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smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

Volume 24 Issue 15 | THURSDAY 12/5/24 | smdp.com

This innovative indoor batting pop-up could be a big hit

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

Fourth Street, between Arizona Ave and Santa Monica Blvd is rapidly becoming Santa Monica's unofficial Sports Zone, with Road Runner Sports already there, the pickleball and padel ball courts coming to 1318 4th Street and now an innovative pop-up called SportsFest is offering everyone the chance to try their hand at various batting sports in a spacious location, complete with bar.

Batfest, a UK-based sports technology firm that utilizes simulator technology to increase the participation of sports, has partnered with a local entrepreneur to create an entertaining and educational sports experience that allows you to try your hand at baseball, tennis, lacrosse and cricket, all within the same batting lane.

"The idea is for us to try to bring these sports to life in a new environment. You traditionally see [these] sports being played on the fields and that's fine, but a lot of people don't want to travel to the field and engage there, so we give them a high street outlet to come and engage instead," said Runish Gudhka, former Kenya international cricketer and now CEO and Co-Founder of BatFast.

The site at 1330 4th St was formally the home of Wasteland, a small, stylish local chain known for its curated selection of used vintage and modern women's clothes. And it's surprisingly big inside, big enough to incorporate four batting nets, pool tables, two bars, group areas and a whole lot of space inbetween.

The entrepreneur in this collaboration is Mari Miranda, a former sports industry strategic consultant who was working in professional baseball when she was first introduced to the BatFest concept. She says that everything was aligned for a Santa Monica-based test of concept, which is, in essence, what this is.

"We just felt like LA gave us so many different opportunities," Miranda said, adding, "When we

SEE **BATTER UP** PAGE 11



Photo by Scott Snowden

BATTER UP: The SportsFest facility on Fourth Street is, in essence a showroom for the new tech.

Cyclist ends cross-country trek at Pier

DEVAN SIPHER
Special to the Daily Press

It's not often that New York City and Santa Monica are linked together in the same sentence. But last Saturday, the two were literally linked by Ryo Murata, a 25-year-old from Numazu, Japan, who rode a bicycle nearly 3,000 miles from Times Square to the Santa Monica Pier.

Mr. Murata united more than just cities as he crossed the country. His intrepid journey through challenging terrain and pouring rain, brought people together across generational, cultural and political divides as they followed his progress on Instagram (@human_revo). He left New York on September 12 with 1,617 followers on Instagram, but when he arrived in Santa Monica

SEE **CYCLIST** PAGE 8



Photo Courtesy Ryo Murata

CYCLIST: Ryo Murata celebrated his recent cross-country bike ride at the Santa Monica Pier.

High schools moved on from college for all. Will Trump come through for job training?

CAROLYN JONES
Special to the Daily Press

In this politically charged era, there's one thing both parties agree on: the benefits of high school career pathways.

With strong bipartisan support, career and technical education programs are poised to be a centerpiece of education policy over the next few years — both federally and in California. That's good news for students taking agriscience, cabinetry, game design and other hands-on courses that may lead to high-paying careers.

Education advocates hail this as a boon for high schools. Students enrolled in career training courses tend to have higher test scores and graduation rates. And business leaders say that strong career education can boost a local economy.

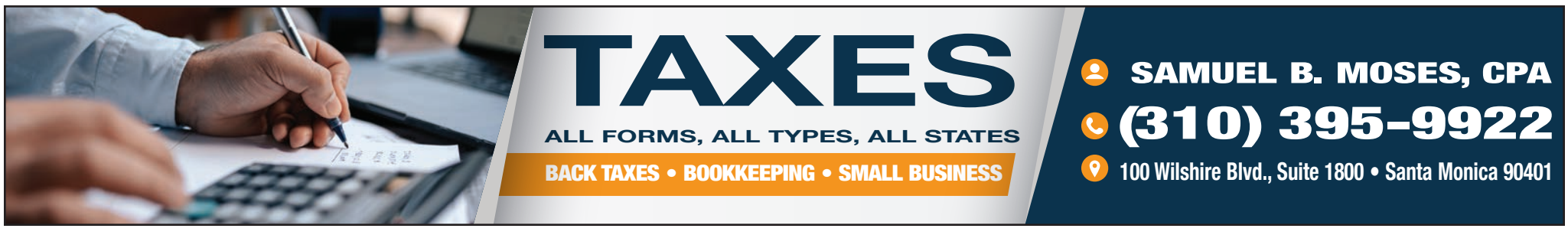
But there are still many unknowns, and some education experts worry that an expansion of career education will come at the expense of college-preparation programs, or lead to a return to "tracking," in which schools steer certain students — often low-

SEE **JOB TRAINING** PAGE 11



Photo by Larry Valenzuela, CalMatters/CatchLight Local

EDUCATION: Students learning to weld in a classroom at the Madera South High School 20-acre farm on April 2, 2024. Welding is one of thousands of career-focused courses in California high schools.





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POWERED BY smdp Santa Monica Daily Press

PUBLIC NOTICE

Eric Uller sexually abused children while masquerading as a police officer at Santa Monica Police Activities League (PAL).

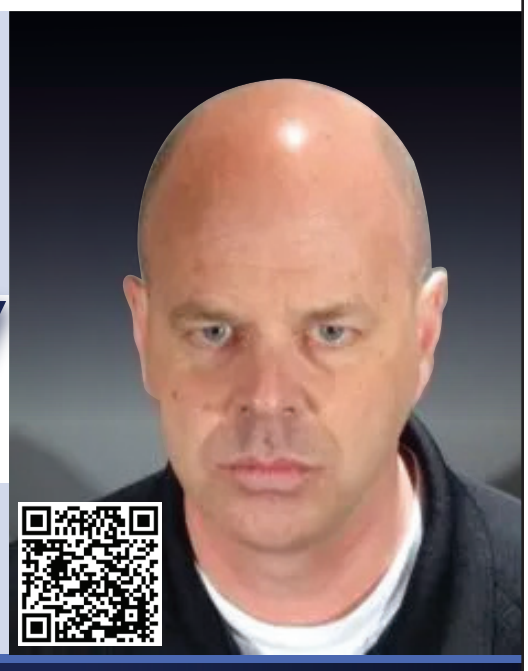
WHAT WE KNOW:

- Over 300 victims (boys and girls).
- Over almost 30 years (late 1980s to early 2000s).
- Some victims, parents and city and PAL employees reported Uller.

WHAT WE DON'T KNOW:

- Why were reports of abuse and/or inappropriate conduct by Uller not acted on?

Contact our firm for a free CONFIDENTIAL consultation if you were a victim or have any information.



McGEE | LERER & ASSOCIATES Personal Injury Attorneys + Sexual Abuse

www.mcgeelerer.com | (310) 231-9717 | Free confidential consultation

Ad. No guarantee of outcome. Each case is different.

AROUND TOWN

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Main St, Montana Ave, holiday street fairs and more

SMDP's weekly guide to food and entertainment goings-on in and around town includes Main St, Montana Ave, holiday street fairs, Venice canals holiday boat parade, brunch with Santa at Orla, a new restaurant on Main St from a Michelin starred chef and much more.

Holiday Cheer on the Pier: The SaMo Pier is bringing the holiday cheer this year with holiday music and performances, puppetry, singalongs and holiday cheer. Thursday, December 5, 12, 19, 4pm–8pm.

Live Talks – An Evening with Peggy Noonan: The Pulitzer-prize winning Wall Street Journal columnist and New York Times bestselling author will be discussing her book, A Certain Idea of America: Selected Writings. Thursday, December 5, 8pm, New Roads School, 3131 Olympic Blvd.



Courtesy Graphic

MAIN STREET: The annual holiday spectacle returns this weekend.

Montana Avenue Holiday Walk and Marketplace: The street will be closed to cars, transforming into a winter wonderland. Enjoy free photos with Santa, roaming carolers, live music and appearances by the Grinch, Cindy Lou and Princess Elsa. Don't miss this magical marketplace, presented by our premier real estate offices. Saturday, December 7, 3pm–8pm.

All About Santa returns to Santa Monica Playhouse. December 7 to 15, Saturdays at 2pm and Sundays at 12:30pm.

Pacific Palisades Holiday Ho! Ho! Ho! Now in its 75th year, expect singers, dancers, martial arts, crafts, cookies, hot chocolate, free photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and more. Saturday, December 7, 1pm–4pm, YMCA Christmas Tree Lot and Simon Meadow Corner of Sunset & Temescal.

