smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

TUESDAY
12.21.21
Volume 21 Issue 32

Art Show
Residents are invited to an art show by a local artist.
Page 4

Omicron Uptick
The variant is now the dominant version of the disease.
Page 5

@smdailypress @smdailypress Santa Monica Daily Press smdp.com

Hot Dog on a Stick reportedly nearing demolition

The legacy business will expand in its current location near the Santa Monica Pier, with construction set to begin this winter.

EMILY SAWICKI
SMDP Staff Writer

The humble Hot Dog on a Stick, which has been slinging sausages near the Santa Monica Pier since 1946, will soon — maybe, hopefully, possibly — be getting its long-awaited makeover.

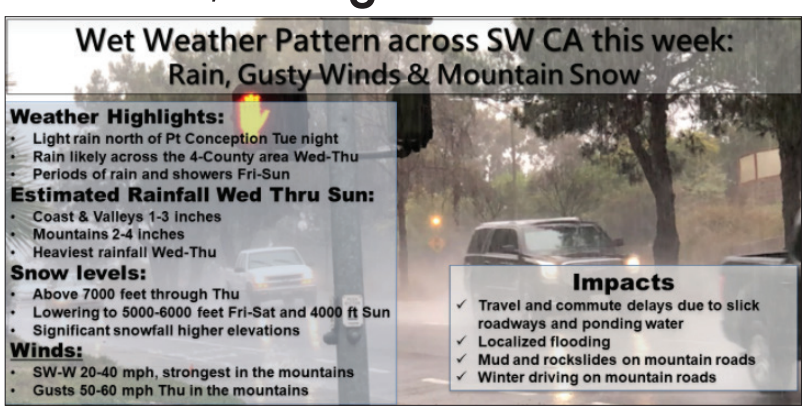
On Wednesday, Dec. 15, the California Coastal Commission granted demolition and rebuild permits to project architects in a unanimous, 10-0, vote. The project was first announced in 2009 before being delayed due to a company bankruptcy declaration in 2014. More announcements came in 2015, but by late 2021the demo was still on hold.

According to architect Michael Riley, that could change as soon as the city issues final permits, which could come as early as January.

"If we can get the last of the final approvals out of the City of Santa Monica, the company that controls Hot Dog on a Stick right now wants to move forward after the first of the year," Riley said.

SEE **HOT DOG** PAGE 7

California faces week of storms, likely travel troubles



National Weather Service

RAIN: It might be a wet Christmas in Southern California.

JOHN ANTCZAK
Associated Press

Drought-stricken California is facing a week of heavy mountain snowfall and widespread rain from another series of the kind of storms that were not expected to be likely this fall and winter due to La Nina conditions in the Pacific Ocean.

Successive waves of precipitation moving into Northern California from Tuesday — the first day of winter — through Sunday afternoon will coat parts of the Sierra Nevada with 1 to 5 feet of snow and possibly up to 8 feet at some higher elevations, the National Weather

SEE **WEATHER** PAGE 6

City Yards receives a sustainable facelift



Photos courtesy of The Miller Hull Partnership

YARD: The City Yard renovation aims to improve the usability and look of the facility.

CLARA HARTER
SMDP Staff Writer

Not many residents have set foot in City Yards, but this 14.7 acre site in the middle of the city houses public works services that are essential for all Santa Monicans. However, the facility is in the midst of major renovations designed to increase resident interactivity, replace outdated facilities and construct sustainable buildings.

City Yards houses facilities for water operations, trash and recycling services, street maintenance, fire department training and more. These services are all critical to the City and many were unable to function optimally using the original 80-year-old buildings, some of which were seismically unsafe or even obsolete.

The renovation design was completed by Miller Hull, while the construction was done by Hathaway Dinwiddie.

The redesign of the site began in July 2019 with the construction of the Fleet Building, which was completed in June 2021. The Administration Building and the Fire Training Facility are set to be completed in late 2022, while other parts of the project are on indefinite hold due to COVID-19 budget cuts.

Located at 2500 Michigan Avenue, the Yards have been opened up to the north after decades of being hidden behind a high wall. The change is perhaps the most visually obvious change for residents.

"The design focuses on the public edges of the City Yards and uses courtyards, plazas, landscaping and lighting to beautify what was previously a blind wall and to extend the public area of the Bergamot Arts district across Michigan Ave. to the northern edge of the Yards," said Michael Palmore, Associate at The Miller Hull Partnership.

A new event space is also planned as part of the redevelopment which will include a community room and enclosed outdoor courtyard for the community to use after hours and access independently of the Yards. For the over 200 city employees who utilize the Yards, the upgrades will create

SEE **DEVELOPMENT** PAGE 6

NICK THE GREEK SOUVLAKI & GYRO HOUSE
@NICKTHEGREEK

AUTHENTIC GREEK STREET FOOD



219 Arizona Ave Corner of 3rd Street Promenade Santa Monica, CA 90401

Southern California Locations
Santa Monica
Westwood UCLA
Westlake/Thousand oaks
Woodland Hills
Ventura
Newport Beach
Fullerton
San Diego
www.nickthegreek.com

Pentagon issues rules aimed at stopping rise of extremism

LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

Warning that extremism in the ranks is increasing, Pentagon officials issued detailed new rules Monday prohibiting service members from actively engaging in extremist activities. The new guidelines come nearly a year after some current and former service members participated in the riot at the U.S. Capitol, triggering a broad department review.

According to the Pentagon, fewer than 100 military members are known to have been involved in substantiated cases of extremist activity in the past year. But they warn that the number may grow given recent spikes in domestic violent extremism, particularly among veterans.

Officials said the new policy doesn't largely change what is prohibited but is more of an effort to make sure troops are clear on what they can and can't do, while still protecting their First Amendment right to free speech. And for the first time, it is far more specific about social media.

The new policy lays out in detail the banned activities, which range from advocating terrorism or supporting the overthrow of the government to fundraising or rallying on behalf of an extremist group or "liking" or reposting extremist views on social media. The rules also specify that commanders must determine two things in order for someone to be held accountable: that the action was an extremist activity, as defined in the rules, and that the service member "actively participated" in that prohibited activity.

Previous policies banned extremist activities but didn't go into such great detail, and also did not specify the two-step process to determine someone accountable.

What was wrong yesterday is still wrong today, said one senior defense official. But several officials said that as a study group spoke with service members this year they found that many wanted clearer definitions of what was not allowed. The officials provided additional details about the rules on condition of anonymity because they were not made public.

The military has long been aware of small numbers of white supremacists and other extremists among the troops. But Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and other leaders launched a broader campaign to root out extremism in the force after it became clear that military veterans and some current service members were present at the Jan. 6 insurrection.

In a message to the force on Monday, Austin said the department believes that only a few service members violate their oath and participate in extremist activities. But, he added, "even the actions of a few can have an outsized impact on unit cohesion, morale and readiness - and the physical harm some of these activities can engender can undermine the safety of our people."

The risk of extremism in the military can be more dangerous because many service members have access to classified information about sensitive military operations or other national security information that could help adversaries. And extremist groups routinely recruit former and current service members because of their familiarity with weapons and combat tactics.

The number of substantiated cases may be small compared to the size of the military, which includes more than 2 million active duty and reserve troops. But the number appears to be an increase over previous years where the totals were in the low two-digits. But officials also noted that data has not been consistent so it is difficult to identify trends.

The new rules do not provide a list of extremist organizations. Instead, it is up to commanders to determine if a service member is actively conducting extremist activities based on the definitions, rather than on a list of groups that may be constantly changing, officials said.

Asked whether troops can simply be members of an extremist organization, officials said the rules effectively prohibit membership in any meaningful way — such as the payment of dues or other actions that could be considered "active participation."

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told reporters that "there's not a whole lot about membership in a group that you're going to be able to get away with." He added, "In order to prove your membership you're probably going to run afoul of one of these criteria."

Kirby also said that commanders will evaluate each case individually, so simply clicking "like" on one social media post, for example, might not merit punishment depending on all the circumstances involved.

He also noted that the Pentagon does not have the ability or desire to actively monitor troops' personal social media accounts. Those issues would likely come up if reported to commanders or were discovered through other means.

The regulations lay out six broad groups of extremist activities and then provide 14 different definitions that constitute active participation.

Soon after taking office, Austin ordered military leaders to schedule a so-called "stand-down" day and spend time talking to their troops about extremism in the ranks.

The new rules apply to all of the military services, including the Coast Guard, which in peacetime is part of the Department of Homeland Security. They were developed through recommendations from the Countering Extremist Activities Working Group. And they make the distinction, for example, that troops may possess extremist materials, but they can't attempt to distribute them, and while they can observe an extremist rally, they can't participate, fund or support one.

The rules, said the officials, focus on behavior, not ideology. So service members have whatever political, religious or other beliefs that they want, but their actions and behavior are governed.

