

From the open sea to death ashore

Veella veella, known as by-the-wind sailors, find their Valhalla on Southland beaches.

By CORINNE PURTILL AND SEAN GREENE

The corpses are washing up by the thousands on Southern California's beaches: a transparent ringed oval like a giant thumbprint 2 to 3 inches long, with a sail-like fin running diagonally down the length of the body.

Those only recently stranded from the sea still have their rich, cobalt-blue color, a pigment that provides both camouflage and protection from the sun's UV rays during their life on the open ocean.

These intriguing creatures are *Veella veella*, known also as by-the-wind sailors or, in marine biology circles, "the zooplankton so nice they named it twice," said Anya Stajner, a biological oceanography doctoral student at UC San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

A jellyfish relative that spends the vast majority of its life on the surface of the open sea, *V. veella* move at the mercy of the wind, drifting over the ocean with no means of locomotion other than the sails atop their bodies. They tend to wash up on the U.S. West Coast in the spring, when wind conditions beach them.

Springtime *V. veella* sightings documented on community science platforms like iNaturalist spiked both this year and last, though scientists say it's too [See [Sailors](#), A12]

Possible TikTok ban stirs worries

L.A. influencers and businesses that rely on the app fear the loss of significant revenue.

By CAROLINE PETROW-COHEN

Brandon Hurst has built a loyal social media following and a growing business selling plants on TikTok, where a mysterious algorithm combined with the right content can let users amass thousands of followers.

Hurst sold 20,000 plants in three years while running his business on Instagram. After expanding the business he launched in 2020 to TikTok Shop, an e-commerce platform integrated into the popular social media app, he sold 57,000 plants in 2023.

He now conducts business entirely on TikTok and relies on its sales as his sole source of income. Hurst, 30, declined to say how much he makes.

Hurst also posts content about plant care for a 186,000-person following on TikTok. He's one of thousands of content creators who engage with an audi- [See [TikTok](#), A8]



THE SETTING SUN illuminates one of the thousands of oval-shaped, jellyfish-like creatures that have been washing up on Southern California shores, including Huntington Beach. They move at the mercy of the wind.

ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

The dream that won't die: Making East L.A. a city

Decades of efforts to create a stand-alone municipality have failed. A new Assembly bill would examine the issue again.

GUSTAVO ARELLANO

1931. 1933. 1961. 1963. 1975. 2012.

Those years were on the lips of the 130-plus people who crammed into the cavernous East Los Tacos on a recent morning to hear from Eastside Assembly-member Wendy Carrillo. She was there to address the crowd about the dream that never dies: making East L.A. a city.

Famous across the world as a cradle of Chicano politics and culture, East L.A. is the most populous unincorporated community in California, with about 119,000 people under the governance of L.A. County instead of their own city officials.

For decades this has rankled some residents, who have pushed state and county officials to help [See [Arellano](#), A12]



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

EAST L.A. is the most populous unincorporated community in California, with about 119,000 people who lack their own city officials.



BRIAN VANDER BRUG Los Angeles Times

GRAHAM COOPER, an Oakland biotech executive, exercises with a training mask that simulates the low oxygen levels at high altitudes on Mt. Everest.

Training for Everest while catching Zs

Climbers break with tradition to create possibly better, more ethical ways to scale world's tallest peak.

By JACK DOLAN

TRUCKEE, Calif. — Graham Cooper sleeps with his head in a bag.

Not just any bag. This one has a hose attached to a motor that slowly lowers the oxygen level to mimic, as faithfully as possible, the agonies of fitful sleep at extreme altitude: headaches, dry mouth, cerebral malaise.

Class of '24 faces overhaul in rites, tradition

Amid Gaza protests, outcome of USC's graduation could set the stage for such events across nation.

By JAWEED KALEEM AND JENNA PETERSON

The chain-link fences are up, bag searches in place and metal detectors installed.

At many universities across the country, graduation for the Class of 2024 will feel more like making it through airport security than a procession through a free-flowing campus green or a cheering stadium crowd.

The drastic changes arrive as universities grapple with pro-Palestinian tent camps — the scenes of recent mass arrests and turmoil — during a volatile time of campus divisions over the Israel-Hamas war. Last week at UCLA a mob attacked an encampment, and violence erupted.

The biggest commencement overhaul is at USC, where the 65,000-attende "main stage" ceremony was canceled after unspecified threats over the selection of a pro-Palestinian valedictorian who critics said was antisemitic.

Early Sunday morning, police in riot gear cleared an encampment where protesters were pushing for divestment from Israel. It was set up near the site of where the stage would have been and reemerged after Los Angeles police arrested 93 people there on April 24.

Graduating USC students are capped at getting eight tickets — often fewer for satellite commencements — and administrators are scrambling to entice angry parents with new attractions as the university moves around traditional celebrations.

"We had planned to bring up to 25 people," said An- [See [Graduation](#), A8]

Ukraine marks 3rd Easter at war

Russia launches a barrage of drones and says it took over a village. **WORLD, A4**

Police clear USC encampment

Protesters beat drums, chant and pledge to resume their demonstration. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Buehler back on Dodgers mound

The onetime ace is returning after a second Tommy John surgery. **SPORTS, D1**

Weather

Lots of sun. L.A. Basin: 73/53. **B6**

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Daily brushes with homeless shape his art

Joel Coplin befriends and helps Phoenix's unhoused but also sued the city to have encampment cleared.

By Noah Bierman

PHOENIX — Artist Joel Coplin has spent the better part of three years painting what he sees through the window of his studio:

A woman showering with a hose beside barbed wire; a body lying still at an intersection under a streetlight.

Then there's an unfinished piece he calls "The Land of Nod," an homage to the men and women who seem to defy gravity as they come down from the effects of opioids.

It's part of a complicated relationship Coplin has with Phoenix's homeless population, a mix of compassion and frustration.

He and his wife, fellow artist Jo-Ann Lowney, maintain a gallery in an area known as the Zone, about 15 square blocks on the edge of downtown that has been the fulcrum of the city's clashes over homeless policy. They live above the gallery, making up about half of the housed population in the area.

Coplin, 69, has helped homeless people with food, money and medical bills. He has paid them \$20 to sit for portraits, to tell their stories and to listen to his.

But he also has had his face punched and glasses broken when he went to find one of his homeless friends. And he has been a plaintiff in a lawsuit that has forced the city to clear the encampments that were once so prevalent he could not open his downstairs gallery for two years.

"It just ballooned into this incredible, like, barter town," he said. "They built edifices out of the tents that were like three deep, and 50-gallon drums at night with flames coming out of it — you know, cooking and music and singing and dancing.



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

JOEL COPLIN with his paintings of homeless people near his Phoenix gallery. He feels both compassion and frustration for the unhoused.

It was just like an incredible street fair — 24/7."

Coplin moved to this property six years ago after selling his old art studio, east of the city. It was cheap and he liked the neighborhood's edginess.

He had spent a decade in New York's Hell's Kitchen and got used to "stepping over people and junkies and all that."

People slept on the street beside the gallery when he moved in, but they had no tents and would leave during the day, he said. He helped his neighbors buy things and let them use his bathroom, "sort of like a little community."

But after the federal appeals court decision restricted the police's ability to clear encampments, people started handing out

tents, he said. During the pandemic, they left again for about a year and then came back.

"So it's been like coming and going," he said.

His art studio and gallery, Gallery 119, is down the street from the Key Campus, a 13-acre complex that includes most of the city's homeless shelters and services. It's otherwise a relatively barren area, aside from his studio, some warehouses, a few old houses, a sandwich shop, a cemetery and train tracks.

Coplin and other property owners sued the city and won a court order to clear the hundreds of people in the Zone in November. Homeless people still roam the area, but there are no longer clusters of tents.

Conditions are better, but the city still has the

wrong solution for homelessness, he said: There should be smaller, more specialized shelters throughout the city, rather than a single super-campus of five blocks.

Amy Schwabenlender, chief executive of Keys to Change, the organization overseeing the campus, said clearing the area has brought more people inside the campus, especially during the day. At night is another story.

"But we still can't shelter everyone, so we know X number of people leave every night and they're sleeping somewhere," Schwabenlender said. "Not necessarily safe, not meant for human habitation."

As a Beethoven symphony played in the background in Coplin's studio, it's hard to imagine the dev-

astation outside that inspires his paintings. He recalls the night he looked out his window to see what he thought was an object "right in the middle of 11th Avenue and Madison."

Then he saw movement — "a person!" Cars weaved around but did not stop. He ran down to help. But before he got there, someone else came, and a mere touch startled the person.

"Up she jumped and started running," he said. "I said, 'Oh, my God, that's Elizabeth.' I knew her."

Coplin's portraits have a quiet dignity — a man in a three-piece suit; a woman looking up while she holds her dog, a blanket their only protection from the rain.

He also looks to the past for inspiration. In one group scene, eight people are bent

to resemble characters in Diego Velazquez's 17th century work known as "Los Borrachos," or "The Drunks."

He pointed to a historic library down the street that now sits vacant. He is campaigning to make it a museum for the state's artists.

He retains hope that the area can become a place where people will come to buy his art and appreciate the potential he sees.

"This is the final frontier," he said. "All other aspects of the downtown have been taken up."

He has always rejected the idea of gentrification, "but now I'm on the other end, and I want the gentrification. And I want condos."

Recently, someone called to offer him \$940,000 for his property, he said. He told them no.

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

It's quite clear: If he loses, he won't go quietly

Trump has never competed in an election that he acknowledged as fair.

DOYLE McMANUS

Donald Trump has put America on notice: If he loses the presidential election, he reserves the right to encourage his followers to fight.



When Time magazine asked Trump whether the election would end in political violence if he loses, the former president replied: "If we don't win, you know, it depends. It always depends on the fairness of an election."

"If everything's honest, I'll gladly accept the results," he later told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. "If it's not, you have to fight for the right of the country."

When Trump says "it depends," here's the problem: He has never competed in an election that he acknowledged as fair.

Even when he won the presidential election of 2016, he claimed that Hillary Clinton and the Democrats rigged the count to deny him a popular-vote landslide, contending without evidence that millions of noncitizens had voted in California. The official inquiry he ordered up found no significant irregularities.

In 2020, when he lost to President Biden by 7 million votes, Trump not only

claimed the result was illegitimate; he also worked for months to overturn it, demanding that state officials "find" thousands of new votes in his favor. When his court challenges failed, he summoned supporters to Washington and urged them to march on the Capitol.

"If you don't fight like hell, you won't have a country any more," he told them. The mob responded by invading the building.

He returned to that apocalyptic theme last week, when he told supporters in Wisconsin that if Biden wins a second term, "we won't have a country left."

"Joe Biden is destroying our country," Trump said at a rally. "The enemy from within is more dangerous than China and Russia. ... I actually think our country is not going to survive."

It was as if he was priming his followers for extreme measures if he doesn't prevail.

And it was part of a long pattern. In January, he warned that if his four criminal indictments prevent him from winning, the result will be "bedlam in the country."

"It's the opening of a Pandora's box," he warned.

In March, he posted a video on his social media account showing an image of Biden hog-tied like a prisoner.

And for months he has extolled the defendants convicted of violent crimes in the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection as "hostages," promising to pardon many or all if he is reelected.

"He's telling us what his intentions are, as he did before Jan. 6," Juliette



KYM ILLMAN Getty Images

ASKED whether there would be violence if he loses the 2024 election, Donald Trump said "it depends."

Kayyem, a terrorism expert at Harvard University, said recently on PBS. "The language is the language of incitement. ... If he loses, we certainly know from what Trump has said — and we also know from what the FBI is telling us — that there are large groups and organizations that are preparing to continue the fight."

As matters stand in the presidential campaign, that kind of 2020-style crisis may not recur, since Trump stands a good chance of winning.

The average of public opinion polls published by fivethirtyeight.com shows a dead heat in the national popular vote — but it shows Trump winning in all six of the most important swing states: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Trump used a day off from his New York criminal trial Wednesday to campaign in Michigan and Wisconsin, where he returned to his warnings about an unfair election process.

"The radical-left Democrats rigged the presidential election in 2020," he claimed untruthfully yet again.

"We're not going to allow them to rig the presidential election in 2024. We won't

have a country left ... 2024 is our final battle."

For months, Biden has sought to remind voters that Trump, if reelected, would run roughshod over the norms of American government and politics.

"Democracy is on the ballot," the president often says.

By reminding voters that he doesn't accept the duty to recognize the result of an election he loses, Trump has paradoxically bolstered Biden's case.

For some voters, this election may come down to a choice between preserving democracy and hoping for a return of the low inflation of the Trump years. They may not find it an easy choice.

A survey last year by the Public Religion Research Institute found that 38% of Americans believe the country needs "a leader who is willing to break some rules if that's what it takes to set things right." That substantial minority included 48% of Republicans.

When Time's reporter asked Trump whether his rhetoric about overriding the Constitution and ruling as a "dictator for a day" might alienate voters, the former president disagreed.

"I think a lot of people like it," he said. Unfortunately, he's right.

A wild orangutan used a plant to treat wound, scientists say

It was seen making juice, compress from medicinal leaves.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — An orangutan appeared to treat a wound with medicine from a tropical plant — the latest example of how some animals attempt to soothe their own ills with remedies found in the wild, scientists reported Thursday.

Scientists observed Rakus pluck and chew up leaves of a medicinal plant used by people throughout Southeast Asia to treat pain and inflammation. The adult male orangutan then used his fingers to apply the plant juices to an injury on his right cheek. Afterward, he pressed the chewed plant to cover the open wound like a makeshift bandage, according to a new study in Scientific Reports.

Previous research has documented several species of great apes foraging for medicines in forests to heal themselves, but scientists hadn't yet seen an animal treat itself in this way.

"This is the first time that we have observed a wild animal applying a quite potent medicinal plant directly to a wound," said co-author Isabelle Laumer, a biologist at the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior in Konstanz, Germany.

The orangutan's intriguing behavior was recorded in 2022 by Ulil Azhari, a co-author and field researcher at the Suaq Program in Medan, Indonesia. Photographs show the animal's wound closed within a month without any problems.

Scientists have been observing orangutans in Indonesia's Gunung Leuser Na-

tional Park since 1994, but they hadn't previously seen this behavior.

"It's a single observation," said Emory University biologist Jacobus de Roode, who was not involved in the study. "But often we learn about new behaviors by starting with a single observation."

"Very likely it's self-medication," De Roode said, adding that the orangutan applied the plant only to the wound and no other body part.

It's possible that Rakus learned the technique from other orangutans outside the park and away from scientists' daily scrutiny, said co-author Caroline Schuppli at Max Planck.

Rakus was born and lived as a juvenile outside the study area. Researchers believe the orangutan got hurt in a fight with another animal. It's not known whether Rakus earlier treated other injuries.

Scientists have previously recorded other primates using plants to treat themselves.

Bornean orangutans rubbed themselves with juices from a medicinal plant, possibly to reduce pain or ward off parasites.

Chimpanzees in multiple locations have been observed chewing on the shoots of bitter-tasting plants to soothe their stomachs. Gorillas, chimpanzees and bonobos swallow certain rough leaves whole to get rid of stomach parasites.

"If this behavior exists in some of our closest living relatives, what could that tell us about how medicine first evolved?" said Tara Stoinski, president and chief scientific officer of the non-profit Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, who had no role in the study.

THE WORLD

Israel orders Al Jazeera to close local office

Move includes seizing broadcast equipment and preventing airing of channel's reports and blocking websites.

By Tia Goldenberg
and Jon Gambrell

TEL AVIV — Israel ordered the local offices of Qatar's Al Jazeera satellite news network to close Sunday, escalating a long-running feud between the broadcaster and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line government as Doha-mediated cease-fire negotiations with Hamas hang in the balance.

The extraordinary order, which includes confiscating broadcast equipment, preventing the broadcast of the channel's reports and blocking its websites, is believed to be the first time Israel has ever closed a foreign news outlet.

Al Jazeera went off Israel's main cable provider in the hours after the order. However, its website and streaming links across multiple online platforms still operated Sunday.

The network has reported the Israeli-Hamas war nonstop since the militants' initial cross-border attack Oct. 7 and has maintained 24-hour coverage in the Gaza Strip amid Israel's grinding ground offensive that has killed and wounded members of its own staff. While including on-the-ground reporting of the war's casualties, its Arabic arm often publishes verbatim video statements from Hamas and other militant groups in the region, drawing Netanyahu's ire.

"Al Jazeera reporters harmed Israel's security and incited against soldiers," Netanyahu said in a statement. "It's time to remove the Hamas mouthpiece from



SAEED QAQ NurPhoto

POLICE and inspectors raid Al Jazeera offices in Jerusalem on Sunday, confiscating equipment. "It's time to remove the Hamas mouthpiece from our country," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement.

our country."

Al Jazeera issued a statement vowing it will "pursue all available legal channels through international legal institutions in its quest to protect both its rights and journalists, as well as the public's right to information."

"Israel's ongoing suppression of the free press, seen as an effort to conceal its actions in the Gaza Strip, stands in contravention of international and humanitarian law," the network said. "Israel's direct targeting and killing of journalists, arrests, intimidation and threats will not deter Al Jazeera from its commit-

ment to cover, whilst more than 140 Palestinian journalists have been killed since the beginning of the war on Gaza."

Israeli media said the order allows Israel to block the channel from operating in the country for 45 days.

The Israeli government has taken action against individual reporters over the decades since its founding in 1948, but broadly allows for a rambunctious media scene that includes foreign bureaus from around the world, even from Arab nations. That changed with a law passed last month, which Netanyahu's office says allows the government

to take action against a foreign channel seen as "harming the country."

Immediately after the announcement, Al Jazeera's English arm began broadcasting a prerecorded message from one of its correspondents from a hotel the channel has used for months in East Jerusalem, which the Palestinians hope to one day have for their future state.

"They're also banning any devices — that includes my mobile phone," correspondent Imran Khan said. "If I use that to do any kind of newsgathering, then the Israelis can simply confiscate it."

The ban did not appear

to affect the channel's operations in the occupied West Bank or Gaza Strip, where Israel wields control but which are not sovereign Israeli territory.

The decision threatens to heighten tensions with Qatar at a time when the Doha government is playing a key role in mediation efforts to halt the war in Gaza, along with Egypt and the United States.

Qatar has had strained ties with Netanyahu in particular since he made comments suggesting that Qatar is not exerting enough pressure on Hamas to prompt it to relent in its terms for a truce deal. Qatar hosts Hamas leaders in exile at a political office in Doha.

The sides appear to be close to striking a deal, but multiple previous rounds of talks have ended with no agreement.

In a statement Sunday, Hamas condemned the Israeli government order, calling on international organizations to take measures against Israel.

Shortly after the government's decision, Cabinet members from the National Unity party criticized its timing, saying it "may sabotage the efforts to finalize the negotiations and stems from political considerations." The party said that in general, it supported the decision.

Israel has long had a rocky relationship with Al Jazeera, accusing it of bias. Relations took a major downturn nearly two years

ago when Al Jazeera correspondent Shireen Abu Akleh was killed during an Israeli military raid in the occupied West Bank.

Those relations further deteriorated after the outbreak of Israel's war against Hamas on Oct. 7, when the militant group carried out a cross-border attack in southern Israel that killed about 1,200 people and took roughly 240 others hostage. Since then, the Israeli military campaign in Gaza has killed more than 34,000 people, according to local health officials there, who don't break figures down into civilians and combatants.

In December, an Israeli strike killed an Al Jazeera cameraman as he reported on the war in southern Gaza. The channel's bureau chief in Gaza, Wael Dahdouch, was wounded in the same attack. Dahdouch, a correspondent well-known to Palestinians during many wars, later evacuated Gaza but only after Israeli strikes killed his wife, three of his children and a grandson.

Al Jazeera is one of the few international news outlets to remain in Gaza throughout the war, broadcasting bloody scenes of airstrikes and overcrowded hospitals and accusing Israel of massacres.

Israel accuses Al Jazeera, funded by Qatar's government, of collaborating with Hamas. Criticism of the channel is not new, however. The U.S. government singled out the broadcaster during America's occupation of Iraq after its 2003 invasion toppled dictator Saddam Hussein and over airing videos of the late Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden.

Al Jazeera has been closed or blocked by other Mideast governments. Those include Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain during a years-long boycott of Doha by the countries amid a years-long political dispute that ended in 2021.

In 2013, Egyptian authorities raided a luxury hotel used by Al Jazeera as an operating base after the military takeover that followed mass protests against President Mohamed Morsi. The channel was apparently targeted over its coverage of Muslim Brotherhood protests over Morsi's ouster.

Three Al Jazeera staff members, Australian Peter Grete, Egyptian Canadian Mohamed Fahmy and Egyptian producer Baher Mohamed, received 10-year prison sentences, but were released in 2015 after international criticism.

Associated Press writers Goldenberg and Gambrell reported from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, respectively. AP writer Jack Jeffrey in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

Gaza cease-fire hopes dim; Israel vows Rafah operation in 'very near future'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — The latest round of Gaza cease-fire talks ended in Cairo after "in-depth and serious discussions," the Hamas militant group said Sunday, reiterating key demands that Israel again rejected.

After earlier signs of progress, the outlook appeared dim as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to resist pressure to halt the war.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant claimed Hamas wasn't serious about a deal and warned of "a powerful operation in the very near future in Rafah and other places across all of Gaza" after Hamas attacked Israel's main crossing point for delivering humanitarian aid, killing three soldiers.

Israeli media reported that CIA chief William Burns, a mediator in the talks, would meet with Netanyahu on Monday. An official familiar with the matter said Burns will travel to Israel after meeting with the prime minister of Qatar, which along with Egypt has been an intermediary dealing with Hamas. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door negotiations.

Israel didn't send a delegation to the talks mediated by Egypt and Qatar. Egyptian media reported that the Hamas delegation went for discussions in Qatar, where the group has a political office, and will return to Cairo for talks Tuesday.

Another threat to talks came as Israel ordered the local offices of Qatar's Al Jazeera satellite news network to close, accusing it of broadcasting anti-Israel incitement. The ban did not appear to affect the channel's operations in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank.

Netanyahu, under pressure from hard-liners in his government, continued to lower expectations for a cease-fire deal, calling the key Hamas demands "extreme." Those include the withdrawal of Israeli forces

from Gaza and an end to the war. That would equal surrender after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that triggered the fighting, he said.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said in a statement that the group was serious and positive about the negotiations and that stopping Israeli aggression in Gaza is the main priority.

But Israel's government vowed to press on with a military operation in Rafah, the southernmost Gaza city where more than half of the enclave's 2.3 million residents are seeking shelter from Israeli attacks.

Rafah is a key entry point for aid. Kerem Shalom, now closed, is another; the Israeli military reported that 10 projectiles were launched Sunday at the crossing in southern Israel and said its fighter jets later struck the source.

Hamas said it targeted Israeli soldiers in the area. Israel's Channel 12 said 10 people were wounded, three of them seriously. It was unclear how long the crossing would be closed.

The head of the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, Philippe Lazzarini, called for an independent investigation and "accountability for the blatant disregard of humanitarian workers." He also said Israel recently denied him entry to Gaza for a second time.

The closing of Kerem Shalom came shortly after the head of the U.N. World Food Program said there is "full-blown famine" in devastated northern Gaza, one of the most prominent warnings yet of the toll of restrictions on aid entering the territory. The comments were not a formal declaration of famine.

In expanded remarks to NBC, World Food Program executive director Cindy McCain said famine is "moving its way south" in Gaza, and Israel's efforts to allow in more aid are not enough.

"We have right now a mass on the outside border, about enough trucks and enough food for 1.1 million people for about three

months. We need to get that in," she said.

Gaza's vast humanitarian needs put pressure on the pursuit of a cease-fire. The proposal Egyptian mediators put to Hamas sets out a three-stage process that would bring an immediate, six-week cease-fire and release of some Israeli hostages, and would include some sort of Israeli pullout. The initial stage would last 40 days. Hamas would start by releasing female civilian

hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

Netanyahu said Israel has shown willingness to make concessions but said it "will continue fighting until all of its objectives are achieved." That includes the stated aim of crushing Hamas. Israel says it must target Rafah to strike remaining fighters there despite warnings from the U.S. and others about the danger to civilians.

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Everest climbers explore new techniques

[Mt. Everest, from A1] ways to climb the world's tallest mountain.

Ballinger said he was appalled by the risks, filth and ballooning crowds on the traditional southern trek up the mountain in Nepal. That's the route familiar from countless documentaries and books, including the 1997 classic "Into Thin Air."

So he decided to take clients up on the north side, a journey that starts in Tibet.

"It's colder, the route is more difficult, and the bureaucracy of dealing with China and getting the permits is a complete nightmare," Ballinger said. "But despite those things, the Chinese are attempting to regulate, so once you get on the mountain, it's safer, it's cleaner, and it's much less busy."

Ballinger is also pioneering a technique he calls "rapid ascent," which cuts the duration of the expedition roughly in half: from about two months to about one. That suits his clients, who usually have more spare money than time. And it buys Ballinger more time to spend at home with his wife and newborn son.

The catch? You have to spend a few months before the trip with your head in the bag.

"It's not great, I'm not gonna lie," Ballinger said with a laugh, but the technology is improving.

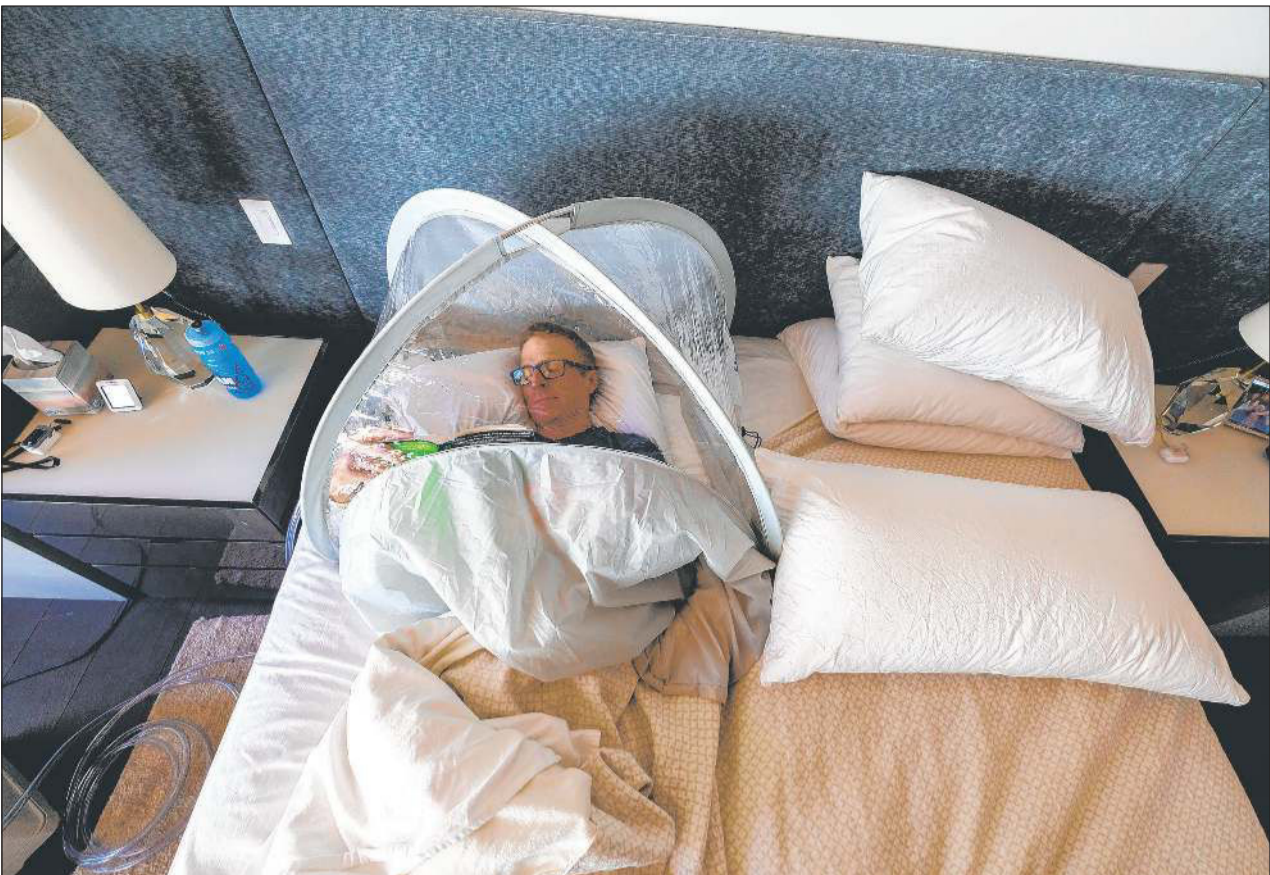
"Hypoxic tents," as they're called, have been used by other endurance athletes for years. In their original form, they would cover a client's entire bed.

That led to difficult conversations with spouses and partners about the necessity of sleeping at progressively higher simulated altitudes until they reached the height of Everest's base camp, roughly 18,000 feet, where there's about half the oxygen available at sea level.

As you can imagine, some clients wound up relegated to a couch with their bizarre-looking contraptions.

Cooper, who used one of the enormous old tents preparing for a 2015 trip to climb the highest peaks in Antarctica and South America, confessed he had no luck sweet-talking Hilary, his wife of 28 years, into sharing the adventure. He got bounced to a guest room.

"It was a lonely boy-in-the-bubble experience," he said. But he has fond memories of the looks on his kids' faces as they trooped into his



AT HIS home in Truckee, Calif., Graham Cooper relaxes with a book inside a hypoxic tent that slowly lowers the oxygen level to mimic conditions at extreme altitude in preparation for an ascent of Mt. Everest. Photographs by BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times



COOPER has been diligently training for his climb, a regimen that includes skiing laps up and down slopes.

little dungeon to kiss him good night.

This time around, "the bag," as he calls it, covers just his head and upper torso and takes up about a quarter of the bed. Hilary sleeps next to him, Cooper said, and she finds the hum of the motor surprisingly soothing.

It goes without saying that the luxury of acclimatizing at home, in bed, with your partner curled up beside you, represents a profound break from the usual manner of preparing to ascend what is still one of the world's deadliest mountains.

The traditional method starts in Kathmandu, at nearly 5,000 feet, where climbers spend a few days getting over jet lag.

That's usually followed by a quick flight to the small mountain town of Lukla, at just over 9,300 feet. The airport there — perched on a narrow Himalayan shelf surrounded by towering peaks, with a steep drop-off at the end of the runway — is regarded as one of the trickiest places in the world to land an airplane.

From there, climbers begin a long, deliberately slow 10-ish-day hike to base camp. The point is to give the body time to gradually adjust to the lack of oxygen.

Ballinger cuts nearly two weeks from his trips by driving his bedroom-acclimatized clients from the airport in Lhasa, Tibet, straight up to the northern route's base camp, which is also about 18,000 feet.

For some old-school purists, eliminating the long walk borders on sacrilege, said Will Cockrell, a journalist whose recent book, "Everest, Inc.," explores the evolution of commercial guiding on the mountain. "They'll say, 'You're not a real climber; you're not a real nature lover,'" Cockrell said.

But since the arrival of big commercial expeditions on Everest in the mid-1990s — complete with Sherpas to install climbing ropes, chefs to cook meals in camp, team doctors to monitor health, and guides to accompany clients every step of the way



NO STRANGER to grueling physical challenges, Cooper looks over his snowsuit for the rapid ascent.

— Mt. Everest has ceased to be a classic off-the-grid mountaineering challenge.

"It has come to represent something completely different," Cockrell said, "something crazy to do to shake up your life, like running an Ironman."

Ballinger makes no apologies. "We're not old school, we don't spend a lot of time sitting around drinking whiskey and playing cards," he said.

That suits his clients, who "tend to be pretty type A, pretty high performing in everything they do," Ballinger said.

They'd better be. His company, Alpenglow Expeditions, charges \$165,000 (before tip) for a private climb, meaning one professionally certified guide per client, and \$98,000 for a group climb with three clients per guide.

"We're proudly expensive," Ballinger said. "I've spent a lot of time thinking about what it takes to run a trip safely and ethically, and this is what it takes."

Climbing from the north side, as Ballinger does, avoids the huge crowds who flock to the southern base camp from all over the world every May, the prime climbing season on Everest, to wait for a brief window of good weather to try to make it to the summit.

Anyone who has even loosely followed events on Mt. Everest in recent years is probably familiar with the terrifying "conga line" photos of climbers stuck in the

world's highest traffic jam.

It forms just below the summit on the southern route, at the last technical obstacle, a nearly vertical 40-foot rock wall called the Hillary Step. It's on a ridge with a 10,000-foot drop to the climber's right and an 8,000-foot drop to the left.

So, when exhausted and inexperienced climbers inevitably struggle there, everybody else waits in a single file, hanging onto a fixed rope, while the bottled oxygen they need to survive at that altitude slowly drains away.

Worse is the Khumbu Icefall, a glacier just above the southern base camp. It's best known for wide spindling crevasses spanned by flimsy-looking aluminum ladders lashed together with rope.

Climbers have to walk across those ladders, wearing big boots and crampons, as they make multiple trips back and forth to advanced camps to acclimatize before heading for the summit.

As dangerous as it is for the mostly foreign climbers and guides, the odds are even worse for the local Sherpas, who regularly traverse the Khumbu ferrying equipment — tents, food, oxygen canisters — for the climbing teams.

Last year, the deadliest climbing season in Everest history, three Sherpas were killed in the Khumbu when a towering block of ice collapsed and buried them.

In six seasons climbing the southern route, from

2009 to 2014, Ballinger said he passed through the Khumbu 38 times and had two close calls. While nobody on his teams lost their lives there, he helped recover the bodies of other climbers who had not been so lucky.

Finally, he did the math and concluded there was no way he could get through a whole career — 20 or 30 years — without losing someone he was responsible for in the Khumbu.

"I just couldn't do it anymore," Ballinger said. "I just couldn't justify the risk."

Ballinger's data-driven approach and stellar track record were enough to win over Cooper.

And he has been willing to wait.

He was ready to climb Everest four years ago, but when China shut down expeditions to its side of the mountain in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ballinger stuck to his principles and refused to resume climbing with the crowds in Nepal. This is the first year since the pandemic that the Chinese side has been open.

The Alpenglow team, which includes 26 clients, guides and Sherpas hoping to reach the summit, were originally scheduled to begin their expedition in late April. After a late permitting change from the Chinese government, that date has been pushed back to Tuesday.

Cooper has competed in the Ironman World Championship in Hawaii 11 times and has won the legendary Western States Endurance Run, a 100-mile ultra-marathon. He is not a man accustomed to sitting around. "I'm feeling ready and anxious to get going," he texted a reporter recently.

When not trying to sleep in his hypoxic tent, Cooper has spent his training days in Tahoe on back-country skis doing laps up and down a mountain, his 3-year-old dog, a Vizsla named Busy, at his heels.

Indoors, he straps on a hypoxic mask hooked to the same motor he uses for the sleeping tent and rides a stationary bike an hour at a time. Or climbs a StairMaster. Or throws on his mountaineering boots and a heavy backpack and trudges up and down slopes.

Why? "I'm addicted to doing this kind of stuff," said Cooper, who ran his first marathon when he was 13. "I just feel like a fundamentally happier person when I'm training."

Ballinger leads clients on bucket list climbs all around the globe. Many of the treks present more interesting technical challenges than Everest. Almost all of them feel like wild outposts compared with the circus vibe on Everest's south side.

Still, he gets poetic when he describes why so many clients are drawn to the world's tallest summit.

"Because it's so hard," he said. It takes incredible fitness, mental fortitude and a heavy dose of luck to make it to the top. And no matter how many precautions you take, there's that uncontrollable element of risk.

"It's not just a battle for success, it's a battle for survival up there," Ballinger said. "That's something that many of us have not experienced otherwise. I think that really captures people."

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Los Angeles Times

As Ukraine marks Easter, drones target east

More than a dozen people are wounded in barrage by Russia, which claims its forces captured a village.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KYIV, Ukraine — As Ukraine marked its third Easter at war, Russia on Sunday launched a barrage of drones concentrated in Ukraine's east, wounding more than a dozen people, and claimed its troops took control of a village they had been targeting.

Ukraine's air force said that Russia had launched 24 Shahed drones overnight, of which 23 were shot down.

Six people, including a child, were wounded in a drone strike in the eastern Kharkiv region, regional Gov. Oleh Sinegubov said.

Fourteen more were wounded in an airstrike Sunday afternoon on the regional capital, also called Kharkiv, the regional prosecutor's office said.

Sinegubov said the city came under aerial bombing.

Fires broke out when debris from drones that were shot down fell on buildings in the neighboring Dnipropetrovsk region.

No casualties were reported.

The Russian Defense Ministry announced Sunday that its troops had taken control of the village of Ocheretyne, which has been in the crosshairs of Russian forces in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine.

Drone video obtained by the Associated Press showed the village battered by fighting.

Not a single person is seen in the video obtained late Friday, and no building in Ocheretyne appears to

have been left untouched by the fighting.

Officials in Kyiv urged residents to follow Orthodox Easter services online due to safety concerns.

Serhiy Popko, head of the Kyiv city administration, warned that "even on such bright days of celebration, we can expect evil deeds from the aggressor."

In his Easter address, President Volodymyr Zelensky called on Ukrainians to be "united in one common prayer."

In a video recorded in front of Kyiv's St. Sophia Cathedral, wearing a *vyshyvanka*, or traditional embroidered shirt, Zelensky said that God "has a chevron with the Ukrainian flag on his shoulder."

With "such an ally," Zelensky said, "life will definitely win over death."

A majority of Ukrainians identify as Orthodox Christians, though the church is

divided.

Many belong to the independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

The rival Ukrainian Orthodox Church was loyal to the patriarch in Moscow until splitting from Russia after the 2022 invasion and is viewed with suspicion by many Ukrainians.

In Moscow, worshippers including President Vladimir Putin packed Moscow's landmark Christ the Savior Cathedral late Saturday for a nighttime Easter service led by Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church and an outspoken supporter of the Kremlin.

Eastern Orthodox Christians usually celebrate Easter later than Catholic and Protestant churches, because they use a different method of calculating the date for the holy day that marks Christ's resurrection.

THE NATION

President may lose youth votes over Gaza

Biden could face resistance from those with college degrees over U.S. response to Mideast war, poll says.

