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MONDAY
12.24.18
Volume 18 Issue 35

Today's paper is the first in a week of year end coverage including our Best Of content and the Year in Review. This edition contains some of the most read stories of the year as judged by readership on www.smdp.com and stories selected by SMDP staff. Best Of coverage will continue tomorrow.

@smdailypress @smdailypress Santa Monica Daily Press smdp.com

Santa Monica's most read stories of the year

City employee arrested for child molestation

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Oct. 18. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage. An additional story about Uller was also in the most read stories of the year covering his suicide.

A city of Santa Monica employee has been arrested for child molestation related to volunteer work with the Santa Monica Police Activities League.

SEE **ULLER** PAGE 7

New rules could limit Bird scooter operations

KATE CAGLE
Daily Press Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This story originally ran March 05. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage. Stories about e-scooters dominated the most read stories of the year. Four of the 10 most read stories were continuations of the scooter story including information about police issuing tickets, the companies rallying fans outside City Hall, the establishment

SEE **SCOOTER** PAGE 6









File Photos

BEST OF : While the biggest stories of the year were clustered around scooters, fires and crime there were also some interesting stories about the city's hostiry.

Santa Monica names new police chief

KATE CAGLE
Daily Press Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This story originally ran March 14. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage.

City Manager Rick Cole has selected Cynthia Renaud as the next Santa Monica Police Chief. Renaud has served as Chief of Police for the City of Folsom, California for the last seven years where she led the police force in both property and violent crime reduction during her tenure. Chief Renaud is not new to

SEE **CHIEF** PAGE 7

Santa Monica sees 12 percent spike in crime

KATE CAGLE
Daily Press Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Jan. 30. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage.

Santa Monica saw a 12 percent increase in serious crime in 2017, with 5,076 "Part 1" incidents, which include murder, arson, burglary, assault and grand theft auto. The

SEE **CRIME** PAGE 8

Isabel A. Ash Esq.
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City of Santa Monica

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO BE HELD BY THE SANTA MONICA ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

DATE/TIME: **10:30 a.m., January 8, 2019**

LOCATION: Council Chambers, Room 213, Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica

A Public Hearing will be held by the Zoning Administrator of the City of Santa Monica at the above noted time and place in regard to the following requests:

FENCE WALL HEDGE MODIFICATION 18ENT-0331, 723 Ozone Street. The applicant requests approval of a height modification for an existing 12' high hedge within the front yard setback along the front and side (east and west) property lines. The subject property is located in the Ocean Park Single-Unit Residential (OP1) zoning district. Pursuant to Santa Monica Municipal Code (SMMC) Section 9.21.050(A)(1), fences, walls, and hedges cannot exceed a maximum height of 42 inches within the required front yard setback as measured from the lowest finished grade adjacent to either side of the fence, wall, or hedge. SMMC Section 9.43.080(B) allows an applicant to request a modification to these height limitations in the front, side, and rear setbacks. [Planner: Ivan Lai] **Applicant / Property Owner: Laura Petroff.**

MINOR USE PERMIT 18ENT-0314, 1316 Wilshire Boulevard. The applicant requests approval of a Minor Use Permit (MUP) to allow a new wireless telecommunications facility on the upper roof of an existing two-story commercial building within the Mixed Use Boulevard (MUB) zoning district. The project consists of installing sixteen (16) panel antennas, sixteen (16) remote radio units, and one (1) GPS antenna divided between four (4) separate sectors along with one (1) 15kW natural gas generator, two (2) mechanical equipment cabinets, and associated cabling. The proposed antennas and associated support equipment would be arranged behind new screen walls designed to match the appearance of the existing building or painted to match the building. Pursuant to Santa Monica Municipal Code (SMMC) Section 9.32.040(A), review and approval of an MUP is required for all personal wireless facilities except for those that are exempt under SMMC Section 9.32.040(B) or that are governed by SMMC Section 9.32.040(C). [Planner: Gina Szilak] **Applicant: Courtney Standridge, Verizon Wireless. / Property Owner: LaBrea Washington Co., LLC.**

MINOR USE PERMIT 18ENT-0323, 710 Wilshire Boulevard. The applicant requests approval of a Minor Use Permit (MUP) to allow a day spa (Personal Service – Massage Establishment) on the ground floor of new construction within the Neighborhood Village (NV) zone district. The use will be divided between three spaces that would collectively total approximately 3,100 square feet with 33'-6" of linear ground floor street frontage. Pursuant to Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 9.31.230(B)(1), massage establishments are required to be reviewed through the MUP process and approved by the Zoning Administrator. [Planner: Ross Fehrman] **Applicant / Property Owner: Santa Monica Proper JV, LLC.**

HOW TO COMMENT
The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment. You may comment at the Zoning Administrator public hearing, or by writing a letter. Written information will be given to the Zoning Administrator at the meeting.

Any person may comment at the Public Hearing, or by writing a letter to the City Planning Division, Room 212, P.O. Box 2220, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2220. Plans are available for public review at the City Planning Division. For more information, please contact the City Planning Division at (310) 458-8341. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 64009(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. The meeting facility is wheelchair accessible. For disability-related accommodations, please contact (310) 458-8341 or (310) 458-8696 TTY at least 72 hours in advance. Every attempt will made to provide the requested accommodation. All written materials are available in alternate format upon request. Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Lines #1, #2, #3, Rapid 3, #7, #8, #9, Rapid #10, and #18 service City Hall and the Civic Center area. The Expo Line terminus is at Colorado Avenue and Fourth Street, a short walk to City Hall. Public parking is available in front of City Hall and in the Civic Center Parking Structure (validation free).

*Esto es un aviso sobre una audiencia publica para revisar applicaciones proponiendo desarrollo en Santa Monica. Esto puede ser de interes para usted. Si desea mas informacion, favor de llamar a Carmen Gutierrez en la Division de Planificacion al numero (310) 458-8341.

What's Up Westside

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA

Monday, Dec. 24

City services closed
City property closed for the day.

Tuesday, Dec. 25

City services closed
City property closed for the day.

Wednesday, Dec. 26

Kwanzaa Crafternoon
Create crafts and learn about how Kwanzaa celebrates family, community, and African American and Pan African culture. For families. Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. 2 – 3 p.m.

Santa Monica Certified Farmer's Market
Today, the Wednesday Farmers Market is widely recognized as one of the largest and most diverse grower-only CFM's in the nation. Some nine thousands food shoppers, and many of Los Angeles' best known chefs and restaurants, are keyed to the seasonal rhythms of the weekly Wednesday Market. 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

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Smoke and ash hit Santa Monica

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Nov. 10. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage.

Wind conditions shifted Saturday aiding firefighters who are battling the Woolsey fire but also covering Santa Monica with smoke and ash.

Dangerous Santa Ana winds fueled the explosive fire Thursday/Friday helping it consume 70,000 acres and kill at least two people. Those wind conditions changed Saturday shifting onshore and bringing hazy conditions to Santa Monica. Locals were advised to remain indoors with their windows closed, seek shelter if outside and avoid unnecessary physical activity.

"It is difficult to tell where ash or soot from a fire will go, or how winds will affect the level of dust particles in the air, so we ask everyone to be aware of their immediate environment and to take actions to safeguard their health," said Muntu Davis, MD, MPH, Health Officer for Los Angeles County. "Smoke and ash can be harmful to health, even people who are healthy. People at higher risk include those with heart or lung diseases, children and older adults."

Wildfire smoke is a mixture of small particles, gases and water vapor. The primary health concern is the small particles. These small particles can cause burning eyes, runny nose, scratchy throat, headaches and illness (i.e., bronchitis). In people with sensitive conditions, they can cause difficulty breathing, wheezing, coughing, fatigue, and/or chest pain.

"We are also advising schools and recreational programs that are in session in smoke-impacted areas to suspend outside physical activities in these areas, including physical education and after-school sports, until conditions improve. Non-school related sports organizations for children and adults are advised to cancel outdoor practices and competitions in areas where there is visible smoke, soot, or ash, or where there is a smell of smoke. This also applies to other recreational outdoor activity, such as hikes or picnics, in these areas," said Dr. Davis.

The City of Santa Monica has cancelled all community and cultural service activities for Saturday.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health said falling ash could also be a problem. Any food items left uncovered should be thrown out if they've come into contact with ash. Sealed items should be fine provided their containers are wiped clean before opening.

When conditions are safe for residents to begin cleanup, they are encouraged to wear gloves and long sleeved shirts, use disposable masks with a rating of N-95 or better and gently sweep surfaces before following up with a wet mop. Never use a leaf blower or shop vacuum for ash disposal.

Airbnb loses latest court battle over Santa Monica's strict rules

KATE CAGLE
Daily Press Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Jun. 18. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage.

Home sharing sites Airbnb and HomeAway will have to verify hosts are properly registered with the City of Santa Monica before booking guests, after a U.S. District Court judge dismissed a legal challenge to local rules. The judge said the city has a right to keep the international websites from facilitating illegal business transactions here.

Santa Monica's strict home sharing ordinance prohibits the use of apartments, condominiums and houses for short-term rentals unless the host is present during the stay. Hosts must register with the City and obtain a business license. City leaders say the rules maintain the character of local neighborhoods and preserve housing in the midst of a statewide crisis.

