



AARON PESKIN is the only San Francisco mayoral candidate running on a progressive agenda, putting him at odds with voters and tech titans who want to see a more hard-core approach to crime and homelessness.

Rap mogul remains in custody in federal case

Sean 'Diddy' Combs pleads not guilty to sex trafficking, other charges, is denied bail.

By RICHARD WINTON AND HANNAH FRY

Sean "Diddy" Combs, a hip-hop music mogul whose career catapulted him to global stardom in the 1990s, has been indicted as the leader of what prosecutors say was a years-long criminal enterprise that preyed on women, plied them with drugs and forced them to participate in sex performances.

An indictment unsealed Tuesday charged Combs, 54, with sex trafficking, racketeering and transportation to engage in prostitution. Combs has been the subject of a sweeping federal inquiry into sex-trafficking allegations since at least the beginning of the year.

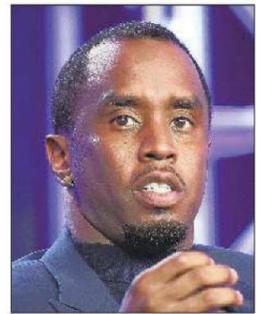
The charges, which he denies, mark a stunning fall from grace for the global superstar. The indictment caps years of allegations against Combs made by women that have tarnished his image.

The charges are likely to amplify questions around the culture of the music industry because authorities allege his employees were

key to facilitating his criminal behavior and covering it up.

"This office is determined to investigate and prosecute anyone who engages in sex trafficking, no matter how powerful or wealthy or famous you may be," Damian Williams, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, said during a news conference Tuesday. "A year ago, Sean Combs stood in Times Square and received a key to New York City. Today, he has been indicted and will face justice in the Southern District of New York."

The rapper and producer, who was arrested Monday in New York, pleaded not guilty to all charges in a Manhattan federal court. [See Combs, A9]



SEAN Combs faces at least 15 years in federal prison if found guilty.

In this S.F. mayoral race, the underdog is a progressive

SAN FRANCISCO — After 17 years wielding power and influence on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Aaron Peskin is facing a rather existential moment.

Has this famously liberal city moved too far right to embrace an old-school progressive like him for mayor?

Peskin, a slight man of 60 with a full beard and glasses, has spent his political career fighting for liberal causes. He's taken on large corporations, wringing substantial money from them to bolster community services. He's a vocal proponent of rent control and neighborhood preservation. As a recovering

The shift in dynamics reflects the city's tilt to the center in recent years

By Hannah Wiley

alcoholic, he thinks the city's homelessness issues should be addressed through a mix of compassion, affordable housing and services, rather than a punitive approach utilizing encampment sweeps and criminal citations.

Despite his experience, Peskin entered the mayor's contest against incumbent Mayor London Breed and three other Democrats — venture capitalist and former interim Mayor Mark Farrell, Levi Strauss heir and nonprofit executive Daniel Lurie, and fellow Supervisor Ahsha Safai — as an underdog.

Peskin joined the race in April. [See San Francisco, A7]

O.C. pastor returns to U.S. after years in Chinese prison

By THOMAS CURWEN

After nearly 20 years in Chinese custody, Orange County pastor David Lin was released over the weekend and has returned to the United States.

Lin, 68, had been sentenced to life in prison after being found guilty of contract fraud related to his efforts raising money to build a church in China. Lin's family and the State Department denied the charge.

"We welcome David Lin's release from prison in the People's Republic of China," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said at a news briefing Monday,

adding that the Biden administration is continuing to push for the release of other Americans wrongfully detained by foreign governments.

For the last year, Lin has been at the center of an intense diplomatic campaign.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom brought up the case during a visit to Beijing in October. This summer, U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken pressed for Lin's release during a diplomatic meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Last month, national security advisor Jake Sullivan also met with Wang and discussed Lin's situation. [See Pastor, A12]



HUNDREDS were taken to American University Hospital in Beirut. Most suffered injuries to the face, hands or stomach, a Lebanese official said.

Lebanon pager explosions appear to target Hezbollah

Militant group blames Israel for attack that left nine people dead and nearly 3,000 hurt.

By NABIH BULOS AND LAURA KING

BEIRUT — In what appears to be a first-of-its-kind attack, nearly 3,000 people were wounded across Lebanon on Tuesday — including at least nine fatally — after hundreds of electronic pagers used by Hezbollah members and others suddenly and mysteriously exploded.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency called it "an unprecedented security

incident," with pagers blowing up in Beirut's Hezbollah-dominated southern suburbs and several other areas.

More than 2,750 people were wounded, 180 of them critically, according to Firas Abiad, Lebanon's acting health minister. Most of the injuries were to the face, hands or stomach — near where the pager would be held, Abiad said.

Hezbollah blamed Israel for the attack. "We hold the Israeli enemy fully responsible for this criminal aggression," the militant group said Tuesday in a statement.

Israeli officials and its military made no comment Tuesday about the exploding pagers. Israel has in the past shown itself capable of

mounting sophisticated remote attacks.

Hezbollah said that pagers used by its members, employees and operatives blew up around 3:30 p.m. Among the dead were one child and two of the group's members, the statement said. Iran's ambassador was also wounded in the attack, its embassy said.

"Hezbollah's specialized agencies are currently conducting a wide-ranging security and scientific investigation to determine the reasons that led to these simultaneous explosions," the militant group's statement said.

The bizarre and unprecedented attacks came hours [See Lebanon, A4]

State puts focus on lowering maternal mortality

Surgeon general says the goal is to cut the rate of deaths in half by the end of 2026.

By EMILY ALPERT REYES

California's surgeon general has unveiled a new initiative to reduce maternal mortality and set a goal of halving the rate of deaths related to pregnancy and birth by December 2026.

Health officials say that more than 80% of maternal deaths nationwide are preventable. California has achieved a much lower rate of such deaths than the U.S., but maternal mortality resurged in recent years amid the COVID-19 pandemic, state data show.

"We have the lowest rate in the country. Now we can do better," the surgeon general, Dr. Diana E. Ramos, said in an interview.

Ramos was joined in announcing the effort Tuesday by First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom, the wife of Gov. Gavin Newsom.

In California, leading causes of such deaths include heart disease, bleeding, "behavioral health" issues such as mental illness and substance use, and infection. More than a fifth of pregnancy-related deaths in [See Maternal, A7]

Harris decries Trump remarks on Haitians

In an interview with Black journalists, she calls attacks on immigrants in Ohio "a crying shame." **NATION, A5**

Law seeks return of Nazi-stolen art

State legislation aims to put a Picasso painting back in the hands of the family that lost it in 1939. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

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NFL rookies adjust to L.A.

Forget just learning the plays. New Chargers from small towns can find new home tough to manage. **SPORTS, B10**

A new effort at AR glasses

Snap unveils its latest version of augmented reality eyewear. **BUSINESS, A8**

Weather

Clouds, then sun. L.A. Basin: 77/60. **B6**



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PERSPECTIVES

The Nazi roots of the smear against Haitians

MICHAEL HILTZIK

If you were tuned in to the political jabber this weekend and undistracted by news of an apparent assassination attempt on Donald Trump, you may be aware that Trump's running mate, JD Vance, acknowledged having "create[d] stories" about Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, to focus the media's attention on the immigration issue.

