4
Busy bees
Give them a hand.

5
Beverly Hills cop
Send us your scofflaws

9
Crossword
Take on our Saturday Stumper.

WEEKEND EDITION
05.06.23 - 05.07.23

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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Santa Monica resident indicted on $800,000 retail theft scheme

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

A man and a woman from Southern California have been arrested on an indictment charging them with conspiracy and 10 counts of wire fraud related to an organized retail theft scheme amounting to $800,000.

Jalen Amir Thomas, 27, of Santa Monica and Armia Ta'Jae Timmons, 25, of Los Angeles, were arrested on the 11-count indictment. They appeared in the US District Court in the Central District of California on Wednesday. According to US Attorney Nick Brown, the pair traveled through 23 different states and hit nearly 200 stores. Prosecutors will ask that they be detained and transported to the Western District of Washington for arraignment.

"Organized retail theft has exploded across the country, due in large part to the growth of an online resale marketplace," said Brown in a statement. "In this case, we allege the co-conspirators hatched a scheme to rent high-value construction equipment and then fail to return it. They allegedly sold the stolen goods on websites such as OfferUp and Facebook Marketplace."

As per the indictment, Thomas led a group including Timmons from as early as March 2022, that traveled the country stopping at home improvement stores and renting two types of expensive construction equipment: jumping jack tampers and vibratory plate compactors valued between $1,500 and $2,000 each.

The group used debit cards

SEE **THEFT** PAGE 4

As House of Pies goes up, trees come down: developer accused of unlawfully removing four sycamores



Grace Adams and Courtesy Photo

SYCA-NO-MORE: The House of Pies site on Venice Blvd in 2022 (Top) and May 2023 (Bottom).

GRACE INEZ ADAMS
SMDP Staff Writer

Driving down Venice Boulevard on a recent weekend, Isabelle Duvivier noticed that something was different. It didn't take her long to figure out what it was: four California Sycamore trees planted by a group of community members along the street nearly thirty years ago were gone, reduced to nothing more than stumps.

Steps away from where they had once stood nearly 20 feet tall, construction was underway at the new House of Pies restaurant slated to open later this year.

"I instantly knew the trees were gone and I instantly knew who did it," Duvivier said.

After talking with neighbors and reporting the chopped-down trees to the City of Los Angeles, her suspicions were confirmed. According to Stephen Du Prey of the L.A. Urban Forestry Division, the situation is still under investigation but he said they have reason to believe the House of Pies developer is responsible.

The trees were located on the sidewalk in the public right-of-way, meaning they could not legally be trimmed or cut down without a permit from the City. Duvivier, who is a member of L.A.'s Community Forestry Advisory Committee, said she and other local residents had helped water and care for the sycamores for years through a local volunteer organization, Verdant Venice Group (VVG), which she helped found with the mission of maintaining and improving the local environment.

"Our group has worked so hard on all the trees on Venice Boulevard," she said. "I was just horrified because it's such a bold move to remove a community asset when you're about to step into a new community and

SEE **VENICE TREES** PAGE 7

Could AI pen 'Casablanca'? Screenwriters take aim at ChatGPT

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

When Greg Brockman, the president and co-founder of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, was recently extolling the capabilities of artificial intelligence, he turned to "Game of Thrones."

Imagine, he said, if you could use AI to rewrite the ending of that not-so-popular finale. Maybe even put yourself into the show.

"That is what entertainment will look like," said Brockman.

Not six months since the release of ChatGPT, generative artificial intelligence is already prompting widespread unease throughout Hollywood. Concern over chatbots writing or rewriting scripts is one of the leading reasons TV and film screenwriters took to picket lines earlier this week.

Though the Writers Guild of America is striking for better pay in an industry where streaming has upended many of the old rules, AI looms as rising anxiety.

"AI is terrifying," said Danny Strong, the "Dopesick" and "Empire" creator. "Now, I've seen some of ChatGPT's writing and as of now I'm not terrified because Chat is a terrible writer. But who knows? That could change."

AI chatbots, screenwriters say, could potentially be used to spit out a rough first draft with a few simple prompts ("a heist movie set in Beijing"). Writers would then be hired, at a lower pay rate, to punch it up.

Screenplays could also be slyly generated in the style of known

SEE **CASABLANCA** PAGE 4



Our Heartfelt Thanks



At Providence Saint John's Health Center, we think of all nurses, doctors and hospital workers as caregivers.

We embrace the opportunity to show our respect, admiration and gratitude for them during National Nurses Week, National Hospital Week and every week of the year.

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providence.org/saintjohns

COMMUNITY NEWS

Citywide

Three Behavioral Health Listening Sessions and Community Events Highlight Mental Health Awareness This May

Throughout May, the City of Santa Monica will focus on raising awareness about behavioral health issues – including mental health and substance use challenges, life stressors, and crises – through a series of free community events and activities. This is an opportunity to increase understanding of and destigmatize conversations about behavioral health and elevate local resources that support diverse paths to prevention and recovery for all.

This year's events align with the City's efforts to obtain comprehensive community feedback on a local Behavioral Health strategy. In addition to an online public survey, Initium Health will be facilitating the following series of in-person Future of Behavioral Health Ideas Exchange events, where community members will have the opportunity to discuss solutions to local mental health and substance use issues with experts:

May 17, 2023, at Annenberg Community Beach House from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

May 18, 2023, at Main Library from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.

May 18, 2023, at Virginia Avenue Park from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

"Taking a comprehensive view of the City's current and future behavioral health needs is integral to ensuring a healthy and thriving Santa Monica," says Santa Monica Mayor Gleam Davis. "I look forward to the outcomes of the community discussions and advancing our city's behavioral health strategy."

For more information on the Ideas Exchange event series, visit santamonica.gov/future-of-behavioral-health.

Mental Health Awareness Month event highlights include:

May 9, 2023 - Mental Health Awareness Month Proclamation: City Council will present a proclamation to members of the Disabilities Commission proclaiming May as Mental Health Awareness Month.

May 21, 2023 – Kidical Mass Family Bike Ride at Clover Park: A family-friendly bike ride for all ages with community partners offering information and activities focused on mental health and wellness.

May 21, 2023 – Day of Art and Wellness at Annenberg Community Beach House: A day of creation and contemplation focused on well-being, health, and healing. This free event features communal artmaking, workshops, labyrinth walks and meditation for adults, kids, and families led by cutting-edge community-based artists, performers, spiritualists, and mental health advocates.