By FAITH E. PINHO

After days of protests roiling college campuses, President Biden broke his silence with a terse speech condemning the chaos and calling for order, while also holding up protest as a fundamental American right.

Will Biden's comments be enough to sate young voters? Some political analysts think not.

"For Biden to get back on track with young voters, he needs to think and act differently and really take to heart what these young activists have been asking for," said Diane Wong, assistant professor of political science at Rutgers University.

In a five-minute speech at the White House on Thursday, the president tried to balance two fundamental principles: the right to protest and the rule of law.

"Violent protest is not protected. Peaceful protest is," he said. "Vandalism, trespassing, breaking windows, shutting down campuses, forcing the cancellation of classes and graduation — none of this is a peaceful protest."

In addition to calling on their universities to divest from companies doing business in Israel, students have pressed the administration to withhold military support from Israel. They've also urged Biden to push harder for a peaceful solution in the war between Israel and Hamas.

"Mr. President," a reporter asked, "have the protests forced you to reconsider any of the policies with regard to the region?"

"No," Biden said, turning from the lectern and leaving the room.

Biden's reaction to students' concerns about Gaza has hampered his campaign, Wong said, pointing out that students at Rutgers University, located in New Jersey, campaigned to push Democratic Michiganans to vote "uncommitted" rather than cast a ballot for Biden in Michigan's primary.

For months, the Biden campaign has been pushing issues seemingly close to young voters' hearts — forgiving student debt, advocating for abortion access and even reclassifying marijuana as a less dangerous drug. Still, Democratic strategist Carly Cooperman said, the messaging is not cutting through.



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

PRO-PALESTINIAN protesters rally on steps at UCLA on May 1. Many have urged their universities to divest from ties to Israel.

‘There’s a lot of voters who don’t have college degrees. And these younger people are really struggling with day-to-day cost of living and the impact of inflation.’

— CARLY COOPERMAN, Democratic strategist

"We've seen poll after poll show that Biden is just underwater with this group," Cooperman said.

Wong said the Biden campaign is banking on wooing young voters with issues other than Gaza.

"To me, that seems risky, and a move that Biden will likely regret come November," Wong said. "Because yes, Gen Z are not single-issue voters, but they've collectively just experienced some of the worst political repression on college campuses that we've seen in decades. And trauma from this kind of violence is remembered."

Until last week, Biden had left it to other administration officials to speak out about the college protests. Former President Trump also has said relatively little, though on Wednesday he praised police for cracking down on protests at Columbia University, calling the students "raging lunatics" and "Hamas sympathizers."

He mused about whether the students who vandalized campus buildings would be prosecuted in the same way as his supporters who ransacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Young voters famously don't vote at the same rates as older adults and retirees. Still, their turnout has inched up in recent years. The 2022 midterms saw the second-highest percentage of voters ages 18-29 casting their ballots in a midterm in decades, said Mindy Romero, director of the Center for Inclusive Democracy at USC's Price School.

A poll by Harvard's Institute of Politics, released last month, found that more than half of Americans between 18 and 29 say they will vote in November — which is on par with its 2020 findings.

"Young people today have clear concerns about where our country is headed," Setti Warren, director of the institute, said in a statement. "From worries

about the economy, foreign policy, immigration, and climate, young people across the country are paying attention and are increasingly prepared to make their voices heard at the ballot box this November."

One of the foremost issues young voters agree on is support for a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas. Slightly more than half of 18- to 29-year-olds support a cease-fire while 10% oppose it, the Youth Poll found.

Biden's situation with young voters over his handling of the Israel-Hamas conflict has become more pronounced after a week of protests on college campuses. College-educated youth voters are Biden's most likely supporters and those most closely following news about the conflict.

The Harvard poll found that youth voters with a college degree are 50% more likely to pay attention to the news about Israel-Hamas, compared with 39% of current college students and 32% of those who never attended college.

Those voters without degrees present a particular challenge to Biden.

"There's a lot of voters who don't have college degrees," Cooperman said. "And these younger people are really struggling with day-to-day cost of living and

the impact of inflation. For them, they're generally discouraged and unhappy with the status quo. And their current president is Biden. So there is an aspect of this that becomes a referendum on him."

Trump's support among young voters generally pales in comparison with his rival's — Biden leads by 19% among likely voters under 30, according to the Harvard poll. But, the poll notes, "The race is even among those not in college and without a four-year degree."

For college students, the war in Gaza is creating unusual momentum for political engagement, Romero said. Typically, she said, political issues in the news do not translate to droves of young voters going to the polls. But the Middle East war is different.

"The topic itself lends it, because of how big it's intertwined with the Biden administration and their policies," Romero said. "And it's an election year, where they feel they have some power. There's some consequence. They can hold the administration accountable."

Campaigns would be smart to capitalize on the youth engagement by offering a listening tour, she added.

"Just from an engagement, democratic process

perspective, this is an opportunity for the president for both parties to talk to young people about what they care about, and campaign around their positions," Romero said. "This is of course an incredibly difficult issue to navigate."

While the president has been reluctant to address young voters directly on the issue, Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Fremont) is one of the Biden campaign's go-to surrogates grappling with Gaza.

Though Khanna supports the president, he has been outspoken about his belief that the U.S. should refrain from sending military aid to Israel, and he has been open about his disagreements with Biden.

In a recent visit to the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Khanna asked a roomful of Jewish and Muslim students about their views on Biden, according to a video he posted to X on Wednesday.

"The generation in Washington, regardless of party, has been unable to solve it," Khanna said of the Middle East conflict. "And my hope is more with your generation."

The school year will soon end, and there's no telling where pro-Palestinian encampments on campuses — or young voters' support for Biden — will go.

Trump says Biden is running a ‘Gestapo’ administration

Ex-president made his latest reference to Nazi Germany to Republican donors at his Florida resort.

By BILL BARROW AND LISA MASCARO

ATLANTA — Donald Trump told Republican donors at his Florida resort over the weekend that President Biden is running a "Gestapo administration," the latest example of the former president employing the language of Nazi Germany in his campaign rhetoric.

The remarks Saturday at Mar-a-Lago were described by people who attended the event and spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private session.

The "Gestapo" comment, one person said, came as Trump renewed his complaint that Biden's White House is behind the multiple criminal prosecutions of the presumptive GOP presidential nominee, including his ongoing hush money and fraud trial in New York and additional cases stemming from his efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

The Gestapo was the secret police force of the Third Reich that squelched political opposition generally and, specifically, targeted Jewish people for arrest during the

Holocaust.

Republican Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota, appearing Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union," essentially confirmed Trump's statement, but tried to diminish its importance.

"This was a short comment deep into the thing that wasn't really central to what he was talking about," said Burgum, who is among the contenders to be Trump's running mate.

Burgum affirmed that Trump drew the parallel as part of his accusation that Biden's White House is behind his legal troubles. "A majority of Americans," Burgum said, "feel like the trial that he's in right now is politically motivated."

The New York Times first reported Trump's comments after obtaining an audio recording of the Mar-a-Lago event.

"These people are running a Gestapo administration," Trump told GOP donors, according to the newspaper. "It's the only way they're going to win."

Biden's reelection campaign blasted the reference. "Trump is once again making despicable and insulting comments about the Holocaust, while in the same breath attacking law enforcement, celebrating political violence, and threatening our democracy," said James Singer, spokesman for the Democrat's campaign, in a statement.

Trump's campaign did not immediately respond to an Associated Press request for comment. The AP has not obtained audio of Trump's speech at the fundraiser.

Previously in the 2024 campaign, Trump has called political opponents "vermin" and said migrants who cross the U.S.-Mexico border are "poisoning the blood of our country," rhetoric that echoes Adolf Hitler's statements during his authoritarian rule of Germany.

"I know nothing about Hitler," Trump insisted in a December interview on conservative talk radio. "I have no idea what Hitler said other than [what] I've seen on the news. And that's a very, entirely different thing than what I'm saying."

A second person who was at Mar-a-Lago over the weekend described to the AP a stem-winding luncheon appearance in which Trump mixed his grievances with optimistic GOP cheer-leading.

Speaking for at least 90 minutes, Trump promised "the gloves are coming off" against Biden, the second Republican recalled. At another point, Trump called up several GOP congressional figures to the stage and referred to the many Republicans vying to be his vice presidential pick.

"They're lining up and begging," Trump said, according to one attendee.

Several presumed contenders circulated in the crowd and were given strategic speaking roles or lead panel discussions. Among the standouts, the Republican said, were Republican Sens. Tim Scott of South Carolina, Marco Rubio of Florida and J.D. Vance of Ohio.

Trump, the person said, singled out Rubio for special praise and referenced a "Florida problem," referring to a constitutional requirement that the president and vice president not claim the same state as their residences.

Rubio and Scott both demurred when asked about their prospects on the Sunday talk shows.

On "Fox News Sunday," Rubio sidestepped a question about whether he would be willing to move to another state to join the GOP ticket.

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) was in attendance as well, shoring up support from Trump. Johnson coordinated one of the legal challenges against the 2020 election that Trump lost to Biden, but the speaker now faces the threat of his own ouster by far-right Republicans led by Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia.

With his time on stage, Johnson said the U.S. needs a "strong man" in the White House, one attendee told the AP.

The Republican National

Committee said after the event that joint fundraising efforts by the RNC and the campaign for April topped \$76 million, by far the best monthly effort of this campaign cycle and a step toward closing Biden's financial advantage. RNC Chairman Michael Whatley hailed an uptick in small-dollar donors, but the Mar-a-Lago event clearly focused on the party's deepest pockets. At one point, one attendee said, Trump offered an open microphone to anyone who immediately pledged a \$1-million contribution to the party. Two people eventually agreed, the source said.

Additionally, the New York Times reported that Trump told his audience that Democrats effectively purchase votes through economic safety net programs, while repeating his false claims that U.S. elections are riddled with systemic fraud.

"When you are Democrat, you start off essentially at 40% because you have civil service, you have the unions and you have welfare," Trump said, according to the New York Times.

"And don't underestimate welfare. They get welfare to vote, and then they cheat on top of that — they cheat."

Biden's victory was affirmed by multiple recounts across many battleground states, and Trump's as-

sertions of fraud were rejected by multiple state and federal courts, including by judges he nominated to the bench. Trump's efforts to overturn the election and his role in his supporters' riot at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, are the subject of two additional indictments.

Trump is not the first Republican presidential candidate to privately connect social programs with Democrats' electoral fortunes. In 2012, then-GOP nominee Mitt Romney was captured on tape at a fundraising event declaring that Democrat Barack Obama had a built-in advantage because of people he said did not have to pay federal income taxes.

"There are 47% of the people who will vote for the president [Obama] no matter what" because they are "dependent upon government" and "believe that they are victims," Romney said, adding that "my job is not to worry about those people. I'll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives."

Obama's campaign used those comments to bolster Democrats' argument that Romney was out of touch with most Americans. Obama was reelected.

Barrow and Mascaro write for the Associated Press. Mascaro reported from Washington.

ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

SEDINA L. BANKS, KALEIGH L. KEMMERLY AND POOJA NAIR SHARE INSIGHTS ON THE FOOD & BEVERAGE INDUSTRY IN 2024

The **Food & Beverage Roundtable** panel is produced by the L.A. Times B2B Publishing team in conjunction with Ervin Cohen & Jessup LLP; Greenberg Glusker LLP; and HUB International.



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With the still-evolving operational changes that businesses in every sector have had to make over the last few years, a whole new landscape has emerged in the food and beverage sector in terms of financial, legislative, employment and supply chain issues. Even the most seasoned industry pros have found themselves having to get creative to determine solutions over the past few years.

Are shifts in protocols and best practices that have emerged temporary or here to stay? What should restaurants, manufacturers,

distributors and vendors be focusing on in terms of new trends and standards?

To address these issues as well as many other topics, the Los Angeles Times B2B Publishing team turned to three leading food and beverage industry experts for their thoughts and most important tips and to get their assessments regarding the current state of the industry and the various trends that they have been observing.

Q: ARE THERE ANY NEW REGULATORY ISSUES THAT FOOD AND BEVERAGE COMPANIES NEED TO BE AWARE OF IN 2024?

A: Nair

Some recent regulatory issues include: (1) *Minimum wage increases*: California has passed a \$20 minimum wage for fast food employees, which went into effect on April 1, 2024. (2) *Non-compete provisions*: California has historically prohibited non-compete provisions except under very limited circumstances. On April 23, 2024, the FTC issued a final rule to ban non-competes nationwide. Therefore, employees who have relied on broad non-compete agreements in their employment agreements will no longer be able to do so. (3) *Food additives*: California passed the California Food Safety Act to ban five specific food additives by January 2027. Another legislation targeting PFAS use is being debated now and would ban the sale of all products containing PFAS by 2030. (4) *Delivery/gig economy regulations*: Many states are increasingly regulating the gig economy, which primarily affects restaurant and grocery delivery. Multiple states, including California, New York and Florida, have passed regulations to require that restaurants be notified and authorize their food to be available on delivery sites, transparency with fees to consumers and minimum standards for gig workers delivering products.

A: Kemmerly

Here are five to be aware of: (1) *Sustainability standards*: Presently there are increased pressures for companies to adopt sustainable practices through all avenues of the business, such as supply chain, sourcing, manufacturing, packaging and waste disposal. (2) *Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) regulation*: Companies should pay attention to the developing regulations and compliance requirements related to PFAS in packaging materials, food and beverage. (3) *Food safety innovation*: To comply with developing regulatory specifications, companies should be ready to execute food safety administration systems, traceability measures and preventive restrictions. (4) *Unconventional foods regulation*: Foods such as insect-based products, plant-based meat alternatives and cell-cultured meat are continuing to gain traction and popularity in the marketplace. Companies involved in this type of development should connect with governing organizations to address compliance requirements. (5) *Nutritional labeling*: Continues to evolve with the focus of providing consumers with actual and accessible nutritional content and ingredients of products.

A: Banks

We can expect front-of-package nutrition labeling (FOP labeling) to be a major focus in 2024. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is increasingly focused on prioritizing nutrition initiatives to ensure consumers

have access to healthier foods and have the necessary information to make informed food decisions. These initiatives include FOP labeling. Per the FDA, FOP labeling would complement the already required Nutrition Facts label by displaying “simplified, at-a-glance nutrition information,” allowing consumers to quickly and easily make informed food choices. The FDA is engaged in consumer research and stakeholder feedback on FOP labeling. In March, the FDA Commissioner previewed some FOP labeling prototypes.

Q: AS A TRUSTED ADVISOR, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY PIECES OF ADVICE YOU HAVE PROVIDED TO THE BUSINESSES YOU WORK WITH IN TERMS OF MANAGING THEIR SUPPLY CHAIN IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE?

A: Kemmerly

Some key pieces of advice I've provided include: (1) *Have variation*: Have a mixed supplier base and several different sourcing locations so you're not putting all your eggs in one basket that's similar and heavily relied upon. (2) *Use collaboration and interaction*: Always have open communication with your stakeholders, suppliers and logistics partners. (3) *Risk evaluation*: Develop an assessment of your supply chain to identify exposures, dependencies and hypothetical interferences. (4) *Resilience arranging*: Create a business continuity plan to ensure

“The greatest opportunity stems from adapting to changing consumer preferences. Established brands are increasingly venturing into new product lines that include non-dairy, gluten-free, plant-based and non-alcoholic options.”

— Sedina L. Banks

your company can respond in the event of a natural catastrophe, geopolitical conflicts, labor strikes and/or a pandemic. (5) *Observing and adjustment*: Pay attention to geopolitical events, market dynamics and regulatory fluctuations. (6) *Insurance coverage*: Always review your policies to make sure you have the proper coverage when it comes to insuring your supply chain, such as stock throughput, business interruption and contingent business interruption.

Q: PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS) HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION

SURROUNDING REGULATIONS PROHIBITING THE USE OF INTENTIONALLY ADDED PFAS IN FOOD PACKAGING. WHAT SHOULD COMPANIES BE AWARE OF?

A: Banks

Known as “forever chemicals,” PFAS are human-made chemicals that have been used for decades and are found in many different commercial, industry and consumer products. PFAS have recently been the subject of federal and state regulation. For example, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently designated two widely used PFAS compounds, PFOA and PFOS, as “hazardous substances.” EPA also announced enforceable drinking water standards for six PFAS. In California, certain PFAS compounds are included on the list of California Proposition 65 chemicals. Commencing on January 1, 2023, California prohibited the distribution, selling or offering for sale any food packaging containing PFAS. We are seeing an uptick in plaintiffs' actions based on the presence of PFAS in food packaging and products. Companies should be aware of the new PFAS regulatory requirements and undertake internal audits to ensure compliance.

A: Kemmerly

Companies need to be aware of: (1) *Component inspection*: Make sure suppliers are following regulations and show documentation of the absence of PFAS. Assess food, beverage, packaging materials and components to detect if any PFAS compounds are deliberately added during the manufacturing process. (2) *Compliance requirements*: Regulatory agencies may impose restrictions or bans on the use of certain PFAS due to potential health and environmental concerns. Stay up to date with current and upcoming developments. (3) *Classification and clarity*: Transparent communication with consumers is key! Consider using “PFAS-free” when labeling products to build trust and confidence with the consumer base. (4) *Risk evaluation*: Verify likely exposure routes for PFAS compounds in food and beverage packaging, including the possibility of it passing into the product that's consumed. (5) *Partnership and backing*: Engage and partner with governing organizations and business alliances to stay afloat on best practices and policy changes having to do with PFAS.

Q: ARE PLANT-BASED FOODS CONTINUING TO TREND UPWARD? IF SO, ARE FOOD BUSINESSES WITH NO PLANT-BASED OPTIONS GOING TO FALL BEHIND?

A: Nair

The market for plant-based food has dramatically expanded from approximately

ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

\$4 billion in 2017 to \$8.1 billion in 2023, and projections suggest that there is still significant room for growth. Most companies have either offered plant-based options or are exploring plant-based options. While there is some pushback to further regulate the labeling of plant-based foods, such as limiting the use of meat and dairy terms to refer to plant-based alternatives, these foods and beverages will be part of the marketplace, and consumers are getting used to having these options.

Q: WHEN IT COMES TO SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS, ARE MORE CHANGES AND REVISIONS TO FTC GUIDANCE IN STORE?

A: Banks

The FTC’s Green Guides provide companies with guidance on compliant green marketing claims to help avoid so-called “greenwashing.” Greenwashing occurs when a company overstates the environmental benefits of its practices or products. The Green Guides discuss general principles that apply to all environmental marketing claims and guidance on how companies can qualify their claims to avoid consumer deception. First issued in 1992, the FTC periodically revises the Green Guides to address new issues and clarify existing guidance. Because the last update was over a decade ago, the FTC is currently updating the Green Guides. Among other updates, the FTC is considering issuing additional guidance on the term “sustainability” and other commonly used green marketing terms. Companies should be aware of these proposed revisions and make sure that they are relying on the most current version of the Green Guides.

A: Nair

The FTC has been extremely active in cracking down on deceptive advertising, particularly related to sustainability and environmental claims. The FTC has also announced that it will be updating its “Green Guides,” which provide guidance for the use of environmental marketing claims. One aspect is that the FTC is

“*Even in our new digital world, there is still a people aspect to the business. You must taste, touch, hear and see the product to learn and understand it.*”

— Kaleigh L. Kemmerly

increasing its power to seek civil penalties against businesses for violations. In 2022, the FTC obtained civil penalties from big box retailers for “greenwashing” by advertising products and describing them as “sustainable” and “environmentally friendly” when they were actually made of nonsustainable content. Notably, plaintiffs use the Green Guides, which were last updated in 2012, to set a standard for unfair or deceptive advertising.

Q: WHAT SHOULD COMPANIES BE AWARE OF TO AVOID THE RISK OF “GREENWASHING” CLAIMS?

A: Banks

Companies must be mindful to ensure that their green marketing claims are not “greenwashing,” which can expose companies to private and public lawsuits and reputational damage. Some tips to avoid greenwashing liability include ensuring that green marketing claims are factually supported. For example, companies cannot claim that their packaging is recyclable if the facts do not support the claim. Companies must also ensure the claims comply with both federal and state law. California, for example, has more stringent green marketing requirements compared to the federal requirements. There may also be product-specific green marketing requirements. Finally, companies should periodically review and reassess their green marketing claims to confirm continued compliance. The law in this area is constantly evolving. Green marketing claims that were permissible in the past, may no longer be legal.

Q: HAS THE INSURANCE LANDSCAPE CHANGED FOR FOOD & BEVERAGE COMPANIES? WHAT SHOULD THEY BE LOOKING OUT FOR ON THAT FRONT?

A: Kemmerly

Food and beverage companies should be mindful of: (1) *Supply chain risks*: The food and beverage industry has become a global supply chain. Companies are subject to interference due to natural catastrophes and geopolitical conflicts. Stock throughputs and proper business interruption and contingent business interruption coverage can help ease these hazards. (2) *Cybersecurity*: With advancements in technology, food and beverage companies have become very dependent on digital systems for consumer engagement and operations. Cyber policies are crucial and will protect a company against ransomware attacks, data breaches and other incidents that may impact consumer faith and organization stability. Social engineering continues to be an issue. Plaintiff attorneys are being funded by third-party money who participate in the higher awards. Look at higher liability limits. (3) *Product recall*: Covers the removal of flawed or hypothetically dangerous products from the marketplace. Includes alerting consumers, recovering the product, fixing and or restoring it, and overseeing the accompanying fees and charges. Be wary of language included in a liability policy as it is not full coverage. (4) *Employment practices liability*: Should be a part of every insurance program and include Wage and Hour for defense as class action lawsuits occur when “clock” management is not good. (5) *Pollution policy*: Important to have especially when dealing with PFAS and for companies that use ammonia or other products that could get into a water table. (6) *Contract review*: Many companies use third-party labor contractors. Due diligence should be exhibited when choosing a labor contractor and verifying coverage on a regular basis is important. Many companies lose their insurance and don’t mention it.

Q: A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, THE FDA REVISED ITS DEFINITION OF “HEALTHY” AND HOW THE TERM CAN BE USED WHEN DESCRIBING FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCTS. PLAINTIFF LAWYERS HAVE SEIZED ON THEIR OWN DEFINITIONS OF “HEALTHY,” TAKING AIM AT ADDED SUGARS. WHAT SHOULD COMPANIES BE AWARE OF TO AVOID RISK OF ACTION?

A: Nair

First, no matter how careful and compliant food and beverage companies are with their product advertising, there is still a risk of a class action lawsuit. Companies should factor this risk into their operating budget and be ready to take action. These lawsuits are most likely to be brought in California, New York and Illinois due to the broad interpretation of the reasonable consumer standard by the Ninth, Second and Eleventh Circuit Courts of Appeal. Companies should be aware that all aspects of a product’s label, packaging, advertising, website and social media campaigns could be subject to false advertising claims.

Q: HAVE FOOD & BEVERAGE TRADE SHOWS MADE A FULL COMEBACK SINCE HAVING TO SHUT DOWN A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO?

A: Kemmerly

100%, depending on the show. Here in So Cal we have the Natural Products Expo West in Anaheim that just took place in March. It is one of the largest tradeshow for the natural, organic and healthy products industry. It’s considered a key event for networking, highlighting products and staying updated on industry trends and innovations. In the past five years I’ve attended, I’ve walked away in awe of the creativity and flavors these companies have come up with. A lot of companies I’ve met at the show, their product has become a part of my daily regimen. I built my book of business and made long-lasting business relationships by attending tradeshow. Even in our new digital world, there is still a people aspect to the business. You must taste, touch, hear and see the product to learn and understand it.

Q: WHAT IS THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITY YOU ARE CURRENTLY SEEING FOR THE INDUSTRY?

A: Banks

The greatest opportunity stems from adapting to changing consumer preferences. Established brands are increasingly venturing into new product lines that include non-dairy, gluten-free, plant-based and non-alcoholic options. Alcohol brands are launching non-alcoholic mixers, elixirs and alternatives to traditional

drinks, like beer. These products cater to non-drinkers but are versatile enough to appeal to those who consume alcohol. As companies diversify their offerings, many are restructuring their operations to support these new lines, often necessitating corporate reorganization, investment in intellectual property, significant capital raises and fundraising.

Q: HOW IS FOOD SAFETY IMPACTING THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY?

A: Kemmerly

Governing compliance, brand reputation and consumer trust. The food and beverage industry is now a global supply chain. The safeguarding of ingredients and products has become more complex. The use of blockchain can help trace initial ingredients, be more transparent, help mitigate risks and improve liability through the supply chain. Improvements in the food and beverage testing methods and quality control procedures are critical for maintaining ambitious standards and addressing potential safety issues right away.

Q: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST MISTAKES THAT FOOD AND BEVERAGE COMPANIES MAKE?

A: Nair

From a legal perspective, these are some of the most common mistakes I see: (1) *Deficient contracts*: Often, small and midmarket food and beverage companies without in-house counsel will enter into form agreements with suppliers, business partners and investors. If disputes arise, these form contracts may not serve their interests. (2) *Compliance with employment law*: Particularly in California, employment law is unforgiving if employers do not meet all requirements and is fluid because new laws are constantly being added. Failing to understand the requirements of California employment law is a major mistake. (3) *Handshake deals*: Deals with investors and business partners are often made based on trusted relationships and are not properly documented, which can create significant complications and litigation down the line.

A: Banks

One of the biggest mistakes that food and beverage companies make from a regulatory compliance perspective is failing to stay apprised of the constantly changing regulatory landscape applicable to their products. Food and beverage companies need to be aware of federal and state

“*Companies should be aware that all aspects of a product’s label, packaging, advertising, website and social media campaigns could be subject to false advertising claims.*”

— Pooja Nair

requirements applicable to labeling, product composition and marketing statements. Food and beverage companies should also be careful not to rely on their competitor’s practices to ensure regulatory compliance. I’ve seen even large, national companies run afoul of regulatory requirements. While it is helpful to be aware of your competitor’s practices, that knowledge should be a starting point and not an end-point in any compliance analysis.

Q: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, HOW DO YOU SEE THE INDUSTRY EVOLVING OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

A: Kemmerly

The food and beverage industry will continue to trend upward toward healthier eating habits, sustainability, and technology. Cultural changes toward healthy eating, reading labels and increased awareness of where ingredients are coming from continue to shape the industry’s path. Sustainability is key with eco-friendly packaging, reducing environmental impact and enhancing a company’s brand reputation. Technology, like AI and data analytics, is crucial with innovations in food delivery, personalized nutrition, automation, enhancing food safety, distribution and marketing strategy.

Class of 2024 faces overhaul of traditional grad ceremony

[**Graduation**, from A1] nette Ricchiazzi, a USC alumna whose daughter graduates this month with an undergraduate degree in theater. The closest family members will attend a ceremony at the Bing Theater, where tickets per student are always limited to four. But grandparents and other relatives had hoped to join the main stage ceremony and other events.

“Not anymore,” Ricchiazzi said. “And with all the security now up, am I supposed to try to get my mother and mother-in-law in wheelchairs to come and just hang around outside where nothing is happening that involves their granddaughter?”

Only Ricchiazzi, her husband and their two other children will attend the Wednesday theater commencement.

USC has also instituted a “clear bag” rule and will run guests through metal detectors as they enter the typically open campus gates. Aiming to offset the disappointment, the university has cobbled together a new “Trojan Family” event that will take place Thursday evening in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. It promises a marching band, fireworks and a drone show.

A nondenominational, interfaith baccalaureate was scheduled for that night in Bovard Auditorium — near the site of the former encampment. On Sunday, a USC spokesman said the event was canceled.

“Due to the recent changes in our commencement exercises, we will not host our annual baccalaureate ceremony in its traditional format. Instead, we will offer an online interfaith blessing for our graduating students and their families,” said Joel Curran, USC’s senior vice president for communications.

Faith-specific commencement events, including a gathering for Catholic students and a new commemoration for Jewish graduates on Friday organized by the USC Hillel and Chabad centers, are also planned.

In total, USC expects to dole out more than 18,000 degrees Wednesday through Saturday in dozens of commencement events.

The outcome of USC’s graduation, one of the earliest in the state, could set the stage for end-of-year celebrations nationwide. In Los

Angeles, another large commencement will unfold June 14 at UCLA, where law enforcement arrested more than 200 people last week after entering a pro-Palestinian encampment. UCLA has not announced changes to its three identical graduation ceremonies in Pauley Pavilion.

Cal Poly Humboldt, where police last week arrested dozens of pro-Palestinian protesters who had barricaded themselves in campus buildings, announced Friday that it will hold three off-campus graduations at venues that include a casino and a high school — instead of one large ceremony at the Redwood Bowl stadium.

“I know it’s just a ceremony, but it’s tradition and I’m disappointed that I cannot graduate in the same place where my father did,” said Ruby Cayenne, a Cal Poly Humboldt senior who will receive a degree in journalism. “For a while, we weren’t sure if we’d have any graduation at all.”

At UC Berkeley, where commencement is May 14, no changes have been announced. There is an encampment of more than 100 tents at the school. The administration has maintained a hands-off approach to the protest.

Across the nation, similar frustrations and debates over graduation are playing out as protesting students argue that their movement to end the Israel’s war in Gaza, which local authorities say has killed 34,000 Palestinians and the United Nations says has left millions in food scarcity, should take precedence over commencement business as usual. Israel’s retaliatory war began after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack, which killed roughly 1,200 people in the country and took 240 hostage, many of whom are believed to be held in Gaza.

At Columbia University, where more than 100 protesters were arrested last week, the New York Police Department plans to remain on campus through May 17, two days past the university’s commencement.

Minouche Shafik, the Columbia University president, has said she does not want to “deprive thousands of students and their families and friends of a graduation celebration.”

“Many in this graduating class did not get a celebration when graduating from



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

THE OUTCOME OF USC’S graduation, one of the earliest in the state, could set the stage for end-of-year celebrations nationwide. Above, two graduates look over vacant tables and chairs at Alumni Park on April 27.



MICHAEL BLACKSHIRE Los Angeles Times

A PAINTING ON campus grounds references Asna Tabassum, the USC valedictorian whose speech was called off after critics accused her of antisemitism.

high school because of the pandemic,” she said in recent remarks.

A pro-Palestinian camp is also set up at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where more than 8,000 students attended a Saturday graduation at Michigan Stadium. The university said in a statement that “commencement ceremonies have been the site of free expression and peaceful protest for decades.” At the same time, security procedures similar to those at football game were in place. There were boos as well as cheers as people unfurled Palestinian flags during the event.

At USC on Friday, about 40 tents and dozens of people, the majority of them students, were present in Alumni Park, the center of campus. Posted signs demanded the university to divest from companies tied to the Israel-Hamas war — a request the university has not accepted.

Students entering campus must go through one of two entrances, show their student ID and have their bags searched. Fencing directs students to security checkpoints. The university also announced Friday that it paused a visitor registration system that allowed students to bring in guests.

As demonstrators studied for finals and held teach-ins in the encampment, students nearby who weren’t activists took photos in graduation regalia by the Tommy Trojan statue and other scenic spots.

Others, such as Sammie Sorsby-Jones, avoided the area. Sorsby-Jones, a 22-year-old senior majoring in law, history and culture with a minor in gender studies, said that campus felt “apocalyptic.”

“I can’t take walks around campus and reflect on the different memories I have in each building when there’s lines to get into cam-

pus and the buildings are surrounded by fences,” she said.

Sorsby-Jones chose not to take graduation photos at landmarks directly next to the encampment.

“It’s not the protesters’ fault, and I know people can still take grad photos there, but it just feels strange,” she said. “It’s this constant reminder of a deeply not normal graduation in a way that does make it difficult to celebrate yourself, because the end of my college experience just feels like it pales in comparison to everything that’s going on right now.”

Speaking to a reporter before the camp was cleared on Sunday, a spokesperson for student activists said, “No matter how this occupation goes down, it’s still a win for us because we have caused a disruption and discomfort to the USC administration. We have ended business as usual for the past few weeks.”

L.A. influencers, businesses fear loss of revenue if TikTok is banned

[**TikTok**, from A1] ence on the app and make money doing it — whether by selling products or partnering with brands.

But Hurst, along with many other creators and influencers, is now wondering whether Washington could threaten the progress he’s made with his business.

After President Biden signed a bill into law that would ban the Chinese-owned app in the U.S. unless it is sold to an American company, social media experts said the economic effects would extend beyond individual creators such as Hurst.

TikTok has advantages that set it apart from other platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat, Hurst and other creators said.

“What makes TikTok special is the algorithm,” Hurst said, noting that if TikTok’s owners sell the app, the algorithm could change.

As with other social networks, TikTok uses a secret algorithm to determine which videos to show to each user, based on what they’ve seen before and with whom they have interacted. What sets it apart is the videos are usually short, informal and designed to entertain, and many spark conversations among creators.

Many small businesses prefer TikTok because of its informality — they don’t need a big production budget to showcase their products or services. They

just need a good hook to grab viewers, and once they’ve gone viral a time or two and established their niche, TikTok will bring the viewers to them.

A ban on TikTok would have cascading effects — especially in Los Angeles, where so many influencers live and work. The Hollywood apartment complex 1600 Vine, for example, is considered by many to be a headquarters for content creators.

That address isn’t the only hub for TikTok stars. Another group lives in a Beverly Hills home dubbed the Clubhouse. If TikTok is banned in the U.S., many creators would lose large portions of their business, they said.

But a sale doesn’t solve every problem either. Some players are already lining up to buy the app even though it’s not yet for sale. And creators such as the Clubhouse residents, who make content as their full-time job, fear a new TikTok ownership could make it harder to attract an audience.

Any ban is expected to face legal challenges and delays, and TikTok executives have said there will be no immediate effect on the app.

Roughly 7 million small-business owners and 1 million influencers rely on TikTok for their livelihoods, according to Rory Cutaia, who owns a livestream social media shopping platform that has partnered with TikTok Shop.



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE Associated Press

SUPPORTERS of a TikTok ban gather in Washington in March. A ban would hurt small businesses.

Cutaia’s platform Market.Live helps small-business owners launch on TikTok, where they also often post videos about their products. TikTok Shop receives around 6,000 applications from small businesses each day, Cutaia said.

Banning TikTok would send ripple effects through the economy because it’s become a primary platform for emerging companies, he said.

“You’re probably talking about billions of dollars that would be removed from the economy,” Cutaia said. “The entire world of retail has changed completely. Today, you need to be distributing your products through social media.”

Adam Sommers, who owns Willow Boutique with Chelsea Sommers, said TikTok leveled the playing field for small businesses. His

was one of the first to sell merchandise on TikTok Shop.

“Everybody had an opportunity to become the next giant in their industry,” Sommers said. “A lot of people have scaled probably beyond their wildest dreams.”

Influencers don’t need to own a business to make money on TikTok, one creator said. They also don’t need to have huge followings to make significant profits, according to said Denise Butler, chief executive of the company that owns Market.Live.

“TikTok very uniquely sets up a content creator to build community and provides amazing exposure,” said Payton Reed, a lifestyle blogger in Memphis, Tenn., with around 16,000 followers. “When I first started blogging and creating content, I didn’t realize that it could

eventually turn into a career.”

Reed makes money sharing links to other products. She was able to help support her husband financially through medical school with her content creator income, she said.

For small-business owners, TikTok Shop makes it “frictionless” to sell and buy products on the app, Butler said. Users can shop while watching a relevant video, interact with others who have purchased the product and complete the purchase without leaving the app.

Although some say TikTok is superior to other platforms for its e-commerce functionality, not everyone relies solely on the app.

Adam Waheed, a sketch-comedy content creator in Los Angeles, said it’s important to have income from more than one platform. He made around \$11 million last year across his social media platforms, including Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and Facebook.

“We’ve worked so hard to build these platforms,” Waheed said. “I think for certain creators who rely more on TikTok, it’s going to be much more of an issue,” he said of the potential ban.

TikTok users in L.A. include small-business owners, content creators and everyday users who can engage with millions of personalities and products. The app is its own local economy, and a ban would leave a gaping hole, creators said.

According to a study from TikTok and Oxford Economics, 890,000 businesses and 16 million people actively use TikTok in California. Forty percent of small to midsize businesses in the state said TikTok was crucial to their business.

TikTok also released national economic data showing the app drove \$15 billion in revenue for small businesses.

“More than half of small-business owners say TikTok allows them to connect with customers they can’t reach anywhere else,” the report said.

Content creators and the companies that work with them aren’t the only ones concerned about a potential TikTok ban. Sen. Laphonza Butler (D-Calif.) recently wrote a letter to Biden urging him to consider how a ban would affect laborers. “Approximately 8,000 people work for TikTok in the United States, concentrated in California and New York,” the letter said. “Their employment and the livelihoods of their families hang in the balance.”

The senator said a ban would harm small-business owners, contractors and other workers, including janitors and servers who help businesses run.

“We need to be taking the time to consider the broader economic impacts,” she said in an interview with The Times. “There are thousands of workers who I think are not being considered.”

BUSINESS

BOILING POINT

A grand bargain to end solar squabbling

The infighting in California is embarrassing. Newsom needs to deliver resolution and address climate crisis.

SAMMY ROTH

Gov. Gavin Newsom's appointees could vote this week on a widely criticized plan that climate activists, solar installers and labor unions say would pointlessly slow California efforts to phase out fossil fuels and limit energy bills for low-income families.

A few days later, Newsom will travel to the Vatican, at Pope Francis' invitation, to speak about the urgency of the climate crisis.

The dissonance would be funny if it weren't so scary.

California is still a global leader in combating the deadly consequences of coal, oil and gas combustion. Newsom has played a role by requiring an end to the sale of cars and light trucks that run solely on oil-based fuels by 2035.

But monopoly utility companies such as Pacific Gas & Electric and Southern California Edison — and the politically powerful labor unions that represent many of their employees, most notably Local 1245 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers — have engaged in a remarkably successful campaign to reduce financial incentives for rooftop solar panels, which don't fuel utility industry profits and are typically installed by nonunion workers.

Some environmental groups, meanwhile, support rooftop solar but have questioned the wisdom of building large solar farms on undisturbed public lands that are currently home to tortoises, sage grouse and other animals. Some conservationists have tried to block construction of those solar farms despite a mountain of evidence that we'll need tons of them to avert a future of ever-worsening heat waves, wildfires, storms and droughts.