Santa Cruise Group Ride: Deck yourself in your most festive attire for a joyful 5.8-mile cruise through Santa Monica & Venice. Bikes, roller blades, skateboard, and other wheeled transports welcome for all ages. Saturday, December 7, 3pm–11pm, starting at SaMo City Hall.

Santa Monica Symphony Concert: The program includes the Los Angeles Premiere of John Williams' Prelude and Scherzo for Piano and Orchestra. Free. December 7, 7pm, John Adams Middle School Performing Arts Center, 2425 16th St.

Miracle on Main St. Tree Lighting Celebration: Celebrate the holidays on Main Street with a festive afternoon of holiday cheer, starting at 3:30pm at the California Heritage Museum. Enjoy activities for kids, holiday music, and Santa's grand entrance at 4pm and the tree lighting at 5:30pm. Sunday, December 8.

Venice Canals Holiday Boat Parade: Originally founded in 1989, the parade has grown to become a highlight of the holiday season in the community. Each year, residents and visitors gather along the canals to enjoy the lights, music, and creative displays as boaters compete for best decoration awards. Sunday, December 8, 4pm.

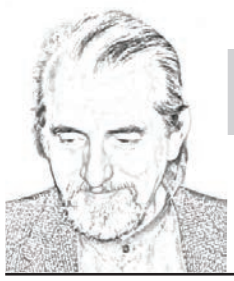
Refractions – Indigenous Art in Public Space: This panel brings together artists and practitioners to reflect on, consider, and uplift the transformational power of Indigenous art in public spaces and the particular concerns around public commissions for First Peoples artists. Wednesday, December 11, 6:30pm, Pico Branch Library 2201 Pico Blvd.

ONGOING: Cirque du Soleil Kooza (until 1/5); Ice @ Santa Monica (until 1/20); LiteBrite Experience

WHAT TO EAT & DRINK?

Chef Caroline Schiff's Pop-Up Diner: The James Beard Finalist and Food + Wine Best New Chef and cookbook author presents a preview of her Diner concept within Siete at Santa Monica Proper with "a set menu featuring fun twists on diner classics

SEE **AROUND TOWN** PAGE 8



OPINION **NOTEWORTHY**

Charles Andrews | Send comments to editor@smdp.com

ZUBIN, RUSKIN, CUBA

MUSIC, ART, CUBA - HELP!

Every good cause is now asking for your donations. But here's a very worthy one you might not otherwise consider.

I was angered but not surprised a few days ago when some MAGA idiot was railing against "dangerous terrorist states" like Iran, China, North Korea... and Cuba. It is for narrow U.S political agendas that the remarkable people of Cuba continue to suffer from an embargo of nearly 65 years. We ended the embargo of Vietnam 30 years ago, a communist state where 50,000 Americans lost their lives. It has made Cuba an impoverished nation, and their great artists and musicians have been unable to obtain even the basic materials to create.

I was introduced to their art by a life-changing show staged by New York's Center for Cuban Studies, at our SM airport nine years ago. Denied canvas, clay, pens or brushes, photo paper, paint, there were rooms and rooms of stunning creativity and beauty through found objects: pieces of wood, leaves, railroad ties, car parts, cardboard, toys, buckets. It was there I met the amazing Sandra Levinson, who co-founded the Center for Cuban Studies in 1972 in New York (and was in the building, less than a year later, working at night, when a bomb went off).

Misinformation and wrong perceptions about Cuba are the norm in the U.S. Like most misinformation it is intentional, to further the cause of a small group. In a nutshell, Cuba has been controlled to a great extent by the U.S. ever since we won the bogus ("Remember the Maine!") Spanish-American War at the beginning of the 20th century and were "given" Cuba and the Philippines by imperial Spain. Cuba wound up with a series of corrupt dictators, controlled by U.S. corporate and political interests, for the first half of the century, until the last one, Fulgencio Batista, was overthrown by Fidel Castro, and fled Cuba on 1/1/1959. Castro was forced to get aid from Russia after the U.S. choked off his country with an embargo of all goods. Castro may not have been an angel and some abuses of civil rights continue to this day, but I can tell you from having been there and interacted with many everyday Cubans that it is not how you picture it. If you'd like a clearer history, read "Listen, Yankee! Why Cuba Matters" by SM's own Tom Hayden. (He was at that art show, and his inscription in the copy I bought told me to "keep writing" - and so I will.)

The CCS offers fantastic organized tours, exchange programs, art, literature, and many educational services. I received a note recently from Sandra that a bill headed for passage in D.C. now will severely damage all non-profits, like CCS. So while there are so many worthy causes for your support, including our local theatre treasure The Ruskin Goup Theatre, who are trying to move to a larger, two-theater space offering great possibilities for Santa Monica, I urge you to help out CCS by ordering their beautiful 2025 calendar. Perfect gift for all your friends, who will remember your thoughtfulness all year. Of course you can donate beyond the cost of the calendar. Thank you!



Courtesy Graphic

CUBA: The Center for Cuban Studies was an eye-opening experience for Charles Andrews.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:

Tonight - TOM MORELLO – There are a lot of really good guitar slingers (especially in LA), there are a handful of indisputably great ones, and there is Tom Morello. Not to say that he is the best ever – that would be Jimi – but only a very few in a generation have such a metaphysical connection to their instrument that the virtuosic playing is a given and you watch and listen in anticipation of what creative soul will pour out of the amps. I haven't seen Morello often. The first time was really memorable, on stage outdoors near the Democratic National Convention in downtown LA in 2000, taking their stage with his band Rage Against the Machine as Bill Clinton was speaking across the street. Quite a split screen. MTV wanted to put on a protest music event but when the city fathers learned Rage's newest album was titled, "The Battle of Los Angeles," they pulled the plug. Literally. As I saw a phalanx of riot-geared LAPD, 2,000 strong and with mounted police, marching towards the area, I was smart/scared enough to get the hell out, of what was later called "a police riot." Morello came out of heavy metal, embraced punk, but added melody and chords (and a new guitar, a Fender Strat he named "Soul Power" - now on exhibit in the Met) when he formed Audioslave, due to the influence of vocalist Chris Cornell. Harvard-educated artist, songwriter, and activist Morello says he is living proof of the transformative power of rock'n'roll. Rolling Stone ranked him the 18th "Greatest Guitar Player of All-Time," but what is that worth? After two multi million selling bands, his signature guitar joined forces with Springsteen's E-Street Band for six years.) I wish I had seen one of

SEE **NOTEWORTHY** PAGE 11



Surf report

WATER TEMP: **58.3**

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.

FRIDAY
FAIR TO GOOD
SURF: Thigh to waist 2-3FT

The Southern Hemi run continues. Size nudges up as SW swell reinforcements move in and it should combo with fresh WNW swell for some fun peaks. Light wind in the forecast at the moment and there's a decent tide push for the early window.

Weather

Thursday: Patchy fog before 10am. Otherwise, mostly sunny, with a high near 65.
Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 51.
Friday: Sunny, with a high near 72.
Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 52.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
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
2024/12/08	Sun	9:21 PM	0.55	L
2024/12/09	Mon	04:18 AM	4.80	H
2024/12/09	Mon	10:39 AM	1.83	L
2024/12/09	Mon	4:03 PM	3.71	H
2024/12/09	Mon	10:10 PM	0.88	L
2024/12/10	Tue	04:55 AM	5.39	H
2024/12/10	Tue	11:43 AM	0.89	L

Daily Lottery

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

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

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 12/3
52 60 61 66 67
Mega#: 23
Jackpot: 579 M

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

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 12/3
4 6 9 34 35

Daily 3
Draw Date: 12/3
EVENING: 0 9 8
Draw Date: 12/3
MIDDAY: 1 1 6

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 12/3
1st: 08 - Gorgeous George
2nd: 12 - Lucky Charms
3rd: 03 - Hot Shot
Race Time: 1:48.02

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Santa Monica Daily Press

California man charged with shipping weapons to North Korea

JAIMIE DING AND AMY TAXIN
Associated Press

A California man has been arrested and charged with illegally shipping weapons and ammunition to North Korea, authorities said Tuesday.

Shenghua Wen, who came to the U.S. from China on a student visa more than a decade ago and stayed in the country illegally, was arrested and charged with conspiring to violate federal law barring the shipments, according to the U.S. Attorney's office in Los Angeles.

It was not immediately known whether Wen, who is 41 and lives in Ontario, California, had a lawyer. He is expected to appear in court later on Tuesday.

"It is essential that we protect our country from hostile foreign states that have adverse interests to our nation," Martin Estrada, U.S. Attorney in Los Angeles, said in a statement.