For the full list of Mental Health Awareness Month events, activities, and community resources in Santa Monica, visit santamonica.gov/blog/may-is-mental-health-awareness-month.

SUBMITTED BY TATI SIMONIAN, ACTING PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Citywide

Committee for Racial Justice presents: Reclaiming Our Mind, Body, and Soul: A Path to Wellness

Committee For Racial Justice (CRJ) will have a May 7 workshop entitled RECLAIMING OUR MIND, BODY, AND SOUL: A PATH TO WELLNESS at Virginia Ave. Park – 6 p.m. food, 6:30 program. For this workshop and in honor of Mothers' Day, CRJ will host Dr. Andrea Best, an expert in Integrative Medicine and Holistic Psychiatry. Set aside the evening of Sunday, May 7th for a special treat to honor all mothers.

Here is the link to register for our May workshop:

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUoceGqrjMrEtY7A7ZwjEHXryvgz-_kXGL_

If you can't come in person, click on this link to be sent the one for Zoom admission on the 7th.

In these difficult times, countless people have come to rely upon the guidance of Andrea Best: MD, teacher, speaker, writer, Holistic and Traditional Psychiatrist. Dr. Best specializes in Integrative Medicine, where she leverages her knowledge as a Nutritionist, Chemist, Plant Medicine Scientist. She is known for her expertise in global treatment methods for Anxiety as the Creator of Anxiety Mastery Workshops and Joy Retreats. Please join us as Dr. Best guides us toward wellness.

Dr. Best will share with us holistic principles and practical techniques that each person can use on their own to tap into their inherent power. She enjoys sharing advanced methods of treating and preventing anxiety, with practical life changing tools that serve one life-long. Let us collectively embrace more integrative and mindful lives to honor the mother in all of us.

Come share in this empowering discussion - and meet with them in person again if you are able – at 6 p.m. for refreshments with the program starting at 6:30 p.m. For more information, call Joanne at 310-422-5431.

Virginia Avenue Park, Thelma Terry Bldg. 2200 Virginia Ave.

SUBMITTED BY JOANNE BERLINH

Citywide

Santa Monica Reads "The Sum of Us" by Heather McGhee

The Santa Monica Public Library joins the City of Santa Monica, Santa Monica College, and Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District for a special community-wide reading of Heather McGhee's book The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together.

Heather McGhee's 2022 book illustrates how racism is harmful to everyone and makes the argument that we all have an interest in fighting it. McGhee, formerly the head of the Demos advocacy group and now the chair of the Color of Change, developed the book from her 2020 TED Talk "Racism has a Cost for Everyone." It has also been published in a young readers' edition and adapted into a podcast produced by Barack and Michelle Obama's company, Higher Ground. When people unite across racial and ethnic lines, McGhee argues, there's a solidarity dividend that helps everyone.

Santa Monica Reads, one of the longest running community-wide reading programs of its kind in the United States, provides an opportunity for people to engage, read, and discuss the same book at community-wide programs and discussions.

Free copies for adults and young readers are available to those planning to participate in the Santa Monica Reads programs. Pick up a copy at the Main Library, and the Pico and Montana Ave. Branch locations beginning Monday, May 1 while supplies last. Print and electronic copies are also available to borrow from the library.

Santa Monica Reads is proudly sponsored by the Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library. To become a Friend of the Library, visit friendsofsmpl.org.

May is packed with provocative programs related to The Sum of Us. Santa Monica College's 2023 Spring Symposium brings these special programs including a keynote address by Heather McGhee to the community:

How We Build Power: Linking Race and Class. Monday, May 15 at 7 p.m. SMC Student Services Center Orientation Hall, SSC 183.

Putting White Interests on Trial: Derrick Bell's The Space Traders Thought Experiment. Tuesday, May 16 at 7 p.m. SMC Student Services Center Orientation Hall, SSC 183.

Why Can't We Have Nice Things? A Student Panel on Race, Class & Solidarity. Wednesday, May 17 at 7 p.m. SMC Student Services Center Orientation Hall, SSC 183.

From Me to We: Building Cross-Racial Solidarity for a Better Democracy. Thursday, May 18 at 7:30 p.m. John Adams Middle School (JAMS), Auditorium. RSVP at tinyurl.com/HeatherMcGheeKeynote. Heather McGhee, author of The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together, will be giving a keynote address as part of SMC's Public Policy Institute's annual symposium.

Santa Monica Reads book discussions are hosted by trained discussion facilitators. Discussion participants are encouraged to share their thoughts about The Sum of Us and its themes or are welcome to simply listen and learn more about the book. Community Book Discussion: For Young Readers Thursday, May 25 at 4:30 p.m. Pico Branch Library, Annex.

Community Book Discussion: For Adults. Tuesday, May 30 at 6 p.m. Zoom. Register for the discussion: tinyurl.com/SumOfUsDiscussion.

For more information about these free, public programs call Santa Monica Public Library at (310) 458-8600 or visit smpl.org/SMReads.aspx. For a full list of free Library programs, resources, locations, and hours, please visit our website at smpl.org. We look forward to seeing you at the Santa Monica Public Library.

SUBMITTED BY JENNIFER ULLRICH, PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PROGRAMMING

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WINNER

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THEFT

FROM PAGE 1

to make a small rental deposit for each machine and signed an agreement that if the equipment was not returned on time, they would pay mounting fees. They used false identities and ruse telephone numbers to rent the equipment and transported stolen goods in vans and rental trucks.

In total, some 480 pieces of equipment were stolen from the home improvement stores. When a store tried to charge the debit account for the value of the equipment or the penalties incurred, it learned there was insufficient funds to cover the debt.

Because the deposits traveled by wire outside the state of Washington, the pair is charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and 10 counts of wire fraud and/or aiding and abetting wire fraud. The conspiracy count and the wire fraud counts are each punishable by up to 20 years in prison and a $250,000 fine.

scott.snowden@smdp.com

CASABLANCA

FROM PAGE 1

writers. What about a comedy in the voice of Nora Ephron? Or a gangster film that sounds like Mario Puzo? You won't get anything close to "Casablanca" but the barest bones of a bad Liam Neeson thriller isn't out of the question.

