smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

TUESDAY
08.03.21
Volume 20 Issue 225

School starts this month
SMMUSD hosting talk on in person vs. independent study options.
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Contract with $340,000 salary approved for new City Manager

CLARA HARTER
SMDP Staff Writer

After 15 months of interim city managers, Council has successfully hired current Berkeley Deputy City Manager David White and cemented his terms of employment.

On July 27, council members unanimously approved White's city manager contract, which includes a $340,000 salary, sevens months of $3,000 monthly rental assistance, and nine months of severance pay under specified conditions.

White, who will begin his position on Oct. 11, declined to speak with the Daily Press, citing a packed schedule finishing his job in Berkeley and preparing to move with his wife.

White's salary is similar to the salary held by previous City Manager Rick Cole. Starting in July 2022, White's salary will be annually adjusted in the same percentage of salary increases granted to participants in the Executive Pay Plan for that fiscal year.

In addition to rental assistance and moving expenses, White will be eligible for a $1.5 million home loan from the City with a 3.5 percent fixed interest rate. White is not required to live in Santa Monica, but the employment agreement states that this is both his and Council's preference. White will receive CalPERS retirement benefits.

Councilmember Phil Brock asked staff whether White's contract salary is on par with that of city managers in similarly sized cities. Interim City Attorney George Cardona confirmed that it is and no further comments or questions were raised by council.

In a statement released on July 22, Mayor Sue Himmelrich said, "David has a keen understanding of the central issues our like-minded cities face and has demonstrated that he has the experience and spirit of can-do inclusion we need to lead Santa Monica at this critical time. We are thrilled to have found a candidate so aligned with our community's values and impatiently await his arrival so we may begin our collective work."



Courtesy photo

MANAGER: Council approved David White's contract last week.

Prior to starting his role as deputy manager in Berkeley in 2019, White served as the city manager of Fairfield for five years. Both cities have similar population sizes to Santa Monica.

White has a background in finance as an investment banker and as Fairfield's finance director. He is expected to play a key role in leading Santa Monica's economic recovery from the pandemic.

White is a native Angeleno and holds a UCLA bachelor's degree in psychology and anthropology and an MIT master's degree in city planning.

As City Manager, White will oversee a total budget of $705.5 million and a workforce of 1,923.

The approval of White's contract marks the end of a six month process to fill the city manager position, which received 64 applications. Council initially selected Montebello City Manager Rene Bobadilla, however Montebello City Council caught wind of this via a press leak and enticed Bobadilla to stay with a $68,500 raise.

John Jalili took over as interim city manager following Interim City Manager Lane Dilg's departure on June 24. Jalili will continue to serve in this position until White begins his permanent role on Oct. 11.

Clara@smdp.com

Man killed in early morning hit-and-run Monday

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

A man was killed Monday morning after being hit by a vehicle on the 3100 block of Santa Monica Blvd.

According to SMPD, officers were called to the scene at about 1:05 a.m. where they found a man in the street. The victim was transported to a local hospital and later pronounced deceased from his injuries.

The suspect vehicle, a dark color newer sedan, was last seen driving eastbound on Santa Monica Blvd. Detectives are conducting necessary follow up, interviewing victims and reviewing available evidence.

The street was closed for part of the morning but reopened at about 7 a.m.

Anyone with additional information pertaining to this incident is strongly encouraged to contact Detective Tavera with the Criminal Investigations Division at 310-458-2201 ext. 2256, by email at ismael.tavera@smgov.net or Santa Monica Police Department's Watch Commander (24 hours) at 310-458-8427.

editor@smdp.com

US hits 70% vaccination rate – a month late, amid a surge



SMDP File photo

VACCINE: More vaccines are reaching arms due to a new surge in cases.

MIKE CATALINI
Associated Press

The U.S. on Monday finally reached President Joe Biden's goal of getting at least one COVID-19 shot into 70% of American adults — a month late and amid a fierce surge by the delta variant that is swamping hospitals and leading to new mask rules and mandatory vaccinations around the country.

In a major retreat in the Deep South, Louisiana ordered nearly everyone, vaccinated or not, to wear masks again in all indoor public settings, including schools and colleges And other cities and states likewise moved to reinstate precautions to counter a crisis blamed on the fast-spreading variant and stubborn resistance to

SEE **VACCINE** PAGE 11



Thinking of making a move?
Let me guide you.

Melanie Tielmann

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COMPASS

DAILY POLICE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 281 CALLS ON AUGUST 1

