



MATT BROWN Getty Images

ANGELS STARTER Tyler Skaggs, pictured before a 2016 game against Boston, died from a fentanyl overdose on July 1, 2019. Years later, the team's communications director, who provided the synthetic opioid to Skaggs, was convicted of federal charges.

COLUMN ONE

How Angels pitcher spent his final days before fatal overdose

Tyler Skaggs cracked jokes, wore a cowboy outfit for Texas and often texted his wife. One night, he stopped replying

By David Wharton and Nathan Fenno

Not many victims of the opioid crisis in America make national headlines. Tyler Skaggs was different. The 27-year-old was a professional athlete, a pitcher for the Angels, wealthy and famous. On a trip with the team, he was found in his hotel room. He had choked on his own vomit after consuming a mix of alcohol, oxycodone and fentanyl. His death on July 1, 2019, sent shock waves through the sports world. A highly publicized criminal investigation not only revealed that Skaggs had secretly used pain-

killers for years, but also led to the arrest of a team employee who provided him with tainted, black market pills. Five years later, The Times has pored over hundreds of pages of court documents and cellphone records to reconstruct Skaggs' final hours. Playing cards with teammates on a three-hour flight. Teasing rookies on the bus. Trading affectionate texts with his wife until late at night. Even the most ordinary details tell an important story, offering an intimate look at an epidemic that has ravaged the country.

[See Skaggs, A10]

Money for their dream babies vanishes

Expectant parents learn that funds put in escrow for surrogate moms is inaccessible and probably gone.

By Matt Hamilton

They scrimped, and they saved. Some asked family and friends to pitch in. Others took out loans for tens of thousands of dollars.

Their goal was twofold: To raise the small fortune necessary to pay for a surrogate. And to realize a dream previously impossible — having a child of their own.

Hundreds of people across California, the U.S. and around the globe put their money, sometimes \$50,000 or more, into the hands of a Texas-based escrow company so the funds could be held in trust and doled out to a surrogate for healthcare costs, insurance and compensation.

But last month, expectant parents and their surrogates learned the money they had set aside at Houston-based Surrogacy Escrow Account Management is inaccessible and likely gone.

"We want answers," said Chris Kettmann of Fair Oaks, Calif., a suburb of Sacramento. "Is there recourse to get the money back? If not, what can we do?"

Kettmann, 33, said he and his wife had about \$45,000 in their escrow account, money owed to their surrogate, who is pregnant with their baby boy and due in October. "We don't know enough to say what happened," he said. "We just know there's something crazy going on."

Police in Houston have opened a wide-reaching investigation. Christina Garza, a spokeswoman for the FBI's Houston field office, confirmed last week that the agency also is investigating Surrogacy Escrow Account Management. The FBI has developed a public portal for SEAM clients to report their account information and how much money they believe they are owed. Garza, however, cautioned that the inquiry was in its early stages and said, "We're trying to compile as much information as possible."

A married same-sex couple in Washington, D.C., says they are out \$55,000. A Los Feliz couple said they demanded their \$40,000 be returned and believe it is gone. Arielle Mitton, an L.A. native who recently moved to Bellingham, Wash., can recite the amount that she and her husband are missing down to the cent: \$37,721.44.

[See Surrogates, A5]

High interest rates hitting Californians harder

They cause greater pain because housing, gas and many other things are more costly than in other states.

By Don Lee and Andrea Chang

By the numbers, the overall U.S. economy may look good, but down at the street level the view is a lot grimmer and grittier. The surge in interest rates imposed by the Federal Reserve to slow

inflation has closed like an acrid cloud over would-be homeowners, car buyers, growing families, and businesses new and old, large and small. It has meant missing opportunities, settling for less — and waiting and waiting and waiting.

It's not that the average American is underwater. It's that many feel that they're struggling more than they anticipated and feel more constricted. In the American dream, if you work hard, things are supposed to get better. Fairly or not, that may be a big part of why so many voters have expressed unhappiness with President

Biden's handling of the economy.

The cost of borrowing, whether for mortgages, credit cards or car loans, is the highest in more than two decades. And that is weighing especially hard on people in California, where housing, gas and many other things are more expensive than in most other states.

California's economy also relies more on interest rate-sensitive sectors such as real estate and high tech, which helps explain why the state has been lagging behind in job growth and its unemployment rate is the highest [See Interest rates, A6]



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

GRITZ N WAFFLEZ owner Jurni Rayne would have expanded sooner if interest rates had been lower.

Financial literacy a must for high schoolers

California will make course in pocketbook economics a requirement

By Howard Blume

California students will have to complete a course in pocketbook economics — balancing a checkbook, managing credit cards, avoiding scams — to graduate from high school under a bill that will become law, state lawmakers announced

last week.

"We need to help Californians prepare for their financial futures as early as possible," Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a statement. "Saving for the future, making investments and spending wisely are lifelong skills that young adults need to learn before they start their careers, not after."

This bill — which has drawn criticism from those concerned about another requirement on crammed academic schedules — orders school districts and charter schools to offer a one-semester course in personal finance. To meet the requirement, the class cannot be combined with any other course beginning in the 2027-

28 school year.

Students graduating in 2031 will have to pass the class.

The agreement among state lawmakers avoids a ballot-box verdict by voters. Backers of the new requirement had gathered enough signatures to place the proposal, dubbed the California [See Finance, A6]

Group investigating federal workers

American Accountability Foundation vetting those it suspects could resist Trump. **PERSPECTIVES, A2**

Handful of laws kick in Monday

Among the legislation: "junk" fees, iPhone fixes and date-rape testing kits. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather

Partly sunny. L.A. Basin: 86/64. **B6**

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'The Bear' actor savors moment

Liza Colón-Zayas' acting chops stand out as Tina's story is told. **ENTERTAINMENT, E1**

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PERSPECTIVES

Hungarian contrarian will preside over EU

Prime Minister Orban recently has seemed to relish opportunities to spoil key decisions.

BY JUSTIN SPIKE

BUDAPEST, Hungary — When Hungary takes over the helm of the European Union on Monday, many politicians in Brussels will have the same thing on their minds: whether populist Prime Minister Viktor Orban will use the role to further his reputation as the bloc's main spoiler.

Orban in recent years has seemed to relish opportunities to block, water down or delay key EU decisions, routinely going against the grain of most other leaders on issues such as the war in Ukraine, relations with Russia and China, and efforts to defend democracy and the rule of law.

His public opposition to EU policies and stances has long frustrated his partners in the bloc and pushed him to the margins of the continent's mainstream. Hungary's motto for its presidency — Make Europe Great Again — raised eyebrows for its resemblance to the famous tagline of former President Trump.

The EU presidency rotates among its member countries, and while the post holds little real power, it does allow countries to put their priorities high on Europe's agenda. Now, as Hungary resides over the 27-nation bloc for the coming six months, it will probably keep up its anti-EU rhetoric, said Dorka Takacsy, a research fellow at the Center for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy.

But the timeline of its presidency — beginning with a lengthy summer break and a transitional period of forming a new European Parliament and executive commission — will give



HUNGARIAN Prime Minister Viktor Orban has been accused of dismantling democratic institutions and violating EU standards, leading the bloc to call for its presidency to be taken out of Hungary's hands entirely.

Budapest few opportunities to derail the bloc's priorities significantly, she said.

"These six months are all together not that long, which means that ... Hungary cannot do potentially much harm, even according to the critics," Takacsy said.

As Hungary's takeover approached, leaders in Brussels rushed to push through important policy decisions while Belgium was still at the helm. On Tuesday, for example, the EU launched membership talks with candidate countries Ukraine and Moldova.

Orban has vocally opposed and threatened to

block Ukraine's candidacy. His government has also held up EU efforts to supply Ukraine with badly needed funding.

Yet with Ukraine's accession process already initiated, Takacsy said, the most Hungary can do now under its presidency is delay further steps toward its EU membership, a process that in any scenario is likely to take many years.

"All the meaningful steps from the European side regarding Ukraine were already done," she said. A Hungarian "delay, according to most European leaders, is already calculated and being

taken into consideration as if it's something which is most likely going to happen."

Orban has long been accused of dismantling democratic institutions and violating the EU's standards on the rule of law, leading the bloc's legislature in May to call for the presidency to be taken out of Hungary's hands entirely.

In a resolution, the EU parliament argued that democratic deficiencies raised questions of "how Hungary will be able to credibly fulfill this task in 2024." Two years ago, the European Commission froze billions of euros in funds to Bu-

dapest over concerns about democratic backsliding by the government.

But some Hungarian officials have stressed that they plan to act constructively during their presidency. Last week, Hungarian Minister for EU Affairs Janos Boka told reporters that "we will be honest brokers, working loyally with all member states and institutions."

"Carrying out the functions of the presidency is our obligation, but we see it primarily as an opportunity," Boka said. "At the beginning of the new institutional cycle, we can initiate a debate and set the agenda on issues

that are important to us."

Among the issues that Hungary has prioritized in its seven-point program is the enlargement of the EU in the Western Balkans for countries such as Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania through a "merit-based" procedure.

Budapest has also vowed to strengthen the EU's external borders and step up against illegal immigration, and to address "demographic challenges" that involve an aging population in Europe — two priorities that reflect Orban's image as a staunch opponent of immigration and defender of family values.

But after years of campaigns portraying the EU as forcing unwanted policies on Hungary — Orban has repeatedly compared membership in the bloc with more than four decades of Soviet occupation of his country — he may find it difficult to restore goodwill among his EU partners.

"The Hungarian government has been using the image of Brussels as a punching bag," Takacsy said. "Now it's somewhat difficult to communicate that for these brief six months, we are basically the Brussels that Hungary is waging war and a freedom fight against."

With some words of advice for Orban before Hungary assumes its role, the prime minister of Belgium said the position "does not mean that you are the boss of Europe."

"The presidency means that you're the one that has to make the compromise," Alexander De Croo said to reporters in Brussels last week. "Being in the position where you have to make the compromise is an interesting position to be in at least once in your life, so I can definitely recommend it to Mr. Orban."

Spike writes for the Associated Press.

Group vets workers it suspects could resist Trump

BY LISA MASCARO

WASHINGTON — From his home office in small-town Kentucky, a seasoned political operative is quietly investigating scores of federal employees suspected of being hostile to the policies of Republican Donald Trump, a highly unusual effort that dovetails with broader conservative preparations for a new White House.

Tom Jones and his American Accountability Foundation are digging into the backgrounds, social media posts and commentary of key high-ranking government employees, starting with the Department of Homeland Security. They're relying in part on tips from his network of conservative contacts, including workers. In a move that alarms some, they're preparing to publish the findings online.

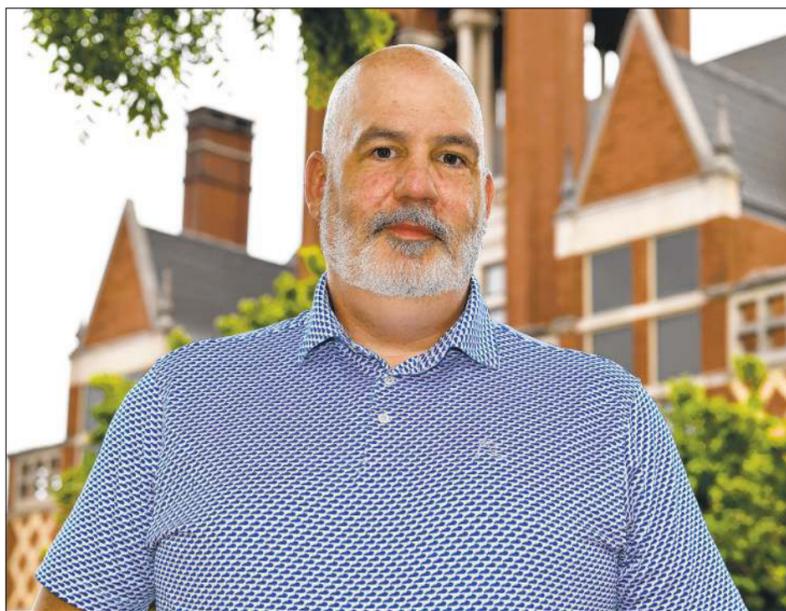
With a \$100,000 grant from the Heritage Foundation, the goal is to post 100 names of government workers to a website this summer to show a potential new administration who might be standing in the way of a second-term Trump agenda — and ripe for scrutiny, reclassifications, reassignments or firings.

"We need to understand who these people are and what they do," said Jones, a former Capitol Hill aide to Republican senators.

The concept of compiling and publicizing a list of government employees shows the lengths Trump's allies are willing to go to ensure nothing or no one will block his plans in a potential second term. Jones' Project Sovereignty 2025 comes as Heritage's Project 2025 lays the groundwork, with policies, proposals and personnel ready for a possible new White House.

The effort, focused on top career government officials who aren't appointees within the political structure, has stunned democracy experts and shocked the civil service community in what they compare with the red scare of McCarthyism.

Jacqueline Simon, policy director at the American



TOM JONES, an activist and former Capitol Hill aide, heads the American Accountability Foundation, which is digging into the backgrounds of federal workers.

Federation of Government Employees, said the language being used — the Heritage Foundation's announcement praised the group for ferreting out "anti-American bad actors" — is "shocking."

Civil servants are often ex-military personnel and are required to take an oath to the Constitution to work for the federal government, not a loyalty test to a president, she and others said.

"It just seems as though their goal is to try to menace federal employees and sow fear," said Simon, whose union backs President Biden, a Democrat, for reelection.

As Trump, who has been convicted of felony charges in a hush money case and is under a four-count federal indictment accusing him of working to overturn his 2020 election loss, faces a likely rematch with Biden this fall, far-right conservatives have vowed to take a wrecking ball to what they call the deep-state bureaucracy.

The Trump campaign has said outside groups don't speak for the ex-president, who alone sets his policy priorities.

Conservatives view the federal workforce as over-

'They're seeking to undermine our democracy. They're seeking to undermine the way that our government works for people.'

— SKYE PERRYMAN, chief executive of the advocacy group Democracy Forward

stepping its role to become a power center that can drive or thwart a president's agenda. Particularly during the Trump administration, government officials came under attack from the White House and Republicans on Capitol Hill, as his own Cabinet often raised objections to some of his more singular or even unlawful proposals.

Though Jones' group won't necessarily be recommending whether to fire or reassign the federal workers it lists, the work aligns with Heritage's far-reaching Project 2025 blueprint for a conservative administration. Heritage's Project 2025

proposes reviving the Trump Schedule F policy that would try to reclassify tens of thousands of federal workers as political appointees, which could enable mass dismissals — although a Biden administration rule seeks to make that more difficult. The Heritage project is working to recruit and train a new generation to travel to Washington to fill government jobs.

In announcing the \$100,000 Innovation Award last month, Heritage said it would support the American Accountability Foundation's "investigative researchers, in-depth reports, and educational efforts to alert Congress, a conservative administration, and the American people to the presence of anti-American bad actors burrowed into the administrative state and ensure appropriate action is taken."

Heritage President Kevin Roberts said the "weaponization of the federal government" has been possible only because of the "deep state of entrenched leftist bureaucrats." He said he was proud to support the work of American Accountability Foundation workers "in their fight to hold our

government accountable and drain it of bad actors."

The federal government employs about 2.2 million people, including those in the Washington, D.C., area and workers whom the unions say many Americans know as friends or neighbors in places across the country.

About 4,000 positions in the government are considered political appointees who routinely change from one presidential administration to the next, but most are career professionals — from landscapers at Veterans Administration cemeteries to economists at the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The public list-making conjures for some the era of Joseph McCarthy, the Wisconsin senator who conducted grueling hearings into suspected communist sympathizers during the Cold War. The hearings were orchestrated by a top staffer, Roy Cohn, who became a confidant of a younger Trump.

Skye Perryman, chief executive of the advocacy group Democracy Forward, said it's deeply disturbing and reminiscent of "the darker parts of American history."

Publicly naming government workers is an "intimidation tactic to try to chill the work of these civil servants," she said, and part of a broader "retribution agenda" underway this election.

"They're seeking to undermine our democracy," she said. "They're seeking to undermine the way that our government works for people."

Jones, from his desk overlooking rickshaws storing barrels in the "bourbon capital" of Bardstown, scoffed at comparisons to McCarthyism as "nonsense."

He's a former staffer to then-Sen. Jim DeMint, the South Carolina conservative Republican who later led Heritage and now directs the Conservative Policy Institute, where the American Accountability Foundation has a mailing address. Jones also worked for Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), and provided opposition research for Texas GOP Sen. Ted Cruz's 2016 presidential bid.

With six researchers, Jones' team operates remotely across the country, poring over the information about federal workers within Homeland Security, the State Department and other agencies that deal with immigration and border issues.

Their focus is on the highest ranks of the civil servants — GS-13, GS-14 and GS-15 employees and those in senior executive positions who could put up roadblocks to Trump's plans for tighter borders and more deportations.

"I think it's important to the next administration to understand who those people are," Jones said.

He dismissed the risks that could be involved in publicly posting the names, salary information and other details of federal workers who have some level of privacy or the idea his group's work could put employees' livelihoods in jeopardy.

"You don't get to make policy and then say, 'Hey, don't scrutinize me,'" he said.

He acknowledges some of the work is often a "gut check" or "instinct" about which federal employees would be suspected of trying to block a conservative agenda.

"We're looking at, 'Are there wrong people on the bus right now that are, you know, openly hostile to efforts to secure the southern border?'" he said.

His own group came under scrutiny as it first probed Biden nominees.

Biden had repealed Trump's Schedule F executive order in January 2021, but a Government Accountability Office report in 2022 found that agencies believed it could be reinstated by a future administration.

Since then, the Biden administration issued a rule that would make it harder to fire workers. A new administration could direct the Office of Personnel Management to undo the regulation, but the process would take time and be open to legal challenges.

Mascaro writes for the Associated Press.

THE WORLD

Female suicide bombers kill at least 18 in Nigeria



VICTIMS of a suicide bomber are treated Sunday at a hospital in Maiduguri, Nigeria. Bombers launched coordinated attacks on three sites, authorities say.

JOSHUA OMIRI Associated Press

The attacks occurred in a state known for Boko Haram activity.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria — Female suicide bombers targeted a wedding, a funeral and a hospital in coordinated attacks in northern Nigeria that killed at least 18 people, local authorities said Sunday.

The first suicide bomber detonated an explosive device at about 3 p.m. at a wedding in the northeastern town of Gwoza, according to Barkindo Saidu, the director-general of Borno State Emergency Management Agency.

"Minutes later, another blast occurred near General Hospital," Saidu said. A third attack occurred at a funeral, conducted by a female bomber disguised as a mourner. Children and preg-

nant women were among those killed.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Gwoza is in Borno state, which has been heavily affected by an insurgency launched in 2009 by Boko Haram, an Islamic extremist group. The violence, which has spilled across borders around Lake Chad, has killed more than 35,000 people, displaced 2.6 million and created a humanitarian crisis.

Boko Haram, which has one branch allied to the Islamic State group, wants to install an Islamic state in Nigeria, West Africa's oil giant of 170 million people divided almost equally between a mainly Christian south and a predominantly Muslim north.

Boko Haram has used women and girls to conduct suicide bombings. This has prompted suspicions that the bombers may be among the many thousands of women and girls the group

has kidnapped over the years. The resurgence of suicide bombings in Borno raises significant concerns about security in the region.

Saidu said the injuries from Sunday's bombings included abdominal ruptures and skull and limb fractures.

"I am now coordinating for a chopper tonight," Saidu said. "I have mobilized emergency drugs to complement the shortage of drugs in Gwoza."

Authorities imposed a curfew in the city, which remained on high alert following reports of another suspected bomber in Pulka, just over a mile away.

Gwoza is a few miles from Chibok, where 276 schoolgirls were abducted in 2014. Nearly 100 of the girls remain in captivity.

Since then, at least 1,500 students have been kidnapped across the country. Armed groups have found this to be a lucrative way to fund criminal activities and take control of villages.

Far-right party leading in France

National Rally has a strong showing in first-round vote, a slap to centrist Macron.

BY JOHN LEICESTER, LORI HINNANT AND SYLVIE CORBET

PARIS — France's high-stakes legislative elections propelled the far-right National Rally to a strong but not decisive lead in the first-round vote Sunday, polling agencies projected, dealing another slap to centrist President Emmanuel Macron.

The projections indicated that Macron's risky decision to call voters back to the polls for the second time in three weeks appeared to have backfired.

French polling agencies said Macron's grouping of centrist parties could finish a distant third in the first-round ballot. Those projections put Macron's camp behind both Marine Le Pen's National Rally and a new left-wing coalition of parties that joined forces to keep her anti-immigration party with historical links to antisemitism from being able to form the first far-right government in France since World War II.

But with another torrid week of campaigning to come before the decisive final voting next Sunday, the

election's ultimate outcome remained uncertain.

Macron and Prime Minister Gabriel Attal urged voters to rally against the far right in the second round.

"Not a single vote must go to the National Rally. France does not deserve that," Attal said.

Addressing a jubilant crowd waving French tricolor flags of blue, white and red, Le Pen called on her supporters and voters that didn't back her party in the first round to push it over the line and give it a commanding legislative majority. In that scenario, Le Pen's 28-year-old protégé, Jordan Bardella, would become prime minister. Macron, who has said he will not step down before his term expires in 2027, would be forced into an awkward power-sharing arrangement called "cohabitation" in France.

Still, the National Rally isn't there yet.

Although polling agency projections gave it around one-third of the national vote on Sunday, it remains unclear how the party's surge will translate into actual seats in round two.

Some polling agency projections indicated that in the best-case scenario for the far right, the National Rally and its allies could collectively clear the bar of 289 seats needed for a secure majority in the 577-seat National Assembly. That could spook European financial markets,

affect Western support for Ukraine and the management of France's nuclear arsenal and global military force.

But, depending on how the second round shakes out, the far right could also fall short, with no single bloc securing a clear majority, polling agencies projected. Predictions are difficult because of the two-round voting system, and because parties will work between the rounds to make alliances in some constituencies or pull out of others. Early official results for the first round were expected later Sunday.

Many French voters are frustrated about inflation and other economic concerns, as well as Macron's leadership, seen as arrogant and out of touch with their lives. The National Rally has tapped that discontent, notably via online platforms such as TikTok.

Voters in Paris had issues including immigration and the rising cost of living on their minds as the country grew more divided between the far-right and far-left blocs, with a deeply unpopular and weakened president in the political center. The campaign was marred by rising hate speech.

"People don't like what has been happening," said Cynthia Justine, 44. "People feel they've lost a lot in recent years. People are angry. I am angry." She added that

with "the rising hate speech," it was necessary to express frustration with those holding and seeking power.

She said it was important as a woman to vote since women haven't always had that right. And "because I am a Black woman, it's even more important. A lot is at stake on this day."

Macron called the early elections after his party was trounced in the European Parliament election earlier in June by the National Rally, which has historic ties to racism and antisemitism and is hostile toward France's Muslim community. It also has historical ties to Russia.

Macron's call was an audacious gamble that French voters who were complacent about the European election would be jolted into turning out for moderate forces in national elections to keep the far right out of power.

A 64-year-old voter, Philippe Lempereur, expressed fatigue with politicians from the left, right and center and what he called their inability to work together on issues such as ensuring people have shelter and enough to eat. "We vote by default, for the least worse option," he said. "I prefer to vote than do nothing."

Leicester, Hinnant and Corbet write for the Associated Press.



EVGENIY MALOLETKA Associated Press

POLICE help a woman evacuate Friday in Toretsk, Ukraine, a civilian area under heavy bombardment.

Russian bombs pound front line in Ukraine's east

BY VASILISA STEPANENKO AND EVGENIY MALOLETKA

DONETSK REGION, Ukraine — Drone video from Ukraine's military released Sunday shows what appears to be bodies in a civilian area in the eastern town of Toretsk, which has come under heavy Russian bombardment in recent days.

The attacks in the war-torn Donetsk region have prompted a scaled-up evacuation effort by Ukrainian rescue services.

Local officials said powerful Russian glide bombs have been used in the town, the latest flash point on the eastern front.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said Sunday that Russia had dropped more than 800 glide bombs in Ukraine in the previous week alone.

"Ukraine needs the necessary means to destroy the carriers of these bombs, including Russian combat aircraft, wherever they are. This step is essential," he wrote in an online post.

The Soviet-era glide bombs are fitted with precision guidance systems and launched from aircraft that are out of range of air defenses. Each bomb weighs more than a ton and blasts targets to smithereens, leaving a huge crater.

Police rescuers in Toretsk helped seniors out of their homes, carrying one woman from her bed onto a stretcher.

"It's a terrible situation, because for three days we could not evacuate," Oksana Zharko, 48, told the Associated Press while leaving the town in a police van with family members and a cat. "Yesterday there was an attack, and our house was destroyed — very strong, there are no walls left. Everyone is stressed, emotional, in tears. It's very scary."

Russian attacks in recent weeks have focused on the town of Khavir Yar to the north, as Ukrainian commanders say their resources remain stretched, thanks largely to a months-long gap in military assistance from the United States.

Ukraine is still struggling to stabilize parts of its front line after desperately needed military assistance was approved by the U.S. in April.

Zelensky called on countries that are assisting Ukraine to further relax restrictions on using Western weapons to strike military targets inside Russia.

"Clear decisions are needed to help protect our people," he said. "Long-range strikes and modern air defense are the foundation for stopping the daily Russian terror. I thank all our partners who understand this."

Hours after Zelensky spoke, Ukrainian officials said Russian glide bombs had struck near a postal warehouse in Kharkiv, the country's second-largest city, in the northeast. The bombs killed an employee and injured nine people, including an 8-month-old.

According to a statement by Nova Poshta, the private postal and courier company that operates the site, the strike set at least seven delivery trucks ablaze, while damaging at least three others and the warehouse itself. One driver died.

As many as nine people remained trapped under burning wreckage, and rescue teams were combing the site Sunday evening, regional Gov. Oleh Sinegubov posted on Telegram.

Less than a day earlier, Russian missiles slammed into a town in southern Ukraine, killing seven civilians, including children, and wounding dozens, local authorities reported.

Ukrainian officials published photos of bodies under picnic blankets in a park in Vilniansk and craters in the blackened earth next to the charred remains of a building.

At least 38 people were wounded in Saturday evening's attack, authorities said.

Meanwhile, Russia-appointed officials in Donetsk, which is partially occupied and illegally annexed by Moscow, said Ukrainian shelling Sunday wounded a 4-year-old boy and a 15-year-old girl. According to Russia's Emergency Ministry, four of its staff also came under shelling Sunday as they attempted to put out a fire in the Kremlin-occupied local capital, also called Donetsk.

Stepanenko and Maloletka write for the Associated Press.

Ultra-Orthodox protest turns violent

Thousands rally in Jerusalem against a court order to enlist in military service.

BY OHAD ZWIGENBERG

JERUSALEM — Thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jewish men clashed with Israeli police Sunday in central Jerusalem during a protest against a Supreme Court order that they enlist for military service.

The landmark decision last week ordering the government to begin drafting ultra-Orthodox men could lead to the collapse of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's governing coalition as Israel wages war in Gaza. Tens of thousands of men rallied in an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood. After nightfall, the crowd made its way toward central Jerusalem and turned violent.

Police said protesters threw rocks and attacked the car of an ultra-Orthodox Cabinet minister. Police used water cannons to disperse the crowd, but the demonstration was not under control late Sunday.

Military service is compulsory for most Jewish men and women in Israel. But politically powerful ultra-Orthodox parties have won exemptions for their followers, who instead study in religious seminaries.

The long-standing arrangement has bred resentment among the broader public, a sentiment that has



OHAD ZWIGENBERG Associated Press

ULTRA-ORTHODOX Jewish men set fires Sunday during a protest against Israeli military recruitment.

grown stronger during the eight-month war against Hamas. More than 600 soldiers have been killed, and tens of thousands of reservists have been activated, upending lives.

Ultra-Orthodox men say serving in the army will destroy their generations-old way of life. Earlier Sunday, thousands crowded a square for mass prayers.

The ultra-Orthodox parties are key members of Netanyahu's governing coalition and could force elections if they decide to leave the government in protest.

Party leaders have not said whether they will leave the government.

Also on Sunday, Israeli troops carried out an airstrike in the northern West Bank, killing a Palestinian militant and wounding five others, Palestinian health officials said.

The strike took place in Nur Shams, an urban ref-

ugee camp that has been a frequent target of the Israeli military and is known as a stronghold of Palestinian militants. The state-run Palestinian news agency Wafa said an Israeli drone fired three missiles and struck a house.

Islamic Jihad identified the dead man as Saeed al-Jaber, one of its local commanders. Wafa said he had escaped a drone strike June 20. The wounded were not identified; health officials said two were in critical condition.

The Israeli military confirmed an attack on the home, saying that militants inside, including Al-Jaber, were responsible for recent attacks on Israeli targets.

The occupied West Bank has experienced a surge in violence since war erupted in October in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Health Ministry says more than 500 Palestinians have been killed by

Israeli fire in the West Bank since the start of the war. Most were killed during Israeli raids and violent protests. The dead include bystanders and Palestinians killed in attacks by Jewish settlers.

Hamas' attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7 killed about 1,200 people; 250 were taken hostage. More than 37,800 Palestinians have been killed in the offensive, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants in its toll.

Israeli forces have been battling Palestinian militants in an eastern part of Gaza City, Shijaiyah, in recent days. Israel returned to the neighborhood months after saying it had completed operations there.

Hamas has repeatedly regrouped in hard-hit areas after Israeli troops pulled out. The latest operation sent thousands of residents fleeing.

The Israeli army said Sunday it had killed dozens of militants in "close-quarters combat" and airstrikes and confiscated weapons from a hideout Hamas kept in a United Nations-supported school.

Palestinians also continued to flee Rafah, the southern Gaza city where Israel says it is in the final stages of an offensive. More than 1.3 million Palestinians have fled Rafah since Israel's incursion into the city in early May.

Zwigenberg writes for the Associated Press.

THE NATION

Biden allies reaffirm support despite debate

After a shaky face-off, the president retreats to Camp David while Democrats rally.

By THOMAS BEAUMONT AND COLLEEN LONG

WASHINGTON — While President Biden was out of sight at Camp David on Sunday spending time with family, prominent Democrats rallied with a public show of unwavering support for his campaign following his unsteady debate performance and growing anxiety over whether he should remain in the White House race.

"I do not believe that Joe Biden has a problem leading for the next four years," said one close ally, Democratic Rep. James E. Clyburn of South Carolina. "Joe Biden should continue to run on his record."

Biden's allies blanketed the Sunday talk shows and conceded that the president's debate performance against Republican Donald Trump on Thursday night had ranged from subpar to bad. They encouraged voters to see past the moment, look at Biden's long-term record and focus on Trump's myriad falsehoods during the 90-minute debate.

Privately, though, Biden's campaign has been working to tamp down concerns over the debate on CNN where Biden sounded raspy and sometimes struggled to finish sentences. The campaign has spent the days since then working to



U.S. REP. James E. Clyburn (D-S.C.) speaks at a rally on Friday in Orangeburg, S.C. Clyburn, a close ally of President Biden, has said Biden should keep fighting.

keep donors and surrogates on board.

After a New York fundraising event Saturday, Biden traveled with his family to Camp David, the presidential retreat outside Washington. The previously planned trip was also being used to take family photographs for the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August.

Even before the debate, the age of the 81-year-old Democratic president has been a liability with voters, and the prime-time face-off appeared to reinforce the public's deep-seated concerns before perhaps the largest audience he will garner in the four months until

election day. CNN said more than 51 million people watched the debate.

Sen. Raphael Warnock, a Georgia Democrat and Baptist minister, said there had been "more than a few Sundays when I wish I had preached a better sermon," relating the experience to Biden's debate performance.

"But after the sermon was over, it was my job to embody the message, to show up for the people that I serve. And that's what Joe Biden has been doing his entire life," Warnock said, echoing the message from other supporters that Biden had a bad debate, but a lifetime of good governance.

Warnock, like Clyburn and others, pivoted to Trump's many falsehoods during the debate — falsehoods Biden and the debate moderators often failed to fact-check from the stage — including statements about the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol by Trump supporters, immigration and the outcome of the 2020 election. "Whenever his mouth was moving, he was lying," Warnock said of Trump.

Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) dodged questions about Trump's false claims and praised Trump's performance while accusing the national news media of hiding a debilitating condition.

Trump "was strong. He was clear. He was coherent," Graham said.

He called Biden "compromised" and said "the media is covering" it up.

Behind closed doors, a sense of concern was simmering among some Democrats that Biden's campaign and the Democratic National Committee were not taking seriously enough the impact of Biden's performance.

The DNC chairman, Jaime Harrison, and Biden's campaign manager, Julie Chavez Rodriguez, held a Saturday afternoon call with dozens of committee members across the country — a group of some of the most influential members of the party — where they offered a rosy assessment of the path forward and no opportunity for others on the call to respond with questions.

Multiple committee members on the call, most granted anonymity to talk about the private discussion, described feeling like they were being asked to ignore a serious predicament. "There were a number of things that could have been said in addressing the situation. But we didn't get that. We were being gaslit," said Joe Salazar, an elected DNC member from Colorado, who was on the call.

Advocates such as Clyburn, whose support was critical to Biden's South Carolina primary win in 2020, pointed to the president's North Carolina rally on Friday, when he appeared energized and animated, a sharp pivot from the night

before.

"I know I'm not a young man — to state the obvious," Biden said at the rally. "Folks, I don't walk as easy as I used to. I don't speak as smoothly as I used to. I don't debate as well as I used to."

"But I know what I do know: I know how to tell the truth. I know right from wrong. And I know how to do this job. I know how to get things done. And I know, like millions of Americans know: When you get knocked down, you get back up," he said to rousing cheers.

Biden's team has reported that the campaign amassed over \$33 million since Thursday, \$26 million from smaller dollar donations, including roughly half from first-time donors this cycle. The campaign said Thursday had been its best "grassroots" fundraising day, while Friday, the day after the debate, was its second best.

Biden's campaign communications director, Michael Tyler, said there had been no internal conversations "whatsoever" about Biden stepping aside, although he, too, acknowledged that the president had a "bad night" on stage.

Clyburn and Graham were on CNN's "State of the Union" and Warnock appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Beaumont and Long write for the Associated Press. Beaumont reported from Des Moines. AP writers Matthew Daly, Zeke Miller and Seung Min Kim contributed to this report.

LGBTQ+ Pride Month concludes with parades, protests

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The monthlong celebration of LGBTQ+ Pride reached its exuberant grand finale on Sunday, bringing rainbow-laden revelers to the streets for marquee parades in New York, Chicago, San Francisco and elsewhere across the globe.

The wide-ranging festivities functioned as both jubilant parties and political protests, as participants recognize the community's gains while also calling attention to recent anti-LGBTQ+ laws, such as bans on transgender healthcare, passed by Republican-led

states.

"We're at a time where there's a ton of legislation, anti-LGBTQ+ legislation," Zach Overton, 47, said at the New York parade. "It feels like we're taking a step backwards in the fight for equality and so it's a great moment to come out and be with our community and see all the different colors of the spectrum of our community and remind ourselves what we're all fighting for."

Thousands of people gathered along New York's Fifth Avenue to celebrate Pride. Floats cruised the street as Diane Ross' "I'm Coming Out" played from loudspeakers. Pride flags filled the horizon, and signs

in support of Puerto Rico, Ukraine and Gaza were visible in the crowd.

This year, tensions over the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza are also seeped into the celebrations, exposing divisions within a community that is often aligned on political issues.

Pro-Palestinian activists disrupted Pride parades earlier in June in Boston, Denver and Philadelphia. Several groups participating in marches Sunday said they would seek to focus on the victims of the war in Gaza, spurring pushback from supporters of Israel.

"It is certainly a more active presence this year in terms of protest at Pride events," said Sandra Pérez, the executive director of NYC Pride. "But we were born out of a protest."

The first Pride march was held in New York City in 1970 to commemorate the first anniversary of the Stonewall Inn uprising, a riot that began with a police raid on a Manhattan gay bar.

Nick Taricco, 47, who was at the New York parade with Overton, said he attended Friday's opening of the Stonewall National Monument Visitor Center, where President Biden spoke. Taricco said he has concerns about politics in the U.S., including the presidential election.

"Even given how old he is, I still think that's the direction we need to go in," Taricco said of Biden. "But it's a very uncertain time in gen-



ETHAN SWOPE Associated Press

REVELERS turned out Sunday to recognize LGBTQ+ gains and call attention to restrictive laws. San Francisco Mayor London Breed, center, joins a Pride parade.

eral in this country."

In addition to the NYC Pride March, the nation's largest, the city also played host Sunday to the Queer Liberation March, an activism-focused event launched five years ago amid concerns that the more mainstream parade had become too corporate.

Another one of the world's largest Pride celebrations took place Sunday in San Francisco.

In Chicago, tens of thou-

sands of revelers packed sidewalks along the parade, a scaled-back event from previous years. City officials shortened the North Side route and the number of floats this year to about 150 from 199 over safety and logistical concerns, including to better deploy police into evening hours as post-parade parties have become more disruptive in recent years. Chicago's parade, one of the largest in the U.S., routinely draws about 1 million

people, according to the city. Sunday's crowd estimates were not immediately available.

Parades were also scheduled in Minneapolis and Seattle.