In theory, nearly all of the key players duking it out in Sacramento — utility companies, unions, rooftop solar installers, consumer watchdogs, environmental groups, large-scale solar developers — agree that we'll need lots of solar from lots of sources.

Massive solar projects in the desert, small rooftop systems — all of the above, please. In a state still heavily dependent on planet-warming natural gas for electricity, there are plenty of climate-friendly electrons — and plenty of jobs — to go around.

In theory, anyway.

In practice, unfortunately, many suppliers and supporters of large-scale and rooftop solar have done hardly anything to help each other politically. And some of them have torn each other to shreds. Especially in California, this solar infighting is exasperating and increasingly embarrassing. With time running short to stop burning most if not all fossil fuels, it needs to end.

We could use a grand bargain — a political masterstroke to end the solar squabbling.

The issue being voted on by Newsom's appointees this week was the subject of such a deal, on a smaller scale.

In contrast to the battle over rooftop solar incentives — which were reduced dramatically after a 5-0 vote by the governor's appointees to the California Public Utilities Commission, triggering a sharp drop in new business and layoffs across the industry — small-scale solar developers managed to secure broad support for "community solar" incentives.

Community solar projects are much smaller than desert solar farms and constructed near neighborhoods. Apartment renters and others who can't install rooftop panels, or can't afford them, sign up to buy some of the energy, lowering their utility bills.

Thus far, California has lagged far behind other states on community solar. But an incentive program crafted by community solar companies won the backing of the Utility Reform Network, an influential consumer watchdog group that had campaigned to cut rooftop solar incentives. Although the group had argued that rooftop solar incentives raise electricity bills for everyone, it got on board with community solar because of an incentive structure that it believed would limit the "cost shift."

The Coalition of California Utility Employees — whose members include IBEW Local 1245 — also broke with its past opposition to small-scale solar and lobbied for the community solar plan, which would require union-level wages for workers.

Alas, all that coalition-building



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

SOLAR PROJECTS surround Imperial Valley farmland, which is irrigated by Colorado River water. In theory, nearly all of the key players fighting in Sacramento agree that California will need lots of solar from lots of sources, climate columnist Sammy Roth says.



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

RENTERS and others who cannot install rooftop panels, or can't afford them, sign up to buy some of the energy to lower their utility bills. Above, a house in Brea gets solar panels helped in 2023.

might be for naught.

Public Utilities Commission staff recommended that Newsom's commissioners instead approve a different community solar plan proposed by Edison. Critics say Edison's proposal would stop community solar from gaining a foothold.

"The economics are just nonviable," said Brandon Smithwood, vice president of policy at Dimension Renewable Energy.

It's unclear whether Newsom's appointees will approve the Edison-backed plan. The vote is scheduled for Thursday.

In the meantime, Newsom and his deputies have been hearing from folks across the political spectrum.

Neil Chatterjee, who was nominated by President Trump to run a federal energy agency, wrote to Alice Reynolds, president of the Public Utilities Commission, questioning the legal logic espoused by Edison and endorsed by commission staffers. If Edison's plan is approved, Chatterjee wrote, the legal basis could be used to undermine community solar programs across the country.

Smithwood also told me he's heard from multiple people that New York Gov. Kathy Hochul called Newsom's office to express that the Public Utilities Commission proposal could undermine community solar in her state. Smithwood has also heard that President Biden's clean energy advisor, John Podesta, contacted Newsom's office to request stronger support for community solar.

A spokesperson for New York's state energy agency didn't respond to my request for comment on whether such a phone call took place. A White House official who works with Podesta declined to discuss any communications that may have occurred.

Newsom spokesperson Alex Stack declined to comment directly on the utilities commission process.

Edison put me on the phone with Erica Bowman, vice president of strategy, planning and performance. She said the company's position on community solar

has been driven by a desire to keep electric bills from rising too much higher at a time when volatile gas prices and costly investments in burying power lines to prevent wildfire ignitions are already pushing up rates. She noted that the utility commission's internal ratepayer watchdog supports the Edison-backed proposal.

"We're supportive of solar. We just want it to be fairly compensated," Bowman said.

But what does "fair compensation" look like? What does "fair" even mean in the world we live in today?

This is why I keep circling back to the idea of a grand bargain to end the solar squabbling.

Again, most experts and advocates agree we need lots of solar facilities big and small to replace all the gas plants still churning away in California, plus the nearly three dozen coal plants scattered across the American West. And we need to start building all that solar fast, with scientists calling for global reductions in climate pollution of more than 40% by 2030.

The main problem isn't technology. It's politics. How can we speed up construction of every kind of solar without falling victim to the political trip wires of utilities designed to serve investors above all else, and unions hard-wired to block anything built by nonunion labor, and environmentalists uncomfortable with the idea of covering even small portions of the desert with solar?

In other words, how can well-meaning citizens persuade their elected officials to stop digging in their heels on one particular type of solar and start making the difficult compromises that will be needed to avoid the worst harms of the climate crisis?

I pitched my "grand bargain" concept to 10 veterans of California climate policy. I suggested that if the sparring parties start supporting each other's policy priorities, they might get things done that they otherwise wouldn't have accomplished.

On the whole, my sources weren't especially optimistic.

One problem: The deep-pocketed utility workers unions don't

really need help at the Capitol. Scott Wetch, who's spent 30 years lobbying for IBEW Local 1245, admitted as much when I asked what it would take to get him to the bargaining table.

"There's not many legislative wins that have eluded us," he said. Bernadette Del Chiaro, executive director of the California Solar & Storage Assn., was similarly dour on my pitch.

She walked me through a long list of pro-rooftop solar bills that she said Wetch and his allies at Edison and PG&E thwarted last month, including one that would have stopped utilities from spending customer money on what critics call thinly veiled public relations campaigns, and another that would have required the Public Utilities Commission to take a broader view of the benefits of rooftop solar.

"We've run into a buzz saw deep in the bowels of the hallways of power," Del Chiaro said.

Still, Del Chiaro sounded hopeful that so many pro-rooftop solar bills were introduced. She thinks lawmakers are responding to a groundswell of public support for the technology after the decision to slash rooftop solar incentives.

Laura Deehan, who leads the advocacy group Environment California, is similarly skeptical that there's a game-changing deal to be made with utilities and unions on rooftop solar. To her mind, the key is building on public frustration with last year's incentive cuts, and pressuring legislators until they're forced to act.

"We've got to figure out who's with us, and work with them to be louder and more persuasive than the other side," she said.

If that's possible, excellent. The question is whether it's possible.

My advice to the folks fighting for rooftop and community solar is to keep fighting — but also not underestimate the potential for some dealmaking. Maybe not with IBEW Local 1245, but with Edison, PG&E and San Diego Gas & Electric, and with the developers building big solar farms that hook up to the power lines operated by those utility companies.

If you're a rooftop solar installer, it may seem like life is pretty easy for Edison, PG&E and SDG&E. By comparison, it is.

But the utilities still face obstacles as they hurry to meet the state's climate goals. The same goes for large-scale solar, wind and power-line developers. Those obstacles include arduously slow permitting for energy projects, opposition from conservationists and farmers to industrial solar projects, and an absurd backlog of renewable power plants waiting to plug into the grid.

The hard-core conservationists most fiercely opposed to building solar in the desert are unlikely to bend. And the mainstream environmental groups more likely to compromise don't wield huge amounts of political power in Sacramento.

But if those groups were willing to talk about streamlined permitting for solar farms and electric lines in areas with not as many environmental conflicts, such as agricultural lands where water is increasingly scarce? That could be an "important starting point" for discussions, said Shannon Eddy, executive director of the Large-scale Solar Assn.

"We cannot litigate every single solar project. People have to let go," Eddy said. "There are going to be trade-offs."

Edison and PG&E, meanwhile, have staked their growth to an all-electric future in which solar panels, wind turbines and batteries fuel a world of electric cars, heat pumps and induction stoves. That means the utilities need political support for highly profitable but difficult-to-permit transmission lines that connect distant solar and wind farms with big cities.

"How can we get [transmission] projects moving much more quickly than they are today?" Edison's Bowman asked.

After asking my Sacramento-savvy contacts about the grand bargain concept, I'm not sure if I'm more or less convinced that it's a good idea. But I have concluded that if it's going to happen, there's basically one person who can bring it about.

That would be the governor. Newsom has delved into thorny energy politics before — at least when he found it necessary to avoid a repeat of 2020's brief rolling blackouts.

He averted the closure of the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant, which aligned with his climate goals. He ensured that several coastal gas plants would keep running beyond their planned shutdown dates. And his move to end the sale of most gasoline cars by 2035 was the kind of signature climate accomplishment that would make great fodder for a presidential run.

Will Newsom be willing to bring California's ridiculous solar infighting to a long-overdue end?

We could get an early glimpse this week, with the scheduled vote on community solar.

After that, maybe Pope Francis can share some words of wisdom with the governor.

This column is the latest edition of Boiling Point, an email newsletter about climate change and the environment in California and the American West. For more climate and environment news, follow @Sammy_Roth on X.

OPINION

EDITORIAL

Presidential debates need rules of civility enforced

Break out the hook? We don't want a repeat of the chaos of the 2020 Biden-Trump debates.

PRESIDENT BIDEN's statement that he would be "happy" to debate Donald J. Trump means that voters will have at least one opportunity to see the two major-party candidates answer questions side by side.

Aside from satisfying some viewers' interest in whether the elderly candidates display mental lapses, debates offer an opportunity for voters to compare the candidates' temperaments and glean differences on issues. This is especially useful for those who don't follow presidential campaigns closely.

That said, Biden could have declined to debate Trump on the legitimate grounds that his likely opponent is not a normal candidate but an unhinged former president who sought to overturn an election he lost — an outrageous campaign that culminated in the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol by his followers. In commenting on Trump's absence from debates during the Republican primary campaign, the editorial board wrote: "No one who has attempted to overturn the will of the voters deserves to be on a debate stage again."

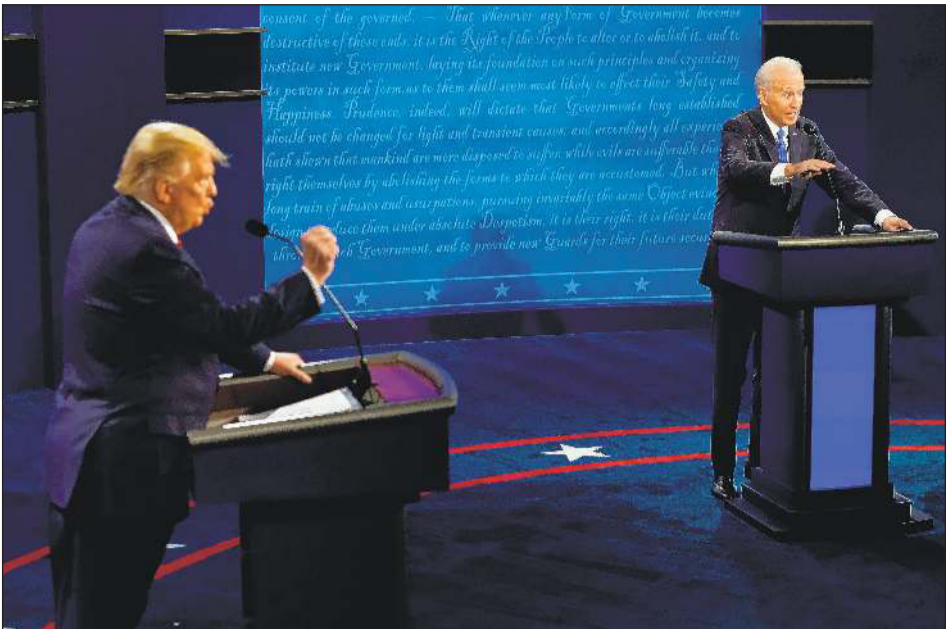
But now that Trump is the presumptive Republican nominee — an indelible stain on the party that has normalized him — it's impossible to have a meaningful debate with-

out him. By participating, Biden has the opportunity to delineate his differences with his predecessor on everything from abortion rights to the economy to foreign policy. Trump likewise will be able to interrogate Biden on his record.

The question is whether Trump will sabotage the civic purpose of presidential debates, as he did when he went berserk in his first debate with Biden in 2020, incessantly interrupting his opponent and spewing vitriol.

Ideally the moderator of any 2024 presidential debate would have the steely fortitude of Juan M. Merchan, the judge presiding over Trump's criminal trial in New York City. Debate moderators can't hold candidates in contempt of court, levy fines or have misbehaving candidates physically removed, but they aren't without the authority to keep participants on track. For instance, they can deal decisively with nominees who bluster, bully, ignore time limits and engage in name-calling by shutting off their microphones.

Trump also should not be permitted to meander endlessly into irrelevancies (nor should Biden) or be allowed to roam around the stage to loom over his rival, as he did during a 2016 presidential debate with Hillary Clinton. Keeping the candidates on topic will be easier if the debates are divided into subject areas. We say "debates" in the plural because multiple encounters at least potentially expand the ground that candidates can cover, as well as assure candidates that they won't be devastated by one bad night.



MORRY GASH Pool Photo

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE Joe Biden answers a question as then-President Trump also speaks during the second and final presidential debate in 2020.

The nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates has announced dates for three presidential debates — Sept. 16, Oct. 1 and Oct. 9 — and one between vice presidential nominees on Sept. 25.

(The Trump campaign has complained that the commission hasn't scheduled debates soon enough to accommodate early voters. In California, ballots will be mailed out by Oct. 7 and ballot drop-off locations will open Oct. 8. But the commission on Wednesday said that its timetable was based on factors including "religious and federal holidays, early voting, and the dates on which individual states close their ballots.")

Ideally all three debates will go forward,

but Biden should feel free to reconsider if Trump doesn't follow the debate rules.

In an open letter calling for Trump and Biden to debate, a group of news organizations (not including the Los Angeles Times) wrote: "If there is one thing Americans can agree on during this polarized time, it is that the stakes of this election are exceptionally high. Amidst that backdrop, there is simply no substitute for the candidates debating with each other, and before the American people, their visions for the future of our nation."

Yet for debates to fulfill that function there must be rules of civility and common decency — and candidates must abide by them.

LETTERS



MARY ALTAPFER Associated Press

POLICE IN riot gear stand guard near demonstrators outside Columbia University in New York on April 18.

The unrest that Trump needs?

Re "What we're getting wrong about protests," Opinion, May 1

JONAH GOLDBERG WRITES: "The nostalgic champions of the campus protests of the '60s would have Americans believe they were a heroic success, stopping the Vietnam War. But what they actually helped achieve was Richard Nixon's election and seven more years of war."

Goldberg nails it.

No matter where you stand on the protests currently taking place on college campuses, those opposed to them will use the demonstrations as an argument to impose law and order. Those who want that tend to see former President Trump as the solution (except, of course, when they happen to be the disrupters, as on Jan. 6, 2021).

When Trump becomes president, what will the protesters do then?

JOHN GOODMAN, Oak Park

For all of Goldberg's well-taken points, he slips in some that trouble me.

He loosely conflates progressives and elites, as if they've conspired to prod counterproductive and even violent protests, and adds that they have "shaped the narratives of ... entertainment."

I heartily agree with Goldberg's intimation that over the past 60 years, the downward spiral of entertainment has been tied to the devolution of our politics. Perhaps the most distressing evidence is seen in pervasive degradation of the Walter Cronkite era's gold standard of straightforward, unbiased news.

In recent decades, an abundance of "alternative news" sources has proliferated, with emphasis on titillating "infotainment" to supplant evenhanded news

presentations. That sad trend has accompanied the emergence of "reality" TV shows that serve the tawdry tastes of those who prefer biased news sources.

No doubt some progressive "elites" have exploited this woeful turn. But far more conservative elites have profited immensely from canonizing a onetime reality show impresario's democracy-eroding rise to power.

Goldberg should concede that their targeted audiences would never think of protesting wars that powerful conservatives are loath to condemn.

P. JANE WEIL
Sacramento

::

Goldberg trivializes student protests as a fashionable rite of passage for

college students who are oftentimes ignorant of the issues they are protesting. I beg to differ.

The gross injustice of canceling the valedictorian's speech at USC starkly represented how our government and university institutions have allowed the depraved Gaza tragedy to continue by silencing dissident voices.

Students are galvanized to protest this tragic injustice through peaceful demonstrations. The object of their fury is Zionism, not members of the Jewish community, many of whom are the leaders of this resistance.

I believe that Goldberg and some politicians are minimizing the passionate determination of our students. We have only to look back to the Vietnam War when protests helped to

bring that tragedy to an end.

JOSEPH TILLOTSON
Redondo Beach

::

I wish Goldberg had "salted this column with examples of today's protesters revealing how little they know about the issues supposedly motivating them — or of fawning coverage of mobs siding with terrorists."

What's so upsetting about these protests is that I imagine that the majority of these students have no idea that Hamas wants to annihilate Jews across the world. Do they understand that Hamas is willing to sacrifice its own people to achieve that goal?

I protested the Vietnam War and totally support the right to gather, but this isn't

the same. Then, no one feared going on campus or attending classes.

I wish for peace and the release of the hostages. I wish for the end of suffering on both sides. I wish for a two-state solution, if that's possible. My mother was a Holocaust survivor. She used to say "never again," but it's again and again and again.

MARGIE FRIEDMAN
Santa Monica

Dilemma: Do nothing, or jail

Re "Could Trump go to jail for contempt?" Opinion, May 2

Both former President Trump and New York Judge Juan M. Merchan are in an extremely tough spot.

Trump's whole brand is based on not showing weakness. He absolutely cannot afford to abide by any of the judge's orders.

Merchan, meanwhile, has an affirmative duty to maintain order and protect the process of justice. The only tools he has to enforce his authority are fines and jail. Given Trump's wealth, imposing fines of a few thousand dollars is worse than useless. Never mind deterrence — I think it actually encourages him.

In other words, the judge has only two options: Do nothing, or put Trump in jail. I can see he doesn't want to do this lightly because of the legal and media storm that would follow. But if he can't control his courtroom, maybe he should take himself off this case.

These two are on a collision course, whether they like it or not.

PETER SCOFIELD
Corona del Mar

::

The juxtaposition of Trump's hush money trial in New York and the college protests highlights a glaring double standard.

On the one hand, House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) and other Republicans in Congress have called for the National Guard to be deployed in response to the student demonstrations. Similarly, Trump called the sight of riot police clearing protesters from Columbia University in New York "a beautiful thing."

On the other hand, Trump rails against the New York court's order to

stop his efforts to intimidate witnesses, complaining that his 1st Amendment right to free speech is being denied. Further, Republicans have complained about conservatives being unable to speak on college campuses.

What hypocrisy!

BONNIE COHEN
Cardiff, Calif.

::

One hears with increasing frequency that Trump wants to be jailed because it plays into his "I am a victim" reelection strategy. In effect, he wants to use a cold, dark jail as a setting for his act.

If Trump continues to defy the New York court's gag order, he should be confined, as would any other defendant engaging in such conduct. However, the place of Trump's confinement shouldn't be the big house, as in a jail cell, but the truly big house — as in his gilded New York apartment.

Forcing Trump to claim that confinement to his 11,000-square-foot aerie is cruel might be a more effective way to bring him to heel than any conventional punishment.

MARK STEINBERG
Los Angeles

Yes, that would be antisemitic

Re "Why is Israel singled out?" letters, May 2

In a letter, a "proud Jewish academic" asks if acknowledging that nothing happening to Jews in this country equals or surpasses the devastation in Gaza makes him an antisemite.

By that logic, can the legitimate concerns of Black, transgender or any other group of Americans be similarly dismissed since they are not currently living in a war zone?

Or are Jewish Americans' concerns the only ones held to this dismissive standard, as though Jews are somehow "responsible" for the war based on their ethnicity?

Believing that would be antisemitic.

LAURA DRABKIN
North Hollywood

HOW TO WRITE TO US

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OP-ED



CHARLY TRIBALLEAU Pool Photo

A truly terrible, horrible, no good, very bad Trump 2.0

Don't let holding former president accountable for his deeds cloud your vision on what he could do next.

JACKIE CALMES

MILLIONS OF US ARE justifiably focused on seeing that Donald Trump is held to account for what he's allegedly done in the past.



Scheming to flip the legitimate 2020 election result and resisting the peaceful transfer of power, a first for U.S. presidents. Making off with top-secret documents and conspiring to hide them from the feds. Falsifying business records to keep hush money paid to a porn star a secret from voters in 2016.

We mustn't lose sight, however, of what Trump *will* do, if — despite all that baggage — he defeats Joe Biden to become president again. His fever dreams are no secret. He's told us, and his henchmen have, too, in interviews and in exhaustive, scary detail in their so-called Project 2025 blueprint for a second Trump term.

Among Trump's first acts? Turning the historically independent Justice Department into his personal law firm, chock-full of taxpayer-paid Roy Cohns ready to dump the criminal cases against the boss.

And then, despite Trump's arguments to the Supreme Court

that presidents must have legal immunity (something no other president ever sought), he'll sic his government prosecutors on Biden. As he told Time magazine for its recent cover story, "Biden, I am sure, will be prosecuted for all of his crimes." What crimes? Trump doesn't say and his Republican flunkies in the House have come up with bubkes after more than a year of investigation.

Focusing on Trump's plans is important in its own right. But it's all the more crucial for voters given that accountability for his past acts is proving so elusive, thanks to Republican appointees on the Supreme Court and the rookie Trump judge handling the classified documents case in Florida. They're indulging his sand-in-the-gears legal tactics and engineering their own. The hush money case could well be the only one to reach a verdict before November.

That Trump 2.0 hasn't gotten more attention is a reflection of just how normalized his outrageousness has become — and how distracted voters and the media have been by the prosecutions of Trump 1.0.

In any other era, proposals like these would be big news: The National Guard, and perhaps the military, too, rounding up and deporting an estimated 11 million people who came to this country illegally, most of them years ago, and who now hold jobs, pay taxes and raise children who are citizens. Huge detention camps for migrants. National Guard troops policing city streets at presidential whim. A rollback of climate change

programs to "drill, baby, drill."

For voters not inclined to wade through the voluminous Project 2025, Time's cover story provided a CliffsNotes version, "If He Wins ... How Far Trump Would Go." He sat for two interviews with the reporter, reflecting his longtime obsession with being a Time coverboy; pre-presidency, he had a fake cover created and hung framed copies in his clubs until the magazine asked that he remove them. (The truly "fake news" headline: "TRUMP IS HITTING ON ALL FRONTS ... EVEN TV!")

His second-term agenda reflects lessons gleaned from the first. Chiefly this one, which is how the Time piece begins: "He was too nice."

Trump unleashed would hire only advisors who agree that the 2020 election was stolen from him. He'd "absolutely" pardon every rioter convicted and charged with Jan. 6 crimes (more than 800 have pleaded guilty or been convicted by juries). He'd gut the civil service and revert to a spoils system of MAGA loyalists. He'd spend federal funds as he wanted, not as annual budget laws stipulated. And because "there is a definite anti-white feeling in this country," he'd look into changing laws that are "very unfair" to white Americans.

Trump would almost certainly spur inflation by raising tariffs at least 10% on all imports and up to 100% on Chinese goods. He simply dismisses multiple analyses that found his earlier tariffs on steel and aluminum imports raised prices for U.S. manufacturers and consumers and cost hundreds of

FORMER PRESIDENT Trump at Manhattan criminal court on Friday.

thousands of jobs. Steel companies "love me because I saved their industry," he said. In fact, whole operations shuttered and the number of steelworker jobs shrank over his term.

On foreign policy, Trump stood by his talk of encouraging the Russians "to do whatever the hell they want" to NATO allies he believes aren't spending enough on their own defense. He told Time he "wouldn't give a penny" to Ukraine unless Europe ponies up equally, which — contrary to Trump's claims — it already is doing.

The former president fell back on his new states' rights stance on abortion to dismiss all questions about the issue. Say red states want to monitor women's pregnancies to police compliance with their abortion bans. "I think they might do that," he said, and "it's irrelevant whether I'm comfortable or not" with that.

Yet Trump might not be as hands-off as this suggests. Project 2025 envisions federal regulatory agencies imposing antiabortion policies and the revival of the 19th century Comstock Act to criminalize mailing abortion pills, now the main method to end pregnancies. Trump's silence about all that is how his allies want it; everyone knows the abortion-rights issue is a loser for him and Republicans in general.

"I just don't want him to shoot off his mouth," one antiabortion ally told the New York Times recently. "I think the pro-life groups should keep their mouths shut as much as possible until the election."

And the more we fixate on his current legal travails, to the exclusion of divining his future plans, the easier that cover-up will be.

@jackiecalmes

Does City Council really want ethics reform?

By Sean McMorris

LOS ANGELES CITY government has a corruption problem. Since 2020, three L.A. council members and a former deputy mayor were found guilty of or pleaded guilty to such charges as bribery and lying to authorities, another council member has been charged with embezzlement, perjury and conflict of interest, and yet another stands accused of violating city ethics laws. During the same period, three other council members (including a former City Council president) were caught on tape engaging in racist commentary as they discussed how to gerrymander council districts to their advantage.

This cascade of scandals has eroded trust in local government. Now the City Council is considering charter reforms that would grant new powers to the Los Angeles City Ethics Commission. The council should be commended for attending to its corruption problem. However, the proposed reforms are inadequate.

What is on offer has good points — the reforms include expanding the membership of the Ethics Commission, setting a minimum budget for it and increasing penalties for violations of the L.A. Ethics Code. But the overall package is less than ideal because the City Council will not cede enough of its power to ensure that the commission will have the independence it needs to do its watchdog job.

Specifically, the proposed charter reforms do not grant the Ethics Commission authority to place ordinances related to its mandate directly on the local ballot — without the City Council having the final say.

That kind of independent power has worked well in San Francisco. In 2013-2023, in response to government scandals, the San Francisco Ethics Commission has placed two ethics-related measures on the local ballot. Both passed by significant margins. Those two measures accounted for just 2% of all San Francisco ballot measures during that time period. In other words, the S.F. commission has not abused its authority to independently update the city's ethics laws, as some Los Angeles council members fear would happen in L.A.

Giving the Ethics Commission the power to go directly to voters would not prevent the agency from first engaging with the City Council to achieve its ends. In fact, that would be preferable: Angelenos' elected representatives should be able to weigh in and come to an agreement with the commission on repairing flaws in ethics laws as they arise. But if the council and the commission cannot find common ground, the commissioners need the option of putting an ordinance on the ballot.

In other words, ballot placement would be an action of last resort, a lever to help move the council to adequately address city ethics problems.

Unfortunately, the proposal the full City Council is scheduled to vote on this week only *looks* like it provides a way for the Ethics Commission to enlist voters against a recalcitrant council. The loopholes are gigantic.

First, the charter reforms would allow the commission to place ordinances on the ballot only if the council ignores its proposals altogether or disapproves them with zero amendments. If the council takes up a commission proposal and waters it down or even guts it with amendments, the commission would have no recourse. Worse, if the council ignores or votes no on an ethics reform, and the commission does decide to take it to the ballot, the council could veto that decision.

This is far from the tried and true San Francisco model, and it isn't likely to result in changes that will strike at the heart of corruption: consolidated power and inaction on reform.

The barrage of scandals at L.A. City Hall has created a once-in-a-generation opportunity to clean up Los Angeles government. It should not be squandered with half-fices. The reform package the City Council approves, which will have to be passed by voters in November, should give the Ethics Commission the independence it needs to hold officials accountable to the people they represent.

To meet the moment, the City Council must cede power for the greater good.

SEAN MCMORRIS is the California Common Cause program manager for transparency, ethics and accountability.

How L.A. can include our Indigenous language speakers

The largest population of Native American and Indigenous peoples in any U.S. city needs better data.

By Jessica Cobian, Heidy Melchor and Sebastian Cazares

WHEN ANGELENOS voted in this year's California primary, an important group was left out: speakers of Latin American Indigenous languages such as Zapotec and K'iche', which are not among the 19 languages in which L.A. County provides voting materials. It's a particularly concerning oversight in Los Angeles. Our city has the largest population of Native American and Indigenous peoples of any city in the United States — and their omission has serious implications for inclusion.

Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act requires that counties provide election materials in the language of a linguistic minority that isn't proficient enough in English to vote without help. That group either has to be greater than 10,000 people or represent at least 5% of a county's total population of eligible voters. California also requires tailored ballots, at a lower

threshold than federal law does: Counties here have to translate the ballot for any single-language minority lacking English proficiency if it makes up at least 3% of a precinct's voting-age residents.

To determine compliance with these laws, local and federal authorities look to census data collected every 10 years. But the government has long struggled to provide an accurate count for Latin American people.

Until this year, when the federal government changed the policy after years of debate, the census asked respondents two different questions about whether they were of Latino/Hispanic origin and what their race and ethnicity were. This approach confused some Americans who see their Latino or Hispanic identity as their ethnicity, not distinct from it. The move to combine those questions follows another change that aimed to make the count more accurate: Since 2020, the census has included free-response lines so that people could write in a specific origin, such as German or Nigerian, and counted up to six different origins per respondent, matching those to the broader racial categories such as white and Black.

Allowing those detailed responses seemed to make the data collection more comprehensive, increasing the recorded Latin American Indigenous population by 390.4% from 2010 to 2020. Even so, many scholars, us included, ex-

pect that the census still woefully undercounts the population of Central and South American Indigenous peoples.

More specifically, because it tracks language in much less detail than it does race and ethnicity, it falls short as reliable data for translations. Consider: Although census data documents 22,024 people of Latin American descent in Los Angeles County who speak a language other than English or Spanish — surpassing the Section 203 threshold of 10,000 voters — it does not identify what those languages are.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the nonprofit organization Comunidades Indígenas en Liderazgo (Indigenous Communities in Leadership), or CIELO, collected that missing data. It surveyed Latin American Indigenous communities in Los Angeles and created a map of their language diversity, which shows a concentration of voting-age Zapotec speakers in the Pico-Union and Koreatown areas.

When we overlaid the CIELO map onto a Los Angeles County precinct map, we identified approximately 36 precincts, generally between Wilshire and West Washington boulevards and from South Fairfax Avenue to South Hoover Street, with high concentrations of Zapotec speakers. Our data suggest that these speakers made up more than 12% of adults in those precincts, far exceeding the state requirement of 3%. But because

this level of detail isn't captured by official census figures, these Angelenos can't vote in their primary language.

The effect of this gap extends well beyond voting. For example, Indigenous people from Mexico and Guatemala lacked essential COVID-19 information in their native languages during the pandemic, prompting CIELO and other groups to provide translations. Similarly, during wildfire seasons, translated information on evacuation areas, shelters and air quality has been scarce. While additional nonprofit groups such as the Mixteco/Indígena Community Organizing Project have stepped up to offer translations, the patchwork reliance on volunteers cannot guarantee access for everyone who needs these resources.

As we near the conclusion of the design phase for the 2030 census, we urge the Census Bureau to actively collaborate with Latin American Indigenous stakeholders to ensure a precise count and capture linguistic diversity within these communities. These collaborations should make sure that respondents understand the updates to the census and are equipped to provide accurate answers. They should also explore avenues to collect more detailed language information.

By making sure that every voice is heard and accounted for, we build a more inclusive democracy that reflects the rich diversity of our city.

JESSICA COBIAN is a senior fellow and SEBASTIAN CAZARES is a graduate fellow at the UCLA Voting Rights Project. HEIDY MELCHOR is the founder and alumni advisor of the UCLA Grupo Estudiantil Oaxaqueño.

Once again, East L.A. ponders cityhood

[Arellano, from A1] them create a standalone municipality.

Others have fought to keep the status quo. Voters rejected incorporation in 1933, 1961 and 1975, and campaigns in 1931 and 1963 went nowhere. The late L.A. County Supervisor Gloria Molina was skeptical of the idea, arguing that it didn't make financial sense.

In 2012, the Local Agency Formation Commission — known as LAFCO — rejected a petition for cityhood signed by more than 16,000 people, citing a study that said the proposed city would run a budget deficit within three years because of a lack of revenue. Services such as libraries, law enforcement and parks — which would be funded by the new city — would suffer unless residents immediately paid more taxes, the report said, while warning of an “adverse fiscal impact” on the county.

Carrillo is sponsoring legislation, Assembly Bill 2986, asking LAFCO to create a task force to once again study the issue, this time also examining whether East L.A. can at least become a special district. That would allow residents to vote for an advisory board that could help Supervisor Hilda Solis, whose district includes East L.A., better administer the community.

The proposal has sparked buzz among incorporation hopefuls — and furious pushback from Solis. The supervisor wasn't at the East Los Tacos gathering, but she was on the minds of everyone there. Earlier in the week, Solis had led the Board of Supervisors in unanimously opposing AB 2986 — which is still in committee — while firing off three news releases claiming that “special interests” were behind the bill. She also sent out a bizarre graphic of Whittier Boulevard and its iconic



MEL MELCON Los Angeles Times

SHOPPERS on Whittier Boulevard. If incorporated, East L.A. would tie Laredo, Texas, as the most Latino U.S. city with a population of at least 100,000, at 95.5%.

‘I’m in a place where I no longer want to hear what’s not feasible. I want to hear what’s possible.’

— ASSEMBLYMEMBER WENDY CARRILLO (D-Los Angeles)

arch colored a hellish red, with the slogan “Help Preserve East LA/No on AB 2986” below it. Posters of the image hung on fences near East Los Tacos.

Solis — who kindly closed a Board of Supervisors meeting last year in honor of my late grandmother, a constituent of hers — didn’t hold back when I asked over the phone who the “special interests” were.

“It’s these merchants that are against street vending, cruising,” she responded. “People who are against marijuana dispensaries that are legally regulated and

against affordable housing. Affordable housing, for God’s sake. It’s a group of people who are saying, ‘You’re not helping us,’ and I’m like, ‘Really? I go back a lot to D.C.’”

The former member of Congress and U.S. secretary of Labor claimed that East L.A. residents have been the beneficiary of hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure and services since she was first elected as supervisor in 2014. She cited the LAFCO study as proof that East L.A. wouldn’t be able to make it financially and complained that Carrillo — whom she referred to

only as “the Assembly member” or “the author” — didn’t tell her about the bill.

Solis said she had a right to know about it, since “I’m technically the mayor for the area.”

She also made the weird argument that East L.A. simply isn’t solid enough for cityhood.

“Ten years ago, [the population] was 129,000. Now it’s less than 119,000. That isn’t just endemic of East L.A., but it shows you it’s transitory, and [residents] do better and move to Montebello or El Monte. East L.A. is the start, but you move on. That’s our Mexican American passion, to be able to get stable.”

Perhaps realizing she was coming off as a hater, Solis added, “It doesn’t mean East L.A. is bad. I don’t mean that at all.”

She quickly shot me down when I mentioned that it seems the East L.A. incorporation dream never dies.

“I don’t know that it

never dies. I think it comes up, then it dies.”

Damn.

I don’t doubt Solis’ commitment to East L.A. — but it’s just one part of her district of nearly 2 million people, and she’s just one supervisor out of five. It’s hard enough for any small, unincorporated community to get attention. When you’re as huge as East L.A., it’s probably best to have more than one local elected official looking out for you.

For that official to say a study looking into expanding representation isn’t worth it, because she knows better, comes off like she’s clinging to power.

Solis should’ve been there at East Los Tacos, where the crowd was overwhelmingly in favor of incorporation. They were senior citizens and youngsters, college professors and business owners, political operatives and regular folks I’ve known for years. They grabbed pan dulce and coffee, fact sheets and a form letter arguing in favor of Carrillo’s proposed legislation and vented about what they claimed was decades of political neglect.

“I’m upset. I’m disappointed,” said Laura Barrera, a 49-year-old East L.A. lifer. “It’s a disrespect to this community. I see Atlantic [Boulevard] — it’s not revitalized. I see Whittier [Boulevard] — it hasn’t gotten support. We’re never going to be viable as a community financially unless we have a conversation” about incorporation.

If that happened, East Los Angeles would be the 10th-largest city in L.A. County and would tie Laredo, Texas, as the nation’s most Latino city with a population of more than 100,000, at 95.5%.

It’s that real-life and symbolic power that has motivated activists to repeatedly push for incorporation, said retired Cal State L.A. political science profes-

sor Jaime Regalado. The problem, however, is that proponents have never translated that passion into a movement that holds for long.

“It’s always been, ‘Well, good luck. Make sure you have the right ducks lined up, and then it will be tough,’ ” Regalado said. “The ‘no’ side has done a much better job of selling fear of the unknown, fear of who your neighbor might be.

“I’m not trying to sell the ‘yes’ side short,” he added. “I’m in favor of it, but it’s had a dismal record: 0 for 6 is 0 for 6.”

Eddie Torres, former president of the East Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, opened the East Los Tacos forum by leading the Pledge of Allegiance. He previously opposed incorporation but offered his full support of Carrillo’s bill.

“I’m already 66 years old and on my way out,” said the commercial printer. “But this is for the future.”

Carrillo, who recently placed fourth in the race to challenge Eastside City Councilmember Kevin de León, started by downplaying *chisme* that she cares about East L.A. incorporation only because it would create new elected offices to pursue.

“I’m not trying to be the mayor of East L.A.” the Assembly member said, joking that because she graduated from Roosevelt High in Boyle Heights, “I get booed, but it’s OK!” As if on cue, someone shouted, “Garfield!” Roosevelt’s chief rival, to laughs and applause.

Speaking calmly in English and Spanish, Carrillo — who was a volunteer for the unsuccessful 2012 incorporation attempt — gave a short history of previous efforts. She noted how neighboring cities over the decades have chipped away at East L.A.’s tax base by swallowing up vital assets like industrial parks and East Los Angeles Community College, which is actually in Monterey Park.

“If the fiscal study at the end of the day says [incorporation or special district status is] not possible, it’s not possible,” she said. “But I’m in a place where I no longer want to hear what’s not feasible. I want to hear what’s possible.”

Other speakers followed Carrillo before Torres introduced some Solis staffers. First up was Waqas Rehman, her director of planning and development.

While admitting that there are “tons of historic injustices that have led East L.A. to not have a tax base,” he said the real culprit is how Sacramento distributes vehicle license fees, which has effectively shut out newly formed cities from those funds since 2011. Incorporation wouldn’t remedy anything, Rehman said.

Solis, he added, “does want the right solution. What she’s worried about is setting up a study that leads to a solution that short-changes the residents.”

