smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

FRIDAY
05.28.21
Volume 20 Issue 167

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LA Council Votes to Move Forward with Homeless Housing Site Study

JAMIE PAIGE
Venice Current / SMDP Staff

The Los Angeles City Council has voted to move forward with a feasibility study on the possibility of housing homeless people at several parks and beach parking lots in Council District 11. Councilman Joe Buscaino voted against the motion saying the sites included in the study "are not feasible" for homeless housing.

Bonin's motion instructs the City Administrative Officer to evaluate the feasibility of and identify funding for:

A temporary site for single-occupancy tiny homes or safe camping at the county-owned parking lot at Will Rogers State Beach, 17000 CA-1 in Pacific Palisades.

A temporary site for single-occupancy tiny homes, safe camping, or safe parking site at the county-owned Parking Lot #3 at Dockweiler Beach, 11999 Vista Del Mar in Playa del Rey.

A temporary site specifically for RV safe parking located at the county-owned RV park at Dockweiler Beach, 12001 Vista Del Mar, Playa Del Rey, CA 90293.

A temporary site for single-occupancy tiny homes or safe camping site at the county-owned parking lot at Lot 2, 13477 Fiji Way in Marina Del Rey.

The motion also instructs the Department of Recreation and Parks to evaluate the feasibility of identifying portions of Mar Vista Park and Westchester Park for safe camping programs, while having the rest of the parks remain open for public use. It also instructs Los Angeles World Airports to work with the City Administrative Officer to identify and fund an airport-owned site for safe camping, safe parking or tiny homes.

The Westchester Playa Neighborhood Council, Mar Vista Neighborhood Council, Brentwood Community Council, and the

SEE **HOMELESSNESS** PAGE 11

Councilwoman visits McKinley







Courtesy photos

VISIT: Mayor Pro-Tem Kristin McCowan visited a 4th grade class at McKinley this week to talk about her role in local government.

School district, city leaders find funds to restore some recreation services

BRENNON DIXSON
SMDP Staff Writer

City Council recently commended staff for bringing forward a balanced budget that includes funds for economic recovery efforts and other Council priorities. But after months of being cooped up inside as a result of the pandemic, local residents are pleading with city officials to fully restore the recreation services they have become so accustomed to throughout the years.

When the City was forced to cut its budget last year in the midst of the pandemic, CREST's enrichment classes, school break camp and its afterschool program, which offers homework assistance, field trips, classes and outdoor play, were allowed to continue, but the community's beloved playground access, youth sports and homework programs were cut.

Since the cuts, community members like Ann Hoover and other Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District stakeholders have been outspoken about a need to restore the services, especially since more parents will be returning to the office in the coming months. However, the FY 2021-23 Proposed Budget presented to Council Tuesday only calls for the continuation of the CREST Club, CREST Camp and CREST Enrichment programs, meaning the CREST Sports and Playground Access programs will likely go unfunded once again this year.

Hoover, who spoke during a public comment period Tuesday along with dozens of other locals who were concerned with local pool and library hours, said she believes parents would sponsor low-income participants or even pay increased fees to bring back the programs in full.

But Santa Monica's Housing and Economic Development Director Andy Agle said the fees would likely be "huge" if they were to cover the costs that are necessary for the City to provide the proper staff ratios and ground support needed to continue the programs.

So, the programs would also still likely need some support from the City, Agle said.

"I'm not sure there's a way to come up with a program that completely relies on fees without making it too difficult for access by our families," he said.

Councilmember Christine Parra asked if there was a way to adjust the agreements with SMMUSD and other local agencies.

"I'm just trying to think outside of the box and see how we can look at different ways we are able to open up these community resources, but also keep the fees down," Parra said.

Director of Finance Gigi Decavalles-Hughes noted this year's budget is strapped as a result of the pandemic.

"We cut our operating costs by 20%; we cut our budget so much last year that what remains are essential services, so whatever we could cut, we cut last year, and any kind of expansion that we are showing this year is very measured and very much focused on the priorities that you asked us to look at," Decavalles-Hughes said. "So, bottom line is any additions to this budget, especially in the

SEE **RECREATION** PAGE 11


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More jobless getting aid than in past even as cutoffs loom

CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

Far more Americans are receiving unemployment benefits than the last time the jobless rate was at the current 6.1%, thanks to a major expansion of the federal safety net that has provided aid to millions of people out of work.

Yet many businesses and Republican officials say all that jobless aid has contributed to worker shortages in some industries, which is why most GOP-led states are moving to cut off the federal support.

About 15.8 million people received unemployment aid through one of several benefit programs during the week of May 8, the latest period for which data is available, according to a Labor Department report Thursday. That's nearly eight times as many people as received jobless payments in August 2014, when the unemployment rate was where it is now and roughly the same proportion of adults had jobs.

The primary reason for the expansion is that the government created two emergency programs in last spring's pandemic relief legislation. About three-quarters of all unemployment beneficiaries — nearly 12 million people — are receiving aid through one of those federal programs. One of them provides payments to the self-employed and gig workers, who had never been eligible for jobless aid before. The other program benefits people who have been unemployed for more than six months. Both are scheduled to end Sept. 6.

Yet 20 states have announced this month that they will cut off the emergency aid early, beginning as soon as June 12, according to an Associated Press analysis, including Texas, Georgia, Tennessee and South Carolina. As a result, about 2.5 million people will lose all their unemployment benefits by early July. Those states are also ending an extra $300 weekly federal payment to the unemployed.

Four other states, including Florida and Arizona, are ending the $300 payment only.

Collectively, those cutoffs of aid coincide with a steady decline in the number of people applying for jobless benefits. The government on Thursday reported the fourth straight weekly drop, to 404,000, the lowest level since the pandemic erupted in March of last year.

The decision by some states to end the aid early highlights the key role the benefits payments have played since the onset of COVID-19. Now, more people — and a higher proportion of the jobless — are receiving unemployment aid than in any past recovery, according to data that extends to the late 1960s. That expansion of aid, economists say, captured millions of people who in previous recessions had fallen through the cracks.

Arindrajit Dube, an economics professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, suggested that the enhanced aid was a key reason — along with three rounds of stimulus checks for most individuals — why Americans' incomes, as a whole, actually rose during the recession despite the loss of millions of jobs.

"That is a success story," Dube said, "and I think that's something we should look at and recognize as a good thing."

Another reason incomes rose is that so many people who lost jobs had been paid comparatively little, while higher-paid professionals who mostly worked from home generally kept their jobs. In fact, total wages and salaries have already rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, even though the economy has 8.2 million fewer jobs.

In the fall of 2014, when the job market was in similar shape, just one-quarter of the unemployed were receiving aid. By then, emergency programs that provided benefits in the aftermath of the Great Recession for as long as 99 weeks had ended. And as the economy slowly improved, many states took steps to limit the availability of unemployment payments, such as reducing the duration of aid.

Now, more Americans are actually receiving jobless benefits that are officially counted as unemployed, though that reflects quirks in the data. The government says 9.8 million people are unemployed. But that doesn't include several million who lost jobs in the pandemic and have stopped looking for work; they aren't counted as unemployed.

As the economy improves, analysts say that the large proportion of people receiving benefits, along with the $300-a-week supplemental payment, may contribute to labor shortages. But jobless aid can also allow people the time to find work that is a good fit for their education and experience, which is helpful for the economy.

"You don't want someone to take the very first job that comes along," said Jason Furman, an economist at Harvard who was an adviser to President Barack Obama. "You want them to take a job that's good for them. ... But you don't want them turning down multiple jobs, either."

The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program, which mostly covers self-employed and gig workers, also allowed parents who were forced to quit and care for children in online schools to receive jobless aid. It essentially acted as a paid leave program, Furman said, which the U.S. doesn't otherwise require from employers, unlike in European countries.

