



HEIDI HEFFINGTON says farewell to her mother, Wilma, at Return Home in Auburn, Wash., with husband Joe at her side. Photographs by CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

Ex-Metro security chief speaks out

Transit agency pays \$195 million a year for law enforcement. It isn't well spent, Gina Osborn says.

BY RACHEL URANGA

A dead man was slumped over on a bench at Metro's San Pedro Street station in February. For nearly six hours, nobody checked his condition, including five Los Angeles Police Department officers who had been patrolling the platform. It took a transit ambassador doing a welfare check to see the man had died, said former Metro security chief Gina Osborn.

"They weren't even paying attention," she said. "They weren't engaged enough to see that there was a human hunched over."

Osborn, a former FBI agent, said she knows because she and her staff had access to cameras set up around the system, and over her two years at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority increasingly used them to oversee law enforcement patrols. Her conclusion: They aren't doing enough.

The security issues surrounding Metro have only grown over the last month after a string of stabbings and two killings on the system. [See Metro, A8]

The quest to alter our last 'toxic' act

It was nearly dark outside when Blaire Van Valkenburgh strode through the woods, lanterns dangling from both hands, to visit the soil that was once her husband.

She walked easily through a tangle of roots and rocks to a small bowl-shaped glade just visible from her kitchen window on Orcas Island, Wash. She and her husband of 40 years, Robert Wayne, had planned to retire here. Then he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Towering Pacific madrone trees and Douglas fir appeared like ghostly shapes around the area where, months earlier, friends and family had emptied seven burlap bags that held Wayne's mulch-like remains and raked them into a dry sprawling puddle under the trees.

This was the "burial" Wayne wanted, chosen just a few weeks before he died on Dec. 26, 2022, at their Calabasas home. The genetics pioneer loved hiking in the woods and was always first in line to try something new, "especially things that made sense from an

environmental, Earth-friendly point of view," said Van Valkenburgh, a paleobiologist at UCLA. But this kind of burial — natural organic reduction — won't be legal in California until 2027, so Van Valkenburgh paid to fly her husband's body to Washington, the first state to legalize human composting in 2020. Three months later, two women in a Subaru drove to Orcas Island and unloaded the bags of Wayne's soil from the back seat — about 250 pounds of what looked like a fine, odorless wood-chip mulch.

By Jeanette Marantos



IN SEATTLE, Larry Kreisman holds soil from his husband, Wayne Dodge, who died in 2021. Other compost has been spread in the gardens of friends and family, he said.

The area looks bare now, Van Valkenburgh said apologetically, but someday she'll plant bulbs. "This is what he sees," she said softly, gazing into a purple-black sky slowly freckling with stars.

The American approach to death and burials has changed dramatically over the last century — from families putting loved ones in a simple box in the ground to expensive, elaborate funerals involving poisonous embalming chemicals, concrete or lead grave liners and land that's

environmental, Earth-friendly point of view," said Van Valkenburgh, a paleobiologist at UCLA. But this kind of burial — natural organic reduction — won't be legal in California until 2027, so Van Valkenburgh paid to fly her husband's body to Washington, the first state to legalize human composting in 2020. Three months later, two women in a Subaru drove to Orcas Island and unloaded the bags of Wayne's soil from the back seat — about 250 pounds of what looked like a fine, odorless wood-chip mulch. The area looks bare now, Van Valkenburgh said apologetically, but someday she'll plant bulbs. "This is what he sees," she said softly, gazing into a purple-black sky slowly freckling with stars. The American approach to death and burials has changed dramatically over the last century — from families putting loved ones in a simple box in the ground to expensive, elaborate funerals involving poisonous embalming chemicals, concrete or lead grave liners and land that's [See Burial, A7]

Mystery surrounds dead baby sea lions

An unusual number of them are showing up along California coastal islands.

BY SUSANNE RUST

On May 7, Patrick Robinson took a boat out to Año Nuevo Island to survey the sea lions that come to birth on this rocky outcropping north of Monterey Bay.

The shore was littered with dead pups — babies that looked as though they'd been delivered too early and therefore were too weak and small to nurse, or had been dead at birth.

Similar observations were being made farther down the coast on San Miguel Island in the Channel Islands — where massive colonies of sea lions gather every year — and as far south as Mexico.

Robinson, director of UC Santa Cruz's Año Nuevo Reserve, said it's not unusual to see some dead pups this time of year. He said sick or malnourished females occasionally stop on their way south to abort. But the numbers he was seeing were alarming. And with the peak of birthing season still several weeks away, it augurs a [See Pups, A11]

Can she kick out the tenant from hell?

For two years, a homeowner watched helplessly as her Mid-Wilshire property was operated as a lucrative Airbnb without her consent



NIKEETA SRIRAM, with boyfriend Peter Banachowski, rented her two-unit property to a man named Nicholas Jarzabek, who immediately listed it on Airbnb.

BY JACK FLEMMING

Nikeeta Sriram would love to live in her Mid-Wilshire home.

But she can't, because for two years, a steady stream of guests have been able to live there. They just had to click a link.

Caught in an Airbnb ordeal, Sriram has seen property damage rack up while she fights to win back her home, she alleges in a lawsuit.

The man accused of taking over the rental, Nicholas Jarzabek, lives 5,000 miles away in England, his social media accounts show.

Fans know him as Nick Diver, a touring musician who recently released the album "Black Liquorice." Sriram knows him as the tenant who turned his two-year rental into a money-making Airbnb operation.

"He seemed like the [See Airbnb, A9]

Early start for summer COVID rise

California doctors see uptick as FLiRT sub-variants make huge gains nationally. CALIFORNIA, B1

Rise in voter suppression laws

Race plays an important role in the GOP's restrictive tactics, Robin Abcarian writes. OPINION, A15

Clark showcases ice in her veins

WNBA rookie superstar was clutch when it mattered most against the Sparks, writes Bill Plaschke. SPORTS, D1

Weather

Clouds, then sun. L.A. Basin: 72/55. B9

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PERSPECTIVES

A case of congressional solicitude toward crypto

House votes to ease regulation of the industry though it is rife with scandal.

MICHAEL HILTZIK

Money, as we all know, is the mother's milk of politics in America. It can look even more nourishing if you can manufacture it yourself.



That's surely what accounts for the solicitude that the cryptocurrency industry has been receiving from Congress.

The House on Wednesday passed a bill reducing regulation of crypto, despite ample evidence that the asset class has been a haven for fraudsters, extortionists and worse.

The law will "make the United States safer for drug traffickers, for terrorist funders, for child and drug traffickers and those who buy and sell child pornography," said Rep. Sean Casten (D-Ill.), listing a few of the documented users of crypto in recent years. "I did not know those groups had such proud advocates in Congress."

Casten may find himself in the House minority in more ways than one. Crypto promoters have managed to peel several Democrats in the House and Senate away from the party's strong opposition to reducing regulations on the asset class.

Earlier this month, bipartisan majorities in both chambers voted to roll back a 2-year-old Securities and Exchange Commission guideline for how financial institutions should account for crypto assets left in their care by customers. President Biden said he would veto the change, and the majorities in neither chamber were large enough to overrule a veto.

The congressional crypto caucus handed the industry another victory Wednesday, when the House passed the Financial Innovation and Technology for the 21st Century Act, known as FIT21. The vote was 279 to 136, with 71 Democrats joining the Republican majority.

The measure's fate is unsure in the Senate, which hasn't yet taken it up. Biden has stated his opposition to FIT21 but hasn't promised a veto. Biden said that he was willing to negotiate a regula-



AMANDA ANDRADE-RHOADES Associated Press

REP. SEAN CASTEN (D-Ill.) opposed a bill to reduce regulation of cryptocurrency, saying it would aid drug and child traffickers and terrorist funders.

tory system that protects crypto consumers and investors without unduly interfering with innovation, but "further time will be needed."

If it becomes law, FIT21 would deliver to crypto promoters their most heartfelt desire: escape from the jurisdiction of the powerful SEC and transferring oversight to the chronically underfunded and understaffed Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

During Wednesday's floor debate, the bill's advocates talked of the virtues of freeing an innovative technology from "overzealous regulators" — that was Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.), mouthing words that could have been dictated to her by crypto executives — and relieving them of "regulatory uncertainty."

SEC Chairman Gary Gensler put the latter claim to rest in a statement about FIT21 he issued Wednesday a few hours before the vote. "The crypto industry's record of failures, frauds, and bankruptcies is not because we don't have rules or because the rules are unclear," he stated. "It's because many players in the crypto industry don't play by the rules."

The bill's advocates tried to pump up the importance of crypto as a financial asset with claims that 20% of Americans are crypto owners. There's no evidence for this. On the contrary, the Federal Reserve has found that interest in crypto among ordinary Americans is weak and fading.

In a recent survey, the Fed determined that only 7% of Americans bought or held crypto as an investment (down from 11% in 2021).

"The entities that stand to benefit from this bill are not ordinary investors trying to build wealth," Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Los Angeles), the ranking Democrat on the House Financial Services Committee, said from the House floor Wednesday, "but rather the crypto firms."

What's most striking about the push for FIT21 is that it comes so closely on the heels of major scandals in the crypto space. Sam Bankman-Fried, the founder of the crypto firm FTX, was sentenced in March to 25 years in jail for crypto fraud, after having been convicted in November on seven federal counts related to fraud.

Just last month, Changpeng Zhao, founder of the international crypto firm Binance, was sentenced to four months in prison on federal money-laundering charges; Zhao had earlier agreed to pay a \$50-million fine, and Binance settled the government case against it for \$4.3 billion.

The counterweight to the arguments against FIT21 is cash — the green variety, not the notional type marketed by cryptocurrency firms. Three super PACs formed by crypto executives and investors have raised about \$85 million to spend on 2024 political races.

The financial potency of this industry's campaign spending isn't in question. One of the PACs, Fairshake, spent more than \$10 million over the last year in opposition to Rep. Katie Porter (D-Irvine) in her race for the Democratic nomination for U.S. Senate.

Porter was known as a strong critic of crypto. In 2022 she joined Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) — the most vociferous crypto critic on Capitol Hill — in an investigation of how crypto "mining" by computer had affected the energy grid in Texas and raised energy prices for consumers.

Porter lost the Senate race. Her victorious opponent in the primary, Rep. Adam B. Schiff, has taken a much more indulgent position toward crypto, listing it on his campaign website among the "new developments in technology ... we need to grow" in order to keep jobs and regulatory oversight in U.S. hands.

In the current congressional election cycle, Fairshake has made \$702,300 in donations to Democrats and \$551,700 to Republicans. Its largest single recipient is Rep. Patrick McHenry (R-N.C.), chairman of the House Financial Services Committee and sponsor of FIT21. His campaign has received \$126,626 even though he has announced that he is not running for reelection this year and retiring from Congress.

In his statement, Gensler tried to strengthen the lawmakers' understanding of the risks they were endorsing with the measure. The bill would "create

new regulatory gaps and undermine decades of precedent" in the regulation of investment contracts, he wrote, "putting investors and capital markets at immeasurable risk."

The cynical device FIT21 uses to neuter the SEC's oversight of crypto investments is to turn that task over to the CFTC. As the regulatory watchdog Better Markets observes, the CFTC has a budget of only \$365 million, versus the SEC's \$2.1 billion, and fewer than 700 employees, compared to the SEC's approximately 4,500 staffers.

The bill "would heap a whole new set of responsibilities on the CFTC, making it the de facto regulator of countless new crypto exchanges and broker-dealers," Better Markets wrote, even though the CFTC "does not have the funding to fulfill all its current statutory mandates."

The debate Wednesday that preceded the House passage of FIT21 was typically tone-deaf and filled with fictitious and factitious assertions. Rep. Mike Flood (R-Neb.) invoked the FTX scandal, which saw billions of dollars in clients' and investors' crypto deposits illegally appropriated by the firm's leaders. "We need to ensure that there are the protective rules that prevent anything like that happening again," he said.

Flood asserted that, under FIT21, FTX would have been barred from registering as an exchange, and it would not have been able to commingle its funds with those of its clients. One wonders what he was talking about. FTX was barred from registering as an exchange, and didn't do so. Why? Because Bankman-Fried, its founder, knew that to do so would have subjected the firm to SEC oversight, which no one in crypto wants to undergo.

As for commingling funds, it's already illegal — it's one of the practices that landed Bankman-Fried in prison.

There's no justification for bestowing on crypto a hand-manufactured regulatory scheme all of its own. Its promoters have no argument other than to claim that they need regulation-lite to foster "innovation," when the result will be to facilitate the cheating of customers, laundering money or lubricating ransomware attacks like the one that has disrupted the crucial operations of the UnitedHealth Group subsidiary Change Healthcare, which manages reimbursement processes for medical providers nationwide.

If there's a corner of the financial world crying out for tougher regulation, it's crypto. For Congress to even contemplate a slackening of the regulation that already exists is nothing short of absurd. But Congress doesn't respond to practicalities; it responds to money. That's the only driver of efforts like FIT21.

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THE WORLD

Ukraine says it has regained control in Kharkiv

Zelensky says his nation's forces have secured parts of the region where Russian troops had entered.

By SAMYA KULLAB AND ELISE MORTON

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian forces have secured “combat control” of areas where Russian troops entered the northeastern Kharkiv region this month, President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

Meanwhile, two people were killed Saturday in an

aerial attack on the city of Kharkiv, the region's capital, according to local officials.

Kharkiv is about 12 miles from the Russian border. Moscow's troops have in recent weeks captured villages in the area as part of a broad push, and analysts say they may be trying to get within artillery range of the city. Authorities in Ukraine have evacuated more than 11,000 from the region since the start of the offensive May 10.

“Our soldiers have now managed to take combat control of the border area where the Russian occupiers entered,” Zelensky said in his video address Friday.

Zelensky's comments appeared to be at odds with

those made by Russian officials.

Viktor Vodolatskiy, a member of Russia's lower house of parliament, said Russian forces now controlled more than half of the town of Vovchansk, three miles inside the border, Russian state news agency Tass reported Friday.

Vovchansk has been a flashpoint for fighting since Russia launched the offensive in the Kharkiv region. Vodolatskiy was also quoted as saying once Vovchansk is secured, Russian forces would target the cities of Sloviansk, Kramatorsk and Pokrovsk in the neighboring Donetsk region.

Independent confirma-

tion of the claims wasn't immediately possible.

Russia's Kharkiv push appears to be a coordinated new offensive that includes testing Ukrainian defenses in the Donetsk region farther south — where Russia's Defense Ministry said Saturday that its forces had taken over the village of Arkhanhelske — while also launching incursions in the northern Sumy and Chernihiv regions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said the Kremlin's army is trying to create a “buffer zone” in the Kharkiv region to prevent Ukrainian cross-border attacks.

The Russian push is shaping up to be Ukraine's

biggest test since Moscow's full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022, with outnumbered and outgunned Ukrainian forces being pressed at several points along the 620-mile front line that snakes from north to south in eastern Ukraine.

Russia is continuing to bombard the Kharkiv region with missiles, guided aerial bombs and drones.

Regional Gov. Oleh Sinegubov said two people were killed and 33 others wounded when an aerial bomb hit a large construction supplies store in the city of Kharkiv on Saturday afternoon.

Zelensky called the airstrike on the store “a

manifestation of Russian madness” and appealed to Western countries to provide Ukraine with air defense systems.

“When we tell world leaders that Ukraine requires adequate air defense protection ... we are literally talking about how not to allow such terrorist strikes,” he said in a post on the social media platform X.

Ukraine's problems have been mounting in recent months as it tries to hold out against its much bigger foe, and the war appears to be at a critical juncture.

Associated Press writers Kullab reported from Kyiv and Morton from London.

100 feared dead in Papua New Guinea landslide

Survivors search by hand for relatives after mountainside collapses. Some 60 homes may be buried.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MELBOURNE — Survivors searched through tons of earth and rubble by hand looking for relatives while an emergency convoy delivered aid Saturday to a remote village in the mountains of Papua New Guinea where a landslide was feared to have buried scores of people, officials said.

An assessment team reported that perhaps 100 people were dead and 60 houses buried by the mountainside that collapsed in Enga province a few hours before dawn Friday, said Serhan Aktoprak, the chief of the International Organization for Migration's mission in the South Pacific island nation.

Confirming a firm number of those who have died will be difficult “given it is considered culturally taboo to ask survivors of the status of their relatives,” Aktoprak said.

Aktoprak said that if the number of buried houses estimated by local authorities was correct, the death toll could be higher.

Only three bodies had been recovered by early Saturday from the vast swath of earth, boulders and splintered trees that struck Yambali, a village of nearly 4,000 people that is 370 miles northwest of the capital, Port Moresby.

Medical treatment was provided to seven people, including a child, said Aktoprak, who is based in Port Moresby. He had no information about the extent of their injuries.

“It is feared that the number of casualties and wounded will increase dramatically,” he said.

A spokesperson for Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape said

Saturday he would release information about the scale of the destruction and loss of life when it becomes available.

Philip Mene, an International Organization for Migration program associate, said survivors “are removing the rubble by hand.”

“Relatives are coming to terms that the people below the debris are all but lost,” he said Saturday.

The gardens that sustain the village's subsistence farming population were destroyed, and the three streams that provide drinking water were buried.

A convoy left the provincial capital of Wabag carrying food, water and other essentials to the devastated village 35 miles away, Aktoprak said.

Village resident Andrew Ruing said the survivors were in desperate need.

“People — they cannot cry or they cannot do anything, because it's difficult for them,” Ruing said in a video shown by Australian Broadcasting Corp.

“We are calling on the national government, the people on the ground, or the business houses, the heights from everywhere, anywhere — we are seeking assistance,” he said.

Aktoprak said that besides food and water, the villagers had an urgent need for shelter and blankets. Relief would be targeted to the most vulnerable, including children, women and disabled and elderly people, he said.

The relief effort was delayed by the blockage of the province's main highway, which serves the Porgera gold mine and the neighboring town of Porgera.

More convoys are planned for Sunday, including the arrival of heavy earth-moving machinery to help clear the 20 to 26 feet of debris, earth and rocks that fell from the Mungalo mountain above Yambali.

Emergency responders may face challenges using heavy machinery because of the risk from unstable earth as well as “cultural sensitivi-



BENJAMIN SIPA International Organization for Migration
A VICTIM is carried on a stretcher after the landslide in remote Yambali village, Papua New Guinea.

ties of desecrating bodies that may be within the rubble,” Mene said.

Papua New Guinea is a diverse, developing nation of mostly subsistence farmers with 800 languages. There are few roads outside the larger cities.

With 10 million people, it is the most populous South Pacific nation after neighboring Australia, which is home to about 27 million.

It is on the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and sits on the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” the arc of seismic faults around the Pacific

Ocean where much of the world's earthquake and volcanic activity occurs. In March, the country was hit by a magnitude 6.9 earthquake.

The United States and Australia are building closer defense ties with the strategically important nation, with whom China is seeking closer security and economic ties.

President Biden and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said their governments stood ready to help respond to the landslide.

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FDIC

A Palestinian Jew was still considered a threat

Following an almost unheard-of conversion, the man met a common fate in the West Bank.

BY JACK JEFFERY

JERUSALEM — At first, it seemed like the kind of shooting that has become all too common in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. A Palestinian aroused suspicions and an Israeli soldier killed him.

But then the deceased was identified as David Ben-Avraham, a Palestinian who had made the almost unheard-of decision to convert from Islam to Judaism years earlier.

His unusual journey had taken him across some of the deepest fault lines in the Middle East and led to some unlikely friendships. Most Palestinians saw him as an eccentric outcast, while many Israelis treated him as an unwelcome convert to a religion that doesn't proselytize.

But in his final moments, he was once again viewed as a Palestinian who was in the wrong place, at a time of widespread anger and suspicion.

A divided city

He was born Sameh Zeitoun in Hebron, home to some 200,000 Palestinians as well as hundreds of Jewish settlers who live in enclaves guarded by Israeli troops. Tensions have run high for decades, often spilling over into violence.

Rights groups have long accused Hebron's settlers of harassing Palestinian residents, and Palestinians have committed a number of stabbing and shooting attacks against Israelis over the years.

Some neighbors live just a few yards apart. In some narrow alleys of Hebron's Old City, metal netting protects Palestinian shoppers from objects thrown by settlers living on the upper floors.

Zeitoun first made contact with Jewish settlers over a decade ago, asking for help converting to Judaism, according to Noam Arnon, a Jewish settler in Hebron who went on to befriend him.

He said Zeitoun was inspired by family stories about his grandfather protecting Jews when riots erupted in 1929, when the Holy Land was under



HAIM PARAG

DAVID Ben-Avraham at a supermarket in the Israeli city of Beit Shemesh, where he briefly worked.

British colonial rule. Palestinians killed dozens of Jewish residents in the city.

"He went further, not only to live as a good neighbor but to join the Jewish community," Arnon recounted.

A rare conversion

Conversion to other faiths is deeply frowned upon in Islam. In much of the Muslim world, those who do so are cast out of their communities, sometimes violently. Judaism, unlike Islam and Christianity, has no tradition of proselytization.

Such a conversion is even more fraught in Israel and the Palestinian territories, where religion and nationality usually overlap in a decades-old conflict. Judaism is the faith of most of the soldiers who patrol the territory and the settlers whom Palestinians see as hostile colonizers.

Arnon said most of the settlers from Hebron's tight-knit community refused to accept Ben-Avraham. Only Arnon and a few others interacted with him, helping with his conversion application papers.

Religious conversions are rare but legal in areas administered by the semi-autonomous Palestinian Authority. Most are undertaken by Palestinian Christians converting to Islam for marriage.

In Israel, converting to Judaism requires an application to the government-run Conversion Authority. Ben-Avraham submitted two requests in 2018 but did not meet the requirements, according to a government official who was not authorized to speak with media and spoke on condition of anonymity.

With that pathway closed, Ben-Avraham turned to Israel's insular

ultra-Orthodox community and eventually made his conversion official in 2020, according to documents published online.

An arrest

In the year before his conversion, Ben-Avraham was detained by the Palestinian Authority's intelligence unit in Hebron, according to Arnon and a local Palestinian activist, Issa Amro.

The reason for his arrest was never publicly disclosed, but they believe his conversion and open connections with Israelis attracted unwanted attention.

Palestinians can face arrest or even death if they're seen as collaborating with Israeli authorities. But few would have suspected Ben-Avraham of being an informant because his story was widely known.

Ben-Avraham told the Israeli news site Times of Israel that he was held for two months in solitary confine-

ment and beaten before being released. Around that time, a video emerged showing him holding what appears to be a Quran and pledging his Muslim faith.

Arnon and Amro said his statement was probably made under duress during detention. The Palestinian Authority's prosecution office said it had no information about his case.

After his release, Ben-Avraham moved in with Haim Parag, a Jewish friend who lived in Jerusalem. He returned to Hebron infrequently because of safety concerns and continued his Jewish studies. Parag said the pair regularly prayed together at a nearby synagogue.

"He was like a son to me," he said.

Parag also said he met Ben-Avraham's wife and some of his children, and that several close family members maintained a relationship with him even after his conversion.

The Zeitoun family declined to speak with the Associated Press, fearing reprisal. In the end, Ben-Avraham left little public record of what drove his personal convictions.

A deadly shooting

Ben-Avraham was waiting outside a West Bank settlement for an Israeli bus to take him to Parag's apartment March 19 when he got into an argument in Hebrew with an Israeli soldier.

Across the West Bank, Jewish settlers live apart from Palestinians in guarded settlements where they're subject to different laws. Palestinians are gener-

ally barred from entering settlements unless they have work permits.

"Are you Jewish?" the soldier shouts in a video that circulated online and appears to have been shot by his body camera.

"Of course," Ben-Avraham answers.

"What's your name?" the soldier says.

"David," he replies.

"David?" the soldier says. "Ben-Avraham, stupid."

The soldier then orders Ben-Avraham to step away from his bag on the ground and raise his hands in the air, before saying sarcastically, "Jewish."

A second video, apparently taken from a nearby security camera, appears to show two soldiers shooting Ben-Avraham from a close distance.

The army said a small knife was found in Ben-Avraham's bag after the shooting. Parag said he gave him the knife for self-defense.

The Israeli army said it's investigating the shooting, but rights groups say soldiers are rarely held accountable in such situations.

Israeli forces have been on high alert as the West Bank has seen a surge of violence linked to the war in Gaza. About 500 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since the war's start, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. Many have been shot to death in armed clashes during military raids, others for throwing stones at troops, and some who were posing no apparent threat.

Palestinians have also carried out several stabbing

and other attacks against Israelis.

Arnon said the shooting was a tragic misunderstanding. Parag, Ben-Avraham's friend in Jerusalem, accused the soldiers of racial profiling, saying they saw Ben-Avraham for his background and not his unexpected beliefs.

A funeral

Even in death, Ben-Avraham's identity was contested.

Parag and another Israeli friend asked an Israeli court for the body to bury him at a Jewish cemetery, filing a petition against members of the Zeitoun family who wanted a Muslim funeral. Bezalel Hochman, a lawyer representing the two Israelis, said the Tel Aviv family court ruled in their favor.

After his death caused a public outcry, the Interior Ministry granted him Israeli residency, saying it wanted "to fulfill the will and desire of the deceased to be part of the nation of Israel."

Parag said Ben-Avraham was buried in April in a Jewish cemetery near Nablus on the foothills of a hilltop sacred to Samaritans — a small, ancient religious minority that straddles the Palestinian-Israeli divide, just like Ben-Avraham.

No one from the Zeitoun family attended the funeral, said Parag, who's designing his friend's gravestone.

He said it will read: "David Ben-Avraham Zeitoun Parag. The Holy Jew."

Jeffery writes for the Associated Press. AP writer Tia Goldenberg in Jerusalem contributed.

Millions vote in India's grueling elections

People line up early to try to beat the searing heat, with thermometers hitting 109 in New Delhi.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW DELHI — Millions of Indians voted Saturday in the next-to-last round of grueling national elections with a combined opposition trying to rattle Prime Minister Narendra Modi's campaign for a third consecutive term for himself and his Hindu nationalist party.

Many people lined up at polling stations before the start of voting at 7 a.m. to avoid the blazing sun. The temperature soared to 109 degrees in the afternoon in the Indian capital.

"This [election] is also like a festival, so I don't have a problem voting in the heat," said Lakshmi Bansal, a homemaker.

Saturday's voting in 58 constituencies, including seven in New Delhi, will complete polling for 89.5% of 543 seats in the lower house of Parliament. The remaining 57 seats will be decided June 1, wrapping up a six-week election. Votes will be counted June 4.

President Droupadi Murmu and External Affairs

Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar were among the early voters. Opposition Congress Party leaders, Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul Gandhi, also voted in New Delhi.

Protests and violence marred voting in the elections that are considered some of the most consequential in India's history and will test Modi's political dominance. If Modi wins, he'll be only the second Indian leader to retain power for a third term, after Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first prime minister.

Most polls predict a win for Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, or BJP, which is up against an opposition alliance led by the Congress and regional parties. But a less-than-expected turnout in the previous five rounds of voting has left doubts about the BJP's projected margin of victory.

"When the polls began it felt like a one-horse race, with Modi leading from the front. But now we are seeing some kind of shift," political analyst Rasheed Kidwai said.

"The opposition is doing better than expected and it appears that Modi's party is rattled. That's the reason you see Modi ramping up anti-Muslim rhetoric to polarize voters," Kidwai said.

On Saturday, Mehbooba Mufti, a former top elected

official of Indian-controlled Kashmir, held a protest alleging that scores of her party workers were detained by police to prevent them from voting. Mufti, the chief of the People's Democratic Party who is contesting the parliamentary election in the Anantnag-Rajouri district, said she complained to election officials.

In West Bengal state, workers belonging to the All India Trinamool Congress Party blocked the car of a BJP candidate as she went to vote. Activists of the rival parties often clash on the streets.

Mamata Banerjee, Trinamool party leader and the state's top elected official, accused Modi's party of an attack that left one activist dead on Friday. Several houses and shops were burned in the Purba Medinipur district, the Press Trust of India news agency quoted Banerjee as saying.

Suvendu Adhikari, a BJP leader in the state, accused Trinamool members of attacking and killing an activist on Thursday, an accusation rejected by his rivals, the news agency reported.

Kidwai, the analyst, said the opposition challenged Modi by centering its campaign on social justice and rising unemployment.

Modi ran his campaign like a presidential race, a referendum on his 10 years of

rule. He said he helped the poorest with charity and free healthcare, providing toilets in their homes and helping women get free or cheap cooking gas cylinders.

But he changed tack after a low turnout in the first round of the elections and began stirring Hindu nationalism by accusing the Congress Party of pandering to minority Muslims for votes.

The opposition accused Modi of using hate speech after he called Muslims "infiltrators."

Hindus account for 80%, and Muslims 14%, of India's more than 1.4 billion people.

Nearly 970 million voters — more than 10% of the world's population — were eligible to elect 543 members to the lower house of Parliament for five years.

Modi's inauguration of a massive Hindu temple for the god Rama, his massive roadshows and big public rallies raised the BJP's hopes of a massive surge in voter support.

The prime minister came to power in 2014, dislodging the Congress Party that governed the country for nearly 55 years after India won independence from British colonialists in 1947.

In March, Rahul Gandhi finished a 4,171-mile walk to raise awareness about poverty, unemployment and democracy.

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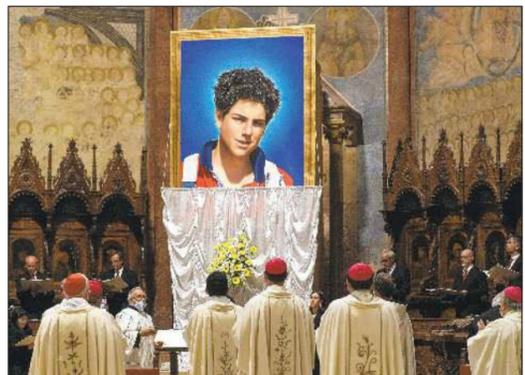
Pope Francis paves way for the 'patron saint of the internet,' a computer whiz who died at 15 in 2006.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROME — Pope Francis has paved the way for the canonization of the first saint of the millennial generation, attributing a second miracle to a 15-year-old Italian computer whiz who died of leukemia in 2006.

Carlo Acutis, who was born May 3, 1991, in London and moved with his Italian parents to Milan as a child, was beatified — the first step to sainthood — in 2020. Francis announced on Thursday he would convene a Consistory of Cardinals to deliberate the canonization of Acutis.

Touted as the "patron saint of the internet," Acutis used his tech talent to create a website to catalog miracles and took care of websites for



GREGORIO BORGIA Associated Press

AN IMAGE of Carlo Acutis is unveiled at his beatification ceremony in Assisi, Italy, in 2020.

some local Catholic organizations. In elementary school, he taught himself to code using a university computer science textbook, then learned how to edit videos and create animation.

Acutis, who died of acute leukemia on Oct. 12, 2006, was put on the road to sainthood after the pope approved the first miracle attributed to him: the healing of a 7-year-old Brazilian boy

from a rare pancreatic disorder after coming into contact with an Acutis relic, a piece of one of his T-shirts.

According to Vatican News, the second miracle recognized Thursday is related to a woman from Costa Rica, who in July 2022 made a pilgrimage to Acutis' tomb in Assisi to pray for the healing of her daughter. The young woman, who suffered severe head trauma after

falling from her bicycle, immediately started showing signs of recovery, the report said.

When he was a small child, Acutis showed a religious devotion that surprised his nonpracticing parents. His mother, Antonia Salzano, recalled in an interview that from age 3 he would ask to visit churches they passed in Milan, and by age 7 had asked to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, winning an exception to the customary age requirement. His curiosity pushed Salzano to study theology in order to answer his questions, renewing her own faith.

Acutis was buried in Assisi at his own request, having become an admirer of St. Francis of Assisi for his dedication to poor people.

The Umbrian town was one of his favorite travel destinations. His body, clad in a tracksuit and sneakers, has been on display for veneration in a sanctuary in the town, and his heart has been displayed in a reliquary in the St. Francis Basilica.



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Los Angeles Times

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THE NATION

Prosecutors ask judge to curb Trump statements

Special counsel seeks order in classified documents case, citing potential threats to law enforcement.

By ERIC TUCKER

WASHINGTON — Federal prosecutors Friday asked the judge overseeing the classified documents case against Donald Trump to bar the former president from public statements that “pose a significant, imminent, and foreseeable danger to law enforcement agents” participating in the prosecution.

The request to U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon follows a distorted claim by Trump that the FBI agents who searched his Mar-a-Lago estate in August 2022 were “authorized to shoot me” and a false claim that they were “locked & loaded ready to take me out & put my family in danger.”

The presumptive Republican presidential nominee was referring to the disclosure in a court document



YUKI IWAMURA Associated Press

THE REQUEST comes after Donald Trump made false claims about the FBI raid on his Florida estate.

that the FBI, during the search, followed a standard use-of-force policy that prohibits the use of deadly force except when the officer conducting the search has a reasonable belief that the “subject of such force poses an imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to the officer or to another person.”

The Justice Department policy is routine and meant to limit, rather than encourage, the use of force during searches. Prosecutors noted

that the search of the Palm Beach, Fla., property was intentionally conducted when Trump and his family were out of state and was coordinated in advance with the U.S. Secret Service. No force was used.

Prosecutors on special counsel Jack Smith’s team said in court papers late Friday that Trump’s statements falsely suggesting that federal agents “were complicit in a plot to assassinate him” expose law en-

forcement — some of whom prosecutors noted will be called as witnesses at his trial — “to the risk of threats, violence, and harassment.”

“Trump’s repeated mischaracterization of these facts in widely distributed messages as an attempt to kill him, his family, and Secret Service agents has endangered law enforcement officers involved in the investigation and prosecution of this case and threatened the integrity of these proceedings,” prosecutors told Cannon, who was nominated to the bench by Trump.

“A restriction prohibiting future similar statements does not restrict legitimate speech,” they said.

Defense lawyers have objected to the government’s motion, prosecutors said. An attorney for Trump didn’t immediately respond to a message seeking comment Friday night.

Atty. Gen. Merrick Garland, responding to a reporter’s question last week, called Trump’s claim “extremely dangerous.” Garland noted that the document Trump was referring to is a standard policy limiting the use of force that was

even used in the consensual search of President Biden’s home as part of an investigation into the Democrat’s handling of classified documents.

Trump campaign spokesman Steven Cheung said in a statement Friday that Biden and “his hacks and thugs are obsessed with trying to deprive President Trump and all American voters of their First Amendment rights.”

“Repeated attempts to silence President Trump during the presidential campaign are blatant attempts to interfere in the election. They are last ditch efforts of desperate Democrat radicals running a losing campaign for a failed president,” Cheung said.

Trump faces dozens of felony counts accusing him of illegally hoarding at his Mar-a-Lago estate classified documents that he took with him after he left the White House in 2021, and then obstructing the FBI’s efforts to get them back. He has pleaded not guilty and denied wrongdoing.

It’s one of four criminal cases Trump is confronting as he seeks to reclaim the

White House, but besides the ongoing New York hush money prosecution, it’s not clear that any of the others will reach trial before the election.

Trump has already had restrictions placed on his speech in two of the other cases over incendiary comments officials say threaten the integrity of the prosecutions.

In the New York case, Trump has been fined and threatened with jail time for repeatedly violating a gag order that bars him from making public statements about witnesses, jurors and some others connected to the matter.

He’s also subject to a gag order in his federal criminal election interference case in Washington. That order limits what he can say about witnesses, lawyers in the case and court staff, though an appeals court freed him to speak about special counsel Smith, who brought the case.

Tucker writes for the Associated Press. AP writer Alanna Durkin Richer in Washington contributed to this report.

Judge denies Alec Baldwin’s motion to dismiss ‘Rust’ criminal case

The actor faces a charge of involuntary manslaughter over the 2021 shooting on the movie set.

By MEG JAMES

A New Mexico judge denied a motion to dismiss the involuntary-manslaughter case against Alec Baldwin, clearing the way for the actor to stand trial for his alleged role in the deadly “Rust” movie shooting.

New Mexico First Judicial District Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer’s decision late Friday was a setback to Baldwin and his legal team, who had argued that prosecutors were bent on winning a conviction at all costs following the October 2021 accidental shooting of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on the set of the low-budget western movie near Santa Fe.

Baldwin’s trial on the felony charge is expected to begin in July. If convicted, the 66-year-old would face a prison sentence of up to 18

months. He has pleaded not guilty.

In January, grand jurors in Santa Fe County indicted Baldwin on an involuntary manslaughter charge, determining that there was sufficient evidence that he acted negligently by pointing a loaded gun at Hutchins without first checking the weapon.

After the indictment, Baldwin’s lawyers pored over transcripts of the grand jury proceedings to build a case that Special Prosecutor Kari T. Morrissey had shut down testimony that could have been beneficial to their client.

“The state has sought to convict and imprison Baldwin for an accident caused by the mistakes of others,” Baldwin’s attorney Luke Nikas wrote in a motion to dismiss the indictment.

On Friday, Nikas and his law partner Alex Spiro said in an email: “We look forward to our day in court.”

In a hearing this month, Baldwin’s attorneys argued that Morrissey failed in her duty to provide testimony in a “fair and impartial manner.”

Marlowe Sommer wrote



EDDIE MOORE Albuquerque Journal

JUDGE Mary Marlowe Sommer ruled that defense attorneys failed to prove “prosecutorial bad faith.”

in her 19-page ruling that defense attorneys failed to provide evidence of “prosecutorial bad faith.”

To meet that definition, defense attorneys must show that the prosecutor deliberately misled the grand jury or engaged in “intentional misconduct,” the judge wrote. “The court does not find that defendant has established prosecutorial bad faith.”

At issue was whether grand jurors were fully informed that they could call

witnesses from a list provided by Baldwin’s attorneys. The judge wrote that the special prosecutor read a letter from Baldwin’s side during the proceedings and that jurors were allowed to question witnesses.

“Although the State deferred certain questions, in many other instances, the grand jurors asked probative questions, and received complete answers from witnesses, without State interference,” Marlowe Sommer wrote.

On the afternoon of Oct. 21, 2021, Hutchins, Baldwin, director Joel Souza and about a dozen other crew members were gathered in a rustic church at Bonanza Creek Ranch, south of Santa Fe, to prepare to shoot a scene. Assistant director David Halls, the on-set safety coordinator, handed the gun to Baldwin, declaring that it was “cold,” meaning there was no ammunition in it, according to numerous witnesses.

The actor was sitting in a pew, facing the door of the church. Hutchins and Baldwin had discussed a close-up camera angle of the gun’s muzzle — a view that Hutchins wanted as a way to heighten the drama in advance of a gunfight scene. Baldwin has said Hutchins told him to slowly pull his Colt .45 revolver from his holster and point it at the camera.

He did so, and the gun went off.

Hutchins died from her wounds. Souza was injured by the same bullet and has recovered.

Baldwin’s case has featured numerous twists and turns, including when the

actor — known for NBC’s “30 Rock” and for parodying former President Trump in skits on “Saturday Night Live” — participated in an ABC News interview, broadcast in December 2021, less than six weeks after the accident. Baldwin described for news anchor George Stephanopoulos how he pointed the gun at Hutchins and cocked the hammer.

“I didn’t pull the trigger,” Baldwin said, blaming others for the tragedy.

Since then, investigators and FBI analysts have performed tests to demonstrate that Baldwin must have pulled the trigger.

However, during the FBI tests in 2022 at the agency’s lab in Quantico, Va., forensic analysts used a rawhide mallet to strike the gun so hard that components of it fractured. Baldwin’s attorney’s have cited the broken parts as evidence that the weapon was compromised before Baldwin handled it.

The first set of prosecutors had to step down after a string of missteps, including an attempt to charge Baldwin on a penalty enhancement that called for a mandatory five-year prison sentence. That penalty wasn’t in effect at the time of the shooting. The initial prosecutors also made statements about holding Baldwin responsible for his actions, prompting criticism from defense attorneys that such commentary was prejudicial against the actor.

Shortly after Morrissey and her law partner Jason J. Lewis joined the case last spring, they dropped the charges against Baldwin, saying they needed time to review evidence and address issues raised by the actor’s team.

Last week, Morrissey bristled at suggestions that it was problematic for her to seek an indictment after dropping the charges against Baldwin last year. She said it was Baldwin’s lead attorney, Nikas, who asked for the charges to be dropped, and she agreed.

At the time, the prosecutors said they needed time to investigate whether the gun had been modified prior to its arrival on the film set, as Baldwin’s team has suggested.

Prosecutors have won two convictions for negligence leading to Hutchins’ death.

In March, a Santa Fe jury convicted armorer Hannah Gutierrez of involuntary manslaughter.

Morrissey had argued that Gutierrez, whose job was handling guns on the set, was the person most responsible for the accident. The jury deliberated for only about two hours after hearing evidence during a two-week trial. Last month, Marlowe Sommer sentenced Gutierrez, 26, to the maximum sentence of 18 months in a New Mexico prison.

Last year, Halls pleaded no contest to negligent use of a deadly weapon and received a suspended six-month sentence.

Uvalde shooting victims’ families sue Meta, game maker

The suit says they are responsible for Instagram and Call of Duty, which the gunman used.

By JIM VERTUNO

AUSTIN, Texas — Families of Uvalde school massacre victims are suing Meta Platforms, which owns Instagram, and the maker of the video game Call of Duty over claims the companies bear responsibility for products used by the teenage gunman in the Robb Elementary School attack.

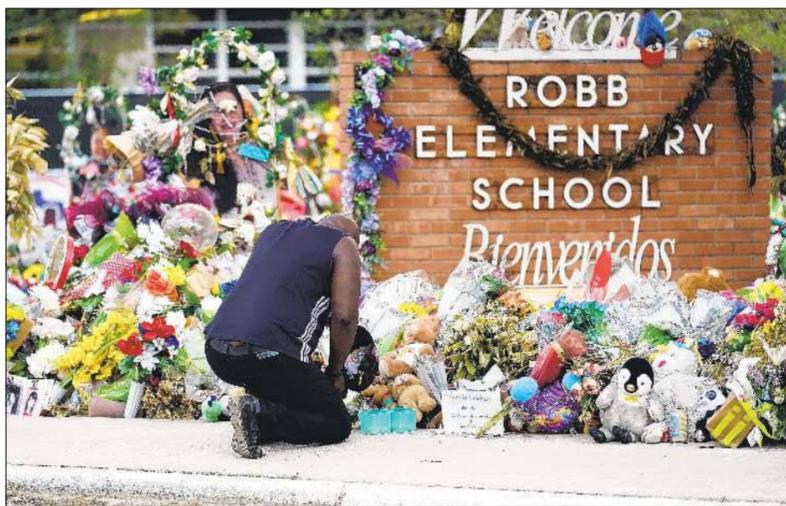
They also filed another lawsuit against Daniel Defense, which manufactured the AR-style rifle used in the May 24, 2022, shooting.

It added to mounting lawsuits over the attack and came as the small Texas city gathered to mourn the anniversary of one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history. The gunman killed 19 students and two teachers.

Officers finally confronted and shot him after waiting more than an hour to enter the fourth-grade classroom.

“There is a direct line between the conduct of these companies and the Uvalde shooting,” said Josh Kosko, an attorney for the families, said Friday. “This three-headed monster knowingly exposed him to the weapon, conditioned him to see it as a tool to solve his problems and trained him to use it.”

Some of the same fam-



ERIC GAY Associated Press

REGGIE Daniels pays his respects at a memorial at Robb Elementary in 2022 in Uvalde, Texas. The second anniversary of the deadly school shooting was Friday.

ilies on Wednesday filed a \$500-million lawsuit against Texas state police officials and officers who were part of the botched law enforcement response that day. More than 370 federal, state and local officers responded but waited more than an hour to confront the shooter inside the classroom as students and teachers lay dead, dying or wounded.

Friday’s lawsuits are not the first to accuse technology companies of having a role in radicalizing or influencing mass shooters.

Families of victims in a May 2022 attack on Buffalo, N.Y., supermarket sued social media companies, including Meta and Instagram, over content on their platforms.

The lawsuit against

Georgia-based gun maker Daniel Defense was filed in Texas by the same group of 19 families who sued on Wednesday. The lawsuit against Meta and Activision Blizzard — the maker of Call of Duty — were filed in California with additional families of victims from the attack.

Activision called the Uvalde shooting “horrendous and heartbreaking in every way, and we express our deepest sympathies to the families and communities who remain impacted by this senseless act of violence. Millions of people around the world enjoy video games without turning to horrific acts.”

A video game industry trade group also rejected the idea of blaming games for vi-

olence, arguing that research has found no link.

“We are saddened and outraged by senseless acts of violence. At the same time, we discourage baseless accusations linking these tragedies to video gameplay, which detract from efforts to focus on the root issues in question and safeguard against future tragedies,” the Entertainment Software Assn. said.

The amount of damages sought in the new lawsuits was not immediately clear.

According to the lawsuits, the Uvalde shooter had played versions of Call of Duty since he was 15, including one that allowed him to effectively practice with the version of the rifle he used at the school.

The families also accused

Instagram of doing little to enforce its rules that ban marketing firearms and harmful content to children.

The Uvalde shooter opened an online account with Daniel Defense before his 18th birthday and purchased the rifle as soon as he could, according to the lawsuit.

“Simultaneously, on Instagram, the shooter was being courted through explicit, aggressive marketing. In addition to hundreds of images depicting and venerating the thrill of combat, Daniel Defense used Instagram to extol the illegal, murderous use of its weapons,” the families’ attorneys said in a statement.

Daniel Defense and Meta each did not immediately respond to emails requesting comment.

In a congressional hearing in 2022, Daniel Defense CEO Marty Daniel called the Uvalde shooting and others like it “pure evil” and “deeply disturbing.”

A separate lawsuit filed by different plaintiffs in December 2022 against local and state police, the city, and other school and law enforcement entities seeks at least \$27 billion and class-action status for survivors.

At least two other lawsuits have been filed against Daniel Defense.

“As we mark this solemn day, may we pray for those we lost, their loved ones, and all those who were wounded,” President Biden said in a letter to the community.

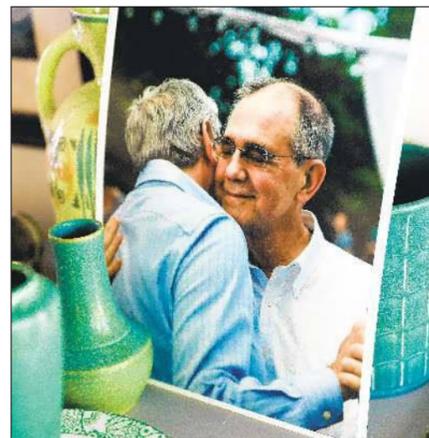
Vertuno writes for the Associated Press.



Photographs by CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times



GILL HODGSON of Venice flew the body of her husband, Mick, to Return Home.



A PHOTO of Larry Kreisman and husband Wayne Dodge, right. At left, McKelle Hilber, a Seattle teacher, stands next to the vessel holding her 23-year-old son, Samah, during the composting process at Return Home.

‘What do I want for my own body when I die?’ People seek greener end

[Burial, from A1] increasingly hard to find in urban areas. Over the last few decades, however, more Americans have chosen cremation — 61% in 2023 — for its ease and much lower cost. You can arrange for a direct cremation — one without a service or other trimmings — for under \$1,000, compared with the country’s median burial costs of nearly \$8,000 (not including cemetery fees for vaults and plots).

But cremation is also an environmental nightmare, requiring huge amounts of energy to incinerate bodies into a highly alkaline and salty ash detrimental to plants and soil in concentrated amounts. Plus, cremations give off so much carbon dioxide that the South Coast Air Quality Management District limits the number that can be performed every month in California’s largest metropolitan region — caps it had to suspend in early 2021 when the death rate more than doubled due to COVID-19.

“The truth is, the last gesture most of us will make on this earth is toxic,” human composting pioneer Katrina Spade wrote in 2016, when she applied for a grant to investigate the feasibility of composting human bodies in the United States.

Now, with 60% of Americans saying they would prefer greener options for burial, we appear poised for another major shift, said Sarah Chavez, founder of the Death Positive movement, which advocates for “honest conversations” about death and dying.

“Over a hundred years ago, there was no funeral industry. People took care of their own dead,” Chavez said. We’ve outsourced that job over the years, to our detriment, she said, as though whisking a body away can somehow relieve our loss.

“[Human] composting really resonates with a growing number of people who see it as a way to give back to the earth; a way of making their final act a meaningful one and being part of a more unique, family-led funeral that will truly honor the lives of their persons, and who they truly were,” Chavez said.

In addition to Washington, nine states — Oregon, Vermont, Colorado, New York, Nevada, Arizona, Maryland, Delaware and California — have legalized natural organic reduction and at least 12 others have introduced bills.

But it all began with Spade, an architectural grad student and mother pondering her own mortality, first thought seriously about a process she called “recomposition” in 2009.

“My kids were really fast growing up, and I had this moment of, ‘I’m mortal,’” said Spade. “I began to think, ‘What do I want for my own body when I die? How does design play a role, and why aren’t there eco-conscious alternatives?’”

Thus began her Urban Death Project to look at eco-friendly and affordable ways to dispose of the deceased in urban areas. She initially designed a “Recomposition Center,” a tall structure with circular ramps, where people could carry their loved one’s body to the top, to be covered in wood chips, alfalfa and straw, and slowly decompose to the bottom, with their soil added to nourish a commu-

nity garden. She spent nearly 10 years researching human composting techniques, including working with soil scientists at Washington State University perfecting techniques farmers had been using to compost dead livestock.

When it became clear that people didn’t like the idea of mingling remains, Spade changed her design to individual capsules containing the human remains and organic material, stacked in a honeycomb grid. In 2019 she successfully lobbied the Washington state Legislature to legalize natural organic reduction and, with the help of investors, opened her mortuary Recompose in 2020.

Former Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia said she wrote California’s law because she felt residents here needed more Earth-friendly choices for burials.

“I love the outdoors and I really want to be a tree in my afterlife,” she said. “My family has a crypt in Mexico, where there are no trees or shade around I want my soil to be used specifically for a plum tree, my favorite fruit, and my loved ones can visit me there.”

The fact that California’s law won’t be in effect until 2027 has frustrated potential users, but it hasn’t stopped them. The three natural organic reduction mortuaries operating in Washington have reported steady business from out-of-state customers, especially Californians, who are either flying or driving their deceased loved ones north.

Depending on the mortuary, the cost of human composting can range from \$4,950 to \$7,000. People from out of state must also cover costs like transportation and preparing an unembalmed body to be safely shipped.

And each mortuary has its own patented processes and unique feel.

Earth, in Auburn, Wash., promises the quickest composting — 30 to 45 days in a facility where spaces for 78 vessels are stacked three-high in the so-called laying-in area. The spotless room with pale green walls is deliberately huge to accommodate for growth, said facility manager John Lawrence. In its first year, Earth cared for 200 bodies. “Our goal,” he said, “is to make this available to as many people as possible.”

Not many relatives request an in-house service, Lawrence said, but for those who do, there are white folding chairs set up in a corner of the cavernous room.

Recompose in south Seattle has a more artistic vibe. There’s a quiet room where families can wash and anoint their loved one’s body before it enters the vessel. Services are held in a high-ceilinged room with a chapel-like feel, with tall, narrow inserts of green glass in one wall that provide murky glimpses of the hexagonal array in the next room where the bodies are composted.

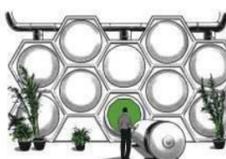
Connecting the two rooms is a short tunnel — inscribed with the words: “May we not live in fear of decomposing, but in awe and gratitude of our future Re-composing” — through which the vessels pass on their way to composting.

Return Home, also in Auburn, is the most touchy-feely of the three. At Earth and Recompose, once a body goes into the vessel, family and

HOW HUMAN COMPOSTING WORKS



An unembalmed body is put in a vessel filled with organic materials such as wood chips, sawdust, straw, alfalfa and flowers.



The containers are stacked into a grid and hooked into an expensive HVAC system that provides the oxygen needed for decomposition while filtering unpleasant smells.



There are occasional odors with heavy alfalfa notes, like in a barn or a hamster cage, but the finished soil in carefully labeled bags has no odor at all.



The vessel temperatures are constantly monitored to ensure the heat caused by microbial activity stays above 131 degrees, the magic number for destroying pathogens. Typically the temperatures get higher, and when they dip the vessels are rotated to restart the microbial activity. The more rotations, the quicker the process.



When the temperatures finally cool — typically in 30 to 60 days — the remains are sifted to remove non-organic items like pacemakers or artificial hips and, as in cremation, the bones are crushed to hasten the final decomposition. Families can take as much of the final soil as they want. Each company has its own wooded and permanently protected conservation area to spread the soils families leave behind.

Illustrations by JOEL KIMMELL For The Times

friends aren’t expected back until the soil is ready for delivery.

Return Home started that way too, until it discovered something “totally unexpected,” said CEO Micah Truman — people wanted to personalize the vessels of their loved ones with photos and drawings, or just drop in to sit near them. So Return Home installed sliding forest-themed panels in front of each vessel to keep them private. It laid rugs on the concrete floors, put out comfy chairs, pillows and blankets and welcomed family to visit whenever they were open.

Those amenities made all the difference to McKelle Hilber, a teacher in Seattle who couldn’t imagine burying or cremating her 23-year-old son after his death in early 2023. “As soon as I read about terramation, I instantly knew this was exactly what Samah would’ve wanted,” she said.

Terramation is a trademarked term invented by Truman. “You don’t say, ‘I’m going to incinerate Mom.’ You call it ‘cremation,’ and it sounds like a milkshake,” he said. “We came up with terramation — ‘terra’ for earth and ‘mation,’ as in transform — because if we have a better lexicon, it will help people have less fear.”

Samah’s laying-in service with close friends and family was “cathartic and comforting,” Hilber said. “He was such a beautiful creative person who loved life, it just seemed like the perfect way to honor him.”

After a visit to Return Home’s facility, the owners of Clarity Funerals and Cremation — one of Southern California’s largest crematoriums — decided to partner with Return Home and change their personal burial wishes.

“With cremations, you’re basically getting a box of carbon. With terramation, you get a box of soil, to literally give your body back to the earth,” said Lauren Williams, Clarity’s director of operations. “I don’t usually talk about my job because, cremation and the funeral industry ... people think it’s kind of sad. But when I talk about terramation, it’s actually beautiful and people are really interested.”

But the process can still feel scary, as Heidi Heffington of Anaheim learned when she chose terramation for her 83-year-old mother, Wilma, who died in July. (Heffington asked to not use Wilma’s last name for privacy in death.) Just three weeks earlier, Wilma had been dancing with her son-in-law, Joe, at the memory care facility where she lived, but then she got pneumonia that irreparably damaged her lungs.

Wilma resisted medications whenever possible, so the idea of embalming her mother was out of the question, Heffington said, and cremation felt too violent. So she and her husband flew to Return Home to lay her mother to rest. Since it was the first composting funeral organized by Clarity, Williams and some of her staff flew up for the service too.

When they arrived at the mortuary, however, Heffington panicked. She remembered as a child seeing a relative who was unrecognizable in his open casket, and she was filled with fear — how would her beloved mother look a week after her death?

Return Home dresses bodies in short cotton-bunting gowns and slippers made specially for its services. Wilma wore a gown accented with pink buttons to match the rosy nail polish on her fingers. The staff used a hydraulic sling to gently lift her inside a vessel half filled with a mixture of alfalfa, sawdust and straw. Then they moved the vessel out to the service area, next to panels of tall trees.

The Heffingtons approached the vessel slowly, carrying two dozen long-stemmed red roses. Using a small platform, they could easily reach inside, and upon seeing her mother, Heffington gasped.

“She looks like a little angel,” Heffington murmured.

When they finished their goodbyes, however, Heffington was smiling. Part of her relief was the aroma, like fresh bedding in a stall. “She would love that natural smell,” she said. “It feels peaceful. I’m so glad she’s here.”

That day Heffington was uncertain about what she would do with her mother’s soil, but three months later, she and her husband took it all. “I didn’t feel it was right to leave some of her soil in another state,” she said. They got 10 bags worth, much more than they expected for her petite mother, Heffington said, and spread it under some trees in Los Angeles, in a spot she had loved.

“Make sure you tell people, you have to come up with a plan for what you’ll do with the soil, because it’s a lot,” Heffington said. But she has no regrets about choosing terramation.

“I wish I could have talked to her about it ahead of time, but I feel I made the right decision. It seemed more gentle to me ... and I was so relieved to see her look so peaceful. That’s what I was hoping for her ... and I hope she sees it that way too.”



“THIS IS WHAT HE SEES,” says Blaire Van Valkenburgh, gazing at the sky from the area where the “soil” of her late husband, Robert Wayne, rests in Orcas Island, Wash.

Metro patrols are lax, ex-security chief says

[Metro, from A1] tem. Metro is slated to spend \$195 million on law enforcement in the next fiscal year, a figure that continues to rise as the agency is exploring the development of its own police department.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass announced an increase in police deployment this month after a spate of violent crimes, and Metro is investing in a series of tactics to improve the system ahead of the 2028 Summer Olympics — including adding transit security officers, continuing the use of transit ambassadors who assist riders, and additional cleaning at several stations.

The crime wave comes at a crucial time for Metro, which continues to expand its train system with new lines and extensions, including the LAX/Metro Transit Center Station, set to open this year.

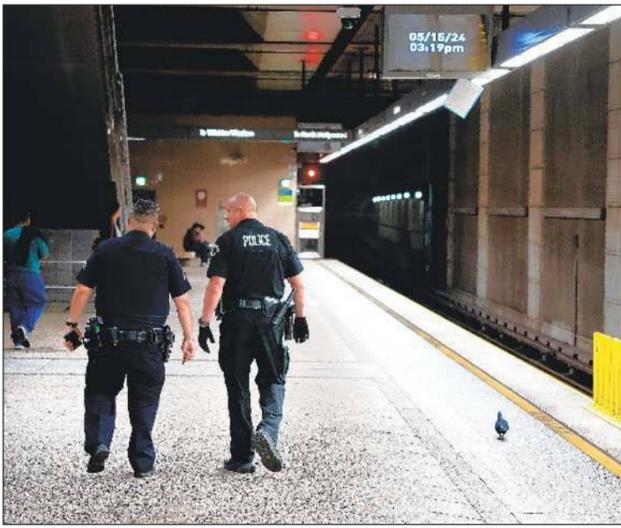
The agencies that patrol the system — the LAPD, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the Long Beach Police Department — said they are doing their job and working with Metro to protect riders, drivers and operators in thousands of buses and trains over more than 100 miles of rail.

"There's always room for improvement," said Donald Graham, deputy chief of the LAPD's Transit Services Bureau. "We will always continue to look and relook at what we're doing and question whether or not what we're doing is the best way to do things."

He said an internal investigation into the incident at the San Pedro Station showed that officers had been doing their job that day. They were there to check that train riders were carrying their Tap cards to pay fares.

Over the last year, under Bass' leadership, he said, arrests on the system have increased as police crack down on drug use, trespassing and other crimes. Response times are below the city average, he said, and their mission has become more clear: engagement, interdiction to prevent situations from getting worse or escalating, and becoming a more visible presence.

Osborn was fired in March, shortly after reporting to the agency's inspector general the alleged failure of sheriff's deputies to patrol the E Line's Downtown Santa Monica Station on March 15, she said. Her attorney, Marc Greenberg, said that during her two-year tenure as chief safety officer, she



WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

OFFICERS patrol an L.A. subway station. The LAPD, Sheriff's Department and Long Beach police patrol the Metro system.

had a "glowing" personnel record and was fired for being a whistleblower.

Metro spokesperson Patrick Chandler said the agency does not comment on personnel matters or pending litigation.

By the time she was ousted, Osborn said, she had become convinced that the LAPD, the Sheriff's Department and Long Beach police were failing at their jobs, not being proactive enough to keep the buses and trains safe. And when Osborn championed creating an internal police department, she said, she felt stymied by Metro Chief Executive Stephanie Wiggins.

She said she discovered the March lapse during spot checks on the law enforcement agencies.

That day, at 1:37 p.m., she texted Sheriff's Capt. Shawn R. Kehoe to tell him that nobody had been at the station since 10 a.m. Eight days later, she said, he responded by email that his two deputies were interviewing for internal positions. But she suspected the officers were at a fundraising golf tournament at the Pico Rivera Golf Club for the department's "Baker to Vegas" running team. The Baker run is an annual relay race held in the desert among law enforcement agencies.

"I don't think the taxpayers are getting their money's worth," she said.

Kehoe told The Times that the

department investigated the allegations and found the deputies were at their posts, "which was verified by location positioning technology that the department utilizes."

"We are committed to working collaboratively with our law enforcement and Metro partners to ensure the safety and security of our transit community and the transit employees," he said.

An audit by Metro's Office of the Inspector General in 2022 found that the police agencies had poor visibility on the system and didn't have adequate means of monitoring the deployment of officers, and that their process of dealing with citizen complaints lacked transparency.

Osborn said she tried to remedy that by installing cameras and negotiating with law enforcement agencies over deployment.

Although there has been improvement, she often met resistance, she said: Long Beach officers had agreed to remove passengers at the end of the A Line in downtown Long Beach but later refused to do so.

"We adhere to our contractual obligations, focusing on enforcing penal code violations to maintain a secure environment on the Metro," Long Beach police spokesperson Richard Mejia said in an emailed statement. "We value our ongoing partnership with Metro, which is essential in ensuring the safety of

both riders and our community."

When she went to Wiggins for help, Osborn said, she found little support.

One issue that popped up early on, she said, was unsafe conditions for cleaning crews working in the miles of subterranean tunnels and rooms that hold equipment that powers the system, known as ancillary areas. Transients would take shelter there, and some trespassers would store contraband or do drugs in the isolated locations. The hidden pathways and workrooms would often be filthy with human excrement, drug paraphernalia and other debris. Many workers were fearful of attacks and wanted escorts.

After fielding complaints from supervisors, Osborn asked Wiggins to increase the number of armed private security guards from 261 to 500 to assist at the locations. Wiggins rejected the proposal, saying it was too costly.

Osborn came up with a lower number, 419, which she said was rejected because Wiggins said it was "fiscally irresponsible." Then she proposed 372, with a quarter of them unarmed, and offered detailed deployment plans. Wiggins ultimately approved the 372, she said. Only half were armed.

At the time, many agencies had turned away from using more armed officers as pressure from the Black Lives Matter movement forced them to assess disparities in enforcement and police brutality. The Metro board was especially reluctant to put more funds into armed law enforcement that critics said made some passengers uncomfortable and too often targeted Black riders. The agency had poured money into social services such as homeless outreach.

Then last May, Metro Deputy Executive Officer William Peterson became ill working in one of the ancillary areas, Osborn said. He told Osborn other workers were becoming sick too. She emailed the deputy chief of risk, safety and asset management to figure out whether it was safe to work in those locations. It was determined the areas were hazardous because of fentanyl, methamphetamine and bacteria. Personal protective equipment should be used, a review found.