In addition to the new rules, the Pentagon is expanding its screening for recruits to include a deeper look at potential extremist activities. Some activities may not totally prevent someone from joining the military,

SEE **PENTAGON** PAGE 4

Virus fears trigger more holiday cancellations, restrictions

PHILIP MARCELO AND JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

The nation's second-largest city called off its New Year's Eve celebration Monday, and its smallest state re-imposed an indoor mask mandate as fears of a potentially devastating winter COVID-19 surge triggered more cancellations and restrictions ahead of the holidays.

Organizers of the New Year's Eve party planned for downtown Los Angeles' Grand Park announced that there will no in-person audience. The event will be livestreamed instead, as it was last year.

In Rhode Island, which has the most new cases per capita over the last two weeks, masks or proof of vaccination will be required in most indoor establishments. And in Boston, the city's new Democratic mayor announced to howls of protests and jeers that anyone entering a restaurant, bar or other indoor business will need to show proof of vaccination starting next month.

"There is nothing more American than coming together to ensure that we're taking care of each other," Mayor Michelle Wu said at City Hall as protesters loudly blew whistles and shouted "Shame on Wu."

Much of the fear centers around the new omicron variant, which scientists say spreads even easier than other coronavirus strains, including delta, and it is expected to become dominant in the U.S. by early next year. Many details about omicron remain unknown, including whether it causes more or less severe illness. But even if it is milder, the new variant could still overwhelm health systems because of the sheer number of infections.

In New York City, where a spike in infections is already scuttling Broadway shows and causing long lines at testing centers, Mayor Bill de Blasio is expected to decide this week whether the city's famous New Year's Eve bash in Times Square will come back "full strength" as he promised in November.

North of the border, the Canadian province of Quebec imposed a 10 p.m. closing time for restaurants, banned spectators from sporting events and shuttered gyms and schools and mandated remote work.

Across the Atlantic, the World Economic Forum announced Monday that it would again delay its annual meeting of world leaders, business executives and other elites in Davos, Switzerland.

But in Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Monday that officials decided against imposing further restrictions, at least for now.

The conservative government re-imposed face masks in shops and ordered people to show proof of vaccination at nightclubs and other crowded venues earlier this month. It is weighing curfews and stricter social distancing requirements.

"We will have to reserve the possibility of taking further action to protect the public," he said. "The arguments either way are very, very finely balanced."

Johnson's warning throws into stark relief the unpalatable choice government leaders face: wreck holiday plans for millions for a second consecutive year, or face a potential tidal wave of cases and disruption.

In the U.S., President Joe Biden planned to address the nation on the latest variant on Tuesday, less than a year after he suggested that the country would essentially be back to normal by Christmas.

His top medical adviser, Dr. Anthony Fauci, has promised that the Democrat will issue "a stark warning of what the winter will look like" for unvaccinated Americans.

Cases are surging in parts of the U.S., particularly the Northeast and Midwest, though it's not always clear which variant is driving the upswing.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from earlier this month found that the omicron variant represented 3% of new cases.

But in Texas, one hospital system reports that omicron already accounts for 82% of new symptomatic COVID-19 cases it is treating. That's a dramatic increase from Friday, when testing showed that omicron was responsible for 45% of the system's cases, Dr. S. Wesley Long, a medical director at Houston Methodist Hospital, said Sunday in a tweet.

In Missouri, an early epicenter of the delta surge, the variant still accounts for 98% to 99% of COVID-19 samples, according to the state's Department of Health and Senior Services.

Idaho state health officials on Monday deactivated crisis guidelines for rationing care that had been in place in northern counties since September, saying the number of COVID-19 patients remains high but no longer exceeds available health care resources.

Meanwhile, hospitals in Ohio, Maine and other states have postponed elective surgeries, and governors have sent in National Guard reinforcements to help beleaguered hospital staff in recent days.

In Kansas, rural hospitals are struggling to transfer patients, with some left stranded in emergency rooms for a week while they wait for a bed. Overwhelmed hospitals as far away as Minnesota and Michigan have been calling looking for beds in larger Kansas hospitals. Often there simply isn't room.

"It's already as crazy as it can be when you are talking about moving people from Minnesota to Kansas City for treatment," Dr. Richard Watson, founder of Motient, a company contracting with Kansas to help manage transfers, said Friday.

Still, many political leaders are reluctant to impose the stiff measures they resorted to earlier in the pandemic.

France is desperately trying to avoid a new lockdown that would hurt the economy and cloud President Emmanuel Macron's expected re-election campaign. The government in Paris, however, has banned public concerts and fireworks displays at New Year's celebrations.

Ireland has imposed an 8 p.m. curfew on pubs and bars and limited attendance at indoor and outdoor events, while Greece will have 10,000 police officers on duty over the holidays to carry out COVID-19 pass checks.

In Spain, where the national average for new cases is double what it was a year ago, authorities are betting primarily on

SEE **EVENTS** PAGE 4

DAILY POLICE LOG

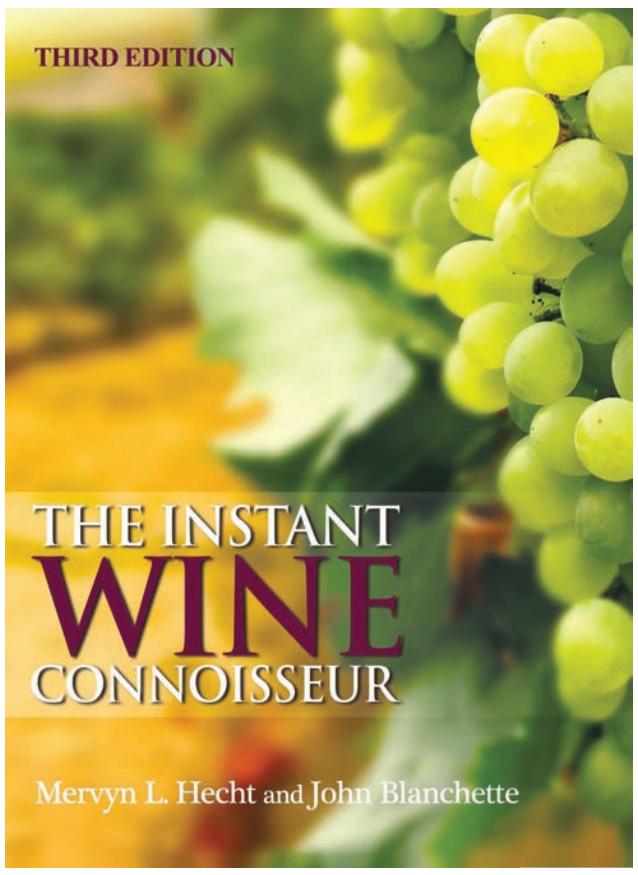
SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 281 CALLS ON DECEMBER 19

