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Volume 25 Issue 25

THE WEEKENDER 12/19-12/21

smdp.com

JSX to begin passenger flights amid legal challenge

MATTHEW HALL

Daily Press Editor

JSX launches passenger service out of the Santa Monica Airport today, marking a new chapter for the facility despite a resident lawsuit challenging the commercial service.

The Dallas-based carrier will operate 30-seat ATR 42-600 turboprop aircraft on daily flights under a three-year lease and commercial operations permit approved by the city in October. JSX markets itself as a "hop-on" public charter airline offering streamlined check-in procedures and currently serves roughly 29 airports across the United States and Mexico.

The company's initial plans call for at least six departures per day from Santa Monica Airport, with potential expansion to nine daily flights. JSX said more than 2,200 Santa Monica residents already use its service from other regional airports, accounting for over 14,000 trips in recent years.



Courtesy photo

JSX: The airline is starting service at the Santa Monica Airport.

The service represents a new kind of operation for Santa Monica Airport, which has historically operated as a general aviation facility serving flight training and charter services rather than scheduled passenger flights.

City officials approved JSX's

commercial operations permit and lease in October following what

SEE **JSX** PAGE 9

SMDP launches new website as newsletter growth skyrockets

MATTHEW HALL

Daily Press Editor

The Santa Monica Daily Press unveiled a redesigned website at www.smdp.com this week, greeting visitors with an updated digital platform while maintaining the vital local content that has defined the independent daily for a quarter century.

The launch represents the latest evolution for a publication that has made adaptation central to its identity since three entrepreneurs from Aspen launched it on Nov. 13, 2001, filling the void left when the Evening Outlook closed after 123 years of publication.

Publisher Ross Furukawa, one of the founding partners still active at the paper, has credited

SEE **WEBSITE** PAGE 9

Coming Home: Pali High's reopening signals a community in recovery

When Palisades Charter High School reopens its home campus in January, the moment will mark far more than the return of students to classrooms. It will signal a turning point for a community that has spent the past year navigating displacement, uncertainty, and rebuilding.

For Principal Pam Magee, the reopening represents both

an operational milestone and an emotional one. "This isn't just about opening doors," Magee said. "It's about bringing our people back to the place that shapes their identity. Schools are communities, and coming home allows healing to truly begin."

After months of operating away from its home campus following the fires, Pali High's return carries deep meaning for its nearly 3,000 students, educators, and families, and for the broader Palisades community that felt the absence acutely. "Being back on campus restores a sense of normalcy that our students have been craving," Magee added. "It gives them stability, pride, and the opportunity to reconnect with one another in ways that only happen when you're

together in a shared space." That sense of reconnection extends well beyond the school gates.

For those overseeing the school's long-term direction, the reopening represents a moment of continuity, a reaffirmation of the school's mission amid disruption. "Reopening the campus is about restoring more than a location - it's about restoring trust, rhythm, and

confidence in the future," said Nick Melovin, LAUSD School Board Member representing Palisades. "This community rallied around its students during an incredibly difficult year, and returning home reflects the collective commitment to move forward stronger than before"

SEE **PALI** PAGE 8







DOJ vowed to punish those who disrupt Trump's immigration crackdown. Dozens of cases have crumbled

The federal agent described her wounds as "boo-boos."

Nevertheless, the Department of Justice aggressively pursued the alleged perpetrator. They jailed Sidney Lori Reid on a charge of felony assault, accusing her of injuring the agent during a July protest of President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown in Washington, D.C.

When grand jurors thrice declined to indict the 44-year-old on the felony, prosecutors tried her on a misdemeanor.

Body camera footage played at trial revealed that Reid had not intentionally struck the agent. Instead, the agent had scratched her hand on a wall while assisting another agent who had shoved Reid and told her to "shut the f—- up" and "mind her own business"

It took jurors less than two hours to acquit the animal hospital worker.

"It seemed like my life was just going to be taken away from me," said Reid, who spent two days in jail and worried she would lose her new job and apartment. "It broke my heart because this is supposed to be a good and fair country and I did not see anything surrounding my case that was good or fair at all for anybody."

Reid's case was part of the Justice Department's monthslong effort to prosecute people accused of assaulting or hindering federal officers while protesting the Republican president's immigration

crackdown and military deployments. Attorney General Pam Bondi has ordered prosecutors to charge those accused of assaulting officers "with the highest provable offense available under the law." In a recent statement, Bondi pledged that offenders will face "severe consequences."

The Justice Department has struggled to deliver on that commitment, however. In examining 166 federal criminal cases brought since May against people in four Democraticled cities at the epicenter of demonstrations, The Associated Press found:

- Of the 100 people initially charged with felony assaults on federal agents, 55 saw their charges reduced to misdemeanors or dismissed outright. At least 23 pleaded guilty, most of them to reduced charges in deals with prosecutors that resulted in little or no jail time.
- More than 40% of the cases involved relatively minor misdemeanor charges, a figure that appears to undermine Trump's claims that many of those accused are domestic terrorists.
- All five defendants, including Reid, who went to trial so far were acquitted.
- Prosecutors have successfully secured felony indictments against at least 58 people, some initially charged with misdemeanors. Those people have been accused of an assortment of assaults that include throwing rocks at federal vehicles, and punching or kicking officers. Those cases are awaiting

trial.

Several factors help explain the mixed record. Sometimes prosecutors have failed to win grand jury indictments required to prosecute someone on a felony. In other instances, videos and testimony have called into question the initial allegations, resulting in prosecutors downgrading offenses. In dozens of cases, officers suffered only minor injuries, or no injuries at all, undercutting a key component of the felony assault charge that requires the potential for serious bodily harm

Felonies carry stiff sentences, often years in prison. A misdemeanor conviction, on the other hand, typically results in no jail time or only a few weeks or months behind bars.

Former prosecutors and law professors said the AP's analysis raises questions about how the Justice Department has prosecuted protesters.

"It's clear from this data that the government is being extremely aggressive and charging for things that ordinarily wouldn't be charged at all," said Mary McCord, a former federal prosecutor who is the director of Georgetown University Law Center's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy. "The other thing that is missing here from the way the federal government appears to be looking at these protests is there seems to be no respect for First Amendment rights. They appear to want to chill people from protesting against the administration's mass

deportation plans."

Randall Eliason, a former federal prosecutor and former adjunct professor at the George Washington University Law School, said Justice Department officials could be working on other cases instead of "minor, minor misdemeanors."

"Many of these cases also show how the rhetoric on Twitter and in press releases and statements is not surviving the courtroom," he said. "What that tells you is that the Trump administration is hoping to send a message and chill future protests, not pursue serious criminal cases that need to be prosecuted."

The Justice Department said it will continue to seek the most serious available charges against those alleged to have put federal agents in harm's way.

"We will not tolerate any violence directed toward our brave law enforcement officials who are working tirelessly to keep Americans safe," said Natalie Baldassarre, a department spokesperson. "Those who attack law enforcement will be held fully accountable for their actions, despite the best efforts of activist liberal judges who would rather see violent criminals walk free."

From the start of Trump's second term through Nov. 24, the Department of Homeland Security says there have been 238 assaults on Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel nationwide, up from

SEE **PROTEST** PAGE 12







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California diversion program allows some to keep vehicular manslaughter charge off driving record

In California, you can kill someone with your car and not even have a point on your

That's because of a criminal justice reform law passed in 2020, allowing judges to effectively erase a misdemeanor case from existence. It shields people accused of "lowlevel" crimes from the stigma of having a conviction on their record, something that can limit work and housing opportunities.

But an ongoing CalMatters investigation found that the new misdemeanor diversion program has also had an unintended consequence: It allows some people charged with vehicular manslaughter to keep the case off of their driving record.

That means you could face more penalties for a speeding ticket than for running someone over.

Allison Lyman first heard about misdemeanor diversion from a Sacramento County prosecutor. In April, her 23-year-old son, Connor Lopez, was riding his motorcycle in Elk Grove when an oncoming car made a left turn and collided with him.

Lopez, a piano teacher, died in the roadway. The district attorney's office charged the driver, Harjit Kaur, with misdemeanor vehicular manslaughter — alleging that her failure to yield to oncoming traffic caused the fatal crash, court records show.

Then the prosecutor told Lyman to brace herself: The case could be wiped off Kaur's record and sealed from view if Kaur asks for diversion and a judge grants it.

'I'm 43 and I will have to live the rest of my life without my son. But there'll be no record of it for her?" Lyman said.

It's part of a larger anger and frustration Lyman has at how the system is treating her son's death. She said she was talking to police and one of the officers kept referring to the case as "low-level."

'She took my son's life, but that's how they're seen — low-level," Lyman said.

Diversion programs have been around for decades nationwide. They essentially let a judge pause a case and order a defendant to meet certain requirements over a specified period of time - like going to rehab and doing community service. If the defendant successfully completes the terms, their case is dismissed. Some diversion programs focus on certain types of criminal defendants, such as military veterans or people with mental health issues. A prosecutor often had to agree

But the 2020 law lets judges in California order diversion for almost all misdemeanors, with few, if any, requirements that defendants have to fulfill, and over the objection of a prosecutor. Five years later, court records show defense attorneys are routinely requesting diversion not just for offenses such as shoplifting and drug possession but also for cases in which someone died.

Rochelle Beardsley, assistant chief deputy district attorney in Sacramento County, said that's like telling a victim's family that their loved one's life meant nothing.

"That's unfair to folks that have suffered

greatly already," she said.

CalMatters identified about three dozen drivers who have avoided a vehicular manslaughter conviction through the misdemeanor diversion law.

The actual number could be much higher because such cases are often sealed and scrubbed from searchable databases at county courthouses. CalMatters was able to identify instances in which diversion was granted by visiting courthouses around the state. In some cases, the files weren't sealed because the defendant hadn't yet completed the terms of the diversion program and the case was still active. Other times, we found cases where diversion was successfully completed but the records were still visible in court databases.