Information about the danger in those areas was leaked to CBS reporter David Goldstein, now retired. When Wiggins found out, she blamed Osborn and de-

manded daily reports on the situation, according to Osborn. Osborn said she made it clear to Wiggins and Chief of Operations Conan Cheung that it was impossible to secure the areas without guards there around the clock. Trespassers continued to get in, often opening emergency doors when a guard's shift was over.

Wiggins wanted Osborn to transfer the private security guards from Metro bus and rail divisions to the underground locations. Osborn refused, saying it would leave those areas vulnerable, and Wiggins shot off a heated email, according to Osborn.

"Ms. Osborn's allegations are categorically false," said Metro spokesperson Chandler when asked about Osborn's accusations that Wiggins dismissed her concerns about the ancillary areas until the information was leaked to the media, and rejected her requests.

"Ensuring the safety of all our customers and employees is the most important thing Metro's CEO, leadership team and union leadership are working on," he said. "Metro is now searching for a new, experienced head of system security who understands the full scope of the job and who will work proactively, resourcefully, and collaboratively to do it."

"Leading system safety and security at Metro requires the acceptance of accountability for all facets of keeping Metro safe — keeping our customers and employees safe on trains and buses, and at our stations, as well as securing the many facilities where our essential employees come to work."

Osborn was eventually granted 87 more guards but said that Wiggins told her the extra security would end in June.

The proposed fiscal year 2025 budget has funds allocated for 53 new transit security officers. It does not include significant increases for more private security officers.

"It's a drop in the bucket," Osborn said.

At the same time, she said, the cost of law enforcement will rise. Last year, Metro paid the LAPD, Sheriff's Department and Long Beach police more than \$200 million, though they were budgeted to receive \$176 million, she said, and it is unlikely they will stay within budget this year with LAPD pay increases.

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‘He seemed like the perfect tenant. Until he turned into a nightmare.’

— NIKEETA SRIRAM, property owner



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

“WHY IS IT illegal for us to get our house back from a guy who’s not even in the country?” Peter Banachowski asks about tenant Nicholas Jarzabek, who appears to be in England. Nikeeta Sriram purchased the Mid-Wilshire property for \$1.675 million in March 2022.

Home is a cash cow — not for the owner, but a sneaky tenant

[Airbnb, from A1] perfect tenant,” she said. “Until he turned into a nightmare.”

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Sriram, 31, wrapped up grad school and moved to L.A. in 2021, signing a yearlong lease in Los Feliz. As the housing market raged at the height of the pandemic, and interest rates dropped, she bought a home in the Mid-Wilshire area for \$1.675 million in March 2022.

Not wanting to break her lease, she decided to stay in her place and rent out the new home. She received a handful of applications — including one from Jarzabek — and rented it out to a pair of men in their 20s who were starting an underwear company, Peppermint.

The company failed, and the men moved out in August, three months after signing. Sriram put the place back on the market, and a familiar applicant popped up: Jarzabek.

“I didn’t think anything of it at the time. I figured he just really liked the house,” she said. “But it’s obviously suspicious in hindsight. Most renters are trying to move on a specific timeline, and you don’t see people applying for the same house three months apart.”

Jarzabek’s plan for the property eventually became clear.

The Mid-Wilshire estate holds two homes: a two-story main house with three bedrooms and a one-bedroom back house with a loft — double the homes, double the earning potential on Airbnb.

Jarzabek, 36, seemed a stellar tenant. He had more than \$1 million in the bank, according to statements reviewed by The Times, and made a great impression on the walk-through, driving up in a white Tesla and sporting a Rolex.

“He talked about the house nicely and offered to put rugs down so he wouldn’t scratch the floors,” Sriram said. “He said he’d treat it like it was his own.”

Real estate records show that Jarzabek grew up in Idaho and lived in L.A. in recent years, but his Instagram suggests that he’s playing shows at London pubs under the name Nick Diver and with his band, the Sprits.

The walk-through was the last time Sriram ever saw him in person.

In retrospect, Sriram said, the only red flag that popped up that day was when Jarzabek asked to move in Aug. 26, a few days before the lease started on Sept. 1. She said yes, assuming he was excited.

In reality, he already had the house listed on Airbnb, and guests were on their way.

The first year of Jarzabek’s tenancy was quiet. He paid the \$8,500 rent on time or early and never asked for repairs. Whenever the home’s ADT alarm was tripped — Sriram had installed it after an intruder broke into the house when it was vacant — he was quick to respond with texts such as “Sorry my mistake,” or “Messed up the code.”

“He seemed like a very responsible tenant, but now I know it’s because he wanted me to never come to the property,” Sriram said.

Jarzabek’s Airbnb listings of the

property came to light 16 months into his lease, on Dec. 29, 2023, when the ADT alarm was triggered so many times that the company automatically called police, who sent an officer to the home the next day.

When Sriram called ADT, the company said police reported that Airbnb guests had triggered the alarm.

Sriram and her boyfriend, Peter Banachowski, assumed there was a mistake. They’d rented the house to Jarzabek, and the lease banned subletting, including on short-term rental sites such as Airbnb.

Sriram called Jarzabek, who denied renting out the property. But then she looked on Airbnb and found it up for grabs. The main house was listed for \$688 per night, and the back house was listed for \$496, according to Airbnb records in the eviction lawsuit she filed.

Together, the houses had more than 100 reviews.

Jarzabek did not respond to requests for comment. But subpoenas records and details from the lawsuit lay out an elaborate, persistent plan to turn Sriram’s home into a cash cow.

The Airbnb was hosted under the name Rich Jacobs. It’s unclear whether that is an alias used by Jarzabek or someone he contracted to operate the Airbnb.

The host used two strategies to keep the Airbnb listings hidden from Sriram.

First, the listings never included photos of the homes’ exteriors. According to the lawsuit, each showed a picture of the Grove shopping center followed by photos of the interiors, which are harder to identify.

Second, the listing provided a false address, at 1830 S. La Brea Ave., the site of a motel called the Starlight Inn, about a mile from the home. Once the house was booked, Jacobs would message guests with the true address, according to Airbnb reviews.

The strategy concealed Sriram’s address and allowed Jacobs to avoid posting a registration number, which is typically required for Airbnb listings in L.A. but not for hotels or motels.

Photos filed in court by Sriram show that the listing claims it’s exempt from displaying a registration number because it’s a hotel or motel, despite it being clearly marketed as a home.

The listing for the larger home had an average rating of 4.76 stars out of 5, and the smaller home averaged 4.46 — not terrible, but reviews included in the court filings hinted at something shady.

“Easy to find once the correct address was found, Air BNB listed a different address than [was sent] by the Owner,” one said.

“The host adopted a very nasty

and aggressive tone with us when we had difficulty learning how to cancel on your website,” said a guest who accused Jacobs of canceling their stay after they said their plane would be arriving late.

When Sriram confronted Jarzabek over the phone, he said to contact his lawyer.

So she got creative. On Feb. 6, she booked the house herself so she could communicate with Jacobs through the chat function on Airbnb.

“STOP RELISTING THIS PROPERTY. You are not authorized to sublease this property!” she wrote.

The response from Jacobs was either automated or apathetic: “Dear Nikeeta, Welcome and Thank You. You will have a great time here.”

After the back-and-forth, the listings were removed, but new ones were soon created. In the meantime, Sriram filed for an eviction through the L.A. Superior Court, and in April she filed a cease and desist to Jarzabek’s attorney.

‘He seemed like a very responsible tenant, but now I know it’s because he wanted me to never come to the property.’

— NIKEETA SRIRAM

Sriram considered changing the locks to keep out Jarzabek and the Airbnb guests, but that would’ve been a violation of the lease, opening her up to damages. The only way to legally remove a tenant is through the eviction process.

While Sriram navigated the court system, the properties were being rented, court documents show. This time, it was under a new owner profile: Monthier.

Monthier, which didn’t respond to a request for comment, appears to be a rental company with listings across the country and multiple accounts on Airbnb. It’s unclear who is running Monthier, and it’s unclear whether its other listings are connected to Jarzabek. But Airbnb reviews of Monthier’s listings reveal red flags.

“The access to the apartment is not like the picture. It is another address,” said one review for a studio suite in Austin, Texas.

“Location doesn’t match listing. The photos are accurate but where it’s located is definitely not great. Host is also not great,” said one about a studio in downtown Los Angeles.

Reviews of Sriram’s home, since deleted, paint a clearer picture.

“The actual owners showed up with legal documents noting ongoing violations and eviction proceedings and removed us from the property,” one said.

The owner who removed the guest was Sriram, along with Banachowski. After the listings kept popping up, they decided to drive to the property whenever Airbnb showed that either house was booked and explain the situation to the guests.

Sriram said all the guests she talked to — a lawyer and her son, a family vacationing from Italy — were understanding but frustrated. When the guests called the host, there was no answer.

“I felt terrible. I didn’t want to ruin their vacations,” Sriram said. “But this is our only recourse since Airbnb provided no help to us.”

Airbnb has changed the face of the short-term rental industry since it launched in 2008, and revenues for hosts have steadily climbed. In 2022, L.A. Airbnb hosts raked in more than \$375 million.

It has also been a boon for the city: Airbnb hosts in L.A. paid more than \$275 million in transient occupancy taxes from August 2016 to June 2023.

But during that stretch, the city has failed to crack down on illegal listings.

As profits soar and hosts charge higher rates for rentals, thousands of listings on Airbnb and similar sites, such as VRBO, are operating without an active registration. The lack of regulation has led to confusion, causing situations like one last summer in Brentwood, when The Times chronicled the fight between an Airbnb host and a guest who simply refused to leave the luxury unit for 570 days.

In the Brentwood situation, Airbnb told the host there was nothing it could do because he extended the stay beyond the original lease outlined on the site.

But what does the company owe Sriram — a host who isn’t a host at all but, rather, a homeowner who says her house was uploaded to the platform without her consent?

On its website, Airbnb admits that there are limitations to its listing verification process: “Even with safeguards, no verification process is foolproof and we cannot guarantee a listing’s location or that the Host has access to it.”

It also notes that it doesn’t inspect listings for accuracy. That could explain how Jarzabek claimed his listings were motels and didn’t require a registration number.

In March, as part of the eviction lawsuit, Sriram subpoenaed Airbnb for information on Jarzabek and found out that although

he communicated with her via a phone number with a New York area code, the number registered for Jacobs with Airbnb had a +44 code, for the United Kingdom.

The subpoena also shed light on the profits: For 16 months between 2022 and 2023, the Airbnb listing generated \$215,954 — an average of roughly \$13,500 per month — all from a property that the host didn’t own, wasn’t authorized to sublet and allegedly wasn’t in the country to operate. It’s not clear if he had other, similar listings.

“If the city can’t figure out how to crack down on Airbnb, it should err on the side of caution and ban the platform until it can build a task force to manage it,” Sriram said. “The current solution is to let havoc ensue and see what happens.”

During its reporting, The Times reached out to Airbnb to ask about the listings remaining active. A few days later, the listings were removed from the site. So far, they haven’t resurfaced, and guests have stopped showing up to the property.

On Tuesday, an Airbnb spokesperson confirmed that the company deleted the Jacobs account and its listings.

“There is no place on Airbnb for hosts who circumvent the City of Los Angeles’ homesharing ordinance or our Terms of Service,” the spokesperson said in a statement. “We will continue to work closely with city officials to address hosts who try to evade the rules just as we have done in the past.”

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After months in court, Sriram’s unlawful-detainer lawsuit was recently approved, allowing her to move forward with evicting Jarzabek. She also received a writ of possession, which allows a sheriff to take hold of the property and grant it back to Sriram.

However, there’s a three-month wait, since the L.A. County Sheriff’s Department has been backed up with requests since the COVID-19 eviction moratorium expired in March 2023.

Sriram estimates that she has lost \$100,000 since the beginning of the year between property damage, legal fees and lost rent, since Jarzabek stopped paying after she filed the eviction notice. She hasn’t been able to address the issues at the property, including water damage to the ceilings and walls, since she can’t get in, according to her lawsuit.

“His Instagram shows that he has four dates in pubs across the U.K.,” Banachowski said. “I understand why we have eviction protections for people in L.A., but why is it illegal for us to get our house back from a guy who’s not even in the country?”

The pair would love to sue Jarzabek for damages, but the process of suing someone who’s living in another country can be complicated and costly.

For now, Sriram and Banachowski wait.

They’re checking the site regularly and holding their breath, hoping no other unwitting Airbnb guests have booked their home.

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Inflation helps Trump in key states

Voters cite high prices in new poll that shows him leading Biden in 6 of 7 battlegrounds and tied in Wisconsin.

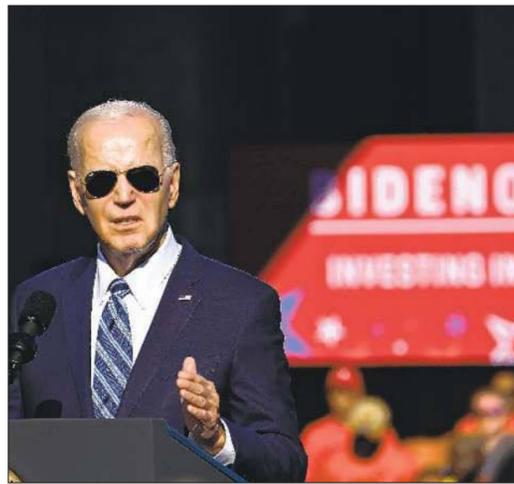
BY JAMES RAINEY

Former President Trump narrowly leads President Biden in six of the seven states considered key in this year's election rematch, an advantage powered by the perception that the Republican challenger would do a better job controlling inflation, according to a poll released Thursday.

Trump's overall advantage in the seven states stands at 47% to 44%, a margin that grows to 5 percentage points in a five-way contest that includes independent candidates Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Cornel West and Green Party nominee Jill Stein, according to the Swing State Survey, overseen by the Cook Political Report and two polling firms.

Trump's lead in the head-to-head contest is a modest one: at or less than the margin of sampling error in four of the states — Arizona, Georgia, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

The Republican holds wider leads in Nevada and North Carolina — 9% and 7%, respectively — while he and Biden are tied at 45%



MARK MAKELA/Getty Images

PRESIDENT BIDEN faces concerns about the economy and his age that could cost him in swing states.

each in Wisconsin, the poll found.

While inflation has subsided substantially since its peak in the second half of 2022, many voters remain preoccupied with high prices. A significant majority of voters in the Cook survey think Biden has control over inflation. But just 40% in the seven swing states said they think prices will be brought under control if he wins a second term, while 56% think a Trump presidency would usher in lower inflation.

Biden has an advantage among voters concerned about loss of abortion rights, but the poll indicated more

voters are focused on economic issues. When nearly 4,000 voters across the seven states were asked what concerns them more, Biden overseeing economic policy or Trump setting policy on abortion, 55% said they were more worried about Biden handling the economy, while 45% said Trump setting abortion policy was more concerning.

"At this point ... the defining issue for this contest is a more traditional one: the economy," Amy Walter, editor in chief of the Cook Political Report, wrote in an analysis of the results.

"While abortion remains a strong issue for Demo-

crats, President Biden's advantage on the issue isn't strong enough to offset Trump's overall strength on bringing down the cost of living," Walter wrote. "Biden's overall weak position, combined with voters' deep worry about rising costs, is currently limiting his ability to make the case that Trump is the bigger risk."

Both candidates face other challenges, with more potential voters, 53%, citing Biden's "age and ability to complete his term" than the 47% who cited Trump's "temperament and legal problems." Biden is 81 years old; Trump is 77 and charged in four felony criminal cases.

"The race is still close because both candidates' personal weaknesses make it hard for them to leverage the issues that should benefit them," Walter wrote.

Trump did better in four of the seven key states in a hypothetical race including the additional candidates. The Cook survey showed the former president ahead in that scenario, 43% to 38%, with 8% saying they'd vote for Kennedy.

Joining the Cook Report in conducting the survey was BSG, a polling firm tied to Democrats, and GS Strategy Group, a firm that works mostly with Republicans. The pollsters reached voters between May 6 and May 13. Of those who responded, 85% said they were "absolutely certain" or "very likely" to vote.

Senators pursue Alito ethics questions

Revelations of Jan. 6-linked flags at his homes prompt call for meeting with the chief justice.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Two Democratic senators are seeking a meeting with Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. after photos revealing that two separate flags carried by rioters at the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol had flown outside houses owned by Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr.

Senate Judiciary Chairman Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.) and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), a member of the Judiciary Committee, wrote to Roberts asking that he meet with them to discuss Supreme Court ethics and steps to ensure that Alito, a fellow conservative, recuses himself from any cases before the court concerning the Jan. 6 attack or former President Trump's attempts to overturn his 2020 election defeat.

"We request a meeting with you as soon as possible, in your capacity as Chief Jus-

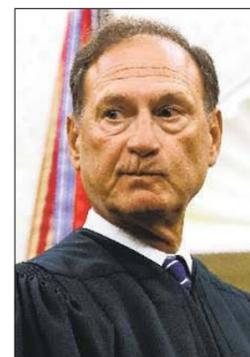
stice and as presiding officer of the Judicial Conference of the United States, to discuss additional steps to address the Supreme Court's ethics crisis," Durbin and Whitehouse wrote to Roberts on Thursday in a letter released Friday by their offices.

The senators' letter comes as another conservative justice, Clarence Thomas, has ignored calls to recuse himself from cases related to the 2020 election over his wife, Ginni Thomas', support for efforts to overturn Trump's election loss — and as public trust in the Supreme Court is at its lowest point in at least 50 years.

The court did not respond to a request for comment regarding the letter.

The court is considering two major cases related to the Capitol attack, including charges faced by the participants and whether Trump has immunity from prosecution on election interference charges. Alito is participating in both cases and has rejected calls from Democrats in the past to recuse himself on other issues.

The New York Times reported that an inverted American flag was seen at Alito's home outside Washington less than two weeks after the attack on the Capi-



CAROLYN KASTER/Associated Press

JUSTICE ALITO has refused to recuse himself from cases with potential conflicts of interest.

tol.

Last week the paper reported that an "Appeal to Heaven" flag was flown outside the justice's beach home in New Jersey last summer.

Both flags were carried by rioters who violently stormed the Capitol in January 2021, echoing Trump's false claims of election fraud and attempting to prevent Congress from certifying Joe Biden's victory.

Alito has said that the inverted American flag was flown by his wife amid a dispute with neighbors, and

that he'd had no part in it. He and the court declined to respond to requests for comment on the "Appeal to Heaven" flag.

Judicial ethics codes focus on the need for judges to be independent, avoiding political statements or opinions on matters they could be called on to decide. The Supreme Court had long gone without its own code of ethics, but it adopted one in November 2023 in the face of sustained criticism over undisclosed trips and gifts from wealthy benefactors to some justices.

The code lacks a means of enforcement, though, and the Judiciary panel approved legislation last year that would set stricter standards. But Republicans have been staunchly opposed to any efforts to tell the court what to do.

Durbin and Whitehouse's appeal for a meeting is a new approach after Roberts declined to testify at a hearing on Supreme Court ethics last year.

"Until the Court and the Judicial Conference take meaningful action to address this ongoing ethical crisis, we will continue our efforts to enact legislation to resolve this crisis," they wrote.



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Numerous sea lion pup deaths prompt testing

[Pups, from A1] potentially serious and worrisome situation.

Experts up and down the California coast say there is clearly something going on, but they still don't know what.

Tests for bird flu — which has obliterated populations of sea lions and elephant seals in South America — are being processed. So, too, are tests for domoic acid, which has poisoned large numbers of sea lions in the past, as well as other common pathogens.

"In a typical year, one might expect to see five to 10" dead pups, said Megan Moriarty, a veterinarian at UC Santa Cruz. "But we have now counted 250 to 300 dead sea lion pups" on Año Nuevo Island.

She said observations included dead or stillborn pups, aborted fetuses, malnourished pups, and adult females with dystocia — difficult births — who are also thin.

"Unfortunately, widespread premature dead pups have also been reported in the Channel Islands [San Miguel], which is a crucial nursery area for California sea lions," she said. "The cause and impact of these mortalities remains unknown."

She and Sharon Melin, a research biologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Alaska Fisheries Science Center, said there are many potential reasons for widespread sea lion pup mortalities, including environmental factors, such as malnourishment, lack of available food related to El Niño, infectious causes (bacteria, viruses such as leptospirosis, influenza, brucella, coxiella and others), and toxins (such as domoic acid).

And although they both think testing for bird flu is warranted — considering it is a multispecies global outbreak — "we have not observed neurologic or respiratory signs in the sea lions



SEA LION pups sleep in Crescent City, Calif., in 2020. Many being found dead were born prematurely.

at Año Nuevo," Moriarty said.

"Reproductive failures and stillborn animals have not been a common finding with influenza A infections in marine mammals globally," she said.

Melin said about 25,000 pups are born in the Channel Islands every year.

"In some years — particularly in El Niño years, or sometimes heat wave years or other oddities that go on in the environment — we'll have something like 20% to 30% premature pups," she said.

She said the pups born this time of year are often not "fully baked."

"They could just stay in a little bit longer ... and probably if you could put them in an incubator and take care of them, they might survive," she said.

And when necropsies are done on these tiny pups, "you'll see that the very last thing to develop fully are their lungs. ... So they're just not quite fully developed enough to breathe on their own and to be successful. They'll sometimes live for a couple days at this point, but can't nurse and don't have the motor skills to hold their head up or nurse effectively."

She said the mothers will usually try hard to get the pups to nurse, "they don't

know what's going on, and they're trying to figure out why they're not nursing. So there's kind of a lot of interaction that goes on there, but usually the pup will just end up dying after a short period of time."

Michael Milstein, a spokesperson for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said the most recent fisheries survey found "considerable declines in anchovy off the south half of the state, where most of the strandings are."

He said observations of predators and seabirds were more scattered, "suggesting they are tracking more dispersed prey." He said surveys farther north have not yet been completed.

But high numbers of brown pelican deaths, and major declines in California's chinook salmon populations, have many concerned about broader ecosystem troubles.

This year, fishery managers decided to ban salmon fishing along the coast and in rivers for a second straight year, seeking to help chinook stocks recover.

Stranding coordinators and biologists say the good news is that the California sea lion population is healthy and robust; however, rescue centers are filling up with sick and malnourished pups.



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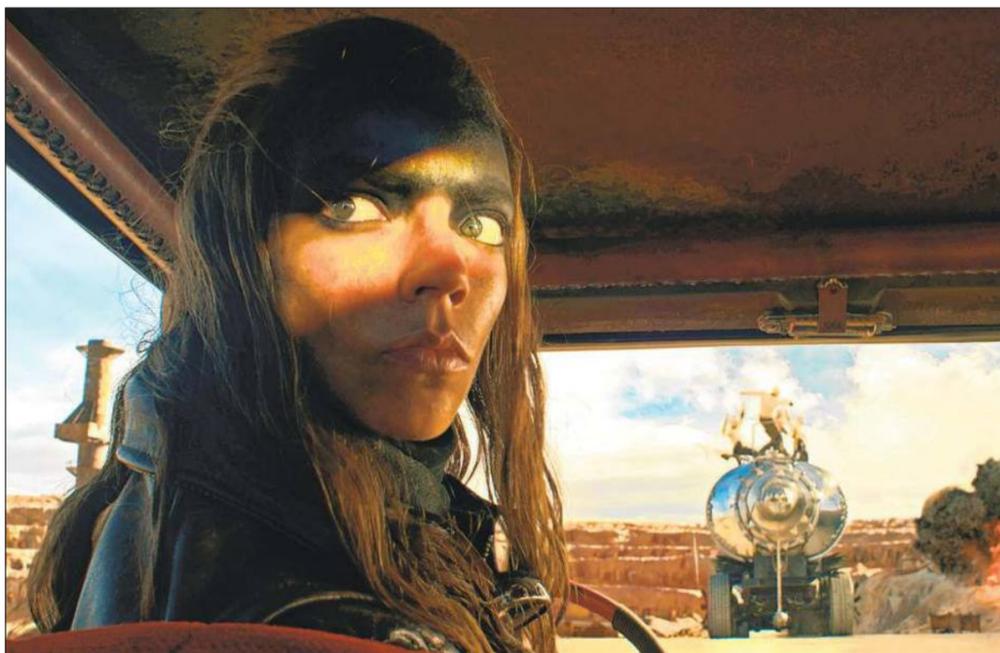
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BUSINESS



Warner Bros. Pictures

THE DYSTOPIAN WASTELAND depicted in “Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga” seems tailor-made for the Imax premium large format, a Warner Bros. Pictures executive said: “It immerses you, so you’re there.”

Imax is big, it’s powerful, and it’s a bright spot amid the box-office doldrums

The format has seen massive sales with recent hits like ‘Oppenheimer’ and ‘Dune: Part Two.’ How has it become such a critical piece of distribution for studios and theaters?

BY SAMANTHA MASUNAGA

When Warner Bros. film executive Jeff Goldstein saw the huge sand dunes and expansive desert vistas of Denis Villeneuve’s first “Dune” movie, he thought, “This was made for Imax.”

The same went for the sandworm sequences of “Dune: Part Two,” a box office hit for the studio this year that pulled in nearly 24% of its domestic box office revenue from the big-screen format.

The dystopian wasteland of this weekend’s action tentpole, “Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga,” brings more fodder for Imax. Its giant screens are expected to account for more than their usual share of box office sales for the George Miller-directed prequel. (The film is tracking to gross more than \$40 million domestically for the four-day weekend opening, according to analysts.)

“It immerses you, so you’re there,” said Goldstein, president of domestic distribution for Warner Bros. Pictures. “Audiences look at Imax as something special.”

As studios and exhibitors bemoan audiences’ slow return to movie theaters since the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns, Imax has been one of the few bright spots.

This year’s box office is down 20% from last year, when “Fast X,” “Barbie” and “The Super Mario Bros. Movie” propelled ticket sales, yet studios are clamoring to get onto Imax screens.

Audience behavior has changed, and getting people back into theaters requires something special that they can’t get at home. That puts Imax in a fortuitous spot.

Imax Corp., a 57-year-old Canadian company that operates out of Playa Vista, is coming off its second-highest-grossing year ever, when Christopher Nolan’s “Oppenheimer” fueled global box office revenue. Films shown on Imax are reaping bigger ticket sales, helped in part by higher prices, and that’s a powerful allure for studios and filmmakers.

Thirteen Hollywood movies slated for release next year will be shot on Imax digital cameras or film, beating the previous high of seven in 2021.

Imax hopes its brand awareness eventually looms so large that viewers come to its screens first.

“Instead of saying, ‘What’s happening at the movies?’ I want them to say, ‘What’s happening at Imax?’” said Chief Execu-

tive Rich Gelfond.

Imax’s financial performance beat expectations in the first quarter of 2024. Net income totaled \$3.3 million, up 33% from the same period the previous year, though revenue decreased by about 9%, to \$79.1 million. Shares of Imax are up about 10.9% so far this year.

“While there are exceptions like ‘Barbie,’ it is very, very difficult to be a blockbuster without being in Imax,” said Greg Foster, a former Imax Entertainment chief executive who now runs a consulting business.

Imax’s mainstream success is what Gelfond and his partners envisioned when they acquired the company in 1994. At the time, Imax was essentially a museum staple that allowed viewers to immerse themselves in the latest nature film or science documentary.

The company adjusted its screens and sound sys-

tems to fit inside commercial multiplex theaters, allowing its business to grow rapidly while limiting costs. (Imax does not own theaters but supplies its screening technology to cinema chains.) Imax also developed technology to convert movies to its format to make it economically attractive for filmmakers, and benefited from the advent of digital film, which made its business more cost-effective.

By 2019, the company had seen global box office growth for several years and had expanded its market share, with box office spread almost evenly among North America, China and the rest of the world.

Like its theater-owner customers, Imax was hit hard by pandemic shutdowns. But because it has few assets and little debt, it was insulated from the financial fallout the rest of the

industry faced. Imax used the time to update its technology, including developing a new laser projection system and sound system; worked on its marketing; and leaned into local-language films, Gelfond said.

In the post-pandemic world, moviegoers want premium experiences, and they’re willing to pay.

“In an industry that is constantly re-evaluating its present and its future in terms of competing with new media and bringing back audiences, it’s Imax that has been at the heart of the conversation when we talk about sectors of the industry that have recovered,” said Shawn Robbins, founder of analysis site Box Office Theory. “It’s been a way for studios to have reliability in an often volatile theatrical market.”

Walt Disney Co. has leaned hard into Imax and other premium large for-

mats, which include Dolby Cinema and ScreenX.

Disney’s marketing campaign for “Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes,” released this month, prominently featured the Imax logo on billboards and other advertisements. During opening weekend, 41% of the movie’s domestic box office came from premium large-format, or PLF, screenings, of which 13% were Imax, Disney said. Typically, a blockbuster that wasn’t filmed on Imax cameras, like “Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes,” would do about 10% at the box office, Gelfond said.

As an industry, “we need to give audiences a terrific experience every time they go to see a movie,” said Tony Chambers, executive vice president and head of theatrical distribution for Walt Disney Studios. “Going to see a movie in premium large formats helps drive engagement and helps

drive frequency.”

From 2022 to 2023, PLF made up 19% of Disney’s domestic business; just before the pandemic, the total was 15%. Some of that came from 3-D screens, which have tapered off in popularity.

Disney saw box office success with James Cameron’s 2022 sequel “Avatar: The Way of Water,” which brought in \$1.6 billion in revenue from PLF out of a total of \$2.32 billion. (About 11% came from Imax.) Marvel’s “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3” last year brought in 31% of its box office revenue from PLF.

There’s more competition for consumers’ time and attention from streaming and social media, making it crucial for studios to give audiences a good reason to leave their couches, Chambers said.

“We need a way to cut through some of the clutter and make it clear to people that you cannot wait, you need to see this on the big screen,” he said. “One of the ways to do that, from a marketing perspective, is to lean heavily into the premium large format.”

For a lot of people, he said, that means Imax. In fact, Imax executives bristle when their company is lumped in with other premium large formats.

Imax box office makes up 13% of Warner Bros.’ domestic business, compared with an industrywide 5%-7%, according to the studio. Imax typically accounts for 10%-12% of opening weekends. But some films are a bigger draw; the Imax share of domestic box office for “Dune: Part Two” was 22%.

“It’s this whole notion of how do you hit critical mass,” Goldstein said. “Imax will help you get to critical mass faster.”

Imax’s future hinges on continued growth, especially internationally.

As of 2023, the company had 1,772 screens across the globe, including its institutional theaters and museum screens, up slightly from the previous year. Company leaders plan to expand, particularly into markets they think are under-served, such as Australia and Japan.

“It has massive growth potential globally, and it’s certainly not at saturation in most of its global markets at this point,” said Alicia Reese, media and entertainment analyst at Wedbush Securities. “They should trade at a higher multiple given their growth potential.”

Hotel strike nears end as union reaches more deals

The 10-month-old labor action initially targeted about 60 properties, and all but nine have settled.

BY SUHAUNA HUSSAIN

The almost 10-month-old strike that initially involved roughly 60 hotels and more than 15,000 workers in Los Angeles and Orange counties is nearing its end.

In late April, the powerful hospitality union Unite Here Local 11 announced it had reached tentative contract agreements with 12 Southern California hotels. And on Friday, Unite Here Local 11 officials said the union had negotiated agreements with six more hotels in recent days.

So far, nearly three dozen other hotels have reached deals with workers over the course of on-and-off strikes that began in July. The new contracts awarded higher pay and other benefits to thousands of housekeepers, cooks, dishwashers, servers and front desk workers.

“Hotels are falling in line,” Unite Here Local 11 co-president Kurt Petersen said. “We’re winning more the longer this goes on.”

Stephanie Peterson, a spokesperson for Aimbridge Hospitality, which operates six hotels that recently settled, said in a statement: “We are pleased to have reached an agreement with the Union that puts our people first, and we are taking the immediate steps to begin issuing the backpay our associates have been waiting for.”

The new contracts include an almost immediate raise of \$5 per hour for workers who don’t typically earn tips, including front desk clerks, dishwashers and housekeepers.

Those workers will see a total hourly wage boost of \$10 over the course of the contract that expires in January 2028.

Hotel Figueroa, LA Grand and Glendale Hilton are among nine hotels whose owners remain in contract negotiations with the union.

A point of contention had been the practice of some hotels recruiting recent migrants living in a Skid Row shelter to replace striking employees.

In a compromise, four hotels agreed to give the migrant workers priority in hiring for permanent positions. The hotels include the Le Meridien Delfina Santa Monica, the Four Points by Sheraton, the Holiday Inn LAX and the Pasadena

Hilton.

“This is a testament to the idea of no workers left behind,” Petersen said. “Our members saw workers exploited and had a sense of solidarity. The bosses’ plan to divide people didn’t work.”

As part of the union’s agreement with Sheraton Park Anaheim, workers who had raised allegations of sexual harassment and were banned from the property will be brought back to work.

Fairfield Inn & Suites and Aloft hotels in El Segundo, which are owned by a real estate affiliate of the Blackstone Group, also approved deals with the union.

Blackstone Group spokesman Jeffrey Kauth said, “The agreement substantially increases wages and benefits over the term of the contract and provides a framework to recognize a broader number of employees who will benefit from these increases. We are proud to continue our positive working relationship with the union.”

During months of strikes, tensions have surged on picket lines at various hotels and have continued at some locations even after deals were reached.

Outside the Hilton Pasadena, a worker and two union members who were



LUIS SINCO Los Angeles Times

MEMBERS of Unite Here Local 11 picket outside the Fairmont Miramar in Santa Monica in July. The union and hotel reached a tentative deal in January.

picketing were issued noise citations by local police and are facing criminal charges for using handheld bullhorns.

At a City Council meeting Monday, the union along with advocates with the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California sharply criticized the city for pursuing the charges.

Peter J. Eliasberg, chief counsel at the ACLU of Southern California, sent a letter May 15 to Pasadena’s City Council members, chief of police and city attorney urging the city to drop the charges, saying they “very likely violate the First Amendment and Liberty of Speech Clause of the California Constitution.”

Video footage captured by the union’s general counsel, Jeremy Blasi, and reviewed by The Times, shows two police officers recording several picketers on a public sidewalk a few feet away.

“The City supports the free speech rights of protesters and does not take sides in disputes, but must balance the rights of those protesting with those nearby residents and businesses impacted by protest activities,” Lisa Derderian, a spokesperson for Pasadena, said in an emailed statement.

Pasadena Mayor Victor Gordo said the city planned to review issues raised by the ordinance, but said he

couldn’t comment on the claims.

Long Beach Mayor Rex Richardson called the deal a “historic contract agreement that ensures hospitality workers will have the dignity of living wages and industry-leading benefits to support their families,” according to a Unite Here Local 11 news release in April.

“Over the next four years, as we prepare for the 2028 Olympics and welcome visitors from around the world to our vibrant Long Beach community, we can be proud that our local tourism economy continues to thrive, while placing value on the workforce that keeps our hospitality industry running,” Richardson said.



RICK BOWMER Associated Press

A VIEW of Salt Lake City International Airport on Friday, which was expected to be the busiest day of the Memorial Day weekend for air travel, with nearly 3 million people passing through airport checkpoints.

Memorial Day weekend means crowds, high prices for travelers

BY DAVID KOENIG

Travelers contended with big crowds and flight delays Friday, which was expected to be the busiest day of the Memorial Day weekend.

More than 6,000 U.S. flights were delayed by early evening on the East Coast, continuing a trend that has tested the patience of travelers all week. Cancellations were more modest, at slightly more than 200, according to tracking data from FlightAware.

There were delays on the highways too.

Along Florida's Turnpike, Wallis Tinnie said a traffic accident and road work slowed her drive to an African American history commemoration in the Florida Panhandle, the site in 1816 of the first battle of the Seminole Wars.

"But we're comfortable with it," the Miami woman

said during a stop at Port St. Lucie. "We left early, and our event is tomorrow. So hopefully — God willing, creek don't rise — we'll be there in plenty of time."

The Transportation Security Administration predicted that Friday would be the busiest day of the holiday weekend for air travel, with nearly 3 million people expected to pass through airport checkpoints. TSA screened just under 2.9 million people Thursday, coming within about 11,000 of breaking the record set on the Sunday after Thanksgiving last year.

"Airports are going to be more packed than we have seen in 20 years," AAA spokesperson Aixa Diaz said.

Highways also are likely to be jammed. AAA predicted this will be the busiest start-of-summer weekend in nearly 20 years, with 43.8 million people expected to roam at least 50 miles from home

between Thursday and Monday — 38 million of them taking vehicles.

The expression of wanderlust that accompanies the start of the summer travel season comes at a time when Americans tell pollsters they are worried about the economy and the direction of the country.

"Memorial Day is a holiday weekend. I get to hang with family and friends, so I'd say that's priceless, right?" Nene Efebo said during a two-hour wait for a delayed flight at Denver International Airport. "Anything to hang out with family and friends."

Victoria Ramos Valdes of Miami was taking a driving vacation with her husband, Blake, and their children, ages 3 and 4 months old.

"We said, hey, we're going to go for a \$300 budget, and the hotel is around \$150," she said, but it has a water slide, providing plenty of entertainment. "We're taking a

nice family trip and doing our best to have the best Memorial Day weekend possible."

Some travelers reported experiencing sticker shock when they booked their trips. Upon arriving at Philadelphia International Airport, Ciarra Marsh said the city "was not our original destination, but we chose here because it was cheaper."

At Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, Larisa Latimer of New Lenox, Ill., said her airfare was reasonable but other expenses for a getaway to New Orleans were not. "I just have to make the accommodation," she said. "The rental car is up ... this year, the hotel accommodations were very unusually expensive."

Kathy Larko of Fort Myers, Fla., used frequent-flier miles — and some flexible scheduling — to pay for her trip to Chicago.

"I'm really conscious of looking at the cost of the entire trip. We're staying a little farther out than we normally would" to get a lower hotel rate, she said. "We're also flying back a day later, because we could get cheaper miles."

The weekend's highway traffic and crowded airports could be a sample of what is to come for several more weeks. U.S. airlines expect to carry a record number of passengers this summer. Their trade group estimates that 271 million travelers will fly between June 1 and Aug. 31, breaking the record of 255 million set — you guessed it — last summer.

Koenig writes for the Associated Press.

PERSONAL FINANCE

Agency spells out buy now, pay later consumer rights

Such lenders must offer same protections as credit card issuers, financial protection bureau says.

BY CORA LEWIS

NEW YORK — Buy now, pay later companies must provide consumers with the same legal rights and protections as credit card lenders do, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau said in a new rule.

That includes the right to demand a refund and to dispute transactions.

The agency began an inquiry into the short-term lending industry two years ago, and it issued the rule in response to ongoing consumer complaints, it said.

Here's what you need to know.

What's behind the new regulation?

Buy now, pay later loans are typically marketed as zero interest or low interest, and they allow consumers to spread out payments for purchases over several weeks or months.

They're marketed as a way to buy expensive products and services over time, and the service is typically offered at checkout for online shopping. It's often used for big-ticket items such as furniture, clothes and airline tickets.

In a report, the CFPB found that more than 13% of buy now, pay later transactions involved a return or dispute, and, in 2021, people disputed or returned \$1.8 billion in transactions at the five companies surveyed.

"Regardless of whether a shopper swipes a credit card or uses Buy Now, Pay Later, they are entitled to important consumer protections under longstanding laws and regulations already on the books," CFPB Director Rohit Chopra said in a statement.

How is the industry responding to the rule?

Two major buy now, pay later players — Affirm and Klarna — say they welcome the regulation.

"We are encouraged that the CFPB is promoting consistent industry standards, many of which already reflect how Affirm operates, to provide greater choice and transparency for consumers," a company spokesperson said in a statement. Affirm currently offers "dispute and error resolu-

tion assistance," the spokesperson added.

A spokesperson for Klarna said the company also already investigates consumer disputes and covers related refunds.

The agency's announcement is a "significant step forward" in regulating the buy now, pay later industry, Klarna said in a statement. It said it has been calling for regulatory oversight "over many years."

Although some in the industry have voluntarily chosen to operate at the standard now mandated by the CFPB's new rule, there remain significant differences between credit card lending and buy now, pay later loans.

For instance, buy now, pay later lenders do not all report their loans to the three major credit bureaus. Some analysts have said this can lead consumers to take on more debt than they can manage or afford.

What rights do consumers have?

The CFPB said that buy now, pay later lenders need to extend many of the same rights and protections as classic credit card providers.

"Importantly, these cover dispute and refund rights," the agency said.

The agency clarified that, with its new rule, buy now, pay later lenders must:

- Investigate disputes. Lenders must also pause payment requirements during the investigation and sometimes must issue credits.

- Issue refunds for returned products or canceled services. Buy now, pay later lenders must credit the refunds to consumers' accounts.

- Provide billing statements. Consumers must receive periodic statements of money owed similar to the ones received for credit card accounts.

"The failure to provide dispute protections can create chaos for consumers when they return their merchandise or encounter other billing difficulties," the CFPB said.

Lewis writes for the Associated Press.

MONEY TALK

The real reason to be wary about automated payments

Data breaches are a concern, but another headache is getting some vendors to stop charging you.

BY LIZ WESTON

Dear Liz: For several reasons you recommend using online services from the bank or credit union to pay bills. I use that method for most of our bills, but not all. Some vendors want us to set up a process where they are able to pull the desired payment directly from our account.

Given the regular reports of data breaches at corporations that should know better, I refuse to give them the required permissions. Am I wrong in this?

Answer: The issue is less about potential breaches and more about getting automated payments to stop when you want them to.

Some companies make it easy to sign up for their services and devilishly hard to cancel them. Gym chains are notorious for this. Federal laws protect your right to cancel automatic payments, but you may have to enlist your bank to get the most pernicious companies to stop charging you.

If you have any doubts that your cancellation order would be honored, consider setting up automatic payments using a credit card instead of giving the company direct access to your checking account.

Social Security survivor benefits

Dear Liz: I read your column regarding the wife who filed for her Social Security benefits at 62 and received \$1,500, while her husband filed at 70 and was receiving \$4,600. You noted that after

the husband died she could receive his entire \$4,600 payment, but wouldn't the amount she receives as a survivor's benefit be reduced due to her early filing?

Answer: That's not true. An early start reduces retirement and spousal benefits. Survivor benefits operate by different rules.

A survivor benefit can be up to 100% of what the deceased spouse received or had earned. If the husband had filed for his own benefit earlier, for example, that would reduce the survivor benefit the wife could receive. Survivor benefits also can be reduced if the survivor starts receiving them before reaching his or her own full retirement age for such benefits.

But the wife's early start on her own benefit doesn't affect the survivor benefit she could get if he dies first.

More help leaving a house to your kids

Dear Liz: The question from the couple who wanted to leave a home to their four children hit home with me. I'm in the same boat but with only two kids. How do I go about finding an estate planning attorney that I can trust and also afford?

Answer: Start by asking for recommendations from friends, family and any financial professionals you trust. If you already have a CPA, for example, chances are they can refer you to a good estate planning attorney in your area. Consider interviewing a few candidates to make sure they handle situations similar to yours.

If you're trying to keep costs down, consider the attorney's overhead. Fancy buildings in expensive areas may impress, but you can find competent attorneys in less ornate offices, perhaps in suburbs or smaller towns,

who charge less.

Update on that CPA search engine

Dear Liz: I am trying to find a CPA personal financial specialist per your column. Using the link you provided, I was told that there are zero people who fit that description in my area, which is hard to believe. Can you help?

Answer: A spokesperson for the American Institute of CPAs, which provided the link (www.aicpa-cima.com/directories), notes that the directory's "search by ZIP Code" function isn't working properly and suggested searching by state or city instead.

Be patient! Find an expert!

Dear Liz: I have a quick question and would like a personal response. What email address can I use?

Answer: You can use the email address of the financial planner you hire to advise you.

Just because a question is quick doesn't mean the answer will be. Answers to financial planning questions take time and effort to craft, plus the appropriate response may vary depending on the details of the questioner's circumstances.

This column answers a few questions of general interest for educational and entertainment purposes. A hired advisor can answer an array of queries and provide truly personalized guidance to help you get the most from your money.

Liz Weston, Certified Financial Planner, is a personal finance columnist. Questions may be sent to her at 3940 Laurel Canyon, No. 238, Studio City, CA 91604, or by using the "Contact" form at asklizweston.com.

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OPINION

EDITORIALS

FOUR YEARS AFTER George Floyd was arrested and murdered by Minneapolis police, the nation is in the midst of a backlash movement that is trying to rewrite the narrative, the legacy and even the facts of the killing.

Call it the anti-reckoning. And it's a disturbing sign of how hard-fought progress on policing and racial justice reforms are under attack by powerful and entrenched interests.

Floyd, a Black man, was taken into custody at around 8 p.m. on Memorial Day, May 25, 2020, after police received a call reporting someone trying to pass a fake \$20 bill. Officer Derek Chauvin knelt on Floyd's neck despite Floyd's anguished cries that he was unable to breathe. After 9½ minutes, Floyd was dead.

The killing sparked months of protests against police brutality and racism in American society, especially in the criminal justice system. The demonstrations were not unprecedented; widespread protests had marked the earlier killings of Black men and boys: Trayvon Martin in Florida, Eric Garner in New York, Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., and many others. And there had been blatant acts of white supremacist blowback including the mass slaughter of Black churchgoers in Charleston, S.C., in 2015 and the ugly Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017.

But anxiety over the COVID-19 pandemic and weeks of lockdowns had turned the nation into a pressure cooker. With the Floyd murder, it exploded.

In statehouses and city halls, lawmakers began considering in earnest the role of race and racism in policing and public safety. Long-delayed discussions of unarmed response to incidents involving mental illness and drug-related behavioral problems finally got on track. New laws were passed to clear court proceedings of racial inequities. Voters continued the trend of electing a new breed of prosecutors who put the quest for justice ahead of demanding the longest possible sentences.

Even corporate America briefly got on



JULIO CORTEZ Associated Press

THE KILLING of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, sparked a reckoning on racial injustice. Many of the reforms from that movement are threatened by a backlash.

Four years later, racial justice reform is under attack

board. Companies promised to pay billions of dollars to combat systemic racism.

The shift in attitude and policy was labeled the racial reckoning.

In law and policy there have been a few lasting advances, such as banning deadly police chokeholds in some jurisdictions that still allowed them, and compiling data that show the extent to which race affects policing practices.

But in Congress, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, which would have incentivized broad police reforms, was rejected twice on mostly party-line votes.

In Los Angeles and most other jurisdictions, officials have failed to move unarmed response beyond the pilot stage, and they're still talking about alternatives to police only for traffic and parking infractions. The county's Care First plan to realign response

to lower-level crimes from jail to healthcare, treatment and other social services agencies is moving at a snail's pace.

Police unions, traditional prosecutors and conservative politicians have taken advantage of the slow movement of reform and fears of crime, real and imagined, to push back not only on post-Floyd reforms but those adopted over the previous decade. In California that means yet another assault on Proposition 47, this time falsely blaming it for homelessness.

Police at first broadly criticized Chauvin as a bad cop in an otherwise flawless system. The "bad apple" theory formed the basis for opposition to the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act and other reforms.

Then came challenges to the facts of Floyd's death. Far-right commentators assert that Chauvin didn't actually kill

Floyd at all, but instead arrested a man already dying of a fentanyl overdose. The officer then was supposedly set up by a corrupt criminal justice system out of fear, or in thrall, of Black Lives Matter.

This nonsense has been thoroughly dissected and disproven, but it remains an article of faith among a certain core of conspiracy theorists who appear to believe that prosecutors, judges and juries were corrupted and imprisoned an innocent man. The irony in this line of thinking is head-spinning: This justice system supposedly operated for years without a taint of the racism against which hundreds of thousands of Americans had been protesting, until a white police officer was put on trial for killing a Black man. Then, suddenly, the system became untrustworthy and illegitimate.

There has also been a steady effort to re-define the protests as gang violence or even insurrection, as a kind of defensive projection by defenders — including former President Trump — of the Jan. 6, 2021 mob assault on the U.S. Capitol to block certification of Joe Biden's election to replace Trump.

It is quite true that the Floyd protests of 2020 were pockmarked by arson and property destruction, resulting in losses of more than \$1 billion. None of that is OK.

But the claim that the perpetrators acted with impunity while the Jan. 6 attackers are being imprisoned is demonstrably untrue. Thousands of people have been arrested and criminally punished, including with prison, for acts that crossed the line from protest to crime. In fact, analyses show that people arrested for 2020 offenses were sanctioned unusually harshly.

The ongoing battle between the George Floyd reckoning and the anti-reckoning blowback is a battle over the role of truth in our society and its institutions. But if we believe facts are real, and independent from ideology and political power, we must acknowledge that what happened to Floyd was real, horrid and unjust. And that it wasn't a one-off, but an example of a flaw in our criminal justice system that must be remedied.

PERSONAL NOTE

Let's try not to kill Griffith Park's newest mountain lion

THERE WAS NO doubt about it. The hulking blond furry animal on a tree trunk illuminated by the headlights of a car in a parking lot east of Barham Boulevard on the edge of Griffith Park last week was a mountain lion.

Seriously? In Los Angeles, the beloved mountain lion named P-22 had lived for a decade in Griffith Park. But he was an aberration. It was astonishing that he got there in the first place — most likely crossing dangerous freeways to get to the park, cramped by lion standards, where he easily found prey such as deer and just as easily avoided the people who flocked there for recreation.

He was captured and euthanized in late 2022 due to sickness and severe injuries.

But here was video, shot by a resident of the adjacent apartment complex. It was as if the camera had captured the ghost of L.A.'s most famous cat.

All I could think was: Don't move! Stay! Better yet, back away from the parking lot! A leading cause of death for urban pumas is being hit by a vehicle. And in the video, he is also seen walking hesitantly on the grassy side of the parking spaces. (A wildlife biologist says the cat in the video is most likely male, so I'm going with "he.")

It would be safer for the cat to tuck himself into the trees and grassy space of the park — and wait for the National Park Service biologists to find and tranquilize him to take biological samples for genetics testing and slip a GPS collar onto his neck so we can remotely roam with him.

And they're definitely interested in adding this cat to the study of mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains (including Griffith Park), Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains that the agency has been doing for more than two decades.

Jeff Sikich, a biologist on the study, says the video suggests the cat is a young adult and probably male based on the broadness of the shoulders, the musculature and a glimpse of genitalia. It is the first legitimate evidence he has seen of a mountain lion in Griffith Park since P-22 died.

How did he get there? If he came from the far western mountains — P-22 is thought to have been born in the Simi Hills — he crossed the 405 and 101 freeways.

If he came from the Verdugo Mountains northeast of Griffith Park, he most likely crossed the 5 and 134 freeways. There are some paths and culverts under various freeways, and overpasses he might have found. "Regardless, it's a tough trek," Sikich says of

the journey to Griffith Park.

Will he stay? Male mountain lions, territorial and looking for mates, have huge home ranges, averaging 150 square miles, says Sikich.

The cat who would be collared and numbered P-22 was about 2 or 3 years old when Sikich captured him in Griffith Park in 2012. The park is a puny nine square miles and offered P-22 no mating opportunities. But it was all his.

Vehicle strikes and rat poison are two of the biggest dangers this cat will face no matter where he decides to live in the Los Angeles area. P-22 was probably hit by a car shortly before he was euthanized. And blood tests later showed he had two rodenticides in his system when he died. Earlier in his life, scientists treated him for mange, which is generally a result of rat poison.

For years, the state of California has been trying to curtail the use of various rat poisons that often sicken and kill wildlife and pets who eat prey that have ingested it. Assembly Bill 2552, the Poison-Free Wildlife Act, would expand a ban on rodenticides. The Legislature should pass it.

To make navigating roads and freeways less treacherous, we need more crossings. The Annenberg Wildlife Crossing over the

101 Freeway is under construction now. And the Safe Roads and Wildlife Protection Act, passed in 2022, requires the California Department of Transportation to construct crossings where they are needed when it builds new highways and improves existing ones.

With less poison out there and more wildlife crossings, maybe this mountain lion will have a better chance.

Sikich won't say when or how he will go looking for the park's newest puma. And hopefully the cat is still there. People are so fascinated by the lions that they will follow the researchers. "I try to stay as elusive as the animals I'm catching," he says, chuckling.

If he is collared, he will be the 121st cat to be added to the research study. But wouldn't it be cool to skip that number and go straight to P-122? Some of the Park Service folks, including Sikich, think so.

Why not? It doesn't subvert the research. It's just a bit of a reminder for all of us that if we want to continue the legacy of P-22, the best way to do that is to make urban California a little less dangerous for its native cats.

— CARLA HALL,
A MEMBER OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD

LETTERS



BRIAN BAER California State Parks

FOR THE last two decades, almost no one has been allowed to visit Sutter Buttes State Park.

Places people shouldn't ruin

Re "A magical state park you can't see," May 21

That there are still places such as the Sutter Buttes inaccessible to almost all visitors ought to make us drop to our knees in gratitude. Yes, I am a progressive, but I draw a very strong line against the view that we humans should have unfettered freedom to enter any natural space we desire.

A few years ago I watched a family at Multnomah Falls in Oregon, having lugged a huge basket of picnic food, leave wrappers, cans and other trash in this pristine spot. Numerous articles have been published showing the deleterious effects of such conduct, so people should be aware the damage done by an inconsiderate and ignorant public.

As we are by nature not only creators of beauty, we also destroy it, possibly to a far greater degree.

I recently returned from

the Netherlands, a small country bursting at the seams with people. However, even when flying over Amsterdam's international airport, one can see green open spaces dotted with little woodlands. Towns and villages are separated by such beautiful areas, creating an air of tranquility.

Why can't we do the same thing in the U.S., a country that is abundant in natural beauty? Moreover, why do we think we must have unimpeded access to places that give habitat to wildlife?

The Sutter Buttes should not fall victim to the idea that the public must have untrammeled access to stunningly beautiful areas.

ANNEKE MENDIOLA
Santa Ana

::

As an attorney, I read your article about the Sutter Buttes with considerable interest.

As I was reading and noted how local landowners didn't want to sell their property for a road for public access, and how that was supported by the local

board of supervisors, I waited to read about the state and its attempt to acquire the needed land through the constitutional application of eminent domain.

I saw not a word devoted to that issue. I would have liked to know if that was ever brought to the fore by the state of California.

MAURY MILLS
Ventura

Laws are for them, not us

Re "Killer's pardon undermines trust in the justice system," editorial, May 22

It's difficult for me to imagine a pardon more repugnant than the one Texas Gov. Greg Abbott granted to the convicted murderer of a Black Lives Matter protester.

But Abbott merely was parroting the same message that former President Trump sent in pardoning so many convicted criminals who were his supporters: Laws are enacted to regulate the actions of progressives, not conservatives.

Got it. Something for voters to remember in upcoming elections.

GREG GILBERT
Burney, Calif.

::

Let me get this straight.

Most people in Texas are allowed to openly carry a firearm in public. But according to Gov. Abbott, Texans are also allowed to shoot anyone carrying a gun if that person approaches you, talks to you or otherwise exhibits any behavior you believe is forcing you to "stand your ground."

That's wilder than the Wild West ever was. Dodge City, Tombstone, Abilene and Deadwood all had varying forms of gun control that today's 2nd Amendment advocates would vociferously claim to be unconstitutional.

GREG SEYRANIAN
Redondo Beach

::

Abbott's pardon is another example in this country of a white minority pretending to have a political philosophy.

Abbott and his ilk are not

politicians, they are not leaders, and they most certainly do not have the public's interest in mind. To be in control is their only motivation.

MICHAEL HAROLD
West Los Angeles

Did you pay?

Re "Seven steps for boosting Metro," letters, May 20

One overlooked safety suggestion for Metro is the former process of random fare checks on trains.

When I began riding the Blue Line in the 1980s, it was common to have a police officer occasionally come onto a train to verify that fare payment was current. The periodic presence of officers checking fares will have the dual benefit of raising revenue and heightening security.

THOMAS BAILEY
Long Beach

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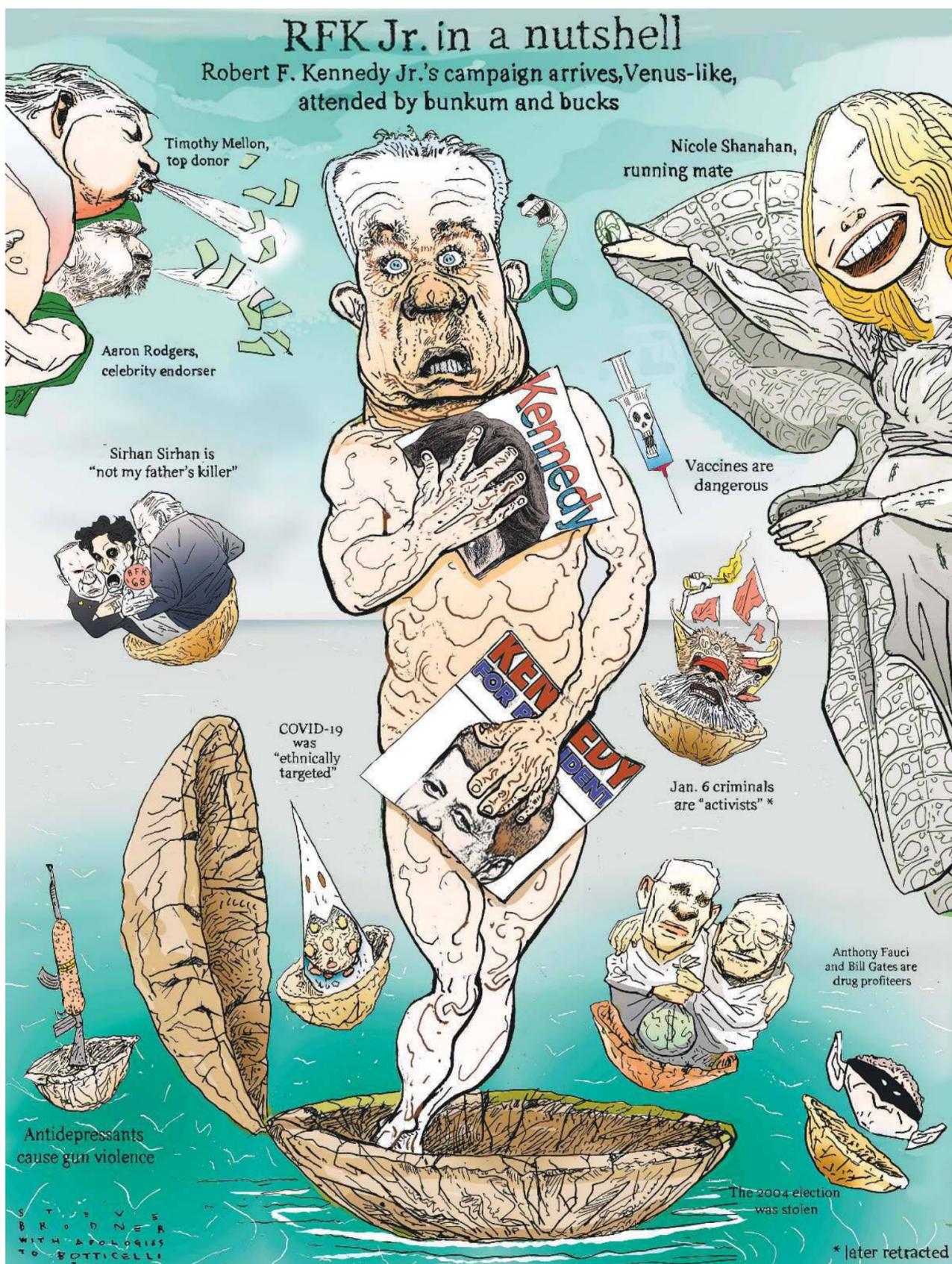


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OP-ED



STEVE BRODNER is a contributing artist to Opinion. He blogs daily at <https://stevebrodner.substack.com>.

The issue of human rights is on life support

By Jack Healey

ONCE HEARD Jimmy Carter say that in a war there are no human rights. With the fighting in Ukraine and in Gaza front and center, that observation seems more profound than ever. Human rights as an issue may be on life support.

There are so few great examples of progress to look to. Maybe just one — Northern Ireland, finally.

In addition to major war zones, human rights are being trampled in so many places that it requires an effort to keep up with the havoc. Old alliances are cracking if not broken. Displaced people clamor for shelter and safety. The number of deaths is enormous, the disruption epic.

The Council on Foreign Relations maintains a conflict tracker — its orange markers dot the globe. Wikipedia maps an even broader set of armed conflicts. Hostile actions are killing folks in Sudan and western New Guinea, Haiti is near collapse, criminal violence pervades Mexico, thousands die in Syria year by year.

Some of the violence is especially barbaric, as at the music festival in Israel on Oct. 7. Hostages are held for long periods of time in Russia, China, Egypt and now Gaza. Nearly a million Palestinians are fleeing any which way, seeking safety from the promised invasion of Rafah.

The consequences are obvious but hard to fathom. The old and the very young die first. Famine follows war; disease follows famine, and young adults and the middle-aged die too. Women are especially vulnerable to sexual violence, with effects that can last for a lifetime. Scores are left homeless.

Decency and sanity demand that we address these catastrophes, however massive and intransigent.

We can start by reminding ourselves about the goal. Reread the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, written under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt. It remains a clear call for how the world should treat its people. Or look to Pope Francis' "Dignitas Infinita," the Catholic Church's call to, "without fanfare, in concrete daily life, fight and personally pay the price for defending the rights of those who do not count."

In Gaza and Ukraine, in Haiti, Sudan and dozens of other conflict zones, we know we must protect the rights and lives of those at risk.

But how? Support those who run toward conflict and danger, who document events, who demand accountability: volunteers and U.N. workers, journalists on the ground and peace negotiators. Groups such as Doctors Without Borders, the World Kitchen, the Red Cross/Red Crescent and Amnesty International, where I once worked. (Do your homework; not every group has staying power.)

Find a part of the world you want to help and don't forget that it might be next door. Talk to people you disagree with. Seek things you can agree on.

Simply put, the world is shaking from violence. It needs to shake from decency. We need to regain our hope and confidence for the future.

Is this foolishness, an impossibility given the metastasizing violence? I think not. Wherever you are, whatever else your responsibilities and commitments, you can vote, meet, organize, listen, donate time and money.

We must get human rights out of intensive care, resurrect our commitment to it. We need it home safe to protect us all.

JACK HEALEY, a former director of Amnesty International USA, is the founder of the Human Rights Action Center. He is the author of "Create Your Future: Lessons From a Life in Civil and Human Rights."

GOP voter suppression isn't just about partisanship

Racial resentment plays an important role in efforts to disenfranchise groups that tend to favor Democrats.

