



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

**TOURISTS** walk under cooling misters Monday in Palm Springs as the temperature reaches 118. The heat is forecast to last another week.

## ANGRY BIDEN SHOVES BACK AT 'ELITES'

'Go ahead. Challenge me at the convention,' the president dares his Democratic doubters as pressure mounts.

BY NOAH BIERMAN

As angry Democrats pile criticism on President Biden, he has a message: He's angry too.

"I'm getting so frustrated by the elites ... the elites in the party who — they know so much more," Biden said sarcastically, calling in Monday to MSNBC's "Morning Joe," his favorite cable news show. "Any of these guys don't think I should, run against me: Go ahead. Challenge me at the convention."

Pressure has been mounting on Biden to drop out of the race since his poor debate performance last month. The televised call was part of a larger effort to push back against the internal pressure by rallying his party's base and channeling national anger with elites that cuts across both parties.

Hours after he railed against the party's insiders, Biden received an important boost from one of its heaviest hitters, Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer of New York, who told reporters "I'm for Joe" as he returned to the Capitol on Monday afternoon.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York also reaffirmed his support, telling a CNN reporter his position has not changed.

Other Democratic lawmakers were more circumspect, including Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, who called for "conversations about the strongest path forward" and for Biden "to more aggressively make his case to the American people."

Biden's tone in the brief call to "Morning Joe" was intended to convey a fighting spirit, to reassure Democrats who worry he is not up to prosecuting the case against former President [See Biden, A5]

## Record highs keep coming

The long-duration heat wave continues, causing deaths and compounding wildfire concerns.

BY GRACE TOOHEY

The intense, early-season heat wave broiling much of the Western U.S. has already set many records and contributed to several deaths, yet it's far from over: The heat is forecast to continue for another week, bringing triple-digit temperatures and compounding health and wildfire concerns across California and surrounding states.

"It's unprecedented heat — take this very seriously," said Dan Berc, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Las Vegas. "It's not normal, this is excessive heat. ... We're talking 10 to 12 degrees above normal for the hottest part of the year."

Officials have attributed several deaths to the severe heat.

Among them are a motorcyclist who died Saturday in Death Valley National Park and four suspected heat-related deaths in the Portland, Ore., area. In Grand Canyon National Park, as temperatures rose to the mid-90s, a hiker was found dead Sunday, according to the National Park Service; the cause of death was not immediately clear.

Extreme heat has become the nation's deadliest weather-related hazard, according to the National Weather Service, which has continued to beef up its warning systems to encourage people, especially vulnerable populations, to take precautions.

The extreme heat was also credited for a massive fish die-off in Lake Elizabeth in Northern California, ac- [See Heat, A5]

### Lake fire rages over 20,000 acres

Michael Jackson's former home is among those at risk in Santa Barbara County. CALIFORNIA, B1

## Tough challenges await new Paramount CEO



BRIAN VANDER BRUG Los Angeles Times

**THE ICONIC** Melrose Gate at the Paramount Pictures lot in L.A. The studio is one of the oldest in Hollywood and has been producing films for over 100 years.

## With merger, an uncertain new chapter in studio's storied history

BY JOSH ROTTENBERG

Legend has it that the iconic star-crested mountain logo of Paramount Pictures was born in 1914 from a simple napkin doodle by co-founder W.W. Hodkinson, inspired by his childhood memories of the majestic peaks in Utah. The fledgling company's name, the story goes, was taken from a sign on the side of an apartment

building. From such humble origins, the film studio — one of the oldest in Hollywood — would come to be known as the Mountain.

In recent years, this once-grand peak has seen more than its share of erosion, as Paramount has fallen behind its studio rivals and struggled to adapt to the advent of streaming.

Still, with a historic lot in the heart of Los Angeles and a stable of hit franchises, in-

cluding "Mission: Impossible," "Transformers" and "Star Trek," the Mountain remains a vital piece of Hollywood real estate worth billions, part of a media empire that also includes CBS and such cable networks as MTV and Nickelodeon.

In an era of increasing consolidation, the question was not so much whether Paramount would be sold but when and to whom. [See History, A7]

David Ellison's acquisition is just the start of a long journey to turn around the entertainment giant.

BY SAMANTHA MASUNAGA

Tech scion David Ellison battled hard to get Paramount Global.

The Skydance Media chief executive first made overtures last summer to Paramount's nonexecutive chair, Shari Redstone, then spent months negotiating and renegotiating a deal acceptable to Redstone, Paramount's board and the company's shareholders.

Now that he's clinched the company through a complicated, multipronged transaction valued at more than \$8 billion, the real work begins. Ellison is set to become the company's chief executive, while former NBCUniversal Chief Executive Jeff Shell will be president. (Shell left his old job after acknowledging an "inappropriate relationship" with a colleague.)

The legacy media and entertainment company has major challenges Ellison will need to address quickly to get Paramount back on the right footing, once the deal closes during the first half of next year.

Like many entertainment companies, Paramount is facing a decline in theatrical box office revenue [See Paramount, A7]

## How Alec Baldwin's 'Rust' case reached trial phase

The actor has pleaded not guilty in the shooting that killed Halyna Hutchins. A jury will now decide.

BY MEG JAMES

**ALBUQUERQUE** — Nearly three years ago, Alec Baldwin pointed a loaded gun at the cinematographer of the low-budget western movie "Rust." He thought the Colt .45 was empty; it wasn't, and the gun fired, killing Halyna Hutchins.

The Oct. 21, 2021, tragedy in New Mexico has led to multiple civil lawsuits, in-

cluding two brought by Hutchins' family members (one of which has settled). And this week, Baldwin is scheduled to go on trial in a Santa Fe courtroom after being indicted in January on a charge of involuntary manslaughter in Hutchins' accidental death.

Jury selection begins Tuesday, kicking off an eight-day trial that experts predict will be the most-publicized criminal prosecution in New Mexico's 112-year history.

Baldwin has pleaded not guilty. If convicted, the 66-year-old actor-producer could spend up to 18 months in prison.

How did Baldwin's case [See Baldwin, A10]



Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office

**BALDWIN**, in an image from video, talks with law enforcement after the 2021 shooting outside Santa Fe.

### Mounjaro bests Ozempic in study

Patients taking Mounjaro lost more weight in the first direct comparison of the drugs. PERSPECTIVES, A2

### Walloped by COVID illness

FLiRT variants continue to spread, bringing worst-ever symptoms for some. CALIFORNIA, B1

### Boeing accepts plea agreement

The firm would plead guilty to fraud, avoid trial over fatal crashes of 737 Max jets if judge OKs deal. BUSINESS, A6

### Weather Sunny and warm.

L.A. Basin: 89/65. B6

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## PERSPECTIVES

## Israel pushes deeper in new Gaza City offensive

Raids targeting areas in north previously cleared of militants have sent Palestinians fleeing once again.

By SAMY MAGDY AND WAFAA SHURAF

DEIR AL BALAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli forces advanced deeper into the Gaza Strip's largest city in pursuit of militants who had regrouped there, sending thousands of Palestinians fleeing Monday from an area ravaged in the early weeks of the nine-month-old war.

Hamas warned that the latest raids and displacement in Gaza City could lead to the collapse of long-running negotiations over a cease-fire and hostage releases after the two sides had appeared to have narrowed the gaps in recent days.

Israeli troops were again battling militants in areas that the army said had been largely cleared months ago in northern Gaza. The military ordered evacuations ahead of the raids, but Palestinians said nowhere feels safe. Most of the population of 2.3 million has been displaced, often multiple times. Hundreds of thousands are packed into sweltering tent camps.

Israel ordered the evacuation of northern Gaza in the first weeks of the war and has prevented most people from returning. But hundreds of thousands of Palestinians remain, living in shelters or the shells of homes.

"We fled in the darkness amid heavy strikes," said Sayeda Abdel-Baki, a mother of three who had sheltered with relatives in the Daraj neighborhood. "This is my fifth displacement."

Residents reported artillery and tank fire, as well as airstrikes. Gaza's Health Ministry, with limited access to the north, did not immediately report casualties.

Israel issued additional evacuation orders for other areas in central Gaza City. The military said it had intelligence showing that militants from Hamas and the



ISRAELI soldiers are seen near the Gaza border on Monday. The militant group Hamas warned that Israel's offensive in Gaza City could threaten cease-fire talks.

smaller Islamic Jihad group were in the area, and called on residents to head south to the city of Deir al Balah.

Israel accuses Hamas and other militants of hiding among civilians. In Shajaiya, a Gaza City neighborhood that has seen weeks of fighting, the military said troops raided and destroyed schools and a clinic that had been converted into militant compounds.

The war has decimated large swaths of urban landscape and sparked a humanitarian catastrophe.

Israel and Hamas seem to be the closest they have been in months to agreeing to a cease-fire deal that would pause the fighting in exchange for the release of dozens of hostages captured by militants in the Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war.

CIA Director William Burns returned to the region Monday for talks in Cairo, according to Egypt's state-run Qahera TV, which is close to the security services. An Israeli delegation was also heading to the Egyptian capital, Israeli media reported.

But obstacles remain, even after Hamas agreed to relent on its key demand that Israel commit to ending the war as part of any agreement. A key part of that shift, officials told the Asso-

ciated Press, is the level of destruction caused by Israel's rolling offensive.

Hamas still wants mediators to guarantee that negotiations conclude with a permanent cease-fire, according to two officials with knowledge of the talks.

The current draft says the mediators — the United States, Qatar and Egypt — "will do their best" to ensure that negotiations lead to an agreement to wind down the war.

Israel has rejected any deal that would force it to

end the war with Hamas intact — a condition Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated Sunday.

Hamas on Monday said it is "offering flexibility and positivity" to facilitate a deal, while accusing Netanyahu of "putting more obstacles in the way of negotiations."

Meanwhile, Hamas' top leader, Ismail Haniyeh, warned mediators of "catastrophic consequences" if Israel continued its operations in Gaza City, saying

Netanyahu and the army would bear "full responsibility" for the collapse of the talks, the group said in a subsequent statement.

The two officials said there's also an impasse around whether Hamas can choose the high-profile prisoners held by Israel that it wants released in exchange for hostages. Some prisoners were convicted of killing Israelis, and Israel does not want Hamas to determine who is released. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the sensitive talks with the media.

In Gaza, residents saw no end to their suffering.

Maha Mahfouz fled her home with her two children and many neighbors in Gaza City's Zeitoun neighborhood. She said their area was not included in the latest evacuation orders but "we are panicked because the bombing and gunfire are very close to us."

Fadel Naeem, the director of Ahli Arab Hospital, said patients fled the facility even though there was no evacuation order for the surrounding area. He said those in critical condition had been evacuated to other hospitals in northern Gaza.

Marwan al-Sultan, director of the Indonesian Hospital, said it received 80 patients and wounded people from the Ahli Arab Hospital who were packed into "every corner."

"Many cases require ur-

gent surgeries. Many cases suffer from direct shots in the head and require intensive care. Fuel and medical supplies are dwindling," he said in a text message. He said the hospital also received 16 bodies of people killed in the Israeli incursion, half of them women and children.

Mahmoud Bassal, a spokesman for the Civil Defense first responders who operate under the Hamas-run government, said the neighborhoods of Tufah, Daraj and Shajaiya had become inaccessible because of Israeli bombing. In a voice message, he said the military shelled houses in Gaza City's Jaffa area and first responders "saw people lying on the ground and were not able to retrieve them."

The war has killed more than 38,000 people in Gaza, according to the Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count.

Hamas' raid on Oct. 7 killed 1,200 people in southern Israel, most of them civilians, according to Israeli authorities. The militants took roughly 250 people hostage. About 120 are still in captivity, with about a third said to be dead.

Magdy and Shurafa write for the Associated Press. Magdy reported from Cairo. AP writers Abby Sewell in Beirut and Melanie Lidman in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.

## Mounjaro bests Ozempic for weight loss

A yearlong analysis of real-world patients is the first head-to-head comparison of the two blockbuster drugs.

By KAREN KAPLAN

In the first head-to-head comparison of two blockbuster drugs used in real-world conditions, people who took Mounjaro lost significantly more weight than their counterparts who took Ozempic — and the longer the patients kept taking the drugs, the wider the gap became.

After three months of weekly injections, patients on Ozempic lost 3.6% of their body weight, on average, while those on Mounjaro lost an average of 5.9%.

At the six-month mark, Ozempic patients had dropped an average of 5.8% of their weight, while the average weight loss for Mounjaro patients was 10.1%.

And when a full year had passed, those taking Ozempic had lost an average of 8.3% of their weight, while those taking Mounjaro had shed an average of 15.3%.

The researchers who conducted the analysis also found that compared with people on Ozempic, those on Mounjaro were 2.5 times more likely to lose at least 10% of their initial weight and more than three times as likely to lose at least 15% of their weight during their first year on the drugs.

The findings were published Monday in JAMA Internal Medicine.

Dr. Matthew Freeby, an endocrinologist and director of the Gonda Diabetes Center at UCLA's Geffen School of Medicine, said the study results are in line with what he has observed in his own patients.

"From a weight-loss perspective, and from a sugar-lowering perspective for those with Type 2 diabetes, we see stronger effects with Mounjaro compared to Ozempic," said Freeby, who was not involved in the research.

Both drugs were approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to help people with diabetes keep their blood sugar under control. By mimicking a hormone called glucagon-like peptide 1, or GLP-1, they boost the body's production of insulin, slow digestion, increase feelings of satiety and reduce appetite.

Mounjaro also imitates a related hormone called glucose-dependent insulinotropic peptide, or GIP.

When the drugs were tested against placebos in



SANDY HUFFAKER Washington Post

A MOUNJARO injectable pen. Experts cautioned patients on Ozempic against rushing to switch drugs.

clinical trials, both helped patients lose a significant amount of weight. Tirzepatide, the active ingredient in Mounjaro, appeared to be more effective than semaglutide, the active ingredient in Ozempic. But the trials weren't conducted under the same conditions, so the results aren't directly comparable.

Researchers from Truveta, a healthcare data and analytics company owned by 30 health systems, sought to remedy that by examining their trove of electronic health records. The work also gave them a chance to see how patients fared outside the idealized setting of a clinical trial, which typically provides free medication, regular checkups and other types of support.

With the help of their database, the researchers were able to spot people who filled their first prescription for either drug between May 2022 — the month Mounjaro joined Ozempic in receiving FDA approval — and September 2023. Patients didn't need to have Type 2 diabetes to be included in the study, but they did have to be overweight (with a body mass index of at least 27) or obese (with a BMI of at least 30).

The Truveta team found about 41,000 people across more than 30 states who met all their criteria for being included in the study. Since Ozempic patients outnumbered Mounjaro patients 3 to 1, the researchers used information on age, race, income, health history and other factors to come up with a group of Ozempic patients who most closely matched the Mounjaro patients. The result was a population of nearly 18,400 who were evenly split between the two drugs.

Before their first medication dose, the average weight for people in both groups was 243 pounds. But it didn't take long for the two groups to diverge.

After accounting for unmeasured influences that could have skewed the results, the Truveta team found that the amount of

weight lost was 2.4 percentage points higher for Mounjaro patients than for Ozempic patients after three months, 4.3 percentage points higher after six months, and 6.9 percentage points higher after a year.

Mounjaro also bested Ozempic in terms of people's success in meeting various milestones within a year of starting on one of the drugs.

Nearly 82% of Mounjaro patients lost at least 5% of their body weight, compared with 67% of patients who took Ozempic. Likewise, 62% of Mounjaro patients and 37% of Ozempic patients lost at least 10% of their initial weight, while 42% of Mounjaro patients and 18% of Ozempic patients lost at least 15% of their starting weight.

The researchers didn't examine the biological mechanisms of the two drugs, but study leader Tricia Rodriguez, a principal applied scientist with Truveta Research, said Mounjaro may have been more effective because it works two ways instead of just one.

Dr. Ken Fujioka, an endocrinologist who leads the Scripps Clinic Nutrition and Metabolic Research Center in San Diego and who was not involved in the study, noted that the FDA approved a higher dose of Ozempic in March 2022 but that many doctors were not aware of that during the study period. With proper dosing, he said, the patients on Ozempic would have seen better results.

"I do believe that Mounjaro does give more weight loss than Ozempic," said Fujioka, who has received consulting and speaking fees from the makers of both drugs. "I am just not sure how much."

The big gap in effectiveness wasn't accompanied by a measurable difference in the rate of moderate or severe side effects such as bowel obstructions and pancreatitis, which were rare for patients in both groups. The researchers didn't compare the risk of milder problems

such as nausea and vomiting because people wouldn't necessarily report them to their doctors, Rodriguez said.

Regardless of which drug they took, patients with Type 2 diabetes lost less weight than patients without the disease, the researchers found.

That might be explained by the facts that certain diabetes treatments can cause weight gain, and that some patients eat more throughout the day to keep their blood sugar from getting too low, Freeby said.

DNA probably is a factor, Fujioka added. "Individuals that have the genetics to become diabetics probably have the genetics to gain weight and hold onto it better," he said.

It's also possible that people who sought prescriptions for Ozempic or Mounjaro with the goal of slimming down were more motivated to keep taking the drug even if it was expensive or caused uncomfortable side effects, or that they were more likely to adopt other behaviors that promote weight loss, Rodriguez said.

Figuring this out is "a crucial topic for future research," she said.

People taking Ozempic probably have a more pressing question on their minds: Should I switch to Mounjaro?

Dr. Nick Stucky, an infectious-disease physician at Providence Portland Medical Center and the study's senior author, said the results alone should not cause patients to stop taking a drug that is working for them. The risk of side effects, insurance coverage and drug availability are things to consider as well.

"While tirzepatide was significantly more effective than semaglutide, patients on both medications experienced substantial weight loss," said Stucky, who is also Truveta's vice president of research.

Freeby seconded that opinion.

"If someone is doing well with a medication, why rock the boat?" he said.

Freeby added that Ozempic (and its sister medication Wegovy, which is FDA-approved specifically for weight loss) has at least one advantage over Mounjaro (and Zepbound, its weight-loss counterpart): In clinical trials, Ozempic has been shown to reduce the risk of heart attacks, strokes and other cardiovascular problems as well as kidney failure.

"At this point, we don't have a lot of data on Mounjaro when it comes to secondary outcomes," he said.

## FOR THE RECORD

"The Bear": In the July 2 Entertainment section, a column on the Hulu show "The Bear" described the character Carmy as being locked in a freezer. He was locked in a refrigerator.

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## THE WORLD

## ANALYSIS

# French voters hold back far right, but what now?

Neither the left nor center wins absolute majority, meaning deadlock will probably follow

By LAURA KING

PARIS — Strangers in Paris cafes raised joyful toasts to one another. In tightly packed crowds, people hugged and wept. A speeding bicyclist trailed a flapping French tricolor. Fireworks hissed and popped.

In Sunday's parliamentary election, the French far right made a thunderous knock at the gates of power — but one that seemingly dwindled at the last moment into insistent tapping.

The National Rally, whose ascendancy had been widely feared after it topped the field in first-round voting a week earlier, fell back to an unexpectedly weak third-place finish — surpassed by both a leftist grouping that took the largest share of parliamentary seats, and President Emmanuel Macron's centrists, who came in second.

Tallies showed no bloc achieving a clear parliamentary majority, a result that points to prolonged political gridlock. But French financial markets, which had been rattled by the prospect of a far-right surge, rallied somewhat on news of the result.

Macron, who has always had a fondness for audacious gestures, made a big gamble in calling these early elections. Reviews were mixed as to whether his bet had backfired.

"It's not catastrophic for Macron," said Christophe Chabrot, a senior lecturer in public law at Lumière University Lyon 2. "But now everything is very, very complicated."

The uncertainty of what would come was not lost on the revelers in Paris, but they were for the moment thrilled that voters had staved off what had been the specter of France's first far-right government since the dark Nazi-collaborationist days of World War II.

The newly formed coalition of leftist and environmental forces was the night's surprise success story, garnering 178 of the 577 seats in the lower house of Parliament. That was well short of the 289 needed for an absolute majority, though.

"C'est Ouf," was the headline in Monday's early



IN NANTES, western France, revelers cheer and wave the French flag on Sunday after projected results of the second round of parliamentary elections showed that the far right did not triumph as had been expected.

JEREMIAS GONZALEZ Associated Press

editions of the left-leaning Liberation newspaper — crazy, in slang usage — superimposed on a photo of a gigantic gathering in the Place de la Republique, a historic central Paris square.

The political disarray comes less than three weeks before the start of the Summer Olympic Games, although visitors to Paris were unlikely to experience much in the way of disruptions beyond the obstacle course that already exists in the city center.

Many among the throngs of tourists navigating the barricades and blockages on Monday said they were unaware of the previous night's commotion.

"We pretty much slept through it all," said Jack Cherry, 28, an Australian tourist who works in finance. "There were a few sirens and so forth that we heard, but that was about it."

For the French, though, the contest was all-consuming.

Into the wee hours of Monday, long after the last late-summer evening light

had left the sky, there was widespread rejoicing over the National Rally's defeat — but already, a dawning sense of the deadlock and instability that lie ahead.

"I think you can say 'dodged a bullet,' yes?" said Leslie Laurent, a Parisian retail manager in her 50s. She said she had supported Macron's bloc, but was relieved that the far right had not managed a triumph.

The vote's stakes were reflected in unusually high tensions surrounding the race — and by a turnout that authorities described as the highest in decades for a parliamentary contest.

The government sent 30,000 police officers into the streets on election day, and dozens of candidates reported having been physically attacked during the run-up to the balloting.

But by Monday morning, there was little sign of the previous evening's raucous celebrations. The Place de la Republique was swept clean, with a sole cleaning crew scrubbing away at new graffiti on the base of the square's central monument.

Macron, whose term does not expire until 2027, can remain in his post, although some opponents, including Jean-Luc Melenchon, the head of the leftist alliance's largest party, were already calling on him to step down.

With Macron's centrists having lost one-third of their previous seats, the president's handpicked prime minister, Gabriel Attal, proffered his resignation Monday — which Macron rejected, citing the need for stability. Attal had already offered to remain in his post until a new government could be formed, which may be a long and difficult process.

The National Rally — a successor party to the National Front, a xenophobic grouping that for decades was relegated to France's political fringe — had high hopes heading into the vote, expressing confidence that it could even achieve an absolute majority and form a government.

But although it fell far short of that aim, the National Rally dramatically increased its number of parlia-

mentary seats — a state of affairs that is likely to result in considerable hand-wringing once the initial euphoria wears off.

And not everyone, of course, is rejoicing.

The National Rally made its name with deep antipathy toward immigration and scorn for the European Union, but part of its appeal springs from hard-edged dissatisfaction with the cost of living and economic inequalities within France — sentiments shared even by many who felt that voting for the party would be an affront to France's democratic values.

Initial reaction from Macron's camp was muted. He made no immediate personal appearance, with his office saying the president would ensure that the "sovereign choice of the French people will be respected."

After the June 30 initial round of voting in which the National Rally came in first — which itself followed France's June 9 elections for the European Parliament, in which the National Rally also performed best — cen-

trist and leftist forces joined together, as they have in the past, to create a "Republican front."

That military-sounding endeavor is so named because it was intended to safeguard the French republic by blocking the far-right juggernaut.

The far right responded to the results with defiance. Its president, Jordan Bardella, the 28-year-old who had hoped to become the next prime minister, referred darkly to "dangerous electoral deals" made to stymie the National Rally's drive.

Leaning into the party's narrative that it champions the forgotten against a powerful elite, Bardella told supporters in Paris that these machinations had "deprived" National Rally supporters of the government they wanted.

Calling the early elections had been a huge gamble on Macron's part, and there was mixed opinion as to whether he had won his bet. He had counted on French voters repudiating the National Rally as a governing force, even if they were willing to lend it a protest vote.

Still, the battle was a deeply damaging one — and likely to leave Macron, deprived of a parliamentary plurality, a diminished figure in global affairs, including causes such as championing Ukraine and fighting climate change.

During the campaign, Macron described the far left as being equally as dangerous as the far right — a dynamic of enmity that will make it difficult for his centrists to secure even temporary tactical alliances with leftists.

At least at this juncture, none of the main blocs appeared willing to work with one another, and the successful leftist grouping in particular could be prone to infighting.

Marine Le Pen, the National Rally leader who did not contest this election but is expected to run for president in 2027, suggested in a post-vote TV interview that it had taken the combined efforts of the left and center to keep her party down.

In the night's setbacks, she told France's TFL, she saw "the ferments that are those of tomorrow's victory."

## Russian missiles hit children's hospital and apartments in Ukraine

More than 30 people are killed in strikes on five cities around the country the day before NATO summit.

By HANNA ARHIROVA AND ILLIA NOVIKOV

KYIV, Ukraine — Dozens of Russian missiles blasted cities across Ukraine on Monday, striking apartment buildings and a large children's hospital in the capital, where residents joined emergency crews to search through piles of rubble. At least 31 people were killed, officials said.

The daytime barrage targeted five Ukrainian cities with more than 40 missiles of different types, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on social media. Ukraine's air force said it intercepted 30 missiles. More than 150 people were wounded.

It was Russia's heaviest bombardment of Kyiv in almost four months, hitting seven of the city's 10 districts. Seven people were killed in the capital, including two staff members at the hospital, where three children were hurt. Strikes in Kryvyi Rih, Zelensky's birthplace in central Ukraine, killed 10.

"It is very important that the world should not be silent about it now and that everyone should see what Russia is and what it is doing," Zelensky said on social media.

Russia denied attacking the hospital and said the strikes hit military targets.

The attack unfolded a day before Western leaders



EMERGENCY services workers move part of the damaged roof of the Okhmatdyt children's hospital in Kyiv, Ukraine, after it was hit in a Russian missile attack.

EVGENIY MALOLETKA Associated Press

who have backed Ukraine were scheduled to begin a three-day North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit in Washington to consider how they can reassure Kyiv of the alliance's unwavering support and offer Ukrainians hope that their country can survive Europe's biggest conflict since World War II.

Zelensky said during a visit to Poland that he hopes the summit will provide more air defense systems for Ukraine.

At the Okhmatdyt children's hospital in Kyiv, rescuers searched for victims under the rubble of a partially collapsed, two-story wing of the facility.

At the hospital's main 10-

story building, windows and doors were blown out, and walls were blackened. Blood was spattered on the floor in one room. The intensive care unit, operating theaters and oncology departments all were damaged, officials said.

At the time of the strike, three heart operations were being performed, and debris from the explosion contaminated the patients' open chests, Health Minister Viktor Liashko said.

The hospital lost water, light and oxygen in the attack, and the patients were transferred to other hospitals, he told Ukrainian television.

Rescuers formed a line, passing along bricks and other debris as they sifted

through rubble. Smoke rose from the building, and volunteers and emergency crews worked in protective masks.

Some mothers carried their children away on their backs, while others waited in the courtyard with their children as calls to doctors' phones rang unanswered.

A few hours after the initial strike, another air-raid siren sent many of them hurrying to the hospital's shelter. Led by flashlight through the shelter's dark corridors, mothers carried their bandaged children in their arms, and medical workers transported other patients on gurneys. Volunteers handed out candy to try to calm the children.

Marina Ploskonos said her 4-year-old son had spinal surgery Friday.

"My child is terrified," she said. "This shouldn't be happening, it's a children's hospital," she added, bursting into tears.

"Among the victims were Ukraine's sickest children," said Volker Turk, the United Nations human rights commissioner, noting that a U.N. team visited the hospital shortly after it was hit and saw children receiving treatment for cancer in beds set up in parks and on streets.

"This is abominable, and I implore those with influence to do everything in their power to ensure these attacks stop immediately," Turk said.

Kyiv city administrators declared Tuesday a day of mourning, when entertainment events are prohibited and flags are lowered.

Ukraine's Security Service said it found wreckage from a Russian Kh-101 cruise missile at the site and began proceedings on war crimes charges. The Kh-101 is an air-launched missile that flies low to avoid detection by radar. Ukraine said it shot down 11 of 13 Kh-101 missiles launched Monday.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres called Monday's missile strikes "particularly shocking," spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting on the attacks for Tuesday at the request of France and Ecuador. Russia, which holds the council's rotating presidency this month, will preside at the meeting.

The International Crimi-

nal Court's founding charter says it is a war crime to intentionally attack "hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not military objectives."

Late last month, the court issued arrest warrants for Russia's former defense minister and its military chief of staff for attacking Ukraine's electricity network.

Russia's Defense Ministry said the strikes targeted Ukrainian defense plants and military air bases and were successful. It denied aiming at any civilian facilities and claimed without evidence that pictures from Kyiv indicated the damage was caused by a Ukrainian air defense missile.

Since early in the war that is well into its third year, Russian officials have regularly claimed that Moscow's forces never attack civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, despite abundant evidence to the contrary.

More than 1,600 medical facilities have been damaged since the start of the war, and 214 have been destroyed, according to Ukrainian Health Ministry statistics published last month.

Col. Yuri Ignat of the Ukrainian air force said Russia has been improving the effectiveness of its air strikes, equipping its missiles with enhancements, including so-called heat traps that evade air-defense systems.

Arhirova and Novikov write for the Associated Press. AP writer Samya Kullab in Kyiv contributed to this report.

## THE NATION

## Beryl slams into Texas, felling trees and killing 3

More than 2 million homes and businesses lose power after storm makes landfall as a Category 1 hurricane.

BY MARK VANCELEAVE  
AND JUAN A. LOZANO

HOUSTON — Tropical Storm Beryl sped across the Texas coast on Monday, leaving more than 2 million people and businesses without power in the Houston area and unleashing heavy rain that prompted dozens of high-water rescues. The fast-moving tempest threatened to carve a harsh path over several more states in coming days.

Within hours after Beryl swept ashore as a Category 1 hurricane, it had weakened into a tropical storm, far less powerful than the Category 5 behemoth that tore a deadly path of destruction through parts of Mexico and the Caribbean last weekend.

But the winds and rains of the fast-moving storm were still powerful enough to knock down hundreds of trees that had already been teetering in water-saturated earth and to strand dozens of cars on flooded roads.

At least two people were killed when trees fell on homes. A third person, a civilian employee of the Houston Police Department, was killed when he was trapped in floodwaters under a highway overpass, Houston Mayor John Whitmire said.

The National Hurricane Center said damaging wind and flash flooding would continue as Beryl pushes inland. There were no immediate reports of widespread structural damage.

More than 2.2 million homes and businesses were without power around Houston, the nation's fourth-largest city, after Beryl blew through, according to the CenterPoint Energy utility. For many, it was an all-too-familiar experience: Powerful storms had just ripped through the area in May, killing eight people, leaving nearly 1 million without power and flooding numerous streets.

Residents without power after Beryl were doing their best.

"We haven't really slept," said Eva Costancio as she gazed at a large tree that had fallen across electric lines in her neighborhood in the Houston suburb of Rosenberg. Costancio, 67, said already been without power



**A DESTROYED** trailer sits near beach homes in Matagorda, Texas, after Beryl came ashore. Two people in Texas were killed when trees fell on homes, and a third was fatally trapped in floodwaters under an overpass.



**IN BAY CITY**, Texas, Hook Jefferson assesses the damage from a fallen tree to his neighbor's home. Restoring power is a priority as temperatures rise again.

for several hours and worried that food in her refrigerator would be spoiled.

"We are struggling to have food, and losing that food would be difficult," she said.

Houston and Harris County officials said power crews would be sent into the area to restore service as quickly as possible, an urgent priority for homes also left without air conditioning in the middle of summer.

Temperatures, which had cooled slightly with the storm, were expected to reach back into the 90s as early as Tuesday.

"While these efforts are full steam ahead, we want residents to know and prepare for a possible multi-day power outage," Galveston city officials said on Facebook. "The estimated timeline is anywhere from 72 hours to two weeks in parts of the island."

Beryl's rains pounded Houston and other areas of the coast on Monday, closing streets in neighborhoods that had already been washed out by previous storms. Television stations on Monday broadcast the dramatic rescue of a man who had climbed to the roof

of his pickup truck after it got trapped in fast-flowing waters. Emergency crews used an extension ladder from a fire truck to drop him a life preserver and a tether before moving him to dry land.

Houston officials reported at least 25 water rescues by Monday afternoon, mostly for people with vehicles stuck in floodwaters.

"First responders are putting their lives at risk. That's what they're trained for. It's working," Whitmire said.

Javier Mejia was one of about 20 people who gath-

ered near the pickup truck rescue site to take pictures of other submerged vehicles sitting on the flooded highway.

"If you don't have a way through, you're going to get stuck like that," Mejia said.

Having experienced previous storms in Houston, Mejia stocked up on food and water before Beryl hit, but forgot gas for his portable generator. He planned to spend the day looking for some.

"I don't want it to go bad," he said of the food, adding that if he can't find gas, "We can just fire up the grill."

Many streets and neighborhoods throughout Houston were littered with fallen branches and other debris. The buzz of chainsaws filled the air Monday afternoon as residents set to work chopping up knocked-down trees and big branches that had blocked streets and sidewalks.

Two people were killed after trees fell on their houses: a man in the Houston suburb of Humble and a woman in Harris County, authorities said. Hundreds of trees fell in the county, crushing vehicles and damaging homes, said Precinct 4 County Constable Mark Herman.

Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who is acting governor while Gov. Greg Abbott is out of the country, warned that flooding could last for days as rain continued to fall on already saturated

ground. "This is not a one-day event," he said.

President Biden was getting regular updates on the storm after it made landfall, the White House said. The U.S. Coast Guard and the Federal Emergency Management Agency had prepared search and rescue teams, and FEMA collected bottled water, meals, tarps and electric generators in case they are needed.

Several companies with refineries or industrial plants in the area reported that the power disruptions necessitated the flaring of gases at the facilities.

Marathon Petroleum Corp. said it conducted a "safe combustion of excess gases" at its Galveston Bay Refinery in Texas City, but did not provide information on the amount of gas flared or how long it would continue. Formosa Plastics Corp. and Freeport LNG also reported flaring related to Beryl, according to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The earliest storm to develop into a Category 5 hurricane in the Atlantic, Beryl caused at least 11 deaths as it passed through the Caribbean on its way to Texas. It ripped off doors, windows and roofs with devastating winds and storm surge fueled by the Atlantic's record warmth.

Three times during the week, Beryl gained wind speeds of 35 mph in 24 hours or less, the official weather service definition of rapid intensification.

Beryl's explosive growth into an unprecedented early whopper of a storm indicates the hot water of the Atlantic and Caribbean and what the Atlantic hurricane belt can expect for the rest of the storm season, experts said. In Jamaica, officials said Monday that islanders will have to contend with food shortages after Beryl destroyed over \$6.4 million in crops and supporting infrastructure.