Among the stories that Vance spewed in appearances on TV talk shows Sunday was that there are 20,000 Haitians in Springfield, that they're illegal immigrants, that they were "dumped" on this unsuspecting municipality, that they're responsible for "skyrocketing" HIV and tuberculosis cases, that they've driven up housing prices, and of course that they're stealing and eating the city's geese and household pets.

None of these goonishly malevolent claims is authentic, some have been decisively debunked, and some are flagrant misrepresentations.

On CNN, Vance rationalized his mainstreaming of these urban legends — which have been picked up and amplified by Trump on the campaign trail — by stating, "If I have to create stories so that the American media actually pays attention to the suffering of the American people, then that's what I'm going to do."

To many commentators online, Vance's casual dismissal of the need to authenticate slanderous claims about an ethnic group evoked propaganda campaigns of the past.

One that came up was a judgment by the Nazi Party's chief racist ideologue, Alfred Rosenberg, about "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," an antisemitic tract wholly fabricated by officials in czarist Russia.

In 1934, Rosenberg wrote that the issue "was less the



CHRIS SZAGOLA Associated Press

REPUBLICAN vice presidential candidate JD Vance has repeated unconfirmed or debunked claims about Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio.

so-called authenticity of The Protocols than the inner truth of what is stated."

When I first encountered this quote in a posting on X, I found it so overdetermined that I thought it must be apocryphal. It's not. It has been documented by Holocaust historians. Indeed, Rosenberg's thinking reflected the general approach to the "Protocols" among Nazis. They included Hitler's propagandist Joseph Goebbels, who wrote in his diary in 1924: "I believe in the inner, but not the factual, truth of The Protocols."

The Jewish community will recognize these statements as related to the "blood libel" — the persistent assertion that Jews used the blood of Christian children to bake matzo or for other ritual purposes. A core tenet of Nazi antisemitism, it was designed to stir up anti-Jewish reaction with a visceral intensity. Of course it was completely fabricated.

This is what Vance and Trump are up to. Vance surely knows that the poison he has injected into political discourse has no resemblance to truth. Pressed on the issue by CNN's Dana Bash, he claimed to have heard about the pet kidnappings in

Springfield from "a dozen" constituents, 10 of whose stories are "verifiable and confirmable."

He didn't say that *he* had verified or confirmed them. Rather, he said it's up to the news media to do that job for him. His own office doesn't appear to have considered the claims authentic enough to pass any evidence on to law enforcement or civic leadership in Springfield, since neither the police nor the city's mayor say they have seen any evidence to validate them.

Questioned by Bash, Vance veered into the argument that the news media had ignored the purported crisis in Springfield until he caught their attention with his eye-opening "stories." In other words, his concern was less the authenticity or inauthenticity of his stories, but their, well, inner truth.

One more thing before we examine the other claims retailed by Vance and Trump: Urban legends about immigrants eating household pets have long been a staple of anti-immigrant propaganda in the U.S. The eminent folklorist Jan Harold Brunvand traced them at least as far back as the 1970s, when immigrants from Southeast Asia reached these shores.

"These stories have all the earmarks of urban legends," Brunvand wrote. "As with most such legends, the stories told about eaten pets are spread by word-of-mouth, and are unauthenticated by actual, traceable details." (Props to NBC's Brandy Zadrozny for unearthing a 1987 column by Brunvand on the topic.) Brunvand observed that the core of these stories is prejudice against immigrants, "who are also dismissed as 'invaders' who live on welfare and violate our cultural norms."

The Trump-Vance campaign didn't respond to my request for comment about the ideological roots of its attack on Haitian immigrants. "We hope the media will continue to cover the stories of the very real suffering and tragedies experienced by the people of Springfield, Ohio," the campaign told me by email.

In European history, blood libels were often the precursors to murderous pogroms directed at Jews; Vance and Trump may imagine that they can stir up hostility to immigrants by blaming immigrants for "real suffering and tragedies" experienced by their neighbors, while dodging responsibility for any violent

outbreaks that occur in the wake of their words, but they are like infants playing with fire.

That brings us to the other calumnies Vance and Trump have directed at the Haitians in Springfield.

First of all, estimates of Haitian residents in Springfield run to about 10,000 to 15,000, not 20,000. They are legal residents, not illegal. Nor did they all appear suddenly; some of them have been in this country long enough to have green cards.

"What we do know," Ohio's Republican governor, Mike DeWine, said Sunday on ABC, "is that the Haitians who are in Springfield are legal. They came to Springfield to work. ... Springfield has really made a great resurgence with a lot of companies coming in. These Haitians came in to work for these companies. What the companies tell us is that they are very good workers. They are very happy to have them there. And frankly, that has helped the economy."

As for the claim that Haitians are kidnapping and eating pets, DeWine called that "a piece of garbage that was simply not true. There's no evidence of this at all."

Vance's claim that HIV and tuberculosis cases are "skyrocketing" in Springfield doesn't appear to have any empirical support. New diagnoses of HIV generally declined from 2018 to 2022, according to a survey by the state Department of Health dated June 30, 2023. The department's director told the Columbus Dispatch that his agency hasn't seen any "measurable or discernible increase" in vaccine-preventable illnesses, a category that includes TB. (The TB vaccine generally isn't given in the U.S. because the disease incidence is so low.)

The influx of Haitian immigrants into Springfield was born in a deliberate local effort to shore up a shrinking economy, starting about 2017 — while Trump was president. The local boosters succeeded in attracting so many companies

to the city that a labor shortage occurred. Haitian immigrants arrived, as DeWine said, to fill those jobs.

It's true that the influx of new residents has strained the municipal infrastructure, including its schools and hospitals, and driven up rents. That's what happens in any town that becomes a magnet for new employment, such as — to name a couple at random — Austin, Texas, and San Francisco.

The state of Ohio has committed \$2.5 million over two years to augment the city's primary healthcare resources, among other assistance.

That said, the problems caused by the influx of working and taxpaying new residents pale in comparison with the damage done by Vance to his own constituents through his decision to mainline Springfield into the national immigration debate. The city appealed to its federal representatives for help dealing with the infrastructure problems from Washington. What they got was a partisan campaign that, so far, has led to bomb threats against local hospitals and the closures of schools and a local college in response to threats of violence.

In his TV appearances Sunday, Vance tried to steer the conversation to what he described as "creat[ing] the actual focus that allowed the American media to talk about this story." He didn't seem to notice that he has become the story.

Vance is wrong to say that the story is about "the suffering of the American people" because of immigration. The story is about the utter lack of judgment, character, shame and integrity he and his running mate have displayed in targeting an entire community of working people with smears, just for partisan gain.

Hiltzik writes a blog on latimes.com. Follow him on Facebook or on X, formerly Twitter, @hiltzik or email michael.hiltzik@latimes.com.

FOR THE RECORD

X's relocation: In the Sept. 15 Section A, an article about the departure of social media company X from San Francisco said SpaceX was moving its headquarters to Austin, Texas. The new headquarters will be near Brownsville, Texas.

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Taliban halts polio vaccinations, U.N. says

The suspension of the effort in Afghanistan is likely to have major repercussions in the region and beyond.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI — The Taliban has suspended polio vaccination campaigns in Afghanistan, the U.N. said Monday. It's a devastating setback for polio eradication, since the virus is one of the world's most infectious and any unvaccinated groups of children where the virus is spreading could undo years of progress.

