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smdp
Santa Monica Daily Press

Volume 23 Issue 24 MONDAY 12/18/23 smdp.com

The big top could return to the Pier parking lot

Matthew Hall

COMING SOON?: After years of absence from the city by the sea, Cirque du Soleil is poised to make a return to the parking lot adjacent to the Santa Monica Pier.

SCOTT SNOWDEN
SMDP Staff Writer

Councilmembers voted unanimously 7-0 to allow the City to negotiate and enter into an agreement with Cirque du Soleil for a Pier-side installation next Fall. In a discussion that covered many seemingly overlooked issues, which raised the question as to why this item was included in the Consent Calendar, concerns were raised over whether or not the increased foot and vehicle traffic would be a help or a hindrance to both the Santa Monica Pier and the adjacent Pacific Park.

Cirque first performed next to the Santa Monica Pier in 1987. More recently, Cirque has staged productions in the Beach Parking Lot 1 North space, sometimes referred to as 1550 Pacific Coast Highway, in 2009, 2012 and 2014. Following Cirque's 2009 Santa Monica stay, the City commissioned an economic impact study which concluded the net fiscal benefit in the City was approximately $16.7 million, equivalent to $22.5 million today accounting for inflation.

However, not everyone benefited. "I'm disappointed that this item actually made it onto your agenda, given the negative impacts the event had on Pier businesses in the past," Jeff Klocke, General Manager, Pacific Park said during the Public Input session.

"To be clear, this is not about Cirque, the brand or the company. I'm a huge fan … I'd love for them to be in Santa Monica, say at the airport, or the 2030 lot. There are a lot of great places they can be. Unfortunately a four month complete takeover of the Pier's primary parking lot for guests is just not workable for our business," Klocke said.

"When we supported the long term event policy in the 1550 lot, we were promised by staff that events would follow the parameters outlined in the research the city did after the successful 'Ashes & Snow' exhibit. That research was clear. It stated that these events were successful in the Pier lot when, number one, they're untimed; two, their shortened duration; three, they have a low ticket price and four, they have a small footprint," Klocke said, adding, "Cirque is actually used as the example of an event that would never come back to the pier because they didn't check a single box."

Klocke continued, "We know from previous runs … how much their [Cirque du Soleil's] takeover will impact our business negatively and it's significant. For those reasons, I proactively reached out to Cirque with a bounce back fares program that I think would benefit the Pier after Cirque leaves, provide their guests with a reason to revisit Santa Monica and produce some useful metrics for the City. At this point Cirque has declined this bounce back proposal. So I'm here to ask that you maybe consider another location … or at a minimum, build into the licensing agreement the ability to make sure that the businesses are not harmed."

Jim Harris, Executive Director of the Santa Monica Pier Corporation, made a statement in the public input section of the meeting. "The Santa Monica Pier Corporation supports the return of Cirque du Soleil to Beach Parking Lot 1 North as presented in the city staff report with the following requests for city staff to pay special attention to in the license agreement with Cirque du Soleil," he said.

In essence, Harris laid out five key requests:

SEE **CIRQUE DU SOLEIL** PAGE 6

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Explorers connect with camps aimed at outdoor learning

Courtesy Photo

EXPLORING OUTDOORS: HAWKs LA fills the learning gap for ages 5-14 during school breaks with a place-based learning curriculum.

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

When you think of the holidays, you probably think of the classic indoor setup. A warm fire, a cup of hot cocoa, a favorite holiday movie or music playing in the background. While this is the typical holiday season for many, the Los Angeles area is anything but typical, and the temperate climate cultivates a community of young explorers eager for the outdoors.

During school closures, HAWKs LA fills the learning gap for ages 5-14, changing the classroom to an outside environment with a curriculum focused on instilling a sense of wonder about nature and instilling a deep connection to the environment. HAWKs, started in November 2022, has a variety of outdoor programming set for Santa Monicans at camps running from Dec. 18-22, Dec. 27-29 and Jan. 2-5. Activities during winter break include hiking, herping, bird watching, journaling, nature crafts and foraging.

Beginning as an acronym for Hiking Adventures With Kids, HAWKs has become much more, transitioning to a full year-round enrichment and day camp program.

"It really started with us seeing the immense benefits from watching our children spend an extended period of time outdoors in nature, which all of our kids were doing during the (COVID-19) shutdowns when … we all learned that it was much safer to be outside," HAWKs LA Co-Founder and CEO Emma Flanders said. "We could see how that was really starting to transform them, and we didn't really find an existing program doing what we were doing for kids of all ages."

Flanders found a "thriving community" of families who wanted the same thing she had growing up in the Bay Area, ample outdoor opportunities that can prevent anxiety and attention deficit.

"Kids are not spending nearly the amount of time outside that they should be," she added. "The way that I grew up is very different from the way that my children have grown up. It's the whole concept of getting off screens and getting kids out into the natural world, so (I) wanted to bring as much of my childhood into this program … just unstructured play that we had that kids these days aren't getting."

Set activities adjust based on the age of the group, as kids from 5-8 years of age learn about native plants they are interested in, while kids from 9-12 can get "a lot deeper into" knowledge about the history of natural spaces, the flora and fauna, the culture, the ecology and the art of the Los Angeles Basin.

To give young adventurers an experience of "native landscapes," HAWKs takes Santa Monica youth to places like the Marina del Rey lagoons, Temescal Canyon and Will Rogers State Park. At the lagoons, students can play at the beach and bird watch in a "really unique saltwater lagoon environment" that is home to a variety of waterbirds. At Temescal, kids can walk through a waterfall and explore a creek, along with the chance to see rare creatures like the California mountain kingsnake. Will Rogers' walkability is a boon for youth to see native plants alongside animals like deer, bobcats and coyotes.

"The fact that we have all of this so close, we want to make sure that we pick these locations (where) kids just have an amazing experience that is so different from their day-to-day, yet it's right there in their backyard," Flanders said.

For more information visit hawksla.com.

thomas@smdp.com

Building connections beat by beat

Photo by Thomas Leffler

DRUMMING UP FRIENDSHIP: Student mentors from John Adams Middle School helped construct a drum circle for fifth-graders at Will Rogers Learning Community on Dec. 13.

THOMAS LEFFLER
SMDP Staff Writer

The bang of the Djembe-style drum acted as a primary communication tool between two sets of schools, binding two separate sects of students into one musical machine this past week.

On Dec. 13, seventh-grade student mentors from John Adams Middle School visited the fifth-grade classroom of Kim Griffin at Will Rogers Learning Community, bringing the boom of the drums to form a circle of community. The hour-long drum circle was one in a series of sessions provided by JAMS mentors, learning under the Arts & Healing Initiative's "Beat the Odds" program.