In Louisiana, heavy bands of rain were expected all day Monday and "the risk is going to be for that heavy rainfall and potential for flash flooding," National Weather Service meteorologist Donald Jones said in a Facebook Live briefing.

Vanceleave and Lozano write for the Associated Press. AP reporters Corey Williams in Detroit, Julie Walker in New York, Melina Walling in Chicago and Jeff Martin in Atlanta contributed to this report.

## 'Bob's Burgers' actor pleads guilty to interfering with police in Jan. 6 riot

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — An actor who played a street-brawling newsman in the movie "Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy" and a pizzeria owner in the television series "Bob's Burgers" pleaded guilty Monday to interfering with police officers trying to protect the U.S. Capitol from a mob's attack.

Jay Johnston, 55, of Los Angeles, faces a maximum sentence of five years in pris-

on after pleading guilty to civil disorder, a felony.

U.S. District Judge Carl Nichols is scheduled to sentence Johnston on Oct. 7.

The estimated sentencing guidelines for Johnston recommend a prison term ranging from eight to 14 months, but the judge isn't bound by that term of his plea agreement with prosecutors.

Johnston's attorney, Stanley Woodward, told his client to not comment to reporters as they left the courtroom.

Johnston, who was arrested in June 2023, is one of more than 1,400 people charged with federal crimes stemming from the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Video captured Johnston pushing against police and helping rioters who attacked officers guarding an entrance to the Capitol in a tunnel on the Lower West Terrace, according to an FBI agent's affidavit. Johnston held a stolen police shield over his head and passed it to other rioters during the



**JAY JOHNSTON** faces a possible five-year prison term for his Jan. 6 role.

attack on Jan. 6, 2021, the affidavit says.

Johnston "was close to the entrance to the tunnel, turned back and signaled for other rioters to come towards the entrance," the agent wrote.

Johnston was the voice of the character Jimmy Pesto on Fox's "Bob's Burgers." The Daily Beast reported in 2021 that Johnston was "banned" from the animated show after the Capitol attack.

Johnston appeared on "Mr. Show with Bob and

David," an HBO sketch comedy series that starred Bob Odenkirk and David Cross. His credits also include small parts on the television show "Arrested Development" and in the movie "Anchorman," starring Will Ferrell.

A court filing accompanying Johnston's plea agreement says he used his cellphone to record rioters as they broke through barricades and sent police officers retreating.

Facing the crowd on the Lower West Terrace, Johnston pounded his fists together and pointed.

Another rioter handed him a bottle of water, which he used to help others flush out chemicals from their eyes.

After passing the stolen shield, Johnson joined other rioters in collectively pushing against police officers guarding the tunnel entrance.

He left the tunnel minutes later, according to the agreement signed by Johnston.

Three current or former associates of Johnston identified him as a riot suspect from photos that the FBI published online, according to the agent.

The FBI said one of those associates provided investigators with a text message in which Johnston acknowledged being at the Capitol on Jan. 6.

"The news has presented it as an attack. It actually wasn't. Thought it kind of turned into that. It was a mess. Got maced and tear gassed and I found it quite untasty," Johnston wrote, according to the FBI.

## 3 at Columbia lose their posts after texts with 'antisemitic tropes'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Columbia University said Monday that it has removed three administrators from their positions and will keep them on leave indefinitely after finding that text messages they exchanged during a campus discussion about Jewish life "disturbingly touched on ancient antisemitic tropes."

In a letter to the Columbia community, university President Minouche Shafik and Provost Angela Olinto said the administrators have been permanently removed from their positions at the university's undergraduate Columbia College. The college's dean, who previously apologized for his part in the text exchanges, will remain in that role.

The university will also launch a "vigorous" anti-

semitism and anti-discrimination training program for faculty and staff in the fall, as well as related training for students, Shafik said.

The administrators, whom the university did not identify by name, were first put on leave last month after a conservative news outlet published images of what it said were text messages they exchanged while attending the May 31 panel discussion "Jewish Life on Campus: Past, Present and Future."

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce published some of the messages last week.

"This incident revealed behavior and sentiments that were not only unprofessional, but also, disturbingly touched on ancient antisemitic tropes," Shafik wrote. "Whether intended as such or not, these sentiments are unacceptable and

deeply upsetting."

Shafik said the text messages conveyed a "lack of seriousness about the concerns and the experiences of members of our Jewish community that is antithetical" to the university's values and standards.

Olinto wrote that the administrators' conduct was "wrong and contrary to the mission and values of our institution. It revealed, at best, an ignorance of the history of antisemitism."

The news outlet, the Washington Free Beacon, published examples on June 12 and 21 of what it said were some of the text exchanges.

Among them was a message suggesting that a panelist could have used recent campus protests as a fundraising opportunity and another that appeared critical of a campus rabbi's essay about antisemitism.

The panel about antisemitism was held a month after university leaders called in police to clear pro-Palestinian protesters out of an occupied administration building and dismantle a tent encampment that had threatened to disrupt graduation ceremonies.

The police action came amid deep divisions on campus as to whether some of the protests against Israel's military campaign in Gaza have been antisemitic.

Columbia College Dean Josef Sorett, whose text messages were among those published by the Free Beacon, will continue to lead the college after apologizing and committing to working to fix damage caused by the text exchanges, Olinto said. He and his administration will be expected to "deliver concrete change in combating antisemitism and discrimi-

nation and creating a fully inclusive environment," Olinto wrote.

"While not intended as such, some of the text messages exchanged may call to mind antisemitic tropes," Sorett said in a letter Monday to the Columbia College community. "Any language that demeans members of our community, or divides us from one another, is simply unacceptable."

"I am deeply sorry that this happened in a community that I lead and, that I was part of any of the exchanges, and I pledge to spearhead the change we need to ensure this never happens again," Sorett continued.

He said "the loss of trust and the pain this incident has caused, particularly to the Jewish members of our community, must be fully repaired."

# West is cooking under long-lasting heat wave

[Heat, from A1] according to Fremont city officials.

Las Vegas on Sunday smashed its all-time high temperature by three degrees, hitting 120 for the first time since record-keeping began in 1937, according to the weather service. Several record highs were set this weekend across California, including in the eastern deserts, Antelope Valley and the state's northwest corner.

Officials say the temperatures are eye-popping on their own, but the number of days topping 100, 110 or 115 degrees is also remarkable — and dangerous.

Much of inland California is expected to remain under an excessive heat warning through at least Friday, with many areas facing extreme heat risk several days in a row, forecasts show.

The San Joaquin Valley is expected to be under an excessive heat alert for 12 days straight — from early last week until Saturday — with weather officials warning that “this level of rare, long-duration extreme heat, with little to no overnight relief, affects everyone.”

While the Central Valley is accustomed to hot summers, health risks increase when overnight temperatures remain high. Some areas, including Bakersfield and Fresno, did not fall below 80 degrees Sunday.

“That could be potentially one of the longest [excessive heat warnings], if not the longest,” said Andy Bollenbacher, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Hanford. “This ridge of high pressure — it's very strong, and it's not moving anywhere.”

That high-pressure ridge — often referred to as a heat dome — is parked over the West, and nothing is expected to interfere with it for days, until it begins to move slightly eastward.

“We have a very large and long-standing pressure cooker over the San Joaquin Valley, and really all of California, keeping us very hot for a very long time,” Bollenbacher said.

It's difficult to tie one heat wave directly to climate change, but researchers continue to find that human-caused global warming drives more frequent and more intense heat events. Recent heat waves are more likely to break records amid warmer worldwide temperatures as well as increased urbanization, which raises baseline temperatures, Berc said.

“We've had long-duration heat waves, but to have this combined with the magnitude of the heat ... is unprecedented,” said Mike Wofford, a meteorologist for the weather service in Oxnard.



VISITORS to Death Valley National Park pose with a thermometer Sunday. Extreme heat there was tied to the death of a motorcyclist.

Ty O'NEIL Associated Press



LAS VEGAS is expected to break records for consecutive days at or above 110 degrees. “We're looking at maybe 15 days in a row,” one meteorologist said.

JOHN LOCHER Associated Press

UCLA climate scientist Daniel Swain said in a weekend briefing that this weather is part of a larger trend of warmer temperatures over time.

“There are people in California who have experienced not only the hottest day that they've ever experienced but also the hottest day that their parents or grandparents ever would have experienced,” Swain said.

In Southern California,

Palmdale and Lancaster on Sunday set records for the most consecutive days at or above 110 degrees — four — according to the National Weather Service, which has collected these data since the 1930s and 1940s. Wofford said the streak is expected to continue this week.

Highs are “all over 110 until maybe Friday,” Wofford said. Lancaster also tied its all-time record high, at 115 degrees Sunday.

Las Vegas is expected to break all-time records for consecutive days at or above 110 degrees, Berc said. Sin City had seen four days in a row over 110 as of Sunday night and is forecast to remain just as hot through early next week.

“We're looking at maybe 15 days in a row,” Berc said. “That's a record I expect we're going to destroy.”

In the Mojave Desert, record highs were tied Sun-

day, with Barstow hitting 118 and Bishop reaching 111, according to the National Weather Service. Barstow-Daggett Airport set a daily record minimum temperature for July 5, never dropping below 85 degrees.

Highs in areas of northwest California also set records Saturday, according to the weather service's Eureka office. Covelo hit 117, beating its prior all-time high of 115; Alderpoint hit 113, passing the prior record of 112; and Hoopa reached 114, surpassing the previous 111.

The rest of this week will see highs 10 to 15 degrees above average in much of California, Wofford said.

The eastern deserts are forecast to see the worst conditions through Thursday. The weather service's Las Vegas office is warning of “dangerously hot conditions for an unusually long period.” Highs across Owens Valley to Death Valley are expected to span from 105 to 129 through Thursday, the warning said.

The Sacramento Valley will remain under the excessive heat warning through Friday night, with hopes that next weekend could see temperatures finally dip below 100.

Most of southwestern California, with the exception of the coast, will remain under heat advisories through at least Thursday,

with the weather service urging residents to “take action when you see symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.”

“Anyone overcome by heat should be moved to a cool and shaded location,” the agency said. “Heat stroke is an emergency!”

Much of Northern California — Trinity, Mendocino, Humboldt and Lake counties — remained under an excessive heat warning through Monday evening.

Temperatures in the Pacific Northwest were also expected to remain well above average, with an excessive heat warning in effect across much of Oregon and Washington, where record highs this weekend reached the 90s and low 100s.

The National Weather Service is warning that this heat wave will continue to bring “elevated to critical fire weather conditions” across the interior, stoking “large fire growth” for new or existing blazes.

The latest fast-growing fire, in the Los Padres National Forest in Santa Barbara County, had surged past 20,000 acres as of Monday. The Lake fire has forced evacuations and was listed as 8% contained Monday morning.

Times staff writers Summer Lin and Nathan Solis contributed to this report.

## ‘It drives me nuts people are talking about this,’ defiant Biden says

[Biden, from A1] Trump.

It's unclear whether it will work as Biden begins one of the toughest political weeks of his tenure in office. Congress is returning with growing clamor in his party to replace him amid polls showing he is falling further behind in the national vote and key swing states.

Biden is also hosting a gathering of international allies at a North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit in Washington, where he will be under pressure to perform for a foreign audience, with worries about the ongoing war in Ukraine and the stability of America's leading role in the world, and a domestic audience eager to see if the president, 81, continues to show signs of decline. Biden has scheduled a rare news conference for Thursday.

He has cast the movement to persuade him to step aside as top-down and anti-democratic, though 60% of voters in a New York Times poll said he should be replaced on the ballot, nearly twice the number who said he should remain the party's nominee.

Biden had little opposition in the Democratic primaries, meaning only he can decide whether to bow out.

“The voters of the Democratic Party have voted. They have chosen me to be the nominee of the party,” he wrote in a letter to congressional Democrats on Monday, laying out his case for staying in the race. “Do we now just say this process didn't matter? That the voters don't have a say?”



PRESIDENT Biden with Jill Biden in Harrisburg, Pa., on Sunday. He had little opposition in the primaries, meaning only he can decide whether to bow out.

MANUEL BALCE CENETA Associated Press

Biden calling in to morning cable news to rail at his party's establishment was reminiscent of Trump's favorite method of communication. For years, even before he ran for election, Trump has been calling in to “Fox & Friends” to speak his mind to friendly hosts.

Early indications suggested Biden was at least buying time to make his case to stay in the race, and, if he can avoid missteps in the coming weeks, hoping that the attention to his frailty will die down. But for Democrats, it will still be a risky bet given Trump's polling lead and the likelihood that

concerns many Americans have over the president's age will not dissipate with time.

Trump has held only one public event in the 11 days since the debate, allowing Democrats to publicly discuss Biden's future and keep the focus on Biden's frailty, rather than Trump's criminal convictions, policy proposals or numerous lies told at the debate.

“It drives me nuts people are talking about this,” Biden said, adding, “Where the hell has Trump been?”

But he would not answer whether he has been tested for Parkinson's or other age-related illnesses.

“I had a bad night,” he said with a purposeful chuckle. “That's why I've been out. I've been testing myself.”

His press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, was equally evasive, refusing to answer why a Parkinson's expert, Dr. Kevin Cannard, visited the White House multiple times, citing security and privacy reasons in a testy exchange with reporters.

She said Biden has seen a neurologist three times since becoming president, during his physicals, but would not say whether it was Cannard or why he had

‘It should not be even close. And there's only one reason it is close, and that's the president's age.’

— REP. ADAM B. SCHIFF, Burbank Democrat and Senate candidate

come at least eight times over the last year and whether those visits were related to Biden.

Riverside Rep. Mark Takano was among four lawmakers on a conference call of leading House Democrats on Sunday to call for a change at the top of the ticket, according to a Democratic aide who was privy to the conversation. Other Democrats on the call also expressed deep concern without explicitly calling for change.

Rep. Adam B. Schiff, a Burbank Democrat and Senate candidate, stated his concerns in public.

“The performance on the debate stage, I think, rightfully raised questions among the American people about whether the president has the vigor to defeat Donald Trump. And this is an existential race,” Schiff said on “Meet the Press.” “It should not be even close. And there's only one reason it is close, and that's the president's age.”

Some Democrats have said the matter is urgent, po-

litically. But the party would have until at least the start of the Aug. 19 Democratic convention and probably beyond that to replace Biden, though the process would get increasingly messy.

Ohio initially required candidates to be finalized by Aug. 7, prompting Democrats to plan on voting virtually before the deadline. But the Legislature passed a bill in late May, signed June 2, that moves the deadline to Sept. 1.

Even if Democrats keep their plan to nominate Biden before the convention through a virtual process, they can always change their mind later if he withdraws, said Elaine Kamarck, author of “Primary Politics: Everything You Need to Know about How America Nominates Its Presidential Candidates.”

“Too much is being made about that. Once the convention meets, it can do whatever it wants to do,” said Kamarck, who also serves as a delegate.

The party could set up a process for nominating a replacement and pass rules through a roll-call vote. If Biden withdrew after a convention vote, the party could still find a replacement through a party committee vote, Kamarck said. Voters are technically electing a set of electors, meaning the ballot would not need to change, she said. Republicans have signaled they would probably sue in that event.

Times staff writer Seema Mehta contributed to this report.

## BUSINESS

## Boeing to plead guilty over two crashes

Company agrees to pay a \$243.6-million fine to avoid a criminal trial, Justice Department says.

BY DAVID KOENIG AND ALANNA DURKIN RICHER

Boeing will plead guilty to a criminal fraud charge stemming from two crashes of 737 Max jetliners that killed 346 people, the Department of Justice said late Sunday, after the government determined the company violated an agreement that had protected it from prosecution for more than three years.

Federal prosecutors gave Boeing the choice last week of entering a guilty plea and paying a fine as part of its sentence or facing a trial on the felony criminal charge of conspiracy to defraud the United States.

Prosecutors accused the American aerospace giant of deceiving regulators who approved the airplane and pilot-training requirements for it.

The plea deal, which still must receive the approval of a federal judge to take effect, calls for Boeing to pay an additional \$243.6-million fine. That was the same amount it paid under the 2021 settlement that the Justice Department said the company breached. An independent monitor would be named to oversee Boeing's safety and quality procedures for three years. The deal also requires Boeing to invest at least \$455 million in its compliance and safety programs.

The plea deal covers only wrongdoing by Boeing before the crashes in Indonesia and in Ethiopia, which killed all 346 passengers and crew members aboard two new Max jets. It does not give Boeing immunity for other incidents, including a panel that blew off a Max jetliner during an Alaska Airlines flight over Oregon in January, a Justice Department official said.

The deal also does not cover any current or former Boeing officials, only the corporation. In a statement, Boeing confirmed that it had reached the deal with the Justice Department but had no further comment.

In a filing Sunday night, the Justice Department said it expected to submit the written plea agreement with a U.S. District Court in Texas by July 19. Lawyers for some of the relatives of those



WORKERS recover debris of an Ethiopian Airlines 737 Max plane in 2019 near Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Prosecutors accused Boeing of deceiving regulators who approved the jet and pilot-training requirements for it.

who died in the two crashes have said they will ask the judge to reject the agreement.

"This sweetheart deal fails to recognize that because of Boeing's conspiracy, 346 people died. Through crafty lawyering between Boeing and DOJ, the deadly consequences of Boeing's crime are being hidden," said Paul Cassell, a lawyer for some of the families.

Federal prosecutors alleged Boeing committed conspiracy to defraud the government by misleading regulators about a flight-control system that was implicated in the crashes, which took place less than five months apart.

As part of the January 2021 settlement, the Justice Department said it would not prosecute Boeing on the charge if the company complied with certain conditions for three years. Prosecutors last month alleged that Boeing had breached the terms of that agreement.

U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor, who has overseen the case from the beginning, has criticized what he called "Boeing's egregious criminal conduct." O'Connor could accept the plea and the sentence that prosecutors offered with it or he could reject the agreement, likely leading to new negotiations between the Justice Department and Boeing.

The case goes back to the crashes in Indonesia and in Ethiopia. The Lion Air pilots in the first crash did not know about flight-control software that could push the nose of the plane down without their input. The pilots

for Ethiopian Airlines knew about it but were unable to control the plane when the software activated based on information from a faulty sensor.

The Justice Department charged Boeing in 2021 with deceiving Federal Aviation Administration regulators about the software, which did not exist in older 737s, and about how much training pilots would need to fly the plane safely. The department agreed not to prosecute Boeing at the time, however, if the company paid a \$2.5-billion settlement, including the \$243.6-million fine, and took steps to comply with anti-fraud laws for three years.

Boeing, which blamed two low-level employees for misleading the regulators, tried to put the crashes behind it. After grounding Max jets for 20 months, regulators let them fly again after the company reduced the power of the flight software. Max jets logged thousands of safe flights and orders from airlines picked up, increasing to about 750 in 2021, about 700 more in 2022 and nearly 1,000 in 2023.

That changed in January, when a panel covering an unused emergency exit blew off a Max during the Alaska Airlines flight over Oregon.

Pilots landed the 737 Max safely and no one was seriously injured, but the incident led to closer scrutiny of the company. The Justice Department opened a new investigation, the FBI told passengers on the Alaska plane that they might be victims of a crime, and the FAA said it was stepping up over-

sight of Boeing.

A criminal conviction could jeopardize Boeing's status as a federal contractor, according to some legal experts. The plea announced Sunday does not address that question, leaving it to each government agency whether to bar Boeing.

The Air Force cited "compelling national interest" in letting Boeing continue competing for contracts after the company paid a \$615-million fine in 2006 to settle criminal and civil charges, including that it used information stolen from a rival to win a space-launch contract.

The company, based in Arlington, Va., has 170,000 employees and dozens of airline customers spanning the globe. The best customers for the 737 Max include Southwest, United, American, Alaska, Ryanair and Flydubai.

But 37% of its revenue last year came from U.S. government contracts.

Boeing also makes a capsule for NASA. Two astronauts will remain at the International Space Station longer than expected while Boeing and NASA engineers troubleshoot problems with the propulsion system used to maneuver the capsule.

Even some Boeing critics have worried about crippling a key defense contractor.

"We want Boeing to succeed," Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a Connecticut Democrat, said during a Senate hearing last month on what he termed the company's broken safety culture. "Boeing needs to succeed for

the sake of the jobs it provides, for the sake of local economies it supports, for the sake of the American traveling public, for the sake of our military."

Relatives of the Max crash victims have pushed for a criminal trial that might illuminate what people inside Boeing knew about deceiving the Federal Aviation Administration. They also want the Justice Department to prosecute top Boeing officials, not just the company.

"Boeing has paid fines many a time, and it doesn't seem to make any change," said Ike Riffel of Redding, whose sons Melvin and Bennett died in the Ethiopian Airlines crash. "When people start going to prison, that's when you are going to see a change."

At a recent Senate hearing, Boeing Chief Executive David Calhoun defended the company's safety record after turning and apologizing to Max crash victims' relatives seated in the rows behind him "for the grief that we have caused."

Hours before the hearing, the Senate investigations subcommittee released a 204-page report with new allegations from a whistleblower who said he worried that defective parts could be going into 737s. The whistleblower was the latest in a string of current and former Boeing employees who have raised safety concerns about the company and claimed they faced retaliation as a result.

Koenig and Richer write for the Associated Press.

## New CEO envisions technology shift for Paramount

BY SAMANTHA MASUNAGA

To compete in today's tumultuous entertainment industry, Paramount Global will need to evolve into a "media and technology" company, tech scion and soon-to-be Paramount Chief Executive David Ellison told investors and financial analysts Monday, a day after the company's board approved a merger deal with his Skydance Media.

"When you look at the landscape that exists today, there are a lot of technology companies that are rapidly expanding into media companies," Ellison said during the hourlong call. "It is essential for Paramount to be able to expand its technological prowess to be both a media and technology enterprise."

Part of that plan involves improving the algorithmic engine and ad technology capabilities of Paramount's streaming service, Paramount+, he said. Making Paramount+ profitable is a key goal for Ellison, and reworking the algorithm that powers user recommendations should increase the time viewers spend on the platform and how content is delivered, he said. That, in turn, should help reduce churn.

On Sunday, the two companies announced that Paramount's board of directors had approved the \$8.4-billion bid for Ellison's Skydance Media and its backers to buy the Redstone family's Massachusetts holding firm, National Amusements Inc., giving Ellison control over Paramount and allowing Skydance to merge with the storied media company.

But the company still faces major challenges due to its heavy linear TV presence, as well as a heavy debt load. With all that in mind, the company needs to adapt to new technology, both to stay relevant and to become more efficient.

Ellison noted the partnership that Skydance Animation has with Oracle — which was co-founded by his father — to build a so-called studio in the cloud. Though animation has long been seen as an on-premise industry, Ellison said Skydance's newest animated film, "Spellbound," was partially produced in the cloud, which reduced costs.

"We intend to scale that business across all of our production workflows," he said, adding that the company plans to use artificial intelligence tools to "enhance creativity and drive production efficiencies."

"It really is that combination of art and technology that we believe is the cornerstone of this business and is going to be essential towards our future," Ellison said.

But market investors may not have been convinced. Shares of Paramount closed Monday at \$11.18, down 5%.

Ellison has withstood months of intrigue and negotiations to clinch control of Paramount. He first approached Paramount's non-executive chairwoman, Shari Redstone, last summer about making a deal for her late father's company. In June, it appeared the two sides were getting close to a resolution, but Redstone abruptly got cold feet and walked away from the deal.

The Ellison-led team of investors regrouped and a revised deal began to come together in recent weeks, culminating in Sunday's announcement. The deal requires regulatory approval.

In a note to employees Sunday night, Paramount's so-called Office of the co-CEOs, which is made up of three executives, said the company will continue to move forward with a plan unveiled late last month, which includes "streamlining teams, eliminating duplicative functions and reducing the size of our workforce."

"Until the transaction closes, it's business as usual," the note said.

## Major stock indexes

Index	Close	Daily change	Daily % change	YTD % change
Dow industrials	39,344.79	-31.08	-0.08	+4.39
S&P 500	5,572.85	+5.66	+0.10	+16.84
Nasdaq composite	18,403.74	+50.98	+0.28	+22.60
S&P 400	2,905.65	+9.85	+0.34	+4.46
Russell 2000	2,038.67	+11.94	+0.59	+0.57
EuroStoxx 50	4,969.83	-9.56	-0.19	+9.91
Nikkei (Japan)	40,780.70	-131.67	-0.32	+21.86
Hang Seng (Hong Kong)	17,524.06	-275.55	-1.55	+2.80

Associated Press

## MARKET ROUNDUP

## S&amp;P 500, Nasdaq hit new highs in mixed day

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — A subdued day of trading on Wall Street ended Monday with a mixed finish for the major stock indexes and more market milestones.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index and Nasdaq composite each notched all-time highs after finishing with gains of 0.1% and 0.3%, respectively. The Dow Jones industrial average closed 0.1% lower.

"The current market is positive and steady to a nearly unprecedented degree," said Mark Hackett, chief of investment research at Nationwide. "It's extremely rare to see these types of consistent gains with almost no volatility."

Specialty glassware maker Corning surged 12% for the biggest gain in the market after raising its sales forecast.

Troubled airplane maker Boeing rose 0.5% after agree-

ing to plead guilty to a criminal fraud charge stemming from two crashes of 737 Max jetliners that killed 346 people.

The government determined that the company violated an agreement that had protected it from prosecution for more than three years.

Entertainment giant Paramount Global slid 5.3% for the biggest decline among S&P 500 stocks after it agreed to merge with Skydance.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 5.66 points to 5,572.85. The Nasdaq added 50.98 points to close at 18,403.74. The Dow fell 31.08 points to 39,344.79.

The central bank will get more updates on inflation at the consumer level Thursday.

Treasury yields were relatively stable in the bond market. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.27% from 4.28% late Friday.

European stocks were mixed and stocks in Asia fell.

## U.S. airports break screening record

More than 3 million people went through security on Sunday, TSA says, amid airline industry's rebound.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

More than 3 million people passed through U.S. airport security Sunday, the first time that many have been screened in a single day, according to the U.S. Transportation Security Administration.

The record, which was widely predicted to happen at some point over the Fourth of July holiday weekend, topped the previous high of more than 2.99 million screened passengers, set June 23. Eight of the 10 busiest days in TSA history have come this year, as the number of travelers tops pre-pandemic levels.

The TSA was created after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and replaced a collection of private security companies that were hired by airlines. The agency operates under the Department of Homeland Security, which said agents checked 35 passengers every second Sunday.

While Americans grapple with inflation, travel costs, including airline tickets and hotels, have eased significantly from a year ago. Hotel rooms were 1.2% cheaper in May than the same month last year, according to government inflation data. Those costs have been



JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

TRAVELERS make their way through the Tom Bradley International Terminal at LAX on Sunday.

trending lower since the beginning of the year.

While most U.S. airlines lost money in the first quarter — traditionally the weakest time of year for travel — all were expecting a summer of full flights.

This spring, American and Southwest said they expected solid second-quarter profits. They joined Delta Air Lines and United Airlines in giving an upbeat outlook for the April-through-June period, which includes the start of peak season for carriers.

Delta reports its second-quarter earnings Thursday, with analysts predicting sales of \$15.5 billion, nearly \$1 billion more than the same period a year ago. Next week, United and American will issue their quarterly results; Wall Street is forecasting higher revenue from a year ago for both carriers.

Increasingly full planes since the COVID-19 pan-

demic shut down travel four years ago have brought a downside for airlines: customer complaints.

The Transportation Department last week said it received nearly 97,000 complaints in 2023, up from 86,000 the year before. The department said there were so many that it took until July to sort through the filings and compile the figures.

That's the most complaints since 2020, when airlines were slow to give customers refunds after the pandemic shut down air travel.

The Transportation Department said the increase was partly the result of travelers knowing about their rights and the ability to file a complaint. Airlines receive many more complaints from travelers who don't know how or don't bother to file them with the government, but the carriers don't release those numbers.

# Storied legacy rooted in Hollywood's early days

[History, from A1]

With the newly announced acquisition of Shari Redstone's holding company National Amusements Inc. by tech scion David Ellison's Skydance Media in an \$8.4-billion deal, the Mountain is coming under new management.

Now, Paramount Pictures will embark on the next chapter in its storied history at a time of deep existential anxiety and uncertainty for the movie business as a whole.

"Given the changes in the industry, we want to fortify Paramount for the future while ensuring that content remains king," Redstone, chair of Paramount Global and chief executive of National Amusements, said in a statement announcing the deal Sunday. "Our hope is that the Skydance transaction will enable Paramount's continued success in this rapidly changing environment."

For many content creators in Hollywood, the Skydance takeover comes as a relief, given that its other bidders, Sony Pictures Entertainment and Apollo Global Management, were expected to slash jobs and further shrink the pool of buyers.

Still, Paramount's future as a film studio remains uncertain. Ellison, who will take over as studio chief, will inherit not only its treasures but also its financial challenges, which steadily mounted over the nearly 40-year reign of the Redstone family.

The studio has already lost much of its former luster, said Stephen Galloway, dean of Chapman University's Dodge College of Film and Media Arts.

"The Redstones took over one of the great palaces of the industry, and now they have to let it go because they couldn't afford to maintain it," Galloway said. "It's goodbye to the butlers and the maids and the valets and the chauffeurs and the gardeners. Can anyone else keep the palace thriving? I don't know. Hopefully, David Ellison has a way to do it. But the film business per se isn't sustainable."

For all Paramount Pictures' ups and downs and ownership changes over the years, its story remains inextricably tied to that of Hollywood itself.



BARON Getty Images

**AUTEUR** Alfred Hitchcock directs a scene during the production of "The Man Who Knew Too Much" in 1955. The film, released the following year, was a Paramount remake of Hitchcock's 1934 thriller of the same name.

Paramount Pictures — whose origins trace back to 1912 through the merging efforts of Adolph Zukor's Famous Players Film Co., Jesse L. Lasky's Feature Play Co. and distributor Hodkinson — helped lay down the crucial foundations of the nascent movie business. Its first major success, Cecil B. DeMille's 1914 silent western "The Squaw Man," was one of the first feature-length films shot in Hollywood.

Early on, the studio placed itself at the vanguard of technological innovation, helping lead the transition out of the silent era with 1927's World War I film "Wings," which was released with a synchronized musical score and sound effects, and later embracing Technicolor and widescreen formats.

During the industry's Golden Age, Paramount produced a steady stream of hits and established a roster of stars, including Marlene Dietrich, Gary Cooper and the Marx Brothers. As a brand, Paramount was associated with class and prestige; indeed, at the first Academy Awards ceremony in 1929, "Wings" took home the best picture prize.

In his seminal history of Hollywood's Jewish founders, "An Empire of Their Own," author Neal Gabler

wrote that the Paramount films of the '20s and '30s "purred with the smooth hum of sophistication. ... The studio basked in its own daring, discrimination, taste and elan."

"I've been to Paris, France, and I've been to Paris, Paramount," director Ernst Lubitsch, who made a string of musicals and comedies at the studio in the 1930s, once quipped. "And frankly, I prefer Paris, Paramount."

In 1948, Paramount suffered a major blow when the Supreme Court ruled against the studios in an antitrust case brought by the U.S. government. Along with its rivals, Paramount was forced to divest its theater operations and end the practice of vertical integration that had allowed it to control production, distribution and exhibition. Governed by settlements known as the Paramount Decrees, the decision all but drove a stake into the heart of the old Hollywood studio system and hobbled Paramount's business.

In the mid-1960s, the studio, after being acquired by the oil and manufacturing conglomerate Gulf + Western, began a comeback under the brash leadership of former actor Robert Ev-

ans. As Evans wrote in his memoir, "The Kid Stays in the Picture," when he took over as head of worldwide production in 1966, "There were eight major studios at the time, and Paramount was ninth."

Within a decade, Evans had reversed the studio's fortunes and redefined its image with a string of critical and commercial hits, including "Rosemary's Baby," "Love Story," "The Godfather" and "The Conversation." In 1975, at the zenith of the Evans era, Paramount dominated the Oscars with 43 nominations, led by "Chinatown" and "The Godfather Part II," a record for any single studio.

As the creative ferment of the '70s gave way to the more corporate-minded culture of the 1980s, Paramount found success leveraging its "Star Trek" TV series into a string of films and generating new franchises from hits like "Raiders of the Lost Ark," "Beverly Hills Cop," "Friday the 13th" and "Airplane!"

Under the leadership of Sherry Lansing, who became the first woman to head a major studio in 1992, Paramount leaned even further into broadly appealing fare like Brian De Palma's 1996 action hit "Mission: Impossible," which kicked off a

valuable franchise that continues to this day, and James Cameron's 1997 blockbuster "Titanic," co-financed by 20th Century Fox, which became the highest-grossing film of all time, a record it would hold for more than a decade.

"In the '70s, Paramount had been known as the cutting edge of a new breed of filmmaker, but Sherry had very broad, commercial, mainstream taste," said Galloway, who wrote a 2017 biography of Lansing. "She liked character-driven dramas like 'Fatal Attraction,' which she had produced, and big, bold, audience-centric crowd-pleasers, like 'Titanic,' 'Forrest Gump' and 'Braveheart,' all of which won Oscars."

In the years that followed, as the media and entertainment landscape began to fragment, Paramount developed a reputation for aggressively managing costs under studio chief Brad Grey and the corporate overlords at Sumner Redstone's Viacom Inc., which took over the studio in 1994.

Paramount placed big bets on Michael Bay's "Transformers" films and Marvel comic-book fare like "Iron Man" and "Captain America: The First Avenger," but its slate otherwise

began to grow increasingly thin. While the frugality helped boost margins, it also made Paramount less attractive among some Hollywood talent.

Over time, as the studio attempted to navigate rapidly shifting consumer habits and volatile streaming landscape, Paramount came to be regarded as something of an also-ran.

The studio has not topped the U.S. box office charts since 2011, when it pulled in \$1.96 billion in domestic revenue, and the Paramount+ streaming service has struggled to compete with competitors like Netflix and Disney+.

In pursuing Skydance's acquisition of Paramount, Ellison — who has produced a string of blockbusters for the studio, including the 2022 smash "Top Gun: Maverick" — presented the board and shareholders a plan to pay down debt, restructure costs, invest more in the film studio and better harness data and analytics to compete in the streaming marketplace.

But for all the resilience the studio has shown over its more than 100 years in existence, the challenges ahead are more daunting than any it has faced before, and the Mountain is unlikely to ever cast as big a shadow as it once did.

With box office receipts for the industry down this year across the board, the studio has only one film on its slate this summer, the prequel "A Quiet Place: Day One," which debuted last month with a franchise-best \$53 million.

