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Santa Monica Daily Press

WEEKEND EDITION
08.21.21 - 08.22.21
Volume 20 Issue 241

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Stormwater pollution needs a tidal wave of solutions

CLARA HARTER
SMDP Staff Writer

Infrastructure improvements are on the way to address the monstrous amounts of polluted stormwater draining onto beaches, but it could take decades until the effects of these projects build a groundswell of environmental change.

Fortunately, Santa Monica is at the vanguard of the stormwater mitigation movement. Unfortunately, it's also at the forefront of the stormwater pollution problem with the Pico-Kenter storm drain, Pier storm drain and several others dumping millions of gallons of runoff into the ocean each year.

This is, almost, by no fault of the City itself. Pollution generated in Santa Monica represents only a fraction of the toxins washed into the ocean through the stormdrain system that channels runoff from thousands of miles inland.

The entire Los Angeles County Flood Control District encompasses 2,700 square miles within six major watersheds. In the Santa Monica Bay watershed alone, 30 billion gallons of polluted runoff are released annually.

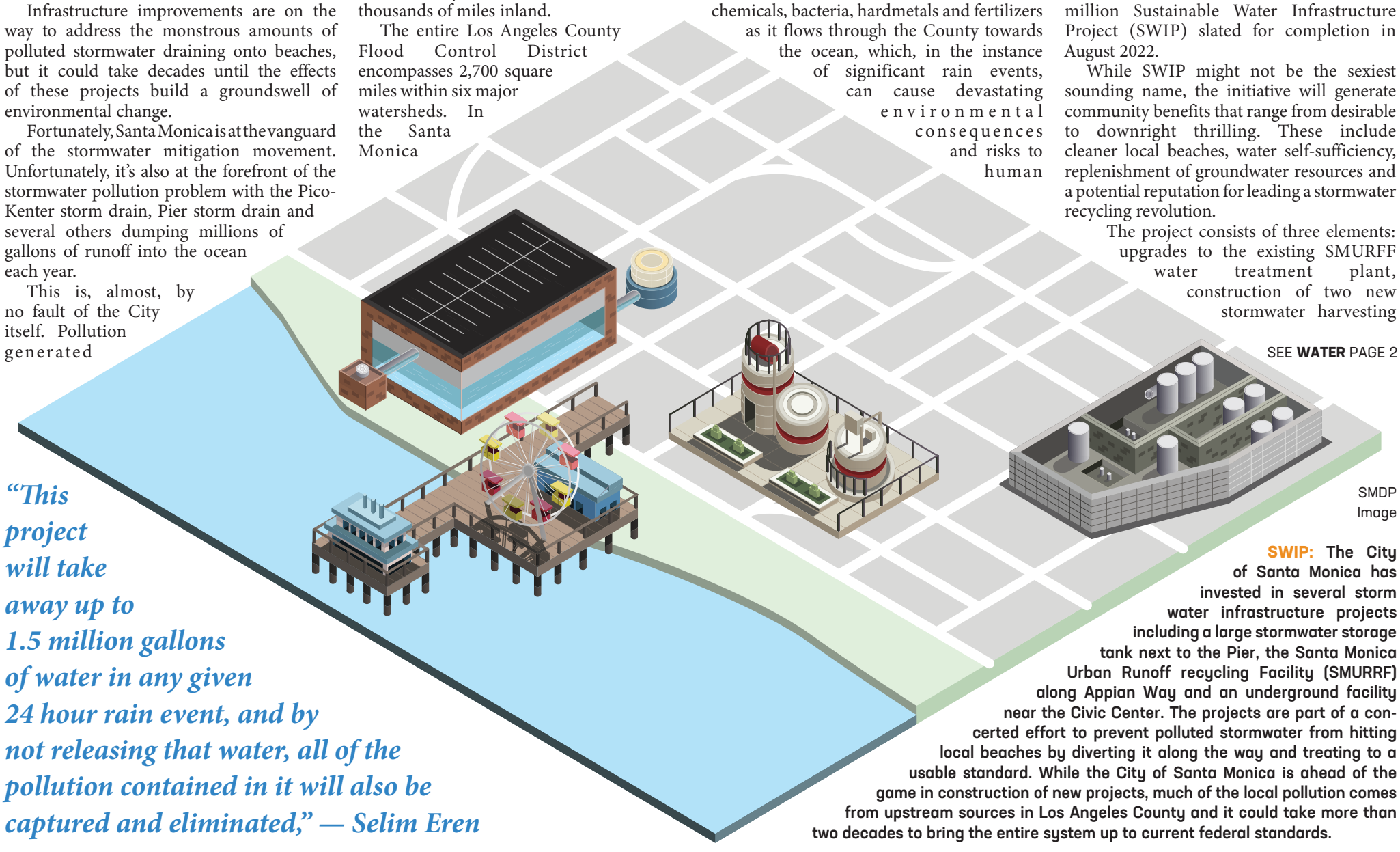
When rain falls it accumulates trash, chemicals, bacteria, hardmetals and fertilizers as it flows through the County towards the ocean, which, in the instance of significant rain events, can cause devastating environmental consequences and risks to human health.

Tides of change are arriving soon, at least on a local level, with Santa Monica's $96 million Sustainable Water Infrastructure Project (SWIP) slated for completion in August 2022.

While SWIP might not be the sexiest sounding name, the initiative will generate community benefits that range from desirable to downright thrilling. These include cleaner local beaches, water self-sufficiency, replenishment of groundwater resources and a potential reputation for leading a stormwater recycling revolution.

The project consists of three elements: upgrades to the existing SMURFF water treatment plant, construction of two new stormwater harvesting

SEE **WATER** PAGE 2



SMDP Image

"This project will take away up to 1.5 million gallons of water in any given 24 hour rain event, and by not releasing that water, all of the pollution contained in it will also be captured and eliminated," — Selim Eren

SWIP: The City of Santa Monica has invested in several storm water infrastructure projects including a large stormwater storage tank next to the Pier, the Santa Monica Urban Runoff recycling Facility (SMURRF) along Appian Way and an underground facility near the Civic Center. The projects are part of a concerted effort to prevent polluted stormwater from hitting local beaches by diverting it along the way and treating to a usable standard. While the City of Santa Monica is ahead of the game in construction of new projects, much of the local pollution comes from upstream sources in Los Angeles County and it could take more than two decades to bring the entire system up to current federal standards.



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WATER

FROM PAGE 1

tanks and the creation of a state-of-the-art sewage and stormwater recycling facility.

The system will work by capturing run-off at the Pico-Kenter storm drain in harvesting tanks, separating out trash, and sending the water for treatment at the SMURRF plant and the new SWIP treatment plant. Recycled water can be utilized by the City and local households, and can replenish Santa Monica's valuable groundwater wells.

"This project will take away up to 1.5 million gallons of water in any given 24 hour rain event, and by not releasing that water, all of the pollution contained in it will also be captured and eliminated," said Selim Eren, Santa Monica civil engineer.

The new treatment plant is being constructed under the Civic Center parking lot. It is the first underground facility in California that will convert municipal wastewater, stormwater and dry weather urban runoff into potable water.

"It's definitely very innovative and unique in the United States, so I think we'll set a great example for years to come," said Eren.

Although the near $100 million price tag is hefty, the project has significant economic benefits.

Currently, Santa Monica pays to import around 30 percent of its water supply and pays for the City's wastewater to be treated at the Hyperion plant in El Segundo. SWIP will help Santa Monica become water self-sufficient, decrease import and processing costs and create a drought-resistant water source.

