



Photographs by MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

PLANNERS will seek community input, draft environmental documents and test closures over the coming year in a bid to permanently shut down the portion of Wilshire Boulevard that cuts through MacArthur Park.

‘IT’S BOLD’: A MOVE TO BLOCK OFF WILSHIRE

To redress the harm caused by roads that fracture communities, L.A. will test closure of the stretch that bisects MacArthur Park

By Rachel Uranga

One of Los Angeles’ most iconic streets may soon be car-free — or at least a small section of it.

City leaders announced the first step Tuesday toward eliminating vehicles on a less than half-mile stretch of Wilshire Boulevard bisecting MacArthur Park. Over the coming year, planners will seek community input, draft environmental documents and test closures in a bid to permanently shut down that portion of road.

If achieved, the closure would mark a watershed moment for a region that has been grappling with what public space means in the center of car culture. And it would be the most significant closure of a major arterial street in recent memory.

The span of Wilshire targeted for closure is in the heart of a dense, immigrant



THE EFFORT is mostly covered by a federal grant and comes as the nation rethinks its reliance on cars.

community marked by poverty and a teeming street culture. With its playgrounds and grass fields, the palm-tree-dotted park has welcomed families — but also has been a haven for drug use.

“It’s about opening up this neighborhood to the possibilities that come when we center people’s needs over the needs of cars,” said Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez, whose district spans a swath of the Eastside. “It’s about dreaming bigger and better for a community in critical need of deep investment.”

Planners hope to eventually extend the greenbelt toward Lafayette Park, less than half a mile west.

“It’s bold,” said Michael Schneider, who ran a successful campaign to pass ballot Measure HLA, which forces Los Angeles to build

[See **MacArthur**, A10]

Pelosi warns Biden on time amid anxiety in their party

Ex-House speaker sends a pointed signal as Democrats flip-flop or avoid questions about the president.

By Noah Bierman

Americans experiencing whiplash over Democratic leaders’ desire to nudge President Biden out of his reelection campaign can be forgiven.

Just as it seemed Biden had beaten back congressional pressure to withdraw this week, former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco ushered in another wave of doubt Wednesday, warning Biden that “time is running short” to reconsider a decision he has said repeatedly and defiantly that he has already made.

The party has contorted itself over the last two weeks

Harris seeks to shore up president

Amid a show of support for Biden in Vegas, some at rally look to her to run in his place. **NATION**, A4

as it contends with competing forces: Biden’s pride, the party’s sinking poll numbers, fear of chaos, elected lawmakers’ personal ambitions and the overwhelming anxiety among Democrats of all stripes that former President Trump will win a second term.

Democratic lawmakers have tried all manner of responses to their Biden dilemma — some evasive, some creative.

The Tuesday walk-back from Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York, who had called for a new candidate only two days earlier: “Whether I have concerns or not is beside the

[See **Biden**, A5]

A cold war of sorts over probe findings

Pentagon intervenes in a misconduct inquiry into a top leader of California National Guard.

By Paul Pringle and Alene Tchekmedyan

The secret investigation of a California National Guard officer focused on small and large matters — the colonel’s Dalmatian and the mess the dog made in a military building, but also her handling of another high-ranking officer’s drunk-driving crash and reports of plummeting morale among firefighting pilots she oversaw.

Inspectors general for the California Guard con-

ducted more than three dozen confidential interviews and pored over financial records and other documents. They came to a clear conclusion: Col. Lisa Nemeth, the target of the investigation, had engaged in conduct unbecoming an officer.

That judgment, issued behind closed doors in 2022, endangered a planned promotion of Nemeth to general, according to two sources familiar with the inquiry who requested anonymity because they are not authorized to speak publicly.

But then came an extraordinary telephone call from the Pentagon — one that ignited a seething cold war between the California Military Department, which is the parent organization of the Guard, and both the Na-

[See **Guard**, A10]

An unlikely battleground for abortion rights

Group’s campaign to block clinic in Beverly Hills may offer playbook for similar efforts

By Sonja Sharp

Emma Craig was outside the Beverly Hills Medical Center on Wilshire Boulevard, spoiling for a fight.

Armed with a bullhorn, sidewalk chalk and “giant photos of dead babies,” the Bay Area art teacher and anti-abortion activist had arrived with her confederates last summer to pray and protest against a clinic seeking to expand its services to California amid a flurry of national restrictions on reproductive care.

Construction on the DuPont Clinic, a highly specialized abortion provider based in Washington, D.C., had halted weeks earlier. But members of Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust — who received confirmation of the development from Beverly Hills officials, emails show — decided to keep protesting anyway.

The Survivors, as they call themselves, were geared up for weeks of aggressive street outreach, in-your-face pickets and guerrilla freeway banner drops. Their Beverly Hills campaign would offer a playbook on future efforts to shut down a clinic even in the nation’s cities and states that most support abortion rights.

“We wanted to demonstrate to the building management and to the city, if this clinic goes in here, it’s not going to be good,” Craig said. “You’re gonna have protesters in your beautiful town with these terrible giant photos.”

Almost as soon as Beverly Hills officials were approached, public records show, they moved swiftly to address the concerns of a group considered extremist even within California’s anti-abortion movement — “the redheaded stepchild,” as

[See **Clinic**, A7]



Gina Ferazzi Los Angeles Times

ACTIVISTS, from left, Heather Fels, Gay Abrams, Andrea Grossman and Amanda Smith say the city colluded with an anti-abortion group to scuttle a clinic.

NATO summit puts off Ukraine

Allies offer more military aid — but not the membership Zelensky seeks amid war with Russia. **NATION**, A4

Big DWP fee hike is forecast

Advocate urges L.A. to delay 2035 goals, calls predicted 7.7% boost “not reasonable.” **CALIFORNIA**, B1

NBA TV deals are finalized

League is said to have agreements with NBC, Prime Video, ABC, ESPN. TNT could lose its rights. **BUSINESS**, A6

Weather
Sunny and warm.
L.A. Basin: 89/64. **B6**

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PERSPECTIVES

They say yes to giving gender-affirming care

LGBTQ+ medical workers understand the importance of helping transgender patients amid a rise in restrictions targeting them

By Jireh Deng

Nico Olalia had just finished her initial nurse training in the Philippines when she realized her aspirations were growing bigger than her home archipelago.

"There are a lot of trans Filipinos, but they're always known in the beauty industry, and they're very seldom found in the professional side," Olalia said.

So she moved back to the United States, where she was born, for better career prospects. Today, she is a clinical nurse at Cedars-Sinai, one of the largest hospitals in Southern California, where she assists new hires and cares for patients in the neurology division.

Olalia feels like it's a dream come true; her peers and patients respect her and welcome her contributions. It's a hope shared by a small but growing number of trans and nonbinary healthcare workers in the U.S.

Yearly surveys of first-year medical students by the Assn. of American Medical Colleges show that the percentage identifying as transgender and gender nonconforming doubled to 14% in 2023 from 0.7% in 2020.

These numbers align with the growing LGBTQ+ population in the United States. Today, younger generations are more likely to identify as LGBTQ+ than generations before. A national survey this year found that 28% of Gen Z respondents identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer.

But that rise in LGBTQ+-identified youths and trans healthcare workers has coincided with escalating restrictions on gender-affirming care.

Between 2022 and 2023, anti-trans legislation proposed across statehouses tripled, with a majority of the bills proposing restrictions on gender-affirming care. According to the Movement Advancement Project, at least half of the states exclude transgender-related healthcare for youths from their Medicaid programs, while only 22 explicitly cover it.

"We've created medical refugees who have to leave their state to get that care,"



JACQUELYN MARTIN Associated Press

PROTESTERS RALLY on the steps of the Texas Capitol against anti-trans bills being considered by the Legislature in Austin in 2021. The state has since banned gender-affirming care for transgender youths.

said U.S. Assistant Secretary for Health Rachel Levine, the first transgender person confirmed by the Senate to a high government post.

"Transgender medicine can be suicide prevention care. It's been shown in many studies that it improves the quality of life and can save lives for youth and adults," said Levine, a pediatrician specializing in adolescent care.

When Levine was doing her medical residency at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City during the 1980s AIDS crisis, she saw friends and co-workers succumb to the epidemic — an experience that has echoes in the discrimination she sees transgender people facing

today, she said.

One study from 2023 showed that 70% of transgender and gender-nonconforming patients faced at least one negative interaction with a healthcare provider, ranging from an "unsolicited harmful opinion about gender identity to physical attacks and abuse." It was only in 2019 that the World Health Organization removed gender dysphoria from its list of mental health illnesses.

Alex Keuroghlian, a clinical psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School, directs training programs through the National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center that educate healthcare providers across the country on gender-affirming care. They've noticed a double standard when it comes to the doubts that people raise against transgender healthcare.

"Given how well resourced anti-trans political groups are, it can really distort the public discourse and make it harder to advance evidence-based, clinically sound practices," Keuroghlian said of the rampant misinformation they've seen online.

An uptick in the number of transgender-identifying youths seeking gender-affirming care sparked a theory that "social contagion" was influencing teens to experience "rapid-onset gender dysphoria." Some practitioners oppose this framing, and research published by the American Academy of Pediatrics has disproved it. Both the American Psychiatric Assn. and the American Pediatric Assn. support gender-affirming care for adolescents.

The news on the legal front hasn't been all bad for trans healthcare providers; last month, a federal court judge struck down Florida's law restricting gender-affirming care for minors and adults. However, the practice of categorizing gender in a binary medical system continues.

That's problematic, said Mauricio Dankers, the intensive care unit director at HCA Florida Aventura Hospital, because the medical erasure of trans people can prevent a proper diagnosis. When doctors have to make split-second decisions in the ICU, he said, failing to recognize a transgender person could prevent them from receiving lifesaving care.

"If I don't know that a transgender woman may have gone through laryngoplasty to change the tone of her voice, I'm going to go and put the breathing tube [and] I may run into trouble," Dankers offered as an example. Chest binding used by some transgender people to appear more masculine can also lead to pneumonia if done improperly, he said.

Dankers, a gay immigrant who left Peru for the more tolerant New York City, worries that the politicization of transgender

healthcare will put a target on LGBTQ+ healthcare providers.

These restrictions "are going to change how the LGBTQ+ trainee thinks about their career," Dankers said. He said they might think, "I'm not going to a place where they don't want me by law."

After Texas banned gender-affirming care for teens, a pediatric endocrinologist closed her practice and moved out of the state because she feared violence from armed protesters. And this year, a Texas man was sentenced to three months in prison for threatening a Boston physician serving transgender patients.

Fear and violence have had a ripple effect even on states that have enshrined transgender healthcare into law.

Baltimore Safe Haven, a nonprofit that provides transitional housing service focused especially on Black trans women, received an increase of 7,000 calls last year after Gov. Wes Moore signed an executive order protecting gender-affirming medical care in Maryland, according to the Baltimore Sun. Most of the callers lived out of state.

"I can't even see my own doctor," said Jules Gill-Peterson, a transgender woman and associate professor at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore who studies the history of transgender medicine. Anecdotally, she's heard of doctors' caseloads tripling with the slew of requests they receive from new transgender patients.

"It's only going to put greater pressure on [the] system as people migrate

from states where it's illegal to transition medically to states where it's not," Gill-Peterson said.

LGBTQ+ healthcare workers are on the defensive, said Kate Steinle, a queer nurse and chief clinical officer at Folx, a nationwide healthcare provider that serves transgender and queer patients.

"Our general counsel wakes up in the morning and is looking at every single possible legislation that could affect our care," Steinle said. Folx lobbies the government to ensure that its patients have access to gender-affirming care, but Steinle said fighting anti-trans legislation can sometimes feel like "a game of whack-a-mole" — as one goes down, another takes its place.

Anti-trans legislation is largely symbolic because most of these bills fail, said D Dangaran, a lawyer and director of gender justice at Rights Behind Bars. According to the Trans Legislation Tracker, of the 617 bills introduced, 44 have passed, 348 failed and the rest are pending.

But the fate of transgender healthcare could shift dramatically depending on the outcome of the presidential election in November.

"A Trump presidency will signal to the states another possibility to move forward on all fronts with anti-trans legislation," Dangaran said. Former President Trump has promised to end gender-affirming care for minors if he wins, and Dangaran anticipates that he would sign "executive orders that are antithetical to protecting trans rights."

Keuroghlian worries that many career government employees in the Department of Health and Human Services could be ousted by political appointees as part of Trump's ambition to reshape the federal workforce. "There is a lot of important healthcare and research funded by the federal government," he said.

All of this could reverse the progress that the Biden administration has done to advance gender-affirming care across the country.

"There hasn't been any president that has more explicitly supported access to gender-affirming care," said Elana Redfield, the federal policy director at the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law.

Last week, the Supreme Court agreed to consider the Biden administration's challenge to Tennessee's ban on gender-affirming care for teens. The administration argues that the ban violates the 14th amendment's equal protection clause. A ruling is expected next year that could cement or further erode transgender rights.

Redfield warns that "people who are multiply marginalized are also most affected by these laws," particularly people of color who live in the Deep South. Beyond the legal restrictions to care, they face problems affording the cost of procedures such as gender-affirming surgery and traveling to where care is available, she said.

Nor can lower-income transgender people afford Folx, a private subscription service that charges \$39.99 a month on top of any out-of-pocket costs and copays levied by an insurer.

"Trans people have a lot to tell us about just how bad U.S. healthcare can get," Gill-Peterson said. "Trans healthcare is not really that different than the rest of healthcare."

Increasing the representation of transgender people in a healthcare system where "profit is placed over people" won't solve those fundamental inequities, she said. Even if doctors support their transgender patients, Gill-Peterson said, they are still bound by law to follow state regulations and insurers' dictates.

On the other hand, studies have linked positive health outcomes in LGBTQ+ patients and patients of color to having a healthcare provider who shares their background. That's one reason University of Michigan medical student Gaines Blasdel, a trans man, wants to become a urologist who can provide gender-affirming surgery to transgender patients such as himself.

Blasdel said gender-affirming care can be an abstract social justice issue to his cisgender classmates, but it isn't to him. "I've been embedded [in medicine] and I'm going to be, no matter how hard it is."

Jona Tanguay, a physician assistant and medical lead in the medical substance use disorder programs at Whitman-Walker Health in Washington, said it's important to not discredit the incremental but meaningful progress in the representation and quality of care offered to transgender people.

"Progress isn't always linear," they said. Tanguay, who is nonbinary, is also the president of GLMA, formerly known as the Gay and Lesbian Medical Assn. They already see the curriculum expanding and the number of out transgender healthcare providers growing steadily. "Every generation after is going to be more self-aware than they used to be about health disparities."

Olalia said her story demonstrates that trans people can practice medicine just as well as their cisgender colleagues. Because she's also enrolled full time in a nursing doctoral program, her days start at 4:30 a.m., when she wakes up to prepare for her 10- to 12-hour shifts. Her efforts at Cedars-Sinai earned her a prestigious \$10,000 no-strings-attached grant from the Simms/Mann Institute & Foundation.

"I do hope that I can have more power to inspire transgender women," Olalia said. "I want those who are walking behind me to ... have that opportunity to go beyond what they're told to do or what society deems them to be."

FOR THE RECORD

Ballot measures: In the July 9 California section, an article about the statewide propositions on the November ballot referred to the 10 measures as initiatives. Five of the 10 are citizen initiatives that were qualified by signatures.

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Los Angeles Times

A California Times Publication
Founded Dec. 4, 1881
Vol. CXLIII No. 221

LOS ANGELES TIMES (ISSN 0458-3035) is published by the Los Angeles Times, 2300 E. Imperial Highway, El Segundo, CA 90245. Periodicals postage is paid at Los Angeles, CA, and additional cities. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the above address.
Home Delivery Subscription Rates (all rates include applicable CA sales taxes and apply to most areas)

Print + unlimited digital rates:
Seven-day \$28/week, \$1,456 annually.
Thursday-Sunday \$16/week, \$832 annually.
Saturday & Sunday \$10/week, \$520 annually.
Saturday & Sunday \$9/week, \$466 annually.
Sunday \$8.50/week, \$442 annually.
Monday-Saturday \$18/week, \$936 annually (also includes Sundays, except 3/31, 5/26, 9/1, and 10/13).
Monday-Friday \$16/week, \$832 annually.

Printed with soy-based ink on recycled newsprint from wood byproducts.



JIREH DENG Los Angeles Times



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TOP, nurse Nico Olalia says she hopes to inspire other transgender women. Above, Violet Rin prepares to inject estrogen at home in Florida in 2023.



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THE WORLD

South Koreans fed up with doctors' strike

As walkout continues, public is siding with government in plan to boost physician ranks.

By Max Kim

SEOUL — By many measures, South Korea's health-care system is among the most successful in the world. Seeing a doctor is easy. The mortality rate from preventable illnesses is low. And though most hospitals and clinics are privately run, a nationalized single-payer health insurance program keeps costs affordable.

An appendectomy costs \$2,500 — less than a fifth of the average price in the United States — with 80% of that covered by government insurance.

But a four-month-old strike by more than 9,000 medical residents and interns across the country is turning the public against the medical establishment.

At issue is a government plan to add 1,497 slots to medical school admissions — a 48% increase — in order to meet the rising need for healthcare as South Korea's population ages.

The government says it is simply trying to plug shortages in essential fields such as pediatrics or gynecology, which doctors are increasingly shunning for higher-paying specializations.

But junior doctors, backed by their senior peers, say a wave of new graduates will compromise the quality of medical education, lead to unnecessary medical appointments and drive down physician salaries.

"Of course we are conscious of the fact that these new graduates will end up joining the competition in the private practice market later," said Dr. Peter Han, a 30-year-old internal medicine resident who resigned from his job at a major teaching hospital in Seoul in February. "Nothing good will come of that."

At a rally in Seoul last month organized by the Korean Medical Assn., doctors held placards that read, "The rushed increase of medical school admissions will collapse the medical system."

Given South Korea's fer-



SOUTH KOREANS rally in Seoul on July 4 for an end to a doctors' strike that has disrupted health services.



PROFESSORS resign over a plan to boost medical school admissions. Doctors say the plan will compromise the quality of medical education and drive down salaries.

tility rate — the lowest in the world — senior citizens are expected to make up 40% of the total population by 2050.

With around 112,000 active physicians as of 2022, the government has estimated the country will need at least 10,000 more in the next decade.

Some fields are already facing shortages. A survey of 59 teaching hospitals by Medi C&C, a local medical

data company, found that pediatric departments failed to fill 152 of their 205 residency openings this year. Dermatology and plastic surgery departments faced overflows.

The protesting doctors have accused the government of failing to factor in artificial intelligence — which they say will someday reduce healthcare's reliance on human labor.

They have also suggested that much of the problem could be solved by increasing efficiency in a system that has long been a marriage of a strong social safety net and the free market.

South Koreans visit the doctor an average of 15.7 times a year — far more than in any other country, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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poll by research company Southern Post.

Amid reports of cancer patients experiencing disruptions in their treatment and patients being shuttled from one emergency room to the next in search of care, some patient advocacy groups have called on the government to permanently revoke the medical licenses of striking doctors and bring in replacements from abroad.

The government has tried to force the absentees back to their posts with threats of legal punishment, a hard-line strategy that appears to have backfired.

"The government and doctors' groups are behaving the same way, which is why dialogue isn't happening," said Yoon Tae-ho, a health management expert at Pusan National University. "The people have simply become a tool and object in this fight."

Among them is Suh Yi-seul, whose 12-year-old son Kai was born with a rare congenital disorder called Klippel-Trenaunay syndrome that has caused his right leg and foot to grow to twice as thick as his left and occasionally triggers skin infections that have kept him from school.

"All he can do when that happens is lie still for 10 days while taking antibiotics," Suh said. "And each time, after the swelling goes down, his leg has grown a little bit bigger."

The departure of residents from his hospital in Seoul has put an indefinite hold on evaluating him for an experimental therapy that research has suggested could help prevent his condition from worsening.

She said she empathized with the doctors but suggested they were behaving selfishly: "Shouldn't they also think of the social good, and not just their group interests?"

As the head of a nationwide network for patients with her son's condition, Suh recently met with lawmakers from the National Assembly's Health and Welfare Committee. It went nowhere.

"It really just felt like they showed up just to let us vent," Suh said. "They don't know what to do for us either."

Israeli military expands Gaza City evacuation order

Move comes as heavy bombardment across the war-torn territory has left dozens dead.

By Wafaa Shurafa and Samy Magdy

DEIR AL BALAH, Gaza Strip — The Israeli military urged all Palestinians to leave Gaza City and head south Wednesday, pressing ahead with a fresh offensive across the north, south and center of the embattled territory that has killed dozens of people over the last 48 hours.

The stepped-up military activity came as U.S., Egyptian and Qatari mediators met with Israeli officials in the Qatari capital, Doha, seeking a long-elusive cease-fire deal with the militant group Hamas in exchange for the release of dozens of Israeli hostages it is holding.

Israel says it is pursuing Hamas fighters that are regrouping in various parts of Gaza nine months into the war. But heavy strikes in recent days along the length of the territory also could be aimed at putting more pressure on Hamas in the cease-fire talks.

In a visit Wednesday to central Gaza, Israel's military chief, Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, said forces were operating in different ways, in multiple parts of the territory "to carry out a very important mission: pressure. We will continue operating to bring home the hostages."

Israel informed Gazans of the evacuation order by dropping leaflets urging "all those in Gaza City" to take two "safe routes" south to the area around the central town of Deir al Balah. Gaza City, it said, will "remain a dangerous combat zone."

Months ago, Israel or-

dered residents of northern Gaza, including Gaza City, to flee south, and much of the population left earlier in the war. Large parts of Gaza City and surrounding urban areas have been flattened or left a shattered landscape by previous Israeli assaults.

The United Nations says about 300,000 Palestinians have remained in the hard-hit north, with the bulk of those said to be in Gaza City.

Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people are crammed into squalid tent camps in central and southern Gaza.

Israeli troops have pushed into parts of Gaza City in recent days, triggering the flight of thousands of Palestinians trying to escape shelling and airstrikes. In the last week, the military ordered Palestinians to evacuate eastern and central parts of the city.

There was no immediate mass exodus from the city after Wednesday's order. Many Palestinians have concluded that there is no refuge in war-stricken Gaza.

The military, meanwhile, said it wrapped up an operation launched late last month in the Gaza City neighborhood of Shajaiya, where it killed dozens of militants and destroyed eight underground tunnels.

Wednesday's evacuation order came after a series of deadly strikes over the last two days in other parts of the territory. Israeli bombardment early Wednesday hit four houses in Deir al Balah and the nearby Nuseirat refugee camp, killing 20 Palestinians.

Among the dead were six children and three women, according to officials at Al Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where the casualties were taken. An Associated Press reporter counted the bodies. The house hit in Deir al Balah was inside the "humanitarian safe zone" where



A BOY wounded in Israeli strikes is treated at a hospital in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza. Israel has stepped-up its offensive amid talks in Qatar on a cease-fire deal.

Israel has told Palestinians to flee for refuge.

The overnight bombardment came hours after Israeli warplanes struck the entrance of a school sheltering displaced families outside the southern city of Khan Yunis. The toll from the strike rose to 31 people killed, including eight children, and more than 50 wounded, officials at the nearby Nasser Hospital said Wednesday.

Video aired by Al Jazeera television showed children playing soccer in the school's yard when a boom shook the area, prompting shouts of "a strike, a strike!"

The Israeli army said the airstrike near the school and reports of civilian casualties were under review. It claimed it was targeting a Hamas militant who took part in the Oct. 7 attack on Israel that triggered the war, though it provided no immediate evidence. The military blames civilian deaths on Hamas because the militants fight in dense, urban areas. But the army rarely comments on what it is tar-

geting in individual strikes, which often kill women and children.

In nine months of bombardment and offensives in Gaza, Israel has killed more than 38,200 people and wounded more than 88,000, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count. Nearly the entire population has been driven from their homes. Many have been displaced multiple times.

During the Oct. 7 raid, militants 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.

Israel's new ground assault in Gaza's largest city has prompted what the U.N called a "dangerously chaotic" exodus of people scattering in multiple directions, unsure where to go. Some have fled to other parts of the north. The new Israeli

limited evidence.

Only 13 of Gaza's 36 hospitals are functioning, and even those only partially, according to the United Nations' humanitarian office.

Amid the ongoing violence, international mediators were making a new concerted effort to push through a proposed deal for a cease-fire and release of hostages.

Israel and Hamas had appeared to narrow the gaps in recent days, 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.

Hamas still wants mediators to guarantee that negotiations conclude with a permanent cease-fire. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has insisted he will not sign any deal forcing Israel to stop its campaign in Gaza without eliminating Hamas. The militant group on Monday accused Netanyahu of "putting more obstacles in the way of negotiations," including the operations in Gaza City.

An Egyptian official said the head of Egypt's General Intelligence Service, Abbas Kamel, went to Doha to join discussions over the deal. The official said U.S. and Israeli officials were also attending. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media on the meetings.

CIA Director William Burns, who has led the American mediation, met Tuesday with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Sisi in Cairo.

Associated Press writers Shurafa and Magdy reported from Deir al Balah and Cairo, respectively. AP writer Melanie Lidman in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

And despite being classified as tertiary care institutions meant for the sickest patients, university hospitals are chronically overcrowded because costs are low and primary care physicians give out referrals for even minor ailments.

Therein lies another factor motivating the strikers: Medical residents say they are the cheap labor propping it all up.

At leading U.S. hospitals, residents make up around 14% of total physicians on staff. In South Korea, they account for around 40% of the physicians at the hospitals where they train. They earn nearly \$2,900 a month while working an average of nearly 80 hours a week, often in 36-hour shifts.

"People will say, 'That's why we're trying to graduate more doctors,' but hospitals won't necessarily hire more of us when it's more profitable to run the ones they have into the ground," Han said. "All of these frustrations are just finally boiling over."

As the strike grinds on, the doctors are losing the battle for public opinion. More than 80% of South Koreans oppose the strike and support the government's plan, according to a recent

THE NATION

NATO summit backs Ukraine, if not as a member

BY TRACY WILKINSON

WASHINGTON — The United States and its NATO allies will give Ukraine new air defense systems, Europe-based military training and other equipment to bolster its desperate fight against Russia more than two years into their bloody war.

But Ukraine will not get critical membership in the transatlantic alliance.

As leaders of the 32 NATO states convened here for the group's 75th anniversary, U.S. officials said Ukraine is instead being offered a "bridge" to membership — an unclear path that delays consideration of its application until after the war.

Ukraine seeks NATO membership as protection against a far larger and better-armed aggressor.

But many NATO members fear that bringing Ukraine into the fold now would put their countries in direct conflict with Moscow. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is disappointed, but U.S. officials warned him to not make an angry public display of his frustration, as he did at last year's summit.

Instead, he made a forceful pitch for urgent, sustained support from the West. In Washington for the summit, Zelensky pointedly chose a Republican audience for a major speech and repeatedly alluded to the possibility of former President Trump winning the November election.

Trump and many other Republicans have voiced skepticism about continued aid to the beleaguered nation.

"It's time to ... make strong decisions, to act and not to wait for November," Zelensky said Tuesday night at the Ronald Reagan Institute's D.C. branch, where he was introduced by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.).

"To this end, we must be strong and uncompromising all together ... all America. Uncompromising in defending democracy, uncompromising against [Russian President Vladimir] Putin and his coterie."

The world, Zelensky said, is "waiting for what November might bring." Asked later whether he supported President Biden, a Democrat, or Trump, Zelensky declined to say.

It was Trump's 2019 phone call with a new President Zelensky that led to the then-U.S. president's first impeachment for threatening to hold up aid to Ukraine unless Zelensky helped dig up dirt on Biden.

Zelensky renewed requests that Ukraine be allowed to use U.S. weapons to attack inside Russia, something the Biden administration has largely forbidden.

"How much longer can Putin last?" Zelensky said. "The answer to this question is right here in Washington."

Biden announced the

new aid for Ukraine as he opened the summit. His appearances this week are under intense scrutiny as turmoil swirls in the Democratic Party over whether he should continue to run for reelection. The 81-year-old president has rejected calls to withdraw from the race.

Biden described the new air defense systems, about a dozen in all, as a "historic donation," although it was relatively modest in comparison with Russia's routine deadly barrages launched against Ukrainian cities, including civilian targets such as the children's hospital in Kyiv, attacked on Monday.

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, speaking on the sidelines of the summit, insisted that Ukraine's future lies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Membership would also require Kyiv to adopt numerous anti-corruption, transparency and good-governance measures.

Blinken said Ukraine's path to NATO is "irreversible," and would be via a "clear, strong, robust, well-lit bridge" featuring both political reform and military reinforcement.

He also announced that the first shipment of U.S.-made F-16 fighter jets — long sought by Ukraine — has been made.

"Coming from Denmark, coming from the Netherlands, ... those jets will be flying in the skies of Ukraine this summer to make sure that Ukraine can continue to effectively defend itself against the Russian aggression," Blinken said.

Sensitivities over Ukraine joining NATO are so high that even the phrasing of a statement about a pathway to membership took months of wrangling in Washington and various European capitals. But enough consensus has been reached to include the word "irreversible" to characterize Ukraine's eventual participation in NATO, according to people familiar with the process.

"I would have predicted by now that there would have been a lot more wobbliness when it comes for support for Ukraine, but other than the Slovaks and the Hungarians, everyone is staying the course," said Charles Kupchan, who teaches international relations at Georgetown University.

Short of NATO membership, diplomats have suggested, Ukraine could aspire to a seat in the European Union, the 27-state bloc that has inched steadily eastward across the continent.

"Ukraine needs ... some sort of security guarantee — doesn't have to be members of NATO — but it has to be something as credible as possible," said Sebastian Mallaby, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "They need the security guarantee and then they also need to bind themselves into the West — a critical path to EU membership."



"HE IS A FIGHTER," Vice President Harris said of the president at her latest Las Vegas rally, the launch of an initiative for the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander vote. Nevada is a key swing state.

Harris rallies for Biden in Vegas

Crowd chants 'Four more years!' but some hope she runs in his place

BY FAITH E. PINHO

LAS VEGAS — Officially, Vice President Kamala Harris appeared in Las Vegas this week to launch a Biden campaign initiative to reach Asian American, Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian voters.

But the quiet underpinning of the event at a resort ballroom was the vice president's firm support of President Biden, even as some Democratic officials — and some supporters in the room — expressed hope that he will step down and that Harris will emerge as the new leader of the party.

Harris' visit to Las Vegas on Tuesday came as the president continued to defiantly insist he is fit for reelection despite growing calls for him to step aside after his disastrous debate performance against former President Trump last month.

Her appearance came a day before actor George Clooney, a major Democratic campaign fundraiser and donor, called on Biden to leave the ticket.

Biden, who appeared listless and confused during the debate, has been attempting to corral support among his fellow Democratic officeholders, even as some cracks appeared over the weekend in a once-solid base. Democratic members of Congress returned to Washington this week after a holiday break, and a central topic of discussion was Biden's viability as a presidential candidate.

The stakes are high in Nevada, where Biden won narrowly in 2020 but which now leans Republican, according to the Cook Political Report.

But in the Las Vegas ballroom on Tuesday, the mood was cheerful, as a crowd of a few hundred people repeatedly erupted into chants of "Four more years!"

In her roughly 15-minute speech, Harris gave fleeting mention of the debate debacle and the swirling questions about Biden's suitability for reelection.

"The past few days have been a reminder that running for president of the United States is never easy," she said. "But the one thing we know about our president, Joe Biden, is that he is a fighter."

The crowd roared in response. But in conversations before and after the rally, even some supporters expressed doubt about the president's ability to continue.

"He probably should step down," said Alyse Sobosan, a college advisor for a Las Vegas charter school. Conversations about Biden's health are taking away from the effectiveness of the campaign, she said. "We can't even talk about the issues or his stances on things, because all the conversation is just about him and his health."

The 36-year-old said that she would support Harris as "a strong candidate" to replace Biden should he leave the race, but that the vice president should do more to amplify her national profile.

"I feel neutral to positive about her," Sobosan said. "I just don't know a lot about her."

Abraham Camejo, 41, brought his four children to the event. They munched on rice cake and sausage skewers, a traditional Korean dish, while he explained why he was sticking with Biden, saying that it was "too late in the game" to switch candidates.

"Can we have a younger Biden? That would be very nice. But unfortunately, we tend to get old," said Camejo, joking that perhaps the 81-year-old president could get some energy with "a little Red Bull."

"We just got to under-

stand that he's not a young man," he said. "But can he get the job done? And I honestly believe that he can."

The Las Vegas event was headlined as a kickoff for the campaign to woo Asian American, Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian voters. The campaign group Nevada for Biden-Harris announced that it was launching a blitz of paid media in the state to coincide with the rally, including ads in several Asian-language publications.

Padma Lakshmi, the cookbook author and host and executive producer of the Hulu show "Taste the Nation," helped introduce Harris as the first Asian American woman to become U.S. vice president.

"I thought of how much it would've meant to me as a young girl to see an Asian American woman helping lead our country," Lakshmi said.

Vivienne Bailey-Reid, 61, a consultant in Las Vegas, said she left Harris' speech feeling inspired and reinvigorated to support the Democratic administration.

"We need to focus and just stop getting bent out of shape about President Biden's age," Bailey-Reid said. "I think she gave us the hope that, 'Wait a minute, we're still in charge.'"

Her friend Linn Hummel, 62, agreed, though she added that Harris had failed to deliver a succinct takeaway message Tuesday, and had instead piled on statistics and facts.

Democrats need to have an easy message to carry to undecided voters, Hummel said, adding that while Harris may attract some voters, such as women, "she needs to focus that message just a little bit more."

"As Democrats ... we need to have the same sort of zeal that Republicans have," she continued. "It used to be, in our political system, good or

bad, when the candidate was chosen, that's who you stood behind. And the fact that he may have had a poor showing in a debate is that moment in time. It is not who he is altogether."

Hummel said that although she understood why the media and Democratic pundits remained focused on Biden's debate performance, she wished they would move on.

"It's that vicious cycle. Once you ask that question — 'Is he viable?' — now that's all you can think about," she said, adding, "I don't need to know what time [Biden] is going to bed."

The most cohesive message Harris delivered, the two friends agreed, was the importance of defeating Trump.

