



Photographs by MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

THE ARATINA Solar Project will involve the removal of 3,500 of the 4,700 Joshua trees on the site. The one above is 150 to 200 years old.

Killing Joshua trees to save planet?

Thousands of the protected species will be removed to make way for a solar project in Mojave Desert. Developers say its benefits will outweigh the loss.

By MELODY PETERSEN

BORON, Calif. — A renewable energy company will soon begin clearing thousands of protected Joshua trees just outside this desert town, including many thought to be a century old, to make way for a sprawling solar project that will generate power for 180,000 homes in wealthier coastal neighborhoods.

The 2,300-acre project has angered residents of Boron and nearby Desert Lake, two small Kern County towns where the poverty rate is twice the California average. Residents say their concerns about construction dust, as well as the destruction of the mostly pristine land that is habitat for endangered desert tortoises, have been



MELANIE RICHARDSON and other Boron residents are concerned that dust from construction of the solar farm will spread valley fever in their community.

ignored by the county and state officials who approved it.

“Let’s destroy the environment to save the environment. That seems to be the mentality,” said Deric English, who teaches at Boron Junior-Senior High School. “It’s hard to comprehend.”

English was part of a group that found the fungus that causes valley fever in samples of soil from the five parcels surrounding the two towns where the solar panels will be built.

“How are kids going to be able to play outside?” asked Melanie Richardson, a nurse who has sons at schools near the site. “So many people from our community were begging them not to approve this project, and they passed it regardless.”

The controversy over the [See **Joshua trees**, A10]

ANALYSIS

Mexico breaks a glass ceiling first

It’s no accident that the country managed to elect a woman as president before the U.S. and many others.

By KATE LINTHICUM AND PATRICK J. McDONNELL

MEXICO CITY — Mexico has elected its first female president — a U.S.-educated climate scientist and former mayor whose landslide victory Sunday reflects both the continued dominance of the country’s ruling party and the vast strides made by women in politics here.

That Mexico will have a female leader before the United States and the majority of other countries is no accident.

For years, Mexico has required political parties to ensure that female candidates make up at least 50% of all competitors in federal, state and municipal elections.

It has transformed politics: More than half of the members of Congress and nearly a third of governors are women, and women head the Supreme Court and the ministries of the interior, education, economy, public security and foreign relations.

Political scientists say female leaders have helped push some of Mexico’s most progressive policies, including a federal law that gives domestic workers the right to social security and the decriminalization of abortion by several states before the Supreme Court ruled last year that it should be allowed nationwide.

The election of Claudia Sheinbaum shatters the last glass ceiling in politics in a country where women were barred from voting until 1954, and where a culture of sexism and high rates of violence against women still [See **Mexico**, A4]

Skydance Media nearing deal for Paramount



EVAN AGOSTINI Invision/AP
DAVID ELLISON’S Skydance offer would keep Paramount intact.

Despite a sweetened offer, storied firm’s key shareholder has yet to approve, sources say.

By MEG JAMES

David Ellison’s Skydance Media is close to clearing a major hurdle in its pursuit of Paramount Global.

The media giant’s committee of independent board members has signaled its approval for Ellison’s take-

over of the storied company, according to four people familiar with the situation who were not authorized to comment.

Formal approval by Paramount’s special committee could come this week, one of the knowledgeable people said.

However, the Skydance deal is not entirely stitched up. It lacks the consent of Paramount’s controlling shareholder, Shari Redstone, sources said. Her support is key for any deal to move forward.

Representatives for Paramount were not immediately available to comment.

Redstone’s family owns 77% of the controlling shares of Paramount Global through its holding company National Amusements Inc., giving the heirs of Sumner Redstone enormous sway over the future of the struggling owner of Paramount Pictures, the CBS broadcast network, Comedy Central, MTV and Nickelodeon.

Complicating matters, as the Skydance sale process

has dragged on, Redstone has fielded interest from at least two other interested buyers for National Amusements.

Last week, Redstone was said to be mulling those offers, including one that was said to be higher than what Skydance and its partners had offered the Redstones. The Skydance proposal would give the Redstone family more than \$2 billion for National Amusements, including money to pay off its debts, [See **Paramount**, A7]



FERNANDO LLANO AP
“I DID NOT arrive alone,” said President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum in her acceptance speech.

Researching pet-to-person bird flu risk

The danger so far is low, but opportunities for infection are abundant

By SUSANNE RUST

When researchers talk about their biggest bird flu fears, one that typically comes up involves an animal — like a pig — becoming simultaneously infected with an avian and a human flu. This creature, now a viral mixing vessel, provides the

medium for a superbug to develop — one that takes the killer genes from the bird flu and combines it with the human variety’s knack for easy infection.

So far, domestic poultry and dairy cows have proved to be imperfect vessels. So too have the more than 48 other mammal species that have become infected by eat-

ing diseased birds and then died.

But researchers say there is one population of animal floating under the radar: pets. The risk may be low, but the opportunities for transmission are abundant.

“I think companion animals definitely need to be in the picture,” said Jane Sykes, professor of medicine

and epidemiology at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, describing the viewpoint that diseases such as H5N1 should be viewed from a human, animal and ecosystem lens. None operates in isolation.

She pointed to our furry friends’ penchant for eating dead things, other animals’ [See **Flu**, A7]

Heat dome to affect much of state

Triple-digit temperatures will broil many parts of California starting Tuesday. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Dodgers winning, but doubts persist

Pitching and bottom of the order remain unsettled, Dylan Hernández writes. **SPORTS, B10**

Weather

Partly sunny.
L.A. Basin: 78/61. **B6**

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Rubio’s shutters 48 restaurants

The chain confirms closures in California, citing business costs in the state. **BUSINESS, A6**

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PERSPECTIVES

Venezuelans eye exits as election looms

The prospect of yet another Maduro term is prompting many to make plans to leave.

By REGINA GARCIA CANO

SABANA DE MENDOZA, Venezuela — One of the most influential politicians in Venezuela once deemed images of his fellow citizens abandoning their home country the result of a professionally scripted, “Hollywood-type blockbuster.”

Migration, Diosdado Cabello said, was an issue conjured by a “media apparatus.” Similarly, his boss, President Nicolás Maduro, denied for years, at least publicly, that millions of people were literally walking away from Venezuela.

Nothing, however, could have pushed them out of denial and into acceptance faster than the existential threat that their self-described socialist government is facing for the first time in years.

As Maduro works toward reelection with a divided, diminished and disappointed base, he has slowly transformed into a defender for migrants, challenging news reports linking some to criminal activities and accusing immigration authorities in other countries of abusing Venezuelans.

Minds are made up

Maduro, like the chief opposition coalition, is promising job opportunities to entice people to return or not leave. But, unlike the opposition’s proposals, his no longer ring true for many voters, and they have already made up their minds: If Maduro wins on July 28, they will become migrants.

“I love Venezuela. I would like to pursue a medical career here, but one must think about the future,” said Arnaldo Benitez, 18. “I want my family to have a decent life and not be thinking ‘I can’t afford this or that.’ So, I have to plan for a better future even if it unfortunately means leaving Venezuela.”

Benitez, who finished high school last year, plans to move to Colombia, which has received the largest share of the more than



ARIANA CUBILLOS Associated Press

VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT Nicolás Maduro, who is running for another six-year term, greets supporters in Caracas on May 15.

7.7 million Venezuelans who have migrated since their country came undone last decade. He said other people in his rural community of Torococo are also waiting for the election outcome to decide whether to leave, but a group of 20 thought it best to not wait and left in early May.

A nationwide poll conducted in April by the Venezuela-based research firm Delphos showed that roughly a fourth of people are thinking about migration, primarily for economic reasons. Of those thinking about leaving Venezuela, about 47% said an electoral win by the opposition would make them stay and roughly the same amount indicated that an improved economy would also keep them in their home country.

Migration decisions are dominating conversations at malls, high schools and political rallies. Some people are saving whatever money they can and others are selling their belongings.

In the 11 years since President Hugo Chávez died and his handpicked successor, Maduro, took over, dropping oil prices, corruption and

government mismanagement have sent the country into a complex crisis, pushing people into poverty, hunger, poor health, crime, desperation and migration. Economic sanctions imposed last decade failed to topple Maduro, as the United States and other governments intended, but they contributed to the existing crisis.

In recent months, he accused news outlets of carrying out a campaign against Venezuelan migrants, accusing the media of “saying that all the crimes in the world today are committed by Venezuelans.”

‘Come back!’

“To Venezuelan migrants: We love you and our love makes us say, ‘Come back!’ We are waiting for you here, this is your land,” he said on state television in February. “Enough of xenophobia and persecution.”

Maduro is seeking to extend his presidency for six more years. Last year, he entered into an agreement with the U.S.-backed Unitary Platform opposition coalition to work toward improving conditions for a free and fair election. But he has since changed course as the meteoric rise of opposition leader Maria Corina Machado turned into a real threat to his reelection prospects, and he has used his ruling party’s control over all government institutions to tilt the balance.

The country’s top court in January affirmed an administrative decision blocking Machado’s candidacy. Her chosen substitute was barred from the ballot too. She and the coalition are now backing former diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia. Compared with Machado, who has campaigned for more than a year, few voters know González’s name or background, but Machado’s endorsement is enough for many to want to vote for him.

During his first campaign rally in mid-May, González asked supporters to imagine “a country in which our airports and borders would be filled with our children returning home” should he win.

Miguel Montilla, 53, a father of three, retired after 27 years in the armed forces but says he and his family cannot live off his roughly \$20 monthly pension. He said he will vote for González because he hopes the candidate will implement changes that spur economic development and convince two of his children to return to Venezuela, just as Machado has repeatedly promised on the campaign trail.

“I have lost my children

because they dropped out of college and migrated. I want them to come back and have a family life and a better future,” said Montilla, who has a small convenience store in Sabana de Mendoza. His eyes swelled at the thought of a family reunion, but after a few hopeful seconds, he considered the other possibility after the election.

“I better encourage my other son to leave if Maduro wins again. He has to leave,” Montilla said. “I might leave too.”

The Delphos poll showed that people between ages 18 and 34 were more likely to consider leaving Venezuela. The poll had a margin of error of 2 percentage points.

Colombia is wary

Colombia’s migration chief, Fernando García, told the country’s Congress in May that it “should expect a large influx of Venezuelan migrants” should Maduro win. The director of the Migration Colombia agency said a Maduro victory coupled with the recent decision by the U.S. government to end some sanctions relief for Venezuela would create the conditions that can lead to migration.

Most Venezuelan migrants have settled in other countries in Latin America or the Caribbean, but after the COVID-19 pandemic

eliminated millions of jobs across the region, they began setting their sights on the U.S.

Public employees these days earn a monthly minimum wage of \$3.60 plus \$130 in bonuses, while private-sector workers make on average \$210 a month. Neither is enough for a family to buy a basic basket of goods, which costs about \$380.

At a government-organized rally last month in the capital, Caracas, the low wages were the only reason cited by some high school students who acknowledged they are considering migrating. They dream about becoming engineers, owning businesses and caring for the sick, but all are willing to postpone or forget those goals.

Many students wore their uniforms, and some wore T-shirts backing Maduro, though they balked at offering verbal support for him. High school senior Jaxael Rivera and other public school students from across Caracas were bused in to the rally, which was eventually addressed by the president.

“I would need a good-paying job to stay,” said Rivera, who is planning to join his sister in Spain, where she has lived for two years.

Garcia Cano writes for the Associated Press.

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Trump’s strategy of denial and lack of remorse could hurt him at sentencing.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump has had plenty to say since his conviction last week.

He has claimed the hush money case was rigged, incorrectly linked President Biden to the state prosecution, called the star witness against him a “sleaze-bag” and said the judge was a “devil” and “highly conflicted.”

What he hasn’t done is utter any variation of the words that might benefit him most come sentencing time next month: “I’m sorry.”

It’s a truism of the criminal justice system that defendants hoping for lenient treatment at sentencing are expected to take responsibility for their actions, even express remorse. But that flies in the face of Trump’s longtime refusal to acknowledge any wrongdoing, a tone he often strikes to portray strength and present himself as a fighter under ceaseless attack.

Although the strategy may resonate with his most loyal supporters, it failed during his New York criminal trial and could complicate his legal team’s efforts to avoid a tough sentence.

“The fact, I think, that he has no remorse — quite the opposite, he continues to deny his guilt — is going to hurt him at sentencing,”



JULIA NIKHINSON Associated Press

SOME LEGAL experts say it would be inadvisable for Donald Trump to speak at his July 11 sentencing.

said Jeffrey Cohen, an associate professor at Boston College Law School and a former federal prosecutor in Massachusetts. “It’s one of the things that the judge can really point to that everybody is aware of — that he just denies this — and can use that as a strong basis for his sentence.”

Trump is set to be sentenced July 11 by Judge Juan M. Merchan, who raised the specter of jail time during the trial after the former president racked up thousands of dollars in fines for violating a gag order. The judge has been the target of Trump’s relentless ire.

The 34 felony counts of falsifying business records are punishable by up to four years in prison. It’s unclear whether prosecutors intend to seek imprisonment — Manhattan Dist. Atty. Alvin Bragg dodged the question Thursday — or whether Merchan would sentence Trump to jail time if that is indeed the recommendation.

As part of a rambling broadside against the case, Trump has sought to downplay concerns about his sentence, saying in a “Fox & Friends” interview that aired Sunday that he was “OK” with the prospect of imprisonment or home confinement.

“I saw one of my lawyers the other day on television saying, ‘Oh, no, you don’t want to do that’ ” to a former president, Trump said. “I said, don’t, you know, beg for anything. It’s just the way it is.”

He will have the option to address the judge at his sentencing hearing, though he is not required to do so, and some legal experts have said it would be inadvisable for him to speak.

Trump did not testify in his own defense at the trial, a strategy he later suggested had to do with concerns that prosecutors would try to catch him in a trivial falsehood.

“If he turns around and blames the court, attacks

prosecutors, decries this as a witch hunt, lies — you should have no misgiving: There will be consequences, and there should be consequences,” said Jeremy Saland, a former assistant district attorney in Manhattan.

In addition, Trump’s constant attacks on the prosecutors, judge and court system and his aggressive trial strategy — outright denying claims of an extramarital affair with adult film actor Stormy Daniels and involvement in the subsequent scheme to buy her silence — would make any change of tune at his sentencing seem disingenuous.

“I don’t see any real benefit of him speaking at sentencing, because even if he did say something, he’s saying the exact opposite outside the courtroom, and the judge is not unaware of that,” Cohen said.

To be sure, there are multiple factors that could tilt against a prison sentence — Trump’s apparent lack of contrition notwithstanding. Merchan could conclude, for instance, that there’s a societal interest against having a former, and potentially future, president in jail.

“Sometimes as a judge and a prosecutor, you have to look at the proverbial scoreboard and say, ‘That’s enough.’ And that scoreboard here is a permanent brand that you’d see on the side of cattle of a big, fat ‘F’ for felony,” Saland said.

“It is far worse than any scarlet letter could ever be,” he added. “And no matter what he says, no matter how he spins it, no matter if it’s a day in jail or not, he will always be a convicted felon. Period.”



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Los Angeles Times

THE WORLD

Front-runner emerges in Iran’s presidential race

By JON GAMBRELL

DUBAI — Iran’s hard-line speaker of the parliament emerged Monday as the most prominent candidate from within the Shiite theocracy to replace President Ebrahim Raisi, who was killed in a helicopter crash last month, in the June 28 election.

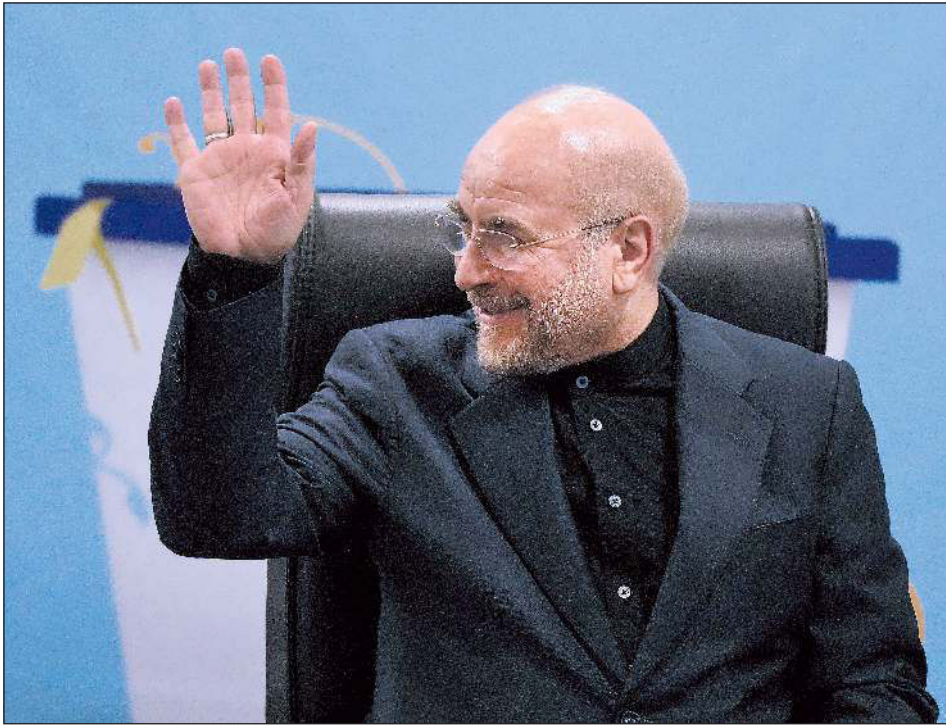
Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, a former Tehran mayor with close ties to the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, catapulted to the front of the candidates just a day after hard-line former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad registered his bid for the presidency.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gave a speech earlier Monday in which he alluded to qualities that Qalibaf has highlighted, potentially signaling support for the speaker.

However, many know Qalibaf as a former Revolutionary Guard general who was part of a violent crackdown on Iranian university students in 1999. He also reportedly ordered live gunfire to be used against students in 2003, while serving as the country’s police chief.

Those events could play into an election that follows years of unrest over an ailing economy and mass protests in 2022 over the fate of Mahsa Amini, who died after being arrested for allegedly not wearing her headscarf, or hijab, to the liking of security forces.

The election comes at a



VAHID SALEMI Associated Press

THE HARD-LINE speaker of Iran’s parliament, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, registered Monday as a candidate in the June 28 presidential election.

time of heightened tensions between Iran and the West over Tehran’s rapidly advancing nuclear program, crackdowns on dissent and the arming of Russia in the war against Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Iran’s support of militia proxy forces throughout the Middle East have been increasingly in the spotlight as Yemen’s Houthi rebels attack ships in the Red Sea over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

Qalibaf, 62, registered his candidacy with the

Interior Ministry in front of a crowd of journalists Monday. Speaking later to the media, he said he would continue on the same path as Raisi and the late Guard Gen. Qassem Suleimani, a figure revered by many in Iran after he was killed in 2020 by a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad.

Qalibaf insisted that he would not allow “another round of mismanagement” in Iran and mentioned poverty and price pressures as the country strains under international sanctions.

“If I didn’t register, the work we have started for resolving economic issues of the people in the popular government [of Raisi] and the revolutionary parliament, and is now at the stage of fruition, would remain unfinished,” Qalibaf said.

It remains unclear what those plans would entail as Iran’s currency, the rial, continues to spiral and again approaches a rate of 600,000 to the U.S. dollar. The currency was trading at 32,000 to the dollar when Tehran signed the 2015 nuclear accord with world powers.

Like other candidates, Qalibaf stayed away from directly discussing the tattered nuclear deal — or the recent comments by officials that Iran could seek the atomic bomb. Such matters of state remain the final decision of Khamenei, 85,

but presidents in the past have leaned toward either engagement or confrontation with the West.

Along with Ahmadinejad, another former parliament speaker, Ali Larijani, and former Iranian Central Bank chief Abdolnasser Hemmati, who also ran in 2021, have registered for the June ballot.

Eshaq Jahangiri, a former vice president under moderate President Hassan Rouhani, whose administration reached the nuclear deal, has also registered.

Acting President Mohammad Mokhber, who took over after Raisi’s death, apparently did not register despite being seen with Khamenei in recent meetings.

Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said “about 80” hopefuls registered during the five days allotted.

The 12-member Guardian Council, a panel of clerics and jurists overseen by Khamenei, will decide on a final candidate list by June 12.

The panel has never accepted a woman or anyone calling for radical change to the country’s governance. Ahmadinejad, who increasingly challenged Khamenei toward the end of his term and is remembered for the bloody crackdown on the 2009 Green Movement protests, was disqualified by the panel in the last election.

Qalibaf ran unsuccessfully for president in 2005 and 2013. He withdrew from the 2017 campaign to support Raisi in a failed presidential bid.

Raisi won the 2021 presidential election, which had the lowest turnout ever in Iran, after every major opponent was disqualified.

A trained pilot, Qalibaf served in the paramilitary Guard during the country’s bloody war with Iraq in the 1980s. After the conflict, he

served as head of the Guard’s construction arm, Khatam al-Anbia, for several years, leading efforts to rebuild.

Qalibaf then served as head of the Guard’s air force.

In 1999, he co-signed a letter to reformist President Mohammad Khatami amid student protests in Tehran over the government’s closing of a reformist newspaper and a subsequent crackdown by security forces. The letter warned Khatami that the Guard would take action unilaterally unless he agreed to put down the demonstrations.

Violence around the protests saw several people killed, hundreds wounded and thousands arrested.

Qalibaf then served as head of Iran’s police, modernizing the force and implementing the 110 emergency phone number. But a leaked recording of a meeting between Qalibaf and members of the Guard’s volunteer Basij force featured him claiming that he had ordered the use of gunfire against demonstrators in 2003, as well as praising the violence used against the 2009 protests.

In comments Monday morning before Qalibaf registered, Khamenei said Iran needs a president who is “active, hardworking, attentive and loyal to the basics” of the 1979 Islamic Revolution — a statement Qalibaf later echoed.

“Concerns about the future of the country was a reason that the elites and entrepreneurs invited me to run in the election,” Qalibaf said. “Who else can take responsibility for finishing jobs in this situation?”

Gambrell writes for the Associated Press. AP writer Nasser Karimi in Tehran contributed to this report.



ABDEL KAREEM HANA Associated Press

MOURNERS GATHER for the funeral of seven Palestinians, including three children, killed by Israeli bombardment on Friday in Deir al Balah, Gaza Strip.

‘State of Palestine’ seeks to join case against Israel

ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE HAGUE — Palestinian officials applied on behalf of the “State of Palestine” at the top U.N. court for permission to join South Africa’s case accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza.

The request, published Monday, says that Israel’s ongoing military operation is “part of a systematic effort to wipe Palestinian society and its culture and social institutions from the map.” The request to the International Court of Justice was signed by Palestinian Authority Foreign Ministry official Ammar Hijazi.

South Africa filed its case with the world court late last year accusing Israel of breaching the Genocide Convention in its military assault that has laid waste to large swaths of the Gaza Strip. Israel denies it is committing genocide in its military operation to crush Hamas over the militant group’s deadly Oct. 7 attacks in southern Israel.

The court has issued three preliminary orders in the case calling on Israel to do all it can to prevent deaths in the enclave, ramp up humanitarian aid and, most recently, halt its offensive in Rafah.

It is unclear how long the court’s judges will take to rule on the request. If granted, Palestinian officials will be able to address the court in writing and during public hearings.

In their request, the Palestinians said they are directly affected by the case.

“The Israeli onslaught has obliterated and damaged, beyond recognition, Gaza’s hospitals, mosques, churches, universities, schools, homes, shops, and infrastructure, as part of a systematic effort to wipe Palestinian society and its culture and social institutions from the map,” the request says.

The request adds that Israel is violating the court’s orders and continuing with “its genocidal acts including deliberately and systematically impeding humanitarian aid, resulting in an intentionally engineered situation of starvation and a creeping famine that is increasingly imminent.”

The Palestinians have been to the United Nations court before. In 2018, the Palestinian Authority filed a case asking its judges to order the United States to remove its relocated embassy from Jerusalem. The case followed the Trump administration’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and to move the U.S. Embassy there from Tel Aviv.

That case remains before the court, where cases can take years to resolve.

Meanwhile in central Gaza, Israeli strikes killed 11 people overnight into Monday, including a woman and three children, Palestinian health officials said.

A strike on a home in the Bureij refugee camp late Sunday killed four people, including the three children. A second strike early Monday killed seven people, including a woman, in the Nu-

seirat refugee camp.

The bombardments come days after President Biden said Israel has offered Hamas a three-phase ceasefire and hostage release deal, declaring that it was time to end the fighting in Gaza and that Hamas is “no longer capable” of carrying out another large-scale attack on Israel.

Israel is expanding its offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, once the main hub of humanitarian aid operations. The Israeli invasion has largely cut off the flow of food, medicine and other supplies to Palestinians facing widespread hunger.

Israel faces growing international criticism over the huge cost in civilian lives and the widespread destruction caused by its nearly eight-month war with Hamas.

Israeli bombardments and ground operations in the territory have killed more than 36,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians.

Israel launched its war in Gaza after Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack, in which militants stormed into southern Israel, killed about 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducted about 250. Israel says around 100 hostages are still held in Gaza, along with the bodies of about 30 more.

On Monday, Israel confirmed the deaths of four more hostages, including three elderly men seen in a Hamas video begging for their release.

Power is cut amid Nigeria strikes

Workers shut down the national grid as unions call for higher minimum wage.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GOMBE, Nigeria — Africa’s most populous country ground to a halt Monday, with electricity cut and major airports closed, as Nigeria’s largest labor unions began striking to demand a salary increase amid the worst cost-of-living crisis in decades.

President Bola Tinubu’s economic reforms — including ending fuel subsidies — have resulted in surging inflation that is at a 28-year high.

In this latest strike, the fourth since Tinubu came to power a year ago, workers shut down the national electricity grid and drove away operators at a key transmission station, the Transmission Co. of Nigeria said, adding that other workers sent to restore power were blocked.

Elsewhere, government workers either failed to show up or shut down entrances to offices, including at airports in the capital, Abuja, and the economic hub, Lagos. Hundreds of passengers were stranded after local airlines suspended flight operations.

All aviation workers should stay away “until further notice,” their association said.

“We demand a living wage,” the Nigerian Labor Congress said on the social platform X, describing what they currently earn as “starvation wage.” It and the Trade Union Congress represent hundreds of thousands of government workers across key sectors.

The unions want the current minimum monthly wage of 30,000 naira (\$20) to be increased to nearly 500,000 naira (\$336). The government offers 60,000 naira (\$40).

The unions’ demand would increase the government wage bill by \$6.3 billion, which is capable of “destabilizing the economy,” Infor-

mation Minister Mohammed Idris has said.

Analysts have warned that a minimum monthly wage of nearly \$336 is not sustainable for Nigeria’s states, most of which struggle to pay salaries.

“It is one thing to sign [the new wage bill], but it is another thing for you to be able to sustain it,” said Muda Yusuf, head of the Nigeria Center for Promotion of Private Enterprise.

The labor unions defend their demands by pointing to the expensive lifestyle of Nigeria’s public officials.

After Nigeria’s president ended the decades-long but costly fuel subsidies on his first day in office, the price of gas more than doubled in one of Africa’s biggest oil producers. Prices for public transportation and commodities soared.

Tinubu’s government also devalued the currency to encourage foreign investment, which further increased prices of basic commodities in the import-dependent country of more than 210 million people.

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Mexico breaks glass ceiling, beating U.S.

[Mexico, from A1] prevail.

“In 200 years of the Mexican republic, I have become the first woman president,” Sheinbaum, 61, told supporters in her acceptance speech Sunday night, describing her win as a victory for all women.

“I did not arrive alone,” she said. “We all arrived.”

She is set to be sworn in Oct. 1, taking the helm of a prosperous but polarized nation beset by widespread gang violence.

Sheinbaum has vowed to continue the path cut by outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a populist widely known as AMLO who helped slash poverty by doubling the minimum wage and expanding the country’s welfare system while giving extraordinary new powers to the military and failing to halt cartel violence.

She backs some of his most divisive proposals, including a series of constitutional changes that critics worry would erode democratic checks and balances.

Her extraordinary margin of victory — she won more than twice as many votes as her main competitor — was largely seen as a vote of confidence for López Obrador and the party he founded, Morena.

But how Sheinbaum will navigate his long shadow is already the central question of her presidency. López Obrador has vowed to retire from politics, but many wonder whether he will find a way to remain in the fray that has animated his entire adult life.

Sheinbaum, for her part, has dismissed as sexist the implication that she will be the former president’s puppet. “There’s a hint of misogyny, of machismo there,” she said in one interview.

Veteran Mexican journalist Jorge Zepeda Patterson suggested that Sheinbaum is up against a lot.

“The generals, the union leaders, the party leaders, the managers of the business chambers ... are not only men, they operate culturally with patriarchal codes,” he wrote in the Spanish newspaper El País.

Sheinbaum owes her political career to López Obrador, who was mayor of Mexico City when he plucked the then-university professor out of academic obscurity and named her his secretary of environment.

He then encouraged successive electoral bids that catapulted Sheinbaum to his former post as the capi-



SUPPORTERS of President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum celebrate early Monday in Mexico City’s Zócalo after the historic election. MARCO UGARTE Associated Press

tal’s mayor and, now, to succeed him as president.

Sheinbaum’s standard campaign stump speech routinely refers to her tutor in all things political as Mexico’s “greatest president” ever. She borrows his slogan promising to “put the poor first.”

“It’s hard to believe” that López Obrador will stay completely away from politics, said Lila Abed, acting director of the Mexico Institute at the Wilson Center in Washington. “But he will probably allow [Sheinbaum] to stake out her own stands on certain issues.”

One is energy policy. López Obrador has invested billions of dollars in refinery projects and in propping up the plodding state oil giant, Pemex.

When asked about how her policies may differ, Sheinbaum inevitably refers generally to her scientific background, which includes a doctorate in environmental engineering and four years of study at the Lawrence Berkeley National

Laboratory in California.

“I am a scientist, I have always worked for renewable sources of energy,” she said in an interview last year with the Los Angeles Times. “I am a woman. I believe in scientific development as part of national progress.”

Her adherence to science was evident from the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic as López Obrador defied social distance recommendations and toured the country — pressing the flesh with admirers, hugging and kissing supporters and urging his compatriots to keep eating in restaurants.