"Having sustainable, long-term, self-sufficient, locally-produced water resources has long been a goal of City Council dating back to 2010, when staff were first directed to look into ways to increase local production," said Eren.

The decrease in polluted run-off rushing onto local beaches will be a primary environmental benefit of SWIP. However, there will also be broader benefits that come from stopping the energy-intensive import of water and serving as a model for other municipalities to build similar facilities.

At the County level the state of stormwater mitigation efforts is more stark.

According to Dan Lafferty, deputy director for water resources at L.A. County Department of Public Works, it would take $20 billion of investment in mitigation projects over 20 years to bring the County's storm drain system into compliance with the standards established by the EPA's Clean Water Act.

"The reason there's the 20 year time period is that these projects tend to be very large, siting them is a challenge and you still have to go through the design and the regulatory process to get approval to build," said Lafferty. "On average, these projects take anywhere from three to seven years from idea to completion."

Los Angeles County needs a lot of stormwater capture and processing facilities as around 95 percent of stormwater drains into the ocean. This occurs for several reasons.

L.A. is highly developed and covered in impervious surfaces such as concrete and asphalt. The natural geology of the area also makes it difficult to filter runoff into underground aquifers. The way the flood control system was designed starting in 1915 focused on centralizing all flows towards the ocean, limiting the opportunity for upstream diversion.

Collectively, this means that even when the SWIP project is complete in 2022, millions of gallons of runoff from the County will still flow out of the Pico-Kenter storm drain in the rainy season.

Recognizing the dire need for stormwater mitigation efforts, L.A. County voters passed a parcel tax called Measure W in 2018, which provides dedicated funding for these infrastructure projects. SWIP received $20 million in Measure W funding, while the remaining $76 million is funded by special low-interest financing from the state.

Similar infrastructure developments are underway across the County, with municipal projects likely to come online in the next few years and larger DPW run regional projects working on a longer timeline.

These projects are promising, but according to Lafferty, Measure W only provides about 20 percent of the funding needed to bring the storm drain system into EPA compliance.

In addition to these facilities, the Department of Public Works is looking into ways to divert water runoff into the existing sewage system for processing.

"Significant urban water conservation efforts—all of the low flow toilets and low flow shower heads we've been involved in—actually resulted in a 25 percent drop in the amount of sewage being delivered to sewer treatment plants," said Lafferty. "That creates an opportunity for us as a stormwater agency to make use of that capacity."

Currently, DPW diverts dry weather runoff into the sewer system using around 40 diversions located by the coast. Dry weather season is typically from May to October and run-off flows are generated by things like irrigation, street sweeping and carwashes.

Several dry water diversions are located in Santa Monica, including the existing SMURFF facility and diversions at the Pier, Montana Ave and Wilshire Blvd.

The system works by holding back dry weather runoff using dams inside the storm drain pipelines. The runoff can then be collected and pumped over to the sewer system. The dams are short or deflatable, so that stormwater can flow through and not get backed up if there is a rain event.

"In the summer, if you look at the history of the Heal the Bay beach report cards, you can see significant improvement in those scores over time and the bulk of that improvement is really a result of the effort to build these dry weather diversions," said Lafferty.

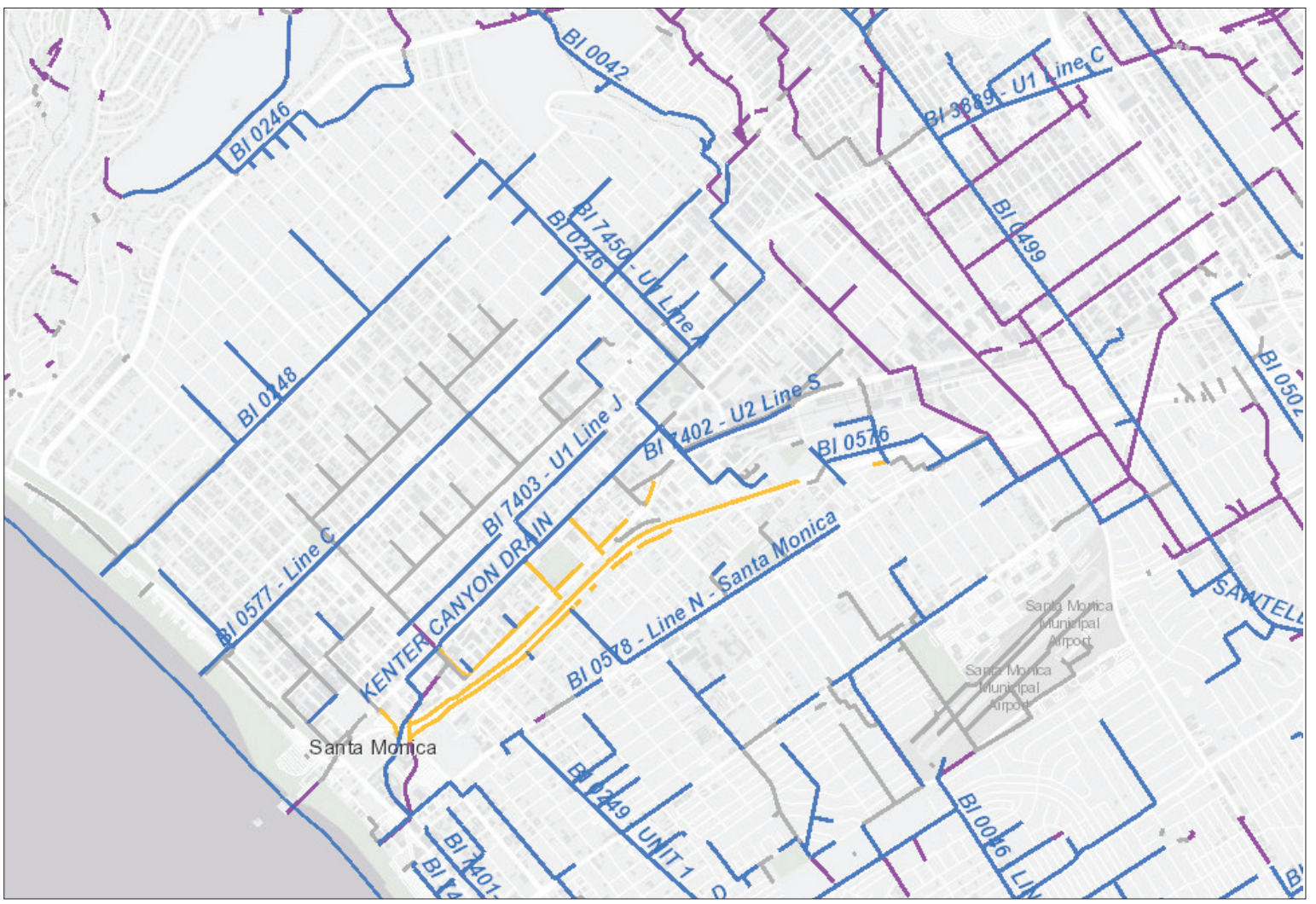
DPW is now seeking to adapt the system so that diversions can be used during wet weather events. According to Lafferty, this concept has great potential, but will take many years to bring to fruition.

"That pilot project is probably about five years away, but it has a lot of promise based on the analysis we've done so far," said Lafferty, adding that just the process of building the dry water diversions took 15 to 20 years.

All of these initiatives—water conservation, flow diversion, stormwater tanks and recycling facilities—are steps in the right direction. But, due to both the time they take to construct and the billions of gallons needing diversion, they are currently drops in the bucket for addressing Los Angeles's stormwater pollution problem.

