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Concert colossus is sued over its power

Justice Department seeks to break up Ticketmaster's owner, alleging 'stranglehold' on the industry.

By August Brown

The Department of Justice on Thursday announced that it had filed a lawsuit against Ticketmaster's Beverly Hills-based parent, Live Nation Entertainment, seeking to break up the company over allegations that it created an illegal monopoly over the live entertainment industry.

The government, joined by 29 states and the District of Columbia, accuses Live Nation of using its power to dominate the industry by forcing venues into exclusive ticketing contracts and influencing artists to use only its services, threatening its competitors with financial retribution.

"Live Nation and its wholly owned subsidiary, Ticketmaster, have used that power and influence to insert themselves at the center and the edges of virtually every aspect of the live music ecosystem," the lawsuit alleges. "This has given Live Nation and Ticketmaster the opportunity to freeze innovation and bend the industry to their own benefit. While this may be a boon to Live Nation's bottom line, there is a real cost to Americans."

Live Nation controls more than 265 concert venues in North America and manages more than 400 musical artists, according to the Justice Department. The suit is seeking a jury trial.

California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta, who joined the suit against Live Nation, said in an interview with The Times on Thursday that "there's dominance and control by Live Nation in three aspects of the music industry — pro-

[See Ticketmaster, A9]

Would a breakup cut ticket prices?

Splitting the company wouldn't be easy, and it's unclear what would result. **BUSINESS, A8**



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

SHAINA SAVOY scales a limestone wall at Robbers Roost in the Spring Mountains of Nevada on May 13. In the Vegas area, world-class climbing is easily accessible year-round.

Las Vegas gains toehold as a top outdoors destination

Beyond the Strip, adventurers are settling down just '15 minutes from trailheads where you can be completely alone' without the drag of living in a van

By Jack Dolan | Reporting from Las Vegas

For many, the lure of Las Vegas is the near-complete immersion in a man-made world.

Visitors bury themselves deep inside temperature-controlled casinos, surrounded by artificial lights and sounds, with no windows or even clocks to remind them that the outside world still exists.

It's one of the *indoors-iest* places on the planet.

But just outside the city, about 20 minutes from the bachelor parties and slot machines, a growing number of elite outdoor athletes are buying homes, starting families and declaring Las Vegas the adventure sports capital of the United States.

"It just has unparalleled access to the outdoors," said Alex Honnold, the world's most famous rock climber and subject of the Academy Award-winning documentary "Free Solo," about his breathtaking 2017 ascent of Yosemite's El Capitan, a nearly vertical granite wall that rises 3,000 feet above the valley floor.

It was first climbed in 1958 by a team who took 18 months searching for tiny protrusions and cracks to use as holds and driving heavy metal spikes into the rock where no natural holds existed. Honnold shocked the climbing world by using only his hands and feet — [See Vegas, A5]

UCLA leader grilled at D.C. hearing

Block and others defend their handling of campus incidents amid concerns of antisemitism.

By Jaweed Kaleem, Andrea Castillo and Jenny Jarvie

WASHINGTON — A House committee grilled UCLA Chancellor Gene Block about pro-Palestinian protests as he faced off with lawmakers Thursday over his handling of a violent mob attack last month on a campus encampment and answered accusations that the university has failed under his leadership to address a rising tide of antisemitism.

Block, who testified alongside the presidents of Northwestern and Rutgers universities, was soft-spoken and at times vague in response to questions on UCLA administrators' role in resolving campus tensions that have grown since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel and that country's retaliatory war in the Gaza Strip.

The chancellor said he could not fully answer questions about issues including the status of students facing disciplinary action for violating UCLA rules and the state of police investigations into agitators who attacked an encampment overnight on April 30 amid an hours-long delay in police response.

"I don't know if that's ongoing," Block said of a police investigation into allegations of antisemitic threats against a UCLA professor and her husband.

"We'll see what happens," he said regarding disciplinary action. [See Antisemitism, A6]

Four takeaways from his testimony

At hearing, chancellor acknowledged mistakes and said antisemitism is a problem. **NATION, A6**

Redistricting by GOP upheld

Supreme Court backs a map drawn by South Carolina lawmakers that shifted Black voters. **NATION, A4**

Woman charged in wild pursuit

Missouri transplant is accused of crashing into police cruisers and other vehicles on the 405. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Diverse viewers' pivotal role

Women and people of color drive ratings for streaming films, a UCLA report finds. **CALENDAR, E1**

Weather
Drizzle.
L.A. Basin: 69/55. **B6**

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Riot police descend on new UCLA encampment



A GROUP of protesters locks arms while police move in as pro-Palestinian students erect a new solidarity encampment on Thursday on the UCLA campus.

CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

Officers face off against pro-Palestinian protesters as tensions rise amid a strike by academic workers.

By Hannah Fry, Caroline Petrow-Cohen, Connor Sheets and Howard Blume

More than two dozen officers in riot gear descended on UCLA Thursday afternoon, facing off with pro-Palestinian protesters who had erected a new encampment on campus hours earlier.

The move came amid escalating tensions between pro-Palestinian students and their faculty allies and administrators on the West-

wood campus. The academic workers union announced Thursday that its ongoing strike over working conditions would expand to UCLA and UC Davis on Tuesday.

Union members contend that their free speech rights were violated when UC system leaders called on police to forcibly remove pro-Palestinian encampments at several campuses, including at UCLA.

"It's a very fraught, violent environment that the administration has created here," said Vincent Doehr, a graduate student and union member. "The disruption to campus today is coming from [the] administration shutting down this entire area due to an encampment that's simply in the courtyard of one building."

[See UCLA, A7]



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PERSPECTIVES

Biden thanks Kenyan leader for helping Haiti

William Ruto plans police deployment to the Caribbean nation. Biden defends keeping U.S. troops out.

BY AAMER MADHANI
AND SEUNG MIN KIM

WASHINGTON — President Biden on Thursday expressed deep appreciation to Kenyan President William Ruto for the coming deployment of Kenyan police forces to help quell gang violence in Haiti, and he defended his decision to withhold American forces from the mission in the beleaguered Caribbean nation.

The United States has agreed to contribute \$300 million to a multinational force that will include 1,000 Kenyan police officers, but Biden argued that an American troop presence in Haiti would raise “all kinds of questions that can easily be misrepresented.”

The Democrat came into office in 2021 pledging to end U.S. involvement in so-called endless wars in the aftermath of 20 years of conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“Haiti is in an area of the Caribbean that is very volatile,” Biden said at a news conference with Ruto, who was in Washington for the first state visit to the U.S. by an African leader since 2008. “There’s a lot going on in this hemisphere. So we’re in a situation where we want to do all we can without us looking like America once again is stepping over and deciding this is what must be done.”

Ruto, who will be honored by Biden with a state dinner on the White House grounds in the evening, also gave a climate policy address and met with former President Obama.

Ruto is facing legal challenges in Nairobi over the decision to commit Kenyan forces to a conflict thousands of miles from home when his own country has no shortage of economic and



LEAH MILLIS Pool Photo

KENYAN President William Ruto and President Biden walk to the Oval Office on Thursday. Ruto was in Washington, D.C., for the first state visit to the United States by an African leader since 2008.

security challenges. He said that Kenya, as a democracy, has a duty to help.

“Kenya believes that the responsibility of peace and security anywhere in the world, including in Haiti, is the collective responsibility of all nations and all people who believe in freedom, self-determination, democracy and justice,” Ruto said. “And it is the reason why Kenya took up this responsibility.”

Some analysts say his move could run afoul of a Kenyan High Court ruling in January that found the deployment unconstitutional because of a lack of reciprocal agreements between Kenya and Haiti. A deal was signed in March, before Ariel Henry resigned as Haiti’s prime minister, to try to salvage the plan.

Kenya’s moving ahead “gives the impression that the country is lawless and does not believe in the rule of law,” said Macharia Munene, an international relations professor at United States International University-Africa.

A difficult assignment is ahead for the Kenyan offi-

cers. Haiti has endured poverty, political instability and natural disasters for decades. International intervention in Haiti has a complicated history. A United Nations-approved stabilization mission to Haiti that started in June 2004 was marred by a sexual abuse scandal and the introduction of cholera, which killed nearly 10,000 people. The mission ended in October 2017.

Biden and Ruto also called on economies around the globe to take action to reduce the enormous debt burden crushing Kenya and other developing nations.

The call to action, termed the Nairobi-Washington Vision, comes as Biden presses his appeal to African nations that the U.S. can be a better partner than economic rival China. Beijing has been deepening its investment on the continent — often with

high-interest loans and other difficult financing terms.

Biden and Ruto want creditor nations to reduce financing barriers for developing nations that have been constrained by high debt burdens. They also called on international financial institutions to coordinate debt relief and support through multilateral banks and institutions providing better financing terms.

The White House announced \$250 million in grants for the International Development Assn., part of the World Bank, to assist poor countries facing crises.

Separately, a \$1.2-trillion government funding bill passed by Congress in March allows the U.S. to lend up to \$21 billion to an International Monetary Fund trust that provides zero-interest loans to support low-income countries.

“Too many nations are forced to make a choice between development and debt, between investing in their people and paying back their creditors,” Biden said.

An Associated Press analysis of a dozen countries most indebted to China, including Kenya, found the debt is consuming an ever-greater amount of tax revenue needed to keep schools open, provide electricity and pay for food and fuel.

Behind the scenes is China’s reluctance to forgive debt and its extreme secrecy about how much money it has lent and on what terms, which has kept major lenders from stepping in to help.

Kenya’s debt-to-GDP ratio tops 70%, with the bulk of it owed to China. Credit ratings agency Fitch estimates the Kenya will spend almost one-third of its government revenues just on interest payments this year.

The Biden administration has praised Kenya for stepping up in Haiti when so few other countries have agreed to do so. Biden also announced his intention to designate Kenya as a major non-NATO ally, an acknowledgment of the growing security partnership between the countries.

The designation, while largely symbolic, reflects how Kenya has grown from a regional partner that has long cooperated with U.S. counterterrorism operations on the continent to a major global influence — even extending its reach into the Western Hemisphere. Kenya will be the first sub-Saharan African country to receive the status.

Ruto arrived in Washington on Wednesday and began the visit by meeting with Biden and tech executives from Silicon Valley and Kenya’s growing tech sector.

The White House announced it was working with Congress to make Kenya the first country in Africa to benefit from funding through the CHIPS and Science Act, a 2022 law that aims to reinvestigate the computer chip sector within the United States through tens of billions of dollars in targeted government support.

“I think we have a historic moment to explore investment opportunities between Kenya and the United States,” Ruto said.

Despite the optimistic outlook, Kenya has seen a sharp decline in foreign investment since 2017. Net investment for foreign companies has fallen from \$1.35 billion in 2017 to \$394 million in 2022, the World Bank said.

Madhani and Kim write for the Associated Press. AP writers Evelynne Musambi in Nairobi and Josh Boak and Sagar Meghani in Washington contributed to this report.

FOR THE RECORD

Mountain lion report: In the May 21 California section, an article about a reported mountain lion sighting near Griffith Park said the National Park Service had tracked and collared 121 mountain lions since 2002. It has tracked, studied or collared 120 mountain lions in that time.

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Ceremonies link Raisi to general whose 2020 killing by U.S. drew more mourners.

BY JON GAMBRELL

DUBAI — Iran interred President Ebrahim Raisi at the nation’s holiest Shiite shrine Thursday, days after he was killed in a helicopter crash that added to the woes of a country beset by international sanctions, internal unrest and tensions abroad.

Raisi, who died alongside the foreign minister and six others, was lowered by mourners into a tomb at the Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad, where Shiite Islam’s eighth imam is buried and millions of pilgrims visit each year.

Hundreds of thousands of people dressed in black crowded around under the shrine’s golden dome, wailing and beating their chests in sorrow in a sign of mourning common in Shiite ceremonies.

A hadith, or saying, attributed to the prophet Muhammad states that anyone with sorrow or sin will be relieved by visiting the site. But Thursday’s mass procession offered little solace for Iran and its many challenges.

The days of services for Raisi have not drawn the same massive crowds in this nation of over 80 million people as the 2020 gatherings mourning Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani, killed in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad.

In Tehran alone, an estimated 1 million people had filled the streets for Soleimani — something onlookers said they didn’t see Wednesday at commemorations for Raisi and the other crash victims. Yet this week’s ceremonies have repeatedly invoked the general and included his image, strongly associating the late president with Soleimani.

Raisi’s presidency included a harsh crackdown on dissent during protests over the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini after the young woman was detained on allegations of not wearing her mandatory headscarf to authorities’ liking.



Iranian Presidency Office

A CEREMONY for late President Ebrahim Raisi and others who died in Sunday’s helicopter crash drew hundreds of thousands Thursday in Mashhad, Iran.

Coverage provided by state television and in newspapers has said little to nothing about that crack-down, Iran’s struggling economy or Raisi’s involvement in the mass execution of an estimated 5,000 dissidents at the end of the Iran-Iraq war.

Little information has emerged about the cause of the crash of the aging Bell helicopter that went down in a foggy, mountainous region. The country’s security forces are expected to continue investigating it in the coming days.

Prosecutors have warned against any public signs of celebration over Raisi’s death, and Tehran has seen a heavier security presence since the crash.

Raisi, 63, was also a Shiite cleric and had been discussed as a possible successor to Iran’s supreme leader, the 85-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The next presidential election is set for June 28. Iran’s political elite has yet to show a clear favorite.

Mohammad Mokhber, a relatively unknown first vice president before Sunday’s crash, has stepped into his role as acting president, including attending a meeting with Khamenei and Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh on Wednesday.

Mashhad, the city where the late president was interred, had served as a long-time base for Raisi. In 2016,

Khamenei appointed him to run the Imam Reza charity foundation, which manages a vast conglomerate of businesses and endowments in Iran, as well as oversees the shrine. It is one of many charitable foundations fueled by donations or assets seized after Iran’s 1979 Islamic Revolution.

These foundations offer no public accounting of their spending and answer only to the supreme leader. The Imam Reza charity, known as Astan-e Quds-e Razavi in Farsi, is believed to be one of the biggest in the country. Analysts estimate its worth at tens of billions of dollars, as it owns almost half of the land in Mashhad, Iran’s second-largest city, about 470 miles east of the capital, Tehran.

Raisi is the first top politician in the country to be buried at the shrine, which represents a major honor for the cleric. His father-in-law serves as the city’s Friday prayer leader.

The deaths of Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian come as Iran continues to back militia groups in the wider Middle East to pressure its enemies, namely Israel and the U.S. Mourners have chanted against both nations in this week’s ceremonies.

State media circulated photos Thursday showing Iran’s paramilitary Revolutionary Guard chief and the head of its expeditionary

Quds Force meeting with representatives of the Gaza Strip’s Hamas, Lebanon’s Hezbollah and Yemen’s Houthis rebels.

On Thursday morning, thousands of people dressed in black gathered along a main boulevard in the city of Birjand, which Raisi once served as its member on the Assembly of Experts in Iran’s South Khorasan province along the Afghan border.

There and in Mashhad, mourners reached out to a truck carrying his casket, with some tossing scarves and other items against it for a blessing.

Former Foreign Ministers Mohammed Javad Zarif and Ali Akbar Salehi and other dignitaries paid respects to Amirabdollahian at the Foreign Ministry, where the casket of the agency’s late leader was displayed.

His body later was interred in Shah-e Rey, just outside Tehran, at the Abdol Azim shrine, another final resting place for those famed in Persian history.

“Give Soleimani our greetings,” a religious singer said, referring to the slain general, as Amirabdollahian’s body was put into its final resting place.

Gambrell writes for the Associated Press. AP writer Amir Vahdat in Tehran contributed to this report.

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Los Angeles Times

THE WORLD

Is N. Korea bigger threat under Biden or Trump?

The U.S. has largely kept Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions on the back burner, but tensions are rising.

By Max Kim

SEOUL — Faced with other more pressing developments in Ukraine and Gaza, the Biden administration has largely kept the threat of North Korea's nuclear program on the back burner.

But tensions around the Korean peninsula have been ratcheting up for years, opening a new and uncertain chapter in a standoff that, just six years ago under then-President Trump, seemed to be on the cusp of a major breakthrough.

So what happened? And what lies in store for whoever wins the White House in November?

In 2018, hopes ran high that North Korea might finally relinquish its nuclear arsenal.

After three summits between then-South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, the two countries issued a declaration pledging better ties between the countries, the easing of military tensions and a mutual commitment to the "denuclearization of the Korean peninsula."

That unprecedented document, the Panmunjom Declaration, set the stage for meetings between Trump and Kim Jong Un, who had until then been slinging insults at each other, with Trump belittling Kim as "little rocket man" and Kim calling Trump a "dotard" —



KIM JONG UN, North Korea's leader, shown in 2019, has vowed that his country would "never give up" its nuclear arsenal, which contains at least 40 warheads.

or a senile old person.

Held over the course of 2018 and 2019 in Singapore, Hanoi and the Korean demilitarized zone, the three meetings produced several gestures of goodwill, such as Pyongyang repatriating the remains of American soldiers who died in the Korean War and dismantling several rocket launch sites. At the DMZ, Trump became the first sitting U.S. president to set foot on the North Korean side of the border.

But the meetings failed to achieve a denuclearization deal, running into the same intractable problem that has defined the conflict for decades: the United States' reluctance to accept anything less than total and immediate nuclear disarmament and North Korea's equal reluctance to surrender its primary source of lev-

erage.

Things have gone downhill ever since. In June 2020, North Korea blew up a joint liaison office that had been installed on its side of the border to facilitate communication with Seoul. It also resumed its nuclear program, rebuilding the nuclear test site it had partially demolished after the Panmunjom Declaration.

North Korea has launched more than 100 missiles since 2022, and U.S. and South Korean officials have said it is probably preparing to conduct its seventh nuclear test — the first since 2017.

In September 2022, North Korea passed a law officially declaring itself a nuclear state, with Kim vowing that the country would "never give up" its nuclear arsenal, which is estimated to

contain at least 40, and perhaps more than 100, warheads.

The new law specifies several scenarios in which the country would use nuclear weapons, including pre-emptive strikes in the event of imminent attack.

As a result, the last few years have seen increasingly combustible military postures by both Korea and the United States.

"North Korea has obviously never had this many nuclear weapons, especially those of such technological sophistication, when it comes to delivery methods or strike range," said Kim Dong-yup, a professor at the University of North Korea Studies in Seoul.

"But all the negotiation channels or mechanisms that North and South Korea had for preventing escala-

tion or misunderstandings are gone. The safety pin has been pulled out."

In response to North Korea's growing nuclear might, the Biden administration has resumed military drills with South Korea that had been paused under Trump. It has said that any nuclear attack by North Korea "will result in the end of that regime."

South Korea has also been honing its strategy to decapitate North Korean leadership, while Kim Jong Un, who recently repudiated the once-shared goal of Korean reunification, labeled South Korea as his government's "primary foe." Given these competing moves, altercations seem inevitable, experts say.

"I don't think the chances of a full-blown war are particularly high, because there is now an element of greater deterrence in play," Kim, the professor, said. "But the likelihood of smaller-scale conflicts has risen significantly, especially in areas near the border with North Korea."

Technically, the Korean War never ended. The hostilities halted in 1953 with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

Biden, if reelected, is widely expected to pursue his current strategy of maintaining sanctions and military deterrence, keeping with his wider regional strategy of expanding U.S. influence in Asia.

Under President Yoon Suk-yeol, a conservative, South Korea joined a U.S.-led trilateral military alliance with Japan — a buffer against China as well as North Korea.

But that is not to say the door to dialogue with North Korea is shut.

In March, senior U.S. offi-

cialists said that they would be open to exploring "interim steps" toward denuclearization with North Korea, but that the goal of nuclear disarmament remains unchanged.

Yet this is essentially the same offer that has failed to produce meaningful outcomes in the past — including at the Trump-Kim summits — and North Korea has been ignoring the Biden administration's attempts to make contact.

"The worst-kept secret in the Korea policy community is that demanding denuclearization of North Korea is a nonstarter — totally unrealistic," said Van Jackson, a former Pentagon official and currently a professor of international relations at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand.

"North Korea will come back to the negotiating table only if it receives presidential honors like summits, or tangible accommodations that signal turning over a new leaf — sanctions relief, ending the Korean war," he said.

"There's a way in which North Korea's position here is understandable," Jackson added. "They don't have any intention of denuclearizing and they'd be foolish to disarm without having confidence that their much larger adversary is not really an adversary anymore."

A Trump win would entail far more variables.

"There's an assumption that if Trump reaches out to Kim, that they would immediately resume their love letters, but we have to remember that Kim was blindsided and jaded by the Trump team in Hanoi, so he will not necessarily come running to Trump," said Andrew Yeo, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

In other words, drawn out once with the prospect of a groundbreaking deal that never materialized, a warier Kim may not be so quick to do so again.

"Additionally, the geopolitical landscape has changed where Kim has much more support from China and Russia than during the first Trump administration, so he may have less incentive or need to talk to the U.S.," Yeo said.

In May 2022, China and Russia vetoed a U.S.-led effort at the United Nations Security Council to increase sanctions on North Korea, which has in recent years cozied up to Moscow, itself the target of sanctions for the invasion of Ukraine.

After his meeting with Vladimir Putin in September 2023, Kim has sought Russia's help in launching its own spy satellites, sending in return artillery shells, mortars and short-range ballistic missiles for Russia's war with Ukraine.

Still, many Asia experts believe that dialogue with North Korea is more likely under Trump rather than Biden — with the possibility of a second round of high-level meetings on the table.

"If Trump wins, I fully expect Kim to press the 'Hey, remember me?' button and resume summit diplomacy," Jackson said. "But it's totally unclear how Trump would respond to that this time around."

In the event of another summit, the question is how much ground Trump would be willing to give for the sake of consummating a deal to his credit — whether he might, for example, be open to a nuclear freeze rather than disarmament.

"The bureaucracy under Trump will still have hawkish preferences, but if Kim Jong Un is able to manipulate Trump, it's much more likely this time around that Trump will be able to impose his preferences for Korea," Jackson said. "In 2018 and 2019, Trump faced a lot of resistance from civil servants and political appointees, but MAGA has since built a cadre of loyalists who are going to exist to ensure Trump's whims are carried out."

Yet even dialogue that doesn't lead to tidy deals may be worthwhile as a kind of pressure valve — a way to ease growing tensions, said Kim Dong-yup, the professor.

"It provides an opportunity to rethink and temper hostile stances," he said. "And once you begin talking, new solutions may emerge over time."

9 killed at Mexico campaign event whipped by winds

The collapse of a stage also injures 121 people at the outdoor rally for a long-shot presidential candidate.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN PEDRO GARZA GARCIA, Mexico — The collapse of a stage in heavy winds at a campaign rally in northern Mexico has killed at least nine people, including a child, and injured 121, the governor of Nuevo Leon state said Thursday.

The collapse occurred during an event Wednesday evening attended by long-shot presidential candidate Jorge Álvarez Máynez, who ran to escape. Videos of the collapse on social media showed people screaming, running away and climbing out from under metal poles.

The victims "will not be alone in this tragedy," Máynez told reporters Wednesday night, adding that he had suspended upcoming campaign events.

Soldiers, police and other officials roamed the grounds of the park where the event took place while many



THE COLLAPSE occurred at a park in San Pedro Garza García, Mexico, on Wednesday. Health officials said a lot of the injuries involved skull fractures.

nearly sat stunned and haunted by the tragedy.

In a video message, Nuevo Leon Gov. Samuel García, a leading member of Máynez's Citizens Movement party, said that 94 of the injured were treated and released, but that 27 remained hospitalized. State health authorities said a lot of the injuries involved skull

fractures. García said that several victims were undergoing surgery and that some appeared to be in critical condition.

García said the accident occurred "in a matter of seconds."

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said most of the injured were women. He absolved Citi-

zens Movement — widely viewed as an implicit ally of López Obrador's Morena party — of blame even before investigations were carried out.

"We know that they are not to blame," the president said Thursday.

Condolences poured in from across Mexico, including from the other two presi-

dential candidates.

Videos of the accident showed Máynez waving his arm as the crowd chanted his name. But then he looked up to see a giant screen and metal structure toppling toward him. He ran rapidly toward the back of the stage to avoid the falling structure, which appeared to consist of relatively light framework pieces as well as what appeared to be a screen with the party's logo and theater-style lights.

In a Facebook post, Alejandra Gamez Escalera wrote that her father and a brother, 11, died in the collapse. She said they had gone to the event to hear a band.

"If only you had stayed home and not gone to the event, none of this would have happened," Gamez Escalera wrote.

Máynez has been running third in polls in the presidential race, trailing front-runner Claudia Sheinbaum of Morena and opposition coalition candidate Xóchitl Gálvez.

The accident happened at the height of campaign season, with many events held this week and next in anticipation of the June 2 elections.

Several injured on rough Singapore flight need spinal surgery

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BANGKOK — Several of the more seriously injured people who were on the Singapore Airlines flight that hit severe turbulence this week will need spinal surgery, a Bangkok hospital said Thursday.

Twenty people remained in intensive care after the Boeing 777, which was flying from London's Heathrow airport to Singapore on Tuesday, ran into bad turbulence over the Andaman Sea, hurling items and passengers and crew members around the cabin. A 73-year-old British man died.

A public relations officer for Samitivej Srinakarin Hospital, where most of the 104 people hurt in the incident were treated, told the Associated Press that other local hospitals have been asked to lend their best specialists to assist in the treatments. He spoke on condition of anonymity under

hospital policy.

Hospital director Adinun Kittiratanapaibool said at a news conference Thursday that none of the 20 patients in the ICU were in life-threatening condition. They consisted of six Britons, six Malaysians, three Australians, two Singaporeans and one person each from Hong Kong, New Zealand and the Philippines.

Passengers have described the "sheer terror" of the aircraft shuddering, loose items flying and injured people lying paralyzed on the floor of the plane.

It remains unclear what exactly caused the turbulence that sent the plane, which was carrying 211 passengers and 18 crew members, on a 6,000-foot descent in about three minutes, after which the flight was diverted to Thailand.

In one of the latest accounts of the chaos on board, Amelia Lim, 43, of Malaysia described finding herself face down on the

floor.

"I was so afraid ... I could see so many individuals on the floor; they were all bleeding. There was blood on the floor as well as on the people," she told the online Malay Mail newspaper.

The woman who had been seated next to her was "motionless in the aisle and unable to move, likely suffering from a hip or spinal injury," she said.

Thai authorities said the man who died possibly had a heart attack. Passengers have described how the flight crew tried to revive him by performing CPR for about 20 minutes.

Among some 41 people who had remained at Samitivej Srinakarin Hospital on Thursday morning, 22 had spinal or spinal cord damage, six had skull or brain injuries and 13 had damage to bones or internal organs, said hospital director Adinun. The 19 men and 22 women ranged in age from 2 years to 83.

Seventeen surgeries have already been performed — nine spinal surgeries and eight for other injuries, he said. Thirteen others injured in the incident remain at two other branches of the hospital.

Asked about the prognosis for the most serious cases, Adinun said it was too early to tell whether any could suffer permanent paralysis, and doctors would have to observe whether muscle function recovered after surgery.

On Wednesday morning, a special Singapore Airlines flight took 143 uninjured or lightly hurt people onward to Singapore.

Most people associate turbulence with heavy storms, but the most dangerous type is so-called clear air turbulence. Wind shear can occur in wispy cirrus clouds or even in clear air near thunderstorms, as differences in temperature and pressure create powerful currents of fast-moving air.

According to a 2021 report by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board, turbulence accounted for 37.6% of all accidents on larger commercial airlines between 2009 and 2018. The Federal Aviation Administration has said there were 146 serious injuries from turbulence from 2009 to 2021.

Tourism and aviation expert Anita Mendiratta, who is based in London, said severe turbulence is "extremely unusual."

She said passengers should listen to instructions to keep their seat belts on, ensure that hand baggage is put away safely when not in use, and reduce items stowed in the overhead compartments.

"When there is turbulence, those doors can open and all of the items up top, whether it's our hand baggage, our jackets, our duty-free items, they become movable and they become a risk to us all," she said.

THE NATION

Supreme Court allows controversial redistricting

Justices strike ruling that cited ‘stark racial gerrymander’ in South Carolina map that shifted Black voters.

By DAVID G. SAVAGE

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled Thursday that a state’s mapmakers may shift tens of thousands of Black voters to a different district in seeking to shore up a partisan advantage for a Republican candidate.

In a 6-3 decision, the justices upheld a redistricting map drawn by South Carolina’s Republican Legislature and overturned a lower court ruling that called the map a “stark racial gerrymander.”

mander.”

At issue was whether the state legislators drew the districts for political or racial reasons.

The six Republican-appointed justices said the legislators were motivated by partisan concerns, while the three Democratic appointees dissented, saying voters were shifted based on their race.

In the past, the court has said that partisan gerrymandering is legal and as old as the nation, but that racial gerrymandering is discriminatory and unconstitutional.

The reasoning has been that the Constitution permits elected officials to make decisions based on political considerations, but that the 14th Amendment forbids the government from making decisions



MEG KINNARD Associated Press

SOUTH CAROLINA Republican Nancy Mace represents the congressional district that was at issue.

based on race.

Not surprisingly, those two principles come into conflict in the drawing of election districts in areas where Black voters overwhelmingly support Democrats.

This case focused on a

congressional district in the Charleston, S.C., area held by GOP Rep. Nancy Mace.

The district had long elected Republicans until 2018, when a Democrat won the seat. Mace ran in 2020 and won a narrow victory.

When the state Legisla-

ture redrew its seven districts to account for the 2020 census, mapmakers sought to shore up Mace’s district as a Republican stronghold. They shifted more than 30,000 Black voters from the district into a Black-majority district held by Rep. James E. Clyburn, the state’s lone Democrat.

Lawyers for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the American Civil Liberties Union sued, arguing the state’s redistricting plan was unconstitutional. They won a ruling from a three-judge court that concluded “race was the predominant motivating factor” in redrawing the district.

But Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., speaking for the majority, said the evidence showed that partisan motives were the driving force.

“The Constitution entrusts state legislatures with the primary responsibility for drawing congressional districts, and redistricting is an inescapably political enterprise. ... A legislature may pursue partisan ends when it engages in redistricting,” he said.

“To untangle race from other permissible considerations,” Alito said, “we require the plaintiff to show that race was the predominant factor motivating the legislature’s decision to place a significant number of voters within or without a particular district.”

South Carolina’s mapmakers looked at voting data as well as racial data, he said, concluding that the plaintiffs did not show race was the dominant factor in drawing the districts. Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and fellow conservative Justices Clarence Thomas, Neil M. Gorsuch, Brett M. Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett agreed.

Liberal Justices Elena Kagan, Sonia Sotomayor and Ketanji Brown Jackson dissented.

“What a message to send to state legislators and mapmakers about racial gerrymandering,” Kagan said in dissent. “Go right ahead, this court says to states today. ... In the electoral sphere especially, where ugly patterns of pervasive racial discrimination have so long governed, we should demand better — of ourselves, of our political representatives, and most of all of this court.”

Civil rights lawyers who brought the case said justices should have deferred to the three-judge court that held a nine-day trial in the case and closely examined evidence of how the districts were redrawn.

“The highest court in our land greenlit racial discrimination in South Carolina’s redistricting process, denied Black voters the right to be free from the race-based sorting and sent a message that facts, process, and precedent will not protect the Black vote,” said Janai Nelson, president and director-counsel of the Legal Defense Fund.

Unlike redistricting cases from Alabama and Louisiana, however, the South Carolina case’s immediate impact looks to be limited.

Civil rights lawsuits in those Southern states led to the creation of a second Black-majority district where a Democrat could be elected. The South Carolina litigation did not involve a possible second Black-majority district.

In March, the three judges who had struck down Mace’s district issued an order that allows this year’s election to proceed using the state’s preferred map.

Harvard grads chant ‘Free Palestine,’ leave ceremony

A board decision to bar 13 students from receiving diplomas because of protests draws criticism.

By STEVE LeBLANC

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Hundreds of students in graduation robes walked out of the Harvard commencement on Thursday chanting “Free, Free Palestine” after weeks of protests on campus and a day after the school announced that 13 students who participated in a protest encampment would not be able to receive diplomas alongside their classmates.



CHARLES KRUPA Associated Press

GRADUATES chant amid a walkout at the Harvard commencement in Cambridge, Mass. Those in a protest encampment called for a cease-fire in Gaza.

principles,” she said. “The students had spoken. The faculty had spoken. Harvard, do you hear us?”

Those in the encampment had called for a cease-fire in Gaza and for Harvard to divest from companies that support the war.

Commencement speaker Maria Ressa, a journalist and advocate for freedom of the press, told the graduates that “you don’t know who you are until you’re tested, until you fight for what you believe in. Because that defines who you are.”

“The campus protests are testing everyone in America. Protests are healthy. They shouldn’t be violent. They shouldn’t be silenced,” she said.

Also on Thursday, the leaders of Northwestern University and Rutgers University were expected to testify at a House Committee on Education and the Workforce hearing about conces-

sions they gave to pro-Palestinian protesters to end demonstrations on their campus. The chancellor of UCLA also was scheduled to appear at the latest in a series of hearings looking into how colleges have responded to the protests and allegations of antisemitism.

The decision by Harvard’s top governing board follows a recommendation Monday by faculty members to allow the 13 to receive their degrees despite their participation in the encampment.

However, Harvard’s governing board, the Harvard Corp., said that each of 13 have been found to have violated the university’s policies by their conduct during the encampment protest.

“In coming to this determination, we note that the express provisions of the Harvard College Student Handbook state that students who are not in good standing are not eligible for

degrees,” the corporation said in a written statement.

The statement left open the possibility of an appeals process saying the corporation understands “that the inability to graduate is consequential for students and their families” and supports the Faculty of Arts and Sciences’ intention to provide an expedited review of requests for appeal.

“We care deeply about every member of our community — students, faculty, staff, researchers, and alumni — and we have chosen a path forward that accords with our responsibilities and reaffirms a process for our students to receive prompt and fair review,” the statement added.

At Drexel University in Philadelphia, protesters packed up their belongings and left a pro-Palestinian encampment Thursday after the school announced a decision to have police clear

the encampment. A wave of pro-Palestinian tent encampments on campuses has led to more than 3,000 arrests nationwide.

Supporters of the students said the decision not to allow them to receive degrees at commencement violated a May 14 agreement between interim President Alan Garber and the Harvard Out of Occupied Palestine coalition that would have allowed the students to graduate.

Protesters against the war between Israel and Hamas voluntarily dismantled their tents after they said university officials agreed to discuss their questions about the endowment, bringing a peaceful end to the kinds of demonstrations that were broken up by police on other campuses.

The group issued a statement late Wednesday saying the decision jeopardizes the postgraduation lives of the 13 students.

“By rejecting a democratic faculty vote, the Corporation has proved itself to be a wholly illegitimate body, and Garber an illegitimate president, accountable to no one at the university,” the group said.

“Today’s actions have plunged the university even further into a crisis of legitimacy and governance, which will have major repercussions for Harvard in the coming months and years,” the group said.

There was a noticeable presence of police officers around the campus Thursday mixing with soon-to-be graduates, their families and sidewalk flower sellers.

LeBlanc writes for the Associated Press.

Los Angeles Times

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Vegas growing as an outdoors destination

[Vegas, from A1] no safety equipment of any kind — and completing the ascent in just under four hours, a new speed record for the route.

In early May, as light from the rising desert sun seemed to set fire to the towering cliffs of Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area just west of Las Vegas, Honnold pulled up in his electric truck ready to sprint up another sheer rock face. This one, known as the Rainbow Wall, rose about 1,000 feet above the desert floor.

Honnold, 38, who is of medium height and build and graying slightly at the temples, was dressed in a T-shirt, shorts and running shoes. At first glance, there was little to set him apart from a dozen or so other hikers and climbers lined up to enter the park at 6 a.m.

But then he tossed a small pack over his shoulder and started moving, eager to cover several miles of brush and boulder-strewn landscape between him and the base of the climb before the day got too hot. His small entourage, which included a climbing partner and two Times journalists, struggled to keep up.

“Honestly, I would say Las Vegas is better than any of the other cities in the country that have a reputation for being outdoorsy,” Honnold said. “People go to Denver because they say they want to be near the outdoors. But it’s at least an hour’s drive away from the real mountains.

“In Vegas, you can live in the middle of suburbia and be 15 minutes from trailheads where you can be completely alone and feel like you’re gonna die,” he said as two of his companions hunched over and gasped for breath.

What sets Vegas apart is the unexpected geographic diversity, making world-class climbing easily accessible year-round. In the winter, there are the endless routes in Red Rock, the canyon that begins just beyond the suburbs. Its sandstone walls start at about 3,000-foot elevation, which means they’re low enough to remain warm and pleasant even in December and January.