Torres interrupted. “He’s still talking about cityhood. We’re not. He’s confusing the issue. Sorry, bro.”

Tami Omoto-Frias, Solis’ senior budget deputy, jumped in.

“Whether it’s a city, whether it’s a special district,” she said, “it has to support itself.”

“Well, let’s find out!” someone screamed.

The meeting ended, and Torres urged those who remained to gather for a group photo. Only 25 took part, but they were excited and chanted, “East L.A.! East L.A.!” while holding signs that were the cheery inverse of Solis’ apocalyptic Whittier Boulevard arch graphic: white and blue, with the slogan “East LA Community Supports AB 2986/Our Voices Deserve to Be Heard.”

Sitting by himself reviewing notes was Jeff Nava, a Cal Poly Pomona student who attended the meeting for a political science project on local government. He was surprised to learn that East L.A. wasn’t already a city because “it’s such a large place and so historic.”

I asked the 20-year-old if he was in favor of incorporation, based on what he had heard. He said he wants to study the issue.

“Every community should have representation,” he said. “What I did like to see was that people care about the situation.”

A cobalt-blue jellyfish relative hits our beaches

[Sailors, from A1] early to know if this indicates a rise in actual numbers.

V. velella are an elusive species whose vast habitat and unusual life cycle make them difficult to study. Though they were documented for the first time in 1758, we still don’t know exactly what their range is or how long they live.

These beaching events confront us with a little-understood but essential facet of marine ecology — and may become more common as the oceans warm.

“Zooplankton” — the tiny creatures at the base of the marine food chain — “are sort of this invisible group of animals in the ocean,” Stajner said. “Nobody really knows anything about them. No one really cares about them. But then during these mass *Velevella velella* strandings, all of a sudden there’s this link to this hidden part of the ocean that most of us don’t get to experience.”

What looks like an individual *Velevella velella* is actually a colony of teeny multicellular animals, or zooids, each with its own function, that come together to make a single organism. They’re carnivorous creatures that use stinging tentacles hanging below the surface to catch prey such as copepods, fish eggs, larval fish and smaller plankton.

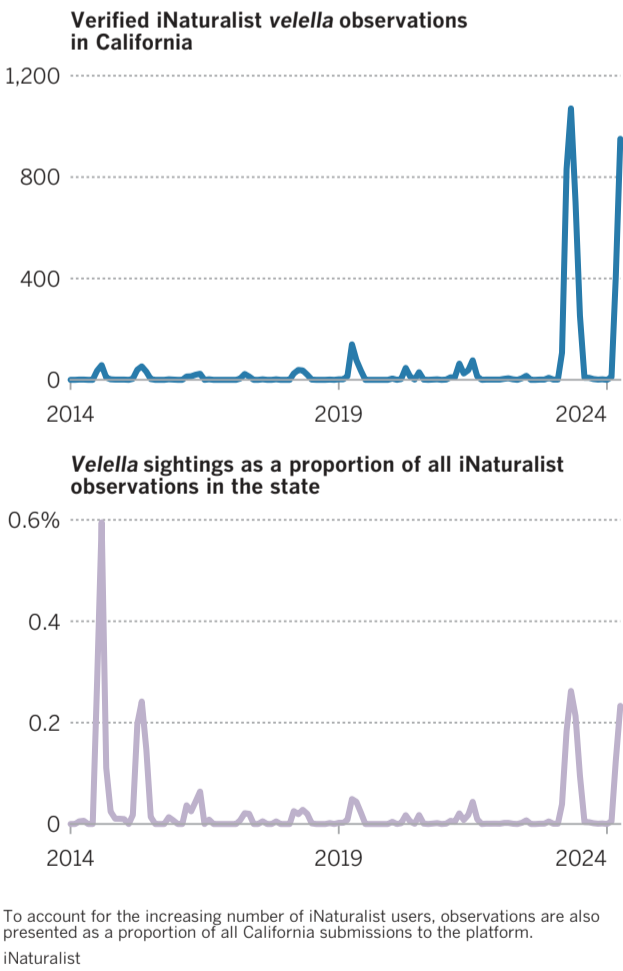
Unlike their fellow hydrozoa the Portuguese man-of-war, the toxin in their tentacles isn’t strong enough to injure humans. Nevertheless, “I wouldn’t encourage anyone to touch their mouth or their eyes after they pick one up on the beach,” said Nate Jaros, senior director of fishes and invertebrates at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach.

V. velella that end their lives on California beaches typically have sails that run diagonally from left to right along the length of their bodies, an orientation that catches the onshore winds. As the organism’s carcass dries in the sun and the soft tissues decay, the blue color disappears, leaving the transparent chitinous float behind.

“The wind really just brings them to our doorstep in the right conditions,”

Velevella sightings in California have spiked in two consecutive springs

It’s unclear whether the sharp rise in sightings reflects an actual rise in the species’ numbers.



SEAN GREENE Los Angeles Times

Jaros said. “But they’re designed as open ocean animals. They’re not designed to interact with the shoreline, which is usually why they meet their demise when they come into contact with the shore.”

V. velella show up en masse when two key factors coincide, Stajner said: an upwelling of food-rich, colder water from deeper in the ocean, followed by shoreward winds and currents that direct the colonies to beaches.

A 2021 paper from researchers at the University of Washington found a third variable that appears to correlate with more *V. velella* sightings: unusually high sea surface temperatures.

After looking at data over a 20-year period, the researchers found that warmer-than-average win-

ter sea surface temperatures followed by onshore winds tended to correlate with higher numbers of *V. velella* strandings the following spring, from Washington to Northern California.

“The spring transition toward slightly more onshore winds happens every year, but the warmer winter conditions are episodic,” said co-author Julia K. Parrish, a University of Washington biologist who runs the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team community science project.

Given that sea surface temperatures have been consistently above the historical average every day since March 2023, the current *V. velella* bloom is consistent with those findings.

Previous research has found that gelatinous zoo-

Velevella Valhalla

Unable to move on their own, by-the-wind sailors drift over the ocean. Over the years, some make landfall along the West Coast and meet their demise.



SEAN GREENE Los Angeles Times

plankton like *V. velella* and their fellow jellyfish thrive in warmer waters, portending an era some scientists have referred to as the “rise of slime.”

Other winners of a slimy new epoch would be ocean sunfish, a giant bony fish whose individuals can weigh in at more than 2,000 pounds and consume jellyfish — and *V. velella* — in mass quantities. Ocean sunfish sightings tend to rise when *V. velella* observations do, Jaros said.

“The ocean sunfish will actually kind of put their heads out of the water as they eat these. It resembles Pac-Man eating pellets,” he said. (KTLA-TV published a picture of just that this week.)

Though *V. velella* blooms are ephemeral, we don’t yet know how long any individual colony lives.

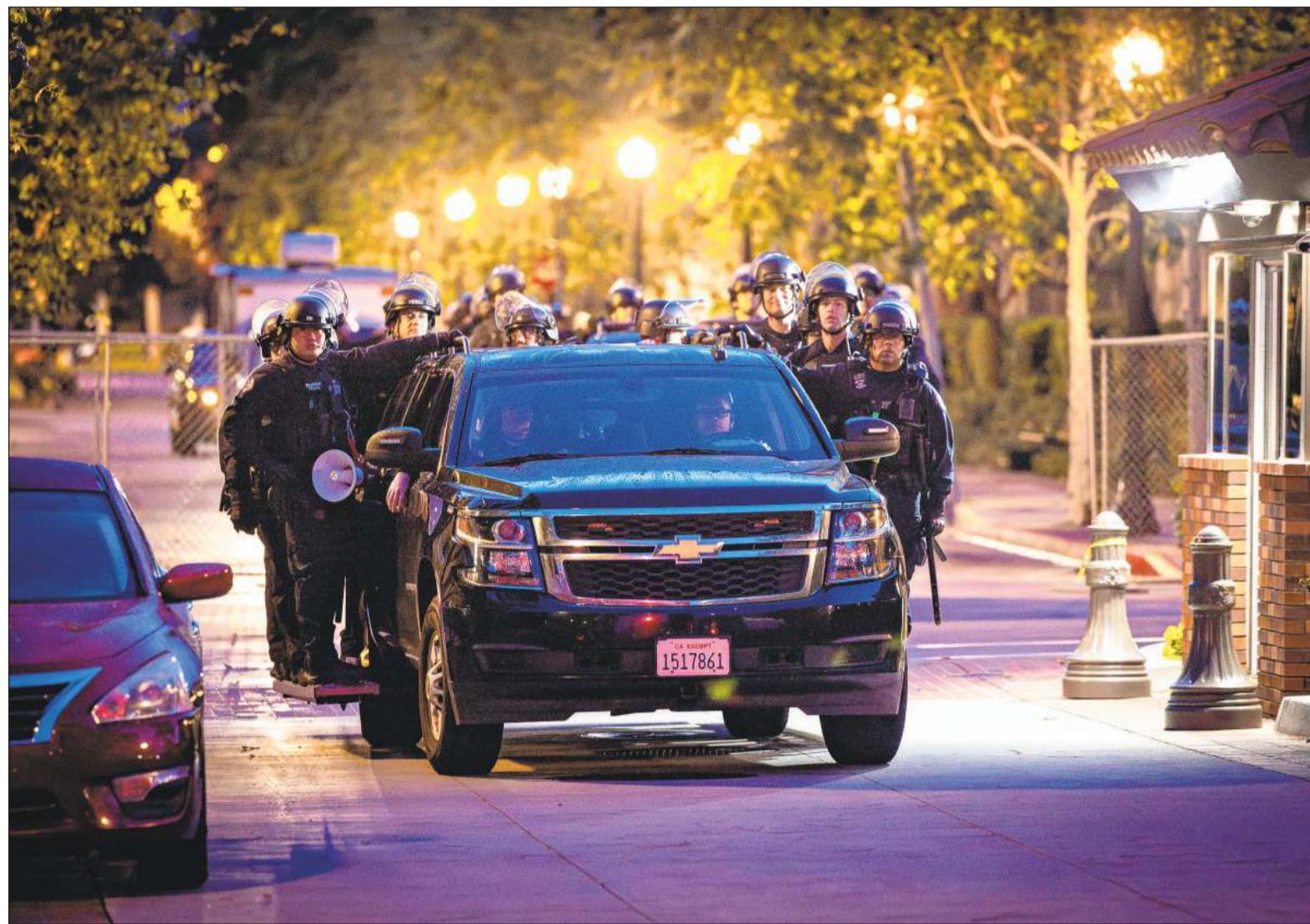
The blue seafaring colonies are themselves asexual, though they bud off tiny, transparent medusae that are thought to go to the deep sea and reproduce sexually there, Stajner said. The fertilized egg then evolves into a float that returns to the surface and forms another colony.

“I was able to actually collect some of those medusae last year during the bloom, but rearing gelatinous organisms is pretty difficult,” Stajner said. The organisms died in the lab.

Stajner left May 1 on an eight-day expedition to sample *V. velella* at points along the Santa Lucia Bank and Escarpment in the Channel Islands, with the goal of getting “a better idea of their role in the local ecosystem and trying to understand what these big blooms mean,” she said.

CALIFORNIA

MONDAY, MAY 6, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/CALIFORNIA



LAPD OFFICERS in riot gear leave USC early Sunday morning after helping campus security remove an encampment in Alumni Park.

Police clear USC protest site

Pro-Palestinian activists say they plan to resume their demonstration

BY ANGIE ORELLANA
HERNANDEZ,
JAWEED KALEEM,
HAYLEY SMITH
AND HANNAH FRY

In a swift, predawn operation three days before graduation ceremonies begin, USC campus police and LAPD officers in riot gear cleared a pro-Palestinian encampment from the center of campus Sunday as protesters beat drums, chanted and later pledged to continue their demonstration.

There were no arrests during the sweep, according to USC officials and student activists. By about 8 a.m. some 40 tents, posters, debris and barricades had been hauled away. A party rental company moved in as a tall black fence was installed around the park.

“The operation was peaceful.



SUNDAY’S SWEEP, the second time police dismantled the camp, unfolded with graduation activities scheduled to start Wednesday.

Campus is opening, students are returning to prepare for finals, and commencement set-up is in full swing,” USC President Carol Folt wrote in a campuswide email Sunday.

Folt, who has been under criticism from supporters and opponents of pro-Palestinian activists for her handling of the protest and free speech on campus, said the university “issued repeated warnings.”

“When free speech protests devolve into illegal occupations, violating the rights of others, we must draw a line,” Folt said.

The police operation was the culmination of a second tense week of protests at USC and universities throughout the country as college presidents face criticism for calling in police in riot gear to clear pro-Palestinian encampments. Leaders have struggled to balance campus

UCLA creates high-level post to oversee safety

The move comes after lapses in response to mob attack on protesters

BY TERESA WATANABE

UCLA has moved swiftly to create a new chief safety officer position to oversee campus security operations, including the Police Department, in the wake of what have been called serious lapses in handling protests that culminated in a

mob attack on a pro-Palestinian student encampment last week.

Chancellor Gene Block announced Sunday that Rick Braziel, a former Sacramento police chief who has reviewed law enforcement responses in high-profile cases across the country, will serve as associate vice chancellor of a new Office of Campus Safety. He will over-

see the Police Department — including Police Chief John Thomas, who is facing calls to step aside — and the Office of Emergency Management.

Braziel previously was tapped to review police actions in the Uvalde, Texas, elementary school shooting; riots in Ferguson, Mo.; the shootout with police killer Christopher

Donner; and other cases. He will report directly to Block in a unit that will focus solely on campus safety — an arrangement that has proved effective at major universities across the country, the chancellor said.

Previously, the campus police chief and the Office of Emergency Management reported to Administra-

Supply chain sustains Cal State L.A. camp

GUSTAVO ARELLANO

Valeria Mena opened the trunk of her SUV near Zamora Park in El Monte and beamed. She had emptied it to make room for as much stuff as possible.

“This is as clean as it’s been in a while,” she joked to a group of friends.

In went board games, a 5-gallon jug of water and a pack of mini-water bottles, a soccer ball and boxes of Svenhard’s Danishes and Pringles. Next up: a trip to Walmart to buy safety goggles, zip ties, blankets and fire-resistant gloves.

The final destination: a pro-Palestinian encampment at Cal State L.A.

On May 1, students occupied a stretch of grass next to the school gymnasium and vowed not to leave until the university divests from all investments with Israel, boycotts organizations with ties to the country and calls for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza.

They plugged into a movement that has swept college campuses across the country. In Southern



SAM VASQUEZ and his girlfriend, Nayellie Diaz, prepare to hand out supplies on Friday at the Cal State L.A. encampment. The couple participated in protests during their time in college.

LAUSD schools may face decision on police

Amid surge in fights, task force wants each campus to choose to have an officer or not.

BY HOWARD BLUME

Amid steeply escalating school crime, drug use and fighting, individual Los Angeles public school campuses should be allowed to decide whether to station a police officer on campus, a safety task force said, a recommendation that, if adopted, would reverse wins by anti-police student activists but respond to calls by many parents to restore officers.

Recent practice in the L.A. Unified School District has been to keep police off campus. Instead, school police — a department paid for and operated by the school system — patrol areas around schools and respond to emergency calls off and on campus.

The task force, established by the Board of Education, has operated quietly during the current school year against a backdrop of rising fights on campus and difficulty controlling vaping and the use of serious drugs, such as fentanyl, which killed a student on campus in 2022. District data show a sharp rise in what the school system refers to as reported incidents.

The latest data leave out the two peak-pandemic years of 2019-20 and 2020-21 because students were learning from home for all or much of the time. But with that caveat, incidents under

District chief fired over claims of bullying students

Poway superintendent allegedly made threats after her child didn’t get enough applause.

BY ANDREW J. CAMPA

A San Diego-area school district superintendent was fired last week, nearly a year after students alleged she threatened to ban them from graduation ceremonies after they inadequately applauded her daughter at a banquet.

The board that oversees the roughly 35,000-student Poway Unified School District voted unanimously to dismiss Marian Kim Phelps during a closed-door meeting on Tuesday.

In a statement read by President Michelle O’Connor-Ratcliff, the board said it “has lost all confidence and trust in Dr. Phelps’ ability to continue to serve as superintendent.”

The vote followed a board-launched investigation into Phelps’ actions that began Nov. 15 and concluded April 18.

“The investigation brought to light previous unknown evidence with witnesses with direct first-hand knowledge that contradicted Dr. Phelps’ statements and assertions to the board, district staff and the public,” the board’s statement said.

The board said it would

Police clear USC encampment for second time

[USC, from B1]
safety and the right to protest, with calls to address antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred. Many have been under pressure to clear camps before commencements, when parents, alumni, donors and luminaries descend on campuses.

In one of the most violent incidents at a protest, a mob attacked a UCLA pro-Palestinian encampment last week, prompting criticism over the university's handling of campus safety. Police arrested more than 200 people after moving onto the Westwood campus to push out protesters.

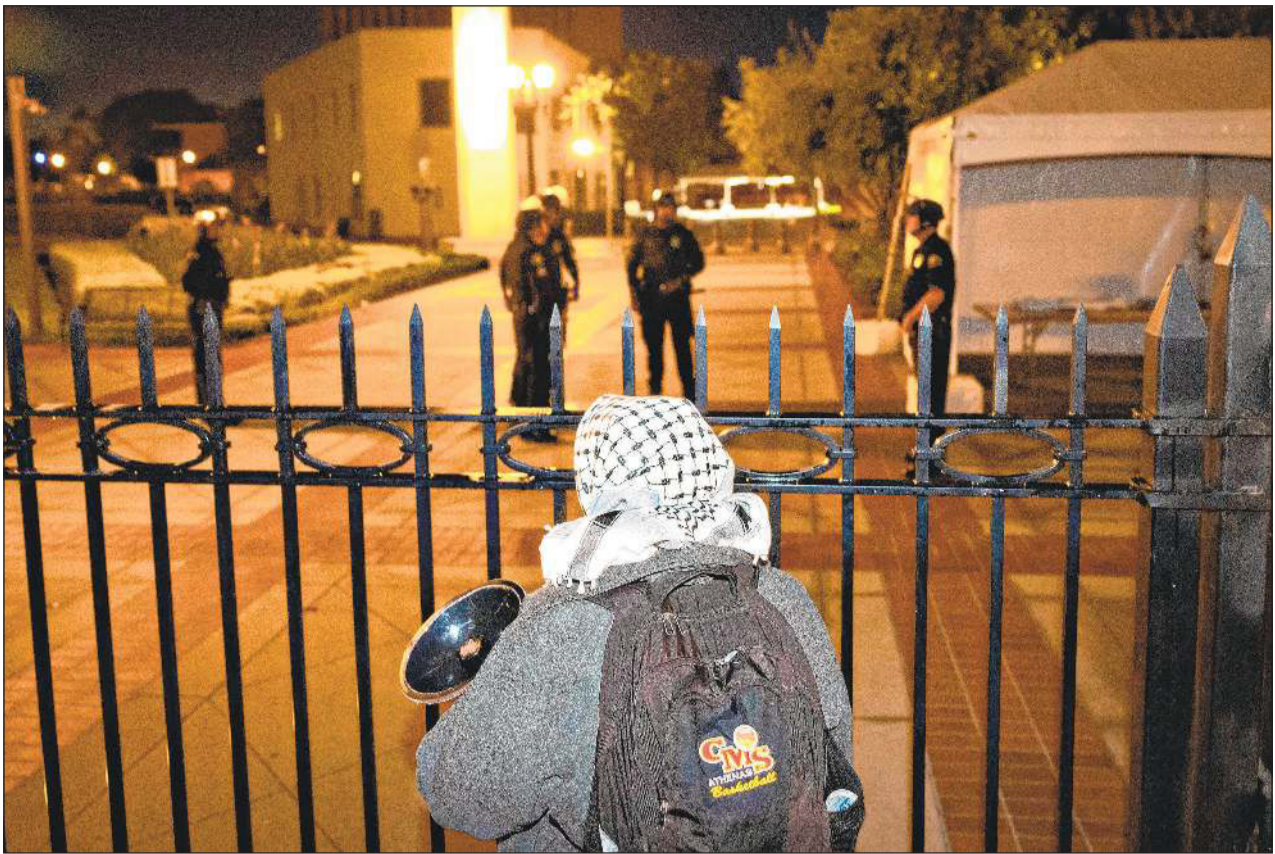
Sunday's USC sweep was the second time police dismantled the encampment. It unfolded as graduation activities are set to kick off Wednesday with tens of thousands of guests on campus. Los Angeles police arrested 93 activists — most of them USC students — on April 24 on suspicion of trespassing when they cleared the encampment in Alumni Park.

At 4:17 a.m. Sunday, USC issued a text alert saying that the Los Angeles Police Department had arrived and that people should leave central campus, which was closed to everyone, including students. Officers from the campus Department of Public Safety issued a dispersal warning to activists. About 30 protesters left as police pushed them toward the university's Jefferson Boulevard exit.

"Free, free Palestine," demonstrators chanted as they faced police at the perimeter officers set up outside the camp, beating drums while helicopters hovered overhead.

About 5 a.m., police entered the encampment. They dismantled tents, leaving behind posters, trash and makeshift barriers. Campus Police Chief Lauretta Hill gave a fist bump to the remaining officers. An hour later, Alumni Park was empty and quiet, largely devoid of police, as workers cleaned the grounds.

The University Park campus reopened to students, faculty and staff about 10 a.m. as USC issued a new warning via text message: Tents and related equipment were prohibited, along with camping and unpermitted events. Those breaking the rules would be sub-



JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

A PRO-PALESTINIAN activist waits outside USC after Los Angeles police helped university security remove an encampment in the heart of campus early Sunday morning. Graduation activities are to begin Wednesday.

ject to discipline.

"No individuals or groups may obstruct free passage throughout our campuses, commencement setup, or other functions," the alert said.

"We will be back. Free Palestine," said a message the student activists posted on the Instagram account of USC Student Coalition Against Labor Exploitation. The pro-Palestinian group that set up the encampment, USC Divest from Death Coalition, uses the labor organization's social media for its official announcements.

"We are not done," a spokesperson for the student activists said after the camp was cleared. The spokesperson did not give details on future actions. The person declined to identify themselves because of fear of retaliation from the USC administration and students opposed to their activism.

Protesters — like others at universities nationwide — have demanded that USC boycott and divest from financial ties with Israel, which USC has rejected.

The encampment spokesperson said Sunday that "divestment is not a

short-term movement. Divestment is a long-term movement. ... The movement doesn't end with this occupation. The occupation is simply one way to bring attention and bring our demands."

After two meetings last week with protest leaders, USC President Folt posted on X that students "seemed more interested in having me issue a political statement in support of their viewpoint as opposed to coming up with practical solutions to resolve the situation."

In those meetings, Folt said she had "no intention" of asking the LAPD to come to campus again. In an interview with The Times last week, she did not rule it out as an option but said it was not her preference.

In her campus letter Sunday, Folt wrote that "despite our efforts to de-escalate, the occupation was spiraling in a dangerous direction over the last several days. ... With no resolution in sight, I requested the LAPD to assist DPS in removing the encampment as peacefully and safely as possible."

Devin Griffiths, an associate professor of English and comparative literature,

said it was "disappointing that the LAPD was invited back onto campus after many faculty strongly expressed their anger and worry at the invitation of the LAPD a little over a week ago."

Griffiths joined a faculty march last week in support of students' rights to protest. He is among more than 380 faculty members who had recently called for a no-confidence vote in USC's top leadership for its handling of tensions.

Some campus members expressed relief that the encampment was cleared.

"I hope it's gone for good. It's good news. My only concern is that it took so long for USC to act decisively on this," said Anna Krylov, a professor of chemistry who has opposed the protest. "I hope in the future they will act more promptly in dealing with this type of illegal disturbance."

Krylov writes for a Substack called "Voices Against Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism at USC." She is among nearly 100 faculty members who recently wrote to the USC Academic Senate, urging an investigation into the "persistent and escalating antisemitism and

anti-Zionism at USC" and "harassment and intimidation of Jewish students."

The chemistry professor, who is not Jewish, said the camp had antisemitic slogans, such as signs and chants on "intifada." Pro-Palestinian groups say the word means a general "uprising," including boycotts against Israel; pro-Israel groups say it has been used to describe deadly attacks against Jewish Israelis.

Student Sabrina Jahan, a pro-Israel senior, was also critical of the protest.

"I'm just glad the focus will hopefully now be back on finals and graduation like it should have been in the first place," said Jahan, who is Jewish.

Among the remnants of the camp on Sunday morning, a Times reporter found a crumpled and torn document titled "Ground Tactics for the Student Intifada."

The four pages of typed papers included guides on how to organize human formations when confronted by police. "The purpose of a mass action is not make it go on for as long as humanly possible," the document read. "The purpose of a mass action is to maximize disruption at a minimum cost

to the organizers."

John Vidale, a professor of earth sciences, rode his bike by Alumni Park as it was being cleared.

"I'm glad the Gaza protest is over. It was a nuisance," he said. "However, the students made their point clearly, mostly behaved well, and college is the time and place for such dramatic gestures. The few times it escalated come with the territory, and I like President Folt's moderate and moral actions."

The university has designated a "free speech" area in a less visible campus green behind Leavey Library, south of West 34th Street.

Students in the camp said they are not interested in relocating to the designated free speech area, a lesser traveled part of campus.

"Protest locations cannot be dictated by the people in power because then it's no longer the freedom to protest and assemble," the encampment spokesperson said.

The decision to clear the first camp sparked further anger after tensions rose when USC decided that valedictorian Asna Tabassum could not deliver a speech during its May 10 commencement — a first in the university's 143-year history — over unspecified safety threats.

The move happened after pro-Israel groups criticized Tabassum for a link on her Instagram profile directing people to a pro-Palestinian website that they said was antisemitic. The site said "Zionism is a racist settler-colonialist ideology" and calls for "the complete abolishment of the state of Israel" so that "Arabs and Jews can live together."

Within days, USC canceled its "main stage" commencement. The event draws 65,000 people each year to Alumni Park, where the encampment was set up.

To make up for that, USC on Friday announced a new "Trojan Family" graduation event at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. The event will take place Thursday at 8:30 p.m. It will feature a drone show, fireworks and the Trojan Marching Band. Dozens of satellite graduation events for individual colleges, schools and departments will also continue.

UCLA moves swiftly to create chief safety officer post

[UCLA, from B1]
tive Vice Chancellor Michael Beck.

Block also announced a new advisory group to partner with Brazier. Members include Joseph Farrow, UC Davis' police chief and the respected chair of the UC Council of Police Chiefs; Vickie Mays, UCLA professor of psychology and health policy and management; and Jody Stiger, UC systemwide director of community safety.

"Protecting the safety of our community underpins everything we do at UCLA. In the past week, our campus has been shaken by events that have disturbed this sense of safety and strained trust within our community," Block said in a message to the campus community. "One thing is already clear: to best protect our community moving forward, urgent changes are needed in how we administer safety operations."

"The well-being of our students, faculty and staff is paramount."

The move is intended to immediately address campus security shortfalls that left UCLA students and others involved in the protest encampment to fend for themselves against attackers for three hours before law enforcement moved in to quell the melee.

Three sources, who were not authorized to speak publicly, told The Times that Thomas failed to provide a repeatedly requested written security plan to campus leadership on how he would keep the campus safe in various scenarios, including rallies, skirmishes and violence. He failed to secure external law enforcement to assist UCLA police and private security in safeguarding the encampment area before the mob attack, despite authorization to do so with as much overtime payment as needed, the sources said.

Thomas also assured leadership that it would take just "minutes" to mobilize law enforcement to quell violence. It actually took three hours to assemble enough officers before they moved in to intervene.

Thomas, in an interview late Friday night, disputed that account as inaccurate and said he did "everything I could" to safeguard the community in a week of strife that left UCLA reeling.

A large group of counter-protesters, some dressed in black outfits with white masks, stormed the area Tuesday night through Wednesday morning and assaulted campers, tore down barricades, hurled wood and other objects into the camp and at those inside. Campers, some holding lumber and wearing goggles and helmets, sought to defend themselves with pepper spray and other means. Several were injured, including four Daily Bruin student journalists.

University of California President Michael V. Drake has initiated an independent review of UCLA's response, which Block has said he welcomes. The chancellor also has launched an internal review of the campus security processes. A spokesperson for Gov. Gavin Newsom has also called for answers to explain "the limited and delayed campus law enforcement response at UCLA."

Drake hailed the appointment of Brazier, saying he brings "a wealth of experience in community policing, emergency response operations, and institutional reviews."

"I fully support this appointment and believe that it is an important step towards restoring confidence in our public safety systems and procedures," Drake said in a statement Sunday.

The UC external investigation is expected to move

quickly and focus more on lessons to be learned rather than individuals to be blamed, a UC source said.

But internal calls for Thomas to step aside are growing, the sources said. And the vice chancellor he reports to — Beck — is also being scrutinized.

Beck has not responded to requests for comment about his actions around the protests and encampment.

One UC source, who was not authorized to speak publicly, described Thomas as a "dedicated public servant" who had properly raised red flags about the encampment from the moment the first tents went up. But his warnings to take the encampment down went unheeded, the source said.

"To point a finger at the police chief is ridiculous," the source said. "This completely falls in the lap of Michael Beck."

The UC police union issued a statement Saturday reiterating that the external review should focus squarely on the failures of administrators, not law enforcement.

"UC administrators are solely responsible for the University's response to campus protests, and they own all the fallout from those responses," said Wade Stern, president of the Federated University Police Officers' Assn., which represents the 250 officers of the 10 UC police departments. "UC's written guidelines make clear that UC administrators decide what the response to campus protests will be, who will respond, and the role of campus police is only to implement that response."

Several top LAPD leaders not authorized to discuss the incident told The Times that Thomas had tarnished the reputation of Los Angeles law enforcement with what they called his lack of planning and poor communication with other agen-



WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

A PRO-PALESTINIAN protester has his eyes washed after being maced during a mob attack.

cies. They said they had to scramble for officers and wait until enough could be assembled to safely intervene about 1:40 a.m.

Critics said his attempts to justify his actions to The Times, while others were focused on addressing the crisis, showed selfishness and had fueled more calls for him to step aside.

Thomas said he was not ready to step aside. He asserted that he had provided daily briefings to campus leadership, the number of resources, the response protocol and assigned roles for those deployed.

He said he was restricted in planning because of a directive from campus leadership not to use police, in keeping with UC community guidelines to first rely on communication with protesters and use law enforcement as a last resort.

When campus leadership directed him to secure outside help and spare no cost for enough officers and private security to safeguard the community, Thomas said, he attempted to secure it from the Los Angeles Police Department and L.A. County Sheriff's Department. But he said he was told by an LAPD lieutenant that problems with the payment system between the city and state prevented

completion of the effort before the melee broke out.

Thomas acknowledged telling leadership that it would take just minutes to deploy police forces, but he was referring to a general response — not a force large enough to handle the size of the crowds that clashed that night. But three sources confirmed he was directly asked how long it would take for outside law enforcement to quell any violence.

The Times reported Thursday that the UCLA Police Department had asked other campuses for additional police officers five days before the attack. The reporting was based on documents the paper reviewed and information from the head of the UC police officers union. Only a few on-duty UCLA police officers were on hand to protect the encampment Tuesday night. Questions are being raised as to why Thomas did not increase the number of UC police that night after being directed to use whatever resources were needed to keep the community safe.

"I did everything I could to increase the police presence that we couldn't provide because of our small department," he said.

On the night of the attack, Thomas said, he was watching a Dodgers game at

home and was alerted to the mob violence by Beck. Thomas said he immediately called the LAPD to ask for deployment to the campus and notified his UCLA watch commander to call for mutual aid from law enforcement with the cities of Beverly Hills, Culver City and Santa Monica, along with sheriff's deputies.

When he arrived on scene, he said, 19 officers from UCLA, the LAPD and three of the mutual aid agencies had arrived but had not moved in to quell the violence. An LAPD lieutenant told him the force was too small; Thomas said he asked why they couldn't go in with the forces they had, and the lieutenant told him he was directed to wait.

It took more than 90 minutes for sufficient forces to arrive and intervene. The next day, UCLA called in police who dismantled the encampment and arrested more than 200 protesters early Thursday morning in clashes that lasted hours.

The campus will resume normal operations Monday. Faculty are being encouraged to resume in-person instruction as soon as possible but may continue remote classes through Friday without departmental authorization. Law enforcement officers are stationed throughout the campus, according to a BruinAlert sent Sunday.

But sources said that tension over the protests and the fraught politics have continued to bitterly divide both campus members and the outside community, making it difficult to speak freely. They said they hoped Block's actions would represent a turning point. "The chancellor made it clear that Bruin community safety comes first and his swift, decisive actions are really welcomed," a source said.

Times staff writer Richard Winton contributed to this report.

CITY & STATE



JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

CELEBRATING CINCO DE MAYO

Community members perform a traditional Aztec dance Sunday at La Placita Olvera during the Cinco De Mayo Fiesta on Olvera Street in Los Angeles. The event provided free entertainment in addition to offering food, beverages and a zone for children.

High court limits whom police can detain

BY KEVIN RECTOR

Police officers cannot detain someone on the street just because that person tries to avoid contact with them, the California Supreme Court ruled Thursday.

The decision has immediate implications for police officers working all across the state, restricting the grounds under which they can stop and hold people for questioning. It could also affect other litigation in which arrests are being challenged, particularly when people of color allege they were detained simply for trying to avoid police.

Someone acting nervous or attempting to conceal themselves can still be “relevant context” for officers, but those actions alone do not constitute “reasonable suspicion of criminal activity,” Justice Carol Corrigan wrote in the unanimous high court decision.

Officers “may consider what they see in plain view” and also can “approach people in public, engage them in consensual conversation, and take note of their appearance and behavior,” Corrigan wrote, but absent probable cause “the person is constitutionally protected

and empowered to go on his or her way.”

The decision — in a case brought by a Los Angeles man arrested on suspicion of having drugs and a gun after police said he tried to hide from them — was immediately blasted by the union that represents rank-and-file Los Angeles Police Department officers, which called the high court “out-of-touch.” The LAPD did not respond to a request for comment.

Richard Fitzer, an attorney for plaintiff Marlon Flores, praised public defenders who worked the case initially and called the ruling “a vindication of the rights of minorities.” The outcome was possible, he said, because of the Racial Justice Act, a 2020 California law that prohibits discrimination in the state’s criminal justice system based on a defendant’s race, ethnicity or national origin.

Justice Kelli Evans, the high court’s newest member, wrote in a concurring opinion joined by four other justices that “many individuals — including, particularly, people of color — commonly hold a perception that engaging in any manner with police, including in seemingly casual or innocuous ways, entails a degree of risk

to one’s safety.”

Evans listed the names of 35 people killed in interactions with police in recent years, including Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Stephon Clark, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd.

“Due to this searing history and the present day experiences of far too many people in the United States, for generations, legions of parents in minority communities have given their children ‘the talk’ — detailing survival techniques for how to navigate interactions with police ‘all out of fear of how an officer with a gun will react to them,’” Evans wrote. “Given this context, it is apparent why attempting to avoid police officers reflects, for many people, simply a desire to avoid risking injury or death.”

The case began when Flores was arrested by LAPD officers in 2019. According to court records, he was standing on the street in what police described as a “known” drug area and “gang hangout” when he noticed the officers driving up, walked around a Nissan parked illegally and “ducked” behind it. The incident was captured on police body cameras.

The officers stopped, got

out of their car and walked over to Flores, who was bent over and appeared to be moving his hands around his shoes. They told him to stand and put his hands behind his head, and handcuffed him within seconds.

According to the ruling, Officer Daniel Guy later testified that Flores “acted ‘suspicious(ly)’ by ‘attempting to conceal himself from the police’ and then ‘pretend (ing) to tie his shoe.’”

As the officers patted down Flores, the lights on the Nissan blinked — which they assumed was because their frisk had pushed a key fob in Flores’ possession. An officer said that when he shined his light in the car he saw “what looked like a drug pipe.” The officers entered the vehicle and allegedly found a folded dollar bill containing methamphetamine and a revolver in a backpack.

In court, Flores attempted to suppress that evidence as improperly obtained, but his motion was denied by a lower court judge who, as Corrigan wrote, “reasoned that Flores’ acts of ‘ducking,’ ‘remaining hunched over,’ and ‘toying with his feet,’ even after the officers approached and told him to stand, was ‘odd behavior’ and ‘suspicious.’”

The lower court said Flores had done “more than enough” to warrant his detention.

Flores was ordered to serve probation after pleading no contest to a single gun charge. He continued to fight the outcome, and the state Supreme Court took on his appeal.

Thursday’s decision sends the case back to the trial court so that Flores can withdraw his plea and the court can grant his motion to suppress the evidence against him. How his case might proceed from there is unclear.

In a statement to The Times, the Los Angeles Police Protective League defended its officers’ actions in the case, which it said took a gun in the hands of a criminal off L.A.’s streets.

“For most residents living in high crime neighborhoods that’s called good police work,” the union said. “Yet, in their infinite wisdom, California’s out-of-touch Supreme Court overturned two lower court rulings that found the officers acted lawfully and sided with the drug and gun possessing owner of the illegally parked car to further cement California’s criminal justice system as the joke it is.”

UCLA faculty protest at gala

BY JESSICA GELT

About 20 UCLA faculty members protested Saturday night outside the UCLA Hammer Museum’s celebrity-heavy gala, calling for amnesty to be granted to pro-Palestinian students arrested on campus last week and demanding that Chancellor Gene Block resign.

As a well-heeled crowd in cocktail attire filed into the museum for the annual Gala in the Garden, English department professor Jonathan Grossman blamed Block for what he and his colleagues said were dual wrongs done to pro-Palestinian student activists. On Wednesday, they said, students received unnecessarily rough treatment from police as their encampment was cleared. The night before, they said, police failed to protect the same students from violent counter-protesters’ attacks.

Elizabeth O’Brien, a professor in the History department, said she was present Tuesday night and witnessed “a horrifying mob” attacking pro-Palestinian students for four hours.

“Along with a colleague, I begged the police to intervene,” O’Brien said.

O’Brien showed what she said was an X-ray of broken bones in a student’s hands.



JESSICA GELT Los Angeles Times

AT THE Hammer Museum, faculty members decry police treatment of pro-Palestinian student activists.

“She was just protesting peacefully, and they shot her with rubber bullets,” O’Brien said, adding, “Chancellor Block failed egregiously to protect the students.”