ROBIN ABCARIAN

OF ALL THE modern Supreme Court's incredibly disappointing rulings, gutting the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is near the top, second only to its catastrophic decision to rip away half a century of reproductive rights from American women.



Until the court's shocking 2013 Shelby County vs. Holder decision, states and counties with histories of racial discrimination were required to get approval from the Justice Department — known as "preclearance" — for redistricting or changes to voting laws. The conservative members of the Supreme Court changed all that with a 5-4 decision.

"There is no denying," Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. wrote, "that the conditions that originally justified these measures no longer characterize voting in the covered jurisdictions."

That's because these measures were working, sir.

As the director of the Brennan Center for Justice's Voting Rights Program, Sean Morales-Doyle, reminded me last week, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg acidly noted in her dissent that "throwing out preclearance when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory changes is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet."

These days, thanks to our misguided court, it's raining voter suppression laws.

The Brennan Center has found that at least 29 states have passed

94 restrictive voting laws, only a few of which have been blocked by courts or repealed. Freed from federal oversight, states such as Georgia, Alabama, Texas, Mississippi and South Carolina have gone to town, enacting dozens of new restrictions in a cynical effort to make it more difficult for Black, brown and Indigenous voters and college students, all of whom lean Democratic, to cast ballots.

A handy primer on the issue is the 30-minute documentary "Suppressed and Sabotaged," by Brave New Films. Released in 2022 and re-released this year, the documentary examines the different ways Republican states have attempted to disenfranchise voters they don't like. I recommend taking your blood pressure medication before viewing it.

The techniques include reducing the number of polling places in Black precincts, erecting barriers to voter registration, wantonly purging voter rolls, changing the rules for absentee ballots, slashing the number of drop boxes and passing voter ID laws with the pretext of preventing voter fraud, a rare occurrence that MAGA Republicans have become hysterical about.

The documentary focuses on the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial election, which is considered by some voting rights activists to be the proving ground for many of the voter suppression techniques that would later be adopted by other states. In that race, then-Georgia lawmaker Stacey Abrams came very close to beating Republican Secretary of State Brian Kemp and becoming the country's first Black female governor. Kemp, who was running for governor while overseeing the election, conducted what many viewed as a reckless purge of the voter rolls.

More than half a million people, around 8% of registered voters, were excised by Kemp in 2017. More than 100,000 of them were cut not because they died, moved or

went to prison but because they had chosen not to vote in two previous elections.

Black voters encountered unique barriers in Georgia's 2018 election. As Politico reported, they "waited for hours in lines that wrapped around their voting locations. Some were removed from the voter rolls arbitrarily, forcing them to fill out confusing provisional ballots on election day. Others stayed home altogether."

Kemp won by fewer than 55,000 votes, or 1.4% of the total votes cast.

Abrams supporter Peggy Xu, now a 28-year-old attorney in Washington, D.C., was among the tens of thousands of Georgia voters who never received the absentee ballots they requested that year. As a student, she had voted absentee in Georgia for years without any trouble.

"I requested the absentee ballot very early, as soon as I knew I was moving," she told me. "I checked my mailbox every day. It became this horrible ritual." She was hopeful, then anxious, then demoralized. The ballot never came, and she never discovered why.

"It sowed distrust in me," she said. "This upcoming election in 2024 is astronomically important. Maybe I should eat the cost and fly back and vote in person?"

The Brennan Center made a fascinating discovery when it analyzed exactly where these restrictive voting laws were concentrated. It's too simple to say voter suppression laws spring solely from naked Republican partisanship. They also arise from racial animus.

"White racial resentment — and not just party and competitiveness alone — goes a long way toward explaining the phenomenon," Kevin Morris, a Brennan Center voting policy scholar, wrote in his 2022 report.

As Morales-Doyle put it: "Legislators who represent the whitest districts in the most diverse states

are the most likely to introduce restrictive legislation. This is consistent with the idea of 'racial threat,' of people responding to the growing political power of communities of color in these places."

"White racial resentment," it's worth noting, is a metric developed in the 1980s by political scientists Donald Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders for the American National Election Studies. The regular national surveys ask respondents whether and how much they attribute socioeconomic disparities between Black and white Americans to slavery and racial discrimination or to a lack of hard work and perseverance.

"The more an individual agrees with the general sentiment that Black people's lack of effort is the primary reason for racial disparities, the higher that individual's racial resentment score," wrote the Brennan Center's Theodore Johnson. "And study after study has shown that people who voted for Donald Trump had higher levels of racial resentment than those who did not."

Until about 2008, white Republicans and Democrats demonstrated similar rates of racial resentment. But after the election of the first Black president, those rates diverged dramatically. Racial resentment levels among white Democrats plunged, and they rose among white Republicans.

On Thursday, the Supreme Court struck again, ruling that South Carolina could keep using a congressional map that, according to a lower court, unconstitutionally shifts tens of thousands of Black voters to a different district to favor Republicans.

Not all the news is bad, though, as Morales-Doyle pointed out. In 2022, many election deniers ran for office, including to serve as election officials, but none of those candidates prevailed in the battleground states.

"We still live in a democracy," he said. "It has its flaws, but voters want people to have access to voting. That is my reason for hope."

@robinkabcarian

Anthony Fauci and Bill Gates are drug profiteers

Jan. 6 criminals are "activists" *

COVID-19 was "ethnically targeted"

The 2004 election was stolen

* later retracted

OPINION

BOOKS & IDEAS

30 years ago, Grace Paley foresaw today's clash over antisemitism

By Michael Rothberg

IN RECENT MONTHS, as clashes over the war in Gaza have fractured American campuses — including my own at UCLA — I've been thinking frequently of Grace Paley's 1991 story "Three Days and a Question." In this short, autobiographical tale, the Jewish American author and activist recounts three scenes that take place over the course of three days on the streets of New York. In each case, a bare arm is proffered by someone who has suffered trauma. As its title suggests, Paley's story offers not easy answers but probing questions: questions about Jewish identity, antisemitism and the difficulties of solidarity that remain as urgent as they were when Paley was writing. (She died in 2007.)

All three of the scenes Paley recounts resonate 30 years later, but the first one is uncannily familiar in our moment of conflict. The story opens:

"On the first day I joined a demonstration opposing the arrest in Israel of members of Yesh Gvul, Israeli soldiers who had refused to serve in the occupied territories. Yesh Gvul means: *There is a Limit.*"

As with today's campus protests, this demonstration, which takes place during the first Intifada, is teeming with members of the press, including an anchorwoman.

"What do you think?" the anchorwoman asked. "What do you think," she asked a woman passer-by — a woman about my age.

"Anti-Semites," the woman said quietly.

"The anchorwoman said, 'But they're Jewish.'"

"Anti-Semites," the woman said, a little louder."

At this point, one of the demonstrators steps forward and confronts the passerby in accented English: "Are you crazy? How can you ... Listen what we're saying. ... How you dare to say that — all of us Jews. Me, he said. He pulled up his shirtsleeve. Me? You call me? You look. He held out his arm. Look at this." The passerby refuses. But the demonstrator persists: "You look at my number, what they did to me. My arm ... you have no right." She remains unmoved: "'Anti-Semite,' she said between her teeth. 'Israel hater.'" The demonstrator, now revealed to be a survivor bearing a Nazi-inflicted tattoo, responds despairingly: "No, no he said, you fool. My arm — you're afraid to look ... my arm ... my arm."

Many who are Jewish will recognize the scene Paley describes. Whether on social media, in family discussions or on campuses, versions of intra-Jewish conflict are a constant feature of our post-Oct. 7 moment — as, in truth, they have been for some time. The horrific events of Oct. 7 and Israel's catastrophic war against Gaza have exacerbated tensions among American Jews about how to think about Zionism, Jewish identity and Jewish



JAE C. HONG Associated Press

ethics. While the mainstream Jewish community remains staunchly supportive of Israel, polls also show a growing generational divide, with many younger Jews embracing the Palestinian cause. Across the United States, there are Jewish students and faculty on both sides of the barriers set up on campuses around Palestinian solidarity encampments. Jewish division has probably never been so visible in this country.

Paley's story also presciently predicts a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly prominent: the weaponization of charges of antisemitism to stifle dissent about Israeli actions. As Paley emphasizes, even a critic with the most radical personal experience of antisemitism — deportation to Auschwitz — can be accused of anti-Jewishness. Paley seems to have grasped decades in advance just how politically charged and consequential the issue of antisemitism would become.

Today, we are faced with a situation in which the accusation leveled by Paley's passerby may take on the force of law. On May 1, the House of Representatives passed the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act, which if passed by the Senate and signed by President Biden would link federal

antidiscrimination laws to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's controversial "working definition of antisemitism." Beyond the vagueness of the definition itself, the alliance's definition is subject to abuse because of the illustrative examples that accompany it, which disproportionately identify forms of antisemitism with criticism of Israel and Zionism. If signed into law, it would make critics of Israel even more vulnerable than they are now. As Paley predicts and as we see playing out in Germany, it would lead, absurdly, to the targeting of many Jews as antisemites.

Paley's story, however, does not stop with this unsettling encounter between demonstrator and accuser. Her final two vignettes clarify that she is more broadly interested in how confrontations with suffering and injustice provoke discomfort.

On the second day the narrator meets a young man with AIDS who bares his arm to show her his lesions while begging for money: "No one will help me. ... Look at my arm. ... Have you ever seen lesions? That's what people see." On the third day, a Haitian taxi driver stops his cab, holds his bare arm up to the passenger divider and asks why refugees from his country are refused entry: "You tell me — this skin, this black

ISRAEL backers at USC. Jewish critics of the Gaza war are being accused of antisemitism.

Three Days and a Question by Grace Paley, 1991

skin — why? Why you hate this skin so much?"

The tale concludes with Paley's own question. What does it mean, she asks, to have confronted "those gestures, those arms, the three consecutive days" of unsettling encounters? Her question is our question too — a question about how we should respond to an excess of suffering, to conflicts with kin and colleagues, to clashing narratives about war and peace. Instead of offering easy answers, Paley's story helps us see discomfort as a necessary component of solidarity.

Today's protests about the war in Gaza have generated anger and accusations of antisemitism, just like the protest depicted by Paley; it is, indeed, disturbing to be confronted with the realities of political violence. Gaza is not the only place of suffering on Earth; there is more than enough all over. But if we look away or try to deflect, like the passerby in the first vignette who mutters "antisemite," we risk becoming complicit in the injustice unfolding around us — both outside our doors and thousands of miles away.

MICHAEL ROTHBERG teaches English, comparative literature and Holocaust studies at UCLA.

Two women in two eras face injustice in San Francisco

By Valorie Castellanos Clark

MEREDITH JAEGER'S fourth novel, "The Incurrigibles," gives us her best rendering of California's past.

The author is a California native with a penchant for immersive period depictions of some of the state's most desirable cities: San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Los Angeles. Her newest work of historical fiction walks us through two timelines to show the developing San Francisco of the 1890s and the same transforming city in the 1970s.

The dual storylines that follow Annie and Judy as they find love — and then find themselves deceived — are evocative of their time periods without being obsessive. Jaeger's earlier novels insisted on the details too much. As a historian myself, I understand the impulse to adamantly prove you did the research by including everything. Instead of the cataloged lists of details from her debut, "The Incurrigibles" has the defter touch of a more mature writer who knows what she knows and knows how much the readers need to see. Jaeger's style has bloomed into a gripping voice that launches the story, then never pauses for breath.

The novel opens on a woman trying not to cry. Jaeger's body of work is populated by miserable women and (mostly) villainous men. Her heroines are beautiful, innocent girls trapped in desperate circumstances and miserable lives. They endure abusers and murderers and



The Incurrigibles: A Novel by Meredith Jaeger

inconsiderate jerks until they suddenly ascend to happily-ever-after, sometimes seemingly with a wave of a wand. If it reads a little like the Disneyfication of historical fiction, that's all right. People like Disney. People like happy endings. That good women will come out on top and bad men will get their due is guaranteed in a Meredith Jaeger novel.

Perhaps because of that, her novels often are described as easy beach reads — unfairly, I think. Her books have always frankly explored deceit, infidelity, abuse and murder. Thematically her historical fiction is dark, more in the vein of crime fiction than courtly historic novels. Each of her characters is a victim of some stripe. In Jaeger's earlier work, the extreme violence happened between scenes. But in "The Incurrigibles" the violence is in our faces. Among many stark crimes, Annie and Judy both come into direct contact with police brutality, witnessing or enduring violence at the hands of uniformed officers.

Much of Annie's 1890 storyline takes place inside the cells of San Quentin State Prison. The inherent inhumanity of locking people away and referring to them only as num-

bers, not with names, is potent. Annie and her fellow female inmates endure groping guards, an opportunistic journalist and the systemic abuse heaped on convicts that continues long after they are released.

Annie witnesses two women being raped, and this violence happens in front of us, described clearly. We are forced to sit with it for pages rather than look away.

In the 1970s, Judy investigates Annie's life after spotting her mugshot. She is simultaneously trying to save the South of Market neighborhood from a city government that cares little for the people that already live there. The bravery of several marginalized communities standing up to faceless bureaucracies is sympathetically depicted, though Judy trends into "white savior" territory.

She watches a peaceful protest become a violent riot when the police arrive, but turns and runs while elderly people of color are injured.

The tension between what Judy is working for and what we know became of South of Market — SOMA, today — is just one of many ways that Jaeger plays with futility and inevitability. Judy and Annie fight for their lives and their communities, but the boxes society tries to put them into — immigrant, poor, woman, wife, divorcee, convict —

have strong walls. While the men who harm them have options, the women are thrust along by the tides of fate, desperate to reach a safe shore.

The double standard for men and women is never clearer, and the connection to today stronger, than when a female convict is denied a pardon or commutation while others, including a convicted rapist who has shown no remorse, are granted their freedom. The only woman on the list was convicted of a nonviolent crime and yet was outright denied commutation. Why? In a country where only 8% of sexual assault perpetrators will ever see the inside of a jail cell, her question feels sickeningly relevant.

The novel doesn't answer that "why" directly, but the totality of the story is the answer. Time and again the female characters are saved by fate, luck, coincidence, the universe — call it what you will. Inside San Quentin and out, the women in Jaeger's novel save each other when they can and rely on providence — sometimes in the loud ringing of a Gatling gun — when they can't. Justice and equality are routinely denied them by men who "know better," and eventually the only solution is for both women to wrest their fates free.

Is that chick lit? I guess, if stories of female agency and empowerment can be so reduced. But if so, it is thoughtful chick lit that asks us to consider how similar California today is to "distant history."

VALORIE CASTELLANOS CLARK, a writer and historian in Los Angeles, is the author of "Unruly Figures: Twenty Tales of Rebels, Rulebreakers, and Revolutionaries You've (Probably) Never Heard of."

The new novel 'The Incurrigibles' might be dismissed as a beach read or chick lit, but there's more going on in this dual-timeline indictment of misogyny.

OPINION

BOOKS & IDEAS

INTRODUCING THE OTHER ANGELENOS

A guide to creatures great and small, from palm trees to live-forevers and mountain lions to feral cats

By Daniel Vitale

LOS ANGELES TENDS to strike outsiders as a borderless mishmash of suburbs spread over an unfriendly landscape with no significant natural source of water. When it's not on fire, it seems to be sliding into the ocean or collapsing under the weight of its own untamable development.

And yet Los Angeles transplants will still brag to their loved ones across the country that they could go skiing and surfing in the same day (if for some reason they felt so inclined). As conservationist Craig Stanford reminds us, however, you don't have to drive to Big Bear or the beach to feel the pulse of nature in L.A.

In "Unnatural Habitat: The Native and Exotic Wildlife of Los Angeles," Stanford offers Angelenos — and anyone interested in the function and dysfunction of (sub) urban ecosystems — a guide to the natural life that teems beneath our freeways, wanders into our back-



Heyday

Unnatural Habitat: The Native and Exotic Wildlife of Los Angeles by Craig Stanford

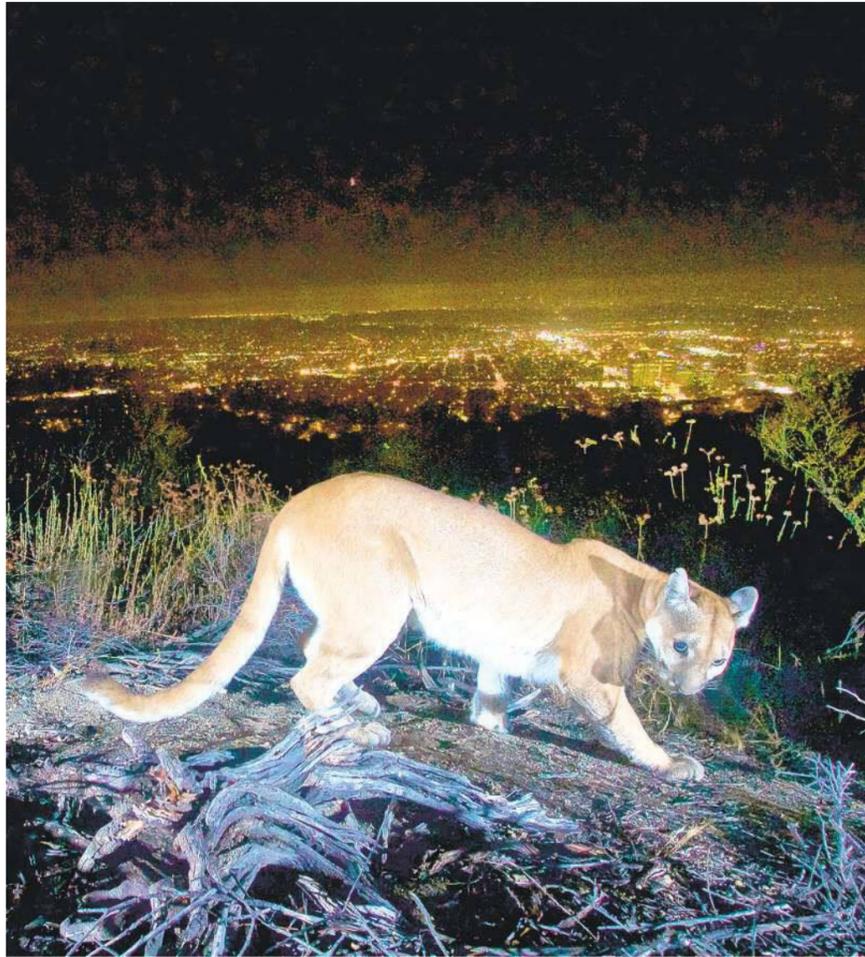
yards and fights for survival in the deserts and mountains that surround our city.

Stanford, who has conducted field research around the world, lives in Pasadena, in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. As he details more than 150 species of L.A. flora and fauna — from native mountain lions to exotic earthworms,

weeds that occur naturally and palm trees that, surprisingly, don't — he evokes a portrait of an unusual city's special, bizarre and unexpectedly fragile wildlife. He conjures up evolutionary histories, stories of foreign species' arrival and their effects on an ecosystem that is massively and continuously altered by human influence.

But Stanford's mission here isn't simply to describe the creatures at hand — though he does do plenty of that, never hesitating to anthropomorphize even the most inhuman of them; to him, snakes are "secretive," tarantulas "ominously deliberate." The book excels — feels necessary, even — when it unravels the intricate interplay between human and animal habits; societal institutions and nature; common sense and our desire to decorate and navigate Los Angeles however we please.

He also offers prescriptions, micro and macro, private and public, for better stewardship of our environs. We can decide what we plant in our own gardens, for example, so Stanford advises readers to fill their yards with something na-



U.S. National Park Service via Associated Press

tive and drought-tolerant that can contribute to a more robust, stable and diverse ecosystem. (Of course, most of our city's residents probably won't get the memo.)

On the public front, Stanford highlights potential institutional improvements as well as bureaucratic roadblocks. In what is perhaps the book's most compelling chapter, he writes about the man-made challenges to L.A.'s mountain lions. The gravest threat to these magnificent animals is our ubiquitous freeway system: Since 2015, more than 500 California cougars

THIS mountain lion tripped a motion-sensor camera in the Verdugos in 2016.

have become roadkill. Perhaps anyone could guess as much, but what a layman might never know without Stanford's book is that our busy roads severely circumscribe the territory cougars can roam, leading to isolation and inbreeding.

A wildlife crossing is under construction over the 101 to allow cougars to traverse the freeway safely, expanding the territory they can access. But the cost of the project is high (about \$90 million), as is competition for land that might otherwise serve as sanctuary for wildlife. Stanford, who usually

comes across as optimistic, can wax cynical in the face of such frustrations.

His unexpected insights range from comical to shocking. He offers a snapshot of his cat having a field day with the finches in his backyard birdbath — and then explains the vicious cycle that creates invasive populations of feral cats that kill literally *billions* of birds across North America every year.

Stanford's self-proclaimed ecological purism doesn't mean he believes we should do away with non-native species altogether, though. In fact, human interference has helped many species worth keeping around. Hummingbirds, for example, stay in L.A. year-round because our backyard feeders preclude any need for them to migrate in search of sugary plants. With that comes the responsibility to care for the wildlife we cultivate in this landscape that he acknowledges is "beautiful but largely nonfunctional." It's not clear whether he thinks we're up to the task.

At his best, Stanford interweaves vivid prose, a reverence for nature and a seasoned Angeleno's eye for what makes this city unique. At times, however, he fails to draw a connection between a species and the city, punctuating the book with vignettes laden with contextless taxonomy.

Regardless, the overall effect is a worthy and illuminating entry in the tradition of works exploring urbanization's effect on the environment. (Stanford references Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring," and that author's influence is felt throughout his book.) Moral questions abound, ranging from animal rights to humanity's role in nature.

Stanford's fundamental message is clear and simple (and oft-repeated): To preserve a Los Angeles in which humans and nature benefit from one another, we must increase our understanding of our city's fragile wildlife mosaic.

Stanford is heavy-handed only when he has to be, and his subtlety often hits harder. One chapter concerns a succulent so common in Los Angeles that I never knew its name: It's called the live-forever (genus *Dudleya*), and, ironically, it's at risk of extinction due to poaching. You can buy the plants at Home Depot, yet they're disappearing from our cliff faces and hiking paths. At the chapter's close, Stanford articulates a profoundly upsetting truth: "Each generation grows up accustomed to the scope of Nature that surrounds it."

Despite all he has to say about it, L.A.'s biodiversity is waning before our eyes. Fortunately, with Stanford's help, we can acquire some of his vision for preserving our native species while effectively introducing exotic ones. Los Angeles is, after all, a city of transplants.

DANIEL VITALE is a writer in Los Angeles and the author of the novel "Orphans of Canland."

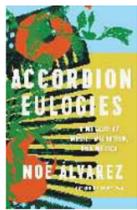
A family's musical odyssey plays out over years and miles

By Lorraine Berry

AS A CHILD, Noé Álvarez "wandered the orchards under the spell of *corridistas* — musicians whose spitfire fingers flew over their three-row accordion keys," he writes in his memoir, "Accordion Eulogies." "Música norteña — a genre that originated in northern Mexico — gave voice to the disempowered men and women of Yakima who lived and labored apart from their motherland." The corridos, whose name is derived from the Spanish for "to run," tell stories of those far from home, on the run, migrating for work or bandits evading capture. Passed down through generations, their stories are a way of preserving history but also a reminder of the place whence you've come.

Álvarez, the son of Mexican immigrants, grew up in Yakima Valley, Wash., a semi-arid, now irrigated, area some 200 miles east of Mt. Rainier. His parents worked in the vast apple orchards and listened to the corridos on their radios, comforted by them as they toiled tending to the trees. While the songs eased some of his parents' *saudade*, for Álvarez, they were also a reminder of his mythological grandfather who had deserted his family: "a homewrecker, a drunk, a gambler; a man forever caught in the currents of migration." He was also an accordion player.

Álvarez sets out to find him. What follows is an extraordinary intertwining of fibers in which the hemp of history, music, memories and community knowledge ropes him to the man who left him behind as a child. Álvarez hopes for resolution to the inherited trauma of those



Catapult

Accordion Eulogies: A Memoir of Music, Migration, and Mexico by Noé Álvarez

forced to wander the land in search of work and the devastation left behind for those who stayed.

Searching for his *abuelo* also means searching for his instrument. The accordion had its origins in Germany but was carried into North and South America by immigrants. In Louisiana, Álvarez hears its sounds in a land of the displaced "German, Irish, French, French Canadian, Native American, Anglo American, Italian, and Spanish" who landed there. Black Creole elders created forms of music that spoke to their descendants. Zydeco — music with a snappy beat that derives its name from French Creole colloquial expressions for poverty and tough times — is powered by the accordion. Álvarez meets zydeco legend Jeffery Broussard, "a bruised man with a story to tell." A hard life as a Louisiana Black man has prepared Broussard to use his accordion to help folks with healing zydeco traditions.

Broussard tells him, "It's music that holds a lot of sadness ... that also finds comedy in tragedy, tackling themes that are relatable to the local populations." The Black Creoles carried the scars of slavery, and they infused their music with African and Haitian song, using call-and-response forms that "made music with their beaten bodies, never relinquishing the sounds of their homelands." The accordion

added its rich sound to this mix.

Similar stories emerge in other parts of the United States, where accordions took hold on the West Coast and in the Midwest, the South and Texas, where Álvarez journeys next. There he meets an accordion builder who spends more than 100 hours handcrafting each instrument.

Álvarez reaches out to an Italian accordion player, who initially rejected the instrument for its status as working-class folk music. On a trip to Ireland, Álvarez meets a musician who lives in a country emptied out in waves as poverty, famine, political oppression and violence scattered its people. But it's not all sadness. The Irishman tells him, "Words can sometimes fail us, melody can save us. It can give you back your color, give you back your feelings, and give back the stories that migrants lose on dangerous pilgrimages."

As a sound carried by those who do the backbreaking labor of building and harvesting crops, work seen as undesirable by the middle class, accordion music is rich with history but also permeated by a fraught masculinity. What does it mean to be a "provider" if work carries you miles away from your family? Álvarez's grandfather fled, a man chasing a dream of "something more" that he could not find even thousands of miles from his Mexican village.

Álvarez recalls a childhood where educators prohibited him from speaking Spanish in school; thus he was forced to learn the language of the people who relied on migrant

labor but were resentful of those they employed. As an Indigenous Mexican, he recalls the irony of being prevented from speaking the language that was imported by those who had conquered the land and decimated its people. In Mexico, Álvarez experiences the double bind of the American Mexican. Seen as American — and not to be trusted — by those who stayed, he becomes a man whose sense of identity is put to a severe test. He is personally affected by drug cartel violence, and the dangerous landscape leads him to a greater understanding of what made his family leave.

"Accordion Eulogies" is a working-class desert odyssey that ends in the home of Álvarez's *abuelo*. For years, the only reminder Álvarez had of him was a photo of a younger man holding an accordion. Tied together by their shared history of music, and their magical beliefs that what they're looking for awaits in their next destination, the two men finally meet.

Most of us living in the U.S. are the descendants of those who fled their homelands because of the constant violence of poverty, hunger and lack of opportunity. For those who are several generations away from those experiences, the pain of leaving is long forgotten. But for the children of recent immigrants, the double consciousness of feeling set apart in America while being an alien in our ancestral lands is an ache hard to articulate.

But with "Accordion Eulogies" Álvarez has written his own corrido, creating a harmony from these difficult, sometimes unspeakable, themes. In finding connection through the accordion — originally brought from far away but now the instrumental repository of a million immigrant stories — he has composed a classic melody.

LORRAINE BERRY is a writer and critic in Eugene, Ore.

Seeking the grandfather who abandoned his family means following his instrument, which plays a sound carried into the Americas by immigrants.



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CALIFORNIA

SUNDAY, MAY 26, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/CALIFORNIA



Photographs by GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

TREE CANOPY ecologist Wendy Baxter, left, and plant physiological ecologist Anthony Ambrose climb the General Sherman tree to perform a wellness check in Sequoia National Park last week.

GOLDEN STATE

The largest tree in the world gets a checkup

Scientists scale giant sequoia seeking signs of trouble

STEVE LOPEZ

SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK — Roughly around the time of the Han Dynasty and just prior to the beginning of the Roman Empire, a tree began growing at an elevation of roughly 7,000 feet in what became known as the southern Sierra Nevada. It's not the tallest or oldest tree in the world today, but it's the largest when measured by volume, at 52,000 cubic feet.

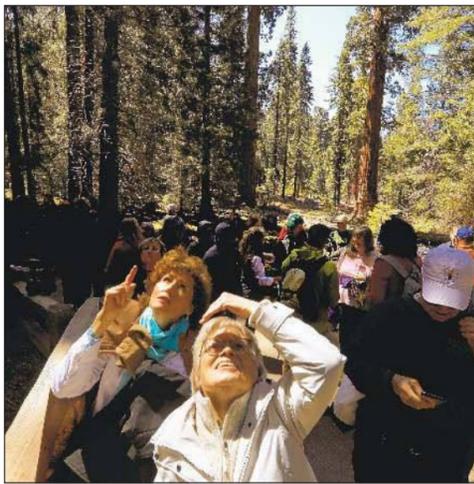


The one-time sapling is believed to be about 2,200 years old and appears to be holding up well for a 275-foot-tall, 2.7-million-pound old-timer. But a few dozen of its neighbors have taken ill and died in recent years under threat from drought and bark beetle infestations, so on Tuesday the giant sequoia known as the General Sherman tree got a checkup.

A team of tree doctors from the Ancient Forest Society rigged ropes and pulleys so they could scale the cinnamon-barked skyscraper and search for signs of trouble. Anthony Ambrose, the group's co-founder and director, explained what the trees are up against:

"Less snow is arriving, it's melting earlier, so there's less water available, and [these trees] need an enormous amount of water. A tree like the General Sherman

[See Lopez, B6]



VISITORS watch as scientists climb the General Sherman tree to inspect for bark beetle activity.

Summer COVID season may get early start due to new subvariants

California doctors see uptick in spread as FLiRT strains make huge gains nationally.

By RONG-GONG LIN II

California may be headed to an earlier-than-normal start to the summer COVID-19 season, with coronavirus concentrations in sewage rising in some areas along with the statewide positive-test rate.

The trend comes as the latest family of coronavirus subvariants, collectively nicknamed FLiRT, have made significant gains nationally.

The FLiRT subvariants — officially known as KP.2, KP.3 and KP.1.1 — have overtaken the dominant winter strain, JN.1. For the two-week period that ended Saturday, they were estimated to account for a combined 50.4% of the nation's coronavirus infections, up from 20% a month earlier.

Instead of California seeing reduced circulation of COVID-19, as occurred earlier this spring, state health officials said that they estimate the spread is now either stable or slowly increasing.

"COVID-19 concentrations in wastewater have suggested increases in several regions across California since early May. Test positivity for COVID-19 has been slowly increasing since May," the state Department of Public Health said in a statement to The Times on Friday.

Over the seven-day period that ended Monday, about 3.8% of COVID-19 tests came back positive; in late April, that share was 1.9%. (Last summer's peak test-positive rate was 12.8%, at the end of August.)

Doctors at hospitals in Southern California and the San Francisco Bay Area are also seeing an uptick in coronavirus spread.

"We're certainly seeing a bit of a small increase. And

this is all due to the so-called FLiRT variants," said Dr. Elizabeth Hudson, regional chief of infectious disease at Kaiser Permanente Southern California.

The increase has so far been seen primarily in outpatient cases at Kaiser.

"Anytime there's a new variant, then, unfortunately, the new variants will have the ability to [overcome immunity resulting from prior infection], and if it's been awhile since someone has been vaccinated, they obviously will not have the same level of protection as someone who was more recently vaccinated," Hudson said.

In San Francisco, infectious disease doctors are noticing more people in the hospital with COVID-caused pneumonia.

"I have seen more than I would expect of sick people in the hospital" for COVID, said Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, a UC San Francisco infectious diseases expert. The number was just a handful, "but it's definitely noticeable."

Based on his reading of wastewater data, "we know that it's up, and it's up earlier," Chin-Hong said of coronavirus activity.

"Last year, I think it was late June when it started going up, and this year it's, like, now it's late May. So it's a little bit earlier, but we're starting from a very low place," Chin-Hong said.

And anecdotally, people in the Bay Area are talking about COVID more, it seems, Chin-Hong said. He recalled hearing about someone's child's classroom dealing with a COVID case a few days ago.

"It's not necessarily an alarming number now, but it is ... the beginning of the summer, so that's what we expect," Chin-Hong said.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has also started to see a very small uptick in cases in recent days.

From May 10 to 15, the most recent data available, there were an average of 82 to 92 COVID-19 cases per

[See COVID, B4]

South Bay rail plan advances, though tentatively

By RACHEL URANGA

Metro board members advanced a two-stop, 4.5-mile light rail extension of the C Line through the South Bay, while leaving an opening to reverse course, as many residents voiced opposition to the plan.

Residents of Redondo Beach and Lawndale packed in at a Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority board meeting Thursday, asking the nine members present to vote against a route that would run along a rail right-of-way, or ROW, behind homes. Many wore red shirts that said "No to Row" and pushed for a more costly path that would draw more riders down Hawthorne Boulevard, where the old Pacific Electric Railway Red Cars once ran.

After more than two hours of public comment on both sides, the board unanimously gave the green light to further environmental analysis of the ROW route, a crucial step to developing the project. The route was

[See Rail, B4]

His petition led to a short-term rental ban

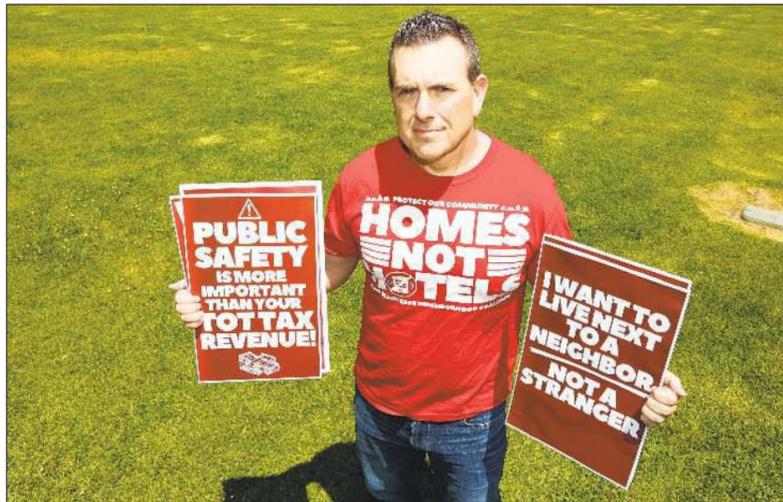
Long Beach resident's successful campaign fuels nine others around the city.

By ANDREW J. CAMPA

First came the all-night parties and music blaring from a neighbor's house that kept Andy Oliver up at night.

Then there were the "smoke outs," when visitors enjoying refuge from hostile cannabis laws in their home states blazed marijuana throughout the day, sending clouds of hazy smoke into Oliver's sanctuary, his house in Long Beach's College Estates neighborhood.

The final straw came Jan. 2, when a shooting vic-



MICHAEL BLACKSHIRE Los Angeles Times

ANDY OLIVER led a push to ban unhosted short-term rentals in his Long Beach neighborhood of College Estates following issues with guests at a home nearby.

tim climbed over his fence, bleeding and looking for shelter.

In each case, the source of Oliver's grief was tourists staying in an unhosted short-term rental next door, listed by homeowners who are not present during the guests' stay.

"All this happened over a year's time, and it was beginning to be too much," Oliver, 50, said. "This is a residential area, and something had to be done."

Fast-forward four months, and Oliver has successfully petitioned Long Beach's Community Development Department to ban short-term rentals within College Estates. His win spawned nine similar petitions around the city.

"I don't have the final

[See Long Beach, B5]

USC scientist faces scrutiny over research integrity

Berislav Zlokovic has had papers retracted, drug trial paused since whistleblower report.

By CORINNE PURTILL

Late last year, a group of whistleblowers submitted a report to the National Institutes of Health that ques-

tioned the integrity of a celebrated USC neuroscientist's research and the safety of an experimental stroke treatment his company was developing.

The NIH has since paused clinical trials for 3K3A-APC, a stroke drug sponsored by ZZ Biotech, a Houston-based company co-founded by Berislav V. Zlokovic, professor and chair of the department of

physiology and neuroscience at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

Three of Zlokovic's research papers have been retracted by the journal that published them due to problems with their data or images. Journals have issued corrections for seven more papers in which Zlokovic is the only common author, with one receiving a second correction after newly sup-

plied data were found to have problems as well.

For an 11th paper co-authored by Zlokovic, the journal Nature Medicine issued an expression of concern — a note appended to an article when a journal has reason to believe there may be a problem with the paper but have not conclusively proven so. Since Zlokovic and his co-authors no longer had the original data for one of the

questioned figures, the editors wrote, "readers are therefore alerted to interpret these results with caution."

"It's quite unusual to see this volume of retractions, corrections and expressions of concern, especially in high-tier influential papers," said Dr. Matthew Schrag, an assistant professor of neurology at Vander-

[See USC scientist, B9]

Confederate sentiment ran deep in Southland

During Civil War, some Angelenos unleashed rebel yells and cheered Lincoln's death

PATT MORRISON

Of all the sounds now vanished from the heart of old downtown Los Angeles — the songs of the Tongva, the whistles of steam locomotives, the clanging of streetcars — there's one you'd never have expected: the rebel yell.

The battle cry of the Confederacy resounded a long way from its home, but throughout the Civil War, you could hear it in secessionist hangouts like the old Bella Union Hotel.

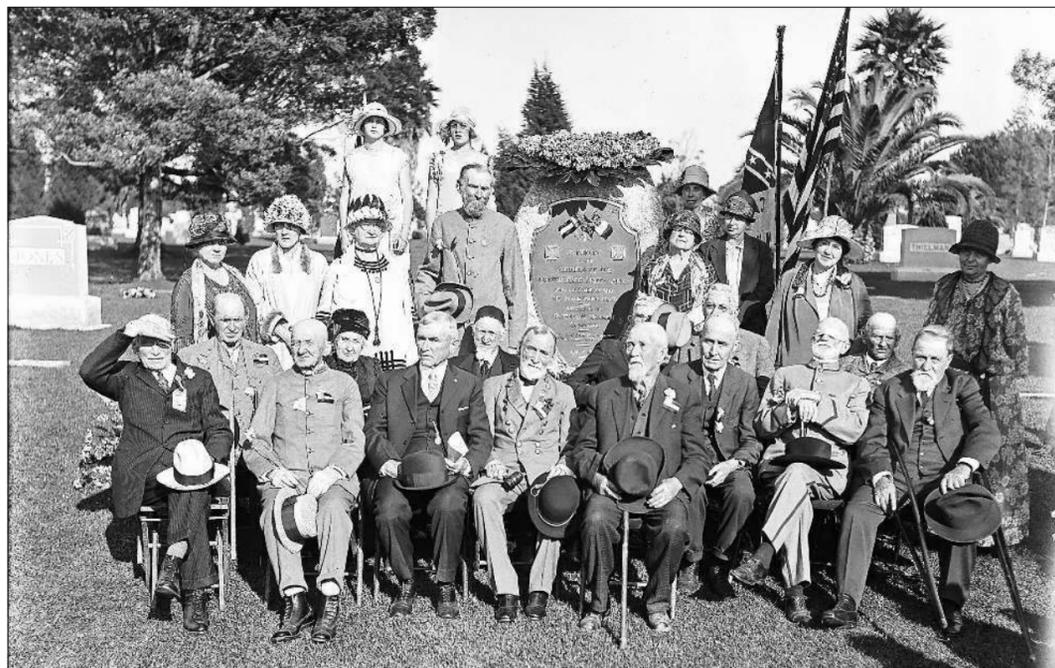
The yell usually went along with hollering and arguing, and maybe the bibulous singing of "We'll Hang Abe Lincoln to a Tree." That was the Confederates' poor rejoinder to the Yankees' insult song about the Confederate president, "We'll Hang Jeff Davis From a Sour Apple Tree." (Poor, because the meter doesn't scan, and who hangs anyone to a tree, anyway?)

Like the song, the Confederacy was a failure. But here — here, in now politically azure-blue L.A. — sympathy for the South was muscular and, as far as the U.S. government was concerned, a potential menace.

Think of Jets and Sharks decked out in buckskins or Yankee blue, ambling down our grubby streets, swapping mad-dog stares or whistling a few bars of those taunting tunes — pushing, egging, daring someone to start something.

That modest-scale surrogate Civil War was fought here, in the cow county of Los Angeles, where the ratio of cattle to people at the war's beginning was almost 7 to 1: a reported 11,333 two-legged residents to some 70,000 bovine.

These were fraught times, knife-edge times. And oh, do they sound familiar: treason and vigilantism afoot, radicals spoiling for a fight, an epidemic and resistance to vaccination orders, and ballot box-stuffing accusa-



Los Angeles Times archive / UCLA Library

A PHOTOGRAPH published in the Los Angeles Times in 1925 shows Confederate veterans and others at Hollywood Forever Cemetery for the unveiling of a monument to fallen soldiers of the Confederacy.

tions, which in this instance turned out to be true.

I thought about this not long ago, when the L.A. County Board of Supervisors moved toward making a county historical landmark of the Altadena gravesite of Owen Brown.

Not a name that sets off the alarm bells of memory, right? Owen Brown was a son of John Brown. He was the man who, in 1859, led his sons and fellow abolitionists, Black and white, on a raid of the federal armory at Harpers Ferry in Virginia, now in West Virginia.

Brown's goal was to arm and inspire an uprising among enslaved people. He failed and was hanged for treason. But the botched raid nonetheless put a match to the fuse of the Civil War. Owen got away, and wound up in the Altadena foothills, where he died in 1889.

But in 1929, almost 65 years after the Civil War ended — a human lifetime —

the United Daughters of the Confederacy opened Dixie Manor in San Gabriel, a home for old Confederate soldiers. Twenty-one of them went through its care before the manor closed up shop in 1936. Many of those 21 were buried in Hollywood Forever cemetery, where a 1925 monument to Confederate soldiers and families buried there was carted off in 2017, days after the "unite the right" white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Va.

How did Southern California wind up so ... Southern?

Well, the Butterfield stagecoach routes ran from Texas through Arizona and New Mexico into L.A., and people heading west brought enslaved Black men and women with them, to the gold fields and, after the gold played out, throughout the state.

California's constitutions forbade slavery, but slave-masters and slave-

catchers often ignored that. (In 1856, Biddy Mason, born in Mississippi and brought here by a slave owner, won her freedom from a judge in a Los Angeles courtroom where she was not permitted to testify.)

Just about the only non-Southern sympathizing county officials at the outset of the war were the district attorney and the county surveyor; even the sheriff and two of his underlings were pro-Confederate, and one of them, A.J. King, was briefly arrested for declaring that Confederate President Jefferson Davis was "the only constitutional government we have."

In 1860 and 1864, in the two elections that sent him to and kept him in the White House, Abe Lincoln lost L.A. County. In 1860, he came in third.

El Monte was far out of L.A., but not so far as to miss out on the action.

In the spring of 1861, about a month before the

Civil War began, the "Monte Mounted Rifles" formed up, led by Undersheriff King. Most were emigres from Texas who brought their politics to El Monte.

Itching for a robust little set-to, they rode around waving the California Republic's Bear Flag — which by then was a states' rights symbol. El Monte's deputy postmaster refused to deliver pro-Union newspapers to subscribers. Even after the war, Major Horace Bell, who'd left L.A. to go fight for the Union, wrote that if he had occasion to go to El Monte, he found himself attacked.

El Monte traveled a long road to shed this reputation; in the 20th century, an El Monte pastor was also the local Ku Klux Klan's "Kludd," its spiritual leader. And in the 1960s and '70s, the American Nazi Party opened up shop in town.

The actual war simply blew open these schisms.

The Bella Union Hotel, standing a few yards north-east of the present Los Angeles City Hall, was where the Butterfield stage stopped to disgorge its passengers. It was also practically a clubhouse for Southern sympathizers. Not long after the war began, pro-Confederates carried into the Bella Union saloon — as triumphantly as if it had been the man himself — a full-sized color lithograph portrait of P.G.T. Beauregard, the Confederate general who had ordered the bombardment of Ft. Sumter.

The hotel shared its grounds with the offices of the Los Angeles Star. Its owner/editor was an ardent secessionist and racist who thundered that the war was being fought for "the degradation of the white race, and the elevation of the African family among them." Henry Hamilton was arrested for treason later in the war and spent 10 days in Alcatraz. He had to swear an oath of allegiance to the Union but returned unrepentant, to a hero's welcome barbecue in El Monte.

A San Francisco newspaperman told his readers in the pro-Union Bay Area that secesh Angelenos filled the spring air with "Dixie." What he actually wrote was "dogs bark it, asses and mules bray it, and bilious bipeds whistle it."

Plans were underway for a big pro-Union demonstration in May 1861 when an anonymous threat posted outside the Bella Union warned that anyone raising the Stars and Stripes above the courthouse would be shot. The flag was raised anyway, sans bloodshed, and a 34-gun salute was fired, one volley for each state, boldly including the Confederate states.

Maybe the most mythologized event of Los Angeles' Civil War happened behind closed doors in the Army quartermaster's brick home at 3rd and Main streets, perhaps in early to mid-June 1861.

A number of U.S. Army officers stationed in California were Southerners by birth. Some were also colleagues and friends of Winfield Scott Hancock, who as quartermaster was charged with protecting Union armaments in Los Angeles. He took this all seriously enough to arm his wife, Almira, against being taken prisoner.

At this famous "last supper" were Hancock's friends and fellow officers — the Southerners Albert Sidney Johnston, Lewis Armistead, Richard Garnett and George Pickett, who had resigned their Union commissions. They'd be fleeing to join the Confederate army — Johnston early on June 16, just ahead of an arrest warrant.

Through the evening, as the stories go, there was some singing, some weeping, and expressions of eternal affection. Johnston was killed not quite a year later, at the Battle of Shiloh. The other four met on the battlefield at Gettysburg in 1863. The Confederates charged Hancock's position in the disaster that became known as Pickett's Charge. Garnett died in the field. Armistead lived long enough to tell a field surgeon, "Say to General Hancock for me that I have done him, and you all, a grievous injury, which I shall always regret." Pickett survived but fell into a slough of despond and vengeance. Another dinner guest, the Southerner Cameron Thom, was wounded at Gettysburg but returned to L.A. to become its 16th mayor.

More than 200 men left L.A. County to wear the Confederate uniform, but only two local men were known to have joined the Union army. One was Bell, and the other man had to go out of town to enlist; it was too dangerous to do so in L.A.

Tempers and feelings did not ebb with the South's failing fortunes on the battlefield. On April 9, 1865 (159 years ago), Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Grant in Lee's home state of Virginia.

The news arrived here by telegraph the next day, but the Union headquarters at the Drum Barracks in Wilmington didn't hear it until the next day, when the governor telegraphed the surrender news. Cannons and the bells made a cacophony of celebration as pro-Union Los Angeles threw off its timidity and danced in the streets.

The joy didn't last. Four mornings later, at 9:20 on Saturday, April 15, the telegraph office — which stood roughly where City Hall is now — got this news: "President Lincoln and Secretary Seward were assassinated in Washington last night. The president died this morning; Seward still alive but not expected to live."

No one needed social media or phones to spread this calamity. Distraught Angelenos ran through the streets, calling out the news. Some collected at the telegraph office, crying.

But then, here and there, from the homes of some Confederate supporters, came the sound of jubilation.

Several secessionists celebrating the assassination were arrested, among them an odd character named Peter Biggs. Biggs was a Black man brought here enslaved in the early 1850s by his then-owner, a military officer. Biggs became free and opened a barbershop. But when war came, he sided with the South. He had been arrested in May 1863 and forced to walk hobbled by ball and chain from central L.A. to the Drum Barracks at the harbor. Along the way, he tossed his hat in the air and gave three cheers for Davis.

He was freed after signing an oath of allegiance to the Union, but here he was again, delighted at the news of Lincoln's death, and arrested again. Four years later, Biggs was stabbed to death in a restaurant by the cook.

Even after the Appomattox surrender, the secessionist undersheriff, King, went on insisting, "We have been and are yet secessionist." Horace Bell found that Confederate-sympathizing friends still turned their backs on him, and one of them told him, "The idea of a Los Angeles man of your stamp fighting on the side of the Blacks!"

But other matters soon pressed in to occupy Angelenos. The drought of 1864 had already started the death spiral of the region's cattle-grazing economy, and in time it was back to business as usual — and the seasonal disaster calendar of fire, flood, drought and quake.

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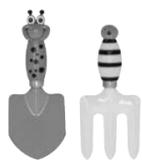
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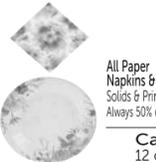
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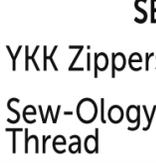
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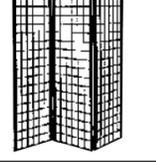
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CITY & STATE



HERE COMES THE SUN

CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

MacKenzie Bergman, 4, of Hesperia, left, and Charlie Young, 12, of Eastvale, center, play in the sand while camping with their families Saturday at Dockweiler State Beach in Playa del Rey. Morning clouds are forecast to be on the wane through Memorial Day.

\$3-million boost to clean polluted areas

BY TYRONE BEASON

Five Southern California communities have been awarded federal grants totaling \$3 million to help transform polluted “brownfield” sites into land that’s safe for development, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has announced.

The Orange County Transportation Authority received a \$1-million grant to conduct environmental site assessments and clean up its 18.78-acre OC Connect site in Garden Grove and Santa Ana, which is thought to be contaminated by an old railway and industrial waste.

Part of the site is being considered for a future biking and hiking trail that would run along the former Pacific Electric right-of-way corridor, connecting the two cities’ downtowns and linking to the Santa Ana River Trail and the county-wide OC Loop bikeway.

A \$1.5-million grant will

go to the Orange County Council of Governments, which will work with the cities of Anaheim, Orange, Santa Ana and Garden Grove and the nonprofit housing organization NeighborWorks Orange County to review and assess brownfield sites, gather community input and develop plans to clean up contaminated parcels.

The OCCOG will focus much of its attention on three culturally diverse, mixed-income neighborhoods where residents face shortages of affordable housing and quality health care and are disproportionately threatened by pollution: East Anaheim; Orange’s Marlboro neighborhood; the International West and Harbor Boulevard neighborhoods in Garden Grove; and Santa Ana’s Harbor Boulevard neighborhood.

The council has already identified three sites of interest — a 2.2-acre former metals manufacturing facility, a 10,000-square-foot vacant

restaurant building and a 1.4-acre site that used to be home to a furniture manufacturer.

NeighborWorks Orange County, which has offered homebuyer education, homeowner resources and real estate lending services since 1977 and has experience collaborating with local governments, will lead the brownfield assessments and study some parcels as possible locations for affordable housing construction, according to Helen O’Sullivan, the nonprofit’s president and chief executive.

“If we can do something to make that land available and safe for us to build on affordably, then we’re going to want to include that in the assessment process and then work with the cities to plan on that,” O’Sullivan said.

This is the first time that the OCCOG has received a federal grant to study and plan for the cleanup of polluted properties in Orange County, according to Marnie

O’Brien Primmer, the council’s executive director.

But it wouldn’t be the first time that cities in the region have transformed idle, previously polluted land into housing.

In 2001, the Anaheim Redevelopment Agency spearheaded the purchase and cleanup of the site of a former Kwikset Corp. metal-plating plant that left behind petroleum, volatile organic compounds, polychlorinated biphenyls, lead and other toxins. That effort paved the way for the construction of a housing complex with more than 300 units and an adjacent recreational space.

In Los Angeles County, the city of Carson has received a \$500,000 grant to conduct environmental site assessments in three census tracts where residents have been disproportionately affected by climate change, pollution and a lack of affordable housing, health care, clean water and effective wastewater systems.

Two parcels will get top priority — a former gas station and a former landfill where an auto auction facility stands.

“Brownfield sites have long been a burden on our communities, and this funding will help to clean up these areas and revitalize them into thriving community assets that help attract jobs and enhance the quality of life for residents,” Rep. Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-San Pedro), who represents California’s 44th Congressional District, which includes Carson, said in a statement.

The EPA’s Brownfields Program was started in 1995 to remove toxic waste from blighted properties to prepare them for new uses. Its funding has increased with a \$1.5-billion infusion from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and President Biden’s Justice40 Initiative, whose goal is to direct more federal dollars to communities beset by underinvestment and pollution.

Pesticide bill aims to protect children

BY ANABEL SOSA

SACRAMENTO — The state Assembly last week passed legislation that would require farms within a quarter-mile of a school to notify county officials before spraying pesticides.

The intent of Assembly Bill 1864, authored by Assemblymember Damon Connolly (D-San Rafael), is to reduce exposure to pesticides in young children, who are uniquely affected by the carcinogens.

“Strengthening the enforcement of pesticide regulations in school zones is critical to student health, particularly in our rural school districts,” Connolly said. “Children are particularly vulnerable to the health impacts of pesticides, and insufficient enforcement of pesticide regulations disproportionately impacts students of color.”

The legislation now heads to the state Senate for consideration.

Before the Assembly vote Tuesday, Connolly argued that the prevalence of the chemicals near classrooms is a source of anxiety for parents of school-age children in some of the state’s most rural counties where schoolyards and farms often border each other.

Last month a group of teachers and environmental and social justice groups sued Monterey County agriculture officials and state pesticide regulators, alleging that they disregarded children’s health by allowing several farms to use restricted pesticides near three elementary and middle schools, whose students are mostly Latino.

Monterey County ranked seventh among California’s 58 counties for the largest number of pesticides applied, with more than 9 million pounds used on 6.5 million acres. Fresno and Tulare counties are ranked first and second, respectively, according to the California Department of Pesticide Regulation.

A local city council member called it “environmental racism.”

The California Department of Public Health, California Environmental Health Tracking Program and Public Health Institute released a study in 2014 that examined pesticide exposure across 2,511 public schools attended by more than 14 million students. It found that Latino students were disproportionately exposed — 46% were more likely than their white counterparts to attend schools with the highest exposure to pesticide use.

The report found that children in general are more prone to exposure because of three factors: being outside more often, their physiological maturity and their body size. Exposure rates were also found to differ dramatically across counties, mostly because some counties implement different buffer zones for pesticide use or restrict the use of pesticides near certain sensitive locations.

Connolly’s bill would require farmers to submit requests to county agricultural commissioners for authorization to use pesticides within a quarter-mile of a public or private school.

California’s Pesticide Reform, a statewide coalition that wants to restrict pesticide use and a supporter of the bill, said that exposure to pesticides is “linked to acute poisoning and chronic diseases, such as cancer, respiratory disease and developmental disorders in children.”

The California Agriculture Commissioners and Sealers Assn., an organization that provides regulatory services for agricultural production and opposes the bill, argued that the burden of the new enforcement responsibilities would “fall largely on the county’s agricultural commissioners.”

Other opponents include various state and family-run groups including the California Blueberry Assn., the California Strawberry Commission and the Olive Growers Council of California.

Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis launches Democratic PAC

BY JULIA WICK

California Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis has launched an independent political action committee aimed at mobilizing “pro-choice” California voters, defeating Donald Trump and taking back Democratic control of the House of Representatives.

Californians for Choice — which, as a super PAC, is allowed to raise unlimited sums from donors for independent expenditures on races — plans to recruit volunteers across the state to make calls and knock on doors in areas with key congressional contests, according to a statement from the committee.

The PAC will focus on defeating Reps. John Duarte

(R-Modesto), Mike Garcia (R-Santa Clarita), David Valadao (R-Hanford) and Ken Calvert (R-Corona) and replacing them with Democrats.

It also aims to retain Democratic control of Irvine Rep. Katie Porter’s House seat, where Democratic State Sen. Dave Min is competing against Republican Scott Baugh. Instead of running for reelection, Porter made a bid for the U.S. Senate but lost in the March primary.

The PAC launched with a 30-second ad starring Kounalakis in jeans and a blazer, speaking directly to the camera as headlines about abortion restrictions blare in the background.

“I’m building an army to fight back, stand up for

choice and stand up for women,” Kounalakis says.

Californians for Choice has placed an initial ad buy of just over seven figures across digital media and TV, according to David Beltran, a strategist working with the PAC.

Kounalakis, the powerful state politician and former U.S. ambassador to Hungary, has been running in the 2026 gubernatorial race for more than a year, and the ad should enhance her name recognition and burnish her image as a leader on abortion rights.

With Gov. Gavin Newsom termed out in 2026, the race to replace him is already crowded. California Supt. of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, Sen. Toni Atkins (D-San Diego) and



ERIC RISBERG Associated Press

ABORTION rights are key for Eleni Kounalakis.

former state Controller Betty Yee are among those who have thrown their hats in the ring.

State Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta has said he’s considering a gubernatorial bid but hasn’t officially joined the race.

Kounalakis is the daughter of Sacramento real estate magnate Angelo Tsakopoulos.

She and her family have spent generously on political priorities in the past, including her campaign for lieutenant governor.

Kounalakis was first elected as lieutenant governor in 2018 and was reelected in 2022. It’s a relatively under-the-radar office that’s often used as a launching pad for the governor’s mansion. Both Newsom and former Gov. Gray Davis previously served as lieutenant governor.

Paperwork to create Californians for Choice was filed with the Federal Election Commission in mid-April, according to records from the agency.

1,020 reports to California hate-crime hotline in a year

BY ANABEL SOSA

In the year since California launched a hotline for reporting hate crimes, most of the calls were related to race or ethnicity, with 26.8% of calls citing anti-Black bias. The second- and third-most cited incidents involved anti-Latino and anti-Asian bias, state officials announced recently.

The statewide hotline was created to address the uptick in hate crimes across California during the COVID-19 pandemic, by compiling a comprehensive database to track incidents and offer an alternative to police intervention. In the

year since it debuted, the state has received 1,020 reports of hate crimes — including discrimination and harassment claims. Most claims were reported from residences, like at homes or apartment complexes, and at the workplace.

“This program is new. And so this data should not be treated as represented of all acts of hate in our state. We have more work to do,” Kevin Kish, director of the California Civil Rights Department, said during a Monday news conference.

When someone calls they can ask to be connected to mental health services, to get help filing a civil rights complaint, or to get redi-

rected to legal services.

This one-year mark comes on the heels of reported upticks in crimes against Jewish and Palestinian communities and as the state Legislature deliberates a reparations package that aims to remedy the legacy of slavery.

“There is no question that the work on reparations is directly linked to the work on combating hate,” said Becky Monroe, the deputy director for strategic initiatives and external affairs at the California Civil Rights Department. She called the work on hate crime reporting “central” to the state’s reparations plans.

Race and ethnicity bias

were the most cited reasons for calls, accounting for more than one-third of the total calls received, the state’s data show. The second most reported category was related to gender identity, accounting for 15.1% of calls, while sexual orientation-related calls accounted for 10.5%.

Calls related to anti-Jewish violence accounted for 36.9% of religious targeting calls. The second most reported was Hindu bias, which accounted for 23.3% of calls. Anti-Muslim bias accounted for 14.6%, according to the data state officials released.

Asked if reports of religious-based hate crimes

rose in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Israel on Oct. 7 and the ensuing war against Hamas, Monroe said, “We absolutely did see an increase in anti-Jewish, anti-Muslim, anti-Arab American, anti-Palestinian. We saw all of these increase. ... But I hesitate to say I can give you one cause for that.”

She said October was also around the time when they were publicly campaigning for the hotline.

People who dial (833) 866-4283 — or 833-8NO-HATE — can reach trauma-informed care coordinators who work for the program. Translation is offered in more than 200 languages.

Summer COVID season may be starting early

[COVID, from B1] day, an increase from earlier in the spring. There were an average of 60 to 80 new cases a day between March 25 and May 9, L.A. County health officials said in a statement to The Times. The case counts typically reflect tests done at medical facilities and don't include home tests — nor do the tallies account for infections among people who don't test.

"It's too soon to tell if this very small increase in recent days will become a sustained uptick. These case counts are low, making it difficult at this time to assess real trends," the L.A. County Department of Public Health said.

Coronavirus levels in L.A. County wastewater remain relatively stable, at 9% of last winter's peak. But the data in those findings have a significant reporting lag, with the most recent data available being for the 10-day period that ended May 11.

Elsewhere in the state, viral levels in sewage are rising, including in Santa Clara — Northern California's most populous county and the home of Silicon Valley. In recent weeks, coronavirus levels reached the "high" threshold in Palo Alto's sewer shed.

With the summer travel season beginning in earnest this Memorial Day weekend, doctors urged people to consider getting up to date on their vaccinations — particularly if they are at higher risk of severe complications from COVID-19.

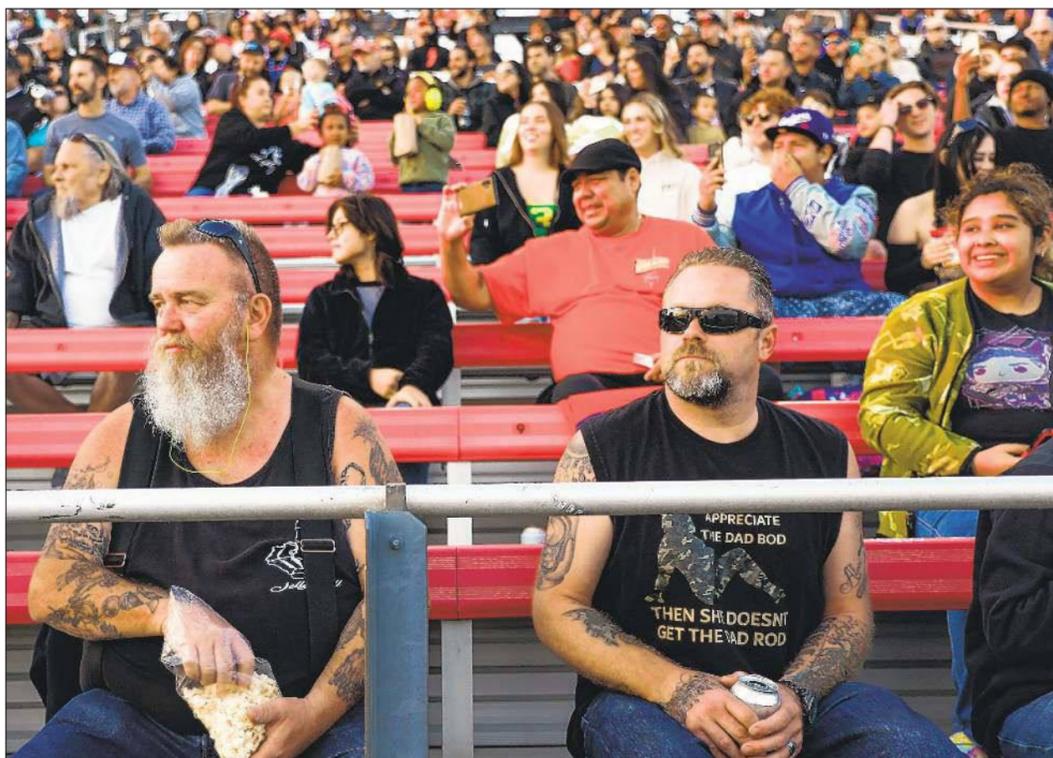
In California, just 36% of seniors ages 65 and older have received the updated COVID-19 vaccine that first became available in September. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has urged everyone ages 6 months and older to get one dose of the updated vaccine. A second dose is also recommended for those ages 65 and older, as long as at least four months have passed since their last shot.