Vehicular manslaughter can be charged as a misdemeanor or felony, depending on the circumstances. Prosecutors typically charge a misdemeanor if the driver wasn't intoxicated or driving in an extremely dangerous manner like excessive speeding.

In court, prosecutors and victims' families often make emotional pleas for justice in arguing against letting the drivers off. Sometimes the judges listen and deny diversion. When they don't, there's a clear practical impact: The defendant keeps a clean driving record. That's because diversion isn't considered a conviction, and only violations for which a motorist is convicted are listed on a person's DMV record.

That means the law isn't just allowing the defendants to escape criminal penalties. It can allow them to avoid DMV punishments, too. Manslaughter typically counts as two points on a driver's record and can lead to higher insurance premiums, traffic school and even a license suspension if the driver racks up additional points for things such as speeding or running a red light.

Of the three dozen drivers we identified who were granted diversion, there's no indication of the manslaughter case on any of their driving records. (Some of the records do show the driver was in a collision. But the DMV records the agency released don't reveal who was at fault or the crash's severity.) Most currently have a valid license. Nearly a third of the drivers have gotten a traffic ticket or been involved in another collision after the fatal crash, their DMV records show.

That includes a young man in Los Angeles who fell asleep at the wheel and ran over a bicyclist. He got a red-light ticket just a few months after the judge granted diversion and speeding ticket this summer, shortly after his case was dismissed. In Alameda County, a driver who was in a fatal 2022 crash that killed his passenger got a speeding ticket just two months before a judge granted diversion. In Butte County, a driver who was in a fatal 2020 crash got two traffic tickets last year shortly before a judge granted him diversion and then promptly got a speeding ticket.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Daniel Lowenthal helped craft the 2020 legislation. He said he's "very protective of diversion"

SEE TRAFFIC PAGE 15



WATER TEMP: **62.6**

SURF: 0-1ft

Smaller surf off easing swell. Light winds due all day, best in the morning. Mainly small scale WNW swell remnants, with waves running thigh to waist high, after the early morning high tide backs out for a while. Ebbing tide mid-day looks like the best window. Light/variable winds in the morning, followed by a light+ WNW afternoon sea breeze

SATURDAY POOR TO FAIR SURF: 0-1ft Shin to knee

Waves getting smaller as swell fades. Winds looking light, AM most favorable. Lingering little WNW swell for knee to waist high surf, after the mid-morning high tide ebbs out. Lower tide helps a little later morning/mid-day. Waves taper off in the afternoon. Looking like another day of light winds, offshore early, sea breeze for the afternoon.



Friday: Sunny, with a high near 70. Light and variable wind becoming west southwest 5 to 10 mph in the afternoon.

Friday Night: Patchy fog after 10pm. Otherwise, increasing clouds, with a low around 54. Calm wind.

Saturday: Patchy fog before 10am. Otherwise, partly sunny, with a high near 65. South southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 55.

Data	Davi	Time (I CT/I DT)	Duadiatad	/64\ : - /
Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted	(ft)High/Low
2025/12/19	Fri	01:34 AM	2.53	L
2025/12/19	Fri	07:58 AM	5.96	Н
2025/12/19	Fri	3:27 PM	-0.70	L
2025/12/19	Fri	10:05 PM	3.46	Н
2025/12/20	Sat	02:06 AM	2.54	L
2025/12/20	Sat	08:29 AM	6.00	Н
2025/12/20	Sat	4:02 PM	-0.73	L
2025/12/20	Sat	10:42 PM	3.45	Н
2025/12/21	Sun	02:40 AM	2.56	L
2025/12/21	Sun	09:01 AM	5.95	Н
2025/12/21	Sun	4:37 PM	-0.69	L
2025/12/21	Sun	11:20 PM	3.45	Н
2025/12/22	Mon	03:16 AM	2.60	L
2025/12/22	Mon	09:35 AM	5.81	Н
2025/12/22	Mon	5:12 PM	-0.58	L
2025/12/23	Tue	12:00 AM	3.49	Н
2025/12/23	Tue	03:58 AM	2.66	L

· Daily Lottery

the event of any discrepancies, California State laws and California Lottery regulations will prevail. Complete game nation and prize claiming instructions are available at California Lottery retailers. Visit the California State Lotter



Draw Date: 12/17 25 33 53 62 66 Jackpot: 1.5 M

Jackpot: 90 M

1 3 4 17 40







1st: 01 - Gold Rush 2nd: 11 - Money Bags 3rd · 09 - Winning Spiri Race Time: 1:42.64

Draw Date: 12/17

Draw Date: 12/17

Draw Date: 12/17

EVENING: 0 9 6

Draw Date: 12/17

MIDDAY: 2 3 4

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

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Summons

SUMMONS (CITACION JUDICIAL) Case No. 25SMCV00899 NOTICE TO DEFENDANT (AVISO AL DEMANDADO): HELENE BERK IRVIN, an individual; and DOES 1 through 25, inclusive. YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF (LO ESTÁ DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE): JEFFERY MAROZ, an individual. NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the nation below. You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site (www. awhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts

Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo. ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. ¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación. Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia. Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos

un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos exentos por imponer un grasobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 ó más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso. The name and address of the court is (El nombre y dirección de la corte es): Los Angeles County Superior Court, 1725 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is (El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): J.Scott Russo, Russo & Duckworth, LLP, 3404 Via Oporto, Ste. 201, Newport Beach, CA 92663 949-752-7106. DATE (Fechal): 02/21/2025. Clerk, by (Secretario) David W. Slayton, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court, By W. Lee, Deputy (Adjunto) Clerk. Electronically FILED by Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles 2/21/2025 3:04 PM David W. Slayton, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court, By W. Lee, Deputy Clerk. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/05/2025, 12/12/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025

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Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25TRCP00526. Superior Court of California. County of Los Angeles. 825 Maple Ave. Torrance, CA 90503. Petition of Layla Marie Toma for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner Lavla Marie Toma filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Lavla Marie Toma to Lavla Toma Murad, THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause. if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 01/30/2025, Time: 9:30 A.M., Dept: N/A. The address of the court is Southwest District - Inglewood Courthouse, One Regent Street, Inglewood, CA 90301. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 12/09/2025. TAMARA HALL, Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026, 01/09/2026

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25STCP02335. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 111 North Hill Street, Room 118, Los Angeles, CA 90012 Petition of YUN MA and CHUNLIN YANG for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner YUN MA and CHUNLIN YANG filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: ALAN JUNHAO PENG to ALAN YUNYI YANG. THE $\hbox{COURT ORDERS that all persons interested}\\$ in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 01/23/2026, Time: 8:30AM, Dept: 45, Room: 529. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: JUN 25 2025. VIRGINIA KEENY. Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/12/2025, 12/19/2025 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25STCP02338. Superior Court of California. County of Los Angeles. 111 North Hill Street, Room 118, Los Angeles CA 90012. Petition of QIRAN WANG and HUAYI WEI for Change of Name, TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner QIRAN WANG and HUAYI WEI filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: OLIVIA WEI to OLIVIA TSUN. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 01/03/2026, Time: 8:30AM, Dept: 95, Room: 539. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 11/24/2025. VIRGINIA KEENY. Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/12/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026

GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

CalPERS' \$60 billion investment in 'climate solutions' lacks environmental standards, transparency



Photo by Larry Valenzuela, CalMatters/CatchLight Local **ELK HILLS:** Oil pumps near the Elk Hills Power Station on March 29, 2024.

In November the California Public Employees Retirement System announced it invested \$60 billion in "climate solutions," toward a goal of \$100 billion by 2030. While the announcement highlighted several deals, the pension's overall strategy remains shrouded in secrecy.

As the largest public pension in the U.S., what CalPERS does has major impact. Yet it does not disclose a complete list of its climate-focused investments, nor the criteria it used to select them.

When asked how CalPERS defines climate investments, its staff points to a "taxonomy of mitigation, transition and adaptation" — meaning investments that reduce carbon emissions, support cleaner technologies for polluting businesses and help communities adapt to climate impacts.

This taxonomy captures the right themes but is a woefully sparse definition for a pension that prides itself on climate leadership.

Climate finance around the world faces credibility challenges. Research has found climate dollars going to everything from airports to ice cream shops.

CalPERS can and should do better. The Sierra Club and the California Common Good coalition have asked CalPERS to be more transparent and adopt science-based principles to guide its climate investment strategy.

That became more important after research revealed CalPERS' climate plan included \$3.56 billion invested in fossil fuel

companies, as well as in airlines, plastics manufacturers and tech companies.

CalPERS' climate plan aims to not only reduce carbon emissions through its portfolio, but to reduce the risk that climate change poses to the pension fund.

Risk reduction should be front of mind, as studies show pension funds are particularly vulnerable to the wide-ranging economic impact of climate change and could face declines in investment return of up to 50% by 2040. That would be a massive shock to all pensions working to deliver safe, secure retirements for beneficiaries.

What remains unclear is how CalPERS' investments in polluting companies actually address climate risk.

CalPERS has defended its fossil fuel outlay by emphasizing the investments are "small," and "a green asset is a green asset." That doesn't cut it. The investments lack what is called "additionality" — they're not new investments, and they don't unlock resources for decarbonization.

Simply put, holding investments in fossil fuel companies does not protect workers' savings from the systemic risk of climate change.

A climate plan that counts anything with a whiff of "green" as a climate investment does not represent a commitment to allocating capital where it's needed to scale clean energy solutions and stabilize markets. Every dollar invested in polluting

GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Newsom's \$18 billion budget gap has roots in pandemic aid ending



Photo by Miguel Gutierrez Jr., CalMatters

SACRAMENTO: Gov. Gavin Newsom at a press conference at the Capitol Annex Swing Space in Sacramento on Aug. 21, 2025. He faces deficits rooted in overspending after federal pandemic aid ended.

When Gov. Gavin Newsom unveils his first draft of the state's 2026-27 budget next month, he'll reveal whether he intends to deal squarely with its chronic, multi-billion-dollar deficit or punt the shortfall to his successor.

Legislative Analyst Gabe Petek, the Legislature's independent fiscal advisor, estimates the state faces an \$18 billion gap between projected spending and likely revenues next year and, if left unaddressed, the deficit will grow to \$35 billion a year.