With climate change accelerating, drought on the horizon, and the ocean's health deteriorating, the need to capture and process polluted stormwater is only growing more urgent.

Clara@smdp.com



Courtesy image

DRAINS: Storm drains channel water from all over the county to local beaches different pipes are maintained by different agencies.

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DAILY POLICE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 332 CALLS ON AUGUST 19

Loud Music 3200blk Pennsylvania Ave 12:19 a.m.
Loud Music 2400blk Pier Ave 2:26 a.m.
Petty Theft 1400blk 9th St 3:12 a.m.
Animal Related Incident 200blk 10th St 4:09 a.m.
Encampment 1100blk Lincoln Blvd 6:21 a.m.
Encampment 2900blk The Beach 6:41 a.m.
Encampment 2800blk The Beach 7:08 a.m.
Exhibition Of Speed 26th St / San Vicente Blvd 7:11 a.m.
Petty Theft Now 9th St / Wilshire Blvd 7:48 a.m.
Grand Theft 2600blk Ocean Park Blvd 7:53 a.m.
Animal Related Incident 1100blk 6th St 8:20 a.m.
Encampment 800blk Santa Monica Blvd 8:21 a.m.
Indecent Exposure Now Lincoln Blvd / Pico Blvd 8:22 a.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries City Prop Involved 7th St / Raymond Ave 8:37 a.m.
Auto Burglary 400blk Santa Monica Pier 8:45 a.m.
Fraud 1300blk Olympic Blvd 8:50 a.m.
Encampment 3100blk The Beach 8:52 a.m.
Vehicle Parked In Alley 700blk Hill St 9:05 a.m.
Found Property 2900blk The Beach 9:29 a.m.
Encampment 2600blk The Beach 9:51 a.m.
Vehicle Blocking Driveway 1000blk Pacific St 9:57 a.m.
Vandalism 1800blk 9th St 10:00 a.m.
Vandalism 2100blk Carlyle Ave 10:09 a.m.
Vehicle Blocking Driveway 2500blk Main St 10:14 a.m.
Domestic Violence 1200blk San Vicente Blvd 10:28 a.m.
Grand Theft Auto 400blk Broadway 10:40 a.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries Cloverfield Blvd / Santa Monica Blvd 10:57 a.m.
72 Hour Psychiatric Hold 1600blk Ocean Front Walk 11:10 a.m.
Burglary 800blk Ocean Park Blvd 11:36 a.m.
Assault W/Deadly Weapon 1100blk 12th St 11:38 a.m.
Battery Ocean Ave / Bay St 11:45 a.m.
Vehicle Blocking Driveway 2000blk Lincoln Blvd 12:07 p.m.
Drinking In Public 2100blk Lincoln Blvd 12:14 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 26th St / Santa Monica Blvd 12:15 p.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 200blk Alta Ave 12:23 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 1400blk Harvard St 12:30 p.m.
Grand Theft Auto 1000blk 2nd St 12:36 p.m.
Petty Theft Franklin St / Santa Monica Blvd 12:45 p.m.
Vehicle Parked In Alley 1500blk Lincoln Blvd 1:04 p.m.
Lewd Activity 00blk Seaside Ter 1:12 p.m.
Critical Missing Person 2400blk 14th St 1:16 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 200blk 10th St 1:18 p.m.
Grand Theft 300blk Santa Monica Blvd 1:22 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 900blk 5th St 1:33 p.m.
Grand Theft 1200blk 4th St 1:44 p.m.
Vandalism 300blk Santa Monica Pl 1:45 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 200blk 21st Pl 2:09 p.m.
General Parking Problem 2600blk Montana Ave 2:17 p.m.
Petty Theft 500blk Broadway 2:21 p.m.
Auto Burglary 2100blk Broadway 2:25 p.m.
Encampment 1500blk 16th St 2:30 p.m.
Petty Theft Now 1400blk 5th St 2:41 p.m.
General Parking Problem 1800blk 7th St 2:43 p.m.
Stalking 300blk Olympic Dr 2:47 p.m.
Vandalism 1400blk 7th St 2:50 p.m.
Handicap Zone Violation 1100blk 9th St 2:54 p.m.
Encampment 1400blk Lincoln Blvd 3:00 p.m.
Public Intoxication Neilson Way / Hollister Ave 3:38 p.m.
Petty Theft 800blk 2nd St 3:48 p.m.
Found Property 2700blk Ocean Park Blvd 3:57 p.m.
General Parking Problem 1400blk Ocean Ave 4:24 p.m.
Loud Music 2000blk Ocean Ave 4:25 p.m.
72 Hour Psychiatric Hold 500blk Olympic Blvd W 4:25 p.m.
Identity Theft 1400blk 7th St 4:41 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 23rd St / San Vicente Blvd 4:45 p.m.
Indecent Exposure Now 900blk 2nd St 4:47 p.m.
Petty Theft 1500blk 6th St 4:53 p.m.
Silent Robbery Alarm 1100blk Montana Ave 5:02 p.m.
Vehicle Parked In Alley 800blk 7th St 5:09 p.m.
Fight Yale St / Santa Monica Blvd 5:13 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 1700blk Georgina Ave 5:49 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries Lincoln Blvd / Pico Blvd 6:01 p.m.
Handicap Zone Violation 1000blk 10th St 6:13 p.m.
Petty Theft 2800blk Main St 7:04 p.m.
Threats Report/Investigations 2500blk Santa Monica Blvd 7:09 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries City Prop Involved 800blk Pacific Coast Hwy 7:11 p.m.
General Parking Problem 1200blk Harvard St 7:13 p.m.
Panic Alarm 1300blk 12th St 7:17 p.m.
Auto Burglary 1500blk 2nd St 7:38 p.m.
Handicap Zone Violation 2600blk 24th St 7:48 p.m.
Indecent Exposure Now 1300blk Santa Monica Blvd 8:03 p.m.
Party Complaint 17th St / Montana Ave 8:28 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 1100blk Lincoln Blvd 8:31 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 1600blk 9th St 8:31 p.m.
Party Complaint 800blk 17th St 8:41 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries 700blk Wilshire Blvd 8:51 p.m.
Threats Report/Investigations 2000blk 4th St 9:00 p.m.
Keep The Peace 700blk Idaho Ave 9:12 p.m.
Grand Theft Auto 1500blk Pearl St 9:21 p.m.
Petty Theft 1900blk Wilshire Blvd 9:26 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation Lincoln Blvd / Pacific St 9:32 p.m.
Speeding Ocean Ave / Arizona Ave 9:48 p.m.
Sexual Assault Stanford St / Santa Monica Blvd 9:58 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries Main St / Hill St 10:05 p.m.
Lost Property 300blk Santa Monica Pier 10:33 p.m.
Loud Music 3200blk Donald Douglas Loop S 11:15 p.m.
Theft Of Recyclables 1400blk Ocean Ave 11:28 p.m.
Arson 2900blk Exposition Blvd 11:29 p.m.

USC AD measured in discussing Clay Helton's job security

DAN GREENSPAN
Associated Press

Southern California athletic director Mike Bohn had the chance to defend embattled coach Clay Helton.

He could have taken Helton off the proverbial hot seat before his sixth season leading the Trojans, who are ranked 15th in The Associated Press Top 25 preseason poll and expected to contend for the Pac-12 title.

But Bohn declined Thursday to offer his full support for Helton, only going as far as downplaying the idea the upcoming campaign would be one that makes or breaks his position leading the most storied college football program on the West Coast.