Sheinbaum, who at the time was mayor of Mexico City, was one of several insiders credited with working behind the scenes to persuade the president to reverse course and embrace mask-wearing and more caution.

“She urged people to wear masks, she closed the city and favored social distancing at a time when AMLO was saying the contrary,” Abed said.

Experts said Sheinbaum is also likely take a more pronounced stand than her predecessor on gender issues — an area that activists routinely accused López Obrador of neglecting.

Their criticism has often extended to Sheinbaum as well, though she did speak out against violence against women and the grim statistic that an average of 10 women are killed every day.

In 2022, she pushed for the arrest and prosecution of the alleged killers in one of the country’s most high-profile cases: the slaying of Ariadna Fernanda López Ruiz, whose battered body was found dumped on a highway outside the capital. Sheinbaum alleged a cover-up on the part of a state prosecutor, who was later charged in the case.

Early returns suggested that Sheinbaum captured a broader share of the vote than any candidate in decades.

As of Monday afternoon, she was winning with 59% of the vote compared with 28%

for her closest rival, Xóchitl Gálvez Ruiz, a former senator on a ticket with a coalition of opposition parties largely united against López Obrador.

With two women front-runners, it was clear for months that Mexico would elect a female president.

Many credited the work of activists that resulted in gender quotas, an effort that dates to the country’s transition to democracy.

After more than seven decades of domination by the Institutional Revolutionary Party, politicians began rewriting laws in the 1990s to make elections more fair. Feminist activists saw an opening.

Lawmakers first set a mandatory 30% quota for female candidates in the 2003 elections and later raised the threshold to 40% for the 2009 vote.

For a while, parties tried to evade the requirements, running women in losing districts or making backroom deals so female candidates would resign once elected

and cede their positions to men.

In response, female politicians from across the ideological spectrum formed a coalition to push back, taking parties to court and pressing election officials to strengthen the quota rules.

Fewer than a third of the member states of the United Nations have ever had a female leader, according to a Pew Research Center analysis.

Jennifer Piscopo, a professor of gender and politics at the University of London who studies Mexico, said her research shows that having women in office shapes not only policy but also culture.

“Even if all forms of gender equality are not solved, I think it matters that now there won’t be any little girl in Mexico who thinks a woman can’t be president,” she said.

Cecilia Sánchez Vidal in The Times’ Mexico City bureau contributed to this report.

Death highlights chaos, squalor in Italy’s migrant jails

The suicide of a young man from Guinea who suffered mental illness shines a light on conditions.

By PAOLO SANTALUCIA, GIADA ZAMPANO, ANNIE RISEMBERG AND BOUBACAR DIALLO

ROME — It was still dark and quiet outside when Ousmane Sylla had his last prayer in the courtyard of an Italian migrant jail.

A few moments later, the silence of dawn was shattered. Chaos took over the detention and deportation center of Ponte Galeria on the outskirts of Rome. The 21-year-old Guinean had been found dead in an apparent suicide.

Fellow detainees who discovered his body screamed for help and frantically tried to resuscitate him. When paramedics finally arrived, Sylla was gone. Enraged by his death, migrants set mattresses on fire, broke down doors and threw stones at security forces inside the prison. The riots led to the arrest of 13 people.

Sylla’s death in February shined a spotlight on the conditions inside these de facto jails for migrants, raising questions about Italy’s migration policy as its government, led by far-right Premier Giorgia Meloni, vowed to build more such facilities across the country as well as abroad.

The detention and deportation centers were established in 1999; lawyers and activists have described them as “black holes for human rights.” The Italian gov-



DETAINEES gather in an open area of the Ponte Galeria center on the outskirts of Rome, one of the facilities created in Italy to hold migrants before repatriation. ANDREW MEDICHINI Associated Press

ernment says they are essential to deterring migrants such as Sylla from crossing the Mediterranean on smugglers’ boats.

Sylla’s journey from the West African nation of Guinea to Italy began in 2022. One of seven children, he dropped out of school during the COVID-19 pandemic. He learned masonry, but his real passion was singing. Sylla posted videos of himself on TikTok rhyming and gesturing like a rapper.

“His dream was to become a big star, that everyone would say his name, and he would sing for everyone,” his older sister, Mariama Sylla, said from the family’s modest house in the outskirts of the capital, Conakry.

To get to Europe, Sylla crossed the Sahara through Mali, Algeria and Tunisia. He made his way to the Tunisian coast, where smugglers move thousands of migrants from northern Africa to Europe on rickety boats. This central Mediterranean route is known as one of the deadliest migration crossings in the world; more than 2,500 people died or went missing last year alone.

After nearly drowning in the Mediterranean, Sylla finally reached the Italian island of Lampedusa on July 29, 2023.

Sylla was trying to join his older brother, who lives in France. But when he reached the border town of Ventimiglia on Aug. 9, 2023,

he was rejected by French authorities. After lying about his age in hopes that it would increase his chance of getting residency, Sylla was sent south, to a center for underage migrants in the town of Cassino.

But the place was violent and dysfunctional, his brother and witnesses told the Associated Press. During his time in Cassino, Sylla told them he was repeatedly beaten up by other migrants.

According to witnesses working at the center, the facility lacked basic services such as proper clothing, psychological support and interpreters. Food deliveries, pocket money and mobile data cards were scarce.

On Oct. 13, Sylla received

an order expelling him from the country. One day later, he was transferred to a detention and deportation center in Trapani, the first of two migrant jails where he would spend the last four months of his life, according to Dario Asta, a lawyer who assisted Sylla.

Giuseppe Caradonna, another lawyer who tried to help Sylla, said that’s when a psychologist first flagged his mental health issues.

Caradonna informed local authorities on Nov. 14 that Sylla’s mental and physical conditions made him unfit for detention and requested his transfer to a specialized facility.

But the transfer request was denied and on Jan. 5 a judge ordered him held for three more months.

A fellow migrant detainee from Guinea-Bissau said that Sylla was taking daily medication provided by a doctor at the Trapani facility. In late January, when a riot broke out in the center, burning most of it, both of them were transferred to the Ponte Galeria detention center near Rome.

As Sylla boarded the bus that would transfer him, a doctor handed him his case file, urging him to show it to staff at the new center so he could get proper care.

But there is no evidence that the file was ever seen by any professional at the Rome detention center, and Sylla was never seen by the center’s psychologist. The center, managed by an international detention and reception company called ORS, wouldn’t comment on Sylla’s treatment, but the contract confirmed they had a responsibility to provide psychological care to detainees.

Four days later, the young man took his own life.

Italy has 10 such migrant jails across the country with a capacity to hold 700 foreigners under administrative detention at any one time. Two of them, including Trapani’s, are closed for upgrades.

In theory, the aim of the centers is deportation. But according to Interior Ministry data, only 52% of migrants in detention centers are successfully expelled. The rest are eventually released with a self-expulsion order, unable to work or regularize their situation. Many fall into the underground economy or become prey to criminal groups.

Rights groups and human rights lawyers have for years denounced and documented squalid conditions inside the migrant prisons, including the lack of adequate health services, overprescription of psychiatric drugs to keep detainees sedated, and limited access by their lawyers and relatives.

From 2019 to 2024, 13 people had died — five by suicide — inside Italy’s detention centers, which also registered hundreds of suicide attempts and self-harm episodes.

Sylla’s relatives blame the Italian government for his death.

“I am so, so angry at them!” Mariama Sylla told the AP shortly after his burial in Conakry. “What they’ve done to my little brother, they abandoned him like he’s not a human being. I’m furious.”

Associated Press writers Santalucia and Zampano reported from Rome and Risemberg and Diallo from Conakry, Guinea.

THE NATION

Puerto Rico’s governor loses primary bid

Island’s congressional member wins in upset, as voters struggle with 2017 storm’s effects.

By Danica Coto

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Puerto Rico congressional representative Jennifer González defeated Gov. Pedro Pierluisi in a surprise upset during a primary election held Sunday by their pro-statehood party.

The two ran on the same ticket four years ago under the New Progressive Party, but González, a Republican, announced her plan to challenge Pierluisi, a Democrat, in early December. Public jabs between the two turned acrimonious during the campaign.

Puerto Rico’s main political parties are divided by the island’s political status, so it’s common to find both Republicans and Democrats within the same party.

“What happened is very painful, and I didn’t expect it, but let no one think that I’m going to slow down in the remainder of this four-year period,” Pierluisi said late Sunday as he congratulated González.

He addressed his supporters briefly as González celebrated with hers while results continued to trickle in.

González obtained 56% of the vote compared with Pierluisi’s 44%, with an estimated tens of thousands of votes still uncounted. She is the first female gubernatorial candidate to secure a primary win for the New Progressive Party.

“Positions do not belong to politicians ... they belong to the people,” González said during a speech shortly



ANDREW HARNIK Associated Press

JENNIFER González and other gubernatorial candidates face voters still dealing with outages and reconstruction years after Hurricane Maria struck in 2017.

after Pierluisi conceded. “I commit to being on the streets, to listen to people.”

As of Monday, Puerto Rico’s elections commission had not yet provided updated numbers and was still counting votes.

Running with González for the position of resident commissioner is senior U.S. naval military officer Elmer Román, a former secretary of state for Puerto Rico, while Puerto Rico Sen. William Villafaña is seeking the position under Pierluisi. On Monday, Villafaña had secured 53% of the votes and Román 47%, with 80% of voting centers reporting.

Earlier Sunday, Puerto Rico Rep. Jesús Manuel Ortiz defeated Sen. Juan Zaragoza in the primary held by their Popular Democratic Party, which backs the island’s territorial status and seeks a return to power in the upcoming general

elections.

Zaragoza conceded defeat after obtaining 38% of the votes compared with Ortiz’s 62%, even though only a little more than 60% of the votes had been counted.

Attorney Pablo José Hernández ran unopposed to be the Popular Democratic Party’s candidate for resident commissioner, the first person in 20 years to seek that nomination.

As results came in late Sunday, the page of Puerto Rico’s elections commission crashed, frustrating many who were closely following the primaries. Officials said they were rushing to fix the problem, saying they did not know what caused it but that U.S. Homeland Security and other agencies were helping.

“If it were necessary to activate the FBI given the situation, we will do it,” said Jessika Padilla, the commis-

sion’s alternate president.

Ortiz, González and other candidates face disgruntled voters on an island still struggling with chronic power outages and awaiting completion of reconstruction projects after Hurricane Maria, which hit as a Category 4 storm in September 2017.

Power outages were reported at more than a dozen voting centers, including one where Ortiz arrived to cast his vote, forcing officials to revert to a manual process. Heavy rain also pelted parts of the island, with flood warnings issued for nearly a dozen towns and cities where landslides also were reported.

Power outages were such a big concern that Puerto Rico’s elections commission rented more than a dozen generators and a private power company identified 81 alternative voting sites with guaranteed electricity.

“It’s been years since I last voted,” said Benito López, a 66-year-old retiree wearing a T-shirt that read, “The Island of Enchant-

ment.” He planned to cast a vote for a candidate he would not disclose “to see if there’s any improvement and change.”

Other voter complaints include the difficulty of obtaining business permits, a fractured education system, and the island’s lack of access to capital markets after the local government emerged two years ago from the largest debt restructuring in U.S. history.

Meanwhile, more than \$9 billion of debt owed by Puerto Rico’s power company, the largest of any government agency, remains unresolved. A federal judge overseeing a bankruptcy-like process has yet to rule on a restructuring plan after bitter negotiations between the government and bondholders.

“They have broken Puerto Rico,” Cecilio Rodríguez said of the current and previous administrations as he waited to cast his vote. “Economic development must be a priority.”

For other voters, stopping the exodus of doctors from Puerto Rico and improving the U.S. territory’s crumbling health system are priorities.

“The patients are the ones who have to stay here and endure this. It’s not fair,” said Dr. Alfredo Rivera Freytes, an anesthesiologist who left Puerto Rico for St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands because of the problems with Puerto Rico’s health system.

He returned two years ago with plans to retire, but found himself working again because of the need for anesthesiologists in Puerto Rico.

Ahead of the primaries, Pierluisi had touted record tourist numbers, hurricane reconstruction and growing economic development among his successes. He had pledged to prioritize projects focusing on children and the island’s growing elderly population, among other things.

An event marking the end of his campaign held a week before the primaries was headlined by former Gov. Ricardo Rosselló, who resigned in August 2019 after nearly two weeks of street protests touched off by a leak of crude and insulting chat messages between him and his top advisors.

González has pledged to crack down on corruption, award more funds to agencies to help victims of violence amid a surge in killings of women, and stem an exodus of doctors and other medical workers to the U.S. mainland.

González appealed to voters’ frustration earlier Sunday before her victory, saying she would work to resolve their problems.

“That’s one of the reasons why I’m aspiring to governorship, because I believe that we should not get used to not having electricity, we should not get used to not having water,” she said.

Zaragoza had promised to prioritize climate change and renewable energy, decentralize the island’s education department and improve access to health.

His opponent, Ortiz, pledged to improve the licensing process to retain doctors, simplify the island’s tax system and revamp healthcare.

González and Ortiz will face gubernatorial candidates from other parties in November’s general elections. Puerto Rico’s next governor will have to work alongside a federal control board that oversees the island’s finances and was created after the government declared bankruptcy.

Ahead of Sunday’s primaries, more than 4,900 inmates voted in prisons across the U.S. territory. The State Commission of Elections also received and counted tens of thousands of early ballots.

Coto writes for the Associated Press.

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee being treated for pancreatic cancer

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee announced that she has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and is undergoing treatment.

The 74-year-old Texas Democrat, who is seeking a 16th term, said in a statement late Sunday that as a member of Congress, she has been honored to be a leader in the fight for justice and equality and will approach this more personal fight with faith and courage.

“I am confident that my doctors have developed the best possible plan to target my specific disease,” Jack-



STEPHANIE SCARBROUGH AP

THE TEXAS Democrat is seeking a 16th term.

son Lee said. “The road ahead will not be easy, but I stand in faith that God will strengthen me.”

Jackson Lee said that it’s

likely that she will be absent from Congress occasionally as she pursues treatment, but that her office will continue to serve constituents. She said she is committed to working with congressional leadership to be present for votes.

She first took office in 1995 and won the Democratic nomination in March, just months after losing a bid to become Houston’s mayor. She had sought to be the first Black female mayor of the nation’s fourth-largest city.

Jackson Lee’s district includes downtown Houston and some of the city’s historically Black neighborhoods.

Harris to attend Swiss summit

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Vice President Kamala Harris will represent the U.S. at this month’s Swiss-organized global peace summit on the war in Ukraine, an event promoted by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The White House said Harris would attend the June 15 meeting in Lucerne. President Biden is scheduled to be at a campaign fundraiser in Los Angeles

hosted by actors George Clooney and Julia Roberts.

“The vice president will underscore the Biden-Harris administration’s commitment to supporting Ukraine’s effort to secure a just and lasting peace, based on Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity” and the principles of the U.N. charter, said her communications director, Kirsten Allen. She said Harris will also “reaffirm support for the people of Ukraine as they defend themselves against

ongoing Russian aggression.”

Biden’s national security advisor, Jake Sullivan, will join Harris as part of the U.S. delegation.

Zelensky has heavily boosted the summit and encouraged world leaders to attend, even as he’s accused Russia, with China’s help, of trying to undermine the meeting. On Monday, Zelensky met with the Philippine president in a rare Asian trip to urge regional leaders to attend the summit.



CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

VICE PRESIDENT Kamala Harris will represent the U.S. at a summit on the war in Ukraine, an event promoted by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

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Rubio's shuts down 48 restaurants in California

Fish taco chain cites rising costs for the move. Eighty-six outlets remain open.

BY DON LEE

It was a food concept that had Southern California written all over it.

As a college student in San Diego, Ralph Rubio discovered fish tacos while on spring break in Baja California. And in 1983 he opened a modest walk-up stand, helping popularize fish tacos in the country and seeing his business, known over the last decade as Rubio's Coastal Grill, grow to about 200 restaurants in California and several other states.

But the pandemic slammed the company, prompting it to shut down restaurants in Florida and Colorado.

Rubio's also has been struggling under the shadow of Mexican restaurant giant Chipotle in the hyper-competitive segment known as fast casual. And then there were the costs: rising food prices and increasing worker wages.

On Monday, Rubio's confirmed that it had closed 48 of its California restaurants on Friday — more than a third of its already slimmed-down chain of 134 restaurants.

Rubio's, in a statement Monday issued by media strategist Sitrick & Co., attributed the closings to the rising cost of doing business in California.



A RUBIO'S Coastal Grill in Los Angeles. The chain, which started in San Diego and grew to about 200 locations in several states, was hurt by the pandemic, competition from Chipotle and rising food and labor costs.

The company did not elaborate on the closures, which stunned some workers, but said they were “underperforming.” The move came two months after the state's \$20 an hour minimum wage took effect for fast-food employees.

The company statement

said the decision came after a “thorough review of its operations and the current business climate.” A Sitrick spokesperson said no Rubio's executive would be available to comment.

The closing marks the latest sign of distress in a restaurant industry that has

been squeezed by the effects of inflation and higher labor costs.

The iconic seafood chain Red Lobster — in a segment known as casual dining — filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy last month after closing dozens of locations.

Restaurants are also see-

ing signs of some consumer pullback, particularly among lower income households. Unemployment has climbed in California, and many consumers have taken on more debt as they've run down their savings that were bolstered by pandemic stimulus checks.

Rubio's did not say how many employees were let go, but comments posted on social media by employees said they were given no notice, with some saying they received phone calls over the weekend that their jobs had been eliminated.

Rubio's said it would keep operating 86 remaining locations in California, Arizona and Nevada.

Rubio's was acquired by the private equity firm Mill Road Capital in 2010 for \$91 million and taken private. In the fall of the first year of the pandemic in 2020, the company filed for bankruptcy protection and underwent a complete restructuring. Rubio's attributed the problems to higher costs then as well, citing minimum wage increases specifically as a factor.

Rubio's previously went by the names “Rubio's Baja Grill” and “Rubio's Fresh Mexican Grill.”

It took on its current iteration, Rubio's Coastal Grill, in 2015.

“Rubio changed its name to emphasize seafood and differentiate itself from Chipotle, the monster in the room,” said Alan Gin, an economics professor at the University of San Diego Knauss School of Business.

“Given all these closings, the name change apparently didn't make a big difference,” he said.

Rubio's, in its brief statement Monday, said: “While painful, the store closures are a necessary step in our strategic long-term plan to position Rubio's for success for years to come.”

Ralphs owner is sued over bread calorie count

Kroger is accused of false advertising and violating state fair competition laws.

BY MARISA GERBER

Could that slice of Kroger brand carb-conscious bread really contain only 30 calories?

The answer, according to a new lawsuit filed by a pair of California prosecutors, is no.

In the civil suit against the supermarket chain, which owns around 300 Ralphs and Food 4 Less stores in the state, the district attorneys from Santa Barbara and Ventura counties accused the company of false advertising and violating state laws about fair competition.

“Consumers rely on nutritional information to make important decisions about their personal health,” Ventura County Dist. Atty. Erik Nasarenko said in a statement. “For some consumers, these decisions are based upon medical necessity.”

A representative for Kroger did not respond to a request for comment.

The allegations focus on the Cincinnati company's line of Carbmater loaves. Prosecutors noted that the front of the packaging for the line's white bread included big, bright type alerting customers it contained “30 CALORIES PER SERVING.”

At some point, prosecutors say, Kroger changed the mandatory nutritional content label on the back of its package to reflect that each slice in fact had 50 calories. Still, it left the 30-calorie claim on the front.

In another instance, hamburger buns labeled with a note reading “GREAT TASTE. NO REGRETS,” listed 50 calories per serving on the front, but the back label said each bun had 100 calories.

“It doesn't honestly surprise me,” said Susan B. Roberts, senior associate dean of foundational research at Dartmouth College's school of medicine, who has researched calorie

counts for years.

Part of the complication, she said, is that the Food and Drug Administration allows manufacturers to choose from several different methods for calculating calorie counts.

“It's almost impossible to actually police all of these,” Roberts said. “To a large extent, we're dependent on the honesty of the food companies.”

Prosecutors say they contacted Kroger about the bread packaging back in 2022. But as of Monday morning, the website for Ralph's showed a loaf of wheat bread boasting 30 calories per serving on the front, while the nutritional label said each slice had 50 calories.

“This bread is an excellent choice for those of us whom are Type 1 Diabetics,” one consumer wrote in a review.

Kroger isn't the first to face accusations of dishonesty over calorie counts.

Several years ago, a group of consumers in L.A. County sued Chipotle over a 300-calorie burrito claim that seemed too good to be true.

And according to a report from Perkins Coie, a law firm that tracks class-action suits, such cases are increasingly common.

In 2020, more than 100 lawsuits were filed alleging false labeling — a category that the firm said included accusations of underreporting or overreporting nutrient levels, misstating servings per container and claims that foods were prepared in a specific way, such as being smoked.

Roberts, the calorie count researcher, said her interest in the topic began several years ago when she set out to lose a few pounds.

After stocking up on frozen meals from the supermarket, she couldn't figure out why — even though she was staying within the calorie limits she knew made sense as a nutritional scientist — she still wasn't losing weight.

“Fundamentally, it's really hard to diet using calories,” she said. “But millions of people do rely on calories, so I'd like them to be accurate.”



AS MORE people drive electric vehicles, revenue from the gas tax, used to fund roadwork, will dry up. The new system will be based on how many miles you drive.

State will offer gift cards to test an alternative to gas tax

California is again looking for drivers as it seeks more reliable source of funding.

BY GRACE TOOHEY

California officials are still trying to figure out how to pay for road repairs and maintenance in the not-so-distant future, when electric vehicles dominate the roadways and gas tax revenue dries up.

So they're offering drivers up to \$400 to test a couple of alternatives for six months, starting in August. The pilot program is open to drivers of all vehicle types, gasoline-powered or otherwise.

Road improvements are financed mainly through the state's comparatively high excise tax on fuels (about 58 cents a gallon for gasoline and 44 cents a gallon for diesel). Approximately 80% of highway and road repairs are funded by the state gas tax, according to the California Department of Transportation.

But that important revenue stream is expected to nosedive in the coming years as the transition to more electric and hybrid vehicles quickens, especially with a ban on the sale of new gas-

powered vehicles set to take effect in 2035.

So state transportation officials are looking for drivers to participate in what probably will be the final test of a new system aimed at replacing the gas tax with a more reliable funding source based on the number of miles you drive, not how many gallons your car guzzles.

“What's happening right now as we see this growth in different types of vehicles ... we're seeing this increasing unfairness in what people are paying,” said Lauren Prehoda, manager of Caltrans' Road Charge Program. Although owners of electric vehicles pay a yearly fee to help pay for road repairs, it's about a third of the roughly \$300 that Californians pay on average through the gas tax, according to the program.

Prehoda said the latest pilot program — the fourth focused on this issue — will test two payment models: a flat per-mile rate and an individualized rate based on a vehicle's fuel efficiency.

“This time it's unique because in the past we haven't actually collected money,” Prehoda said. She said the program is focused on testing the collection process, but will be looking to ensure the process is easy for drivers, reliable for the state and

equitable for all Californians.

Prehoda expects this will be the final test of the process before policymakers determine how it will be implemented.

“As a state we've been looking at this for 10 years now,” she said. The first pilot program kicked off in 2016, when transportation officials tested the feasibility of such a new revenue stream, looking into a variety of ways for drivers to report mileage. Officials have since looked at how such a new tax could disproportionately affect rural and tribal communities and how private and public roads are used.

The latest study is looking for about 800 participants statewide who will begin paying the mileage-based travel fee every month, but also receive a credit for the gas taxes or EV registration fees they paid to ensure they aren't double-taxed. Participants can also earn up to \$400 in gift cards.

Interested Californians can sign up online at <https://caroadcharge.com/engage/contact-us-pilot/>.

“This is your opportunity to figure this out together with us; to solve an issue that the state of California has,” Prehoda said, adding that the failure to maintain roads causes costly wear and tear on the vehicles using them.

Spotify raises prices on premium plans

Streaming services are increasingly focused on profitability over subscriber growth.

BY WENDY LEE

Spotify, the world's largest music streaming subscription company, is raising its prices again for U.S. premium accounts.

The price of ad-free individual plans is going up \$1 to \$11.99 a month, the company said Monday.

Rates for group subscriptions are also increasing: Duo plans will rise \$2 to \$16.99 a month, and family plans will rise \$3 to \$19.99 a month.

For students, premium prices stay at \$5.99 a month.

“So that we can continue to invest in and innovate on our product features and bring users the best experience, we occasionally update our prices,” Spotify said in a blog post.

The higher prices take effect immediately for new premium users; existing subscribers will see the increase next month.

Stockholm-based Spotify, which has a large presence in downtown L.A., offers a vast library of music, audiobooks and podcasts. The service has 615 million users; 239 million of them have premium subscriptions to listen ad-free.

Led by co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Daniel Ek, Spotify joins other streaming services that have raised their prices as investors have shifted their focus to profitability from subscriber growth.

In an effort to increase profitability, the company cut staff last year after overspending on podcast deals with influencers and newsmakers.

In April, Spotify reported its largest quarterly gross profit.

The company's stock rose 5% Monday morning to \$312.07 a share.

Spotify last raised its U.S. prices in July.

Californians don't have to accept soaring electric bills

Here are some ideas to reduce the burden on consumers as the state moves to electrify homes and cars.

YOU'RE NOT alone if it seems like your electric bill is getting too damn high. Californians pay some of the highest electric rates in the country. In the last decade households have seen their electricity rates nearly double even while their budgets are squeezed by inflation and rising temperatures from climate change mean they have to use more energy to cool their homes.

And it's only going to get worse. State greenhouse gas reduction policies are pushing residents to adopt electric cars and appliances that will only increase their electricity consumption. Rate hikes have become bigger and more frequent, rising even faster than inflation for customers of the big three monopoly utility companies whose rates include costs for expensive wildfire mitigation, grid infrastructure projects and disaster-related payouts.

In Pacific Gas & Electric territory, electric bills have climbed from \$128 a month for an average residential customer in January 2020 to \$226 today. Southern California Edison monthly bills rose to \$180 from \$114 over that same period.

It's no wonder about 1 in 5 California households (and 1 in 3 low-income customers) are behind on their bills, owing an average of nearly \$800.

These dramatic increases are alarming and unsustainable. This is a crisis, both for affordability and for climate action.

Much of the recent debate over electric rates has focused on the California Public Utilities Commission's May 9 decision to shift the way electricity bills are charged to customers served by investor-owned utilities. It's a positive step that will help smooth the way for home and vehicle electrification, but will do nothing to rein in the amount utilities are allowed to charge ratepayers.

Lawmakers must address rising costs next to protect cash-strapped Californians and prevent rising electric rates from undermining the state's climate goals. Here are four ideas they can use to kick off the discussion.

Reduce customers' costs

Much of what Californians are charged on their electric bills isn't for the cost of the power but for other purposes including the operation and maintenance of the grid, projects to reduce wildfires (power lines have sparked some of the state's worst ones) and energy efficiency programs.

If investor-owned utilities were stripped of their responsibility for much of the spending not directly related to the generation and delivery of electricity, it would reduce the amount they could collect from customers and thus lower electric rates for everyone.

One idea proposed as recently as 2022 by state Sen. Josh Becker (D-Menlo Park) is to create a state authority to publicly finance transmission line projects at lower cost.

Shifting costs away from ratepayers would require tough decisions about which programs to cut, which to keep and how to fund them. For example, some of the energy efficiency incentive programs, which are largely conservation-based, may have outlived their usefulness in a state pushing for electrification.

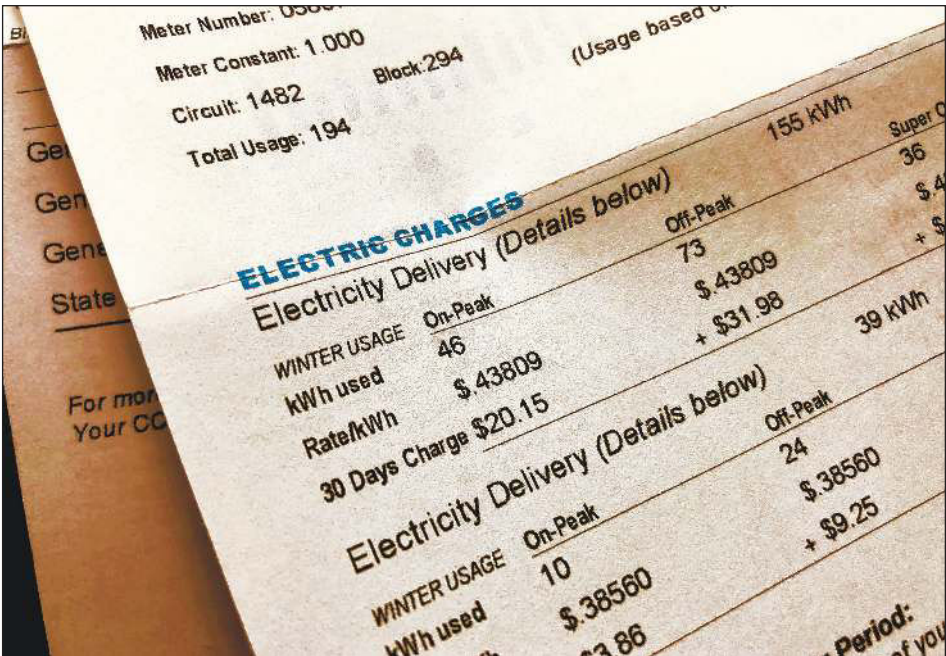
For crucial programs such as wildfire mitigation and rate assistance, it's worth considering whether it would be more appropriate to fund them out of the state's general fund, through bonds or through fees the state collects from polluters through its cap-and-trade program.

Limit rate increases

Although the rate increases requested by utility companies are decided by the state Public Utilities Commission, state legislators have also changed the law to allow utilities to seek more frequent rate increases outside the normal three-year rate request process to respond to rising costs from wildfire and other climate disasters. That's one reason why the PUC has approved more than a dozen rate hikes each for PG&E and Edison since 2020.

But less frequent, more comprehensive rate hike proceedings that are more heavily scrutinized and holistically considered by regulators would probably be better for customers, by allowing overstretched ratepayer watchdogs more opportunity to contest the increases and scale them back.