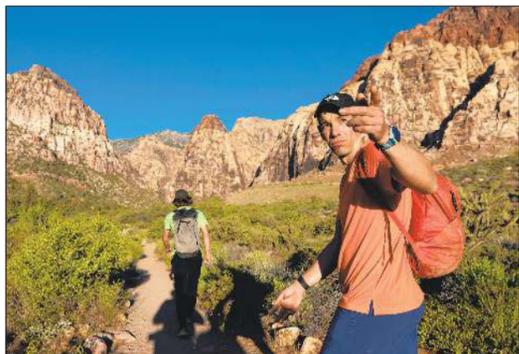
When spring and summer roll around, and the valley becomes a furnace, 12,000-foot Mt. Charleston is less than an hour’s drive away and the upper reaches can be 30 degrees cooler. There, towering limestone walls offer some of the toughest technical climbs in the world, and there are enough routes to keep a professional climber busy for a lifetime, Honnold said.

Even Yosemite, long regarded as mecca for rock climbers from all corners of the globe, where Honnold and so many other professionals made their reputations, can’t match that.

“Yosemite is a world destination in the spring and fall,” Honnold said. “But in the summer, it’s way too hot and way too crowded.” And in the winter, at 4,000 feet and directly exposed to Pa-



EMILY HARRINGTON, a five-time U.S. national champion in sport climbing, lives outside Las Vegas with son Aaro and her husband.



FAMED CLIMBER Alex Honnold, right, and hiking partner Joey head to the Rainbow Wall in Las Vegas.

cific storms, “it’s too wintry.”

And even when the weather is good, day-to-day life for climbers in Yosemite looks more romantic in old documentary films, and on Instagram, than it is in real life. Routes on its biggest and most famous walls, El Capitan and Half Dome, were pioneered by mostly unemployed self-proclaimed “dirtbag” climbers in the late 1950s and early 1960s, who built a fierce and defiant counterculture in the nearby campgrounds.

Among them was Yvon Chouinard, a tinkerer whose small climbing gear business grew into the billion-dollar retailer Patagonia, but who spent years living hand to mouth with fellow climbers in tents and out of their cars. He has told more than one interviewer that, at times during his early climbing days, he was so broke he subsisted on canned cat food because “it was better than dog food.”

That underlying ethos had mellowed a bit, but still existed when Honnold first drove the family minivan

down from Sacramento in the early 2000s. He was still living in a van in 2017 when he made the career-defining climb of El Capitan.

But ask anyone who has done it for long and they’ll tell you, van life gets old, even in a place as beautiful as Yosemite.

Emily Harrington, a five-time U.S. national champion in sport climbing and one of Honnold’s good friends, knows it all too well.

“Yosemite is just a hard place to exist,” she said. You spend all day pushing yourself to mental and physical exhaustion on the climbing walls, but there’s no rest when you come down. You have to find a place to camp, or park the van, or drive the van on long, crowded, windy roads to find a place outside the park. And even when you find a place, you’re still stuck in a van.

“It’s quite stressful,” Harrington said.

At 37, Harrington says climbers of her generation are looking to settle down. She and her husband, fellow climber Adrian Ballinger, re-

cently had a son, which added real urgency to their quest.

That’s why they bought a place in Vegas not far from Honnold, his wife and their two young kids.

Harrington’s joy and relief are palpable as she lists the upsides of the new arrangement. “I can go out, drive five minutes to the trailhead, climb big routes all day, and then come back to my house and my kid and put him to bed, and I don’t have to live in a van!”

Hot showers. Soft beds. Great food. She rattled off about half a dozen of her favorite restaurants that are only a few minutes away. “It’s just so nice,” she said.

Jonathan Siegrist, 38, who is regarded as one of the world’s greatest technical climbers, couldn’t agree more.

While Honnold was battling the Rainbow Wall and nearly 90-degree heat in Red Rock last week, Siegrist and his wife, Shaina Savoy, huddled in puffy jackets between pitches on the cool limestone of nearby Mt. Charleston.

Siegrist is unassuming when you first meet him: 5-foot-6, a firm handshake, a friendly smile. But then he pulls off his warm outer layer and starts climbing. Supporting his entire body with just his fingertips and the points of his toes on microscopic holds, he ascends the wall in precise choreographed movements, his progress as fluid and inevitable as flowing lava.

Despite the intense effort, which would leave most people gasping and single-minded, Siegrist had the aerobic and mental capacity to carry on a normal conver-

sation.

He lived in his truck, off and on, for seven years. He settled down in Vegas because the climbing is better than anywhere else in the country and because the cost of living is much more reasonable than trendier climbing spots like his hometown of Boulder, Colo.

Even so, he struggles to convince young climbers, who are still trying to make names for themselves, that Vegas is the place to be.

“This city still has a really bad reputation in the outdoor community,” he said. “A lot of outdoor people would never stoop so low as to walk into a casino and enjoy themselves, or shop at a strip mall. That’s a huge contributing factor as to why Vegas has stayed under the radar.”

But it’s actually one of the perks, he said.

Fashionable mountain towns are full of people trying to fit in, Siegrist said, to conform to a pretty strict outdoorsy aesthetic. They tend to look, dress and think the same way.

Freedom from that is one of the things he loves about Vegas.

“I’m not just talking about racial diversity. I’m talking about economic diversity, diversity of ideas and diversity of interests,” he said. On rest days, when he’s not climbing, “I can be a totally different version of myself.”

The difference can show in something as simple as walking his dogs off leash. If he tries that in Boulder, where his parents still live, “I’ll get yelled at by, like, six people in the first 30 seconds, even though the dogs are really obedient,” he said.

In Vegas, “nobody gives a s— what your dogs are doing as long as they’re not hurting anyone.”

Honnold, whose parents were teachers and who supports strong public services, confessed he, too, was pleasantly surprised by the lower cost of living in Nevada.

“I mean, there’s no income tax! And the house was so cheap, it nearly paid for itself in tax savings,” he said. All those years on the road, living in vans, he had listed his mom’s house in Sacramento as his address.

“That was crazy,” he said. “I was like, why didn’t I move to Vegas sooner?”

The Vegas airport is another huge draw for people whose profession demands they travel the world in search of adventure. It’s 20 minutes from Honnold’s house, the security lines are usually a breeze and, because of all the tourists, it has direct flights almost anywhere you’d want to go.

One day, when he was splitting time between training and promoting “Free Solo,” he climbed a 2,000-foot wall in the morning, showered at home, then caught a noon flight to London.

“Where else in the world can you do that?” he asked.

But what about that other side of Vegas, the Strip? Honnold said he and his wife go there once or twice a year to catch a show and otherwise avoid it as much as possible.

Does he ever sit down at a slot machine and start pulling the lever?

“If a game is designed for you to lose, why play?” he asked. “I’ve actually never tried it. I like to joke that I only gamble with my life.”

Louisiana lawmakers OK restricting abortion pill access

A first-of-its-kind bill would classify the two affected drugs as controlled and dangerous substances.

By SARA CLINE

BATON ROUGE, La. — Two abortion-inducing drugs could soon be reclassified as controlled and dangerous substances in Louisiana under a first-of-its-kind bill that received final legislative passage Thursday and is expected to be signed into law by the governor.

Supporters of the reclassification of mifepristone and misoprostol, commonly known as “abortion pills,” say it would protect expectant women from coerced abortions. Numerous doctors, meanwhile, have said it will make it harder for them to prescribe the medicines that they use for other important reproductive healthcare needs, and could delay treatment.

Passage of the bill comes as abortion rights advocates and abortion opponents await a final decision from

the U.S. Supreme Court on an effort to restrict access to mifepristone. The justices did not appear ready to limit access to the drug on the day they heard arguments.

The GOP-dominated Legislature’s push to reclassify mifepristone and misoprostol could possibly open the door for other Republican states with abortion bans that are seeking tighter restrictions on the drugs. Louisiana currently has a near-total abortion ban in place, applying to surgical and medical abortions.

Current Louisiana law already requires a prescription for both drugs and makes it a crime to use them to induce an abortion in most cases. The bill would make it harder to obtain the pills by placing it on the list of Schedule IV drugs under the state’s Uniform Controlled Dangerous Substances Law.

The classification would require doctors to have a specific license to prescribe the drugs, which would be stored in certain facilities that in some cases could end up being located far from rural clinics. Knowingly possessing the drugs without a

valid prescription would carry a punishment including hefty fines and jail time.

More than 200 doctors in the state signed a letter to lawmakers warning that it could produce a “barrier to physicians’ ease of prescribing appropriate treatment” and cause unnecessary fear and confusion among patients and doctors. The physicians warn that any delay to obtaining the drugs could lead to worsening outcomes in a state that has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the country.

“This goes too far. We have not properly vetted this with the healthcare community and I believe it’s going to lead to further harm down the road,” said state Sen. Royce Duplessis, a Democrat who opposes the measure. “There’s a reason we rank at the bottom in terms of maternal health outcomes, and this is why.”

Supporters say people would be prevented from unlawfully using the pills, though language in the bill appears to carve out protections for pregnant women who obtain the drug without a prescription for their own consumption.

The reclassification of the two drugs in Louisiana is an amendment to a bill originating in the Senate that would create the crime of “coerced criminal abortion by means of fraud.” The sister of Republican state Sen. Thomas Pressly, who was author of the bill, has shared her own story, of her husband slipping her abortion-inducing drugs without her knowledge or consent.

“The purpose of bringing this legislation is certainly not to prevent these drugs from being used for legitimate health care purposes,” Sen. Pressley said. “I am simply trying to put safeguards and guardrails in place to keep bad actors from getting these medications.”

The Senate voted 29 to 7, mainly along party lines, to pass the legislation. In the 39-person Senate there are only five women, all of whom voted in favor of the bill.

In addition to inducing abortions, mifepristone and misoprostol have other common uses, such as treating miscarriages, inducing labor and stopping hemorrhaging.

Mifepristone was approved by the U.S. Food and

Drug Administration in 2000 after federal regulators deemed it safe and effective for ending early pregnancies. It’s used in combination with misoprostol, which the FDA has separately approved to treat stomach ulcers.

The drugs are not classified as controlled substances by the federal government because regulators do not view them as carrying a significant risk of misuse. The federal Controlled Substances Act restricts the use and distribution of prescription medications such as opioids, amphetamines, sleeping aids and other drugs that carry the risk of addiction and overdose.

Abortion opponents and conservative Republicans inside and outside the state have applauded the Louisiana bill.

Conversely, the move has been strongly criticized by Democrats, including Vice President Kamala Harris, who in a social media post described it as “absolutely unconscionable.”

The Louisiana legislation now heads to the desk of conservative Republican Gov. Jeff Landry.

The governor, who

was backed by former President Trump during last year’s gubernatorial election, has indicated his support for the measure, remarking in a recent post on social media platform X, “You know you’re doing something right when @KamalaHarris criticizes you.”

Landry’s office did not respond to an emailed request for comment.

A recent survey found that thousands of women in states with abortion bans or restrictions are receiving abortion pills in the mail from states that have laws protecting prescribers. The survey did not specify how many of those cases were in Louisiana.

The only exceptions to the ban are if there is substantial risk of death or impairment to the woman if she continues the pregnancy or in the case of “medically futile” pregnancies, when the fetus has a fatal abnormality.

Currently, 14 states are enforcing bans on abortion at all stages of pregnancy, with limited exceptions.

Cline writes for the Associated Press.

Hearing puts UCLA chief on defense

[Antisemitism, from A1] plinary processes that were prompted by complaints that pro-Palestinian protesters had prevented some Jewish students from accessing parts of campus.

Questions over Block's leadership catapulted to the national stage just two months shy of his departure from the chancellor role.

The hearing by the GOP-led House Committee on Education and the Workforce focused on antisemitism on U.S. campuses. In tense exchanges, Republicans largely targeted Northwestern President Michael Schill and, to a lesser extent, Rutgers President Jonathan Holloway. Both leaders have come to agreements with students to take down pro-Palestinian encampments.

Democrats, who make up 20 of the 44 members of the committee, criticized Republicans as not being serious in their pursuit to combat antisemitism. Members of the House minority have called the hearings an attempt by Republicans to use campus unrest for political gain, pointing out that no similar hearings have been convened on anti-Muslim or anti-Arab hatred, which have also increased.

Four Californians sit on the committee — Republican Reps. Michelle Steel and Kevin Kiley and Democratic Reps. Mark Takano and Mark DeSaulnier.

Republicans on the panel accused Schill and Holloway of “giving in” to protesters, who — like those at UCLA — had urged their universities to divest their endowments from weapons companies and ties to Israel. Each university, including UCLA, has rejected the call.

Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.) questioned Schill on allegations of assault and stalking of Jewish students on campus. Schill said the university “believes in due process” but that he did not have a timeline to offer on the “lots of investigations” that are underway.

Schill and Holloway defended their universities' pacts with protesters. Schill said the agreement at Northwestern gave students “the ability to feel safe on campus.” Holloway shot back at Republicans who labeled protesters as “pro-Hamas.”

“They were not, as some have characterized them, terrorists. They were our students,” Holloway said.

The hearing did not provoke explosive moments like



MICHAELA A. MCCOY Getty Images

GENE BLOCK, chancellor of UCLA, testified Thursday alongside other university presidents on how they've handled campus tensions that have grown since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack and Israel's retaliation in Gaza.

those that unfolded in December, when the committee's first hearing contributed to the resignations of the presidents of Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania. During that testimony, university leaders had stumbled when asked how their campuses would handle calls for the genocide of Jews.

In his opening remarks, Block said that, “with the benefit of hindsight,” UCLA should have acted to “immediately remove” a campus pro-Palestinian encampment “if and when the safety of our community was put at risk.”

Block, who is Jewish, said that “as a public university, UCLA is subject to a dual legal mandate: We have a legal obligation under the 1st Amendment to protect free speech on campus, as well as a legal obligation under federal law to protect students from discrimination and harassment. This balance is not always easy to achieve.”

The chancellor faced one of his toughest moments when questioned by Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) about the night of violence on April 30 at the UCLA encampment. Omar said the images from UCLA were “appalling,” but even worse was

“that it was completely preventable.”

The Democratic congresswoman told him multiple times that he should be “ashamed” for the injuries that took place under his watch.

“You, the UCLA leadership and law enforcement stood by for hours as the mob of agitators gathered near the encampment with a clear intention to cause violence,” she said. “I would like to know if you are truly committed to keeping your students safe. How did you fail these students at many critical points where you could've intervened?”

“I'm sorry, but I reject the premise,” Block replied after thanking Omar for the question. He said that UCLA is working with the Los Angeles Police Department to identify attackers, and that the university had “tried to get police there as quickly as possible.”

Block was also asked about the current protests. “There are no encampments,” he said shortly before 8 a.m. — just as new encampment went up outside Kerckhoff Hall at UCLA.

Amid a show of police in riot gear, the small camp was dismantled by 2 p.m.

The camp was timed to

coincide with Block's testimony, as was an announcement that unionized UCLA academic workers would strike Tuesday, saying the university had violated their rights to free speech when the large encampment was dismantled by police on May 2 and about 200 people were arrested.

Republicans brought up a viral video and news reports about Jewish students who complained that UCLA activists had set up checkpoints restricting access to the encampment area after it went up on April 25.

Some have told The Times that they felt intimidated as activists blocked pathways, while other Jewish students who helped set up the encampment argued that the camp was not antisemitic, but anti-Zionist.

“Why did you fail to immediately clear these checkpoints?” committee Chair Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) asked Block.

Block said he issued instructions to staff to make sure that all the students could freely pass without obstruction and then sent out a campus-wide memo on April 30, telling students that the university would not tolerate the blocking of

access to parts of campus.

“Did it stop as a result of what you said?” Foxx asked.

“I believe it did,” he said.

He was later questioned again on the matter by California's Rep. Kevin Kiley (R-Rocklin).

Foxx also asked the school presidents how many students had been suspended or expelled since Oct. 7 over antisemitic comments. Block said there are more than 100 active investigations into allegations of antisemitism as well as Islamophobia at UCLA.

The hearing also addressed issues raised before the spring encampments.

Rep. Aaron Bean (R-Fla.) asked Block about an incident reported in November when a UCLA professor and her husband attended a counterprotest during a pro-Palestinian rally. The couple, who wore pro-Israel shirts, said they were threatened with violence. The next day, they said, a student from the pro-Palestinian rally attempted to visit the husband at his office.

“All this was reported to you and other UCLA officials, including the identity of who's doing it,” Bean said to Block. “What disciplinary actions did UCLA take in response?”

“We immediately alerted the police and the police did an investigation,” Block said. “I don't know if that's ongoing or not, but police were involved immediately in this incident.”

Rep. Michelle Steel (R-Seal Beach) asked Block whether he had disciplined a professor who allegedly offered extra credit to students who protested. Block said he wasn't aware of that incident. She also asked whether he was investigating a report that a lecturer had led first-year medical students in a “Free Palestine” chant. Block replied that the university was investigating the allegation but that he did not have more details.

The top Democrat on the committee, Rep. Robert C. Scott of Virginia, said in his opening remarks that the hearing was the wrong way to address a real problem.

“Here we are, for the fifth time in six months, holding another hearing to complain about the problem of antisemitism, but no work is being done to find a meaningful solution to address animus on college campuses,” he said. “Complaining about the problem is not a solution.”

About 40 graduate students and faculty from UCLA, Rutgers and Northwestern showed up to the hearing, packing the hallway outside. They included John Branstetter, a UCLA lecturer in the political science department, who said he was among faculty members arrested at the camp.

“This committee is completely missing the point,” he said. “We're trying to set the record straight.”

Branstetter said he watched as students he had taught for years were sprayed in the eyes and shot with beanbags. Police threw him to the ground, he said, giving him a bloody knee and bruises. He had visible handcuff marks and said he was still experiencing wrist pain. He said Block should resign.

“The suppression of civil rights came at the hands of Gene Block,” he said. “His only answer to the question of ‘How do you keep students safe?’ is to arrest them. I don't feel safe on campus having him as chancellor.”

Block announced last year that he would step down at the end of July after a 17-year career at UCLA. A biologist, he plans to return to teaching and research.

Four takeaways from chancellor's Capitol Hill testimony

Official acknowledges errors in how UCLA handled the antiwar protests and issues of campus antisemitism.

BY JENNY JARVIE

UCLA Chancellor Gene Block found himself in the nation's culture wars hot seat Thursday, interrogated by members of Congress about his handling of complaints of campus antisemitism, amid student protests over the Israel-Hamas war.

For Republican Congress members, the hearing organized by the GOP-led House Committee on Education and the Workforce was a chance to present UCLA as exhibit A in how not to deal with protests.

Almost as soon as activists set up a Palestinian solidarity encampment April 25, Jewish students and faculty complained that demonstrators established checkpoints restricting access to many students, at times singling out students they identified as Zionists.

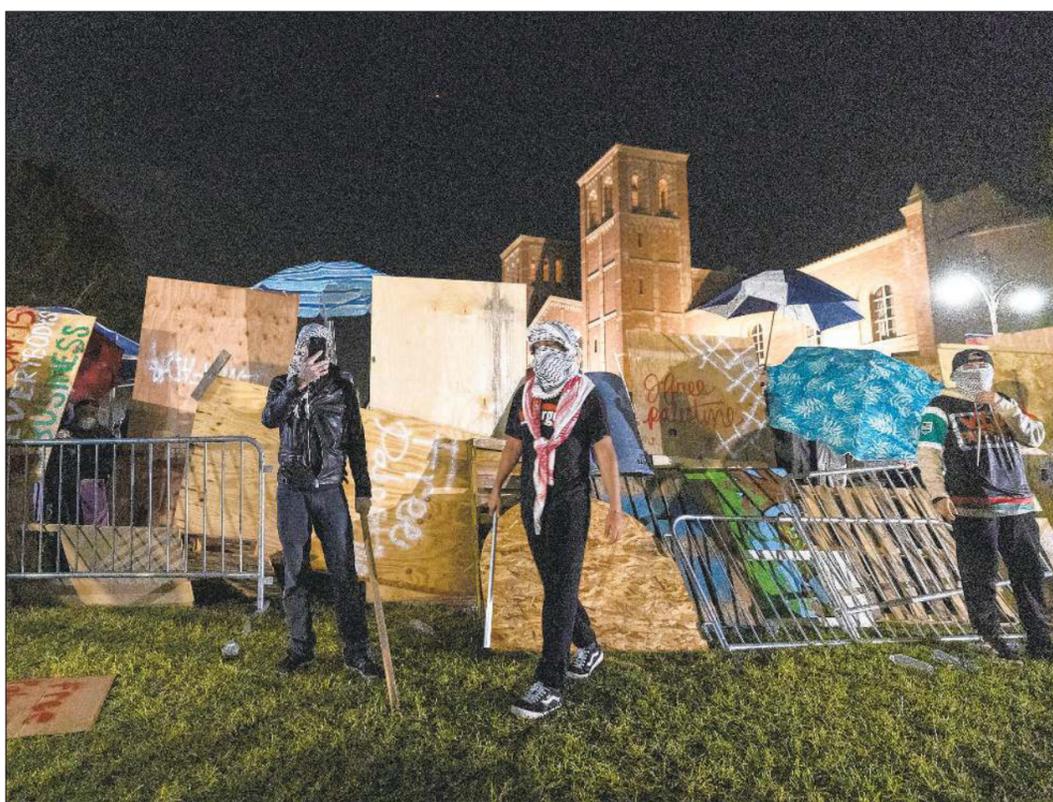
But other Jewish students helped set up the camp, arguing it was not antisemitic but anti-Zionist.

After a mob of pro-Israeli counterprotesters attacked the encampment April 30, it was dismantled May 2, with law enforcement arresting more than 200 people.

Here are some key takeaways from the hearing:

■ **Block said he was late in shutting down the camp.**

In his opening testimony, Block conceded that UCLA made errors in judgment. The encampment, he said, “disrupted normal ac-



ETIENNE LAURENT AFP/Getty Images

PRO-PALESTINIAN activists rebuild a barricade amid violent clashes May 1 at UCLA. On Thursday, Chancellor Gene Block didn't explain why the university didn't take action as outside agitators gathered on campus.

cess to some classes” and “impeded our educational mission.”

“With the benefit of hindsight,” he said, “we should have been prepared to immediately remove the encampment if and when the safety of our community was put at risk.”

■ **He was vague about what he'd do differently.**

Block did not specify what UCLA should have done to prevent discrimination or violence as protests ramped up. And he did

not explain why the university did not take action as students reported discrimination from protesters and outside agitators gathered on campus.

“Why did you fail to immediately clear these checkpoints?” asked Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.), the committee chair.

Block said he instructed staff to make sure all students could freely pass without obstruction and then sent out a campuswide memo April 30, declaring that the encampment was

“unlawful.”

Striking a mild, noncombative approach throughout, Block did not say what campus discipline had been — or would be — meted out to students who violated UCLA rules.

Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) criticized UCLA leaders for standing by for hours as a “mob of agitators” gathered near the encampment.

“This happened in front of your eyes on your campus, and it was livestreamed for the whole world to see,”

Omar said. “How did you fail these students at many critical points where you could have intervened?”

Block said he rejected the premise of the question.

“How can you reject the premise?” Omar said. “Are these pictures lying? Are any of these people in jail?”

Block said the Los Angeles Police Department was working to identify the attackers.

“It's been over a month,” Omar said, cutting him off.

■ **Protesters in the block-**

ade haven't been disciplined.

Rep. Kevin Kiley, a California Republican, asked Block whether physically obstructing students from entering campus based on their race, ethnicity or religion is an expellable offense. “There is a disciplinary process,” Block said. “It could be.”

Kiley played a viral video showing UCLA protesters blocking a student, Eli Tsives, from passing a checkpoint.

“Were those students who formed blockade?” Kiley said. “Were they disciplined?”

Block said he didn't know, repeating that he sent out a memo April 30.

“I'm going to take that as a no,” Kiley said. “There's been no consequence whatsoever?”

“I did not say that,” Block said. “This is being investigated, and we'll see what happens with the disciplinary process.”

■ **Block said campus antisemitism is a problem.**

Block, who is Jewish and has family members who died in the Holocaust, said UCLA has a problem with antisemitism.

“I am fully aware that many of our Jewish students have had to confront rhetoric and images on campus that any reasonable person would find repugnant,” Block said in his opening statement. “Trust me, I understand their pain.”

But the chancellor also rebutted the Republican narrative that UCLA was awash in antisemitism.

“I don't believe we are a hotbed of antisemitism,” Block said. “I think we've had incidents of it that are disturbing we're trying to address.”

Amid rising tensions, a new UCLA camp

[UCLA, from A1]

What started as a small group of protesters setting up a few tents on the Kerckhoff patio Thursday morning had grown to several hundred supporters, including academic union members, outside the encampment by the afternoon.

Police pushed back the crowd, which eventually retreated to another area of campus near Murphy Hall, and tore down the encampment and wood pallets surrounding it.

It was not clear whether any arrests were made or anyone was injured. Video showed protesters marching through Dodd Hall chanting "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free."

Sebastian Cazares, a UCLA grad student and a local education and civil rights organizer, said the new encampment was set up to show that "police repression could not stop this movement."

"Despite the fact that this is a peaceful movement, they're still learning no lessons and sending out militarized law enforcement in response," he said.

Doehr said he hoped the strike would prompt the university to "negotiate in good faith with the movement for divestment, rather than calling the police on students every time they protest."

According to the union, dozens of academic workers are still facing criminal charges, disciplinary action or both. Many are barred from campus, the union said, including campus housing and classes they may teach or attend.

Hours before police arrived, campus officials had warned those in the encampment to disperse or face potential disciplinary and legal action.

"Law enforcement is prepared to arrest individuals, in accordance with applicable law," administrators wrote in a letter to protesters.

"We remain committed to supporting the safety and well-being of Bruins, supporting the free expression



PRO-PALESTINIAN demonstrators fill Dodd Hall on Thursday on the UCLA campus. Police in riot gear arrived in the afternoon in response to a new pro-Palestinian encampment that was erected hours earlier.

JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

rights of our community, and minimizing disruption to our teaching and learning mission."

By the afternoon, a handful of students in kaffiyehs sat outside the north end of the encampment, sharing drinks and snacks. They were there to show support for the protesters, one said.

A small crowd gathered on the south end of the encampment, some holding signs that said "UAW rank & file workers for Palestine." Protesters marched in a circle outside the nearby Mathematical Sciences Building, chanting "free Palestine."

Police tape blocked off the entrance to the encampment and officers prevented people from entering the area.

At one point, protesters surged past the police tape to deliver water to the site. Classes held in the buildings

surrounding the encampment were shifted online.

Administrative Vice Chancellor Michael Beck and Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Safety Rick Braziel said in a statement that the "demonstrators' activities — including erecting barricades, establishing fortifications, and blocking access to parts of the campus and buildings — are disrupting campus operations."

The police response to the encampment came on the same day that UCLA Chancellor Gene Block, who has led the university amid months of tense protests over the Israel-Hamas war, testified before a congressional hearing on campus antisemitism.

Dana Kopel, a second-year PhD student at UCLA who is a supporter of Palestinian solidarity actions on campus, said the con-

gressional inquiry is "part of the larger process in the U.S. to frame antisemitism as a means to suppress student protest and the justification for the violent suppression of student protests at UCLA and elsewhere."

Some Jewish students on campus said they felt intimidated by the initial encampment as protesters scrawled graffiti such as "Death 2 Zionism" on campus buildings and blocked access. The phrase "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," which is frequently used at protests, has also been seen as antisemitic among certain groups, including the Anti-Defamation League.

Kopel said students involved in the protests have "remained steadfast" in their support for Palestinians and their goal to end the bloodshed in Gaza.

"So many of these students faced such intense violence just a few weeks ago," Kopel said. "I think that's why there's a real effort to communicate that the risks of this are high. The university has made it clear and the government has made it clear that they want to suppress the solidarity movement at all costs."

In early May, more than 200 people were arrested on the UCLA campus as police dismantled tents and pushed out protesters in a clash that lasted hours.

The police operation capped two days of upheaval on the campus that began when school officials declared the encampment "unlawful" and continued when a group of pro-Israel counterprotesters attacked the camp, with police taking hours to stop the violence.

UCLA officials have been

sharply criticized over their handling of the situation. UCLA Police Chief John Thomas on Wednesday was removed from his post and reassigned over security failures that led to violence at the encampment.

Thomas, who did not return phone calls this week seeking comment, defended his actions in a previous interview and said he did the best he could.

UCLA, like other universities across the country, has emerged as a hotbed of pro-Palestinian activism in recent months.

Students, faculty and staff have erected makeshift camps and demanded an end to Israel's war in the Gaza Strip and that their universities divest from companies that sell weapons or services to Israel.

Several camps, including one at Cal State Los Angeles, remain active. Others, including one at USC and another at UC Irvine, have been dismantled by police in recent weeks.

Union leaders have demanded protection for free speech on campus; amnesty for all academic employees, students, student groups, faculty and staff who face disciplinary action or arrest due to participation in protests; and divestment by the university from "weapons manufacturers, military contractors and companies profiting from Israel's war on Gaza."

In response, the university has asked the state labor board to seek a court injunction to halt the strike, contending that the action is illegal.

UCLA graduate student and elected union leader Anny Vitoria Winnett said it's essential that workers go on strike to stand up for a safe environment and free speech.

"There is no existential threat larger for a union than not being able to speak our mind and protest," she said.

Times staff writers Jaweed Kaleem, Richard Winton and Teresa Watanabe contributed to this report.

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BUSINESS

Would breaking up Live Nation cut ticket costs?

U.S. lawsuit alleges anticompetitive practices. But there's also the problem of gouging by scalpers.

BY WENDY LEE

The U.S. Department of Justice's effort to break up Live Nation and Ticketmaster has been a long time coming, following years of complaints from concertgoers who say they've been squeezed by exorbitant prices and hidden fees when trying to buy passes to see Taylor Swift, Beyoncé and other music megastars.

Ever since the government cleared the merger of concert promoter Live Nation and ticket seller Ticketmaster in 2010, there have been demands from consumer advocates to cleave them. The Justice Department argues that the combination is a monopoly that has resulted in harm for music fans and has clamped down competition in the multibillion-dollar live music market.

Live Nation says the arguments are off-base and will probably fail in court. Either way, it will take a long time for the case to wind through the legal system.

Why is the government suing Live Nation?

The Justice Department has raised concerns that Live Nation and Ticketmaster have retaliated against competitors and new entrants and locked out competition with exclusionary contracts.

"The result is that fans pay more in fees, artists



TAYLOR SWIFT performs in Buenos Aires in 2023 as part of her Eras tour. Tickets to her shows often are resold for much higher than face value.

have fewer opportunities to play concerts, smaller promoters get squeezed out, and venues have fewer real choices for ticketing services," said Atty. Gen. Merrick B. Garland. "It is time to break up Live Nation-Ticketmaster."

Beverly Hills-based Live Nation, the world's largest concert company, has long been a target for government scrutiny.

When the U.S. approved the 2010 merger, it did so after the companies agreed to a settlement meant to ensure fair competition in the ticketing marketplace and prohibit Live Nation from retaliating against venue owners that decided to defect to competitors. The consent decree was extended and amended in 2019.

But this time, the government is going hard at the company. In its Thursday

lawsuit, the U.S. accused Live Nation of various anticompetitive practices and said the company uses its market dominance to impose fees on consumers and pressure artists to use its services.

The suit comes amid a wave of antitrust actions from the Biden administration, which has sought to curb the power of conglomerates and Big Tech. The U.S. government has filed other cases against tech giants including Apple, Amazon and Google, taking them to task for their alleged impact on competition.

Live Nation said that the lawsuit will not solve issues related to ticket prices, service fees or access to in-demand shows.

"Calling Ticketmaster a monopoly may be a PR win for the DOJ in the short term, but it will lose in court

because it ignores the basic economics of live entertainment, such as the fact that the bulk of service fees go to venues, and that competition has steadily eroded Ticketmaster's market share and profit margin," Live Nation said in a statement.

Would breaking up Live Nation lower prices?

Several industry observers who spoke to The Times expressed doubt that the lawsuit would significantly reduce prices for consumers.

Brandon Ross, an analyst at research firm Light-Shed Partners, said artists decide how much they want to charge for a tour and then the promoter buys the tour from them. Due to Live Nation's large scale, it is able to take a lower profit margin, with most of the money going back to the artist,

Ross added.

"There is an efficiency in having a large player in the industry," Ross said. "If that goes away, then that's going to come out of either the artist's take, or the artists are going to charge consumers even more."

Artists such as Swift and Bruce Springsteen are able to charge big sums for tickets because the concerts are one-time events, and some people are willing to pay. Because of supply and demand, tickets resold on the secondary market can be much higher than face value.

But James Sammataro, co-chair of Pryor Cashman's music group, said he believes the lawsuit could address issues such as excess ticketing fees.

"What's really harming the consumer is all these excess fees and the restrictions on getting the tickets," Sammataro said. "For most artists, these 'increased prices' aren't really benefiting the artists. In many cases, it's alienating their core ticket buyers and their core audience."

There is a larger issue in the music industry of concert tickets being bought at face value by scalpers and resold on secondary markets for astronomical prices.

It's leading to two classes of music fans: those who can afford to pony up and those who can't.

Meanwhile, many promoters left the industry after getting clobbered by the pandemic, which shut down or restricted many live events. Some smaller music artists have also been hurt by the lack of competition among promoters and are not given opportunities to play at larger venues, Sam-

mataro said.

"The overall effect is that it leads to a very tilted playing field where it's difficult for promoters to compete," Sammataro said. "And when you have a lack of competition, essentially like the basis of predatory pricing, ultimately there's going to be long term gouging."

Could the company actually be broken up?

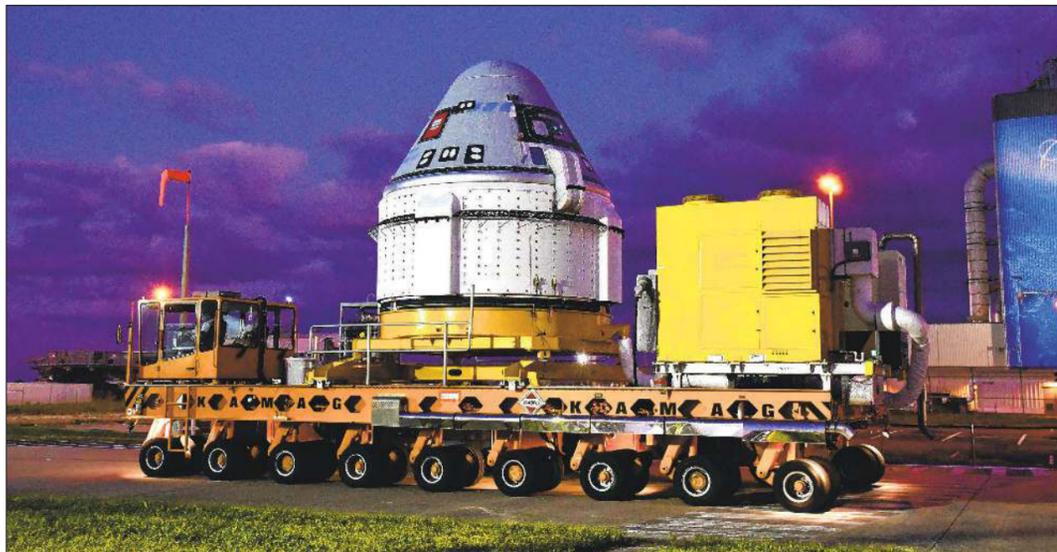
Anything is possible, but there is one thing everyone agrees on: This legal battle will be a long fight.

"Antitrust litigation can be long and protracted," said Eric Enson, an antitrust partner at Crowell & Moring. "I expect that this will be a matter of years and not months."

Music industry expert Bill Werde, who runs the music business program at Syracuse University, cautioned that splitting up such a large enterprise wouldn't be easy, and it's unclear what the businesses would look like after being disentangled from each other more than a decade after merging.

"They make their margin in ticketing and sponsorships, so if you break up this company, ... I don't know how Live Nation the concert promotion business necessarily lives and thrives independent of this high-margin ticketing business," said Werde, who also publishes a weekly newsletter.

But even if it could lose, there are reasons the government might be motivated to go after the company in an election year. As Werde and other experts were quick to point out, there's nothing that unites people like hating Ticketmaster.



THE LAUNCH of the Starliner spacecraft, seen in 2019 in Cape Canaveral, Fla., has been delayed multiple times. Boeing is years behind SpaceX in launching a crewed capsule to service the International Space Station.

Boeing reschedules Starliner launch for June 1 after helium leak

BY LAURENCE DARMIENTO

The launch of Boeing's Starliner capsule, first delayed due to a balky rocket valve and later because of a helium leak, is now set for June 1.

The original May 6 launch was scuttled hours before takeoff because of a malfunctioning valve on the Atlas V rocket that would send the spacecraft to the International Space Station. It was rescheduled for May 10 and then a second

time for May 17, when it was decided to replace the valve.

All systems seemed good until yet another problem cropped up, this time with the capsule. A helium leak was detected coming from the spacecraft's propulsion system.