Harris spent a portion of her speech condemning the Supreme Court's recent decision to allow presidents immunity from prosecution for official acts, saying, "Trump wants to turn our democracy into a dictatorship. And the Supreme Court basically just declared he can get away with it."

She outlined Project 2025, a plan created by close Trump allies for overhauling the federal government, should he be elected in November.

The goal of defeating Trump motivated Arlene and Joel Williams, a couple who moved to Las Vegas two years ago from San Jose, to begin writing letters in support of the Democratic Party a couple of months ago.

The two, both 74, say they will support any Democrat — including Harris, whom they've known since her days as a San Francisco politician.

"We don't want Trump. It's scary," Arlene Williams said.

Her husband added: "We're in the anybody-but-Trump camp."

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Last of Beryl heads for northeast U.S.

A tornado touches down in Indiana and a flood watch is in effect in seven states.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS — The remnants of Hurricane Beryl spawned at least one tornado and threatened flooding Wednesday as the system churned toward Canada and the northeastern U.S. after leaving millions in the Houston area without power.

Beryl, which landed in Texas on Monday as a Category 1 hurricane, was a post-tropical cyclone and centered over southeastern Michigan around midday Wednesday with maximum sustained winds of 30 mph, the National Weather Service reported.

A flood watch was in effect for parts of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire



JACKIE JECMENEK, right, speaks with a worker in Bay City, Texas, after Hurricane Beryl passed.

and Maine, and rainfall warnings were issued for portions of southern Canada. The storm dumped 3 to 6 inches of rain in northern Indiana, saturating the ground and putting trees at risk of toppling in strong winds forecast for Wednesday afternoon.

Parts of northern New York and New England could see heavy rain, said Bob Oravec, a weather service forecaster. After Thursday, only a few showers can be expected across New England, he said.

A tornado touched down Tuesday in Posey County in southwestern Indiana, officials said. The storm collapsed much of a warehouse and ripped off roofs, derailed train cars and damaged mobile homes. No injuries were reported.

Jerrod Prather, a supervisor for Nutrien Ag Solutions, told the Evansville Courier & Press that he watched the tornado on a security camera.

"I saw it come down and kind of lift back up, and then come down again," he said.

Beryl has been blamed for at least seven U.S. deaths — one in Louisiana and six in Texas — and at least 11 in the Caribbean.

More than 1.6 million homes and businesses in Texas still lacked electricity late Wednesday morning, down from over 2.7 million on Monday, according to PowerOutage.us.

More than 56,000 homes and businesses lacked power in Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.

Democratic leaders reluctant to push Biden

[Biden, from A1] point.”

The Wednesday double-reverse by Rep. Ritchie Torres of New York, who on Monday warned that the “drip-drip-drip” of public calls for Biden’s withdrawal were wounding him: “An unsentimental analysis of the cold hard numbers — which have no personal feelings or political loyalties — should inform what we decide and whom we nominate.”

The restatement of fact from Rep. Ro Khanna of Fremont, Calif., during a Washington Post video interview: “The reality is that the president has said that he is running.”

The optimistic quip from Rep. Lou Correa of Santa Ana: “80 is the new 60.”

A predicted tsunami of Capitol Hill Democrats calling for Biden to withdraw from his reelection bid has instead given way to isolated flash floods of public dissent, held back by a thin seawall of support. Many lawmakers have dodged reporters, talked around the question or, when pressed, said what they needed to say in hopes of moving on from concerns about Biden’s decline or whether he is capable of defeating Trump.

They have largely left such calls to donors and other influential unelected leaders. George Clooney, who co-hosted a Hollywood mega-fundraiser for Biden last month, penned a brutal call for his withdrawal in a Wednesday op-ed in the New York Times.

“The one battle he cannot win is the fight against time,” Clooney wrote. “None of us can. It’s devastating to say it, but the Joe Biden I was with three weeks ago at the fundraiser was not the Joe ‘big F— deal’ Biden of 2010. He wasn’t even the Joe Biden of 2020. He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate.”

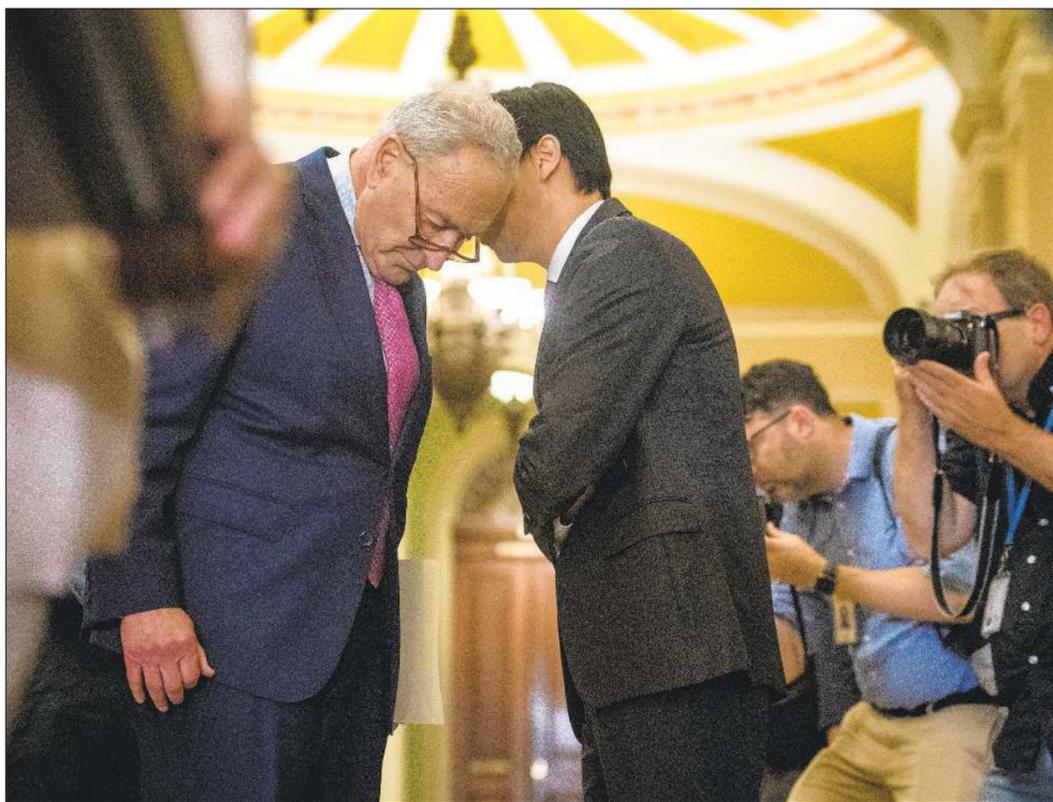
Pelosi, one of the most influential voices in Biden’s sphere outside of his family, seemed to sense that Biden’s efforts to stall for time were nonetheless pushing the party toward acceptance of a candidacy that is looking increasingly doomed, as polls and political handicappers push the needle toward Trump.

The respected Cook Political Report shifted six states toward Trump’s column late Tuesday, including Arizona and Nevada, which it moved from the “toss-up” category to “Lean R,” presaging the possibility that the election moves from squeaker to landslide.

Pelosi said in her Wednesday appearance on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe,” Biden’s favorite cable news show, that she preferred to keep the discussions behind closed doors — for now.

“Tell somebody privately, but you don’t have to put that out on the table until we see how we go this week,” she said.

But by appearing on the same show where Biden declared angrily on Monday that he would remain in the



SENATE Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) listens to an aide on Capitol Hill on Tuesday. President Biden appears to have avoided the kind of mass public defections in his party that would force his hand.



REP. Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) said that “time is running short” for Biden to reconsider.

race — and then ignoring his declaration — she sent a very pointed signal.

“It’s up to the president to decide if he is going to run,” she said. “We’re all encouraging him to make that decision because time is running short.”

Pelosi sandwiched her comments between praise for Biden and his record. But Pelosi is notably careful and calculating in her public comments. She is no longer in Democratic leadership but remains in the House after one of the most consequential tenures in history.

At 84, she is three years older than Biden and served alongside him for most of his political career, working closely with him during the Obama presidency to pass the Affordable Care Act. She also had the experience of watching close friend Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) deteriorate before dying in office last year.

Former President Obama, another influential voice, has been quiet since offering initial support. He

believes he can be most valuable as a “sounding board and confidant” to Biden, according to a person who speaks with him regularly and requested anonymity to discuss the closed-door relationship.

The reluctance of most lawmakers to step out on their own says as much about their political motivations — and the imperative politicians place on self-preservation — as it does about Biden. Polls show majorities of voters want Biden to step aside and he has fallen further behind Trump in many head-to-head polls, including an AARP poll released Tuesday that showed him 5 percentage points down in Wisconsin, a must-win state.

“It’s driven by caution, political survival instincts. A lot of Democrats don’t want to be out on a limb,” said Tim Miller, who worked on communications strategy at the highest levels of Republican politics before becoming a vocal Trump critic and leaving the party.

“There’s a lot of loud voices that are going to yell at you on social media and the phones in your office,” he added, arguing that those voices do not represent the consensus among voters.

Behind the scenes, elected Democrats are deeply worried about Biden’s declining stamina and his ability to defeat Trump, according to congressional aides and others who have spoken with them, along with public comments of some lawmakers. The mood at a meeting of House Democrats on Tuesday at the Democratic National Committee’s headquarters was described as “sad and frustrated” by a person familiar with the closed-door meeting who would describe it only anonymously. Senate Democrats held a similar gathering later in the day.

But for now, at least, Biden appears to have avoided

the kind of mass public defections that would force his hand. He could face a new round of doubts if fresh polls show him sinking further or he stumbles during a public event such as his planned news conference on Thursday. But the longer he buys time, the less likely it is he will leave the race.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the New York Democrat and leading progressive voice, appeared to be reckoning with that reality late Monday as she tried to close the book with yet another sort of semi-endorsement that evaded the question of whether he should remain in the race. “Joe Biden is our nominee. He is not leaving this race,” she told reporters. “He is in this race and I support him.”

Jim Manley, who spent decades in the Senate devising communication strategies for Democratic leaders,

said the reactions have surprised him, especially the unwillingness of many House Democrats to speak out when they normally rush for the cameras.

“The president feels correctly that time is his friend. Many members are unwilling to confront this. They’re just stalling for time,” he said.

But there’s also a problem of collective action. Lawmakers such as Nadler and Sen. Mark R. Warner of Virginia stepped back from their calls for a new candidate after they failed to rally others.

“The president has probably benefited from the lack of a really organized opposition,” said John Lawrence, who spent 38 years as a Democratic aide, eight of them as Pelosi’s chief of staff.

But it’s also not the nature of members of Congress, who tend to value their own reelection more than the presidency or even which party controls the House and Senate, said Lawrence, author of “Arc of Power: Inside Nancy Pelosi’s Speakership, 2005-2010.” Going against an incumbent president, stirring chaos at the top of the ticket or shaking up an institution all cut against those goals, he said.

“Relatively few revolutions are launched by people in power,” he said.

Republicans have been tested by Trump many more times than Democrats as their nominee has faced two impeachments, multiple indictments, a conviction, calls to suspend the Constitution and any number of startling statements that began before he became president in 2017.

“I don’t want to compare thoughts about a candidate’s age to not wanting to speak out about a candidate’s racism or bigotry or lies or conspiracy mongering,” Miller said. “The motivations come from the same place, which is political survival and not wanting to rock the boat.”

Times staff writers Seema Mehta and Faith Pinho contributed to this report.

Slave descendants submit petition to fight rezoning

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DARIEN, Ga. — Residents of one of the South’s last Gullah-Geechee communities of Black slave descendants have submitted signatures, hoping to force a referendum on whether to reverse zoning changes that they fear will make them sell their land.

Elected commissioners in Georgia’s McIntosh County voted in September to weaken zoning restrictions that for decades helped protect Black residents of Hogg Hummock, a group of modest homes along dirt roads on largely unspoiled Sapelo Island. About 30 to 50 Black residents still live in Hogg Hummock, which was founded by formerly enslaved people who had worked on a plantation.

Hogg Hummock residents and their supporters submitted a petition at the McIntosh County courthouse in Darien for a referendum to repeal the zoning changes. The petition had more than 2,300 signatures — hundreds more than needed to put the issue before voters in an election,

said Josiah “Jazz” Watts, a Hogg Hummock descendant and homeowner.

“We know there is still a long way to go, but man, this is significant,” Watts said at a news conference after Tuesday’s submission.

The signatures need to be reviewed and certified, but organizers expect the referendum to go before McIntosh County voters in September or October, said Megan Desrosiers, executive director of the conservation group One Hundred Miles.

An email to the county manager was not immediately returned.

The zoning changes doubled the size of houses allowed in Hogg Hummock. Residents say that will lead to property tax increases that they won’t be able to afford, possibly forcing them to sell land their families have held for generations.

County officials have argued the smaller size limit was not enough to accommodate a whole family. They said that limit also proved impossible to enforce.

Hogg Hummock landowners are also fighting the rezoning in court. A judge dismissed the original lawsuit on technical grounds,

but it has since been amended and refiled.

Located about 60 miles south of Savannah, Sapelo Island remains separated from the mainland and reachable only by boat. Since 1976, the state of Georgia has owned most of its 30 square miles of largely unspoiled wilderness. Hogg Hummock, also known as Hog Hammock, sits on less than a square mile.

Gullah-Geechee communities are scattered along the Southeast coast from North Carolina to Florida, where they have endured since their enslaved ancestors were freed by the Civil War.

Scholars say these people long separated from the mainland retained much of their African heritage, from their unique dialect to skills and crafts such as cast-net fishing and weaving baskets.

Hogg Hummock earned a place in 1996 on the National Register of Historic Places, the official list of the United States’ treasured historic sites. But for protections to preserve the community, residents depend on the local government in McIntosh County, where 65% of the 11,100 residents are white.

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BUSINESS

NBA in TV deal with NBC, Prime Video

ABC and ESPN are said to get contracts, but TNT may lose broadcast rights after the 2024-25 season.

By STEPHEN BATTAGLIO

It's crunch time in the NBA's negotiations for a new media rights deal that could have a significant effect on the TV business.

The NBA has finalized the contracts for a new 11-year deal that will return its games to broadcast network NBC and bring the league to Amazon's Prime Video streaming platform, according to a person familiar with the matter who was not authorized to comment.

The contracts, first reported by the New York Times, will pay the league \$76 billion over the term and will go to team owners for approval next week. Current NBA rights holder Warner Bros. Discovery's TNT will have an opportunity to make a matching offer.

If TNT does not match, it will lose the NBA after the 2024-25 season, depriving it of a cornerstone of its programming.

Representatives at NBC Sports, TNT and Amazon declined to comment on the

negotiations. The NBA did not respond to requests for comment.

Another person familiar with the situation who was not authorized to comment said Warner Bros. Discovery had not been officially told by the league that the other contracts had been finalized.

The NBA's departure from TNT would be the most significant loss of a TV sports property since CBS was outbid by Fox for the NFL's National Football Conference package in 1993. The addition of the NFL transformed Fox into a full-fledged broadcast network, while CBS went into a tailspin, losing viewers and key affiliate stations.

The new NBA deal would also spell the end of "Inside the NBA," TNT's highly regarded studio show with Charles Barkley, Shaquille O'Neal, Kenny Smith and Ernie Johnson.

NBC parent company Comcast is expected to pay \$2.5 billion a year in the new deal. NBC, which has the ability to reach nearly every household in the U.S., will carry an exclusive weekly prime-time game and a piece of the conference finals in the new package. Comcast also gets some games for its streaming platform Peacock.

NBC last held NBA me-



JACK DEMPSEY Associated Press

LIVE SPORTS have become more important for television broadcasters. Above, a game in April.

dia rights from 1990 to 2002 during the championship reign of Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls. (Longtime fans are already anticipating the return of John Tesh's "Roundball Rock," the rhythmic theme music NBC used during its coverage.)

Warner Bros. Discovery Chief Executive David Zaslav may end up being haunted by comments he made at a 2022 investor conference, where he said the company did not need the

NBA. The remark was taken as a signal that Zaslav was unwilling to enter a deal that did not make financial sense for a company with about \$40 billion in debt.

Barkley recently told sports talk host Dan Patrick that Zaslav's remarks "probably p— off" NBA Commissioner Adam Silver.

Barkley, regarded as one of the top in-studio sports analysts, has been publicly critical of Warner Bros. Discovery's handling of the ne-

gotiations and said he would retire from television after next season. But it's likely that his services will be coveted by one of the new partners in the new deal.

Zaslav's stance on the NBA was ill-timed, as the demand for live sports has escalated in recent years. They are considered the last reliable source of programming with the ability to attract mass audiences to live TV.

Traditional TV networks need live sports more than ever as they try to retain advertising dollars and negotiating leverage when dealing with pay-TV carriers for carriage fees. Streaming services are also aggressively pushing into live sports as they seek to get a larger share of the TV ad market.

Amazon will pay \$1.8 billion a year for a new package on Prime Video, the largest of its kind between one of the major U.S. sports leagues and a streaming service. (Amazon pays \$1 billion a year to the NFL for the exclusive rights to "Thursday Night Football.")

Prime Video will carry weekly regular season games and the NBA Cup, a mid-season tournament launched last year. The streaming service will also get the NBA's play-in tournament, in which the teams ranked between seventh and 10th over the regular season

face off for the final two playoff seeds in their conference. Playoff contests and some WNBA games are also included in the package.

Comcast will carry regular season contests, including prime-time games on NBC and Peacock. Comcast hopes the NBA will attract new subscribers to the streaming service. Peacock has 34 million subscribers, well behind other streaming services such as Netflix, Max and Paramount+.

Walt Disney Co. maintains the rights to the NBA Finals, which will continue to air on broadcast network ABC. Disney's ESPN will also continue to carry regular season and playoff games. Disney will pay \$2.8 billion per year, up from \$1.4 billion in the current deal.

Warner Bros. Discovery will now have to negotiate its next round of deals without offering the NBA at a time when such talks are increasingly contentious. Pay-TV distributors are battling to keep costs down as their customer bases shrink.

Lower subscriber fees will also affect Warner Bros. Discovery's role in Venu Sports, a planned joint venture with Disney and the Fox Corp. set to launch this fall.

Venu will carry linear channels such as ESPN, TNT and Fox.

Safety experts are to blame, lawyer for Baldwin says

By MEG JAMES

SANTA FE, N.M. — Alec Baldwin's criminal trial in the fatal "Rust" shooting hinges on a single question: Was it the Hollywood actor's responsibility to do a safety check on his gun?

Baldwin's trial on involuntary manslaughter charges in the 2021 death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins began Wednesday with a prosecutor telling jurors that Baldwin acted negligently because he never bothered to check his gun and frequently went off script during production of the low-budget western near Santa Fe.

Then, during the ill-fated rehearsal on Oct. 21, 2021, Baldwin unexpectedly cocked the hammer of his prop gun and pulled the trigger in a reckless act that caused Hutchins' death, special prosecutor Erlinda O. Johnson alleged.

One of Baldwin's attorneys provided jurors with a dramatically different account.

"The real problem was not that Baldwin was manipulating his gun; that's what actors do, Baldwin attorney Alex Spiro said.

During his opening statement, Spiro suggested the real crime was that a live bullet had found its way on the New Mexico movie set.

The film's safety officer and weapons expert were the ones who failed to per-

form their duties, as did sheriff's deputies who were unable to figure out the source of the live ammunition, Spiro said.

"They didn't find the lethal bullet — they never did," Spiro said. "Looking for that shiny object, they found another shiny object. Instead of trying to find the source of the lethal bullet, they focused on Mr. Baldwin."

Spiro suggested that sheriff's deputies and prosecutors were under considerable pressure because "the media was swirling."

Even though investigators long considered the shooting an accident, state officials started scrutinizing Baldwin's conduct despite knowing he did not bring the bullets onto the set, Spiro said.

Spiro stressed that it was the film's assistant director and the armorer — not the actor — who were tasked with checking the guns. Baldwin's role was to realistically portray his character, the outlaw Harland Rust, Spiro said.

"He is deeply focused in that moment on his character," Spiro said. "He was just acting as he has done for decades. It was the safety experts who let them all down. Alec Baldwin had committed no crime."

Baldwin was indicted in January on one count of involuntary manslaughter. He has pleaded not guilty. His trial is expected to last eight days.



EDDIE MOORE Albuquerque Journal

ALEC BALDWIN, center, with lawyer Luke Nikas on the first day of the "Rust" trial. The actor is accused in the fatal on-set shooting of a cinematographer.

If convicted, he could spend up to 18 months in prison.

"On a movie set, you are allowed to pull the trigger," Spiro said, adding that Baldwin "did not know or have any reason to believe that gun was loaded with a live bullet."

After Spiro finished his opening statement and sat beside Baldwin, the actor put both arms around Spiro and leaned in to whisper something.

The 66-year-old actor-producer arrived at the Santa Fe County courthouse at 8 a.m. with his wife, Hilaria.

His brother Stephen Baldwin sat with Hilaria Baldwin in the second row of the courtroom, behind the defense table.

Famed victims' rights attorney Gloria Allred sat in the first row behind the prosecutors. Allred represents Hutchins' family members who live in Ukraine as well as "Rust" script supervisor Mamie

Mitchell.

The family members and Mitchell have brought negligence lawsuits against Baldwin and the other producers. The producers deny any wrongdoing.

The film's director, Joel Souza, who was injured in the shooting but recovered, is expected to testify.

"The director will tell you that many times the actor would do his own thing," Johnson, the prosecutor, said.

She also noted that members of the camera crew had walked off the "Rust" set — hours before the tragic accident.

"They were concerned over safety breaches," Johnson said.

The 2021 shooting shined a harsh light on New Mexico's vibrant film community.

"We are not a wealthy state and we work hard to bring industry here, and one area that is really starting to thrive is the movie industry," Santa Fe resident Gail Anderson said Tuesday eve-

ning.

The "Rust" shooting "revealed how film sets are managed and how they need to be more tightly managed," Anderson said.

More than 100 reporters and TV camera operators clustered around the courthouse in downtown Santa Fe on Wednesday.

The trial is being livestreamed by Court TV.

Grand jurors in January determined there was sufficient evidence to charge Baldwin for allegedly acting negligently by pointing a loaded gun at Hutchins without first checking the weapon for ammunition.

In March, a different jury found the armorer Hannah Gutierrez guilty of involuntary manslaughter. The judge sentenced her to 18 months in prison.

Assistant director David Halls last year pleaded no contest to negligent use of a deadly weapon. He received a suspended sentence of six months of probation, which he completed last fall.

Kroger to sell 63 markets in California under proposed merger

By SUHAUNA HUSSAIN

Supermarket giant Kroger Co. announced plans to offload more than 60 supermarkets in California as part of its planned merger with Albertsons.

The 63 supermarkets — primarily in Southern California — are among hundreds of stores, distribution centers and plants on a list the companies released on Tuesday identifying which ones it plans to sell to C&S Wholesale Grocers. The sale, however, would occur only if federal regulators approve Kroger's bid to buy its smaller rival Albertsons.

The grocery chains proposed to sell off a package of stores and other facilities to allay regulators' concerns

about the megamerger, upping the number to 579 from 413 in April after the Federal Trade Commission blocked the deal this year.

The sale of hundreds of stores and facilities was valued at \$2.9 billion in April.

The 63 California stores listed consist of 15 Albertsons locations, including two in Huntington Beach; 31 Vons locations, including the store on Fairfax Avenue in Los Angeles, as well as the location on West 3rd Street; 16 Pavilions locations; and one Safeway in the Bay Area.

The companies have started notifying workers at affected locations, Chief Executive Rodney McMullen wrote in a memo to employees Tuesday, Bloomberg reported.

Workers will become em-

ployees of C&S Wholesale Grocers after the transaction closes, McMullen wrote. C&S has committed to transferring pay and health plans and assuming all collective bargaining agreements, he added.

In February, the FTC announced it was suing to block the merger, arguing the deal would obliterate competition, leading to higher prices and lower-quality products for millions of Americans.

The grocers, which announced their \$25-billion merger in October 2022, are sharing the list ahead of a trial expected in August that will determine the fate of their deal.

A coalition of United Food and Commercial Workers union locals in California

has opposed the merger, organizing protests and meetings with grocery company representatives as well as state and federal regulators.

"We remain focused on stopping the proposed mega-merger for the same reasons we have stated since it was first announced over 20 months ago — because we know it would harm workers, it would harm shoppers, it would harm suppliers and communities, and it is illegal," five UFCW locals said in a statement Tuesday.

Kroger and Albertsons say they need the merger to compete with larger, non-unionized rivals Amazon.com, Walmart and Costco. The companies have pledged to invest \$500 million to cut prices and \$1 billion to raise worker wages

and benefits, in addition to \$1.3 billion to improve Albertsons stores.

Kathy Finn, a longtime leader at United Food and Commercial Workers Local 770 in Southern California, said this year that the proposed merger would "impact California as much or more than any other state."

Local 770 represents nearly 30,000 members in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Ventura, San Luis Obispo and Kern counties in the grocery, cannabis, retailing, healthcare and packaging industries.

Other stores listed for sale include 124 markets in Washington state, 101 in Arizona and 91 in Colorado.

Bloomberg contributed to this report.

CBS News president exits role ahead of fiscal cuts

Ingrid Ciprian-Matthews will remain as a senior editorial advisor for network's election coverage.

By STEPHEN BATTAGLIO

Ingrid Ciprian-Matthews is stepping down as president of CBS News ahead of budget cuts expected from the division's new ownership.

Cost reductions at Paramount Global were already planned before the company agreed to merge with David Ellison's entertainment company Skydance Media in an \$8-billion deal announced Sunday.

But larger cuts are now expected with the coming merger, as Skydance executives have said they are looking for \$2 billion in savings.

Ciprian-Matthews is a 30-year veteran of CBS News, where she was named president in August. She hinted at the changes ahead in a note sent Wednesday to her staff.

"We all know our industry and company are going through a transformation and a number of short- and long-term decisions need to be made," her note said.

"I do not want to be disingenuous with any of you about who should drive these decisions. I've always leaned into my integrity and my values and I felt it was important to be transparent at this juncture about my plans."

Ciprian-Matthews will stay with CBS News as a senior editorial advisor for the network's election coverage. After the election, she will leave the company.

No successor has been named for Ciprian-Matthews, who reported to Wendy McMahon, chief executive of CBS News and Stations and CBS Media Ventures.

Ciprian-Matthews is the second major broadcast news president to step down this year. Kim Godwin resigned from ABC News after a rocky three-year tenure. No replacement has been made.

This week, the National Assn. of Hispanic Journalists is inducting Ciprian-Matthews into its Hall of Fame.

An abortion rights battle in Beverly Hills

[Clinic, from A1] Craig put it.

Reproductive rights advocates allege Beverly Hills officials met with Craig's group and allied activists and aggressively pursued their concerns, while entreaties to meet with DuPont's leadership went unanswered for months.

The Times reviewed emails obtained by the reproductive rights groups the Lawyering Project and Beverly Hills for Choice that show one city leader responding to an inquiry about efforts to shut down the clinic within five minutes of receiving it.

"I am looping our City Manager and City Attorney into this email," current Vice Mayor Sharona R. Nazarian wrote to antiabortion activist Tasha Barker. "I am not sure what jurisdiction we as a Council have on a private business entering the City of Beverly Hills but [am open] to learning more."

Less than a month after Barker first met with city officials, landlord firm Douglas Emmett moved to terminate DuPont's lease, ordering management to halt construction on the clinic.

The firm's attorney cc'd the mayor and the city manager of Beverly Hills on the message. It cited the Survivors' early activism as central to the decision, saying: "These graphic threats have already disturbed and caused interference with other tenants' use and enjoyment of their leased premises."

The group's activities in Beverly Hills are the subject of ongoing litigation by the clinic against the landlord and the city's government.

Attorneys for Douglas Emmett did not respond to requests for comment.

For the Survivors, the outcome was a coup. For DuPont and abortion access advocates, it was a dangerous new front in the war on reproductive rights.

Andrea Grossman, one of the founders of Beverly Hills for Choice, said of the city's leaders: "They couldn't meet with these extremists fast enough."

"All it took was about five antiabortion extremists to exert pressure on members of the city council and members of city staff, and before you know it, the lease was rescinded," she said. "It's a stain on the city that it meddled with something so urgent as this."

Dr. Jennefer Russo, the DuPont Clinic's chief medical officer, said she requested to meet with Beverly Hills officials but was rebuffed. The mayor of West Hollywood and a Corona city councilwoman also reached out to their Beverly Hills counterparts on behalf of DuPont, email records show, but to no avail.

"I reached out a number of times before things started escalating," Russo said.

The city denied allegations it had helped scuttle the clinic.



EMMA CRAIG of Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust addresses fellow antiabortion activists last summer outside 8920 Wilshire Blvd. in Beverly Hills, where the specialized DuPont Clinic had been set to open.

"The decision to rescind DuPont Clinic's lease was not made by the City of Beverly Hills," public information manager Lauren Santilana wrote in a statement in response to DuPont's lawsuit against the city.

But the widespread impression that officials thumbed the scale against DuPont — in spite of the state's "abortion sanctuary" status, the county's \$20-million "abortion safe haven" grant fund and the city's public position in support of reproductive freedom — has emboldened extremists.

"This is the first time that a supposedly supportive city has done this," Russo said. "Survivors is saying, 'We triumphed,' and now it's a win for them."

The Survivors agreed. "We were encouraged that activism works," Craig said. "We loved working in Beverly Hills."

A medical miracle and legal gray area

Politically speaking, Beverly Hills is a violet island in a sea of deep indigo. Although Republican candidates routinely raise millions there, they tend to garner just a few thousand votes.

On reproductive rights, the city is slightly more progressive than the county as a whole. In 2022, Beverly Hills and its neighbors in the 36th Congressional District voted almost 80% in favor of Proposition 1, helping enshrine abortion access in California's Constitution.

DuPont would not have been the only abortion provider in Beverly Hills. It would not even have been the only abortion provider at 8920 Wilshire Blvd., where the clinic was set to open last

fall.

But it would have been the only clinic in Southern California offering procedures after 24 weeks, which account for a small fraction of a percent of the 1 million abortions performed nationwide in 2023.

Devastating fetal diagnoses, life-threatening maternal complications or pregnancy among very young patients or in the aftermath of abuse are the most common circumstances surrounding such

'If you could push a clinic like this out of Beverly Hills, you could push it out of anywhere.'

— DR. KIM BADER, associate professor emeritus at USC Keck School of Medicine

late-term abortions, according to Dr. Kim Bader, associate professor emeritus of obstetrics and gynecology at USC Keck School of Medicine.

"My experience with patients who needed late-term abortion were nightmares, absolute nightmares," said Bader, who spoke in support of the DuPont clinic at the Beverly Hills City Council meeting in November. "I get choked up just thinking about it."

Abortion later in pregnancy is very different from first-trimester procedures, which account for 93% of the total and are now mostly induced at home with medication, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Twenty weeks is the point at which most first-time mothers can sense fetal movements, or quickening.

It is also the dividing line between miscarriage and stillbirth.

Just 1% of abortions are performed after this point, nearly all of them between 21 and 24 weeks. Most happen in hospitals such as Cedars-Sinai, about a mile from the Beverly Hills Medical Center.

Survival at or before 24 weeks of gestation is a medical miracle, one frequently touted by hospital PR and picked up by local TV stations. Yet because at least

rights."

Many abortion-protective states — among them Massachusetts, New York and Nevada — ban the procedure at or past 24 weeks. Nine others, plus the District of Columbia, have no gestational restrictions.

California law falls somewhere in the middle, banning abortion after "viability" without specifying a gestational age.

This ambiguity left DuPont vulnerable to claims it planned to violate the law — as the Survivors have repeatedly alleged and the clinic has denied.

"We were 100% going to be compliant ... but the law isn't clear," Russo said.

For the Survivors, this laser focus on a tiny percentage of procedures — roughly 1,000 a year in the U.S. — is less about the law than about optics.

"It's particularly barbaric, and we think this is an 'in' to get people to care about abortion," Craig said. "It's kind of strategic."

'We gotta do something'

As fundamentalist Christians, the Survivors believe life begins at fertilization, and that a 24-hour-old zygote is as alive as a 24-week fetus.

But the activists know that few Californians share that view. In a city where fertility clinics outnumber churches, fewer still would be willing to legislate it.

The Beverly Hills Medical Center "already has an abortion clinic in it, so we know they're OK with abortion," Craig said.

Emails show the activists received confirmation from Beverly Hills police, city gov-

ernment and the building manager that DuPont's lease was rescinded, yet continued to publicly claim it was expected to open for more than two weeks afterward.

When local activists discovered what had happened, it was faith, as much as politics, that pushed them to fight back.

Grossman, of Beverly Hills for Choice, had never heard of DuPont or the Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust when she spotted a story about the clinic in The Times last August. Though she'd long been a staunch supporter of reproductive rights, the issue had felt far away, a crisis for other women in other communities, not a liberal urban enclave known internationally as a destination for world-class medical care.

She immediately called her friend Gay Abrams.

"I said we gotta do something about this," said Abrams, who raised the alarm to her neighbor Heather Fels when they bumped into each other on the street a few days later.

From there, the trio began contacting political organizations around Los Angeles, leading them to Amanda Smith. They nicknamed themselves the "abortion yentas," borrowing the Yiddish word for a busybody or gossip.

For the yentas, the Survivors' name alone is offensive. And they found the antiabortion activists' decision to flood the City Council's public comment period on Yom HaShoah, the Jewish day of mourning for victims of the Nazi genocide, especially galling.

But what troubled them most was that a cadre of fundamentalist Christians had managed to impose their will on one of few municipalities in the U.S. where Christians are not the majority.

About a quarter of Beverly Hills residents are estimated to be Jewish refugees from Iran and their descendants, while Jews like the yentas with roots in Eastern Europe make up a plurality of the remaining population.

They made their initial foray into activism at the City Council meeting last September. But Smith said they were stonewalled until Thanksgiving.

They teamed up with the Lawyering Project, a N.Y.-based nonprofit focused on abortion access, and filed a request under the California Public Records Act that yielded 1,200 pages of city emails.