Even with Paramount's legacy, the path for a traditional film studio has grown only more tenuous in the era of streaming.

"Look at MGM — what was once one of the most storied studios in Hollywood is now a part of Amazon with no brand identity at all," Galloway said. "I hate to say it, but that could be the next step for Paramount. At some point, it could be the prelude to being sold to a much bigger corporation because these companies need deep pockets to compete in streaming or they're lost."

As fading silent star Norma Desmond famously says in 1950's "Sunset Boulevard" — one of Paramount's many jewels — "It's the pictures that got small."

## Paramount deal just the start of effort to revive entertainment giant

[Paramount, from A1]

as audiences haven't returned to movie theaters with the same frequency as before the COVID-19 pandemic. Add to that Paramount's particular woes with its money-losing streaming business as well as its heavy investment in cable networks that face challenges from cord cutting and declining advertising dollars, and it's clear there is a lot for Ellison and his investors to fix.

"There really are amazing assets in this company," said Jessica Reif Ehrlich, senior media and entertainment analyst at Bank of America Securities. "They just haven't been managed well."

For example, Paramount Pictures' historic Melrose Avenue studio is valuable, as is Paramount's broadcast network CBS. Some of the company's cable networks, which include Nickelodeon, BET and MTV, have prized content and recognizable names. But they're shells of what they used to be, Reif Ehrlich said.

"Every part of the business is under siege at this moment," she said. "They really do need to resolve what they will be and have a clear point of view and way to achieve that as soon as possible."

First and foremost is paying down Paramount's debt. Part of the company's balance sheet problem will be addressed with a \$1.5-billion cash infusion from Skydance, RedBird Capital Partners and the private equity firm KKR.

Getting Paramount on solid financial footing is key to its future success.

"This is very much about the fact that David Ellison and Skydance have had a 15-year relationship with Paramount," RedBird Capital founder Gerry Cardinale said in an interview. "So it made it a lot easier to look at a strategic recapitalization, as opposed to just do-

ing a deal."

Paramount's three current co-CEOs have already embarked on a \$500-million cost-cutting plan that will continue as the Skydance transaction unfolds. That plan involves evaluating the sale of certain Paramount assets, potentially including BET, as well as an unspecified number of layoffs. During an investor presentation Monday, Skydance executives said they had identified as much as \$2 billion in "cost efficiencies" that would help increase cash flow.

It's no secret that linear television revenue is declining as more customers cut the cord and abandon their traditional cable and satellite packages. But though the financial returns are diminishing, the cable networks are still making money for Paramount. That makes them an important asset to keep managing — strategically.

Last year, Paramount's TV media segment, which includes CBS and the cable networks, brought in about \$20 billion, or 68% of the company's total revenue, according to its annual report. But that was about an 8% decrease compared with 2022.

Things were slightly better in the first fiscal quarter of 2024, when TV media brought in \$5.2 billion in revenue, an increase of 0.7% compared with the same period a year ago.

"The linear business declining is not necessarily a bad story for Paramount," said Laurent Yoon, senior analyst at Bernstein. "It's already reflected in the stock price, and it's not Paramount's problem alone. There's not much they can do. They just have to manage the decline."

During Monday's investor call, Skydance and RedBird executives touted the value and reach of CBS, noting that the network was a "driver" for the company.

As one of Hollywood's



ALBERTO PEZZALI Associated Press

**DAVID ELLISON**, at the U.K. premiere of "Top Gun: Maverick" in 2022, will be Paramount's CEO.

first studios, 112-year-old Paramount Pictures is the crown jewel of the company. That's certainly how Sumner Redstone, Shari's late father, saw it.

It has churned out such landmark films as "The Godfather," "Chinatown" and "Breakfast at Tiffany's," while moving into the modern age with franchises like "Top Gun" and "Star Trek." But the company's studio business has been a mixed bag of late.

Paramount's filmed entertainment segment, which includes Paramount Pictures, animation arm Nickelodeon Studios and Miramax, brought in about \$3 billion in revenue last year, down 20% from the previous year, according to regulatory filings. For the three-month period ending March 31, Paramount's filmed entertainment sector revenue totaled \$605 million, up about 3% from last year.

In some respects, the studio is being hit by the same external forces battering the rest of the entertainment industry — the 2024 box office receipts are not reaching the levels they did last year and fall far short of pre-pandemic levels. But the studio's creative strategy needs to be rethought, as well as film budgets, said Reif Ehrlich of Bank of America.

Rethinking the studio strategy means leaning into

franchises, Shell said in an interview.

"In Hollywood, you really make money when you have big franchises and are able to monetize them, and they really have not done that very effectively at Paramount," Shell said. "For example, there's no 'Top Gun' theme park ride anywhere in the world."

If the studio's finances were optimized — meaning if it cut back on expenses — it could be a \$3-billion to \$4-billion business with a potential for a 10% to 15% margin, said Yoon of Bernstein.

"Paramount obviously has a great heritage when it comes to moviemaking," he said. "It feels like they should do better, but they're not."

The foray into the streaming business has been a costly one for Paramount. The company was late to join the so-called streaming wars, lagging behind competitors Netflix and even Disney, and then spent heavily on the service.

Even so, the company is struggling to add subscribers, leading to about \$2 billion in losses for Paramount+ since launch. In the first fiscal quarter of 2024, however, the company's streaming division reported revenue of nearly \$1.88 billion, up 24% compared with a year earlier. The segment's quarterly loss was \$287 million.

Ellison laid out a plan Monday for tech upgrades to the Paramount+ service, including improved ad technology and a better algorithmic recommendation engine that could help reduce subscriber churn and increase users' time on the platform.

One option currently being explored by the company is a joint venture for the streaming service, Paramount executives have said. Having a partner could help Paramount turn a profit in streaming, Yoon said.

Such a partnership would not be unprecedented.

In May, Warner Bros. Discovery and Walt Disney Co. said they would join together to offer a new streaming bundle this summer that would allow subscribers to access Max, Disney+ and Hulu in the same deal. Separately, Disney, Warner Bros. and Fox are preparing to launch a streaming venture for sports.

"It's generally believed at this point that Paramount+ could be profitable in 2025, but 'profitable' is relative," Yoon said. "Is it a dollar or is it a billion? They need to make sure the margin increases."

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Los Angeles Times

OPINION

EDITORIAL

# Big Oil lost a battle but will still fight to drill near homes

Fossil fuel companies withdrew a ballot measure to overturn state restrictions but may go to court.

**T**HE OIL INDUSTRY'S recent decision to abandon its effort to repeal California's neighborhood oil drilling restrictions and pull its referendum from the November ballot is a big relief.

After a 16-month suspension, the state's 2022 law banning new drilling within 3,200 feet of homes and schools is back in effect. It's a victory for public health, the environment and Californians, more than 2 million of whom live near drilling operations and are exposed to cancer-causing air pollutants and suffer related health ailments.

But it shouldn't be seen as a total defeat for the oil companies that walked away with a healthy return on the more than \$25 million they invested in the effort: A lengthy delay to a law they didn't like, an undermining of the legislative process, and the ability to keep extracting oil and profits from our backyards without these restrictions for more than a year.

When the California Independent Petroleum Assn., the industry lobbying group backing the referendum, announced the withdrawal of the measure last month, it blamed lawmakers, saying that even if its side won and voters repealed the law in November, the Legislature would simply intro-

duce other, similar bills.

A bill by Assemblymember Isaac Bryan (D-Los Angeles) may have been the last straw. That legislation would penalize low-producing wells within the buffer zone with \$10,000-a-day fines, and had cleared the state Assembly and started to move through the Senate late last month. But after negotiations with worried industry representatives, Bryan said he promised to narrow the scope of the bill if they pull the referendum from the ballot.

We're guessing that another reason for the industry's failure was a law passed last year that changed the confusing way questions are phrased in a referendum. Instead of choosing between "yes" and "no," voters now decide whether to "keep the law" or "overturn the law." Fossil fuel interests could no longer count on voter confusion to help them get rid of a law they didn't like, and polling showed the referendum did not have enough public support.

Also key to its defeat was the strength of the coalition defending the law, which included former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, actor Jane Fonda and grassroots environmental justice groups. The industry may not have relished going up against local activists — such as Nalleli Cobo — who have lived near drilling operations and fight the oil industry by focusing on the harm extraction inflicts on communities of color. Gov. Gavin Newsom also championed these protections and rebuffed industry pressure to weaken the law by narrowing the buffer zone or carving out exemptions in Signal Hill and



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

**A CALIFORNIA** law banning new drilling within 3,200 feet of homes and schools is back in effect after a 16-month suspension. Above, a pump jack sits idle.

Long Beach.

No matter what combination of factors was responsible, the restoration of this law shows you can fight Big Oil and win (and that it doesn't hurt to have a well-funded campaign that raised more than \$30 million and powerful allies in government and Hollywood).

Still, the oil industry has made it clear that its fight to keep drilling in neighborhoods will continue, only in court instead of on the ballot. It's still the state's most powerful lobby and we can expect it to keep using its money and influence to try to get its way.

Now that the law is in force again, the

California Geologic Energy Management Division, the state's oil and gas regulator, must move past its history of coziness with the fossil fuel industry and rubber-stamping oil wells and use its authority vigorously to protect public health and safety. This division now plays a crucial role in policing a dirty industry whose days are numbered by the move to zero-emission vehicles and ensuring it winds down its operations quickly and safely, and takes responsibility for cleaning up its mess.

Although this latest threat is now off the ballot, the fight with Big Oil and its damage to our communities and our planet remain far from over.

LETTERS



MATT KELLEY Associated Press

**BIDEN** supporters attend a June 28 rally. Some potential donors have expressed doubt about the president.

## The arrogance of the wealthy

Re "Major Hollywood donors pressure Biden to step aside," July 6

**P**RESIDENT BIDEN may stay in the race, he may not. In either case, I'm sure it's comforting to our NATO allies to read that critical U.S. political decisions are being made by movie stars and blockbuster producers.

But that's what you get with a system that forces voters to choose not the best qualified politician but the best funded.

BART BRAVERMAN  
Indio

I never cease to be amazed at the arrogance of the wealthy, who seem to think that because they're rich, their opinions matter more and that they're somehow entitled to influence our politics.

If President Biden remains the nominee of the Democratic Party, these Hollywood donors certainly have the right to withhold their campaign contributions. But if they choose to do so, I hope they'll be happy living under an authoritarian Trump regime.

STEPHEN BULKA  
Los Angeles

::

In an attempt to sup-

press any hints of self-aggrandizement, I would like to remind rich Hollywood political backers that, according to news reports, Rick Caruso spent \$160.42 per vote while Karen Bass spent \$10.15.

Yes, funds are important, but apparently they are not the deciding factor.

BARBARA DOSS  
Hawthorne

### So much for a check on power

Re "Can Donald Trump still face trial for Jan. 6?," July 5 and "We should all dissent, not respectfully," July 2

Thanks to Harry Litman and Erwin Chemerinsky for their excellent op-eds on the recent Supreme Court decision regarding Donald Trump's immunity from criminal prosecution. I was struck by how the majority relied on the supposed separation of powers principles — not the actual text of the Constitution — to, as Litman wrote, "forbid the criminal prosecution of a former president for 'official acts'" and rule that "this immunity precludes any consideration of motive."

The framers of the Constitution were caught between two extremes from the recent memories of their time: the ineffectiveness of the Articles of Confederation and the tyranny of a British monarch. And thus, we have the constitutional principles of "separation of powers" and "checks and balances."

I think Justice Louis Brandeis got the principles of separation of powers correct in his dissent in the 1926 Supreme Court case *Myers vs. United States*: "The doctrine of separation of powers was adopted by the Convention of 1787, not to promote efficiency but to preclude the exercise of arbitrary power."

JOHN EAGLESHAM  
Long Beach

Litman has been excited about the Russia investigation, the impeachment efforts, then the Jan. 6 committee hearings, and finally the conviction of Trump in New York City.

I would say this to Litman: If Trump had anything to do with the trespassing at the Capitol on Jan. 6, he would be in prison right now. As I see it, the reason why Trump is back is because the elites supported an incompetent candidate in 2020.

MARK WALKER  
Yorba Linda

::

If the former president does get elected once more and is indeed the "one day" dictator, will his personal Supreme Court sycophants also then undo the 22nd Amendment limiting the president to only two terms, or will they grant him the title of president-for-life?

PETER AMBROSE  
Claremont

::

Litman stated that "the justices are not, strictly speaking, interpreting any provision of the Constitution but rather applying their notion of what makes for an effective president."

It appears to me that the

Supreme Court has overstepped its judicial function in favor of constructing a new amendment to our Constitution dealing with the indemnification of presidents. Unfortunately for the Supreme Court, there is no authority for the justices to take it upon themselves to construct a new amendment. The justices rather have the authority of overseeing the judicial system in the United States. Therefore, it seems that the justices' opinion regarding the indemnification of Donald Trump should be declared null and void.

RICK PALARDY  
Temecula

### What happened to originalism?

Re "Court pits Trump against rule of law," July 3

So, what happened to the Supreme Court's "originalist" jurists who attempt to fathom the minds of the Founders to determine their original intent?

Could they possibly believe that our Founding Fathers intended to create a presidency whose occupant is not accountable to the laws that govern the people over which she or he presides? Had our founders not just freed themselves of the bonds of a monarch who ruled without such accountability? If the so-called originalists don't hear the Founding Fathers spinning in their graves, either they are deaf or they never believed in their theory in the first place. The United States of America: Democracy or Hypo-crazy?

LAURIE JACOBS  
San Clemente

::

Perhaps one answer to last week's immunity ruling by the Supremes, and to Trump's ongoing rallies, might be to heap ridicule on him and his campaign. Just take the Project 2025 plan and paste it on him, along with a paper crown and wooden scepter. Publicize it broadly. Perhaps enough voters will wake up to what a horror it all is.

PAUL COOLEY  
Culver City

### We're in the age of Amazon

Re "I'm not celebrating Amazon's birthday," July 5

Jen Caltrider wrote that "consumers shouldn't bear the burden of making Amazon better; policymakers and regulators should."

Do you really want to wait for that? If you want to change Amazon, cancel your memberships, delete your accounts and use your local stores and libraries for your needs. Otherwise, Amazon just continues to take over the world.

MOIRA WADELLE  
Los Angeles

::

It's unfair to single out Amazon as data and personal information collectors. Our privacy has been taken by everyone, be it by websites, the government, car tracking devices, cell-phones, social media, etc. That's just the way it is.

I, for one, am celebrating 30 years of Amazon. Jeff Bezos' brilliant website has made my life so much easier. I can get almost anything there. Sure, I have some problems with Amazon, but overall it has changed people's lives big time.

RODGER HARGEAR  
Los Angeles

### L.A. has made real progress

Re "Grants Pass ruling: Influx to L.A.?", July 7

On her first day in office, in December 2022, Bass declared a homelessness state of emergency. The number of homeless residents counted in Los Angeles County has dipped slightly, decreasing by about 0.3% since last year.

While any reduction in homelessness is a significant accomplishment, however small, it underscores Mayor Bass' steadfast commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of those in need. As a formerly homeless single parent who has experienced the challenges of living on Skid Row more than once, I sincerely appreciate her inclusive strategies, which make us all feel we have a role in addressing homelessness and fostering a sense of shared responsibility.

ERIC PROTEIN MOSELEY  
Richmond

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## OP-ED

## Biden put his party in a pickle. What can it do?

Democrats openly ask whether they would be better off with Kamala Harris as their candidate.

By Scott Jennings

DEMOCRATS ARE IN quite a pickle.

Actually, they probably wish they had pickled their 81-year-old standard-bearer — President Biden — to preserve him until November. Biden set off a round of epic hand-wringing following his disastrous debate performance against Donald Trump on June 27 and did little to quell concerns about his fitness in his subsequent interview with ABC's George Stephanopoulos.

Republicans like me are somewhat amused by this newfound concern over Biden's age, as his decline has been obvious for years. But there was a curious lack of curiosity about it until the debate and the dreadful polls that followed showing Biden losing to Trump in a national landslide (the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and CNN all show Trump winning by at least 6 points).

There are now serious concerns

about Biden's capacity to function. Axios' Alex Thompson reports one former White House aide saying that Biden is "staffed so closely that he's lost all independence." The New York Times says Biden's "lapses appear to have grown more frequent, more pronounced and ... more worrisome."

Biden is not just a candidate, of course. He's the current commander in chief! And he has made clear that performing the duties of president (an overseas trip that ended nearly two weeks before the debate and a cold) made him too "exhausted" to debate Trump for 90 minutes. Biden is engaged in his job from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, according to Axios, but is less reliable outside that time window.

Never mind the 3 a.m. call that Hillary Clinton once warned about. Americans are now hoping that the world's bad actors don't cause havoc in the late afternoon.

But Democrats aren't responding to the alarm that the current president may be unable to execute his duties. If Biden had simply performed in a middling fashion against Trump and remained within striking distance in the post-debate polling, they'd be just fine sticking with a candidate who will be 86 at the end of his second term.

The Democratic freakout is all political. If you think Biden won't

be up to the job in January, you must believe he isn't up to it today. So why aren't there more calls for Biden to resign instead of just stand aside as a candidate? As of this writing, the Biden family appears dug in deeper than an Alabama tick. But Democrats are openly wondering: Would we be better off with Vice President Kamala Harris in November?

It's a good question. Biden never trailed against Trump in 2020, but today he is consistently behind, suffers from a job approval in the high 30s, and faces an electorate that knows he cannot fulfill the duties of the office for four more years.

Let me stipulate that I don't think Democrats can shift to anyone but Harris. She's the first Black female vice president of the United States, and Democrats aren't going to pass over her for another white male. Please. To skip her would be to admit she wasn't qualified for her current job, the one Biden chose her for in 2020, and that's simply not going to happen.

A Harris candidacy might have some appeal — she is far younger, which takes the fitness question off the table. She will get a blast of energy from a political media that hates Trump and has clearly moved on from Biden. And she might have the capacity to reenergize the minority voters who are

Right now, the Biden family looks dug in at the White House. But that doesn't make the president the safest bet for defeating Trump.

souring on Biden in poll after poll.

But let's not sugarcoat this — Harris is not a great politician. Her own approval rating is 37%, about where we find Biden. Her presidential campaign in 2020 was a complete flop, the high-water mark coming when she implied that Biden was a racist during a debate. And her weird speeches featuring the phrase "the significance of the passage of time" and "unburdened by what has been" have become the laughingstock of the internet.

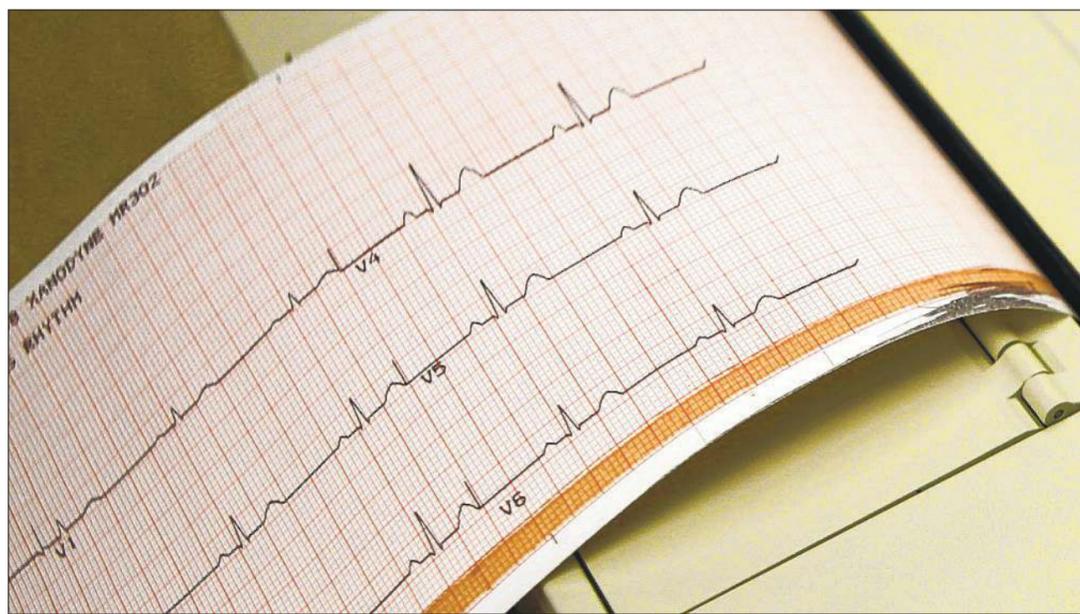
Part of Biden's 2020 appeal was that he at least faked the idea of being a genial, middle of the road dealmaker who could resist the extremes of both parties. With Harris, you get an unapologetic, card-carrying progressive who embraces whatever bubbles up from the liberal fever swamps.

It would be reasonable for Democrats to conclude that they'd be better off with anyone but Biden. All of the party's voters who would pick a stuffed buffalo over Trump will come to a new nominee, and a fresh face would remove the Biden age baggage.

But Biden did beat Trump once (by roughly 44,000 votes in three states) and did win the Democratic nomination in 2024. To remove him now may seem like a knee-jerk reaction to a nation craving strong leadership. There's some chance Biden could win again, albeit a dwindling one if you believe the data-crunching forecasters. And it would be sort of comical for the self-appointed party of democracy to strip the nomination from someone who won it fair and square in a series of primary contests.

My money is on Biden remaining the nominee. His wife is on the cover of Vogue in August and his son Hunter gets to hang out at Camp David and the White House while preparing for his felony tax evasion trial in September. Something tells me you'll have to drag the Biden family out of the White House by the fingernails.

SCOTT JENNINGS is a former special assistant to President George W. Bush and a senior CNN political commentator.  
@ScottJenningsKY



JEFF ROBERSON Associated Press

## It's not just hype. AI could revolutionize diagnosis in medicine

The future isn't handing over the keys to computers but making use of what they can do and funding these efforts adequately

By Gaurav Singal and Anupam B. Jena

THE HISTORY OF medical diagnosis is a march through painstaking observation. Ancient Egyptian physicians first diagnosed urinary tract infections by observing patterns in patients' urine. To diagnose diseases of the heart and lungs, medieval doctors added core elements of the physical examination: pulse, palpation and percussion. The 20th century saw the addition of laboratory studies, and the 21st century of sophisticated imaging and genetics.

Despite advances, however, diagnosis has largely remained a human endeavor, with doctors relying on so-called illness scripts — clusters of signs, symptoms and diagnostic findings that are hallmarks of a disease. Medical students spend years memorizing such scripts, training themselves to, for example, identify the sub-millimeter variations in electrocardiogram wave measurements that might alert them to a heart attack.

But human beings, of course, err. Sometimes, misdiagnosis occurs because a doctor overlooks something — when the patterns of illness fit the script, but the script is misread. This happens in an estimated 15% to 20% of medical encounters. Other times, misdiagnosis occurs because the illness has features that do not match known patterns — they do not fit the script, such as when a heart attack occurs without telltale symptoms or EKG findings.

Artificial intelligence can help solve these two fundamental problems — if it's given enough financial support and deployed correctly.

First, AI is less susceptible to common factors that lead doctors to make diagnostic errors: fatigue, lack of time and cognitive bandwidth when treating many patients, gaps of knowledge and reliance on mental shortcuts. Even when illnesses conform to scripts, computers will sometimes be better than humans at identifying details buried within voluminous healthcare data.

Using AI to improve the accuracy and timeliness with which doctors recognize illness can mean the difference between life and death. Ischemic stroke, for example, is a life-threatening emergency where a blocked artery impedes blood

flow to the brain. Brain imaging clinches the diagnosis, but that imaging must be performed and interpreted by a radiologist quickly and accurately. Studies show that AI, through superhuman pattern matching abilities, can identify strokes seconds after imaging is performed — tens of minutes sooner than by often-busy radiologists. Similar capabilities have been demonstrated in diagnosing sepsis, pneumonia, blood clot in the lungs (pulmonary embolism), acute kidney injury and other conditions.

Second, computers can be useful for illnesses for which we haven't developed the right scripts. AI can, in fact, diagnose disease using new patterns too subtle for humans to identify. Consider, for example, hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, a rare genetic condition in which the heart's muscle has grown more than it should, leading to eventual heart failure and sometimes death. Experts estimate that only 20% of those affected are diagnosed, a process that requires consultation with a cardiologist, a heart ultrasound and often genetic testing. What, then, of the remaining 80%?

Researchers across the country, including at the Mayo Clinic and UC San Francisco, have demonstrated that AI can detect complex, previously unrecognized patterns to identify patients likely to have hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, meaning AI-driven algorithms will be able to screen for the condition in routine EKGs.

AI was able to recognize these patterns after examining the EKGs of many people with and without the disease. The rapid growth in healthcare data — including detailed electronic health records, imaging, genomic data, biometrics and behavioral data — combined with advancements in artificial intelligence technology has created a major opportunity. Because of its unique ability to identify patterns from the data, AI has helped radiologists to find hidden cancers, pathologists to characterize liver fibrosis and ophthalmologists to detect retinal disease.

One challenge is that AI is expensive, requiring large-scale data to train computer algorithms and the technology to

AI SYSTEMS have detected patterns in a standard EKG that can identify a genetic heart disease.

do so. As these resources become more ubiquitous, that can make the associated intellectual property difficult to protect, discouraging private investment in these products. More generally, diagnostics have long been considered unattractive investments. Unlike their therapeutic counterparts, which see around \$300 billion in research and development investment a year, diagnostics receive a modest \$10 billion in private funding.

Then there's the question of who pays for the use of AI-based tools in medicine specifically. Some applications, such as detecting strokes, save insurers money (by preventing costly ICU stays and subsequent rehabilitation). These technologies tend to get reimbursed more quickly. But other AI solutions, such as detecting hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, may lead to increased spending on costly downstream therapies to treat newly identified chronic illness. Although the use of AI may improve quality of care and long-term outcomes in such cases, without financial incentives for insurers, reimbursement and thus adoption may be slow.

Life sciences companies have on rare occasion agreed to subsidize development or reimbursement of AI-based diagnostics. This will help bridge the gap, but the federal government may need to play a greater role. Federal support for COVID diagnostics during the pandemic drove rapid development of critical tests, and the cancer moonshot project has helped drive R&D in screening and new treatments.

It is usually tough to marshal funding at the scale needed for new medical frontiers. But the National Academies of Medicine has estimated that tens of billions of dollars and countless lives could be saved from improving diagnosis in medicine.

Artificial intelligence offers a path toward that. It should complement, rather than replace, the human expertise that already saves so many lives. The future of medical diagnosis doesn't mean handing over the keys to AI but, rather, making use of what it can do that we can't. This could be a special moment for diagnosis, if we invest enough and do it right.

GAURAV SINGAL is a computer scientist and physician at Harvard Medical School and was previously the chief data officer of Foundation Medicine, a cancer diagnostics company. ANUPAM B. JENA is an economist, physician and professor at Harvard Medical School and co-author of "Random Acts of Medicine: The Hidden Forces That Sway Doctors, Impact Patients, and Shape Our Health" and the Random Acts of Medicine Substack.

## Bronny James is seeing the downside of being a nepo baby

LZ GRANDERSON

EXPERIENCE IS SAID to be life's best teacher. However, it seems our culture believes suffering is the only experience worth learning from. It isn't, of course. Pain is just easier to remember. Still, if we're paying attention, we can also learn a lot while experiencing joy.

For example, on June 27 — while riding the euphoria from hearing his name called in the second round of the NBA draft — Bronny James learned that public scrutiny takes no days off. I'm sure he's been aware of that from watching his father deal with criticism — both fair and unfair — for 20 years. Now he's learned it for himself in presumably one of the happiest moments of his life.

And in case Bronny wasn't paying attention last month, that lesson is being taught again during Summer League as his quiet debut — 4 points on 2 of 9 shooting — was followed up by being kept out next game for a slightly swollen knee. Not exactly the kind of start that will silence naysayers, though one could argue a teenage second-round pick shouldn't have naysayers to begin with. This is the other side of nepotism. The side that doesn't get talked about and few think about unless they go through the fire themselves.

Being second-guessed is the kind of lesson that will follow Bronny in team losses as well as celebrations and victories. Talk of him being a local high school kid who gets drafted by his hometown team was never going to be in the cards for someone with his name. Whether he was the top pick in the draft or the last, people are going to assume he had an unfair advantage.

A storyline about making history as his father's teammate was instantly supplanted by criticism that he only got there because of his father. Not just the night the Lakers drafted him either. That was said about him in college and similarly he was second-guessed in high school. That's the trade-off for being the son of LeBron James — all the public benefits of access and the private burden of comparison. And not just comparison to his father but to every

player drafted after him or not drafted at all.

Compounding this reality is the Polyanish chorus about sports being some sort of meritocracy as if talent were the reason Colin Kaepernick couldn't find a new job in the NFL. Dear gentle reader ... certainly in a town full of "nepo babies" who are quick to grab a new name for independence but slow to release the benefits

NIC COURRY Associated Press

**LAKERS GUARD**  
Bronny James at a game on Saturday.

that come with the old name, there must be an appreciation for someone facing the criticism head on.

Not that he has much choice.

Besides, money is but one form of currency. Family connections are another. Some people spend, some people save — either way, you can't take it with you. So maybe LeBron decided to do some spending and use his connections for his son's benefit.

If I were in his position, I would have done the same thing, and I'm hardly alone. In fact, in certain industries nepotism has long been the currency of choice.

A 1959 Washington Daily News study found nearly 100 members of Congress had their spouses, children or other family members on the payroll. Even after federal anti-nepotism legislation passed in response to John F. Kennedy appointing his brother Bobby as attorney general, relationships are still leveraged to aid family members in Washington. President Clinton placed his wife, Hillary, in charge of a healthcare task force, and Donald Trump brought in his daughter and son-in-law. Having an NFL executive of the year as a grandfather certainly helped Sean McVay get his foot in the door. Having a legendary coach as a father helped Denver Nuggets coach Michael Malone as well as Philadelphia assistant coach Coby Karl.

So, yeah, Bronny James benefited from his father's name. He also carries the weight of his father's name. And on the day he was drafted, arguably one of the happiest moments of his life, he learned that weight is most likely never coming off. Accusations of nepotism will shadow his career until he shines on his own. And even then, he'll be second-guessed.

That's the trade-off of life ... and one hell of a life lesson.

@LZGranderson



# Baldwin's case hit hurdles before going to court

**[Baldwin, from A1]** — which some experts believe is a stretch by prosecutors — get this far?

Public pressure, high-stakes legal maneuvering and hubris all have played a role.

Production of the movie finished in Montana last year, but "Rust" doesn't have a release date. In addition, New Mexico officials have denied the movie producers' request for as much as \$1.6 million in tax incentives.

Baldwin and his attorneys declined to comment.

Baldwin's criminal case suffered multiple setbacks. And Baldwin — long a polarizing figure — has invited additional scrutiny over some of his actions.

In a move questioned by experts, Baldwin agreed to an interview with ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos weeks after the shooting. "I didn't pull the trigger," Baldwin said. Instead, he blamed others for the tragedy in a wooden church at Bonanza Creek Ranch, a sprawling stretch of high desert south of Santa Fe.

Baldwin told Stephanopoulos during the December 2021 interview that he pointed the gun at Hutchins during a rehearsal because he had directed him to.

"During this interview, everything changed," special prosecutor Kari T. Morrissey wrote in an April court filing. "Mr. Baldwin ... blamed the incident on Ms. Hutchins."

Baldwin was told the gun was "cold" that day, meaning it lacked live ammunition. Baldwin and others have emphasized that actors are not tasked with checking guns.

On "Rust," two crew members, the armorer Hannah Gutierrez and assistant director David Halls, were responsible for safety.

Baldwin's attorneys have argued Baldwin lacked an awareness that his actions could be dangerous. But prosecutors and weapons experts counter that the first rule of gun use is not pointing it at someone and not pulling the trigger, par-



**ALEC BALDWIN**, in glasses, appears Monday for a pretrial hearing in Santa Fe. Jury selection begins Tuesday in the actor's involuntary manslaughter trial. Legal experts say his celebrity may help his case, or hurt it.

ticularly when someone is standing nearby.

"The law is on the side of the prosecutors in this case," said Joshua Kastenber, a law professor at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. "But there's a belief that the facts lean more towards an acquittal than a conviction."

For example, the armorer has already been convicted of involuntary manslaughter for Hutchins' death. Gutierrez is serving time in a New Mexico prison, which Kastenber said could reinforce a view among some of the Baldwin jurors that the person most responsible for the tragedy has already been prosecuted.

Prosecutors had planned to point to Baldwin's role as one of the film's producers, maintaining that he had an obligation to ensure "Rust" was a safe set. But on Monday, a judge ruled she won't allow jurors to consider that.

Crew members have testified previously that the production was rushed and chaotic. Prosecutors maintain that the producers recognized Gutierrez, who was working on just her second film as head armorer, was

overwhelmed.

Morrissey plans to introduce evidence — outtakes from the filming of "Rust" — that depicts Baldwin ordering crew members to hurry up.

Kastenber said the case boils down to: When does negligence become a crime? "And that's a pretty high bar," he said.

The investigation into the "Rust" shooting has faced multiple hurdles and delays, exacerbated by sharp tensions between defense attorneys and prosecutors.

Baldwin has hired a team of eight high-powered lawyers, led by Quinn Emanuel's Luke Nikas and Alex Spiro, who have accused Morrissey and her predecessors of mistakes and misconduct.

Morrissey has denied such allegations and countered in an April court filing that the defense's goal is "to ensure the case is not heard on its merits [but] to discredit the prosecution, investigation and witnesses in the media so that a conviction becomes unlikely for reasons other than Mr. Baldwin's criminal culpability."

A judge denied Baldwin's repeated requests to dismiss his indictment, clearing the way for this week's trial.

Baldwin's statements to ABC News in 2021 influenced the Santa Fe County sheriff's investigation, which spent nearly a year on the case.

Still, investigators were unable to determine how live ammunition wound up on the movie set. It was Morrissey who this year — after studying thousands of photos from the October 2021 production — alleged that Gutierrez brought it with her to New Mexico.

Sheriff's investigators wanted to see whether Baldwin's account was plausible.

So the lead detective, Cpl. Alexandria Hancock, ordered violent testing of the gun. An FBI analyst repeatedly used a rawhide mallet to apply force to the gun, eventually breaking the hammer and sear.

Baldwin's legal team seized on the gun damage, suggesting the weapon was prone to malfunction.

Morrissey joined the case in March 2023, after the district attorney and the initial

special prosecutor stepped down, following several missteps.