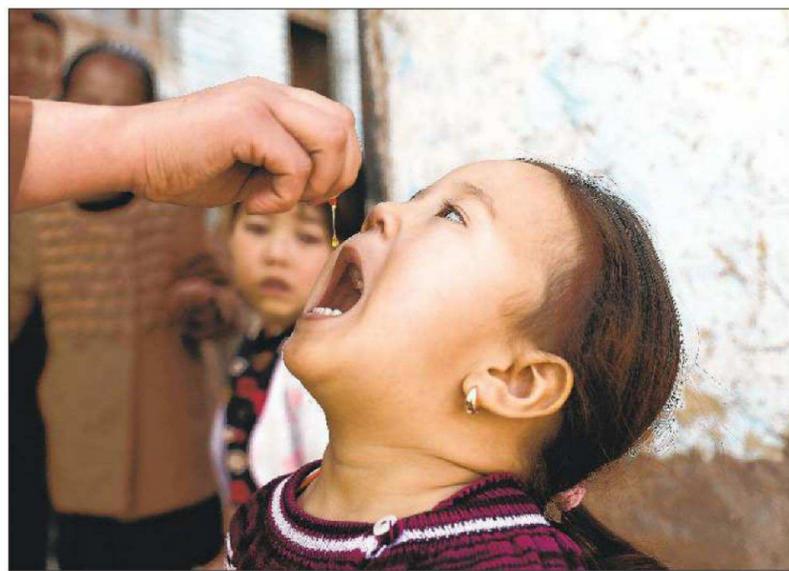
Afghanistan is one of two countries in which the spread of the potentially fatal, paralyzing disease has never been stopped. The other is Pakistan. It's likely that the Taliban's decision will have major repercussions for other countries in the region and beyond.

News of the suspension was relayed to United Nations agencies right before the September immunization campaign was due to start. No reason was given for the suspension, and no one from the Taliban-controlled government was immediately available for comment.

A top official from the World Health Organization said it was aware of discussions to move away from house-to-house vaccinations and instead have immunizations in places like mosques.

The WHO has confirmed 18 polio cases in Afghanistan this year, all but two in the south of the country. That's up from six cases in 2023.

"The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is aware of the recent policy discussions on shifting from house-to-house polio vaccination campaigns to site-to-site vaccination in parts of Afghanistan," said Dr. Hamid Jafari from the WHO. "Part-



RAHMAT GUL Associated Press

A CHILD in Kabul receives a polio vaccination in 2021. Afghanistan is one of two countries where the spread of the paralyzing disease has never been stopped.

ners are in the process of discussing and understanding the scope and impact of any change in current policy."

Polio campaigns in neighboring Pakistan are regularly marred by violence. Militants target vaccination teams and police assigned to protect them, falsely claiming that the campaigns are a Western conspiracy to sterilize children. As recently as August, the WHO reported that Afghanistan and Pakistan were continuing to implement an "intensive and synchronized campaign" focusing on improved vaccination coverage in endemic zones and an effective and timely response to detection elsewhere.

During a June nationwide campaign, Afghanistan used a house-to-house vaccination strategy for the first time in five years, a tactic that helped to reach the majority of children targeted, the WHO said.

But southern Kandahar province, the base of Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, used site-to-

site or mosque-to-mosque vaccination campaigns, which are less effective than going to people's homes.

Kandahar continues to have a large pool of susceptible children because it is not carrying out house-to-house vaccinations, the WHO said. "The overall women's inclusion in vaccination campaigns remains around 20% in Afghanistan, leading to inadequate access to all children in some areas," it said.

Any setback in Afghanistan poses a risk to the program in Pakistan due to high population movement, the WHO warned last month.

Pakistani health official Anwarul Haq said the polio virus would eventually spread and continue affecting children in both countries if vaccination campaigns aren't run regularly and in a synchronized manner. "Afghanistan is the only neighbor from where Afghan people in large numbers come to Pakistan and then go back," said Haq, the coordinator at the National

Emergency Operation Center for Polio Eradication. "People from other neighboring countries, like India and Iran, don't come to Pakistan in large numbers."

There needs to be a united effort to eliminate the disease, he told the Associated Press.

The campaign suspension is the latest obstacle in what has become a problematic global effort to stop polio. The initiative, which costs about \$1 billion every year, has missed multiple deadlines to wipe out the disease, and technical mistakes in the vaccination strategy set by WHO and partners have been costly.

The oral vaccine has also inadvertently seeded outbreaks in dozens of countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East and now accounts for the majority of polio cases worldwide.

This was seen most recently in Gaza, where a baby was partially paralyzed by a mutated strain of polio first seen in the oral vaccine, marking the territory's first case in more than 25 years.



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Los Angeles Times

THE WORLD



A FIRE rages near Sever do Vouga, one of about 100 blazes in northern Portugal. The hot, dry conditions contrast with flood-causing rains in Central Europe.

BRUNO FONSECA Associated Press

Four firefighters and two others killed in wildfires across Portugal

Crews totaling 5,000 members struggle to contain blazes. Over 50 people are injured; many are evacuated.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LISBON, Portugal — Five thousand firefighters struggled Tuesday to contain multiple wildfires raging across northern Portugal that are blamed for causing at least six deaths including four firefighters and forcing an unknown number of residents to flee their homes.

Some 100 fires reported by national authorities stretched the firefighting brigades. Authorities have yet to give figures on how many people have had to evacuate and how many homes have been lost. More than 50 people have been injured.

Civil Protection official André Fernandes said that three firefighters had died while traveling by road Tuesday, but it was not known whether their vehicle had crashed before it was engulfed by flames. The deaths of two civilians were confirmed, one from burns and the other from cardiac arrest, and one more firefighter died from an un-

specified illness while on duty, over the weekend.

With no rain forecast, national authorities prolonged an alert for fires until Thursday. The measure included a ban on farmers using heavy machinery to harvest crops because of the risk of sparks that could start more fires.

The hot, dry conditions behind the outbreaks in Portugal came while downpours caused flooding in Central Europe.

“I would like to say within a word of calm and tranquility we also need to be realistic,” Portuguese Prime Minister Luis Montenegro said late Monday. “We will endure difficult hours in the coming days. We need to prepare for it and we need to come together for it.”

Among the hardest-hit areas is the district of Aveiro, south of the northern city of Porto, but blazes were also raging out of control in other wooded areas. Portuguese state broadcaster RTP showed images of houses burned to the ground and smoke billowing over charred terrain in the area of Castro de Aire.

Ground units were supported by Portuguese water-dropping aircraft. Fellow European Union members Spain, France, Italy and Greece have committed to providing eight more planes to help local forces.

“The EU stands with Portugal as it battles major wildfires,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a message on X. “I thank France, Greece, Italy and Spain for their rapid reaction. This is EU solidarity at its best.”

Still, televised images showed some residents wielding tree branches and buckets of water to try to save their homes from encroaching fires.

Portugal was devastated by massive fires in 2017 that killed more than 120 people and burned more than half a million hectares.

U.N.-backed report decries worsening Venezuelan repression

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA — Independent U.N. human rights experts said in a new report Tuesday that their findings show Venezuela’s government has intensified the use of the “harshest and most violent” tools of repression after the disputed July presidential election.