Living In A Vehicle 400Blk Georgina Ave 12:06 a.m.
Party Complaint 16Th St / Colorado Ave 12:41 a.m.
Loud Music 1500Blk Olympic Blvd 12:46 a.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop 2700Blk Main St 1:07 a.m.
Loud Music 1800Blk 12Th St 1:23 a.m.
Party Complaint 16Th St / Colorado Ave 1:38 a.m.
Public Intoxication 2000Blk Wilshire Blvd 1:43 a.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop 2100Bkl 11Th St 1:43 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 2400Blk 3rd St 2:10 a.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop 800Blk Olympic Blvd E 2:13 a.m.
Fight 2100Blk Stewart St 2:19 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 400Blk Santa Monica Blvd 3:13 a.m.
Public Intoxication 1500Blk Ocean Ave 3:51 a.m.
Vehicle Burglar Alarm 1600Blk San Vicente Blvd 4:00 a.m.
Overdose 600Blk Wilshire Blvd 4:07 a.m.
Trespassing 1800Blk 9Th St 4:21 a.m.
Petty Theft Just Occurred 4Th St / Broadway 4:47 a.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop Lincoln Blvd / Michigan Ave 5:08 a.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries 1100Blk Lincoln Blvd 5:48 a.m.
Animal Related Incident 2100Blk 20Th St 6:28 a.m.
Person With A Gun 400Blk Expo Line 7:09 a.m.
Trespassing 1100Blk 6Th St 7:49 a.m.
Animal Related Incident 1800Blk 16Th St 8:01 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1200Blk 16Th St 8:02 a.m.
Animal Related Incident 3000Blk Olympic Blvd 8:04 a.m.
Burglary Report 2600Blk Lincoln Blvd 8:06 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 400Blk Santa Monica Blvd 8:29 a.m.
Trespassing 100Blk Wadsworth Ave 8:49 a.m.
Mark & Tag Abandoned Vehicle 900Blk Harvard St 9:05 a.m.
Construction Noise 1200Blk Euclid St 9:36 a.m.
Animal Related Incident 1800Blk Dewey St 9:43 a.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 2500Blk Pico Blvd 9:48 a.m.
Traffic Collision - Unknown Injuries 1000Blk Palisades Beach rd 10:04 a.m.
72 Hour Psychiatric Hold 700Blk 7Th St 10:09 a.m.
Handicap Zone Violation 1300Blk 2nd St 10:12 a.m.
Grand Theft Report 2600Blk Ocean Park Blvd 10:13 a.m.
Battery Report 2000Blk Arizona Ave 10:40 a.m.
Grand Theft Report 1700Blk Ashland Ave 10:40 a.m.
Construction Noise 1000Blk 21st St 10:44 a.m.
Exhibition Of Speed Interstate 10 / Cloverfield Blvd 10:54 a.m.
Animal Related Incident 1800Blk 16Th St 11:07 a.m.
Traffic Hazard 11Th St / Pico Blvd 11:29 a.m.
General Parking Problem 400Blk Georgina Ave 11:53 a.m.
Burglary Report 1500Blk 6Th St 11:54 a.m.
Animal Related Incident 11th St / Pearl St 12:05 p.m.
Traffic Control Request - Level 1 1400Blk 3rd Street Prom 12:10 p.m.
Rape Report 2700Blk Main St 12:19 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 2000Blk Wilshire Blvd 12:38 p.m.
Traffic Collision - Unknown Injuries Lincoln Blvd / Ashland Ave 1:03 p.m.
Malicious Mischief Now 2800Blk Wilshire Blvd 1:52 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 1200Blk 7th St 2:01 p.m.
Trespassing 400Blk Broadway 2:07 p.m.
Violation Of Preferential Parking Zone 1500Blk Pacific Coast Hwy 2:11 p.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop 9th St / Wilshire Blvd 2:43 p.m.
Public Intoxication 2600Blk Ocean Front Walk 3:12 p.m.
Violation Of Preferential Parking Zone 3300Blk Barnard Way 3:26 p.m.
Petty Theft Report 1400Blk Santa Monica Blvd 3:29 p.m.
Petty Theft Report 800Blk 5th St 3:37 p.m.
General Parking Problem 500Blk Marguerita Ave 4:05 p.m.
Traffic Hazard 20th St / Pico Blvd 4:06 p.m.
Petty Theft Just Occurred 3rd Street Prom / Arizona Ave 4:07 p.m.
Malicious Mischief Now 1400Blk Lincoln Blvd 4:09 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 200Blk Bay St 4:12 p.m.
Handicap Zone Violation 1300Blk 2nd St 4:12 p.m.
Hit And Run Misdemeanor Investigation 00Blk Seaview Ter 4:14 p.m.
Loud Music 2600Blk Barnard Way 4:20 p.m.
Battery Just Occurred 800Blk Broadway 4:24 p.m.
Violation Of Posted Sign 200Blk California Ave 4:56 p.m.
Encampment 2400Blk 14th St 4:57 p.m.
Panic Alarm 2100Blk La Mesa Dr 5:02 p.m.
Animal Related Incident 200Blk Bay St 5:06 p.m.
Trespassing 700Blk 9th St 5:41 p.m.
Petty Theft Just Occurred 200Blk Wilshire Blvd 5:58 p.m.
Petty Theft Just Occurred 1800Blk Lincoln Blvd 6:15 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 1500Blk Oak St 6:16 p.m.
Trespassing 1200Blk Franklin St 6:41 p.m.
Trespassing 1400Blk 7th St 6:57 p.m.
Loud Music 2000Blk Ocean Ave 6:59 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries 11th St / Pico Blvd 7:20 p.m.
Trespassing 1300Blk Palisades Beach rd 7:32 p.m.
Traffic/Vehicle Stop Cloverfield Blvd / Olympic Blvd 7:34 p.m.
Loud Music 2000Blk Ocean Ave 8:12 p.m.
Exhibition Of Speed Main St / Kinney St 8:19 p.m.
Person With A Gun 9th St / Arizona Ave 8:31 p.m.
Trespassing 600Blk Broadway 8:46 p.m.
Traffic Hazard Cloverfield Blvd / Interstate 10 8:54 p.m.
Trespassing 2200Blk Colorado Ave 8:58 p.m.
Panic Alarm 200Blk Broadway 9:04 p.m.
Battery Now 1100Blk 12th St 9:22 p.m.
Burglary Report 500Blk Washington Ave 9:23 p.m.
Arson 200Blk Ashland Ave 9:27 p.m.
Audible Burglar Alarm 2700Blk Pico Blvd 9:59 p.m.
Loud Music 10th St / California Ave 10:09 p.m.
Party Complaint 500Blk 24th St 10:41 p.m.
Drunk Driving Investigation 3100Blk Santa Monica Blvd 10:59 p.m.
Traffic Collision - No Injuries 1800Blk Ocean Park Blvd 11:02 p.m.
Petty Theft Report 1700Blk Cloverfield Blvd 11:40 p.m.





★★★★★ A light-hearted fun read.
★★★★★ Well written, particularly useful, instantly accessible.
★★★★★ ...Hecht has a joyful eye and fabulous taste



Daily Press Food &Wine Columnist Merv Hecht takes you on an delightful tour of the world of wine. A fun way to increase your appreciation and knowledge of wine.

available at amazon

DAILY FIRE LOG

SMDP STAFF CHOSE THE FOLLOWING FROM 42 CALLS ON DECEMBER 19

EMS 1500Blk 7th St 12:41 a.m.
EMS 1500Blk 7th St 12:48 a.m.
EMS 1300Blk 17th St 1:01 a.m.
EMS 2000Blk Wilshire Blvd 1:38 a.m.
EMS 100Blk Palisades Ave 2:35 a.m.
EMS 1500Blk 5th St 3:17 a.m.
EMS 1200Blk 21st St 3:36 a.m.
EMS 1100Blk 4th St 4:01 a.m.
EMS 600Blk Wilshire Blvd 4:07 a.m.
EMS 1500Blk 5th St 4:44 a.m.
EMS 2200Blk Pier Ave 5:54 a.m.
Miscellaneous Outside Fire 1600Blk 4th St 9:38 a.m.
Elevator Rescue 800Blk 6th St 9:49 a.m.
EMS 2400Blk Main St 11:32 a.m.
EMS 800Blk Euclid St 11:41 a.m.
EMS 2100Blk Ocean Ave 11:50 a.m.
EMS 1300Blk 7th St 12:36 p.m.
EMS 2200Blk Colorado Ave 12:47 p.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury Lincoln Blvd / Ashland Ave 1:03 p.m.
EMS 9th St / Alta Ave 1:14 p.m.
EMS 500Blk Olympic Blvd W 1:24 p.m.
EMS 9th St / Pico Blvd 1:37 p.m.
EMS 2700Blk Pico Blvd 1:44 p.m.
EMS 800Blk Wilshire Blvd 2:04 p.m.
EMS 1500Blk 4th St 3:25 p.m.
EMS 400Blk Ocean Ave 3:27 p.m.
Lock In/Out 1700Blk Main St 4:09 p.m.
EMS 800Blk Broadway 4:29 p.m.
EMS 500Blk Wilshire Blvd 4:40 p.m.
EMS 2000Blk Arizona Ave 5:28 p.m.
EMS 2400Blk Wilshire Blvd 5:59 p.m.
Elevator Rescue 100Blk Wilshire Blvd 6:38 p.m.
EMS 900Blk 7th St 6:51 p.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury 11th St / Pico Blvd 7:20 p.m.
EMS 19th St / Pico Blvd 7:43 p.m.
Odor Of Natural Gas 2900Blk Washington Ave 8:19 p.m.
Trash/Dumpster Fire 200Blk Ashland Ave 9:20 p.m.
EMS 2800Blk Kansas Ave 9:28 p.m.
EMS 3100Blk Pico Blvd 10:36 p.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury 3100Blk Santa Monica Blvd 11:00 p.m.
Traffic Collision With Injury 1800Blk Ocean Park Blvd 11:02 p.m.
EMS 1700Blk Bryn Mawr Ave 11:26 a.m.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Lincoln Blvd.

Art Show

Garrett Wasserman's exhibition entitled Still Here including nine new paintings will be on view to the public. This work captures the interconnected relationship between people and nature and the strength in which they embody together as well as separate; fused in a seemingly still moment. Using a constant flow of water during the painting process, Garrett Wasserman reacts instinctively in a continuously unpredictable environment. The inventive brushwork and manipulation of color visually creates a unique imaginary world.

Born in Los Angeles in 1988, Garrett Wasserman is a self taught artist and has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions. Wasserman also works as a muralist creating large scale paintings often supporting social justice. The show is located at 806 Broadway.

SMDP STAFF

PENTAGON

FROM PAGE 2

but require a closer look at the applicant.

The department also is expanding education and training for current military members, and more specifically for those leaving the service who may be suddenly subject to recruitment by extremist organizations.