Meanwhile, Petek says, the state has rung up \$21.6 billion in off-the-books debt to cover deficits in recent fiscal years.

Petek and others have warned about the possibility of a serious recession afflicting the national economy which would exacerbate the budget's imbalance and strain California's emergency reserves, which have already been tapped to cover shortfalls.

Even without a recession, California's economy is, in Petek's words, "sluggish." Jobs are shrinking, and at 5.6% of the labor force, California's unemployment rate remains the highest of any state.

The recent history of papering over deficits with gimmicks and borrowed money is not an encouraging signal of a forthright approach. However, perhaps Newsom will opt to balance California's books before embarking on a near-certain presidential campaign.

Unfortunately, the state is not alone in being plagued by yawning gaps between income and outgo. Throughout California, school districts, cities, counties and other units of local government are facing deficits rooted in the same dynamics that

led to red ink in state finances — immense injections of federal relief funds during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's been est imated that the feds pumped as much as \$600 billion into California through state and local governments to counteract the pandemic's economic impacts, not counting many other billions that businesses and individuals received directly.

The federal aid gave officials cash to spend with few safeguards and fueled a short-lived jolt of taxes, particularly income taxes.

The Newsom administration interpreted the windfall as a permanent increase in revenue that led the governor to declare, in 2022, a \$97.5 billion surplus. He and the Legislature immediately ramped up spending. But the surplus never materialized, and eventually the administration acknowledged that it had over-estimated revenues by \$165 billion four years.

By then, however, the additional spending, especially for an expansion of medical care, was lodged in state law, and the state was left with what is termed a "structural deficit" in the \$20 billion range.

Meanwhile, local governments and school districts were using their pandemic aid to satisfy the demands by employee unions for salary increases, which often could not be covered once the federal aid vanished. Inflation in living costs ratcheted up union salary demands even further.

A new report by the Fiscal Crisis & Management Assistance Team, which monitors California school district

SEE **NEWSOM** PAGE 15

Santa Monica Daily Press

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No. 2025268677 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: SWISS COPYWRITING SERVICE, 4108 Del Rey Ave, Apt 520, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292, Los Angeles County. Registered Owner(s): Swiss Luster, 4108 Del Rey Ave, Apt 520, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292. This business is conducted by: an Individual. The date registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 08/2022. s/ Swiss Luster, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 12/3/2025. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to be published 12/5/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/19/2025

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT File No. 2025268656 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: MELODY GODFRED, 2632 WILSHIRE BLVD #360, SANTA MONICA, CA 90403, LOS ANGELES COUNTY. AI #ON 3451716. Registered Owner(s): WRITE IN COLOR, INC., 2632 WILSHIRE BLVD #360, SANTA MONICA, CA 90403. This business is conducted by: a Corporation. The date registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 01/2018. s/ MELODY GODFRED, PRESIDENT. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 12/3/2025. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish: 12/12/2025, 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025, 10/2/2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT File No. 2025270911. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: MITSUHARU HADEISHI LLC. 1460 W 182ND ST. GARDENA. CA 90248, County of Los Angeles, Registered Owner(s): MITSU HADEISHI LLC, 1460 W 182ND ST, GARDENA, CA 90248. This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 04/2025. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true any material matter pursuant to Section 17913 of the Business and Professions Code that the registrant knows to be false is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000)). /s/ MITSUHARU HADEISHI, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 12/5/2025. NOTICE: This Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious another under Federal, State, or Common Law (See Section 14411 et seg., Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026, 01/09/2026

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FIIE No. 2025275797. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: FOURTH WALL CONSULTANTS, 3201 WILSHIRE BLVD SUITE 301, SANTA MONICA, CA 90403, County of Los Angeles. Registered Owner(s): KAITLIN WIECHERT, 3201 WILSHIRE BLVD SUITE 301, SANTA MONICA, CA 90403. This business is conducted by: an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed

above on N/A. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true any material matter pursuant to Section 17913 of the Business and Professions Code that the registrant knows to be false is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000)). /s/ KAITLIN WIECHERT, OWNER. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 12/11/2025. NOTICE: This Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed before that time The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or Common Law (See Section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026, 01/09/2026

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 2025270911. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: MITSUHARU HADEISHI LLC, 1460 W 182ND ST, GARDENA, CA 90248, County of Los Angeles. Registered Owner(s): MITSU HADEISHI LLC, 1460 W 182ND ST. GARDENA, CA 90248. This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 04/2025. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true any material matter pursuant to Section 17913 of the Business and Professions Code that the registrant knows to be false is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000)). /s/ MITSUHARU HADEISHI, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 12/5/2025. NOTICE: This Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious another under Federal, State, or Common Law (See Section 14411 et seg., Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/19/2024, 12/26/2024, 01/02/2025, 01/09/2025

No. 2025276548. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: RXO TECHNOLOGIES. 624 EUCLID ST., SANTA MONICA, CA 90402, County of Los Angeles. Registered Owner(s): DOUGLAS JAMES MAYERS, 624 EUCLID ST., SANTA MONICA, CA 90402. This business is conducted by: an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true any material matter pursuant to Section 17913 of the Business and Professions Code that the registrant knows to be false is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000)) /s/ DOUGLAS JAMES MAYERS, OWNER, This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 12/12/2025. NOTICE:

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT File

DBA

This Fictitious Name Statement expires five years from the date it was filed in the office of the County Clerk. A new Fictitious Business Name Statement must be filed before that time. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a Fictitious Business Name in violation of the rights of another under Federal, State, or Common Law (See Section 14411 et seq., Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025. 01/02/2026. 01/09/2026

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25SMCP00630. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, Santa Monica Courthouse, 1725 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. Petition of Patricia Ann Leedy-Kahn for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner Patricia Ann Leedy-Kahn filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: Patricia Ann Leedy-Kahn to Tish Ann Leedy-Kahn. THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 01/23/2026, Time: 8:30 AM, Dept: K. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation. printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 12/10/2025. Lawrence H. Cho, Judge of the Superior Court. SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/19/2025, 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026, 01/09/2026

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 25STCP02340. Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 111 North Hill Street, Room 118, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Petition of YANG ZHANG for Change of Name. TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner YANG ZHANG filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: JAKE CHENG ZHANG to ANDREW ZHANG, THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. NOTICE OF HEARING: Date: 01/23/2026, Time: 8:30AM, Dept: 45. The address of the court is same as noted above. A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation printed in this county: SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS. Date: 06/25/2025. VIRGINIA KEENY, DAILY PRESS Publish: 12/12/2025, 12/19/2025. 12/26/2025, 01/02/2026

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CITY OF SANTA MONICA ORDINANCE NUMBER 2838 (CCS) (CITY COUNCIL SERIES)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA AMENDING CHAPTER 13.04, VACANT PROPERTIES, OF ARTICLE 13, NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION, OF THE SANTA MONICA MUNICIPAL CODE TO REQUIRE THE REGISTRATION OF VACANT PROPERTIES

The following is a summary of Ordinance Number 2838 (CCS) prepared by the Office of the City Attorney:

Ordinance Number 2838 (CCS) ("the Ordinance") amends Chapter 13.04 of the Santa Monica Municipal Code ("SMMC") to require the registration of vacant properties by July 1, 2026 or within 60 days of the property becoming vacant, whichever is later. The Ordinance amends SMMC section 13.04.030 to add new definitions related to the tier classification of vacant properties and to clarify existing definitions relative to Chapter 13.04, and amends SMMC section 13.04.040 by reorganizing existing vacant properties standards. The Ordinance adds new SMMC section 13.04.045 to require that every person who owns or has control of a vacant property register the property with the City on a form provided by the City and that such person pay a vacant property registration fee. The Ordinance adds new SMMC sections 13.04.047 and 13.04.080 to require the payment of vacant property monitoring fees in an amount depending on the tier classification of the vacant property. The Ordinance amends SMMC section 13.04.060 to clarify the Director of Community Development's authority to waive any vacant property standard and to place or modify conditions on such waiver. The Ordinance adds SMMC section 13.04.070 to authorize the City Manager or designee to promulgate regulations to implement Chapter 13.04.

The full text of the above Ordinance is available upon request from the office of the City Clerk, located at 1685 Main Street, Room 102, Santa Monica. Phone: (310) 458-8211.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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As oil and gas companies pivot to plastic, California neighborhoods become sacrifice zones again



Photo by Miguel Gutierrez Jr., CalMatters **SACRAMENTO:** Plastic waste in a recycling bin at a home in Sacramento on June 30, 2022.

The fossil fuel industry is pivoting. As demand for gasoline declines, oil and gas companies are betting their future on plastic. What once powered our cars is now being refined, cracked and polymerized into bottles, packaging and single-use products that will outlive us all.

This shift isn't just a climate concern — it's a public health crisis. Plastics are fossil fuels in another form. And the communities most exposed to their production bear the highest health burdens.

A new report from the UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation on what defines a plastic-burdened community traces how this expanding plastic economy maps directly onto California's oil and gas footprint.

Even as California celebrates its climate leadership, our neighborhoods remain entwined with the legacies of fossil fuel infrastructure. More than 2.5 million Californians live within a kilometer of an active or idle oil or gas well.

There are pumpjacks in Inglewood, refineries along the Wilmington corridor and wells beside schools in Kern County. Refinery infrastructure — much of it feeding plastic precursor production — also is heavily concentrated in Los Angeles County, the most populous region in the state.

UNEQUAL EXPOSURE

The science is unequivocal: living near

oil and gas development is linked to a wide array of health harms: respiratory disease, cardiovascular illness, adverse birth outcomes and elevated cancer risk. The higher odds for these conditions persist even when controlling for socioeconomic and environmental factors.

In California and beyond, research shows pollutants from drilling and refining — such as volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxides, particulate matter and formaldehyde — degrade air quality and increase asthma, heart attack and low-birth-weight rates.

The burden of these exposures falls unevenly, our analysis shows.