The official results of the vote have been widely criticized as undemocratic, opaque and intended to keep President Nicolás Maduro in power.

In its report, the fact-finding mission on Venezuela, commissioned by the U.N.-backed Human Rights Council, denounced rights violations including arbitrary detentions, torture and sexual and gender-based violence by the country’s security forces that, “taken as a whole, constitute the crime against humanity of persecution on political grounds.”

“During the period cov-



VENEZUELANs clash with police in Caracas during demonstrations over disputed election results in July.

MATIAS DELACROIX Associated Press

ered by this report, and especially after the presidential election of July 28, 2024, the state reactivated and intensified the harshest and most violent mechanisms of its repressive apparatus,” the experts said. The report covered a one-year period through Aug. 31.

The Venezuelan diplomatic mission in Geneva said it does not recognize

the mandate of the fact-finding mission and declined to comment on the report to the Associated Press, though it was likely to address the report when it comes up for presentation to the council this week.

The findings echo concerns from United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, Hu-

man Rights Watch and others about Venezuela and its democracy, including repression before and after the highly anticipated vote and the subsequent flight into exile of Venezuela’s opposition candidate in the election, Edmundo González Urrutia.

Marta Valiñas, who heads the experts team, said Venezuelan authorities acknowledged they arrested more than 2,200 people between July 29 and Aug. 6.

“Of these, we have confirmed the arrest of at least 158 children — some with disabilities,” Valiñas told reporters at a news conference Tuesday in Geneva, noting that some had been accused of serious crimes, such as terrorism. “This phenomenon is something new and extremely worrying. We are facing a systematic, coordinated and deliberate repression by the Venezuelan government, which responds to a conscious plan to silence any form of dissent.”

Venezuela’s National

Electoral Council, which is stacked with Maduro loyalists, said the incumbent won the election with 52% of the vote.

But opposition supporters collected tally sheets from 80% of the nation’s electronic voting machines, and said they indicated González had won the election — with twice as many votes as Maduro.

Global condemnation over the lack of transparency prompted Maduro to ask Venezuela’s Supreme Tribunal of Justice, whose members are aligned with the ruling party, to audit the results. The high court reaffirmed his victory.

The independent experts, who do not represent the U.N., have been reporting on rights violations — including alleged crimes against humanity — in Maduro’s Venezuela for years. This report, the fifth of its kind, decried the government’s efforts to crush peaceful opposition to its rule.



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Israeli role suspected in pager explosions

[Lebanon, from A1] after Israel signaled it was weighing an escalation of its military confrontation with the Iran-backed Lebanese Shiite militant group, one of Lebanon's most powerful political parties.

Hezbollah, which has been engaged in a tit-for-tat fight with Israel since October, had switched to using pagers to communicate in recent months in an attempt to avoid Israeli tracking and surveillance of phones.

The exact trigger of the explosions was uncertain.

Technical experts at SMEX, a Beirut-based internet watchdog group, speculated that a shipment of pagers could have been intercepted and planted with small amounts of explosives that would be triggered either by a timer or a pre-arranged signal.

A security expert speaking to Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera said the pagers appeared to have been implanted with nearly an ounce of explosives. The person said that the pagers were part of a shipment of about 5,000 units brought in by Hezbollah.

Another possibility was that Israel developed a way to overheat the pager batteries, experts said. Modern pagers utilize lithium-ion batteries, which can ignite and explode if subjected to sufficient heat.

Hundreds of injured were taken to American University Hospital in central Beirut, where Mohammad Salhab, a burly man whose green shirt was streaked with blood, was waiting for news of his friend.

"He was holding the pager in his hand," Salhab said. "The doctors had to amputate. They couldn't save his hand."

News of the attack caused panic in neighborhoods and areas of the country where Hezbollah officials and operatives are present, with people calling family members and telling them to disconnect routers and other devices that could be vulnerable.

Witnesses passing through Beirut's southern suburb at the time of the blasts saw a bloodied man lying on the ground with people crowding around.

Pictures on social media claiming to be from the attack depicted one shopper at a fruit market standing near a stall when his bag explodes. Another depicts a man in a shop holding a pager and putting it on a desk before it detonates, throwing him back.

The Times could not in-



FIRST RESPONDERS aid a man wounded by his exploding pager in Sidon, Lebanon, on Tuesday. Hezbollah militants had switched to using pagers recently instead of phones to avoid Israeli tracking and surveillance.



POLICE inspect a car in Beirut after a pager inside blew up. It was unclear how the blasts were triggered.

dependently verify the videos or the images.

Dozens of ambulances crisscrossed Beirut's streets on alert and called on medical staff across the country to report to their facilities.

Late Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his government's goals in the war against Hamas militants in Gaza Strip would now include the secure return of

residents to northern Israel. About 60,000 people have been displaced in northern Israel since Oct. 8, when Hezbollah began firing rockets at Israel in solidarity with Hamas.

Analysts said even though Israel has not acknowledged responsibility, the pager attack heightened the risk of a major escalation.

"I think that we are closer than we were before to the scenario of full-scale war," said Orna Mizrahi, a senior research fellow at the Tel Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies.

Also Tuesday, Israel's do-

mestic spy agency, the Shin Bet, announced that it had foiled what it described as an attempt by Hezbollah to assassinate a former senior Israeli security official using a remotely activated device. It said the attack was intended to be carried out in coming days.

Senior Israeli commanders, including Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, met Tuesday evening for talks "on readiness for attack and defense in all arenas," the military said in a brief statement that did not mention the pager attacks.

The United Nations called Tuesday's developments "extremely concerning," particularly given the volatile context of ongoing Israeli-Hezbollah hostilities. Stéphane Dujarric, a spokesman for Secretary-General António Guterres, said the world body "cannot underscore enough" the risks of escalation in Lebanon and the region.

Netanyahu met Monday in Tel Aviv with President Biden's envoy, Amos Hochstein, and an Israeli readout said the prime minister had made it clear that displaced Israelis would not be able to return home without "a fundamental change in the security situa-

tion in the north."

A similar warning came from Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who also met with Hochstein. He told the U.S. envoy that only "military action" could end the cross-border clashes.

The rise in tensions between Israel and Hezbollah coincides with dogged efforts on the part of the Biden administration to help secure a cease-fire deal with Hamas.

The Israel-Hamas war started Oct. 7 after a surprise assault by Hamas-led fighters killed about 1,200 people in a string of rural communities and at a desert music festival. About 250 people were taken hostage.

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken traveled Tuesday to Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials. The United States, together with mediators Qatar and Egypt, has tried for months to secure an accord, but efforts have been stymied, most recently by Netanyahu's demand to keep troops in a narrow strip of land on Gaza's border with Egypt known as the Philadelphi corridor.

Bulos reported from Beirut and King from Tel Aviv.

Myanmar deaths push Typhoon Yagi toll past 500

At least 226 killed in the country, with the tally still rising and 77 missing.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BANGKOK — Floods and landslides in Myanmar triggered by last week's Typhoon Yagi and seasonal monsoon rains have claimed at least 226 lives, with 77 people missing, state-run media reported Tuesday. The new figures push the total number of dead in Southeast Asia from Yagi well past 500.

The accounting of casualties has been slow, in part due to communication difficulties with the affected areas. Myanmar is racked by a civil war that began in 2021 after the army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Independent analysts believe the ruling military controls much less than half of the country's territory.