"The City of Santa Monica has consistently dedicated policies to producing, protecting and preserving housing in our community," said City Attorney Lane Dilg. "Today's decision affirms that cities can take reasonable steps to preserve precious housing supply in the face of an ever-expanding vacation rental industry that threatens to convert homes, and particularly affordable rental units, into de facto hotels."

In the case, Airbnb and HomeAway complained the rules violate the Communications Decency Act, the First Amendment, the Fourteenth Amendment and the California Coastal Act. However, the judge ruled the ordinance does not penalize publishing activities, but seeks to prevent illegal business transactions. The Court followed a similar decision in Northern California over San Francisco's rules.

In that city, thousands of listings vanished after Airbnb promised to delete illegal properties. In Santa Monica, a city report estimated there were 950 apartments and homes listed on Airbnb here during peak tourism season, while only 187 were actually registered. Despite the threat of fines, the city estimated Airbnb and its hosts had collected $31 million from illegal and legal rentals since the ordinance began.

"For more than two years, Airbnb sought to work with the City of Santa Monica on a solution that ensures middle and lower class families who want to visit the coast can find an affordable place to stay," said Airbnb spokesman Charlie Urbancic. "Despite our efforts, the city insisted on an approach that violates federal law. We were left with no option but to file suit and appeal the lower court's prior erroneous ruling, which the court has now extended in this order. We will continue to pursue our pending appeal."

Code enforcement officials complain Santa Monica's rules have been difficult to enforce without cooperation from the platforms. Hosts use an array of tactics to outwit investigators, including deleting illegal listings during City Hall business hours and manipulating addresses to appear to be in Los Angeles.

"We agree with the Court that the Ordinance is a constitutional exercise of the City's legislative authority to protect the health, safety, and welfare of residential neighborhoods," said Chief Deputy City Attorney Yibin Shen.

The home sharing sites also brought a claim the ordinance violates the California Coastal Act, which the Court declined to evaluate when it dismissed the federal claims. The websites could still pursue those claims in a different court. The City's current Land Use Plan does not address vacation rentals.

In 2017, the Council banned any new guesthouse from being used exclusively for short-term rentals.

Local student slashed in fight with homeless man

ANGEL CARRERAS
Daily Press Staff Writer

Editor's Note: this originally ran Aug. 24. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage.

A Santa Monica College student is recovering from cuts to his face, head and throat after a violent fight with a homeless man at Tongva Park early Friday morning. The attack happened as a group of college students was heading home from a late night celebrating the end of their summer vacation. The victim will likely carry the scars for the rest of his life.

Hours after the incident, the sidewalk on 2nd Street across from City Hall was still stained with blood where a homeless man allegedly stabbed 20-year-old Miles O'Brien with a broken picture frame. It was about 3 a.m. and O'Brien and his friends, Oliver Konopek and Danech Kiya, had just called an Uber to head home when they say the man approached the group.

"We were all huddled in a circle and this guy started walking towards us," Kiya recalled. "He looked fidgety and jumpy. He came up behind us and pushed us, saying, 'This is my property, you have my stuff, you're in my spot' something like that, just screaming in our ears."

O'Brien told the Daily Press he felt "exceptionally threatened."

"I realized that just trying to avoid him and be non-confrontational wasn't working and I had to defend myself, as he kept trying to mess with us," he said.

"We had a cup of soda and he knocked it over," Kiya said. "He pushed Miles and singled him out, and I don't know what happened. (Miles) reacted and they just started fighting."

The young men said the fight lasted only seconds. The friends quickly pulled O'Brien away from the attacker. The SMC's student's face was covered with blood. Once they pulled the two men apart, the victim realized the other man had slashed his face with a small, metal picture frame that had been configured into a makeshift weapon.

A nearby parking officer saw the fight and called the police, who responded quickly and arrested the man. Pictures from the scene show O'Brien carried off on a stretcher.

Santa Monica Police Department identified the suspect as 29-year-old Javon Patton who has been charged with assault with a deadly weapon. Police did not release any more details about Patton's background or criminal history but told the Daily Press O'Brien threw the first punch.

The group admitted they had been drinking earlier in the evening and then stopped at McDonald's on 2nd Street to grab dinner before heading to the park. The college students said they were sober by the time the fight broke out and didn't believe it played a role in the assault.

By Friday afternoon, O'Brien was home from the hospital. The group was still shaken up.

O'Brien felt the homeless man was looking for a fight.

"It just happened to be us there, it could have been anyone else who encountered this guy," he said.

The group was trying to move past the event with humor, showing the Daily Press a group chat where O'Brien himself made light of the situation, showing memes they made from their photos.

"Humor definitely helps out," O'Brien said. "[It] lets you feel something else besides the approximate 10 stitches in your head."

Asked if they'll hang around Tongva anymore, the group was mixed. Kinya said the altercation showed him "how dangerous it can get," while Konopek said there are bigger problems in the world.

O'Brien said although the encounter showed him how dangerous the park can be, time would tell if he hangs out there again.

Downtown Santa Monica McDonald's will close at night to prevent crime

MADELEINE PAUKER
Daily Press Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Nov. 14. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage.

The City of Santa Monica announced Nov. 14 that it settled a complaint against the McDonald's on 2nd Street, which has become a hotbed for crime over the past two years.

Most McDonald's stay open 24 hours a day, including the one downtown. But locals will no longer be able to buy Big Macs between 12 and 6 a.m. Sunday through Thursday or between 2 and 6 a.m. on Friday and Saturday, an administrative hearing officer ruled.

"Calls for service and disruptive activities at McDonald's have been greater than at any other business in Santa Monica, including other 24-hour fast food restaurants," said Erika Aklufi, a Santa Monica Police Department sergeant. "The restaurant's operations created an unacceptable drain on police resources."

SMPD received 847 calls for service to the McDonald's in 2017 and 657 in the first half of 2018 alone, Aklufi said.

Residents may remember a July 2017 fight between a few people and a security guard at around 5 a.m. that was widely reported in local media. A video showed a security guard asking people who were drinking beer inside the restaurant but had not ordered food to leave. One of the men started repeatedly punching the security guard and another man hit them with a chair to try to break up the fight.

The police department and the City's Code Enforcement Division administratively charged Nicholas Lardas and Lardas Management Inc., who own and operate the McDonald's, and RBE 1540 Second Street LLC, which owns the property, for maintaining a public nuisance and initiated a week-long administrative trial.

In addition to ceasing 24-hour service, the hearing officer required the restaurant close the alley gate to its parking garage between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. and the gate accessible from 2nd Street between 12 and 6 a.m. McDonald's will also have to relocate its soda fountain behind the cashier counter to prevent people from stealing soda and pay administrative citation fines.

The hearing officer may adjust the opening hours in the future if the restaurant maintains decorum. If the McDonald's sees a 50 percent reduction in calls to SMPD for service by April 15, 2019, it may resume 24-hour service.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS
BEFORE THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA
CITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Proposed Urgency Interim Ordinance Extending Urgency Interim Ordinance 2592 (CCS)

A public hearing will be held by the City Council to introduce for adoption an urgency interim ordinance extending Urgency Interim Zoning Ordinance 2592 (CCS) to establish interim regulations for the demolition permit review process relating to the preservation of historic resources.

On November 13, 2018, Council adopted an emergency interim zoning ordinance to establish temporary regulations for the demolition permit review process set forth in Santa Monica Municipal Code ("SMMC") Section 9.25 (Demolition and Relocation Ordinance). These interim regulations were established to safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic, and cultural heritage while also balancing legal and procedural considerations. The original emergency Interim Zoning Ordinance (IZO) amending SMMC Chapter 9.25 went into effect immediately after Council adoption on November 13th and will expire in 60 days unless otherwise extended by Council up to a total of 60 months. Staff recommends that this proposed extension of the IZO continue for one year until November 13, 2019 to provide an opportunity for further study key issues and monitor implementation before making permanent changes to SMMC Chapter 9.25

Date/Time: Tues., Jan. 8, 2019, at 6:30 p.m.
Where: City Council Chambers, Second Floor Santa Monica City Hall
1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, California

HOW TO COMMENT
The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment. You may comment at the Planning Commission public hearing, or by writing a letter. Written information will be given to the City Council At the meeting.

Address your letter to: City Clerk
Re: Demolition Interim Zoning Ordinance Extension
1685 Main Street, Room 102
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Or email to: **councilmtgitems@smgov.net**

MORE INFORMATION
If you want more information about this project, please contact Roxanne Tanemori, Principal Planner at (310) 458-8341, or by e-mail at Roxanne.tanemori@smgov.net. The Zoning Ordinance is available at the Planning Counter during business hours and on the City's web site at www.smgov.net. The meeting facility is wheelchair accessible. If you have any disability-related accommodation request, please contact (310) 458-8341, or TYY Number: (310) 458-8696 at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting. Santa Monica "Big Blue" Bus Lines #1, #2, #3, Rapid 3, #7, #8, #9, #10R, and #18 service the City Hall and the Civic Center. The Expo Line terminus is at Colorado Avenue and Fourth Street, a short walk to City Hall. Public parking is available in front of City Hall 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: Esto es una noticia de una audiencia pública para revisar applicaciónes proponiendo desarrollo en Santa Monica. Si deseas más información, favor de llamar a Peter James en la División de Planificación al número (310) 458-8341.