Another idea worth considering is limiting the percentage of their income households can be made to pay for utilities. One



ROB NIKOLEWSKI San Diego Union-Tribune

ELECTRIC BILLS are becoming less affordable in California. If rates continue to rise, it will be tough to get consumers to switch to electric cars and appliances.

proposal in New York would have capped utility bills in low- and moderate-income households at 6% of their income, above which customers are considered to have high energy burdens.

Ratepayer advocates in California have floated the idea of legislation that would prohibit utilities from increasing their rates faster than inflation. The Utility Reform Network ratepayer advocacy group has suggested tying a cap on rate increases to the Social Security Administration's annual Cost-of-Living Adjustment, which in 2023 was 8.7%.

Slash utility spending

The investor-owned utilities are spending heavily to stop their equipment from starting wildfires and to build and upgrade power lines, substations and transformers needed to handle vehicle and building electrification. But they have little incentive to be frugal because they can pass on the cost to ratepayers while also taking a healthy profit.

Stronger restrictions on utility spending may force them to stop treating ratepayers like a credit card with no limit.

There is legislation pending in Sacramento that would push utilities to use the fastest and most cost-effective wildfire mitigation methods, such as insulating wires and managing vegetation, instead of the most expensive options such as undergrounding power lines, and require some utility overspending to be covered by shareholders instead of customers.

Also fueling rising electric bills are shareholder returns. The money investor-owned utilities collect from customers fuels their profits, including the \$2.2 billion PG&E reportedly raked in last year, a 25% increase over the year before. Lower limits on the returns they are allowed to funnel to shareholders would reduce costs to customers.

Consider a public takeover

Customers of publicly owned utilities such as the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power pay lower electric rates in large part because a profit margin isn't part of the equation.

Gov. Gavin Newsom threatened to take over the troubled PG&E during its last bankruptcy if it didn't become a more responsible utility. Ultimately, the governor struck an oversight deal. But a public takeover is still worth exploring to protect Californians from unaffordable rates.

Also up for discussion should be reforms to the Public Utilities Commission, which critics accuse of being too friendly to the utilities and failing to protect consumers. Could the PUC be more responsive if some of its many other responsibilities — including trains, autonomous vehicles and internet service — were handed off to other agencies, or if it included voting members who weren't appointed by the governor?

It is likely that there are many other worthy ideas to address electric rates. It's time to start discussing them in earnest, before the affordability crisis turns into a ratepayer revolt.

LETTERS



JOHN MINCHILLO Associated Press

SUPPORTERS of Donald Trump gather outside Trump Tower in New York on Friday, the day after a jury convicted the former president on 34 felony counts.

What this trial wasn't about

Re "Trump verdict may be a wildcard in House," June 1

I WOULD LIKE to respond to the low-information voter in your article on the Trump verdict in New York possibly shaping a House election who still plans to vote for the former president.

Trump was not on trial for having sex with a porn star. That is not a crime. He was not on trial for paying hush money. That is also not a crime.

Trump was on trial for falsifying business records to hide his actions in order to influence the 2016 election. And, by the way, this is the least serious thing for which Trump has been charged across four separate criminal cases. Stealing and hiding classified documents, election tampering in Georgia and inciting an insurrection are more serious charges.

The voter quoted also suspects that President Biden is guilty of unspecified crimes. If she is unable to name these crimes, it is unlikely they exist.

LORRAINE KNOPF, Santa Monica

Let me get this straight. The Times' story quotes a former teacher from Santa Clarita who says: "Hush money has been going on since the beginning of time. So I don't know why they're making such a big deal about it."

I wonder if her lessons included lying to her students on school subjects to

fit her agenda; after all, lying has been going on for a long time. Would she say it is OK for someone to practice racism, since that too has been going on since the beginning of time?

The good news is that she's retired. Thank God for small miracles.

J.J. GUEVARA
Pico Rivera

The conviction might not sway swing voters for the same reason it will not sway Trumpers.

The media referring to this as a "hush money" trial instead of a "falsifying business records" trial gives Trump a break. Read the quote in Saturday's paper:

"Hush money has been going on since the beginning

of time. So I don't know why they're making such a big deal about it."

That is what most people think. But all 34 counts were for falsifying business records, which is against the law.

If Trump had directed a large sum of money to a charity and falsified business records to cover it up because he didn't want, say, the National Rifle Assn. to know about it, would the media have called this a "charity donation" trial?

RICHARD LARSEN
La Habra

Homeless vets need settlement

Re "If not a czar, close enough," May 29

I have worked for years to change U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs policy regarding homeless veterans in Los Angeles. So, I was thrilled to see Doug Smith's thoughtful article on U.S. District Judge David O. Carter, whom Smith calls the closest official we have to a homelessness "czar."

I want to support Carter's smart suggestion that VA Secretary Denis McDonough come to Los Angeles in person to reach a settlement on existing litigation over housing homeless veterans. I know this could work, because it has before.

In 2015, then-VA Secretary Bob McDonald met me and colleagues to settle prior litigation. That settlement created significant positive benefits, including hundreds of housing units and a detailed, formal plan for a vibrant "town center" for the VA campus community in Westwood.

That type of negotiated settlement can happen again now. But without McDonough's personal

intervention, this lawsuit will go to trial in the summer. The courtroom and the country will see exhibits and hear testimony on the Biden administration's failure to build the thriving community necessary to stop veteran suffering.

I hope McDonough will follow his predecessor's smart example and enter settlement discussions soon.

BOBBY SHRIVER
Santa Monica

The writer was a member of the Santa Monica City Council from 2004-12.

Defining antisemitism

Re "30 years ago, Grace Paley foresaw today's clash over antisemitism," Opinion, May 26

Michael Rothberg, a professor at UCLA, labels the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism "controversial" and "vague." In reality, the IHRA definition has long been the global gold standard — controversial only among a small group of scholars.

The 35-nation organization, where I am now the Advisor and was the longtime chair of its anti-semitism committee, adopted the definition in 2016 with consensus of all member countries, including the United States.

Since then, more than 40 countries, 30 American states, nearly 70 cities and counties, and more than 1,000 institutions, businesses and sports leagues have embraced it. The U.S. State Department has used the IHRA definition to track antisemitism for years.

While Rothberg claims that a congressional bill adopting the IHRA defini-

tion would make critics of Israel "even more vulnerable," the definition is explicit: "Criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be antisemitic."

Debates about terms are a luxury for times of peace. The future of our democracy requires that we understand all forms of antisemitism and emphasize unequivocally that it has no place in America.

ROBERT WILLIAMS
Los Angeles

The writer, executive director of the USC Shoah Foundation, is the UNESCO chair on antisemitism and Holocaust research.

What's unethical for a justice?

Re "Justice Roberts declines Democrats' call to discuss ethics," May 31

It's interesting that while Supreme Court Chief Justice John G. Robert Jr. sees the impropriety of speaking only with Democratic senators to discuss an ethics code for justices, he seems to overlook the impropriety of justices flying insurrectionist-related flags or accepting valuable gifts from Republican billionaires who have a stake in cases before the court.

If partisanship blinds the justices to right and wrong, then perhaps the real issue is one of competency — of having the necessary foundational skills to rise above personal preferences.

PAMELA KELLY
Long Beach

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OP-ED

Mexico's election is historic as well as foreboding

The first woman to lead the country is likely to further undermine its democracy.

By Kristina Foltz

MEXICO CITY mayoral candidate Santiago Taboada quoted the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda on social media recently: “They can cut all the flowers, but they can’t stop the spring.” It was a jab at outgoing Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, known as AMLO, and his Morena party. Party members had been seen removing Taboada’s campaign fliers in the Mexico City Metro and replacing them with advertisements for their own candidates.

A conservative politician quoting a communist writer was a sign of a dramatic shift in Latin American politics: The Cold War-era dichotomy between right and left has given way to a struggle between populist authoritarians and “conservatives,” who now tend to encompass all meaningful opposition, liberal or conservative.

Sunday’s decisive victory of AMLO’s handpicked successor, former Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum, over opposition candidate Xóchitl Gálvez promises to continue the president’s “socialist” agenda. But if Sheinbaum’s penchant for stretching the truth is any indication, she will be as avid as her predecessor in employing the “three Ps” — populism, polarization and post-truth — to consolidate power and further degrade Mexico’s democracy.

The Venezuelan journalist Moisés Naím identified the three Ps as the standard playbook of 21st century autocrats. Today’s aspiring authoritarians are less likely than the 20th century’s to show up as right-wing strongmen, using violence and repression to seize power. Rather, they come into office through traditional elections, cloaking their campaigns in the rhetoric of democracy while using divisive rhetoric to galvanize support. Once in power, they destroy or subjugate the institutions that could check them, allowing them to govern as they please.



MARCO UGARTE Associated Press

CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM addresses supporters in Mexico City after her election victory. She is a protege of outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

Much has been said about Mexico’s democratic decline under AMLO. Instead of building social programs, he has used populist tactics like his daily propaganda show to obfuscate and polarize. He has also wooed Mexico’s poor with regular monetary handouts and raised the minimum wage, which was one of his more constructive achievements.

Despite AMLO’s constant railing against “neoliberals” — code for the United States — it is on his watch that Mexico’s democracy and social prosperity have declined.

AMLO’s pension program essentially robs Mexico’s young people for political expediency, taking money from the pension funds of hardworking Mexicans to allow immediate payments to the elderly, boosting his popularity.

The sociologist Máximo Ernesto Jaramillo-Molina found that from 2018 to 2022, Mexico’s spending on social programs as a share of gross domestic product increased only 0.7%, to 4.7%. That’s less than during the first three years of the administration of López Obrador’s predecessor, Enrique Peña Nieto, or the first four years of the previous presidency, Felipe Calderón’s. Under AMLO, El Economista wrote, “the social policy of the federal government ... stopped privileging the poor and ended up benefiting the richest households in the country.”

The Mexican president has also bestowed unprecedented power on a loyal military. He attempted to disappear the country’s National Electoral Institute, transferring election oversight to the judiciary. And he elevated a political ally with no judicial experience to the Supreme Court.

AMLO also effectively killed the Mérida Initiative, the vast, joint U.S., Mexican and Central American anti-drug program that attempted to counter organized crime and

strengthen the rule of law. His policy on the cartels, “hugs, not bullets,” is effectively a non-policy. Despite his recent claim that homicides had dropped 20% during his presidency, a government security agency found that his term had seen over 171,000 homicides, more than any previous administration.

Mexico has elected its first female president, a historic event that should be cause for celebration. But I’m afraid AMLO’s protege is too steeped in Morena methodology to make real progress for Mexico.

In the most recent presidential debate, for example, Sheinbaum claimed that homicides had declined 58% during her mayoralty, when they had actually increased 9%.

Sheinbaum, who has an environmental science degree, sometimes speaks like a committed environmentalist; she told the Associated Press she supports renewable energy. But she also promised to increase generation by state-owned power plants that rely on fossil fuels. As the only G-20 country without a net-zero-emissions plan, Mexico needs a climate change leader, not a labyrinth of empty words.

Born into an elite family with a history of financial opacity, Sheinbaum falsely denied their involvement in the Panama Papers scandal, betraying her inclination for *posverdad*, or post-truth. The investigation revealed that six of Sheinbaum’s family members, including her mother, hid millions in offshore tax havens.

Mexico’s populists are, in short, no friends to its people. Sheinbaum’s election means we’re still waiting for the arrival of Mexico’s democratic spring.

KRISTINA FOLTZ is a Rotary scholar who writes about populism and disinformation in Latin America.

She can handle the rough play of the WNBA

Caitlin Clark fans say she’s being singled out for mistreatment. They’re the ones singling her out.

LZ GRANDERSON

WE KNEW Caitlin Clark was going to have a slow start to her pro career because the team that drafted her, the Indiana Fever, has not had a winning season since President Obama was in office. Of course, growing pains come with being the No. 1 pick in the draft — regardless of sport.



You can also count on those top picks to be tested by veterans, especially physically. It’s a rite of passage for star rookies. Hard fouls are part of the game.

Cheap shots, like the one Chennedy Carter delivered to Clark on an inbound play on Saturday, are not supposed to be part of the game. But they are part of competition. Hence the Rodney Dangerfield joke: “I went to a fight the other night, and a hockey game broke out.”

For her part, Clark has repeatedly said she’s ready to go through that rite of passage. However, it seems many of her supporters are not.

“It is an absolute outrage what’s happening to Caitlin Clark in the @WNBA,” posted tennis commentator (and former colleague of mine) Patrick McEnroe, without explaining what he thinks is happening to her. Fox Sports analyst Emmanuel Acho posted video of Carter’s foul on Clark, asking, “Are the women out to get her?”

One of the more disappointing synopses came from former NBA player Austin Rivers, who accused WNBA players of resenting Clark because of her fame: “If you girls were Destiny’s Child, she would be Beyoncé.”

He also echoed a popular sentiment that hostility toward Clark is rooted in identity politics and that her play alone is why she has so much attention.



DOUG MCSCHOOLER Associated Press

INDIANA FEVER guard Caitlin Clark, right, drives against Seattle Storm forward Nneke Ogwumike last week. The WNBA has always been physical. Many just tuning in are aghast.

“And it’s not because she’s white,” he said about Clark’s popularity and economic importance. “It’s not because she’s straight — good God, no one cares. And it’s not because she’s pretty, another thing I heard some woman who knows nothing about basketball saying.... It’s because she’s an unbelievable basketball player and talent.”

Rivers, whose father is NBA legend Doc Rivers, could have offered his perspective on what it’s like being tested as a rookie with a target on your back because of fame. He also could have addressed why women’s basketball wasn’t more popular before Clark. But that would have taken nuance.

So instead he tried to gaslight everyone by suggesting being pretty, straight and white doesn’t help a woman’s Q rating, which is akin to saying being tall, dark and handsome doesn’t help men.

Clark has repeatedly said she wants to be treated like everyone else. And that’s how she’s being treated. Why are so many

having a difficult time accepting that?

WNBA basketball has always been a physical game. At the very beginning, star rookie Rebecca Lobo had to adjust from college play to the physicality of the professional game. When Candace Parker was a superstar rookie in 2008, she found herself in the middle of a brawl. Angel Reese was hit in the neck mid-jump less than a week before Carter hip checked Clark. Afterward Reese said: “They’re not supposed to be nice to me or lay down because I’m Angel Reese or ‘cause I’m a rookie.”

The problem began the moment men with very large platforms started making proclamations about Clark’s place in history without respecting the history of the game.

Consider this: In any major sport, someone can be considered a contender for “the greatest of all time” only if they have won a championship. In fact, the conversation typically starts with how many Super Bowls or rings a particular player has.

Not how close they got but how many were captured. Except with Clark.

Her accomplishments are worthy of all the attention she has attracted, but sports media shoehorned Clark into a GOAT conversation that by the industry’s own metric, she didn’t belong in. They did so because Clark was great in college, and they weren’t watching the sport before her so ... she was crowned without context. It’s like a tourist who spends a week at a resort and proclaims to know the local culture better than the people who live there.

And now there is this outcry from casual fans who are shocked to find out the WNBA is a lot tougher than college. Something that wouldn’t have to be explained at all if professional women’s basketball were given the attention it has always deserved.

Clark doesn’t need protecting. She’s a talented player who’s learning the ropes, not a damsel in distress.

@LZGranderson

What’s a grandmother to do when her grandchild lives far away?

My granddaughter is a change agent for me and a hopeful symbol of reimagined possibilities.

By Judy Belk

FINALLY HAVE come to grips with the fact that my son has sex. He’s 30-something and recently became the father of an adorable baby girl, Ada Irene. This is all now serious business in the cycle of life.

When your child becomes a parent, it’s a tectonic shift. There’s no turning back for my son or me. He’s another human being’s father. In becoming a parent, he’s made a generational crossing of sorts, pulling other family members with him. Instantly there are new roles for everyone. His wife becomes a mother; his sister, an aunt; and my husband and me, grandparents.

I find myself full of intense love for this child created by my child. She’s gifted, I’m sure, and already has a great sense of timing. She delayed her birth by two weeks to enter the world on my birthday. And based on how she chews the edges of her “Good Night Moon” book, she’s going to devour the best in literature, soaking in knowledge and wisdom wherever she can.

She laughs with joy when her name is called. As the third “Ada” in my large Black family, she seems to instinctively know that her name honors two of her great-grandmothers and five generations of strong determined women who paved a path for her.

In a small way, she also represents how far America has progressed in just one generation. Ada and I share a birthplace as well as a birthday: Virginia, just outside of the nation’s capital. Ada lives with her parents about two miles from my childhood home. Her mother is white, and her father is Black. During the first 15 years of my life in Virginia, it would have been a crime for her parents to have been married in the state.

I like to think of little Ada as a hopeful symbol of reimagined possibilities. A trendsetter bridging an ugly history of racial divisions. Back in 2017, the Pew Research Center placed the number of multiracial or multiethnic infants born in the United States at more than one in seven, nearly triple the share in 1980 and rising. In 2021, the Census Bureau put the total mixed-race share of the population at 10%.

So Ada is on the leading edge of positive change. But even her non-symbolic self is amazing. So amazing that I have a serious case of the grandma blues.

First, there’s the issue of distance. I’m in Los Angeles. Ada is in Virginia. It’s a cruel and unfair geographic mismatch. I blame Ada’s grandfather, who years ago grabbed my heart and squeezed it with such intensity that I shamelessly followed him across the country.

But I’m at fault, too. I encouraged Ada’s California-born-and-raised father to go east for college, to experience life beyond the West Coast. He was supposed to come back but he never did, and it looks like he’s keeping Ada with him. I love California, but Ada’s birth has taken a little of the shine off the Golden State.

Still, it’s time that’s really got my grandma jaws tight. Time is not on my side. If I’m lucky, I might be around, and still with it enough, that I could make it to Ada’s high school graduation. It’s a slim chance that I could see her graduate from college without being wheeled in and propped up. But there’s so much of her life I will miss, and I feel cheated.

Ada’s birth has made me question my own decisions about when to become a parent. Waiting eight years after getting married to have her father now seems like a waste of time. I wanted the time to find myself, focus on my career, be a more mature mother. Blah, blah, blah. Sounds pretty self-centered now. I became an older mom, and now I’m an old-ass grandmother.

If I could rewind the tape and have eight additional years with Ada instead of “finding myself,” I might have had a shot at watching her start a career, attending her wedding, and making a toast.

“To my lovely, smart, talented granddaughter, Ada Irene. From the beginning, we shared a birthday and love for, the first man in your life, your father, my son and your mother’s husband.”

Finding the right partner for Ada will take some time though, given that she’s gorgeous, will have high standards, not take anything off anybody who wants her love, and will want to meet the expectations of her grandmother.

Despite my grandma blues, it’s hard to stay in a funk around Ada. She is so present in the now. Fascinated by lights, sounds and sights of a world she’s discovering bit by bit every day. Her innocence and glee is a reminder that while we can’t stop the march of time or solve all the problems of this troubled world she’s entered, we can choose how we want to spend the time we have.

So while I’m not certain how many birthdays Ada and I will get to celebrate together, I’m going to make the most of the ones we do have by blowing out our candles in unison at every opportunity. And wishing for love and peace for Ada now and in the future.

JUDY BELK, former president and chief executive of the California Wellness Foundation, is at work on a book of essays about growing up 10 miles from the White House.

Solar farm will destroy thousands of Joshua trees

[Joshua trees, from A1] Mojave Desert project is an example of the trade-offs being made in California as state and local government officials press for a rapid expansion of clean energy.

Although solar and wind fields are expected to help mitigate climate change, they are also tearing up undeveloped land, harming threatened plants and wildlife and causing concern in nearby communities, which are often small and far from the state's cities.

"Rural communities that don't have political power just get ramrodded over," English said.

The site, known as the Aratina Solar Project, is being developed on private land by Avantus, a California company that is mostly owned by KKR, the global private equity firm.

Crews were scheduled to start clearing the site of the iconic Joshua trees Monday, said a person who was briefed on the project. The person declined to be named since they were not authorized to discuss it.

Avantus decided to take the extra step of shredding the trees onsite, rather than leaving them in piles or hauling them away whole, the person said, to reduce the visibility of the tree clearing.

Avantus company executives would not confirm the June 3 date but said that the contractors had begun site preparations last month and "will soon begin selectively clearing the area of vegetation and other large natural obstacles" approved for removal by the county and state wildlife officials.

The company said the massive solar and battery storage project will have environmental benefits that outweigh the destruction of the Joshua trees and habitat of protected wildlife.

"While trees will be impacted during project construction, vastly more Joshua trees are being

threatened by climate change caused by rising greenhouse gas emissions, which the Aratina solar project directly addresses," the company says on its website.

"Avantus takes care on all projects to minimize any unnecessary impacts such as noise, dust, or traffic throughout all phases of the project," the company told The Times in a statement. It added that it was "committed to being a good neighbor."

The Kern County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the project in October 2021 despite comments and letters from dozens of residents.

"It was like the decision had already been made," Richardson said.

Aratina will be the ninth solar project that Avantus, formerly named 8minute Solar, has built in Kern County.

During the board meeting, Alexander Sundquist, a company executive, said the benefits of the project to the county included \$3 million in sales taxes and \$73 million in property taxes.

When asked why the company decided to put the project on land next to the two towns, Sundquist said that executives wanted to keep the solar field in Kern County rather than farther south in San Bernardino. "We like doing business here," he said.

In 2019, San Bernardino County supervisors voted to ban the construction of large solar and wind farms on more than 1 million acres of private land.

Kern County, home to the state's largest oil patch, has long been friendly to energy companies. Lorelei Oviatt, director of Kern County Planning and Natural Resources, has repeatedly spoken at industry conferences to emphasize how the county tries to quickly approve projects.

Oviatt told The Times



Photographs by MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

A CREW INSTALLS fence posts at the Aratina Solar Project last week ahead of the planned removal of thousands of Joshua trees. The 2,300-acre project has angered residents of Boron and nearby Desert Lake.



A MURAL on the side of a building in Boron, where the poverty rate is twice the California average.

that so far the county has approved 160,000 acres of solar and wind energy projects. Most of those projects are in the desert, she said, because of the easier access there to electric transmission lines.

"I am pro Kern County, not necessarily pro solar," Oviatt said. "There was an over 18-month process and nothing was rushed. My recommendation [to approve the project] carefully considered all the community comments.

"Land use is always a balance of private property rights and people's viewpoints."

The county said that Avantus had put \$1.4 million into a fund that will be used to protect Joshua trees in other areas of the state.

To mitigate the damage

from Aratina and several other solar projects, Avantus has also purchased the grazing rights on 215,000 acres of federal land in Kern County and is working with government officials to preserve it.

Avantus declined to disclose the details of where the power would be sent. But earlier the company signed contracts to send some of the power to Silicon Valley Clean Energy and Central Coast Community Energy, nonprofit agencies that deliver green energy to homes in those regions.

"The generated energy doesn't even stay here," English said. "It's shipped to other communities hundreds of miles away."

Joshua trees, with their twisted, otherworldly shape,

are often said to look like they were taken from the pages of a Dr. Seuss book. They grow just 1 to 3 inches a year, which means a 16-foot tree could be more than 100 years old.

The environmental impact statement for Aratina said that nearly 4,700 Joshua trees were found on the site during a survey. More than 500 of those trees are at least 16 feet tall.

"I'm not aware of other projects where this many trees will be removed," said Kevin Emmerich of Basin and Range Watch, an environmental group.

Avantus agreed to reduce the project's original footprint to create more space between the solar panels and the two communities. The person with knowledge of the project said the company's plan now included destroying 3,500 Joshua trees.

Last year, state legislators passed the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act, which bans unpermitted killing of the trees, while also providing a mechanism for the construction of green energy and housing projects.

State officials approved the Aratina project, however, before that law and before an earlier state decision to make the Joshua tree a candidate for protection under the California Endangered Species Act.

In 2020, the California Fish and Wildlife Commis-

sion agreed that Aratina and 14 other green energy projects would not be subject to the increased measures to protect the tree.

Unfortunately, said Brendan Cummings, conservation director at the Center for Biological Diversity, "thousands of Joshua trees will be sacrificed."

State wildlife officials told The Times that the company must still relocate any desert tortoises or Mojave ground squirrels, which are listed as threatened under California law, that are found during construction.

English said little attention has yet been paid to his group's discovery on the site of the soil-dwelling fungus *Coccidioides*, which causes valley fever. Valley fever has been found repeatedly to infect workers building solar fields in California.

On Thursday, half a mile from Boron's Little League field, a construction crew, wearing yellow vests, was building a fence at the edge of the site, while a truck sprayed water, trying to keep the dust down.

Antje Lauer, professor of microbiology at Cal State Bakersfield, worked with English and Richardson to test the soil samples.

"Desert land is really cheap and there are not that many regulations," Lauer said. "We need renewable energy, but it needs to be done correctly."

Buddhist leader Lama Rod wants to help end your pain

The Harvard Divinity School-educated teacher draws on his experiences as a queer Black Southern man.

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO

ROME, Ga. — Instead of traditional maroon and gold Tibetan Buddhist robes, Lama Rod Owens wore a white animal-print cardigan over a bright yellow T-shirt with an image of singer Sade, an Africa-shaped medallion and mala beads — the most recognizable sign of his Buddhism.

"Being a Buddhist or a spiritual leader, I got rid of trying to wear the part because it just wasn't authentic to me," said Owens, 44, who describes himself as a Black Buddhist Southern Queen.

"For me, it's not about looking like a Buddhist. It's about being myself," he said at his mother's home in Rome, Ga. "And I like color."

The Harvard Divinity School-educated lama and yoga teacher blends his training in the Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism with pop culture references and experiences from his life as a Black, queer man, raised in the South by his mother, a pastor at a Christian church.

Today, he is an influential voice in a new generation of Buddhist teachers, respected for his work focused on social change, identity and spiritual wellness.

On the popular mindfulness app Calm, his wide-ranging courses include "Coming Out," "Caring for your Grief" and "Radical Self-Care" (sometimes telling listeners to "shake it off" like Mariah Carey). In his latest book, "The New Saints," he highlights Christian saints and spiritual war-



JESSIE WARDARSKI Associated Press

LAMA ROD OWENS, posing outside his childhood home in Georgia, is an influential voice in a generation of Buddhist teachers with a focus on social change.

riors, Buddhist bodhisattvas and Jewish tzaddikim among those who have sought to free people from suffering.

"Saints are ordinary and human, doing things any person can learn to do," Owen writes in his book, where he combines personal stories, traditional teachings and instructions for meditations.

"Our era calls for saints who are from this time and place, speak the language of this moment, and integrate both social and spiritual liberation," he writes. "I believe we all can and must become New Saints."

But how? "It's not about becoming a superhero," he said, stressing the need to care for others.

And it's not reserved for the canonized. "Harriet Tubman is a saint for me," he said about the 19th century Black abolitionist known for helping enslaved people escape to freedom via the

Underground Railroad. "She came to this world and said, 'I want people to be free.'"

Owens grew up in a devout Baptist and Methodist family. His life revolved around his local church.

When he was 13, his mother, who owns a baseball cap that reads "God's Girl," became a United Methodist minister. He calls her the single greatest impact in his life.

"Like a lot of Black women, she embodied wisdom and resiliency and vision. She taught me how to work. And she taught me how to change because I saw her changing."

He was inspired by her commitment to a spiritual path, especially when she went against the wishes of some in her family, who — like in many patriarchal religions — believed a woman should not lead a congregation.

"I'm very proud of him,"

said the Rev. Wendy Owens, who sat near her son in her living room, decorated with their photographs and painted portraits.

"He made his path. He walked his path, or he might have even ran his path," she said. "Don't know how he got there, but he got there."

A life devoted to spirituality seemed unlikely for her son after he entered Berry College, a nondenominational Christian school. It didn't deepen his relationship with Christianity. Instead, he stopped attending church. He wanted to "develop a healthy sense of self-worth" about his queerness, and was dismayed by conservative religious views on gender and sexuality. He felt the way that God had been presented to him was too rigid, even vengeful. So, in his words, he "broke up with God."

His new religion, he said, became service. He trained as an advocate for sexual as-

sault survivors, and volunteered for projects on HIV/AIDS education, homelessness, teen pregnancy and substance abuse.

"Even though I wasn't doing this theology anymore, what I was definitely doing was following the path of Jesus: feeding people, sheltering people."

After college, he moved to Boston and joined Haley House, a nonprofit partly inspired by the Catholic Worker Movement that runs a soup kitchen and affordable housing programs.

There, he said, he met people across a range of religious traditions — "from Hinduism to Christian Science to all the denominations of Christianity, Buddhists, Wiccans, Muslims. Monastics from different traditions, everyone."

A Buddhist friend gave him a book that helped him find his spiritual path: "Cave in the Snow," by Tibetan Buddhist nun Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo.

The British-born nun spent years isolated in a cave in the Himalayas to follow the rigorous path of the most devoted yogis. She later founded a nunnery in India focused on giving women in Tibetan Buddhism some of the opportunities reserved for monks.

"When I started exploring Buddhism, I never thought, 'Oh, Black people don't do this, or maybe this is in conflict with my Christian upbringing,'" Owens said. "What I thought was: 'Here's something that can help me to suffer less. ... I was only interested in how to reduce harm against myself and others.'"

At Harvard Divinity School, he was again immersed in religious diversity — even a Satanist was there.

"What I love about Rod is that he's deeply himself no matter who he's with," said Cheryl Giles, a Harvard Di-

vinity professor who mentored him and who now considers him one of her own teachers.

"When I think of him, I think of this concept of Bodhisattva in Buddhism, the deeply compassionate being who is on the path to awakening and sees the suffering of the world and makes a commitment to help liberate others," said Giles.

"And I love," she said, "that he's Black and Buddhist."

Through Buddhism, mindfulness and silent retreats, Owens eventually reconciled with God.

"God isn't some old man sitting on a throne in the clouds, who's, like, very temperamental," he said. "God is space and emptiness and energy. God is always this experience, inviting us back through our most divine, sacred souls. God is love."

His schedule keeps him busy these days — appearing in podcasts and social media, speaking to college students and leading meditations, yoga and spiritual retreats across the world.

So much inspires him. He wrote his latest book listening to Beyoncé and thinking about the work of choreographer Alvin Ailey. He loves Tony Kushner's "Angels in America." And pioneering fashion journalist Andre Leon Talley of Vogue magazine, who he says taught him to appreciate beauty.