Before arriving in Myanmar, also known as Burma, Typhoon Yagi killed almost 300 people in Vietnam, 42 in Thailand and four in Laos, according to the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance. It said 21 people were killed in the Philippines, with 26 others missing.

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said Monday that an estimated 631,000 people may have been affected by flooding across Myanmar. There were already 3.4 million displaced people at the beginning of September, according to the United Nations refugee agency, mostly because of war and unrest in recent years.

Heavy rains from the typhoon and the seasonal monsoon brought widespread flash floods to Myanmar, especially the central regions of Mandalay, Magway, Bago and the Irrawaddy River Delta; the eastern states Shan, Kayah, Kayin and Mon; and the country's capital, Naypyidaw.

Some flooded areas have started to see water levels recede, but others in the Shan and Kayah states remain critical.

More than 160,000 houses have been damaged and 438 temporary relief camps have been opened for more than 160,000 flood victims, Myanmar Alinn reported. The military government announced that nearly 240,000 people have been displaced.

Myanmar Alinn said 117 government offices and buildings, 1,040 schools, 386 religious buildings, roads, bridges, power towers, and telecom towers were damaged in 56 townships.

It also said nearly 130,000 animals were killed and more than 640,000 acres of agricultural land were damaged by the floods.

The U.N.'s humanitarian affairs agency said food, drinking water, medicine, clothes, dignity kits and shelters are urgent needs for the flood victims but alleviation efforts are hampered by blocked roads, damaged bridges and ongoing armed clashes.

Vice Senior Gen. Soe Win, the second-ranking member of Myanmar's ruling military council, said the country had received relief aid from other countries, and some humanitarian assistance from the Assn. of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, will arrive soon.

Soe Win, speaking at a meeting of the National Disaster Management Committee on Monday, said that the extent of flooding in the capital was unprecedented, and cleaning and rehabilitation activities in the flooded areas began Thursday as the water level declined.

Myanmar experiences extreme weather during the monsoon season virtually every year. In 2008, Cyclone Nargis killed more than 138,000 people around the Irrawaddy River Delta. The military government at the time was harshly discredited when it delayed acceptance of outside aid.

French man admits guilt in shocking rape trial

Dominique Pélicot, 71, testifies he repeatedly drugged his wife, let other men assault her.

BY DIANE JEANTET

AVIGNON, France — A 71-year-old French man admitted in court Tuesday that for nearly a decade, he repeatedly drugged his unwitting wife and invited dozens of men to rape her while she lay unconscious in their bed.

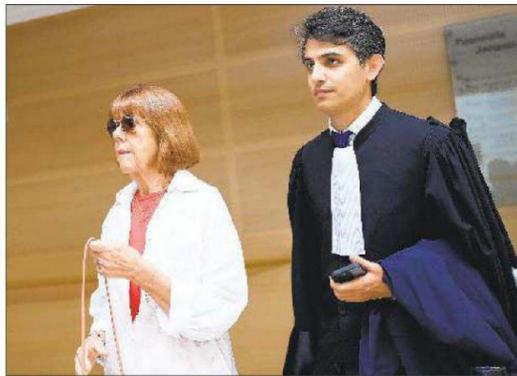
His wife of 50 years, who has divorced him since his arrest, also got to speak, telling the court that she feels completely betrayed.

In a trial that has gripped France and raised new awareness about sexual violence, Dominique Pélicot told the court that he also raped his wife, Gisèle Pélicot, and that the 50 men standing trial alongside him understood exactly what they were doing.

"Today I maintain that, along with the other men here, I am a rapist," Dominique Pélicot testified. "They knew everything. They can't say otherwise."

Pélicot's testimony marked the most important moment yet in a trial that has shocked the world. Although he previously confessed to investigators, his court testimony will be crucial for the panel of judges to decide the fate of his co-defendants, who range in age from 26 to 74. Many of them deny having raped Gisèle Pélicot, saying that her then-husband had manipulated them or that they believed she was consenting.

Many following the case



GISELE PELICOT, left, arrives at the courthouse in Avignon, southern France, for the trial on Sept. 5.

also hope his testimony might help explain why Dominique Pélicot would subject his wife and the mother of his three children to such unconscionable abuse.

Gisèle Pélicot has become a hero to many rape victims and a symbol of the fight against sexual violence in France for agreeing to waive her anonymity in the case, letting the trial be public and appearing openly in front of the media. She shows up every day, passing through the courthouse security line behind men accused of raping her. As she left court during a break Tuesday, supporters brought her flowers.

After days of delay due to what his lawyers said was a kidney stone and urinary tract infection, Dominique Pélicot, seated in a wheelchair, testified that the charges against him are true. With his ex-wife looking on from the packed gallery and his voice trembling and barely audible at times, he started a long day of testimony trying to explain child-

hood traumas that he said scarred and molded him into the person he became.

"One is not born a pervert, one becomes a pervert," Pélicot told the judges after recounting, sometimes in tears, being raped by a male hospital nurse at age 9 and being forced to take part in a gang rape at age 14.

Pélicot also said that for years, his father sexually abused a young girl his family had taken in, and that his brother later said their father had invited other men to do the same.

He regretted that his parents didn't let him continue his studies after he turned 14. He said that around that time, he tried to persuade his mother to leave the house with him, but "she never wanted to."

"I don't really want to talk about this, I am just ashamed of my father. In the end, I didn't do any better," said Pélicot, who faces 20 years in prison if convicted.

After he spoke about his difficult upbringing, Gisèle Pélicot was given the oppor-

tunity to address the court.

"It is hard for me to hear this. For 50 years, I lived with a man. I couldn't imagine even one second that he could have committed acts of rape," she said. "I trusted this man entirely."

The two looked at each other, he from behind the dock's glass window and she from the witness stand.

"I am guilty," he told her. "I regret everything I did. I ask you for forgiveness, even if it is unpardonable."

Asked if she wanted to respond, Gisèle Pélicot turned and left the stand.

When asked about his feelings toward his ex-wife, Dominique Pélicot said she didn't deserve what he did.

"From my youth, I remember only shocks and traumas, forgotten partly thanks to her," he said in tears.

At that moment, Gisèle Pélicot put on her sunglasses.

Later, Dominique Pélicot said, "I was crazy about her. She replaced everything. I ruined everything."

A supermarket security guard caught Pélicot in 2020 secretly shooting video up women's skirts, according to court documents. During a search of his house and electronic devices, police found thousands of photos and videos of men engaging in sexual acts with Gisèle Pélicot while she appeared to be unconscious in bed.

With the recordings, police were able to track down most of the 72 suspects they were seeking.

In addition to the photos and videos of Gisèle Pélicot, investigators found photos of the Pélicots' daughter, Caroline Darian, and two daughters-in-law that were surreptitiously taken while

they were in their underwear, getting undressed or taking showers, according to authorities.

Although her mother has stayed remarkably calm throughout the trial, Darian walked out of the courtroom Tuesday as her father was being asked about photos of her that were found on his laptop.

"Excuse me, I'm going to vomit," she said angrily before rushing out. She has written a book about what happened to her family, called "And I Stopped Calling You Daddy."

After retiring, the Pélicots moved from the Paris region to a house in Mazan, a small town in the Provence region.