The WGA's basic agreement defines a writer as a "person" and only a human's work can be copyrighted. But even though no one's about to see a "By AI" writers credit at the beginning a movie, there are myriad ways that regenerative AI could be used to craft outlines, fill in scenes and mock up drafts.

"We're not totally against AI," says Michael Winship, president of the WGA East and a news and documentary writer. "There are ways it can be useful. But too many people are using it against us and using it to create mediocrity. They're also in violation of copyright. They're also plagiarizing."

The guild is seeking more safeguards on how AI can be applied to screenwriting. It says the studios are stonewalling on the issue. The Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which bargains on the behalf of production companies, has offered to annually meet with the guild to go over definitions around the fast-evolving technology.

"It's something that requires a lot more discussion, which we've committed to doing," the AMPTP said in an outline of its position released Thursday.

Experts say the struggle screenwriters are now facing with regenerative AI is just the beginning. The World Economic Forum this week released a report predicting that nearly a quarter of all jobs will be disrupted by AI over the next five years.

"It's definitely a bellwether in the workers' response to the potential impacts of artificial intelligence on their work," says Sarah Myers West, managing director of the nonprofit AI Now Institute, which has lobbied the government to enact more regulation around AI. "It's not lost on me that a lot of the most meaningful efforts in tech accountability have been a product of worker-led organizing."

AI has already filtered into nearly every part of moviemaking. It's been used to de-age actors, remove swear words from scenes in post-production, supply viewing recommendations on Netflix and posthumously bring back the voices of Anthony Bourdain and Andy Warhol.

The Screen Actors Guild, set to begin its own bargaining with the AMPTP this summer, has said it's closely following the evolving legal landscape around AI.

"Human creators are the foundation of the creative industries and we must ensure that they are respected and paid for their work," the actors union said.

The implications for screenwriting are only just being explored. Actors Alan Alda and Mike Farrell recently reconvened to read through a new scene from "M(asterisk)A(asterisk)S(asterisk)H" written by ChatGPT. The results weren't terrible, though they weren't so funny, either.

"Why have a robot write a script and try to interpret human feelings when we already have studio executives who can do that?" deadpanned Alda.

Writers have long been among notoriously exploited talents in Hollywood. The films they write usually don't get made. If they do, they're often rewritten many times over. Raymond Chandler once wrote "the very nicest thing Hollywood can possibly think to say to a writer is that he is too good to be only a writer."

Screenwriters are accustomed to being replaced. Now, they see a new, readily available and inexpensive competitor in AI — albeit one with a slightly less tenuous grasp of the human condition.

"Obviously, AI can't do what writers and humans can do. But I don't know that they believe that, necessarily," says screenwriter Jonterri Gadson ("A Black Lady Sketchshow"). "There needs to be a human writer in charge and we're not trying to be gig workers, just revising what AI does. We need to tell the stories."

Dramatizing their plight as man vs. machine surely doesn't hurt the WGA's cause in public opinion. The writers are wrestling with the threat of AI just as concern widens over how hurriedly regenerative AI products has been thrust into society.

Geoffrey Hinton, an AI pioneer, recently left Google in order to speak freely about its potential dangers. "It's hard to see how you can prevent the bad actors from using it for bad things," Hinton told The New York Times.

"What's especially scary about it is nobody, including a lot of the people who are involved with creating it, seem to be able to explain exactly what it's capable of and how quickly it will be capable of more," says actor-screenwriter Clark Gregg.

The writers finds themselves in the awkward position of negotiating on a newborn technology with the potential for radical effect. Meanwhile, AI-crafted songs by "Fake Drake" or "Fake Eminem" continue to circulate online.

"They're afraid that if the use of AI to do all this becomes normalized, then it becomes very hard to stop the train," says James Grimmelmann, a professor of digital and information law at Cornell University. "The guild is in the position of trying to imagine lots of different possible futures."

In that way, the long work stoppage that many are expecting — Moody's Investor Service forecasts that the strike may last three months or longer — could offer more time to analyze how regenerative AI might reshape screenwriting.

In the meantime, chanting demonstrators are hoisting signs with messages aimed at a digital foe. Seen on the picket lines: "ChatGPT doesn't have childhood trauma"; "I heard AI refuses to take notes"; and "Wrote ChatGPT this."

GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Show Your Love for the Pollinators

CAMILLE KESTERMAN
Community and Gardening Guest Author

Bees are busy. Spring has sprung and the Santa Monica Community Gardens are in full bloom. If you have not visited the gardens in a while, stop by and experience an abundance of blossoms for nature's majesty is on full display. California poppies, rock roses, western blue-eyed grass, and sage are flowering in Isihara Park. Sweet peas are in blossom at Euclid Park, along with vibrant pansies and roses. There is a gorgeous profusion of wisteria at the southeast corner of the Main Street garden. Calendula, cosmos, and even more poppies adorn this garden. At Park Drive there is a glorious cascading geranium along Broadway just waiting to make your day.

Plants don't produce flowers just for beauty's sake, though. They bloom to attract pollinators, the unsung heroes of the flowering plants, fruits, and vegetables in our local environments and food chains everywhere.

There's a reason the "talk" has long been euphemistically noted as explaining the birds and the bees; pollination is pretty sexy stuff. Pollination is an essential process in the sexual reproduction of all flowering plants. Most pollen grains are immobile, and cannot reach the stigma by themselves. Some external agent is required; it can be wind, water, sometimes even gravity or growth contact in species that can self-pollinate, but most often pollen is transferred by a pollinator.

A pollinator is any animal or insect that moves pollen from the anther (the male organ of the plant) in the stamen of one plant to the stigma (the female organ of the plant) in the pistil of another. Anything that nestles within a flower to get to its nectar can be a pollinator. But bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, flies, moths, and beetles are the main pollinators here in the California Coastal Chaparral Forest which includes our coastal plains, and the interior valleys of Southern California.

The National Park service estimates that 90% of wildflowers and 75% of food crops depend on pollination for successful seed production. This year about two million beehives were imported to California just to pollinate the almond crop. In our climate, especially in commercial agricultural fields without crop diversity, it is difficult to increase hive supply due to the lack of floral food supply for pollinators throughout summer and fall.

As urban gardeners, we have a great opportunity, some may say a responsibility, to help create a more sustainable ecosystem in our local environments. If you have a lawn, you can save on average 44 gallons of water yearly for every square foot of grass you remove when you convert turf to a drought resistant, pollinator friendly native plant garden. Santa Monica offers a landscape rebate to help you remove your lawn: https://www.santamonica.gov/process-explainers/how-to-get-a-landscaping-rebate

Don't have a yard? Don't worry! You can make a difference with one window box, a few feet on an apartment balcony, or just room enough for a few flower pots or raised beds on a patio.