Arts & Healing Initiative enhances art activities with mental health practices, something founder and director Ping Ho says is "done with the intention of proliferating kindness, compassion and connection." Projects like the drum circle offer nonverbal tools to help children express themselves, bringing a "backdoor approach" to helping mental health and behavioral issues during a crucial developmental stage.

"The arts actually have (many) social-emotional benefits that many people who participate in them know, whether its mindful presence, stress reduction … you get to know other people very quickly, so for social connection (arts are) very powerful," Ho said.

Rooted in an evidence-based curriculum published in 2012, Beat the Odds piloted a drum circle program earlier this year at Long Beach Unified School District, seeing that the activity decreased a broad range of behavioral problems and was a positive developmental approach like previous Arts & Healing endeavors.

"We discovered not only was it feasible, we were also witnessing changes right before our eyes," Ho said. "The students, all of a sudden their inner wisdom became apparent, their teamwork (improved), the way they supported each other (increased), they made new friends, they became more expressive. Some kids who initially didn't talk at all were now speaking up and (were) willing to present verbally."

Ho proposed the program to JAMS with an excited response from staff, including JAMS Mental Health Counselor Nancy Gutierrez, who previously took the drumming training herself. Working with an average of 20 seventh-grade mentors for the past three months, JAMS kids had rehearsal time before delivering a class to Will Rogers fifth-graders, and eventually developed their own activities for the session. Ho added that teaching children to be mentors, rather than adults, can cultivate "a very large contingent of people who could actually make a difference in their community."

Drumming activities included games like Simon Says, Name that Tune and Telephone Rhythm. Will Rogers students also learned "weather check-in signals," different beats that represent weather patterns like sunny, stormy and snowy. These beats also serve as metaphors for different feelings, and the fifth-graders used the signals to emote how they felt about preparation for middle school.

Bridging the emotional support gap through music is important to Ho because the activity "enables anybody to participate" and that "everyone can participate at a similar level and contribute" to the fun. Honing in Beat the Odds on students in fifth and seventh grade is also critical, as Ho says that they are beginning to experience the stressors of life more rigorously, and togetherness through activity can raise a student's mood.

"When kids are so disconnected from their community, then that's when they want to harm themselves and harm others," Ho said. "So this builds connection and some of the kids who seem … more along start to develop friendship and feel part of the community."

Arts & Healing Initiative will continue to work with JAMS students in the spring to deliver more lessons, and hope to eventually put together a demonstration for parents during a future open house night. Ho wants the entire community to see how the bang of the drum can expand student empathy and increase positive behavior.

"When you're drumming and you're sitting in a circle … you're literally seeing each other," she added. "And when you mirror each other, and you do the same thing, or somebody plays something and you play it back, it's like a metaphor for empathy. It's saying 'I see you, I hear you, I validate you.'"

For more information on the Arts & Healing Initiative, visit artsandhealinginitiative.org.

thomas@smdp.com

Surf report

WATER TEMP: **61.3**

MONDAY
FAIR
SURF: 2-3ft
Thigh to waist

Watching potential for a pulse of mid period WSW/W swell from cutoff area of low pressure expected off the California coast later this week. There's always uncertainty with these but the current outlook is promising. Stay tuned.

TUESDAY
FAIR
SURF: 2-3ft
Thigh to waist

Continued potential for a good run of WSW/W swell from cutoff low expected off the California coast. Morning winds looking light. Stay tuned.

Weather

Monday: A 50 percent chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 69.
Monday Night: A chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 57.
Tuesday: A chance of rain. Cloudy, with a high near 67.
Tuesday Night: Rain likely. Cloudy, with a low around 56.

Date	Day	Time (LST/LDT)	Predicted (ft)	High/Low
2023/12/18	Mon	02:19 AM	4.03	H
2023/12/18	Mon	07:05 AM	2.72	L
2023/12/18	Mon	12:52 PM	4.74	H
2023/12/18	Mon	8:09 PM	0.02	L
2023/12/19	Tue	03:14 AM	4.43	H
2023/12/19	Tue	08:58 AM	2.37	L
2023/12/19	Tue	2:20 PM	4.05	H
2023/12/19	Tue	9:05 PM	0.50	L
2023/12/20	Wed	04:02 AM	4.91	H
2023/12/20	Wed	10:33 AM	1.66	L
2023/12/20	Wed	3:58 PM	3.59	H
2023/12/20	Wed	9:58 PM	0.97	L
2023/12/21	Thu	04:45 AM	5.39	H
2023/12/21	Thu	11:43 AM	0.82	L
2023/12/21	Thu	5:30 PM	3.41	H
2023/12/21	Thu	10:48 PM	1.39	L
2023/12/22	Fri	05:27 AM	5.83	H
2023/12/22	Fri	12:40 PM	0.04	L
2023/12/22	Fri	6:48 PM	3.44	H
2023/12/22	Fri	11:35 PM	1.75	L
2023/12/23	Sat	06:07 AM	6.17	H

Daily Lottery

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

POWERBALL
Draw Date: 12/13
3 8 41 56 64
Power#: 18
Jackpot: 535 M

Fantasy5
Draw Date: 12/14
1 7 23 28 37

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 12/12
8 23 44 45 53
Mega#: 3
Jackpot: 28 M

Daily 3
Draw Date: 12/14
EVENING: 4 9 1
Draw Date: 12/13
MIDDAY: 2 7 1

SuperLotto Plus
Draw Date: 12/13
4 9 28 36 41
Mega#: 20
Jackpot: 23 M

Daily Derby
Draw Date: 12/14
First: 09 - Winning Spirit
2nd: 10 - Solid Gold
3rd: 01 - Gold Rush
Race Time: 1:43.30

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

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Santa Monica Daily Press

COMMUNITY NEWS

Citywide

Santa Monica Rent Control Board selects new executive director

Following a nationwide search, the Santa Monica Rent Control Board selected Jonathan Holub as its new executive director, replacing retiring administrator Tracy Condon.

Holub is currently the rent stabilization division manager in West Hollywood, where he has served since 2010, and as the division manager for the past three years. Prior to that, he was deputy county counsel for the Office of Riverside County Counsel. He brings extensive subject matter expertise and public service experience to the job.

"I am deeply honored to have been selected by the Rent Control Board for this crucial role in an agency that so admirably reflects the defining principles of the city of Santa Monica," Holub said. "My commitment is to bring a robust approach to the implementation of the Rent Control Charter Amendment and regulations. With nearly two decades of experience in municipal, housing, and rent stabilization law, including leading the city of West Hollywood's Rent Stabilization Division, I am enthusiastic about utilizing my skills and passion to fulfill the mission of the Rent Control Agency."

Rent control laws, more commonly known as rent stabilization laws, have been adopted by a growing number of jurisdictions in California and many have similar provisions as in Santa Monica. West Hollywood's rent stabilization ordinance, which was adopted in 1985 shortly after the city's incorporation, has many of the same protections for tenants as does Santa Monica's rent control law. The cities are similar in that both have a high percentage of the population living in residential rental units.