After two more delays, officials with NASA, Boeing and United Launch Alliance, the rocket maker, said earlier this week that the flight would be postponed indefinitely — but now NASA is aiming for a June 1 launch.

"It has been important that we take our time to understand all the complexities of each issue," said Steve Stich, manager of NASA's Commercial Crew Program.

NASA said late Wednesday that the June 1 launch is set for 9:25 a.m. Pacific time. If that date is not met, the Starliner could launch the next day, June 5 or June 6.

The delays are particularly nettlesome for the Arlington, Va., aerospace giant because it's years behind SpaceX in launching a crewed capsule to service the space station.

Both companies were given multibillion-dollar contracts in 2014 to develop the craft, and since 2020 Elon Musk's Hawthorne company has ferried eight operations crews to the base — while Boeing has managed only two unmanned flights.

The companies were chosen by NASA after the agency had to rely on the Russian program to send U.S. astronauts to the station when the space shuttle program was ended in 2011.

Boeing has reportedly had to eat \$1.5 billion in Starliner cost overruns, and it can ill afford a failure with astronauts aboard, especially after the two crashes of its 737 Max 8 jets and a door plug blowout during a 737 Max 9 flight this year to Ontario International Airport in San Bernardino County.

"Boeing has so much to prove. They're just about four years behind SpaceX," said Laura Forczyk, executive director of space industry consulting firm Astralytical. "They need to make sure they have all their ducks lined up in a row."

L.A.-based Oaktree seizes Italian soccer club after loan default

Inter Milan's majority owner, a Chinese conglomerate, failed to repay more than \$400 million in debt.

BY GIULIA MORPURGO AND IRENE GARCÍA PÉREZ

Los Angeles-based Oaktree Capital Management took ownership of Italy's Inter Milan, one of the most storied soccer clubs in Europe, after its Chinese owner defaulted on a loan.

The U.S. fund took control of the club Wednesday after conglomerate Suning Holding Group Co. failed to repay more than \$400 million, Oaktree said in an emailed statement.

The collateral backing the debt was a majority stake in the club.

"Our initial focus is operational and financial stability," Alejandro Cano, managing director and co-head of Europe for Oaktree's global opportunities strategy, said in the statement.

Oaktree said it was committed to the long-term success of the club and recognizes its responsibilities to the fans.

Inter won Italy's top domestic Serie A league this season and was runner-up in the UEFA Champions League last year. Inter's new owners look set to make



BENJAMIN PAVARD, left, and Weston McKennie jump for the ball during a Serie A soccer match between Inter Milan and Juventus in Milan in February.

changes to the club's board, bringing in more Italian and European members, according to people with knowledge of the plans.

Oaktree, a \$192-billion asset manager known for distressed debt investing, has form in taking over soccer clubs: It did so with troubled French side Stade Malherbe

Caen in 2020, and has since exited its stake. Oaktree co-founder Steve Kaplan is also an investor in Welsh team Swansea City.

This isn't the first time a creditor has taken ownership of a soccer club in Milan. In 2018, Elliott Management swapped the debt of the city's other major

team, AC Milan, into equity in the club after the previous owner defaulted on its liabilities.

For Inter, Suning had been in talks with Pacific Investment Management Co. to refinance its debt in recent weeks, but it couldn't get a deal signed before the Oaktree loan came due

Tuesday.

Suning's takeover of Inter in 2016 marked the high point of Chinese involvement in European soccer. A number of Chinese tycoons embraced a government push to transform the sport in the country by predominantly buying stakes in famous clubs in Europe. However, domestic financial struggles have led to the loss of positions in clubs including Aston Villa and Atletico Madrid.

Oaktree lent the money to Suning in 2021 to help support Inter's finances as the pandemic kept stadiums closed to the public.

Documents signed at the time and seen by Bloomberg News stated that after a default, creditors or representatives acting for them were entitled "immediately and without demand, advertisement or notice of any kind" to enforce the pledge granted by Suning, including seizing collateral if repayment isn't possible.

After the Oaktree takeover, Inter still has some outstanding liabilities, including more than \$400 million in high-yield bonds sold to institutional investors and set to mature in early 2027.

Those notes are issued by Inter Media and Communication, a unit that owns the club's broadcast and sponsorship rights.

Morpurgo and García Pérez write for Bloomberg.

Live Nation accused of being illegal monopoly

[Ticketmaster, from A1] motion, ticketing and venues. They tie those aspects of control together, and force venues to use their ticketing, artists to use their venues and retaliate when they can't tie the three together. That leads to increased prices for fans and hurts artists as well as consumers."

Live Nation released a statement in response to the suit. "The DOJ's lawsuit won't solve the issues fans care about relating to ticket prices, service fees and access to in-demand shows," the company said. "Calling Ticketmaster a monopoly may be a PR win for the DOJ in the short term, but it will lose in court because it ignores the basic economics of live entertainment."

The statement continued: "We will defend against these baseless allegations, use this opportunity to shed light on the industry, and continue to push for reforms that truly protect consumers and artists."

Live Nation and Ticketmaster have been scrutinized by the government for decades, going back to the 1990s when the rock band Pearl Jam criticized Ticketmaster in a hearing about its fees and market dominance. Complaints continued when the two firms merged in 2010, and exploded last year in a Senate hearing after the debacle around the sale of tickets for Taylor Swift's Eras tour.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) led last year's hearing on Live Nation and Ticketmaster.

"Consolidation and unlawful conduct in the ticketing market has left buyers with fewer choices and higher prices. The hidden fees, the messed-up processes, and the stranglehold



MARK J. TERRILL/Associated Press

BEVERLY HILLS-BASED Live Nation controls over 265 concert venues in North America and manages more than 400 acts, the Justice Department says.

on competition has long hurt fans," she said in a statement to The Times. "As a result, the live event entertainment experience has become increasingly out of reach for many Americans. The Justice Department is doing the right thing today by seeking to break up this monopoly that has long harmed fans, artists and venues."

Mark Lemley is the director of the Stanford Program in Law, Science and Technology, where he studies antitrust law. He said the concerns laid out in the suit have trailed the company for years.

"These were the two largest providers in the industry who locked up exclusive deals with the most valuable venues," Lemley said. "They've basically got a monopoly for many places bands want to play, and there just aren't many other

choices. The reason we don't like monopolies is not just because we want people to have choices, but because companies can raise prices and have services degrade, and we've seen exactly that with Live Nation and Ticketmaster."

The Justice Department is seeking structural remedies to break up the company because Live Nation already operates under a 2010 federal consent decree that allowed it to merge with Ticketmaster.

The Justice Department said in a 2019 statement that the agreement "permitted Live Nation to merge with Ticketmaster but prohibited the company from retaliating against concert venues for using another ticketing company, threatening concert venues or undertaking other specified actions against concert venues for 10 years." The company agreed

to extended oversight through an independent monitor through 2025.

The Justice Department updated and extended that agreement in 2019 because, in its view, "despite the prohibitions in the Final Judgment, Live Nation repeatedly and over the course of several years engaged in conduct that, in the Department's view, violated the Final Judgment."

"The original set of conditions in 2010 provided a great pathway forward," Bonta said. "The merger was conditional. They had to follow those conditions and if they didn't agree, there would be no approval. They agreed, then they violated it. That required regulators and enforcers to take steps."

Rebecca Allensworth, a legal scholar and antitrust violations expert at Vanderbilt University, said that while "antitrust courts have

for years preferred behavioral remedies to breakups, this is a rare case where a breakup is not impossible. That's because a new consent decree is going to look unattractive, given that Live Nation is allegedly not complying with the one they have."

Live Nation's business model is predicated on what it calls a "flywheel," where its vast reach across the concert industry gives it leverage to grow its most profitable businesses. The company has exclusive ticketing contracts that cover around 70% of sales at major venues.

In a 2023 earnings report, President and Chief Executive Michael Rapino said that "as we then look to 2024 and beyond, we have all the necessary levers to build our flywheel globally and continue to compound [adjusted operating income] by double digits for the foreseeable future."

The suit also aims at Live Nation's long-standing practice of using its significant resources to acquire potential competitors. Referencing its 2016 purchase of a controlling stake in AC Entertainment, the suit alleges that "Live Nation's Chief Strategy Officer explained to Live Nation executives: 'The numbers are not super exciting and this feels like more of a defensive move to keep [rival] AEG out of the region.'"

"It's not illegal to have no competition, but what are illegal are the tactics that a vertically integrated company uses to maintain it," Allensworth said. "Things like using your power over concert promotion to force people to buy tickets through Ticketmaster, or threatening a competitor with retaliation in other markets."

Some experts are skeptical that the Justice Department's proposed remedies would meaningfully lower ticket prices and improve fan experiences.

Bob Lefsetz, a longtime concert-industry watcher, said in his most recent newsletter that breaking up the company is "not going to make ticket prices any lower. ... If you think any change is going to trickle down to the consumer, you're delusional."

A source familiar with Live Nation and Ticketmaster's practices said that artists ultimately set ticket prices for shows, and that venues set and keep most of the much-loathed add-on fees.

Lemley said breaking up the company could encourage artists and venues to "get rid of long-term exclusivity deals, and allow other companies to get traction in the market. You could put some restrictions on the nature of fees. We might see high-profile bands break away if they had a real choice."

The Justice Department's suit comes amid a flurry of recent high-profile antitrust action. It sued Apple in March, and the Federal Trade Commission sued Amazon last year.

If successful, the suit would profoundly reshape the concert industry, from Live Nation's global ambitions down to fans just trying to get Eras tour tickets.

"You see things like the Taylor Swift overload, where Ticketmaster's technology and capacity and performance as a business was not good, but it doesn't have to be good because they have no competition," Bonta said. "Consumers and fans deserve better."

'I saw a need and I had to fill it': Ranks of indie booksellers grow

'Some are opening to give back to their community. And some still just love books,' industry member says.

BY HILLEL ITALIE

NEW YORK — Three years ago, Erin Decker was a middle school librarian in Kissimmee, Fla., increasingly frustrated by the state's book bans and worried that she couldn't make a difference remaining in her job.

So, she and fellow librarian Tania Galifianes thought of a way to fight back.

"We just put our heads together and decided a bookstore would help make sure students could get to books that were being pulled from shelves," says Decker, whose White Rose Books & More opened last fall in Kissimmee. The store is named for a resistance group in Nazi Germany and features a section — ringed by yellow "caution" tape — dedicated to such banned works as Maia Kobabe's "Gender Queer," Jonathan Evison's "Lawn Boy" and John Green's "Looking for Alaska."

White Rose Books is part of the ever-expanding and diversifying world of independent bookstores. Even as industry sales were slow in 2023, membership in the American Booksellers Assn. continued its years-long re-

vival. It now stands at 2,433, more than 200 over the previous year and nearly double since 2016. About 190 additional stores are in the process of opening over the next two years, according to the ABA.

"Our numbers are really strong, and we have a solid, diverse pipeline of new stores to come," says the book association's chief executive, Allison Hill. She cites a variety of reasons for people opening stores, from opposing bans to championing diversity to pursuing new careers after the pandemic.

"Some are opening to give back to their community. And some still just love books," she says.

Recent members include the romance-oriented That's What She Read in Mount Ayr, Iowa; Seven Stories in Shawnee, Kan., managed by 15-year-old Halley Vincent; and more than 20 Black-owned shops.

In Pasadena, Octavia's Bookshelf is named for the late Black science fiction author Octavia Butler and bills itself as "a space to find community, enjoy a cup of coffee, read, relax, find unique and specially curated products from artisans from around the world and in our neighborhood."

Leah Johnson, author of the prize-winning young adult novel "You Should See Me in a Crown," was troubled by the surge in book bans and by what she saw as a shortage of outlets for diverse voices. Last year, she

founded Loudmouth Books, one of several independent sellers to open in Indianapolis.

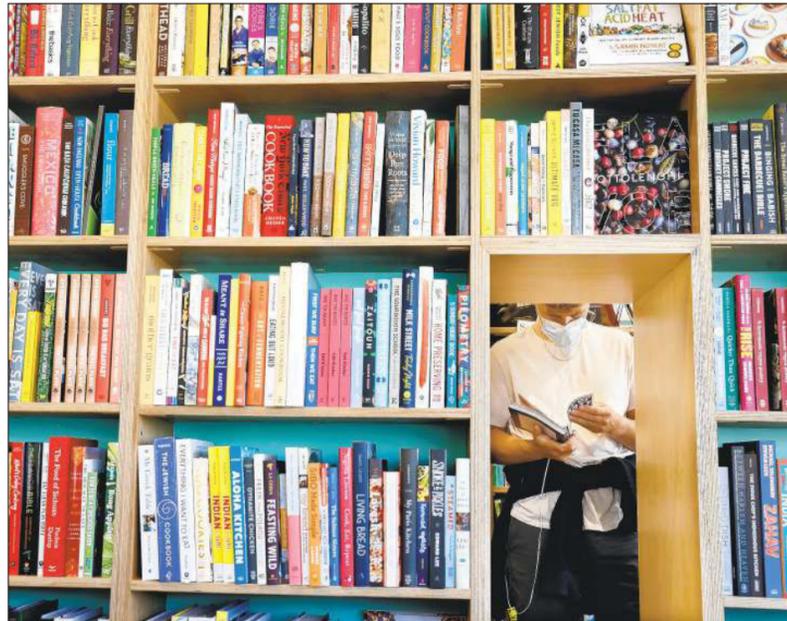
"I'm not a person who dreamed of opening a bookstore. I didn't want to be anybody's boss," Johnson says. "But I saw a need and I had to fill it."

Most of the new businesses are traditional "brick and mortar" retailers. But a "bookstore" can also mean a "pop-up" business like Loe'd & Lit, which has a mission to bring "the joy of reading to the Bronx," the New York City borough that had been viewed by the industry as a "desert" for its scarcity of bookstores. Other new stores are online only, among them the Be More Literature Children's Bookshop and the used books seller Liberation Is Lit.

Nick Pavlidis, a publisher, ghost writer and trainer of ghost writers, launched the online Beantown Books in 2023 and has since opened a small physical store in suburban Boston.

"My goal is to move into a larger space and create a friendly place for authors to host events," he says, adding that he'd like to eventually own several stores.

Independent bookselling has never been dependably profitable, and Hill notes various concerns — rising costs, dwindling aid from the pandemic and the on-going force of Amazon.com, which remains the industry's dominant retailer even



CHRISTINA HOUSE/Los Angeles Times

A CUSTOMER browses in Culver City. Even as industry sales were slow in 2023, membership in the American Booksellers Assn. continued its years-long revival.

after the e-book market stalled a decade ago. Last month, the booksellers association filed a motion with the Federal Trade Commission, seeking to join the antitrust suit against Amazon that the FTC announced in 2023. The motion states in part that Amazon is able to offer prices "that ABA members cannot match except by forgoing a sustainable margin, or incurring a loss."

Just opening a store requires initiative and a willingness to take risks. Decker says that she and Galifianes had to use retirement money because lenders wouldn't provide credit until they were actually in business. The owner of Octavia's Bookshelf, Nikki High, is a

former communications director for Trader Joe's who relied on crowdfunding and her own savings to get her store started.

"Even with tons of planning, and asking questions and running numbers, it's been very difficult," High says. "I don't know that I could have prepared myself for what a shrewd businessperson you have to be to make a living out of this."

High cites a variety of challenges and adjustments — convincing customers they don't have to order items from Amazon.com, supplementing sales by offering tote bags and journals and other nonbook items. Knowing which books to stock has also proved an ed-

ucation.

"I would read a book and think it's the best thing ever and order a bunch of copies, and everybody else is like, 'No, I don't want that book,'" she explains. "And when we started, I wanted to be everything for everybody. We had a ton of different categories. But I found out that short stories and poetry almost never sell for us. People want general fiction, best-sellers, children's books. Classics sell very well, books by James Baldwin and Toni Morrison and bell hooks and June Jordan."

"It's incredibly important to listen to your customers."

Italie writes for the Associated Press.

MARKET ROUNDUP

Strong economic reports weigh on stocks; S&P 500 has worst day since April

ASSOCIATED PRESS

In the latest example of how good news for the economy can be bad for Wall Street, most U.S. stocks slumped Thursday after strong economic reports raised the possibility of interest rates staying painfully high. The weakness was widespread and overshadowed another blowout profit report from market heavyweight Nvidia.

The Standard & Poor's 500 fell 0.7% for its sharpest drop since April and pulled further from its record set this week. The Dow Jones industrial average dropped 1.5%, and the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.4%.

Stocks broadly struggled under the weight of higher yields in the bond market. Treasury yields cranked up the pressure after the stronger-than-expected reports on the U.S. economy, which forced traders to rethink bets about when the Federal Reserve could offer relief to financial markets through lower interest rates.

One report suggested growth in U.S. business activity is running at its fastest rate in more than two years. S&P Global said its preliminary data showed growth improved for businesses not only in the services sector but also in hard-hit manufacturing.

A separate report, meanwhile, showed the U.S. job

Major stock indexes

Index	Close	Daily change	Daily % change	YTD % change
Dow industrials	39,065.26	-605.78	-1.53	+3.65
S&P 500	5,267.84	-39.17	-0.74	+10.44
Nasdaq composite	16,736.03	-65.51	-0.39	+11.49
S&P 400	2,951.94	-38.15	-1.28	+6.13
Russell 2000	2,048.41	-33.30	-1.60	+1.05
EuroStoxx 50	5,037.60	-36.74	+0.25	+11.41
Nikkei (Japan)	39,103.22	+486.12	+1.26	+16.85
Hang Seng (Hong Kong)	18,868.71	-326.89	-1.70	+10.68

Associated Press

market remains solid despite high interest rates. Fewer workers applied for unemployment benefits last week than economists expected, an indication that layoffs remain low.

Treasury yields had been

close to flat after the joblessness report but turned higher immediately after the report on business activity, which also suggested upward pressure on selling prices remains stubbornly high.

With pressure on inflation coming from both the manufacturing and service sectors, "the final mile down to the Fed's 2% target still seems elusive," said Chris Williamson, chief business economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

The Fed is trying to pull off the difficult feat of slowing the economy enough through high rates to get inflation back to 2% but not so much that it forces a painful recession.

A hotter-than-expected economy could push the Federal Reserve to wait longer before cutting interest rates. What's worse, it could force the Fed to ultimately raise rates more and cause a deep

recession to get inflation to fully succumb.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury, which helps set rates for mortgages and other loans, rose to 4.47% from 4.43% late Wednesday. The two-year yield, which more closely tracks expectations for action by the Federal Reserve, climbed to 4.93% from 4.87%.

VF Corp., which owns the North Face, Vans, Timberland and other brands, fell 2.9% after reporting a loss for the latest quarter, along with weaker revenue than analysts expected.

They helped to more than offset a 9.3% leap for Nvidia, which delivered its latest knockout profit report late Wednesday.

OPINION

EDITORIAL

Make climate polluters pay for the mess they have made

Big fossil fuel companies should share the cost of the damage done to the environment.

AS CLIMATE CHANGE exacts a mounting toll on California, who should pay for the damage from rising sea levels and increasingly ferocious wildfires, floods and heat waves?

Fossil fuel companies would like taxpayers to keep footing the bill while they reap the profits from the burning of coal, oil and methane gas. That's not right. Companies whose products are responsible for the vast majority of the greenhouse gas emissions should be held liable for the costs.

That's the concept behind the Polluters Pay Climate Cost Recovery Act, a bill in the California Legislature that would create a Superfund-style program to collect money from major fossil fuel companies such as Chevron and ExxonMobil to help the state pay for the environmental damage caused by their products.

Other states, including New York, Massachusetts and Maryland, are considering similar "Climate Superfund" bills. They're modeled on the 1980 federal Superfund law that established an industry-funded trust fund to pay for cleaning abandoned hazardous waste sites and holds current and past operators and other responsible parties liable for the costs. California would not be the first to act; Vermont lawmakers earlier this

month sent a Climate Superfund bill to their governor's desk.

Senate Bill 1497, by Sen. Caroline Menjivar (D-Panorama City), rightly focuses on the world's largest fossil fuel companies on the grounds that they are responsible for much of the climate impacts California is experiencing and paying for today.

The fund would come from the estimated 41 fossil fuel extraction and refining companies that meet the bill's threshold of being responsible for more than 1 billion metric tons of emissions from 2000 to 2020. Each would pay a share of the climate costs to the state based on a study to be conducted by the California Environmental Protection Agency. The total cost recovery could amount to tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars, according to legislative analysts, and could be paid in installments over 20 years.

It may sound like a lot, but even that would not fully offset the costs climate-related damages California is expected to suffer for years to come from just those two decades of pollution. Wildfires alone have caused tens of billions in destruction of property, health costs and other losses in California in just the past few years.

The new climate fund, supporters say, could pay for everything from seawall construction and zero-emission vehicles to forest and wetlands restoration and wildfire fighting costs. A new approach to addressing climate hazards is also warranted given the precariousness of California's roller coaster-like budget, which Menjivar, the bill's author, said demonstrates that "we



LUIS SINCO Los Angeles Times

YOUTH SOCCER teams practice at Wilmington Waterfront Park in the shadow of the Conoco Phillips refinery.

need creative solutions to relieve taxpayers of this burden."

Just a few years after Gov. Gavin Newsom boasted about setting aside \$54 billion to fight climate change, state lawmakers are now facing a \$45-billion budget deficit and planning to cut billions from those same climate programs. The state's other big source of climate funding, the cap-and-trade program, has raised more than \$27 billion over the last decade but is designed to generate less revenue as emissions decline.

Oil companies have posted some of their best-ever profits in recent years so it's no surprise that the fossil industry and business trade groups are opposing the bill to keep raking in money at the planet and the public's expense. But it's time for them to sacrifice some of their huge profits to clean

up the environmental mess they helped create. It's not fair for taxpayers to shoulder such a staggering burden.

Passing this bill won't be easy as it requires a two-thirds vote and stalled last week. But there is still time to move this legislation. Doing so would show that California is serious about responding to the climate crisis in a fiscally responsible way, without saddling all of the costs on regular people.

It's also a chance for state lawmakers, including so-called moderate Democrats who have a history of bending to the oil industry (which is one of the top spenders on lobbyists in Sacramento), to demonstrate that they will put the health and well-being of California residents before the short-term profit interests of polluters.

LETTERS



JESSIE WARDARSKI Associated Press

CHRISTIAN-THEMED pro-Trump hats are seen at a rally for the former president in Ohio in March.

How would Jesus vote?

Re "Jesus is their savior, and Trump is their candidate," May 21

WHAT HAS DONALD TRUMP ever done to suggest that he is in any way aligned with Jesus? It is one thing to say that King David was also imperfect, but to be totally flawed and proud of it does not reflect Christ.

Rather, it is becoming an ever more glaring reality that what passes itself off as "conservative Christianity" is not remotely Christian at its core.

What did Jesus ever say to justify the forceful suppression of other beliefs? What did he say that justifies the denial of urgently needed medical care to women? Did he actually tell his followers that the Samaritan was good because he didn't stop to offer help?

This is the Catholicism of the Spanish Inquisition or the murderous insecurity of Iran's Islamic theocracy. When people insist that their security requires that anyone who is not on their team be subject to their every whim, I see it as the furthest thing from Christ.

The Golden Rule is not limited in application to one's own culture, race, gender or any other group.

JACK QUIRK, Porter Ranch

I have read at least a half dozen articles from different media sources about evangelical Christians supporting Trump. They all seem to be asking the same question: Why?

I recall a survey in the 1990s asking Christians a variety of questions to get an idea about their mind set. One question I remember went something like this: How do you know you are a Christian?

Problem was, there were many answers given. There is only one correct answer that I know of, and it's this: I know that I'm a Christian because I have put my complete trust in Jesus Christ for my salvation.

This is the core problem with asking Christians why they support Trump. The

assumption that all the people who call themselves Christians are actually Christians is wrong. Just because your parents are Christian or you have gone to church your whole life or you are an American doesn't make you Christian.

Simply put, in religious terms, some of these people simply do not know the Lord. But most people know at least a little about Christian ethics, and this is what causes confusion and disbelief on the part of nonbelievers regarding evangelicals' support for Trump.

ROBERT PACHECO Whittier

::

This article reports that conservative Christians

maintain that the former president shares their values.

My advice to these folks is to look closely at Trump's character and ask themselves, "How would Jesus have voted?"

HERB WEINBERG Marina del Rey

Bad excuse to kill single-payer

Re "Lawmakers reject another attempt to create single-payer healthcare," May 22

Assembly Bill 2200, the California Guaranteed Health Care for All Act, or CalCare, was buried without a public vote in the

Assembly Appropriations Committee last week. Politicians who claim to support single-payer healthcare now say it must be delayed because the state has a massive budget deficit.

In a piece last year in Forbes, emergency room physician Arthur L. Kellerman noted that the U.S. spends more on healthcare than other wealthy nations but ranks last in health outcomes.

Each time research confirms this bad news, two objections are made: that this country has world-class medical hospitals and research, and any medical system other than our own would cost too much.

Stark class divisions in this country prevent millions of people from getting

timely checkups and comprehensive care. Our healthcare system is fragmented by competing insurance companies. Small businesses are burdened by job-based health plans.

Bureaucrats and perverse incentives come between providers and patients. Doctors burn out, because while they are trained to heal and save lives, they spend too much time arguing with insurance companies.

This broken system is already staggeringly expensive. A single-payer system would cost less and cover more. The administrative costs created by insurance companies would be drastically reduced.

If there is no democracy in healthcare, the foundation of the social contract is undermined. Healthcare delayed is healthcare denied.

SCOTT TUCKER Los Angeles

::

Tell readers the truth about single-payer systems: They don't work.

Most of us who live in California are lucky. If we need to see a doctor, we can typically get an appointment within a few days. But not everyone is so lucky, and we must find ways to help those less fortunate.

But it is not necessary to destroy our whole healthcare delivery system to do that.

According to the Fraser Institute, a libertarian think tank in Canada, in 2023, Canadian patients waited longer than ever for medical treatment in their government-funded system. The physicians surveyed reported a median wait time of almost 28 weeks — more than six months.

Single-payer systems tend to have one big problem: They are massively underfunded, and that causes unacceptable delays in getting help from a doctor. Why would we want that in California?

DOUG McDERMOTT Santa Monica

::

Did Assemblymember Buffy Wicks (D-Oakland), chair of the Appropriations Committee, bother to read the analysis of AB 2200 written by a principal consultant of her own committee?

That analysis clearly

delineates AB 2200 as a policy bill, not a spending bill.

It also quotes the 2022 finding by Gov. Gavin Newsom's Healthy California for All Commission that, if single-payer were enacted, changes to the current system would reduce overall healthcare spending, saving California billions.

As Appropriations chair, Wicks has power over the fate of many bills. By denying Californians improved, comprehensive, universal healthcare and freedom from medical debt, Wicks is also denying California a long-term investment to protect us from future deficits.

CAROL FODERA La Crescenta

A clown show in Congress

Re "Crockett's clapback not just entertaining," column, May 22

Anita Chabria writes in regard to the insults traded by Reps. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) and Jasmine Crockett (D-Texas): "There was a clear winner. It was not MTG."

No, there was no clear winner. There were just two congressional representatives who behaved as clowns, and therefore we got a circus. The entire House Oversight Committee hearing where this exchange took place was an embarrassment.

Chabria doesn't see it that way; her moral compass doesn't distinguish that two wrongs don't make a right.

Also, she ignores the false equivalency of Crockett's rejoinder, "Bleach blond bad built butch body," to Greene's, "I think your fake eyelashes are messing up what you're reading." They're both puerile jabs, but Crockett's is much more of a vituperative ad hominem attack.

The embarrassing clown show doesn't interest Chabria, because she's only interested in rooting for her team.

GIUSEPPE MIRELLI Los Angeles

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OP-ED

The case against Trump is all in. How strong is it?

New York prosecutors presented a persuasive narrative. The defense relied on undermining it.

HARRY LITMAN

AFTER 20 DAYS, 22 witnesses and intermittent courtroom fireworks, the evidence in Donald Trump's New York hush money trial is all in. The case will soon be in the hands of the jury.

Who holds the advantage at this crucial juncture? My assessment, after attending much of the trial in person, is that it's the prosecution's case to lose.

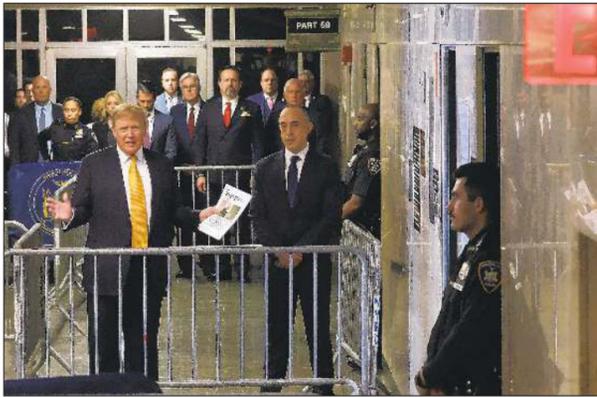
With the standing caveat that it takes only one juror to block a unanimous guilty verdict — and that the law puts the greatest burden on prosecutors — the case as it has come in puts the district attorney's office in the driver's seat going into next week's closing arguments.

The prosecution's essential achievement was to provide a compelling, credible narrative that points toward only one plausible conclusion: that Trump is guilty as charged.

The defense, by contrast, took a scattershot approach focused on undermining the credibility of any and all of the prosecution's witnesses, particularly Michael Cohen, Trump's former attorney and fixer. But what Trump's lawyers didn't do is provide a counternarrative, a story compelling enough to leave jurors with a reasonable doubt as to which explanation of the facts is true.

Providing such a competing story isn't the defense's legal obligation, of course. The judge will instruct the jurors that if they have any reasonable doubt about the prosecution's case, they should vote to acquit.

But my experience as a trial



MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO Associated Press

THE FORMER PRESIDENT speaks to reporters at Manhattan Criminal Court this week. The case goes to jurors soon.

lawyer suggests a difference between freestanding doubt about one or more witnesses and a broader doubt about the rationale behind the charges — an alternative plotline that jurors might find believable. That's the kind of defense being presented on behalf of Sen. Robert Menendez, for example, who is arguing that his wife is the guilty party.

From the first day of testimony, the prosecution has presented a tight, persuasive tale. It begins with an August 2015 meeting involving Trump, Cohen and tabloid executive David Pecker — who explained it to the jury from the stand — in which the parties agreed on a scheme to smother negative stories about Trump.

And sure enough, before the next year's election, a series of scandal-mongers required neutralizing to insulate Trump from political damage. These episodes are akin to Acts II and III of the script, falling into place along the tracks that the Pecker testimony laid.

Hope Hicks' testimony was brief but powerful given her longtime loyal service to Trump and her obvious candor notwithstanding her reluctance to harm her former boss, which seemed

to cause her to break into tears. She confirmed in dramatic terms that Cohen and Allen Weisselberg, the Trump Organization's then-chief financial officer, would not have cooked up the scheme to pay off the adult-film actor Stormy Daniels without Trump's say-so.

The prosecution effectively corroborated in advance most of what would come from its last and most important witness, Cohen. At the same time, the prosecutors encouraged their own witnesses to disparage Cohen, lowering expectations before he took the stand.

When he did, Cohen was low-key, responsive and agreeable. With a few exceptions, he accepted the insults the defense served up, accounting for most of the discrepancies in his story by explaining that he had been telling the truth since he left the Trump fold.

A couple of low points in Cohen's testimony got a lot of attention, and it's natural for the media to zero in on dramatic moments. But the jury is more likely to evaluate the evidence in the context of the whole narrative and a witness' general comportment.

Most important, jurors, like

all of us, make overall judgments about credibility, which is the heart and soul of the jury system. Taking the measure of the people before them, they decide whether their accounts are basically trustworthy, notwithstanding the defects of the messengers. And all the stories in this case — not just Cohen's but those of other flawed witnesses such as Pecker and Daniels — cohere and ring true.

It follows that the impertinence of Robert Costello, a defense witness who muttered in disagreement with Judge Juan M. Merchan's rulings, probably caught the jury's attention more than the flaws in Cohen's largely even presentation — especially once Merchan forcefully rebuked Costello's buffoonish grandstanding.

The prosecution's cross-examination of Costello and redirect of both Cohen and Daniels were crisp, clear, textbook demolitions of the defense's points. Trump's team was more meandering and given to stray potshots, missing more than they hit.

I think the defense still has one largely overlooked escape hatch: the arcane legal instructions for deciding the felony charges. The charges require the prosecution to prove that Trump caused the alleged falsification of documents to further another crime. Prosecutors have offered up three different candidates for that other crime, each of which has flaws. I could see the jury, which includes two lawyers, considering the legal instructions very carefully and finding that the district attorney came up short. And in any event, the issue is sure to figure in an appeal.

But any appeal feels a millennium away. By the time that transpires, Trump will either be president, giving him extensive options for evading accountability, or a losing candidate facing three other criminal trials. This trial looks increasingly likely to be the only opportunity for a jury to decide for the first time whether a former president is a criminal. Going into the final act, I like the chances that he will be found guilty.

HARRY LITMAN is the host of the "Talking Feds" podcast and the Talking San Diego speaker series. @harrylitman

Cannabis has gone mainstream. Bring it on

LZ GRANDERSON

MORE AMERICANS NOW consume marijuana on a daily basis than drink alcohol every day, according to a recent study.

That's welcome news for an industry that has been unfairly demonized by opportunistic politicians since the days of Nixon. The findings — based on data gathered between 1979 and 2022 — are consistent with the wave of decriminalization under state laws, notably with California's Proposition 215 back in 1996.

After the election that year, a law professor at Loyola was quoted in the Los Angeles Times as saying "this may be the baby boomers taking control."

It wasn't the boomers prevailing, but pragmatism.

About 1.3 million people in the U.S. are in state prisons. The most common reason for incarceration? Drug-related crimes. Given how much the country with the highest prison population loves pot, it makes sense to stop throwing people in jail for doing weed.

Today the only states where cannabis is totally illegal are Idaho, Kansas, South Carolina and Wyoming. Earlier this month President Biden announced plans to reclassify pot as a less dangerous drug.

In short: "Just say no" is dead. Long live "pass the dutchie" pon the left-hand side."

The next important step in having policy actually reflect society would be for Gov. Gavin Newsom to sign the "munchie bill" that's likely to be headed his way soon.

Last year Assembly Bill 374 — which would make it legal for dispensaries to become cafes and offer food as well as host live events — passed the Assembly 66-9 and the Senate 33-3.

Surprisingly, Newsom vetoed the bipartisan bill in October, citing concerns about providing a smoke-free work environment for employees. That seems nonsensical, considering that it is already legal to consume marijuana in California dispensaries. AB 374 would have just made it possible to buy a bag of chips while you do it.

Marijuana cafes have existed in Amsterdam since the 1970s. Last summer I spent a few hours listening to music and eating homemade desserts at the first marijuana cafe in North America. Fittingly called New Amsterdam Cafe, the popular hangout opened in Vancouver in 1998 and is as chill as Issa Rae's Hilltop Coffee.

However, vibes are not the only reasons Assemblymember Matt Haney (D-San Francisco) introduced AB 374. For him it's also a matter of fairness and trying to level the playing field.

"Small businesses have to follow every rule, and yet you're telling them they can't adapt and innovate and offer something people want," he said. "The ones who follow the rules should be able to offer an experience. People pay a lot to sit in a winery. We have cigar lounges. This is really no different."

Despite law enforcement's best efforts, illegal pot is estimated to have pulled in more than \$8 billion in 2020 compared with \$4 billion for legal. However, it's the small-business owners who also have the burden of taxes, regulations and fines. All of which eats away at profits and businesses' ability to grow. Haney said his proposal not only would allow small business owners to diversify their income stream, but also would encourage people to come out of their post-pandemic cocoons and socialize again.

California began liberating cannabis culture in 1996. It's only right the state continues to correct a narrative that was born not from science but from President Nixon's prejudice. It's because of that cloud hanging over cannabis that advocates of decriminalization had to sweeten the deal for voters by promising a financial windfall for the state, which of course is why legal pot is ridiculously overtaxed.

Haney said he knows the cafes won't solve all of the problems that dispensary owners face because of competition from the black market, but it would at least provide owners with more ways to make money. Haney said he worked with both Newsom's office and the Department of Cannabis Control before reintroducing the bill.

He said the new version, AB 1775, addresses the governor's concern for the work environment, and it also has union support. It recently passed the Assembly 49 to 4 and is headed to the Senate.

My hope is that the munchie bill meets Newsom's approval. With proper ventilation for employees and customers alike, marijuana cafes could provide local artists with new venues and add another branch of tourism.

"I'm one of the younger legislators, and I see how excited my friends are," 42-year-old Haney told me. "I have a couple of colleagues who represent suburban districts and one came to me and said, 'All the suburban moms are excited about your cannabis cafe bill.' Post-pandemic, it's been hard to get people to get out, and I think this just makes sense."

It really does.

@LZGranderson

California has to get cities to build more housing

Amid an affordability crisis, settlements with wealthy towns such as Malibu aren't enough.