UCLA’s police chief, John Thomas, failed to deliver a written safety plan and prepare enough forces to keep the peace as directed by campus leadership, sources have said. He denied allegations of security lapses and said he did everything he could to keep students safe. In a statement, Block described the attack on pro-Palestinian protesters as “a dark chapter in our campus’s history” and said the university was reexamining its procedures as a result.

The gala, which draws

one of the starriest crowds in L.A.’s museum fundraising circuit, had a guest list that a spokesperson said included Jane Fonda, Ava DuVernay, Keanu Reeves, Will Ferrell, Joel McHale and Owen Wilson.

“We’re all so keenly aware of what’s happening in the world and the protests,” longtime Hammer director Ann Philbin said to the crowd, adding that the violence on UCLA’s campus tempered the evening’s joy.

She added later: “We will defend the sacrosanct right to freedom of expression and the right to protest.”

Times staff writer Teresa Watanabe contributed to this report.

San Francisco’s Bay Bridge to get upgraded lighting

BY CHRISTOPHER GOFFARD

In the decade after they went up, the 25,000 LED lights illuminating the western side of the Bay Bridge endured a brutal pounding.

“It’s the salty air, the wind, the fog, the rain, the 24-7 vibrations on the bridge, lightning strikes, car grit and grime — and more,” said Ben Davis, founder of the San Francisco nonprofit behind the light installation that went up in 2013.

With the lights deteriorating faster than they could be fixed, Davis asked to turn them off in 2023, leaving what he calls “a hole in the night sky” for the last year.

To restore the lights, Davis launched a campaign to raise \$11 million without city or corporate funding. With \$10.5 million raised, he said, the 1.8-mile work of public art will return early next year, with more durable lights, and twice as many.

News of the relighting has sent “a shiver of excitement” through San Francisco, he said.

The public art installation, called “The Bay Lights” and designed by New York-based artist Leo Villareal, had relied on “off-the-shelf” LEDs because they were the best available, Davis said.

After about eight years, they were suffering, with sections dying along the bridge that connects San Francisco to Oakland.

“There was no way we could keep up with the failure rate,” said Davis, founder of the public-art nonprofit Illuminate. He said more than 1,200 people donated to the relighting effort, including five who gave million-dollar gifts.

The nearly 50,000 new, tougher lights are being custom-engineered and made by Musco Lighting in Iowa.

San Francisco restaurateur Pete Sittnick hosted fundraisers to bring the lights back. From decks and patios at his two restaurants, guests marveled at the lights for a decade.

“It was energizing to see the joy it brought to the guests, everybody taking photos, taking videos,” Sittnick said.

L.A. priest receives Medal of Freedom

BY RUBEN VIVES

Father Greg Boyle, a Jesuit priest who founded the Homeboy Industries gang intervention program in Los Angeles, has received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States.

Boyle was one of 19 recipients who were honored Friday at the White House by President Biden. The honorees included high-profile figures such as former Vice President Al Gore, former New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Opal Lee, an educator and activist known for her efforts to make Juneteenth a federally recognized holiday.

The award, established by President John F. Kennedy in 1963, is given to people who have “made exceptional contributions to the security or national interests of America, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors.”

In a statement, the White House described Boyle as the founder of the world’s largest gang intervention and rehabilitation program and credited him with turning around the lives of thousands of Angelenos.

Boyle could not be reached for comment.

Boyle became pastor of Dolores Mission Church in 1986. The parish in Boyle Heights was one of the poorest, serving residents from housing projects such as Aliso Village and Pico Gardens.

By 1988, Boyle created Jobs for a Future to help men and women transition away from gangs through education, job training and employment. Jobs for a Future evolved into Homeboy Industries and expanded its services to include tattoo removal, housing assistance and substance abuse support, as well as training in jobs such as solar panel installation.

The nonprofit launched several businesses, including Homeboy Bakery, a supplier for its Homeboy Farmers Markets, Homeboy Diner and Homegirl Cafe.

Obituaries

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Betty Grace Hermelin

Betty Grace (Flores) Hermelin died peacefully on April 24, 2024 at 90 years of age. She is survived by her sons David (Heidi) and Eric (Asya), and by her beloved granddaughters Isabella Virginia Hermelin of Los Angeles and Sophia Grace Hermelin of Georgetown, DC. She also leaves brothers Fred Flores (Valerie), Mac Flores (Connie) and Robert Flores (Kathi), and numerous nieces and nephews whom she treasured. She was preceded in death by her husband David, sister Vicky Ramirez and brother Joe Flores.

Betty was born in Hanford, CA, and eventually moved with her family to Torrance, CA. She had several careers including as a factory worker, a social worker and finally as a Supervisor at the Internal Revenue Service. She was a graduate of CSU Dominguez Hills and attended St. James Catholic Church in Redondo Beach.

A Vigil will be held at 6 pm on 5/6/24 at Lighthouse Memorials and Receptions in Torrance; Mass at 10 am on 5/7 at St. James Church; burial at 11:30 am on 5/8 at Riverside National Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in her memory to American Cancer Society.

Robert Eugene Sharon

Longtime LA Radio man Robert (Bob) Sharon passed away April 29th at the age of 96 in Loveland, CO where he had moved two years ago from Palm Desert, CA.

He is survived by Kathryn (Kay) Sharon his wife of 53 years and six children and

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Legal Notices

Legal Notices

SUMMONS
(CITACION JUDICIAL)

Case Number (Numero del Caso):
24SMCP00076

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:
(AVISO AL DEMANDADO):
ROSEMARY OBI, MD

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:
(LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):
RESIDENTS MEDICAL GROUP, INC.

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below. You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

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The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y dirección de la corte es):
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
1725 Main Street
Santa Monica, California 90401-3291

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):
Diana Spielberger
11400 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 1500
Los Angeles, California 90064
310-399-3259

Date: (Fecha) 03/25/2024

David W. Slayton Clerk
(Secretario)
K. Parenteau Deputy
(Adjunto)

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The California Construction Authority is soliciting bids from Licensed Contractors for the following public works project at the AV Fair & Event Center in Lancaster, CA:

Material and labor for the construction of two new buildings (170k sf) and a new kitchen facility within an existing building (6k sf).

Engineers Estimate:
\$85,000,000.00

A Mandatory Job Walk will be held on 5/9/24 @ 9:30 am at the Administration Offices Board Room (Enter Gate 2 off Avenue H), at the AV Fair & Event Center, 2551 W Avenue H, Lancaster, CA 93536. Electronically Submitted Bids Due by 6/6/24 @ 2:00 pm.

For complete Electronic Bid Package, contact Rachelle Seitz: rseitz@CCAauthority.org, (279)236-0051 or visit www.ccaauthority.org.

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JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles,
one letter to each square,
to form four ordinary words.

MIGER
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THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



SHE WAS EXHAUSTED AFTER BAKING
SO MANY SUGAR COOKIES AND
WAS READY FOR ---

Now arrange the circled letters
to form the surprise answer, as
suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: UDDER OPERA INSIST STINKY
Answer: The city was growing, and the number of
skyscrapers being built was — ON THE RISE

A baby grand
in the
baby's room?



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Legal Notices

SUMMONS
(CITACION JUDICIAL)

CASE NUMBER (Número del Caso):
23STCV31210

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:

(AVISO AL DEMANDADO):
ALBERT NAZARYAN, an individual; NELLI NAZARYAN, an individual; ALBERT OHANJANYAN, an individual; ZHASMEN TOVBEKHAKYAN, an individual; SAMANTHA TE LE, an individual; and DOES 1 through 30, inclusive.

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:
STATE FARM MUTUAL AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE COMPANY, a corporation.

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación. Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puedo encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de extensión de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia.

Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services, (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos extensos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 o más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso.

The name and address of the court is:
(El nombre y dirección de la corte es):
Los Angeles Superior Court
111 North Hill Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

The name, address, and telephone number of the plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is:

(El nombre, la dirección y el número del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):
Knapp & Spurlock, LLP, 3525 Hyland Avenue, Suite 220, Costa Mesa, CA 92626 714-434-9600

Date: 12/21/2023

David W. Slayton Executive Officer/
Clerk of the Court
(Secretario)
Y. Marks Deputy
(Adjunto)

Published in the Los Angeles Times



Man who drove family off cliff could be freed

His wife testifies that he should be released from jail into a mental health program.

By Noah Goldberg



San Mateo County Sheriff's Office

DHARMESH Patel has been jailed since 2023.

The wife of a Pasadena man who drove her and their two young children off a Northern California cliff asked a judge to release her husband from jail, saying the family needs him.

Neha Patel testified for the first time Thursday during a hearing over whether her husband, Dharmesh, should have his case removed from criminal court, in a scenario that would see him released from jail and put into a mental health diversion program.

"We need him in our life," said Patel, who appeared via video call, according to the Mercury News. "We're not a family without him."

She and her two children were passengers when Dharmesh Patel drove his Tesla off a cliff Jan. 2, 2023, at Devil's Slide on Highway 1. He was charged with a count of attempted murder for each passenger and has been jailed since.

Doctors testifying in Dharmesh Patel's defense say he is fit for mental health diversion, and the crash was probably a result of a major depressive disorder and a psychotic episode.

Mental health diversion would mean that he would be released from jail and placed under a treatment plan by a supervising doctor

for two years. If he were to violate the treatment plan or other conditions of release, his case would be returned to court. If he followed the plan, his case would be dropped.

Patel testified at length about the effect her husband's absence has had on the family, calling him a "kind and altruistic" man who "has been my best friend for more than 25 years," according to the Mercury News. Her testimony was surprising as she told paramedics after the crash that her husband purposefully drove off the cliff.

"He intentionally tried to kill us," she told paramedics, according to the San Mateo County district attorney.

Dist. Atty. Stephen Wagstaffe opposes the diversion of the case. A doctor for the prosecution testified Thursday that Dharmesh Patel suffers from schizoaffective disorder and that his case should not be diverted.

A judge has not yet ruled on the motion.

Superintendent fired after students allege wrongdoing, threats

[Applause, from B1] not comment further or provide additional information regarding the investigation, because minors were involved.

The school district did not respond to an email or phone call seeking further comment. A phone call to a number listed for Phelps was also not returned.

Players, coaches and parents allege that Phelps bullied and harassed members of the softball team at Del Norte High School, a Poway Unified campus in San Diego, during an after-season team banquet on May 30, 2023. Phelps, players alleged, was upset that her daughter, who was named team MVP that evening, did not receive applause from her teammates Phelps deemed adequate.

The perceived slight, players alleged, prompted Phelps to launch an investigation and threaten to bar seniors from participating in their graduation ceremonies.

Parents, a player and two softball coaches raised the issue at the school board's Nov. 9 board meeting — alleging some wrongdoing by Phelps. The board subsequently launched its investigation.

Senior shortstop Miranda Mosqueda was flanked by six teammates that evening as she described the banquet initially as the best she had ever attended.

Mosqueda said the superintendent-led investigation "made life hell for 10 seniors, threatening to bar them from their own graduation" unless they said they deliberately didn't clap for Phelps' daughter. She said no one realized any player "didn't get enough claps."

Then-Del Norte softball coach Tom Peronto called the Phelps-initiated investigation "flawed," and questioned how it could be considered legitimate or comprehensive. "As coaches presenting awards, we had the best view of the events of the evening," he said at the Nov. 9 meeting. "Yet, not a single coach was consulted about the events of that evening."

One unnamed minor student sued Phelps, the high school, school district and the board in San Diego

County Superior Court, alleging intentional and negligent infliction of emotional distress, negligence in properly training district employees and a violation of her 1st Amendment rights.

The student alleged that she and Phelps' daughter were competing for the same position on the softball team. Phelps and her daughter felt slighted when they thought members of the softball team cheered harder for other players than for Phelps' daughter, the lawsuit alleges.

Phelps believed there was a conspiracy against her daughter to withhold applause, according to the lawsuit.

The banquet ended that night around 9. Phelps texted one player about two hours later and spoke with her for more than half an hour, trying to prove her theory, the lawsuit alleges.

That summer, according to the lawsuit, Phelps followed social media accounts for private travel softball teams the plaintiff also played for, which eventually led to those squads blocking Phelps.

The result of Phelps' investigation, the lawsuit states, was to offer the plaintiff an opportunity to admit she bullied Phelps' daughter or else be banned from the high school softball team for her senior year.

Phelps allegedly followed through on that threat. Included in the lawsuit is correspondence from Del Norte's principal to the plaintiff on Aug. 15, which said she was being banned from extracurricular activities for not signing an "Other Means of Correction" document, in which she would agree to refrain from "bullying, intimidation, harassment, threats and derogatory statements."

Eventually, the plaintiff said she signed the form under duress to rejoin the team.

Phelps was placed on paid administrative leave in February. The district appointed Associate Supt. Greg Mizel to the position on an interim basis the same month.

Phelps was hired at Poway in 2017 after four years as superintendent of the Westminster School District.

Pringles, plywood and commitment

[**Arellano**, from B1]
California, encampments have sprouted at UC Irvine and my alma mater, Chapman University, where I occasionally teach classes. Huge ones at UCLA (where I earned a master's degree) and USC drew national attention after police arrested hundreds of participants while clearing them out.
The Cal State L.A. encampment hits different. It's happening at a commuter school on the Eastside, with a blue-collar, Latino-majority student body of all ages who wouldn't seem to have the time to protest, let alone live in a tent town for days.

Anyone surprised by what's going on at Cal State L.A., though, isn't paying attention.

The school has a tradition of activism dating to the 1960s Chicano movement. And as I wrote in a *column* last month, many young Latinos have embraced the Palestinian cause since Oct. 7, when a Hamas-led massacre of about 1,200 people prompted Israel to launch a bombing campaign that has killed more than 34,000 in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry.

Activists have pushed Latino-majority cities such as Bell Gardens and Cudahy to pass cease-fire resolutions, have organized bilingual rallies from Boyle Heights to Santa Ana and have lighted up social media with posts making parallels between Israel's treatment of Palestinians and how the U.S. has treated Latin America.

"It's a lot of youths' first time to be in that type of setting," Mena said. The 25-year-old is a volunteer with Casa Zamora, a community space in Zamora Park that usually holds workshops on topics such as *corridos*, art and local history.

On Friday, it served as one of three loading zones for a Cal State L.A. supply

run.
"We're trying to provide some assurance, to let them know that faces like ours have their back," Mena added.

"You feel the need to support community," said Isabel Pan, a 20-year-old sophomore at Pitzer College, which has its own encampment. She couldn't go to Cal State L.A., but her friend was one of 20 people arrested last month after students occupied the president's office at Pomona College. "A lot of different fights are connecting, and people want to be a part of them."

Pedro Gonzalez is a UCLA graduate who remembers walking "hundreds of times" through his alma mater's Dickson Plaza, where the school's pro-Palestinian encampment existed for nearly a week, attracting a violent attack from counterprotesters before being cleared by law enforcement early Thursday morning.

Seeing the cops fire flash grenades and less lethal rounds that injured protesters "was disturbing," said the 26-year-old. "I couldn't make it out there, but helping to gather supplies [for Cal State L.A.] is one way to support."

The group arrived at Cal State L.A. just after sunset. They unloaded in a small parking lot packed with others doing the same. The scene looked like the outside of a Home Depot as people carried neon-colored safety vests, sheets of plywood and planks of various lengths. Others lugged tubs stuffed with blankets, sleeping bags and first-aid kits.

Ysabel Jurado, a candidate for the City Council district that includes Cal State L.A., showed up at the invitation of students, bringing bean and cheese burritos from La Abeja in Highland Park.

"We can't look away from the horrors in Gaza," she said. "And these students are peacefully exercising their right to free speech



NAYELLIE DIAZ walks out of Casa Zamora in El Monte with supplies as Pedro Gonzalez holds the door. "Helping to gather supplies [for pro-Palestinian protesters at Cal State L.A.] is one way to support," he says.

and moving the needle on the conversation, and they need our support."

In the parking lot, Zhao Feng Ye was taking a break after unloading a carrier van packed with wooden pallets.

"A lot of us adults are asking 'What can we do?' We're marching, we're calling politicians who are doing the bare minimum, and we feel helpless," the 34-year-old San Gabriel Valley resident said. "So when we see the next generation do this — it's not an easy task for them to risk standing up to a multi-billion-dollar institution. When you see it happen at a commuter school — it's big. It's a powerful statement."

Sam Vasquez and his girlfriend, Nayellie Diaz, showed up with masks and chalk.

"They've come a long way from back in the day," said Diaz, a 35-year-old alumna of Cal State L.A. In 2016, she and classmates tried to block traffic on the 10 Freeway near the campus after Donald Trump's presidential victory. "It's beautiful to see community members here as well."

Vasquez, 36, participated in the Occupy movement as a student at San Francisco State. "It's a mischaracterization that students should be in their classes," he said. "But this is another way of doing politics."

He looked on as more people showed up. "I can't help out like I used to before. But I can help resupply."

More than 100 people mingled inside the encampment, blocked from public access by a three-layer barricade of plywood, steel safety barriers and metal picnic tables pulled from the school's eating area.

One sign proclaimed, "Jesus was Palestinian"; another stated "Free Palestine" in Vietnamese.

Pup tents were set up in the center; pop-up tents housing food and medic stations ringed the perimeter. Graffiti on the lower part of the gym wall contrasted with a mural at the top that commemorated its role in the 1984 Summer Olympics.

Burly men took turns manning the entrance, which consisted of half a pallet with a sign listing crossed-out numbers above the words, "And Counting."

Nearby was a Purell hand sanitizer dispenser, a statue of Billie Jean King decorated with a mask, a Palestinian flag, and a bouquet of baby's breath and what looked liked cosmos flowers.

Protesters were in their 20s and 30s and mostly Latino. Volunteers used drills to fortify the barricades, as camp lights turned on and folks began to

settle for the night.

Joviality was in the air. No one in the encampment wanted to give their names — although a young woman admitted that the small boxer dog with her was named Lola.

I asked to speak to the media contact, and a skinny, jittery spokesperson who gave their name as Natalia emerged. They politely declined to let me in and asked that we speak underneath a tent just outside the encampment with a paper sign that said "Media." Another sign warned that the protesters retained the right to refuse comment.

Natalia is a Cal State L.A. student who's been enrolled at the school for "a while." They said most of the other protesters were students too.

"It fills our heart to see people helping to support us play a part in ending the genocide in Gaza," they said.

When I asked about some people's surprise that a commuter campus like Cal State L.A. would have an encampment, Natalia replied, "Even though we have to drive a long way, our effort in ending our complicity in ending this genocide is a lot more than having to drive to get here."

What item had they received the most of?

"Water — it's been hot."

How long would the encampment stay up?

"Until we win." Natalia noticed a Times photographer taking photos. "Masks up!" they screamed to people inside the encampment.

I thanked Natalia and chased down passersby for comment. Most refused.

A young woman walked by, raised her fist and shouted "Free Palestine!" She gave her name as Ana and attends UC Riverside.

"I didn't know it was going on. I'm very interested," said the East Los Angeles native. "We have always been told you have to learn from history, or history will be repeated. I think students don't want to repeat that."

A young man holding a piece of white toast with beans on top had just left a study session.

"It's nice to see people willing to fight for what they believe in," he said, requesting to be identified as "Anonymous Student." He said the encampment wasn't much of a conversation topic among his classmates and offered no opinion about it since he didn't know enough.

More people carried supplies past us as the student thought for a moment.

"To be honest, most of my time is spent studying."

Los Angeles Times

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Today in Southern California

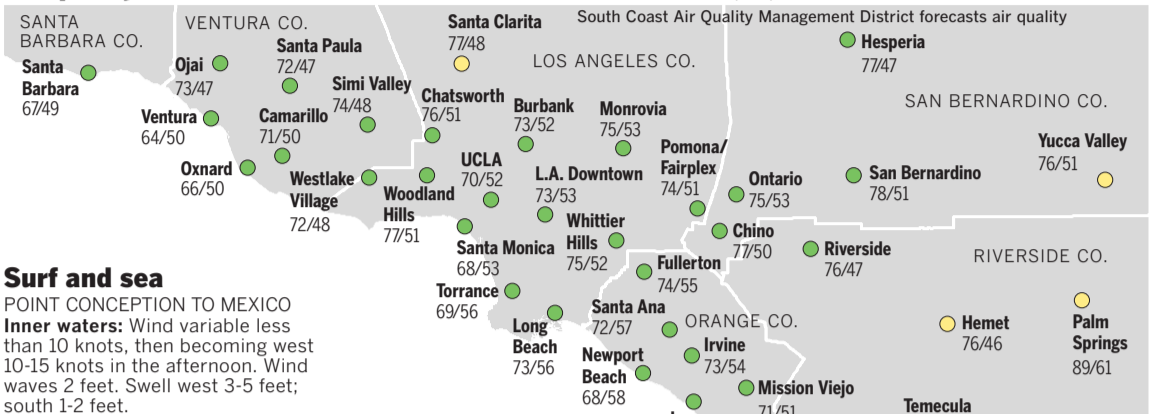
Sunshine for many: High pressure will continue to build across Southern California, bringing a good deal of sunshine to most areas. Temperatures will remain on the lower end of the historical average. As the ridge grows stronger, a warming trend will take place, sending temperatures well above the historical average by Wednesday.

5-day forecasts

High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin	Valleys	Beaches	Mountains	Deserts
Today	73 53 Lots of sun	76 53 Sun and warmer	68 53 Mostly sunny	61 39 Warmer, sunshine	89 61 Sunshine
Tuesday	Partly sunny 72/56	Mostly sunny 78/53	Partly sunny 69/54	Partly sunny 64/32	Mostly sunny 92/65
Wednesday	Sunny 74/57	Sunny 79/54	Sunny 66/56	Sunny; cool 60/32	Sunny 92/66
Thursday	Mostly sunny 76/54	Mostly sunny 78/52	Partly sunny 69/54	Mostly sunny 60/33	Sunny; warm 94/67
Friday	Clouds, sun 73/56	Some sun 78/58	Clouds, sun 68/55	Some sun 63/33	Sunny; warm 97/69

Air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO
Inner waters: Wind variable less than 10 knots, then becoming west 10-15 knots in the afternoon. Wind waves 2 feet. Swell west 3-5 feet; south 1-2 feet.

Surf zone: The risk for strong rip currents is moderate at the S.B. County beaches and high elsewhere.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	2-4'	8 sec	WSW	56
Ventura	3-6'	8 sec	WSW	55
Los Angeles	3-5'	11 sec	SW	59
Orange	3-5'	16 sec	SSW	59
San Diego	3-5'	15 sec	SSW	62

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

Today	8:53a	4.5 Hi	2:46a	-0.5 Lo
Tue.	8:42p	6.4 Hi	2:25p	0.7 Lo
	9:46a	4.3 Hi	3:32a	-1.0 Lo
	9:16p	6.6 Hi	3:00p	1.1 Lo

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people

Las Vegas, 10	Phoenix, 10
Los Angeles, 10	San Francisco, 25

California cities*

City	Sun.	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today	Hi	Lo	Tue.	Hi	Lo
Anaheim	70	49	.02		75	52		74	54	
Avalon/Catalina	61	50	.14		63	53		65	52	
Bakersfield	67	44	.01		72	48		75	55	
Barstow	66	45	Tr		80	55		86	52	
Big Bear Lake	43	28	Tr		61	39		64	32	
Bishop	60	37	--		76	39		80	41	
Burbank	69	48	.02		73	52		74	53	
Camarillo	68	49	.01		71	50		71	50	
Chatsworth	65	48	.01		76	51		78	54	
Chino	71	45	.05		77	50		77	50	
Compton	67	52	.01		74	55		73	55	
Dana Point	66	52	.01		68	54		68	57	
Death Valley	77	73	Tr		88	82		92	84	
Del Mar	74	52	.01		62	47		64	56	
Escondido	64	44	.02		73	46		73	48	
Eureka	57	46	.10		57	41		57	42	
Fallbrook	63	44	.14		74	47		73	48	
Fresno	66	46	--		72	51		74	52	
Fullerton	69	52	.10		74	55		74	56	
Hemet	65	42	--		76	46		75	48	
Hesperia	57	37	.01		75	48		76	42	
Huntington Beach	66	55	.01		68	57		69	60	
Idyllwild	50	40	--		65	48		67	49	
Irvine	68	51	.01		73	54		72	56	

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set

	Los Angeles Co.	Orange Co.	Ventura Co.
Sun	5:59a/7:41p	5:58a/7:40p	6:02a/7:46p
Moon	4:55a/6:28p	4:54a/6:26p	4:59a/6:32p



Almanac

Sunday Downtown readings

Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
High/low	66/54	66/52	59/49
Normal high/low	73/57	76/56	69/51
High/low a year ago	67/56	68/54	62/53
Record high/date	101/1990	94/2018	90/1953
Record low/date	46/1920	50/1999	40/1994

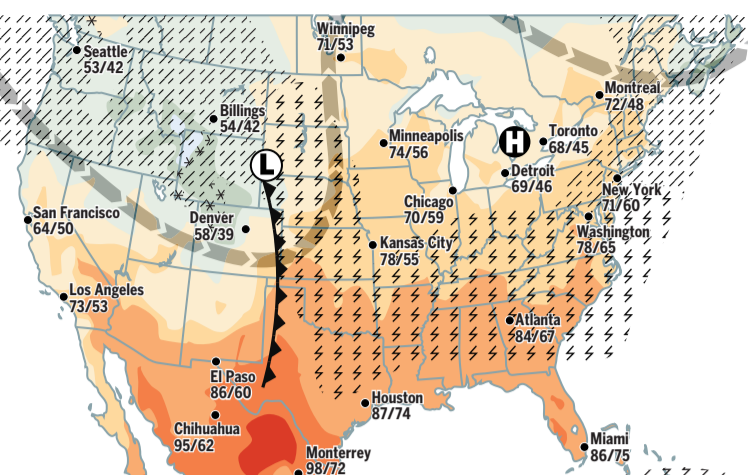
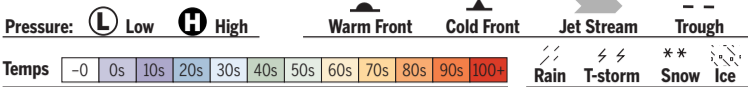
Precipitation	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
24-hour total (as of 2 p.m.)	0.13	0.10	0.01
Season total (since Oct. 1)	22.15	16.59	24.62
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	28.02	21.31	26.96
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	13.88	11.45	15.76
Humidity (high/low)	93/42	100/38	93/49

City	Sun.	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today	Hi	Lo	Tue.	Hi	Lo
L.A. D'town/USC	67	52	.13		73	53		72	56	
L.A. Int'l. Airport	65	52	.12		68	54		68	56	
Laguna Beach	62	53	.01		67	55		66	59	
Lancaster	60	45	.02		74	49		75	47	
Long Beach	72	54	.10		73	56		71	57	
Mammoth Lakes	38	16	--		52	23		57	19	
Mission Viejo	66	48	.02		71	51		71	54	
Monrovia	68	49	.02		75	53		76	55	
Monterey	59	44	.01		61	49		61	48	
Mt. Wilson	44	39	.07		52	49		55	49	
Needles	78	54	--		85	61		91	66	
Newport Beach	66	56	.03		68	58		68	60	
Northridge	69	48	--		77	52		78	53	
Oakland	62	47	--		64	50		68	48	
Oceanside	65	47	.03		72	49		71	53	
Ojai	65	45	--		73	47		76	48	
Ontario	68	47	.15		75	53		75	50	
Palm Springs	80	55	--		89	61		92	65	
Pasadena	68	48	.03		73	50		74	54	
Paso Robles	66	38	--		72	44		77	43	
Redding	65	44	--		70	48		76	57	
Riverside	64	44	.06		76	47		75	47	
Sacramento	63	42	--		71	47		74	51	
San Bernardino	67	46	.05		78	51		79	51	

City	Sun.	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today	Hi	Lo	Tue.	Hi	Lo
San Diego	64	53	.04		69	56		69	59	
San Francisco	59	49	--		64	50		66	52	
San Gabriel	70	51	.01		75	53		76	54	
San Jose	64	46	.01		68	49		71	48	
San Luis Obispo	64	45	--		70	51		71	50	
Santa Ana	67	55	.06		72	57		70	58	
Santa Barbara	70	48	--		67	49		69	52	
Santa Clarita	65	44	.01		77	48		81	51	
Santa Monica Pier	66	51	.06		68	53		69	54	
Santa Paula	67	44	--		72	47		74	49	
Santa Rosa	66	40	Tr		69	44		74	43	
Simi Valley	65	44	.01		74	48		76	48	
Tahoe Valley	38	21	.01		53	25		56	25	
Temecula	63	42	.02		76	46		76	48	
Thousand Oaks	65	45	--		72	47		74	49	
Torrance	64	55	.01		69	56		69	57	
UCLA	66	50	Tr		70	52		68	53	
Van Nuys	71	48	.01		76	52		77	54	
Ventura	64	49	--		64	50		67	51	
Whittier Hills	70	51	.03		75	52		74	54	
Woodland Hills	70	48	--		77	51		76	54	
Wrightwood	46	38	--		62	49		66	44	
Yorba Linda	69	46	.03		74	49		75	51	
Yosemite Valley	46	25	--		57	29		62	31	

Today in North America

Strong winds across Rockies: Strong winds will blow across the Rockies and northern Plains while a severe weather outbreak brings tornadoes and large hail to portions of Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri. Weather will be seasonable across the Upper Midwest.



U.S. cities

SUNDAY'S EXTREMES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 95 in Plant City, Fla.

Low 13 in Lucerne, Wyo.

City	Sunday			Today			City	Sunday			Today				
	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Sky		Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Sky		
Albany	54	49	1.23	70	51	Pc	Seattle	55	47	.14	53	42	R		
Albuquerque	81	53	Tr	71	45	Su	Tampa	89	73	.06	88	74	Su		
Anchorage	51	37	--	47	36	Cy	Tucson	89	60	--	82	54	Su		
Aspen	65	44	Tr	37	28	Sn	Tulsa	67	57	1.90	81	59	Ts		
Atlanta	85	66	.04	84	67	Ts	Washington, D.C.	73	54	.65	78	65	Ts		
Austin	80	63	.81	88	72	Ts	Wichita	67	53	Tr	77	48	Ts		
Baltimore	70	51	.84	78	65	Ts	World								
Boise	54	44	.54	56	38	Sh		Acapulco	87	72	--	87	72	Cy	
Boston	52	45	.25	69	57	Cy		Amsterdam	61	48	.31	66	51	Cy	
Buffalo	66	54	.14	68	46	Su		Athens	--	74	59	--	74	56	Su
Burlington, Vt.	53	50	.62	75	50	Sh		Bangkok	104	88	.01	102	86	Ts	
Charleston, S.C.	85	70	.25	85	70	Ts		Barcelona	70	55	.01	70	56	Pc	
Charlotte	78	65	.40	76	65	Ts		Berlin	68	49	.16	66	46	Hz	
Chicago	64	51	--	70	59	Pc		Cabo San Lucas	86	66	--	87	67	Hz	
Cincinnati	78	61	--	70	61	Sh		Cairo	82	68	--	81	61	Su	
Cleveland	75	62	.06	65	52	Cy		Dubai	98	81	--	96	82	Su	
Columbia, S.C.	85	67	3.51	80	65	Ts	Dublin	63	48	--	61	43	Cy		
Columbus	78	64	.11	72	62	Sh	Havana	90	70	.06	90	72	Sh		
Dallas/Ft.Worth	80	65	1.29	85	71	Ts	Ho Chi Minh City	95	82	.42	98	82	Ts		
Denver	78	42	--	58	39	W	Hong Kong	86	77	.06	86	76	Pc		
Detroit	71	61	.01	69	46	Pc	Istanbul	64	55	--	65	50	Sh		
El Paso	91	60	--	86	60	W	Jerusalem	70	57	--	64	54	Sh		
Eugene	55	45	.15	56	40	R	Johannesburg	77	46	--	78	53	Ts		
Fort Myers	90	71	.06	90	71	Su	Kuala Lumpur	94	78	.07	92	77	Ts		
Hartford	55	50	.43	76	56	Cy	Lima	71	65	--	73	65	Su		
Honolulu	84	70	.05	83	72	Sh	London	66	45	.03	60	50	Ts		
Houston	81	73	.94	87	74	Pc	Madrid	69	57	.24	72	45	Su		
Indianapolis	76	63	--	69	61	Sh	Mecca	104	70	--	104	74	Hz		
Jacksonville, Fla.	89	68	.03	87	66	Ts	Mexico City	88	60	--	89	60	Cy		
Kansas City	61	45	.06	78	55	Cy	Montreal	54	52	.40	72	48	Pc		
Knoxville	81	62	.06	78	63	Ts	Moscow	52	46	.07	52	35	Pc		
Las Vegas	69	60	.03	80	59	Su	Mumbai	93	83	--	92	82	Hz		
Louisville	81	64	.16	74	66	Ts	New Delhi	106	81	--	105	82	Hz		
Medford	58	39	.01	58	41	Sh	Paris	65	50	.17	64	48	R		
Memphis	80	63	.86	83	72	Ts	Prague	70	48	.02	68	50	Sh		
Miami	84	76	--	86	75	Su	Rome	70	48	--	70	54	Pc		
Milwaukee	60	49	Tr	65	51	Su	Seoul	59	55	1.80	60	55	R		
Minneapolis	69	49	--	75	60	Sh	Singapore	91	79	--	89	79	Ts		
Nashville	84	63	.07	78	66	Ts	Taipei, Taiwan	86	74	.06	89	72	Ts		
New Orleans	87	73	.05	87	75	Cy	Tokyo	--	77	64	--	73	68	W	
New York	54	49	.19	71	60	Cy	Vancouver	56	52	.24	57	44	Sh		
Norfolk	82	61	.62	80	68	Ts	Vienna	78	50	--	76	55	Pc		
Oklahoma City	68	57	.35	80	54	Ts									
Omaha	67	42	--	76	48	Ts									
Orlando	89	69	.05	89	68	Su									
Philadelphia	61	50	.23	76	62	Ts									
Phoenix	84	72	--	86	63	Su									
Pittsburgh	79	56	.20	75	59	Cy									
Portland, Ore.	55	48	.42	57	45	R									
Providence	50	46	.22	71	58	Cy									
Raleigh/Durham	75	66	.85	81	67	Ts									
Reno	53	36	Tr	65	41	Su									
Richmond	75	59	1.91	79	64	Cy									
St. Louis	70	56	--	79	66	Ts									
Salt Lake City	53	48	.80	56	42	R									

Key: Su sunny; Pc partly cloudy; Cy cloudy; Fg foggy; Prcp precipitation; Dr drizzle; Hz hazy Sh showers; Ts thunderstorms; R rain; Sn snow; Sf snow flurries; I ice; Rs rain/snow; W windy; Tr trace. Notes: National exceptions exclude Alaska and Hawaii. * - data estimated.

Sunday's readings as of 2 p.m.

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DODGERS designated hitter Shohei Ohtani (17) greets Mookie Betts (50) after hitting the first of his two home runs in L.A.'s 5-1 victory over the visiting Braves.

DIALING BROOM SERVICE

Buehler returns ready to adapt to new normal

By Jack Harris

On an otherwise quiet backfield at the Dodgers' Camelback Ranch complex this spring, a barrage of expletives rang out from the mound one late February day.

In his first time facing hitters all camp, Walker Buehler was already in fiery midseason form.

He'd pull a fastball inside, then admonish himself with a growl. He'd miss the other corner of the strike zone, and frustratingly blurt out a four-letter word. At one point, teammate Kiké Hernández playfully patronized the right-handed pitcher, telling him the misplaced pitches shouldn't make him feel bad.

With a glare from the rubber, Buehler snapped back just as he started to fire his next pitch.

"He's in his leg kick," one Dodgers official in attendance cracked with a laugh, "and he's still talking s—."

Two years and a [See Buehler, D5]



WALKER BUEHLER will start for the Dodgers on Monday night for the first time in 23 months after undergoing the second Tommy John surgery of his career.

Ohtani homers twice, giving him three in two games, as the surging Dodgers complete a three-game sweep of Atlanta.

By Mike DiGiovanna

Dave Roberts seemed a little conflicted before Sunday's series finale against the Atlanta Braves in Dodger Stadium.

The manager didn't want to put too much emphasis on an early-May series against a potential playoff opponent, saying, "I just want to win as many games as we can," but as he sized up a "great" trip in which the Dodgers won seven of nine games and a homestand that began with two wins over the Braves, he changed his tune.

"It's time to get greedy," Roberts said, "so, yeah, we're trying to sweep them."

The gluttonous Dodgers did just that, riding a strong start by left-hander James Paxton, a pair of two-run home runs by Shohei Ohtani and Teoscar Hernández and another solo blast by Ohtani to a 5-1 victory to complete a three-game sweep of the Braves before a sellout crowd of 52,733.

Ohtani [See Dodgers, D5]



CONFETTI RAINS DOWN as the UCLA men's volleyball team celebrates its second straight NCAA championship. The Bruins beat the Beach in four sets.

Bruins' encore brings them 21st NCAA volleyball title

UCLA turns back Long Beach State in four sets to win its second title in a row.

By Thuc Nhi Nguyen

UCLA players raised the NCAA championship trophy to each corner of the Walter Pyramid. While most of Long Beach State's sell-out crowd had emptied before the Bruins could begin their championship celebration, large swaths of blue-

and-gold clad fans still remained. They chanted. "Back-to-back! Back-to-back!"

Top-seeded UCLA defended its national championship with a four-set win over No. 2 Long Beach State in Walter Pyramid on Saturday. The Bruins won their 21st NCAA title in program history and completed their first repeat bid since 1996, sending the decorated senior class that ended UCLA's almost two-decade title drought off with a matching set of championships.

"It took a long time to get

one at UCLA," UCLA coach John Speraw said. "Now they got two."

When Long Beach State's Skyler Varga tipped an attack out of bounds on match point, UCLA celebrated a 25-21, 25-20, 27-29, 25-21 win by rushing the court. Middle blocker Guy Genis and outside hitter Cooper Robinson fell to the bottom of the pile. Speraw raised both fists as he leaned back to look at the rafters.