That program has also benefited many other Americans who had previously fallen through the cracks, including people who haven't worked enough hours to meet state requirements to qualify for unemployment benefits.

Dube said his research has found little evidence that the extra $300 has prevented people from taking jobs. In lower-income states where the extra money is a larger boost, hiring has rebounded at the same pace as in other states, he said.

But a separate study by economists at the San Francisco Federal Reserve concluded that the $300-a-week supplement had a modest effect, reducing the rate at which people out of work find jobs by about 3.5 percentage points.

Companies in the restaurant, hotel, manufacturing, and construction industries have said they are struggling to find workers. States began announcing cutoffs to the extra

SEE **JOBLESS** PAGE 11

GOP set to block 1/6 panel, stoking Senate filibuster fight

MARY CLARE JALONICK AND LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

Senate Republicans are ready to deploy the filibuster to block a commission on the Jan. 6 insurrection, shattering chances for a bipartisan probe of the deadly assault on the U.S. Capitol and reviving pressure to do away with the procedural tactic that critics say has lost its purpose.

The vote Thursday would be the first successful use of a filibuster in the Biden presidency to halt Senate legislative action. Most Republicans oppose the bill that would establish a commission to investigate the attack by Donald Trump supporters over the election.

"We have a mob overtake the Capitol, and we can't get the Republicans to join us in making historic record of that event? That is sad," said Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois, the No. 2 Senate Democrat. "That tells you what's wrong with the Senate and what's wrong with the filibuster."

The filibuster is a time-honored Senate tradition that requires a vote by 60 of the 100 senators to cut off debate and advance a bill. With the Senate evenly split 50-50, Democrats would need support of 10 Republicans to move to the commission bill, sparking fresh debate over whether the time has come to change the rules and lower the threshold to 51 votes to take up legislation.

The House already approved the measure with 35 Republican votes. But Trump has made it clear he opposes the formation of any panel to investigate the Jan. 6 siege, when a violent mob of his supporters broke into the Capitol in a failed effort to overturn Joe Biden's election. Democrats are warning that if Republicans are willing to use the filibuster to stop an arguably popular measure, it shows the limits of trying to broker compromises, particularly on bills related to election reforms or other aspects of the Democrats' agenda.

"There is no excuse for any Republican to vote against this commission," said Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., while still making clear that he would not support efforts to do away with the filibuster.

"I'm not ready to destroy our government," Manchin said. "I think we'll come together. You have to have faith there's 10 good people."

Ahead of Thursday's vote, the mother of the late Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, along with Sicknick's girlfriend Sandra Garza and two police officers who fought the protesters that day, met with several Republican senators to try to persuade them to act. Sicknick was among many officers protecting the building, some seen in videos in hand-to-hand combat with the mob. He collapsed immediately after engaging with the rioters and died the next day.

Video shows two men spraying Sicknick and another officer with a chemical, but the Washington medical examiner said he suffered a stroke and died from natural causes.

Outside of a meeting with Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, one of two senators who has signaled support for the House bill, Sicknick's mother said Sicknick was "doing his job and he got caught up in it, and it's very sad."

In a statement Wednesday, she was more blunt: "I suggest that all Congressmen and Senators who are against this bill visit my son's grave in Arlington National Cemetery and, while there, think about what their hurtful decisions will do to those officers who will be there for them going forward."

Garza and the officers also met with Maine Sen. Susan Collins, who has proposed minor changes to the bill to try to attract more GOP votes. Collins said afterward that they were "powerful advocates" for a commission, which she said is necessary to make sure "that such an attack on the ultimate symbol of our democracy never happens again."

Collins' effort has so far failed to sway enough Republicans to support the legislation, and so far only Romney and Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski have said they will vote to move ahead with the bill.

"What we want is closure," Murkowski said Wednesday.

Mostly, the GOP senators will follow Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who has declared the bill a "purely political exercise," since Senate committees are already looking into security shortfalls.

McConnell, who once said Trump was responsible for "provoking" the attack on the Capitol, now says of Democrats: "They'd like to continue to litigate the former president, into the future."

The talks over potential changes to the legislation come as Republicans have struggled over how to respond to the insurrection as many in their party have remained loyal to Trump. The former president told his supporters the morning of Jan. 6 to "fight like hell" to overturn his defeat. He has repeatedly said the election was stolen, even though his claims have been rejected by courts and election officials across the country.

Manchin, in a statement with Arizona Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, implored colleagues to act, calling the attack "horrific" and bipartisan commission a "critical step."

The two centrist Democrats have been prominent holdouts against changing the Senate filibuster rules to allow 51 votes for passage of legislation.

Collins' amendment seeks to remedy some of the chief Republican complaints about the proposed commission. It would require the Democratic-appointed chair and the Republican vice chair of the panel to "jointly appoint" staff, changing House language that only required the chair to consult with the vice chair. It would also terminate the commission 30 days after a final report is issued, instead of 60 days, an effort to avoid their work spilling into the election year.

Both the House version and Collins' amendment would require the final report to be issued by Dec. 31, 2021.

Still, most Republicans have held fast to their opposition. Texas Sen. John Cornyn, who once supported the idea of the commission, said he now believes Democrats are trying to use it as a political tool.

"I don't think this is the only way to get to the bottom of what happened," Cornyn said.

Republicans have also pointed to a bipartisan Senate report that is expected next

SEE **FILIBUSTER** PAGE 11

DAILY POLICE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 299 CALLS ON MAY 26