The following month, Nikas shared with prosecutors evidence that he suggested showed the gun had been modified before Baldwin's use. Morrissey dropped the involuntary manslaughter charge against Baldwin, saying she needed time to investigate. She hired a gun expert to dig into the controversy and learn more about the FBI's destructive tests.

As soon as the charges were dropped, Baldwin traveled to Montana to finish the film.

Since then, the weapon provider testified that he had received the Italian-made Pietta Colt 45 — a fully functional replica of an 1880s revolver — before supplying it to the film production in 2021. Footage from the film also shows Baldwin successfully firing the gun in the days leading up to the tragedy, the prosecutor has said.

Gun expert Lucien Haag also has testified that he rebuilt the gun after the FBI damage, and that it functioned normally.

Haag also insisted that

Baldwin would have had to pull the trigger for the gun to fire. And prosecutors revealed that a "Rust" crew member would testify that he saw Baldwin pull the trigger that day.

By last fall, Morrissey began preparing to take the Baldwin case to a grand jury with the intent of refiling criminal charges.

However, Morrissey first offered Baldwin a plea deal that would have ended the actor's criminal case.

In court documents, Morrissey said she told Baldwin's team in October that she would abandon the prosecution if the actor pleaded guilty to negligent use of a deadly weapon, a misdemeanor, according to the April court filing.

That was the same charge that the "Rust" assistant director, David Halls, had accepted last year, and Morrissey said in the document she felt obligated to offer a similar deal to Baldwin.

But October's offer soon unraveled.

Morrissey said Baldwin's team did not respond to her offer. Instead, she learned that it had shared details of the confidential settlement with an NBC News reporter. She also learned that Baldwin was planning to make a media splash by announcing that he was suing the state of New Mexico.

The prosecutor also became concerned that Baldwin was "actively pressuring" crew members who witnessed the shooting to give interviews in a documentary about him.

Legal experts say Baldwin's celebrity could help — or hurt — his case.

"There is a sense that runs through the country, not just here in New Mexico but more broadly, that we have two systems of justice," Kastenber said. "One for the powerful, famous and wealthy and one for everybody else."

Another lingering question is whether Baldwin will take the stand toward the end of the trial.

"The decision to testify is Baldwin's alone," Kastenber said. "That's his right."

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Los Angeles Times

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# CALIFORNIA

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ETHAN SWOPE Associated Press

**PRISON** reform and the COVID-19 pandemic have reduced the number of inmates eligible to take part in the state's firefighter camps. Above, inmates dig a firebreak against the Thompson fire last week in Oroville, Calif.

## State faces fire season with fewer inmate crews

The program's participants perform crucial and risky tasks

By RUBEN VIVES

Two wet winters followed by repeated record-breaking heat waves in recent months have set California on a path to a fiery summer.

And though firefighters with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection will be on the front lines against the flames, behind them in the trenches are hundreds of California inmates, digging, chopping and chainsawing containment lines for crews to gain an advantage. And there are fewer of them than ever.

Peppered throughout the state's 35 conservation camps — minimum-security facilities — they perform crucial fuel-reduction projects year-round and are occasionally placed in the path of advancing flames, sometimes at the cost of their own lives.

But prison reform and the COVID-19 pandemic have shrunk the pool of inmates eligible to attend the camps — operated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Cal Fire or the Los Angeles County Fire Department. [See **Inmates**, B2]



DANIEL DREIFUSS AFP / Getty Images

**SMOKE RISES** over the hills near Rancho Sisquoc as the Lake fire, expected to grow amid a heat wave, burns in the Los Padres National Forest on Sunday.

## Wildfires persist amid heat wave

Lake blaze threatens the former home of Michael Jackson in Santa Barbara County.

By NATHAN SOLIS

Firefighters in California continued to battle several wildfires across the state on Monday, including one that threatened Neverland Ranch, former home of the late pop star Michael Jackson, in the Santa Barbara County mountains.

The Lake fire started Friday afternoon and by Monday had grown to 20,320 acres in the western Los Padres National Forest, where it fed on grass, brush and timber in rugged terrain, according to the U.S. Forest Service. The fire was 8% contained Monday morning, but fire officials expected it to grow amid a prolonged heat wave that has lowered moisture in the area and brought gusty winds.

Over the weekend, firefighters on the ground had a difficult time reaching the blaze because of the endur-

ing heat and challenging terrain, requiring them to use helicopters to contain its spread. Temperatures on Monday were expected to reach the 90s to the low 100s, said Jackie Ruiz, spokesperson for Santa Barbara County's Office of Emergency Management.

On Sunday, Santa Barbara County expanded its evacuation orders to include Figueroa Mountain Road, also known as the Grass Mountain Trail Head, and neighborhoods within Sawmill Basin, including [See **Fires**, B2]

## COVID illness is worse than ever, some say

FLiRT variants continue to spread, bringing misery to those infected.

By RONG-GONG LIN II

COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are rising in Los Angeles County — and some of those recently re-infected are finding their latest bout to be the worst one yet.

There are no signs that the latest coronavirus variants are producing more severe illness, either nationally or in California. But some doctors say this COVID rise challenges a long-held myth: Although reinfections are often milder than a first brush with the disease, they can cause severe illness. Even some who don't visit an emergency room or need to be hospitalized describe agonizing symptoms.

"The dogma is that every time you get COVID, it's milder. But I think we need to keep our minds open to the possibility that some people have worse symptoms," said Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, a UC San Francisco infectious diseases expert.

Each time you get infected, he said, is "kind of like playing COVID roulette."

This underscores the need for caution during summer travel and activities, even though the risk remains relatively mild.

It's difficult to quantify how many are experiencing more acute symptoms now compared with previous infections.

But anecdotally, including on social media sites, people are expressing shock at how sick they've become from the latest subvariants,

collectively nicknamed FLiRT.

"I've had COVID a few times but this is the worst I've had it," one person wrote on Reddit. The person reported recurring fever, being so congested they couldn't breathe out of their nose, "terrible sinus pressure and headache ... and I can't stand up for too long without feeling like I'm about to pass out."

"Previously COVID just felt like the common cold, but this strain is [wreaking] havoc," the person wrote. "I don't like to complain like this, but I'm shocked at how much it's taking me out."

Another wrote that their "throat feels like razor blades" and they're "in living misery."

"I have so much phlegm, but it hurts so bad to cough because my throat is on literal fire!!" the person wrote. "This is my 4th time having Covid and I swear I feel like this is the worst it's ever been!!"

Some who eluded COVID for more than four years got infected this summer.

One person fell ill and tested positive for the first time after hosting a Father's Day gathering for 12. The person described "uncontrollable body-shaking chills so bad I couldn't feel most of my fingertips."

A 42-year-old nurse, who has had COVID four times, said the latest bout has been "intense with fevers, cough, head pressure and pain. It's attacking my throat and ability to swallow."

Others, though, have said each subsequent COVID illness has been easier to recover from, and one person infected for the first time wrote of "super mild symptoms [that] just feels like a seasonal allergy."

[See **COVID**, B5]

## Minimum wage, rents, marriage on November ballot

Here's a brief guide to the state initiatives that voters will be asked to consider.

By MACKENZIE MAYS

In addition to a precarious presidential election and high-stakes U.S. House races, California voters in November will also weigh in on a slew of statewide initiatives that could significantly shape policy and affect the lives of millions of residents.

Ten measures will be on the ballot and will ask voters if they support raising the minimum wage, cracking down on crime, banning forced prison labor, capping rent and much more.

Golden State voters are accustomed to legislating by the ballot and are often faced with a list of initiatives as part of the state's direct democracy process. But this year especially, political parties are hopeful that some of the causes will help draw voters to the polls to check other boxes, too, said Mindy Romero, founder of the Center for Inclusive Democracy, a nonpartisan research organization focused on elections.

"Sometimes there are people who are not interested in the top ticket that may solely come out because of their cause," said Romero, who is a political sociology professor at USC.

Altogether, campaigns

supporting and opposing the ballot measures have collected tens of millions of dollars in contributions.

The number of initiatives put to voters could have been much higher, but a flurry of last-minute negotiations in the state Capitol led to measure proponents agreeing to pull their proposals in favor of legislation, including a move to make financial literacy a high school graduation requirement. The remarkable round of dealmaking comes as state leaders have fought to tackle a massive budget deficit and worry about bogging down voters with a crowded ballot.

Here are the initiatives voters will officially see on their ballot in November:

### Proposition 2

This bond measure would authorize the state to borrow \$10 billion to modernize K-12 schools and community colleges.

The funding could be used to repair outdated school buildings and to upgrade libraries, heating and cooling systems and broadband internet.

### Proposition 3

This measure would remove outdated language in the state Constitution that still defines marriage as between a man and woman and instead replace it with a broad "right to marry."

While the constitutional clause is unenforceable, and same-sex marriage remains [See **Voter guide**, B4]

## Need a background check for an apartment or job? Court changes are causing long waits

A state ruling limiting access to personal info has screening services struggling to adapt.

By CAROLINE PETROW-COHEN

Significant delays in the processing of background checks are causing headaches across California, leaving applications for jobs and housing stuck in limbo while making it harder for employers and landlords to screen for criminal records.

The situation stems from a state appellate court ruling more than three years ago, which industry experts say has blocked background screeners and any court re-



CHRIS PIZZELLO Associated Press

**A MAN'S** silhouette is seen on a wall at the Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center in July 2021.

searcher from using date of birth or driver's license information to narrow down search results as they investigate an individual's criminal history.

The 2021 decision in *All of Us or None of Us vs. Hamrick* arose from a case brought by criminal justice reform advocates who have long argued that background checks lead to discrimination against formerly incarcerated people.

A panel at the 4th District Court of Appeals determined that Riverside County's Superior Court website, which allowed users to input dates of birth and driver's license numbers while searching for criminal records, was in violation of a state court rule that says [See **Background**, B4]

# Inmate fire crews down as season heats up

**[Inmates, from B1]** ment — for fire training and assignments. At the same time that the camp sizes have shrunk — from a peak of 4,250 to fewer than 1,800 today — California has experienced its biggest and deadliest fires, with this summer off to a bad start.

Despite that, Cal Fire and state corrections officials say their strategy of using younger inmates, leaning on seasonal crews longer and partnering with the California Conservation Corps and California Military Department will get them through the year and eventually bring inmate firefighter numbers back to pre-pandemic levels.

“I know there’s been other articles that have painted a picture of doom and gloom and despair,” said Jarrod Clinkenbeard, staff chief of the hand crew program for Cal Fire. “I don’t feel like that’s where we are.”

In 2005, at the peak of the inmate firefighter program, officially known as the Conservation (Fire) Camp Program, there were 192 crews, or 4,250 inmate firefighters, according to the state corrections department. Participants of the program include support staff such as cooks, orderlies and maintenance workers.

Four years ago, as prisons shut down and inmate populations declined, the corrections department winnowed the camps down to 1,821 participants. As of July 2, there were about 83 hand crews and 1,760 participants.

Depending on the year, inmate fire crews account for as much as 30% of the state’s wildfire force and are typically paid \$5.80 to \$10.24 per day by the corrections department, earning an additional dollar per hour from Cal Fire when responding to a disaster. Inmate fire crews are made up of 12 to 17 firefighters, led by a fire captain. Inmates who have been convicted of violent crimes, such as rape, lewd acts with a child under 14 or any felony punishable by death or life in prison, or who have a history of escaping or arson, are automatically disqualified.



ETHAN SWOPE Associated Press

**CHANGES** to California laws have led to a decline in inmate firefighters. Above, an inmate sprays water on the Thompson fire last week in Oroville, Calif.

In a letter to Gov. Gavin Newsom on June 21, Los Angeles County Supervisors Lindsey Horvath and Kathryn Barger voiced concerns about deeper cuts to the program that would’ve shuttered five camps in the county, affecting more than 200 inmate firefighters.

“The implications of such

cuts are dire,” the letter read in part. “As you are aware, California faces a critical shortage of wildland firefighting hand crews, a situation that has been exacerbated by the increasing frequency and severity of wildland fires due to climate change.”

Indeed, the loss of hand

crews has occurred nationwide but the labor crisis is particularly acute in California, where 14 of the 15 largest fires on record have occurred since 2007. This year the state has seen 90,000 acres burn, significantly more than the average at this point in the season.

The governor recently

took the five L.A. County fire camps off his list of cuts this year, as Horvath and Barger had requested, but other efforts to increase inmate firefighting have been months or years in the making.

In August, the corrections department launched the Youthful Offender Program’s Conservation Camp, a pilot program that allows eligible young incarcerated adults to become firefighters and that is set to expire next year unless it is made permanent.

The program is an offshoot of the corrections department’s Youthful Offender Program established in 2014 and allows eligible inmates ages 18 to 25 to receive fire training before being housed at Growlersburg Conservation Camp in Georgetown, a mountain community northeast of Sacramento.

All inmate firefighters receive the same training that seasonal wildland firefighters receive, including a week of classroom instruction and a week of field exercises. Once inmates graduate from the program, they are eligible to be placed at a camp.

There are currently 113 total camp volunteers at

Growlersburg. Of those, 30 are part of the pilot program and 18 are inmates who are certified mentors. The young adult firefighters responded to their first fire May 10 in El Dorado County.

Corrections officials said that the program is showing promising results and that the number of hand crews may slowly inch back to 2019 levels, when there were 1,975 inmate firefighters and support staff at the department’s fire camps.

It took years for California to reach this point, and it will take years to find a reliable solution, officials said.

Hand crew cuts have occurred in waves as penalties for some crimes were reduced, Clinkenbeard said. The first wave came in 2011 with California’s realignment law that mandated some nonviolent inmates serve time in county jails instead of prisons.

Then Californians in 2014 approved Proposition 47, which allowed the courts to reduce penalties for some nonviolent theft crimes and drug possession offenses that were reclassified as misdemeanors.

Three years later, voters approved Proposition 57, allowing inmates convicted of nonviolent crimes to be considered for early release or parole.

In 2020, the pandemic led the state to release more inmates to increase distancing among those behind bars.

Then two years ago, the California Correctional Center in Susanville, which doubles as a firefighting training center for inmates, closed. Another one is expected to close next year.

Despite the reductions, Clinkenbeard said, Cal Fire still has a healthy number of hand crews for the fire season. He said the agency also has mutual aid agreements with other states that can be called upon to help boost its firefighting force.

As of July 2, Cal Fire had 149 hand crews, 65 of which were state inmate crews; 38 were seasonal firefighters, 32 were participants with the California Conservation Corps and 14 were from the California Military Defense

## Fires prompt evacuations; hikers found

**[Fires, from B1]** Tunnel Road and the Figueroa Campground, according to emergency officials.

About 20 people have left their homes, Ruiz said. The evacuation zone also extended to Sycamore Valley Ranch, formerly Neverland Ranch, in Los Olivos, according to the latest data. The cause of the blaze is still under investigation.

To the east, an evacuation order was put in place for the Mt. Baldy ski resort in the San Bernardino National Forest because of a wildfire that has burned more than 115 acres.

The Vista fire was reported around 1 p.m. Sunday in steep terrain, about a

mile from the ski resort and west of mountain community Lytle Creek, according to the U.S. Forest Service. Portions of the Pacific Crest Trail were closed from the Lytle Creek area to Mt. Baldy and additional trails below the resort.

Hundreds of people were evacuated from nearby recreational areas since the fire broke out, according to Nathan Judy with the U.S. Forest Service, but residents in the nearby community of Lytle Creek were able to reach their homes.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Meanwhile, up north, a group of hikers were located Monday after they went missing in the zone of a wild-

fire burning in the Tahoe National Forest.

The Royal fire, situated near the Royal Gorge in the North Fork of the American River in Placer County, has burned 170 acres since first being reported late Sunday afternoon, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

The Placer County Sheriff’s Department said 13 hikers, between the ages of 16 and 20, were believed to be missing in the area of the fire after their vehicles were discovered parked at the Palisades trailhead.

But the group was spotted by helicopter Monday morning, and a search-and-rescue team was sent to meet them and escort them out of the area, according to

Sgt. Ty Conners with the Placer County Sheriff’s Department. The hikers were reported to be in good health, according to officials.

The area where the Royal fire is burning is known for world-class kayaking and hiking, said Battalion Chief Nolan Hale with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. That means the fire is “sitting in super remote terrain, with steep unforgiving cliffs and a ton of granite.”

Farther north in Butte County, firefighters have nearly contained a wildfire that started near the city of Oroville last week. The Thompson fire has burned 3,789 acres since Wednesday and forced thousands to flee.

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## CITY &amp; STATE



SARAH APAEZ

**DINA SAMIMI** pushes her daughter Nya Samimi during a four-mile practice run at Los Angeles Historic Park in March. The Running Mamis, which has about 70 members, was started in 2018 in Boyle Heights.

## Helping Latina moms go the distance is group effort

The Running Mamis offers safe space for mothers to run with or without their tots.

By **KAMREN CURIEL**

On a rainy Saturday morning in early March, a group of 60 women huddled outside Blue Ribbon Sports in Santa Monica in preparation for the Los Angeles Marathon. The conditions weren't ideal, but that wouldn't stop the Running Mamis from gathering at 6:30 for their last full-fledged training before the big race.

Raquel Román and Jo Anna Mixpe Ley arrived early to set up the black and white nylon Running Mamis flag on the exterior of the shoe store. They review routes while hugging spandex-clad runners as if they were at a family function.

What started in Boyle Heights in 2018 as a safe space for mothers to run with their babies in tow without the threat of catcalls and cracked sidewalks has become an ever-growing community.

Román and Ley founded Running Mamis with Raquel Zamora and Monica Perez shortly after becoming first-time mothers, an idea sparked while participating in a community run with their babies in strollers. Frustrated with the lack of "mommy and me" spaces and safe running paths on the Eastside, the quartet decided to start their own running group.

Their first meetup, held at the Los Angeles State Historic Park, drew 10 runners.

"This space is a saving grace," said Ley, who picked up running in college.

"It's become our lifeline through the pandemic and personal challenges. We see each other and hold each

other without judgment. We talk about childbirth, postpartum depression, challenges we're having with our partner or at work. Doing that while moving helps you process and move forward. It's liberating. We're so lucky our kids see it as a norm."

Since then, the Running Mamis have grown to about 70 members and are now an official Nike L.A. running club. Identifying mostly as Chicana and Latinx, the Mamis are intergenerational, ranging from 18 to 66 years old. Grandmothers, nieces, tias, friends and coworkers get in on the action. It's an inclusive space where all distances, levels and paces are welcome.

"A lot of time at races you look around and there's not a lot of women of color," said Román, who lives in Huntington Park. "These women are going to the races with different body types, diverse body shapes and they're all at the start line. That's what I'm really proud of."

Many of the Running Mamis live in Boyle Heights and southeast L.A. County, but some travel from as far as Ventura and San Diego for twice-a-month meetups at L.A. State Historic Park, Griffith Park and the Rose Bowl. During training season, they meet weekly. They are stay-at-home moms, educators, organizers, lawyers, artists, chefs, therapists, social workers and restaurant workers. Some run one mile, others run 20.

The Running Mamis are a tight-knit group that prioritizes community over competition. They trick or treat with their kids on Halloween, run through the streets of East L.A. during Latinx History Month and take yoga and self-defense classes for Mother's Day. Some of the kids who were in strollers when Running Mamis began are now grown

and participate in local kid runs. Román and Ley sometimes invite professional trainers and running coaches to teach the runners about form, nutrition and how to run according to their menstrual cycle. Mamis are reminded to trim toenails and ensure shoes fit properly — a thumb's width of space between the big toe and the front of the shoe.

Before each run, the Running Mamis circle up to check in and set their running intention. Two or three miles are typical — when training for a marathon, runners can get as long as 20 miles. The real talking starts when the running begins. Friendships are born on these trails.

The Running Mamis provide Latinx mothers an opportunity to come together and share stories about the struggles of motherhood. Postpartum depression affects Latinas at higher rates than white women, according to a study published last year by the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

"Mothers risk losing themselves because of how much they give and how little time they have for themselves," said Adriana T. Alvarez, a psychotherapist based in L.A. "Running lifts moods and keeps moms fit to meet the physical endurance required of motherhood. The meditative focus on breath keeps moms present. It sends kids the message that mothers are strong, we take care of ourselves and our separate time is a priority."

A 2023 study by Adidas found that 92% of women are concerned for their safety when they run alone, with half of them afraid of being physically attacked. More than a third of women said they experienced physical or verbal harassment, including sexist comments and being followed.

Although crime statistics indicate these types of attacks are rare, women are hypervigilant when they run. Recently, a Georgia nursing student was killed while jogging on campus. There are at least nine known cases in the last 10 years of women who were fatally attacked by strangers while running.

"Running with the Mamis gives me a sense of security," said Laura Lara, who lives in Bell Gardens. She started carrying pepper spray when she runs along the Rio Hondo bike path after a woman was attacked in the area. She's been followed by men in cars and pedestrians while running.

An avid marathon runner, Lara said running quiets her mind and helps her work through life's difficulties. On a mission to keep running after she got pregnant, Lara heard about Running Mamis through a friend, but social anxiety kept her from joining.

Tired of training for the marathon by herself, she met up with them for the first time in 2022. Running with a group, she discovered, increases her stamina and gives her the motivation she needs to keep running. Having someone in front and behind her makes running long distances easier.

"Running in community is so encouraging," said Reina Rodriguez, who teaches Chicano and women's studies at Cal State L.A. and has a 9-year-old son. She lives in Azusa and gets up at 5 a.m. to run with the Mamis.

"It's a sacrifice to get up early on a Saturday, but I do it because it's so much fun," she said. "Everyone is so supportive and waits for everyone to finish. I'm not doing it for a specific time or pace. I'm doing it for the experience."

Curiel is a special correspondent.

## Driver hits 2 adults, 3 youths out cycling in Garden Grove

Police say the man at the wheel fled but was later detained. One child is badly hurt.

By **MATT HAMILTON**

A driver in Orange County crashed into three children and two adults who were out cycling Sunday night, then fled, authorities said.

The suspected hit-and-run occurred about 7:30 p.m. near Haster Street and Lampson Avenue in Garden Grove, said Orange County Fire Capt. Greg Barta.

The adults and children were riding bicycles, and at least some of the children were towed by a trailer af-

fixed to one of the bikes, according to aerial footage of the scene by KCAL.

It's unclear what led to the collision. The driver fled but was later detained by police, according to Garden Grove Police Sgt. Nick Jensen. The identity of the driver, a man, was not disclosed, and it was unclear late Sunday if he had been formally booked on charges.

One child was taken in critical condition to a trauma center, Barta said. Two children and two adults were taken to the hospital in stable condition, he said.

Traffic investigators from Garden Grove police were on scene late Sunday examining what led to the collision, according to Jensen. "The investigation is ongoing," he said.



Anadolu/Getty Images

**THE ACCUSED**, Alejandro Garcia Aranda, is said to have sent the images via Instagram direct messaging.

## San Fernando Valley man, 23, is indicted in 'sextortion' scheme

A Sylmar resident is charged with selling explicit photos of high school girls.

By **SUMMER LIN**

A San Fernando Valley man has been indicted on allegations he used Instagram to post and sell sexually explicit photos of high school girls without their consent — and allegedly threatened to post more images in a "sextortion" scheme.

A federal grand jury charged Sylmar resident Alejandro Garcia Aranda, 23, with advertising child pornography, distributing child pornography and transmitting threatening communications with intent to extort, according to a news release from the U.S. attorney's office in the Central District of California.

The June 27 indictment

alleges that Aranda advertised explicit photos on an Instagram account with the handle "valleyhoezzz818," whose stated goal was to shame girls in the Valley.

He allegedly targeted girls who attended San Fernando Valley schools and used Cash App, Venmo, PayPal and Zelle to sell his sexually explicit wares.

Authorities said Aranda sent customers the images through direct messages on Instagram after receiving payment. When the girls discovered that the photos were being advertised and distributed, Aranda allegedly tried to get more photos from them by threatening to post more images online.

If convicted, Aranda faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years and a maximum of 30 years in federal prison for advertising child porn, five to 20 years for distributing child porn and up to two years for extortion.

## Motorcyclist dies as Death Valley hits record 128 degrees

Victim is among a group distressed by heat, which also hinders rescue effort.

By **MATT HAMILTON**

As the temperature climbed Saturday to a record 128 degrees in Death Valley National Park, a group of motorcyclists became distressed by the extreme heat, and one of them died, a park ranger said.

The motorcyclists were touring the park near Badwater Basin, a stretch of salt flats that is also the lowest point in North America, when — in the mid- to late afternoon — they reported being affected by the extreme heat, according to park ranger Nichole Andler.

One of the riders was pronounced dead at the site, and another person with se-

vere heat illness was taken to Las Vegas, Andler said. Four others in the group were treated and released.

The name of the deceased motorcyclist was not released, and the specific cause of death will be determined by the coroner, Andler said.

"It was 128 degrees, which was a record high for that day in Death Valley," the ranger said, "and these folks were traveling through on motorcycles, and most likely they didn't have adequate cooling."

The heat also hindered the rescue effort. When temperatures exceed 120 degrees, a medical helicopter cannot access the park. Air expands when it is heated, becoming thinner than cold air. So, helicopters can't get the lift needed to fly.

But Andler said that, in addition to park rangers, first responders from Inyo County and nearby



FRANCINE ORR/LOS ANGELES TIMES

**DEATH VALLEY** National Park's annual heat-related fatalities reflect the region's harsh climate.

Pahrump, Nev., assisted the bikers.

Saturday's temperature was just shy of the all-time record in Death Valley — 134 degrees, set on July 10, 1913. Since record-keeping began

in 1911, temperatures have reached or exceeded 130 degrees only three times — with two of those times since 2020: Aug. 16, 2020, and July 9, 2021.

Each year, at least one

person dies of heat-related illnesses while visiting the park, and each week, there are one to three calls for medical assistance for heat-related stress.

"Folks get excited about experiencing the warmest temperatures that they've ever experienced before, and sometimes they forget that if an hour ago they were hot and started to feel nauseous, then they need to spend the rest of the day in air conditioning — because that could be the earliest sign of heat illness," Andler said. "If you warm up and never properly cool down, your body doesn't get a chance to reset."

Elsewhere in Southern California, the heat shattered records and broiled communities.

On Sunday, Palmdale and Lancaster each set record highs for that date — with Palmdale seeing a 114-degree high, exceeding the

record of 110 set in 1989. In Lancaster, the 115 degrees recorded Sunday topped the record of 110 reported in 1989 and 2017.

The National Weather Service said extreme heat would continue this week across the Southland, with highs of 105 to 115 in the interior valleys, mountains and deserts.

The excessive-heat warning was extended to 9 p.m. Thursday for the western San Gabriel Mountains, the Antelope Valley, Angeles Crest Highway and the corridors of the 5 and 14 freeways.

Another excessive-heat warning was in place until Wednesday for the Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Monica Mountains, Calabasas, the San Fernando Valley and eastern San Gabriel Mountains — regions where temperatures were forecast to exceed 100 degrees, according to the weather service.

# Ruling hampers criminal checks

**[Background, from B1]** such information should be excluded from court “indexes” accessible to the public through “electronic means.”

“After considering the text, history, and purpose” of the rule, the judges found that state courts should limit search criteria for the public, effectively eliminating the use of birth dates and license numbers.

Those personal identifiers had long been used to match individuals to their records, and without them it has proved nearly impossible to conduct searches that involve common

names, industry experts say.

“This was an interpretation that no one had ever seen before or seen coming,” said Melissa Sorenson, executive director of the Professional Background Screening Assn. “Each of the courts is trying to figure out how to comply.”

Delays are particularly bad in Los Angeles County, where background check firms receive about 100,000 screening requests each month.

“Right now, L.A. County is an example of something that’s not sustainable,” Sorenson said.

Residents with common names or those with a long history in the area may have to wait months or even years for their background check to be completed, Sorenson said, if it’s possible for it to be completed at all.

It has taken time for courts to adjust since the 2021 appellate ruling was handed down. The Superior Court of Los Angeles announced its changes in February.

“All the background screener can do is plug in Jose Rodriguez, for example, and because it’s a relatively common name in L.A., you could get back hundreds



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

**THE L.A. COUNTY** Superior Court made changes in February in response to a 2021 appellate ruling.

to thousands of results,” Sorenson said. “We have no way to filter based on any other identifier.”

Dates of birth are contained within physical court files, the Superior Court of Los Angeles said.

“These restrictions require background checkers seeking information on commonly named individuals to visit the courthouse where the physical court file is located to determine if the information they obtained in an electronic criminal record search applies to the person about whom they are inquiring,” the court said in an email.

The court limits the number of case files it will retrieve for a requester to five per day at any courthouse. For names with thousands of results, it’s not practical to check each physical file.

At the Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center, the county’s busiest criminal clerk’s office, additional court service assistants have been assigned to help with file viewing requests.

The current wait time to pull multiple files is three to five days, the court said.

In a message reviewed by The Times, the background screening firm Sterling sent out a notice to clients explaining the situation earlier this year.

“With this change, the L.A. County court has made it significantly more challenging to accurately identify individuals during background checks,” the firm said. “Delays for criminal checks in L.A. County are expected to increase. ... Some searches were closed as unperformable.”

Sterling did not respond to a request for comment.

On the online forum Reddit, Los Angeles residents

shared concerns that their background checks were not getting completed in time.

“Sterling is not able to get it done!” one user wrote. “Seriously anxious and have been unemployed for a month now,” said another.

In 2022, Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed Senate Bill 1262, which would have allowed court researchers to use date of birth to search for an individual without making the date publicly available.

“This bill would override a 2021 appellate court decision and current court rules that strike a fair balance between public access to court records, public safety, and an individual’s constitutional right to privacy,” Newsom wrote after shutting down the bill.

The nonprofit Legal Services for Prisoners with Children pushed for the veto, arguing the bill “was sponsored by commercial background check companies ... with no regard for the interests of formerly incarcerated or convicted people.”

Eric Sapp, a staff attorney at the Oakland-based organization, pointed out that when background checks are authorized and required by law, local authorities are obligated to provide the relevant information and assure compliance.

“There’s no need for a background check company to intervene in those circumstances,” he said.

“We definitely believe that background checks are overused and are often useless for the purposes for which they’re used,” he said. “The criminal background check as it currently exists today might not be a viable model in the near future.”

Joshua Kim, lead attorney for the plaintiffs in the Hamrick case, said he wasn’t aware of holdups with housing and job applications — but said any such issues would be the fault of the background check industry, not the courts complying with the law.

“If there is in fact a delay that affects people’s opportunity for housing and employment because of the background check company’s inability to do their job, then that could potentially create another legal liability for them,” he said.

Thirty-seven states have adopted what is known as a “ban the box” policy that prohibits investigation into a job candidate’s conviction history before making an offer of employment, but many employers still seek to vet candidates, especially for jobs that require working with vulnerable populations or involve access to sensitive data.

“The fundamental question that we’ve been asking in the reentry law community is whether background checks are effective in screening out dangerous employees,” Kim said.

But some Angelenos have been frustrated by the current state of affairs.

South Pasadena mother Erin Chang had been stuck waiting months for her disabled son’s summer camp aide to get approved for work. The background check had to clear in order for the state to cover the cost of the aide, Chang said.

Although the check cleared just before camp began, Chang had to pay out of pocket for the aide and said she will seek reimbursement.

“We’re still not sorted out,” Chang said. “They offered the explanation that she had a common name and that there is a backlog.”

Outside Los Angeles, other counties are making similar changes to comply with the court rules. San Luis Obispo County announced last month that it is redacting access to date of birth and driver’s license information in court search engines, and Orange County is rumored to be making the same move soon, said Sorenson of the background check trade group.

“It is more than just an L.A. County issue,” she said. “If an employer has a candidate with California history, they may have to move on to a different candidate.”

# Obituaries

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## Walter Clayton

Hey Pop, was thinking about you and what to say. So many things come to mind. It’s been a minute, had a lot to process. The anger, depression, remorse, loneliness and feeling that it’s my fault you passed alone. Sorry. It took me awhile to accept but I think I am ready. Today I celebrate you pop. Hard to believe it’s been 3 years since your transition to eternity. You are missed for so many reasons, like your love of life, golf, your knowledge of the city and your voracious appetite for knowledge in general. Your kindness, your heart, conviction, UNMATCHED. Your grandson is doing tremendously, your granddaughter is finding herself and hitting her stride at 19 walking boldly into her future. Your daughter in law still has not changed her home screen. Your brothers, nephews, nieces are good. I went to see pop pops house with Jerry, I wish I had the resources to keep it. All that just to say I miss you, our talks, your sense of humor and your intelligent wit. I’ve been told you were proud of me, I was and always will be a reflection of you. You lived your life unapologetically and I appreciate the lessons you passed on. I’m sad because I feel like we were just getting to know each other when you left, and your absence has been life-altering. I love you pop. We-mi-tai-mi-how

J

## Jan “Baka” Bailey

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Los Angeles Times



## Richard H. Deihl

Just before dawn on Friday morning, June 28, 2024, Richard H. Deihl passed away peacefully at his home in San Diego, California. He was surrounded by his loving wife, Billie, and his four children, Cathy, Vicki, Mike and Christine after being in hospice care for nearly one month. He was 95 years old when he passed after enjoying a very full and rewarding life.

“Dick” was born in Whittier, California on September 9th, 1928. He attended schools in the Whittier area and then was awarded the Matilda-Hadley Scholarship to attend Whittier College where he graduated in three years with an A.B. degree in Economics. In 1949, he pursued graduate studies in marketing and finance at the University of California in Berkeley. Aware that his draft number was drawing near, he decided to join the US Air Force, and two days after graduation from the Cadette program, he was married to Billie Beane who was also a graduate of Whittier College.

He was sent to Korea and served as a fighter-bomber pilot during the Korean Conflict, flying 76 combat missions. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with Three Clusters, became a First Lieutenant, and came home to Del Rio, Texas, where he was a flight instructor teaching jet gunnery.

Receiving an honorable discharge in 1955, his first job was with the National Cash Register Co. as an accounting machine salesman. His leadership qualities were quickly realized and in 1960 Howard Ahmanson invited him to become a loan officer for Home Savings and Loan. In seven years, he had risen to become President of the Association and soon after was named CEO of the Company by his Board of Directors. During his years at Home Savings, he was also Vice Chairman of the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco, President of the Thrift Institutions Advisory Council of the Federal Reserve System, served on the Securities and Exchange Commission, and a member of the Savings and Loan League.

He is a past member of the Arco Board, serving as Chairman of the Audit Committee, a trustee of Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles, a trustee of the Scripps Foundation in the San Diego area, a member of the Board Trustees of Whittier College, and served on the Board of the Charter Oak Unified School District of San Gabriel Valley.