According to a copy of a federal complaint, Wen told U.S. authorities in interviews earlier this year that he had exported weapons and ammunition to North Korea at the request of its government. He said he met with North Korean officials at consular offices in China before he came to the U.S. on a student visa in 2012, the complaint said.

Wen said North Korean officials in China contacted him about two years ago to buy firearms and that he shipped two containers of weapons and other items from Long Beach, California, to North Korea via Hong Kong in 2023. He told U.S. authorities that he was wired about $2 million to do so, according to the complaint.

The FBI seized 50,000 rounds of ammunition from Wen's home about 40 miles (64 kilometers) east of Los Angeles that had been stored in a van parked in the driveway, the complaint said. They also seized a chemical threat identification device and a transmission detective device that Wen said he planned to send to the North Korean government for military use, the complaint said.

Wen came to the U.S. in 2012 on a student visa. His visa expired the following year and he was ordered deported in 2018, officials said.

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING
BEFORE THE SANTA MONICA CITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: PROPOSED ISSUANCE OF EXEMPT FACILITY BONDS BY THE CALIFORNIA MUNICIPAL FINANCE AUTHORITY FOR THE BENEFIT OF 710 BROADWAY AFFORDABLE, LP RELATING TO A PROPOSED MULTIFAMILY RENTAL HOUSING PROJECT LOCATED AT 710 BROADWAY, SANTA MONICA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on December 17, 2024 at 5:30 p.m., the Santa Monica City Council shall hold a public hearing as required by Section 147(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (the "Code"), relating to a proposed plan of financing providing for the California Municipal Finance Authority (the "Authority") to issue exempt facility bonds for a qualified residential rental project pursuant to Section 142(a)(7) of the Code in one or more series issued from time to time, including bonds issued to refund such exempt facility bonds in one or more series from time to time, in an amount not to exceed $350,000,000 in aggregate principal amount (the "Bonds"). The proceeds of the Bonds will be used to: (1) finance or refinance the acquisition, construction, improvement and equipping of a multifamily rental housing project located at 710 Broadway, Santa Monica, California (the "Project"); and (2) pay certain expenses incurred in connection with the issuance of the Bonds. The facilities are to be owned by 710 Broadway Affordable, LP (the "Borrower") or a partnership of which The Related Companies (the "Developer") or a related person to the Developer is the general partner.

The Bonds and the obligation to pay principal of and interest thereon and any redemption premium with respect thereto do not constitute indebtedness or an obligation of the City, the Authority, the State of California, or any political subdivision thereof, within the meaning of any constitutional or statutory debt limitation, or a charge against the general credit or taxing powers of any of them. The Bonds shall be a limited obligation of the Authority, payable solely from certain revenues duly pledged therefor and generally representing amounts paid by the Borrower.

The hearing will commence at 5:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, and will be held in the City Hall Council Chambers, 1685 Main Street, Room 250, Santa Monica, California. Interested persons wishing to express their views on the issuance of the Bonds or on the nature and location of the Project proposed to be financed or refinanced may attend the public hearing or, prior to the time of the hearing, submit written comments.

Additional information concerning the above matter may be obtained from, and written comments should be addressed to, City Clerk, City of Santa Monica, 1685 Main Street, Room 102, Santa Monica, California 90401 or email to councilmtgitems@santamonica.gov.

The meeting facility is wheelchair accessible. For disability-related accommodations, please contact (310) 458-8341 or (310) 458-8696 TTY at least 72 hours in advance. Every attempt will be made to provide the requested accommodation. All written materials are available in alternate format upon request. Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Lines numbered 2, 5, and 9 serve City Hall.

City Council Meeting: December 17, 2024 Santa Monica, California

Police say a Hawaii woman disappeared voluntarily and traveled to Mexico

A Hawaii woman who vanished after landing in Los Angeles three weeks ago disappeared voluntarily as she sought to "step away from modern connectivity" and was last seen crossing into Mexico with her luggage, police said at a news conference where they urged her to contact her distraught family.

Hannah Kobayashi, 30, appeared unharmed as she walked alone into a covered walkway at the San Ysidro crossing about 125 miles (201 kilometers) southeast of Los Angeles around noon on Nov. 12, the day after her family reported her missing, LA police said Monday. Authorities made the discovery after reviewing surveillance video from U.S. Customs and Border Protection late Sunday.

Los Angeles Police Chief Jim McDonnell said there is no evidence Kobayashi was being trafficked or was otherwise a victim of a crime. Her disappearance is now classified as a "voluntary missing person."

"We've basically done everything we can do at this point. She's left the country and in another nation now," he said, adding that if she returns to the U.S., law enforcement will be notified.

McDonnell said she has a right to her privacy, but urged her to reach out to her family or law enforcement.

"A simple message could reassure those who care about her," McDonnell said. He explained that the missing person case will remain active until her safety is confirmed by law enforcement.

Kobayashi went missing after the budding photographer from Maui didn't make a connecting flight to New York on Nov. 8 to travel for a new job and to visit relatives. She told her family she would sleep in the Los Angeles International Airport that night.

Family members assumed she was on standby for another flight, according to her aunt, Larie Pidgeon. The next day, Kobayashi texted them to say she was sightseeing in Los Angeles, planning to visit The Grove shopping mall and downtown LA, Pidgeon said.

On Nov. 11, the family received "strange and cryptic, just alarming" text messages from her phone that referenced her being "intercepted" as she got on a Metro train and being scared that someone might be stealing her identity, her aunt said.

Her father, Ryan Kobayashi, who had been in the search party along with volunteers, was found dead by apparent suicide on Sunday, Nov. 24, in a parking lot near LA International Airport, police and her family said.

McDonnell said during a police commission meeting last Tuesday that detectives determined Hannah Kobayashi missed her connecting flight intentionally. Kobayashi's sister, Sydni Kobayashi, disputed his statement in a social media post.

Police said Monday that after Hannah Kobayashi was seen in various locations around LA, she requested that her luggage, which had been checked to New York, be sent back to LAX. She then returned to the airport to retrieve it on Nov. 11 and did not have her phone when she left again, according to police.

Investigators found that she had "expressed the desire to step away from modern connectivity."

Police also identified and questioned a man that Kobayashi was seen with on the Metro. He was "cooperative" and said he met her at LAX, police said.

Sydni Kobayashi did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment. Members of the public who were in the "Help Us Find Hannah" Facebook group, which garnered the interest of more than 25,000 participants, shared a post from the group Monday that said the family would be shutting the group down after "threats against their lives and the lives of their small children."

The post also said Sydni Kobayashi and her mother would not be responding to any messages.

Authorities in Mexico said Tuesday that they've been been alerted about the missing woman, but haven't received any official request to search for her.

"Up to now, there has not been any formal complaint filed with the state prosecutor's office on the disappearance of this woman," said an official with the Baja California state prosecutor's office who was not authorized to speak publicly about the case. "Baja authorities are completely willing to help American authorities on this case, and agents have been alerted about her case if she is found."

During the Los Angeles news conference, the police chief reflected on all that the family had endured these last few weeks.

"My ask would be to anybody considering doing this, think about the people you're leaving behind, your loved ones who are going to be worried sick about you," McDonnell said.

The story has been updated to correct the location of San Ysidro to southeast of Los Angeles, not southwest.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988. There is also an online chat at 988lifeline.org.

Golden reported from Seattle. Associated Press journalists Christopher Weber in Los Angeles and Mark Stevenson in Mexico City contributed to this report.

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California Democrats plan to crack down on cities that block abortion clinics

KRISTEN HWANG
Special to the Daily Press

As President-elect Donald Trump prepares to take office, California Democrats are developing new plans to strengthen the state's abortion protections.

Attorney General Rob Bonta today announced two legislative proposals aimed at safeguarding medication abortion and enforcing the state's Reproductive Privacy Act, which ensures individuals have the right to make decisions about reproductive care without government interference.

Both bills, if enacted, would join more than two dozen other laws intended to make California a reproductive health "safe haven" since the Supreme Court's Dobbs decision three years ago eliminated federal abortion protections.

The move comes as lawmakers meet during a special legislative session to "Trump-proof" the state's policies. Gov. Gavin Newsom convened the session to request additional money for the state Department of Justice to sue the Trump administration over a variety of policies that could be challenged by a conservative federal government, including climate programs and reproductive health care.

"In California we are not backing down. We are absolutely committed to making sure that all women have access to reproductive freedom," Bonta said during a press conference Monday. The state Department of Justice is sponsoring both measures.

> "In California we are not backing down. We are absolutely committed to making sure that all women have access to reproductive freedom"
> - Rob Bonta

Trump said previously he will let states decide on abortion, but he takes credit for the overturning of federal abortion protections. The Supreme Court, with three conservative justices appointed by Trump, in 2022 eliminated Roe v. Wade's long-standing constitutional protections for abortion.

Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, a Democrat from Orinda, is authoring a bill that would allow the attorney general's office to fine cities and other local governments that interfere with abortion access under the Reproductive Privacy Act.

The proposal follows moves by several cities recently to restrict the opening of new abortion clinics. Earlier this year Bonta's office reached a settlement with the city of Beverly Hills, which Department of Justice investigators said inappropriately prevented an abortion clinic from opening. Planned Parenthood is also in the midst of suing the city of Fontana over allegations that officials are illegally blocking the organization from opening a new clinic.

"What we know is that our laws are only as good as the enforcement mechanisms in them, and so today, we are announcing better teeth to make sure those cities do not stand in the way of those clinic doors opening," Bauer-Kahan said.

The California Family Council, which opposes abortion, said in a statement in November that the Beverly Hills settlement will have a chilling effect on local autonomy.

"The battle in Beverly Hills highlights the importance of vigilance and advocacy in the face of relentless pro-abortion legislation," the statement said.

Maggy Krell, a newly-elected Assemblymember from Sacramento, will author a second bill to protect medication abortion. Krell, a former Planned Parenthood attorney and former assistant attorney general who focused on sex trafficking cases, said the bill aims to protect the abortion pill supply chain.

"We have an incoming federal government that is hostile to women's rights. We have a Department of Justice incoming that may not even defend the FDA approval of medication abortion drugs. We have a United States Supreme Court that has abrogated the personal liberty interests of women to control their own bodies...That's what we're faced with," Krell said. "But California has done a lot to be ready for this."

In his second term, many abortion advocates fear that Trump will revive a so-called "zombie law" from the 19th century known as the Comstock Act that prohibits mailing equipment and tools used for abortion and other pregnancy-related care, which could affect abortion pills.

Bonta said one of the newly introduced bills will shield abortion pill manufacturers, distributors and health care providers from civil or criminal liability when "legally transporting, distributing or administering medication" in California.

Bonta was cautious however in revealing too many details, saying "what it will ultimately include is dependent upon what the Trump administration does" and that he did not want to "telegraph" California's defensive strategy to the conservative administration. The measure is currently a spot bill, or a placeholder for legislation.

"I will tell you we have a plan. We have a plan that is both legislative and involves litigation. We think it's a very effective plan, and should we need to unroll it and unveil it, we are ready on day one," Bonta said.

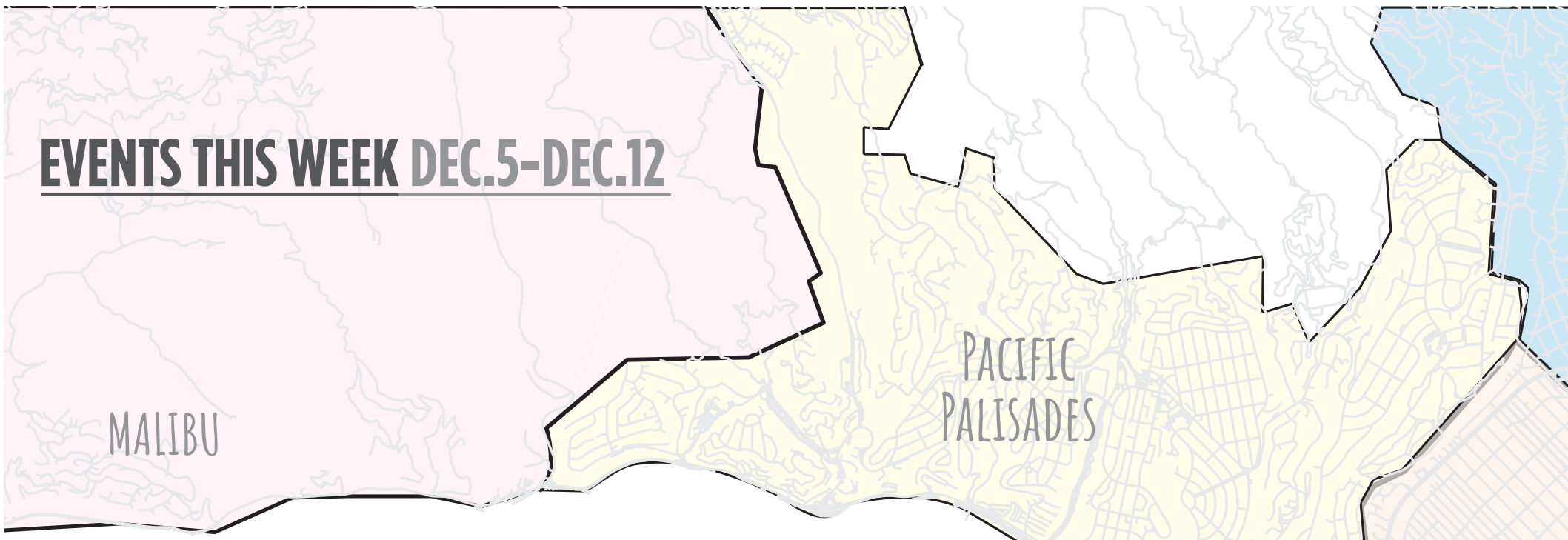
Supported by the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF), which works to ensure that people have access to the care they need, when they need it, at a price they can afford. Visit www.chcf.org to learn more.



Photo by Ted Soqui for CalMatters
CLINIC: Planned Parenthood supporters rally outside Fontana City Hall on May 14, 2024.

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EVENTS THIS WEEK DEC.5-DEC.12



Saturday, December 7, 9 - 11:00 a.m.

Saint Monica Preparatory, 1011 7th St

Santa Monica Preparatory Holiday Playdate & Open House

Los Angeles native Danny Janklow is quickly gaining international recognition for his soulful and innovative alto saxophone voice. His heartfelt, passionate, and highly energetic music has reached and inspired thousands of listeners from Japan to Holland to Mexico. His live performances, often described as "emotionally charged" and "vibrant celebrations," leave his listeners always wanting more. Tickets $10, to purchase visit: https://www.smc.edu/community/events/tickets.php.

Sunday, December 8, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Annenberg Community Beach House, 415 Pacific Coast Hwy.

Take A Moment - An Unplugged Event

The Annenberg Community Beach House hosts "Take a Moment," its first offline, unplugged event with opportunities for all ages. Luxuriate in four hours of offline space designed for you to be in solitude or in community while you read, knit, draw, write, play games, color or engage in a seasonal wellness tea workshop. The afternoon will wind down with a sound bath. To RSVP, visit https://www.eventbrite.com/e/take-a-moment-an-unplugged-event-at-the-annenberg-community-beach-house-tickets-1075238500299.

Saturday, December 7, 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Santa Monica History Museum, 1350 7th St.

Imagineering Santa Monica

Bring the family to a free, interactive workshop where creativity and city-building come to life. Participants of all ages will design their ideal version of Santa Monica. The event will open with insights from local writer and urbanist Frances Anderton, followed by expert guidance from James Rojas of Place It! and John Kamp of Prairieform, specialists in urban planning. Attendees will be able to explore the museum and engage with a 14-block model of Santa Monica, featured in the museum's current exhibition, Un|Housed: A History of Housing in Santa Monica.
Let the museum know you're coming, RSVP@santamonicahistory.org.