Loud Music 00blk Bay St 12:03 a.m.
Traffic Collision - Unknown Injuries 800blk Pacific Coast Hwy 12:06 a.m.
Loud Music Main St / Ocean Park Blvd 12:33 a.m.
Party Complaint 1500blk Princeton St 12:33 a.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries City Prop Involved Lincoln Blvd / Ocean Park Blvd 12:35 a.m.
Party Complaint 600blk Navy St 1:10 a.m.
Party Complaint 1900blk Euclid St 1:29 a.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 4th St / Alta Ave 1:49 a.m.
Party Complaint 2300blk Schader Dr 3:17 a.m.
Encampment 2500blk Ocean Front Walk 6:44 a.m.
Encampment 2600blk The Beach 6:55 a.m.
Encampment 2nd St / Hollister Ave 6:56 a.m.
Burglary 2500blk Broadway 7:00 a.m.
Encampment 1000blk The Beach 7:11 a.m.
Encampment 1200blk The Beach 7:18 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1100blk 7th St 7:36 a.m.
Lewd Activity 2300blk Pico Blvd 8:35 a.m.
Auto Burglary 700blk Navy St 8:53 a.m.
Loitering Lincoln Blvd / Broadway 9:03 a.m.
Grand Theft Auto 2700blk Neilson Way 9:15 a.m.
Found Property 800blk 4th St 9:27 a.m.
72 Hour Psychiatric Hold 4th St / Interstate 10 9:34 a.m.
Petty Theft 2800blk The Beach 9:35 a.m.
Auto Burglary 1300blk Ocean Ave 9:45 a.m.
Petty Theft 2400blk Lincoln Blvd 9:58 a.m.
Indecent Exposure Now 1100blk 16th St 9:59 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1300blk 3rd Street Prom 10:19 a.m.
Abandoned Vehicle 100blk Hollister Ave 10:21 a.m.
Battery 1000blk Wilshire Blvd 10:30 a.m.
Petty Theft 1000blk The Beach 10:38 a.m.
Abandoned Vehicle 2800blk 2nd St 11:10 a.m.
Loud Music 2800blk Neilson Way 11:10 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 300blk Santa Monica Pl 11:17 a.m.
Failure To Pay Parking Fee 2000blk Ocean Ave 11:24 a.m.
Encampment 1600blk 16th St 11:24 a.m.
Attempt Burglary 2900blk Main St 11:34 a.m.
Attempt Burglary 2900blk Main St 11:34 a.m.
Petty Theft 2500blk Santa Monica Blvd 11:35 a.m.
Loud Music 2600blk Ocean Front Walk 11:48 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1600blk Stanford St 12:27 p.m.
Silent Robbery Alarm 800blk 5th St 12:28 p.m.
Drunk Driving Investigation 7th St / Wilshire Blvd 12:36 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 4th St / Pico Blvd 12:41 p.m.
Domestic Violence 1100blk Pico Blvd 1:02 p.m.
Exhibition Of Speed Lincoln Blvd / Pico Blvd 1:11 p.m.
Exhibition Of Speed Pacific Coast Hwy / California Incline 1:17 p.m.
Assault W/Deadly Weapon 2100blk Main St 1:24 p.m.
Exhibition Of Speed 26th St / San Vicente Blvd 1:40 p.m.
Petty Theft 11th St / Washington Ave 1:42 p.m.
Fight 4th St / Interstate 10 2:12 p.m.
Vehicle Parked In Alley 1500blk Lincoln Blvd 2:19 p.m.
Grand Theft 1300blk 3rd Street Prom 2:23 p.m.
Burglary 600blk Navy St 2:25 p.m.
Oversize Vehicle Violation 1500blk Pacific Coast Hwy 2:28 p.m.
Construction Noise 2200blk Pier Ave 2:29 p.m.
Petty Theft 300blk Santa Monica Pl 2:32 p.m.
Indecent Exposure Now 1200blk Santa Monica Blvd 2:34 p.m.
Battery 1600blk Ocean Front Walk 2:36 p.m.
Construction Noise 2500blk 10th St 2:44 p.m.
Loud Music 2700blk Barnard Way 2:54 p.m.
Drinking In Public 1200blk Pacific Coast Hwy 3:01 p.m.
Found Property 1700blk Ocean Ave 3:18 p.m.
Person Down 4th St / Colorado Ave 3:18 p.m.
Encampment 900blk Ozone Ave 3:19 p.m.
Urinating/Defecating In Public 2600blk Ocean Front Walk 3:29 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1500blk 17th St 3:39 p.m.
Petty Theft 1600blk Ocean Front Walk 3:40 p.m.
General Parking Problem 1300blk Ocean Ave 3:44 p.m.
Petty Theft 1400blk 3rd Street Prom 3:57 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries 16th St / Ocean Park Blvd 4:11 p.m.
Petty Theft 500blk Santa Monica Blvd 4:14 p.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 2100blk Oak St 4:34 p.m.
Traffic Collision With Injuries Beverley Ave / Ocean Park Blvd 4:51 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries Lincoln Blvd / Broadway 4:53 p.m.
General Parking Problem 300blk California Ave 5:16 p.m.
Loud Music 2600blk Main St 5:33 p.m.
Critical Missing Person 1600blk Ocean Ave 5:46 p.m.
Found Property 200blk Broadway 5:54 p.m.
Battery 100blk Santa Monica Pl 6:07 p.m.
Loud Music 1600blk Ashland Ave 6:38 p.m.
Loitering 17th St / Alta Ave 6:40 p.m.
Overdose 1800blk Ocean Front Walk 6:49 p.m.
Petty Theft Main St / Hollister Ave 6:51 p.m.
Traffic Collision With Injuries 100blk San Vicente Blvd 6:54 p.m.
Loud Music 2600blk Barnard Way 7:00 p.m.
Defrauding Innkeeper In Progress 1200blk 3rd Street Prom 7:09 p.m.
Encampment 700blk Ozone St 7:31 p.m.
Found Property 300blk Santa Monica Pier 7:31 p.m.
Loud Music 2700blk Barnard Way 7:35 p.m.
Loud Music 2700blk Barnard Way 8:34 p.m.
Auto Burglary 2400blk 34th St 8:41 p.m.
Illegal Weapon 1600blk Ocean Front Walk 9:02 p.m.
Person Down 2nd St / Colorado Ave 9:22 p.m.
Loud Music 1800blk 18th St 9:24 p.m.
Petty Theft 600blk Wilshire Blvd 9:32 p.m.
Petty Theft 700blk Broadway 9:43 p.m.
Loud Music 600blk Kensington Rd 9:58 p.m.
Petty Theft 700blk Idaho Ave 10:02 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1300blk Wilshire Blvd 10:23 p.m.
Loud Music 2400blk 34th St 10:38 p.m.
Auto Burglary 1400blk 2nd St 10:48 p.m.
Assault W/Deadly Weapon 400blk Santa Monica Pier 10:59 p.m.
Lewd Activity 200blk Hollister Ave 11:13 p.m.
Encampment 700blk Ozone St 11:32 p.m.
Found Property 300blk Bay St 11:52 p.m.

DAILY FIRE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 35 CALLS ON AUGUST 1

EMS 1200blk 4th St 12:11 Am
EMS 2000blk Arizona Ave 12:18 Am
EMS 2100blk Ocean Ave 12:48 Am
EMS 2300blk Ocean Park Blvd 1:16 Am
EMS Ocean Ave / Bicknell Ave 2:29 Am
Flooded Condition 500blk Wilshire Blvd 2:47 Am
Miscellaneous Outside Fire 1700blk Euclid St 3:18 Am
Structure Fire 14th St / Olympic Blvd 3:22 Am
EMS 1100blk 23rd St 3:41 Am
EMS 400blk Wilshire Blvd 5:33 Am
EMS 1100blk Pine St 5:36 Am
EMS 1800blk Euclid St 7:22 Am
EMS 900blk 11th St 8:18 Am
EMS 500blk Olympic Blvd W 10:14 Am
Request Fire 4th St / Pico Blvd 10:35 Am
Automatic Alarm 1200blk 15th St 10:37 Am
EMS 1200blk Princeton St 10:48 Am
EMS 800blk 4th St 11:05 Am
Automatic Alarm 1300blk Lincoln Blvd 12:15 p.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury Interstate 10 / Cloverfield Blvd 12:38 p.m.
Flooded Condition 2300blk Pearl St 12:50 p.m.
EMS 600blk San Vicente Blvd 1:18 p.m.
EMS 1000blk 11th St 1:19 p.m.
Structure Fire 2300blk Schader Dr 1:32 p.m.
EMS 500blk Olympic Blvd W 2:19 p.m.
Elevator Rescue 200blk Washington Ave 2:54 p.m.
EMS 800blk 2nd St 3:05 p.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury Beverley Ave / Ocean Park Blvd 4:51 p.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury Interstate 10 / Lincoln Blvd 5:21 p.m.
EMS 900blk 21st St 5:55 p.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury 100blk San Vicente Blvd 6:54 p.m.
EMS 1000blk Pico Blvd 7:02 p.m.
EMS 2000blk Navy St 7:24 p.m.
EMS 1400blk 4th St 7:25 p.m.
EMS 500blk Colorado Ave 9:58 p.m.

Letter to the Editor

Whitney Scott Bain Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Who did we elect to serve the public of Santa Monica? The city council beats their chests boasting transparency yet, all they do is talk-the-talk, but don't walk-the-walk.

They refuse to open the Fairview branch library which is a valuable resource to the Sunset Park community.

They refuse to open the pickle ball courts that is a source of exercise as well as fun for the public.

The City Wi Fi problem in Sunset Park has still not been addressed and has been out since May 26 of this year. Neither the Information Systems nor the city council will take responsibility for answers as each one refers the problem to the other to fix both ignoring each other in a series of ping-pong talk to the citizens questions.

Parking structure 3 is slated for demolition to make way for affordable housing yet, no architectural plans drawn up and there was never any public discussion about said project.

Many businesses have permanently closed or are in the process of moving away with no concern of the city council.

If a city is a good as its civic leaders the who did we elect?

Whitney Scott Bain, Santa Monica

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.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21 7:50 P.M.

An SMPD PSO (Public Safety Officer- civilian position) requested officer assistance on the 100 block of Colorado. Upon arrival, officers observed a vehicle stalled on the road with the driver attempting to start it while the alarm was sounding. The driver told officers he had just purchased the car the day prior. Dispatch advised that the vehicle had been reported stolen and the victims were contacted. One of the victims relayed that he used the vehicle to do work deliveries and had left the keys in the ignition while dropping off a package as it was missing upon his return. Sergio Gonzalo Diaz was arrested for 10851 VC- Unlawful Taking Or Driving Of A Vehicle.