"Alongside the Board and the Agency's dedicated professional staff, my goal is to ensure a continuation of the fairness and transparency that Santa Monica has come to expect," Holub said. "Importantly, I look forward to engaging with tenants, landlords and all stakeholders in the coming months to foster a deeper understanding of the perspectives and concerns currently at the forefront of the community."

The Board announced the incoming administrator at its Dec. 14 meeting.

"We are excited to welcome Jonathan to our team," current Rent Control Board Chairperson Anastasia Foster said. "His deep background in legislation and the legal protections of our charter and for our tenants will continue to protect the stability of this wonderful city, now and into the future."

Holub will begin his work with the city of Santa Monica on Jan. 2. After a brief transitional period, Condon will retire after 37 years with the agency. Her leadership has laid the groundwork for continued successful administration of the law by the new director and agency staff.

SUBMITTED BY TATI SIMONIAN, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Citywide

Clean & Safe: Council approves playground replacement at Douglas Park

The Santa Monica City Council Tuesday approved a project to replace and improve the playground at Douglas Park.

The new playground will be universally accessible — the fifth of its kind to be built in Santa Monica — welcoming children of diverse abilities to play and enjoy. The replacement advances the city's Clean & Safe key strategic priority, aimed at protecting open spaces and enhancing clean and safe neighborhoods, including parks for recreation and leisure activities.

The playground replacement project will kick off in 2024 and will include two community workshops and other opportunities for community input. The first community workshop will feature a presentation on potential concepts, options and themes for the playground. Feedback from this first community workshop will be incorporated and the preferred concept design will be presented in the second and final community workshop, planned for summer 2024.

Construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2025 and completed in summer 2025.

"I'm thrilled to see this project kick off in the coming months," Mayor Phil Brock said. "I look forward to seeing the first concept designs and have Douglas Park join Marine Park, Ishihara Park, the South Beach Playground, and the North Beach Playground in being Santa Monica's next universally accessible playground."

Project updates will be available at santamonica.gov/places/parks/douglas-park

SUBMITTED BY TATI SIMONIAN, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

City of Santa Monica

CITY OF SANTA MONICA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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

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

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

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

Band brings Lincoln community back for more

Photos by Thomas Leffler

MUSIC: In the midst of a performance-heavy week for Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, the bands of Lincoln Middle School took to the stage on Dec. 14, bringing in a packed house of parents and other locals. Performances included showcases from the symphonic, jazz and concert bands, as well as the wind symphony and wind ensemble. Along with the concert, raffle tickets were sold throughout the evening benefitting the wind ensemble's upcoming tour and performance in San Francisco, taking place from March 21-24, 2024. Both the wind ensemble and the wind symphony auditioned and were accepted to perform at Disney's California Adventure, with the ensemble performing at the Disneyland resort in December and the symphony performance set for March 7, 2024. The theme of the Disney shows is music from scary movies, which doubled as the theme for the 2023 winter concert. "I want to thank my students for working hard this first semester and showing me that they too share my passion for music," stated Director of Bands Salvador Muñoz in the concert program.

News Binge: All of last week's stories in one place

STAFF REPORT

MAYORAL TRANSITION MEETING INCLUDED TALK OF DRONES AND ACROBATS:

The Dec. 12 meeting of Santa Monica City Council was a mostly light affair, but more importantly, it marked the last with Gleam Davis as Mayor, before Councilmember Phil Brock takes over for a period of one year. Davis will remain on Council, but she along with Brock and Councilmembers Oscar de la Torre and Christine Parra are up for re-election next year, if the city's election process remains unchanged as the outcome of the long gestating California Voting Rights Act could potentially upend the election process. Other highlights included authorizing the city to execute a second modification to the agreement with Flying Lion Incorporated to provide air support services for the Santa Monica Police Department, as well as authorizing the City to enter into a license agreement with Cirque du Soleil to use a portion of Lot 1N directly north of the Santa Monica Pier from Oct. 1, 2024 to Jan. 24, 2025.

BREAKING GROUND AT WILL ROGERS:

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, SMMUSD Superintendent Dr. Antonio Shelton, Will Rogers Learning Community Principal Lila Daruty, ASB students, other district leaders and Sherwin Schmeoil from Assemblymember Zbur's office helped break ground for a host of new projects at Will Rogers on Dec. 8.

spcaLA animal shelters face food shortage:

A tradition of animal care dating back to the 1800s is in danger during the 2023 holiday season, as a food shortage risks serious issues arising at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA). The nonprofit animal welfare organization has served Southern California since 1877, but had to make an "urgent appeal" to area residents to donate pet food or funds in order to make it through the rest of 2023. The organization's President, Madeline Bernstein, said that spcaLA is at a "critical" food shortage due to an increasing number of pets under its care.

RECENT EXHIBIT SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON SAMOHI ARTISTS:

The Santa Monica High School's robust visual arts department brought locals to the Samohi Roberts Art Gallery on Dec. 7 for the Samohi Spotlight Exhibit. Put together by Samohi senior Flynn Latta, the gallery was adorned with selected pieces from Samohi advanced art students in art forms like photography, digital art, ceramics, acrylics and sculptures, along with more traditional paintings. Along with just showing off their works, Samohi students had the option to sell art pieces to gallery visitors, of which there were many during the two-hour showcase.

ACCUSATIONS OF ANTISEMITISM PROMPT FEDERAL INVESTIGATION OF SMC:

Santa Monica College (SMC) has been added to a list of educational institutions under investigation by the federal government for civil rights violations. SMC was one of six schools added to a list of investigations in early December after an initial group of educational institutions were identified by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights as under investigation for alleged violations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in November. According to the Dept. of Education, these investigations focus on shared ancestry violations, addressing discrimination and harassment, including antisemitism, anti-Muslim, and anti-Arab incidents, since the Israel-Hamas conflict in October 2023.

Courtesy Photo

WINE AND CLOTHES: Divine Vintage has an unusual pairing, but draws a dedicated following.

EVICTION OF DISABLED LONGTIME RESIDENT DELAYED:

The case of a longtime Santa Monica resident concerning his current housing accommodations will be moving to a jury trial at a later date. On Dec. 11, an update on the case of 3231-3301 OPB Buildings against defendant Scott Brutzman was held at Santa Monica Courthouse, with the Dec. 11 initially-scheduled jury trial date now moved to an unspecified date in the future. The case concerns Brutzman's residency status at 3301 Ocean Park Boulevard, wherein the defendant has been staying at the commercial property after the closure of his insurance business at the location.

FRANKLIN BUSY WITH BEES IN GROWING TK PROGRAM:

As part of Franklin Elementary School and the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's growing TK (Transitional Kindergarten) program, the young TK crop at the school has been involved in a project-based learning unit busy with bee knowledge and creative endeavors. Led by general education teacher Danielle Eden and special education teacher Nell Canon, the tag-team of teachers brought students into the beehive with a host of fun projects, including the creation of a bee sanctuary for Franklin's TK-Kindergarten yard.