On the other side of the net, Long Beach State's DiAeris McRaven stood frozen [See UCLA, D8]

Álvarez hands Munguía first loss
In a battle of Mexican fighters, the super middle-weight champion takes a unanimous decision. **D2**

He's riding the wave as long as he can
Moorpark's Jonas Meskis is "living the good life" as a world-traveling, high-profile international surfer. **D7**

USC dominates beach volleyball again
The Trojans sweep past UCLA to win their sixth NCAA title and fourth under coach Dain Blanton. **D8**



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Álvarez delivers Munguía his first defeat

It's not a knockout, but undisputed super middleweight champ leaves no doubt.

By Mark Anderson

LAS VEGAS — The question of whether Canelo Álvarez can any longer knock out anyone likely won't go away with his unanimous victory Saturday night, but he remains the undisputed super middleweight champion because he was the stronger and more effective boxer.

Álvarez (61-2-2), who closed as a minus-380 favorite at BetMGM, overcame a somewhat slow start to dominate and hand Jaime Munguía (43-1) his first loss.

The champ took full control after knocking down Munguía in the fourth round in front of the announced crowd of 17,492, which was fairly evenly split between the two competitors.

Tim Cheatham scored the fight 117-110, David Sutherland had it 116-111 and Steve Weisfeld 115-112.

"When I retire, my numbers will say what position I'm in," Álvarez said. "I know there's a lot of great Mexican fighters in the past, but I'm the best fighting right now."

This is the second straight time that Álvarez left no doubt who was the better fighter and showing why, even at 33, he remains one of the sport's all-time greats. Álvarez also had his way with Jermell Charlo in September to win by even wider margins.

These two fights followed two victories and a loss that were anything but impressive. While Álvarez showed he still is the class of his division, he still hasn't delivered a knockout since defeating Caleb Plant in 2021 — a span of five matches.

Álvarez was circumspect regarding what he might do next, saying he'll return to the ring "if the money is right."

"I've fought everyone and I can do what I want," he said.

The lead-up to the bout was unusually civil, with both fighters saying they were proud to represent Mexico on Cinco de Mayo weekend.

"This win means a lot," Álvarez said. "I'm glad that I



JOHN LOCHER Associated Press

CANELO ÁLVAREZ knocks down Mexican challenger Jaime Munguía in their bout in Las Vegas. Alvarez won by unanimous decision.

gave him this opportunity. Munguía is a great guy and a great champion. He's going to have a great career. I'm very proud that all the Mexicans are here watching us."

Álvarez saved his harshest criticism during week not for his opponent, but for Munguía's promoter. Oscar De La Hoya used to be in Álvarez's corner, but they clearly are on opposite sides now and nearly even came to blows Wednesday at the news conference after trading allegations.

The 27-year-old Munguía was the more aggressive boxer the first three rounds, even getting Álvarez into the ropes in the third. Álvarez, though, showed in the

fourth he wasn't going anywhere, using a left and then a right to the face to send Munguía to the canvass with 38 seconds left to change the tenor of the fight.

Álvarez then proceeded to sting Munguía over the next four rounds with shots to the face. Munguía put together his own sets of flurries, but they did little noticeable damage to Álvarez.

That is until the ninth round when Munguía landed some blows to the face that sent Álvarez backward, even into the corner at one point. But Álvarez responded with his own combinations, including coming out of the corner, in the fight's most action-packed

round.

The 10th and 11th rounds were close, but largely the same trends followed of Álvarez delivering the harder shots.

Munguía came out in the final round as if he knew he were trailing on the judges' cards but did little to change the outcome. It was Álvarez who again came through with the best blows, using a combination with about a minute left to Munguía's head and following with several more shots to end the fight.

"I came out strong and was winning the early rounds," Munguía said. "I let my hands go, but he's a fighter with a lot of experi-

ence. The loss hurts because it's my first loss and I felt strong."

In the other main-card fights:

■ San Antonio's Mario Barrios (29-2) successfully defended his WBC interim world welterweight title by defeating Argentinian Fabián Maidana (22-3) by unanimous decision in the co-main event. Each judge scored the bout 116-111.

Barrios prevailed despite fighting with his right eye nearly completely closed.

"Maidana fought hard for 12 rounds like I expected," Barrios said. "Once my eye started swelling up, it was hard to find my range. But we stuck to the fundamen-

tals, tried to find openings and came out with the victory."

■ WBC interim world featherweight champion Brandon Figueroa (25-1-1, 19 KOs) of Welasco, Texas, knocked out Jessie Magdaleno (29-3) of Las Vegas with a left uppercut to his kidney with one second left in the ninth round ended.

■ Lithuania's Eimantas Stanionis (15-0) easily retained his WBA welterweight title by claiming a unanimous decision over Venezuelan Gabriel Maestre (6-1-1) with scores of 117-111, 118-10 and 119-109.

Anderson writes for the Associated Press.

PRO CALENDAR

	MON 6	TUE 7	WED 8	THU 9	FRI 10
DODGERS	MIAMI 7 SNLA	MIAMI 7 SNLA	MIAMI Noon SNLA		at San Diego 6:30 SNLA
ANGELS	at Pittsburgh 3:30 BSW	at Pittsburgh 3:30 BSW	at Pittsburgh 9:30 a.m. BSW	KANSAS CITY 6:30 BSW, FS1	KANSAS CITY 6:30 Apple TV
GALAXY	SATURDAY: VS. REAL SALT LAKE, 7:30 P.M., APPLE TV				
LAFC			at Las Vegas* 7:30		
ANGEL CITY	MAY 12: VS. HOUSTON, 4:30 P.M., BSW				

SPARKS: Friday at Phoenix (preseason), 7 p.m. PDT
Shade denotes home game. *U.S. Open Cup

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
BASEBALL		
3 p.m.	Detroit at Cleveland	TV: FS1, FOXD
3:30 p.m.	Angels at Pittsburgh	TV: BSW R: 830
6:30 p.m.	Texas at Oakland	TV: MLB
7 p.m.	Miami at Dodgers	TV: SNLA R: 570, 1020
BASKETBALL		
4:30 p.m.	NBA playoffs, second round, Game 1, Indiana at New York	TV: TNT, TruTV
7 p.m.	NBA playoffs, second round, Game 2, Minnesota at Denver	TV: TNT, TruTV
COLLEGE GOLF		
Noon	PGA WORKS Collegiate Championship, first round	TV: Golf
HOCKEY		
5 p.m.	NHL playoffs, second round, Game 1, Boston at Florida	TV: ESPN
SOCCER		
9 a.m.	Italy, Salernitana vs. Atalanta	TV: CBSN, Paramount+
11:45 a.m.	Italy, Udinese vs. Napoli	TV: Paramount+
Noon	England, Crystal Palace vs. Manchester United	TV: USA, Peacock
Noon	France, Lille vs. Olympique Lyonnais	TV: beIN
TENNIS		
2 a.m. (Tue.)	Italian Open, WTA early rounds	TV: Tennis

SPORTS EXTRA

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Courtesy of Ricardo Celis and Televisa Univision

REPORTERS Ricardo Celis, left, and David Faitelson, right, say they were denied credentials for criticism.

Reporters: Álvarez banned us

Veteran broadcasters Celis and Faitelson say the decision sets a dangerous precedent.

By EDUARD CAUICH

LAS VEGAS — Before his win over Jaime Munguía, Canelo Álvarez was accused of influencing the denial of credentials for two well-known sports reporters, Ricardo Celis and David Faitelson.

Celis, a broadcaster who has called Álvarez's fights for DAZN since 2018, was replaced on the microphone by Jaime Motta. Celis, with more than 35 years in boxing, said Álvarez's team requested that he not be part of the broadcast. Celis also is a commentator on the independent site ProBox TV, alongside Juan Manuel Marquez, a former world champion and well-known Álvarez critic.

Celis was told a month ago he was going to be the play-by-play voice of Saturday's bout along with Claudia Trejos, his partner at DAZN, and planned to travel to Las Vegas on Wednesday. However, on Tuesday he was notified he

would not be part of the broadcast team at Álvarez's request.

"Our job there is to talk about boxing. Not everything we do paints them rosy, because that's not the way the world is," said Celis, a contract employee for DAZN. "Canelo sometimes does good things and we say it, and sometimes [boxers] do bad things and we say it."

"I have spent 35 years working in boxing. I have narrated thousands of fights. I've never had a fighter veto me or put this kind of censorship. It's like a warning, 'If you talk bad about me, the same thing that happened to Ricardo and David is going to happen to you.' It is a very bad precedent."

Celis has called Álvarez's fights since the Mexican fought Rocky Fielding at Madison Square Garden in 2018.

Álvarez's team representative, Kanessa Tixe, told the Los Angeles Times en Español that the Mexican boxer's team did not handle media credentials, and had no comment on the alleged veto imposed on Celis and Faitelson.

Broadcasters DAZN and Televisa TUDN did not respond to The Times' request

for comment. Premier Boxing Champions, promoter of Saturday's fight, said it had no comment on the matter.

Faitelson, a well-known TUDN commentator who has interviewed Álvarez on multiple occasions during his ESPN career, accused Álvarez of denying him accreditation for the fight. The Mexican journalist, known for his criticism of Álvarez in recent years, said he arrived to the media room in Las Vegas on Wednesday and learned he had been denied credentials.

"It seems to me that this is a terrible outrage, the truth is that I still don't understand it," Faitelson said in an interview with Mexican newspaper El Universal.

"I think Saul 'Canelo' Álvarez, who I think is a magnificent boxer, has to understand that criticism is part of his career."

"He has to assimilate it and understand it." On Thursday, Álvarez was questioned by digital media and washed his hands of the issue.

"Not at all, the company is the one in charge of that, I'm not in charge of that, I'm involved in my own thing, focused on what I have to do," said Álvarez, who has had

several verbal exchanges on air with Faitelson. "If the company vetoed him, he must have his reasons too. He is a person who discredits every one of my fights, so why do they want him here? I think the company has many reasons."

Faitelson said in an interview with Diario Récord that he tried to talk to Álvarez's trainer and manager, Eddy Reynoso, as well as Álvarez about it, but they did not speak to him.

"We all know the situation. The only thing I regret very much is that this sets a precedent and that from now on, any manager, player or boxer or whatever, suddenly says: 'He doesn't speak well of me, he criticizes me, so I won't let him in,'" said Faitelson, whose coverage of fights in Las Vegas began in 1988 with a Julio César Chávez bout.

"The big guys accept positive and negative criticism, the little guys accept arrogance and tantrums," said Fernando Schwartz, a well-known Fox reporter who has also accused Álvarez of denying him entry to one of his events.

This story first appeared in Spanish on L.A. Times en Español.

Mystik Dan might not run in Preakness

His trainer says the Kentucky Derby winner did not feel well after the race.

By John Cherwa

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Mystik Dan's road to the Triple Crown might be taking a detour before the Preakness Stakes. Kenny McPeck, trainer of the Kentucky Derby winner, said Sunday morning that he has not committed to going to Baltimore to race May 18 after the horse seemed a little off after Saturday's victory.

"We're not committed to the Preakness," McPeck said. "I ran him back once in two weeks and it completely backfired on me."

One thing that trainers use to gauge a horse's fitness is how they eat. In short, an empty feed bucket means a happy horse.

"Most trainers don't talk about all this," McPeck said. "Look, cards on the table, face up. He left three-quarters of his feed. We couldn't hardly get everybody out of the barn until midnight, so he didn't really get a great night's rest. We'll watch him today and tomorrow."

At this point it is closer to a coin flip more than anything else if Mystik Dan will run in the Preakness.

There is no need to take any chances with a colt whose breeding value jumped exponentially after winning the Kentucky Derby by the slimmest of noses.

"The back story on that [two-week reference] is that I ran the colt back too quick in November," McPeck said on Saturday night before knowing about Sunday's development. "He won really easy in his maiden race and I wanted to stretch him out and it was the end of the season."

"I ran him back in an allowance race going a mile and he coughed up a lung infection on me. Learned a little lesson there with him. I feel if a horse is doing good and we can win a race, let's give it a run. That one backfired."

McPeck said a decision might not be made until next Monday when entries are taken for the Preakness. It's not unusual for a horse to be shipped to Baltimore on the Wednesday before the race.

"We're going to have a lot of input," co-owner Lance Gasaway told Horse Racing Nation. "It's all about the horse. Let's see how the horse comes out of the race."



JEFF ROBERSON Associated Press

JOCKEY BRIAN HERNANDEZ JR. basks in the winner's circle after riding Mystik Dan to victory in the Kentucky Derby. Trainer Kenny McPeck says Mystik Dan might not run in the Preakness in two weeks. The horse did not eat or rest well after the race, he says.

‘Let’s see how the horse comes out of the race. Give him two or three days. If he comes out good, we’ll look at it.’

—LANCE GASAWAY, co-owner of Mystik Dan

Give him two or three days. If he comes out good, we'll look at it. If not, we'll worry about the horse more than anything."

If he doesn't go, it will spoil his rematch with Muth. Mystik Dan finished third in the Arkansas Derby while Muth won it.

But Muth was not eligible to run in the Kentucky Derby because he is trained by Bob Baffert, who is in the third year of a ban that was originally set at two years. Churchill Downs barred him from its properties after Medina Spirit tested positive for a legal medication that is banned on race day after winning the 2021 Derby. Baffert has had no horses fail a

test since then.

Baffert is expected to also enter Imagination, who finished second in the Santa Anita Derby to Stronghold, who finished seventh in the Derby. Baffert has won the Preakness eight times, including last year with National Treasure.

If Mystik Dan does not go to Baltimore, it would heighten the conversation about the relevance of the Preakness Stakes at a time when most horses don't come back on two weeks' rest.

The Stronach Group, which owns Santa Anita Park, just turned over Pimlico Race Course to the state of Maryland but still retains

the intellectual properties of the Preakness Stakes.

Aidan Butler, chief executive of its racing division, has been floating ideas that the Triple Crown should be retooled with each race held a month apart rather than two weeks from the Derby to the Preakness and three weeks from the Preakness to the Belmont. This could certainly bolster his argument.

There is no doubt that current training patterns do not favor a two-week turnaround. Last year there was only one Derby horse that ran in the Preakness, the only one that mattered, Derby winner Mage. The previous year, Rich Strike skipped the Preakness. In

2021, Medina Spirit ran in the Preakness and finished third. The Derby result was overturned and Mandaloun was declared the winner, so technically the Derby winner was not in the race.

In 2020, the COVID year, the Preakness was held in October and the Derby winner, Authentic, was in the race. The Derby was run in September.

A survey of most of the other trainers by Churchill Downs media relations could not find any takers ready to go to Baltimore. The jockey for T O Password, Kazishi Kimura, indicated on Saturday that he thought the horse could go to the Preakness. But the people who pay the bills have him headed back to Japan.

"He's good this morning, no problems, but he is tired," Kimura said. "It is what it is. He missed the first step and from there I followed Sierra Leone. He tried hard all the way."

The second-place fin-

isher, Sierra Leone, will be skipping the Preakness.

"He's good, but he's not going to the Preakness," trainer Chad Brown said. "I'm going to take him to Saratoga tomorrow and he's going to train there for the Belmont [Stakes]. He's a little tired."

"He's a real laid-back horse, but when we brought him out he was a little more tired than he normally is after his races. I think giving him the five weeks to the Belmont is definitely the right thing to do."

Regardless if Mystik Dan runs in two weeks, he'll also be headed back to Saratoga, where McPeck has a home.

McPeck now has a career Triple Crown, having won the Preakness in 2020 with Swiss Skydiver and the Belmont in 2002 with Sarava at 70-1 odds.

Will McPeck now start to get doubles on his career Triple Crown? The thinking is the answer lies in the feed bucket.

NBA PLAYOFF SCHEDULE

WESTERN CONFERENCE SEMIFINALS

1 Oklahoma City vs. 5 Dallas
Gm 1 Tues. at OKC, 6:30, TNT
Gm 2 Thu. at OKC, 8:30, ESPN
Gm 3 Sat. at Dallas, 12:30, Ch. 7
Gm 4 May 13 at Dallas, TBA, TNT
Gm 5 May 15 at OKC, TBA, TNT*
Gm 6 May 18 at Dallas, 5:30, ESPN*
Gm 7 May 20 at OKC, 5:30, TNT*

2 Denver vs. 3 Minnesota Timberwolves lead, 1-0
Gm 1 Minn. 106, Denver 99
Gm 2 Monday at Denver, 4, TNT
Gm 3 Fri. at Minn., 6:30, ESPN
Gm 4 Sun. at Minn., 5, TNT
Gm 5 May 14 at Denver, TBA, TNT*
Gm 6 May 16 at Minn., 5:30, ESPN*
Gm 7 May 19 at Denver, TBA*

EASTERN CONFERENCE FIRST ROUND

4 Cleveland vs. 5 Orlando Cavaliers win, 4-3
Gm 1 Cleveland 97, Orlando 83
Gm 2 Cleveland 96, Orlando 86
Gm 3 Orlando 121, Cleveland 83
Gm 4 Orlando 112, Cleveland 89
Gm 5 Cleve. 104, Orlando 103
Gm 6 Orlando 103, Cleveland 96
Gm 7 Cleveland 106, Orlando 94

SEMIFINALS

2 Boston vs. 4 Cleveland
Gm 1 Tues. at Boston, 4, TNT
Gm 2 Thur. at Boston, 4, ESPN
Gm 3 Sat. at Cleve., 5:30, Ch. 7
Gm 4 May 13 at Cleve., 4, TNT
Gm 5 May 15 at Boston, TBA, TNT*
Gm 6 May 17 at Cleve. TBA, ESPN*
Gm 7 May 19 at Boston, TBA*

2 New York vs. 6 Indiana
Gm 1 Monday at N.Y., 4:30, TNT
Gm 2 Wed. at N.Y., 5, TNT
Gm 3 Friday at Ind., 4, ESPN
Gm 4 Sun. at Ind., 12:30, Ch. 7
Gm 5 May 14 at N.Y., TBA, TNT*
Gm 6 May 17 at Ind., TBA, ESPN*
Gm 7 May 19 at N.Y., TBA

* if necessary
Times PDT, p.m. unless noted

NBA PLAYOFFS

Mitchell ensures Cavaliers advance

Donovan Mitchell brought redemption and relief to himself and the Cleveland Cavaliers.

A year after being bullied and bounced in the first round of the NBA playoffs, Cleveland is moving on.

Mitchell made sure. "This is why I'm here," he said. "It's my job."

Mitchell scored 39 points, Caris LeVert added 15 and Cleveland avoided a potentially franchise-shifting loss by rallying for a 106-94 win over the visiting Orlando Magic on Sunday in Game 7 to advance in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

The Cavs trailed by 18 in the first half and were in danger of being eliminated early for the second year in a row — a scenario that may have led to firings.

But Mitchell, who scored 50 in a Game 6 loss at Orlando and has been battling a left knee injury for months, put the Cavs on his back. He carried them past an up-and-coming Orlando team whose playoff inexperience showed in the second half.

"I don't mean this disrespectful, but it doesn't really mean much," Mitchell said. "We didn't come in just to win the first round. We accomplished one goal, now we have to do it again. That's the mind-set."

According to the NBA, Cleveland's comeback is the largest in a Game 7 since the league began tracking play-by-play in 1997-98.

Evan Mobley grabbed 16 rebounds and Darius Garland hit a critical three-pointer — after getting a pep talk from Mitchell — in the fourth for Cleveland, which



JASON MILLER Getty Images

CLEVELAND'S Donovan Mitchell reacts during the fourth quarter of the Cavaliers' series-clinching 106-94 victory over Orlando. He finished with 39 points.

won its first playoff series without LeBron James since 1993.

The Cavs will begin the second round on the road against the top-seeded Celtics in Game 1 on Tuesday. Boston went 2-1 against Cleveland this season.

In the closing minutes, the towel-waving crowd inside Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse chanted, "We want Boston!" — a matchup that didn't look likely an hour earlier.

"I'm pretty sure everybody thinks they're going to come in and kick our ass," Mitchell said. "So for us to continue to stay level-headed throughout, and just be who we are, that's the biggest thing."

Paolo Banchero scored 38 — just 14 after halftime — and added 16 rebounds to lead the Magic, who grew up in the series but couldn't figure out how to win in Cleveland as both teams held serve on their floors.

"After the first game, people were like, I don't know if they're ready," Banchero said. "To come back the way we did, it shows where we're headed and shows what we're able to do."

Led by the 21-year-old Banchero, the Magic, who won only 22 games two years ago before they selected him with the No. 1 overall pick in the draft, were 24 minutes from winning a series they trailed 2-0.

But Orlando didn't have

enough — or Mitchell.

Whenever the Cavs needed a big play, the All-Star guard made one. Whenever a teammate needed support, he was there. And in scoring 89 points in the final two games, Mitchell may have finally silenced critics who pointed to his inability to close.

"That's what special players do when it matters most," Cavs coach J.B. Bickerstaff said. "He was special when he needed to be."

Minnesota 106, at Denver 99: Anthony Edwards scored a playoff career-high — and franchise postseason-record — 43 points, Naz Reid had 14 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter and the

Timberwolves beat the defending NBA champion Nuggets in Game 1 of the second-round series Saturday.

Edwards was unstoppable in the first half, scoring 25 points, and Reid took over in the fourth quarter.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 20 points despite dealing with foul trouble. The Timberwolves shot a blistering 71.1% from the floor in the second half.

"The whole team, we trust each other," said Edwards, who was 17 of 29 from the floor as he posted his third career playoff game with 40 or more points. "It doesn't matter down the stretch who takes the shot."

"I'm proud of the way he's accepted the kind of growth he needed to have to be where he is," said Mike Conley Jr., who finished with 14 points and 10 assists. "It's not easy for a 22-, 23-year-old to make that adjustment so quickly."

"Twenty-two," Edwards playfully chimed in.

Game 2 is Monday night in Denver.

Three days after undergoing knee surgery, Timberwolves coach Chris Finch was on the bench in the second row, behind assistant coach Micah Nori, who did the instructing, roaming and switching.

Two-time NBA MVP Nikola Jokic had 32 points, eight rebounds and nine assists for Denver, but also had seven turnovers. Jamal Murray scored 17 points after being held scoreless in the first half.

Murray, the hero for the Nuggets in Round 1 with a pair of game-winners that allowed Denver to eliminate the Lakers in five games, finished six of 14 from the floor.



THE GUARDIANS' Jose Ramirez watches his two-run home run off Angels starting pitcher Griffin Canning in the sixth inning.

Photographs by PHIL LONG Associated Press

Guardians' power defeats Angels

Canning goes a season-high six innings, but Naylor and Ramirez hit two-run home runs in Cleveland's victory.

By JOHN PERROTTO

CLEVELAND — José Ramírez broke a 0-for-19 skid and finished a 10-pitch at-bat with a two-run home run and Josh Naylor also hit a two-run shot to lift the Cleveland Guardians to a 4-1 victory over the Angels on Sunday.

Ramírez, a five-time All-Star, had been hitless in six consecutive games before connecting on a full-count fastball from Griffin Canning (1-4) in the sixth inning to wipe out a 1-0 deficit.

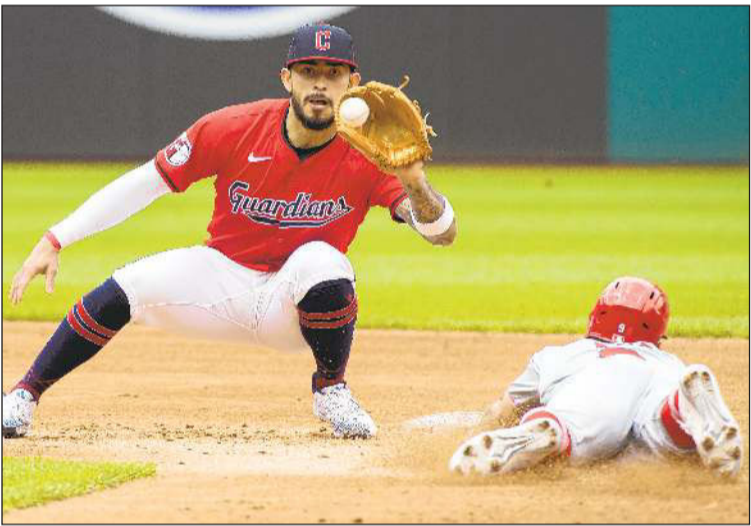
Andrés Giménez singled and Ramírez followed with his sixth home run of the season into the stands in right-center.

"The at-bat with Josey didn't start very great, but he battled and battled, got some information then got a mistake and didn't miss it," Guardians manager Stephen Vogt said. "That's what elite players do."

Ramírez has homered four times in his career plate appearances in at-bats of 10 or more pitches and Naylor was not surprised to see his teammate grind out the at-bat. "José is always focused whether it's offensively or defensively," Naylor said.

Naylor added insurance with his team-leading eighth homer with two outs in the eighth inning off Matt Moore. Naylor's shot came after Ramírez drew a two-out walk.

Vogt gave Naylor, who was in a



THE GUARDIANS' Gabriel Arias, left, takes a throw before tagging out Angels baserunner Zach Neto, right, at second base.

two-for-19 slump, the night off Saturday. The first baseman then went two for four Sunday.

"I don't like getting days off," Naylor said. "It is what it is. I love to play every single day. I really don't believe in slumps, to be honest. I don't chase results. I just try to have good at-bats to help the team win and get on base any way I can."

Carlos Carrasco (2-2) gave up a run and six hits over six innings. He had given up 13 runs and five home runs over nine innings in his previous two starts.

"That's the best stuff he's had all year," Vogt said. "His sinker, his slider, they were electric."

Emmanuel Clase pitched a perfect ninth inning for his 10th save in 12 chances.

Canning (1-4) pitched a season-high six innings, giving up just two

runs while striking out five and walking one.

"Canning did a heck of a job," Angels manager Ron Washington said. "Even the pitch to Ramírez was up and away and he yanked it out to right field so you've got to give him credit because he's a hell of a hitter."

The AL Central-leading Guardians (22-12) moved 10 games over .500 by taking two of three in the series. The Angels (12-22) dropped to 10 games under. The Angels lost for the 13th time in their past 16 games overall and have lost 27 of their past 32 at Progressive Field. They have one series win this year.

The Angels got their run in the second inning when Willie Calhoun hit a leadoff double and scored on Jo Adell's sacrifice fly. Cole Tucker had two hits for the Angels and is

CLEVELAND 4, ANGELS 1											
Angels	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.	Cleveland	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Schanuel 1b	4	0	0	0	.232	Florial dh	4	0	1	0	.200
Moniak cf	3	0	1	0	.167	Giménez 2b	4	1	1	0	.270
a-Pillar cf	1	0	0	0	.167	Ramírez 3b	3	2	1	2	.230
Ward lf	4	0	1	0	.279	J.Naylor 1b	4	1	2	2	.271
Calhoun dh	4	1	1	0	.417	Brennan if	4	0	0	0	.242
Drury 2b	4	0	0	0	.161	Laureano rf	3	0	0	0	.153
Thaiss c	3	0	0	0	.222	B.Naylor c	2	0	0	0	.179
Adell rf	1	0	0	1	.261	Freeman cf	2	0	0	0	.189
Tucker 3b	3	0	2	0	.417	Arias ss	3	0	0	0	.239
Neto ss	2	0	1	0	.237	Totals	29	4	5	4	
Totals	29	1	6	1							

Angels	010	000	000	-1	6	1
Cleveland	000	002	02x	-4	5	0

a grounded out for Moniak in the 8th.

Walks—Angels 3; Thaiss 1, Adell 1, Neto 1. Cleveland 2: Ramírez 1, B.Naylor 1.

Strikeouts—Angels 7: Schanuel 2, Drury 2, Thaiss 1, Tucker 1, Neto 1.

E—Thaiss (2), LOB—Angels 5, Cleveland 4. 2B—Calhoun (3), Tucker (2), Ward (7), HR—Ramírez (6), off Canning; J.Naylor (8), off Moore. RBIs—Adell (12), Ramírez 2 (27), J.Naylor 2 (26), SB—Florial (2), Neto (5), Tucker (3), Adell (7), CS—Neto (3), SF—Adell.

Runners left in scoring position—Angels 2 (Drury, Neto); Cleveland 2 (Arias, J.Naylor). RISP: Angels 0 for 6; Cleveland 1 for 4.

Runners moved up—Calhoun, Freeman. GIDP—Schanuel.

DP—Cleveland 1 (Arias, J.Naylor).

U—Charlie Ramos, Jeremie Retnak, Ryan Willis, Carlos Torres. T—215.

Tickets sold—19,579 (34,788).

five for 12 since being called up from Triple-A Salt Lake.

Short hops

Angels catcher Logan O'Hoppe (right hand bruise) was out of the lineup after being injured Saturday but expects to play Monday. ... Infielder Luis Rengifo (illness) sat out for a second straight day but said he was feeling better. ... The Angels open a three-game series Monday in Pittsburgh with left-hander Tyler Anderson (2-3, 2.23 ERA) facing Pirates right-hander Mitch Keller (2-3, 5.18).

Perrotto writes for the Associated Press.

Angels slammed by Naylor, Guardians

Detmers walks the bases loaded before giving up the home run to the Cleveland catcher in the sixth inning.

By BRIAN DULIK

CLEVELAND — Bo Naylor hit his first grand slam, Austin Hedges had his first homer since June 14, and the Cleveland Guardians beat the Angels 7-1 on Saturday night.

Naylor's two-out blast to right in the sixth inning came off Angels starter Reid Detmers (3-3), who had loaded the bases on three walks.

"I just didn't execute, the pitch was right in his honey hole," Detmers said. "It's frustrating, but that's baseball. We're going to get over it. We're going to get past it."

Detmers, a left-hander, gave up season highs of seven runs and three homers in 5 2/3 innings.

"Reid was competing, but he left a pitch over the plate to a left-hander [Naylor]," Angels manager Ron Washington said. "In my wildest dreams, I would have never thought that would happen."

The Angels have not won consecutive games in Cleveland since 2013; the loss was their 24th in a stretch of 27 games at Progressive Field. The Angels beat the Guardians 6-0 in the three-game series opener.

Angels catcher Logan O'Hoppe was removed in the fifth because of a right hand contusion but planned to be back in the lineup Monday.

For Naylor, a third-year catcher, the four RBIs were a career high.

"Anytime I'm out there, I'm ready to play and this was a great opportunity to help the Guardians win," Naylor said. "This team is really resilient and we take everything super serious."

Hedges, batting ill on the season, hit a two-run homer in the second inning. Ramón Laureano added a solo shot in the fourth.

Cleveland left fielder Steven Kwan, who was leading the American League with a .353 batting average, exited after the third inning because of left hamstring tightness. He walked with a pronounced limp following the game.

Ben Lively (1-1) went six innings, giving up one run on four hits while striking out five. The right-hander ended a nine-start winless streak that included four losses since beating Kansas City on June 14.

"Ben has been great for us," Guardians manager Stephen Vogt said. "He attacks with all of his pitches and is not afraid."

The Angels trimmed their deficit to 3-1 in the fifth on Zach Neto's single that plated Jo Adell, but Ehire Adrianza fled out with the bases loaded to end the threat.

Rengifo out sick

Angels second baseman Luis Rengifo was held out of the lineup because of a high fever after falling ill Friday.

Dulik writes for the Associated Press.

Roberts gifted a Porsche too ... on tad smaller scale

Ohtani brings his manager the sports car, much like the one he gave Kelly's wife, but this fits anywhere.

By MIKE DIGIOVANNA

Shohei Ohtani gifted new teammate Joe Kelly's wife with a new Porsche Panamera, a sports car with a sticker price between \$100,000 and \$200,000, when the Dodgers reliever agreed to give his jersey No. 17 to the two-way star after Ohtani signed a 10-year, \$700-million deal with the Dodgers in mid-December.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts received a similar gift from Ohtani on Friday, but it was more of the gag variety, a mauve-colored model Porsche with a sticker price of ... between \$100 and \$200.

The car was given to the manager to mark Ohtani tying Roberts' franchise record for home runs by a Japanese-born player last weekend in Toronto, a mark that stood at seven entering Saturday night's game against the Atlanta Braves.

Roberts, knowing Ohtani has a sponsorship deal with Porsche, had joked on the last road trip that "I need a new car." Ohtani got the message and delivered ... kind of.

"A Japanese-born player who is about to break my Dodgers record [for home runs] very soon, brought a gift, a Porsche," Roberts told reporters Saturday afternoon, building suspense with his story.

"He brought it into my office ... so there is context. He did buy me a



COURTESY OF DAVE ROBERTS

DODGERS MANAGER Dave Roberts shows off his shiny new Porsche model car he received from Shohei Ohtani to mark tying Roberts' franchise record for home runs by a Japanese-born player.

car. And I guess I didn't specify what type of car [I wanted]. So Shohei did bring in a nice little Porsche for me, so I can't say he never gave me anything."

Then in the third inning of Saturday night's 11-2 win over the Braves, Ohtani hit a 392-foot solo shot into the right-field pavilion for home run No. 8, passing Roberts on the franchise home run list for

Japanese-born players.

Asked after the game how he felt about passing Roberts, Ohtani, speaking through an interpreter, said, "Relieved."

And what about the little prank he played on Roberts?

"He said he wanted a car — he got a car," Ohtani said with a chuckle. "I'm glad he's happy. ... I like to make people laugh. I'm hop-

ing I can do more of these."

Roberts then interrupted Ohtani's news conference, which took place in the hallway outside the Dodgers clubhouse, to show reporters the toy car Ohtani gave him and to make a little speech.

"Tonight, he passed me for the Japanese-born Dodgers home-run record, so Shohei, I just want to say congratulations and thank you

very much," Roberts said. "This is my car. The difference is Joe's car doesn't fit in my office. This car fits on my desk."

Will Ohtani ever replace the toy car he gave Roberts with an actual Porsche he can drive?

"Yes, if we win the World Series," Ohtani said, "I'll think about it."

The laughter, the joke on his manager and his growing comfort with his new team after six years in Anaheim are just the latest indications that Ohtani has moved on from the scandal that led to the late-March firing of his former interpreter, Ipppei Mizuhara, who was charged with stealing at least \$16 million from Ohtani to pay off gambling debts.

The primary one is that Ohtani, the two-time American League most valuable player, is batting .345 with a 1.044 on-base-plus-slugging percentage, eight homers, 14 doubles, one triple, 22 RBIs, 28 runs and seven stolen bases in 34 games.

"I think with Shohei, it just speaks to how comfortable he feels here with the Dodgers, how excited he is to play winning baseball," Roberts said. "He arguably has a chance to be one of the great players of our generation, if not beyond, but ultimately, guys are competitors, and they want to play for a championship."

"So I think the way he's been received, the way he's melded with our ball club, how much the fans have embraced him ... he feels it, and I believe that it translates into performance. I think he's having as much fun as he's ever had, and the play shows it."

Ohtani goes deep two times

[**Dodgers**, from D1] put an exclamation mark on the sweep by demolishing a first-pitch fastball from reliever A.J. Minter in the eighth inning, sending a 464-foot homer to center field — his longest of the season — for his team-leading 10th homer and a 5-1 lead.

“I think I have to hit the ball twice to get there,” Dodgers infielder Miguel Rojas said of Ohtani’s bomb. “That’s definitely next-level stuff. It’s pretty special having a guy like Shohei in the lineup, a guy who can do those kinds of things.”

Paxton gave up one earned run and five hits in 6⅓ innings, striking out three and walking two, the latter number a significant improvement for a veteran who had walked 22 batters — eight of them in an April 14 game against San Diego — in 25⅓ innings of his first five starts.

The Dodgers won their 11th game in 13 tries, a stretch in which their starters have given up 17 earned runs in 75⅓ innings for a 2.03 ERA.

Dodgers reliever Joe Kelly got the final out of the seventh, striking out Adam Duvall, and right-hander Blake Treinen, making his 2024 debut after missing most of the 2022 and 2023 seasons because of shoulder injuries, retired the side in order with one strikeout in the eighth.

With closer Evan Phillips placed on the 15-day injured list because of a right-hamstring strain before the game, right-hander Michael Grove retired the side in order in the ninth to complete the brisk 2-hour, 7-minute game.

The Dodgers had only five hits, four of them by Ohtani, who followed a Mookie Betts walk in the first inning by driving an up-and-in curveball from Braves left-hander Max Fried 412 feet over the center-field wall for a two-run homer.

Ohtani also singled in the third inning and singled in the sixth ahead of Hernández’s two-run homer to right field, his eighth long ball of the season giving the Dodgers a 4-0 lead.

The Dodgers backed Paxton with several superb defensive plays, the biggest coming in the top of the seventh, when Hernández fielded Matt Olson’s leadoff drive



TEOSCAR HERNÁNDEZ points skyward while circling the bases after hitting a two-run home run in the sixth inning. The Dodgers’ sweep of the Braves gave them 11 wins in their last 13 games.

off the right-field wall and air-mailed a throw to Betts at second base to cut down Olson, who was trying to stretch the hit into a double.

The strong throw saved a run, as Marcell Ozuna followed with a home run to right-center field to pull the Braves to within 4-1.

Third baseman Kiké Hernández fielded Ozuna’s second-inning chopper on the outfield grass and made a long one-hop throw to first for the out. Betts and Rojas turned a smooth double play on Chadwick Tromp’s third-inning grounder, and center fielder Andy Pages battled a tough sun while catching seven fly balls.

Fried, the former Harvard-Westlake High School star, was dominant in his two previous starts, throwing a three-hit, six-strikeout, 92-pitch shutout against the Miami Marlins on April 23 and six no-hit innings against the Seat-

tle Mariners last Monday night.

Roberts countered by lining up six right-handed hitters — Teoscar Hernández, Kiké Hernández, Pages, Rojas, Chris Taylor and Austin Barnes — in his lineup behind the left-handed-hitting Ohtani and Freddie Freeman.

On the bench was the left-handed-hitting Max Muncy, who clubbed three home runs in Saturday night’s 11-2 win over the Braves and had homered twice and notched five hits in 16 career at-bats against Fried.

“I made that decision before [Saturday night’s] game,” Roberts said. “We’re trying to keep Max fresh, and I think it allows a little bit of a runway for C.T., who’s also had success against Max Fried. We have a run of righties [coming up], so Max is gonna play plenty, but I’m also trying to find at-bats for Chris to get on track.”