More than 650 people have been charged in the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol, including dozens of veterans and about a half dozen active duty service members.

EVENTS

FROM PAGE 2

mandatory mask-wearing indoors, with no further restrictions planned. Neighboring Portugal is simply telling most nonessential workers to work from home for a week in January.

Cases of omicron are doubling in Britain about every two days, and the latest surge has decimated the economy in the busy pre-Christmas period. The government has so far pinned its hopes on vaccine boosters. It has set up temporary clinics in soccer stadiums, shopping centers and cathedrals to meet a goal of offering everyone 18 and up an extra shot by the end of the month.

U.S. vaccine maker Moderna announced Monday that lab tests suggested that a booster dose of its vaccine should offer protection against omicron. Similar testing by Pfizer on its vaccine also found that a booster triggered a big jump in omicron-fighting antibodies.

But some leaders warn that boosters alone aren't enough and that tougher action will be needed.

Hendrik Wuest, governor of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany's most populous state, said people need to be prepared for more restrictions after Christmas.

"Omicron," he said, "won't forgive us any carelessness if we aren't cautious."

Lawless reported from London. Associated Press writers John Antczak in Los Angeles; Mark Pratt in Boston; Juan Lozano in Houston; Heather Hollingsworth in Mission, Kansas; Keith Ridler in Boise, Idaho; Rob Gillies in Toronto; Geir Moulson in Berlin; Aritz Parra in Madrid; Barry Hatton in Lisbon and Derek Gatopoulos in Athens contributed to this story.

PUBLISHER
Ross Furukawa
ross@smdp.com

PARTNER
Todd James
todd@smdp.com

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Matthew Hall
matt@smdp.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Charles Andrews,
Jack Neworth,
David Pisarra,
Matthew King,
Kimberly Jaffe.

CIRCULATION
Guadalupe Navarro
ross@smdp.com
Keith Wyatt
ross@smdp.com

STAFF WRITERS
Clara Harter
clara@smdp.com

Emily Sawicki
emily@smdp.com

DIRECTOR OF ADVERTISING
Cindy Moreno
cindy@smdp.com

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Dina Araniva
dina@smdp.com

PRODUCTION
Esteban Inchaustegui
production@smdp.com
Diana Corona
diana@smdp.com
Julio Davalos
julio@smdp.com

AWARD WINNER

AWARD WINNER

Santa Monica Daily Press

1640 5th Street, Suite 218
Santa Monica, CA 90401
OFFICE (310) 458-PRESS (7737)
FAX (310) 576-9913

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.

Published by Newlon Rouge, LLC

© 2019 Newlon Rouge, LLC, all rights reserved.

Sustainable Quality Awards
WINNER

OPINIONS EXPRESSED are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Santa Monica Daily Press staff. Guest editorials from residents are encouraged, as are letters to the editor. Letters to the Editor can be submitted to letters@smdp.com. Receipt of a letter does not guarantee publication and all content is published at the discretion of the paper. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content. All submissions must include the author's name, address and phone number for the purposes of verification.

Omicron sweeps across nation, now 73% of US COVID-19 cases

MIKE STOBBE
AP Medical Writer

Omicron has raced ahead of other variants and is now the dominant version of the coronavirus in the U.S., accounting for 73% of new infections last week, federal health officials said Monday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention numbers showed nearly a six-fold increase in omicron's share of infections in only one week.

In much of the country, it's even higher. Omicron is responsible for an estimated 90% or more of new infections in the New York area, the Southeast, the industrial Midwest and the Pacific Northwest. The national rate suggests that more than 650,000 omicron infections occurred in the U.S. last week.

Since the end of June, the delta variant had been the main version causing U.S. infections. As recently as the end of November, more than 99.5% of coronaviruses were delta, according to CDC data.

CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said the new numbers reflect the kind of growth seen in other countries.

"These numbers are stark, but they're not surprising," she said.

Scientists in Africa first sounded the alarm about omicron less than a month ago and on Nov. 26 the World Health Organization designated it as a "variant of concern." The mutant has since shown up in about 90 countries.

Much about the omicron variant remains unknown, including whether it causes more or less severe illness. Early studies suggest the vaccinated will need a booster shot for the best chance at preventing omicron infection but even without the extra dose, vaccination still should offer strong protection against severe illness and death.

"All of us have a date with omicron," said Dr. Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. "If you're going to interact with society, if you're going to have any type of life, omicron will be something you encounter, and the best way you can encounter this is to be fully vaccinated."

Adalja said he was not surprised by the CDC data showing omicron overtaking delta in the U.S., given what was seen in South Africa, the U.K. and Denmark. He predicted spread over the holidays, including breakthrough infections among the vaccinated and serious complications among the unvaccinated that could stress hospitals already burdened by delta.

Dr. Eric Topol, head of the Scripps Research Translational Institute, said other countries had seen omicron's fast growth, but the U.S. data showed "a remarkable jump in such a short time."

Topol also said it's unclear how much milder omicron really is compared with other variants.

"That's the big uncertainty now," Topol said. "We have to count on it being a lot of hospitalizations and a lot severe disease from omicron."

CDC's estimates are based on thousands of coronavirus specimens collected each week through university and commercial laboratories and state and local health departments. Scientists analyze their genetic sequences to determine which versions of the COVID-19 viruses are most abundant.

In the week that ended Dec. 11, omicron's share of new infections in the U.S. increased to 2.9% from 0.4% the week before, the CDC previously reported.

But CDC on Tuesday said they are revising some of the earlier numbers, after analyzing more specimens. The new numbers indicate that about 13% of the infections the week of Dec. 11 were omicron, and not 3%, CDC officials said.

Though there remain a lot of new infections caused by the delta variant, "I anticipate that over time that delta will be crowded out by omicron," Walensky said.

Associated Press writers Lauran Neergaard and Carla K. Johnson contributed to this report.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles New Year's event goes virtual due to COVID-19

The New Year's Eve party planned for downtown Los Angeles' Grand Park will not have an in-person audience due to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases in LA County, organizers said.

The "NYELA Countdown to 2022" event will instead be streamed, as it was last year.

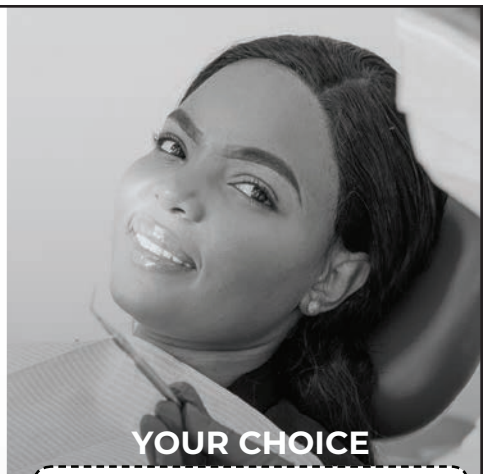
Organizers originally planned to have an invite-only audience of LA County frontline workers and first responders.

The program will feature the band Kinky and other musical performances starting at 11 p.m. on Dec. 31.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health reported more than 3,500 new cases of COVID-19 on Sunday as the number of daily new cases tripled over the week.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ADVERTISE WITH US TODAY!
Santa Monica Daily Press
office (310) 458-7737

FINDING A NEW DENTIST IS TOUGH!
(BUT WE MAKE IT EASY!!!)
If you don't like what we have to say we will give you a copy of your x-rays at no charge
DENTAL CARE WITHOUT JUDGEMENT!
WE OFFER UNIQUE SERVICES
*Emergencies can be seen today
*No interest payment plans
*Our dentists and staff members are easy to talk to
AND OF COURSE WE DO
• Invisalign
• Periodontist on Staff
• Oral Surgeon on Staff
• Cosmetics and Implants
• Zoom bleaching
• and more

YOUR CHOICE
TRY OUR NO OBLIGATION
$20 EXAM
INCLUDES FULL XRAYS
OR
TRY OUR NO OBLIGATION
$99 EXAM AND CLEANING
For New Patients
INCLUDES FULL XRAYS
SANTA MONICA FAMILY DENTISTRY
SANTA MONICA FAMILY DENTISTRY
DR. ALAN RUBENSTEIN
WWW.ALANRUBENSTEINDDS.COM
1260 15th ST. SUITE #703
(310) 736-2589
WILSHIRE BLVD.
15TH ST.
14TH ST.
ARIZONA AVE.



SMALL BUSINESS
STARTUP?
LET ME HELP YOU SUCCEED
TAXES • BOOKKEEPING • STARTUPS • CORPS. • LLCS
(310) 395-9922
SAMUEL B. MOSES, CPA
100 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1800 Santa Monica 90401

City of Santa Monica
WOODLAWN
Cemetery
Mausoleum
Mortuary
FD #2101

Helping families honor, remember, and celebrate life.



