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Year in Review Part 3: July - September

The Daily Press is summarizing the year's news as it was covered in our pages for the year. Today, we are covering the third three months of the year.

JULY

A court of appeals issued a ruling that reversed a previous order forcing Santa Monica to change the format of its city council elections. Plaintiffs in the CVRA case filed an appeal with the California Supreme Court for a final ruling.

A man was arrested in connection with the arson of Sake House restaurant during the looting on May 31. He was charged with one count of arson, a felony offense that carries a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in federal prison and a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years.

Gov. Gavin Newsom ordered bars and indoor dining at restaurants to close in most areas of the state for three weeks amid a surge of new coronavirus cases. The revised stay-at-home order affected 19 counties where nearly three-quarters of the state's roughly 40 million people live — including Los Angeles County.

Officials temporarily reclosed beaches, beach parking lots, beach bike paths, beach facilities and beach accessways over the July 4 holiday to prevent crowds from spreading COVID-19.

A Santa Monica based

SEE **JULY** PAGE 2



File Photo

ARSON: Arrests were made in connection with the damage done during the May looting spree.

The stormy, fiery year when climate disasters wouldn't stop

SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

Nature struck relentlessly in 2020 with record-breaking and deadly weather- and climate-related disasters.

With the most named storms in the Atlantic, the largest-ever area of California burned by wildfires, killer floods in Asia and Africa and a hot, melting Arctic, 2020 was more than a disastrous year with the pandemic. It was a year of disasters — and climate change from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas was a big factor, scientists said.

The United States didn't just set a record for the most disasters costing at least $1 billion — adjusted for inflation — the nation obliterated the record, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

By September, 2020 had tied the old record of 16 billion-dollar disasters and when the count is completed in early January, officials figure it will be 20, likely more. Only three states weren't part of a billion-dollar weather disaster (Alaska, Hawaii and North Dakota) — and all the coastline from Texas to Maine, except for a tiny part of Florida, was under a watch or warning for a hurricane, tropical storm or storm surge from those systems in 2020, according to U.S. weather officials.

With 30 named storms, the Atlantic hurricane season surpassed the mark set in 2005, ran out of storm names and went deep into the Greek alphabet, making meteorologists reconsider how they name future storms, officials said. Ten of those storms rapidly intensified, making them more dangerous. A dozen made landfall in the U.S., easily smashing the old record of nine. And Louisiana got hit five times. At one point, the American Red Cross had 60 New Orleans hotels filled with refugees.

With a devastating 20-year megadrought and near-record heat, California had at least 6,528 square miles (16,907 square kilometers) burned by wildfire, doubling the previous record area burned. Five of the six largest wildfires in California history have been in 2020. Oregon and Colorado had immense fire damage, too. More than 10,000 buildings were damaged or destroyed and at least 41 people killed.

Between fires and hurricanes, the American Red Cross provided a record 1.3 million nights of shelter for disaster-struck Americans — four times the annual average for the previous decade.

SEE **DISASTERS** PAGE 11

Despite bleak 2020, celebrities make effort to brighten year

JONATHAN LANDRUM JR.
AP Entertainment Writer

Yes, 2020 may seem like a complete fail with all the constant bad news and tragic moments. It's been filled with gloom and doom(scrolling), but some celebrities and those inspired by them have tried to brighten a bleak year.

Some like singer Dolly Parton donated money to fight the coronavirus, John Krasinski put a spotlight on good news at a crucial time and DJ D-Nice played music to dance away your anxiousness about the unfolding pandemic.

Here are a few examples of those efforts to make 2020 a little better for others.

DOLLY'S VACCINE DONATION

In April, shortly after the coronavirus was declared a pandemic, country music icon Dolly Parton donated $1 million toward researching the virus at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tennessee. The singer's donation was used to help fund the development of Moderna's vaccine, the second experimental COVID-19 drug to yield extraordinarily strong early results during trials. Parton didn't stop there. She starred in Dolly Parton's "Christmas on the Square," playing an angel in the Netflix musical. She also put out new holiday music, "A Holly Dolly Christmas" with a same-titled TV special where she sang

SEE **CELEBRITIES** PAGE 11

JULY

FROM PAGE 1

charity was ordered to dissolve and its directors were prohibited from serving on any future non-profit board or handle money associated with a volunteer position. The California Attorney General announced a $7 million settlement against the Lithuanian Assistance Foundation over allegations of wrongdoing.

Local residents continued to participate and organize actions around social justice. Groups organized marches, protests and educational events throughout the area while many residents participated in vigils, town hall meetings or other events to continue discussions about institutional racism.

The School District adopted its 2020-2021 budget with the hope that extra funding would arrive from the state budget.

Santa Monica High School teacher Guadalupe Mireles-Toumayan declined an opportunity to teach at Harvard University in order to have a greater impact in her own community.

Local beaches scored well on the annual Beach Report Card issued by Heal the Bay. No local beaches were part of the Beach Bummer list this year and while Santa Monica beaches had a wide variety of grades based on conditions, all were listed as A or A+ during dry weather.

COVID-19 patients got younger as the county's case count increased. Director of Public Health Barbara Ferrer said hospitalizations of people over 65 had declined while individuals between 17 and 65 were being hospitalized at an increased rate. Officials said almost 50% of new cases occurred among younger people with the most significant increase in the percentage of cases among residents between 18 and 40 years old.

Alicia Arden and attorney Gloria Allred demanded the Santa Monica Police Department investigate why no action was taken when Arden accused Jeffrey Epstein of sexually battering her at a Santa Monica hotel in 1997.

Two men were arrested in connection with the looting of downtown businesses on May 31. According to SMPD, detectives identified a vehicle related to the REI looting through social media posts that showed two suspects loading merchandise into the car.

More than 80 people applied to be an interim council member following the unexpected resignation of Councilman Greg Morena. Kristin McCowan, a native Santa Monican, was appointed to the City Council for four months to fill the vacancy.

The City of Santa Monica launched a COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program to provide eligible applicants with up to three months of rental assistance.

An employee of a local restaurant died after exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms and coworkers filed a complaint with state and county regulators over safety protocols at the Santa Monica Burger King location.

California officials released another 3,100 inmates from state prisons in response to the coronavirus pandemic and in all planned to release a total of more than 10,000 inmates, or nearly 10 percent of prisoners.

Interim City Manager Lane Dilg announced the selection of 15 members of Santa Monica's Public Safety Reform Advisory Committee. The committee is made up of individuals who are residents of or have a close working knowledge of Santa Monica and organized an input process, vetted reform proposals, and ultimately made recommendations on public safety reform for both use of force and invest/divest strategies.

Longtime restaurateur Maurice Solomon, known locally as the Deli King for his decades of service at Fromin's Deli, died from cancer. Solomon died at age 81.

The newly constructed Fire Station 1 opened at 1337 7th Street. The new $41.2 million facility replaced SMFD's first and oldest station located just down the street.

Founded in 1923, Fisher Lumber closed their Lincoln and Colorado Blvd location. The independent lumber and hardware store was one of the oldest retail businesses in Santa Monica.

Newsom extended the closure of bars and indoor dining statewide and ordered gyms, churches and hair salons closed in most places as coronavirus cases kept rising.

Installation of a significant sculptural artwork by Metro-commissioned artist Walter Hood resumed at the corner of 4th and Colorado.

The 2021 Rose Parade was canceled because of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on planning for the New Year's Day tradition and the risk of spreading infections among its huge audience and participants, organizers said.

COVID-19 forced the cancellation of Open House celebrations at schools across the Westside this year, but the students of McKinley Elementary School refused to let the pandemic stop them from creating more than 100 virtual projects that aimed to help the community in a time of need.

The City's "We Are Santa Monica Fund", originally limited to COVID-19 community relief, expanded to permit donors to earmark their donations to advance a Black Agenda in Santa Monica. In addition, 10% of any donations that were not earmarked for a specific purpose were allocated to support projects that are part of the Black Agenda.



File Photo

PIER: The Pier reopened with some organized socially-distance sections.