It's especially important that older people get at least one updated dose. Of the patients Chin-Hong has seen recently who had serious COVID, none had gotten an updated vaccine since September, and all were older or immunocompromised.

"We are still seeing individuals hospitalized, and based on CDC data presented in February, more than 95% of those hospitalized had not received the updated 2023-2024 vaccine," the L.A. County Department of Public Health said.

CDC data have shown that getting the updated vaccine offered 54% increased protection against COVID-19 illness compared with those who did not get the shot.

For older people consid-



DAVID LOCKRIDGE, left, and Gary Hoyle watch a race at Irwindale Speedway on May 11. Though public use of face masks has become much less common, doctors say they are still handy tools to prevent infections.

ering a second updated COVID-19 vaccination now, factors to consider include travel plans or whether they have a job where they interact with many people, doctors say. There's plenty of time to get that vaccine now and also get the expected new formulation in the fall.

"By getting your booster now, you're really going to give yourself protection to make it through this likely summer wave," Hudson said.

Even though for many people, COVID no longer means a visit to the hospital, "for some people, it is a big deal," Chin-Hong said. "And those are the people I saw in the hospital — they were very, very sick, and they were there for some time."

Nationally, since the start of October, more than 43,000 people have died of COVID, according to the CDC, including more than 3,400 in California. By contrast, flu has probably resulted in fewer deaths nationally — an estimated 25,000 over the same period.

The risk of death among those hospitalized is higher for those with COVID than those with the flu, especially among older people, according to the L.A. County Department of Public Health.

"When you're in the hospital, lots of other things can happen. ... You can catch hospital-acquired infections. So you always want to prevent hospitalization," Chin-Hong said.

California recently achieved a significant

COVID milestone: zero deaths on a single calendar day, April 2, a feat not achieved since the first days of the pandemic.

Los Angeles County also experienced a new record low for deaths: an average of 0.14 a day over a weekly period, which was recorded for the seven days that ended April 2.

"It is a triumph of science, truly, that we have gotten to a point where we have a day where there are zero COVID deaths," Hudson said, crediting factors such as the development of vaccines and

anti-COVID drugs, along with honing techniques used to treat patients.

Still, "COVID is not just a flu or a cold," Hudson said. "COVID can potentially for some people have very long-lasting impacts. ... Long COVID really makes things different."

There is evolving evidence that the more times you get COVID, the more likely long COVID will develop, Hudson said. And "it does seem like people in their 30s and 40s are the ones who are more likely to get long COVID."

Some patients have been permanently disabled by long COVID, but, Hudson said, "for most people, it does seem — maybe after 12 months, sometimes 18 months — all the symptoms do resolve. But that's a long time to not feel good."

There has been much discussion that long COVID's prevalence is lower than early in the pandemic. But even now, every time someone gets COVID, there's a chance that long COVID can develop.

Some patients "have problems with breathing,"

Hudson said. Others can develop POTS, which stands for postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome and can cause sharp spikes in the heart rate and dizziness.

"Long COVID can affect the autonomic nervous system in ways that we don't 100% understand yet," Hudson said. "But we know that people end up with this particular syndrome, and it can be life-altering."

Besides getting up to date on vaccinations, doctors offered the following advice on preparing for an expected increase in COVID circulation:

■ Avoid sick people. Some sick people might pass off their symptoms as a "cold," when it could be the start of a COVID-19 illness.

■ Test if you're sick, and test daily. It's sometimes taking longer after the onset of illness for a COVID-19 rapid test to show up as positive.

Consider taking a rapid COVID test once a day for three to five consecutive days after the onset of cough-and-cold symptoms, Hudson said. Doing so can help the sickened person take measures to isolate themselves and limit the spread of the illness to others.

■ Have a plan to ask for Paxlovid if you become ill. Paxlovid is an antiviral drug that, when taken by people at risk for severe COVID-19 who have mild-to-moderate illness, reduces the risk of hospitalization and death.

■ Masks are much less common these days than they once were but can still be a handy tool to prevent infection. Wearing a mask on a crowded flight where there are coughing people nearby can reduce the risk of infection.

South Bay residents protest Metro rail plan

[Rail, from B1] backed by Metro staff because it would cost \$800 million less and because it took advantage of already existing transit stations in Redondo Beach and Torrance. Advocates who want to see denser housing and more transit also backed it, as did the city of Torrance.

But the approval came with a caveat, introduced by board member and Inglewood Mayor James Butts, who represents the region on the board: The agency has to come up with refined cost estimates for both routes and an exploration of funding sources, and study issues raised by community members during the recent environmental process. Those include vibration from trains, proximity to homes, moving of jet fuel pipes that run near homes and any residential displacement.

"The game is not over," Butts told the crowd, which was clearly deflated by the vote. "What this means in essence is that we live to fight another day."

Lawndale and Redondo Beach warned they would explore legal options should the ROW route move forward.

But the action by Butts offered some reason for optimism.

"This will shed some light on how much it's going to cost to relocate those fuel pipes or protect them," Redondo Beach Council member Zein Obagi said after the meeting. "That potentially could really push the budgeting of those projects."

Although the decision, decades in the making, is not final, it paves the way for final environmental clearances necessary to build. Those studies can take more than a year and seldom are dashed, making a course reversal unlikely.

Still, Supervisor Holly Mitchell said that "this isn't the end of the process" and pointed out that Metro has previously ditched projects — pointing to the reversal of the 710 Freeway expansion.

Mitchell, who represents



THE K LINE runs along Crenshaw. The proposed South Bay line would eventually be part of the K Line.

the South Bay, had earlier delayed the vote and made efforts to find available funds. She said next time the project returns to the board, she expects to see details of how it can be paid for and what kind of community improvements it will include.

Estimated to cost roughly \$2.23 billion, the project is one of several ambitious rail projects the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority is undertaking in the coming years. It has stirred an emotionally charged debate in the region over where rail lines should be, what it will mean to the communities they traverse and how Metro addresses residents' concerns. The line, while extending off what is now the C Line, will eventually be a segment of the yet-to-be-completed K Line, creating an even more complex transit network.

"It's just exhausting," said Niki Negrete-Mitchell, who owns a Redondo Beach home along one of the proposed routes and has gone to dozens of meetings to voice her opposition. "It's killing me. If this thing were to happen ... I personally would need to be relocated."

Negrete-Mitchell, 65, is one of the hundreds of residents who live along a freight rail corridor Metro purchased in 1993 when the specter of rail expansion began to take shape. For years, she said, only one train a day would pass by. Neighbors would use the corridor to let

dogs run and take walks. There was even talk about making the land into a parkway. Many like Negrete-Mitchell, who bought her home 16 years ago, didn't know or grasp Metro's plan. When she went to her first community meeting, she was in disbelief.

Since then she has been part of a group of residents who have dogged the agency, attending public meetings to argue that its assessments don't paint the full picture of the challenges the route poses behind homes. The group said it has gotten more than 1,500 signatures of residents opposed.

The chosen extension proposal runs along a BNSF freight corridor. If built out for Metro, passenger rail cars would run all day between the Redondo Beach (Marine) station and a newly built Redondo Beach Transit Center, with a southern terminus at the Mary K. Giordano Regional Transit Center in Torrance. Neighbors complain that the corridor is too narrow.

Metro's staff argues that a configuration of that route, putting a rail line alongside freight tracks, while adding grade separations near elementary schools at 170th and East 182nd streets, is the most cost-effective and least disruptive of the different options considered. Torrance supports the choice, but the Daily Breeze reported its City Council is divided.

"We understand the con-

cerns of noise to adjacent community along with safety concerns," Torrance Mayor George Chen told a Metro committee considering the item ahead of the vote. The ROW path, he pointed out, leverages the millions in funding the region has sunk into two transit stations recently opened, one in Redondo Beach and the other in Torrance, that will feed into rail.

Negrete-Mitchell and residents near the corridor disagree. They fought for another route, an elevated path down a median of Hawthorne Boulevard, a six-lane Caltrans-owned state highway that runs through Torrance and Lawndale.

The line runs from the Redondo Beach station and cuts across the 405 Freeway before heading south down Hawthorne Boulevard. That route would take it to a station near the South Bay Galleria before the same endpoint in Torrance. The owners of the plaza support that route and plan to build housing near the line. But staff reports show the route would cost nearly \$3 billion.

"This is infrastructure that's going to be here for the next 100 years," said Redondo Beach Mayor Jim Light. "You want to build it right, not fast and cheap. We should be doing it to maximize ridership."

These are arguments the agency will continue to contend with, said Ethan Elkind, who a decade ago published the book "Railtown: The Fight for the Los Angeles Metro Rail and the Future of the City." When rail was being built in Los Angeles in the '80s and '90s, there was a rule of thumb: You didn't want to build in areas with more than 50% homeownership rates because residents would have the resources to fight against the rail lines.

The pushback from cities can tie up projects. "The issue is so hyperlocal," Elkind said. "It's kind of an insane system that we have. You're basically asking for dysfunction when it's so decentralized, and there's so many veto points."

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Long Beach mulls short-term rental bans

[Long Beach, from B1] count, but there are something like 755 homes, and we just got enough signatures," Oliver said. "I heard it was close, and I don't have confirmation of the final vote, but I was informed [last week] that we succeeded."

Oliver's victory was the culmination of nearly a year of work that included calls to the city's complaint hotline, speaking with a council member and founding an online advocacy group, the Long Beach Safe Neighborhood Coalition.

For months, coalition members commiserated on the social media site Nextdoor about their frustrations with short-term rentals, gathering momentum for a ban.

"The common theme that we kept running into was that this was a big deal for many residents, and almost all of us got the run-around from the city of Long Beach," Oliver said. "They didn't seem to care."

As short-term rentals have spread, responses across Southern California have varied.

In Palm Springs, short-term rentals were capped in certain high-demand neighborhoods, leading to a drop in home prices.

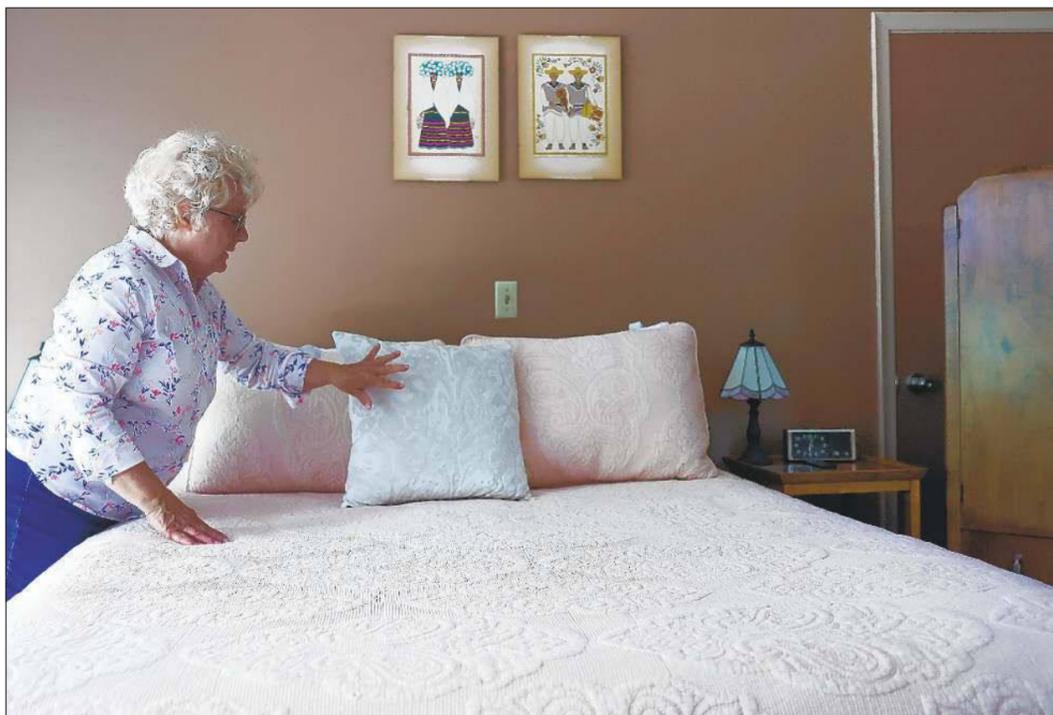
In Orange County, Anaheim requires a minimum stay of three nights to avoid frequent disturbances, while Seal Beach has limited short-term rentals to 31 units in the coastal zone south of Westminster Boulevard.

Last year, Lakewood banned such rentals altogether.

Similarly, Long Beach banned unhosted short-term rentals in the early days of the pandemic.

But that ordinance was loosened to allow for 800 short-term rentals at non-primary residences. There are 626 such rentals registered in the city, according to the Community Development Department. Jean Young, a 67-year-old technical writer, is among the property owners.

"I'm a part-time writer, and the income from rentals



JEAN YOUNG makes the bed in her guest room, which can be rented on Airbnb. "There's all this room in my house to share," she said of the property in the Bixby Knolls neighborhood. "It would be sad to lose that ability."

just smooths out the rough edges and has been wonderful," she said.

Young splits her time between her three-bedroom, two-bathroom home in Long Beach's affluent Bixby Knolls neighborhood and one in the sprawling senior living community at Leisure World in Seal Beach, where she spends three or four months out of the year.

She began renting out part of her Long Beach home 11 years ago to JetBlue and Southwest flight attendants, then turned it into a place of refuge for traveling nurses during COVID-19. Now Young hosts physical therapists and medical residents. Sometimes, she rents out the entire place.

"My son has since moved on to college, and my mother passed away, so there's all this room in my house to share," she said. "It would be sad to lose that ability."

Young said she understands the backlash from community members. The

Jan. 2 shooting next to Oliver's home on Kallin Avenue was an "abomination," she said, but a citywide ban on short-term rentals would be "damaging."

Oliver said he initially tried other means.

He called the city's hotline to complain about his neighbor's rental, "but nothing was ever enforced." He reached out to a council member and the city attorney. Eventually, he went grassroots.

"There were two previous petition drives that failed," he said, "so I wasn't sure if we would have success."

Whenever he was discouraged, he would think back to encounters with rowdy neighbors.

In December, he spoke with 20-somethings from Texas staying at his neighbor's house, because the "insane amount of marijuana they were smoking" was floating into his home, he said. "They said recreational marijuana wasn't allowed in

Texas, and they were going to take advantage of their time here."

A few weeks later, on Jan. 2, a man standing in front of a rental in the 800 block of Kallin Avenue was shot in the lower body by an unknown gunman, according to Long Beach police. The shooting is under investigation.

The home had been listed on Peerspace, an online marketplace for hourly rentals, Oliver said. The victim tried to climb Oliver's fence and smeared blood on the gate as he crossed into the yard.

"My house was closed for hours due to an investigation," Oliver said.

As momentum for his petition grew, help came from unexpected places.

Better Neighbors LA, a coalition of hosts, tenants, housing activists, hotel workers and community members, footed Oliver's \$1,050 petition fee with the city.

"BNLA is happy to support neighbors like Andy in Long Beach as well as people and groups across Los Angeles County who want reasonable regulations on an out-of-control industry that affects their neighborhoods," the group said in a statement.

Oliver said the group is funding efforts to ban unhosted short-term rentals in nine other Long Beach communities, including El Dorado Park, Naples and South of Conant.

Stephen Carr, a freelance photographer, is leading the South of Conant effort. He said the ban was necessary after his neighbor's home, listed on Airbnb, "turned into a hotel."

One weekend last summer, guests who were in town for an electronic dance music festival stayed up every night.

"The music is blaring. There's screaming and drunkenness spilling out into the front and back

lawns till 3 a.m.," he said. "One of the guests actually apologized the next day, but then they partied again till 4 a.m."

Carr said he called police, who would only issue warnings. He tried the city's complaint hotline but never received a call back.

Eventually, he found Oliver on Nextdoor and linked up with Better Neighbors LA, which funded his \$1,050 petition fee.

"There's no regulation, no help coming from anywhere," Carr said.

Airbnb, Peerspace, Vrbo and other platforms that host rental listings in Long Beach say they have outlets for residents to voice concerns and point out problems.

Airbnb cited a city report in April that said the majority of its operators were "meeting compliance standards" and there was "proactive and reactive" enforcement against violations.

The company has a "community disturbance policy" that bans parties and events that are disruptive, open-invite and draw excessive noise, visitors, trash, littering and smoking, among other issues.

Neighbors witnessing violations are encouraged to reach out to Airbnb's support staff, a spokesperson said.

Peerspace, meanwhile, said its venues, including homes, photo studios, storefronts and banquet halls, are rented on an hourly basis. Unlike Airbnb and Vrbo, it does not permit overnight bookings.

Peerspace said it takes neighbor concerns seriously and asks anyone experiencing complications to reach out to its trust and safety team.

Peerspace said it had no listing for the home on Kallin Avenue on Jan. 2, when the shooting victim climbed into Oliver's yard.

Vrbo recommends that neighbors with complaints first attempt to address them with the host. It suggests filling out a company complaint form if a resolution can't be found.



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A wellness visit to famed ancient sequoia

[Lopez, from B1] can use maybe 800 to 1,000 gallons of water in a single day," Ambrose said.

"Giant sequoias are typically thought of as being very resistant to pests and pathogens. ... And now ... the one-two punch of fire and drought is actually making them vulnerable to beetle attack, when previously they were able to fight them off."

A depressing thought, no doubt, especially given the role humans have played in the declining state of the planet's health.

But it's impossible to stand in the center of a magnificent grove of giant trees that are thousands of years old and experience only darkness, especially on a day when morning light slices through the verdant canopy near the summit of Sequoia National Park.

I was reminded of John Steinbeck's description of the sequoias' Northern California cousins, the coast redwoods:

"The redwoods, once seen, leave a mark or create a vision that stays with you always," Steinbeck wrote in "Travels With Charley." "From them comes silence and awe. ... They are ambassadors from another time."

Human time, in fact, is transformed by the enduring wonder of these treasures, and 70 doesn't seem so old.

"I feel like I'm 21 again," said 65-year-old Sheree Keohen of Huntington Beach, who was visiting the park with her husband, Mike, 69.

"We could be fighting like cats and dogs, but once you hit the national park, forget it," said Sheree. "You just forget any bills you have. Whatever it might be, you don't think about it once you hit this beautiful scenery."

"This is the thing you'll remember when you die, and who knows, it might be tomorrow," said Mike. "I can't remember the years the Lakers won the championship, but I can remember going to see the redwoods."

Larry Holland, 77, of St. Louis was visiting the park with his family and had the same feeling about the magic of the spectacle before him. There's an arrogance to our sense of importance and an illusion of control over our own destiny, he said, but we're here and gone in a flash, preceded and survived by these



Photographs by GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

ANCIENT FOREST SOCIETY tree doctors used ropes and pulleys to scale the General Sherman tree. Once virtually immune to the threat of bark beetles, the giant trees have been left susceptible by climate change.

gods of longevity.

"It makes you feel how small you really are," said Holland.

Wendy Baxter, tree canopy ecologist and co-founder of the Ancient Forest Society, was about to climb the General Sherman and conduct the health check, but she took a moment to reflect on the majesty of her subjects.

"I'm inspired by their resilience — just the fact that this organism has been growing here in the same location for more than 2,000 years is incredibly humbling," Baxter said. "And I think they provide an example for all of us on how, if you live your life within your means, if you live well and if you have the resources you need, you can be healthy and live to a good, long old age."

The trees have been pretty good stewards of the planet, providing free lodging to spotted owls, Pacific fishers, flying squirrels and a host of other tenants while nurturing the ground beneath them and spawning new life.

We, on the other hand, haven't been the greatest custodians, especially in the last couple of hundred years, as changes in an increasingly energy-dependent world have made the great trees less resilient, said Baxter.



BOTANIST Cameron B. Williams performs a wellness check in the canopy of the General Sherman tree, the world's largest by volume, in Sequoia National Park.

"We've recorded 40 large Sequoia deaths" in just a few years, said Christy Brigham, chief of resources management and science for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. The trees' "relationship with the landscape" is changing, she said, as a tiny beetle conspires with climate change to bring down the giant ambassadors.

"We have never before seen beetles able to kill an entire large, mature sequoia," Brigham said. "That is our concern here today."

That, along with the drought-deluge cycle that has become the norm, with wildfires that have obliterated millions of trees and ozone levels that foul even the national parks we've long escaped to for a breath of fresh air.

A recent report by the National Parks Conservation Assn. found that 97% of the nation's national parks suffer from ozone pollution, with Sequoia and Kings Canyon topping the list.

The popularity of the

forest is part of the problem.

Visitors flock here from around the world to stand before trees that count their age in centuries, rooted in the soil of a spinning orb that's flying through space. The visitors speak different languages and bring different life experiences and political views to this altar of natural wonder, where they gaze up and fall silent, united in reverence. It's inspiring to see that for all our differences, what we cherish can be a unifying force.

"When I was younger, I would find solace ... and resilience in nature. You see ... the renewal that takes place, and it's just been a very calming part of my life," said Clay Jordan, who knew early on what he wanted to do when he grew up and now serves, at 62, as superintendent of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

For Jordan, the sequoias still are symbols of stability, serenity and perseverance. But he told me he no longer takes them for granted and knows we can all play a role in preserving them, for his grandchildren and for our own.

"I may even appreciate these trees more," Jordan said, "because I now recognize a vulnerability ... that has not existed for the last couple of thousand years."

The scientists from Ancient Forest Society, along with other members of the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, are on the case, using drones, satellite imagery and tree-climbing inspections to greater understand the vulnerability and come up with strategies to save the trees.

When the tree doctors had completed the General Sherman's physical exam, they scaled back down to earth to share the results with park officials, forest service representatives and other interested parties, including the Save the Redwoods League.

"I have good news to report," said Ambrose.

Despite evidence of "attempted entry holes" in branches throughout the crown of the tree, the beetles "don't seem to have been very successful," as they have been in foraging on nearby sequoias.

The General Sherman, said Ambrose, is valiantly holding forth, defying the ravages of time.

The tree "seems to be very vigorous, the foliage is very healthy, and it looks really good."

Twenty-two hundred years old and counting.

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GOLDEN STATE

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Shirley S Mikami

November 7, 1947 - May 8, 2024

Shirley S. Mikami passed away after a brave fight against cancer on May 8, 2024, at home in Torrance, CA. She was born in Los Angeles and grew up in Gardena. After graduating from Gardena High School in 1965, she ventured off to the Hills of Westwood at UCLA and earned her bachelor's degree in 1969. Shirley used her ability to connect with people in a long successful career in human resources. In retirement, she enjoyed lunching with friends, walking at the botanical gardens, traveling, line and Ondo dancing, and attending family gatherings. She was an avid sports fan and loved cheering on the UCLA Bruins, Angels, Dodgers, and Shohei. She was the key helper for her sister Lynn's art projects and IT needs. Her friends and family will dearly miss her extraordinary gift of making people smile and laugh.

Shirley was preceded in death by her father Satoshi (Mike) Mikami and her mother Toshie (Mildred) Mikami. She is survived by her brother Richard Mikami (Ann); sisters Meiko Inaba, Carol Matsuura, and Lynn Mikami; and many nieces, nephews and cousins who adored her.

Per Shirley's request, a Celebration of Life will take place this summer. In lieu of flowers and/or koden please consider donating to the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute at jci-gardena.org.



Richard David Maloof

January 17, 1940 - May 1, 2024

Richard Maloof is best known as the bass & tuba player from The Lawrence Welk Show. He also worked with Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles, Maureen McGovern, Mel Torme, & Henry Mancini.

Richard was born in Sacramento, CA, the oldest of 4 children. When a 3rd grade teacher recognized his talent for music it changed his life. At 20 he toured with Carmen Cavallaro. While in the U.S. Army he was stationed in Colorado with the prestigious NORAD Commanders Band. After his discharge he was hired to join the Lawrence Welk TV show, still seen today on PBS.

Richard loved good jazz, making music with his friends, a vodka martini with 2 olives, oysters on the half shell, the Philadelphia Eagles, and time spent with family & treasured friends.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years (Mary Lou), his brother, Terry, his sister Carolyn, nieces Paris Bury & Laura Burton, & nephew Scott Maloof & their wonderful spouses & children. He was pre-deceased by his sister Darlene.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, June 8 at 11:00AM at the North Hollywood Church of Religious Science, 6161 Whitsett Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91606.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Richard's memory to Cal Stare LA Foundation, Bldg.8381 Attn: Susan Moreno

5151 State University Dr., LA, CA 90032



Vitalis J Lembertas

April 11, 1933 - May 11, 2024

Vitalis J. Lembertas passed from his earthly life into the arms of Heaven on May 11, 2024. He was born to Pranas Pinkeviciute on April 11, 1933 in Kaunas, Lithuania. Fleeing the Russian invasion of their homeland during WWII, Vitalis and family ultimately passed through Ellis Island to settle in Massachusetts. Vitalis served in the US Army Reserve during the Korean War, and earned a Master's degree in engineering at Boston University. In 1958 he married Dana Daukantas with whom he had 2 daughters, Audra and Brigitta, who they raised in Santa Monica, CA, and were active in the Santa Monica & Los Angeles Lithuanian community. Vitalis worked in the aeronautical defense industry until retirement. Regular family road trips passed on his love of the outdoors to his daughters. Dana passed in 1999, and in 2009 Vitalis married Nijole Vitkauskaitė, with whom he shared a love for choral singing, travel, social participation in and support for the still vibrant Los Angeles Lithuanian church and community, where he was a generous supporter. He was much beloved, and is survived by his wife Nijole, daughter Audra & family (Steve Hotchkiss, Logan, Kennan) daughter Brigitta & family (Glenn Hopkins, Sedona (James Roznos, Faye) Cheyenne (Keith Bisiaux, Charles), Bryce)

Visitation Friday May 31, 4 to 8 pm Pierce Brothers Westwood Village, 1218 Glendon Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90024. Rosary and Funeral Mass Saturday June 1 at 11 am, St Casimir's Church 2718 St George St, Los Angeles, CA 90027. In lieu of flowers, please donate in his name to St Casimir's Catholic Church and/or St. Casimir Lithuanian School at 2718 St George St, Los Angeles, CA 90027

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Los Angeles Times



Judy Citron

July 9, 1944 - May 12, 2024

On Mother's Day, May 12, 2024, the beautiful, tiny, but mighty Judith Ann "Judy" Citron was escorted to heaven by the angels -- a fitting farewell for our beloved and cherished mother of four and grandmother of eight.

Judy was born on July 9, 1944, at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington D.C., the first child of Dorothy and Henry Clatterbuck. Shortly after WWII, her family relocated to Phoenix, AZ, where her childhood was filled with music, dance, fashion, and a special devotion to her pets, especially her pet skunk, affectionately known as "Stinky."

From a young age, Judy's beauty and charisma shone brightly. She won a beauty pageant, earning the title of Miss Paris, Scottsdale's sister city, sparking a lifelong passion for all things French. She became an accomplished French chef, studying under renowned chefs, including Julia Child and Roger Verge, mastering the art of French cuisine. She loved her many trips to France and the pleasures of speaking the language and enjoying their fine wines.

Judy pursued her love of fashion at Stephens College before moving to Los Angeles to work at Bullocks. There, in the City of Angels, she met the love of her life, Joel Citron. Their serendipitous meeting, thanks to a matchmaking apartment manager, led to a first date the Monday after Joel completed his bar exam. Less than six months later, they married, beginning a remarkable 59-year journey of love and devotion.

Family was Judy's greatest priority. She was the heart of the Citron family, instilling confidence, love, and determination in her four children. She never missed a game, recital, or match, always volunteering at her children's schools. Her infectious smile could light up any room, making everyone in her orbit feel instantly welcome. To her children's friends, she was a second mother, always opening her home with warmth and generosity. She had a true gift for entertaining, hosting festive Christmas Eve parties and transforming her backyard into the heart of countless celebrations. Her home was a haven of joy and hospitality, where memories were made and cherished by all who were fortunate enough to know her.

Judy's commitment to community service was unwavering and there was no cause too great for her to champion. She served as a docent for Mayor Tom Bradley early in her career and later on, dedicated countless hours to charities, including the National Charity League (where she served as President), the House Institute, ARCS, the Children's Museum, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Las Floristas, and the Irene Dunne Guild at St. John's Hospital. Traveling was another of Judy's passions. She cherished annual family trips to Hawaii and global adventures with Joel, making lifelong friends along the way. Paris, however, always held a special place in her heart as her favorite foreign city.

Judy's life was a testament to love, dedication, and joy. Her legacy lives on through her family and the countless lives she touched with her generosity and spirit. She leaves behind a world made brighter by her presence and a family eternally grateful for her love.

Judy is survived by her husband, Joel, her children, Tom, Nancy, James and Katy, and her eight beloved grandchildren. A Celebration of Life will be held on Bastille Day, July 14, 2024. Please contact the family, or email friends@judy citron@gmail.com to be added to the guest list. Judy's family would like to thank her devoted caregivers, Alejandra, Laura, Jessica, and Malka, for their loving care. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests donations be made on her online tribute page (www.pledge.to/judy), which features nonprofits close to Judy's heart. All donations are tax-deductible and your generous contributions will honor her memory and support causes she deeply cared about.

Phyllis Adler

Mount Sinai Mem Parks - H. Hills 800-600-0076 www.mountsinainaparks.org

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Dana Schwartz

January 30, 1935 - May 9, 2024

Dana Schwartz, loving wife, mother, grandmother, philanthropist, Holocaust survivor and matriarch, died peacefully in her sleep surrounded by loved ones Thursday, May 9 in Los Angeles. She was 89 years old.

Born Danuta "Danusia" Szapira on January 30, 1935 in Lvov, Poland, she emigrated to the United States in late 1949 and settled in Los Angeles.

Dana's earliest experiences shaped her future. She was just 4 when World War II broke out. Forced to separate from her father after escaping an horrific ghetto, she and her mother hid in forests and farm buildings, concealing their Jewish identities and narrowly avoiding capture and death many times over. Enduring unspeakable evil and physical and emotional trauma, they miraculously outlasted the war. Many years later she confirmed her father's murder in the Janowska death camp. Soon after relocating to Los Angeles, she tragically lost her mother to cancer, leaving her an orphaned teenager.

A graduate of UCLA, Dana later earned an MFCC and counseled many people through the years. From the 1970's to the present, Dana was involved with Holocaust education. Her commitment to "never forget" the atrocities of the Holocaust, and to make the world a better place through education, generosity of spirit, and hospitality grew with each passing year.

A very active member of the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust, she was one of the original members of the Holocaust Museum LA and served on the Board of Directors and as Vice Chair of the Board. In 1994 she became the first interviewer and subsequently the first trainer-evaluator of interviewers for the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. Now known as the USC Shoah Foundation, its "mission is to develop empathy, understanding and respect through testimony," which dovetailed perfectly with Dana's mission in life. She spent thousands of hours lecturing students from middle school through graduate school about her inspirational personal story, garnering thousands of thank you letters.

Together with her late husband, Dr. Wilbur Schwartz, and eight other like-minded couples, she co-founded the Concern Foundation - dedicated to funding cancer research in Israel and around the world. She was awarded an Honorary Fellowship at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Her ultimate passion was celebrating life with family and friends. Her favorite saying was, "The best revenge against evil is to fill the world with love and live a great life." Dana loved the greater Los Angeles community and was grateful for the dream that America allowed her to manifest. She literally made the world a better place for all, and will be greatly missed.

Dana is survived by sons Steven, Richard and Jonathan Schwartz, daughters-in-law Jennifer and Rebecca, granddaughters Lana and Sara, and grandsons Harrison, Sidney, Wilson and Micah.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made to The Holocaust Museum LA, The USC Shoah Foundation, or the Concern Foundation.



Linda Thacher BELL

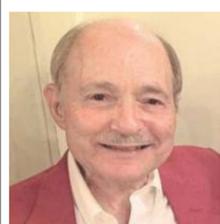
September 25, 1942 - May 11, 2024

Linda Thacher Bell, born Sept 25, 1942 in New York City, New York passed away peacefully on May 11, 2024.

Daughter of Marion Lockhart of New York and Thomas Radar Bell of Tennessee, Linda spent her first 8 years in New York, her second 8 years in North Carolina, and then came out West for her college education at Occidental College in Eagle Rock, California.

Linda became a stockbroker, and after a successful career of over 30 years, she retired in 1999 and moved to be with Michael Lloyd in Manhattan Beach. Linda and Mike were married in 2004, and they lived the next 20 years loving each other's company cruising on the high seas.

Linda will be sorely missed by her many friends and loving husband and family for her bubbly, intelligent and caring personality. Bless her for eternity.



Martin R. Chetron

Martin Ronald Chetron, (Marty), passed away earlier this month from complications of heart disease. He was a devoted father and husband and will be dearly missed by his wife of 67 years, Jane, and their 2 daughters, Danit and Nancy. Marty's education included a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from MIT and an MBA from USC. His interests and hobbies included sports, music, travel, sailing, and gardening. He played basketball and baseball and was an avid Dodgers fan. After many happy years in La Canada, Marty and Jane moved to Laguna Hills. Marty made many new friends in the community and loved taking classes in art and poetry. A private celebration of life will be held in June. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to MIT or the American Heart Association.



William Nam

February 21, 1989 - April 27, 2024

William "Will" Nam, 35, of Newport Beach, passed away in his home on April 27th, 2024.

Those who knew Will knew that he was someone who always went out of his way for others. He loved to see people he knew around the community; he always took the time and effort to give everyone his full attention when they were together, and liked to make small unexpected gestures that made others feel seen and cared for. Everyone who was fortunate enough to be close to him had their lives changed by knowing him, and his loss leaves a chasm that can never be filled.

A California native, Will also wanted to experience other places, and the opportunity arose when he was accepted to McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Already in a long distance relationship with his then-girlfriend Yolande, who was herself attending McGill, this gave Will even more reason to explore what was beyond California's borders. Will met his future wife on an online forum about driving manual transmission cars. They started talking one day, and never stopped, never missing a single day of conversation from the age of 17 to 35.

When it came time for Will to go back to California, Yolande accompanied him so that he would not be making the cross-country drive alone. After having lingered in California, and mutually dreading a return to a long distance relationship, Will asked Yolande to marry him and stay in the US with him. Will and Yolande got married at the historic Old Santa Ana Courthouse on July 13th, 2010.

Will held multiple positions throughout his career, with his time at a startup in Santa Monica - called Bestcovery - being the first long term job. His intelligence and penchant to quickly get to the bottom of things led him to become a foundational member at the company.

When it was time to move onto something new, he entered the automotive world. Will was extremely passionate about cars and driving, and spent several years working at different brands, with a preference and talent for the higher end brands. His last position in the automotive industry was at Porsche Newport Beach; he had set a goal for himself years prior that he would one day work with Porsche, so this was a goal achieved. Although the hours were long and the work was physically demanding, he loved the exposure to the clients and the cars.

Will left Porsche Newport Beach because he was offered a new opportunity - a chance to take up the reins of an old friend - Bestcovery, which has now partnered with the Los Angeles Times. The personal investment he had already made in the company years prior moved Will to accept the offer. After Covid hit, Will was able to work remotely from home - a welcome respite after years of long hours and long commutes. Lunch and hugs from Yolande didn't hurt, either.

Outside of work, Will loved to spend time with his wife Yolande above all else; enjoying a drink, sharing a home-cooked meal, watching shows together, making plans for the future, and just talking and enjoying each other's company into the late hours of the night.

Will was also deeply committed to martial arts, and was an active member of Kuk Sool Kwan Hapkido in Irvine. He had begun collecting martial arts paraphernalia and books and would come home from Hapkido class excited to show Yolande all the new things he had learned - always wanting to talk about and demonstrate both the theory and practice of everything he was working on.

His hobbies included finding shade whenever Yolande convinced him to join her on a sunshine-filled trip to the beach or on a walk, finding ways to make electronics and other setups at home better and more efficient, reading and learning about every single thing he could, somehow picking up new languages in a matter of days, drinking iced coffee, and snacking on way too many mint chocolates.

If he wasn't reading, at Japkiido class, or spending time with his wife, Will also enjoyed playing video games, and just about any activity where he had the opportunity to exercise his intellect and improve his skills. He also had quite the green thumb, and had a small collection of carnivorous plants on his desk. While he credited Yolande for the small jungle that was being built up at home, he was the most integral part of keeping everything and everyone around him thriving.

He is survived by his wife, Yolande Detheux of Newport Beach, his parents Joseph and Josephina Nam of Fontana, his sister Elizabeth Nam of Fontana, his mother-in-law Carol Porteous of Victoria BC, his father-in-law Jean Detheux of Montreal, his brother-in-law Georges Detheux of Montreal, and members of the extended family.

Will was a pillar of strength and generosity for those closest to him, and his passing is an immeasurable loss to us all.



Hugh Ellsworth Knowlton

1943-2024

Mr. Style aka Sue D. aka Senior Jumper (to his adored Junior Jumper), beloved father, grandfather, brother, uncle, friend and husband. We know he's already making people laugh in heaven and likely squint-butted through the pearly gates. He remained astute and kept his wonderful sense of the absurd to the very end. We will miss him profoundly. Go Hawkeyes!

In lieu of flowers we ask that you consider a donation to: www.labellefoundation.org

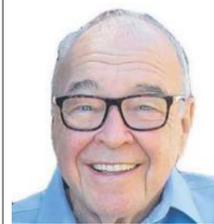
Sr. Julia Costello, DMJ

May 2, 1930 - May 7, 2024

+ COSTELLO, SR. JULIA, Daughters of Mary and Joseph. Julia, one of six children, was born May 2, 1930, to James and Ellen Mahedy Costello. She grew up in a farming family in Longford, Ireland. Julia entered the Daughters of Mary and Joseph in 1948 and came to the U.S. in 1951. She died on May 7, 2024 at Torrance Memorial Hospital. Julia is dearly missed by her DMJ Community who fondly remember her gracious and peaceful presence, her sister Celine (Ireland), numerous nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews, and her many friends. She is predeceased by her parents and four siblings: Mary, Julia, Bridget, and Jimmy. Julia was a quiet mentor and trusted friend to everyone. A woman of many talents, Julia was called to various ministries: teaching and principalship in San Francisco at St. Michael's and Morning Star Schools; in Los Angeles Archdiocese at Precious Blood, and St. Bernard's High School. Because of Julia's gift for spiritual direction and leadership, she was chosen to be Novice Director first in Ireland in the 1970s and later in California in the '80s. These assignments were followed by a call to be House of Prayer Director, Camarillo, and Director of the Mary and Joseph Retreat Center, Rancho Palos Verdes. That was the beginning of 35 years of retreat ministry. In addition to all her roles, Julia was formation Director for the DMJ Associates. In her retirement years, she lived at Marian Residence in Rancho Palos Verdes. After a fall and surgery last winter, Julia spent a few months at Marycrest Nursing Home, Culver City, and Lomita Care Center. We are deeply grateful for the loving care given to Julia at each of these facilities. Mass of Christian Burial will take place May 28th, 10:30 a.m. Mary and Joseph Retreat Center Chapel. Memorials in Sister Julia's name may be made to Daughters of Mary and Joseph Retirement Fund, 5300 Crest Rd., Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275-5004.

Gary Levine

Mount Sinai Mem Parks - Simi Valley 800-600-0076 www.mountsinainaparks.org



Donald Steven Meyer

April 14, 1942 - April 28, 2024

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Don. He was a man of immense humor and wisdom, cherishing every moment spent with his loved ones. He is survived by his beloved wife Sandi, his daughter's Jennifer and Natalie, their husbands Jeff and Tyler and his 5 grandchildren. Services will be held at Ascension Lutheran Church in TO June 1, at 2:30 PM.

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THE WEATHER

Today in Southern California

Morning low clouds: Building upper-level high pressure, though weak, will allow an upward trend in temperatures Sunday and Memorial Day. Clouds Sunday morning will give way to sunshine relatively quickly, though there may be only partial clearing at the coast. On Monday morning, only coastal areas will see clouds. The afternoon will be comfortable for outdoor activities.

5-day forecasts

High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin	Valleys	Beaches	Mountains	Deserts
Today	72 55 Clouds, then sun	72 55 Clearing and cool	68 56 Decreasing clouds	71 39 Sunshine	96 68 Lots of sunshine
Monday	Mostly sunny 74/57	Mostly sunny 76/56	Mostly sunny 66/55	Mostly sunny 72/41	Breezy 99/70
Tuesday	Partly sunny 73/57	Mostly sunny 78/57	Mostly sunny 66/56	Mostly sunny 73/45	Sunny 101/69
Wednesday	Partly sunny 74/58	Sunny 80/58	Some sun 71/57	Mostly sunny 75/45	Sun; warm 97/68
Thursday	Partly sunny 75/61	Mostly sunny 78/57	Partly sunny 69/58	Cooler 73/39	Sunny 99/71

Air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO
Inner waters: Wind southwest 5-10 knots. Wind waves 2 feet or less. Mixed swell west 3 feet at 6 seconds and south 2 feet at 14 seconds.
Surf zone: The risk of strong rip currents is moderate at all area beaches but low at S.B. County beaches.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	1-2'	6 sec	W	58
Ventura	2-4'	10 sec	SW	58
Los Angeles	2-4'	10 sec	SW	60
Orange	2-4'	10 sec	SW	60
San Diego	2-4'	10 sec	SW	63

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

Time	Height	Direction
Today 1:25p	3.2 Hi	6:24a -0.8 Lo
11:22p	5.8 Hi	4:47p 2.7 Lo
Mon. 2:33p	3.3 Hi	7:16a -0.6 Lo
-----	-----	5:45p 2.9 Lo

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people
 Las Vegas, 10 Phoenix, 10
 Los Angeles, 10 San Francisco, 10

California cities*

City	Sat.			Today			Mon.		
	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Prcp.
Anaheim	69	57	--	73	56	--	76	56	--
Avalon/Catalina	60	54	--	64	55	--	67	59	--
Bakersfield	81	56	--	86	60	--	91	62	--
Barstow	85	57	--	92	61	--	97	67	--
Big Bear Lake	66	36	--	71	39	--	72	41	--
Bishop	84	48	--	87	50	--	89	50	--
Burbank	69	54	--	70	55	--	74	56	--
Camarillo	70	58	--	71	55	--	67	55	--
Chatsworth	70	54	--	72	54	--	77	56	--
Chino	71	54	--	77	53	--	81	52	--
Compton	68	58	--	71	56	--	72	57	--
Dana Point	67	58	--	66	56	--	66	55	--
Death Valley	98	88	--	100	91	--	106	96	--
Del Mar	66	56	--	60	53	--	62	57	--
Escondido	69	54	--	69	53	--	74	52	--
Eureka	57	44	02	57	46	57	49	49	--
Fallbrook	68	54	--	70	53	--	76	51	--
Fullerton	80	53	--	85	58	--	90	60	--
Hemet	71	58	--	72	57	--	74	58	--
Hesperia	70	50	--	77	50	--	82	50	--
Huntington Beach	68	48	--	81	53	--	84	56	--
Idyllwild	66	60	--	66	58	--	66	57	--
Irvine	60	50	--	71	55	--	77	55	--
	69	58	--	70	56	--	72	56	--

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set
Los Angeles Co. Sun 5:45a/7:56p Moon 11:31p/8:11a
Orange Co. Sun 5:44a/7:54p Moon 11:29p/8:10a
Ventura Co. Sun 5:48a/8:00p Moon 11:36p/8:14a

Almanac

Saturday Downtown readings

Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
High/low	68/52	69/57	65/50
Normal high/low	74/59	76/60	70/53
High/low a year ago	67/61	70/61	64/57
Record high/date	103/1896	85/2021	76/1986
Record low/date	47/1916	51/2010	42/1994

Precipitation Los Angeles Fullerton Ventura*

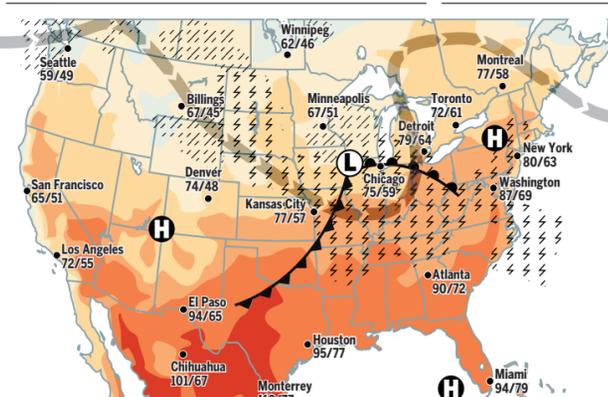
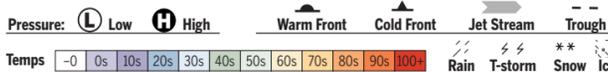
24-hour total (as of 2 p.m.)	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
Season total (since Oct. 1)	22.15	16.59	24.73
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	28.03	21.32	26.97
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	14.10	11.66	15.93
Humidity (high/low)	83/60	89/50	89/62

City	Sat.			Today			Mon.		
	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Prcp.
L.A. D'town/USC	70	56	--	72	55	--	74	57	--
L.A. Int'l. Airport	68	57	--	68	56	--	68	56	--
Laguna Beach	64	58	--	65	57	--	66	59	--
Lancaster	75	57	--	83	58	--	88	61	--
Long Beach	70	60	--	71	58	--	73	59	--
Mammoth Lakes	58	39	--	71	41	--	70	42	--
Mission Viejo	69	55	--	69	54	--	74	54	--
Monrovia	71	54	--	74	54	--	77	56	--
Monterey	60	48	02	60	49	61	51	51	--
Mt. Wilson	53	48	--	56	50	--	57	50	--
Needles	66	60	--	97	71	--	101	73	--
Newport Beach	66	60	--	67	58	--	66	59	--
Northridge	72	55	--	73	55	--	76	57	--
Oakland	61	50	Tr	66	50	66	53	53	--
Oceanside	68	57	01	69	56	70	56	56	--
Ojai	67	49	--	71	51	73	53	53	--
Ontario	70	54	--	75	55	80	56	56	--
Palm Springs	90	64	--	96	68	99	70	70	--
Pasadena	69	56	--	71	55	75	57	57	--
Paso Robles	74	43	--	79	45	82	47	47	--
Redding	78	55	--	88	58	92	60	60	--
Riverside	71	53	Tr	77	54	82	52	52	--
Sacramento	72	48	--	83	52	84	54	54	--
San Bernardino	74	54	--	79	54	83	55	55	--

City	Sat.			Today			Mon.		
	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Prcp.
San Diego	64	60	03	66	59	68	59	59	--
San Francisco	62	51	Tr	65	51	65	52	52	--
San Gabriel	71	57	--	73	56	77	58	58	--
San Jose	69	49	--	74	52	76	54	54	--
San Luis Obispo	69	51	Tr	70	50	69	52	52	--
Santa Ana	69	60	--	69	58	70	59	59	--
Santa Barbara	67	53	--	66	52	66	52	52	--
Santa Clarita	71	50	--	75	53	79	53	53	--
Santa Monica Pier	68	58	--	68	56	66	55	55	--
Santa Paula	71	53	--	71	53	74	56	56	--
Santa Rosa	73	43	--	76	45	75	47	47	--
Simi Valley	66	53	--	72	53	77	54	54	--
Tahoe Valley	62	31	--	70	39	72	38	38	--
Temecula	68	52	--	73	52	79	51	51	--
Thousand Oaks	67	54	--	71	53	73	53	53	--
Torrance	66	58	--	67	57	66	58	58	--
UCLA	65	56	--	68	55	69	56	56	--
Pan Nuy	72	55	--	72	56	79	56	56	--
Ventura	62	55	--	65	53	63	54	54	--
Whittier Hills	67	57	--	73	56	76	56	56	--
Woodland Hills	71	55	--	72	54	76	55	55	--
Wrightwood	64	49	--	69	53	71	53	53	--
Yorba Linda	69	54	--	73	53	76	53	53	--
Yosemite Valley	68	48	--	75	49	76	53	53	--

Today in North America

Another round of severe thunderstorms: Warm, moist air ahead of a cold front will set the stage for dangerous thunderstorms, with the risk of flooding, damaging wind gusts, hail and tornadoes, from southwest Ohio and Kentucky west into eastern Missouri.



U.S. cities

SATURDAY'S EXTREMES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 107 in Laredo, Texas Low 19 in Gothic, Colo.

City	Saturday			Today			City	Saturday			Today		
	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Sky		Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Sky
Albany	80	51	04	84	64	Ts	Seattle	60	47	03	59	49	Sh
Albuquerque	84	54	--	84	57	Su	Tampa	92	78	02	93	77	Pc
Anchorage	56	44	Tr	56	46	Cy	Tucson	91	68	--	94	63	Su
Aspen	57	35	10	59	35	Pc	Tulsa	88	57	--	89	63	Pc
Atlanta	82	71	59	90	72	Pc	Washington, D.C.	87	69	04	87	69	Ts
Austin	98	75	--	98	74	Su	Wichita	86	59	--	86	57	Cy
Baltimore	87	64	04	86	68	Pc	World						
Boise	69	47	01	73	49	Ts	Acapulco	90	74	--	91	72	Su
Boston	69	58	--	74	57	Ts	Amsterdam	65	57	1.15	69	53	Sh
Buffalo	73	55	29	79	66	Pc	Athens	84	63	01	77	64	Pc
Burlington, Vt.	73	46	07	79	62	Su	Bangkok	95	82	1.8	95	82	Ts
Charleston, S.C.	91	71	40	91	75	Ts	Barcelona	68	57	--	75	64	Su
Charlotte	85	64	48	90	70	Ts	Berlin	77	59	2.8	76	57	Ts
Chicago	75	56	04	75	59	Ts	Cabo San Lucas	95	73	--	94	76	Su
Cincinnati	82	65	03	81	67	Ts	Cairo	90	72	--	97	82	Su
Cleveland	82	66	Tr	82	67	Pc	Dubai	102	80	--	104	86	Ts
Columbia, S.C.	89	70	10	94	72	Ts	Dublin	59	52	2.5	60	46	Ts
Columbus	85	65	09	84	67	Ts	Havana	95	68	--	94	74	Pc
Dallas/Ft.Worth	92	69	--	98	70	Pc	Ho Chi Minh City	99	86	1.9	97	82	Ts
Denver	72	45	05	74	48	Pc	Hong Kong	85	78	5.6	86	79	Ts

CHRISTOPHER EDLEY JR., 1953 - 2024

Public policy advisor, former Berkeley law dean

BY RUBEN VIVES

Christopher Edley Jr., a law professor and former dean of the UC Berkeley School of Law who served in senior positions for five presidential campaigns including those of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, has died. He was 71.

His death was announced May 10 by current Berkeley Law dean Erwin Chemerinsky in a written message to staff.

"Chris and I were law school classmates," Chemerinsky wrote. "He has been a dear friend and has provided me invaluable wisdom and support in my years as a dean. I know I speak for all of us in saying how terribly

much we will miss him."

Many who admired Edley's work or had worked alongside him took to social media to express their reaction to his death.

"Chris was a man of extraordinary gifts," wrote Gary Orfield, who co-founded the Harvard Civil Rights Project with Edley. "We tended to cut into problems from different angles working toward the same destination and I learned a lot and greatly enjoyed the seven years we were continuously working on launching a major research [and] policy center. He's gone far too soon and he will be missed on many fronts."

"The passing of Christopher Edley is a big loss for social justice communities. So many Giants leaving us," historian Stephen G. Hall wrote.

The UC system's more hands-off response to pro-Palestinian protests that recently spread across its campuses was shaped by the "Response to Protests on UC Campuses" report written by Edley with Charles Robinson, UC general counsel.

The 2012 report was written in response to demonstrations at the Davis and Berkeley campuses, where students protesting economic and social inequality during the Occupy movement were beaten and pepper sprayed by police officers. The report called for a need to balance 1st Amendment rights with campus safety and security.

It placed communication and dialogue as a "cornerstone" of the UC system's response, with police force used as the last resort. In a key underlying principle, the report called for "a substantial shift away from a mindset that has been focused primarily on the maintenance of order and adherence to rules and regulations to a more open and communicative attitude."

"What's so bad about students pitching tents on a green? That doesn't threaten the core teaching and re-

search mission," Edley told the Times last month. "It's messy and appears to create turmoil, but... you're dealing with a large community of 20-year-olds who we expect to be passionate and who we know are collecting experiences as well as knowledge. It's incumbent on us to be as tolerant as possible without compromising fundamentals."

Edley was born Jan. 13, 1953, in Boston and had a long and successful career in academia and public service. He graduated from Swarthmore College in 1973 with a degree in mathematics. He received a juris doctorate from Harvard Law School in 1978 and a master's in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School, according to his profile. He served as a professor at Harvard Law School for 23 years, where in 1996 he co-founded the Harvard Civil Rights Project, a think tank aimed at promoting racial and ethnic justice.

He served as an economic policy and budget official for President Jimmy Carter and President Bill

Clinton. Edley also helped lead the Clinton administration's review of affirmative action programs.

In a written statement, Clinton described Edley as a "brilliant mind and a kind, good heart that he put to use to build a better, fairer and more just America."

"From his groundbreaking academic career to his service in multiple key roles in my administration, he always believed that law and policy are ultimately about people," Clinton wrote. "He mastered the minute details but never lost sight of the big picture — giving more people the chance to live their best lives. He is gone far too soon, but his legacy will endure."

Edley held senior positions in five presidential campaigns, those of Michael Dukakis in 1988, Al Gore in 2000, Howard Dean in 2004, Obama in 2008 and Hillary Clinton in 2016.

In 2004, Edley became dean of the UC Berkeley School of Law, serving until 2013.

"As dean, he made an enormous positive differ-

ence in every aspect of the law school, from the hiring of many terrific faculty to dramatically increasing support for public interest grants for students, to the creation of many centers," Chemerinsky wrote.

Edley also co-chaired the congressionally chartered National Commission on Education Equity and Excellence from 2011 to 2013. The commission advises the secretary of Education on ways to address education equity issues.

After stepping down as dean, Edley continued to teach at UC Berkeley as the Honorable William H. Orrick Jr. Distinguished Professor. He served as president of the Opportunity Institute, an organization he co-founded in 2015 with Ann O'Leary, a former advisor to Hillary Clinton.

The institute's mission is to increase social and economic mobility and advance racial equity.

Edley is survived by his wife, Maria Echaveste, who is also a former advisor and served as deputy chief of staff to President Clinton.

Obituaries

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Tony Monaco

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H. Hills 800-600-0076
www.mountsinainaparks.org

Ofir Z. Mor

Mount Sinai Mem Parks -
Simi Valley 800-600-0076
www.mountsinainaparks.org



Isabel Green

November 18, 1937 -
May 21, 2024

Dr. Isabel ("Liz") Green passed away on May 21, 2024, succumbing to cancer after a courageous battle of over five years.

Born in Chicago in 1937, Liz graduated Roosevelt High School at age 16, having skipped two grades due to her intellect and drive. Liz went on to earn a B.A. from Northwestern University in English with a Minor in Russian Literature. Liz married Dr. Burton ("Bud") Green in 1956, and the couple remained devoted to each other for over six decades until his passing in 2017. Liz bore three sons: Donald (1961), Mitchell (1963), and Jonathan (1967), and in 1971 the Greens moved from the Chicago area to settle permanently in Southern California. Liz quickly established herself in a prominent role at her local synagogue, delighted her guests with her joyous piano accompaniment to Bud's vocals, competed fiercely on the tennis court, and defended the separation of church and state in public education. A loving wife to her husband and devoted mother to her boys, Liz resumed her education in 1978, earning a Masters in Psychology from Cal State LA, and a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the Claremont Graduate School (1991). Liz proceeded to establish a flourishing psychotherapy practice in Pasadena serving children, adults, and couples.

As their three boys became more independent, Liz and Bud enjoyed international adventures in Europe, Central America, and the Mideast, together with frequent trips to California's wine country. Throughout their travels the couple set a standard for grace and elegance with their extraordinary ballroom dancing.

Having not been given the opportunity to be a Bat Mitzvah as a child, Liz instead took that path in the 2000's with the guidance and tutelage of many devoted teachers at Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center. Later when health complications required her to retire from her career as a therapist, Liz continued to challenge herself by actively participating in—and sometimes leading—discussion groups devoted to literature and film. Liz also shared with her three boys, their partners, as well as her many dear friends, her love for Jewish culture and traditions including its literature, cuisine, and prayers. In addition to her three sons, Liz leaves behind four grandchildren, Aaron, Rachel, Noah, and Sofia.

Jennifer Cho

YOSHIDA

September 15, 1965 -
April 27, 2024

Jennifer Cho Yoshida, born in Seoul, Korea, September 15, 1965, resident of La Canada Flintridge, passed away peacefully in her home on April 27. She is survived by her loving family; husband, Scott Yoshida; sons, Nathan and Matthew Yoshida; sisters, Karen (Brad) Armijo and Susan (Doug) Lee; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Funeral & Burial Service were held in a celebration of Jennifer's life at Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Church of the Reformation, Father Mike Grieco of St. James the Less Catholic Church officiated.

www.fukuimortuary.com
(213)626-0441



Elaine Leigh

Granath Young

January 16, 1984 -
May 19, 2024

Elaine Leigh Granath Young, 40, passed away May 19, 2024 following a seven-month battle with ovarian cancer. She was born Jan. 16, 1984 in Atlanta, but her family moved to Titusville when she was two months old. From an early age, she developed a passion for music. She performed her first solo during a church service at the age of four. She excelled in choir at Apollo Elementary School, Jackson Middle School and Titusville High School.

Elaine decided to follow her father's footsteps in the public relations profession, earning a bachelor's degree in communications and minoring in music. She graduated from Palm Beach Atlantic University in 2006. Soon after, she became a public relations representative for the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation at NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

In 2007, Elaine moved to California. Beginning in 2018, she was employed by KB Home, a large homebuilder with offices in Los Angeles. After holding increasingly responsible positions, she became Risk Management administrator and assistant corporate secretary. Elaine's fellow employees honored her service with a proclamation stating in part, "Madame Granath is an extraordinary special colleague and truly inspiring soul of uncommon courage and tenacity, who we are deeply grateful to have had the good fortune to know."

Elaine is survived by her husband, Brian Young of Los Angeles; parents, June and Bob Granath of Titusville; "second mom," Jeannie Johnson of Titusville; father-in-law, Alan Young of Las Vegas, Nevada; aunts and uncles Nancy and David Granath of Florence, South Carolina; Lisa and Steve Granath of Douglasville, Georgia; cousins Katie and Jason Smith of Tampa; Andrea Granath of Florence; and Kristen Tate of Douglasville.

Visitation will take place at 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 1, 2024, at First Baptist Church of Titusville with funeral following at 3 p.m. Interment will follow the funeral at Oaklawn Memorial Gardens in Titusville.

Please sign Elaine's online guestbook for the family at www.northbrevardfuneral-home.com In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Elaine's honor to the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org



San Francisco Chronicle/Getty Images

'BRILLIANT MIND AND A KIND, GOOD HEART'

Christopher Edley Jr., left, in 2012. Edley held senior positions in five presidential campaigns and co-founded the Harvard Civil Rights Project.

PETE McCLOSKEY, 1927 - 2024

Antiwar congressman who challenged Nixon

BY STEVE CHAWKINS AND HAILEY BRANSON-POTTS

When Pete McCloskey challenged President Nixon for the Republican nomination in 1972, his defeat was nothing short of stunning. Only one of the 1,348 delegates at the Miami convention voted for McCloskey, and nobody gave a speech on his behalf.

Running to protest the war in Vietnam, the California congressman never expected to win, but he had no idea his short-lived campaign would cost him so many friends. Outside a basement meeting room at the Fontainebleau Hotel, someone said he must be the loneliest man in town, and he agreed.

"It's always lonely at conventions like this," McCloskey told reporters. "But then Patrick Henry was lonely when he talked about liberty."

McCloskey was no revolutionary, but as a decorated Marine veteran who wanted U.S. troops out of Vietnam and as the first congressman to urge consideration of Nixon's impeachment on the House floor, he led a life of vigorous dissent.

A Stanford-educated attorney and ardent outdoorsman, Paul Norton "Pete" McCloskey Jr. died May 8 at his home in Winters, Calif., of congestive heart failure, said family friend Lee Houskeeper. McCloskey was 96.

"He was always somebody who had the ability to act from complete integrity and not rely on ideology or party pressure," Helen McCloskey, the congressman's wife of 42 years, said.

With a photogenic square chin and a shock of Kennedy-esque hair, McCloskey represented his San Mateo district in Congress from 1967 to 1983. In that period, he may have become "the only political figure in America who has managed to offend just about everybody," his friend, actor Paul

Newman, said in a trailer for a 2009 documentary.

His outspokenness about Vietnam earned McCloskey an exile, as he later characterized it, to the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. But even in what he first considered a congressional backwater, McCloskey managed to upset many of his fellow Republicans.

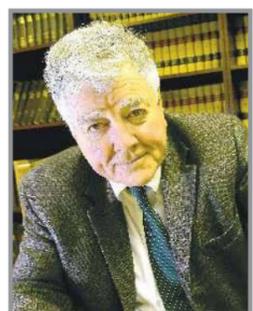
"Well, the Congress then was much more inclined to be made up of 70-, 80- and 90-year-olds who had grown up at a time when development and progress was the keynote of the country," he told The Times in 1985. "Environmentalists in those days were viewed as little old ladies in tennis shoes or nuts or cranks or kooks."

In the relative obscurity of his position, McCloskey thrived. "I was able to help put together a coalition that quadrupled the money for clean water with this funny little bill called the National Environmental Policy Act," he said. "I'll tell you, if the Congress had known what was in it, that bill wouldn't have passed."

He co-authored the 1973 Endangered Species Act — "the one thing I was proudest of, in that miserable town called Washington," he said in 2012. McCloskey was co-chair of the first Earth Day. Its Democratic organizers, reaching across the aisle in 1970, could find no other Republican willing to do it.

But not every Democrat was enthralled with the blunt-talking McCloskey, particularly after he started airing his views on the Middle East in the early 1980s. McCloskey supported Yasser Arafat, then chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and angered Jewish organizations with his criticism of what he saw as "the Jewish lobby's" undue influence over U.S. policies.

In 1982, McCloskey lost to future governor Pete Wilson in a primary election for the U.S. Senate. He told The Times his controversial positions on Israel might have



JEFF CHIU Associated Press

ENVIRONMENTALIST McCloskey co-wrote the Endangered Species Act.

contributed to his defeat.

