2 **Homelessness**
Up 12% across the country.

3 **Whac-a-mole**
With housing production.

4 **2023**
We're over it.

6 **Taylor's time**
The year in pop culture.

smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

Volume 23 Issue 26 WEDNESDAY 12/20/23 smdp.com

Santa Monica prepares for the 2024 homeless count as crisis surges nationwide



SMDP Photo

COUNT: During the count volunteers and city staff spread out across the city to physically count the number of homeless people sleeping on the streets.

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

As January fast approaches we first think of celebrating the New Year, but then we must also think about another event that has unfortunately become an annual occurrence, the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count. And the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) needs your help.

Over a total of three nights across the whole of Greater Los Angeles — and that includes Los Angeles County, along with Orange, Ventura and San Bernardino Counties — teams of volunteers equipped with warm clothing and clipboards will venture forth into the streets and begin the unenviable but essential task of counting the number of individuals who appear to be living in homelessness outside, in cars, tents and other make-shift shelters.

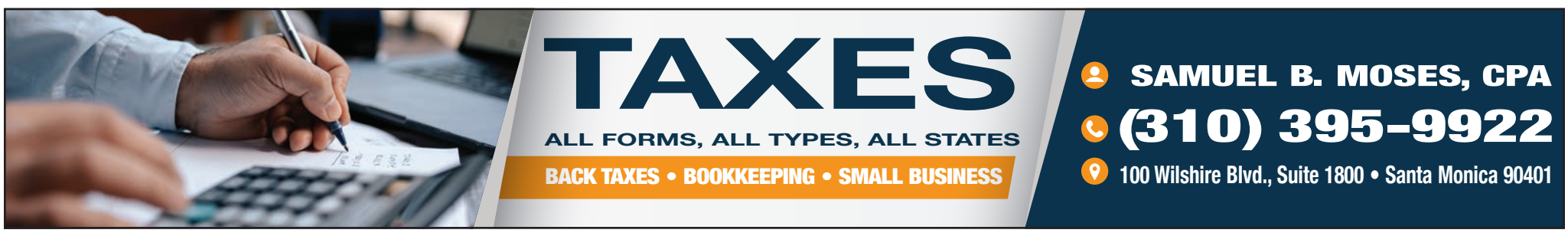
And on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, from 8 p.m. to midnight, a number of compassionate volunteers will gather at St. Monica's Church, at the intersection of 7th St and California Ave and begin counting the homeless in Santa Monica.

The purpose of the point-in-time count is to obtain a snapshot of the homeless population. By undertaking the task across the region simultaneously, officials hope to make it less likely to accidentally double count or miss individuals who move around. The number of people in shelters is also calculated at the same time.

While the count is mandated by the US Department of Housing and Urban development, it also helps officials to gain a better idea of the number of people living in homelessness, demographic trends among the population, and locations of concentration. This data is used to inform local and regional efforts to address homelessness and can affect how resources are allocated.

But in order to accomplish this Herculean task, the LAHSA relies on volunteer efforts and applications to participate in the 2024 Homeless Count in Santa Monica now being accepted. The 2022 count was delayed and modified to reduce interaction and the 2021 count was canceled altogether.

SEE **HOMELESS COUNT** PAGE 11



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US homelessness up 12% to highest reported level as rents soar and coronavirus pandemic aid lapses

KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

The United States experienced a dramatic 12% increase in homelessness to its highest reported level as soaring rents and a decline in coronavirus pandemic assistance combined to put housing out of reach for more Americans, federal officials said Friday.

About 653,000 people were homeless, the most since the country began using the yearly point-in-time survey in 2007. The total in the January count represents an increase of about 70,650 from a year earlier.

The latest estimate indicates that people becoming homeless for the first time were behind much of the increase.

A rise in family homelessness ended a downward trend that began in 2012.

"For those on the frontlines of this crisis, it's not surprising," said Ann Oliva, chief executive officer at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, an advocacy group.

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia Fudge said the data underscored an "urgent need" to support proven solutions that help people quickly exit homelessness and that prevent homelessness in the first place.

Going back to the first 2007 survey, the U.S. then made steady progress for about a decade in reducing the homeless population as the government focused particularly on increasing investments to get veterans into housing. The number of homeless people dropped from about 637,000 in 2010 to about 554,000 in 2017.

The numbers ticked up to about 580,000 in the 2020 count and held relatively steady over the next two years as Congress responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with emergency rental assistance, stimulus payments, aid to states and local governments and a temporary eviction moratorium.

Jeff Olivet, executive director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, a federal agency, said the extra assistance "held off the rise in homelessness that we are now seeing." He said numerous factors are behind the problem.

"The most significant causes are the shortage of affordable homes and the high cost of housing that have left many Americans living paycheck to paycheck and one crisis away from homelessness," Olivet said.

Within the overall rise, homelessness among individuals rose by nearly 11%, among veterans by 7.4% and among families with children by 15.5%.

People who identify as Black make up about 13% of the U.S. population but comprised 37% of all people experiencing homelessness. People who identify as Hispanic or Latino make up about 19% of the population but comprised about 33% of those experiencing homelessness. Also, more than a quarter of the adults experiencing homelessness were over age 54.

HUD said that rental housing conditions were "extraordinarily challenging" in 2022, with rents increasing at more than twice the rate of recent years. It noted that trend has subsided since the January count. Such relief could show benefits when volunteers and housing officials around the country begin the next homeless count in just a few weeks.

Officials also noted that President Joe Biden's budget for this fiscal year has recommended guaranteed vouchers for low-income veterans and youths aging out of foster care, among other investments designed to reduce homelessness.

More than half the people experiencing homelessness in the country were in four states: California, New York, Florida and Washington. While about 28% of the nation's homeless are estimated to be in California, its increase was only about half the national rate. New York's homelessness went up more than three times the national rate, according to HUD's report.

New Hampshire, New Mexico and Colorado along with New York saw the largest percentage increases in homelessness. In all, the number of people experiencing homelessness increased in 41 states and the District of Columbia, and decreased in just nine states.

Dave Giffen, executive director of The Coalition for the Homeless in New York City, said the cost of rental housing soared after the pandemic.

"So when we saw the pandemic-era protections go away, we did start to see homelessness starting to increase again. We saw more people being evicted, housing instability," Giffen said. "But then all of that got kind of masked by the sudden, very rapid influx of new asylum seekers, and that is a crisis for which the city and state were more unprepared to deal with."

Starting in the summer of 2022, New York City's homeless shelter system has been overwhelmed by waves of international migrants who are being bused into the city from southern U.S. border states. More than 150,000 migrants have been in the city's shelters for some period of time.

Mayor Eric Adams has pleaded with the federal government for aid to help defray the cost of housing migrants, which he says will run into the billions of dollars over the next few years. He has chastised the governor of Texas, for arranging to bus migrants out of that state to New York. Adams, a Democrat, has also asked for legal and bureaucratic changes that would allow migrants to get work permits more easily.

HUD did not get data that enabled it to separate out the specific impact of migrants and asylum seekers on homelessness, but some communities indicated it did affect their increase. The Biden administration has provided more than $1 billion in grant funding to cities and states to fund critical needs for migrants. It's also identifying potential federal land and buildings that can be made available for shelter and other services for migrants, said a senior HUD official not authorized to publicly discuss the report.

SEE HOMELESS PAGE 11

GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

California plays whac-a-mole with cities resistant to building much-needed housing



Photo by Semantha Norris, CalMatters

HOUSING: A view of San Francisco on July 12, 2023.