You can collaborate with your neighbors, offer to help out in a friend's yard or community garden. Just begin. The birds and the bees will love you for it. Take the pledge to bring back the pollinators with the Xerces Society: https://www.xerces.org/bring-back-the-pollinators Some tips for attracting pollinators:

• Plant wildflowers and native plants because they have an abundance of nectar and pollen, are drought tolerant and more resistant to pests. Native plants will be lower maintenance, hardier, and beautiful. https://gardens.si.edu/learn/for-educators/what-is-a-pollinator-lawn/

• Find a nursery that specializes in native plants and only choose plants that haven't been treated with pesticides or insecticides. The importance of avoiding chemical pesticides in your garden cannot be overstated.

• Focus on selecting perennials to keep your garden welcoming to pollinators for years to come. Butterflies and bees like to bask in the sun and their favorite flowers grow in full or partial sunlight. Match the plants you choose to the light exposure your garden actually receives for the best results. https://www.gardendesign.com/california/native-plants.html

• Create a diversity of flowers in your garden with different colors, shapes and sizes to attract a

variety of pollinators. Bees, though brilliantly adapted for pollination with fuzzy bodies and an electrostatic charge that helps pollen stick, cannot "see" red flowers. Hummingbirds love trumpet shaped blooms of all colors, but their favorites are red.

• Provide a continuous food supply if possible, by choosing pollinator friendly plants that bloom during different times of the year. Do not overlook native shrubs, grasses, and trees. Vegetables are an asset to every garden too, and tend to flower later in spring and summer.

From 9 – 11, every 2nd Saturday of the month the Main Street Community Garden or at Ishihara Park Learning Garden every 3rd Saturday, there are opportunities to hear from experts and master gardeners and enjoy family fun. Stroll the walking paths there any day you choose.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Citywide

Traffic arraignments, trials moving from Beverly Hills Courthouse to Santa Monica Courthouse

Effective July 3, 2023, the Court is moving all traffic and non-traffic infraction arraignments and trials originating in Beverly Hills to the Santa Monica Courthouse, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court David W. Slayton announced today.

The transition is necessary to improve efficiency in the Court's West District. However, access to justice for litigants remains a priority, and the Court will continue to provide the option for parties to appear remotely using LACourtConnect (LACC), the Court's remote courtroom appearance technology.

Here is what traffic litigants with citations issued in Beverly Hills need to know about court appearances:

• All courtroom appearances for traffic and non-traffic infractions originating in Beverly Hills, including arraignments and trials, will be calendared in either Department A or Department B at the Santa Monica Courthouse, 1725 Main St., in Santa Monica.

• Litigants who have a scheduled court appearance in Beverly Hills on or after July 3, 2023, will receive a notice informing them their matter will be moved to the Santa Monica Courthouse traffic departments. Hearing dates and times will not change.

• All parties may continue to appear remotely using LACC (audio or video) for arraignments, certain trials, and other court hearings. Please note: remote appearances are not allowed if litigants have documents or other evidence such as photos or videos to present during trial. Also remote appearances are not allowed if the defendant's identity is in question.

• Remote appearances are allowed in red light camera infraction proceedings for arraignments only; not trials.

Here is what litigants with citations issued in Beverly Hills need to know about customer service in the Traffic Clerk's Office:

• Litigants with infraction citations issued anywhere in LA County can use the Court's Traffic Call Center at (213) 633-6300 to pay their citations, enroll in a payment plan, or schedule arraignments.

• Litigants with infraction citations also may pay their tickets, schedule arraignments, or seek customer service in person at the Traffic Clerk's Office at both the Beverly Hills Courthouse and Santa Monica Courthouse.

Visit the Court's Traffic webpage at https://www.lacourt.org/division/traffic/traffic2.aspx for information on options to resolve traffic citations. More information on appearing remotely via LACC may be found at this https://my.lacourt.org/laccwelcome.

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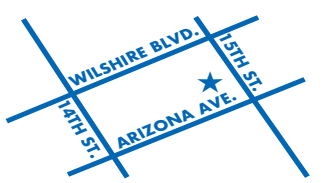
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bit.ly/ActiveAgingMobilityExpo

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Citywide

SMC Opera Theatre Performs Donizetti's Elixir of Love (L'elisir d'amore) May 12-14

Santa Monica College Opera Theatre (SMCOT), in collaboration with the SMC Symphony Orchestra, will perform the popular operatic comedy L'elisir d'amore (Elixir of Love), by Gaetano Donizetti. The fully staged production will be presented in Italian with English supertitles.

Performances will be held in The Broad Stage at the SMC Performing Arts Center, 1310 11th Street (at Santa Monica Boulevard), Santa Monica. Evening performances are at 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, May 12-13. Matinee performance are at 3 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, May 13-14.

L'elisir d'amore (Elixir of Love) is a charming, melodramatic comedy that follows the humorous adventures of a hapless young man who buys an 'Elixir of Love' from a traveling salesman to try to win the heart of his girl before she marries someone else.

"When Elixir of Love came out in the 1830s, it enjoyed a popularity that might be comparable to Wicked or Hamilton today. It was the most performed opera in Italy for 10 straight years," said SMC Voice Professor Dr. Janelle DeStefano, who co-directs SMC Opera Theatre with SMC Coach/Accompanist Mercedes Juan Musotto. "Donizetti's music is full of delightful energy and gorgeous bel canto melodies (including the famous "Una furtiva lagrima"). Romani's libretto demonstrates a rich understanding of human nature and a warm sense of humor. This is SMCOT's first full production with orchestra since the pandemic began, and we are excited to bring this wonderful opera to life!"

Tickets are $25 for general admission and $10 for students. A modest service charge applies. Advance tickets may be purchased online at smc.edu/tickets or by calling 310-434-3005 (Monday-Friday; limited hours). Tickets may also be purchased at the SMC Events Box Office on the main SMC Campus (1900 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica) up to 1 hour before the performance start time. Free parking on premises. Seating is strictly on a first-arrival basis.

More information is available at smc.edu/calendar or by calling 310-434-4323.