"He has been supportive of the Palestinian people's plight since the late 1970s," Helen McCloskey said. "Of course, now that is very relevant."

Returning to California, McCloskey practiced law in the San Francisco area before moving to a ranch near the tiny Yolo County town of Rumsey where he raised Arabian horses and grew organic olives and oranges and made a quixotic primary run in 2006 against Rep. Richard Pombo, a longtime Republican congressman known for his opposition to environmental regulations. McCloskey lost but was credited by Democrats with weakening Pombo, who was defeated in the general election.

A year later, McCloskey, repelled by a series of influence-peddling scandals and the George W. Bush administration's "misdeeds and incompetence," switched parties. For 59 years he had been a Republican, but in an email to local newspapers, the fledgling Democrat decried "the stench of Jack Abramoff" and declared of Republican leaders: "A pox on them and their values."

McCloskey was born in San Bernardino on Sept. 29, 1927, and raised in South Pasadena. His father and both grandfathers were attorneys.

After graduating high school in 1945, he served in the Navy until 1947. He

earned an undergraduate degree at Stanford in 1950 and signed on with the Marines for combat in Korea. His commendations included the Navy Cross, the Silver Star and, for wounds received while leading a rifle platoon, two Purple Hearts.

At a Christmas party in 2011, he gave one of them to then-Rep. Jackie Speier, a Democratic lawmaker who as an aide to Rep. Leo Ryan in 1978 was shot five times while helping to evacuate defectors fleeing Jonestown, the Guyana commune where some 900 people died in a massacre.

"She earned it," McCloskey told The Times. "She got hurt worse than I did."

McCloskey's wounds were also emotional. Suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, he had recurring dreams of peering into a trench and emptying his weapon into young, terrified enemy troops.

In 2014, he traveled to North Korea and arranged to meet with a war veteran from the other side — a retired three-star general who, like McCloskey, had been wounded.

"I told him how bravely I thought his people had fought, and we embraced," McCloskey told The Times. "We ended up agreeing that we don't want our grandchildren or great-grandchildren to fight, that war is hell, and there's no glory in it."

McCloskey is survived by Helen — his longtime press secretary whom he married in 1982 — and four children by his first wife: Nancy, Peter, John and Kathleen.

Helen McCloskey said her husband "was very open-minded in the most wonderful way."

When he was 82, she said, she asked him: "Would you like to try magic mushrooms?" And, oh my God, he loved them." The PTSD-afflicted congressman, she said, awoke from his first trip and said: "Why is that illegal?"

Chawkins is a former Times staff writer.

Share a memory

To sign a guest book please go to [latimes.com/guestbooks](https://www.latimes.com/guestbooks)

Los Angeles Times

SPORTS

SUNDAY, MAY 26, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS



ASHLEY LANDIS Associated Press

INDIANA guard Caitlin Clark strikes a knowing glance after making a crucial three-pointer late in the second half of the Fever's victory over the Sparks on Friday.

CLUTCH IN CRUNCH TIME

Caitlin Clark delivered an inspiring Hollywood debut with her first win in the WNBA, beating the Sparks' bruising defenses and silencing her harshest critics



BILL PLASCHKE

All night, bricks. Then, boom. All night, dreadful. Then, dagger.

Caitlin Clark spent most of her first visit to Los Angeles stuck in terrible traffic Friday, stalling and swerving and slamming the brakes as her Indiana Fever team careened toward embarrassment. Then, FasTrak. She really is unreal. She really is magic. With 2:27 remaining and the Fever clinging to a three-point lead against the Sparks at Crypto.com Arena, Clark nailed her first three-pointer of the night, a deep and looping trey. She spread out her [See Plaschke, D4]

A's have 'Get Out of Vegas Free' card

Agreement intended to bind team to Sin City provides it with unusual escape clause.

BILL SHAIKIN ON BASEBALL

The pitch to the Nevada Legislature was simple: If you provide the Oakland Athletics with \$380 million in public funding toward a new ballpark, the A's will agree to move to Las Vegas and stay there for at least 30 years.

The A's got the funding. However, the agreement intended to bind the A's to Las Vegas provides the team with an unusual es-

cape clause: If ever a tax is aimed at the A's, the team can leave town without penalty.

"That is not a normal clause in these things," said Martin J. Greenberg, the founder of the National Sports Law Institute at Marquette University Law School and an expert in so-called nonrelocation agreements in Major League Baseball.

"The whole object of this is to keep the team at home."

This is not on the A's. The Las Vegas Stadium Authority approved such a provision in luring the Raiders and presented virtually identical contract language to the A's.

[See Baseball, D7]



Will Griffin

UCLA quarterback Chase Griffin testifies about NIL before lawmakers at a Jan. 18 hearing on Capitol Hill.

He's directing the athletes' offense

UCLA third-string quarterback has become go-to guy on matters of NIL and college compensation

BY BEN BOLCH

Faced with an unfamiliar situation, Chase Griffin relied on natural instincts. He surveyed the scene, felt the pressure and stepped up to face it.

Qualities that served him as UCLA's quarterback came in handy testifying before Congress this year. Only no audible was needed given all the time he put into preparing his remarks about how these politicians were wrong in their misguided at-

tempt to protect college athletes.

"It is disheartening," Griffin told a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee on innovation, data and commerce, "to see a federal bill that ignores our hard work and the value we create by putting obstacles in our pathway to the American dream."

Griffin was speaking out against the FAIR College Sports Act, a proposed bill that would increase regulation of name, image and like- [See Griffin, D3]

NCAA SOFTBALL

UCLA back in College World Series

Taylor Tinsley's complete game and Sharlize Palacios' potent bat power the Bruins past Georgia. **D3**

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Spaniard's helmet to honor Grandma

The special safety gear tells Alex Palou's story in racing and features crucial milestones in his life. **D5**

HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL

Bell claims first Open Division title

Sophomore Jayden Rojas throws six shutout innings to lead the Eagles to victory at Dodger Stadium. **D8**



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PRO CALENDAR

	SUN 26	MON 27	TUE 28	WED 29	THU 30
DODGERS	at Cincinnati 9 a.m. SNLA	at N.Y. Mets 1 p.m. SNLA	at N.Y. Mets 4 p.m. SNLA	at N.Y. Mets 1 p.m. SNLA	
ANGELS	CLEVELAND 1 BSW		N.Y. YANKEES 6:30 BSW	N.Y. YANKEES 6:30 BSW	N.Y. YANKEES 6:30 BSW
SPARKS	DALLAS 6 SpecSN		at Indiana 4 p.m. NBA TV		at Chicago 5 SpecSN
GALAXY				DALLAS 7:30 Apple TV	
LAFC				MINNESOTA 7:45 Apple TV, FS1	
ANGEL CITY	NEXT: AT NJ/NY GOTHAM, JUNE 8, 9:30 A.M. PDT, CH. 2, PARAMOUNT+				

Shade denotes home game.

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
AUTO RACING		
9:45 a.m.	IndyCar, Indianapolis 500	TV: 4, Peacock, Universo
3 p.m.	NASCAR Cup, Coca-Cola 600	TV: 11, FOXD
BASEBALL		
9 a.m.	Dodgers at Cincinnati	TV: SNLA R: 570, 1020
10:30 a.m.	Milwaukee at Boston	TV: MLB
10:30 a.m.	Kansas City at Tampa Bay	TV: ESPN+
1 p.m.	Cleveland at Angels	TV: BSW R: 830, 1220
1 p.m.	New York Yankees at San Diego	TV: MLB
4 p.m.	Chicago Cubs at St. Louis	TV: ESPN, ESPND
BASKETBALL: NBA		
5 p.m.	Western Conference finals, Game 3, Minnesota at Dallas	TV: TNT, TruTV
BASKETBALL: WNBA		
6 p.m.	Dallas at Sparks	TV: SpecSN
COLLEGE BASEBALL		
9 a.m.	ACC tournament championship, Florida State vs. TBD	TV: ESPN2
9 a.m.	AAC tournament championship, Tulane vs. TBD	TV: ESPNNews
11 a.m.	Conference USA tournament championship, Dallas Baptist vs. TBD	TV: CBSSN
Noon	SEC tournament championship, Louisiana State vs. TBD	TV: ESPN2, SEC
Noon	Big Ten tournament championship, Penn State vs. TBD	TV: Big Ten
COLLEGE LACROSSE		
9 a.m.	Women's NCAA championship, Boston College vs. Northwestern	TV: ESPN
COLLEGE SOFTBALL		
11 a.m.	NCAA tournament, Florida vs. Baylor	TV: ESPN
1 p.m.	NCAA tournament, teams TBD (if necessary)	TV: ESPN
1 p.m.	NCAA tournament, teams TBD (if necessary)	TV: ESPN2
3 p.m.	NCAA tournament, teams TBD (if necessary)	TV: ESPNU
4:30 p.m.	NCAA tournament, teams TBD (if necessary)	TV: ESPN2
6:30 p.m.	NCAA tournament, teams TBD (if necessary)	TV: ESPN2
GOLF		
10 a.m.	PGA, Charles Schwab Challenge, final round	TV: Golf
Noon	PGA, Charles Schwab Challenge, final round	TV: 2, Paramount+
1 p.m.	Senior PGA Championship, final round	TV: 4, Peacock
HOCKEY: IIHF		
6 a.m.	World Championships, bronze medal game, Sweden vs. Canada	TV: NHL
11 a.m.	World Championships, gold medal game, Switzerland vs. Czech Republic	TV: NHL
HOCKEY: NHL		
Noon	Eastern Conference finals, Game 3, New York Rangers at Florida	TV: 7, ESPN+
HOCKEY: PWHL		
3 p.m.	Walter Cup Final, Game 4, Boston at Minnesota	TV: BSSC
HORSE RACING		
10:30 a.m.	America's Day at the Races	TV: FS1
11:30 a.m.	America's Day at the Races	TV: FS2
MOTORCYCLE RACING		
7:30 a.m.	MotoGP, Grand Prix of Catalunya (delay)	TV: TruTV
PRO FOOTBALL		
11:30 a.m.	UFL, Michigan at Houston	TV: 11, FOXD
RUGBY		
3 p.m.	MLR, San Diego at RFC Los Angeles	TV: FS1
SOCCER		
7:15 a.m.	Spain, Las Palmas vs. Alavés	TV: ESPN+
7:15 a.m.	Spain, Vigo vs. Valencia	TV: ESPN+, ESPND
9 a.m.	Italy, Napoli vs. Lecce	TV: CBSSN
9 a.m.	Italy, Atalanta vs. Torino	TV: Paramount+
11:45 a.m.	Italy, Empoli vs. Rome	TV: Paramount+
11:45 a.m.	Italy, Frosinone vs. Udinese	TV: Paramount+
11:45 a.m.	Italy, Verona vs. Internazionale	TV: Paramount+
11:45 a.m.	Italy, Lazio vs. Sassuolo	TV: Paramount+
Noon	Spain, Sevilla vs. Barcelona	TV: ESPN+
6 p.m.	Mexico, América vs. Cruz Azul	TV: Univision, TUDN
TENNIS		
6 a.m.	French Open, early rounds	TV: Tennis
2 a.m. (Mon.)	French Open, early rounds	TV: Tennis
5 a.m. (Mon.)	French Open, early rounds	TV: BSW
WEIGHTLIFTING		
3 p.m.	World Classic and Equipped Bench Press Championship	TV: CBSSN



MICHAEL CONROY Associated Press

KYLE LARSON will try to win the Indy 500, then make a run at winning NASCAR's Coca-Cola 600.

SPORTS EXTRA

For late coverage of Dodgers, Angels, Lakers and Clippers games and more, see our daily digital eNewspaper. Subscribers get free access to an exclusive "Sports Extra." View it on your phone, tablet or computer at latimes.com/enewspaper.



THE DAY IN SPORTS

Murray dies day after withdrawing

WIRE REPORTS

Two-time PGA Tour winner **Grayson Murray** died Saturday morning at age 30, one day after he withdrew from the Charles Schwab Cup Challenge at Colonial. There were no immediate details on the circumstances of his death.

"It's a huge loss for all of us on the PGA Tour," said **Peter Malnati**, who played with Murray at Colonial and broke down trying to talk about him on the CBS telecast. "As much as we want to beat each other, we're one big family, and we lost one today. It's terrible."

Murray dealt with alcohol and mental health issues but made a big turnaround this year and won the Sony Open, hitting wedge to 3 feet for birdie on the final hole to get into a playoff and winning it with a 40-foot putt. He also won the Barbasol Championship in 2017.

Murray, who won the prestigious Junior World Championship in San Diego three straight years, was No. 58 in the world. He made the cut in his Masters debut and was in the field for the U.S. Open next month.

Scottie Scheffler had the low round of the day with a 63 at Colonial and was four shots back of second-round leader **Davis Riley** (66). **Collin Morikawa** (67) was eight shots back, **Rickie Fowler** (66) nine. ... **Ernst Els** shot a two-under 69, giving him a share of the lead with **Greg Chalmers** going into the final round of the Senior PGA Championship.

ETC.

Keys wins final over Collins

Madison Keys won the Strasbourg International when she thrashed **Danielle Collins** 6-1, 6-2 in an all-American final.

Keys broke Collins six times and didn't drop a set in the tournament. She won her eighth WTA singles title and first of the year.

Keys didn't start her season until March because of a shoulder issue. She has rounded into form before the French Open after reaching the Madrid semifinals and Rome quarterfinals. Only No. 1 **Iga Swiatek** has beaten



MATT YORK Associated Press

GRAYSON MURRAY after winning the Sony Open in January. The 30-year-old died Saturday, a day after he withdrew from the Charles Schwab Cup Challenge.

her on red clay.

Keys is seeded 14th at the French Open and opens against **Renata Zarazua**. Collins is seeded 11th and has drawn compatriot **Caroline Dolehide**.

Casper Ruud won back-to-back matches for his third Geneva Open title in four years, winning the final 7-5, 6-3 over **Tomas Machac** less than three hours after completing his suspended match with **Flavio Cobolli**. ... **Giovanni Mpetshi Perriard**, a wild card, won his first ATP title in his fourth tour event, the Lyon Open, and in his birth city. The 20-year-old beat **Tomas Martin Etcheverry** 6-4, 1-6, 7-6 (7) and earned a wild card into the French Open. ... Top-seeded **Savannah Broadus** and **Janice Tjen**, Pepperdine's first duo to reach the NCAA doubles final, lost 7-6, 2-6, 11-9 to Georgia's **Aysegul Mert** and **Dasha Vidmanova**. **Filip Planinsek** of Alabama and **Alexa Noel** of Miami won singles titles.

Boston Red Sox right-hander **Garrett Whitlock** said his season is over and he'll have his right ulnar collateral ligament repaired with an internal brace. ... Oakland put pitcher **Ross Stripling** (elbow) on the 15-day injured list. ... **Nelson Velázquez** homered and had an RBI double in a three-run 11th inning as Kansas City beat Tampa Bay 7-4 for its eighth straight win. ... **La-Monte Wade Jr.'s** pinch-hit

RBI single in the ninth inning against Mets closer **Edwin Díaz** tied the game, and **Mike Yastrzemski** capped a five-run 10th with a three-run triple as San Francisco won 7-2, one day after joining the 1932 St. Louis Cardinals as the only teams since 1900 to win three consecutive road games in which they trailed by at least four runs. **Patrick Bailey** hit a go-ahead grand slam in the eighth inning Friday, and Gold Glove third baseman **Matt Chapman** made a defensive gem for the final out of an 8-7 win over New York. ... In Friday's other late games, **Juan Soto** hit a long homer in his first game back in San Diego, and **Aaron Judge** and **Giancarlo Stanton** also hit no-doubters off **Yu Darvish** in the New York Yankees' 8-0 win. ... Houston's **Justin Verlander** struck out nine over six innings to give him 3,377, passing Hall of Famer **Greg Maddux** for 10th on the career list in a 6-3 win over Oakland.

Chase Elliott got his first NASCAR Xfinity Series win since 2016 at Charlotte Motor Speedway. ... Ferrari's **Charles Leclerc** won the pole for Sunday's Formula One Monaco Grand Prix.

Paris Saint-Germain beat Lyon 2-1 in the French Cup final and completed the double in superstar **Kylian Mbappe's** last game for the club. ... Manchester United stunned defending champion Manchester City 2-1 to lift

the FA Cup. ... Leverkusen won the German Cup final 1-0 over Kaiserslautern for an unbeaten domestic double. ... Barcelona ended its losing streak against the game's most successful club, beating Lyon 2-0 to clinch its third Women's Champions League title in four years.

Sha'Carri Richardson won the women's 100 meters in 10.83 seconds at the Prefontaine Classic, while **Christian Coleman** won men's 100 in a season-best 9.95. **Beatrice Chebet** of Kenya set a world record in the 10,000 meters in 28:54.14.

In Friday's late NCAA games, freshman **Brayden Dowd** hit his first career home run and drove in four runs, and USC beat California 7-4 to earn its ninth win in a row and a spot in the Pac-12 baseball tournament championship game. The Trojans were scheduled to play top-seeded Arizona for the final Pac-12 title Saturday in a game that ended after this edition's deadline. ... No. 16 seed Texas A&M stunned top-seeded Texas 6-5 in Game 1 of the Austin Super Regional. The teams met again Saturday for Game 2 of the best-of-three series; it ended after this edition's deadline. ... Oklahoma clinched its fourth consecutive trip to the Women's College World Series and ran its win streak to a record 17 straight games in NCAA tournament play, beating Florida State 4-2.

LETTERS

Clark is game-changer for WNBA

Caitlin Clark's impact on the WNBA is no different than Tiger Woods' impact on professional golf 20-plus years ago. These charismatic and generational talents brought in new fans and changed their professions for the better. Any complaints about the attention Clark is getting ignores what Tiger enjoyed and is misplaced.

GARY B. ROSS
Beverly Hills

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In a letter you printed, the writer complained because the Sparks raised the price of the \$20 cheap-seat section to \$125 for the game against Indiana. Perhaps he is not aware that Indiana drafted Caitlin Clark first in the recent WNBA draft. Clark has brought enormous visibility to women's basketball. The women's March Madness final drew the men's final match by millions of TV fans. The WNBA's New York Liberty vs. Indiana game last week became the first women's match to reach \$2 million in ticket sales. The letter writer called the Sparks raising the ticket prices "socialism." I call it capitalism. I suspect he can take his daughter to any other Sparks home game and find the price for the cheap seats to his liking.
MICHAEL S. LUREY
Santa Monica

True or false?

A letter writer last week felt that LeBron isn't a true Laker. Whoever dons the purple and gold on the floor at any time in franchise history IS A LAKER.

The late Kobe Bryant even welcomed LeBron to the family right after he signed. Talk about a ringing endorsement.

This sounds like sour grapes from a fan who is



ASHLEY LANDIS Associated Press

INDIANA Fever guard Caitlin Clark celebrates with actor Ashton Kutcher after draining a three-pointer.

upset that the Lakers are out this year. People want to blame LeBron, yet it takes a team to win in the NBA, not just one player. Should we lessen the value of the most recent Lakers title due to this non-true Laker on the roster for the 2019-20 champs?

Is Michael Jordan not a "true" Washington Wizard? He clearly meant something to that franchise, and it meant something to him. How is any NBA player not a "true" member of a team in the association?

LUKE AIELLO
Orange

::

The Pacers will win it all because this team shares the ball and has confidence in each other. Unlike the Lakers, who play two-man basketball. The other players can't get into any rhythm because it's either LeBron or AD hogging the ball. As long as the Lakers keep LeBron, the losing formula will persist and lead to more of the same.

G.T. OKA
Rosemead

::

Although a long shot, with JJ Redick as coach, the Lakers' three-point shooting should improve.

DAVID MARSHALL
Santa Monica

Flippin' Dodgers

When Dave Roberts said it was playoff atmosphere in San Diego last weekend, he was sure right. For the most part, the offense looked like the offense the last two years in the playoffs. No energy, the shaking of their heads after weak outs and total disregard of fundamentals such as moving runners over and hitting to the opposite field when pitched outside.

Roberts, unless you don't have the team executing the right way now, it will be another disappointing playoff failure.

BOB MALCONIAN
Northridge

::

Just when we thought the exaggerated "bat flip" was the height of arrogant showmanship, that insipid twist-and-wiggle shimmy shake, with arms raised in blatant self-aggrandizement, by all Dodger batters after every base hit, no

matter the score, is bush league and proves Freud's thesis: The ego is nothing other than the focus of conscious attention.

Or, in the immortal words of Vin Scully, "Good is not good when better is expected." Apparently money can buy an elite DH and starting pitcher, or two, but it can't buy you class.

STEVE ROSS
Carmel

Not King-sized

So Rob Blake thinks the key to winning the Stanley Cup is just to believe that "What we've come to realize is that there's a certain desire to win that needs to be raised within our team here." Sorry Rob, you of all people should know that size matters in playoff hockey. Just look at the Kings' 2012 and 2014 teams. The Kings are just too small. Hoping for the Little Engine That Could mentality is not going to cut it.

REGGIE REGINATO
Santa Barbara

No defense

So we discovered last week that USC paid Lincoln Riley \$19 million in his first season at Troy. I was just wondering how much more the boosters would pay if Lincoln also coached defense?

FRED WALLIN
Westlake Village

::

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Email: sports@latimes.com

Tinsley and the Bruins feeling right at home

She leads UCLA back to World Series with a complete game vs. her home-state school.

By THUC NHI NGUYEN

Taylor Tinsley didn't move across the country for anything less than these moments.

UCLA's first player from Georgia ousted her home-state school to send the Bruins to the Women's College World Series with a 6-1 victory over the 11th-ranked Bulldogs on Friday at Easton Stadium.

After winning the best-of-three super regional 2-0, the No. 6 Bruins will face No. 3 Tennessee or No. 14 Alabama in the first round of the World Series on Thursday in Oklahoma City.

Tinsley pitched a complete game, giving up four hits with six strikeouts, leading UCLA (41-10) to its nation-leading 32nd World Series appearance. After Georgia pinch-hitter Sarah Gordon swung through Tinsley's last pitch, the pitcher slammed her blue glove to the dirt and ripped her face mask off while jumping into catcher Sharlize Palacios' arms.

"This was her moment," said Georgia coach Tony Baldwin, who watched Tinsley through her high school career. "She shined tonight."

A three-sport star at George Walton Academy, a small private school less than 30 miles from Georgia's campus in Athens, Tinsley was the No. 1 pitcher and the No. 2 overall prospect in her recruiting class, according to Softball America.

In the Southern California softball hotbed, UCLA coaches rarely leave the state for top talent. But Kelly Inouye-Perez was drawn by Tinsley's competitiveness and inspired by her willingness to accept the difficult challenge of moving across the country and majoring in pre-health. Tinsley hopes to become a physical therapist.

"There were a lot of people when we were going through the recruiting process that said 'You shouldn't go away from home, you should stay close,'" Inouye-Perez said. "I shared with her how awesome it would be to be the role model to be able to say that you can go and strive for your own goals and dreams because you can always go back home. So I'm really proud."

The 5-foot-7 right-hander gave up two hits, a walk and a run in the first inning, but



UCLA pitcher Taylor Tinsley jumps into the arms of catcher Sharlize Palacios after pitching a complete game in Friday's 6-1 super regional win over Georgia.

retired the next 14 batters as the Bruins methodically built their lead. The offense came from veteran leaders Palacios and Maya Brady, who were a combined five for six with five RBIs.

One day after Brady launched two homers in Game 1, Palacios matched the effort with two moonshots that soared over the right-field fence.

The catcher who leads

the Bruins with 20 home runs has 11 in her last 18 games.

While Palacios held the super regional trophy during an on-camera interview with ESPN after the game, teammates lined up and repeatedly bowed behind her. Players took turns posing for photos on the field with an oversized ticket with UCLA's logo representing the team's place in the World

Series.

Palacios gathered with Brady, center fielder Janelle Meoño and left fielder Jade Lynn Allchin to soak in the moment.

The Southern California natives met as preteens playing travel ball then scattered to different Pac-12 rivals. Meoño and Palacios went to Arizona while Allchin went to Washington before they all came back

home to reunite with Brady.

"It feels so rewarding to just be able to hug them and say we're going to finish it at OKC," Palacios said.

The fifth-year senior's veteran presence behind the plate has been critical for a young UCLA pitching staff that had no collegiate post-season experience. Kaitlyn Terry, who was named Pac-12 freshman of the year, proved her mettle by pitching the Bruins to a six-inning, mercy-rule win in Game 1. Tinsley, a sophomore who did not appear in the circle in UCLA's shockingly short two-game post-season run last year, bounced back from a disappointing performance against Georgia in February when she gave up six runs and five hits in 6 2/3 innings of a 7-2 loss.

Less than 100 days later, she was cheering with a capacity crowd at Easton Stadium as players led a final eight-clap.

"Yesterday's history and 100 days ago, when we played there, that's, well, history," Tinsley said, waving her hand nonchalantly. "It was just a new day, new game and here we are."

After their worst start since 1986 at 3-4, the Bruins enter the World Series on a 13-game winning streak.

UCLA QB has become voice for NIL rights

[Griffin, from D1] ness deals in the name of fairness and transparency. In reality, Griffin felt the bill did nothing more than provide another roadblock to athletes receiving the compensation to which they are entitled.

He felt so strongly about the issue that he paid his own way to take a red-eye flight to Washington, powering his way through just a few hours of sleep to defend athletes' rights to maximize their NIL dollars.

"Frankly," Griffin recently told The Times, "the bill that we were discussing there, the FAIR Act, wasn't a good bill and I thought that I had to offer truthfully and experientially my knowledge on what has been and what it can continue to be with unfettered access for college athletes to exercise their NIL rights."

Perhaps it's no coincidence that four months later, the bill is getting no traction thanks in part to the influence of the third-string quarterback who has become a go-to guy for NIL expertise.

"I can't overstate the importance of Chase's testimony," Rep. Lori Trahan (D-Mass.) said of the first active college football player to testify before Congress regarding the prospects of federal legislation to regulate NIL. "I don't know many 23-year-olds who would feel comfortable doing what he did. He's sitting at the witness table just a couple of seats down from the president of the NCAA and looking up at the chairman of the committee and telling them that he vehemently disagrees with many of the proposals that they put forward."

It may not be the last time that Mr. Griffin goes to Washington. While he'll have plenty of options after completing his final football season in the fall, he's on a trajectory that could make him the next Jack Kemp, J.C. Watts or Gerald Ford — football players who went on to successful careers as politicians.

"Chase is going to be one of the next presidents of the United States, all right, and I really mean that," UCLA quarterbacks coach Ted White said of the player recently selected the school's young alumnus of the year. "My first conversation with him, I saw his vision, I saw his work ethic, I saw not only how he cares about the game of football but how he cares about people and that's Chase Griffin in a nutshell."

His resume is the stuff of football and academic dreams. In addition to winning his only start at the Rose Bowl — a 27-10 victory over Arizona in 2020 — Griffin earned an undergraduate degree from the Luskin

School of Public Affairs in two years, a master's degree in transformative coaching and leadership from the School of Education and Information Sciences, and a master's in legal studies from the School of Law.

Equally impressive is Griffin's haul of more than 40 NIL deals with companies in a dozen states, leading to his selection as national NIL athlete of the year from the NIL Summit and Opendorse. He's a one-man operation — Chase Griffin Inc., if you will — serving as his own representative in deal negotiations and creating his own content.

"Chase is certainly one of the faces of NIL," said Blake Lawrence, co-founder and chief executive of Opendorse, the marketing platform that helps connect athletes with NIL deals. "He's the face of the athlete voice of NIL because he's been a strong advocate for student-athletes and his testimony in Congress is proof of that."

Trahan invited Griffin to testify after following his success in NIL endeavors and believing he would be the perfect spokesman for college athletes.

"The thing is, that perspective — probably intentionally, in some cases — has been left out of the conversation in Washington over the future of college athletics," Trahan said, "so we have a parade of industry leaders and college presidents and conference commissioners who come in and meet with us and testify before committees and who advocate for legislation and they're able to do that because they have the infrastructure and the resources to do it."

"Meanwhile, athletes — particularly athletes who share Chase's perspective — tend to be left behind when their school president goes to Washington and that's what we wanted to change."

Among other things, Griffin told Congress that it should study the impact of major brands and small businesses partnering with college athletes and give the NIL market time to grow and innovate before considering legislation. Should Congress later feel the need to pass NIL legislation, Griffin said he supported the College Athlete Economic Freedom Act sponsored by Trahan and Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.).

"The College Athlete Economic Freedom Act preserves a lot of the freedoms that we have now as well as giving international college athletes the ability to monetize their NIL and also provides more protections for Title IX going forward," Griffin told The Times. "And I think it's a relatively simple and straightforward act, it just protects college ath-



CHASE GRIFFIN has thrown only five passes combined over the last three seasons, but as the Bruins' only backup quarterback with experience as a starter, he could be called upon in certain situations next season.

letes' ability to continue monetizing their NIL."

Griffin said NIL is flourishing in part because the NCAA has relinquished a lot of its controls, allowing the proliferation of deals between brands and athletes that have attracted new viewers to sports that historically haven't been widely supported. This spring, the women's Division I basketball national championship game posted higher television ratings than its men's counterpart.

"NIL as a whole, a lot of the detractors before it went into action said that it was going to be the death of college sports; I think because of NIL, more people are watching college sports than ever," Griffin said. "The more empowered the college athletes are to take control over their own persona — how they're publicized, the brands that they work with, who they're associated with — fans start to see these college athletes as people and they show up to the games because they want to root for a person, they feel inspired by them."

As far as Griffin is concerned, the fewer NIL restrictions, the better — even when it comes to pay-for-play. In what is believed to be the most lucrative arrangement involving a college athlete, forward Great Osobor reportedly secured \$2 million in NIL deals as part of his transfer from Utah State to Washington, even though the Mountain West Conference player of the year hasn't made a basket for the Huskies.

Griffin compared athletes changing schools in search of a bigger payday to coaches seeking the highest bidder for their services.

"If coaches can do that, why are we placing some sort of insane moral standard for college athletes?" Griffin said. "And I think at the same time, competition is part of the game and col-

lege athletes throughout the time of the market are only going to be compensated if they're performing as far as that goes. Now, there should be a baseline compensation for performing on the team because if coaches have a salary, then the college athletes should have a salary."

More money could be on the way. Griffin said revenue sharing for college athletes should arrive in a matter of months based on widespread support from athletic directors and NCAA administrators. The apparent settlement of the House vs. NCAA class-action lawsuit would provide billions of dollars in retroactive payments to college athletes for lost NIL opportunities dating to 2016 as well as a model for future revenue-sharing agreements.

The lawsuit and its potential implications are among the topics Griffin has covered in the Athletes Bureau, a Substack platform he created to amplify the voice of college athletes. In a recent podcast, Griffin solicited NIL tips from Claremont McKenna basketball player Connor Printz, who has more than a million followers on social media and has secured more than 100 NIL deals despite playing at the NCAA Division III level.

Printz's biggest advice? Be proactive in reaching out to brands, post daily videos on TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat and respond to messages and comments on each platform.

Continually expanding his NIL knowledge has allowed Griffin to become UCLA's resident expert on the topic, advising coaches and teammates about opportunities to increase their engagement in the space.

"I talk to him a lot about NIL, what direction it's going in, what we should do just here as a school, how to just kick-start more things," new Bruins football coach DeShaun Foster said. "So

I'm just glad that we have Chase Griffin on our team and on our side."

While he's thrown only five passes combined over the last three seasons, Griffin's sixth and final season as a Bruin might not be confined to the sideline. There could be situations calling for his veteran poise in which he would get the nod over top backup Justyn Martin — who will be a red-shirt sophomore — if the Bruins needed a replacement for starter Ethan Garbers late in a tight game.

Griffin is the only backup quarterback with experience as a starter, having replaced Dorian Thompson-Robinson for two games in 2020 when Thompson-Robinson was sidelined because of contact tracing related to COVID-19.

"If my number's ever called, I take pride in being ready," Griffin said. "I prepare every single week like I'm starting."

Given the time he and his teammates dedicate to the team, Griffin said players operate as employees but should be free to decide if they want to be designated as such by taking their case to the National Labor Relations Board, which has filed a complaint against USC to classify its athletes as employees. Even without employment status, Griffin said, compensation from NIL and revenue sharing should suffice.

Griffin told Congress that most college athletes don't make "Lamborghini money" from NIL, though he may be an exception. He wouldn't divulge his NIL income but said his deals typically range from four figures to around six figures, meaning that he has accumulated the sort of wealth that would be the envy of some CEOs.

"My overall life goal is to create generational wealth early, which thankfully I'm in the process of doing now and then going into public serv-

ice and philanthropy," Griffin said. "Now, whether it's more on the privatized, philanthropy side or on the public service side, it's really just about helping others for me and I've been blessed through NIL to be able to practice some of those good habits while I'm still in college."

Generously sharing his wealth, Griffin has donated more than \$25,000 to the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, providing 100,000 meals for the needy. Three years into the NIL era, he's provided more than \$50,000 in charitable donations, including \$11 for each of the 344 points UCLA scored last season, the amount per point representing his jersey number adding up to \$3,784.

Money management is something Griffin is learning through part-time work in the University of California investment office, which controls the UC system's roughly \$170-billion portfolio of investments in retirement, endowment, working capital and cash.

A larger role could be in the works as Griffin takes accounting and finance courses this fall through a UCLA Extension pre-MBA studies program.

And about that possible future in politics? Stay tuned. Trahan was so impressed with Griffin's testimony that she joked about him taking her place on the Energy and Commerce Committee in a few years.

"Look, athletes do well here in Congress, right?" said Trahan, a former Georgetown volleyball player.

"They're disciplined, they understand what it takes to do the work and they're collaborative, they're good team players, so there's a lot of great qualities that he could transfer and I hope he does because we need more articulate voices and talents like Chase Griffin."

MEG OLIPHANT Los Angeles Times



ASHLEY LANDIS Associated Press

CAMERON BRINK shoots against Temi Fagbenle (14) and the Fever during the second half Friday night at Crypto.com Arena. Brink, the No. 2 pick in the WNBA draft, faced off against Caitlin Clark, the No. 1 pick.

Sparks unable to keep up with Clark and Fever

Rookie rallies Indiana to first win, seals it on 29-foot three-pointer with 40 seconds left.

BY ANDRÉS SOTO

A record Sparks crowd of 19,103 packed into Crypto.com Arena to watch them and No. 2 draft pick Cameron Brink face the Indiana Fever and No. 1 pick Caitlin Clark on Friday night.

The electric atmosphere felt familiar for Sparks coach Curt Miller. It brought him back to 2015, when he was an assistant coach as the Sparks built up for their championship run the following year.

"This crowd is like back then, when they were poised to win championships and they had great teams and that rivalry in that era with Minnesota," Miller said after the Sparks lost a 78-73 thriller. "I'm so excited to see the fan base back. I'm excited to see Crypto filled to the rafters, the third deck open. It's just amazing for us and women's basketball in general."

The crowd seemed to hold its breath every time Clark touched the ball, waiting to see something — *anything* — amazing.

She contributed 11 points, 10 rebounds, eight assists and three steals as the Fever (1-5) worked to overcome an 11-point halftime deficit. And then, after a rough shooting night, it happened.

After Rickea Jackson hit a huge three-pointer to cut the Sparks' deficit to three in the fourth quarter, Clark took the ball in transition and drained a wide-open three — her first of the night — as the L.A. crowd roared.

"I was excited to come here and play in this place, obviously so much history in this building," Clark said. "The crowd was absolutely amazing."

The Sparks' rookies, Brink and Jackson, also hit big shots to keep the team within striking distance as time ran down, but Clark delivered a dagger, stepping back and hitting a three-pointer with 40 seconds left to help seal the Fever's first win and hand the Sparks their third loss in four games.

"That third quarter really set the tone for the rest of the game. We got out-toughed at both ends of the court," Miller said. "They just sped us up with their physicality and made it difficult for our wings. ... So hats off to the physicality of Indiana and scrapping to that victory."

The Sparks got off to a quick start thanks to the play of Dearica Hamby, who had 16 points, six rebounds and five assists in the first half as the team cruised to a comfortable lead at the break. Jackson and Brink weren't far behind with seven and six points, respec-

tively. Brink also chipped in six rebounds and a blocked shot.

Whatever was working for them in the first half, however, was unsustainable. The Sparks turned the ball over 13 times in the second half. Hamby made two free throws in the closing seconds but otherwise was held scoreless in the second half, which she attributed to a combination of fatigue and frustration.

"That's where I got to be better," Hamby said. "I'm not used to being in this position to take that load, so that's a learning adjustment that I'm going to have to take on. I can't allow me not touching the ball to frustrate [me] and have lapses on defense. I'll be better."

Indiana stormed out of the gates to start the second half with a 9-0 run led by Kelsey Mitchell (18 points), Aliyah Boston (17 points, six rebounds), last year's No. 1 draft pick, and center Temi Fagbenle (17 points, six rebounds, three assists) to start the third quarter and tie the score.

"That's a credit to Temi's motor," Miller said. "Temi's physicality and her rim running bothered us. We talked a lot about it going into the game ... [she] really made things happen."

Jackson got the lead back on a three, the Sparks' first points of the second half, five minutes into the third. The rookies led the charge offensively with each making huge plays in crunch time. Jackson finished with 16 points and Brink 15.

"There was flashes for both of them to have really good nights," Miller said. "Cam's line, 15 and nine [rebounds], and I think she could've been even more dominant. And then Rickea made some big baskets for us, so you see that potential. They're going to be big for us all year, and I think both of them would say that they can play better."

Jackson said she focused on how to convert early losses into wins.

"We didn't get the win, so I'm not excited or ecstatic about that," she said. "But I feel like we're just going to keep growing and learn from our mistakes today."

The Sparks host the Dallas Wings on Sunday before a rematch against Clark and the Fever in Indianapolis on Tuesday.

Friday's late box

FEVER 78, SPARKS 73	
INDIANA (78)	Smith 2-5 0-0 5, Wallace 3-7 0-0 7, Boston 8-14 1-2 17, Clark 4-14 1-2 11, Mitchell 6-14 4-5 18, Samuelson 0-2 2-2 2, Fagbenle 6-12 4-4 17, Wheeler 0-1 1-2 1, Totals 29-69 13-17 78.
LOS ANGELES (73)	Brink 5-9 4-4 15, Nurse 2-11 0-0 4, Hamby 6-13 5-6 18, Brown 2-10 1-5, Clarendon 1-1 0-0 2, Jackson 5-7 4-4 16, Talbot 0-1 0-0 0, Yuen 0-0 3-4 3, Cooke 1-2 1-2 4, McDonald 3-5 0-0 6, Totals 25-59 18-21 73.

INDIANA	15	19	19	25	-	78
SPARKS	22	23	11	17	-	73

3-Point Goals—Indiana 7-25 (Mitchell 2-5, Clark 2-9, Smith 1-1, Fagbenle 1-3, Wallace 1-4, Boston 0-1, Samuelson 0-2); Los Angeles 5-24 (Jackson 2-2, Cooke 1-2, Hamby 1-2, Brink 1-3, Talbot 0-1, McDonald 0-2, Brown 0-5, Nurse 0-7). **Fouled Out**—None. **Rebounds**—Indiana 32 (Clark 10), Los Angeles 35 (Hamby 12). **Assists**—Indiana 22 (Clark 8), Los Angeles 18 (Hamby 7). **Total Fouls**—Indiana 17, Los Angeles 19. A—19,103 (18,997)

Clark taps Mamba mentality

[Plaschke, from D1] arms. She stuck out her tongue. The sold-out building shook.

Then with 40 seconds remaining and the Fever clutching a two-point lead, she did it again, draining a deep rainbow three to clinch a 78-73 victory, earn her first WNBA win and cement two priceless memories for those lucky enough to bear witness.

As Clark walked across the court after the final buzzer, the crowd continued to scream as if she was a rock star. When she later walked into the postgame news conference, she bore the swaggering smile of a baller.

In her sixth WNBA game, after five losses and countless struggles and heaps of criticism, the collegiate icon has perhaps rediscovered herself.

"Nights like tonight remind me of why I love playing basketball," Clark said. "Because you get a win and you walk off the court and there's so many young kids just screaming your name and love getting to watch you."

If you were wondering how a 22-year-old kid from Iowa became the most celebrated athlete in America, this is why. This was how. This was it.

This was what the roars are about. This is what 19,103 people came to see. This is what has pumped new life into a WNBA that is regularly setting attendance and viewership records. This is what has transformed women's basketball everywhere.

Those two shots, forged from nine straight misses, nailed by a woman wearing Kobe Bryant shoes and determined to honor Kobe Bryant's memory.

"Kobe's the best, man," she said. "That's the mentality you have to have. ... You want those moments, you embrace those mo-



ASHLEY LANDIS Associated Press

CAITLIN CLARK (22) sinks one of two late three-pointers to help the Fever beat the Sparks on Friday.

ments."

For the longest time Friday, it seemed like those moments would again elude her. As the Sparks grabbed an 11-point halftime lead and continued to roll early in the fourth quarter, Clark was getting pushed all over the court by the likes of Sparks guard Layshia Clarendon and frequent Sparks double-teams.

You have to see the 6-foot Clark in person to realize the extent of her disadvantage. She's small. She's slight. It's startling to watch this college giant get so easily smothered by the bigger and more aggressive WNBA veterans.

She made two of her first 12 shots. She showed off her incredible court vision with several pretty assists and she grabbed a bunch of rebounds, but the best part of her game was missing. Then, just in time, the greatest scorer in college basketball history found herself.

"I don't know if it's a good

thing or a bad thing, but I seriously think every shot is going to go in," Clark said. "I want to take those shots at the end of the game. It's like a mindset and confidence you have to have about yourself."

What does that confidence sound like? Listen to what she said after that first trey drained.

"I went to the bench after and I was like, 'I was due. They had to go in. I had missed so many, it was time to go in,'" she said.

She finished with 11 points, 10 rebounds, eight assists and a cool compliment from the beneficiary of several of her passes.

"Caitlin's vision is second to none," said Temi Fagbenle, who scored 17. "I love, I love love playing with her. I know I'm open, but I don't know if she knows I'm open, then she knows and I'm like, 'Oh my gosh, she knew!'"

All of which will perhaps convince critics to take a break from the incessant

sniping that began with Clark's 10-turnover debut.

The verdict that she was a bust — after only five games — was so pervasive that it ran her and teammate Aliyah Boston off social media. Many fans seemingly forgot that she was still a rookie, and that she played for a team so outmatched it had just earned the No. 1 draft pick during consecutive seasons.

"People don't want to give us much grace," Clark said. "They expect us to be world champions on Day 1. That's not realistic. There's a learning curve here."

She's been frequently crushed by that curve, yet she has continued to move gracefully beneath America's hottest sports spotlight, taking every question, giving refreshing and honest interviews while never criticizing anyone but herself.

If you listen to her coach, those two Friday night shots will be remembered as just part of her inspiration.

"She's handling it unbelievable. ... She's handling it with such poise. ... She shows a level of maturity for a 22-year-old that is unbelievable. ... She's special, she's different," Fever coach Christie Sides said of Clark. "The bullets are just coming, every day ... we're scrutinized for everything."

Clark admitted that the attention has been draining.

"Honestly, I feel like I talk to the media more than I get to talk to my own family, which is really kind of sad in a way," she said. "It's a lot for somebody who is 22 years old. It can be tough at times."

And then, as another memorable Friday night in Hollywood proved, it can be wonderful.

"I was excited to come here and play in this place," Clark said. "Obviously there is so much history in this building."

And now there's more.

NBA NOTES

Minnesota hits road down 2-0 after Doncic's winner

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Timberwolves have the same problem in the Western Conference finals against the Mavericks that Minnesota forced on the Denver Nuggets in the previous round of the playoffs.

A struggling **Anthony Edwards** and company are down 2-0 headed to Dallas, which means **Luka Doncic** is closing in on his first trip to the NBA Finals.

After losing twice at home, there's an easy start to the conversation for the Timberwolves going into Game 3 on Sunday night.

The Nuggets answered two losses in Denver with two victories in Minnesota, and had Game 7 at home before blowing a 20-point lead in the second half and losing.

"I don't think anybody in the locker room is panicking," Edwards said. "I hope not."

The next part of the conversation for Minnesota is this: Dallas' two road wins were by a total of four points, capped by Doncic's step-

back three-pointer with three seconds remaining in a 109-108 victory Friday night in Game 2. And the Timberwolves have led for 81 of the series' 96 minutes.

Edwards has acknowledged feeling fatigue, and his numbers show it. He's 11 for 33 from the field and had a crucial turnover on a bad pass to set up Doncic's shot.

Karl-Anthony Towns, the second-leading scorer who is struggling alongside Edwards, didn't even play the final 8:40 of Game 2 and is shooting 28% in the series.

The 7-foot, four-time All-Star and 7-foot-1 **Rudy Gobert** have been outplayed by Dallas' center tandem of **Daniel Gafford** and **Dereck Lively II**, with the Mavericks outscoring the Timberwolves 116-80 in the paint.

Doncic and co-star **Kyrie Irving** are taking turns leading the Mavericks, with huge assists from Gafford and Lively, who combined for 30 points and played big roles in the steady rally from an 18-point deficit in Game 2. Irving scored 24 points in the first half of Game 1 to keep



BRUCE KLUCKHOHN Associated Press

THE MAVERICKS mob Luka Doncic, center, after he hit a step-back three with three seconds left in a 109-108 win Friday night in Game 2 at Minnesota.

Dallas close and had 13 points with four threes in the fourth quarter of Game 2.

Doncic had 15 points in the fourth quarter of the opener before churning out his second 30-point triple-

double in these playoffs.

Also

Indiana's **Tyrese Haliburton** was ruled out for Game 3 of the Eastern Conference finals against Bos-

ton on Saturday night because of an injured left hamstring. ... Chicago guard **Lonzo Ball** says he got a new meniscus when he underwent a cartilage transplant in his left knee last year and

expects to be ready for the season opener. The former Laker and Chino Hills standout hasn't played since January 2022.

NBA PLAYOFF SCHEDULE

WESTERN CONFERENCE FINALS

5 **Dallas** vs. 3 **Minnesota**
Mavericks lead, 2-0

Gm 1	Dallas 108, Minnesota 105
Gm 2	Dallas 109, Minnesota 108
Gm 3	Sunday at Dallas, 5
Gm 4	Tuesday at Dallas, 5:30
Gm 5	Thursday at Minn., 5:30*
Gm 6	Saturday at Dallas, 5:30*
Gm 7	June 3 at Minn., 5:30*

All games on TNT

EASTERN CONFERENCE FINALS

1 **Boston** vs. 6 **Indiana**
Celtics lead, 2-0

Gm 1	Boston 133, Indiana 128 (OT)
Gm 2	Boston 126, Indiana 110
Gm 3	at Indiana, late
Gm 4	Monday at Indiana, 5, ESPN
Gm 5	Wed. at Boston, 5, ESPN*
Gm 6	Friday at Indiana, 5, ESPN*
Gm 7	June 2 at Boston, 5, ESPN*

* if necessary | Times PDT, p.m.

INDIANAPOLIS 500

AT INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY | SUNDAY, 9:30 A.M. PDT | TV: CHANNEL 4

Palou's racing helmet to honor Grandma

Champion says the item, which she imagined in a dream, will include references to key moments in his life

BY EDUARD CAUICH

Spain's Álex Palou, a two-time IndyCar Series champion, is no stranger to pressure. After all, he is defending his series crown this season and this Sunday he will be looking to retain the overall points lead in the mother of all races — the Indianapolis 500.

As usual for this race, the native of Sant Antoni de Vilamajor designed a special helmet that will be dedicated to his grandmother Maria, who a few years ago had a dream of her grandson.

"Two years ago my grandmother called me on the phone and told me she had a dream of a helmet, which I wore during the Indy 500," Palou told L.A. Times en Español prior to Sunday's race, which is scheduled to begin at 9:45 a.m. on Ch. 4.

"I wouldn't be here if it weren't for each and every one of my family members who have supported me," he said. "I thought it was a good idea. Plus to do a well-deserved tribute to her for the 500. I always make a special helmet for the 500, and I think it's one of the best helmets I've ever had."

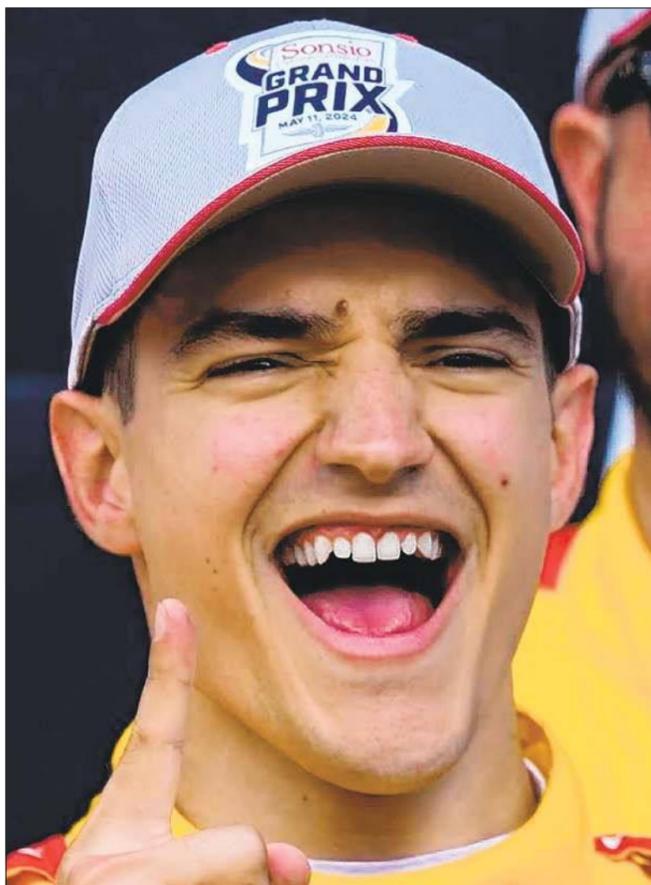
The helmet tells Palou's story in the sport, including references to his time as a young boy riding in a go-kart, people who have helped him compete in Japan and the United States, and the birth of his daughter in December.

Palou, who enters his fifth season in the IndyCar Series and fourth with Chip Ganassi Racing, leads the IndyCar series with 152 points, thanks to a May 11 victory at the Sonso Grand Prix, a pole and four top-five finishes and four top-10 finishes. He is followed by Will Power, with 140 points, and Scott Dixon, with 127. Palou also won the All-Star Challenge in Thermal, Calif., which did not award championship points but gave \$500,000.

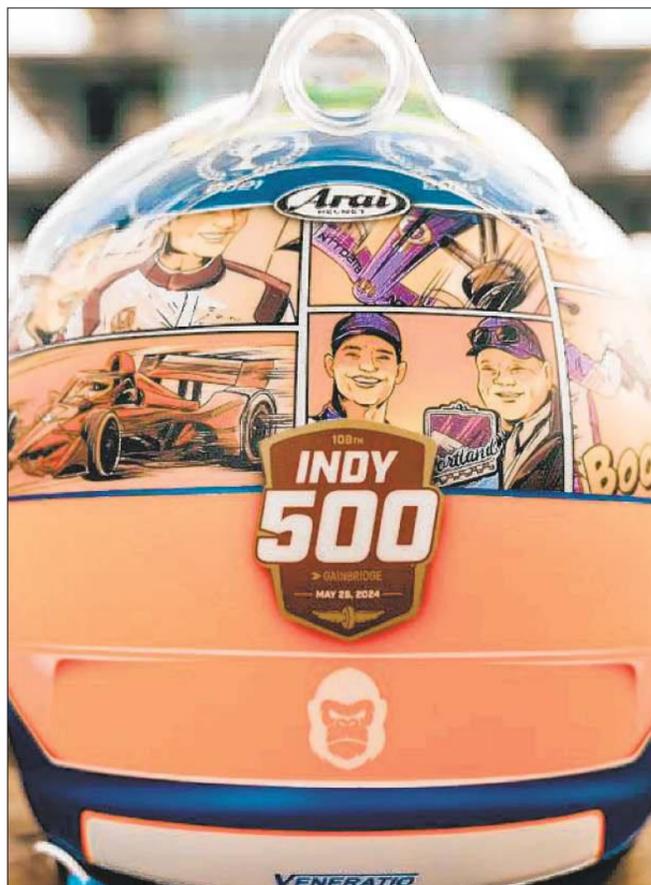
Sunday's historic 2.5-mile oval is located six miles west of downtown Indianapolis. It is the third-oldest permanent auto racing circuit in the world, and its permanent seating capacity of 257,325 makes it the largest sports venue on the planet.

Palou recalled watching the race long before he joined the Ganassi team.

"I remember because my dad watched it every year since I was little. We would watch them because it was something we didn't have in Europe, which is oval racing, and it really caught my attention," Palou said.



ALEX PALOU says his grandmother called him two years ago to say that she had dreamed of him wearing a special helmet to the Indy 500. Now reality, the item features comic book-style cels depicting the people who helped him, the birth of his daughter and other inspirations.



Associated Press / Alex Palou

The Spaniard said the view is far different at the track on race day.

"It's nothing like what you see on television. On television, it can look exciting, but in reality, [being there in person] beats it by 100 times," he said. "It's the only sporting event that houses so many people in one complex. You hear the noise of the people, the energy of the people. It's a very special event."

Palou won the 2021 IndyCar Series championship and last year repeated the feat, so he's accustomed to pressure from his competitors.

"There is always pressure. Last year was amazing, but this year, the points started for everyone at zero. So there's always the pressure to do the same thing again," the 27-year-old said. "In 2022 it wasn't possible [to repeat] but this year if we fight and keep doing things the way we started doing them this year, we can get to the end of the championship with options."

At the end of the race on Sunday, even though he will start 14th, Palou hopes to celebrate by eating fried chicken, a post-win tradition he has maintained since he

started racing karts.

"Getting a 500 win would be something spectacular, not only on a personal or individual level, but it would be something very nice not only for all the family that supports me from home and friends, but also all the fans," he said. "We will be fighting until the end to get it."

Drive for five

At 49, Brazilian Hélio Castroneves, driver for Meyer Shank Racing, is preparing for his chance to win at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, which would be his fifth and set a record for the most wins in the Indy 500. Castroneves will start 20th in his third attempt to become the first five-time winner. The other drivers to win four 500-mile races are Rick Mears, A.J. Foyt and Al Unser.

"The records are there to be broken or conquered. It would be incredible to be part of history as the greatest 500-mile winner," the Brazilian told L.A. Times en Español.

Despite having a lot of experience, the native of Ribeirão Preto said he still feels like the boy who competed in his first Indy 500 in 2001.

"It feels like it was the

first race. Obviously now I have more experience, but it's incredible, the vibe of the crowd, the tradition, it's a unique race obviously," said Castroneves, who fondly remembers his debut in 2001 during which he started from the 11th spot and listened to Mears' recommendation to be competitive. He drove the No. 68 Dallara IR-01-Oldsmobile Penske car and led the final 52 laps to win the race during his first attempt.

"I talked to him [Mears] a lot throughout the month and obviously executed it during the race and it was perfect," Castroneves said.

A year later he repeated it, becoming the first rookie two-time champion at Indianapolis. The Brazilian won a third time in 2009 also with Penske and in 2021 with Meyer Shank Racing.

Castroneves first saw the race on television in 1995 while in England and longed to compete there.

Last February he received a commemorative brick at the track known as the "Brickyard." The track earned the nickname because it originally was paved with bricks in 1909. Today only the start/finish line is brick, while the rest of the

track is asphalt.

Castroneves doesn't take so much history lightly and is happy to have his legacy embodied in such an iconic location.

"Indianapolis is like a coliseum; it's the coliseum of motor sports. To have my name there cemented in the asphalt of Indianapolis is a very big story for my name, for my family. There is no doubt that it is the ultimate in motor sports," he said.

Elsewhere in the field, Mexico's Pato O'Ward, seventh overall and driver of the Arrow McLaren Chevrolet, said he expects the three Penske cars will be the rivals to beat.

"I'm confident we can break through and put ourselves in a position to win," O'Ward said at media day.

O'Ward also jokingly said he learned a lot from last season's Indianapolis race. The 25-year-old Mexican was Arrow McLaren's best chance to win last year's race until he crashed in the closing stages after a maneuver on eventual runner-up Marcus Ericsson sent him into the wall. On Thursday, when asked what he learned from the incident, he responded with a joke.

"Don't end up on the wall,

because if you do, you can't win the race," said O'Ward, who signed a contract extension last March that will pay him \$4 million in 2026 and \$4.2 million in 2027, according to the Indianapolis Star.

O'Ward won the first race of the season in St. Petersburg in March. However, nothing would compare to scoring a win Sunday.

"I'd love to tell you what it feels like to win this race, but I haven't done it yet," the Monterey native said.

Eight previous winners are part of the grid, which is scheduled to feature 2021 NASCAR Cup champion Kyle Larson among the rookies.

There is an 86% chance of rain forecast, with the potential for severe thunderstorms Sunday. The Indy 500, because it cannot be raced in the rain, has been affected by such conditions 12 times during the first 107 races. The race is official after 101 laps, and in the event of a rain suspension, the final positions determined up to the time of the race suspension will be declared as the final positions.

This article first appeared in Spanish on L.A. Times en Español.

Californian will be the fifth to attempt 1,100-mile feat

Kyle Larson, 31, hopes to pull off a Memorial Day double, last tried by Kurt Busch in 2014.

BY MICHAEL MAROT

INDIANAPOLIS — Only four drivers have attempted one of the most grueling days in motorsports: the 1,100-mile Memorial Day weekend double.

Kyle Larson is trying to become the fifth to race in both the Indianapolis 500 and NASCAR's Coca-Cola 600 on the same day and the 31-year-old Californian believes he can do it.

He qualified fifth for Sunday's 500, which starts about 9:45 a.m. Pacific time.

The plan is to complete the showcase in Arrow McLaren's No. 17 car and then be flown to Charlotte, N.C., for his more familiar No. 5 Chevrolet for NASCAR's longest race, set to start at 6 p.m.

Previous quests have been derailed by weather delays, full rainouts, mechanical problems and late arrivals all marring an inflexibly tight schedule.

Only one driver, Tony Stewart, has finished on the lead lap of both races on the same day.

Weather could again pose a major obstacle for Larson, the first driver to make the attempt since Kurt Busch in 2014. The current forecast in Indianapolis calls for strong

chance of rain Sunday.

The race has not been rained out since 1997, when it took three days to run the race, ruining Robby Gordon's first shot at the double.

A look at the previous efforts:

John Andretti

Total double attempts:

One (1994)

At Indianapolis: Started

10th, finished 10th

At Charlotte: Started

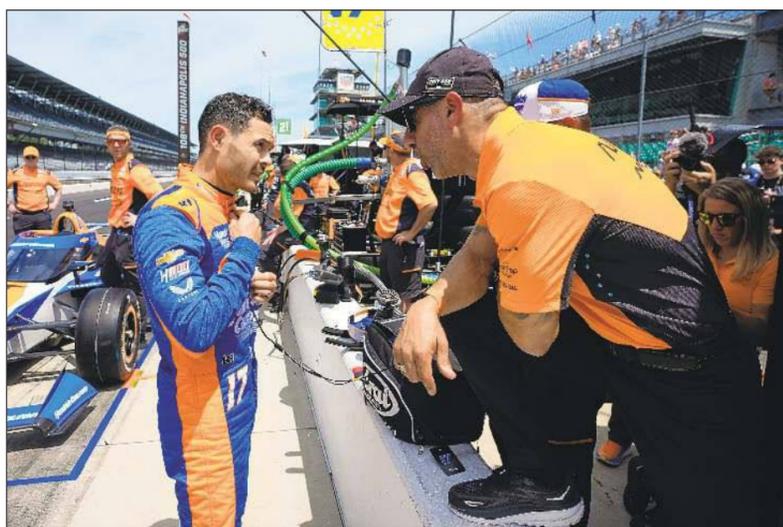
ninth, finished 36th

Total laps completed: 416

(196 of 200 at Indy; 220 of

400 at Charlotte)

The skinny: The nephew of racing great Mario Andretti and cousin of former IndyCar driver Michael Andretti added his chapter to the family legacy as the first to attempt what once seemed unfathomable. The term "double" soon became synonymous in both the open-wheel and Cup series, and has continued to resonate even after John Andretti's death in January 2020. The soft-spoken Andretti even tossed aside the family's long-standing "feud" between his uncle and four-time Indy 500 winner A.J. Foyt, teaming up with Foyt on race day. Andretti claimed a top-10 Indy finish in Foyt's No. 33 Ford before traveling to Charlotte, where a faulty crankshaft relegated him to 36th place. Andretti made five more Indy starts from 2007-11 but never tried the double again.



DARRON CUMMINGS Associated Press

KYLE LARSON, left, talks with former Indy 500 champion Tony Kanaan during a practice session last week at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Indianapolis.

Robby Gordon

Total double attempts:

Five (1997, 2000, 2002, 2003,

2004)

At Indianapolis: Started

12th, fourth, 11th, third and

18th; finished 29th, sixth,

eighth, 22nd and 29th

At Charlotte: Started

28th, 42nd, 12th, 38th, 20th;

finished 41st, did not start,

16th, 12th, 20th

Total laps completed:

1,926 (669 in five Indy

starts, 1,257 in four

Charlotte starts)

The skinny: The five attempts and total completed laps are records in double history, though rain

wreaked havoc on Gordon's hopes. His first shot was washed out in 1997. He was able to race in the 600, but the 500 was completed the following day, so it's not a true same-day double. A rain-delayed start in Indy three years later forced him to miss the start of the Coca-Cola 600, giving PJ Jones the start — and credit for all of the laps completed in Charlotte. Attempt No. 4, in 2003, was derailed when the scheduled 400-lap Coca-Cola was shortened to 276 laps. In 2002, he came within one lap of completing all 1,100 miles. A mechanical problem only 88 laps into the

2004 Indy 500 ended his fifth and final attempt.

Tony Stewart

Total double attempts:

Two (1999, 2001)

At Indianapolis: Started

24th, seventh; finished

ninth, sixth

At Charlotte: Started

27th, 12th; finished fourth,

third

Total laps completed: 1,196

(396 in two Indy starts, 800

in two Charlotte starts)

The skinny: The three-time NASCAR Cup Series champion grew up in Indiana, dreaming of winning the 500.

But he only made five career starts in the race, two coming after he left open-wheel racing for the Cup series. He still found success at his adopted home track and on Memorial Day weekend. "Smoke" completed all but four laps combined in the four double races, posting top-10 finishes in each one. In 1999, he became the first driver to complete all 600 laps in one day and still is the only one to achieve the feat.