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Curious City

Charles Andrews — Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Grief, My Constant Companion

Editor's Note: This column originally ran September. 12. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage

I DON'T UNDERSTAND

This dreaded mystery which unfolds on its own hidden schedule. So much is not visible, graspable, explainable. When it doesn't seem to be affecting your life every moment, you are lulled into thinking that it's not there, though you know it will return, jumping out at you when you least expect it.

But you discover, at some point, that it is there, a part of you now, your confederate, even though you never signed on. In that one horrible moment of loss you were drafted. Lifelong commitment. But no appeal, no recourse. At that moment there were so many other chaotic thoughts and fiery emotions, you likely never would think of that twist.

This may sound suspicious, but I feel I've done relatively well so far. Meaning, I haven't been sobbing constantly, balled up in the corner in a fetal position for a year, unable to function. I didn't want to be around people for a few months, but then I forced myself to get out and participate in life and talk and even laugh. You can't go very long without laughing, you know.

Oh dear, he's suppressing, you think, avoiding, putting off the inevitable, it will just hit harder. But no. I have some ways of confronting loss, with a loving and knowing heart, gifts given to me by others (thank you, dear Thellers), and my own experiences, that have helped me tremendously. But what they say is true, there is nothing worse for a parent than the loss of a child, even an adult child. It is an entirely different ball game.

I'VE READ A LOT

And I can't deny the experiences of so many others who have marched before me. Grief, the profound grief of losing someone very close to you, is not an event, it is a process, that only ends when your life ends. It doesn't have a plot, there is no beginning, middle and end.

I've always had a pretty good attitude about death. I believe we all have our unknown, allotted time, and no more. I just don't think it serves any purpose to rail against the inevitable, or worry about it. Rail against a bad president, against war and poverty even, but you know what else they say. Death and taxes. (The wealthy can beat taxes but none of us can beat death.)

I'm ready to go any time, have been for years. Maybe it was my close shave as a teenager with the worst kind of job description you could have if you went to Nam, that I avoided through pure luck. I don't know.

But you're never ready for the phone call, from the Albuquerque police, that says, we regret to inform you…

THAT WAS A YEAR AGO

Almost. Sept. 20 was the date they found Christopher, in his home, murdered (I say that only because it does make a difference), his cute little adobe-style home with a big backyard on a cul-de-sac in a charming northwest neighborhood, that he shared with such contentment with his two cats, that he made the mortgage payments on religiously. A perhaps unexpected accomplishment for such an anti-establishment guy, and we were so proud of him for that. On his small income. Every one of his bills were current or paid in advance.

Anniversaries and birthdays and Christmas are difficult, they tell you. Sometimes, really, really hard. Sept. 20 is coming up, but Sept. 12 was his birthday, another landmined day. That's today. As I write this I haven't hit that date yet, but it's in my face, in my psyche. I can't really tell you how I expect to feel on Sept. 12, but it's raw right now, and tears are on short notice. Last night my daughter and I had a bigger disagreement than it probably needed to be, and that undercurrent probably had a lot to do with it.

Grief, I have learned in the last year, is an incredibly complex beast. It is a presence that plays hide and seek, a shapeshifter. You can never be prepared. I have a friend from high school, Rick, who lost one of his sons 16 years ago, and we talk sometimes about this. He told me recently that he felt this deep disturbance that he couldn't explain, really shook him up. What in the world is going on? Then he realized it was the day before the anniversary of his son's death. His mind didn't know it, his calendar didn't note it, but his soul was in tune. His soul of a father.

WHY DID I WRITE THIS?

For some of the same reasons I wrote a column a year ago, upon Chris's passing. I mostly wrote that one to memorialize him, to share with people who he was. But I was stunned to find how many people took great comfort from what I wrote. I heard from hundreds of people, and that means there were so many more who felt the same but didn't write. So I hope this will touch those who are going through grief, let them know they are not alone in grappling with this awful, unpredictable beast. Bless you all. Not a club we wanted to be in, but such is life.

I was going to make most of this column a series of quotes I found about grief, so many really good ones, but I decided to use more of my own words instead. Here's what's left, that spoke to me —

QUOTES OF THE WEEK:

"When a child dies, you bury the child in your heart." — Korean proverb

"Grief is the price we pay for love." — Queen Elizabeth II

"Grief can't be shared. Everyone carries it alone. His own burden in his own way." — Anne Morrow Lindbergh

"Grief changes shape, but it never ends." — Keanu Reeves

SEE **GRIEF** PAGE 9

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.

Consumer Corner

By Andrea Cavanaugh

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

The False Advertising Law

Editor's Note: This column originally ran Jun. 18. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage

Jennifer saw a bracelet she loved at a Santa Monica jewelry store and asked the salesperson to show it to her. She saw the $500 price tag and wanted to buy it.

As Jennifer and the salesperson were talking, the store's owner came from another room.

"Oh, no, that price isn't right," the owner said. "The price isn't $500. The correct price is $700."

Jennifer left the store without buying the bracelet and contacted the Consumer Protection Division of the City Attorney's Office.

In California, it's unlawful for businesses or their representatives to make untrue or misleading statements about products or services. This false advertising law covers statements made in print ads, online, in person, or through any other means.

The law also requires businesses to honor their posted prices.

The Consumer Division contacted the store owner, who said the pricing snafu was an honest mistake. However, because the owner had already represented the price as $500, and after hearing more about the law, she offered to sell the bracelet to Jennifer at the original quoted price.

The practice of advertising one price and then attempting to charge customers a higher rate is sometimes a deliberate practice, known as "bait and switch." The business baits the customer with a fake low price and then makes the switch when the customer is at the store or somehow committed to the purchase.

California's false advertising law applies to almost anything a business might charge money for, including consumer goods such as cars, clothing, toys, and food; or professional services such as dentistry or repairs. If you were drawn in by an ad or a promise to provide a good or service at a certain price and then got surprised later by a higher price, the business may have violated the law. This includes hidden fees that were not disclosed in the original ad.

False advertising also covers the condition of merchandise, the terms of a sale, and many other aspects of consumer transactions.

If you think you've been the victim of false advertising, there are a few steps you can take to protect yourself:

Be sure to save evidence of the advertisement. This might include printed ads, screenshots of web pages, text messages, emails, or radio ads.

Save any receipts or confirmation emails from the business.

Make notes: Record the dates and details of the false statement, and when the business refused to honor it.

Make a complaint: If you're a Santa Monica resident or the business is located here, you can contact the Consumer Protection Division at smconsumer.org or 310-458-8336. If the business is located outside Santa Monica, contact the office of the District Attorney, City Attorney, Attorney General, or Consumer Protection Division where the business is located..

Andrea Cavanaugh is a Consumer Specialist with the City Attorney's office.

Accidental acceleration leaves car suspended over 4th Street

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press editor

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Jun. 11. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage.

A car broke through part of the safety cables in Parking Structure 5 (1440 4th Street) Monday morning and was suspended over 4th Street for about an hour while firefighters worked to secure the vehicle.

Lieutenant Saul Rodriguez of the Santa Monica Police Depart said the elderly driver inadvertently pressed the accelerator instead of the brakes sending the car over the edge. The driver was helped out of the vehicle by a bystander who witnessed the incident.

Despite the danger, Rodriguez said the driver was doing fine, and not injured in any way.

According to Captain Patrick Nulty, with the Santa Monica Fire Department (SMFD), firefighters received the call at about 10:30 a.m. and responded within 5 minutes 47 seconds. He said members of the Urban Search & Rescue Team found the late model Honda Civic extending out of the parking structure, held in place only by steel barrier cables.

Two tow trucks were requested to help with the vehicle recovery. One used a winch to raise the front end of the car level with the parking structure floor while the other pulled the car horizontally back into the building. Firefighters had to break a window in the car to allow a chain to be passed through for the winch harness.

The car was secured and the scene cleared at about 11:45 a.m.

SMFD said 25 Firefighters responded with assistance from the Santa Monica Police Department and the Pacific Tow Company of Santa Monica.



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City of Santa Monica

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS
BEFORE THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA
CITY COUNCIL**

SUBJECT: Proposed Urgency Interim Ordinance Extending Urgency Interim Ordinance 2594 (CCS)

A public hearing will be held by the City Council to introduce for adoption an urgency interim ordinance extending Urgency Interim Zoning Ordinance 2594 (CCS) which prohibited fast food restaurants on the Third Street Promenade. The urgency interim ordinance was adopted to prevent the proliferation of fast food restaurants on the Promenade and to ensure that the Promenade maintains its authentic characteristics and provides visitors with a distinctive experience not found in most downtown shopping districts.

On November 27, 2018, Council adopted the initial urgency interim ordinance prohibiting fast food restaurants on the Promenade. The interim ordinance is set to expire on January 11, 2019. The proposed urgency interim ordinance extension would continue until November 26, 2019 to provide an opportunity for further study and analysis of the future of the Promenade through the "Promenade 3.0" visioning process.