By Paavo Monkkonen and Aaron Barrall

CALIFORNIA HAS taken unprecedented action to spur housing production in recent years. Since 2017 the Legislature has passed nearly a hundred new laws to facilitate construction, including requiring cities to update local housing plans with more ambitious production targets. The executive branch has pursued a carrot-and-stick strategy to reward cities committed to addressing the housing crisis and penalize those that are not. And the attorney general scored recent high-profile victories in legal conflicts to advance plans for housing in the wealthy cities of Malibu, Huntington Beach and La Cañada Flintridge.

Yet California's approach to land-use reform has not had the tangible impact on housing production and affordability seen in other states (such as Texas) and countries (such as New Zealand). These places have significantly changed land-use regulations and expedited construction by preventing local governments from denying permits through other means.

Meanwhile, California is not on track to reach its 2022 goal of building 2.5 million units by 2030. In recent years, we've permitted only an average of around 10,000 units annually. Updated housing plans across the state include zoning changes to allow for roughly 750,000 new homes, and the state estimates that the pending developments of more than 6,500 units have been unlocked due to its oversight. This is progress, but still insufficient to improve affordability and stem population losses driven by the



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

HOMES in Huntington Beach, a locality recently ordered by the state to allow development.

high cost of living. The state government must expand the scope and speed of land-use reforms, with all cities, including wealthy and recalcitrant enclaves, doing their part.

Consider Malibu. After the city dragged its feet on its mandated housing plan, which was due in 2021, the attorney general petitioned the courts to intervene in April. Malibu settled with the state, agreeing to adopt a compliant plan by mid-September. In effect, the city was allowed to delay its plan update — and any new housing it may have produced — for almost three years without significant consequences.

And Malibu is not alone. Nearly a quarter of Southern California cities still lack state-approved plans to accommodate new housing development and implement fair housing policies. While these cities dawdle, the region's residents suffer the effects of the housing shortage: high rents, overcrowding, eviction and homelessness. Given how far behind the state is in its goal to meet housing demands, stronger penalties and plans are needed.

Senate Bill 1037 from state Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco), which would give existing laws more teeth, is one welcome start and recently passed in the Senate. Legislators should also strengthen the builder's remedy law to incentivize cities to create compliant plans by allowing certain projects to bypass zoning rules, providing more clarity for developers.

Resistance from towns is not the only obstacle. The state-man-

dated housing plan framework also bears responsibility, as it allows cities up to three years after finalizing their housing plans to change zoning. This multistep framework has enabled Los Angeles to propose bold, acclaimed reforms in its original plan only to whittle away its most effective provisions in the following years.

Another source of delays is the California Environmental Quality Act, which requires the review of rezoning proposals for potential environmental impact. While that may sound beneficial, it means many new housing development opportunities won't be available until nearly halfway through the eight-year planning period. New housing on already built-up urban land, which helps reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions by allowing people to live closer to jobs and amenities, shouldn't be subject to the same environmental review as development on open space.

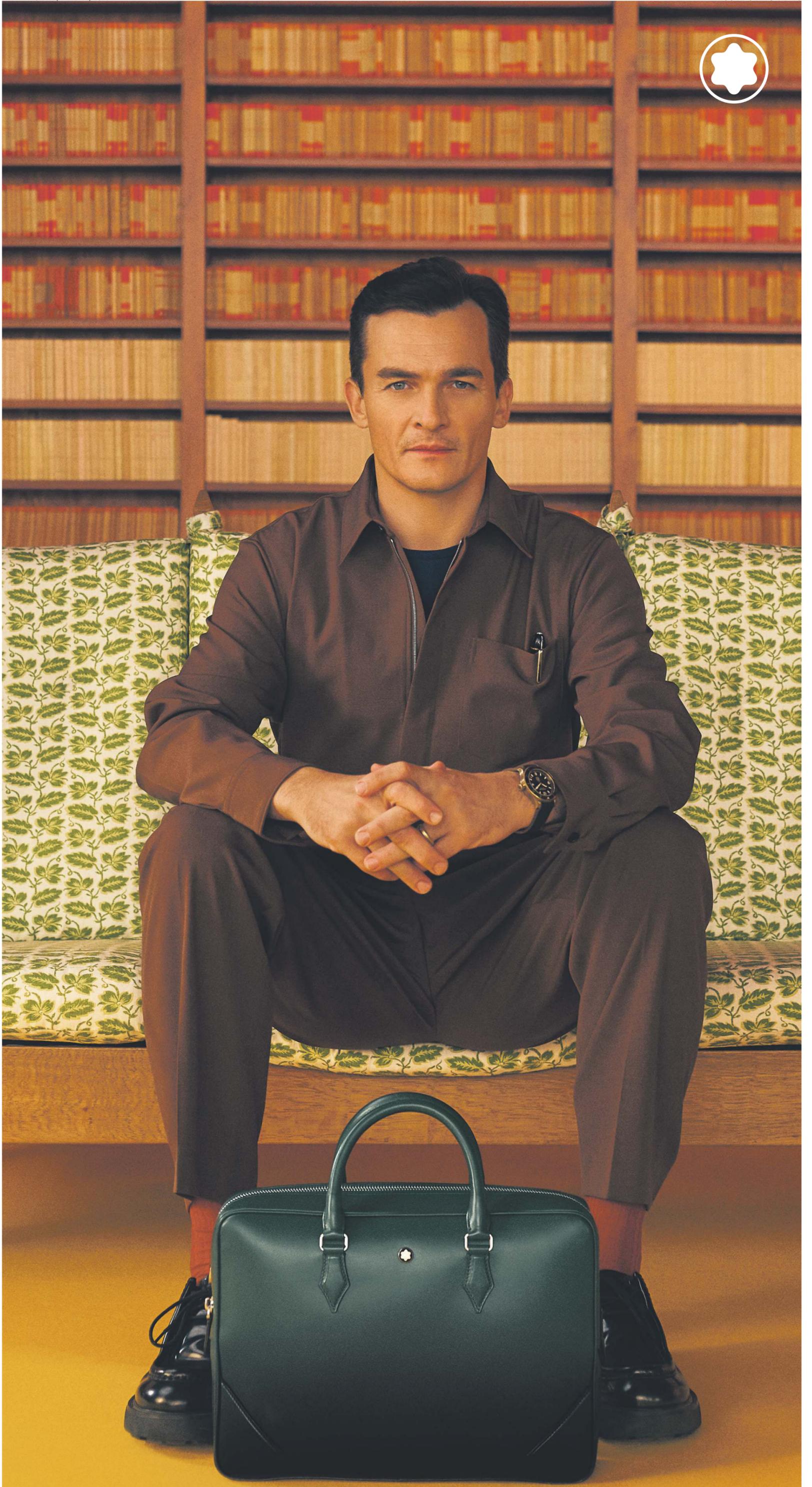
One solution would be to exempt zone changes proposed in local housing plans from CEQA. Legislators could expand SB 10, a 2021 law that allows cities to forgo CEQA review for modest increases in allowed building density in limited locations, to permit greater increases across already-developed areas. This could empower pro-housing cities to change their zoning more quickly and remove an excuse that anti-housing cities use to delay growth. Additionally, local governments can use environmental review to drag out project approvals indefinitely, which contradicts streamlining provisions

in state housing law. The Legislature should reconcile these two statutes.

When at long last cities do adopt their plans, they are often inadequate, falling short of meaningful improvements to housing affordability and access. They are also often unfair: Our ongoing research shows that most California cities concentrate new housing sites in their lower-income neighborhoods. This not only conflicts with fair housing goals; it also reduces the amount of housing developers will build and leaves on the table the many units that could be added to higher-income neighborhoods. State regulators should respond by requiring objective, performance-based metrics, such as the Fair Housing Land Use Score, to ensure all neighborhoods take on their fair share of development.

California is earning national recognition for its action on housing, partly due to high-profile state-local conflicts exemplified by the Malibu case. The Legislature and governor have taken on some tough fights with important symbolic value. But if our leaders are serious about improving housing conditions for the majority of Californians, that symbolism must be matched by more substantial reform of state housing and environmental laws.

PAAVO MONKKONEN is a professor of urban planning and public policy at UCLA. **AARON BARRALL** is a housing data analyst at the UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies.



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DAN STEELE, left, of Lake Havasu City, Ariz., and Scott Bickelhaupt of Temecula set up their campsite Wednesday for a Memorial Day weekend getaway at Bolsa Chica State Beach in Huntington Beach.

3 million to hit road for Memorial Day weekend

AAA expects more holiday travel despite high gas costs

BY KAREN GARCIA

At least 2.9 million Southern California travelers are expected to hit the road this Memorial Day weekend despite higher prices at the pump.

Those traveling by car are a big part of the overall 3.5 million in the Southland who are expected to get away between Thursday and Monday — a record, according to a forecast by the Automobile Club of Southern California. The number of people driving to their destination is a 4.5% increase from last year.

Nationally, 43.8 million Americans are expected to travel this year, a 4.1% uptick from 2023.

Typically, travel trends over Memorial Day are an increase. [See [Memorial Day](#), B4]



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

CALIFORNIA'S AVERAGE price of gas is \$5.17, which is more than the U.S. figure of \$3.61. In the L.A.-Long Beach metro area, a gallon of regular is \$5.13.

Her California dreams end in 405 nightmare

Missouri woman ID'd as driver in wrong-way pursuit documented trip on social media.

BY NATHAN SOLIS

Like countless others before her, Lisa Ann Heflin of Oakview, Mo., headed to Los Angeles this year chasing a dream of fame and fortune.

What she found instead was notoriety.

The Los Angeles County district attorney's office has identified Heflin, 41, as the driver of a white van that plowed into oncoming traffic on the 405 Freeway last week after crashing into several police cruisers and leading police on a wild pursuit.

The office on Wednesday charged Heflin with 10 counts of assault upon a peace officer, four counts of assault with a deadly weapon, one count of fleeing a pursuing peace officer's motor vehicle while driving recklessly and one count of hit-and-run driving resulting in property damage.

"It was remarkable," Los Angeles Police Assistant Chief Daniel Randolph said of the pursuit during Tuesday's Police Commission meeting. Nine LAPD officers were injured, and the driver caused more than \$150,000 in damage to five police vehicles, he said.

A mother of four, Heflin documented much of her journey west on Facebook, X and TikTok. She apparently made it to Los Angeles without her kids, who range in age from elementary school to a teenager; according to relatives, Heflin did not have full custody of them.

In her posts, Heflin wears her hair long and dark. She smiles in her photos, appearing composed — a far cry from the bloodied person who was photographed after crashing on the 405 Freeway. "Chasin my dreams as a 'California Daydreamer,'" she wrote in her TikTok bio.

Heflin also posted photos of her children on social media. In recent weeks, friends

and family in Missouri commented on her posts, concerned about her well-being.

Someone wrote under her most recent post: "Haven't heard from you in almost a week. Seriously getting worried. Hope your ok."

Heflin wrote dozens of messages a day in the weeks leading up to the pursuit. Some of her earlier Facebook posts included links to music videos for artists such as Eminem, Tupac Shakur, Ice Cube, Snoop Dogg and Nickelback. But her later messages became frantic in tone, interspersed with photos in and around Los Angeles.

"I GOT NEWS FOR YA. THAT ROAD YOU DON'T FOLLOW THE LAWS OF JAY-WALKING (ILLEGAL) MIGHT BE THE DEATH OF YOU," Heflin wrote.

"DO NOT COME SPEAK TO ME FOR ANY REASON," she wrote in another post.

In a Facebook message posted May 9, she compared herself to rappers Shakur and Eminem and spoke of being persecuted. In that message, first reported by Los Angeles magazine, Heflin argued about music on [See [Crash](#), B5]

The dark vision of manhood regulated by Trump

GOP's ideal of what it means to be American and male is grounded in white patriarchy.

ANITA CHABRIA

If there is one place where it is undeniable the Republican Party has already won, it's in defining what it means to be an American man.

Theirs is a dark vision of white patriarchy helmed by forever Trumpers. The Democrats don't offer a clear or compelling alternative vision.

That's a political problem, because as much as this election has been framed about women and the loss of their rights, it's about men.

"American politics has long been a contest over who is the real man," C.J. Pascoe, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Oregon, told me recently.

Which is how, "unsurprisingly, two old guys are the only ones" on the ticket, added Juliet Williams, a gender studies professor at UCLA.

While that underlying cultural comfort of having men in charge has always been the unspoken reality, the difference in this particular moment is that former President Trump is screaming about manhood — who has it and who lacks it — every chance he gets.

Trump has made it a part of his platform that we are in desperate need of a real man — in all his out-moded, boorish, racist, homophobic glory.

[See [Chabria](#), B2]

Swimmer makes history in open-water feat

She braved sharks to go from the Golden Gate Bridge to Farallon Islands

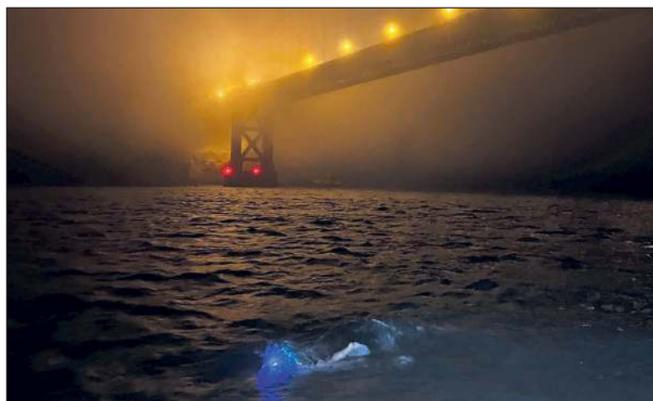
BY JESSICA GARRISON

Amy Appelhans Gubser was a swimmer in college, but when she graduated more than three decades ago, she hung up her cap and goggles and went about the business of working as a nurse and raising two children.

She didn't swim seriously again until about 10 years ago, when a friend coaxed her into the ocean — with Gubser resisting all the way.

This month, Gubser, 55, became the first person, male or female, to swim from the Golden Gate Bridge to the Farallon Islands. It was a journey of 29.7 miles through roiling, freezing, famously shark-infested waters.

In celebrating Gubser's achieve-



SARAH ROBERTS

AMY Appelhans Gubser's historic swim started at the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. A crew followed her in a small boat.

ment, the Marathon Swimmers Federation noted that the feat "has a reasonable claim to be the toughest marathon swim in the world." Though five other people have been recorded as swimming solo across the Gulf of the Farallones, Gubser is the first to do it heading east to west — a more difficult journey because colder water temperatures near the islands hit swimmers when they are at their most exhausted.

"I don't think we all know what we're capable of," Gubser said on her lunch break from her job at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, where she works in the fetal cardiac unit. She added that she hoped her feat would inspire other people to do hard things. Her own swim, she said, was dedicated to a brother and [See [Swimmer](#), B2]

Private security accused of force at UCLA protest

BY CONNOR SHEETS

When authorities launched the first of many flash-bang-style devices early on the morning of May 2, it shattered the relative calm of UCLA's pro-Palestinian encampment and drove a stream of protesters

running toward makeshift barricades that blocked the exits.

Two students said they witnessed a student protester standing near Powell Library attempt to move a metal barrier to accommodate the people fleeing. Instead, he was met with force by members of Apex Security

Group, according to the witnesses, who were interviewed together and requested anonymity in fear of retaliation by the university or law enforcement.

"Members of the security team started attacking him. I think it was around five to seven of the security guards," one of the students

said. "Two or three of them were trying to hit him on the head, and the others were trying to restrain him."

The protester broke free from the private guards and fled. Within minutes, a deep bruise materialized on the young man's face where one of the guards had punched him, the second student wit-

ness said. The student who was allegedly hit was not identified and could not be reached for comment.

"It was really unwarranted. He just, like, moved back a little bit and then they attacked," the second witness said. "It was a really scary feeling. I'd never seen [See [Security](#), B4]

Deal is reached in man's death in custody

By Terry Castleman

Riverside County and the family of a man who died in custody in 2020 have reached a \$7.5-million settlement, a lawyer for the family said.

Christopher Zumwalt, a 39-year-old construction worker who specialized in remodeling kitchens, was detained in October 2020 by the Riverside County Sheriff's Office.

At the time, "he was temporarily estranged from his girlfriend and was upset," said John Burton, a lawyer who represented Zumwalt's three children, "and he took methamphetamine, which was not typical of him."

A neighbor called the police after Zumwalt had an adverse reaction to the drug. When arrested, "he was completely cooperative with the police," Burton said.

Video from the Sheriff's Office shared with The Times by Burton confirmed that Zumwalt was cooperative during his arrest and booking at Larry D. Smith Correctional Facility in Banning.

While being fingerprinted, Zumwalt was left to sit unrestrained on a bench and complied with officers' orders, the video showed.

He was placed in a sobering cell, first with another inmate and then alone, for over 10 hours, during which "he became psychotic," according to Burton.

On the video, Zumwalt yelled, pounded on the door to the cell and stripped naked. At one point he reached into the toilet, "thinking there was money in there," Burton said.

A nurse wanted to do a medical evaluation, but the unrestrained inmate was too agitated. Officials called in an emergency response team of about a dozen officers clad in helmets and gas masks.

The video shows officers throwing canisters of tear gas and a flash-bang grenade into the cell as Zumwalt screams. When officers enter the cell, they can be seen wrestling Zumwalt to the floor in the smoke-filled room.

Officers tased Zumwalt in a struggle that lasted several minutes before subduing him and placing him in a restraint chair with a covering over his head and a towel over his naked midsection.

The restraints were tied too tightly, preventing him from breathing freely, according to Burton. Officers wheeled Zumwalt to another cell, closed the door and left him there alone for nearly 10 minutes before entering the room to find him unresponsive, the video showed.

Paramedics were able to resuscitate Zumwalt, but he had suffered "too much cardiac down time, too much brain damage," Burton said. He was put on life support and died two days later.

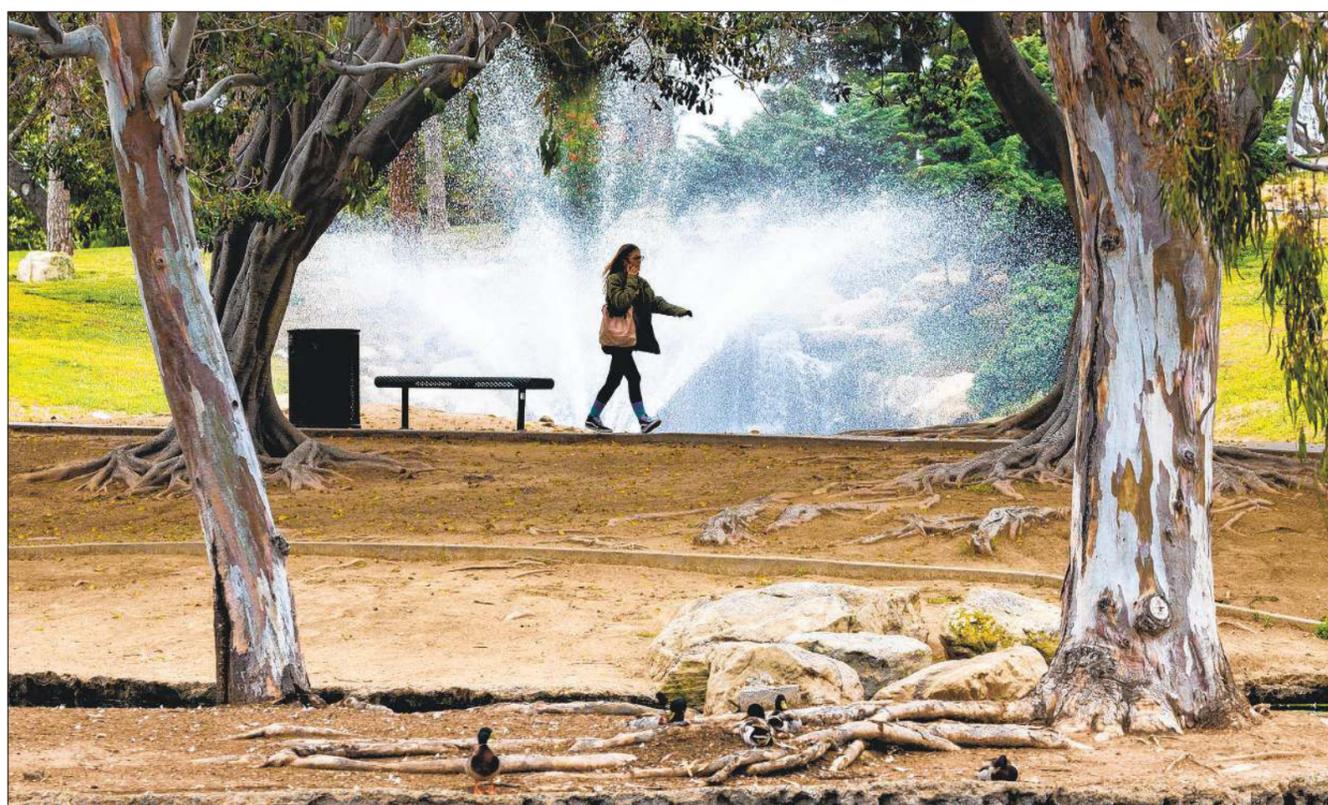
Zumwalt's family did not know anything about the incident until they found out he was comatose at a hospital, according to Burton. The county told them he had had a medical emergency in jail. Eventually, the family obtained reports from the county indicating that force had been used on Zumwalt. Lawyers were able to get body cam and jail videos from the Sheriff's Office.

The videos "are so powerful and tell such a clear story that that's what influenced the defense to settle," Burton said.

Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco said the fault lay entirely with Zumwalt.

"The facts of this case clearly show the actions of our deputies were appropriate and lawful," Bianco said. "The actions of Mr. Zumwalt while in a methamphetamine-induced psychosis caused his death. Fighting with deputies, required to do their job, increased his already taxed circulatory system."

In February 2023, the state attorney general opened a civil rights investigation into the Riverside County Sheriff's Office amid allegations of excessive force against detainees and inhumane jail conditions.



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

A WALK IN THE PARK

A woman passes a fountain at TeWinkle Park in Costa Mesa on Thursday. The recent May gray weather shows no sign of letting up, with cool temperatures, a strong marine layer even inland and possible drizzle in the forecast for Friday. **WEATHER, B6**

Woman is first to swim west to the Farallones

[Swimmer, from B1] friends who are battling cancer.

The Farallones are a fog-shrouded, nautically menacing string of islands west of San Francisco that Native Americans believed were a home for the spirits of the dead. Though just off the coast of one of the world's most famous cities, they are a national wildlife refuge, thus uninhabited, and closed to the public.

Gubser, who lives in Pacifica, just south of San Francisco, would look out and see them almost every day — provided they were visible.

"They're mysterious. They're creepy. They're captivating," she said. "I'm just drawn to them."

But for a long time, Gubser wasn't swimming anywhere, let alone across a gulf considered among the most treacherous in the world.

She had a swimming scholarship to the University of Michigan, where she was a backstroker. But when she left college, she left swimming as well.

Then, about 10 years ago, a friend challenged her to join him on an open-water swim. After some amount of cajoling, Gubser finally showed up to meet him at the South End Rowing Club, the famed open-water swim club in San Francisco just across the bay from Alcatraz.

"I started crying," Gubser said, recalling that first

day on the beach.

"I was terrified. I put my feet in; my feet were freezing." How was she going to put her whole body in that water?

Eventually, she got in and began to swim. And as she warmed up, something remarkable happened: "Every cell in my body was alive," she said.

Almost from that day, she was hooked on open-water swimming.

She joined the South End Rowing Club for its annual swim from Alcatraz back to the club.

She swam beneath the Golden Gate Bridge, and across Santa Monica Bay, and from Santa Catalina Island to the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

"It just felt so fun," she said, adding that her children thought she was "absolutely bonkers."

She swam around Manhattan, and from Ireland to Scotland, and from Spain to Africa.

But nearly every day, she would look out from her little town, and there the Farallones would be.

About five years ago, she decided she wanted to attempt it.

But achieving it, said Evan Morrison, the co-founder of the Marathon Swimmers Federation, requires not just incredible grit and hard training but also the right currents and weather conditions.

The area around the Far-

allones is a breeding ground for great white sharks, but in May many of them head elsewhere.

On May 11, with weather conditions judged to be favorable, Gubser got into the water just before 3:30 a.m. She wore a black and white swimsuit — an attempt to fool sharks into thinking she might be an orca — and a swim cap with a light on it, so her support team could see her.

The quest started late because a container ship came through.

But once she was in the water, Gubser began to swim. For the first four hours, she was lucky: An ebb tide carried her about 10 miles.

"I sang verses to songs," she said. "I solved four or five world problems in my head."

The remaining 19.7 miles would take 13 more hours.

When she began swimming, the water temperature was in the 50s. But in the cold currents that swirl around the Farallones, it reached 43 degrees at one point.

"I thought to myself, if I have to do this for much longer, I don't know if I can," she said. But she didn't want to stop, either.

As Gubser swam, a crew followed her in a small boat, tossing her nourishment at various intervals. One person kept an eye on her at all times, said Sarah Roberts, a friend and fellow open-water swimmer who

was on the boat. Another person kept a sharp eye out for sharks.

At one point, the fog descended, and there was "this sense of creepiness, of this wild, feral place."

A few miles from the finish point, the group spotted a dead sealion floating in the water. This gave everyone pause.

"There's really only one reason for it to be dead," Roberts noted, and that is "because something chomped it."

Should they pull Gubser out of the water?

She kept swimming. "They did not tell me [about that]," Gubser said. "Which was a good thing."

She reached the buoy that was her endpoint just after sunset. The group on the boat erupted into cheers.

Gubser burst into tears. She yelled: "I did it."

Gubser's crew pulled her into the boat. Her skin was ice cold, Roberts said, and everyone went to work trying to warm her up, drenching her in warm water, plying her with hot tea, and eventually wrapping her in an electric blanket.

Roberts recalled hearing Gubser say something to the effect of: "I can't believe I did that."

Morrison, the co-founder of Marathon Swimmers, said Gubser is "a beloved member of the open-water swimming community" known for her enthusiasm and support for other swim-

mers. "It couldn't happen to a better person," he said of her accomplishment.

One of Gubser's teammates took detailed notes of her odyssey, and once they have been submitted to Marathon Swimmers and reviewed, her swim will be officially ratified, Morrison said.

By last week, Gubser was sufficiently recovered that she was back at work.

What she wanted others to take from her swim, she said, was that almost anyone is capable of an astonishing feat.

She is 55, and a grandmother to boot. "If I was in a room of elite athletes," she said, "I would be extremely underwhelming."

"I just think it is amazing that I can do this," she added.

There is no monetary prize for the swim, and when asked if her life would change as a result of it, Gubser said: "I'm still at work today, aren't I?"

Still, she will get one perk. As she swam toward the island, the Coast Guard radio traffic alerted a researcher on the Farallones that she was coming. The man walked down to the beach and took photos of her as she finished her swim.

Then he invited her back for a special tour of the island.

She accepted, but said: "I'm not going to swim there."

Forever Trumpers' toxic masculinity is a badge of honor

[Chabria, from B1]

Anything else is "woke," a code word for weak and unmanly, by that Republican definition.

Obviously, this retrograde rumba is a dance that goes far beyond Trump — Tucker Carlson, Andrew Tate, Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley, who wrote an entire book on the "masculine virtues America needs." Pick your skeezy partner.

Kansas City Chiefs kicker Harrison Butker, he of the too-tight pants, made headlines recently for a commencement speech at a Catholic university where he offered this imperious gem: "Be unapologetic in your masculinity, fighting against the cultural emasculation of men. ... As men, we set the tone of the culture, and when that is absent, disorder, dysfunction and chaos set in."

Thor, is your sugar getting low?

Literally, so out of touch that even the Benedictine nuns clapped back, pointing out that lots of women — including nuns — happily and successfully contribute to the world.

But Butker isn't out of touch with the power men who hold the trump we have given them — the ones who are attempting to ban or outlaw abortion, birth control, IVF, gay marriage, LGBTQ+ rights, drag shows, vote-by-mail, immigration and children's books including "The Adventures

of Captain Underpants."

"Part of what is now happening with Republicans is they are trying to legalize these cultural visions of masculinity," said Pascoe.

But just ask Hillary Clinton how far the Democrats have come when it comes to pushing back on these musty masculine ideals, or Kamala Harris for that matter.

Yes, Democrats stand up for the rights of women and vulnerable groups — but they "are just as wedded to claims about what a real man is," said Pascoe.

That can be especially true in Black communities and other communities of color, where traditional notions of manhood run deep. "You spend time in the Black community, you know that there is some resonance in this type of messaging," Hakeem Jefferson told me.

Jefferson is an assistant professor of political science at Stanford, and I called him to talk about another commencement speech — the one Biden recently gave at Morehouse College, an all-male, historically Black university in Atlanta, one whose graduates, known as "Morehouse Men," are celebrated for accomplishment.

Jefferson points out that there is great pressure on men of the Morehouse variety to prove wrong the racist stereotypes of Black males as being lazy or criminal —



JAY L. CLENDENIN Los Angeles Times

A TRUMP supporter holds a flag in Beverly Gardens Park in Beverly Hills on election night, Nov. 3, 2020.

to embrace a kind of Barack Obama masculinity that is solid and irreproachable.

It can sound like the same values Trump espouses, but at heart is a rebuttal. The idea that white masculinity is under any sort of attack is a notion Jefferson finds "dangerous."

He says what's "troubling about Republicans taking hold of manhood as a category in need of defending" is that they're suggesting that anyone who threatens that power is out of line.

That's what Biden's speech was about. Though many news accounts focused on what Biden said about Gaza and college protests, he also told graduates that Republicans "peddle a fiction, a caricature of what being a man is about — tough talk, abusing power, bigotry."

"But that's not you. It's

not us. You all know and demonstrate what it really means to be a man. Being a man is about the strength of respect and dignity. It's about showing up because it's too late if you have to ask. It's about giving hate no safe harbor and leaving no one behind and defending freedoms. It's about standing up to the abuse of power, whether physical, economic or psychological."

That is lovely, and wonderful, and ideals that every human should have. And I stress human.

Biden's view of manly virtue only goes so far because he leaves the notion of power and leadership in the hands of men, and certain men at that.

Don't get me wrong, I am all-in for decent grandpa. But this blind adherence to traditional masculinity is how we end up with all the

current problems framed as women's issues or attacks on LGBTQ+ people.

Democratic men need to speak up not in defense of others, but in defense of themselves.

There are Harry Styles men, Pete Buttigieg men, Lil Nas X men, Amal Clooney's husband men.

Seriously, God loves wondrous variety — own it.

Democrats need to be talking about masculinity from their own experience — what does it mean to be a gay father, a trans husband, a girl dad of any persuasion?

What does masculinity mean when it's not tied to expectation, subjugation or Trump?

Failing to start that conversation, is "proving a disaster and it's backing Democrats into a corner," warns Williams, the gender studies professor.

She argues that for the left to counter these legislative attacks that have a certain vision of masculinity at their core, they need to present a new and more inclusive vision of what it means to be a man.

Imagine if Biden actually talked about all the different ways to be a man and to be masculine. If he stepped away from the traditional and embraced the diversity that truly defines the Democratic Party.

"I don't think he's going to do that, but imagine how powerful it would be," Pascoe said.

CITY & STATE

Honoring 'artists' who cherish Skid Row

Walk the Talk programs and parade celebrate side of the neighborhood not often seen

BY JULISSA JAMES

Hundreds of artists are set to parade through the streets of Skid Row Saturday, a brass band booming behind them, in a biennial celebration known as Walk the Talk, which has taken place in Los Angeles since 2012.

Put on by the Los Angeles Poverty Department — a performance group and arts program founded by director-performer-activist John Malpede in 1985 — the parade honors the neighborhood's artists, activists and community members.

"We wanted to acknowledge the breadth of people that are engaged with bettering the community, and especially the residents who might not be as visible as some of the other people," Malpede said. Too many people see Skid Row as a transient space, and, in many ways, Walk the Talk is about acknowledging Skid Row as a home, including a home to artists.

"Skid Row, it's a gregarious community," Malpede says.

Along the route Saturday, several people will be holding up smiling portraits of themselves, part of a long-held tradition in which the parade honors people from the neighborhood. This year's portraits were created by Armenian artist Hayk Makhmuryan, who imagines honorees as landmarks of the neighborhood.

Ahead of Walk the Talk, a number of the honorees spoke about what the neighborhood has taught them about home and belonging. The conversations have been edited for length and clarity.

Hayk Makhmuryan

Art worker, community organizer and founder of Doodles Without Borders

Each one of the portraits has a map of a Skid Row neighborhood — 3rd to 7th and Alameda to Main — and then zooms in on one part and imagines, for instance, a street being named after Gary Brown. The work that happens in the Skid Row neighborhood is not in a vacuum. It's part of the larger work. It's important when we make global connections — there is a genocide happening in Palestine now — to ask how it is related. Because actually, it is related to things that happen that are sometimes very local. One direct thing is that the money that's not going to places like the Skid Row neighborhood is going overseas to bombs.

Linda Leigh

Artist, healer, advocate involved with Street Symphony, Urban Voices Project, Studio 526, Skid Row Coffee, LA CAN Food and Wellness Committee, Skid Row Community Refresh Spot and the Skid Row Action Plan

This is my favorite spot [the People Concern's Studio 526]. This is where home is for me. This is where I had the sense of community, where I'm not only working, but I'm socializing. Lots of friendships. Learned a lot of different things, not just with the art that I do, but I learned how to do zines, I learned how to make books, we did creative writing and I got published. One thing I learned being in this com-



Photographs by NICHELLE DAILEY For The Times

HAYK MAKHMURYAN, a community organizer, says, "The work that happens in the Skid Row neighborhood is not in a vacuum. It's part of the larger work. It's important when we make global connections."

munity is that home is a fallacy. It changes your perspective and you start thinking, "What is home?" You might have an idea of what the home is but not all people have that. [People in this community], they create. Being like in the arts, what they do with the things that we throw away — oh, my God, it's magnificent. Absolutely magnificent.

Kayo Anderson

Minister of music and artistic development with the Row Church Without Walls and Creating Justice L.A.

I started the Freedom Singers at Los Angeles Community Action Network. That was really amazing, learning about advocacy. What was missing was a place where the people drive the energy. Now we have the Artist Village [in the Creating Justice L.A. Peace and Healing Center]. I wanted to pull artists together so we can create collectively, so that everybody's voice can get out there and be heard and also really charge artists with the activism piece.

Music in this community ... I've sung many, many times, marched with many, many folks. Every Friday night, I'm out here at 7 p.m. on the street, having church with Pastor Cue. I show up for Skid Row when asked. Period.

Adelene Bertha

Senior peer support specialist with the Downtown Women's Center, co-chair of the L.A. City Skid Row Park Advisory Board and homeless advocate

I am a previous Skid Row resident. I've stayed in Skid Row since 2014. I started off as a previously homeless youth at the age of 16. The focus of my work has had to do a lot with using my public speaking to talk about the homeless experience for youth in Skid Row, and to connect with women and young girls about my lived experience. I always say that you don't have to have four walls to feel at home. I didn't have anywhere that I couldn't literally call home, but I felt like I was home when I was around the people of Skid Row. Their conversations, their interactions, their honesty — be-



LINDA LEIGH, an artist and healer, says of the People Concern's Studio 526: "This is where home is for me. This is where I had the sense of community."



KAYO ANDERSON, a musician, says, "I wanted to pull artists together so we can create collectively, so that everybody's voice can get out there and be heard."

cause they'll be honest with you, oh my goodness, they're not afraid to say whatever they want to say to your face — just them being their authentic self to you made me feel like, this is what home should be like.

"Downtown" Gary Brown

Musician, painter and longtime member of Skid Row arts scene

I play keyboards and mostly the percussion or the rhythm section and saxophone. I started playing out in the streets, on Hollywood,

on corners, in downtown L.A. Where we are now is a beautiful place, it's where we started, actually. LAMP [now the People Concern's Studio 526] used to be right here. It's significant. It's the beginning of me getting out of the predicament that I was in in the streets. Artists were coming from everywhere. It was beautiful while it was here. It started in 1999, and in 2003 they moved into [this building]. Ever since 1999 I've been involved in that community. It's always been a great community. It's a different way of life. I thank God that I'm still able to walk, talk, and haven't been

shot or stabbed. A lot of people take it for granted. Many homeless people are upset or pressed about being in this predicament, but people have strived, the community has come together, we have people demanding our rights. God is on our side.

Clancey Cornell

Archival projects manager at Skid Row History Museum & Archive

I started first as a volunteer in Skid Row with the LAMP arts program, which is now Studio 526. And then I started volunteering with the Los Angeles Poverty De-

partment. Showing up at the art studio every week, I found myself deepening into the community and making a lot of friends and finding myself in this position of supporting community events that wanted to happen here. Gary Brown and Linda Leigh specifically frequented the arts programs, so that was my entry point into Skid Row.

