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smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

Volume 24 Issue 14 WEDNESDAY 12/4/24 smdp.com

Improved ELA, math scores highlight School Dashboard results

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

Campuses throughout Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) saw marked improvements in several categories in the 2024 California School Dashboard.

The Dashboard, released annually to assess student success across key indicators, is a crucial component of the state's school accountability system. The data ranges from categories like graduation rates and suspension rates to test scores and English learner progress.

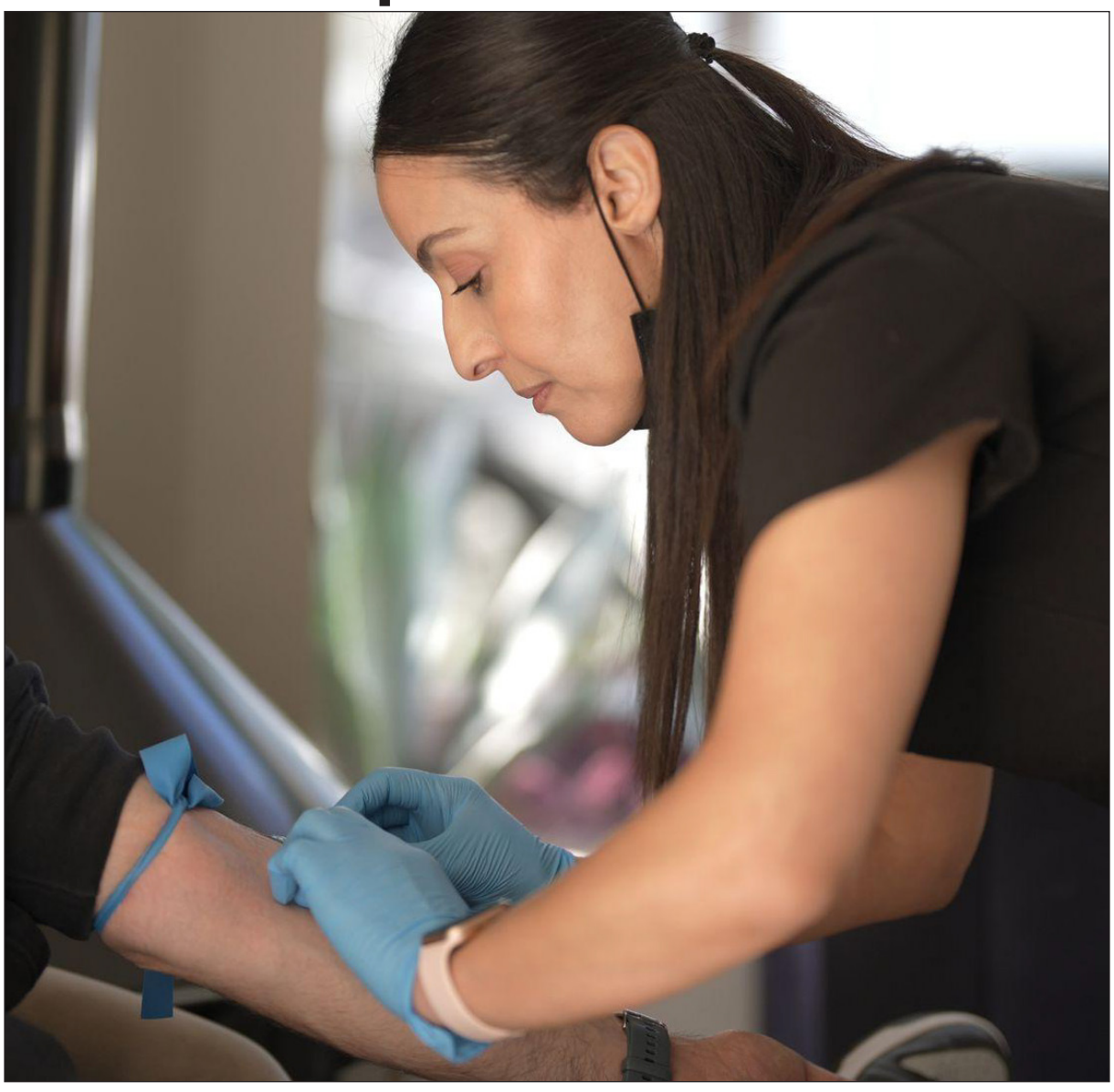
Broken into five color-coded categories, "red" being the lowest performance and "blue" being the highest, SMMUSD's Dashboard metrics remain largely unchanged from 2023. The district has two metrics at the highest "blue" level in 2024, one being a Graduation Rate of 97.4%, up 2.2% from the prior year and outpacing the state rate of 86.7%.

Another high-placing metric was English Language Arts (ELA), based on student performance on either the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment or the California Alternate Assessment for grades 3-8 and grade 11. SMMUSD students were noted as being 56.2 points above grade-level standards, way above the state average of 13.2 points below the standard.

The one change on district Dashboard metrics is English Learner Progress going from a "green" score to a "yellow" one, a decline of 6.9% of current EL students making progress towards English language proficiency or maintaining the highest level.

SEE **SMMUSD** PAGE 8

IV innovation pads Downtown med spa's services



Courtesy Photo

WELLNESS: Dripology provides a range of services, from IV drips to skin revitalization.

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

A Santa Monica business duo is sharing their brotherly love to the community via its latest innovation.

This past month, med-spa Dripology at 1411 7th St. unveiled its FAST NAD+ IV drip, delivering the powerful benefits of NAD+ in just under 15 minutes. Found in all living cells, nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD) is designed to boost cellular energy, mental clarity and longevity.

While NAD+ treatments (also available at Dripology) can take anywhere from 1-4 hours, the FAST NAD) drip gives a patient one-fourth of a typical dosage, something Chief of Operations

SEE **WELLNESS** PAGE 7

California birth centers are shutting down. A lawmaker has a new plan to help them

KRISTEN HWANG
Special to the Daily Press

Many California families want to bring their babies into the world outside of a hospital, but the state isn't making it easy for them. Half of the state's birth centers have closed since 2020, leaving only four licensed facilities open.

Birth centers don't need a state license to operate, but the expensive and onerous process of obtaining one is one of the primary reasons why birth centers are failing. Most insurers and Medi-Cal, the state's public health insurance program for low-income residents, will only work with licensed facilities.

Compounding the problem is the rapid closure of hospital labor wards, creating maternity care deserts in communities of all sizes.

That's why Assemblymember Mia Bonta, a Democrat from Oakland and chairperson of the Health Committee, is planning to introduce a bill today to ease birth center licensing requirements.

"Eliminating requirements that are only driving up prices for providers and are irrelevant to patient safety is a much- needed step to ensure our remaining birth centers can stay afloat and lay the groundwork for more facilities to open," Bonta said.

The bill, Bonta plans to introduce, would delete a requirement that birth centers participate in a specific Medi-Cal benefit known as the comprehensive perinatal services program, which includes services such as nutrition counseling and psychosocial support. Until recently, midwives weren't allowed to participate in the program, making

SEE **BIRTH CENTERS** PAGE 8



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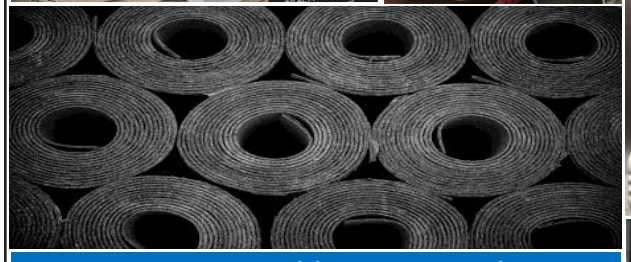








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5,000 bills is too many. Assembly Speaker sets new max for legislators



Photo by Miguel Gutierrez Jr., CalMatters
ASSEMBLY: Democratic Assemblymember Robert Rivas on the floor on May 31, 2022.