72 Hour Psychiatric Hold Ocean Ave / Idaho Ave 12:00 a.m.
72 Hour Psychiatric Hold 2100blk Santa Monica Blvd 12:49 a.m.
72 Hour Psychiatric Hold 2100blk Santa Monica Blvd 12:53 a.m.
Exhibition Of Speed Centinela Ave / Ocean Park Blvd 12:58 a.m.
General Parking Problem 2nd St / Arizona Ave 5:41 a.m.
Grand Theft 300blk Ocean Ave 6:04 a.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 300blk Olympic Dr 6:25 a.m.
Encampment 2300blk 4th St 7:04 a.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries 1900blk Cloverfield Blvd 7:09 a.m.
Encampment 1600blk 16th St 7:14 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1200blk Wilshire Blvd 7:27 a.m.
Person With A Gun 300blk Santa Monica Pier 7:40 a.m.
Encampment 500blk Colorado Ave 7:42 a.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries 2200blk Delaware Ave 7:44 a.m.
Battery Just Occurred 400blk Colorado Ave 7:48 a.m.
Battery 1000blk Lincoln Blvd 7:50 a.m.
Domestic Violence 4th St / Colorado Ave 7:50 a.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 1900blk Ocean Way 7:58 a.m.
Person With A Gun 1600blk Wilshire Blvd 8:06 a.m.
Vandalism Just Occurred 7th St / Michigan Ave 8:21 a.m.
Encampment Barnard Way / Hollister Ave 8:27 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1000blk Montana Ave 8:41 a.m.
Silent Burglar Alarm 2800blk Neilson Way 8:41 a.m.
Injured Person 1300blk Colorado Ave 8:44 a.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 7th St / Montana Ave 9:13 a.m.
Lewd Activity 1500blk 7th St 9:32 a.m.
Missing Person 300blk Olympic Dr 9:33 a.m.
Encampment 700blk Ocean Ave 9:38 a.m.
Burglary 900blk Grant St 9:40 a.m.
Encampment Ocean Ave / Hollister Ave 9:48 a.m.
Exhibition Of Speed Lincoln Blvd / Colorado Ave 10:11 a.m.
Found Property 2000blk The Beach 10:14 a.m.
Petty Theft 1800blk 14th St 10:44 a.m.
Missing Person 300blk Olympic Dr 10:57 a.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation Glenn Ave / Ashland Ave 11:45 a.m.
Person With A Gun Ocean Ave / Wilshire Blvd 11:49 a.m.
Grand Theft 200blk Bay St 12:00 p.m.
Burglary 1000blk 12th St 12:08 p.m.
Vandalism 1600blk 6th St 12:29 p.m.
Vandalism 5th St / Olympic Blvd W 12:57 p.m.
Assault Just Occurred 1700blk Cloverfield Blvd 1:06 p.m.
Battery Just Occurred 600blk Santa Monica Blvd 1:07 p.m.
Person With A Gun 1700blk Olympic Blvd 1:10 p.m.
Harassing Phone Calls 1400blk 23rd St 1:11 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 1500blk 4th St 1:30 p.m.
Petty Theft Just Occurred 1600blk Cloverfield Blvd 1:34 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries 23rd St / Wilshire Blvd 1:43 p.m.
Person With A Gun 1700blk The Beach 1:43 p.m.
Vandalism Olympic Blvd / 26th St 1:44 p.m.
Exhibition Of Speed Pacific Coast Hwy / California Incline 1:59 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 2600blk Lincoln Blvd 2:00 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries 2300blk Wilshire Blvd 2:01 p.m.
Medical Emergency 400blk Santa Monica Pier 2:10 p.m.
Burglary 900blk Grant St 2:29 p.m.
Lewd Activity 2600blk Arizona Ave 2:29 p.m.
Bike Theft Main St / Ashland Ave 2:34 p.m.
Petty Theft Just Occurred 300blk Pico Blvd 2:36 p.m.
Exhibition Of Speed 4th St / Broadway 2:38 p.m.
Assault W/Deadly Weapon Just Occurred 1600blk Appian Way 2:52 p.m.
Assault Just Occurred 2500blk Santa Monica Blvd 2:55 p.m.
Harassing Phone Calls 800blk 18th St 3:00 p.m.
Fraud 1500blk 16th St 3:26 p.m.
Injured Person 1500blk Ocean Front Walk 3:30 p.m.
Vandalism 600blk Wilshire Blvd 3:41 p.m.
Indecent Exposure 26th St / Broadway 3:47 p.m.
Petty Theft Just Occurred 1400blk 3rd Street Prom 3:57 p.m.
Person Down 3100blk Pico Blvd 4:27 p.m.
Fraud 700blk Wilshire Blvd 4:29 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 2nd St / Montana Ave 4:31 p.m.
General Parking Problem 1600blk 14th St 4:51 p.m.
Burglary 1300blk 7th St 5:02 p.m.
Silent Robbery Alarm 2600blk Wilshire Blvd 5:15 p.m.
Encampment 1300blk Palisades Beach Rd 5:20 p.m.
Bike Theft 1600blk The Beach 5:23 p.m.
Indecent Exposure Lincoln Blvd / Ocean Park Blvd 5:28 p.m.
Vandalism 1900blk The Beach 5:40 p.m.
Found Person 1100blk 17th St 5:54 p.m.
Petty Theft Just Occurred 1200blk 17th St 5:57 p.m.
Armed Robbery In Progress 1600blk Ocean Front Walk 6:06 p.m.
Battery Just Occurred 800blk Broadway 6:15 p.m.
Encampment Lincoln Blvd / Raymond Ave 6:17 p.m.
Vandalism 900blk Arizona Ave 6:39 p.m.
Vandalism Just Occurred 100blk Broadway 7:00 p.m.
Petty Theft 1400blk 2nd St 7:09 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1700blk Ocean Park Blvd 7:15 p.m.
Missing Person 300blk Olympic Dr 7:49 p.m.
Vandalism Just Occurred 1900blk Ocean Way 7:54 p.m.
Vandalism 2900blk Exposition Blvd 7:55 p.m.
Petty Theft 2300blk 32nd St 7:56 p.m.
Stalking 300blk Olympic Dr 8:13 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation Glenn Ave / Ashland Ave 8:21 p.m.
Battery 1100blk Lincoln Blvd 8:32 p.m.
Identity Theft 2200blk Colorado Ave 9:15 p.m.
Drunk Driving Investigation 2200blk Lincoln Blvd 9:30 p.m.
Vandalism Just Occurred 4th St / Santa Monica Blvd 9:34 p.m.
Vandalism Just Occurred 300blk Santa Monica Pier 9:43 p.m.
Battery Ocean Ave / Colorado Ave 9:56 p.m.
Harassing Phone Calls 900blk 21st St 10:40 p.m.
Death Investigation 800blk 17th St 11:18 p.m.
Person With A Gun 20th St / Ocean Park Blvd 11:30 p.m.

DAILY FIRE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 29 CALLS ON MAY 26

EMS 900blk 9th St 1:08 a.m.
EMS 1300blk 15th St 3:21 a.m.
EMS 2800blk Pico Blvd 3:27 a.m.
EMS 2500blk 20th St 3:37 a.m.
EMS Highland Ave / Ocean Park Blvd 5:53 a.m.
Miscellaneous Outside Fire 2nd St / Colorado Ave 7:27 a.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury 2200blk Delaware Ave 7:44 a.m.
EMS Euclid St / Broadway 8:05 a.m.
EMS 1300blk Colorado Ave 8:41 a.m.
EMS 900blk Wilshire Blvd 9:13 a.m.
EMS 1300blk 3rd Street Prom 10:35 a.m.
EMS 1300blk 17th St 1:06 p.m.
EMS Barnard Way / Sea Colony Dr 1:33 p.m.
Structure Fire 2900blk 4th St 1:42 p.m.
EMS 900blk 3rd St 2:04 p.m.
EMS 1300blk 6th St 2:18 p.m.
EMS 900blk Wilshire Blvd 3:02 p.m.
EMS 1400blk 17th St 3:36 p.m.
Lock In/Out 1400blk Ocean Ave 3:56 p.m.
EMS 3100blk Pico Blvd 4:27 p.m.
Miscellaneous Outside Fire 200blk Arizona Ave 4:28 p.m.
EMS 800blk 4th St 5:19 p.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury Interstate 10 / 4th St 5:23 p.m.
EMS 2000blk Santa Monica Blvd 5:39 p.m.
EMS 1800blk 16th St 5:55 p.m.
EMS 3400blk Airport Ave 7:53 p.m.
Haz Mat - Level 1 2500blk Michigan Ave 9:12 p.m.
EMS 1300blk 20th St 10:08 p.m.
EMS 800blk 17th St 11:09 p.m.

CRIME WATCH

BY DAILY PRESS STAFF

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

ON THURSDAY, MAY 13 AT 10:09 P.M.

Officers were called to the 1900 block of Lincoln Blvd in front of Fatburger/Buffalo's Express. Dispatchers noted that a male subject was threatening to fight customers and was currently standing outside the location, holding a bottle. Officers were flagged down by an individual who stated the Suspect had assaulted him and pointed in the direction of the Suspect. The victim also relayed that the Suspect had assaulted several other people and had been walking up and down the street, screaming unintelligibly. Officers ultimately made contact with and arrested Scott Gerald Miller for 241(a) PC - Assault. Due to LA County Covid guidelines, Miller was later issued a citation and released.





WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE BECAUSE OF THE CARELESSNESS OR NEGLIGENCE OF OTHERS.



Robert Lemle

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Shoppers go back to stores, but retailers face challenges

ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
AP Retail Writer

Americans are going back to one of their favorite pastimes: store shopping.

With more people getting vaccinated and dropping their face masks, retailers from Walmart to Macy's are seeing an eager return to their stores after more than a year of their customers migrating online during the pandemic.