"I want people to feel the same way when they experience something that I talk about or write about," Owens said. "That's part of the work of the artist — to help us to feel and to not be afraid to feel. To help us dream differently, inspire us and shake us out of our rigidity to get more fluid."

Henao writes for the Associated Press. AP writer Jessie Wardarski contributed to this report.

CALIFORNIA

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JILL CONNELLY For De Los

STUDENTS in the newspaper class at Downey High look at photos in a gallery. “Journalism has always been a big part of our schools in Downey Unified,” one district administrator said of the robust curriculum.

DE LOS

Getting their first scoops

Latinos remain underrepresented in newsrooms, but Downey Unified schools are a pipeline for students interested in journalism careers

By TINA VASQUEZ

A few weeks into the school year, the editorial staff of the Downey Legend filter into Downey High School’s Room S26 and settle into their seats.

Today is pitch day — students are expected to come to class prepared with a story idea to tackle in the coming weeks, *if* their fellow journalism students think it’s interesting *and* they get the approval of their co-editors in chief, Madeline Hidalgo and Ximena Solorzano.

Both are seniors who are opinionated but kind, questioning but courteous. They have a knack for asking just the right questions to get to the heart of

a story. And after serving on the newspaper staff for three years, they also have a keen sense of what reporting goes over well with the larger student body. They run a tight ship, and there’s little room in Hidalgo and Solorzano’s busy editorial schedule for lackluster reporting.

During the session, senior Angelina Andrade, a Downey Legend veteran, pitches a story worthy of the front page: The school abruptly cut a number of elective courses, leaving some recently hired teachers without jobs and students scrambling to fill gaps in their schedules. Andrade would later deliver on the story, reporting that the chaos was the result of more than a hundred of the city’s teachers retiring over the

summer, leading Downey Unified School District to go on a hiring surge. The problem, she reported, was that student enrollment rates in the fall were far lower than expected.

For a moment, it appeared as if Downey High School’s photojournalism class was on the chopping block, which would have been a devastating blow to a small but enormously important ecosystem that has taken shape in the school system over the last two decades: a pipeline for working-class Latino students interested in pursuing journalism.

“Journalism has always been a big part of our schools in Downey Unified,” explained the district’s director of sec- [See Downey, B5]

Tackling an indignity for women in jail

A bill aims to ensure inmates don’t have to beg prison workers for menstrual supplies.

By ANABEL SOSA AND KERI BLAKINGER

One thing Alissa Moore remembers clearly from her time in prison is how the guards taunted her when she asked for a tampon. Sometimes they’d outright refuse; other times they’d ask her to come to a closet or back room, where, on several occasions, she was sexually assaulted, she said.

If she wanted to avoid that humiliation, Moore could buy tampons from the commissary. But a box cost \$7, and prisoners in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation earned as little as 8 cents an hour. Sometimes, that meant Moore had to trade food for tampons. Less fortunate inmates resorted to using towels or tissues.

“It was hell,” she told The Times.

Over the last decade, prisons and jails across the country have enacted policies to make menstrual products free to inmates. But problems remain.

In New York, jail officials admitted last year that they’d stopped providing free supplies. In Texas, women say they sometimes are challenged by guards when they ask for tampons or pads. And in California, where a bill to address the

problem was passed in 2020, reports have surfaced of women being denied menstrual products.

Now California is trying to fix this for good. State lawmakers are considering Assembly Bill 1810, which would require jails, prisons and juvenile lockups to make tampons and pads readily accessible so that women don’t have to beg prison workers for them.

“We know power dynamics [in prisons are] ripe for abuse,” said Ruth Dawson, a legislative attorney for ACLU California Action. “It seems like a small tweak in the law, but we think it will have big implications for incarcerated people who menstruate.”

The bill unanimously passed last month in the Assembly. It’s now headed to the Senate, with bipartisan support. If passed and signed by the governor, the measure would take effect next year.

When California enacted its landmark Reproductive Dignity for Incarcerated People Act in 2020, the measure aimed to remedy an array of problems. In addition to mandating access to perinatal medical care and banning the use of Tasers and chemical weapons on pregnant inmates, the legislation required jails and prisons to provide free tampons and sanitary pads.

But last year, a report issued by California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta — who authored the 2020 legislation when he was in the Assem- [See Inmates, B2]

Safety measures for stonecutters

Countertop workers are dying of silicosis. Lawmakers seek to regulate shops.

By EMILY ALPERT REYES

As growing numbers of countertop cutters in California suffer from an incurable and deadly lung disease, lawmakers are seeking to clamp down on which businesses can legally perform such work.

Health officials have tied the rise in silicosis to the surging popularity of engineered stone, an artificial product that can be much higher in silica than natural slabs. The disease is caused by inhaling tiny bits of crystalline silica that scar the

lungs, leaving ailing workers reliant on oxygen tanks and lung transplants to survive. More than a dozen countertop workers in California have died, some barely into middle age.

In the San Fernando Valley, outreach workers have found immigrant workers cutting the artificial material in dusty shops with scant protections. When Cal/OSHA took a closer look at the industry in 2019 and 2020, it found that 72% of shops where it conducted air sampling were in violation of silica rules. It recently estimated that out of nearly 5,000 such workers statewide, as many as 200 could die of the disease.

Despite the risks posed by cutting and grinding the material, “there is uncon- [See Stonecutters, B4]

UC fails to get injunction; strike expands

Still to come is the fight over the legality of the protest by academic workers.

By JAWED KALEEM AND HOWARD BLUME

For the second time, the state labor board has declined to order an immediate halt to the UC academic workers strike, which has resulted in canceled classes, blocked parking garages and disrupted coursework



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

WORKERS walked out at UCLA, above, as well as campuses in Santa Cruz, Davis and Santa Barbara.

for thousands at a crucial time of the year when students take finals.

The state’s Public Employment Relations Board ruled Monday that the university, in its legal filings, had not met the high legal standard of showing “irreparable harm” required for the labor board to approve an injunction.

The walkout has included University of California campuses in Santa Cruz, Davis and Los Angeles. The strike expanded Monday to UC Santa Bar- [See Strike, B4]

Heat dome expected to push state temperatures past triple digits

Highs are set to top 100 from the Antelope Valley to the Sacramento Valley.

By GRACE TOOHEY

A significant, early-season heat wave is expected to broil much of inland California this week, with highs set to top 100 from the Sacramento Valley to the Antelope Valley — dangerously high temperatures that experts warn could bring health risks given that nighttime cooling will be limited in many areas.

Much of the western U.S. is bracing for the effects of a high-pressure ridge, or heat dome, which will begin

warming up the region Tuesday, likely driving temperatures to near-record or record-breaking levels, with several excessive heat watches and warnings already issued.

In Southern California, the most extreme temperatures are expected Tuesday through Thursday in the inland mountains and deserts, with Wednesday supposed to be the hottest.

“It’s going to start heating up really tomorrow,” Joe Sirard, a National Weather Service meteorologist, said Monday morning. “Those temperatures in the lower mountains and deserts will be anywhere from 15 to 17 degrees above normal for this time of year.”

Highs in the Antelope Valley are expected to reach

103 to 108 degrees Wednesday and Thursday, while the Los Angeles County valleys will likely peak around 90 degrees. Statewide, the coast will generally avoid the worst of this heat wave, with L.A. beaches remaining in the 70s and 80s this week.

Lancaster and Palmdale are forecast to tie or break daily high temperature records, Sirard said, with highs topping out at 104 degrees in both cities. An excessive heat watch has been issued for Wednesday and Thursday across the Antelope Valley and its surrounding foothills, as well as a warning of “dangerously hot conditions” for the Apple and Lucerne valleys, where temperatures may go as high as 106 degrees.

[See Heat, B4]



JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

SANTA MONICA will be a refuge from the heat this week. While L.A. beaches stay in the 70s and 80s, temperatures in many other places will soar past 100.

SPORTS ON BACK: Dodgers win but look unconvincing, Dylan Hernández writes. B10

Inmates’ menstrual needs are focus of bill

[Inmates, from B1] bly — found that almost all of the jails in the state’s 58 counties failed to create policies to comply with the law.

Since then, more than 50 counties have created policies. However, the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California has identified eight cases since September in Los Angeles, Monterey and Bay Area jails of women being denied menstrual supplies.

“That is not surprising,” said Assemblymember Isaac Bryan (D-Los Angeles), who authored AB 1810.

Bryan said women have reported officers withholding period products as retaliation for filing complaints. Other women say guards use requests for menstrual products as a means to coerce them into providing sexual favors.

When asked for comment, a state prison official said menstrual products are free and available for all inmates.

“All incarcerated people receive free basic supplies necessary for maintaining personal hygiene, including menstrual products,” said Alia Cruz, a corrections department spokesperson. “Items are readily available and replenished every week, or upon request.”

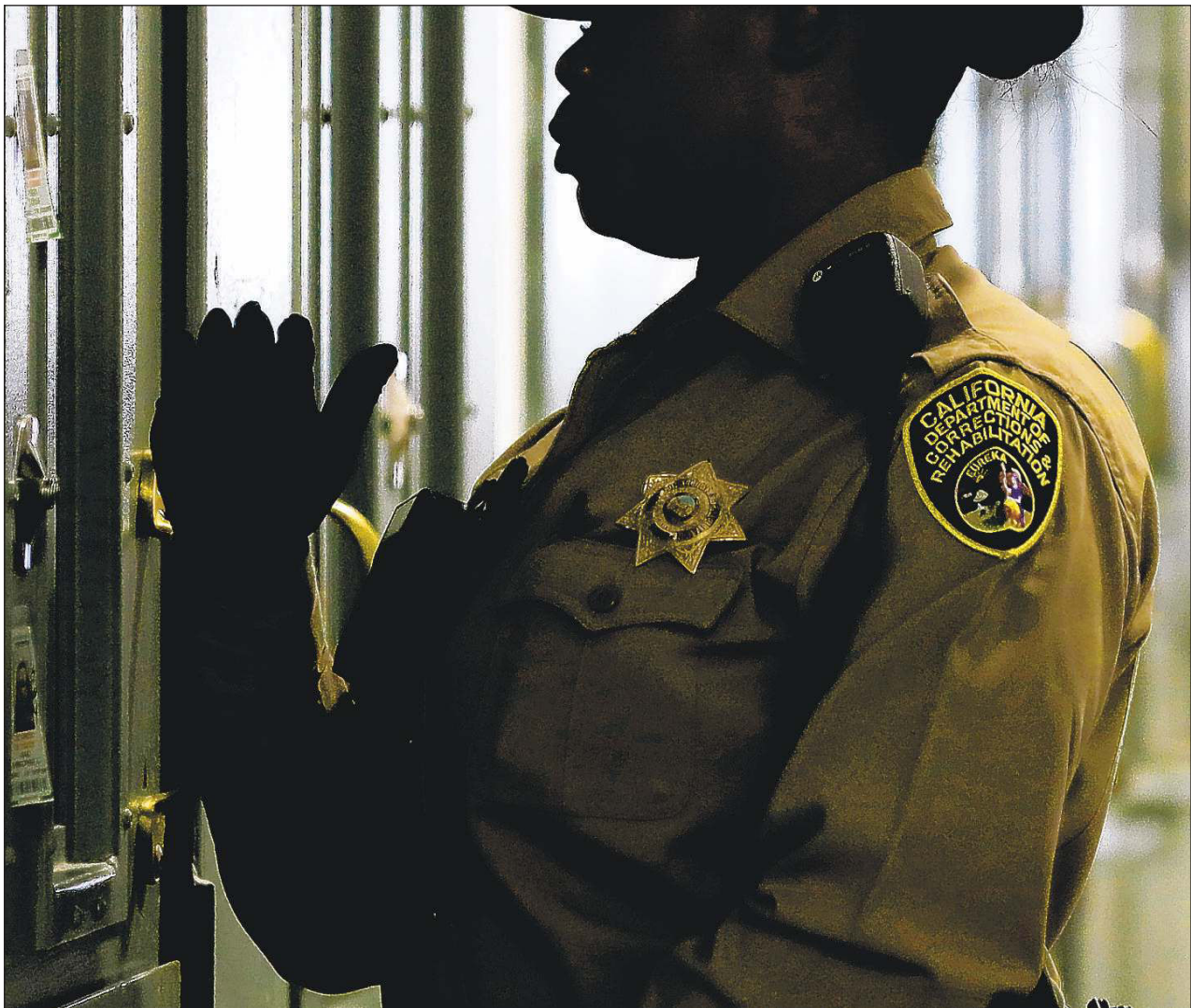
The department said it does not comment on pending legislation but noted that inmates can file complaints if they feel they are not being accommodated.

Bryan’s bill would make menstrual products accessible for women to take as needed — without asking staff. The estimated cost to the state would be minimal.

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The first time Moore got her period, she was 11 and living at a school for troubled youth in Mendocino. She’d been arrested on felony and misdemeanor robbery charges and served her three-year sentence at the Catholic reform school instead of a juvenile detention facility. It was a difficult place to go through puberty.

“Nobody was talking to us about our menstrual cy-



LUIS SINCO / Los Angeles Times

A CORRECTIONS OFFICER checks on inmates at California State Prison in Sacramento. The ACLU has identified eight cases since September of women incarcerated in California being denied menstrual supplies.

cles or sex,” Moore told The Times. “No one is talking to us about our bodies at all. Then you are incarcerated, and one day you have your period. That was fairly traumatizing.”

At 17, Moore was arrested again. This time, it was a second-degree murder charge for the killing of her boyfriend, who abused her, she said. In 1997, she was sentenced to 15 years to life.

As a teenager in a California prison, her period became a monthly anxiety. She was given about a dozen tampons and a dozen pads each month, though the exact number varied based on supply and was up to the discretion of the guards. When the law passed in 2020, a year before her release, officers

tried to make it “appear as if they were available” to the administration and any outside visitors, she said. “But it was all facade.”

Because of a medical condition, she experienced long periods of bleeding that required more supplies.

“It was happening to a large majority of the women,” Moore said. “I couldn’t say that it was just me.”

After entering the system as a child, Moore left it behind three years ago. She now works as a reentry coordinator at All of Us or None, a nonprofit led by formerly incarcerated people.

She remembers clearly the first time she bought tampons from Walmart.

“It was almost like a surreal experience,” she said. “I

didn’t need to stand there and be sexualized for getting a tampon. It took a while for things like that to sink in.”

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The problem is not limited to state prisons. In Los Angeles jails, inspections show that access to menstrual supplies has been inconsistent, due to an apparent lack of availability or to deputies’ unwillingness to hand out supplies. Two years ago, the county’s Sybil Brand Commission reported that people living in some dorms of the Century Regional Detention Facility — the primary women’s jail — couldn’t get tampons, for unclear reasons. The following year, the commission

found “deputies taking it upon themselves to decide if a woman will get an additional napkin if she needs it.”

Since then, inspections have generally turned up fewer problems with access to menstrual supplies — though commissioners reported that during a visit in April, one woman said she had her period and didn’t know where she would get a pad for the next day.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department said in a statement that it is “committed to providing free and easy access to sanitary napkins, panty liners and tampons” so women in custody “can focus on their rehabilitation with dignity.”

Officials said menstrual products are available in

common areas in the women’s jail. But “based on the challenges” faced by the most severely mentally ill inmates living in “high-observation housing,” those women have to request menstrual supplies.

Over the last decade, at least two dozen states have passed legislation to ensure access to menstrual products, according to the Prison Flow Project. Maryland, Delaware and Florida were among those that passed measures in 2018, and a few more states have followed suit each year since.

Most states make those free supplies available upon request. As a result, many women still face a lack of access that Michele Deitch, director of the Prison and Jail Innovation Lab at the University of Texas at Austin, described as “absolutely unacceptable.”

“One of the big problems in addition to limits on the supplies is that in many places they have to request the supplies — and sometimes have to show their bloody clothes to an officer as proof that they need them,” she said. “Any time you put women in a position where they have to request something from staff, it makes them vulnerable to the staff wanting something in return, including sexual favors.”

Texas prison officials said menstrual products are free for inmates and emphasized that they make sure the items are available.

“Last year, we began a campaign to educate inmates about the availability of these products,” said spokeswoman Amanda Hernandez.

But Kwaneta Harris, a 51-year-old doing time in a central Texas prison, said guards have grilled her about why someone her age needs pads and tampons.

“If one more guard says to me when I ask for them, ‘Ain’t you too old to still be having a cycle?’ It ain’t gonna be pretty,” she wrote. “I’m sick of explaining that perimenopause means hot flashes AND heavy periods to guards the same age as my kids.”



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CITY & STATE



ZOE CRANFILL Los Angeles Times

MARCHERS CARRY a giant rainbow flag down Santa Monica Boulevard on Sunday during the West Hollywood Pride Parade. This year, several organizations made a pointed effort to spotlight current political events.

Pride on parade in WeHo

Movement’s social justice roots are in the spotlight amid diversity celebration.

By JIREH DENG

The sun was tucked away, but the cheeks were out Sunday at the West Hollywood Pride Parade as go-go dancers in jockstraps and gay cowboys in breezy leather chaps strolled down Santa Monica Boulevard.

Leading the pack was a phalanx of queer bikers ready to rev their engines down a rainbow-swaddled corridor in the heart of Southern California’s iconic gay haven.

West Hollywood local Katrina Vinson has been taking part in the parade for years as the founder of Pride Riders, a collective of lesbian riders. To her, the weekend’s LGBTQ+ festivities were about spotlighting inclusivity.

“WeHo specifically tends to be a Boystown,” said Vinson, speaking of West Hollywood’s reputation as primarily a hot spot for affluent white gay men. “It’s really important for there to be visibility of gay women and nonbinary [people].”

All along the parade route, people waved iterations of flags representing those who are asexual, trans or lesbian — Mexican flags with rainbow stripes signaled pride at intersectional identities.

Local restaurants capitalized on the street traffic, opening their storefronts to the sidewalk to serve beverages and eats to pedestrians and their canine companions. Other businesses used the parade as an advertising opportunity.

“Take Pride in your flexibility,” read Crunch’s pithy float as it promoted the fitness franchise.

A film crew took advantage of the setting to shoot a scene for the biopic “Trust Me, I’m a Doctor,” about for-

mer Playboy model Anna Nicole Smith. Abbie Cornish, as Smith, wore a sleek silver dress and sat atop a convertible across from co-star Kal Penn, who plays Smith’s doctor Sandeep Kapoor.

Although West Hollywood Pride definitely has a commercial side, Hollywood resident Tim Armitage said he’d noticed a shift in recent years toward a more local vibe, with a greater focus on nonprofits and service organizations.

In 2020, West Hollywood and L.A. Pride split, resulting in two weekend festivals that have to compete for headline acts and corporate sponsorships. With two parades, there’s more space for neighborhood groups to shine.

“It feels a lot more authentic,” said Armitage, a marketing strategist who has lived in Los Angeles for 22 years. He identifies as gay and says parade organizers have expanded the event’s scope, better ensuring that communities under the LGBTQ+ umbrella are represented. “It gets better and better every year.”

But it wasn’t all rainbows and fun. This year, several organizations made a pointed effort to call attention to current political events locally and globally.

With calls for housing justice as well as a campaign to pass the Equal Rights Act — the social justice roots of Pride Month were a throughline amid the joyful celebration of diversity.

A group of Indigenous queer people marched in traditional regalia while waving a Mexican flag and prominently displaying a Palestinian flag on the bumper of their truck that said, “Free Palestine.”

“It is our belief that the Pride festival and the whole Pride event was a protest itself. It was a revolt. And we’re here and continuing that spirit of fighting for civil rights,” said Ozomatli Xochipilli. He added they were nearly barred by a pa-

rade official and law enforcement from participating in the parade because their political banner reflected support for Palestinians in the Israel-Hamas war.

A few dozen protesters clad in kaffiyehs demonstrated along the sidelines of the parade, corralled by Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputies. “No pride in apartheid,” read one sign. Another read, “No queer liberation without Palestinian liberation.”

Despite the peaceful nature of the event, some parade-goers expressed an undercurrent of fear, citing political backlash affecting the transgender community. Last year during Pride Month, the Supreme Court voted 6-3 to affirm the right of a web designer to refuse services to same-sex couples even as states including Florida and Tennessee considered laws banning drag performances.

And in April, The Times reported bomb threats against the TransLatin@ Coalition, which provides services for transgender and gender-nonconforming Latino communities.

But that didn’t stop TransLatin@ Coalition, marking its 15th anniversary, from celebrating as well in a quinceañera-themed float, where trans women in bejeweled floor-length gowns danced to reggaeton and cumbia.

The organization offers social services with bilingual assistance. Training coordinator Bee Curiel says transgender Latinos with language barriers face greater discrimination. “That just reinforces that our presence is needed and that our community members rely on us,” Curiel said.

The law firm Carpenter and Zuckerman took a playful jab at current affairs — hiring drag queens to portray a reimagined Supreme Court.

“Drag has become a revolutionary act,” said Carlos Hernandez, a queer trial attorney at the firm. Hernan-

dez said that in recent years, the firm had become increasingly concerned with the number of transgender individuals seeking legal representation after being targeted by law enforcement.

Meanwhile, the firm made its political point by driving a rainbow-painted Tesla with its Supreme Court in tow to express solidarity with its clients.

Local drag queen Mylique E. Fawcett was tasked last year with representing Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. This year, Fawcett was invited back to portray an orange-colored Supreme Court justice in a rainbow pantheon of drag queen justices. Her pumpkin-inspired outfit was a provocative look, complete with green nail polish, knee-high stockings, ivy woven into her ginger wig and a judge’s gavel.

“We are imagining the Supreme Court justice that we deserve and want,” Hernandez said.

First-time Pride parade attendee and high school sophomore Bumble, a pseudonym, said she was amazed by the atmosphere of acceptance and inclusivity.

“I love drag queens. I look up to them,” said the student from L.A.’s Bernstein High School. Some walked, others drove to the Pride parade. But Bumble rode the bus with their classmate Thierry, who provided just their first name. Together they held a flag covered with rainbow hearts.

“I was bawling my eyes out because this is really a moment for me,” added Bumble.

Although Bumble professes to being loud and proud at her school, she said it’s more difficult for classmates like Thierry. Not all families are accepting.

“I love being here because I had never been out before,” said Thierry, who said they have struggled to find a way to freely express their queer identity. “But now I can.”

Corral fire injures two, destroys home

Blaze near explosives testing facility in San Joaquin County is mostly contained.

By SUMMER LIN, JOSEPH SERNA AND ALEX WIGGLESWORTH

A wildfire that broke out over the weekend near an explosives and materials testing site in San Joaquin County, forcing residents to evacuate, injured two firefighters and destroyed one home, authorities say.

The Corral fire, which began Saturday afternoon near the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory Site 300, is burning to the west of Interstate 580. It had grown to 14,168 acres by Sunday night.

The fire was 75% contained as of Monday morning, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said.

Feeding on light, dry grass, the blaze moved toward Tracy, a city of about 100,000 east of San Francisco, and triggered mandatory evacuations that were downgraded to warnings at 6 p.m. Sunday.

“Residents are advised to remain vigilant and prepared for potential changes,” San Joaquin County’s office of emergency services said.

One home near the Tracy Golf & Country Club burned completely to the ground. Officials were concerned about the fire reaching the new Tracy Hills planned community, which has a couple of homes so far.

“We had such strong winds, and this grass fire was able to spread to more than 14,000 acres in essentially a day,” said Cecile Juliette, a spokeswoman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s Santa Cruz unit.

On Saturday, Laura Tosti evacuated with her family and animals as the blaze approached her Tracy home, she told KCRA 3.

Friends and family showed up at her house with trucks and trailers to transport Tosti’s livestock.

She was able to return home Sunday night.

“We feel very blessed for what we have,” she told the TV station.

The fire was considered a threat to the laboratory, which the Environmental Protection Agency describes as a “high-explosives and materials testing site in support of nuclear weapons research,” the Associated Press reported Sunday.

The EPA said operations at the site, which commenced in the 1950s, had “contaminated soil and groundwater with hazardous chemicals,” and long-term cleanup is ongoing.

The fire briefly shut down Interstate 580; all lanes have reopened.

Local closures remain in place while crews battle the blaze.

About 475 Cal Fire personnel, 45 fire engines, 14 crews and 15 water tenders have been deployed.

Weather conditions Monday morning were favorable for fighting the fire. Temperatures near the Tracy airport were in the low 70s, with relative humidity in the mid-50s, according to National Weather Service meteorologist Nathan Rick. Winds were 20 to 25 miles per hour.

But by Tuesday afternoon, relative humidity is expected to drop to the low 20s or upper teens.

“That’s when we start to get a little more concerned with fire weather potential,” Rick said.

Grass fires are common at this time of year in Northern California.

Grasses tend to be fully cured or dried out by May or June, according to Craig Clements, professor and chair of the department of meteorology and climate science and director of the Wildfire Interdisciplinary Research Center at San José State University.

The Corral fire occurred during relatively cool, moist conditions, carried by a strong sea breeze through the Altamont Pass, east of Livermore, and was stoked by dry grasses and strong winds, Clements noted.

“With that amount of wind, fires can spread really quickly,” he said.



KENT PORTER Associated Press

THE CORRAL FIRE burns through a home Saturday west of the San Joaquin County city of Tracy.

Shark attacks swimmer; beach in Del Mar closed

Man, 46, suffers torso, arm and hand injuries not expected to be life-threatening.

By MARISA GERBER

A 46-year-old man — a member of a group of ocean swimmers who regularly train in the waters north of San Diego — was attacked by a shark Sunday morning in Del Mar, prompting officials in the beach city to block water access until later in the week.

The attack happened around 9 a.m. off 17th Street, city officials said in a statement.

The victim, who was bitten in the torso, left arm and hand, was transported to a hospital, officials said,

where he was being treated for injuries they described as significant but not likely life-threatening.

After the attack, lifeguards began posting signs barring swimmers and surfers from getting into the water at beaches within one mile in either direction from where the incident happened.

The water closure, officials said, will stay in effect until 9 a.m. Tuesday.

Last week, surfers and swimmers were barred from entering the water at another beach in Southern California following what officials described as “aggressive shark behavior.”

In that attack, which happened over Memorial Day weekend in San Clemente, a shark knocked a surfer from their board.

Woman again accused of kidnap attempt

Police say 27-year-old with a mental health disorder was arrested after incident in park.

By KAREN GARCIA

For the second time this year, a Los Angeles woman with a mental health disorder has been arrested on suspicion of attempting to kidnap a child in Koreatown.

Her previous sentencing for attempted kidnapping resulted in a diversion program for a mental health disorder that the court believed had a role in her initial crime.

But police say she has tried another abduction. L.A. Police Department officers responded to reports of a woman approaching children about 5 p.m. May 28 at Seoul International Park in the 3200 block of San Marino Street, according to the department.

Witnesses who spoke to officers said the woman, identified as Yara Vanessa



Los Angeles Police Department

YARA Vanessa Pineda was previously held on suspicion of trying to kidnap a boy at a Target in February.

Pineda, approached several children, picked them up and then let them go, KTLA-TV reported.

Pineda, 27, allegedly put the children down after their parents confronted her, and then she fled.

Officers saw Pineda running down Normandie Avenue and tried to arrest her, said Jader Chaves, an LAPD spokesperson. She resisted, and officers used a Taser to subdue her, Chaves said.

The LAPD had arrested her Feb. 28 on suspicion of trying to kidnap a young boy from a Target.

On Feb. 25, Olympic Division officers responded to a report that Pineda allegedly grabbed a 4-year-old child from behind and carried him out of the store, according to a police report.

Pineda allegedly put the child down after his parents confronted her outside. The family told officers they didn’t know Pineda.

Three days later, officers in the North Hollywood area got a call from a person who saw Pineda and recognized her from a community alert issued by police. She was found and arrested in the attempted kidnapping.

On May 21, Pineda was sentenced to two years of a mental health diversion program. It was unclear from court records why she was released so recently after the previous arrest.

A court is allowed to grant a mental health diversion for individuals with a felony charge if they are diagnosed with a mental health disorder and do not pose a significant safety risk if treated in the community, according to the California Department of State Hospitals. The charges, however, can’t be murder, voluntary manslaughter, rape or lewd and lascivious acts with a child under the age of 14.

The diagnosis can be of schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder or bipolar disorder.

Pineda’s diagnosis was not disclosed in court documents.

A mental health diversion is granted when the court deems that a mental health disorder played a role in the criminal behavior.

High temperatures ahead

[Heat, from B1]

National Weather Service officials are focused on the serious and potentially deadly health effects from extreme heat, especially for vulnerable populations, such as elderly people or pregnant women. The weather service reminds residents in these hot spots to stay hydrated, avoid the sun and the heat of the day and use air conditioning.

The heat is also expected to bring elevated fire condi-

tions across the state.

This past weekend, the Golden State probably saw its busiest fire activity so far this year, with a 14,000-acre blaze in San Joaquin County that temporarily forced evacuations.

Several other small fires popped up across the state, including two vegetation fires in Santa Barbara County and one in Riverside County.

The most extreme heat this week is expected near

California's border with Nevada, where an excessive heat warning will be in effect from Wednesday through Friday, with dangerously hot temperatures. Forecasters warned of highs hitting 115 degrees around Lake Mead and Lake Havasu City, 114 degrees in Las Vegas and up to 120 degrees in Death Valley.

"As the heat builds day by day there will be little relief during the overnights, especially within the Las Vegas valley and Death Valley National Park," the warning said.

The excessive heat warning will also be in effect across the Mojave Desert on Wednesday and Thursday, where "dangerously hot conditions" are expected to bring highs between 96 and 106 degrees. In the San Joaquin Valley and lower Sierra Nevada foothills, highs are forecast to top out between 103 and 108 degrees.

In Northern California,



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

PADDLEBOARDING in Newport Beach will be one way to stay cool this week.

the heat wave is expected to hit even sooner, with heat warnings going into effect Tuesday morning, including across the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys and the Sierra foothills, where warnings of excessive heat have been issued. The mercury there is forecast to reach 95 to 108 degrees, with "limited overnight relief, with low [nighttime] temperatures in the 60s to mid 70s," the warning said.

Across inland North and East Bay and the Sonoma County mountains, highs

are expected to reach nearly 100 degrees Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, with nighttime temperatures dropping only into the 60s and 70s, according to the heat advisory issued for that region.