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VENICE TREES

FROM PAGE 1

say, 'come and populate my business.'"

Du Prey said that the City is issuing a notice to the House of Pies owner and developer for non-permitted tree removal and requesting that two new trees be planted for every one that was cut down – meaning House of Pies could be on the hook for eight new trees.

However, he said that due to the nature of the location and lack of available space it is not likely all of the trees could be planted at that site, in which case the City would charge the owner $1,945 to allow them to plant a tree elsewhere within the Council District (CD 11).

While Du Prey said the motivation for cutting down the trees has not yet been determined by the City, James Murez, a long-time Venice resident who was involved in their planting in the 1990s, said he thinks aesthetics had something to do with it.

Renderings of the House of Pies restaurant posted at the construction site do not include the sycamores along the sidewalk, but instead feature multiple palm trees around the building. Murez said he spoke to someone involved in the project who told him the owner had wanted just that. "The owner of the property had talked about wanting to have palm trees out there and he was told that wasn't possible because these trees were planted by the community and were approved street trees for the boulevard and palm trees would not be okay – he knew that," Murez said.

However, the same person also said that he believed it was miscommunication between the owner and workers at the site that ultimately led to the trees being cut down.

The House of Pies owner did not return requests for comment before publication, but a representative involved in the project said he believes the owner is open to working with the City and the community to find a solution going forward.

For community members like Murez and Duvivier, that will involve, at a minimum, replanting and maintaining more trees like the sycamores.

Unlike palm trees, California Sycamores are native to the region and provide numerous benefits for the local ecosystem. In a city dominated by concrete and starved for green space, resident and VVG member Sarah Wauters said the removal of any public tree is a loss but the fact that these were native trees adds extra weight.

"A California Sycamore is more important than just chopping down some random, non-native tree," she said. "Native trees provide the food and the nesting that supports the biodiversity that we have in Southern California… and another problem is we need as much shade and carbon sequestration as we can get."

With climate change continuing to contribute to increasingly extreme heat, particularly in urban areas like L.A., Duvivier said maintaining tree cover is more important than ever. However, trees across the city are still being removed to make way for new buildings and other construction.

"We're losing the tree canopy at a really alarming rate, mostly due to development," Duvivier said. From 2000 to 2020 it is estimated that L.A.'s urban tree canopy decreased by 11%.

While an estimated 90% of L.A. trees are located on private property and are therefore at the mercy of land owners, the 10% trees in public spaces have some legal protections, at least in theory. However, Duvivier said these protections too often fail to make a difference.

"These are the only trees that we can actually sort of protect, and yet we can't protect them at all," she said, referencing the four butchered sycamores.

Du Prey said, in line with City policy, the House of Pies owner will be required to take out a bond to ensure the health of new trees for five years.

"They have a five year period to keep them alive and if they die or decline the bond continues until they comply," he said.

Duvivier and Murez think this is not enough and that the City needs to go further in taking action to conserve and promote public trees.

For Murez, in this case, a 30-year commitment on behalf of the owner to maintain the trees seems more appropriate to compensate for the loss, which he said he feels on a personal level as one of the people who secured funding and led the charge to plant native trees along Venice Boulevard in the first place.

"I put in thousands of hours and now here we are 30 years later and what was it all about, so somebody can just come along and do whatever they want?" Murez said. "I was doing this because I wanted the community to be better for the next generation."

"I think it's not enough," Duvivier said. "Those trees were 30 years old… and the fact that they cut down the trees isn't an indication that they're going to be great stewards of future trees."

She and Murez are also concerned about the precedent that a lack of more severe consequences could set.

"I'm really scared that it could be a model for other business owners and apartment building owners on the street," Duvivier said. "I'm afraid it could start a chain reaction of other people deciding they can just go rogue on their street trees."

However, Murez said, depending on what ends up happening, this could also be an opportunity to send the opposite signal.

"We need to send a message that needs to be really loud and clear: if you cut down a city tree, we're going to get you for it and when we do, you're going to be responsible for however long it's been there," he said.





Shelley Billik and Grace Adams

TREES: Top: VVG members working on a tree on Venice Blvd. Bottom: A stump of one of the cut-down sycamores.

grace@smdp.com



Santa Monica Daily Press

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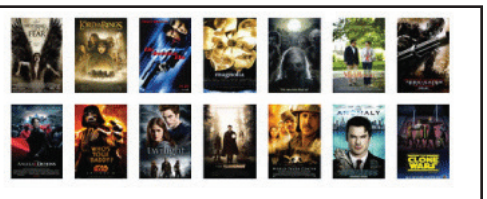
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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (May 6)

This year is an elevator which lifts so many aspects of your life including moods, professional status, social options and more. Your charms attract the most interesting people and invitations. Other highlights: property bought and sold at a profit, extraordinary answers to ordinary questions and a certificate that's been a long time coming. Aries and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 4, 2, 30 and 16.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll humbly embrace the vast and infinite unknown, striding ever-forward with the faith that your ignorance can be illuminated by the light of newfound understanding. In other words, you'll read.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The best relationships are the flexible ones that can accommodate the growth of both people. Relationships that are so rigid as to fit but one circumstance will exist in the chapter they are meant for.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Service is a way to engage the people around you. You don't mind giving something away for free because it brings you the privilege of getting to know people and getting the chance to earn their trust.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The kind of work you'll do today is the sort no one can do for you and you're glad for that because at the end of this process you'll know what you can do, you'll understand your power and you'll own your confidence totally.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The network may be broadcasting, but you won't get the show until you tune your receiver to its frequency. The same goes for relationships of all kinds. You'll work on matching frequencies, and you'll notice who is matching yours.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Nothing can keep you from moving on. You'll wrap up the last scene as neatly as possible. Whether you get help is irrelevant. You'll do what's necessary to feel good about how you left things. Closure isn't a team sport.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Those who can't see past their own agenda are disadvantaged. They may appear to be confidently getting all they want, but this would be impossible; at the center of those unable to connect or empathize with others lies an insatiable void.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Don't think in terms of "more" or "less" because it's all subjective. What you're looking for has nothing to do with quantity, and everything to do with fit. Knowing yourself is half the work of fulfilling your needs.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Assumptions are the default of the human processing system. You'll make some today, so you may as well lean toward empowering ones. Assume you're strong and capable enough to get the job done. Assume people like you and want to be your friend.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Do not doubt in your ability to heal. Your body knows how to heal itself. You have helped others heal through your knowledge, touch and kind heartedness. Know that healing happens through and around you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). People will give you what you want today providing they know what that is. If you feel weird about saying it, consider why -- it's the golden topic now, the one which will bring you an enlightened moment.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Humans come with egos. As much as you try and minimize the role your ego plays in a transaction, allow it a few treats and give it the self-talk it likes. This will prevent you needing too much praise from others.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