I had an interest in community archives and radical archives because I was someone who loves history, social justice and art. I started to get really interested in the power of archives as an activist tool for justice and for healing and memory preservation. There's a stereotype around Skid Row that it's a transient community of un-housed folks: people are just passing through or people who hit rock bottom and stay there. What you learn over time and being in this community is that a bit of that is true — people do land in Skid Row, you could say — but people also live in Skid Row, make it their life and their community.

Sieglinde von Deffner

L.A. County Skid Row coordinator for the Department of Health Services

You have to love this place. You have to start with loving. There are many people who didn't speak to me for the first two years, because the one thing I'll tell you is everybody's watching. Are you going to do what you said you were gonna do? What are you really doing out here? Let me watch you before I even get to the point of words. There is more love, caring and giving from one person who has nothing to another than I've ever seen in my life. We've forced people into just the most basic of survival skills, so there are also challenging acts of brutality, because of the conditions we forced people to live in. [But] this is a community that looks out for each other. We have to remember that home and community is everybody.

Lorinda Hawkins Smith

Actor, singer, video maker, author, playwright and advocate against domestic violence

I'm an activist, which means I marry being an activist to art. In whatever we are touching, there's gonna be an activism component. [I'm producing] a play. It's been a fight in some ways because I want theater to be accessible and I know we struggle. Even our theater company, just having enough money to even put on the show. But what is the point of putting on a show if everybody can't see it?

I was living in a [single-room occupancy] in Skid Row, married, my husband was property managing that building. And my son was living with us in his last year of high school. My son made it into UC Berkeley. I was doing an open mic event downtown, and we wanted to help my son financially, so we were asking for people to give at the open mic. But then in the place where I was living in Skid Row, they did so much more. Here are people who have the least, doing the most.

Victim survives stabbing, area's latest mass transit violence

BY GRACE TOOHEY

A person was stabbed Tuesday aboard a Los Angeles Metro bus in Lynwood, the latest incident of bloodshed linked to the county's mass transit system, which is struggling to keep commuters safe.

The passenger, identified only as an adult, was stabbed in the leg and taken to a hospital, where they were listed in stable condition, according to a statement from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Deputies and an emer-

gency medical team responded to the assault just after 11 a.m. at the intersection of Long Beach Boulevard and Norton Avenue in Lynwood, according to the Sheriff's Department and the L.A. County Fire Department.

A person of interest has been detained, said sheriff's spokesperson Deputy Miguel Meza, but he didn't share details about what led to the stabbing or arrest.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn called Tuesday's stabbing "another grim reason that we need a surge of law enforcement on our transit system."

"People who rely on Metro every day need to know they can take our buses and trains safely," Hahn, vice chair of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority board of directors, said in a statement.

"I appreciate our Sheriff's deputies who responded to the scene quickly and have detained a person of interest," she added. "Thankfully, I am told that the victim's injuries are not life threatening. I am praying for their quick recovery, and I am so sorry that they had to endure this."

The attack follows a

spate of violent incidents across Metro's bus and rail system, including the fatal stabbing of a 66-year-old grandmother from Nicaragua who was riding the B Line in late April.

Just last week, a father from East Los Angeles was shot in the head and killed while riding a bus home from work.

Three people were also stabbed last week in two separate, nonfatal incidents, and in mid-April, a bus driver was stabbed while on the job.

Patrick Chandler, a spokesperson for Metro, said Tuesday that the

agency "shares the concerns of our employees and customers about the increased severity of crime we are seeing in our cities and on the Metro system, like the one onboard a Metro bus in the city of Lynwood."

Chandler did not immediately respond to questions about growing safety concerns, but said Metro is hoping Tuesday's stabbing victim makes a full recovery and commended the Sheriff's Department for promptly apprehending a suspect.

Despite several recent violent incidents against passengers and staff, Metro offi-

cials say the rate of crimes per passenger has decreased of late, with a little more than five crimes reported per million boardings in March. That was about 28% lower than the rate in February and 41% lower than in March 2023.

Metro has also been looking into, and in some cases started implementing, security improvements, including adding more security personnel on buses and creating barriers to protect drivers.

Times staff writers Nathan Solis and Rachel Uranga contributed to this report.

Private security accused of using force

[Security, from B1] someone get beat up like that in person before.”

The incident was the first of at least two that witnesses said involved Apex Security Group guards acting aggressively at UCLA in recent weeks. Witnesses who spoke with The Times accused the guards of assaulting and accosting demonstrators who posed no threat and leaving the scene at a key moment on May 1 as counter-protesters escalated violence that left at least 30 people injured.

Apex and its parent company, the Northridge-based security giant Contemporary Services Corp., did not respond to requests for comment. Apex’s website says it employs “off-duty and retired law enforcement officers who provide supplemental services for clients that require support above and beyond standard event security and crowd management services.”

Hired guards are increasingly ubiquitous at college protests, with Apex and CSC contracted for security on campuses from Los Angeles to New York. The guards perform crowd control and many of the duties traditionally carried out by police officers, and can carry weapons if properly licensed. They can detain people, but typically as private citizens, not sworn law enforcement, which means they enjoy fewer of the legal protections afforded police. Entry-level private security guards — who in many cases receive just a few days of training — are often directed by those who hire them to use force only as a last resort.

It’s unclear what instructions Apex had from UCLA.

Ryan King, a spokesman for the office of the University of California’s president, Michael V. Drake, said in an email that Drake announced on May 7 “an independent investigation” into what led to the violence on April 30. The university did not respond directly to questions about its relationships with Apex and CSC or the incidents with the firms on campus.

UC “awaits the findings of that investigation,” King said. He added that the 10 UC campuses each have their own police departments “that have control and jurisdiction on their respective campuses and may request local law enforcement support or contract for additional security assistance as necessary. Each campus coordinates their response to conditions on the ground with their respective leadership.”

Some protesters at UCLA and beyond have questioned why universities and law enforcement agencies increasingly rely on private security firms when cracking down on overwhelmingly nonviolent protests.

But contracting with security companies is “a common and reasonable practice,” according to Rick Santoro, a New Jersey-based security expert with more than 30 years of experience.

“Typically, public law enforcement agencies do not have the resources to provide security services on a long-term basis in situations such as labor actions [and] civil unrest,” he said via email. “It’s practical and necessary in many cases for colleges and universities to use private security contractors either exclusively or to supplement” police in such situations.

At UCLA, where Apex guards were accused of getting physical with some students on May 2, they were also filmed standing by the previous night as some pro-Israel protesters tore down



TWO UCLA students who witnessed the recent campus protests against the Israel-Hamas war say employees of Apex Security Group beat an activist who posed no threat. Above, a guard with the firm’s parent company.

barricades and incited violence.

The Apex guards, who appeared to have been unarmed, were brought in at the behest of former UCLA Police Chief John Thomas, who was removed from the post this week as he faced withering criticism over his handling of the protests.

University leaders had repeatedly directed Thomas to create a safety plan, three sources told The Times this month. He was told, the sources said, to spend whatever was necessary to maintain peace and order. Thomas developed a plan, the sources said, to deploy private security who would not be authorized to arrest anyone and who were told to contact the UCLA police if the situation on the ground escalated. Whether Apex personnel received directions to leave the scene in the event of violence remains unknown.

But a group of Apex security guards posted at the perimeter of the encampment ultimately left without intervening, according to witnesses and video from the scene. Mayhem ensued, with clashes between the opposing groups of protesters lasting until police in riot gear arrived more than two hours later.

::

Allegations of physical altercations between Apex personnel and student protesters did not stop with the dismantling of the camp.

On May 15, a 2023 UCLA graduate returned to the campus to participate in a pro-Palestinian demonstration. The alum, who uses the pronouns “they” and “her,” said they had scrawled messages including “Free Palestine” and “How many people did you kill today?” in chalk on sidewalks and school buildings as the marchers made their way across the Westwood campus.

As the procession wound down near Shapiro Fountain, about 10 Apex guards gathered around the 5-foot-tall protester, who asked to remain anonymous, citing concerns about retaliation by law enforcement.

Three men wearing black windbreakers with APEX SECURITY GROUP emblazoned in white letters across the back and light khaki pants can be seen grabbing them by the arms in videos of the incident reviewed by The Times. Several CSC

guards are visible in the background of one of the videos.

“Let them go. You’re not a f—ing cop,” an onlooker yelled at one of the Apex guards. “What are you doing to them? Why are you grabbing them?”

The alum was released moments later as a guard took their tote bag and opened it up on a nearby ledge.

“Give me back my bag, you f—ing pig,” they yelled as the guard rifled through the bag’s contents before pulling out a red pen and holding it up in the air.

“Come here, Miss, here’s your bag back. I have her marker that you graffitied with. Here you go,” the guard said loudly. The alum yelled back that it was a pen, not a marker. “Hold on. So she graffitied, so everybody knows. And you can’t graffit. Here you go. Here’s your bag back.”

The alum maintained they were drawing in chalk, not making graffiti.

Apex did not respond to questions about the incident.

There have been other recent instances of protesters accusing the company of harsh tactics. In January, Apex sent dozens of guards to Berkeley, where they assisted in the clearing of tents and makeshift homes erected in People’s Park a few blocks from UC Berkeley in an attempt to block the redevelopment of the landmark site.

Columbia University

used the firm as part of its controversial response to a pro-Palestinian protest movement last month.

“One security guard said the university’s contractor, Apex Security Group Inc., was recruiting more workers for its 7 p.m.-to-7 a.m. shift at a rate of \$240 a day,” the New York Post reported.

The company has branches in more than a dozen cities and regularly works high-profile gigs, including Super Bowl LVIII in Las Vegas, L.A. Rams and Chargers games, and other major events.

Apex’s parent company, CSC, was founded in 1967 by Damon Zumwalt, then a student athlete at UCLA. Unlike the off-duty and retired officers hired by Apex, the larger firm recruits security guards who have varying backgrounds, using a screening process that is less stringent compared with law enforcement agencies.

California requires a few dozen hours of training to become a licensed security guard.

Many police departments, including the LAPD, require officers to complete a six-month stint in a police academy, followed by additional months of field training.

As a result, there’s a vast pay gap between low-end private security personnel and sworn law enforcement officers. Most security guards make little more than minimum wage versus well over \$100,000 a year plus

government benefits for experienced cops.

Law enforcement veterans like those Apex hires tend to be more calm and efficient in high-stress situations than their civilian counterparts, according to James F. Pastor, an attorney who runs a security consulting firm in Florida.

Many who contract with the company are looking for a higher level of service and capacity than a more all-purpose firm like CSC can provide. But there can be a flip side to years of experience, said Pastor, a former Chicago police officer.

“There’s a lot of good security officers out there that can manage people, that have experience in de-escalation techniques and communication techniques and just frankly using a level of professionalism to get the job done without getting too physical,” he said, but “there’s a lot of cops who lose that ability either through frustration or burnout over the years.”

Even with incidents like those alleged at UCLA, private guards are here to stay at concerts, sporting events and on college campuses.

“What I see now is a driving towards private security,” Pastor said. “I think post-George Floyd, the reality is police are having a much more difficult time recruiting and keeping trained police officers. So I think that tide is turning where they’re seeing the value of having a private security officer next to them.”

State bill to allow pot cafes passes in Assembly

BY JULIA WICK

A bill that would allow Amsterdam-style cannabis cafes in California passed the state Assembly this week on a 49-4 vote and is headed to the Senate. But even if the Legislature’s upper chamber approves AB 1775, legalization remains far from a sure thing.

Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed a prior iteration of the bill in October, citing the state’s long-standing smoke-free workplace protections.

The bill would authorize local jurisdictions to allow licensed cannabis retailers to prepare and sell non-cannabis food and nonalcoholic beverages. The bill would also allow the cafes to host live music and other performances.

Under current state law, patrons can consume cannabis at a dispensary, but dispensaries can’t legally sell non-cannabis products like coffee and food, as is legal in Amsterdam.

California’s symbolic position at the apex of weed culture has long been rivaled by the Dutch capital, where cannabis cafes have been legal since the 1970s.

Assemblymember Matt Haney (D-San Francisco), who introduced the legislation, has framed it as a matter of fairness. He argues that the cafes would level the playing field for the state’s highly taxed and regulated legal weed industry, allowing legitimate businesses to compete with black-market sellers who don’t operate under the same constraints.

“This is a bill that supports our legal small businesses that just want to diversify their businesses and do the right thing,” Haney said Monday on the Assembly floor. “The illicit illegal market is continuing to grow and thrive, while our legal cannabis market is struggling.”

Haney cited the governor’s prior veto, saying he had been working to address Newsom’s concerns through amendments to the bill. The new version would prohibit cannabis smoking or vaping where food is being prepared or stored, creating separation between where people are consuming cannabis and other work areas.

Rather than taking a blunt statewide approach, the bill would put the decision to allow cannabis cafes in the hands of local jurisdictions. Should a jurisdiction decide to green-light the lounges, it would have to hash out its own permitting process and regulations.

West Hollywood put a licensing system in place several years ago, and a handful of cannabis lounges operate within the city’s 1.89 square miles. The West Hollywood businesses operate with workarounds that separate the food businesses, The Times has reported. No such licensing system exists in Los Angeles.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, the American Heart Assn. and the American Lung Assn. have all opposed the bill, raising concerns about the health effects of secondhand marijuana smoke. They argue that the bill would undo hard-fought workplace protections.

Marijuana advocacy group Americans for Safe Access has argued that patrons and employees would face no health risks because of the highly regulated nature of such establishments.

A Newsom spokesperson declined to comment on pending legislation.

Times staff writer Nathan Solis contributed to this report.



ROBERT GAUTHIER L.A. Times
WEST HOLLYWOOD allows cannabis cafes.

3 million on road expected for Memorial Day weekend

[Memorial Day, from B1] dication of what’s to come for summer, so there could be more records ahead, said Doug Shupe, a regional spokesperson for AAA.

The increased number of travelers is a sign that people need a break and are wanting to get out and connect, even though the cost of goods and services is higher these days, he said.

“What we typically see in these travel forecasts is people prioritize travel in their budgets,” Shupe said.

And a big part of that budget this year is allocating enough funds for filling their gas tanks.

California’s gas price average is \$5.17 — nearly \$2 more than the national average of \$3.61.

In the Los Angeles-Long Beach metro area, a gallon of regular self-serve gasoline costs just under the state average: \$5.13.

This time last year, the price was \$4.86.

In a bit of good news, prices have been dropping since last week, when the cost was \$5.22.

But don’t get too excited, Shupe said, noting that gas costs may creep up further.

“What we don’t know is the wild card of crude oil,” he said. “Unlike last year there are two wars, in the Middle East and Ukraine, and that can cause some turmoil in the oil market.”

Despite the tensions overseas, the potentially vol-

atile effect on crude oil prices has been kept in check by spare production, according to recent U.S. Energy Information Administration projections. If holders choose to use it, the spare crude oil supply can be available to the market in the event of short-term disruptions.

Historically, gas prices tend to rise gradually in the spring and peak in late summer, when people drive more frequently, according to the EIA.

California’s prices also are affected by the shift to a different fuel blend in warmer weather, a transition that already has taken place.

As you prepare for your weekend plans, experts say factor in fuel-efficiency tips and plan for where you’ll fuel up. Both can save you money.

Fuel-efficiency tips

Here’s a list of simple things you can do to squeeze a few extra miles out of each gallon of gas in your tank.

- **Don’t put off repairs:** Ignoring your check engine light could not only result in costly extra repairs but also increase your gasoline usage. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, fixing a serious maintenance problem, such as a faulty oxygen sensor, can improve your mileage by as much as 40%.
- **Check your tire pres-**

sure: Driving with deflated tires can cost motorists two or three miles per gallon, according to the EPA.

■ **Slow and steady wins the race:** Go the speed limit, because the faster a vehicle is moving, the more fuel you’re burning.

■ **Pack your luggage inside the car:** Putting your belongings in the overhead luggage rack can cause your car to drag, reducing fuel efficiency. If you can, keep items inside the trunk.

■ **Lighten the load:** Pack lightly on road trips. The less weight you’re carrying, the better your fuel efficiency.

Shop around for gas

While you’re mapping out your travel route, consider searching for where you’ll stop for gas.

There are several apps and websites that can help you find lower prices:

- **The Auto Club app** for AAA members shows the closest gas stations with the lowest amounts, anywhere in the United States.
- **In its app and on its website,** Gasbuddy displays real-time pump prices near you.
- **The Gas Guru app** can search for gas stations by price, fuel grade and distance, as well as show prices in your area.
- **Mapquest, Google Maps and Waze** have a feature that enables you to see gas prices on the route of your trip.

Obituaries

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Marsha J. Feldman
Mount Sinai Mem Parks -
Simi Valley 800-600-0076
www.mountsinainaparks.org

Max Lieberman
Mount Sinai Mem Parks -
Simi Valley 800-600-0076
www.mountsinainaparks.org

VITA LAZARUS GERMAIN
Attended UCLA. In 1950’s studied in London under Anna Freud and became a preschool director in Cleveland. Married 55 years, beloved husband Donald died in 2013. Sons Paul, Greg, Dan, Marc. Eight grandchildren. October 6, 1926 - May 6, 2024. Unforgettable!

The year that was 1935
Although a primitive, two-color process was first used in 1922, audiences weren’t impressed by Technicolor until a three-color system appeared in “Becky Sharp.”
latimes.com/archives

Missouri woman's quest for fame, fortune in California goes awry

[Crash, from B1] the radio, made several comments about "attempted murder" on the road and other veiled threats, and accused unnamed people of doing terrible things to get closer to celebrities. She ended with the question, "Do you like my van?" — which family members believe was where she was living.

One person living in a van near where Heflin parked in Venice, who identified himself only as Greg, said he spoke to her on a few occasions, but she appeared to be under the influence of drugs and was incoherent at times.

"You can't help but speak to someone like that when you're all parked close together," Greg said.

Los Angeles City Councilmember Traci Park's office said a a homeless outreach group under contract with the city offered Heflin "services and housing solution."

A spokesperson for her office said they could not disclose specific details about the services but said Park's office remains "committed to addressing the needs of our community through continuous support and outreach."

Hours after the pursuit, Park wrote in a Facebook post: "This is the failed social experiment unfolding in real time. This is not a housing crisis, it is a behavior crisis. We need the resources and legal tools to get unstable, dangerous people out of our neighborhoods. Those

who refuse services continually cannot choose to remain on the streets, terrorizing neighborhoods, and in this case, endangering lives."

The events that led to the crash, which destroyed two private vehicles and several LAPD cruisers, began just after 4:30 a.m. Friday.

The LAPD responded to 3rd and Rose avenues in Venice amid reports of a woman acting erratically. When officers arrived, the woman argued with police while standing next to a white van that was parked diagonally toward the curb, according to residents.

"She woke me up from a dead sleep yelling in the middle of the street," said Greg, who was in his van a few yards from Heflin's. The

parking spots along Rose Avenue between 3rd and 4th avenues feel safer than other parts of the beach communities, he said, because the street is well lighted next to a storage-unit business.

Police tried to calm her, Greg said, but she continued to argue.

Janice James, 58, a musician living in her car around the corner from where the white van had been parked, said she saw the woman jump into the van that morning and rev the engine several times before pulling out of the parking spot.

"That's when she floored it in reverse and just rammed that police SUV," James said. "That shook them up because the SUV moved about two or three feet."

James was afraid the woman in the van would hit other cars as she sped down the narrow street about 50 mph.

"I wouldn't want to lose my car," James said Wednesday morning.

James said she saw video of the police chase as the woman drove erratically before crashing into police vehicles.

Authorities tried to get the van off the road with multiple maneuvers that were ineffective.

"She could have made a great stuntwoman driver," James said.

Police say Heflin got onto the 405 Freeway and began driving in the wrong direction. She eventually crashed into two cars and a tractor-trailer that had stalled on

the freeway.

Motorist David Hill jumped out of his car after the white van crashed into him.

"When that van came to a stop, I wasn't sure who was inside, what they were going to do, if they were going to come out and try to steal my car," Hill told KTTV. "So I immediately got out of my car and came to the shoulder and just waited while police apprehended that suspect."

Authorities say Heflin jumped out and climbed onto the hood of the semi as police swarmed her and took her into custody.

During a court hearing Wednesday, Heflin pleaded not guilty to all charges. She's due back in court June 20 and is being held in lieu of \$695,000 bail.

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Los Angeles Times

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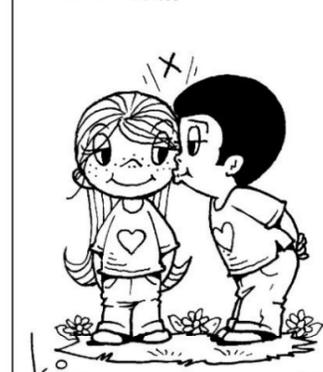
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LEGAL NOTICES
\$50,000 REWARD NOTICE
The City of Los Angeles offers a reward payable at the discretion of the City Council to one or more persons in the sum or sums up to an aggregate maximum total sum of \$50,000 for information leading to the identification and apprehension of the person or persons responsible for the SHOOTING DEATH OF Marcellus Gude, in the City of Los Angeles On June 15, 2021, at approximately 8:20 p.m., 22-year-old Marcellus Gude was standing in the area of 102nd Street and San Pedro Street when unknown suspects exited a passing vehicle and opened fire in Mr. Gude's direction. An 8-year-old girl who was riding her bicycle in the area was also struck by gunfire on the arm. The suspects re-entered their vehicle and fled the scene. The victims were transported to local medical centers, where Mr. Gude was pronounced deceased. The detectives believe a reward may compel member of the public to provide information on the persons responsible for this crime. The person or persons responsible for this crime represent an ongoing threat to the safety of the people of Los Angeles; therefore, it is appropriate for the City of Los Angeles to offer a reward for information leading to the identification, apprehension and conviction of the person or persons responsible

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for this crime. Unless withdrawn or paid by City Council action, this offer of reward shall terminate on, and have no effect after, November 24, 2024. The provisions of payment and all other considerations shall be governed by Chapter 12 of Division 19 of the LAAC Code, as amended by Ordinance Nos. 158157 and 166666. This offer shall be given upon the condition that claimants continued cooperation within the criminal justice system relative to this case and is not available to public officers or employees of the City, their families, persons in law enforcement or persons whose misconduct prompted this reward. If you have any information regarding

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Legal Notices

this case, please call the Los Angeles Police Department at 1-877-LAPD-24-7, 24 hours. C. F. No. 21-0010-524. 5/24/24
CNS-3817125#

CASE NUMBER: 23STPB04881

NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION TO DETERMINE CLAIM TO PROPERTY

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, 111 N. Hill Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012, Stanley Mosk

ESTATE OF (name): GRACE M. KELLY, Decedent

A petition has been filed asking the court to determine a claim to the property identified in 3, and a hearing on the petition has been set. Please refer to the petition for more information.

If you have a claim to the property described in 3, you may attend the hearing and object or respond to the petition. If you do not want to

LEGAL NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES</

THE WEATHER

Today in Southern California

Cool, with low clouds and areas of drizzle: The marine layer will be deep and persistent Friday from the coast to the foothills. Limited clearing is expected in the afternoon across the interior valleys, but closer to the coast there may not be any clearing at all. Localized drizzle is possible throughout the day, with the best chance in the foothills.

5-day forecasts

High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin	Valleys	Beaches	Mountains	Deserts
Today	69 55 Drizzle	68 52 Cloudy, mist	67 57 Drizzle	66 37 A shower in places	93 62 Breezy in p.m.
Saturday	A.M. mist	70/56	A.M. mist	69/54	A.M. mist
Sunday	Some sun	71/56	Partly sunny	72/55	Clearing
Monday	Mostly sunny	74/57	Mostly sunny	76/56	Mostly sunny
Tuesday	Partly sunny	73/57	Mostly sunny	78/57	Partly sunny

Air quality



Surf and sea

Inner waters: Winds west-southwest at 6-12 knots increasing to 15-20 knots in the afternoon. Seas 3-5 feet with a southwest swell. Some fog, drizzle.

Surf zone: The risk of strong rip currents is moderate at most area beaches, but lower at S.B. County beaches.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	1-3'	8 sec	W	58
Ventura	2-4'	8 sec	WSW	58
Los Angeles	2-4'	14 sec	SSW	62
Orange	2-4'	14 sec	SSW	62
San Diego	2-4'	14 sec	SSW	64

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

Time	Height	Direction	Temp
Today 11:30a	3.4 Hi	4:53a	-0.8 Lo
10:00p	6.1 Hi	3:33p	2.4 Lo
Sat. 12:24p	3.3 Hi	5:36a	-0.8 Lo
10:38p	6.0 Hi	4:07p	2.5 Lo

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people
 Las Vegas, 10
 Los Angeles, 30
 Phoenix, 10
 San Francisco, 30

California cities*

City	Thu.		Today		Sat.	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
Anaheim	71	57	72	58	70	55
Avalon/Catalina	57	54	61	54	60	54
Bakersfield	88	60	86	53	80	55
Barstow	90	62	87	56	86	58
Big Bear Lake	69	40	66	37	66	36
Bishop	80	49	80	47	83	49
Burbank	67	35	67	54	67	55
Camarillo	70	54	70	55	70	57
Chatsworth	68	55	67	53	71	52
Chino	74	54	73	56	74	55
Compton	66	58	70	58	71	57
Dana Point	66	58	67	58	66	57
Death Valley	98	89	99	89	98	91
Del Mar	65	59	61	56	61	56
Escondido	70	56	69	55	66	55
Eureka	57	45	57	47	55	44
Fallbrook	66	55	70	55	66	56
Fontana	85	56	82	54	82	54
Fullerton	67	60	72	59	71	56
Hemet	74	51	73	51	70	51
Hesperia	78	50	72	48	70	48
Idyllwild	67	59	68	59	68	60
Irvine	70	50	66	45	65	50

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set

City	Rise	Set
Los Angeles Co.	5:46a/7:54p	5:49a/7:59p
Orange Co.	5:45a/7:53p	5:49a/7:59p
Ventura Co.	9:39p/6:17a	9:44p/6:20a

Almanac

Thursday Downtown readings

Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
High/low	65/59	67/60	61/55
Normal high/low	74/59	76/59	69/53
High/low a year ago	66/61	67/60	62/55
Record high/date	92/1932	85/2017	78/1949
Record low/date	41/1881	53/2021	43/1960

Precipitation Los Angeles Fullerton Ventura*

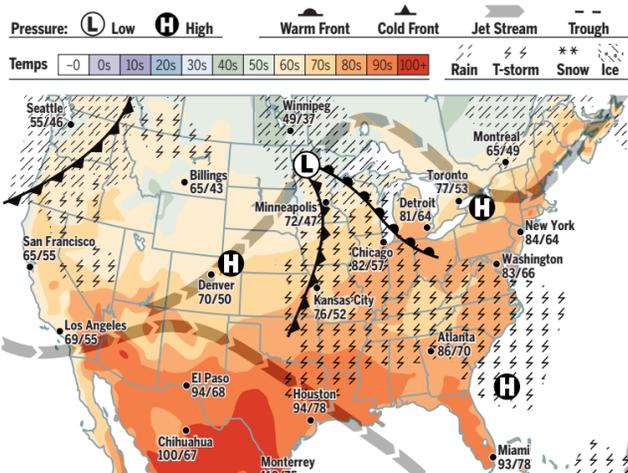
24-hour total (as of 2 p.m.)	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
Season total (since Oct. 1)	22.15	16.59	24.73
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	28.03	21.32	26.97
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	14.08	11.64	15.91
Humidity (high/low)	86/67	77/56	93/67

City	Thu.		Today		Sat.	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
L.A. D'town/USC	66	56	69	55	70	56
L.A. Int'l. Airport	65	57	68	56	68	57
Laguna Beach	62	57	67	58	66	59
Lancaster	82	56	76	54	75	58
Long Beach	70	59	71	59	69	58
Mammoth Lakes	59	42	59	36	64	36
Mission Viejo	64	55	69	56	66	56
Monrovia	71	56	70	55	71	55
Monterey	63	50	64	55	62	49
Mt. Wilson	60	47	51	43	54	49
Needles	98	72	97	69	92	68
Newport Beach	66	59	68	60	67	60
Northridge	71	55	69	54	71	54
Oakland	67	53	63	54	64	50
Oceanside	69	59	70	58	69	59
Ojai	67	50	66	48	68	50
Ontario	72	55	71	57	70	54
Palm Springs	92	66	93	62	89	64
Pasadena	69	57	68	55	68	55
Paso Robles	78	44	74	47	72	42
Redding	86	56	83	54	76	54
Riverside	74	53	73	51	72	54
Sacramento	85	53	75	52	72	49
San Bernardino	75	54	73	55	72	54

City	Thu.		Today		Sat.	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
San Diego	65	60	67	61	66	59
San Francisco	66	52	65	55	65	51
San Gabriel	70	58	70	57	70	57
San Jose	77	52	67	54	69	49
San Luis Obispo	72	53	68	57	70	50
Santa Ana	66	60	69	60	69	60
Santa Barbara	65	52	67	52	69	53
Santa Clarita	70	53	70	48	72	50
Santa Monica Pier	68	58	67	57	67	58
Santa Paula	64	52	68	50	69	53
Santa Rosa	80	45	74	51	71	43
Simi Valley	70	51	68	52	71	52
Tahoe Valley	57	40	62	36	61	31
Temecula	70	54	71	53	67	54
Thousand Oaks	67	52	68	53	69	54
Torrance	66	59	68	59	68	59
UCLA	66	56	67	55	67	56
Van Nuys	71	56	70	53	71	53
Ventura	61	55	65	51	65	53
Whittier Hills	69	57	71	58	71	56
Woodland Hills	70	55	68	54	68	54
Wrightwood	72	49	64	46	62	47
Yorba Linda	68	55	71	56	71	54
Yosemite Valley	71	51	66	44	68	44

Today in North America

Strong storms from the Midwest to the Carolina coast: Severe weather is expected Friday as warm, moist air fuels thunderstorms across the eastern half of the country. Areas around Chicago may have hail, flash flooding and damaging winds, with gusts of up to 75 mph possible.



U.S. cities

THURSDAY'S EXTREMES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 107 in Zapata, Texas
 Low 12 in Gothic, Colo.

City	Thursday		Today		City	Thursday		Today	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo		Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
Albany	79	67	83	52	Seattle	55	46	55	46
Albuquerque	85	51	84	56	Tampa	92	75	92	78
Anchorage	54	41	52	44	Tucson	94	60	95	62
Aspen	62	32	63	37	Tulsa	82	65	84	61
Atlanta	87	70	86	70	Washington, D.C.	86	72	83	66
Austin	93	77	92	72	Wichita	82	57	80	55
Baltimore	83	67	83	62	World				
Boise	62	40	73	49	Acapulco	91	77	91	74
Boston	78	65	83	57	Amsterdam	66	55	65	57
Buffalo	73	62	78	54	Athens	86	72	81	64
Burlington, Vt.	82	70	73	47	Bangkok	91	79	90	80
Charleston, S.C.	90	68	88	70	Barcelona	68	59	70	58
Charlotte	87	68	83	64	Berlin	75	59	75	58
Chicago	80	58	82	57	Cabo San Lucas	93	74	92	75
Cincinnati	75	61	82	66	Cairo	102	82	90	70
Cleveland	79	57	83	50	Dubai	100	84	100	84
Columbia, S.C.	89	68	86	65	Dublin	55	48	56	46
Columbus	78	64	84	65	Havana	91	71	92	71
Dallas/Ft.Worth	90	71	94	73	Ho Chi Minh City	91	82	92	76
Denver	78	44	70	50	Hong Kong	83	77	82	78
Detroit	80	57	81	64	Istanbul	73	61	73	60
El Paso	93	65	94	68	Jerusalem	86	66	77	61
Eugene	68	42	63	46	Johannesburg	70	40	73	48
Fort Myers	93	74	92	76	Kuala Lumpur	93	78	93	79
Hartford	83	68	83	65	Lima	68	60	68	60
Honolulu	84	74	85	72	London	65	54	66	48
Houston	91	79	94	78	Madrid	77	46	82	52
Indianapolis	80	60	83	66	Mecca	109	76	109	80
Jacksonville, Fla.	89	67	93	71	Mexico City	87	63	90	61
Kansas City	82	54	76	52	Montreal	77	68	65	49
Knoxville	77	63	79	64	Moscow	68	45	69	47
Las Vegas	93	71	92	66	Mumbai	93	86	94	84
Louisville	77	67	84	68	New Delhi	104	88	108	87
Medford	76	39	77	48	Paris	68	55	66	49
Memphis	81	69	85	70	Prague	72	52	67	51
Miami	90	77	93	78	Rome	73	57	75	55
Milwaukee	77	57	72	56	Seoul	77	57	78	65
Minneapolis	78	55	72	47	Singapore	90	79	90	79
Nashville	86	66	84	67	Taipei City	79	73	81	73
New Orleans	89	76	84	77	Tokyo	75	66	81	66
New York	80	68	84	64	Vancouver	65	50	56	50
Norfolk	89	69	84	66	Vienna	75	59	71	56
Oklahoma City	77	64	80	61					
Omaha	81	54	73	50					
Orlando	91	68	93						

Sparks lean into positive fan experience

[Sparks, from B10]

need for increased capacity as the reason for the move, he said. Some renovations in Crypto.com Arena were postponed, Monjer said, which was partly why some games could return.

Ticket prices changed accordingly — according to StubHub, the average price of tickets sold when the game was still at the Pyramid was \$253. After the game changed venues, the price dropped to \$192.

Seeing the high demand, Monjer still wanted to make a positive first impression on fans who could be attending their first WNBA game. The team president, who joined the Sparks in March after helping build the Las Vegas Aces into one of the most recognizable WNBA brands, capped the price for tickets bought directly from the team at \$50 for the top level.

“More fans in the building, better for the W, better for the Sparks, better for everybody,” she said.

Not content to just get in the door, Carson Faulkner bought one ticket near the court for Friday’s marquee game for \$200. The 21-year-old business student at Saddleback Community College attended his first Sparks game Tuesday, watching the team hold off the Washington Mystics in a two-point victory. His favorite player, Cameron Brink, made the game-clinching defensive stop.

Faulkner, wearing Brink’s gold Sparks jersey backward so her last name and No. 22 was across his chest, first heard about the 6-foot-4 forward while watching Golden State Warriors games, when announcers mentioned that NBA superstar Stephen Curry — Faulkner’s idol — was Brink’s godbrother. He then started following Brink’s career at Stanford, where she led the Cardinal to the 2021 national championship, was named an All-American three times and won two national defensive player of the year awards.

When he saw the Sparks had the second pick, the Orange County native knew the opportunity was perfect for his local team to grab his favorite player.

“Now I’m going to be a Sparks fan because of her,” said Faulkner, who draped his jersey over a railing at the Pyramid for an autograph as Brink walked off the court after warmups.

The most anticipated rookie class of the WNBA’s



CAITLIN CLARK of the Indiana Fever, left, will make her first Los Angeles appearance Friday night.

JASON REDMOND Associated Press

28-year history has brought unprecedented interest in the league. The WNBA had a 14% increase in attendance during the first week of the regular season, according to the Associated Press, and boasted 10 sellouts along with historic TV ratings. An average 2.1 million viewers tuned in to Clark’s debut against the Connecticut Sun that was the most-watched WNBA game on ESPN.

The Sparks saw a 30% increase in season ticket sales compared to last year. The team led the league in attendance for three consecutive seasons before the COVID-19 pandemic, but has struggled to recapture the same enthusiasm as star players bolted in free agency during Derek Fisher’s failed tenure as a general manager and head coach.

In a front-office makeover, the Sparks split the head coach and general manager positions in 2022, signaling the franchise’s willingness to keep up with the fast-changing WNBA landscape. In his first year at the helm, coach Curt Miller led the Sparks to a 17-23 record in front of an average home crowd of 6,553, which ranked seventh in the WNBA.

“To me, the biggest hope was when they hired this particular coach,” said Susan Burden, a season ticket

holder of more than 20 years, “because he’s a really good coach and we seemed to have been missing that.”

While she acknowledged that the team is in rebuilding mode, Burden was eager to follow the process as she attended both games in Long Beach. Attendance for the two games at the Pyramid reached 93% capacity.

Attention on the WNBA is at an all-time high, but the league wants to make sure it’s not fleeting. The process is similar to a funnel; the top is larger than it has ever been, said Ceyda Mumcu, chair of sport management department at the University of New Haven. But league executives will want to keep those fans moving down the funnel, where they could learn about more players and become repeat and reliable fans.

“It is about retention,” Mumcu said. “How do we keep those folks, how do we build that relationship, how do we build that fandom.”

The Sparks’ plan to win over fans is with a culture of hospitality at games.

At Tuesday’s game, Monjer was on the floor about 45 minutes before tipoff. She likes to get out among the fans early, get a sense of how full the arena is, how quickly entrance lines are flowing outside the venue and whether there are any

bottlenecks. She paused near the courtside seats, picking up and re-straightening several neon green rally towels that had fallen off the chairs.