DODGERS 5, ATLANTA 1											
Atlanta	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.	Dodgers	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Acuña rf	3	0	0	0	.268	Betts ss	3	1	0	0	.352
Albies 2b	4	0	0	0	.297	Ohtani dh	4	2	4	3	.364
Riley 3b	3	0	0	0	.237	Freeman 1b	3	1	0	0	.293
Olson 1b	4	0	1	0	.197	T.Hernández rf	4	1	1	2	.252
Ozuna dh	4	1	2	1	.306	K.Hernández 3b	4	0	0	0	.216
Archie ss	3	0	1	0	.271	Pages cf	4	0	0	0	.319
Harris cf	3	0	0	0	.271	Rojas 2b	3	0	0	0	.259
Duvall lf	3	0	1	0	.220	Taylor lf	3	0	0	0	.074
Tromp c	2	0	0	0	.219	Barnes c	1	0	0	0	.231
a-Kelenic d'Arnaud c	1	0	0	0	.274	Totals	29	5	5	5	
Totals	30	1	5	1							
Atlanta						000	000	100	-1	5	1
Dodgers						200	002	01x	-5	5	0
a-struck out for Tromp in the 8th.											
Walks—Atlanta 2; Acuña 1, Riley 1, Dodgers 3; Betts 1, Barnes 2.											
Strikeouts—Atlanta 7; Acuña 1, Albies 2, Riley 1, Ozuna 1, Duvall 1, Kelenic 1, Dodgers 8; T.Hernández 1, K.Hernández 2, Pages 3, Taylor 2.											
E—Olson (3), LOB—Atlanta 4, Dodgers 4. HR—Ozuna (10), off Paxton; Ohtani (9), off Fried; T.Hernández (8), off Fried; Ohtani (10), off Minter. RBIs—Ozuna (33), Ohtani 3 (25), T.Hernández 2 (25).											
DP—Atlanta 1 (Riley, Albies, Olson); Dodgers 1 (Betts, Rojas, Freeman).											
Atlanta											
Fried, L, 2-1.....	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA			
Minter.....	7	4	4	3	7	108	4.23				
Chavez.....	1	1	1	0	0	8	2.93				
Dodgers											
Paxton, W, 4-0.....	6½	5	1	1	2	3	84	3.06			
Kelly, H, 9.....	½	0	0	0	0	1	6	4.73			
Treinen, H, 1.....	1	0	0	0	0	1	11	0.00			
Grove.....	1	0	0	0	2	11	5.85				
Inherited runners scored—Chavez 1-0, Kelly 1-0, HBP, Fried (Freeman). U—Cory Blaser, Manny Gonzalez, Nestor Ceja, Todd Tichenor. T—2:07. Tickets sold—52,733 (56,000).											

Hamstring strain puts Phillips on injured list

By Mike DiGiovanna

The return of veteran setup man Blake Treinen on Sunday was dampened by the loss of an even more important Dodgers reliever as closer Evan Phillips was put on the 15-day injured list because of a right hamstring strain before the series finale against the Atlanta Braves.

Manager Dave Roberts said Phillips, who converted all eight of his save opportunities and had an 0.66 ERA in his first 14 games, caught a spike in the turf while playing catch before Saturday night’s game. An MRI test revealed a Grade I, or minor, strain, and Phillips joined fellow relievers Brusdar Graterol and Ryan Brasier on the IL.

“It was just a freak and random [injury], sort of like how Brasier was running sprints and blew out his calf — a little bit of bad luck,” Roberts said of Phillips, who went on the IL for the first time in his three seasons with the Dodgers. “It’s very benign, and the hope is that once his [IL] stint is up, he’ll be back and ready to go.”

Right-handers Joe Kelly, Daniel Hudson and Treinen and left-hander Alex Vesia will be candidates to pitch the ninth inning, but when asked who his closer will be in Phillips’ absence, Roberts said, “I honestly don’t even know.”

“We’ll see. I think it will be more of just managing the game and figuring out the leverage of the game and however the ninth inning falls out. We’ll just sort of try to win every inning and just manage the leverage.”

The addition of Treinen, who sat out most of the last two seasons because of shoulder injuries and suffered broken ribs when he was hit by a line drive in an early March exhibition game, could ease the loss of Phillips.

Treinen, 35, went 6-5 with a 1.99 ERA in 72 games of his last full season in 2021, striking out 85 and walking 25 in 72 ⅓ innings as closer Kenley Jansen’s setup man.

“I was very encouraged,” Roberts said this spring. “The stuff was where it needed to be to be an effective high-leverage reliever.”

Buehler set to learn the kind of pitcher he’ll be

[**Buehler**, from D1] second Tommy John surgery later, the old Buehler — in mind, if not yet completely in body — was unmistakably back.

“Walker’s an elite competitor, that’s never gonna change,” president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman said. “So we’re excited to get him back and watch him compete for us every turn.”

On Monday night at Dodger Stadium, that return finally will happen.

Buehler will complete a 23-month comeback against the Miami Marlins, having finally finished a six-outing rehabilitation stint in the minor leagues last week.

“The biggest thing of being a starting pitcher ... is having that ownership of the game,” Buehler said about his anticipation for Monday. “For me that’s what has always given me the butterflies or whatever. An entire organization’s success on that given day relies on you. So that’s probably the thing I’ve missed the most.”

When Buehler climbs the Chavez Ravine mound, it will put him at a crossroads in his once-burgeoning career.

He’ll not only be taking on a key role in the Dodgers’ starting rotation, Buehler will be embarking on his final season before free agency this winter. And he’ll be doing it all while trying to rediscover — or redefine — who he is as a pitcher.

“I’m just happy to be back,” he said. “And ready to help us win.”

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From the moment Buehler hurt his elbow in June 2022, Dodgers officials tried to pinpoint the exact root of the issue, holding a series of conversations with coaches, trainers and medical staff to identify if something could have been done to better protect the ace of their pitching staff.

“We’ll have a debriefing, and talk about some different things,” pitching coach Mark Prior said when Buehler was first hurt. “I think it’s healthy to do that with anybody that goes down.”

In the two years since then, that process never stopped — remaining front of mind through Buehler’s initial rehab in 2023, an unsuccessful comeback attempt at the end of last season, and an elongated ramp-up to Monday night.

At every step, Buehler and the Dodgers evaluated his pitching mechanics, contemplated changes in his delivery and tried to trace the causes of his ulnar collateral ligament tear.



GARY CORONADO Los Angeles Times

IN THE PAST, Walker Buehler has relied on a high-90s fastball to overpower hitters, but he might need to alter his approach.

The answer they arrived at, as Buehler stated matter-of-factly this spring, was less of an obvious explanation, but rather an acknowledgment of his undersized reality.

“When you’re a little bit smaller,” Buehler said, “there’s risks you gotta take.”

This is a trade-off Buehler accepted long ago.

To get the most out of his wiry 6-foot-2 frame, he learned to throw with maximum effort on every pitch.

To facilitate his rise to big league stardom — becoming a two-time All-Star and World Series champion — he pushed the limits of his body, and elbow, in a calculated bet.

“The style I throw with is kind of predicated on my ability to let every ball go hard,” Buehler said. “There’s risks that come with that.”

But not any regret.

“Had I not done that,” Buehler noted, “who knows if I get to the big leagues, or would be any good in the big leagues. There’s some cost-benefit to that.”

Now, the challenge for Buehler — who notably has added weight during his rehab process — is figuring out how to be good in the big leagues again.

The first checkpoint will be executing his delivery. His mechanics haven’t changed drastically since his injury, still marked by an over-the-head wind-up, high leg lift and straight-leg finish. “To the naked

eye, it’s very similar,” Prior said. “It’s kind of his signature [move].”

Still, there are subtleties Buehler has been trying to hone, Prior said, “nuanced positions” with his back hip, front leg and general arm path that were affected not only by the two-year rehab process, but the bad habits Buehler developed in 2022, when his ailing elbow was causing problems even before his UCL blew out.

“I’ve always been a tinkerer,” Buehler said. “Health-wise I feel great. Now it’s just about getting my rhythm back.”

Then, there’s the matter of his actual stuff, typically among the biggest questions for pitchers returning from a second Tommy John — something only a handful of starters, such as Nathan Eovaldi and James Taillon, have handled with much consistent success.

In his rehab stint last month, Buehler’s fastball averaged 94 mph, about a tick down from his 2022 average, which was already a drop from other years. The spin rates on his curveball and slider had also dropped, though it had notched up on other pitches such as his cutter.

One potential factor for the inconsistency, Buehler noted, was a lack of intensity at the minor league level.

“To be completely frank, there’s not a whole lot of [adrenaline] for me down there,” he said. “I wish there was for me to get going. I wish I didn’t sound so [crappy] to say that. But I think getting the adren-

aline of pitching in the big leagues is something I’ve been looking forward to for a long time.”

The Dodgers, meanwhile, saw enough in Buehler’s weapons to be optimistic about his post-injury potential — especially after finishing his rehab stint with a five-inning, one-run start in Oklahoma City last week.

“I was really impressed because he was *pitching*,” Roberts said of his last rehab start. “I thought he used his entire pitch mix really well. The velocity was still there. And he was getting outs.”

Added Prior: “That one, it was like, ‘Dude, we’re not worried about the amount of pitches you throw. Just go pitch and see where it’s at.’ And hopefully, that freed him up to feel more convicted, more confident.”

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In the biggest moment of his career, Buehler put complete faith in his most commanding pitch.

With the bases loaded and no outs in Game 6 of the 2020 National League Championship Series, Buehler dialed up 12 consecutive fastballs (including one cutter) to help him record three straight outs and escape a monumental jam.

The sequence was a microcosm of Buehler’s old heater-heavy game plans. While he enjoys a repertoire of curveballs, sliders and breaking pitches, a fastball capable of hitting the upper-90s has always come first and foremost.

The question now: What if he can’t attack quite the same way?

Roberts hinted at this reality when discussing Buehler’s return last week, acknowledging the 29-year-old’s need to probably adapt as he recalibrates his physical state and in-game mindset.

“I think he’s going to still be Walker,” Roberts said. “He’s going to be attacking.”

But ...

“I think that there’s [a version of] attacking with his entire repertoire,” the manager added. “In years past, it was heavy fastball, heavy cutter — where I think that Walker has more weapons. And I think that’s what my hope is. [Using them] instead of just trying to bully guys.”

This is the strategy Buehler — who still runs hot when he pitches, as his live batting practice sessions in the spring loudly displayed — will have to strike in his return to the mound.

On the one hand, he needs his fire, his competitive edge; the one that drove him at even the healthi-

est points of his career, and could help compensate for whatever velocity he has lost since then.

“It’s part of his superpower,” Friedman said. “And he’s really good at it.”

At the same time, however, overly relying on that in-zone aggression, or an overconfidence in his ability to blow guys away as he once did, could spell trouble in his transition back to major league competition.

“The game has changed in three years,” Prior said, noting the length of Buehler’s absence poses a problem.

“It’s kind of weird to say. I don’t mean it’s changed drastically. But hitters continue to get better, continue to game-plan ... and those are things that he’s going to have to re-learn. Guys he used to be able to blow fastballs by or throw different pitches, a lot of these guys have gotten tremendously better.”

Add in a small regression in velocity or deception, and Buehler might have no choice but to maintain a more precise, crafty, patient pitch-by-pitch presence.

“He’s gonna have to figure those things out, and the only way to figure it out is to put him against big league hitters,” Prior said.

“As you haven’t been competing at this level for quite some time, [you have] to sort of feel, figure out, [see where you’re at,” Roberts added. “I’m sure there’s going to be some anxiousness, some nerves, that there naturally should be, until you kind of get a couple starts under your belt.”

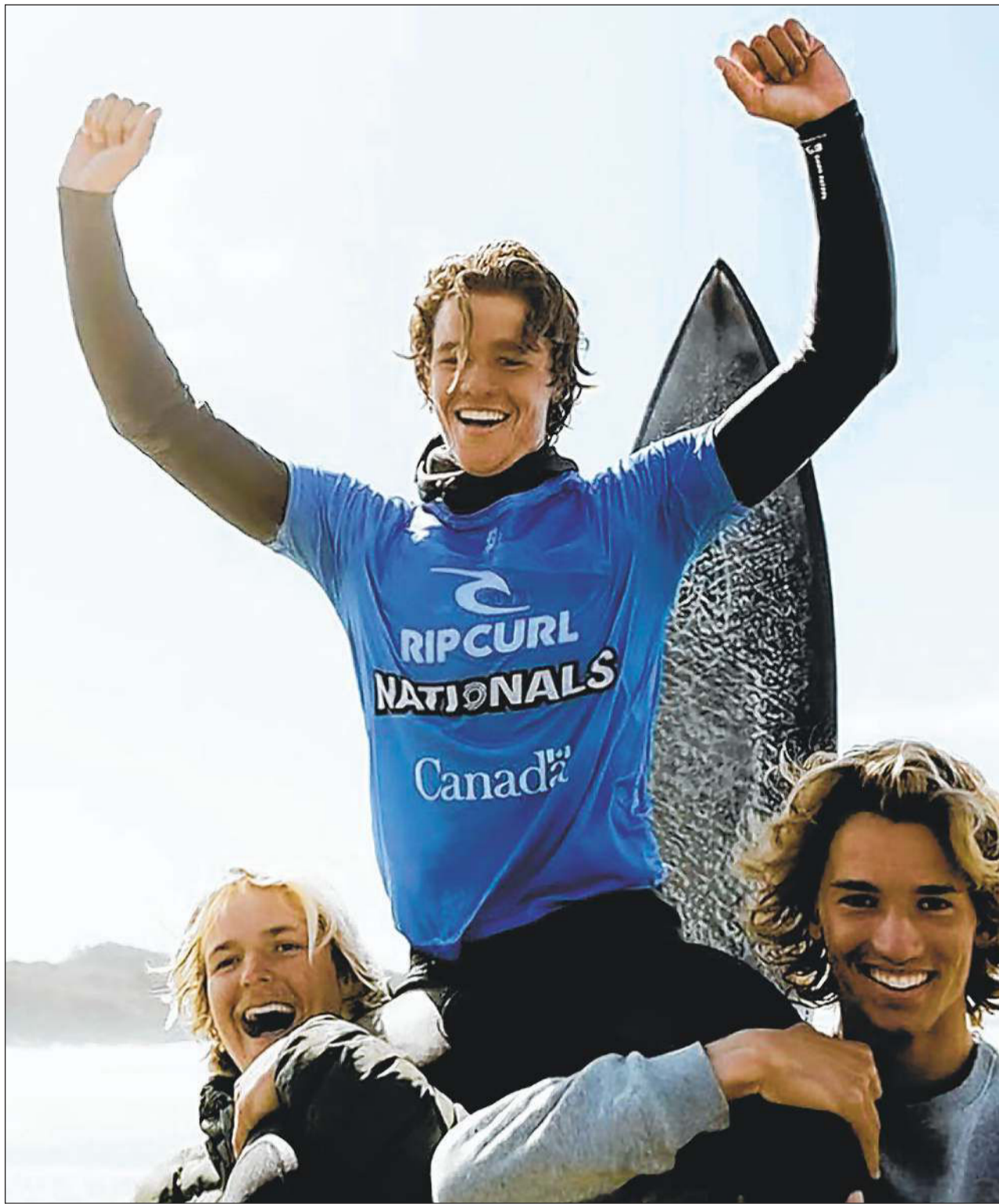
Ideally, it will be a quick process for Buehler and the Dodgers, one that could make the right-hander a vital piece in their long-term championship contention plans — and position him for an offseason payday that once seemed in question.

“He demands a lot and has high expectations for himself,” Prior said. “That hasn’t changed.”

Yet since his 2022 injury, so much else has.

He might be a similar pitcher. He might possess the same unrelenting mindset. But, to manage a return from a second Tommy John surgery that few others have mastered, Buehler might also have to formulate a new approach on the mound, and concoct a slightly altered recipe for success.

“It’s been a long time and a long process, but I finally put some things together,” Buehler said, looking forward to Monday’s first true test. “The delivery just works better when you’re amped up a little bit, so I’m looking forward to that.”



BRYANNA BRADLEY

JONAS MESKIS celebrates after winning the Canadian junior national championship in surfing last month.

Riding a wave as long as he can

Meskis, of Moorpark, is 'living the good life' as a high-profile international surfer.

ERIC SONDEHEIMER
ON HIGH SCHOOLS

Jonas Meskis acts as if every day is a good day. "I'm living the good life," the 17-year-old says. "It's incredible."

He's a surfer traveling the world and visiting surfing hot spots with his twin brother, Jackson.

"Oh my gosh, it's incredible. It's so cool," Jonas says.

This weekend, Jonas was in Surf City, El Salvador, competing at the ISA World Junior Surfing Championship. Last month, he was in British Columbia winning the Canadian junior national championship.

He has a YouTube channel. He's an influencer on TikTok and Instagram. He

has an endorsement deal from a French wetsuit maker and another for Sun Mud sunscreen. He's enrolled in an independent study program through Oak Park Independent School, leaving time for surfing in the morning or whenever.

"It's great, all fun," he says.

His father, Jason, is assistant principal at Oak Park High. His mother works for the school district. His brother didn't qualify to compete in El Salvador but joins Jonas as a morning surfing partner for trips to Zuma Beach or Ventura Harbor.

Jonas says nothing produces a better adrenaline rush than riding a wave and nothing is more relaxing than sitting on a board in the middle of the ocean.

"It's pretty cool. You're putting yourself in a dangerous situation a lot of people couldn't handle," he says. "I love it so much. I like how it separates me from the

regular world. I'm going to a whole different environment. I get to clear my mind. No wave is the same. It's always new, it's always changing."

Jonas talks like an A student, which he is. The stereotype of surfers not being the brightest (think "Fast Times at Ridgemont High") just doesn't fit. He does embrace all the surfer phrases, though. He's got the lingo down to perfection. "You're shredding" means surfing is good. "Sick" means awesome. "Gnarly" means large.

Surf competitions come down to finding a big wave, riding it and impressing the judges. Winning the Canadian junior championship was important to Jonas. His parents and many relatives are Canadian.

"I was so happy. I worked so hard the past three years to win that," he said.

His parents have supported the twins by paying for trips, but Jonas works

during the summer giving surfing lessons. The twins intend to enroll at Moorpark College after high school.

For now, Jonas is obeying a strict surfing schedule.

He started a streak of surfing every day and keeping his fans informed via social media. The streak reached 144 days Saturday, even after storms came to Southern California and made going into the water unhealthful. He brought out earplugs and a hood to wear with his wetsuit and took long showers afterward to avoid getting sick.

He has visited Mexico, Brazil and Costa Rica to surf. How long he keeps competing remains to be seen. But he makes clear his love for surfing will never end.

"I don't know how far I want to take it competitively, but I know for a fact I'll always be surfing," he said.

As they say in surfing lingo, that's sick.

THE DAY IN SPORTS

Verstappen hits the pits, Norris a Miami winner

WIRE REPORTS

Lando Norris needed 110 starts and a mistake by **Max Verstappen** to win his first Formula One race Sunday and end Verstappen's dominance at the Miami Grand Prix.

Verstappen, who started from the pole and won Saturday's sprint race, was out front when he hit a chicane and knocked a cone out of place on the circuit. It forced the three-time reigning F1 champion to pit and gave Norris the lead.

The 24-year-old driver for McLaren then controlled the race to give the organization its first win since a **Daniel Ricciardo** victory in 2021.

With about 10 laps to go, Norris realized the race was his to lose when his lead over Verstappen hit five seconds.

"Five seconds?" Norris radioed his team. "Am I alive?"

Indeed he was as an ecstatic McLaren squad celebrated a rare victory on a weekend in which it debuted significant upgrades on its two cars. McLaren now has 13 wins in races in the United States — tying a record with Ferrari — but it was the first on American soil since **Lewis Hamilton** at Circuit of the Americas in 2012.

In NASCAR Trucks, **Corey Heim** on Saturday night held off late challenger **Zane Smith** to win the Heart of America 200 at Kansas Speedway, leading 79 of 134 laps. **Christian Eckes**, **Kaden Honeycutt** and **Brett Moffitt** rounded out the top five. ... The start of the NASCAR Cup Series race was delayed three hours because of rain.

ETC.

Rublev rallies to win in Madrid

Andrey Rublev rallied to beat **Felix Auger-Aliassime** in three sets and win the Madrid Open for the first time.

Rublev won 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 after Auger-Aliassime double-faulted on the last point of the final at the clay-court tournament in the Spanish capital. It was the second Masters 1000 title for the eighth-ranked Rublev. The 26-year-old Russian also won at Monte Carlo last year.

Auger-Aliassime was playing in his first final at this level. Rublev entered Madrid on a four-game losing streak after early exits at Indian Wells, Miami, Monte

Carlo and Barcelona.

Taylor Pendrith won his first PGA Tour event in 74 starts, shooting a four-under 67 in the final round to beat **Ben Kohles** (66) and win the CJ Cup Byron Nelson Classic by one shot. ... **Brooks Koepka** shot a three-under 68 to win the LIV Golf tournament in Singapore, his fourth victory on the circuit. Koepka finished 15-under 201 for the three rounds, two ahead of Australians **Marc Leishman** and **Cameron Smith**. ... **Scott Dunlap** was declared the 36-hole winner of the Insuperity Invitational when rain washed the final round, giving Dunlap his first Champions title in nearly 10 years. ... **Adrian Otaegui** overcame a five-shot deficit to win the China Open in Shenzhen, the Spanish golfer's fifth tour title.

Mika Zibanejad had two goals and an assist, **Artemi Panarin** also scored and the New York Rangers beat the Carolina Hurricanes 4-3 in Game 1 of their NHL second-round series.

Rodriguez gave San José the lead in the fifth minute and the Earthquakes never looked back in a 3-1 victory over LAFC at Levi's Stadium on Saturday night. San José (2-8-1), which ended a five-match unbeaten run, jumped to a 1-0 lead on defender Rodriguez' second goal of the season. **Cristian Espinoza** notched his sixth assist on Rodriguez' header from the center of the box to the bottom right corner of the net off a corner kick. **Cristian Olivera** scored for LAFC (4-4-3).

Hometown champion **Alexandre Pantoja** unanimously outpointed Australian **Steve Erceg** on Saturday night to retain his flyweight championship at UFC 301 in Rio de Janeiro.

Bob Avellini, a former Chicago quarterback who teamed with Hall of Fame running back **Walter Payton** to lead the Bears to the 1977 playoffs, died Saturday after a battle with cancer, the team said. He was 70.

It only took **Tadej Pogacar** until the second day of his Giro d'Italia debut to make a mark on the Italian grand tour. And the Slovenian star did it despite a puncture and a tumble, 11 kilometers (seven miles) from the end of the tricky second stage, on the approach to the final climb.

Taking careful aim at those masked men

Some NHL players have developed a skill to be able to score goals off goalie's mask.

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**

Off the goaltender's mask, off a defenseman's back, nothing but net. Well, at least in the net.

That is how Colorado's Casey Mittelstadt got his first goal of the NHL playoffs this year, and it is not the only one. Several players have scored by ricocheting the puck in off a goalie's head, including Dallas' Evgenii Dadonov against Vegas last week.

It is an art that is becoming more and more refined as skaters find ways to score against the best netminders in the world. Sniping goals in from near-impossible angles — Mario Lemieux was remarkable at it — is now common and even expected for NHL forwards. Maybe banking shots in off a goalie's mask was the inevitable next step in a league that saw its first "Michigan" — the lacrosse-style goal done from behind the net — only in 2019.

"Some guys seem to be really good at it," New York Rangers forward Jimmy Vesey said. "It seems like some guys are starting to perfect it."



FRED GREENSLADE Associated Press

CASEY MITTELSTADT (37) of the Colorado Avalanche is one of several players this postseason to have scored a goal that bounced in off a goaltender's mask.

Goalies say they have learned to expect it, or at least not get salty about pucks intentionally directed at their noggins, a notable concern in hockey as the league has taken steps to cut down on concussions and other head injuries.

"You've got to be prepared for anything," Washington's Charlie Lindgren said. "You see shooters are so good now where all they need is the smallest little corner."

Mittelstadt's goal, batted out of the air, clanked off the front of the mask of Winnipeg's Connor Hellebuyck, one of the league's best goalies, off Jets defenseman Brendan Dillon into the net.

"Interesting way," he said. "I haven't scored very many like that in my life, but [I will] definitely take it, for sure."

After Dadonov shot from a bad angle off the mask of the Golden Knights' Logan Thompson in the Stars'

Game 4 victory, Dallas goalie Jake Oettinger theorized that half the goals this time of year are about just getting the puck on net and hoping you get a good bounce.

"Just throw pucks at the net and you're going to score dirty goals like that in the playoffs," said Oettinger, who also made two big saves with his mask in winning Game 5.

Colorado counterpart Alexander Georgiev speaks for his masked brethren when

he says he doesn't mind when opponents take aim for the back of his helmet in games. That is just part of the deal.

If Avalanche players do it in practice? Not so cool.

"Guys are really good here with trying to avoid the mask in practice, at least," Georgiev said. "When it's the game, it's part of the game. It doesn't bother me. The equipment is pretty good, luckily."

Georgiev, whose team is pursuing its second championship in three years, has tried different mask brands over the years, settling on a commonly used heavier Bauer model with "no complaints" when it comes to safety.

"It works great," he said. "I feel the one I'm using now is very solid and blocks of the shots pretty good. You don't feel the impact that much."

Dallas' Jason Robertson tried to beat Thompson with a shot off his mask in Game 1 of their series. In hindsight, he wishes he would have tried something different. That's because it's so rare to score that way.

"When you just have time, pick your head up, see if it can happen," Robertson said. "I think goalies understand. It's tough now. ... The goalies are good."

Whyno writes for the Associated Press.

NHL PLAYOFF SCHEDULE

WESTERN CONFERENCE

FIRST ROUND

1C Dallas vs. WC2 Vegas

Series tied, 3-3

Gm 1	Vegas 4, Dallas 3
Gm 2	Vegas 3, Dallas 1
Gm 3	Dallas 3, Vegas 2 (OT)
Gm 4	Dallas 4, Vegas 2
Gm 5	Dallas 3, Vegas 2
Gm 6	Vegas 2, Dallas 0
Gm 7	at Dallas, late

EASTERN CONFERENCE

FIRST ROUND

2A Boston vs. 3A Toronto

Bruins win, 4-3

Gm 1	Boston 5, Toronto 1
Gm 2	Toronto 3, Boston 2
Gm 3	Boston 4, Toronto 2
Gm 4	Boston 3, Toronto 1
Gm 5	Toronto 2, Boston 1 (OT)
Gm 6	Toronto 2, Boston 1
Gm 7	Boston 2, Toronto 1 (OT)

SEMIFINALS

1A Florida vs. 2A Boston

Best of seven

Gm 1	Mon. at Florida, 5, ESPN
Gm 2	Wed. at Florida, TBA, ESPN
Gm 3	Fri. at Boston, TBA, TNT
Gm 4	Sun. at Boston, TBA, TBS
Gm 5	May 14 at Florida, TBA*
Gm 6	May 17 at Boston, TBA*
Gm 7	May 19 at Florida, TBA*

M1 N.Y. Rangers vs. M2 Carolina

Rangers lead, 1-0

Gm 1	N.Y. Rangers 4, Carolina 3
Gm 2	Tue. at N.Y., TBA, ESPN
Gm 3	Thu. at Carolina, TBA, TNT
Gm 4	Sat. at Carolina, TBA, TNT
Gm 5	May 13 at New York, TBA*
Gm 6	May 16 at Carolina, TBA*
Gm 7	May 18 at New York, TBA*

*if necessary
All times PDT, p.m.

USC women rule beach volleyball world

Led by the Nourse twins, the Trojans beat UCLA for their fourth straight title.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GULF SHORES, Ala. — Twin sisters Nicole and Audrey Nourse won the deciding match for a second straight season and top-ranked USC won its fourth straight beach volleyball championship with a 3-0 sweep over No. 2 UCLA on Sunday.

It was the first championship — since the NCAA recognized the sport in 2016 — where all five matches went to a third game.

USC (37-5) has won six of the eight championships — the last four under head coach Dain Blanton. UCLA (35-7) won the other two titles in 2018-19.

USC jumped to a 2-0 lead behind its No. 2 and No. 4 pairs.

Twos Madison White and Maddi Kriz dropped the first game 14-21 to UCLA's Peri Brennan and Devon Newberry before rallying for 21-19 and 15-13 victories in the next two.

The Trojans' Grace Seits and freshman Ashley Pater lost the opener 24-26 to the Bruins' Jaden Whitmarsh and Tessa Van Winkle. Seits and Pater trailed 8-4 in the second game but rallied for a 25-23 victory before dominating the third 15-8. Seits and Pater won their final five matches and finished 12-1 as a pair this season.

The Nourse sisters edged UCLA threes Jessie Smith and Kenzie Brower 22-20 to open their match. Smith and Brower answered with a 21-15 win to even it at a game apiece. The third one was tied 9-9 before a Nicole



JAMIE SCHWABEROW NCAA Photos via Getty Images

THE TROJANS hoist the trophy. USC (37-5) has won six of the eight championships — the last four under head coach Dain Blanton.

Nourse service ace and her block at the net wrapped up a 15-11 win and the 2024 title.

USC seniors Megan Kraft, a three-time AVCA first-team All-American, and two-time first-teamer Delaynie Maple cruised to a 21-16 win over the Bruins' Maggie Boyd and Lexy Denaburg in the opener for

the ones. Boyd and Denaburg led by four in the second game before the Trojans pulled within 18-17. UCLA scored the final three points, capped by Boyd's service ace to force a third game. Kraft and Maple had an 8-4 lead in the final game before the result became moot.

UCLA's No. 5 pair of Natalie Myszkowski and Ennsley Alden opened with a 21-17 win over USC's Mabyn Thomas and Madison Goellner. The Trojans eked out a 23-21 win to force a deciding game. USC was up 4-2 when the match was called.

USC beat UCLA 3-2 in the championship match

last season.

USC began its streak with a 3-1 win over UCLA for the 2021 title. The Trojans followed that with a 3-1 win over Florida State. The event wasn't held in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anna Collier coached USC to its first two titles — a

3-0 sweep over Florida State in 2016 and a 3-2 victory over Pepperdine the following season.

The Trojans advanced to the final this season with a 3-0 victory over No. 5 Cal Poly in the semifinals. The Bruins advanced to the title match with a 3-1 victory over No. 11 Louisiana State



WALLY SKALIJ NCAA Photos via Getty Images

MIDDLE BLOCKER Derrick McHenry (13) of UCLA shows love to his teammate and the NCAA trophy after the Bruins beat Long Beach State in the men's volleyball championship match on Saturday at Walter Pyramid.

Bruins turn in a winning encore

[**UCLA**, from D1] with his hands on his hips. He dropped his head. Teammate Simon Torwie pulled him into the Long Beach State huddle.

Torwie, who was named to the all-tournament team with eight kills, five blocks and an ace in the championship game, was part of a group of Long Beach seniors who played in three consecutive national semifinals and advanced to the championship match twice, although the program couldn't secure its first national title since 2019.

"They are champions to me," Long Beach coach Alan Knipe said. "They are unbelievably a great group of men, on and off the court. ... I could be happier for them, but I absolutely could not be prouder."

Senior Clarke Godbold helped Long Beach State (27-3) build momentum late in the second set despite falling behind 2-0 in the match.

The honorable mention All-American came off the bench with three kills and two blocks in the second set then saved the Beach in the third with a kill on UCLA's championship point. He doubled down with a second consecutive kill that gave Long Beach State its first set point.

The Beach needed four chances to close out the set, finally clinching on a solo block by McRaven.

Then UCLA called on its own super sub. Sophomore Zach Rama delivered three kills in the final six points to break a 20-20 tie in the decisive fourth set.

Caught near the bottom of the celebratory pile, the outside hitter from Phoenix slapped the ground with his hand with Robinson's arm wrapped around his neck.

"I figured there might be a time this weekend when it would be Rama time," Speraw said, "and it was the right time."

UCLA senior Ethan Champlin was selected NCAA tournament most outstanding player after leading the Bruins with 15 kills and six blocks in the championship match.

With shaky hands and watery eyes, he struggled to loosen the back of his championship hat to fit it over his brown hair. He was breathless at the postgame news conference, whispering through a raspy voice with his shoulders slumped in exhaustion.

"There's a phrase that goes 'All gave some, some gave all.' I didn't have anything left to give that fourth set," Champlin said while leaning both elbows on the table. "I was trying my best to have some energy. I was lightheaded, I couldn't feel my legs. ... To be here with these guys, it means a lot."

The Bruins continued a run of six consecutive champions to win back-to-back titles, but it didn't come with-

out struggles. Returning all starters except for their libero, the Bruins dropped two matches in January.

But the Bruins reminded themselves what was most important. It wasn't about being the best team in February, middle blocker Merrick McHenry said. In some ways, it was about being the grimmest team.

Taking inspiration from Speraw's history as a microbiology and molecular genetics major at UCLA, the Bruins tried to channel the strength of a sewer rat, whose immune system is built through surviving the toughest of conditions.

"We want to wallow in the muck and crap and be able to come out on the other side," Speraw said, "and not be bothered by anything that isn't important."

After wallowing through the season, the Bruins walked out of the Pyramid with their championship T-shirts, hats and trophy.

Will fans be keen to circle the bowls on the calendar?

Though games still draw a lot of viewers, player opt-outs are now more common.

By RALPH D. RUSSO

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — With the expanded College Football Playoff locked in through 2031, questions still remain about what the rest of the postseason will look like.

One thing is certain, there will still be bowls.

"College football cannot have a postseason that only provides 12 opportunities," Nick Carparelli, executive director of Bowl Season, the organization that advocates for bowl games, said Thursday. "That's contrary to every other NCAA sport. And the leadership of college athletics has been very clear in recent years that they want more opportunities for student-athletes to compete in the postseason, not less across all sports."

Carporelli has some ideas to keep bowl games robust and relevant, including creating more freedom for games to make the most interesting matchups. Though the biggest change could come from outside the bowl system as college football moves to a more professionalized model and player compensation agreements mandate postseason participation.

The CFP expands from four to 12 teams this season. It could jump to 14 teams starting as soon as 2026. Even in a four-team system, the playoff decreased the focus on the bowls and prompted discussion about how meaningful they were.

Though the dozens of bowl games played around Christmas and New Year's still draw a healthy amount of eyeballs to TVs, player opt-outs have become commonplace.

"I still believe at their core kids like playing football," said Carparelli, who was attending a Fiesta Bowl event last week that included Big 12 and Mountain West Conference meetings. "They've been presented with reasons why not to in recent years. And I think that's very unfortunate for sure."

Caparelli believes the future of college football includes revenue sharing with players and possibly name, image and likeness compensation deals that set terms similar to pro sports contracts.

"As player compensation becomes the norm, at some point in time, I think it's reasonable to expect that there's going to be some obligation on the part of the student-athlete receiving the compensation to perform the duties as assigned," he said. "In my mind, 12 regular-season games, a bowl game or playoff."

This year there will be 36 bowl games played outside the College Football Playoff, which will also include four first-round games played on campus sites.

Carporelli said he doesn't believe the bowl eligibility minimum of six victories will change. Whether there will still be a need for three dozen bowl games for the 2026 season and beyond is to be determined.

Even the bowls outside the playoff structure have contractual agreements with conferences that run concurrent to the CFP's original 12-year deal, which expires after the 2025 season. All those games are about to become free agents.

Conferences prefer to lock in numerous bowl partnerships to guarantee eligible teams a spot in the postseason.

Carporelli would like to encourage more flexibility in the bowl selection process, allowing the games the ability to make compelling matchups with the available teams — more similar to way bowls operated 30 or 40 years ago — instead of being locked into predetermined conference deals.

"It would be the conferences that would need to make that decision," he said. "Anything is possible. At the highest level, the CFP has decided that there's not going to be any certainty there outside of five conference champions to be in that system. I don't see any reason why that can't translate to the next level of bowl games."

Russo writes for the Associated Press.



BRANDON WADE Associated Press

ADIN HILL watches the puck sail into the net. The goal by Dallas’ Radek Faksa was the difference as the Stars knocked out the defending champion Golden Knights.

Dallas takes Game 7 to send Vegas home

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Radek Faksa made a promise to his 2½-year-old son when they were playing together before the Dallas Stars took the ice for Game 7.

Faksa did indeed score in his return to the lineup after sitting out four games because of an undisclosed injury. His go-ahead goal came on a backhand 44 seconds into the third period, after his son had been taken home, and Dallas beat the defending Stanley Cup champion Vegas Golden Knights 2-1 on Sunday night to wrap up the first-round series.

“I’m happy I did,” Faksa said. “And so I can show him the video in the morning, and we can watch it together.”

Only captain Jamie Benn and Tyler Seguin have played longer for the Stars than Faksa, a fourth-liner in his ninth season who got his

goal from the circle to the left of goalie Adin Hill. Dallas also got another Game 7 goal from 20-year-old Wyatt Johnston.

Jake Oettinger had 21 saves in his second Game 7 victory. He also had the Stars’ only penalty, though they killed that off after he was called for tripping Ivan Barbashev in front of the net midway through the third.

“The last period was a clinic. Just so proud of the guys of how we responded,” Oettinger said. “It’s a long playoffs and you’re going to need different guys to step up at different times. A lot of hockey left so hopefully a lot more heroes. It’s going to be a run ride.”

The Stars, the No. 1 seed in the West, move on to play well-rested Colorado in the second round. Game 1 is in Dallas on Tuesday night, a week after the Avalanche wrapped up their series against Winnipeg with a Game 5 victory.

Brett Howden scored for Vegas,

which couldn’t pull off another series win in Dallas, where last year the Knights wrapped up the Western Conference finals in a Game 6 win. Hill had 22 saves in his third game of this series after Logan Thompson started the first four.

The visitor won the first four games in this series until the home teams held serve the last three games.

“There’s probably a lot of doubters out there. After Game 2, they probably thought we couldn’t come back,” Benn said. “A lot of believers in this room, in this organization. And we showed ‘em.”

Dallas has won Game 7s in each of its first two postseasons for coach Pete DeBoer, who is now 8-0 in his career in such games with four different teams. That includes the Knights’ only Game 7 wins in 2020 and 2021 when he was their coach.

Johnston scored his series-high fourth goal on a wrister from the

top of the slot with 5:26 left in the first period after picking off a clearing pass by Shea Theodore that his teammate, Tomas Hertl, missed when taking a twisting swipe at it.