On top of concerns about protests, federal agencies have warned that foreign terrorist organizations and their supporters could target the parades and adjacent venues. A heavy security presence was expected at all of the events.

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Boulder View blaze was 19% contained Sunday after charring six square miles.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Evacuation orders in Arizona have been lifted for some residents of northeast Scottsdale, days after they were forced from their homes by a wildfire, authorities said Sunday.

The Boulder View fire was 19% contained Sunday after charring nearly six square miles on the cusp of the Boulder Heights subdivision since Thursday.

About 60 homes were evacuated Friday. No injuries have been reported and no structures have been damaged.



TIFFANY DAVILA Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management SMOKE rises from the Boulder Fire near Scottsdale on Thursday. About 60 homes were evacuated Friday.

Authorities said the cause of the fire remains under investigation. It began about five miles outside northern Scottsdale on the

edge of the Tonto National Forest.

Maricopa County Department of Emergency Management officials said

evacuations were lowered from "Go" to "Set" status Saturday evening for some displaced residents preparing to return home.

Scottsdale officials have notified homeowners that the north part of the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, including all trails, will be closed until further notice. They called that a precautionary move and said there was no immediate threat to the preserve.

Tiffany Davila, a spokesperson for the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, said nearly 270 firefighters were battling the wildfire in triple-digit heat Sunday.

She said there was a chance of thunderstorms in the fire area Sunday evening and that could make fire-fighting efforts more complicated due to gusty winds and lightning strikes.



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Los Angeles Times

Millions held in escrow for surrogates is missing, but babies are still on the way

[Surrogates, from A1]

"I assumed naively that an escrow account was a safe thing," said Mitton, whose surrogate in Indiana is pregnant with their daughter and is due to deliver on Christmas Eve.

Mitton has joined hundreds of affected parents and surrogates in a private Facebook group that has become a forum for venting, grieving, exchanging information and trying to answer the overriding questions: What happened here? And where did all their money go?

Scrutiny has centered on the sole owner of SEAM, Dominique Side, who has told customers that she had once been a surrogate. The 44-year-old billed herself as an entrepreneur of multimillion-dollar businesses in the Houston area, including a vegan grocery store, a nonprofit school, a vegan music studio and the surrogacy escrow outfit. She walked the red carpet in L.A. for vegan fashion events and ran a concierge service for those seeking a more eco-friendly lifestyle.

"One common thread runs through all my businesses: each is based firmly on a foundation of compassion — for others, for myself and for the planet," she told a Houston publication in 2022.

Side did not respond to calls or written questions. Emails to Side triggered an auto response that doubled as a press statement. Citing the "active investigation by federal authorities," Side wrote in the email, "Under the advice of counsel, I am not permitted to respond to any inquiries regarding the investigation."

On Thursday, Side and SEAM were hit by a lawsuit from a merchant cash advance lender, the third such lawsuit this year. Merchant cash advance lenders provide small businesses with quick infusions of money at high fees akin to interest rates of 50% to 100%.

A judge in Texas also froze all of the company's accounts along with Side's other businesses after a SEAM client, Marieke Slik, sued over her "vanished" \$28,000.

Calling herself a "victim of a scam," Slik alleged that Side and her company had lured her and others "into a fiduciary relationship in order to steal their escrow funds," according to her lawsuit, which was filed in Texas. "The Defendants have left hundreds of surrogates throughout the country — who are pregnant with a child that does not belong to them — with no way to pay for necessary prenatal care." Sides' actions, according to the lawsuit, "are nothing short of evil."

For some, a path of heartbreak, tragedy

Many surrogacies often involve LGBTQ+ couples who want children, or older couples for whom child-bearing is no longer a viable possibility.

For others, the road to surrogacy is one of heartbreak and tragedy.

The married woman in Los Feliz said she had had multiple miscarriages. She was recently pregnant but gave birth in the second trimester. The newborn died at Cedars-Sinai in his parents' arms.

The couple turned to surrogacy after exhausting all other options. They selected a surrogate, completed the necessary contract — which often requires using an escrow firm — and put more than \$40,000 into the account, a portion of the overall cost. But their embryo had yet to be transferred into the surrogate.

"Nothing is clear," she said, explaining that they demanded their funds weeks ago. "Obviously that fell on deaf ears — we didn't get our money back," she said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because their extended family remains unaware of their attempt at using a surrogate.

"I'd love to carry this child," she said, and "not spend any money on a surrogate. There's a level of that, where you feel so terribly sad. You feel sad about the money, but you feel sad about the situation."

'Something really bad has happened'

For intended parents and



DOMINIQUE SIDE, owner of Surrogacy Escrow Account Management, at Vegan Fashion Week at L.A.'s California Market Center in October. The 44-year-old has told customers that she was once a surrogate.

surrogates, trouble emerged around late May, when surrogates did not receive their usual payments.

In early June, Tena Doan — a 42-year-old surrogate mother in Indiana — said she noticed her bank account balance was lower than expected and realized her monthly payment and allowance had not come through. Her surrogacy agency told her that banking issues at SEAM had delayed the arrival of the money.

"I said, 'No problem, they'll get it fixed,'" Doan recalled, figuring that banking issues happen. When she logged into SEAM's portal, she saw that the money listed as due her was still there.

Then came a June 12 email from Side claiming that fraudulent charges had prompted Capital One to freeze SEAM's account.

"Some payments were able to go through before the accounts were frozen," Side wrote in the email. She stated that new bank accounts were established and promised service would be restored.

Two days later, however, Side sent another email indicating that "all operations have been placed on hold" due to legal action.

Doan said that the email stopped her in her tracks.

"That's when we were like, 'Oh s—, this is not good. Something really bad has happened,'" Doan recalled. "From there, it's been a whirlwind."

Mitton — the mother of the child that Doan is carry-

'There's a level of that, where you feel so terribly sad. You feel sad about the money, but you feel sad about the situation.'

— A Los Feliz woman who said she had multiple miscarriages before using a surrogate

ing — was at home more than 2,000 miles west.

"The first few days, I barely slept, I was nauseous from all the emotional aspects and had vertigo," Mitton remembered.

She contacted the FBI, Houston police, the Texas attorney general. Mitton even emailed the chief executive of Capital One, questioning how the money could apparently vanish.

Both Doan and Mitton joined the Facebook group and realized they were part of a club they never wanted membership in: those affected by SEAM's financial collapse.

An informal poll among members suggested that about \$10 million was unaccounted for. Parents and surrogates from across the country and around the world have traded information in the Facebook group about current police investigations and become sleuths themselves.

They've pored over Side's various businesses — Vgn Bae Music Studio and Nikki Green, a luxury vegan fash-

ion line. They've also mined her social media accounts.

A recent post on Side's Instagram page VgnBae-Dom, which has since been deleted, recounted her birthday week in June: Side said she flew to L.A., enjoyed dinner at the upscale Culver City vegan restaurant Shojin, dined at Crossroads Kitchen and Craig's — both frequent celebrity hot spots — enjoyed a "full day of spa and cabana" at the Four Seasons, before doing fittings at Celine, the luxury French fashion house.

"The week this was going down was also her birthday week," said Mitton, who recalled thinking, "She's probably spending our escrow money there."

Signs of financial difficulty appear

SEAM was first registered in Texas in 2014. Testimonials from 2017 onward show glowing reviews, and one parent told The Times he had used SEAM for their first child without issue.

Lawsuits from cash ad-

vance lenders filed against SEAM and Side in New York this year indicate mounting financial trouble in recent months.

So-called merchant cash advance lenders send sums of money to distressed businesses, often with a rapid turnaround, and in exchange, a business lets the lender withdraw a portion of future receipts directly from the business' bank account to pay off the debt. Cash advance lenders often insist they aren't lenders and that cash advances against future revenue aren't technically loans — but New York's former attorney general had lambasted the industry for predatory debt collection practices.

In January, Side received an unspecified sum from Pearl Delta Funding and agreed to pay back \$69,500. But she defaulted the next month, prompting the lender to sue her in New York in March. (Pearl Delta's attorney did not respond to an email seeking comment.)

On May 6, Side secured \$650,000 from Dynasty Capital and agreed to pay \$975,000, or 150% of the amount borrowed, according to court records.

Under the agreement, the lender was allowed to debit \$12,500 per day from SEAM's account until the full amount was paid back. On May 31, Dynasty Capital said in court papers, SEAM "breached the agreement" and either failed to put revenue into the business account or diverted it elsewhere, leaving Dynasty unable to recoup its money.

Dynasty Capital sued Side, SEAM and her various businesses on June 18. Dynasty's lawyer declined to comment.

On May 29, Side obtained \$100,000 from Arsenal Funding and agreed to allow Arsenal to deduct 1.25% of SEAM's daily revenue from its business bank account until \$149,000 was paid off.

Arsenal sued Side and SEAM last month after Side stopped making payments on June 21 and defaulted, according to the lawsuit filed in New York, which demands about \$190,000 to cover the outstanding debt and fees.

To secure the loan from Arsenal, Side had to disclose her largest revenue sources. She listed three companies, all in Southern California: US Harvest Babies Surrogacy in the City of Industry; Mle & Mlang International Surrogacy in L.A.; and a Shady Grove Fertility office in Solana Beach.

But there is reason to doubt the accuracy of what Side told the lender. In a statement, Shady Grove said it had no financial relationship with Side or SEAM and did not refer patients to the company, explaining that "some patients may have independently engaged with SEAM."

Further, the name that Side had listed as her contact has never been an employee of Shady Grove, according to a person familiar with the company's operations. And the address she

listed for Shady Grove is a small branch in the San Diego area that's been open for only a few months; Shady Grove is headquartered in Maryland and has 49 locations nationwide.

Neither Harvest Babies nor Mlang responded to requests for comment.

Side told Arsenal that she was the 100% owner of SEAM and projected an average monthly revenue of \$2.78 million, according to a copy of the financial agreement that Arsenal included with its lawsuit.

Lori Hood, a Houston-based attorney who is representing Slik — the client who sued Side last month in Texas — said she was confounded by SEAM's financial practices. She said the lawsuit from Dynasty Capital indicated that escrow money was used to secure the \$650,000 cash payment.

"How do you put up escrow funds as collateral?" said Hood. "That's my first indication that something's desperately wrong. You don't recognize escrow funds as revenue."

Second, Hood said, SEAM's tax records that she's reviewed also showed revenue of "millions of dollars."

"Did her company make millions of dollars, or is she putting into the tax returns that the escrow money was her revenue?" Hood asked.

To press their client's lawsuit against SEAM, Hood and her law partner, Marianne Robak, petitioned a judge to freeze all of SEAM's accounts at Capital One along with other accounts owned or controlled by Side.

"The evidence shows that SEAM's escrow account with Capital One ... has no funds available," notes the request for a restraining order to freeze all accounts. "SEAM is insolvent."

In the filing, Hood also accused SEAM of diverting money into accounts in the name of Life Escrow, a company registered last year to Side's business partner, Anthony Hall, who is also a defendant in the suit filed by Slik.

Side's "actions appear to be to avoid having to face the clients she defrauded. It appears she had absconded," states the restraining order, which a Harris County, Texas, judge signed off on June 21.

Reached by phone on Thursday, Hall said he "had no connection with SEAM," adding, "I wish I had answers."

Hall said he was a business partner of Side in the vegan music studio, Vgn Bae Studios, adding, "Everything was great until it wasn't."

Hall said he did not know whether Side had an attorney and said that he was speaking only for himself.

"She's not going to respond," he said of Side. "I'm defending myself. I don't know what they have going on."

Pregnancies don't wait

For Hood and hundreds of surrogate mothers and parents, questions mount.

"I won't cast blame on any of the parents. They did everything they were supposed to do," Hood said.

Time is short, however, for ongoing pregnancies and those couples who hope to have a surrogate receive an embryo soon.

Kettmann, from the Sacramento area, said their surrogate is 22 weeks pregnant. Of the \$57,000 they put into SEAM, he said, \$45,000 is missing. The rest had been distributed to the surrogate.

"It's a scramble," he said. He and his wife had some money saved for additional expenses, which they've used to cover the June payment that never arrived from SEAM. He's now raising funds from family and friends.

"We told her we'll do everything we can to keep her up to date on payments," he said, "but [we're] asking her to be patient."

Mitton and her surrogate, Doan, have started collecting donations through GoFundMe and plan to extend the payment terms two years, rather than having all the money sent to Doan shortly after delivery.

"I'm growing a healthy baby girl for them," Doan said, "and that's all that matters."



"WE WANT answers," says Chris Kettmann, pictured with his wife, who holds an ultrasound image, in an undated photo. Their baby boy is due in October.

CHRIS KETTMANN

High interest rates are taking a bigger toll on Californians

[Interest rates, from A1] in the nation.

High rates strain household budgets

When interest rates rise, savers can earn more on their deposits. But in America's consumer society, for most people higher rates mean that a lot of things cost a little (or a lot) more. That makes it harder to stretch an individual or family budget. It may mean giving up on the nicer car you had your heart set on, or settling for a smaller house, or a shorter, less glamorous vacation.

And with every uptick in interest rates, which is almost inevitably passed on to customers, some have had to give up on a purchase entirely.

Geovanny Panchame, a creative director at an advertising agency, knows these feelings all too well: He thinks often about what could have been if he and his wife had bought the starter home they were planning for in 2020.

Back then, they had been pre-approved at an interest rate of 3.1% — right around the national average — but were outbid several times. They figured they'd wait a few years to save more money for a nicer place.

Four years later, the couple are still renting an apartment in Culver City — and now they're expecting their first child.

Pushing to buy a house and get settled before their son is born in December, they recently made an \$885,000 offer for a three-bedroom, 1.5-bath home in Inglewood. They plan to put down 10%. At the current average mortgage interest rate of 7%, that would mean a monthly payment of about \$5,300 — \$1,900 more than if they had an interest rate of 3.1%.

The source of that increase is the Federal Reserve's power to set basic interest rates, which determines the interest rates for almost everything else in the economy. The Fed's benchmark rate went up rapidly, from near zero in early 2022 to a generational high of about 5.5%, where it has been for almost a year. The rate has been higher in the past, but after two decades

in which it was mostly at rock bottom, most people had gotten used to both very low inflation and low interest rates.

"Clearly, we look back and we probably should have kept going and hopped into something," Panchame, 39, said. "I've been really sacrificing a lot to get to this point to purchase a home, and now I just feel like I got here but I didn't work quick enough because interest rates have gotten the better of me."

Add property taxes and home insurance, and it's even more painful for homebuyers because those costs have also risen sharply since the COVID-19 pandemic, along with housing prices themselves.

A typical buyer of a mid-tier home in California, priced about \$785,000 in the spring, was looking at a total housing payment of about \$5,900 a month. That's up from \$3,250 in March 2020 and almost \$4,600 in March 2022, when the Fed began raising interest rates, according to the California Legislative Analyst's Office.

It wasn't supposed to work like that: Lifting interest rates as fast and as high as the Fed did, in its effort to curb inflation, should have led to falling home prices.

But that didn't happen, mainly because relatively few homes came on the market. Most existing homeowners had locked in lower mortgage rates before the surge; selling those houses once interest rates took off would have meant paying higher prices and interest rates on other homes, or bloated rents for apartments.

For most homeowners sitting on the low rates of the past, their financial well-being was further supported by low unemployment and incomes that generally remained on par with inflation or grew a little faster. And many had cushions of savings built up in early phases of the pandemic, thanks partly to government support.

All of which has kept the U.S. economy as a whole humming along, blunting the full effects of higher interest rates.

"Consumers are doing their job," said Claire Li, sen-



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

"ABSOLUTELY, lower interest rates would have helped me," says Jurni Rayne, owner of Gritz N Wafflez. Rayne started in a ghost kitchen before moving into a small spot in Pico-Union. It grew to 17 tables from three.

ior analyst at Moody's Investors Service, though she added that there are now signs of slower spending, evidenced by consumers cutting back on credit card purchases.

Unlike most home loans, credit card interest rates aren't fixed. And today the average rate has bounced up to almost 22% from 14.6% in 2021, according to Fed data. That's starting to squeeze more borrowers, adding to their unease.

Rising credit card debt, delinquencies

In California, the 30-day delinquency rate on credit cards is nearing 5% — something not seen since late 2009 around the end of the Great Recession, according to the California Policy Lab at UC Berkeley.

Lower-income and younger borrowers are more prone to falling behind on credit card, auto and other consumer loan payments than those with higher incomes. And it's these groups that are feeling the effects of higher interest rates the most.

Christian Shorter, a self-employed tech serviceman who lives in Chino, just bought a used Volkswagen Jetta for \$21,000. He put down \$3,500 and financed the rest over 69 months at an annual interest rate of 24%. His monthly payment is more than \$480, and by the end of the loan he will have paid about \$15,000 in interest.

Shorter, 45, said he doesn't have good credit. He plans to take out a personal loan when interest rates drop and pay off the car debt. "Definitely, definitely, they should lower interest rates," he said of the Fed.

Between the jump in interest rates and prices of new vehicles, some auto buyers have downgraded to cheaper models. The biggest shift, though, especially in California, has been a move by more buyers to turn to electric vehicles to save on fuel costs, says Joseph Yoon, a consumer analyst at Edmunds, the car research and information firm in Santa Monica.

In May, he said, buyers on average financed about \$41,000 on a new vehicle purchase at an interest rate of 7.3% (compared with 4.1% in December 2021). Over 69 months, that translates to a monthly payment of \$745.

"For a big part of the population, they're looking at this car market and saying, 'I got to wait for something to break,' like interest rates or dealer incentives," Yoon said.

For a lot of small-business owners, a major driver of the L.A. economy, they don't have the luxury of waiting it out. They need funds to survive, or to expand when things are going well.

But many can't qualify with traditional commercial lenders, and when they can they're typically looking at interest rates of 9%; that's more than double what they were before the Fed's rate increases, according to surveys by the National Federation of Independent Business.

One result: More people in Southern California are looking for help from lenders such as L.A.-based Lendistry, one of the nation's largest minority-led community development financial institutions.

From January to May, applications were up 21% and the dollar volume of loans rose 33% compared with a

year earlier, said Everett Sands, Lendistry's chief executive. Interest rates on his loans range from 7.5% to 14.5%.

"Business owners, they're resilient, entrepreneurial, scrappy — they'll figure out a way," he said, adding that he sees many doing side jobs including driving for Uber or making Instacart deliveries at night.

Even so, Sands said, the higher borrowing costs inevitably mean less money spent on things such as investing in new technology and software and bringing on additional staff, as well as delays in owners growing their businesses.

"Some of them lose out in progressing forward."

Jurni Rayne, 42, started her brunch business, Gritz N Wafflez, as a ghost kitchen in February 2022, preparing food orders for delivery services. She financed that by maxing out her credit cards and getting a merchant cash advance, which is like a payday loan with super high interest rates. Her debts reached \$70,000.

"When you put everything on the line, you get desperate," said Rayne, a Dallas native who moved to Los Angeles a decade ago and has worked as a manager at California Pizza Kitchen and the Cheesecake Factory. "You don't care about the interest rate because it's something like between passion and insanity."

She has since paid off all the merchant loans. And her business has seen such strong growth that last year Rayne got out of the ghost kitchen and into a small spot in Pico-Union, starting with just three tables. She now has 17 tables and a staff of 14.

In the fall she'll be moving to a bigger location in Korea-

town and has her sights on a second restaurant in South Los Angeles. But she frets that she could have expanded sooner if interest rates had been lower and she'd had more access to financing.

Economists call that an opportunity cost. For Rayne, it's personal.

"Absolutely, lower interest rates would have helped me," she said.

For many others, the wait for lower rates continues without the balm of intermediate success.

Lynn Miller, 60, began looking to buy a home in Orange County about a year ago, hoping to upgrade from her current 1,600-square-foot apartment.

"It's not bad, it's just not mine — the dishwasher is crappy, the washing machine is old," she said of her rental in Corona del Mar. "I'm obviously not going to invest in these appliances. It's just different not owning your own home."

It's been a discouraging process, she said, especially when she inputs her numbers into the mortgage calculators on Zillow and Realtor.com, which churn out estimates based on current interest rates.

"If you look at those monthly payment numbers, it's shocking," said Miller, a marketing consultant. "It'll get better, but it's just not better right now."

She's continuing her house search — she'd love to buy a single-family, three-bedroom home with a backyard for a dog — but is holding off for now.

"I'm still waiting because I do think that interest rates are going to go down," Miller said, although she knows it's a guessing game. "I could end up waiting a long time."

Financial literacy to be California high school mandate

[Finance, from A1] Personal Finance Education Initiative, on the November ballot. They will now shut down that effort.

The new requirement and the bill that will make it law "will benefit countless future generations of Californians," said Tim Ranzetta, a wealthy Silicon Valley businessman who bankrolled the signature gathering for the ballot initiative and also supported the legislation.

Thursday was the legal deadline for Ranzetta to withdraw the ballot initiative, which he said he would do if an adequate version of the requirement was guaranteed to become law.

Ranzetta heads a non-profit, Next Gen Personal Finance, that provides free curriculum and teacher training. He said the materials have reached nearly 100,000 teachers across the country, including more than 6,000 in California.

Although there is broad agreement on the importance of financial literacy, not everyone supports the requirement or the process that brought it about.

"There is a philosophical opposition to governance by ballot measure — where billionaires by virtue of their wealth — are exerting a disproportionate impact on determining curriculum in our schools," said Troy Flint, chief information officer for the California School Boards Assn. "We don't believe that's the best system."

He said financial literacy could have been incorporated into the existing one-semester economics requirement.



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST Associated Press

STUDENTS graduating high school in 2031 will have to pass the class. Above, a student balances a checkbook in a personal finance class in Chicago in 2005.

"Financial literacy instruction could be included within that larger pre-existing economics course without further cluttering the class schedule for high school students — and reducing their ability to take an elective course or a course of interest to them, which this new bill will do."

The final version of the bill attempts to speak to this concern, according to a legislative analysis, by allowing students to substitute personal finance in place of the one-semester course in economics.

Former L.A. schools Supt. Austin Beutner also expressed concern: "What is it that one is going to subtract to create time for financial literacy?"

"It's more important for kids to build a foundation in literacy and math before they get to high school," he

said. "If they have that, then there's little mystery in personal finance."

Several students liked the subject matter, but Angelica Gonzalez, who just graduated from Rancho Dominguez Preparatory School, said, "It should just be based on what the student wants, not what the student has to do in order to graduate."

As an elective, "a course in financial literacy is more of a necessity than other electives, such as leadership." Often students value "how easy an elective is rather than what the elective actually has in its course," she said.

Chidubem Okigbo, a student at Narbonne High School, was less concerned about the requirement "crowding out electives... because the course has potential to be practical and cre-

ative. For example, if the course included a lesson on how one could monetize their passion, students would most likely be interested and engaged."

Odalys Lopez, who just graduated from Dr. Maya Angelou Community High School, said personal finance is "hardly ever talked about in other required classes/courses, not even in business classes. ... I personally think it should be a one-year course to better prepare students."

The legislation was introduced by Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento). Not everyone was fully on board from the outset. McCarty introduced a similar bill last year that was amended to make financial literacy an optional component of economics classes, which could be done already. Ranzetta dropped his sup-

port of that bill, and even the watered-down version failed to pass.

The fate of the bill on this round changed with the backing of the governor and leaders of each house.

"Financial literacy is a critical tool that pays dividends for a lifetime," said Senate President Pro Tem Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg).

Separately, California lawmakers recently added an ethnic studies course to the list of mandated classes.

Minimum graduation requirements include three years of English and two of mathematics, including one year of algebra. There also are two years of science, including biological and physical sciences and three of social studies, as well as two years of physical education, one year of visual or performing arts, world language or career technical education.

There are additional requirements if a student wishes to apply to a four-year state college, and selective universities carefully evaluate the rigor of a student's advanced coursework. Individual school districts often have their own added requirements as well.

L.A. high school teacher Colleen Ancrile said her school builds financial literacy into its advisory program, a class similar to the homeroom of old. "Adding a course to all of the other requirements will be a scheduling difficulty. Financial Literacy should be embedded starting in elementary school. Outreach to accounting firms to come in [is] actually a better idea."

"Great idea but difficult to implement," said L.A. parent Beth Owen. "The requirements to graduate are already quite cumbersome and often at the end a student discovers they are missing something and have to scramble. ... Electives are often courses that happen yearly, like band. It doesn't work to have to drop something like that for a semester. Or it's leadership or yearbook — yearlong commitments that are valuable."

Los Angeles-area parent Irene Luczynski was surprised by how few opportunities there are for her ninth-grade son to take electives: "There's really no room for him to branch out and try something new, and isn't that what electives are supposed to do? ... Perhaps this is trivial, but where's the fun in school?"

However, momentum appears to be building for financial literacy. The number of states that guarantee personal finance education for high school students has grown from eight in 2021 to 26, according to Ranzetta's organization, which tracks the issue.

In an earlier analysis, the Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College gave California an F in the topic: "Personal finance is not included in the graduation requirements, either as a stand-alone course or embedded in another course, and schools are not required to offer financial literacy courses."

Researchers gave California some credit because the state education department offers "a robust list of financial literacy resources."

BUSINESS

BOILING POINT

These hot rocks can cool global warming

Geothermal energy can supply 24/7 clean power to combat the world's climate crisis. Is California ready?

SAMMY ROTH

In the fight against climate change, they're humanity's mighty Avengers: Solar panels. Wind turbines. Electric cars.

And now, superheated rocks.

Geothermal power plants — which tap scorching-hot underground rocks and reservoirs to generate renewable electricity — have been bit players in California's energy landscape for decades, too expensive to compete with solar, wind and fossil fuels.

Last week, they took a giant leap forward.

Geothermal startup Fervo Energy — which has spent seven years perfecting lower-cost drilling techniques, with financial backing from Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and other investors — announced its largest contract to date, a milestone 15-year deal to sell 320 megawatts of climate-friendly power to Southern California Edison, one of the nation's largest utility companies.

That's enough electricity to power 350,000 homes. It will be available to Edison customers 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"This is a technology that is bankable, ready for prime time," Fervo's chief executive, Tim Latimer, said in an interview.

The Houston-based startup will generate the electricity at Cape Station, a 400-megawatt power plant that it's currently building in Utah's Beaver County. Latimer estimated that 200 to 300 people will be employed at peak construction, with 30 to 50 full-time employees after that. The first 70 megawatts should come online by 2026, with the plant fully operational by 2028.

The company previously struck deals to sell smaller amounts of power from Cape Station to several Southern California city and county governments, including Clean Power Alliance, which buys electricity for Los Angeles and Ventura county residents. Fervo will also supply 115 megawatts to Google to power its data centers in Nevada, as part of a deal announced last month.

But the Google project, to be built in northern Nevada, isn't expected to produce electricity until 2029 — basically an eternity on a planet already facing ever-deadlier heat waves, fires and storms, prompting urgent calls from scientists to ditch fossil fuels.

That's what's so exciting about the Edison deal. It's a clear statement that advanced geothermal is real, and it's spectacular.

"There's a lot of companies in this space that seem to be over-hyped. Fervo is one of the few that's actually worth the hype," said Ric O'Connell, executive director of GridLab, a Berkeley-based nonprofit consulting firm focused on clean energy.

Already, California got nearly 55% of its electricity from renewable and other climate-friendly sources in 2022, with the U.S. as a whole achieving just under 40%. The vast majority of that low-carbon energy came from solar and wind, hydropower dams and nuclear reactors, with geothermal accounting for less than 5% of California's power, and less than 0.5% for the nation.

O'Connell and other experts have calculated that society can get most of the way to 100% clean power — largely expelling fossil-fueled electricity — by building low-cost solar panels, wind turbines and lithium-ion batteries to store energy for after dark, along with more power lines to move the electricity around. The tricky part will be replacing the last 10% to 20% of fossil fuels.

That's where geothermal should help.



CAROLYN COLE Los Angeles Times

GEOTHERMAL energy's reliability makes it easier to ditch fossil fuels. Above, the EnergySource geothermal plant near the Salton Sea.



A DRILLING rig at the Cape Station geothermal project in Beaver County, Utah. In the background, Milford wind farm supplies electricity to Southern California.

As a "clean firm" energy source that utilities such as Edison can count on to be available 24/7, geothermal makes it easier to shut down polluting coal and gas plants without raising the risk of blackouts or especially broiling or frigid days, when the power grid is pushed to its limits by people cranking up their air conditioners or home heaters. Solar panels paired with batteries are already reducing the risks. But batteries are good for only a few hours at a time. There's nothing quite like a steady power plant.

Next-generation geothermal plants could also limit the need for solar and wind farms, O'Connell said — at least somewhat.

Although it's technically and economically feasible to get most of the way to 100% with solar, wind and batteries alone, there are practical constraints. The more large-scale projects have been proposed, the more they've come into conflict with wildlife habitat, rural towns and lands sacred to Indigenous tribes — prompting a backlash that threatens to derail the energy transition.

Geothermal plants, by contrast, take up far less land than solar or wind farms. "You don't have to cut down so many Joshua trees," O'Connell said.

Even with cheaper access to underground heat, we'll still need mind-boggling amounts of solar and wind. But Fervo's technology could limit the number of bitter land-use battles, easing the path to a healthier future without planet-wrecking fossil fuels.

So how did Fervo do it? How did the company reinvent a technology that's been around for decades?

Surprisingly, the answer has to do with oil and gas.

Drilling down several thousand feet is expensive,

meaning geothermal developers have to charge high rates for the power they produce. And the financial risks are substantial, at least outside of the best underground hot spots (such as Southern California's Salton Sea and Northern California's Geysers, where some of the earliest geothermal facilities were built). You can spend millions of dollars drilling a well and come up short. If you don't have high certainty of success, the up-front risk isn't worth it.

For years, federal researchers and climate advocates hoped some entrepreneur would make the process less risky, finding a way to drill faster and more cheaply, in a broader variety of places, with much greater certainty of striking profitably hot fluid.

That's exactly what Fervo did.

Latimer and his colleagues improved on traditional geothermal techniques in several ways. But the biggest was this: They utilized horizontal drilling, boring about 10,000 feet down and then 5,000 feet to the side with each well. The technology has been around for decades, but it's gotten a lot less expensive since the mid-2000s because of widespread adoption by oil and gas companies.

For fossil fuel companies, horizontal drilling has been a great tool — in combination with hydraulic fracturing, aka fracking — for tapping vast oil and gas deposits that were previously hard to reach. For Fervo, sideways drilling has been an ideal way to expand the subsurface acreage it can access with every well — making it much more likely that each dig strikes clean energy gold.

"It's all about bang for your buck," Latimer said.

Fervo doesn't have everything figured out. (Not

that anyone does.) So far, the startup is sticking to drill sites with relatively good geology for geothermal heat — as in, the American West. Eventually, Latimer hopes to expand to the rest of the country.

The company also faced a hiccup at the California Public Utilities Commission.

The commission's ratepayer watchdog objected to Fervo's contract with Edison, saying it was too expensive and could set a poor precedent, leading to a string of pricey geothermal plants — and, ultimately, higher electric bills for Californians. High bills punish lower-income people. They also threaten climate progress, by making electric cars and gas-free appliances more expensive.

The Public Advocates Office asked the commission — whose members are appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom — to require Edison to try to renegotiate the Cape Station contract. The commissioners weren't interested. They approved the deal unanimously.

I'm sympathetic to the Public Advocates Office. Our utility bills are already too high. But to rescue ourselves from climate calamity, we'll need advanced geothermal — or something remarkably similar — as soon as possible. And costs are coming down. Latimer told me that Fervo is now able to drill for less than \$5 million per well, and is selling electricity "in the ballpark" of \$100 per megawatt-hour — numbers that are falling into line with traditional geothermal.

For SoCal Edison, Fervo's Cape Station offers "just hit the right mark," said Erica Bowman, the company's vice president of strategy, planning and performance. Like other California electric utilities,

Edison is required to attain 100% clean power by 2045.

Edison is also under orders from the Public Utilities Commission to buy several hundred megawatts of "clean firm" power over the next few years. When I asked Bowman if there are other viable "clean firm" options, she basically made the shrug emoji.

"Geothermal's right up there," she said.

Fervo has continued lining up investors, announcing another \$244-million funding round in February. It included oil and gas firm Devon Energy, industrial giant Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and billionaire Tom Steyer's Galvanize Climate Solutions.

Longer term, there will hopefully be a variety of climate-friendly choices for keeping the lights on when sunlight and wind aren't enough. Bowman cited several technologies she's watching closely, including floating offshore wind farms, green hydrogen, gas plants equipped with carbon capture, advanced nuclear and long-duration energy storage such as pumped hydropower.

Also crucial, in my view: using energy more efficient-

ly and public policies supporting rooftop solar power.

For now, though, Fervo is ahead of the game.

That's partly because, in another wise decision, the firm chose to build Cape Station in a spot where it can actually send electricity to California — a challenge on the overloaded Western grid. The electrons will flow through a 488-mile transmission line that now transmits energy to L.A. from a Utah coal plant. It's slated to close next year, opening up precious space on the wires.

For Fervo, the timing is fortuitous.

As for the rest of us? Let's not leave the fate of the planet to good timing. There's an election in just over four months, and a lot of hard work after that. Don't wait — join the fight. Demand climate solutions from politicians, businesses and each other.

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

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OPINION

EDITORIAL

Supreme Court squandered a chance to protect women

Justices didn't rule on whether Idaho's restrictions on emergency abortion ban violate federal law.

FOR THE TIME BEING, a pregnant woman in Idaho no longer has to be near death before she can get a medically necessary emergency abortion. The Supreme Court on Thursday put back in place an injunction from a lower court that blocks a draconian portion of Idaho's abortion ban that only allows emergency abortions to prevent a pregnant person's death.

While it's a relief that the Supreme Court is blocking the worst part of this law, it's appalling that such restrictions will continue to exist. Ideally, the court would have ruled that the Idaho law's extreme restrictions on emergency abortions violate the federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act — known as EMTALA.

Under the federal law, emergency rooms receiving Medicare funding must treat and stabilize a person with a serious medical condition. A pregnant person with a severe medical condition, for example, that threatens her future fertility or organ function may not be at death's door but she has a serious condition that might require an emergency abortion.

The Biden administration successfully argued in federal court that the Idaho law violated EMTALA, and a federal judge issued an injunction blocking the emergency conditions in the law. After an appellate

court upheld the injunction, the Supreme Court granted Idaho's request to hear the case and blocked the injunction, letting the harsh restrictions on emergency abortions take effect.

But in an order issued Thursday, the court said it should not have granted review of what are two cases joined — *Moyle vs. U.S.* and *Idaho vs. U.S.* — and kicked them back to the federal courts, putting the injunction back in place.

This is exasperating. This was a prime opportunity not just to save ailing pregnant women from having to be airlifted to another state to have an abortion or to risk death before getting one in Idaho. The justices had an opportunity to protect women in all states with harsh abortion bans that leave it unclear whether doctors may perform the procedure in an emergency.

"This Court had a chance to bring clarity and certainty to this tragic situation, and we have squandered it," Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson wrote in a blistering opinion. "And for as long as we refuse to declare what the law requires, pregnant patients in Idaho, Texas, and elsewhere will be paying the price."

Abortion rights advocates were relieved but similarly frustrated by the lack of a decision.

There's little doubt that this issue will come before the justices again. In fact, the U.S. government has already asked the court to hear a case in which an appellate court has ruled that the U.S. cannot enforce EMTALA in Texas with regard to emergency abortions.

The order was unsigned but it was ac-



ANDREW HARNIK/Getty Images

DOCTORS join others for a rally outside the Supreme Court on April 24 to protest restrictions on medically necessary emergency abortions.

companied by a number of signed opinions, so any reader can see what the justices all thought of the issues involved in the two cases. For example, Justice Amy Coney Barrett wrote that the Supreme Court should not have reviewed the case and it should return to the lower court — with the injunction against the harsh emergency restrictions in place. "Idaho represents that its exception is broader than the United States fears, and the United States represents that EMTALA's requirement is narrower than Idaho fears," she wrote. Samuel A. Alito Jr. wrote that they should have taken the case

and questioned whether the Idaho law was subject to EMTALA's rules.

If they had decided to issue an opinion, it's possible they would have ruled for Idaho. So maybe it's worth being a little glad they didn't rule this time.

Pregnant women in Idaho may not have to worry for the moment about needing to be at death's door to get an emergency abortion, but women in other states, such as Texas, aren't as fortunate. One day the Supreme Court will need to actually weigh in and hopefully make a decision that protects them.

LETTERS



MYUNG J. CHUN/Los Angeles Times

HOMELESSNESS services workers check on an unhoused person in Silver Lake on June 12.

Actually building is the hard part

Re "More seniors live on the streets," editorial, June 25

IT'S EASY TO SAY, "Build more affordable housing." Doing it is another matter entirely.

For-profit developers generally aren't interested. There's no profit to be had, except in the form of a density bonus for including affordable housing. But developers don't want to manage these units.

Nonprofits struggle as well, as detailed in recent L.A. Times articles. While nonprofits are usually better at providing monitoring and support services, financing these projects is hard for them.

Building in California is expensive. We have tough building codes to deal with earthquakes and other kinds of natural disasters. Land gets increasingly expensive in urban areas because developers pay full price for properties, tear down the improvements and then have to recover that cost.