Neighborhoods closest to wells and refineries have far higher proportions of Latino and Black residents, lower incomes and greater health vulnerabilities. On average, for each refinery within 1.5 miles of a community, the median household income is nearly \$11,000 lower, poverty rates are 5.5% higher and emergency-room visits for asthma and heart disease are significantly elevated.

The environmental injustices of the oil age are being repackaged in the plastic economy. Globally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development projects plastic production will triple by 2060. Petrochemicals already account for roughly 14% of oil use and by midcentury could drive nearly half of global

SEE **OIL AND GAS** PAGE 15

COMMUNITY NEWS

Los Angeles

Mental Health Department Screened 'Rosemead' with Lucy Liu

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health hosted a special screening of the award-winning film "Rosemead" at AMC Century City 15, followed by a panel discussion on mental health, families and cultural values.

The panel featured the film's lead actor and producer Lucy Liu, director Eric Lin, actor Lawrence Shou and LACDMH Director Lisa H. Wong, Psy.D.

The critically acclaimed film tells the story of an ailing woman who takes drastic measures to protect her troubled teenage son. Liu stars as the mother, while Shou plays her son, who faces dark obsessions. Set against the tensions of a Chinese American community, "Rosemead" portrays a family pushed to the edge.

"'Rosemead' captures the emotional landscape of Asian immigrant life and provides a voice to the complicated emotions many in our immigrant communities struggle to name," Wong said.

The film is inspired by a true story from a 2017 Los Angeles Times article. The real-life incident occurred in the San Gabriel Valley city of the same name.

Wong led the panel discussion, which focused on the resilience, cultural traditions and family bonds of Asian immigrant communities in Los Angeles County. She emphasized the importance of de-stigmatizing mental health and opening dialogue about seeking help.

"People do not have to face these challenges alone — there are culturally and linguistically responsive resources available throughout Los Angeles County," Wong said.

LACDMH is committed to providing mental health support to county residents, including the Asian American community, in culturally and linguistically responsive settings. Mental health resources can be accessed by calling the 24/7 helpline at (800) 854-7771.

The department invites feedback about its programs through stakeholder engagement, such as the Asian Pacific Islander Underserved Cultural Communities group, and encourages public comment and participation to help improve its services.

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF

Los Angeles

County Releases Annual Hate Crime Report Showing Second-Highest Total in 44 Years

The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations released its annual hate crime report Thursday, Dec. 4, revealing 1,355 reported hate crimes in 2024 — the second-highest total in the report's 44-year history.

The report shows record-high levels of hate crimes targeting African Americans, LGBTQ+ individuals, Jewish people, Latinos, Middle Easterners, women, Israelis, Muslims and Scientologists. The data also notes significant increases in crimes occurring in schools and cases connected to conflicts in the Middle East.

"Each of these numbers represents a person whose dignity was violated and whose community feels that harm," said Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath. "This year's report makes clear that hate isn't slowing — it's evolving and appearing in the daily lives of far too many Angelenos."

Key findings include:

African Americans comprised 51% of racial hate crime victims, with 345 anti-Black crimes — the highest number ever reported.

Anti-transgender crimes reached 102, the largest number documented, with 95% being violent crimes. Anti-Middle Eastern crimes increased 118% from 22 to 48.

Anti-female crimes grew 75% from 20 to 35, setting a record.

Hate crimes at schools increased from 139 to 147, representing 11% of all hate crimes.

Crimes involving specific language about Middle East conflicts increased from 64 to 81.

Race, ethnicity and national origin remained the most common motivation, constituting 48% of all hate crimes with 678 victims — the highest count in the current database.

Since 1980, the commission has compiled and analyzed hate crime data submitted by over 100 law enforcement agencies, educational institutions and community-based organizations throughout Los Angeles County.

The complete report, including hate crime maps, graphs and tables, is available at hrc.lacounty.gov.

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- 4 p.m. Family Service

A family-friendly "No Muss, No Fuss" Christmas Pageant for all ages. Costumes will be available at the door for all children to participate. (Approx. 45 min. In-person and online.)

- 8 p.m. Candlelight Service

Join us for a traditional candlelight service, accompanied by the Chancel Choir, organ, and harp. This meaningful worship offers a serene moment of beauty and reverence during the Christmas season. (*In-person and online*.)

- 11 p.m. Communion Service

Join us for a contemplative Christmas Eve Service as we celebrate the arrival of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. We will reflect upon the mystery of the Incarnation, the Word made flesh, in song, prayer, candlelight, and the sharing of Holy Communion. (*In-person only.*)

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COMMUNITY NEWS

SMC

SMC Names Dr. Tania Acosta Vice President of Student Success

Santa Monica College has appointed Dr. Tania Acosta as its new Vice President of Student Success. effective Jan. 2, 2026, following unanimous approval by the Board of Trustees on Tuesday, Dec. 2,

Dr. Acosta, a first-generation high school and college graduate, brings more than 24 years of experience in senior-level positions at Miami Dade College, a multi-campus Hispanic-Serving Institution. Her previous roles include interim campus president, dean of student services, director of campus administration, emergency management incident commander, chief information officer, facilities coordinator and adjunct faculty.

As vice president of student success, Dr. Acosta will serve as chief student services officer and member of the college's senior leadership team. She will oversee counseling and retention, student success initiatives, student life, special programs, student outreach and onboarding, enrollment services, financial aid, student health and wellness, marketing and campus police, among other duties.

"It is significant to note that Dr. Tania Acosta's student-centered, innovative, and equity-driven leadership has enriched an institution that, like Santa Monica College, is a proud Hispanic-Serving Institution and also serves a diverse, global student body," said SMC Superintendent/President Dr. Kathrvn E. Jefferv.

Dr. Acosta said she is honored to join the Santa Monica College community and plans to build upon the institution's existing legacy.

"My goal is to build upon Santa Monica's existing legacy by collaborating with students, faculty, and staff to remove barriers while ensuring a supportive and equitable environment for every student's personal journey," she said. "I am particularly excited to champion initiatives that will ensure not just matriculation, but that all our students thrive and graduate with confidence."

Dr. Acosta's experience includes student enrollment management, institutional effectiveness, strategic planning, community resource development and emergency management. She chairs the campus Behavior Intervention Team, has National Incident Management System certification and served as campus incident commander for more than a decade. She also served on the Department of Justice Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinated Community Response Team.

In the community, Dr. Acosta serves on the board of the Economic Development Council of South Miami-Dade, which serves more than 600,000 residents, 140,000 workers and 20,000 businesses.

Dr. Acosta earned a bachelor's degree in public administration from Florida International University. a master's degree in business administration from American Intercontinental University and a doctorate in higher education leadership/organizational leadership from NOVA Southeastern University.

Dr. Acosta was selected after a nationwide search guided by consultation firm PPL, Inc.

EDITED BY SMDP STAFF

PALI

FROM PAGE 1

Melovin emphasized that the return to campus is the result of sustained collaboration between school leadership, families, and the broader community - a reminder that recovery is built through shared responsibility and long-term stewardship.

For community leaders, the reopening of Pali High stands as one of the most visible signs that recovery is moving from intention to reality. "The reopening of Pali High is a powerful emotional milestone for this community," said Maryam Zar, Chief Executive Officer of the Malibu Pacific Palisades Chamber of Commerce. "Seeing students reunited in classrooms again signals that recovery isn't theoretical - it's happening. For neighborhoods still healing from profound loss, this moment restores momentum, normalcy, and hope."

Zar added that the presence of students, including those who commute from outside the Palisades, plays an important role in restoring vitality to the neighborhood, reinforcing the school's identity as a regional institution that reflects the diversity and interconnectedness of the Westside.

That return to shared space has also reignited the heartbeat of campus life with athletics. For Athletic Director Rocky Montz, the path back to competition has mirrored the broader recovery story defined by grit, adaptability, and belief. "What this group of student-athletes has accomplished with limited resources is nothing short of remarkable," Montz said. "They competed, they rebuilt, and they won - even when basic things like uniforms and equipment weren't guaranteed. That speaks volumes about their

character and the culture we're rebuilding."

Despite constraints around jerseys, equipment, and field readiness during the transition period, Palisades athletics returned to competitive form, culminating in multiple championship seasons. Montz noted that while those achievements reflect extraordinary effort, sustaining momentum will require continued community support. "This next phase is about sustainability," he said. "We've proven what's possible. Now we're asking the community to help us strengthen facilities, expand capacity, and ensure our student-athletes have what they need to continue growing."

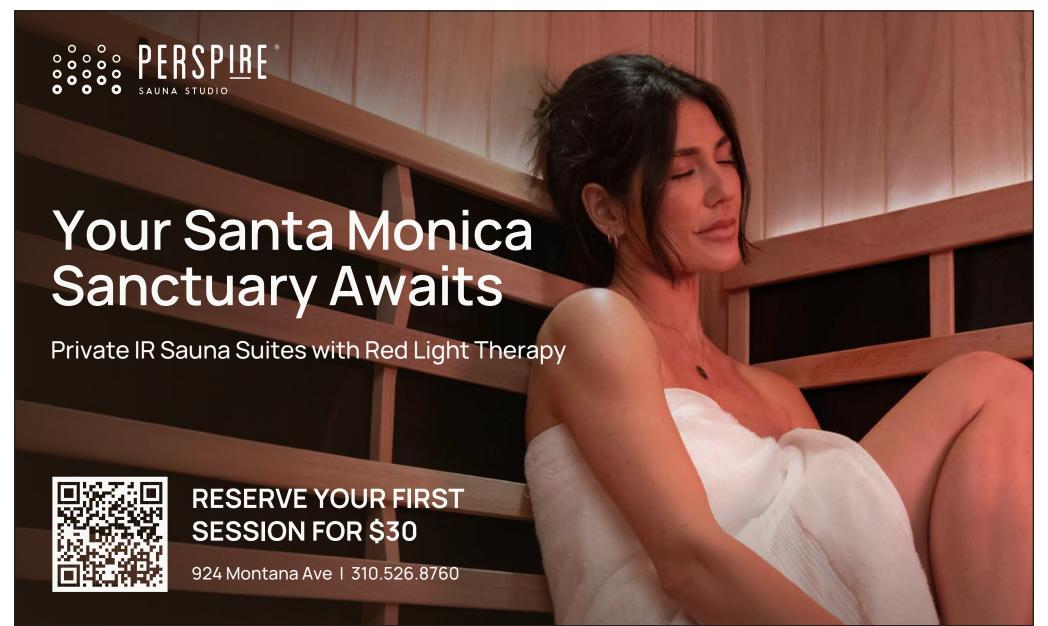
While challenges remain infrastructure improvements to managing construction activity near campus school leaders and community organizations continue to collaborate on solutions that prioritize student safety and school operations.