"There is a moderate to high risk for those who are heat sensitive, especially those without effective cooling or adequate hydration," the National Weather Service Bay Area warned.

The widespread warming will also increase snowmelt, raising concerns

about cold, fast-moving waterways across the state, creating what the weather service warned could be "potentially dangerous conditions for those seeking relief in rivers and lakes."

The upper-level high pressure system driving this heat wave is expected to slowly weaken and move east by the end of the week, Sirard said.

"By Friday, temperatures do start to cool down a little bit," Sirard said. "We are expecting a gradual cool-down through the weekend."

Obituaries

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John Lawrence Callaghan

John Lawrence Callaghan passed away peacefully in his sleep on May 29th, 2024.

Born August 2nd, 1930, in Liverpool, England, to Florence and John Callaghan, he was a lifelong Catholic devoted to his faith and family. He touched countless lives as a renowned educator, mentor, sportsman, and friend.

John completed his primary school years at St. Mary's College before serving in the Royal Air Force. He continued his education at Loughborough University and later began his teaching career at Ratcliffe College. John would go on to receive honorary doctorate degrees from London and Loughborough Universities. Eventually life led him west in 1965, where John pursued his PhD at the University of Southern California. In 1977, Los Angeles became his home.

In total, John spent 67 years in education, including 48 years at USC, over half of which he also served as the University Marshall. His impact was felt by the thousands of students who passed through his office and classroom.

John's love of sport began at an early age and ultimately took him places all across the globe. After retiring from rugby, soccer, and cricket, golf and tennis became his mainstays.

John's entire life changed when he met Mary Elizabeth Shea, fittingly at the Los Angeles Country Club, in 1971. Love quickly ensued, and 4 years later, they were married. Upon welcoming their 4 children, John loved nothing more than to be with his family; he spent countless hours on a field, in a gym, or on a court with them. To him, family was the ultimate.

John leaves behind his most cherished wife of 48 years, Mary Elizabeth; his four children, Kate Gorr (Robb), Anne Hickey (Kevin), John (Christina), and Peter (Taylor); his twelve grandchildren; and his sister, Betty. He is predeceased by his sister, Josie, and his brother, Peter (Sheila).

A funeral mass will be held on June 12th, at 10am, at St. Brendan Catholic Church, Los Angeles.

Please consider Loyola High School's Innovation Initiatives (<https://www.loyolahs.edu/giving/>) and Augie's Quest to Cure ALS (<https://augiesquest.org/>) in John's memory.

Lawrence Mann

June 6, 1927 - May 27, 2024

Lawrence Mann was born in New York, coming to California at the age of 13. He attended Fairfax High School, and got his bachelor's degree at UC Berkeley, interrupting his college studies for service in the Navy. Larry graduated college and married in 1948, followed by a successful career in life insurance. Larry and Carol had three children, Susie (David), Kathy and Marcy. They were also blessed with grandchildren Judith, Daniel, Robert, Henry, Anthony and Edward, as well as three great grandchildren.

The year that was 1935

Although a primitive, two-color process was first used in 1922, audiences weren't impressed by Technicolor until a three-color system appeared in "Becky Sharp."

latimes.com/archives



Sheldon E Weisberg

Sheldon Weisberg was born on February 13, 1932 in Chicago, Illinois and peacefully passed away at his home in Rancho Mirage on May 29, 2024. All of his friends called him "Shelly." He went to school only a few blocks away from Wrigley Field. It was befitting he became a lifelong fan and student of baseball (luckily changing his allegiance from the Cubs to the Dodgers in 1960).

He served as an MP in the US Army Air Force in Monterey, California and later at the Presidio. He fell in love with the state, attending the University of Southern California thereafter. His obsession with the Lakers and USC Trojans football team began there and continued for the rest of his life. It was in Southern California that Shelly met Barbara, the love of his life, and they were married June 29, 1958. Together, they raised three children, traveled the world, and spent time with their friends.

Shelly was a successful entrepreneur, founding several apparel manufacturing companies. Although driven by his strong work ethic, nothing made him happier than spending time with his family, exploring new parts of the world, and watching sporting events with his family. The 2012 and 2014 Stanley Cup wins by the LA Kings were among his highlights.

Shelly never let technology pass him by. He was talented with the computer and was an avid photographer. His favorite subjects of photos were his family and friends. Shelly was a trumpet player in his youth and remained a music lover of every genre. He passed the joy of music on to his family. Shelly will always be remembered for his kindness. He did not care where a person came from or their social status. Everyone was equal in his eyes and he was an optimist to the core. He was a generous soul. He always had a genuine smile to share and time to listen to a stranger's story. To know Shelly was to love him. His loyalty to his family and friends was one of his most enduring traits.

Shelly leaves behind Barbara, his wife of 65 years, his daughter Tammy, his sons Michael (Betsy) and Gregg (Samantha), and his grandchildren Gabriella, Jack, Hank, Wolf and Gustav, all of whom he loved and touched deeply. Shelly is also survived by his dog Kobe who made him smile every day. Shelly was preceded in death by his mother Fay, his father Mike, and his sister Anita.

Memorial services for Shelly will be held at Hillside Memorial Park on June 5, 2024 at noon. In lieu of flowers, the family requests a donation be made in Shelly's memory to the charity of your choice. We recommend: Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles.

In Memoriam



Rita La Fountaine

June 4, 1933 - October 19, 2010
IN LOVING MEMORY

[Stonecutters, from B1]

trolled access in California to materials that contain silica," said Jim Hieb, chief executive of the Natural Stone Institute, an industry group. "This means anyone can purchase materials and allow any contractor to fabricate them" — cutting and polishing a slab for countertop installation — "without regulatory control."

That could change if state lawmakers pass AB 3043, a bill that would establish a licensing system for businesses that cut and polish slabs of engineered or natural stone.

Under the bill, no business could legally do stone "fabrication" work in California without such a state license. To obtain one, shops would need to show they were following state requirements for workplace safety and ensure employees were trained in protective measures. The bill would also bar suppliers from providing slabs to unlicensed cutters.

In addition, AB 3043 would prohibit such shops from cutting slabs without using "wet methods" to tamp down dust. Emergency rules adopted in December by state regulators already require such systems whenever risky work is being performed, but Assemblymember Luz Rivas (D-North Hollywood) argued that banning "dry cutting" in state law would strengthen the rules.

Working in this industry should not be "a death sentence," said Rivas, who in-

troduced the bill.

The bill would also require Cal/OSHA to start publicly reporting on its website on any orders prohibiting activities at stonecutting shops in the previous year, as well as mandate reports to lawmakers about which parts of the state have the highest numbers of violations and how many licenses have been issued.

The legislation was sponsored by the State Building and Construction Trades Council and is also backed by the American Lung Assn. in California and the Western Occupational & Environmental Medical Assn.

The hope is that as many stonecutting businesses step forward and get licensed, Cal/OSHA "may be able to shine a light on the parts of the industry they know about that haven't registered" and "target their resources," said Jeremy Smith, chief of staff for the State Building and Construction Trades Council.

Business groups had bristled at an earlier version of the bill that imposed wage requirements, which were later stripped from the proposal. The Silica Safety Coalition, an industry group that argues silicosis can be prevented with the use of safety measures, said it was now backing the bill. So is the Natural Stone Institute.

"Careful implementation of the licensure program registration, coupled with strict monitoring and enforcement will be critical to the success of this program,"

Hieb said in an email.

Enforcement has been a serious question in the face of high vacancy rates at Cal/OSHA. Even knowing how many stone fabrication shops exist has been a challenge for state regulators: At a UCLA conference in May, a California Department of Public Health official estimated there were more than 900 stonecutting shops across the state. In another presentation that same morning, Hieb said his group pegged the figure around 3,000.

Whenever a state bill involves Cal/OSHA, "that is in the back of everybody's mind. ... Are they going to have the wherewithal to really do what we want this bill to do?" Smith said.

Funding could be a problem: Under the bill, any stonecutting shops seeking a license would need to pay fees — \$650 in total for an initial application, \$450 for a renewal — which would go into a state fund used to enforce the rules. AB 3043 would also require stonecutting businesses to bear the costs of training workers.

But an Assembly Appropriations Committee analysis concluded that fees and possible penalties under the bill were unlikely to cover the costs of the regulatory structure set out by AB 3043, potentially requiring other funding from the state as it grapples with a yawning deficit. Rivas said she and other lawmakers are still assessing the fees needed to support rigorous enforce-

ment.

Among those who have questioned the bill is Assemblymember Diane Dixon (R-Newport Beach), who voted against AB 3043 in committee. In a statement, Dixon said among her concerns was that "the worker training requirements in this bill are largely duplicative of existing training requirements under Cal/OSHA regulations." Rivas disputed that argument.

Dr. Robert Blink, past president of the Western Occupational & Environmental Medical Assn., said the state needs to impose a fee on every square foot of stone slab that is sold, "producing enough money every year to actually fund the necessary training, education, registration, tracking, enforcement and so forth."

Scofflaw shops will still try to ignore the rules if AB 3043 passes, he said. "If there is enough energy addressed to reining them in ... then it will help a lot," Blink said.

Rivas said that she would have tried to ban engineered stone — a decision soon to go into effect in Australia — if she thought such a bill would have a chance at passing. In Australia, workplace safety regulators concluded that "the only way to ensure that another generation of Australian workers do not contract silicosis from such work is to prohibit its use" entirely.

Short of such a ban, Rivas said, "we're trying to create a way that workers will be safe."

UC again fails to get injunction; strike expands

[Strike, from B1]

bara and UC San Diego and is scheduled to spread Wednesday to UC Irvine.

"By direction of the board, the request for injunctive relief in the above-entitled matter is denied without prejudice, sufficient grounds therefore not having been demonstrated," wrote J. Felix De La Torre, general counsel for the employment board, announcing Monday's decision to both parties.

United Auto Workers Local 481I represents 48,000 graduate teaching assistants, researchers and other academic workers at UC's 10 campuses and the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory.

Unionized workers lead discussion groups, grade papers, conduct research and administer exams, among other responsibilities.

The ruling does not settle the question of whether the strike is legal. This broader issue will be settled through a slower process that would probably outlast the strike. The two sides also are in mediation, which has the potential to end the strike, through a settlement, prior to its scheduled conclusion on June 30.

In a statement Monday, UC's vice president of labor relations expressed disappointment that the strike would go on. The statement said UC would shift its legal fight to state court.

"We are disappointed that the state agency dedicated to the oversight of public employment could not take decisive and immediate action to end this unlawful strike — a decision that harms UC's students who are nearing the end of their academic year," said

Melissa Matella, UC's associate vice president for systemwide labor relations.

"Now that UC has exhausted the PERB process for injunctive relief, UC will move to state court and is hopeful for quick and decisive action so that our students can end their quarter with their focus on academics," Matella said.

Union President Rafael Jaime said in a statement that the state labor board "has once again upheld the law. It's time for UC to face reality."

"We said last week that if UC did not make progress in addressing the serious unfair labor practices, as many as three more campuses could be called to stand up. UC instead chose another week of legal saber-rattling," Jaime said, adding that officials should "stop wasting time and public resources on legal maneuvers. We stand ready to reach resolution — where is UC?"

On May 23, the labor board issued a complaint against the union based on UC's allegation that the walkout is illegal because of a "no strike" clause in the union's contract. The complaint sets in motion a process under which both sides will make their case. The complaint indicates the labor board's view that, if the facts presented by UC are shown to be accurate, then the strike could be ruled illegal.

But this is a slow-moving deliberation — both sides have until mid-June to submit paperwork.

The university had sought a quicker route, seeking an injunction to halt the strike, saying the walkout was causing harm "that can never be undone."

"At just UC Santa Cruz, UCLA and UC Davis, over 9,000 UAW members teach over 5,130 ... undergraduate classes, seminars, discussion sections, and laboratory sections. These classes have literally hundreds of thousands of students enrolled in them — students who have paid tuition for a full quarter's worth of instruction, and in many cases whose grades and academic futures rely on the completing [of] their courses," UC said in its filing requesting the injunction.

John Logan, a professor in the department of labor and employment studies at San Francisco State University, said the labor board's decision will put UC officials "under intense pressure — both from within the university and external political pressure — to negotiate with the union to end the strike."

UAW 481I went on strike last month after alleging its members' free speech rights were violated by UC's actions during pro-Palestinian protests and encampment crackdowns, among other charges.

Police on Friday morning entered the UC Santa Cruz campus, ordering protesters to disperse. Such police actions at other campuses have been a basis for the union's claims that workers' rights have been violated — and that these alleged violations amount to an unfair labor practice, providing legal justification for the current walkout.

As with any strike, the purpose has been to apply pressure on the institution by disrupting business as usual. In the view of UAW 481I, the work stoppage is a standard, legally protected

union activity.

Also on May 23, the state's labor board — which oversees labor-management relations and actions — ruled that the strike could continue, while also allowing the university to submit additional evidence in an attempt to meet the high legal standard necessary for outside intervention.

The strikers lay blame for disruptions on the university for events leading up to the strike as well as the delay in its resolution.

Whereas unions typically strike over pay and benefits, this walkout has been far different because of the intertwining of political issues beyond standard contract matters.

Academic workers on strike at UCLA, UC Davis and UC Santa Cruz chanted last week about "workers' rights under attack," referring to pro-Palestinian union members who were arrested and suspended after recent protests. Some on the picket line wore kaffiyehs, traditional scarves used to express solidarity with Palestinians.

Others waved Palestinian flags, shouting "free Palestine," and pressed union demands that UC divest from ties to Israel and the war in Gaza and grant all protesters amnesty from campus discipline.

Another union demand is for the researchers it represents to receive transitional funding so they can opt out from "funding sources tied to the military or oppression of Palestinians." That would include those working for departments that were given portions of the \$333 million UC received last year from the Department of Defense.

A focus on journalism

[Downey, from B1] onday education, Rani Bertsch. “I began working in Downey Unified in 1994 and we already had well-established journalism courses at the middle and high school level.”

The district’s journalism offerings have evolved with the times and with the goal of preparing young people for 21st century careers.

Middle schools in Downey Unified now offer courses and training in advanced journalism, video production, digital photography, and even podcasting. These courses feed directly into what the district calls Career Technical Education Pathways, a program that enables high school students to earn college credit through dual enrollment with Cerritos College and Cal State Long Beach. High School students who are interested in pursuing a career in journalism also have the option to take electives such as advanced journalism and newspaper — classes that come with opportunities to develop real-world experience.

In October, when SoFi Stadium hosted its first high school football game between rivals Downey and Warren high schools, Downey Legend reporters were in the press box and on the sidelines alongside professional journalists. Prior to the game, students attended the mandatory meeting for the media. Downey Legend staff members also have the opportunity to contribute to the local newspaper, the Downey Patriot. For those more interested in the communications side of the industry, the district offers a summer internship that allows students to shadow public relations professionals.

Of the 30 or so students in newspaper advisor Michelle Napoli’s journalism class this year, almost all of them are Latino and, more specifically, Latinas. To attend school in Downey, many come from working-class communities, including Compton, South Gate and Paramount. Overwhelmingly, the students’ parents are immigrants, or first generation, and they prioritize the schooling their children receive in Downey, which has an education budget that far outpaces others in southeast L.A. County.

The backgrounds and demographics of the Downey Legend staff are entirely unlike those of newsrooms nationwide. Once a blue-collar trade, journalism now draws disproportionately from affluent families. In English-language newsrooms across the United

States, Latinos remain largely absent. In fact, there are severe disparities in Latino representation across all sectors of journalism, including broadcast news, cable news, print newspapers and digital news sites.

But while the number of Latinos in the media industry has remained stagnant, growing just 1% between 2010 and 2019, the city of Downey has spent years quietly implementing journalism infrastructure that has the potential to change the face of local reporting and serve as a model for school districts nationwide.

Cohesive learning experiences

Trust in journalism is at a record low and media literacy — or the ability to critically analyze and evaluate information — is also severely lacking.

This was evidenced by successful online misinformation and disinformation campaigns that targeted Latino communities and contributed to warped perceptions of the election and the COVID-19 pandemic. Downey Unified did not intentionally set out to rectify larger societal problems, but its focus on journalism effectively provides the young Latinos who make up a majority of the student body with training in media literacy, a sense of social responsibility and a career path for entering the field.

Elementary schools in Downey Unified are now part of this pipeline, and the training can start as early as first grade.

Downey Unified is home to eight of Apple’s Distinguished Schools, chosen by the company for their innovative implementation of Apple technologies that enhance student learning.

Every elementary and middle school student in the district receives an iPad, and each elementary school offers journalism training through “innovation labs” that allow schools to host weekly news presentations.

Allison Box has been a school principal in Downey Unified for 12 years, seven of which were spent at Lewis Elementary School, one of the first schools in the district that transitioned a basic computer lab into an innovation lab using funds from a grant.

Initially, the school developed a student tech squad and the lab was intended to focus on engineering and design. Teacher Susan Fisher had the idea to expand the focus to media, using the technology available to teach Lewis students research and reporting skills.

According to Box, Lewis became the first elementary school in the district with a floor-to-ceiling green screen, used by the student news anchors who broadcast the morning announcements.

“What we’ve tried to do is leverage technology tools to lead to deeper understanding and learning,” Box said. “And ultimately kids become the designers of their own innovative learning experiences.”

Children who aren’t interested in being in front of the camera have the opportunity to learn about script writing, sound engineering, lighting and other behind-the-scenes skills that bring broadcast journalism to life.

The Lewis News Team, as it’s known, is an offshoot of the tech squad, and Lewis’ current principal, Tami Francis, says the program is the most sought-after at the school.

Around 80 students apply each year to join the news team, many of whom go on to middle schools in the district where they can continue to build on their journalism skills.

“In Downey Unified, we’re striving to create cohesive K-12 learning experiences, and with journalism, there is now a pathway for students to continue working on these skills through high school and beyond,” Francis said.

“It’s important that this is a districtwide initiative so that every student in our district receives the same opportunities.”

Children from out of town also benefit from the district’s journalism offerings. South Gate resident Andres Campos is a seventh-grader at Sussman Middle School, where he said an introduction to journalism class with teacher Steve Schmaltz sparked his interest in the behind-the-scenes work of broadcast journalism. Now, Campos works with his best friend and fellow South Gate resident Jeffrey Aceves, 13, to create graphics, oversee the



JILL CONNELLY For De Los

STUDENTS, from left, Mia Ellingson, Isabelle Elaine Gudiel and Zinadin Rosales prepare for a podcast.

soundboard and perform other tasks associated with the school’s daily news broadcast.

Campos was initially drawn to Sussman’s journalism offerings because of his interest in technology. Now at 13, he’s considering a future in journalism. He already plans to take photojournalism classes when he attends Downey High School.

The news airs in Sussman classrooms three times a week and Schmaltz said he relies on the broadcast journalism students to deliver. That seems to inspire confidence in Aceves, Campos and other students.

“Mr. Schmaltz told us this was more of a job than a class and that’s why I really wanted to join,” Aceves said. “I like the feeling of having this job ... and these types of classes prepare us for the future.”

Campos said he feels lucky to attend school in Downey because he knows other school districts, including the one where he lives, do not offer the kinds of courses or provide the same access to technology that Sussman does.

“We have what a lot of other kids don’t have,” Campos said.

“My parents are actually really happy that I’m in this class because they know that I like it and that I am doing good in journalism and that it’s giving me a lot of confidence in myself.”

‘My community is rooting for me’

It’s not hard to find examples of former Downey public school students who are now pursuing journalism as a career. But some, such as Clarissa Arceo, describe leaving the city’s predominantly Latino student newsrooms as a bit of a rude awakening.

Arceo is first generation and grew up in Huntington Park before moving to Downey when she was 13, a transition that paved her path to photojournalism. She jokes that she grew up “freelancing” — as a second-grader, she would write original stories and sell them to classmates for 50 cents.

But her early love of writing and interest in photography felt like dead ends, she said. As a child, she had no outlet for her interests and because she never saw Latina reporters and no one in her family did journalism work, she also had no understanding of how she could earn a living pursuing her passions. As a teenager, Arceo left Catholic school to attend Downey High, where she met teacher and Downey Legend advisor Napoli. Arceo credits Napoli with changing her life by introducing her to photojournalism and bringing her onto the staff of the school paper.

In 2020, during her senior year, Arceo interned for the local publication Downey Latino News and founded

the storytelling project JUN-TOS L.A., which highlights immigrant community members. After graduating from high school, Arceo went on to Cerritos College, where she became a reporter and community editor for the school newspaper, Talon Marks. She soon transferred to UC Berkeley and served as the deputy photo editor for the Daily Californian before graduating in December with a degree in media and journalism.

The 22-year-old went on to participate in a study abroad program in Mexico and is now considering grad school, but said she sometimes struggles with insecurities about entering such an unstable industry — one where Latinos remain so underrepresented. Unlike her journalism experience in southeast L.A. County, where she was one of many Latina student reporters, Arceo has found herself in classrooms and newsrooms where she was the only one.

“Of course I worry sometimes, like what if I don’t find my place or what if there’s no room for me in journalism,” Arceo said. “But I push myself through it and I focus on my goal of doing work that brings awareness to underrepresented and marginalized communities — especially those from immigrant backgrounds.”

When visiting family back home in southeast L.A. County, Arceo often returns to the warm embrace of Downey High School to speak to Napoli’s journalism students. Arceo said it’s a good reminder of where she comes from and why becoming a professional journalist is something worth fighting for.

“Not everyone gets to grow up in a strong Latino community that has all of this journalism infrastructure,” Arceo said. “I want to keep making the most of it because when I come back, I still feel the support and like my community is rooting for me. It’s a big piece of who I am, it sort of defines me. I will always carry this community with me and I want to carry it with me in my reporting.”

Metro train hits, kills pedestrian

A man is struck while walking across the tracks near Vernon Station last week.

By LILA SEIDMAN

A pedestrian was struck and killed by a Metro light rail train Friday afternoon in South Los Angeles, according to the Los Angeles Fire Department.

The incident happened around 1:45 p.m. near the above-ground Vernon Station, where twin tracks run alongside Long Beach Avenue, according to the Fire Department.

The person was walking across the tracks and hit by a southbound Metro A Line train near the station, according to the L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

“Metro extends its heartfelt condolences to the deceased’s family and friends,” said Dave Sotero, a spokesperson for Metro.

The pedestrian appeared to be an adult male, LAFD spokesman Brian Humphrey said.

When firefighters arrived, they found the man fully underneath the train but not trapped or pinned down by the understructure, Humphrey said.

“The firefighters actually crawled beneath the very narrow area beneath the train to discreetly, and in a dignified manner, make the removal of remains,” Humphrey said.

The man was declared dead at the scene, he said.

A spokesperson for the L.A. County medical examiner said the case had not been reported to the office as of Friday afternoon.

There were 42 passengers aboard the three-carriage train, according to the LAFD. None were injured.

A video posted by the LAFD on X shows a helicopter flying overhead as emergency personnel worked the scene. Onlookers peer over yellow police tape.

Vernon Station was closed Friday, with trains bypassing the station. Metro officials said the agency would be implementing a bus bridge between Washington and Slauson stations until further notice.

Metro urged people to observe rail safety guidance.

“Pedestrians and vehicles should only cross tracks at marked crossings with signals to help ensure safe passage,” Sotero said.

The Los Angeles Police Department is investigating the incident.

The death is the latest tragedy for the beleaguered Metro transit system, which has experienced a series of recent attacks on buses and trains, including stabbings, killings and fights among passengers and drivers.

L.A. Mayor Karen Bass recently announced that police patrols were being increased and that Metro was trying to improve the system in anticipation of the 2028 Summer Olympics, including using transit ambassadors to assist riders, adding transit security officers and cleaning certain stations more often.

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JUMBLE

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PCNOOH

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Ans. here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's | Jumbles: GUPPY JOIST UNWISE EIGHTY
Answer: The young canine campers were having fun setting up their — PUP TENTS

LEGAL NOTICES 1300

Bids Wanted

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
WELFARE-TO-WORK
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The County of Los Angeles' Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to gather relevant information from service providers and determine the extent of interest from qualified agencies in engaging and providing workforce readiness and subsidized employment activities such as Paid Work Experience, On-the-Job Training, Classroom Training, Blueprint Classes, and other services to the County's California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Welfare-to-Work, non-CalWORKs refugees, CalFresh Employment and Training, Skills and Training to Achieve Readiness for Tomorrow participants and eligible Transitional Age Youth. The RFI is targeted for release on or about June 3, 2024. The RFI will be posted and available for downloading on the Doing Business with Los Angeles County Solicitations website at: http://camisvr.co.la.ca.us/lacobids/ The RFI will also be posted on the DPSS website at:

Bids Wanted

https://dpss.lacounty.gov/en/business/contracts.html
The internet can be accessed at County libraries.
6/3, 6/4, 6/5, 6/6, 6/7/24
CNS-3813115#

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLIC REVIEW AND PUBLIC HEARING
The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) has drafted the 2025 Agency Plan and it will be available for public review and comment beginning **June 10, 2024 through August 1, 2024**. The proposed Plan can be reviewed at HACLA's website at <http://www.hacla.org/About-Us/Public-Documents>, and at the Section 8 satellite offices in Torrance and Van Nuys, and at:
Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles – Central Office
2600 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90057
Please note that comments received after the Public Hearing will not be considered. Please address any written communications to:
Community Engagement Department
2600 Wilshire Blvd., 3rd floor
Los Angeles, CA 90057
The Public Hearing for the 2025 Draft Agency Plan will be held:
August 1, 2024
At 5:00 p.m.
Los Angeles Convention Center
Meeting Room 408/410 MR
1201 South Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90015
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Legal Notices	Legal Notices
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Rough-and-tumble time for Clark

Indiana star knocked down but gets up to face hostile opposing players and media.

By **CHUCK SCHILKEN**

Caitlin Clark had a bit of a rough weekend.

On Sunday, the Indiana Fever rookie scored the fewest points and posted the lowest shooting percentage of both her 11-game WNBA career and her four-year career at Iowa during a blow-out loss to the New York Liberty.

That came a day after Clark was knocked to the court by the Chicago Sky's Chennedy Carter with a hip check away from the ball — a sequence that appeared to draw an enthusiastic response from Sky rookie Angel Reese and later caused some observers to wonder when Clark's teammates will start sticking up for her.

On the bright side, however, the Fever did win that game 71-70 for only their second win of the season.

Clark had 11 points while making 36% of her shots (four for 11) on a night when her team made 39% of its shots while holding Chicago to 41%.

"I thought earlier this season if we would have shot like this, we wouldn't have won the game because we didn't have that resiliency and we would have let it affect our defensive play," Clark told reporters after the game. "So just proud of us, I thought we were really gritty."

Clark's weekend has sparked a lot of conversation, including a bizarre rant by Pat McAfee on his ESPN show Monday in which he described Clark using an offensive phrase while trying to defend her and her status in the WNBA. He has since apologized. Here's a recap:

What happened between Clark and Carter?

After making a jumper to pull the Sky to within 53-49 with 15.8 seconds remaining in the third quarter, Carter approached Clark — who was awaiting the inbound pass from Fever teammate Aliyah Boston — and gave her a hard bump to the hip.

Clark fell to the court on the play, which was called as a common foul at the time but upgraded by the WNBA to a flagrant-1 violation the next day.

"I wasn't expecting it," Clark told reporters of the foul following her team's one-point win. "It is what it is. It's a physical game. Go make the free throw and execute on offense, and I feel like that's kind of what we did."

Said Sky coach Teresa Weatherspoon in a statement on Monday: "Chennedy got caught up in the heat of the moment in an effort to win the game. She and I have discussed what happened and that it was not appropriate, nor is it what we do or who we are. Chennedy understands that there are better ways to handle situations on the court, and she will learn from this, as we all will."

Who is Carter and what did she say about the incident?

Carter was selected



DOUG MCSCHOOLER Associated Press

INDIANA'S Caitlin Clark, left, battles Chicago's Dana Evans for control of the ball in Saturday's game. The Fever won 71-70 for just their second win this season.

fourth overall by the Atlanta Dream in the 2020 draft but was suspended for conduct detrimental to the team midway through her second season and traded to the Sparks before the 2022 season. She played 24 games for Los Angeles and was benched for poor conduct before being waived during the following offseason.

After taking a year off from the WNBA, Carter joined the Sky this season and is averaging 12 points, 2.7 rebounds and 2.6 assists off the bench. Asked by a reporter after the game about her foul on Clark, Carter responded, "I ain't answering no Caitlin Clark questions."

Carter did have a bit to say on social media, though. In response to a Threads post showing video of her refusal to answer questions about Clark, Carter wrote, "& that's that on that cause beside three point shooting what does she bring to the table man."

On X, one user posted video of the play before Carter's basket and subsequent foul on Clark, which appears to show Clark throwing an elbow toward Carter and Sky forward Isabelle Harrison in the back during a rebound attempt, then appearing to turn and say something to Carter. That post read, "And a little shove in the back.....," to which Carter replied, "yeah this the play lol."

What's the story with Reese, Clark?

The two WNBA rookies were rivals in college. Their teams — Clark's Hawkeyes and Reese's Louisiana State Tigers — played in the 2023 NCAA championship game,

with LSU claiming a 102-85 victory. Late in the game, Reese was seen waving her hand and pointing to her ring finger in front of Clark, apparently showing the Iowa star where the championship ring would go. Clark reportedly made the same gesture toward an LSU player earlier in the game.

Earlier this year, Clark was drafted No. 1 overall by the Fever, while Reese was taken by the Sky at No. 7 overall.

Last month, Reese tweeted, then deleted, a comment that was interpreted as a slam toward Clark and the idea that the WNBA's surge in popularity and the league's decision to allow charter flights for the first time this season can be credited to Clark alone.

Saturday's game was their first meeting as WNBA players. When Carter fouled Clark, Reese could be seen jumping from her seat on the Sky bench and applauding.

"my dawg fasho, got all my teammates," Carter wrote on Threads about Reese's reaction.

Reese also appeared to give Clark an elbow while boxing out during the fourth quarter.

Reese, who finished the game with eight points and 13 rebounds, was fined \$1,000 by the WNBA on Sunday for not making herself available for reporters after the loss to the Fever.

What are others saying?

Matt Barnes, whose 15-season NBA career included four years with the Clippers and two with the Lakers, took to Instagram to call out Clark's teammates for not

having their star player's back in such situations.