DAN WALTERS

Whac-A-Mole is an amusement arcade game, invented in Japan nearly a half-century ago, whose players try to hit moles as they pop up from their holes, but if they hit one another immediately pops up.

It's become a cultural icon and, as Wikipedia notes, "is often used colloquially to a situation characterized by a series of futile, Sisyphean tasks, where the successful completion of one just yields another popping up elsewhere."

For years, California's state government has been playing whac-a-mole to persuade – or compel – local officials to become more receptive to housing development needed to close an immense gap between supply and demand that drives up living costs and contributes to the state's very high poverty and homelessness rates.

The game has become especially intense during Gavin Newsom's governorship. His housing agency, sometimes in league with the attorney general's office, has been forcing cities to rezone land to meet quotas and eliminate impediments to development, such as overly prescriptive design criteria.

The Legislature has contributed to the effort by passing dozens of new carrot-and-stick laws that give state officials more power to counteract the often stubborn reluctance of local officials to comply with mandates.

As the state cracks down, local officials who oppose new housing that they see as disrupting the ambiance of their communities conjure up new strategies to minimize compliance. Hence, it's a game of political and legal whac-a-mole.

Three recent events illustrate the syndrome.

One occurred in San Francisco, the city that Newsom once governed as mayor. Over the years, it has earned a reputation for making housing developers go through bureaucratic and political hoops that can take years to navigate, add millions of dollars to costs and often make projects untenable.

The city has a quota of developing 82,000 new housing units over eight years, more than half of which are to be "affordable" to low- and moderate-income families. However the city's Board of Supervisors had rebuffed Mayor London Breed's efforts to overhaul housing regulation.

The state ramped up pressure, threatening to strip the city of control over housing permits, finally forcing the board to act. Last week the state gave its blessing to the overhaul.

As state officials were whacking one mole in San Francisco, another popped up a few miles to the south in San Mateo. The San Mateo Heritage Alliance applied to the state Office of Historic Preservation to designate Baywood, a San Mateo neighborhood of upscale single-family homes, as an historic district.

It was the latest effort by local neighborhoods around the state to take advantage of a loophole in Senate Bill 9, one of the many new laws aimed at compelling cities to accept multi-family housing projects. The legislation, signed in 2021, in essence outlaws exclusive single-family zoning, but doesn't apply to neighborhoods designated as historic.

Attorney General Rob Bonta has interceded when some historic designation petitions were obvious attempts to block new housing, but it remains a new front in the ongoing conflict between state and local officials.

Nearly 400 miles further south, Bonta and the Newsom administration are trying to whack another mole in La Cañada Flintridge, a bucolic suburb of Los Angeles which has stubbornly resisted state pressure to build more housing.

SEE **GUEST COMMENTARY** PAGE 11



Surf report

WATER TEMP: **61.9**

WEDNESDAY
FAIR
SURF: 2-3ft
Thigh to waist

Slows down in the morning then a new WNW swell build from another storm pushing across the Gulf of Alaska towards the California coast. Wind and conditions look problematic with E/SE flow.

THURSDAY
POOR
SURF: 2-3ft
Thigh to waist

Decent size pulse of WNW swell but will need to watch storm expected offshore/near the region to dial in size and quality. Looking like a decent size swell with conditions dicey for most of the region under continued E/SE winds.

Weather

Wednesday: Rain. High near 64. South southeast wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.
Wednesday Night: Rain and possibly a thunderstorm. Low around 58. East southeast wind around 15 mph.
Thursday: Rain and possibly a thunderstorm. High near 63. East southeast wind around 15 mph.
Thursday Night: Rain and possibly a thunderstorm before 10pm, then showers and possibly a thunderstorm after 10pm.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2023/12/20	Wed	04:02 AM	4.91	H
2023/12/20	Wed	10:33 AM	1.66	L
2023/12/20	Wed	3:58 PM	3.59	H
2023/12/20	Wed	9:58 PM	0.97	L
2023/12/21	Thu	04:45 AM	5.39	H
2023/12/21	Thu	11:43 AM	0.82	L
2023/12/21	Thu	5:30 PM	3.41	H
2023/12/21	Thu	10:48 PM	1.39	L
2023/12/22	Fri	05:27 AM	5.83	H
2023/12/22	Fri	12:40 PM	0.04	L
2023/12/22	Fri	6:48 PM	3.44	H
2023/12/22	Fri	11:35 PM	1.75	L
2023/12/23	Sat	06:07 AM	6.17	H
2023/12/23	Sat	1:27 PM	-0.58	L
2023/12/23	Sat	7:50 PM	3.54	H
2023/12/24	Sun	12:20 AM	2.03	L
2023/12/24	Sun	06:46 AM	6.38	H
2023/12/24	Sun	2:10 PM	-0.98	L

Daily Lottery

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

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 12/18
5 8 19 34 39
Power#: 26
Jackpot: 572 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 12/15
10 20 28 40 54
Mega#: 12
Jackpot: 41 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 12/16
3 6 12 17 29
Mega#: 10
Jackpot: 7 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 12/18
14 20 23 31 32

Daily 3
Draw Date: 12/18
EVENING: 3 2 3
Draw Date: 12/18
MIDDAY: 1 8 8

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 12/18
1st: 10 - Solid Gold
2nd: 04 - Big Ben
3rd: 08 - Gorgeous George
Race Time: 1:47.16

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

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Santa Monica Daily Press

City of Santa Monica

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE SANTA MONICA LANDMARKS COMMISSION

SUBJECT: 23ENT-0108 (Certificate of Appropriateness)
331 Palisades Avenue
APPLICANT: Marmol Radziner (Architect)
PROPERTY OWNER: San Pasqual Fiduciary Trust Company, Trustee of the ST AESOP Trust

A public hearing will be held by the Landmarks Commission to consider the following request:

Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of the existing Mediterranean/Classical Revival Style residence and basement addition to the single-family residence, a City Landmark structure.

DATE/TIME: **MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024, 7:00 PM**

LOCATION: City Council Chamber, Second Floor, Santa Monica City Hall
1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401

HOW TO COMMENT
The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment. Members of the public unable to attend a meeting but wishing to comment on an item(s) listed on the agenda may submit written comments prior to the public hearing via email to planningcomment@santamonica.gov or via mail to the address listed below. Comments received prior to 12 p.m. on the day of the meeting will be distributed to the Landmarks Commission prior to the meeting and posted online. All written comments shall be made part of the public record. You may also comment in-person at the Landmarks Commission hearing. Please check the agenda for more detailed instructions on how to comment.

Address your comments to: **Stephanie Reich, Design and Historic Preservation Planner**
Re: 23ENT-0108 (331 Palisades Avenue Certificate of Appropriateness)
VIA E-MAIL: planningcomment@santamonica.gov
VIA MAIL: City Planning Division
1685 Main Street, Mail Stop 28, Santa Monica, CA 90401

MORE INFORMATION
If you want more information about this project or wish to review the project file, please contact Stephanie Reich by e-mail at stephanie.reich@santamonica.gov. The Zoning Ordinance is available on the City's web site at www.santamonica.gov. For disability-related accommodations, please contact (866) 311-7266 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Every attempt will be made to provide the requested accommodation. All written materials are available in alternate languages provided the request is received 72 hours prior to the meeting. Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Lines serve City Hall and the Civic Center area. The Expo Line terminus is located at Colorado Avenue and Fourth Street, and is a short walk to City Hall. Public parking is available in front of City Hall, on Olympic Drive, and in the Civic Center Parking Structure (validation free).