Date/Time: Tues., Jan. 8, 2019, at 6:30 p.m.
Where: City Council Chambers, Second Floor Santa Monica City Hall
1685 Main Street
Santa Monica, California

HOW TO COMMENT
The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment. You may comment at the Planning Commission public hearing, or by writing a letter or e-mail. Information received prior to the hearing will be given to the Planning Commission at the meeting.

Address your letter to: City Clerk
Re: Fast Food Urgency Interim Zoning Ordinance Extension
1685 Main Street, Room 102
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Or email to: **councilmtgitems@smgov.net**

MORE INFORMATION
If you want more information about this project, please contact Tony Kim at (310) 458-8341, or by e-mail at tony.kim@smgov.net. The Zoning Ordinance is available at the Planning Counter during business hours and on the City's web site at www.smgov.net. The meeting facility is wheelchair accessible. If you have any disability-related accommodation request, please contact (310) 458-8341, or TYY Number: (310) 458-8696 at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting. Santa Monica "Big Blue" Bus Lines #1, #2, #3, Rapid 3, #7, #8, #9, #10R, and #18 service the City Hall and the Civic Center. The Expo Line terminus is at Colorado Avenue and Fourth Street, a short walk to City Hall. Public parking is available in front of City Hall 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: Esto es una noticia de una audiencia pública para revisar applicaciónes proponiendo desarrollo en Santa Monica. Si deseas más información, favor de llamar a Peter James en la División de Planificación al número (310) 458-8341.

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Shooting investigation at Cloverfield/I-10

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press editor

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Aug. 15. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage.

The Santa Monica Police Department is investigating a shooting on the 1900 block of Cloverfield.

According to SMPD, one individual was taken to the hospital with a non-life threatening injury to the leg.

Officials sent out a notification on the City's alert system at about 5 p.m. regarding the shooting that occurred at about 4:15 p.m.

Residents were asked to avoid the area of Cloverfield and the I-10 Freeway pending the results of the investigation.

Suicide by hanging decapitates victim

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

Editor's Note: This story originally ran on Sep. 05. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage.

A man was decapitated after hanging himself from the seventh-floor of Parking Structure 4 in Downtown Santa Monica Wednesday afternoon.

According to the Santa Monica Police Department, the victim used a rope to hang himself from the east side of the structure (facing the alley) on the 1300 block of 2nd Street. Officers issued an alert asking the public to stay out of the area while they investigated but Lt. Saul Rodriguez said there was no sign of foul play. The alley was closed to all traffic at both ends of the block.

The suicide came just minutes after emergency responders cleared an incident nearby on the 1500 block of 5th Street. In that case, a man climbed a tree and caused the street to be closed for several hours.

SCOOTER

FROM PAGE 1

of fines for bad behavior and information about riding on the beach path.

City staff is recommending an emergency ordinance to migrate Bird Scooters off sidewalks in Santa Monica and onto private property.

The Council will debate an ordinance Tuesday that will prohibit offering or displaying a "shared mobility device" from the public right-of-way or public property without City authorization. Under the proposed law any vehicles, including Bird scooters, left on the sidewalk would be subject to immediate impounding.

"Urgent regulatory actions are necessary to protect public health and safety," said a recent report by Salvador Valles, the assistant director of planning and community development for Santa Monica.

City staff recommends an impound fee of $60 per scooter and administrative fines of $500 to $1000 for violating the law. According to the report, the city has already been collecting scooters from the sidewalk.

"Although staff has recently impounded devices, such as scooters operated by Bird Ride's, Inc, no impound fee currently exists making these efforts ineffective," the report said. The ordinance is worded to limit criminal liability on the part of users. Instead, companies that display or offer the scooters for rent would have to pay up for misdemeanor penalties.

In order to keep their business in the city, Bird would instead need to partner with local businesses and parking lots where users would park their scooters at the end of a ride. The company currently operates on an ad-hoc basis where users can simply leave the electric scooters on street corners and sidewalks.

While this ordinance focuses on the company, riders can still get tickets from the police department for not wearing a helmet, riding on the sidewalk or without a license. The California Vehicle Code prohibits riding motorized scooters on sidewalks or the beach bike path.

While the emergency ordinance is in effect, the city would establish a pilot program to assist with the development of a regulatory framework for dockless rental companies like Bird. City staff wants to contract with a third party to help enforce the law by removing scooters from the street.

Just two weeks ago Bird took a plea deal with the city attorney's office to accept responsibility for violating local law and pay more than $306,000 in fines and investigative costs. The city said a significant portion of the fines would go to a broad public safety campaign for Vision Zero, the City Council's goal of eliminating deaths and significant injuries from traffic collisions.

Bird has recently reduced the top speed of the scooters from 22 to 15 miles per hour, instituted a free helmet service and improved their app security to ensure only those with a valid license can register to ride.

The discussion on an emergency ordinance to control Bird's operations comes just a week after the City Council voiced strong support for policies to get more commuters out of cars.

"I think we have a tendency to react.. somewhat negatively to disruption, sort of the conversation we had around Uber and Lyft a year ago was actually quite negative," said Mayor Pro-Tempore Gleam Davis during last Tuesday's mobility discussion. "That's not going to stop these disruptors so we darn well better adjust our attitude and say...'we're going to work with you.'"

Davis supports more car-free lanes in the City for bikes and electric scooters. She encouraged staff to be both bold and nimble. Recent data suggests traffic has worsened throughout Southern California over the last fifteen years, with the percentage of households without cars falling thirty percent, according to the Southern California Association of Governments. The increased congestion has lengthened commute times.

"We welcome disruption," Davis said. "We want to be disrupted but you have to work with us."

The City Council will hear from the public and discuss the emergency ordinance Tuesday, March 6, at 5:30 p.m. inside City Hall Council Chambers 1685 Main Street. The Council will enter closed session for legal discussions before moving on to public items.

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ULLER

FROM PAGE 1

Eric Uller, Principal Technology Analyst with the city's information technology department was arrested by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) on Thursday, Oct. 18. at about 9:30 a.m. for "lewd and lascivious acts on a minor ages fourteen (14) or fifteen (15) years old."

According to LASD, their Special Victims Bureau was brought in at the request of SMPD over allegations Uller sexually assaulted four male victims going back to the 1990's while a volunteer with the City of Santa Monica's Police Activities League.

He was arrested by deputies from the Marina Del Rey substation and was being held on a $2 million bail. Uller has a court date scheduled for Oct. 22 at the LAX Superior Court.

According to a statement issued by the City of Santa Monica, SMPD received an anonymous tip about Uller earlier this summer. The case was referred to the Sheriff's Department once a victim was identified.

Debbie Lee, Chief Communications Officer for the city, said officials were deeply disturbed by the allegations.

"The City is aware that a PAL employee was convicted in 2015 of a misdemeanor charge of annoying or molesting a minor," said Lee in a statement. "That employee was fired. The City will continue to take all steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of youth enrolled in City-sponsored programs. The City has and will continue to cooperate fully with the Sheriff's Department and the District Attorney's Office as the matter proceeds. Mr. Uller has been placed on administrative leave, pending resolution of the charges."

Uller's work with SMPD includes the City's crime map program, police security cameras and technology upgrades to patrol vehicles. He has been recognized by community service organizations and the city itself. In July of this year, Uller was part of a group of IT professionals recognized by City Manager Rick Cole for preventing a systems outage during a flood at the Public Safety Building.

Uller would be the second individual associated with PAL to face child molestation charges in recent years following the 2014 arrest of Donald Condon.

Condon was charged with five counts of child molestation. At least one case was related to a PAL field trip to Dodger Stadium where Condon was accused of taking surreptitious sexual pictures without consent while chaperoning a Santa Monica PAL event. At the time, Condon was said to have taken inappropriate photos of minors in a public place.

Condon worked at PAL, a city-backed nonprofit that serves area youth, but was eventually banned from all PAL locations and activities. The terms of his plea deal also prohibited him from attending any volunteer activities involving minors, and he is not allowed near his grandchildren without supervision.

Anyone with information related to the Uller investigation is encouraged to contact the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Special Victims Bureau toll-free tip line at (877) 710-5273 or by email at specialvictimsbureau@lasd.org.

CHIEF

FROM PAGE 1

the Southland. She served in the Long Beach Police Department for 20 years before taking the chief post in Folsom.

"The job of Police Chief is all about character and leadership," said City Manager Rick Cole. "Chief Renaud is a nationally respected law enforcement leader who spent the first twenty years of her outstanding career in Southern California. She will hit the ground running to address public safety challenges in Santa Monica. The selection process was a rigorous one that resulted in someone who understands and practices 21st Century policing – using technology, data and community partnerships to fight crime and the fear of crime – and build trust that Santa Monica's Police Department will be fair, equitable, constitutional, humane and effective. In Chief Renaud we are getting a leader who will lead and empower the sworn and civilian staff of SMPD to enhance their reputation as the 'benchmark of excellence' for law enforcement in our region."

"I am so fortunate to be selected as Santa Monica's next police chief and join in your progressive efforts to embrace community while encouraging a healthy, holistic lifestyle that considers the wellbeing of all," said Chief Cynthia Renaud. "I look forward to meeting with, connecting with and hearing from all Santa Monicans about what impacts their daily lives and how the Police Department can be part of the overall city team working to serve their needs. I understand the pressing and vexing challenges facing this wonderful community and I intend to immediately partner with my department, fellow City departments and those we serve to address crime and be a productive part of the stakeholder group fighting to reduce homelessness and find long-term solutions for those in need."