"For those that know our program, we recognize the improvement in the program and all the different things we're doing. Our trajectory is strong, so I don't think that's accurate," Bohn said. "We know the championship expectations. We're competitive. That's why we're here and that's why we continue to make the improvements that we make, but some of those national people maybe don't understand all the different things that are going on here. And all you have to do is watch these young players and the way this recruiting class is really producing for him and us, and we're encouraged."

Helton has been under pressure practically from the moment he was named the permanent head coach prior to the 2017 Pac-12 championship game. He is 39-21 since then, with one conference title, a Rose Bowl win, and two division crowns to his credit.

However, USC has never been in serious contention for the College Football Playoff during his tenure, lost three straight games to intersectional rival Notre Dame, and sustained blowout losses to Alabama and Ohio State that reflect how far it has been from contending for national titles.

Coming off a shortened 2020 season because of the COVID-19 pandemic where the Trojans went 5-0 in conference games before losing in the Pac-12 title game to Oregon on their home field, Bohn said he expects Helton to be in the mix for the top prizes in the sport going forward.

"And this year we're ranked 15 to start the season, so we're making progress. But we

SEE **USC** PAGE 11

DAILY FIRE LOG

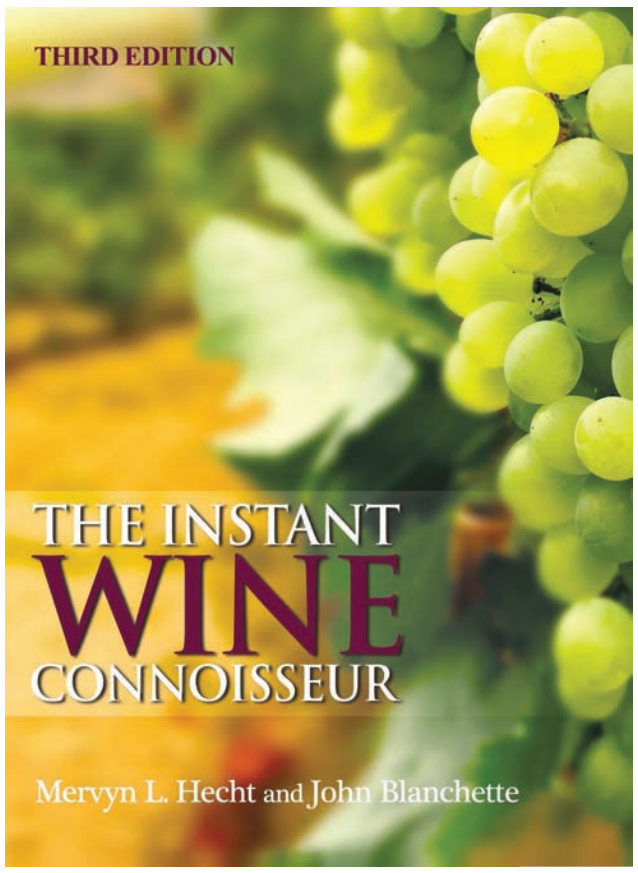
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EMS 7th St / Marguerita Ave 2:13 a.m.
EMS 800blk 2nd St 6:03 a.m.
EMS 4th St / Santa Monica Blvd 6:07 a.m.
EMS 900blk 6th St 7:01 a.m.
EMS 2nd St / Santa Monica Blvd 7:17 a.m.
EMS 1400blk 2nd St 7:27 a.m.
Public Assist 1600blk Main St 7:38 a.m.
EMS 1900blk Pico Blvd 7:56 a.m.
EMS 800blk 2nd St 8:15 a.m.
EMS 500blk Ocean Ave 9:32 a.m.
EMS 1500blk 5th St 10:03 a.m.
EMS 1100blk 18th St 10:54 a.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury Cloverfield Blvd / Santa Monica Blvd 11:05 a.m.
EMS 200blk Bay St 11:14 a.m.
EMS 900blk 3rd St 11:41 a.m.
EMS 2200blk Colorado Ave 11:41 a.m.
EMS 500blk Colorado Ave 11:51 a.m.
EMS 800blk 19th St 12:28 p.m.
EMS 1100blk Wilshire Blvd 2:00 p.m.
EMS 400blk Expo Line 2:21 p.m.
EMS 1400blk Lincoln Blvd 3:04 p.m.
EMS 1200blk 16th St 3:11 p.m.
EMS 2200blk 30th St 3:57 p.m.
Lock In/Out 2400blk 31st St 5:29 p.m.
Elevator Rescue 1000blk 4th St 5:47 p.m.
EMS 1500blk 7th St 6:16 p.m.
EMS 3100blk Neilson Way 6:19 p.m.
Elevator Rescue 2200blk Colorado Ave 7:45 p.m.
EMS 1900blk Lincoln Blvd 8:06 p.m.
EMS 1100blk Lincoln Blvd 8:27 p.m.
Elevator Rescue 2200blk Colorado Ave 8:57 p.m.

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Do I need a booster if I got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?

LAURAN NEERGAARD
AP Medical Writer

Do I need a booster if I got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?

Probably at some point, but health officials still are collecting the data needed to decide.

With boosters being planned in the U.S. as early as the fall for those who got the two-shot Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, recipients of the single-dose J&J jab might be wondering just how well their protection is holding up.

All the vaccines used in the U.S. — including the J&J vaccine — still are doing their job of preventing hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19.

"I don't think there's any signal that the J&J vaccine is failing at its primary task," said Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease specialist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Despite continued protection against severe disease, U.S. officials are planning to offer Pfizer and Moderna boosters eight months after the second shot based on evidence that effectiveness against infection wanes over time. Adding to the decision, the vaccines don't appear quite as strong against the highly contagious delta variant as they were against earlier versions of the virus.

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said boosters "will likely be needed" for the J&J vaccine. Authorities expect more data to decide in the coming weeks.

That's in part because the J&J rollout didn't start until March, several months after Pfizer and Moderna vaccinations began. The J&J shot is made differently. And there's more data about how the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines fare against delta because they're more widely used in countries where the variant struck before its U.S. surge.

There is some real-world data showing J&J's shot holds up against the delta variant. A huge study of health workers in South Africa showed the vaccine remained 71% protective against hospitalization from the variant and between 91% and 96% effective against death. And the researchers said the vast majority of so-called "breakthrough" infections in vaccinated people were mild.

J&J has also presented lab data on virus-fighting antibodies that indicates its vaccine protects against the delta variant for eight months and counting. Another small lab study has raised questions about whether a two-dose approach would work better, an option J&J is studying.

A separate issue is whether people with severely weakened immune systems should get extra shots as part of their original vaccinations, since they don't respond as well to any vaccines. The government now recommends a third shot of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines for organ transplant recipients and others in this group. But it's still collecting data before making a similar recommendation for another dose of the J&J vaccine.

Just the facts is a new feature in the Daily Press that will highlight data points about the City of Santa Monica.

just the facts

City of Santa Monica

Population	93,076
Area	8.4 sq mi
Density	11,080 per sq mi

Population by Decade		change	% chg
1970	88,289		
1980	88,314	+25	0.0%
1990	86,905	-1,409	-1.6%
2000	84,363	-2,542	-2.9%
2010	89,736	+5,373	6.4%
2020	93,076	+3,340	3.7%

Source: US Census Bureau

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

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AWARD WINNER
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At 60, Peace Corps plots return to world after virus hiatus

WILSON RING AND ROY NKOSI
Associated Press

More than a year after COVID-19 began sweeping the world, abruptly cutting short her Peace Corps stint, Cameron Beach is once again living in rural Malawi — this time on her own dime.