VIKINGS HOOPS START STRONG IN NON-LEAGUE SLATE:

The Samohi Vikings showed out in front of a home crowd on Dec. 7, taking down Dorsey by a score of 71-27. The victory was the sixth of the season for the basketball unit, undefeated in non-tournament play after the win over Dorsey. Led by junior Jayden Xu and senior big man Anton Berge Wells, the Vikings returned to action last month after a 2022-23 campaign that ended with an 18-12 record, 4-6 in Bay League play.

LOCALS' NIGHT AT THE PIER WILL INCLUDE MAYORAL HANDOVER CEREMONY:

The Holiday Season edition of the popular Locals' Night event, held every month n the Santa Monica Pier, is set to include a Mayoral handover ceremony, marking the transition from the end of Mayor Gleam Davis' term and the beginning of Phil Brock's one year term in the center seat. It will take place inside the Pier's famous Merry Go-Round Building on Dec. 21.

BUSINESSES LEARN TO GO GREEN FOR HOLIDAYS AND BEYOND:

Locals recently broadened their horizons on the intersection between business and environmental sustainability, taking part in the "All Shades of Green" mixer event at the HGA Architects and Engineers building Dec. 5. Throughout the two-hour get-together, multiple city officials and HGA representatives provided pointers on how businesses can get involved in eco-friendly activities, such as taking part in a water conservation rebate program, the Santa Monica Green Business Certification Program and the 2024 Sustainable Quality Awards.

DISTRICT STAFF ADDITIONS, APPOINTMENTS HIGHLIGHT FINAL 2023 BOARD MEETING:

Staffing change approvals and several financial reports were broached by the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education during their final meeting of 2023. On Dec. 14, the board met for the first time since Nov. 16, appointing several new roles in the district such as the promotion of Daniela Wiener from assistant principal to principal at McKinley Elementary School. The former McKinley principal, Dr. Ashley Benjamin, was recently promoted to the position of Director of Curriculum and Instruction in the district, and had been working in both that and the principal role during a transitional period. The Board also heard reports on the 2023-24 First Interim Report as it pertains to the SMMUSD budget, as well as 2022-23 school year audit reports on Measures R, BB, ES, SMS and M.

JUDGE SIDES WITH COUNTY COURTS IN CASHLESS BAIL LAWSUIT:

A judge has gutted a lawsuit by several cities, including Santa Monica, targeting recently established bail rules that eliminated cash bail for most suspects but the ruling allows plaintiffs to amend and resubmit the lawsuit. A group of cities had argued that the new rules amounted to a violation of the court's responsibility to uphold public safety, but Orange County Superior Court Judge William D. Claster rejected that argument saying there was no constitutional requirement to use cash bail. Claster also rejected a request to suspend the new bail rules saying the Los Angeles courts were required to implement an alternative to cash bail in an earlier case.

BACON IS THE BIG DEAL FOR NEW BUSINESS OPENINGS:

Downtown Santa Monica has seen some high profile closures recently across both retail and restaurant spaces but there are several new businesses cropping up including a breakfast spot specializing in the best breakfast meat. Closures include Del Frisco's Grille, Jinky's, Carlo's Bake Shop, The Independence, REI, Dagwood's, Tara's Himalayan and HiDeHo Comics. New openings include Bandit Bikes, El Husuba, Little Hawaii Smoothie Bar, Impasta, Pieces Los Angeles, CoComelon Party Time and Sweet Maple.

DIVINE VINTAGE IS CELEBRATING ONE YEAR OF CREATIVE SUCCESS ON MONTANA AVENUE:

Although tiny in size, Divine Vintage is celebrating a big milestone after their first year of doing business on Montana Avenue. To celebrate their one-year anniversary, the store is offering a promotion all December long. All new wine is 20% off, along with all new wine club sign ups. If any current members refer a friend, 20% off a January wine club membership will be added as well. They are also introducing a new slew of wine classes, including Champagne and Caviar, and Party Wines.

SEE **NEWS** PAGE 11

Santa Monica Arrests

For the week of Dec 7th to 13th

Crime	Arrests
Shoplifting	8
Vandalism	4
Warrant	4
Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol	3
Assault & Battery	2
Possession of Drug Paraphernalia	2
Battery Causing Serious Bodily Injury	1
Battery on a Peace Officer	1
Bringing Contraband into a Jail or Prison	1
Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor	1
Driving Under Combined Influence of Alcohol And Drugs	1
Drunk in Public	1
Grand Theft Auto	1
Murder	1
Possession of Brass Knuckles	1
Possession of Methamphetamines	1
Possession of Methamphetamines for Sale	1
Robbery	1
Violation of Stay-away Order	1
TOTAL	**36**

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

FROM PAGE 1

1. Develop and execute a parking and traffic management plan that serves Cirque du Soleil visitors, non Cirque du Soleil visitors and employees of Pier businesses and takes into account the number of employees working on the Pier, the hours of operation of all Pier businesses and the safe transportation of pier business employees to their vehicles after those business hours.

2. The parking and traffic management plan will be presented in draft form to the Santa Monica Pier Corporation board of directors in a public meeting prior to final City approval in order to receive input from the Pier Corporation, Pier merchants, local stakeholders and the public.

3. City staff will meet with the Pier Corporation board of directors and a public meeting shortly after the first week of Cirque du Soleil performances, to receive feedback and input from the board, Pier merchants, local stakeholders and the public.

4. Representatives from Santa Monica Pier Corporation staff and the Santa Monica Pier Lessees Association will be included in weekly operations meetings with City staff and representatives of Cirque du Soleil.

5. Cirque du Soleil will continue good faith negotiations with Pacific Park.

6. Future bookings in Beach Lot 1 North need to black out and avoid the winter holidays from Christmas Eve through New Year's Day, which is a crucial time for all businesses on the Pier.

Elana Buegoff, Pier and Beach Administrator for the Economic Development Division of the City of Santa Monica gave the initial presentation and attempted to field most of the Council's questions. She was joined by Kevin Kulas, Vice President, Global Tour Planning at Cirque Du Soleil Entertainment Group, but no one in Chambers instructed him to move closer to the microphone, so it was utterly impossible for anyone watching the meeting at home on YouTube or on CityTV to hear a single word he actually said.

Despite the fact that Cirque du Soleil has had a number of installations on our city's sandy beaches over the past 46 years or so, the issues raised on Tuesday evening feel even more relevant since the Olympic Games are coming to Los Angeles — and Santa Monica in particular — in under five years' time. Councilmember Gleam Davis was the first to mention this pertinent fact.