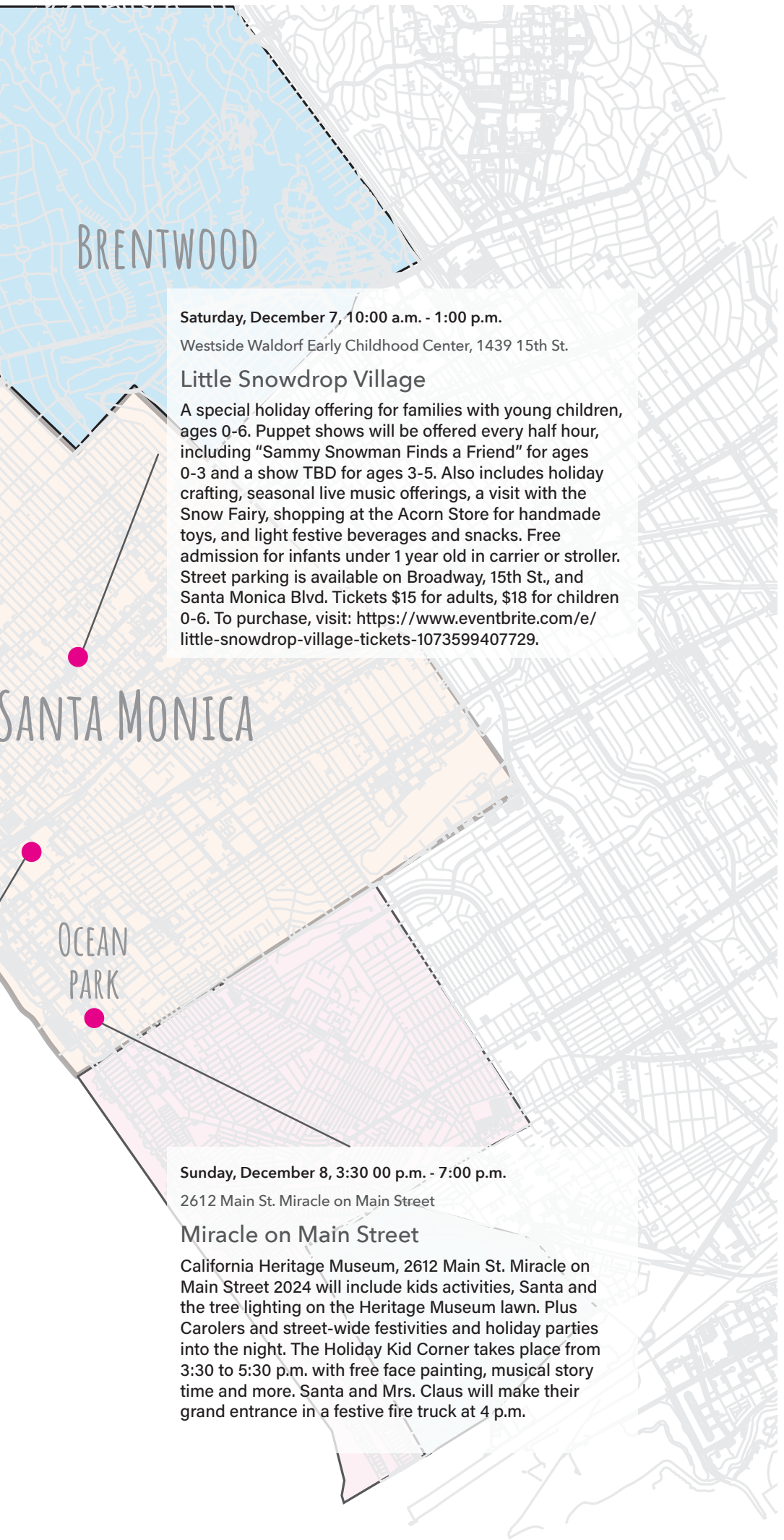
Saturday, December 7, 3:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main St.

Santa Cruise

Join for an iconic holiday group ride for skateboarders, rollerbladers, bikers and more. The route is a 6-mile beginner-friendly loop from Santa Monica to Venice and back. Expect music, dancing and several surprises along the way. Keep the party rolling with an epic after party at The Waterfront. Group ride free RSVP, after party general admission $25, to purchase visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/santa-cruise-las-biggest-holiday-group-ride-party-tickets-1047692234677.

Check out more events at: smdp.com/events



Saturday, December 7, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Westside Waldorf Early Childhood Center, 1439 15th St.

Little Snowdrop Village

A special holiday offering for families with young children, ages 0-6. Puppet shows will be offered every half hour, including "Sammy Snowman Finds a Friend" for ages 0-3 and a show TBD for ages 3-5. Also includes holiday crafting, seasonal live music offerings, a visit with the Snow Fairy, shopping at the Acorn Store for handmade toys, and light festive beverages and snacks. Free admission for infants under 1 year old in carrier or stroller. Street parking is available on Broadway, 15th St., and Santa Monica Blvd. Tickets $15 for adults, $18 for children 0-6. To purchase, visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/little-snowdrop-village-tickets-1073599407729.

Sunday, December 8, 3:30 00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

2612 Main St. Miracle on Main Street

Miracle on Main Street

California Heritage Museum, 2612 Main St. Miracle on Main Street 2024 will include kids activities, Santa and the tree lighting on the Heritage Museum lawn. Plus Carolers and street-wide festivities and holiday parties into the night. The Holiday Kid Corner takes place from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. with free face painting, musical story time and more. Santa and Mrs. Claus will make their grand entrance in a festive fire truck at 4 p.m.



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

COMMUNITY DOG TRAINING CLASSES

12 - 1 p.m. Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Ave. People's Dog Training, a Love At First Sit program, offers Community Dog Training Classes on Saturdays at Virginia Avenue Park in Santa Monica. Class fee is $5, then Pay-What-You-Can after that, with class proceeds donated to charity. Sign up at peoplesdogtraining.com/community-training.

PALISADES VILLAGE HOLIDAY STROLL

11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Palisades Village, 15225 Palisades Village Ln, Pacific Palisades. A holiday market with live music, snowfall, a champagne chalet, festive sips and bites, exclusive offers and a visit from Santa. Pick up gifts for everyone on your list. PalisadesVillageCA.com.

MONTANA AVENUE HOLIDAY WALK & MARKETPLACE

3 - 8 p.m. Montana Avenue. Santa Monica's best festive event to shop, dine and support small businesses all at once. At this free event, the streets are closed to cars as shop windows are decked out in the season's finest. This 11-block holiday party is the perfect opportunity to discover what's new and pick out some wonderful holiday gifts for your loved ones.

ALL ABOUT SANTA

2 p.m. Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 4th St. It's holiday time at the North Pole and everyone is in a tizzy - Santa has disappeared. Is he taking a vacation? Did the sleigh run out of spirits? Can Mrs. Claus keep the home fires burning and the toy shop churning until he can be found? Starring Sarah Hajmomenian, Madeline Lemay, Isabel Lindley, JT Melaragno, Michala Peltz and Megan Wright. Book, music and lyrics by Evelyn Rudie and Chris DeCarlo. SantaMonicaPlayhouse.com.

THE LUNAR LIGHT: DISCOVERY

5 p.m. Santa Monica Media Park, 1813 Centinela Ave. Prepare to embark on a journey unlike any other. As a Mission Specialist in The Lunar Light Saga, you'll step into the boots of an astronaut in a fully immersive world of virtual reality and live interactive theater, where the Moon's greatest mystery awaits you. Tickets $42-$77, to purchase visit: https://www.universe.com/events/the-lunar-light-discovery-tickets-XW5G0C.

VENICE HOLIDAY SIGN LIGHTING

6 - 9 p.m. Windward Avenue & Pacific Avenue, Venice. Join the Venice Chamber of Commerce, special guests, and your community for a beloved tradition-the annual changing of the Venice Sign lights to festive red and green for the holidays! Now in its 13th year, this special celebration will take place on Windward Avenue (east of Pacific Avenue), with street closures to make room for live music and family-friendly activities. Don't miss this magical start to the season.

SANTA MONICA SYMPHONY

7 - 9 p.m. John Adams Middle School Performing Arts Center, 1630 Pearl St. Join the Santa Monica Symphony for the Legends and Legacies concert with guest conductor Geoffrey Pope. To RSVP for free, visit https://www.eventbrite.com/e/santa-monica-symphony-legends-and-legacies-tickets-1004145344757.s 13-18. To register, email library@santamonica.gov.

SUNDAY | DECEMBER 8

TAKE A MOMENT - AN UNPLUGGED EVENT

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Annenberg Community Beach House, 415 Pacific Coast Hwy. The Annenberg Community Beach House hosts "Take a Moment," its first offline, unplugged event with opportunities for all ages. Luxuriate in four hours of offline space designed for you to be in solitude or in community while you read, knit, draw, write, play games, color or engage in a seasonal wellness tea workshop. The afternoon will wind down with a sound bath. To RSVP, visit https://www.eventbrite.com/e/take-a-moment-an-unplugged-event-at-the-annenberg-community-beach-house-tickets-1075238500299.

CYCLIST

FROM PAGE 1

on Saturday, he had amassed over 180,000, with close to 500 showing up at the Pier, according to Jeffrey Jarow, the President of Santa Monica Sister City Association.

"We needed this now" said Leticia Barajas, who lives in Hawthorne. She found Mr. Murata's live video streams to be an inspiring antidote to post-election polarization. "With everybody being very divided, this brings out how amazing we are when we come together as a community."

The upbeat videos documented each day of Mr. Murata's expedition. Traveling alone with very limited English, this courteous young man with a teenager's physique was truly dependent on the kindness of strangers, and the extraordinary part is how often he received it. A homeless man in New Jersey offered him insect repellant. A police officer in Ohio found him a free motel room. Truck drivers offered water, and passersby invited him home for meals in red states and blue. He repeatedly asked people why they were helping him, and frequently the answer was "Why not?"