SAMEEA KAMAL AND RYAN SABALOW
Special to the Daily Press

The California Assembly will limit the number of bills each member can introduce from 50 each two-year session to 35, according to house rules that will be adopted at the start of the session today.

Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas is scheduled to give remarks today at the swearing-in ceremony for legislators. Senate President pro tem Mike McGuire told CalMatters he isn't opposed to a conversation about a similar reduction for senators.

Legislators and advocates have long complained that there isn't enough time to properly consider complex bills that can involve negotiations with multiple stakeholders, detailed legal analysis and delicate coalition-building.

As CalMatters reported earlier this year, legislative leaders tried to speed up the process by encouraging committee chairpersons to consider bill changes in private, not in public hearings. Good government advocates complained about the practice, but McGuire said "there is real potential for confusion, misunderstanding and disagreement on definitions" when the decisions are made in public.

Today, legislators can request a waiver to exceed the cap on bills they are allowed to introduce. Nineteen of the 40 senators hit or went over the bill limit in the most recent session. In the Assembly, 24 of the 80 lawmakers hit the cap or went over, according to the Digital Democracy database.

In all, legislators introduced 4,821 bills this session and sent 2,252 to Gov. Gavin Newsom.

The new rule by Rivas isn't the first time in recent history the limit has been changed.

In 2002, then-Assembly Speaker Bob Hertzberg lowered the limit from 40 to 30 bills per member, and limited each person's committee assignments to three. Instead of more bills, he said he encouraged members with the same ideas to work together.

"There's too many laws," he told CaMatters. "But the political industrial complex builds up — everybody's got to justify their existence and have more and more bills. I think it undermines confidence from the public."

In 2017, when Assemblymember Anthony Rendon took over as Speaker, he increased the bill limit from 30 to 50. He said it was to make up for the reduced time legislators were allowed to serve in office after voters approved more restrictive term limits that took effect in 2012.

Legislators have mixed reactions about the idea of limiting the number of bills they can introduce.

Former Assemblymember Phil Ting, a Democrat from San Francisco who previously chaired the Budget Committee, had the most bills of any lawmaker with 170. But Ting said he does not think there are too many bills. "It's frankly not about quantity, it's about the impact," he said.

Another former Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, a Democrat from Sacramento, also didn't see a problem. "I think they get pushed out anyway, just by the process," he said. "Clearly, not all bills go forward, but California is a complex state. Forty million people, a lot of problems, and a lot of issues to address."

Others saw merit in the idea.

Democratic Sen. Tom Umberg of Santa Ana, was chairperson of the Senate Judiciary Committee this year when he said there were 64 bills heard in one hearing. He credited legislative staff for their hard work, but added: "It often doesn't do justice to making sure that we create an effective policy."

Former Assemblymember Brian Maienschein, a Democrat from San Diego, also said: "Probably lowering the number of bills people could do is a good idea."

Maienschein said the process works at weeding out many bills, "But overall, I think on balance, it would likely be a good thing to have fewer bills (and) have more discussions and hearings and work on whatever the kind of top issues that term are in California."

This article was originally published by CalMatters.



OPINION | CURIOUS CITY

Charles Andrews | Send comments to editor@smdp.com

CURIOUS CITY, 2012-2025* R.I.P.



Courtesy Photo

CURIOUS CITY: The regularly-scheduled days of Curious City have come to the end of the road.

NOT IMMEDIATELY...

And not forever, yet. But its days are numbered. The very last one will be sometime in 2025. This is the last regularly-scheduled CURIOUS CITY, the loved and hated blast of uncomfortable truths (as I see them) that all of Santa Monica has held its collective breath for each Wednesday, for 13 years. Whatever will you do with your Wednesdays now?

"OMG I knew it, they finally sacked Charles. One too many columns about that horrible School Board..." No. This is my choice entirely, and the Daily Press has supported me wonderfully through the wind down over a couple of years. I thank publisher Ross Furukawa, co-owner Todd James, and especially Editor-in-Chief Matt Hall, a man of high personal and journalistic integrity who has been on the front line of the mostly partisan angry reactions my columns sometimes provoked. So many times Matt went more than the extra mile for me. Ross especially, and Todd, were on the receiving end of screaming phone calls and cursing emails, and rarely mentioned it to me. Reporter Thomas Leffler has also been a big help recently.

SO WHY AM I PULLING THE PLUG?

Discouraged at not being able to make a real difference? (Although I think my long, hard push for electing the entire independent slate of Brock-de la Torre-Parra to City Council, which most thought an impossibility, had something to do with that earthshaking break of SMRR-controlled local politics. OK, maybe the May 31 looting of Santa Monica had something to do with that too.) I have had that thought of powerlessness sometimes, but from a lifetime in print I know that change can move glacially. I also believe that constantly banging the right drum has more effect than you might guess. I spent a few years in advertising, where it is a maxim that people have to see or hear something over and over and over before it has a chance to change their thinking.

I'VE BEEN IN GREAT COMPANY

My dear friend and longtime, revered SMDP political columnist Bill Bauer told me with certainty three different times in his last years that he was going to throw in the towel on his "My Write" column – "what's the use, I keep exposing these corrupt politicos here and people keep electing more of the same." Another SMDP columnist and very close friend, Jack Neworth, also told me several times he was going to quit his very popular and beloved "Laughing Matters"column. I think he wondered how Trump could still be stalking the land after all the satire, derision, mockery and contempt Jack heaped on him. How could that McNuggets-stuffed Mango Mussolini still stand? But neither columnist did give up. They wrote until cancer stole the words out of their keyboards. Both should get a statue.

Writing about 1,000 columns for SMDP since 2012 has been a grind many times. I often had to toss an important sentence, paragraph, or entire column because extensive research could not prove something I was certain of. That's frustrating. What to write and what to leave out is a constant moral dilemma, and I didn't always get it right.

SEE **CURIOUS CITY** PAGE 4



Surf report

WATER TEMP: **59.0**

WEDNESDAY
FAIR
SURF: Knee to thigh 1-2FT

Gradually rise in SPAC swell -- a little slow but fun when the sets show. Modest to kinda fun for most spots with long period focal points going a bit bigger. Conditions look clean for the morning with a decent tide push first thing.

THURSDAY
FAIR
SURF: Thigh to waist 2-3FT

Another one to keep an eye on. SW swell continues and we could see a little WNW refresh for some fun combo surf. Conditions look okay at this point outside of the deep late morning high tide.