“Whether it’s your first game or your 100th game, we want to wow you every time,” she said during an earlier interview. “Those small details are in everything we do.”

But even the best efforts at hospitality sometimes fall flat. When the Sparks moved the Fever game back to Crypto.com Arena, it created headaches for fans who had already planned on attending the game in Long Beach.

Some fans complained that their reassigned seats in Crypto.com Arena were farther away than the ones they’d purchased for Long Beach. Monjer said seat misalignments typically happened when fans bought tickets on the secondary market and that all fans who purchased their tickets from the Sparks were “taken care of,” though she has still responded to every email about concerns.

“At the end of the day, you want to do what’s right for the team, right for the franchise and also for your fans,” she said.

Still wanting to maintain a connection with the Long Beach community, Monjer’s business team was mindful

in keeping some games at the Pyramid. Long Beach resident Jessie Comer couldn’t resist the opportunity to see the team in his backyard.

He and his 12-year-old daughter, Maiya, were the first fans seated at the Pyramid before Tuesday’s game. Wanting to pick up a sport, Maiya started playing basketball two years ago on a whim. On the hardwood, the soccer-playing dual-sport athlete is a hard-nosed center who prides herself on defense like her favorite Sparks players Brink and Zia Cooke. When her father encouraged her to shoot some extra free throws, she used to say she was tired. Lately, she’s been more eager to get on the court.

“Now she wants to get out there because she sees these girls playing,” said Comer, who attended both of the games at the Pyramid. “It kind of motivates her.”

The Sparks have made a concerted effort to push their players into the public eye. Since getting drafted second and fourth overall, respectively, rookies Brink and Rickea Jackson have appeared on SportsCenter, rubbed elbows with Lakers greats in a suite at a Lakers playoff game and sat courtside with Sparks teammates Dearica Hamby and Kia Nurse at a Clippers playoff

game. The night before Brink and Jackson played career-bests in minutes to help the Sparks hold off the Mystics, they threw out the first pitch at the Dodgers game.

“The L.A. fans are the best,” Brink said, “so just hoping to bring some of them to Crypto for our next game.”

Monjer credited Sparks director of public relations and communications Lauren Douglas with increased public appearances. Growing the team’s influence in the community is at the top of everyone’s mind in the organization, from the front office to the bench, where Miller has marveled at the way Brink and Jackson have balanced the transition to WNBA play while also handling their off-court opportunities with enthusiasm.

“They’re going to go represent us, which is so important to build our brand back up to what has been a long time: a championship [team] and the gold star for our league for so long,” Miller said Tuesday. “Those two are going to help bring that gold star back, that people are going to want to play in L.A., people are going to see what the Sparks are going to be again.”

Despite being in their new era, the Sparks are never too far from their old glory days. The team is one of just three original WNBA franchises remaining. As the franchise welcomes the wave of new fans, Monjer also wants to honor those who have stuck around through the back-to-back championships in 2001 and 2002, the arrival of Candace Parker and the former most valuable player’s departure, leaving the team in its current rebuild.

Being there for every up and down has been a thrill for Susan Burden and Jennifer Scott. They’ve already loyally supported the team with season tickets for more than 20 years, but seeing the WNBA “take a jump up” this season has been “really wonderful to see,” Burden said.

Even when Parker and former point guard Chelsea Gray bolted during free agency in 2021, Burden and Scott never wavered. After a particularly lean year, when the Sparks reached out about season ticket renewals during the spring, maybe the longtime fans jokingly wondered if they really wanted to sign up again.

“Now,” Burden said, “we’re really lucky that we bought tickets last spring.”

NBA NOTES

Despite strides, Cavaliers cut coach

ASSOCIATED PRESS

J.B. Bickerstaff was fired as Cleveland’s coach on Thursday despite the Cavaliers improving in each of his four seasons and making it to the second round of the playoffs this year despite numerous injuries.

His dismissal came one week after the Cavaliers were eliminated by Boston in the Eastern Conference semifinals while playing the final two games without All-Star guard Donovan Mitchell or center Jarrett Allen.

The coaching change could trigger a summer shift for the Cavaliers, who are hoping to sign Mitchell to a long-term extension and could make major moves.

“The NBA is a unique business that sometimes requires aggressive risk-taking to move a franchise forward and ultimately compete for championships,” general manager Koby Altman said in a statement.

Late playoff game

Luka Dončić scored 15 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter, and Dallas stole home-court advantage from Minnesota with a 108-105 victory in Game 1 of the Western Conference finals on Wednesday night.

“We made important ones,” said Dončić, who was selected to the All-NBA first team and scored seven straight points over 63 seconds early in the fourth



ABBIE PARR Associated Press

KYRIE IRVING scored 24 of his 30 points in the first half of Game 1 against Mike Conley and Minnesota.

quarter to fuel a 13-0 run by Dallas for a 97-89 lead.

Minnesota rallied and led 102-98 after a three-pointer by Anthony Edwards with 3:37 left, but Dallas answered with an 8-0 run and the Timberwolves didn’t score again until a tip-in with 10.5 seconds to go.

All-NBA teams

LeBron James is now the youngest — and oldest — player to make an All-NBA team, voted a third-team selection. Lakers teammate Anthony Davis was a second-team selection with the Clippers’ Kawhi Leonard.

Denver’s Nikola Jokic and Oklahoma City’s Shai Gilgeous-Alexander were the only unanimous first-team selections, joined by Dončić, Milwaukee’s Giannis Antetokounmpo and Boston’s Jayson Tatum.

NBA PLAYOFF SCHEDULE

WESTERN CONFERENCE FINALS

5 Dallas vs. 3 Minnesota	
Mavericks lead, 1-0	
Gm 1	Dallas 108, Minnesota 105
Gm 2	Fri. at Minnesota, 5:30, TNT
Gm 3	Sunday at Dallas, 5, TNT
Gm 4	Tuesday at Dallas, 5:30, TNT
Gm 5	Thursday at Minn., 5:30, TNT*
Gm 6	June 1 at Dallas, 5:30, TNT*
Gm 7	June 3 at Minn., 5:30, TNT*

EASTERN CONFERENCE FINALS

1 Boston vs. 6 Indiana	
Celtics lead, 1-0	
Gm 1	Boston 133, Indiana 128 (OT)
Gm 2	at Boston, late
Gm 3	Sat. at Indiana, 5:30, Ch. 7
Gm 4	Monday at Indiana, 5, ESPN
Gm 5	Wed. at Boston, 5, ESPN*
Gm 6	May 31 at Indiana, 5, ESPN*
Gm 7	June 2 at Boston, 5, ESPN*

* if necessary | Times PDT, p.m.

NHL NOTES

Kings not changing identity

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jim Hiller is sticking to the hard-nosed, defense-first philosophy that got the Kings to the first round of the playoffs — and no further — in each of the last three seasons.

General manager Rob Blake introduced Hiller as the Kings’ permanent coach Thursday, retaining the former assistant who took over for the fired Todd McLellan in February and led the Kings to their third consecutive third-place finish in the Pacific Division and third straight early playoff exit.

“Where Jim always seemed to come to the top was in the aspect that we’ve had time together,” Blake said. “We’ve seen him work... [and we’re] very comfortable, very confident in Jim’s approach to challenges. His presence in front of the group is very important to us. The way he can command the room and drive home the point that we make, the direction we want to go together, confident he can drive that home.”

With Blake and Hiller returning after weeks of speculation about their futures, the Kings’ playoff struggles clearly won’t lead to a reboot or a rebuild. They were eliminated by Edmonton for the third time in as many years, this time in five games.

The GM and his first-time coach remain committed to the style they’ve embraced with their 1-3-1 neutral zone trap. The system has made the Kings a nightmare to face, but their players sometimes chafe at the regimented strategy — and even Hiller acknowledges it hinders the Kings’ offensive production.

“We’ve started the pro-

NHL PLAYOFF SCHEDULE

WESTERN CONFERENCE FINALS

1C Dallas vs. 2P Edmonton	
Gm 1	at Dallas, late
Gm 2	Saturday at Dallas, 5
Gm 3	Monday at Edmonton, 5:30
Gm 4	Wed. at Edmonton, 5:30
Gm 5	May 31 at Dallas, TBD*
Gm 6	June 2 at Edmonton, TBD*
Gm 7	June 4 at Dallas, TBD*

All games on TNT

EASTERN CONFERENCE FINALS

1M N.Y. Rangers vs. 1A Florida	
Panthers lead, 1-0	
Gm 1	Florida 3, New York 0
Gm 2	Friday at New York, 5, ESPN
Gm 3	Sun. at Florida, noon, Ch. 7
Gm 4	Tuesday at Florida, 5, ESPN
Gm 5	Thursday at N.Y., 5, ESPN*
Gm 6	June 1 at Florida, 5, Ch. 7*
Gm 7	June 3 at New York, 5, ESPN*

* if necessary | Times PDT, p.m.

ess of looking at everything about our game,” Hiller said. “We are a top defensive team in the National Hockey League. Have been for some years now. The identity of the L.A. Kings is a checking team that’s difficult to play against. We feel we have to find some areas where we can create more offense, but not at the expense of what our identity is, and what we’ve taken some time to create.”

Only two teams gave up fewer goals than the Kings (210) this season, but they were squarely in the middle of the pack on offensive production despite a roster with expensive, top-end talent.

“There’s teams that are playing in the NHL [conference] finals right now that play a 1-3-1, and there’s teams that don’t,” Hiller said. “The common theme is they play good defense. They check. It doesn’t necessarily matter

what the system is. You’ve got to check within that system.”

That’s important, because the Kings appear to be stuck in a rut: They’ve lost to Edmonton in three consecutive first-round series after finishing the season with totals of 99, 104 and 99 points. They’ve stayed in this spot despite spending big money to add high-scoring forwards Kevin Fiala — who has 145 points in two strong seasons — and Pierre-Luc Dubois, who managed only 40 points in his dismal debut after signing a long-term contract last summer.

Hiller got a three-year deal with incentives that could trigger a fourth season, Blake confirmed without giving specifics. D.J. Smith will stay on Hiller’s staff after being hired as an assistant in February, and the Kings will hire a new assistant coach to focus on the power play, filling Hiller’s role under McLellan.

Late playoff game

Sergei Bobrovsky had 23 saves for his first shutout of the postseason, and Florida beat the New York Rangers 3-0 on Wednesday night in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals.

Also

Dallas center Roope Hintz was out of the lineup for the Western Conference finals opener Thursday night against Justin Edmonton, which was without forward Adam Henrique. ... Colorado captain Gabriel Landeskog plans to return next season after missing two years because of a knee injury. ... Rick Tocchet was coach of the year after guiding Pacific Division champion Vancouver to its second playoff berth in nine years.

BASEBALL: WEDNESDAY FLASHBACK

Diamondbacks have Dodgers' number

L.A. drops series in a 6-0 loss to Arizona after going hitless in eight at-bats with runners in scoring position.

By Mike DiGiovanna

Leadoff man Corbin Carroll driving balls into the gap and racing around the bases. Slugger Christian Walker crushing home runs into the left-field seats.

If this had a familiar ring to the Dodgers and a crowd of 46,593 in Chavez Ravine on Wednesday night, it was because it was all too familiar, the Arizona Diamondbacks cruising to a 6-0 victory to win two of three games in a series that was reminiscent of their three-game sweep of the Dodgers in last year's National League Division Series.

Carroll keyed a three-run fifth inning with a two-run triple that helped send Dodgers ace Tyler Glasnow to his second straight loss; Walker did his usual Dodgers damage with a solo homer in the sixth and a double in the eighth; and Marte started a quirky and timely double play to help extricate the Diamondbacks from a two-on, no-out jam in the sixth.

And it was bulk reliever Ryne Nelson who reprised the role of Brandon Pfaadt from Game 3 of that division series, the 26-year-old right-hander entering the day with a 2-3 record and 7.06 earned-run average in seven starts but blanking the Dodgers on five hits over five innings, striking out five and walking three.

The Dodgers, at the end of a 13-day, 13-game stretch in which they went 7-6, went hitless in eight at-bats with runners in scoring position and lost their first regular-season home series to Arizona since April 13-15, 2013, a span of 13 series. It was Arizona's first shutout in Chavez Ravine since a 13-0 win on Sept. 4, 2017.



WALLY SKALUP Los Angeles Times

TYLER GLASNOW, who pitched a scoreless first four innings, reacts to giving up a two-run triple to Corbin Carroll in the fifth.

The Diamondbacks, with some key players hurt and others under-achieving, still were two games under .500 (24-26) and eight games behind the Dodgers in the NL West after the win.

But as they showed during their surprising World Series run last October and again this week in Los Angeles, they could present problems for the Dodgers.

"Oh, yeah. I think we know that," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said, when asked if Arizona was better than its record might indicate. "It seems like everyone around the league is going through a lot of injuries — certainly those guys with their starting pitching.

"But their bullpen has been really good, they took good at-bats against us and they got big hits when they needed to. We know how good of a ballclub they are. They certainly play us very well."

Glasnow was dominant for four scoreless innings in which he gave up two singles, struck out six, walked none and induced 14 swinging strikes, but the Diamondbacks snapped the scoreless tie with three runs in the fifth.

Gabriel Moreno drew a one-out walk. No. 9 hitter Kevin Newman grounded a single to center field to advance Moreno to third, and Newman took second on the throw.

Carroll, the 2013 NL rookie of the year who is off to a brutal start — he entered Wednesday with a .191

average, two homers and 14 RBIs — drove a hanging 1-and-2 curveball from Glasnow into the right-center-field gap for a two-run triple and a 2-0 lead. He then scored on a wild pitch.

"I thought the stuff was really good early and through that fourth inning," Roberts said of Glasnow, who gave up three runs and four hits in five innings, striking out six and walking one, to fall to 6-3 with a 3.09 ERA.

"He was getting the swing and miss. The command was good. The breaking ball was good. The slider was good. And then in that fifth inning, it seemed like he just couldn't find his mechanics and lost his command. ... He got Carroll into a leverage count and hung the breaking ball."

The Dodgers had a similar threat in the top of the fourth when Teoscar Hernandez walked and Gavin Lux laced a double to right to put runners on second and third with one out. But Nelson struck out Andy Pages on three pitches and got Jason Heyward to ground out to first.

The Dodgers failed to score again after putting two on with no outs in the fifth when Shohei Ohtani hit a mile-high fly ball to center field, Freddie Freeman struck out on a 96-mph fastball from Nelson, and Will Smith flied to the wall in right.

"We had a couple of situational

opportunities that we didn't cash in on, even after we saw [Nelson] a couple of times," Roberts said. "In those situations, he went after us with the fastball, and we couldn't catch up to it. Just really uncharacteristic of us."

The Diamondbacks pushed the lead to 4-0 in the sixth when Walker crushed a 417-foot homer to left-center off reliever Elieser Hernandez, giving the first baseman 22 homers in 87 games against the Dodgers, 14 of them in Chavez Ravine.

"He's one of my favorite players to watch," Roberts said of Walker. "He plays the game the right way. He uses the whole field. He doesn't give away pitches. He's a Gold Glover on defense. He runs the bases. He's one of the guys I really respect as a ballplayer. You just don't like it when he's in the batter's box, for sure."

The Dodgers had one final chance to make a game of it in the sixth when Teoscar Hernandez singled to right and Lux singled to left, putting two on with no outs. Pages followed with a jam-shot flare over the mound that Marte alerted let drop near second, then flied the ball, stepped on the bag for the force out and started a run-down that ended with Hernandez being tagged out between second and third for a double play. Heyward flied out to the warning track in left to end the inning.

"There was really nothing our baserunners could have done," Roberts said. "We had a chance to kind of build an inning, and then Andy gets sawed off. Ketel made a heady play and just killed the rally right there."

Arizona scored twice off reliever Ryan Yarbrough in the eighth when Marte led off with a homer off the left-field foul pole and Walker doubled and later scored on a passed ball.

Short hops

James Paxton and Walker Buehler will start the first two games of a three-game series at Cincinnati beginning Friday night, and Yoshinobu Yamamoto will start Sunday's series finale, marking the fourth time the right-hander will pitch on five days' rest.

STANDINGS

Through Wednesday

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Table with columns: West, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Rows: DODGERS, San Diego, Arizona, San Francisco, Colorado.

Table with columns: Central, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Rows: Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati.

Table with columns: East, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Rows: Philadelphia, Atlanta, Washington, New York, Miami.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Table with columns: West, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Rows: Seattle, Texas, Houston, ANGELS, Oakland.

Table with columns: Central, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Rows: Cleveland, Kansas City, Minnesota, Detroit, Chicago.

Table with columns: East, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Rows: New York, Baltimore, Boston, Tampa Bay, Toronto.

Today's games

Table listing today's games with times and locations: Dodgers at Cincinnati, Angels vs. Cleveland, Atlanta at Pittsburgh, Toronto at Detroit, Seattle at Washington, Kansas City at Tampa Bay, Milwaukee at Boston, San Francisco at New York (NL), Baltimore at Chicago (AL), Texas at Minnesota, Chicago (NL) at St. Louis, Philadelphia at Colorado, Houston at Oakland, Miami at Arizona, New York (AL) at San Diego.

ARIZONA 6, DODGERS 0

Arizona vs Dodgers box score table with columns: Arizona AB R H BI Avg. Dodgers AB R H BI Avg.

Arizona: Carroll 5 1 2 1.191, Bettis 3 0 1 0.330, Rangel 3b 5 1 2 1.291, Ohtani dh 4 0 1 0.354, Pederson dh 3 0 0 0.313, Freeman 1b 4 0 0 0.286, a-Alex dh 2 0 0 0.247, v-Vargas lf 3 0 0 0.301, Walker 1b 4 2 2 1.257, v-Hernan lf 1 0 0 0.143, Gurriel lf 4 0 1 0.242, v-Hernan lf 1 0 0 0.246, Glotchuk lf 4 0 1 0.285, c-Laylor 3b 1 0 0 0.097, McCarty lf 0 0 0 0.282, Luch 2b 4 0 0 0.212, Suarez 3b 3 0 0 0.215, Pages cf 4 0 0 0.240, Moreno c 3 1 1 0.233, Heyward rf 4 0 0 0.179, Newman ss 4 1 1 0.276, K-Hernan 3b 3 0 0 0.124, Barnes c 0 0 0 0.189, Totals 37 6 9 4. Totals 32 6 0 0.

Arizona: 000 031 020-6 9 0. Dodgers: 000 000 000-0 6 1. a-grounded out for Pederson in 8th. b-struck out for W-Smith in 8th. c-grounded out for T.Hernandez in 8th.

Strikes—Arizona 2; Suarez 1, Moreno 1, Dodgers 3; Betts 1, Hernandez 2, Williams 1, Hernandez 2. Walks—Arizona 8; Carroll 1, Marte 1, Pederson 1, Alexander 1, Gurriel 1, Suarez 1, Moreno 2, Dodgers 9; Betts 1, Freeman 2, Smith 1, Vargas 1, Luch 1, Pages 2, Heyward 1, E-Betts (7), LOB—Arizona 6, Dodgers 8; 2B—Walker (6), Betts (2), Luch (4), 3B—Carroll (3), HR—Walker (off), c-Hernandez, Marte (off), off Yarbrough, RBIs—Carroll 2 (16), Walker (32), Marte (27), Runners left in scoring position—Arizona 3 (Pederson, Newman 2); Dodgers 4 (W-Smith, Heyward, Freeman). RISP—Arizona 3 for 6; Dodgers 0 for 4. Runners moved up—Ohtani 2. GDP—Pages. DP—Arizona 1 (Newman, Suarez, Marte, Moreno, Marte).

Atlanta 9, Chicago Cubs 2. Atlanta: AB R H BI Avg. Chicago: AB R H BI Avg.

Atlanta vs Chicago Cubs box score table with columns: Atlanta AB R H BI Avg. Chicago AB R H BI Avg.

Atlanta: AB R H BI Avg. Chicago: AB R H BI Avg.

Atlanta vs Chicago Cubs box score table with columns: Atlanta AB R H BI Avg. Chicago AB R H BI Avg.

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ANGELS 2, HOUSTON 1

Angels vs Houston box score table with columns: Angels AB R H BI Avg. Houston AB R H BI Avg.

Angels: Schaefer 1b 4 0 1 0.244, Altuve 2b 4 0 0 0.291, Rangel 3b 3 1 2 1.253, Kuckler rf 3 0 0 0.298, Ward lf 4 0 0 0.271, Alvarez dh 4 0 1 0.265, Calhoun dh 4 0 0 0.311, Bregman 3b 4 0 0 0.209, Adell lf 4 0 0 0.234, Peña ss 4 0 1 0.326, Thaiss c 3 0 0 0.184, Singleton 1b 4 0 0 0.221, Neto ss 2 0 0 0.249, Meyers cf 3 1 1 0.302, Guillotms 2b 1 0 1 0.321, Dublin lf 3 0 2 1.311, Moniak cf 2 1 0 0.185, Caratini c 3 0 1 0.254, Paris 2b-ss 2 1 1 0.238, Totals 29 2 3 2.

Angels: 000 020 000-2 3 1. Houston: 000 010 000-1 6 0.

Walks—Angels 4; Rengifo 1, Thaiss 1, Moniak 1, Paris 1, Houston 2; Kuckler 1, Meyers 1. Strikes—Angels 5; Rengifo 1, Calhoun 1, Adell 2, Neto 1, Houston 6; Alvarez 2, Peña 1, Singleton 3. E—Ward (1). LOB—Angels 4, Houston 6; Alvarez (9), Caratini (5), Peña (9), Dublin (8). HR—Paris (1), off Brown; Peña (5), off Anderson. RBIs—Angels 1 (5), Dublin (2). Runners left in scoring position—Angels 1 (Ward); Houston 5 (Caratini, Bregman 2, Singleton, Kuckler). RISP—Angels 0 for 2; Houston 0 for 6.

Runners moved up—Ohtani 2. GDP—Ward. DP—Houston 1 (Ward, Singleton).

Angels vs Houston box score table with columns: Angels AB R H BI Avg. Houston AB R H BI Avg.

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MINNESOTA 3, WASHINGTON 2

Minnesota vs Washington box score table with columns: Minnesota AB R H BI Avg. Washington AB R H BI Avg.

Minnesota: Lindor ss 5 0 2 0.203, Freeman cf 4 1 1 0.219, Alonso 1b 4 1 1 0.236, Gimenez 2b 3 2 1 0.261, Nimmo lf 3 0 1 0.220, Ramirez dh 4 1 1 1.258, Martinez dh 4 0 0 0.294, Fry 1b-3b 3 1 2 0.349, Stewart rf 3 0 1 0.210, Arias 3b 2 0 0 0.215, B-Marte lf 1 0 0 0.260, a-Manza 1b 2 0 1 0.211, Vientos 3b 3 0 1 0.357, Rodriguez rf 3 0 1 1.143, McNeil 2b 4 1 1 1.240, Fiori dh 3 0 0 0.209, Bader cf 3 1 1 1.281, Hedges c 4 1 1 1.400, Narver c 3 0 0 0.155, Rocchio ss 3 0 0 0.207, c-Taylor 1 0 0 0.248, Totals 34 3 8 3.

Minnesota: 010 001 001-3 7 0. Washington: 000 000 101-2 7 0.

a-lined out for Killifin in 7th. b-grounded out for Adams in 7th. c-pinch hit for Julien in 8th. d-grounded out for Rosario in 8th. 1-run for Garcia in 9th.

Walks—Washington 1; Winker 1. Strikes—Minnesota 9; Julien 1, Farmer 1, Kepler 1, Jeffers 1, Buntz 2, Castro 2, Miranda 1, Washington 6; Abrams 1, Rosario 1, Winker 2, Gallo 2. LOB—Minnesota 5, Washington 6. 2B—Kepler (2), Vargas (0). HR—Kepler (4), off Irvin, Correa (4), off Irvin; Menses (2), off Duran. RBIs—Kepler (18), Irvin (13), Jeffers (32), Ruiz; Menses (24), BS—Jeffers (2). CS—Winker (1). J.—Young, Garcia. Runners left in scoring position—Minnesota 3 (Jeffers, Miranda, Santana); Washington 4 (Young, Rosario, Gallo, Ruiz).

Minnesota vs Washington box score table with columns: Minnesota AB R H BI Avg. Washington AB R H BI Avg.

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Minnesota vs Washington box score table with columns: Minnesota AB R H BI Avg. Washington AB R H BI Avg.

CLEVELAND 6, N.Y. METS 3

Cleveland vs New York Mets box score table with columns: Cleveland AB R H BI Avg. New York Mets AB R H BI Avg.

Cleveland: Lindor ss 5 0 2 0.203, Freeman cf 4 1 1 0.219, Alonso 1b 4 1 1 0.236, Gimenez 2b 3 2 1 0.261, Nimmo lf 3 0 1 0.220, Ramirez dh 4 1 1 1.258, Martinez dh 4 0 0 0.294, Fry 1b-3b 3 1 2 0.349, Stewart rf 3 0 1 0.210, Arias 3b 2 0 0 0.215, B-Marte lf 1 0 0 0.260, a-Manza 1b 2 0 1 0.211, Vientos 3b 3 0 1 0.357, Rodriguez rf 3 0 1 1.143, McNeil 2b 4 1 1 1.240, Fiori dh 3 0 0 0.209, Bader cf 3 1 1 1.281, Hedges c 4 1 1 1.400, Narver c 3 0 0 0.155, Rocchio ss 3 0 0 0.207, c-Taylor 1 0 0 0.248, Totals 34 3 8 3.

Cleveland: 110 100 000-3 8 0. New York: 000 003 12x-6 8 0.

a-struck out for Arias in 7th. b-grounded out for Stewart in 8th. c-struck out for Narver in 9th.

Walks—New York 3; Alonso 1, Nimmo 1, Vientos 1, Cleveland 3; Rodriguez 1, Fiori 1, Ramirez 2, Taylor 1, Cleveland 6; Freeman 1, Gimenez 1, Ramirez 1, Arias 1, Manzanera 1, Kneib 1, Hedges 2. LOB—New York 8, Cleveland 5. 2B—Lindor (2), Vientos (4), Freeman (3), Ramirez (3), Manzanera (5). HR—Alonso (11), off McKenize; McNeil (3), off McKenize; Bader (2), off McKenize; Gimenez (4), off Quintana. RBIs—Alonso (24), McNeil (13), Bader (13), Gimenez (3), Rodriguez (1), Ramirez (45), Manzanera (3). SB—Bader (7). Runners left in scoring position—New York 5 (Vientos, Nimmo 2, McNeil, Alonso); Cleveland 3 (Hedges 2, Rocchio). RISP—New York 0 for 8; Cleveland 3 for 7.

Cleveland vs New York Mets box score table with columns: Cleveland AB R H BI Avg. New York Mets AB R H BI Avg.

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Cleveland vs New York Mets box score table with columns: Cleveland AB R H BI Avg. New York Mets AB R H BI Avg.

ST. LOUIS 5, BALTIMORE 4

St. Louis vs Baltimore box score table with columns: St. Louis AB R H BI Avg. Baltimore AB R H BI Avg.

St. Louis: Batters ss 3 1 1 0.266, Winn ss 4 2 2 1.295, Rutschman dh 4 0 0 0.239, Arobyson rf 4 0 1 1.213, O'Haram 1b 4 0 1 0.276, Goldsch dh 4 0 1 0.211, Santander lf 4 0 1 0.206, Arenado 3b 4 1 2 0.269, Westburg 2b 4 0 0 0.281, Burleson 1b 4 0 1 0.298, Cowser cf 4 0 1 0.266, Carlson lf 3 1 0 1.033, Hays lf 4 1 0 1.148, Donovan 2b 4 1 1 1.229, Lucas 3b 3 1 1 0.339, De La Cruz ss 4 0 0 0.256, a-Mullins 1 0 1 0.191, Siani cf 2 0 0 0.224, McCann c 3 1 0 0.208, Totals 33 5 8 4.

Baltimore: 000 000 001-4 8 2. St. Louis: 000 013 10x-5 8 1.

a-singled for Urias in 9th. b-sacrificed for McCann in 9th. Walks—Baltimore 2; Henderson 2, St. Louis 2; Carlson 1, Siani 1. Strikes—Baltimore 5; Henderson 1, Rutschman 2, Cowser 1, McCann 1. St. Louis: Nootbaar 2, Pages 1, E—Henderson (4), McCann (3), Arenado (3). LOB—Baltimore 6, St. Louis 6; 2B—Arenado (10), Winn (9), Donovan (12). HR—Winn (2), off Irvin. RBIs—Henderson (3), O'Haram (16), Santander (26), Stowers (1), Nootbaar (18), Donovan 2 (23), Winn (14), SF—Stowers. Runners left in scoring position—Baltimore 2 (Santander, Cowser); St. Louis 1 (Donovan). RISP—Baltimore 2 for 8; St. Louis 2 for 5. Runners moved up—O'Haram, Burleson. DP—St. Louis 1 (Nootbaar, Burleson, Nootbaar).

St. Louis vs Baltimore box score table with columns: St. Louis AB R H BI Avg. Baltimore AB R H BI Avg.

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St. Louis vs Baltimore box score table with columns: St. Louis AB R H BI Avg. Baltimore AB R H BI Avg.

Ventura's Engelhardt continues to chase victory

She'll try to cap a record year with a three-peat in the 1,600 meters at state finals.

BY STEVE GALLUZZO

There are many intriguing storylines heading into this weekend's 104th CIF State Track & Field Championships. Qualifying is Friday and the finals are Saturday at Buchanan High's Veterans Stadium in Clovis.

No athlete will be under a brighter spotlight than Ventura's Sadie Engelhardt, who will try to cap a record-setting junior year with a three-peat in the girls' 1,600-meter run. She has already broken the National High School Federation record twice this spring (both in full-mile races), including a 4:29.86 split that is 3.59 seconds faster than the state meet record she set last year, when she also won the 800 meters — a state double not seen since Pleasant Hill senior Kathy Costello won both the mile and 880-yard events in 1975.

After going for her sixth individual state title (she already owns two in cross country and three on the track, Engelhardt will join teammates Melanie True, Tiffany Sax and Aelo Curtis in trying to win the 4x800 relay. The Cougars' foursome



STEVE GALLUZZO For The Times

AFTER GOING for her sixth individual state title this weekend, Ventura junior Sadie Engelhardt also hopes to be part of a winning 4x800 relay team.

is seeded No. 1 after winning the Southern Section Masters Meet in 9:02.57 last week.

Headlining a stellar field featuring nine girls with sub-10:18 times, reigning state 3,200 champion Rylee Blade of Corona Santiago will try to hold off fellow juniors Holly Barker (Trabuco Hills), Maya De Brouwer (La Cañada), Hanne Thomsen (Santa Rosa Montgomery) and Abigail Errington (South Pasadena), sophomores Jaelyn Williams (Chula Vista Eastlake) and Summer Wilson (JSerra) and Huntington Beach freshman Sydney Rubio.

History could also be made in the boys' 100-meter dash. No freshman has ever won the state title, but ninth-graders hold the two top seed times — last week's Masters Meet winner Demare Dezeurn of Bishop Alemany (10.36) and Benjamin Harris of Long Beach Poly, who posted a head-turning 10.38 two months ago at the Redondo Track Festival and finished first at the Arcadia Invitational in April.

Other contenders include sophomore Brandon Arrington Jr. (who impressed with an against-the-wind 10.50 effort at the San

Diego Sectionals), City Section champion Jordan Coleman of Granada Hills (10.49), Acalanes senior Paul Kuhner (who clocked a wind-legal 10.36 two weeks ago at the Tri-Valley Area Championships), Concord De La Salle sophomore Jaden Jefferson (10.46), Central Section champion Jalen Ford of Bakersfield (10.62), Los Alamitos junior Devin Bragg (10.47) and Valencia's Brian Bonner (10.48).

Gardena Serra's Rodrick Pleasant (now at the University of Oregon) set the state record of 10.20 as a senior last year.

A compelling duel is

brewing in the boys' high jump, where state leader JJ Harel from Sherman Oaks Notre Dame will go head-to-head with Birmingham senior Deshawn Banks. Harel is vying to join Serra's Harrison Steed (2008) as the only 10th-grader to win the state title in the event. He cleared 7 1/4 feet to set the Southern Section Division 3 finals record two weeks ago. Banks, meanwhile, won at Arcadia and Mt. SAC and repeated as City champion with a 6-10 effort.

Fairfax's Sebastian Ikolo emerged as a dark horse after matching Banks at 6-10 at City finals only to settle for second with more misses. Also in the mix is Mater Dei junior Brandon Gorski (6-8), who was runner-up to Banks at Arcadia.

Junior Kaylin Edwards will compete in four events for defending girls' state team champion Long Beach Wilson, including the 300 hurdles, which she won in 41.57 seconds at last year's

state meet.

She enters prelims with the second-best seed time (42.03) behind only Carlsbad junior Morgan Herbst (41.54). She will contend for the 100 hurdles crown, where her 14.11 is the third-best seed time behind only San Diego junior Anisa Bowen-Fontenot (13.67) and Marlborough senior Fallyn Gowans (14.02). Edwards produced a season-best 42.00 in the 300 hurdles two weeks ago at the CIF-SS Division 1 finals and will also run on the Bruins' 4x100 and 4x400 relays, which advanced to state along with the 4x800 team.

All nine girls in the 100 meters at last week's Masters Meet moved on to state, led by Gardena Serra senior Mia Flowers (11.46), Royal sophomore Olivia Kirk and Canyon Country Canyon senior Mikaela Warr (both clocked 11.54), Chaparral junior Keelan Wright (11.56) and Oaks Christian senior Nia Clayton (11.59).

PRO CALENDAR

	FRI 24	SAT 25	SUN 26	MON 27	TUE 28
DODGERS	at Cincinnati 4 SNLA	at Cincinnati 4:15 Ch. 11	at Cincinnati 10:30 a.m. SNLA	at N.Y. Mets 1 p.m. SNLA	at N.Y. Mets 4 p.m. SNLA
ANGELS	CLEVELAND 6:30 BSW	CLEVELAND 6:30 BSW	CLEVELAND 1 BSW		N.Y. YANKEES 6:30 BSW
SPARKS	INDIANA 7 Ion		DALLAS 6 SpecSN		at Indiana 4 p.m. NBA TV
GALAXY		HOUSTON 7:30 Apple TV			
LAFC		at Atlanta 4:30 Apple TV			
ANGEL CITY	NEXT: AT NJ/NY GOTHAM, JUNE 8, 9:30 A.M. PT, CH. 2, PARAMOUNT+				

Shade denotes home game.

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL		
8:30 p.m.	AFL, Carlton vs. Gold Coast	TV: FS2
11:30 p.m.	AFL, Geelong vs. Greater Western Sydney	TV: FS2
AUTO RACING		
7:45 a.m.	Formula One, Monaco Grand Prix, Practice 2	TV: ESPN2
10:30 p.m.	NASCAR Trucks, North Carolina Education Lottery 200, qualifying	TV: FS1
12:30 p.m.	NASCAR Xfinity, BetMGM 300, qualifying	TV: FS1
3 p.m.	ARCA, The General Tire 150	TV: FS1
5:30 p.m.	NASCAR Trucks, North Carolina Education Lottery 200	TV: FS1
3:15 a.m. (Sat.)	Formula One, Monaco Grand Prix, Practice 3	TV: FS1
BASEBALL		
4:10 p.m.	Milwaukee at Boston	TV: Apple
4:10 p.m.	Dodgers at Cincinnati	TV: SNLA R: 570, 1020
4:40 p.m.	Baltimore at Chicago White Sox	TV: Apple
5 p.m.	Chicago Cubs at St. Louis	TV: MLB
5:38 p.m.	Cleveland at Angels	TV: BSW R: 830, 1220
BASKETBALL: NBA		
5:30 p.m.	Western Conference final, Game 2, Dallas at Minnesota	TV: TNT
BASKETBALL: WNBA		
7 p.m.	Indiana at Sparks	TV: Ion
COLLEGE BASEBALL		
Noon	West Coast tournament, teams TBD	TV: ESPN+
2:30 p.m.	Pac-12 tournament, semifinal, teams TBD	TV: Pac-12
4 p.m.	West Coast tournament, semifinal, teams TBD	TV: ESPN+
4:30 p.m.	UC Riverside at UC Santa Barbara	TV: ESPN+
7 p.m.	Pac-12 tournament, semifinal, teams TBD	TV: Pac-12
6 p.m.	Long Beach State at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	TV: ESPN+
8 p.m.	West Coast tournament, semifinal, teams TBD	TV: ESPN+
9:30 p.m.	Cal State Fullerton at Hawaii	TV: ESPN+
LACROSSE		
12:30 p.m.	Men's NCAA tournament, semifinal, Florida vs. Northwestern	TV: ESPN
2:30 p.m.	Men's NCAA tournament, semifinal, Syracuse vs. Boston College	TV: ESPN
COLLEGE SOFTBALL		
9 a.m.	NCAA tournament, Baylor vs. Florida	TV: ESPN2
11 a.m.	NCAA tournament, Duke vs. Missouri	TV: ESPN2
1 p.m.	NCAA tournament, Alabama vs. Tennessee	TV: ESPN2
3 p.m.	NCAA tournament, Texas A&M vs. Texas	TV: ESPN2
5 p.m.	NCAA tournament, Oklahoma vs. Florida State	TV: ESPN2
5 p.m.	NCAA tournament, Arizona vs. Oklahoma St.	TV: ESPN
7 p.m.	NCAA tournament, UCLA vs. Georgia	TV: ESPN2
7 p.m.	NCAA tournament, Louisiana State vs. Stanford	TV: ESPN
COLLEGE TRACK AND FIELD		
2 p.m.	NCAA championships	TV: ESPN+
GOLF		
10 a.m.	Senior PGA Championship, second round	TV: Golf
1 p.m.	PGA, The Charles Schwab Challenge, second round	TV: Golf
4:30 a.m. (Sat.)	World Tour, Soudal Open, third round	TV: Golf
HOCKEY: NHL		
5 p.m.	Western Conference finals, Game 2, Florida at New York Rangers	TV: ESPN
HOCKEY: PWHL		
4 p.m.	Walter Cup Final, Boston at Minnesota	TV: BSSC
SOCCER		
11:45 a.m.	Italy, Genoa vs. Bologna	TV: Paramount+
Noon	Spain, Girona vs. Granada	TV: ESPN, ESPN+
7 p.m.	NWSL, Bay FC vs. NJ/NY Gotham FC	TV: Amazon Prime
SURFING		
10 a.m.	WSL Championship tour, Tahiti Pro	TV: ESPN+
TENNIS		
7 a.m.	French Open qualifying: Geneva, Lyon, Strasbourg, Rabat quarterfinals	TV: Tennis



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

"I DON'T REALLY know where it is," Dodgers pitcher James Paxton said of his cut-fastball, an essential part of his three-pitch repertoire for most of his 11-year career until this season. Here he delivers against the Reds.