Financing for an affordable housing project comes from multiple sources. Multiple layers of financing mean multiple lawyers examining the transaction and billing their time, even though terms of the financing are nonnegotiable.

Government funding from a single source is part of the answer, but no single agency can do that. Article 34 of our state Constitution requires a vote of the people for government-funded affordable housing, adding the cost of an election to the process without any guarantee the voters will approve.

The first step is breaking through all these obstacles. A proposal to put repealing Article 34 on the ballot has been dropped. Now what?

JUNE ALIN SEWELL, Marina del Rey

The writer is an attorney who has worked on affordable housing projects.

Absent from your editorial on solutions to address the increase in homelessness among seniors in California is rent control.

Yes, we need to build more housing more quickly — but affordable housing, not more luxury housing. And providing modest rental subsidies when warranted to keep people in their homes could prevent many seniors from slipping into homelessness and ending up on our streets.

However, keeping people housed in their existing

homes via reasonable rent control measures could be the lowest-hanging fruit in a multi-pronged approach to homelessness.

This November, Californians will have the chance to vote on the Justice for Renters Act, a measure that will override an existing state ban on rent control. For a newspaper that has previously endorsed similar rent control initiatives, it is strange that *The Times* made no mention here of rent control as another important tool to address

housing affordability.

GED KENSLEA
Los Angeles

The writer is senior director of communications for the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, sponsor of the rent control ballot initiative.

Torn apart

Re "The choice: Go to war or resist?" letters, June 26

I was struck by two letters in last Wednesday's L.A. Times.

Both writers had fathers who served in World War II. When their sons were faced with service in Vietnam, one father, feeling that America had trampled on everything his generation had fought for in Europe and Asia, encouraged his son to go to Canada to avoid the draft.

The other father impressed upon his son the need to serve. The writer served, primarily to preserve his relationship with his dad.

Like the first writer, I got a high number in the draft

lottery and did not have to face that dilemma. But the Vietnam War tore our country apart, and I don't think we have ever recovered.

RICHARD SHAFARMAN
Santa Clarita

Backlash to secularization

Re "Ten Commandments law faces court challenge," June 25

How could our democracy's venerable church-state wall lately have come under constant attack?

Even we agnostics would concede that "God knows why." Christian conservatives fear the steadily growing percentage of religiously unaffiliated Americans. If recent trends hold, the unaffiliated will outnumber Christians within the next 20 years.

This prospect doubtless has alarmed the U.S. Supreme Court's conservative Christian justices.

Hence they welcome all manner of supposed religious-liberty cases, the better to foster religious proselytizing, however subtle or overt, from school grounds to statehouses.

It's a desperate gambit aimed at preserving American Christians' shrinking majority — not to mention their disproportionate political (and judicial) influence.

Alas, the torrent of faith-indulgent rulings likely won't abate anytime soon. Never mind how constitutionally sinful it is to favor theocracy over democracy.

GARY DOLGIN
Santa Monica

It would seem that the same conservatives who do not want to have our children feel any guilt about the past treatment of African Americans and thus have banned critical race theory from classrooms now want the Ten Commandments in those classrooms.

How many of us have clandestinely taken a cookie from the cookie jar, held Taylor Swift as an idol or worked on Sunday (or is it Saturday?)

We should constantly remind our children of those sins, but not the sins of our racist past?

LARRY HARMELL
Granada Hills

Educators in Louisiana who have an issue with the new Ten Commandments law should post them in a prominent place in their classrooms — but upside down, as a signal of distress.

DAN PROCTOR
Northridge

::

I read that Republican Gov. Jeff Landry has required the Ten Commandments to be posted in most school classrooms in Louisiana.

I also read that he has signed into law expanded methods of execution.

Isn't one of the commandments thou shalt not kill?

ERIC WILSON
Santa Monica

A sacred same-sex marriage

Re "Foes of same-sex marriage have a problem: It has worked well," Opinion, June 25

I'm one of five siblings. Between three siblings, there were 11 marriages and 13 divorces, I think — I lost track.

When my wife and I had been together for eight years, I made a very funny video of all the divorces and marriages, and how my mother would have to change all the pictures on the wall every time there was someone new added to the family.

But she knew she would never have to change the picture of my wife and me. We were together for 33 years — legally married for nine — until she died of cancer last April.

I always became furious when someone on the religious right would throw around the phrase "the sanctity of marriage," because I think straight people just take it for granted. I think the LGBTQ+ community cherishes marriage, because they know how important it is to their rights and how easy it would be to lose them.

DENISE MCCANLES
West Hollywood

HOW TO WRITE TO US

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OP-ED

A lousy week for Biden and the Supreme Court

Democrats — and small-d democrats, too — bewailed justices' new decisions and suffered from debate shock.

JACKIE CALMES

JUSTICE SONIA Sotomayor, one of the three lonely liberals on a Supreme Court with a right-wing supermajority, confessed in a speech last month, "There are days that I've come to my office after an announcement of a case and closed my door and cried."



Friday surely was one of those days. The court issued the latest in what's become its legacy of landmark rulings smashing generations-old precedents on women's, voters' and workers' rights, on gun safety and the environment, on criminal justice and against political corruption. The Republican-appointed justices continued to undermine the legal cases against Donald Trump for the unprecedented act of trying to overturn an election, including two justices, Clarence Thomas and Samuel A. Alito Jr., with conflicts of interest suggesting a clear

bias toward him.

But if Sotomayor was teary on Friday, she had company in her misery. Lots of it. Americans nationwide — Democrats mostly, but small-d democrats, too — weren't bewailing the new court decisions so much as they were suffering a political hangover: the realization that President Biden's wretched performance in Thursday night's presidential debate made it all the more likely that Trump might return to the White House.

And the two things, the court's opinions and the presidential debate, are sadly related.

Biden bombed and the justices demonstrated anew why voters should consider that the federal judiciary is also on the ballot in 2024 — and why they shouldn't re-empower Trump to pick judges and give Republicans control of the Senate that confirms them.

After all, Trump has already named one-third of the Supreme Court, providing the margin that overturned *Roe vs. Wade* just as he'd promised in 2016 (and boasted in the debate). Likewise, he appointed a sizable number of lower-court judges, including U.S. District Court judges Aileen Cannon in Florida, who has all but sabotaged the government's classified documents case against Trump, and Matthew Kacsmaryk in Texas, who sought to ban abort-

tion medication nationwide.

On Friday, business and anti-government zealots got a victory they've been coveting: The six conservative justices overturned a 40-year-old *unanimous* ruling that had established the so-called Chevron deference doctrine, which held that when laws are ambiguous, courts must defer to the federal agencies charged by Congress with enforcing those laws. This reversal is nothing short of a power grab for unelected judges, grabbing from expert bureaucrats answerable to elected presidents.

It's impossible to overstate how damaging this ruling probably will be to governance as we know it, specifically to protections against financial fraud and for clean air and water, safe food and drugs, quality healthcare, worker rights and more. In the liberals' dissent, Justice Elena Kagan predicted "large scale disruption" — just as the court has disrupted healthcare for pregnant women and enforcement of gun limits with its precedent-shattering radicalism.

Yet it's all but impossible to make voters understand or care when the issue is the government regulatory process (bor-ing) and the consequences are hypothetical. You know who does care, deeply? The Federalist Society, the Heritage Foundation and right-wing dark-money donors for

whom overturning Chevron and gutting the dread "administrative state" was a much higher priority than reversing *Roe*. The whole cabal worked to that end to get sympathetic deregulators Neil M. Gorsuch, Brett M. Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett onto Trump's short list of prospective nominees and then to the Supreme Court.

The court's record has made a mockery of Republicans' past demands for "judicial restraint," dating back to when the balance of power was more moderate, even progressive. In other decisions Friday, the court held that local governments can make it a crime for the homeless to sleep in public, and threw out felony charges of obstructing Congress against hundreds of insurrectionists who stormed the Capitol in 2021.

That raised questions as well about two Jan. 6 charges against Trump. But coming Monday is the court's long-awaited decision on whether Trump as a former president has legal immunity from the Jan. 6 and classified documents charges. Already the justices' delay has ensured he won't be tried before the election.

Against this sorry backdrop of judicial news, almost all attention was on Biden and his failure in the debate to reassure his party and the nation that, at 81, he is fit to serve a second term.

Trump proved his unfitnes in other ways on the stage — blatantly lying about his economic record, Jan. 6, immigration, election fraud, Democrats' alleged support for execution-style abortion of full-term babies and a four-star general's eyewitness account that Trump called fallen service members "suckers" and "losers," among dozens more falsehoods.

Also, he dodged repeated questions about whether he would accept the election result this time, no matter who wins.

But what was shocking — after all, Trump no longer shocks — was Biden's inability to effectively fact-check his rival's lies, or to express what were often cogent arguments other than in an oddly weak, raspy voice and with a vacant, mouth-agape look that screamed "old." He trailed off in mid-sentence, ending at one point, flummoxed by the buzzer, with a puzzler: "We finally beat Medicare." Yikes.

Predictably, Democrats rushed to what former Obama advisor David Plouffe called "a DEFCON-1 moment" minutes into the debate. They continue to ponder how to get Biden to step aside (unlikely), whether he could be replaced atop the ticket (ditto) and, absent those scenarios, how to limit the down-ballot damage for Democrats.

Friendly pundits called on Biden to go, and I am sorely tempted to join but for the impracticality and likely counterproductiveness of opening the Democratic convention in August to pick... whom? Many Democrats don't favor turning to Vice President Kamala Harris, yet to spurn her could be catastrophic in a party that counts Black women as a pillar.

I've been shaken from my cautious optimism that Biden can vanquish Trump. That's scary. The stakes could hardly be higher, perhaps most of all for the courts. Judicial appointments are a president's longest-lived legacy — as we've already learned from Trump's single term, alas.

@jackiecalmes

How Hawaii just changed the game on climate goals

By Cara Horowitz and Evan George

LAST MONTH, 13 young Hawaiian plaintiffs were set to take the state's Department of Transportation to trial for failing to make real headway on reducing planet-warming pollution. Instead, on the eve of their court date, the youths inked a groundbreaking settlement with Hawaii's governor and ushered in a new phase of climate litigation.

The resulting deal will accelerate Hawaii's progress toward a zero-emission transportation system, and it could serve as a road map for other advocates looking to gain ground on urgent climate goals.

Several states — including Alaska, Florida, Utah and Virginia — face similar lawsuits by young people over their alleged failures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Unlike their red-state counterparts, officials in ocean-blue Hawaii have tried to lead on climate. They have crafted ambitious laws to mitigate climate change, setting long-term targets for reducing greenhouse gas pollution.

In addition to a statewide 2045 carbon neutrality target, the state Legislature enacted a 2030 emissions reduction goal and aimed specifically to decarbonize the transportation sector, the largest source of climate emissions in Hawaii. The state's 2050 sustainability plan promises a transition of the entire state fleet to zero-emission vehicles by 2035.

But ensuring implementation of such promises is hard — and made that much harder by a lack of intermediate targets along the way to distant goals. The Hawaii plaintiffs argued that state officials have ignored their own goals by failing to take meaningful steps to reduce climate emissions from transportation sources. They contended that the state thereby breached its constitutional duty to protect natural resources from climate change and disasters such as last year's unprecedented Maui wildfires. Their lawsuit alleged that the defendants "impaired and infringed upon youth plaintiffs' right to a clean and healthful environment, including the right to a life-sustaining climate system."

In that way, the Hawaii lawsuit focused not on a wholesale failure to adopt meaningful climate policies but on nitty-gritty questions about follow-through. The issue at trial would not have been whether officials made good laws but rather what happened after they did. In an age of proliferating climate pledges in liberal-leaning states such as California, New York and Hawaii, it's a profound and important question.

The resulting settlement answers that question by providing benchmarks for a greenhouse gas reduction plan that will be overseen and enforced by a court through 2045 or until Hawaii achieves its zero-emission goal,

"whichever is earlier."

Under the agreement, the state must set interim decarbonization targets for the transportation sector in 2030, 2035 and 2040; report annually on its progress toward those targets; reform elements of the Transportation Department's planning and budgeting to align them with the state's climate goals; and spend millions of dollars in the short term on low-carbon infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging stations and bike lanes. The settlement also creates new leadership positions within the department charged with addressing climate change.

The settlement is far from a panacea. For example, it saves for another day the question of exactly how ambitious Hawaii's interim decarbonization targets should be. Nevertheless, the deal is trailblazing in a few ways. First, "it shows other governments the benefits to working with youth, not against them," said Andrea Rodgers of Our Children's Trust, one of the public-interest law firms that represented the plaintiffs. "This is the first time a government has decided to do that."

As their lawsuit noted, the plaintiffs — surfers, divers, spearfishers and regenerative farmers among them — have suffered climate anxiety, disruption of traditional ways of life and, in some cases, destruction of their homes. Without even stepping foot in court, they more or less won the measure of justice they were seeking. By deciding to settle with the youths rather than go to trial, Hawaii Gov. Josh Green (yes, Green is his real name!) set a higher bar for what can be accomplished by a state leader who takes climate change and its consequences seriously. It's a dramatic contrast with climate change deniers such as Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

The outcome also offers a template for others seeking to ensure that climate pledges are realized. That can be hard work. As Hawaii's government maintained before the settlement, long-term climate goals provide few footholds for today's litigants. A 2045 carbon neutrality goal, for example, creates a host of challenges by failing to specify which sectors must reduce emissions, by how much and by what dates. But the big-picture question of how to ensure that long-term climate goals have teeth could not be more important.

Democratic-controlled states such as California have acted as climate policy bellwethers partly by enacting ambitious climate goals. Now we have an example of how to turn such lofty pledges into court-enforced action to decarbonize a critically important sector.

This case serves as a resounding endorsement of the courts' capacity to address climate change. Many defendants facing climate lawsuits — notably including Hawaii officials in the earlier stages of this case — often protest that climate change policy should be made by legislatures, not judges. This landmark settlement demonstrates that the courts can hold decision-makers accountable if they fail to live up to their promises.

CARA HOROWITZ is the executive director of the Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at UCLA School of Law. EVAN GEORGE is the institute's communications director.



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN Associated Press

DEMONSTRATORS outside the Supreme Court on Friday. The 2024 election could make reproductive rights gains moot.

Don't take much comfort in the latest abortion rulings

The justices this term didn't make matters worse for pregnant women facing emergencies. Or did they?

By Mary Ziegler

EMERGENCY ACCESS to abortion has been a flashpoint in the chaotic aftermath of the Supreme Court's overturning of the right to terminate a pregnancy in *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization* in 2022.

Can states deny women the care they need to preserve their health in the aftermath of *Dobbs*, or does federal law provide some protection for patients?

In January, the Supreme Court agreed to hear two cases testing whether the federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act — or EMTALA — could override Idaho's strict state abortion ban. Idaho has some of the narrowest exceptions to its ban in the nation — allowing doctors to intervene only when there was a threat to the *life*, not health, of the patient. The Biden administration argued that the federal law provided broader protection — and trumped the state's ban. But on Thursday, the justices decided they had taken up the issue too soon, dismissing the cases as "imprudently granted" and sending them back to the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

In practical terms, Thursday's ruling means that a district court order in Idaho that agreed with the administration about EMTALA went back into effect: Emergency access to abortion will be protected in the state, at least for the time being.

It may seem at first that abortion supporters should be happy. The Supreme Court's conservative supermajority agreed to hear two major abortion cases in a single term. And yet with Thursday's ruling, and the court's earlier decision that maintained wide access to mifepristone, a drug used in more than half of abortions nationwide,

things didn't get worse for reproductive rights.

The truth is that the court's Idaho ruling is its own kind of disaster. It will increase the confusion and chaos women face when they need an emergency termination in states that ban all or most abortions. And the decision contains important clues about what could happen when or if the justices get another chance at these issues. The bottom line is simple: Don't expect the Supreme Court to come to the rescue of women who find themselves in dire need of an abortion.

In theory, every state that severely limits or bans abortion has some kind of exception for threats to the life or health of the patient, but many of those exceptions are narrowly drawn and hard to understand. In addition, states impose unprecedented penalties on physicians who perform abortions that *don't* fall under an exception — including, in some cases, life in prison. For these reasons, physicians have been reluctant to intervene, even when a patient may qualify under an exception.

States have scrambled to offer clarity, with some legislatures or medical boards adding explicit examples of when certain abortions may be performed, but these moves have only amplified the confusion. If an emergency condition doesn't appear on a state's list, does that automatically mean that a physician can't act? Are there state or federal constitutional limits on denying access to patients who may die or suffer severe and permanent health damage? And what role, if any, does EMTALA play? The Supreme Court's ruling ensures that none of these questions will be fully answered in the short term, and patients will be the ones to pay the price.

The "imprudently granted" ruling split the court into three three-justice factions, with a center-right bloc agreeing with the liberals to dismiss the case, and the most conservative justices, led by Samuel A. Alito Jr., prepared to hold that EMTALA does absolutely nothing to limit strict abortion bans.

Justice Amy Coney Barrett, joined by Brett M. Kavanaugh and Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., agreed that it was too early for the court to intervene, but they didn't seem averse to accepting Idaho's arguments against EMTALA. Even if the center-right justices could find some rationale for providing patients with protection under EMTALA, they suggested a Faustian bargain: The court would interpret EMTALA to apply only to physical, not mental, health — and would conclude that the law does nothing to stop doctors with conscience-based objections from turning patients away, even when they face life-threatening emergencies.

The opinion Barrett penned clearly reflects suspicions about patients who invoke *mental* health as a justification for terminating a pregnancy, a long-standing talking point for those who consider psychological struggles during pregnancy to be a mere excuse for "abortion on demand."

As for conscience-based denials of care, we can guess what Barrett has in mind because Kavanaugh's majority opinion in the mifepristone case already spelled it out: Instead of the law having to balance doctors' conscience-based objections with patients' safety, the objecting doctors would be able to just say no, even in healthcare deserts where other providers may be unavailable.

The most concerning signal about what could be in store for those who get pregnant came in Alito's dissent in the decision to send the Idaho case back to the lower court. Joined by Justices Neil M. Gorsuch and Clarence Thomas, he suggested that EMTALA, rather than protecting a pregnant patient with a life-threatening emergency, protects the *unborn* patient instead.

Antiabortion groups have long argued that the 14th Amendment of the Constitution guarantees constitutional fetal rights. Alito did not explicitly take up that question, but his reading of the statute aligns with so-called fetal personhood views. He reasoned that because the wording in EMTALA includes the term "unborn child," its framers must have prioritized the fetus over the mother, even when the mother's life or health is in jeopardy.

As EMTALA litigation moves back into the federal courts, the 2024 election could make the whole thing moot. A second Trump administration would almost certainly withdraw President Biden's guidance on EMTALA and let the states make their own decisions about when to withhold emergency care from patients. That is precisely what conservatives, led by the Heritage Foundation, have recommended in Project 2025, a proposed blueprint for another Trump presidency.

Abortion rights advocates may have been relieved on Thursday that the conservative majority on the Supreme Court punted on the Idaho abortion cases, but any celebration will be short-lived. In reality, there is no relief in sight for pregnant patients facing the dangers of a post-*Roe* America.

MARY ZIEGLER is a law professor at UC Davis and the author of "Roe: The History of a National Obsession."

How Angels pitcher spent his last days

[Skaggs, from A1]

Saturday, June 29

Skaggs pitches at Angel Stadium against the Oakland A's and is pulled after surrendering two runs in four-plus innings. CAA agent Nez Balelo texts to commiserate about "the quick hook ... after cruising basically through 3 and 4."

Skaggs is nothing if not dogged. At 6 feet 4 and 225 pounds, he has fought back from a string of serious injuries, refusing to quit, which might help explain his painkiller use. After the game, his mother, Debbie Hetman, a longtime softball coach at Santa Monica High, calls him and his wife.

"I didn't FaceTime him because I was — we were super busy, so we just talked really quickly," Hetman later testifies during the team employee's trial. "I think he was in line at In-N-Out with Carli."

Sunday, June 30

Shortly before a 1:07 p.m. game against the A's, Skaggs receives a text from Eric Kay, the team communications director who for years has allegedly supplied him with "blue boys" — blue, 30-milligram oxycodone pills.

Kay: "Hoe [sic] many?"

Skaggs: "Just a few like 5"

Kay: "Word"

Skaggs: "Don't need many"



ANGELS STARTER Tyler Skaggs throws against the Oakland A's on June 29, 2019, days before his death in a Texas hotel room.

MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ Associated Press

4:25 p.m. Pacific Time

The Angels conclude their four-game home series with a 12-3 loss. It is a getaway day, meaning the team will head directly from the stadium to Long Beach Airport, where a charter plane waits for the start of the trip.

Skaggs has previously asked his manager's permission for the players to dress like cowboys for the flight to Texas. Before leaving the stadium, he meets his wife, Carli, so she can snap pictures of him in his black hat, bolo tie and boots.

"When did he buy that outfit?" a prosecutor later asks her during Kay's trial.

"The day before."

"Did you help him pick it out?"

"Yes."

6:11 p.m. PT

Skaggs gathers with teammates on the tarmac beside a United Airlines charter plane for another photo to show off their Western wear. He hitches his thumbs in his belt like a cowboy. Seeing the picture on Instagram, Carli comments: "So cute"

8:07 p.m. PT

With the Texas Rangers next on the schedule, the flight to Dallas Fort Worth International Airport lasts about three hours. Along the way, Carli texts to ask how things are going.

Skaggs: "Good gambling ... losing"

Carli: "Damn babe ... How much cool ... Lol!"

Skaggs: "200 bucks ... I'm winning now"

Carli: "Sweet"

11:06 p.m. Central Time

On the 15-minute ride from the airport to a Dallas-area hotel, Skaggs grabs a microphone at the front of the bus.

"So, he would have been kind of like emceeing, doing the music," teammate Andrew Heaney later testifies. "You know, we would call younger guys up, ask them, you know, embarrassing questions or make them tell a funny story or whatever it may be, make them sing a song, something like that."

Throughout the league, Skaggs is known as friendly, funny, eminently likable. Teammate Mike Trout later says: "The energy he brought to a clubhouse ... every time you saw him, he's just picking you up."

11:25 p.m. CT

The Angels arrive at the Hilton Dallas/Southlake Town Square, where players receive key cards to their rooms and peruse a table of snacks, protein bars and Gatorade. A friend invites Skaggs to go out, but the pitcher remains in his room.

11:47 p.m. CT

Skaggs texts his room number to Kay.

"469," he writes, adding: "Come by"

"K," the communications director responds.

Kay had used opioids enough to know black market oxycodone pills might be laced with dangerous drugs such as fentanyl, a synthetic opioid 50 to 100 times more powerful than morphine. In a jailhouse call recorded after his trial, he denies giving drugs to Skaggs that night, saying he visited the pitcher to talk about something else.

"I guess he hated the rookies or something — and he was one flight up so I flipped my door and went up," he says.

The hotel does not have securi-

ty cameras in the hallway, so it is unclear how long Kay spends in room 469.

Monday, July 1

12:02 a.m. CT

Skaggs texts with teammate Ty Buttrey. He then trades messages with his wife.

Skaggs: "Miss you babe"

Carli: "Miss u too"

When the two met in 2013, Skaggs reportedly fell hard. Now, they have a house and are thinking about kids. They text continually when the Angels are traveling.

12:42 a.m. CT

"What u Doin," Carli asks. No answer. She tries again: "Helloooooo."

1:09 a.m. CT

It is late in Dallas — two hours later than Los Angeles — and Carli is still waiting for a "goodnight" from her husband. She writes: "U know better than to get drunk and fall asleep without texting me"

Approx. 12:53 p.m. CT

The night passes, followed by morning, and still no word from Skaggs. Heaney texts him: "Lunch?"

After a few minutes, Heaney stops by Room 469. Light shines from under the door; the curtains must be open in there. Nearby, hotel workers are noisily cleaning a carpet. Heaney wonders how anyone could sleep through all this.

When his knock gets no response, he goes back to his room and tries calling Skaggs on the hotel phone.

1:49 p.m. CT

Tom Taylor, the Angels' traveling secretary, is having lunch with Kay at a nearby barbecue joint and recalls Carli texting him. Heaney also reaches out to Taylor.

"He hadn't heard from him either," Taylor later testifies. More than 12 hours after Carli's last exchange with her husband, she messages again: "You have a drinking problem. I'm about to text tom Taylor."

Carli later insists these words were sent "purely out of anger" with "no truth to it."

Irritation gives way to another emotion. Carli contacts Skaggs' mother, Hetman.

"She was really nervous," Hetman later testifies. "I was really nervous because it was very unusual not to hear back from Tyler. Tyler was very good about returning text messages." Hetman dials

his number, and it sounds as if the call goes directly to voicemail. Her husband, Dan Ramos, sends a text:

"Hi kid. How r u doing. How is life treating u. How is your arm feeling"

2:04 p.m. CT

Now Hetman tries texting: "Hey Ty Are you okay today?" Around the same time, Taylor returns to the hotel and knocks on Skaggs' door. He then summons Chuck Knight, one of the team's security men, and they ask hotel management to let them into Room 469.

A former Anaheim Police Department officer, Knight enters the room alone, staying less than a minute. Taylor later recalls him emerging with "a shocked-looking face, almost like, it's not good, what he saw."

2:16 p.m. CT

Knight calls 911. Asked later about what he encountered in the room, he testifies: "I saw two legs hanging off the end of the bed in a position that I thought was unusual for someone that might be sleeping ... I walked closer in an attempt to obtain a pulse. I reached down to grab his wrist and noticed that his skin was very cool to the touch. I did not obtain a pulse."

Heaney, who is getting messages from Carli, returns to the hallway outside Room 469. Taylor tells him: "It's not good."

"I knew what was going on, but his wife didn't," Heaney later testifies. "And she was texting me, so it was — I just felt like I wanted her to know what was going on."

He decides not to answer. A call crackles over the scanner: "Medic 4-1, truck 4-1 respond. Medical emergency, Hilton Southlake Town Square." The dispatcher adds: "It's gonna be ... a possible death investigation. PD is arriving on scene now."

A Southlake police officer finds Skaggs' room looking mostly undisturbed — the bed still made, a backpack and another bag on the couch, unopened beers on the coffee table. There is a white, "almost chalky" substance on the desk. Skaggs' cellphone lies near his head.

2:23 p.m. CT

Cory Teague, a Southlake Fire Department paramedic, arrives at Room 469. His medical supplies include Naloxone, which can be administered to reverse the effects of opioid overdose.

"Did you use it?" a prosecutor later asks at trial.

"No."

"Why not?"

"The patient had signs incompatible with life, unable to be revived."

3:05 p.m. CT

Carli's phone rings as she pulls up to her parents' house in Santa Monica. It's Billy Eppler, the Angels' general manager. "I'll never, ever forget that call," she later says. She dials Hetman, who is at her Los Angeles home, and breaks the news. Hetman later recalls "crying and yelling and screaming."

Buses are scheduled to take the Angels to their evening game. Instead, players and staff are told of Skaggs' death and shepherded into a hotel banquet room where police take statements.

"The questions that we asked were generic for each player and employee," Cpl. Delaney Green of the Southlake Police Department later testifies. "And it was along the lines of: When was the last time that you had seen or spoken to Tyler Skaggs? Had you seen him consume any alcohol on the plane? And did you know of any drug use that you were aware of?"

Kay is among those interviewed. He tells police that Skaggs was drinking on the flight to Texas but adds, "I didn't think he had a lot." He says he last saw the pitcher when they collected their room keys in the lobby.

3:52 p.m. CT

The Times and other news agencies report Skaggs' death on social media.

Family members call his mother at home. She later testifies that "before I could even talk to anybody, that whole — everything was like blowing up and it was super-crazy."

4:11 p.m. CT

The Rangers announce the postponement of that night's game as the Angels switch to another hotel. The team gathers for an emotional meeting.

"We were able to talk about Tyler and laugh at some of the stories and some of the goofy things he did, listen to some of his stories," manager Brad Ausmus later says before breaking down.

On social media, players from around the league post messages.

"RIP to my longtime friend and Little League teammate," then-St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Ryan Sherriff writes. "I love you brotha."

About 8 p.m. CT

Carli and the Skaggs family board a flight to Texas.

Tuesday, July 2

About 10 a.m. CT

Carli and the Skaggs family visit the medical examiner's office in Fort Worth. She later recalls kissing her husband's cold lips as he lay on a gurney.

11:10 a.m. CT

The medical examiner begins an autopsy. He will eventually determine that "alcohol, fentanyl and oxycodone intoxication" caused Skaggs to choke on his own vomit.

Later that morning, Carli and the Skaggs family arrive at the Southlake police station to retrieve his luggage, iPad and other belongings.

In words that underscore the anguish of losing a loved one to opioids, Hetman later testifies: "I was angry because I knew that my son loved life and he did not want to die. He did not know that there was poison in that pill that cost him his life."

About 5:30 p.m. CT

Team officials hold a news conference with Kay standing quietly to the side, hands clasped at his waist. At one point, he appears to take a deep breath, look toward the ceiling and exhale.

7:05 p.m. CT

The game against the Rangers proceeds as scheduled. The ballpark is eerily quiet, with the home team forgoing the usual walk-up music.

The Angels, wearing black No. 45 patches on their jerseys, score early and cruise to a surprising 9-4 victory, but Trout says: "All I was thinking about was Tyler. It was just a different feeling, you know. Just shock."

Epilogue

Federal prosecutors charged Kay with distribution of a controlled substance resulting in death and conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute controlled substances. A trial began in February 2022.

"This was a case of one, one person who went up to that room on June 30," a prosecutor said in court. "One person who went into that room and gave Tyler Skaggs fentanyl."

The jury deliberated less than 90 minutes before returning a guilty verdict on both counts.

At a hearing where the judge sentenced him to 22 years in federal prison, Kay — who didn't testify during trial — apologized to his family for the "disgrace and embarrassment" he had caused them.

Privately, however, he continued to profess innocence. In a recorded jailhouse call, he told a friend: "The worst thing, though, is that text that he sent me ... because I didn't know what he wanted. I had no idea. In my head, I think he thought I already got more [pills] for him but I told him they were going to be s—."

By then, the Skaggs family had filed a wrongful-death suit against the Angels. The team has denied wrongdoing, and the case continues.

In the five years since Skaggs died, opioid overdoses — fueled by illicitly manufactured pills — have claimed hundreds of thousands of American lives.



OUTFIELDER MIKE TROUT, left, embraces pitcher Andrew Heaney as players attend a July 2, 2019, conference regarding Skaggs' death. For years, Skaggs secretly used painkillers.

TONY GUTIERREZ Associated Press

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has a 24-hour helpline for individuals and families facing mental and substance abuse disorders. The number is (800) 662-HELP (4357).

CALIFORNIA

MONDAY, JULY 1, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/CALIFORNIA



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

FANS at Taylor Swift's performance at SoFi Stadium in August. Under Senate Bill 478, charges that must be disclosed upfront to customers include hotel resort fees, cleaning fees for rental platforms such as Airbnb and Vrbo, and venue fees for concerts and sporting events.

FLiRT variants push up cases of COVID

Mayor Bass is among those testing positive. Daily tally is believed to be an undercount.

BY RONG-GONG LIN II

COVID-19 cases are continuing to climb in Los Angeles County, as are the number of people hospitalized with infections, as the typical summer surge in the illness creeps up.

Among those recently testing positive for the coronavirus was Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, whose office disclosed the result Friday morning. The mayor first tested positive for the virus in June 2023.

The rise of COVID in California comes as levels of coronavirus in the state's wastewater remain high, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Doctors have noted an earlier-than-normal rise for this time of year, beginning in May in L.A. County. The midyear rise in county COVID cases and hospitalizations didn't begin until early July in 2021 and 2023, though in 2022 it started in early May.

For the week ending June 23, the most current data available, reported cases averaged 215 per day, up from 154 the previous week. A month before that — for the week that ended May 26 — an average of 83 cases a day were reported.

The official tally is an undercount, as it includes only tests done at medical facilities. The tally does not reflect positive at-home tests or take into account that far fewer people are tested once they're sick. But the tallies are still helpful in detecting trends, such as when COVID is on the upswing.

The latest count shows the most new coronavirus cases per day since February's tally, as the virus' winter peak was trending down. The peak rate in the winter was 621 cases a day; last summer, it was 571 cases a day.

The rate at which COVID tests are coming back with positive results is swinging up across California. For the week that ended June 24, 9% of tests showed positive results; a month earlier, the positive rate was 3.4%. Last summer's peak rate was 13.1%.

New subvariants of the coronavirus, labeled FLiRT, are increasingly edging out the previous dominant strain of the virus.

The new FLiRT subvariants, officially known as KP.3, KP.2 and KP.1.1, are believed to be roughly 20% more transmissible than their parent, JN.1, the winner [See COVID-19, B2]

Signed last year, new laws kick in

Gun tax, iPhone fixes, date-rape test kits among wide-ranging legislation

BY LAURA J. NELSON

California's legislators pass hundreds of laws each year, most of which take effect in January. But a handful kick in on July 1, the start of the state's fiscal year.

Signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom last year, the wide-ranging new laws include sweeping protections for California consumers against hidden "junk" fees that add unexpected costs to services, including concert tickets and food delivery. The laws also tackle issues related to housing affordability, the difficulty of fixing your iPhone and other electronic devices yourself, and screening measures to detect date-rape drugs in alcoholic drinks at bars and nightclubs.

As in years past, the list

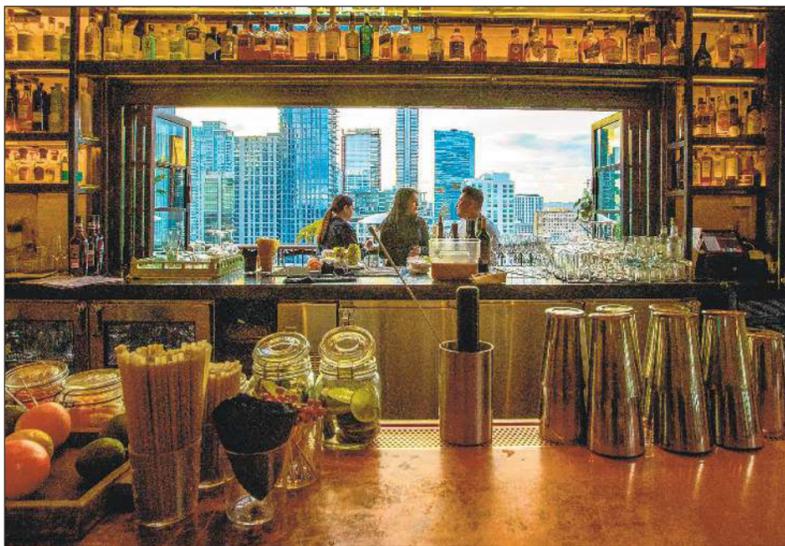
mostly reflects the politics and interests of the Democrats who hold a supermajority of seats in the state Assembly and Senate.

Here's a look at several of the laws that will take effect Monday.

No more hidden fees and surcharges

Two new laws will require that businesses including hotels, food delivery apps, airlines and concert venues include all mandatory fees and surcharges in their advertised prices.

The wide-reaching transparency law, Senate Bill 478, will apply to many industries. The charges that must be disclosed upfront to customers include resort fees at hotels, cleaning fees for lodging rental platforms like Airbnb and Vrbo, venue fees [See Laws, B6]



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

THE CARA CARA bar in Los Angeles. Bars and nightclubs in California will be required to offer kits that test for controlled substances slipped into drinks.

Restaurants exempted from ban on 'junk' fees

BY STEPHANIE BREIJO

Those 3%, 5% and 20% fees at the bottom of your menu could be here to stay. With little time to spare, a new law will allow restaurants and bars to continue charging service fees, healthcare costs and other surcharges when listed clearly for diners to see. The practice was set to be outlawed beginning Monday.

On Saturday, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed state Senate Bill 1524, an emergency measure to exempt California food and beverage vendors from Senate Bill 478 — a law that goes into effect in July and targets ticket sellers, hotel and travel websites and other businesses that charge "hidden" or "junk" fees.

Before Newsom signed SB 1524, which was introduced in early June, restaurants and bars were included in the affected businesses, and state Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta had advised that the food and beverage vendors roll such fees into listed menu prices to avoid the possibility of legal action.

"These deceptive fees prevent us from knowing how much we will be charged at the outset," the attorney general, who co-sponsored SB 478, said in a statement the day it was signed. Bonta

could not be reached for comment regarding the exemptions allowed by SB 1524.

Numerous business operators in the service industry have been vocal against SB 478, which was passed in October. They said they feared that raising list prices during a tumultuous year marked by closures and inflation would cost them more customers and support. Multiple restaurateurs

told The Times that the process of revising or entirely overhauling their tipping and surcharge system could result in the loss of staff benefits or closures. SB 1524's rules allowing such surcharges could affect tens of thousands of restaurants throughout the state.

"We're the most regulated of any business out there, and we are struggling to survive in the broken system" [See Restaurants, B4]

An innocent man or godfather of the O.C. underworld?

BY MATTHEW ORMSETH

Johnny Martinez wants you to know he is not a monster.

He has been called many things in the last six years by law enforcement agencies: godfather of the Orange County underworld; member of the Mexican Mafia, a syndicate of imprisoned Latino gang members; architect of murders, shootings, knifings, shakedowns and drug deals.