Marcia Williams, who lives in a Philadelphia suburb and who stuck to online shopping only during the height of COVID-19, went back to her local mall right after she was fully vaccinated last month. That was her first time in more than a year

"I am definitely getting out," said Williams, a hair and makeup artist who spent nearly $1,000 on clothing for herself and her three children during several buying trips. "I do feel more comfortable. I like the experience of trying on clothes. I love grocery shopping. It's my outlet."

The return to store shopping, highlighted in many retailers' earnings reports in recent days, offers a big relief in part because shoppers return less when they make their purchases at the store — 8% compared with 25% for online, according to Forrester Research. And store customers tend to do more impulse buying. For clothing, for instance, 25% of purchases are done on a whim versus 16% online, says market research firm NPD Group Inc.

"Retailers want you in the store," said Marshal Cohen, NPD's chief industry advisor. "They need you to be in the store so you generate more traffic. Crowds bring more crowds. (Shoppers) buy more product."

Still, retailers — particularly mall-based stores and other specialty stores that were struggling even before the pandemic — face plenty of challenges to keep customers coming back. They face stepped up competition online and from discounters that thrived in the last year. Experts also say that post-pandemic shoppers will be even more demanding: After being forced to stay close to home, they're looking for better and convenient services and experiences.

Many retailers like Macy's are still recovering from the pandemic, which forced them to temporarily close early last year, driving more traffic to big box stores that were allowed to stay open. And overall store traffic, while rebounding, is still not back to where it was two years ago.

Customer counts at overall stores surged 43.2% for the week starting May 10 compared to the year-ago period, but that number was still down 5.6% for that same period in 2019, says mobile-device location data from foot-traffic analytics firm Placer.ai. In clothing, customer counts soared more than two-fold for the same timeframe, but it was down 11.2% on a two-year basis. For big-box stores like Target, customer counts were up 5.3% for the same period but down 4.9% on a two-year basis.

Analysts are carefully watching the battered department store sector's market share, which shrunk from 3% in 2019 to 2% last year and has remained at that figure for the first four months of the year, according to NPD. In comparison, discounters' market share held steady at 21% last year from 2019 but ticked up to 22% for the early part of this year. Overall, market share for online retail rose to 26% last year from 23% in 2019.

The pandemic pulled forward the pace of online spending by about two years. Online shopping is expected to account for 21% of overall sales, or $794 billion, in 2020 compared to the prior year and should increase to 27%, or $1.1 trillion in 2023, Forrester says. However, online sales growth is slowing down, from 29.5% last year to a projected 15.6% this year and 10% next year.

Williams, who has a makeup line called Embellish Beauty and pivoted her consulting business to online during the height of the pandemic, says she will keep about 15% of her overall buying to online purchases like soap and other essentials.

Still, physical shopping is still not the same as it was pre-COVID-19. For example, retailers' beauty counters are not yet allowing shoppers to try on makeup. Target said it will begin to offer this service in stores again this year

Williams says she's used to being served champagne when she shopped at Tiffany's. But when she was at the upscale jeweler earlier this month, there was no champagne to be had because of COVID-19 restrictions.

"Those are the experiences I missed," she said.

Still, store executives are feeling optimistic — for now.

Walmart, based in Bentonville, Arkansas, said last week that transactions in its stores were up for the first time in a year. At Target, sales at stores opened at least a year jumped 18% in the three-month period that ended May 1. That follows a 6.9% increase in the previous quarter.

That trend continued this week.

Best Buy, which had earlier said that comparable store sales might fall this year, revised their expectations Thursday, saying that those sales, a critical gauge of a retailer's health, will likely rise between 3% and 6% in 2021.

Stores are seeing the return of shoppers "across all age demographics," said CEO Corie Barry on Thursday in a conference call with industry analysts.

Many retail executives say that they are adding fresh new merchandise to welcome back shoppers. Target is planning to open Ulta Beauty shops in more than 100 Target stores by mid-2021. Kohl's is getting ready to open Sephora beauty shops in 200 locations this fall. And Macy's is leaning into such areas as toys, health and wellness, pet care, food and wine.

"Clearly, our customer is ready to get on with life," Macy's CEO Jeff Gennette told analysts last week. "We don't see this as a short-term pop."

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The Santa Monica Daily Press publishes Monday - Saturday with a circulation of 8,200 on weekdays and 8,000 on the weekend. The Daily Press is adjudicated as a newspaper of general circulation in the County of Los Angeles and covers news relevant to the City of Santa Monica. The Daily Press is a member of the California Newspaper Publisher's Association, the National Newspaper Association and the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce. The paper you're reading this on is composed of 100% post consumer content and the ink used to print these words is soy based. We are proud recipients of multiple honors for outstanding news coverage from the California Newspaper Publishers Association as well as a Santa Monica Sustainable Quality Award.

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WINNER

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‘Nothing looks good’ preparing for summer wildfire season

ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press

Wearing soot-smudged, fire-resistant clothing and helmets, several wildland firefighters armed with hoes moved through a stand of ponderosa pines as flames tore through the underbrush.

The firefighters weren’t there to extinguish the fire. They had started it.

The prescribed burn, ignited this month near the scenic mountain town of Bend, is part of a massive effort in wildlands across the U.S. West to prepare for a fire season that’s expected to be even worse than last year’s record-shattering one.

The U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management have thinned by hand, machines and prescribed burns about 1.8 million acres of forest and brushland since last season, officials from the agencies told The Associated Press. They typically treat some 3 million acres every year.

All that activity, though, has barely scratched the surface. The federal government owns roughly 640 million acres in the U.S. All but 4% of it lies in the West, including Alaska, with some of it unsuitable for prescribed burning.

“All these steps are in the right direction, but the challenge is big and complex,” said John Bailey, professor of silviculture and fire management at Oregon State University. “And more needs to be done to even turn the corner.”

The efforts face a convergence of bleak forces.

Severe drought has turned forests and grasslands into dry fuels, ready to ignite from a careless camper or a lightning strike. More people are building in areas bordering wildlands, expanding the so-called wildland-urban interface, an area where wildfires impact people the most. Invasive, highly flammable vegetation is spreading uncontrolled across the West.

“I’m seeing probably the worst combination of conditions in my lifetime,” said Derrick DeGroot, a county commissioner in southern Oregon’s Klamath County. “We have an enormous fuel load in the forests, and we are looking at a drought unlike we’ve seen probably in the last 115 years.”

Asked how worried he is about the 2021 fire season, DeGroot said: “On a scale of 1 to 10, I’m a 12. Nothing looks good.”

In other prevention measures in the West, utility companies are removing vegetation around power lines and are ready to impose blackouts when those lines threaten to spark a fire.

Armies of firefighters are being beefed up. And communities are offering incentives for residents to make their own properties fire-resistant.

Still, much work remains to change the region’s trajectory with fire, particularly in two key areas, said Scott Stephens, professor of wildland fire science at the University of California, Berkeley.

“One is getting people better prepared for the inevitability of fire in areas like the wildland-urban interface. That includes new construction,” he said. “And the second is getting our ecosystems better prepared for climate change and fire impacts.”

On the local level, individuals and communities need to create defensible spaces and evacuation plans, he said. On the government level, more resources need to go toward managing forests.

“I think we’ve got one to two decades,” Stephens said. “If we don’t do this in earnest, we’re frankly just going to be watching the forest change right in front of our eyes from fire, climate change, drought, insects, things of that nature.”

Part of the issue is that increasing wildfire resilience often requires trade-offs, said Erica Fleishman, professor at Oregon State University’s College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences.

Cities or states could require defensible spaces around homes. Building codes could call for fire-resistant materials. That would drive up construction costs but also mean homes would be less likely to burn and need rebuilding, she said.

“The insurance industry and the building industry and communities and lawmakers are all going to need to have the will to create these changes,” she said.