For Magee, the reopening represents a crucial psychological shift. "Our students have shown extraordinary resilience," she said. "Returning home tells them that what they went through matters, that this community stands with them, and that the future is something we are actively building together."

In a town still recovering from catastrophic loss, the return of students learning, competing, and reconnecting offers something deeply tangible: proof that recovery is underway.

As classrooms fill, practices resume, and campus life returns, Palisades Charter High School's homecoming serves as a reminder that rebuilding is not only about structures, it's about people.

By Michelle Edgar, Special to the Daily Press



JSX

FROM PAGE 1

they described as a rigorous technical and legal review covering safety, environmental, traffic and policy considerations. The Federal Aviation Administration and U.S. Department of Transportation have certified JSX to operate its 30-seat aircraft safely at the airport.

The city determined no new environmental review was required under the California Environmental Quality Act, concluding the permit does not represent a new project or an expansion of existing use. Officials said the approval was exempt from CEQA on three grounds: that it was a ministerial action, the "common sense" exemption, and a categorical exemption for negligible expansion of existing facilities.

City Manager Oliver Chi said the approval aligns with a 2017 federal consent decree with the FAA requiring Santa Monica to keep the airport open through Dec. 31, 2028, while allowing qualifying aeronautical users to operate under limited-term leases. The JSX lease runs through Nov. 30, 2028, one month before the city could close the airport.

City officials said federal law and the consent decree prohibit Santa Monica from denying airport access to qualified aeronautical users who meet established standards. JSX must comply with all airport operational restrictions, including hours of operation, noise limits and environmental standards, with city staff monitoring compliance throughout the lease term.

However, Santa Monica residents and advocacy group Measure LC Defense filed a lawsuit in November challenging the approval. The plaintiffs, including residents

Alan Levenson and Zina Josephs, allege the city improperly relied on exemptions under CÉQA instead of conducting a comprehensive environmental review.

The lawsuit contends JSX's operations could increase jet fuel use from approximately 30,000 gallons to 66,000 gallons per month at the airport. Plaintiffs argue the flights could create new impacts on noise, air quality, traffic, safety and emergency response in surrounding neighborhoods.

The lawsuit disputes the city's CEQA exemption claims. Plaintiffs argue the municipal code expressly authorizes the city manager to exercise discretion in denying or conditioning commercial operations permits to address safety, economic viability or environmental concerns.

The petition also notes that Santa Monica Airport lacks the aircraft rescue and firefighting capacity required at certificated airports, and that its runway protection zones are 750 feet rather than the FAA standard of 1,000 feet, with residences located within areas that should be part of such zones.

Petitioners are seeking a writ of mandate requiring the city to rescind JSX's permit until a full environmental review is completed, along with injunctive relief preventing JSX from operating until the city complies with environmental review requirements.

Founded in 2016, JSX operates a fleet of 50 Embraer jets and two ATR 42-600 turboprops. The company's CEO, Alex Wilcox, has described Santa Monica Airport as "a natural gateway" to extend JSX's regional air travel service to local residents.

editor@smdp.com

WEBSITE

FROM PAGE 1

the Daily Press's longevity to its unwavering commitment to local coverage and willingness to embrace change. Co-publisher Todd James, who joined as a partner in 2018 to help modernize operations and future-proof the enterprise, shares that philosophy of innovation.

The redesigned website comes as the Daily Press continues to rapidly expand its digital footprint. The six-times-weekly email newsletter has seen spectacular subscriber growth-up nearly 750% in just the past two years. Newsletter growth has become increasingly vital for local news outlets nationwide, with nearly 95% of local online news publishers now offering newsletters and about 72% seeing their subscriber lists grow in recent years. Research shows newsletters are among the tools that drive digital subscriptions for local outlets, establishing a personal, habitual connection that arrives without social media algorithms.

The Daily Press pioneered digital delivery early, reportedly becoming one of the first daily newspapers in the United States to offer a free PDF edition of each issue online in the early 2000s. The paper participated in the Google News Initiative and other media accelerator programs in 2019 to overhaul its technology and digital strategy, expanding its reach while maintaining a print edition that still distributes copies five days per week.

The website overhaul reflects broader trends in local journalism's digital transformation. Local news websites now serve as the central hub of community journalism, delivering breaking news in real time far beyond the old daily print cycle while enabling richer storytelling and convenient access on any device. A well-built site lets a hometown newsroom maintain the mix of instant delivery and traditional integrity that sustains reader trust.

The move comes at a critical time for local newspapers nationwide. In the past two decades, legacy local newspapers have faced steep declines, with around two shutting down per week on average. More than 1,800 U.S. communities now have no local paper, and industry advertising revenue has plunged more than 80% since 2000. By 2018, nearly as many Americans preferred to get local news online (37%) as on television (41%), vastly more than those relying on print (13%), making a strong digital presence essential for local media.

The survival and growth of the Daily Press stands in stark contrast to the broader media landscape. While many local newspapers have folded or been absorbed by chains, the Daily Press remains proudly independent, supported by advertising, reader memberships and local sponsorships.

editor@smdp.com

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September 22, 1957 - December 20, 2024



IN LOVING MEMORY

hristopher "Chris" Wilder, a renowned and influential artist, surfer and teacher, known for his humor, charisma, courage, adventuresome spirit, unsurpassed knowledge of, and rarified opinions about art, music, waves, UFOs and countless other subjects, died December 20, 2024 in Los Angeles from complications following heart surgery. He was 67 years old.

Born on September 22, 1957, in Long Beach, California, Chris was the son of Georgia, an accomplished dancer, homemaker, and stained-glass artist, and Phillip Wilder, a Los Angeles County Firefighter, inveterate tinkerer and storyteller. The family lived in Huntington Beach, blocks from the ocean, where Chris began surfing at age eleven. The Wilders were an adventurous family, often embarking in their trusty VW van to surfing and snorkeling destinations in remote areas of Baja California, a pursuit Chris embraced and expanded upon throughout his life, traveling extensively through Mexico, Hawaii, Australia, and elsewhere to surf, explore and create. He was especially influenced by Lorne and Lawrence Blair's epic BBC documentary series "Ring of Fire: An Indonesian Odyssey" that lured him across Java, Bali, Sumba, Timor and Rote Island several times and where he formed many lasting friendships.

While his silly sense of humor and play is legendary, it is Chris' insatiable and inspiring curiosity that stands out for most who encountered him. School was all but impossible for a kid struggling with severe dyslexia, dysgraphia and ADHD in the 1960s and 70s, so he developed an interest in alternative media that was broad but discerning, including an early fascination with MAD magazine and Rick Griffin's illustrations in Surfer magazine, relatively obscure film music such as Ennio Morricone's Good, Bad, and the Ugly and Lee Marvin's rendition of "Wandering Star" from the film "Paint Your Wagon," surf photography and videography, and reruns of the Ernie Kovacs Show. Discovering the Documenta 5 and 7 catalogs, which featured the work of conceptual artist Michael Asher, among others, awoke his curiosity around contemporary art.

He enrolled at Orange Coast College and attended innovative experimental video and painting classes. Encouraged by OCC's outstanding faculty, Chris applied to the San Francisco Art Institute and was accepted with a full scholarship. At SFAI, he was especially inspired by video artist Doug Hall. Chris later enrolled at Cal Arts to study with Michael Asher and Douglas Huebler and became a student, friend and occasional



collaborator of Mike Kelley. Chris' irreverent nature turned him away from what he viewed as old-hat conceptual art and instead, in the words of his sister and fellow CalArts student Holly Wilder, made "paintings of volcanos, corrals, and lima beans and occasionally lima beans corralled under a volcano."

Soon after graduation, Chris gained notice by showing at the influential if unorthodox Dennis Anderson Gallery and went on to have many solo exhibitions, including at the Kim Light and Blum & Poe galleries in Los Angles, Petersburg Gallery in New York, and across Europe, including at Tanja Grunert & Michael Janssen, Cologne, and Kapinos Gallery Berlin. New York Times critic Roberta Smith wrote with insight, "Mr. Wilder works with an appealing, if youthful, nonchalance, seems equally at home with the physical and the conceptual." However, Chris' nonchalant approach was not due to disinterest in craft but skepticism of all proscribed standards and a chuckling praise of folly. His exhibitions and accompanying book entitled Project Blue Book, documented the United States' vast archive of inconclusive evidence on the existence and threat of UFOs, he borrowed from Nick Toches' biography of Dean Martin, titling a show, Living

High in the Dirty Business of Dreams, another in tribute to an early Renaissance satirist, Adages of Erasmus followed by Confessions of a Crap Artist with a wink to Philip Roth.

Based in Santa Monica for the last 25 years of his life, Chris was honored to be among the crusty old dudes presiding over Malibu's famed surf breaks. He also had a legendary love for and encyclopedic knowledge of music, and for the final decade of his life was actively exploring and creating sound works drawn from his field recordings, original lyrics and vocal gibberish, using an esoteric array of equipment, and which he often synched to his original videos. He enjoyed his role as an admired, if crowd-baffling, DJ. In response to the usual drunken requests for pop hits, Wilder was famously known to play the full seventeen-minute version of Giorgio Moroder/ Donna Summer's "Love to Love You, Baby" followed by one of the many migraine-inducing selections in his vast collection of drone/experimental/avant garde/noise records.