One of his best pitches is missing

[Paxton, from B10] cutter that averaged 85.8 mph to throw it 16.5% of the time, holding batters to a .191 average (13 for 68) with 26 strikeouts in at-bats ending with the pitch.

Paxton, who signed a one-year, \$7-million deal with the Dodgers in January, threw his curve 19.5% of the time last season, holding hitters to a .231 average (15 for 65) and 23 strikeouts in at-bats ending with the pitch. But the cutter has been left on the cutting-room floor for most of 2024, Paxton throwing the pitch only 42 times (5.7%). He's thrown 458 fastballs (62.4%) and 191 curves (26%) and even leaned on a seldom-used changeup in a 5-1 victory over the Atlanta Braves on May 5, throwing that pitch 12 times.

"I think it goes to show how special of a delivery he has with the deception of the throw," assistant pitching coach Connor McGuinness said of Paxton's ability to survive — and often thrive — with only two pitches for much of the season.

"When he's throwing fastballs in there at 97-98 mph,

quite honestly, any off-speed pitch with his delivery is going to work," McGuinness said. "He's found great success with that curveball this year, and I think that cutter is going to come along once that power really starts to get back."

That's the crux of the problem for Paxton, whose cutter has fallen victim to a loss of fastball velocity since his elbow ligament replacement procedure in 2021. Paxton's four-seamer has averaged just 93.5 mph this season, and his cutter has averaged just 84.2 mph, well off its peak of 90.3 mph in 2016.

"I think pre-Tommy John, I used it quite a bit. It was a big swing-and-miss pitch for me," Paxton, 35, said of the cutter. "But I haven't really had it since surgery. It's not as hard. I was throwing it 89-91 mph before. Now, it's like 85 mph. And the movement is just not quite as sharp as it was."

Neither Paxton nor the Dodgers have given up on the pitch. Paxton has been working in bullpen sessions between starts to fine-tune his delivery and is long-tossing more in an effort to in-

crease his arm strength, and if he can bump the velocity of his fastball a bit, his cutter should improve.

"The focus for him has been trying to get the delivery dialed in and to get some more athleticism back in the throw, because some of the general execution of the fastball hasn't been where he wants it to be," McGuinness said. "But when he gets to a point where he's throwing the velocity that he wants, then that cutter will come into play."

The loss of his cutter was the least of Paxton's concerns in April. Command of all of his pitches was a bigger issue, Paxton going 3-0 with a 3.51 ERA in five starts despite walking 22 batters and striking out 15 batters in 25 2/3 innings.

But Paxton found some better rhythm in his delivery during a bullpen workout in early May, and he did not walk a batter in his last two starts, giving up four hits and striking out four in six shutout innings of a 5-0 win at San Diego on May 11 and giving up three runs and seven hits and striking out two in a 7-3 win over the Reds last

Friday night.

"I think the most impressive thing is that he uncharacteristically has walked a lot of guys, and he's been able to weather those baserunners and still make pitches to limit the damage and not get overly frustrated to where he costs us a start," manager Dave Roberts said. "That just speaks to experience and maturity."

That maturity — and patience — McGuinness said, has also allowed Paxton to keep any frustration about the loss of his cutter in check.

"He's just a gamer, man," McGuinness said. "I mean, he went out there for a few starts with just a fastball, and he was still able to go deep into the game and give our offense a chance to put up some runs and win."

"He's been able to kind of reinvent himself for now until he really gets to the point where he feels like the delivery is locked in and that fastball velocity is there. When that happens, I'm willing to bet that cutter is gonna be right there, too. ... We're excited about him moving forward, because we feel like the best is yet to come."



SPORTS EXTRA

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SPORTS

FRIDAY, MAY 24, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS

SPARKS VS. INDIANA

TONIGHT AT CRYPTO.COM ARENA, 7 | TV: ION



Photographs by GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

SPARKS guards Lexie Brown, left, and Kia Nurse leave the court as fans cheer after their first win this season Tuesday at the Walter Pyramid.

IT'S FAN-TASTIC

Sparks focus on game experience as they ride wave of WNBA popularity

BY THUC NHI NGUYEN
AND SAMANTHA MASUNAGA

More than 16,000 fans buzzed in Edmonton's Rogers Place. Christine Monjer scanned the crowd before the Sparks' preseason game against the Seattle Storm and saw couples on a date night, families with their kids, people who looked like former basketball players and others who appeared to have never played the game. All were lined up in a merchandise line that wrapped around the concourse.

The Sparks' team president stood in awe.

"This isn't the W from 10 years ago," Monjer said, "this is just a brand-new era for us, so we're meeting the moment."

The Sparks are hoping to surf the WNBA's tidal wave of popularity to reignite an organization that has fallen



COMEDIAN Leslie Jones is among the fans cheering in the final seconds of the Sparks' victory against Washington.

from grace in the midst of a three-season playoff drought. The pivotal season reaches an early crest Friday as the Sparks host Caitlin Clark's Indiana Fever at 7 p.m. at Crypto.com Arena in the star rookie's only regular-season game in L.A. this year.

The former Iowa star will receive a grand welcome to L.A. as the game was moved from the roughly 4,000-seat Walter Pyramid to the Sparks' 18,000-seat downtown home.

The Sparks made arrangements late last year with Long Beach State to play five games at the Pyramid due to a renovation project at Crypto.com Arena. But in the last month, the organization called to let officials know their plans had changed, first for the Fever game, then for the next two games after that, said Mike Habura, associate athletics director for facilities and event operations, who manages the Pyramid.

The team cited a [See Sparks, B7]

Replicating her Chelsea soccer success in U.S.

Hayes accepts dad's challenge to reinvigorate women's team

BY KEVIN BAXTER

NEW YORK — The women's national soccer team hasn't won an Olympic championship in 12 years, its longest drought ever. Yet for Emma Hayes, the woman tasked to get the U.S. back to the top of the medal podium, memories of the 2012 tournament have little to do with gold medals.

The Games were played in England that year and Hayes' father, Sid, became enamored with the Americans. So much so that when Hayes took the coaching job with the Chelsea women's team that summer, he urged her to remake the English game in the U.S. model.

She did, hoisting 16 trophies. So with little left to win in England, Hayes became a candidate for the U.S. coaching job when it became open last year — and that led to another conversation with her father just before he died in September.

This time he urged her to remake the American team in the Chelsea model.

"I have a 23-minute voice note, my last conversation with my father, and it was all about 2012," Hayes said [See Hayes, B6]



EMMA HAYES holds a banner against the New York skyline. Her first coaching job was with the Long Island Lady Riders.

Dodgers' Paxton is missing a pitch but still a success

He's 5-0 with a 2.84 ERA, despite a shaky start and the fact he's minus his cut-fastball.

BY MIKE DIGIOVANNA

James Paxton will take a 5-0 record and 2.84 ERA into his start Friday night at Cincinnati, which is pretty remarkable considering the Dodgers left-hander walked as many batters (24) as he struck out (24) in 44 1/3 innings of his first eight games and is ready to send out a search party for one of his best secondary pitches.

"I don't really know where it is," Paxton said of his cut-fastball, an essential part of his three-pitch repertoire for most of his 11-year career until this season. "I'm trying to figure it out. We're playing catch with it, throw-

ing it in the bullpen and stuff like that, and I just haven't been able to find it yet."

A lively four-seam fastball that averaged 97.5 mph at its peak in 2016 has always been Paxton's best pitch, one he's thrown 62% of the time throughout his career, and he has complemented his heater with a knuckle-curve that he's thrown 19% of the time and the cutter, which he's thrown 13% of the time.

But during a four-year stretch from 2016-19, Paxton threw his cutter, which was clocked between 89 and 91 mph, almost as much as his curve, holding opponents to a .196 average (87 for 444) with 200 strikeouts in at-bats ending with the cutter.

Even in his first season after Tommy John surgery, with the Boston Red Sox in 2023, Paxton had enough confidence in a diminished [See Paxton, B9]

Continuing to chase victories

Ventura's Engelhardt will try to cap a record year with a win in the 1,600 meters at state finals. **B9**

Kings decide to stay the course

By keeping Hiller, team is sticking to a defense-first philosophy that comes up short in the postseason. **B7**

NCAA, Power Five agree to settlement

Pac-12 is the last conference to sign off on the deal in which \$2.77 billion would settle antitrust suits. **B6**

SPORTS EXTRA

A TIMES E-NEWSPAPER EXCLUSIVE :: FRIDAY, MAY 24, 2024



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

MAYA BRADY is greeted at home plate after her second home run in UCLA's 8-0 victory over No. 11 Georgia. The No. 6 Bruins are one win from taking the series.

Brady's two homers power UCLA to win

By THUC NHI NGUYEN

Maya Brady's hot bat has UCLA one win away from a return to the Women's College World Series.

The back-to-back Pac-12 player of the year went three for four at the plate with two home runs in UCLA's six-inning, 8-0 win over No. 11 Georgia in the first game of the Los Angeles Super Regional on Thursday. The No. 6 Bruins (41-10) can clinch a berth to the World Series with a win Friday at 7 p.m. at Easton Stadium in the best-of-

three Super Regional.

Including UCLA's three wins in the regional round, Brady is nine for 12 at the plate in four postseason games with six extra base hits and five RBIs. She set up UCLA's first mercy rule win in the Super Regional since 2010 as Savannah Pola hit the walk-off two-run single in the bottom of the sixth.

Brady slapped a double and launched two home runs, leading off the first and fifth innings with long balls. Her solo shot in the fifth bounced off the redshirt senior's photo on the scoreboard in left field and sparked a four-run inning

for the Bruins that turned a close game into an easy run-rule victory.

Jadelyn Allchin followed Brady's blast with a single to left field and Sharlize Palacios reached base when she was hit by a pitch. Sophomore Jordan Woolery, who struck out with the bases loaded in the second inning, didn't miss in the fifth, delivering a three-run homer to dead center field.

With an opportunity to activate the run rule in the fifth, Brady could have ended the game with the bases loaded and a six-run lead. But the former Oaks Christian star struck out swinging. It

was her only blemish of the day.

On defense, she led the charge at shortstop, helping turn two double plays to support freshman pitcher Katilyn Terry.

The left-hander allowed a baserunner in each of the first five innings — three walks and two singles — but effortlessly worked her way out of danger with the help of her defense. Allchin made a diving catch in left field to fire up the Bruins in the second inning.

Woolery caught a ball in foul territory while sliding to her knee in the third inning after Terry gave up a leadoff single. The pitcher al-

lowed a leadoff walk in the fourth, but Brady erased it flawlessly, taking a hard-hit ball from Georgia's Sara Mosley off the bounce, tagging second and firing the ball to Woolery at first.

Terry gave up four hits and three walks with five strikeouts in a complete-game victory. She faced her biggest threat in the sixth with runners on the corners and two outs, but used a devastating off-speed pitch to freeze Georgia's Lyndi Raw Davis. Terry stomped her foot and whipped her fist in the air and the Bulldogs catcher trudged back to the dugout.

Brown scores 40 as Celtics rout Pacers to take 2-0 series lead

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jaylen Brown was a big enough problem for the Indiana Pacers even before an All-NBA snub that may have given him an added desire to show how much he can do for the Boston Celtics.

"I think he cares about it in a way that motivates him, and I think he doesn't really care about it at all," Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said after watching Brown match his playoff career high of 40 points in Boston's 126-110 victory over Indiana in Game 2 of the Eastern Conference finals Thursday night.

"He understands that winning is the most important thing," Mazzulla said. "He just cares about the right stuff."

Two nights after his game-saving three-pointer and one day after he was left out of the voting for the league's top 15 players, Brown scored 10 points during a 20-0 Boston run that turned a first-quarter deficit into a second-quarter lead that the Celtics never relinquished.

Asked if the All-NBA snub motivated him, Brown said, "I wouldn't say that." Asked to elaborate, he said colorfully: "We're two games from the finals. I don't got time to [care]."

Jayson Tatum and Derrick White scored 23 points apiece and Jrue Holiday had 15 points and 10

assists for the top-seeded Celtics, who lost Game 2 in both of their previous series this postseason.

Pascal Siakam scored 28 points for Indiana, which heads home for Games 3 and 4 on Saturday and Monday nights in an arena where they have won 11 straight games — including six in the playoffs — since March 18. Tyrese Haliburton, who had 25 points and 10 assists in the series opener, had 10 points and eight assists Thursday before leaving the game in the third.

"We need Ty, but 'next man' mentality," Siakam said. "We've got to play together. This team got where we're at by playing together. ... It's on us to continue."

One game after the Celtics jumped to a 12-0 lead and Indiana spent the rest of the first half clawing its way back, the lead changed hands 10 times in the opening quarter, with the Pacers holding a 27-22 edge with 1:14 left.

Then Boston scored the next 20 points.

Indiana missed nine straight shots and committed four turnovers during the drought that lasted more than six minutes. Brown scored 10 on his own during the run and had 24 at the half; he opened the third quarter with two quick baskets to give the Celtics a 61-52 lead.

But Siakam also came out hot in the second half, hitting four bas-



MICHAEL DWYER Associated Press

BOSTON'S AL HORFORD dunks past Indiana's Myles Turner (33) during the first half of the Celtics' 126-110 win over the visiting Pacers in Game 2 of the NBA's Eastern Conference finals.

kets in the first four minutes — a pair of twos and a pair of threes — to make it a two-point game. Boston pulled away again — this time for good, scoring 16 of the next 21 points.

Indiana never got within single digits again.

Brown scored 26 points Tuesday night, when the Celtics won thanks to some unforced errors by the Pacers — especially Haliburton — down the stretch.

"I mean, he has it going," Holiday said. "Y'all see what I see. Great player. Great leader. But wants to win. And takes thinks into his own hands. So I'm glad to have him on my side. I ride with him. The

way JB's been playing, man, it's outstanding."

NHL PLAYOFFS

Oilers win Game 1 over Stars in OT

Connor McDavid scored 32 seconds into the second overtime and the Edmonton Oilers overcame their captain's double-minor penalty in the first extra period and beat the host Dallas Stars 3-2 in Game 1 of the Western Conference Final on Thursday night.

The Stars were 0 for 3 on power

plays in regulation, then couldn't capitalize on four minutes with a man advantage after a high-stick penalty against McDavid in the opening seconds of the first overtime that wasn't called until a replay review on the next stoppage of play.

Leon Draisaitl extended his playoff-opening points streak to 13 games with a goal, and Zach Hyman had a goal and an assist for the Oilers. Stuart Skinner stopped 31 shots, three nights after the Oilers wrapped up their second-round series with a Game 7 victory on the road at Edmonton.

The Stars have lost Game 1 in their last seven playoff series.

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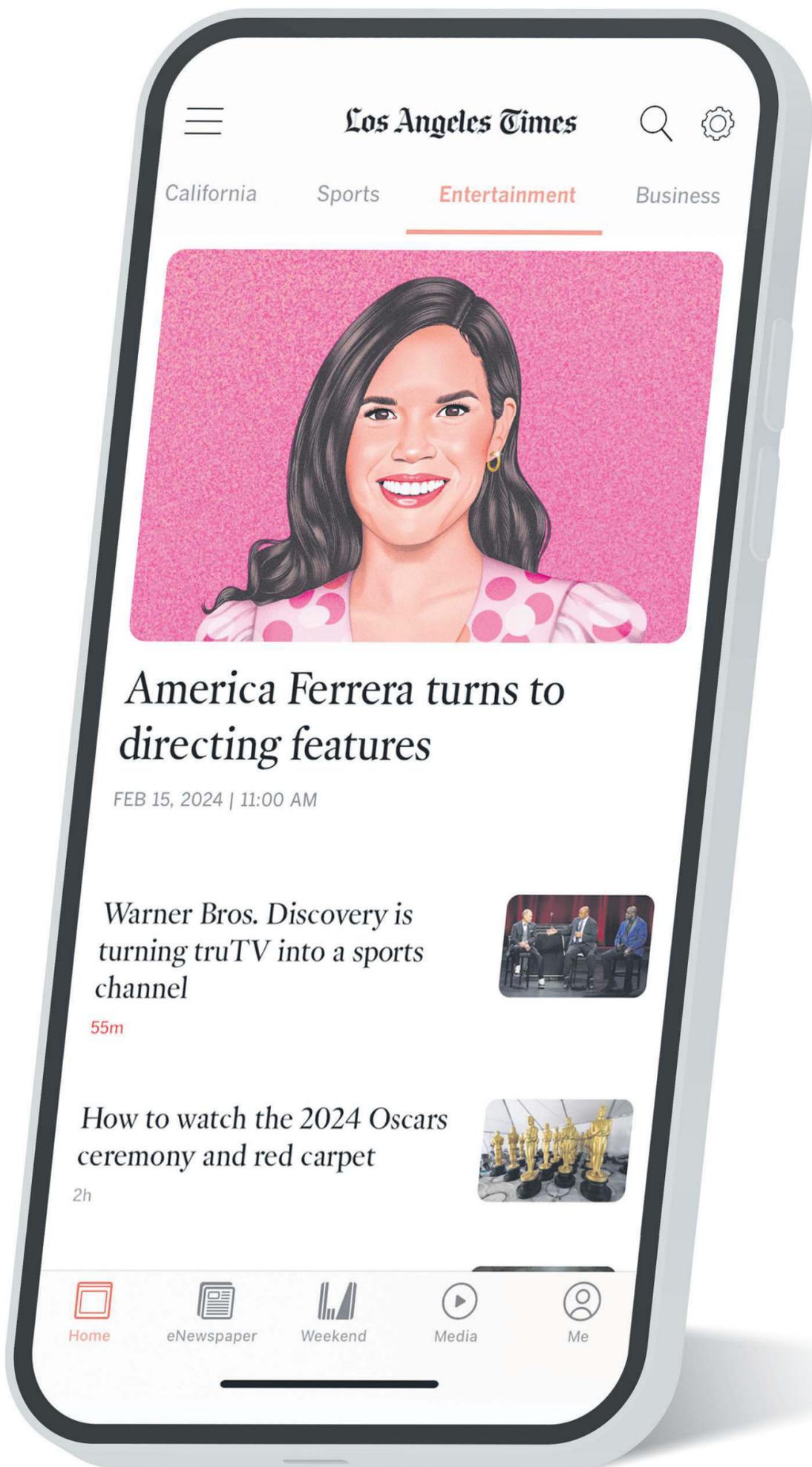


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Los Angeles Times

CALENDAR

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TELEVISION REVIEW

Typical Shane Gillis in 'Tires'

Netflix sitcom, set in an auto repair shop, is filled with the comic's style of crude jokes.

ROBERT LLOYD
TELEVISION CRITIC

I know that Shane Gillis is a controversial comic — not in the Lenny Bruce sense, but because in 2019 he was cast on "Saturday Night Live" as a featured player and fired from the show, even before his first appearance, when remarks surfaced that I've seen characterized as "racist, homophobic and misogynist." I don't know what those remarks were or in what context they were offered, but my guess is that they were supposed to be funny. And this February he returned to the show as a guest host.

Gillis is now the star and co-creator (with Steve Gerben, who co-stars, and McKeever, who directs) of "Tires," a six-episode Netflix comedy that has already been renewed for a second season. This isn't particularly surprising, given that 1) Gillis is popular, if not popular with everyone — unpopular performers don't host "SNL"; 2) this is a relatively cheap show, shot almost entirely on a single location; and 3) Netflix, in its drive to destroy the rest of television, wants to capture every possible audience.

The comedian already has a Netflix stand-up special, last year's "Beautiful Dogs," which I haven't watched. As in a courtroom where certain evidence may be excluded as prejudicial, it seemed fair to treat "Tires" blind, on its own merits, or lack of same.

It's a slight show, set in an auto repair shop, incompetently managed by Will (Gerben), one of several owned by his father. Gillis plays Shane, his cousin, an employee whose day is almost entirely devoted to teasing, humiliating and undermining [See "Tires," E3]



SHANE Gillis helps ineptly operate an auto repair shop with his cousin in "Tires."



CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

"WHEN I took the job, they said it wasn't meant to be the Tim Allen show. It was meant to be our show," Patricia Richardson says about "Home Improvement," one of the 1990s' biggest sitcoms.

PROUD OF THE 'HOME' SHE BUILT

Patricia Richardson on the series she and Tim Allen made a hit

By Ashley Spencer

THE "Home Improvement" pilot was in crisis.

As rehearsals got underway on the would-be ABC sitcom in 1991, it became apparent that the central tension between Tim Allen and Frances Fisher, who had been cast as Jill Taylor, the wife of Allen's character, Tim Taylor, was all wrong.

The show had been built around 37-year-old Allen's particular brand of machismo stand-up comedy and, opposite his grunts and jabs, Fisher's comebacks were sounding more like pleas. A test audience watched a run-through of their battle-of-the-sexes repartee in silence.

1999

THE 1999 PROJECT

All year we'll be marking the 25th anniversary of pop culture milestones that remade the world as we knew it then and created the world we live in now. latimes.com/1999

"Frances is a very good actress, and her character was upset," said "Home Improvement" co-creator and executive producer Carmen Finestra. "But the audience was thinking, 'This guy is a brute.' You're not going to feel very sympathetic toward the male character if you feel like he's abusive."

Enter Patricia Richardson. The 40-year-old actress was under contract with Disney — which co-produced "Home Improvement" under its former Touchstone Television banner — on a different pilot, and the executives suggested trying her in the role instead. Armed with a stash of withering glares, a no-nonsense Texas twang and a gift for physical comedy, Richardson stood toe-to-toe with Allen [See Richardson, E6]

THEATER REVIEW

Rejoinders are on point in brilliant chat fest

The joy is in the play of ideas in A Noise Within's sparkling 'Misalliance' revival.

CHARLES McNULTY
THEATER CRITIC

Characters are never at a loss for words in the plays of George Bernard Shaw. What the French call "esprit de l'escalier," or staircase wit, to refer to those moments when the perfect rejoinder is thought of only after it's too late, is not an experience that commonly afflicts his hyper-articulate crew.

Shaw's "Misalliance," now in revival at A Noise

Within in Pasadena, offers the pleasures of brilliant chat. It's a wordy play, running close to three hours. The plot, which includes the crash landing of an airplane and an armed intruder out to settle a family score, is nearly all talk.

Shaw originally subtitled his play "A Debate in One Sitting." Recognizing the length of the proceedings, he added an author's note saying that the curtain would be lowered twice for the audience's convenience. There's only one intermission at A Noise Within, but the sparkling conversation keeps the play galloping apace.

"Misalliance" may not be [See 'Misalliance,' E2]



CRAIG SCHWARTZ

JOSEY Montana McCoy, Deborah Strang, Riley Shanahan, Frederick Stuart, Peter Van Norden star in the staging of George Bernard Shaw's "Misalliance."



PARRISH LEWIS Netflix
"YOU People" was one of Netflix's top films in 2023, especially among households of color.

Viewers tune in to see diversity

Women, people of color were key to streaming film hits, UCLA report finds.

By Josh Rottenberg

Amid today's heated streaming wars, it appears diversity is the secret weapon. Women and people of color played a pivotal role in driving ratings for streaming films in 2023, even as they continued to face relatively limited opportunities and resources behind the camera, according to the second part of a UCLA Hollywood Diversity Report released Thursday.

The report, which examined the 100 highest-rated English-language scripted films released last year on major streaming services, found that women represented the majority of viewers for nine of the top 10 streaming releases and 17 of the top 20. Similarly, households of color were overrepresented as viewers for nine of the top 10 and 18 of the top 20 streaming films, including Netflix hits like Jennifer Lopez's revenge thriller "The Mother" and the Kenya Barris-directed romantic comedy "You People."

The findings echo the first part of UCLA's diversity report, released in March, which found that women and people of color also drove the biggest box office winners of 2023 even as they continued to remain underrepresented in the film industry.

"2023 clearly shows that diversity in film makes good business sense at home and in the theaters," Darnell Hunt, UCLA's executive vice chancellor and provost, said in a statement accompanying its release. "Diversity isn't an impediment. It's a draw."

The UCLA study found that the streaming landscape as a whole experienced a contraction last year, with the number of English-language films dropping by 28.6%, from 161 in 2022 to 115 in 2023, as studios scaled back projects and budgets in the post-pandemic era amid looming strikes.

Despite these cutbacks, the findings underscore the importance of diversity in attracting audiences, with films featuring diverse casts and crews, like Netflix's "Jen" [See UCLA, E2]

'Kairos' wins Booker Prize

German author Jenny Erpenbeck's tale of a tangled affair takes home international award for fiction. E2

Good-natured look at legends

A new Beach Boys documentary focuses on the band's love rather than family squabbles. Review, E3

Comics E4-5
Puzzles E5

A tale of tangled love affair wins Booker Prize

Jenny Erpenbeck is first German to garner international award since it began in 2016.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON — German author Jenny Erpenbeck and translator Michael Hofmann have won the International Booker Prize for fiction for “Kairos,” the story of a tangled love affair during the final years of East Germany’s existence.

Erpenbeck said she hoped that the book — whose win was announced Tuesday — would help readers learn that there was more to life in the now-vanished Communist country than depicted in “The Lives of Others,” the Academy Award-winning 2006 film about pervasive state surveillance in the 1980s.

“The only thing that everybody knows is that they had a wall, they were terrorizing everyone with the Stasi [secret police] and that’s it,” she said. “That is not all there is.”

“Kairos” traces an affair from utopian beginning to bitter end and draws parallels between personal lives and the life of the state.

The book beat five other finalists, chosen from 149 submitted novels, for the prize, which recognizes fiction from around the world that has been translated into English and published in the U.K. or Ireland.

The \$64,000 prize is divided between author and translator.

Canadian broadcaster Eleanor Wachtel, who chaired the five-member judging panel, said Erpenbeck’s novel about the relationship between a student and an older writer is “a

richly textured evocation of a tormented love affair, the entanglement of personal and national transformations.”

It’s set in the dying days of the German Democratic Republic, leading up to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Erpenbeck, 57, was born and raised in East Berlin, which was part of East Germany (the GDR) until the country disappeared with German reunification in 1990.

“Like the GDR, [the book] starts with optimism and trust, then unravels so badly,” Wachtel said.

She added that Hofmann’s translation captures the “eloquence and eccentricities” of Erpenbeck’s prose.

The International Booker Prize is awarded every year. It is run alongside the Booker Prize for English-language fiction, which will be handed out in the fall.

Last year’s winner was another novel about communism and its legacy in Europe, “Time Shelter” by Bulgarian writer Georgi Gospodinov and translated by Angela Rodel.

The prize was set up to boost the profile of fiction in other languages, which accounts for only a small share of books published in Britain, and to salute the underappreciated work of literary translators.

Erpenbeck is the first German winner of the International Booker Prize, and Hofmann is the first male translator to win since the prize launched in its current form in 2016.

He said he felt his style complemented that of the author. “I think she is a tighter and more methodical writer than I would be,” he said, and the English-language book is “a mixture of her order and my chaos.”



CRAIG SCHWARTZ

FREDERICK STUART plays Lord Summerhays to Erika Soto’s Hypatia in A Noise Within’s revival of George Bernard Shaw’s “Misalliance” in Pasadena.

Joy’s in play of words in staging of ‘Misalliance’

“Misalliance,” from E1 the finest of Shaw’s disquisitionary dramas. “Heartbreak House: A Fantasia in the Russian Manner on English Themes,” an argumentative state-of-the-nation play with eccentrically drawn characters of Chekhovian complexity, represents the pinnacle of the playwright’s achievement in this genre.

Shaw was still working out in “Misalliance” the musical structure he would perfect in “Heartbreak House.” Social issues are taken up and then allowed to recede, returning like themes in a symphony without concern for resolution. The joy is in the play of ideas, the eternal back and forth of opposing viewpoints, the variation of intellectual motifs in a recurring pattern.

The play concerns the relationship of parents and children. Shaw’s focus is on the education of the younger generation, not for social or professional prestige but for human fulfillment and the enrichment of society.

The conflict between the young and the old is ex-

plored in the context of social class. The aristocracy, the moneyed middle class and the working poor are set side by side to see which might have the generational advantage.

Playwriting for Shaw served as a kind of political blog, a repository for his wide-ranging thinking, generously distributed among a cross-section of characters. This might sound dry but it’s actually scintillatingly entertaining, thanks to

Shaw’s keen intelligence, verbal virtuosity and spry theatrical instincts.

“Misalliance,” as the title suggests, revolves around the question of marriage. This disputatious sociopolitical drama is cunningly packaged as a romantic comedy.

At stake in the plot is the future happiness of Hypatia (Erika Soto), the free-thinking daughter of wealthy underwear manufacturer John Tarleton (Peter Van Norden). She’s engaged to Bentley Summerhays (Josey Montana McCoy), the effete son of Lord Summerhays (Frederick Stuart), a former governor of a British colony.

But she isn’t sure that Bentley’s aristocratic refinements are enough for her. She appreciates his brain but would like more brawn. More than anything, she wants to live her life as “an active verb” and not as a prisoner of respectable morality.

This longing is answered when Joseph Percival (Dan Lin) makes an emergency airplane landing that shatters the Tarletons’ greenhouse. His passenger, Lina Szczepanowska (Trisha Miller), a Polish acrobat in disguise as a man, saves the day with her quick action and no-nonsense fearlessness.

As all the men fall madly under the spell of the audaciously heroic Lina, Hypatia decides that Joey, the man

who just fell out of the sky, is meant to sweep her off her feet. So what if he’s an old friend of her fiancé’s. About that gun-toting intruder (played by Joshua Bitton), not to worry — the fabulously athletic Lina has him covered.

The play takes place at the Tarletons’ elegant home in Surrey, handsomely imagined by scenic designer Angela Balogh Calin. The issues of “Misalliance” haven’t expired, but the milieu and period of the play must be respected, and on this score especially, Guillermo Cienfuegos’ staging succeeds. I drove to Pasadena but felt transported to Edwardian England.

The production opens on a somewhat cartoonish note. Riley Shanahan as the square businessman son of Mr. Tarleton, and McCoy as the exasperatingly “overbred” Bunny (Bentley’s nickname) overplay their difference to vivid comic effect but at the expense of subtlety. (Shaw’s comedy works best when actors play their humorous roles as straight as possible.)

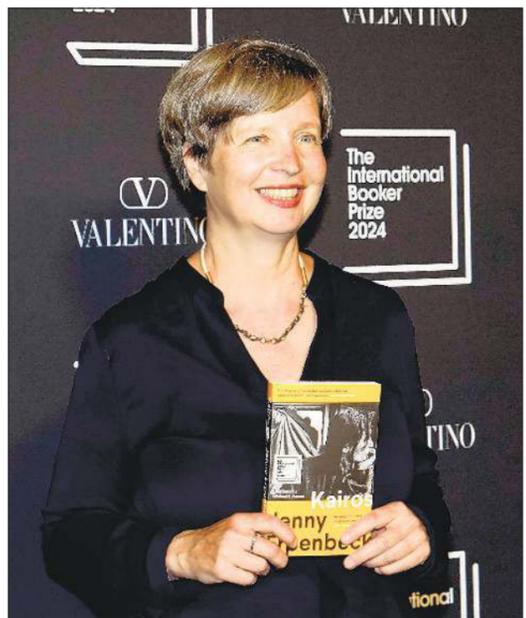
But the revival finds its groove once the veteran actors take over. Van Norden, a dab hand with Shakespeare, is a natural for Shaw. Deborah Strang as Mrs. Tarleton perfectly balances the character’s conscience and conventionality. Stuart imbues Lord Summerhays with somber suavity.

All three parents are dogged by misgivings and regrets about their children. On the topic of his relationship with his sons, Lord Summerhays confesses to “a sort of remorse about the way we shake hands.” It’s the kind of majestically phrased remark that naturally occurs in Shaw’s dialogue and shifts the play’s emotional weather.

Soto, a winning Beatrice in Cienfuegos’ production last year of “Much Ado About Nothing” at A Noise Within, is excellent here. Her Hypatia, the spoiled ingenue-turned-rebel, is wild and wayward yet fighting a worthy fight. “Men like conventions because men made them,” she declares with frustrated sanity, making clear she won’t uphold what crushes her freedom.

Miller’s glorious Lina, a woman who rejects bourgeois propriety as beneath her, is one of Shaw’s great comic creations. She challenges the other characters even more robustly than Hypatia to step out of their minds and into their bodies, prescribing physical exercise as a remedy for lives oversaturated with words.

Lina provides the truest example in the play of how to live independently, with courage and heart. She’s an emissary from another world, a mismatch with the characters of “Misalliance” and all the more appreciated for showing them an alternative they never dreamed existed.



ALBERTO PEZZALI Associated Press

JENNY ERPENBECK displays copy of her prize-winning book. “Kairos” translator was also honored.

Women, POC drive streaming films’ ratings

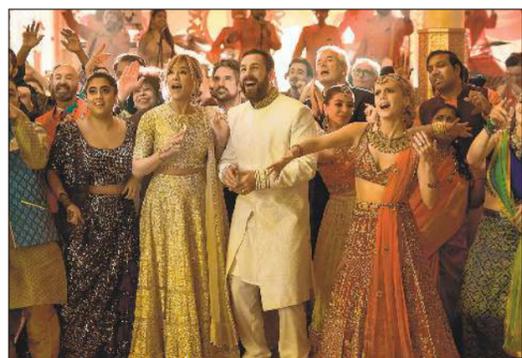
[UCLA, from E1] nifer Aniston-Adam Sandler comedy “Murder Mystery 2,” drawing higher engagement and ratings.

Ana-Christina Ramón, director of UCLA’s Entertainment and Media Research Initiative and co-founder of the report with Hunt, noted that diverse content has particularly

strong appeal to younger audiences, who have become more accustomed to seeing themselves represented in animated films and on social media. “This is how you keep subscribers: Give them what they respond to and clearly want to see,” said Ramón.

For the first time in the report’s 11-year history, actors of color reached proportionate representation in starring roles for streaming films, making up 45% of lead roles — a significant increase from 33.3% in 2022. Women also reached proportionate representation as leads, although their overall presence in casts lagged. Films with a majority diverse cast accounted for more than a third of the top streaming films in 2023 (35%), up 10% from the previous year.

Behind the camera, streaming offers more opportunities for women and people of color compared to the theatrical realm. For directors of color, their share of streaming films reached 31%, compared to 22.9% for theatrical releases. Female directors also helmed a



SCOTT YAMANO Netflix

FILMS featuring diverse casts and crews, like “Murder Mystery 2,” drew high engagement and ratings.

higher proportion of streaming films at 31%, almost double their share of theatrical films.

Still, financial constraints remain a significant hurdle. Female directors were more likely to work on lower-budget movies, with the vast majority of their projects costing less than \$20 million. In contrast, big-budget films remained predominantly the domain of white male directors.

“Creators that represent

diverse backgrounds face a mixed bag,” said co-author and UCLA doctoral candidate Michael Tran. “On one hand, they have a chance to lead or participate in these streaming projects, but then the studios are putting on the brakes financially and there is less room to show success.”

With the entertainment landscape continuing to undergo seismic shifts in the streaming era and studios facing increasing pressure from Wall Street to show profits, the report’s authors conclude that investing in diverse content is not a gamble but a proven strategy for success.