The Peace Corps, a U.S. government program marking its 60th anniversary this year, boasted 7,000 volunteers in 62 countries in March 2020. They were given little time to pack before being put on a plane and sent back to the United States that month.

"It was especially painful for me because I was given 24 hours to leave a place that I'd called home for almost two years," Beach said during a recent video call from her home in Malawi, a landlocked country in southern Africa.

Beach was trained to speak Chichewa and had been teaching English at the Mkomera Community Day Secondary School in Dedza, located in a compound about 25 miles (40 kilometers) southeast of the capital, Lilongwe. The 25-year-old Greenville, South Carolina, native paid her own way back to her post nine months after evacuation and is living on savings, but says she would "absolutely" rejoin the Peace Corps if it became possible.

It might be: The organization hopes to begin returning volunteers to the field late this year or early next year.

While Peace Corps volunteers would be required to be vaccinated, sending them back will depend on the situation in individual countries. Initially, about 2,400 evacuated volunteers expressed interest in going back and there are about 10,000 applications on file, Acting Peace Corps Director Carol Spahn told The Associated Press.

"Immediately after the evacuation we had tremendous interest from volunteers who were evacuated in returning to their country of service," Spahn said. "Clearly, as time goes on, you know, people do move on with their lives, but I will say we have a robust pipeline of both people who were evacuated as well as those who were invited, but were unable to go and those who are expressing new interest."

How soon they can be sent overseas depends on the worldwide fight against the virus, complicated by the recent emergence of the more transmissible delta variant and the slow rollout of vaccines in developing countries — many of which host Peace Corps programs.

Spahn estimates it will be several years before the Peace Corps is back to its full strength. After all, while volunteers in select countries had been evacuated before, March 2020 marked the first time since the organization was founded by President John F. Kennedy that it had to evacuate all its volunteers at the same time.

Since its creation in 1961, more than 240,000 Americans have served as Peace Corps volunteers in scores of countries. The goal is to help the countries meet their development needs with a wide variety of programs — from education to health and agriculture programs — while helping promote a better understanding of Americans.

Typical service lasts two years after a training period, the length of which depends on the country and the program. During the pandemic most Peace Corps staff, both U.S. citizens and local hires, remained in place and, in some cases, kept up some programs. Some former volunteers even worked remotely on development projects from the United States, receiving a small stipend for their work.

Heading back overseas is nonetheless a daunting undertaking between the required training and rebuilding of programs. Areas that have few returning volunteers will also lose the institutional, cross-cultural and local knowledge typically passed on by departing volunteers to their successors.

It's not just the Peace Corps that has had to recall thousands from remote reaches of the globe and navigate the aftermath.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had to send home about 26,000 missionaries tasked with recruiting new members to the faith known widely as the Mormon church. Many pivoted to doing missions in their home countries with a focus on online work.

In November, the church began sending missionaries back into the field and, in June of this year, the church reopened its missionary training centers in Utah, the Philippines and Mexico.

All missionaries from the United States who serve overseas are required to be vaccinated, said church spokesperson Sam Penrod. Missionaries who do not want to be vaccinated will be assigned to missions in their home countries.

"The church is taking a careful approach when assigning missionaries outside of their home country, based upon local conditions and following the guidance of government and health officials," he said in an email.

As time goes by, potential recruits and returnees are moving on.

Cullen O'Donnell, 25, originally from Mentor, Ohio, served two years with the Peace Corps in Ecuador teaching English and then extended for a third year. He was planning another year, working on the Galapagos Islands, when COVID-19 hit.

He'd still like to go back — "then again with Peace Corps it's very vague: 'Yeah we're hoping to get back to the field,' but it keeps getting pushed back."

So he's getting on with his life. He now has a fulfilling job at a school for at-risk students in Pennsylvania and was just accepted to graduate school.

The Peace Corps has been accepting new applications throughout the pandemic, but in June the agency began planning for a return to Belize after the government there asked for volunteers who could help local schools recover from the pandemic's disruptions. But there is no

SEE **PEACE CORPS** PAGE 11

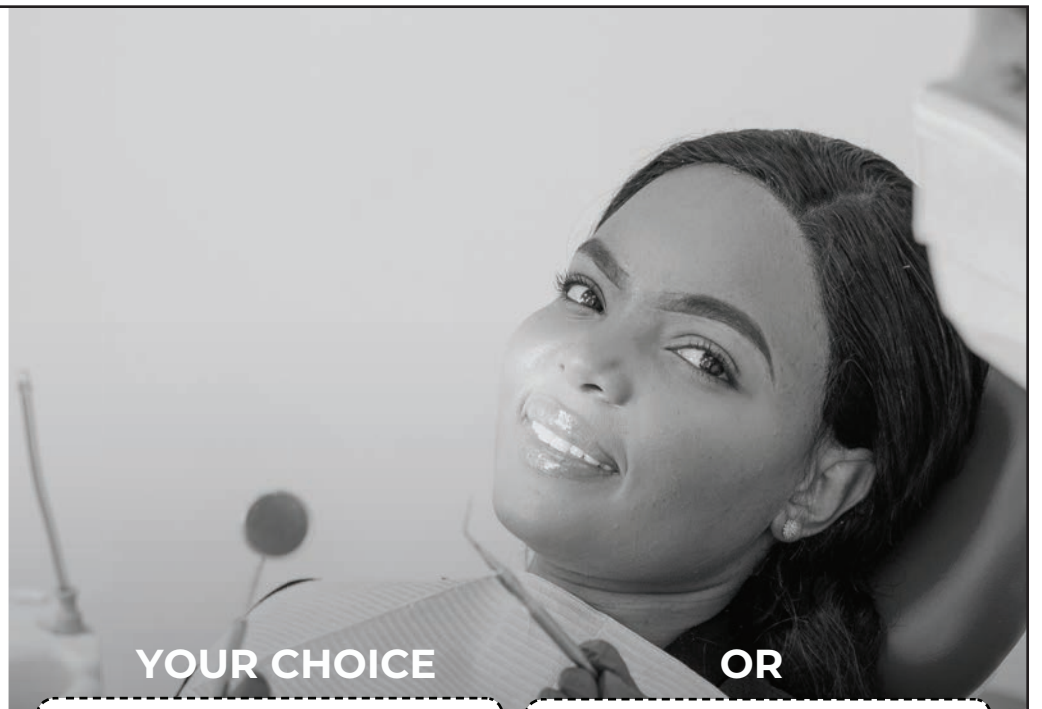
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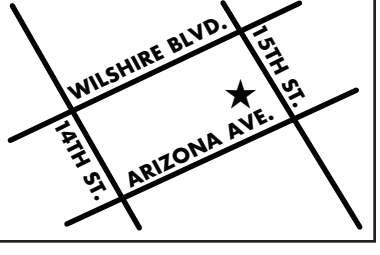


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The Re-View

Merv Hecht
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Taqueria Qué Padre



Merv Hecht

CHIPS: Chips and salsa are on the menu but it's the tacos that stand out.

Caruso's Palisades Village is now a popular weekend destination for people on the Westside. When it first opened I was skeptical. I admired the architecture, and, for those in need of a $3,000 purse, there were some nice shops. But Palisadians had expected a delicatessen to replace Mort's, the Palisades meeting spot for generations, and a high-end French restaurant to replace Maison Giraud (which did draw from all over Los Angeles). Instead, there was a poor quality, overpriced hamburger joint, another Italian restaurant (the 6th in the Palisades?), and a beautiful restaurant with a good steak and trout, owned by a local English couple. There was nothing that can compete with the fine restaurants in Santa Monica until they can get a great chef and sommelier.