Weather

Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 62. Calm wind becoming southwest around 5 mph in the afternoon.
Wednesday Night: Patchy fog after 10pm. Otherwise, mostly cloudy, with a low around 50.
Thursday: Patchy fog before 10am. Otherwise, mostly sunny, with a high near 68.
Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 53.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2024/12/04	Wed	03:28 AM	2.78	L
2024/12/04	Wed	09:59 AM	5.87	H
2024/12/04	Wed	5:51 PM	-0.50	L
2024/12/05	Thu	12:58 AM	3.36	H
2024/12/05	Thu	04:17 AM	2.94	L
2024/12/05	Thu	10:46 AM	5.55	H
2024/12/05	Thu	6:40 PM	-0.31	L
2024/12/06	Fri	02:00 AM	3.51	H
2024/12/06	Fri	05:30 AM	3.08	L
2024/12/06	Fri	11:42 AM	5.10	H
2024/12/06	Fri	7:32 PM	-0.06	L
2024/12/07	Sat	02:55 AM	3.82	H
2024/12/07	Sat	07:11 AM	3.06	L
2024/12/07	Sat	12:53 PM	4.55	H
2024/12/07	Sat	8:27 PM	0.23	L
2024/12/08	Sun	03:39 AM	4.26	H
2024/12/08	Sun	09:12 AM	2.64	L
2024/12/08	Sun	2:26 PM	4.03	H

Daily Lottery

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

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 12/2
3 9 26 61 67
Power#: 13
Jackpot: 240 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 11/29
3 29 34 37 38
Mega#: 17
Jackpot: 541 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 11/30
10 13 23 29 37
Mega#: 17
Jackpot: 45 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 12/2
2 3 22 25 28

Daily 3
Draw Date: 12/2
EVENING: 9 5 6
Draw Date: 12/2
MIDDAY: 3 8 7

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 12/2
1st: 05 - California Classic
2nd: 04 - Big Ben
3rd: 06 - Whirl Win
Race Time: 1:48.34

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Santa Monica Daily Press

CURIOUS CITY

FROM PAGE 3

I have to send out a tsunami of love to all of you who commented personally or wrote to me. I read every email, and I tried to respond to each one. I met a few people over coffee and that gave me a better sense of our city. Not a column went by that I did not hear from people I had never heard from before, and that reassured this solitary columnist shivering, hungry in a dimly lit room, hunched over an ancient writing device... oh, sorry, but it has let me know someone is reading it. Often they would write, "I have been reading your column for years but never wrote before..." Those were the ones that really kept me going. As well as so many friends and a handful of "enemies" and strangers on the street and in the supermarket. (That's why you put your picture on the column. I learned that in college.) I also feel like I am letting each one of you down by quitting this column. I do have a fairly compelling excuse, though.

I HAVE BEEN LEGALLY BLIND SINCE THE FIRST OF THE YEAR

And losing my eyesight for almost three years before that. I can measure the loss almost daily. It is what is called so elegantly "a geographic atrophy," a pinpoint destroying the retina, which will only expand, a result of macular degeneration (that I lived with for eight years with no noticeable effects). No cure, but finally a drug was approved recently that MAY slow the process down by about 20%. It does require getting an injection, yes into the side of the eyeball, ewwww! every six weeks, but I'll take it. It is not as bad as it sounds, and I HATE needles. I have been treated by Dr. Thomas Chu for all those years, who is, according to my friend and globally-recognized ophthalmologist Houman Hemmati, "one of the best in the world!"

It is a great irony, or just another proof that God has a dark sense of humor, that I spent my entire life since college protecting my one good eye, the left one, after a rock thrower at an anti-Vietnam War demonstration I was covering as a reporter in Albuquerque, made a very high flying direct hit on that right eye, resulting in an immediate 50% loss of sight. It was an annoyance since then, that I could compensate for, but when this atrophy decided to show up, it chose my one good eye. But it does mean that even if I lose all sight in the left one, that foggy bit of vision remaining in the right will make it my "good" eye, and it will keep me from bumping into walls. So if I have passed you somewhere and didn't seem to recognize you, please forgive. I can't recognize a face more than three feet away, and that will get worse.

I know some people born blind graduate from law school with honors. They are heroes. (Well, except for adding another lawyer to the deck. But you wouldn't want them to be surgeons, would you?) Many people have suggested some form of accessibility assistance to magnify things and use voice recognition, and I could. But I don't want to. I've carried this torch for the city I love for a long time.

IT'S SOMEONE ELSE'S TURN

Hopefully, someone like Bill Bauer who is not afraid to call out bad management, hiring and planning, corruption and political ambition and cowardice, and name names, not someone who thinks we should put certain former mayors on a pedestal without being aware of their overall impact. We have very few political heroes in Santa Monica.

I will continue with the weekly music column NOTEWORTHY for as long as I can. But CC took a lot of time and difficult research, and I need that remaining vision time for personal projects.

I kept my news to family members mostly, not because I am ashamed in any way of my affliction, but because I know so many people in Santa Monica and I didn't want to enter a room or take a walk and feel like the first thing everyone thought about me was, oh, there's that poor Charles Andrews, going blind. For as long as possible I wanted to leave it at, there's that libtard Andrews who dreams of a sleepy beach town, and can't write his way out of a paper bag. And he's NOT funny. That I can live with.

See you around.

Charles Andrews has lived in Santa Monica for 38 years and wouldn't live anywhere else in the world. Really. Send love and/or rebuke to him at therealmrmusic@gmail.com



Critically endangered leopard dies at age 21 in California zoo

JAIMIE DING
Associated Press

A critically endangered species of leopard has died at a Southern California zoo.

Zoya, a 21-year-old Amur leopard, died of old age at 21 at the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens in Palm Desert last Tuesday after over a decade there, zoo officials announced.

Zoya outlived both the life expectancy of Amur leopards in the wild, 10 to 15 years, and in captivity, 15 to 20. Zoya was one of the oldest leopards in human care in the country, the zoo said.

Amur leopards were classified as critically endangered in 1996 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Native to the mountains of eastern Russia and northern China, they have adapted to the cold climate by having thick fur and paler coats than other leopard species to camouflage in the snow.

In the 1970s their population in the wild dwindled to fewer than 30, making them one of the world's most endangered big cats, according to the WildCats Conservation Alliance. There has been some rebound in recent years, however, with the current population estimated to be around 100.

Zoo officials said that even in old age and with decreasing kidney function, Zoya remained "spry and athletic." She enjoyed being up high where she could watch the warthogs and guests, as well as lying on her rock overlooking the pond in the mornings, officials said.

"As we celebrate Zoya's life, we encourage you to enjoy the little things in life — as she did," the zoo said in a statement. "Spend some time observing your natural surroundings. Be playful. Appreciate those special, tranquil moments throughout the day."

Efforts have been made to stop illegal poaching of Amur leopards, protect their natural habitat and increase the population of prey animals like deer and wild boar, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

There are more than 200 Amur leopards in 94 institutions around the world, including the San Diego Zoo, the Santa Barbara Zoo, and the Minnesota Zoo. Two leopard cubs were born last year at the San Diego Zoo, its third litter.

COMMUNITY NEWS

SMMUSD

Santa Monica High School Celebrates its New Exploration Building and Gold Gymnasium with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Let's celebrate! Santa Monica High School (Samohi) will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony for its new Exploration building and Gold gymnasium on Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2024, at 4 p.m. This event marks the completion of the new state-of-the-art facilities designed to enhance student learning, physical fitness and artistic development. The new buildings reflect the District's commitment to creating future-ready learning environments that empower students to reach their full potential, both academically and social-emotionally.

The Exploration building and Gold gymnasium were funded by Measure SMS, approved by the Santa Monica voters in 2018.

The District will also use this occasion to celebrate the passage of Measure QS, that was approved by the voters in November 2024. Along with needed improvements at the elementary and middle schools, Measure QS will fund the next phase of the Samohi campus plan. Thank you, voters! SMMUSD appreciates your ongoing support!