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65009(b), if this matter is subsequently challenged in Court, the challenge may be limited to only those issues raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Santa Monica at, or prior to, the public hearing.

ESPAÑOL: Este es un aviso de una audiencia publica sobre una solicitud para remodilar un edifecio que tiene valor historico importante. Para más información: planning@santamonica.gov

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THE DAILY PRESS
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Extreme weather, guilt tipping and, yes, Barbie: We're over you, 2023

LEANNE ITALIE
AP Entertainment Writer

All things Barbie, going pantless, humungo Stanley Cup bottles and pressure tipping. There's plenty from 2023 to leave behind come the new year.

Extreme weather hit historic heights. Fakeness took a huge turn with the rise of AI. The rudeness epidemic continued with the help of FaceTime. Here's a less than all-inclusive list of what we're over as we look ahead to 2024:

BARBIE, TAKE A HIKE

Barbiecore, aka all things hot pink and playful and hyper-feminine, has been around since the dawn of Paris Hilton and Britney Spears. Pierpaolo Piccioli at Valentino added some high-fashion oomph in 2022 with a buzzy Barbie pink collection. And there's Nicki Minaj, of course, and her army of fans dubbed the Barbz.

Then along came Barbenheimer and bam! July 2023 was nuts with the conflation of the films "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer." They shared an opening weekend. Big Barbie (and "Oppenheimer") money was made. It was fun. We needed that feel-good frenzy.

Now, please, let's put Babs back in her box and hop on over to some other aesthetic and spot on the color wheel to get all crazy about. Enough with the high profile for our senior gal and her pink. Pink for breast cancer awareness is a whole other story. So is millennial pink, if that ever was an actual thing people generally cared about.

On to Gen Z yellow, people!

PANTYHOSE ARE NOT PANTS

Kendall Jenner. Hailey Bieber. Ariana Grande. Rihanna. Kim Kardashian. The list goes on of celebs who decided colored but still sheer pantyhose are pants.

They're not pants. They're not tights. They're not leggings. And they're definitely not naked dresses, which make some kind of sense on a red carpet or runway for a sheer, sexy vibe.

There are lots of other ways people go pantless, for sure. Bare legged. Leotarded, like the bedazzled Marc Jacobs number Jenner wore to the Met Gala. All just look like one forgot one's pants, leaving behind a tuxedo jacket or a long bulky sweater or ill-fitting sweatshirt.

Isn't this what assistants are for? To make sure one remembers one's pants?

WE'VE HAD IT WITH YOU, EXTREME WEATHER

"The dog days of summer are not just barking, they are biting. Climate breakdown has begun."

So said U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres of the summer of 2023 and its devastating outbreak of extreme weather.

Wicked ocean storms, wildfires, flooding and droughts. The planet suffered through them all. Earth experienced its hottest Northern Hemisphere summer ever measured. The world's oceans were the hottest on record, according to the World Meteorological Organization and the European climate service Copernicus.

We know this is a big ask, in a climate change sort of way, but extreme weather, be gone!

ENOUGH WITH THE PRESSURE TIPPING

At the height of the pandemic, and during the early throes of rebuilding our lives, we were happy to tip generously and often. That included an onslaught of new tip requests from a brave new world of workers armed with little screens that prompt for tips just before we pay. Because, as you remember, we were contactless.

The problem? It never went away. The pre-pay tip prompts are still there, in our faces.

Tipping fatigue is real.

The idea of tipping isn't new, of course. But the disgruntled took to social media in protest of the guilt trip for non-traditional tipping, when we're handed coffee and a muffin, say, or cruising through a drive-through.

The new normal doesn't look or feel anything like the tip jars of yore that were easily ignored.

Let's pay workers more to begin with and stop the pressure tipping.

THE FAKENESS OF IT ALL

Fake eyelashes the size of caterpillars persisted in 2023. Lab-grown diamonds made their way into the mainstream as cheaper alternatives to the real thing. Fake marriages hit the A-list, or at least those that secretly reached expiration dates years before the world found out (looking at you Will, Jada, Meryl and Don).

The relentless onslaught of fake news and disinformation continued in the lead-up to elections in 2024. Influencers and celebs rocked on with their "natural look" makeup tutorials that require a counter full of products. Kim Kardashian's fringe at the Council of Fashion Designers of America awards was, yes, fake.

Was 2023 a big year for fake everything? Counting AI, the answer is, definitely. Talk about creating an illusion. Let's not forget about real. Real just may get us through.

THE STANLEY CUP CRAZE

Hydration is important. Reducing water bottle plastic is a worthy cause.

HOWEVER, there's a world of reusable water bottles out there, not just the ginormous and pricey Stanley Cup kind that earned cult status on TikTok and Instagram in 2023.

People wait in lines for these things. Some come as large as 40 ounces in a variety of colors at $40 a pop. Stans (apropos slang) put up unboxing videos. Starbucks, Target and other retailers have been selling out. And there's bling to be had: Name plates and straw tips fill the new TikTok shop, along with suspected fake Stanleys.

Stanley-related hashtags have been shared millions upon millions of times.

Who's behind it all? Social media marketing, of course. Thanks mom influencers. And score one for Stanley parent Pacific Market International. And while we're at it, score one for inventor William Stanley Jr.

He created the things in 1913 when,

SEE **YEAR 2023** PAGE 11

GAS PRICES IN SANTA MONICA

76	1776 Cloverfield Blvd	$5.25
SHELL	1802 Cloverfield Blvd	$5.20
CHEVRON	1819 Cloverfield Blvd	$5.80
MOBIL	731 Santa Monica Blvd	$5.40
LINCOLN BLVD CAR WASH	1624 Lincoln Blvd	$5.39
WORLD	1801 Lincoln Blvd	$4.70
SHELL	1866 Lincoln Blvd	$5.00
SPEEDWAY EXPRESS	2555 Lincoln Blvd	$4.70
CHEVRON	1732 Lincoln Blvd	$5.00
ARCO	332 Pico Blvd	$4.50
SINCLAIR	1944 Pico Blvd	$5.20
76	2601 Wilshire Blvd	N/A

*Prices paying in cash

SMDP and GasBuddy

Average gasoline prices in Los Angeles have fallen 10.2 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging $4.68/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 2,135 stations in Los Angeles. Prices in Los Angeles are 38.3 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 29.5 cents per gallon higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has fallen 9.2 cents in the last week and stands at $3.99 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Los Angeles was priced at $3.89/g yesterday while the most expensive was $6.35/g, a difference of $2.46/g. The lowest price in the state yesterday was $3.34/g while the highest was $7.79/g, a difference of $4.45/g.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 8.6 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging $3.03/g today. The national average is down 26.9 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 6.8 cents per gallon lower than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than 11 million weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the country.