But the Caruso team is pretty capable. Soon there were great snack places all over the center - a wonderful ice cream store, my favorite candy store, several snack shops, and a good coffee house. Things were looking up. Then came the Blue Ribbon Sushi restaurant and bar (rarely used) with first-class Japanese food. Now a first-class Mexican restaurant has opened, and I've heard a rumor that a first-class Italian restaurant is coming soon. Still no great French or Greek restaurant (it's a long drive to Malibu to get to Taverna Tony), but things are definitely looking up, and the center is now drawing from Santa Monica and all over the Westside. And if some of the people walking around with the kids look familiar, it's probably because you've seen them on TV or in a movie.

The new Mexican restaurant is QUÉ PADRE. The menu can be found online, but it's primarily tacos. We also had guacamole, which was fine, and I see a few other things on the menu that we didn't try, but what we did order was excellent. It's not like a typical Mexican restaurant because there is no chile relleno, no burrito, no enchilada; there is one fajita plate and you can order their taco fillings in a bowl, but this is a taco place.

The best tacos we had were the birria (shredded beef) and the carnitas (roast shredded pork). The chips were different but good. But the star was the collection of sauces. For me that's what makes or breaks a Mexican restaurant. They served four sauces, all of which were superior to what I find in most Mexican restaurants. The habanero was the spiciest, but there was another red sauce with a bit less spice but more flavor. There were two others for variety and I love dipping chips into different tasting sauces.

I took the lobster taco home for my companion. That was a disappointment. It was a taco with a small lobster tail in it. There was a cup of cilantro and chopped onion, but no sauce. My companion said it looked lonely, all by itself. She cut it into pieces and made a lobster salad out of it.

So, there's not much more to write about. It's just a really nice addition to the center in a lovely setting on the "village green" with outside seating. It's not cheap - we paid $40 per person. I don't know what they will do when the rainy weather hits - if it ever does.

Merv Hecht, like many Harvard Law School graduates, went into the wine business after law. In 1988, he began writing restaurant reviews and books. His latest book "The Instant Wine Connoisseur, 3rd Edition" is available on Amazon. He currently works for several companies that source and distribute food and wine products internationally. Please send your comments to: mervynhecht@yahoo.com

COVID anxiety rising amid delta surge, AP-NORC poll finds

JAMES ANDERSON AND HANNAH FINGERHUT
Associated Press

Anxiety in the United States over COVID-19 is at its highest level since winter, a new poll shows, as the delta variant rages, more states and school districts adopt mask and vaccination requirements and the nation's hospitals once again fill to capacity.

The poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research also finds that majorities of American adults want vaccination mandates for those attending movies, sports, concerts and other crowded events; those traveling by airplane; and workers in hospitals, restaurants, stores and government offices.

The poll shows that 41% are "extremely" or "very" worried about themselves or their family becoming infected with the virus. That is up from 21% in June, and about the same as in January, during the country's last major surge, when 43% were extremely or very worried.

"I wouldn't have said this a couple of years ago, but I'm not as confident as I was in America's ability to take care of itself," said David Bowers, a 42-year-old business analyst in the Phoenix suburb of Peoria.

Bowers, a Democrat, and his wife, a public school teacher, got vaccinated early. But they fret once again about their daughters, ages 7 and 9, attending school in a state whose Republican governor, Doug Ducey, signed a law to block school districts from mandating masks, let alone vaccines.

A brief summer respite from COVID-19 fatigue included a family trip to New York. "COVID was pretty much out of mind," Bowers said. "Now it feels like we're going backward."

Close to 6 in 10 Americans say they favor requiring people to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to travel on an airplane or attend crowded public events. Only about a quarter of Americans oppose such measures.

Roughly 6 in 10 also support vaccine mandates for hospital or other health care workers, along with government employees, members of the military and workers who interact with the public, such as in restaurants and stores. Support is slightly lower for requiring vaccinations to go out to a bar or restaurant, though more are in favor than opposed, 51% to 28%.

Nearly 200 million people, or just over 60% of the U.S. population, had received at least one vaccine dose as of Thursday, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Just over half of the population was fully vaccinated.

Hospitals across the U.S. had more than 75,000 coronavirus patients as of last week, a dramatic increase from a few weeks ago but still well below the winter surge records. Florida, Arkansas, Oregon, Hawaii, Louisiana and Mississippi have set records for COVID-19 hospitalizations in recent weeks, and the surge in the delta variant, combined with low vaccination rates, has produced a scramble to find beds for patients.

The poll suggests that despite increasing cases and greater concern about the virus, Americans have not stepped up their own precautionary behavior since June, though at least half still say they always or often wear a mask around other people, stay away from large groups and avoid nonessential travel.

Confidence in vaccines to withstand virus variants has not waned, either, as U.S. health officials this week announced plans to dispense booster shots to all Americans to shore up their protection. The doses could begin next month.

Carla Jones, 37, of Lafayette, Louisiana, is a paraplegic with immunity problems and uses a wheelchair after she was severely injured in a car accident. Because of her health, she has been told by her doctor she cannot get the vaccine. She gets anxious visiting the doctor or when her grandchildren visit.

"I see someone next to me at the doctor's without a mask, it makes my heart rapidly beat faster," Jones said.

Jones, a Democrat, strongly favors vaccination and mask mandates, and not just for herself. "For the good of all," she said. "I don't have the shot, but I definitely wouldn't want to pass it on to anyone else."

The poll shows that 55% support requiring Americans to wear masks around other people outside their homes, while 62% support mask mandates specifically for workers who interact with the public, such as at restaurants and stores. Eighty-five percent of Democrats and 39% of Republicans are in favor of mask mandates for public-facing workers.

Robbie Allen, a 63-year-old retiree from Clifton, Texas, is fully vaccinated and will wear a mask when required by stores or other places. But the self-described independent who leans Republican insists it is a matter of personal choice, and he sees mandates as taking the joy out of life.

"The COVID is not going away very quickly, but I don't think people should live in fear," said Allen, who motorcycled with his girlfriend to this month's Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, which attracted hundreds of thousands to the South Dakota city. "People are going to die, but if we all hunker down, life gets miserable."

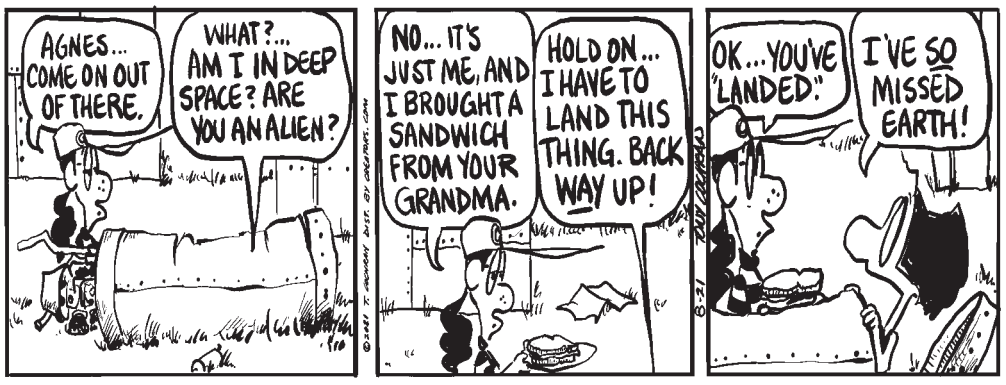
Partisan gaps are also wide on vaccination requirements. In Arizona, Bowers has already taken time off work to pick up his daughter from school after she developed a high fever. They spent hours last week looking for a drive-thru COVID-19 testing site that wasn't overcrowded. She tested negative. But the worries persist.