Martinez says none of

this is true. In a jailhouse interview, he told The Times that despite the government's best efforts to make him "sound like Hannibal Lecter," he is an innocent man being railroaded by lying witnesses and vindictive prosecutors.

Martinez has pleaded not guilty to charges of racketeering, murder in aid of racketeering, using a firearm in a crime of violence and conspiring to distribute methamphetamine and heroin.

[See Martinez, B4]

CAPITOL JOURNAL

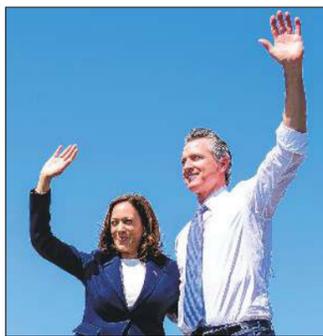
Harris or Newsom may be Democrats' Plan B

As pressure mounts on President Biden to drop his reelection bid after debate fiasco, the spotlight will focus on the two Californians

GEORGE SKELTON
IN SACRAMENTO

As pressure mounts on President Biden to quit his reelection race after a shockingly dismal debate performance, the spotlight will turn more intensely on two Californians: Vice President Kamala Harris and Gov. Gavin Newsom.

And although California won't matter in the November election — whoever is the Democratic nominee will easily carry the state — its huge delegation to the party's national convention in August could play a



KENT NISHIMURA Los Angeles Times

KAMALA HARRIS and Gavin Newsom attend a rally in 2021.

decisive role in choosing a Biden replacement.

Harris would top the initial list of possible substitutes with Newsom close behind.

But Harris, 59, has been less popular than Biden, according to polls. And she's widely considered a drag on the ticket. One fear of many voters is that if Biden, 81, didn't last out his second term, he'd be replaced as president by Harris.

The former California attorney general looked sharp, however, in a post-debate interview on CNN. And although I've long been a critic, I got the feeling while watching her that she might not be a campaign disaster [See Skelton, B5]

Grand jury: Cops illegally shared license plate data

Report finds sheriff, police in Sacramento gave information to out-of-state agencies.

By ANDREW J. CAMPA

License plate information and perhaps even more sensitive material from Sacramento County's 1.3 million registered vehicles and their drivers were improperly shared by law enforcement departments with out-of-state agencies, according to a grand jury report Wednesday.

The Sacramento County Grand Jury, a 19-member team serving as a watchdog over city and county agencies, said the county Sheriff's Office and the Sacramento Police Department either were unaware of state privacy protections or flouted them.

The jury released results from a seven-month investigation into the use of stationary and mobile cameras known as automated license plate readers across the county.

Foreperson Steve Caruso, who grew up in La Crescenta, said his group estimated that Sacramento law enforcement agencies use about 170 cameras that can each capture up to 1,800 license plates per minute. The Sheriff's Office scanned 17 million plates in one week, according to the grand jury report.

"They're often confused with red-light cameras in intersections, but they're separate," Caruso said. "They're also not just in intersections, but all over the place."

Caruso said, like red-light cameras, the readers take snapshots of license plate information as well as drivers and passengers in a vehicle and mark them with time and date stamps.

Although he "couldn't say for certain" that police and sheriff's officials were handing over more than just license plate info, Caruso said it was "safe to assume they were sharing all info."

The grand jury said any such distribution of information to out-of-state agencies — including the federal government — violates state

Senate Bill 34, which was signed into law in 2015.

California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta issued a pair of bulletins in October informing law enforcement of the responsibility "to safeguard this data and ensure its use is consistent with state law."

"We subsequently learned that both the Sheriff's Office and Sacramento Police Department have been lax in following state law regarding how [license plate readers'] data is shared with other law enforcement entities," Caruso said in a statement.

A Sacramento police spokesperson said the department consulted with the city attorney's office and the attorney general's office and amended its policy "to no longer share data with agencies outside of California."

The spokesperson said the policy was updated June 13 "in an interest to maintain transparency."

But Caruso said the change happened only because of the grand jury's investigation. The department had continued sharing data with agencies in Washington, Oregon, Nevada and

Arizona until recently, he said.

Similarly, the Sheriff's Office did not immediately change its policy when first alerted by the grand jury, Caruso said, but the agency eventually came around.

Former state Sen. Jerry Hill (D-San Mateo), author of SB 34, said he was concerned about possible misuse of the license plate database in early 2015.

Curious to see what could be gleaned, Hill and his wife hired a private investigator to pull information from the database regarding Hill's spouse.

The private investigator obtained a photo of her car outside a Sacramento gym. The shot included his wife's license plate number, vehicle make and model, and the time, latitude and longitude of where she was, Hill said.

"My wife is an ordinary citizen, and the database was used to track her down," said Hill, who is retired. "Anybody could abuse the power too easily, and that's the genesis behind SB 34. It's too easy for bad actors to help themselves to data."

The San Francisco-

based Electronic Frontier Foundation, a nonprofit civil liberties watchdog, has pushed back against SB 34 violations.

The foundation and the ACLU previously filed California Public Records Act requests against various agencies, including the Los Angeles Police Department and the L.A. County Sheriff's Department regarding usage and storage of license plate data.

In 2019, the foundation found that both departments collected about 3 million data points per week that are stored for years, with 99% of the car license plates not linked to a crime.

A senior investigative researcher at the foundation, Beryl Lipton, said she "wasn't surprised" to hear about privacy violations in Sacramento County despite SB 34.

"You can pass a law that is supposed to protect privacy, but we're not going to see any positive outcomes if law enforcement is either unaware of their responsibilities or chooses to act against them," she said.

Lipton said what's particularly dangerous about

the sharing of license plate information or other data across state lines is the broad potential usage by outside agencies.

She said that although the identification of stolen vehicles and Amber Alerts was common, other state agencies could potentially track abortions across state lines, hampering reproductive rights.

Lipton also was concerned about potential bad actors who now had access to databases. "These databases are leaky and easily accessible, and the information is stored for a long time," she said.

In what the grand jury labeled as "another threat to data privacy protection," users could access information through the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office database by entering random characters, without knowing specific case numbers. Sheriff's officials acknowledged in an internal audit that this was "a major flaw" in the database.

A sheriff's spokesperson said the department "won't have [a] comment on the Grand Jury report until we can look into it further."

Fueled by FLiRT variants, COVID-19 cases tick up in L.A. County

[COVID-19, from B1] ter's dominant subvariant, Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, an infectious-disease expert at UC San Francisco, has said.

For the two-week period that ended June 22, the most recent information available, 62.9% of estimated COVID specimens in the U.S. were of the FLiRT variants — up from 45.3% a month earlier.

Despite their increased transmissibility, the new mutations do not appear to result in more severe disease.

Coronavirus-positive hospitalizations also are ticking upward. For the week that ended June 22, there was an average of 153 patients in L.A. County hospitals per day, up from 138 the previous week. Last

summer's peak was an average of 620 patients per day, and the winter's was 825.

The share of emergency room visits related to the coronavirus is also up. For the week ending June 23, 2.1% of ER visits in L.A. County were coronavirus-related; a month before that, the number was 1.2%. Last summer, that share peaked at 5.1% toward the end of August.

Despite those upticks, coronavirus levels in L.A. County wastewater have remained largely stable of late.

For the week that ended June 15, the most recent data available, coronavirus levels in sewage were at 17% of the 2022-23 winter peak. That's slightly up from the 15% the previous week, which was an increase from 13% the week

before. But the week before that, the level was 16%.

Last summer saw coronavirus levels in L.A. County wastewater reach a high of 38% of the peak from the winter of 2022-23.

A number of places in California have seen rising coronavirus levels in wastewater.

Santa Clara County, Northern California's most populous, continues to report high coronavirus levels in a swath of Silicon Valley, from San Jose to Palo Alto.

Fourteen states, including California, are showing high or very high coronavirus levels in their wastewater.

California is among nine states with high levels, along with Arkansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts,

Missouri, Texas, Washington and Wyoming.

The five states with very high levels of coronavirus in sewage are Florida, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah.

COVID death rates have remained stable in L.A. County. For the week that ended June 4, the most recent information available, the county's average was fewer than one COVID death a day.

Summer surges in the virus typically coincide with an increase in travel and group gatherings. And with the majority of the population having long ditched their masks, the chances for infection are higher.

Further increasing the likelihood of infection is the fact that most people who

have been vaccinated are far removed from their last COVID-19 booster shot.

Across California, 36.2% of seniors have received at least one dose of the updated COVID vaccine since September, when it was introduced.

Just 18.3% of adults ages 50 to 64 received an updated vaccine in that time; among younger adults, up to age 49, only 9.7% have done so.

The CDC says everyone ages 6 months and older should have gotten at least one updated shot since September, or two shots for seniors 65 and older who are four months out from their first updated dose.

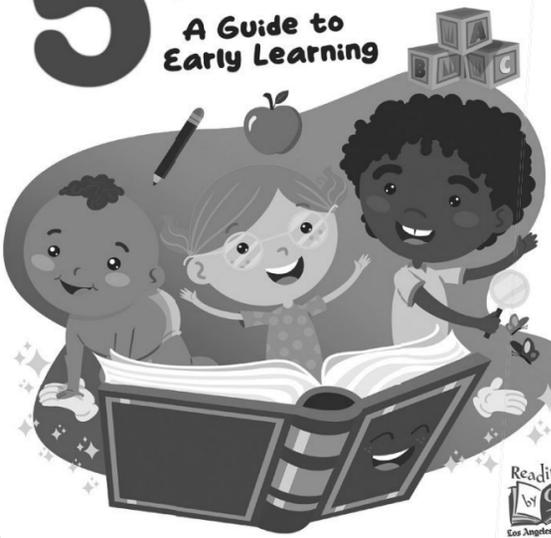
People who are immunocompromised can get an additional updated shot two months after the last recom-

mended dose, and can speak with their healthcare providers about whether further doses are needed.

A new updated formula for the COVID vaccine is expected in the fall. Last week, the CDC recommended that after the vaccine comes out, perhaps starting in September, everyone 6 months and older should get the updated 2024-25 version of the vaccine.

"Our top recommendation for protecting yourself and your loved ones from respiratory illness is to get vaccinated," CDC Director Mandy Cohen said in a statement. "Make a plan now for you and your family to get both updated flu and COVID vaccines this fall, ahead of the respiratory virus season."

The First 5 years
A Guide to Early Learning



Reading by 9
Los Angeles Times

The First 5 years
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CITY & STATE



WEAPONS DISPOSAL

CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

Long Beach police detectives Amanda Akin, left, and Vannak Vann collect firearms during a gun buyback event on Saturday at Scherer Park in North Long Beach. Participants got Amazon gift cards in exchange for guns that will be destroyed after processing.

Gender bill passes after Assembly clash

BY MACKENZIE MAYS

SACRAMENTO — After a chaotic debate on the Assembly floor filled with shouting and tears, California lawmakers sent Gov. Gavin Newsom a bill that would ban schools from requiring teachers to notify parents about changes to a student's gender identity.

The 61-16 vote came after a lengthy and emotional back-and-forth between Democrats, who said the bill is necessary to protect LGBTQ+ youths, and Republicans, who said it would infringe on the student-parent relationship.

Assembly Bill 1955 by Christopher M. Ward (D-San Diego) would shield teachers from retaliation for supporting transgender student rights and prohibit school policies that require "forced disclosure" of youth gender decisions to their families.

The legislation is in response to a wave of conservative-backed school board policies that have sought to notify parents if their child changes their name or pronouns, or if students request to use facilities or participate in programs that don't match their gender on official records.

Implementation of those policies is held up in court. However, Democrats said Thursday that legislation is necessary to safeguard transgender K-12 students who may not feel safe at home to come out to their parents. They cited high bullying and suicide rates of transgender youths.

"It's not the job of teachers to be the gender police. They want to teach, and they want to be able to provide a safe and supportive environment. And when they do,



RICH PEDRONCELLI Associated Press

ASSEMBLY Bill 1955 set off a lengthy, emotional debate between Democrats, who say it protects LGBTQ+ youths, and GOP lawmakers opposed to the legislation.

students will thrive," a tearful Ward said on the Assembly floor, surrounded by his Democratic colleagues who stood in support of the bill. "Nothing in this bill gets involved in the parent-child relationship."

Thursday's vote came after combative opposition from Assemblymember Bill Essayli (R-Corona), who opposed the measure over concerns about "parental rights" and accused Democrats of fear mongering.

Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Jim Wood (D-Healdsburg) repeatedly cut Essayli's microphone during the debate and ruled that he was "out of order" for speaking about other legislation during his testimony against AB 1955, as well as for "disparaging the house."

"I am tired of being interrupted by you," Essayli told Wood.

Essayli, who compared state Democrats to the "Chi-

nese Communist Party," responded by attempting to block the testimony of his Democratic colleagues.

The floor debate was disrupted by several procedural votes required to cut Essayli's time. The Democratic caucus ultimately paused the vote to take a recess after Assemblymember Corey Jackson (D-Perris) was physically restrained by his colleagues to stop him from confronting Essayli on the Assembly floor.

"I went blank. I lost it," Jackson told The Times. "I don't think sometimes that my Republican colleagues understand that for some bills, this is not about policy. This is about acknowledging people's humanity. So of course it's personal."

Jackson said that he apologized to his fellow lawmakers for the distraction and that he did not speak to Essayli about the matter.

"We stand with you. We

do not want anyone to be bullied or hurt or erased or any of this stuff," Essayli said after ultimately being allowed to speak on the floor about the bill. "When a child is going through this, it's a very difficult and emotional time. ... We do not believe that the government — the schools — have any authority to withhold information from parents at all, period."

Several members of the California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus shared their own coming-out stories in support of the bill and their experiences with unsupportive families.

Assemblymember Lori D. Wilson (D-Suisun City) said a teacher was the one to tell her that her child is transgender. She was "disappointed" by that teacher's judgment.

"If my teacher had told my parents... I don't know if I would've survived that day, because that was the level of

abuse that was happening in my home," Wilson said. "I don't care how old you are. That is a personal decision."

Newsom will have 12 days to sign or veto the bill, which cleared the Senate, 29 to 8, once it officially hits his desk.

The Democratic governor is a staunch LGBTQ+ advocate. He signed a bill in 2022 that named California a sanctuary for transgender children and their families seeking healthcare and support they can't get in red states.

But Newsom shocked LGBTQ+ advocates when he vetoed a bill last year that would have required judges in custody battles to consider a parent's support for their child's gender identity. In a veto message, he said, "I urge caution when the executive and legislative branches of state government attempt to dictate — in prescriptive terms that single out one characteristic — legal standards for the judicial branch to apply."

Newsom does not typically comment on pending legislation.

When asked about the issue last year, he told The Times that he understands parents' concerns but said that the school board policies are being used as a guise by Republicans to "bully" the LGBTQ+ community.

The governor, a father of four, said he "draws the line" at requiring teachers to "out" students.

"I take very seriously the work I do as a parent at home to meet their needs, and I don't honestly expect teachers to sub my role as a parent," Newsom said in November. "I want them to teach my kids, and I want them to keep them safe and make them feel included and not outed."

Beavers could aid the state's ecosystem

BY TYRONE BEASON

Beavers are precious to the Tule River Indian Tribe. They are woven into the California tribe's stories and appear in ancient pictographs painted by ancestors on the walls of a rock shelter in the Sierra Nevada.

But when nine of the furry rodents recently slid out of crates and slipped into waterways on the Tule River Reservation, they returned to a habitat where they hadn't been seen in nearly a century.

A family of beavers — three adults, one subadult and three babies, known as "kits" — were released into the South Fork Tule River watershed on June 12, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife said. Two other beavers were released into Miner Creek on June 17.

The department conducted the releases in the foothills of the southern Sierra in partnership with the tribe, whose 55,356-acre reservation is based in Porterville, Calif., in Tulare County.

Beavers were a common sight in parts of the Sierra before the arrival of Europeans, but by the 20th century their numbers had been decimated by fur trappers and eradication efforts.

A decade ago, tribal leaders called for the animals to be returned, driven by traditional Indigenous knowledge about beavers' importance to the ecosystem — and inspired by the 500- to 1,000-year-old beaver images left at the Yokuts village site known as Painted Rock.

In 2022, the Fish and Wildlife Department received state funding to start a restoration program to prepare sites in California for the semiaquatic animals.

Beavers aid the environment by building dams that help to keep landscapes well-hydrated and more resilient in droughts and wildfires. That enhanced water retention could also protect the Tule River Indian Tribe's drinking water supply — 80% of which comes from the river's watershed, Fish and Wildlife officials said.

"We've been through numerous droughts over the years — we were wondering how we can conserve, save water, get water here on our lands," Kenneth McDarment, a Tule River Tribe member and former tribal councilman, said in a Fish and Wildlife statement. "The answer was in our pictographs."

California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot said the beaver program was the result of an unprecedented effort by the state to not only steward the environment but also support tribal sovereignty.

Elders from the Tachi Yokut and Tubatulabal tribes joined an elder from the Tule River Indian Tribe in a blessing ceremony to ready the habitat for the beavers' arrival in June.

In video captured by the Fish and Wildlife Department, some of the beavers, which were brought in from state-owned land in Merced County, can be seen checking out their new digs in the 6,000-foot-elevation Sierra meadowland.

The slicked-back fur on the beavers' heads and backs glistens in the sun as the agile swimmers slice the murky waters past submerged evergreen leaves, drifting twigs and shrubs. Possible construction materials?

Beavers released in the fall by Fish and Wildlife in partnership with the Indigenous-led Maidu Summit Consortium in Plumas County wasted no time building lodges to live in and dams to protect themselves from predators and to store food, a department spokeswoman said. Today those structures, in the tribal community known as Tasmam Koyóm, are large and well-developed.

"Our past is one where we treated these animals and others as varmints, and our culture over time ran them off the landscape," said Charlton H. Bonham, department director. "That can't be our future."

Family says man shot by Downey police was mentally ill

BY REBECCA ELLIS

A mentally ill man was fatally shot by Downey police in his backyard after a neighbor called the police on him for lighting fireworks, his family said.

The Downey Police Department said it was responding to a call about a "disturbance" on Stewart and Gray Road about 6:15 p.m. Saturday.

The family said Alberto Nicholas Arenas, 29, had struggled with psychosis since he was 12 and lived with his parents at their home. On Saturday night, some family members were barbecuing in the backyard where Arenas had been drinking, which often trig-

gered psychotic episodes, said his father, Alberto Hurtado Arenas.

He said his son had been lighting fireworks in the backyard when he got in an argument with a neighbor, who said the explosives were upsetting his dog. One of the neighbors called the police, the family said.

"He didn't deserve to die," said his sister, Samantha Arenas. "He wasn't a bad person — he was trying to get his life together."

His sister, who was not at the home at the time, said a SWAT team with a negotiator responded to the call, though she said she did not know why the call required the heightened response. She said her two younger siblings, who were home at

the time, told her that police kept asking them whether he had a weapon.

"They kept telling him no," she said. "He doesn't have anything — he's just mentally unstable."

Arenas' father said he'd been driving home from Azusa, about an hour away, when he learned the police were at the house.

For roughly two hours, the elder Arenas said, his son stood in the fenced-off backyard while law enforcement stood outside the house's six-foot wooden gate, yelling at his son to come out onto the street. He said the gate has a large plank missing, which the negotiator spoke through.

The father said he called the Downey police station at

least half a dozen times asking them to wait to engage with his son until he was home.

"I had told them, 'Don't go in my yard, wait until I get there,'" the father recounted. "The officers were badgering him through the wall."

At one point, he said, the dispatcher told him that his son had shot at the police and the police had returned fire.

He said no one else aside from the dispatcher has told him his son fired a weapon.

The police statement said the man died at the scene and no officer was injured. The statement did not mention whether any weapon was found.

Downey police said the

California Department of Justice is handling the investigation into the shooting. The department typically investigates police shootings when the victim did not have a weapon.

Arenas' father said the Downey police knew his son, who he said had a felony conviction, and were aware he struggled with mental illness. He said his son had been improving lately, recently landing a promising job with a company that makes medical supplies and taking care of his two children, a 9-month-old and a 2-year-old.

The father said that in his opinion, there was "nothing to stop" officers from walking away from the home that night.

Did prosecutors conspire against him?

[Martinez, from B1]

Prosecutors say Martinez, nicknamed "Crow," is the Mexican Mafia's main man in Orange County, drawing a "tax" from dozens of street gangs and a percentage from all illicit business — drugs, gambling, unlicensed marijuana dispensaries — within his territory.

But where prosecutors allege a murderous enterprise — which they say is proved by wiretapped calls, text messages, jailhouse notes and testimony — Martinez sees a conspiracy among law enforcement. Stung by his victories in Superior Court, local cops colluded with federal prosecutors, Martinez claimed, to repackage a case he had already beaten into a federal racketeering indictment.

To hear Martinez tell it, the conspiracy is broad: the FBI, the U.S. attorney, the Orange County Sheriff's Department and district attorney, all channeling their hopes of imprisoning him through his former cellmate Omar Mejia.

Representatives for the U.S. attorney, the Orange County district attorney and the FBI declined to comment. A spokeswoman for the sheriff said the department investigated all cases involving Martinez fairly and without consideration for his advocacy within the jail system. The department is "committed to ensuring all inmates' rights are protected during investigations," she said.

Mejia, who was indicted alongside Martinez, has testified in two federal trials that he had people shot, stabbed, beaten and extorted on Martinez's orders.

Martinez called Mejia a shameless perjurer who became a government witness only after reviewing the evidence against him and realizing he was caught dead to rights for his own crimes. Mejia's only way out of spending the rest of his life in prison, Martinez alleged, was to point the finger at him.

"It sends the message, in my opinion, that when you get caught doing something horrible, run to [the government] and say, 'He told me to do it,'" Martinez said. "And they'll welcome you with open arms."

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Martinez, 48, has spent two-thirds of his life locked up.

Arrested at 18 on suspicion of killing a man during a brawl, the Placentia native was convicted of murder under the theory that the death was a "natural and probable consequence" of Martinez joining the fight. He was sentenced to 26 years

to life in prison.

Law enforcement officials testified that Martinez was inducted into the Mexican Mafia around 2015. Asked by a Times reporter if this was true, Martinez said prison officials have classified him as a Mexican Mafia member, "and that's about all I can say on that."

In a recent interview at the Santa Ana city jail, Martinez, who wore a tan jumpsuit, glasses, handcuffs and a broad smile, was unfailingly polite. After greeting a reporter with a fist bump through the glass partition, Martinez joked that the prosecutors who monitored his conversations over closed-circuit telephone must be wondering, "Why's this guy visiting this short SOB?"

Martinez said he was speaking against the advice of his lawyers, because he needed to defend himself against a "character assassination."

In May, Martinez's attorneys asked a judge to release him on bail, filing in support of their request a dozen letters from lawyers, professors, pastors and other public figures who vouched for his character and promised he posed no threat to the public.

In response, prosecutors published transcripts from what they said was a wiretap on a contraband cellphone Martinez used in a Northern California prison to direct criminal activity in Orange County. According to the transcripts, Martinez threatened to blow off a man's head, bragged of killing four people and swore to leave the side of his mother's deathbed if one of his "brothers" in the Mexican Mafia required it.

Martinez insisted he was misquoted in the transcripts. The claim that he would abandon his mother, an oversight commissioner for the Los Angeles County Probation Department, was "straight B.S.," he said.

Martinez said he never threatened to shoot anyone in the head or boasted of killing people, although he acknowledged saying "some not nice things" to Michael "Shaggy" Cooper, a co-defendant whom Martinez is accused of twice trying to have murdered.

Martinez, who denies hurting Cooper, said people who haven't been to prison wouldn't understand the way inmates talk to one another.

"I can't address somebody like that the way I would talk to you or my mother or my brother," he said. "It's a different environment in here. It really is survival of the fittest."

Prosecutors say it is not mere talk. Martinez is charged with two murders,

the first the night of Jan. 19, 2017, when three armed men tried to rob a small-time drug dealer named Robert Rios outside his uncle's house in Placentia. The uncle testified that his nephew's last words before being gunned down were, "Don't kill my family!"

According to testimony at a preliminary hearing in 2020, the slaying was orchestrated by Martinez's alleged right-hand man, Gregory "Snoopy" Munoz, who was serving a 12-year sentence for robbery at Calipatria State Prison. Using a contraband cellphone, Munoz arranged for a crew to obtain a car, guns, zip ties, masks and gloves before directing them to Rios' home, a detective testified.

But the planned robbery went awry when Rios fought back. When one of the assailants fired a burst from a MAC-10 assault pistol that killed Rios, he also shot an accomplice in the leg.

The getaway driver, in his confession to police, described a scene out of a Quentin Tarantino movie: the wounded man spurting blood across the rear seats, shouting, "The homie shot me!" Munoz, on speakerphone from his prison cell 200 miles away, was screaming: "You guys are f—idiots!"

Orange County prosecutors alleged Munoz could not have ordered the move against Rios without Martinez's knowledge and approval. But after a months-long preliminary hearing, Superior Court Judge Patrick Donahue dismissed the case in 2021, ruling that prosecutors had not met the low threshold of showing probable cause that Martinez had participated in the crime.

That has not stopped federal prosecutors from charging Martinez with Rios' killing — this time as a murder in aid of racketeering. Martinez, who denies involvement in Rios' death, said he is being prosecuted out of spite.

"I embarrassed them," Martinez said. "They held a big ol' press conference in 2018 talking about how they were going to convict me. And I made them put their foot in their mouth when the judge said there was no probable cause. Zero. So then they take the same case, the same evidence, the same people, and they slap a RICO on it."

The federal indictment under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, however, is

more sweeping than the Superior Court case was. It charges Martinez with drug trafficking, attempted assault, murder and attempted murder that were not alleged by county prosecutors.

Martinez claims authorities are not targeting him only in the courtroom. He alleged that Orange County sheriff's deputies put his life in danger by falsely labeling him a snitch in a document that then turned up in the county jail and state prisons.

Carrie Braun, a spokeswoman for the Sheriff's Department, confirmed that someone mailed to the jail a "fictitious memo" that identified Martinez as an informant but said the person arrested for doing so was not a sheriff's employee. She declined to name the suspect, saying authorities were still investigating the person.

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According to Orange County prosecutors, Munoz fell out with Martinez not long after Rios' slaying and was stabbed on two occasions at Calipatria.

Paroled in July 2017, Munoz sent a stream of text messages to Martinez, thanking the man who allegedly ordered the attempts on his life for "forcing me out" of gang life.

"That's what made me realize, homie, that this isn't the way," he wrote.

According to messages filed in court, Munoz asked Martinez to protect him, claiming he'd changed his ways and was leading a law-abiding life.

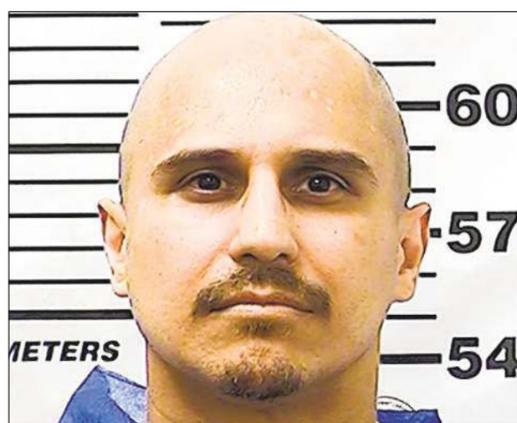
"If what you're telling me is true," Martinez replied, according to court records, "I'll put word out there then. I just don't want u involved in trying to run— and disrespecting [things]."

The night of Aug. 5, 2017, a worried Munoz told Martinez that a man was circling the block where his girlfriend's mother lived in Placentia. "I do have a weapon and I'll use it," he wrote in a text.

Martinez said he would "send word for them to respect the mom's house."

"No one will mess with you," he told Munoz, "but you need to respect things and not start problems because then my hands are tied."

Three hours later, prosecutors wrote in court papers, a man wearing dark clothing walked up to Munoz and, without saying a word, fired seven shots into his back



California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

JOHNNY MARTINEZ, 48, is facing federal charges of murder, drug trafficking and other crimes.

and legs as he tried to crawl away. Munoz survived.

Mejia testified that he dispatched the shooter after Martinez told him Munoz's whereabouts and said, "He needs to go."

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Mejia, who shared a cell with Munoz at Calipatria, testified that he became Martinez's new right-hand man. Mejia said his boss ordered the murders of two others: Richard Villeda, an underling accused of stealing money in a drug deal, and Cooper, who, according to Mejia, had accumulated drug debts, lied to Martinez and plotted to usurp him.

Villeda was gunned down in Orange by three men who were convicted last year of murder in aid of racketeering. Cooper was stabbed at Calipatria and attacked in a county jail by inmates who slit his throat with a razor blade in 2019.

In the interview with The Times, Martinez denied directing Villeda's murder and the attempts on Cooper's life. He alleged that Mejia told prosecutors what they wanted to hear — that Martinez was behind every act of violence that a "rogue" Mejia ordered on his own — in hopes of getting a better deal.

Martinez claimed to The Times that the FBI's Orange County Violent Gang Task Force has allowed Mejia to read transcripts of other witnesses' testimony so he could tailor his own to fit the facts. The task force has even fed Mejia fast food during the coaching sessions, he added.

Martinez could barely hide his contempt for Mejia, with whom he shared a jail cell for three years. Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, he said; Mejia did it for a few burgers from Carl's Jr.

Contacted for comment, Mejia's attorney, Shaun

Khojayan, said: "Any attempt to sway potential jurors before trial is improper. We look forward to an impartial jury rendering its verdict in this case."

Mejia, 36, has pleaded guilty to racketeering. Testifying this year at the trial of a co-defendant, he said he hopes prosecutors will seek a reduced sentence for his federal conviction and speak on his behalf to the state parole board. He has been imprisoned since he was 16 for conspiring to commit murder, attempted manslaughter and assault.

Asked by a defense attorney how many murders he took part in, Mejia said: "Actually murdering somebody, probably one — probably like one or two." He testified he also participated in three or four attempted murders.

"Even now, really," the lawyer asked, "you don't care if you hurt people?"

"Of course I do," Mejia said.

"Do you care that you're hurting Johnny Martinez?"

"I don't feel good about it."

"But you do it anyway?"

"Yeah," Mejia said.

::

For Martinez, the stakes could not be higher.

Last year, a judge reduced his 1995 conviction to a misdemeanor assault, ruling that Martinez would not have been convicted of murder under the law as it is written today. The only thing keeping him behind bars is the federal case, which is scheduled for trial in 2025.

If Martinez is convicted, he will spend the rest of his life in prison with no chance of parole. Yet he remains confident that once a jury hears his story, he will walk free.

"This is the final round," he said. "When I beat this, that's what I'm going to call this: the final round."

Restaurants, bars can keep their service fees

[Restaurants, from B1]

tem that has been handed to us throughout many, many decades," said Eddie Navarrete, a co-founder of the Independent Hospitality Coalition, a restaurant advocacy group. "When you add more regulations, whatever it may be, it makes things more difficult. Things are already difficult. ... There is a mass exodus of our small-restaurant community. I think it's a huge relief, just to have one less thing being thrown at them right now."

Navarrete spent weeks campaigning for SB 1524's passage, writing letters, meeting with more than 35 policy advisors, legislators or their representatives, knocking on doors at the state Capitol, and explaining the usage of service fees within the restaurant industry, whose tip-based employee earnings make it different from most fields that will be affected by SB 478.

Surcharges, health fees and service charges are regularly used within the industry to stabilize wages across dining rooms and kitchens — where servers often receive tips but cooks and dishwashers do not — and to help offset the cost of benefits such as healthcare. Businesses with larger service fees, such as 18% or 20%, often note that tips are not expected.

"It's confusing why the restaurants are claiming that they need to do things differently, because it just feels like they're saying that they need to hide the cost of their food for us, and that doesn't feel right," said Jenn Engstrom, state director of the California Public Interest Research Group, a non-profit that advocates for consumer interests and protections.

"It feels like you're being

duped," she said. "That's what it feels like: that they're trying to trick you."

Some local restaurants have come under fire, accused of misusing service fees or other surcharges, though multiple chefs and restaurateurs told The Times that these "bad actors" are few and far between.

"Every restaurateur that I know who cares in this industry is using it in a way that is so immensely appropriate and responsible and forward-thinking that if it was to go away, it would be really crippling to everybody," Kafo restaurateur Ryan Bailey told The Times this year.

The new bill, which passed unanimously in the Assembly and Senate in late June, was co-written by Sen. Bill Dodd (D-Napa) — who also co-wrote SB 478 — as well as Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) and Assemblymembers Matt Haney (D-San Francisco), Jesse Gabriel (D-Encino) and Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D-Winters).

It is supported by the California Restaurant Assn. and the labor union Unite Here, both of which represent thousands of hospitality workers in California.

SB 1524 "will enable restaurants to continue to support increased pay equity and to make contributions to worker health care and other employee benefits," Matthew Sutton of the California Restaurant Assn. said in a statement. "And, importantly, consumers will remain empowered to make informed choices about where they choose to dine out."

Although some restaurateurs and bar operators are breathing a sigh of relief over the continuation of service fees, others are frustrated with the government's quick

change in tack.

Following the attorney general's guidance for SB 478, in April restaurateur Dustin Lancaster rolled a 4% surcharge into the menu list prices of two of his L.A. restaurants, L&E Oyster Bar and El Condor. He said that SB 1524 would not prompt him to revert to a service-fee model, at least for the foreseeable future, and that it wasn't "so simple to just unmake the cake."

"This is, sadly, all too familiar territory for restaurants in California," Lancaster told The Times last week. "Just like in COVID, they jerk us around and expect us to pivot and change our model repeatedly as if it's no big deal to small businesses. Restaurants continue to shutter [at] an alarming rate in L.A., and this sort of unnecessary about-face is why California continues to be the least small-business-friendly state in America."

At Bell's, a Michelin-starred restaurant in Santa Barbara County's Los Alamos, owners diligently tracked the progress of both Senate bills and awaited final word before determining whether to remove its 20% service charge, which benefits all nonmanagerial staff.

And even before SB 1524's passage, Bell's listed the charge on its lunch and dinner menus, on its webpage for frequently asked questions, and on its homepage section on takeout orders. The new law will allow the restaurant to continue its practice without reconfiguring its business model.

Greg Ryan, an owner of Bell's, told The Times that he had been listening to and was understanding of customers, legislators and his team, and that he wanted to do what was best for his staff.

For months, the practice has felt like a balancing act.

As SB 1524 made its way through the Assembly and Senate, outcry on social media and on public forums such as Reddit was swift and vocal, with multiple anonymous posters commenting that to retaliate for the exemption, they would stop leaving tips. Another Reddit user created a spreadsheet that tracks surcharges and service fees in restaurants across the state.

An L.A. restaurateur, speaking anonymously for fear of customer retribution, told The Times that they'd seen an increase in tips of \$1, 0% or other low amounts over the course of the month, possibly in response to the 3% to 4% service fees that their restaurant was charging.

"I'm not thrilled with the bill," Engstrom, of the California Public Interest Research Group, said of SB 1524. "I think it was better when restaurants and bars also had to have really clear upfront pricing, so that consumers could do easy comparison shopping. When I decide to go out to a restaurant with my family, I check the prices first, on the menu, online."

That SB 1524 requires clear posting of fees is a benefit, she said, but it's not as strong as SB 478 with the attorney general's initial guidance that called for rolling service fees into listed prices. Engstrom called SB 478 "a great model bill," saying she would love to see similar consumer-protection legislation in other states, or federally — without many carve-outs for industries, regardless of how service fees factor into their business plans.

"I think [SB 1524] is unfortunately kind of a step backwards, but it's still transparent," she said. "You can still see it; you just have to do the math."

Obituaries

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Dixie Ann Fraley
November 28, 1933 -
May 1, 2024

Beloved Wife, Mother, Grandmother, Great Grandmother & Teacher passed away peacefully in Artesia, Southern California. Dixie's parents were Ernest & Elsie Hix -deceased, who lived in Hollywood, CA. Dixie's brother was Ernest Hix-deceased.

Dixie graduated from Hollywood High School in 1951. She attended University of Southern California, and joined the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority, majoring in Education. She graduated in 1954. Dixie taught pre-School, Kindergarten and 2nd Grade. Dixie was married to Richard W. Fraley in 1955. Dixie is survived by her four sons, Steven Fraley and his wife Penny (Prescott, AZ.), Kirk Fraley and his wife Lynell (Danville, CA), Shawn Fraley and his wife Leilani (Laguna Hills, CA), Tim Fraley and his wife Jessica (Bend, OR), her six grandchildren, Kyle Fraley, Maryssa Fraley, Brytten Fraley, Zoe Fraley, Peyton Fraley and Fisher Fraley, and four great-grandchildren.

The Celebration of life and Internment was at Forest Lawn Cemetery, Burbank, CA on June 4th, 2024. If interested, donations can be made to the American Bible Society.

Maxwell Gottesman

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Los Angeles Times

If Biden bows out, will Harris or Newsom run?

[Skelton, from B1] after all.

In fact, Harris might perform well on the stump. Drop the robotic script and be more spontaneous. She certainly would be a more competitive debater against Republican Donald Trump than the weak Biden.

Harris showed genuine conviction — a look she usually lacks — in pitching Biden's policies. She tried to put the best face on his debate performance.