One of his favorite awards came from the Junior Achievement group, and he won this award two years in a row. He was so proud to have helped the many young people gain a greater understanding of business and quality leadership. Then there were the Boy Scouts of America.

When Dick retired from Home Savings he did not retire from business. He became an entrepreneur by buying and selling franchises all over Southern California. His last venture was to buy and upgrade the Marriott Hotel in Bakersfield where he has been working with the exclusive services of Barney Hospitality Group leading to awards of excellence and a thriving place of business.

Richard Deihl was an honest and remarkable leader who will be greatly missed by his family and his community.



## Renate Anita Huy

December 31, 1930 - July 1, 2024

Renate Anita Huy Simpson, age 93, passed away surrounded by her family.

Renate was born in Ludwigshafen, Germany in 1930. In 1952, she was crowned Miss Nürnberg, then Miss Germany. She participated in the first Miss Universe pageant in Long Beach, CA in 1952, which led to a movie contract with Universal Studios. From 1953 - 1960, Renate starred in several movies and in a TV series. She was credited as Renate Huy, Renate Hoy, and Erika Nordin.

In 1954, she married actor Brett Halsey (nee Charles Oliver Hand) in Munich. Upon their return to to L.A., they had two children: Charles Jr. (aka Rock Halsey) and Tracy.

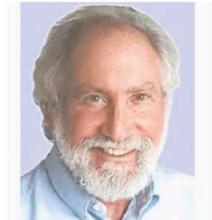
Renate became a U.S. citizen in 1960.

In 1959, she divorced Halsey. In 1963, she married barrister Raymond C. Simpson Jr., and they had one child: Richard. They divorced in 1975.

In addition to her pageant, film, and TV work, she owned a salon and was successful in real estate.

Renate is survived by her daughter Tracy Leigh Simpson, her son Richard James Simpson, her granddaughter Lauren Rose Sanders, and her son-in-law Miguel Infanzon Hill.

Services are private.



## Leland A Klein

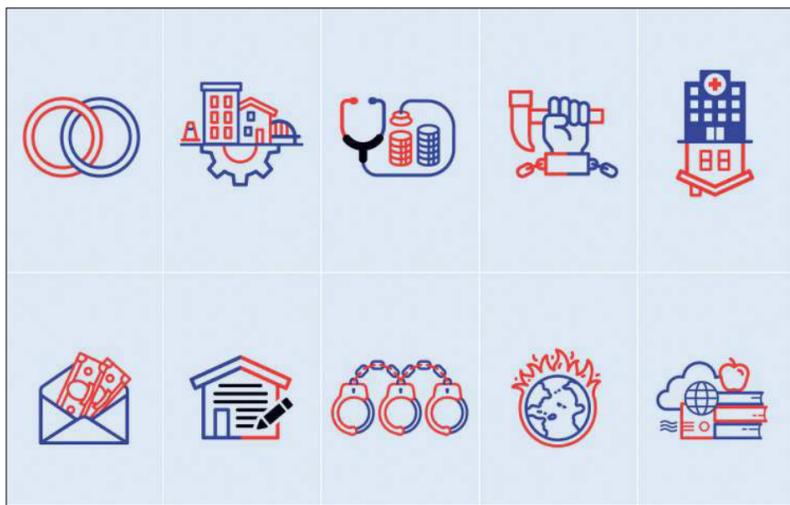
Leland (Lee) Klein, 83, passed away peacefully on July 5th in Los Angeles. Born August 9th, 1940, he served in the US Navy, earned degrees from Santa Monica Community College and Cal State LA, and taught at Chapman University and Loyola Marymount University, where he received his MBA. He later excelled in management at GTE and Northrup Grumman.

A passionate world traveler, Lee founded The California Native in 1983, guiding adventurers across California and internationally. An avid hiker and outdoors enthusiast, he completed 12 marathons after age 60. He is survived by his beloved wife Ellen, children Laura (Jerry), David (Judy), and Jeffrey (Erin), grandchildren Elizabeth, Lorelei, Leilah, and Jeron, and was brother to the late Robert Klein.

Private funeral services. Donations to The Alzheimer’s Association or a charity of choice appreciated.

May his memory be a blessing.

To place an obituary ad please go online to: latimes.com/placeobituary or call Ms. Phillips 1-800-528-4637 Ext. 77242



JIM COOKE Los Angeles Times

# Forced labor, school funding and more: A guide to ballot measures

**[Voter guide, from B1]** federally protected, proponents of the measure say it’s a necessary precaution in case of potential rulings from a conservative Supreme Court majority former President Trump helped appoint.

## Proposition 4

This bond measure would authorize the state to borrow \$10 billion to help fund the response to climate-related disasters such as drought, flooding and extreme heat. It would also help to ensure clean drinking water.

If approved by voters, it would be the largest investment in combating climate change in California history.

## Proposition 5

This measure would make it easier for local governments to approve bonds and tax measures that fund affordable housing and some public infrastructure.

Proposition 5 would lower the required vote threshold to approve those measures from a two-thirds supermajority to 55%.

## Proposition 6

This measure would ban involuntary servitude and

end mandatory work requirements for state prisoners.

The proposed constitutional amendment is part of a reparations package for descendants of African Americans enslaved in the U.S.

## Proposition 32

This measure would increase California’s hourly minimum wage from \$16 to \$18 and annually adjust it for inflation.

The proposal comes after the state’s politically powerful unions secured \$25 an hour for healthcare workers and \$20 an hour for fast-food workers and as cities including West Hollywood have moved ahead of the state minimum to as much as \$19.08 an hour.

## Proposition 33

This measure would allow cities and counties to enact rent control.

Proposition 33 would repeal a 1995 law called the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act, which generally restricts local governments’ ability to limit rental rates as issued by landlords.

## Proposition 34

This measure would re-

quire that healthcare providers spend most of the revenue they get from federal prescription drug discount programs on direct patient care.

It would apply only to a very specific subset of providers that have spent more than \$100 million over a decade on “anything other than direct patient care.”

## Proposition 35

This measure would provide permanent funding for Medi-Cal, California’s version of Medicaid, which pays for health services for low-income residents.

Right now, a tax on managed health insurance plans that funds the program is set to expire in 2026.

## Proposition 36

This measure, backed by law enforcement agencies, would impose harsher sentences for drug possession and retail theft. It would turn some crimes involving firearms and repeated shoplifting that are currently misdemeanors into felonies.

Proposition 36 aims to roll back parts of Proposition 47, which a decade ago recategorized some low-level offenses.

# It's 'COVID roulette' — each infection is different

[COVID, from B1]

Some studies back up the idea that subsequent infections pose additional risks.

A 2022 report in the journal Nature Medicine, focused on veterans, found that, "compared to non-infected [people], cumulative risks and burdens of repeat infection increased according to the number of infections," heightening the risk of medical problems, hospitalization and death.

While the prevalence of long COVID appears to be declining, doctors note that there is risk of developing the syndrome with each infection. A report published last summer by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the prevalence of long COVID among U.S. adults was 7.5% in early June 2022 but had fallen to 6% as of mid-June 2023 — still a notable share of the population.

There are a number of reasons why a subsequent COVID illness might feel worse than the first.

Consider a vaccinated person who was last boosted in 2021 and got infected in 2022 and again in 2024: The long gap of not being exposed or boosted "maybe led to [their body] not having as much immune memory," Chin-Hong said. "And the variants have changed so much anyway, it's like getting exposed to something relatively different from what virus the immune system had seen earlier."

Without staying up-to-date on COVID vaccinations, which "remind the immune system of what the more current variants look like," a recent infection may cause the body to react strongly to the FLiRT subvariants that are dominant nationwide.

"It's evolved so much, and the body is, like, 'O-M-G, what is this thing that I'm seeing?'" Chin-Hong said.

The logic is much the same for flu shots, which are formulated each year in hopes of priming the immune system against the dominant circulating versions of that virus.

For the week ending Saturday, an estimated 70.5% of COVID specimens nationwide were of the FLiRT subvariants — officially known as KP.3, KP.2 and KP.1.1 — up from 54.9% a month earlier. Another closely related subvariant, L.B.1, is estimated to comprise 14.9% of specimens, up from 10% a month earlier.

Prior immunity from old vaccinations can do a decent job of protecting against serious illness. But without an updated vaccine, Chin-Hong said, the immune system "probably won't be able to stop the virus in its tracks, or neutralize the virus as soon as it comes in, because it looks so different, before kicking in memory immunity."

"In the meantime," he added, "this virus is infecting cells happily, while the body is trying to use its current memory to make new immune cells."

Even for adults who are up to date on their COVID immunizations, it has been nearly a year since the last vaccination, and the effectiveness weakens over time.

A report published in February by the CDC found that the 2023-24 COVID vaccine provided about 54% increased protection against symptomatic illness compared with not getting the shot. Vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic infection is higher in the first few months after getting the updated shot.

The vaccines continue to provide protection against hospitalization and death.

In L.A. County, COVID cases and hospitalizations continue to rise.

For the week ending June 30, there were an average of 229 cases a day, up from 106 a month earlier. For the week ending June 29, there were an average of 197 coronavirus-infected people in hospitals per day, up from 117 a month earlier.

In L.A. County, last summer's spike peaked at 571 cases a day and 620 people per day in hospitals.

Officially reported cases are an undercount, as they don't account for at-home tests or those who don't test at all.

Viral levels in L.A. County wastewater have been relatively stable.

For the week that ended June 22, the most recent data available, viral levels in sewage were at 17% of the peak from the winter of 2022-23, the same as the prior week.

The rate at which coronavirus tests are coming back with positive results continues to climb across the state.

For the week ending July 1, 10.6% of tests came back positive, up from 4.1% a month earlier. Last summer's positive test rate peaked at 13.1%, toward the end of August.

In California, there has been relatively low uptake of the updated vaccine. Since it became available in September, 36.7% of Californians age 65 and up have received at least one dose, as have 18.5% of 50- to 64-year-olds and 10% of those up to age 49.

Those who haven't gotten a vaccine in the last year "should think about getting it, especially if you're older and immune compromised," Chin-Hong said.

There continue to be hundreds of COVID deaths reported nationally every week, with seniors and immune-compromised people most at risk.

Getting the 2023-24 vaccine now will allow you to get the updated version that is on track for availability this fall. The CDC will recommend that everyone 6 months and older get the 2024-25 version. A good time to get it is in October, Chin-Hong said.

Chin-Hong said that even healthcare workers need to be reminded of proper COVID infection control protocols, like the importance of testing when sick and reporting illness to one's employer.

"It's like everybody seems to be thinking COVID is just, like, normal now," Chin-Hong said. But taking sensible measures — like not going to work when sick, wearing a mask near ill people and testing when symptomatic — can make a world of difference in limiting the spread.



JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

**THE BUSY SUMMER** travel season is a good time to get the 2023-24 COVID-19 vaccination, ahead of the updated version on track for availability this fall.

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Los Angeles Times

## MERCHANDISE 800

### Miscellaneous Merchandise

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## LEGAL NOTICES 1300

### Bids Wanted

**Request for Proposals**  
Request for Proposals - Hospitality Training Academy is soliciting proposals for IT services, website redesign, and marketing. Interested parties can find information at [www.lahta.org](http://www.lahta.org) on or about July 8, 2024.

El Monte City School District (RFP 2024-3) Requesting proposals for Interpretation & Translation Services. Please visit [www.emcsd.org/RFP](http://www.emcsd.org/RFP) for more info. Submissions are due by 7/24/24 4:00 pm.

### Name Change

If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.  
**NOTICE OF HEARING**  
DATE: AUGUST 12, 2024  
TIME: 9:30 AM  
DEPT: 9  
ROOM: 9  
**The address of the court is:** SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA County of LOS ANGELES 111 N. HILL STREET 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 hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: Dated: JUNE 20, 2024  
ELAINE LU  
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT  
Published in the Los Angeles Times 07/02/24, 07/09/24, 07/16/24, 07/23/24

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## JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NOPGR

CENEI

LAHTE

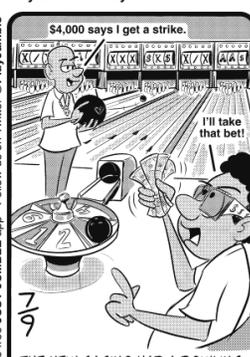
RALSAY

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(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: NOVEL BOUND ACCENT BOTH  
Answer: He rounded first and hurried to second because he wanted to get there — ON THE DOUBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME  
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

### Legal Notices

#### SUMMONS (CITATION JUDICIAL) CASE NO. 24STCV15411

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT,  
Plaintiff,

v.  
ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE MATTER of the Validity of Proceedings Relating to the Authorization and Issuance of Notes and Bonds to Be Issued with Respect to Certain Obligations of the Los Angeles Unified School District Arising from Involuntary Tort Claims to Be Reduced to Judgment, a Revolving Credit Agreement, an Indenture and Any Other Related Contracts and Agreements Authorized or Contemplated by the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education and the Adopting of a Resolution Pertaining Thereto,  
Defendants,

#### NOTICE TO DEFENDANT (AVISO AL DEMANDADO):

**NOTICE!** YOU HAVE BEEN SUED. THE COURT MAY DECIDE AGAINST YOU WITHOUT YOUR BEING HEARD UNLESS YOU RESPOND NOT LATER THAN August 12, 2024, WHICH IS AT LEAST TEN (10) DAYS AFTER COMPLETION OF THE PUBLICATION OF THIS SUMMONS. READ THE INFORMATION BELOW.

**AVISO!** USTED HA SIDO DEMANDADO. EL TRIBUNAL PUEDE DECIDIR CONTRA USTED SIN AUDIENCIA A MENOS QUE USTED RESPONDA A MÁS TARDAR PARA EL 12 DE AGOSTO 2024, QUE ES DIEZ (10) DIAS DESPUES QUE TERMINE LA ULTIMA PUBLICACION DE ESTE CITATORIO. LEA LA INFORMACION SIGUIENTE.

TO: ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE MATTER of the Validity of Proceedings Relating to the Authorization and Issuance of Notes and Bonds to Be Issued with Respect to Certain Obligations of the Los Angeles Unified School District Arising from Involuntary Tort Claims to Be Reduced to Judgment, a Revolving Credit Agreement, an Indenture and Any Other Related Contracts and Agreements Authorized or Contemplated by the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education and the Adopting of a Resolution Pertaining Thereto.

DETAILED SUMMARY OF MATTER TO BE VALIDATED:  
The Board of Education (the "District Board") of the Los Angeles Unified School District (the "District") has authorized the issuance, from time to time, of judgment obligation notes (the "Promissory Notes") and judgment obligation bonds (the "Bonds"), the proceeds of which will be used to satisfy the District's obligations to pay judgments that have been or soon will be entered against the District in cases involving involuntary tort claims against the District either by application of California Assembly Bill Number 218, chaptered by the California Secretary of State on October 13, 2019 ("AB 218"), or as a result of similar childhood sexual assault, abuse, and/or molestation claims for tort liability (collectively, the "Judgment Refunding Program").

Enacted by the Legislature in 2019, among other things, AB 218 extended the statute of limitations for tort claims based on allegations of childhood sexual assault to a plaintiff's 40th birthday, and revived claims that were previously time-barred by the expiration of the statute of limitations for a period of three years, commencing on January 1, 2020 and ending on January 1, 2023 (the "Revival Window"). With the enactment of AB 218 and, in particular, the Revival Window provisions thereof, the District is defending an unprecedented number of involuntary tort claims from plaintiffs (the "Tort Plaintiffs") who allegedly spent time in the District's charge as children while suffering sexual assault, abuse, and/or molestation at the hands of District employees. As of June 17, 2024, the District has had more than 175 of such cases (involving nearly 300 individual Tort Plaintiffs), and counting, filed against it asserting involuntary tort claims by application of AB 218 or otherwise alleging claims in tort based on childhood sexual assault, abuse, and/or molestation claims (the "Lawsuits"). A significant portion of the Lawsuits could potentially be resolved in the coming months and years through settlements and stipulated judgments or via judgments on the merits entered against the District (each, a "Judgment" and, together, the "Judgments"). In either case, the District faces a substantial increase in liability from Judgments entered in the Lawsuits in favor of Tort Plaintiffs which obtain such Judgments (each a "Judgment Obligor" and, collectively, the "Judgment Obligees") in the coming months and years. Given the potential liability amounts to result from the Lawsuits, payment of each Judgment in full upon conclusion of the related Lawsuit would likely result in significant and material impacts to the District's operating budget that would be immediately felt across the District's operating funds for years to come.

To mitigate and manage these impacts, the Judgment Refunding Program establishes interim and long-term financing mechanisms to refund the District's obligations to the Judgment Obligees evidenced by the Judgments as and when the Judgments are entered against the District. First, the District will refund the Judgments on an interim basis pursuant to one or more credit facilities established under one or more revolving credit agreements (each, a "Revolving Credit Agreement") to be entered into by the District and one or more lender banks (each, a "Lender"). Each Revolving Credit Agreement will provide a short-term revolving line of credit that will be drawn upon as funds are needed to satisfy a Judgment or Judgments. The District's obligations under each Revolving Credit Agreement will be evidenced by Promissory Notes to be issued thereunder. Moreover, to confirm the agreement between each Lender and the District with respect to certain commitment fees and other fees payable to such Lender under a Revolving Credit Agreement, the District will enter into a fee agreement (each, a "Fee Agreement" and, together with the related Revolving Credit Agreement, a "Lender Agreement") with each Lender. To provide additional short-term borrowing options and flexibility, the District may also from time to time and pursuant to its authority under applicable law authorize other forms of temporary borrowing by the District in the form of temporary notes to be issued from time to time (each, a "Temporary Note" or, collectively, the "Temporary Notes" and, together with the Promissory Notes, the "Notes"), the proceeds of which are used to satisfy and refund one or more Judgments.

Second, the District will issue Bonds, from time to time, pursuant to an indenture (the "Indenture") to be entered into by the District and a commercial bank as trustee (the "Trustee"), and, if applicable, one or more supplemental indentures (each, a "Supplemental Indenture"), to be entered into by the District and the Trustee as provided under the Indenture. That is, when the amount of outstanding Notes and the timing is periodically appropriate to issue long-term obligations, the District will issue Bonds to refund the District's interim obligations under Notes, the proceeds of which will go to satisfying amounts payable to a Lender or other holders of Notes then outstanding and issued in satisfaction of any Judgment or Judgments, from time to time, and related costs. Bonds may also be issued to directly refund Judgments unrefunded at the time of issuance of any Bonds, and if desirable in the future, any previously issued Bonds then outstanding which previously refunded any Notes or Judgments.

On June 18, 2024, after public notice in accordance with law, the District Board adopted a Resolution entitled, "Resolution of the Board of Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District Approving and Authorizing the Issuance of Judgment Obligation Notes and Bonds, the Execution and Delivery of Revolving Credit Agreement(s), an Indenture and Related Documents, an Official Statement, a Validation Proceeding, and Related Actions, all for the Purpose of Refunding Obligations Incurred by Application of Assembly Bill Number 218 and Similar Claims for Tort Liability" (the "Resolution").

The Resolution authorized the District to (a) issue the Promissory Notes under the Judgment Refunding Program, on an interim basis, to refund obligations the District owes in connection with the Judgments; (b) enter one or more Lender Agreements pursuant to which the Promissory Notes are to be issued; (c) issue Bonds, on a long-term basis, to refund obligations the District owes in connection with the Judgments (i.e., any outstanding Notes or Judgments or previously issued Bonds at the time of issuance); (d) enter the Indenture and one or more Supplemental Indentures as provided under the Indenture, pursuant to which the Bonds are to be issued; and (e) undertake certain related proceedings, or execute certain documents, instruments and other matters, with respect to the Judgment Refunding Program. Under the Resolution, the aggregate dollar amount of Judgments to be refunded by Promissory Notes and/or Bonds must not exceed \$500,000,000 (excluding any interest due thereunder).

The District brought this validation action to confirm the validity of the Judgment Refunding Program and its various constituent parts, as described above and more specifically in the Complaint and exhibits thereto. The District seeks a judgment declaring, among other things, that the District's incurrence of any and all indebtedness and/or liability in connection with the amounts due to Judgment Obligees as set forth in the Judgments, the Notes, the Bonds, the Lender Agreement(s), the Indenture and any Supplemental Indenture as provided under the Indenture, and any and all contracts and agreements executed and delivered in connection therewith, is exempt from and not subject to the debt limitation set forth in Article XVI, Section 18 of the California Constitution. Namely, that the Notes, the Lender Agreement(s), the Bonds, the Indenture, and any Supplemental Indenture as provided under the Indenture, and any related contracts and agreements authorized or contemplated by the District Board in the Resolution do not create a new or different liability for purposes of the debt limitation set forth in Article XVI, Section 18 of the California Constitution but, rather, merely evidence the change of the form of the existing involuntary liabilities of the District arising in tort, as reflected in the Judgments, which are obligations imposed by law.

The Plaintiff has filed a civil complaint against you. If you wish to contest the legality or validity of the matter that is the subject of this lawsuit, you must appear and file with the Court a written pleading in response to the Complaint **not later than August 12, 2024**. Your pleading must be in the form required by the California Rules of Court. Your original pleading must be filed in this Court with proper filing fees and proof that a copy thereof was served on Plaintiff's attorneys.

Unless you so respond, your default will be entered upon Plaintiff's application, and this Court may enter a judgment against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. Persons who contest the legality or validity of the matters which are the subject of this lawsuit will not be subject to punitive action, such as wage garnishment or seizure of their real or personal property.

**YOU MAY SEEK THE ADVICE OF AN ATTORNEY IN ANY MATTER CONNECTED WITH THE COMPLAINT OR THIS SUMMONS. SUCH ATTORNEY SHOULD BE CONSULTED PROMPTLY SO THAT YOUR PLEADING MAY BE FILED OR ENTERED WITHIN THE TIME REQUIRED BY THIS SUMMONS.**

**SI USTED DESEA SOLICITAR EL CONSEJO DE UN ABOGADO EN ESTE ASUNTO, DEBERIA HACERLO INMEDIATAMENTE, PARA QUE, SU RESPUESTA ESCRITA, SI HAY ALGUNA, PUEDA SER REGISTRADA A TIEMPO.**

CASE NUMBER (Número del Caso): 24STCV15411

The name and address of the court is:  
(El nombre y la dirección de la corte es):  
SUPERIOR COURT, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
Stanley Mosk Courthouse  
Department 78  
111 North Hill Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney is  
(El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante es):  
Attn: Aaron M. Rubin, Esq., Kristopher R. Wood, Esq., Donald S. Field, Esq.  
Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe  
2050 Main Street, Suite 1100  
Irvine, CA 92614-8255  
Telephone: (949) 567-6700  
Facsimile: (949) 567-6710

Date: (Fecha) July 1, 2024

David W. Slayton, Executive Officer/Clerk of Court

Clerk, by I. Mariscal, Deputy

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THE WEATHER

Today in Southern California

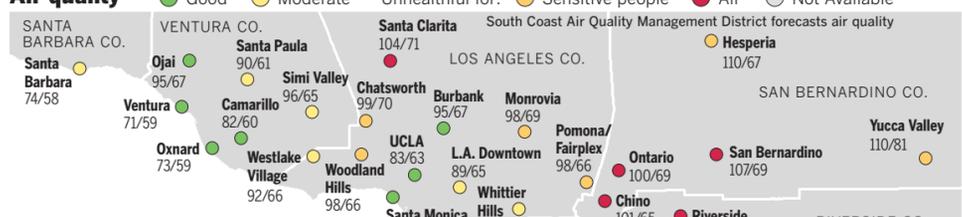
Another scorcher away from the coast: Onshore flow will continue to weaken Tuesday and bring the return of dangerously high temperatures to some areas. In the Inland Empire, temperatures in the 100s will be common. Morning fog will be more confined to the immediate coast. Across the interior, temperatures in the 110s will be widespread, with the 120s expected across the deserts.

5-day forecasts

High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin	Valleys	Beaches	Mountains	Deserts
Today	89 65 Sunny and warm	98 70 Sunny and hot	78 63 Fog to sun	90 53 Mostly sunny; warm	121 86 Very hot
Wednesday	Sunny; warm 93/65	Sun; hot 100/72	Fog to sun 81/65	Very warm 90/56	Very hot 120/88
Thursday	Mostly sunny 89/68	Hot 100/70	Humid 78/65	Some sun 90/60	Very hot 119/89
Friday	Mostly sunny 87/65	Hot 98/68	Partly sunny 75/63	Some sun 88/57	Very hot 118/87
Saturday	Mostly sunny 86/64	Very warm 95/66	Mostly sunny 76/62	Partly sunny 84/54	Hot 115/87

Air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO  
**Inner waters:** Winds light in the morning, becoming west at 5-10 knots in the afternoon. Seas generally 2-4 feet with a SW swell, fog early.  
**Surf zone:** The risk of strong rip currents will be moderate at L.A. and Ventura county beaches today and low at all others. Wind waves 2-4 feet.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	1-3'	8 sec	W	63
Ventura	2-4'	8 sec	SW	63
Los Angeles	2-4'	11 sec	SW	70
Orange	1-3'	11 sec	SW	69
San Diego	1-3'	11 sec	SW	72

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

Time	Height	Direction
1:21p	3.9 Hi	6:35a -0.2 Lo
11:56p	5.2 Hi	6:03p 2.5 Lo
1:59p	4.0 Hi	7:08a 0.2 Lo
-----	-----	6:58p 2.6 Lo

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people  
 Las Vegas, 10 Phoenix, 10  
 Los Angeles, 10 San Francisco, 25

California cities\*

City	Mon.*		Today		Wed.	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
Anaheim	84	63	--	89 64	92	66
Avalon/Catalina	73	65	--	82 70	85	69
Bakersfield	112	79	--	109 78	110	79
Barstow	119	85	--	118 83	115	85
Big Bear Lake	88	55	--	90 53	90	56
Bishop	109	61	--	108 59	106	60
Burbank	88	64	--	95 67	97	69
Camarillo	77	62	--	82 60	84	60
Chino	94	66	--	99 70	101	70
Chino Hills	91	63	--	101 65	103	64
Compton	81	63	Tr	86 65	89	68
Dana Point	75	65	--	78 66	78	67
Death Valley	123	97	--	128 98	129	98
Del Mar	75	58	--	72 65	75	58
Escondido	87	61	--	94 61	95	62
Fresno	61	55	02	65 54	64	52
Fallbrook	85	61	--	93 61	95	64
Fremont	112	74	--	109 75	109	77
Fullerton	81	67	--	89 67	91	69
Hemet	98	64	--	107 66	109	68
Hesperia	108	72	--	107 70	107	73
Huntington Beach	75	66	--	76 67	79	68
Idyllwild	96	73	--	97 73	98	76
Irvine	80	64	--	85 65	87	67

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set  
 Los Angeles Co. 5:50a/8:07p  
 Orange Co. 5:49a/8:05p  
 Ventura Co. 5:53a/8:12p  
 Moon 9:20a/10:51p 9:19a/10:50p 9:24a/10:56p



Almanac

Monday Downtown readings

Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
High/low	81/65	81/67	65/59
Normal high/low	81/64	84/66	73/57
High/low a year ago	78/61	78/62	67/55
Record high/date	98/2018	97/2018	87/2018
Record low/date	50/2019	60/2010	48/1948

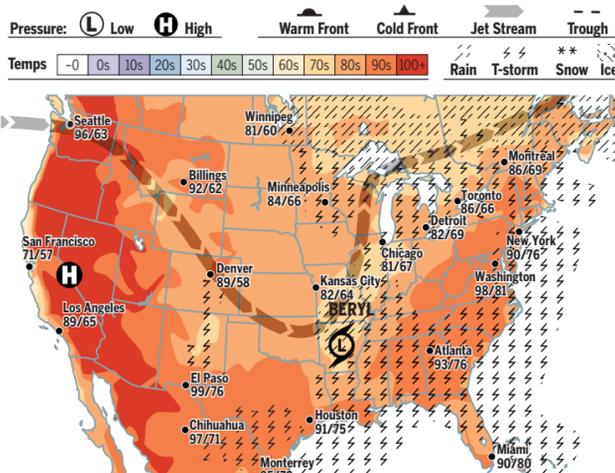
Precipitation Los Angeles Fullerton Ventura\*

24-hour total (as of 2 p.m.)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Season total (since Oct. 1)	22.15	16.59	24.79
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	28.03	21.35	27.06
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	14.26	11.80	16.05
Humidity (high/low)	100/72	96/52	100/75

City	Mon.*		Today		Wed.	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
San Diego	76	66	--	78 66	78	67
San Francisco	70	57	--	71 57	76	57
San Gabriel	88	64	--	95 67	97	68
San Jose	86	60	--	87 61	91	64
San Luis Obispo	80	57	--	87 58	83	57
Santa Ana	79	67	--	82 68	86	68
Santa Barbara	71	58	--	74 58	77	60
Santa Clarita	98	65	--	104 71	105	69
Santa Monica Pier	72	62	--	78 63	81	65
Santa Paula	78	61	Tr	90 61	94	65
Santa Rosa	87	53	--	83 53	93	55
Simi Valley	91	62	--	96 65	99	67
Tahoe Valley	91	47	--	90 48	90	49
Temecula	91	63	--	101 66	102	67
Thousand Oaks	82	61	Tr	90 64	93	63
Torrance	75	64	01	78 65	78	66
UCLA	73	62	04	83 63	87	65
Van Nuys	89	66	--	100 69	102	71
Ventura	65	59	03	71 59	74	60
Whittier Hills	86	64	--	92 65	93	66
Woodland Hills	95	63	--	98 66	99	66
Wrightwood	93	73	--	92 71	91	70
Yorba Linda	86	62	--	92 64	95	63
Yosemite Valley	98	59	--	96 60	96	57

Today in North America

Beryl moves inland: Beryl, now a tropical rainstorm, will move quickly through the Mississippi Valley toward the Ohio Valley, spreading heavy tropical rain. Rainfall amounts of 4 to 8 inches are expected from Texas into northern Indiana.



U.S. cities

MONDAY'S EXTREMES AS OF 2 P.M. FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES  
 High 120 in Needles, Calif. Low 31 in Gould, Colo.

City	Monday*		Prcp.	Today		Sky
	Hi	Lo		Hi	Lo	
Albany	92	65	--	96	74	Ts
Albuquerque	83	66	--	92	65	Su
Anchorage	62	54	Tr	64	54	Cy
Aspen	78	40	--	78	46	Pc
Atlanta	89	74	1.76	93	76	Ts
Austin	91	77	1.5	97	74	Ts
Baltimore	98	73	--	98	78	Ts
Boise	103	66	--	106	73	Su
Boston	83	67	--	91	75	Pc
Buffalo	87	64	--	86	70	Ts
Burlington, Vt.	88	67	--	91	71	Ts
Charleston, S.C.	93	78	2.3	90	78	Ts
Charlotte	91	75	4.9	92	77	Ts
Chicago	86	69	0.9	81	67	Ts
Cincinnati	89	69	--	88	69	Ts
Cleveland	88	63	--	85	71	Pc
Columbia, S.C.	94	74	.67	92	77	Ts
Columbus	92	66	--	89	73	Pc
Dallas/Ft.Worth	86	74	.22	92	74	Pc
Denver	82	53	--	89	58	Pc
Detroit	87	68	--	82	69	Ts
El Paso	94	77	1.5	99	76	Cy
Eugene	105	59	--	107	58	Su
Fort Myers	92	80	--	92	78	Pc
Hartford	94	70	--	95	74	Ts
Honolulu	87	75	.03	88	77	Sh
Houston	80	74	5.75	91	75	Pc
Indianapolis	87	69	--	78	66	R
Jacksonville, Fla.	97	79	1.46	91	76	Ts
Kansas City	84	66	Tr	82	64	Su
Knoxville	94	74	--	94	75	Pc
Las Vegas	117	90	--	117	90	Su
Louisville	92	72	--	88	70	Ts
Medford	111	64	--	108	69	Su
Memphis	92	80	.04	82	67	Ts
Miami	91	82	1.0	90	80	Cy
Milwaukee	84	69	.04	78	67	Pc
Minneapolis	81	68	.06	84	66	Pc
Nashville	98	74	1.0	95	71	Ts
New Orleans	92	81	.05	90	78	Ts
New York	95	77	--	90	76	Ts
Norfolk	91	77	1.4	92	78	Ts
Oklahoma City	88	68	1.5	87	66	Cy
Omaha	82	60	--	85	65	Su
Orlando	97	78	.07	85	76	Ts
Philadelphia	95	77	--	96	77	Ts
Phoenix	118	91	--	116	89	Su
Pittsburgh	91	68	--	93	75	Pc
Portland, Ore.	102	67	--	105	67	Su
Providence	90	72	.02	87	72	Pc
Raleigh/Durham	94	75	.09	95	77	Ts
Reno	104	69	--	105	67	Su
Richmond	92	76	1.36	96	77	Ts
St. Louis	87	71	.77	73	67	R
Salt Lake City	95	66	--	100	72	Hz

Key: Su sunny; Pc partly cloudy; Cy cloudy; Fg foggy; Prcp precipitation; Dr drizzle; HZ hazy; Sh showers; Ts thunderstorms; R rain; Sn snow; Sf snow flurries; I ice; Rs rain/snow; W windy; Tr trace. Notes: National extremes exclude Alaska and Hawaii. \* - data estimated.  
 Monday's readings as of 2 p.m.

Forecasts by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2024  
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PAUL GEORGE says he was offered a two-year, \$60-million extension last fall. "I'm like, 'Whoa, whoa, whoa. That's crazy.'"

George 'never wanted to leave'

Ex-Clipper describes failed contract talks that led him to sign with 76ers. Initial offer was 'disrespectful.'

By CHUCK SCHILKEN

Paul George didn't want to leave Los Angeles. And the Clippers wanted to keep him here for life.

That's all according to George, who relayed the information while wearing his new Philadelphia 76ers No. 8 jersey.

In Monday's episode of "Podcast P with Paul George," the nine-time All-Star revealed details from the failed contract negotiations that led to him leaving the Clippers after five seasons and signing a four-year, \$212-million contract with Philadelphia last week.

He prefaced it all by saying there were "no hard feelings"

toward the organization.

"Just to put it out there, I never wanted to leave L.A. Initially, I was not trying to leave L.A.," said George, who grew up in Palmdale. "L.A. is home. This is where I wanted to finish at. I wanted to work as hard as possible to win one in L.A., like that was the goal, to be here and be committed to L.A."

George's most recent contract with the Clippers included a player option for the final year, which would have paid him \$48.7 million for the 2024-25 season. Last fall, George said, the Clippers approached him with an extension offer for two years and \$60 million, which the veteran player thought was "kind of disrespectful."

