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smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

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City sued over alleged racism in firing of former HR chief



File photo

LORI GENTLES: The former city employee has filed a lawsuit.

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

The City of Santa Monica is being accused of racism and discrimination by a former employee who alleges the stress of dealing with persistent bigotry caused damage to her mental health

SEE **LAWSUIT** PAGE 5

Snackers' delight ready for Pacific Park feasts

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

One of the world's top chefs has shifted his palette from New York City fine dining to classic cookout fare, bringing a new food paradise for hungry patrons at Pacific Park.

The Santa Monica Pier's amusement park introduced

SEE **SNACKVILLE** PAGE 7

2024 class of model Mariners celebrates diverse successes



Photo by Thomas Leffler

MARINERS: Saint Monica Preparatory Class of 2024 Valedictorian Dylan Smith spoke to the Mariners community during a June 7 graduation ceremony.

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

From navigating the deep waters of the COVID-19 pandemic to raising the profile of Saint Monica Preparatory's breadth of activities, the Mariners class of 2024 was 76 souls committed to bettering themselves and the school community.

The group will now be moving onto the next stage of their lives after a June 7 graduation ceremony, full of excitement for the future and bittersweet emotions when looking at the past four years. Saint Monica Principal James Spellman began the ceremony by stating that the class excelled at "modeling what it means to be a Mariner" and "never shying away from the challenge" of advocating for the greater Mariner ecosystem.

"Your dedication and commitment to Saint Monica (aided) our pursuit to provide the very best Catholic education," Spellman added.

That dedication began before the students arrived on campus, as the then-freshmen dealt with the remote learning atmosphere of the pandemic. Salutatorian Anav Oommen said he didn't want to dwell on the ordeal because "we all lived through it," but made note that the time took a mental health toll on

SEE **MARINERS** PAGE 6

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Voting your values

Dear Santa Monica Neighbors:

As we enter the summer, and as the slow economic recovery from the shutdown continues, and candidates for our local offices begin to be endorsed by our various organizations, to ask what we want for our city in the next four years.

I believe that we could benefit from a shared vision of what we hope Santa Monica will be in the future, so that we can make decisions about candidates and platforms based on the extent to which they contribute to that shared idea. I'd like to ask that we begin discussing what we DO want. Here's a first draft of some ideas for discussion.

I want a vibrant, thriving, community of people who treat each other with respect.

I want a Santa Monica made up of comfortable, friendly neighborhoods, each of which is served by neighborhood businesses, schools, libraries, parks and other amenities.

I want a diverse city, with people from all backgrounds, levels of educational attainment and economic resources to live together and to grapple together with the real challenges that diversity brings.

I want a Santa Monica where those that work here can and do live here, whether they are publicly or privately employed. This means that we must build more housing of all kinds, for all sorts of people and families – including allowing and even encouraging more, and larger apartment buildings and mixed-use buildings along our major thoroughfares and business streets. Planning more bustling, busy, thriving avenues near quieter, more tranquil streets will make Santa Monica more walkable. More workforce housing will reduce traffic, strengthen neighborhoods, and support local businesses.

I want our teachers, our librarians, our first responders, our planners, building inspectors, sanitation workers, and all other public employees to be able to live here. I want our city department heads, especially high visibility folks like our school Principals, Police and Fire Chiefs, City Manager, etc. to be required to move here – of course that will mean that we will have to ensure that they have the ability to do so. There must be adequate, desirable housing that they can afford.

I want the privately employed, from the lowest paid to our well-compensated tech workers, to be able to afford to live here – and to want to live here. Most importantly, I want our children to be able to live here – and to want to do so. This means that we must have housing that is affordable and desirable at all levels - from simple starter apartments to family homes of different kinds.

I want many different ways of getting around town without getting into a car. I want true safe routes not just to school but also to the grocery store, the pharmacy, restaurants, parks, health care, recreation and businesses. I want some streets to be turned into true slow streets, with separated walking and biking paths. I want more streets like 17th Street and Broadway, with fully separated bike paths. I want buses that run more often, on time, and which get us where we need to go reliably and in a reasonable amount of time. And I want the good rental ebikes, the ones that can be pedaled and which have seats that can be adjusted. I want it to be easy for anyone in Santa Monica to get to anywhere else in Santa Monica without having to drive – or to take our lives in our hands to walk or ride a bike on a street where speeding, impatient drivers make it unsafe.

I want a renewed and expanded set of public facilities and amenities – schools, libraries, parks, recreation, performance venues etc.

I want a robust library system, well-funded, professionally staffed, with extended, fully open hours in every one of our branches. I know my own daughter's childhood was profoundly enriched by the children's librarians and programs at the Ocean Park and Fairview Branches – from babyhood through High School. When she was in elementary school we could go to Fairview or the Main Library any evening after I got home from work. I cannot imagine the lost opportunities of all the children that are growing up here without those opportunities. We also saw our neighbors, had more casual conversations, and wound up strengthening connections.

I want public services that function well, and which are provided by city staff who feel valued and properly compensated. This requires us – all of us, and especially our elected officials, to treat our city staff with respect. And, our city staff must also be trained in client and customer service, de-escalation and mediation, and they must be supported, with their expertise and experience valued.

I want a city that leads in climate resilience and responsible practices, without needing to be at the cutting edge. Let's have more, and but simpler incentives for lowering water use – let's stop overregulating and being so prescriptive in giving out money for ripping up lawns and instead simply incentivize low water use by having more. Lets have more, and much steeper, tiers of water use for both homes and businesses. Let's commit to the city switching gradually (as lights need to be replaced) to dark sky compatible, wildlife friendly lighting systems, and let's offer incentives for those that make such switches themselves. Let's bolster our own city electrical grid and do everything we can do encourage everyone to put in efficient, electrical heat pumps for HVAC and for water heaters; let's put solar panels over every public parking lot (that provides parked cars with shade and produces energy). Let's use local landscape architects and plant locally appropriate, pollinator and local wildlife friendly gardens. And let's make more community gardens.

SEE **LETTER** PAGE 11

Leak investigations are important, but so is transparency

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

Today's council meeting includes a request by some members to investigate leaks of information from closed sessions, a fine idea but one that has to recognize that this council doesn't always tell you as residents everything it should out of its closed sessions.

By law, governments can conduct some discussions in secret, predominantly negotiations related to payment or real estate and discussions with attorneys over court cases. There are good reasons for those allowances as conducting all that business in open session could undermine privacy rights or put the city at a disadvantage in a way that could cost taxpayers more. In those cases, protecting the discussion is absolutely valid.

However, there are instances where the discussions that are allowed to occur in closed session should be daylighted and the public should be informed. It's important to note that the law only requires disclosure under specific circumstances but the Council can choose to waive confidentiality and inform the public about actions in closed session.

That hasn't always happened, including a secret decision earlier this year to withdraw Santa Monica from the lawsuit regarding the County's zero bail system.

Starting in October of last year, every police agency in the county had to follow a new bail system that largely eliminated the need for cash bail while evaluating the severity of the crime, a suspect's risk to the public and repeat offenses.