When police officers called Gisèle Pélicot in for questioning in late 2020, she initially told them her husband was "a great guy," according to legal documents. They then showed her some photos. She left and later divorced her husband.

Since Dominique Pélicot's arrest, other cases have surfaced. He was fined after being caught shooting video of a woman's crotch in 2010 and required to see a psychologist. Gisèle Pélicot has said she never knew about this incident.

Among those hoping to secure a seat to watch the Tuesday's proceedings was Bernadette Tessonnière, a 69-year-old retiree who lives a half-hour drive from Avignon, where the trial is taking place.

"How is it possible that in 50 years of communal life, one can live next to someone who hides his life so well? This is scary," she said.

Jeantet writes for the Associated Press.

THE NATION

Harris denounces Trump's attacks on Haitians

In interview with Black journalists, she calls rival's remarks about immigrants 'a crying shame.'

By HAILEY BRANSON-POTTS

Vice President Kamala Harris on Tuesday called former President Trump's false claims that Haitian immigrants in Ohio are stealing and eating pets "a crying shame" and sharply criticized her opponent for "spewing lies that are grounded in tropes that are age-old."

Harris, speaking in Philadelphia at a panel hosted by the National Assn. of Black Journalists, said Trump had a long history of using racist tropes — and of discriminating against Black people in particular.

She cited several examples of Trump's controversial actions regarding race, including his "birther" lies that questioned former President Obama's birthplace, alleged racial discrimination against Black families at Trump's housing developments, and his support for the death penalty for defendants in the 1989 case of the Central Park Five, the five Black and Latino teenagers wrongly convicted — and later exonerated — in the beating and rape of a white female jogger.



DEMOCRATIC presidential nominee Kamala Harris greets interviewers from the National Assn. of Black Journalists in Philadelphia on Tuesday.

"This is not new," Harris said. "This is not new in terms of these tropes. This is not new in terms of where it's coming from."

Harris was speaking on a panel moderated by three Black journalists before a live audience that included NABJ members and journalism students attending historically Black colleges and universities.

In July, Trump spoke during NABJ's annual convention in Chicago, taking part in a contentious interview with three Black female reporters in which he questioned the Black identity of Harris, who is the biracial daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants.

Trump falsely accused Harris of shifting her racial and ethnic identity over time, contending that, for years, Harris "was always of Indian heritage, and she was only promoting Indian heritage. I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago, when she happened to turn Black and now she wants to be known as Black. So I don't know. Is she Indian, or is she Black?"

"I respect either one, but she obviously doesn't," said Trump, whose remarks on that subject and others drew boos and cheers.

Harris' office said at the time that she did not attend the NABJ convention because she had a scheduling

conflict.

On Tuesday, Harris' most pointed criticism of her opponent followed a question by Eugene Daniels, the White House correspondent for Politico, about the verbal attacks by Trump, his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, and their allies on Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio.

Schools and government buildings in the small city have been evacuated amid a rash of bomb threats, many coming from overseas, as Trump and Vance continue to repeat their false claims that Haitian immigrants have been eating dogs and cats. Trump has referred to those immigrants as being

in the country illegally, but they are predominantly legal U.S. residents.

"It's a crying shame, literally, what's happening to those families, those children in that community," Harris said.

Harris said her "heart breaks" for Haitians in Springfield.

"There were children, elementary school children who — it was school photo day; you remember what that's like, going to school on picture day? — who were dressed up in their best, got all ready, knew what they were gonna wear the night before — and had to be evacuated. Children. Children! A whole community put in fear," she said.

Harris said she believes that the American people want to move on from Trump's "hateful rhetoric" and that they want to say: "This is exhausting, and it's harmful, and it's hateful and grounded in some age-old stuff that we should not have the tolerance for."

On his Truth Social account, Trump in recent days has shared memes with images depicting himself rescuing animals and one with a group of kittens holding a sign that reads: "Don't Let Them Eat us. Vote for Trump."

His son Donald Trump Jr., in an interview with right-wing activist Charlie Kirk last week, made a racist claim that Haitians were less intelligent than people from other countries, say-

ing: "You look at Haiti, you look at the demographic makeup, you look at the average IQ — if you import the Third World into your country, you're going to become the Third World."

In the interview, Harris defended the economic policies of the current administration, saying that she and President Biden entered office at a time of economic turmoil, with high unemployment amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The country's economic woes, she said, were due in large part to "mismanagement by the former president."

"Is the price of groceries still too high? Yes," she said. "Do we have more work to do? Yes. And I will tell you, I do believe that I offer a new generation of leadership for our country."

In a statement Tuesday, Janiyah Thomas, the Trump campaign's Black media director, said Harris "admitted today that she has failed Black Americans," adding that because of "her failed policies, grocery prices are too high and the American Dream is unattainable for young Americans."

Harris also told the interviewers that she called Trump after the apparent assassination attempt Sunday at his Florida golf club.

"I checked on him to see if he was OK," she said, "and I told him what I have said publicly: There is no place for political violence in our country."

Pipeline fire ebbs but still burns near Houston

By JUAN A. LOZANO AND SEAN MURPHY

DEER PARK, Texas — A flame that towered over a southeast Houston suburb subsided Tuesday but was still burning after a pipeline explosion that happened when a vehicle drove through a fence along a parking lot and struck an aboveground valve, officials said.

"Progress has been made as first responder crews worked through the night. The fire is significantly smaller," according to a statement from Deer Park. The city said Energy Transfer, the Dallas-based owner of the pipeline, expected the fire to burn itself out later Tuesday.

City officials said police and FBI agents found no preliminary evidence to suggest a coordinated or terrorist attack, and said it "appears to be an isolated incident," but they haven't offered any details on how they came to that conclusion.

Investigators were trying to learn more about the driver of the sport utility vehicle. The car was incinerated by the explosion, which scorched the ground across a wide radius, severed nearby power transmission lines, melted playground equipment and ignited nearby homes. More than 24 hours after the explosion, the driver still had not been publicly identified.

The valve, which appears



A FIREFIGHTER directs water toward the fire in La Porte, Texas, on Monday. It began with an explosion after a sport utility vehicle ran into a valve, officials said.

to have been protected by a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire, is located within a long, grassy corridor where high-voltage power lines run. Below the ground run several pipelines. On one side of the corridor is a neighborhood of homes; on the other is a Walmart. Officials say the driver went through a fence along the Walmart parking lot and across the grassy right-of-way before striking the valve.

Officials have not given any information on the condition of the driver. Deer Park spokesperson Kaitlyn Bluejacket said four people were injured, but provided no details about the seriousness of the injuries. Authorities said one firefighter sustained minor injuries.

The roaring fire shot orange flame and then black smoke hundreds of feet into the air, prompting authorities to evacuate nearly 1,000 homes and order people in nearby schools to shelter in place.

By Tuesday, the city of La Porte said it had slightly reduced the evacuation area south of the fire but did not

say how many people were affected.

Operators shut off the flow of natural gas liquids after the explosion rattled homes and businesses in Deer Park and the adjacent suburb of La Porte shortly before 10 a.m. Monday. But Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo said 20 miles of pipeline stretched between the two closed valves, and all the chemicals inside had to burn off before the fire would stop.

Robert Hall, a senior advisor at the nonprofit Pipeline Safety Trust, said it's not surprising that it's taken more than a day for the material to stop burning.

"You're talking about 20-inch pipelines and miles between valves, so it takes a long time to burn down," Hall said.