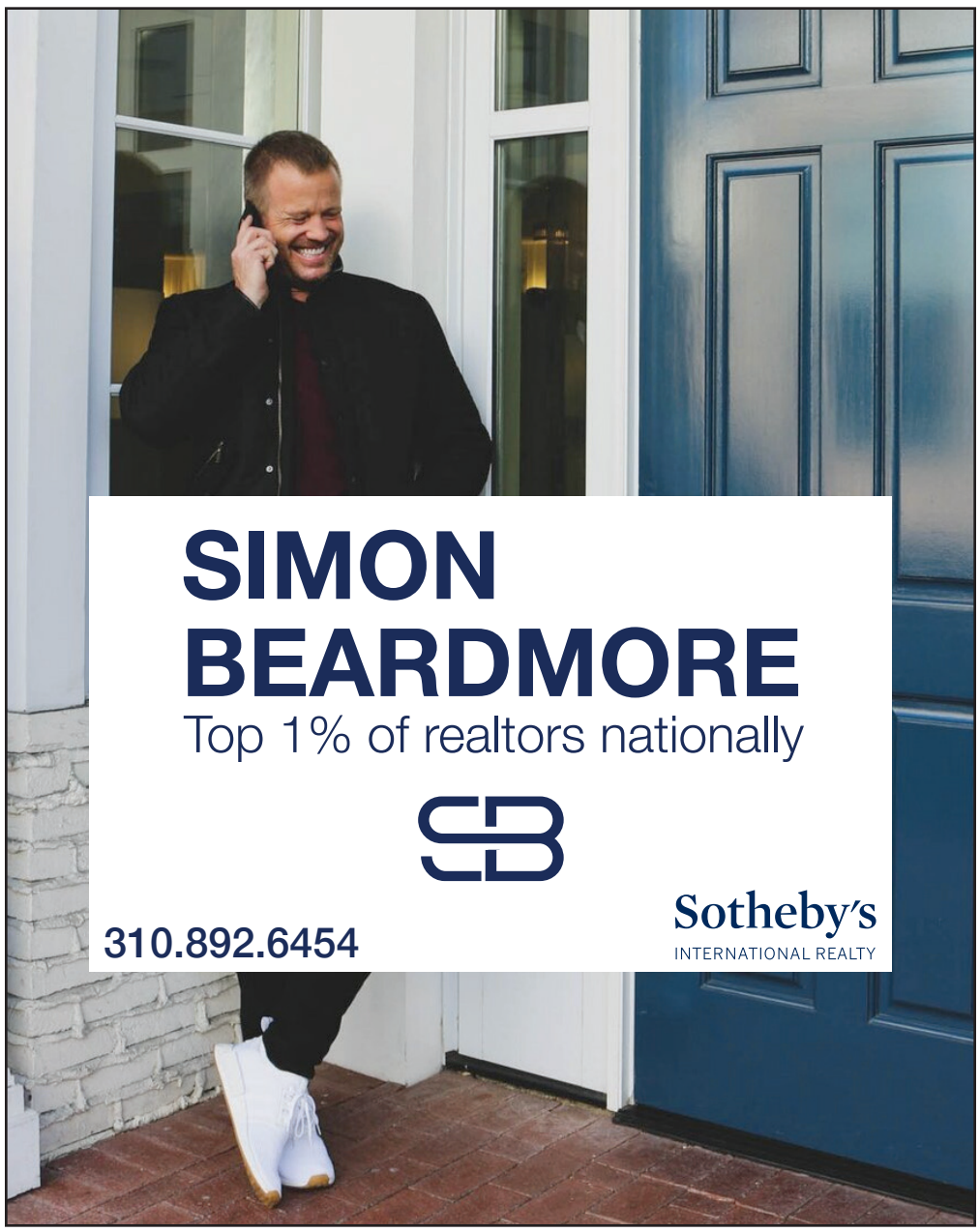
• Traditional Burial • Green/Natural Burial • Cremation
• Funeral Planning & Mortuary Services
ALL IN ONE LOCATION

1847 14th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404 ▪ (310) 458-8717 (on-call - 24/7)
woodlawn.cemetery@smgov.net ▪ www.woodlawnsm.com

Thank you for buying local.

Buy Local
SANTA MONICA
buylocalsantamonica.com ™

It makes a difference!



DEVELOPMENT

FROM PAGE 1

a dramatically improved work environment with new locker facilities and restrooms.

The renovations also reimagine the dated industrial complex as a center of sustainability and the project is designed to have net-zero energy.

"The project will produce more energy than it uses," said Palmore, explaining the meaning of net-zero energy. "This is made possible by optimization of energy use through well-insulated wall and roof assemblies, the use of energy-saving mechanical equipment and light fixtures, an innovative heating system with radiant heating in the floor slab of the Fleet building; and by the production of energy through photovoltaic panels that cover the rooftops of all the new buildings."

The project is designed to maintain water neutrality, which is one of Santa Monica's overarching sustainability goals. This means that this building development will be completed without increasing the City's overall water demand. By maintaining water neutrality the renovations will not hinder the City's efforts to achieve water self-sufficiency by 2023.

Clara@smdp.com



Photos courtesy of The Miller Hull Partnership

CONSTRUCTION: While some construction is complete, other parts of the project are on hold.

WEATHER

FROM PAGE 1

Service said.

The mountain range, where ski resorts had struggled to open this fall, is already sporting glistening peaks after recent storms. The snowfall is important because the Sierra's winter snowpack normally is a significant source of California's water.

In October, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced that a the Pacific Ocean was showing signs of a new La Nina, the flip side of the El Nino ocean-warming pattern, that tends to cause changes in weather worldwide.

Forecasters said much of California would have a 33% to 50% chance of below-normal precipitation, while only the state's far northern tier had equal chances of above- or below-normal precipitation.

But the storm track has trended farther south than is usual during La Ninas. After a series of mid-December tempests, California's overall snow-water equivalent — a measurement of how much water is in the snowpack — jumped from 19% of normal to date on Dec. 10 to 76% of normal on Dec. 17, according to the latest U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook.

While the current wet trend is positive, it is too early to know if it will last through January and February. The snowpack normally doesn't reach its maximum until April and last spring there was minimal runoff because much of the water was absorbed by the drought-parched landscape.

Forecasters noted that this week's storms will also have potential for significant low-elevation snow, including over Interstate 5 north of Redding, the northern region where last week's storms shut down the vital highway for nearly 24 hours.

Little break in snowfall is expected after Tuesday and major travel difficulties are anticipated the mountains, the weather service said.

"Gusty winds will further reduce visibilities during this event with local whiteout conditions possible," forecasters said. "Holiday travelers should prepare for winter driving conditions by packing chains, warm winter clothes, and extra food and water."

The wet weather pattern will begin to affect Southern California late this week.

The Los Angeles weather office said water vapor imagery over the Pacific shows an atmospheric river developing as moisture streamed from an area east of Hawaii.

Atmospheric rivers suck up water from the Pacific and dump it in the form of snow and rain when they arrive at the West Coast.

Rain and high-elevation snow will likely occur Wednesday through Thursday, followed by unsettled and showery weather through the weekend, forecasters said.

HOT DOG

FROM PAGE 1

The project is estimated to take two months from start to finish, once demolition was cleared to begin, according to the coastal commission staff report.

Riley said that his Yorba Linda-based firm, Tanaka Riley, had already spent roughly 11 years with the project. When asked if factors such as permitting obstacles, coastal commission approval, the COVID-19 crisis or even the 2008 financial crash factored into the delays, Riley said it was all of the above.

"As time goes by, approvals expire," Riley said, describing various factors such as landmark status and parking variances that made the project more complicated to approve.

The new building will largely resemble the current one, but will be about 50 percent larger; the boardwalk-facing facade will expand from 10 to 15 feet and total square footage will increase from 440 to 680. Other than size, Riley said little will change on the outside of the hot dog stand.

"It'll still have the same signature red and white, still be primarily rectangular and shape, [still have] the windows in the front — all of those sorts of things," Riley described. "So, you know, there was a lot of thought [put] into making the building as close as possible to the existing building."

Both Riley and the Santa Monica Landmarks Commission agreed the business — the original Hot Dog on a Stick location — will retain its legacy status even with brand new digs. In 2015, the commission approved the demolition.



Matthew Hall

SHACK: **The Hot Dog on a Stick shack near the Pier remains popular despite its age and size.**

"It's really important in keeping the Pier a unique and special place with businesses that you just don't see everywhere you go, but you'll only see them and experience in Santa Monica and on the Santa Monica Pier," Pier & Beach Administrator Elana Buegoff told the Daily Press. "Now, Hot Dog on a Stick, although it has many, many outlets, the original location started on Muscle Beach in Santa Monica. And we're really proud to have that designation as the original location for Hot Dog on a Stick."

While many of the legacy businesses on and around the Pier draw tourism traffic, Buegoff said Hot Dog on a Stick and others also serve the local community well. She cited Santa Monica's "buy local" program, calling it one of the largest of such programs in the country.