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US employers ratchet up the pressure on the unvaccinated

ALEXANDRA OLSON
AP Business Writer

Employers are losing patience with unvaccinated workers.

For months, most employers relied on information campaigns, bonuses and other incentives to encourage their workforces to get the COVID-19 shot. Now, a growing number are imposing rules to make it more onerous for employees to refuse, from outright mandates to requiring the unvaccinated to undergo regular testing.

Among employers getting tougher are the federal government, the state governments of California and New York, tech giants Google and Facebook, the Walt Disney Co. and the NFL. Some hospitals, universities, restaurants, bars and other entertainment venues have also started requiring vaccines.

But the new measures are unlikely to affect many of the millions of unvaccinated Americans.

Many of the companies that are requiring shots have mostly office workers who are already largely vaccinated and are reluctant to work alongside those who aren't.

In contrast, major companies that rely on low-income blue-collar workers — food manufacturers, warehouses, supermarkets and other store chains — are shying away from mandates for fear of driving away employees and worsening the labor shortages such businesses are facing.

Tyson Foods, for instance, said about half of its U.S. workforce — 56,000 employees — has received shots after the meat and poultry processor hosted more than 100 vaccination events since February. But the company said it has no plans to impose a mandate to reach the other half.

Walmart and Amazon, the country's two largest private employers, have also declined to require its hourly workers to get vaccinated, continuing to rely on strategies such as bonuses and onsite access to shots. But in a potentially powerful signal, Walmart said employees at its headquarters will be required to get vaccinated by Oct. 4.

The biggest precedent so far has come from the federal government, the nation's largest employer. President Joe Biden announced last week that all federal employees and contractors must get vaccinated or put up with weekly testing and lose privileges such as official travel.

The federal government has said it will cover the costs of the weekly tests. As for other employers, insurance may pay for such testing at some workplaces but not others.

Biden's decision could embolden other employers by signaling they would be on solid legal ground to impose similar rules, said Brian Kropp, chief of research at consulting firm Gartner's human resources practice.

But Kropp said some companies face complicated considerations that go beyond legalities, including deep resistance to vaccines in many states where they operate.

Retailers like Walmart might have a hard time justifying vaccine requirements for their workers while allowing shoppers to remain unvaccinated, Kropp added. Stores have mostly avoided vaccine requirements for customers for fear of alienating them and because of the difficulty in trying to verify their status.

In surveys by Gartner, fewer than 10% of employers have said they intend to require all employees to be vaccinated.

But a shift is building amid frustration over plateauing vaccination rates and alarm over the spread of the more contagious delta variant.

On Monday, the U.S. finally reached Biden's goal of dispensing at least one shot to 70% of American adults — but a month late and amid a fierce surge that is driving hospital caseloads in some places to their highest levels since the outbreak began. The president had hoped to reach his target by the Fourth of July.

The Union Square Hospitality Group, a group of New York City restaurants and bars founded by Danny Meyer, is now requiring employees and customers to be vaccinated by Sept. 7.

The San Francisco Bar Owner Alliance, a group of about 300 bars, made a similar decision following a meeting where "the thing that stood out was anger and frustration" toward vaccine holdouts, said founder Ben Bleiman.

While some companies fear vaccine mandates will drive workers away, the pandemic itself is also causing absenteeism. Bleiman said he recently had to close his bar for a night after his bartender, who was fully vaccinated, tested positive and a replacement couldn't be found.

Some employers are concluding that requiring vaccines is simpler than trying to come up with different rules on masks and social distancing for the small number of unvaccinated employees.

BlackRock, the global investment manager, is allowing only vaccinated workers into its U.S. offices for now and said people will be free to go maskless, as local health guidelines allow, and sit next to each other and congregate without restrictions. The firm said 85% of its U.S. employees are vaccinated or in the process of getting shots.

Matthew Putman, CEO of New York-based high-tech manufacturing hub Nanotronics, said he agonized over his decision to impose a vaccine mandate on his more than 100 employees. As it turned out, nearly all of them were already vaccinated, though he dreads the prospect of having to fire any holdouts.

"I hate the thought. But if it has to happen it has to happen," Putman said. "I lost a ton

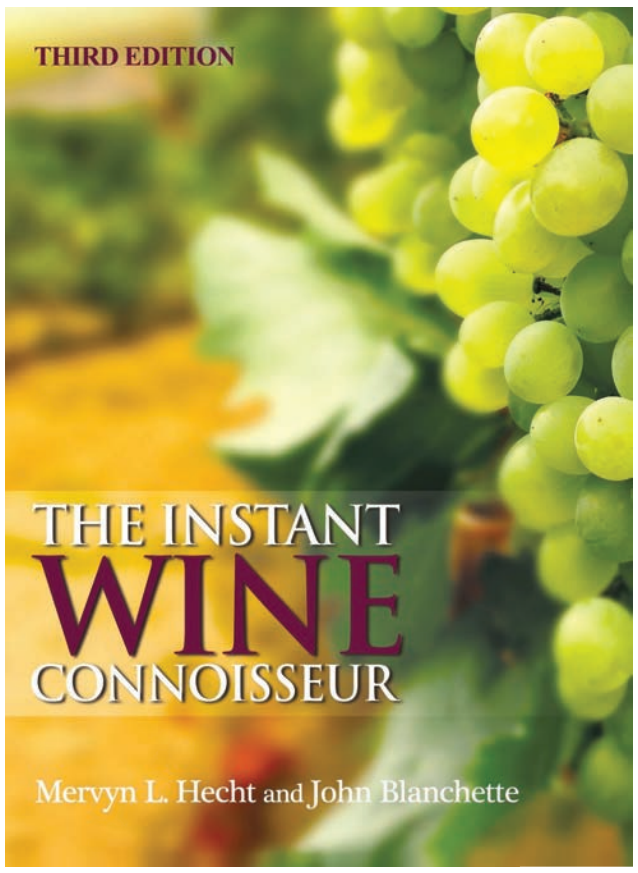
SEE **BUSINESS** PAGE 11



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SANTA MONICA

★★★★★ A light-hearted fun read.
★★★★★ Well written, particularly useful, instantly accessible.
★★★★★ ...Hecht has a joyful eye and fabulous taste



Daily Press Food &Wine Columnist Merv Hecht takes you on an delightful tour of the world of wine. A fun way to increase your appreciation and knowledge of wine.

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Your column here

Jeff Prang
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Tax Agents Bombard Appeals Board Hoping to Make a Buck

I've been trying to resolve an important issue since I was elected in 2014 that, I submit, is crippling the process by which property owners appeal the assessment on their property. In fact, it has created a huge backlog of more than 40,000 cases still waiting for a hearing, and that could take years to accomplish.

In no small measure, this situation has been caused by a handful of tax agents who file thousands of appeals - this year, 3,600 from one tax agent in a single month – that are without merit, withdrawn at the first sign of legitimate questioning or a no-show at the hearing.

Our tracking reveals that 70% of these frivolous appeals are withdrawn as soon as my appraisers challenge the claim. Moreover, the appeal will come to an unscheduled and screeching halt when the tax agent fails to appear at the hearing, which happens with alarming frequency.