The final designs of the Belmar History + Art Project were revealed by the City of Santa Monica, and artist April Banks said she was is excited to begin work on a life-sized sculpture that will offer residents a glimpse into Santa Monica's Black history. Following approval from the Santa Monica Arts Commission in June, the project features a sculpture of a shotgun house, a form of architecture that was common in Santa Monica's Belmar neighborhood, an area of early African American settlement and a place where residents and Black businesses thrived between 1900 and 1950.

SMMUSD said it would begin the next school year utilizing a distance-learning format, but district leaders retained hope that students would be able to return to school on a full-time basis once safer at-home orders eased.

County officials linked current COVID-19 cases to the July 4 holiday and said the only way to avoid another mass shutdown was with large-scale cooperation from the public on health directives including wearing masks and limiting social activity.

SMMUSD revised its interdistrict permit policies and required an annual verification process for students who wish to retain a permit heading into future school years.

COVID-19 became the second leading cause of death countywide. COVID-19, with over 4,200 deaths so far, was on track to claim more lives in Los Angeles County than any disease except coronary heart disease — killing more people than Alzheimer's Disease, other kinds of heart disease, stroke and COPD.

California surpassed New York for the most coronavirus cases in the country, reporting more than 409,000 infections. The surge of cases comes as California reopened much of its economy in May.

Santa Monica expanded its outdoor retail program to allow some businesses on Wilshire Blvd. to use bike and/or parking lanes for new seating.

Locals noticed dozens of chalk art pieces popping up throughout town. While some efforts were organized by artists with specific goals or themes, others were efforts by individual residents looking for a creative outlet during the pandemic.

The Pico Neighborhood Association (PNA) and Pico Youth & Family Center (PYFC) joined forces to deliver packages of groceries and essential items to local seniors and families in need. The idea for the Pico We Care initiative came from Ashil Srivastava who is a PYFC youth leader and 11th grader at Samohi.

The reclosure of fitness centers statewide forced local fitness fanatics to get creative and move classes outdoors during the summer months to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

The Santa Monica Police Department detained a man who exhibited mental health issues while brandishing a gun on the Santa Monica beach.

AUGUST

Bike shops were one of the businesses with unique problems caused by the pandemic. With residents forced to look for new recreation options, sales surged at local shops however stores were unable to find enough bikes to sell as inventory pipelines collapsed. Repair wait times skyrocketed as thousands of residents tried to fix old equipment. Similar shortages hit products like camping equipment, baking supplies, home office equipment and outdoor heaters as various industries reacted to pandemic restrictions.

SEE **REVIEW** PAGE 3

REVIEW

FROM PAGE 2

Businesses began closing permanently due to the pandemic. Restaurants like Ippudo Ramen, Dialogue, Enterprise Fish Co. and Panini Grill were among the eateries who didn't survive the year while the closures also claimed various retail establishments.

Officials said they were cautiously optimistic that the County was getting back on track with efforts to reduce COVID-19 cases after a summer spike during June and July.

A huge wildfire in mountains east of Los Angeles forced thousands of people to evacuate their homes in one of the region's biggest blazes.

The House Oversight Committee invited the new postmaster general to appear at a hearing to examine operational changes to the U.S. Postal Service that caused delays in mail deliveries across the country. Mail problems were a persistent concern leading up to the election and package delivery became a significant source of resident complaints in the later part of the year.

The U.S. Postal Service says it lost $2.2 billion in the three months that ended in June as the beleaguered agency — hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic — piles up financial losses that officials warn could top $20 billion over two years.

Officials said the region's homeless crisis will get worse as the pandemic ripples through the local economy. Service providers said coronavirus shuttered in person services while endangering housing for some of the area's most vulnerable residents.

State prison officials said as many as 17,600 California inmates would be released early due to the coronavirus, 70% more than previously estimated and a total that victims and police said includes dangerous criminals who should stay locked up.

Santa Monica Brew Works announced a series of local partnerships to produce beer inspired by local businesses. The company reintroduced a beer honoring the legacy of Rip City Skates, a shandy brewed with lemonade from Hot Dog On A Stick and a beer made with beer from Bay Cities Deli.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health officials said there were extreme disparities in COVID-19 cases and deaths within the county's affluent and impoverished areas. Officials said residents in poor communities were more likely to be in essential work capacities, have less access to healthcare and were less able to isolate themselves.

A local man began running a 5K a day for 115 consecutive days while fundraising in the name of Breonna Taylor.

The Santa Monica Police Department arrested a man for stabbing a homeless person in Reed Park. When officers arrived at the park they saw the suspect walk towards the center of the park and stab the victim who was lying on the ground.

A former Los Angeles Angels employee was charged with conspiracy to distribute fentanyl in connection with the overdose death of pitcher Tyler Skaggs. The team reaffirmed its position that management didn't know Skaggs was an opioid user and didn't know any employees were providing drugs to players.

The Venice Chamber of Commerce's Chamber in Action Committee continued connecting chamber members to local nonprofits and businesses in need of improvement through digital workshops. In one project, local artists pivoted to a virtual workshops for Clare Matrix residents after the pandemic forced them to cancel plans for a large mural on site.

Ralph Mechur was the only incumbent who chose not to file for reelection. Mechur was a member of the SMMUSD Board and retired rather than run again.

Employees in SMMUSD's child care and preschool programs, as well as its special education department, were among the employees out of work due to financial problems, but local educators said the decision negatively affected students districtwide when the pandemic was already putting some student groups at a severe disadvantage.

Joe Biden named California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate, making history by selecting the first Black woman to compete on a major party's presidential ticket and acknowledging the vital role Black voters would play in his bid to defeat President Donald Trump.



File image

CASES: Officials said the rate of expansion for COVID cases improved.

A group of Samohi seniors left a lasting legacy with a generous parting gift- a $15,400 donation to be used for the purchase of this year's summer reading book "Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson.

The City of Santa Monica in collaboration with the People Concern housed 26 homeless individuals who were high risk for COVID in a locally owned Santa Monica motel. While homeless shelters saw some large COVID-19 outbreaks, the virus didn't bring devastation to the homeless population as many feared.

ZJ Boarding House, which had been a hallmark of Main Street since 1988, announced it would close its doors due to unresolved lease negotiations between Boardriders, the parent company, and the landlord. However, after several months, the two sides were able to negotiate a deal and the store announced it would reopen.

Santa Monica's bikeshare program, Breeze, ceased operations. The program had been in operation for five years with a mix of funding from user fees and a corporate sponsorship. The system needed significant reinvestment to continue operating and officials said money was not available to keep the system running.

The City of Santa Monica received $108,066.05 in donations to address the coronavirus pandemic and costs associated with the May 31 riots. City Hall began accepting donations in March. Donors can give cash or goods/ services directly to the city or to the We Are Santa Monica Fund. Donations to the City can be used for city programs or distributed to non-profits.

After the filing deadline, there were 21 residents vying for council's four available full-term seats and one resident running for the partial-term seat.

Los Angeles County said data suggested the county was continuing to improve with regard to COVID cases. The total number of COVID-19 cases in Los Angeles County

SEE **AUGUST** PAGE 4



File Photo

TEST: COVID-19 cases began to climb in the second half of the year.