Fleishman also believes more prescribed fires could be conducted in the wildland-urban interface, but said “society is risk averse.”

“Right now, there’s not, in many cases, a whole lot of will to do it,” she said.

Prescribed burns target vegetation that carries flames into forest canopies, where they can explode into massive wildfires.

Planning and preparing for them can take two to five years. And carrying them out is a never-ending task, said Jessica Gardetto, spokeswoman for the National Interagency Fire Center, in Boise, Idaho.

While targeting one forest, other forests continue to grow, creating “this vast buildup across the landscape,” she said.

Besides overgrown forests, the West faces a newer threat: cheatgrass, which grows prolifically after a wildfire and becomes incredibly flammable.

Gardetto said trying to get rid of the invasive grass is like the endless toil of Sisyphus, the Greek mythological figure who was forced to roll a boulder up a hill, only for it to roll down as it neared the top, over and over again.

After a fire is put out, the first thing to come back is cheatgrass.

“It starts this horrible cycle that is really difficult to combat,” she said.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom and U.S. Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen signed an agreement last August committing the state and the federal agency to scale up treatment of forest and wildlands to 1 million acres annually by 2025.

They have a long way to reach that goal. Cal Fire, a state agency responsible for protecting over 31 million acres of California’s privately owned wildlands, treated some 20,000 acres with prescribed fire and thinning from last summer through March.

Meanwhile, California increased the number of seasonal firefighters by almost 50%, according to Lynne Tolmachoff,

SEE **WILDFIRE** PAGE 11

Happy Birthday Ross!

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Laughing Matters

Jack Neworth
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

My Almost "Heartbreak Kid" Afternoon

In honor of Memorial Day I planned to write about how wonderful this year's celebration will be compared to 2020. But recently a terrific comedic actor, Charles Grodin, passed away and I wanted to pay my respects. I still love his iconic movie "The Heartbreak Kid." On his Miami Beach honeymoon, Lenny, played by Grodin, falls madly in love with Kelly, played by Cybill Shepherd, a gorgeous Midwestern college student on holiday.

In our case my wife and I honeymooned in Hawaii, staying in an ocean view condo on Kauai, the "Garden Island." One fateful day, however, I spent three hours on a secluded beach body surfing and swapping life stories with a world-famous movie star. (What could go wrong?)

That morning my wife was spending the day shopping at a gift shop featuring indigenous Hawaiian art so she encouraged me to go to a nearby beach renowned for its white sand and surf. In our rental car she dropped me off, we kissed goodbye until dinner where we had a reservation at a restaurant renowned for its seafood and romantic ambiance.



Courtesy image

LOVE STORY: Actress Ali McGraw

I brought a script I was re-writing in case I had a brainstorm between waves. After spotting coral reefs to avoid I body surfed for two exhilarating hours and then walked back to the condo for lunch. But when I returned there was suddenly a rock on my script as if to hold it down in case of wind. I was confused because I hadn't seen a soul all day but I ignored it and dived into the crystal clear aquamarine water for body surfing round two.

Fifteen minutes later a tall, tanned and toned woman in a striped bikini looking to be in mid-30's was walking in the water headed directly toward me with what I assumed were her two handsome young lovers. Politely, she asked if there was coral around because as a teenager she had gotten tiny scars from the often dangerous and sharp reefs.

A bit intimidated by her stunning beauty (okay, more than a bit) I assured her it was safe where we were. She thanked me, adding "Where are my manners? I'm Ali," as she shook my hand.

"I'm Jack" I replied, feigning nonchalance but excitedly realizing I was talking to "Love Story" Ali McGraw! Ali then suggested to the two young men, (actually her son and his friend) it would be okay if they went down the beach after which they immediately took off.

"Wanna ride some waves?" Ali asked. As if she wasn't gorgeous, she was also a pretty fearless body surfer. (It turns out, she's a pretty fearless woman.) After thirty minutes we took a break and walked to my towel and, oddly enough, hers was almost next to mine.

Drying off, Ali volunteered she had put the rock on my script and confessed she enjoyed what she had read of it, asking "Have we ever worked together?" (If so, it would have been in my dreams.)

For the next few hours Ali and I alternated body surfing, sunbathing and her remarkably candid chat. She described her difficult childhood with an occasionally violent and bigoted father, her modeling, acting and three failed marriages, two with Robert Evans and one with Steve McQueen.

As we talked it seemed very cathartic for her and it was definitely fascinating to me. A year later I read in her autobiography "Moving Pictures," that this Hawaii vacation had been a planned spiritual reassessment of her career, fame and money, and a focus on her purpose in life.

Maybe she was so open because I was a total stranger she would never see again. An articulate Wellesley College graduate, at one point she commented, "You and I talk the same language." It sounds weird but we actually did.

At another point she showed me her coral scars that were on her inner thigh and I felt like Grodin's lecherous Lenny. She also pointed out her magnificent condo on a volcanic rock bluff directly over the water, I thought possibly hinting did I want to see the inside. Not sure what to do, I simply said, "It's beautiful."

When her son and his friend returned, Ali thanked me profusely for the fun day and how I made her laugh which was music to my ears. We didn't exchange numbers which, as I was on my honeymoon, left me relieved but also a tad disappointed. As she walked off down the beach, though probably risky, I decided to tell my wife, who loved many of my stories, about my "afternoon with Ali." To find out her reaction check here in two weeks.

To Charles Grodin, R.I.P. And to you, dear reader, given what we've all been through this past year, may you have the best Memorial Day ever.

To appreciate Charles Grodin's humor, go to YouTube and search "Grodin and Carson" and "Grodin vs Letterman." Jack can be reached at jackdailypress@aol.com.



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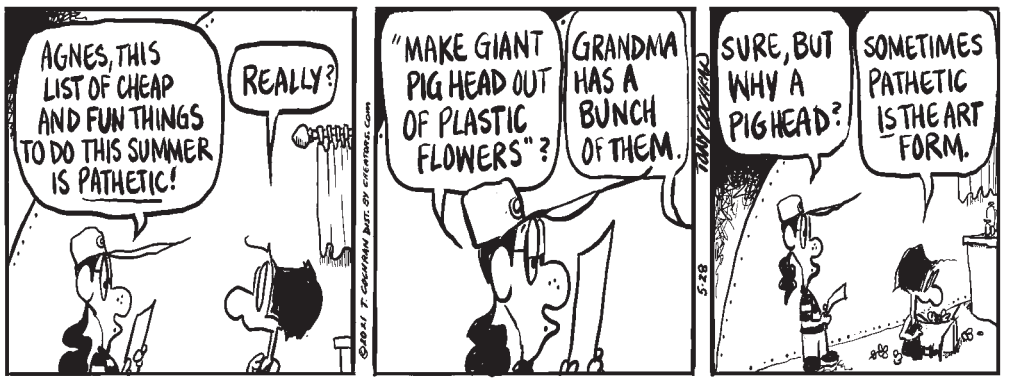


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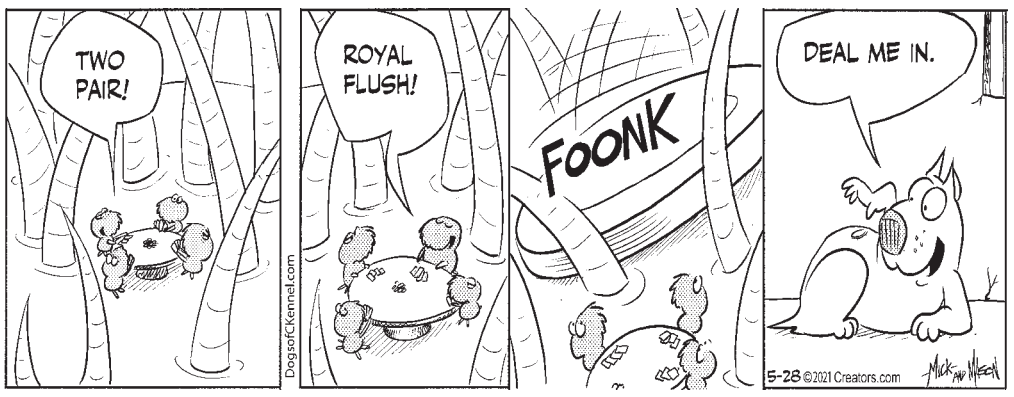
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