"One of the things I've been advocating for is that we really start to think about large events in general. Obviously Cirque is one of those, the Food and Wine Show, Frieze is another one, out at the airport and looking down the road, we have the World Cup and, of course, the Olympics in 2028," Davis said, adding, "it seems to me that this is an opportunity to start to develop more holistic traffic plans about the whole city."

A motion was made by Davis to authorize the City to negotiate and execute a license agreement with Cirque du Soleil to use a portion of Lot 1N from October 1, 2024 to January 24, 2025, with direction that incorporated all of Harris's concerns and was seconded by Councilmember Jesse Zwick. Mayor Pro Tempore made one small friendly amendment to include direction on ensuring safe transportation for Pier staff after hours and the motion was passed unanimously 7-0.

scott.snowden@smdp.com

GUEST COMMENTARY

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Despite what political campaigns say, one election won't determine the fate of US democracy

Photo by Richard Vogel, AP Photo

DEMOCRACY: LGBTQ counter-protesters wave Pride Flags as Los Angeles police officers separate them from protesters at the Saticoy Elementary School in North Hollywood on June 2, 2023. Police officers separated the groups outside a Los Angeles elementary school that has become a flashpoint for Pride Month events and activities across California.

ALI NOORANI

Over the next 10 months, billions of dollars in political machinery will serve up apocalyptic narratives about where our country is headed. Candidates will speak in partisan absolutes, framing the consequences of the 2024 general election as existential. Many will want us to believe that next year's election will determine the future of democracy.

They are wrong.

Regardless of who wins, Nov. 5, 2024, will be neither "mission impossible" nor "mission accomplished" for American democracy. Democracy is about more than campaigns and elections. It is about a shared political community, which we are at risk of losing.

Increasingly, the dominant political strategy has involved stoking polarization and building higher walls between different groups and factions. Rather than opposing or alleviating this tendency, elected officials capitalize on our intense divisions.

Voters today are presented harshly different visions of the United States. One seeks a durable, inclusive set of institutions strong enough to address the economic, social and security challenges and opportunities we face. The other believes our government should serve the interests of specific populations, blocking us off from the world, undermining freedoms for all in the interests of a few.

The debate isn't left versus right. It is a fault line between those committed to the basic rights and obligations ensconced in our Constitution, versus those who would use populism and demagoguery for cynical ends.

To be clear, the stakes of the upcoming presidential election are high – and some of the most urgent political debates are indeed matters of life and death. But an all-or-nothing mentality renders implementing actual solutions or engaging the opposition nearly impossible. Our politics have been flattened to the maximalist pursuit of political gain, making it difficult to find ways to overcome the enormous challenges we face, from climate change to pervasive inequities to attacks on democracy itself.

The bedrock of a thriving society is mutual respect and dedication to the well-being of all its members, which requires an ongoing process of values-based deliberation and consensus building. Fostering such a process can be done only by leaders with political capital and a mandate to build cross-partisan and cross-ideological coalitions.

Congressional leaders have historically led these efforts, though these initiatives have all but ceased.

We need leaders who champion their group's values, beliefs and identities – and are willing to engage and potentially compromise with those who hold different views. In her book "High Conflict: Why We Get Trapped and How We Get Out," author Amanda Ripley thinks of this as

SEE **GUEST COMMENTARY** PAGE 11

California's food insecurity rises as pandemic aid ends

JEANNE KUANG
Special to the Daily Press

Food insecurity in California ticked upward over the past year, bringing the share of hardship back up to levels early in the COVID-19 pandemic, according to data released by the California Association of Food Banks on Tuesday.

"Families are buying less food," said May Lynn Tan, the association's director of research and strategic initiatives, who conducted a survey of food aid recipients this summer. "They're running out of food, not being able to afford nutritious meals, and worrying more about food."

Advocates credited a pandemic-era federal aid program that gave food assistance recipients more money for groceries for pulling food insecurity below 20% of California households between 2021 and 2022. The additional aid, Tan said, helped recipients buy healthier food and become more financially stable.

As prices soared last year, food insecurity spiked. Then, the boost in federal aid ended in April. By October, more than 1 in 5 California families — more than 3.1 million households, including 1.1 million with children — were steadily reporting uncertain access to food, according to Census data analyzed by the association.

While hunger overall is disproportionately borne by people of color, Black families in particular reported sharp increases this year. In April, 30% of Black households in California were food insecure. Six months later, the figure was 40% — and nearly half of Black families with children.

Photo by Martin do Nascimento, CalMatters

AID: Volunteers Terry Scovil (center), and Shendi Klopfer load the car of a community member with food from the Trinity County Food Bank at the Trinity County Fairgrounds on Feb. 8, 2023.

Anti-poverty advocates had feared a rise in hunger after the end of the aid boost this year, which affected the nearly 3 million California households that receive CalFresh, the federally-funded food stamps program. For three years the program had given all families receiving CalFresh the highest possible amount of food assistance for their family size each month, with $95 on top for those already receiving the maximum.

When the program reverted to ordinary aid levels, the decrease was anywhere from 32% to 40%, depending on the recipient, according to the food banks association. In a survey the association conducted over the summer, more than two-thirds of the state's food banks reported increases in the number of clients seeking meals and groceries.

The uptick in food insecurity also follows an increase in poverty last year, triggered by the end of a different pandemic-era policy. A one-time, yearlong expansion of a tax credit program in 2021 sent thousands of dollars to most families with children and pulled child poverty levels down to historic lows; after it ended, poverty spiked again.

Both trends are likely to be the basis of advocates' calls next year for California to expand safety net spending, even as the state faces a projected $68 billion deficit in the 2024-25 fiscal year. That's double the budget hole California plugged this year.

Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano volunteers and staff load groceries into cars in Vallejo on June 7, 2023. Photo by Shelby Knowles for CalMatters

The food insecurity data was outlined by the food banks association Tuesday as it gears up to lobby for the expansion of assistance programs next year, including increasing funding for food banks to buy California produce to distribute to clients and supplementing the federally-funded CalFresh (food stamps) program with state dollars.

"It does look like a tough budget year next year but I don't think that changes our strategy," said Becky Silva, the association's director of government relations.

It'll be a tough sell.

California lawmakers and Gov. Gavin Newsom avoided major program cuts when they closed the deficit this year, but it did bring to a halt several years of social services expansions.

Still, at a separate Tuesday web conference for anti-poverty advocates and lobbyists hosted by the liberal California Budget and Policy Center, Jessica Bartholow, chief of staff to state Senate Budget chairperson Nancy Skinner, an Oakland Democrat, urged advocates to continue seeking funding or program expansions.

"Don't ask for less," she said.

CalMatters politics reporter Yue Stella Yu contributed to this story. This article was originally published by CalMatters.