"Yes, there was a slow start. That's obvious to everyone," she said. "But it was a strong finish."

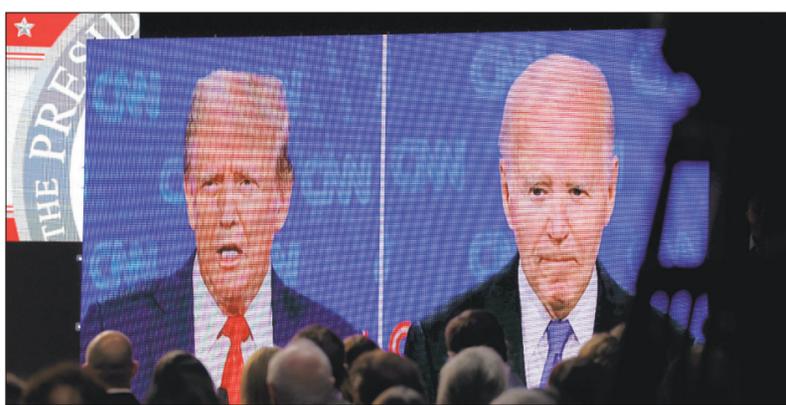
Well, no it wasn't, but he did improve — after badly damaging himself, probably beyond repair.

One Harris hurdle, however, is that party leaders remember she bombed running for president in 2020.

Then there's Newsom, 56.

If Newsom ever wants to run for president — and he acts like he does — now may be his best opportunity, assuming Biden can be coaxed out. There's persistent speculation about him running in 2028. But he's in the limelight now, and there could be a Democratic incumbent seeking reelection in four years.

Newsom is already warmed up. The two-term governor has been promot-



GINA FERRAZZI Los Angeles Times

THURSDAY'S debate between President Biden and Donald Trump is shown in L.A. Biden's dismal performance stoked voter anxiety, George Skelton writes.

ing himself nationally while attacking red state policies and playing the role of an enthusiastic Biden surrogate. He has a veteran campaign organization.

But Newsom would need to compete for the nomination against Harris, his old San Francisco ally. And he has said publicly he wouldn't do that. If he did, he'd be considered a party pariah, especially among Black women, Newsom has said privately.

Actually, I've never thought that a California Democrat could be elected president in this era of hardened polarization. Our politics are just too leftist for most of America.

Newsom has Hollywood looks and oratorical skills. But his biggest political asset — being California governor — is also his biggest vulnerability.

One strength that both Harris and Newsom have, however, is that California's delegation will be by far the largest at the Democratic convention. Presumably it would back a California candidate.

The 496-member state will field 22% of the votes needed to win the nomination. So if Biden leaves the race, California could play a big role in choosing his successor.

Who else is a possibility? For starters, two governors

of key battleground states: Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan and Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania. There's also Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg.

There's no perfect candidate. But Trump is thoroughly imperfect.

Biden loyalists and lethargic naysayers have contended for months that it's too late to change horses while the presidential race is underway, especially now that it has neared the final lap. Nonsense.

Conventions were invented to fight over nominations. But smoke-filled

rooms unfortunately got a bad name, and the Democratic Party went overboard on reforms. And the conventions became boring television shows that fewer people watched.

Republicans had the last convention battle in 1976 when they nominated President Ford over Californian Ronald Reagan. Ford then was beaten by Democrat Jimmy Carter.

The last good Democratic brawl was in 1972 when the California delegation propelled George McGovern into the nomination. He was pummeled by President Nixon, a native Californian.

So convention battles sometimes backfire on a party. But this year could be different.

A Democratic donnybrook could stir new interest in the party and wake up the slumbering base that keeps telling pollsters it wants a president much younger than the 81-year-old incumbent.

Political leaders have a bad habit of plugging their ears when the public is saying things they don't want to hear.

Voters aren't satisfied with either of their choices. Trump, 78, seems healthier than Biden, at least physically. But Trump's a pathological liar. "The morals of an alley cat," Biden told him

during the debate.

The voters' anxiety about Biden's ability to adequately serve a second term was restoked in his halting, hoarse-voiced, awkward performance. He seemed to lose his train of thought at least once and had trouble finishing sentences.

It was the worst presidential debate performance ever.

President Reagan blew his first debate against Democrat Walter Mondale in 1984, raising concerns about his age at 73. But he wasn't nearly as painful to watch as Biden. Reagan fully recovered in a second debate.

Even if Biden's decision-making is sound, people perceive him as weak. And that means he'd have difficulty leading the country.

If Trump's election really would endanger democracy, as Biden contends, then the president should step aside to give the party a better chance of defeating the unfit jerk. He'll naturally resist that. But those he trusts should level with him and push.

"You don't turn your back [on someone] after one performance," Newsom told a TV interviewer. "What kind of party does that?"

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LEGAL NOTICES 1300

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR A CHANGE OF NAME CASE NO. 24NWCPO0237

Petitioner or Attorney (name, state, bar, and address): EDUARDO ARMANDO GONZALEZ 14843 LA CUARTA STREET

Fictitious Business Name Statement NO.: 2024 4289158

The following person is doing business as:
Fictitious Business Name(s) The Healing Project 4419 Allott Ave Apt 6 Sherman Oaks, Ca 91423. **Registered Owner (S):** Cydni Danielle Willhite 4419 Allott Ave Apt 6 Sherman Oaks, Ca 91423. **Business is conducted by** an Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on **N/A**. I declare that all information in this statement is true and correct. (A registrant who declares as true information which he or she knows to be false is guilty of a crime) **REGISTRANT/CORP/LLC NAME:** Signature: Cydni Danielle Willhite. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County on 06-10-2024. **NOTICE** in accordance with subdivision (a) of section 17920 A Fictitious Name Statement generally expires at the end of five years from the date on which it was filed in the office of the County Clerk except, as provided in subdivision (b) of section 17920, where it expires 40 days after any change in the facts set forth in the statement pursuant to section 17913 other than a change in the residence address of a registered owner. A new fictitious business name statement must be filed before the expiration. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of fictitious business name in violation of the rights of another under federal state or common law (see section 14411 et seq. Business and Professions code). Dean C Logan, Los Angeles County Clerk. BY: Dean C Logan, Deputy. Published 06/24/24, 07/01/24, 07/08/24, 07/15/24.

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Name Change

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED: EDUARDO ARMANDO GONZALEZ filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

Present Name EDUARDO ARMANDO GONZALEZ

Proposed Name EDWARD ARMANDO GONZALEZ

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear

Name Change

at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING DATE: AUGUST 23, 2024 **TIME:** 9:30AM **DEPT. C ROOM:** 312

The address of the court is: SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA County of CA 12720 norwalk blvd, norwalk, ca 90650 A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for three successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county. Dated: JUNE 21, 2024 DAVID W. SLAYTON EXECUTIVE OFFICER/CLERK OF COURT Published in the Los Angeles Times 07/01/24, 07/08/24, 07/15/24, 07/22/24

SUMMONS (CITACION JUDICIAL) Case Number (Numero del Caso): 24CHCV00925

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: (AVISO AL DEMANDADO): DARENTS BEGLARYAN, an individual; ALINA HAKOBYAN, an individual; RAFAYEL KARAPETYAN, an individual; and DOES 1-100, inclusive

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE): U-HAUL CO. OF CALIFORNIA, a California corporation, and U-HAUL CO. OF ARIZONA, an Arizona corporation

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. **¡AVISO!** Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación.

Tiene 30 DIAS DE CALENDARIO despues de que le entreguen esta citacion y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefonica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y mas informacion en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede mas cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentacion, pida al secretario de la corte que le de un formulario de exencion de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podra quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin mas advertencia.

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es): Chatsworth Courthouse 9425 Penfield Ave. Chatsworth, CA 91311

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Dan A. Everakes / Colman Perkins Law Group 500 N. Brand Blvd., Ste. 2200 Glendale, CA 91203 (818) 546-8686

Date: (Fecha) 03/19/2024

David W. Slayton Clerk (Secretario) S. Reyna Deputy (Adjunto)

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR A CHANGE OF NAME CASE NO. 24STCP01757

Petitioner or Attorney (name, state, bar, and address): Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt 5455 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 1250, Los Angeles, CA 90036

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED: Petitioner Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

Present Name Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt

Proposed Name Shiloh Nouvel Jolie **THE COURT ORDERS** that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.

Name Change

Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING DATE: 07/29/2024 **TIME:** 9:30 A.M. **DEPT. C ROOM:** 9

The address of the court is: SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA County of Los Angeles 312 N. Spring St., Los Angeles, CA 90012 A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for

SUMMONS (CITACION JUDICIAL) Case Number (Numero del Caso): 23STCV23819

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: (AVISO AL DEMANDADO): DAVID CAMPBELL, an individual; JEREMIAH PAUL, an individual; and DOES 1-100 INCLUSIVE

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE): U-HAUL CO. OF CALIFORNIA, a California corporation; U-HAUL CO. OF ARIZONA, an Arizona corporation; and ARCOA RISK RETENTION GROUP, INC.

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. **¡AVISO!** Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación.

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The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es): Superior Court of California, Stanley Mosk 111 N. Hill Street Los Angeles, CA 90012

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Dan A. Everakes, Colman Perkins Law Group 500 N. Brand Blvd., Ste. 2200 Glendale, CA 91203 818-546-8686

Date: (Fecha) 01/10/2024

David W. Slayton Clerk (Secretario) S. Bolden Deputy (Adjunto)

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es): Superior Court of California, Stanley Mosk 111 N. Hill Street Los Angeles, CA 90012

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Dan A. Everakes, Colman Perkins Law Group 500 N. Brand Blvd., Ste. 2200 Glendale, CA 91203 818-546-8686

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NOTICE OF HEARING DATE: 07/29/2024 **TIME:** 9:30 A.M. **DEPT. C ROOM:** 9

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The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es): Superior Court of California, Stanley Mosk 111 N. Hill Street Los Angeles, CA 90012

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Dan A. Everakes, Colman Perkins Law Group 500 N. Brand Blvd., Ste. 2200 Glendale, CA 91203 818-546-8686

Date: (Fecha) 01/10/2024

David W. Slayton Clerk (Secretario) S. Bolden Deputy (Adjunto)

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es): Superior Court of California, Stanley Mosk 111 N. Hill Street Los Angeles, CA 90012

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Dan A. Everakes, Colman Perkins Law Group 500 N. Brand Blvd., Ste. 2200 Glendale, CA 91203 818-546-8686

Date: (Fecha) 01/10/2024

David W. Slayton Clerk (Secretario) S. Bolden Deputy (Adjunto)

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Name Change

Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING DATE: 07/29/2024 **TIME:** 9:30 A.M. **DEPT. C ROOM:** 9

The address of the court is: SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA County of Los Angeles 312 N. Spring St., Los Angeles, CA 90012 A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for

SUMMONS (CITACION JUDICIAL) Case Number (Numero del Caso): 23STCV23819

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: (AVISO AL DEMANDADO): DAVID CAMPBELL, an individual; JEREMIAH PAUL, an individual; and DOES 1-100 INCLUSIVE

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE): U-HAUL CO. OF CALIFORNIA, a California corporation; U-HAUL CO. OF ARIZONA, an Arizona corporation; and ARCOA RISK RETENTION GROUP, INC.

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can

THE WEATHER

Today in Southern California

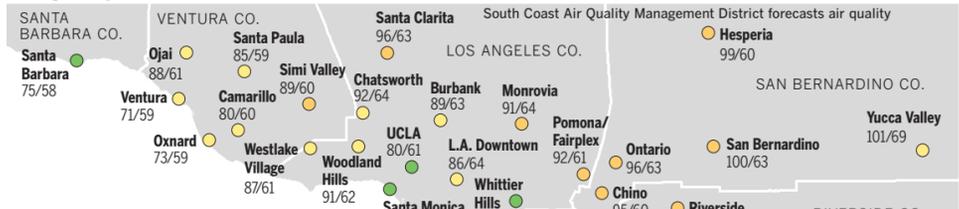
Trough enters; heat follows: A trough will slide by to the north on Monday, bringing little in the way of any big changes to our weather. There will be patchy coastal clouds early on before turning mostly sunny over the region.

5-day forecasts

High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

Table with 5 columns: L.A. Basin, Valleys, Beaches, Mountains, Deserts. Rows: Today, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Includes temperature ranges and weather descriptions.

Air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO Inner waters: Wind southerly at 10 knots. Seas 3-4 feet. Swell will be mixed from the west at 3 feet and southwest at 2 feet.

Table with 5 columns: County, Height, Period, Direction, Temp. Lists surf conditions for Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego.

Tides

Table with 5 columns: Time, Height, Direction, Temp. Lists tide information for L.A. Outer Harbor.

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people. Las Vegas, 10 Phoenix, 25 Los Angeles, 10 San Francisco, 25

California cities*

Table with 5 columns: City, Sun. Hi Lo, Today Hi Lo, Tue. Hi Lo. Lists weather for various California cities like Anaheim, Bakersfield, etc.

Sun and moon

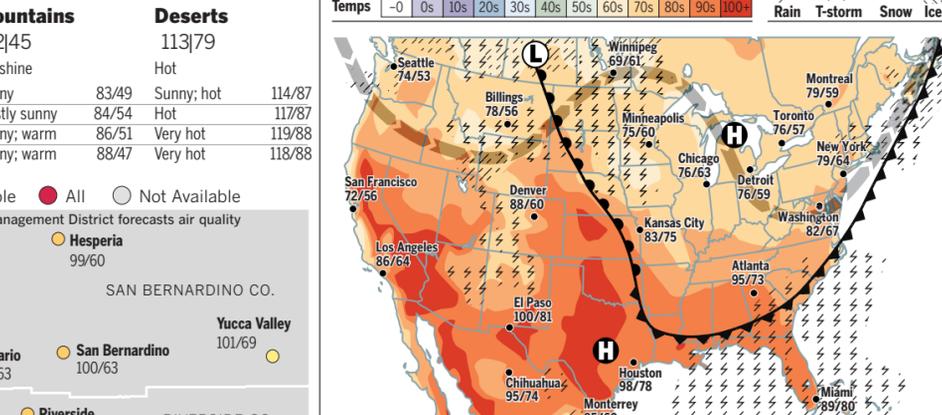
Table with 3 columns: City, Sun. Hi Lo, Today Hi Lo. Lists sunrise and moonset times for Los Angeles, Orange, and Ventura.

Almanac

Table with 4 columns: Temperature, Los Angeles, Fullerton, Ventura. Lists temperature readings and precipitation for Sunday.

Today in North America

Rounds of storms for the northern Plains: Storms are expected across the northern Plains. The main threats with these storms will be gusty winds, flooding downpours, hail and even an isolated tornado.



U.S. cities SUNDAY'S EXTREMES AS OF 2 P.M. FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES. High 112 in Needles, Calif. Low 30 in Yellowstone NP, Wyo.

Large table with 5 columns: City, Sunday* Hi Lo, Today Hi Lo, Sky, City, Sunday* Hi Lo, Today Hi Lo, Sky. Lists weather for 50+ cities including Albany, Albuquerque, etc.

New laws mostly reflect politics of majority Democrats

[Laws, from B1] for concerts and sporting events, and surcharges for driver benefits and deliveries on apps such as DoorDash and Uber Eats.

The bill was sponsored by Sens. Bill Dodd (D-Napa) and Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley) and backed by state Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta.

A second law targets cleaning and resort fees at hotels and short-term rentals. Assembly Bill 537, introduced by Assemblymember Marc Berman (D-Menlo Park), requires that lodgings display the total price before checkout, except any government taxes and fees.

The laws have already led to some national changes, including hotel websites that now display the total price for each stay before taxes, and a "total before taxes" search option on Airbnb.

President Biden last year called out junk fees and backed a bill in Congress that would ban the fees nationally.

The Federal Trade Commission has also started drafting regulations that would bar companies from advertising prices without including mandatory fees.

New limits on security deposits

Many California landlords will be barred from charging more than the equivalent of one month's rent for security deposits. Landlords could previously charge the equivalent of two times the monthly rent for unfurnished units, and three times the monthly rent for furnished units.

Assemblymember Matt Haney (D-San Francisco), who introduced AB 12, said that high security deposits can be a barrier to finding affordable housing, especially in coastal California cities where rents are among the country's highest.

Mom-and-pop landlords who own as many as two rental properties, with no more than four units, are exempt from the law.



ANDY FANG, right, DoorDash's co-founder, picks up an order in downtown San Francisco. On apps like his and Uber Eats, surcharges for driver benefits and deliveries must now be disclosed upfront to customers.

Credit card codes for gun retailers

Credit card payment networks must now provide a unique identifying code for gun and ammunition retailers. Those four-digit identifiers, known as "merchant category codes," already appear on credit card statements for most types of businesses, including grocery stores, hotels and gas stations, and help payment networks offer rewards and track spending trends.

Typically, gun and ammunition retailers are categorized as sporting goods stores. Under AB 1587, introduced by Assemblymember Phil Ting (D-San Francisco), credit card payment networks must begin offering the merchant category code for gun and ammunition retailers. Retailers have until May to integrate the code into their systems.

Ting's office said the code would allow banks to flag

suspicious activity related to gun purchases, akin to the warnings that banks already pass along to law enforcement agencies about purchases potentially linked to terrorist financing, fraud and identity theft.

Date-rape test kits in bars, nightclubs

Bars and nightclubs in California will be required to offer kits that test for controlled substances slipped into drinks. The law will require bars and clubs to sell, or offer for free, strips, stickers, straws or other devices that test alcoholic drinks for the presence of common date-rape drugs, including ketamine, GHB and flunitrazepam, which is often sold under the brand name Rohypnol.

AB 1013, introduced by Assemblymember Josh Lowenthal (D-Long Beach), will also require bars and clubs to post "in a prominent



THE REVENUE from AB 28, a tax on firearms and ammunition, will fund gun violence prevention.

and conspicuous location" a notice that reads: "Don't get roofied! Drink spiking drug test kits available here. Ask a staff member for details."

A tax on guns and ammunition

The sale of many firearms, ammunition and

parts used to build guns will incur an 11% excise tax. The revenue from AB 28 will fund gun violence prevention and gang intervention programs in California. The federal government charges an excise tax on guns, but California's is the first such tax at the state level.

The law, introduced by Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel (D-Encino), will not apply to sales to active and retired police officers and law enforcement agencies, nor to sales by mom-and-pop vendors who reported less than \$5,000 in sales in the quarter when the purchase was made.

State budget analysts estimated that the tax would generate \$159 million in revenue in the first year. If the excise tax is passed on by vendors to their customers, analysts said, the bill would generate additional sales and use tax revenue of up to \$14 million for state and local governments.

Information on how to fix your iPhone

Manufacturers of many electronic devices and appliances will be required to provide the parts, tools and instructions needed to repair their products under a new law aimed at empowering consumers who are interested in fixing their own phones, dishwashers and lawnmowers.

Under SB 244, the Right to Repair Act, manufacturers must make documents, parts and tools available to fix devices that cost \$50 to \$99 for at least three years after the product was last manufactured. For products that cost more than \$100, the time period rises to seven years, regardless of warranty periods.

California is the third U.S. state, after New York and Minnesota, to pass a so-called right-to-repair law.

The law, introduced by state Sen. Susan Takamantes Eggman (D-Stokton), doesn't apply to video game consoles, fire alarms and heavy machinery used in agriculture, forestry and construction.

SPORTS

MONDAY, JULY 1, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS

Dodgers at a loss from very start



SHOHEI OHTANI went 0 for 5 Sunday with three strikeouts, including one to end the game. His performance typified the kind of day it was for the Dodgers, who trailed 9-0 at one point and dropped the series against the Giants after sweeping the White Sox in Chicago. GODOFREDO A. VÁSQUEZ Associated Press

Paxton gives up nine early runs in 10-4 series defeat to Giants

By Mike DiGiovanna

SAN FRANCISCO — The “opener” in what was supposed to be a “bullpen game” for the San Francisco Giants outlasted the Dodgers’ starter, which should provide a hint at how things went for the visiting team on a sun-splashed Sunday afternoon at Oracle Park.

Dodgers left-hander James Paxton was pummeled for nine earned runs and 12 hits in four innings of an eventual 10-4 loss to the Giants, failing to give his team a chance to win or provide much-needed length after eight relievers combined to throw eight innings in Saturday’s 14-7, 11-inning victory.

Meanwhile, reliever Spencer Bivens, a 30-year-old rookie who was expected to go two, maybe two-plus innings for the Giants, threw five one-run, four-hit innings with three strikeouts, the right-hander punctuating his 60-pitch outing with a full windup and violent fist pump after he struck out Shohei Ohtani with an 82-mph sweeper to end the [See Dodgers, D5]



DETROIT 7, ANGELS 6

Win streak ends; Trout itches to hit

Tigers hold off late rally and the sweep in series finale. Slugger aims for return this month. **D5**

Skaggs’ final days

A Times review of court records shows moments leading up to pitcher’s fatal overdose in 2019. **A1**

PARIS  OLYMPICS

NO FEAR DIVING INTO THIS CHALLENGE

Amid her sport’s funding cuts, Agúndez is overcoming all obstacles to bring more glory to Mexico’s best

By Kevin Baxter

Gaby Agúndez has been diving for more than half her life. Yet she’s still frightened by the long climb to the top of the 10-meter platform.

“It happens to all divers,” said Agúndez, a two-time Pan American champion and a bronze medalist in the Tokyo Olympics. “We continue to feel butterflies in our stomach when we stand on the platform.”

But if the 59 steps up the tower are terrifying, the exhilaration of the 33-foot plunge to the water below more than makes up for the fright.

“The adrenaline you feel when you jump, it’s an inexplicable sensation,” Agúndez said in Spanish during a videoconference from Mexico City. “It’s what captured me about my sport since I was little. I really liked that feeling of challenging myself, of overcoming a fear to show



GABY AGÚNDEZ is scared of the high 10-meter platform but calls her dive an “inexplicable sensation.” HASSAN AMMAR Associated Press

myself what I’m capable of.”

Agúndez has a chance to show the world what she’s capable of in this summer’s Paris Olympics, where she will be among Mexico’s top hopes for a medal.

Three years ago in Tokyo, she teamed with Alejandra Orozco to win bronze in the synchronized 10-meter platform, then finished fourth in the individual event. She followed that with Pan Am golds in the individual and synchronized platform events and silver in the team competition in the last two World Aquatics Championships.

But that success brings with it the heavy weight of expectation, because if diving is of minor interest in many countries, in Mexico it borders on a national pastime. Not only has Mexico won more Olympic medals in diving than in any other sport — only five countries have more diving medals than Mexico’s 15 — but also [See Diver, D6]

Quarterbacks commute 160 miles a day

Brothers John and Shawn Sanders of Mojave take long trips in dad’s hybrid to play for St. Francis. **D2**

Clippers, Harden agree on deal

The high-scoring veteran guard reportedly will get a two-year, \$70-million contract from the team. **D3**

Rousey flexing her writing chops

Former UFC and WWE champion now a graphic novelist and to set to publish her first work. **D6**



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PRO CALENDAR

	MON 1	TUE 2	WED 3	THU 4	FRI 5
DODGERS		ARIZONA 7 SNLA	ARIZONA 7 SNLA	ARIZONA 6 SNLA	MILWAUKEE 7 SNLA
ANGELS		at Oakland 6:30 BSW	at Oakland 6:30 BSW	at Oakland 1 BSW	at Chicago Cubs 11:15 a.m. BSW
SPARKS		WASH. 7 SpecSN			LAS VEGAS 7 Ion
GALAXY				LAFC* 7:30 Apple TV+	
LAFC				at Galaxy* 7:30 Apple TV+	
ANGEL CITY	NEXT: VS. NJ/NY GOTHAM, SATURDAY, 7 P.M., ION				

Shade denotes home game. *-at Rose Bowl

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
BASEBALL		
Noon	Houston at Toronto	TV: MLB
3:30 p.m.	New York Mets at Washington	TV: MLB, ESPN+
5:30 p.m.	Milwaukee at Colorado (joined in progress)	TV: MLB
BASKETBALL: WNBA		
7 p.m.	Dallas at Seattle	TV: NBA
CYCLING		
3:30 a.m. (Tue.)	Tour de France, Stage 4	TV: Peacock
SOCCER		
9 a.m.	UEFA Euro, round of 16, France vs. Belgium	TV: FS1
Noon	UEFA Euro, round of 16, Portugal vs. Slovenia	TV: 11
Noon	Canada, HFX Wanderers vs. Cavalry	TV: FS2
6 p.m.	Copa América, group play, U.S. vs. Uruguay	TV: FS1, Univision, TUDN
6 p.m.	Copa América, group play, Bolivia vs. Panama	TV: FS2, UniMas
TENNIS		
3 a.m. (Tue.)	Wimbledon, first round	TV: ESPN, ESPN+, ESPND

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.



Quarterback guides long drives downfield to play for St. Francis

Sanders and his brother, who have above-4.0 GPAs, commute 160 miles.

ERIC SONDEHEIMER ON HIGH SCHOOLS

In fall 2021, the most amazing commitment began. Tracey Sanders bought a new hybrid car so that six days a week he'd be able to drive his freshman son, John, from the family home in Mojave to St. Francis High in La Cañada Flintridge. It's 80 miles one way and takes 90 minutes driving the 14 Freeway.

Two years later, his other son, Shawn, joined John in attending St. Francis and making the 160-mile round-trip commute.

Both are quarterbacks and had been trained by St. Francis coach Dean Herrington since they were youth athletes.

"We do whatever we have to do for the kids," said Tracey, a general contractor who also helps coach at St. Francis.

With temperatures closing in on 100 degrees in Mojave, John, now a senior, was enjoying summer workouts recently at St. Francis. And he was ready to answer the question, "Did you think you'd do this for four years coming from Mojave?"

"Ah, to be honest, before I came here, I didn't think it would last this long," he said. "But here we are. I've got one more year."

The long commute has been good for both Sanders boys. They have grade-point averages above 4.0 and use their car time for doing homework or sleeping. John is coming off a



ERIC SONDEHEIMER Los Angeles Times
JOHN SANDERS was one of the most versatile quarterbacks at St. Francis last season. His brother, Shawn, is a backup quarterback, receiver, kicker and punter.

junior season when he was one of the most versatile quarterbacks, passing for 2,032 yards and 21 touchdowns while rushing for 778 yards and eight touchdowns.

Herrington has compared him to the coach's former quarterback pupil, Vernon Adams, who wasn't recruited much out of Bishop Alemany but went on to play for Eastern Washington and Oregon. Adams now plays in the Canadian Football League.

"Colleges made a mistake not going after Vernon," Herrington said. "Now it's the same deal. I don't get it. John can run, can throw. He's smart. He's tough. I see a lot of bad college quarterbacks out there. Someone has to pull the trigger."

Sanders ran the 40-yard dash in 4.6 seconds at a football camp this summer and ran an 11.2-second 100 meters for the track team. He thinks he's faster and stronger.

"I can just feel it," he said. The Golden Knights are expected to pass the ball a lot more with the addition of new receivers who are faster than last year's group.

Demari Nunley, a transfer from St. Pius X-St. Matthias, and sophomores Mason Maddox and Daveon Blaylock could take advantage of Sanders' arm and experience.

Then there's Shawn, a sophomore who serves as the backup quarterback, receiver, kicker and punter. With the recent scorching temperatures, John was

outside serving as the holder while little brother tried field goals.

Imagine the potential fake field-goal plays that could be designed with the kicker and holder both quarterbacks. Think laterals, but who should throw the ball?

"Either of us," John said. "Whoever grabs it first."

The Sanders family can discuss their ideas coming and going thanks to Dad being their loyal chauffeur.

Tracey said the hybrid is holding up and will need to last through 2026, when Shawn graduates. That would be five years of round trips from Mojave to La Cañada Flintridge.

"Their grades are great," Tracey said. "I'm not breaking up that."

THE DAY IN SPORTS

Missed putt aids Davis victory

WIRE REPORTS

Cam Davis won the Rocket Mortgage Classic for the second time, closing with a two-under 70 on Sunday that gave him a one-shot victory when Akshay Bhatia three-putted from 32 feet on the final hole.

Davis, a 29-year-old Australian who won his first PGA Tour title three years ago at Detroit Golf Club, pulled into a tie with Bhatia with a birdie on the par-five 17th hole.

That proved to be enough when Bhatia's 4-foot par attempt on the 18th missed low and left for his first three-putt of the week.

Hiroiyuki Fujita held a three-stroke lead with eight holes to play in the final round of the U.S. Senior Open when the tournament was postponed because of severe weather at Newport (R.I.) Country Club. The tournament will resume Monday. ... In Midland, Mich., Athaya "Jeenoo" Thitikul of Thailand made a 12-foot birdie putt on the final hole as she and Ruoning Yin of China won the Dow Championship by closing with an eight-under 62 in the fourballs format. ... Marcel Siem beat Tom McKibbin in a playoff to win the Italian Open in the German's fourth event back after hip surgery in February.

Force showing improvement

NHRA great John Force is showing "daily signs of improvement" in a neurological intensive care unit a week after a fiery, 300-mph crash at the Virginia Nationals, according to his team.

John Force Racing said Sunday that the 75-year-old from Yorba Linda has been able to respond to commands including giving a thumbs-up and to recognize



AL GOLDIS Associated Press
ATHAYA THITIKUL, left, and Ruoning Yin kiss their trophies after winning the Dow Championship. They won the fourballs format with an eight-under 62.

family members, calling them by name and saying "I love you."

Initially, he couldn't follow commands to open his eyes, squeeze the hands of care providers or move his extremities.

In Sunday's finals in Norwalk, Ohio, Bob Tasca III (funny car), Antron Brown (top fuel), Aaron Stanfield (pro stock) and Gage Herrera (pro stock motorcycle) won their respective classes. Herrera won his 11th consecutive race this season.

George Russell clinched Mercedes' first win of the season at Formula One's Austrian Grand Prix after taking advantage of a late clash involving McLaren driver Lando Norris and championship leader Max Verstappen in a Red Bull. Oscar Piastri was second, ahead of Carlos Sainz Jr. Norris was trying to take the lead from Verstappen with just seven laps remaining. The incident left Norris' car unable to continue, and Verstappen was given a 10-second time penalty. ... John Hunter Nemechek took the lead off a restart on Lap 142 and drove away for the win at the NASCAR Xfinity Series race Saturday for his 11th career victory. ... On Friday, Christian Eckes dominated the NASCAR Trucks race in

Nashville, the 23-year old leading all 150 laps - the first time a driver has led every race lap in 12 years. ... The Cup Series race at Nashville Superspeedway was red-flagged because of inclement weather nearly halfway through the 300-lap race. The race resumed after a 1-hour, 21-minute delay and ended after press time.

The suspension of American winger Tim Weah was extended to two games by South America's soccer governing body for punching Panama's Roderick Miller. ... Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa was suspended for coming out late for the second half of the first two Copa America matches and will miss his team's game against the United States on Monday. ... Jude Bellingham scored a stunning overhead kick with only seconds left to help England avoid one of the most shocking defeats in the history of the European Championship. The midfielder's acrobatic strike in the fifth minute of stoppage time leveled the round-of-16 game against Slovakia at 1-1. Harry Kane scored in the first minute of extra time to secure a 2-1 comeback win. ... Spain rolled past upstart Georgia 4-1 to reach Friday's quarterfinal against host Germany. ... In Copa

America on Saturday night, Argentina shut out Peru 2-0 and Canada and Chile battled to a scoreless tie in group-stage matches.

The Buffalo Sabres moved on from Jeff Skinner, the top-paid forward on the team's roster, by buying out the final three years of the veteran's contract. ... Tampa Bay acquired the rights to high-scoring winger Jake Guentzel. ... New Jersey acquired defenseman Johnathan Kovacevic from Montreal for a 2026 fourth-round pick.

Alex Pereira delivered a vicious left kick to Jiri Prochazka's head and then pounded the top-ranked challenger 13 seconds into the second round to retain his light-heavyweight championship Saturday in UFC 303.

Wynstock won the \$100,000 Los Alamitos Derby by a nose over Cornell on Saturday, giving Hall of Fame trainer Bob Baffert a 1-2 finish and his eighth consecutive victory in the Grade 2 race.

At the Tour de France, Tadej Pogacar took the yellow jersey and Jonas Vingegaard followed close behind in the second stage.

SOCCER

Galaxy, LAFC each victorious to stay atop West

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Joseph Paintsil scored a first-half goal and the Galaxy added two more late in the second half to defeat the San José Earthquakes 3-0 on Saturday at Stanford Stadium for their fourth consecutive win.

Paintsil scored with an assist from Gabriel Pec in the 37th minute and the Galaxy took a 1-0 lead into the break.

In the second half, Dejan Joveljic scored in the 72nd minute off a header after Riqui Puig hit the crossbar with a shot. Mauricio Cuevas wrapped up the scoring with a goal in stoppage time. It was the first goal of his MLS career.

The Galaxy had seven shots on goal to six for San José. The Earthquakes had an 18-14 advantage in total shots. John McCarthy had six saves for the Galaxy and William Yarbrough stopped four for San José.

The Galaxy remain tied for first place in the Western Conference. LAFC (12-4-4) and the Galaxy (11-3-7) each have 40 points. Real Salt Lake (10-3-7) is off until

Wednesday and remained at 37 points.

Saturday's match marked the 101st edition across all competitions of the California Clásico between the Galaxy and Earthquakes, with the Galaxy leading the all-time series 49-33-19.

The Galaxy will play rival LAFC at the Rose Bowl on Thursday.

LAFC rolls past Colorado at home

Mateusz Bogusz scored all three goals for his first hat trick in two seasons with LAFC in a 3-0 victory over the Rapids at BMO Stadium on Saturday night.

Bogusz scored in the 20th, 58th and 72nd minutes. The third goal came after Colorado's Kévin Cabral received a red card.

Bogusz raised his season total to 12 goals, second on the team to Denis Bouanga's 13. Cristian Arango of Real Salt Lake leads MLS with 16 goals.

LAFC had 11 shots on goal to Colorado's one and outshot the Rapids 21-11 overall.



EAKIN HOWARD Getty Images
THE GALAXY'S Joseph Paintsil, left, tries to fend off San José's Hernán López during Saturday's game.

NBA NOTES

Lakers, Christie ink new contract

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

The Lakers are keeping **Max Christie** from becoming a free agent, signing him to a four-year, \$32-million contract, people with knowledge of the situation not authorized to speak publicly on the matter told The Times.

Christie, 21, averaged 4.2 points last season as he moved in and out of the Lakers' rotation. He would've been a restricted free agent, but the Lakers were able to strike a deal to keep him just before Sunday's 3 p.m. PDT opening bell.

Christie is entering his third season after being selected 35th in the 2022 NBA draft, and the Lakers are hoping he can take a major step to become the type of player who can impact the game on both ends of the court.

The 6-foot-6 Christie had a 20-game stretch last season in which he settled into consistent rotation minutes. But once the team signed guard **Spencer Dinwiddie** in free agency and **Gabe Vincent** returned from injury, Christie's minutes were significantly cut. Christie didn't play for the Lakers in the postseason.

His role last season was cited as one area of concern for the Lakers, and both in the search for their new coach and in the aftermath of hiring **JJ Redick**, Christie's name was mentioned often as an important part of the organization's developmental plan.

— DAN WOIKE

Warriors say goodbye to Paul

Guard **Chris Paul** was waived by the Golden State Warriors, who would have had to pay him \$30 million for the coming season otherwise. The 39-year-old Paul averaged 9.2 points and 6.8 assists in 58 games last season. He'll be looking to join a third team in a span of 14 months after spending 2022-23 with Phoenix and last season in Golden State.

Love set for new deal with the Heat

Kevin Love was completing a new contract with the Miami Heat, a person with knowledge of that deal told the Associated Press, the move coming one day after he didn't opt into what would have been a \$4 million contract for this coming season with the club. Love, a former UCLA standout, had said repeatedly last season that he has no intention of leaving Miami.

Pistons, Bickerstaff agree to 4-year deal

The Detroit Pistons agreed to a four-year contract with coach **J.B. Bickerstaff** with a team option for a fifth season, a person familiar with the situation told the AP.

The Pistons fired coach **Monty Williams** one season into a six-year, \$78.5-million deal after posting the NBA's worst record for a second straight year. They also fired general manager **Troy Weaver** after winning 23% of games in his four seasons.

More news

Obi Toppin is being rewarded nicely for his strong first season with Indiana. A person with knowledge of the agreement said he and the Pacers were finalizing a four-year deal worth nearly \$60 million. Toppin averaged a career-best 10.3 points last season, his first with Indiana after three years in New York. ... New Memphis Grizzlies center **Zach Edey** announced he was pulling his name from consideration to play for Canada in the 2024 Paris Games to focus on his NBA career. "I have a duty now to properly prepare for all that is coming my way with being drafted by the Memphis Grizzlies," Edey said in a statement. ... The NBA set the salary cap at \$140.588 million for the 2024-25 season, down slightly — about \$400,000 or so — from what teams had been told to expect. The tax level was set at \$170.814 million, the first apron level will be \$178.132 million, the second apron level will be \$188.931 million.

Clippers, Harden forge 2-year deal

Star guard, team agree to a \$70-million deal, and also get former Rockets guard Porter.