The fire was burning so hot that all firefighters could do was use ladder trucks to hose down nearby houses that began smoking in the radiant heat.

Houston, Texas' largest city, is the nation's petrochemical heartland and is home to a cluster of refineries and plants and thou-

sands of miles of pipelines. Explosions and fires are a familiar sight, and some have been deadly, raising recurring questions about industry efforts to protect the public and the environment.

Energy Transfer did not immediately respond Tuesday to a question about what safety precautions were in place near their valve.

Energy Transfer and Harris County Pollution Control are conducting air monitoring and have found no health issues, according to Deer Park officials.

The Railroad Commission of Texas, which regulates oil and gas in the state, said Tuesday its safety inspectors will enter the site when it's safe to do so to begin their investigation.

Lozano and Murphy write for the Associated Press, and reported from Deer Park and Oklahoma City, respectively. AP writers Christopher L. Keller in Albuquerque; Valerie Gonzalez in McAllen, Texas; Ken Miller in Oklahoma City; and Jamie Stengle in Dallas contributed to this report.

Florida sheriff, tired of false threats, posts 11-year-old's mug shot

He says he'll publicize arrests in school shooting hoaxes.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — A Florida sheriff fed up with a spate of false school shooting threats is taking a new tactic to try to get through to students and their parents: He's posting the mug shot of any offender on social media.

Law enforcement officials in Florida and across the country have seen a wave of school shooting hoaxes recently, including in the wake of the attack at Apalachee High School in Winder, Ga., that killed two students and two teachers.

Volusia County Sheriff Mike Chitwood on Florida's Atlantic Coast said he's tired of the hoaxes targeting students, disrupting schools and sapping law enforcement resources. In social media posts Monday, Chitwood warned parents that if their kids are arrested for making these threats, he'll make sure the public knows.

"Since parents, you don't want to raise your kids, I'm going to start raising them," Chitwood said. "Every time we make an arrest, your kid's photo is going to be put out there. And if I can do it, I'm going to perp walk your kid so that everybody can see what your kid's up to."

Chitwood made the announcement in a video highlighting the arrest of an 11-year-old boy who was taken into custody for allegedly

threatening to carry out a school shooting at Creekside or Silver Sands Middle School in Volusia County. Chitwood posted the boy's full name and mug shot to his Facebook page.

In the video, which had more than 270,000 views on Facebook as of Monday afternoon, the camera pans across a conference table covered in air guns, pistols, fake ammunition, knives and swords that law enforcement officers claim the boy was "showing off" to other students.

Later, the video cuts to officers letting the boy out of a squad car and leading him handcuffed into a secure facility, dressed in a blue flannel button-up shirt, black sweatpants and slip-on sandals. The boy's face is fully visible at multiples points in the video.

"Right this way, young man," an officer tells the boy, whose hands are shackled behind his back.

The boy is led into an empty cell, with metal cuffs around his wrists and ankles, before an officer closes the door and locks him inside.

"Do you have any questions?" the officer asks as he bolts the door.

"No, sir," the boy replies.

The video prompted a stream of reactions on social media, with many residents praising Chitwood, calling on him to publicly identify the parents as well — or press charges against them.

Others questioned the sheriff's decision, noting that the 11-year-old is just a child, and that the weight of the responsibility should fall on his parents.

Under Florida law, juvenile court records are generally exempt from public release — but not if the child is charged with a felony, as in this case.

Law enforcement officials across Florida have been tracking a stream of threats in the weeks since the 2024-25 school year began. In Broward County, home to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, site of a mass shooting in 2018, officials said last week that they had arrested nine students, ages 11 to 15, for making threats since August.

"For my parents, to the kids who are getting ready for school, I'm going to say this again," Broward Sheriff Gregory Tony said at a news conference. "Nothing about this is a laughing or joking matter."

"Parents, students, it's not a game," he added.

Ohio city hit by bomb threats deploys troopers to schools

Officials say most of hoaxes in Springfield — the target of lies by Trump and Vance — came from abroad.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SPRINGFIELD, Ohio — State police were stationed at Springfield schools Tuesday in response to a rash of bomb threats — the vast majority of which were from overseas, officials said — after former President Trump and his running mate, Ohio

Sen. JD Vance, falsely suggested legal Haitian immigrants in the small city were eating dogs and cats.

Schools, government buildings and elected officials' homes in Springfield were among the targets of more than 30 hoax threats last week that forced evacuations and closures. Two more schools had to be evacuated Monday. Republican Gov. Mike DeWine said that a foreign actor was largely responsible, but he declined to name the country.

"The vast majority of the bomb threats came from foreign countries. Not 100%, but it's the vast majority," Dan

Tierney, DeWine's spokesperson, said Tuesday.

Tierney said a criminal investigation by multiple law enforcement agencies yielded information on the origin of the bomb threats. He was not more specific on how investigators determined they came from a foreign country, nor would he reveal the name of the country, saying that could encourage additional threats.

"These are largely foreign actors, not folks in the community or another part of the United States," he said. "We think it's useful in part because it shows that it's, you know, false, that it's safe

to send your kids to school. And we're providing extra patrol support to make sure people feel safe at school."

DeWine announced Monday that he was dispatching dozens of members of the Ohio State Highway Patrol to help keep schools open. Two highway patrol officers have been assigned to each of the Springfield City School District's 18 schools, said Jenna Leinasars, a district spokesperson.

"The troopers will conduct sweeps of the buildings for threats prior to school and sweep again, after school has ended. In between these sweeps, the

troopers will be stationed at the building for the entire day," she said.

State police were visible at a middle school Tuesday morning, with students dropped off as normal.

Thousands of Haitian immigrants have settled in recent years in the predominantly white, blue-collar city of about 60,000, about 45 miles from the state capital of Columbus, where they have found work in factories and warehouses that had been struggling to fill job openings. The influx has strained schools, healthcare facilities and city services and driven up housing costs.

Trump fans were recruited to run. A dirty trick?

Shadowy group helps far-right candidates get on ballots in swing districts — a likely boon to Democrats.

BY RYAN J. FOLEY AND BRIAN SLODYSKO

DES MOINES — Joe Wiederien was an unlikely candidate to challenge a Republican congressman in one of the nation's most competitive districts.

A fervent supporter of former President Trump, Wiederien was registered as a Republican until months earlier. A debilitating stroke had left him unable to drive. For a time, he couldn't vote because of a felony conviction.

But he arrived last month at the Iowa Capitol with well over the 1,726 petition signatures needed to qualify for the ballot as a conservative alternative to first-term Republican Rep. Zach Nunn.

Similar stories have unfolded across the country.

For the last year, a group called the Patriots Run Project has recruited Trump supporters to run as independent candidates in swing districts where they could siphon votes from Republicans. In addition to two races in Iowa, the group recruited candidates in Nebraska, Montana, Virginia and Minnesota. All six recruits described themselves as retired, disabled or both.

The group's operation provides few clues about its management, financing or motivation. But interviews, text messages, emails, business filings and other documents reviewed by the Associated Press show that a significant sum has been spent — and some of it traces back to Democrats.

Dirty tricks are as old as American elections, but the efforts this year could have profound consequences in the fight to control Congress, which is expected to be decided by a few races.