Vuochhy Lao, who lives in Fontana, invited him to spend the recent holiday with her family. "As a mom of four, I'm thinking, gosh, he's here alone and who is he gonna spend time with on Thanksgiving?" she said.

Ms. Lao has become a key part of a community of supporters who graduated from passively following to actively assisting the latter part of Mr. Murata's ride, escorting him along treacherous California highways and arranging for meals, hotel rooms, and even a trip to Disneyland.

"We are tired of the negative stereotypes of Americans," said Ms. Lao, who credits Mr. Murata with bringing people together "no matter where we all came from or how different we look."

During a short ceremony, Mr. Jarow presented Mr. Murata with a Certificate of Completion for his trek and informed the crowd that Mr. Murata is from the same prefecture as Santa Monica's sister city, Fujinomiya, where 35 Samohi students are traveling in April to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the relationship.

The Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles was among those in attendance, as was Declan Henson, 13, from Huntington Beach, with a handmade sign expressing his admiration for Mr. Murata's accomplishment.

"If he had the dedication to bike across the country then I can have the dedication to do stuff in my life," he said.

A grateful Mr. Murata seemed both exhausted and exhilarated. He had suffered through broken spokes, broken brakes, and occasionally broken spirits, but he said that the support he received is what motivated him to keep going.

He had previously taken a similar ride in Japan and written a book about it. But the distance from New York to Santa Monica was significantly greater, and he only had a three-month visa. "I felt a lot of pressure to reach the finish within that time, and anxiety if I couldn't," he said.

However, he realized that feeling anxious wasn't going to improve the outcome, which was a crucial lesson, he said, "I learned that it is more fun to turn anxiety into excitement and go on a journey."

devannyc@gmail.com

AROUND TOWN

FROM PAGE 2

and her signature maximalist desserts, all paired with crafted cocktails." Friday – Sunday, December 6 – 8, 700 Wilshire Blvd.

Brunch with Santa at Orla: Guests can take photos with Santa and even learn a routine from the Rockettes. $95 for adults and $55 for children ages 3-10 includes a Champagne cocktail for adults, and a two-course brunch featuring family-style starters and à la carte selections. Sunday, December 8, 15, & 22, 11am–2pm, 1700 Ocean Ave.

Milo & Olive on "Best Pizza In LA" List: The Infatuation states "This sourdough pizzeria works equally well for weeknight dinners with friends as it does for dates, but we'd be lying if we didn't tell you it's a go-to Westside takeout crutch. Order the mushroom pie, which comes sprinkled with lemon zest and parmesan, or the pork sausage pizza if you're looking for a tomato base. Oh, and garlic knots are required by law." 2723 Wilshire Blvd.

Salt & Straw's Holiday Series: Festive ice cream flavors include Gingerbread Cookie Dough, Almond Brittle with Salted Ganache, Spiked Eggnog, a vegan The Great Cookie Swap and more.

Jyan Isaac Bread Holiday Bagels and Panettone: They are taking orders for their popular seasonal items now. 1620 Ocean Park Blvd.

Pasjoli Chef Dave Opened a New Fine Dining Restaurant on Main St: This Eater report details Seline, which opened this week "with 15-plus courses of ambitious cuisine" for $295. 3110 Main St.

Further Afield: LA Christmas Market: ROW DTLA is hosting an ongoing European-inspired Christmas Market featuring holiday decor, baked treats, festive activities, and seasonal music. Visitors can browse dozens of open-air booths offering seasonal delights like soft pretzels and hot chocolate, as well as handcrafted items from local artisans. The market runs every Wednesday through Sunday throughout December.

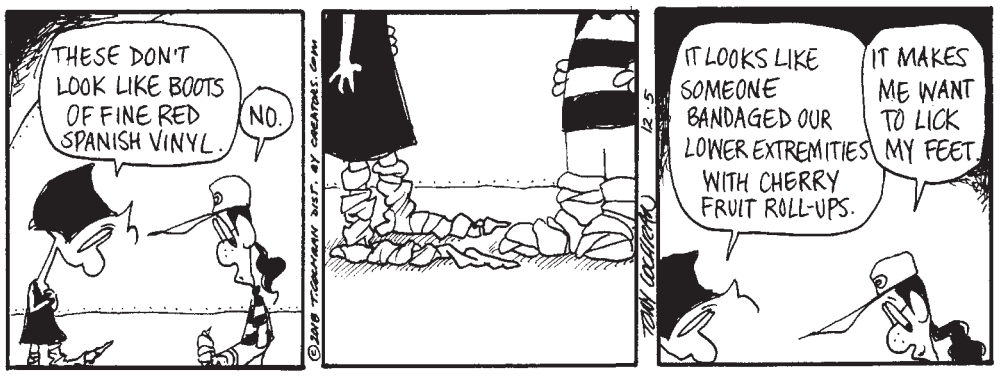
Looking Ahead: 16th Annual Santa Monica Pub Crawl (12/14); Main St. Holiday Party & Tree Lighting (12/8); Meet Me Under The Fig Tree (12/15)

If there's something you think is worth highlighting around town, reach out to me at sean@smdp.com.



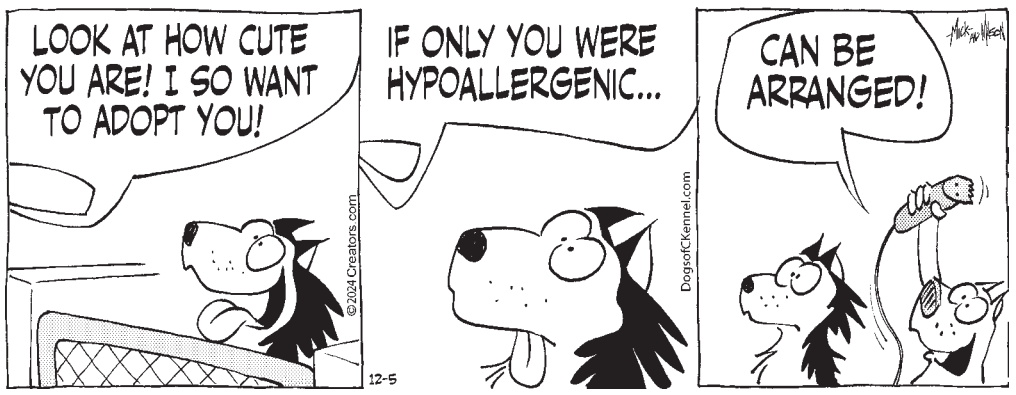
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



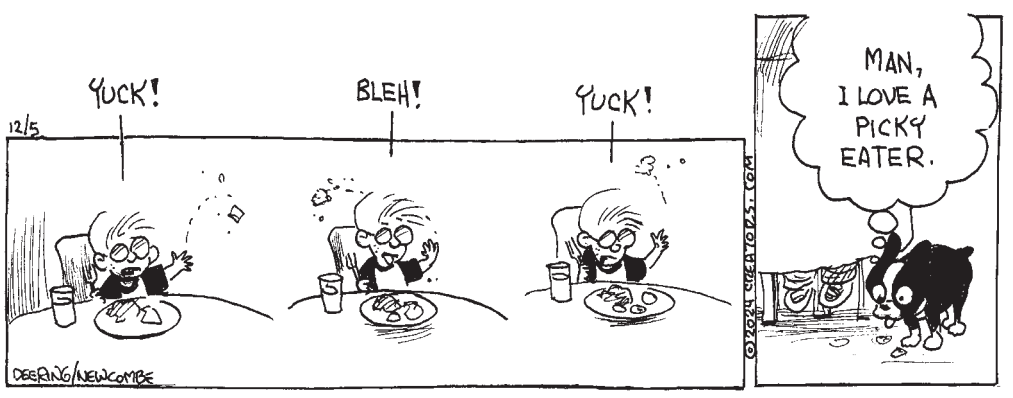
Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



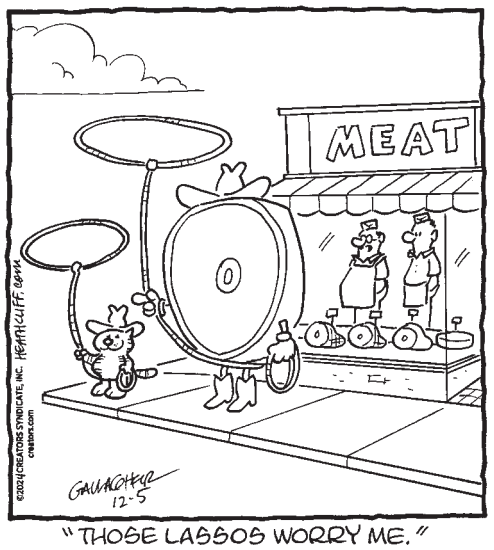
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER



"THOSE LASSOS WORRY ME."