BY BRODERICK TURNER

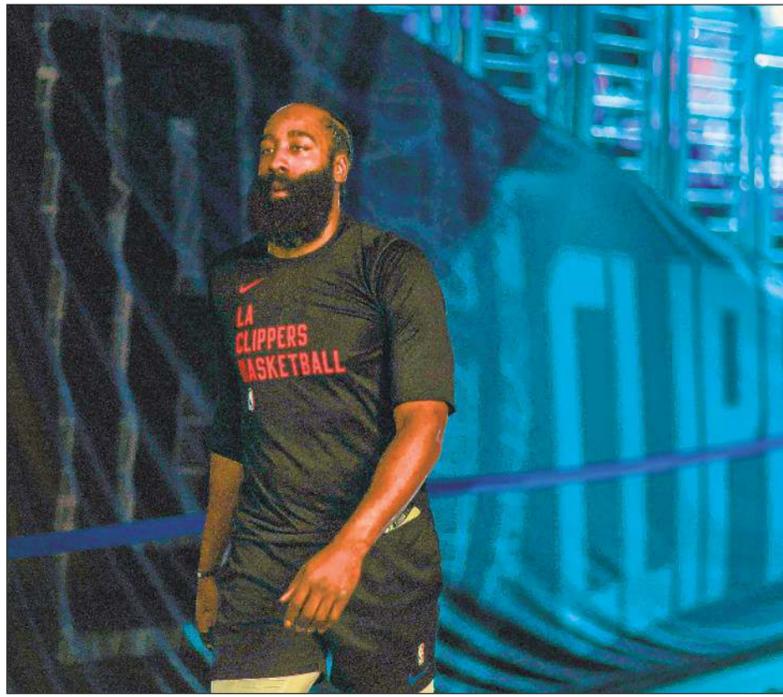
James Harden agreed to a two-year, \$70-million contract Sunday to remain with the Clippers, according to people with knowledge of the deal not authorized to speak on the matter.

Harden averaged 16.6 points and 8.5 assists while shooting 42.8% from the field, 38.1% from three-point range, in 72 games with the Clippers last season.

He led the Clippers in scoring (21.2) and assists (8.0) in a first-round playoff series loss to the Dallas Mavericks.

"We think James has been terrific for us when we obtained him five games into the season," Lawrence Frank, the Clippers' president of basketball operations, said Thursday. "Thought he had a terrific season. ... He's been great in terms of even the offseason, coming in, working out, coming in two-a-days, getting extra work in."

Harden, who will turn 35 in August, was acquired by the Clippers from Philadelphia in October after a falling out with Daryl Morey, the 76ers' president of basketball operations, over Harden's contract situation.



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

THE CLIPPERS' leading scorer in the playoffs last season, James Harden was acquired by the team in October after a falling out with 76ers owner Daryl Morey.

Harden believed he had earned a larger contract than the one he was playing under. He eventually called Morey "a liar" regarding contract negotiations and demanded a trade, saying, "I will never be a part of an organization that he's a part of."

It was the third team in three years that he asked for

a trade, telling the 76ers that the Clippers were his desired destination.

In other news, guard Kevin Porter Jr. agreed to a two-year deal with the Clippers, which includes a player option, according to people not authorized to speak publicly on the matter.

In four years in the NBA — three with the Houston

Rockets — Porter averaged 15.3 points and shot 44.2% from the field.

The Clippers learned Saturday that All-Star forward Paul George did not exercise the player option on his contract, which was worth \$48.7 million. George is going to listen to offers from multiple teams, including the 76ers, Orlando Magic

and Clippers.

The 76ers and the Magic, teams with salary-cap space, can offer George up to \$212 million over four years.

A person close to George, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the matter, said they "wouldn't put anyone as the front-runner right now" because he wants to go through the process.

George will be meeting with the 76ers, Magic and Clippers over the next couple of days, presumably before making a decision.

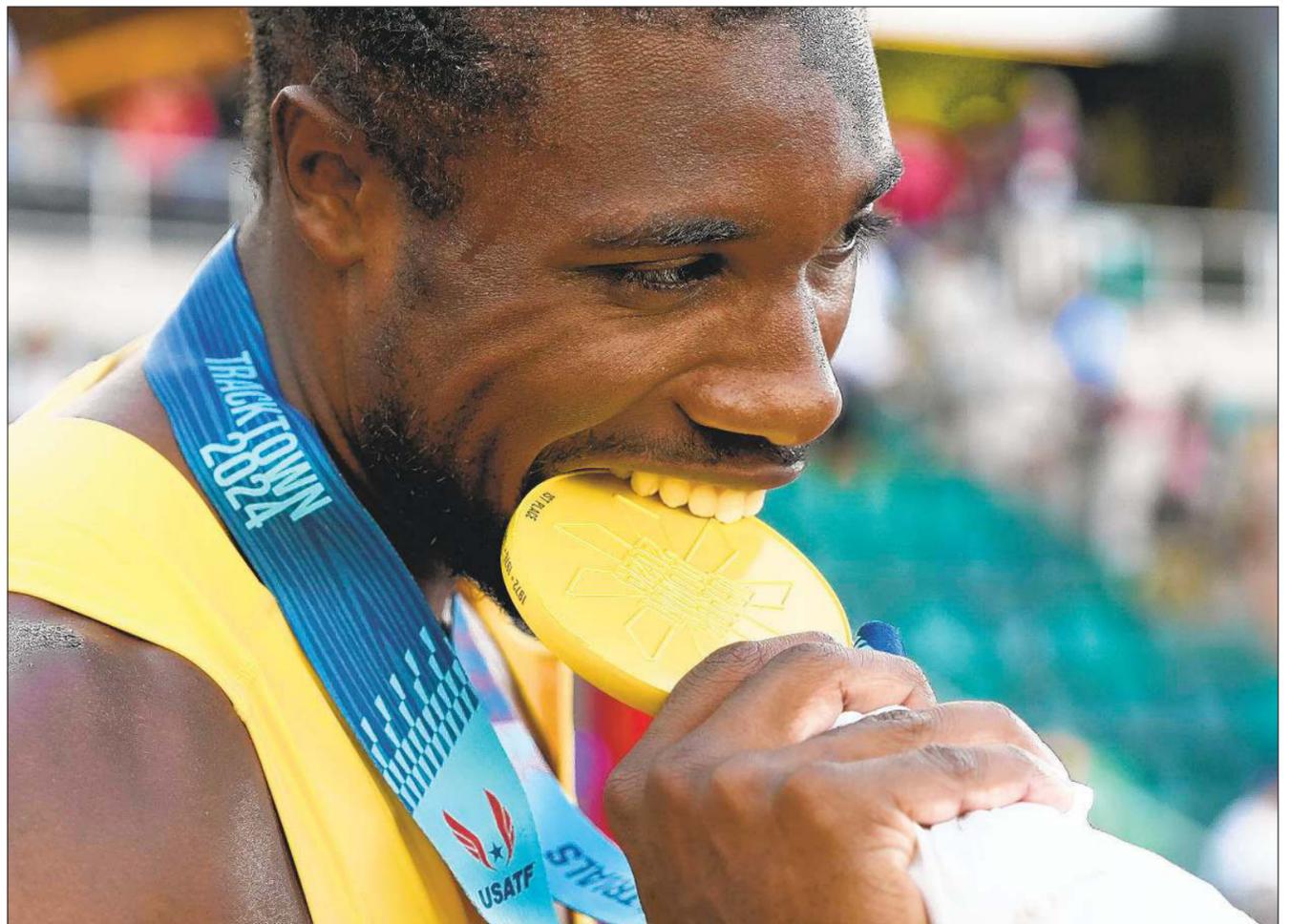
George, who is from Palmdale, was excited to come to Los Angeles in 2019 when the Clippers acquired him in a trade with Oklahoma City so his family could see him play.

"He's going to look at everything, figure out what the best spot is for him," the person said. "Look, he's also got a lot of love for the Clippers."

"But he's also got to look at everything. Everyone just thinks that, 'Oh, he definitely would stay home.' He has to look at what's best for him, including the Clippers, and then figure things out."

George, a nine-time All-Star, played in 74 games last season, the most he had played since joining the Clippers. He averaged 22.6 points and 5.2 rebounds.

Former league MVP Russell Westbrook, also a nine-time All-Star, opted into the final year of his contract, worth \$4 million.



Photographs by CHARLIE NEIBERGALL Associate Press

NOAH LYLES came from behind to win the 200, and his time of 19.53 was a U.S. Olympic trials record and fastest in the world this year.

Lyles on course for Olympic double

He adds a 200 title to the 100 he won last weekend in hopes of winning both in Paris.

BY EDDIE PELLIS

EUGENE, Ore. — Noah Lyles kept alive his hopes for the sprint double at the Olympics on Saturday night, coming from behind to win the 200 meters at the U.S. track trials in 19.53 seconds, the fastest time in the world this year.

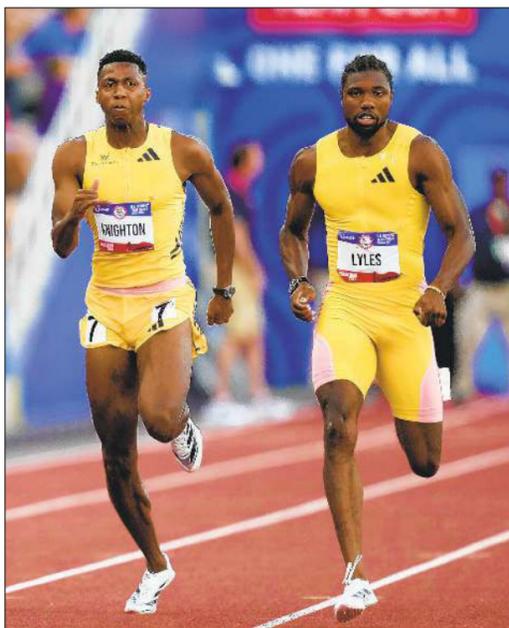
Lyles added the 200, his signature race and the distance at which he is a three-time world champion, to the 100 he won last weekend.

It was no blowout, as Lyles had to race to the line to pass Kenny Bednarek with about 10 meters left and beat him by 0.06 seconds.

Erriyon Knighton, racing for the first time this year at trials after being cleared in investigation about eating drug-tainted meat, finished third and made his second Olympic team.

Lyles' 19.53 broke an Olympic trials record of 19.66 held by Michael Johnson since 1996.

Lyles will head to Paris hoping to make up for his only loss in the 200 at a major meet — which came when he was battling depression and took third in 2021 at the



ERRIYON KNIGHTON, left, finished third to Lyles in the 200 but still clinched a spot on the U.S. team.

Tokyo Games.

"I've said it all season, but it helps to not have depression," he told NBC. "I thank God every day ... for getting me through each and every round. Healthy, mentally and physically."

The Lyles victory came about 90 minutes after this meet's other big name, Sha'Carri Richardson,

slowed down in the home-stretch of the women's 200 and finished fourth, depriving her a chance to race in both sprints. Gabby Thomas won that title.

Then, as if to underscore the point that there are no sure things in track, Lyles found himself trailing Bednarek with about 10 steps to go in the 200.

Instead of trying for an American or world record, as he suggested the night before that he might, Lyles simply had to hold off Bednarek, who adds this second-place finish to his second in the 100 and also has a chance for hardware in both races in Paris.

"I had it, but I tightened up a little bit, so I'm gonna get him next time," Bednarek said. "I'm on his case."

More dominance in women's hurdles

Yet another sign of Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone's dominance in the 400 hurdles came in the semifinal round.

Her time in the race where she was only trying to stay upright and advance, 52.48 seconds, was the best time in 2024 in the event.

McLaughlin-Levrone holds the world record at 50.68 seconds. On Sunday night, she raced for a spot in the Olympics and a chance to defend her title.

Davis-Woodhall wins long jump

America's top long jumper certainly knows how to put on a show.

Down to her last try after two scratches, Tara Davis-Woodhall finally took off from behind the board to

avoid being eliminated.

Awarded three more tries, she jumped 7 meters on the second of those to vault from fifth to first place.

Davis-Woodhall remains undefeated this season, but this one was a nail-biter.

"I don't want to put myself or you guys in that position again," she said in an interview on the stadium PA system. "Apologize. But I'm going to Paris, baby!"

New life for asylum seeker from Eritrea

Weini Kelati won the 10,000 meters 10 years after seeking asylum in the United States. Kelati traveled to Oregon as a teenager for the world junior championships and, without telling her friends or family, missed her flight back home to Eritrea to begin a new life.

Taken in by a relative, Kelati went to high school in Virginia and competed at the University of New Mexico, where she became a multi-time All-American.

Now, the 27-year-old has earned a trip to the Paris Olympics. Kelati held off Parker Valby of the University of Florida by less than a half second. Karissa Schweizer, who made the team for the Tokyo Games in 2021, was third.

Pellis writes for the Associated Press.

BASEBALL: SATURDAY FLASHBACK

Dodgers' scoring spree in 11th enough

They tally seven times in the inning to overcome struggling Glasnow's early exit from win over Giants.

By Mike DiGiovanna

SAN FRANCISCO — Saturday was a planned "bullpen game" for the San Francisco Giants, whose rotation sports just two healthy established starters in Logan Webb and Jordan Hicks and has five pitchers — Blake Snell, Kyle Harrison, Keaton Winn, Robbie Ray and Alex Cobb — on the injured list.

It turned into an impromptu bullpen game for Dodgers, who was both surprising and disappointing considering they sent to the mound ace Tyler Glasnow, who was 8-5 with a 2.88 ERA and a National League-leading 135 strikeouts and had thrown five innings or more in each of his first 16 starts.

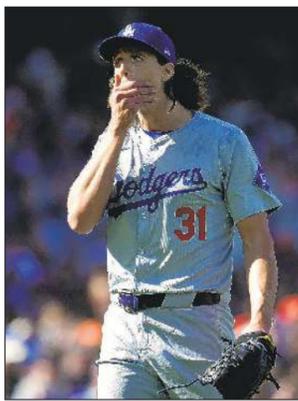
Glasnow was rocked for five runs and seven hits in an abbreviated three-inning start, leaving Dodgers relievers to cover the final six innings.

Not only was the bullpen up to the task, but it also worked overtime and got contributions from every arm, with eight pitchers combining to limit the Giants to one earned run over eight innings of a wild 14-7, 11-inning victory in front of a crowd of 39,663 at Oracle Park.

"It was all hands on deck, really," veteran right-hander Daniel Hudson said after the grueling 3-hour 45-minute game. "We had to go that one once we tied it up and took the lead [in the fourth inning]. We were all just focused on getting to the next guy."

The Dodgers blew the game open with a seven-run rally in the 11th, but they wouldn't have gotten there if Hudson hadn't escaped a bases-loaded, one-out jam in the 10th.

The Dodgers had scored in the 10th off 6-foot-11 right-hander Sean Hjelle when Jason Heyward grounded out to first base, advancing automatic runner Chris Taylor to third, and Miguel Rojas blooped a single to shallow right-center for a 7-6 lead.



GODOFREDO A. VÁSQUEZ Associated Press

DODGERS ACE Tyler Glasnow was rocked for seven hits and five runs in three innings.

Hudson, who gave up a two-run homer to Matt Chapman in Friday night's loss, got Nick Ahmed to ground out to shortstop to open the bottom of the 10th, with automatic runner Brett Wisely holding at second, but pinch-hitter David Villar ripped a double off the left-field wall to tie the score 7-7.

LaMonte Wade Jr. was intentionally walked, and Heliot Ramos dribbled a grounder to third for an infield single — the Dodgers thought the ball hit Ramos' foot and should have been ruled foul but were out of replay challenges — to load the bases with one out. The Dodgers brought Taylor in from center field for a five-man infield.

"I don't," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said, when asked if he could remember the last time he employed a five-man infield. "It has been that long. It's not a strategy I love to pull out of my hat, but it just seemed like the right time given the situation."

Hudson then escaped the jam by striking out Patrick Bailey with a nasty, 88-mph slider and, with Taylor back in the outfield, getting Matt Chapman to pop out to catcher Will Smith, sending the game to the 11th.

"That guy has done everything in this game," closer Evan Phillips said of Hudson, who was on the mound when the Washington Nationals clinched their World Series

title in 2019. "There's just nobody better to handle that, no one we trust more in those situations, and I don't think anyone batted an eye when he got out of it."

The Dodgers, who scored seven runs in the ninth inning for a come-from-behind, 11-9 win at Colorado on June 18, then broke out the heavy lumber in the top of the 11th.

Shohei Ohtani, who hit his NL-leading 26th home run to straightaway center field in the third, giving him nine homers in 12 games, was intentionally walked to open the inning, and Smith drove a two-run double to left-center for a 9-7 lead.

Freddie Freeman followed with a bloop double to left to score Smith. Teoscar Hernández blooped a single to right, moving Freeman to third, and Taylor grounded a single to right for an 11-7 lead. Heyward roped a two-run triple into the right-field corner, and Rojas hit a sacrifice fly to left to make it 14-7.

The seven runs in the 11th were the most by the Dodgers in an extra inning since they moved to Los Angeles in 1958, and, according to MLB researcher Sarah Langs, the seven-run win was baseball's second-largest extra-inning win since 1901, behind the Milwaukee Braves' 12-4, 11-inning win over the Brooklyn Dodgers on Aug. 29, 1954.

"We needed every bit of that," Roberts said of the seven-run outburst. "We were down to our last arm, and I was thinking about having Miggy Ro pitch that last inning. That's kind of where we were at. Exhausting all of our arms feels a lot better when you win."

Rojas, who also hit RBI singles in the second and fourth innings, was ready and willing to take the mound.

"I was telling Mark [Prior, Dodgers pitching coach] to give me the ball," Rojas said. "I've been waiting to pitch this year, to be honest with you. We've been up by nine runs, but I think we need to be up by 10 to pitch in a game that we're winning."

Rojas might not have fared much worse than Glasnow, who limited opponents to a .179 average in his first 16 starts, the third-best mark in the league, but was tagged

for seven hits in 14 at-bats Saturday. The Giants batted around in the third, an inning in which Glasnow threw 37 pitches after throwing only 24 in the first two innings.

The inning began with Glasnow's walk to No. 9 hitter Ahmed and Jorge Soler's RBI double to right field. Soler tried to advance on Wade's grounder to shortstop but was thrown out at third by Rojas.

But Ramos singled to center, Bailey hit an RBI single to right, and Dodgers third baseman Cavan Biggio couldn't get the ball out of his glove after charging Chapman's chopper, a play that was generously ruled an RBI single.

Michael Conforto walked to load the bases, and Luis Matos grounded into a run-scoring fielder's choice for a 5-2 lead before Wisely flied to left to end the four-run inning.

"The feel was completely lost today from my warmups to the game," Glasnow said of his pitches. "It was just one of those days where I had no command of anything. ... From pitch one, I'd think my release point was at one place, and it's at another place. It was just kind of all over the place today."

How does Glasnow cope with such an impediment?

"I didn't today," he said. "I think it's more about just trying to eliminate thought and just go out there and compete. A lot of stuff got away from me, and I'm just glad the team could come back and win the game."

The Dodgers answered San Francisco's four-run third with four runs in the top of the fourth, batting around against relievers Spencer Howard and Randy Rodriguez, a rally that Andy Pages sparked with a one-out walk.

Heyward singled to right, advancing Pages to third, and Rojas grounded an RBI infield single to the shortstop hole.

Lux followed with an RBI single to right. Biggio popped out on a bunt attempt, but Ohtani walked to load the bases.

Smith beat out a slow roller for an RBI single, and Freeman walked with the bases loaded for a 6-5 lead.

STANDINGS

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Includes National League and American League standings.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. American League standings.

Today's games

Table with columns: Game, Time. Houston at Toronto, New York (NL) at Washington, Milwaukee at Colorado.

LEAGUE LEADERS

Table with columns: Player, G, AB, H, R, Avg. National League and American League leaders.

Table with columns: Player, G, AB, H, R, Avg. Dodgers 14, San Francisco 7.

Walks—Dodgers 5; San Francisco 2. Pages 1. Strikeouts—Dodgers 7; San Francisco 10.

Wade 2, Bailey 2, Chapman 2, Slater 1, Wisely 2, Ahmed 1, E-K.Hernández 3.

LOB—Dodgers 15, San Francisco 15. (2B)—Pages 13, Freeman 2 (24), Smith 13.

CS—Soler 2 (15), Chapman 2 (1), Ohtani 1 (1), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1).

SB—Heyward 1 (1), HR—Ohtani 1 (2), off Howard RBIs—Rojas 4 (19), Ohtani 2 (2).

Runs left in SP—Dodgers 19, San Francisco 10. RISP—Dodgers 10 for 19; San Francisco 5 for 23.

Table with columns: Player, IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA. Dodgers and San Francisco pitching stats.

U—Andy Fletcher, Jansen Visconti, Mike Mutschinski, Edwin Jimenez. T—3-45. Tickets sold—39,663 (41,915).

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Arizona 3, Oakland 0.

Walks—Oakland 1; Soderstrom 1, Arizona 4; Marte 1, Walker 1, McCarthy 1.

Herrera 1, Soderstrom 2, Butler 1, Arizona 5; B.Alexander 1, Langels 1, Cameron 1.

García 1 (14), Abrams 2 (2), RBIs—Ramirez 1 (1), HR—Abrams 1 (3), off Ohtani 1 (3).

CS—Langels 1 (1), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1).

SB—García 1 (1), HR—Ohtani 1 (2), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1).

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García 1 (14), Abrams 2 (2), RBIs—Ramirez 1 (1), HR—Abrams 1 (3), off Ohtani 1 (3).

Table with columns: Player, G, AB, H, R, Avg. Chicago White Sox 11, Colorado 3.

Walks—Colorado 2; White Sox 1. Strikeouts—Colorado 7; White Sox 10.

Wade 2, Bailey 2, Chapman 2, Slater 1, Wisely 2, Ahmed 1, E-K.Hernández 3.

LOB—Dodgers 15, San Francisco 15. (2B)—Pages 13, Freeman 2 (24), Smith 13.

CS—Soler 2 (15), Chapman 2 (1), Ohtani 1 (1), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1).

SB—Heyward 1 (1), HR—Ohtani 1 (2), off Howard RBIs—Rojas 4 (19), Ohtani 2 (2).

Runs left in SP—Dodgers 19, San Francisco 10. RISP—Dodgers 10 for 19; San Francisco 5 for 23.

Table with columns: Player, IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA. Chicago White Sox and Colorado pitching stats.

U—Andy Fletcher, Jansen Visconti, Mike Mutschinski, Edwin Jimenez. T—3-45. Tickets sold—39,663 (41,915).

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Chicago Cubs 5, Milwaukee 3.

Walks—Cubs 1; Milwaukee 1. Strikeouts—Cubs 1; Milwaukee 1.

Herrera 1, Soderstrom 2, Butler 1, Arizona 5; B.Alexander 1, Langels 1, Cameron 1.

García 1 (14), Abrams 2 (2), RBIs—Ramirez 1 (1), HR—Abrams 1 (3), off Ohtani 1 (3).

CS—Langels 1 (1), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1).

SB—García 1 (1), HR—Ohtani 1 (2), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1).

Runs left in SP—Oakland 1; Soderstrom 1, Arizona 4; Marte 1, Walker 1, McCarthy 1.

García 1 (14), Abrams 2 (2), RBIs—Ramirez 1 (1), HR—Abrams 1 (3), off Ohtani 1 (3).

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García 1 (14), Abrams 2 (2), RBIs—Ramirez 1 (1), HR—Abrams 1 (3), off Ohtani 1 (3).

Table with columns: Player, G, AB, H, R, Avg. Cincinnati 9, St. Louis 4.

Walks—Cincinnati 3; St. Louis 2. Strikeouts—Cincinnati 7; St. Louis 10.

Herrera 1, Soderstrom 2, Butler 1, Arizona 5; B.Alexander 1, Langels 1, Cameron 1.

García 1 (14), Abrams 2 (2), RBIs—Ramirez 1 (1), HR—Abrams 1 (3), off Ohtani 1 (3).

CS—Langels 1 (1), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1).

SB—García 1 (1), HR—Ohtani 1 (2), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1).

Runs left in SP—Dodgers 19, San Francisco 10. RISP—Dodgers 10 for 19; San Francisco 5 for 23.

Table with columns: Player, IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA. Cincinnati and St. Louis pitching stats.

U—Andy Fletcher, Jansen Visconti, Mike Mutschinski, Edwin Jimenez. T—3-45. Tickets sold—39,663 (41,915).

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Houston 9, N.Y. Mets 6.

Walks—Houston 7; New York 4. Strikeouts—Houston 10; New York 11.

Herrera 1, Soderstrom 2, Butler 1, Arizona 5; B.Alexander 1, Langels 1, Cameron 1.

García 1 (14), Abrams 2 (2), RBIs—Ramirez 1 (1), HR—Abrams 1 (3), off Ohtani 1 (3).

CS—Langels 1 (1), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1).

SB—García 1 (1), HR—Ohtani 1 (2), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1).

Runs left in SP—Dodgers 19, San Francisco 10. RISP—Dodgers 10 for 19; San Francisco 5 for 23.

Table with columns: Player, IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA. Houston and N.Y. Mets pitching stats.

U—Andy Fletcher, Jansen Visconti, Mike Mutschinski, Edwin Jimenez. T—3-45. Tickets sold—39,663 (41,915).

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Baltimore 6, Texas 5.

Walks—Baltimore 4; Texas 3. Strikeouts—Baltimore 7; Texas 10.

Herrera 1, Soderstrom 2, Butler 1, Arizona 5; B.Alexander 1, Langels 1, Cameron 1.

García 1 (14), Abrams 2 (2), RBIs—Ramirez 1 (1), HR—Abrams 1 (3), off Ohtani 1 (3).

CS—Langels 1 (1), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1).

SB—García 1 (1), HR—Ohtani 1 (2), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1).

Runs left in SP—Dodgers 19, San Francisco 10. RISP—Dodgers 10 for 19; San Francisco 5 for 23.

Table with columns: Player, IP, H, R, ER, BB, SO, NP, ERA. Baltimore and Texas pitching stats.

Table with columns: Player, G, AB, H, R, Avg. Toronto 9, N.Y. Yankees 3.

Walks—Toronto 3; New York 2. Strikeouts—Toronto 7; New York 10.

Herrera 1, Soderstrom 2, Butler 1, Arizona 5; B.Alexander 1, Langels 1, Cameron 1.

García 1 (14), Abrams 2 (2), RBIs—Ramirez 1 (1), HR—Abrams 1 (3), off Ohtani 1 (3).

CS—Langels 1 (1), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1). Villar 1 (1).

SB—García 1 (1), HR—Ohtani 1 (2), Villar 1 (1), Villar 1 (1).

Runs left in SP—Dodgers 19, San Francisco 10. RISP—Dodgers 10 for 19; San Francisco 5 for 23.

Table with

Angels' 6-game win streak grinds to a halt

Late rally falls short after Detroit's Malloy hits an inside-the-park homer to propel Tigers' 7-6 victory.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Justyn-Henry Malloy hit an inside-the-park homer in the fourth inning, Carson Kelly added a three-run homer and the Detroit Tigers snapped their four-game losing streak with a 7-6 victory over the Angels on Sunday at Angel Stadium.

The Angels trailed 7-1 entering the ninth inning before Zach Neto hit a three-run homer and Jo Adell added a two-run shot, all with two outs against Shelby Miller.

Tyler Holton came on and calmly struck out Nolan Schanuel to secure his second save and Detroit's third victory in nine games, while the Angels' six-game winning streak ended.

Miller's disastrous ninth inning started when he hit leadoff batter Taylor Ward in the helmet with a 93-mph fastball.

Ward, who appeared to be fine on the field, left the game as a precaution.

Ward was hit in the face by a pitch from Alek Manoah last June, and he didn't play again in 2023.

Casey Mize (2-6) pitched scoreless three-hit ball into the sixth inning for the Tigers, earning his first victory in 12 starts since April 21. Mize left abruptly with a leg injury, but Detroit still prevented the Angels from sweeping a homestand of at least seven games for the first time in 20 years.

Malloy drove in two runs when his line drive to deepest center field eluded Mickey Moniak at the wall and bounced away, allowing the rookie to slide home without a throw.

It was Detroit's first inside-the-park homer since 2021, and the first at Angel Stadium since Tommy La Stella hit one for the Angels in June 2019.

Tyler Anderson (7-8) allowed six runs and seven hits in his second-shortest start of the season for the Angels.

Anderson has been the Angels' best starter this season, but he lasted just 4 2/3 innings and struck out only two against Detroit.

Detroit led 1-0 after its first two batters. Andy Ibanez hit a leadoff triple and scored on Mark Canha's long flyout.

The Tigers turned three double plays in the first five innings to keep the Angels scoreless.

Kelly connected in the fifth inning off reliever Andrew Wantz, who had just relieved Anderson.

Brandon Drury made his first appearance since June 18, striking out as a pinch-hitter in the sixth and grounding out in the ninth. The veteran had missed the previous nine games with an unspecified illness, although he had been at the ballpark each day.

José Soriano is expected to return from a nearly three-week absence with an abdominal infection to start the opener of a road series against the Oakland Athletics on Tuesday.



THE TIGERS' Carson Kelly slides behind Angels catcher Logan O'Hoppe to score on a groundout by Gio Urshela during the fourth inning of Detroit's 7-6 win at Angel Stadium. The Angels fell a game short of a perfect homestand as their winning streak ended.

MARK J. TERRILL Associated Press

Trout is 'itching to hit' during IL stint

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mike Trout said he doesn't have a timetable for his return. However, the Angels slugger did admit he would be disappointed if he wasn't playing by the end of July.

"Oh yeah, I'll be back before that," Trout said Saturday before the Angels hosted the Detroit Tigers. "I'm not putting like, an exact timetable on it, but once I do all the tests and I can run, hit and throw, I'll be out there."

"I'm happy where I'm at right now. It makes me relieved not to feel [any consistent pain]."

Trout hasn't played since April 29 after an MRI exam confirmed he had a torn meniscus in his left knee. The three-time AL MVP had surgery on May 3.

When Trout had the procedure, the initial timeline was six to eight weeks. The recovery, though, has gone slower than initially expected.

Trout is jogging and working out on a treadmill as well as playing catch. He hasn't started running or taking swings.

"I'm itching to hit. I feel like if I went into the cage and took some swings, I would be pain-free," Trout said. "I think the biggest thing for me is actually the running part, but we have to build up to that."

It remains to be determined if Trout would need a rehabilitation stint once he is ready to go.

This is the fourth straight season Trout has dealt with a major injury.

He played in only 36 games during the 2021 season because of a strained calf. In 2022, he was sidelined for five weeks because of a back injury.

Last season, Trout broke a bone in his hand on a foul ball during a game in San Diego on July 3. He tried to return in August but played in only one game.

Trout has played in only 266 games and sat out 302 since the start of the 2021 season.

The Angels have won a season-high five straight games. Despite their two highest-paid players being out of the lineup for the last two months, the Angels have gone 14-10

in June after a tough start to the season.

One of the keys to the June surge has been Luis Rengifo, who leads the American League with a .315 batting average.

After going 7-21 at home the first two months, the Angels are 10-4 at Angel Stadium in June.

"I'm pleased with the progress that we've made with these young kids, and I'm more than certain they're pleased with it too," manager Ron Washington said. "You can see that by the way they about their business. We're getting there, but we're not there yet."

Trout and Anthony Rendon have been in the same lineup in only 118 games out of 568 since 2021 (20.8%).

Rendon has sat out 61 games because of a hamstring injury in late April. The \$245-million third baseman is expected to face live pitching this week and could be back in the lineup when the Angels return home on July 8 after a trip to Oakland and Seattle.

Rendon has played in 167 games since the start of the 2021 season.

Pillar's RBI in the 10th inning lifts Angels again

Kevin Pillar's single with one out in the 10th inning drove in Taylor Ward and the Angels extended their winning streak to six, rallying for a 6-5 victory over the Detroit Tigers on Saturday night.

"Belief. You can feel the energy changing where maybe earlier we talked about going out and winning and hoping we win. I think we're starting to expect that every time we go on the field," said Pillar, who had the fourth walk-off hit of his career and first since 2018.

With Ward as the automatic

runner in the 10th, Luis Guillorme had a sacrifice bunt to move Ward to third. Detroit decided to have five infielders with Pillar up and the outfielders playing in left center and right center.

Pillar, who came in as the designated hitter in the seventh inning, hit a looping single into left off Ja-

DETROIT 7, ANGELS 6											
Detroit	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.	Angels	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Ibanez 2b	4	2	0	297	.297	Schanuel 1b	5	1	2	0	.235
Canha 1b	3	0	1	228	.228	Rengifo 2b	3	0	1	0	.317
Greene cf	4	0	0	253	.253	Guillorme 2b	1	0	0	0	.286
Rogers dh	4	1	1	208	.208	Ward lf	3	0	0	0	.243
Kelly c	4	2	3	245	.245	1-Pillar	1	0	1	0	.010
Perez rf	3	1	1	264	.264	Calhoun dh	1	0	0	0	.281
Urshela 3b	4	0	1	241	.241	a-Drury dh	2	0	0	0	.170
Malloy lf	3	1	2	175	.175	Sano 3b	3	0	0	0	.221
Badddo lf	1	0	0	111	.111	O'Hoppe c	2	0	1	0	.275
Kreidler ss	4	0	0	129	.129	Thaiss c	1	1	0	0	.215
Totals	34	7	8	7		Neto ss	4	1	3	2	.249
						Moniak cf	4	1	2	0	.195
						Adell rf	4	1	2	2	.186
						Totals	33	9	9	5	
Detroit	100	330	000	-7	8	0					
Angels	000	001	005	-6	9	0					

a-struck out for Calhoun in the 6th. 1-run for Ward in the 9th.
DP—Detroit 3 (Canha, Kreidler; Ibanez, Kreidler; Canha, Ibanez); Angels 1 (Sano 1, Thaiss 1).
Walks—Detroit 2; Ibanez 1, Perez 1, Angels 3; Calhoun 1, Sano 1, Thaiss 1.
Strikeouts—Detroit 6; Canha 1, Rogers 1, Urshela 1, Malloy 1, Kreidler 2; Angels 8; Schanuel 2, Ward 1, Calhoun 1, Drury 1, O'Hoppe 1, Thaiss 1, Sano 1, Moniak 1.
LOB—Detroit 3, Angels 4. **2B**—Perez (11), Rengifo (12). **3B**—Ibanez (1). **HR**—Malloy (3), off Anderson; Kelly (5), off Wantz; Neto (11), off Miller; Adell (13), off Miller. **RBI**—Canha (32), Urshela (21), Malloy 2 (7), Kelly 3 (21), Neto 3 (38), Adell 2 (36). **SB**—Moniak (5). **SF**—Canha.
Runners left in scoring position—Detroit 1 (Greene); Angels 1 (Drury). **RISP**—Detroit 2 for 5; Angels 1 for 8.
Runners moved up—Urshela, Drury. **GDP**—Rengifo, Neto.
DP—Detroit 3 (Canha, Kreidler; Ibanez, Kreidler; Canha, Ibanez); Angels 1 (Sano 1, Thaiss 1).
Detroit IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA
Mize, W, 2-6.....5 3 0 0 2 2 86 4.23
Faedo.....1 2 1 1 0 3 26 3.47
Chafin.....1 1 0 0 0 2 16 4.05
Miller.....3 5 5 1 0 22 6.23
Holton, S, 2-2.....% 0 0 0 1 4.04
Angels IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA
Anderson, L, 7-8.....4 7 6 6 1 2 88 3.03
Wantz.....1 1 1 1 3 35 6.75
Fulmer.....2 0 0 0 0 1 22 3.96
Moore.....1 0 0 0 0 8 4.83
Inherited runners scored—Wantz 2, HBP_Miller (Ward), WP—Faedo.
U—Mark Ripberger; Roberto Ortiz; Alfonso Marquez; Lance Barrett.
T—2:42. **Tickets sold**—35,061 (45,517).

Dodgers blown out at Oracle

[Dodgers, from D1] fifth.

Paxton, who gave up only two earned runs and seven hits in 18 innings of his previous three starts, was tagged for a run and two hits in the first inning, two runs and four hits in the second, a run and two hits in the third and five runs and four hits in the fourth.

But the Dodgers' bullpen didn't even begin to stir until Patrick Bailey lined a two-run double to left for a 7-0 lead in the fourth. Only when Matt Chapman followed with a two-run homer to left for a 9-0 lead did right-hander Michael Petersen begin to warm up.

Petersen replaced Paxton to start the fifth and threw two scoreless innings, right-hander Yohan Ramirez added a scoreless seventh, and Austin Barnes hit a two-run double in the top of the ninth.

About the only other bright spot for the Dodgers was Chris Taylor, who hit a solo homer to center field off Bivens in the fifth and an RBI double to right-center off Landen Roupp in the seventh.

Taylor started at third base, a position the veteran utility man will be playing more of in the coming days, Roberts said.

Third base has been a problem spot since Max Muncy suffered a rib-cage strain on May 15, the slugger's replacements — mostly Cavan Biggio and Kiké Hernández — batting .156 (21 for 135) with 40 strikeouts in 39 games since Muncy



MATT CHAPMAN connects on a two-run homer in the fourth inning to give Giants a 9-0 lead.

went on the injured list. Taylor was one of baseball's worst hitters for the first two months of the season, batting .095 (eight for 84) with a .305 OPS, one extra-base hit, eight RBIs, 38 strikeouts and nine walks in 36 games through June 6. But Taylor hit .318 (seven for 22)

with a .921 OPS, one homer and a triple over his next nine games and had two hits and a walk in four at-bats Sunday to bump his season average to .154 and his OPS to .511.