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DBA

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: 2023256992 ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 11/30/23. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as FCC License Exams 13900 Panay DS12 Marina Del Rey, CA 90292 Articles of Incorporation or Organization Number (if applicable): Ai #ON The full name of the registrant(s) is/are Charles P Pascal 13900 Panay DS12 Marina Del Rey, CA 90292 If corporation or LLC- Print State of Incorporation/Organization: This Business is conducted by: An Individual The date registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/ARegistrant/Corp/ LLC Name /s/: Charles P Pascal Title: Owner Charles P Pascal This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 11/30/2023NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411 et seq. ,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS 12/04/23,12/11/23, 12/18/23, 12/27

DBA

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: 2023227607 ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 10/20/23.The following person(s) is (are) doing business as Adage Studios 1920 Hillhurst Ave #207 Los Angeles, CA 90027Articles of Incorporation or Organization Number (if applicable): Ai #ON The full name of the registrant(s) is/are Arielle Ackerman 1920 Hillhurst Ave #207 Los Angeles, CA 90027If corporation or LLC- Print State of Incorporation/ Organization: This Business is conducted by: Am Individual The date registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 10/2023 Registrant/Corp/ LLC Name /s/: Arielle Ackerman Title: Owner Arielle Ackerman This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 12/1/2023NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411 et seq. ,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS 12/04/23,12/11/23, 12/18/23, 12/26/23

DBA

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: 2023247350 ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 11/15/23. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as Calyx Peak 925 Wilshire Unit B Santa Monica, CA 90401Articles of Incorporation or Organization Number (if applicable): Ai #ON The full name of the registrant(s) is/are CPC Compassion Inc 1628 Cravens Lane Carpenteria, CA 93013If corporation or LLC- Print State of Incorporation/Organization: CAThis Business is conducted by: A Corporation The date registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A Registrant/Corp/ LLC Name /s/: CPC Compassion Inc Title: Secretary Howard Keum This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 11/15/2023NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411 et seq. ,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS 12/04/23,12/11/23, 12/18/23, 12/26/23

DBA

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Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAMECase No. 23SMCP00581 Superior Court of California, County of Los AngelesPetition of Kamilla Vaksman for Change of NameTO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:Petitioner or Attorney: Kamilla Vaksman a petition with this court for a decree of changing names as follows: Kamilla Vaksman to Kamilla Gafurzjanova The court orders that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Notice of Hearing: Date 12/29/2023 Time: 8:30 a.m, Dept: K Room: – The address of the court is SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA - COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES 1725 Main Street Santa Monica, CA 90401A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: Santa Monica Daily Press.

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAMECase No. 23SMCO0586Superior Court of California, County of Los AngelesPetition of Ethel Elizabeth Cox for Change of Name TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:Petitioner or Attorney: Ethel Elizabeth Cox filed a petition with this court for a decree of changing names as follows: Ethel Elizabeth Cox to Ethel Eichelberger Cox The court

Name Change

orders that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Notice of Hearing: Date 01/05/2024 Time: 8:30 a.m, Dept: K Room: - The address of the court is SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA - COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES 1725 Main Street Santa Monica, CA 90401A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: Santa Monica Daily Press.

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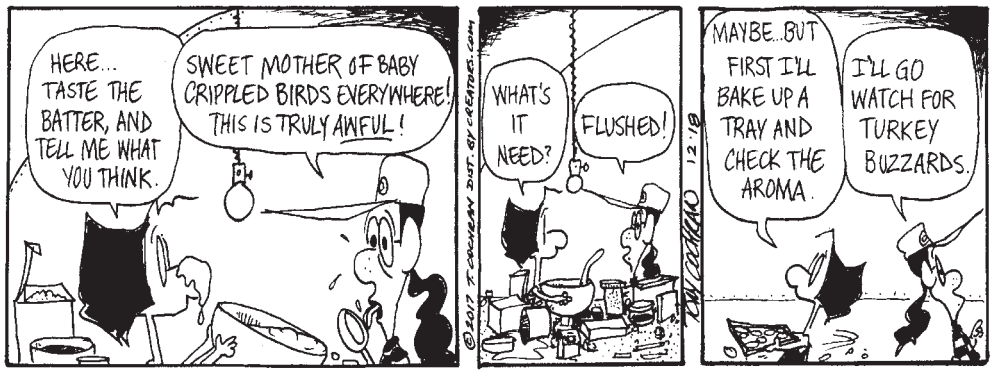
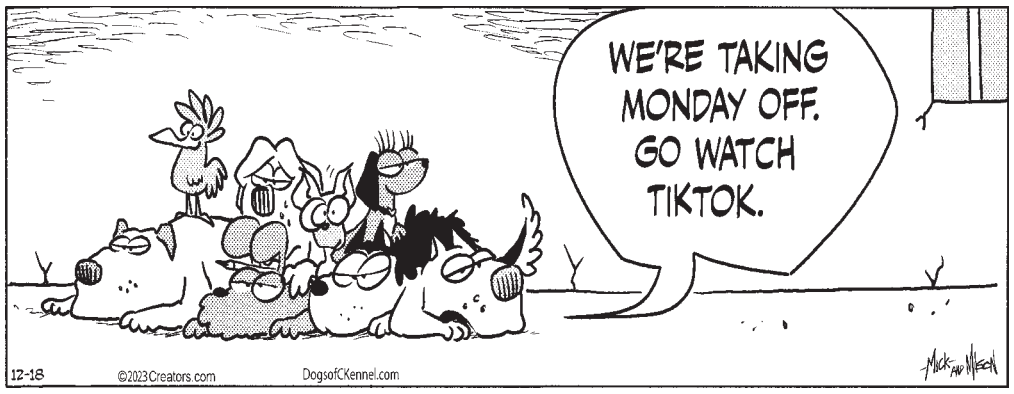
By TONY COCHRAN



Dogs of C-Kennel

By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART



Zack Hill

By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE

Heathcliff

By PETER GALLAGHER

Strange Brew

By JOHN DEERING

FIND THE WORDS

This is a theme puzzle with the subject stated below. Find the listed words in the grid. (They may run in any direction but always in a straight line. Some letters are used more than once.) Ring each word as you find it and when you have completed the puzzle, there will be 28 letters left over. They spell out the alternative theme of the puzzle. © australianwordgames.com.au 6062

Public performance

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

Admire
Applause
Balls
Brave
Cash
Clap
Clever
Closer
Conjure
Crowd
Dramatic
Funny
Gymnast
Handstands
Hats
Heckler
Hilarious
Instrument
Licence
Magic
Money
Musical
Noisy
Novelty
Patter
Routines
Show
Smart
Somersault
Song
Tips
Trapeze
Tricks
Tune
Unusual

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TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 18)