Since then, the group has pushed aggressively for an independent investigation into the affair, concurrent with a DuPont lawsuit against the city alleging it "colluded and conspired" with the landlord to "induce breach of contract."

The clinic has also filed a claim against Douglas Emmett.

The city and the landlord have denied any wrongdoing in court filings, and the cases remain pending.

"We want accountability," Grossman said. "We're not gonna go away and shut up, because how do four yentas shut up?"

'There have to be consequences'

The yentas call their quest a form of *tikkun olam*, the Jewish spiritual practice of repairing the world.

The Survivors call it a tantrum.

"All these pro-choice women showed up to the City Council, and they're really angry now — but you snooze you lose," Craig said.

Yet she too is keenly aware that the lawsuit could rewrite the rules of engagement just as they'd seemed to tilt in the activists' favor.

"What's unfortunate about these pro-choice activists getting stirred up is, when this happens again in a different community, the city's gonna look at what happened with DuPont and say, 'We don't want to deal with lawsuits,'" Craig said.

That's exactly what the clinic's medical director is hoping for.

"It can't be a precedent — there have to be consequences," Russo said. "If we're not going to be able to provide care, we have to make it possible for others to provide it."

If there's one thing both sides agree on, it's that the stakes are existential.

"If you could push a clinic like this out of Beverly Hills," Bader said, "you could push it out of anywhere."

MARKET ROUNDUP

S&P 500 hits new high amid Wall St. rally

BY STAN CHOE

NEW YORK — Wall Street's blistering rally stretched into a seventh day Wednesday and vaulted the U.S. stock market to more all-time highs.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index jumped 1% and topped the 5,600 level for the first time. The Nasdaq composite also rallied to a seventh straight gain and added 1.2% to its all-time high set a day before. The Dow Jones industrial average, meanwhile, swung higher by 1.1%.

Big technology companies led the way, as has become the norm on Wall Street, and Taiwan Semiconductor's U.S.-listed shares rose 3.5% after it said its revenue climbed nearly 33% in June from a year earlier.

Taiwan Semiconductor makes the chips for Nvidia and others that have been driving the business world's rush into artificial intelligence technology. The promise of big profits in the future from AI has sent Nvidia to breathtaking heights over the last year, and Nvidia rose an additional 2.7% on Wednesday to bring its gain for the year to

Major stock indexes

Index	Close	Daily change	Daily % change	YTD % change
Dow industrials	39,721.36	+429.39	+1.09	+5.39
S&P 500	5,633.91	+56.93	+1.02	+18.12
Nasdaq composite	18,647.45	+218.16	+1.18	+24.22
S&P 400	2,922.47	+35.00	+1.21	+5.07
Russell 2000	2,051.75	+22.28	+1.10	+1.22
EuroStoxx 50	4,958.86	+55.24	+1.13	+9.67
Nikkei (Japan)	41,831.99	+251.82	+0.61	+25.01
Hang Seng (Hong Kong)	17,471.67	-51.56	-0.29	+2.49

Associated Press

172.5%. It was again the strongest single force pushing the S&P 500 upward.

Advanced Micro Devices was another major force behind the stock market's leap; it rose 3.9% after announcing a \$665-million deal to buy Silo AI, a European AI lab.

The frenzy around AI has been a major reason the U.S. stock market has climbed to records despite a slowdown in the economy's growth and a tightening squeeze on lower-income households. So have hopes that inflation is slowing enough for the Federal Reserve to deliver much-sought cuts to interest rates later this year.

Fed Chair Jerome H. Powell returned to Capitol Hill to give testimony about interest rates, where he echoed many of his comments

from a day before. He said he was "not sending any signals" about when cuts to rates could arrive, but he pointed out the downsides of being too late on them.

"We're looking at both sides" of the risks involved in moving its main interest rate, which has been sitting at its highest level in more than two decades, Powell said. Cutting rates too early could allow inflation to pick up, while waiting too long could allow the economy's slowdown to turn into a recession.

Much of Wall Street is expecting the Fed to begin cutting its main interest rate in September, but traders have a long history of being premature in their calls. Powell gave a nod to recent reports that have shown improve-

ment in inflation after a discouraging start of the year, but he said again that the Fed doesn't have enough confidence that inflation is sustainably heading toward its goal of 2%.

"More good data would strengthen our confidence" and clear the way for a cut, Powell said.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury edged down to 4.28% from 4.30% late Tuesday and from 4.70% since April. The move since the spring is a significant one for the bond market and offers support for stock prices.

The two-year Treasury yield, which moves more on expectations for Fed action, held steady at 4.62%, where it was late Tuesday.

A report coming Thursday could cause sharper swings in the bond and stock markets. That's when the U.S. will release the latest monthly update on inflation. Economists expect it to show U.S. consumers paid prices for food, airline tickets and everything else that were 3.1% higher in June than a year earlier. That would be a touch slower than May's 3.3% inflation rate.

Later this week will also bring the unofficial start to the latest earnings reporting season. Delta Air Lines, JP-

Morgan Chase and others will report how much profit they made from April through June, and the hope on Wall Street is for S&P 500 companies to deliver the strongest growth in more than two years.

Smart Global Holdings, a technology company with computing, memory and LED businesses, rose 26.3% after it reported stronger profit and revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

On the losing end of Wall Street was LegalZoom, which fell 25.4%. It said its chief executive, Dan Wernikoff, is leaving the company and resigning from its board. The company also cut its revenue forecast for the full year.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 56.93 points to 5,633.91. The Nasdaq composite rallied 218.16 points to 18,647.45, and the Dow gained 429.39 points to 39,721.36.

In stock markets abroad, Japan's Nikkei 225 rose 0.6% to close at its own record as AI enthusiasm pushed up technology stocks.

Other markets in Asia were mixed and European indexes climbed.

Choe writes for the Associated Press.

OPINION

EDITORIAL

County shows that reform doesn't have to take years

It just takes strong leadership to move it forward, which has been lacking on the L.A. City Council.

LET'S COMPARE HOW the city and county of Los Angeles have handled government reform recently.

In less than a week, county Supervisors Lindsey Horvath and Janice Hahn unveiled a sweeping plan to expand their board to nine members from five, add an independently elected county executive and create a new ethics commission to investigate government misconduct — and the Board of Supervisors agreed to move forward with putting the changes on the November ballot.

In a few months, voters could overhaul L.A. County's notoriously bureaucratic and dysfunctional government and make it more responsive to residents.

Over at Los Angeles City Hall, more than a year and a half has passed since City Council members vowed to make sweeping changes to governance after the latest scandal. But they've put only a couple of reforms on the November ballot, postponing the more important changes, such as expanding the size of the council.

Voters in November will be asked to approve an independent redistricting commission, similar to what the state and county already have, so City Council members can't draw their own districts. They'll also get a watered-down version of ethics reforms that fall short of what experts and academics recommend.

More ambitious changes, including a

proposal to expand the City Council, were punted to a charter reform commission. The commission will make recommendations on the size and powers of future councils, among other governance changes. But the City Council will decide which — if any — proposals make it to the 2026 ballot.

While City Council members dithered over the details, wrung their hands over the ideal number of council districts and seized any uncertainty as an excuse to delay changes that could limit their power, county leaders forged ahead, choosing progress over perfection.

The reason for such different approaches? Strong leadership.

Horvath, who is the newest member of the Board of Supervisors, said from the get-go that she was going to change county government. Her fellow supervisors requested a report on possible reforms a year and a half ago, but the study hasn't even begun. Frustrated with the slow progress, Horvath and Hahn pulled together a package of reforms that have been studied and discussed for decades, many of which previously had been backed by other members of the board.

There wasn't unanimity among the board about the particulars of the proposal and the rush to get it on the November ballot. Supervisors Holly Mitchell and Kathryn Barger abstained from voting Tuesday on the motion to have county lawyers draft the ballot language. But Horvath, Hahn and Supervisor Hilda Solis said they didn't want to miss the rare moment when there is public support for change, and a county charter commission would hammer out specific details later.

At the city, Council President Paul



GARY CORONADO Los Angeles Times

SUPERVISOR Lindsey Horvath, pictured in 2023, sought to reform Los Angeles County government as soon as she joined the board as its newest member in 2022.

Krekorian had led the reform committee through detailed — sometimes excruciatingly so — discussions to try and reach consensus. Even though Krekorian said he wanted to get council expansion on the November ballot, he didn't push his colleagues to be decisive. City voters have to wait for more comprehensive changes.

It's a shame because the interest in reform may wane after this election. Calls for changes to city governance began in October 2022, when a leaked audio recording captured three council members making deplorable and racially divisive comments about their colleagues and constituents as they plotted for political power.

The incident renewed concerns about the city's 2021 botched redistricting process. In response to the public outrage, the council created an ad hoc committee on governance reform and held public hearings across the city last year. A panel of academics funded by philanthropic groups recommended a series of reforms, including ex-

panding the City Council, which hasn't changed in size since 1924, although the city's population has nearly quadrupled.

While the attention has been focused on fixing City Hall, the county has been in dire need of reform too. L.A. County adopted its current charter in 1912, when the population was just 500,000 and before women could vote. It's a government representing 10 million people with no elected executive to run it, just the oversight of five supervisors, each representing a district of about 2 million people.

City and county voters have rejected previous proposals to expand the City Council and the Board of Supervisors. But recent polling suggests voters are ready to support changing the structure of local government, even if it means hiring more politicians.

Kudos to the Board of Supervisors for seizing the moment and moving forward with a major government overhaul proposal — and showing city leaders that while reform is complex, it doesn't have to be hard.

LETTERS



LOUISE DELMOTTE Associated Press

PEOPLE GATHER in Paris on Sunday after the second round of legislative elections in France.

The centrists won over extremism

Re “Leftists are projected to win most seats in France,” July 8 and “Jewish voters in France face unpleasant choice,” July 6

IBEG TO DIFFER on the idea that French President Emmanuel Macron's gamble to call snap elections did not pay off for France. Macron's calculated risk to stave off Marine Le Pen's National Rally surge and coalesce with other political parties created a massive groundswell at the ballot box, keeping National Rally at bay.

The willingness of French politicians, who had initially campaigned for office, to strategically withdraw their bids in order to consolidate the anti-ultra-right vote demonstrates a commendable sacrifice for the greater good of the country. While the arduous task of unifying diverse political factions now begins, it is clear that France has managed to contain the rise of extreme right-wing forces at least for the moment. France had a great example of whom not to follow: the United States.

Vive la France, indeed!

YASMIN NETERVALA-ISELI
Zurich, Switzerland

I lived for one year for my junior year abroad, in Paris, from 1978-1979. It was a time of major antisemitism. Businesses and a synagogue were bombed in the Marais.

I went to a home goods marketplace and when I asked the appliance salesman why one would need a large oven and a small oven, his reply was “one is for big Jews and one is for little Jews.” I was quite shaken by that. And make no mistake, that salesman was not an immigrant or a Muslim. He was a white Frenchman. Members of the Vichy government who were white, Christian Frenchmen were quick to round up the Jewish population and send them to death camps.

Donald Trump, like Le Pen, appeals to white supremacists who are trying to gain power by pitting Jews and Muslims against each other, so it's that much easier to get rid of us all.

ERICA FOX
Studio City

Should Harris be president?

Re “A Harris run would thrust L.A. into national political spotlight,” July 7 and “As Biden flounders, why aren't more sold on Harris?” column, July 6

Remember how President Biden said he wanted

to be a “bridge” to the next generation of Democratic leaders? And how “his” accomplishments are the accomplishments of his administration, of which Kamala Harris is an integral part?

What about switching out Biden and Harris, with her as the presidential nominee and him as the vice presidential nominee? He can be the elder statesman, available to lend the benefit of his experience. She can bring her crisp prosecutorial logic and speaking skills to the task of skewering Trump's record and statements.

While Harris may not be the ideal new fantasy candidate many Democrats

would like, keeping Biden on the ticket, but in a less demanding capacity, might be a good compromise between Democrats wanting change and those wanting the status quo, keeping everyone in the fold for November.

This also allows Harris to use the money the Biden-Harris campaign has raised without issues, and would allow Biden to step down from the rigors of the top spot and seek medical care for his health.

Medical issues do not benefit from being ignored or untreated for four months of intense campaign activity.

Maybe Jill Biden would be persuaded by the idea that getting treatment now

is critical to President Biden's future health and continued quality of life.

LINDA FALCAO
Baltimore

::

Lorraine Ali's article concludes that Vice President Harris is not a favored candidate to replace Biden should he resign or not run again.

Ali attributes this lack of enthusiasm to the fact Harris “faces a higher bar due to her gender and race.” The article, however, fails to consider that Harris' standing as a replacement candidate could instead be limited by her less than noteworthy performance as vice president.

Harris was tasked with leading immigration reform without anything to show for her efforts and let the administration suffer the consequences.

Likewise, she was to push for new rules on artificial intelligence and came up empty once again. Not everything is about race and gender.

ROBERTO ACKERMANN
Dallas

::

The very fact that many harbor doubts as to whether a seasoned, articulate, female former prosecutor (Kamala Harris) can defeat a corrupt, lie-generating, insurrectionist male felon (Donald Trump) speaks to just how far our society has to go in bringing about equality between the sexes.

WILLIAM P. BEKKALA
West Hollywood

::

Joe Biden has been a stellar president.

In 2020 he saved this country from the scourge of COVID-19, as well as from the chaos and disaster of another Trump presidency. His legislative record is phenomenal. He has much to be proud of.

But President Biden is not the same leader today that he was in 2020. Time has taken a toll and voters have noticed, with alarm.

Although Joe and his close allies insist that he is the only candidate who can beat Trump, many Democratic voters disagree. True-blue Democrats are abandoning Biden in droves,

including deep-pocket donors.

The time has come to pass the torch. The future of the country must take precedence over personal pride.

President Biden can proudly point to his accomplishments and rest on his laurels. If he stays in the race and Trump wins, which is increasingly likely, what happens to that legacy?

Kamala Harris is President Biden's handpicked successor. She is qualified. She is competent. She can take on Trump, and she can win.

For the sake of our country and our democracy, President Biden needs to step aside.

VICTORIA ANG
Pasadena

Restore poetry to baseball

Re “Make baseball beautiful again,” Opinion, July 5

Rubén Martínez is off base with his argument to “make baseball beautiful again.”

Baseball has steadily been losing its fan base and importance in the minds of the next generation. There are two clear changes fans want to see, according to MLB's executive vice president of baseball operations, Morgan Sword: “A crisper, shorter game and more action.”

An article quoting Sword stated that “many of the analytic efficiencies that were helping teams win games were the very factors sapping the sport of much of its charm.”

That is right on! I, as a baseball fan, am tired of the umpires impacting the game with their missed calls.

MLB is the only major sports league where the umpires being right most of the time is acceptable.

The technology is there to make it right 100% of the time.

DENNIS PARKS
Dana Point

HOW TO WRITE TO US

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Los Angeles Times
FOUNDED DECEMBER 4, 1881
A California Times Publication

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OP-ED

Police too hesitant to use tools like Tasers

By Greg Meyer

RECENT REPORTING has highlighted the prevalence of shootings by police of people wielding knives and other edged weapons. These cases, often involving individuals in crisis, show two deadly problems: There are limits to what “de-escalation” can accomplish. And officers too often hesitate to use nonlethal force, allowing standoffs to spiral out of control.

Across the country in recent years, officers often seem reluctant to use legitimate force to end a standoff incident when verbal attempts fail to inspire the subject to give up. This hesitation to use even nonlethal weapons — in situations that clearly call for them — often leads to a police shooting, because at some point as de-escalation efforts drag on fruitlessly, suspects may suddenly attack.

People outside law enforcement sometimes have the impression that if only officers would consistently try to de-escalate standoffs with disturbed individuals, shootings could always be avoided — as though de-escalation were a miracle cure. But there is no miracle cure.

To be sure, de-escalation is a crucial tool for police officers. It is one of the first things I learned as a rookie cop in 1976: Talk instead of fight, if the situation allows the choice. The hope in engaging the resisting subject in effective communications is to lower the intensity of the incident and persuade him or her to submit. It works when it works (which is the norm), and it doesn't work when it doesn't.

This is where the deadly mistake often lies: recognizing that de-escalation is not working, but remaining reluctant to use nonlethal force because of fear of the administrative, legal and media aftermath.

One sees the pattern when police are in a standoff with someone who is armed with a knife. The norm would be for officers to keep their distance, to talk to the individual and listen, to keep communication going as an effort to resolve the situation peacefully. Instead, with the best of intentions, officers “talk the person to death.” When police fail to recognize that talk isn't working, then officers decline to use nonlethal means such as Tasers to subdue an armed individual, the result often goes the other way: The individual grows more agitated the longer the standoff drags on and charges with the knife at officers or bystanders. This is when shootings occur.

If only officers had abandoned de-escalation on their own terms instead of waiting for the suspect to end it by attacking. If only the officers had used a Taser or other nonlethal option and saved a life — not to mention avoided an expensive shooting investigation and litigation — instead of “talking the person to death.”

As a longtime consultant on police use of force, I believe that officers should use talk in most situations but must assess each case on its own merits for how long they will talk without acting. It seems likely to me that officers have become gun shy because so many colleagues have faced backlash after shootings, but no one's interest is served by extending this attitude to nonlethal force.

Don't let an overemphasis on de-escalation put civilians' and officers' lives at risk.

Don't hesitate to use tools such as Tasers and other force options when appropriate.

Fewer and less severe injuries from nonlethal weapons are preferable to avoidable shootings.

A hope that all police standoffs could end with talk is unrealistic. But can most end with talk or nonlethal means? Absolutely — and in fact most standoffs already do. The exceptions that become shootings are the cases that make the headlines. We can make those exceptions more rare with better policy and training and a cultural shift that encourages use of nonlethal weapons at the right moments.

The public and the media have a role to play. Just as public pressure and equipping officers with a variety of nonlethal weapons have contributed to reducing the frequency of police shootings compared with decades ago, public support can make a difference for officers and departments that use lower levels of force — before a standoff situation becomes a shooting.

GREG MEYER, an expert on police use of force, is a retired Los Angeles Police Department captain who conducted the department's nonlethal weapons research, testing and training in 1979-80.



JACQUELYN MARTIN Associated Press

PRESIDENT BIDEN at the NATO summit on Wednesday, still facing calls to leave the campaign after his debate fiasco.

Step aside, Joe. It's time

JACKIE CALMES



IF JOE BIDEN is the Democratic nominee this fall against Donald Trump, my vote for him would be the easiest I've ever cast.

And yet, I've now joined those who believe Biden should end his bid for reelection. I wish he'd take a well-deserved bow, and help unite his party at its convention next month around a younger, more vibrant nominee who stands a better chance not only of beating Trump but also of serving out a four-year term.

I'd like to be able to say, as some others do, that it's become *absolutely* clear to me that the enfeebled president must pass the torch. I can't. I remain torn. Biden has earned reelection by his formidable record and his restoration of normalcy and decency post-Trump. Also, the risks inherent in the unprecedented, uncharted process of Democrats settling on an alternative ticket are real: The prospect of their disarray and division — all to Trump's advantage — kept me from jumping just after Biden's distressing debate performance.

Two weeks later, however, the greater risk seems to be that Biden stays in the race, loses and returns the keys to the Oval Office to a man who should never darken its door again. “God help us,” says retired Gen. John F. Kelly of that possibility, a sentiment echoed by so many former Trump aides. Also, a Republican rout could cost Democrats control of the House and Senate.

That's not the legacy Biden wants. The president's brain freezes, bumbling responses and vacant, mouth-agape visage at the June 27 debate were bad enough, so bad as to overshadow the ever-unhinged Trump's fusillade of lies. But what's been maddening, and what made up my mind against Biden's candidacy, is this: his and his staff's utter failure since then to fully acknowledge the crisis on their hands — this wasn't “one bad night” — and to have Biden act accordingly.

Post-debate, we should have seen daily unscripted appearances at the White House and on the campaign trail, not sporadic sightings. A lengthy press conference. Immediate phone calls to leaders and allies in Congress and state capitals. And, not least, a full panel of neurological tests, after which

The president should take a bow and unite his party around a nominee who stands a better chance of beating Trump.

the president's doctors would go before cameras to describe the results and — we hope — reassure us that all's as well as can be expected for an 81-year-old man with the most stressful job on Earth.

Biden and his campaign on Monday finally started executing that sort of salvage operation, with some success, but only after some elected Democrats had gone public with calls for the president to forfeit the nomination. The late-breaking Biden blitz included his letter to Democrats in Congress (“Any weakening of resolve or lack of clarity about the task ahead only helps Trump and hurts us”); his call in to the friendly hosts during MSNBC's “Morning Joe” show (“I am not going anywhere”); meetings with the House's Black, Hispanic and progressive caucuses; a conference call with hundreds of donors and announcements of added campaign stops.

But Biden has nixed a neurological examination: “No one said I had to,” he countered when ABC News' George Stephanopoulos asked on Friday whether he'd had or would have such an exam. “Look, I have a cognitive test every single day. ... Not only am I campaigning, but I'm running the world.”

Just as the Biden brouhaha intensified this week with Congress' return from a summer break, world leaders also came to Washington for a NATO summit marking the alliance's 75th anniversary. The dignitaries' already high anxiety about Trump's possible return has ratcheted up, along with efforts to “Trump-proof” the organization against threats he could pose to it or to its support for Ukraine against Russia's war. (Among the debate moments eclipsed by Biden's meltdown was Trump's obnoxious response when Biden asked whether he'd pull the U.S. out of NATO: a dismissive shrug.)

Biden may have stanching the bleeding in

Congress, for now. Democrats' scattered calls to step aside were outnumbered by statements of renewed support early in the week. Yet I'm not persuaded because I completely agree with Biden: Democracy is at stake. Where we disagree is on whether he can preserve it by defeating Trump.

The strategists who helped elect the prior two Democratic presidents — Bill Clinton's guru James Carville and Barack Obama's David Axelrod — no longer think Biden can win. Carville, in the New York Times on Monday, proposed a round of town halls for alternative candidates before the convention starts Aug. 19. (First, however, Biden would have to drop out, which is just one reason Carville's hoped-for caper is unrealistic.) Axelrod, in a CNN column Friday that cited post-debate polls, concluded that Biden is “headed for a landslide defeat to a lawless and unpopular former president.”

Axelrod's description of Trump pinpoints the tragic irony of the Biden saga. A good man and a good president is being nudged off the stage even as the Republican Party next week will make official its nomination of a bad man who was the nation's worst president, by historians' rankings. Or, as Jimmy Kimmel put it (because he can find humor where I can't): “The media has spent almost two weeks calling on a candidate to drop out of the race, and somehow it's not the convicted felon.” (Who's also an adjudicated sexual abuser and financial fraudster.)

I'm saddened to become one of Biden's nudges, but this election is bigger than Biden. If he'd step aside, Democrats could rally 'round Vice President Kamala Harris, the other half of the ticket that Democratic primary voters chose, and the one alternative to Biden who could tap the Biden-Harris war chest. Convention delegates could pick her running mate; my choice would be Kentucky's impressive two-term Gov. Andy Beshear.

Things could get messy, but I believe Democrats would unite given the stakes. And could they win? Polling of hypothetical races is a crapshoot. But a new, younger ticket drawing from Democrats' deep bench could inject excitement into a match-up that's left half the voters unhappy with their choices.

Of course if Biden stays in, I'll vote for him — bracing for the worst, hoping for the best: four more years.

@jackiecalmes

Did the Supreme Court doom Trump's conviction?

HARRY LITMAN

IT WAS ONLY HOURS after the Supreme Court issued its staggering term-ending opinion on presidential immunity when Donald Trump invoked it in an attempt to set aside his criminal conviction in New York.

On the surface, the effort would seem ill-fated and even brazen. The opinion made a top-line distinction between “official actions” — which are either immune or presumed immune from criminal prosecution — and “unofficial actions,” which are not. And it's hard to imagine more prototypically unofficial actions than those of which Trump was convicted in the New York case. While still running for president, Trump devised a scheme to suppress stories of his alleged trysts — in particular with the adult film actor Stormy Daniels — and falsified business records to further the cover-up.

Most of the critical conduct took place before Trump was in office, the exception being the payments to his fixer, Michael Cohen, that generated the false paperwork. And the reimbursement of Cohen from a personal bank account was patently unofficial conduct even though it coincided with Trump's presidency.

So Judge Juan M. Merchan, who presided over the trial, might be expected to make quick work of Trump's effort to shoehorn the conviction into the sphere of “official action” for which the court prescribed immunity.

In fact, however, the court's opinion is strewn with mines and sinkholes that Trump might be able to use to gain a new trial or at least render his conviction provisional for an extended period. These facets of the opinion are part and parcel of its enormous scope

and overreach, all to protect a party of exactly one: the only president ever to be charged with a crime.

The court's revolutionary holding places the president largely outside the reach of criminal law, but the conservative majority wasn't content to stop there. Its expansive guidance “for the ages,” as Justice Neil M. Gorsuch put it at oral argument, dictates that a jury may not even consider a president's official acts as evidence to prove a crime involving unofficial conduct.

The court's reasoning here is particularly threadbare, simply asserting that allowing evidence of official actions would undo the protections of immunity, which the conservative majority considers necessary to ensure a nimble and vigorous presidency. Yet it makes little sense to suggest that a president would be constrained by the prospect that a jury might one day hear about their official actions. Most official actions are public anyway, and those that aren't can be protected by executive privilege and other means when there is a particular need to do so.

This is where Justice Amy Barrett parted with her fellow conservatives, noting that “the Constitution does not require blinding juries to the circumstances surrounding conduct for which Presidents can be held liable.”

In the context of Trump's motion to set aside his New York conviction, a fair-minded court should have little trouble concluding that the conduct at issue was unofficial and therefore not subject even to the generous immunity protections prescribed by the justices. However, some of the evidence presented at trial at least arguably concerned official conduct, particularly under the Supreme Court's wide-ranging, categor-

ical definition of the term.

Most notably, the jury heard testimony from Hope Hicks about a conversation she had with Trump in 2018, when she was the White House communications director, about a report on Cohen's hush money payments to Daniels and its public opinion repercussions. Prosecutors described Hicks' testimony, which ended with her breaking down in tears, as “devastating.”

So was Trump's conversation with Hicks in the White House “official conduct” that, under the immunity opinion, never should have been presented to the jury? And if so, do the convictions have to be set aside?

Those questions are far from straightforward. The answers depend not only on how the Hicks conversation is characterized but also on a thicket of procedural issues. Those include whether Trump may have waived the issue, whether any waiver applies under the Supreme Court's holding and whether any error in allowing the testimony could be deemed harmless given the strength of the rest of the evidence.

Trump's conviction may well survive the Supreme Court ruling, but getting to that point won't be simple. Moreover, Merchan's ruling is likely to be appealed to higher courts in New York and eventually the U.S. Supreme Court. That prospect could well temper the analysis of lower courts that now understand the breadth and zeal of the justices' determination to shield Trump from accountability.

It appears as if the Supreme Court has dealt Trump not just a get-out-of-jail-free card but a whole deck of them, allowing him to contest and delay multiple facets of the nearly 100 criminal counts against him. If it turns out that he can use it to his advantage in New York, where he stands already convicted of manifestly personal conduct, it's hard to imagine a case where he can't.

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

An effort to block off Wilshire Boulevard

[MacArthur, from A1] more bicycle paths and room for pedestrians on roads. “I love it. It’s probably the boldest closure of a major arterial in Los Angeles I’ve ever seen.”

The \$2.5-million effort in MacArthur Park is mostly covered by a federal grant. It’s part of a larger campaign to redress the harm caused by building roads that fractured communities, often cutting through low-income or already segregated areas. Several projects in the county received funding, including \$3.59 million for a park over the 101 Freeway.

The changes come as the nation rethinks its dependency on cars.

With the streets devoid of cars during the pandemic, San Francisco and other cities began to shut down roadways — and some of the experiments have stuck. A long boulevard through Golden Gate Park remains mostly car-free.

The efforts have energized activists like Schneider who want to reclaim space from cars, which have defined cityscapes for generations and are among the largest contributors of greenhouse gases.

Why not go further, he asks, and close even larger portions of major arteries?

But MacArthur Park’s issues won’t be solved solely by eliminating a stretch of roadway. The area represents both the city’s promise and its most difficult challenges.

As Hernandez made the announcement Tuesday, a disheveled man sat under the shade of a nearby tree. Several others, some without shoes, were gathered by a nearby bathroom where a weathered sign warned of regular LAPD patrols.

The landmark park sits in the heart of Westlake, an immigrant hub where residents live in some of the country’s most crowded conditions. On the east end, drug users sleep on the grass while dealers mix with the crowd around the periphery. Overdoses are regular occurrences.

Across the street, ven-



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

SOME NEARBY residents say drug use and homelessness — not Wilshire Boulevard — are what prevent them from coming to the park.

dors hawk tacos and trinkets, and families with small children navigate the crowded sidewalk.

The proposal would expand the park by two football fields, bringing shady trees and fields of green space. But those who live in the tall, aging apartments nearby say Wilshire Boulevard doesn’t prevent them from coming to the park — it’s the drug use and homelessness.

Some residents said they like the convenience of the road, which is one of the most widely used bus transit routes in the city.

“It’s very uncomfortable to come here,” Cristina Chavez, 43, said as she watched her 12- and 15-year-old boys sitting on a swing set. She explained that her

sons are on summer vacation, but she won’t let them go to the park alone. “It’s dangerous,” she said.

Shortly before a phalanx of well-dressed city workers descended on the park for the news conference, a city cleanup team was mopping trash and debris on the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Alvarado Street, where it is not unusual to see tarp tents covering the sidewalk, and drug users slipping in and out.

“MacArthur Park is the overdose epicenter of the city of Los Angeles. And it’s something that we cannot turn away from,” Hernandez said. “This is a multilayered approach that we’re taking, to make it a place where ... it’s like, ‘Oh, yeah, I want to go to that area.’ Because

right now, this is not that.”

The council office secured \$3 million from the city’s opioid settlement fund to build what’s dubbed a “respite center” within half a mile of the park. It will be a space for service providers to offer those without a home referrals to primary healthcare and substance use treatment, wound care, hygiene kits and restrooms and access to naloxone, the opioid overdose drug.

The effort would dovetail with the finalization of the road closure study, which Laura Rubio-Cornejo, general manager of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, said would prepare the city to “reclaim a section of the roadway for the people.”

Wilshire Boulevard was

the precursor to L.A.’s highways — congestion nightmares. In the 1920s, it was so packed with traffic, city planners introduced traffic circles and then signals. It was the city’s first street to be striped in 1930. In 1934, a road that sliced through the park opened. It was touted as “California’s most famous thoroughfare,” named after Henry Gaylord Wilshire, who gifted the land — then surrounded by a wealthy enclave — to the city.

The Times noted it was the “successful completion of an uninterrupted boulevard from Los Angeles to the sea.”

“Almost 90 years ago, a decision was made to split this park in two, to prioritize the movement of cars, effectively disregarding the con-

nectedness of a community. It was done without regard for the people who lived and worked in this area,” Rubio-Cornejo said. “And that decision has forever altered the character of this neighborhood and has affected everything from safety to air quality for this community.”

Kevin Roderick, author of “Wilshire Boulevard: The Grand Concourse of Los Angeles,” said history shows that whatever happens, the returning of the park to its original space will never make everyone happy.

“I imagine there will be some winners, people will have more park space, but there will be some losers too,” he said. “That’s anyone who has to deal with traffic on the other streets, because this is a big one.”

Findings of California Guard leader’s misconduct nixed

[Guard, from A1] seriously compromised Col. Nemeth’s character or standing as an officer.”

Among those outraged by the Pentagon’s move was Maj. Gen. Matthew Beevers, who succeeded Baldwin as head of the California Guard in 2022.

“Quite frankly, it is perplexing to comprehend how the Air Force IG summarily non-concurs with all four substantiated allegations, especially given the lack of any new evidence,” Beevers wrote in a memo to Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David W. Allvin, which The Times obtained under the California Public Records Act.

“This superficial dismissal of this substantiated allegation defies the basic precepts of good order in discipline in a military command while establishing a new, disturbing precedent.”

Beevers, who wrote the memo in response to The Times’ queries, said the “flimsy logic” used by the Air Force inspector general to override the findings of the California investigation compromised his efforts to reform an organization that was reeling from scandals involving its senior leaders.

The latter included a general fired for having subordinates perform personal tasks, similar to allegations against Nemeth.

“When the Air Force IG neglects and/or intentionally refuses to uphold the established ethical standard, as has been clearly accomplished in this case, my ability to effect positive, meaningful change to good order and discipline is undermined,” Beevers wrote.

Loh retired last month. He declined to comment, and Nemeth did not respond to interview requests from The Times. The U.S. Senate in May confirmed a nomination of Nemeth to brigadier general, but the National Guard did not respond to queries of whether her promotion has been finalized.

At the time of her nomination, Nemeth was serving as the Air National Guard advisor to the commander, Air Mobility Command, at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, according to the De-

fense Department.

Ann Stefanek, a secretary of the Air Force spokesman, said that Loh’s phone call had no bearing on Davis’ decision to reverse the findings against Nemeth and that he didn’t even learn of the call until much later.

“That was not part of their calculus at all,” she said.

Davis said in a letter to Beevers that the evidence in the California investigation did not support the allegations against Nemeth and, because the case had been open for more than two years, “finalizing the investigation was the proper course of action.”

The 19,000-member California National Guard serves a dual state-and-federal mission that includes responding to earthquakes, wildfires and other emergencies in the state under the direction of the governor as well as, when activated by the Pentagon, aiding U.S. armed forces in military operations overseas. The National Guard Bureau has an administrative role, overseeing staffing, training and equipment needs for the Guards.

In recent years, a series of embarrassing episodes involving Guard leaders have fueled a perception that high-ranking officers who break the rules are protected from punishment.

They included a top general who received only a letter of admonishment after having underlings perform personal errands for him, take his mother shopping and complete a part of his cybersecurity training. After The Times reported on the matter, and following a second investigation, Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Magram was ousted from his job.

Magram, once director of the Guard’s air staff, was the fifth general to resign, retire or be fired after Times investigations since 2019.

In another case, Brig. Gen. David Hawkins received a written reprimand after an internal inquiry found that he made anti-semitic and homophobic slurs, including that Jews are unrepentant sinners and

that gay marriage is a reason terrorists attack the United States. He resigned.