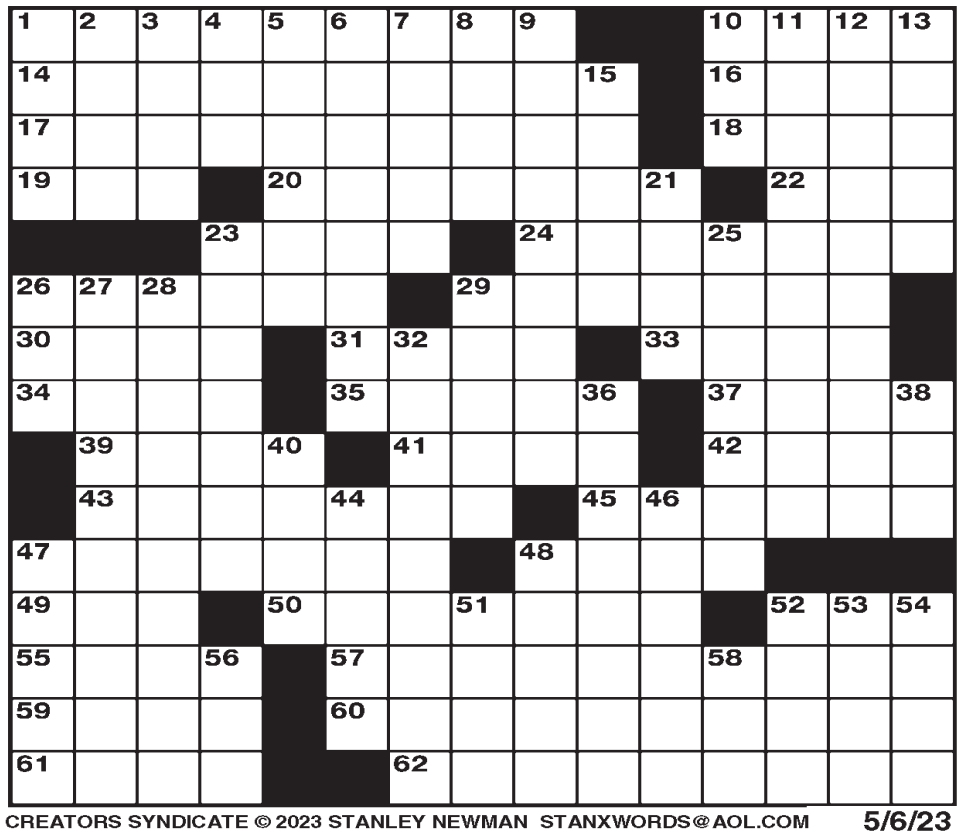
					4			3
4		5		3				8
	2				8	6		
2				6				9
	6		1	7	9		2	
3				8				7
		1	7				3	
8				4		7		6
9			8					

Newsday Crossword

SATURDAY STUMPER by Steve Mossberg
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Creation for a trade show
10 Home of the Hotel Taj Plaza
14 What a wedding band might do
16 Ready to sit down
17 Enters a new phase
18 pH test specimen
19 Secure
20 You'd expect it to catch a mouse
22 Travel checkers
23 Fantasy game conjurer
24 Stopovers between flights
26 Musical "one more time"
29 Past saving
30 Retired player as of 2022
31 Soup or salad
33 Grunt of long ago
34 Baby, maybe
35 Associate of Knuckles the Echidna
37 Going between
39 First bring into conversation
41 Cosmo or Tiki beverage
42 Outpouring
43 Releases from the inside
45 Utilizes, as limestone to purify ores
47 Timeless
48 One way to get your things together
49 Divisional competitors of BOS and MTL
50 In a whirl
52 Online ill-wishers
55 Whom Emerson met in Yosemite
57 "This isn't happening"
59 Know-nothing bridge
60 Fuel source
61 What Asian bread isn't
62 Edenic antonym

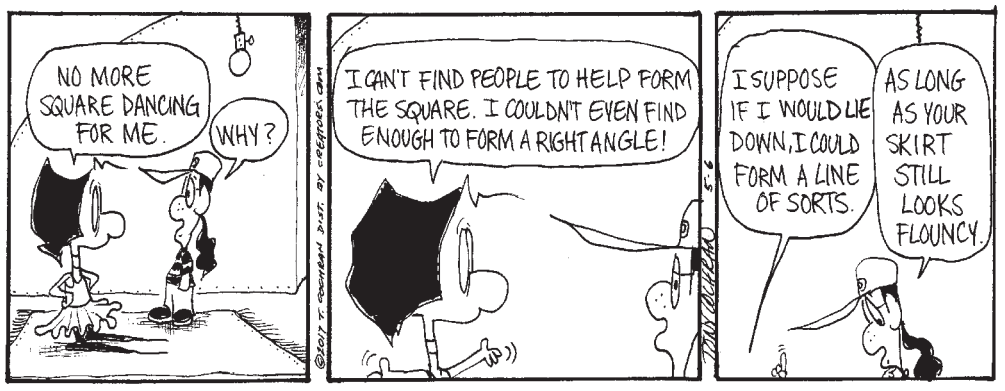
DOWN
1 Remark after relief
2 Indian name at Woodstock
3 Noah emulator in a 2007 film
4 Gathering in a forest
5 Nonpareil in the movies
6 Nonpareils
7 Geode, often
8 Watches for money, maybe
9 Stumpery clue for "cot"
10 What all new EU-sold autos have had since 2004
11 Inner power
12 Resistance symbol
13 Assistant in a Herculean labor
15 Still
21 "We make our ineffaceable mark upon time and the diverse __": Whitman
23 Fill-in-the-blank game
25 Plow, vis-à-vis roads
26 Go beyond superficiality
27 Veil-wearing activity
28 Word in the news expected today (5/6/23)
29 Barbary Coast city
32 Solar system boundary
36 Half of a dance duo
38 Ballpark figures
40 Word from Old High German for "nibble"
44 Contents of a bank portfolio
46 *Capitale della Lombardia*
47 At ease
48 Some Lords
51 Minute
52 Digital editing
53 One catching some rays
54 Stayed
56 Shortened studies
58 Fist bump, informally