Guests are invited to gather in the Exploration building's "pitch space" for a brief program, including speeches from students, school leaders and elected officials. Following the program, attendees will have the opportunity to tour the new facilities and enjoy light refreshments.

Please RSVP here for the event: https://bit.ly/SamohiExplorationandGoldgymRibbonCuttingRSVP2024.

Parking: 600 Olympic Blvd. Santa Monica, CA 90405, or city center parking on 4th Street.

Students and teachers are already making full use of the new Exploration building and Gold gymnasium, engaging in innovative learning experiences and enjoying upgraded spaces for physical fitness and activities.

"We are pleased to be in the Exploration building and Gold gymnasium, where students and teachers have been thriving in their new learning environments," said Samohi Principal Marae Cruce. "These spaces are not only beautiful, but they are also allowing students to actively collaborate and engage with new industry standard equipment exposing them to current professional practices."

> "We are pleased to be in the Exploration building and Gold gymnasium, where students and teachers have been thriving in their new learning environments
> - Marae Cruce, Samohi Principal

SUBMITTED BY ESMI MCKAY

COMMUNITY NEWS

Pico

City of Santa Monica Announces Upcoming Matching Grant Program For Pico Boulevard Businesses

Small businesses on Pico Boulevard can soon apply for grant funds to improve their storefront thanks to a new matching grant program from the city of Santa Monica.

Through the Commercial Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program, small businesses can receive a dollar-to-dollar match of up to $10,000 to use for:

-Replacement of exterior elements such as old signs, awnings, window displays, lighting, siding, façade elements, or other architectural details

-Repair of exterior elements such as paint and patch of the façade

-Landscaping

-Installation of new entry doors and entryways that meet ADA standards

-Exterior security enhancements based on recommendations from a Santa Monica Police Department assessment

Funding for the program comes from federal Community Development Block Grants provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to enhance economic vitality in the areas that serve low-income and moderate-income households. Earlier this year, the City Council, the city earmarked a portion of these funds to help support small businesses.

This first phase of the grant program will focus on small business owners who have historically experienced higher barrier to assessing capital; inclusive of minority owned, woman owned, and LGBTQ+ owned businesses. There will be additional consideration for selecting Santa Monica vendors for material and labor to further support and reinvest in local businesses.

Following this pilot phase in the Pico Business Improvement District, the city will explore expanding to other business areas in Santa Monica.

There will be an official kick-off meeting for the grant program on Jan. 15, 2025, at 4 p.m. in the Annex at Pico Branch Library, 2201 Pico Blvd.

In the meantime, interested businesses can schedule appointments with the Police Department for security audits and begin thinking of their proposed uses for the grant. To schedule an appointment, email halima.barreto@santamonica.gov.

For more information and to apply, visit santamonica.gov/programs/small-business-matching-grant-program. For questions, contact the Economic Development Division at econdev@santamonica.gov or (310) 458-8906.

SUBMITTED BY TATI SIMONIAN

Citywide

Workshops For Landlords And Tenants To Be Held This December

Santa Monica residential landlords, tenants, property managers, service providers and city staff are set to discuss the latest information in landlord/tenant topics at the popular free annual Landlord/Tenant Forum on Monday, Dec. 9, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Main Public Library's Martin Luther King Auditorium.

The Santa Monica City Attorney's Office and the Rent Control Agency will host the event and topics of discussion will include:

-Roundtable updates on landlord/tenant topics around the state

-Updates on changes to local laws

-Tenants' rights to replace roommates

-Tenant protections during construction

-Q&A of general interest

Registration is required, at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfldydsTVdMPX6UCkf4wW8DxJ-Dv169VGXpYUtqIFBUgPQrq4A/viewform.

A recording of the Landlord/Tenant Forum will be made available on the city's YouTube channel following the event.

Additional December events hosted by Santa Monica's Rent Control Agency include a Spanish-language seminar for tenants on Tuesday, Dec. 10, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Virginia Avenue Park's Thelma Terry Building.

The workshop is for Santa Monica tenants to learn more about services and resources available through the Rent Control Agency, such as information about how rent and amenities are determined, protections against eviction and remedies available for issues related to excess rent, amenities and maintenance. The seminar is free and open to the public.

A similar seminar for tenants in English is planned for the spring.

For more information and for a description of the event in Spanish, visit santamonica.gov/rent-control-seminars-and-newsletters or call the Rent Control Agency at (310) 458-8751.

SUBMITTED BY DAN COSTELLO

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City of Santa Monica

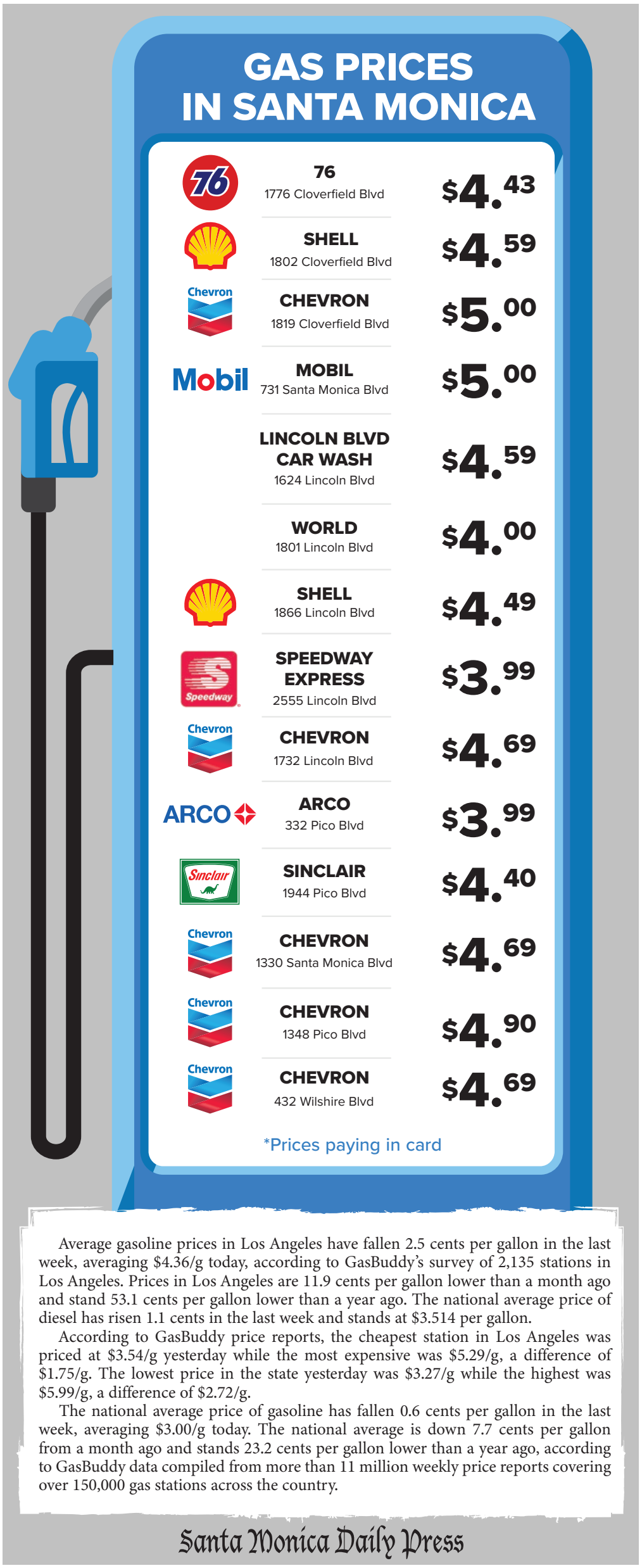
PUBLIC NOTICE

Please take notice that at its regular meeting of November 14, 2024, the Santa Monica Rent Control Board amended Chapter 15 of the regulations to consolidate hearing procedures in one location and repealed subchapters B, C, D, E and Regulation 4039 of Chapter 4, and subchapter D of Chapter 8.