Kurt Busch

Total double attempts:

One (2014)

At Indianapolis: Started

12th; finished sixth

At Charlotte: Started

28th; finished 40th

Total laps completed: 471

(200 at Indy, 271 at

Charlotte)

The skinny: Busch became the most recent driver on the list when he teamed up with Michael Andretti's IndyCar team a decade ago. The month started relatively well. Busch qualified on the fourth row of the 11-row field and started in the middle of the pack at Charlotte. But after matching the highest 500 finish by a driver pulling double duty, Busch's quest ended with a blown engine in Charlotte. He told reporters the attempt would be a "memory I'll have forever."

Marot is an Associated Press reporter.

Bullpen woes finally caught up to Dodgers

Ravaged by injuries, relief corps imploded in grand fashion in the 9-6 loss in Cincinnati.

By Jack Harris

CINCINNATI — The Dodgers' injury-ravaged bullpen had been lurking like a land mine in recent weeks.

On Friday, the short-handed group finally imploded.

In the kind of meltdown the team has dreaded of late — with key relievers Evan Phillips, Brusdar Graterol, Ryan Brasier and Joe Kelly all on the injured list — the Dodgers' relief corps came unglued in the fifth inning, giving up four runs (plus an inherited runner) in the decisive sequence of a 9-6 loss to the Cincinnati Reds.

"You're trying to figure out how to get through the game," manager Dave Roberts said. "Unfortunately, it just didn't work out."

Entering Friday's fateful frame, the Dodgers appeared to be rolling toward a win in the opener of a six-game trip. They led by two runs. Their starting pitcher, James Paxton, appeared to find a rhythm. And their recently slumping bats awoke at hitter-friendly Great American Ballpark.

But then, in a nightmarish turn of events in which three pitchers took the mound in an eight-batter sequence, everything changed.

Paxton gave up a leadoff home run to Stuart Fairchild before issuing a two-out walk to Spencer Steer. It was the fourth free pass Paxton gave up, the veteran left-hander again battling the command issues that have dogged him this season. It also was Paxton's last pitch, prompting Roberts to come to get him after 95 pitches.

That's when the inning went off the rails.

Needing to dip into the underbelly of his bullpen, Roberts called upon Yohan Ramirez, a five-year veteran with decent stuff but a history of command issues — he has averaged nearly five walks per nine innings in his career — whom the Baltimore Orioles and New York Mets designated for assignment this year.

"He's got to go out there and just do his job," Roberts said.

Instead, Ramirez could barely throw a strike.

The right-hander missed badly with his first three pitches before plunking Tyler Stephenson. He grazed the zone just once in a five-pitch walk to Santiago Espinal. Then, in another 3-and-0 count, he hit Nick Martini with a 95-mph fastball, forcing home the tying run with the bases loaded.

Ramirez went no further, pulled after his requisite three batters. But the mess he left behind didn't dissipate.

His replacement, left-hander Alex Vesia, had to



CINCINNATI'S Jonathan India watches his grand slam sail out of Great American Ballpark in the Reds' win over the Dodgers on Friday.



RELIEVER Yohan Ramirez, who walked one batter and plunked two others without recording an out, departs during the Dodgers' nightmarish fifth inning.

face a right-handed hitter in Jonathan India. Vesia fell behind 3-and-0 before working the count full. Then, on the payoff pitch, Vesia offered up an inner-half four-seamer that India turned on for a

game-altering grand slam.

The ticking bullpen time bomb finally detonated. The Dodgers' lack of quality relief options had blown up in their face.

"I still don't feel it was too

much of a leverage spot," Roberts said, noting the Dodgers needed just one out from Ramirez to escape the inning and set up their preferred late-game plan. "I think that was a good spot

for him. And we just didn't get it done tonight."

Of course, this all should be a short-term problem for the Dodgers.

Phillips, out since May 3 because of a hamstring strain, is set to begin a rehab assignment this weekend. Brasier, out since April 27 because of a calf strain, is close behind him, Roberts said before the game. Graterol and Kelly appear further away from returning. Nevertheless, the bullpen had been performing well in their absence, entering Friday ranked fourth in the majors with a 3.21 earned-run average (including a league-best 2.26 this month, when the injuries have been most prevalent).

Still, there are nights like Friday when even one extra arm might have made the difference. And until the bullpen is back at full strength, the potential for more late-game collapses will remain.

"It's frustrating," Roberts said flatly.

One remedy for the Dodgers is consistent starting pitching — something they'd had plenty of lately before Paxton's command issues returned.

Despite his 5-0 record and 2.84 ERA entering the night, this season has been a bit of a slog for Paxton. His signature cutter has eluded him, and against the Reds, the 35-year-old shelved the pitch completely, failing to throw it once for the first time in an outing since 2016.

"Just not there yet," Paxton said of his cutter. "There's other pitches that I think are better to throw in-game right now. It's some-

thing I'm going to work on on the side and if it comes around, we'll use it. But right now it's just not there."

The move didn't translate to better results. Paxton walked two of the first three batters he faced (he had no free passes in his previous two starts) and then gave up a three-run homer to Steer. And while he navigated traffic for the next three innings, his shaky command resurfaced in the fifth, leaving him with 28 walks (tied for fourth most in the majors).

"Just couldn't really find a rhythm," Paxton said. "I feel like I got better as the game went on a little bit and then just that fifth inning, kind of lost the handle a little bit again."

The Dodgers temporarily recovered and got Paxton off the hook for a loss. They scored four times in the second inning, including two on a double from Chris Taylor, his first extra-base hit of the season, and another on a double from Mookie Betts, one of his three hits. Will Smith made it 5-3 on a solo home run in the fifth, going the other way for his sixth of the season.

From there, though, the bullpen fell apart. The offense never recovered (the Dodgers finished just three for 14 with runners in scoring position, and had a couple deep drives robbed by leaping catches from Reds center fielder Fairchild). And their long list of reliever injuries finally backfired in explosive, excruciating fashion.

"It was unfortunate to see how it went," Paxton said. "But that's baseball. It happens sometimes."

A's deal provides them with unusual escape clause

[Baseball, from D1]

"It is a targeted tax clause that says if they are taxed in a way that is different than the way other businesses are taxed, they have the option to leave," said Erica Johnson, director of communications for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

This is not some remote hypothetical. If you go to a show in Las Vegas, you pay a 9% live entertainment tax. If you go to a game in Las Vegas — and the game is staged by a pro team based in Nevada — you do not pay that tax.

In 2021, an effort to remove that professional sports exemption was rejected. During legislative hearings on the A's funding last summer, a state senator asked A's President Dave Kaval whether the team would be willing to pay the tax, given that smaller Nevada businesses do. The Raiders and NHL's Golden Knights do not.

Kaval dodged a yes or no answer, saying only that the legislation did not contemplate that. In the future, should a specific tax target the A's, their players or opposing players, the A's can move out of town.

The A's propose a 33,000-

seat ballpark in Las Vegas. If the A's sell 26,000 tickets per game at last season's average major league ticket price of \$37, a 9% tax could generate \$7 million for Nevada per year.

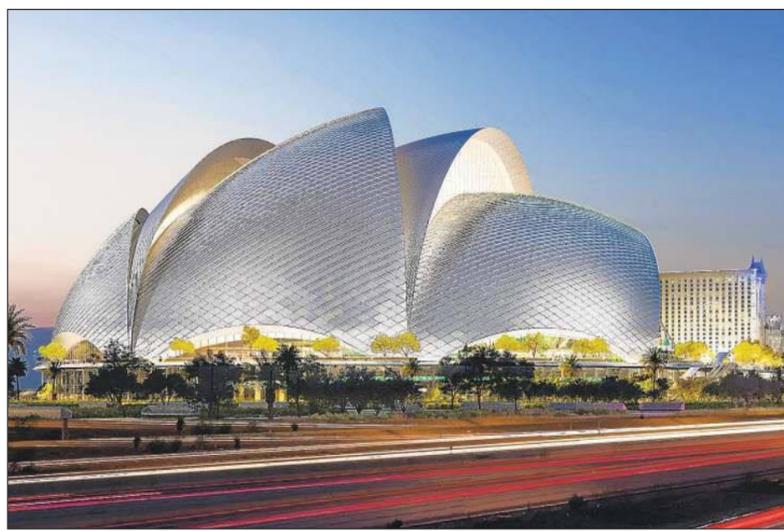
In a presentation led by Steve Hill — chairman of the stadium authority and president of the visitors authority — the Nevada Legislature was told the A's could generate an estimated \$1.3 billion per year in economic impact. (Most economists consider this estimate wildly optimistic.)

I asked Johnson why the A's would be provided with an opt-out clause that could jeopardize that economic impact. She did not comment. Hill was unavailable for comment.

"These nonrelocation agreements are what I call political cover," Greenberg said. "They basically are, at least from a politician's standpoint, the quid pro quo for the gigantic amount of public dollars that are going into these stadiums."

"Basically, the politician can say, 'Look, we're investing all this money because the team is going to stay here, based upon a nonrelocation agreement.'"

In 2022, the Anaheim City Council considered



THE ATHLETICS' planned \$1.5-billion stadium in Las Vegas. If ever the team is targeted with a tax by local or state government, it has the option to relocate.

such a targeted tax — a 2% admission tax that would have applied only to Disneyland, Angel Stadium and Honda Center, where the NHL's Ducks play. The council ultimately voted against the tax, in part because the Angels' lease requires the city to credit the amount generated by any such targeted tax at Angel Stadium against the

team's rental payments.

The leases of the Colorado Rockies and Seattle Mariners restrict the ability of the respective stadium authorities to impose any targeted taxes. The Miami Marlins' lease restricts the city or county from imposing a targeted tax and empowers the team to sue if it believes a tax violates the agreement.

David Samson, the former Marlins president who negotiated that lease, said it is impossible to protect against any targeted tax that might be imposed at any level of government in the future. What a lease can do, he said, is say what can happen in the event such a tax is imposed.

"Can be anything," Samson said, "a rent abatement,

some sort of extra flow of funds from general revenue, or it can be as far as, hey, this nonrelocation agreement becomes null and void."

I asked Johnson if any alternative language had been considered besides granting the A's the ability to move. She did not comment. For the record, neither Greenberg nor Samson believes Las Vegas would be at high risk of losing the A's if a targeted tax were to be imposed. For one, although the A's would have the option to relocate, they could choose not to do so, or negotiate a lease concession in exchange for not doing so.

If the team did wish to move, it would have to find a new home, secure funding for a new ballpark there, and win a vote among MLB owners — and the saga that led to Las Vegas took two decades for the A's. Their move to Las Vegas would be only the second MLB relocation since 1972.

"It's not easy, as we've seen, to move a team," Samson said.

It's also not easy to build a fan base in a new city. It might be a little bit easier if the "We're here for 30 years!" pledge were not accompanied by an asterisk.

NHL NOTES

Goalies putting on show in East

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Eastern Conference finals have been a goaltender duel, and nobody should have expected otherwise.

Seems fitting that the Florida Panthers and New York Rangers are knotted at one game apiece heading into Game 3 on Sunday afternoon, given that a pair of Russian netminders and past Vezina Trophy winners as the league's top goalie — **Sergei Bobrovsky** for the Panthers, **Igor Shesterkin** for the Rangers — basically have matched each other save for save, stat for stat.

Bobrovsky has given up two goals. Shesterkin has given up two goals, not counting an own goal deflected in by a teammate and an empty-netter that New York yielded in Game 1. And the similarities hardly end there.

"It's definitely fun," Bobrovsky said.

Fun is one way to describe it. Hair-raising, gut-churning and nail-biting also apply.

The Rangers evened the series Friday with a 2-1 overtime win at Madison Square Garden, **Barclay Goodrow** the hero 14:01 into the extra session by beating Bobrovsky and giving New York — which finished with the NHL's best regular-season record — a needed split of the first two games before heading on the road for Games 3 and 4.

There's been almost no breathing room over the first two games: Through 134 minutes and 1 second of hockey so far in the East finals, 130:13 of it has come with the margin on the scoreboard being one goal or the game being tied. The goalies have just been that hard to beat.

"He's certainly been terrific in the playoffs," Rangers coach **Peter Laviolette** said of Shesterkin. "I thought there was good goaltending at both ends."

Take away the own goal from Game 1 and the goaltender numbers are almost perfectly matched. Bobrovsky has stopped 52 of 54 shots he's seen, a .963 save percentage. Shesterkin has stopped 50 of the 52 Florida shots that have gotten to him, a .962 mark.

'Just trying to bring the same game'

Goodrow scored four goals, one of them a game-winner, on 61 shots in 80 games for the Rangers this season. In the 12 playoff games, he has four goals, two of them game-winners, on just 12 shots.

He was asked to explain. He could not.

"I'm just trying to bring the same game every night," said Goodrow, the only skater in the Rangers lineup who has won a Stanley Cup.

Streaks end

Going back to his time in Columbus, Bobrovsky had won 12 consecutive overtime playoff games — tying the longest such streak in NHL history with **Patrick Roy**.

And the Panthers had won 11 OT playoff contests in a row, the second-longest run in playoff history behind a 14-game stretch by Montreal from 1993 through 1998.

NHL PLAYOFF SCHEDULE

WESTERN CONFERENCE FINALS

1C Dallas vs. 2P Edmonton
Oilers lead, 1-0

Gm 1	Edmonton 3, Dallas 2 (2OT)
Gm 2	at Dallas, late
Gm 3	Monday at Edmonton, 5:30
Gm 4	Wed. at Edmonton, 5:30
Gm 5	Friday 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
Series tied, 1-1

Gm 1	Florida 3, New York 0
Gm 2	New York 2, Florida 1 (OT)
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	Saturday at Florida, 5, Ch. 7*
Gm 7	June 3 at New York, 5, ESPN*

*if necessary | Times PDT, p.m.



Photographs by WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

BELL HIGH players party on the mound after defeating Birmingham in the City Section Open Division championship at Dodger Stadium.

Bell claims first Open Division title

Sophomore Rojas throws six shutout innings to lead Eagles at Dodger Stadium.

BY ERIC SONDEHEIMER

Get ready for a parade and maybe keys to the city.

A group of teenage baseball players from Bell High made history on Saturday afternoon at Dodger Stadium, winning the school's first City Section Open Division championship with a 4-1 win over defending champion Birmingham.

Sophomore Jayden Rojas, embracing the pressure and significance of pitching on his field of dreams, threw six shutout innings. His most impressive moment came in the sixth inning when Birmingham loaded the bases with none out on a hit batter, error and bunt single. Rojas escaped by getting a strikeout on a 3-and-2 pitch and two fly-ball outs. As he walked off the mound, he was surrounded by pumped-up teammates and fans were chanting, "M-V-P, M-V-P, M-V-P!"

What a pitching duel it was, Michael Figueroa of Birmingham opposing Rojas. Figueroa's command and ability to throw strikes gave the Eagles few opportunities through five innings of a scoreless game. The best was in the second inning when a pinch-runner tried to score from second on a ground ball off the glove of first baseman Trevor Sostman. Sostman was able to recover, pick up the ball and make the throw to catcher



JAYDEN BARRIENTOS, left, scores a run for the Eagles in the sixth inning. Bell would go on to win 4-1 to capture its first City Section Open Division title.



STARTING PITCHER Jayden Rojas celebrates after escaping a bases-loaded jam in the sixth inning.

Nick Penaranda in time for the out at the plate.

Then, in the sixth, with two outs, Gustavo Ramirez reached on an infield single, just beating the throw from Figueroa. He moved to second on a wild pitch and scored on a single by David Gonzalez, who also drove in the only run for Bell in its 1-0 semifinal win over Granada Hills. The Eagles added three runs in the seventh on a bases-loaded walk and two-run single by Ramirez.

Meanwhile, Rojas' poise showed throughout. Each time he got a third out to keep his scoreless string alive, he'd walk off the mound waving his fist. The 15-year-old is a big Dodgers fan, and he said last week it was his dream to pitch at Dodger Stadium. His execu-

tion and effectiveness have already stamped him as one of the best pitchers in the City Section. And he also had two hits on Saturday. He came off the mound in the seventh after a leadoff walk to a standing ovation from Bell fans. Another sophomore, Rigoberto Baltazar, finished the game.

Bell pitchers gave up one run in playoff victories over Sylmar, Granada Hills and Birmingham. The Eagles all week refused to be intimidated, making the routine plays and getting stellar play at the catcher position. It was defense and pitching that helped the Eagles take down the best teams from the San Fernando Valley.

For Bell, its historic season that relied on a talented group of underclassmen won't be soon forgotten. Yes, the Eagles made it to the final before — winning Division III in 1987 — but they hadn't been to an upper-division final since 1953. These players showed poise, feistiness and fearlessness taking on more highly touted players and programs urged on by coach Frank Medina, who used to coach football and was fiery and unyielding in pushing his players to succeed.

The Eagles' third inning showed they were not backing down. With Birmingham having a runner in scoring position, Medina twice ordered intentional walks to load the bases to avoid facing the Patriots' No. 2 and No. 3 hitters. Rosas got a fly-out on a 3-and-2 count to end the inning and keep the game scoreless. It was an early sign the Eagles meant business.

North Hollywood wins final in eighth inning

Strong pitching from Koster and a triple by Park help the Huskies defeat Banning 3-1.

BY ERIC SONDEHEIMER

Nick Park, North Hollywood High's junior second baseman, stood down the first-base line at Dodger Stadium for the awards ceremony on Saturday afternoon after his team's 3-1 win over Banning in eight innings in the City Section Division I championship game. His bleached blond hair and smile told the story after his second triple and third hit of the game broke a 1-1 tie.

"Amazing, unbelievable," he said.

North Hollywood received a strong pitching performance from Maxwell Koster, who gave up two hits in seven innings. Catcher Robert Handressor also played brilliant defense, saving balls in the dirt from potentially going to the backstop and making strong throws to second. It was North Hollywood's first title since winning Division II in 2012.

The score was tied 1-1 going into the eighth when North Hollywood's Diego Velazquez singled against reliever Robert Guerrero

and moved to second on a sacrifice. That's when Park hit the ball to right field and ended up with a triple. Cristian Calderon followed with an RBI single.

It was a game in which the defenses for both teams were tested with bunts and pressure-situation plays. North Hollywood failed on a suicide squeeze. Banning lost a run when its runner tagging from third on a fly ball was called out for leaving too early.

North Hollywood coach Eder Tapia, in his fifth season, hasn't had a home game since the 2019 season. The Huskies' baseball field no longer exists because of school construction. A new one won't be available for at least two more years. The team has been playing all road games and practicing at Van Nuys Sherman Oaks Park. Dodger Stadium was just another road venue, and Tapia, who played in the City final in 1999 for Sun Valley Poly, tried to tell his players what to expect.

"I told them to soak it all in, enjoy and relax," he said.

In the end, his players listened and performed at their best in the playoffs to emerge as champions as the No. 8 seed.

"He means everything to us," Han-Dressor said. "I'm very proud of him and thank him for coaching us."



CRAIG WESTON For The Times

NORTH HOLLYWOOD infielder Nick Park leaps after hitting a tiebreaking triple in the City Section Division I championship at Dodger Stadium on Saturday.

SPORTS EXTRA

A TIMES E-NEWSPAPER EXCLUSIVE :: SUNDAY, MAY 26, 2024



JEFF DEAN Associated Press

SHOHEI OHTANI hits a triple during the sixth inning of the Dodgers' 3-1 loss Saturday in Cincinnati. The Reds clinched the rematch series and could sweep Sunday.

Dodgers can't cash in runners, fall to Reds

By JACK HARRIS

CINCINNATI — They had the bases loaded with no outs in the second inning. A leadoff double in the fourth. A one-out triple in the sixth.

All night Saturday, the Dodgers threatened to get their offense going at Great American Ball Park. All night, they had chances to bury the Cincinnati Reds with their star-studded lineup.

But at each crucial point, the offense failed to deliver, continuing its recent trend of poor situational hitting to drop a fourth straight game 3-1 in front of a sold-out crowd of 41,880.

So far this season, one stat has defined the Dodgers' success — or failures — more than anything else.

During their 12-11 start to the season, they batted just .244 with runners in scoring position, the 19th-best mark in the majors dur-

ing that span.

During a 14-2 tear from April 21 to May 9, they batted an MLB-best .328 with runners in scoring position, seemingly addressing their situational hitting woes by cutting down on strikeouts and coming through in opportune moments.

In the two weeks since, however, the team's batting average with runners in scoring position has cratered again. Since May 10 they are batting just .194 in such spots, better than just two teams (the Angels and Rangers) in that span.

Unsurprisingly, the team's record has tapered off, with the Dodgers 7-8 in their last 15 games — a stretch in which their high-powered lineup has managed just 3.7 runs per game.

Situational hitting wasn't the issue for the Dodgers (33-21) on Saturday.

Starting pitcher Walker Buehler couldn't replicate the dominance he flashed in six score-

less innings against the Reds (22-30) in Los Angeles last week, instead getting tagged for three runs in 5 2/3 innings in a rematch series the Reds have clinched and can sweep Sunday.

Shohei Ohtani had the triple in the sixth but struck out three times, leaving his batting average over the last nine games at .206.

Will Smith hit a leadoff single in the second (and scored the team's lone run on a Jason Heyward double-play ball), and Freddie Freeman doubled in the fourth, but they managed nothing else, continuing slow May performances (they both are batting below .250 this month).

Even Mookie Betts couldn't provide a spark, getting picked off at first base in the first inning after his only hit of the night.

Situational hitting can be a fickle stat in baseball. And Octoberers aside, it typically has been a strength for the Dodgers. They

have ranked in the top 10 each of the last five seasons. They entered Saturday in the top half of the majors at 14th too, with a .258 mark that actually was better than their .255 average overall.

Still, the issue has plagued them in the last couple of postseasons — and makes any skid like their current one that much more frustrating, looming as a potential playoff weakness for a team navigating championship-or-bust expectations.

The good news for the Dodgers: They still have a sizable lead in the National League West, up 5 1/2 games on the San Francisco Giants. They'll eventually get injured third baseman Max Muncy back, though his return has been delayed by continued discomfort in his strained oblique. Most of all, their recent malaise feels like a temporary blip, more of a frustrating speed bump in their season than some larger cause for alarm.

ANGELS

Soriano can't slow down torrid Ramirez

José Ramírez homered for the second straight game and the Cleveland Guardians extended their winning streak to eight, beating the Angels 4-3 on Saturday night at Angel Stadium.

Ramírez's two-run drive in the fourth inning off José Soriano (2-5) extended the Guardians' lead to 4-0. It was his third of the weekend series and sixth in eight games. He's tied for fourth in the majors with 15 home runs and has an MLB-leading 51 RBIs.

Tanner Bibee (3-1), who grew up in nearby Mission Viejo, picked up his first win since April 21.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Holiday's finishing flurry helps Celtics seize 3-0 series lead

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jrue Holiday overcame an illness to convert the go-ahead three-point play with 38 seconds left, then made the game-saving steal to help the Boston Celtics rally from an 18-point deficit to beat the Indiana Pacers 114-111 on Saturday night for a 3-0 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

Boston can clinch its second NBA Finals trip in three seasons with a Game 4 win Monday in Indianapolis.

Jayson Tatum matched his playoff career high with 36 points and had 10 rebounds and eight assists. Jaylen Brown added 24 points and Al Horford had 23 points and seven three-pointers as the Celtics won their sixth straight playoff game and stayed unbeaten on the road this postseason.

Holiday played despite being listed as questionable with an illness unrelated to COVID-19 and missing the morning shootaround.

"For him to come out here and put it all on the line for us and come up with a big play to win the game, we've got a hell of a team," Tatum said in his postgame TV interview.

Andrew Nembhard led the Pacers with a career-high 32 points before Holiday stole the ball from him with 3.3 seconds remaining. T.J. McConnell finished with 23 points,

nine rebounds and six assists, while Myles Turner and Pascal Siakam each had 22 points.

Indiana played without All-NBA guard Tyrese Haliburton, who sat out because of a left hamstring injury, and missed him as Boston closed the game on a 13-2 run. It's the first loss in seven postseason home games for the Pacers.

The sold-out crowd, decked out primarily in gold checkered-flag shirts featuring dozens of individual stamps of Indiana's state outline as part of the Indianapolis 500 weekend celebration, helped inject energy with Haliburton out.

But the crowd was quieted by Holiday's big layup, the ensuing free throw and the defensive play of the game. He closed it out by making two free throws with 1.1 seconds to go.

Indiana had a chance to force overtime, but Aaron Nesmith's three-pointer was off the mark.

It was a wild game, with Indiana taking an 18-point lead midway through the second quarter and again midway through the third. But Boston responded the second time by forcing a flurry of turnovers that it turned into a 13-4 spurt to close to 90-81 after three quarters.

The Celtics were just getting started. Boston opened the fourth quarter on a 9-3 run that cut it to 93-90 on a three from Horford with 8:29 to play.



MICHAEL CONROY Associated Press

CELTICS forward Jayson Tatum, who matched his playoff career high with 36 points and tallied 10 rebounds and eight assists, screams in celebration during Boston's Game 3 win in Indianapolis.

Then, after Indiana rebuilt a 107-99 cushion with 3:05 left, Boston closed the game on the 13-2 run that sealed its fifth consecutive road victory in these playoffs.

NHL PLAYOFFS

Stars defeat Oilers to even West final

Mason Marchment scored for the first time since the playoff opener and the Dallas Stars beat the Edmonton Oilers 3-1 on Saturday night to even the Western Conference final at a game each.

Marchment broke a tie at 3:41 of the third period when he deflected a shot that went through the legs of defenseman Vincent Deshams, then bounced on the ice and went between the right arm and body of goalie Stuart Skinner. Stars defenseman Ryan Suter, whose 1,444 career regular-season games without a Stanley Cup title are the most among active players, shot the puck from against the board just inside the blue line that Marchment deflected.

Stars captain Jamie Benn had a goal and assisted on Esa Lindell's empty-netter with 2:03 left. Wyatt Johnston had two assists.

Dallas goalie Jake Oettinger

stopped 28 shots, including a reaching glove save on Mattias Ekholm's shot with about 3 1/2 minutes left and also gathered in the Edmonton defenseman's long shot about a half-minute after that.

Connor Brown had Edmonton's goal. Skinner stopped 22 shots.

Game 3 is Monday night in Edmonton, where the Stars won 4-3 in their only trip this season. That was Nov. 2 during the Oilers' 3-9-1 start that led to Jay Woodcroft getting fired as coach and replaced by Kris Knoblauch.

Edmonton center Leon Draisaitl was scoreless, seeing his playoff-opening points streak ended at 13 games.

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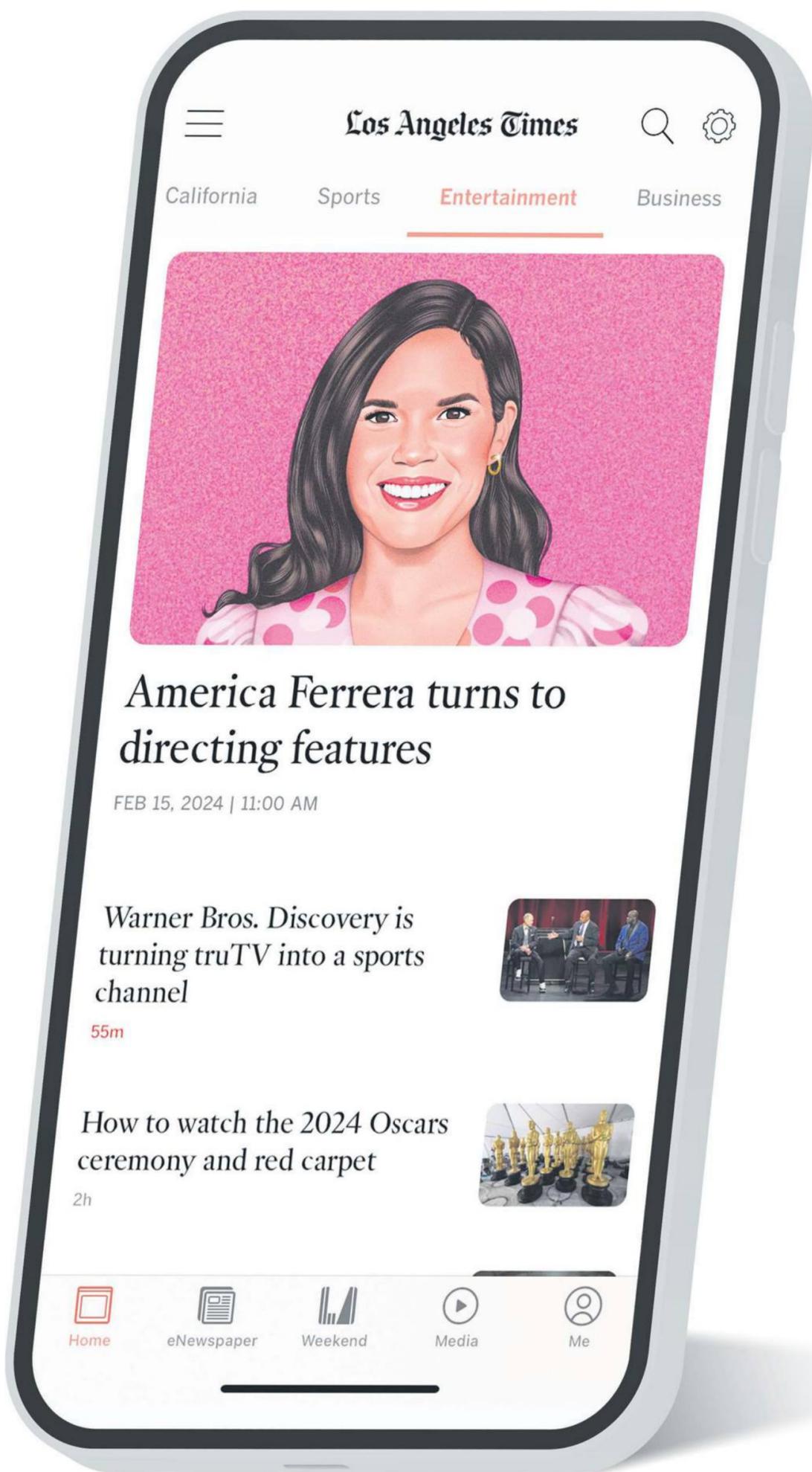


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AN INFAMOUS LOVE TRIANGLE. A BOMBSHELL RECORDING. THE DOWNFALL OF DONALD STERLING FINALLY GETS THE HOLLYWOOD TREATMENT IN FX'S 'CLIPPED.' **E4**

EVAN MULLING For The Times

Ricky Martin and the 1999 'Latin explosion' in pop that really wasn't. **E2** How Benedict Cumberbatch gives life to a puppet in 'Eric.' **E6**

DE LOS

Ricky Martin and the 'Latin explosion' that never was in pop

THE PUERTO RICAN SINGER SHOT TO FAME WITH HIS CATCHY HIT, BUT THE ANTICIPATED BOOST TO LATINO MUSICIANS AND SINGERS WOULD WIND UP FALLING FAR SHORT



WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

RICKY MARTIN is in his element during a concert in Las Vegas in 1999. It was the year he became a household name in the United States.

RICKY MARTIN knew “Livin’ La Vida Loca” would be an instant hit when producer Desmond Child and songwriter (and fellow Menudo alum) Robi “Draco” Rosa brought him a demo of the track. † The Puerto Rican singer and his team were putting the finishing touches on “Ricky Martin,” his fifth studio album and his first ever in English, when he heard what would become the LP’s first single. † “I said, ‘Hold on a second, wait a minute, this is the song.’” † Martin recently said on “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon.” † “The album was already recorded. We were about to go into mastering and I said, ‘Everybody go back into the studio. We need to record this song.’” † Talk about a premonition.

BY ANDREA FLORES

“Livin’ La Vida Loca,” a ska-infused, fast-paced earworm about a seductive, sinister woman living on the edge, was released on March 27, 1999. It immediately took over Top 40 radio and topped the Billboard Hot 100 chart weeks later. The music video, an expensive production full of sex appeal, was on constant rotation on MTV.

“Not for a very long time have we seen a new artist with the star power of Ricky Martin,” Tom Calderone, then-chief of programming at the cable network, told The Times in 1999. “We played his video, and the next day it was among the most requested ... for a brand new artist to catapult to the top like that, we just don’t see that.”

Martin, who began his artistic trajectory by acting in commercials in Puerto Rico when he was 9, was now 27 and all over American network television, wowing audiences in studio and across the country with his energetic and polished performances on programs like “Today,” “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno” and even “Saturday Night Live.”

“Let me tell you something, America is in love with you,” Rosie O’Donnell told the pop star when he appeared on her daytime talk show on May 11, the same day as the release of “Ricky Martin.” The album would debut at No. 1.

In the interview, O’Donnell said she had learned about her guest the previous year during a conversation with a friend, Tommy Mottola, Sony Music Entertainment’s then-chief executive, who predicted that Martin would be the biggest star in the world. In fact, he was betting on it — Martin was signed to Columbia Records, a subsidiary of Sony.

“I said, ‘Who’s Ricky Martin?’ No offense, but I didn’t know,” O’Donnell said.

By summer 1999, Mottola’s pre-

diction had turned true. Martin would become a household name in the United States, sharing the top of the charts with the likes of the Backstreet Boys, TLC and Britney Spears. He would also be the face of the so-called Latin explosion in pop music, a phenomenon that ended up being more marketing ploy than demographic eventuality.

::

Although the instant ubiquity of “Livin’ La Vida Loca” might suggest otherwise, Martin’s success did not come overnight.

By the time the song hit the airwaves, Martin had spent his teenage years touring the world as a member of the boy band Menudo; earned heartthrob status after acting in a telenovela (“Alcanzar una Estrella II”), a U.S. soap opera (ABC’s “General Hospital”) and on Broadway (“Les Miserables”); and dominated the Latin American music charts with his four previous Spanish language albums, which sold millions of copies.

Such was his popularity that FIFA, the International Assn. of World Football, asked Martin and his team to create the theme song for the 1998 World Cup. The end result was “La Copa de la Vida,” an infectious samba-inspired banger that became a global hit.

If anyone was primed to become a major pop star in the United States, it was Martin.

His chance to win over an English-speaking music audience came on Feb. 19, 1999. After some arm-twisting by Mottola, the Recording Academy invited Martin to perform at the 41st Grammy Awards.

“We had enormous leverage at that time with almost every major superstar on our label,” Mottola told Billboard in 2019. “We heavily voiced our opinion and influence and said, ‘Ricky must have a per-

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formance on the Grammys.' No was not an option."

Martin did not disappoint, receiving a standing ovation from the audience at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles after electrifying attendees with an English rendition of his World Cup hit that featured plenty of horns and drums.

Madonna was so blown away by the Puerto Rican pop star that she was seen clinging to him backstage; by this time, the Material Girl had agreed to record a track with Martin for his upcoming English debut.

(As a side note, the 1999 awards show was also historically significant because it is where the Recording Academy announced creation of the Latin Grammys.)

All of a sudden, everybody wanted a piece of Martin, and the fanfare that followed his Grammy performance all but ensured that "Livin' La Vida Loca" would debut with a bang — the single would sell more than half a million copies in the U.S. alone within a matter of weeks.

That momentum propelled Martin's eponymous album to the top of the Billboard 200 after its release, selling 661,000 copies in its first week (by year's end, "Ricky Martin" would sell 6 million copies, making it the third bestselling album of 1999, behind the Backstreet Boys' "Millennium" and Britney Spears' debut, "...Baby One More Time"). As The Times reported, fans waited hours in line at the Virgin Music Store in West Hollywood to be among the first people to buy the album at midnight.

The store was also giving away free tickets to the KIIS-FM Wango Tango concert later that summer at Dodger Stadium — a show that is engraved forever in radio host Rick Dees' memory.

"I've never heard screams like that," Dees said, recounting the moment he introduced Martin to the crowd. "I didn't even get to the 'Mar' part of Martin."

Dees, known for his internationally syndicated show "The Rick Dees Weekly Top 40 Countdown," remembers Martin from his Menuendo days.

"He [would] come in and had a glistening tooth smile. He just seemed so happy. It was infectious," he said, adding that Martin "had the look of a superstar." He remembers blasting "Livin' La Vida Loca" on huge Altec Lansing speakers when Martin came to the L.A.-based studio.

"It was the first time he'd ever heard it go out over the speakers at a radio station, and he was giggling, and he started dancing and jumping up and down," Dees said. "It looked like he had swallowed a jackhammer."

L.A. Times photo editor Raul Roa, who shot many of the up-and-coming Latin stars as a freelance photographer, remembers the Martin craze like it was yesterday.

"You could just feel the electricity in the air," Roa said, "People were dying to get backstage [to see Martin]. They would offer to buy my photo pass from me."

But what made Martin such a draw? Besides his work ethic, talent and "I can't believe this is my life" approach to his success, the star also filled a void in the broader pop music landscape.

In an April 1999 Times story, Jody Gerson, then-vice president of EMI publishing (and now chief executive of Universal Music Publishing Group), argued that the industry lacked a single male figurehead to contrast with the choreographed look and feel of boy bands like NSYNC and the Backstreet Boys, adding that consumers were tired of "depressing alternative bands" and wanted "happy music you can dance to."

"These Latin artists look at you, and you feel like they could fall in love with you," Gerson said.

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In the media frenzy that followed the release of "Livin' La Vida Loca" and Martin's English-language LP, the performer's ethnicity became a central part of the coverage. His success was seen as a harbinger of a new wave of artists with roots in Latin America ready to take over the charts. America, it seemed, was ready to embrace Latinos — then about 1% of the U.S. population, or approximately 30 million people — and their culture.

"Latin-tinged pop is blowing up because it fits the musical times," journalist Christopher John Farley wrote in a Time magazine cover story.

Indeed, 1999 was a big year for artists with Latin American roots. Following in Martin's heels with English-language albums were Ecuadorian American Christina Aguilera ("Christina Aguilera"), as well as Nuyorican artists Jennifer Lopez ("On the 6") and Marc Anthony ("Marc Anthony"). Legendary rocker Carlos Santana was also lumped in with this group thanks to the release of "Supernatural." As was Enrique Iglesias ("Enrique") — never mind that the crooner was born in Spain.

Two years later, Shakira, then considered to be the Colombian version of Alanis Morissette, would follow with the release of "Laundry Service," her first LP in English.

Not every journalist bought into the Latin explosion narrative. Times reporter Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez



Photo illustration by AN AMLOTTE Los Angeles Times; photos by Raul Roa Los Angeles Times, Getty Images, Associated Press and AFP

SUCCESS

of Martin, above middle, was seen in the late '90s as a harbinger for a new wave of Latin artists to take over the charts, including, clockwise from top, Shakira, Enrique Iglesias, Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony.



and music columnist Agustin Gurza actively challenged it, arguing that the storyline was reductive and lazy.

"While no one denies that focusing the mainstream media spotlight on Latino musicians and singers is overdue, the recent storm of coverage has exposed an abysmal ignorance about the complexity, diversity and reality of Latinos and Latin music," Valdes-Rodriguez wrote in June 1999.

"Lost in the recent frenzy to cover 'crossover' artists have been two simple facts: Latino artists do not necessarily perform in Latin music genres; and Latin music is not always performed by Latinos."

Similarly, Gurza countered the notion that the rise of Martin signaled America's willingness to accept Latin music.

"The American pop mainstream finds it hard to accept other cultures on their own terms," he argued. "The outside artist must almost always conform to American tastes or be marginalized. Music must pass through a mass-market blender, filtering out ethnic character and foreign meanings."

It's a valid point — save for the three words in its title, the lyrics of "Livin' La Vida Loca" are entirely in English, and although the song sounds like it's Latin-infused, it contains no elements that are staples in Latin music.

"But it's a one-way deal," added Gurza. "Latin American audiences have always embraced U.S. artists, culturally intact and in English."

It wouldn't take long for Valdes-Rodriguez and Gurza to be proved right. By 2004, the steady stream of artists with Latin American heritage breaking into mainstream pop had all but disappeared, prompting Gurza to dub the "Latin explosion" as nothing more than a "marketing mirage" orchestrated by Mottola. With the exception of Iglesias, who

was signed to Interscope, every Latino artist who saw their careers take off in 1999 was signed to a label owned by Sony.

Mottola himself would admit the charge.

"There never really was a Latin explosion," he said in a Billboard interview, "But we used it to take gigantic advantage of it, and lots of our stars benefited from that."

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Twenty-five years later, Valdes-Rodriguez looks back at the "Livin' La Vida Loca" craze as a "bittersweet moment" for Latin music.

"On the one hand, I was glad that people in the mainstream were kind of waking up to the fact that there was this whole other U.S.-based music industry that was huge," she said. "But on the other, it was a little bit frustrating because every 10 years, the mainstream corporate media will be like 'Latinos are exploding.'"

Valdes-Rodriguez, who left journalism to pursue a literary career, says that just about every decade in the 20th century presented its own Latino "crossover" figure.

In the 1950s, it was Ritchie Valens with "La Bamba." The 1980s had Gloria Estefan and the Miami Sound Machine. Less than five years before "Livin' La Vida Loca," Tejano superstar Selena Quintanilla was poised to take over the mainstream before she was killed in 1995.

"What's frustrating is that every time someone like [Ricky Martin] comes along, there's this collective erasure in the mainstream press of those who came before," Valdes-Rodriguez said.

And though the so-called Latin explosion was a marketing ploy, to Mottola's credit, it proved to be a successful one. Aguilera, Lopez and

Shakira are now considered pop divas — the latter two even shared the stage during the 2020 Super Bowl halftime show.

As for Martin, he would eventually return to recording music in Spanish and has been a mainstay in Latin pop for decades. The Puerto Rican star just wrapped up a trilogy tour this year with Iglesias and Pitbull — most of the songs on Martin's setlist were in Spanish — and can be seen on Apple TV's drama "Palm Royale."

In the 25 years since the release of "Livin' La Vida Loca," the U.S. Latino population has doubled — more than 63 million as of 2022, or approximately 19% of the U.S. population — which has fueled the exponential growth of the Latin music industry. The Recording Industry Assn. of America recently reported that revenue for the all-encompassing genre (which includes *musica Mexicana* and reggaeton) hit an all-time high of \$1.4 billion in 2023, a 14% growth from its previous peak in 2005.

A new crop of artists has been able to reach the heights of Martin's success without the need to atone its Latino identity to appease a white majority.

Mexico's *corrido tumbado* star Peso Pluma was YouTube's most streamed artist in 2023. Colombian singer Karol G was named Billboard's woman of the year in 2024. Puerto Rican reggaeton trap star Bad Bunny recently co-chaired the Met Gala, a year after his performance at the 65th Grammys — a standout set that prompted backlash against CBS after the network used "singing in non-English" in lieu of transcribing his Spanish lyrics in the broadcast's closed captioning. CBS President and Chief Executive George Cheeks apologized a week later for the snafu.

And yet, none of the top-charting Latino stars has released an English album.

"[Latin music] is American music too," Valdes-Rodriguez said. "We're not crossing over to anything."

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

And Adam Silver, newly installed as NBA commissioner, faced a dilemma over how to punish Sterling and quell the outrage.

"I don't know of many stories I've covered that had so many twists and turns as this one," said executive producer Ramona Shelburne, whose podcast "The Sterling Affairs," for ESPN's "30 for 30," serves as the basis for the series. "The more I covered it, the more I realized this incredible love triangle. It was like living in a movie."

Shelburne probed Sterling's rise from humble beginnings to the largest residential landlord in Los Angeles. Along the way, he also secured a notorious reputation — and constant legal hassles — for his refusal to rent to Black people and other marginalized groups. In 2009, Sterling agreed to pay \$2.73 million to the Justice Department to settle a lawsuit alleging that he refused to rent apartments in his Koreatown buildings to Latino and Black tenants and to families with children.

As her reporting deepened, Shelburne zoomed in on a central theme: the powerful lure of the lifestyles of the rich and famous.

"There's this moment when you have to determine how far you're willing to go to have that life, to have the sun shine on you," she said. "Each of these characters make their choice on how far they are willing to go, and what pieces of their soul they are willing to sacrifice to have that life."

Welch said the subject matter was naturally suited to dramatic exploration.

"There are elements of absurdity and weirdness that I knew would be fun to write," she said. "The central characters are complicated and fascinating people, their nose pressed up against the glass of wealth and power and fame. There is a real loneliness to them."

Although aware of the scandal when it first broke, O'Neill was not keen about signing onto the project when Welch first approached him.

"I was all ready to say, 'This is not for me,'" said O'Neill, who is not a basketball fan. "I felt it would be too difficult for me to do convincingly. I don't look anything like him. I'm bigger than he was. I felt there were actors who could do a better job."



KELSEY MCNEAL FX

SPOUSES Shelley and Donald Sterling (Weaver, left, O'Neill) sit courtside next to the Clippers owner's personal assistant, V. Stiviano (Coleman), in "Clipped."



But he began to have second thoughts when reflecting on his career trajectory, particularly the lighter fare that had made him a prime-time star.

"For a long time, I've been like a second-tier guy, and I've always thought, 'You know, I can do a lot better than this,'" O'Neill said. "But sometimes you don't get the opportunities. When you're in the business, there's a tendency to put you in a slot. And I understand that. But it never affected me that way. I was looking for something that would be fun and challenging to do."

"I've been very lucky. I don't complain. I've had a great career, and some great opportunities. But not stuff like this! It's almost Shakespearean, like Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Donald and Shelly were a team and protected what they had."

PART OF THE appeal for O'Neill was his understanding of Sterling's approach to life.

"I wanted to connect with Donald's humanity — not to make him a hero but to show people it's not always easy to judge someone," he said. "He was such a personality that you never knew what you were going to get one minute to the next. He was inadvertently funny, and he

could be mean as a snake. You could make a case that he liked the players, that he enjoyed them tremendously, but he had these flaws."

Despite their physical differences, O'Neill easily slips into the role, projecting not only Sterling's quirks and occasional charm but also his bullying temper.

Said the actor: "He didn't think of himself as a horrible guy. He ultimately did admit, 'I should not have said those things.'"

Welch called O'Neill's performance a revelation.

"I think he was excited for the opportunity to show everybody how good he is," said Welch. "He was completely alive to every scene he played — he was funny when it was time to be funny, and terrifying when it was time to be terrifying. He understood that what he was doing is going to surprise people."

"I also knew I needed an actor who was not protective of his own image. It's hard to find an actor to play someone really ugly, and Ed was totally down to go there."

Weaver said she studied footage and interviews in her research for playing Shelly Sterling.

"I admired her," she said. "She was a quiet lady, soft-spoken, but she beat them all at their own game. She was half-owner of the team, a

great example of being the brains behind the brawn. I also think there was really true love between them."

Much of the series is told from the perspective of Stiviano. In addition to her edgy personality and desire for celebrity, "Clipped" also shows her softer side, including her care for two young boys whom she adopted, a detail that was not widely reported at the time.

"She insists on her own value despite her surroundings suggesting otherwise," Coleman said of Stiviano. "I saw her as an outsider and survivor, an outlier. She also had a perceptible lack of shame, which was fascinating. Sometimes she breaks rules because she doesn't really know what they are."

She added, "I really came to care for her. The way she played with fame showed a lot of intelligence and humor, which I think was lost at the time."

Confident in her mission to bring authenticity and meaning to the Clippers story, Welch said she is hopeful sports and nonsports fans will connect with "Clipped."

"Whether you are an NBA fan and really followed this story, or you don't give a f— about basketball, I want people to sit down and get involved with the characters and love the show on its own."



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Photographs by JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

CREATIVITY HELPS A FATHER CONNECT

CAST AND CREATOR ON 'ERIC,' PUPPETS AND THE SEARCH FOR A MISSING BOY

T BY YVONNE VILLARREAL

HE MOST IDIOSYNCRATIC and striking moment on TV this summer? It could be Benedict Cumberbatch as a father running through the streets of New York in a giant, fuzzy blue monster puppet getup amid a desperate attempt to reconnect with his son. † It may sound like some sweet magical adventure, but that's not the style of British screenwriter Abi Morgan, who created "Eric" for Netflix. She isn't afraid to tackle big subjects and her body of work — including "Shame" (2011), which tackles sex addiction; "Suffragette" (2015), about women's suffrage in the U.K.; and TV dramas "The Hour" and "The Split" — often leaves viewers emotionally strung out in its intense examination of human behavior, internal battles and broken systems. And "Eric" is just as visceral.

Set in 1980s New York City, the initial episode of the limited series finds Cumberbatch's Vincent Anderson, a puppeteer and creator of a "Sesame Street"-esque children's show "Good Day Sunshine," exasperated by work demands and his floundering marriage to Cassie (Gaby Hoffmann). The couple's troubles intensify when their 9-year-old son, Edgar (Ivan Howe), goes missing on his walk to school. Torn up by guilt, Vincent is convinced if he turns his son's drawing of a blue monster, Eric, into a life-size puppet on TV, Edgar will come home. And tasked with investigating the boy's disappearance is Michael Ledroit (McKinley Belcher III), a Black and queer detective whose closeted identity becomes an obstacle at work as he pursues the case.

Morgan started with a simple idea: Can we live in a world where a kid can walk to school and come home safely? In exploring that question, the series weaves a lot of issues that plagued the city at the time: rising crime rates, a forgotten underclass, the AIDS epidemic, endemic racism, as well as government mismanagement and corruption.

"There were parallel themes that just became very apparent to me," Morgan said during a press day with the cast in Los Angeles. "We're looking at a world where the parents become children and the children become parents in some ways. And the notion of what is a family beyond the nuclear family of the Andersons? There's a wider family of our city. Who looks after us in the city? Can we trust *those* parents — be that government, local council or our police force? And when those systems break down and expose themselves, where do we find our new boundaries of trust?"

Morgan sees the show as a way for audiences to ask themselves those questions through Vincent's journey. And the city's many issues

presented in the series, inspired by Morgan's time spent in New York in the '80s, added another dimension to the inciting mystery. "There was this dark underbelly. It hadn't had that cleanup," she said. "There was something very particular about the '80s — it was a melting pot and a point of change, a point of shifting sands, filled with fear and hope, and moments of great freedom and moments of really pushing down that freedom. It felt like a really rich fabric and tapestry in which to set 'Eric.'"

With no shortage of real and existential horror lurking outside, Morgan knew from the beginning she wanted to bridge the story with a space that provided safety and comfort. Influenced by her own

childhood spent backstage with her theater director father, observing how sets were created and the way costumes came to life, she saw "Good Day Sunshine" as a contrast to the city's roughness and a way to dig deeper into how Vincent, who begins the series already on shaky ground before his mental health declines further, copes with his reality.

"He's trying to re-create his childhood and idealizing something that was less than ideal," Cumberbatch said. "His mental health crisis was brushed under the carpet with pharmaceuticals and very cold, cut-off, loveless parenting ... he's invested so much of himself in that show from a need that was never satisfied in his childhood."

Morgan added that "Good Day Sunshine" is a world that Vincent can control, unlike his own, and that the puppets give life to his voices as he struggles with his mental health and alcoholism. It's also a way to signal the value of pursuing a creative life, which stands in contrast to that of his estranged parents, particularly his father, a wealthy developer.

"That creativity is a way to liberate, heal, manage and help understand ourselves," Morgan said. "Vincent's desire to create a world of good, is probably one of the healthier things he has done."

As a show within the show, "Good Day Sunshine" features an assortment of puppet characters — a mix of animals, inanimate objects and people — including one operated and voiced by Vincent, putting Cumberbatch's chameleon voice work into practice (his eclectic credits include the dragon Smaug in "The Hobbit" trilogy and the Grinch in the eponymous 2018 animated film). Before he goes missing, Edgar observes his father at work from the sidelines and, later, watches as Vincent becomes agitated with notes from network bosses, demanding that the show broaden its appeal to get viewership numbers up, with a new puppet as a possible solution. On the subway ride home, Edgar suggests his idea for the puppet, Eric, to little fanfare from his dad.

Morgan credits series director Lucy Forbes with being a key architect behind the 7-foot monster puppet, which took roughly four weeks

'There was something very particular about the '80s. ... It felt like a really rich fabric and tapestry in which to set "Eric."'

— ABI MORGAN, Creator



to perfect. Eric is a manifestation and an amalgamation of details in Edgar's mind — a tail that mimics his cat and fur that matches the chevron of his grandmother's mink. Vincent becomes convinced that bringing Eric to life could help bring Edgar back, and as he begins to mold the puppet from foam, Vincent also begins to hallucinate Eric, a manifestation of his inner voice, into existence in his quest to find the boy.

Cumberbatch felt the exploration of the imagined other — a device done before, including in films like "Harvey" (1950) and "Ted" — in the larger context of the story was intriguing. And bringing depth to the surreal is familiar territory for the actor, who has done green screen and motion-capture acting and



LUDOVIC ROBERT Netflix

McKINLEY BELCHER III, top left, Benedict Cumberbatch and Gaby Hoffmann star as Michael, Vincent and Cassie in Netflix's "Eric," right.

understands the commitment required to make it believable. Still, as Cumberbatch tells it, acting opposite puppeteer Olly Taylor in a plush, furry costume as his character Vincent was falling apart was a surprisingly grounded experience.

"I'd often do line runs with Olly, who's a really brilliant actor and incredibly capable puppeteer," he said. "I tried the [Eric] voice out, I'd often read lines and sometimes not; he just got it and the rhythm was the only way it could be for Eric in that moment. It was all about trying to remind ourselves what the purpose of Eric was in relation to [Vincent's] state of mind. At one point, I tried on the [puppet] headgear and I cried. I just had this wave of empathy for Olly and the performance he had to give in that contraption. It's a miraculous skill."

The puppet element helped soften some of the script elements for Hoffmann. As a mother of two children, the actor said she was initially hesitant about the heavy subject matter, but grew eager about its singular dynamic and the way the series explores the various breakdowns of systems, small and large. The series first captures the unraveling of a social institution — marriage — as Vincent and Cassie veer in opposite directions, and examines how their behavior negatively affects the parent-child dynamic.

"Vincent and Cassie are two very different people who are dealing with the world in two very different ways," she said. "But I think that Cassie hasn't been active in an honest way, on behalf of her son, for a while now — and on behalf of herself. I think that she knew that she needed to leave the marriage, and that it wasn't a healthy environment for [Edgar]. As we come to find out, she has secrets and is in some denial. She's not as deeply in it, and she's not as avoidant and terrified of her emotions as Vincent is, or distracting herself with as many substances, but the disappearance ... she definitely feels a sense of responsibility."

WHEN Morgan started to incorporate Ledroit into the story, she was determined not to make him a secondary character. She wanted Ledroit to go on his own journey, informed by his identity, and coming up against all the institutions — the precinct where he works or the gay nightclubs he used to visit — that are making him question his identity similar to Vincent. Playing a Black queer detective who is challenging the norm in the '80s, Belcher understood that sense of duty and purpose.

"In a story like this, it would be very easy for him to just turn into a cop that comes to work and deal with the information and solving the case. But it's really exciting as a Black queer man, to show up with all the baggage that Ledroit would be carrying in the '80s, to wrestle with stuff, but to leave him in a place of action that is going to be the change."

Belcher also acknowledged that though the Black community isn't a monolith, they have a complicated relationship with law enforcement. He sees his character as an instrument of change within the institution.

"I think over the course of the six episodes, that's a place he lands on: Oh, this is what's required for us to do what we're really here for. And it means I must call out injustice; it means I must be intolerant of corner cutting; it means I have to own who I am and stand firmly in that and stand up as a man and say 'no,'" he said.

The various threads in the series take some time to come together, making for a premise that can take some finesse in distilling. But that's what the team behind the series hopes sets it apart.

"You felt held by an imagination that contained worlds within the worlds of the story," Cumberbatch said. "It felt fresh and new — trying to explain it to people was interesting. I've never really heard of anything quite like this before."

It's why all these months later, cozy on a sofa with Hoffmann, Cumberbatch can't help but chuckle wistfully while recalling a moment in the series that had him, as Vincent, wearing the fuzzy Eric costume and running through the streets.

"Running and running and running and running," Cumberbatch said. "It's the knife-edge thing with this drama; it is very funny, but also weirdly heroic and desperately sad and poignant."



Photographs by QUANTRELL COLBERT E! Entertainment

UPCYCLED STYLE WITH A DARING SPIN HITS REALITY TV

COMPETITION SERIES 'OMG FASHUN' COMBINES VISION OF FASHION 'IT GIRL' JULIA FOX, STYLIST LAW ROACH

W BY ILANA KAPLAN

WITH THE YEARS-LONG success of series like "Project Runway" and "America's Next Top Model," fashion competition reality TV shows are nothing new. But "OMG Fashun" is a different type of series ripe for short attention spans and a style-savvy generation more attuned to concerns about the environment. "There's so many awful things happening in the world," says Julia Fox, the show's co-host, over the phone from New Mexico, where she's in production for a movie. "And this isn't one of them." "OMG Fashun," which premiered in early May on E! and airs weekly at 9 p.m. Pacific, is a thrilling reality competition series hosted by Fox, fashion's "It" girl and cultural renegade, and celebrity stylist Law Roach. The show brings sustainable fashion to the forefront with quickfire competitions and a rotation of guest judges that includes Phaedra Parks of "Real Housewives" fame and "13 Reasons Why" star Tommy Dorfman, among others.

But "OMG Fashun" opts for snackable episodes primed for the TikTok generation — roughly 20 minutes each — that feature three rising "fashion disruptors" competing in two separate challenges. The catch? They're encouraged to use sustainable, upcycled and unconventional materials like insects and condoms. It's chaotic — and that's the point.

Behind the series is Scout Productions, known for reality shows like "Queer Eye," "Legendary" and "The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning," a company with decades of experience in the reality competition space. After producing the two-season streetwear competition series "The Hype," Scout Productions co-founder David Collins and Chief Creative Officer Rob Eric were asked by their agent if they wanted to chat with Fox. A 15-minute conversation turned into an hourlong one.

"She brought this originality to how we look at fashion, how we look at ourselves in fashion, what fashion actually is," Eric says in an interview alongside Collins over Zoom. "That it doesn't need to be a \$40,000 outfit, but it actually could be leaves that she found in a park." That sparked the idea for "OMG Fashun." He added, "We thought, 'Oh, what would it be like if we could take 90 minutes of 'Project Runway,' mix with 'The Hype' chopped into it, and put it into a 21-minute show?'"

Eric and Collins, who executive produced the series, were in constant awe of how Fox, 34, made her mark in the fashion world with an unwavering sense of authenticity. "She wore a dress made of condoms. She wore a dress made of ties. All [the] sustainable stuff that she was doing, and it kept getting put into TMZ, WWD and Elle magazine. We knew that Julia had that voice," Eric says.

Reality TV came naturally for Fox, whose prior credits have been in film. After all, she's used to doing "new stuff." However, it was admittedly "more work than acting" for her because whole episodes had to be shot in a day.

"It was a lot of outfit changes, a lot of time in hair and makeup, super early call time, ending super late at night," she says.

But Fox seemingly made it look easy. Collins says everyone was "slack-jawed" from the second she sat down on the stage despite never having starred on a TV show before. "We're like, 'What? We're not having to prompt her, tell her, and remind her?' She just killed it over, over and

over again," he says.

Roach, 45, who was recruited by Scout Productions after working on "Legendary," was intrigued by the premise of "OMG Fashun" — highlighting emerging designers and sustainability. Fox also had wanted to work with the stylist for a while. "We both had admiration for each other's work and the things that she wore. I think her stylist is incredible," he says over the phone from Los Angeles.

The pair ultimately had a "fun" dynamic, he says, since Fox "doesn't take herself seriously at all."

"She gave me so much agency to poke fun at her and she did the same to me," Roach says. "She'd create this really fun and friendly and kooky work environment, so it was great. It made me excited to go to work every day and to see what she was going to wear because we didn't share outfits."

While Fox and Roach had fun with their roles on the show, the talent was nothing to mock. "These young designers had these incredible gifts and ideas of how to take discarded materials and turn them into wearable works of art," he says.

So "OMG Fashun" doesn't just want to be another fashion show. "We've seen other shows that have a component where there's a challenge where they're instructed to create a garment out of recycled materials or upcycling or discarded fabrics," Roach says. "But this one, the entire show is based on that principle."

Fox often struggled to choose a winner because she was in such awe of the designers' talents. In the nature challenge, for instance, she had to stop filming because she couldn't decide between the contestants. Luckily, Fox is keen on wearing their designs whether they take home the top prize or not on "OMG Fashun." "I did wear one of the outfits [from the show] during the press tour — the little black blazer with the underwear bottoms with the metal utensils on them, nail clippers, nail files and forks," she said. She's also kept in touch with many of the contestants.

Amid the release of "OMG Fashun," Roach made headlines for the "tenniscore" ensembles he helped envision for Zendaya and the hashtag he started — #TashiMadeMeWearIt — amid the "Challengers" press tour.

"Just to see people participate in tenniscore and going out in groups and dressing in this way, that's the most heartwarming and incredible thing. I'm like, 'This might be cool to give people this challenge to go out and to create these looks,'" he says.

Fox also admired how Zendaya's looks were playful nods to the film and its themes. "It was definitely giving 'OMG Fashun' for sure," she says.

With Fox's presence on "OMG Fashun" and her affinity for daring looks, is a fashion line in her future? Not exactly.

"Is that really what this planet needs — another fashion line? Like, I'd rather prop up kids that are doing it and salute them for their efforts and call it a day," she says. Fox also would rather rely on someone else's talents: "Why would I want to do it myself when I could have someone else do it for me?"

Should "OMG Fashun" get another season, the co-hosts already know who they'd love to see as guest judges. Roach wants John Galliano, Grace Jones, Naomi Campbell or RuPaul on. Fox, on the other hand, wants to recruit Doja Cat, Dennis Rodman, Gwen Stefani or Lil' Kim. "I love accidental-like fashion icons," she says. "People that didn't really set out or try but became [them]."

Ultimately, the hope is that viewers watching will shift their perspective on fashion. Fox wants people to "dig a little deeper" and "look inward."

Roach adds, "We've gotten into this culture of once you have something, you post it on social media that it has to be discarded, you can never wear it again. I challenge people to reinvent the clothes that they already have and the way they've worn them. If you like it, buy it. If you love it, live in it."