"I think with Chris, I see better at-bats," Roberts said. "I think his swing has leveled out more. It's more conducive to line drives. He's

not under fastballs as much as he used to be. The swing-and-miss is down. So for me, he's earning more opportunities, and I'm going to give him more runway at third base."

What does "runway" mean to Roberts?
 "I don't know what that means,"

SAN FRANCISCO 10, DODGERS 4											
Dodgers	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.	San Fran.	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Ohtani dh	5	0	0	316	.316	Soler dh	4	2	2	1	.230
T.Hernandez lf	2	0	0	248	.248	Slater rf	3	0	1	1	.207
Vargas lf	2	0	0	324	.324	Ramos cf	5	2	3	1	.294
Freeman 1b	2	0	0	296	.296	Bailey cf	5	1	2	3	.284
Biggio 1b	2	0	1	188	.188	Chapman 1b	3	1	1	3	.242
Pages cf	4	0	1	255	.255	3b					
Heyward rf	4	0	0	214	.214	Matos lf	5	1	1	0	.241
Lux 2b	3	1	0	221	.221	Villar 1b	4	1	2	1	.357
Taylor 3b	3	2	2	164	.164	Ahmed ss	4	0	2	0	.248
K.Hernandez ss	4	1	3	208	.208	Fitzgerald	4	2	2	0	.286
Barnes c	4	0	1	208	.208	2b					
Totals	35	4	8	4		Totals	37	10	16	10	
Dodgers	000	010	102	-4	8	2					
San Francisco	121	500	01x	-10	16	0					

Walks—Dodgers 2; Lux 1, Taylor 1. **San Francisco** 3; Soler 1, Slater 1, Chapman 1.
Strikeouts—Dodgers 7; Ohtani 3, T.Hernandez 1, Vargas 1, Pages 1, Barnes 1. **San Francisco** 5; Soler 1, Bailey 2, Matos 1, Ahmed 1.
E—Pages (2), Biggio (3). **LOB**—Dodgers 6, San Francisco 8.
2B—K.Hernandez (6), Taylor (2), Barnes (2), Soler 2 (17), Matos (4), Villar (2), Ramos 2 (10), Bailey 2 (11), Slater (1), Ahmed (5). **HR**—Taylor (2), off Bivens; Chapman (1), off Paxton. **RBI**—Taylor 2 (12), Barnes 2 (4), Chapman 3 (39), Soler (31), Slater (9), Villar (4), Ramos (37), Bailey 3 (28). **SF**—Chapman, Slater.
Runners left in scoring position—Dodgers 4 (Barnes, Ohtani 3); San Francisco 7 (Chapman, Ahmed, Soler, Ramos, Fitzgerald, Matos 2). **RISP**—Dodgers 1 for 7; San Francisco 8 for 19.
Runners moved up—Barnes, K.Hernandez. **GDP**—Matos.
DP—Dodgers 1 (Lux, Biggio).
Dodgers IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA
Paxton, L, 7-2.....4 12 9 9 2 4 89 4.28
Petersen.....2 1 0 0 0 0 26 1.17
Ramirez.....1 1 0 0 0 1 13 2.91
Phillips.....1 2 1 1 1 0 18 1.82
San Francisco IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA
Bivens, W, 2-1.....5 4 1 1 0 3 60 2.57
Ta.Rogers.....1 0 0 0 0 1 17 2.10
Roupp.....2 3 3 2 3 59 6.06
Ty.Rogers.....% 1 0 0 0 1 7 2.75
Inherited runners scored—Ty.Rogers 2, 2.
U—Jansen Visconti, Mike Mutschinski, Edwin Jimenez, Andy Fletcher.
T—2:27. **Tickets sold**—40,428 (41,915).

Roberts said, "but he's going to play more than he has in the last few weeks."

Paxton's start looked more like a crash landing. He minimized damage after the Giants loaded the bases with no outs in the first on a Jorge Soler double, Austin Slater walk and a Heliot Ramos single, the Giants scoring only once on Chapman's sacrifice fly.

Paxton gave up two more runs and four hits in the second, an inning that would have been even worse had the Giants not run into an out. Villar led off with a single to shallow right. Nick Ahmed singled to left, and Tyler Fitzgerald flared a hit to right.

San Francisco third base coach Matt Williams waded Villar home, but Villar, who would have scored easily, stopped at third. Ahmed raced around second, thinking Villar would score, and was thrown out at second by cut-off man Freddie Freeman.

Rousey out of the ring, onto the keyboard

Former UFC, WWE champion set to publish first, somewhat autobiographical, graphic novel next year

BY CHUCK SCHILKEN

Ronda Rousey couldn't sleep. It's not that she wasn't tired.

She was exhausted after shattering a knuckle at WrestleMania 35. Finally in her hotel bed after surgery, Rousey had a cross-country flight to Los Angeles in five hours.

Then inspiration struck. The former UFC champion and then-WWE superstar had been trying to work on a screenplay, but had come up with only a one-line synopsis: "Two wanted assassins with an unwanted pregnancy learn that giving life is harder than taking it."

"Do you ever get an idea in your head and you're laying in bed and then you won't let yourself go to sleep and you keep repeating it in your head over and over so you don't forget it by the morning?" Rousey said during a phone interview with The Times.

Sleep never came for Rousey, who typed all five hours in her hotel room and continued on the flight.

Five years later, that screenplay idea is now set to be a graphic novel. A Kickstarter campaign launches July 25 for "Expecting the Unexpected," a Rousey-written 160-page book with illustrations by award-winning comic artist Michael Deodato slated to be published next year by Artists Writers and Artisans.

Through the Kickstarter campaign, fans will have 30 days to order the book, with access to a variety of special offerings, including limited and signed editions, variant artwork, bonus pages and the opportunity of being drawn into the novel as a character.

The story revolves around a notorious hitwoman who goes by the code name Mom, because she wears a fake baby bump filled with weapons. But after she sleeps with a fellow assassin, Mom becomes pregnant and has to come to terms with the notion of becoming a parent ... with a bounty on her head.

In an early look at the novel, provided by AWA, one thing becomes clear upon first view of Mom, with her long hair pulled back in a tight ponytail, muscular arms, white tank top and some very familiar-looking facial expressions:

Mom is Rousey.

"I'm particularly pleased with how I captured Ronda's



Photographs courtesy of AWA

AN EARLY mockup of "Expecting the Unexpected" depicts illustrations by Michael Deodato Jr., an award-winning comic artist.



RONDA ROUSEY, kissing daughter La'akea Browne, says of her becoming a graphic novelist: "Maybe that's the path that I was meant for more."

essence in the Mom character — her mannerisms, personality, and even her laughter," Deodato said.

The lead male character's name is Hapa, the nickname of Rousey's husband, former UFC fighter Travis

Browne. Their first child together, La'akea Browne, was born in 2021.

"It really is our story — even though it didn't really happen," Rousey said, adding with a laugh, "I didn't really go on a spree of fight-

ing all these people."

She explained: "The whole story is just the story of me and my husband. Our journey trying to get pregnant, having a baby, our becoming parents — you know, the process from when you

become pregnant to when you accept the task of being a parent. ...

"When you actually come to that realization and live up to it is I think a process that isn't really covered in anything I've really seen so far. That was kind of a personal journey that was really important to us."

Rousey was 21 when she became the first American woman to win an Olympic medal in judo, taking home bronze at the 2008 Beijing Games. She became a superstar as a mixed martial artist, winning six UFC women's bantamweight title bouts before retiring from MMA in 2016. Rousey remained in the spotlight as a professional wrestler, becoming a WWE triple-crown winner before retiring last year.

By 2019, Rousey had appeared in numerous movies and TV shows, but never a leading role. She wrote "Expecting the Unexpected" hoping to be the star, but realizing she was too unproven.

That's when she landed upon the idea of a graphic novel, a literary form she had become "a closet nerd" for as an adult.

Writing the script was just the start.

"This has a lot of action sequences in it," she said, "I wrote all the choreography for it in the script and I actually had to film them and perform the choreography with a couple of friends of mine in a wrestling ring."

Deodato, the comic artist, then turns it into illustrations.

It's a lot of work, but Rousey said she's enjoying the process.

"I originally intended on this being a movie, but I really think that this is the way it was always meant to be, as a graphic novel. Maybe that's the path that I was meant for more, to be a graphic novelist," Rousey said.

All that said, if presented with the opportunity, would Rousey be willing to turn her graphic novel back into a screenplay?

"Twist my arm and I'll do it," she said with a laugh.

"But I'm also so happy with where I'm at. I don't see this as a stepping stone, I see this as a new path that I never dreamed would be available to me, and I'm enjoying the scenery more than I ever thought was possible."

She's keeping high standards of Mexico divers

[Diver, from D1] its most decorated Olympian, Joaquín Capilla, who won four medals between 1948 and 1956, was a diver.

As a result, every four years kids in Mexico are inspired not to become swimmers, sprinters or cyclists, but to take up diving. At least that's how it happened for Agúndez, who remembers watching on TV as Germán Sánchez, Paola Espinosa and Orozco won Mexico's only three silvers in the 2012 London Games.

"It was something that excited me a lot, seeing a Mexican compete and win a medal," she said. "It motivated and inspired me. Maybe a child will see me and be motivated."

But Agúndez, who will turn 24 the day before the individual platform event begins in Paris, said there's also something in the national psyche that makes Mexicans good at diving.

"We have certain qualities for this sport," she said. "Mexicans are characterized as being brave; I think that is something that helps us. The baton has been passed from generation to generation. Once a result has been achieved, we work to be able to maintain it."

"That has worked to make diving in Mexico what it is now, a world power."

And it's worked despite the best efforts of Mexico's sports ministry, CONADE. Last year Ana Guevara, the former Olympic sprinter and politician who became CONADE's president, cut funding from the Mexican swimming federation because of a spat with World Aquatics, the global governing body for six aquatic



DMITRI LOVETSKY Associated Press

GABY AGÚNDEZ, right, and Alejandra Orozco Loza show off their bronze medals won at the Tokyo Olympics.

'Mexicans are characterized as being brave. ... The baton has been passed from generation to generation.'

—GABY AGÚNDEZ, Mexican Olympic diver

sports including diving.

That forced many athletes to find creative ways to make up for the loss of their government stipends as well as to pay for their participation in last year's World Aquatics Championships in Fukuoka, Japan.

The diving team released

a video asking for donations while Kevin Berlin, who finished fourth in the synchronized platform event in Tokyo, launched his own beverage brand, Olympic Coffee. Diego Balleza, his Tokyo teammate, began posting content behind a paywall on the racy website

OnlyFans.

"Fortunately, I have done well," Balleza said.

Agúndez and Orozco, meanwhile, made plans to auction off their Olympic medals before AeroMexico agreed to cover their airfare.

The divers then embarrassed Guevara by winning

a record six medals, finishing behind only China in the table. Osmar Olvera finished second in both the 1- and 3-meter springboard events, Balleza and Agúndez won silvers in team events and Berlin was third in the synchronized platform.

A court eventually ordered CONADE to resume some, but not all, of the withheld funding and in this year's world championships, Olvera won a gold and a bronze, stamping himself as a favorite for Paris in both springboard events. Agúndez and Berlin also medaled again.

That will send Agúndez to the Olympics riding a wave of momentum, with medals in her last five major international competitions. In Paris she'll have a chance at two more in the individual platform, where she'll compete against Orozco, and in the synchronized event, where she'll dive alongside the three-time Olympian.

"I don't have any favorites," she said of the two competitions. "In the individual, I like to feel that everything is in my hands. But I also really like the synchronized. It's not easy to dive 10 meters alone, so it's much less easy to dive 10 meters with a person next to you and know that what you have to do is exactly the same as the other person."

Either way, the pressure will be on to reach the podium, something Mexico has failed to do in Olympic diving just once this century. For Agúndez, however, that pressure is a privilege.

"It's a great responsibility," she said. "But more than that responsibility or nerves of knowing that a good result is always expected, I like to see it from the side that it is pride, it is an honor."

"The people in Mexico, my family, the entire team trusts me, they believe in my work and they believe in my talent."

Los Angeles Times
SPORTS EXTRA

A TIMES E-NEWSPAPER EXCLUSIVE :: MONDAY, JULY 1, 2024



ABBIE PARR Associated Press

THE U.S. squad will be Hezly Rivera, left, Joscelyn Roberson, Suni Lee, Simone Biles, Jade Carey, Jordan Chiles and Leanne Wong, pictured Sunday at Target Center.

Veteran Biles vaults to third Olympics trip

BY THUC NHI NGUYEN

MINNEAPOLIS — In a historically difficult selection process, one choice was easy.

Simone Biles will be on the U.S. women's gymnastics team for the Paris Olympics.

The 27-year-old earned her third consecutive Olympic berth by winning the Olympic trial all-around crown Sunday at Target Center. She entered the second day of competition with a 2.5-point lead and finished with a score of 17.225, five points better than her nearest competitor. The seven-time Olympic medalist's all-around victory earned her an automatic spot on the Olympic team.

After hitting her floor routine in the final rotation, Biles could finally exhale. She sat at the top of the stairs on the floor podium and sighed.

"Oh my God," she muttered.

Jordan Chiles was the first gymnast to greet her. The teammates who train together will return to the Olympics together.

Chiles made her second Olympic team after a third-place all-around finish. Injuries to three key contenders cleared the path to Paris for a unique veteran-laden team that will also include Olympic gold medalists Suni Lee and Jade Carey.

Lee, the reigning Olympic all-around champion, finished second in the two-day trial competition, continuing a triumphant return after two kidney diseases threatened her future. Carey, the Tokyo Olympics floor champion, finished fourth in the all-around.

The group of Olympic veterans will lead the way for rookie Hezly Rivera, who survived a tight race against 18-year-old Joscelyn Roberson for the final position. Roberson and Leanne Wong were named alternates.

Rivera and Roberson tied on beam — a key event for the United States scoring scenarios — at trials, but Rivera finished with a 0.175-point advantage for fifth in the all-around, doubling down on her sixth place at the U.S. championships.

Rivera turned 16 just two days after the championships last month. Having just become age-eligible for the senior elite level this year, Rivera's only senior international competition was at the City of Jesolo Trophy, where she helped the United States win bronze.

The team is the oldest women's artistic gymnastics team in history, with four of five competitors returning for at least a second Games.

Skye Blakely, 19, and Shilese Jones, 21, were favorites to make their first Olympic teams, but both withdrew after injuries. Blakely's Achilles tear on Wednesday and Jones' knee injury, combined with

an Achilles injury suffered in competition Friday by Tokyo Olympic alternate Kayla DiCello, suddenly limited the selection pool that was one of the deepest in history.

The veteran team will attempt to win the United States' third Olympic gold medal in the last four Games. The silver-medal finish in Tokyo extended the United States' Olympic podium streak to eight Games, but it is more commonly remembered as the time Biles quit the team final.

After that, the most decorated athlete in the sport questioned whether she would ever compete again. It wasn't the physical toll. She just wondered if she could do it all — the daily training, the scrutiny, the attention — mentally. During her first day back, she didn't think she could.

"That was the hardest part after Tokyo: I didn't trust myself to do gymnastics," Biles said at the U.S. championships last month. "I

knew that it would come if I started training again, but it was really hard to trust just myself."

Not only did Biles return, but she continued to redefine the sport. Her Biles II vault — a Yurchenko double pike that no other woman in history has dared to attempt in competition — wowed the sold-out crowd again Sunday even though she had so much power that she was forced to run backward several steps to catch herself at the edge of the platform.

She still had no problem blowing away the vault competition with a two-day score of 74.400.

Sitting on the floor podium after the event, Biles credited her focus on her mental health with helping her return to the Olympics.

"Seeing my therapist every Thursday," Biles said in an in-arena interview to a loud cheer from the crowd. "It's kind of religious for me."

McLaughlin-Levrone breaks world record to win 400 hurdles

BY EDDIE PELLIS

EUGENE, Ore. — For the better part of two years, Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone all but disappeared from the 400-meter hurdles course.

Turns out, she wasn't hiding or looking for something else to do. She was just getting better at what she does best.

The 24-year-old Olympic champion lowered the world record for the fifth time Sunday, closing out the U.S. Olympic trials with 10 leaps over the barriers, then an all-out sprint toward the finish line in 50.65 seconds. She broke her last record by .03 seconds.

This one came on the last day of trials at Hayward Field. Her first record came in 2021 — also on the last day of trials and also at Hayward Field.

To say she expected this, though, would not be the case.

"Just shock. Honestly shock," said McLaughlin-Levrone, who covered her mouth in amazement when she crossed and saw the time. "I know when it first came up it said, '50.67.' I was like, 'There's just no way.'"

Then, the clock adjusted down two ticks.

"I wasn't expecting that time," she said.

Counting the two preliminary

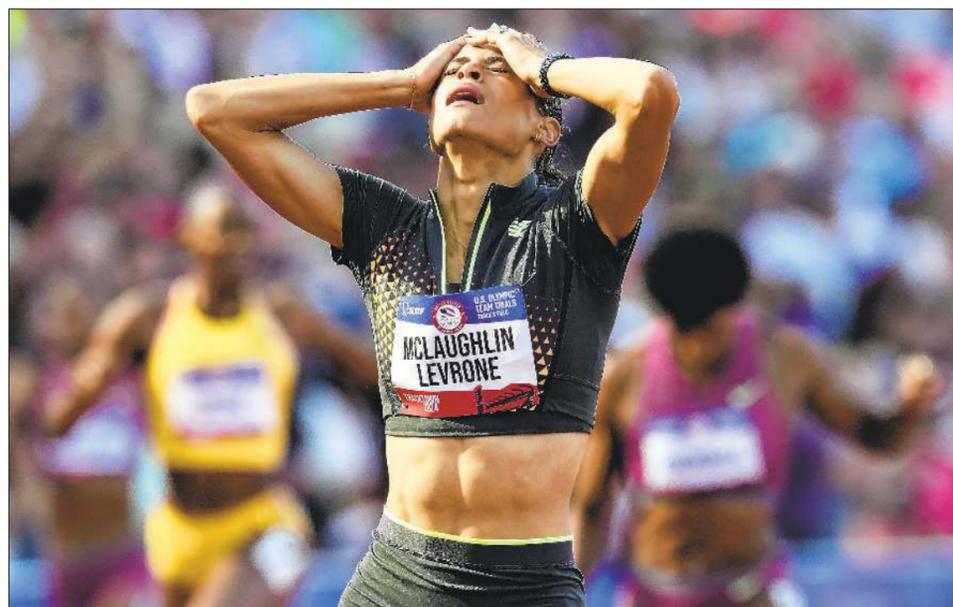
rounds at trials this week, this was only McLaughlin-Levrone's fourth 400-meter hurdles race of the season. Unlike other times when she has taken the track, there wasn't a huge amount of buzz about her mark of 50.68 — set at world championships in 2022, also here at Hayward — going down this time.

A closer look shows this was all simply part of the plan.

She spent her time working on the shorter hurdles, along with 200- and 400-meter sprints, both of which she had hinted might be in her future as her main event. Really, what all those races were doing were making her better at her main job. All of them are good for speed. The short hurdles helped her master the difficult art of jumping off either foot.

"She ran in Atlanta, and she was having problems attacking the hurdles and getting her steps together" because of all her newfound speed, hurdling great Edwin Moses said of McLaughlin-Levrone's first 400-hurdles race of 2024. "I told her I'd had similar problems and that her brain just had to catch up with her physicality."

It did, and in an event that used to be decided by steps or slivers, McLaughlin-Levrone's victory came by 1.99 seconds over Anna Cockrell and 2.12 over Jasmine Jones.



GEORGE WALKER IV Associated Press

AFTER BREAKING the world record in the 400-meter hurdles at the U.S. Olympic trials, Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone was shocked. Her next closest competitor was almost two seconds behind.

In other finals:

■ Shelby McEwen qualified for his second Olympic Games, clearing 7 feet, 6 1/2 inches to win the men's high jump.

■ In the men's 5,000, Grant Fisher won his second final, securing an Olympic double. Fisher edged Abdihamid Nur with a few steps to go.

■ Bryce Hoppel won the men's 800, setting a trials record of 1:42.77 to book his spot in a second Olympics. Hobbs Kessler finished second and Brandon Miller third.

■ In the women's 100 hurdles, Masai Russell smashed a 24-year-old trials record, winning the race in 12.25 seconds to earn her first

Olympic berth. Alaysha Johnson finished just behind Russell with a personal best of 12.31, qualifying alongside Grace Stark.

■ In the women's pole vault, Bridget Williams cleared a height of 15-6 1/4 to win the event to make her first Olympics. Katie Moon placed second to secure her second Olympic berth, where she will defend her gold medal. Brynna King finished third.

■ In the women's 1,500, Nikki Hiltz secured her first Olympic bid with a time of 3:55.33. Emily Mackay crossed the line just 0.57 seconds behind Hiltz to set her lifetime best and qualify. Elle St. Pierre finished third.

■ In the triple jump, Salif Mane set his personal best (57-5 3/4) to become an Olympian for the first time. Mane will be joined by Donald Scott, who placed third and met the Olympic standard.

■ In women's javelin, Maggie Malone-Hardin took first and is bound for her third Olympics.

■ In the men's 400 hurdles, Rai Benjamin, the reigning Olympic silver medalist, coasted to victory with a trials record time of 46.46 seconds. Two first-time Olympians, CJ Allen and Trevor Bassitt, will join Benjamin.

Pellis writes for the Associated Press.

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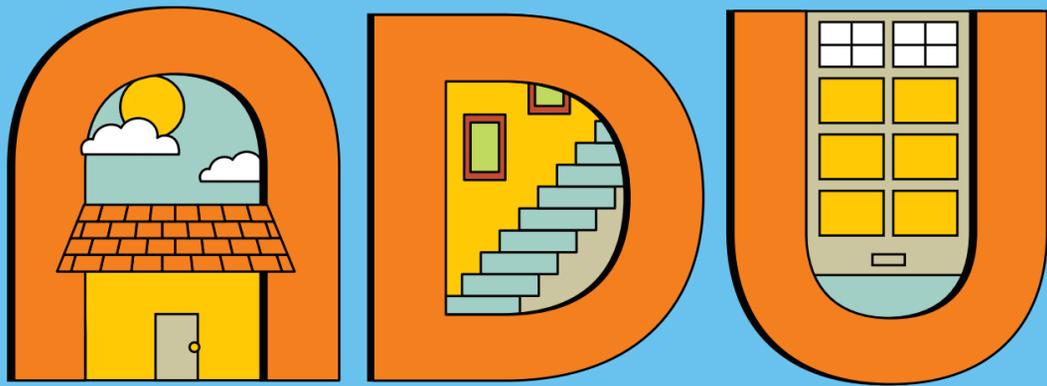
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Los Angeles Times

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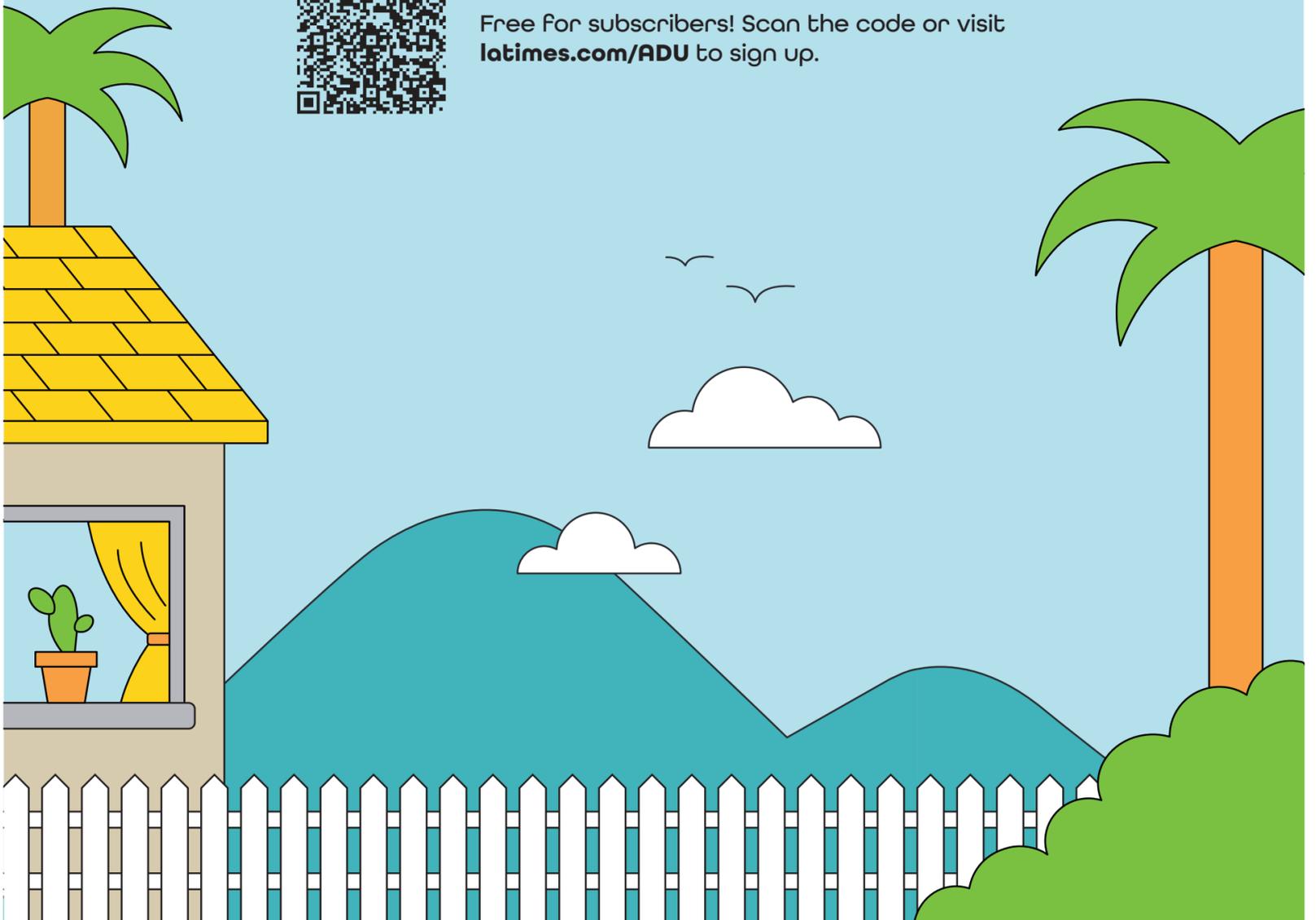
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ENTERTAINMENT

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MOVIE REVIEW

Various angles to migrant crisis

Agnieszka Holland's 'Green Border' brings a compassionate focus to a global plight.

By TIM GRIERSON

The luckless souls inhabiting Polish director Agnieszka Holland's "Green Border" have little light in their eyes. A grim drama about Europe's refugee crisis (a subject that's been explored in equally superb recent Oscar-nominated films like "Flee" and "Io Capitano"), the movie chronicles this labyrinthine tragedy from three disparate perspectives: those of a migrant family, a ragtag group of activists and a morally blind border guard.

And yet, their despairing expressions are the same. The purpose of such films is to attach a human face to unimaginable tragedies, to put us in the shoes of society's most vulnerable, but what's most striking is how Holland extends that approach to everyone her camera captures, whether the oppressors or the oppressed. To varying degrees, each character has been undone by this crisis; all of them are collateral damage at the mercy of something larger and more insidious just out of view.

Set in October 2021 on the border between Poland and Belarus — the border between democracy and dictatorship — and shot in black and white, "Green Border" opens with a family of Syrian refugees, led by father Bashir (Jalal Altawil), on a flight landing in Belarus. Three generations, tired but hopeful, will be making their way to Poland with the ultimate goal of reuniting with a relative in Sweden. Another passenger, an older Afghan woman named Leila (Behi Djanati Atai), who, like them, is fleeing war for sanctuary in the European Union, attaches herself to Bashir's family to have companions while navigating what might be an arduous journey.

We quickly learn just how arduous. After being picked up at the airport by a nondescript van, Bashir, Leila and the rest are stopped at a se-

[See 'Green Border,' E2]



AGATA KUBIS Film Forum
"GREEN Border" looks at refugees and activists.



LIZA COLÓN-ZAYAS is thrilled with backstory of her character, Tina, on Season 3 of "The Bear." CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

ACTING CHOPS ON THE MENU

Liza Colón-Zayas' skills move to forefront in Season 3 of 'The Bear.' It's been a long time coming for Nuyorican.

By YVONNE VILLARREAL

There is no nail-biting stress for Liza Colón-Zayas in this restaurant. On a balmy June afternoon, she enters the homey, brightly colored space of Mofongos, a family-run North Hollywood Puerto Rican eatery, and instinctively begins moving her hips to the beat of Ángel Canales' "Sabor, los Rumberos Nuevos," which slaps the eardrums upon entering.

In scheduling our meetup, she had one request: shining a light on a small business akin to the one featured on "The Bear," the hit FX series about the people working in the chaotic kitchen of a Chicago sandwich shop-turned-fine-dining restaurant. It's less than a week before the third season of the series drops — it's now streaming on Hulu — and the Nuyorican actor, who plays no-nonsense cook Tina Marrero, has never been to this establishment yet quickly offers guidance on the dishes to the rookie in front of her.

"You like pork?" she begins. "There's also *arroz con gandules*, which is yellow rice, with the *sofrito*

and pigeon peas. Mofongo, as the name suggests, are fried plantains mashed together with crispy pork skin, and they fill it in the *pilon* with whatever you want — shrimp, chicken or pork — and a sauce around it."

At just over 5 feet tall, Colón-Zayas seems smaller seated at this tabletop that's glossed with a photo of Puerto Rican baseball icon Roberto Clemente. Unlike her character, she isn't stingy or curt with her words and is more likely to insist you sample her order of *mofongo de carne guisada* than try to sabotage the cooking of your stock by turning up the flame to high heat. But much like her character, Colón-Zayas knows what it's like to be in plain sight, putting in the work for years, hoping for the nexus of potential and opportunity.

With a nearly 30-year career, Colón-Zayas is an off-Broadway veteran. She's performed on a string of television shows and films over the years, often in day-player roles but also in roles that tap her range. Then came "The Bear," FX's critical and audience darling, which has nabbed a slew of awards [See Colón-Zayas, E2]

ART REVIEW



SARAH GOLONKA

DAVID MEDALLA'S show at the Hammer, in an installation view.

Primal portrait of an artist

Erotic soap-bubble sculptures are just part of David Medalla's story at Hammer.

CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT ART CRITIC

David Medalla, a Filipino artist who died in Manila in 2020 at age 82, is not well known in the United States. "A Stitch in Time," perhaps his most widely admired work, was an interactive, multiyear piece that he began in London in 1968 by inviting the audience to sew small objects, images or texts of personal significance onto a large cloth suspended in a public space.

Its 1998 inclusion in "Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949-1979" at the Museum of Contemporary Art is one of the few times Medalla's art has been shown in L.A.

Now, the UCLA Hammer Museum is presenting "David Medalla: In Conversation With the Cosmos," organized by interim chief curator Aram Moshayedi, the first American retrospective of the artist's work and a curiously absorbing affair. "A Stitch in Time" is not included (some documentary material related to it is, including a drawing and a tin box stuffed with bits of cloth and spools of thread).

With just a few sculptures and paintings, the show is largely composed of works on paper — scores of drawings, watercolors, notations, sketchbooks, posters, notepads, photographs, scrapbooks and other assorted ephemera — plus documentary photographs by colleagues. The most frequent material Medalla employed over the course of half a century seems to have been a ballpoint pen.

Did I mention that his drawings tend to be pretty terrible? They are — at least in the traditional sense of skillfully developed and captivating rendering, or what has been called "artisanal" [See Medalla, E3]

25 years on, kids step to success with a dedicated crew

Young dancer's legacy lives on in grooving students at Gabriella Charter Schools.

By KIMBERLY AGUIRRE

The Angelus Temple megachurch in Echo Park was the unlikely venue (and largest to date) for the Gabriella Charter Schools' year-end dance recitals.

Friends and family packed the 5,300-seat, three-story theater for two performances on a Saturday in June that transported them from California's redwood forests and Central Valley farms to the schools' home of Los Angeles.

Sixth-grader Annabelle Soriano took the stage as a voice-over in English and Spanish told the story — inspired by José Cruz González's play "Two Donuts" — of a Guatemalan American girl who doesn't see the beauty in her L.A. neighborhood.

So in her dreams, she embarks on an adventure through the Golden State in search of meaning. Students explore California through classic dance styles including tap, hip-hop and ballet mixed with moves popularized on TikTok and by the video game "Fortnite."

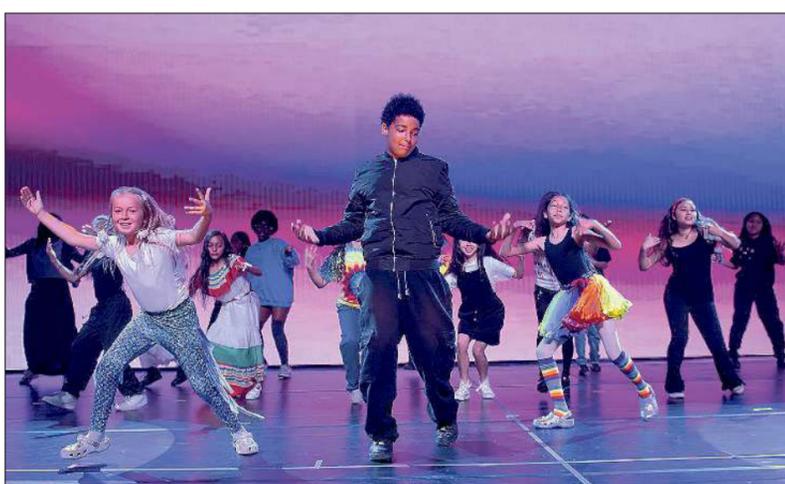
Audiences lined Glendale Boulevard hours before the two performances. Rhonda Baldenegro, executive director of Gabriella

Charter Schools, said this is the norm for the schools' annual recital — even though it's only their second in-person performance since the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event's popularity is a testament to Liza Bercovici's decades-long commitment to dance education.

Bercovici, a former attorney, founded an after-school dance program for low-income communities in 1999 in honor of her 13-year-old daughter, Gabriella Axelrad, who was killed that year by a distracted driver while bicycling during a family vacation. Gabriella was a dancer and dreamed of becoming a teacher.

In 2005, the program grew into a charter school [See Dancing, E3]



EMANN MALLORCA

YOUNG performers dance at Gabriella Charter Schools' "Cali Dreams" recital.

Making every second count in 'The Bear'

[Colón-Zayas, from E1] to back up the hype.

For two seasons, her character has simmered on the back burner — active and essential but not at a full boil just yet.

As a new regime takes over at the Original Beef of Chicagoland following the death of its owner, Michael “Mikey” Berzatto (Jon Bernthal), Tina’s guard is up, resistant to the orders being slung at her by new, younger bosses. In time, she relaxes enough to see that change could be for the better — last season, she enrolled in culinary school and was promoted to sous chef.

“I get her,” Colón-Zayas says. “She’s on guard, like, ‘You’re walking into my territory.’ This is not just a job. This is a made family. Restaurants, old-school traditional ones, are shutting down all around us. She doesn’t know what the changes Carmy is trying to make will mean. And we’ve just lost a family member, Mikey.”

In the third season, Tina comes into focus. And so does Colón-Zayas.

Episode 6, titled “Naps,” rewinds back five years before the petite and sharp-tongued working mom was stretching her culinary potential.

Already stressed about finances after a rent increase, Tina loses her job managing payroll at a confectionery company. Her husband, played by Colón-Zayas’ real-life spouse, David Zayas (“Dexter”), is a doorman waiting for a promotion that will never come. With bruised pride, financial anxiety and ample copies of her résumé in hand, Tina pounds the pavement each day — smile locked in — seeking work but being met with indifference or outright rejection.

“I am glad to know that she was far more respectable than I thought she’d be,” says Colón-Zayas, who didn’t create a backstory for the character beyond deciding she was a transplant from New York.

“When we’re introduced to Tina, she’s pretty hardcore, but we know she’s a mom. I didn’t realize that she had a 9-to-5, and they were working poor, they were stable, and [she and her husband] are in love. There was this whole other peaceful, kind of normal side of her life.”

A pivotal moment in the episode, which was directed by Ayo Edebiri (who plays Sydney Adamu in the se-

ries), arrives when Tina, after one particularly disappointing day on the job search, steps foot in the show’s central sandwich shop. The volume gets turned up, both in sound and grace. She orders only a coffee but is given a free Italian beef sandwich by the boisterous but kind staff.

As she finds a table away from the chaos, she’s overcome by the reality of her situation, crying into her food. Mikey checks on her, and it leads to a heartfelt talk between them — in part, about people who get to live out their dreams and the ones who are just trying to survive — that ends with him offering her a job. The scene was shot over two days.