"I'm like, 'Whoa, whoa, whoa. That's crazy,'" George said. "So I'm like, 'Naw, I'm not signing that.'"

George said the Clippers' offer went up "inches, inches, inches" during the early months of last season. Then in January, the team

reached an extension agreement with one of its other star players, Kawhi Leonard, for three years and \$152.3 million. So, George said, he asked for the same deal.

"I'm like, 'Just give me what Kawhi got. ... I'm not gonna say I want more than 'Whi. It's not about me being paid more than him. I'm gonna take what he got. Y'all give him that, give me that,'" George said. "They didn't wanna do that."

At that point, George said, he shut down negotiations for the remainder of the season because "it was starting to get into my mood." After the Clippers' loss to the Dallas Mavericks in the first round of the playoffs, George said, the team offered him a three-year, \$150-million deal.

George thought the offer was "in the ballpark," but he also wanted a no-trade clause. The team refused, George said, so he then asked for a four-year, \$212-million deal.

"Like at least pay me my money," George said. "If y'all gonna trade me, y'all gonna trade me. But at least now I'm not in a situation where I coulda got more had I gone to free agency than just take this deal and y'all can just ship me wherever [you] wanted, and now I'm in this deal that I didn't want."

"They didn't want to do that. So now it's like, now I'm open to entertaining what's out there."

On June 29, George informed the Clippers he was opting out of the final year of his contract. George's agent met with Lawrence Frank, the president of basketball operations, the next day, but no deal was reached. On July 1, George agreed to terms with the 76ers.

"They weren't gonna budge. I wasn't gonna budge," George said of the Clippers. "I thought I played well enough for them to be like, 'You know what, he's a part of our future.' I thought I did that. I thought I earned that. Granted, we didn't win while I was there, but luck has a lot to do with that. We couldn't remain healthy as a unit. But I thought I did enough to earn that."

"But at that point it didn't even feel right to come back with that type of energy and be comfortable playing back in L.A."

George also said he spoke with Leonard privately to inform him of his intention to leave five years after they joined the team together — Leonard as a free agent and George in a trade with the Oklahoma City Thunder. He said Leonard supported his decision.

"I owed Kawhi that conversation,"

# Frustrating late-game fizzle for the Sparks

Despite Jackson's career-high 22 points and 25 from Hamby, L.A. falls to Phoenix.

By MARISSA KRAUS

As Phoenix Mercury coach Nate Tibbetts watched the Sparks play the Las Vegas Aces from his home Friday, he was jealous of the electric Crypto.com Arena atmosphere and competitive matchup he saw. It made him excited for Sunday's game against the Sparks, which exceeded his expectations.

Natasha Cloud scored a career-high 31 points as the Mercury overcame the absence of Diana Taurasi to defeat the Sparks 84-78 after a fourth-quarter duel Sunday at Crypto.com Arena.

For Sparks coach Curt Miller, it was not only a disappointing game, but a frustrating one.

"I'm frustrated that we didn't play how we were capable of playing," Miller said. "I don't think we played with the same spirit, intensity and focus. The No. 1 thing you realize as a coach with a lack of focus is when you struggle coming out of a timeout and look at them in the eye and diagram something and they don't know where they are supposed to be.

"They don't execute. That is a frustrating thing for a coach. If we played like we did tonight, Minnesota would beat us by 20 easily. I don't worry about the wins and losses. I'm worried about playing to our standards, and if we don't do that Tuesday against Minnesota it will be a long night."

Despite a career-high 22 points from Sparks rookie Rickea Jackson, Phoenix broke a 78-78 tie when Cloud scored with 35 seconds left in the game. Missed three-point attempts from Aari McDonald and Dearica Hamby in the final 30 seconds helped seal the win for the Mercury (11-10).

Miller said he was proud of the rookie's performance, which was critical to keeping the Sparks in the game.

"Rickea is a really talented rookie, they guarded her now for the second game in a row in stretches with



**DEARICA HAMBY** of the Sparks drives around Phoenix's Brittney Griner in the first half of L.A.'s 84-78 loss to the Mercury at Crypto.com Arena. Hamby led the Sparks (5-16) with 25 points and nine rebounds.

[Brittney Griner] and we had to find that matchup in a variety of ways to try to isolate [Griner] on the perimeter and also get us moving against [Griner]," Miller said. "For overall growth, I want her to want to take over at times with how they were guarding her. She had a good game. I think it could have been even more of a monster game."

Hamby led the Sparks (5-16) with 25 points and nine rebounds, and Jackson had six rebounds and three assists. Cloud had nine rebounds and five assists, and

Mercury teammate Kahleah Copper had 25 points and 10 rebounds while making 11 of 13 free throws.

The Sparks continued to struggle from three-point range, shooting five for 24 while making 29 of 75 from the field overall. Phoenix shot 27 for 59 and 23 for 28 from the free-throw line.

Though the Sparks kept pace early, they struggled to contain Cloud, who hit a trio of three-pointers and scored 13 points to help Phoenix take a 25-15 lead by the end of the first quarter.

"When you know [Diana

Taurasi] is out and you're a dog like she is, she was going to will that team to the finish line and you need closers," Miller said. "No one is going to tell [Cloud] she's not the best player on the floor every time she plays. Attitude is everything, and she was confident in crunch time and we were hesitant."

Azurá Stevens, making her Sparks season debut after undergoing surgery on her left arm in March, scored her first points on a steal early in the second quarter. She finished with 10 points, six rebounds and four as-

sists. Guard Crystal Dangerfield also made her Sparks debut after signing a seven-day hardship contract Thursday.

For Hamby, Stevens' return was a positive development for the team.

"Azurá is offensively versatile," Hamby said. "She's long, she is active. Defensively it was nice, took a little pressure off for her to guard [Griner] and allow me to roam a bit. We've missed her and I know what she's capable of offensively and defensively. It's good to have her back."

After being named to the Australian national team Thursday, Stephanie Talbot, who has been playing significant minutes with an injured right foot, left the game in the first quarter and did not return.

The Sparks clawed back late in the second quarter, going on a 7-0 run to trail 42-39 at halftime. Jackson scored seven points in the second quarter and Hamby had 12 points and seven rebounds at the break.

While Hamby helped make it a one-point game early in the third quarter, foul trouble hampered the Sparks' efforts. However, the Sparks tied the score 56-56 on a pair of Rae Burrell free throws with 2:13 left in the third. Jackson finished with 10 points in the quarter and made it a two-point game after scoring with 11 seconds left.

Midway into the fourth quarter, Hamby scored a three-pointer to give the Sparks a 70-67 lead — their first since the first quarter. Both teams traded points down the stretch before the Mercury pulled ahead in the final minute.

Despite losing for the ninth time in 10 games, the Sparks are looking at the positives — they had only nine turnovers and they stayed in the game until the final seconds. They showed that if they can take care of the ball, they can compete. They plan to build on those positives Tuesday against a talented Minnesota team.

"I'm proud of this team," Jackson said. "We didn't get the win, but are proud of how we are growing each and every day. I feel like we are trending in the right direction. Wins will come if we just keep coming together and continue to do what we do."

## SUNDAY'S LATE BOX MERCURY 84, SPARKS 78

**PHOENIX** — Cunningham 3-6 0-0 8, Herbert Harrigan 2-7 1-2 6, Griner 9-9 2-4 9, Cloud 10-16 7-7 31, Copper 7-17 11-13 25, Dixon 1-1 0-0 2, Meek 1-2 0-0 2, Sutton 0-1 1-2 1, Totals 27-59 23-28 84.

**SPARKS** — Jackson 8-17 4-6 22, Talbot 1-2 0-0 2, Hamby 10-19 3-5 25, McDonald 1-10 2-4, Nurse 1-2 0-0 2, Stevens 4-10 2-2 10, Burrell 0-5 4-4 4, Yueru 0-0 0-0 4, Clarendon 2-4 0-0 4, Cooke 2-5 0-0 5, Dangerfield 0-1 0-0 0, Totals 29-75 15-19 78.

**Phoenix** 25 17 23 19 — 84  
**Sparks** 15 24 24 15 — 78

3-Point Goals—Phoenix 7-21 (Cloud 4-6, Cunningham 2-5, Herbert Harrigan 1-4, Sutton 0-1, Copper 0-5), Los Angeles 5-24 (Hamby 2-4, Jackson 2-4, Cooke 1-1, Clarendon 0-1, Dangerfield 0-1, Nurse 0-1, Talbot 0-1, Burrell 0-2, Stevens 0-3, McDonald 0-6). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Phoenix 38 (Copper 10), Los Angeles 29 (Hamby 9). Assists—Phoenix 16 (Cloud, Copper 5), Los Angeles 25 (McDonald 6). Total Fouls—Phoenix 23, Los Angeles 24. A—11,618 (18,997).

## Leonard feeling good ahead of Olympics

[Leonard, from B10] initially saying he wanted to just answer questions about Team USA. Leonard later clarified that he didn't have a problem with George or his decision to sign elsewhere.

As far as his decision to play this summer in Paris, Leonard said the Clippers were supportive in allowing him to pursue something that he's passionate about and hadn't been able to do previously when asked.

"I'm just able to play right now. So I'm happy to go out there ... with these talented players and be able to learn something. ... I've always wanted to play against other talent overseas and just other basketball styles and plays. It's one of the reason why I love the game. We could all teach each other how to shoot a basketball, but all our jumpshots are going to look different."

Leonard, who has struggled with injuries throughout the second half of his career, said he's disappointed

"I took the time. I was able to turn [it] around over the last two weeks. I'm out here now and I'm having a good time."

— **KAWHI LEONARD**, Clippers star, on his knee injury

he hasn't been healthier, particularly last season when he tried "to play as much as possible."

"[I] felt great and you know at a certain period of time I couldn't go," he said. "I tried the best that I could, but it's just my journey. You know I don't want to be in the situation that I [am] in, but I gotta take it for what it is. And you know a lot of people are watching. Supporters or doubters. But I motivate a lot of people."

"So I gotta keep doing what I'm doing."

## James is 'absolutely OK' with his pay cut

[James, from B10] under the second apron, the Lakers are able to be more flexible in the ways they can improve the roster, maybe most importantly giving the franchise the ability to trade multiple players for one player, though they still cannot take back more money than they send out in a deal.

James praised his experience with Team USA on the second day of training camp.

"For us to be on the same team, it's like surreal," James said. "Like anytime I see a clip, like if I go on social media and I see a clip of us walking into the building ... I was like, man, that's just crazy."

"Us" in this case is a roster that's rivaling the origi-

nal Dream Team, with James joined by Olympic veterans Stephen Curry, Kevin Durant, Kawhi Leonard and Anthony Davis while bridging things with younger American stars such as Devin Booker, Anthony Edwards and Tyrese Haliburton.

"We don't step on their toes and nothing of that nature, but we just hope that we continue to set a standard for them of what excellence is all about because they're already excellent," James said. "And see if they can just carry it on and be great as long as they want to be too."

"So I hope we just we're just setting the standards for them."



**ROOKIE** Dalton Knecht has had rough outings in the Lakers' back-to-back losses in the California Classic.

## Lakers' offensive pains continue

Knecht leads the team with 12 points but misses 10 of 13 shots in loss to Golden State.

By ANTHONY DE LEON

**SAN FRANCISCO** — The Lakers' start to the first weekend of summer league play has been plagued with inconsistency, especially for the team's first-round pick, Dalton Knecht.

The rookie from Tennessee has had rough performances in back-to-back losses for the Lakers during the California Classic at Chase Center.

On Sunday, the guard struggled to knock down shots consistently in the team's 92-68 loss to the Golden State Warriors.

Knecht finished with 12

points, one assist and two rebounds in 22 minutes. He made only three of 13 shots from the field and one of three on three-pointers, with much of his scoring coming from the free-throw line.

This performance was similar to the day before when he shot three for 12 from the field and one of four from beyond the arc, also scoring 12 points, in a loss to the Sacramento Kings.

Before this weekend, Knecht had not played a full game since March. He acknowledged that finding his rhythm and adjusting to the NBA game is essential for his success.

Unfazed by his poor shooting performance to start, Knecht emphasized the importance of getting to his spots and making shots. Throughout the game, Knecht looked confident every time he released a shot.

"Shooters shoot," Knecht said. "My dad always told me the next one is going in, so shoot."

After a slow start to the game, Knecht became more aggressive in the second half, taking more shots. The Lakers began facilitating the offense through him to get him open looks, but he could not get much to fall.

At the start of the second half, Knecht showcased his athleticism by driving through the lane and soaring to the rim for a two-handed dunk.

"I was trying to put it on someone's head, like I did against Michigan State," Knecht said about his high-light dunk.

A few plays later, he nearly made another high-light dunk but instead converted a contested layup, resulting in a three-point play. Knecht eventually found

some rhythm as the game progressed, but he sat out the fourth quarter.

Lakers summer league coach Dane Johnson recognized that Knecht's development will take time, stressing the importance of patience as he adjusts to the NBA level. He spoke highly of Knecht's shooting ability and aims to help him expand his volume of shots.

But to do so, Knecht needs to allow the game to unfold naturally without forcing plays.

"It's going to come," Johnson said. "He's a great player, so I'm not worried about him making or missing some of these shots. He's going to knock down shots going forward."

The Lakers are scheduled to play Wednesday against the Miami Heat before heading to Las Vegas for the NBA summer league.

BASEBALL : SUNDAY FLASHBACK

Hernández wants to join this swat team



WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

Dodgers' sunflower seed celebrator voices interest in participating in next week's Home Run Derby.

By JACK HARRIS

Teoscar Hernández will be bringing his sunflower seed home run celebration to the All-Star Game next week.

Whether he'll get the chance to swat some long balls of his own during the festivities in Arlington, Texas, remains to be seen.

After being selected to his second career All-Star team Sunday, Hernández voiced his interest in participating in the league's annual Home Run Derby as well, which will take place July 15, a day before the All-Star Game, at the Texas Rangers' Globe Life Field.

"Yeah, yeah. Why not?" Hernández said when asked about his interest in the Derby after the Dodgers' series finale loss to the Milwaukee Brewers. "Obviously, in my career, I wanted to be a part of it, see how it feels. Why not try to go for it and win everything?"

Hernández said it would be up to Major League Baseball to extend him an invitation — that decision was expected in the coming days — but his potential participation would be a fitting punctuation to his prodigious start to the 2024 season.

Entering play Monday, Hernández's 19 home runs and 60 RBIs both ranked fifth in the National League. His .483 slugging percentage and .802 OPS were both top 20. And after signing a one-year, \$23.5-million deal this offseason — a short-term bet on himself after a down 2023 season with the Seattle Mariners — Hernández has re-established himself as one of the more potent sluggers in the game.

"I mean, yeah, a little bit," Hernández said when asked if this season was more gratifying given his career-low production with the Mariners last year, when he had a .741 OPS that barely ranked above league average.

"A lot of people expected me to not perform well after last season,"

SUNFLOWER SEEDS cover the Dodgers' Teoscar Hernández after a solo home run in a game against the Braves in May.

Hernández added. "But in my mind, I was just working hard. I know the things that I know I can do on the baseball field. And, you know, when you work hard and you put a lot of things, a lot of effort in, good things happen at the end of the day."

Hernández's Derby interest flows from the same vein.

He knows hitting home runs is one of his strengths.

He would relish a national, league-wide stage on which to showcase it.

"I think he'd do just fine," teammate Freddie Freeman said, laughing, when told of Hernández's

Derby hopes. "He can punish a baseball. If he wants to do it, I'll put all my chips on him."

So far, more stars have announced they're not doing the Derby than those who have said they are.

Last week, Dodgers designated hitter Shohei Ohtani confirmed he was unlikely to participate, given the added risks he and the Dodgers feared it could create in his rehabilitation as a pitcher from last year's Tommy John surgery.

Yankees sluggers Aaron Judge and Juan Soto have also confirmed they won't participate, while other possible big-name candidates

such as Bryce Harper and Giancarlo Stanton are doubtful after recently suffering injuries.

As of Monday afternoon, only four of the Derby's eight spots had been filled: Gunnar Henderson of the Baltimore Orioles, Alec Bohm of the Philadelphia Phillies, Bobby Witt Jr. of the Kansas City Royals and Pete Alonso of the New York Mets.

Henderson has 27 home runs this year, trailing only Ohtani and Judge for the MLB lead. Alonso is at 18 and has become a Derby hallmark since winning back-to-back editions of the event in 2019 and 2021.

Witt has 15 homers but Bohm has only 11 — reflecting the relatively shallow pool of big-name MLB sluggers who appear to be possibilities for this year's showcase.

There are other names who would still make sense. Marcell Ozuna, José Ramirez and Rafael Devers are All-Star selections with at least 20 home runs this year. The host Rangers have one All-Star position player, Marcus Semien, as well as past Derby participant Adolis García. Vladimir Guerrero Jr. is the Derby's off-the-champ.

Hernández, though, is hoping to bring his own flair to the competition.

He's already well-known for his sunflower seed home run celebration, in which he showers teammates with handfuls of seeds when they return to the dugout after a big fly.

He's been the recipient of more than enough seed showers himself to warrant a potential Derby place, on pace to surpass his previous career-high home run total of 32 (which he set in his only other All-Star season in 2021).

Most of all, he's hoping to continue his bounce-back performance this year on a stage he's never been on, waiting to see if his strong debut season with the Dodgers will also include a first career appearance in the Home Run Derby.

"He wants it ... so hopefully it works out," manager Dave Roberts said. "If he wants to go out there and hit a bunch of homers and make the fans go crazy, have at it."

STANDINGS

Table with columns: League, Team, W, L, Pct., GB, L10. Includes National League (West, Central, East) and American League (West, Central, East).

Today's games

Table of today's games with columns: Game, Time, Location.

MILWAUKEE 9, DODGERS 2

Box score for Milwaukee 9, Dodgers 2. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—Milwaukee 6; Chouiro 1, Hoskins 1, Velich 1, Adames 1, Mitchell 1. Turang 1. Dodges 5: Smith 1, Freeman 1, T. Hernández 1, Rojas 1, Taylor 1. Strikeouts—Milwaukee 9: Chouiro 2, Hoskins 3, Adames 1, Mitchell 1, Perkins 1, Haase 2, Dodges 9: Ohtani 2, Smith 1, T. Hernández 1, Biggio 1, Vargas 2, K. Hernández 1, Taylor 1. E—Peguero (1), Wroblewski (1).

MINNESOTA 3, HOUSTON 2

Box score for Minnesota 3, Houston 2. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Houston—Houston 3: Meyers 2, McCormick 1, Minnesota 2: Larnach 2, Kapler 1, Walker 1. Strikeouts—Houston 7: Altuve 1, Bregman 1, Diaz 1, Velich (1), Duke 1, McCormick 1, Minnesota 3: Larnach 2, Farmer 2, Sarrano 1, Buxton 2, Vargas 1. E—Salazar (1), LOB—Houston 6, Minnesota 9. 2B—Loperfido (5), HR—Vázquez (4), off Hader. RBIs—Salazar (7), Altuve (4), Vázquez 3 (6), CS—Miranda (1), SF—Salazar. Runners left in scoring position—Houston 3 (McCormick, Bregman, Peña), Minnesota 5 (Castro, Farmer, Margot, Buxton). RISP—Houston 1 for 7; Minnesota 1 for 7. Runners moved up—Lee. GDP—Lee. DP—Houston 2.

KANSAS CITY 10, COLORADO 1

Box score for Kansas City 10, Colorado 1. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—Kansas City 2; Refugio 1, García 1, Colorado 2; Toggia 2. Strikeouts—Kansas City 6: Fowler 1, Witt 1, Foye 1, Meléndez 1, Ibsel 1. Colorado 10: Blackmon 2, Tovar 3, McMahon 1, Dornie 2, Stalling 2, Toggia 1. LOB—Kansas City 4, Colorado 6. HR—García (6), off Gordon; Meléndez (9), off Witt (15), off Black. RBIs—Fermán (2), Garcia 3 (4), Meléndez (5), Meléndez (2), Witt 3 (6), Jones (1), SF—Salazar. Runners left in scoring position—Kansas City 1 (Fermán), Colorado 2 (Tovar, Salazar). RISP—Kansas City 4 for 7; Colorado 2 for 6. DP—Pasquonito. GDP—Jones, Stalling. DP—Kansas City 2 (Witt, Massey, Perez, Witt, Massey, Perez); Colorado 1 (Schubert, Toggia, Schubert).

CHICAGO CUBS 5, ANGELS 0

Box score for Chicago Cubs 5, Angels 0. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Angels—Angels 2: Calhoun 1, O'Hoppe 1. Chicago 4: Hoerner 1, Suzuki 1, Schanuel 1b. Dodges 9: Ohtani dh. Hoerner 2b. Dryud 2b. Wurf 1b. Hirta 1b. Calhoun dh. Pillar 1b. O'Hoppe c. Neto ss. Mastriani 3b. Moniak 3b. Guillorme 3b. Totals 31 0 0 0.

DETROIT 5, CINCINNATI 1

Box score for Detroit 5, Cincinnati 1. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—Detroit 4: Keith 1, R.Greene 1, Rogers 1, Meadows 1. Strikeouts—Detroit 4: Verling 1, Keith 1, R.Greene 3, Pérez 1, McKinstry 1. Cincinnati 15: India 2, De La Cruz 2, Candelario 2, Marte 2, Espinal 1, Wynns 2, Benson 1, Dunn 1, Rios 1. E—McKinstry (7), Marte (5). LOB—Detroit 7, Cincinnati 4. 2B—Verling (11), Wynns (4), Candelario (8), Steer (21). HR—McKinstry (3), off Diaz. RBIs—McKinstry (3), Keith (2), Espinal (2), Marte (5). SB—Meadows (4), Keith (5), Rogers (1), CS—Meadows (3). Runners left in scoring position—Detroit 4 (Meadows, Pérez, R.Greene 2b, Cincinnati 0 for 8). Runners moved up—Rogers. RISP—Detroit 3 for 11; Cincinnati 0 for 8. Runners moved up—Rogers. Marte.

BALTIMORE 6, OAKLAND 3

Box score for Baltimore 6, Oakland 3. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—Baltimore 3; Meade 2, Urdy 2, Oakland 2; Bledy 1, Soderstrom 1. Strikeouts—Baltimore 7: Santander 1, O'Hearn 1, Kjerstad 2, Mountcastle 1, Mullens 2, Oakland 13: Roeker 1, Langiers 3, Gencel 3, Butler 3, K.McCann 1, Schumann 2. E—Henderson (3), Spence (1), Bledy (5), B.Harris (2), LOB—Baltimore 6, Oakland 7. 2B—Soderstrom (6), S.Henderson (5), HR—Santander (2), off Spence; Kjerstad (3), off Spence. RBIs—Santander (5), Kjerstad 3 (2), Henderson (6), Soderstrom (2), Langiers 4 (6), Bledy (3), SB—Mullens (1), SF—Langiers. Runners left in SP—Baltimore 4 (Mountcastle, Santander, Rutschman 2), Oakland 2 (Gelfo, Andujar). RISP—Baltimore 2 for 9; Oakland 2 for 6. DP—Baltimore 1, Oakland 2.

N.Y. METS 3, PITTSBURGH 2

Box score for N.Y. Mets 3, Pittsburgh 2. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—New York 5: Lindor 1, Nimmo 1, Martínez 1, Alvarez 1, Iglesias 1. Pittsburgh 10: McCutchen 2, Reynolds 1, Gonzales 2, Cruz 2, Bart 1, Taylor 2. E—Martínez 2, Martínez 1, Alonso 1, Vientos 2, McNeil 2, Torrens 1. RISP—New York 5 for 10; Pittsburgh 1 for 6. Runners moved up—Carrillo. GDP—Grichuk, Carroll, Perdomo, Walker. DP—Arizona 2 (Newman, Perdomo, Walker), San Diego 3 (Kin, Arnez, Solano, Cronenweth, Arnez, Cronenweth, Kin, Arnez).

BOSTON 3, N.Y. YANKEES 0

Box score for Boston 3, N.Y. Yankees 0. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—Boston 1: Duran 1, New York 1: Cabrera 1. Strikeouts—Boston 13: Duran 1, Hamilton 3, O'Neil 2, Gershens 1, Wong 1, Yoshida 1, Abreu 3, Smith 1. New York 6: Rice 2, Judge 3, Dravins 1, Solano 2. LOB—Boston 3, New York 3. SB—Smith (9), LeMahieu (3), Soto (3). HR—Devers (20), off G. Rafaela (1), off Weaver; Devers (21), off Tonkin. RBIs—Devers 2 (5), Rafaela (5). SB—Wong (4), CS—Wong (4). Runners left in scoring position—Boston 2 (Hamilton, Duran); New York 2 (Volpe, Rice). RISP—Boston 0 for 4; New York 0 for 4. Runners moved up—Verdugo. DP—Grisham. GDP—LeMahieu. DP—Boston 2 (Devers, Hamilton, Smith; Hamilton, Smith, Hamilton).

ARIZONA 9, SAN DIEGO 1

Box score for Arizona 9, San Diego 1. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—Arizona 8; Carroll 2, Peterson 1, Walker 2, Perdomo 1, Suárez 1, Thomas 1, San Diego 5: Cronenweth 1, Solano 2, Peralta 1, Kim 1. E—De Los Santos (1), LOB—Arizona 3, San Diego 3. 2B—Carroll (1), Newman (1), Suárez (13), Thomas (2), Moreno (4), HR—Carroll (3), off Cease; Suárez (7), off Cease; Peralta (9), off Hernandez. RBIs—Carroll (24), Suárez 5 (39), Moreno (3), Thomas (9), Profar (59). S—Carroll. Runners left in scoring position—Arizona 2 (Grichuk, Perdomo); San Diego 0. RISP—Arizona 4 for 8; San Diego 0 for 0. Runners moved up—Carroll. GDP—Grichuk, Carroll, Perdomo, D.Peralta. DP—Arizona 1 (Newman, Perdomo, Walker), San Diego 3 (Kin, Arnez, Solano, Cronenweth, Arnez, Cronenweth, Kin, Arnez).

ATLANTA 6, PHILADELPHIA 0

Box score for Atlanta 6, Philadelphia 0. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—Philadelphia 3: Marsh 1, Castellanos 1, Clemens 1. Atlanta 3: Kelenic 1, Albies 1, Ozuna 1. Strikeouts—Philadelphia 9: Stott 1, Turner 2, Marsh 2, Castellanos 1, Clemens 1, Stubbs 1, Rojas 1. Atlanta 10: Kelenic 2, Riley 1, Olson 1, Ozuna 2, d'Arnaud 1, Duval 1, Acia 1, White 1. LOB—Philadelphia 9, Atlanta 6. 2B—Bohm (30), Pache (4), Riley (17), Duval (8), HR—Duval (7), off Mercado; Kelenic (10), off Mercado; Olson (13), off Mercado; White (1), off Phillips. RBIs—Duval (22), Kelenic 3 (29), Olson (42), White (1), SB—Kelenic (6), Marsh (10), Marsh (10). Runners left in scoring position—Philadelphia 8 (Castellanos, Stubbs 2, Rojas 3, Merrill (4), Marsh), Atlanta 4 (Ozuna, d'Arnaud 2, White), RISP—Philadelphia 0 for 8; Atlanta 1 for 8. Runners moved up—Marsh, Stubbs, Bohm, Olson. Philadelphia IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA

MIAMI 7, CHICAGO WHITE SOX 4

Box score for Miami 7, Chicago White Sox 4. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—Chicago 4, Miami 7. Strikeouts—Chicago 9: Parns 3, Robert 1, Sheets 1, Jiménez 2, Delong 1, Sosa 1, Miami 4: Burger 2, Myers 1, Brúján 1, Brúján (10), Fortes (6), Edwards (3), Bell (6). 3B—Lee (1), HR—Méndez (3), off Cabrera; Burger (9), off Kopech. RBIs—Méndez 2 (8), Lee (24), Vaughn (43), Brúján (10), Fortes (14), Bell 2 (37), Burger 3 (3), SB—Chisholm (17), Sosa (3), Parns (3), Méndez (6), CS—Myers (1), SF—Vaughn, S—Fortes. Runners left in SP—Chicago 6, Miami 4. RISP—Chicago 1 for 6; Miami 3 for 9.

TORONTO 5, SEATTLE 4

Box score for Toronto 5, Seattle 4. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—Toronto 3, Seattle 5. Strikeouts—Toronto 11, Seattle 14. E—Berrios (1), LOB—Toronto 10, Seattle 15. 2B—Bichette (16), Riley (10), HR—Springer (10), off Stanek; Robles (1), off Berrios; Carter (12), off Berrios. RBIs—Kirk (22), Springer (13), Vanstro (37), Robles (2), Garner 3 (6), SB—Robles (2), Moore (5), Bliss (5), SF—Kirk, S—Vanstro (3), Robles (3). Runners left in SP—Toronto 4, Seattle 7. RISP—Toronto 2 for 10; Seattle 2 for 12.

ST. LOUIS 8, WASHINGTON 3

Box score for St. Louis 8, Washington 3. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—St. Louis 3: Winn 1, Donwan 1, Gorman 1, Washington 3: Wood 2, García 1. Strikeouts—St. Louis 8: Contreras 1, Anderson 1, Gorman 1, Carlson 3, Paegs 2, Washington 12: Abrams 2, Thomas 3, Wood 1, García 1, Lopez 1, Lipscomb 2, Adams 1, Young 1. E—Adams (4), Lipscomb (8), LOB—St. Louis 9, Washington 8. 2B—Gorman (11), Goldschmidt (13), Winker 2 (17), Yepez (2), HR—Contreras (3), Arenado 2 (7), Yepez 1 (4), Adams (7), Carlson (11), Contreras 3 (21), Arenado 2 (7), Yepez (1), Adams (7), Winker (4), SB—Contreras (1), Arenado 2 (7), CS—Thomas (7). Runners left in SP—St. Louis 3 (Carlson, Gorman, Contreras), Washington 5 (Thomas, Abrams, Lipscomb, Winker 2). RISP—St. Louis 4 for 11; Washington 2 for 9. Runners moved up—Yepez. DP—Winker. GDP—Contreras 2, Yepez. DP—St. Louis 3, Washington 1.

TEXAS 13, TAMPA BAY 2

Box score for Texas 13, Tampa Bay 2. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—Texas 3: Semien 1, N.Lowe 1, Grossman 1, Strikeouts—Tampa Bay 8: Diaz 1, B.Lowe 1, Paredes 2, Lowe 1, Deluca 1, Caballero 1; Texas 10: Semien 1, Seager 1, Orelans 1, Smith 2, N.Lowe 3, Taveras 1, Hill (9), HR—López 2, Orelans 1, Diaz 1, 2B—Seager (11), Langford (11), Heim (9), Hedges 1, Caballero (6), off Envaldi; Seager (16), off Utlich; Heim (8), off Utlich; Grossman (2), off Poche. RBIs—Caballero 2 (4), Langford (7), Heim (23), Jankowski 3 (10), Seager 3 (43), Taveras (21), Hill (5), Grossman 2 (9). Runners left in scoring position—Tampa Bay 0; Texas 6 (Hill 3, N.Lowe, Smith 2). RISP—Tampa Bay 0 for 0; Texas 10 for 12. Runners moved up—Jankowski. GDP—Lowe, Jankowski. DP—Tampa Bay 1 (Seager, Caballero, Diaz); Texas 1 (Semien, Seager, N.Lowe).

CLEVELAND 5, SAN FRANCISCO 4

Box score for Cleveland 5, San Francisco 4. Includes batting and pitching stats.

Walks—San Francisco 1: Soler 1, Cleveland 3: Martínez 2, Freeman 1. Strikeouts—San Francisco 7: Wade 1, Bailey 2, Yastrzemski 1, Slater 1, Cleveland 7: Hwang 1, Ramirez 1, Schenemann 1, Noel 1, Giménez 1, Hedges 1, Roca 1. E—Martínez (2), LOB—San Francisco 4, Cleveland 6. 2B—Hamed (6), Wisely (9), Chapman (24), Ramirez (18), Schenemann (4), HR—Conforto (10), off Carrasco; B.Naylor (5), off HJelle. RBIs—Conforto 3 (35), Ramos (41), Naylor (66), Schenemann (3), San Francisco 3 (23), CS—Rocchio (6), S—Martínez. Runners left in SP—San Francisco 1 (Cleveland 3), RISP—San Francisco 1 for 7; Cleveland 3 for 9.

Walks—Inherited runners scored—Mears 10, HBP—Zerpa (Blackmon). WP—Lance, U—David Rackley, Nate Tompkin, Chris Segal, Larry Vanover. T—238. Tickets sold—32,160 (50,144).

Walks—Inherited runners scored—De Los Santos 33, U—Alex Mackay, Malachi Moore, Chad Whitson, Bill Miller. T—241. Tickets sold—41,172 (40,222).

Walks—Toronto 3, Seattle 5. Strikeouts—Toronto 11, Seattle 14. E—Berrios (1), LOB—Toronto 10, Seattle 15. 2B—Bichette (16), Riley (10), HR—Springer (10), off Stanek; Robles (1), off Berrios; Carter (12), off Berrios. RBIs—Kirk (22), Springer (13), Vanstro (37), Robles (2), Garner 3 (6), SB—Robles (2), Moore (5), Bliss (5), SF—Kirk, S—Vanstro (3), Robles (3). Runners left in SP—Toronto 4, Seattle 7. RISP—Toronto 2 for 10; Seattle 2 for 12.

Walks—Texas 3: Semien 1, N.Lowe 1, Grossman 1, Strikeouts—Tampa Bay 8: Diaz 1, B.Lowe 1, Paredes 2, Lowe 1, Deluca 1, Caballero 1; Texas 10: Semien 1, Seager 1, Orelans 1, Smith 2, N.Lowe 3, Taveras 1, Hill (9), HR—López 2, Orelans 1, Diaz 1, 2B—Seager (11), Langford (11), Heim (9), Hedges 1, Caballero (6), off Envaldi; Seager (16), off Utlich; Heim (8), off Utlich; Grossman (2), off Poche. RBIs—Caballero 2 (4), Langford (7), Heim (23), Jankowski 3 (10), Seager 3 (43), Taveras (21), Hill (5), Grossman 2 (9). Runners left in scoring position—Tampa Bay 0; Texas 6 (Hill 3, N.Lowe, Smith 2). RISP—Tampa Bay 0 for 0; Texas 10 for 12. Runners moved up—Jankowski. GDP—Lowe, Jankowski. DP—Tampa Bay 1 (Seager, Caballero, Diaz); Texas 1 (Semien, Seager, N.Lowe).