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

© australianwordgames.com.au 6415

Lord Howe holiday

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

Abundant	Endemic	Rest
Accommodation	Fish	Rugged
Airport	Flora	Seafood
Beach	Foyer	Snorkel
Bike	History	Spoil
Birds	Idyllic	Striped marlin
Board	Indulgence	Stunning
Boobies	Museum	Supply
Bush	Ocean	Tour
Cliffs	Old Settlement	UNESCO
Day spa	Petrel	Wine
Dinner	Quiet	

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.

Use the flags on the beach

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smdp Santa Monica Daily Press

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 5)

Being happy actually changes your chemical makeup in this year of joy, health and progress. You cherish other people's time and attention and they will heap it on you in meaningful and abundant ways. More highlights: A surprise award, attendance at events that once seemed of reach, the expansion of a business. You'll be an excellent employer. Scorpio and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 3, 33, 28 and 11.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Love isn't always sweet smiles and cozy moments. Experimenting with different sides of yourself could enrich the relationship. Today, stay open to expressing yourself in new ways and being someone you haven't met yet.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Talk about who you want to be as if you're already that person. You'll cross paths with people who can open doors, inspired by your confidence and vision, ready to help you bring your dreams to life.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You may not have intended to end up here in the relationship, but this is where it's landed. Accept it as your new starting point, and with an open mind, you'll find fresh ways to move forward together.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You've found work you enjoy even more than conventional "fun" activities, and that's a gift. Today, embrace what brings you that unique satisfaction; it's a rare pleasure to find joy where others might not even look.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Even if you tried, you couldn't trace exactly how you arrived here, nor would you be able to duplicate your successes were you given the chance. Trust life's mysterious, winding road, and go forward knowing you'll always be in the right place.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). When things work out the way you want, it feels like destiny is sending you to the heart of your dreams. When they don't, it might feel bad at first, but it's still destiny, sending you to the heart of your dreams, but on a different route.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Balance usually comes naturally to you, though every now and then, you trip up. This is actually a gift; it helps you appreciate your innate talent for keeping things steady, even when life feels momentarily out of sync.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Because you are curious, social and multifaceted, you have relationships with people from different walks of life, with whom you have little in common but for a shared interest or two and the possibility of exchanging joy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You have a way of getting the best performance out of people. Sometimes it's your uplifting words or compliments, but today it's your keen eye, spotting greatness and calling it into the light.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). With so much experience with a subject, it would be easy to overlook something basic. Step back and look at things as though you'd never seen them before. Starting from the very beginning elevates your work to a new level.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Sensitive people will feel how happy you are and will catch your mood to some degree. Because of this, you feel a responsibility to be happier and to generate warmth and excitement for the others.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You have luck for shopping, negotiating and finding just what you've been searching for. Today, your instincts are spot on, guiding you to deals and discoveries that fit your need and delight your people.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

Newsday Crossword

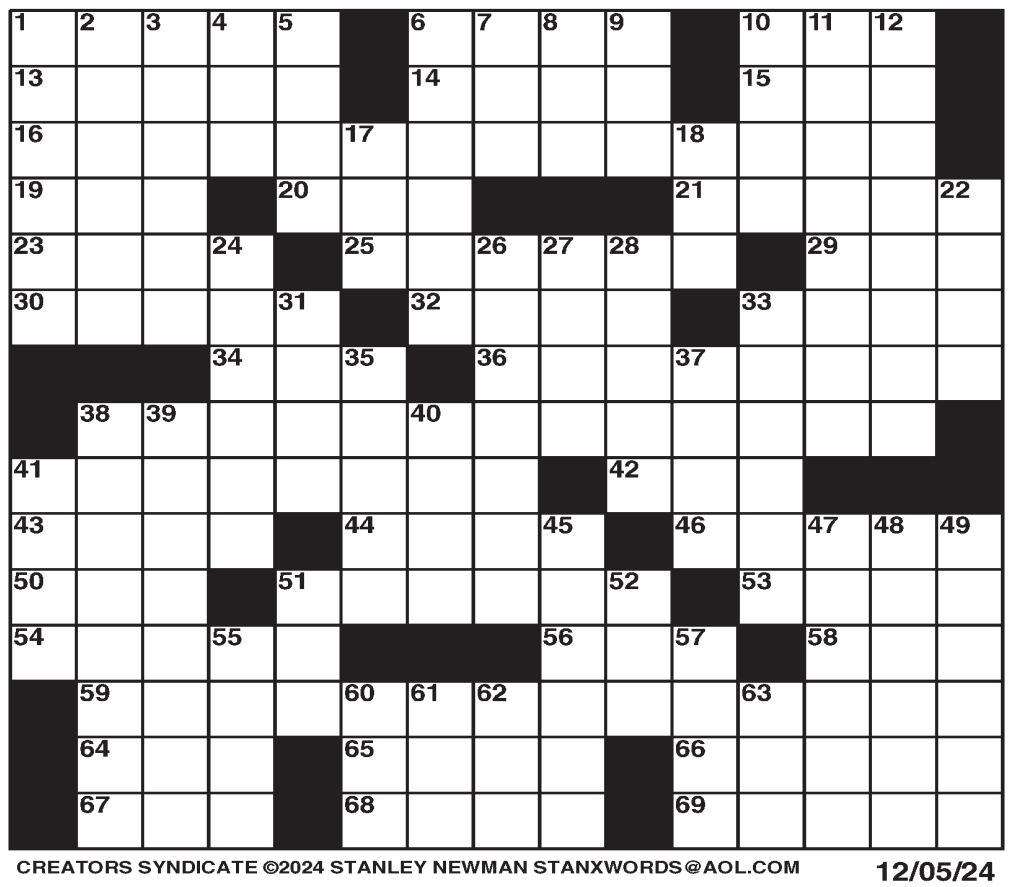
OPPOSITE ATTRACTIONS by S.N.
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 Work hard to clean
6 Splendor
10 Shake up
13 It's very hot for a while
14 Commando activity
15 World Cup cheer
16 Surprising and strange
19 Stick with a kick
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BATTER UP

FROM PAGE 1

were planning this, we didn't expect the Dodgers to win the World Series, but it was a huge bonus for us and we're hoping to tap into that passion for baseball."

"Lacrosse is big in California too," Miranda said, "And cricket is growing in Los Angeles as well, you know, they've got a Major League Cricket team here. And tennis too, the Williams sisters come from this part of the world, plus of course the Olympics are coming to Los Angeles in 2028."

Two, full-size batting nets have been set up in the vast ground floor interior space, along with one slightly smaller net in an area that can be sectioned off for private parties. You can either focus on one sport in particular, or test your skills on all four. A giant digital screen at the far end creates the image of a pitcher, bowler or player or opponent, winding up before a rubber ball about the size of a cricket ball comes hurtling out of a strategically-placed hole in the screen. Surprisingly, it's quite effective and the pitches, bowls, serves and throws will vary depending on your strengths and the adjustable difficulty setting.

Towards the back of the ground floor space is a neat little bar and more space for groups to congregate. Then, at the very back and down a small flight of stairs, is a space that is set to be turned into a stylish speakeasy-themed space, complete with a big, unmarked exterior door that will serve as the main entrance.

Miranda says that to gain entrance, bargoers will be asked a specific question relating to the year 1984, when Los Angeles last hosted the Olympic Games. Although she adds that they might have to provide a few clues, since it's quite a niche subject.

Then there's a mezzanine floor that features the last batting net and another chill out area for groups to hang out in. Food can be ordered through an app directly from the kitchens of partnering outlets that include the Britannia pub and Silverlake Ramen, which is then delivered to the SportsFest address.

"Not only are we able to provide options and choices, but also really highlight everything that Santa Monica has to offer," Miranda said.

"We wanted to create a local clubhouse, a place where locals aren't just coming down to the promenade when they're shopping for a gift or a special event, but that there's a place here for them to come and really exercise. Even if it's just a watch party, or if it's actually getting in the cage for one or two rounds, we're providing something for everyone," Miranda said.

Adorning the wall space is a series of paintings by artists both from Los Angeles and further afield including Larry Zox, Berta Negari and Camille Jun and much of the interior design was done by Lloyd Production Studios.