Dwight Stirling, a former judge advocate for the California Guard, said it was improper for Loh to disregard the chain of command in the Nemeth case and interfere with a state investigation.

“It’s the attempt to short-circuit the proper ongoings of investigations. It’s the attempt to cover up misconduct,” he said. “This senior federal official had picked this officer and didn’t want the misconduct that she engaged in to derail her career. Well, you’re not supposed to do that as a senior manager. You’re supposed to respect the investigation.”

The saga at the 146th Airlift Wing at Channel Islands, a unit nicknamed the Hollywood Guard because of its proximity to the film industry when it was previously based in Van Nuys, began after Nemeth took the helm in a June 2020 ceremony. Nemeth, a pilot who was new to the Guard, was saluted by the organization as California’s first female wing commander.

The celebration was short-lived.

Staffing for the firefighting program — made up of a team of highly skilled pilots who fly C-130J tankers over backcountry blazes — dropped to critical levels. Most pilots work at the wing part time and hold outside jobs with airlines, and firefighting missions are largely voluntary. Some pilots felt that Nemeth was not prioritizing training for the dangerous assignment, according to the California inspector general report reviewed by The Times.

The commander of the 15th Airlift Squadron, which is part of the 146th wing, quit his post in July 2021, fielding daily complaints from pilots about wing leadership, the report said.

“Guys were coming to me just livid and saying they’re not gonna fly ... they’re not gonna volunteer for any more trips ‘cause as long as, you know, if leadership doesn’t care about them, then why should they care

about the place,” he said, according to a transcript of his interview.

Another firefighting pilot, whose name was redacted in the report, shared a similar sentiment.

“It was very apparent that [the program] was not being given the attention that it deserved and not because it’s a glamour mission but because it ... inherently has risks that need to be mitigated,” the pilot said.

At one point, wing leaders discussed forcing the pilots to participate in the grueling missions because there weren’t enough volunteers, which one said contributed to overall burnout, the report stated. And Nemeth did not inform higher-ups in the Guard that the staffing shortages had become severe, according to the inspector general report.

“The recurring perception of Col. Nemeth being more concerned with her ‘report card’ than the morale and welfare of her airmen, is lent credence by this omission to senior leadership,” the report said.

According to the report, Nemeth said she felt she was at a disadvantage because pilots were not supportive of female officers.

But the report identified other alleged lapses in judgment.

When Nemeth’s second-in-command, Col. Bill Green, was arrested in March 2021 on suspicion of drunk driving after crashing into an electrical pole, Nemeth fought to keep him in his position and planned to put him in charge when she had to travel. He was grounded, but allowed to start flying firefighting missions again two months after his arrest. Investigators concluded that Nemeth’s decision further eroded morale.

Nemeth was also accused of having subordinates care for her Dalmatian at work, which investigators found disrupted operations and distracted people from doing their jobs.

In one incident, the dog urinated on the carpet during a meeting and a flight surgeon left to get supplies to clean it up, according to

Beever’s memo and the investigative report.

In another, government funds were used to buy expensive pet cleaning supplies, including a carpet cleaner machine, and two Dyson fans. Others on the base took notice and brought their own pets to work, the report said.

Dogs aren’t allowed on the property except for official purposes, a rule other senior officers struggled to enforce, the report said.

“It’s tough to enforce when the boss brings her dog to work,” one operations commander told investigators, the report said. The commander’s name was redacted.

During the investigation, the report stated, Nemeth said that she wasn’t aware of the rule and that her puppy made people “smile and laugh when it was a horrible time.”

In his voicemail message, Loh seemed to suggest that the complaints about her could be viewed as reflecting a bias against female commanders.

“I guess she went in there and did some cleanup work and now a bunch of IG complaints,” Loh said. “This is about the third one in Guard Nation where there’s allegations of toxic climate by females and of course that’s getting the highest scrutiny.... Gimme a call back or if not, just please take a look at this case.”

The inspector general who was the principal investigator, Col. Shawna Pavey, declined to comment. The attorney who worked on the inquiry is also a woman, Charmaine Betty-Singleton. She did not respond to interview requests.

In an email to The Times, a California Guard spokesman, Lt. Col. Brandon Hill, dismissed the suggestion that sexism played a role in the case.

“In this matter, the overwhelming amount of evidence to the contrary stands on its own,” Hill wrote. He said Pavey has an “impeccable record” and has never had a case overturned during her 10 years as an inspector general.

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Board is split on adding county leaders

Two supervisors criticize proposal to expand their ranks, create executive post.

By REBECCA ELLIS

A plan to reshape Los Angeles County government inched closer to the November ballot Tuesday, despite concerns from a minority of supervisors that the overhaul was rushed and haphazard.

In an unusually testy meeting, the supervisors voted 3 to 0 to direct county lawyers to draft an amendment to the county charter that would nearly double the size of the five-member Board of Supervisors and create an elected position to oversee day-to-day operations.

Supervisors Kathryn Barger and Holly Mitchell, who critiqued parts of the plan throughout the meeting, abstained from voting.

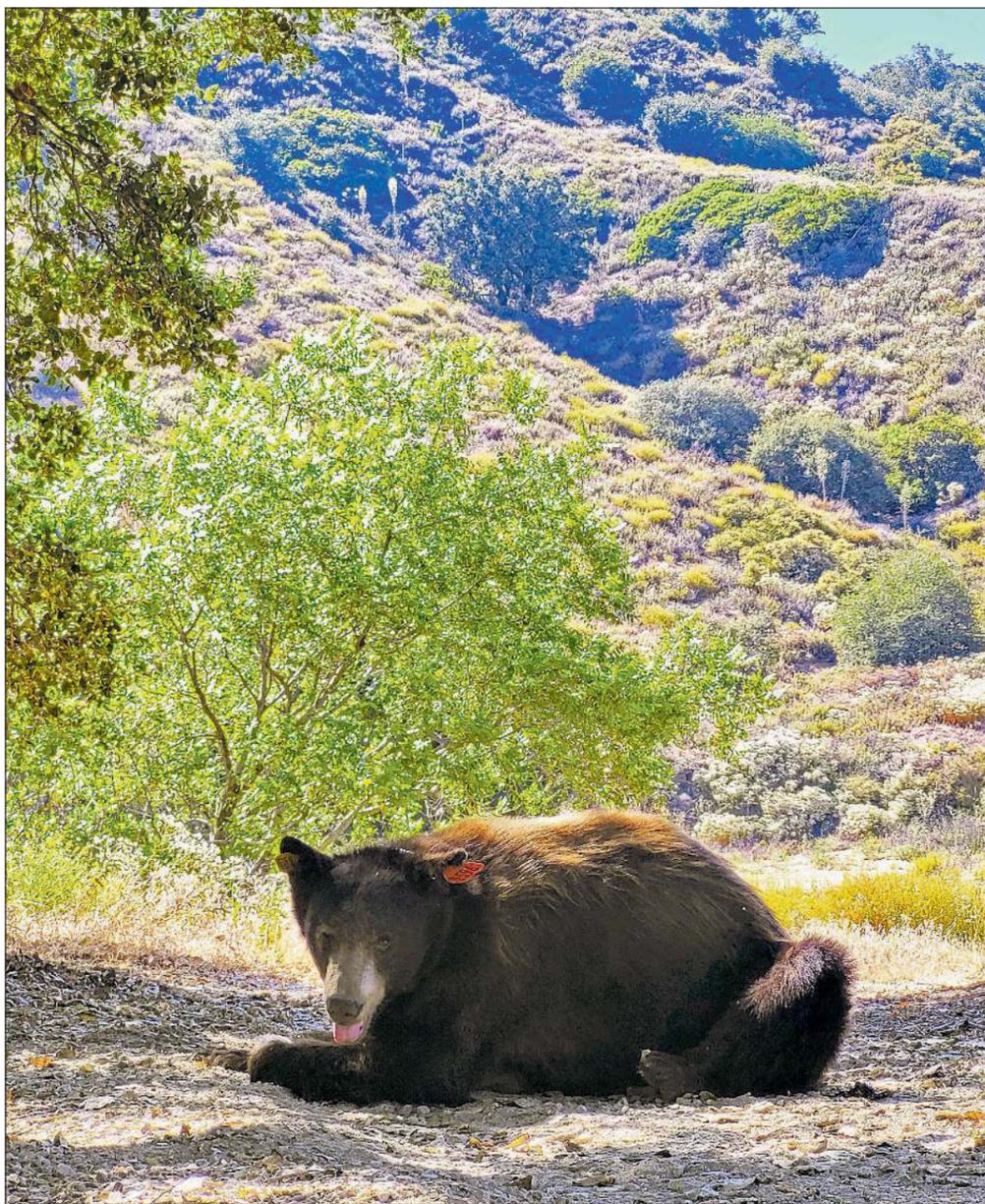
Supervisor Hilda Solis cast the decisive yes vote, joining the plan's authors, Supervisors Lindsey Horvath and Janice Hahn, in moving it forward. Horvath and Hahn have said their aim is to make the government structure — fundamentally unchanged for over a century — more responsive to the county's 10 million residents.

Each of the five supervisors oversees a district of about 2 million people. In 1912, when voters first adopted a charter, the ratio was one supervisor for every 50,000 people.

"I've always been of the opinion that we do need to have more representation," Solis said.

Under the proposed charter amendment, the number of supervisors would increase to nine. The county chief executive, who oversees the budget and manages daily operations, would be elected by voters rather than appointed by the board. And the county would create an independent

[See Supervisors, B5]



California Department of Fish and Wildlife

YELLOW 2291 was outfitted with a GPS collar in May and is being tracked by state wildlife officials.

Paving the way for wildlife?

A female bear's wanderlust could help researchers determine where future animal crossings should be situated in the Southland

By SANDRA McDONALD

A bear taking the scenic route around Southern California may help researchers learn how wild animals cross freeways to get from one habitat to the next — and how they might be kept out of your backyard.

Known to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as Yellow 2291, the adult female black bear wandered into a trap near Claremont on May 31. There, researchers

gave her a GPS tracking collar and took her north into the mountains of the Angeles National Forest.

Last week, the bear was removed from a Chatsworth tree and taken back to the forest, only to be spotted over the weekend in a Sylmar neighborhood.

"This female bear's just saying, 'Yeah, I'm just gonna take a little trip across Southern California,'" said Jessica West, a regional wildlife conflict specialist at the state Department of Fish and Wildlife who

monitors Yellow 2291 and other tagged bears.

Since her initial trapping, Yellow 2291 took a long trek from the 210 Freeway corridor into the Malibu area. From the 210 corridor, she probably used an underpass or other unknown crossing at the Newhall Pass interchange of the 5 Freeway and Highway 14. She cut across the 118 Freeway into the Santa Monica Mountains and spent time near Pacific Coast Highway in the Malibu

[See Bear, B4]

DWP customer advocate predicts a rate rise

Office urges delay of L.A. 2035 green goals, calls expected 7.7% hike 'not reasonable.'

By DAKOTA SMITH

Los Angeles residents and businesses will face higher electric bills as the Department of Water and Power transitions to 100% clean energy, according to a report by the city's Office of Public Accountability.

Monthly bills could rise 7.7% annually in the coming years if the city sticks to its goal of 100% clean energy by 2035, according to the report, which deems the cost "not reasonable" for customers and recommends delaying the 2035 benchmark.

The median monthly electric bill for apartments and homes is \$65.81, according to the DWP. Increases in sewer fees, which appear on the same bill, have also been proposed by the city.

Fred Pickel, the ratepayer advocate for the Office of Public Accountability, an independent city department that oversees DWP rates, expressed concern that in the rush to meet the 2035 goal, the DWP could commit to outdated technology, which could be more costly in the long run.

One example is the DWP's adoption of battery storage, which could help retain solar power. That technology is expected to change in the coming decade.

The DWP is seeking to phase out coal and gas and boost wind, solar and geothermal power, as well as possibly green hydrogen, and get to 100% clean energy by 2035.

The 2035 goal, part of an effort to reduce the planet-heating carbon emissions that result in deadly heat waves and intense wildfires, among other consequences, was first announced by then-Mayor Eric Garcetti in 2021.

The state of California has a similar mandate, but with a deadline of 2045.

DWP bills are expected to go up because of new systems to distribute the clean energy and new technology such as "smart" thermostats, as well as staffing increases, according to the Office of Public Accountability.

Pickel acknowledged that his report relies on information from the DWP's 2022 blueprint for the city energy supply for the next few decades.

The 2024 version of that plan will be released later this year, likely altering the utility's cost projections.

The Office of Public Accountability report also doesn't account for the bill

[See DWP, B2]



GARY CORONADO Los Angeles Times
CAROL FOLT will serve beyond the five years in her last contract, but the new terms are unclear.

USC grants extension to president's contract

Folt endures criticism over her priorities and handling of protests backing Palestinians.

By TERESA WATANABE AND RYAN KARTJE

USC President Carol Folt, who calmed the scandal-rocked university, boosted athletics and expanded student access —

but also drew heavy criticism for her handling of pro-Palestinian protests this spring — has received an extension to her five-year contract, the university confirmed Tuesday.

USC would not disclose the terms of the contract extension, including its length or any amendments. It was unclear whether it was a short-term extension to allow the Board of Trustees to conduct a thorough review on whether to offer Folt a

longer-term contract.

"President Folt's contract remains in full force," a university statement said Tuesday. "Like all university officers, the president is subject to annual review and reappointment, which occurred this last spring. The Board remains pleased with the university's strong direction under President Folt's leadership."

Folt, 72, took the helm on July 1, 2019, with a contract that compensated her at the

same level as former President Max Nikias, according to Rick Caruso, USC board chair at the time. He said then that he expected Folt to serve for at least a decade.

Folt was hired with an overriding mandate to restore trust in the university, which had been rocked by one scandal after another. She replaced key administrators, brokered a \$1-billion settlement with alumnae victimized by a sexually

[See Folt, B4]

As grasshopper population grows, farmers take a big hit

By CINDY CARCAMO

When a torrent of grasshoppers devoured more than 100,000 acres of grass pastures and rangeland three years ago in the state's northeast, Mike McKoen felt bad for the cattle ranchers who took a financial hit. But the third-generation farmer didn't worry much about his family farm, where they grow crops such as onions, potatoes and wheat.

"They don't like onions," an entomologist told him about the grasshoppers. He explained that the insect prefers to feed on nonirrigated drylands where cattle graze.

But last year, swarms of grasshoppers attacked McKoen's onions. They chewed on the stalks, leaving behind holes where irrigation water seeped in, causing fungal and bacterial disease to spread. He spent nearly \$100,000 to rescue his crops.

Hundreds of farmers and ranchers lost a good portion of their crops, resulting in millions of dollars in damage, scientists and government officials reported.

Now, the grasshoppers, which can travel long distances and decimate crops in their path, are making another unwelcome appearance in the state's far north.

"The population of grasshoppers in the region have increased in size, scope and density in recent years,"

[See Grasshoppers, B2]



Klamath Water Users

GRASSHOPPERS, which can travel long distances and decimate crops, are making an unwelcome appearance in large numbers in California's far north.

Grasshopper invasions have cost millions in damage

[Grasshoppers, from B1] said Rob Wilson, a University of California Cooperative Extension livestock and natural resource advisor in the small city of Tulelake.

Wilson, who specializes in pest management, said drought and government policies limiting allocation of water to farms, ranches and wetlands are to blame for the increase of grasshoppers.

By mid-July, thousands of grasshoppers take flight and can migrate several miles. In the fields, they are camouflaged and eat everything in their path. But when they're out and about, they become a nuisance in daily life.

For instance, one can't go outside without several crashing into your face. They're such a problem that McKoen's family and other locals try to stay indoors.

'It's like hail'

In the evenings on his way home from the ranch, McKoen is careful to drive slowly because the multitude of grasshoppers crash into his windshield and side windows, impeding his vision of the road ahead.

"It's like rice hitting your windshield," he said. "Sometimes it's like hail."

Some farmers have lost up to 70% of their hay crop in past years, said Laura Snell, a University of California Cooperative Extension livestock and natural resource advisor in Modoc County who is based in Alturas, a rural town in the state's northeast that is about an hour's drive from the Oregon border.

Grasshoppers can consume 30% to 250% of their body weight per day, Wilson said. Thirty pounds of grasshoppers can eat the same amount of plants as a 600-pound cow per day, he explained.

"I think this could be our worst year yet," Snell said.

Officials in at least seven states in the West have reported invasions of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets, another insect that can destroy crops and other vegetation. Some of the most severely affected areas



Klamath Water Users Assn.

FARMERS AND RANCHERS have lost a good portion of their crops, resulting in millions of dollars in damage, because of grasshoppers.

are in drought-stricken Northern California and eastern and central Oregon.

The grasshopper surge adds additional pressures on Northern California beef producers and crop farmers.

The grasshoppers, which lay eggs in the fall and begin hatching by summer, particularly like to eat hay and grasses — such as alfalfa — which many ranchers grow to feed their cattle. In response, many ranchers have reduced their herds because of the grasshopper destruction of their feed, said Brian Ingraham, a fourth-generation cattle rancher in Modoc County.

"For 75 years we were always able to raise enough hay to feed the number of livestock we had," he said. "The last three or five years, we've had to purchase," cutting into the ranch's bottom line.

In response, Ingraham sold off some of his cattle, reducing the herd from 150 mother cows to 100.

High beef prices

Fewer mother cows means there are fewer to breed calves, which means there aren't enough cattle born to replace those going to market.

Eventually, if enough ranchers reduce their herds, beef inventory decreases throughout the supply chain, forcing prices to rise.

The latest Consumer Price Index report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows beef and veal prices in May of this year up 5.7% compared with May 2023. More specifically, ground beef is up 4.9%, beef roasts 6% and beef steaks are up 5.7%.

High feed prices partnered with high interest rates have made cattle farming costly, according to various reports. In response, cattle ranchers have reduced the size of their herds and some have gotten out of the business altogether.

Currently, cattle inven-

tory is the smallest it's been since the 1950s. Despite high beef prices, American appetite for beef hasn't dwindled. Low supply and high demand have forced prices higher.

It's difficult to calculate how much the grasshopper destruction affects beef prices, said UCCE farm advisor Wilson.

"Beef prices are up in general," he said. "And if you just look West-wide, [beef] cattle numbers are way down due to the drought and other issues. The grasshoppers are just another factor that puts a strain on the beef producer and does increase prices."

Beef from the region ends up on dinner tables across the nation, including those in Los Angeles, said Carolyn Carey, a board member on the California Beef Council.

Grasshopper damage to cattle feed is a concern but, for now, fuel prices are putting more pressure on cattle ranchers' bottom line, said Carey, who runs a cattle ranch near the town of Alturas.

In the past, the grasshoppers were a problem in dry fields and generally stayed away from irrigated lands. But that's changed, said Wilson, who is also director of the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, Intermountain Research & Extension Center in Tulelake.

Last year grasshoppers traveled 10 to 20 miles into the irrigated lands, Wilson said.

"You have farmers who have been dealing with drought water curtailment for the last five years," he said. "They've really suffered from that and then you add this biblical grasshopper deal? It's been a little bit

overwhelming."

Since early April, Wilson has scouted and monitored the grasshoppers near Tule Lake, an ancient lake that has come under threat after several years of drought. He's found that there are more than eight immature grasshoppers per square yard in more than 50,000 acres he's surveyed around the lake. More than eight is the threshold that indicates economic damage.

"The numbers are quite alarming," Wilson said. "In some cases there are 20 to 30 nymph per square yard. There's potential for a lot of problems."

Grasshoppers tend to be cyclical, but there wasn't much of a problem in the region until four years ago, Snell said.

A series of drought years made for prime nursery grounds for grasshoppers, which flourish in dry land. They're particularly vulnerable to natural fungi and diseases in humid and wetter conditions.

"But when it's dry, those natural barriers that prevent them from becoming a problem aren't there," Snell said.

County officials, farm advisors, farmers and ranchers have asked the state for grasshopper treatments. They've petitioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS), which operates an abatement program in several states and on federal lands, using treatments to kill a majority of the grasshoppers but still leaving enough for natural predators that feed on them. USDA APHIS also shares costs for treatment of private lands bordering federal lands.

Since 2021, the agricultural community in the region has been in conversations with the agency about the need for grasshopper treatments in the affected counties in the state.

Snell and Wilson said they haven't gotten very far.

The bugs return

Modoc County Farm Bureau President Sean Curtis said California discontinued its abatement program more than 50 years ago because the grasshoppers had stopped becoming an issue until their recent return, Snell said.

It's been difficult to get it back.

There are several methods used to prevent the proliferation of grasshoppers, such as certain pesticides that can be sprayed in their infant stage. But those chemicals are pricey and, some say, not worthwhile because every single landowner would need to spray for it to be effective.

You need widespread treatment, Ingraham argued.

"If all the landowners aren't doing it," Ingraham said, "they just move right on into the food source where we've already mitigated."

Ingraham's land borders other private land and federal land. He used to spray but no longer does.

The insecticides kill the grasshoppers on his land, but days later, he says, the voracious grasshoppers from neighboring land will just fly in and eat what's on his ranch.

"It's shooting ourselves in the foot, pouring money down the rat hole," he said of treating his land with insecticides. "We'll just take our licks as they come."



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Advocate predicts rise in DWP rates

[DWP, from B1] lions in federal dollars available to utilities under the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, which is intended to help households save money on energy bills.

Pickel acknowledged that the report doesn't include the costs to the planet or health effects on humans that might result from delaying the longstanding 2035 goal.

Still, Pickel expressed concern about the DWP's approach to meeting the 2035 goal, which he has previously stated but never as explicitly. Pickel, who is retiring later this year, quoted President Eisenhower in his report, writing, "Plans are worthless, but planning is everything."

"People justifiably want to reduce carbon as fast as they can," Pickel told The Times. "But L.A. will have a bigger impact if we can convince people that it can be done cost effectively and quickly. ... We shouldn't blindly charge ahead for 2035 come hell or high water."

The DWP provided a statement from Simon Zewdu, senior assistant general manager of the utility's power system.

The DWP is "absolutely committed" to getting to 100% clean energy by 2035 in an affordable way, Zewdu said.

Mayor Karen Bass affirmed her support for the

2035 goal during her annual State of the City speech in April, saying she was "proud to continue Los Angeles' global leadership on climate change."

Bass' office didn't respond to requests for comment about the report, which was sent to city leaders last month.

If the city pushed its deadline to 2045 — the state's yardstick — bills would rise 4.8% annually starting that year, the report said, calling the increase "modest."

Under the 2035 scenario, the increase could be even higher than 7.7% annually, depending on how the DWP decides to transition to clean energy.

By contrast, DWP power bills have risen about 4% to 4.5% annually the last two years, Pickel said.

The projections include expected annual 2.5% inflation increases, as well as increases resulting from the state's shift to clean energy.

Tony Wilkinson, chair of a DWP Neighborhood Council advisory committee, said that city leaders have touted the 2035 goal without laying out the costs.

He said he fully supports getting to 100% renewable energy but questioned whether waiting until 2038, for instance, would be cheaper.

"The earlier you adopt a technology, the more expensive it becomes," he said.

Environmental leaders said they appreciate some of the report's recommendations, including the need to spend more money on converting transportation and buildings to electric power.

But they rejected delaying the 2035 date. Julia Dowell, senior campaign organizer with the Sierra Club, said that sticking to the timeline is "absolutely critical."

"Failing to rapidly decarbonize means exacerbating L.A.'s worst-in-the-nation air pollution and related health costs," she said. "It also means increasing the possibility of future climate catastrophes."

Andrea Vega, an organizer for the group Food & Water Watch, said that "there is a huge public health cost" to fossil fuel use and that L.A. needs to focus on investing in programs that mitigate rate increases.

Critics also said the report doesn't account for some of the savings drivers might enjoy by not having to purchase gas, for instance.

Lorraine Lundquist, a faculty associate at the Institute for Sustainability at Cal State Northridge, said the report "ignores the incredible costs of continuing to burn fossil fuels."

"The wildfires sweeping the state right now make it clear that the cost of sticking with the status quo is enormous," she said.

CITY & STATE

DE LOS Singers' Walk of Fame stars defaced

Black paint is put on Selena Quintanilla's, Jenni Rivera's squares twice in 24 hours.

BY CERY S DAVIES
AND MARCOS FRANCO

The Hollywood Walk of Fame stars of Selena Quintanilla and Jenni Rivera were vandalized twice with black paint in the span of 24 hours.

Rivera, known as "la Diva de la Banda," was granted the posthumous honor at a June 27 ceremony that saw fans from all over the country gather to celebrate her legacy. Quintanilla was given her star in 2017. Both Mexican American singers are recognized globally for their contributions to Latin music. They also faced tragic ends to their lives: Quintanilla was murdered in 1995 and Rivera was killed in a plane crash in 2012.

The first incident of vandalism took place sometime Monday morning, said Ana Martinez, vice president of media and talent relations at the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, the organization that oversees and maintains the Walk of Fame. Martinez said she immediately filed a police report and sent a cleanup crew. Videos of fans getting on their hands and knees scrubbing the Rivera star began to circulate online that day.

Marisela Santana, a Rivera fan who attended the dedication ceremony, said she was not surprised that people had shown up to clean the star.

"The fact that someone defaced her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame doesn't mean she stopped shining," she said. "I'm glad that people took it upon themselves to clean it immediately."

"It's not just Jenni's trophy; it's a trophy for the community," said Julie Vasquez, Rivera's longtime assistant. "In true Jenni fashion, we wouldn't have the triumph without the trials and tribulations. People throw rocks at things that shine, this is no different than all the other recognitions and awards she's received. I pray that this is the last time it gets vandalized."

On Tuesday morning, the stars were vandalized yet again. Martinez said she was inspecting a portion of the Walk of Fame on Vine Street when she noticed black paint on several stars.

"I've done this for 37 years and have not experienced this. There have been little incidents, where people try to poke around to see what star is being covered or people will graffiti their names on blank stars, but nothing like this," she said, adding that she called for an additional cleanup crew and filed a second police report. Martinez said the chamber is seeking surveillance video from nearby establishments to share with authorities.

"My mother's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame is a symbol of her incredible legacy and the impact she made on so many lives," Jacqie Campos, Rivera's second-oldest child, said in a statement to The Times. "Seeing it damaged not once, but twice, is heart-breaking and deeply disappointing."

"My family and I hope that those responsible understand the pain they've caused and that they come to appreciate the significance of this honor. We are committed to preserving her memory and will continue to honor her contributions to music and our community. We also want to extend our heartfelt thanks to the fans for their unwavering support and for helping restore her star. Your love and dedication mean the world to us."



WALLY SKALIS Los Angeles Times

SHADOW SOCCER

A man plays soccer against a wall in Venice Beach Tuesday. Warm temperatures should moderate into next week. **WEATHER, B6**

California to get some relief from relentless heat wave

Meteorologists say a cooldown should start Friday and last at least through the weekend.

BY GRACE TOOHEY

Californians could soon feel a bit of relief after almost two weeks of an oppressive heat wave that has relentlessly broiled the state and set several temperature records.

"A cooldown should start on Friday [and last] at least through the weekend," said John Dumas, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Oxnard. "But when

you start out more than 10 degrees above normal, it will still feel quite warm."

Most of Southern California can expect to see a few degrees of cooling each day, beginning Friday through Monday, Dumas said — though some areas, including the Antelope Valley, will remain in the triple digits.

The ridge of high pressure, known as a heat dome, that has driven the extreme temperatures has parked itself over California and its eastern neighbors since early last week. But forecasters say it will begin to shift eastward by the end of the week.

"Until it does, we're going to be hot, hot, hot," said Dan Berc, a weather service me-

teorologist in Las Vegas.

Potentially record-breaking and dangerous highs are still forecast across much of the region through Friday.

Temperatures in Lancaster and Palmdale soared to more than 110 degrees Tuesday, the cities' sixth consecutive day at or above that mark — doubling the length of the prior record. Barstow-Daggett Airport in the Mojave Desert again tied its all-time high at 118 degrees on Tuesday, and several locations set record highs for July 9, according to the weather service.

That pattern will likely continue for the next few days.

"Stay cool, stay hydrated,

stay informed," the weather service warned, urging residents to take the extreme heat seriously. "Anyone overcome by heat should be moved to a cool and shaded location. Heat stroke is an emergency!"

Excessive heat warnings across southwestern California remain in effect through Thursday night, with highs up to 108 possible for much of the Inland Empire and coastal valleys and mountains.

In Northern California, most heat advisories will remain in effect slightly longer, through Friday, with the Bay Area mountains, Sacramento Valley and surrounding areas bracing for a second peak of heat Thursday

and "widespread major to locally extreme heat risk anticipated," forecasters warned.

Parts of the state, including the Antelope Valley and much of the San Joaquin Valley, will remain under severe heat warnings through Saturday.

"A cooling trend is expected by Friday and the weekend but temperatures will remain well above normal inland," weather service officials wrote in a Wednesday forecast.

"High pressure aloft continues to impact the forecast area, with dangerously hot weather continuing across the majority of the region through at least Thursday."

Federal grand jury investigating Oakland family, mayor

Subpoena for city documents confirms an inquiry involving waste disposal firm.

BY SALVADOR HERNANDEZ

Federal investigators are ordering the city of Oakland to hand over documents involving a prominent, influential local family that holds a waste management contract with the city, as well as Mayor Sheng Thao and her partner, according to documents reviewed by The Times.

The subpoena, issued five days after agents raided Thao's home on June 20, confirms there is a current federal grand jury investigation that appears centered on Cal Waste Solutions Inc.; its owners, members of the Duong family; and their dealings with Oakland officials, particularly its mayor.

Dated June 25, the eight-page subpoena asks the city to turn over all documents and communications regarding Cal Waste Solutions, all of its employees and representatives, and any documents involving appointments to prominent city posts.

The deadline is Thursday.

A spokesperson for the Department of Justice did not immediately respond to

questions regarding the subpoena.

Federal investigators are also requesting documents related to the 2022 Oakland mayoral election, when Thao was elected as the first Hmong mayor of a major U.S. city.

The subpoena further reveals the possible involvement of Thao's partner, Andre Jones, in the inquiry. Investigators requested that the city turn over calendar entries and records involving meetings for Thao and Jones from June 1 to the present.

Attorneys for Thao declined to comment on the subpoena but said the investigation involving Thao did not involve criminal charges or allegations.

Thao has denied any wrongdoing. "I can tell you with confidence that this investigation is not about me," the mayor said in a news conference three days after FBI agents raided her home.

Exactly what the focus of the federal investigation is remains unclear, but the June 25 subpoena offered a slightly wider glimpse into the scope of the investigation, the latest scandal to engulf the Bay Area city that has recently faced a mayoral recall effort, a growing budget deficit, and concerns about crime that have driven out major businesses.

Shortly after city officials received the subpoena, Oak-



JEFF CHIU Associated Press

OAKLAND Mayor Sheng Thao has denied wrongdoing after the FBI raided her home.

land's city attorney directed staff in an email to preserve all records involving Thao, Jones, and the Duong family, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

A spokesperson for the city attorney's office confirmed the existence of the memo to staff but in an email declined to provide a copy of it or answer questions about it, referring to the memo as "confidential attorney-client communication between the Oakland City Attorney and the other city of Oakland staff members."

The federal subpoena, issued by the U.S. attorney's Northern District of California, requests multiple documents involving the Duong family, including David, Andy, Kristina, Victor and Michael Duong.

For at least five years, the

family has been at the center of an investigation involving the state's Fair Political Practices Commission and the Oakland Public Ethics Commission. The family is accused of using "straw donors" to circumvent legal donation limits and fill the campaign coffers of elected public officials while the family's companies sought contracts with cities.

The family's company, Cal Waste Solutions, provides recycling services to Oakland.

After the warrants were executed, Cal Waste Solutions officials issued a statement saying they were surprised by the searches and had cooperated with investigators.

"We believe that we have not engaged in or committed any illegal activities and are awaiting the decision of the law enforcement agency," the statement read.

A spokesperson for the company did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

But the state and local inquiry into the family's dealings with city officials in the area paint a troubling picture.

Court records reveal the Fair Political Practices Commission has been investigating political donations made by the family since 2019. The agency alleges that Andy Duong and former business associates used friends and business connections to

make political contributions, then reimbursed them with cash to hide the true origin of the money.

"CWS was the true source of at least 93 contributions to multiple local campaign committees," one court record reads, with the goal being "to curry favor with candidates and provide more access to candidates."

The agency tracked questionable donations made in Oakland, as well as San José and other parts of Santa Clara County, where the family was looking to do business.

The investigation found there had been multiple contributions made to Thao's campaign in 2018 for City Council, including "seven of which were admitted reimbursements by or on behalf of [Andy] Duong."

One former associate told investigators, according to court records, he saw Andy Duong pull cash from a drawer in his office at Cal Waste Solutions to reimburse people for donations.

Fair Political Practices Commission officials confirmed their inquiry is still ongoing.

Federal officials are also requesting documents involving the city's declaration of a local emergency on homelessness, and any communication regarding the former Oakland Army Base, a site that had been considered as possible housing for unhoused individuals.

O.C. deputy shoots suspect after 2 people and dog are found dead

'Bloody' man survives after fleeing reported domestic attack site in San Juan Capistrano.

BY SANDRA McDONALD
AND JON HEALEY

An Orange County deputy shot a "bloody male" suspect Tuesday morning in San Juan Capistrano after deputies found two elderly people and a dog dead in a nearby home, according to officials.

Deputies had responded

to a report of a domestic assault at a mobile-home community in the 32000 block of Alipaz Street at 7:36 a.m.

They found the bodies of a 77-year-old man, a 79-year-old woman and a dog, Orange County Sheriff's Department Sgt. Matt Parrish said. The cause of their deaths is under investigation.

In a news release, the department said investigators believe that a 41-year-old relative was responsible for the deaths.

The names of the victims and the suspect had not been released as of Wednesday

afternoon as notification of the victims' next of kin was pending. The suspect's exact relationship to the victims was not yet confirmed.

While deputies were at the scene of the deaths, a second call came in reporting that the suspect, described as a "bloody male," was chasing a maintenance worker in the mobile-home community and had stolen a golf cart, the Sheriff's Department said.