Chris took particular joy in teaching Fine Art for many years at UCLA, UCSD and Otis College of Art and Design, leaving a proud legacy of brilliant, thoughtful, skilled young artists, curators, critics and creators in his wake. Never teaching by doctrine or dogma, instead, he tailored his instruction and suggestions to his students based on his remarkable ability to truly listen to and see whoever was before him and help them discover what they wanted to do and how they wanted to do it. His advice to every student was to keep going. Though Chris exhibited less frequently later in life, he always followed this advice, constantly working in his Santa Monica studio, completing a vast number of paintings, videos, photographs, and musical/sound works, as well as collaborating with other

Christopher Wilder is survived and deeply missed by his longtime partner, Sheila Bowers and their three dogs, JuneBug, Chuy and Pixel, his sister Holly Wilder and nephew Maximum Wilder - Smith, and his stepmother Elaine Atherton - Wilder, alongside many beloved friends and colleagues. He was predeceased by his mother, Georgia Wilder, and father, Philip

A non-profit organization, Broken Head Incorporated, has been founded in Chris' memory with a studio that is open by appointment. A website is in progress at www.BrokenHead.org where tax-deductible donations may be made and archives of his life and work will be published, along with a community space and updates about exhibitions and other events.







FRIDAY | DECEMBER 19

SANTA SESSIONS

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. 1233 Rose Avenue Los Angeles. Meet Santa, share your wishlist, write him a letter, take a picture, and enjoy some Holiday music! Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/santasessions/17631618/2025-12-19T09

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT HOLIDAY SALE

10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Santa Monica College Corsair Gym 1900 Pico Blvd Santa Monica. Once a year huge sale of artworks from students and faculty of Santa Monica College's Art Department. One of a kind original blown glass, ceramics, sculptures, jewelry, prints and paintings. A portion of sales benefit the Art department at SMC and help support programs and materials for students. Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/santa-monica-college-art-department-holiday-sale/17613875/2025-12-19T10

BRUNCH FRIDAYS WITH LIVE MUSIC IN OUR GARDEN PATIO!

11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tiato Kitchen & Venue 2700 Colorado Ave Santa Monica. Our newly launched Brunch Fridays just got vibey-er! Every week enjoy great eats, summer libations, and a featured music artist on our beautiful garden patio! So come toast to summer with our uniquely crafted brunch menu including our Turmeric Spiced Cloud Egg dish, Smoked Gouda Scramble with Smashed Ube, Vietnamese French Toast, along with Mama An classics such as Famous Garlic Noodles, Shaken Beef, and Seafood Egg Fried Rice! And of course, it wouldn't be brunch without bottomless mimosas & summer punch bowls, so grab your brunch crew and enjoy the fair along the beautiful backdrop of Al fresco dining. Visit: https:// smdp.com/events/#/details/brunch-fridays-with-livemusic-in-our-garden-patio-/14639006/2025-12-19T11

LIVE MUSIC FRIDAYS AT THE SURFING FOX

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. 120 Colorado Ave CA Contact Info (424) 214-1830 matt.sedgwick@candrpr.com Visit thesurfingfoxsm.com to view menus and learn more Santa Monica. Erinn Alissa performs acoustic folk pop with her guitar Friday nights at The Surfing Fox. Enjoy a night of live music, tasty bites, and Foxtails! Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/live-music-fridays-at-the-surfing-fox/14385252/2025-12-19T18

SMC 47TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY ART SALE

10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Corsair Gym SMC Main Campus, 1900 Pico Blvd Santa Monica SMC's Holiday Art Sale is a once-a-year opportunity to buy some truly unique works of art to satisfy holiday, anniversary, birthday, and year-round gift needs. This year's outstanding selection features ceramics and hand-blown glass, fused glass, jewelry, prints, and more. Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/smc-47th-annual-holiday-art-sale/17652127/2025-12-19T00

SATURDAY | DECEMBER 20

WALKING MEDITATION

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Beach lot 5 South 2600 Bernard Way Los Angeles. Walking meditation is and has always been a significant alternative to sitting meditation, especially for those starting a new practice. The goal of meditation is to be able to practice in all positions, conditions and activities whether sitting, standing, walking, lying down, or whenever awake. We'll meet Tuesday's and Thursdays at 8 am at lifeguard tower 28 (paid parking available in the Santa Monica Beach lot 5 South) After some basic instructions we'll walk silently together for approximately 50 minutes on the shoreline at a natural leisurely pace from tower 28 towards the Santa Monica Pier and back. Everyone is always welcomed to join whether new to meditation or with many years of experience. Looking forward to meeting and meditating with you all. Please feel free to reach out with any concerns or questions and please arrive 5 minutes early. Don't forget to check schedule for any changes or cancellations. Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/walkingmeditation/16206460/2025-12-20T08

VIRGINIA AVENUE PARK/PICO BOULEVARD FARMERS MARKET

8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Virginia Avenue Park 2200 Virginia Ave Santa Monica Virginia Avenue Park Santa Monica. The family market in the heart of the Pico neighborhood's Virginia Avenue Park! Enjoy one of Santa Monica's farmers markets, widely considered to be among the best on the west coast and featuring field-fresh produce, hundreds of kinds of vegetables, brilliant cut flowers, breads, cheeses, delicious foods, live music and more. Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/virginia-avenue-park-pico-boulevard-farmers-market/16090226/2025-12-20T08

SANTA MONICA FARMERS MARKET - VIRGINIA AVENUE PARK/PICO BOULEVARD

8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Virginia Avenue Park 2200 Virginia Ave Santa Monica. The family market in the heart of the Pico neighborhood's Virginia Avenue Park! Enjoy one of Santa Monica's farmers markets, widely considered to be among the best on the west coast and featuring field-fresh produce, hundreds of kinds of vegetables, brilliant cut flowers, breads, cheeses, delicious foods, live music and more. Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/santamonica-farmers-market-virginia-avenue-park-pico-boulevard/12382447/2025-12-20T08

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT HOLIDAY SALE

10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Santa Monica College Corsair Gym 1900 Pico Blvd Santa Monica. Once a year huge sale of artworks from students and faculty of Santa Monica College's Art Department. One of a kind original blown glass, ceramics, sculptures, jewelry, prints and paintings. A portion of sales benefit the Art department at SMC and help support

programs and materials for students. Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/santa-monica-college-art-department-holiday-sale/17613875/2025-12-20T10

DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Hosteling Intl. 1436 2nd Street Santa Monica. Join the Santa Monica Conservancy's Downtown Walking Tour. Discover downtown Santa Monica's architectural gems, history, and culture. From Art Deco to Victorian and Romanesque Revival, you'll explore the various styles that fill the streets of Santa Monica. Explore downtown's diverse architectural heritage, including Bay Cities Guaranty Building, El Miro Theater, Georgian Hotel, Gussie Moran House, Keller Block and more! The Downtown Walking Tour is FREE for Conservancy members, FREE for guests staying at Hostelling International, and \$10 for the general public. Learn More. Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/downtown-walking-tour/15830816/2025-12-20T10

BEGINNER REFORMER PILATES AT GOOD BODY PILATES STUDIO

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Good Body Pilates Studio 3229 Pico Blvd. Santa Monica Good Body Pilates Studio Santa Monica. Start your Saturday feeling strong, centered, and energized with our Beginner Reformer Pilates Class at Good Body Pilates Studio, taught by expert instructor Kylie. This group class is perfect for those new to Pilates or anyone looking to reconnect with the fundamentals in a welcoming and supportive environment. No experience necessary! Located in the heart of Santa Monica on Pico Boulevard, right across from Trader Joe's, our boutique studio is surrounded by great local coffee shops and restaurants, making it the perfect place to kick off your weekend. Plenty of metered parking available on Pico Blvd, and both metered and free street parking available on Urban Ave. Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/ beginner-reformer-pilates-at-good-body-pilatesstudio/16094481/2025-12-20T10

SANTA MONICA SYMPHONY PRESENTS SCENES FROM LIFE: JOY

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Barnum Hall 600 Olympic Boulevard Santa Monica. Step into the spirit of the holidays with a concert full of festive cheer, elegant sparkle, and timeless classics. Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/santa-monica-symphony-presents-scenes-from-life-joy/16991645/2025-12-20T19

SUNDAY | DECEMBER 21

THE WATERFRONT - SUNDAY REAL FUNDAY BRUNCH BUFFET

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. The Waterfront 205 Ocean Front Walk Venice. Enjoy a bottomless brunch buffet Sundays at The Waterfront! The Waterfront Venice is a full-service restaurant celebrating Californian cuisine with views of the Pacific Ocean. Situated between Rose and Navy on the famous Venice Beach Boardwalk, our food & beverage menus celebrate

California with carefully selected seasonal produce from local farms. Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/the-waterfront-sunday-real-funday-brunch-buffet/14894114/2025-12-21T11

SUNDAY TASTING AT ESTER'S WINE SHOP & BAR

12:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. 1314 Seventh Street CA 90401 Contact Info hello@esterswineshop.com Santa Monica. Sunday Tastings are 12-9 p.m., with new themes every week, curated by Sommelier Randall Middleton. Enjoy a flight for \$25/person, which includes a mini cheese pairing and link to a video of our team telling stories about the lineup. Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/sunday-tasting-at-ester-swine-shop-bar/11526041/2025-12-21T12

VENICE ELECTRIC LIGHT PARADE - SUNDAYS AT SUNSET

Windward Plaza 1501 Ocean Front Walk Venice. Join the Magic of the Venice Electric Light Parade Every Sunday Night! Looking for a unique and vibrant way to end your weekend? The Venice Electric Light Parade (VELP) is here to light up your Sunday evenings! Founded by Marcus Gladney, this family-friendly weekly event celebrates community, creativity, and safe cycling. Bring your LED-lit bicycle and join us for an unforgettable ride along the iconic Venice Beach. Details: When: Every Sunday evening, Meet 45 minutes before sunset. Where: Windward Plaza, Venice Beach. Who: Open to everyone! Bring your bike, lights, and good vibes. Cost: FREE to join! Experience the magic of glowing bikes, amazing sound bikes playing great music, and the welcoming energy of the Venice community. The parade follows a strict no-smoking or drinking policy, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for all. Why Join? Connect with old and new friends. Celebrate the artistic and cultural spirit of Venice. Enjoy a safe and fun environment for all ages. So, light up your ride, bring your friends, and join us this Sunday at Windward Plaza. Don't forget to turn on your lights and practice safe cycling at night! Let's ride into the sunset together! Visit: https://smdp.com/ events/#/details/venice-electric-light-parade-sundaysat-sunset/14970341/2025-12-21T00

MONDAY | DECEMBER 22

HOLIDAY CENTERPIECE WORKSHOP

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Viola Floral Studios 1639 11th St. Suite 162 Santa Monica. Learn tried-and-true professional techniques for holiday flower arranging! You'll build a low and lush flower arrangement that has these 3 key elements: Doesn't block views during meals. Enhances your existing holiday decor. Uses seasonal flowers as a conversation starter. You'll build a versatile holiday centerpiece in a 12 inch rectangular vessel using seasonal varieties. The techniques you learn will inspire you to update your florals as the seasons change. Exactly what you need in your holiday hosting toolkit! Visit: https://smdp.com/events/#/details/holiday-centerpieceworkshop/17600673/2025-12-22T13

PROTEST

FROM PAGE 2

19 during the same period last year. The agency declined to provide its list or provide details about how it defines assaults.