"I mean, throughout the season, she's been getting beat up. Hard screens, elbows, knocked down," Barnes said in a video posted Sunday. "It is what it is. She's not the first, she won't be the last. ... Where are the rest of the Indiana Fever at?"

"I've seen a couple of girls smirk when she's got knocked down, half-ass to pick her up. Like, y'all supposed to protect the asset, protect the star. And although this is a team, she's the star. You always protect your star. I was someone who protected the stars. ... And you wonder why you sit at the bottom of the league right now, it's because y'all don't protect each other, man."

Golden State Warriors star Draymond Green suggested on Instagram that "Indiana better go invest in an enforcer ... FAST!" Clark's boyfriend Connor McCaffery, a former Iowa basketball player, liked a pair of X posts that expressed the same sentiment.

Carter responded to that notion Sunday with an X post, telling all those who feel that way to "hoop or shut up."

And then there was McAfee, who opened his show Monday with a lengthy, pro-Clark monologue that received a lot of attention — not for McAfee's overall message, but because he called her "a white b—."

Here's the context:

"I would like the media people that continue to say, 'This rookie class, this rookie class, this rookie class.' Nah. Just call it for what it

is," McAfee said. "There's one white b— for the Indiana team who is a superstar. ...

"Is there a chance that people just enjoy watching her play basketball because of how electrifying she is? ... Maybe. But instead we have to hear people say that we all like her 'cause she's white. And she's only popular because the rest of the rookie class is doing what they're doing. ... What you have is somebody special and we're lucky she's here in Indiana."

Later in the day, McAfee wrote on X that he should not have used the offensive phrase.

"No matter the context ... even if we're talking about race being a reason for some of the stuff happening," McAfee wrote. "I have way too much respect for her and women to put that into the universe."

"My intentions when saying it were complimentary just like the entire segment but, a lot of folks are saying that it certainly wasn't at all. That's 100% on me and for that I apologize... I have sent an apology to Caitlin as well. Everything else I said... still alllllll facts."

ESPN declined to comment for this story.

What happened in Sunday's game

In addition to her poor shooting night, Clark also pulled in just two rebounds while contributing five assists and two steals.

She left the game early in the fourth quarter after hurting her left ear while getting bumped on a screen. She went to the locker room a few minutes later but returned to the bench late in the game.

"I think collectively as a team, we understand who kind of the head of the monster is on that team and we are trying to just make everything tough and difficult," Liberty guard Sabrina Ionescu said after her team's third game against Indiana this season. "Obviously, they came off a back-to-back, so it's a little bit tough for them as well."

"But she'll figure it out. It's not that big of a deal to have a game like that."

Asked about Clark's performance after the game, Fever coach Christie Sides spoke generally about her players' fatigue after opening the season with 11 games in 20 days.

"Their legs were shot. I mean, that's where everything stems from, your legs, when you shoot the basketball — especially for threes," Sides said. "They're shot, they're gassed, so everything was a little short."

The Fever are off until a road game against the Washington Mystics on Friday.

NBA NOTES

All signs point to Porzingis return

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Whether injured Celtics center **Kristaps Porzingis** will be ready in time for the start of the NBA Finals this week is still to be determined.

But signs are pointing to him being able to return to the court sooner rather than later during Boston's matchup with the Dallas Mavericks.

The 7-footer hasn't appeared in a game since sustaining a strained left calf in Game 4 of Boston's first-round playoff series against Miami on April 29.

But 4-1 victories over the Heat and Cleveland in the second round, followed by a 4-0 sweep of Indiana in the finals, have given the Latvian extended recovery time.

Celtics coach **Joe Mazzulla** has refrained from making predictions on when he expects Porzingis to be available. But he was clear that his team is better with Porzingis in the lineup, despite compiling a 9-1 record without him this postseason.

"When KP is at his best, he's been tremendous for us and we expect that from him and we know he'll give that to us," Mazzulla said.

On Saturday he participated in light five-on-five play with his teammates — his most extensive on-court workout since sustaining his injury.

Mazzulla said Porzingis "did everything the team did" during Saturday's practice and was expected to go through a more intense session on Sunday.

Assuming he clears that benchmark, it would mark the most promising sign yet that the Celtics could soon get back Porzingis.

Nori will interview with Cavaliers

The Cavaliers will interview Timberwolves assistant **Micah Nori** for their head coaching vacancy — the fifth known candidate in Cleveland's search — in the next few days, a person familiar with the meeting told the Associated Press.

A longtime NBA assistant, Nori assumed bench duties during the playoffs when Minnesota coach **Chris Finch** suffered a knee injury and had limited mobility.

Last week, the Cavaliers opened their search by receiving permission to speak with Golden State assistant **Kenny Atkinson**, New Orleans assistant **James Borrego**, New York assistant **Johnnie Bryant** and Miami assistant **Chris Quinn**.

Mourning had prostate cancer

Basketball Hall of Famer **Alonso Mourning** told ESPN that he was diagnosed with prostate cancer and had his prostate removed earlier this year.

Mourning, now an executive with the Miami Heat, said his prostate was removed in March and that he is now cancer-free.

Celtics favored but Mavericks the draw

The Celtics are prohibitive favorites to win Thursday's Game 1 of the NBA Finals and odds are on Boston to hoist a record 18th championship banner.

But the money, at least at BetMGM Sportsbook, is pouring in on the Dallas Mavericks.

Senior trader **Halvor Egeland** said that 80% of the bets were coming on **Luka Doncic**, **Kyrie Irving** and the Mavericks to win their second NBA title. Boston is a -225 favorite to win it all, meaning someone would need to wager \$225 to win \$100.

NBA PLAYOFF SCHEDULE

NBA FINALS

1 Boston vs. 5 Dallas

Best-of-seven series

Gm 1	Thursday at Boston, 5:30
Gm 2	Sunday at Boston, 5
Gm 3	June 12 at Dallas, 5:30
Gm 4	June 14 at Dallas, 5:30
Gm 5	June 17 at Boston, 5:30*
Gm 6	June 20 at Dallas, 5:30*
Gm 7	June 23 at Boston, 5*

All games on Channel 7

* if necessary | Times PDT, p.m.

Coach says Bruins still had a successful season

[**UCLA**, from B10] Maxwell held UCLA scoreless for the first time since April 7, Stanford ace NiJaree Canady kept UCLA to four hits and one run with eight strikeouts Sunday.

The USA Softball collegiate player of the year struck out back-to-back Pac-12 player of the year Maya Brady three times. The UCLA star matched her career high in a game and equaled her strikeouts in UCLA's shutout loss to Oklahoma. She was 11 for 16 at the plate in the NCAA tournament entering the World Series, but the program's second-leading home run hitter went 0 for 7 in her last two games.

Before Brady and sophomores Megan Grant and Taylor Tinsley appeared for the postgame news conference, Inouye-Perez encouraged them to keep their composure. But even the coach who got through the team meeting without a tear

started breaking down on the dais. Then in one final graceful stand, Brady smiled through the end of her decorated career.

"Just a dream," Brady said of her five-year UCLA tenure. "I feel like as a little girl you always look at the program, the coaching staff, the players. You think that they're untouchable. Just to get the opportunity to wear this jersey, get my degree, be close to my family. ... It surpassed my expectations. We never got to win, but trust me, I'm winning in life."

Brady will hand off the program to a talented sophomore class led by Tinsley. The pitcher tossed 3 2/3 innings of relief Sunday, giving up three hits and one run with one strikeout to keep the Bruins in contention against Canady.

Stanford (50-16) chased UCLA starter Kaitlyn Terry with a tying RBI double by Taryn Kern in the third inning, then Tinsley gave up

the go-ahead hit on an RBI single by Ava Gall. The Cardinal extended their lead in the fifth, leading off with back-to-back bunts and scoring on a sacrifice fly by pinch-hitter Allie Clements to bring home Emily Jones.

A two-run lead was far from insurmountable for a team that entered the World Series leading the postseason field with 7.8 runs per game in the NCAA tournament.

The Bruins nearly started a rally when Savannah Pola was hit by a pitch with two outs in the seventh. Thessa Malau'ulu then poked a line-drive single past the Stanford shortstop to get two on for the Bruins. The rowdy fans in the UCLA section seated behind the first-base line waved their blue-and-gold pompoms as Ramsey Suarez stepped into the batter's box.

The pinch-hitter grounded out.

Grant produced UCLA's

only run with a solo home run to lead off the third inning.

She was one of the last players to leave the UCLA dugout after the game, standing at the top of the stairs to grab a final glance at the country's most famous softball stadium.

Underclassmen making their Oklahoma City debuts delivered almost all of UCLA's key moments under the bright lights. First baseman Jordan Woolery won the opening game with a three-run homer in the sixth inning against Alabama. Tinsley and Terry, a freshman, held the three-time defending champion Sooners to one run in Saturday's pitchers' duel.

The opportunities were exactly what Tinsley dreamed of growing up when she watched the tournament with her father.

"Just being able to pitch, soak up the environment, there's a lot of people watch-

ing you, I honestly love it," Tinsley said. "That's why I wanted to be a pitcher in the first place, having everybody's eyes on me."

The answer elicited laughter from Brady and Inouye-Perez, who elbowed each other and nodded.

"That's such a pitcher answer," Brady said under her breath.

Tinsley and Terry, who gave up three hits and two runs with three strikeouts Sunday in her third consecutive start, were major questions for a team that had experienced hitters throughout the order. They answered all concerns with strong performances that have the Bruins planning for a return to the big stage.

"I wasn't emotional in the meeting because I just look forward to the future," Inouye-Perez said.

"The experience they gained on this stage is real. They have a fire burning in their guts."

Roberts finally gets to use trio of relievers

[Phillips, from B10] cause of surgeries on both knees, has been a back-of-the-bullpen mainstay all season, with a 2-1 record, 2.35 ERA and three saves in 23 games entering Tuesday's game at Pittsburgh, and Treinen has not given up an earned run in 9 2/3 innings of his first 10 games.

But Saturday night marked the first time this season that all three right-handers pitched in the same game, a luxury Roberts likened to receiving a Christmas gift.

"To go to Hudson, Treinen and Evan was pretty exciting for me," Roberts said. "Treinen and Huddy have been so good for us — for them to come off injury last year and be inserted into their normal roles and thrive has been great. And to have Evan back and do what he did, it certainly makes you feel good about the back end of the game."

The return of Phillips, who struck out one of three batters in a clean ninth inning Saturday night, should solidify the back end of the bullpen.

"Now we know that every time we get a lead in the ninth inning," outfielder Teoscar Hernández said, "it's close to 100% that we're gonna win the game."

But even with Phillips, the relief corps remains far from whole. Right-hander Brusdar Graterol, who went 4-2 with a 1.20 ERA in 68 games in 2023, has been sidelined all season because of shoulder inflammation and has not even resumed throwing.

And right-handers Ryan Brasier, who had a 4.63 ERA in 12 games before suffering a right calf strain in late April, and Joe Kelly, who had a 1.69 ERA in 10 2/3 innings of his previous 12 games before going on the injured list because of a shoulder strain in early May, are weeks away from returning.

"I think when our entire staff is healthy, we're going to be in a great position to win," Phillips said. "We still have a lot of major pieces missing. We're waiting for Joe Kelly and Ryan Brasier ... to picture that bullpen when the time comes will be a lot of fun."

"We'll see when that time is, but some of the new guys



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

SHOHEI Ohtani, here struggling to connect against Colorado, has been in an extended slump since mid-May.

that have been here the last couple of weeks have picked up some of the slack and have been really impressive."

Sho stopper

Shohei Ohtani looked like a leading National League most valuable player candidate in mid-May, the slugger batting .364 with a 1.108 on-base-plus-slugging percentage, 12 homers, 16 doubles, 30 RBIs, 34 runs, 38 strikeouts and 22 walks in his first 43 games.

But Ohtani has been in an extended slump since then, batting .193 (11 for 57) with a .621 OPS, two homers, one double, eight RBIs, seven runs, 15 strikeouts and five walks in his last 15 games, dropping his average to .322 and OPS to .988 entering Tuesday.

Ohtani had two hits, including a two-run homer, and three RBIs in the first game of a doubleheader sweep of the Mets in New York last Tuesday, but he

had a quiet weekend against the Rockies, going one for nine with four strikeouts, three walks and a stolen base in three games.

Ohtani suffered a right hamstring bruise when he was hit by a pickoff throw from Reds left-hander Brent Suter on May 16. Roberts believes there is a correlation between that injury and Ohtani's recent struggles.

"His words, he doesn't feel it when he's swinging the bat," Roberts said. "But he's a finely tuned machine, and sometimes, in the context of a sports car, when it's not firing on all cylinders, it just doesn't run right."

"When his back was bothering him a little bit [in early May] you saw some funkier swings, a little bit more chase. His hamstring is bothering him a little bit, you see a little bit of the same thing. But I think that he's getting close to where he needs to be physically. I think that staying to the big part of the field is a remedy."

Second to none

Miguel Rojas has made only eight of his 36 starts this season at second base, a position he has made 39 starts at during his 11-year career, but the veteran utility man who was the team's regular shortstop in 2023 has made a quick study of the position.

Rojas teamed with third baseman Kiké Hernández to turn two slick double plays in Sunday's 4-0 win over the Rockies, the first with a lightning-quick glove-to-hand transfer on Brandon Rodgers' sixth-inning grounder to Hernández's left and the second on Kris Bryant's one-hopper right at Hernández to end the game.

"When you're really watching the game and valuing outs and the usage of pitchers, you know that Kiké cutting off Mookie [Betts, the shortstop] to get that ball [from Rodgers] and Miggy Ro turning the double

play was huge," Roberts said.

"And the last one, Miggy makes a good play turning it and Freddie [Freeman] stays on the [first-base] bag. ... I mean, those are plays that change games and allow me to keep guys fresh and save arms, too."

Rojas has played only 71 innings at second base but has already accumulated two defensive runs saved there, according to FanGraphs, which would rank him seventh among qualifying major league second basemen.

"It's a little bit of adjustment for me because I haven't played second base in a while, so I'm getting that [internal] clock back," Rojas said. "When I know a runner can fly, I do my best to throw the ball as fast as I can. It doesn't matter if it's not a perfect throw, because I know if I get it there, Freddie will do a good job of getting it."

"But I know like the last

one Kris Bryant hit, I have all the time in the world, so I can make sure that I catch the ball and make a better throw to first."

Buehler's high bar

Walker Buehler seemed relatively patient with his inability to recapture his dominant 2019-2021 form immediately after returning from a second Tommy John surgery and a near 23-month-long absence in early May.

"I'm not freaked out — I'm actually pretty encouraged by a lot of the things I've done," Buehler said after giving up three runs and five hits in 3 1/3 innings of a 4-0 loss to San Diego in his second start on May 12. "I'm kind of giving myself a little grace for a few more starts, and then after that, that kind of 'happy to be here' thing will go away."

That grace period clearly ended Friday night after Buehler gave up four runs — three earned — and six hits, struck out seven and walked four in six innings of a 4-1 loss to the Rockies, dropping the right-hander to 1-3 with a 4.32 ERA in five starts in which he has struck out 24, walked seven and been tagged for six homers in 25 innings.

Asked to assess his overall performance, Buehler said he "feels like [crap]" and is "not anywhere close to where I want to be ... it's kind of put-up or shut-up time for me." Roberts felt the ultra-demanding Buehler was being a little too hard on himself.

"I guess that's how you want it, but there is a balance of managing expectations, and I think that's where [pitching coach] Mark Prior and I come into play," Roberts said. "Individually, he's gonna expect the best of himself, but for me, for our organization to sort of temper [expectations] and know that this is still a process is important."

"I think Walker can take something positive out of each outing. A year ago today, he was at home in Kentucky watching his teammates, so there's been a world of change since then, and he's put in a lot of work [to get here] so we can't lose that perspective."



JASON FRANSON The Canadian Press via AP

DALLAS' Thomas Harley (55) and Chris Tanev (3) battle for the puck with Edmonton's Leon Draisaitl in the second period of the Oilers' 2-1 series-clinching triumph in Game 6 of the Western Conference finals.

NHL PLAYOFFS

Will Cup cap Oilers' unlikely journey?

ASSOCIATED PRESS

EDMONTON, Canada — For the Edmonton Oilers, the journey from worst to first in the Western Conference is complete. And now a chance at the Stanley Cup is their reward.

Connor McDavid had a goal and an assist in the opening period to get Edmonton going, Stuart Skinner stopped 34 shots for his hometown team and the Oilers capped an improbable run to the Stanley Cup Final by beating the Dallas Stars 2-1 on Sunday night.

Zach Hyman also scored — like McDavid, on a first-period power play — and Evan Bouchard had two assists for the Oilers, who won the Western Conference final in six games and will play for the Cup for the first time since 2006.

They'll be heading to Florida for Game 1 of the Stanley Cup Final, sched-

uled to open Saturday night. At 2,540 miles between Edmonton and Sunrise, Fla., it's the longest distance between Stanley Cup Final opponents in NHL history.

"When the horn went off, that's the loudest I ever heard it," McDavid told Sportsnet amid the on-ice postgame celebration as Edmonton fans chanted "We want the Cup" over and over. "Special place to play, honestly. So much history. And these fans, it was great to hear their support."

Mason Marchment scored midway through the third period and Jake Oettinger stopped eight shots for the Stars, who finished the regular season with the second-best record in the NHL — 113 points, just one behind the New York Rangers in the race for the Presidents' Trophy.

But the Stars, just like the Rangers, let a 2-1 lead in the conference finals get away. Dallas scored five

NHL PLAYOFF SCHEDULE

WESTERN CONFERENCE FINALS

1C Dallas vs. 2P Edmonton
Oilers win, 4-2

Gm 1	Edmonton 3, Dallas 2 (2OT)
Gm 2	Dallas 3, Edmonton 1
Gm 3	Dallas 5, Edmonton 3
Gm 4	Edmonton 5, Dallas 2
Gm 5	Edmonton 3, Dallas 1
Gm 6	Edmonton 2, Dallas 1

STANLEY CUP FINAL

1A Florida vs. 2P Edmonton
Best-of-seven series

Gm 1	Saturday at Florida, 5
Gm 2	Monday at Florida, 5
Gm 3	June 13 at Edmonton, 5
Gm 4	June 15 at Edmonton, 5
Gm 5	June 18 at Florida, 5*
Gm 6	June 21 at Edmonton, 5*
Gm 7	June 24 at Florida, 5*

*-if necessary | Times PDT, p.m.
TV: All games on Channel 7

goals in Game 3 to take the series lead; the Stars managed four goals total in the

next three games.

"I would probably argue that was our best game of the series," Stars forward Jamie Benn said. "Didn't go our way."

"Proud of our group, proud of our fight, proud of our battle," Stars coach Peter DeBoer said.

Just by getting to the Cup final, Edmonton has done something truly extraordinary — making the title series after finding itself 10 points out of a playoff spot during the regular season. Entering games on Nov. 24, the Oilers were 5-12-1, 10 points back of Seattle and St. Louis for the final wildcard spot in the West and 19 points behind Vegas for the top spot in the conference.

Edmonton is just the third team in NHL history to make the final after being 10 points or more out of a playoff spot; the others were Toronto in 1958-59 and St. Louis in 2018-19. The Blues won the Cup that season.

PRO CALENDAR

	TUE 4	WED 5	THU 6	FRI 7	SAT 8
DODGERS	at Pittsburgh 3:30 SNLA	at Pittsburgh 3:30 SNLA	at Pittsburgh 3:30 SNLA	at N.Y. Yankees 4 SNLA Apple TV+	at N.Y. Yankees 4:30 Ch. 11
ANGELS	SAN DIEGO 6:30 BSW	SAN DIEGO 6:30 BSW, FS1		HOUSTON 6:30 BSW	HOUSTON 7 BSW
SPARKS		MINNESOTA 7 SpecSN		DALLAS 7 ION	
GALAXY	JUNE 15: VS. KANSAS CITY, 7:30 P.M., APPLE TV				
LAFC	JUNE 15: AT ORLANDO, 4:30 P.M. PDT, APPLE TV				
ANGEL CITY					at NJ/NY Gotham 9:30 a.m. Ch. 2, Paramount+

Shade denotes home game.

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
BASEBALL		
3:30 p.m.	Dodgers at Pittsburgh	TV: SNLA R: 570, 1020
4 p.m.	Minnesota at New York Yankees	TV: TBS
6:30 p.m.	San Diego at Angels	TV: BSW R: 830, 1330
6:30 p.m.	San Francisco at Arizona	TV: MLB
BASKETBALL: WNBA		
5 p.m.	New York at Chicago	TV: NBA
7 p.m.	Phoenix at Seattle	TV: CBSSN
CYCLING		
6 a.m.	Créteil du Dauphiné: Stage 3	TV: Peacock
SOCCER		
9 a.m.	Men's international friendly, Slovenia vs. Armenia	TV: FS2
11:45 a.m.	Men's international friendly, Portugal vs. Finland	TV: FS2
Noon	UEFA Women's Euro qualifying, France vs. England	TV: CBSSN
4:30 p.m.	Women's international friendly, Canada vs. Mexico	TV: FS2
5 p.m.	Women's international friendly, U.S. vs. South Korea	TV: TNT, truTV, Universo
TENNIS		
6 a.m.	French Open, quarterfinals	TV: Tennis
2 a.m. (Wed.)	French Open, quarterfinals	TV: Tennis

SPORTS EXTRA

For late coverage of Dodgers, Angels and Sparks 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.





WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

TYLER GLASNOW has been a solid ace for the Dodgers’ rotation, but his growing workload might put a strain on the injury-prone right-hander later in the season.

Dodgers look unconvincing so far

They’re winning now, but issues continue to cloud World Series aspirations

DYLAN HERNÁNDEZ

The Dodgers are winning again.

They followed their sweep of the New York Mets by taking the last two games of their three-game series against the Colorado Rockies during the weekend.

Mookie Betts homered in their series finale against the Rockies, a 4-0 victory on Sunday at Dodger Stadium. Freddie Freeman also homered. Second-year right-hander Gavin Stone further cemented his place in the rotation by pitching five scoreless innings.

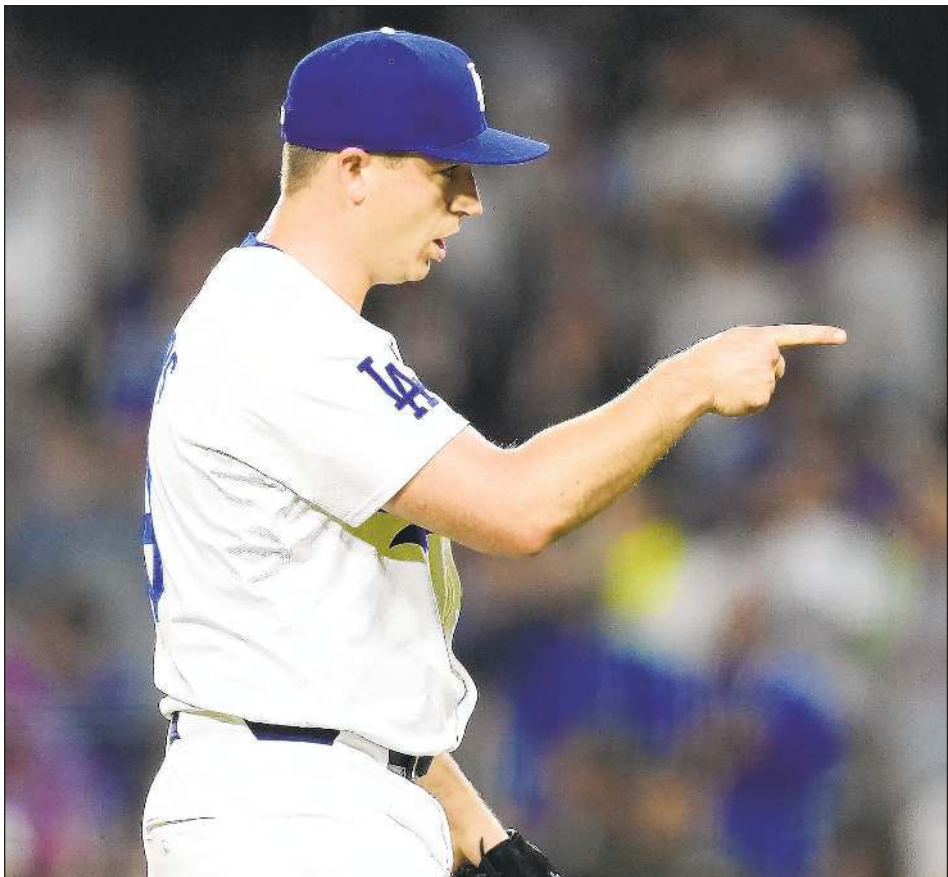
The Dodgers are 38-23, the second-best record in the National League. They have a 6 ½-game division lead over the second-place San Diego Padres.

Yet, none of this was convincing.

None of this answered the long-standing questions about them.

None of this felt like persuasive evidence for why they wouldn’t crash and burn in the postseason as they have in each of the previous three years.

They have identified a postseason Game 1 starter in Tyler Glasnow, but who comes after



RYAN SUN Associated Press

THE RETURN of reliever Evan Phillips, who struck out one of three batters in a clean ninth inning Saturday night, should solidify the back end of the bullpen.

Phillips’ return a shot in arm for Roberts’ bullpen

By Mike DiGiovanna

Managing a 4-1 victory over the Colorado Rockies on Saturday night was like sitting in the back seat of a self-driving car for Dodgers field boss Dave Roberts.

Right-hander Yoshinobu Yamamoto delivered a quality start, giving up one run and seven hits in six innings and turning the game over to the bullpen with a three-run lead.

With his three highest-leverage relievers available, Roberts used Daniel Hudson in the seventh inning, Blake Treinen in the eighth and closer Evan Phillips in the ninth, a clockwork-like strategy that Roberts had been able to deploy ... like, never, this season.

Phillips had an 0.66 ERA and converted all eight of his save opportunities in his first 14 games before going on the injured list because of a right hamstring strain on May 5, the same day that Treinen, who sat out most of 2022 and 2023 because of shoulder injuries and was slowed this spring by fractured ribs, made his 2024 Dodgers debut.

Hudson, who also sat out most of 2022 and 2023 be-

[See Phillips, B9]

WOMEN’S COLLEGE WORLD SERIES :: STANFORD 3, UCLA 1



BRYAN TERRY The Oklahoman

UCLA’S TAYLOR STEPHENS walks off the field as Stanford players revel in their 3-1 victory over the Bruins in a Women’s College World Series elimination game at Devon Park in Oklahoma City on Sunday.

A hard end for UCLA softball

Bruins’ magic run in College World Series comes up one rally short against Stanford.

By Thuc Nhi Nguyen

OKLAHOMA CITY — The clock struck midnight on UCLA’s Bruin Magic.

After a season defined by miraculous wins, the Bruins came up one rally short, losing 3-1 in a Women’s College World Series elimination game to No. 8 Stanford on Sunday at Devon Park.

Although UCLA (43-12) scored only one run in its last two games, coach Kelly Inouye-Perez still called the season a successful comeback for the Bruins, who not only returned to Oklahoma

City for the eighth time in nine seasons but did so after fighting off the program’s worst start in almost 40 years.

“When I put it all together, this is the greatest year of coaching I’ve experienced,” Inouye-Perez said, fighting off tears. “Man, building belief, building trust, building a team that could fight. We were right where we needed to be, and we ran out of time.”

The Bruins were 3-4 in February before they surged to win 30 of their last 35 regular-season games. UCLA took a nation-leading 14-game winning streak into Saturday’s game against Oklahoma and then floundered against two of the country’s top pitchers.

After Oklahoma’s Kelly

[See UCLA, B7]

A worst-to-first journey for Edmonton

Will the Oilers cap off an improbable season with a Stanley Cup victory over the Florida Panthers? **B9**

Rough-and-tumble weekend for Clark

The Indiana Fever star is knocked down by Chicago’s Chennedy Carter, then has to deal with the fallout. **B7**

Hall of Fame lineman Allen dies at 52

The six-time All Pro, inducted in 2013 after a career mostly with the Dallas Cowboys, was on vacation. **B6**

Los Angeles Times

SPORTS EXTRA

A TIMES E-NEWSPAPER EXCLUSIVE :: TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024



ASHLEY LANDIS Associated Press

THE ANGELS' Jo Adell scores on a sacrifice fly by pinch-hitter Luis Guillorme in the eighth inning. The Angels won to improve their MLB-worst home record to 8-21.

Angels look right at home to end slide

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jo Adell doubled and scored the tiebreaking run on two flyouts in the eighth inning, sending the Angels to a 2-1 victory over the San Diego Padres on Monday night at Angel Stadium.

Tyler Anderson pitched into the seventh and Willie Calhoun had an early RBI single for the Angels, who ended their five-game skid.

Calhoun had two of the Angels' four hits as they improved the worst home record in the majors to 8-21 in the opener of a six-game

homestand.

Adell led off the eighth with a double off the right-field wall against Adrian Morejon (1-1). Adell moved to third on Zach Neto's fly-out and scored easily on pinch-hitter Luis Guillorme's long sacrifice fly to center off Jeremiah Estrada.

Manny Machado homered for the Padres, who lost their second straight after a 5-1 surge. San Diego's powerful lineup failed to score after the first inning and went 0 for 6 with runners in scoring position.

Hunter Strickland (2-1) escaped two jams before Angels closer Carlo Estévez finished for

his ninth save.

Both starting pitchers excelled in the opener of a series between interleague rivals separated by about 90 miles of the I-5 freeway.

Matt Waldron gave up two hits and struck out four over 6 1/3 innings in another strong start for San Diego. The part-time knuckleballer pitched into the seventh inning for the first two times in his career in his last two starts.

Anderson yielded five hits and three walks for the Angels. He has permitted one run in each of his last four starts, totaling 26 2/3 innings.

Machado hit a 438-foot drive off the fake rock pile beyond center field in the first inning for his sixth homer of the season.

Luis Rengifo singled in the fourth for the Angels' first hit. Rengifo then stole second and scored on Calhoun's single off a knuckleball, ending Waldron's streak of 13 straight scoreless innings over three starts.

Jurickson Profar walked in the sixth and attempted to score from first on Fernando Tatis Jr.'s double to left but was out at the plate on Neto's relay throw from shortstop. San Diego got two runners on in

the seventh to chase Anderson, but Strickland got pinch-hitter David Peralta to fly out to the warning track. The Padres had two more runners on with one out in the eighth, but Strickland also escaped that jam.