I have to dedicate more than a dozen of my appraisers to handle these meritless cases who could otherwise be doing our primary work – processing transfers of property and new construction, which contribute to the Assessment Roll, the foundation of the property tax system. For instance, the appraisers that are assigned to preparing assessment appeals cases for thousands of meritless appeals, could be reassigned to process new construction permits. This year, 40,000 new construction permits will be delayed for processing until 2022. These permits have an estimate value of $4 billion, or $40 million in property tax revenues. These funds will not be available to the County this year for public services such as police, fire, public schools and all kinds of infrastructure maintenance. It's higher this year because of the COVID pandemic.

Historically, I delay 20,000 new construction permits annually because of this issue, which is $20 million in annual revenue that the County can't use for public services. That's a lot of money!

Essentially, these tax agents have monetized the assessment appeals process. They file a high volume of assessment appeals in hope that a smaller percentage will be approved without the necessary scrutiny, which is hard to provide when the system is overloaded by so many cases. I estimate that in hard costs the County loses at least $15 million annually in tax revenue. The lost "opportunity costs" are in the tens of millions.

The tax agents, on the other hand, receive 30-50% of whatever first year tax reduction they get for their client. It doesn't cost the tax agents anything to file these thousands of claims that they typically secure through mailing solicitations to unsuspecting homeowners.

These very same homeowners are experiencing a huge boost in their home's value. Yes, small businesses have struggled, many forced to shutter, but the housing market has been booming. The average single family residence has increased 22% over last year in the average home price, cresting at median of about $817,000.

However, most of the appeals are for residential properties. That's right, when homes are rising, tax agents say home values are plummeting. It just isn't the case. Not even close.

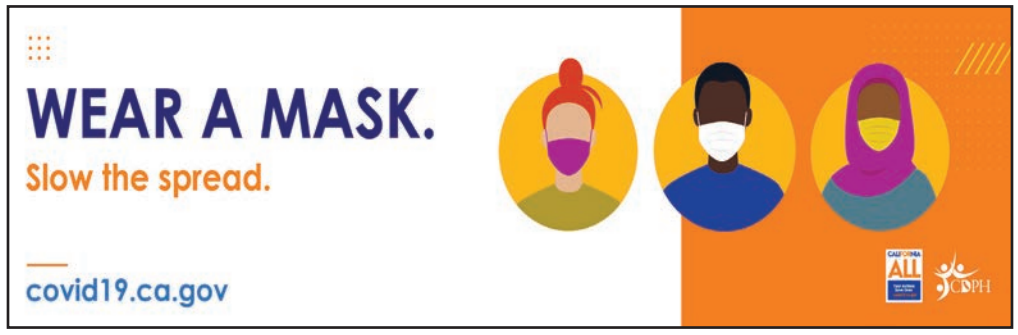
I have a possible solution. Something that many other counties in the state already have: A $46 filing fee, along with a hardship exemption if a homeowner cannot afford the nominal fee.

As an example, the 3,600 claims filed by one agent since July 2 would cost $165,600 in fees. I bet they would think twice about incurring such a cost, if it was required. Now, it costs them nothing to file. Nothing.

By introducing the $46 filing fee, logic dictates tax agents will be much more discriminatory when deciding what legitimate cases to submit. Otherwise, I won't be able to get my job done, legitimate appeals cases will go unheard, and the assessment appeals process will continue to be overwhelmed.

One last thing, which is very important, I am committed to making sure that property owners are getting fair and timely resolutions to their disputes without rogue players consuming my Office's resources for their own personal gain.

Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang has been in office since 2014. Upon taking office, Prang implemented sweeping reforms to ensure that the strictest ethical guidelines rooted in fairness, accuracy and integrity would be adhered to in his office, which is the largest office of its kind in the nation with 1,300 employees and provides the foundation for a property tax system that generates $17 billion annually.



OPINIONS EXPRESSED are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Santa Monica Daily Press staff. Guest editorials from residents are encouraged, as are letters to the editor. Letters to the Editor can be submitted to letters@smdp.com. Receipt of a letter does not guarantee publication and all content is published at the discretion of the paper. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content. All submissions must include the author's name, address and phone number for the purposes of verification.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Citywide

Fall school option symposium

SMMUSD Superintendent Dr. Ben Drati and Board of Education will host a virtual Health Symposium on Tuesday to discuss Fall reopening options.

SMMUSD is offering in-person or independent study options this year.

Guests will include:

Dr. Jamie Lloyd-Smith, UCLA Professor, Dept of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Studying COVID-19 Aerosol and Surface Stability.

Dr. Rita Kachru, UCLA Health, Associate Professor and Section Chief, Clinical Immunology and Allergy. SMMUSD Health & Safety District Advisory Committee Member.

Dr. Will Nicholas, Director, Center for Health Impact Evaluation, LA County Department of Public Health.

The Zoom webinar will be held Aug. 3 at 6 p.m.

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87443915002

Dial in: 720-707-2699 / ID: 874 4391 5002

SUBMITTED BY GAIL PINSKER

Malibu

Explore the City of Malibu's Fall Recreation Offerings in the Online Recreation Guide & Newsletter

Explore the City of Malibu's wide variety of excellent educational, sports, artistic and cultural programs, camps and events offered this fall in the City's Fall 2021 Recreation Guide and City Newsletter, available online beginning Friday, August 6 at MalibuCity.org/CommunityServices.

"Malibu's high-quality, professionally-run programs are more important than ever to the wellbeing of our community," said Mayor Paul Grisanti. "I am proud that we have been able to continue offering them during the pandemic, and I encourage everyone in Malibu to check out the Recreation Guide and sign up."

The Guide, which is now completely digital, is meant to help the community enjoy the City's many excellent programs and parks. The Guide also includes informative articles and contact information for City departments and services.

Residents can view upcoming City programs offered September through November, including Afterschool Programs, CineMalibu, Youth Basketball League, Water Polo, Senior Programs. The Guide also includes facility schedules, program descriptions and contact information for City departments and services. Registration for Fall Programs opens on Monday, August 9 at 8 a.m. at MalibuCity.org/Register.

Due to COVID-19, a limited number of Community Services Department programs and modified events will be available with safety protocols in place. All programs will follow current Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Safety Guidelines and Protocols. Staff will continue to monitor epidemiological metrics and public health guidelines and will revise the programming as needed.

For ongoing, up-to-date information on Aquatics, Day Camps, Community Classes, the Virtual Recreation Center and other Community Services programs, visit MalibuCity.org/Parks.

SUBMITTED BY MATT MYERHOFF

Citywide

Erica Cuyugan to Serve as Interim City Librarian

Interim City Manager John Jalili has selected Erica Cuyugan as Interim City Librarian beginning September 5, 2021 when Patty Wong leaves the Santa Monica Public Library. A 15-year veteran of the department, Cuyugan has served as the Assistant City Librarian since 2017, a role in which she manages system-wide library operations for Main Library and four branches.

"Erica is someone who has proven herself as a dedicated library leader time and again, having taken the helm once before on an interim basis in 2016," said Interim City Manager John Jalili. "She's exactly the person to see us through this transition and as our Library team continues to provide service in new ways."

Cuyugan started with the City as a Teen Services Librarian in 2006. She rose through the ranks and became the Fairview Branch Manager before joining the leadership team in 2015. As Assistant City Librarian, Cuyugan oversees the Library's budget, staffing, and capital projects. She also represents the Library in the City's Emergency Operations Center. Cuyugan has been integral in our efforts to safely staff and reopen our library branches. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, she helped lead a collaborative pilot in our libraries to address homeless issues, including executing pop-up clinics with service providers.

"I am extremely invested and committed to this community and our talented staff. I look forward to the role and helping our organization recover and continue to provide quality library services for Santa Monica," said Cuyugan.