Advocates said the new bail process addresses an unfair system that targeted the poor who could not afford bail. Critics said it would contribute to rising crime trends although information from the Court system said it had no impact on crime rates after implementation.

A group of cities in Los Angeles County filed a lawsuit to delay implementation of the policy in response to the new rules and Santa Monica joined the case on a 4 - 3 vote.

Mayor Pro Tempore Lana Negrete and Councilmembers Christine Parra and Oscar de la Torre voted yes, along with then Councilmember (now Mayor) Phil Brock who asked for the City to join the case. Councilmembers Gleam Davis, Caroline Torosis and Jesse Zwick voted not to join the lawsuit.

Whether you agreed with the lawsuit or not, you had a right to know the Council withdrew and why they did so. There was no report out of a closed session, Councilmembers refuse to comment on the decision and the City Attorney's office statement is "Per the City Attorney, according to the Brown Act, there was no reportable action from closed session on the Whittier case."

There's no good reason for the situation and the secrecy is an insult to you, the residents who vote for our elected officials.

Did the Council think that residents would not want to know about this decision? If so, that's just rabid incompetence on their part.

Did they know residents would care but didn't want to talk about it? That's malfeasance.

Did they want to disclose it but were told they couldn't? That would be a lie by the staff.

No doubt, the current leak investigation discussion is going to make reference to trust and the lack of it that occurs when secrets are divulged. That's an important point and while there are good reasons for some discussions to be withheld from the public eye, Council should consider the damage they do to the public's trust when they use closed sessions to hide otherwise important information from residents.

editor@smdp.com

City of Santa Monica

The Santa Monica Housing Authority (SMHA) is pleased to announce the selection of the following owners for the award of Project-Based Housing Choice Vouchers: Yaron & Yael Levy Revocable Trust, Michelle Kim, Delaware Avenue Apts., LLC c/o Farid Afra, Miller Family Trust 222 Bicknell Avenue, LLC, Ken Downing, Mansouri, David & Nazila Panah, Xanate Properties Gregg Wolff, Slome Kaplan a California Limited Partnership and Laurel EAH NC, L.P.

SMHA wishes to thank the owners for their participation in the program and for being a part of the solution to address affordable housing needs.

The award of the vouchers furthers SMHA's goal of de-concentrating poverty and expanding economic and housing opportunities for low-income families in the City of Santa Monica, California.

SMHA is an equal employment and housing opportunity agency.

GET IT DAILY...



Surf report

WATER TEMP: **61.9**

TUESDAY — ***FAIR***
SURF: 2-3ft
Thigh to waist

Waves down a touch as SW swell lingers. S/SSE swell picks up a peg and NW swell looks to weaken. Blend of swells opens up some corners west of Dume. Morning winds looking a little lighter than previous AMs. Drained mid AM low tide.

WEDNESDAY — ***FAIR TO GOOD***
SURF: 3-4ft+
Waist to shoulder

Fresh SW swell picks up, mixing with secondary S swell and a hint of NW energy. Blend of swells bodes well for the open beachbreaks so structured spots shouldn't be the only game in town. AM looks clean enough — maybe a touch of texture.

Weather

Tuesday: Patchy fog before 11am. Otherwise, cloudy through mid morning, then gradual clearing, with a high near 67.
Tuesday Night: Patchy fog after 11pm. Otherwise, cloudy, with a low around 59. Southwest wind 5 to 10 mph.
Wednesday: Patchy fog before 11am. Otherwise, cloudy, with a high near 67.
Wednesday Night: Patchy drizzle and fog after 11pm. Cloudy, with a low around 59.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted	(ft)High/Low
2024/06/11	Tue	12:27 AM	5.03	H
2024/06/11	Tue	08:05 AM	-0.06	L
2024/06/11	Tue	3:27 PM	3.65	H
2024/06/11	Tue	7:34 PM	2.98	L
2024/06/12	Wed	01:17 AM	4.47	H
2024/06/12	Wed	08:51 AM	0.36	L
2024/06/12	Wed	4:18 PM	3.84	H
2024/06/12	Wed	9:09 PM	2.93	L
2024/06/13	Thu	02:19 AM	3.91	H
2024/06/13	Thu	09:38 AM	0.77	L
2024/06/13	Thu	4:59 PM	4.08	H
2024/06/13	Thu	10:54 PM	2.59	L
2024/06/14	Fri	03:41 AM	3.42	H
2024/06/14	Fri	10:23 AM	1.15	L
2024/06/14	Fri	5:32 PM	4.37	H
2024/06/15	Sat	12:07 AM	2.04	L
2024/06/15	Sat	05:10 AM	3.12	H
2024/06/15	Sat	11:03 AM	1.50	L

Daily Lottery

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

POWERBALL — Draw Date: 6/8
8 38 52 54 64
Power#: 15
Jackpot: 221 M

MEGA MILLIONS — Draw Date: 6/7
3 5 12 22 66
Mega#: 7
Jackpot: 30 M

SuperLotto Plus — Draw Date: 6/8
1 7 27 30 40
Mega#: 6
Jackpot: 43 M

Fantasy5 — Draw Date: 6/9
8 18 24 27 28

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

Daily Derby — Draw Date: 6/9
1st: 03 - Hot Shot
2nd: 11 - Money Bags
3rd: 10 - Solid Gold
Race Time: 1:41.76

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Santa Monica Daily Press

Troop 2 BSA Santa Monica to Award Eagle Scout Rank to Four Local Youth

In June 2024, four Santa Monica teenagers will be recognized with the highest rank one can earn in Scouting America (formerly Boy Scouts of America).

The four Scouts are Julian Bender, Quentin Corbel, Cyrus Pruneau, and David Zhao. All four young men attended Santa Monica High School. Bender graduated in 2023, while Corbel, Pruneau, and Zhao are graduating in June.

All four Scouts were honored at the Troop 2 Eagle Court of Honor on Sunday, June 9 at the Kuruvungna Village Springs on South Barrington in West Los Angeles.

The Eagle rank honors exemplary effort, leadership, and service. Only eight percent of Scouts achieve the rank of Eagle. In addition to demonstrating proficiency in first aid, citizenship, camping, swimming, emergency preparedness, and many other skills, Eagle candidates must coordinate and complete a community service project that demonstrates significant leadership abilities. Each of the Scouts being honored led a major project to improve the quality of life of people in the community. All of the projects included many hours of work by other Troop 2 Scouts, working under the direction of the Eagle candidates.

The 2024 Eagle Scouts completed the following community service projects:



Courtesy photo

SCOUTS: Four members of Troop 2 BSA Santa Monica will be recognized with the highest rank of Eagle Scout.

JULIAN BENDER

I hosted beach cleanups for my Eagle project because they directly address a pressing environmental issue while also demonstrating to younger Scouts the impact their actions can have. Beaches are so much more than recreational spaces. They are crucial ecosystems that support diverse marine life and provide essential functions, like protection from coastal erosion. Sadly, our beaches are often littered with plastic waste and other debris, which poses a threat to wildlife, can be hazardous to visitors, and spoils the beauty of our shores. For the first goal of my project I partnered with Heal The Bay to complete 3 separate beach cleanups, removing over 40 pounds of trash from two different beaches. My second goal was to educate younger Scouts and inspire them to rectify the damage we've done to our coastal ecosystems. Hosting beach cleanups was a way for me to express my personal love for the ocean, but I hope it also inspired others to take action and give back to our community and contribute to the care of our planet.