"My thinking is, the people who don't want mandates are the people who need to be regulated," Bowers said. "There's a slim majority in this country making the right decisions. If it wasn't for a slim majority as a country, we'd be in trouble."



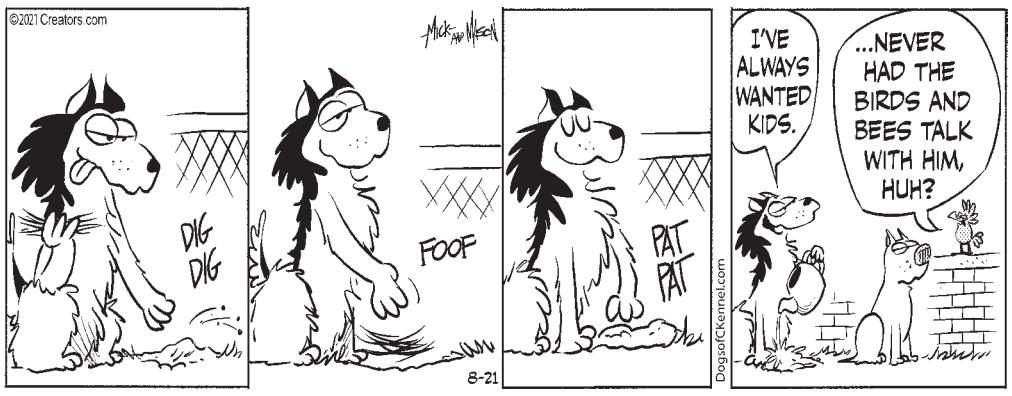
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



"ICE CREAM CONES WITH RAINBOW SPRINKLES AREN'T COLLATERAL."

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING





SURF FORECASTS

WATER TEMP: 67.8°

SATURDAY - **FAIR** - SURF: 3-5ft Waist to head high
Most likely clean in the morning but you may want to let that tide come up some if you're surfing the points. SW/SSW swell is winding down, still providing some fun waves through the day.

SUNDAY - **POOR TO FAIR** - SURF: 3-4ft Waist to chest high
Light wind and mostly clean morning. Decent tide push early, then sluggish mid-morning from high tide. Smaller SSW swell leftovers.

WEATHER

Saturday: Cloudy, then gradually becoming mostly sunny, with a high near 71.
Saturday Night: Patchy fog after 11pm. Otherwise, mostly cloudy, with a low around 64.
Sunday: Patchy fog before 11am. Otherwise, partly sunny, with a high near 69.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2021/08/21	Sat	03:38 AM	-0.98	L
2021/08/21	Sat	10:00 AM	4.54	H
2021/08/21	Sat	3:05 PM	1.86	L
2021/08/21	Sat	9:16 PM	6.72	H
2021/08/22	Sun	04:15 AM	-0.83	L
2021/08/22	Sun	10:32 AM	4.70	H
2021/08/22	Sun	3:48 PM	1.66	L
2021/08/22	Sun	9:56 PM	6.49	H
2021/08/23	Mon	04:48 AM	-0.53	L
2021/08/23	Mon	11:04 AM	4.81	H
2021/08/23	Mon	4:31 PM	1.55	L
2021/08/23	Mon	10:36 PM	6.07	H
2021/08/24	Tue	05:20 AM	-0.11	L
2021/08/24	Tue	11:36 AM	4.87	H
2021/08/24	Tue	5:14 PM	1.52	L
2021/08/24	Tue	11:15 PM	5.51	H
2021/08/25	Wed	05:50 AM	0.41	L
2021/08/25	Wed	12:07 PM	4.89	H
2021/08/25	Wed	5:58 PM	1.57	L
2021/08/25	Wed	11:56 PM	4.87	H
2021/08/26	Thu	06:17 AM	0.99	L

DAILY LOTTERY

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 8/18
35 36 51 55 61
Power#: 26
Jackpot: 290 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 8/17
3 6 16 38 56
Mega#: 24
Jackpot: 256 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 8/18
9 22 38 39 45
Mega#: 2
Jackpot: 10 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 8/19
4 11 21 27 37

Daily 3
Draw Date: 8/19
EVENING: 0 4 7

Draw Date: 8/19
MIDDAY: 3 0 4

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 8/19
1st: 03 - Hot Shot
2nd: 07 - Eureka
3rd: 05 - California Classic
Race Time: 1:48.72

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 21)

Friendship, love, passion and romance light the candles on this year's cosmic cake. A talent you didn't know about will surprise you. Extend beyond your comfort zone; your amateur status will afford you advantages and freedoms. Definitely be as wild and experimental as you wish. You'll turn pro soon enough! Libra and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 2, 11, 28 and 6.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll summon your courage on behalf of another. A loved one in need or the dare of friend is as good a reason as any to dig deeper and dip into your potent audacity.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). As you interact with someone in a way you haven't before, there's a sense that you're not entirely in control of your actions... yet. You'll gain skill in this realm with repetition over time.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Part of the story isn't adding up. The good news is, unless you're an accountant, it really doesn't have to. Push your imagination, emotion and intuition into the situation, and let the rest find its own balance.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It is possible, though rare, to admire someone without bringing yourself into a comparison. If you must evaluate, it benefits you to do so privately, internally or within your locked journal.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your unique relationship with destiny is fortified by the way you talk about what has happened and what you think will happen. Every time you affirm something beautiful and hopeful, it paves the way for more of the same.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You didn't set out for this destination, but this is where the relationship has landed. Even if you were to retrace your steps, you still wouldn't be able to figure out exactly how you got here. Make this the new starting place.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You've been known to avoid allegedly enjoyable pursuits. You have your reasons! For instance, you've discovered types of work that are legitimately more fun than fun.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). In the past, you've felt as though no one was listening close enough to you, if they were listening at all. That will be remedied today as the influence you hold will be made obvious.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A vision has come to you multiple times now, a gentle but persistent tap on the shoulder letting you know of an alternate reality that could be yours if you want to put the work in.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Because you are curious, social and multifaceted, you have relationships that don't necessarily represent your interests, share your beliefs or serve an obvious purpose except for the exchange of joy.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Places carry the energy of the events that happened in their boundaries. Emotional vibrations have a way of lodging themselves into the ground, walls and atmosphere. Only stay where you feel welcome.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Wanting sets you up for suffering, especially if you want something that is not within your control. You may find it hard not to want at all, though a little easier to want what is within your power to create.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