“We know investing in diversity isn’t a risk,” said Hunt, who is also a professor of sociology and African American studies. “It should be considered a strategic business imperative if Hollywood wants to survive.”

You can read the entire report at socialsciences.ucla.edu.

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NETFLIX

TELEVISION REVIEW

Sentiment wins out over band squabbles

Disney+ documentary 'The Beach Boys' puts emphasis on the love among band members.

ROBERT LLOYD
TELEVISION CRITIC

I will (almost) always watch a film about the Beach Boys — the latest, titled simply "The Beach Boys," premieres Friday on Disney+ — not just for the part they played in American musical and cultural history but for the part they played in my own. From 1966 to 1969 my father worked for the band, in the capacity of a tour promoter; that these were their years of lesser popularity, as rock got heavy and dour and jammy, meant that this relationship gave me no cachet with my peers. But it was interesting to me.

I saw them play, in striped shirts, white suits, colorful velours and out of costume, at the Hollywood Bowl, when the kids still screamed during their shows; at the Melodyland theater-in-the-round across from Disneyland, when they seemingly couldn't get booked any closer to L.A.; and at the Whisky A Go Go, when "Sunflower" was released. I saw Dennis Wilson drag race; his Shelby Cobra rolled over my toe as it was being pushed to the starting line, but as much of the weight had been stripped out of the car, no damage was done. Bruce Johnston introduced me to Eric Clapton at a Blind Faith concert. ("This is Eric," he said. "Hello," I said.) I rode for a minute in a car with Carl Wilson and his parents.



THE BEACH BOYS circa 1964: Dennis Wilson, left, Al Jardine, Carl Wilson, Brian Wilson and Mike Love. The new Disney+ documentary uses new interview footage and lots of archival material to tell band's story.

I knew them as much as any child knows a parent's business associates, which is to say, not at all really, but they were familiar characters, as were the support staff in the office, the studio and the road. They came together in stray bits of news and gossip, coalescing into a pantheon that floated about my life. The Maharishi, with whom the band briefly toured, gave my dad his mantra. And there was Charles Manson, of course, the ineradicable dark blot in any telling of this tale, who attached himself to Dennis looking for pop stardom. My

father had moved on by the time of the Tate-La Bianca murders, but as he had once thrown Charlie out of the office — that was a moment in our house.

Directed by Frank Marshall ("Rather") and Thom Zimny (whose documentary "Elvis Presley: The Searcher" is one of the best films about Elvis), it covers well-traveled — oft-surfed? — territory. Not even counting the scores of online videos and the all-star tributes, there's a wealth of full-blown films about the band as a whole and of Brian Wilson, the foundation of their sound,

going back decades, including three biopics: two for television — the Dennis-focused "Summer Dreams" and "The Beach Boys: An American Family" — and the well-regarded big-screen Brian young-and-old movie "Love and Mercy."

It's irresistible material, a show business story and a family drama, salted with child abuse, drug addiction, mental illness and recovery, a war between art and commerce and an arc of success and failure and success — when "Endless Summer," a two-LP best-of package went to No. 1 on the charts in

1974, it catapulted the group into permanent residency as "America's Band." With its range of good-time rock 'n' roll and ambitious, eccentric art-pop, they're at once a band for everybody and a band for geeks.

Running less than two hours at a time when four-hour rock docs are not unusual, this is a swift, compact telling, with surprisingly little in the way of music and whole swaths of recording history skated over. But it looks fantastic, with a wealth of archival photographs and home movies, many of which are new to

me, even as a veteran of these things. Apart from new interview footage with the survivors, in and around the band, and the customary pop musician testimonials, not much if anything will be new to the fans. What is new, among Beach Boys documentaries, is the tone, which does not linger on the sensational episodes and downplays the squabbling to emphasize the love.

For a group whose relations have been famously divisive, and whose story has been marked by tragedy — the early deaths of Dennis and Carl are represented only by a closing title card — it's essentially good-natured, even sentimental. (The film checks out early in their ongoing, competitive careers, before the Beach Boys became Mike Love's band and Brian a solo artist, and surprisingly omits their 50th-anniversary reunion tour and final studio album, the 2012 "That's Why God Made the Radio," which is not bad at all.) Everybody, even problematic Wilson dad Murry, gets their due. A staged but genuinely sweet closing scene may bring a tear to your eye.

Like the Beatles or the Grateful Dead, the Beach Boys are a perennial act whose influence will long outlive them. And eventually the idiosyncratic pop music they made in the late 1960s — my years in their orbit, which is to say my Beach Boys music — came to be celebrated. Few bought "Friends" when it came out in 1968, but now you can listen to a four-part podcast in which well-informed fans take it apart, tenderly, track by track, instrument by instrument, voice by voice.

'Tires' spins out typical Shane Gillis material

["Tires," from E1] ing Will. As we begin, Will has mistakenly ordered 500 tires, which he tries to mitigate by noting that he got a volume discount. Sending them back does not seem an option.

Also working at the garage are Kilah (Kilah Fox), a receptionist, I guess, whose job seems to be smoking cigarettes and looking annoyed, and Cal (Chris O'Connor), the only one of them who might be employable elsewhere. Stavros Halkias plays the district manager, who is frequently on-site or on the phone; he is a large, long-haired, unkempt thorn in their side.

Business is down, if it was ever up — the possibility of someone losing their position or the shop itself being shut down runs through the season. They are bad at up-selling customers, apparently the backbone of the auto repair business, but one wonders how they have any customers to upsell at all, their service being worse than nonexistent. Certainly you would not take your car there more than once.

Either to represent the brand or to prove that there is a place in the streaming universe for "offensive" humor, Gillis and company dutifully push some buttons. (The Netflix guide describes "Tires" as "deadpan" and "raunchy.") We get, among other things, "gay" as a pejorative, Shane putting on a bad Japanese accent, an Italian slur, a joke about Jewish noses, much talk of breasts and bottoms (not the terms employed here) and a lot of sex jokes. (I was

going to write "crude sex jokes," but that felt redundant.) As if to balance this, nearly every woman in the series — customers, most of them — is smarter than the men. (Cal, who would just like to get on with his work, excepted.)

One might say that these are characters and do not represent the personal predilections of the writers and actors, or that there are people like this in the world — presumably some are fans of Gillis' comedy — and so the creators are just being, you know, honest. Some of them are clearly idiots. I'm pretty sure we're supposed to regard Shane as a charming, even admirable fellow, self-possessed, in control of a situation (if to no positive effect) in a way that Will, a classic schlemiel, is not. And yet Gillis' best moments are when he stops being a jerk for a moment and becomes actually helpful or thoughtful; he has a surprising softness. As a screen presence, he's not unappealing.

The quandary of what constitutes a joke and how to take it is, of course, at the heart of much professional — and political — discourse these days, and people are always telling other people that they just don't get it, or they're being too sensitive or not sensitive enough. I wasn't outraged — the humor, like the characters, is too pointedly juvenile to take that seriously. Still, I didn't laugh once. Humor is funny that way.

The season has a happy ending. It has to do with those tires.



VISITORS wait to enter Elvis Presley's Graceland in Memphis, Tenn., in 2020. Elvis Presley Enterprises said Wednesday that it's conducting business as normal at the late singer's "iconic home" and welcoming Elvis fans.

Riley Keough prevails in court to stop auction of Graceland

Questions of fraud remain open, but Tennessee judge blocks proposed sale.

BY ANGIE ORELLANA
HERNANDEZ

Elvis Presley's granddaughter landed a partial victory in court Wednesday when a Tennessee judge upheld a temporary injunction blocking an auction and foreclosure sale of the late singer's famed Graceland mansion. Still to be decided is whether the note and deed of trust in question are fraudulent documents.

The ruling, confirmed by The Times, came a day after actor Riley Keough obtained a temporary restraining order against the sale of the Memphis property by Naussany Investments & Private Lending LLC, which she alleged in a lawsuit might not even be a "real entity."

The sale had been scheduled for Thursday. Naussany Investments did not immediately respond Wednesday to a request for comment sent to an email address listed on court documents.

Keough's lawsuit, which was reviewed by The Times, said Naussany Investments presented documents to the estate via the Los Angeles County Superior Court in September. Those docu-

ments alleged that Lisa Marie Presley, Keough's late mother, had borrowed \$3.8 million from the company and "gave a deed of trust encumbering Graceland as security."

The "Daisy Jones & the Six" star denied the claims, calling the documents "fraudulent" and "forgeries" in her lawsuit.

"Lisa Marie Presley never borrowed money from Naussany Investments and never gave a deed of trust to Naussany Investments," the lawsuit read.

The deed of trust presented by the company was "purportedly acknowledged" by Florida notary Kimberly L. Philbrick; However, Philbrick submitted an affidavit stating she had no role in the matter.

"I have never met Lisa Marie Presley, nor have I ever notarized a document signed by Lisa Marie Presley," Philbrick's affidavit read. "I do not know why my signature appears on this document."

Tennessee's Shelby County Register of Deeds said Tuesday that it did not have any filed documents relating to a Graceland deed, according to a broadcast outlet WREG Memphis, but a copy of a deed was attached in Keough's lawsuit.

Prior to Wednesday's court hearing, a representative for Naussany Investments submitted a filing asking to continue the litigation,



RILEY KEOUGH, granddaughter of Elvis Presley, is now the sole trustee of his estate.

tion, the New York Times reported. Chancellor JoeDae Jenkins moved forward with the case, citing a lack of appearance by Naussany Investments representatives at the recent hearing and a need for additional evidence from Keough's lawyers.

It was unclear when the next hearing in the case would be held.

Hours after the court ruled, a person purporting to be a Naussany Investments representative submitted a statement that said the company intended to drop its claims on Graceland, according to the Associated Press, which was not able to immediately find new legal filings in online records.

Naussany Investments couldn't be verified as a Missouri-based business by CNN, despite the outlet hav-

ing court documents that gave the firm's location as being in Kimberling City.

Elvis Presley Enterprises, which manages the Presley estate, told The Times in a statement Wednesday that it is conducting business as normal.

"As the court has now made clear, there was no validity to the claims," the statement read. "There will be no foreclosure. Graceland will continue to operate as it has for the past 42 years, ensuring that Elvis fans from around the world can continue to have a best in class experience when visiting his iconic home."

Keough was formally named the sole trustee of her mother's estate — and, by extension, Elvis' estate — in November after settling a legal dispute with her grandmother Priscilla Presley, Elvis' widow.

Priscilla Presley had challenged her daughter's will after the singer-songwriter's death last January at age 54, questioning the "authenticity and validity" of a 2016 amendment that named Keough and her brother, Benjamin Keough, as heirs to her estate. Benjamin Keough died in 2020 at age 27.

The family came to an agreement last May that gave Priscilla Presley burial rights at Graceland, a \$1-million lump-sum payment and an advisory role relating to Elvis Presley Enterprises.



'TIRES' CO-CREATORS Shane Gillis, left, and Steve Gerben star in the Netflix sitcom, which is set in an incompetently managed auto repair shop.

COMICS

LA CUCARACHA By Lalo Alcaraz



PICKLES By Brian Crane



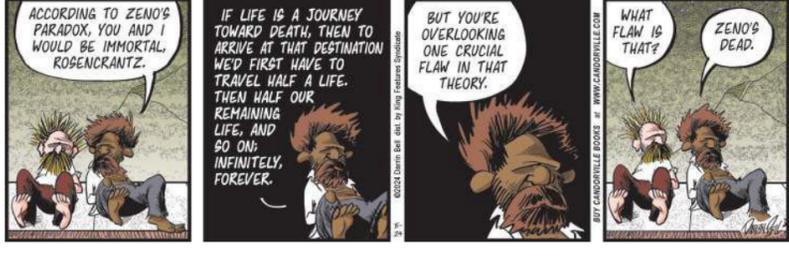
CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia



BABY BLUES By Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



CANDORVILLE By Darrin Bell



CRANKSHAFT By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers



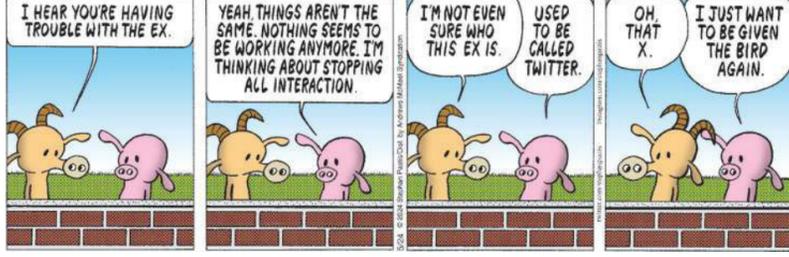
LOOSE PARTS By Dave Blazek



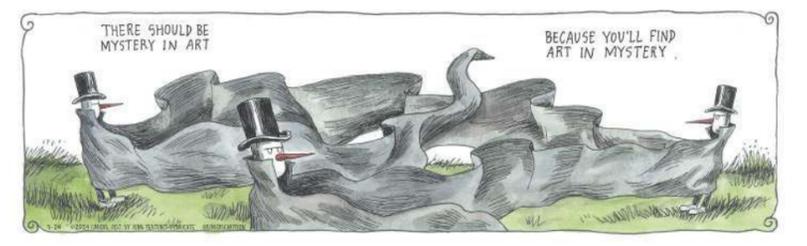
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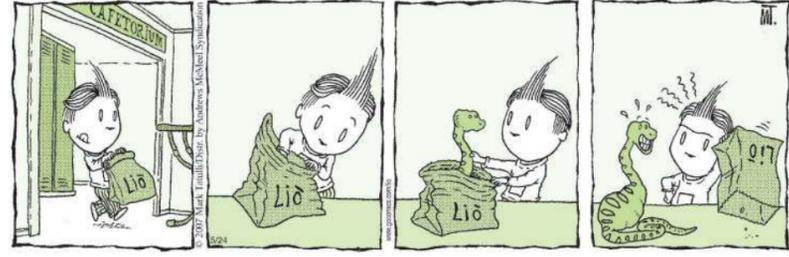
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By Stephan Pastis



MACANUDO By Liniers



LIO By Mark Tatulli



BLONDIE By Dean Young & John Marshall



ZITS By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



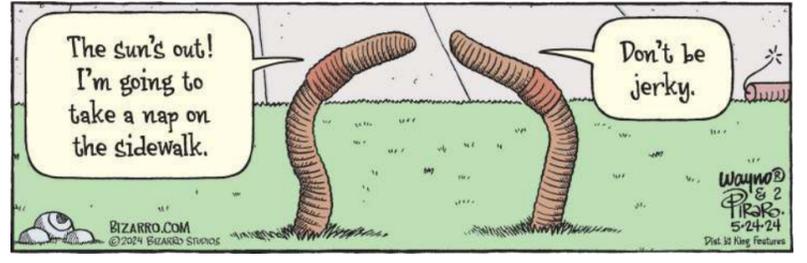
BETWEEN FRIENDS By Sandra Bell-Lundy



TUNDRA By Chad Carpenter



BIZARRO By Wayno and Piraro



SIX CHIX By Maritsa Patrinos



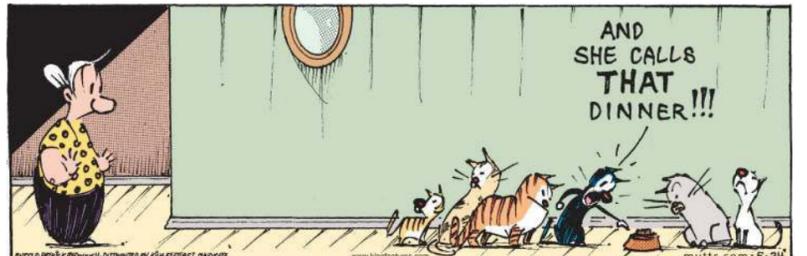
DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan



FRAZZ By Jef Mallett



MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell



NON SEQUITUR By Wiley



PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz



COMICS

SUDOKU

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KENKEN

Every box will contain a number; numbers depend on the size of the grid. For a 6x6 puzzle, use Nos. 1-6. Do not repeat a number in any row or column. The numbers in each heavily outlined set of squares must combine to produce the target number found in the top left corner of the cage using the mathematical operation indicated. A number can be repeated within a cage as long as it is not in the same row or column.

4+	24X		
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24X		3-	4+

HOROSCOPE

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

Aries (March 21-April 19): You have natural ability and a charisma that draws people in, but they are not the foundation of your success.
Taurus (April 20-May 20): You're in a labyrinth of sorts. Remember the truth: this thing is just made of shrubs. At any point, you could get through them if you had to.
Gemini (May 21-June 21): Fear is as normal a part of the human experiences as is having thumbs. Thumbs don't define you. Fear shouldn't either.
Cancer (June 22-July 22): People who say they are funny often aren't. The proof is in the embodiment of a thing. You'll be amused at what you embody today.
Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): You'll get a compliment and other validating signals that you're on the right track. Stay focused on improving.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): People trust you. This is why you have enough information to sink your associates or loved ones. Just know, it would hurt less to slip with your feet than your mouth.
Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): You are performing at a high level, but you can't feel it because being inside you feels about the same as it has all along this process.
Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): Your time is better spent solving a number of problems instead of trying to make one thing perfect.
Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Today you'll end up throwing something you thought you knew out the window. This is, ultimately, where some knowledge belongs — jettisoned.
Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Even as a director you can't always control the direction the scene takes, but it can be influenced, nudged along to excellent effect.
Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb.

18): A quest is in order, but what's the aim? One quest always worthy is to become masterful at reading people.
Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Wisdom sticks around and waits for you to be mature enough to understand its meaning.
Today's birthday (May 24): This solar return celebrates love in many forms. Family, friends, romance, causes, animals ... the beautiful quality attention you give makes every relationship better. There's a sharp turn in the professional realm and you'll shine under new management. More highlights: lush scenery, the chance at a prize known by few in the world, and a series of savvy, game-changing moves. Virgo and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers: 7, 20, 14 and 16.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol
 By Margi Stevenson

ACROSS
 1 Home of S.D. and the O.C.
 6 Cardinals gp.
 9 Hall of Famer Piazza who caught the ceremonial last pitch at Shea Stadium
 13 myrtle
 14 MSN rival
 15 Country with one of the highest life expectancies in the world
 16 Dried poblano
 17 Stellar essay?
 19 Zero-stress period
 21 Cyberhandle
 22 Modest proposal?
 24 "Never gonna happen, laddie!"
 27 Pt. of 61-Across
 28 Use a straw
 29 Go around
 31 Spotter's confirmation
 34 "Can do!"
 35 Compliment a nice thatching job?
 39 Eldest Brady boy
 40 Sea salt
 41 Hit Ctrl+R, say
 44 Little gripe
 45 Fig. on a mountaintop sign
 48 Waste watchers org.
 49 June celebrant's social media posts?
 53 Harangue
 55 Singer-songwriter Billie
 56 Comparison shop at BevMo?
 59 Martini's vermouth partner
 60 Tackle box supply
 61 Pre-Sierra Mac platform
 62 Subsequently
 63 Refuse
 64 Satisfied, as expectations
 65 Turn on

DOWN
 1 Rapscaillions
 2 Like Scrooge
 3 Flora that's tricky to transplant
 4 Garden pest eaten by hoverfly larva
 5 2022 World Cup Golden Ball winner
 6 Power _

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7 Rome landmark
 8 Writer Mario Vargas _
 9 Christmas trio
 10 Big little tech release of 2005
 11 Actor Penn
 12 Turn off
 15 Dried meat snack
 18 Balkan native
 20 Native Ohioans
 23 L'escrime equipment
 25 "Never gonna happen, bud"
 26 Repair shop fig.
 30 "Things": Oscar-winning Lanthimos film
 31 Who Othello declares "is most honest"
 32 "Give _ go!"
 33 Yours, biblically
 35 Get ready to cook
 36 Many a wedding guest
 37 Name in a Beethoven title
 38 Untaxed investment options
 39 Hurdle for M.A. hopefuls
 42 -ski
 43 Lure

45 Label founded by Clive Davis
 46 _ of two evils
 47 Part of a summer camp uniform
 50 Kick to the curb, for one
 51 Crowded
 52 Like a kite
 54 Totally gross
 56 Deg. held by Wilson, but no other U.S. president
 57 Tuna tartare topper
 58 Tel. no. addition

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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

BRIDGE

BY FRANK STEWART

This week's deals have treated the finesse, a basic technique that is better avoided since half the time it will betray you. Declarers should look for alternatives. Look only at today's North-South cards. Plan your play at four hearts when West leads the five of spades. Declarer can take the ace and finesse in trumps (against either defender), but if he misguesses, he is at risk of losing a diamond and two clubs as well. South may do better if he doesn't try to guess the queen of trumps. He takes the A-K of spades, leads a diamond to the king, ruffs the last spade, cashes the ace of diamonds and exits with a

diamond. East wins and leads a fourth diamond, ruffed in dummy. Declarer then leads a club to his queen, and West wins and returns a club. South takes the king and exits with a club. With three tricks left, dummy is left with the K-J-10 of trumps, and declarer has A-7-6. With a defender to lead, South is sure of the last three tricks and 10 in all. You hold: ♠ 7 4 3 ♥ K J 10 4 ♦ K 7 3 ♣ K 6 4. Your partner opens one club, you bid one heart and he raises to two hearts. What do you say? Answer: Game is barely possible. Your partner might hold a perfect minimum such as 9 2, Q 9 8 2, A 2, A Q J 3 2, and if you bid three hearts to try for game, he would go on. Still, partners seldom have just the right

cards, and if your partner holds K 8 2, A Q 6 5, 8 6, A 7 3 2, you can't be sure of even nine tricks. Pass.

South dealer
 N-S vulnerable

NORTH
 ♠ 7 4 3
 ♥ K J 10 4
 ♦ K 7 3
 ♣ K 6 4

WEST
 ♠ Q 8 6 5 2
 ♥ 9 8 5
 ♦ 6 2
 ♣ A 10 3

EAST
 ♠ J 10 9
 ♥ Q 3
 ♦ Q J 10 8
 ♣ J 8 7 5

SOUTH
 ♠ A K
 ♥ A 7 6 2
 ♦ A 9 5 4
 ♣ Q 9 2

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
 1 NT Pass 2 ♣ Pass All Pass
 2 ♥ Pass 2 ♣ All Pass

Opening lead — ♠ 5

ASK AMY

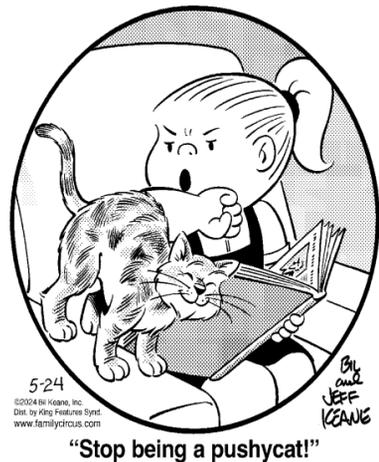
A farewell to columns

Dear Readers: After 21 years writing the "Ask Amy" column, I'm announcing that I'm leaving this space. My final column will run at the end of June. I'm healthy, happy and 64 years old. I've been wrestling with this for over a year. When I was hired by the Chicago Tribune to write an advice column after Ann Landers' death, I was a middle-aged single mother. My daughter, Emily, and I relocated from our Washington, D.C., home to Chicago. My welcome to Chicago was to deliver a solo performance of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" in front of 35,000 fans during the seventh-inning stretch of a Cubs game at Wrigley Field. This turned out to be a metaphor for my experience writing this column: an exuberant and sometimes nerve-racking effort of trying to hit the right notes before a huge audience. After several great years in Chicago, Emily left for college and I moved to my tiny hometown of Freeville, N.Y., (pop. 505), to spend time with my sisters, aunts and cousins, and to be with my mother at the end of her life. My experiences have mirrored those of many of my readers. For me, these last two decades have been

about the intensity and consequences of love and loss. After returning home, I promptly tumbled into a Hallmark Channel plotline, when I fell in love with and quickly married a man I've known since childhood. We then blundered into the often awkward blending of our five daughters. I became a stepmother, and then a grandmother, all before I believed I was ready. Day in, day out — over the last two decades — readers have generously shared their vulnerabilities about many of our common experiences. I'm grateful we've been able to help each other. I've burned through eight laptops, opened bushels of postal mail, written columns in the car, on planes, on my honeymoon and at my mother's bedside. I've also written two books, a screenplay and scores of essays. Doing this work has sent me into therapy. It has inspired me to explore the teachings of world religions, and to seek the insight of thinkers like Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung. I've made mistakes, been well pranked (at least twice, that I know of) and learned how to apologize, ask for forgiveness and forgive others for their mistakes. Inspired by readers, I've worked hard

to mend fractured family relationships and to be a better friend. Being an advice giver has challenged me to be aware of cultural, social and relationship trends, and to appreciate the quirks of human behavior. When readers get frustrated by my lengthy answers to sometimes petty problems, they often suggest that I should just tell people to "get a life!" I think that wrestling with our questions — from the quotidian to the profound — is living. For the next month, I'll publish fresh columns and rerun some favorites. Then my fantasy is to drive an RV cross-country, visiting people I've met through this work who challenged me and tantalized readers with their requests for advice. In my hometown, I'm opening a little lending library. You can find me on social media or through my Asking Amy newsletter (amydickinson.com). I'm delighted to make way for R. Eric Thomas, whose "Asking Eric" will continue the engaging relationship we've shared. Eric is young, smart and a talented advice giver, formerly of the Dear Prudence column. You can send your questions to ericaskingeric.com.

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham



FREE RANGE By Bill Whitehead



MARMADUKE By Brad & Paul Anderson



BLISS By Harry Bliss



SPEED BUMP By Dave Coverly



Why 'Hollywood hates our show'

[Richardson, from E1] when she arrived two days before filming was scheduled to begin.

"Pat made it the comedy that we hoped it would be," Finestra said. "It was unbelievable what she did. I mean, it made the show work."

With Richardson as Jill, "Home Improvement" surged ahead to a series order, and it soon became one of the most popular sitcoms of the 1990s — its third season was No. 1 in the ratings, toppling "Seinfeld," "Frasier" and "Roseanne." At its peak, an average of 34 million Americans tuned in to the family comedy each week.

"We were weirdly compared to 'Frasier,'" executive producer Elliot Shoenman said, "in that they were the intellectual show, and we were the everyday-people show."

From 1991 to 1999, audiences watched the Taylors raise their three sons (Zachery Ty Bryan, Jonathan Taylor Thomas and Taran Noah Smith); laughed at Tim's mishaps on his cable show, "Tool Time," alongside his more competent assistant, Al (Richard Karn); and took in the wisdom of the Taylors' camera-shy neighbor, Wilson (Earl Hindman).

But at the heart of the series was the contentious yet loving relationship between Tim and Jill.

"When I took the job, they said it wasn't meant to be the Tim Allen show. It was meant to be our show," Richardson said in a recent interview with The Times, noting, "I've always said, I don't want to play the thankless wife."

FROM THEATER TO TV STARDOM

While the Taylors' home life was one of comforting familiarity, Richardson had a nomadic childhood, thanks to her father's military career. After a couple of stints in Dallas, she returned a third time to attend Southern Methodist University, where she earned a degree in theater. She worked at a local dinner theater and saved money to pay her way to New York, where she spent more than a decade performing on and off Broadway.

She'd never planned to do TV or film, but when an advertising executive approached her one night after she'd performed an ensemble role in "Gypsy," she soon booked TV ads for fabric softener and diapers.

"Commercials paid for the theater habit, which didn't pay at all," Richardson said.

After relocating to Los Angeles to shoot the Norman Lear sitcom "Double Trouble," she and her then-husband, actor Ray Baker, made the move permanent in the late 1980s, when she landed lead roles on the short-lived sitcoms "FM" and "Eisenhower & Lutz."

ABC had been desperate to secure Richardson for "Home Improvement" at the eleventh hour. Richardson was less eager. She'd just given birth to twins a few months earlier, and she had another young son at home. She didn't feel ready to return to work at all and was especially anxious because the series "was so obviously going to be an enormous hit," she said.

But the production offered her accommodations, including an extra dressing room to put her twins' cribs in and a personal driver, so that her nanny could take the babies home early.

Still, the early weeks shooting "Home Improvement" were difficult. Allen — who had been handpicked by Disney after Michael Eisner and Jeffrey Katzenberg watched his "Men Are Pigs" stand-up set — had never acted professionally beyond commercials. The producers often picked apart his work, and while filming one particularly emotional scene in the first season, Allen panicked when tears began to well in Richardson's eyes mid-take.

"Tim said, 'We have to stop the scene. Something's wrong with Pat,'" series writer and co-executive producer Rosalind Moore recalled. "He thought she was really upset. It never occurred to him that somebody could be so into a scene that they would have a real emotion."

Eventually, the show found its groove, and Allen and Richardson began meeting regularly with the producers and writers after the weekly read-throughs to



CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

PATRICIA RICHARDSON has kept busy on various TV projects, including starring in Lifetime's "Strong Medicine," and says she'd be up for a dramedy.

give input on their characters and storylines. For Richardson, it was the chance to imbue Jill with depth and humanity beyond her quippy retorts to Tim's antics.

"Pat was the only woman down on that set almost all of the time, and I was very often the only woman writer in the room," said Moore. "When she was surrounded by all that testosterone, she would still hold her ground. There were times when she said, 'You know what? I have three kids. I wouldn't say this to my children.' And she was always right. She always made it better."

But it wasn't always an easy battle: Richardson remembered one disagreement with the male writers over the way a scene had been written for Jill. When she told them it wasn't how a woman would react to the circumstance at hand, one of the men chided, "Pat, it's not like we don't understand women. We're married to them."

As the show entered its third season, Richardson said she was able to renegotiate her contract to be guaranteed four Jill-centric episodes per season, as well as a profit share point, which would give her a back-end percentage of the series earnings.

"I knew that residuals just get less and less, and I felt that I am going to end up being a huge part of whatever this show is," she said. "It's going to work because of me almost as much as because of Tim."

But despite her input into shaping her character and, occasionally, entire episodes of the series, Richardson said she was denied a producer credit out of fear of setting a precedent for other actors. (Allen was an executive consultant in the first season and became an executive producer in the sixth.)

Finestra, who was part of Wind Dancer Productions and co-produced the series with Touchstone, did not recall any conversations around whether Richardson should get a producer credit but said, "That could very well have been a Disney decision." (Disney Television Studios declined to comment.)

As the character of Jill developed, Richardson received Emmy nominations for her work on Seasons 3, 5, 6 and 7. Allen had received a Season 2 nod, and after his team missed the deadline for Emmys consideration for Season 3, Disney put on an elaborate spectacle the following year, complete with a hot rod and the USC marching band leading a parade to present Allen's nomination

ballot to the Television Academy. But he never received another Emmy nomination for playing Tim Taylor.

"I think that parade turned a lot of people off," Finestra said. "That just annoyed everybody in the academy, so I think there was some backlash to that."

And while Finestra didn't recall any palpable disappointment from Allen over his Emmy snubs, Richardson felt that there was concern from others that the imbalance of recognition might upset her co-star.

"I think everybody was always afraid of making him feel bad," she said.

To make up for the show's overall lack of critical acclaim — it ultimately won seven Emmys during its run, all for Donald A. Morgan's lighting direction — Finestra created the "Homey Awards," an in-house talent show where the cast and crew of "Home Improvement" could win every fictional category. The honors even came with a trophy shaped like a giant screw.

"It looked like a penis, of course," Richardson said.

LEAVING 'HOME IMPROVEMENT'

While filming the show's eighth season in 1998, Rich-

ardson made it clear that it would be her last. She'd gone through a divorce and wanted to be more present in her children's lives. She had extended her seven-year "Home Improvement" contract to include one more season and negotiated additional profit points, but after shooting more than 200 episodes, in her eyes, this was the end of Jill Taylor.

"I told everybody, there's not enough money in the world to get me to do a ninth year. This show is over. It needs to end," she recalled.

According to her, she and Allen both agreed the series

had run its course — the ratings had dwindled and Thomas, a fan favorite among younger viewers, had exited the series at the top of the eighth season. Allen and Richardson were increasingly working with new directors who weren't as familiar with the show, and they had to fight to keep the storylines true to their characters.

But with just a couple of months left on the production, Richardson said, a surprise offer arrived: \$1 million per episode for her and \$2 million per episode for Allen to return for a 25-episode ninth season. Per Richardson, Allen jumped at the offer, but she held firm.

"All I really care about is having enough money to live on, get my kids to college and leave them some. I don't need a plane. I don't need a boat," she said.

Richardson came up with a proposition she was sure would be rejected. If the network would pay her \$2 million an episode and give her an executive producer credit — the same deal they'd reportedly offered Allen — she would stay.

"I knew that Disney would in no way pay me that much. That was my way to say 'no' and was a little bit of a flip-off to Disney," she said. "I'd been there all this time, and they never even paid me a third of what Tim was making, and I was working my ass off. I was a big reason why women were watching." As she expected, the deal was shot down, and the producers said they never considered continuing the series without Richardson.

"Some shows would have had the mom die," Finestra said. "I don't remember one discussion where we said, 'How can we keep this going without Pat?' It just couldn't have worked."

Echoed Shoenman, "Without her, it just didn't make any sense."

When it was time to film the three-part finale that ended with the Taylors relocating to Indiana for Jill to pursue a new job, emotions and tensions ran high off-screen.

"I was mad at Tim because he was leaving me alone being the only person saying no, which made me feel terrible and like the bad guy," she said, "and he was upset with me for leaving."

A representative for Allen said he was not available to comment for this story.



RON TOM Disney General Entertainment Content

TIM ALLEN and Richardson reunite in 2015 in a scene from Allen's ABC series "Last Man Standing."



RANDY HOLMES ABC

CAST of "Home Improvement" in 1999, from left: Zachery Ty Bryan, Taran Noah Smith, Richardson, Allen, Earl Hindman, Richard Karn and Debbie Dunning.

A COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP

In 2015, Richardson reunited with Allen to film two episodes of his follow-up ABC series, "Last Man Standing," but it seems her relationship with the comedian is complicated. She and Allen do not keep in touch, though she repeatedly praised his talent and said she "never stopped loving working with him."

The more notable strife on the "Home Improvement" set, Richardson said, came from the difficulties of having three young actors' parents jockeying for equal screen time and opportunities for their sons.

When Pamela Anderson, who co-starred on the first season of "Home Improvement," alleged in her 2023 memoir that Allen flashed her on her first day on set, Richardson was quick to defend Allen, who has denied the claim. Richardson, who shares a publicist with Allen, reiterated her stance in this interview.

"I just cannot believe that Tim did that. It's just not in him. It's not like him," she said.

ASSESSING THE SHOW'S LEGACY

After "Home Improvement" ended, Richardson went on to star as a lead on Lifetime's medical drama "Strong Medicine," as well as several Hallmark and Lifetime films, and had arcs on shows including "The West Wing" and "Grey's Anatomy."

While she said that practically "nobody gets hired in their 70s if they're female in this business," she'd next love to find a single-camera dramedy to flex her range of skills.

In March, she made headlines on the podcast "Back to the Best," which revisits entertainment from the 1990s and 2000s, saying she had zero interest in a "Home Improvement" reboot. She noted that Bryan, who played eldest son Brad, is "now a felon," and Thomas, who played middle son Randy, is more interested in directing and writing.

But even without a reboot, "Home Improvement" hasn't experienced the same resurgence on streaming as many of its '90s contemporaries, like "Friends," "Seinfeld" and "The Nanny," which have found new Gen Z viewers. "Home Improvement," which is streaming on Hulu and Disney+, has mostly remained in the shadows.

"Hollywood hates our show," Richardson said. "When they talk about what the best shows of the '90s were, they will not give 'Home Improvement' credit."

She finds the internet listicles that place fellow family sitcom "Full House" above "Home Improvement" especially grating.

"My dread with 'Home Improvement' was that it was going to turn into 'Full House,'" she said. "It was a running thing, like, 'Oh, are we doing 'Full House' now?' That was my insult for how bad a script was."

Richardson believes there's a particular reason for the nostalgic oversight: "I think it's about Tim, and it's about his politics." The comedian has long been outspoken about his conservative views and has faced criticism for a string of controversial comments, including likening the plight of conservatives in Hollywood to 1930s Germany and asking why he shouldn't be allowed to say the n-word.

"Of course, I don't like his politics," said Richardson, who has been vocal on social media about her opposition to conservative views and former President Trump.

In March, ABC announced a new sitcom pilot starring Allen, called "Shifting Gears." This time, his character is a widower.

For Richardson, the most important part of the "Home Improvement" legacy is the feedback she's received from viewers over the decades. Many have written to her detailing the comfort the series brought them during periods of grief or illness. Others have relayed how Jill's gumption impacted their own lives, including the multiple women who told her Jill's decision to go to graduate school on the show inspired them to get their own degrees.

"I'm really proud of what it meant to our audience," Richardson said. "I don't care what anybody says, I'm proud of the legacy."