BESTSELLERS

- Fiction** weeks on list
- All Fours** by Miranda July (Riverhead Books: \$29) An irreverent and tender novel about a woman upending her life. **1**
 - Funny Story** by Emily Henry (Berkley: \$29) Two opposites with the wrong thing in common connect. **4**
 - James** by Percival Everett (Doubleday: \$28) An action-packed reimagining of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." **9**
 - Table for Two** by Amor Towles (Viking: \$32) A collection of stories from the author of "The Lincoln Highway." **7**
 - The Women** by Kristin Hannah (St. Martin's Press: \$30) An intimate portrait of coming of age in a dangerous time and an epic tale of a nation divided. **15**
 - Long Island** by Colm Tóibín (Scribner: \$28) The story of a woman alone in a marriage and the bonds she rekindles on her return to the place and people she left behind. **2**
 - Martyr!** by Kaveh Akbar (Knopf: \$28) An orphaned son of Iranian immigrants embarks on a search for a family secret. **15**
 - The Familiar** by Leigh Bardugo (Flatiron Books: \$30) A magic-infused novel set in the Spanish Golden Age. **6**
 - The Ministry of Time** by Kaliane Bradley (Avid Reader Press/Simon & Schuster: \$28.99) A fusion of genres and ideas that's part time-travel romance and part spy thriller. **2**
 - The Paris Novel** by Ruth Reichl (Random House: \$29) An adventure through the food, art and fashion scenes of 1980s Paris. **4**

- Nonfiction** weeks on list
- The Demon of Unrest** by Erik Larson (Crown: \$35) An exploration of the pivotal five months between Abraham Lincoln's election and the start of the Civil War. **3**
 - The Creative Act** by Rick Rubin (Penguin: \$32) The music producer's guidance on how to be a creative person. **70**
 - Rebel Girl** by Kathleen Hanna (Ecco: \$30) A memoir by the original rebel girl and legendary frontwoman of Bikini Kill and Le Tigre. **1**
 - Fire in the Hole!** by Bob Parsons (Forefront Books: \$29) The GoDaddy founder shares his story of success as an entrepreneur. **1**
 - Somehow** by Anne Lamott (Riverhead Books: \$22) A joyful celebration of love from the bestselling author. **6**
 - The Wager** by David Grann (Doubleday: \$30) The story of the shipwreck of an 18th century British warship and a mutiny among the survivors. **54**
 - The Situation Room** by George Stephanopoulos, Lisa Dickey (Grand Central: \$35) Inside the place where 12 presidential administrations grappled with history-making crises. **1**
 - The Light Eaters** by Zoë Schlanger (Harper: \$30) An examination of the hidden world and astonishing capabilities of the plant kingdom. **1**
 - The Anxious Generation** by Jonathan Haidt (Penguin Press: \$30) An investigation into the collapse of youth mental health and a plan for a healthier, freer childhood. **7**
 - Inspire Greatness** by Matt Tenney (Matt Holt: \$28) A four-step process on how to improve employee motivation, engagement and performance. **1**

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Strand Releasing

THE NEW documentary "Songs of Earth" contemplates Norway's Oldedalen river valley, at Laemmle Royal.

Monica; Egyptian Theatre, 6712 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Los Feliz Theatre, 1822 N. Vermont Ave., Los Feliz. americancinematheque.com

Long Beach Symphony The ensemble closes its season with Anton Bruckner's "Romantic" Symphony and Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, along with a preconcert talk at 7 p.m.
● 8 p.m. Saturday, Long Beach Terrace Theater, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach. longbeachsymphony.org

Natalie Merchant The passionate singer-songwriter, who last year released "Keep Your Courage," her first full-length studio album of new material in nearly a decade, performs in a concert rescheduled from September.
● 8 p.m. Saturday, Walt Disney

THE WEEK AHEAD

A CURATED PREVIEW OF WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MUSIC, MOVIES, THEATER AND THE ARTS

SUNDAY
"My American Dream: City of Angels" Painter Keith Mayerson explores California mythology and the changing landscape of the American West; includes a conversation with the artist, 6 p.m. Thursday.
● 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday, through July 20. Karma, 7351 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles. karmakarma.org

TUESDAY
"Funny Girl" If you missed Katerina McCrimmon as Fanny Brice at the Ahmanson in April, or want to see the show again, the national tour returns for a two-week run in Orange County.
● 7:30 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 2 p.m. Saturday, 1 and 6:30 p.m. Sunday, through June 9. Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, Segerstrom Center for the Performing Arts, 600 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa. scfta.org

"On Thin Ice: Dutch Depictions of Extreme Weather" Just in time for summer, this exhibition brings a wintry blast of drawings and paintings by Hendrick Avercamp and other 17th century Dutch



MINDY SMALL/Getty Images

IT'S Quittin' Time with Zach Bryan at Crypto.com Arena.

artists illustrating an unusual era of persistent global cooling.
● Tuesday-Sept. 1. The Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles. getty.edu

WEDNESDAY
Girl in Red The Norwegian indie-pop singer-songwriter plays a two-night stand after opening multiple shows on Taylor Swift's Eras tour last year.
● 8 p.m. Wednesday-Thursday, Greek Theatre, 2700 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles. lagreektheatre.com

"Jelly's Last Jam" This rollicking musical unpacks the life and times of musician Jelly Roll Morton at the dawn of Jazz.
● Wednesday-June 23. Pasadena Playhouse, 39 S. El Molino Ave., Pasadena. pasadenaplayhouse.org

Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner "In the Summers" opens LALIFF's 23rd edition celebrating movies, television and music.
● Wednesday-June 2. TCL Chinese Theatres, 6925 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood. laliff.org

FRIDAY
Get Lit — Words Ignite The youth poetry troupe, featured in the recent documentary "Our Words Collide," delivers interpretations of classic and contemporary works with original spoken-word responses.
● 8 p.m. Friday, UCLA Nimoy Theater, 1262 Westwood Blvd., Westwood. getlit.org

Sarah McLachlan The Canadian singer-songwriter marks the 30th anniversary of her album "Fumbling Towards Ecstasy" with guest Feist.
● 8 p.m. Friday, Hollywood Bowl, 2301 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood. hollywoodbowl.com

"Solo" A Montréal drag star



J. Paul Getty Trust / Getty Museum

"A WINTER Scene" by Hendrik Meyer at the Getty Museum.

enters into a toxic romance with another performer while attempting to reconnect with his mother in writer-director Sophie Dupuis' drama, which won best Canadian feature at last year's Toronto International Film Festival.
● Starts Friday, Laemmle Glendale, 207 N. Maryland Ave., Glendale. laemmle.com

"Songs of Earth" Filmmaker Margreth Olin's 85-year-old father guides us on a four-season tour of Norway's Oldedalen river valley in this meditative documentary.
● Starts Friday, Laemmle Royal, 11523 Santa Monica Blvd., West L.A. laemmle.com

SATURDAY
Bleak Week — Cinema of Despair Filmmakers including Jerry Schatzberg, Al Pacino, Lynne Ramsay, Karyn Kusama, Kenneth Lonergan, Allen Hughes and Charlie Kaufman screen and discuss films depicting humanity's dark side.
● Saturday-June 7. Aero Theatre, 1328 Montana Ave., Santa

Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., downtown L.A. laphil.com

The Offspring The O.C. punk band celebrates the 30th anniversary of the venue as well as its album "Smash," with guests Save Ferris!
● 8 p.m. Saturday, Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim. hondacenter.com

JUNE 2
Zach Bryan The War and Treaty (Sun.-Mon.), Sierra Ferrell (Tue.) and Levi Turner join the "I Remember Everything" singer on the Quittin' Time Tour.
● 7 p.m. June 2-Tuesday, Crypto.com Arena, 1111 S. Figueroa St., downtown L.A. cryptoarena.com

FOR THE RECORD

"Lady in the Lake": In the May 16 Calendar section, a list of summer TV shows said that Moses Ingram's character in "Lady in the Lake" is named Cleo Sherwood. The character's name is Cleo Johnson.

SCREEN GAB

This week, TV critic Robert Lloyd and staff writer Kaitlyn Huamani recommend a small-town (dark) comedy and John Mulaney's delightfully zany show.

BODKIN
Netflix
A bodkin is best known, from Shakespeare, as the dagger with which one might make one's quietus. But here it's the significantly sinister name of the Irish village to which bumbling American podcaster Gilbert (Will Forte) has come on the cold trail of a 25-year-old mystery: the disappearance of three people on the Irish Night of the Dead. Attached to him are a reluctant, even contemptuous Dove (Siobhán Cullen), a legitimate investigative reporter whose editor has hustled her out of the U.K. after the death of a whistleblowing source;



ENDA BOWE/Netflix

MYSTERY is afoot in "Bodkin," above. John Mulaney takes hosting duties to "L.A."

and eager, somewhat abused assistant Emmy (Robyn Cara). As one would expect from a seven-episode series, emerging facts will widen the scope and rearrange the matter of the case, and as one would expect from a small-town (dark) comedy, our heroes are regarded variously as a curiosity and an irritant — to the eccentric villagers and to one another.

Nearly everyone's got at least one secret — even to themselves — and things get wild, and emotionally moving, as the show goes on. (R.L.)

JOHN MULANEY PRESENTS: EVERYBODY'S IN L.A.
Netflix
Although he made clear his hosting stint was strictly a limited run, John Mulaney proved he could be the next big thing in late night with "Everybody's in L.A." Featuring interviews with his comedian pals and local experts on L.A.-centric topics like coyotes and palm trees, Mulaney crafted a bizarre and often chaotic show that



RYAN WEST/Netflix

feels straight out of the '70s. The hybrid late-night/sketch comedy show, produced in conjunction with the Netflix Is a Joke comedy festival, assembled a motley crew of A-listers, academic celebrities and up-and-coming comedians for its six episodes to prompt delightfully strange encounters — like when David Letterman cozied up with comic Luenell under a blanket, proceeding to make seismology star Dr. Lucy Jones blush. It's an acquired taste, but those familiar with Mulaney's style will appreciate its zaniness. Richard Kind also lends his familiar banter as the show's announcer, and he and

Mulaney maintain consistent bits throughout the episodes, like asking live callers what kind of car they drive or getting snacks from a food delivery robot during the show. The host's monologues, with biting one-liners about his new city, are also quintessential Mulaney: strong rhythm, witty criticism and a dash of eccentricity. (K.H.)

For more of the TV shows, movies and moments everyone's talking about, sign up for Screen Gab at latimes.com/newsletters, and tell us what you're watching by emailing screengab@latimes.com

Los Angeles Times

WEEKEND

SUNDAY, MAY 26, 2024

C is for cookie

The
best chewy,
crumbly, crispy,
crunchy cookies
to try in L.A.

L6-7



AMANDA VILLAROSA For The Times

A calm, clean space soothes renters and owners alike

LOS ANGELES ADU'S MODERN, ROOMY TOUCHES MAKE IT FEEL LIKE HOME

BY LISA BOONE

CATIE MARQUES TELES and Scott Savarie had been looking for an apartment in Los Angeles for six months when they spotted a listing on Zillow that caught their eye. “We thought, ‘This can’t be real,’” Teles said of the modern accessory dwelling unit, which had two bedrooms and a sparkling new kitchen with custom birch cabinets. The long driveway, a common detail in Los Angeles’ 1920s-era homes, also provided a private patio with views of the San Gabriel Mountains. “After getting ghosted more than a few times, we thought it was too good to be true.” But the 1,000-square-foot ADU converted from a two-car garage was no hoax. Situated behind the 1923 Spanish bungalow of architects En Jang and Jooyoung Chung of Yeh-Yeh-Yeh, the ADU was explicitly designed as a rental steps from the home the couple share with their two children, 10 and 14.

Teles, who works as a product marketer, fondly remembers the moment they realized the rental was a four-minute walk from the home of their best friends. “It was meant to be,” she said with a smile.

On the first day the ADU was listed in 2021, at least 30 to 40 people came to look at it. While most weren’t serious about renting the expensive unit, Jang and Chung found the perfect tenants — twice. After three years, the first renters moved to Michigan to be closer to family after having a baby. Then Teles and her husband, Savarie, who are both 33, came along.

“We are immigrants from South Korea and don’t have family here, so we don’t need extra space for them,” Jang said. “This was the perfect way to highlight our architectural practice and earn extra income. Both tenants are similar. They’re in their mid-30s, work from home and are passionate about design.”

The architects purchased the three-bedroom home seven years ago, knowing they would eventually take advantage of state law allowing the addition of a second unit on your property. After years of ruminating, they spent about \$354,000 to transform their detached two-car garage into an ADU designed specifically as a rental. It now rents for \$4,500 a month. While Los Angeles’ rental market is technically cooling, it can still feel competitive. The median monthly rent for a two-bedroom house is \$3,600, according to Zillow, with Ladera Heights and Eagle Rock trending slightly below at

around \$3,300 and Silver Lake and Culver City well above at around \$4,700.

“We put a lot of thought into it,” Chung said of the ADU. “We wanted the tenants to feel like it’s their own home.”

The private-feeling rental sits at the end of a long, lushly landscaped driveway of Turfstone paving in a herringbone pattern. The driveway can be used for parking in front, which is not an issue in the neighborhood, and outdoor living in the back. (State legislation stipulates that parking is not required in some scenarios, including when an ADU is within a half-mile of public trans-

ARCHITECTS Jooyoung Chung, below left, and En Jang designed a modern ADU with their tenants in mind. It includes a full kitchen, top, and lots of storage space and light.



portation or a historic district.)

“It feels like our own home,” Teles said. “We always go out on the patio and enjoy our morning coffee. It’s such a peaceful space.”

The ADU includes a full-sized kitchen with a 30-inch Forno range and convection oven, a 32-inch Fisher & Paykel refrigerator, a built-in desk and an open-plan living and dining area overlooking the courtyard. In addition to the two bedrooms and bathroom, Jang noted that they didn’t want to “waste the corridor,” so they added storage and a stackable washer and dryer in the sun-filled hallway.

The ADU is modern and minimal, unlike the main house, which is Spanish in style. Still, it keeps a low profile from the street, and windows are strategically placed to ensure privacy from neighbors on three sides.

With an artist’s sensibility, the architects, who studied architecture in South Korea and have master’s degrees from SCI-Arc, made the most of the space, using bold geometry, including a dramatic flat roof, white tones and birch wood so “people can furnish it in any style,” Chung said.

The ADU’s most striking element is its angled roofline, which features an arresting, geometric overhang that shades the outdoor patio. Chung describes the ADU’s rough exterior coating as a “traditional Korean application mixing gravel and sand. It works like a stone and stores heat.”

The effect contributes to a well-insulated home. “It is nice and cool inside,” Teles said. “You don’t find that a lot in rentals.”

Smooth polished concrete floors with a satin finish complement the minimal palette, and a single skylight in the corridor floods the interiors with California sunshine, which Teles and Savarie, who previously lived in San Francisco and Berlin, appreciate.

Knowing storage would be an issue in the former garage, the architects spent \$40,000 on millwork and built-in storage. Thanks to the ample cabinets and closets, the couple said the small space feels much bigger than the 1,500-square-foot Victorian house they previously rented in the Mission District in San Francisco. “It felt smaller because there was no storage,” Teles said. Their

1902 rental in Berlin was similar.

“There is chaos hidden behind all the storage,” joked Savarie, a software company designer, as he opened the cabinets in the living room to show sports equipment, suitcases and guitars hidden behind the birch plywood doors.

“We both like our home to be tidy, so the storage is fantastic,” Teles added. “We don’t even use all the storage because there is so much.”

Having lost their garage, the architects built a storage unit for themselves and installed it on the exterior of the ADU, which faces their backyard.

Looking back three years, Chung recalls the anxiety he felt the first night his original tenants moved in. “I didn’t sleep that night, thinking of all the things that could go wrong” as a landlord, he said.

Today, he appreciates the ability to address problems immediately on-site, especially after being intimately involved in the building process.

“It’s incredibly helpful to oversee a construction project in your backyard,” he said.

When asked what her favorite thing about the ADU is, Teles struggled to narrow it down. “I love how the light moves from the house,” she said. “It is very intentional and unique. I also love the efficiency of the design. We are two people, but there is so much room and space when friends come over. The clean lines are very much our aesthetic. We both need a calm, clean space.”

The couple said they like having a personal connection with their landlords on the other side of the fence.

“It’s nice to have a relationship beyond a transaction,” Teles said.

The architects feel the same way. “We recently started playing tennis together,” Chung said as they all laughed.

“We’re getting better,” Teles said. “We’re looking forward to a rematch.”

FOR THE RECORD

West Coast 101 Experiences: The Columbia River Maritime Museum is in Oregon. It was incorrectly grouped with attractions in Washington in the May 19 special section.

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SPRING doesn't always arrive with a bang in L.A. Temperatures tiptoe up and the sun waits a little longer to set, but there isn't exactly a flashing sign to tell us that we're in the vernal glow of a new season.

That is, unless you happen to glimpse a rose garden. May is to roses what July is to fireworks, which is to say, it's when they go off. Glum, pruned-back bushes erupt with stupid-pretty blossoms that evoke pastel supernovas, origami whirlpools and tiny watercolor ballgowns.

And they aren't just easy on the eye. According to Karen Haney, who teaches horticultural therapy at UCLA Extension, rose blossoms can be a balm for the mind too.

"Roses give us a wide range of sensory experience that we can use to improve our mood," she told me, noting that the kaleidoscopic colors and textures can actually engage our brains to reduce anxiety.

Then there are the fragrances — those mysterious swirls of floral, herbal and animal notes that have intoxicated poets and perfumers for millennia. "When you are experiencing that scent, the mindfulness that you're giving to that moment is providing a restorative experience for your brain, a little bit of softness," Haney said. "Our heart rate might lower, we take deeper breaths and we're calming our sympathetic nervous system."

Luckily for Angelenos, these natural mood-boosters are easy to find. Abundant sunshine and mild weather make Southern California an ideal climate for rose gardens, from charming historic plots like the Orcutt Ranch Horticultural Center to world-class collections like the Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens and the Exposition Park Rose Garden.

The blooms stay spectacular from spring all the way through the beginning of winter, when most gardeners prune their blossoms to help the plants recharge for the next year. But there's no time like the present, so we've put together a useful map to help you discover the most show-stopping, fragrant and relaxing rose gardens in the L.A. area right now.

Virginia Robinson Gardens

For roses with a heady perfume of Old Hollywood glamour, head to the Virginia Robinson Gardens just up the street from the Beverly Hills Hotel. The lavish 1911 estate was built by department store magnates Harry and Virginia Robinson and boasts Italianate architecture, lush botanical gardens and views that stretch as far as Catalina Island on a clear day. Opulence is the unofficial theme here, and the rose gardens are no exception: You'll find no fewer than 500 blooming plants spread across two separate collections, one for display and one for cutting.

The display garden, just across from a tennis court where Hollywood stars like Charlie Chaplin used to play, is still maintained according to Virginia's original design, with an emphasis on her favorite color. See if you can guess what it was as you browse the 34 different rose varieties, including blushing Mon Cheri, pastel Sweet Surrenders and Virginia's personal preference, a Barbie-bright hybrid tea rose called Eiffel Tower.

High up on the house's outer wall, you can even spot a historic climbing rose that was planted during Virginia's lifetime and still explodes in yellow and white blooms every year. On the other side of the tennis court (which has a few more historic rose plants clinging to its borders), the sloped cutting garden spills down a hillside of blossoms. "Virginia loved to entertain and would decorate with roses that matched the color of her dress that day," Diane Sipos, superintendent of the park, told me on a recent visit. Like I said: opulence.

In 1977 the estate was handed over to L.A. County, which now runs reservation-only tours along with a number of on-site classes and programs. (Events are posted about a month out and tend to fill up quickly, so it helps to check the official website regularly for new dates.) If you want especially Instagrammable lighting, try a Golden Hour tour, which showcases the gardens at sunset. Wellness classes — including sound baths and meditative walks — offer a chance for even more mindfulness on the grounds. And for a hands-on experience with the roses themselves, look out for the annual pruning class in January, when master gardeners give lessons in the cutting garden.



ADAM MARKOVITZ

STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES RIGHT NOW

A GUIDE TO THE SEVEN MOST SHOWSTOPPING, FRAGRANT AND TRANQUIL GARDENS IN LOS ANGELES

BY ADAM MARKOVITZ

● 1008 Elden Way, Beverly Hills, (310) 550-2087, robinsongardens.org. Open by reservation only. Adults \$15, children (5-12) \$6, students \$11, seniors (62+) \$11.

Rancho Los Alamitos

"There are things (in the world) that make it a good place to be born in, to live in and to die in," wrote Florence Bixby, wife of Southern California real estate tycoon Fred Bixby, in 1935. High up on her personal list: "the scent of old-fashioned roses, which soothes your nostrils, and brings to your heart a pang of remembrance."

Bixby, then owner of Rancho Los Alamitos, kept that aroma close at hand by commissioning a small but stately rose garden on her estate in 1927. The historic Rancho's 4 acres include sprawling gardens for cacti and native plants, complete with tiny waterfalls, but the roses have an especially tranquil position on a tiled terrace between the Olive Patio and the Oleander Walk. (Fun garden gossip: Those aren't actually oleanders anymore; they're crepe myrtles.)

Designed by the Olmsted brothers, sons of landscaping legend Frederick Law Olmsted, the rose garden holds a few dozen plants, including some tea roses that were introduced before 1910. Don't miss the Los Angeles rose, which became the first Southern Californian rose to win the coveted Bagatelle prize in Paris in 1918, or the fiery pink-and-yellow Talisman that crawls up one of the garden posts. (It's so rare that the Rancho staff are currently searching far and wide for another example to climb the matching post on the other side of the path.)

If you're coming here for the first time, don't be intimidated when you pull up to the security barrier for the gated Bixby Hill community on Palo Verde Avenue, across from the CSU Long Beach campus. Just tell the guard you're going to the Rancho, and they'll happily hand you a parking permit during public visiting hours.

● 6400 Bixby Hill Road, Long Beach, (562) 431-3541, rancholosalamitos.org. Open 1 to 5 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday. Free.

Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum

The drab warehouse district south of Compton looks like an unlikely spot for a hidden garden oasis, but that's exactly what you'll find when you wend your way through a private gate and

up a hill to the Dominguez Rancho Adobe. Built in 1826 by Manuel Dominguez, the Rancho was part of the San Pedro land grant that once stretched from here to Palos Verdes and Manhattan Beach. Today, the historic home is still privately owned and operated by Manuel's descendants, who've turned it into a museum that's perennially popular with school field trips. (On my first visit, a seventh-generation Dominguez even popped by to say hello.)

The estate's rose garden — laid out in tidy plots interlaced with red-brick footpaths — was commissioned in the 1940s as a Works Progress Administration project. Manual labor came from the seminarians who lived in the ornate building opposite the adobe, which is now a retirement home. (The statue of Mary in the garden still faces the seminary with outstretched arms, as a permanent thank-you for the flowers.)

"In terms of size, we're actually bigger than the White House Rose Garden," boasted Mike Horibe, the garden's rose curator, who has been revitalizing and replanting the space for the last seven years with support from the foundation and local volunteers. His work has paid off in more than 300 blooming rose varieties, ranging from historic bushes to modern ones such as the eye-catching Ketchup & Mustard rose (red and yellow, naturally) and the fragrant yellow George Burns, which thankfully smells nothing like cigars.

Admission and parking are always free, but check the museum's website for hours and reservations. For the most tranquil visit, aim for a 1 p.m. slot — that's when the school trips usually take their lunch break. You can even request Horibe personally as a guide for a special 45-minute tour focused on the gardens or attend one of his rose pruning workshops every January.

● 18127 S. Alameda St., Rancho Dominguez, (310) 603-0088, dominguezrancho.org. Tours Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. (Reservations required for Sunday tours only.) Free.

Palisades Park Rose Garden

It might not be the biggest in L.A., but Palisades Park Rose Garden in Santa Monica has at least one thing that sets it apart from the rest. "It probably has the best view of any rose garden

I know of in Southern California," said Rachel Young, public landscape administrator for the city of Santa Monica. "And I've been to most of them."

Set on a bluff about 100 feet above the Pacific, the garden offers a rare sweet-and-salty sensory experience of rose fragrance and ocean air, which becomes a little more magical every hour as the sun slides down to the horizon. (The sea spray actually isn't great for roses, but Santa Monica's gardeners monitor the soil closely for salinity.) There are 100 or so roses here, including the white-and-pink floribunda Queen Elizabeth, which originated in Southern California, the bright red Knockout and a special Olympiad Rose Bush with a plaque that commemorates the 1984 Los Angeles Games and marathon.

The flowers are organized in neat plots around a bronze statue of Arcadia Bandini Stearns de Baker, the Mexican American widow of Santa Monica co-founder Col. Robert Baker. The rose garden wouldn't be here without her; Arcadia donated the land that is now Palisades Park, along with part of Rustic Canyon and the property that now holds the West L.A. VA Medical Center in Westwood, among others. The garden also has one more rare distinction that you can't see: It's part of Santa Monica's water self-sufficiency plan and is on track to use 100% recycled water within the next few years.

● (310) 458-8411, santamonica.gov/places/parks/palisades-park. 5 a.m.-midnight daily. Free.

Exposition Park Rose Garden

With the Natural History Museum and the California Science Center on either side, it's fitting that this city garden feels less like an urban park than a living museum of roses in every possible shape, hue and size. This is the largest free, public rose garden in Los Angeles, with more than 19,000 blooms filling 166 rose beds across seven acres, with plaques identifying each variety.

Here you'll find towering baby-pink Falling in Loves, creamicle-orange Brass Band blossoms, delicate milky-white French Lace petals and so many

more. If you're looking for a rose garden to visit with kids, Exposition Park is a perfect choice — its wide, grassy paths offer plenty of space for wandering, four gazebos are available for shady breaks and a large central fountain sends a refreshing mist into the air to keep you cool on hot days.

This park wasn't always so kid-friendly, though. When it was first built in the late 19th century, it was known as "Agriculture Park" and served as a "kind of perpetual State Fair of the Wild West" filled with "speed freaks, bookies, prostitutes and jockeys," according to PBS. Today, the wildest crowds you'll likely run across are tourists snapping photos and influencers banking content in front of rosy backdrops.

Parking in the nearby Expo Park lots will cost you \$15, but the garden itself is free and only steps from the Expo Park/USC stop on the Metro E Line. Just don't plan a visit between Jan. 1 and March 15, when the park is closed for annual maintenance.

● 701 State Drive, Los Angeles, (213) 763-0114, laparks.org/expo/garden; Daily, 9 a.m.-sunset. Free.

Orcutt Ranch Horticultural Center & Community Garden

There's no shortage of eye-catching nature on display at this historic estate, which was built in the 1920s by oil tycoon William Orcutt and his wife, Mary. Across 24 acres in West Hills, near the beginning of the L.A. River, you can find a swaying bamboo forest, a fruitful orange grove and even a colossal 700-year-old coastal oak — possibly the oldest living tree in Los Angeles.

But for pyrotechnic beauty, nothing beats the rose garden, bursting with red and orange blooms. More than 400 rose bushes — some about 100 years old — grow here, including trees and climbing varieties. The most historic are the ones on the east side of the adobe house — a patch of fragrant, strawberries-and-cream-colored Double Delights that were planted by Mary herself, who wanted to be able to see them from the nearby window of her office. Mary was one of the original members of the West Valley Garden Club, whose volunteers still work in the gardens today. "I think of this place as a hidden gem," Yvonne Jones, a Garden Club member, told me on a recent visit. "It's so quiet and serene. I come here almost every day, just to walk."

Orcutt Ranch isn't off the radar when it comes to weddings, though. In the summer, there's an event almost every Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening. For a more peaceful visit, come in the morning or during the week. You never need a reservation, and admission is free. Dogs are welcome, but be sure to keep them on leash since coyote sightings are possible.

● 23600 Roscoe Blvd., West Hills, (818) 346-7449, laparks.org/horticulture/orcutt-ranch. Daily, dawn to dusk. Free.

The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens

The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens is the grand dame of Southern California botanic gardens. (It's as large and formidable as its name.)

The sprawling collection of extraordinary roses — more than 1,300 cultivars — makes up just one part of the Huntington's 130 acres of gardens. The museum's Instagram account even boasted recently that its roses have "reached peak bloom." In the rose garden, you'll find labels with information about the many blooms, including Huntington's 100th, a yellow and pink Floribunda hybrid so named in honor of the museum's centennial in 2019. If you visit on a Thursday, you can hear performances by the Pasadena Conservatory of Music from 1 to 3 p.m. through June 10. The Rose Garden Tea Room reopened in 2023, but best to get reservations in advance.

In addition to the 3-acre rose garden, the Huntington boasts authentic Chinese and Japanese gardens and areas dedicated to Australian plants, Shakespearean plants, herbs, desert plants, jungle and subtropical plants (you can almost hear Tarzan bellowing somewhere in those towering, vine-dripping trees) and, of course, a whimsical garden to enchant children.

— Lisa Boone and Jeanette Maranox
● 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, huntington.org. Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily except Tuesdays. Reservations required Friday-Sunday. Prices start at \$25 weekdays and \$29 on weekends; slightly lower fees for seniors, students and children. Members and children under 4 enter free.



MICHAEL BLACKSHIRE Los Angeles Times

AT C&S Garden Center, Debbie Peiser, left, sniffs a large weed bud as Maria Calabrese watches. Below, Emily Gogol, left, and Penny Barthel teach a weed-growing workshop.

PLANTS

L.A. IS A GREAT PLACE TO GROW WEED OUTDOORS

LOCAL CLASSES CAN GET YOU STARTED ON GROWING CANNABIS IN YOUR BACKYARD. HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE PLANTING IT. **BY ADAM TSCHORN**

IF YOU'VE EVER CONSIDERED growing your own pot plant at home in Southern California but found the whole tents-and-timers-in-a-closet thing impossibly confusing or prohibitively intimidating (or both), the good news is that it doesn't have to be either. That's the takeaway from a series of workshops that have taken place at nurseries and gardening centers across L.A. Motivated by a desire to demystify and destigmatize growing hemp and cannabis at home (and funded in part by a USDA grant), Emily Gogol (head gardener of Oregon-based Grow It From Home) and Penny Barthel (author of "The Cannabis Gardener" and Bay Area co-founder of the educational website Wondering About Weed) have been helping aspiring ganja greenthumbs across the Southland get their grow on since earlier this year. Their basic premise? A cannabis plant is as easy to grow — in your backyard garden or on your patio — as a tomato plant. That was one of the surprising things I walked away with after catching one of the duo's hourlong free workshops at C&S Garden Center in Lawndale one late April Saturday afternoon. There, surrounded by bags of fertilizer, shelves full of planters and every kind of leafy green plant imaginable, Gogol and Barthel offered pointers and answered questions for a group of 30 hobby gardeners who had come seeking guidance before growing their first-pot plant in the natural SoCal sunlight.

Having experienced the whole lights-and-timers thing firsthand when I grew my first plant a few years back, I was intrigued by the garden-club feel of the duo's approach as well as their efforts to move cannabis gardening from the exclusive, insular realm of basements and bro culture and put it in its rightful place: on the patio right next to the trellised tomatoes and cooking herbs. (As Gogol pointed out early in the workshop I attended, the whole reason most cannabis plants grown at home were traditionally indoors and out of sight was because of a half-century of pot prohibition.)

Even before I caught their workshop, I'd considered adding a plant to the greenery of my L.A. backyard. But something Gogol told workshop attendees really sealed the deal for me: "You guys actually live in one of the best places on the planet to grow cannabis," she said.

Once I heard that, I felt compelled (for journalistic purposes, if nothing else) to see just how easy it could be. Especially because, as I was soon to learn, I had not missed this season's outdoor planting window. And as of this publication, neither have you, so if you're a backyard gardener thinking about adding a pot plant to your plot or a weed head contemplating an adventure in hazy horticulture, here are five things that will help you successfully (and legally) get growing.

1 KNOW WHAT'S LEGAL WHERE YOU LIVE

Although it may be as easy to grow as tomatoes or zucchini, growing cannabis is different in one very important way: Under state law, you have to be age 21 (different regulations apply to medical marijuana patients), you're limited to growing six plants per private residence and, most important, if you're growing outdoors (that's why you're here, right?), the plants must be in a locked space that is

not visible to the public. (In other words, the front yard is no-go; a fenced-in backyard or enclosed patio is a better bet.)

What you'll need to know beyond that to keep your home grow legal depends on where in California you live because cities and counties can further restrict (or outright ban) personal-use cultivation. The cities of Los Angeles and West Hollywood don't have additional regulations, while L.A. County's ordinance (which applies to unincorporated areas of the county) has all kinds of specifics to keep in mind. These include a minimum distance from rear and side property lines (10 feet), maximum plant height (6 feet) and type of fencing (masonry or wood is OK; chain link is not).

If your eyes are starting to glaze over — and not in a good way — check out the county's very helpful handout on the topic at planning.lacounty.gov/long-range-planning/cannabis-regulations. For L.A. County residents, a good starting point to find out local laws is the database of rules and regulations compiled by the Los Angeles

chapter of NORML (the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) at lanorml.org.

2 GET THE RIGHT SEEDS

"One of the differences from tomato [plants] that makes cannabis so special and fun — but also confusing — is that cannabis plants can be male or female," Gogol said during the C&S workshop I attended. "And basically, when you grow cannabis for flower, you want them to be the female plants, so we'd encourage you to purchase female seeds — they're called 'feminized' seeds."

Another seed term to be on the lookout for, especially if you want to make the most of the SoCal sunlight, is "photoperiod," which means the resulting plant will start to flower (i.e., start producing those tasty buds) when the amount of light drops below 12 hours each day. (There are also autoflower seeds whose resulting plants begin to flower after a set period of time regardless of the amount of light they receive.) Beyond that, what kind of seeds you buy depends a lot on what end product you're hoping to harvest as well as what you can find.

This brings me to what might be the coolest thing (of many cool things) I took away literally and figuratively from the C&S workshop: an old-timey-looking seed packet no different from what you'd find at any garden center. Except, that is, for the bold letters THC in the upper left-hand corner of the front, an artfully drawn leafy green pot plant and the words "Afternoon Punch" (a cultivar described on the back with the words sweet, raspberry and hibiscus).

Inside the \$45 packet were five feminized, photoperiod

seeds from Gogol's Oregon farm, and they can be purchased with no more hassle — or stigma — than anything else at C&S Garden Center. (Grow It From Home's seeds also are available locally through Fig Earth Supply, Flora Grubb Gardens L.A. and International Garden Center as well as the C&S Nursery in the Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw neighborhood.)

While that may not seem like a big deal — especially in a place like Los Angeles, where seeds (and seedlings) have long been available in dispensaries (or surreptitiously via mail, arriving in unmarked packages) — Gogol and Barthel see being able to pick up cannabis seeds in the same place as any other gardening supplies as a game-changer when it comes to making patio pot growing more accessible to the kind of casual gardeners who would feel much more at ease in a nursery than a dispensary.

It's also something that's relatively new and uncharted territory, Gogol said, explaining that she is relying on a 2022 Drug Enforcement Administration letter (known as the Pennington letter) that clarified that cannabis seeds containing less than 0.03% THC (which they do) are legally classified as hemp and exempt from the Controlled Substances Act. "It's legal," Gogol said about making seeds available this way. "I've got a whole binder on [the topic]."

Shane Pennington, the lawyer whose inquiry resulted in the DEA's clarification, confirmed Gogol's interpretation but added a note of caution. "Just because it's not illegal under the federal Controlled Substances Act doesn't mean that it's legal for all purposes, under every other law in the United States or in every state or every jurisdiction in every state," he said.



3 SEEK OUT THE SUN

Assuming you're keeping legal requirements in mind, where's the best outdoor place for your plant? "Where you get your sun is where you should grow your cannabis," Barthel told attendees. "Even if it's not in the ground."

Gogol concurred, adding that "it's better to grow in a container with full sun — eight to 12 hours a day — than in the ground in a shade situation."

If you're going the container route, Gogol suggested using one in the 10- to 15-gallon range ("terracotta, plastic, fabric — it doesn't matter") and to use a high-quality potting soil. "Something like [Fox Farm's] Ocean Forest. It doesn't say 'cannabis' on it. It doesn't say 'dank' anything," she said. "It's what you would buy if you were going to grow a couple of tomatoes and maybe a miniature eggplant on a trellis on your patio." (Another option, suggested in "The Cannabis Gardener," Barthel's book for beginners, is EB Stone's Recipe 420 Potting Soil.)

Whether you're growing in the ground or using a container, Barthel said, "You can't go wrong by using compost."

4 PLANT BETWEEN 4/20 AND FATHER'S DAY

"When to start your seeds or get your [seedlings] is about controlling the size of the plant," Gogol told workshop attendees. "So if you want a 5-foot-tall, human-size plant that's going to yield bags and bags of flower — and be easy to harvest and take care of and manage and give you almost no trouble — we tell folks to start anytime after 4/20 and before Father's Day. It's really a window."

Always the third Sunday in June, Father's Day falls on June 16 this year, so this year's window is only open for a few more weeks.

This was another one of the many things from the workshop that surprised me because I'd previously read — and taken as gospel — that seeds needed to be planted no later than Mother's Day.

5 DON'T OVERWATER

Gogol and Barthel said the No. 1 mistake budding gardeners make is overwatering. "You want to water [your plants] as deeply and as infrequently as possible," Gogol said. "If you're growing in a container, put your hand in the soil and dig around. If it feels bone dry all the way down to finger length, then give it water. And if you're watering in a container, you'll want to water fully so the water flushes out the bottom of the pot for a little bit. In [Southern California] where it doesn't get that hot, you can honestly water deeply once a week or maybe twice a week if you're having a hot dry spell. But you want to err on the side of under-watering. It does not want wet feet — it's not a hydrangea. Again, think of it like a tomato."

Is growing weed in your garden — or on your patio — any more complicated than that? Gogol and Barthel assured us it's not. Even so, I've barely scratched the surface of what both pot professionals covered in that hourlong workshop, so if you're feeling canna-curious and want to pepper a pro with questions before the get-em-in-the-ground window closes, you've got a handful of options. One is a June 3 online workshop (prices start at \$5) or a handful of in-person workshops in the L.A. area in the run-up to Father's Day and one on the day itself (the latter will include giveaway Father's Day bouquets that incorporate cannabis foliage).

Additional information and free tickets are available at growitfromhome.com. (There are also four workshops scheduled for the Bay Area before the planting window closes.) Otherwise, these five pointers should at least get you started down the ganja garden path legally and logistically.

And who knows, if it really is as easy as growing tomatoes, in the fall I (and perhaps some of you) may be signing up for another one of their workshops — the one where they teach how to properly harvest all that backyard bounty.

L.A. is a cookie lover's paradise

FROM GLOBAL FLAVOR COMBOS TO DECADENT CHOCOLATE CHIP, IT'S ALL HERE

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OOKIES ARE THE ULTIMATE bringers of joy. These days, Los Angeles is flush with standout bakeries ready to satisfy every type of cookie craving. The cookie scene here has gotten so competitive that a handful of East Coast shops have relocated to get in on the action. Last summer, famed New York bakery Levain landed on Larchmont Boulevard with dense 6-ounce cookies embellished with coconut flakes, gooey chocolate and caramel. Lines are constant at James Beard-nominated Gusto Bread in Long Beach, with customers stocking up on sweet and savory pastries that draw from the owners' Mexican and Argentine heritages. On a corner in West Adams, one of L.A.'s newest bakeries, Fleurs et Sel, pulls inspiration from France with fat, chewy cookies that weave floral ingredients with nostalgic flavors. And then there are the reliable neighborhood bakeries that have long perfected their recipes for crumbly almond and comforting oatmeal cookies, crispy biscootti and more. During the pandemic, many returned to the nostalgic practice of baking, using cookie and bread dropoffs as a way to briefly connect with friends, family, neighbors and other fans of fresh baked goods. For some, their talent proved so impressive that they decided to leave their previous careers and pursue opening bakeries and other sweet-centered shops. Cookies are an accessible treat for whenever you need a little something sweet, available as an individual snack or in assorted boxes for special occasions. A cookie from one of L.A.'s star bakeries ranges from \$3 to \$5 — an easy impulse to pursue. From towering cookie sandwiches to jammy cookies that burst with the flavors of the season, here are 20 of our favorite cookies to seek out across L.A.

Alfajor de nuez at Gusto Bread

A child waiting in line on a recent Sunday at Gusto wailed to his dad, "Why does this place have to be so popular?!" Such is the demand for breads and pastries from the Long Beach bakery that once operated inside Arturo Enciso and Ana Belén Salatino's living room. On many days, there will be a long line (sorry, kid!) for Enciso's rustic loaves and baked goods such as springy, cheesy jalapeño bolillos and cocoa-sprinkled chocolate conchas. Cookies at Gusto include the ear-shaped puff pastry oreja, crunchily spelt chocolate chip, and powdered-sugar-dusted polvorones.

It's the alfajor de nuez that might best represent the couple's respective Mexican and Argentine backgrounds. As with his polvorones, Enciso uses walnuts for the alfajores, the South American sandwich cookies that are typically extra-soft, melt-in-your-mouth and pale (as in no browned edges). Gusto's alfajores are nutty, soft but toothsome and slightly browned. The walnuts and the toasty edges complement the thick, extra-dark caramel between the two cookies. Go early for the widest selection, especially since the James Beard Foundation recently nominated Gusto for a 2024 award in its outstanding bakery category.

— *Betty Hallock*
● 2710 E. 4th St., Long Beach, (562) 343-1881, gustobread.com

Almond cookie from Largwa

Though Lo Hoang's cult-favorite pastries sometimes take the shape of pandan tres leches or passion fruit mochi bars, the signature sweets found via the baker's Largwa pop-ups are almost always cookies. The self-described "cookie girlie" riffs on a number of classics — including thumbprint cookies, Oreos, madeleines and a s'mores-and-chocolate chip mashup — but one of the least flashy is also one of the best: the brown-butter almond cookie, a nod to the crumbly, crunchy almond cookie, and especially the version made by the L.A.-based Amay's Bakery & Noodle Co., which sells wholesale almond cookies far and wide.

Hoang began toying with their own recipe while at Pearl River Deli in Chinatown, trying to riff off the Asian American

dessert in a new way. They started with a brown-butter cookie base that incorporates almond flour as well as Chinese almond flour, resulting in a chewier, softer texture than the drier, more ubiquitous version. Watch Hoang's Instagram for announcements about Largwa pop-ups, which usually occur at Silver Lake restaurant Bé Ú.

— *Stephanie Breijo*
● 557 N. Hoover St., Los Angeles, instagram.com/largwa

Amaretti ai pignoli at Eagle Rock Italian Bakery & Deli

In the hall of great Italian cookies, it's hard to beat the amaretti ai pignoli. The chewy, gluten-free treats rely on almond paste for their nutty, soft center and egg whites for an almost meringue-like outer shell, while an onslaught of pine nuts forms a just-toasted crunchy layer atop it all. So few bakeries and restaurants make these fresh year-round in Los Angeles, but Eagle Rock Italian Bakery & Deli has been at it for more than 70 years. "Nobody does this," Anthony Cafarchia laughed. "It's too much work."

The small deli and market was founded in 1949, then purchased by Nick Cafarchia in 1961; his sons, Anthony and Vito Cafarchia, now run the operation and use their father's amaretti recipe, which has remained untouched for decades. The bakery team hand-makes a spread of roughly a dozen Italian and other classic deli cookies in a constant rotation throughout the day, filling the cases with rainbow cookies, macarons and jam cookies, plus cakes, pastries and holiday specials. The pignoli, however, are always a top seller and can be purchased individually or by the pound. Try the pistachio version, which is also gluten-free, to switch things up — though you'll find it hard to top the classic pignoli. — *S.B.*

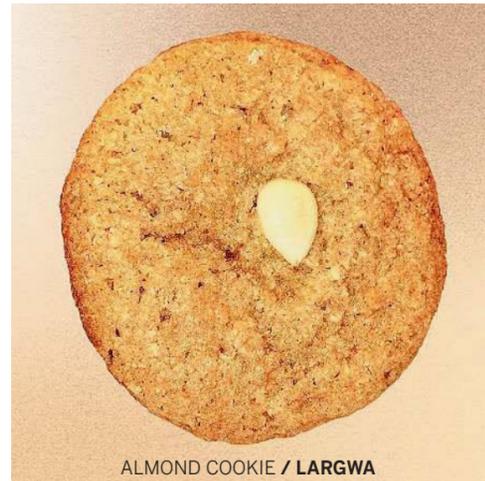
● 1726 Colorado Blvd., Los Angeles, (323) 255-8224, eribdeli.com

Anzac biscuit from the Pie Room by Curtis Stone at Gwen

Celebrity chef Curtis Stone may very well serve as one of the best de facto Australian diplomats L.A. has ever seen, consistently serving some of the tastiest



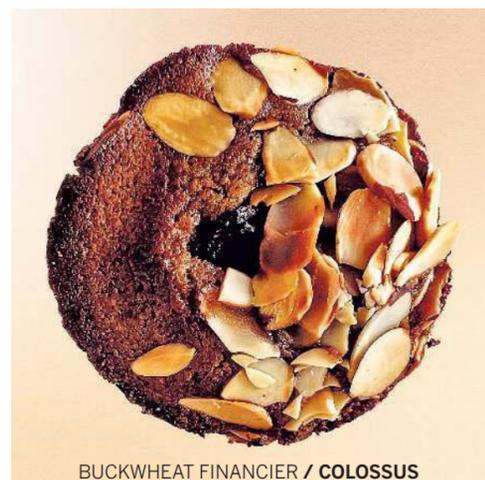
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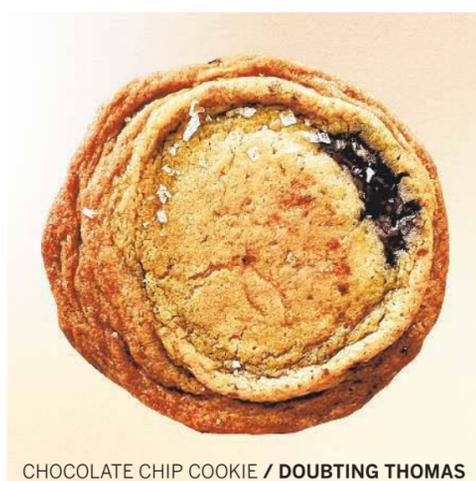
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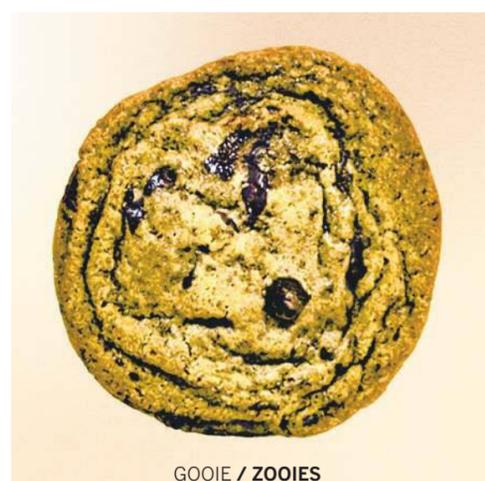
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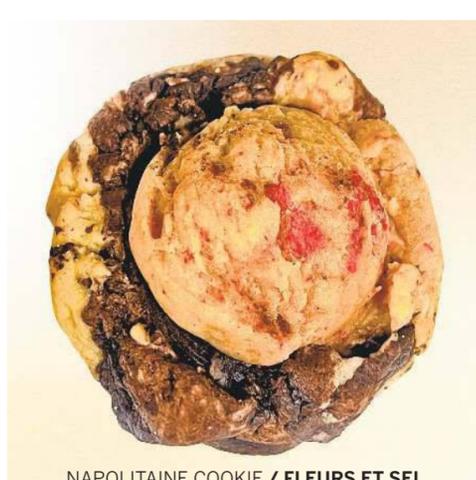
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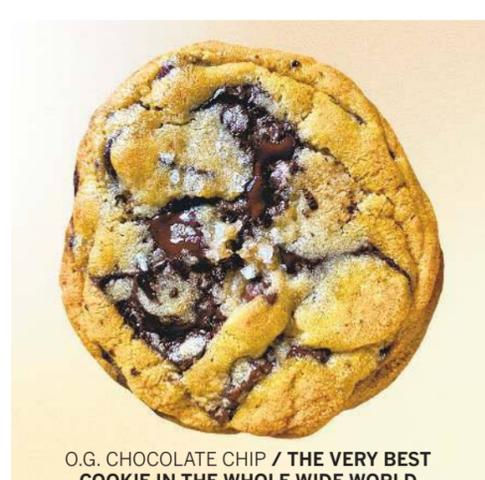
CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE / DOUBTING THOMAS



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cuisine of Down Under across multiple restaurants, pop-ups and price points. During the pandemic the Melbourne-born force temporarily flipped Maude, his Beverly Hills tasting-menu restaurant, into the Pie Room by Curtis Stone, a pop-up filled with sweet and savory pies — many of which are either classics of, or take their culinary cues from, his homeland. And you can't have an ode to Aussie baked goods without the Anzac biscuit. The cookie that's almost synonymous with New Zealand and Australia dates back more than a century, popularized by women's groups and well-wishers who would send the hard, sweet rations to members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) during World War I.

It's Stone's favorite cookie that he and his team bake, and it takes the chewy route (some bakers make them crisp). His take uses the traditional ingredients of Lyle's golden syrup, butter, oats and sugar — and then adds golden raisins for more texture, flavor and moisture. The chewy, golden, large flat disc is almost caramelized along its base, and there's barely any flour holding the melange of shredded coconut, oats and those plump raisins together. While Stone and his team are readying the Pie Room's permanent location, you can still find the Anzac and other banger baked goods during the Pie Room's current residency in Gwen from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday and at select local farmers markets. — *S.B.*

● 6600 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, gwenla.com

Black sesame dark chocolate cookie at Jiyoon

Jiyoon Jang is a baker and pastry chef who definitively has her

own style: clean, modern lines; spare garnishes; and nostalgic Korean American flavor combinations that come across as of-the-moment. Boricha madeleines have a perfectly smooth cream-colored glaze flavored with barley tea and dusted with misugaru grain powder. A small perilla lime tart features a whole candied leaf of the Korean herb. A makgeolli poached Korean pear is served cold for a sorbet effect, with a warm drizzle of doenjang caramel.

Her cookies are in the same vein, in three flavors: misugaru, black sesame dark chocolate and dark chocolate espresso — all big, thin and crackly-chewy. It's hard to choose a favorite. White miso with the earthy grain flavor of misugaru is sweet-savory-salty-funky. But it's the color and nuttiness of the black sesame cookie that is somehow ultra-sultry, especially with dark chocolate and brown butter. Jang says she's a pandemic baker who finished her senior year of college at home. "When everyone took up sourdough, I did the same," she says, but soon found "pastry is where I can really be creative and put my twist on things and fits my personality better."

Two and a half years after she delivered her first box of pastries, Jang — who also worked at Clark Street Bakery and occasionally sells her baked goods at pop-ups (see Instagram) — plans to open her own cafe and bakery in Highland Park this summer. — *B.H.*

● instagram.com/by_jiyoon

Buckwheat financier at Colossus

Is a financier a cookie? Some call it a tea cake, others say it's a cookie. It might be a stretch, but let's call it a cookie here at Colossus, the tiny shop next door to

artisan chorizo maker Chori-Man in San Pedro. Kristin Colazas Rodriguez bakes naturally leavened breads made with house-milled flour; croissants; cardamom buns; and danishes filled with herb-infused pastry cream and local fruit. Her financier is substantial — a lush puck of a cookie-meets-snack-cake, topped with slivered almonds and a daub of raspberry jam. The classic financier is made with nutty caramelized butter, flour and almonds. Rodriguez uses buckwheat flour, which is naturally gluten-free. And the result is a distinctively earthy, not-too-sweet financier (which is said to have been first created by a baker near the Paris stock exchange who baked them in rectangular molds so they resembled ingots of gold). If you're looking for a straightforward cookie, the O.G. is the way to go: a big, crackled, crunchy, chewy, not too thick, not too thin chocolate chip cookie with chocolate chunks in every bite and flaky sea salt on top. A second Colossus location is open in Long Beach. — *B.H.*

● 2311 S. Alma St., San Pedro, (213) 444-0077, colossusbread.com

Butter cookie at Southern Girl Desserts

The dessert shop from "Cupcake Wars" winners Catarah Coleman and Shoneji Robison anchors the entrance of the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza, with a few tables for enjoying treats on the spot. Described as "a chocolate chip cookie without the chocolate chips," the butter cookie at Southern Girl Desserts is fluffy, rich and reminiscent of a tea cake with a golden-brown edge and a soft, raised middle. It's simple, satisfying and surprisingly addictive — I always buy more than I can finish in one sitting but immediately freeze a few so



AMARETTI AI PIGNOLI
/ EAGLE ROCK ITALIAN BAKERY & DELI



ANZAC BISCUIT
/ PIE ROOM BY CURTIS STONE AT GWEN



BUTTER COOKIE / SOUTHERN GIRL DESSERTS



CARAMEL COCONUT CHOCOLATE CHIP
/ LEVAIN BAKERY



LEMON LAVENDER COOKIE / FAT + FLOUR



MOLASSES GINGER SNAP / GJUSTA



SPELT THUMBPRINT / PROOF BAKERY



STRAWBERRY PASSION FRUIT COOKIE
/ LEI'D COOKIES

Photographs by BETTY HALLOCK, STEPHANIE BREIJO, DANIELLE DORSEY Los Angeles Times; Jlyoon; KIRSTYN SHAW; MICHELLE TERRIS; JESSICA MILLER For The Times

I won't be tempted to ignore my full stomach and keep eating. — *Danielle Dorsey*
● 3650 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Los Angeles, *southerngirldesserts.com*

Caramel coconut chocolate chip at Levain Bakery

Imagine a Samoa Girl Scout Cookie. Now envision it dense, moist and the size of a softball — the best version possible. The mellifluous blend of coconut, caramel and chocolate is hardly new, but at New York's — and now Larchmont's — viral cookie factory, where guests have been known to wait in lines that trail down the block, it's perhaps reached its final and top form. The bakery famed for its massive 6-ounce, handmade cookies released this flavor as a limited-time, seasonal special but it was so in demand and sold out so regularly that Levain decided to make the caramel coconut chocolate chip cookie a permanent fixture. We're better for it. Chock-full of toffee-like caramel chips, pops of rich chocolate and shredded coconut, it's a tropical and welcome twist on the classic chocolate chip cookie — which, of course, also is sold here in fist-sized portions. — *S.B.*
● 227 N. Larchmont Blvd., Los Angeles, (323) 576-5895, *levainbakery.com/pages/larchmont*

Chocolate chip cookie at Doubting Thomas

There are many, many delicious chocolate chip cookies in Los Angeles. And it's no surprise that Naomi Shim's is among them. The passion fruit tart at her Historic Filipinotown cafe and bakery, Doubting Thomas, is a fan favorite, but the chocolate chip cookie sells out as quickly (so go early). I like everything about Doubting

Thomas' palm-size chocolate chip cookie: the crumpled concentric rings, crisp-crunchy edges, chewy interior, lots of dark Tcho chocolate and requisite flakes of coarse sea salt. There's so much chocolate in it that it nearly forms an edge-to-edge layer inside the cookie. Also, if you're looking for a gluten-free version of a chocolate chip cookie, I can't think of a better one than her oat cookie made with almond flour and milk chocolate. — *B.H.*
● 2510 Temple St., Los Angeles, (323) 350-9869, *doubtingthomas.la*

Chocolate chip pecan at Loupottie Kitchen

Ever since she was young, Sarah Bessade knew that she wanted to make a perfect chocolate chip cookie. "I wanted to be the queen of cookies," she said. "My first goal when opening the restaurant was to have the best cookie." She arguably succeeded, though it took years of trial and error. The founder of French restaurant Loupottie Kitchen combined a range of recipes and tasted and altered them until she landed on her chocolate chip pecan cookie. On the scale of cakey to chewy, this nostalgic chocolate chip cookie is cakey and dense but manages to maintain its fluffiness and stay soft all the way through. Rich pops of 70% dark chocolate punctuate the vanilla-scented dough, while the crunch and earthy tones from chopped pecans add intensity and variance. Find the cookies and others, such as madeleines, baked fresh each morning and waiting under a cloche at the coffee bar. Order these slightly warmed, as Bessade prefers, so the chocolate just barely melts. — *S.B.*
● 1726 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, (323) 603-9414, *loupottiekitchen.com*

Corn cookie at Milk Bar

This is like summer in circular, sweet form. For all pastry whiz Christina Tosi's famous concoctions — the layer cakes, the cereal-milk soft serve, the cake truffles — the corn cookie is, in my book, the best of them all. Not to be confused with her cornflake cookie (also worth ordering), Tosi's signature corn cookie serves as an ode to her family farm and tastes like the summer's sweet-savory bounty slicked with salted butter. Thanks to two forms of corn — corn flour and freeze-dried corn powder — the vegetable's unmistakable flavor shines through, and corn's natural sweetness translates perfectly to a dessert. Tosi's golden-yellow cookie is chewy and soft, with a just-crinkly exterior, and its flavor perfectly walks that line of sweet and savory — so much so that she even recommends using these cookies to make a grilled cheese sandwich (TBD on that one). A mainstay for more than a decade, the corn cookies began at Momofuku Milk Bar and have cropped up in all of Tosi's standalone Milk

Bar locations ever since, including L.A.'s. These can be ordered individually wrapped and on-line, which makes for great gifting, but swing by the Melrose bakery and pick up a freshly baked batch for best results. — *S.B.*
● 7150 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, *milkbarstore.com*

Gooie at Zookies

This cookie shop in a Culver City gas station has flavors that feel like they were dreamed up in collaboration with our sweetest childhood memories, like the Gimme S'more with house-made graham crackers and a torched marshmallow topping or the Panda with chopped Oreos and white chocolate chips. Still, I find myself favoring the classic Gooie cookie with milk and dark chocolate chips, a moist center and crispy edges. The brown butter chocolate chip is a close second, with a slightly savory edge. A walnut Gooie is available if you want to add some crunch to your chocolate chip cookie, as well as the Mooie, with pretzels added for a dose of saltiness. — *D.D.*
● 9815 National Blvd., Los Angeles, (310) 820-8282, *zookies.com*

Lemon lavender cookie from Fat + Flour

The lemon lavender cookie at Fat + Flour feels like the perfect summer dessert with bright citrus cutting through each bite and subtle vanilla and lavender notes. It's thin, slightly crumbly and perfect for those who like simple, not-too-sweet cookies that go beyond sugar. Because it's vegan, it's a pretty light snack, so you won't be too full to try additional vegan cookies such as the peanut butter, bourbon chocolate pecan or vanilla sprinkle sugar. If dairy isn't a problem, the plush snickerdoodle cookie is worth adding to your order. If the options overwhelm, let owner-baker Nicole Rucker and her expert staff do the choosing for you with a dozen assorted cookies. — *D.D.*
● 317 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, *fatandflourla.com*

Li'l Merri cookie at Cake Monkey

My cookie order at Cake Monkey varies based on my mood. If I need chocolate, I'll devour a Big O, the Mexican hot chocolate sandwich cookie tasting of spiced dark chocolate and vanilla buttercream. The chocolate brownie cookie speckled with blotches of powdered sugar is another favorite. But the cookie I return to most is the Li'l Merri. It's a cookie sandwich with two lacy oatmeal cookies around a lighter-than-air middle of maple buttercream. The sandwich layers taste like good, thin oatmeal cookies completely covered in chewy caramel. They're crisp enough to crack, then disappear into the buttercream. — *Jenn Harris*
● 7807 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, (323) 932-1142, *cakemonkey.com*

Molasses ginger snap at Gjusta

In the always-crowded Venice deli and cafe, the pastry case with its express line is your best bet for getting in and out in a hurry. Who needs salad when you can have apricot danish or apple coffee cake? Among its baklava croissants, seasonal fruit galettes, cardamom knots, banana buckwheat loaf, citrus ricotta cake and hefty loaves of bread are the bakery's big, chewy, comforting cookies. Chocolate chip brown butter cookies might be stacked next to orange pistachio and miso date (if you're lucky/early enough). It might be easy to overlook the ginger snaps, the homey spiced cookie that always evokes the holidays — but are great anytime. These aren't the hard-as-bricks kind of ginger snaps from a box. They're the chewiest, softest, crackliest variety, punchy with molasses and small chunks of candied ginger, perfectly spiced with ground cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and cloves — but so well balanced that one isn't distinct from another. — *B.H.*
● 320 Sunset Ave., Venice, (310) 314-0320, *gjusta.com*

Napolitaine cookie from Fleurs et Sel

Lara Adekoya spent her teenage years in France falling in love with the country's boulangeries. When she launched her cookie pop-up in April 2020, she named it in French after her two favorite things: flowers and salt. Adekoya recently landed in a bricks-and-mortar in West Adams where you can order her cookies via online drops or in person. The cookies are bulkier

and more bulbous than what you're used to seeing, with centers that protrude to form cartoonish mushroom tops. There are fun rotating flavors such as London Fog with Earl Grey, bergamot and vanilla, but my favorite is the Napolitaine that's swirled with strawberry, vanilla and chocolate dough that delivers a different flavor with each bite. The strawberry is light like ice cream while the chocolate is deep and decadent and the delicate vanilla ties it all together. — *D.D.*
● 5300 W. Adams Blvd., Suite 100, Los Angeles, *fleursetsel.com*

O.G. chocolate chip cookie at the Very Best Cookie in the Whole Wide World

The bakery name is quite the flex, but owner Kirstyn Shaw has earned it. Her O.G. cookie is textbook-perfect, crisp around the edges and soft and chewy in the middle. There are shards of both hand-chopped dark and semisweet chocolate from Callebaut generously studded throughout. Shaw also adds chocolate chips to vary the texture of the chocolate from gooey to not fully melted. It's finished with enough Maldon sea salt to give the chocolate a boost. When my 8-year-old self dreams of a chocolate chip cookie, this is the one. — *J.H.*
● 2625 S. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, (424) 326-9123, *theverybestcookieinthewholewideworld.com*

Spelt thumbprint at Proof Bakery

The Atwater Village cooperative bakery founded by Na Young Ma is seemingly always full, with crowds jockeying for Proof's legendary croissants. But don't skip the cookies. Bags of chocolate shortbread and dried-fruit-studded biscotti line the shelves near the entrance. And in the pastry case are fat coconut macaroons; big, well-browned, crinkly chocolate chip cookies; and pistachio polvorones whose green tinge peeks from beneath a dusting of powdered sugar. But the spelt thumbprint cookies are a particular favorite for their nutty, not-too-sweet flavor, melt-in-your-mouth texture and bright seasonal jam filling. Made with spelt flour, they are light, airy and somehow both sandy and silky. The ratio of cookie to jam is just right, and the jam itself always sings with fresh fruit flavor, no matter what season it is. Most recently it was blueberry lemongrass or raspberry jam, but it will change again soon. — *B.H.*
● 3156 Glendale Blvd., Los Angeles, *proofbakery.com*

Strawberry passion fruit cookie at Lei'd Cookies

Smorgasburg vendors Leilani Terris and James Lewis expanded to the colorful Culver City storefront previously occupied by Coolhaus last fall, except now painted orchids and a neon-lighted sign with their logo welcome you inside. The cookies draw inspiration from not just the bakers' backgrounds but all around the world, such as a mango sticky rice option that's packed with chunks of mango and coconut flakes and frosted with a house coconut rice sauce. Flavors come and go from the menu frequently, such as the recently launched salted duck egg chili oil crisp cookie in collaboration with Hot Jiang Sauce for Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (a.k.a. May). I encourage a thorough exploration to find your preferred flavor, but if I were to recommend one that rises to the top, it'd be the strawberry passion fruit that started as a seasonal offering and is now a permanent menu item. The golden-brown cookie is made with a creamy strawberry base with bits of fresh strawberry and topped with a tartly sweet passion fruit glaze. It's fruity, tropical and tastes like you've been whisked away to a white-sand beach. — *D.D.*
● 8588 Washington Blvd., Culver City, *leidcookies.com*

Tahini chocolate chip cookie from Kismet

The focus at Sara Kramer and Sarah Hymanson's Kismet is on dishes that highlight seasonal produce through a Cal-Mediterranean lens, with a few proteins (such as a lemony chicken plate) for diners who prefer mains with meat. Whatever you end up ordering, save room for the tahini chocolate chip cookie that is extra creamy and nutty with sesame flavor. The cookies are baked with a healthy sprinkling of sea salt that satisfies sweet and savory cravings all at once. — *D.D.*
● 4648 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, *kismetla.com*



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Photographs by STEPHANIE BREIJO Los Angeles Times

TV's laziest animated egg comes to SoCal

SANRIO'S FIRST U.S. GUDETAMA CAFE IS IN BUENA PARK, AND FANS LINED UP FOR HOURS TO WELCOME IT. **BY STEPHANIE BREIJO**

THE OPENING OF Orange County's Gudetama Cafe has been anything but "meh." Lines wrapped through the Buena Park Downtown Mall parking lot on its May 4 opening day, when hundreds of fans showed up to try a cafe devoted to the world's favorite anthropomorphic, utterly lazy egg. Some waited hours, some were turned away. Yelp reviewers wrote that they waited as long as 12 to 16 hours to enter the temple to Sanrio's genderless, unfertilized egg with its own Netflix show. Some guests had to make subsequent attempts to visit but found that wait times had whittled down to 20 to 40 minutes since the first Saturday of business. Once inside, it's all yellow and eggy everywhere, especially when it comes to the food. Most of the items are egg-topped. Character statues can be found hanging from the ceiling and on display tables. The walls are awash with murals of Gudetama listlessly saying, "Meh," "Whatever ..." and "Can I go now?" The bright yellow building that sits just to the east of Knott's Berry Farm marks the first Gudetama Cafe in the U.S. — a savory counterpart to Sanrio's Hello Kitty Cafes in Irvine and Las Vegas, which specialize in confections and tea service. A number of Gudetama Cafes have cropped up in the last decade, kicking off with a pop-up in Japan, then larger-scale Gudetama Cafes in Singapore, Osaka and Tokyo, as well as a Brighton restaurant called Gudetama's Lazy Lounge in England.