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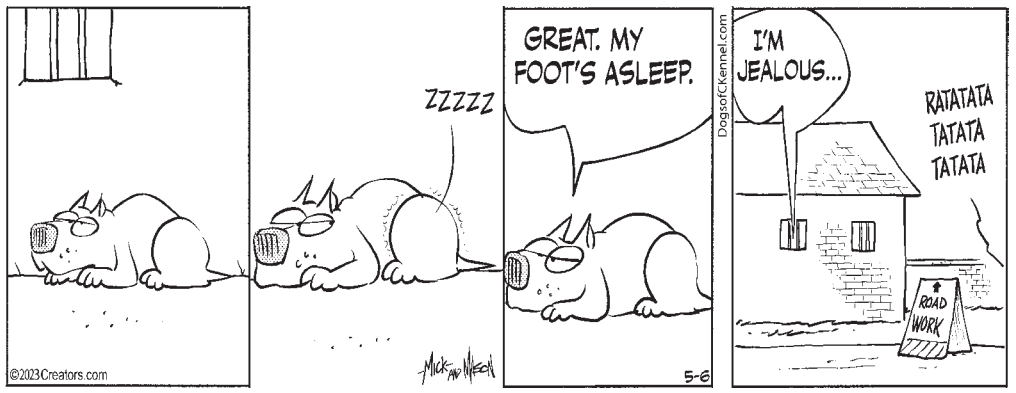
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



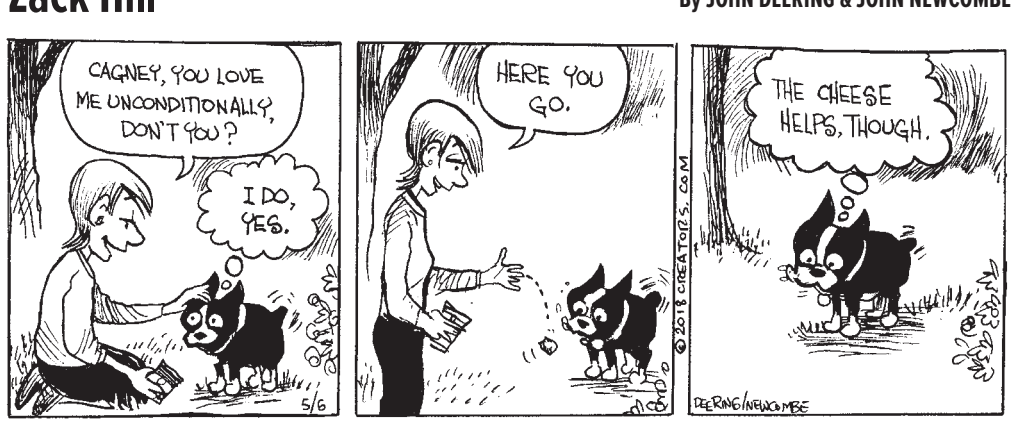
Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



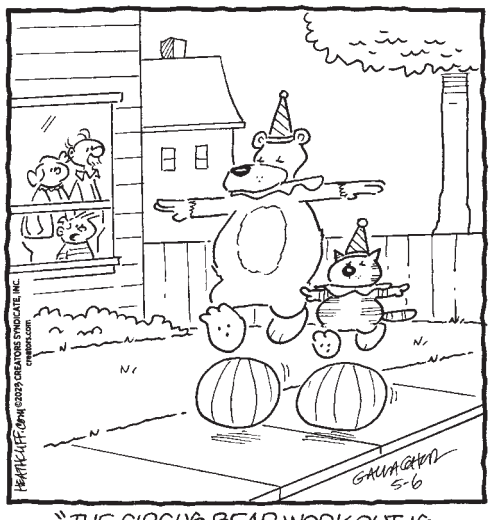
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

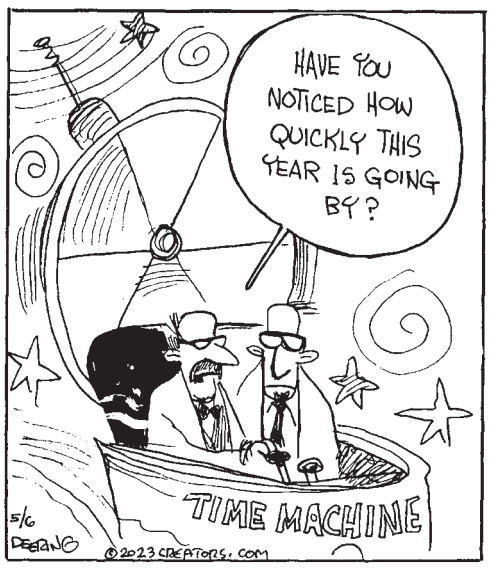
By PETER GALLAGHER



"THE CIRCUS BEAR WORKOUT IS ALL THE RAGE."

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 23 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle. © australianwordgames.com.au 5836

South-western NSW

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

Beef	Emus	Markets	Rural
Birds	Farmer	Murray	Sheep
Boats	Flow	Bridge	Trees
Bolaro	Friendly	Nature	Urban
Station	Grower	New South	Vast
Cabin	Gums	Wales	Vegies
Canals	Indulge	Nuts	Welcome
Carp	Junee	Oranges	Wine
Coots	Lakes	Owls	Wool
Corn	Lamb	Pears	Yass
Cowabbie	Leeton	Profit	
Echidna	Loans	Relax	

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MONDAY | MAY 8

THE WAILERS : THE OFFICIAL BEACHLIFE AFTER PARTY

The band play a special set featuring incredible cuts from Bob Marley's formidable back catalogue along with a string of their greatest, classic hits. The Wailers are giving you a chance to be part of the legacy. Aston Barrett Jr, himself reggae royalty as son of the irrepressible 'Familyman', carries the flame for The Wailers in a show that is simply not to be missed. The Venice West, 1717 Lincoln Blvd. Venice, CA 90291 https://www.ticketweb.com/event/the-wailers-the-official-the-venice-west-tickets/12925965