Your artistic talents will add beauty to the world. Your secret is in finding the art in even the most mundane activities and interactions, thus elevating the experience of all. More highlights: You will know the thrill of deciphering puzzles. With a desire for a larger context, and a receptive heart, you will unlock astonishing secrets hiding in plain view. Virgo and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 10, 13, 4 and 21.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The instinct to protect yourself is a survival mechanism that generally serves you well. However, you may do your best today in an unguarded moment, as that's when someone will connect with you on a deeper level.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). While it's not necessary for you to be under pressure to do your best work, the pinch of a deadline will concentrate you and boost you with the energy surge you need to make things extra special.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You enjoy yourself more when you feel free. If you don't feel you can enter, stay or leave a situation whenever you wish, it will change the way you operate inside of it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You care about what you desire, and you desire what you care about. You'll be willing to put time into elevating your special interest into something more beautiful, functional and accessible than it was.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll do exactly what you would like someone to do for you, were the situation reversed. You'll get to note the reaction and compare it to what you imagined it would be. This is prime social education.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There are many reasons to give second chances. Some have to do with spiritual generosity, and some are about logistics. You've invested time already, and it's simply wise to aim for a return on that investment.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You were once overwhelmed by choices that seemed endless and complicated. Now you see that there are only a few options that make sense for you, and this will make it easier to move forward.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Being a little nervous gives you an edge and lifts the energy of your performance. Being very nervous puts stoppers on the energy and inhibits your ability to engage the world. What can you do to create a sense of comfort and keep the stakes reasonable?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). It's uncomfortable to be complimented with words that go far beyond your usual internal dialogue. It's the compliments that are a few steps over your usual internal talk and/or attitude that will really resonate with you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). New situations give you the chance to experiment with your role. Who do you want to be in the situation and who are you being already? You can play this any way you want, and whatever you choose, you'll be believable.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Aligning to the belief systems of those around you is a survival mechanism. Sometimes the right answer is hard to see because everyone around is agreeing to the wrong answer. But don't worry, things are shifting.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). External factors, such as reminders of the person or situation you're trying to move on from, can trigger strong emotional responses. Just remember, emotions are not static. They will change and evolve over time. The future brings a new set of feelings.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

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

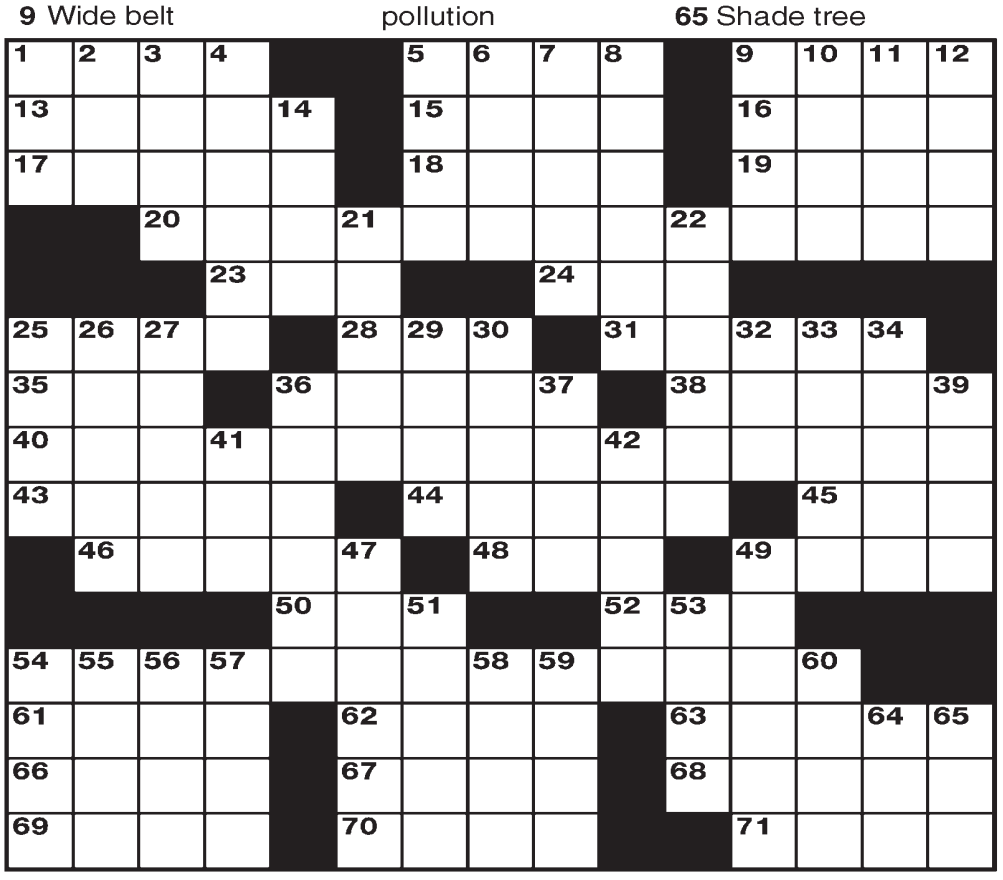
1		5	7				9	
	8			3		4		5
		4	1		5			6
8		2		6			5	
			4	8	7			
	1			5		7		8
9			5		6	2		
2		7		1			4	
	3				4	5		7

Newsday Crossword

DESKTOP DEVICES by Doug Peterson
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS
1 Baby sheep
5 Recedes, as the tide
9 Short comic routine
13 Fully attentive
15 Narrow opening for coins
16 Well ventilated
17 Backyard barbecue spot
18 Of low quality
19 Even trade
20 Mechanical calculator
23 Exceedingly long time
24 Resort with steam baths
25 Gym floor's pads
28 Santa Claus assistant
31 Rudely ignores
35 Pub beverage
36 Three-person bands
38 Foolishly silly
40 Screen connected to a PC
43 __ Bowl (NFL's biggest game)
44 Cross home plate, for example
45 Belonging to us
46 Ups and __
48 Soft-boiled breakfast
49 Tiny pests at picnics
50 Flightless Australian bird
52 Portrait or mural
54 Holder of a cellophane roll
61 Neighborhood
62 Tra __ (song syllables)
63 Pro singer's talent
66 Ship's docking place
67 Self-images
68 Child in a classroom
69 Drains of energy
70 Damp, as morning grass
71 Squad of athletes

DOWN
1 Place for a dinner napkin
2 Pie __ mode
3 "Simple Simon __ pieman . . ."
4 Women on wedding cakes
5 Sports cable channel
6 Online diary
7 Sounds from a cannon
8 Handbag handles
9 Wide belt
10 Fuzzy brown fruit
11 Teheran's country
12 Do keyboarding
14 Things __ (chore list heading)
21 Motionless
22 Dog or wolf
25 Apple's PC alternatives
26 Spoken for all to hear
27 Musical pace
29 Falsehoods
30 Compel to do
32 "Single" prefix for cycle
33 Relay race stick
34 Pig's nose
36 Made a left or right
37 Visible urban pollution
39 Goofs up
41 Bench for worshipers
42 Church instrument
47 Looked happy
49 Dined away from home
51 Customary practice
53 Letters on an invitation
54 Touches on the shoulder
55 Operatic solo
56 Chick's chirp
57 Cobs of corn
58 Snow-clearing vehicle
59 Not at all difficult
60 Ready to harvest
64 US spy group: Abbr.
65 Shade tree



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GUEST COMMENTARY

FROM PAGE 6

building a cadre of "conflict interrupters" to counter the conflict entrepreneurs: leaders who can counter polarization and extremism by reframing compromise and democratic deliberation as a values-based commitment to a working democracy.