The Board also amended the following regulations:
3304(d)(1) and (2), (k); 4107(a)(6); 4113B(i)(11) and (l); 4115(a); 4202; 4203(c); 4400(g); 4400(l)(3); 4400(m)(3); 4500(d); 8003; 8013; 8029; 13004(d); 13005(l); 13008(e) to update references to hearings procedures, which are now located in Chapter 15.

These changes will become effective by promulgation the day after publication in the newspaper.

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Average gasoline prices in Los Angeles have fallen 2.5 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging $4.36/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 2,135 stations in Los Angeles. Prices in Los Angeles are 11.9 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 53.1 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has risen 1.1 cents in the last week and stands at $3.514 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Los Angeles was priced at $3.54/g yesterday while the most expensive was $5.29/g, a difference of $1.75/g. The lowest price in the state yesterday was $3.27/g while the highest was $5.99/g, a difference of $2.72/g.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 0.6 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging $3.00/g today. The national average is down 7.7 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 23.2 cents per gallon lower than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than 11 million weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the country.

Santa Monica Daily Press

From Bach to Beyonce, why a church orchestra aims to lift up young musicians of color

DEEPA BHARATH
Associated Press

For over two years, Ebonie Vazquez searched to find a mentor of color for her son, Giovanni, now 11 and passionate about playing the violin. She has now found that space at a local church.

New Hope Presbyterian Church, a multiethnic congregation led by a Black female pastor in Anaheim, California, started a string orchestra in April, welcoming students, including those who may have trouble getting into and paying for music programs. It's located in Orange County, which is largely affluent.

The Rev. Chineta Goodjoin said her church had a smaller strings program for several years. When Goodjoin's daughter Nyla started playing violin with the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles, founded in June 2009 by renowned conductor Charles Dickerson, the pastor grew determined to replicate the concept in Orange County with Dickerson taking the lead.

> We value social justice and equity and we believe we are called to help the marginalized, to set the captives free
>
> - Chineta Goodjoin

The church's orchestra now has about 18 members ranging in age from 9 to 20, playing violin, viola, bass and cello. The orchestra accepts all students without auditions, and it's free. Like the Los Angeles group, the orchestra is also powered by mentors who look like the young musicians they help guide.

Ebonie Vazquez says it is empowering for students "to see themselves reflected in their mentors and teachers."

"It's important they don't feel like outsiders, but are supported and feel like they belong," she said. "It has definitely helped my son connect more to the music and the craft."

During rehearsal, when Giovanni started talking about music, the boy's eyes turned dreamy and his arms became animated. Even as his words gushed out in child-like excitement, they reflected the aura of an old soul.

"I just want to be able to express myself in my music and show that I not only have talent, but I also take my time, and I practice," he said. "You can change one little thing, one note, and the music will be totally different. You make your own thing."

Giovanni said that in the church orchestra, he could play classical music or he could chill with Imagine Dragons. He also plays violin in his school orchestra and with Dickerson's Los Angeles group. He values being part of the church orchestra because "it's a piece of our community."

"They encourage young musicians of color and everyone gets a chance to play and maybe use it as a stepping stone to get better or even turn this into a career," he said.

Giovanni thinks it could be cool to play in Carnegie Hall. He pauses, then adds: "But honestly, I just want to play around people who listen to and value music. My favorite part is really to see people enjoy music."

Melissa Bausley, a cellist who works in finance and volunteers as a mentor, said she often found herself alone as a Black woman in this realm.

"I never had a teacher that was African American growing up and I didn't think it mattered or made a difference," she said. "But now, as an adult, I'd say there is absolutely value in being able to learn from someone who looks like you."

Dickerson said he started the Los Angeles orchestra when he was approached by a group of students who yearned to play in their city and neighborhood.

"They would have to drive long distances to be in these orchestras where they didn't know the other kids and felt like the odd ones," he said. "The young kids from our communities were always put in the back row and the back row was right next to the door."

"It's easy to walk out that door," he added, "when you don't really feel accepted and when you know you're probably not as skilled as the others who have a smattering of connections and have been playing since they were three."

Goodjoin said she and her husband, Reggie Goodjoin, a jazz musician and the church's music director, envision an orchestra where "African American kids play classical music and play it well."

"Not modified or watered down abridgements, but the real deal," she said. "I like to say they play everything from Bach to Beyonce. We want them exposed to all genres."

The children will play sacred and secular music as well as the work of Black composers, and the orchestra is open to children of all faith backgrounds, Goodjoin said.

"They learn the music of Count Basie and Duke Ellington and so many others who have forged the path — an experience they might not get in a mainstream school setting," she said.

She believes the church is a great place to start talking about equity in music.

SEE **CHURCH** PAGE 11

WELLNESS

FROM PAGE 1

Amin Afshari (brother of founder Hamed Afshari) said creates "the sensation of what the IV drip feels like without being stuck to it for hours on end."

"It's not a substantial amount to really tip the scales for you, but what it does is it opens your mind to the possibility of utilizing that on many different fronts," Afshari added.

He explained that NAD+ drips work on a cellular level, helping cells to "read directions" better. The drips are now a part of the wellness package for Dripology, which began as a venture between the Afshari brothers in 2019.

Starting as an IV delivery company that year, the brothers (Hamed a nurse, Amin an engineer) had a year of revenue under their belt when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Not knowing what the future would hold, the pandemic became a boon when Los Angeles residents requested IV drips when they would become sick, whether it was COVID or another illness.

Opening the Downtown Santa Monica med spa in 2022, the brothers have preached a professional ethos. They aimed to be the opposite of what Hamed's wife, celebrity makeup artist Ash Holm, saw her clients experience in the field.

"(A) guy would come in with jean shorts, (a) t-shirt and his hair wasn't even tied up behind his back, just messy ... Hamed, being a nurse, his whole demeanor was 'this can be done better, this can be done at a higher level,'" Amin said. "This is not the Wild West ... we have some documentation, we do some vitals, we ask you what's going on and then we give you the treatment, and we look professional when we do it. We're wearing scrubs, and you have a nurse, and she provides education with the service that you're getting."

Ever since opening the Santa Monica space in 2022, the services have expanded to include Botox, Morpehus8 Microneedling, PRP Therapy and Semaglutide weight-loss medication. Regardless of the service received, the brothers didn't want to take advantage of their customers, with Amin likening it to avoiding a situation where a mechanic takes advantage of an individual not knowledgeable about vehicles.

"I want people to always come back here and feel safe coming here and know that they're not going to get nickeled and dimed," he said. "(They) feel like a king or queen when they come in here ... (we) want you to be immersed and feel taken care of."

While the Dripology team has talked about franchising in other locations, Santa Monica was picked as a med spa spot since it has "always" been a favorite of the brothers, even when they were visiting from their native East Coast.