Santa Monica Daily Press

City of Santa Monica

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE SANTA MONICA LANDMARKS COMMISSION

SUBJECT: 23ENT-0207 (Certificate of Appropriateness)

1333 and 1337 Ocean Avenue (LC-01LM-001 & LC-04-LM-005)
(project site also includes 1327 Ocean Avenue, 101 and 129 Santa Monica Boulevard)

APPLICANT: Worthe Real Estate Group
PROPERTY OWNER: Ocean Avenue Partners LLC

A public hearing will be held by the Landmarks Commission to consider the following request:

Certificate of Appropriateness for the Cultural Uses Campus Improvements that are a component of the Ocean Avenue Project, a mixed-use hotel, housing, museum, and retail/restaurant project. The scope of work for the Cultural Uses Campus Improvements includes rehabilitation, restoration, adaptive reuse, repositioning, and integration of two designated City Landmarks (Queen Anne at 1333 Ocean Avenue and Spanish Colonial Revival at 1337 Ocean Avenue) with construction of a new museum building. The Cultural Use Campus is constructed above a basement level and subterranean parking garage. The City Council approved a development agreement and certified the Final EIR for the project on July 14, 2022. The proposed Certificate of Appropriateness includes temporary relocation of the two designated City Landmarks during the course of construction.

DATE/TIME: **MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024, 7:00 PM**

LOCATION: City Council Chamber, Second Floor, Santa Monica City Hall
1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401

HOW TO COMMENT
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Address your comments to: **Roxanne Tanemori, Acting Deputy Director**
Re: 23ENT-0207 (Ocean Avenue Project Certificate of Appropriateness)

VIA E-MAIL: planningcomment@santamonica.gov
VIA MAIL: City Planning Division
1685 Main Street, Mail Stop 28, Santa Monica, CA 90401

MORE INFORMATION
If you want more information about this project or wish to review the project file, please contact Roxanne Tanemori at (310) 458-8202 or by e-mail at roxanne.tanemori@santamonica.gov. The Zoning Ordinance is available on the City's web site at www.santamonica.gov. For disability-related accommodations, please contact (866) 311-7266 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Every attempt will be made to provide the requested accommodation. All written materials are available in alternate languages provided the request is received 72 hours prior to the meeting. Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Lines serve City Hall and the Civic Center area. The Expo Line terminus is located at Colorado Avenue and Fourth Street, and is a short walk to City Hall. Public parking is available in front of City Hall, on Olympic Drive, and in the Civic Center Parking Structure (validation free).

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ESPAÑOL: Este es un aviso de una audiencia publica sobre una solicitud para remodilar un edifecio que tiene valor historico importante. Para más información: planning@santamonica.gov

City of Santa Monica

CITY OF SANTA MONICA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Santa Monica invites sealed proposals for

RFP: # 388 Professional Engineering Design Services for the MAPS and SMURRF Rehabilitation Project

- **Submission Deadline is February 15, 2024 at 5:00 PM Pacific Time.**

Proposals must include forms furnished by the City of Santa Monica. Request for Proposals may be obtained on the **City's Online Vendor Portal.** The website for this Request for Proposals and related documents is OpenGov (https://secure.procurenow.com/portal/santa-monica-ca) There is no charge for the RFP package.

SEND YOUR NEWS TO THE EDITOR

Santa Monica Daily Press **editor@smdp.com**

2023 (Taylor's Version): The year in pop culture

JOCELYN NOVECK
AP National Writer

In weather terminology, they call it "rapid intensification" — the process by which a storm strengthens dramatically in a short period.

In pop culture terminology, they call it Taylor Swift.

It's not like Swift didn't have big – huge! – years before this. But 2023? This was ridiculous.

From the blockbuster "Eras" tour that conquered the United States before a planet-vanquishing international leg, to the re-release of more albums on the road to reclaiming her catalog, to the record-smashing concert film, to becoming a billionaire — and yeah, that thing with "the guy on the Chiefs" — it all made for a year you could reasonably call "2023 (Taylor's Version)."

There were, of course, non-Swiftian developments in pop culture. Beyoncé, ever the superstar, had a huge tour herself, and ruled the box office with "Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé." Speaking of renaissance, look no further than Barbie — technically age 64 but now living her most fantastic life in plastic, thanks to Greta Gerwig's record-shattering "Barbie." Through mere coincidence of timing, Gerwig's candy-colored creation paired with "Oppenheimer" to fuel "Barbenheimer," a phenomenon that singlehandedly revitalized the multiplex.

There were comebacks, as always. The Rolling Stones never left, surely, but produced their best new music in decades. Even the Beatles released a new song. On TV, Samantha even made it back — for a minute — to the "Sex and the City" franchise. A pregnant Rihanna soared (literally) at the Super Bowl, and again showed us that nobody makes a more glamorous, more fashionably late Met Gala entrance.

Our very selective (and this year, very Swift-centric) stroll down pop culture memory lane:

JANUARY

If anyone needs a comeback, it's the GOLDEN GLOBES. The year begins with comic JERROD CARMICHAEL deftly navigating host duties, quipping, "I'm here because I'm Black" — a nod to the diversity scandal plaguing the awards. Speaking of scandal, nobody does it better than the royals: PRINCE HARRY'S "Spare" sells more than 3.2 million copies in one week. Also breaking records: SHAKIRA'S "BZRP Music Session #53," in which she bitingly sings of her ex, former soccer star GERARD PIQUÉ. January (Taylor's version): U.S. senators grill Ticketmaster about its mega-breakdown selling SWIFT tickets.

FEBRUARY

At the Super Bowl, RIHANNA floats above the 50-yard line in a bright red jumpsuit … and reveals a baby bump! It's her first solo performance in seven years and her first since becoming a mother nine months earlier. Now's the time to learn things we didn't know about PAMELA ANDERSON, whose memoir "Love, Pamela" drops, joining a Netflix documentary. At the GRAMMYS, it's a decidedly mixed bag for BEYONCÉ, who breaks the record for career wins, but is shut out in the top categories. HARRY STYLES bests her for album of the year, stoking controversy with his acceptance speech.

MARCH

It's OSCAR time! And nobody gets slapped! "Everything Everywhere All at Once" lives up to its title, sweeping nearly every major category. This feel-good night proves a huge moment for Asians and Asian Americans in Hollywood. "My journey started on a boat. I spent a year in a refugee camp," says an emotional KE HUY QUAN, winning best supporting actor. Some may have skipped the Oscars entirely — namely PEDRO PASCAL fans, catching the finale of "The Last of Us." Longtime Bravolebrities Tom Sandoval and Ariana Madix break up when it's revealed Sandoval has been having an affair with their "Vanderpump Rules" co-star, a development soon dubbed "Scandoval." In a Utah courtroom, GWYNETH PALTROW wins a battle over a ski collision, but also nabs the "quiet luxury" fashion award. And the "Eras" era begins: SWIFT opens her tour in Arizona.

APRIL

Back to the courtroom for a sec: have you seen "JURY DUTY"? The TV sleeper hit sticks the landing. Somehow, regular guy RONALD GLADDEN never figured out that everyone else doing jury duty was an actor, including JAMES MARSDEN, playing a deliciously conceited … JAMES MARSDEN. And back to SWIFT watch: Neither confirms it, but reports say she and longtime boyfriend JOE ALWYN have split.

MAY

If Samuel Beckett had attended the MET GALA, he'd surely have written "Waiting for Rihanna." Most guests come in time for cocktails; RIHANNA shows up closer to dessert, but makes it worth the wait. This is the year JARED LETO dons a giant cat suit, but still the animal world is most memorably represented by … a COCKROACH! A real one, who walks the carpet and entertains media waiting for Rihanna, until, squish! Bye, cockroach — and bye also to the ROY kids, aka KENDALL, ROMAN and SHIV, who self-destruct gloriously in the final episodes of "Succession." Leave it to Hollywood's writers, now striking, to have the cleverest signs: "HBO Max Pays HBO Minimum," reads one. They will remain on strike for nearly 150 days, joined by the actors in July.