Chief Renaud is the 3rd Vice President of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). She has also served on the Law Enforcement Executive Committee of the United States Attorney, Eastern District of California. She is the President of the Central Sierra Police Chiefs' Association and is a member of the California Police Chiefs' Association where she was appointed to the CLETS (California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System) Advisory Committee by California Attorney General Kamala Harris.

In her new role, Chief Renaud will oversee 460 personnel with an annual operating budget of $86.6 million. The Santa Monica Police Department has several divisions: administrative services, operations, criminal investigations, crime analysis, and strategic services, which includes the Homeless Liaison Program, traffic services, animal shelter and custody services.

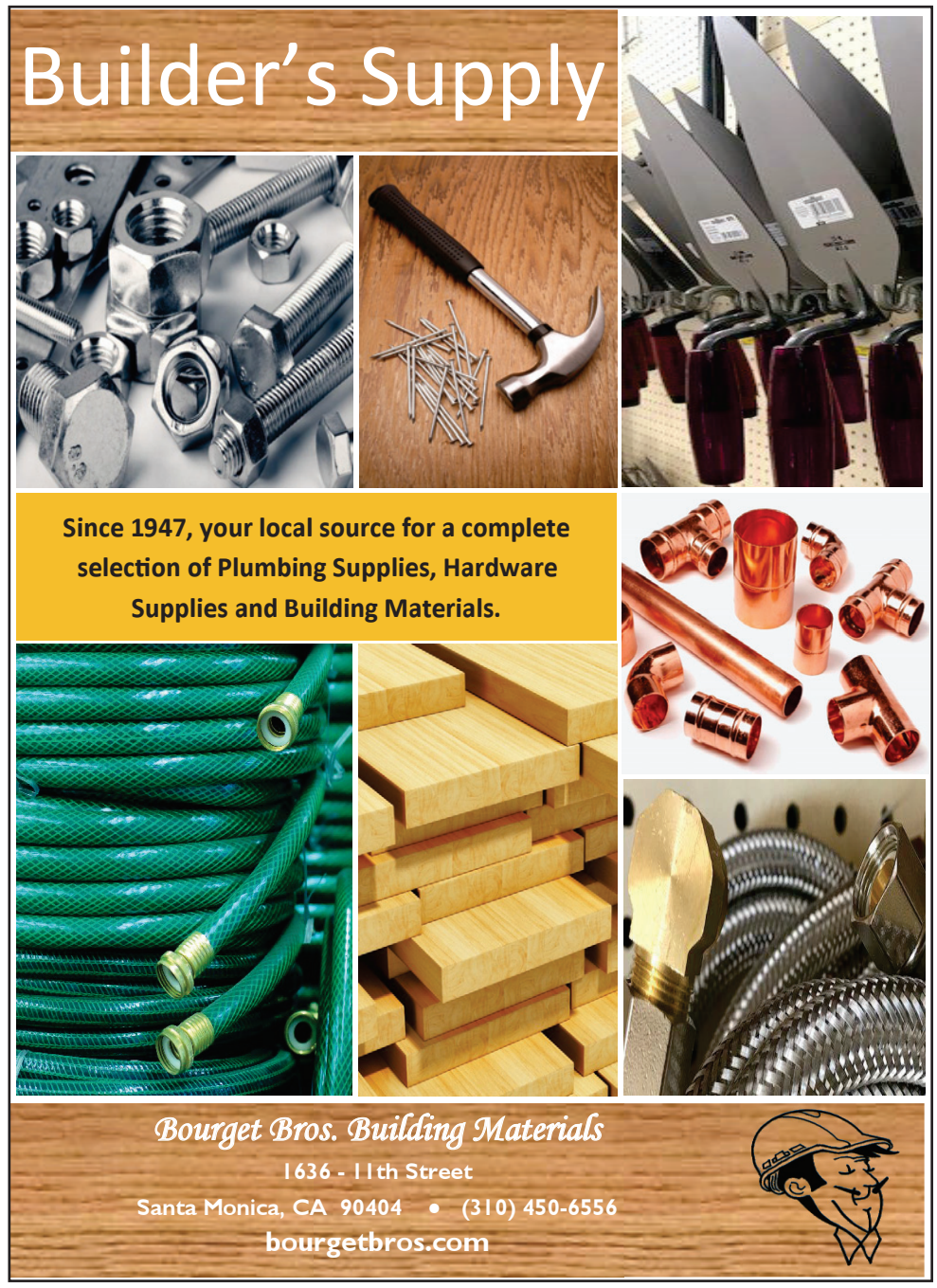
Upon successful completion of Police Officer Standards and Training (POST-required) hiring process, Chief Renaud will join the City team at the end of April with an annual salary of $265,440.

THE TOP OUTCOME AREAS SET FORTH FOR THE NEW CHIEF ARE:

- Lower crime
- Positively impact homelessness
- Foster relationships and collaboration with both our residential community and our business community
- Empower and energize staff of the Police Department and work towards fostering succession planning at all levels
- Collaborate well with our fellow City departments in order to accomplish the overall mission of the City of Santa Monica







New rehab clinic offers holy grail to addicts: keep drinking

KATE CAGLE
Daily Press Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This story originally ran Feb. 26. It is republished here as part of our year-end coverage.

A Canadian addiction center that relies on medication and therapy to treat alcohol use disorder opened its first U.S. clinic in January with a discreet office in Santa Monica. A small group of doctors and therapists meet with patients all over California while quietly disabling a century-old tenet to recovery: that abstinence is the only way to go. In their approach, continued drinking is key to regaining control.

"Most people don't want abstinence," said Alavida's medical director and co-founder Dr. Diane Rothon. "They want to be able to have a cocktail at the end of the day or a glass of wine with dinner, go to a wedding and have a few drinks. They want to be able to fit in."

Since Alcoholics Anonymous opened its doors in 1935, the 12-step program has set the tone for addiction recovery. Most of the country's 17 million alcoholics know the familiar trajectory: once a person hits "rock bottom," they join AA, admit they powerless over alcohol and embrace the struggle for sobriety for the rest of their lives.

Rothon says it's an outdated way of thinking that ignores recent medical leaps in scientific understanding of the brain and addiction. Some estimates put AA's success rate at below 10 percent.

"It's about the relationship you have with alcohol," Rothon said. "Some of that is learned. Some of that is genetic."

Doctors at Alavida treat their outpatient clients with therapy, a smartphone app to track how many drinks they've had and medication. Most patients get a prescription for naltrexone pills to take as needed, an hour before they drink. Because the medication blocks opiate receptors in the brain while they drink, patients gradually feel their cravings weaken.

Scientists call it "selective extinction." Patients say the effect of the medication is subtle.

"There was a point where I was wondering if it was a placebo but at the same time I was starting to drink less," said Mark, who asked to use his middle name to keep his recovery private. Mark, who is in his late 40s, felt his drinking was beginning to escalate before he discovered Alavida. He had begun hiding it from friends and family but never would have considered an abstinence-based program like AA.

"I have no interest in going to those meetings," Mark said. "It sounds time-consuming and dreadful."

Instead, Mark logs onto his computer every other week to talk to his therapist and doctor at Alavida over secure teleconferencing. He logs his drinking his drinking in an app and takes naltrexone before he goes to the bar or anywhere else he may drink.

Two weeks ago, he went out to a pub with his wife and drank two beers. He said when he got home she poured him a glass of wine and just as he was about to take a sip he changed his mind. He set down the glass and simply said 'no thank you.'

"It's a four to six month period where I'm building a new repertoire of habits and I hope when it's over I'll be a more moderate person," Mark said. He does worry once his program ends that he may slip back into bad habits. He'll have a prescription for the naltrexone for the rest of his life.

"That's really the start of change," said Alex Lee, clinical director at Alavida. "What we're doing is creating new feedback loops."

Without endorphins enforcing the behavior, Lee and Rothon say clients regain the self-control needed to turn down a second or third drink.

"When it works it's a like a miracle," Rothon said. She says naltrexone works in about four out of five patients. "For many, we're giving them back their children, their jobs, their bank accounts, their homes. For the ones who waited too long, they've lost everything and now they are getting it back."

While Alcoholics Anonymous and abstinence is free, patients at Alaveda pay about $6,500 for a four to six-month program. They can submit the treatment program to their medical insurance for reimbursement, but the total cost may not be recovered.

Rothon hopes the data from her clinic in Santa Monica will help her approach become more mainstream. She hopes more doctors and insurance companies will begin to recognize tailored approaches to addiction that use medication and therapy to allow patients control over their bad habits.

"There's so much more to do than just hit rock bottom and quit drinking," Rothom said. "That's the old-fashioned way."

Financial advisor battles bureaucracy to get elderly homeless man a bed

KATE CAGLE
Daily Press Staff Writer

Editor's Note: First published on May 7, 2018. It is reprinted here as part of our year end coverage.

The pristine lobby of Affluencer Financial is not the kind of place you would ever encounter the homeless.