A day after his 20th birthday last May, Johnston became the youngest player in NHL history with a game-clinching goal in a Game 7. He gathered a puck that ricocheted off the back boards in the third period of the Stars’ 2-1 win over Seattle in that second-round series.

The goal Sunday against came in quick succession after Vegas had two scoring chances. Oettinger made a tough save to deny Jack Eichel and Jonathan Marchessault then shot the rebound off the left post, and got a hit on Johnston before the Dallas youngster skated to the other end and scored about 10 seconds later.

“I think a couple of our players will probably not sleep tonight, because if you look at what trans-

pired in the game,” Vegas coach Bruce Cassidy said. “We hit a post, take them down, they score 10 seconds later. We miss an open net at the end of the second, and they score on the first shift of the third.”

at N.Y. Rangers 4, Carolina 3: Mika Zibanejad helped the Rangers get off to a strong start in their first game in a week, and they held on to get a big win in their second-round series opener against the Hurricanes.

Zibanejad had two goals and an assist, Artemi Panarin also scored and the Rangers took in Game 1 in the Eastern Conference semifinals. Vincent Trocheck had a goal and an assist, and Chris Kreider had two assists.

Igor Shesterkin stopped 22 shots to become the third goalie in franchise history to open a post-season with five straight wins, joining Dave Kerr (1937) and Mike Richter (1994).

Larson edges Buescher in Kansas in closest NASCAR finish ever

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyle Larson came around Chris Buescher on the final lap and banged doors with him all the way to the finish line Sunday, where he was declared the winner of the Cup Series race by officials at Kansas Speedway in the closest finish in NASCAR history.

The official margin was a thousandth of a second — every bit as close as the Kentucky Derby a day earlier — and Buescher was left dumbfounded and dejected. His team had begun to celebrate before learning he had finished second.

The dramatic finale came after a caution for Kyle Busch’s spin forced a green-white-checked finish. Larson pulled behind Buescher on the backstretch of the last lap, then came around him on the outside of the final corner. Buescher looked as if he had pulled in front, and even Larson thought he had finished second, before the call came through that he had won.

“That was wild,” Larson said. “I was thankful for that caution. We were dying pretty bad. I was happy to come out third.”

It was a brilliant start to a busy month of May for Larson, who will attempt to run the Indianapolis 500 and Coca-Cola 600 on the same

day Memorial Day weekend. The win was the second of the season for him in the No. 5 car for Hendrick Motorsports, and a bit of retribution finishing second to Denny Hamlin last week at Dover and in the spring race at Kansas a year ago.

Martin Truex Jr. finished fourth on Sunday. Hamlin, who had the lead on the final restart, faded to fifth place.

Meanwhile, Buescher was left questioning the grainy black-and-white images of the photo finish, and the entire Ford contingent — which has yet to win in any of NASCAR’s top three series this year — had to rue the closest miss in its history.

“I don’t know what to say right now,” Buescher said, shaking his head while standing beside his No. 17 car. “I haven’t seen a replay other than just the picture, and I sure can’t see in that picture. That sucks to be that close.”

Making it a bigger bummer for Buescher was the fact that he had overcome a big miscue midway through the race. He had just won the second stage and led the field onto pit road when a crew member came over the wall too soon. The penalty sent him to the rear of the field, and he had to spend much of the final stage working his way back to the front.

Ultimately, he opted for a differ-



COLIN E. BRALEY Associated Press

KYLE LARSON (5) crosses the finish line a thousandth of a second in front of Chris Buescher (17) in a NASCAR Cup Series race at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City, Kan. Chase Elliott was third.

ent pit strategy along with Hamlin, who had his own share of problems on pit road. And it might have worked out for them had the race finished under green. Instead, the late caution forced all the leaders to pit.

“I don’t know what to say right now,” Buescher said.

Christopher Bell started on the pole but struggled to run up front all day in a race that began after a 3½-hour delay because of rain, finishing sixth. He was followed by Alex Bowman and Kyle Busch, whose spin brought out the last caution. Noah Gragson and Michael McDowell gave Ford two more cars in the top 10.

MLS Galaxy, Seattle play to a scoreless draw

John McCarthy finished with five saves for the Galaxy and Stefan Frei stopped three shots for host Seattle as the teams played to a scoreless draw Sunday.

McCarthy had four saves and Frei stopped the only shot he faced in the first half.

Frei became available to play for the Sounders (2-5-4) after the red card he received in a match against D.C. United last weekend

was rescinded by an independent review panel.

Seattle held the Galaxy’s Joseph Paintsil in check. The 26-year-old rookie forward had four goals and four assists in his first 838 minutes of action with the Galaxy (5-2-4). The Galaxy played without Riqui Puig, who missed the match because of an accumulation of yellow cards.

The Sounders improved to 5-0-3 in their last eight at home against the Galaxy, who have not won in Seattle since a 1-0 victory in 2016.

It was the 50th all-time matchup between the two clubs in all competitions with Seattle holding a 19-17-14 advantage.



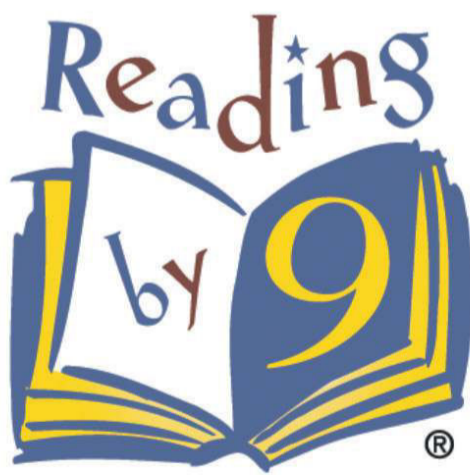
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CALENDAR

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“IT’S AN active, creative, chaotic mix of things. It feels like art,” says Meow Wolf curator Han Santana-Sayles about L.A. Photographs by ETHAN BENAVIDEZ For The Times

The fur is set to fly in L.A.

The city’s in for a wild ride as experimental art collective Meow Wolf works on a move to its largest market yet, taking the wonder of moviemaking as its guide

By TODD MARTENS

A MEOW WOLF exhibition is designed as a dream space, a walk-through floor-to-ceiling collection of psychedelic art with a sci-fi bent and an anything-goes, punk rock spirit. Apples that melodically squeal when squeezed? One can find those in “Omega Mart,” Meow Wolf’s Las Vegas exhibition. A video game that grapples with an uncompromising, impossible-to-please parent? Head to “The Real Unreal” outside Dallas. A neon-soaked forest in a suburban backyard? That originated in Meow Wolf’s Santa Fe, N.M., home. “We are undefinable in so many ways, and it makes people think, ‘It’s just entertainment,’” says Meow Wolf curator Han Santana-Sayles, 31, sitting in her newly rented Pasadena home. “But I truly believe we are a wild art experiment.” Meow Wolf spaces, of which there are currently four open, are warped visions of reality, designed to get guests to see the world, and hopefully themselves, differently. They’re spots where the familiar — think a grocery store or a home — is used as an entry point to otherworldly, maximalist art that’s at once a fantastical twist on nature and a deep dive into why-are-we-here philosophies.

So what happens when [See Meow Wolf, E3]



MEOW WOLF co-founder Sean Di Ianni is overseeing the L.A. project.

Truths behind those obesity drugs

MARY McNAMARA

The historic failure of medical research to acknowledge that women’s bodies differ from men’s has a new catchphrase: Ozempic babies. According to recent reports, all of them anecdotal and many of them on TikTok, off-label use of diabetes drugs, including Ozempic, Wegovy and Mounjaro, for cosmetic weight loss has, in some cases, apparently resulted in unexpected pregnancies. For women with infertility issues, this can be cause for celebration; for those trying to avoid pregnancy by taking birth control pills, the exact opposite.

Doctors, meanwhile, are scrambling to figure it out. Pregnancy in previously infertile women taking semaglutides including Ozempic may, some surmise, be a result of weight loss — obesity can lead to hormone imbalances that make pregnancy difficult to achieve or sustain. Mounjaro and Zepbound, on the other hand, are tirzepatide, which may interfere with how medications are absorbed, rendering birth control pills less effective.

“May” being the operative word; no one appears to know for sure. Everyone recommends that women who want to become pregnant should stop taking these drugs at least two months before trying, but there apparently have been no long-term studies on the effects of these drugs on birth control or female fertility.

Cool, cool, cool. Just what women need as their access to abortion, birth control and other aspects of reproductive healthcare is being severely restricted [See Women, E6]

Under the spell of the ‘TV Glow’

A shared obsession over a fictional series strands ‘90s teens in glum gaze. Review, E2

Duane Eddy put twang in rock

The guitar hero whose reverberating sound influenced countless musicians has died. E6

Comics E4-5
Puzzles E5

ALBUM REVIEW

Still coolly above it all, but ...

Dua Lipa sounds great on latest LP, but is that enough in this age of meta-narrative?

MIKAEL WOOD
MUSIC CRITIC

Dua Lipa’s “Radical Optimism” has a hilarious album cover, two songs about illusionists and what may end up the year’s most succulent bass playing. What it doesn’t have is the kind of detailed celebrity meta-narrative that’s come to define — and to propel — the superstar pop LP in music’s parasocial age.

The 28-year-old London-born singer might disagree: On the cusp of her Saturn return, Lipa has been talking up her third studio album as a meditation on hard-won

emotional maturity à la Ariana Grande’s “Eternal Sunshine” or Kacey Musgraves’ “Deeper Well.”

“Radical optimism in the way that I see it,” she told Zane Lowe, “is this idea of rolling with the punches.” The LP’s cover shows her bobbing in the sea dangerously close to a shark’s fin, and I guess the shark represents the punches?

Yet because Lipa’s lyrics are very bad — “If these walls could talk, they’d tell us to break up,” she sings at one point — this concept doesn’t really come together.

And, besides, a quest for emotional maturity really misses the whole point of Dua Lipa, which is being coolly above it all in the pursuit of earthly pleasure.

Her celebrity lore, to the extent that it exists, revolves around her identity as the [See Dua Lipa, E6]



DUA LIPA appears to be “rolling with the punches” on the cover of her latest album, “Radical Optimism.” Warner

TELEVISION REVIEW

Finding love in the least likely of places: Auschwitz

A widower recounts his past as a prisoner tattooist in a moving Peacock miniseries.

ROBERT LLOYD
TELEVISION CRITIC

“This is a love story,” says Lali Sokolov (Harvey Keitel) at the beginning of “The Tattooist of Auschwitz,” as a caveat, or perhaps a come-on — not your usual Holocaust tale, then, that we’re about to begin. (Though there will be plenty of the usual, as well.)

The memories of real-life survivor Sokolov (played by Keitel old, and Jonah Hauer-King young) became the basis of a 2018 novel by New Zealand writer Heather Morris, who interviewed him over three years with an eye to writing a screenplay. The novel it became sold many copies and topped the New York Times bestseller list — no better guarantee of a picture deal — and sits on a shelf among similarly titled volumes, including “The Librarian of Auschwitz,” “The Midwife of Auschwitz,” “The Dressmakers of Auschwitz,” “The Last Boy in [See ‘Tattooist,’ E2]

MOVIE REVIEW

Glum look at teens under the screen’s spell

Two youths’ shared obsession in ‘I Saw the TV Glow’ will leave you feeling drained.

By AMY NICHOLSON

“I Saw the TV Glow” is a claustrophobic mood piece that taps into the hollowness of growing up hypnotized by the screen. In 1996, a withdrawn kid named Owen (played as a seventh-grader by Ian Foreman and by Justice Smith in his barely matured adolescence and adulthood) becomes fixated on a late-night teen thriller called “The Pink Opaque” and, when the show gets canceled, fills his soul watching reruns in the fear that if he did anything else, he’d be forced to admit his existential choices are just static.

Owen is a helpless, hopeless and inarticulate avatar for anyone who’s ever wondered whether it would be healthier to do less watching and more living. (Film critics, for one.) While the horror elements of the movie left me restless, having spent some of my own life watching Owen’s, I was haunted by its residue: the sensation of being a cow watching another cow get sucked into a UFO’s tractor beam, lowing in vain at the fact that we’re all just hamburger.

Writer-director Jane Schoenbrun is part of a burgeoning group of young filmmakers, like Kyle Edward Ball (“Skinamarink”) and Vera Drew (“The People’s Joker”), whom I’ll call the Indoor Kids, as they use their formative pop-culture totems like a terrarium.

Their intimate stories play out in someone else’s habitat. Schoenbrun, who debuted with 2021’s similarly hermetic internet chiller “We’re All Going to the World’s Fair,” has a knack for imagery that triggers a Pavlovian response: D.A.R.E. posters, Fruitopia vending machines, election booths offering up Ross Perot or Ralph Nader, and inserted scenes of “The Pink Opaque” that capture the flat, bright fuzziness of ’90s episodic TV. Sense memories of childhood isolation take over like a lucid dream. (The one fumble is the too-modern and twee folk soundtrack by Alex G.)

“The Pink Opaque” stars summer-camp friends Isabel and Tara (Helena Howard and Lindsey Jordan), who discover that they’re psychic soulmates. Think “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” with a sprinkle of Georges Méliès. Every week, Isabel and Tara fend off a goofy minor villain — clowns, lunar-faced goons, something called a Drainlord — as they build up to defeating the big bad, the resonantly named Mr. Melancholy (Emma Portner).

When Owen watches the show with his fellow obsessive Maddy (Brigette Lundy-Paine), an older classmate who guards the walls around their fandom with an impatient, fast-talking ferocity, both teens’ faces are awash in warm pink light. They gawk at an ice cream monster who drools soft serve from his goopy fangs. That almost mythical melting atrocity might not be what everyone else sees.

But everything *we* see is calculated to tickle the recesses of our brain stems.



Sundance Institute

JUSTICE SMITH and Brigette Lundy-Paine fixate on a show in Jane Schoenbrun’s “I Saw the TV Glow.”

‘I Saw the TV Glow’

Rated: PG-13, for violent content, some sexual material, thematic elements and teen smoking

Running time: 1 hour, 40 minutes

Playing: In limited release

The nostalgic tingle Schoenbrun gets right is the feeling of being engulfed in mysteries. Some puzzles fade with age (What’s everyone else up to after my 10 p.m. bedtime?) while others linger (Why did my gym class make us play with parachutes?).

Here, the biggest question is: What makes someone give themselves over to the spell of a show? What’s underneath “The Pink Opaque’s” cheap special effects that keeps Owen gripped? During what looks

to us like a pretty corny clown-fighting scene, he glances over at Maddy to find his acquaintance quivering with sobs. They aren’t close enough to talk about it. One hint why Maddy might ache to identify with a fighter comes in a casual warning. If Owen doesn’t leave her living room by morning, Maddy’s stepdad will “break my nose again.” As for Owen’s own dad (a startling cameo by Fred Durst), he’s a distant, intimidating figure usually staring at his own shows on his own TV, grimly making the case that the problem isn’t just generational.

It’d be a stretch to call Owen and Maddy friends and neither is at all interested in becoming something more. Pressed to answer whether he likes girls, Owen sputters, “I think that I like TV shows.” Schoenbrun, a trans artist, has said the boy might have a deeper reason to imagine himself as “The Pink Opaque’s” beautiful and timid Isabel.

The film itself isn’t that coy — Owen and Maddy attend classes at Void High School, i.e. VHS — but this point is whispered lightly through parallel cuts of Owen and Isabel walking through forests and a glimpse of Maddy urging him to step into a dress. “The Pink Opaque” is a kids’ show, a girls’ show, Owen is told. If he’s still watching it when he becomes what looks like a caricature of an elderly suburban man, what does that make him?

On its surface, however, “I Saw the TV Glow” is just about a mope. Owen’s torpor — his froggy, monotone way of talking; his incessant, suppressed discomfort — is draining.

The film invents a new emotion: passionate ambivalence. Schoenbrun’s argument might be that this is exactly the response they’re after. They’ve accomplished it, but at the expense of engagement, resulting in a collection of leaden scenes that might make the audience

want to claw out of its own skin.

The most aggravating of them is when Owen and Maddy, who only ever have conversations centered on the television show, who only ever relate to the events of their life as though they were in a TV show, who compare the passing of years to the skipping of a DVD chapter, reconnect after some time apart and suffer through this excruciatingly drawn-out line delivery: “Do you remember that show we used to watch together? ... It was called ... ‘The Pink Opaque.’”

In that moment, I could have smashed my own head into the nearest TV. (A harrowing image also seen in here.) Still, the film does end strongly on the idea that one must — must! — ditch their stunted pubescence or risk a breakdown. But the last impossible, unanswerable question it asks is: What happens when you put away childish things and are left with nothing?

Love survives in the worst place on Earth

[“Tattooist,” from E1] Auschwitz,” “The Sisters of Auschwitz,” “The Redhead of Auschwitz” and “Lovers in Auschwitz.” Apparently the story of Lali and Gita Sokolov wasn’t unique.

In this television telling, now on Peacock and soberly directed by Israeli filmmaker Tali Shalom-Ezer (“Princess”), novice writer Morris (Melanie Lynskey) becomes a character, deposing Lali at his request; he wants to get his story out. The action alternates between scenes of their meetings and the story he’s telling her. Though we spend more time in the past, the series is as much about the recent business as the distant one.

In 1942, Lali, a Slovakian Jew, is sent to the expanding concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau where, after a period of disorientation, he is put to work tattooing serial numbers on the forearms of new prisoners. The job affords him some comforts — greater freedom of movement, his own room

— even as it puts him in danger. “You are working for the SS now,” says SS officer Stefan Baretzki (Jonas Nay), his manager. “You will need protection. Trust me.”

Lali is at work one day in the women’s camp when up steps Gita (Anna Próchniak). It is love at first sight for both.

“Your eyes, are they blue?” she asks him. (Close up on Lali’s eyes.)

“Sometimes.”

“Today, they look like the sky.”

(Then she asks if she can get her tattoo in pink.)

We know from the start, obviously, that Lali will survive; Gita’s fate isn’t explicitly stated until the end of the third episode. (“I did wonder when you would tell me,” Heather tells Lali). That she survived as well is not a spoiler; it’s been stated in every press release and promotional posting. There are other characters whose fate remains uncertain, though with a couple of exceptions we invest in them



MARTIN MLAKA Sky UK

JONAS NAY, left, and Jonah Hauer-King star in “The Tattooist of Auschwitz.”

as a class, rather than as individuals. The spotlight is on our couple and to some extent on Baretzki, who, by action or inaction, makes their difficult liaison possible —

because, seemingly, he cares for Lali.

In one extraordinary moment, the SS officer, drunk and disheveled, holds Lali (who is concerned for the health of an ailing Gita) and coos, “We’ll get through this. I’m here for you.”

Baretzki and other ghosts haunt modern-day Lali; they sit beside him on his couch, look over his shoulder, watch from across the room, questioning his memory as he speaks to Heather. Lali is an ordinary unreliable narrator in that he’s digging out things that happened some 60 years before; but there are also things he has protectively buried and isn’t ready to face. Interludes in which the accusing faces of prisoners silently fill the frame act as a sort of externalization of his survivor’s guilt. These are useful dramatic devices, but repeated over a six-hour series, they do start to feel a little pat, even cheesy.

If “The Tattooist” doesn’t quite register as an Uplifting Testament to the Power of the Human Spirit — to its credit, I’d say — it’s an honorable project, honorably made, moving at times, horrifying at others, in broad strokes and small details. (“After the shower there will be coffee and rolls,” we hear a guard tell a new group of prisoners,” followed by Baretzki telling Lali, without irony, not to stare because he’ll “frighten the chil-

dren.”) As the lovers, Hauer-King and Próchniak are sweet and sad, with Próchniak making an especially strong impression. In terms of screen charisma, it’s easier to see what he saw in her than what she saw in him.

At 84, playing an old Jewish man is not a stretch for Keitel, but he’s quite poignant — not the first word one associates with Keitel roles — not just as a man measuring his past, but as a lonely widower who has had an interested younger person come into his life. Trying to get Heather to stay awhile after the day’s interview, he sounds like the parent or grandparent you never visit enough: “The tennis is on in 15 minutes ... I bought the chips you like.” And as the mild Heather, who worries increasingly that she’s in over her head — well, it’s always good to see Melanie Lynskey.

The series’ most nuanced performance, however — its most surprising, anyway — may belong to Nay. Moral compromises notwithstanding, Gita and Lali are clear-cut characters with straightforward motivations — stay alive, see each other as much as possible, help other prisoners when they can, get home, find each other.

They’re heroes limited by circumstance — “In this hell that we’re in we’re only given two choices, the bad choice, or the worse one,” a fellow

prisoner tells Lali — but Baretzki, whom we have no reason to like and many to hate, is a tragic figure, lonely, angry, awkward when not barking orders, looking for something like love, unpredictably violent, and doomed. That’s a lot for an actor to balance, and Nay does it marvelously well.

Though the well-informed might say different, the re-creation of Auschwitz feels trustworthy; and one can watch these evocations of death camp life with the same curiosity as if this were a documentary. The chimneys belching black smoke deliver a shock. Still, we’re looking at the past through a scrim of art, and no matter how dedicated “The Tattooist of Auschwitz” may be to getting things right, it’s a translation of a work of fiction based on a memory of an experience; a filtered reality, and only a slice of it. (And questions have been raised about the veracity of Morris’ novel.)

The actors may have worked to inhabit their roles, or lost weight to play the part, but none are actually suffering, and we sense it. Through their privations they remain pretty people, as a screen romance would require; the producers want you to love these lovers and stick around six hours to the end. (And there’s a good new Barbra Streisand song.)

Coincidentally, or perhaps not, the series premiered days before the congressionally established, weeklong Holocaust Days of Remembrance began Sunday, marking the anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising. Not a year goes by that at least one Holocaust drama, and usually more, comes to the small or big screen; “We Were the Lucky Ones” concluded its run Thursday on Hulu, the day that “The Tattooist of Auschwitz” appeared.

Producers make pictures for all kinds of noble and less noble reasons, with greater and lesser success, but it’s good that these stories keep coming, given the ordinary dustbusting of history, the appallingly common denial of history, and a renascent antisemitism that was surging even before current events gave cover to antisemites.

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Meow Wolf finally is coming to L.A.

[**Meow Wolf**, from E1] Meow Wolf decides that its next place of expansion is the home of American make-believe?

Meow Wolf is coming to Los Angeles, and it aims to turn our city's most ritualistic experience — that is, the act of going to the movies — into an interactive, art-driven wonderland.

The Santa Fe-based art collective-turned-capitalistic enterprise — leaders of the so-called “experience economy” — is in the closing round of negotiations that will bring a Meow Wolf exhibition to West Los Angeles, with an opening targeted for 2026. Meow Wolf will be taking over a vacant movie theater complex and intends to fully embrace the spot's cinematic roots. Meow Wolf's move into its largest market yet is intended as a statement piece, a declaration that weirdness and art-focused ventures still have a place in an immersive economy that's been racked by closures and layoffs, Meow Wolf included.

“A movie theater is representative of the history of L.A., a city that has been known for over 100 years with Hollywood and moviemaking,” says Meow Wolf Chief Executive Jose Tolosa. “I think the location we picked is one of the components that embodies the richness and the history of the city, and the artistry of the city.”

Anticipate multiple rooms of narrative-based art that strive to test perceptions, grappling with not only the stories we tell one another but why we tell them, says co-founder Sean Di Ianni, 39, who is overseeing the L.A. project.

If Disney and Universal theme parks ask us to “ride the movies,” Meow Wolf will be challenging guests to question their communal power, exploring, via hallucinatory art, the minds of those who make them, sell them and love them. Expect it all to be delivered with hints of mysticism, as Meow Wolf artists will dabble in themes of ritual and religion.

Like past Meow Wolf exhibitions, a significant number of installations will come from the local art community. Santana-Sayles, a Murrieta native who now resides a few blocks from where her grandmother once lived, will lead the outreach into L.A.'s art world, a process that is in its infancy. A Meow Wolf exhibition is a mix of elaborately designed environments and commissioned works from artists who reside in the host city.

“I'm looking for a super broad range,” she says. “I want to include people who do wild projection mapping. But I also want to find people who do just pastels — really, really well. Or they're painters. Or they draw. They've homed in on this one thing. We don't want it to read as a theme park. We're a contemporary arts platform.”

And yet the company's rise from experimental art collective in 2008 to an “experience economy” corporation has been meteoric, attracting creative talent from theme park giants such as the Walt Disney Co. and NBCUniversal. It has been embraced by the likes of the Themed Entertainment Assn., and Meow Wolf's play-focused, active approach has shifted the industry, encouraging environments with multiple access points that increasingly push guests to lean in and participate.

Meow Wolf's roots in underground art and its penchant for flirting with popular culture have resulted in a specific kind of tension. Meow Wolf is a corporation, but one that staunchly believes in original intellectual property. Meow Wolf stands by the power of the individual creator, having long supported independent muralists, game designers or sculpture artists, but it also traffics in interconnected storylines that require the sort of environmental storytelling defined by Disney's theme parks.

Its ambitions are high art, but it's also extremely populist. And that says nothing of Meow Wolf's outspoken penchant for progressive politics. Melding all of this with a capitalistic enterprise could seem like a contradiction, but it also feels uniquely fit for Los Angeles.

“I love the chaoticness of it,” Santana-Sayles says of Los Angeles. “I love that



KATE RUSSELL Meow Wolf

IN “THE HOUSE of Eternal Return” in Santa Fe, a suburban house leads to a fantastical twist on nature.

yesterday I was on the street and someone was flipping a sign, really incredibly. He had a Walkman on and was doing a dancing Jesus sign movement. On the other corner was a juggler, a Cirque du Soleil-qualified juggler. Then on the other side of the street was a kid skateboarding with a dog under his arm.

“It's an active, creative, chaotic mix of things,” she says. “It feels like art.”

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The Los Angeles announcement arrives at what has become a reflection point for the immersive community.

Meow Wolf, along with long-running New York-based theatrical production “Sleep No More,” defined the immersive space. Since 2016, when the once-scrappy Meow Wolf art collective opened Santa Fe's “House of Eternal Return,” the company has welcomed about 10 million visitors across its four venues. Yet in April Meow Wolf announced it would cut 165 employees; exhibitions in Denver and Las Vegas were heavily affected. “Sleep No More,” meanwhile, which has been running since 2011, will end this year.

The two spawned an industry of interactive, social media-primed spaces, one that saw the rise and fall of everything from projection-based exhibitions such as “Immersive Van Gogh” to Lost Spirits, a heavily themed Las Vegas rum distillery with circus trappings, which just shuttered. The Walt Disney Co. even got in on the action via the Star Wars: Galactic Starcruiser, a two-day live-action role-playing game that utilized a mobile phone app to drive gameplay with real-life actors and sets. It lasted about a year.

Meow Wolf's Tolosa pins the recent layoffs on two factors. One, he says, the company has become better at understanding its staffing needs, having opened a Denver exhibition with more than 300 employees. Last year's “The Real Unreal” in Grapevine, Texas, in contrast, launched with a staff of around 100. He also notes that attendance tends to peak from a period of opening to around 18 months after, necessitating that the company adjust its models.

“We remain committed to a growth path,” Tolosa says. “Not only in L.A. but beyond. We're already looking into other cities.” Tolosa adds that Meow Wolf is continuing to build an app that will connect all of its exhibitions, and is exploring other mediums such as gaming.

Meow Wolf, says Noah Nelson, founder of immersive entertainment site No Proscenium and its accompanying conference, is still one of the most recognizable names in the sector. While the layoffs raised eyebrows, the pledge to future exhibitions is an argument that the audience isn't eroding.

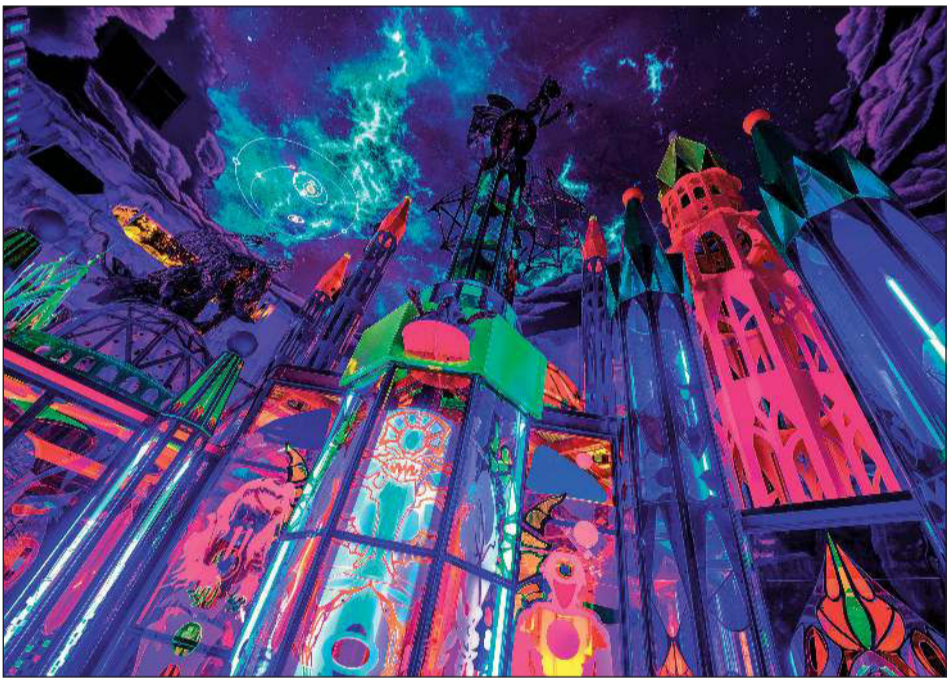
“Meow Wolf represents the paradox,” Nelson says.

“It was born from a wild artist collective that created these family-friendly psychedelic sandboxes,” he says. “It morphed into a business that became increasingly a business and is still trying to hold onto that family-friendly psychedelic sandbox energy. It's still trying to



CHRISTOPHER DEVARGAS Meow Wolf

“OMEGA MART” starts as a satiric take on a grocery store that leads to art.



JESS BERNSTEIN Meow Wolf

DENVER'S “Convergence Station,” envisioned by the late artist Matt King.

maintain its soul. That's a tightrope that is very hard to walk, and it has at times been downright scary to watch them walk it. The upside is that they're still walking it.”

Di Ianni helped grow Meow Wolf from an artist community into a corporation.

“I've been on all sides of this,” Di Ianni says. “I've created things. I helped organize things. I helped form the business. I've conducted layoffs myself. I've felt the pain, the struggle, the beauty and the mystery and magic in all different ways. It's still happening. We're still experiencing it. People, sometimes people who weren't around for it, think of the early days as some utopian fantasy. It wasn't that. It was a chaotic, anarchic mess.”

“I guess what I'm saying,” he says, “is it's always been a struggle.”

Di Ianni and Santana-Sayles hope Los Angeles will be a point of healing. After all, it just may be Meow Wolf's most personal artistic statement yet.

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The large thematic touchpoints for what would become Meow Wolf's L.A. space were sketched out about two years ago. Many of them originated with Matt King, whom Di Ianni credits for leading a significant portion of Meow Wolf's philosophical bent. King died by suicide in July 2022.

While Di Ianni is keeping much of the narrative a se-

cret, he said the team envisioned as its setting “a world at a distant crossroads” in the midst of some sort of ritual. “What if this place we're creating has some event that occurs, and people are drawn to this event the way people are drawn to a panda being born at a zoo?” Di Ianni says.

Santana-Sayles digs deeper.

She was King's fiancée at the time of his death, and at various points a conversation with her delves into a discussion on how to process grief. An art piece of King's, a woven portrait of flowers, sits in her living room waiting to be hung. After his death, she says, she made the decision to return to L.A. to be closer to her family. That Meow Wolf would center its next project here became a fortunate coincidence.

“It's so hard to be split from people,” she says of the last two years of her life. “They become you, and you become them.”

She takes comfort in being able to bring one of King's final Meow Wolf ideas to fruition, and she and Di Ianni speak of wanting to protect what King was envisioning. “It'll be harder for me to work on a Meow Wolf that he had nothing to do with,” Santana-Sayles says. “That won't be far off. It's the project after this. That will be way more challenging for me. I feel like I still get to hold his hand.”

When discussing some of the themes for the Los Angeles exhibition, she heads to

her bookshelf and digs out a stack of King's books, specifically ones he was reading in the last year of his life. King, she says, was becoming heavily fascinated with theories that interwove astrology and the Bible.

“He would come to dinners and say, ‘I'm so excited to tell you that this chapter of the Bible is actually parallel to this incredible spring equinox and the equinox is a metaphor for the way Moses parted the sea,’” she says. “I thought Matt, frankly, was sometimes extremely discerning about his sources and sometimes not at all. He would flip between different texts — historic texts, and then things that were on the verge of conspiracy theory. He just wanted to absorb.”

“This exhibit,” Santana-Sayles says, “I do think, in the funniest way, grapples with big mystical and religious questions. Not overtly, but in a way people will read themselves into. I think there's a lot to be explored there.”

Santana-Sayles and her team will have a significant say in how. It's early days but she's in the midst of working with consultants to create demographic surveys of Los Angeles, striving to ensure the exhibit will fully represent the diversity of the region. As a SoCal native from a Mexican American family, Santana-Sayles says, “I would be dishonored” if the exhibit failed in its mission to capture the breadth of the L.A. population. A cultural engagement specialist has been hired for outreach to

Indigenous artist groups.

“It's really important to make that intentional,” she says. “I'm not just going out and saying, ‘They have art I like. I'm going to bring them in.’ It's a combination. Yes, they're an amazing artist, *and* they have a really important story for this region.”

Santana-Sayles is asked what makes a Meow Wolf artist. It's not always an easy answer. In Grapevine, for instance, “The Real Unreal,” housed in a former Bed Bath & Beyond, is centered around a family story of grief. On a tour of the space last summer, many of the locally commissioned pieces appeared designed to celebrate community and healing, be it a calming tower of reflective geometric shapes that feels like a place of worship, or murals that reference Greek mythology and hint at being at an emotional crossroads.

“We're really looking for experiential art — it has to be immersive in some way that playfully subverts reality and that thematically connects with what we're doing as a whole with the exhibition,” Santana-Sayles says. Then she references works from other Meow Wolf exhibitions.

“There's so many different ways to do that,” she continues. “Ways people do that are with materials, characters and concepts. We have people doing Indigenous futurism. We have people working with only trash art, reconstructing everyday items. We have people making completely different planets that have their own interesting logic. The umbrella feels quite broad, but that's really what I'm trying to find. I'm looking for people who have a really defined sense of what they do.”

Regardless of what is conceived, don't assume a passive experience. The Meow Wolf design philosophy is one that's based on active participation by the guest, a shift from less assertive forms of entertainment of yore, be it a museum or the early days of theme parks. Stray, not-so-hidden paths and an assortment of nooks dot a Meow Wolf exhibition, inviting guests to choose their own narrative. Story threads are peppered throughout. “Omega Mart,” for instance, grapples with environmental distress and corporate responsibility.

Meow Wolf's West L.A. theater, says Di Ianni, also will be built for discovery. The byzantine paths and shifts in art direction are what he refers to as “good mystery confusion.”

“That was one of the challenges of using a movie theater as a point of entry,” Di Ianni says. “It's passive. But there are stories told in movie theaters, and then there are stories of movie theaters and stories of the people who work at movie theaters. But when you get into that auditorium, it's meant to be a blank space where stories are told. It's a little meta. This is a storytelling space about storytelling.”

For those looking for further hints as to where the Los Angeles exhibition may veer, Di Ianni mentions that he and the team back in Santa Fe soon will be doing a group watch of Wolfgang Petersen's “The Never-ending Story.” The 1984 film is a fantastical work about the beauty of our imaginations and how art can bring dreamlike worlds to life.

And that's ultimately fitting for a Meow Wolf exhibition. While there are narrative threads and elaborate ideas, Meow Wolf spaces are essentially places of wonder, where dozens of disparate artists come together to create something akin to an explorable fairy tale.

“We can't control whether you decide to change your perception of the world, or change yourself or change the world,” Di Ianni says. “But we can set up the conditions for people to have a little more access to that possibility. It's very high-minded and very activist in a way. That's what art and entertainment does. That's why we go on vacation. That's why we go to Disneyland. We want to see the world differently. We want to open up possibilities.”

Meow Wolf's exhibitions have always been theaters for fantasy, centering the guest as the performer. Eventually, they were bound to find themselves in a city whose primary industry is known for creating dreamers.

COMICS

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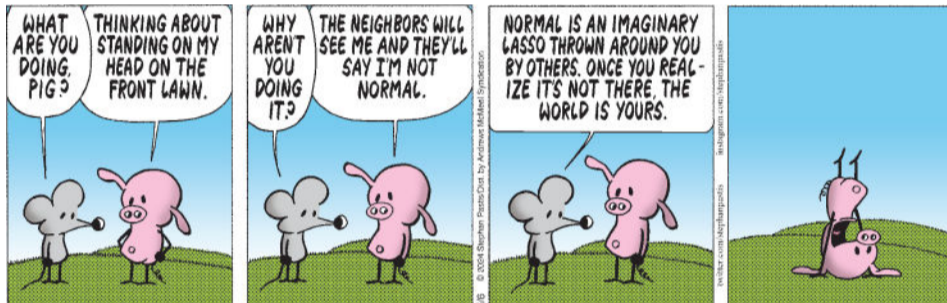
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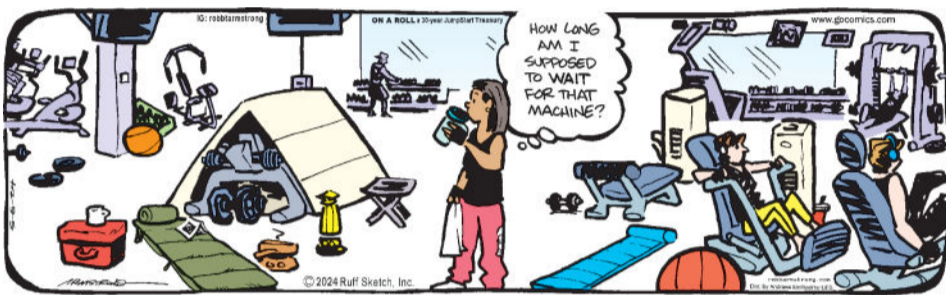
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