QUENTIN CORBEL

My Eagle Scout service project was reforestation in the Will Rogers State Park. This California State Historic Park is facing serious issues due to the loss of many trees in recent years. I worked on the tree planting logistics with the California State Park team for several months, then planted trees in four pre-designated locations over the course of two days, effectively restoring the tree count in those areas. In respect for the history of the park, the planting locations were based on the original "tree lines" chosen by Will Rogers and his team in the 1920s. The project volunteers were excited to help restore the park's canopy and preserve its biodiversity (California native plants, wild animals, etc.) with their efforts. Fifty-eight volunteers invested a total of 194 labor hours in the two day event. Part of my project also involved the creation of a tree planting guide for volunteers that explained the re-planting steps as well as the benefits of the reforestation process. I feel that this project helped preserve a place for future generations to enjoy and learn about nature conveniently close to Santa Monica and the rest of Los Angeles. The project's success helps ensure that this magnificent historic park is strong and healthy, allowing for the community to enjoy its beauty for years to come. Will Rogers Park sits at the heart of many of Troop 2's favorite locations: Topanga Park, Temescal Canyon Park and Camp Josepho. Over the coming years, the trees we planted trees will grow with our generation, benefiting the park, the park staff, and the many visitors.

CYRUS PRUNEAU

For my Eagle project I repainted the curb markings inside the Los Angeles National Cemetery, which is managed by the United States Veterans Administration. On the dozens of curbs, letters identify the rows of the memorials, which makes it easier for visitors to locate their loved ones. Since paint fades and wears away over time, the many curbs markings need to be repainted periodically, so I thought my project would be both helpful and useful. The day we did the painting I was well prepared, but my original plan just didn't work well, largely due to difficulties with the stencils. This created the necessity for some significant improvisation. Despite this challenge, I managed to maintain calm and clear thinking so that the people I was leading didn't feel any stress or pressure, and we successfully finished the project within the limited time frame. This national cemetery has burial grounds dating back to 1889, and has eleven veteran facilities. I feel that the efforts of me and my team will help the many visitors to this vast facility find their destinations much more easily.

DAVID ZHAO

Helping my Elementary School was something I've always wanted to do, and being able to come back to Franklin Elementary in Santa Monica with a volunteer Scout project all these years later made me feel both proud and grateful. When I first reached out to the school, I had little hope of them responding, but to my surprise the principal emailed me a few days later and we arranged a meeting at the school. We walked around the campus, noting many things that needed to be renovated or cleaned. There were many ways I could have helped, but I thought that building benches for the kids to rest and socialize on during recess and lunch would be the most beneficial. I proposed this to the principal and he agreed. The project was approved, and I was very happy with this choice because I feel very passionate about kids always having good friendships to rely on. The construction and painting took two weekends, but once it was done, both the principal and I were very pleased with the result.

Achieving the Eagle rank also means the scouting experience comes to an end for these accomplished young men. The 2024 Eagles were asked what they will remember most about their years in scouting.

DAVID ZHAO

For me the most memorable experience of my scouting years was the high adventure trip in the Olympic Mountains in Washington State. I was just an 8th grader on that trip and I had no experience backpacking, so what better way to learn than trekking through the unforgiving Olympic Mountains! As we hiked from mountain peak to mountain peak, I witnessed so many unforgettable scenes in this beautiful wilderness area. The feeling of summiting the peaks filled me with a sense of accomplishment. On the week-long trek we trudged through vasts forests, pranked each other by putting banana slugs on each other, and laughed so hard at the many campfires! We were all so young and full of energy. Descending huge cliffs on a rope with a 30 pound backpack was not easy, but I did it. One lesson that I learned on the trip was that hard work will always pay off, and the more effort one puts in, the more rewarding the outcome.

CYRUS PRUNEAU

My favorite experience with Troop 2 was canoing in the Minnesota Boundary Waters. There were so many days when we had beautiful calm water, miles of lush fauna, and stunning sunsets. Other days it was not so idyllic, like when we were sheltering during thunderstorms or paddling against massive gusts of wind! But altogether it was a spectacular trip, and it feels good to look back at it. One favorite memory was the day we were paddling through shimmering green water surrounded by reeds and lily pads while ducks swam all around us. I also had a great group of people to share this trip with. We cooked good food, sang songs and got eaten alive by mosquitoes at the campfires, and made many memories that I'll treasure for the rest of my life. It really felt like we were livin' it up at the Hotel California.

QUENTIN CORBEL

Throughout my years with Troop 2 I spent many summers on high adventure trips all over the country, and they were all amazing experiences that I will cherish for a lifetime. If I had to choose a favorite it would be the backpacking trip in the Olympic Mountains in 2019. The Olympic Mountains in Washington State are dense with lush vegetation (being a temperate rain forest) and the views at the 7,000 ft peaks were so stunning and beautiful that my thirteen-year-old brain could barely comprehend it all. Another fond memory was the time we had to bushwhack though all that lush vegetation after a navigation mistake put us off our intended route. And then there was the day our beachside campsite was completely flooded by the morning tide! Great memories with great friends. I still find it thrilling to think about.

JULIAN BENDER

Undoubtedly my favorite experience during my Troop 2 years was climbing Silver Peak on Catalina island in 2018. While it may not be the farthest I've traveled or the most difficult thing I experienced as a Scout, I believe it has had the biggest impact on me as a person. The day started at 4:30 A.M., and I remember struggling with feelings of regret, waking up so early and setting out from our campsite near the beach in the cold morning chill. And it didn't feel any better as I strained to climb the steep, dusty trail in the dark. The whole thing felt pretty unpleasant. But the experience changed as we neared the top of the mountain. We were hiking the second highest peak on the island, and waiting for us at the top was a spectacular sunrise. Seeing the sun shine out from above the clouds, illuminating the beautiful island below, was well worth the challenge. I felt grateful that I overcame adversity and persevered through the cold. It showed me how much I could accomplish if I just took those first uncomfortable steps out of my warm bed. And, gratefully, the hike back to camp with my friends was warm and well lit, and most importantly, all downhill.

TROOP 2

Troop 2 is one of the oldest and largest Scout troops in the western United States. In its remarkable 77 year history, Troop 2 has awarded Eagle Scout rank to 390 deserving individuals. The storied troop has traveled to Scout camps and high adventure destinations throughout the United States, and all together Troop 2 Scouts have saved more than 67 lives using CPR, water rescue, first aid, and other skills and training.

These four Eagle Scouts flourished in Troop 2 under the care and guidance of Scoutmasters John Matise and Dr. Steve Marcy, and supported by the many Assistant Scoutmasters. Dr. Marcy passed away peacefully in January, 2023, at the age of 77, after serving for 34 years as Scoutmaster of the organization.