The assaults have occurred amid a pair of shootings targeting immigration detention facilities in Texas and the deadly attack on National Guard troops in Washington, where a former Afghan soldier who had worked for the CIA has been charged.

THE SPECTER OF ANTIFA

The administration has deployed or sought to deploy - troops to the four cities where AP examined the criminal cases: Washington; Los Angeles; Portland, Oregon; and Chicago. Judges have blocked the deployments in Portland and Chicago, citing a lack of credible evidence there's any organized rebellion and finding that Trump administration officials had often exaggerated or lied about threats posed by protesters. A district judge and an appeals court have gone back and forth over whether Trump must give control of the troops in California back to the state.

Trump and his administration have sought to justify the military deployments, in part, by painting immigration protesters as "antifa," which the president has sought to designate as a "domestic terrorist organization."

"President Trump will not turn a blindeye to the sustained campaign of violence destroying American cities perpetrated by leftists and those who enable them," said Abigail Jackson, a White House spokeswoman.

Short for "anti-fascists," antifa is an umbrella term for far-left-leaning protesters who confront or resist neo-Nazis and white supremacists, sometimes clashing with law enforcement.

The AP's review found only a handful of references to "antifa" in court records for any of the 166 cases it reviewed. Federal prosecutors wrote in court papers that a defendant in Portland was someone who "claims a loose association with Antifa." In another case, an FBI agent wrote in an affidavit that conservative influencers had described a protester as an "Antifa helper or

The AP found no case in which federal authorities officially accused a protester of being a "domestic terrorist" or part of an organized effort to attack federal agents.

In affidavits for many of the Portland cases, federal agents referred to so-called "black bloc" protesters who wear all black clothing but did not use the word "antifa" to describe them.

In at least one press release, DHS has alleged a protester was a suspected member of antifa. That person was arrested outside a Chicago-area ICE facility in October while allegedly carrying a firearm. He has not yet been charged with a crime, court records

Five people pleaded guilty last month to terrorism-related offenses stemming from a July 4 shooting that wounded a police officer outside an immigration detention center near Dallas. Prosecutors in that case accused the defendants of being part of an antifa cell. It was not included in AP's analysis because it did not occur in one of the four cities where Trump has sought to deploy troops.

"Rioters and other violent criminals have threatened our law enforcement officers, thrown rocks, bottles, and fireworks at them, slashed the tires of their vehicles, rammed them, ambushed them, and even shot at them," said DHS Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin.

EVAPORATING FELONIES

The AP's analysis showed that dozens of people charged with felonies have seen their offenses reduced to misdemeanors.

Among them was Dana Briggs, a 70-yearold Air Force veteran who was charged in September with assault after a protest in Chicago. Prosecutors first downgraded the charge to a misdemeanor. After video footage emerged of federal agents knocking Briggs to the ground, prosecutors dropped the case. Prosecutors declined to say why they dismissed it.

In Portland, 28-year-old Lucy Shepherd was charged in November with felony assault after she batted away the arm of a federal officer who was attempting to clear a crowd outside the city's ICE facility. Her lawyers argued in court filings that a video of her arrest proved there had not been an assault. The video, they wrote, showed she brushed aside an officer with "too little force to have been intended to inflict any kind of injury on the officer whatsoever." Prosecutors dropped

The office of the U.S. attorney for Oregon declined to comment.

Prosecutors are not required to disclose why they sought to downgrade a charge, and much of that process is cloaked in secrecy. Legal experts said prosecutors typically take such action when they learn the evidence is weaker than expected or uncover facts that do not support a felony charge.

Court records showed that prosecutors have secured felony indictments against people who are accused of assaulting federal officers and agents in a host of ways. They have been accused of hurling rocks and projectiles at officers, punching or kicking them and shooting them with paintballs.

HOW A CASE DISSOLVED

Marimar Martinez, a 30-year-old teaching

assistant at a Montessori school, was arrested and charged in October with a felony, accusing her of trying to use her car to ram into a Border Patrol agent in a southwest Chicago neighborhood. A DHS press release asserted that she and the driver of another car involved in the incident were "domestic terrorists."

In court papers, an FBI agent alleged that Martinez and the other driver were "aggressively" driving and chasing a Border Patrol vehicle.

When Border Patrol agents got out of their vehicle, the FBI agent wrote, Martinez drove at one of the agents. The agent was forced to open fire, the agent alleged, striking Martinez at least five times. She was treated at a hospital and released. Inside Martinez's car, authorities recovered a loaded firearm,

DHS noted in a press release that Martinez had been armed with a "semi-automatic weapon." Martinez and a 21-year-old man were charged with assaulting a federal officer with her vehicle, which was classified as a dangerous weapon. They faced up to 20 years in prison.

Then the case fell apart.

It turned out Martinez legally owned the gun, and her attorneys contended that video footage — from security cameras and body cameras worn by Border Patrol officers undermined the official narrative. The videos showed a Border Patrol agent steering his vehicle into Martinez's truck, rather than the other way around, her attorney said. Text messages showed the federal agent bragging about his marksmanship after the shooting.

"I fired 5 rounds and she had 7 holes," read a text message that the agent, Charles Exum, sent to colleagues. "Put that in your book boys." Twenty-four hours after the shooting, Exum texted, "Cool, I'm up for another round."

Federal prosecutors last month dismissed all charges against Martinez and the other driver. Martinez's attorney celebrated the move but emphasized that his client's "life is changed forever" due to her physical injuries, trauma and long-term impacts of being publicly branded a "domestic terrorist."

They call this 'Operation Midway Blitz,' but I call it 'Operation Midway Bust' because this and every case that has come out of this has fallen apart," said the lawyer, Christopher

Joseph D. Fitzpatrick, an assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, said prosecutors are constantly evaluating evidence to ensure "the interests of justice are served in each and every case."

Legal experts said dropping cases or reducing charges are not straightforward victories for the accused.

They noted that defendants have to

hire lawyers and may face significant legal expenses. They may also be held in jail for days or weeks, potentially losing jobs and seeing their families disrupted.

Former federal prosecutors and defense attorneys said they were surprised that the Justice Department took at least five misdemeanor cases to trial. Such trials eat up resources, and those convicted frequently receive little jail time. The experts said they were also shocked DOJ lost all five cases at trial, a sign that the cases were particularly

"When the DOJ tries to take a swing at someone, they should hit 99.9% of the time. And that's not happening," said Ronald W. Chapman II, a defense attorney with extensive experience in the federal courts.

The highest-profile loss involved Sean Charles Dunn, a Washington, D.C., man who tossed a Subway-style sandwich at a Border Patrol agent he had berated as a "fascist." Dunn was acquitted Nov. 6 after a two-day

Katherine Carreño was arrested in August on a felony assault charge, accused of striking a federal officer in Los Angeles. The 32-yearold was protesting with a group outside the downtown federal building when DHS security officers asked them to move out of the way of a vehicle that was trying to enter a gate, according to a criminal complaint.

Carreño, a paralegal, said it was one of many times she had gone to demonstrate in front of the federal complex where immigrants were being detained.

An officer gave "two loud commands to move back," which all protesters did except Carreño, the complaint alleged. The officer pushed her away from the vehicle, and Carreño "raised her hand and brought it down in a slapping/chopping motion" onto the officer's arm. She did this twice before being detained, the complaint said.

Prosecutors reduced the charge to a misdemeanor and took her to trial.

Social media video shown to jurors showed an officer striding toward Carreño and pushing her back. She was not standing in front of the vehicle but to the right and slightly forward of it. The video did not show whether Carreño hit the officer.

The officer said she did not push Carreño. Some jurors, pointing to the video evidence, said they disagreed. It took them just under five hours to reach their verdict — not guilty.

By MICHAEL BIESECKER, JAIMIE DING, CHRISTINE FERNANDO, CLAIRE RUSH and RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press. Ding reported from Los Angeles, Fernando from Chicago, Rush from Portland, Ore., and Foley from Iowa City, Iowa.



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Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE





Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER

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

Ok computer

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

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ASCII	Disc	Hubs	Scroll
Bars	Dots	Hypertext	Storage
Beta	DVDs	IMac	Tape
Binary	Edit	IPad	Tuner
Blog	Email	Keys	USB stick
Bookmark	Enter	Malware	Video
Byte	Fast	Menu	Website
Cache	File	Motherboard	Wifi
Chat	Firewall	Mouse	Windows
i			

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE. **Probably a dying skill**

Covering the city by the bay since 2001.







TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 19)

It's your Year of the Electric Surprise. Your network expands wildly - coincidences, encounters, coffee meetings and phone calls all lead somewhere thrilling... if not right away then after a bit of follow-through. At certain points, numerous opportunities chase you at once, so you have your pick. More highlights; romance that's plentiful and genuine, exceptional creative output people pay for, share and celebrate, Taurus and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 19, 8, 14 and 40.



HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Don't bother weighing the positives and negatives. Not only do they lack actual weight, but it's impossible to know which are "negatives" or "positives" because what seems inconvenient today may prove, in the long view, to be your best luck yet.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your dream can work! The gatekeepers just don't see it yet. It's not for them. So don't shrink the vision; shift the setting. A different venue, format or audience will be a better fit. This project just needs the

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Some people love with words, others with total silence and careful listening. Some love with support, others with competition. Assume what's offered is a form of love. If it's not the kind you most need, keep moving and you'll find it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Information spreads fast through the gossips, broadcasters and other natural amplifiers. Today, use that to your advantage. Give the talkers something worth talking about, and let their distribution network work in your favor.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You genuinely want what's best for others, but you also need care. Can you make more time for yourself? Carve out a few hours for the special things that matter to you - things that have nothing to do with serving

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Out of kindness, you've sometimes dimmed your light around people who feel competitive or fragile. But today, don't worry. Your brightness will not destabilize others. If anything, when you shine, you expand the field for everyone connected to you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Those who are unaware of what others expect of them are liable to disappoint people by breaking "agreements" they didn't even know they made. You avoid this dynamic by staying aware of social contracts, spoken and unspoken.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). To say you're a dancer seems to imply a certain skill level, but what if being a dancer is just about dancing? Do the action today and don't worry about the identity. Identity follows action, not the other way

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Talk about what you do and what you need. Opportunities aren't as rare as some would have you believe. There is always room for new ideas, especially ones that improve people's lives, and those come so easily to you!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your steadiness doesn't come from rigidity, but from being rooted, like a tree that can bend with the wind. You'll attract people who need a bit of grounding, and you'll kindly let them lean on you for the support that is so easy for you to give.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Take measures to make sure everyone is on the same page. What could possibly be misunderstood? Check and doublecheck. Miscommunication leads to mistakes, but good communication and a little diligence now will prevent problems down the line.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There is no clear winner today, which is how you know you're not in a game, but in something with deeper dimensions, like a purpose or an epic story - a grand landscape or a love affair.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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L	0	В	0				Α	U	R	Α		L	0	U
F	R	E	N	C	Н	0	Р	Е	N	C	H	Α	М	P
Α	М	Y		Н	0	P	Е				Τ	0	N	0
			S	Ε	C	T			L	Ε	T	S		Ν
S	P	R	Е	Ε			S	T	0	U	T			
Q	U	I	C	K	S	T	Α	R	T	G	U	П	D	Е
U	R	G	E		С	Α	M	0		Ε	N	D	Α	T
Α	G	E	D		Α	T	0	М		N	Ε	Ε	D	S
D	Ε	L	Ε		R	Ε	Α	P		Ε	S	S	Α	Y

Sudoku

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

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

	5	6	1				8	
9			7		6			
	7	2		9				3
	9	4		26		8		
5				6				4
		8		1		3	7	
7				8		4	1	
			3		1			8
	2				5	9	3	

Newsday Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Square stat
- 5 Cantina's "roasted"
- 10 Road debris protector
- 13 Fills with hands
- 14 Birch relative
- 15 Whitman's "Gliding
 - All"
- **16** Produced nearby
- 17 Los Angeles power source
- 19 Tickled
- 21 Maisel or Dalloway
- 22 Slender swimmers
- 23 Calvin and Hobbes artist
- 25 Band date
- 26 Foil's cousin
- 27 Family identifier
- 31 Inquiry of self-doubt
- 34 Brief time, briefly
- 36 Reunion arrivals
- 37 Moody daughter of cartoons. TV and films
- 41 Ratatouille critic's voice
- 42 Seashell neckwear
- 43 Outlandishly
- 44 Cavalrymen at Waterloo
- 46 Mischievous
- 49 Certain gobbler
- 50 Storage structure
- 55 World of Warcraft villains
- 57 Briefest of the signs
- 58 Fixed tears
- 59 Inspiration for a young John Wayne
- 62 Ancient Andean
- 63 Mark or bud beginning

64 Retail venues

- 65 It's west of
- Montgomery
- 66 Compass reading
- 67 "It seems to me..."
- 68 Are, in Arles

DOWN

- 1 Appetite enhancer
- 2 Edited further, as films
- 3 Old fridges, cameras, etc.
- 4 Not up
- 5 A joyful noise
- 6 Video effect
- 7 Accessorizes
- 8 App builders
- 9 More than just

- 10 Big Apple 35 "Southern" school
 - convenience store areeter
- 11 Extremely, informally
- 12 Administrative branches

appear

- 13 Wolverine weapon 18 Kept under control
- 20 Actor's aide
- 24 Lentil, essentially
- 25 Electrical network
- 28 Yet to be viewed
- 29 Written reminder
- 30 Gulf Canada rival
- 31 USMC offense
- 32 Cleverly
- - self-referential

- 33 REDACTION

38 Free

anagram

- 39 Fe or Na

LEADING QUESTIONS by Adam Simpson Edited by Stanley Newman www.stanxwords.com

- 40 Date's end
- 45 Renounces, with "off"
- 47 Poolside furniture
- 48 Pest in a nest
- 51 Major vessel
- 52 Reunion arrival
- 53 Thin layers of limestone
- 54 Mystery author
- Buchanan 55 Actor Wilson
- 56 Clancy hero
- 57 Go first
- 60 Initialized "Enough!"

12/19/25

61 Social sci.

14 15 13 17 16 18 <u> 19</u> 20 <u>21</u> 22 23 25 26 28 30 31 32 33 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 43 49 50 53 54 52 51 55 56 58 59 62 60 61 65 63 64 66 67 68

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CLIMATE

FROM PAGE 4

companies — that isn't being leveraged to drive change — is a dollar that could have been invested in reducing emissions and protecting communities.

Fossil fuel investments do not belong in CalPERS' climate solutions portfolio.

By keeping its criteria for climate solution investments vague, CalPERS may think it is preserving flexibility to develop a cutting-edge strategy. But it is missing the opportunity to show how public money can be invested to proactively protect workers' livelihoods, retirement savings and communities.

CalPERS' climate plan counts progress in billions of dollars, but it doesn't measure the things that matter most, such as the amount of emissions reduced, communities served and clean energy deployed.

System-level risks require system-level solutions. For a fund of CalPERS' size and influence, that means using its leverage to mitigate the risks of climate change that threaten the economy and beneficiaries' pensions.

CalPERS can start by adopting science-based principles that set clear exclusions on what does — and does not — constitute climate investments, and by clearly defining strategies for mitigation, adaptation and transition.

CalPERS should be applauded for identifying that climate change poses a clear risk to its beneficiaries' savings and the entire economy. Many pensions have yet to follow suit.

But it has yet to articulate a bold enough vision to effectively mitigate those risks.

Allie Lindstrom is a senior strategist for the Sierra Club's sustainable finance campaign. Jakob Evans is a senior policy strategist with Sierra Club California.

OIL AND GAS

FROM PAGE 6

oil demand.

In other words, even as we transition away from burning fossil fuels, we are locking ourselves into new forms of dependence — embedded in the packaging we discard daily.

Recognizing this link is critical as California prepares to implement the Plastic Pollution Mitigation Fund under Senate Bill 54, a plastics recycling and pollution prevention law signed in 2022. The fund will direct hundreds of millions of dollars from the plastics industry to communities harmed by pollution.

Administered wisely, the fund could be a catalyst for mitigating the adverse health impacts of plastics and could create a transformative shift away from plastic production, use and disposability, building on the plastic reduction efforts required of the industry under SB 54.

Plastic pollution is not just about littered beaches or overflowing landfills; it begins long before a product reaches a store shelf. If California truly intends to lead on climate and environmental justice, it must see plastic for what it is — the fossil fuel industry's new frontier — and it must ensure that communities long treated as sacrifice zones become the first to benefit from solutions.

Daniel Coffee is a researcher at UCLA's Luskin Center for Innovation. Veronica Herrera is a professor of urban planning at UCLA.

NEWSOM

FROM PAGE 5

finances, examined the chronically troubled Sacramento City Unified School District and described how federal aid led to its financial quicksand.

The report catalogued the district's history of overspending revenues and said, "This (federal) funding masked the district's existing structural deficit, delaying the necessary actions to be taken to address it."

Even after the federal aid stopped, the district continued to sign union contracts calling for raises that it could not afford.

And it failed to implement the cost-saving steps it had pledged to balance its budget, the analysis found.

The budget problems in other school districts — Oakland Unified is a notorious example — and in local governments such as the City of Los Angeles have a similar ring. School trustees and city council members, elected with union support, squandered federal aid. Then they approved unsustainable contracts and blamed the resulting deficits on insufficient revenue.

Dan Walters, CalMatters Opinion Columnist

TRAFFIC

FROM PAGE 3

because he's seen it work so well and that it could be appropriate in some vehicular manslaughter cases.

"Might a court think it appropriate to divert so they don't lose their job and suffer the draconian collateral consequences? Potentially," Lowenthal said.

However, he said, it would be fair for the state to ensure that the diversion still ended up on a driver's DMV record.

Kaur, the woman charged in Connor Lopez's death, was arraigned on Monday in Sacramento County Superior Court. Because it's a misdemeanor case, she didn't need to show up. After the brief proceedings, her attorney, Hendrick Crowell, declined to

comment. At such an early stage in the court process, there's no indication Kaur's attorney will even seek diversion. Still, Allison Lyman is already meeting with lawmakers and hoping to get the possibility of such an outcome taken off the table.

For now, every Wednesday she goes to the site of her son's death along with her mom and sister, and sometimes her daughter, she said. They stand along the side of the road holding signs with Lopez's picture, urging drivers to be safe.

"If there was some consequence, maybe — maybe — people would think about the responsibility when they get behind the wheel of a car," Lyman said.

By ROBERT LEWIS and LAUREN HEPLER/CalMatters CalMatters





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