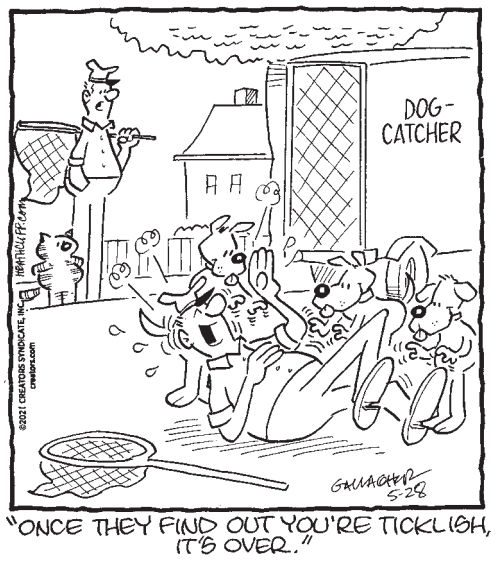
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

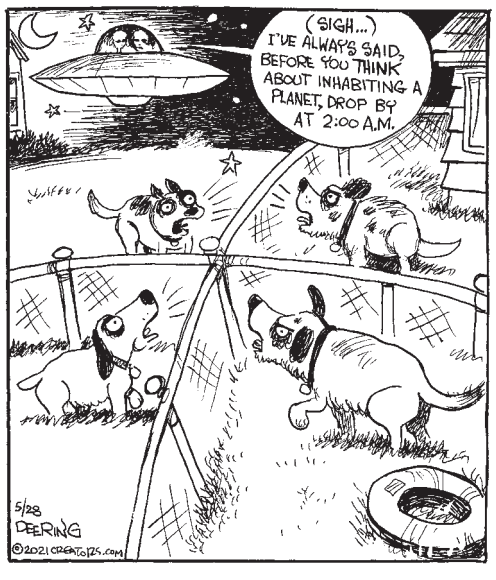
By PETER GALLAGHER



"ONCE THEY FIND OUT YOU'RE TICKLISH, IT'S OVER."

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING





SURF FORECASTS

WATER TEMP: 62.4°

FRIDAY - **POOR TO FAIR** - SURF: 3-4ft Waist to chest high
New pulse of SW swell starts to fill in. Morning wind looks light. Drained out first thing, will want to wait for the tide to come up through early/mid-morning.

SATURDAY - **POOR TO FAIR** - SURF: 3-4ft Waist to chest high
SW swell fills in further. Drained out first thing, will want to wait for the tide to come up through mid-morning -- wind should stay light through that window. Manageable bump in the afternoon.

WEATHER

Friday: Patchy fog before 11am. Otherwise, mostly cloudy, with a high near 68.
Friday Night: Patchy fog. Otherwise, mostly cloudy, with a low around 57.
Saturday: Patchy fog before 11am. Otherwise, partly sunny, with a high near 66.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2021/05/28	Fri	05:53 AM	-1.67	L
2021/05/28	Fri	12:31 PM	3.70	H
2021/05/28	Fri	4:54 PM	2.20	L
2021/05/28	Fri	11:14 PM	6.41	H
2021/05/29	Sat	06:47 AM	-1.39	L
2021/05/29	Sat	1:38 PM	3.62	H
2021/05/29	Sat	5:49 PM	2.51	L
2021/05/30	Sun	12:07 AM	5.89	H
2021/05/30	Sun	07:45 AM	-0.98	L
2021/05/30	Sun	2:51 PM	3.65	H
2021/05/30	Sun	6:58 PM	2.77	L
2021/05/31	Mon	01:07 AM	5.26	H
2021/05/31	Mon	08:46 AM	-0.53	L
2021/05/31	Mon	4:04 PM	3.83	H
2021/05/31	Mon	8:32 PM	2.88	L
2021/06/01	Tue	02:18 AM	4.62	H
2021/06/01	Tue	09:50 AM	-0.11	L
2021/06/01	Tue	5:04 PM	4.11	H
2021/06/01	Tue	10:28 PM	2.66	L
2021/06/02	Wed	03:43 AM	4.09	H
2021/06/02	Wed	10:49 AM	0.26	L

DAILY LOTTERY

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 5/26
2 8 21 34 62
Power#: 16
Jackpot: 253 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 5/25
14 21 31 34 54
Mega#: 11
Jackpot: 22 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 5/26
1 6 8 23 42
Mega#: 12
Jackpot: 50 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 5/26
8 10 16 20 35

Daily 3
Draw Date: 5/26
EVENING: 9 0 3

Draw Date: 5/26
MIDDAY: 3 6 3

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 5/26
1st: 06 - Whirl Win
2nd: 08 - Gorgeous George
3rd: 07 - Eureka
Race Time: 1:49.59

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

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (MAY 28)

Love flows and you make healthy relationships the focus. You're more productive than last year even though you'll work less. You've a tremendous talent for setting the right goals and picking people who will help you achieve them. The sale of a property or service will allow you to make one of your dreamy projects a reality. Leo and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 1, 44, 28, 2 and 9.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). A busy mind works with many of your intellectual pursuits, though socializing isn't one of them. For that, you'll get into a different mode, one where you're calmly receptive to your environment and the people therein.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You feel like the hero of your story and so does everyone else. Understanding that people serve as their own protagonists will be central to the way you do lucrative business.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Successful spontaneity depends on someone, once upon a time, having had a plan that worked out so splendidly that now others can just show up to what they accomplished.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Play the long game. Perseverance will be essential to the victory. Through sheer determination, you'll not only make a situation work for today; you'll make it matter for years to come.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It's a little surprising when you don't get the reaction you were going for. But this isn't a movie set, and they didn't get your script. You'll roll with the improvisational moment and brilliance ensues.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're on when you need to be, and you feel relief when it's time to power down. The ideal scenario would be to have such congruence of purposes that there is no need to jolt yourself into different modes. Work toward it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your fellow Libra, the poet e.e. cummings famously said, "I'm living so far beyond my income that we may almost be said to be living apart." A preventive financial review will make sure it doesn't happen to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Material possessions are only important to you because of what they represent and how they enable you to do things with other people. It's those relationships that really matter.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The day vibrates with fresh potential. You only need to explore one new thing to get the energetic lift that a little novelty can bring. Interaction with an air sign will be fortunate.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Fewer opinions mean more room for peace and ease. Bonus: The gentleness of self-forgiveness isn't even necessary if you have the gentleness of nonjudgment going for you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Like having a partner who votes, eats or recycles differently, it seems your efforts are being canceled out by someone close to you. You'll learn and grow through this relationship and the conflict it brings up.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Don't hide or even work on your flaws today. Your lovability doesn't hinge on one isolated feature or fact, rather it's the effect of everything about you coming together to make an impact that could only be made by you.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