If we believe a thriving society is built on mutual respect, and recognize the threat that today's polarized environment presents, we cannot believe that a single election will right the ship. Similarly, we cannot believe there is any one solution to climate change, poverty or religious liberty. By design, our Constitution establishes a process through which citizens can find narrow bands of compromise within which progress is made incrementally.

A durable, inclusive democracy requires civic engagement beyond the important act of voting. Strengthening America's governing institutions and electoral processes will rebuild our shared political community – where good conflict leads to solutions rather than extremism and political violence. Achieving this goal requires multiple long-term strategies that transcend politics and elections.

Sometimes those are big steps forward. Sometimes they are small. Other times, we feel like they are steps backward. But in a shared political community, the democratic process offers a path. A durable, inclusive democracy is as much about what happens between election days as on them.

Ali Noorani is the program director of U.S. democracy at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. This article was originally published by CalMatters.

NEWS

FROM PAGE 5

LOCALS CRAWL FOR A CAUSE:

Flocks of locals had drinks flowing on Dec. 16 for a milestone anniversary in entertainment and charity. The annual Santa Monica Pub Crawl held its 15th get together through three distinct bar and restaurant routes, with more than 20 local establishments offering exclusive food and drinks specials throughout the evening. The night culminated in Santa's Secret After Party at 1212 on the Third Street Promenade. In the spirit of giving, the annual event benefits the Westside Food Bank, which provides free access to nutritious food through acquisition and distribution. Since the crawl began in 2008, the food bank has received 20% of the event's net profit, providing over half a million meals through contributions.

ORCHESTRA KICKS OFF WEEK OF WINTER MUSIC SHOWS:

The Samohi Orchestras started a week of Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District winter shows strong, bringing its brightest string prodigies to the stage at Barnum Hall on Dec. 12. Directed by Jason Aiello and Jim Wang, the orchestras Winter Concert included performances by combined string and concert, concert, sinfonia, intermezzo, chamber, philharmonic and symphony orchestras. District musical performances continued throughout the week from the John Adams Middle School choir, the Malibu choirs, the Lincoln Middle School band and the Samohi choir.

FEDERAL LABOR REGULATORS DEMAND STARBUCKS REOPEN SHUTTERED LOCATION:

The Starbucks corporation may be forced to reopen a location at the Santa Monica Pier that closed in 2022 following a ruling by federal regulators this week accusing the company of trying to undermine unionization efforts across the country. Regional Director Ronald K. Hooks in the National Labor Relation Board's Region 19 (Seattle) Office issued a complaint on December 13 against Starbucks Corporation consolidating several cases along the West Coast. The complaint alleged that Starbucks closed 23 stores (including the Ocean Front Walk & Moss store in Santa Monica and five other stores in LA), eight of which had Workers United certified as bargaining representative, to discourage membership in a labor organization. The complaint further alleges that Starbucks closed the stores without prior notice to the union and without affording the union an opportunity to bargain about the decisions and that a manager told employees they could not "borrow" shifts at other stores while the employer negotiated with the union about the closures.

SANTA MONICA RUGBY CLUB HOSTS OXFORD UNIVERSITY RFC:

The Santa Monica Rugby Club hosted the Oxford University first XV on Dec. 12 in an enjoyable, albeit somewhat one-sided game played at the grounds of Santa Monica High School, with the gamer ultimately ending in a 47-7 visitors victory. Oxford were coming to the end of their four-game Southern California tour, having played games against the San Diego Legion and the Chicago Hounds, both in San Diego, as well as a thrilling match against the UCLA Bruins.

CITY CLERK HONORED:

During the Dec. 12 meeting of Santa Monica City Council, long-serving City Clerk Denise Anderson-Warren was honored in her last Council meeting before retiring from public service. Anderson-Warren's first appearance in chambers was a special meeting on Friday, November 21, 2003, and she previously served as Deputy City Clerk before obtaining her certification as a Certified Municipal Clerk. A video showing archived footage of that meeting was shown as part of a tribute to Anderson-Warren.

CRIME WATCH

Crime Watch is culled from reports provided by the Santa Monica Police Department. These are arrests only. All parties are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

ON DEC. 8

Officers responded to a call for service placed by a city employee who was working out on the beach and was flagged down by some beachgoers about individuals who were seen inside Tower 18. The individuals had already left when the employee was flagged. Officers responded and found two locks had been damaged and some belongings had been left inside. The officers took a trespassing and vandalism report (LA County is the victim) and collected the abandoned property. The total damage was about $50 (estimated).

MONDAY | DECEMBER 18

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
City Hall, 1685 Main Street, 7 p.m. Agenda online at https://www.smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Boards-Commissions/Architectural-Review-Board/

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT
Civic Center Parking Structure, 333 Civic Center Dr. 7 p.m. Information available online https://www.santamonica.gov/categories/programs/sustainability-and-the-environment

VIRGINIA AVE PARK ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Ave. 7 p.m. Agenda's available online at https://www.smgov.net/Departments/CCS/content.aspx?id=52743

TUESDAY | DECEMBER 19

MYSTERY BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION
This community-led, monthly book discussion group currently meets online/virtually via Zoom. To register, email library@santamonica.gov. December's selection is Island of the Mad by Laurie R. King. 7 - 8 p.m.

NONFICTION BOOK CLUB
This lively group of avid readers meets on the third Tuesday of each month to discuss a work of nonfiction. Books selected for discussion can be new or old and come from a wide array of genres, styles, and authors. December 19: An Invisible Thread by Laura Schroff. 1 p.m. Donald Bruce Kaufman - Brentwood Branch Library, 11820 San Vicente Boulevard.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main St. 5:30 p.m. Agendas available online at: https://www.smgov.net/departments/clerk/agendas.aspx

WEDNESDAY | DECEMBER 20

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

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

DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET
The largest grower-only Certified Farmers Market in Southern California and a favorite for local chefs! Enjoy one of Santa Monica's farmers markets, widely considered to be among the best on the west coast and featuring field-fresh produce, hundreds of kinds of vegetables, brilliant cut flowers, breads, cheeses, delicious foods, live music and more. Downtown Farmers Market Locations: Wednesdays at Arizona Ave & 2nd St and Saturdays at Arizona & 3rd St. 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

THURSDAY | DECEMBER 21

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

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

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

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

FRIDAY | DECEMBER 22

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

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

Eric Uller at Police Activities League (PAL) sexually abused hundreds of children in the late 1980s – early 2000s

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