Cuyugan will manage a workforce of 47 with an annual operating budget of $8,470,145.

An executive search for our next City Librarian will begin this summer and more information will be provided once the details are confirmed.

SUBMITTED BY CONSTANCE FARRELL, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

LET US KNOW YOUR OPINION

Santa Monica Daily Press editor@smdp.com

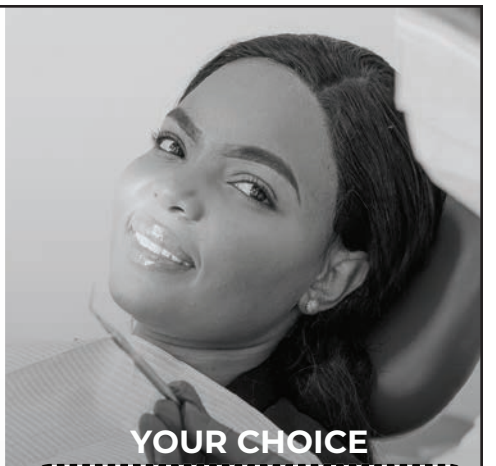
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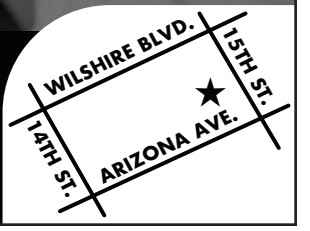
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Strictly Business

David Pisarra
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Sammy's Blossoms Blooms on Pico

Like crocus peeking through a snow covered landscape, entrepreneurs are opening up new businesses across the city. The graffiti scarred plywood is coming down, the butcher block paper that keeps people from peeping into the empty shells of what used to be vital community hubs is being stripped from the windows and new ventures are setting forth.

It's a testament to the resiliency of the human spirit that in the midst of a still ongoing pandemic, with a new surge happening, there are people who are willing to sign leases, take the leap of faith to create a new retail outlet and stake themselves into the next level of entrepreneurial adventures.

This past Sunday Sammy's Blossoms opened for business at 1302 Pico Blvd. Steven Castro and his mother Lupe erected a giant purple and silver balloon attention getter, with a big red flowered heart to alert the neighborhood that there's a new florist in town when I noticed them

Steven is turning what used to be conventional thinking on its head. He is moving from an online presence into a retail one. "My grandfather wanted to build a tortilleria in Santa Monica. He always wanted to own his own business. He'd bought the machines, but wasn't able to pull the trigger. So I'm doing it, in my own way, as a tribute to him and his goal. It's a way to honor my family and build something for my 6 year old son" said Castro. He is a second generation born and bred Santa Monican, as his mother was quick to point out.

Starting out, Castro went to Community Corp, that behemoth of social good in our midst, and they were working with him, but they wanted to put him in the new structure they just broke ground on at 19th and Pico which is slated for a 2023 occupancy. Obviously that was a non-starter. So he went looking for other space, luckily there's lots of open shops for new businesses, and the smart landlords are willing to make some good deals these days.

Sammy's Blossoms flower shop is located on the corner of Euclid and Pico, in what was Andy's Cleaners. "I used to bring my suits and shirts in here. So when I was looking for a place to lease, and it was open, seemed like a good idea." The shop is a block and a half away from Woodlawn Cemetery so I imagine there'll be some good business to be had, once it is fully outfitted with proper signage. During the height of the shutdown I would be walking in the cemetery and it was a thought of mine that a flower shop across the street would be a good idea. There were a few open spots in the commercial strip on 14th street and the idea ended as quickly as it came.

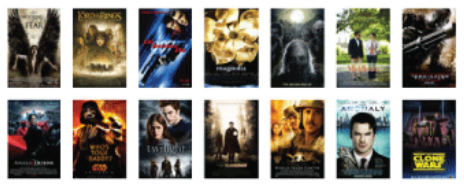
Sammy's Blossoms is starting out as traditional flower shop. They've got the roses, the peonies, the birds of paradise, a selection of big orchid plants with lush displays of flowers. This is not the typical selection of floral offerings you get at Trader Joes or Ralphs. Castro is aiming to build a business that will provide Instagram/Facebook/Social Media worthy props. The giant red flowered heart is a perfect rental piece for a Valentine's day party or perhaps the back-lit rose display for a quinceanera are samples of what he is looking to create for our community. Lupe wants to add in small plants and maybe even a coffee bar. Steven is going to be running his notary public business out of there as well – which is a happy event for me, as my local notary had retired and I was having to source mobile notaries.

Sitting in this retail store that has a new floor, and fresh paint, and the smell of hope and anxiety mixed with the sweet scent of hundreds of flowers, I was reminded that yes, even after a world overturning pandemic, life does go on. People will pick themselves up, and start afresh to pursue a dream, complete a family passion and provide for a future generation.

Sammy's Blossoms is across the street from my office and I hope to see that parking lot full on a regular basis with people stopping in to get flowers for their home, a bouquet for a loved one in the cemetery and maybe some fresh basil or mint to through in a ragout for a romantic night's dinner with a loved one.

If you have good idea for a story, or know of a company that is innovating in some novel way that should be brought to a wider audience, please drop me an email at DAVID@SMDP.COM and let's see what the future is looking like.

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Zoom to pay $85M for privacy miscues at start of pandemic

MICHAEL LIEDTKE
AP Technology Writer

Zoom will pay $85 million to settle a lawsuit alleging that weak privacy controls opened too many peepholes into the personal information of users and that it was too easy for outsiders to disrupt video meetings during the early stages of the pandemic.

The proposed agreement must still be approved by U.S. District Judge Lucy Koh. A hearing on the settlement is scheduled for Oct. 21 in San Jose, California.

Millions of people in the U.S. who have used Zoom since March 31, 2020 could be eligible for a slice of the settlement that was reached over the weekend. The payment amounts are expected to average $34 or $35 for those who subscribed to Zoom's paid version, and $11 or $12 for the overwhelming majority who used the free version, based on estimates in court documents.

Zoom was bedeviled by security issues early last year after stay-at-home orders transformed the company's videoconferencing service from a niche product into a cultural phenomenon. Almost overnight it became the go-to venue for business meetings, schools, social gatherings and, in a deadly global pandemic, funerals.

The lawsuit alleged that the Silicon Valley company violated the trust of millions of people by sharing the personal information of users with platforms like Facebook, Google and Microsoft-owned LinkedIn. The case, which consolidated 14 different lawsuits filed since March 2020, also targeted the disruptive practice of "Zoombombing" — a term coined to describe hackers who broke into videoconferencing meetings being held by others.

The company in a prepared statement Monday said that it acted quickly to tighten security after reports of Zoombombing began to surface.

"We are proud of the advancements we have made to our platform, and look forward to continuing to innovate with privacy and security at the forefront," Zoom said Monday. The company didn't acknowledged any wrongdoing in the settlement.

Security concerns did not prevent Zoom from permeating the daily lives of millions during the pandemic.

The Zoom's annual revenue quadrupled last year to nearly $2.7 billion and it ended April with 497,000 customers that employed at least 10 workers and subscribed to the premium version of its service, up from 81,900 customers before the pandemic hit the U.S. Its stock price has tripled and traded close to $380 Monday.

The lawyers that pursued the case are seeking $21.25 million, or 25% of the $85 million settlement fund.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Countywide

2,361 New Cases of COVID-19 in LA County and 5 New Deaths

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) continues to offer vaccines at many different sites across the County to make it as easy as possible for eligible residents to get vaccinated. Many sites are open on weekends and have evening hours and vaccinations can be obtained at many sites without an appointment.