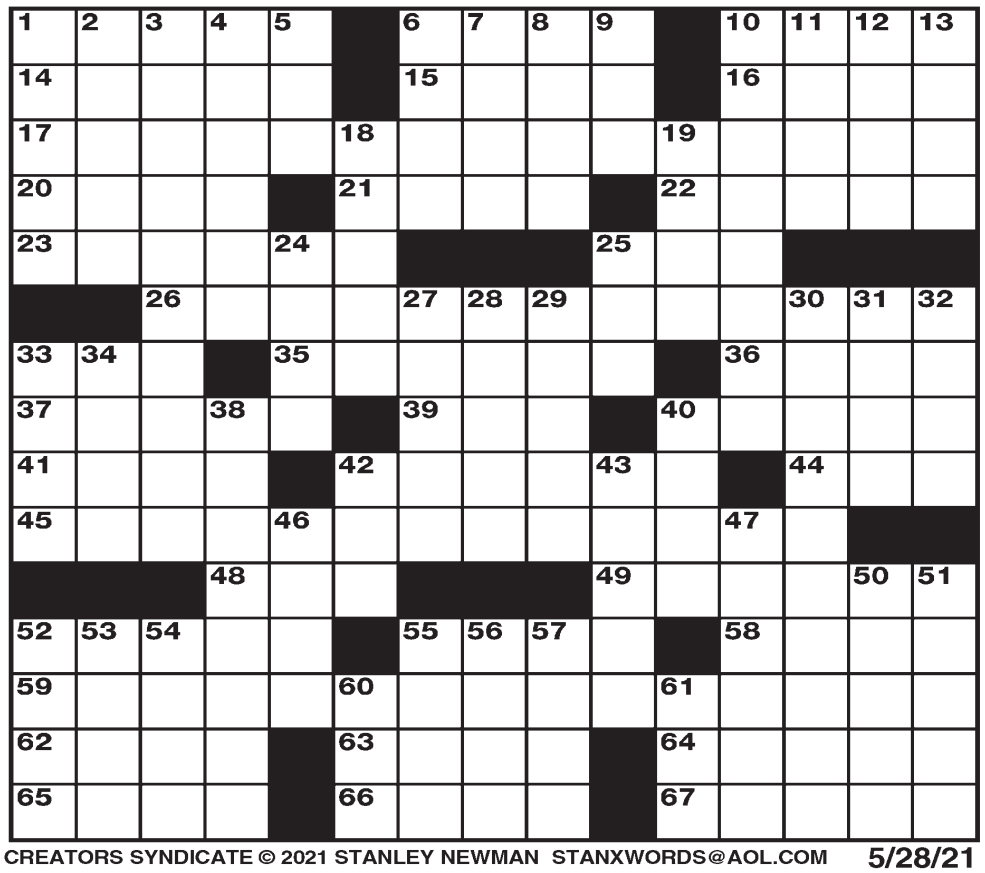
		8	2	9			5	
	4				5			7
2			3					4
7		4		5			9	
	9			6			3	
	5			3		4		2
9					6			1
4			9				7	
	6			7	1	2		

Newsday Crossword

FINISHING MAY by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Build __ egg
6 Steady fellow
10 Cricket equipment
14 Big name in cups
15 Swerves at sea
16 Party with poi
17 May-__
20 Possible MBA major
21 Car trip game
22 A real trouper
23 Of sovereignty
25 Sound of disappointment
26 "May __?"
33 Hotel wheel-in
35 Nail down
36 Unibody Apple
37 Spingarn Medal awarder
39 One of the fam
40 Wise about
41 "Short" suffix in music
42 Repair again, as paper
44 Capital of Somalia
45 "May __!"
48 Choice word
49 NFL kick category
52 Actress Sevigny
55 Grain covering
58 Medical suffix
59 May __
62 Different
63 Andrei's emphatic assent
64 Puerto Rican port
65 Quartet in Mississippi
66 Artisans' marketplace
67 Dramatist Chekhov

DOWN
1 Scotland's only native snake
2 Reunion attendee
3 Devise
4 "Burnt" color
5 Time being, briefly
6 Tourney passes
7 Old West icon
8 Off the mark
9 GI hangout
10 Rather formal
11 Reunion attendee
12 Stuffed shell
13 Plaintiff
18 Rips off
19 Gather together
24 Without delay
25 Souvenir shop staple
27 Great trait
28 Andean capital
29 Civic
30 Without remorse
31 Source of straw
32 Some on base
33 Tech news site
34 Solemn sentence
38 Quaint cars
40 Cut for lumber
42 Alphabetic trio
43 Drudges
46 Pentathlon event
47 Knows all about
50 Much Bee Gees music
51 Ruhr Valley city
52 Kept in the e-loop
53 Brilliant circle
54 Extreme avidity
55 Grilled link
56 Pretzel shapes
57 Traveling
60 WWII VIP
61 Tap choice



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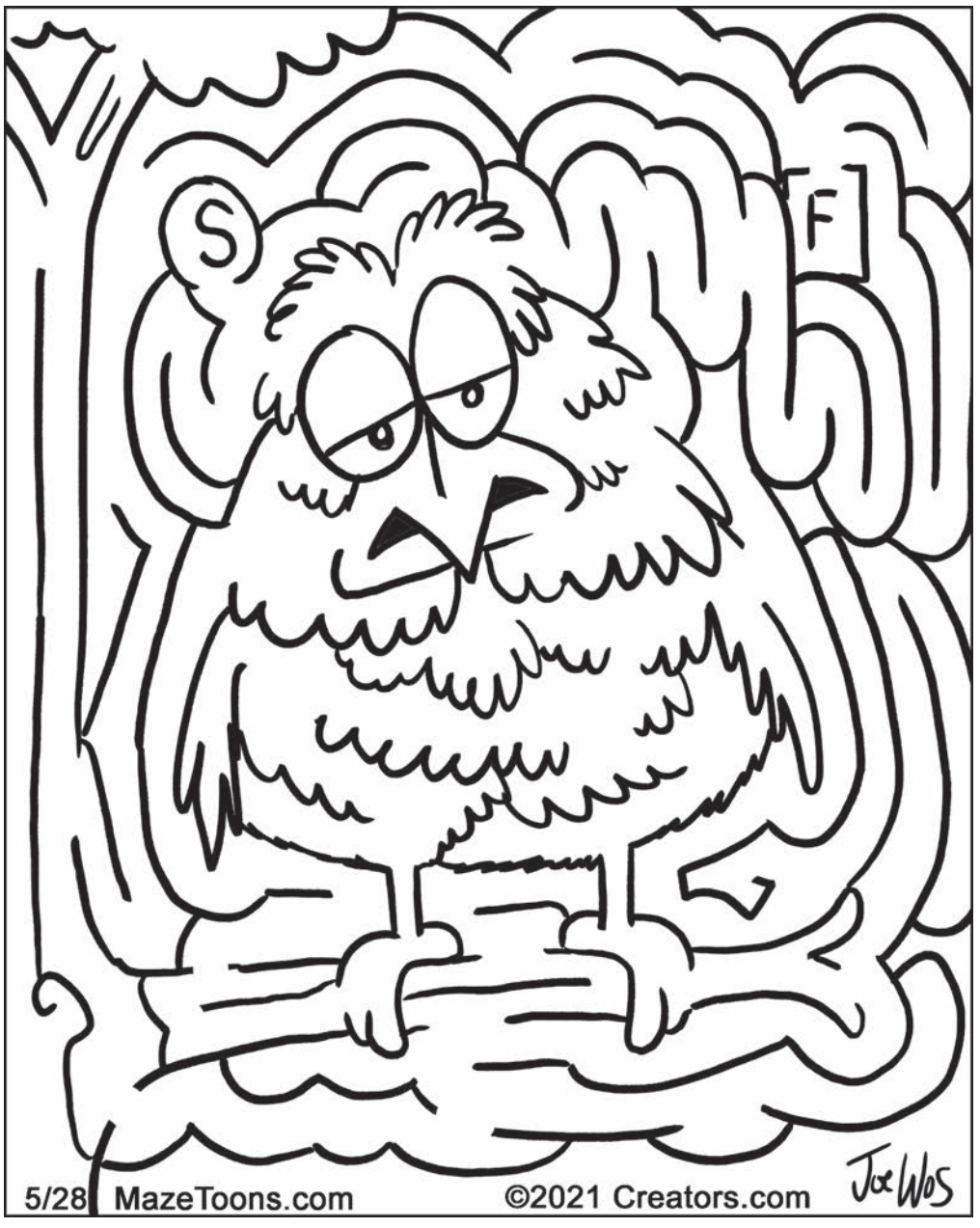
Binary Puzzle