City of Santa Monica

CITY OF SANTA MONICA
ORDINANCE NUMBER 2660 (CCS)
(CITY COUNCIL SERIES)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA AMENDING SANTA MONICA MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 4.67.060 RELATING TO PUBLIC HOUSEKEEPING TRAINING

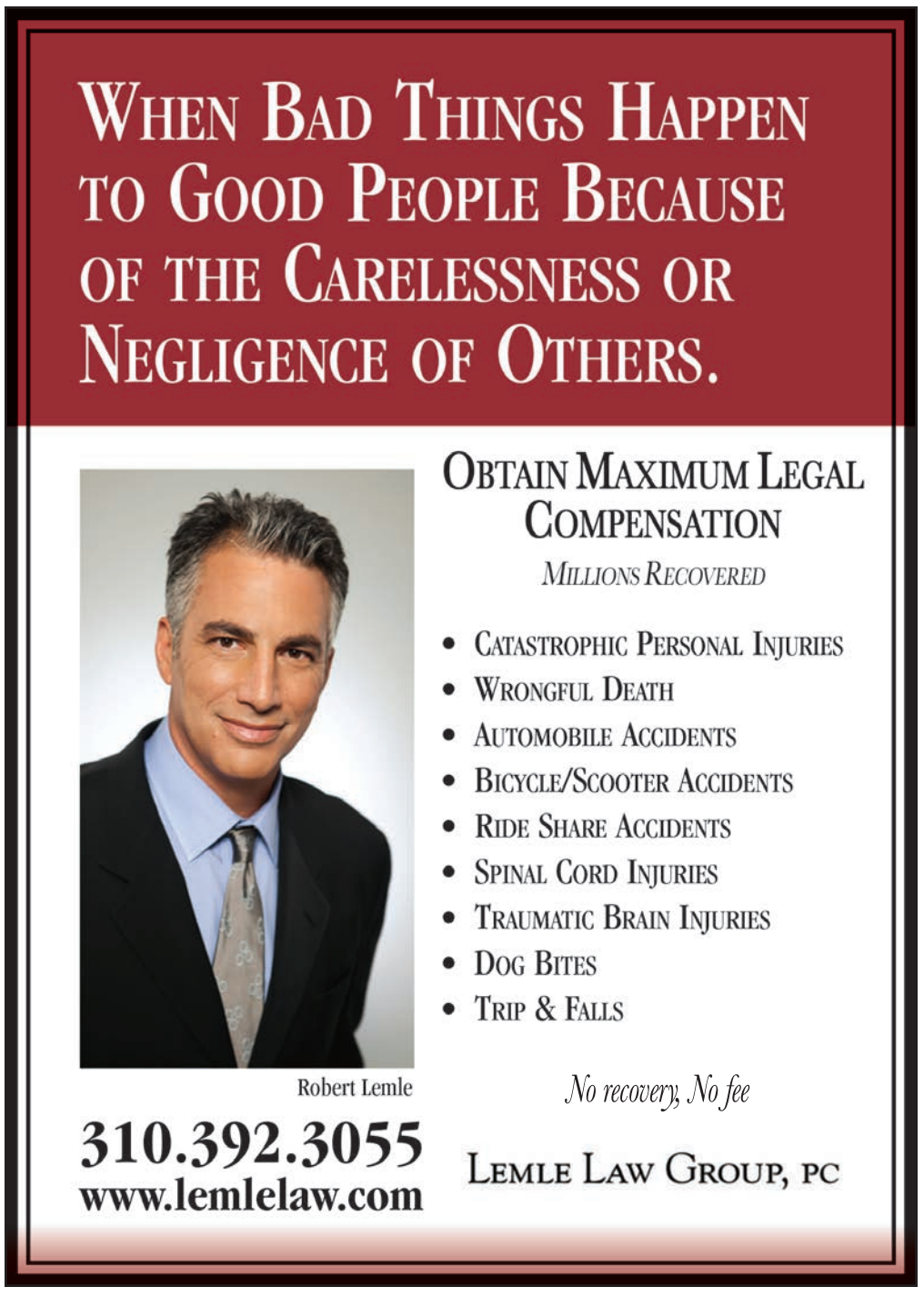
The following is a summary of Ordinance Number 2660 (CCS) prepared by the Office of the City Attorney:

On September 10, 2019, the City Council adopted Ordinance Number 2614 (CCS), which established Santa Monica Municipal Code ("SMMC") Chapter 4.67 setting forth enhanced protections for hotel workers in Santa Monica. Within that Chapter, SMMC Section 4.67.060(d) restricted hotel employers from employing hotel workers for more than 120 days without such workers having a valid Public Housekeeping Certificate, issues upon successful completion of a Public Housekeeping Training Program and a Public Housekeeping Examination. To provide time for the City to certify and designate the required Public Housekeeping Training Organization and for hotel workers to complete the required training, SMMC 4.67.060(d) specified that it would become effective one year after the effective date of SMMC Chapter 4.67. In light of delays in implementing the required training, Ordinance Number 2660 (CCS) extends the effective date of SMMC 4.67.060(d) to June 30, 2022.

The Ordinance will take effect thirty days after its adoption.

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





AUGUST

FROM PAGE 3

reached 223,131.

Local fundraisers continued to move their efforts online. The Venice Chamber of Commerce brought the experience of live art to living rooms as the Venice Art Crawl streamed its 10th anniversary. The Santa Monica Education Foundation and PTA fundraising efforts in Malibu raised $2,068,155 and $337,543 respectively for the upcoming school year. The Ed Foundation saw a 9 percent decrease in parent participation and a 5 percent decrease in money raised from businesses, which was attributed to the financial impact of the pandemic.

Joni Swenson, who had been the orchestra director at Samohi for 17 years, announced her retirement. Beloved by students, parents, and teachers alike, Swenson helped bring the Santa Monica High School symphony orchestra to concerts across the world.

The former operators of Brandy Melville Canada sued executives from Brandy Melville USA, over unfair business practices that were allegedly in retaliation for the plaintiffs' refusal to comply with racist policies. The plaintiffs claim that in or around April 2017, Yvan Marsan representing Bastiat USA Inc., a Santa Monica-based manufacturer of fashion brand Brandy Melville, ordered the Canadian operators to shut down their Square One store because of the "ghetto" clientele.

A lawsuit against scooter company Lime alleged company officials neglected to properly maintain equipment, which led to severe injuries to riders. The lawsuit from McGee, Lerer & Associates alleged more than 40 riders suffered grievous injuries resulting from defective brakes, wheels, throttles and handlebars. The complaint also alleged that Segway manufactured defective scooters and geofencing technicalities played a role in the injuries as well.

Three council members asked for an outside agency to expedite an analysis of the City's response to looting and riots. Councilmembers Terry O'Day, Kristin McCowan and Sue Himmelrich asked staff to promptly retain an outside expert to compile the final report after SMPD said it was unable to do so.

SMMUSD Superintendent Dr. Ben Drati issued an apology after an automatic system generated passwords for students that could be considered racist. In an email sent to the community Drati said the password was removed from the system but said anyone who thinks an automatic password is inappropriate should contact officials.

Officials said every Los Angeles County voter would be mailed a Vote By Mail (VBM) ballot as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and concerns about in-person voting. VBM ballots could be returned three ways, by mail, ballot drop-off box or at a Vote Center.

Santa Monica's famed farmer's markets returned to local streets after a hiatus. All three markets reopened after two were forced to consolidate and eventually suspend operations due to COVID rules.

SMMUSD partnered with nonprofit Human I-T to donate old electronics to low income families, preventing almost 2,000 lbs of e-waste from entering landfills. The program helped meet families' elevated need for personal electronics during distance learning and advanced the District's sustainability goals.

When restaurants reopened in June, breweries rushed to open COVID-safe beer gardens in partnership with local food vendors but they were forced to shut down indefinitely mere weeks later as rules changed.

City officials approved new rules governing rental units that prevent landlords from offering leases less than a year in length. The adopted ordinance states leases must be longer than 365 days and rental housing units cannot be furnished. Advertising any lease of a residential rental unit that does not comply with these requirements is also prohibited and violators will be subject to fines and penalties.

SEPTEMBER

The Boys & Girls Club of Santa Monica reopened its Lincoln and Mar Vista Gardens centers for in-person and virtual academic support. Prior to the pandemic, the club primarily offered after school programming, but it expanded its services to include in-person learning support during the school day.

Neighbors living on Bay Street and nearby businesses joined forces to tackle a growing encampment of homeless people who they believed were involved in drug dealing operations in the alley behind the Walgreens on Lincoln. By working with an array of local services the community members reduced the number of people living in the alley from 12 to zero without arresting the unhoused or removing their possessions.

The Santa Monica Police Department investigated the death of an elderly woman who was found on a downtown street corner. The 102 year-old woman was found on Colorado Ave. and 2nd St.

Officials announced charges were possible against Capt. Jerry Boylan over his role in the deaths of 34 people aboard the boat Conception. Boylan was eventually charged with manslaughter for each person who died.

SEE **NEWS** PAGE 5

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NEWS

FROM PAGE 4

A new Metro task force began work to determine if the Los Angeles transit system could become fareless in the future.

Local law enforcement agencies prepared for an intense Labor Day weekend driven by a potentially dangerous combination of heat, racial tension and ongoing virus precautions. While heat caused crowds to gather outside and triggered power outages in some areas, there were no significant problems locally.