JUNE

We'll keep this one brief: Heard of the GRIMACE SHAKE at McDonald's? It's all the rage on TikTok. A new group of luminaries is invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, among them DAVID BYRNE, AUSTIN BUTLER, KEKE PALMER, KE HUY QUAN — and yes, SWIFT.

JULY

Take one famous doll with a complicated history. Add a talent like GERWIG, get MARGOT ROBBIE to star, bring in RYAN GOSLING to chew the scenery, and you have "BARBIE," the biggest movie of 2023 and a milestone for female directors. Now stir in CHRISTOPHER NOLAN'S superb "OPPENHEIMER," and the rest is box office history. Speaking of history, one famous bird is no more — ELON MUSK drops a longtime logo and decrees TWITTER will henceforth be called "X." Also history: SWIFT now has more No. 1 albums than any woman, eclipsing BARBRA STREISAND. From eclipse to earthquake: Scientists report they've detected seismic signals roughly akin to a 2.3 magnitude earthquake under Swift's Seattle show.

AUGUST

Guess who has 277 million Instagram followers? You know who. Guess who has almost double that? LIONEL MESSI, that's who, with 493 million. The Argentine soccer god, in his first month with Inter Miami, thrills fans and gives a jolt of adrenaline to soccer in the United States. KIM CATTRALL makes a very quick return to the "Sex and the City" reboot.

SEPTEMBER

Now that summer is over, let's inspect the damage — by which we mean all the recent celebrity splits: JOE JONAS and SOPHIE TURNER, ARIANA GRANDE and DALTON GOMEZ, BRITNEY SPEARS and SAM ASGHARI, SOFIA VERGARA and JOE MANGANIELLO, among others. But hey, someone's looking for love: Retired widower GERRY TURNER, "The Golden Bachelor," begins his search on ABC. Also, jersey sales rapidly intensify this month for one TRAVIS KELCE, tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs, by some 400%. So weird, any idea why? In unrelated news, SWIFT attends a Chiefs game.

OCTOBER

It's a good month to be 80! MARTIN SCORSESE becomes a TikTok star via daughter Francesca's silly videos and presents one of his most ambitious films yet, "Killers of the Flower Moon." Also 80, MICK JAGGER joins slightly younger ROLLING STONES bandmates KEITH RICHARDS (79) and RONNIE WOOD (76) in producing the crackling new album "Hackney Diamonds." In a much-awaited memoir, BRITNEY SPEARS details her heartbreaks and her struggles, her relationships and her nearly 14-year conservatorship. SWIFT reaches billionaire status — and throws a Hollywood premiere for her "Eras" movie, which will become the most successful concert film of all time.

NOVEMBER

Hollywood's writers and actors are thankfully back, back to where they once belonged. Which brings us to the BEATLES: No, they aren't getting back together. But six decades after Beatlemania ruled, a new and final tune, "Now And Then," is released, thanks to artificial intelligence. Cast members of "Friends" gather to mourn co-star MATTHEW PERRY at his funeral. The "Eras" tour goes international, packing stadiums in Argentina,then Brazil, with more to go in 2024.

DECEMBER

SPOTIFY announces 2023's most-streamed artist — it's SWIFT, dethroning BAD BUNNY. BEYONCÉ conquers the box office on opening weekend with her "Renaissance" film. Is it a foregone conclusion, finally, that SWIFT would close out her year staring at us from magazine covers as Time's person of the year, in a year her fame achieved something akin to "nuclear fusion"? Which brings us to our final question: How long can a storm rapidly intensify? Fact is, though, SWIFT seems to always be rewriting the rules.



2023: The year we played with artificial intelligence — and weren't sure what to do about it

MATT O'BRIEN
AP Technology Writer

Artificial intelligence went mainstream in 2023 — it was a long time coming yet has a long way to go for the technology to match people's science fiction fantasies of human-like machines.

Catalyzing a year of AI fanfare was ChatGPT. The chatbot gave the world a glimpse of recent advances in computer science even if not everyone figured out quite how it works or what to do with it.

"I would call this an inflection moment," pioneering AI scientist Fei-Fei Li said. "2023 is, in history, hopefully going to be remembered for the profound changes of the technology as well as the public awakening. It also shows how messy this technology is."

It was a year for people to figure out "what this is, how to use it, what's the impact — all the good, the bad and the ugly," she said.

PANIC OVER AI

The first AI panic of 2023 set in soon after New Year's Day when classrooms reopened and schools from Seattle to Paris started blocking ChatGPT. Teenagers were already asking the chatbot — released in late 2022 — to compose essays and answer take-home tests.

AI large language models behind technology such as ChatGPT work by repeatedly guessing the next word in a sentence after having "learned" the patterns of a huge trove of human-written works. They often get facts wrong. But the outputs appeared so natural that it sparked curiosity about the next AI advances and its potential use for trickery and deception.

Worries escalated as this new cohort of generative AI tools — spitting out not just words but novel images, music and synthetic voices — threatened the livelihoods of anyone who writes, draws, strums or codes for a living. It fueled strikes by Hollywood writers and actors and legal challenges from visual artists and bestselling authors.

Some of the AI field's most esteemed scientists warned that the technology's unchecked progress was marching toward outsmarting humans and possibly threatening their existence, while other scientists called their concerns overblown or brought attention to more immediate risks.

By spring, AI-generated deepfakes — some more convincing than others — had leaped into U.S. election campaigns, where one falsely showed Donald Trump embracing the nation's former top infectious disease expert. The technology made it increasingly difficult to distinguish between real and fabricated war footage in Ukraine and Gaza.

By the end of the year, the AI crises had shifted to ChatGPT's own maker, the San Francisco startup OpenAI, nearly destroyed by corporate turmoil over its charismatic CEO, and to a government meeting room in Belgium, where exhausted political leaders from across the European Union emerged after days of intense talks with a deal for the world's first major AI legal safeguards.

The new AI law will take a few years to fully take effect, and other lawmaking bodies — including the U.S. Congress — are still a long way from enacting their own.

TOO MUCH HYPE?

There's no question that commercial AI products unveiled in 2023 incorporated technological achievements not possible in earlier stages of AI research, which trace back to the mid-20th century.

But the latest generative AI trend is at peak hype, according to the market research firm Gartner, which has tracked what it calls the "hype cycle" of emerging technology since the 1990s. Picture a wooden rollercoaster ticking up to its highest hill, about to careen down into what Gartner describes as a "trough of disillusionment" before coasting back to reality.

"Generative AI is right in the peak of inflated expectations," Gartner analyst Dave Micko said. "There's massive claims by vendors and producers of generative AI around its capabilities, its ability to deliver those capabilities."

Google drew criticism this month for editing a video demonstration of its most capable AI model, called Gemini, in a way that made it appear more impressive — and human-like.

Micko said leading AI developers are pushing certain ways of applying the latest technology, most of which correspond to their current line of products — be they search engines or workplace productivity software. That doesn't mean that's how the world will use it.

"As much as Google and Microsoft and Amazon and Apple would love us to adopt the way that they think about their technology and that they deliver that technology, I think adoption actually comes from the bottom up," he said.

IS IT DIFFERENT THIS TIME?