Each cell should contain a zero or a one. No more than two similar numbers below or next to each other are allowed. Each row and each column is unique and contains as many zeros as ones.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

I	O	I	I	O	O	I	O	O	I	O	I
I	I	O	I	I	O	O	I	O	O	I	O
O	I	I	O	I	I	O	O	I	I	O	O
I	O	O	I	O	O	I	O	I	O	I	I
O	O	I	O	I	I	O	I	O	I	I	O
O	I	I	O	I	O	I	O	I	O	O	I
I	O	O	I	O	I	O	I	O	I	I	O
O	I	O	I	O	I	I	O	I	I	O	O
O	O	I	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	I	I
I	O	I	O	O	I	O	I	O	I	O	I
O	I	O	I	O	I	I	O	I	O	I	O
I	I	O	O	I	O	O	I	I	O	O	I

	O							I			
O											
		I					O		O	O	
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								O		O	O
		I					O	O		O	O
I		O					O	O		O	O



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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 5127

Sydney Harbour

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

Airport	Culture	Handel	Song
Applause	Design	Hotels	Spheres
Beauty	Dinghy	Interval	Steps
Black tie	Drinks	Kirribilli	Surf
Blue	Duet	Mezzo	Swim
Boat	Elation	Music	Tenor
Bridge	Encore	Saga	Tour
Busy	Famous	Sails	Windy
Calm	Finale	Seats	Zoos
Comedy	Fish	Sharks	
Crowded	Formal	Solo	

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HOMELESSNESS

FROM PAGE 1

Pacific Palisades Residential Association voiced opposition to the study.

"I am here today to express the outrage and concern for those who have been negatively impacted by the homeless. Our neighborhood council supported Bonin's safe parking not once but twice. While just a study, Bonin intends to use as many public spaces as possible without the proper security resources and sanitation. One only has to look at Venice and see the crisis to know what will happen here," said Paula Gerez, president of the Westchester Playa Neighborhood Council.

Gerez also stated that broken promises were made to Venice residents when opening the bridge home located on Sunset Avenue. "They were promised that the area would be cleaned and maintained and that it would not become a magnet. The opposite is true."

Those who spoke in favor of the study said Bonin's motion is not enough and that more needs to be done in all districts. "In CD11 a lot of usable land is in parking spaces. They [the parking lots] are underutilized properties other than maybe three months out of the year. Maybe it's going to create a hardship for some, but not for all. As we all know this is a homelessness crisis and we all have to suffer some consequences. And maybe fewer people get beach parking. I am really sorry about that, but we have to start somewhere," said Venice resident Lisa Redmond.

City Council President Nury Martinez noted that her office received more than 500 calls and on Tuesday alone.

Although he voted in favor of the motion, Councilman Mitch O'Farrell, who received pushback for the Echo Park clearing and cleaning, noted concerns about Los Angeles being a "park-poor" city and the possibility of Bonin's proposal exacerbating that problem. O'Farrell also pointed out that an overwhelming majority of the "poorer population" use the beach to escape. "This is their only respite from city life," he noted. "We have to consider these sites and parks moving forward."

Buscaino said the proposal raises concerns about public access to beaches and parks, along with public safety issues. "I'm very concerned that this proposal will impact access to recreational spaces across this city," Buscaino said. "The city needs to balance the needs of our unhoused residents with the needs of the housed. Parks and beaches must not be sacrificed for the needs of the few at the expense of the many."

In response to Busciano's objection, Bonin told Buscaino that if he "has some extra sites in his district for people who are currently unhoused in my district, I would be happy to look at those as a substitute for those that I have proposed."

This story was published in partnership with the Venice Current.

RECREATION

FROM PAGE 1

general fund, would require an equivalent amount to be taken away from something else. It would require a trade off of the same amount, because, as (Councilmember Kevin McKeown) said, we're at zero fund balance."

Mayor Sue Himmelrich said she holds the same view as Parra, which is that this should be collaborative.

"We're talking about children; we're talking about the city; we're talking about the schools, right? And everybody has skin in the game," Himmelrich said, "so we could build some collaboration."

Interim City Manager Lane Dilg clarified there may be a path forward for the district to continue Playground Access and other CREST programs and the City is certainly willing to sit down and find solutions to the problem.

Less than 24 hours later, Dilg announced during a continuation of this week's budget study that SMMUSD Superintendent Ben Drati confirmed there is one-time funding available from the district that will allow programming to continue through this year while the City attempts to find a more permanent solution.

"That's really fantastic news, because when we were thinking about how do we pull together the district, the city, the PTA, and hopefully some nonprofit partners, what we were immediately struck with is: 'School starts in August, and we're at the end of May,'" Agle said, detailing how such a short time-frame would make it hard to complete recruitments and other necessary preparations. "So, giving us time to work together as a community is critical. And I give our gratitude to the district for figuring out how to do that and giving us all time to work together."

Agle added, "I just want to make sure we remember one thing that it's really fantastic that the district's able to step in for the next year and give us time to work on the future. And I just want us to remember that we may need, as the City, to provide some sort of gap funding… The school district got one time money; they likely aren't in a position to fund for the long-term. So, we don't need to deal with that in the first year of the budget that you're adopting next month. But as we work through mid-year and year-end — as we see where revenues are going — we may have to have this discussion again."

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WILDFIRE

FROM PAGE 5

spokeswoman for Cal Fire.

With the fire season getting longer each year, Colorado lawmakers last spring allocated about $3 million to increase staffing at the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, said Mike Morgan, its director.

"Historically, wildland firefighters were college students. They'd get out of school on Memorial Day, they'd go fight fire, and they'd go back to school on Labor Day," Morgan said. "Well, now we're having fires every month of the year, and so we need firefighters year-round."

The Bureau of Land Management is transforming its seasonal firefighting force to fulltime with a $13 million budget increase, Gardetto said.

Despite all these efforts, warnings are going out telling people to be ready for the worst.

The Oregon Office of Emergency Management advised residents on Monday to have a bag packed and have an evacuation plan.

"Abnormally dry conditions and pre-season fires on the landscape are causing concern for the 2021 wildfire season," the agency said. "Now is the time for Oregonians to prepare themselves, their families and their homes for wildfire."

Associated Press writers Don Thompson in Sacramento, California; Thomas Peipert in Denver; and Daisy Nguyen in San Francisco contributed to this report.

FILIBUSTER

FROM PAGE 2

month, saying it will be sufficient to fix security problems in the Capitol.

Four protesters died during the insurrection, including a woman who was shot and killed by police as she tried to break into the House chamber with lawmakers still inside. Dozens of the officers defending the Capitol were injured. Hundreds of people have been arrested.

Associated Press writers Alan Fram and Colleen Long contributed to this report.

JOBLESS

FROM PAGE 2

benefits after April's jobs report showed a sharp slowdown in hiring, compared with March, despite a record level of job openings.

Many unemployed remain reluctant to take jobs in restaurants, hotels and other service industries for fear of contracting COVID-19. And some women can't return to work without adequate child care, though that is now having a relatively small impact, according to recent research by Furman and economist Melissa Kearney.

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