A complete list of prices and available options can be found at sportsfestus.com. The current plan is to remain open for 84 days — as a nod to the 1984 Olympics — from an as yet unspecific time that Gudhka says will be any day now. However, SportsFest is currently open Mon-Fri, 2pm–2am, Sat 10am–2am and Sun 10am–10pm.

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NOTEWORTHY

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those shows. This is a treat to see him in the intimate legendary Sunset Stip club The Roxy. There will be an opening act TBD. Thurs 8 p.m., The Roxy Theatre, West Hollywood, $125-232 (guaranteed resale)

RECOMMENDED:

Tonight -"KOOZA," CIRQUE DU SOLEIL – Now you don't have to drive to Vegas! This is a good bet as HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, and hopefully I will be able to report back on that, but a couple of friends gave it high marks. No one else really does what they do, on this scale. They invented it. I've only seen a few of their shows but they seem to have retained their high standards all these years, ever since I saw their first one also here on SM Beach, by the Pier, 37 years ago, that launched them to great international success. I think they know they have a rep to maintain with Santa Monicans. Thurs, Fri, Sat, next Thurs 8 p.m., Sat 4:30 p.m., Sun 2 p.m., 5:30 p.m., Santa Monica Pier, $69-310.

BRAHMS with ZUBIN MEHTA – Brahms not on your top composers list? Should be. You think he's just that "Lullaby" guy? True he is a Romantic but his symphonies can stand with the classics, and the 2nd is one of them. The evening opens with his "Violin Concerto," performed by Greek virtuoso Leonidas Kavakos, whom the New York Times calls a wonder on the violin: "The music flowed out of him like a river - big, glistening, and unobstructed, but also tasteful in its frictionless subtleties." The "Second Symphony" features one of the most affecting melodies the composer has written. And with our old LA Phil guy Zubin Mehta on the podium, you can't go wrong. Fri 11 a.m., Sat 8 p.m., Sun 2 p.m., Disney Hall, LA, $69-239.

TOLEDO DIAMOND – His decades-long Sunday night residency at Santa Monica's Harvelle's, the oldest blues bar in LA (almost a century!), is a treasure that you shouldn't assume will always be there.Toledo choreographs (literally) a truly unique show, a blend of '50s hipster jazz and his dancing dames and a most modern smokin' hot band that gets better all the time. Every Sunday 9:30 p.m., Harvelle's Santa Monica, $12.

COMING ATTRACTIONS (also recommended): TOM MORELLO, Roxy, 12/5; "KOOZA," CIRQUE DU SOLEIL, Santa Monica Pier, 12/5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31; BRAHMS with ZUBIN MEHTA, Disney Hall, 12/6, 7, 8; TOLEDO DIAMOND, Harvelle's, 12/8, 15, 22, 29; HOT CLUB OF LOS ANGELES, Cinema Bar, 12/9, 16, 23, 30; ZUBIN MEHTA Conducts SCHOENBERG'S "Gurrelieder," LA PHIL, LA Master Chorale, Disney Hall, 12/13, 15; STEVIE WONDER, Crypto.com Arena, 12/14; BILLIE EILISH, Kia Forum, 12/15, 16, 17, 20, 21; KY-MANI MARLEY, Lodge Room, 12/17; LOSTON HARRIS, Jazz Bakery, 12/21; SAMANTHA FISH, Fonda, 12/21; TONY GILKYSON, RICK HOLMSTROM, Cinema Bar, 12/24.

Charles Andrews has listened to a lot of music of all kinds, including more than 3,000 live shows. He has lived in Santa Monica for 38 years and wouldn't live anywhere else in the world. Really. Send love and/or hate mail to: therealmrmusic@gmail.com

JOB TRAINING

FROM PAGE 1

income students — toward careers that tend to pay less than those that require college degrees.

"This could be a great opportunity for career and technical education, but we have to do it right," said Andy Rotherham, co-founder of Bellwether, a nonprofit educational consulting organization. "There's a lot at stake."

Funding is a primary question mark. While Republicans strongly support career education, it's unclear if that enthusiasm will translate to more money — especially if Congress eliminates the Department of Education, as President-elect Trump has vowed to do.

Career education classes can be some of the most expensive programs in a school district. Supplies, up-to-date equipment, teacher training, smaller class sizes, operation costs and students' certification exams can cost millions, and the costs only increase over time. Schools spend 20%-40% more to educate students in career programs than they spend on those who aren't, research shows.

Most federal funding for career education comes from a 1960s law meant to improve career education. But that funding has not kept up with the escalating costs. Last year Congress allotted $1.4 billion, which was distributed to states through grants. California received $142 million, and supplemented that with an additional $1 billion.

"It's wonderful to see this bipartisan support, but we'd like it to lead to continued investment," said Alisha Hyslop, chief policy, research and content officer at the Association for Career and Technical Education, an advocacy group.

CAREER EDUCATION AND TRACKING

Career and technical education has waxed and waned since its inception in the early 20th century as a way to prepare students, usually from working-class or immigrant families, for jobs in skilled trades.

For decades, most high schools in the U.S. had some form of vocational education. Those programs came under scrutiny in the 1980s and '90s as some complained about tracking practices that left many students without the option to attend a 4-year college because they hadn't taken the required coursework.

Partly in response to that criticism, former President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act in the early 2000s encouraged schools to promote college for all students. As a result, many schools cut back their career education offerings and added more advanced academic classes.

Then the 2008 financial crisis hit. High unemployment coupled with the soaring cost of college led schools to revive their career training programs, but with less tracking. Schools started encouraging all students to take career education classes, and the classes themselves were updated. Welding and auto shop were joined by computer science, graphic design, environmental studies, health care and other fields. In California, students are encouraged to take a career pathway as well as the required classes for admission to public 4-year colleges, although last year only about 11% of students completed both, according to state data.

WELDERS VS. PHILOSOPHERS

Career and technical education is a focal point of Project 2025, the conservative policy roadmap written by the Heritage Foundation as well as the Republican party education platform and President-elect Trump's nominee for education secretary, Linda McMahon. McMahon headed a pro-Trump political action group called America First Action, whose policies include an emphasis on career education in K-12 schools. The Republican platform reads, "(We) will emphasize education to prepare students for great jobs and careers, supporting … schools that offer meaningful work experience."

Sen. Marco Rubio, Trump's nominee for Secretary of State, put it more succinctly: "Welders make more money than philosophers. We need more welders and less philosophers," he said in 2015.

Career education has also been a priority for Democrats. In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond and the Legislature have all promoted career education. In 2022 Newsom created the Golden State Pathways program, a $470 million investment in high school career education, and followed up a year later with the Master Plan on Career Education, outlining a long-term vision. Newsom described it as "a game changer for thousands of students."

In California, the goal is to link career training with college preparation coursework, and tie pathways — sequences of two or three classes — to the local job market. For example, a pathway at a high school near the Port of Long Beach includes classes in global logistics and international business. A pathway at Hollywood High trains students for jobs in the entertainment industry.

MORE TIES TO BUSINESS?

But some educators worry about the fate of career education if the Department of Education, which administers the Perkins Act, is eliminated. Project 2025 suggests moving it to the Department of Labor, where it would likely have stronger ties to business and fewer ties to education organizations. That could impact whether pathway programs continue to have academic components, or include college preparation classes.

"Businesses love CTE because it socializes one of their big costs. Taxpayers are paying to train their workers," said David Stern, education professor emeritus at UC Berkeley who's an expert on career education.

Hyslop shares that concern.

"Certainly CTE has connections to the economy, but at its heart it's an education program. It's about preparing students for their future, whatever that future may be," she said.

A broader question may be whether the push for career education is part of a backlash against college generally. College enrollment has been dropping steadily for a decade, coinciding with a surge in trade school enrollment.

Meanwhile, Trump has proposed big cuts to higher education, and has often expressed disdain for what he described as colleges' leftward tilt. Project 2025 calls for the government to place trade schools on equal footing with 4-year colleges.

"This new interest in CTE captures the anti-elitist sentiment of the time," Stern said. He added that preparation for college does not have to conflict with preparation for careers, and some programs, such as the California Partnership Academies, prepare students for both.

Rotherham agreed. "On the right, there's definitely antagonism toward college," he said.

But they both said regardless of the politics behind it, a national focus on career education could be transformative — if it doesn't railroad students away from college opportunities. Ideally, students can gain career experience in high school, while also learning poetry and civics and other important academic subjects, Rotherham said.

"Power is having choices," Rotherham said. "That's what we want for kids. The option to change their mind if they want."

This article was originally published by CalMatters.

'Tis the Season

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