Submitted by Liz Grossman

LAWSUIT

FROM PAGE 1

before she was fired in retaliation for her complaints.

Lori Gentles, the former head of human relations for the City of Santa Monica, filed the lawsuit against the city in February of this year, just after being terminated from her position.

She alleges the decision was motivated by a longstanding campaign against her by white management that was resistant to her efforts to diversify the city's workforce.

Gentles is Black and was hired in 2016 as the city's Chief People Officer by then city manager Rick Cole. Prior to coming to Santa Monica she worked as the Human Resources Director for the County of Santa Barbara. Before her work with that city, Gentles worked for the California State University System as Vice President of HR, Diversity and Inclusion for Cal State Fullerton. She was also the Associate Vice President of HR, Safety and Risk Management for San Francisco State University. Gentles was also the HR Director for Contra Costa County, Deputy Personnel Director for the City of Phoenix and HR Administrator for the City of Mesa.

Gentles alleges that throughout her tenure, she engaged in protected activities such as advocating against institutionalized racism within the city and recommending policy changes. However, she faced adverse employment actions including retaliation for attempting to implement changes to eliminate discriminatory practices. This retaliation included unfair performance reviews, micromanagement, and being held to a different standard than her white colleagues. She also reported instances of racial harassment and discrimination within the workplace. Despite her complaints being ignored or dismissed, the she said she persisted, which led to increased stress and anxiety, ultimately requiring professional treatment. Additionally, during her protected medical leave, she claims there were attempts to interfere with her privacy rights and terminate her employment. These actions culminated in her being placed on paid administrative leave in retaliation for her protected complaints and medical leave.

Gentles cites several specific instances in her complaint.

In one instance, she claims Susan Cline, in her capacity as acting assistant City Manager, asked for an investigation into a situation where a city employee complained about a false or exaggerated police report filed by another city employee. Gentles says her investigation concluded that the police report was not false and that conclusion upset both Cline and then interim City Manager Lane Dilg who wanted the report to be false to limit city liability. Gentles claims a subsequent inaccurate performance review was retaliation for that conclusion.

In April of 2021, Gentles said she was made aware of a complaint regarding a comment made by a white city employee wherein the employee pointed at a Black man and said "don't worry about him, we could just lynch him". She reported this to Dilg, Katie Lichtig (former Assistant City Manager), and Andy Agle (Former Housing Director.) According to the lawsuit, Agle laughed in response to the allegation and while Gentles wanted to escalate the complaint, she claims city leadership instead assigned the investigation to Agle.

The lawsuit also claims white department heads were able to escape criticism for mismanaging their departments and that persistent failures to implement required performance reviews for most city employees prevented qualified individuals from securing promotions.

"The CITY's failure to take these allegations seriously caused significant stress and anxiety, and she was forced to seek professional treatment as a result," said the lawsuit.

However, she claims her leave was "abnormally scrutinized" and that leadership (including City Manager David White and Deputy City Attorney Meishya Yang) began to interfere in the confidential leave process by unlawfully requesting copies of her protected medical records in violation of privacy laws.

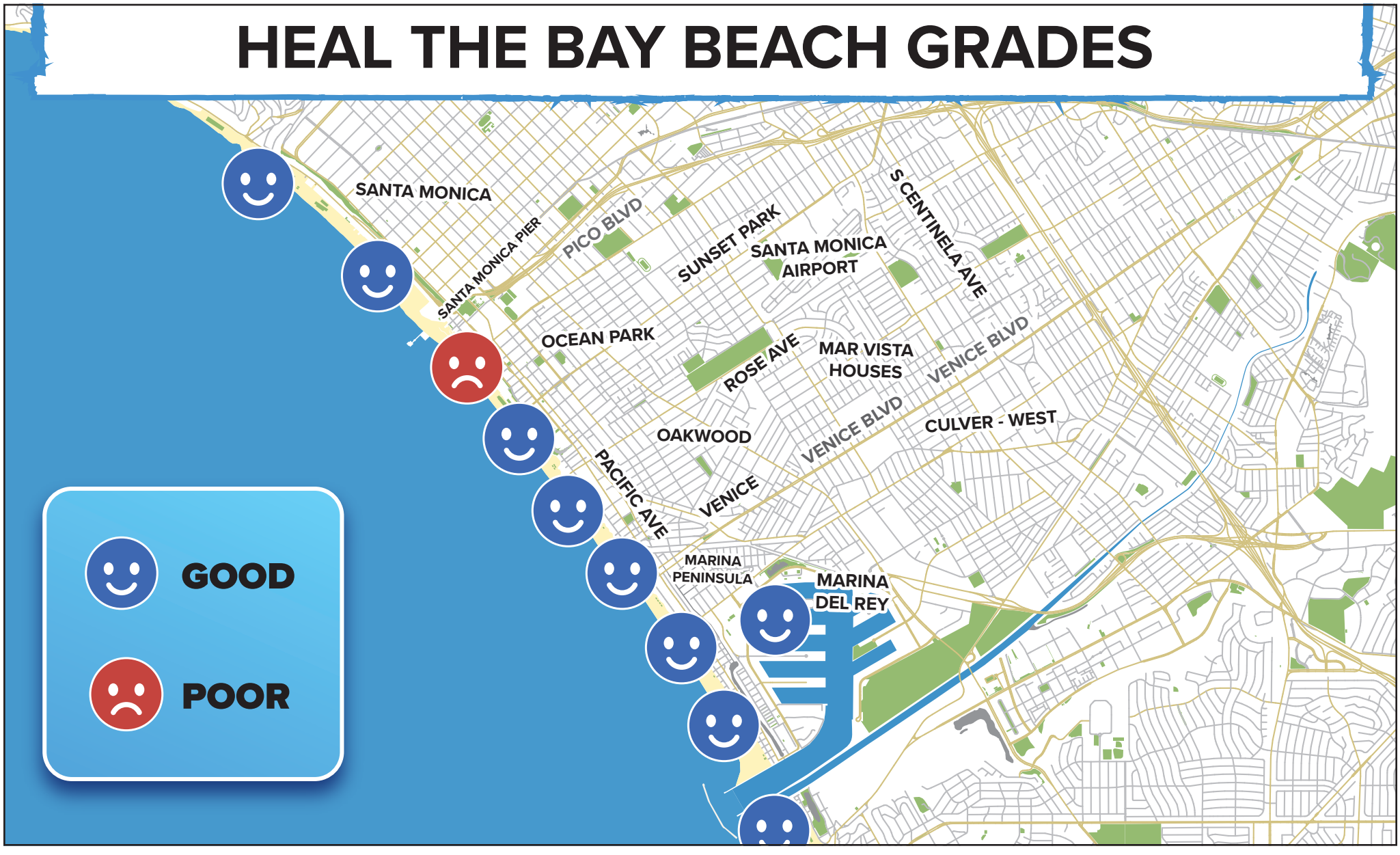
Gentles claims she was put on a paid administrative leave in retaliation for making protected complaints and for taking protected medical leave due to the stress caused by the city's inaction before being fired in February.