Short hops

Angels first baseman Nolan Schanuel returned from a three-game absence because of a sore left thumb. ... Infielder Brandon Drury (hamstring) took grounders and hit on the field. He has been out since May 8 but hopes to return next week.

With the Belmont, historic Saratoga is high in the saddle

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Health, history and horses are the three H's carved into the welcome sign when travelers venturing into New York's Adirondack Mountains reach Saratoga Springs.

Horses have always been the main event here, where the oldest active sporting venue in the country, Saratoga Race Course, stands at the heart of the town of 30,000.

Saratoga has seen upsets since opening before the end of the Civil War, including Upset defeating decorated Man o' War and Triple Crown winner American Pharoah slipping up against Keen Ice in the Travers.

For the first time, Saratoga Race Course will have the best 3-year-olds in the world duke it out in a Triple Crown race when the venerable track hosts the Belmont Stakes on Saturday.

"I mean, this has been a rumor for a couple of years regarding the Belmont in Saratoga," Mayor John Safford said. "The fact that it actually came about is just exciting."

The excitement is palatable every year. Once July rolls around, Saratoga becomes a full-force race town: parked cars line the streets, fans flood the sidewalks walking with coolers, kids yell, "Get your \$1 water here!," the smell of cigarette

smoke and horses fills the air and the downtown restaurants pack in guests.

Racing is the fifth season of Saratoga. A town that revolves around a 1 1/8-mile dirt track for two months of the year and has been doing so for just under 160 years since John Morrissey wanted a place to gamble during the day in 1863.

Rumors of the race coming to Saratoga emerged when the New York Racing Assn. scheduled \$455-million renovations for Belmont Park in 2024-25 and needed a new place to host the final leg of the Triple Crown. NYRA President David O'Rourke sent the invitation to Saratoga, one of the most historic horse-racing cities in the world and home of the National Horse Racing Hall of Fame.

In October 2022, Todd Shimkus, Saratoga Chamber of Commerce president, received word that if the funding for the renovations were approved, Saratoga would host the Belmont in 2024 and 2025.

"I can tell you everybody in the room wanted to hug David O'Rourke for the opportunity to host this," Shimkus said. "We've been anticipating this for almost two years now and can't wait."

This is not the first time the race, ordinarily run at 1 1/2 miles, is taking place somewhere other



RICK GARGIULO Associated Press

A FOG burns off as the sun rises over a training track at Saratoga Race Course in New York. The venerable venue will add to its reputation by hosting the Belmont Stakes for the next two years.

than Belmont Park. Aqueduct in Queens had it from 1963 to 1967 while Belmont underwent renovations.

National Racing Museum historian and longtime horse-racing writer Mike Veitch doesn't know why the closer Aqueduct was passed over so quickly but understands why Saratoga was the pick.

"Clearly, Saratoga is popular and clearly a lot of people are going to be here, so I get that," Veitch said. "I think that NYRA probably knows that there'll be a big crowd here, which there will be."

NYRA has capped the Belmont Stakes in Saratoga at 50,000 fans, which is right at capacity. Veitch,

along with locals, is skeptical an event of this size can happen in Saratoga logistically.

The city is prepared, and the Belmont is far from the first large event to come to Saratoga. The Grade 1 Travers Stakes is the peak of the annual summer racing, with crowds upward of 40,000.

Last year, Phish played a sold-out 27,000-crowd concert at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center the night before the Travers. The Travers then had a crowd of 47,000 the next day.

The one-day attendance record at Saratoga is 72,745 in 2007, far above the 50,000 Belmont cap.

"It's 50,000 people here on Sat-

urday, June 8, that is unprecedented," Shimkus said. "We've never had that many people here on a June 8 in the history of Saratoga Springs. But 50,000 people come here often over the summer."

Whether historians and locals like the Belmont coming to Saratoga or not, the estimated \$50-million revenue boost, along with the exposure for the town is tough to pass down, and that's even with Kentucky Derby winner Mystik Dan losing in the Preakness to eliminate the chance of a Triple Crown being on the line at the place affectionately known as the Spa.

"It is sure to be an incredibly exciting weekend," O'Rourke said.

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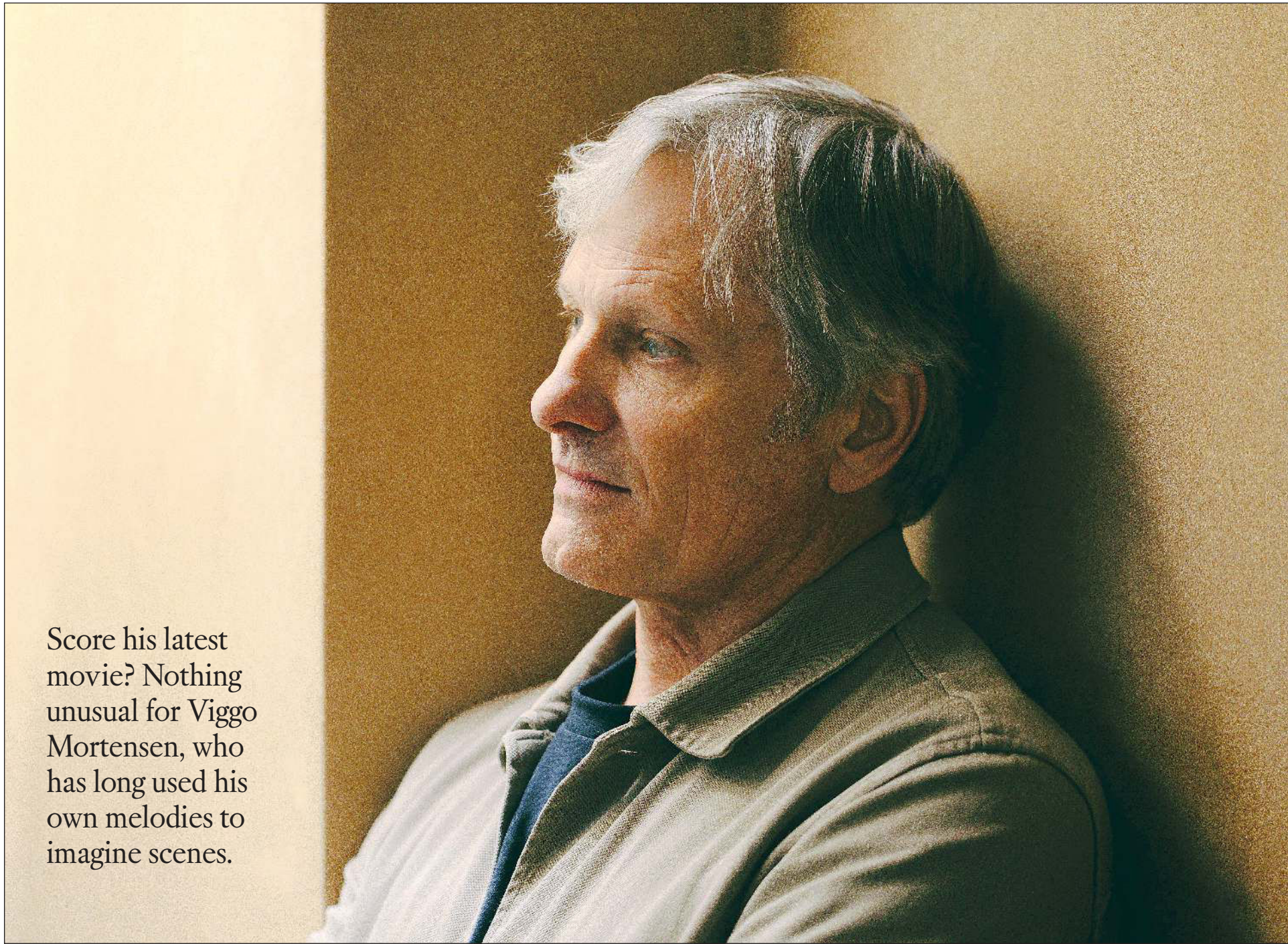
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CALENDAR

TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/CALENDAR



JUSTIN JUN LEE For The Times

Score his latest movie? Nothing unusual for Viggo Mortensen, who has long used his own melodies to imagine scenes.

Making music is a vital part of his life story

By TIM GREIVING

Viggo Mortensen was always drawn to the old piano in his grandparents' house in Wadsworth, N.Y., 30 miles south of the Canadian border, the community where he lived after his parents divorced. Whenever he went over, he would sit down and play. He improvised melodies, usually imagining a scene or something visual. "It was a comfortable place to be, and you could sort of travel with your imagination as you were playing," the actor, 65, says via Zoom from his part-time home in Spain, the afternoon light spilling from the window behind him as he lights up a smoke. "Even as a kid, I liked doing that. I

always related music to images. I would imagine being somewhere."

It's only too clear in hindsight that Mortensen was, essentially, scoring a movie in his mind.

Now he's doing it for real. Mortensen has written and directed "The Dead Don't Hurt," a new western now out in which he also stars as a Danish immigrant handyman who leaves his bold new bride (Vicky Krieps) to serve in the Civil War. As if that weren't enough hats to wear, Mortensen composed the music, performing several instruments on the score.

Mortensen, who also scored his 2020 directorial debut, "Falling," joins a very exclu-

sive club of directors who've created the music for their own films — from Charlie Chaplin to Clint Eastwood to Jeymes Samuel. But one doesn't get the sense that this is some auteurist flex, or even simply a means to save on the music budget (as was the case for fellow club member John Carpenter). For Mortensen, who also does painting and photography and runs a micro publishing company, making music has always been a vital part of telling the story of his life.

"He really is a total, complete artist," says Elijah Wood, Mortensen's "Lord of the Rings" co-star, on a Zoom call from his home in Highland Park. "Certainly, there are people who [See Mortensen, E3]

TELEVISION REVIEW

Jousting for 'Ren Faire' crown

A small-town power struggle in Texas hits Shakespearean levels in HBO docuseries.

ROBERT LLOYD
TELEVISION CRITIC

I haven't been to a Renaissance faire since — well, not quite since the Renaissance, but a really long time. I know from the billboards, though, that a local edition is still going strong. The one I knew — the original Renaissance Pleasure Faire — was held on the Paramount Ranch in Agoura Hills among the oaks, a cozy, non-profit, semi-educational, handcrafted hippie festival co-sponsored by KPFFK, our leftist community-sponsored radio station. This was back when LARPing had no life past Civil War reenactors, before cosplay went mainstream, before "Dungeons & Dragons," Medieval Times restaurants and thatched-roof fantasy blockbuster movies.

All things change, even in the re-created Renaissance, and such events, which have proliferated across the country and into Europe, can be big business. In the documentary series "Ren Faire," which premiered Sunday on HBO, Lance Oppenheim ("Some Kind of Heaven") trains his camera on the 50-year-old Texas Renaissance Festival, outside of Houston, which claims to be the biggest in the nation, and specifically its founder, owner and operator, George Coulam.

The constructed narrative is one of a power struggle. (This is not a detailed look into the obviously complex workings of a Renaissance faire.) In his mid-80s, George is thinking of moving on — he has determined somehow that he will live to be 95, exactly, and wants to leave enough time for work- [See 'Ren Faire,' E2]

PRIDE MONTH

Grab the remote for LGBTQ+ TV binge

By ERIK PIEPENBURG

Pride Month is here, which means parties, protests and plenty of queer television.

Parades too: On Sunday, Hulu will stream the 54th Los Angeles Pride Parade starting at 11 a.m.; grand marshals include actor and activist George Takei.

The parade will be hosted by "Good Morning America" weekend co-anchor Gio Benitez and ABC7 news anchor Ellen Leyva.

Whether for a vacation binge or a night at home with friends, air conditioning on blast and cocktails at the ready, here's a guide to queer shows — new, classic and pioneering — to make your Pride Month merry. [See Shows, E2]

Comedy marks a special occasion



From Fifi Dosch

FIFI DOSCH hosts a "very trans, very kinky comedy show" at a secret location.

Documentaries, live shows, family-friendly entertainment and drag fill June schedule.

By JULIE SEABAUGH

On May 7, 2022, the inaugural Netflix Is a Joke festival's "Stand Out" show welcomed to the Greek Theatre stage 22 diverse LGBTQ+ comedians, including Eddie (Suzy) Izard, Wanda Sykes, Lily Tomlin, Sandra Bernhard, Rosie O'Donnell, Trixie Mattel, Tig Notaro, Sam Jay, Mae Martin, Joel Kim Booster, Fortune Feimster and Bob the Drag Queen. In the wings, documentary director Page Hurwitz kept cameras rolling and conversations flowing.

Hurwitz's "Outstanding: A Comedy Revolution," which premieres Friday at New York's Tribeca Festival and streams on Netflix June 18, dives deep into the history of stand-up trailblazers [See Comedy, E3]

LGBTQ+ TV shows to binge

[Shows, from E1]

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

‘Disco: Soundtrack of a Revolution’

In 1970s New York, gay and Black communities got sweaty together in small clubs and basement bars to the beat of disco music, a genre that made its way into the global mainstream, thanks to singers like Donna Summer and Sylvester and venues like Studio 54. Described as a “revisionist history” of the disco age, this new docuseries reinforces disco as a defining gay music genre and a cultural phenomenon that brought together people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. (Disco also faced a hateful, anti-gay backlash.) The three-part series also looks at how disco enabled gay men who were feeling newly empowered by the gay liberation movement to find joy and camaraderie (and sex) on the dance floor in the years before a plague changed everything. *(Streaming on PBS.org; airs on PBS on June 18.)*

‘Dead Boy Detectives’

Based on Neil Gaiman and Matt Wagner’s comic book series, this paranormal fantasy is about Edwin (George Rexstrew) and Charles (Jayden Revri), teenagers born decades apart — and ghost besties now — who run a detective agency that solves supernatural mysteries. The eight-episode series, the latest in Netflix’s Sandman Universe, features tender-hearted queerness and queer characters in various stages of coming out and coming of age. Central is the chemistry between Edwin and Charles, who share a kind of love story — homoerotic, if not “Euphoria”-style sexual — that underscores the value of chosen families. In his review of the series, Times television critic Robert Lloyd called it “uncommonly well done — cleverly written, smartly cast, sensitively played, marvelously realized.” *(Netflix)*

‘Ripley’

Andrew Scott, who with Paul Mescal plunged into dark emotional waters in the gay drama “All of Us Strangers,” stars as the title rogue in this slick eight-episode thriller. Adapted from Patricia Highsmith’s 1955 novel “The Talented Mr. Ripley,” the series is set in Italy in the ’60s and follows Tom Ripley — grifter, heartbreaker, psychopath — as he manipulates his way into the lives of Dickie (Johnny Flynn), a trust-fund wielding American, and Dickie’s lady friend, Marge (Dakota Fanning). The question of whether Ripley is gay is as old and unanswered as Highsmith’s novel and the 1999 film adaptation starring Matt Damon. Here, the answer is still deliciously enigmatic. In an interview with The Times, Scott said, “I love the fact that we don’t know. I think there’s a lot of people who can relate to that.” For an extra scoop of the maca-

bre, Oscar-winning cinematographer Robert Elswit shot the series in stark black and white. *(Netflix)*

‘I Kissed a Boy’

From “The Bachelor” to “Love Is Blind,” gay men who are fans of reality dating shows have had to live through the romantic aspirations of straight people for a long time. (Thanks for trying, “Boy Meets Boy” and “Finding Prince Charming.”) Queer men get a new chance to watch romance blossom with dopamine butterflies and then crack from tear-soaked rage when the U.K.’s first gay dating show makes its American streaming premiere this month. The Australian singer Dannii Minogue — younger sister of gay diva Kylie — plays host at a swank mansion where 10 single young men meet, mingle and make out in hopes of finding a partner, or at least a lover (or if that doesn’t last, maybe a hot friend with benefits?). Crossing the pond sometime later this year on Hulu: “I Kissed a Girl,” this show’s sapphic sister. *(On Hulu June 15)*

‘Interview With the Vampire’

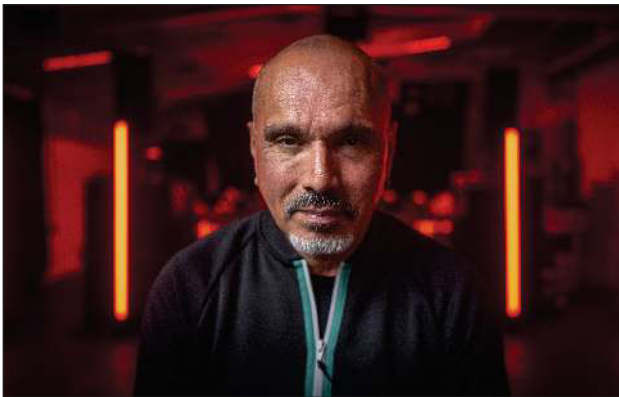
This sleek adaptation of Anne Rice’s beloved and bestselling vampire novel is back for a second season with a few additions (a Parisian setting) and subtractions (a new actress, Delaine Hayles, plays the young but old vampire Claudia). Returning are the debonair vampires Louis (Jacob Anderson) and his servant, Rashid (Assad Zaman), who, as it was revealed in the first season, was actually Armand, an ancient vampire who has a troubled but charged relationship with Louis. Lestat (Sam Reid) is back too, haunting his lover Louis’ imagination and providing the series with dark and hallucinatory mischief. These are some hot, elegant gay bloodsuckers who speak French and flash brilliant smiles but aren’t afraid to kill to survive — kinda like Fire Island with fangs. *(Season 2 episodes run weekly through June 30 on AMC; streaming on AMC+.)*

‘The Second Best Hospital in the Galaxy’

Fans of queer animation will have a busy summer, with characters in every shade of LGBT and Q appearing on several new and returning shows, from “Hazbin Hotel” to “Harley Quinn.” This adults-only sci-fi comedy released in February, from “Russian Doll” writer Cirocco Dunlap, is set at an outer space hospital where two alien surgeons, best friends Klak (Keke Palmer) and Sleech (Stephanie Hsu), treat their creature-patients’ oddball interstellar maladies in a world where gender isn’t binary and queerness is a given. The starry cast includes queer performers Sam Smith and Bowen Yang and queer favorites Maya Rudolph and Natasha Lyonne. Dunlap recently told Yahoo News that the eight episodes reflect her family’s



CHARLES (Jayden Revri, left) and Edwin (George Rexstrew) are ghost besties on “Dead Boy Detectives.”



DAVID MORALES, a DJ and record producer, is among those in “Disco: Soundtrack of a Revolution.”

own queer contours. “My mom is bi, my dad was gay, my sister was in a polyamorous relationship and that was my growing-up experience,” she said. *(Prime Video)*

INTERNATIONAL BINGES

‘Veneno’

Cristina Ortiz, the Spanish transgender singer and television personality known as La Veneno (“poison” in Spanish), is the larger-than-life sensation that drives this acclaimed 2020 dramedy, a hit in Spain. Based on a 2016 book about Ortiz’s life written by transgender journalist Valeria Vegas, the eight-part series blends Ortiz’s lived history with fictionalized accounts of what made La Veneno — she was also a sex worker and model — a pop culture star in ’90s Spain, when much of the show is set. Here, La Veneno, who died in 2016 at age 52, is played by a trio of transgender actresses — Jedet, Daniela Santiago and Isabel Torres — who portray her over the course of her life not only as an activist, sex symbol and life of the party but also as a transgender woman with a deeply affecting and troubled backstory — one that will resonate beyond just queer and transgender viewers. *(Max)*

‘The Bisexual’

Desiree Akhavan wrote, directed and starred in this six-episode British comedy-drama about a woman who gets a boyfriend after leaving her lesbian relationship of 10 years. When the show debuted six years ago, reviews were mixed; the Guardian called it “neither comic nor dramatic,” but The Times said it was “exceptionally funny and heartfelt.” Since then, the show has found advocates who admire Akhavan, a bisexual Iranian American, for not

sticking to the idea that sexual orientation is a binary — an observation that in a “Sex Education” and “Heartstopper” world puts this show in the ahead-of-its-time category. *(Hulu)*

‘Cucumber’ and ‘Banana’

Watch almost any new LGBTQ+ television series, and to be a gay man is to be physically pert, sexually athletic, friends with everyone at the club — in other words, young. But that’s not the case in “Cucumber,” a British series from 2015: Henry (Vincent Franklin) is Gen X, with a belly and a graying beard who struggles to navigate being gay, past the age of 40 and on the hunt for love and sex. It will come as no surprise that the creator of this series was Russell T Davies, the man behind “Queer as Folk,” the path-breaking 1999 series about a group of gay friends in Manchester, England (more on that show below). Davies’ narrative signatures — cutting wit, frank sex and dark humor — are at play here too. As a companion, watch “Banana,” Davies’ equally funny comedy about some of the other characters from “Cucumber.”

(“Cucumber” and “Banana” streaming on Freevee.)

THE GROUNDBREAKERS

‘The L Word’

Queer women are all over television in 2024. According to GLAAD, for the 2023-24 season, there were more LGBTQ women than men on broadcast television for the fifth straight year, and most of those characters were lesbians. Television wasn’t always so sapphic, which is why Showtime’s pioneering series about a group of West Hollywood lesbians and bisexual women is worth revisiting. During its six-season run from 2004-09 on Showtime, the series was like a lesbian “Bachelor in Paradise,” but with more emotional drama, way chicer pantsuits (but just as much skin) and franker queer sex. It helped that actual queer women were behind the show, including Ilene Chaiken, the series’ creator, and writers Guinevere Turner and Rose Troche. The original series has had real legs: “The Real L Word,” a 2010 reality dating show, is streaming on Paramount+, and a 2019 series reboot, “The L Word: Generation Q,” is available to rent or buy on most major platforms. *(Paramount+)*

‘Noah’s Arc’

It lasted only two seasons (2005 to 2006) when it ran on the LGBTQ+ network Logo, but this big-hearted series about best friends — played by Darryl Stephens, Jensen Atwood, Christian Vincent, Doug Spearman and Rodney Chester — remains a touchstone of Black queer television. Only a handful of Black gay male characters had appeared on television before, on the “Sanford and Son” spinoff

“Sanford Arms,” and on the ’90s sitcom “Moesha.” But this series, created by Patrik-Ian Polk, was different: It was the first American drama with a cast of all-Black and gay characters. On the show, which was set in Los Angeles, the protagonists experienced the same degrees of love (life-changing) and romance (it’s complicated) that white characters before them took for granted. The series helped set a course for shows, in a variety of genres, that featured positive portrayals of Black gay male characters, from “Brooklyn Nine-Nine” to “Pose.” *(Paramount+)*

‘Queer as Folk’

When this show debuted in the U.K. in 1999 on the cusp of Y2K, jaws dropped. On television, gay men were generally sad clowns and tragic loners. Here, they felt emotions, loved their supportive moms and had sex with the kind of frankness never seen on U.S. television. (In its early years, “Queer as Folk” could be seen by American audiences only on bootleg VHS tapes.) Showtime’s 2000 American remake, set in Pittsburgh, had its charms too, eventually running several seasons longer than its British counterpart. (For completists only, there’s also Peacock’s 2022 “Queer as Folk” reboot.) But it’s the British original — equal parts ’90s time capsule and old-school melodrama — that today comes across as a forward-looking progenitor of “Looking” and other 21st century shows about gay characters who are fully, messily, truthfully human. *(The American version streams on Paramount+; the British version streams on Pluto and Prime Video.)*

Another kind of succession

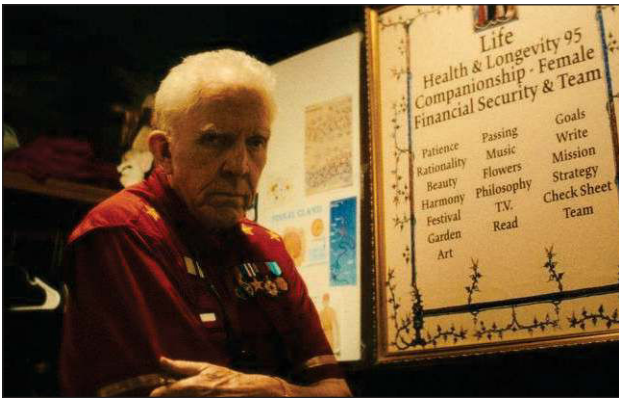
[‘Ren Faire,’ from E1]

ing on his art, his gardens and to “chase ladies.” To this end, he’s on 15 dating apps, including “sugar daddy” sites; we accompany him on a couple of dates to the Olive Garden, where his first and potentially only question is “Are your breasts natural?” “What is the king without his kingdom?” muses George, who favors shirts with patches representing stars and military medals. “What is the king without his property? He’s free.” But, as we will see, giving up his fiefdom won’t be so easy.

“It’s just a game — some people lose and some people win and some people win more than others,” observes Glenda, a.k.a. Fairy Godmother, who has known George for a long while. “Something to fill that emptiness, his games.”

Not only is he “King George” in the context of the faire and the minds of many around him, he’s also the mayor of Todd Mission, the town he incorporated in order to be able to stage an event as large as the festival. (It has its own police force.) He lives there in a stone-walled house he calls Stargate Manor, a temple of expensive kitsch with its own arboretum, chapel — where George prays to Jesus, Buddha and Mother Nature — and waiting sarcophagus. One would call him a naive artist, were it not for the master’s degree in art.

Barely daring to imagine he might one day wear the crown, but imagining it all the same, is Jeff Baldwin, formerly the entertainment director, the latest in a line of general managers whose tenures last no longer than that of a Spinal Tap drummer. (George is capricious.)



GEORGE COULAM is the founder of the Texas Renaissance Festival, the subject of HBO’s “Ren Faire.”

His association with the festival, which he loves with childlike passion, goes back almost to its beginning; there’s no one more devoted to it, or to George. (“He is our benefactor,” Jeff says to wife Brandi, now the interim entertainment director. “He is your benefactor,” Brandi replies.)

Jeff describes himself as “the head Oompa Loompa” to George’s Wonka; in the “King Lear” metaphor he kicks around with Brandi, he’s hopelessly Cordelia, whose imperiously impetuous father finally recognizes his honest child’s worth.

Jeff’s primary opponent in this drama of succession is lean and hungry-looking, overcaffeinated Louie Migliaccio. His spiritual, temperamental and physical opposite, Louie runs a kettle corn stand, a burlesque nightclub and other concessions on the site; he pounds Red Bull like it’s a contest, and is determined to buy the festival — his family is rich — beef it up with “new and immersive technology” and, above all, make a lot of money.

“Capitalism has a negative connotation nowadays,”

says Louie, “but I see the beauty in it.”

Because the characters can seem both ridiculous and relatably human, “Ren Faire” reads as a comedy, of a melancholy sort — a not-so-fun faire. Oppenheim calls the series a “docu-fantasia,” which is to say, liberties have been taken. Stylistically, it aims for, and achieves, a cinematic look, with shallow focus, extreme close-ups, elaborate camera movements and some hallucinatory visual and sound effects to create tension and indicate emotional distress.

Still, real life has a habit of imposing itself even on a docu-fantasia, and “Ren Faire” does lose a little steam in its final third, as the characters — now including a third contender, Darla Smith, appointed co-manager with Jeff — continue to go around in circles. You may share their frustration.

But as time spent in a different sort of place — different even from the one the characters imagine inhabiting — it’s a quite rewarding, even refreshing, not-over-long watch. And the ending is, in its way, happy.

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SONGS OF EARTH 1:00 3:10 5:15 7:30	KIDNAPPED: THE ABDUCTION OF EDGARDO MORTARA 4:00 7:00	FURIOSA: A MAD MAX SAGA R 1:00 4:00 7:00	THE DEAD DON'T HURT R 1:00 PM YOUNG WOMAN AND THE SEA PG 1:30 4:30 7:20
TAKING VENICE 1:20 7:20	BACK TO BLACK R 1:10 4:10 7:10	HIT MAN R 1:00 4:10 7:00	FURIOSA: A MAD MAX SAGA R 1:00 4:00 7:00
EVIL DOES NOT EXIST 4:20 PM	THE FALL GUY PG-13 1:00 4:00 7:00	SOLO 1:20 7:20	BABES R 1:10 4:20
MONICA 1332 Second Street Santa Monica	NYE 1:00 PM	BABES R 4:20 7:10	BACK TO BLACK R 4:00 PM
EZRA R 1:10 4:10 7:20	NEW HALL 22500 Lyons Ave. Santa Clarita	LA CHIMERA 4:10 PM	THE FALL GUY PG-13 1:10 4:10 7:10
SUMMER CAMP PG-13 1:00 3:05 5:10 7:30	JESUS THIRSTS: THE MIRACLE OF THE EUCHARIST 7:00 PM	COMA 1:30 7:30	CLAREMONT 450 W. 2nd Street Claremont
THE DEAD DON'T HURT R 1:10 7:00	EZRA R 1:30 4:30 7:30	NYE 1:00 PM	EZRA R 1:00 4:10 7:10
FURIOSA: A MAD MAX SAGA R 1:00 4:00 7:10	SUMMER CAMP PG-13 1:00 7:30	SHORT FILM PROGRAM 3:20 PM	YOUNG WOMAN AND THE SEA PG 1:20 4:20 7:20
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Comedians keep laughs coming for L.A. Pride Month

[**Comedy**, from E1] like Moms Mabley (out in the 1920s in her 20s) and Robin Tyler (the 1950s, age 16) who demanded equality.

By the late '70s, Tomlin explains, "Comedy became an act of resistance," in the face of Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" discrimination campaign. Bernhard experienced a parallel battle with Ronald Reagan in the '80s. (Historical turns of progress inevitably meet religious persecution.) As a young comic during the AIDS crisis, Todd Glass heard hurtful cracks from Eddie Murphy, Sam Kinison and Andrew "Dice" Clay. He grew fearful of being outed even as Margaret Cho, O'Donnell and Ellen DeGeneres rose to stardom through the '90s.

Elsewhere in the documentary, history/political science buff Guy Branum lends context to jaw-dropping archival footage, Hannah Gadsby speaks to the rise of identity-forward material, and River Butcher and Solomon Georgio pay homage to Izzard's influence around the globe.

On the local film front, comic and cartoonist Mo Welch's "Dad Jokes," a stand-up special/documentary partially filmed at the Lodge Room in Highland Park, debuts on YouTube June 14. Pioneering trans activist Tuesday Thomas gets the doc treatment with "The Trash Goes Out on Tuesday," premiering June 12 at the Independent Filmmakers Showcase at Regal L.A. Live.