"There's a really strong culture, a network of residents and employees who live local who want to support those local businesses," Buegoff said, including brick-and-mortar businesses as well as booths and vendors at the farmers markets.

Focusing on legacy businesses, Buegoff said, helps protect that legacy for those who live here.

"I think it's keeping Santa Monica unique and in the Santa Monica heritage for the residents," Buegoff said. "They're supporting these businesses and keeping them financially and operationally viable."

emily@smdp.com



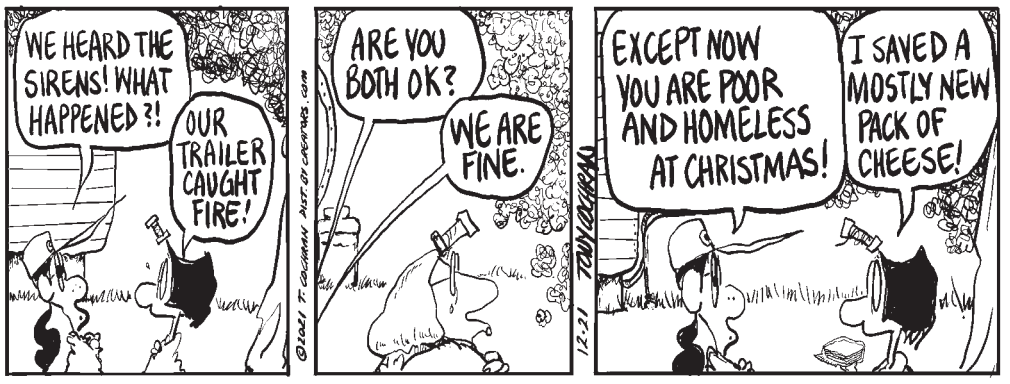
Dear Luke,

Happy 17th Birthday!

Have an amazing day.
We love you!

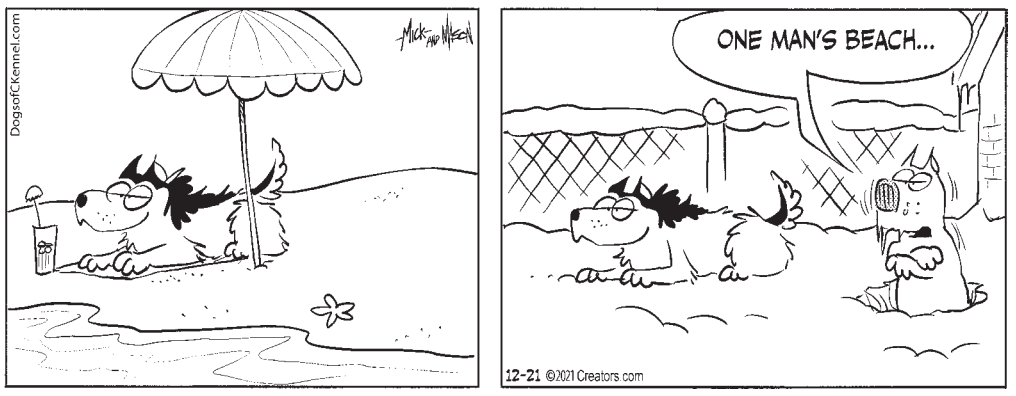
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



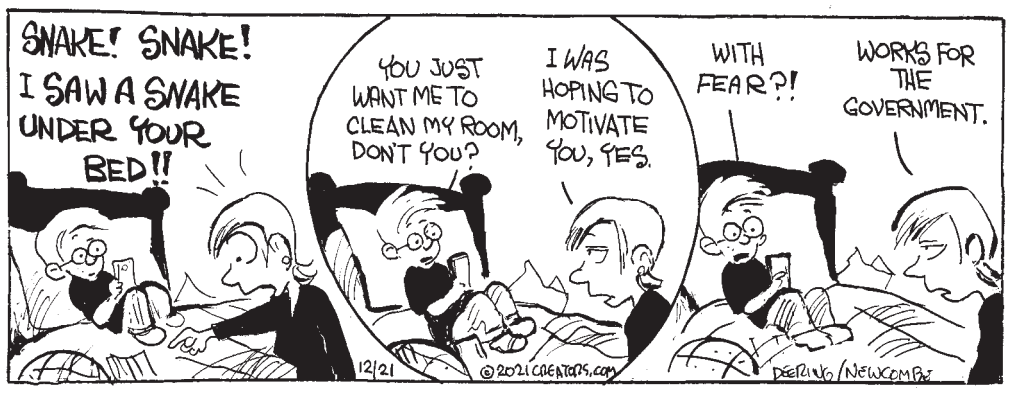
Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

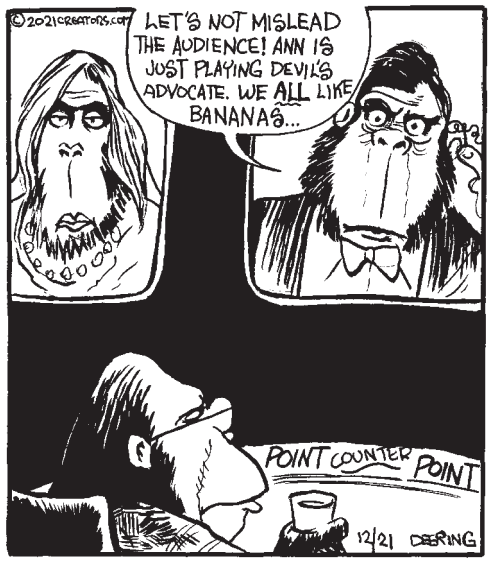
By PETER GALLAGHER



"HE LIKES THE WRAPPING MORE THAN THE PRESENTS."

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING





SURF FORECASTS

WATER TEMP: 58.3°

TUESDAY - **FAIR** - SURF: 2-3ft+ Waist to stomach high
Small NW swell mix. Wind looks ok for the west facing breaks in the morning though the big high tide will slow things down.

WEDNESDAY - **POOR** - SURF: 2-3ft Thigh to waist high
WNW swell mix continues. Wind could become an issue and there isn't a whole lot of swell/surf to work with – big high tide in the morning will be slow.

WEATHER

Tuesday: Partly sunny, with a high near 63. Northeast wind around 5 mph.
Tuesday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 49. West southwest wind around 5 mph.
Wednesday: A 30 percent chance of rain, mainly after 5pm. Cloudy, with a high near 60.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2021/12/21	Tue	03:12 AM	2.59	L
2021/12/21	Tue	09:29 AM	5.73	H
2021/12/21	Tue	5:05 PM	-0.44	L
2021/12/21	Tue	11:58 PM	3.41	H
2021/12/22	Wed	03:49 AM	2.71	L
2021/12/22	Wed	10:04 AM	5.50	H
2021/12/22	Wed	5:43 PM	-0.28	L
2021/12/23	Thu	12:46 AM	3.43	H
2021/12/23	Thu	04:34 AM	2.83	L
2021/12/23	Thu	10:42 AM	5.18	H
2021/12/23	Thu	6:22 PM	-0.06	L
2021/12/24	Fri	01:37 AM	3.53	H
2021/12/24	Fri	05:33 AM	2.94	L
2021/12/24	Fri	11:27 AM	4.75	H
2021/12/24	Fri	7:04 PM	0.21	L
2021/12/25	Sat	02:28 AM	3.74	H
2021/12/25	Sat	06:55 AM	2.95	L
2021/12/25	Sat	12:25 PM	4.23	H
2021/12/25	Sat	7:50 PM	0.53	L
2021/12/26	Sun	03:14 AM	4.07	H
2021/12/26	Sun	08:49 AM	2.67	L

DAILY LOTTERY

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 12/18
2 6 24 51 61
Power#: 1
Jackpot: 363 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 12/17
21 32 38 48 62
Mega#: 10
Jackpot: 171 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 12/18
26 33 35 37 42
Mega#: 18
Jackpot: 8 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 12/19
7 13 25 28 34

Daily 3
Draw Date: 12/19
EVENING: 4 4 3
Draw Date: 12/19
MIDDAY: 7 1 2

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 12/19
1st: 06 - Whirl Win
2nd: 08 - Gorgeous George
3rd: 11 - Money Bags
Race Time: 1:41.39

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

WISE & Healthy Aging
(310) 394-9871
Adult Day Service Center
Your trusted source for adult day care for your loved one. Let us give you the break you need.
Somos Amigos
"Somos Amigos" (we are friends) is our Spanish Language Program offering mental stimulation, exercise-strength training and recreation.
Let Us Help You Address Early Memory Loss
A Program of WISE & Healthy Aging
WISE Minds
A Veterans Benefit!