The Los Angeles City Council declared a fiscal emergency, paving the way to furlough about 15,000 employees as the city struggles with an economic body blow from the coronavirus pandemic. The furloughs required civilian employees to take up to 18 unpaid days off from work for the fiscal year that began in July.

Quinn Armour, a student at Samohi launched the Community Connect Club, which pairs Santa Monica High School students with local seniors for weekly check-in phone conversations.

Hotel occupancy in Santa Monica was down by 48% compared to occupancy in January through July last year, with an economic knock-on slamming hospitality workers, local businesses, and City tax revenues. Reeling in this wake, hotels rapidly reoriented to implement stringent safety protocols and market to a new demographic of drive market customers and "staycationers".

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, several restaurants opened in 2020. While some businesses operate on traditional models, others launched ghost or cloud kitchens that offered menus to online customers without a physical storefront. The team from Holy Cow BBQ expanded the farm and launched Rooster's Chicken House as a delivery only concept. Nueva opened on the corner of Abbott Kinney and Washington offering fresh takes on Mexican classics and creative list of cócteles. The owners of American Beauty steakhouse brought their "Win-Dow" burger concept to the Boardwalk with a menu of items at $8 or less. The creators of Butcher's Daughter launched plantbased pop-up De Buena Planta on Abbott Kinney. Abbott Kinney also housed the Post Script pop-up. Forma, home of the pasta swirled in a cheese wheel, expanded into Venice.

City Council approved a raft of recommendations designed to promote racial equity. Among the many decisions were authorization for a new Police Commission, instituting Equity and Inclusion Officers in every City department and creation of the Santa Monica Black Lives Association (a nonprofit designed by Black community leaders to support Black Santa Monicans).

Los Angeles County health officials issued a list of restrictions for Halloween including a prohibition on traditional trick-or-treating to control the spread of COVID-19.

Around 30 of Santa Monica's firefighters were deployed in mutual aid assignments over the past six weeks, including 15 team members fighting the Creek, Dolan, Bobcat and Valley Fires. The Santa Monica Fire Department provides engines, firefighters, incident leadership, or other specialty fire services through the state's mutual aid system.

The Los Angeles District Attorney investigated an allegation of animal cruelty against a Santa Monica man who was filmed beating his dog.

As the pandemic increased the City's budget deficit, firefighters agreed to a series of salary and benefit cuts to preserve emergency services for the community. Firefighters' salaries were reduced by 2.5 percent until June 30, 2021. In the following year the reduction will be 1 percent until June 30, 2022, after which point salaries are set to revert to the base salaries of June 30, 2020. These cuts, in combination with adjustments to sick leave cashout and compensatory time off, will save the City $1,456,739 in the General Fund and $171,932 in other funds over the next two fiscal years.

While Council approved some public safety reforms and approved other social justice measures across city departments, Council did not cut funding from the police department. While planned expansions of police duties were shelved, Council did not cut $8 million from the department's budget as had been proposed by some activists.

There was a 20 percent decrease in kindergarten enrollment at SMMUSD this fall compared to enrollment numbers in Oct. 2019, indicating that many parents were unable or unwilling to support their young child's distance learning amidst the other challenges of COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District predicted a 9 percent drop in kindergarten and transitional kindergarten enrollment, due to regional demographic shifts.

A man was arrested in connection with a string of sexual assaults at local nursing homes. According to the Santa Monica Police Department, charges were filed against 55-year-old Juan Victor Mendoza for assaults that occurred between 2012 and 2018.

Air quality warnings were issued for the Los Angeles region. Precautions included avoiding unnecessary outdoor exposure and limiting physical exertion (whether indoor or outdoor), such as exercise. The warnings were issued as a result of wildfires dropping smoke and ash into the area.

A machete wielding man was subdued and arrested after chasing a resident through an alley. According to the Santa Monica Police Department, 53 year old Andre Joaquin

SEE **SEPTEMBER** PAGE 6

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SEPTEMBER

FROM PAGE 5

Castille, possibly from West Los Angeles, was arrested after a resident saw Castille attempting to break into the back yard of a home.

A man jumped from the 3rd floor of Santa Monica Place shopping mall and was pronounced dead on the scene.

While the official report analyzing the city's response to the May 31 looting was delayed by at least six months, Police Chief Cynthia Renaud began touring local community groups to provide details on the delay and answer community concerns over public safety.

Forty-four people were arrested in Beverly Hills for unemployment benefits fraud. The investigations recovered 129 California Employment Development Department debit cards with a total value exceeding $2.5 million. A total of $289,000 in cash also was seized from the suspects along with seven handguns. The investigation found that people were coming into California from out of state to fraudulently obtain EDD debit cards using stolen identities.

Santa Monica's hometown radio station, KCRW, lost 28 positions as the NPR affiliate worked to overcome a 30 percent decline in revenue.

Census officials worked to complete the count of Santa Monica residents which will determine the city's share of the $115 billion in federal funding.

A group of property owners, landlords and management companies filed a lawsuit against the state, Los Angeles County and several cities over anti-eviction laws enacted during the pandemic. The City of Santa Monica was among the defendants as were West Hollywood, Glendale, Burbank and Beverly Hills.

Santa Monica College announced the decision to remain online through June 2021, with the exception of select lab classes deemed essential by the California Governor's office.

The city of Santa Monica's expanded access to COVID-safe outdoor opportunities for residents and extended the City's eviction moratorium.

More of California was cleared to reopen as coronavirus infection rates fell to their lowest level of the pandemic. The lifting of some restrictions in counties that showed improvement came as California tried for a second time to recover from the devastating impact COVID-19 had on business. An earlier effort to reopen more quickly backfired with a surge in cases and hospitalizations in late spring and early summer.

Despite a 1.5% decrease in total taxable sales since last year, DTSM was still able to claim $5.2 million in assets during the 2019-2020 fiscal year, nearly $1 million more than it reported last year. However, there were 28% fewer pedestrian impressions on the Third Street Promenade this year than in the year prior. Like the number of pedestrians visiting the Promenade, the average nightly room rate dropped (17% this fiscal year) as did the average occupancy rate of hotels, which decreased 23% from last year as well.

Shares of Santa Monica-based healthcare company GoodRx soared 53% on the stock's first day of trading and by week's end had a market capitalization of nearly $20 billion. The company, whose app helps consumers save money on prescriptions and other healthcare services, raised a total of $1.3 billion in its initial public offering — $944 million from shares sold by the company and the remainder in shares held by pre-IPO investors.

A 39-year-old woman was charged in what authorities say was an attempted kidnapping of the 9-month-old granddaughter of Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Montana from his Malibu home. The 64-year-old Montana told sheriff 's deputies that the girl was asleep Saturday in a playpen in his house in Malibu when a woman he did not know entered and picked up the child.

While the architects of Samohi's Discovery Building did not initially anticipate that pandemic proofing a classroom would become one of those needs, designers reimagined how the building can accommodate socially distant, outdoor, and hybrid education models. The building is on schedule to open in Aug. 2021 and will bring 38 new classrooms, an upgraded pool, a rooftop hydroponic garden, high-tech lab facilities, and several wide and open-air common spaces to Samohi's North Campus.

Squeezed by limits on attendance at its theme parks and other restrictions due to the pandemic, The Walt Disney Co. said it planned to lay off 28,000 workers in its parks division in California and Florida. Two-thirds of the planned layoffs involved part-time workers but they ranged from salaried employees to hourly workers, Disney officials said.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion allowing breweries and wineries to begin outdoor service. The State of California allowed breweries and wineries to reopen for outdoor service if they partner with a third-party permitted food vendor. However, the County of Los Angeles had not permitted breweries and wineries that do not have restaurant licenses to resume service.