And not to be outdone, Trixie Mattel's packed calendar for WeHo Pride 2024 — "one of my favorite Prides in the universe" — included Sunday's annual Santa Monica Boulevard parade. (The Comedy Store returned with its own comedian-packed float.) En-

thused Mattel, "I've attended, I've hosted, and I always have the time of my life."

For more Pride Month festivities, here's a guide to must-see live shows across Los Angeles:

On Friday, Fifi Dosch hosts "a kind of on the hush-hush" but "very trans, very kinky comedy show and art exhibit" at a secret Van Nuys locale dubbed the Greenhouse. "We don't advertise the address freely," Dosch cautions of the "really fun trans refuge and party," but for attendees who message @greenhouse.comedy.and.art on Instagram, "We'll give the address if we can prove you're not a cop." Art show begins at 6 p.m. with comedy at 8. Previews Dosch, "I'll be hosting in a hammer-and-sickle bikini."

CANTIQ

June 21 at Echo Park's inclusive lingerie store, Sammy Mowrey's "Boyfriend: A Queer Comedy Show" brings aboard Jake Noll and Pluto Papaya, "some of my favorite queer comedians in L.A., opening for me while I run my half-hour set." Intending to tape the special within the next six to eight months, Mowrey says, "I'm trying to get the feel of the flow."

THE CROW

In Santa Monica, a new Family Pride weekend launches with safe, all-ages events. June 14 at 7 and 9 p.m., the Crow's signature "Storyectomy" series returns with community and allies getting personal alongside headliners like Cameron Esposito. June 15 at the Santa Monica Pier, the Crow hosts free "Fierce Fables: Drag Queen Pride — Family Edition!" storytelling at the Carousel from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., along with



MARIAH TAUGER Los Angeles Times

APARNA NANCHERLA is in Thursday's "Nori Reed and Lovers" at the Lab.



MICHAEL BLACKSHIRE Los Angeles Times

CAMERON ESPOSITO will perform at the Crow's "Storyectomy" as well as at Frogtown's Elysian.

face painting, a Family Pride parade and dance numbers from Pickle Drag Queen, Pandora Boxx and Johnny Gentleman.

Back at the venue's Bergamot Station home base that afternoon, programming includes family-friendly improv from Pull My Finger, a youth open mic, the "BYOB (Baby)" comedy show, music from singer-songwriter Abby Posner and "I Gotta Crow" stand-up with Nina Nguyen, Jeffrey Jay, Jeena Bloom, Zoe Zakson and

Jackie Monahan.

DYNASTY TYPEWRITER

In Westlake, Natalie Rotter-Laitman does an hour June 17, Drew Droege's new "Messy White Gays" play gets dirty June 24, and Nikki Levy hosts "Don't Tell My Mother" June 25 with Rachel Scanlon, Vico Ortiz, Jen Kober and musical guests Ezra & the Pussy-boys.

THE ELYSIAN

Frogtown's favorite comedy theater offers "Joe Castle

Baker: Something to Think About" on Saturday, the descriptively named "Cameron Esposito Is Taping a Thing" Sunday, "Twin Flames" June 16, "Big Dad Energy" June 27 and "Gentlemen's Club" June 30. Longtime scene producer Sam Varela's Naked Comedy brand further sweetens the Elysian calendar with Tuesday's clowning collage "Self-Portraits With Shan Fahey" and Saturday's "Ahamed Weinberg Presents: Repentance," a Downtown Women's Shelter fundraiser with Esposito, Brendan Scannell and host Titi Lee.

Additional Naked Comedy productions include live-animated show "Picture This! Pride Edition" at the Virgil June 21 and Quei Tann's "The QT Comedy Show!" Hollywood Fringe festival run with rotating lineups June 16, 21, 23, 27 and 29 at the Los Angeles LGBT Center.

THE IMPROV

On Thursday at the Lab, "Nori Reed and Lovers" gets busy with Sam Oh, EJ Marcus, Rachel Pegram and Aparna Nancherla. June 24's "The Mav & Kalea Show" finds Mav Viola and Kalea McNeill doing time up top plus

hosting four of their TBA comedy pals.

LARGO

Before Ellen DeGeneres begins touring in late June en route to filming her final-ever special, two DeGeneres test dates were extended to four: Tuesday, Wednesday, June 12 and 13. Tig Notaro's monthly "Tig Has Friends" slot momentarily shifts to Notaro and partner Stephanie Allynne's "She Said, She Said" June 16.

LYRIC HYPERION

From the heart of Silver Lake, "Planet Courtney" takes orbit Thursday, "Hannah Einbinder Presents Friends and New Material" June 21, "two rogue lesbian nuns take over" in "Divine Perversions: A Sapphic Mass" June 23 and Titi Lee turns "Good Girl Gone Baddie" June 30.

NICO'S

Atwater Village's newbie wine shop only opened in January, but its Baby Battista bar venue has already become an alt hot spot. "Ever Mainard and Their Mostly Gay Friends" donate 100% of ticket sales to the Fund Texas Choice nonprofit June 11, with Mainard returning June 27 for solo-show-in-progress "Ottis." (Mainard's "Y'all Gay Podcast" co-host Ali Clayton released debut comedy album "Country Queer" May 31, a mere 15 years into her career.) June 25 at Nico's, Naked Comedy and Jeena Bloom's "Cruising Comedy" promises "the hottest and hardest stand-up comedy action you can handle!"

UCB

The Hollywood sketch and improv mecca showcases Jesse Esparza and Dan Leahy a.k.a. "Two Loud Gays" performing "very loud, very gay" sketch Tuesday, the all-queer cast of "Conversion Camp" variety gets campy Wednesday, and "Dating Gayme" makes matches with a "1/2 Homosexual Dating Show, 1/2 Queer Improv Spectacular" June 16.

Music background for background music

[**Mortensen**, from E1] express themselves in different disciplines and have other interests, but he's so accomplished in everything he does. And he's very humble and quiet about it. He just does."

As his acting career began to take off in the 1980s — his first big screen role was as an Amish man in Peter Weir's "Witness" — Mortensen married punk singer Exene Cervenka of the Los Angeles band X after they played husband and wife in the 1987 televangelism satire "Salvation!"

He wrote some lyrics with her, although his role in her career was mainly limited to taking the cover photos for her solo albums. Their union ended in 1992, but it produced a son, Henry, who became a skilled musician and "knows a lot more about punk rock music than I do," Mortensen says, "even though I like it."

Still, there was always something punk, or bohemian, about Mortensen onscreen — even though he was often cast as working-class, macho types: a drug dealer, a hit man. He played tough parts sensitively, and straight parts sideways.

A fateful moment came in the mid-'90s, when the producers of a spoken word album about Greek and Roman myths approached Mortensen to contribute a piece about Poseidon.

He wrote and performed a water-themed poem and "crudely, with a little tape recorder, recorded some water sounds to go with it," he says. "I mixed it in a half-assed way and sent it to the company."

They sent it back, fully mixed, with some interesting guitar parts by an enigmatic musician whose stage name was Buckethead.

Brian Patrick Carroll is an Anaheim native who wears an upside-down KFC bucket for a hat over his long curly locks and a white "Halloween" mask. Mortensen asked Buckethead if he wanted to collaborate, and they met in the Chatsworth studio of Travis Dickerson.

Something sparked between Mortensen, with his improvisational and decidedly nonpop inclinations



MARCEL ZYSKIND

VIGGO MORTENSEN wrote, directed and stars in the new western "The Dead Don't Hurt." He also created the score for the movie.

and poetic musings, and Buckethead, with his virtuosic shredding and duffel bag full of Japanese toys. Their first indie album was "One Less Thing to Worry About" in 1997 (long out of print), which featured a black-and-white photo of Mortensen eating a shoe on its cover.

"We've made several records since then," says Mortensen, "all with Travis recording and laughing and just enjoying us clowning around. Some things are really odd to listen to, I guess. But every once in a while, we'd come up with a melody that was really beautiful."

The whirlwind, impromptu sessions involved Mortensen's son from the beginning. Afterward, "I would feel just very calm, almost like a really benevolent kind of drug or something I'd taken," Mortensen says, laughing at himself.

"I would drive home feeling really good, and then when we had the record finished, I would just listen to it over and over again — especially driving."

Even when Mortensen found blockbuster fame as Aragorn in the "Rings" films,

he kept making these weirdo soundscape albums. At the height of "Rings" fever, he roped his new co-stars — Wood, Dominic Monaghan and Billy Boyd — into contributing on a bizarre record called "pandemoniumfrom-america."

Mortensen "invited us hobbits to laser tag," Wood recalls, and then they all went over to Dickerson's studio, where Buckethead and a bunch of instruments were scattered around the room. "It was just a couple of friends hanging out and messing around in the studio, and suddenly these things started to take shape out of the ether."

On one track, "Half Fling," Wood and Monaghan made "high-pitched, Muppet call-and-response voices," says Wood. "I became aware instantly that the musical expression is not dissimilar from painting or photography for him. I don't know that it even has an identifiable genre. I wouldn't know how to classify it. It's sort of beautifully undisciplined."

"We did it for ourselves, really," Mortensen says. "That's how I see making art, generally — making it as

a way of remembering what I'm experiencing at that time."

That was the same impulse for Mortensen's turn as a writer-director.

"Falling" was inspired by memories of his mother and father, who divorced when he was young, and the dementia they both developed in older age.

Based on his own original script, "The Dead Don't Hurt" is a classic western in many respects. Mortensen plays the Danish-born Holger Olsen — his own father, Viggo Sr., was Danish and the actor still has family in Denmark — and Krieps plays Vivienne Le Coudy, a French Canadian woman with clear echoes of Mortensen's mother, Grace Gamble, of Canadian descent. The story was born from his image of her running around in the maple forests near the Canadian border as a little girl.

Mortensen says he wrote the score as he was writing the screenplay, pegging where he thought music should go. He knew he wanted music of the period and reached out to violinist Scarlet Rivera — who famously played with Bob Dy-

lan in the '70s — and cellist Cameron Stone to perform his folksy Americana ideas. They convened in the Chatsworth studio and Mortensen joined in on piano and also played bass, guitar and percussion.

When it came to shooting the movie, the score was as much of a guide as the script.

"I played the music for the cinematographer and for my first [assistant director] and some of the actors," he says, "just to explain: This is the tone I'm going for and this will affect the duration of the scene, the rhythm of the scene and even shot selection. And because it's a nonlinear story I knew there were going to be transitions from one time period to another, or ellipses. I knew the music would help."

The sharp sound of clacking claves accompanies Mortensen's character in the present day, hunting down the man who preyed on his wife during his military absence.

Warm fiddle tunes and sweet harmonies underscore happier times in their marriage. Mortensen's melodic score has a tactile, earthy feel that perfectly suits the steep trails, can-

yons and rustic production design. (Stunning locations in Durango, Mexico, stood in for Nevada.)

"I don't like it when the music in a movie is telling you, 'Now you must be afraid. Now you must be sad. Now you must be happy,'" the actor-director-composer says, "any more than I like it when the dialogue does that or the acting or the cinematography. So the idea was to have all the music before, and know what we were aiming to get across — but that it would accompany, and sometimes be in contrast, in the right moment, to what was happening."

Mortensen says he might hire a different composer for the next movie he directs. He's aware of his own limitations. Regardless, he'll involve them early.

But whenever he comes across a piano — in a hotel, a restaurant or in a holding area on the set of "Eastern Promises" — he's going to sit down and play it.

"Even if you just play for two minutes," he says, "it brings you back down, puts your feet on the ground" — and it lets Mortensen's imagination wander off into some new world.

COMICS

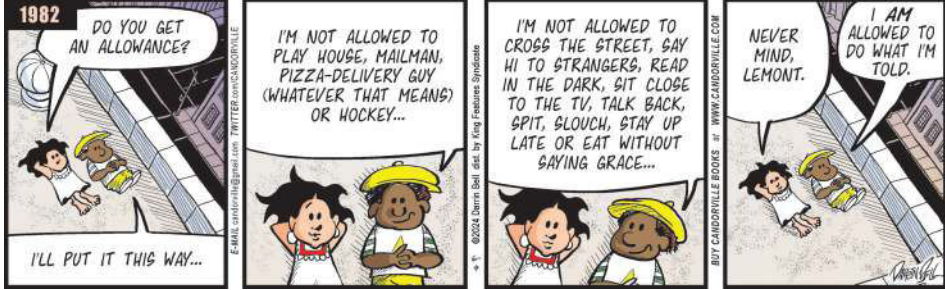
LA CUCARACHA By Lalo Alcaraz



CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia



CANDORVILLE By Darrin Bell



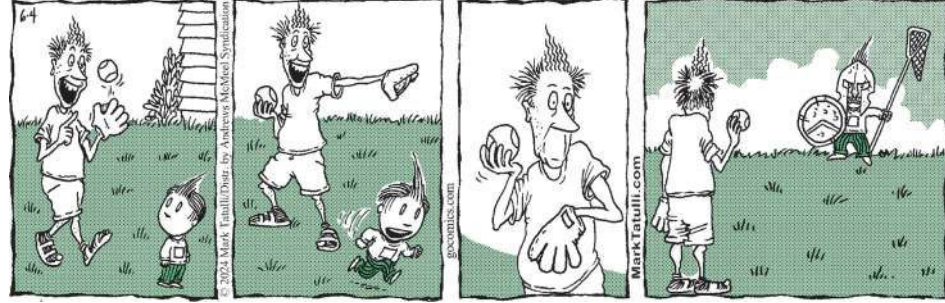
LOOSE PARTS By Dave Blazek



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By Stephan Pastis



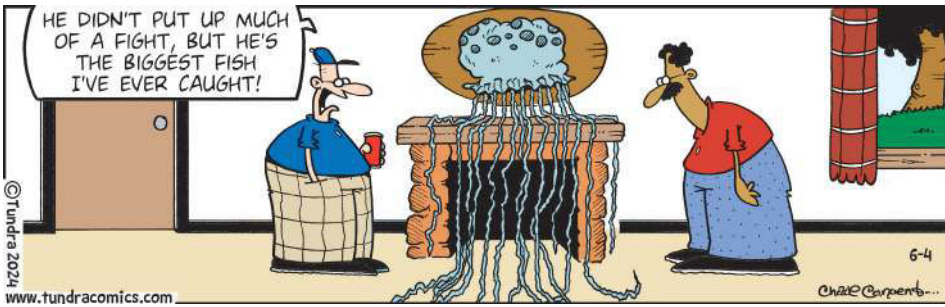
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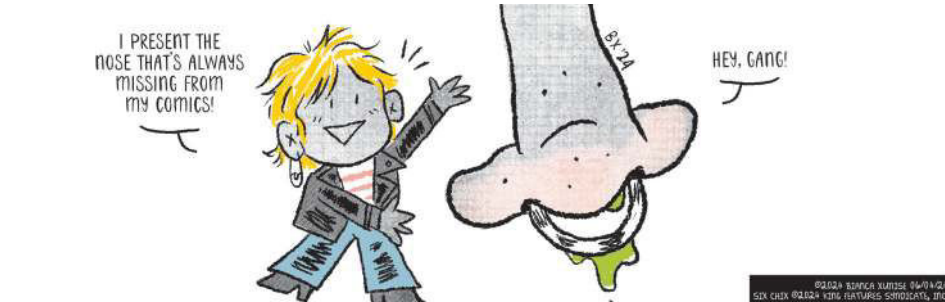
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TUNDRA By Chad Carpenter



SIX CHIX By Bianca Xunise



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PICKLES By Brian Crane



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JUMP START By Robb Armstrong



MACANUDO By Liniers



BLONDIE By Dean Young & John Marshall



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BIZARRO By Wayno and Piraro



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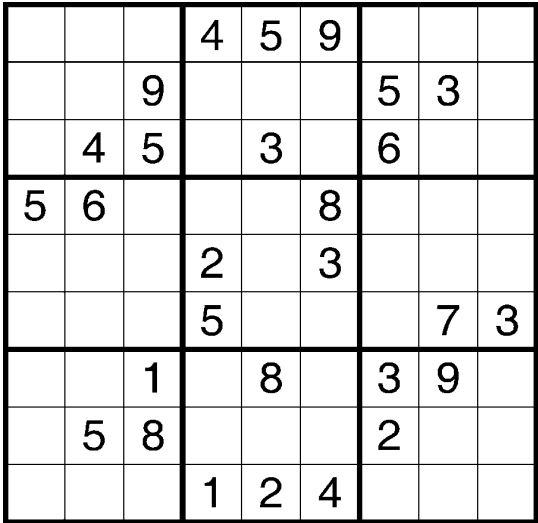


PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz



COMICS

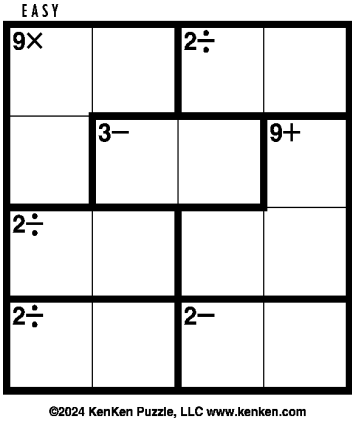
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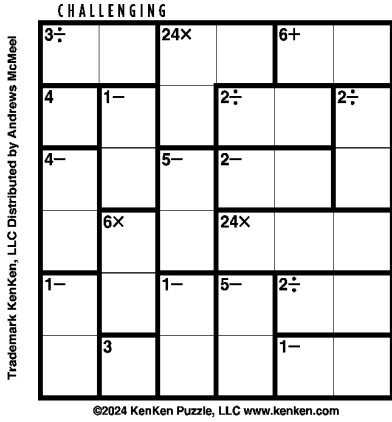
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Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 or 2-by-3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 6 for the smaller grid). For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk.

KENKEN

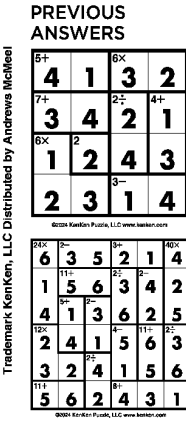
Every box will contain a number; numbers depend on the size of the grid. For a 6x6 puzzle, use Nos. 1-6. Do not repeat a number in any row or column. The numbers in each heavily outlined set of squares must combine to produce the target number found in the top left corner of the cage using the mathematical operation indicated. A number can be repeated within a cage as long as it is not in the same row or column.



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HOROSCOPE

By HOLIDAY MATHIS

Aries (March 21-April 19): Heavy realities are like dumbbells to weightlifting goals. They are a grunting pain to deal with, but it's an effective way to make the sinew do what you want it to.
Taurus (April 20-May 20): It's the people who maintain a sweet demeanor even when expectations have been dashed who really deserved the medal.
Gemini (May 21-June 21): People who talk about how useful they are but don't follow through with action are worse than the ones who don't get involved.
Cancer (June 22-July 22): If you leave a conversation too early, you won't get past the surface observations and niceties. Today, your sense of social timing will be impeccable.
Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): While putting too many eggs in one basket is never ad-

vised, right now just do what you can and hope for the best.
Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): What was once confusing to you is now easily sorted because you have taken the time to discern what you're dealing with and how it is most expediently handled.
Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): There's a new, impressive someone. In the moments you prioritize this person, you feel changed.
Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): The relationship between physical and emotional space will be highlighted.
Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Getting to the next milestone will be extraordinarily simple. Decide where you're going, get on the road and go there.
Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): There is an adjustment to be made, and likely it's a subtraction. Can you guess what you might need to lose along the path of desire?
Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb.

18): Fun and surprise go together, and you'll have both today because you dare to let go.
Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Because you'd rather experience the lovely drama of a weather system that cycles and dissipates than bear a damp season, you'll embrace whatever feelings arise.
Today's birthday (June 4): Your personal life will be fond, and your intellectual life adventurous. More highlights: You'll get to live in your preferences for long stretches and refine the tones, moods and styles that make your work attractive and thrilling. A stimulating hobby will unexpectedly develop in lucrative ways. Sagittarius and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers: 8, 10, 33, 4 and 19.

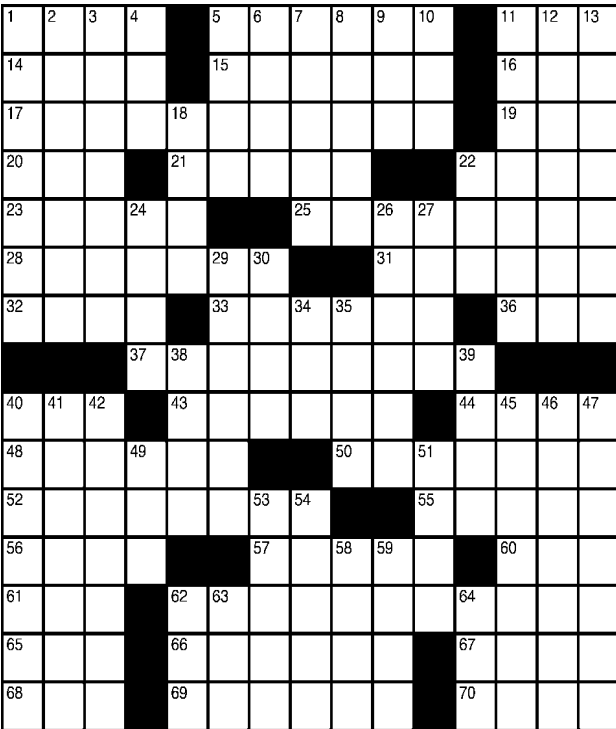
Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol
By Taylor Johnson

- ACROSS**
1 Pool or polo
5 Groups of troops
11 Understood, as a joke
14 Persian Gulf country that borders Armenia
15 Noggin
16 NPR host Shapiro
17 Vegetable patch pest
19 "Mm-hmm"
20 Lawyer's org.
21 Unwilling (to)
22 Band bookings
23 Native Costa Ricans, informally
25 Feline who lives indoors
28 Anthem heard in Nova Scotia
31 Olympic gymnast Biles
32 Vanity Fair publisher Condé —
33 Tooth's outer layer
36 Neither's partner
37 Workplace companion
40 Cable network with many reruns
43 "Good enough"
44 Job inspection org.
48 Baltimore ballplayer
50 Walked stealthily
52 New York City rodent that went viral in 2015
55 Mixes
56 School support orgs.
57 Coral producer
60 Combat sport, briefly
61 Ad-__: improvise
62 Really fun person, or an apt descriptor of 17-, 25-, 37-, and 52-Across?
65 Subj. for some new immigrants
66 Zoo section with birds
67 Actress Russo
68 __/her pronouns
69 Prime-time soap opera set in Texas
70 Commotions

- DOWN**
1 Unit of explosive force
2 Coffee bean variety
3 Seed-filled percussion pair
4 Stop
5 __ Domini
6 Civil rights activist Parks



- 7 Calendar viewing option
8 Washington neighbor
9 Former quarterback Manning
10 Salt, in French
11 Judy Garland or Cher
12 Herb in Italian seasoning
13 Bettor's adviser
18 Anna's sister in "Frozen"
22 Precious stone
24 Not fooled by
26 Applied to
27 Storage tower
29 More adroit
30 Deep blue dye
34 Oft-torn knee pt.
35 Rx items
38 Seoul-based athleisure brand
39 Billy __
40 Brings down
41 "The Great __ Baking Show"
42 Quite large
45 Read quickly
46 Spanish brother
- 47 Revenue source for magazines
49 Parts of lbs.
51 "SportsCenter" network
53 Earth Day time
54 Add up to
58 Harp-shaped constellation
59 Celebratory shouts
62 Cushion
63 Filmmaker DuVernay
64 Nest egg letters



BRIDGE

By FRANK STEWART

"Some days," Cy said, "I'm convinced that my partners don't have a clue. On other days, I'm convinced that it's not just some days."
Cy was today's North. When South opened and re-bid in hearts, Cy raised to game — then had to watch his partner try to make it. West led a spade, and declarer took dummy's ace, cashed the ace of trumps and led a trump to his jack. West took the queen and led another spade, and when East won and led the jack of clubs, the result was down two.
"Thank you, partner," the Cynic growled.
"So two key honors were in the wrong place," South

growled back.
There are no perfect partners, but South's play wasn't best. After South wins the first trick, he should take the A-K of trumps.
No queen falls, but South is still alive. He runs the diamonds and pitches two clubs as West ruffs. Then the defense can take one spade and one club, but South wins the rest.
You hold: ♠ K 8 7 4 ♥ 7 6 ♦ 7 3 2 ♣ J 10 9 4. The dealer, at your left, opens one diamond. Your partner doubles, you bid one spade and he raises to three spades. What do you say?
Answer: You must remember that your hand could have been worse, yet your partner is willing to undertake a nine-trick contract. Since you have a king and good intermediates in

clubs that may produce tricks, bid four spades. Partner's hand may be A Q 10 3, A Q 8 2, 4, A Q 7 6.
South dealer
N-S vulnerable
NORTH
♠ A 5
♥ A 3 2
♦ K J 10 9 4
♣ 8 3 2
WEST
♠ Q 10 6 2
♥ Q 10 4
♦ 8 6 5
♣ A Q 7
EAST
♠ K 8 7 4
♥ 7 6
♦ 7 3 2
♣ J 10 9 4
SOUTH
♠ J 9 3
♥ K J 9 8 5
♦ A Q
♣ K 6 5
SOUTH
1 ♥
2 ♥
WEST
Pass
Pass
NORTH
2 ♦
2 ♦
EAST
Pass
All Pass
Opening lead — ♠ 2
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ASK AMY

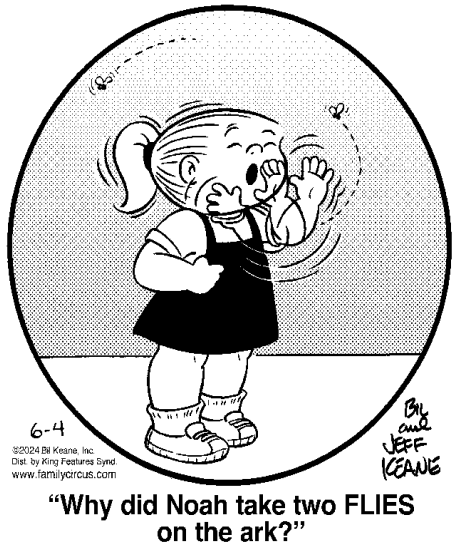
Helping depressed elders

Dear Amy: My 83-year-old widowed mother is depressed, and I don't know how to help.
She refuses to see a therapist and views drugs as a crutch. She has always been a very private person, is generally distrustful of doctors and would never let down her shields to a stranger.
I have told her that I am not a therapist, but she has lately begun to confide in me about things that, even as an adult, I shouldn't be hearing. Depression runs in the family. I've seen a therapist in the past and am on medication, so I understand and empathize, but it's getting to the point where I dread seeing her, and yet I know that I'm her only lifeline.
How do I help her?
WORRIED
Dear Worried: People sometimes start to reveal long-repressed or suppressed trauma very late in life, when — for a variety of reasons (medical, emotional, cognitive) — their defenses are down. Studies of WWII survivors have shown that the strong and stoic "Greatest Generation" have experienced nightmares, remembered traumatic events and suffered from depression very late in life.
Therapy helps. Medi-

cation helps. And yet many elders are resistant to the idea of treatment in the ways your mother is.
My first suggestion is that you should resume in-person (or telehealth) therapy right away, in order to process this burden, which is a trigger for you.
I urge you to seek healthy ways to be open and present for your mother, while resisting the temptation to try to provide answers or your own brand of therapy for her.
Being in the moment with her is a special and challenging kind of witnessing. You stroke her hand. You say, "Mom, I'm so sorry." You sit quietly, and if you're able, you stay in the moment with her, letting her speak.
I wonder if you might be able to urge your mother toward treatment by asking her if she would consider doing this "for" or with you.
A good and competent therapist helps their client transition from being a stranger to a trusted and helpful ally.
Dear Amy: I got married (at 30) to a man who had two children. The girl was 7, the boy was 2.
We were together for 16 years before divorcing, and although I have a close bond to the now 53-year-old for-

mer stepdaughter, I have never been successful in having a bond with the son.
Now, 30 years after my divorce from his father, I received an invitation to his daughter's high school graduation party.
I am flummoxed and am unsure about how to respond to this gesture.
I do not know this young woman and have never been included in their lives.
Should I just send a nice card?
ON THE FENCE
Dear On the Fence: Yes, just send a nice card. There is never a downside to sending a nice card.
Someone, somewhere, suggested this young woman should invite you to her graduation party.
The graduate's aunt (the former stepdaughter you've stayed close to) might have encouraged her brother and his daughter to make an effort to get to know you.
Some might accuse this girl of "trolling for gifts," but my theory is that the high school graduation celebration is often the first party to which young people have inviting privileges that includes a wider circle than immediate friends — and they tend to cast a wide and sometimes awkward net.

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham



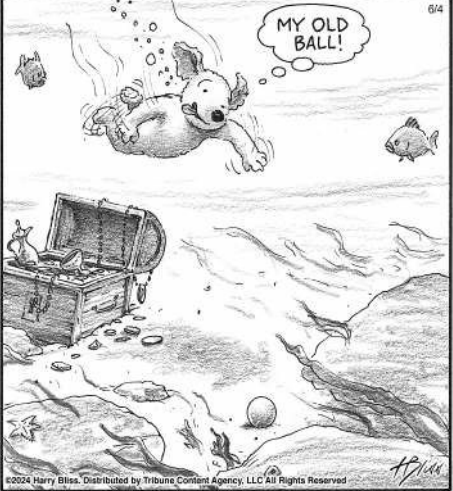
FREE RANGE By Bill Whitehead



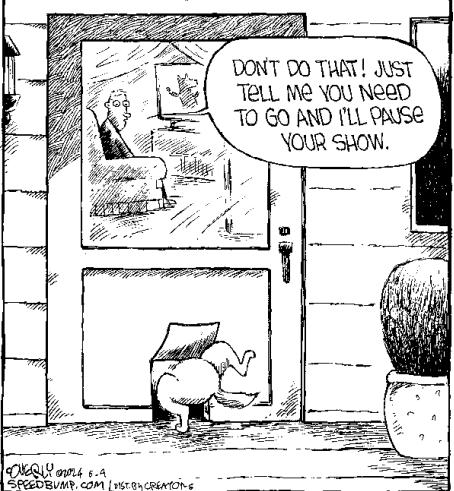
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Los Angeles Times

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