Public Health continues to improve access to vaccine. Hundreds of community health workers are providing local residents with information in multiple languages on available vaccination services in hard hit communities and helping residents schedule appointments, arrange for transportation, and access additional support. Mobile vaccine teams continue bringing vaccinations into the neighborhood places where people gather. Currently, there are vaccination sites set up at retail stores, parks, recreation centers, and many other gathering places all over the county to make getting vaccinated more convenient.

If there is a special event, organization or workplace where people may need to get vaccinated, you can request a mobile vaccination unit to provide vaccines. Public Health encourages you to visit the Find a Vaccination Provider page to request a visit at your workplace, organization, or special event from a mobile vaccination unit or other vaccination partners in the community to provide vaccines.

This week, there are 772 sites offering vaccinations including pharmacies, clinics, community sites, and hospitals and 312 sites where mobile teams are offering vaccinations, which are concentrated in higher-need, harder hit areas.

Public Health confirms 2,361 new cases of COVID-19. The number of cases and deaths likely reflect reporting delays over the weekend. Of the 5 new deaths reported today, one person who passed away was between the ages of 65 and 79, three people who passed were between the ages of 50 and 64, and one person who passed was between the ages of 30 and 49. To date, Public Health identified 1,305,704 positive cases of COVID-19 across all areas of L.A. County and a total of 24,690 deaths. Testing results are available for more than 7,350,000 individuals with 17% of people testing positive. Today's test positivity rate is 6.2%; the rate was 1.3% on July 2.

There are 1,096 people with COVID-19 currently hospitalized. This is a nearly four-fold increase in one month; on July 2, only 280 people were hospitalized with COVID-19 illness.

To find a vaccination site near you, make an appointment at vaccination sites, and much more, visit: www.VaccinateLACounty.com (English) and www.VacunateLosAngeles.com (Spanish). If you don't have internet access, can't use a computer, or you're over 65, you can call 1-833-540-0473 for help finding an appointment, connecting to free transportation to and from a vaccination site, or scheduling a home-visit if you are homebound.

Visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov for more information.

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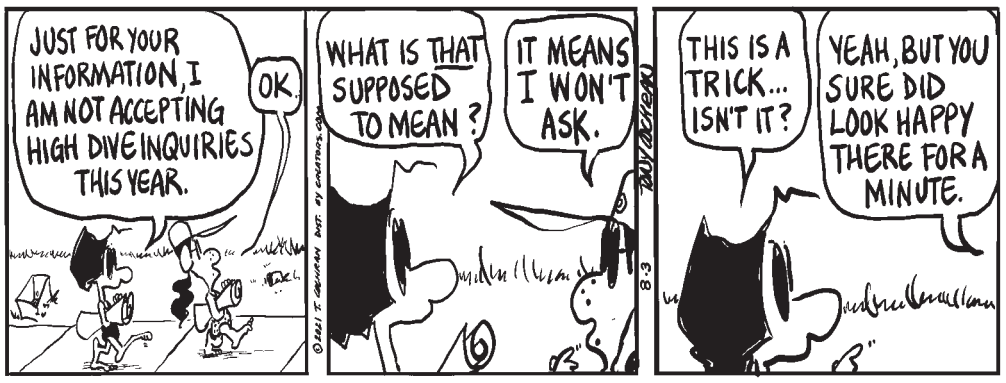






Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



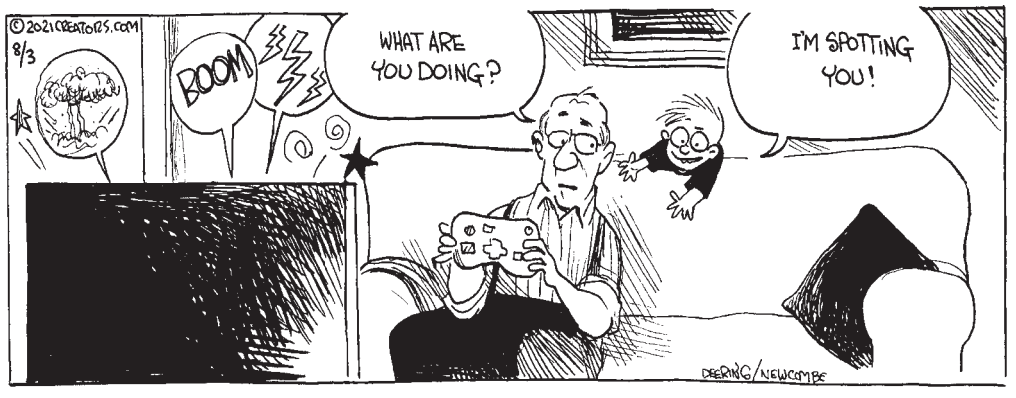
Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



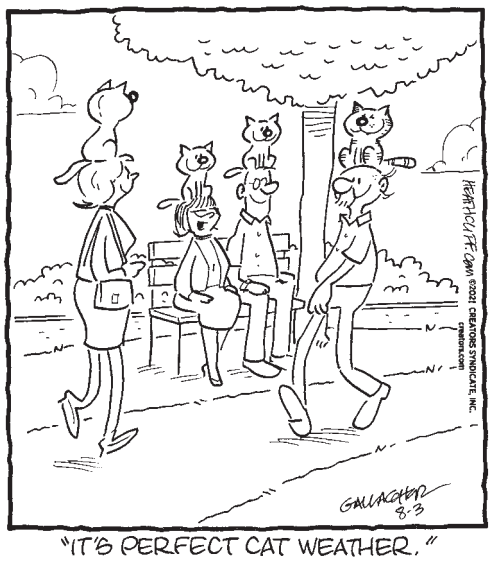
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

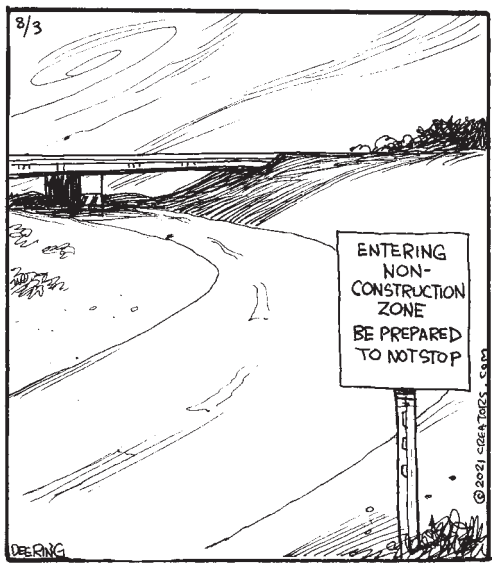
By PETER GALLAGHER



"IT'S PERFECT CAT WEATHER."

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING





SURF FORECASTS

WATER TEMP: 66.2°

TUESDAY - **POOR TO FAIR** - SURF: 3-4ft+ Waist to shoulder high occ. 5 ft
Clean AM but best at spots that do fine with a little water/tide. Fun little SSW swell and SSE tropical swell. One of the best days of the week.

WEDNESDAY - **POOR TO FAIR** - SURF: 3-4ft+ Waist to shoulder high
Clean AM but best at spots that do fine with a little water/tide. Another fun day of SSW swell and small SSE/S tropical swell.