With eleventh-story views overlooking Interstate 405 and the Santa Monica Mountains, wealthy clients filter in and out of offices looking for financial advice. Two receptionists near the elevator offer coffee, water, and candy. Beyond the double doors, founder Samuel Rad wears a silk tie, a tailored suit, and a smile. He usually charges by the hour - $350.

Recently, however, Rad has encountered the biggest challenge of his career, a 'client' he's taken up pro-bono. His name is Parvis Sistani. He's 77 years old and he's homeless.

"He's a gentleman," Rad said smiling at Sistani, whom he calls Peter. "He reminds me of my dad. He's a great guy."

The high temperature was 62 degrees the day Rad met Peter walking down Pico Boulevard in Santa Monica. It was April 5, and in broken English, Peter begged Rad for a place to get off the street. The homeless man worried he wouldn't survive another night outside.

"It's heartbreaking," Rad said. "The day we met him he was ready to collapse."

A naturalized citizen, Peter says he came to Los Angeles seven years ago. Somewhere along the way, he lost his job and his family and ended up on the street. Without any address, identification and little English speaking skills, Peter had no way to collect money from the social safety net.

When Rad figured out they both speak Farsi, the two began a month-long journey to get the aging and ailing man a bed of his own. The very first night, Rad called 2-1-1 and found all the shelters booked besides one on skid row in Downtown Los Angeles. The social services worker advised Peter to turn down the free bed.

"The guy said, 'I don't think it's good for him.' He's 77-years-old, he said 'it's too rough for him,'" Rad said. It was the first disappointment of many. Rad says Peter has been turned away by two dozen agencies, churches, temples and organizations. Some people said they couldn't help Peter without an identification, some said they were full, others said he was the wrong religion.

A month later, Peter is shaven, showered, fed and clothed and often sitting quietly in the lobby of Affluencer Financial. He is still suffering from diabetes and arthritis. He is still homeless.

Peter's plight has been complicated by the fact little is known about him. He speaks very little, even in Farsi. When Rad brought him in off the street, he had no identification. The DMV became a catch-22: he couldn't get an ID without an ID. Without ID, he couldn't get on a waiting list for housing. In the meantime, finding Peter a home has become a second job for Rad and his colleague, Blanca Reynoso.

"How are these homeless people ever able to navigate this system?" Reynoso wondered. "We have a car. We speak English. We're taking him all kinds of places. One guy on foot can't go to the DMV, the Federal Building, Social Security. It's impossible for these people."

Rad and Reynoso said a state official - who asked to remain anonymous - finally stepped in to get Peter a California ID. The process took three weeks. Rad said he was beaming when he picked up the phone to call the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to tell them Peter could now get on the list for housing. Rad thought they had the problem solved but the news was hardly reassuring: Peter could now get on a six-month waiting list for a bed. In the meantime, the LAHSA employee warned Rad that if Peter continued to sleep on his couch he will no longer qualify as "homeless" and would lose his spot on the list.

Rad was stunned.

"Every agency we talk to tells us to call another agency," Rad said. "Everyone is looking for a reason to disqualify, rather than say 'hey, how can I help you?' The system is broken."

Reynoso says the process has opened her eyes to the difficulties the homeless face every day.

"We are really, feeling helpless when we're trying to do a good deed and get him some stability," Reynoso said. "We don't seem to be making any headway."

Throughout their efforts, friends have offered medical help, dental check-ups, and clothing.

What they haven't found is a place to stay.

CRIME

FROM PAGE 1

spike follows a 5.5 percent increase in the same crimes in 2016.

"We hope that it's leveled out," said Lt. Saul Rodriguez with the Santa Monica Police Department, who attributed the increase to legislative changes like Propositions 47 and 57, which reduced sentences for petty theft and drug offenses and allowed parole for nonviolent felons. "We know what our problems are and how to continue to tackle these problems, like property crime."

Similar to the year before, property crime has driven much of the increase, with 86 percent of serious incidents related to theft. In many cases, items are stolen from cars parked on streets, in private garages or in public lots. Rodriguez said the city is in the process of improving the security cameras inside parking structures to deter smash-and-grab break-ins downtown but simply hiding items can help prevent thefts of opportunity.

There was also a 3.8 percent increase in violent crime year over year, a statistic which includes homicide, rape, robbery, and assault. Rodriguez said there were 407 assaults in 2017, up from 244 the year prior.

The department does not have a definitive reason for the increase.

"I don't know," Rodriguez said. While law enforcement continues to blame legislative changes on increasing crime rates, Rodriguez did not have statistics to support whether the same people are responsible for multiple incidents. Officers and victims both complain the jail has become a revolving door for offenders, who are sometimes released the same day they are sentenced.

"We see a lot of recidivism: the same people getting arrested in the daily log. We see it all the time, the same names pop up frequently," Rodriguez said. "It's a challenge. It's more difficult for us to make an impact."

While crime rates are on the rise, the department struggles to keep up with the number of officers entering retirement as the City seeks to increase patrols on the street while wrangling overtime costs. On Monday, the SMPD swore in five brand new officers, however, five had recently retired in December. The department has the budget for 235 officers but only employees around 215.

"We're battling with other departments in the area to hire good, quality candidates," Rodriguez said. "It's a challenge."

About a dozen cadets are in the training program right now to become sworn officers.

The department averages about 330 calls for service every day, thirty percent of those are homeless-related, according to Rodriguez. While the number of homeless people sleeping on Santa Monica streets has dramatically increased over the last year, Rodriguez said their proportion of police calls has stayed relatively consistent. Over the past three months, every officer has gone through mandatory training on how to properly deal with homeless residents and those just passing through.

While officers are retraining and the department is working to address the problems, police encourage residents to be more vigilant in the current climate, stashing away valuables when you leave your car and locking the front and back door to your house. Rodriguez said an outside camera and a sign for a home security system can go a long way to deterring home burglaries.

"We have to come up with better strategies on how we are going to educate people and prevent crimes," Rodriguez said.

Mayor Ted Winterer and City Manager Rick Cole are expected to address the increase in crime at Thursday's State of the City Address.

GRIEF

FROM PAGE 4

"Tearless grief bleeds inwardly." — Christian Nestell Bovee

"In our culture I think most people think of grief as sadness, and that's certainly part of it, a large part of it, but there's also this thorniness, these edges that come out." — Anthony Rapp

"In my hometown of New Orleans, grief is a public spectacle that, somewhat paradoxically, necessitates celebration. The dead are not mourned so much as they are posthumously venerated with music and dance." — Clint Smith

"I'll be seeing you in all the old familiar places, that this heart of mine embraces" — Billie Holiday

"It's coming on Christmas, they're cutting down trees, they're putting up reindeer, and singing songs of joy and peace, oh I wish I had a river I could skate away on." — Joni Mitchell

Charles Andrews has lived in Santa Monica for 32 years and wouldn't live anywhere else in the world. Really. Send love and/or rebuke to him at therealmrmusic@gmail.com

WELL NEWS BY SCOTT LAFEE

Observation

■ "I tried every diet in the book. I tried some that weren't in the book. I tried eating the book. It tasted better than most of the diets." -- Singer Dolly Parton

Medical History

■ This week in 1985, a successful heart transplant to a 4-day-old infant, Eddie Anguiano, known then as Baby Moses, was performed by Dr. Leonard Lee Bailey of the Loma Linda University Medical Center. Eddie had been born with a fatal heart defect called hypoplastic left heart syndrome and had only days to live. Luckily, the heart of a brain-dead baby became available. Eddie's transplant was the third such attempt. The previous two were unsuccessful, but Eddie thrived.