A community services officer for the Sheriff's Department encountered the suspect exiting a bike trail near Calle Arroyo, and a deputy

arrived shortly thereafter.

According to the department, the deputy alerted the suspect before shooting him multiple times. The department offered no information about what prompted the shooting, but said that no deputies were injured.

Deputies in San Juan Capistrano have body-worn cameras, and video of the incident will be released "in accordance with the law and in consultation with the Orange County District Attorney's Office," the department said.

California law requires that such video be released

within 45 days of most shootings by law enforcement officers.

The deputy who fired the shots treated the suspect until an Orange County Fire Authority crew arrived. The suspect was taken to a hospital, where he was in critical but stable condition Tuesday afternoon, the department said.

The Sheriff's Department urge anyone with information relevant to the homicides to call the department's nonemergency line at (714) 647-7000 or leave an anonymous tip at ocsheriff.gov/occrimestoppers.

Bear's wanderlust could help situate wildlife crossings

[Bear, from B1] area. Then she walked back toward the Angeles National Forest, according to state wildlife officials.

She climbed into a tree inside a business complex in Chatsworth, where she was tranquilized and moved back to the national forest last week. She wandered back down the mountain and was recognized in residential Sylmar over the weekend, before heading back into the forest foothills Monday morning.

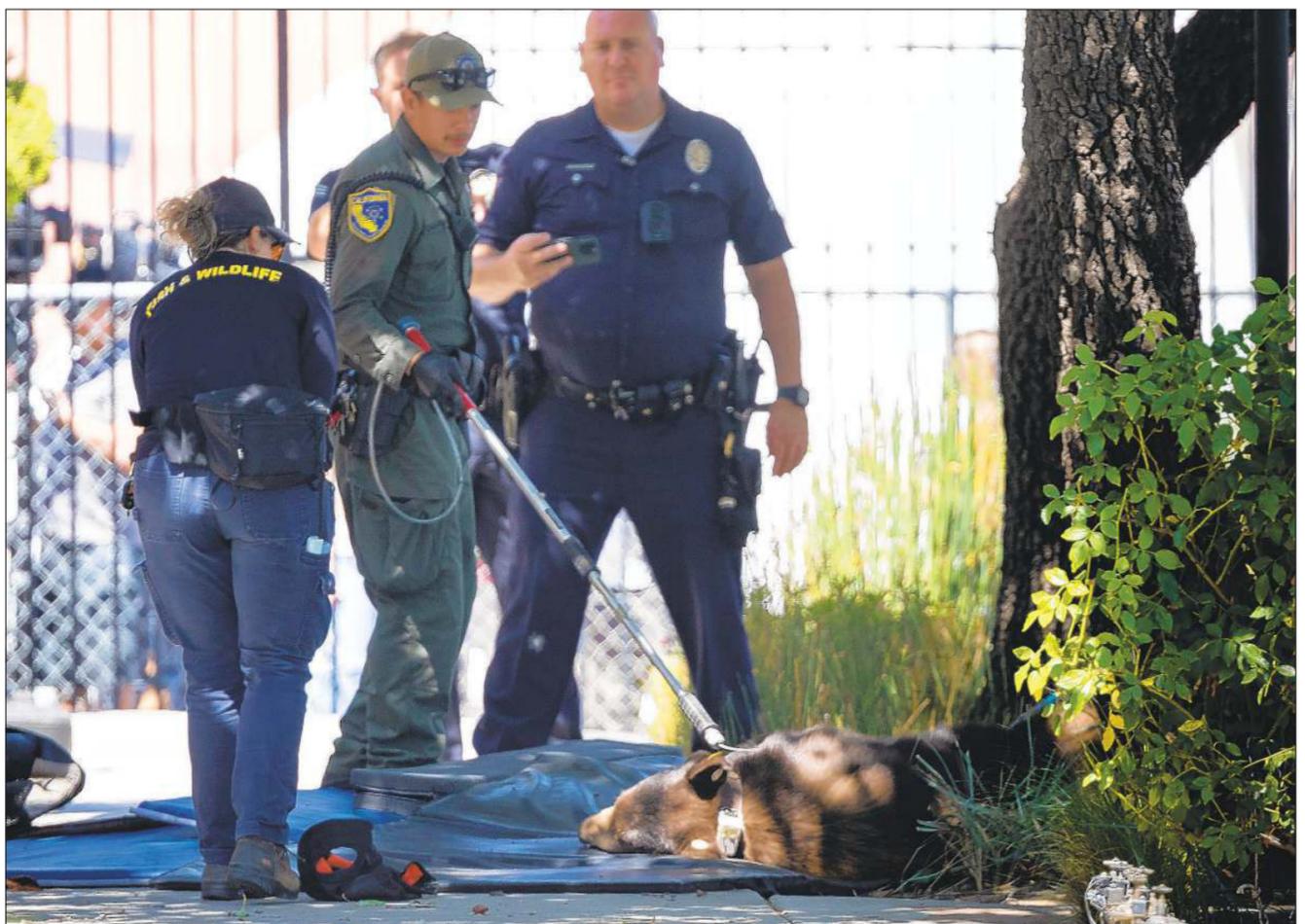
West said it's uncharacteristic of female bears to wander so much. Male black bears have larger home ranges than females, she said, and tend toward this type of erratic movement. But for those researchers studying connectivity, or how animals move from one habitat to another across developed areas of Southern California, this bear's movement may be key.

"If we can figure out where about she was crossing, either under or over these freeways, that can really influence" where future wildlife crossings should go, West said.

The Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing, which is being built over the 10-lane 101 Freeway near Agoura Hills, is one of several crossings under construction or in development in the state. Tracking Yellow 2291's movement is step one in connecting habitats fragmented by freeways and neighborhoods while keeping them out of residential areas, according to Beth Pratt, regional executive director of the National Wildlife Federation.

"That is the good data and research needed for any crossing," said Pratt, leader of the #SaveLACougars campaign, which was a key advocate for the 101 Freeway crossing. "The animals are our guide," she said.

"Their whole existence is spent, every day, trying to get enough calories — and picture you're doing that in the middle of the most densely populated metropolitan area in the country," Pratt said. Rebuilding connectivity between suit-



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

A STATE wildlife official nudges a bear dubbed Yellow 2291 after she was spotted in a Chatsworth neighborhood last week and tranquilized. Tracking her could help officials connect habitats fragmented by freeways while keeping animals out of residential areas.

able habitats means bears and other wild scavengers will be less likely to wander up to your trash cans looking for a quick snack, and more likely to stay in the wildlands.

Yellow 2291's recent relocations may be a factor in her relentless wandering, according to Pratt.

"If you were relocated, you're gonna try to come back to the same place as well," Pratt said.

If the bear is not from the Angeles National Forest, where Fish and Wildlife officials believe she is from, she may be trying to find her original stomping ground.

"They don't have options when there are 10-lane free-

ways in their way," Pratt said. "If there's a fire and you need to move, and a road's in your way, it cuts off your escape mechanism," she said.

Two years ago, a study found mountain lions were crossing busy roadways to escape the 2018 Woolsey fire, resulting in a higher chance of them being hit by a vehicle

or dying in territorial disputes with other mountain lions. This summer, an unprecedented heat wave has brought triple-digit temperatures and threatened to cause more and bigger wildfires.

Over the last month, two mountain lions were found dead, one near the unfin-

ished 101 Freeway crossing and another on the 405 Freeway. In May, a Placer County black bear was killed after being hit by a car, before having its paws cut off.

For Yellow 2291, crossing the 5 Freeway to summer in Malibu might be a conscious choice. "Animals are individuals," Pratt said, "And, in-

deed, if she's picked this as her home — which, rightly so, I mean, bears were on the landscape before we were — it's not that she necessarily shouldn't be there. It's just that she should be able to come and go without it being a death sentence. And her luck is probably going to run out at some point."

USC president to stay on, at least for now

[Folt, from B1] abusive campus gynecologist, and authorized the removal of an antisemitic, eugenics-supporting former USC president's name from a campus building.

The first woman to lead USC in its 144 years, Folt also worked to open access to more low-income, first-generation and underrepresented students of color. In one of her most highly touted initiatives, Folt directed USC to eliminate tuition for students whose families make \$80,000 or less annually, and to no longer consider home equity in financial aid calculations. The estimated annual cost of attendance for 2024-25 is \$95,225 for students living away from their families.

She drew national attention for her moves to reshape USC's athletics program. Those moves included hiring a renowned head football coach, Lincoln Riley, on a \$10-million annual contract — one of the highest salaries in the sport — along with investing heavily in new and improved athletic facilities and the school's landscape-altering shift to the Big Ten that led to the demise of the Pac-12 Conference.

But those actions were overshadowed this spring by enormous controversy over Folt's handling of pro-Palestinian protests.

Her decision to rescind pro-Palestinian valedictorian Asna Tabassum's speaking slot in USC's main commencement ceremony drew widespread outrage. Folt said the decision was due to safety threats, but did not

specify what they were.

The turmoil escalated when the president then canceled the main-stage commencement ceremony, depriving graduating students and their families of a treasured ritual. Folt and her team called in police to dismantle a tent encampment that students had set up in support of Palestinians, and 93 were arrested.

She made no public remarks for two weeks, drawing criticism that she was missing in action during the most explosive issue of her tenure.

Such actions cost Folt key faculty support. In May, the USC Academic Senate voted to censure her and Provost Andrew Guzman for their handling of issues around commencement. Of the senate's 44 members, who represent about 4,500 faculty, 21 supported the censure motion, seven opposed it and six abstained.

William Tierney, a professor emeritus at USC's Rossier School of Education and an expert on university administration and governance, said that Folt's handling of the protests was a "total failure" and that USC needed a new leader who could navigate such issues without her "head in the sand" approach.

Although he gave Folt credit for her leadership at a "vexed time" of serial scandals, he became soured by her pivot to sports boosterism. He is also critical of what he sees as her lack of the fundraising prowess of previous presidents who had enabled ambitious academ-

ic and research enterprises — including the poaching of two star brain researchers from UCLA.

USC should reprioritize the pursuit of top donors — as Johns Hopkins University did in landing \$1 billion from Bloomberg Philanthropies for tuition-free medical education for most students — rather than pursuing top football coaches, Tierney said.

"We are not a football university," he said. "We have faculty aspiring to change the world. I don't see the president providing the intellectual or financial leadership in that way."

"When I look to what USC aspires to do in the next five years," he said, "I don't think it's with Carol Folt."

Anna Krylov, a chemistry professor, said she was "neutral" on whether Folt should be granted a long-term contract renewal. She said she appreciated Folt's takedown of the pro-Palestinian encampment, which Krylov said had fed rabid antisemitism. But Folt and campus leadership haven't done enough to combat antisemitism in general, she said, adding that it had become "serious and pervasive" in recent years.

Krylov also said Folt focused too much energy on the "wrong issues," including what she called performative efforts for diversity, equity and inclusion. Like Tierney, Krylov said USC leadership needed to focus more on its core mission of education and research.

Folt's supporters, howev-

er, noted that she had created a new school of advanced computing and boosted mental health services. She also presided over a record number of applicants — 82,000 for fall 2024 — driving down the admission rate to 9.3%, a record low. Admitted students, one-fifth of them the first in their families to attend college, had an average 3.89 GPA.

Under Folt, USC raised more than \$800 million in fiscal year 2024, its largest haul in eight years, and its total the previous year ranked in the top 10 among U.S. research universities, USC said in a statement. Research expenditures were \$11 billion in fiscal year 2023, a 27% increase over four years, according to the emailed statement.

In her first six months as president in 2019, Folt set out to reshape USC's athletic department. She replaced Lynn Swann, a Trojan football hero who resigned as athletic director that September, with Mike Bohn, the first outsider to helm USC athletics in a quarter-century.

But Bohn resigned abruptly last May after The Times sent questions to him and USC about his conduct as athletic director and his management of the department. In his place, Folt hired Jennifer Cohen, the university's first female athletic director.

USC began construction this year on a state-of-the-art football performance center, one of several capital facilities projects in the works.

Obituaries

Place a paid notice latimes.com/placeobituary
Search obituary notice archives: legacy.com/obituaries/latimes



Gerald Francis Corrigan

April 16, 1937 - May 26, 2024

Gerald Francis Corrigan, beloved husband, father, and grandfather, passed away peacefully and surrounded by family, at the age of 87 in Santa Barbara, California.

Born on April 16, 1937, in Dublin, Ireland, Gerry immigrated to the United States in 1959. He earned his B.A. and M.B.A. from UCLA, where he became the first foreign-born student body president. Gerry later served as Assistant Dean of the UCLA School of Business and remained a lifelong Bruin.

It was also at UCLA where Gerry met Virginia Tang. They married in 1966 and raised their two children in Pacific Palisades before retiring to Santa Barbara in 2000.

Gerry had a distinguished career as an executive recruiter, served as the Irish Olympic Team Attache for the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Games, dedicated many years to the University College Dublin Business School, and in 1990 was bestowed the Irishman Of The Year Award.

In retirement, Gerry shared his passion for knowledge through Vistas Lifelong Learning, taught economics at Santa Barbara City College, and served as an arbitrator for FINRA.

Gerry is survived by his wife of 58 years Virginia; children Peter Corrigan and Elizabeth Branham; spouses Karen Bergan and Erc Branham; grandchildren Sophie, Aedan, Jocelyn, and Connor; and extended family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a charity of one's choosing.

Ar dheis Dé do raibh ananam.

Place an Obituary Online go to latimes.com/placeobituary

Elaine McKay

August 6, 1932 - June 7, 2024

Elaine McKay, resident of Cameo Shores in Corona del Mar. Elaine was a devoted mother of 2, grandmother of 5, and great-grandmother of 4. As a longtime member of Calvary Chapel, her faith was paramount. She humbly and anonymously acted that out through her charitable giving. Elaine was loved and will be missed.

Maxine Lois Meyers

September 26, 1924 - July 4, 2024

Maxine died at the age of 99. She was born in Long Beach, Ca. And died in Torrance, CA. She is survived by two sons, Craig and Michael Meyers, 4 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. She was active in Hadassah, Red Cross, LAX USO and Fort Irwin. Services will be held in private.

Roscoe Mark Needles

April 23, 1942 - July 1, 2024.

Aside from his many musical and artistic gifts and quick wit, he was a published author, a great teacher, a voracious reader and an Associate Professor Emeritus at California State University Northridge.

Ph.D. 1975, University of North Dakota, M. ED 1971, Tulane University, B.B.A. 1964, Iowa University. He was preceded in death by his father, Roscoe Murray Needles, and his mother, Ida Sabo Needles. He is survived by his brothers, David and James.

Sondi Brodsky

July 20, 1950 - July 11, 2019

I can't believe it has been 5 years, my friend.

I miss your love of the ocean, your wisdom, and your warm smile.

I think of you every day.

Love, Linda

Park officials take visitors to task over toilet paper

Hikers left soiled tissue along Yosemite trail. Littering is a growing problem.

BY SUMMER LIN

Next time you're hiking through the wilderness at Yosemite National Park, you might stumble upon something that soils the park's majestic scenery.

Park officials posted a photo on Instagram on Tuesday of multiple toilet paper rolls — including used scraps of bathroom tissue — abandoned near Rancheria Falls. It appears that many campers or hikers bring in the toilet paper for personal hygiene but ne-

glect to throw it in a trash container or pack it out.

"If you bring toilet paper out on your trips, please pack it out too," according to the post. "You can bring a sealable plastic baggie to stash it in, and even cover the bag in tape so you don't have to look at it. Because really, nobody wants to stumble upon a surprise package left behind by an anonymous outdoor enthusiast."

Park officials recommended visitors not bury toilet paper because it can be easily exposed by erosion and weather. Animals can also dig up the trash or even use it as nesting material. The material can take up to three years to decompose.

Yosemite is one of the

nation's most popular national parks, attracting millions of visitors every year. During a trash cleanup last September, cigarette butts, Starbucks cups, energy bar wrappers, water bottles, hair bands, microplastic fragments and receipts were among the most common items found.

Litter has also been a problem in other national parks and monuments, lakes and recreation areas. Last year, volunteers collected more than 4 tons of trash on the shores and in the water of Lake Tahoe, most of it left behind by July 4 revelers.

The post by national park officials drew dozens of comments, mostly by wilderness enthusiasts who slammed visitors who trash

the park.

"This is happening at all parks, beaches and beautiful places like Yosemite. People need to be respectful and responsible," one user commented. "Just wrong and shameful. I can walk the streets by my home or go out hiking and the trash left by those who obviously are selfish and don't care is everywhere. I bring a bag every time I go, just to do my part and pick up what others leave behind."

Another person commented that they were seeing this happen "all too often."

"If you're too lazy to take it back out after carrying it in, DON'T go. The wilderness doesn't want you," they wrote.



DAVID FRANCO Board of Supervisors

LOS ANGELES COUNTY has five supervisors: from left, Janice Hahn, Hilda Solis, Lindsey Horvath, Kathryn Barger and Holly Mitchell. They have voted to direct lawyers to draft an amendment to the county charter that would add four more supervisors.

County leaders are divided on adding to governing board

[Supervisors, from B1] ent ethics commission to investigate corruption. The amendment must come back to the board twice more for votes before appearing on the November ballot.

Barger and Mitchell delivered a series of pointed questions to their colleagues and two experts:

Why nine supervisors and not seven or 15?

Could a study be done to determine the right number?

Would having an elected executive turn the position partisan?

What would it take to fund the overhaul?

"I've got questions," Mitchell said. "I just think there's too much at risk for us to take a bite of the apple that's not absolutely ideal."

Barger unleashed some of the most biting criticism, saying she felt that county supervisors were plagued not by structural issues but rather by paralyzing indecision. She pointed to the long delays in closing Men's Central Jail, a dilapidated facility that supervisors voted to shut down years ago. The problem there, she said at the meeting, was that the supervisors had "no will to make the tough decision" on what should replace it.

Both Barger and Mitchell also criticized the process of formulating the ballot measure, which burst into public view last week with a news conference. Barger said she felt her colleagues had excluded Mitchell, who had brought forward two plans early last year — one successful, one not — to improve county government structure.

"This process was anything but transparent as it relates to how this was rolled out," Barger said.

It was an unusually contentious meeting from supervisors who, at least publicly, like to agree — or disagree in the most gentle of terms.

"You're really upset about this," said Hahn, not-

ing that she and Barger are usually aligned. "I feel it."

Horvath and the experts she and Hahn had invited sought to alleviate some of the concerns, saying the proposal, while not a panacea, would probably make the government more responsive.

Fernando Guerra, director for the Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University, told the supervisors he had never heard of a jurisdiction with 10 million people not having an elected executive.

"It might not be perfect, and it might not meet the needs of all five members, but I maintain that this is the right thing to do," Horvath told her colleagues.

Under the plan, the nine-supervisor structure would not start until 2032, following a redistricting process, which could give some racial and ethnic groups new political prominence, notably those in the often-overlooked unincorporated parts of the county.

Pomona College politics professor Sara Sadhwani, who served on the California Citizens Redistricting Commission, noted to the board that Rowland Heights and Hacienda Heights have large Asian American populations, while East Los Angeles has a significant Latino community, which could form powerful voting blocs depending on how the lines are drawn.

There has never been an Asian American county supervisor, and Solis is the only Latina on the all-female board, in a county that is nearly 50% Latino.

"These districts are so large that we have incredible dilution of various communities of color," Sadhwani said.

Horvath's office said the plan is for the final two votes on the charter amendment language to take place July 23 and Aug. 6.

The final board vote would have to happen before Aug. 9 for the amendment to make the November ballot.

Driver in fatal Malibu crash identified as social media influencer

'Wellness advocate' is said to be the driver in a crash that killed one and injured two.

By SALVADOR HERNANDEZ

The driver of the car that collided head-on with a Cadillac sport utility vehicle in Malibu on July 4, leaving one person dead and two injured, has been identified as a "wellness advocate" and social media influencer.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department alleged that Summer Wheaton was behind the wheel of a 2019 Mercedes Benz that crossed the center median and crashed into a 2020 Cadillac headed west on Pacific Coast Highway.

The driver of the Cadillac died at the scene. Wheaton and a passenger in the Cadillac were taken to a hospital to be treated for injuries.

Formerly a licensed real estate agent, Wheaton most recently marketed herself as a "founder, speaker and wellness advocate" who supports healthy eating and life-

style choices. On Instagram, she has more than 100,000 followers. But after she was identified as the driver in the deadly crash, Wheaton's Instagram account was made private.

On her personal website, Wheaton is listed as CEO and founder of "two innovative startups," including one company that markets vending machines with healthy snacks.

The site, where Wheaton markets her businesses and herself for speaking engagements, had also been removed from public view by Tuesday. That day, its web address listed it as a private site accessible only to the owner.

Wheaton did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The crash is still under investigation, a spokesperson for the Sheriff's Department said.

The deadly crash occurred about 10:20 p.m. along the 2200 block of Pacific Coast Highway, at about the same time that Nobu Restaurant was holding a party that had not obtained the required city permits, the Malibu Times reported.

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Residents of Weingart Tower 1 will benefit from Weingart Center's on-site, comprehensive support services. These services are developed to help maintain housing stability.

For more information, contact Barker Management Inc at (714) 221-5697 or weingarttowers1@barkermgt.com. (714) 221-5697 or weingarttowers1@barkermgt.com.

love is...

7/11

...counting the days until we're together!

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JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

AHRIC

PRUUS

SLNEOS

SIYETF

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Yesterday's Jumbles: IMPEL TREND LONGER LAVISH
Answer: When the angler hooked a huge tuna, it — SENT HIM REELING

Legal Notices

THE AFORESAID MONIES WILL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2024. DATED: JUNE 12, 2024 DIANA MANGIOGLU, CITY TREASURER OFFICE OF FINANCE CITY OF LOS ANGELES 7/11, 7/18/24 CNS-3823072#

Legal Notices

NOTICE OF ESCHEAT TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that for the past three years there remained unclaimed with the Police Department of the City of Los Angeles monies held in the account known as the "UNCLAIMED MONIES SEIZED INCIDENTAL TO ARREST TRUST FUND" which were seized between March 1, 2019, and April 1, 2021. The amount of the unclaimed monies is: AMOUNT: \$1,122,714.74 Claims for return of these monies held must be filed with the City of Los Angeles Office of the City Clerk, Room 395 City Hall, 200, North Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA, 90012 BEFORE MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2024. THE AFORESAID MONIES WILL BECOME PROPERTY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2024. DATED: JUNE 12, 2024 DIANA MANGIOGLU, CITY TREASURER OFFICE OF FINANCE CITY OF LOS ANGELES 7/11, 7/18/24 CNS-3823144#

Legal Notices

NOTICE OF ESCHEAT TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that for more than three years last past there remained unclaimed with the Department of Transportation of the City of Los Angeles monies held in the account known as the "UNCLAIMED MONIES OF PARKING VIOLATIONS TRUST FUND NO. 853" which represent uncashed bail refund checks issued between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2020. AMOUNT: \$428,606.16 A listing of these unclaimed deposits may be viewed on the web at <http://www.lacity.gov/transportation/laopn/refund.html>. Claims for return of monies held must be filed with the City Clerk, Room 395 City Hall, 200 N. Spring St., Los Angeles, CA 90012 BEFORE SEPTEMBER 9, 2024.

Legal Notices

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Legal Notices

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Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR A CHANGE OF NAME
CASE NO. 24NNCP00329
Petitioner or Attorney (name, state, bar, and address):
Matthews Cashman
316 N Maple Street Burbank, CA 91505
TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED:
Petitioner Eugenia Matthews Cashman filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
Present Name Eugenia Matthews Cashman
Proposed Name Emma Matthews Cashman
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.

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Name Change

should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing. **NOTICE OF HEARING** DATE: August 23, 2024 TIME: 8:30 AM DEPT: B ROOM: **The address of the court is:** SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA County of Los Angeles County 300 East Olive Avenue Burbank, CA 91505 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: July 2, 2024 J. Calderon Deputy Clerk Published in the Los Angeles Times 07/04/24, 07/11/24, 07/18/24, 07/25/24

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR A CHANGE OF NAME
CASE NO. 245MCP00339
Petitioner or Attorney (name, state, bar, and address):
Rhosida Nicole Stafford
714 N Sweetzer Blvd Apt 404, West Hollywood, CA 90069
TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED:
Petitioner Rhosida Nicole Stafford filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
Present Name Rhosida Nicole Stafford
Proposed Name Hanaan Mehkai Persaud
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing. **NOTICE OF HEARING** DATE: August 30, 2024 TIME: 8:30 AM DEPT: K ROOM: **The address of the court is:** SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA County of Los Angeles Santa Monica Courthouse 1725 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401 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: July 02, 2024 David W. Slayton Executive Officer/Clerk of Court Published in the Los Angeles Times 07/04/24, 07/11/24, 07/18/24, 07/25/24

Name Change

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CASE NO. 24NNCP00329
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Matthews Cashman
316 N Maple Street Burbank, CA 91505
TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED:
Petitioner Eugenia Matthews Cashman filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
Present Name Eugenia Matthews Cashman
Proposed Name Emma Matthews Cashman
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Legal Notices

SUMMONS SUPERIOR COURT OF ARIZONA IN MARICOPA COUNTY CASE NUMBER: CV2023-018538

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:
The Estate of John R. Blanchard

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:
Swift Transportation Co. of Arizona, LLC and Jackson Atou Ngoh

WARNING: This is an official document from the court that affects your rights. Read this carefully. If you do not understand it, contact a lawyer for help.

If you would like legal advice from a lawyer, Contact the Lawyer Referral Service at 602-257-4434 or www.maricopabar.org. Sponsored by the Maricopa County Bar Association.

The name of the court is: SUPERIOR COURT OF ARIZONA IN MARICOPA COUNTY

The name, address, and telephone number of the plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is:
Person Filing: Arcangelo S. Cella Jones, Skelton & Hochuli
Address: 40 N. Central Avenue, Suite 2700
City, State, Zip Code: Phoenix, Arizona 85004
Telephone: (602) 263-4456
Email Address: acella@jshfirm.com
Attorney's Bar Number: #037176
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF

1. A lawsuit has been filed against you. A copy of the lawsuit and other court papers are served on you with this "Summons."

2. If you do not want a judgment or order taken against you without your input, you must file an "Answer" or a "Response" in writing with the court, and pay the filing fee. If you do not file an "Answer" or "Response" the other party may be given the relief requested in his/her Petition or Complaint. To file your "Answer" or "Response" take, or send, the "Answer" or "Response" to the:

Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court, 201 West Jefferson Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85003-2205 OR

Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court, 18380 North 40th Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85032 OR

Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, 222 East Javelina Avenue, Mesa, Arizona 85210-6201 OR

Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, 14264 West Tierra Buena Lane, Surprise, Arizona, 85374.

Mail a copy of your "Response" or "Answer" to the other party at the address listed on the top of this Summons.

3. If this "Summons" and the other court papers were served on you by a registered process server or the Sheriff, within the State of Arizona, your "Response" or "Answer" must be filed within TWENTY (20) CALENDAR DAYS from the date you were served, not counting the day you were served. If this "Summons" and the other papers were served on you by a registered process server or the Sheriff outside the State of Arizona, your Response must be filed within THIRTY (30) CALENDAR DAYS from the date you were served, not counting the day you were served. Service by a registered process server or the Sheriff is complete when made. Service by Publication is complete thirty (30) days after the date of the first publication.

4. You can get a copy of the court papers filed in this case from the Petitioner at the address listed at the top of the preceding page, from the Clerk of the Superior Court's Customer Service Center at:

601 West Jackson, Phoenix, Arizona 85003

18380 North 40th Street, Phoenix, Arizona, 85032

222 East Javelina Avenue, Mesa, Arizona 85210

14264 West Tierra Buena Lane, Surprise, Arizona 85374.

5. Requests for reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities must be made to the division assigned to the case by the party needing accommodation or his/her counsel at least three (3) judicial days in advance of a scheduled proceeding.

6. Requests for an interpreter for persons with limited English proficiency must be made to the division assigned to the case by the party needing the interpreter and/or translator or his/her counsel at least ten (10) judicial days in advance of a scheduled court proceeding.

7. Eviction Actions/Forcible Detainers: If you want to request a telephonic hearing, please contact the judge assigned to your case. If you do not know your assigned judge, or have not been assigned a judge, please contact Civil Court Administration at 602-506-1497.

Date: 03/01/2024
Time: _____

Jeff Fine Clerk of Superior Court

18380 North 40th Street, Phoenix, Arizona, 85032

222 East Javelina Avenue, Mesa, Arizona 85210

14264 West Tierra Buena Lane, Surprise, Arizona 85374.

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THE WEATHER

Today in Southern California

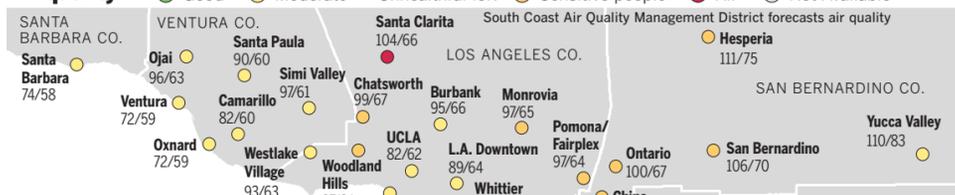
Heat continues inland: As a ridge of high pressure over the western third of the nation remains little changed, dangerous heat will continue across the interior with very warm air spreading westward toward the coast while onshore flow decreases. Smoke and haze from the Lake fire in Santa Barbara County could spread across parts of the area. Temperatures over the weekend will be a bit lower.

5-day forecasts

High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin	Valleys	Beaches	Mountains	Deserts
Today	89 64 Sunny and warm	99 67 Hot with sunshine	77 62 Mostly sunny	89 56 Partly sunny; warm	120 87 Very hot
Friday	Mostly sunny 87/65	Hot 96/68	Some sunshine 75/63	Mostly sunny 90/57	Very hot 118/89
Saturday	Sunny 84/64	Sunny; hot 93/66	Mostly sunny 75/62	Some sunshine 83/54	Hot 113/85
Sunday	Mostly sunny 82/63	Mostly sunny 92/63	Partly sunny 73/60	Stray t-storm 80/52	Very warm 111/85
Monday	Mostly sunny 82/64	Mostly sunny 90/62	Mostly sunny 74/60	Partly sunny 80/47	Hot 113/84

Air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO
Inner waters: Wind becoming west increasing to 10-15 knots. Seas 2-4 feet. Mixed swell south and west of 2-3 feet.

Surf zone: The risk of strong rip currents will be moderate at L.A. and Ventura county beaches and low elsewhere.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	1-3'	7 sec	W	63
Ventura	2-4'	10 sec	SSW	63
Los Angeles	2-4'	10 sec	SW	69
Orange	1-3'	12 sec	S	69
San Diego	1-3'	11 sec	S	70

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

Day	Time	Height
Today	12:36a	4.6 Hi
	2:37p	4.1 Hi
Fri.	1:23a	3.9 Hi
	3:17p	4.3 Hi

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people
Las Vegas, 10 Phoenix, 10
Los Angeles, 10 San Francisco, 10

California cities*

City	Wed.*		Today		Fri.	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
Anaheim	89	66	--	88 65	89	65
Avalon/Catalina	84	67	--	81 67	79	65
Bakersfield	110	81	--	113 82	112	79
Barstow	116	83	--	116 86	113	82
Big Bear Lake	90	53	--	89 56	90	57
Bishop	108	62	--	108 60	103	64
Burbank	99	67	--	95 66	92	69
Cambridge	82	62	--	82 60	79	60
Chatsworth	103	70	--	99 67	96	67
Chino	100	65	--	100 64	96	66
Compton	85	65	--	86 65	85	66
Dana Point	74	67	--	77 66	78	66
Death Valley	126	106	--	127 106	127	106
Del Mar	74	60	02	71 66	73	66
Escondido	91	61	--	91 61	91	63
Eureka	62	54	01	64 52	62	50
Fallbrook	87	61	--	90 62	89	61
Fresno	109	77	--	110 77	109	73
Fullerton	88	67	--	87 66	88	65
Hemet	108	66	--	106 66	102	66
Hesperia	107	71	--	107 76	107	74
Huntington Beach	76	67	--	76 66	78	66
Idyllwild	96	72	--	95 74	98	71
Irvine	83	66	--	84 66	85	65

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set
Sun 5:51a/8:07p
Moon 11:13a/11:39p



Almanac

Wednesday Downtown readings

Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
High/low	84/63	83/65	70/57
Normal high/low	82/64	84/66	73/57
High/low a year ago	83/61	85/60	68/54
Record high/date	103/1959	92/2020	91/1959
Record low/date	55/1903	60/2023	50/1966

Precipitation Los Angeles Fullerton Ventura*

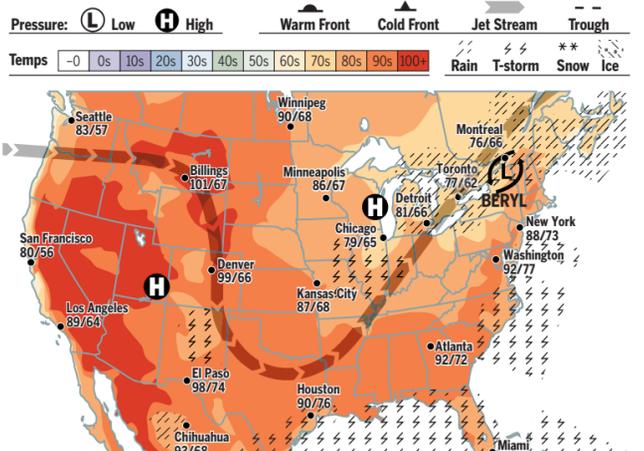
City	Wed.*	Today	Fri.
Los Angeles	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fullerton	22.15	16.59	24.79
Ventura*	28.03	21.35	27.06
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	14.26	11.81	16.05
Humidity (high/low)	93/68	100/52	92/68

City	Wed.*		Today		Fri.	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
L.A. D'town/USC	92	64	--	89 64	87	65
L.A. Int'l. Airport	76	63	--	76 63	75	64
Laguna Beach	73	67	--	77 66	80	66
Lancaster	110	73	--	111 77	109	77
Long Beach	84	67	--	84 66	85	64
Mammoth Lakes	86	44	--	86 47	79	51
Mission Viejo	88	66	--	87 64	87	66
Monrovia	98	68	--	97 65	95	65
Monterey	68	53	--	70 52	70	54
Mt. Wilson	89	72	--	79 71	81	69
Needles	123	92	--	122 92	119	94
Newport Beach	80	68	--	77 67	78	67
Northridge	99	67	--	98 65	95	67
Oakland	79	57	--	83 57	78	57
Oceanside	84	65	--	84 65	84	63
Ojai	94	68	--	96 63	92	67
Ontario	101	67	--	100 67	97	68
Palm Springs	121	87	--	120 87	118	89
Pasadena	97	68	--	94 65	91	65
Paso Robles	104	58	--	106 59	103	58
Redding	115	76	--	114 76	114	78
Riverside	105	64	--	103 65	100	66
Sacramento	106	67	--	111 67	108	63
San Bernardino	107	70	--	106 70	104	70

City	Wed.*		Today		Fri.	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo
San Diego	75	68	--	77 67	76	67
San Francisco	75	56	--	80 56	77	59
San Gabriel	95	67	--	94 65	93	66
San Jose	92	64	--	97 65	93	63
San Luis Obispo	83	57	--	87 58	84	58
Santa Ana	80	68	--	82 67	82	66
Santa Barbara	72	56	--	74 58	74	59
Santa Clarita	104	70	--	104 66	102	65
Santa Monica Pier	79	63	--	77 62	75	63
Santa Rosa	86	62	--	90 60	87	59
Simi Valley	94	54	--	99 55	95	53
Tahoe Valley	97	66	--	97 61	94	61
Temecula	94	65	--	98 63	97	63
Thousand Oaks	87	63	--	91 61	88	60
Torrance	80	65	--	78 64	76	66
UCLA	80	63	--	82 62	81	63
Van Nuys	100	69	--	100 67	96	68
Ventura	71	59	--	72 59	71	61
Whittier Hills	90	66	--	91 65	90	66
Woodland Hills	102	66	--	97 64	93	65
Wrightwood	94	73	--	92 75	92	70
Yorba Linda	92	65	--	91 64	91	64
Yosemite Valley	96	60	--	98 66	94	67

Today in North America

Beryl moves across New England: Beryl will bring rain from upstate New York to northern New England with thunderstorms in Maine bringing the risk of damaging wind gusts. Thunderstorms will line the mid-Atlantic coast through Florida and west to Texas.