# U.S. Olympic team is heavy on MLS players, light on veterans

A conflict with Copa América prevents squad from calling up every strong player.

By Kevin Baxter

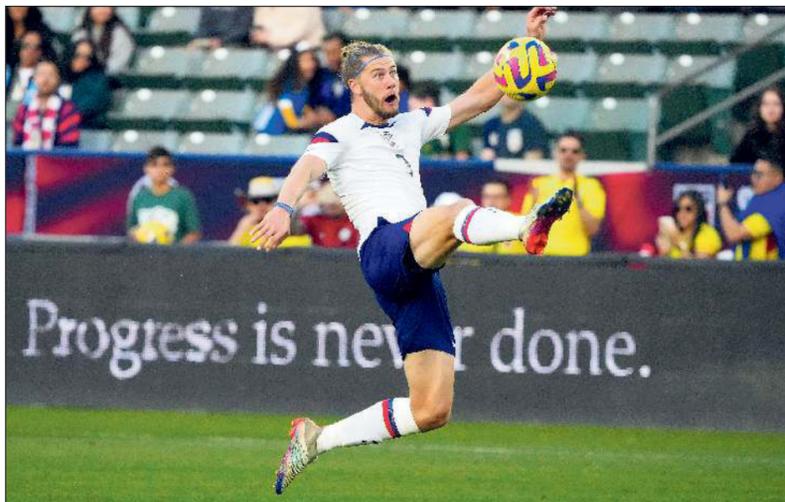
The U.S. will return to the men's Olympic soccer tournament later this month with a roster featuring eight players off European clubs and 10 from MLS, making it the most international Olympic roster in U.S. history.

The U.S. will open against host France in Marseille on July 24, two days before the opening ceremonies. The U.S. will also face New Zealand and Guinea in group play, needing to finish in the top two to advance to the quarterfinals for just the second time since 1956.

Because the Olympics are an age-group tournament in men's soccer, the 18-man roster was limited to players born on or after Jan. 1, 2001, with three overage exceptions.

In addition, club teams are not required to release players to compete in age-group events, so players including Joe Scally, Gio Reyna, Johnny Cardoso, Yunus Musah, Malik Tillman, Ricardo Pepi and Folarin Balogun, who were all on the U.S. team that bowed out of the Copa América last week, were not available for selection.

"It was actually a really difficult process in the last eight to 10 months, talking to the clubs and trying to get players released," U.S. coach Marko Mitrovic said. "That was a challenge. But we ended up with a roster that we really believe can represent us in the best possible way. I feel very good about



MARCO JOSE SANCHEZ Associated Press

"JUST GETTING this opportunity is amazing," Walker Zimmerman says.

the team."

FC Cincinnati defender Miles Robinson, who was also on the Copa América team, was named to the Olympic team as one of three overage players, alongside Nashville center back Walker Zimmerman and Colorado midfielder Djordje Mihailovic.

"First time for me going to the Olympics," said Zimmerman, who played on the U.S. team that failed to qualify for the 2016 Games. "I thought my dream was over, I won't have a chance to play in the Olympics.

"Just getting this opportunity is amazing. It's something I always watched growing up, something I always wanted to participate in. Can't wait to get to France."

Despite the international flavor of the roster, MLS played a major role in developing the team since 17 of the 18 players selected have played in the league or spent time in an MLS academy.

## U.S. men's Olympic soccer roster

The roster with club/country and hometown:

### GOALKEEPERS

Patrick Schulte (Columbus Crew; St. Charles, Mo.), Gabriel "Gaga" Slonina (Chelsea/ENG; Addison, Ill.)

### DEFENDERS

Maximilian Dietz (Greuther Furth/GER; New York City), Nathan Harriel (Philadelphia Union; Oldsmar, Fla.), Miles Robinson (FC Cincinnati; Arlington, Mass.), John Tolkin (New York Red Bulls; Chatham, N.J.), Caleb Wiley (Atlanta United FC; Atlanta), Walker Zimmerman (Nashville SC; Lawrenceville, Ga.)

### MIDFIELDERS

Gianluca Busio (Venezia/ITA; Greensboro, N.C.), Benjamin Cremaschi (Inter Miami CF; Key Biscayne, Fla.), Jack McGlynn (Philadelphia Union; Queens, N.Y.), Djordje Mihailovic (Colorado Rapids; Jacksonville, Fla.), Tanner Fessmann (Venezia/ITA; Birmingham, Ala.)

### FORWARDS

Paxten Aaronson (FC Utrecht/NED; Medford, N.J.), Taylor Booth (FC Utrecht/NED; Eden, Utah), Duncan McGuire (Orlando City SC; Omaha), Kevin Paredes (Wolfsburg/GER; South Riding, Va.), Griffin Yow (KVC Westerlo/BEL; Clifton, Va.)

### ALTERNATES

Josh Atencio (midfielder, Seattle Sounders FC; Bellevue, Wash.), Jacob Davis (defender, Sporting Kansas City; Rochester, Mich.), Johan Gomez (forward, Eintracht Braunschweig/GER; Keller, Texas), John Pulskamp (goalkeeper, Sporting Kansas City; Bakersfield)

# Nearing return, a changed person

[Press, from B10]

She's now 35, and it's uncertain how her reconstructed knee — and the rest of her body — will hold up when she returns to the field. That question should be answered during one of Angel City's three Summer Cup games, which will be played during NWSL's seven-week Olympic break.

Given what she has gone through already, Press is confident she can handle whatever comes next.

"Every single day when I go out to the field I asked my knee, 'Are you ready?' It's out of my control in a lot of ways," she said. "It's not, 'Oh, you're back and everything's easy.' My career will never look like it did.

"I want to make it back. I want to see if I can be good."

Angel City could certainly use the help. The team went into the Olympic break having won only one of its last nine games, falling to 11th place in the 14-team NWSL with 10 games to play.

Press is likely to be ready for significant playing time when the season resumes in late August, but she might not be the only addition to the roster. With the transfer window opening soon, Angel City is nearing deals on two significant summer signings, said one person close to the team who is not authorized to speak publicly on personnel matters.

Despite the injury, Press was never really inactive. Physical therapy after each operation ate up much of her time, and she said she still does four to six hours of daily exercises just to keep the swelling down.

"Honestly, it's a full-time job for her," said Sarah Smith, Angel City's director of medical and performance.

Still, she used the opportunity to work on other things as well. Press said she started therapy — the mental kind, not the physical kind — last September.

"I was like, 'Well I have all this additional time that I can't be on the pitch. What can I do with it?'" she said. "And I had a lot to work through, like my childhood,



HARRY HOW Getty Images

**CHRISTEN PRESS** in action in June 2022. It's uncertain how her reconstructed knee — and the rest of her body — will hold up when she returns to the field.

but also a changing life.

"Being healthy and strong has been my whole career, right? But it hurt to go up and down the stairs. It was a very big shift in identity."

She has also devoted more time to the eclectic business empire she and her partner and former teammate Tobin Heath are managing, one that includes RE-INC, a gender-neutral community-driven fashion brand, and the RE-CAP Show, the couple's entertaining award-winning podcast on women's soccer.

That has given the whip-smart Stanford graduate a

jump-start on the next phase of her life, though she's not sure when that phase will begin in earnest. Her Angel City contract expires at the end of the season, but Press said that if her knee holds up, she's not putting any limits on how much longer she might play.

"There's part of soccer that has been really hard that I don't miss. And then there's simultaneously a deep longing and a sadness for not being in the game," she said. "My body's craving competition. It's like a dichotomy."

If the last two years have produced nothing on the

field and have been mostly painful off it, mentally and physically, they've been invaluable in many other ways. She's grown. She's become stronger, smarter, healthier and wiser. And she promises that's going to be good for everyone — but especially for her.

"There's pain and there's also an opportunity," Press said. "I have this ideology that things don't happen to you, they happen for you. So I always ask myself, 'What's the gift of this?'"

"It's a happy story. It's life, you know. It's happy and it's sad. [Am I] a better person?" No, I'm different."

## PRO CALENDAR

	TUE 9	WED 10	THU 11	FRI 12	SAT 13
DODGERS	at Philadelphia 3:30 SNLA	at Philadelphia 4 ESPN	at Philadelphia 3 SNLA	at Detroit 3:30 SNLA	at Detroit 10 a.m. SNLA
ANGELS	TEXAS 6:30 BSW	TEXAS 6:30 BSW	SEATTLE 6:30 BSW	SEATTLE 6:30 BSW	SEATTLE 6:30 BSW
SPARKS	MINN. 7 SpecSN				at Dallas 12:30 Ch. 2
GALAXY					at Dallas 5 Apple TV
LAFC		NEW MEXICO* 8 Apple TV			COLUMBUS 7:30 Apple TV
ANGEL CITY	NEXT: JULY 20 VS. CLUB AMÉRICA**, 7 P.M., PARAMOUNT +				

Shade denotes home game. \*U.S. Open Cup \*\*NWSL x Liga MX Femenil Summer Cup

## TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
<b>BASEBALL</b>		
3:30 p.m.	Dodgers at Philadelphia	TV: SNLA R: 570, 1020
6:30 p.m.	Texas at Angels	TV: BSW R: 830, 1330
6:30 p.m.	Seattle at San Diego	TV: MLB
6:45 p.m.	Toronto at San Francisco	TV: ESPN+
<b>BASKETBALL: NBA SUMMER LEAGUE</b>		
4 p.m.	Memphis vs. Philadelphia	TV: ESPN, ESPN+
5 p.m.	San Antonio vs. Team China	TV: NBA, ESPN+
6 p.m.	Oklahoma City vs. Utah	TV: ESPN2, ESPN+
7 p.m.	Charlotte vs. Sacramento	TV: NBA, ESPN+
<b>BASKETBALL: WNBA</b>		
7 p.m.	Minnesota at Sparks	TV: SpecSN
<b>COLLEGE FOOTBALL</b>		
10 a.m.	Big 12 media days	TV: ESPN
<b>CRICKET</b>		
5:30 p.m.	MLC, Seattle at Los Angeles Knight Riders	TV: BSSC
<b>CYCLING</b>		
2 a.m. (Wed.)	Tour de France, Stage 11	TV: Peacock
<b>SOCCER</b>		
Noon	UEFA Euro, semifinal, Spain vs. France	TV: 11
5 p.m.	Copa América, semifinal, Argentina vs. Canada	TV: FS1, Univision, TUDN
<b>TENNIS</b>		
5 a.m. (Wed.)	Wimbledon, quarterfinals	TV: ESPN, ESPN2, ESPND
<b>WATER POLO</b>		
6 p.m.	Exhibition, U.S. women vs. Hungary	TV: ESPN

## 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](https://latimes.com/enewspaper).



# Down two sets, Fritz ousts rankled Zverev

With his comeback, American reaches the Wimbledon quarters. Djokovic also wins.

By Howard Fendrich

LONDON — After Taylor Fritz deposited a backhand that Alexander Zverev didn't even chase, wrapping up the American's comeback from a two-set hole in Wimbledon's fourth round Monday, the men met at the net for what turned into a longer-than-usual chat.

Zverev, playing with a bone bruise in his right knee, said he was bothered by some of the cheering coming from Fritz's guest box in the fifth set. When Fritz began to move away, Zverev stuck his chest to block the path and continued the mostly one-sided exchange.

This wasn't the 13th-seeded Fritz's only noteworthy postmatch interaction at the All England Club this fortnight — he told an earlier opponent to "have a nice flight home" — but he shrugged this one off, more interested in thinking about the way he turned things around to defeat two-time Grand Slam finalist Zverev 4-6, 6-7 (4), 6-4, 7-6 (3), 6-3 and reach the quarterfinals.

"It was amazing," said Fritz, 26, who lives in Rancho Palos Verdes, "to do that on Centre Court [at] Wimbledon, two sets down."

Zverev, seeded fourth, said later his issue wasn't with Fritz or his two coaches, but rather with others in the winner's support group "that are not maybe from the tennis world, that are not maybe [used to] watching every single match; they were a bit over the top."

"He's totally allowed to be annoyed if they were being annoying. ... That's one of the things I asked him at the net, 'Who was it?'" said Fritz, who next meets 25th-seeded Lorenzo Musetti, a first-time Slam quarterfinalist. "It's not a big thing.

It's all good."

Fritz joins good pal Tommy Paul in the final eight, giving the United States two men that deep in the tournament for the first time since 2000. The other quarterfinal on the bottom half of the men's draw will be No. 9 Alex de Minaur against seven-time Wimbledon champion Djokovic, who dismissed No. 15 Jannik Sinner in the men's bracket; No. 7 Jasmine Paolini is still in the women's field — by beating Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, 6-2. De Minaur eliminated Arthur Fils 6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.

Winners in women's fourth-round matches included 2022 champion Elena Rybakina, No. 21 seed Elina Svitolina and 2017 French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko. Rybakina faces Svitolina in the quarterfinals, and Ostapenko's next opponent will be 2021 French Open winner Barbora Krejčíková.

Rybakina moved on when No. 17 Anna Kalinskaya stopped playing because of a wrist injury, Svitolina overwhelmed Wang Xinyu 6-2, 6-1, Krejčíková defeated No. 11 Danielle Collins 7-5, 6-3, and Ostapenko was a 6-2, 6-3 winner against Yulia Putintseva, who beat No. 1 Iga Swiatek in the third round.

Fritz hit 15 aces, with zero double-faults, and they combined for 124 winners (69 by Fritz) and 56 unforced errors (23 by Fritz).

He's now 10-1 on grass in 2024 and is on an eight-match winning streak that includes a title at a tuneup event in Eastbourne the week before Wimbledon.

"What I enjoy the most on grass," Fritz said, "is just when you hit a good shot, you're rewarded for it."

Fendrich writes for the Associated Press.

# SPORTS

TUESDAY, JULY 9, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS



SEAN M. HAFFEY Getty Images

**GIVEN** what she's gone through already, Christen Press — a two-time World Cup champion — is confident she can handle whatever comes next.

## 'I ENJOY MY LIFE MORE'

**C**hristen Press hasn't gone two years without a soccer game since she learned to walk. So when she was laid up by a torn anterior cruciate ligament that took four surgeries and nearly 25 months to repair, she decided to make use of the free time she never thought she'd have.

As a result, the player who returned to training with Angel City this month is not the same one who was carried off the field eight games into the team's first season.

"I definitely feel like this is the best version of me that I've ever known. And I hope it continues to evolve," Press said Saturday in an interview that was heavy on smiles and optimism.

"I don't know if I would say I'm a better person. I

Angel City's Christen Press is a changed person as she nears return from injury

**KEVIN BAXTER  
ON SOCCER**

am a more grounded person. I'm more peaceful. I'm more at ease with myself. I'm more self-aware. I enjoy my life more, absolutely."

It would be hard for her to be a better player than she was two years ago. A two-time World Cup champion and Hermann Trophy winner whose 64 international goals rank ninth in U.S. women's national team history, Press was arguably in the best form of her life when she sustained the first major injury of her career.

At first she expected to be back in time for last summer's World Cup. Then she thought maybe she could play in this summer's Olympic Games. But the injury proved to be stubborn, and doctors had to go back in three more times for additional repairs. [See Press, B9]

## James says he took pay cut to protect Lakers

\$3-million gesture keeps team from second apron of cap

BY DAN WOIKE

LAS VEGAS — LeBron James said he wanted to give the Lakers something back by taking close to \$3 million less in his deal to keep the team from the salary cap's second apron.

"Like when you're in a relationship — like I've been married for a while now. I've been with my wife since high school — there's certain things that sometimes you have to do," James said Sunday. "You have to understand in a relationship, in order for a relationship to work ... both sides have to work."

"Me being able to be in a situation where I can protect the franchise under the second apron, understanding this new thing is very hard on a lot of teams as far as them trying to get better and whatever the case may be. I'm, I've been in a relationship with the Lakers going on seven years. I'm absolutely OK with [taking a pay cut]."

By staying [See James, B7]



MERCEDES OLIVER NBAE

**KAWHI LEONARD**, left, handles the ball during Team USA's training camp in Las Vegas on Sunday. "I'm happy to go out there ... with these talented players."

## Knee healed, Leonard ready for Olympics

Clippers star doesn't have issue with George leaving

BY DAN WOIKE

LAS VEGAS — Speaking to reporters for the first time since his postseason was cut short in the first round of the playoffs, Clippers star Kawhi Leonard said his injured knee was feeling good, allowing him to participate with Team USA in the upcoming Olympics.

Though the knee issues that caused him to sit out the last three games of the Clippers' series with the Dallas Mavericks were concerning enough that Leonard feared he could miss another Olympics, his return to the court over the last month has him reassured.

"I took the time," he said Sunday. "I was able to turn [it] around over the last two weeks. I'm out here now and I'm having a good time."

Leonard declined to comment about Paul George's decision to leave the Clippers in free agency. [See Leonard, B7]

### Men's team heavy on MLS players

Few veterans make the roster for the Paris Olympics partly because of a conflict with Copa América. **B9**

### Fritz reaches Wimbledon quarters

He comes back from two sets down to oust fourth-seeded Zverev and give U.S. two men in final eight. **B9**

### Hernández wants to join this swat team

Dodgers' sunflower seed celebrator voices interest in participating in next week's Home Run Derby. **B8**

Los Angeles Times  
SPORTS EXTRA

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RYAN SUN Associated Press

ANGELS shortstop Luis Guillorme, left, can only watch as Texas designated hitter Travis Jankowski steals second base in the sixth inning of the Rangers' 9-4 victory.

# Rendon returns, but hot Rangers top Angels

BY JOE REEDY

Corey Seager extended his hitting streak to 13 games with a 457-foot, two-run homer, Nathaniel Lowe had three hits and the Texas Rangers' offense remained hot in a 9-4 victory over the Angels on Monday night at Angel Stadium.

Wyatt Langford also went deep as the Rangers had 12 hits to extend their winning streak to four games. The defending World Series champions tied a season high Sunday with 19 hits in a 13-2 victory over Tampa Bay.

Texas trailed 3-2 before breaking it open with a five-run fourth inning, including an RBI single by Lowe that gave the Rangers the lead.

Anthony Rendon had an RBI single in the seventh after being activated off the injured list before

the game for the Angels, who have dropped seven of eight. The off-injured third baseman sat out 68 games because of a left hamstring strain.

Texas right-hander Jon Gray (4-4) gave up three runs in five-plus innings for his first road win this season.

After Marcus Semien led off the game with a base hit to left, Seager drove a fastball near the top of the strike zone over the center-field shrubs and onto the berm.

The 457-foot homer was the second-longest of Seager's career, surpassed only by a 464-foot shot he hit for the Dodgers against the Arizona Diamondbacks in 2021.

It also marked the first time since 2021 and seventh since MLB Statcast started in 2015 that an opposing hitter had a homer off at least 455 feet at Angel Stadium.

The Angels took a 3-2 lead in the

second with four straight hits, including Mickey Moniak's two-run triple down the right-field line and an RBI single by Jo Adell.

Texas regained the lead in the fourth, including a two-run single by Semien that ended the night for Angels starter Davis Daniel. Before Semien's hit, Langford scored on a balk and Lowe and Leody Taveras had RBI base hits.

Daniel's two outings since throwing eight shutout innings in his first big league start on June 27 against Detroit have not gone well.

The right-hander gave up seven runs and eight hits in 3 2/3 innings. He gave up five runs (four earned) in 5 1/2 innings at Oakland last Wednesday.

Langford, who had four hits Sunday, extended Texas' lead to 9-3 with a two-run homer in the seventh.

Rendon remained in Southern

California last week while the Angels were on a six-game trip

He said the main thing he did over the weekend was run the bases, which is something he wasn't able to do much until the last week.

After talking to manager Ron Washington, Rendon will alternate between third base and designated hitter until he feels comfortable being able to play the field on consecutive days.

Rendon started the season 0 for 19 before going 20 for 56.

The 33-year-old Rendon is in the fifth season of a \$245-million, seven-year contract with the Angels, but he has had a series of injuries over the last four seasons. He has played in only 168 games and sat out missed 408 since the start of the 2021 season.

"He really wanted to perform this year. Too bad the hamstring

pushed him back. He had this date on the calendar and he's excited about it," Washington said. "He wants to come out here and show that he still wants to perform."

Rendon and three-time AL MVP Mike Trout have been in the same lineup in only 118 games out of 575 since 2021 (20.5%). Trout had surgery on his left knee on May 3 and hopes to return to the lineup by late July.

## Notes

Trout did some jogging and took swings off a tee before the game. Outfielder Taylor Ward (knee) is expected back in the lineup Tuesday after he made a hard slide into the wall trying to run down a foul ball Sunday at Chicago.

Reedy writes for the Associated Press.

# Teen holds his own against NBA's best in Olympic team practice

BY TIM REYNOLDS

LAS VEGAS — A three-pointer over Anthony Davis, swish. A baseline turnaround over Jrue Holiday, easy. An acrobatic putback after crashing the boards and getting fouled by Bam Adebayo, no problem.

Those are three of the best defenders in the NBA.

Cooper Flagg is 17 years old. He held his own against them all.

The story of practice for the U.S. Olympic basketball team Monday was Flagg, who hasn't even played his first college game yet.

The Duke freshman — part of the select team that was invited to work out against the Olympic squad during its training camp — looked totally at ease going against some of the NBA's biggest names. "The opportunity, it was great," Flagg said. "It was a blessing to be here. I think just the physicality, and just the level of where I want to get to, there's a lot to get better at, a lot where I need to keep improving. This showed just how big the details are."

He will surely get better. That might be a scary concept. "He kicked butt here," U.S. select team coach Jamahl Mosley of the Orlando Magic said. "There's a respect factor for what he's done. People who have not seen him play,

as he gets himself going within the game, they quickly see what he can do."

The select team is typically made up of young NBA players, brought in to scrimmage the national team and help it prepare for either World Cup or Olympic competition.

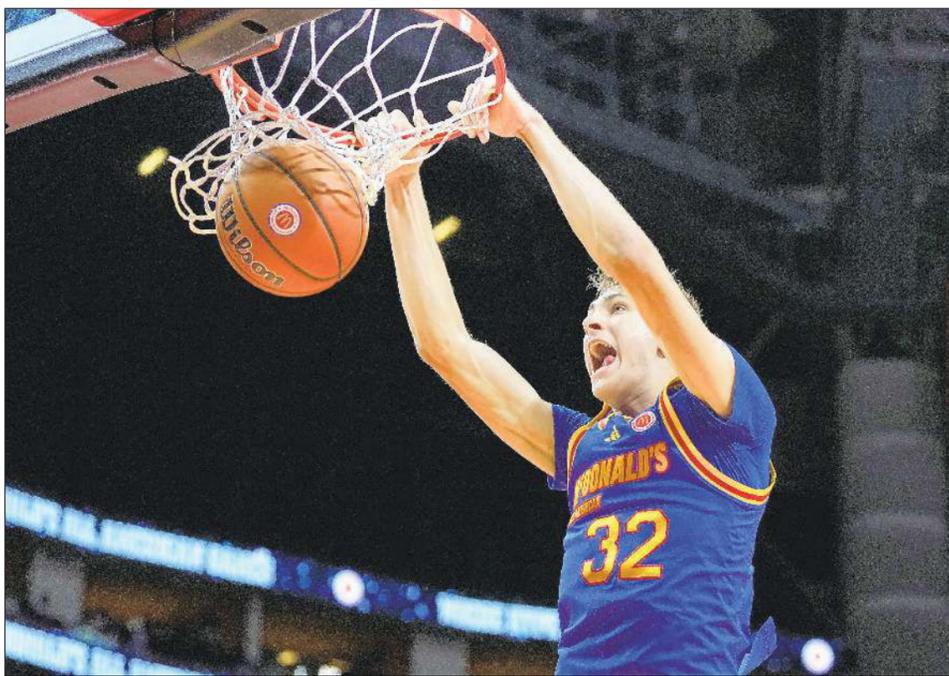
Flagg was the first college player asked to be part of the select team since Doug McDermott and Marcus Smart were asked to join a minicamp in 2013.

But those situations weren't anywhere near the same as Flagg being part of this camp. McDermott had played 110 college games for Creighton at that point and was a two-time consensus All-American. Smart was coming off a freshman season when he won Big 12 rookie of the year and player of the year honors at Oklahoma State. They were already proven.

Flagg has zero college points. He still proved plenty in this camp.

"He wants it," U.S. guard Devin Booker said. "I know this experience, he's going to take with him and move forward."

In Monday's scrimmage — the Olympic team beat the select team 74-73 — Flagg was in the middle of everything down the stretch and looked perfectly comfortable. And when it was over, there were plenty of pictures with everyone; the select team's final day in camp was



KEVIN M. COX Associated Press

COOPER FLAGG, 17, dunks during the McDonald's All American boys' basketball game April 2 in Houston. The incoming Duke freshman looked at ease against some of the NBA's biggest names.

Monday, though some might be invited to stick around to continue assisting the Olympic squad.

"To be able to do what he did, not even playing a college game, let alone an NBA game, there's no fear," select team forward Jaime Jaquez Jr. of the Miami Heat said. "It's relentless. And the thing that you can tell about him is that he just has a knack and the will to win. He doesn't need the ball. He just finds a way to it. And the ball finds its way to him. That's something that you can't teach. He's just got a

great feel for the game."

Flagg is a 6-foot-9 forward from Newport, Maine, but played his last three years of high school basketball at Montverde Academy in Florida.

He chose Duke over Connecticut, was USA Basketball's male athlete of the year in 2022 after leading the Americans to gold at the U17 World Cup, and was the Gatorade National Player of the Year, Naismith Player of the Year and a McDonald's All-American in his final high school season.

"I was shocked, I was surprised, and I was really excited for this opportunity," Flagg said. "And I'm just really blessed that I was able to come out and capitalize on it and show what I have. I was really grateful to come out and learn. That was the biggest thing for me, just being able to learn and grow, to share a gym with all of these great, great names. Legends. So, I'm just truly blessed."

Reynolds writes for the Associated Press.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

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## A sad end for fans of cinema

Chicago's South Loop loses its last movie theater, a worrisome sign for the film biz.

BY MICHAEL PHILLIPS

CHICAGO — At the back of the U-shaped Roosevelt Collection retail complex, on Delano Court at Roosevelt Road, there's a multiplex for lease. Until the last day of June, the place wasn't just a place. It was a ShowPlace: the Kerasotes ShowPlace Icon.

And now? The Roosevelt Collection management company is taking meetings in search of a new operator. And the South Loop movie options are, right now, none.

When it opened in 2009, the Icon made news. Here was a sleek attempt to bring some luxe to the South Loop, with impressively deafening sound, bright image quality (usually) and a bar upstairs. The 16 auditoriums at the Roosevelt Collection site featured all-digital projection, making it the first all-digital, no-analog Chicago multiplex.

"Yeah," Tony Kerasotes said the other day on Zoom from his home in Tucson. He's retired now. "It was cutting-edge back then."

He and his brother, Dean, decided to call it quits some weeks ago. The closing notice went up on the front door June 30, thanking patrons who had plans to see "Inside Out 2" or something else there that day for their "unwavering support, loyalty and enthusiasm over the many years."

"Most of our peer group," Kerasotes said, referring to other U.S. chains, "went out of business three or four years ago. We kind of hung on. Maybe that wasn't the wise thing to do. But we decided we'd put enough money into the business, and so we gave the proper- [See Chicago, E2]

### ALBUM REVIEW

## 'Mind Games' goes big in remix

'Ultimate Collection,' in 2- or 6-disc edition, is for John Lennon fans who love original.

BY SCOTT BAUER

The new remixed and expanded "Mind Games: The Ultimate Collection" is for those John Lennon fans who really, really love his inconsistent 1973 record of the same name.

The problem is, many Lennon fans would rank the original "Mind Games" fourth or fifth among his most beloved records. Not that the fourth-best John Lennon album is bad or anything; it's just that "Mind Games" has to have a special place in your heart to make the new "Ultimate Collection" worth it.

Most Lennon fans will be more than satisfied with the two-disc version, which offers the original album remastered plus a disc of outtakes.

And for those rare few who may pick "Mind Games" over, say, "Imagine" or "Plastic Ono Band" as their favorite Lennon album, there's the "Super Deluxe [See 'Mind Games,' E3]



Photographs by JUSTIN LAWSON, above, and ZAY MONAE For The Times, below left and right

MODEL AND recording artist Shaun Ross, above, DJs at "Black House Radio." Guests below jam to music from various artists.



With 'Black House Radio,' Michael Donte aims to showcase the city's Black DJs and pay tribute to a genre that's steeped in community

By Kailyn Brown

## WARM HUG AT SOUTH L.A.'S HOTTEST DANCE PARTY



On a breezy Saturday evening in South L.A., the sounds of heavy kick drums and electric claps trail down the block from a tan, two-story house with a well-manicured lawn. Through the large front window, passersby can catch a glimpse of a DJ in a dimly lit living room, meticulously turning knobs on a mixer and blending house records together. In the dining room, about 15 people dance and socialize under a crystal chandelier. Dark liquor flows into red cups. A man sits between a woman's legs as she braids his hair into cornrows, while another guest taps a tambourine to the beat of the music.

From a distance, this scene may look like a typical house party, which is exactly the allure of "Black House Radio," a YouTube show and L.A. event series spotlighting Black DJs who specialize in house music. Throughout the gathering, no one pays much attention to the cameras recording, and for the hundreds of thousands of viewers at home, watching the videos feels like you've been ushered into a high-energy kickback.

At a time when DJs are showcasing their skills in creative ways and in sometimes unexpected settings — at parks, on elevators, at the beach, inside loft apartments, in the subway and at laundromats — "Black House Radio" stands out because of its familial charm and devotion to the genre it highlights.

"I want 'Black House Radio' to feel like a warm, nostalgic hug from a grandmother," says founder Michael Donte, who's also a film- [See House music, E3]

## Eve Best explains her character's fateful choice

'House of the Dragon' actor compares Rhaeny's story to Hillary Clinton's.

BY MEREDITH BLAKE

This story contains spoilers from "House of the Dragon" Season 2, Episode 4, "The Red Dragon and the Gold."

The Queen Who Never Was is no more.

In Sunday's episode of "House of the Dragon," "The Red Dragon and the Gold," Princess Rhaeny's Targaryen (Eve Best) volunteers to take her dragon, Meleys, into battle at Rook's Rest, which is besieged by the Greens' army, led by Ser Criston Cole.

She encounters two other dragon-riding Tar-



OLLIE UPTON HBO

"ALMOST EVERY single great woman you can think of," says Eve Best, has "an element" of Princess Rhaeny Targaryen — including politician Hillary Clinton.

garyens: Aegon and his beast Sunfyre, who are quickly downed, and Aemond and the ferocious Vhagar, who prove to be more formidable opponents. Vhagar deals a fatal blow to the much smaller Meleys, who falls from the sky. With a look of peaceful resignation on her face, Rhaeny plummets to certain death.

Her fate — and Aegon's uncertain future — marks what is sure to be an escalation in the Targaryen family civil war known as the Dance of the Dragons. Rhaeny, who was passed over in the line of succession in favor of King Viserys (Paddy Considine) because of her gender — only to see him name his daughter Rhaenyra (Emma D'Arcy) as his heir — was a rare voice of restraint and caution in [See Best, E2]

# Why 'House of the Dragon' princess pushed the 'red button'

[Best, from E1] the harsh world of Westeros, breaking out the fiery beasts only when absolutely necessary.

Rhaenys' demise also means "House of the Dragon" viewers will be deprived of Best, a regal actor who infused the role with steely poise and quiet wisdom. Best has some experience with playing women in close proximity to the throne, having starred as Carole Middleton in the final season of "The Crown" and Wallis Simpson in "The King's Speech."

From her home in Italy — where birds could be heard chirping in the background — she spoke with The Times about her character's farewell, and the real-world inspiration she drew from a certain female politician.

**Presumably you had some idea that things would end this way for Rhaenys. But how did you react when you read the script?**

It's the nature of the beast. If you're part of the "Game of Thrones" franchise, the strong likelihood is that there's going to be a sticky end at some point. I knew [Rhaenys was going to die], I just didn't know exactly when.

I was devastated on her behalf. I think she's such a magnificent character and a magnificent woman. There's that wonderful film "The Last Samurai." There's similar territory with Rhaenys. I said to [showrunner Ryan J. Condal] at the end of last season, "I want her to go full samurai when things kick off," because up until that moment in Season 1, when she breaks through her own glass ceiling on the dragon so fantastically, she stayed very neutral. She's trodden very lightly through the minefield.

When you see these noble characters, these warriors with truth and goodness on their side, [dying], it's ag-

ony. In the context of this world, it's such a tremendous loss. In Westeros, as in our world, enlightened feminine role models are vital and much needed. That's absolutely the role that she plays, particularly in Season 2 — this beacon, like an instruction manual to Rhaenyra. *This is what a good ruler does. This is how you lead.* That's something that's always struck me about the nature of this particular story, the backbone of it being these women being thrust into the midst of a patriarchal system that is in disarray.

What Rhaenys represents is someone with absolute authority, power, wisdom, intelligence, expertise, political savvy and utter compassion — a constant awareness of [the need for] collaboration and making a choice for love, as opposed to destruction.

**Did you think about any real-world figures, whether historical or contemporary, in relation to this character? There have been a lot of Rhaenys-like women.**

Absolutely, 100%, almost every single great woman you can think of [has] an element of [Rhaenys]. Sara Hess, who's one of the executive producers and the lead writers for the show, said to me on the first day, "There's so much of Hillary Clinton [in Rhaenys]." God knows you couldn't compare Viserys to the other one [former President Trump], but the similarities are very clear — to see that the person who is absolutely, hands down, best suited for the job is sidelined simply because she's a woman, and then has to somehow find her way.

One of the things that gave me the most respect for Hillary Clinton was in the aftermath of [the 2016 election], how she navigated her role/non-role and brilliantly maintained her dignity, self-respect and



OLLIE UPTON/HBO

**THE "GAME OF THRONES"** spinoff stars Eve Best as Princess Rhaenys Targaryen and Steve Toussaint as Lord Corlys Velaryon. Shooting Episode 4 was challenging physically and emotionally, Best says.

leadership. That felt like territory that Rhaenys was treading.

I felt keenly aware of how extremely difficult that is, that particular dance — to not let the inevitable human disappointment turn to darker feelings of revenge, resentment, blame, to let none of it fester, as we see it is starting to taint choices that [Rhaenyra and Alicent] are making. We see them both going down these rabbit holes of potential disaster because of their personal circumstances. Rhaenyra somehow manages to stay above it all in spite of every single blow that's thrown at her. The poetry of her literally coming to an end in the sky on her dragon and letting go into eternity is perfect.