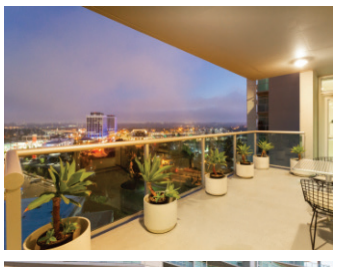
SIMON BEARDMORE

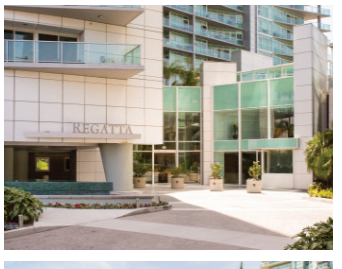
Top 1% of real estate professionals nationally

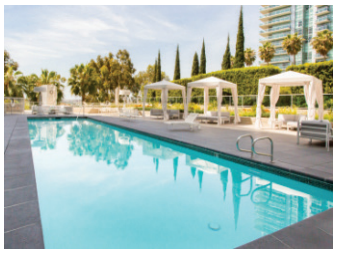
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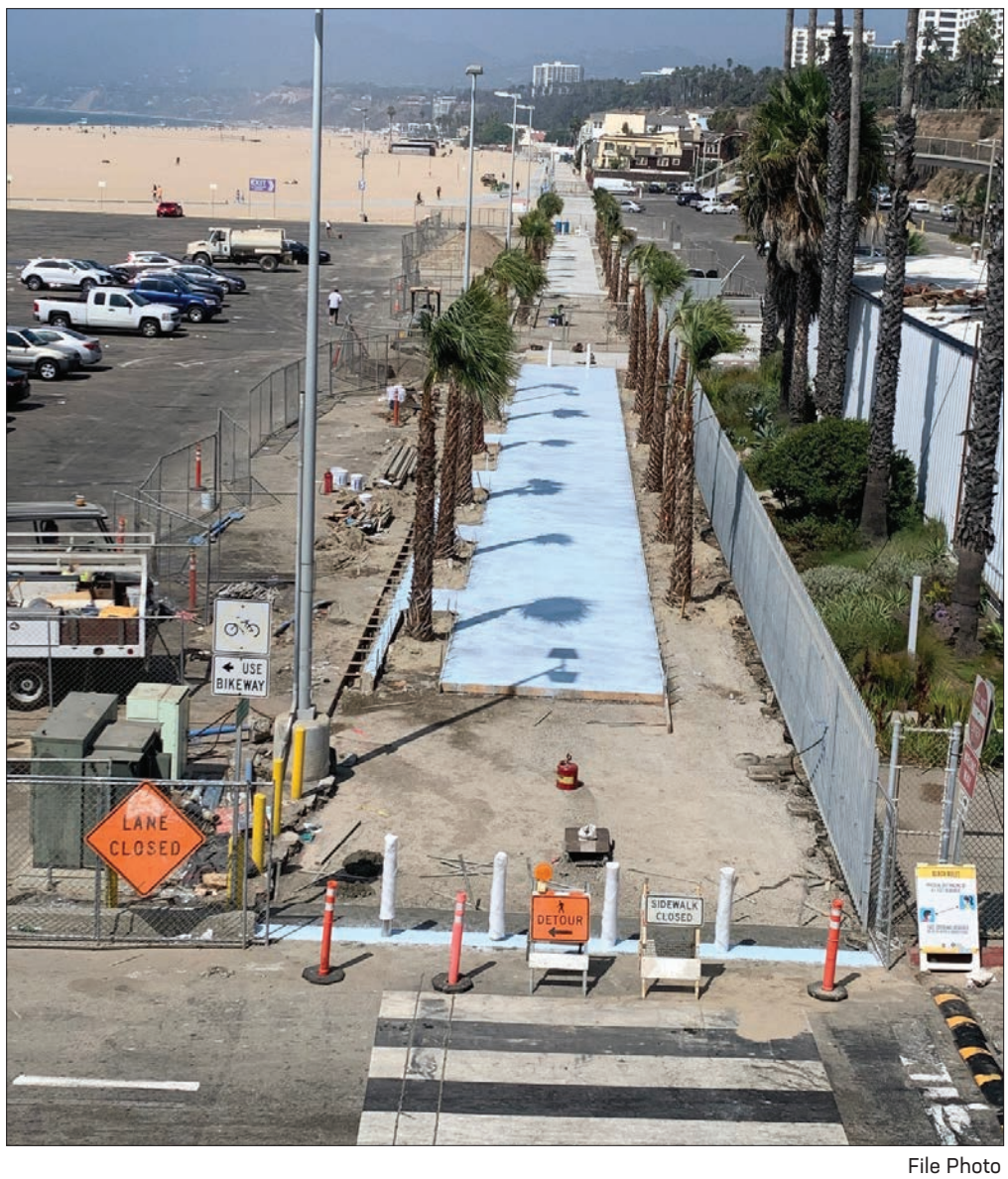
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File Photo

BEACH PATH: Santa Monica finished construction on an expanded section of beach path.

Get lost 2020: Some things to leave behind, with caveats

LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press

Zoom, Zoom and Zoom. Masks, masks and masks. Sourdough starter and short-order cooking. In these "troubled times," in our sweat pants and the isolation we endure "out of an abundance of caution," there isn't much not to be over as 2020 comes to a longed for halt.

With the election behind us, along with its deluge of texts and cries of fake news, the year was a mess of common horrors and inconveniences driven by political divisions, racial injustice and the deadly and persistent pandemic, with chronic language to match.

But not all things 2020 need to be left behind. More white people have realized racism is real and present. Quppies (as in quarantine puppies) and Quittens (the feline equivalent) have enriched millions of lives. Family dinner is back on the table and coronavirus pods have turned friends into family.

Here's a few more things we're over as we lurch into 2021, and a few things we may just remember fondly:

DISTANCE LEARNING

There's no denying that some kids have done OK and others have suffered greatly from school at home, as have their parents. And when the pandemic sputters to an end, all kids will return to their classrooms.

While we wait, let's talk teacher heroes trying to make the most of their worst case scenarios. They've organized drive-by parades and made TikTok dance videos for gym class. They've delivered meals to students and written encouraging chalk messages on doorsteps. They've transformed kitchens into chemistry labs and tutored kids through porch doors. Thank you.

STREAMING EXPLOSION

Do those of us who can't or won't march back into movie theaters miss the big screen experience? Sure. But streaming exploded at just the right time, including first-run films available at home. That means a dizzying array of choices, but also that parents don't have to suffer in the dark through "Trolls World Tour." It means more couples are cuddling up on the couch and more families are making their own popcorn to sit down together for movie night.

Comcast, the nation's largest cable operator and owner of NBCUniversal, reportedly passed a telling milestone: It now has more streaming subscribers than cable-TV subscribers.

What we're over? Let's work on decent, affordable Wi-Fi for all.

OH THE BREAD

We made bread. We made bread! WE MADE BREAD. Yes, we did. And now we're thinking it might be time to stop. As the pandemic brought on baking — and hoarding — madness in March, flour was in short supply for a time, along with yeast.

Some companies reported the biggest spikes in sales were for bread flour. With nothing but time at home for plenty of proving and chilling of dough, many in quarantine tried their hand at bread. And who's the queen? Sourdough, along with her mother.

Talk of sourdough starters spread like a loaf on fire. Boasts of decades-old mothers proliferated. Then the COVID 19 (pounds, not virus) led some to reconsider all that baking.

But, the thing is, we did it!

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

We've hiked. We've walked. We've dined outdoors. As winter descends in cold-weather environs, are we over it or merely bundling up to continue seeking space free of walls? Add-on value of leaving one's home in a pandemic: Being able to wave at the neighbors without stopping to say hello, because coronavirus, and because we're all introverts now.

The great outdoors has led some to rediscover what's right in front of them: their local parks, their backyards, their decks, their porches. And they've spent some of their newfound time sprucing them up. Work from home office views are now trees and gardens and birds for many.

Outside isn't entirely out of reach for those facing down winter, and for all who are supremely over working from home.

DUMP THE DOOMSCROLLING

We bought new distractions and made long to-do lists. We had big pandemic plans, darn it. Perhaps we've done a thing or two, but the endless time suck of consuming negative news has us prone and fretting much of the time.

Let's free ourselves, people! Halt the endless doomscrolling, especially at night when sleep would be the smarter choice.

Need something to do instead? Take up a collection with neighbors of all that stuff we've hoarded and donate it to a soup kitchen or food pantry. And guess what, they'll take our pile of Fresh Direct bags, too.