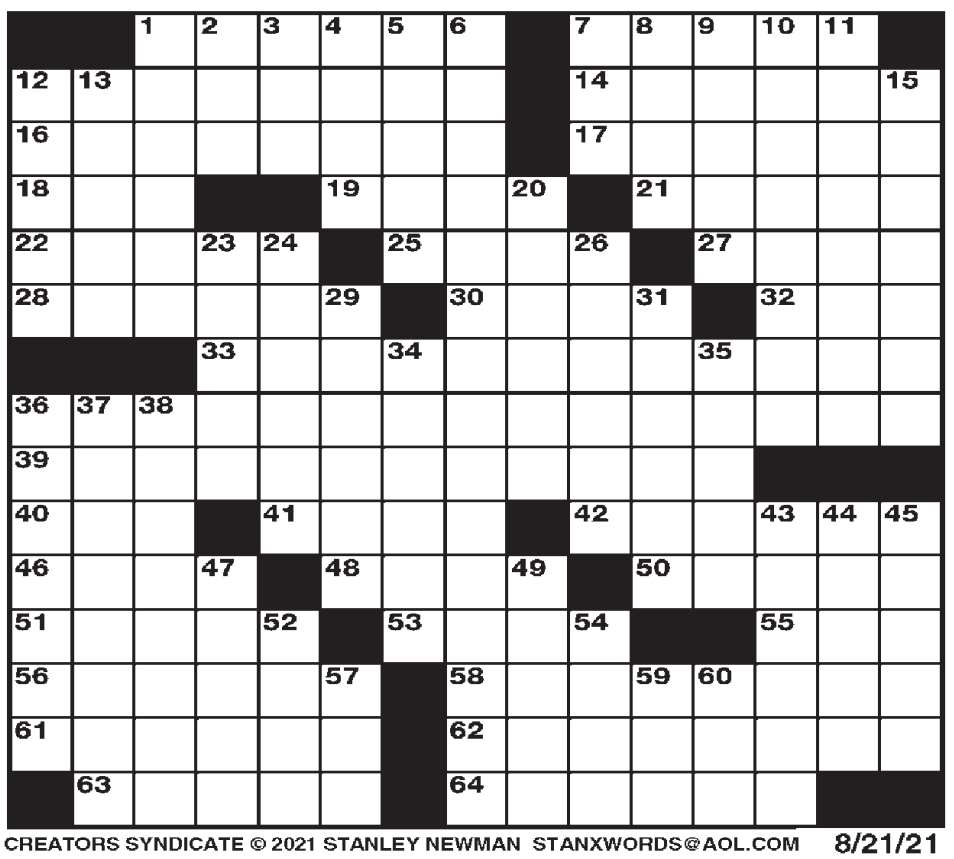
	1				8		5	
2		5		1				
					9	6		2
		2		6				4
8		4		9		2		6
6				3		9		
4		3	5					
				7		4		3
	6		9				2	

Newsday Crossword

SATURDAY STUMPER by S.N.
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Afghans, for example
7 *Le plus haut des Alpes*
12 Steal all from
14 Don't lose it
16 Persuasive salesperson
17 Stock market sales
18 Discommode
19 Berth announcements
21 Elbows on the table
22 Literally, "stealthy person"
25 Not taken by
27 Character
28 "Go ahead, it's an __!" (beer slogan)
30 Attitudinal differences
32 "Puh-leeze!"
33 "Puh-leeze!"
36 Redundant-sounding, rather new refreshment
39 Suite requiring a key
40 One's luck
41 "The hunger of a dragon is slow to wake, but hard to __": Le Guin
42 Circular seals
46 Game box info
48 Order out
50 Stand-up's seating
51 Guilt-free, as gummies
53 Pulls off
55 *The Air Up There* podcast purveyor
56 Profiling facility
58 Order-out service
61 Service agreement
62 Pistachio, say
63 World's wealthiest drummer
64 Strike a blow

DOWN
1 Unequivocal renouncement
2 The Austrian __ (Schwarz-enegger)
3 Folks, so to speak
4 Take down
5 Caused by
6 "Believe it or not . . ."
7 Key WWII morale builder
8 Spring up
9 Represent for a bit
10 Uninspired
11 Ellington partner on a '63 album
12 Trouser material
13 Overly attention-getting
15 Trouser material
20 *Fuller House* executive producer
23 Spirit/spearmint concoction
24 Cardmember activations
26 Not ruling out
29 Coconut/caramel cookies
31 Cord cutters
34 Fully held
35 Blow
36 First to publish blues music (1910s)
37 *Mad* marginalia master
38 Stuck in sci-fi, perhaps
43 Player's protest
44 Blame takers
45 More than trim
47 Former Grammy Album category
49 Messing with TV credits
52 Place to hide
54 Apparently are
57 Exclamation not heard (alas) in *Hamilton*
59 Post-retirement acronym
60 Fuel suffix



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

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

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



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FIND THE WORDS

This is a theme puzzle with the subject stated below. Find the listed words in the grid. (They may run in any direction but always in a straight line. Some letters are used more than once.) Ring each word as you find it and when you have completed the puzzle, there will be 11 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

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Fun at school

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

Acid
Aides
Arcs
Artist
Bags
Behave
Books
Boys
Break
Cane
Choir
Classes
Confer
Cram
Detention
Duties
Energy
English
Eraser
Exams
Fruit
Funny
Gerund
Girls
Groups
Late
Learning
Lessons
Loud
Maps
Marks
Maths
Miss
Noisy
Notes
Open
Oral
Output
Page
Paper
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SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.
There's an evacuation order

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PEACE CORPS

FROM PAGE 5

indication when the first trainees would be sent to the tiny country tucked between Mexico and Guatemala.

A few volunteers refused to be evacuated but their Peace Corps service was ended, Spahn said. Despite their truncated service, volunteers are eligible for the variety of benefits typically afforded those who complete the two years — including resettlement payments, preferred hiring status for federal jobs and special scholarships.

But those former volunteers — like Beach — could help seed the revived Peace Corps, Spahn said.

Beach hadn't been able to say goodbye. Her students had missed her.

"The time when Madam Beach left Malawi, lots of things went wrong especially in our class," said Aness Leman Filimoni, who is in her last year of high school. "Madam Beach was teaching us English but when she left, the school could not find a suitable replacement."

Beach is now teaching her usual two classes a day, five days a week. She's also helping finish up a girls' dormitory built in part with a Peace Corps grant.

Just before the pandemic, there were 108 volunteers in Malawi. Peace Corps Malawi Director Amber Lucero-Dwyer, who stayed, has seen a handful of former volunteers return on their own — although she thought most were visiting, not staying indefinitely as Beach is.

"We have tried to be as creative as possible to determine what can we do, what core Peace Corps work can we do in the absence of volunteers," Lucero-Dwyer said.

Beach was originally sent to Malawi just weeks after her college graduation, and was scheduled to complete her service in August 2020; if she's able to return to service, she doesn't know how long the stint would last.

Regardless, she's found her niche.

"It's what I feel I'm meant to do," Beach said of what she sees as the calling that drew her to the Peace Corps and ultimately Malawi. "It wasn't a very windy road."

Ring reported from Stowe, Vermont.

USC

FROM PAGE 3

recognize that the expectation and the history is for us to get to the CFP, and that's certainly our goal. That's what we're trying to do. I know that's what these young men are trying to do," Bohn said.

Since replacing Lynn Swann in November 2019, Bohn has focused much of his attention on putting the resources in place for Helton to succeed on the field by adding non-coaching personnel.

Compared to other national powers, USC has lacked numbers in areas such as recruiting and player development. Bohn and chief of staff Brandon Sosna have helped bring in analysts, support staffers, and sports scientists, and the emphasis on structural development for the football program was a constant refrain from them during the media availability.

Sosna said he keeps two notes from his initial meetings with Helton on his desk to constantly remind him of areas that need improvement.

"We're really excited that I think we've ticked off almost every single one of those boxes and continue to look at it every single day," said Sosna, who declined to discuss a report by Yahoo Sports that he recently met with the Detroit Lions.

The emphasis seems to have paid off. After signing a historically poor recruiting class by its standards in 2020, USC bounced back by adding a consensus top-10 haul that includes standout edge rusher Korey Foreman and several others expected to contribute as freshmen.

The initial returns from those additions are why Bohn believes USC is better positioned to achieve its goals this season.

"When you think of championship expectations, it requires championship support. And I believe we've made strides associated with that, and Brandon has been a big part of helping envision that along with Clay," Bohn said. "So our expectations are what they've always been. We want to be in the Rose Bowl and be a part of that College Football Playoff. Those are our goals."

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