"Santa Monica has this roundedness to it ... even though it's upscale, even though it's a really nice city ... it's got a groundedness to it," Amin said. "People (are) more chill, and they're more open and we really like that it's less trendy ... it's more (of becoming) a staple in the community when you start getting integrated into it."

For more information on Dripology and the FAST NAD+, visit dripology.co.

thomas@smdp.com



Photo by Thomas Leffler

WELLNESS: The Dripology med spa has been adding new innovations to its services package.

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SMMUSD

FROM PAGE 1

On Summative English Language Proficiency Assessments (ELPAC), the amount of English Learners who progressed at least one English Learner Progress Indicator (ELPI) level declined from 45.3% in 2023 to 44.2% in 2024, while English Learners who decreased at least one ELPI level went from 15.7% to 21.3%.

Despite the drop in level, the EL metric for SMMUSD is still ahead of the state, which sits in the "orange" level with 45.7% of students making progress in 2024, a decline of 3%. To hone in on EL improvement, the District English Learners Advisory Committee recently gave a report to the SMMUSD Board of Education recommending hiring staff who work directly with families of EL students, as well as provide additional EL parent training.

Looking at individual campus performance on the Dashboard, assessment scores in ELA and Mathematics had marked improvements district-wide. Six SMMUSD campuses each went up a level in both areas, including increased performance for both at Edison Language Academy, Franklin Elementary School, Lincoln Middle School, Malibu Middle School and Malibu High School.

On the state level, officials lauded significant increases in attendance, with a 16.7% year-over-year decline in chronic absenteeism. Six SMMUSD campuses also improved a level in the category, though Lincoln Middle School was noted as having a rise in absenteeism.

Another highlight of the state report was college and career readiness, something SMMUSD has at a "green" level, with increases for student groups like Black/African-American students in the category noted as a success.

"(The) Dashboard results show California continuing to make important strides in post-pandemic recovery - we're getting students back to school, getting more of them prepared for college and careers, and graduating them in greater numbers," California State Board of Education President Linda Darling-Hammond said. "We are also supporting stronger gains for Black students, Native American students, students in foster care, and others who have been furthest from opportunity in many years."

To see the SMMUSD report in full, visit caschooldashboard.org.

thomas@smdp.com

GET IT DAILY...

BIRTH CENTERS

FROM PAGE 1

birth center licensure nearly impossible.

Advocates say removing the requirement entirely will further streamline the process and actually allow them to serve more low-income clients.

The bill is part of a larger legislative effort by Bonta to protect access to reproductive health care during the coming Trump administration. Bonta's other planned bills seek to preserve access to abortions at all hospitals, including ones affiliated with religious organizations, in the event of an emergency and to pay for over-the-counter birth control for Medi-Cal patients.

Licensed midwives and certified nurse midwives can provide prenatal and postpartum care as well as low-risk deliveries outside of hospitals. They direct higher-risk pregnancies to hospitals. Birth centers are midwife-run clinics for low-risk births.

In March, the state's first licensed and accredited birth center closed after three decades of operation. The San Diego facility, which delivered more than 5,600 babies over the years, was unable to keep up with mounting costs. Many others have followed suit. At least 19 birth centers have closed in the past four years, accompanied by the closure of more than 50 hospital maternity wards, according to CalMatters reporting.

The closures disproportionately affect rural communities and people of color, deepening a maternal health care crisis, said Sandra Poole, a lobbyist with the Western Center for Law and Poverty, which is co-sponsoring the bill.

"We have a whole population that is losing access to maternal care, and we're hearing more and more for various reasons — whether it's mistrust of hospitals or just wanting the ability to have their births in a more homelike setting — that folks, particularly people of color, would rather have their birth at a birth center," Poole said. "But they're just not afforded that opportunity especially if they're on Medi-Cal."

Medi-Cal pays for more than half of the births in California, and 80% of those babies are not white, according to state data. A statewide survey also suggests that people of color want alternative birth support such as midwives and doulas more than any other demographic group. Lack of insurance coverage is the most commonly cited barrier to that care, according to the survey from the California Health Care Foundation.

California is known for having the strictest licensing requirements for birth centers in the country, according to the American Association of Birth Centers. Midwives have previously told CalMatters that they had to leave the state and even the country because it was too difficult to operate in California.

Bethany Sasaki, president of the state chapter of the American Association of Birth Centers, said it's "heartbreaking" that this legislative effort is coming too late to save the birth centers that have closed already, but it is an important first step. Sasaki closed her Sacramento birth center earlier this year after the state refused to grant her a license.

"This is step one to the long process of improving access to midwives and safe out of hospital birth," Sasaki said.

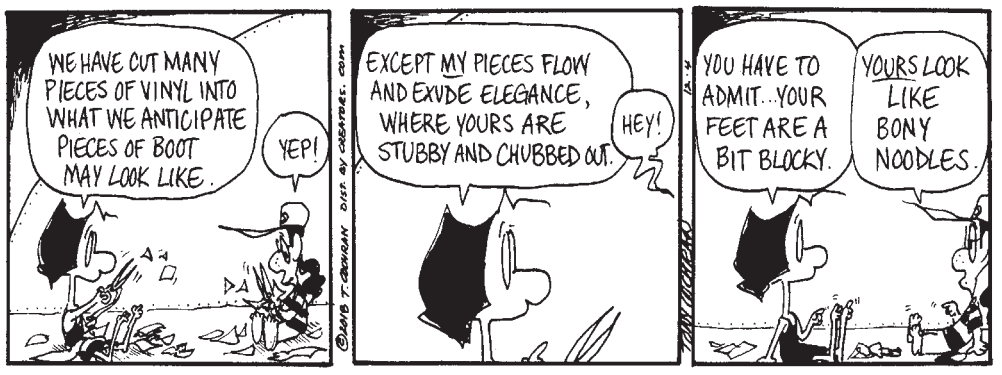
Supported by the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF), which works to ensure that people have access to the care they need, when they need it, at a price they can afford. Visit www.chcf.org to learn more.

This article was originally published by CalMatters.



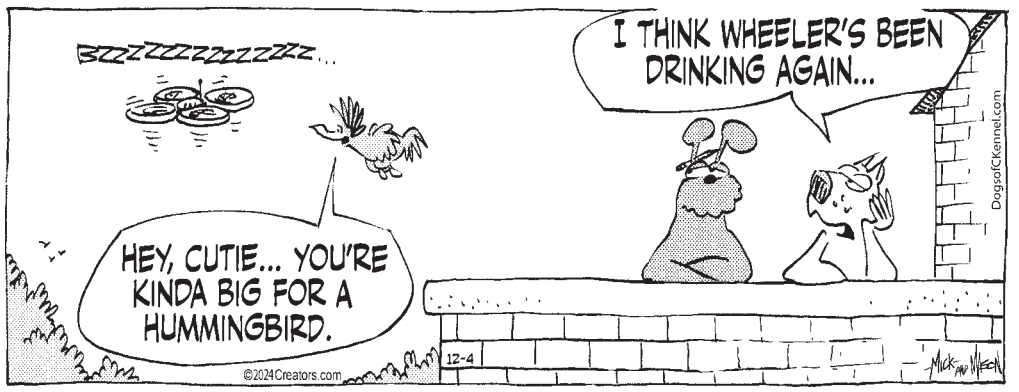
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



"YOU'LL SPOIL YOUR APPETITE."

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING



FIND THE WORDS

This is a theme puzzle with the subject stated below. Find the listed words in the grid. (They may run in any direction but always in a straight line. Some letters are used more than once.) Ring each word as you find it and when you have completed the puzzle, there will be 21 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle.