A representative for Sanrio told The Times that the company plans to open more cafes based on its litany of cute characters throughout the year — and that in the pantheon of those characters, Gudetama, though newer, has already become one of the most beloved, especially by older fans who can relate.

Cesar Shih is the manager of Gudetama Cafe as well as a franchisee of the Habit Burger Grill; he also helped bring the Hello Kitty Cafe to Las Vegas in 2016 (he has since departed, and has no affiliation with the Irvine location). Shih said he signed on to the Gudetama Cafe project due to the appeal of Gudetama itself.

"We went into COVID and people developed a different mentality," he told The Times the day before the cafe opened. "Before, we were so engaged in the hustle and bustle. Now, it's like: Gudetama is tired all the time but is stress-free. I just really fell in love with the character."

Multiple fans echoed the sentiment during a preview the day before the cafe opened. Among the many attendees dressed in yellow and Gudetama-themed hats, shirts and dresses was Risa Light, clad in an egg-inspired beret, a white dress and a yellow apron.

"Gudetama is the new icon of this new era," said Light, who teaches Japanese slang on Instagram. "Gudetama is obviously super kawaii, super cute, but he's also lazy — he doesn't want to go to work. He just wants to stay in bed today, and I relate to him so much. [In the past] there was no character like this we could relate to as much as Gudetama."

Nine-year-old visitor Olivia Lopez told The Times that Gudetama reminds her of her mom, Cynthia "Cyn" Lopez. The duo wore matching "Gude vibes" shirts

and drove down from San Fernando Valley to try the new restaurant. A self-described Sanrio fan since her childhood, content creator Lopez said she jumped at the chance to see the cafe and "share this passion of loving Sanrio" with her daughter.

When it came to building the cafe's menu, the egg, of course, was crucial. This location uses pasture-raised eggs from Vital Farms on a menu decidedly more American than its global counterparts: Whereas previous iterations saw fluffy Japanese pancakes, curry and udon, Buena Park's features classic breakfast sandwiches with bacon and American cheese, egg-topped sliders and avocado toast, in addition to an egg-topped chicken katsu sandwich, and all are served with tater tots. Most of the yolks feature the unenthusiastic visage of Gudetama, while brioche buns come stamped with the character donning a chef's toque and reclining in its eggshell.

Having collaborated with Beard Papa's in the past, Sanrio suggested adding that Japanese

bakery's famed cream puffs to the cafe menu. Gudetama Cafe offers the original, piped-to-order cream puff as well as a version coated with a dripping, rich-yellow topping — though it's not egg yolk but mango sauce.

Shih, who also helps oversee the food, said the Gudetama Cafe kitchen team also is developing its own desserts such as Portuguese egg tarts and yellow macarons, and that he wanted the cafe to be more informal — with an order-at-the-counter format, as opposed to full-service dining — to be "more reflective of the Gudetama personality."

If Gudetama fans — like their favorite egg — find the thought of rolling out of bed too daunting, even to make it to Buena Park right now, there could be other reasons to visit this and other Sanrio cafes in the future.

"We're excited to finally get the doors open," said Jill Koch, senior vice president of marketing and a Sanrio employee for 22 years. "And stay tuned. There's more cafe news coming shortly. ... Definitely there'll be multiple openings over the course of the rest of this year."

Gudetama Cafe, 8340 La Palma Ave., Buena Park; 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Sunday.

Staff writer Jreh Deng contributed to the reporting of this story.

GUDETAMA just can't, but at the lazy egg's Buena Park cafe, egg-topped katsu sandwiches, breakfast sandwiches and more have the character's face.



RESTAURANT REVIEW

10 FAVORITE WAYS TO SAVOR MERCADO GONZÁLEZ

HERE'S A GOOD START ON SAMPLING FROM ITS HUNDREDS OF STALLS

BY BILL ADDISON
RESTAURANT CRITIC

A THOUSAND STIMULI charge your senses when you walk into the Mercado González in Costa Mesa. Dragon fruit, colored in lucid pinks and greens, piled in a wooden bin among dozens of other fruits and vegetables displayed with a gallerist's fastidious eye. The sunshine smell of masa, maybe mingling with the piercing scent of carnitas bubbling slowly in lard. Voices ringing like applause through 70,000 square feet — or maybe that's actual clapping for the mariachi trio playing onstage in the food court. Your brain registers colorful signs for aguas frescas, mariscos and chicharrones, but you start by reaching for a pile of packaged tortillas near the entrance. They're still warm. Don Miguel and Doña Teresa González founded the Northgate Market chain in Anaheim in 1980; the company currently operates more than 40 locations throughout Southern California. The opening of Mercado González in November marks a new level of ambition for Northgate, now led by generations of family members: The enormous space seamlessly entwines a Mexican supermarket with a food hall anchored by more than a dozen puestos (permanent stalls) and a finer-dining restaurant called Maizano.

Its scale at first overwhelms and exhilarates, but the mercado has quickly settled into useful everydayness. Customers stroll unhurriedly at all hours, chucking (among an approximate zillion choices) bunches of cilantro, dried chiles, coffee creamer and containers of preseasoned steak into their carts. A few loners meander with tacos or tortas in hand. Many more couples and families attempt to camp out at tables in the muraled food court or its adjoining, shaded patio. Vying for seats becomes cutthroat on weekends, when the place is mobbed and parking is a nightmare — the valet stand starts to feel like a practical option after circling for the fifth time — but the live music inside helps dispel the initial hassle.

Half a year in, the crowds show no signs of thinning.

As I've returned again and again over recent months, one stomach attempting to survey the puestos' hundreds of culinary possibilities, it's been stirring to witness the near-instant civic buy-in around the mercado. The curation reflects decades of business savvy, no question, but no amount of marketing or messaging could inspire the multigenerational scene on Saturday night, a parade of souls dancing, patrons downing a third shot of tequila or singling out the most unblemished head of lettuce under one roof. The community, it seems, has quickly chosen this place, giving it lifeblood as a vital third space.

These are 10 favorite ways to savor the mercado. It's only a beginning, and I didn't ignore the tamales, the spatchcocked pollo adobado or the paleta de fresa con crema. Those I took home (or ate in the car). Here I zero in on dishes I most enjoy eating within the mercado's ever-resounding walls.

Aguachile rojo at Mariscos El Pariente

It makes sense to begin with El Pariente, given its beckoning location near the mercado's entrance and the near-instant nourishment it provides. An overhead menu details a mix of cocteles and campechanas made to order, many highlighting shrimp harvested from the Sea of Cortez. Even more immediate: the long counter exhibiting ceviches and aguachiles in steel bowls over ice. One might include diced mango among pearly seafood; others take on an emerald cast from the

base of fresh green chiles in their marinade.

I'm partial to the aguachile rojo for its inclusion of shrimp and scallops — their snappy-silken contrasts are especially satisfying — and for the smoky undertones imparted by guajillos. But no need to choose one: Order small portions of several mariscos to purchase along with some crisped tortillas for make-them-yourself tostadas. The blue-tiled counter along the stand is often some of the easiest seating to nab in the building, and caddies full of five or six different hot sauces make for endless experiments in flavor.

Al pastor and suadero tacos at Tacos Los Guichos

The dependably longest line for dining in the mercado wraps around the corner of its dedicated taqueria, a partnership with al pastor specialist Tacos Los Guichos on West Slauson Avenue in South L.A.'s Florence neighborhood. Don't expect an exact reproduction of the Los Guichos experience in the market. At the original, the pastoreños shave the layers of meat off the trompo to order, straight onto palm-size corn tortillas. Here, the seasoned pork is precut to keep up with demand, and the garnish includes the popular addition of pineapple, which Los Guichos owner Mariano Zenteno eschews at the flagship.

All that said, the outpost's efforts ably fulfill fundamental appetites for tacos. Definitely try the chewy-crisp, thoroughly seasoned al pastor, appropriately dressed with chopped cilantro and onion, a squeeze of lime juice and a tart splash of salsa verde. Other meats include carne asada, pollo, cubed lengua (its springy bite especially good against the crisp surface of a cheese-lined mulita) and, my favorite, suadero, the confit-like cut of beef at once slick and crackly. Los Guichos also has long crafted an excellent, extra-meaty variation on torta cubana, which the mercado team faithfully duplicates.

Chicharrón con carne at Carnitas Don Miguel

The puesto for all things pork centers the Michoacan-style carnitas recipe developed by Don Miguel González and served in the first Northgate Market. Through picture windows, you can watch cooks in the kitchens in the back of the building



GUISADOS LAS CAZUELAS

BILL ADDISON Los Angeles Times



DANIA MAXWELL Los Angeles Times

shop's café de olla, which in true California spirit translates refreshingly well as cold brew. A narrow patio just outside the stand, decorated with El Moro's trademark blue and white patterned tiles, can be a surprisingly calm escape.

Drinks and snacks at Maizano

It was logistically sound for the González family, when planning the mercado's on-premise restaurant, to join forces with Gruppo Apapacho, the Mexico City-based group responsible for Terraza Cha Cha Chá, a rooftop bar in the capital city's Tabacalera neighborhood, and for local design-forward ventures like LA Cha Cha Chá in downtown Los Angeles and seafood-focused Loreto in Frogtown. At the half-year mark, Maizano, emphasizing dishes built around masa made daily in the market, is still finding its synthesis with the project as a whole.

Until recently, its dining room might be sitting nearly empty on a Saturday night while the food court raged in full-throttle party mode. Its revolving door, the only visible connection to the restaurant inside the mercado, creates a distancing effect. Maizano also has a small patio, and as the weather warms I've noticed more people gravitating to the outdoor space on the edge of the parking lot, even while tables inside often remain empty.

I'm happiest at the restaurant's handsome bar, ordering several of chef Alan Sanz's maíz-centered snacks and sipping mezcal or cocktails crafted with restraint, like a martini of Las Californias gin and Dolin dry vermouth that substitutes a spear of pickled cactus squares for olives. The campfire perfume of smoked tuna infuses the pescadilla — sometimes, depending on the region of Mexico, rendered in the form of a fried corn tortilla but here more resembling an empanada — and the smokiness of morita salsa nicely balances a sope gilded with bone marrow. If you're still hungry and considering a larger dish, look first to nutty, hauntingly subtle mole blanco served with broccolini and nixtamalized chayote.

And then, for a coffee or churros or a sopping slice of tres leches, rejoin the river of humanity flowing through the mercado.



PRODUCE SECTION AT MERCADO GONZALEZ



CHIVA TORTA

BILL ADDISON L.A. Times



SUSHI EL SINALOENSE

BILL ADDISON L.A. Times

other pan dulce; the tres leches isn't on display, but the staffer behind the counter will grab one for you. They're also frequently stocked at a refrigerated stand next to the beverage case near the food court. Find a slice surrounded by a deep moat of mixed milks for maximum soakage.

Churros and cold brew at Churrería El Moro

You might be here solely for the churros. The González family triumphed by securing the first United States location of the beloved Mexico City churrería, started in 1935. While modern interpretations of churros can skew billowy and custardy, this recipe of flour, salt and water is the opposite: lanky, coiled, intensely crisp, designed to be dipped. From afternoon to evening the line can flow outside the building, moving quickly as staff fries dough to order, rolling bowed sticks in cinnamon and sugar and calling out names. Dips are a buck apiece: I lean to the essentials, chocolate and cajeta, that taste as pleasingly straightforward as you can imagine them.

Chocolate drinks, served hot or cold, run from jittery-sweet to a nicely bitter version made with cacao from Tabasco state and a flicker of cinnamon. Piloncillo, with its caramel undercurrents, and a trio of spices (clove, star anise, cinnamon) flavor the



TACOS LOS QUICHOS

BILL ADDISON Los Angeles Times



CHURRERIA EL MORO

DANIA MAXWELL Los Angeles Times

I usually prefer to skip in my bundled morning meal). This is also the corner of the market where you can sate your hunger for cheese enchiladas. I'm mostly here for the namesake guisados, stews that make a sustaining plate with Mexican rice and a pool of refried beans. They're presented in wide, sky-blue pans atop heating pads along the counter: chicharrones simmered in red or green salsa, chunky bistec ranchero with tomatoes and, as a bright spot for vegetarians, calabacitas sprinkled with queso. The can't-miss for omnivores: costillas (supple, bite-size pieces of pork rib) married with nopales in gently spiced broth, the kind of earthy goodness that induces a deep breath almost involuntarily.

Torta ahogada at Chiva Torta

To add Guadalajara's iconic sandwich into the mix, the mercado recruited the Albarran family that has operated the Chiva Torta truck in Santa Ana for over two decades. The version here closely mirrors the original. Cooks smear the insides of a crusty, intentionally well-salted bolillo called a birote salado with refried beans and then stuff the roll with meat. Carnitas are traditional — and despite my tepid opinion of the market's carnitas, they're my first choice, given how well their flavors blend with all the other elements — but chicken, buche (pork stomach), cueritos (pickled pork rind, a Chiva Torta signature) and barbacoa are on the roster. Pickled onions are scattered over the top before staff drenches the torta in thin tomato sauce with three levels of heat.

Know that the super spicy option will engulf the whole affair in its firestorm. Consuming the beast is messy and thrilling in its zigzags of crunch and squish and sauciness. The puesto also serves tacos dorados

(an excellent way to try the cueritos) and steamed tacos de canasta filled with fluffy potatoes.

Mochis roll at Sushi El Sinaloense

I'll admit to a purist streak when it comes to sushi. My tastes in maki fillings run to simple, lone ingredients: tuna, cucumber, kanpyo (dried gourd). But over the last decade plenty of Southern Californians have embraced the rising popularity of Sinaloa-style sushi, merging the joys of mariscos with extravagantly creamy, spicy, deep-fried rolls. The menu at Sushi El Sinaloense, located in a prime position near the stage in the food court, runs to starters like chiles güeros stuffed with cream cheese and imitation crab and ponzu-doused tiraditos before segueing to rolls topped with salmon, mango and avocado or lobster blanketed with mayo and squiggles of eel sauce.

For me: the more stripped-down but still artful Mochis roll, a sliced California roll with a single garlic shrimp crown atop each round. Groups ordering multiple creations might find their meal spread over a wooden tray in the shape of a boat. Seeing how many plastic containers the market goes through, even for customers eating on site, is sobering (hardly an issue exclusive to the mercado).

Tres leches at Pastelería La González

A staple in the bakery departments of Northgate markets, the tres leches recipe needs no tweaking for Mercado González. The engineering of a boxed slice is unerring: Its poundcake density is substantial enough to maintain structure yet porous enough to absorb the milks, with just the right, rounded hit of vanilla. Customers in the market's panaderia section will line up with their trays of conchas and

simmering the meat in lard throughout the day in traditional copper cazos, which the mercado also sells. In a region where experts render some extraordinary carnitas, these rare fine enough: tender and nicely lacy at the edges, but often a little dry.

I'll nudge you instead to delve into fritanga (variations on fried pork), including several variations on chicharrones. A staffer wisely suggested the chicharron con carne, a warm horseshoe-shaped hunk of puffed rind with an attached ring of thick, crisp pork belly. The nuances in each shattering, porcine bite are remarkable. Ask for salsa verde to help offset the pure, saturating meatiness.

Goat and beef birrias at La Tapatia Birrieria

In this age of birria fervor, the González family takes a universalist stance on the dish's regional variations: It invests in several options. Yes, there are quesada birria tacos, gener-

ously filled with ropy birria de res and a just-right veneer of cheese with the requisite side of chile-oil-red consommé. They're respectable. I was far more sold on the oven-roasted goat birria, lush and humming with spice and served in soup form with the beef consommé. If you happen to be in the area for breakfast, the birrieria opens at 6 a.m. and a bowl is powerful ignition for the day. For a centerpiece at lunch or dinner, check out the whopping beef rib birria, a club of bone and flesh with meat that melts on to the fork. It doesn't come with consommé; it needs little more than the onions, cilantro and lime wedges that come on the side.

Costillas con nopales at Guisados Las Cazuelas

This puesto, without outwardly advertising it, serves several breakfast standards, including comfortingly saucy chilaquiles, eggs in salsa and oversized burritos filled with rice (an ingredient



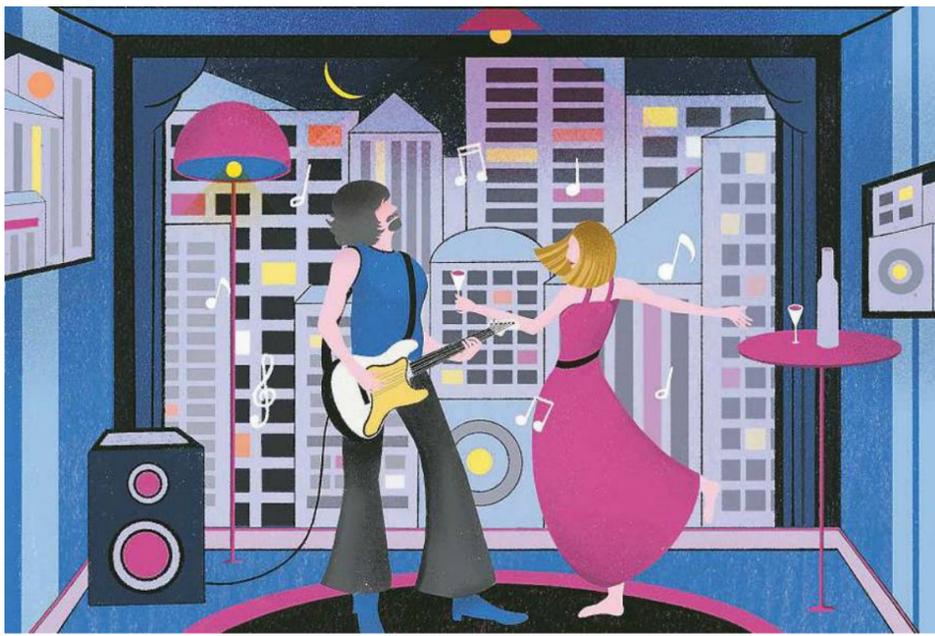
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L.A. AFFAIRS

Songs in key of life

MUSIC IS KEEPING MY SWEETIE YOUNG, AND I'M PLAYING ALONG

BY MELISSA GOULD

I WAS AT dinner in Los Feliz recently trying to encourage a couple I've been friends with for more than 20 years to come see my boyfriend's band play the following weekend. "It's so fun," I said. "It's at a bar in the Valley, but Luis gives it the same energy as if he's playing the Forum. Plus, it's a Friday night. You can sleep in on Saturday." They nodded their heads in consideration, and then the husband asked a perfectly reasonable question. "What time does he start?"

"Around 9," I said. "Ish."
Their faces lighted up and their eyes got wide as if I had just delivered the funniest punchline they'd ever heard. "Nine o'clock?!" the wife asked. "At night?"

"Well," I admitted, "9:15. The latest 9:30."

Her husband laughed and said, "We're usually in bed by then."

The wife added, "But if he ever plays a daytime gig, we'd love to come."

I've had the same conversation with a variety of friends for years, and they usually end the same way. The truth is, I get it. Because on the nights that my blues-playing, guitar-slinging boyfriend doesn't have a gig, we're usually in bed by 9:30 too.

Luis and I met when we were in our 40s. He was my daughter's guitar teacher, although taking her to her lessons fell under the jurisdiction of my late husband, Joel. Luis and I had met until I was nearly a year into my widowhood. A friend had invited me to one of his gigs, and I went. We got to talking and saw each other a few times over the next several weeks.

What we thought might be a fling turned into a bona fide relationship. It's now been almost 10 years, and we haven't

just grown together as a couple, we've also grown ... old. Or maybe we're just older. We're still youthful, but I haven't been carded in ages, and oftentimes we text each other to see if one of us has the reading glasses the other can't seem to find.

We used to look forward to getting couples massages together. Now, we're excited when our colonoscopies are the same week. We used to frequent a neighborhood Italian restaurant and drink old-fashioned and vodka martinis with our clams linguine and eggplant parm. Now, we frequent the pharmacy to make sure I keep an eye on my cholesterol and he has enough of his blood pressure medication.

Same thing with my friends, many of whom I've known since we were in our 20s. Back then, we'd talk obsessively about our

fledgling careers and the people we would end up marrying, and we'd wonder if we really could have it all. Now, we talk constantly about our hormones (or lack thereof), how we're handling our aging parents and how "kids today" — even our own — are plagued with anxiety and depression.

Again, we're not old, per se, but we're not young either. Unless we live well past the age of 110, we're not even middle-age. So that segment of our lives is actually far behind us.

Joel, who died unexpectedly at age 50, was middle-aged in his 20s. Of course, at the time, we had no idea that that was the case. We weren't a couple yet. When Joel and I met, we worked at a record label on the Sunset Strip. Part of our job was to see up-and-coming and established bands, sometimes several in one

night. It wasn't out of the ordinary to see the Rave-Ups play at the Palomino in North Hollywood at 9 p.m. and then rush over the hill to end the evening with an 11 p.m. set by the Red Hot Chili Peppers at the Hollywood Palladium. And that would be during the week. Neither of us would think twice about how late things got started or the distance we would travel. We loved seeing live music. It was fun. We were young.

It's so cliché, but when I look at pictures of myself at that age, I think, "I was so cute. So open. So driven." I had no idea what the future held: young widowhood, a major career change and love later in life with a man I'll likely continue growing older with, a man who isn't Joel.

Love with Luis has always been different. Maybe it's be-

cause falling in love again, especially as a widow, was so unexpected. We had lived full lives by the time we got together. Although neither of us feels compelled to marry, we expect we'll be grandparents together sometime in the future. That's a thought that makes us smile.

All of this said, I'm convinced that playing music is what keeps Luis young. That, and his hair. He's got a lot of it. Thick, wavy, even unruly at times. In our years together, it's gotten more salt than pepper, but that hasn't stopped anyone from asking if they can smell him. Yes, friends and strangers alike ask if they can get really close to him and take a whiff. We think this is strange. But he's a charismatic and handsome musician, and this may just be par for the course.

When he's onstage, singing with his band, jumping and kicking with his guitar strapped around his neck, it's hard to believe he's closer to 60 than 25. Maybe music is the fountain of youth. Or maybe it's as simple as doing what you love. And I love being in the audience, watching him do what he loves. It's something that makes me feel young too. Especially when it's late on a Friday night, even if my friends have opted to stay home. They have no idea what they're missing.

The author lives in Los Angeles and wrote the bestselling memoir "Widowish." She is working on her second book, a middle-grade novel. She's on Instagram: @melissa_gould_author

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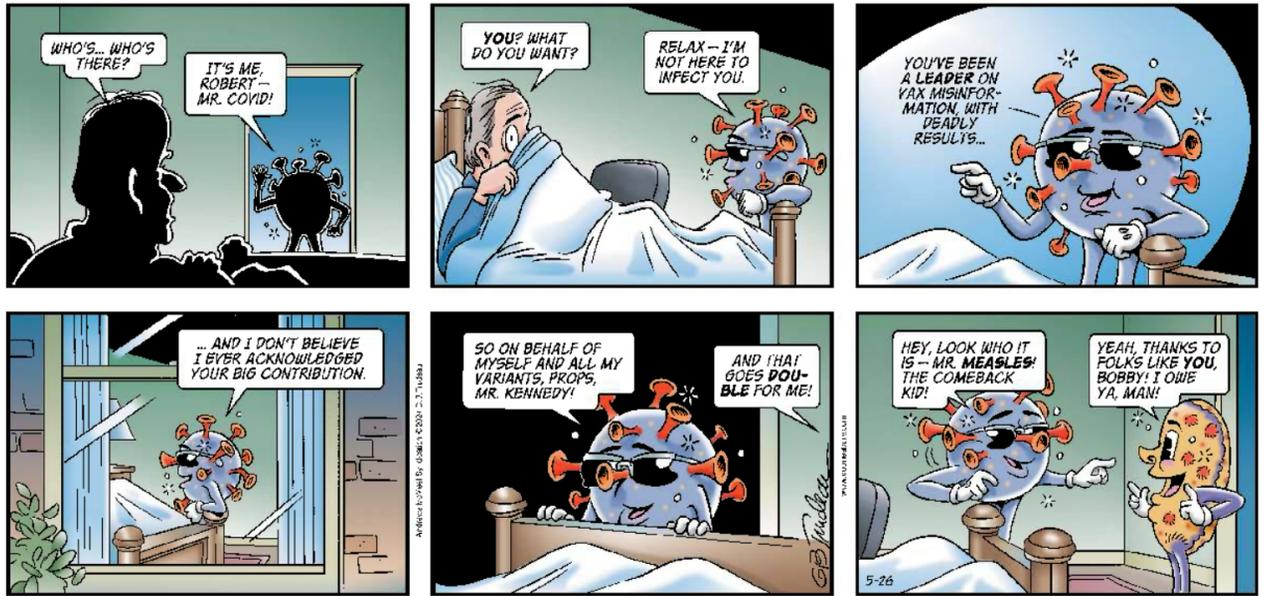
PICKLES

by Brian Crane



DOONESBURY

By Garry Trudeau



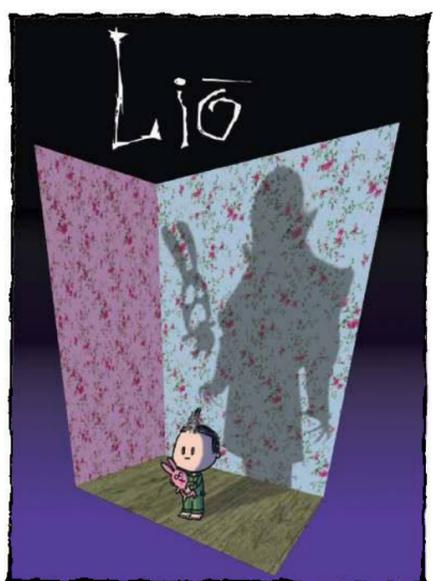
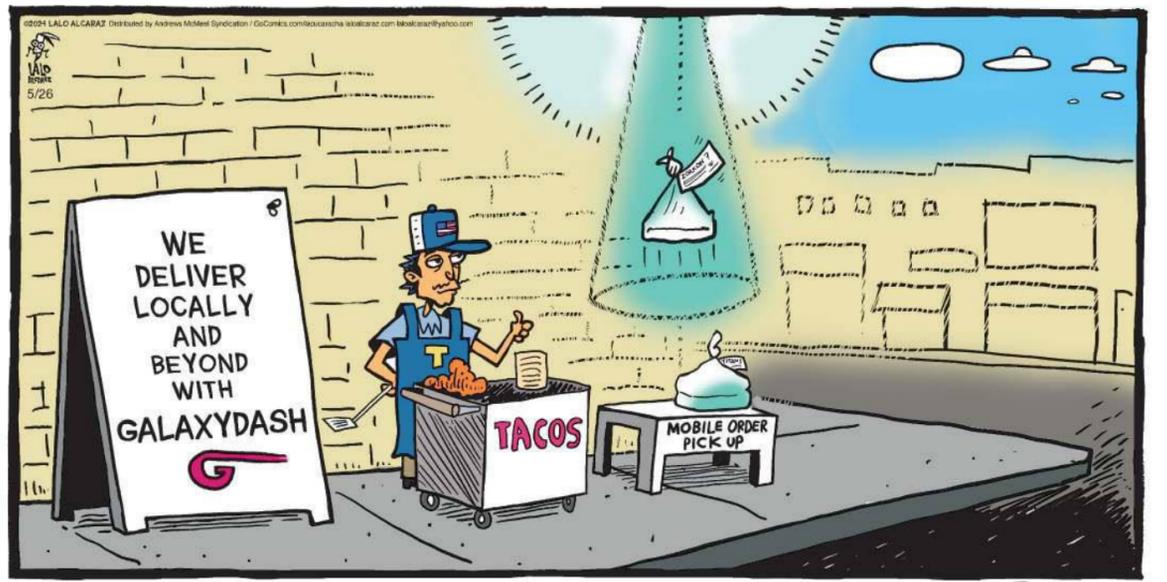
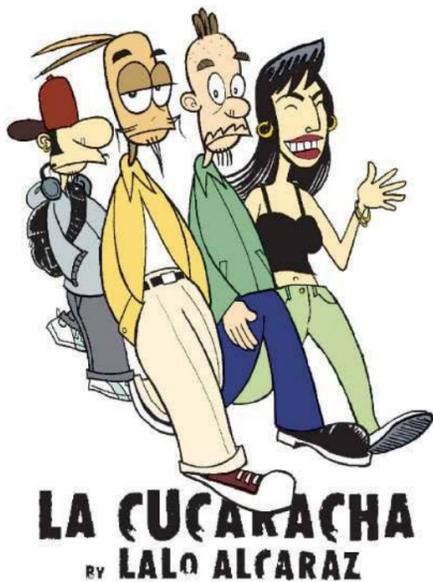
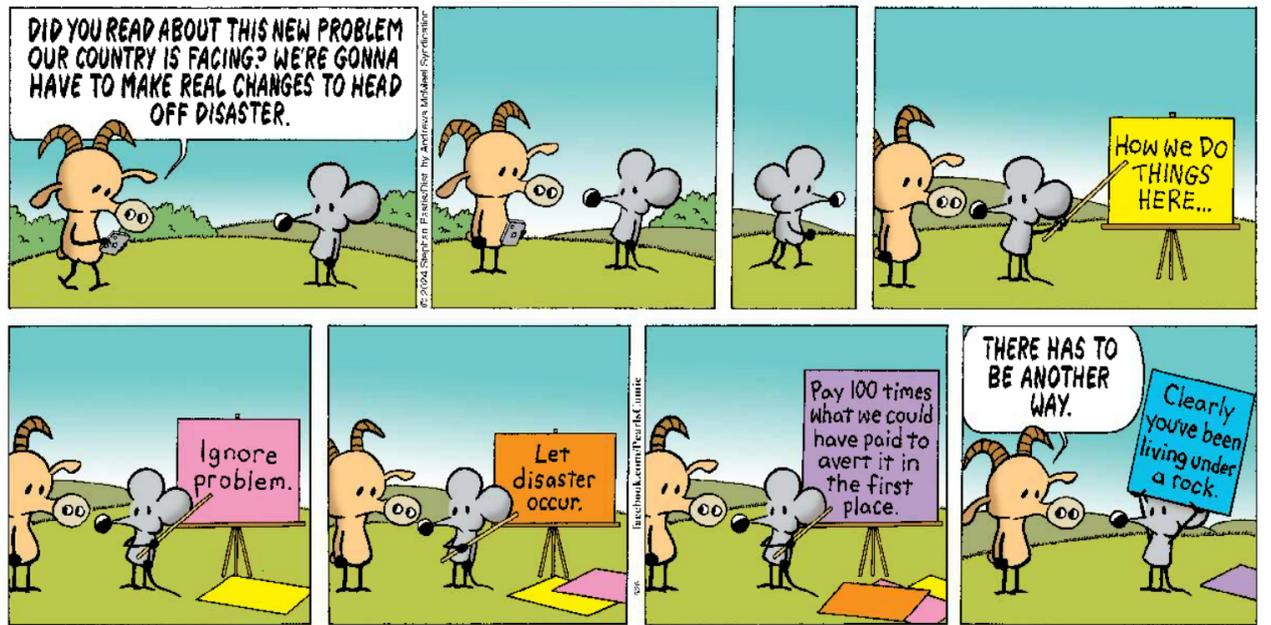
CRABGRASS

By Tauhid Bondia



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

By Stephan Pastis



MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell

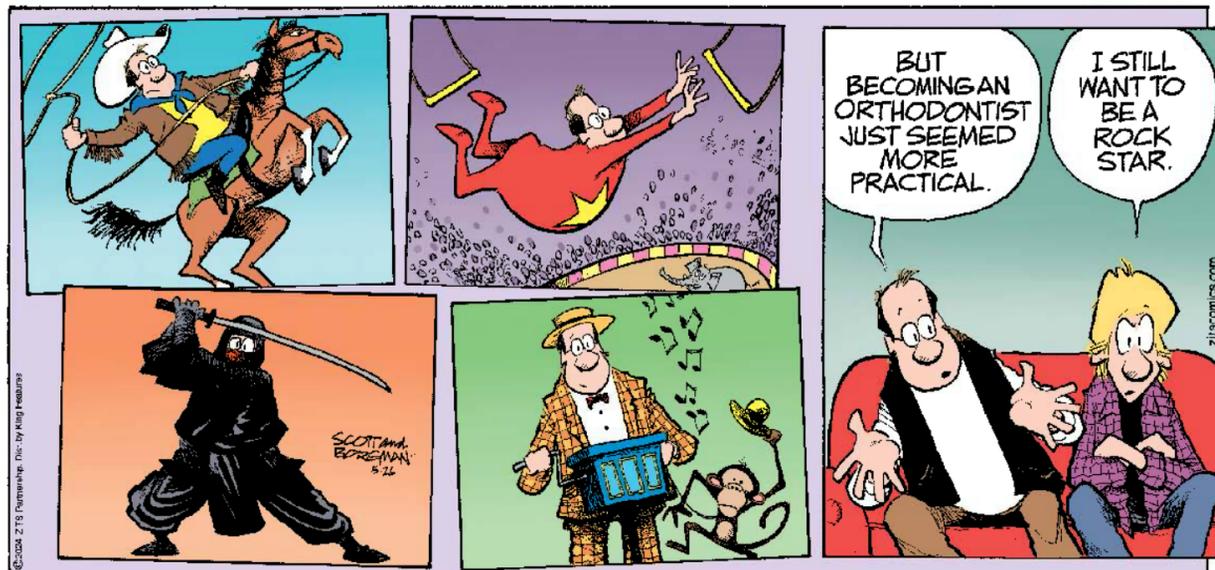


BLONDIE

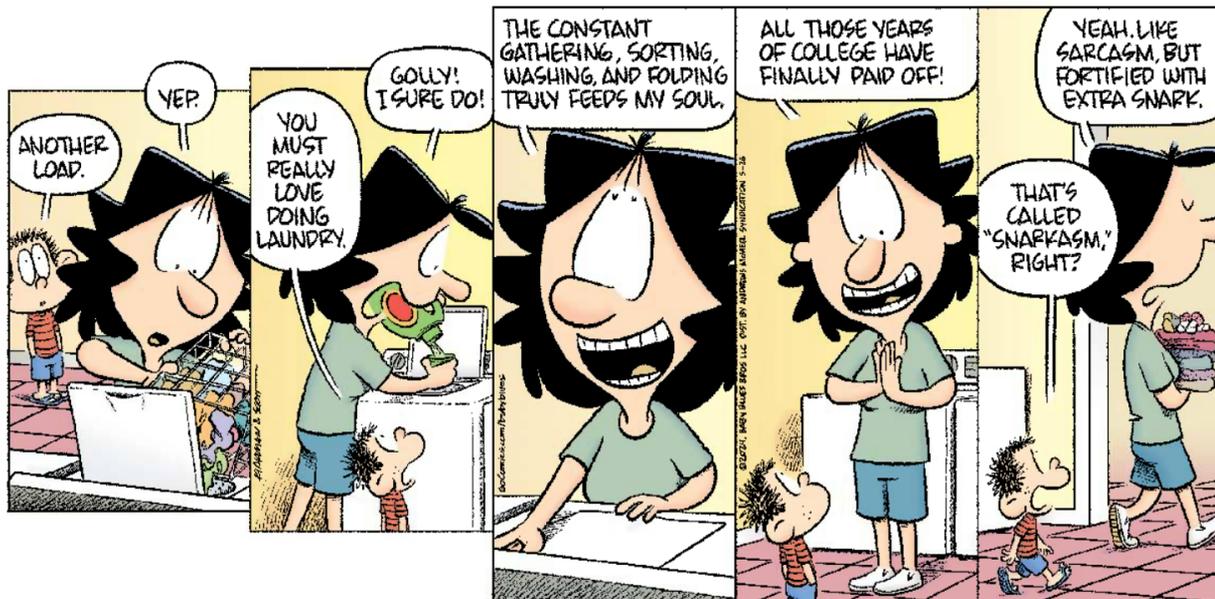
By Dean Young & John Marshall



ZITS By Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman



BABY BLUES By Rick Kirkman and Jerry Scott

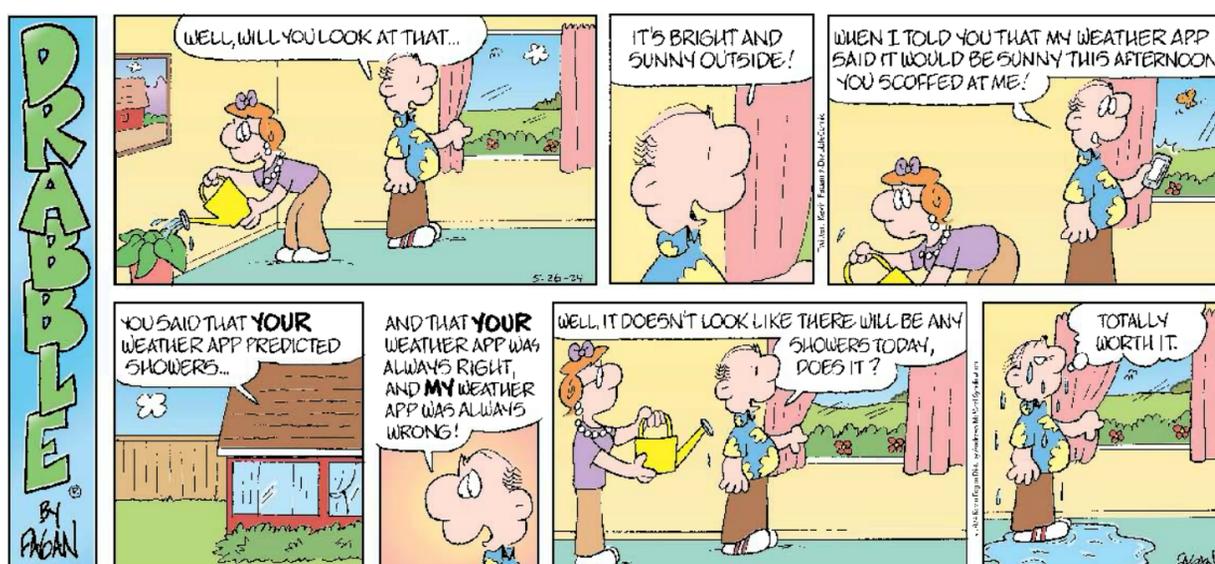
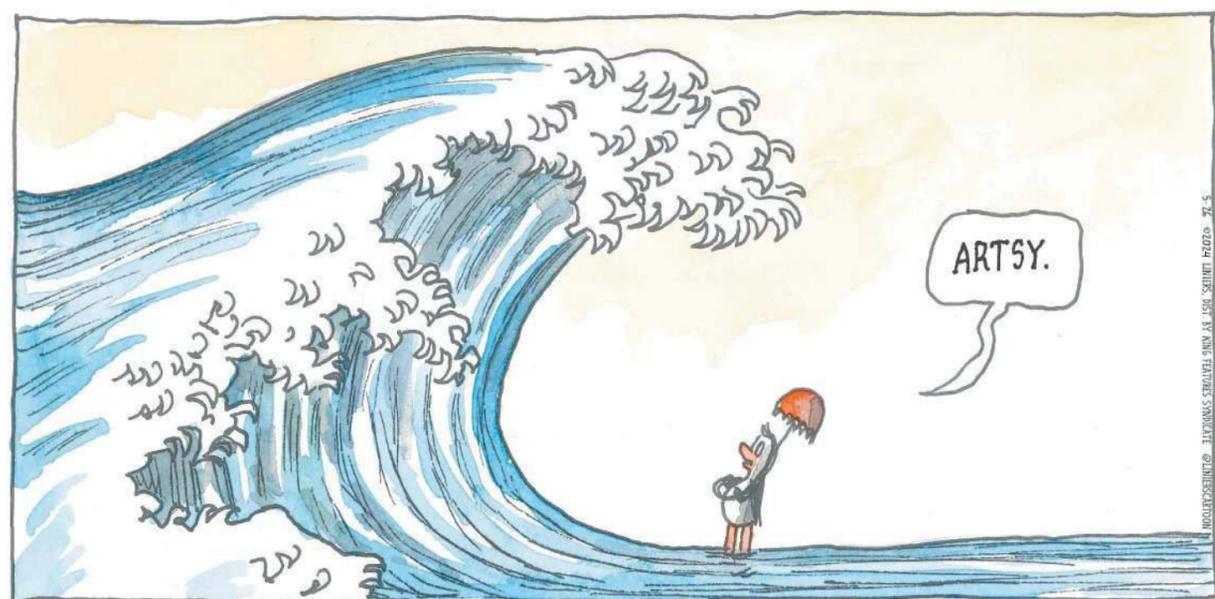


MARMADUKE

By Brad & Paul Anderson



MACANUDO By Liniers



DOG GONE FUNNY PALM DESERT, CA

GERALDINE DAVIS HAS A 17-YEAR-OLD MALTESE/BICHON MIX WHO IS QUITE THE ACTOR. GERALDINE TOOK HIM TO THE VET TO HAVE AN INJURY TREATED. A FEW DAYS LATER, SHE WAS LEAVING THE HOUSE WHEN HER DOG CAME FOLLOWING, PATHETICALLY HOLDING OUT HIS PAW AND LIMPING. HE DID NOT WANT GERALDINE TO LEAVE!

HOROSCOPE

HOLIDAY MATHIS

Aries (March 21-April 19): The spaces are part of a shape. The pauses are part of the music. The distance between hearts is partly what makes it love.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): You'll be offered timely companionship and support, which reinforces that relationships are your great treasure.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): You'll be in stimulating environments and in a position to choose your level of involvement.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): You'll love the work of the day. Assignments and duties are opportunities.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): There are those who see people as either useful or not useful instead of seeing them as potential friends. Not you. Because of the way you treat people, you will be among the ones you admire.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): There is more than one way to be the best version of yourself, and there are also multiple paths to creating the life you want. Avoid thinking in absolutes.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): You'll find beauty in diverse human connections and cherish each unique perspective. Every conversation is an opportunity to learn and grow as a person.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): In the quest for vitality, you sometimes get problems instead: remedies that are more like ongoing experiments than solutions, and "helpers" who just don't. Even when it goes that way, the quest is still worthwhile.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You know what's interesting to you, and when you follow your curiosity and land on something you want, you immediately figure out what it will take to make it happen.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You don't speak to win. Winning hardly ever happens through speaking anyway. You let your ears guide you instead of your mouth.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Few things match the fulfillment of feeling seen and understood. Who has done this for you? Which connections do you think you should celebrate?

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Talk about what's bothering you. Your description alone brings you closer to the answer. There's someone near who can help you solve your problem.

Today's birthday (May 26): It's a year of love and invitations. You are many people's favorite person. It's partly the way you give support, and partly the way you take it. More highlights: You'll be bowing to applause. You'll make an investment so savvy many will copy you. You'll throw and attend wonderful events. Capricorn and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers: 7, 8, 11, 2 and 22.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

Workplay

EDITED BY PATTI VAROL

By SAMUEL A. DONALDSON & DOUG PETERSON

ACROSS

- 1 FLOTUS after Hillary
6 Result of a lost front tooth, perhaps
10 Winter accessory
15 Docs doing deliveries
18 Fairy tale bullies
19 Kuwaiti ruler
20 Gainbridge Fieldhouse player
21 "Sussudio" singer Collins
22 Home business?
25 Sword side
26 Ritzy
27 PJ top, perhaps
28 Change one's story?
29 Handle
30 Sift through
32 Small stream
34 "They set us up!"
36 Italian "That'll do!"
39 Risky business?
42 Fail to cooperate?
44 Timid souls
45 Division I org. based in Arlington, Texas
46 Efficient
47 Diamond with hits
49 Pita sandwiches
52 Rough and disorderly
56 Pressing business?
59 Checker's concern
61 Loafer, e.g.
62 Souvenir shop staples
63 Pop, to baby
66 Real struggle
68 Buckeyes' sch.
70 Core business?
74 Venn diagram grouping

- 75 1960s sitcom family with a pet dragon named Spot
77 Entreaty
78 Formerly, once
80 Amount countable on one hand
81 Partially melted
83 Funny business?
88 Six Flags attractions
90 Afternoon class hour
93 127-Across's Bonneville — Flats
94 Homeowner's overhaul, for short
95 ICU readout
97 Response to something 98-Down
99 Gymnastics team gear
101 Family business?
107 Scanner brand
108 More than necessary
109 Wind with keys
110 Unnamed others
112 Slimming procedure, for short
113 Gothic governess
115 Guesses from late guests, briefly
117 Lack of pep
121 "Hooked on Classics" record label
122 Nobody's business?
125 Make waterproof
126 Doomed, so to speak
127 Bryce Canyon National Park locale
128 Run the —
129 Couture monogram
130 Weasel relative
131 Okay
132 Kimberly of "Diary of a Mad Black Woman"

DOWN

- 1 Parliament member
2 "The African Queen" screenwriter James
3 Intercontinental mountain range
4 Second thoughts
5 Like one of the ace community
6 Service that's neither good nor bad?
7 Apple that comes in many colors
8 Lutelike instruments
9 Pump option
10 Lotion letters
11 Central Perk, e.g.
12 Biting
13 Compete in a poetry slam
14 Tool that resembles a "P"
15 "Fiddlesticks!"
16 Burger with a jingle listing its ingredients
17 Grumpy colleague

Last week's solution: "TV Infusion"



ASK AMY

Dear Amy: My mother recently died, and I'm expecting a relatively substantial inheritance from her.

My brother, also not living, has two adult children.

My mother originally told me she intended to halve the inheritance between my brother and me. After he died, she decided to pass her entire inheritance to me, giving nothing to her grandchildren (my brother's kids).

These granddaughters were good to her.

My beloved brother always believed in fairness, and to me my mother's favoritism is unacceptable.

I would like to take half of my inheritance and gradually give it to my two nieces so the gifts will stay under the legal limit to incur taxes.

The problem is that my control freak, anxiety-ridden husband of 40 years, who feels we need more money, has told me he wants to keep and invest it all, and to give a tiny amount to my sweet nieces.

He sees this as a financial issue of our "need," and feels it is generous to give anything to my nieces, but I view

it as my wanting to do right by my brother, who would be brokenhearted to know about the situation.

Your thoughts? LOVING AUNT

Dear Aunt: Before making any decisions, consult a financial planner with experience with inheritance in your state. My understanding is that (depending on where you live) inheritance, unlike other income, earnings or real estate, is not considered marital property, unless you commingle it by depositing the inheritance money into a joint account.

So let's assume that this is your money, and you have the right to spend it as you wish. If your husband inherits this money, he will have the right to use it as he wishes.

A financial advisor also can tell you if yours is a sound plan. It leaves half of this "substantial inheritance" for you to use as you want — or as your husband wants, if you choose to share.

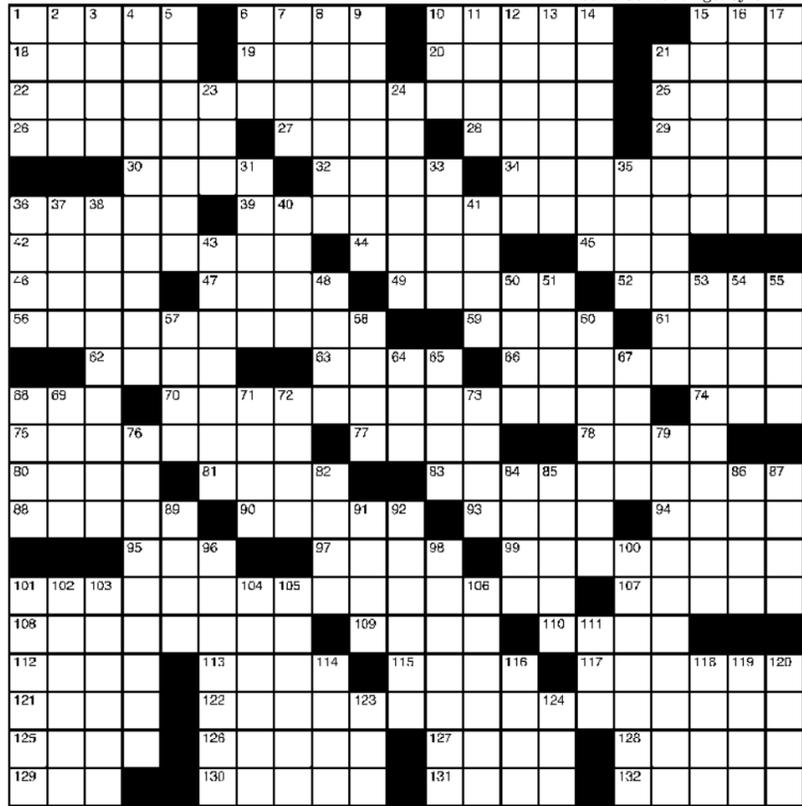
Email questions to Amy Dickinson at askamy@amydickinson.com.

- 21 Whitsunday, by another name
23 Seasoning for French fries?
24 North Sea work site
31 First part of many forms
33 Like many doilies
35 Vegan panna cotta ingredient
36 Lacking locks
37 Laptop using ChromeOS, maybe
38 "More to come"
40 Apt reply to "Does drei times drei equal acht?"
41 Brand with a Kids Tactical Vest Kit
43 Tiny outfits
48 What a journalist might bury, in jargon
50 Home of surfing's Triple Crown
51 Slew

- 53 Teakettles and referees, e.g.
54 Cake stand topper
55 Chuck, casually
57 What just isn't right?
58 Hoarse voice
60 Had a go at
64 ISP option
65 "Gimme —"
67 Nemo's forgetful friend
68 Squad-mate of Tlaib and Pressley
69 Islamic mystic
71 Easy gait
72 "H.R. wouldn't like this" warning
73 New Mexico art community
76 Glazed treat
79 Some recycling material
82 Rishi Sunak, for one
84 Algeria neighbor
85 To-be
86 Ctrl+Z action

- 87 Cap'n's deputy
89 Whole alternative
91 Slightly, on scores
92 Argentine grape
96 Sticks on
98 Laugh-out-loud funny
100 The first "T" in TMNT
101 Down-home
102 Offers with clickable RSVP's
103 Overturn
104 Pain relief brand with an oxymoronic name
105 Word with empty or veiled
106 Close by
111 Snarky syllable
114 Instead
116 Daycation destinations
118 "Rent" role
119 Promising notes
120 Pay to play
123 ABBR. on a copier tray
124 "Think so, eh?"

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POKER CHAD HOLLOWAY

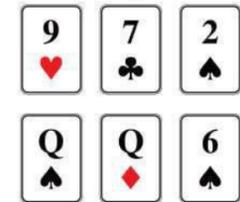
One of the best poker events to happen thus far in 2024 was the World Poker Tour Voyage, a poker festival hosted on Virgin VoyagesValiant Lady from Miami and down into the Bahamas. The flagship tournament of the series was a \$5,000 buy-in, \$1,000,000 GTD Main Event, followed by a \$1,100 buy-in WPT Prime Voyage Championship. It was in the latter tournament that I played a few hands that took me on a roller-coaster ride.

On Day 1b, which was a turbo flight that featured 20-minute levels, I had worked my 40,000 starting stack up to 103,000 in Level 12 (1,500/3,000/3,000), when I raised and poker pro Michael Wang three-bet me. I four-bet jammed, he called, and it was off to the races with my A♠ K♠ flipping against his Q♠ Q♥. Players use terms like against two overcards as mathematically it's always near a 50/50 proposition.

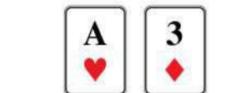
In that hand, the proverbial coin came down in my favor as the board ran out A♠ J♠ 2♠ J♠ 4♠ to give me a winning pair of aces.

In the very next hand, a

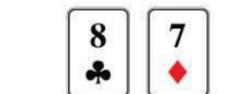
Flops:



Turns:



Rivers:



middle-position player raised to 10,000 and I just called from the big blind with the 9♠ 9♠. I then checked top set on the 9♥ 7♠ 2♠ flop and smooth called when my opponent bet 14,000.

On the A♥ turn, I checked for a second time

and then snap-called when the middle-position player moved all in for 43,000. The middle-position player was drawing dead with the K♠ 10♠ and I pulled in another nice pot when the 8♣ completed the board on the river.

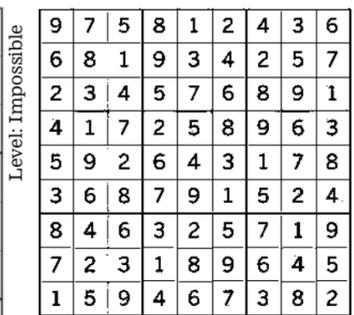
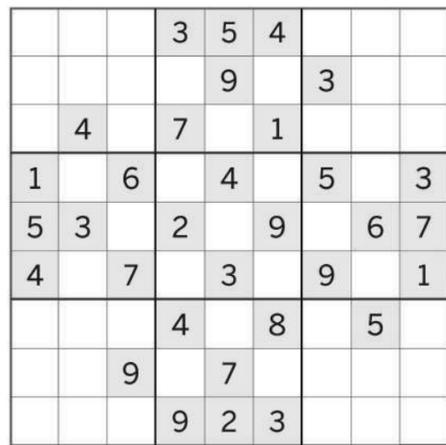
Unfortunately, that heater wore off and I lost a big flip with my ace-jack failing to get there against pocket tens. My stack dwindled and in Level 17 (5,000/10,000/10,000) I shoved my last 90,000 from the button with the K♥ 4♠ and was called by the K♠ Q♥ of Jeff Farnes in the big blind.

I was dominated and left drawing thin when the Q♠ Q♠ 6♠ flop gave Farnes trip queens. The 3♠ turn left me drawing dead and I was eliminated short of the money after the meaningless 7♠ was put out on the river.

My rush was fun while it lasted, but it was a stern reminder that no matter how hot the cards may seem in any given poker game, they can cool off at any time.

Holloway is a 2013 World Series of Poker bracelet winner.

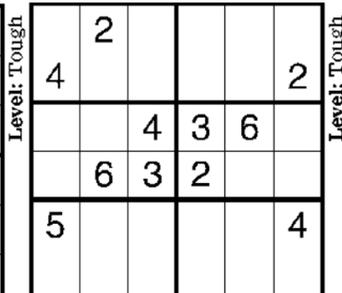
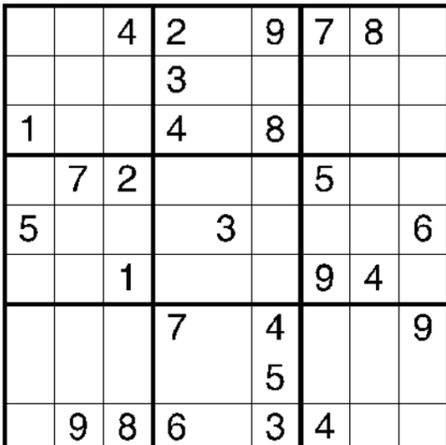
SUDOKU



Solution to last week's puzzle

More Online

For other brain-teasing challenges, go to latimes.com/games.



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Solutions to Saturday's puzzles

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 or 2-by-3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 6 for the smaller grid). For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk.



FoxTrot

by Bill Amend

WE THOUGHT WE'D GIVE DYNAMIC PRICING A TRY.

DANG! THE SUN'S BEHIND A CLOUD AGAIN!

JUMP START

Starring JOE & MARCY
By ROBB FRISKRONG

NO CONTAINER, CLARENCE? ANIMALS WILL GET INTO THOSE BAGS!

SOMEBODY STOLE MY TRASH CANS! YOU BELIEVE THAT, JOE?

YOU GONNA OPEN AN INVESTIGATION, OR WHAT?!

WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN STEALING YOUR TRASH CANS, CLARENCE?!

IT HAPPENED TO OWEN, TOO!

WHO IS THAT?!

OWEN JUST BOUGHT THE PLACE FOUR DOORS DOWN! DON'T YOU SEE?

DON'T I SEE WHAT?

THE PERP IS HITTING ADDRESSES WITH ODD NUMBERS!

IS THAT RIGHT?

YES! HIS PATTERN IS SO OBVIOUS!

STICK TO BEING AN ORTHODONTIST, CLARENCE.

IF YOU WON'T FOLLOW THESE LEADS, I WILL!

IN THE BLEACHERS By Steve Moore

WATCH OUT!

HE'S STEALING SECOND!

NON SEQUITUR By Wiley

DANG... SO-O-O CLOSE

CANDORVILLE By Darrin Bell

I'M SO TIRED OF FACEBOOK.

EVERYONE'S ALWAYS POSTING ABOUT THEIR LIVES.

AT FIRST IT WAS COOL: YOU COULD FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS' LIVES WITHOUT HAVING TO EVEN ASK THEM.

BUT AFTER A WHILE, THE "I DIDN'T ASK THEM" PART STARTED TO MAKE IT SEEM CREEPY.

AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO REMEMBERS WHEN FRIENDS USED TO ACTUALLY GREET EACH OTHER BEFORE TALKING ABOUT THEMSELVES?

WHEN DID "TOE TRANSPLANT WENT WELL" BECOME THE NEW "HI"?

YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO BE THIS CROTCHETY.

FRAZZ By Jef Mallett

SAME OLD SAME OLD, SAME OLD.

WHY DO WE DUMP ON MOVIE SEQUELS WHEN IT'S SO AWESOME TO REREAD A BOOK?

A FAIR QUESTION. A SEQUEL FEELS UNORIGINAL, BUT SOMEHOW THE EXACT SAME BOOK...

BUT IT'S NOT THE SAME BOOK.

OK, IT IS THE SAME BOOK, BUT I'M ALREADY NOT THE SAME PERSON.

SO THE PROBLEM WITH SEQUELS IS THAT THEY DO CHANGE?

MAYBE IT'S THAT THEY ASSUME I HAVEN'T.

Bizarro

AFTER THE OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE WON THE LOTTERY



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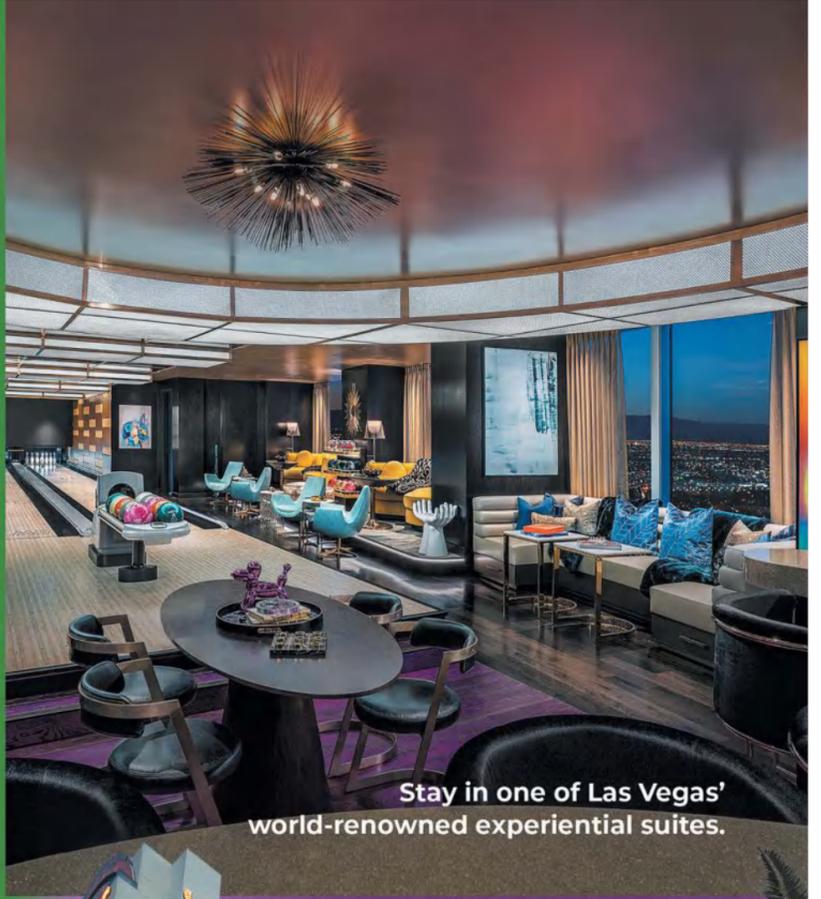
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- Best Hotel Lobby
- Best Rooms
- Best Suites
- Best Spa, The Spa & Salon
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- Best Carnival Games



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JAY LENO'S
 — PICK



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