In its response, the City denies all the allegations. It cites 36 various defenses to the suit including assertions that the claims are barred by various case law, arbitration policies and jurisdictional questions. The response also claims there was no discrimination involved in the process saying there were non-discriminatory reasons for making decisions and that Gentles was unable to perform essential job duties even with reasonable accommodations.

Gentles is asking for as yet unknown financial damages while the city is asking the court to dismiss the case with prejudice.

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MARINERS

FROM PAGE 1

both students and faculty, giving special thanks to the teachers and staff who made it through COVID to continue Mariner mentorship.

Valedictorian Dylan Smith added that the pandemic "shrouded off" much of the class' typical freshman bonding, but ended up bringing the students closer when they eventually returned to in-person classes.

"I remember this feeling of newness among everybody, it almost felt like we were restarting our high school journey under some more normal circumstances," Smith said. "I think this is what bonded us as a class the most, we all wanted to make up the loss of our first year together. (The pandemic) may have seemed like a rain cloud hovering over our student environment, but I now see that (the) rain is necessary, just as plants need water to flourish."

Smith drew much inspiration from plants for her speech, namely the Saint Monica trademark wildflower, asking the packed courtyard to imagine themselves as a wildflower and what type they would be. She described several of her classmates as different kinds of wildflowers, adding that each one of her fellow seniors should do the same.

"We are all special standing alone, but it is in the presence of each other that we've been able to create a bigger, more beautiful environment. So as we stand on the precipice of our future, I urge you all to embrace the wildflower within you, carry your adaptability, strength and distinct beauty into the rich soil of your new environment. Keep the unconventional journey we've undergone together in the back of your mind as a constant reminder that our potential for growth is limitless."

Oommen spoke less in metaphor and more in what the class brought to the whole community, namely successes in endeavors like athletics. He gave special commendations to teams like Mariners football, who were 2023 CIF Southern Section Division 13 champions, as well as shouting out playoff appearances from boys and girls basketball squads. Several seniors will be playing in the college ranks, including football standout Joshua Barnes at the University of Idaho, golf's Carolina Calzada at King University in Tennessee, and the basketball duo of Shadel Ffrench and Kaya Ghobrial at Glendale College and Loyola-Chicago, respectively.

"Four years ago, we could not rely on sports to further the Mariners brand name, but look at us now," Oommen said.

The 2024 Mariners class was full of academic achievements as well, including 19 seniors who held a career 4.0 GPA, and 11 class members part of the National Honor Society. Major scholarships and awards given to the class include Daniel Seraphine selected as "Mariner of the Year" and Smith earning the Class of 1959 award.

Oommen added that the 2024 class' diversity was "one of our greatest strengths" and what really brought them closer together, saying that his fellow seniors should accept the diverse paths life will take them on.

"Seize this opportunity, embrace life for all its good, bad and ugly with open arms," Oommen said. "I'm sure there'll be times where you'll have to push through the mud, I say to you keep going, pushing mud makes great fields after all. I am so excited to be able to tell people what you all will accomplish."

thomas@smdp.com





Thomas Leffler

GRADUATION: The Saint Monica community packed the school's campus during a June 7 graduation ceremony, featuring senior members of the SMPREP choir (above) performing "Vienna" by Billy Joel.

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SNACKVILLE

FROM PAGE 1

"Snackville" on June 7, a colony of customer-pleasing stands serving burgers, fries, churros, ice cream, funnel cake and frozen fruit treats. The new locale is the first of $10 million in capital investments committed to Pacific Park via new operator SC Holdings, and is the culinary concept of Michelin Star Chef James Kent.

"When you're hanging out by the Santa Monica Pier with the seagulls flying around … you never really think 'oh, let's bring a Michelin-starred chef in to help us make a really awesome smash burger,' but that's the door that's been open … and we're super excited to have (Snackville) here," Pacific Park Senior Director of Business Affairs Nathan Smithson said.

Kent has a rich history in the NYC food scene, serving as chef de cuisine at Eleven Madison Park before opening Crown Shy and SAGA in the landmark Art Deco building in the mecca's Financial District. Since opening, both Crown Shy and SAGA have been awarded Michelin stars, adding to Kent's already-solidified legacy.

Working on the project for about six months, Kent saw Pacific Park as the "perfect opportunity" to try out new foods after testing his concessions skills during the 2023 U.S. Open tennis tournament. Making new menus and introducing a host of Snackville mascots, Kent was beaming with pride during the grand opening.

"It's a different world from what we do, we work in a high-end, kind of fine dining world," Kent said. "But I think with those skills, you can always go (different) and work (to) make delicious food … we've had a lot of fun working for this."



Photo by Thomas Leffler

SNACKVILLE: Michelin Star Chef James Kent has brought his eye for food creativity to the new "Snackville" location at Pacific Park.

The five pillars of Snackville start at the Pacific Park entrance with Smashie's Burgers, serving smash burgers charbroiled on the griddle, topped with American cheese, grilled onions and the new "Smashie Sauce." The complement to the burger can be found at Mr. Nice Fry, with fry varieties including "Skinny Dippers," "Swirly Fries" and "Tater Wheels."

Desserts are plenty in the new space, such as Kent's chance to take churros "up a notch" at Churrita Churros. Noted as the first time churros have been made fresh on the Pier in "decades," the sweet shop can serve churros with or without soft-serve ice cream in flavors like cinnamon sprinkled, dulce de leche or chocolate filled.

Located just inside the Snackville entrance is Scoops Creamery, handing out treats like hand-scooped ice cream, milkshakes and sundaes, while Cosmic Funnel Cake serves the signature boardwalk treat with several topping options.

Kent stated that whether it's fine dining or classic treats, everything starts with setting systems and protocols for team members to execute, and he didn't want to "overthink things" in the planning process.

"I can't give them a recipe that has 20 ingredients, it's too complicated," Kent added. "We need to do three or four things that can be done really well … my chefs are having a good time and they're proud."

Making the trip to Snackville from its homestead in Arizona is eegee's frozen fruit drinks, located inside of Mr. Nice Fry. A staple in the state since 1971, eegee's has 30 locations across Southern Arizona and brings flavors like peach and strawberry across state lines for the new experience.

With this combination of food favorites, Kent explained that he's bringing a dining experience to the Pier that "everyone has a reference point" for.

"This is iconic Americana where we're standing … (it's about) how do we support that and do things that people understand, (but) do it a little bit better," Kent said.