Edebiri says she wanted that moment to feel like viewers were stepping back to Season 1, recalling the noise and frenetic energy, while showcasing Colón-Zayas’ prowess as an actor.

“One of the many amazing things about Liza is she’s so petite, and so you’re about to use this sense of wonder,” Edebiri says. “She does a lot of that with just her face and her openness, but Tina’s coming from also this really arduous journey of rejection — shocking and demoralizing rejection — and then in this really chaotic and unexpected place, she finds warmth.”

The scene is also a window into Mikey, whom we’ve seen glimpses of throughout the series, but his connection to the staff and what his loss has meant comes further into focus.

“Mikey is such a complicated character; we see so many different facets of him,” Edebiri says. “He’s a tough, damaged guy, but he has a lot of love and invoked a lot of love in people. I think Tina is such an important person to that story.”

It gets Colón-Zayas thinking of her own journey to this point in her career.

The youngest of five children, she lived in subsidized housing in the South Bronx with her mother. (Her parents split when she was young, but her father was in her life.) Her gumption revealed itself at an early age. When she was 7, she wrote a letter to the producers of “The Partridge Family” to consider her as a replacement for red-haired, tambourine-playing Tracy Partridge.

“I was gonna run away. I was gonna take a taxi, and I was gonna take over because I could play the tambourine much better,” she says.



LIZA COLÓN-ZAYAS plays no-nonsense cook Tina Marrero to Jeremy Allen White’s Carmen “Carmy” Berzatto in the series “The Bear.” For first two seasons, Tina simmered on the back burner, but not anymore.

“Then my brother saw the letter and opened it and read it out loud and made fun of me, and I was mortified. It never got sent.”

But she found other ways to hone her craft: impersonating Erica Kane, Susan Lucci’s character on the ABC soap “All My Children,” for guests at her mother’s repeated request.

Talking about her early dreams evokes other emotions. At age 16, she joined the Church of Bible Understanding, a controversial religious group. When she was approached by members of the congregation, her family situation was tough. “They seemed very caring,” she says.

Describing the group as a cult, she said it encouraged isolation from and distrust of nonmembers. She left home at age 18 and was taken to Philadelphia, near where the group was founded. There, she took a training course with the church and recruited for it while also working full time at a bakery. The church kept the money she earned and wouldn’t deliver messages or mail from her family.

“I got in deep,” Colón-Zayas says, her eyes turning glassy. “There was no sexual abuse or physical violence to me. And I never witnessed that. It was mind control.”

She eventually returned to New York and, after some vacillating, broke ties with the church. She attended SUNY Albany, and her world opened up after she saw a play by Native American women. “I remember thinking, ‘This is what I want to do.’”

She has been a part of the Labyrinth Theater Company since its founding in 1992 and began her acting career off-Broadway, appearing in productions of Quiara Alegria Hudes’ “Water by the Spoonful” and

originating numerous roles in Stephen Adly Guirgis’ works, including “In Arabia We’d All Be Kings,” “Our Lady of 121st Street” and “Between Riverside and Crazy.” (She reprised her role in “Between Riverside and Crazy” for a third time in 2022, making her Broadway debut in the process.)

She also wrote, produced and starred in “Sistah Supreme,” a semiautobiographical solo show about growing up Latina in New York in the 1970s and ’80s.

“LABYrith became my artistic community,” says Colón-Zayas, who felt frustrated by both the scarcity of roles for Latinx actors and the stereotypical tones roles often had.

“That’s always my advice to young people: Find your artistic community. Find the people who hold you up. It could be just two or three of you, but if they hold you up and you have the same interest and you want to meet in your house and do writing exercises and read scenes or whatever, it helps you stand taller,” she says.

According to Guirgis, a longtime friend who directed “Sistah Supreme,” what makes Colón-Zayas so compelling as a performer is her push for truth and that she draws from a deep well of lived experience.

“She’s always going to give you 100% of her heart, and that is going to end up being something onstage that’s going to be painful, funny, truthful, outrageous but real. Her acting doesn’t seem like acting,” he said.

After years of small roles in shows like “Law & Order,” “Sex and the City” and “Nurse Jackie,” Colón-Zayas got her first recurring part in 2019 on the short-lived OWN drama “David Makes Man.” In 2021, she booked another recurring role in HBO’s revival of “In Treatment.”

Then came the part of Tina on “The Bear.”

Her husband commended her perseverance as an actor, maneuvering through disappointment and frustration but eventually finding mainstream visibility.

“The way she dealt with the reality at the time, which was there weren’t many opportunities for someone like Liza, and her struggles with it, yet finding ways to get through it,” Zayas says. “She’s got a great reputation in theater, she’s done amazing work in theater. So just watching her continuing to move forward is inspiring.”

In her youth, Colón-Zayas got some experience working in restaurants. She worked at a doughnut shop and the counter at a deli, and she waited tables at a family-owned Italian restaurant in Albany. “I was always spilling something or getting orders wrong,” she says.

And while she enjoys cooking, she’s modest about her skills.

To prepare for Season 2 and Tina’s new role as sous-chef, Colón-Zayas did intense training for a week with James Beard Award-winning chef David Waltuck of Chanterelle and with Courtney Storer — sister of “The Bear” creator Christopher Storer — who is a culinary producer on the show and previously held senior roles at Animal and Jon & Vinny’s in Los Angeles.

“I learned all of the basics, even how to properly hold the knife,” Colón-Zayas says. “I had no idea how sharp those knives were. Day 1, I must have had maybe four or five bandages on my finger because the blades are so sharp you don’t feel it. I’m no pro at home, but I’m better.”

It’s quite the turn for the actor, who said she once failed to return a copy of a James Beard cookbook

when she was a teen. Not that she ever dared to make a recipe from it: “I had intentions, but it’s a lot of scary ingredients for a poor kid.”

For what it’s worth, Guirgis says Colón-Zayas makes the best roast chicken, which he describes as “out of this world, juicy and absolute perfection.”

Asked about her technique, she says her trick is marinating it for a few hours in white vinegar, a ton of garlic, oregano and pepper.

“When you put it in to roast, soak a paper towel in oil, so that when you cover it with the foil, it will not rip the skin. And brush the top skin with a little more seasoning and oil so it crisps up real cute, to the point where, when you take it out, it should be falling off the bone,” she says.

Knowing the ins and outs of cooking is one thing. Navigating how surreal it feels to be on one of TV’s buzziest shows is something Colón-Zayas is still getting used to.

“I realize, in hindsight, there are things the universe protected me from myself because I wasn’t ready then,” she says.

“It’s hard to take in the good things when you’re always used to scarcity, when your friends and loved ones are struggling. I don’t want to be perceived as being insensitive to that. To have this episode, that is Ayo’s directorial debut, and it’s all me, I cried every time I read the script. It validated that I had a gift.”

Determined not to let the tears welling in her eyes cascade down, she pivots.

“Anyway,” she says, as she moves the food on her plate around as the restaurant’s lively soundtrack overwhelms the moment. By the time we make our way out, she’s let the rhythm find her again.

Unflinching look at a migrant crisis

[“Green Border,” from E1] curity checkpoint in the middle of the forested countryside. Sudden distant gunfire sends them scrambling toward a barbwire border fence, their luggage unceremoniously flung over the barrier by guards as the van speeds away. Welcome to Poland — except, soon, local

authorities violently force them back into Belarus. Nobody wants these foreigners, unless they can be bled dry financially, armed soldiers demanding bribes for necessities such as water.

The film’s second narrative strand concerns Jan (Tomasz Włosok), an amiable Polish border guard

brainwashed by his superiors into assuming that all refugees are secretly terrorists plotting to destroy Poland. (“One mistake,” Jan’s commander warns during a briefing, “and in six months we’ll have a bomb on the Warsaw subway.”) While Bashir and his children run for their lives, Jan is about to

start a family with his young wife, trying not to be bothered by the plight of the outsiders he’s successfully othered in his head.

Lastly, Holland introduces us to Julia (Maja Ostaszewska), a widowed Polish psychiatrist who vows to dedicate herself to helping refugees find safe passage. However, her friends aren’t as willing to stick their necks out: As one supposed fellow liberal Pole tells her after refusing to loan Julia her van, “What if they catch you and tie it to me?” It’s not just callous border guards who have hardened their hearts.

Holland, a politically outspoken filmmaker who has plumbed the darkness of the Holocaust (“Europa Europa,” “In Darkness”), views this modern humanitarian crisis as equally deplorable. And the three-time Oscar nominee, who turned 75 in November, has lost none of her anger or willingness to provoke. “Green Border” condemns her homeland’s abusive behavior toward migrants. It resulted in the film being attacked ahead of its Venice premiere by the Polish right-wing government, which recklessly and ludicrously compared it to Nazi propaganda.

Happily, some of those government officials were recently defeated at the polls, while “Green Border” remains unbowed: a brutal document about a seemingly hopeless situation. Indeed, when the idealistic Julia teams up with some experienced young activists — including pragmatic leader

‘Green Border’

Not rated
In Polish, Arabic and French, with subtitles

Running time: 2 hours, 32 minutes

Playing: Laemmle Royal, West Los Angeles

Marta (Monika Frajczyk) — she discovers the realities of trying to make a difference. No matter these good samaritans’ efforts, refugees will drown in swamps. Others are too heavy to carry to safety and constant border patrols make it nearly impossible to escape detection. They can’t rescue everyone. It’s about picking their battles, many of which they’ll lose.

Across the separate plot lines, there’s a dourness to the characters, underlined by the spare performances. Holland has cast actors who often share similarities with their roles: Altawil is himself a Syrian refugee, while Ostaszewska has aided migrants at the border. The script, co-written by Holland, draws from actual incidents, although the film’s snaking story lacks showy moments or big speeches. Similarly, cinematographer Tomasz Naumiuk’s handheld monochrome images are pristine while avoiding self-conscious prettiness.

Instead, what lingers is a collective misery and the invisibly masterful choreography of chaos, rage and death. As one might expect, those narrative threads will occasionally intertwine, sometimes leading to too-tidy dramatic ironies that

run counter to the blunt-force shock of what otherwise unfolds. “Green Border” is most riveting when it succumbs to the senselessness of the world it portrays, the characters futilely battling an overarching system of oppression and intolerance. If Altawil articulates Bashir’s panic and fear, Włosok is equally adept at capturing Jan’s gradual moral awakening: His complexity, which has guaranteed him a steady paycheck, grows into a spiritual cancer that eats away at him.

Clearly, even an army of Julias isn’t enough to repair the societal rot. “Green Border” also examines the everyday instances of cowardice and fear that perpetuate this migrant crisis. It’s the farmer who shows Leila kindness but then reports her to the cops. It’s the woman at the grocery store who’s adamant that refugees don’t deserve compassion. It’s the casual bigotry and distrust disguised as national security.

Holland’s heart breaks for Bashir and Leila, but she never reduces them to simplistically pitiable figures. She teases out the flickers of Jan’s developing conscience and his realization that he’s as disposable as the migrants he’s paid to dispatch. These atrocities are ongoing and, like with Jan, Holland wants to challenge viewers to feel complicit because of our inaction.

“Why are you doing this to us?” an anguished Leila screams at one point at indifferent border guards. No one responds. Whether it’s Poland’s border or one closer to our own, that silence is deafening and damning.

LAEMMLE		NOT AFRAID OF SUBTITLES	
Info Line 310.478.3836		www.LAEMMLE.com	
ROYAL 11521 Santa Monica Blvd. West L.A. JANET PLANET PG-13 1:20 4:20 7:30 SHOESHINE 1:00 5:10 7:30 THE GREEN BORDER 1:00 4:00 7:00 THE TWISTERS 3:10 PM MONICA 1332 Second Street Santa Monica DADDIO R 1:10 4:25 7:30 HORIZON: AN AMERICAN SAGA CHAPTER 1 R 12:45 3:50 6:55 KINDS OF KINDNESS R 1:00 3:50 7:00 GHOSTLIGHT R 1:20 4:10 THE BIKERIDERS R 1:00 4:00 7:10 THELMA PG-13 1:15 4:30 7:20 MY NAME IS ANDREA 7:00 PM	TOWN CENTER 17200 Ventura Blvd. Encino DADDIO R 1:20 4:20 7:20 HORIZON: AN AMERICAN SAGA CHAPTER 1 R 12:45 3:45 7:00 JANET PLANET PG-13 1:30 PM GHOSTLIGHT R 4:10 PM THE BIKERIDERS R 1:00 4:00 7:10 THELMA PG-13 1:10 4:30 7:30 MY NAME IS ANDREA 7:00 PM NEW HALL 12500 Lyons Ave. Santa Clarita A QUIET PLACE: DAY ONE PG-13 1:30 4:20 7:20 DADDIO R 1:20 4:20 7:20 HORIZON: AN AMERICAN SAGA CHAPTER 1 R 12:45 3:50 7:00 THE BIKERIDERS R 1:10 4:00 7:10 THELMA PG-13 1:00 4:10 7:00 INSIDE OUT 2 PG 1:10 4:30 7:30 BAD BOYS RIDE OR DIE R 1:00 4:00 7:10	GLENDALE 207 N. Maryland Ave. Glendale JANET PLANET PG-13 1:30 7:10 KINDS OF KINDNESS R 1:00 3:50 7:00 THE IMAGINARY PG 1:20 4:10 7:20 THE BIKERIDERS R 1:00 4:00 THELMA PG-13 1:10 4:30 7:30 ROBOT DREAMS 4:20 PM MY NAME IS ANDREA 7:00 PM	NoHo 7 5240 Lankershim Blvd. No. Hollywood A QUIET PLACE: DAY ONE PG-13 1:20 4:20 7:30 HORIZON: AN AMERICAN SAGA CHAPTER 1 R 12:45 3:50 6:55 KINDS OF KINDNESS R 12:50 3:50 7:00 TOOFAN 1:00 7:00 FANCY DANCE R 4:20 PM THE BIKERIDERS R 1:10 4:00 7:10 THELMA PG-13 1:30 4:10 7:15 INSIDE OUT 2 PG 1:10 4:30 7:20 CLAREMONT 450 W. 2nd Street Claremont A QUIET PLACE: DAY ONE PG-13 1:30 4:20 7:20 DADDIO R 1:20 7:30 HORIZON: AN AMERICAN SAGA CHAPTER 1 R 12:45 3:50 7:00 THE BIKERIDERS R 1:00 4:00 THELMA PG-13 4:30 PM INSIDE OUT 2 PG 1:10 4:10 7:20 MY NAME IS ANDREA 7:00 PM

FOR 7/1/2024 ONLY

They've got the beat — and they're loving it

[Dancing, from E1] for students from kindergarten through eighth grade. The Echo Park campus that is now its home opened in 2009 and spawned a second location in South L.A. in 2017. About 400 students are enrolled at each school.

Twenty-five years later, Gabriella's legacy lives on.

"We serve a pretty impacted population, and any experience that can be offered them that enhances their lives, to me, is just really, really important," Bercovici said. "We as an organization have made this commitment to provide arts and dance at a very high level and a very frequent level, and that's very atypical."

Baldenegro said Gabriella Charter Schools is one of the few public schools in the country to teach dance as a part of the curriculum multiple days a week. For many of its low-income students, it's their sole opportunity for formal dance training.

Even after their recital, as summer vacation loomed, the kids kept dancing.

For five students, that will continue through the summer at the Theatrical Education Group's Summer Arts Conservatory at the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts.

While enrollment costs more than \$1,200, Gabriella students received full-ride scholarships.

GCS dance instructor Antavius Ellison was the catalyst in connecting the school and the program.

"The more I'm able to introduce [students] into those spaces now lets me feel like, 'Hey, you're doing your job. You didn't have this growing up and now you're able to pay it forward [in] a very hopeful way,'" said Ellison, a professional dancer who's appeared in music videos for SZA and Hozier.

"I feel like that's one of my purposes for being at GCS right now. ... I take it as a sign from God that you are doing just what you need to do."



HEATHER SEYBOLT

KIDS show off their moves during Gabriella Charter Schools' recent Golden State-themed dance recital.

One of the conservatory scholarship recipients is rising eighth-grader Madison Pinon, whom Ellison personally selected. He calls her his "little assistant-mentee."

"As soon as she found out, I've never seen that smile," said Madison's mother, Berlin Pinon. "[It was] ear to ear that whole weekend."

The young dancer joined Gabriella Charter Schools in fifth grade. She hadn't taken classes since she was 8. As her dance skills progressed, Madison began assisting Ellison in leading classes for younger students at the Echo Park campus.

The 13-year-old hopes to learn new styles of dance during the three-week program in July.

"In sixth grade, I discovered dance is something I can pursue in the future, something I can do for a living," Madison said. "I feel like if I believe in the fact that I can — and in myself — I probably would be able to get there."

Fifth-grader Nathan Sandoval is one of the scholarship recipients from the South L.A. campus. His mother, Nora Martinez, was "in shock" when she found out about the opportunity.

"I feel so blessed because they see my son has talent," she said. "These are achievements that he's doing himself because he loves [dance]."

Martinez said the 11-year-old was a born performer who finally shed his shyness at GCS.

"He always tells me before he goes onstage, 'Mom, I'm doing this for you because you cheer for me and I know you're going to like my dance,'" Martinez said.

Even as the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools into virtual learning, the dancing never stopped.

During the spring 2020 semester, dance instructors recorded videos for students to watch, said Echo Park principal Stephanie Piazza. The school still put on its recital — although that year's

took the form of videos stitched together of the students dancing at home.

"In a lot of places, the pandemic stopped stuff that schools had been doing. And we just were like, 'No, this matters. This is important. We're going to figure out a way to do it,'" Piazza said. "Anytime I see a clip of [2020] performance we did, it's really emotional because we were all so lonely and sad, and we still found ways to connect like that."

The schools' commitment to dance earned them a California Pivotal Practice Award for innovation during the shutdown.

"Something I'm really proud of is that we never stopped doing any arts, even as budgets go everywhere all the time in California, that's just because it's our mission and vision that will never get touched," Piazza said. "[Dance is] such a powerful way for kids to express themselves. ... It's really amazing for kids, as young as 4 at our school, to have

this other space where they can shine."

Dance classes have been shown to help students' physical and emotional well-being. In 2016, the Copenhagen Consensus Conference found that physical activity improves scholastic performance and brain function. Meanwhile, children's arts education has been linked to improved grades and attendance.

"We really, truly believe in sort of the transformative power of dance and how it can help kids learn better and just be more competent, poised individuals who have this great mind-body connection when it comes to learning," Baldenegro said.

Walking through the Echo Park campus, everyone knows everyone else's name. The common theme among students, family and faculty: a love for the community the schools have created.

"A lot of kids at my old school, they all kind of stick to their own group and they

aren't so happy," Madison said. "But here, a lot of people are happy; they get really happy through dance."

The schools' dance classes mix classic cardio exercises such as jumping jacks and high knees with choreography. The students move to popular tunes from artists such as Kali Uchis and Harry Styles. One dance to Drake's "Controlla" was choreographed — and, for the first-grade class, led — by Madison.

Previously, Madison "stuck to choreography" that was familiar to her. She has since felt empowered to choreograph original dances in order to "express more" through her own movements, she said.

"I've seen a lot of growth within her, not only in her dancing skills — obviously with more practice that's bound to happen — but just leadership skills and discipline. She really is committed and sets plans for everything," Berlin said. "I can see she's shaping up to be a great young woman."

After the class concluded, two second-graders wanted to show off a dance they made up, complete with acrobatics.

"I couldn't have paid them to have done that last semester," Ellison said.

While the dance instructors at the schools are in charge of choreographing the recital, Ellison said he makes sure to incorporate his students' moves.

"I want to give my students more agency to be able to create because I feel like that allows them to be more confident within themselves," Ellison said. "They are taking up space in a very healthy way. ... A space is given for them to trust in their natural abilities, and to understand that movements and creativity will always look different, based off the person, and there is no — to me — right or wrong way to move your body, to dance."



Images by SARAH GOLONKA, above; and David Medalla Archive and another vacant space, Berlin, below

THE WORKS of David Medalla, in installation view, are the focus of "In Conversation With the Cosmos" at the UCLA Hammer Museum.

Absorbing portrait of an artist at the Hammer

[Medalla, from E1] competence" (sometimes derisively). Looking at them is sort of like riffling through the diary of someone with really poor penmanship.

His drawings are rarely where he worked out the look of a painting or sculpture, and none seems to have been intended as a stand-alone art object. The data can be interesting, even if the look is unripe and sometimes crabbed. The show's primary exceptions are three vivid, colorfully explosive 1962-63 studies for an impossible sculpture-machine that would ooze molten lava into random patterns — Earth's primal forces simultaneously destroying and creating.

Perhaps the studies were inspired by contemporaneous, widely reported activity of Hawaii's dramatic Kilauea volcano and the epic, year-long eruption of Gunung Agung volcano in Indonesia. Volcanic action is hardly uncommon in the Philippines. Whatever the case, with magma running at 1,300 to 2,200 degrees, production of an actual lava sculpture-machine was unlikely. The imaginative drawings entice.



In a notebook entry, Medalla explains that he began to draw in 1943 at age 5, during the brutal Japanese occupation of Manila, when his four older siblings gave him a set of watercolors, colored pencils and pads of paper to play with. He kept at it until he was felled by a stroke in 2016. There's no indication that he ever developed facility with it.

Nor is there any indication that he wanted to. What begins as rudimentary contour drawings of figures in flat black ink, including male nudes and the intertwined

heads of kissing boys, is soon accompanied by scratchy ballpoint sketches, often on ruled paper, of things rumbling through his head.

Images span performance ideas, political sloganeering, plans for kinetic art objects, fascinations with Rosa Luxemburg, the Polish German socialist thinker; Arthur Rimbaud, radical French poet; and more.

That early childhood identification of the manual activity of drawing with feelings of social, homosexual and familial warmth repeatedly shines through the ex-



SHOW includes "Mondrian Fan Club, Mondrian in Excelsis," left, "Adam Nankervis," above.

hibition. It also lurks within the absent "A Stitch in Time." That participatory project was birthed by serendipity. Medalla had given embroidered handkerchiefs, needles and thread to two ex-lovers, urging them to add embroidery to the cloth at their leisure, in any way they liked. Years later, in a random encounter in Amsterdam with a backpacker from Bali, Medalla discovered one of those handkerchiefs in his possession.

Maybe by chance, the original launch of "A Stitch

in Time" also coincided with a landmark labor-relations dispute in the United Kingdom, in which sewing collided with tangled questions of gender and skill. (The peripatetic Medalla lived and worked primarily in London, where he co-founded Signals Gallery, with stints in Paris, New York and Berlin, and he traveled widely, returning periodically to Manila.)

London's 1968 sewing machinists' strike at a Ford factory, led by six women, caused a huge public uproar when the auto company sought to cut wages for the women's "less skilled production job" of sewing seat covers rather than welding chassis. The women's strike, ultimately successful, prompted passage of a national equal pay act.

Medalla's performance actions sometimes employed fanciful homemade masks — amusing, although nothing special, based on the few displayed examples. Often, the actions took direct aim at social issues, including the shocking imposition of martial law in his previously democratic, post-colonial homeland.

Tiered shelves in one gal-

'David Medalla: In Conversation With the Cosmos'

Where: UCLA Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood
When: Tuesdays to Sundays, through Sept. 15
Cost: Free
Info: (310) 443-7000, hammer.ucla.edu

lery feature a few dozen collages on a rainbow of brightly colored poster boards — titled "Kumbum," after the endless manifestations of Buddha's bodies in Tibetan lore — each simply an informational newspaper story or full-page pasted down. Several include scrawled Medalla text that lambastes Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, one for shutting down the resolutely liberal broadsheet the Manila Chronicle, founded at the end of World War II.

The show's standout work, though, is "Cloud Canyons" (2017), one of a series of kinetic sculptures Medalla began exhibiting in 1964.

Frothy clouds of soapy bubbles emerge from the tops of five clear plastic pillars, which rise from a circular platform that hides the bubble compressors. Transitory columns of evanescent foam rise, droop and fall. The foamy shapes recall solid prewar sculptures by Naum Gabo, Constantin Brancusi and Jean Arp, while the kinetic machine creates ephemeral drawings in space, a motif of central importance in Western art after World War II.

Medalla said the work was inspired by personal experience, including an indelible memory of the scary frothing mouth of a wounded Japanese soldier he discovered in the family garden when he was a child.

Constructed right after his lovely but impossible drawings for an erupting lava-machine sculpture, the bubble sculpture is also inescapably erotic. The steadily oozing phallic implies a sequence of erection, ejaculation and flaccid rest, only to endlessly repeat.

That five climaxing columns cluster tightly together infers an abstract same-sex orgy — another primal force simultaneously destroying and creating.

COMICS

LA CUCARACHA By Lalo Alcaraz



PICKLES By Brian Crane



CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia



BABY BLUES By Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



CANDORVILLE By Darrin Bell



CRANKSHAFT By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers



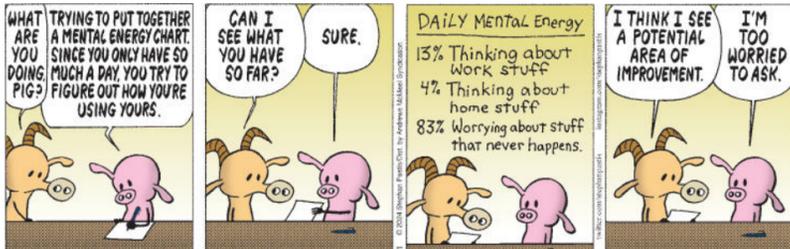
LOOSE PARTS By Dave Blazek



JUMP START By Robb Armstrong



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By Stephan Pastis



MACANUDO By Liniers



LIO By Mark Tatulli



BLONDIE By Dean Young & John Marshall



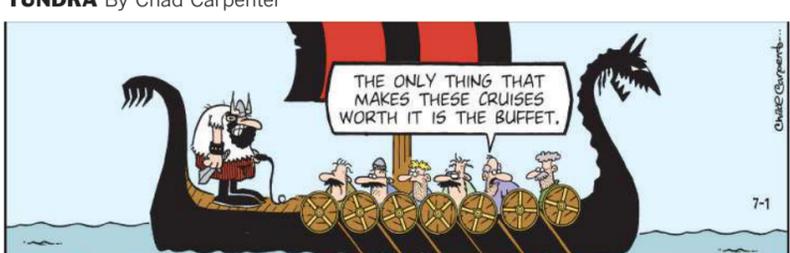
ZITS By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



BETWEEN FRIENDS By Sandra Bell-Lundy



TUNDRA By Chad Carpenter



BIZARRO By Wayno and Piraro



SIX CHIX By Isabella Bannerman



DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan



FRAZZ By Jef Mallett



MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell



NON SEQUITUR By Wiley



PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz



COMICS

SUDOKU

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	5			6			2	
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KENKEN

Every box will contain a number; numbers depend on the size of the grid. For a 6x6 puzzle, use Nos. 1-6. Do not repeat a number in any row or column. The numbers in each heavily outlined set of squares must combine to produce the target number found in the top left corner of the cage using the mathematical operation indicated. A number can be repeated within a cage as long as it is not in the same row or column.

6X	1-	3-			
			1-	2÷	
3-					
3+			1-		

HOROSCOPE

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

Aries (March 21-April 19): Make sure to find out where people are in terms of motivation so you can place your bets accordingly.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): If only your intention was enough to move the world. It's almost enough. But ultimately, adding a few key phrases and two or three actions will do the trick.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): These funny thoughts you are having about a new venture are fresh and half-formed. In the weeks to come they will assimilate.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): Repetition has been a theme for about three weeks. There will be an interruption of the pattern, probably in the form of a messenger.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Curiosity is your guiding impulse of the day. You will be drawn to an interest, learn about it, and then

learn more.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You're headed for a goal that has obvious external rewards, but over time, the internal motivation will become stronger than any outside motivation.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): It may feel a little chaotic today. Your life is falling into the perfect alignment to conquer all obstacles in the path.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): You must figure out what's in the way to go around, over or above it.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Your habits will dictate your mood, and it all happens because of small things.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): It doesn't take an expert to know something's wrong, but an expert can tell you exactly what the problem is and how to fix it.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You can crack codes, dispel myths and find the puz-

zle piece. Even so, you respect the unknowable. The best things are to be enjoyed, not solved.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): If it can be fixed with money, throw it down and be done with it. If it can't be fixed with money, it's a problem that will grow you in all directions.

Today's birthday (July 1): It's as though this year was given an assignment to make sure you have fun regularly and often, and then ace the mission. It helps that you'll keep excellent company. More highlights: You'll enjoy an advancement that comes with multiple perks, a shift in style and heartfelt connections that give your home life richness. Pisces and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers: 8, 10, 4, 44 and 28.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol
By Doug Peterson

- ACROSS
- "Lisa": Louvre highlight
 - Highly capable
 - Squad car alerts, for short
 - Unaccounted-for GI
 - "American Top 40" medium
 - Peek
 - Where to see stars on an app
 - Assistant on Apple devices
 - New Year's Eve Potato Drop state
 - Mythical Himalayan beast
 - Smart ___: frozen food brand
 - "The Golden Bachelor" network
 - Motionless
 - Carpentry tool
 - Where to see stars after a blow
 - "Frankly," in a text
 - Female pheasant
 - Laughably silly
 - Org. that encourages flossing
 - Quick to prepare, like pudding or coffee
 - Ornamental pond fish
 - Toned down
 - Moody genre
 - Beings on UFOs
 - Where to see stars under a dome
 - Earn after taxes
 - Neckwear worn with mittens
 - Threaded fastener
 - Effect in a tunnel
 - British Tolkien characters
 - "Attraction": Glenn Close thriller
 - Hamperful of laundry
 - Where to see stars in Hollywood
 - Equivalent
 - Paperless message
 - Not occupied
 - Wood choppers
 - "I wanna have a turn!"
 - Pull hard

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64				65				66					
67				68					69				
70				71					72				

- "___ we good?"
 - Folk hero Crockett
 - Emmy winner Falco
 - Cobbler container
 - Service provided by a wrecker
 - Unsuccessful candidate
 - "I see where you're coming from"
 - Real snooze
 - Winter resort rentals
 - AnnaSophia of "Bridge to Terabithia"
 - "SportsCenter" anchor Linda
 - Issue forth
 - Notary public's mark
 - "Opposites Attract" singer Paula
 - "Ah, too bad"
 - "Hollywood Squares" symbols
 - Prefix with face or lace
 - 100 bucks
 - Major caper
 - Concept
 - Calais chum
 - Word such as "word"
 - Converts into a secret message
 - Small spade
 - House with a sharply sloping roof
 - Bungle
 - Stretchy candy
 - "Frozen" sister with a French braid
 - Gently persuade
 - Seafood in a shell
 - milk
 - "Teen Titans Go!" voice actress Strong
 - "So true!"
 - Scallion relative
 - La Liga cheer
- ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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BRIDGE

BY FRANK STEWART

Another message on a sign standing guard beside a church in my town: "Adultery is a sin. You can't have your Kate and Edith too."

A good declarer doesn't put his faith in a single chance for the contract if two or more are available. At today's slam, South discarded a club on dummy's king of spades and led a diamond to his king. West did well to play low smoothly.

South then drew trumps with the ace and queen, threw another club on the ace of spades, and led a second diamond from dummy. He lost two diamonds to West's A-J and went down.

South's play was poor. He gets an extra chance by pitching two clubs on the

A-K of spades, taking the ace of clubs and ruffing a club. He returns a trump to dummy and ruffs a club.

When East-West follow, South draws the last trump in dummy and discards the 10 of diamonds on the good 13th club. He loses one diamond. If the clubs didn't break 3-3, South could reach dummy with trumps to lead twice toward his K-Q-10 of diamonds.

You hold: ♠ Q J 10 8 5 2 ♥ 3 ♦ A J 4 ♣ Q 10 4. Your partner opens 1NT. The next player passes. What do you say?

Answer: Almost every practiced partnership uses "transfers" in many situations. Bid four hearts, asking partner to bid four spades, which you will pass. It will often be better for the opening lead to come up to, not through, his strength.

With a better hand, transfer at the two level, then bid game — a sequence that invites slam.

North dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH		EAST	
♠ AK6	♠ 9743	♠ 9743	♠ 52
♥ Q97	♥ 52	♥ 9863	♥ KJ9
♦ 752	♦ 852		
♣ A763			

WEST: ♠ QJ10852 ♥ 3 ♦ AJ4 ♣ Q104

EAST: ♠ 9743 ♥ 52 ♦ 9863 ♣ KJ9

SOUTH: ♠ None ♥ AKJ10864 ♦ KQ10 ♣ 852

NORTH: 1♣ Pass 1NT Pass
EAST: Pass 1♥ Pass
SOUTH: 1♥ Pass 6♥ All Pass
WEST: 1♠ Pass All Pass

Opening lead — ♠ Q

Tribune Content Agency

ASKING ERIC

Editor's note: Amy Dickinson has retired her Ask Amy column. R. Eric Thomas will be giving out advice in a new syndicated column.

Dear Eric: My youngest son (my baby!) had a horrible breakup last year. I still hate her and sob-yelled during an Alanis Morissette concert to "You Oughta Know." Said son is adorable, nice, has a great job that he loves, etc. Yet, he won't date.

Let's be clear. I need grandchildren from this boy. He's the best one of the bunch (don't tell the others). How do I encourage him to get out there without actually saying those words? Or do I just adopt more cats as my grandchildren?

MOROSE MOM

This process is his own to create and he is currently taking the time he needs to heal. The last thing you want is for him to jump into a rebound relationship and start having babies. You clearly have a lot of compassion for your son, which is wonderful. But be careful not to slide into codependent tendencies. The breakup may hurt you but it's still his breakup. Tread carefully and keep your comments in the supportive, rather than prescriptive, range.

even if you haven't found a historian or museum that might want your diaries, yet.

Years back, I worked with an organization called SAGE, which collects oral histories from LGBTQ+ elders relating to their experiences in housing. Our goal was to find anecdotal evidence of housing discrimination to help inform policy-making, but the best way to do that was to simply ask people to reflect on their past and tell stories. It was one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life and helped me to see my own future much differently.

In the future, you may want to redact the spicier parts of the diaries and talk to a community organization, historian, or even a local theater company about making a donation they can use to create something new. Consider reaching out to local history departments to see if they have any grad students focusing on times you have an insight into. Talk about your diary practice with friends, relatives, and acquaintances. Tell them what this practice has meant to you and what you've learned. By sharing this part of your life and letting people know the diaries exist, you may spark ideas in others.

Dear Mom: Cats. As I vividly recall from the Morissette-fueled sob-yell periods of my youth, the chorus of "You Oughta Know" includes the line "I'm here to remind you of the mess you left when you went away." Alanis would no doubt remind us that getting over any breakup, particularly a horrible one, can be a long, grueling experience.

There's a rule of thumb that posits it takes half the length of a relationship to get over the end of said relationship. But don't go running to your calendar to circle some due date in your son's future.

Dear Eric: I am 67 years old and have kept a daily diary since I was 15. I grew up in the '70s and things were, shall we say, a little crazy (sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, as experienced by a woman who went to a parochial school and wasn't exactly a model of obedience). Times were different.

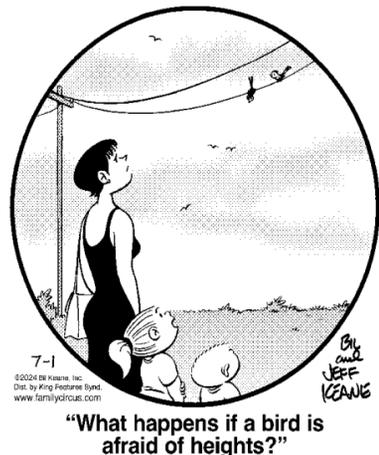
Now, I wonder what to do with all of these volumes of my life. I'm married, but we have no children and no relatives that I would even remotely consider entrusting the good, bad and ugly of my/our lives to. I feel as though they have historical meaning, perhaps significant to some entity, but finding that entity has been problematic. Any suggestions?

DAILY DIARIST

Dear Diarist: What a beautiful gift you've given yourself. Please, don't stop

Email questions to R. Eric Thomas at eric@askingeric.com.

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham



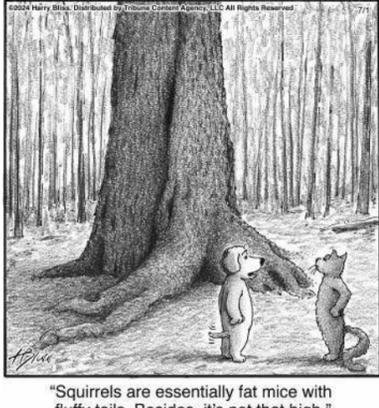
FREE RANGE By Bill Whitehead



MARMADUKE By Brad & Paul Anderson



BLISS By Harry Bliss



SPEED BUMP By Dave Coverly



A CAPITOL FOURTH



THURSDAY, JULY 4 AT 8:00PM
ENCORE BROADCAST AT 9:30PM!



Hosted by Alfonso Ribeiro



Smokey Robinson



Fantasia



Darren Criss



Fitz & Noelle from
Fitz and the Tantrums



Sheila E.



Sister Sledge
ft. Sledgendary



Loren Allred



Chloe Flower



Shawn Johnson East

Maestro Jack Everly conducting the National Symphony Orchestra
and a special tribute to Team USA!

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