MYSTERY PHOTO

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

Sudoku

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

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

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

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

Newsday Crossword

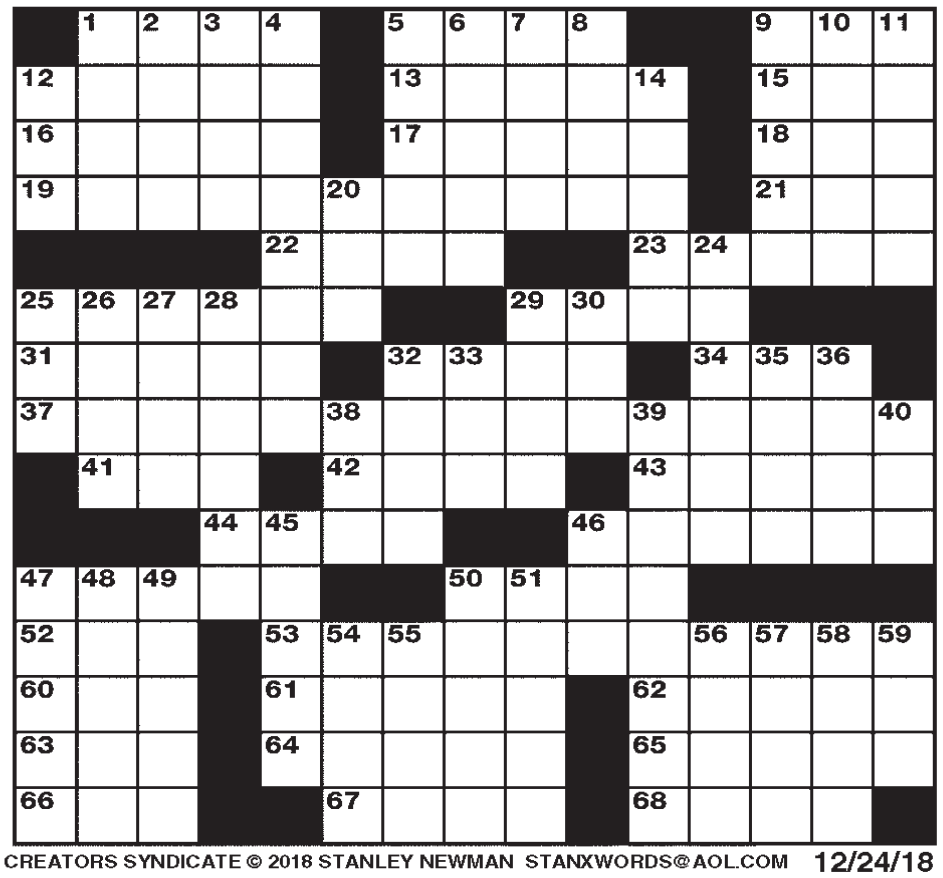
"12 DAYS OF" EXCERPTS by Sally R. Stein
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 Fine necktie fabric
5 Upscale German cars, for short
9 Ship's diary
12 Obama's vice president
13 Scary and strange
15 Top card in poker
16 Without assistance
17 Boxing match locale
18 Coffee alternative
19 "Five __, four calling birds . . ."
21 Portion of corn
22 Emcee
23 Qualifies for
25 Minister in church
29 Season after summer
31 Angry look
32 "__ Sir or Madam . . ."
34 Walk-__ (cameo roles)
37 ". . . __, two turtledoves . . ."
41 When a plane is expected: Abbr.
42 "Mighty" trees
43 Devour
44 Was familiar with
46 Don't stop at
47 Selected
50 Moved quickly
52 Pull apart, as paper
53 ". . . and a partridge __"
60 "Roses __ red . . ."
61 Irritates greatly
62 Wear away
63 Midmorning hour
64 __ off (get along well)
65 "Great!"
66 Double-curve letter
67 Land parcels to build on
68 Adolescent

DOWN

1 Farm's grain tower
2 Much-admired celebrity
3 Give temporarily
4 Desk space for legs
5 "Grizzly" beasts
6 Qualify for
7 Small warbling bird
8 Perform a ballad
9 In a little while
10 Pacific or Atlantic
11 Car transmission choices
12 Pocketbook or satchel
14 Artist's stand
20 Neither fish __ fowl
24 Hawaiian hellos
25 California winter clock setting: Abbr.
26 Muscle soreness
27 Alphabetize
28 Minor modifications
29 Ceiling-mounted room coolers
30 Curved line
32 Sketch a picture
33 "A mouse!"
35 Receives after taxes
36 Ignore socially
38 Opponent
39 Safety attachment atop a car seat
40 Secret agent
45 Horse's cry
46 Pod veggie
47 Wooden shipping container
48 Adds to the payroll
49 Unlocks
50 Break in two
51 Annoying ones
54 Hammer target
55 Female choir member
56 Factual
57 Cowpoke's lasso
58 Adam and Eve's home
59 Occupational suffix for auction



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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 24)

Your attractions come with a side of strong curiosity, which is why you learn so much this year -- about people, emotional landscapes, and subjects that light up your mind. Truly, your very style of thinking changes with the incredible experiences of this busy year. "Yes" is the word that opens many doors. Libra and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 40, 22, 28 and 13.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
Your abiding respect for words and your love of their eloquent or novel expression will enhance your experience as you take part in a brilliant conversation or piece of writing.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Though a belief in something that cannot be observed or quantified exists only in the mind, the tangible things that happen because of and in expression of the belief can change the world.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)
Human relationships are very intricate, requiring the complex balance of several layers all at once. So when you feel as if you're getting it right, give yourself a lot of credit. And when you're not, offer up a huge amount of grace.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)
The reason the card is as important as, if not more important than, the gift is that the spirit in which you do things matters much more than the actions themselves.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
Open your eyes to the secret clues. You only have to see one for there to suddenly be an endless ticker tape of clues to point you in the right direction or provide reassurance anytime you need it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
You're powerful, capable and creative. So you'll turn the old traditions into something you can get behind, or you'll do things in a way that's all you; the tradition starts now.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)
Sometimes you simply don't let yourself want what you want. You reason it away as too expensive, time-consuming, caloric, difficult to obtain, etc., but to no avail, because the want keeps coming back. Go on and let yourself have it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)
Nothing connects you with family and friends like good food and merry music. Even if you don't happen to be around loved ones, going where there are food and music and strangers will give you a connected feeling.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Your heart is filled with a boundless, conditionless kind of love. However, relationships don't live solely in the heart. Relationships live in a conditional world. You'll be attuned to how everyone's conditions are being met.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
What's shared between you and the other person is a formless feeling, yet when you try to put it into form, you come pretty close to creating a perfect understanding of the emotion.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
The move that improves things happens before the main action. It's the moment you take to project an outcome that will please you, to create an intention, and to decide who you're going to be in the scenario.

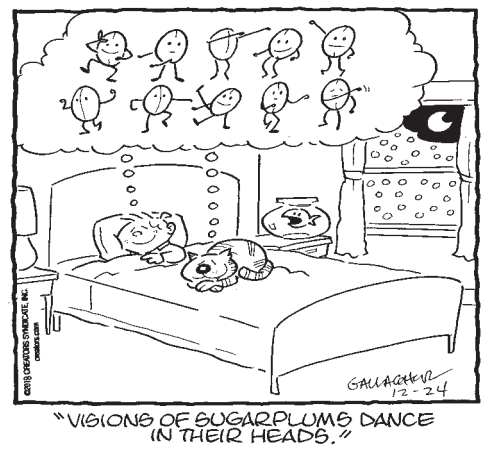
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Romantic or not, each relationship has its own chemistry. What's going on at this level is good information, and you'll have a heightened awareness of what's clicking and feeling great.

The Neptunian Sugarplum Situation

Mercury and Neptune may interfere with the vision of sugarplums supposedly dancing in our heads. The remedy is to take the vision out of our heads (where it might get distorted or lose its sweetness) and stop leaving everything to the plums. Turn up the music, and do your own dance. Move your body and life moves merrily along.

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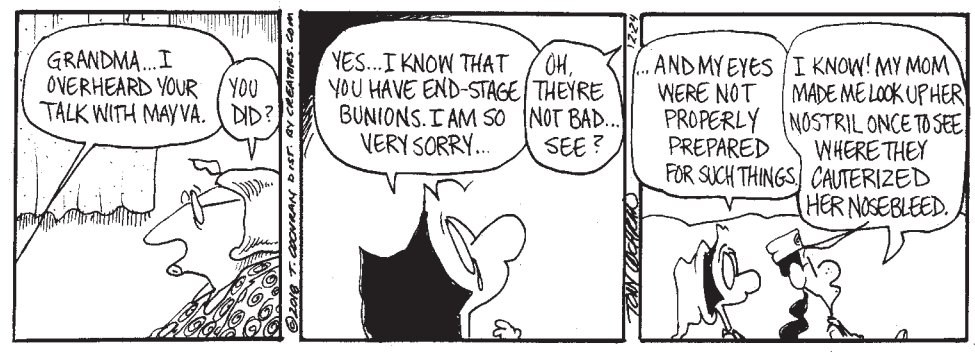
Heathcliff
By PETER GALLAGHER



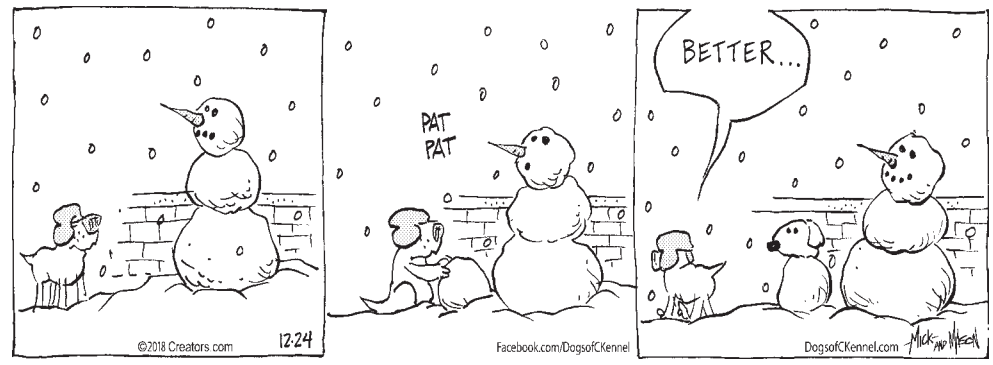
Strange Brew
By JOHN DEERING



Agnes
By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel
By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill
By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



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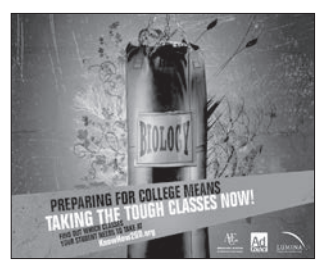
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Walking tours link locals and visitors to Santa Monica history

MATTHEW HALL
Daily Press Editor

Editor's Note: This story was first printed on Feb. 1, 2018. It is reprinted here as part of our year end coverage.