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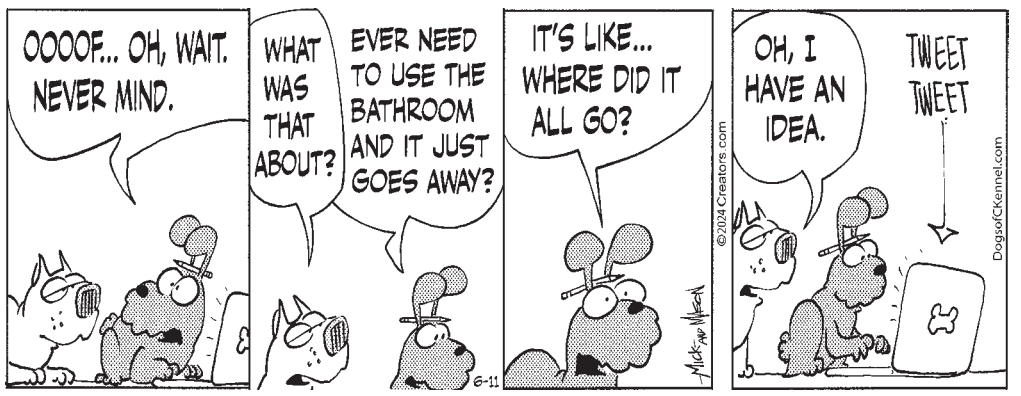
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



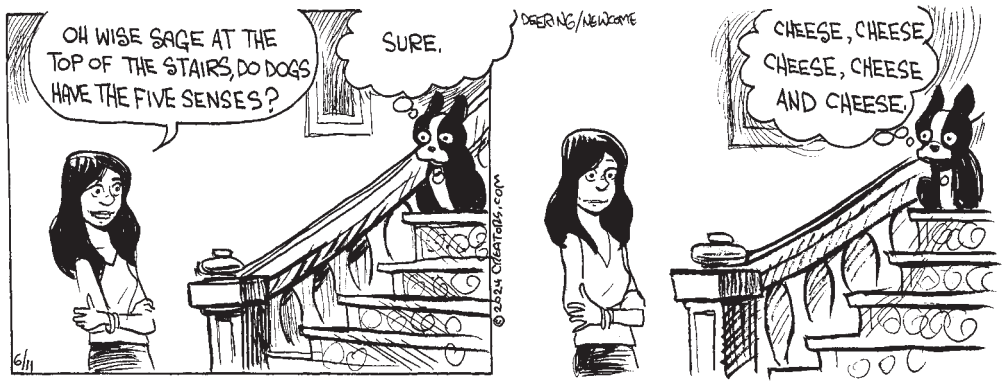
Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

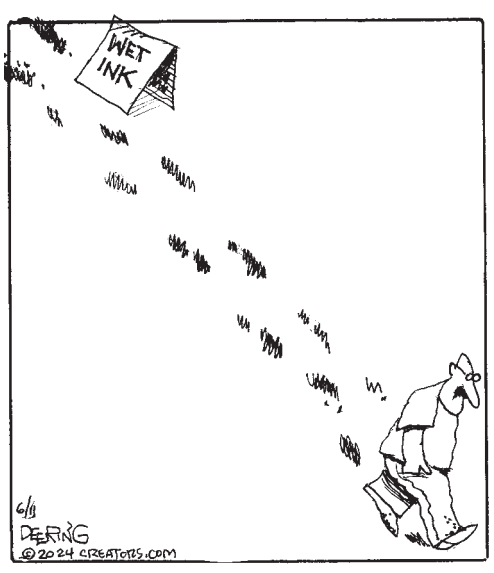
By PETER GALLAGHER



"IT'S HOW HE INTRODUCES HIMSELF."

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 13 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

© australianwordgames.com.au 6238

Fur and feather babies

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

Accident
Alpaca
Bark
Bath
Beds
Bird
Bone
Broken
Cage
Calm
Cavy
Chow
Claws
Coat
Cute
Diet
Dingo
Docile
Dogs
Drool
Duck
Eyes
Ferret
Fido
Finch
Food
Galah
Hens
Hound
Kitten
Lady
Legs
Mess
Mouse
Nurse
Oscar
Pats
Perch
Pigeon
Pills
Pony
Puppy
Purr
Rest
Scratches
Sedation
Tabby
Tail
Tank
Timid
Tiny
Toys
Untidy
Veterinarian
Warm

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (June 11)

People want to be around you because you're fun, but it's your loyalty and trustworthiness that keeps them orbiting. It's a year of thrilling opportunities, and because of your willingness to tolerate the adrenaline surges, much will open up for you. More highlights: a powerful attraction, an impressive certification and family expansion. Virgo and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 12, 2, 14, 38 and 33.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Repetition is one way to create magic in your day. The tasks you repeat will make you strong. The words you repeat will give you a purpose that grows and deepens. The people you come back to again and again will fortify you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You go out of your way to try to understand someone who is not so easy to figure out. You really want to know their motivations and the feelings they are not showing, and with patience, you'll make some headway in this regard.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your thoughtfulness has often shown up in the way you tailored gestures and gifts to each friend's preferences and interests. Now that same quality will be lavished on you, and it will feel terrific to know you had it coming.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There are those who display their nonconformity by conforming to the other nonconformists — in other words, they think differently in the same way. Maybe there's nothing new under the sun, but you'll have a take on it that is truly original.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You may inwardly feel nervous about how others are viewing you, but you're doing better than you think. Relax to whatever extent you can, and if it's not possible, then just embrace the unease.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Before you single someone out with praise, remember that not everyone wants to be complimented publicly, as the attention sets up expectations or disallows for unselfconscious freedom, experimentation and the like.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Sometimes you feel like following the rules, and sometimes you feel like breaking them, but you always prefer to at least know what the rules are. In today's case, it won't be so obvious. Feel free to ask.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Life is a sensory experience. If you've been depriving yourself in some way, your senses will speak up today in the form of cravings, longings, urges and the like. You were meant to feel and enjoy things.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Success doesn't always come in the form of abundance. There's a point in which too much of a thing can be cumbersome, heavy and difficult to manage. Today will highlight the benefits to having less instead of more.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The reality of what's happening doesn't always relate to the feelings you're having in that reality. For instance, running can feel more like flying than being in a jet does. Stay open-minded.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It's easy to help those you like, but it's not so easy to help difficult people who may in fact need the most help of all. You'll show your remarkable heart and character through such acts of service.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your nonjudgmental and compassionate nature makes people feel heard, valued and understood. The right questions pop to mind, and most will be open to your curiosity and perhaps even flattered by it.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