**Why do you think Rhaenys ultimately sided with Rhaenyra and Daemon, despite everything that happened to her children because of them (and her own claim to the throne)?**

The decision to side with them is really tough, but yet again, she takes the personal out of the equation. The bigger picture is that Rhaenyra is absolutely the heir to the throne. Rhaenyra has such a strong feeling of "not again on my watch can

this story be told. This is not going to happen again. Literally over my dead body."

It's very clear that [Rhaenyra] is the infinitely more sensible choice than Aegon. On all fronts, it's the right thing to do. It's almost like Rhaenyra is programmed to do the right thing. She puts away her personal feelings, which is so hard to do. It's such a strong temptation to scratch her eyes out or just go off back to Driftmark with Corlys, sit looking at the sunset and wash her hands of all of them.

**We've seen Rhaenys urge restraint over and over again. Why does she decide to use deadly force this time?**

It's reached the moment when it's actually necessary. There's a point of no return. She's tried everything, she's argued for restraint, collaboration and communication. She [told Rhaenyra] to go talk it out with Alicent, sister to sister, because these two women love each other and they have the power to heal.

The Black Council spends a lot of time debating whether or not to unleash the dragons. When we were rehearsing, I said,

"What's the context? How can we relate to this?" And Ryan said, straightaway, "Nuclear war." Nuclear war is inevitable [in this world], and she knows 100% that she's the last grown-up in the room, and the only person that can take that action.

The moment when she says "Send me" was changed at the last minute. Sara Hess suggested that we change it to "You must send me," which is so brilliant, because it's an instruction, almost like her last piece of guidance. She knows that she's sacrificing herself, effectively. She knows that it's the red button, and if anybody's going to have the responsibility for pressing that red button and dealing with the appalling, devastating weight of that action, it has to be her, because she's the one who can cope with it, not just physically but emotionally. I think she knows damn well that it is a kamikaze mission and is downplaying it.

**Tell me about shooting the battle sequence. What's the hardest part of riding a dragon?**

Technically, it's incredibly demanding and exhausting. I certainly feel my age, I don't think this is my

comfort zone at all. I kept having to ask for many more cushions. It was two weeks solid, just me, all morning and evening, all afternoon, doing quite a lot of physical stuff. That was a challenge. But the more challenging part was the emotional story. The moment of their joint demise was my penultimate shot. The buildup to it was quite intense. I was feeling a lot of pressure to make a good death, to do the character justice.

Ryan very sweetly came to set and gave a lovely speech, saying goodbye. The spotlight on this moment just became more and more unbearable. It was complicated to do the camera angles, and they had to prep for everything. I was standing about, waiting and feeling more anxious.

By the time [we got to it], I was a pressure cooker ready to explode. I was strapped on — and it was over in a flash. We did two takes, and that was it, which was perfect. In that moment, what was key about it for her was this absolute letting go and acceptance. This is exactly what one goes through as an actor: In the end, you have to just let go and accept because you're not in control.

## Cinema's closure a worrisome sign for film biz

[Chicago, from E1] ties back to the landlords."

The legal untangling, he said, is underway.

Dozens of screens in three other ShowPlace Icon locations likewise gave it up last week, in California (Mountain View and San Jose) and in suburban Minneapolis (St. Louis Park). Last month, the Icon in Secaucus, N.J., was sold to the Regal Cinemas chain. As reported by IndieWire, the St. Louis Park venue may be picked up by Milwaukee-based Marcus Theatres.

The South Side has had decades of frustrating, here-today, gone-tomorrow access to big screens. The Chatham Studio Movie Grill

opened in 2017 and made a go of it, uneasily, through the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. It closed its 14 screens in 2021.

There is, however, a promising recent reopening in Hyde Park of the Harper Theater, with a face-lift accompanying that 1915 venue's latest redux. It's run by Omaha-based Main Street Theatres.

With the Icon closed, for now, at least, the ACX Harper is the best South Side option for miles around.

For much of the previous century, the Kerasotes family invested in small-town Illinois. This, Kerasotes says, dates back to "when entertainment meant high

school sports or the movies."

First came a nickelodeon in Springfield, in 1909 — the Royal Theatre. "That's where everything started," Kerasotes said. He's not a nostalgic guy; he's more matter-of-fact. "My grandfather Gus converted his confectionery into a nickelodeon. A lot of the Greeks made a living running confectioneries back then."

The business grew, along with the popularity of picture shows. In Springfield, Gus Kerasotes opened a lavish movie palace with a pipe organ in 1920. Then another. His sons expanded the business downstate, on one main street after another.

The family "was very

good for the state of Illinois, more than people might realize," says Chris Johnson, who oversees the hardy and resourceful Classic Cinemas chain.

"They pretty much had a theater in every small town in the state and, at one point, they were the biggest chain outside AMC, Cinemark and Regal," Johnson said. "And they advocated for other theater owners. Myself included."

I asked Kerasotes what he won't miss about the movie business, in Chicago and elsewhere. Well, he says, "The crime problem. That has been a problem, particularly in Chicago." Then, sounding like a lot of Arizona transplants who used to live in Illinois, he adds: "It's not a problem everywhere."

In April 2023, for example, gunshots were fired inside the ShowPlace Icon lobby, no injuries but plenty of nervous fallout. A few months later, unruly cus-

tomers, multiple arrests and a security officer who died on the job of a heart attack.

"Public safety," Kerasotes says. "Going out to the movies in Chicago shouldn't be such an 'adventure.' The city's going to have to start arresting more people and putting more people in jail than they do now."

Nevertheless, he says, the decision to shut it all down wasn't about the crime. It was just time, he says. It was getting too hard to weather the financial headwinds, the uncertain audience devotion, all of it.

And yet, he acknowledges, look at last year: "Barbie," "Oppenheimer," boom. And now that the Hollywood writers' and actors' strikes are settled, the production pipeline might start flowing again — if the industry isn't actively destroying the business en route to figuring out how to not lose money in the streaming

lane.

And just look at the last couple of weeks, Classic Cinemas head Johnson notes, with "Inside Out 2": It's already the third biggest moneymaker ever for the Classic Cinemas chain, behind "Avatar" and "Barbie."

You never can tell. Meantime, here's a statement from CBRE Property Management director Deirdre Larsen, who's talking with potential operators and looking for someone who wants to take over the Icon:

"The Icon ... has served the community as one of the best performing theaters in the Chicago area and it is closing as a result of its parent company ceasing all operations nationally. (We are) having active conversations with potential new theater partners. We look forward to sharing our plans with the community once finalized."

Phillips is the Chicago Tribune film critic.

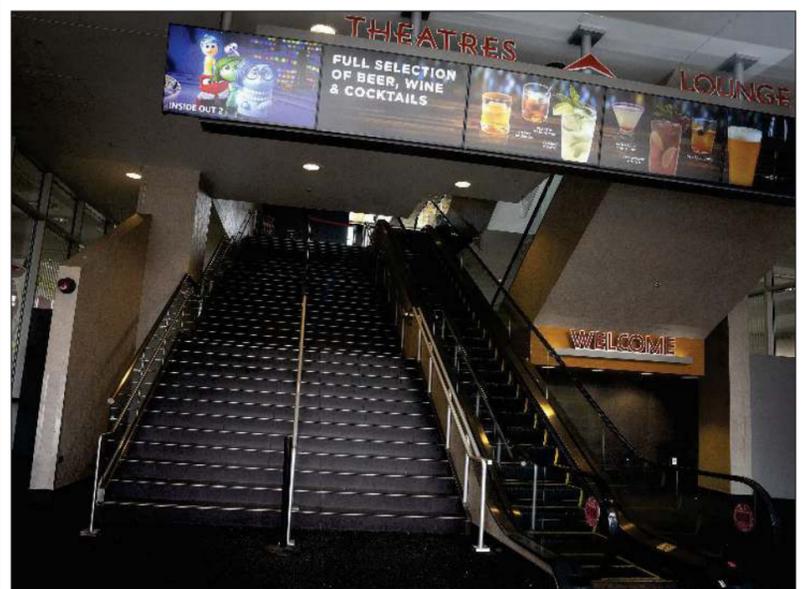
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<b>AMERICA</b> 1:00 7:10 <b>JANET PLANET</b> PG-13 1:20 7:00 <b>JUNE ZERO</b> 1:30 4:20 7:20 <b>THE GREEN BORDER</b> 3:50 PM <b>A MAN OF REASON</b> 4:10 PM <b>MONICA</b> 1332 Second Street Santa Monica <b>MAXXXINE</b> 1:10 4:25 7:30 <b>DADDIO</b> 7:20 PM <b>HORIZON: AN AMERICAN SAGA CHAPTER 1</b> 12:45 3:25 6:55 <b>KINDS OF KINDNESS</b> 1:00 3:50 7:00 <b>GHOSTLIGHT</b> 4:20 PM <b>THE BIKERIDERS</b> 4:15 PM <b>THELMA</b> PG-13 1:15 4:30 7:20 <b>ROBOT DREAMS</b> 1:20 7:30 <b>APOLONIA, APOLONIA</b> 1:00 PM	<b>AMERICA</b> 4:00 PM <b>DADDIO</b> 4:30 PM <b>HORIZON: AN AMERICAN SAGA CHAPTER 1</b> 12:45 3:40 7:00 <b>JANET PLANET</b> PG-13 4:20 PM <b>JUNE ZERO</b> 7:10 PM <b>KINDS OF KINDNESS</b> 12:50 3:50 7:10 <b>GHOSTLIGHT</b> 1:00 7:20 <b>THELMA</b> PG-13 1:10 7:30 <b>APOLONIA, APOLONIA</b> 1:00 PM <b>NEWHALL</b> 22500 Lyons Ave. Santa Clarita <b>MAXXXINE</b> 1:30 4:30 7:30 <b>SOUND OF HOPE: THE STORY OF POSSUM TROT</b> PG-13 1:00 4:00 7:00 <b>DESPICABLE ME 4</b> PG 12:45 3:00 5:10 7:30 <b>A QUIET PLACE: DAY ONE</b> PG-13 1:40 4:20 7:10 <b>HORIZON: AN AMERICAN SAGA CHAPTER 1</b> 12:45 3:40 7:00 <b>THE BIKERIDERS</b> 4:00 PM <b>THELMA</b> PG-13 1:20 7:10 <b>INSIDE OUT 2</b> PG 1:10 4:30 7:20	<b>MAXXXINE</b>  1:30 4:30 7:30  <b>JANET PLANET</b> PG-13  7:10 PM  <b>KINDS OF KINDNESS</b>  12:50 3:45 6:50  <b>LAST SUMMER</b>  1:20 7:00  <b>THE BIKERIDERS</b>  4:00 PM  <b>THELMA</b> PG-13  1:00 4:20 7:20  <b>ROBOT DREAMS</b>  4:10 PM  <b>APOLONIA, APOLONIA</b>  1:00 PM	<b>MAXXXINE</b> 1:30 4:30 7:30 <b>THE SECRET ART OF HUMAN FLIGHT</b> 1:10 4:10 7:10 <b>KILL</b> 7:10 PM <b>DESPICABLE ME 4</b> PG 12:45 3:00 5:10 7:25 <b>A QUIET PLACE: DAY ONE</b> PG-13 1:15 4:30 7:20 <b>HORIZON: AN AMERICAN SAGA CHAPTER 1</b> 12:45 3:40 7:00 <b>KINDS OF KINDNESS</b> 1:00 4:00 7:00 <b>THE BIKERIDERS</b> 1:10 PM <b>THELMA</b> PG-13 4:10 PM <b>CLAREMONT</b> 450 W. 2nd Street Claremont <b>MAXXXINE</b> 1:20 4:10 7:10 <b>DESPICABLE ME 4</b> PG 12:45 3:00 5:10 7:30 <b>A QUIET PLACE: DAY ONE</b> PG-13 1:30 4:20 7:20 <b>HORIZON: AN AMERICAN SAGA CHAPTER 1</b> 12:45 PM <b>HORIZON: AN AMERICAN SAGA CHAPTER 1</b> 3:45 7:00 <b>INSIDE OUT 2</b> PG 1:10 4:30 7:30 <b>APOLONIA, APOLONIA</b> 1:00 PM

BARGAIN IN ( ) CLOSED CAPTION NON-STANDARD PRICING FOR 7/9/2024 ONLY



E. JASON WAMBSGANS Chicago Tribune

**THE CROWDS** are gone and the escalator's off after the closure of the luxe Kerasotes ShowPlace Icon multiscreen movie theater in Chicago's South Loop.

# House music's safe, authentic space

[House music, from E1] maker, producer and DJ. He hosts the intimate gathering roughly once a month at his best friend Jeremy's ancestral house, which Jeremy's grandparents bought in 1963 after moving to L.A. from Millport, Ala., during the Second Great Migration. Everything in the home, including a blue-patterned couch, teal-colored carpet, vintage drapes and framed family photos, is in the same place it's been since the 1970s.

"Black house music was made in our homes," says Donte. He adds that he felt frustrated when he would go out and see more white DJs getting booked to play house music than Black performers — who created and popularized the genre in the 1970s — aside from at select events like newcomer TheyHouse and Utopia, which has been elevating house music in L.A. for years. "[A white DJ is] very different than a Black person playing house music — it's just a feeling."

After getting laid off last year from his job as a creative executive for YouTube Originals, Donte learned how to DJ, then launched "Black House Radio" to bring the genre back home, literally, by hosting events in spaces that are vital to the Black community, such as family homes, hair salons, barbershops and churches.

Donte hosted the first "Black House Radio" event the day before Thanksgiving in 2023 and served collard greens and cornbread. About a dozen of his friends showed up with their own soul food dishes, while he and three other L.A.-based DJs — Naygod, Silhouwet, DJ Bodii — provided the soundtrack for the hours-long event.

## GOING LIVE

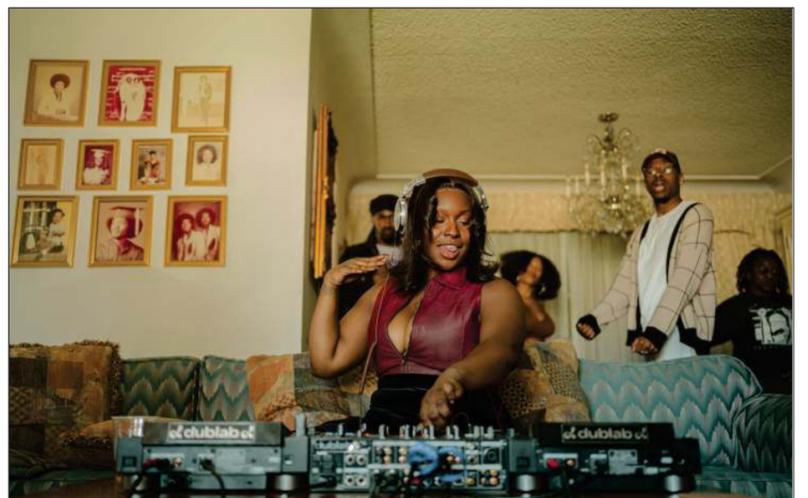
Then, in February, during Black History Month, Donte began posting live sets from that November day on YouTube, where he's since acquired more than 50,000 subscribers and has built a community of loyal house heads who look forward to every drop. The most-watched video so far is a set by Ashley Younnia, which had more than 435,000 views on YouTube as of Monday.

Some of L.A.'s most exciting DJs have been past guests, including Terrell Brooke, founder of TheyHouse and co-creator of Casual; Mez, who runs an event called Signal Underground; Rush Davis, a singer, producer, creative director and DJ; and Chrysalis, who toured with singer Rochelle Jordan.

Shaun Ross immediately knew he wanted to be a part of "Black House Radio" when one of his friends shared its Instagram page with him.

"I feel like it's a train to get on — to actually bring back Black house music," says Ross, a celebrated model, DJ and recording artist. He's performed at two "Black House Radio" functions so far. "A lot of DJs don't really play Black house music, and I feel like today, the world has this wrong notion of what house music is so when you play it, people are like, 'It's not hype enough. It's not giving me a Vegas show.'"

He says the YouTube show also gives younger generations the opportunity to go back and look at people who are uplifting house music today. "I love that it's Black and queer, and I love that it's healing for everybody here," adds Ross, who hosts a house music party called "Stardust."



**MICHAEL DONTE**, "Black House Radio" creator, clockwise from left. DJ Nico spins. A sign details the house rule. DJ Terrell Brooke and DJ Chinua embrace. Guests mingle in the kitchen of the South L.A. home where family portraits are on display. A guest enjoys the vibe.



Photographs by ZAY MONAE For The Times

Back at the party, Vaughan Higgins pours herself a drink in the kitchen as other attendees grab slices of pizza and homemade pound cake. Higgins regularly goes to Black and queer events in L.A. but says being inside a Black ancestral house carries an extra layer of significance for her.

"It mainly makes me think of resistance and survival," says the L.A.-born musician, who decided to attend because her friend DJ Nico was spinning. "The fact that this house is even still in Black hands and they are using it to bring Black joy — that is all a part of this. It's really beautiful."

In many of the YouTube videos, Donte infuses archival footage — some that he's found online and others that his friends have given him — of Black families dancing at cookouts or participating in praise and worship at church — his way of preserving Black culture, he says.

"That's one thing I feel like is missing from video streaming," says Sevyn, who performed a groovy DJ set for "Black House Radio" in April. "I feel like compared to other streaming things I've done, this one just has a story and also, I've been here. This is my granny's house. It's familiar."

Although each of "Black

House Radio's" YouTube sets, which typically start in the afternoon and go into the evening, are invite-only due to limited space at the house, Donte has recently started hosting public events so house aficionados can enjoy the experience offline.

The first one, called "Church," was held in June at the Pico Union Project, a nonprofit housed in a building that was once home to Sinai Temple (built in 1909). As at the house functions, Donte displayed framed portraits around the space, which had church pews, flameless candles and a piano. (Video cameras were

here too, but Donte doesn't plan to release a video. You just had to be there.) He's also got his eyes set on doing a Black house music festival in the near future.

## REAL CONNECTION

When he reflects on the rise of "Black House Radio," Donte says he thinks people connect with the show because of its authenticity.

"It's not trying to be unique," he says. "It's not trying to be something different or new. I want it to feel familiar. I want you to be able to smell what you see on that TV. You know what that house smells like. You know what the carpet feels like.

You know what the food is probably on the stove."

He adds, "I think my friends and I do a good job of making it a safe space for people to show up as themselves, and that's just beautiful to watch."

Around 8 p.m., when the last DJ finishes their set, one person shouts, "Keep the party going." Donte hops back onto the decks and plays upbeat house music. Two guests vogue in the living room, and attendees socialize over more drinks. The cameras are no longer recording, but no one cares or even notices. They are in the company of family. They are at home.



"MIND GAMES (The Ultimate Collection)" by John Lennon is available in two-disc or six-disc editions.

## Playing expanded 'Mind Games'

['Mind Games,' from E1] Edition" that was limited to just 1,100 copies for a cool \$1,350. It includes extras such as a hologram-engraved EP and bespoke I-Ching coins.

Thinking about buying that one? Too late, it's long sold out.

But for the rest of us, there are the more economical six- or two-disc collections. The six-disc version has all of the music included on the two-disc version, with additional CDs offering multiple ways to experience "Mind Games," including an audio documentary and an expansive book that goes deep into the songs and

what was happening in Lennon's life and the world at the time.

There's the original recording remixed "from the ground up" by Lennon's son Sean Ono Lennon, dubbed "The Ultimate Mixes." "The Elementals Mixes" presents the songs stripped down from postproduction enhancements but with Lennon's voice at the forefront.

The best disc of the bunch is the "Raw Studio Mixes," which delivers "Mind Games" as it was recorded in the studio before overdubs and other postproduction effects. This one, more than any of the others,

really puts the listener on the studio floor with Lennon and the other musicians.

Disc three, titled "The Elements Mixes," not to be confused with "The Elementals Mixes," goes in the opposite direction and removes Lennon's vocals altogether. That's a bold move, to put it kindly, that likely will make this the least played disc in this set for most.

"The Evolution Documentary" delivers just what it promises — mini-audio documentaries showing how each song evolved. That's kind of cool, especially for those who like to hear how the songs changed during recording without lis-

tening to every single take. The studio banter from Lennon and Yoko Ono is a fun bonus.

Rounding out the set on disc six, or disc two of the slimmed-down release, are, of course, the outtakes.

All of it may have the more casual fan throwing their hands in the air and shouting the Lennon lyric, "Gimme some truth!"

It's unlikely that anyone listening to all five-plus hours of "The Ultimate Collection" will be shouting "Gimme more 'Mind Games!'"

Bauer writes for the Associated Press.

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



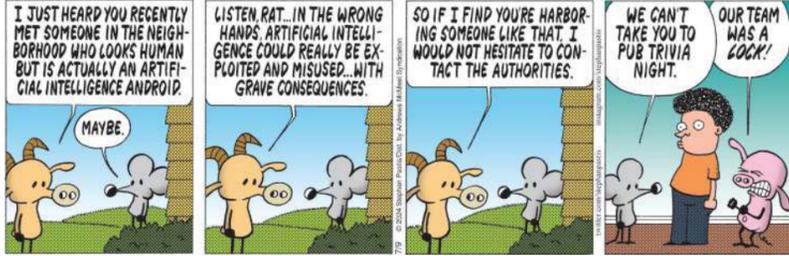
LOOSE PARTS By Dave Blazek



JUMP START By Robb Armstrong



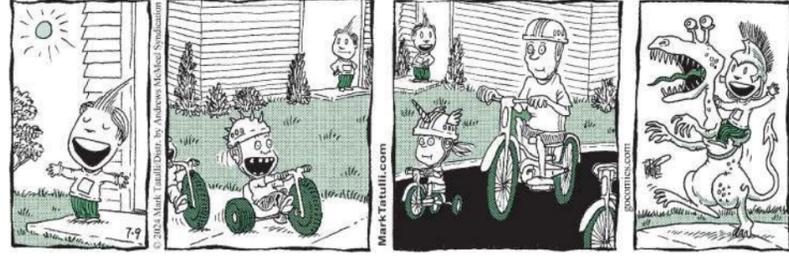
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By Stephan Pastis



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



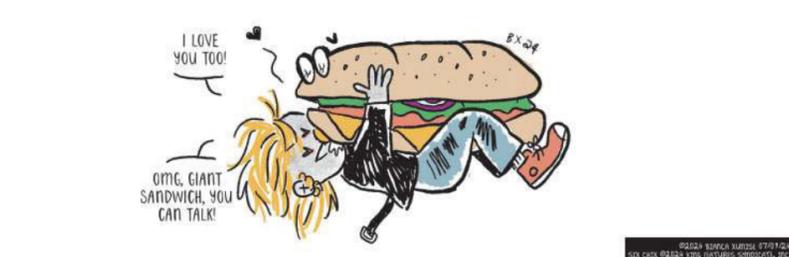
TUNDRA By Chad Carpenter



BIZARRO By Wayno and Piraro



SIX CHIX By Bianca Xunise



DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan



FRAZZ By Jef Mallett



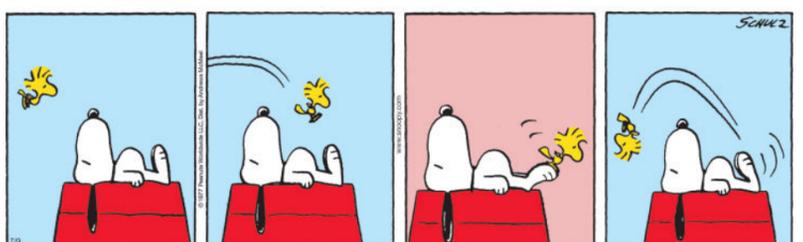
MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell



NON SEQUITUR By Wiley



PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz



COMICS

SUDOKU

9x9 Sudoku grid with numbers 1-9. Level: Gentle.

9x9 Sudoku grid with numbers 1-9. Level: Gentle.

Solutions to Monday's puzzles. Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 or 2-by-3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 6 for the smaller grid).

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.

6x6 KenKen puzzle grid with arithmetic operations like 3-, 6x, 6+, 1-, 4, 3-, 2+, 1-.

6x6 KenKen puzzle grid with arithmetic operations like 4-, 2-, 2, 72x, 4, 1-, 15x, 5-, 6x, 6+, 1-, 5-, 3-, 11+, 2-, 9+, 3-, 3-.

PREVIOUS ANSWERS grid with numbers 1-6 and 7/9/24.

HOROSCOPE

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

Aries (March 21-April 19): Novelty makes moments stretch. Break the routine. Variety is a must for a memorable life.
Taurus (April 20-May 20): You don't always get to see the impact you have on others. Sometimes, it takes people years to recognize an effect.
Gemini (May 21-June 21): Your first impression on a situation will be strong. Note it.
Cancer (June 22-July 22): There seems to be no end to the number of tricky, sticky situations to be navigated today.
Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): If inclined to move based on the potential for fun, what direction would you go?
Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): The truly confident don't need to talk about it. Today features a kind of quiet satisfaction.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): You'll be put in a position. Say yes and you'll say it again and again. Say no and it will be the last time.
Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): Many successful people keep their goals flexible and life becomes more about exploring paths than obtaining things.
Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): When you like yourself a real lot, it's no problem getting on your own team. And honestly, what's not to like?
Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): If you've ever worked out too hard or eaten too much, you understand how the choices in the moment don't always please the person who has to live with them.
Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You'll be inspired to make fresh choices. You wouldn't normally dedicate yourself to the pursuit of pleasure, and the novelty of this is what makes this so fun.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): You don't have to divulge your story to everyone who wants to know about it, but at the same time, it's nice to know people are curious. There will be benefits to acts of sharing and caring beyond the obvious ones.
Today's birthday (July 9): You'll experience more joy than ever this year. Your love of the natural world shines, and you'll lend a sense of hope, care and progress to environments you interact in. You also define "progress" in a meaningful way that catches on with others. More highlights: a genuine confidante, the victorious end of a battle, five excellent events and one that's wildly successful.
Scorpio and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers: 7, 30, 21, 15 and 9.
Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

BRIDGE

BY FRANK STEWART

Cy the Cynic has at least three dates a week. "I've wanted to go out with some women," he told me, "but they didn't know I exist."
"Whatever that professor of philosophy you're seeing?" I asked.
"She doesn't know whether I exist," Cy said.
Cy was today's East in a penny game, and against four hearts, West led the king, queen and a third spade. The Cynic took the ace and led a club.
South doubted that Cy would lead a club from the king; South took the ace and ran his trumps. The last trump squeezed West, who couldn't keep his king of clubs and the Q-7 of diamonds, and South was

home.
Cy defended as if a problem didn't exist. Cy can assume that South has the ace of clubs (from his strong bidding and because West might have cashed it at Trick Three if he had it). If West has the king of clubs, he may be threatened with a squeeze, but Cy can and should break it up by leading a diamond at the fourth trick.
You hold: ♠ K Q 5 ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ Q 7 6 2 ♣ K 9 5. Your partner opens one heart, and the next player passes. What do you say?
Answer: You have 10 high-card points — too many, according to the textbooks, for a single raise. Still, your trump support is weak, your distribution is flat and you have no aces. I would bid two hearts with no misgivings.

Bridge hand diagram showing South dealer N-S vulnerable, North and South hands, and a table of opening lead options.

ASKING ERIC

Dear Eric: I am a 50-year-old technology worker. My boss is in her early 40s. She has made comments that are not my business about co-workers in their 60s who she says "should retire."
I get Botox, filler, color my hair, diet and exercise and keep up on all the latest technology. However, like everyone who isn't a vampire, I'm aging. I've had some health issues and I will need to work until at least 65 to pay for my health insurance and medications.
I feel very anxious about losing my job because I'm too "old." Widespread ageism is common in the tech industry; it's not just my boss. Is there a gentle way to remind people that age is not a topic that should come up in the workplace unless it is specifically related to succession or retirement planning? Do I just let it go?
No MORE AGE TALK
Dear Age: What you're experiencing isn't fair and may cross a legal line. I asked human resources expert Hannah Marks, a people and talent adviser at Culture Marks, for guidance.
"As a first step for any employees experiencing ageism in the workplace," she said, "it is key to maintain documentation of any/all instances. It's always a good idea to flag the situation to your HR team. If the company is too small and doesn't

yet have an HR team (often the case in tech), bringing this up to a manager or senior leader is another good option. In more severe cases, or when HR/senior leadership has failed to appropriately address the situation, employees have the right to seek legal counsel."
The Age Discrimination in Employment Act specifically forbids age discrimination against people who are age 40 or older.
If you want to learn more about the law and your options for reporting, visit the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission website; it has a section dedicated to age discrimination and ways to combat it.
Lastly, any boss who would rather put older employees out to pasture than benefit from their experience is going to have a rude awakening in a few years.
Dear Eric: I have a cousin who recently told me that he is "in love" with a woman in a foreign country and plans to get married. He would have to fly to her country to get married, leaving behind his son, grandson and mother, who is in a nursing home.
He has never met this woman, and I am concerned that the whole thing is a scam. The country is one where foreigners can't have any property in their name, so anything he would buy would be only in her name.

What should I say to him? I don't want to crush him.
CONCERNED COUSIN
Dear Cousin: You're right to be concerned. Romance scams are quite common. Often they start online. It's a huge red flag that your cousin's relationship requires him to leave the country to get married. He could be in real danger and a bruised heart is the better option.
Be upfront about your concerns and your reasons. Use the FBI romance scam section to walk your cousin through any similarities in his life. Ask him for photos of his fiancée and do a reverse image search to see if they're stock photos or associated with another person. Ask him to talk you through his plan for his family, for his mother's care and his plan after getting married. Be probing but kind. Assure him that he's not wrong for wanting companionship.
According to the Federal Trade Commission, there were more than 64,000 reported romance scams in 2023, raking in \$1.14 billion.
Ask your cousin to slow down the relationship for his safety and that of his family. If he's insistent and you still have concerns, report the suspected fraud to the FTC or the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center.
Email questions to eric@askingeric.com.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol
By Beth Rubin & Rebecca Goldstein

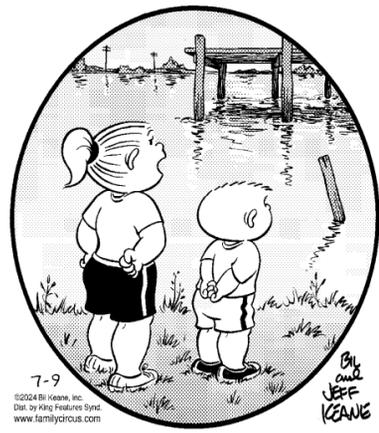
- ACROSS
1 Gentle touches
5 Raise, as morale
10 Harvest
14 Baker's appliance
15 One of the Three Musketeers
16 Penne \_ vodka
17 Intimate conversation in bed
19 "The Rabbit Hutch" National Book Award winner Gunty
20 Pizzeria owner in "Do the Right Thing"
21 Prepare ahead of time
22 Make a quick policy change
23 Coming in handy
25 Laundry apparatus used as a percussion instrument
28 Funnel-shaped flower
30 Apple platform
31 Greek letter before epsilon
32 Fellows
33 CPR pro
34 "Been there, \_ that"
35 Aerosolized popcorn condiment
38 Yes votes
40 Key \_ : car remote
41 Bit of positivity?
42 Bad review
43 Poivre partner
44 Ideal
48 Timepiece innards
51 Muscat resident
52 "NCIS" protagonist \_ Jethro Gibbs
53 Lyft competitor
55 Show hosts, for short
56 Actress Shawkat
57 Actor's stand-in, or a hint to what can precede both parts of 17-, 25-, 35-, and 48-Across
60 Exams for srs.
61 Foe
62 Wax alternative
63 Whack
64 Like grainy graphics
65 Best Female Athlete, e.g.

13x13 crossword grid with numbers 1-65.

- 3 "Preach!"
4 NBC sketch show, familiarly
5 Weep loudly
6 Capital of Canada
7 Hawaiian word for "family"
8 Pine-\_: cleaning brand
9 Disapproving sound
10 Math comparison
11 Stairs alternative
12 Concession speech giver
13 Late, as a library book
18 First game of the season
22 "All Creatures Great and Small" ailer
24 Sugar cubes
26 "Atlas" actor Liu
27 Good intel
29 Shortly
33 Flow out
34 Jeans material
35 Miss, in Mexico
36 "Carpe diem" acronym
37 "My Neighbor \_": 1988 Miyazaki film
38 Sr.'s course for college credit
39 Sonia Sotomayor's alma mater
43 Pie in the \_
44 "I'm cool with that"
45 Deadly African snakes
46 Release, as a carabiner
47 " \_ loves company"
49 Seashore
50 More impolite
54 Dreyer's ice cream, east of the Rockies
57 "The Fresh Prince of \_-Air"
58 Artist Yoko
59 French article

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE grid with words like ALDA, ROTI, APSO, SEED, EVENS, SLOP, PEACE, MARCH, KEPT, CDTRAY, ROAM, AHI, ASHES, YAMMERSON, ETTA, ESTEEM, STOP, TINC, EPSOM, HOV, VEGHEAD, IIRA, HYENA, TMS, BREW, PRONTO, ISEE, CORNERBAR, PRAMS, LOU, SELL, GIMLET, IDLE, KALEYCUOCO, FLEA, STORM, DECO, FEST, EYES, ASAP.

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham



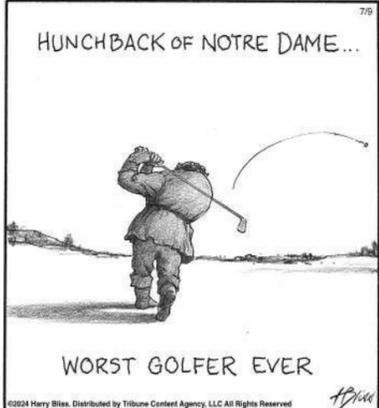
FREE RANGE By Bill Whitehead



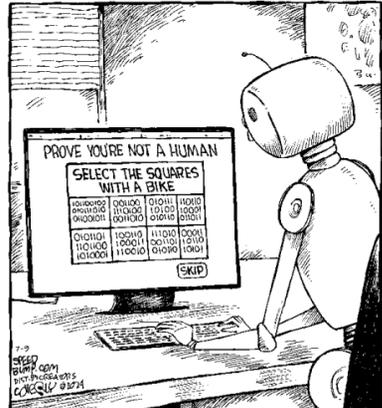
MARMADUKE By Brad & Paul Anderson



BLISS By Harry Bliss



SPEED BUMP By Dave Coverly





Marcos Chin / For The Times

Exploring the exceptional contributions of LGBTQ+ people since the 1924 founding of the nation's first gay rights organization.



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