WEATHER

Tuesday: Clear, with a low around 65. West southwest wind 10 to 15 mph.
Tuesday Night: Sunny, with a high near 75.
Wednesday: Increasing clouds, with a low around 65.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2021/08/03	Tue	01:45 AM	0.73	L
2021/08/03	Tue	08:36 AM	3.38	H
2021/08/03	Tue	12:15 PM	2.89	L
2021/08/03	Tue	6:44 PM	5.34	H
2021/08/04	Wed	02:22 AM	0.32	L
2021/08/04	Wed	09:07 AM	3.58	H
2021/08/04	Wed	1:05 PM	2.84	L
2021/08/04	Wed	7:25 PM	5.64	H
2021/08/05	Thu	02:54 AM	-0.01	L
2021/08/05	Thu	09:33 AM	3.74	H
2021/08/05	Thu	1:47 PM	2.70	L
2021/08/05	Thu	8:03 PM	5.94	H
2021/08/06	Fri	03:25 AM	-0.28	L
2021/08/06	Fri	09:57 AM	3.88	H
2021/08/06	Fri	2:25 PM	2.52	L
2021/08/06	Fri	8:39 PM	6.19	H
2021/08/07	Sat	03:55 AM	-0.46	L
2021/08/07	Sat	10:22 AM	4.01	H
2021/08/07	Sat	3:01 PM	2.34	L
2021/08/07	Sat	9:14 PM	6.35	H
2021/08/08	Sun	04:25 AM	-0.56	L

DAILY LOTTERY

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 7/31
1 21 22 34 47
Power#: 4
Jackpot: 211 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 7/30
19 26 31 52 68
Mega#: 10
Jackpot: 179 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 7/31
16 18 30 32 38
Mega#: 5
Jackpot: 13 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 8/1
1 20 21 31 39

Daily 3
Draw Date: 8/1
EVENING: 9 3 8

Draw Date: 8/1
MIDDAY: 0 3 6

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 8/1
1st: 10 - Solid Gold
2nd: 03 - Hot Shot
3rd: 12 - Lucky Charms
Race Time: 1:48.58

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 (AUGUST 3)

This solar return highlights relationships. You'll be well-loved! Your tenderness draws many close to your heart; some will have the privilege of entry. You'll gain advantage in a competitive arena. You'll be surprised, inspired and benefited with teammates who work as hard as you for the group prize. Gemini and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 13, 2, 19, 44 and 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Luck may come to the young beginner, but good fortune is like a sparkler in the hand; a quick-burning excitement, insignificant next to the resounding boom of triumph. Triumph belongs strictly to those who endure.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Action prevails. Action is a difference in the world. Action is education. Action forges the character. The words won't flow easily today and that is for the best. Anything that would be said will be done instead.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The thing that seemed so modern in one era becomes laughably retro. That used to happen over the course of years and now it's a seasonal growth. Your efforts to keep up with it will provide fun and advantages.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). When in public, others come first and you come second. This is the glue that holds polite society together. You are not afraid to assert yourself when it's necessary, but most of the time it's not — and that's so nice.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It's the conundrum of the modern world — spending big on what's entirely unnecessary. So much of what you're willing to pay for today is actually free. Challenge yourself to keep your money and cut something out.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Relationships are as strong as what they have in common. Bonds form over a shared goal, ritual or cause. If nothing comes up organically, these things can be artificially instated to good effect, as long as everyone is invested.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Whether you're the recipient or the giver, a random act of kindness will elicit a natural high. Likely, you'll be both. You enjoy figuring out how to help and delight others. It always comes back to you in some form.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The path to the land of deeply interesting things runs right through the forest of shiny objects. The trick is to keep moving past, eyes ahead. Don't stop, and definitely don't veer. Ever-forward.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). It has sometimes felt as though the Fates were against you, though perhaps they were just projecting a few more moves into the future than you were able to see. In any regard, you're perfectly aligned.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). To dream of the day in which you do what makes your heart sing is dangerous business. "Doing you" isn't the kind of dream you should wait to accomplish. Engage in your joyful activities daily.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll knuckle down to a project you thought would already be in your rearview. Better late than never. Giving up isn't an option to you. For this reason, life's timing, however far-off of your own it may seem, won't disappoint.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The beauty that appears so far away is actually in the small network of electric impulses sparking inside you as you push your senses into the world. It takes less than a millisecond to travel to your place of wonder and delight.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

Sudoku

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

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

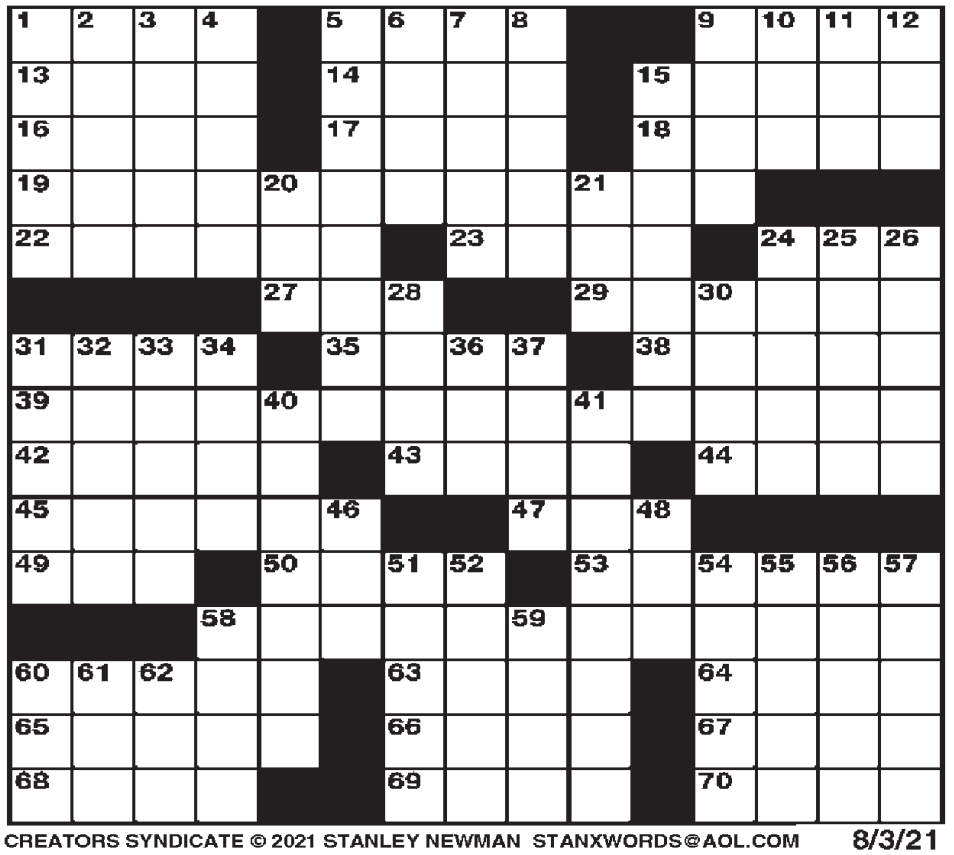
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4		1	5		3		7	9
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3		7		9		6		1
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				3		5		
6	5		1		4	9		8
			2		9			

Newsday Crossword

BIG GROUPS by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Crush, as potatoes
5 Savings protection agcy.
9 Secret writing
13 Female choir voice
14 __ Ness monster
15 Nonsense, informally
16 Italian farewell
17 Neck of the woods
18 Protective atmospheric layer
19 Community-wide resistance to infection
22 Infant's garment
23 Public school support orgs.
24 Egyptian snake
27 Abbreviation for a big company
29 Despise
31 "Now!" letters in a memo
35 Sleep in a tent
38 Employ towards
39 Use of a product by many people
42 "If only . . ."
43 __ fish sandwich
44 Jet-black
45 Wyoming and Washington
47 Explosive initials
49 Boy in the family
50 "If all __ fails . . ."
53 Rinsing with a tube
58 Management of large groups
60 Marshy arm of a river
63 Revered star
64 Now drained of color
65 Seize by force
66 Harvest-ready
67 Envelope routing abbr.
68 Tenth of a dollar
69 A smaller amount
70 Golfer's pegs