Added incentive: Some of our doomsday cache may be approaching expiration dates. Does anything last forever?

THAT SPIKY SPHERE

We're certainly over COVID-19, but are we also over the coronavirus model? You know the one. It's the round image with the germ's notorious crown-like spikes. Sometimes it's red, sometimes blue or purple, but always, always ominous.

The prickly orb is on every news and medical site. It's all over TV and on flyers for COVID car cleaning. It's a nasty little emoji guest that needs to go home.

Graphic designers everywhere, please come up with something else! It DID serve nicely as a vivid reminder of the murderous little devil. Now, over it.

ELECTION FATIGUE

Oh boy, what an election it was. Choosing a president fueled the chaos in our lockdown minds, but something else occurred in 2020. It was the 100th anniversary of women winning the right to vote.

Congress passed the 19th Amendment on June 4, 1919. It was ratified on Aug. 18, 1920. We marked the centennial with a special postage stamp, museum exhibitions and the like.

But the fight didn't end in 1920. Practically speaking, Black women, indigenous women and other women of color continued to face stumbling blocks. Over that, then and now.

GET OVER BEING OVER IT

Are these unprecedented times?

Well, when it comes to the pandemic, a little something called Black Death killed 25 to 30 million people from 1347 to 1352. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 500 million people, or one-third of the world's population, were infected in the flu pandemic of 1918-19. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide.

How about getting over being Over It? Tired of wearing masks, following other protocols, being housebound, having to sacrifice? Consider that some of our grandfathers stormed the beaches of Normandy and slogged through the jungles of Vietnam. Consider that business owners have lost their livelihoods and families are struggling to afford food.

When it comes to the U.S. election, the times, they were unprecedented. But the caterwauling. We're over it. People are truly suffering. For those of us who have jobs and food and a roof, just breathe.

As one Holocaust survivor put it: Things of importance fade into oblivion when NEVER AGAIN is reduced to a meaningless mantra.





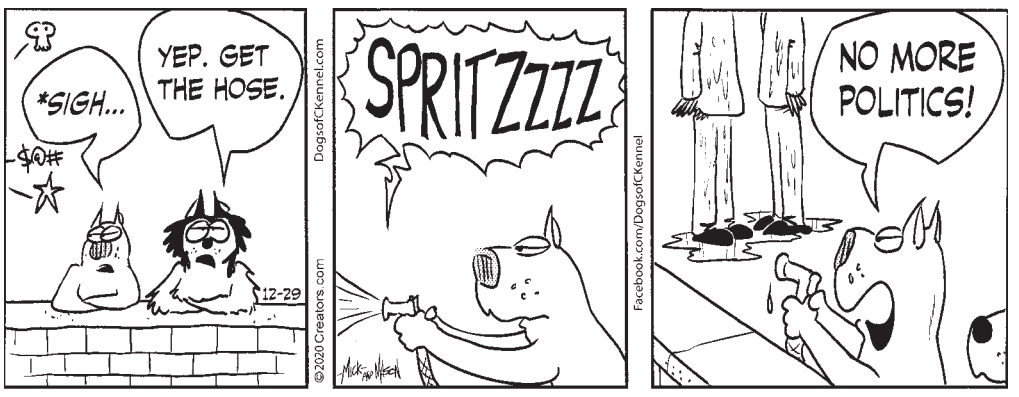
Agnes

By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE



Heathcliff

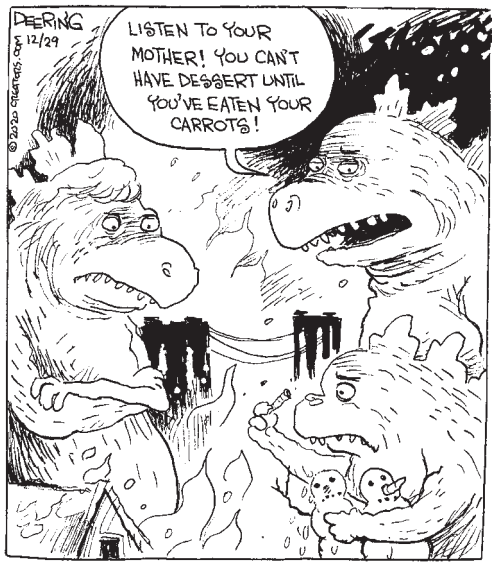
By PETER GALLAGHER



"MAKE A GIRL."

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING





SURF FORECASTS

WATER TEMP: 57.7°

TUESDAY - **FAIR** - SURF: 4-6ft Shoulder high to 1 ft overhead
WNW swell continues with potential for improved winds as coastal storm exits region.

WEDNESDAY - **FAIR** - SURF: 4-6ft Waist to shoulder high
Fun sized short period waves from the WSW.

WEATHER

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 56.
Tuesday Night: A chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 51.
Wednesday: A chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 60.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2020/12/29	Tue	01:45 AM	2.22	L
2020/12/29	Tue	08:03 AM	6.08	H
2020/12/29	Tue	3:23 PM	-0.79	L
2020/12/29	Tue	9:55 PM	3.59	H
2020/12/30	Wed	02:18 AM	2.25	L
2020/12/30	Wed	08:35 AM	6.15	H
2020/12/30	Wed	3:58 PM	-0.88	L
2020/12/30	Wed	10:33 PM	3.60	H
2020/12/31	Thu	02:54 AM	2.30	L
2020/12/31	Thu	09:10 AM	6.12	H
2020/12/31	Thu	4:37 PM	-0.93	L
2020/12/31	Thu	11:18 PM	3.56	H
2021/01/01	Fri	03:31 AM	2.40	L
2021/01/01	Fri	09:46 AM	6.03	H
2021/01/01	Fri	5:15 PM	-0.81	L
2021/01/02	Sat	12:00 AM	3.61	H
2021/01/02	Sat	04:18 AM	2.46	L
2021/01/02	Sat	10:27 AM	5.72	H
2021/01/02	Sat	5:54 PM	-0.59	L
2021/01/03	Sun	12:46 AM	3.72	H
2021/01/03	Sun	05:15 AM	2.53	L

DAILY LOTTERY

POWERBALL
Draw Date:12/19
27 32 34 43 52
Power#: 13
Jackpot: 321 M

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 12/22
29 53 56 59 67
Mega#: 21
Jackpot: 352 M

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 12/19
10 15 25 31 33
Mega#: 21
Jackpot: 17 M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 12/22
1 4 6 13 22

Daily 3
Draw Date: 12/22
Evening: 7 3 4
Draw Date: 12/22
Midday: 4 4 2

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 12/22
1st: FIRST: 01 - GOLD RUSH
2nd: 03 - HOT SHOT
3rd: 07 - EUREKA
RACE TIME: 1:44.34

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

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (DECEMBER 29)

You'd rather have one authentic exchange than a hundred generic gestures. The gems of your year will be just the sort of wonderful events that thrill and fortify you. Ever the cheerleader, you'll use your airtime to promote others, and you'll thrive in spite of this -- or, more likely, because of it! Gemini and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 40, 3, 22, 12 and 18.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Someone wants you to make a change from your standard terms, and if you bend, he or she will, too. There is a place to meet -- perhaps not in the middle, exactly, but you'll still be better off for having made the deal.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Without grace, beauty doesn't breathe; ornamentation doesn't sparkle. With grace, bad ideas pass for brilliant; the mundane becomes magical. What exactly is grace? Whatever it is, you have it today.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Even though you think it's obnoxious to draw attention to your work, attributes and good deeds, the fact is that unless you are seen exemplifying a quality, they will not understand who you are. Don't do it for ego. Do it for clarity.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll lean toward acts of gallantry, nobility, high character, forgiveness, generosity. This leaning changes the balance, and into magnanimity you'll topple.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll be asked to make a judgment, and you really don't have to. A stance of no stance keeps you in a perfect position. You can say very little, keep the mood light and move on swiftly.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Work absorbs and excites you. You'll make a difference and have an impact. These are the sorts of efforts that make time speed. You'll be happy for the puzzles that make everything stop for a minute.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The uphill climb won't be safe until after the thaw. But wouldn't it be silly to wait around? Since that won't get you there at all, there's no glory in taking that route. Go easy. Actually, it's the only open route right now.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Right now it's a little hard to get people to give you what you need, maybe because you're not entirely clear on it. Explore the topic. Ask yourself the sharp questions.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). To complain always brings someone discredit. There's a lot else to try before it comes to that. Offer a solution if you can. Another way is to praise the way someone else did it and see if others don't follow suit.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). What you admire in others you can cultivate in yourself. This will eliminate the need for you to carry around the kind of heavy energy that comes from wanting things from people. Self-sufficiency is incredibly light.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You have friends in powerful places. Though you rarely ask anything of these connections, it's a secure feeling to know that if you needed to, you could. Still, the best security is knowing you have your own back.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Maybe you don't completely judge a book by its cover, but you do get a pretty good idea about what language it's written in, what era it comes from and more. Today, you'll use every hint you can get!