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (DECEMBER 21)

Waves of creativity sweep the shores of your life, giving your world rhythm, your body momentum and your spirit velocity. There's at least one idea in the current you can ride straight to the bank. Your work will change and your daily routines along with it. A paradox: Bonds of love will be as strong as they are free. Aquarius and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 30, 1, 33 and 17.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The problem is that once you start to learn about something, you don't want to stop until you know everything about it. The world will seem to be arranged around exploring this new area of interest.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll be led back to the scene of a mistake, giving you the rare do-over opportunity. You don't have to get it right; just try it differently than the last time.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You'll deal with confident people with much to offer. You'll get the chance to experiment freely. A service will be provided for you free of charge or obligation. Try before you buy.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It's OK to lose sight of the big picture. In fact, today, you'll be wise to ignore the big picture altogether in favor of paying detailed attention to very small but crucial elements.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Social risk often feels as scary as physical risk and for good reason — it matters! Discussion among loved ones will go to dicey places, but you'll be surprised at how well this turns out.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The infrequency of an indulgence is what makes it delightful. You can't give yourself a treat every day because that would make it a habit, not a treat.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You like to be chased and you like to do the chasing. Whichever role you're in today, it will be fun so long as the one who is doing the chasing really intends to catch the other person.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You will be flexible and open to what the people around you propose even when it's a little ridiculous. You might find yourself going along with a bad idea for the sake of social grace.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You're sensitive to the feelings of others and you've a compassionate response to their needs. Just be sure to care for your own needs, too, especially to the need for comfort and relaxation.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Know your top priority and everything else will settle around it. Your attention span will vary from hour to hour over the course of the day, but you'll finish what's important.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It's not what you say but how you say it. The tonality of your voice will set all at ease. Your calm utterances could tame lions, charm snakes, hush babies.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). An inner sense of reality is a hard thing to share. Nonetheless, it seems you really understand the way another person thinks and because of this, you'll make accurate guesses and tight social bonds.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

Sudoku

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

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

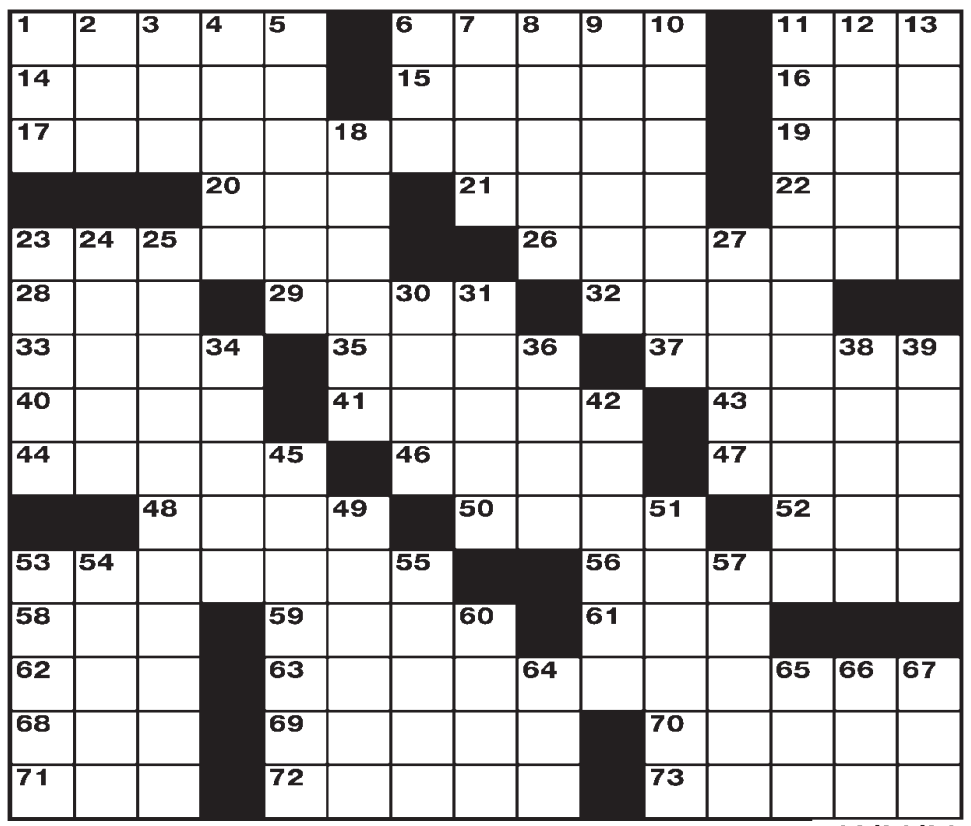
5		3		2		1		4
	8		3		9		7	
6			1		7	8	4	
		2		5		9		
	4	1	9		2			3
	2		5		8		9	
9		8		6		3		5

Newsday Crossword

INITIAL APPROVAL by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Genre of *Star Wars* films
6 Thin soup
11 Cries of surprise
14 Julius Caesar's language
15 Slim and agile
16 Attorney's expertise
17 Cooking area without walls
19 Game cube with spots
20 Point at a target
21 Tiny, informally
22 __ out a living (just get by)
23 Combined, as several persons' funds
26 Does research (on)
28 Elbow's location
29 Italy's capital, to Italians
32 Jogger's pace
33 Chair or stool
35 Informal denial
37 British nobles above earls
40 Ripped
41 Our planet
43 Chew like a beaver
44 Inquired
46 Ship of 1492
47 Fire hydrant attachment
48 Do harm to
50 End an airplane flight
52 Get married
53 Oklahoma Native American
56 Rio __ (Texas border river)
58 Bit of sunlight
59 Bit of heredity
61 Motorists' org.
62 "Poison" climbing vine
63 Gadget to open shellfish
68 The Caribbean, for one
69 Worries (about)
70 __ Allan Poe
71 Tree that might be near an oak
72 Lavish parties
73 Declared under oath

DOWN
1 __-mo replay
2 Top of a toothpaste tube
3 Suffix meaning "resident"
4 End-of-term exam
5 More pitch-black
6 Crunchy sandwich initials
7 Grain in sushi
8 Turn the __ cheek
9 World Wide Web
10 Enclosed area for chickens
11 Most ancient, discovered so far
12 Short Japanese poem
13 Clean with a broom
18 "All finished!"
23 Spaghetti or ravioli
24 Black-and-white cookies
25 "The Rubáiyát" poet
27 Bread, before it's baked
30 __ and groan (complain)
31 Fourth month of the year
34 Start a hole of golf
36 Sicilian volcano
38 Loosened (up)
39 Person from Stockholm
42 Airplane's garage
45 Take away, despite resistance
49 "__ playing our song"
51 Male ducks
53 Stand up
54 Entangle, as yarn
55 Beginning stage
57 "Initial" root beer brand
60 Suffix for luncheon
64 Double-curve letter
65 "Where did __ wrong?"
66 Distant
67 Before, in poems



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2021 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 12/21/21