DOWN
1 Ultra-manly
2 Visitor from another planet
3 Unblinking look
4 Parkas' head coverings
5 Foot-stamping Spanish dance
6 College housing
7 Become frosty
8 Repetitive shout
9 Comfy
10 Tic-tac-toe winner
11 Family room
12 Hurricane center
15 Steaming bowl of chicken noodle
20 Three on a sundial
21 Suffix for proverb or potent
24 Had supper at home
25 Trembled
26 Tenth of a 68 Across
28 Is unable to
30 Italian wine region
31 Not quite right
32 Took care of
33 From the largest continent
34 "Hey you!" whisper
36 E. Lansing school
37 Fourth-down play
40 Restore to happiness
41 Street's accesses to sewer systems
46 __-mo replay
48 Cargo weight measure
51 Apt rhyme for "whirl"
52 Clothing retailer Bauer
54 March 17 honoree, for short
55 Really angry
56 Actor Nick
57 Secluded valleys
58 Apple throwaway
59 Police officers
60 Unopened blossom
61 "__ was saying . . ."
62 "Delicious!"



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2021 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 8/3/21

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	O	I	O	I	I	O	I	O	O	I
O	O	I	O	I	I	O	I	O	I	O	I
O	I	O	I	I	O	I	O	O	I	I	O
I	O	I	O	O	I	O	I	I	O	O	I
O	I	I	O	I	O	I	O	I	O	I	O
I	O	O	I	O	I	O	I	O	I	I	O
I	I	O	I	O	O	I	O	I	O	O	I
O	I	I	O	I	O	O	I	I	O	O	I
I	O	I	O	O	I	O	I	O	I	I	O
O	I	O	I	O	I	I	O	I	I	O	O
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"The City of Bell spectacle is what happens to communities without their own old-fashioned, diligent news coverage." - Terry Francke, Journalist

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

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By the river

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

Areas
Balonne
Boat
Burley Griffin
Callop
Canoe
Carp
Casts
Crew
Daly
Dams
Danger
Dora
Eden
Fish
Harvey Estuary
Hume
Huon
Isaac
Lake
Lort
Nets
Nyah
Overflow
Peel
Plants
Reeds
Rice
Risk
Rods
Ross
Safety
Sand
Scrub
Slip
Snowy
Spray
Steep
Styx
Surf
Swim
Tides
Todd
Tugs
Upper
Urana
Waikerie
Weirs
Wilson
Wine
Worms
Yarra
Yule

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VACCINE

FROM PAGE 1

getting the vaccine.

"As quickly as we can discharge them they're coming in and they're coming in very sick. We started seeing entire families come down," lamented Dr. Sergio Segarra, chief medical officer of Baptist Hospital Miami. The Florida medical-center chain reported an increase of over 140% in the past two weeks in the number of people now hospitalized with the virus.

Biden had set a vaccination goal of 70% by the Fourth of July. That figure was the low end of initial government estimates for what would be necessary to achieve herd immunity in the U.S. But that has been rendered insufficient by the highly contagious delta variant, which has enabled the virus to come storming back.

There was no celebration at the White House on Monday, nor a setting of a new target, as the administration instead struggles to overcome skepticism and outright hostility to the vaccine, especially in the South and other rural and conservative areas.

The U.S. still has not hit the administration's other goal of fully vaccinating 165 million American adults by July 4. It is about 8.5 million short.

New cases per day in the U.S. have increased sixfold over the past month to an average of nearly 80,000, a level not seen since mid-February. And deaths per day have climbed over the past two weeks from an average of 259 to 360.

Those are still well below the 3,400 deaths and a quarter-million cases per day seen during the worst of the outbreak, in January. But some places around the country are watching caseloads reach their highest levels since the pandemic began. And nearly all deaths and serious illnesses now are in unvaccinated people.

The surge has led states and cities across the U.S. to beat a retreat, just weeks after it looked as if the country was going to see a close-to-normal summer.

Health officials in San Francisco and six other Bay Area counties announced Monday they are reinstating a requirement that everyone — vaccinated or not — wear masks in public indoor spaces.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said New York City airport and transit workers will have to get vaccinated or face weekly testing. He stopped short of mandating either masks or inoculations for the general public, saying he lacks legal authority to do so.

Denver's mayor said the city will require police officers, firefighters and certain other municipal employees to get vaccinated, along with workers at schools, nursing homes, hospitals and jails.

Minnesota's public colleges and universities will require masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. New Jersey said workers at state-run nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals and other such institutions must get the shot or face regular testing.

North Carolina's governor ordered state employees in the agencies under his control to cover up indoors if they are not fully vaccinated.

And McDonald's said it will require employees and customers to resume wearing masks inside some U.S. restaurants regardless of vaccination status in areas with high or substantial coronavirus transmission. The company didn't say how many restaurants would be affected by the new mask mandate.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said a nationwide vaccination requirement "is not on the table," but noted that employers have the right to take such a step.

The U.S. Senate saw its first disclosed breakthrough case of the virus, with Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina saying he has mild symptoms.

In Florida, it took two months last summer for the number of people in the hospital with COVID-19 to jump from 2,000 to 10,000. It took only 27 days this summer for Florida hospitals to see that same increase, said Florida Hospital Association President Mary Mayhew.

She noted also that this time, 96% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients are unvaccinated and they are far younger, many of them in their 20s and 30s.

Amid the surge, Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis doubled down on his anti-mask, anti-lockdown stance, warning in a fundraising email over the weekend: "They're coming for your freedom again."

While setting a national vaccination goal may have been useful for trying to drum up enthusiasm for the shots, 70% of Americans getting one shot was never going to be enough to prevent surges among unvaccinated groups. And when he announced the goal, Biden acknowledged it was just a first step.

It's the level of vaccinations in a community — not a broad national average — that can slow an outbreak or allow it to flourish.

Vaccination rates in some Southern states are far lower than they are New England. Vermont has fully inoculated nearly 78% of its adult population. Alabama has just cracked 43%.

Associated Press writers Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Michelle Liu in Columbia, South Carolina, and Gary Robertson in Raleigh, North Carolina, contributed to this report.

BUSINESS

FROM PAGE 3

of sleep over this but not as much sleep as I've lost over the fear of infection."

Other mandates could provide a clearer test of the potential for employee backlash.

Hospitals and nursing home chains, for instance, are increasingly requiring the vaccine. So far, such mandates have survived legal challenges. More than 150 employees at a Houston hospital system who refused to get the COVID-19 shot were fired or resigned after a judge dismissed an employee lawsuit over the requirement.

Atria Senior Living, which operates more than 200 senior living communities across the country, was among the first to mandate vaccines for its staff in January.

It worked. Nearly 99% of Atria's 10,000 employees are vaccinated, and only a tiny fraction quit over the requirement, said CEO and Chairman John Moore.

"Our residents deserve to live in a vaccinated environment. Our staff deserves to work in a vaccinated environment," Moore said.

Associated Press Business Writers Anne D'Innocenzio and Dee-Ann Durbin contributed to this story.

Santa Monica Daily Press
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