U.S. cities

WEDNESDAY'S EXTREMES AS OF 2 P.M. FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 118 in Bullhead City, Ariz.

Low 31 in Fairplay, Colo.

City	Wednesday*		Today		Sky	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo		
Albany	94	76	54	86	67	Ts
Albuquerque	90	67	--	91	66	Cy
Anchorage	68	54	Tr	66	54	Cy
Aspen	79	44	08	83	50	Pc
Atlanta	87	73	--	92	72	Su
Austin	96	73	04	95	73	Cy
Baltimore	95	80	--	91	73	Pc
Boise	110	73	--	106	70	Su
Boston	89	74	Tr	88	72	Pc
Buffalo	82	72	1.07	75	63	R
Burlington, Vt.	80	72	1.04	83	69	Ts
Charleston, S.C.	94	77	Tr	95	77	Ts
Charlotte	94	78	0.4	93	74	Pc
Chicago	84	66	0.60	79	65	Ts
Cincinnati	79	67	0.36	85	67	Pc
Cleveland	82	74	23	78	64	Cy
Columbia, S.C.	97	77	--	96	75	Pc
Columbus	76	73	0.4	84	66	Pc
Dallas/Ft.Worth	99	76	0.4	97	77	Su
Denver	93	60	--	99	66	Su
Detroit	74	69	1.31	81	66	Pc
El Paso	96	74	1.15	98	74	Cy
Eugene	96	62	--	91	53	Su
Fort Myers	92	81	Tr	88	75	Ts
Hartford	92	75	0.26	93	69	Pc
Honolulu	87	75	0.03	87	77	Sh
Houston	93	76	0.4	90	76	Ts
Indianapolis	83	65	1.05	82	67	Ts
Jacksonville, Fla.	91	77	0.48	93	72	Ts
Kansas City	87	63	--	87	68	Pc
Knoxville	86	74	--	90	68	Su
Las Vegas	118	94	--	117	92	Pc
Louisville	85	69	0.76	88	70	Pc
Madison	103	68	--	99	62	Su
Medford	87	67	--	91	73	Su
Memphis	91	61	0.4	88	76	Ts
Miami	91	81	0.4	88	76	Ts
Milwaukee	77	68	Tr	76	64	Su
Minneapolis	80	68	0.41	86	67	Su
Nashville	88	71	--	91	69	Su
New Orleans	88	79	0.05	88	77	Ts
New York	91	79	--	88	73	Pc
Norfolk	91	78	0.4	84	77	Ts
Oklahoma City	93	67	--	94	72	Su
Omaha	89	68	0.16	86	66	Pc
Orlando	93	75	0.06	86	75	Ts
Philadelphia	93	78	0.1	90	74	Pc
Phoenix	117	92	--	117	92	Su
Pittsburgh	92	78	0.13	84	63	Cy
Portland, Ore.	94	68	--	88	58	Pc
Providence	86	74	--	83	70	Pc
Raleigh/Durham	97	80	0.11	93	76	Ts
Reno	106	66	--	105	69	Su
Richmond	94	78	--	91	73	Ts
St. Louis	89	69	0.15	89	71	Ts
Salt Lake City	105	72	--	105	75	Su

City	Wednesday*		Today		Sky	
	Hi	Lo	Hi	Lo		
Seattle	88	62	--	83	57	Su
Tampa	92	82	--	89	80	Ts
Tucson	109	83	--	108	81	Ts
Tulsa	95	68	--	95	75	Su
Washington, D.C.	97	82	Tr	92	77	Pc
Wichita	92	63	--	98	70	Pc

World

City	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	
Acapulco	87	75	86	90	77	Ts
Amsterdam	71	63	25	69	56	Pc
Athens	100	86	--	97	78	Su
Bangkok	88	81	37	92	80	Ts
Barcelona	81	70	--	85	71	Su
Berlin	88	70	18	79	62	Sh
Cabo San Lucas	91	76	--	91	77	Su
Cairo	103	79	--	103	81	Su
Dubai	111	95	--	108	91	Su
Dublin	59	54	92	63	48	Cy
Havana	93	78	0.03	93	73	Ts
Ho Chi Minh City	90	75	0.01	90	77	Ts
Hong Kong	93	83	1.17	92	84	Sh
Istanbul	95	77	0.03	86	76	Ts
Jerusalem	91	72	--	94	72	Su
Johannesburg	68	36	--	70	47	Su
Kuala Lumpur	89	76	0.59	90	76	Cy
Lima	64	59	--	65	58	Pc
London</						

UCLA REPORT

Georgia and Auburn out, Utah and Cal in

BY BEN BOLCH

UCLA is dropping two college football heavyweights from its future football schedules in favor of far more familiar foes.

Gone will be Georgia and Auburn, titans of the Southeastern Conference.

Arriving will be Utah and California, former Pac-12 Conference rivals who joined the Big 12 and Atlantic Coast conferences, respectively, in the wake of UCLA's departure for the Big Ten. Now they will be nonconference opponents who need no introduction.

UCLA will play Utah in 2025 at the Rose Bowl and in 2030 at Rice-Eccles Stadium

in Salt Lake City. The Bruins will face Cal in 2026 and 2028 at Memorial Stadium in Berkeley and in 2027 and 2029 at the Rose Bowl.

Those games replace UCLA's previously scheduled nonconference games against Georgia in 2025 and 2026 and Auburn in 2027 and 2028, which were canceled by mutual agreement among the schools.

From UCLA's perspective, these scheduling changes come with several benefits. Among other things, they will reduce the travel burden for a team playing in a coast-to-coast conference, allow the Bruins to revive a rivalry with Cal that dates to 1933, boost recruiting in Northern Califor-

nia and allow UCLA's fans in the Bay Area to regularly see the team without making a trip to Pasadena.

The series with Cal is not expected to have any impact on UCLA's \$10-million annual "Calimony" payments to its sister school for the next three years that are intended to subsidize the Golden Bears' athletic department. But the scheduling move could serve as a goodwill gesture between the schools that nurtures their relationship.

UCLA's approach to nonconference scheduling now features the inclusion of one major-conference team along with two lesser opponents. In 2025, the Bruins will play Nevada Las Vegas

and New Mexico in addition to Utah. In 2026, UCLA will face San Diego State and Nevada in addition to Cal. In 2027, the Bruins will play Hawaii and UC Davis in addition to Cal.

From a competitive standpoint, UCLA doesn't need any SEC schools as part of its nonconference schedule given the move to the Big Ten will stack its schedule with enough quality teams.

Utah certainly could add heft to the Bruins' schedule given that it won the Pac-12 in two of the last three seasons and is expected to immediately contend in the Big 12.

Cal, on the other hand, has not posted a winning

season since 2019, though it whipped UCLA, 33-7, last season at the Rose Bowl.

In a nod to the bizarre landscape of college sports, the Golden Bears and Bruins will resume their rivalry as part of far-flung conferences.

Bruins add a coach

UCLA has hired **Corey Miller** as its head football performance coach in a move that represents the addition of another staffer with NFL experience as well as a return to Westwood after Miller previously spent the 2022 season as the Bruins' director of speed and movement.

Last summer Miller became the Carolina Panthers'

assistant director of strength and conditioning. Miller also had worked with the Rams during their 2022 training camp.

During his first stint at UCLA, Miller produced speed and weight training plans for offensive linemen, defensive linemen and "big" skill athletes while also helping with producing and analyzing sport science data and leading the team's return-to-play protocols.

A former star defensive lineman at Tennessee, Miller had previous stops in strength and conditioning roles at Mississippi and South Carolina.

Miller replaces **Keith Belton**, who has departed for an undisclosed job.

Hamby says she must do more

Sparks leader needs to better set the tone for her team after its third loss to Lynx this year.

BY BENJAMIN ROYER

Curt Miller urged his team to play with an all-or-nothing sentiment before the Sparks closed their four-game homestand Tuesday night.

"We have to leave it all out there," he said before the game. "There's nothing we should be saving in the tank tonight. We should lay it all on the line."

But Miller's plea for passion and intensity on the court didn't translate to a victory.

Minnesota never trailed despite playing without potential most-valuable-player candidate Napheesa Collier for the second consecutive game. The Lynx led by 15 in the first quarter and as many as 25 overall, defeating the last-place Sparks 82-67 at Crypto.com Arena.

"Obviously, a game where we were outplayed [and] outcoached," Miller said. "And again, this is why Minnesota is one of the top three teams in the league right now — is their execution at the offensive end, their tempo, their screening [and] their physicality. It's just really been impressive all year to watch against everybody, and you know, they're stepping up without even their best player now."

The Sparks (5-17) ended an eight-game losing streak last Friday by beating the Las Vegas Aces, but that has begun to resemble a blip on the radar rather than a change of course.

Dearica Hamby led all scorers with 18 points and reached 3,000 points for her career, but Minnesota (16-6) still claimed a victory over the Sparks for the third time this season.

Since becoming the Sparks' coach last year, Miller has yet to beat the Lynx, having lost all seven matchups. Bridget Carleton led Minnesota with 16 points and Dorka Juhász had a sea-



MEG OLIPHANT/Getty Images

DEARICA HAMBY scored a game-high 18 points against Cecilia Zandalasini and Minnesota on Tuesday, including the Sparks star's 3,000th career point.

son-high 15 to help offset the loss of Collier, who is out indefinitely because of plantar fasciitis in her left foot.

Lynx coach Cheryl Reeve forced Miller to call two timeouts in the first quarter, which closed with the Sparks trailing 29-16 after three-pointers from Alissa Pili and Cecilia Zandalasini on back-to-back Minnesota possessions.

The Sparks shrunk the deficit to five points in the second quarter, but by the end of the half, despite shooting 42.9%, they were down 16. Midway through the third quarter, the advantage grew to 25.

Hamby said as one of the veterans on the Sparks, she has to set an example for teammates by showing higher intensity from the opening tip to prevent quick deficits like Tuesday's.

"I got to start with the toughness and the physicality from the start of the game," said Hamby, the Sparks' leading scorer this season. "As a pro, you kind of

learn yourself, but when you have to lead, I think I have to be more intentional about the tone that I set from the beginning. It may work for me, but it doesn't necessarily work for everybody else."

Sparks forward Azurá Stevens, who made her season debut Sunday in a loss to Phoenix, started for the first time since having left arm surgery in March. The seven-year veteran scored nine points with six rebounds. Stevens replaced Stephanie Talbot, who exited Sunday's game because of an injury.

"I feel good," Stevens said. "It's a condensed season, so I've had reps in practice. ... I'm still getting used to just the physicality of the game, incorporating my arm in that."

The Sparks entered the game ranked third worst in the WNBA in turnovers (15.9 per game) and finished with 18, leading to 22 Minnesota points.

And while the Lynx shot 50% from beyond the arc, the Sparks struggled from long

range — shooting three for 20.

"We talked about the margin in here a lot between winning or losing for us," Miller said.

"Our margin is different than a bunch of teams in this league. And so you have to — every night — bring your toughness, your energy, your physicality."

"And we got out-toughed. We got out-physicaled tonight."

Tuesday's late box

LYNX 82, SPARKS 67

MINNESOTA — Carleton 6-7 0-16, Juhász 7-11 1-11, Smith 2-6 2-8, McBride 4-9 2-2 11, Williams 2-8 0-0 4, Kone 0-0 1-21, Miller 2-4 2-2 6, Pili 3-6 0-0 7, Zandalasini 4-9 1-11, Hiedeman 2-5 0-0 5. Totals 32-65 9-10 82.

SPARKS — Jackson 3-8 0-1 6, Stevens 4-9 0-0 9, Hamby 7-9 3-18, McDonald 2-6 0-0 4, Nurse 2-7 1-1 5, Burrell 0-4 6-6 6, Yueri 0-2 4-4 4, Clarendon 4-5 0-0 8, Cooke 1-4 2-2 5, Dangerfield 0-2 2-2 2. Totals 23-56 18-19 67.

Minnesota 29 22 19 12- 82

Sparks 16 19 16 16- 67

3-Point Goals—Minnesota 9-18 (Carleton 4-4, Zandalasini 2-3, Hiedeman 1-2, Pili 1-3, McBride 1-4, Smith 0-1, Williams 0-1), Sparks 3-20 (Hamby 1-2, Cooke 1-3, Stevens 1-3, Burrell 0-1, Clarendon 0-1, Dangerfield 0-2, Jackson 0-2, McDonald 0-2, Nurse 0-4), Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Minnesota 27 (Juhász, Smith 6), Sparks 29 (Hamby 8), Assists—Minnesota 23 (Williams 5), Sparks 17 (Clarendon, McDonald, Stevens 4), Total Fouls—Minnesota 22, Sparks 20. A-9,533 (18,997)

Berhalter is fired after U.S. collapse at Copa América

Men's soccer coach was popular among his players, but early exit this month cost him.

BY KEVIN BAXTER

With the 2026 World Cup less than two years away, U.S. Soccer is starting over after firing coach Gregg Berhalter on Wednesday.

"I want to thank Gregg for his hard work and dedication to U.S. Soccer and our Men's National Team," U.S. Soccer president Cindy Parlow Cone said in a statement announcing the move.

"We are now focused on working with our Sporting Director Matt Crocker and leveraging his experience at the highest levels of the sport to ensure we find the right person to lead the USMNT into a new era of on-field success."

Berhalter was hired in December 2018, 14 months after the U.S. failed to qualify for the World Cup, and led the team to a Gold Cup championship, two CONCACAF Nations League titles and to the round of 16 in the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

"I want to thank the US Soccer Federation for entrusting me to lead this team for the past five years," Berhalter said in a statement.

"Representing our country is a tremendous honor and I am proud of the identity we have built on and off the field. It was very gratifying watching this team improve over the years and I remain grateful for the lifetime bonds created with our players, coaches, and staff members."

"The Copa América result is extremely disappointing and I take full responsibility for our performance. Our approach and process was always focused on the 2026 World Cup and I remain confident that this group will be one of the great stories in 2026."

With a record of 44-15-13, he leaves with the best winning percentage of any coach who worked more than seven matches with the national team.

But he was undone by a poor performance in this summer's Copa América,

which the U.S. exited in the group stage after losing to Panama and Uruguay.

That marked the first time in 20 global or continental tournaments the U.S. has hosted that the national team has gone out in the group stage.

It was also the first time a Copa América host failed to advance.

Only Bruce Arena (81) and Jurgen Klinsmann (55) won more games with the U.S. than Berhalter, but the team has struggled lately, winning three of its last nine games dating to last November.

So after the 1-0 loss to Uruguay last week, Crocker issued a statement promising a thorough examination of the national team program.

"We must do better," he said.

"We will be conducting a comprehensive review of our performance in Copa América and how best to improve the team and results as we look towards the 2026 World Cup."

Berhalter, a former Galaxy player and assistant coach and the only former World Cup player to coach the U.S. in the tournament, was popular in the locker room and several of his players voiced their support for the coach after the Copa América debacle.

"I see no issue with the direction we're heading," goalkeeper Matt Turner said. "When you have a fight like that on the pitch in every single game we're in in this tournament, it speaks volumes to how the manager prepares us."

Midfielder Weston McKennie, meanwhile, said players would "run through a brick wall" for Berhalter.

What they apparently couldn't do for him, however, was score a goal. The U.S. was held to one or fewer goals during seven of their past nine games.

And that was enough for some players to realize change was needed.

"Look, we have a good relationship with him," captain Christian Pulisic said after the loss to Uruguay. "Whatever the next step looks like, it's not my job to decide."

There was no word Wednesday on a successor.

THE DAY IN SPORTS

Musetti will face Djokovic in semifinals at Wimbledon

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Lorenzo Musetti threw his head back and spread his arms wide to celebrate reaching his first Grand Slam semifinal at Wimbledon, then covered his face with both hands.

His 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 victory over **Taylor Fritz** on Wednesday was a big deal, to be sure. After all, the 25th-seeded Musetti, a 22-year-old from Italy, never had made it past the third round at the All England Club — or past the fourth round at any major tournament.

Now comes a far tougher test: **Novak Djokovic**.

This will be Djokovic's record-tying 13th semifinal at Wimbledon alone — equaling **Roger Federer** — and 49th Slam semifinal overall, extending a mark he already held. As Musetti

pursues his first major championship, Djokovic seeks a 25th, including what would be an eighth at the All England Club.

His smooth trip through this bracket was made even easier when the man he was supposed to play in the quarterfinals Wednesday, **Alex de Minaur**, pulled out because of a hip injury.

Playing Fritz, the Southern California native who is one of the sport's biggest servers but fell to 0-4 in major quarterfinals, Musetti managed to accumulate 13 break points and convert six, and he did far more to vary his strokes — a drop shot here, a lob there, plenty of slices — than Fritz did.

In the women's quarterfinals, 2022 champion **Elena Rybakina** grabbed nine of the last 11 games to defeat **Elina Svitolina** 6-3, 6-2, and **Barbora Krejčíková** elimi-

nated **Jelena Ostapenko** 6-4, 7-6 (4).

ETC.

Banned Porter pleads guilty

Former NBA player **Jontay Porter** admitted he schemed to take himself out of games for gambling's sake, pleading guilty to a federal conspiracy crime in the scandal that already got him banned from the league.

Porter acknowledged he agreed to withdraw early from games so co-conspirators could win bets on his performance. He did it, he said, "to get out from under large gambling debts."

Porter, 24, is free while awaiting sentencing set for Dec. 18. Prosecutors estimated his sentence at a

range from just under 3 1/2 years in prison to a little more than four years.

A'ja Wilson had 24 points and 20 rebounds for her first 20-20 game, and the Las Vegas Aces beat Seattle 84-79. ... **Caitlin Clark** became the first WNBA player with 29 points, 13 assists, five rebounds, five threes, five steals and three blocks in a game. ... Chicago's **Angel Reese** extended her record run of double-doubles to 14.

Tampa Bay Rays shortstop **Wander Franco** will go to trial Aug. 14 after being charged with sexually abusing a 14-year-old in the Dominican Republic. Franco, who agreed to a \$182-million, 11-year contract in 2021, is on administrative leave and has not played since August. ... Philadelphia slugger **Bryce Harper**, who re-

turned from the injured list Tuesday against the Dodgers, sat out Wednesday because of a bruised left hand.

Noah Gragson is the third of four Stewart-Haas Racing drivers to secure a NASCAR ride for next year, signing a multiyear deal with Front Row Motorsports.

Defending champion **Jonas Vingegaard** beat rival **Tadej Pogacar** in a two-man sprint after a brutal day in the mountains to win Stage 11 of the Tour de France. Pogacar remains the leader.

England made a second straight European Championship final by beating the Netherlands 2-1 thanks to substitute **Ollie Watkins'** stoppage-time winner.

Oklahoma State coach **Mike Gundy** said NCAA

rushing champion **Ollie Gordon II**, who was arrested last week and charged with driving under the influence by a person under 21, won't miss a game next season and said "I've probably done that a thousand times in my life."

Gordon, who also showed up to Big 12 media day Tuesday, apologized, and Gundy defended his decision. "Yeah, he's playing in the first game because that's what he does, OK? He needs to take care of his business," Gundy said. "I'm not gonna seclude him and not play him in the game. I understand the severity of the situation and know this: Is suspending him for one game really gonna matter? I don't think so. Now you wanna suspend him for six games maybe? Maybe that'll do it, but then I don't think that that's fair to everybody else on our team."

— CHUCK SCHILKEN

BASEBALL: TUESDAY FLASHBACK

STANDINGS

Table showing MLB Standings through Tuesday for National League and American League, including teams like Dodgers, Yankees, and Red Sox.

Today's games

Table listing today's MLB games, including matchups like Dodgers at Philadelphia and Angels vs. Seattle.

ON THIS DATE

1985 - Nolan Ryan of the Houston Astros became the first pitcher to reach 4,000 strikeouts when he fanned the New York Mets' Danny Heep leading off the sixth inning.

If only that O'Hoppe could pitch too

Angels catcher has three hits, including two tying homers, but Texas hits the tiebreaking shot in eighth.

By JOE REDDY

Adolis Garcia broke out of a one-for-19 slump with a solo homer in the eighth inning, and the Texas Rangers beat the Angels 5-4 on Tuesday night.

Garcia was batting .115 in July (three for 26) before he drove a sinker from Luis Garcia into the elevated stands in right-center, helping the defending champions to their season-high fifth win in a row.

"It was awesome because it helped the team win. That's the most important thing right now," Garcia said through an interpreter.

Garcia had hard-hit balls in his first two at-bats but ended up grounding into a double play and lining out to the outfield.

"He didn't have much to show for it, and didn't get down about it. He goes up there and hits a home run to put us ahead," manager Bruce Bochy said.

Rangers starter Max Scherzer tied the game. His second-inning homer over the left-center wall made it 1-1. In the fourth inning, he lined a fastball that just made it over the outstretched glove of center fielder Leody Taveras and knotted it at 4-4.

"I watched him growing up a ton. He's been dominant his whole career, but it doesn't matter being on the losing end," O'Hoppe said about his game against Scherzer.

The Angels had a chance to take the lead in the seventh inning with the bases loaded after Anthony



RYAN SUN ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANTHONY RENDON dodges the ball as he bounces out to Texas catcher Andrew Knizner during the first inning Tuesday in Anaheim. Outside of Logan O'Hoppe, the Angels lineup did little.

Rendon drew a walk off Jose Leclerc, but Nolan Schanuel grounded out to end the inning.

Texas' Kirby Yates gave up a two-out single to Zach Neto in the ninth but struck out Jo Adell to earn his 14th save.

"We put ourselves in position to do something really good, but we couldn't get that hit," Angels manager Ron Washington said.

Texas' Josh Smith, a surprise omission off the All-Star Game roster, had three hits, including a home run in the first inning. After two failed bunt attempts, Smith lined a changeup over the center of the plate from Angels starter Roansy Contreras off the auxiliary

scoreboard above the wall in right-center. The solo shot also knocked out power to some of the panels on the scoreboard.

Texas scored three times in the third to take a 4-1 lead. The Rangers' first five batters got aboard, including a ground-rule RBI double by Marcus Semien and Smith's run-scoring single, which ended Contreras' night.

The Angels got within 4-3 in the bottom of the inning on Schanuel's RBI double. He then came home on Taylor Ward's single to the right-field gap, with Texas' Derek Hill misplaying the ball for an error.

Notes

Garcia will represent the host Rangers in Monday night's home run derby at Globe Life Field. He was knocked out in the first round last year. ... Rangers catcher Jonah Heim was scratched from the lineup because of neck stiffness. ... Rangers right-hander Tyler Mahle (elbow surgery) gave up one hit and struck out two in two innings in a rehab start for double-A Frisco, his second rehab appearance. ... Rangers right-hander Jacob deGrom (elbow surgery) had a 30-pitch bullpen session.

Reddy writes for the Associated Press.

PHILADELPHIA 10, DODGERS 1. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

TEXAS 5, ANGELS 4. Game recap table with player stats for Garcia, Scherzer, and others.

PHILADELPHIA 10, DODGERS 1. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

PHILADELPHIA 10, DODGERS 1. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

PHILADELPHIA 10, DODGERS 1. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

CINCINNATI 12, COLORADO 6. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

BOSTON 12, OAKLAND 9. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

N.Y. METS 7, WASHINGTON 5. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

CHICAGO CUBS 9, BALTIMORE 2. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

HOUSTON 4, MIAMI 3. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

TAMPA BAY 5, N.Y. YANKEES 3. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

PITTSBURGH 12, MILWAUKEE 2. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

ATLANTA 6, ARIZONA 2. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

SEATTLE 8, SAN DIEGO 3. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

SAN FRANCISCO 4, TORONTO 3. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

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SAN FRANCISCO 4, TORONTO 3. Game recap table with player stats for Ohtani, Turner, and others.

Dodgers demote Miller after latest outing

Team hopes his stint in the minors will correct what is ailing pitcher's mechanics.

By Jack Harris

PHILADELPHIA — The Dodgers starting rotation lost another pitcher on Wednesday.

This time, the subtraction was intentional.

A day after getting rocked for nine runs by the Philadelphia Phillies, in what was the latest clunker of a disappointing 2024 season, right-hander Bobby Miller was optioned to triple-A Oklahoma City, the Dodgers announced — an unexpected, but hardly unwarranted, demotion for the 2023 rookie star who had stumbled to a 1-2 record and 8.07 ERA in seven outings this year.

“No. 1, we got to get him right, that’s the impetus,” manager Dave Roberts said. “You have a path to either continue to go as we have been, and hope that it turns; or remove him from the situation, option him, and give him a reset to get out of this hotbox of performance. So we just felt this was the best thing for Bobby and for us. He’s a big part of what we’re trying to do this year.”

Indeed, Miller’s raw stuff makes him a vitally important piece of the Dodgers’ long-term pitching plans.

For a team that is currently without Tyler Glasnow, Yoshinobu Yamamoto, Walker Buehler, Clayton Kershaw and Dustin May because of injuries, and approaching a trade deadline market short of top-end starting pitching,

Miller’s upper-90s mph fastball and (when well-executed) swing-and-miss secondary stuff makes him a unique talent on their roster.

He’s one of the club’s increasingly few pitchers with the kind of potential to excel in October.

Which is why, in a 2024 season that was already derailed two months by a



MATT SLOCUM Associated Press

PITCHER Bobby Miller has a 1-2 record and 8.07 ERA in seven outings this year after a breakout 2023.

shoulder injury, the Dodgers couldn’t risk his slump lasting any longer.

They want to send him to the minors, let him and the organization’s player development department try to iron out his delivery, then get him back at top-form in time for the season’s important stretch run.

“You can see it taking a toll on him,” Roberts said of Miller’s struggles.

“When I take him out of a game, you can just see the weight and the stress that he’s putting on himself. So I

do think that getting him out of this environment is gonna be beneficial.

“He’s gonna come back reset, recharged, and throwing the baseball the way we know he can.”

That, at least, is the optimistic view of the Dodgers’ decision on Wednesday.

Through another lens, the move served as the latest sign of the team’s suddenly dwindling rotation options — both in the short term, with a rotation that is now down to just four arms, but also in the long term, as

starting pitching questions start to cloud the club’s October chances.

“The last thing I’m thinking about is a playoff rotation,” Roberts said.

“We don’t even know who Sunday’s starter is. We have a lot of good options [for the playoffs] if they’re healthy and pitching well. But right now we’re just a long way from that point.”

The time frame for Miller’s eventual return to the majors is unclear.

This week, he will work directly with Dodgers minor

league pitching director Rob Hill, trying to identify what in his delivery has caused his lack of command, dip of fastball velocity and overall inability to execute consistently.

After next week’s All-Star break, Miller will join the Dodgers’ triple A rotation in Oklahoma City, where Roberts said the club will be looking for him to “finish off hitters when he has count leverage; command the baseball, certainly the fastball; and get his changeup back to being a swing-and-

miss pitch.”

“I think he was certainly taken aback, but he understood it, handled it like a professional,” Roberts said of Miller’s reaction to the news, which he was informed of Tuesday night.

“He was determined to do whatever he could to get back to help us win up here, and be the pitcher that he knows he’s capable of being and has been before.”

In a best-case scenario, Miller can be called back as soon as July 25 (and possibly sooner, if someone else on the Dodgers’ pitching staff goes on the injured list in the meantime).

In the meantime, Roberts said it’s possible top pitching prospect River Ryan could be called up to join the team’s big-league rotation — one that already features three other rookies currently in Gavin Stone, Landon Knack and Justin Wrobleski.

“It isn’t easy [sending Miller down] because we need healthy starting pitchers,” Roberts said. “But it just shows how much we value Bobby.”

Still, for a pitcher who was supposed to be a “big piece of the puzzle” in the Dodgers’ pitching plans this year, as Roberts put it early in the season, and still figures to serve as one of their few legitimate options to start games in October, if he can rectify his form, Wednesday’s “news reflected the depths of the struggles Miller had endured — and the desperation with which the club is trying to get him right. If you’re going to do something this drastic or whatever, we’ve got to make sure we run this play out so we don’t have to do it again,” Roberts said.

Hernández in derby

Amid a dream start to his first season with the Dodgers, outfielder Teoscar Hernández was officially announced as part of the eight-man field for Monday’s home run derby.

His 19 home runs entering Wednesday were tied for 12th most in the majors.

Dodgers mull options for trades

[Dodgers, from B10]

From the Nos. 6-9 spots, the Dodgers ranked in the bottom third of the majors in batting average (.216) and OPS (.625) entering Wednesday. They regularly use platoons at as many as three positions, but have still struggled to find much bottom-half consistency.

It hasn’t stopped the club from building a commanding lead in the National League West. It hasn’t prevented them from being a premier offensive force, entering Wednesday with more runs scored than any other NL club.

But the top-heavy nature of the lineup has sparked plenty of brainstorming in the Dodgers’ front office.

The team’s most important need might be another front-line pitcher, another top arm to join Tyler Glasnow when he returns from the injured list after the All-Star break and Gavin Stone at the top of the rotation.

But with deadline pickings among starting pitchers looking slim, there are myriad ways the team can bolster its lineup for a forthcoming postseason run too.

“The organization,” manager Dave Roberts said last week, “is always looking to upgrade.”

The Dodgers’ preference would be to acquire more consistent everyday hitters, and be less reliant on matchup-based platoons that often can be exploited by playoff-caliber pitching.

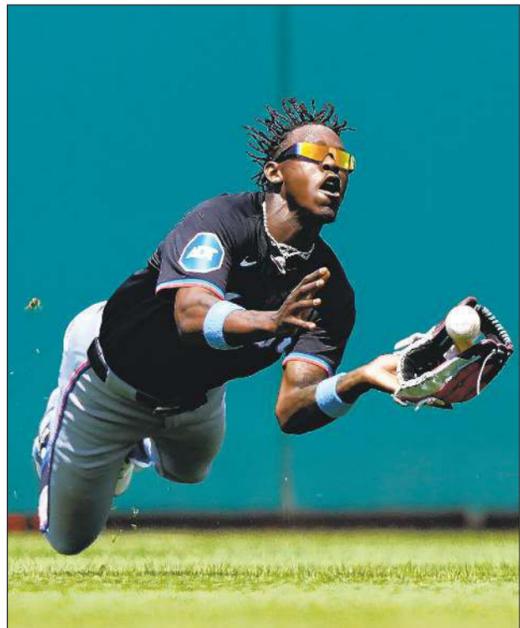
The eventual return of third baseman Max Muncy offers one de facto second-half addition, with the club remaining confident Muncy will recover from an oblique strain that has sidelined him since mid-May.

However, after this much time away from the field, Muncy’s performance upon returning continues to grow as a variable.

“The longer he’s out, the harder it is,” Roberts said.

Has it reached a point where it could impact the Dodgers’ deadline plans? “We’re still counting on him,” Roberts added. But, the manager added, “we’re looking to upgrade in different spots.”

That’s why, even at this relatively early juncture, the Dodgers have started ex-



SUSAN WALSH Associated Press

MARLINS outfielder Jazz Chisholm Jr. could be one of the top names on the trade block this month.

ploring potential big-name moves to boost the lineup.

The team has had interest in outfielders Luis Robert Jr. of the Chicago White Sox and Randy Arozarena of the Tampa Bay Rays, according to people with knowledge of the situation who weren’t authorized to speak publicly. On a trade market lacking much star power, those two could be among the splashier targets potentially moved this month.

However, there would be hurdles to completing a deal for either player — impediments that could make acquiring one of them, or any impact hitter for that matter, difficult.

First and foremost, neither Robert (under contract through 2025, with club options in 2026 and 2027) nor Arozarena (team control through 2026) is a rental player, which means acquiring them could come at a steep cost.

Neither is Robert his best season, either. Having been limited to 38 games because of a hip injury and is batting a career-low .220, though his .788 OPS is well above league average. Arozarena has heated up in recent weeks but still was batting just .201 entering

Wednesday after a dreadful start to the season.

Those factors could complicate any negotiations.