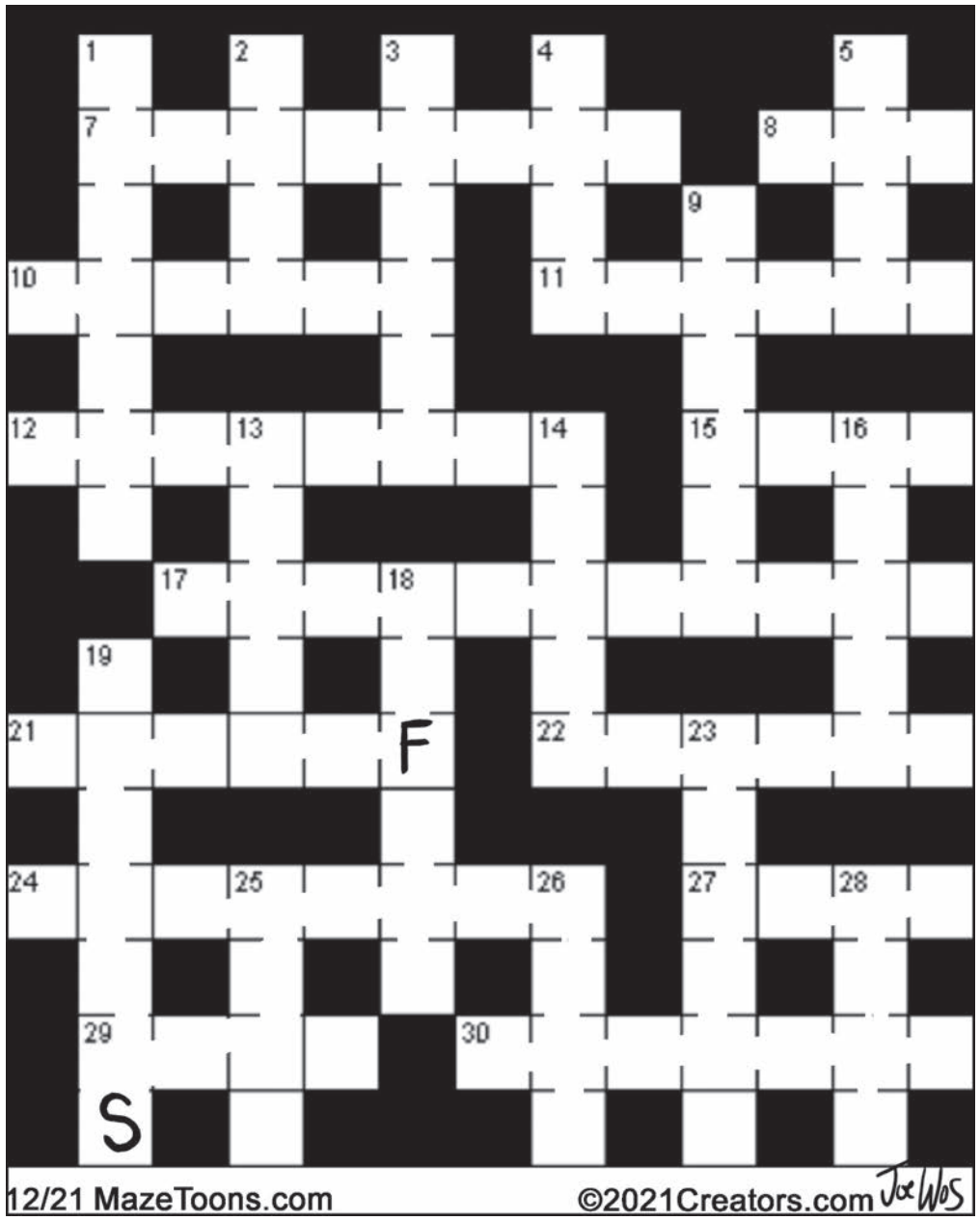
Binary Puzzle

Each cell should contain a zero or a one. No more than two similar numbers below or next to each other are allowed. Each row and each column is unique and contains as many zeros as ones.

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

Editor's Note:

Due to a lack of events caused by the upcoming holiday, we have temporarily replaced the What's Up Westside calendar with additional puzzles. The calendar will return in January.



"The City of Bell spectacle is what happens to communities without their own old-fashioned, diligent news coverage." - Terry Francke, Journalist

Locally owned, and committed to local news reporting since 2001.

smdp Santa Monica Daily Press

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 18 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle. © australianwordgames.com.au 5335

Council meeting

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

Acts	Cost	Laws	Role
Animated	Data	Litter	Share
Argue	Debt	Office	Shire
Beach	Dogs	Open	Silence
Bins	Employ	Outdoor	Staff
Board	Fields	Ovals	Talk
Boss	Footpaths	Parks	Topics
Chairs	Fund	Plan	Town
Clash	Grass	Power	Trees
Close	Hall	Project	
Competitive	Hands	Ranger	
Controversial	Ideas	Record	

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.
It's my happy place

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER
Santa Monica Daily Press office (310) 458-7737

EXPLAINER: Boosters key to fight omicron, lot still to learn

LAURAN NEERGAARD AND CARLA K. JOHNSON
AP Medical Writers

The new omicron variant took only a few weeks to live up to dire predictions about how hugely contagious it is but scientists don't yet know if it causes more severe disease even as the world faces exploding cases just before Christmas.

"Everything is riskier now because omicron is so much more contagious," said Dr. S. Wesley Long, who directs the testing lab at Houston Methodist Hospital — and over the past week has canceled numerous plans to avoid exposure.

Omicron now is the dominant variant in the U.S., federal health officials said Monday, accounting for about three-quarters of new infections last week.

The speed that it's outpacing the also very contagious delta variant is astonishing public health officials. In three weeks, omicron now makes up 80% of new symptomatic cases diagnosed by Houston Methodist's testing sites. It took the delta variant three months to reach that level, Long said.

The mutant's ability to spread faster and evade immunity came at a bad time — right as travel increased and many people let down their guard. But what the omicron wave will mean for the world is still unclear because so many questions remain unanswered.

Here's the latest on what's known and what's still to learn about omicron.

HOW MUCH PROTECTION DO VACCINES OFFER?

Vaccines in the U.S. and around the world do not offer as much protection against omicron as they have against previous versions of the coronavirus. However, vaccines still help — a lot. Lab tests show while two doses may not be strong enough to prevent infection, a booster shot of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine produces virus-fighting antibodies capable of tackling omicron.

Antibody levels naturally drop over time, and a booster revved them back up again, by 25 times for Pfizer's extra shot and 37 times for Moderna's. No one knows exactly what level is high enough — or how long it will be before antibody levels begin dropping again.

After a booster, the protection against an omicron infection still appears about 20% less than protection against the delta variant, said Dr. Egon Ozer of Northwestern University.

But if the virus gets past that first line of defense, the vaccinated have additional layers of protection.

"The vaccines are going to protect you against severe disease, hospitalization and death," said Houston Methodist's Long. "And that's really the most important thing."

Those extra defenses include T cells that mobilize to beat back the virus, plus memory cells that, once reactivated, race to make more and stronger antibodies.

WHAT ABOUT NATURAL IMMUNITY?

A prior infection doesn't seem to offer much protection against an omicron infection although, like with vaccination, it may reduce the chances of severe illness.

In South Africa, where omicron already has spread widely, scientists reported a jump in reinfections that they hadn't seen when two previous mutants, including delta, moved through the country.

In Britain, a report from the Imperial College of London on Friday found the risk of reinfection from omicron was five times higher compared to the earlier delta variant.

Health experts say anyone who's survived a bout of COVID-19 still should get vaccinated, because the combination generally offers stronger protection.

WHY ELSE DOES OMICRON SPREAD SO FAST?

Scientists are trying to decode the dozens of mutations that omicron carries to figure out what else is going on. Researchers in Hong Kong recently reported hints that omicron may multiply more quickly in the airway than delta did, although not as efficiently deep in the lungs.

What scientists can't measure is human behavior: Many places were relaxing restrictions, winter forced gatherings indoors and travel has jumped right as omicron began spreading.

IS OMICRON CAUSING MILDER ILLNESS?

It's still too early to know — especially given that if the vaccinated get a breakthrough infection, it should be milder than if omicron attacks the unvaccinated.

Early reports from South Africa suggested milder illness but doctors were unsure whether that's because the population is fairly young — or that many retained some protection from a recent delta infection.

And that British study found no evidence that omicron has been milder than delta in Britain, even with young adults — who would be expected to have milder illness — having higher rates of infection with omicron.

"There's a hint, and I think many of us are hopeful, that omicron will be less severe. But I don't think we can bet the farm on that. We're still talking about SARS CoV-2, a virus that has killed millions of people," said Dr. Jacob Lemieux, who monitors variants for a research collaboration led by Harvard Medical School.

WHO'S MOST AT RISK?

Based on the behavior of other variants, "if you're older, if you have underlying conditions, if you're obese, you're more likely to have severe disease. I don't think it's going to be any different" than other variants, said Dr. Carlos del Rio of Emory University.

But even if you don't get very sick, an omicron infection could certainly ruin the holidays. Experts agree that in addition to getting vaccinated and boosted, it's wise to get back to the basics of protection: Wear masks indoors, avoid crowds and keep your distance.

AP Science Writer Laura Ungar contributed to this report.

DENTAL
Insurance
Get the dental care you deserve.

Medicare does not cover dental care[1]. That means if you need dental work done, it can cost you hundreds or even thousands of dollars out of your own pocket.

Get Dental Insurance from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. It helps cover over 350 procedures – from cleanings and fillings to crowns and dentures. Call today to get help paying big dental bills.

- **See any dentist you want**, but save more with one in our network
- No deductible, **no annual maximum**
- **Immediate coverage** for preventive care

Call to get your FREE Information Kit
1-855-323-7468
dental50plus.com/santamonica



[1] "Medicare & You," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2020
Includes the Participating (in GA: Designated) Providers and Preventive Benefits Rider. Product not available in all states. Acceptance guaranteed for one insurance policy/certificate of this type. Contact us for complete details about this insurance solicitation. This specific offer is not available in CO, LA, NY; call 1-800-969-4781 or respond for similar offer. Certificate C250A (ID: C250E; PA: C250Q); Insurance Policy P150 (GA: P150GA; NY: P150NY; OK: P150OK; TN: P150TN); Rider kinds B438/B439 (GA: B439B).
6255



Your Journey starts at SMC

Classes start
February 14
smc.edu/spring

SANTA MONICA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rob Rader, *Chair*; Dr. Louise Jaffe, *Vice Chair*; Dr. Susan Aminoff; Dr. Nancy Greenstein; Dr. Margaret Quiñones-Perez; Dr. Sion Roy; Barry A. Snell; Ali Shirvani, *Student Trustee*; Kathryn E. Jeffery, Ph.D., *Superintendent/President*

Santa Monica College | 1900 Pico Blvd. Santa Monica, CA 90405 | smc.edu