© australianwordgames.com.au 6414

Beach safety

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

Adults	Dive	Marine	Rubber
Alarm	Drowning	Nervous	duckies
Attack	Dumper	Oars	Save
Belt	Girls	Panic	Scan
Cadets	Grommet	Patrol	Search
Calm	Guys	Police	Sharks
Caps	Help	Real	Signs
Club	Junior	Relax	Ski
Crew	Kick	Resuscitate	Speed
Currents	Lanes	Rips	Tube
Danger	Legs	Risk	Wash

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.
Societal expectations

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 4)

Your approach to relationships sets the tone. You risk openness, give your trust and proceed in mutual respect. Your year sparkles with distinct and meaningful connections reflected in fun dates, insightful conversations and lasting commitments. More highlights: something new to celebrate in your family, and projects that bring about optimal productivity and profit. Aries and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 33, 25, 39 and 13.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll come to realize you don't need someone as much as you once thought, and paradoxically, this self-sufficiency makes you all the more desirable. Your independence has an undeniable allure, attracting attention and admiration.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Someone who genuinely loves you will remind you of your strengths, highlighting all the things you do right. Embrace these affirmations, as they reflect just how meaningful you are to those who care.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Emotions rise like a wave. Instead of tamping them down, channel them into something expressive. Whether it's art, exercise or play, this raw energy can lead to breakthrough ideas.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Be early because it shows enthusiasm, and there are opportunities that will only go to the first ones on the scene. Also, giving yourself a head start lets your charm shine in the peaceful ease that only preparedness brings.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It's a good time to remind people what you do and how you do it differently than the others. You can pull attention slyly or obviously, and both are headed to the same aim of helping all. Let your impact speak.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). An exciting person is drawn to you, captivated by the intelligence and insight you bring. They'll take notice of your unique perspective, and this connection has the potential to spark something truly engaging.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Love doesn't thrive under the weight of obligation. The correct contribution will not feel difficult to give. Go with heart and integrity, giving at the intersection of what's needed and what feels good and right to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). It's tempting to stick with people you know, but life is better when you include those you don't know and strive to understand people who are very different from you. Reach out in warmth. The kindness you extend lifts everyone around you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Though you project calm and poise, there's a fiery, untamed energy stirring within you. Others will pick up on it and feel drawn to your dynamic spirit, sensing a depth and intrigue that keeps them captivated.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You're inspiring someone to grow into their best self, though ultimately, they'll have to put in the work themselves. Remain supportive, but remember that real transformation requires their commitment, not your intervention.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Every savvy businessperson knows that scarcity drives up demand, and you'll use this principle in your social life today. By giving just a bit less, you'll find people clamoring for more of your time and attention.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your social network is a treasure cultivated over years. Some of your relationships have sustained decades. Your ties will strengthen further through the upcoming events. You'll be laying the groundwork for that today.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

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

Newsday Crossword

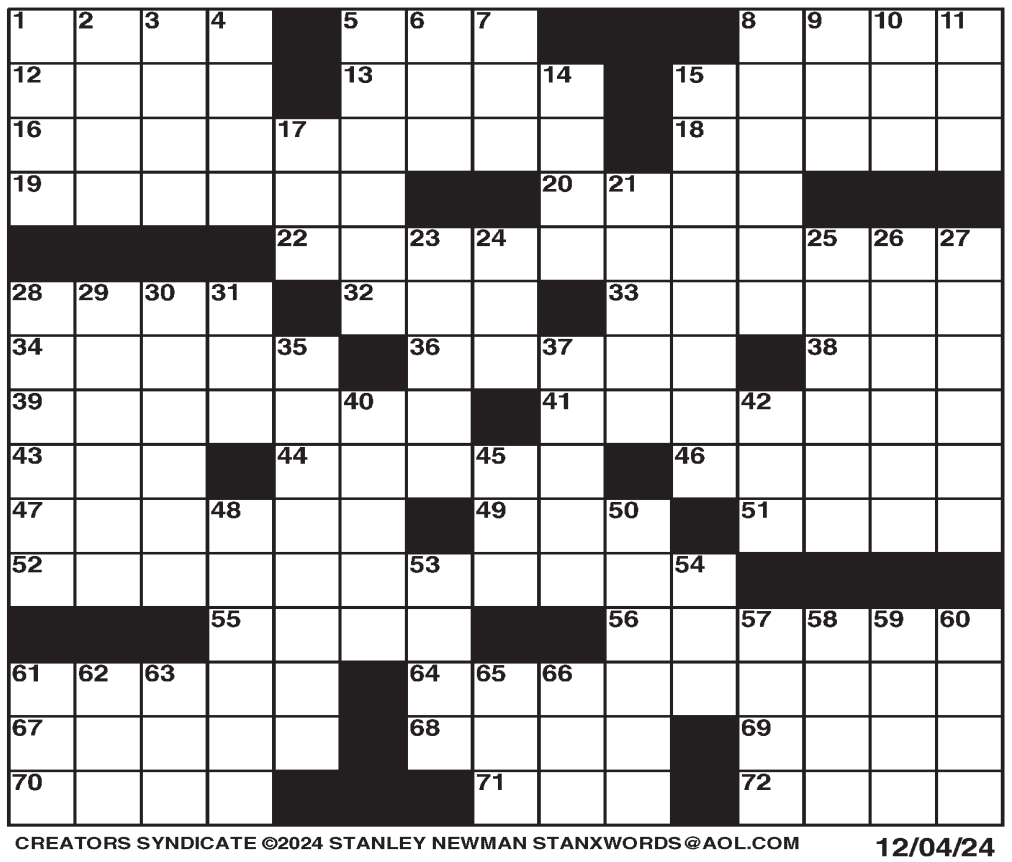
TAKE A RIDE by Lin Josephson
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 Mimicked
5 Home loan agency Fannie __
8 Bring up, as a child
12 Identical
13 Adam's second son
15 Charming Southern woman
16 Washing machine phase
18 Stick on, as a stamp
19 Art on some arms
20 Forbidden thing
22 Wedding gown attachment
28 Overly fussy person
32 Chem. or bio.
33 Shy and modest
34 Japanese noodle soup
36 Lazy person
38 Line of stadium seats
39 Beseech
41 Showy garden flower
43 Finance deg.
44 Waterproof coverings
46 Historian __ Kearns Goodwin
47 United by treaty
49 Donkey
51 Diplomatic agreement
52 Metaphor for a flop
55 Apple's center
56 Estée of cosmetics
61 "Famous Potatoes" state
64 Dinnerware for pouring sauce on turkey
67 Twisty toy cube creator
68 Shoe bottom
69 Raison d'__
70 Don't discard
71 Very angry
72 Sales agents, for short

DOWN

1 Aide: Abbr.
2 Baby Bear's dad
3 Give off, as light
4 Minor fender bump
5 City officials
6 2, on an ATM
7 Electrified fish
8 Improvement of conduct
9 North Pole worker
10 __ Baba
11 Tyrannosaurus __
14 Director Dunham
15 Exchanged quips
17 Holder of kernels
21 __ days (long ago)
23 More frosty
24 Completed
25 High-latitude sky display
26 Amusingly unexpected
27 Most recent
28 Most important
29 Be a wanderer
30 Chevy's "antelope" sedan
31 Hair goo
35 Portable computer
37 Rodeo rope
40 Storm-tracking technology
42 Floor-washing tool
45 Crony
48 Pet-finding device
50 Completed, as a puzzle
53 Spider's octet
54 Dissenting vote
57 Lyft competitor
58 Lavish affection (on)
59 Wyatt of Westerns
60 Numbered rds.
61 Be a bother to
62 Scheduled to arrive
63 Prez on a penny
65 CD-__
66 __ carte menu



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12/04/24

MORE OF STAN'S CROSSWORDS! Play FREE from Stan's archives of Easy, Hard and Sunday puzzles at: tinyurl.com/stan-newman-crosswords

CHURCH

FROM PAGE 6

"We value social justice and equity and we believe we are called to help the marginalized, to set the captives free," Goodjoin said. "And music is freedom."

