen, D-Santa Monica, praised recent enforcement actions by Gov. Gavin Newsom and Attorney General Rob Bonta, noting that more than 280 fraudulent providers have been shut down statewide.

Allen authored SB 664 in 2021, which established a first-in-the-nation moratorium on new hospice licenses in response to growing concerns about fraud and abuse. He also co-authored AB 2673 in 2022, which closed additional loopholes and updated enforcement tools to keep pace with evolving fraud tactics.

“These policies allowed us to hit pause on a system that was being exploited and gave us needed tools to stay ahead of the fraud,” Allen said.

Newsom’s office said the state has revoked more than 280 hospice licenses over the past two years, has approximately 300 additional providers under evaluation for revocation, and has arrested 284 individuals in connection with hospice-related offenses since 2019. The California Department of Justice has investigated 101 criminal enterprises and filed 24 civil cases, with 109 individuals charged with hospice-related offenses since 2021.

The state’s response has been coordinated through a multi-agency Hospice Fraud Task Force facilitated by the California Department of Public Health, which includes representatives from the California Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Health Care Services, Department of Social Services and the California Department of Justice’s Division of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse.

### SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

The numbers underlying the county’s action are stark. Los Angeles County accounts for roughly 18% of all hospice and home health Medicare billing nationwide, despite representing approximately 2.5% of the

country’s senior population, according to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz. The county’s hospice provider count surged roughly 1,500% from 2010 to 2022 — six times the national growth rate. Average Medicare billing per hospice patient in L.A. County runs about \$29,000, more than double the national average of \$13,200.

Investigators have documented extreme clustering of providers, including 89 hospice companies registered at a single Van Nuys office plaza and 210 agencies concentrated within one square mile of the San Fernando Valley. A CBS News analysis found more than 700 L.A. County hospice agencies triggered multiple fraud red flags.

Common fraud patterns include paying recruiters \$1,000 to \$3,000 per Medicare beneficiary number, offering patients cash and gifts to enroll, billing for services never delivered and cycling patients between affiliated hospices to evade audits.

A structural flaw in Medicare’s payment system has contributed to the problem. The program pays hospices a flat per diem rate for each day a patient is enrolled, regardless of services actually delivered — a structure the HHS inspector general has said creates incentives to enroll patients who are not terminally ill while minimizing actual care.

### FEDERAL AGENCIES ESCALATE, POLITICAL BATTLE LINES SHARPEN

Federal enforcement has escalated sharply. The Justice Department’s June 2025 national health care fraud takedown was the largest in history, with 324 defendants charged across 50 federal districts and \$14.6 billion in alleged losses.

In April 2026, the FBI conducted raids across Southern California in an operation called “Operation Never Say Die,” charging 15 defendants in nine investigations alleging more than \$50 million in fraudulent hospice billing. The operation was coordinated with a fraud task force established by executive order in March 2026 under Vice President JD Vance.

The enforcement surge has also generated political friction. House Oversight Chairman James Comer and more than two dozen Republican members sent a letter to Newsom in March 2026 demanding documents on the state’s hospice oversight, calling California a “kingdom of fraud.” Oz said his agency had accomplished more in 10 weeks than Newsom had in four years. Newsom’s office pushed back, pointing to the 2021 moratorium and accusing the administration of racial profiling after Oz attributed much of the fraud to what he described as an “Armenian mafia.”

### RECENT PROSECUTIONS

Among those charged in the April federal operation was Lolita Beronilla Miner, 65, of Anaheim, a licensed vocational nurse who allegedly submitted more than \$9.1 million in fraudulent hospice claims to Medicare through her Artesia-based Topanga Hospice Care Inc. Investigators said the facility had a non-death discharge rate of approximately 85%, nearly five times the national average, and that Miner paid cash kickbacks of \$300 per month to patients who were not terminally ill.

A Glendale couple, psychologist Gladwin Gill, 66, and his registered nurse wife Amelou Gill, 70, were also arrested and charged with submitting more than \$5.2 million in fraudulent claims through their St. Francis Palliative Care facility, of which Medicare paid more than \$4 million. Prosecutors alleged the pair laundered proceeds to cover personal

expenses including international flights and car payments.

Also charged was Nita Almuete Paddit Palma, 76, described in court documents as a thrice-convicted health care fraudster who allegedly continued operating three fraudulent Glendale-area hospice facilities

while incarcerated at a federal prison in Seattle awaiting sentencing on prior charges.

All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The Associated Press contributed background information to this report. editor@smdp.com



## WEDNESDAY | APRIL 8

### BEACH WALK MEDITATION

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Santa Monica Lifeguard Tower 24 2400 Ocean Front Walk Los Angeles. Walking meditation is and has always been a significant alternative to sitting meditation, especially for those starting a new practice. The goal of meditation is to be able to practice in all positions, conditions and activities whether sitting, standing, walking, lying down, or whenever awake. Developing mindfulness doesn't have to happen in a quiet room without any distracting sights or sounds. In fact we can develop our mindfulness while out in nature; feeling the warmth of the sun on our backs and the cool ocean splashing around our feet. Let's practice meditation in motion while creating a potent wellness experience that enhances mental clarity, alertness, and overall well-being. We'll meet Wednesdays and Fridays at 8 am at lifeguard tower 24 - see a red, yellow, blue, orange, white FLAG. After some basic instructions we'll walk silently together for approximately 45 minutes on the shoreline at a natural pace from tower 24 towards the Santa Monica Pier and back. Free—Donations are accepted. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/beach-walk-meditation/16206460/2026-04-01T08>

### DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET - WEDNESDAY MARKET

8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Downtown Santa Monica Arizona Avenue (Between 4th & Ocean) Santa Monica. One of the largest grower-only Certified Farmers Market in Southern California and a favorite for local chefs! Enjoy one of Santa Monica's farmers markets, widely considered to be among the best on the west coast and featuring field-fresh produce, hundreds of kinds of vegetables, brilliant cut flowers, breads, cheeses, and more. Downtown Farmers Market Locations: Wednesdays at Arizona Ave & 2nd St and Saturdays at Arizona & 3rd St. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/downtown-farmers-market-wednesday-market/18330379/2026-04-01T08>

### AUTHOR EVENT! MARIE BENEDICT & SUSAN WALTER

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Zibby's Bookshop 1113 Montana Avenue Santa Monica. In person author event with Marie Benedict and Susan Walter at Zibby's Bookshop, 1113 Montana Ave, Santa Monica 90403! Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/author-event-marie-benedict-susan-walter/18369843/2026-04-08T18>

### JAZZ A GO GO AT LOULOU SANTA MONICA

7:00 p.m. - 11:30 p.m. LouLou Santa Monica 395 Santa Monica Pl #300 Santa Monica. JAZZ A GO GO at LouLou Santa Monica. Every Wednesday · From 7 PM till late - Live Jazz that turns into a Vibe.Music you Feel. People you Meet. Amazing Food. Nights that Flow. JAZZ A GO GO (@jazzagotonight) by LouLou Santa Monica, Gilles Signature & Gilles Los Angeles - curated by the creator of @jazzeclectica. Every Wednesday · From 7 PM till late Watch the LouLou experience: <https://bit.ly/loulou-jazz-a-gogo> . Book Now: [bit.ly/booking-loulou](https://bit.ly/booking-loulou) LouLou Santa Monica JAZZ A GO GO Every Wednesday From 7 PM till late 395 Santa Monica Pl #300, Santa Monica, CA 90401(323) 410-2337info@loulousantamonica.comloulousantamonica.com Reserve your table now: [bit.ly/booking-loulou](https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/jazz-a-go-go-at-loulou-santa-monica/18476815/2026-04-08T19). Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/jazz-a-go-go-at-loulou-santa-monica/18476815/2026-04-08T19>

### WINE WEDNESDAY AT THE WHALER

101 Broadway CA 90401 Contact Info (424) 330-0166

info@venicewhaler.com Does not apply on holidays Santa Monica. \$15 wine flights & half off bottles of wine all day every Wednesday. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/wine-wednesday-at-the-whaler/16952883/2026-04-01T00>

## THURSDAY | APRIL 9

### BIG FEELINGS WEEKEND AT CAYTON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Cayton Children's Museum 395 Santa Monica Place, #374 Santa Monica. Each month, Cayton Children's Museum dedicates a full weekend to one shared emotional theme. April is all about Caring for our planet — a weekend that aims to teach children about the importance of respecting the natural world around us. Museum activities will focus on the beauty and wonders of nature, animals, and community spaces! All activities are included with admission and membership. Through interactive art, building challenges, experiments, storytelling, and collaborative play, children explore our natural world, with parents and caregivers invited to participate alongside them. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/big-feelings-weekend-at-cayton-children-s-museum/18487820/2026-04-10T08>

### BRUNCH FRIDAYS WITH LIVE MUSIC IN OUR GARDEN PATIO!

11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tiato Kitchen & Venue 2700 Colorado Ave Santa Monica. Our newly launched Brunch Fridays just got vibey-er! Every week enjoy great eats, summer libations, and a featured music artist on our beautiful garden patio! So come toast to summer with our uniquely crafted brunch menu including our Turmeric Spiced Cloud Egg dish, Smoked Gouda Scramble with Smashed Ube, Vietnamese French Toast, along with Mama An classics such as Famous Garlic Noodles, Shaken Beef, and Seafood Egg Fried Rice! And of course, it wouldn't be brunch without bottomless mimosas & summer punch bowls, so grab your brunch crew and enjoy the fair along the beautiful backdrop of Al fresco dining. RESERVE NOW. Visit: <https://www.smdp.com/calendar/#/details/brunch-fridays-with-live-music-in-our-garden-patio-14639006/2026-04-10T11>

## FRIDAY | APRIL 10

### FOOD, CULTURE, CLIMATE

6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Miles Playhouse, Reed Park, 1130 Lincoln Blvd, Santa Monica. Learn and discuss how food justice can help build a more just and regenerative future! Join us for an engaging evening to explore the intersections of food, culture, and climate with environmental educator Isaias Hernandez, founder of QueerBrownVegan. Isaias will delve into key food justice topics including community land stewardship and local food systems. He will reflect on how land functions as a living archive of ecology and culture, shaping the ways we understand and interact with the environments around us. Drawing from inspiring stories across Los Angeles, he will highlight how communities are reconnecting with the land through practices like community gardening and composting. Gather with community members, experience one of our thriving community gardens, learn about food justice, hear about local community-led sustainability efforts, and share your thoughts and ideas! We can't wait to see you there! Reserve your spot: RSVP HERE Full details and RSVP at FOOD, CULTURE, CLIMATE. Visit: <https://sustain.ucla.edu/event/food-culture-climate-exploring-food-justice-with-isaias-hernandez/>

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

# Campus Events

# 20 26



Photo by Amy Williams

**SPRING & SUMMER**

## Exciting events happening at SMC!

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- Dance Performances & Master Classes
- Intercollegiate Athletic Competitions
- Music Concerts
- Planetarium Shows
- *Santa Monica Review* Issue Launch Party
- Theatre Arts Performances
- And Much More!

Visit [smc.edu/events](http://smc.edu/events) for more information.



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