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

Newsday Crossword

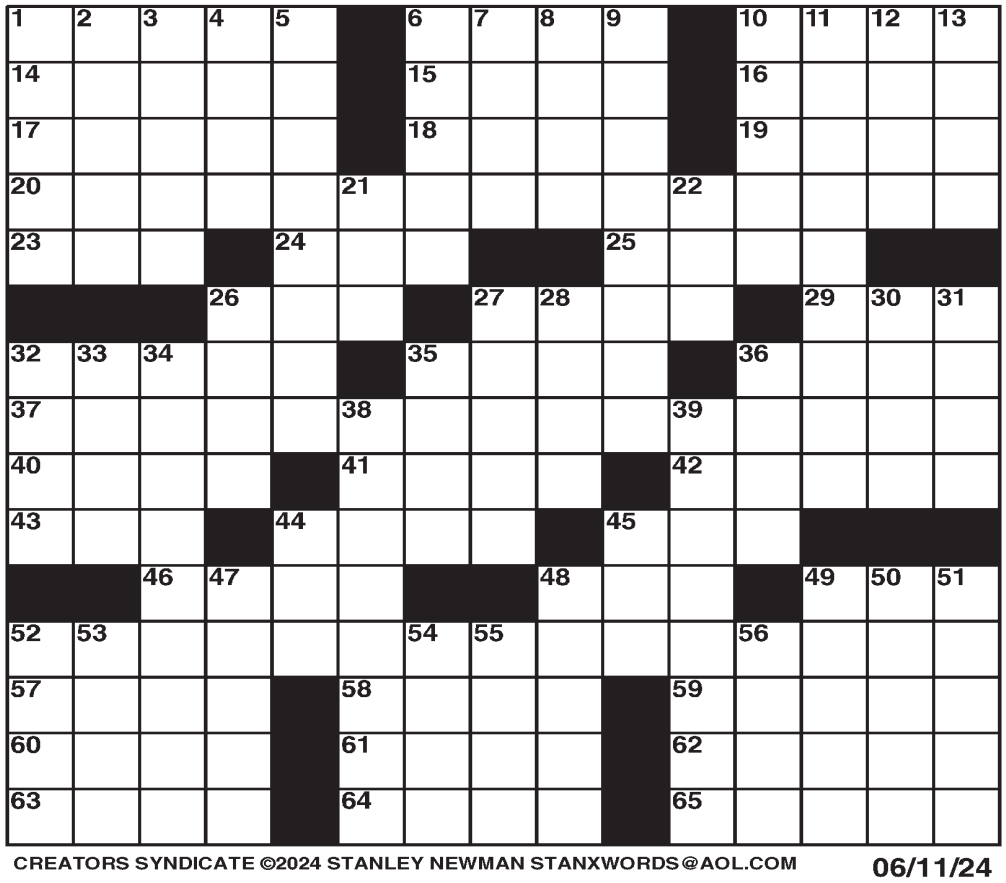
TILTED by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 __ toast (thin, crisp bread)
6 Show-__ (big boasters)
10 Nest egg accts.
14 Coral reef island
15 Bagpiper's skirt
16 Alaskan port city
17 Artificial ship shortcut
18 Indistinct image
19 Compose an email
20 Tilted path off an interstate
23 Spanish cheer
24 Sandwich bread
25 Place to swim at a hotel
26 Baseball great DiMaggio
27 Garment behind a superhero's back
29 Halves of qts.
32 Chef's cover-up garment
35 Brief memo
36 Worm on a fishhook
37 Tilted park ride for kids
40 Person in charge
41 Money in Spain and France
42 Person who doesn't mingle
43 Fuel additive letters
44 Woman with a niece
45 Animal doc
46 42-gal. oil measures
48 Meet with
49 African 48-Down
52 Pisa's tilted attraction
57 Very uncommon
58 __ Raton, FL
59 Very silly
60 Makes a mistake
61 Onionlike soup ingredient
62 The ancient Vikings
63 Pianist's targets
64 Otherwise
65 Color of limes

DOWN

1 Ultra-manly
2 Online commerce
3 Vowel sound in "easy"
4 Uninteresting, informally
5 Completely incorrect
6 "Sure, farewell"
7 Manicurist's tool
8 State of constant change
9 Removed paint from
10 Opening speech
11 Huge hassle
12 Digital clock toggle switch
13 Trickle slowly
21 Sailor's "yes"
22 Tip of a shoe
26 Great pleasures
27 Tennis venue
28 __ cost (free)
30 Ocean's rise and fall
31 Suffix for young or prank
32 Police dept. alerts
33 Evil scheme
34 Small red fruit
35 Person, place, or thing
36 Ink stain
38 Not for one time only
39 Raining in icy pellets
44 Pub beverage
45 Really relax, with "out"
47 "God __ America"
48 Slithering reptile
49 In the know
50 Taste, hearing, or sight
51 Fuss at a mirror
52 Tiring journey
53 Rabbit's cousin
54 Christmas song
55 Puts frosting on
56 __ about (roughly)



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06/11/24

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LETTER

FROM PAGE 2

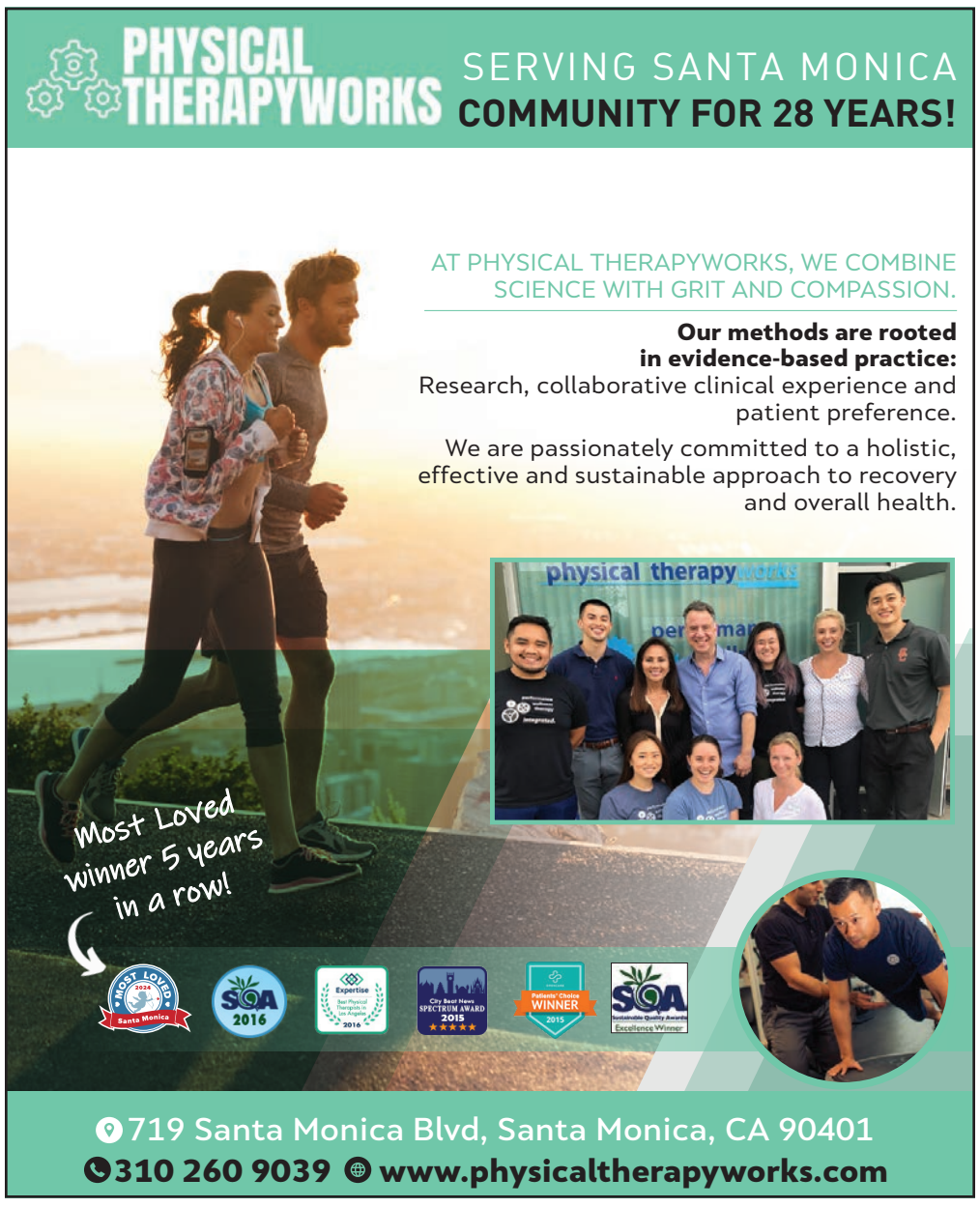
Supporting all of this means increasing our tax base, of course. We cannot have a 25% vacancy rate in downtown Santa Monica. Nor can we afford to have our Sunset Park Business Park half-moribund, or the airport. We cannot allow our assets – the Civic Auditorium, the branch libraries and other spaces to sit unused.