The pastor is already getting positive feedback from parents. One boy who plays the upright bass was about to quit playing because no one in his school orchestra looked like him.

"His mom said that when he came here, the pressure to play and compete was taken off and that it's a delight to now watch her son light up feeling a sense of worthiness," she said.

Carol Nealy, whose 9-year-old son Johnathan plays the violin, said the church has the ability to nourish the community — be it with food, spirituality or music.

"Because of this program, my kids are exposed to the violin. It's no longer something untouchable or foreign," she said. "It'll have an impact for generations because their children will see their parents pick up and play the violin."

Elizabeth Moulthrop, executive director of El Sistema, an international network of music education programs that was founded in Venezuela, said she has seen similar programs run out of churches.

"Music and art have always been such an important part of the church," she said. "It's a natural place for expression of faith."

For those who aspire to advance in the field, such programs also offer access to life-changing summer music camps, college scholarships and connections to jobs, Moulthrop said.

Dickerson says the orchestras are an attempt "to add to the value of what we need in our community."

"The goal is to uplift young people and give them the opportunity for a better life," he said.

"A lot of young people feel like it's not cool to carry a violin down the street," he added. "But, when you play the violin well with other kids who are like you, social acceptance begins to emerge. You feel pride as opposed to shame because you're not out there shooting hoops."

The Black Church has always served as a place where the community could come together, Dickerson said.

"It's the one place in history where we've been able to assemble without interference from other cultures, so to speak," he said. "The church started banks when Blacks could not put money in banks. They started newspapers when no one was prepared to cover our communities. We even started baseball leagues when we were barred from playing.

"If we can come together in the church and create a symphonic orchestra, all I can say is all praise to God."

Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

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WINTER STUFFIE SLEEPOVER

5:30 - 6:15 p.m. Youth Activity Room, Santa Monica Main Library. Author Sarah Mlynowski reads her new book "A Dragon for Hanukkah" at this special pajama story time featuring winter holiday stories from many traditions. Bring your favorite stuffed animal and then leave them afterwards for a night of fun in the library. Book sale and signing follows the story time. Space is limited. For ages 4-10.

PLANNING COMMISSION

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

SCHRAMBERG WINEMAKER DINNER

6 - 9 p.m. Farmshop LA, 225 26th St, Suite 25. The conclusion of Farmshop's 2024 wine dinner season with Schramsberg and Davies vineyards. Farmshop's culinary team is collaborating with Napa's finest for a curated dining experience with wine maker Hugh Davies. Farmshop is featuring a four-course tasting menu focusing on free, local ingredients paired with a special selection of both sparkling and still wines showcasing the best of California. $225 per person, to RSVP visit: https://www.opentable.com/booking/experiences-availability?rid=117178&restref=117178&experienceId=381472&utm_source=opentable&utm_medium=tms_email&utm_campaign=shared.

HA HA HANUKKAH

8:30 - 10 p.m. The Crow, 2525 Michigan Ave., Unit F4. A night of the best Jewish comedians from HBO, Comedy Central and Netflix. Proceeds from the comedy show will benefit Jewish Family Service LA. Tickets via donation tiers of $36-$108, to purchase visit: https://crowcomedy.com/showsandtickets.

THURSDAY | DECEMBER 5

IMMIGRATION SERVICES OFFICE HOURS

12 - 2 p.m. Study Room 1, Pico Branch Library, 2201 Pico Blvd. Come in for a free consultation for immigration services with an attorney from the nonprofit African Communities Public Health Coalition. This nonprofit organization offers free assistance with family-based immigration, including Petition for Alien Relative, VAWA and DACA. Services available on a first arrival basis.

HOUSING COMMISSION

6:15 p.m. Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main St. The Santa Monica Housing Commission is a city advisory body whose mission is to protect and improve the quality of life of all Santa Monicans by listening to input from city residents and staff, publicly deliberating, and providing recommendations to both the Santa Monica City Council and Santa Monica Housing Authority Board on issues related to housing in Santa Monica.

19TH STREET COMMUNITY FARM DESIGN PRESENTATION

6:30 - 8 p.m. Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Ave. Join for the presentation of the proposed design for the 19th Street Community Farm and Wellness Garden. The first of two community conversations surrounding the final design, the second will take place via Zoom on Dec. 10. RSVP for one, or both, of these meetings at: https://www.santamonica.gov/events/4wfw40brd-vw5q66cwh4sm39cdp/202412051830.

AN EVENING WITH PEGGY NOONAN

8 - 9:15 p.m. Ann and Jerry Moss Theatre at New Roads School, 3131 Olympic Blvd. Pulitzer-Prize winning opinion columnist at the Wall Street Journal where her column, Declarations, has run since 2000. She is the author of ten books on American history and culture and was a special assistant and speechwriter to President Ronald Reagan. General admission ticket plus signed copy of the book $50, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/an-evening-with-peggy-noonan-tickets-1012904684177.

FRIDAY | DECEMBER 6

THE PROM

7 p.m. Morgan-Wixson Theatre, 2627 Pico Blvd. Join for a heartwarming and hilarious musical that celebrates love, acceptance and standing up for what is right. Tickets $16-$25, to purchase visit https://www.morgan-wixson.org/yes-dynamic-2/prom.

SATURDAY | DECEMBER 7:

ISHIHARA PARK ORCHARD CREW

9 - 11 a.m. Ishihara Park Learning Garden, 2909 Exposition Blvd. Join the new Orchard Care Crew which will be serving Ishihara Park Learning Gardens Citrus Orchard the first Saturday of each month. Interested volunteers can start by creating a Santa Monica Volunteer Account at santamonica.volunteermatters.org/register.

AIRPORT CONVERSATION PROJECT COMMUNITY EVENT

1 - 4 p.m. Memorial Park Gymnasium, Memorial Park, 1401 Olympic Blvd. The "Phase 2: Discovering the Place & Setting the Stage" community event will include the results from the Phase 2a survey and help determine the foundation for future Airport design alternatives.

HOLIDAY CONCERT & UKULELE STRUM-ALONG

2 - 3:15 p.m. MLK Jr. Auditorium, Santa Monica Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. Cali Rose and the CC Strummers invite you to strum along, sing along, and enjoy festive holiday and popular songs. Bring your own uke or borrow one (supplies are limited).

SLOW FASHION WORKSHOP FOR TEENS

2 - 3:30 p.m. Youth Activity Room, Santa Monica Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. The Rediscover Center teaches eco-friendly tips on how to caring for and maintaining the pieces you love, and modifying thrift store treasures into runway-ready masterpieces. Learn awesome skills such as mending, patching, applique and basic modifications to tailor clothes to suit your body and your personality. For ages 13-18. To register, email library@santamonica.gov.



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