It's easy to forget that this isn't the first wave of AI commercialization. Computer vision techniques developed by Li and other scientists helped sort through a huge database of photos to recognize objects and individual faces and help guide self-driving cars. Speech recognition advances made voice assistants like Siri and Alexa a fixture in many people's lives.

"When we launched Siri in 2011, it was at that point the fastest-growing consumer app and the only major mainstream application of AI that people had ever experienced," said Tom Gruber, co-founder of Siri Inc., which Apple bought and made an integral iPhone feature.

But Gruber believes what's happening now is the "biggest wave ever" in AI, unleashing new possibilities as well as dangers.

SEE **AI** PAGE 11

Saint John's Health Center
Providence

Providence Saint John's Health Center is pleased to announce it will add another new graduate nursing cohort to its Transition into Practice (TIP) residency program hosted by the Clinical Academy of Providence Nursing Institute. This TIP Residency program has been awarded accreditation with distinction; the highest recognition awarded by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation (ANCC). Santa Monica College nursing student graduates residing in a zip code that starts with 904 are welcome to apply to the residency program that will start in February 2024.

The TIP Residency program is an exceptional professional development program designed to support progression as a new graduate RN (Resident) from education to practice and then transition into a professional nursing role. Newly graduated nurses (RNs) will enter into practice through the TIP Residency Program which is offered in the winter, spring and late summer.

The curriculum and experience created by our Clinical Academy team earned the full three-year accreditation for practice transition programs. This means our nursing residency program for nurses with less than 12 months' experience exceeds the global standards for preparing our nurses to transition to a new care setting. Our accredited residency focuses on preparing nurses to practice in the following settings:

- Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)
- Obstetrics Unit
- Oncology Unit
- Orthopedics Unit

The application for the February 2024 TIP program opens December 18, 2023. To apply, please visit our website: bit.ly/3TGbLhN.



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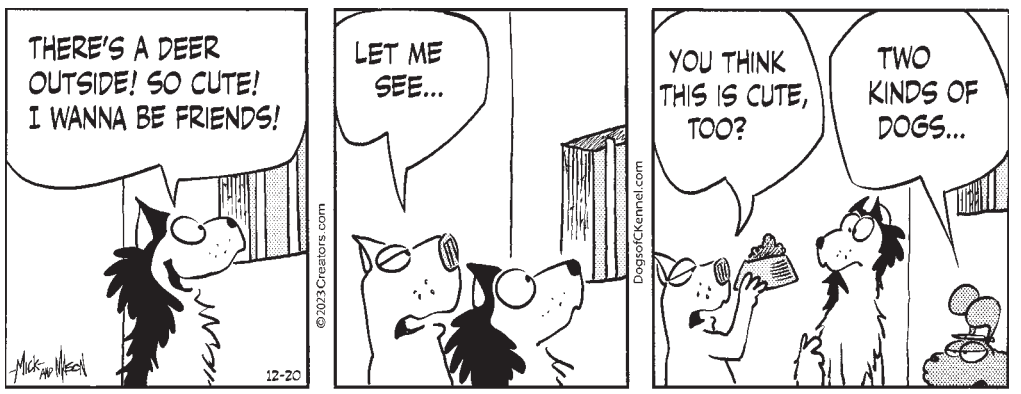
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



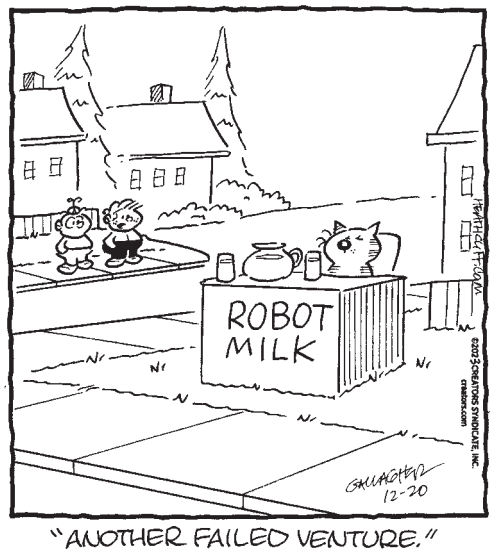
Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

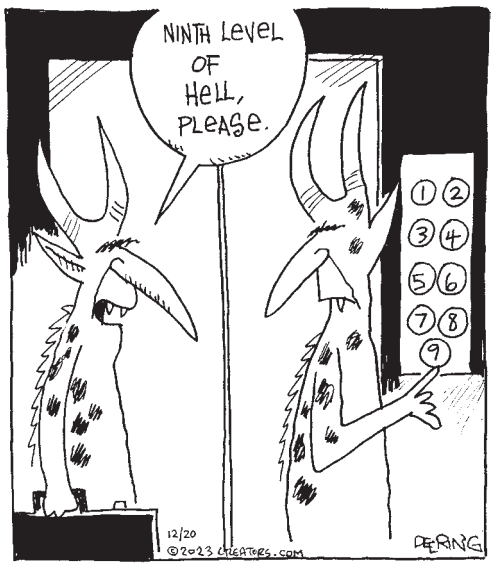
By PETER GALLAGHER



"ANOTHER FAILED VENTURE."

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

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Getting fit

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

Ache
Arms
Back
Ball
City
Cool
Core
Diet
Drop
Easy
Encouragement
Face
Fast
Fibre
Floor
Focus
Fruit
Fuel
Goals
Group
Hard
Hats
Help
Hips
Keen
Keto
Kilometre
Lean
Legs
Mind
Neck
Perspiration
Push
Relax
Run
Scales
Shoes
Size
Slog
Sport
Squat
Stairs
Steep
Strain
Swing
Time
Tired
Vaults
Weekend
warrior

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 20)

A wonderful year, not because you'll get everything you want but because of the satisfaction and confidence you gain from solving life's problems and claiming the prizes you so deserve. More highlights: You nail your top priority and all settles around it. Financial interests compel more education, which pays off big time. Libra and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 3, 12, 1 and 19.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll direct your resources to delight people who are notoriously hard to please. It's not done with more, just better. The cost will be accounted for in organizational and creativity points, not dollars.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Today will be a seamless flow, with you navigating swiftly, your focus unwavering. Delegate those details so you can keep doing what you do best. You'll claim the prize and return to share it with the team.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your talent for discretion will set you apart. You radiate class and professionalism. You will have an uncanny sense for which cards to hold back and which ones to play. You will guide others to the information that is relevant and helpful to the situation.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Adversity has shown you who you are and who you want to be. It has given you a clearer path than you had before the challenge. You're thankful for the ways you've had it tough, though you're often driven to help others have it better.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). No one can be reasoned out of beliefs they didn't reason their way into, so there's no point in arguing with opinionated individuals who present their beliefs as incontrovertible fact. You'll learn more from people who aren't obsessed with being right.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You've been known to invest in people you like, but more often it goes in the reverse order. People need your help, and in giving it, you develop an affinity for the recipient.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Certain notions you have about yourself are so habitual you won't notice them until someone points it out to you. Use good judgment in deciding when to try and influence others and when to stay out of it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You have but limited time, energy and resources. Deep commitment requires substantial investments of these resources. Keep your promises to a minimum. You'll accomplish three wonderful things today and push your project forward.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Cats and terriers possess the ability to detect the scent of unseen rats, and today, you share a common trait with these perceptive creatures. Express your suspicions and they will be validated.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You'll have good conversations today. And though you have a knack for picking the right topics, there will still be times of uncertainty. When you're not sure what to talk about, all you have to do is listen. People talk about things they like to hear about.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Every day unfolds with myriad possibilities, each choice leading down a distinct path, subtly shaping the course of events. Your ability to anticipate and understand these outcomes improves, empowering you to become more strategic in your decision-making.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). A strategic mindset allows you to navigate the intricate web of choices before you, selecting paths that align with your goals and aspirations. Your evolving predictive abilities enable you to foresee potential outcomes.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