I want a thriving Downtown filled with destination hotels and successful businesses, at least some of which are unique and not found just anywhere else. Let's find ways to fill up our empty storefronts, and for those that haven't filled up yet let's ask their landlords to do more. Is it time for a vacancy tax on long-empty commercial real estate? Let's get creative and perhaps pilot some business development zones downtown if need be (can we make our own version of Mercado La Paloma?). Let's look at ways to bring true signature anchor businesses here. Can we create a little business development brain trust? Could they consider a range of ideas? What would it take to bring short term attractions like Luna Luna here to Santa Monica? And to a place that would have spillover to other businesses? Could we ask an LA institution like a Porto's to take over the old Barnes and Noble? Could we explore having if one or more of the big museums open a branch in downtown – or set up a state of the art gallery and bring shows from each of them in turn? And what can we do to support our existing local, businesses, especially the independent businesses? To help them thrive and grow?

We are world famous, but how can we be that world-class destination that satisfies our visitors and provides us lucky locals with the revenue to live in a comfortable, well-resourced neighborhood in our world-class city?

I do hope, dear neighbors, that you will all speak up about what you want, so that we can build our future here together, and hopefully, open the possibility that our children and their children can live here – something they will be unable to do unless we create a much wider range of housing and employment opportunities for them. I hope you – we – will all pay attention to who our candidates for local office are, and vote for those who truly stand for what we all want.

With hope and gratitude. Thank you, Karen Wise



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TUESDAY JUNE 11

SOCIAL SERVICE ASSISTANCE

Virginia Avenue Park, in partnership with Providence St. John's Community Health Program, resumes Social Service Assistance from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Help with facility nutrition and health care access from trained community health workers. The trained Providence St. John's staff can assist with enrollment in CalFresh, the state of California's food subsidy program created to improve the nutrition of families through access to healthy foods. Staff can also help navigate enrollment or questions for MediCal or Medicare. If you have questions about whether you qualify for benefits or if you need help completing enrollment forms, you can make an appointment by calling 310-458-8688. Drop-ins are also welcome.

TUESDAY TALES: RAINBOW FAMILY STORYTIME

Celebrate LGBTQIA+ Pride Month with an inclusive storytime for LGBTQIA+ and ally families in the Youth Activity Room of the Santa Monica Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd., beginning at 10:30 a.m. This engaging and fun weekly series of stories, songs and rhymes travels to different library locations every week. Limited space, free tickets available at 10:15 a.m. For ages 2-5.

SMC 94TH COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Come join Santa Monica College to honor and celebrate the SMC graduates of 2024. Begins at 4 p.m. at Corsair Field, 1900 Pico Blvd.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The City Council is made up of seven members elected at-large for staggered four-year terms. Every two years, after each election, the City Council selects one of its members to serve as Mayor and another to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore. The City Council also sits as the following bodies for the City of Santa Monica: Housing Authority, Parking Authority, Public Financing, Redevelopment Successor Agency and Audit Subcommittee. Meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers at Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main St.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 12

CRAFTERNOON

Are you working on a craft project you can't seem to find time to finish? Bring it in and make space for yourself! We'll chat, have treats, and work together. Don't have one? We'll provide coloring pages and pens/pencils, so come relax. For ADA accommodations, call (213) 228-7430 at least 72 hours prior to the event. 3 - 5 p.m. West Los Angeles Regional Branch Library, 11360 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles.

AN EVENING WITH LEE HARRIS IN LOS ANGELES ACCOMPANIED BY DAVOR BOZIC

Join acclaimed transformational teacher Lee Harris in Santa Monica for an unforgettable evening on his first tour of North America in over 4 years. At this workshop, Lee will weave together his gifts of intuition, channeling, humor and music to guide you on a journey of self-discovery and provide you with valuable insight on how to handle some of life's most common challenges. With a keen ability to read the energy of the room, he will directly address the core topics and themes relevant to those in attendance and will provide a heart-centered approach to fostering less stress, more happiness, and a greater sense of purpose. Sharing the stage with Lee is composer and musician Davor Bozic, who will craft a live musical soundtrack for the evening, adding a layer of depth, resonance and healing to the experience. Join us for an unforgettable night and take the next step in your spiritual evolution. The Eli and Edythe Broad Stage 1310 11th Street, $59 - $79, https://www.eventbrite.com/e/an-evening-with-lee-harris-in-los-angeles-tickets-796065652797

WESTERN STANDARD TIME

This event is 21 and over. Any ticket holder unable to present valid identification indicating that they are at least 21 years of age will not be admitted to this event, and will not be eligible for a refund. The Venice West 1717 Lincoln Blvd, Venice, $25, https://www.ticketweb.com/event/western-standard-time-ska-orchestra-the-venice-west-tickets/13462474

BMH & POD OFFICE HOURS

Housing staff with the City of Santa Monica will be available to answer questions in-person in English and Spanish about applying to the City's Below Market Housing (BMH) or Preserving Our Diversity (POD) programs. No appointment necessary, first come basis. Runs from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Ave. For additional questions, email smhousing@santamonica.gov or call 310-458-8740.

Transient Occupancy Tax Advisory Committee Meeting: City Council established by resolution an advisory committee that would make non-binding recommendations on the use of the additional Transient Occupancy Tax revenues. The TOT Advisory Committee meeting will begin at the Santa Monica Institute Training Rom, 330 Olympic Dr., 2nd Floor (Plaza Level) at 6 p.m.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Established in 1946, the Planning Commission envisions Santa Monica as a city of wellbeing, sustainability, and equity, and seeks to balance the many needs and priorities within our community in accordance with the City's General Plan and Specific Plans. The Commission acts through open and civil discourse that is informed by public input, impartial analysis, and best practices in land use and planning. Meeting begins at 7 p.m. in City Council Chambers of Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main St.

DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET

The largest grower-only Certified Farmers Market in Southern California and a favorite for local chefs. Enjoy Santa Monica's downtown farmers market from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. between 4th St. and Ocean Ave. Widely considered to be among the best on the west coast and featuring field-fresh produce, hundreds of kinds of vegetables, brilliant cut flowers, breads, cheese, delicious foods, live music and more.

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

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ON-CAMPUS AND ONLINE CLASSES



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