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

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

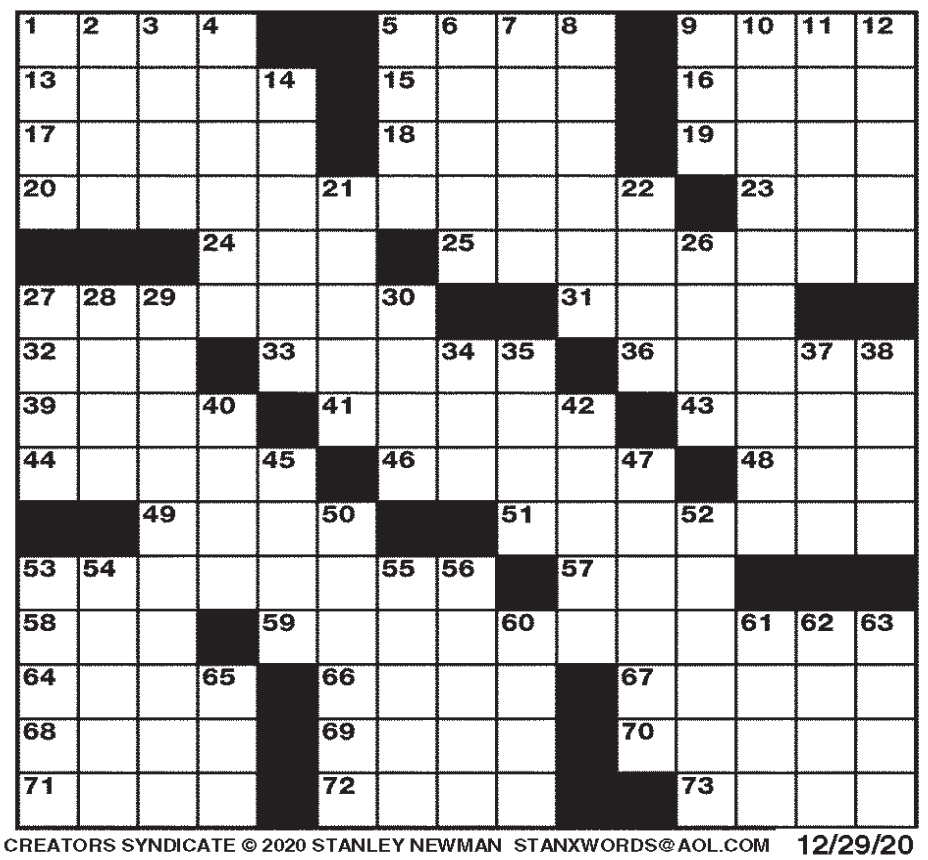
	8	1				3		
7				1			8	
			8		5		7	6
			1	5			2	
2		7		4		5		3
	4			3	9			
5	7		4		2			
	1			8				7
		6				8	5	

Newsday Crossword

BROWN STUDY by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Norway's capital
5 Imitated
9 Broker's customer: Abbr.
13 Devout
15 Operates smoothly
16 Clinton's vice president
17 Fill with joy
18 Curve of a foot
19 Numbered musical work
20 Midmorning ritual
23 Teacher's favorite
24 Once __ blue moon
25 In a calm way
27 Shares top billing
31 Jury member
32 "Now I get it!"
33 Step heavily (on)
36 From the neighborhood
39 Very small
41 Squirrel away
43 __ of the above
44 Colas and root beers
46 Family diagrams
48 Suffix for meteor
49 Nautical staff
51 Beer variety
53 Dangerous driving situation
57 Use scissors
58 "No __, ands, or buts!"
59 Third-place Olympics award
64 Garden entrance
66 Speck of dust
67 Cost
68 Gawk at
69 Puts to work
70 Appears to be
71 Fishing-rod attachment
72 Impudent
73 Poems of praise

DOWN
1 Oil cartel
2 Farm storage tower
3 Bread purchase
4 Set of clothing
5 *Moby-Dick* captain
6 Contented comments from 27 Down
7 Game-show host
8 E-flat equivalent
9 Long, long __ (way back when)
10 What the penny used to be
11 Merciless
12 Easily irritated
14 Perceived to be
21 Farm soil
22 Ship's backbone
26 Advertising sign gas
27 Popular pets
28 Toledo's state
29 Beachgoer's building project
30 Chimney grime
34 Scratch or dent
35 Get ready, for short
37 Poker-pot starter
38 Villain's look
40 Three feet
42 Clear frost from
45 Balkan native
47 Losing streaks
50 Pre-exercise ritual
52 Audio system
53 Strictness
54 Old enough
55 Gaggle member
56 Walk on the stage
60 Gusto
61 Fizzled out
62 Apex
63 Not so much
65 Snakelike swimmer



CREATORS SYNDICATE © 2020 STANLEY NEWMAN STANXWORDS@AOL.COM 12/29/20

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.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0

0		1									
					0						
										0	
					0						
		0					1			0	
1		0		0	0						
							1	1		1	1
				1		1				1	1
								1			
					0		1	1		1	
		1		0		0			1	1	



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

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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 20 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle. © australianwordgames.com.au 4977

The office party

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

Adults
Anniversary
Band
Barbecue
Beer
Bonbons
Bosses
Cake
Cheese
Chips
Costume
Dance
Dress
Entertain
Gifts
Happy
Hats
Hire
Jolly
Kids
Leis
Lights
Meal
Music
Name
Napkins
Nice
Pool
Regrets
Riotous
Rose
Rowdy
Sausages
Seafood
Sing
Social
Songs
Spirit
Sugar
Sweet
Tags
Tapas
Ties
Toys
Workmates

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S WORDS PUZZLE.
Car maintenance is expensive

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CELEBRITIES

FROM PAGE 1

hymns, holiday pop classics and tunes from her new album, and shared her personal and faith-based Christmas memories. And if that wasn't enough, she had time to help Cyndi Lauper's annual concert to combat youth homelessness, too.

SERENADE TO NEIGHBORS

In the second week of France's lockdown, Paris-based opera singer Stephane Senechal serenaded his neighbors with renditions of the French national anthem. He along with musicians — professional and amateur — sang from their balconies or windows to uplift neighbors. During France's second lockdown, Senechal was back at his window, sharing his strong vocals a couple times a week.

CLUB QUARANTINE

During the pandemic's early stage, DJ D-Nice created a virtual remedy for anyone dealing with the lockdown blues. He hosted Homeschool at Club Quarantine on his Instagram Live, where he spun popular tunes on the turntables at his home. His sets started with just a few hundred viewers — mainly friends — then blossomed to hundreds of thousands. An array of celebs even tuned in: from Rihanna and Janet Jackson to Jimmy Fallon and Mark Zuckerberg. Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey popped in for a listen, and even Stevie Wonder tried to use the "join" feature to be on screen with D-Nice and interact with him.

DANCING IN THE RAIN

Anthony Mmesoma Madu gained fame through a simple cellphone video of him performing the pirouette without shoes in the drizzling rain in Nigeria earlier this year. The 11-year-old Nigerian boy thought the footage would be used for a common film study session, but the video spread on social media thanks to his trainer, Daniel Ajala, who posted it. By the end of August, the video garnered more than 20 million views on social media including by actors Viola Davis and Cynthia Erivo. Impressed by his dancing, Erivo decided to sponsor Madu's training and helped bring the video to the attention of the New York-based American Ballet Theater, who offered him a scholarship.