Do you want to know where Jim Morrison played his first public show? How about the once-secret history of special commandos trained on the Santa Monica beach? Maybe you're more interested in the founding of the modern movie industry, the City's role as a global fitness trendsetter or the now ubiquitous cartoon sailor with a penchant for spinach created on the Santa Monica Pier?

These answers and many, many more are part of the weekly Downtown walking tour offered by the Santa Monica Conservancy.

The volunteer tour-guides have access to a wealth of local history including the Tongvas, Californios, European settlers, Gold Rush, the city's founding and modern evolution but the tours are not a dry lecture.

"There's so much story to tell. It just fills me with enthusiasm and a kind of a joy when I'm telling that story and I think all the other docents feels the same way," said Kay Pattison who co-organizes the tours with Margi Falk.

Organizers said the tours are a dynamic interaction between guide and group that highlights the information the group finds most interesting while building a human connection between participants.

"It's a fascinating story," said Pattison. "I look at all of us, the docents, we're storytellers, we're telling the story of Santa Monica, which has an amazing history for a small city on the edge of the Pacific."

Pattison said the tour doesn't shy away from the City's less glamorous, but no less interesting, history but it does put everything into context to explain how Santa Monica came to be the city it is today.

"There was a time when we were pretty down in the mouth out here and we actually have become a destination for tourists," she said. "They come here specifically because they want to be in Santa Monica."

She said that enthusiasm for the city is embodied in the docents who love sharing their knowledge with locals and visitors alike.

"I enjoy it so much, there's something about being a tour guide when you spend a couple of hours with a group, there's a bond that's created. I definitely feel it at the end of the tour. We go on an adventure together and have touched one another, it's a unique feeling."

She said a bond forms during a good tour that elevates the experience for everyone involved.

"This is an adventure when you go on this walking tour, you go on an adventure," she said. "You're going to learn aspects of Santa Monica, that no one knew existed."

Pattison said the tours put the city in a different light and personalize it in a way that creates a meaningful connection to the place.

"This is a living city and we're saluting the past and looking toward the future because when (founders) Baker and Jones founded the little township of Santa Monica, this is what they wanted," she said. "Jones said Santa Monica is going to become the most prominent city in Southern California. We're the dream he dreamed.

The tours are offered every Saturday at 10 a.m., starting at Hostelling International, 1436 Second Street. The default tour is about two hours and ranges over about a six-block span of Downtown Santa Monica. Tours are $10 for the public, $5 for Santa Monica Conservancy members, LA Conservancy members and City employees. Cash and check accepted. Walkups are welcome provided space is available but reservations can be made online (www.smconservancy.org/events-programs/downtown-walking-tours/. To make a reservation within 24 hours of a tour or to arrange private/group tours (with two weeks notice) email dwt@smconservancy.org or leave a message at (310) 496-3146.

Historic horse hitch saved for post-parade ceremony

JONAH DYLAN
Special to the Daily Press

Editor's Note: This story was first published on July 4, 2018. It is reprinted here as part of our year end coverage.

Mitch Lachman said it just kind of hit him one day: the horse hitch on Wadsworth Ave. was the last horse hitch he knew of.

"So I said, 'Hey, this is important. This is a relic,'" Lachman said.

He told local historian Richard Orton about the horse hitch, but there was a problem. The city of Santa Monica, in an effort to even out the curb and the sidewalk on the street with the horse hitch, paved over the small ring on the sidewalk, apparently not even realizing it was a horse hitch.

But Orton had recently taken an interest in the hitch, which was historically used for riders to tie up their horses and was enacted in 1902.

He appealed to city manager Rick Cole, who was very receptive to Orton's concern. So the asphalt covering the hitch was removed, and members of the police equestrian unit will tie their horses up during a brief ceremony at the hitch after the Santa Monica July 4th parade.

"I just thought it ought to be celebrated," Orton said. "And it was kind of my thinking that, well, a good time to do that would be right after the 4th of July parade when we have equestrian units in Ocean Park. And it would be fun to actually have them come down there after the parade and actually hitch horses to the horse hitch."

Orton will give a brief speech explaining the significance of the horse hitch, and other community members will be invited to speak as well. His goal is for the city to enact a plaque memorializing the horse hitch. The plaque could also include a bike rack that would utilize the hitch.

Nina Fresco, another historian in the Ocean Park area, said the hitch serves as a reminder of a past time in Santa Monica.

"It kind of connects to why is history important," she said. "The thing about that horse hitch is it's a really small piece of hardwood that somehow managed to survive in a city where there has been decade after decade of really dramatic change and redevelopment and evolution. And so when a thing like that makes it to the present day, it's a real anomaly."

Mitch Lachman, who originally alerted Orton to the horse hitch's existence, echoed Fresco's comments about its significance. He called it a "treasure," and said Ocean Park used to be littered with horse hitches, but the one on Wadsworth is now the last remaining one.

"They've just disappeared, I don't know of any other horse ring anywhere," he said. "But there it is, and I felt it was important because it's a carryover from a time in California when horses were predominate. Can you imagine ocean park back in the day at the turn of the century when there were no cars, there were horses?"

Orton, who produces a newsletter about Santa Monica history and has lived in Ocean Park since 1970, said he was very pleased with how much the city has worked with him to preserve the horse hitch. He added that he was excited with the interest the horse hitch has gained recently.

Fresco said the horse hitch is part of a larger neighborhood that isn't usually recognized for its historical significance.

"That neighborhood where it's in is one of our most intact old original development neighborhoods in the city," she said. "It is the most historically intact neighborhood yet it is not designated as a landmark. But it is really important to people in the community."

Virtual reality gets real in Downtown Santa Monica

LILY RICHMAN
Daily Press Intern

Editor's Note: This story was first published on Feb. 26, 2018. It is reprinted here as part of our year end coverage.

Welcome to the new reality, where a tiny storefront can house infinite spaces, activities, and adventures.

There's no magic at the Gateway Virtual Reality Showroom. The simple storefront actually backs onto a large warehouse but, as the name suggests, the physical square footage houses multiple virtual reality suites that are available for rent.

The showroom, located at 7th Street and Colorado Avenue, opened to the public in early January with a mission to develop and showcase virtual reality (VR) technology. The venue offers a number of experiences, regardless of the customer's technological skill level, physical mobility or interests.

"For any kind of person that comes in here, no matter where they're from or their background, there's an experience for them," said Chief Gatekeeper Rob McCarty. "We wanted to create a safe place where the L.A. community could come to experience virtual reality."

Gateway offers licensed games and features programs created by in-house developers. This gives Gateway programmers the chance to interact directly with consumers and adjust their products as needed.

"We actually get to see firsthand what's going well and what's going poorly so when things go wrong we can fix them immediately," said Gehrig Gosselin, Head of Development and Community Relationships. "It's nice that we can update stuff consistently."

The showroom offers a wide array of activities and exhibits. The venue's entryway features an augmented reality gallery where visitors can watch on a tablet as technology enhances the images and objects in front of them.

Gateway includes three single-player rooms sectioned off by floor to ceiling red curtains. Outfitted with a couch or two, a rug, a VR headset hanging from the ceiling and a television screen, each of these rooms allows one person to engage in a multitude of activities while surrounded by friends. Offerings range from painting with a virtual color palette and brush to games that involve shooting robots.

"If you have a desire to play something, we can figure out a way to make it happen," said Gosselin.

In the center of the warehouse, up to four players can strap on a backpack, pull on a headset, pick up a faux gun, and move around to engage in interactive VR games that require teamwork and communication. Customers are currently able to play LA Deadzone, an original game created and programmed by Gateway's staff in which partners work together to defeat an approaching army of zombies.

The showroom targets anyone that wants to try collaborative and interactive activities with friends or colleagues in a comfortable environment. The company markets to corporate team-building, casual gatherings of friends or individuals hosting discussions among technology experts.

The technologically sophisticated warehouse, which is complete with projection mapping, state of the art sound and DJ equipment, and VR experiences, can be configured to address clients' imaginations and specifications. Over 250 people can be comfortably situated inside of the space, and more can be accommodated using the outside of the venue.

On April 8, Gateway VR Showroom will host its official grand opening, at which point it will disclose key investors and partners in a block party-like event.

Prior to the launch, the team is planning to host a 48-hour game jam programming event in which software developers will collaborate to develop VR games and experiences, some of which may be featured at the grand opening.

The Gateway is run primarily by a group of five so-called "Gatekeepers." In addition to McCarty and Gosselin, the showroom is led by Evan Davis, Director of Experiences, Bryce Davis, Creative Director and Kevin Leekley, Director of Technology.

The team's core objective is to make VR technology more accessible and inspire widespread virtual reality usage in the general public.

"At the end of the day, our goal is mass adoption ... When it gets to the point where my parents are asking what VR experiences they should look out for, I think we've done our job," McCarty said.

Team members said the initial response has been positive.

"[We've received] humbling support. The people here have been so welcoming and so generous with their time and their energy," said McCarty.

The Gateway Showroom is located at 716 Colorado Boulevard. It is open from 3 - 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. On Saturday and Sunday, its business hours are 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. The showroom charges $35 per person for each hour one spends at the location. For more information, visit https://gatewayshowroom.com.



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