Newsday Crossword

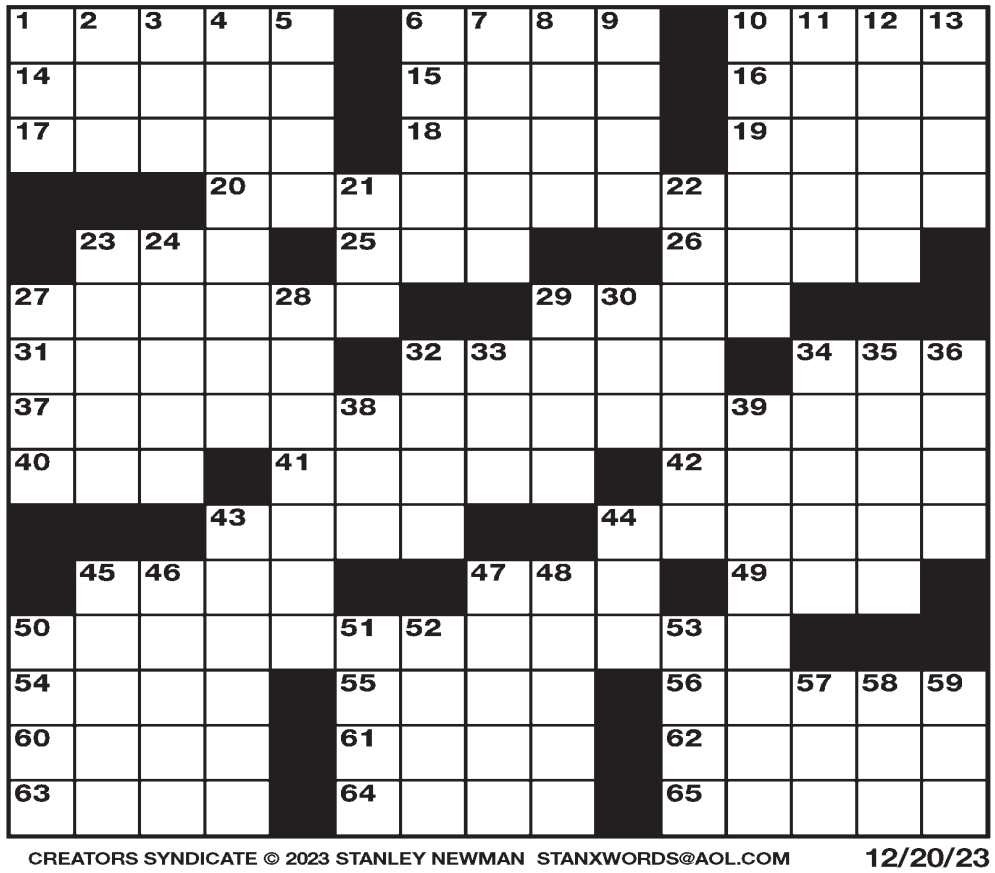
GOLF TROUBLE by Fred Piscop
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 "Same here!"
6 Take a cruise
10 IRS form experts
14 Scrub thoroughly
15 __ extra cost (free)
16 Went by bike or bus
17 Must, informally
18 Store window light
19 Coup d'__
20 Competing overly aggressively
23 Move to and __
25 Labor Day day: Abbr.
26 Otherwise
27 Northernmost state
29 Abate
31 State-run game
32 Give one's two cents
34 Sign at a hit show
37 Makes no sense
40 Billboard displays
41 Used a stopwatch on
42 Single-handedly
43 Feels unwell
44 Parcels out
45 Wine barrel
47 Oxygen, for instance
49 Right-angle shapes
50 *All in the Family* character
54 Official refusal
55 Vegan's taboo
56 Stone used for marbles
60 Fragrance
61 "The Red Planet"
62 Baton-passing race
63 Was clothed in
64 Artist Warhol
65 Catch in a trap

DOWN

1 Flavor enhancer letters
2 Earth-friendly prefix
3 Small child
4 Remote military bases
5 Word-of-mouth
6 Sony competitor
7 Had dinner at home
8 Drop __ (visit briefly)
9 Lasting quite a while
10 Louisiana cuisine
11 Oval Office VIP
12 Wise maxim
13 Brother of Cain and Abel
21 Physicians' org.
22 Subscription extension
23 Inundate
24 Is worthy of
27 *M*A*S*H* star
28 Thor Heyerdahl's raft
29 Unable to throw strikes
30 Mac __ cheese
32 Electrical resistance measures
33 "The Raven" writer
34 Tavern seat
35 Takes an apartment
36 Mine resources
38 Up to, in brief
39 Any sneeze-causing substance
43 Back from boating
44 Inquire
45 Brief statement of belief
46 Cast member
47 Security worker
48 Unable to sit still
50 Declare firmly
51 Watson of the Harry Potter films
52 Lima or lentil
53 Corn harvest
57 __ carte menu
58 Road's black surface
59 Watch carefully



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

HOMELESS COUNT

FROM PAGE 1

You can register by visiting the website theycountwillyou.org/volunteer and following the instructions to RSVP. This year, LAHSA is running the operation slightly differently and fewer volunteers will be needed, just 75 in fact for the City of Santa Monica, compared to last year, when 300 were utilized.

Results from the 2023 count showed that homelessness increased by about 9% countywide and by 45% the Santa Monica area. LAHSA released the results that showed the increase was driven almost entirely by huge spikes in the western and southern regions of the county, including the area covering Santa Monica. Nationwide, homelessness increased by about 12% last year.

According to the Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count website, "the results of the count is just one tool the city and jurisdictions across the country use to respond to the homelessness crisis ... Addressing homelessness continues to be a top priority in Santa Monica and the city is allocating unprecedented resources to addressing the impacts of homelessness on our streets and ensuring a Clean & Safe community."

"Volunteering for the homeless count is one way community members can currently assist with efforts to address homelessness ... The count would not be possible without the volunteers who come together across the county."

For any additional information, you can email homelesscount@lahsa.org or call 213-683-3333.

scott.snowden@smdp.com

HOMELESS

FROM PAGE 2

HUD also sought to highlight improvements and noted that some communities bucked the national trend. Chattanooga, Tennessee, and the surrounding region, for example, saw a 49% drop from the 2022 count to this year's. Chattanooga increased efforts to more rapidly connect people to permanent housing and boosted efforts to prevent people from becoming homeless.

Other communities highlighted for a drop were Dallas, which experienced a 3.8% decrease, and Newark and Essex County, New Jersey, which saw a 16.7% drop. Houston has closed numerous homeless encampments across the city and saw a 17% reduction in unsheltered homelessness. San Jose, California, and Tucson, Arizona, were also cited for improvements.

GUEST COMMENTARY

FROM PAGE 3

Last week, Bonta sued the city, seeking to reverse its denial of an 80-unit affordable housing project and also declare the city to be out of compliance with state housing laws, thus subjecting it to the "builder's remedy," meaning it would lose virtually all authority over housing projects.

The "builder's remedy" is, in effect, the state's most powerful hammer with which to whack resistant municipal moles.