TUESDAY | MAY 9

COUNCIL PROCLAMATION OF AAPI HERITAGE MONTH

Council Proclamation of AAPI Heritage Month: The City Council will present a proclamation declaring May as AAPI Heritage Month to Anna Wong, niece of the famous actress and former Santa Monica resident, Anna May Wong. Watch in person at City Hall or view the live stream on the City's YouTube channel. City Hall, 1685 Main Street. Santa Monica, CA 90401 https://www.youtube.com/user/Citytv16santamonica

WEDNESDAY | MAY 10

CLEAN BEACHES COMMITTEE MEETING

The mission of the Clean Beaches & Ocean Parcel Tax Citizens Oversight Committee is to uphold the mission of the City of Santa Monica Watershed Management Plan: to restore a healthier balance between the urban environment and the natural ecosystem, including the Santa Monica Bay, by reducing the pollution in urban runoff, reducing urban flooding, and increasing water conservation, recreation opportunities, open space, and wildlife and marine habitat. The Citizens Oversight Committee consists of five (5) residents of the City of Santa Monica. The Committee meets quarterly at 6:30 P.M. at the Civic Center Parking Structure, 330 Olympic Drive, 2nd floor Santa Monica Institute (SMI) Room, Santa Monica, California.

THURSDAY | MAY 11

ROCK N COMEDY NIGHT

8:30 at the door 9:00pm show starts. Comedians from Netflix, BET, Prime etc. Hosted by Reid Clark. raffles, prizes and giveaways. Rock N Pies 1120 Wilshire Blvd. Santa Monica, CA

FRIDAY | MAY 12

SMC OPERA THEATRE PRESENTS: ELIXIR OF LOVE BY GAETANO DONIZETTI

Janelle DeStefano and Mercedes Juan Musotto, Directors. SMC Opera Theatre joins forces with the SMC Symphony Orchestra to present a fully staged production of L'elisir d'amore, Donizetti's delightful comedy about a young man who buys an "Elixir of Love" from a traveling salesman to try to win the heart of his girl before she marries someone else. SMC Performing Arts Center The Broad Stage

SATURDAY | MAY 13

BEACH WALK & SKETCH

Guided by a naturalist, join others in this peaceful pursuit to sketch our beautiful coastline. We'll provide the binoculars, drawing boards, pencils, and newsprint, or bring your own easy-to-carry sketching tools. Annenberg Community Beach House 415 Pacific Coast Highway. Santa Monica, CA 90402 https://www.eventbrite.com/e/beach-walk-sketch-tickets-586017583367

ART AT THE AIRPORT

Art At The Airport is a monthly series of open studios that provides a rare glimpse into over 20 professional artist studios as well as the opportunity to buy art directly from the artists. 18th Street Arts Center Airport Center 3026 Airport Ave. Santa Monica, 90405

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



SURF REPORT

WATER TEMP: **60.8**

SATURDAY *POOR TO FAIR*	**SURF:** 3-4ft Waist to chest	Looking like lully but fun morning for summer points. A little more SSW swell moving in through the day, with light/favorable winds and a nice tide push in the morning. Moderate onshores due for the afternoon but the points are rideable.
SUNDAY *POOR TO FAIR*	**SURF:** 3-4ft Waist to chest	Lully SSW swell holds steady to keep the summer points rideable. There still isn't much NW energy so the beachbreaks will be pretty walled.

WEATHER

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 60. North northeast wind 5 to 10 mph.
Saturday Night: Patchy fog after 11pm. Otherwise, mostly cloudy, with a low around 53.
Sunday: Patchy fog before 11am. Otherwise, partly sunny, with a high near 64.
Sunday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 53.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2023/05/06	Sat	04:41 AM	-0.88	L
2023/05/06	Sat	10:58 AM	3.62	H
2023/05/06	Sat	3:45 PM	1.68	L
2023/05/06	Sat	10:06 PM	6.07	H
2023/05/07	Sun	05:26 AM	-1.01	L
2023/05/07	Sun	11:53 AM	3.37	H
2023/05/07	Sun	4:16 PM	2.00	L
2023/05/07	Sun	10:42 PM	6.04	H
2023/05/08	Mon	06:17 AM	-0.98	L
2023/05/08	Mon	12:58 PM	3.14	H
2023/05/08	Mon	4:50 PM	2.31	L
2023/05/08	Mon	11:25 PM	5.85	H
2023/05/09	Tue	07:14 AM	-0.84	L
2023/05/09	Tue	2:19 PM	3.02	H
2023/05/09	Tue	5:34 PM	2.63	L
2023/05/10	Wed	12:17 AM	5.53	H
2023/05/10	Wed	08:20 AM	-0.65	L
2023/05/10	Wed	3:55 PM	3.15	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: 5/3
21 26 30 45 47
Power#: 23
Jackpot: 87 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 5/2
3 15 16 32 41
Mega#: 9
Jackpot: 68 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 5/3
17 20 21 24 44
Mega#: 26
Jackpot: 56 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 5/4
10 20 22 28 33

Daily 3
Draw Date: 5/4
EVENING: 0 4 4
Draw Date: 5/4
MIDDAY: 9 6 4

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 5/4
1st: 08 - Gorgeous George
2nd: 11 - Money Bags
3rd: 01 - Gold Rush
Race Time: 1:43.57

ADVERTISE WITH US TODAY!
Santa Monica Daily Press

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Future of Behavioral Health

Free and open to the public!
This event brings behavioral health experts, local leaders, and the public together to identify priority areas, share suggestions, and learn from each other.

It's worth talking about.

What are the latest trends shaping behavioral health in the nation?

What is behavioral health?

Behavioral health refers to mental health and substance use disorders, life stressors, and crises.

How can we support businesses affected by behavioral health issues?



Marjorie Morrison
CEO, Psych Hub



Danielle Schlosser, PhD
Board Chair, OneFifteen &
Asst Professor of Psychiatry,
UCSF Health



Kristen Choi, PhD, RN, FAAN
Psychiatric Nurse &
Asst Professor,
UCLA Health



James Corbett, MDiv, JD
Principal, Initium Health

MODERATOR



Derrin Horton
Sports Anchor, KTLA

JOIN OUR IDEAS EXCHANGE

Wednesday, May 17, 2023 | 5 - 7 p.m.
Annenberg Community Beach House
415 E. Pacific Coast Hwy | Santa Monica, CA 90402

PLEASE SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER FOR THIS FREE EVENT

Refreshments provided.
Complimentary parking.

City of Santa Monica