FASHION'S FRONT-LINE GEAR

When COVID-19 initially spread throughout the U.S., it resulted in a face mask shortage. Fashion designer Christian Siriano met the shortage with his own solution. After seeing the cases skyrocket, the "Project Runway" star tweeted New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo about doing his part. Siriano and his team pivoted from crafting gowns to making masks. He reassigned his 10 seamstresses in New York to produce thousands daily for health care workers on the frontlines. Separately, actors Nicole Ari Parker and her husband Boris Kodjoe gave away thousands of face masks to essential workers and first responders during the pandemic. Parker's apparel company, Gymwrap, turned its attention from making headbands to crafting masks for the couple's Help Our Heroes campaign. For every Gymwrap mask sold, they donate masks to frontline and essential workers who need them.

SING TO FATHER

In March, Israeli opera singer Irit Stark brought comfort to her father who had been quarantined in his apartment for two weeks in Tel Aviv. Stark along with her son stopped by her father's home for an improvised performance of "Habanera" from Georges Bizet's opera "Carmen." Stark's father looked on from his second-story balcony, and some neighbors were brought to tears. He called her performance "absolutely refreshing."

VERZUZ SERIES

A friendly competition between music producers Swizz Beatz and Timbaland on social media started off to entertain homebound fans during the pandemic. But their platform eventually evolved into a place where some of music's biggest stars could compete against each other in the same fashion. The two Grammy-winning legends created the "Verzuz" series, which faces off two musicians in a song-against-song battle on Instagram Live. The series has grown from a novel event to bridging music's past and present. Some of the most epic battles have included John Legend vs Alicia Keys, Erykah Badu vs. Jill Scott, Gladys Knight vs Patti LaBelle, Gucci Mane vs Jeezy, Brandy vs Monica and Snoop Dogg vs DMX. An April battle between Babyface vs. Teddy Riley ended abruptly due to audio issues but was completed another night.

GLORIA ESTEFAN HELPS HEALTH WORKERS

Gloria Estefan took action to help those in need. The singer and husband Emilio Estefan's restaurant Estefan Kitchen served up homemade meals for health care workers in Miami. For a month, the restaurant prepared, packaged and delivered to workers in what Gloria Estefan said was a "small way of thanking you." She also participated in a star-studded benefit virtual concert to honor nurses on Thanksgiving. The concert called Nurse Heroes Live, which was co-produced by Emilio Estefan, was a benefit that provided money for a variety of programs including scholarships for nurses and their children.

WALLER-BRIDGE'S SUIT

"Fleabag" creator and actor Phoebe Waller-Bridge auctioned off her Golden Globes suit for Australia brushfire relief. She placed her Ralph & Russo pantsuit up for auction, calling it an "incredible piece of art." The tuxedo was praised as one of the fashion hits of the red carpet. She shared the news in the press room after accepting her award for best actress in a comedy or musical television series. An anonymous buyer bought the suit for $27,000.

SOME GOOD NEWS

John Krasinski wanted to create a place where people could smile. In late March, the actor tweeted to his 2.6 million-plus followers using the hashtag #SomeGoodNews, asking them to share feel-good stories that recently brought a smile to their face. He received thousands of heartwarming videos. His idea became so popular that Krasinski created a YouTube web series, "Some Good News," focusing on positive and inspiring stories. He produced eight free episodes including an "Office" reunion, a "Hamilton" performance, a virtual prom and online graduations. His channel garnered more than 2.5 million subscribers before he sold the web series to CBS.

ROSIE RAISES CASH FOR BROADWAY

Rosie O'Donnell brought her talk show "The Rosie O'Donnell Show" back for one night to raise more than $600,000 for virus victims. O'Donnell hosted the March streaming special. It featured numerous appearances from Broadway, including Kristin Chenoweth, Gavin Creel and Gloria Estefan. The money went to The Actors Fund to help those in need during the pandemic.

ALL IN CHALLENGE

In April, Robert De Niro and Leonardo DiCaprio united to offer a fan the chance to win a walk-on part in Martin Scorsese's upcoming film, "Killers of the Flower Moon," — starring both actors — as part of Michael Rubin's online charity auction, the All In Challenge. The challenge coordinated offers by celebrities and athletes to raise funds to feed those in need during the pandemic. Beneficiaries included America's Food Fund, launched by DiCaprio and others to help ensure people have reliable access to food.

WAITITI'S CELEB READING

Filmmaker Taika Waititi led a celebrity read-along of Roald Dahl's novel "James and the Giant Peach." He teamed up with the Roald Dahl Story Company to raise money for Partners in Health, a medical and social justice organization fighting COVID-19 and supporting public health systems in vulnerable areas around the world. Those joining Waititi included Meryl Streep, Chris and Liam Hemsworth, Cate Blanchett, Ryan Reynolds, Mindy Kaling, Benedict Cumberbatch, Lupita Nyong'o, Billy Porter, Sarah Paulson, and Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, all reading and performing characters in the story from their homes.

DISASTERS

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"Since April, we've seen a large disaster occur somewhere in the country every five days," said Trevor Riggen, the Red Cross vice president in charge of disasters. "It's really been a non-stop pace, and not all those disasters make the news."

It was such a busy and crazy a year that a derecho that savaged the Midwest somehow flew under the radar, despite damage nearing $10 billion, and is barely remembered. Other billion-dollar severe storms, often with tornadoes and hail, struck the U.S. in January, February, twice in March, three times in April and another three times in May.

All these U.S. disasters have "really added up to create a catastrophic year," said Adam Smith, a NOAA applied climatologist. "Climate change has its fingerprints on many of these different extremes and disasters."

"Nature is sending us a message. We better hear it," United Nations Environment Programme Director Inger Andersen told The Associated Press in an interview. "Wherever you go, whatever continent, we see Nature socking it at us. The warmest three-year period we've ever seen. The Arctic temperatures, the wildfires, etc. etc."

Worldwide, more than 220 climate- and weather-related disasters hurt more than 70 million people and caused more than $69 billion in damage. Over 7,500 people were killed, according to preliminary figures from the international disaster database kept at the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium.

Of the disasters the group tracks, including earthquakes, volcanoes and landslides, 85% to 90% are climate and weather related, said Director Debarati Guha-Sapir.

Unlike the United States, which saw a rare break in 2020 from increasing non-hurricane flooding, worldwide "floods is your biggest problem," Guha-Sapir said. "It's a huge mistake to underestimate floods."

Floods killed more than 1,900 people in India in June and affected 17 million people, according to the center's data. Other flooding and associated landslides in Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan and again in India killed at least another 1,250 people. African floods killed nearly 600 people. And flooding along Yangtze River and the Three Gorges Dam in China killed at least 279 people in the summer and caused economic losses of more than $15 billion, according to the World Meteorological Organization.

Hue, Vietnam had a record 103 inches (261 centimeters) of rain in October, according to the WMO.

Extremes, including heat waves and droughts, hit all over the world. Siberia reached a record 100 degrees (38 degrees Celsius) as much of the Arctic was 9 degrees (5 degrees Celsius) warmer than average and had an exceptionally bad wildfire season. Arctic sea ice shrank to the second lowest level on record and set a few monthly records for melt.

Death Valley saw the warmest temperature recorded, 129.9 degrees (54.4 degrees Celsius), on Earth in at least 80 years.

The pace of disasters is noticeably increasing, said disaster experts and climate scientists. The international database in Belgium calculated that from 1980 to 1999, the world had 4,212 disasters affecting 3.25 billion people and costing $1.63 trillion, adjusted for inflation. From 2000 to 2019 those figures jumped to 7,348 disasters, 4.03 billion people affected and $2.97 trillion in damage.

"Disasters are very much becoming a chronic condition in this country," said Riggen, who has noticed the change since 2006 when he joined the Red Cross after Hurricane Katrina.

Climate change figures in the growth of disasters, especially wildfires worsened by drought and heat, said Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann.

"I didn't expect to see a season with 30 named storms in my lifetime," Mann said, noting that hurricanes were fueled by a natural La Nina cooling of parts of the central Pacific combined with human-caused warming of water temperatures.

National Hurricane Center Deputy Director Ed Rappaport said: "It was an exhausting year."

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