While the Dodgers’ highly touted farm system possesses the prospect capital to potentially swing such a deal, the club could be reluctant to overpay for what it already deems to be inflated deadline prices. On what figures to be a seller’s market, there will be limits to how much they’re willing to part with.

And that dynamic could apply to other top trade options too, such as Jazz Chisholm Jr. of the Miami Marlins, the other top outfielder who could be on the block this month, or Bo Bichette of the Toronto Blue Jays, the best shortstop who could be moved before July 30.

It means, in an equally likely scenario, the Dodgers could approach this deadline similar to last year’s, when they bypassed any blockbuster deals in favor of more marginal lineup additions.

If the club goes the latter route, it will make the next three weeks vital for role players on the team, turning the rest of the month into a final evaluation period for

the team to determine its exact needs.

Entering Wednesday, only two typical bottom-half hitters had an OPS of .700 or higher: Miguel Rojas, who has taken over as the everyday shortstop since Betts’ hand fracture, and Andy Pages, the rookie slugger who has emerged as the team’s primary option in center field.

Everybody else in the bottom half of the order has been a liability at times. Gavin Lux has struggled at second base in his return from last year’s knee injury. Jason Heyward has been hot and cold and on the injured list twice.

Utility players Kiké Hernández, Chris Taylor and Cavan Biggio also have underperformed, each with an OPS of less than .600 entering Wednesday.

And though the recently recalled Miguel Vargas has been good in flashes, he is still playing on a part-time basis.

It means the Dodgers could benefit from another veteran outfield bat, with names like Tommy Pham, Kevin Kiermaier and Mark Canha all expected to be available before the deadline.

They might need a more consistent utility option, so players like Luis Rengifo and Amed Rosario could be a fit.

For now, the Dodgers aren’t rushing into any of those types of moves. They still have time to determine where their roster should be reinforced.

“Every night that these guys are getting opportunities, they have a chance to make an impression,” Roberts said of his bottom-half group. “[They can] kind of change the way the organization views what might be a position of need. That’s the job.”

Still, just like with the pitching staff, the team would like to strengthen its lineup before the July 30 deadline.

And with less than three weeks to go until the deadline, they are keeping all options — big and small — seemingly open, still trying to decide which avenues for potential improvement will make the most sense for them to explore.

PRO CALENDAR

	THU 11	FRI 12	SAT 13	SUN 14	MON 15
DODGERS	at Philadelphia 3 SNLA	at Detroit 3:30 SNLA	at Detroit 10 a.m. SNLA	at Detroit 10:30 a.m. SNLA	
ANGELS	SEATTLE 6:30 BSW	SEATTLE 6:30 BSW	SEATTLE 6:30 BSW	SEATTLE 1 BSW	
SPARKS			at Dallas 12:30 Ch. 2		
GALAXY			at Dallas 5 Apple TV		
LAFC			COLUMBUS 7:30 Apple TV		
ANGEL CITY					NEXT: JULY 20 VS. CLUB AMÉRICA**, 7 P.M., PARAMOUNT +

Shade denotes home game. **NWSL x Liga MX Femenil Summer Cup

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL		
2:30 a.m. (Fri.)	AFL, Collingwood vs. Geelong	TV: FS2
BASEBALL		
10 a.m.	Washington at New York Mets	TV: MLB
10 a.m.	Colorado at Cincinnati	TV: ESPN+
3 p.m.	Dodgers at Philadelphia	TV: SNLA R: 570, 1020
3:30 p.m.	Chicago Cubs at Baltimore	TV: MLB
6:30 p.m.	Seattle at Angels	TV: BSW R: 830, 1330
6:30 p.m.	Atlanta at Arizona	TV: MLB
BASKETBALL: WNBA		
4 p.m.	Chicago at New York	TV: Amazon Prime
CYCLING		
4 a.m. (Fri.)	Tour de France, Stage 13	TV: Peacock
GOLF		
7:30 a.m.	PGA Tour, Scottish Open, first round	TV: Golf, Peacock
11 a.m.	PGA Tour Champions, Kaulig Companies Championship, first round	TV: Golf, Peacock
1:30 p.m.	PGA Tour, ISCO Championship, first round	TV: Golf, Peacock
3 a.m. (Fri.)	LPGA, Evian Championship, second round	TV: Golf, Peacock
HORSE RACING		
9:30 a.m.	Saratoga Live	TV: FS2
1 p.m.	Saratoga Live	TV: BSSC
3 p.m.	Saratoga Live	TV: FS1
PICKLEBALL		
9 a.m.	MLP, Grand Rapids, first round	TV: Tennis
TENNIS		
5 a.m. (Fri.)	Wimbledon, men’s singles, semifinals	TV: ESPN, ESPN2

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.



SPORTS

THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS

PARIS OLYMPICS



KNEE FORCES LEONARD TO HEAD HOME

Clippers star won't play in Olympics and instead will focus on preparing for season.

BY BRODERICK TURNER

LAS VEGAS — Kawhi Leonard said his surgically repaired right knee was “at a neutral state” after a fourth day of training camp with Team USA and was hopeful it would remain that way.

It did not. So, in consultation with Team USA and the Clippers, Leonard withdrew from the Paris Olympics on Wednesday so the forward can concentrate on getting his knee healthy for next season.

“Kawhi has been ramping up for the Olympics over the past several weeks and had a few strong practices in Las Vegas,” Team USA said in a statement. “He felt ready to compete. However, he respects that USA Basketball and the Clippers determined it’s in his best interest to spend the remainder of the summer preparing for the upcoming season.”

The team replaced Leonard with Boston guard Derrick White ahead of Wednesday’s exhibition with Canada, a game Leonard had said he was going to play.

“Yeah, I think I will suit up tomorrow,” Leonard said Tuesday after practice. “Everything has been good so far.”

But injuries have been a big part of Leonard’s five seasons in Los Angeles.

He played in 68 games last season, the most since he played in 74 for the San Antonio Spurs in 2016-17, but missed the Clippers’ final eight regular-season games because of right knee inflammation.

Leonard then played in Games 2 and 3 of the Clippers’ first-round playoff series against the Dallas Mavericks but missed the last three because of inflammation. His last NBA game was April 26.

Out of 410 regular-season games with the Clippers, Leonard has played just 226.

He missed the entire [See Leonard, B6]

FASHION MEETS FUNCTION

The day after hearing their names called as members of the 2024 U.S. gymnastics team in front of a sold-out crowd in Minneapolis’ Target Center, Simone Biles, Suni Lee, Jordan Chiles, Jade Carey and Hezly Rivera assembled on an NBC stage in front of an exclusive audience. Each gymnast received a red box labeled with a gold plate that read “made exclusively for” with their name. On three, each gymnast opened their box.

A sparkling, star-spangled leotard glittered inside.

“They were in awe,” said Jeanne Diaz, the design mastermind behind the U.S. Olympic leotards.

While trying to recapture team gold in Paris, the Americans will wear an eight-piece leotard

U.S. gymnastics leotards look dazzling, but performance is key

BY THUC NHI NGUYEN

collection that aims to take the Olympic leotard to new heights of both fashion and function. Don’t let the crystals — up to 10,000 on one — be a distraction. These bedazzled bodysuits are just as tough as the athletes who wear them.

“We are charged to create this beautiful intersection of fashion and sport and the Team USA leotard represents that at its pinnacle,” GK Elite CEO Matt Cowan said. “But ultimately they’re there to perform. They’re there to win gold medals.”

Diaz’s Olympic process starts two years before the Games. The GK Elite gymnastics design director started planning in August 2022, compiling a mood board for a theme that could unify the collection. [See Gymnastics, B6]



GK Elite Sportswear

TEAM USA gymnasts, clockwise from top, Suni Lee, Simone Biles and Leanne Wong sport leotards designed especially for Paris.

Dodgers might be trade bottom feeders to bolster lineup

Weak-hitting lower part of the order is ripe for an upgrade if the price is right.

JACK HARRIS ON THE DODGERS

PHILADELPHIA — Almost every day, the top half of the Dodgers’ batting order looks the same.

Mookie Betts, when healthy, providing a spark from the leadoff spot.

Shohei Ohtani producing MVP-caliber numbers as the designated hitter behind him.

Three more All-Star hitters from there in Freddie Freeman, Will Smith and Teoscar Hernández.

Together, they have formed the most potent quintuplet in the majors this year. Combined, the club’s .284 batting average



LINDSEY WASSON Associated Press

WHITE SOX outfielder Luis Robert Jr. could be a trade target for the Dodgers, but he is having a down year.

Dodgers demote struggling Miller

Team hopes the young pitcher can correct his mechanics in minors. B9

Too bad O’Hoppe can’t hit and pitch

Catcher slugs two home runs, but Angels fall to Rangers on Tuesday. B8

and .881 on-base-plus-slugging percentage from the top five spots in the batting order, as of Tuesday, easily were the best in baseball.

However, with the league’s July 30 trade deadline less than three weeks away, the bottom half of the Dodgers’ lineup continues to generate concern — and has emerged as a source of speculation surrounding the team’s potential deadline plans.

[See Dodgers, B9]

UCLA football tweaks future schedules

Bruins drop Georgia and Auburn, replacing them with former Pac-12 rivals Utah and California. B7

U.S. Soccer fires coach Berhalter

He led men’s team to key tournament titles but was undone by a poor performance in Copa América. B7

NBA on verge of reaching TV deal

League finalizes the contracts for extended deals with NBC, ABC, ESPN and Amazon’s Prime Video. A6

Los Angeles Times
SPORTS EXTRA

A TIMES E-NEWSPAPER EXCLUSIVE :: THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2024



MATT SLOCUM Associated Press

DODGERS catcher Austin Barnes tags out the Phillies' Alec Bohm in the fifth inning. Philadelphia won for the second night in a row in a battle of division leaders.

Even Stone can't stop another bad night

BY JACK HARRIS

PHILADELPHIA — Here's a list of everything that's gone wrong for Dodgers pitchers this week:

Tyler Glasnow was placed on the injured list Tuesday because of back tightness, reigniting fears of his injury-prone past after a strong opening half to the season.

Bobby Miller was demoted to the minors after giving up nine runs Tuesday night, getting a much-needed "reset," as manager Dave Roberts put it, given his 8.07 earned-run average.

Then, the Dodgers' best healthy pitcher, Gavin Stone, took some lumps in a 4-3 loss to the Philadelphia Phillies on Wednesday night, giving up four runs (all earned, though his defense was equally to blame for at least a couple) in less than five innings against a star-studded lineup the Dodgers very well could see again in October.

The good news?

Kiké Hernández got four outs at the end of Tuesday's blowout.

Other than that, it's been a bleak week.

"This was a frustrating one," Roberts said. "We had some opportunities that we couldn't capitalize."

Stone didn't pitch poorly. While Kyle Schwarber got him for a lead-off home run in the first inning, the Phillies' one-run second inning and two-run fifth both were keyed by misplays from the Dodgers' defense.

In the second, Miguel Vargas failed to reel in a line drive in left, leading to a leadoff double that came around to score. In the fifth — just after the Dodgers erased their early two-run deficit — Andy Pages lost a fly ball in the lights in center, turning a routine out into a leadoff triple. Then, with two outs, short-stop Miguel Rojas couldn't cleanly field a difficult ground ball from

Trea Turner, leading to the Phillies' go-ahead run.

"Gavin was fine, he settled in nicely," Roberts said. "But I think that with him, he needs his defense. That's just the way it is."

Indeed, instead of compensating for the miscues made behind him, Stone fell well short of dominance. He collected just three strikeouts. He gave up nine hits. And, for a second consecutive start, he couldn't complete five innings, getting replaced with two outs in the fifth after throwing 77 pitches.

"Just made a couple mistakes," Stone said, "and they took advantage of it."

Considering the opponent — the Phillies (60-32) own MLB's best record and trail only the Dodgers (55-38) in scoring among National League clubs — it was an understandable result.

A more clinical performance from the Dodgers' offense might

have altered the outcome, as well.

Despite going four for 11 with runners in scoring position, the team stranded multiple runners on base in the fifth and seventh innings.

In the latter frame, there was a peculiar moment when pinch-hitter James Outman struck out after deciding — on his own, according to Roberts — to bunt at the first two pitches.

Then, in the eighth, the Dodgers' best chance to rally was dashed when Rojas was called out trying to extend an RBI single into a double — a controversial call since it appeared Rojas' cleat was pushed off second base by Phillies infielder Bryson Stott.

"I was trying to lobby that Stott coerced him off the bag," Roberts said.

"But that's a judgment call, and they didn't see that."

Still, given the crumbling state of the Dodgers pitching staff — the

team also remains without Yoshinobu Yamamoto, Walker Buehler and Clayton Kershaw — more will be expected of Stone against talented opposition too.

That's because, for now, Stone is looking like one of the few safe bets on the roster to start games come October.

He is still 9-3 with a 3.26 ERA. He was one of the bigger snubs from the NL All-Star team (especially after being bypassed to replace Glasnow on the roster).

And he's been the club's most consistent starter for much of the year, a rare ray of light amid the Dodgers' growing pitching darkness.

On Wednesday, Stone couldn't clear out the storm clouds.

Instead, amid another long day on and off the field for the Dodgers' beleaguered pitching staff, he became the latest victim of poor execution, bad luck and losing results in a week that has been full of them.

With double-double, Davis lifts Team USA to win against Canada

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Before Team USA took the court to meet Canada in Wednesday's exhibition game in Las Vegas, the story of the day was about Kawhi Leonard being sent back to Los Angeles from training camp because he wasn't healthy enough to compete in the Paris Olympics.

After the fourth day of practice, Grant Hill, the managing director of Team USA, said he informed Leonard on Tuesday night that it was smarter for him and the Clippers to prepare for the upcoming 2024-25 NBA season.

"We just felt it was in our best interest, but also the Clippers and Kawhi's best interest to move into a different direction," Hill said before Team USA defeated Canada, 86-72, at T-Mobile Arena. "We tried. I think we all tried and gave it a valiant effort and unfortunately we have to move forward."

Leonard missed the final eight regular-season games and four of six playoff games in the Clippers' first-round series against Dallas because of right knee inflammation. His last game was April 26, Game 3 in Dallas.

He had been working out leading up to the training camp that started Saturday with hopes of being able to play.

"My approach was let's get

through the four days, let's hope we can get through the four days and then let's take a step back and evaluate," Hill said. "So, really looking at the totality of the camp and conferring with the Clippers and speaking with Kawhi and his representation and figuring out the next move. So, that was at least my thought process coming into camp."

Boston's Derrick White is the replacement for Leonard.

"Our decision was made," Hill said. "I think we were open and honest and understanding through it all. Like I said, my heart goes out, but we have to do what's best for the team and protect the team, give ourselves the best opportunity for success."

Lakers forward Anthony Davis had one of the top performances for Team USA, coming off the bench to register a double-double with 10 points and 11 rebounds. Anthony Edwards of the Minnesota Timberwolves led with 13 points, and Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors had 12.

Team USA leaves Thursday for Abu Dhabi for two more exhibition games against Australia and Serbia and then it will travel to London for games against South Sudan and Germany.

Team USA will open the Olympics against Serbia on July 28.

— BRODERICK TURNER



BRIAN BABINEAU NBAE

BAM ADEBAYO dunks during Team USA's victory over Canada on Wednesday in Las Vegas. Earlier, the Clippers' Kawhi Leonard was sent home and replaced on the roster by Derrick White.

ANGELS Neto, Moniak mess with Texas pitchers

Mickey Moniak and Zach Neto both homered and drove in three runs as the Angels ended the Texas Rangers' season-best five-game winning streak with a 7-2 victory at Angel Stadium.

Neto finished a triple short of the cycle for the Angels, who had lost four in a row and eight of nine. He combined with Moniak to give the Angels five hits and three runs from the bottom two batters.

Moniak, the No. 9 hitter, launched a three-run homer to make it 4-0 in the second inning. Neto added an RBI double in the third and a two-run homer in the eighth, his 12th of the year.

Angels starter Griffin Canning pitched well until the fifth, when he gave up a two-run homer to Leody Taveras with no outs. After getting Travis Jankowski to ground out, Canning loaded the bases on back-to-back singles and a walk before being pulled.

Right-hander Hans Crouse (1-0) struck out rookie Wyatt Langford and slugger Adolis García to end the inning.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

L AFC U.S. Open Cup reaches final four

L AFC is on to the final four of the U.S. Open Cup for the second time in franchise history after a 3-1 quarterfinal win over New Mexico United at BMO Stadium.

L AFC got first-half goals from Timothy Tillman and teenager David Martínez and a second-half score from Mateusz Bogusz to run its unbeaten streak to 13 games in all competition.

— KEVIN BAXTER

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Los Angeles Times

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ENTERTAINMENT

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ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

SLASH'S latest album, "Orgy of the Damned," features 11 blues covers with such varied music stars as Iggy Pop, Brian Johnson, Gary Clark Jr. and Chris Stapleton.

Exhibit to plant dozens of trees

An exhibition of artist Joseph Beuys' work at the Broad will include a reforestation effort.

BY JESSICA GELT

The works and environmental activism of German contemporary artist Joseph Beuys will be featured this fall at the Broad as part of the Getty's PST Art program, which this year focuses on the connections between art and science. The exhibition, "Joseph Beuys: In Defense of Nature," will include a reforestation effort that involves planting 100 native trees in Elysian Park and five at the Kuruvungna Village Springs in West L.A.

The Broad curator Sarah Loyer, who organized the show with Beuys scholar Andrea Gyorody, said Beuys was "one activist among many who was sounding the alarm" on climate change decades ago, and "unfortunately, it's more relevant than ever now."

Beuys, who defies categorization as an artist, died in 1986 at the age of 64. He was in the midst of a monument- [See Beuys, E3]

THE ROCKER WITH A BIG CASE OF THE BLUES

Guitar hero Slash brings his S.E.R.P.E.N.T. fest to L.A. with a message that the genre has some of the most exciting music

BY JOSH CHESLER

When you've reached the pinnacle of rock 'n' roll superstardom while remaining one of the most iconic and recognizable guitarists in the world for more than 35 years, what do you do for a fun little break? For Slash (born Saul Hudson), the answer is: spend a few weeks throwing together a blues cover album with some old friends and then recruit some of the music world's biggest vocalists from the last 60 years to sing on it.

That's how "Orgy of the Damned" came about when he had a little time between tours last year. With 11 classic blues covers (each featuring a different vocalist) and an original instrumental closer, it likely competes with his self-titled solo debut as the most star-studded album Slash has ever put

together. Featuring veteran rock legends like Billy Gibbons, Iggy Pop, Brian Johnson and Steven Tyler to current musical superstars such as Gary Clark Jr. and Chris Stapleton performing on songs written by artists like T-Bone Walker, Stevie Wonder and Howlin' Wolf, "Orgy of the Damned" has more name recognition than most major albums with years of planning around them — even if it was mostly just an impromptu jam session.

"The idea to do this record had been sitting in the back of my head for years, and then all of a sudden I felt an urgency to do it right then and there," Slash recalls, noodling on a Les Paul in the desk chair of his private studio in Encino. "We booked a little rehearsal room in North Hollywood for two weeks and then had a [See Slash, E2]

Trippy sphere for Dead & Company

Bob Weir and John Mayer dig being able to delight and surprise fans at Vegas venue.

MIKAEL WOOD
POP MUSIC CRITIC

LAS VEGAS — Four hours or so before they're due beneath the massive wraparound video screen at Sphere, Bob Weir, Mickey Hart and John Mayer amble into a backstage production office like three guys showing up — again — for the work of blowing 17,000 minds.

"Nice to meet you," Mayer says, grinning as he extends a hand. "John Mayer, Mayer Industries."

As original members of the Grateful Dead, guitarist Weir, 76, and percussionist Hart, 80, are jam-band royalty; Mayer, 46, is the singer and guitarist known for pop hits like "Gravity" and "Your Body Is a Wonderland." Together they represent the nucleus of Dead & Company, which on this recent afternoon has just passed the halfway mark of a 30- [See Dead, E6]

DE LOS

For Omar Apollo, loss led to vulnerability

The singer discusses his latest album, 'God Said No,' and posing nude for paintings.

BY LUCAS VILLA

Omar Apollo is in a back room at a soundstage in Van Nuys, taking a break from filming the music video for "Done With You," a track off his sophomore album, "God Said No," released June 28 via Warner Records. Dressed in a neutral-colored striped shirt and baggy jeans, he leans back in a chair and stretches his arms behind his head. A pair of sparkling diamond studs adorn his ears.

"To describe this era, it's

pretty glamorous," Apollo said.

Following his first Grammy nomination last year for his debut album, "Ivory," Apollo has outwardly lived a charmed life. He's modeled for fashion campaigns and attended Paris Fashion Week. In May, Apollo walked the cream- and moss-colored carpet at the Met Gala, wearing an outfit he described as being based on "just vibes." His presence at the exclusive event sparked a somewhat viral moment after Apollo posted a video on X that showed his father running inside the family home in Hobart, Ind., toward the living room after being told his son was on the television screen. On the wall above [See Apollo, E2]



JILL CONNELLY For De Los

THE GRAMMY-NOMINATED singer's sophomore album was released June 28.



DAN McFADDEN Apple TV+

SCARLETT Johansson and Channing Tatum in "Fly Me to the Moon."

'Moon' doesn't quite land

The rom-com set around Apollo 11 has the elements of a hit but misses its mark. Review, E3

Comics E4-5
Puzzles E5

A guitar legend amps up blues performers

[Slash, from E1] week to record before I had to leave again. We picked all the different songs that I had earmarked for this and just started jamming them. It was really cathartic for me to just play some straight-up blues stuff. I didn't have to give it too much thought. It was really just for the fun of it."

While Slash might be best known as a rocker thanks to his decades of work with acts like Guns N' Roses, Velvet Revolver and the Conspirators, "Orgy of the Damned" is far from his first foray into blues. In addition to his "drunken cover band" in the late '90s called Slash's Blues Ball (whose bassist and keyboardist play on the new album), the legendary top-hat-wearing guitarist cites the genre as one of his early inspirations and also what he still gets excited about today.

In fact, it's the current blues renaissance — led by some of Slash's newest collaborators and tour mates, like Clark and Christine "Kingfish" Ingram — where he finds some of his favorite modern guitarists (both to listen to and to play with) more often than the rock world.

"There are some amazing guitar technicians out there, but it reminds me of the way that skateboarding has evolved," Slash says, looking off to the side behind his signature aviators and top hat. "Everyone's so technical now — and there's some really interesting and impressive stuff that's come out of it — but there's only a few guitar players who I really like these days."

"There's a guy named Chris Buck, who's a really great blues guitar player. I helped him to get a visa to come here, and then I called the Troubadour to get him a gig."

"You see all these young blues artists really going for it and getting really f— good. That's a genre that's really thriving and alive and fresh at the moment, whereas it's a little bit few and far between for me to find interest-



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

THE BLUES genre is "really thriving and alive and fresh at the moment," says Slash, shown at his recording studio in Encino. The musician's S.E.R.P.E.N.T. Festival tour makes a stop Saturday at the Greek Theatre.

ing things to listen to in rock. I think what's really exciting for me is when the guitar is in context as a melodic part of a song. That's what's always turned me on, and there's such a lack of that going on [in rock music]. There's all these guitar players that sound amazing by themselves, but it doesn't really fit inside of a composition of an exciting band."

To celebrate both the ongoing blues revival and his new album, Slash put together S.E.R.P.E.N.T. Festival, a touring blues fest that brings together some of the genre's top acts for a good cause. Instead of just going on a normal tour in support of "Orgy of the Damned," S.E.R.P.E.N.T. (Solidarity, Engagement, Restore, Peace, Equality N' Tolerance) is partnering with organizations like the Equal

Justice Initiative, Colin Kaepernick's Know Your Rights Camp, the Greenlining Institute, War Child and the National Alliance on Mental Illness to bring both money and awareness to a variety of causes that the guitarist finds important.

But even beyond the charity aspect of the festival — which makes its L.A. stop Saturday at the Greek Theatre — Slash hopes that S.E.R.P.E.N.T. can bring a diverse audience together to celebrate music that they all enjoy. After all, the guitar hero will bring plenty of his own fans, but the all-star blues crew featuring names like Kingfish, Samantha Fish, Keb Mo and Warren Haynes should also draw an audience that couldn't care less about his hard-rock background.

"I'm not what you would

call a big political or social advocate, but I just feel like in this really crazy time we're living in, where there's so much division going on and so much pending negativity for what's about to happen, I'd like to do something that had a positive message," Slash says.

"That's what blues music is all about anyway. I wanted this festival to be inclusive to all people and not to promote any kind of one-dimensional influence, but I also wanted to support people who have been on the fringes over the last 10 years. There have been a lot of racial issues, a lot of poverty, a lot of homelessness and mental issues that are all happening, and it's all very ripe right now. So I wanted to address that and find some charitable organizations to give back a little bit."

"When I was putting the bills together, I wanted to have guys that I've become aware of within the last five to 10 years and guys I've known for a really long time to have a cool mixture of very vibrant blues artists," Slash continues.

"I don't even really know [what the audience will be like]. I guess we're just going to do it. It'll be a mix of different things, and it's a broad-based blues kind of gig. There's the stuff that we do, which is very blues-driven, but there's also rock 'n' roll — and it's all still delivered with a certain energy, but it's not all Marshall stacks. I think it's going to bring in a lot of people just to see what's going on, because it's going to be really fun and entertaining and cool for people. I don't think anybody knows exactly what's going to hap-

pen." As for the never-ending discussion of whether there's still a place for the true "lead guitarist" in modern rock, Slash doesn't seem too concerned. On one hand, he'll tell you that the Los Angeles music scene hasn't been the same since Guns N' Roses returned from their tours supporting "Appetite for Destruction" in the late 1980s and the music industry as a whole has been destroying talented artists in favor of radio-friendly Top 40 hits for decades. But at the same time, he's already seeing the next generation of artists start to understand the imperfect beauty and humanity found in the guitar-based music of yesteryear.

"Until something really touches you, you lose interest in it until it gets to the point where you forget why it was ever important," Slash says of lead guitar parts. "There's a lot of music that's historic and means so much to people, and that's why there are so many great heritage bands."

For the new stuff coming up, however, the music industry has become so corporate that there's no risk-taking or development, Slash says. There's none of what used to happen when you'd find a really talented artist, bring them in, present them to the world and develop them. "Now you need to make a Top 40 hit or they don't have time for you, and that's the record business," he continues.

The legendary guitarist is convinced that young music fans and musicians aren't interested in the corporate thing anymore. "They're discovering that we went through this really crappy digital period where people didn't care about the quality of the sound, but that there's some really great-sounding old stuff, and they're just creating something on their own," he said. "I think something will come out of that, catch everybody's ear, and start a wave of stuff that's not really industry-driven. Then eventually the industry will catch on to that too."

Chronicling a breakup, singing in Spanglish and baring all in the studio

[Apollo, from E1] the TV set, we see a crucifix sandwiched by two platinum song plaques. The video has been viewed more than 3.8 million times.

"My parents are such a big part of my life," Apollo said. "I love them so much. When people would call me genuine, I feel like they're just complimenting my parents because I get everything good from them."

Apollo's self-proclaimed glamour era has also taken the singer to the world of high art. Last October, Apollo hosted an immersive listening experience at MoMA PS1 for "Live for Me," an EP that delves into his coming-out experience. On display at the ticketed event were two nude paintings of Apollo done by queer artist Doron Langberg — they doubled as the front and back covers of the EP.

Over the years, Apollo

has owned his queerness in public as his career has progressed.

Though his music has always hinted at his sexual orientation — when asked by The Times four years ago how he identified, Apollo said, "I'm just chilling" — it wasn't until 2022 that he sang frankly about being in love with another man. The song, "Evergreen (You Didn't Deserve Me at All)," also happened to be his biggest hit to date, peaking at No. 51 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

"It made me trust my intuition more," he said of the song's success. Since then, Apollo has been more open about who he is and what inspires him.

"I'm super into Peter Hujar, David Wojnarowicz, all these photographers from the '80s during the AIDS epidemic. I think nudity is beautiful," Apollo said, add-

ing that the Langberg paintings were inspired by a Hujar photograph in which the subject is masturbating.

"It was a dope experience. I wanted to do it for myself," he said. "It was a crazy year for me. Being 26 was something I wanted to remember."

Much like the paintings, "God Said No" captures a portion of Apollo's life at that age (he turned 27 in May). The album was recorded while he was going through a breakup, chronicling the dissolution of that relationship in real time.

In the hi-NRG rush of "Less of You," Apollo sings about his ex becoming distant. In the soulful funk of "Done With You," his voice flutters as he struggles to move on. The title of the LP doubles as an acknowledgment that it wasn't meant to be — Apollo shared that it came from a conversation he

had in the studio with a friend after opening up about his situation.

"My friend was like, 'God said no to you,'" Apollo recalled. "I was like, 'Wow, that really ties the album together.' After every song, you can say, 'God said no.' I believe in a higher, divine power and I believe that sometimes you have to accept a colossal loss."

Leaning into his bilingual upbringing, Apollo also processed the grief of his breakup in Spanglish. Though much of his music is in English, he's flaunted his Mexicanidad here and there.

In his 2020 mixtape "Apolonio," Apollo showed off his corrido chops with "Dos Uno Nueve (219)," a braggadocious ode to his hometown (the number refers to the area code for northwest Indiana). In "Ivory," he channeled his inner Juan Gabriel in the haunting "En el Olvido." In "God Said No," Spanish is tucked away in the heart-breaking ballad "Empty." Halfway through the song, Apollo sings, "Cantando en otro lenguaje pa' que no me entiendes / No quiero que sepas cuánto me duele" (I'm singing in another language so you don't understand me / I don't want you to know how much I'm hurting).

"In that song in particular I was exhausted with love," he said.

"I was exhausted writing about the same situation, the same person, love in general. I was just so sick of it. I was sick of it being understood and I was like, 'Well, he doesn't speak Spanish, so let me just write this in Spanish.' It made sense. That felt authentic and genuine for me. It felt so right."

One of the people Apollo leaned on while making the album was Pedro Pascal. The Chilean American actor even makes a cameo on the album — he contributed to the interlude "Pedro," opening up about a moment of grief in his life. While bonding in the recording studio, Apollo said, he discussed with Pascal the possibility of getting into acting in the fu-



JILL CONNELLY For De Los

IN HIS 2022 single "Evergreen," Apollo sang of being in love with another man. It was his biggest hit to date. "It made me trust my intuition more," he said.

ture.

"That would be cool. I'll do it! I've been friends with him for a while now," Apollo said.

"He was present during the whole process of me making that album. We got along so well. We have a great friendship. I only really like to work with my friends. [Sudanese Canadian poet] Mustafa's the only other feature on this album. He's my best friend. I just keep it in the circle."

Next week, Apollo will embark on an ambitious world tour in promotion of "God Said No," kicking it off in Australia and making a stop at the Hollywood Bowl on Oct. 5. If 26 was spent in the studio, 27 will be spent in front of his fans — something he appears to relish. He describes feeling joy at a listening party for "God Said No" he'd held the night before

this interview.

"There were a lot of queer Chicano kids, and it just made me so happy," he said with a smile, recalling one fan encounter in particular.

"This kid had me as his phone background. He wanted to take a picture with me, and then he covered his phone with his hand. I was like, 'You don't have to cover it. It's cool. You're safe here.' It was so cute because I used to have the people I love as my background. It's so sweet that I can be some type of source of light for the queer community, especially in the Latino community."

Villa is a Mexican American journalist who covers pop and Latin music. He's written for Allure, Elle, Rolling Stone, Billboard, Paper magazine, Vibe and LGBTQ Nation.

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KINDS OF KINDNESS 1:00 3:50 7:00	SOUND OF HOPE: THE STORY OF POSSUM TROT PG-13 1:00 4:00 7:00		
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THE BIKERIDERS 4:15 PM	A QUIET PLACE: DAY ONE PG-13 1:40 4:20 7:10		
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MOVIE REVIEW

Throwback rom-com gets lost on way to 'Moon'

Scarlett Johansson and Channing Tatum don't quite spark in new screwball film.

BY GARY GOLDSTEIN

It may not have all the right stuff, but what "Fly Me to the Moon" lacks in narrative coherence and tonal consistency it makes up for, in part, by simply existing. If that sounds like damning with faint praise, it is. By all rights, the movie, set mainly in 1969 during the lead-up to NASA's Apollo 11 lunar landing, should have been a far sharper, kickier, more propulsive ride.

That said, general audiences may find the film a sufficiently entertaining throwback — the kind of glossy, star-driven, big-canvas, IP-free picture that's been in short supply on theater screens for way too long. And the potential of sparks flying between stars Scarlett Johansson and Channing Tatum certainly has its heart-swelling appeal.

The result, though, directed by Greg Berlanti ("Love, Simon") from a script by first-time feature writer Rose Gilroy (from a story by Keenan Flynn and Bill Kirstein), is a nostalgic, wannabe-screwball rom-com that's sadly light on both the "rom" and the "com." As the movie goes on, the plot becomes as distracted as my Labrador retriever on squirrel watch.

Johansson, also a producer here, shines as Kelly Jones, a New York marketing dynamo with a penchant for stretching the truth if it means sealing a deal. Little does she know she's being tracked by Moe Berkus (Woody Harrelson), a shadowy operative working for then-President Richard Nixon, who hires Kelly to help sell the looming moon mission to an uneasy and cynical American public. This is, after all, the fraught era of the Vietnam War, which has already divided a nation — and an electorate.

Kelly jets down to Florida to set up shop with her



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN MCFADDEN Apple TV+
SCARLETT JOHANSSON and Channing Tatum star in "Fly Me to the Moon" about the 1969 lunar mission.

'Fly Me to the Moon'

Rated: PG-13, for some strong language and smoking

Running time: 2 hours, 12 minutes

Playing: In wide release Friday

trusty Nixon-despising assistant, Ruby (a winning Anna Garcia), at the Kennedy Space Center. (The film was shot there with the full cooperation of NASA). In no time, Kelly is spinning heads — and narratives — as she starts whipping together a rah-rah, whatever-it-takes promotional campaign to indelibly elevate the image of the Apollo 11 operation and its astronauts in the minds of Americans and the world.