This article was originally published by CalMatters.

YEAR 2023

FROM PAGE 4

through his work on transformers, he hit on a welding technique to insulate his vacuum bottles with steel instead of glass.

Would he approve of all the virtue signaling, which is not unlike all the virtue signaling we had already experienced via Hydro Flasks and their VSCO Girls? Before that it was Nalgene.

It's likely Stanley would be ecstatic.

KEEP YOUR FACETIME TO YOURSELF

FaceTime is great. FaceTime is fun. FaceTime keeps us connected. The thing is, we like our FaceTimes. Not your FaceTimes.

FaceTiming in public (along with good ole speaker phone talk) reached cataclysmic proportions on the annoyance scale in 2023. On trains and buses, in streets, stores, doctors' offices. In public restrooms. Nowhere is spared. Sometimes, the camera's not remotely pointed at the phone user's face.

What's the deal? What's the point? Is it a, "I do it because I can" thing? What you do because you fat-finger all your texts or hang up a call with your face when the phone is, um, at your face? Don't know what Bluetooth is? Can't stand things in your ears or on your head?

Don't make us rue 2010, when Apple introduced FaceTime alongside the iPhone 4. Figure something out, unless there's a legit reason you can't use your phone all the other more considerate ways in public.

OVER IT RUNNERS-UP

Weed, of the marijuana variety, is ubiquitous. Weed stinks. Somebody please genetically alter a variety that smells better. Much appreciated.

Social media speak: "I was today years old." "So let's get into it." "Yas, bestie, it's giving." Be original. You'll love it.

The comings and goings of Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce. Let them live unfettered by media drooling over their every move, presuming their romance lasts come 2024.

AI

FROM PAGE 7

"We're surprised that we could accidentally encounter this astonishing ability with language, by training a machine to play solitaire on all of the internet," Gruber said. "It's kind of amazing."

The dangers could come fast in 2024, as major national elections in the U.S., India and elsewhere could get flooded with AI-generated deepfakes.

In the longer term, AI technology's rapidly improving language, visual perception and step-by-step planning capabilities could supercharge the vision of a digital assistant — but only if granted access to the "inner loop of our digital life stream," Gruber said.

"They can manage your attention as in, 'You should watch this video. You should read this book. You should respond to this person's communication,'" Gruber said. "That is what a real executive assistant does. And we could have that, but with a really big risk of personal information and privacy."



WEDNESDAY | DECEMBER 20

FREE WALK-IN LEGAL CLINIC

Santa Monica residents can meet one on one with a lawyer from Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles for help with HOUSING issues. Third Wednesday of the month 4:30 - 7 p.m. at Virginia Avenue Park- Park Center. Immediate assistance is available by calling LAFLA directly at 800-399-4529 or visit lafla.org/gethelp. Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Ave.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE MULTI LEVEL LOW

Santa Monica Public Library hosts an ongoing series of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes taught by Adult Education Center instructors. Classes are free and students must be 18 years or older to attend. Community parents and SMMUSD parents have priority enrollment. Learn more about California adult education at caladulted.org. Enrollment is through the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Adult Education Center, located at 2510 Lincoln Blvd., Room 203, Santa Monica, CA, 90405. Contact Olga Saucedo at (310) 664-6222, ext.76203 or osaucedo@smmusd.org to enroll. Pico Branch Library, 2201 Pico Blvd. 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET

The largest grower-only Certified Farmers Market in Southern California and a favorite for local chefs! 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. Downtown Farmers Market Locations: Wednesdays at Arizona Ave & 2nd St and Saturdays at Arizona & 3rd St. 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

THURSDAY | DECEMBER 21

MONTANA AVENUE BRANCH BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

This community-led, monthly book discussion group currently meets in person. December's selection is Say Nothing by Patrick Radden Keefe. Montana Branch Library, 1704 Montana Avenue. 6 - 7 p.m.

LOCALS NIGHT ON THE SANTA MONICA PIER

Join organizers every THIRD THURSDAY of the month on the Santa Monica as the Pier Corp. will be rolling out the red carpet for Santa Monicans for a curated series for locals, by locals. Gather your friends and family and head down to the Pier for amazing entertainment including youth activities, a car show, local DJs and live music from local bands, art exhibits, salsa dancing and so much more! You really won't want to miss this incredible and unique outdoor setting to unwind, all while celebrating Santa Monica. Santa Monica Pier, 200 Santa Monica Pier, 3:30 - 10 p.m.

FAMILY STORYTIME

Stories, songs, fingerplays, rhymes: building reading skills while having fun! Suggested for ages 3 and up. Palisades Branch Library, 861 Alma Real Drive
Pacific Palisades 4 p.m.

BUILDING BLOCK PARTY AT THE LIBRARY FOR KIDS AND TEENS

Bring your engineering ideas to life with soft blocks, Duplos, and LEGOs. For ADA accommodations, call (213) 228-7430 at least 72 hours prior to the event. Para ajustes razonables según la ley de ADA, llama al (213) 228-7430 al menos 72 horas antes del evento. West Los Angeles Regional Branch Library, 11360 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, 4:15 p.m.

FRIDAY | DECEMBER 22

THE PHARCYDE

This event is 21 and over. Any ticket holder unable to present valid identification indicating that they are at least 21 years of age will not be admitted to this event, and will not be eligible for a refund. The Venice West, 1717 Lincoln Blvd, 8 p.m., $45, https://www.ticketweb.com/event/the-pharcyde-the-venice-west-tickets/13556808

THE NO CHASERS HOLIDAY SHOW

Doors open at 8 PM. Show starts at 9:30PM. Online ticket sales end at 7 PM, tics available at the door after 8 PM. 2 drink minimum. The No Chasers" are hailed as one of the greatest cover groups around SoCal. Harvelle's Santa Monica, 1432 4th St, $10, https://santamonica.harvelles.com/shows/244678

POP UP: WEAVING CREATIVITY

These exhibition-based workshops encourage creative inspiration for different activities, so make sure to check out the corresponding galleries. No prior art-making experience is necessary; our friendly staff will happily work with you on your creation. All ages are welcome! Please note, these in-gallery workshops are free with general admission. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 5905 Wilshire Blvd, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

COCOA & CAROLS

Join organizers at RUNWAY Wonderland for a vibrant evening of Cocoa and Carols! RUNWAY Wonderland will be extra Merry on Friday Nights in December. Come by and get a cup of gourmet hot cocoa with a variety of toppings and sweet extras, as you enjoy the sounds of acapella carolers. Find them on The Turf on Town Center Dr. Epic Mega Cookie Co. will be popping up for a special treat. First come, first serve. RUNWAY Playa Vista, 12746 West Jefferson Boulevard, 6 - 8 p.m.

SATURDAY | DECEMBER 23

ALLIGATOR BEACH

Doors open at 8 PM. Show starts at 9:30PM. Online ticket sales end at 7 PM, tics available at the door after 8 PM. 2 drink minimum. Funk roots run deep - all the way to Hermosa Beach, California - where some of the most sought-after backup musicians in the biz are creating a stir in a New Orleans-flavored funk band called Alligator Beach. Alligator Beach: New Orleans meets Los Angeles. They are going to grab something from The Meters, The Neville Brothers, Maceo Parker and Aretha. They are going to round up all the party people and head down to the beach to have a funky good time and shake everything we got. Harvelle's Santa Monica, 1432 4th St. $10.

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