Then there's Cole Davis (Tatum), NASA's stalwart, no-frills launch director. He's an ex-Air Force pilot — and rejected astronaut — haunted by the fiery, fatal failure of the Apollo 1 mission less than two years earlier. After flaming out during



TATUM, left, with Ray Romano in the film that was shot largely at NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

a strained meet-cute with Kelly at a local diner, he's irked to discover that she's now a fixture at Cape Kennedy, calling some of the shots that were formerly his to make.

The inevitable head-butting, sexually tense banter between the super-serious (and frankly dull) Cole and the vivacious, near-magically-capable Kelly never quite takes off, nor, surprisingly, does the chemistry between the two leads.

Cole is so tense and unaduly hostile toward Kelly at first that, when they start to see more eye-to-eye (and,

yes, mouth-to-mouth), you wonder what exactly draws Kelly to him, save that he looks fetching in colorful knit turtlenecks.

The script attempts to layer in enough backstory to explain, if not justify, Cole's fustiness, but it doesn't make him any more engaging. Whether it's the writing or the direction, even when his character lightens up, Tatum still comes off a bit stiff.

Kelly and Cole's budding romance (and the film's limited comedy) soon takes a back seat to the story's second-act curveball. That's

when Moe orders a reluctant Kelly to stage and film a mock moon landing in a studio that can be broadcast to the world to save America's face — particularly against chief space-race competitor the Soviet Union — should the mission tank. (The visual part would be a simulation but the audio feed would remain real.) Oh, and everyone involved in creating this "alternate version," also known as Project Artemis, must be sworn to eternal secrecy. That means no one outside of this covertly shot production, including Cole and the entire NASA team, can know the truth.

There are too many holes in this big-swing plot development to parse; it's best just to go with it. It's a disruptive yet intriguing (and, let's be clear, entirely fictional) segue that plays off the longtime conspiracy theory that the moon landing was faked.

Unfortunately, this strand nudges things into light action-thriller territory, complicating the story, forcing a predictable rift between the truth-flexible Kelly and Boy Scout-honest Cole, and overextending the

film's running time.

From a technical standpoint, the movie proves a solid watch as it mixes memorable bits of archival footage from the actual Apollo 11 mission and its attendant media coverage with vibrant cinematography by Dariusz Wolski, who also plays the bogus moon landing's expert cameraman. Kudos as well to film editor Harry Jierjian, production designer Shane Valentino, costumer Mary Zophres and the picture's sound design and editing team for their first-rate contributions.

As for the rest of the movie's large cast, Harrelson is a hoot, stealing his share of scenes as the stealthy Moe attempting to manipulate history via Kelly, who's got a few skeletons in her closet.

Ray Romano is his welcome hangdog self as a veteran NASA engineer, Donald Elise Watkins and Noah Robbins charm as a pair of eager young technicians, and Colin Jost (Johansson's husband) and Victor Garber pop up in enjoyable cameos as pivotal U.S. senators. A nimble black cat also factors in.

It should be said, however, that Jim Rash sets the image of gay men back, at least to 1969, in his turn as Tab-swilling, ascot-wearing, limp-wristed fustpot Lance Vespertine, the commercial director brought in to helm the ersatz moon-landing shoot. His hoary portrayal is a head-scratching misstep. Comic relief? Sorry, no.

Also strange is the omission of Frank Sinatra's iconic 1960s hit, "Fly Me to the Moon," which features such other decade-appropriate needle-drops as Aretha Franklin's take on "Moon River" and the Bee Gees' "To Love Somebody."

Yes, "Fly Me" is heard in a few other incarnations, but given that Ol' Blue Eyes' version was played when Buzz Aldrin stepped onto the moon's surface, its inclusion here would seem like a guaranteed smile in a film that contains most of the elements of a crowd-pleaser — but not quite the right formula. Maybe they are rocket science after all.

JON BONSAALL, 1948 – 2024

Tenor of the Oak Ridge Boys for over 50 years

The country and gospel singer was in the Country Music Hall of Fame.

BY ALEXANDRA DEL ROSARIO

Joe Bonsall, a singer who dedicated more than 50 years to the Grammy-winning country and gospel quartet the Oak Ridge Boys, has died. He was 76.

The tenor's website announced in a statement that Bonsall died Tuesday from complications of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a neurodegenerative disease also known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease. In January, Bonsall said he was battling a neuromuscular disorder that prompted his retirement from the Oak

Ridge Boys.

"I am now to a point that walking is impossible so I have basically retired from the road," he said in a January statement on X. "It has just gotten too difficult."

He added at the time: "It has been a great 50 years and I am thankful to all the Oak Ridge Boys band crew and staff for the constant love and support shown to me through it all."

The Oak Ridge Boys spread news of Bonsall's death online, sharing a photo of the singer and the statement on the group's various social media platforms.

Bonsall joined the Oak Ridge Boys, known for hits including "Elvira" and "Bobbie Sue," 30 years after its founding in 1943. He became a member after a gig with the Keystones and was a mainstay as the group

achieved mainstream success throughout the '70s and '80s. The Tennessee group gained popularity in gospel circles and touted Johnny Cash, Ray Charles, Brenda Lee and Paul Simon among its collaborators.

The group earned its first Grammy Award in the gospel performance category in 1971. The Oak Ridge Boys would go on to win four additional Grammys, including one for "Elvira" in 1982. The group has a total of 23 Grammy nominations.

"We're the act that won't go away," Bonsall told The Times in 1996 after a performance in Glendale. "We're not kids anymore, but we're out there rockin'."

Bonsall, a member of the Grand Ole Opry, was also inducted into the Philadelphia Music Hall of Fame, the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, and the Vocal Group Hall of



BILL WAUGH Associated Press

MAINSTAY

"We're not kids anymore," Jon Bonsall told The Times in 1996, "but we're out there rockin'."

Fame and the Country Music Hall of Fame, according to his website.

The musician was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2015, the same year the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry in the U.S. In response to the decision, Bonsall declared, "It's a sad day for those that care about spirituality and principles based on the Bible," and swiftly faced backlash.

In the years before his

death, Bonsall toured seemingly nonstop with the Oak Ridge Boys, save for their hiatus amid the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Before announcing his retirement this year, Bonsall had revealed in 2022 that he had battled pulmonary embolisms, telling fans at the time, "I could've easily died last weekend."

The Oak Ridge Boys launched their American Made Farewell Tour in September 2023, and singer-songwriter Ben James took

over for Bonsall amid his retirement.

Before his death, Bonsall authored 11 books, including his upcoming memoir "I See Myself," which is set to publish in November. Music, family and faith were central to Bonsall, his website said.

"Joe loved to sing. He loved to read. He loved to write. He loved to play banjo," the statement added. "He loved working on the farm. And he loved the Philadelphia Phillies. But Jesus and his family always came first — and we will see him again on the Promised Day."

Bonsall was born May 18, 1948, in Philadelphia. He is survived by wife Mary Ann, daughters Jennifer and Sabrina, granddaughter Breanne, grandson Luke, two great-grandsons, Chance and Grey, and a sister, Nancy. He is preceded in death by parents Joseph S. Bonsall Sr. and Lillie Bonsall. The family will not host a funeral, at Bonsall's request. Supporters can donate to the ALS Assn. or to the Vanderbilt Medical Center ALS and Neuroscience Research Center.

Former Times staff writer Jonah Valdez contributed to this report.

Extending land artist's practice

[Beuys, from E1]

current work of land art called "7000 Oaks" in Kassel, Germany. The project consisted of laying 7,000 black basalt stones in a pile outside the Fridericianum museum. A stone was removed from the heap and placed beside a tree each time one was planted.

"7000 Oaks" took five years to complete, and Beuys' son set the final stone beside the last tree after his father's death, Loyer said. The oaks are now an integral part of Kassel's ecology and stand as a symbol of regeneration.

"Social Forest: Oaks of Tovaangar," created in partnership with North East Trees, Gabriellino/Tongva archaeologist Desirée Renee Martinez and artist Lazaro Arvizu Jr., extends Beuys' ideas and practice into the

current day.

"We're really excited to be bringing this project to Los Angeles," said Loyer. "It starts with Beuys' seed of an idea, and then it jumps off and thinks about ways that this idea can be relevant to Los Angeles today as opposed to Kassel, Germany, in 1982."

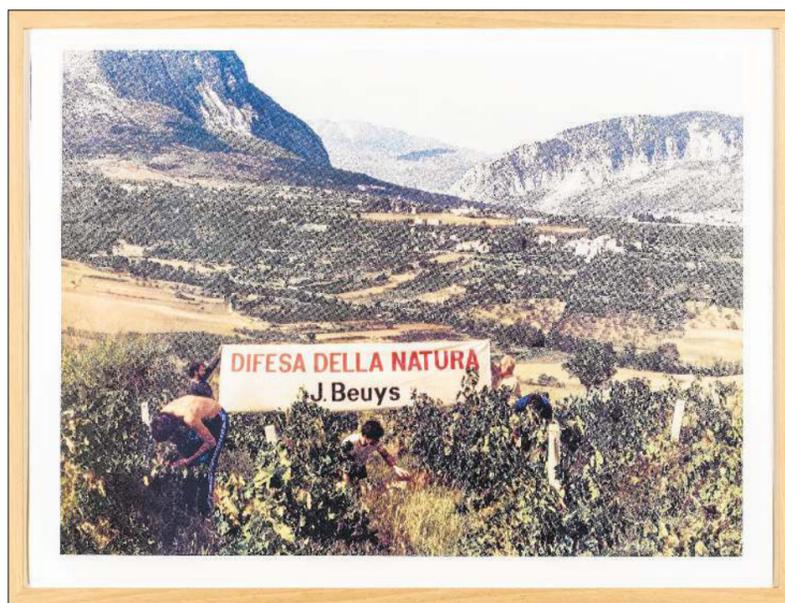
The Beuys exhibition at the Broad, which opens Nov. 14, will feature more than 400 works of art that represent Beuys' practice and his dedication to environmental justice and democracy.

"This exhibition marks the first time we are displaying our uniquely deep collection of Joseph Beuys' important and extensive multiples at the Broad, and, through "Social Forest," our first permanent offsite project," Joanne Heyler, founding director and president of the

Broad, said in a news release. "Through his innovative concept of 'social sculpture,' he demonstrated the power of art to connect and uplift — affirming the resilience of humans to reconcile with each other and with the past, and seed a better, more just future."

Although Beuys is tangentially associated with the experimental Fluxus movement of the 1960s and '70s, he steered his own course and during his lifetime created monumental sculptures and land, performance and conceptual art. He was also a teacher and a founding member of the German Green Party.

Loyer is thrilled to introduce American audiences to Beuys' work. In Germany, Beuys is a household name on the same level with Andy Warhol in the U.S.

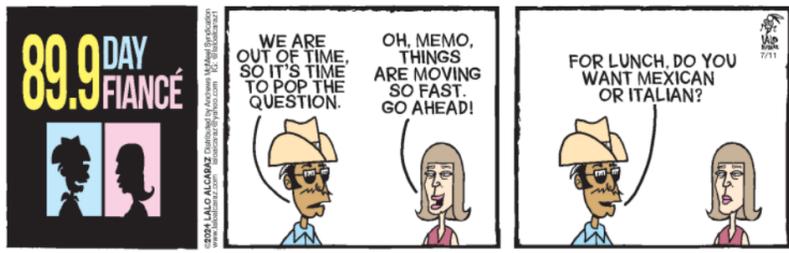


JOSHUA WHITE JWPictures.com / Artists Rights Society / VG Bild-Kunst / Broad Art Foundation

"SOCIAL FOREST: Oaks of Tovaangar" will bring German artist Joseph Beuys' ideas and practice into the current day with the planting of more than 100 trees.

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



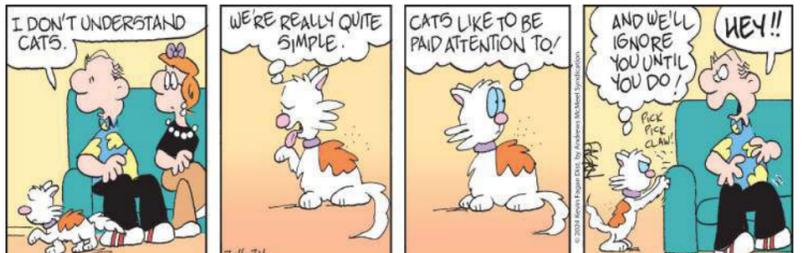
BIZARRO By Wayno and Piraro



SIX CHIX By Mary Lawton



DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan



FRAZZ By Jef Mallett



MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell



NON SEQUITUR By Wiley



PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz



COMICS

SUDOKU

3				6		1		
			7	2				
	9			8	3			
1	6				2			
7		8				3	5	
	3				1		9	
	1	6		7				
		2	7					
7	3							4

Level: Tough

	4	2			6			
				2				
		1						
1							3	
	5		4	2				

Level: Moderate

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Solutions to Wednesday's puzzles
 7/11/24

KENKEN

Every box will contain a number; numbers depend on the size of the grid. For a 6x6 puzzle, use Nos. 1-6. Do not repeat a number in any row or column. The numbers in each heavily outlined set of squares must combine to produce the target number found in the top left corner of the cage using the mathematical operation indicated. A number can be repeated within a cage as long as it is not in the same row or column.

EASY

7+	2÷		2÷
	4+		
6x		2÷	1-
3-			

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CHALLENGING

3-		5-		1-	
15x	5-		1-	3+	15+
		2-	15x		
				3÷	
5-		2÷	14+		8+
1-					

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PREVIOUS ANSWERS

4	1	2	3
1	2	3	4
2	3	4	1
3	4	1	2

7/11/24

HOROSCOPE

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

Aries (March 21-April 19): Even though you may feel clueless as to what your next move is, your intention to steer yourself in a healthful direction will prevail.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): Go forward incrementally, so as to make the challenge a pleasure, not a punishment.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): There are many ways to be truthful. Your truth is tested by worthy opponents. Priorities shift. Growth is exhilarating. Rest when needed.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): It's a day to choose your song and let it carry you through experiences, as a good soundtrack is keen to do.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): When volunteers are needed, you'll consider it and you'll join in the case where you truly believe you can do something good in

the situation.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): There's so much that has to happen to make one meeting come together. This is what's on your mind and agenda.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): Build goodwill and it will remain. It will be there when you want to tap it and it will be there if you never do.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): When people want to be generous with you, you're first instinct is skeptical, which is only smart. If there's no reason to be skeptical, that will be revealed.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Once you let go of a matter, it will fall into circulation. Someone else will get it and be very happy for the acquisition.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't wait for others to notice your accomplishments. Privately acknowledge and praise yourself.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Contrary to the saying,

honesty is not always the best policy. There's a time for silent honesty.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): You'll be a key player in the events of the day, and there's a lot you're doing to get ready for the events of tomorrow too. The muses favor you with excellent ideas.

Today's birthday (July 11): You'll venture boldly, not knowing the way, and nor will your mentors or team. But your moral compass, curiosity and work ethic will lead you all to innovate, invent and strike gold. More highlights: relationship developments that thrill and move you, a clutch investment will pay for seasons to come, and droves of new clients, supporters and fans. Sagittarius and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers: 13, 2, 20, 14 and 8.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

BRIDGE

BY FRANK STEWART

"My cousin the Queen of Hearts brags that her card is supreme," the Queen of Diamonds told Alice at the Mad Hatter's game. "Big deal. Even a deuce of clubs can win a trick if clubs are trumps."

"Yes," Alice said in a tone of polite disbelief. "Surely, losing a trick can be better than winning one."

"Deal the cards and I'll show you," the Queen said.

When Alice played at four spades, West, the Hatter, led the king of hearts. Alice ducked, won the next heart and saw three more losers: a club and two diamonds. She drew trumps and led the A-K and a third club.

The Hatter won and pondered. He had to break the

diamonds to avoid conceding a ruff-suff. If he led low, Alice could succeed by playing low from dummy. Nor would leading the 10 beat the contract if Alice read the position.

So with a nod to the Queen of Diamonds, the Hatter led the queen. Whatever Alice did, she would lose two diamonds. Down one.

"See what I mean?" the Queen of Diamonds chortled.

You hold: ♠ K 8 7 6 2 ♥ A 4 ♦ 9 6 5 ♣ A K 3. Your partner opens one heart, you bid one spade and he jumps to three hearts. What do you say?

Answer: Partner's jump-rebid in his own suit shows a good six-card suit (rarely, a seven-card suit) and about 16 high-card points. If he has A 4, K Q J 9 6 2, A 3, Q 5 4, you might make a grand slam.

South dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH
♠ A Q 10 5 3
♥ 10 3
♦ A J 7
♣ 10 6 4

WEST
♠ 9 4
♥ K Q 9 7
♦ Q 10 4 3
♣ Q J 5

EAST
♠ J
♥ J 8 6 5 2
♦ K 8 2
♣ 9 8 7 2

SOUTH
♠ K 8 7 6 2
♥ A 4
♦ 9 6 5
♣ A K 3

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass
4 ♠ All Pass

Opening lead — ♥ K

Tribune Content Agency

ASKING ERIC

Dear Eric: We are a retired couple in our late 60s. In our younger days we enjoyed an active social life that often revolved around drinking, sometimes to excess. As we've grown older we've slowed down, improved our diet and taken up a near-daily fitness regimen that has us both in good shape.

My wife still drinks more than she should, as measured by my opinion and numerous articles I've read. We've discussed it a few times and she makes an improvement for a short term but soon backslides into having four, five, sometimes six glasses of wine a night. I've eliminated alcohol.

I don't nag her. I'm all for everyone making their own choices in life, but I know this regular drinking is not healthy. I used to buy the alcohol for us both (my cessation is fairly recent), and since I stopped she has purchased the wine on her own.

Yesterday, knowing I will do this week's shopping soon, she put wine on the list. I am torn between telling her I won't enable her drinking (while expressing my hope that she can reduce to a more reasonable level), and just keeping quiet.

WINDING DOWN

Dear Winding: When one partner changes, the whole system changes. But that change is often a lot slower and more complicated than

we'd like it to be.

In your marriage right now, you and your wife aren't aligned in a vision for how you want to live life together and individually.

She hasn't made the same decision that you have about alcohol consumption, and it bothers you because you care about her but also because it's different from the choice you made. Perhaps it even makes you question your decision.

Hundreds of similar decisions happen in a marriage. Conflict can arise from the fact that no one can make their spouse do what they think the spouse should do.

You don't have to keep buying the wine, and shouldn't if it's causing you consternation. Tell her you have made this decision and your reasons for doing it. Don't expect that your reasons are going to make her change. When we comment on a loved one's drinking (or any behavior), it can shift the loved one's thinking or highlight things they're not seeing. However, decisions to change their behavior have to come from them.

Your wife isn't there. If you feel her alcohol consumption is having a negative impact on your relationship, say that. I'm sure you've already presented her with the data. Show your concern and your love while also recognizing that this journey is new for both of you

and it will take you different amounts of time to get to wherever you're both going.

Dear Eric: I may be hopelessly old-fashioned at 73, but when my children were young and received a gift, I gave them notecards, stamps and addresses and explained the ways a "thank you" could be worded.

I encouraged them to include information about their lives, school, etc.

It seems that now parents don't care enough to teach their children to acknowledge a gift. I've been chastised for discontinuing to send cards/gifts/money to young people past the age of 15, who never thank me or even acknowledge a gift.

I am frustrated that I am forced to contact the recipient simply to hear, "Oh yeah, I got it. Thanks." Am I wrong for expecting a "thank you," and setting consequences?

DISGRUNTLED GIVER

Dear Giver: Social norms may change but the words "thank you" still mean the same thing. You're not asking a lot, and if your relatives can't teach their kids to respect your boundary and acknowledge your gift, then you don't owe it to them. Fifteen is old enough to learn the value of healthy communication and gratitude.

Email questions to eric@askingeric.com.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol
By Jared Cappel

- ACROSS
- Satisfied sounds
 - Comforting text during a bad storm, say
 - Popeyes rival
 - Political coalition
 - Econ. figure used to highlight income inequality
 - Every last one
 - *Totally falls apart
 - 20-20, say
 - Surgical tube
 - "Deal"
 - Offshore
 - Radiate happiness
 - *Floating lunar particles
 - Hollywood VIP
 - Doc's order
 - Bygone space station
 - Wine category
 - Breakaway groups
 - *Gravity powered nourishment
 - Anesthetic of old
 - Praise
 - Musician Yoko
 - Debtor's letters
 - Words on some missing posters
 - *Tips to the next dollar, say
 - Wolfe of fiction
 - Professionals who work from home about a quarter of the time?
 - Asian language
 - Channels of communication
 - "... me guess ..."
 - Audio technique, or a feature of the answers to the starred clues
 - "Me" problem
 - Terrarium pet
 - "Night" author Wiesel
 - Juan, Puerto Rico
 - Wipes
 - Related groups

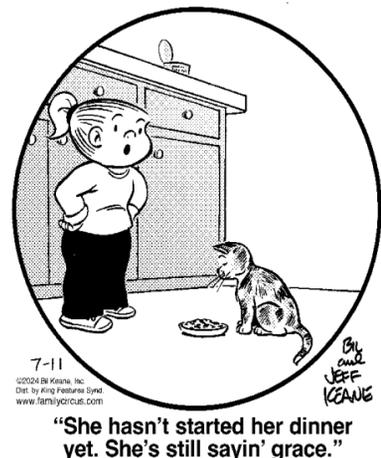
- DOWN
- Building blocks
 - Bushels
 - Residential delivery?
 - Act divisions
 - Critical hosp. area
 - Department store department
 - Genesis city

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14				15						16			
17				18						19			
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57				58		59		60		61	62		
63				64				65					
66				67						68			
69				70								71	

- Speed skater Ohno
 - Swifties, e.g.
 - Word with public or private
 - Fried Japanese cutlet
 - Takes a high way
 - Spiked shoe
 - Saves or assists
 - Said more
 - Griffin who created "Jeopardy!"
 - Loch _ monster
 - Québec pal
 - _ roller
 - Instagram video
 - 23andMe material
 - Genre for Otis Redding
 - Predator with powerful jaws
 - Lifford of "Queen Sugar"
 - Ad
 - Bridle straps
 - Former Yank who's now part owner of the Timberwolves
 - Japanese noodle
 - American leg of a concert series
 - Frozen Four game
 - "Jurassic Park" dinos
 - Principles
 - Last Greek letter
 - Supermodel Kate
 - Saldaña's "Star Trek" role
 - Slacks
 - Run in neutral
 - Still fighting
 - Grows older
 - Sault_Marie
 - Month, in Mexico
- ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE
- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| O | S | S | I | X | C | A | R | N | E | B | T | S | | |
| S | P | A | N | X | A | E | N | E | A | S | O | S | | |
| H | O | N | T | I | N | G | L | O | D | G | E | | | |
| A | N | D | A | L | S | O | R | A | I | N | V | L | | |
| | | | | K | E | A | S | A | L | A | M | I | | |
| C | A | S | E | S | O | A | K | E | G | E | O | G | | |
| L | S | U | | L | E | A | | N | E | L | S | O | | |
| A | T | M | | B | I | G | B | R | E | A | K | V | | |
| N | O | M | A | A | M | | D | A | G | | P | P | | |
| G | A | B | A | S | A | S | E | A | T | | L | O | | |
| | | | | R | E | B | E | L | S | | S | I | | |
| E | M | M | A | | E | C | O | | A | N | N | A | S | U |
| L | E | E | | V | A | R | I | A | B | L | E | C | O | S |
| S | A | G | | I | N | E | S | S | E | | A | L | B | E |
| E | T | A | | E | S | T | E | S | | | R | E | A | R |
- 7/11/24

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham



FREE RANGE By Bill Whitehead



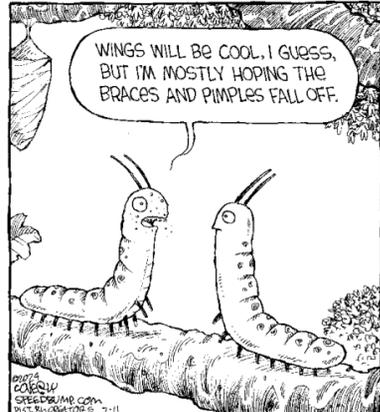
MARMADUKE By Brad & Paul Anderson



BLISS By Harry Bliss



SPEED BUMP By Dave Coverly



Trippy sphere for Dead & Company in Vegas

[Dead, from E1] date summer residency at Sphere, the state-of-the-art dome-shaped venue behind the Venetian resort on the Las Vegas Strip.

Not that they're counting.

"Halfway? If you say so," Weir says as he lowers himself into the lotus position on a sofa next to his bandmates. Adds Hart, his hands encased in his trademark white golf gloves: "This is just a habit for us. We keep coming back here three days a week and playing our stuff."

A year ago, they seemed poised to shake that habit: Having logged more than 200 gigs since 2015 — when the band came together in the wake of a public farewell by the Grateful Dead — Dead & Company wrapped up what was billed as its own final tour that July with three concerts at Oracle Park in San Francisco, where the Grateful Dead formed in the mid-1960s and quickly became an avatar of the city's Haight-Ashbury counterculture. (The other members of Dead & Company are bassist Oteil Burbridge, keyboardist Jeff Chimenti and drummer Jay Lane, the last of whom replaced Bill Kreutzmann, another Grateful Dead founder, after Kreutzmann left in 2023.)

Yet the prospect of Sphere's visual splendor lured the group back onstage.

With a 160,000-square-foot screen said to be the highest-resolution in the world, the \$2-billion venue opened to much fanfare last fall with an eye-popping show by U2 that put the veteran Irish band amid photorealistic images of the Vegas desert in the pre-neon age; Phish followed U2 into Sphere in April, turning the building's curved surface into an underwater lair and the soapy interior of a car wash.

Mayer reckons that the venue has "established overnight a new big league" of acts eager — and able — to take advantage of Sphere's technical potential.

"I think what we all love is that there's finally once again a live-music space race," he says, dressed in tan cargo pants and a clingy black T-shirt. "There's the social-media space race, the podcast space race, the AI [artificial intelligence] space race. But live music pretty much stayed the same for such a long time."

Mayer insists it's not ego that's driving musicians to play Sphere — "Well, it's a little ego," he clarifies — but, rather, the drive "to delight and surprise people more than they expected to be with this big, empty canvas and this really big palette."

Amid the other offers Dead & Company fielded for engagements that didn't require extensive travel, Hart says, "This was a very juicy option."

Dead & Company's residency, which is called Dead Forever and runs through Aug. 10, has been a clear box-office success, with an average nightly gross of approximately \$4 million, according to the band; what's more, the group says that nearly a third of concertgoers have bought tickets for more than one date — repeat business



DEAD & COMPANY'S Jay Lane, Jeff Chimenti, John Mayer, Bob Weir, Oteil Burbridge and Mickey Hart take a bow onstage at Sphere, where the band is in the middle of a summer residency at the Las Vegas venue.

likely to correspond with a hefty spend at Dead & Company's pop-up merch store at the Venetian, where fans can buy T-shirts, hoodies, even a pair of handmade Belgian loafers emblazoned with the band's cheerful dancing bear logo. (The shoes will run you \$395.)

More important, Dead Forever is an artistic triumph: a showcase of the musicians' deeply interconnected playing that attains a richly emotional narrative thrust thanks to the possibilities of the room.

The show begins with a jaw-dropping sequence — designed by Industrial Light & Magic and shared endlessly on TikTok — in which the audience appears to blast off from Haight-Ashbury into outer space; three hours later, we return to Earth having visited some key sites and moments from Dead history, including Cornell University's Barton Hall in 1977 and the Egyptian pyramids in 1978.

"We're pushing the envelope here," Weir says as he munches a handful of peanut butter-filled pretzels.

The whisky guitarist likens Dead Forever's storytelling to opera; Mayer says the visual content, which he took a lead role in developing with the London-based Treatment Studio, "has a little Disney ride in it."

Mayer came to the Dead relatively late in life after hearing the band's "Althea" on Pandora; for him, this show represents "a trip through the metaphysical anthropology of the Grateful Dead with Dead & Company as your hosts."

Part of what seems to animate Mayer — 29 years after the Dead's mastermind, Jerry Garcia, died of a heart attack at age 53 — is his desire to introduce the band's music and iconography to younger listeners and to folks outside the traditional jam-band ecosystem. And indeed that appears to be happening in Vegas, as in the case of Tucker Halpern of the dance-pop duo Sofi



EYE-POPPING show takes fans back to band's origins in 1960s San Francisco.



THE VISUAL part of show features a colorful collection of Dead memorabilia.

Tukker.

"Growing up, the Grateful Dead didn't play much of a role in my life," Halpern says. Yet as card-carrying millennials, he and his bandmate, Sophia Hawley-Weld, were sufficiently intrigued by Mayer's presence in Dead & Company to check out a recent Sphere gig. His ver-

dict? "Amazing — a really beautiful journey." One older hip-hop musician, Questlove of the Roots, offered similar praise in an Instagram post last weekend, calling Dead Forever "a hell of an astral display."

This kind of pop-cultural penetration is not without precedent for the Dead, of

course: In 1987, the band scored its only top 10 hit on Billboard's Hot 100 with "Touch of Grey," which was virtually inescapable on MTV. (Last month, Vampire Weekend covered the song at the Hollywood Bowl.)

Nor is the immersive audiovisual spectacle of the Sphere production a novel

concept for the group, as Rolling Stone senior writer David Browne points out.

"From the beginning, there was always a sense when you went to a Dead show that you were entering this self-contained world — a kind of land unto itself," says Browne, author of "So Many Roads: The Life and Times of the Grateful Dead." "The light show and the trippy album covers were part and parcel with their whole aesthetic."

Yet Dead Forever undoubtedly takes the presentation to new levels of both grandeur and precision.

"I think there's a part of us that loves the idea of showtime — like, 'Places, people,'" Mayer says, and nothing in the show demonstrates that better than the finale, when night after night, Dead & Company perfectly times the end of a song to touchdown back in Haight-Ashbury.

Asked how they do it, Mayer credits Weir as "a genius of temporal awareness," though he also provides a more practical explanation.

"It comes from years of being told you're gonna be fined \$25,000 a minute if you go over," he says, referring to tight curfews imposed by union stagehands. "We might be 20 minutes late to get on — we ain't late to get off," he adds with a laugh.

"I pride myself in being able to watch the union steward," Weir says. "He's thinking, 'Oh, boy, these guys are hard into it...'" But I can cut it off as the clock is ticking."

Weir, Hart and Mayer agree that one important benefit of Dead & Company's extended stay at Sphere is not having to constantly acclimate to the peculiarities of a new venue.

"If you think about it, every time we go and play somewhere, it's an away game," Mayer says. "This is the first time we've ever been the home team." He laughs. "You can leave a shirt in the venue and go back and wear it instead of having someone send it to you."

Might that comfort induce the band to undertake a second residency at Sphere? Mayer says there certainly won't be more dates this year. (On Sept. 20, the Eagles will launch a 16-date residency scheduled to run through mid-December.) But, he adds, "I think the modularity of the show makes it future-proof."

"This is a work in progress," says Weir, who envisions a heightened degree of interactivity between the musicians and the crew controlling the visuals on Sphere's screen. "At some point, the tech will evolve to the point where those guys can intuit where we're headed and then be there with a little surprise for us."

Says Mayer: "There's a little bit of a lament knowing that every year is gonna bring more latitude and dimension — that the 12th band in here is gonna have colors that we don't have. But I think this is the first time in a long time where we feel kind of honored to be a part of something that's so culturally right up in everyone's view."

"We're all sort of like, how cool is this?"

Frontman's surgery halts Queens of the Stone Age tour

Josh Homme, who was diagnosed with cancer in 2022, returns to U.S. for procedure.

By NARDINE SAAD

Queens of the Stone Age has paused its European tour so lead singer Josh Homme can return to the U.S. for emergency surgery.

"Every effort was made to push through and play for you, but it is no longer an option to continue," the alt-rock band said Tuesday in a post on social media, confirming the cancellation of eight additional shows this summer.

"Queens are gutted we aren't able to play for you. We apologize for any inconvenience and share in your frustration and disappointment," the post said.

The band — whose other members are guitarist Troy Van Leeuwen, bassist Michael Shuman, keyboardist Dean Fertita and drum-

mer Jon Theodore — will no longer perform at festivals in France and Slovakia this week due to the singer-guitarist's departure.

Shows in Berlin, Austria, Romania, Croatia and Greece have also been canceled, according to the announcement, which directed ticket holders to visit their festival websites for more information. Ticket holders for the band's headliner shows will be contacted directly from their point of purchase, the post said.

On Friday, the "No One Knows" and "The Way You Used to Do" band canceled its appearance at Italy's AMA Festival "due to illness," although it did not indicate in the announcement who had fallen ill. As of Wednesday, dates for August shows in Europe and shows in North America, which are scheduled through November, are still listed on the Queens of the Stone Age website.

A spokesperson for the group did not immediately respond Wednesday to The



JOSH HOMME and his alt-rock band Queens of the Stone Age were in middle of a European tour when it was decided to cancel several concerts "due to illness."

Times' request for additional comment.

Homme, 51, who grew up and started his music career in Palm Desert, was diagnosed with cancer in 2022 but said he had recovered after undergoing surgery. It's

unclear whether this emergency surgery is related, as no specifics about the procedure have been given.

After starting the pioneering stoner-metal group Kyuss in the mid-1990s, Homme broke out in 2001

with the Queens of the Stone Age album "Rated R." He has also played with the Eagles of Death Metal and the supergroup Them Crooked Vultures, has produced albums by Iggy Pop and Arctic Monkeys and is

known for embracing the avant-garde.

Last summer, Queens of the Stone Age released "In Times New Roman..." its long-awaited eighth studio album. The group's first LP in six years reflected on the tumultuous years in which Homme lost several close friends, including Foo Fighters' Taylor Hawkins, Mark Lanegan of Screaming Trees and actor and bar owner Rio Hackford.

Homme also was embroiled in a custody battle, including restraining orders, over his three children with ex-wife Brody Dalle. He and Dalle, lead singer for the Distillers, divorced in 2019 after about 15 years of marriage and amid allegations of alcoholism, drug abuse and domestic violence. Then, after completing the Queens of the Stone Age album but before its June 2023 release, Homme was diagnosed with cancer.

Times pop music critic Mikael Wood contributed to this report.

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