JOSEPH WIEDERIEN withdrew his candidacy as an independent in a House race in Iowa after it became clear to him that he'd been manipulated into running.



WIEDERIEN shows a text exchange with a political operative whom he knew only as "Johnny."

"I was thinking, well, it would be nice to be in Congress and get to work with President Trump," Wiederien, 54, reflected in an interview outside the Veterans Affairs hospital in Des Moines, where he was seeking treatment for a leaking incision on his head from previous brain surgery. "It looks like it's a dirty trick now."

Wiederien withdrew his candidacy last month after he says it became clear he'd been manipulated into running. As with other recruits, his story begins with Face-

book, where the Patriots Run Project operated a series of pro-Trump pages and ran ads that used apocalyptic rhetoric to attack establishment politicians in both parties while urging conservatives to run in November.

Once recruited, they communicated with a handful of operatives through text messages, emails and phone calls. In-person contact was limited. The Patriots Run Project advised them about what forms to fill out and how to file required paperwork.

In at least three races, pe-

tion signatures to qualify for the ballot were circulated by a Nevada company that works closely with the Democratic consulting firm Sole Strategies, according to documents, including text messages and a draft contract, as well as the firm's co-founder. In Iowa, a different Democratic firm conducted a poll testing attacks on Nunn, while presenting Wiederien as the true conservative.

Nunn on Monday called the effort a plot "to steal this election."

"I am outraged to see anyone prey on hardworking Iowans or deceive voters," he said.

Despite the ties to Democratic firms, there is a scant paper trail to determine who is overseeing the effort.

The Patriots Run Project is not a registered business in the U.S., nor is it listed as a nonprofit with the Internal Revenue Service. And it has not filed paperwork to form a political committee with the Federal Election Commission. The only concrete identifying detail listed on the group's website is a P.O. box inside a UPS store in Washington, D.C.

Messages left at email ad-

resses and phone numbers for the group's operatives went unanswered.

Jason Torchinsky, a prominent Republican election lawyer and former Justice Department official, said investigators should take interest. "There could be a wide variety of federal and state criminal violations," he said.

In Iowa, it is a crime to deprive or defraud voters of a fair and impartially conducted election process, while in Virginia "conspiracy against rights of citizens" is a felony.

Thomas Bowman, who is 71 and disabled after a kidney transplant, said he believes he probably was recruited to run against Democratic Rep. Angie Craig of Minnesota to split the conservative vote and help Craig win reelection in the suburban Minneapolis district. But the self-described constitutional conservative expressed gratitude for free help getting signatures.

"They got me on the ballot," Bowman said. "If I had to do that all by myself, I couldn't do it."

In Montana, Dennis Hayes was recruited to run as a Libertarian against GOP Rep. Ryan Zinke. The group found a donor to give him \$1,740 to cover his filing fee, Hayes recalled.

Robert Reid, a widowed retiree running against Republican Rep. Jen Kiggans in southeastern Virginia, said he was contacted by the Patriots Run Project after posting his views to Facebook. His sole in-person contact was when a man drove to his home in a Mercedes SUV to drop off his completed petition signature paperwork.

In Nebraska, Army veteran and Trump supporter Gary Bera said he was asked to run as an independent against Republican Rep. Don Bacon. The district, which includes Omaha, is the state's most competitive. Plans changed abruptly last month when he was informed that the group had not collected enough signatures for him to qualify.

In Iowa, the group recruited longtime GOP activist Stephanie Jones to run as an independent against Republican Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks. Jones said the group paid to gather signatures for her but fell short.

Wiederien wants the Patriots Run Project to be investigated.

The group convinced Wiederien to change his party affiliation from Republican to unaffiliated so he could qualify. They assured him a 2013 felony conviction wasn't disqualifying and arranged for a firm to gather signatures across the district.

Those signatures were gathered by Common Sense America, a Nevada limited liability company created in February. A company disclosure filing in Colorado, which requires signature gatherers to register, lists a phone number for a co-founder of Sole Strategies.

"We work very closely with Common Sense America," said Zee Cohen-Sanchez, the co-founder.

Last month, a poll attacked Nunn, calling him "an errand boy for the uniparty elite," while painting Wiederien as the pro-Trump conservative in the race.

A spokeswoman for the firm that operated the poll, Dynata, said its customer was Patinkin Research, which says it "has worked to elect dozens of Democratic candidates."

When it was time to submit his petitions, Wiederien was driven by a Patriots Run Project operative to Des Moines, where they met a man in an office near the Capitol. He gave them paperwork and a binder full of his signatures. All he had to do was sign a form.

Not long after, he heard from Republicans who convinced him he'd been tricked into thinking the Patriots Run Project had Trump's support and he withdrew his name from the ballot.

Associated Press writers Foley and Slodysko reported from Des Moines and Washington, respectively.

Los Angeles Times
BUSINESS TO BUSINESS
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Los Angeles Times

Is his progressive agenda now out of step in S.F.?

[San Francisco, from A1] several months after Breed and the other three competitors had started campaigning. That put him at a financial disadvantage in a mayoral election shaping up as one of the most expensive in San Francisco history.

But even more significant: Peskin entered the race as the only candidate running on a progressive agenda, putting him at odds with the rising chorus of voters and tech titans who want to see a more hard-core approach to the sprawling tent encampments and drumbeat of retail and property crimes that have eroded their sense of a safe, functional city.

In recent decades, it hasn't been unusual for San Francisco to elect mayors who are centrist Democrats alongside a more progressive Board of Supervisors.

But the tech money flooding into the race, combined with frustrations over the city's slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, has many voters questioning progressive policies and the wisdom of a city that governs with a bleeding heart.

Many parents were furious that the city's schools were closed for more than a year during COVID — longer than most in the country.

The remote learning persisted even as the school board engaged in a divisive effort to rename a third of the city's public schools whose existing names, critics asserted, honored historical figures associated with slavery or oppression of women or "who otherwise significantly diminished the opportunities of those amongst us to the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Outrage over the progressive agenda fueled the recall of three school board members in February 2022. Four months later, voters also recalled then-Dist. Atty. Chesa Boudin, a leading reform advocate whose progressive policies on sentencing and incarceration were derided by opponents as a threat to public safety.

Last March, San Francisco made national headlines when voters approved a pair of ballot measures that Breed had championed to broaden police surveillance powers and impose drug treatment mandates for certain welfare recipients. That same night, a slate of moderate candidates took control of the governing body of the local Democratic Party.

Although the five leading candidates for mayor are Democrats, all but Peskin now fall in that moderate camp. Breed, in particular, has tacked right on issues such as homelessness and crime over the last year.

Peskin celebrates the distinction, saying that he joined the race to keep San Francisco a "beacon" for the artists, creatives, immigrants and LGBTQ+ pioneers who've shaped the city's culture for decades,



STEPHEN LAM San Francisco Chronicle

MAYORAL candidate Aaron Peskin says he would prioritize low-income housing, expand rent control and open more treatment facilities.

and that he fights for working-class people to ensure they can afford living in the city.

"Don't get me wrong, I think that one of the most important things that any government does is to make people safe," Peskin said. "But, you know, that's all the other candidates are talking about. They're not talking about also making it safe and welcoming."

Peskin has targeted Breed from the start of his campaign, arguing that her leadership is incoherent and dismissing her recent crackdown on homelessness as a cynical political ploy.

"She actually embraced the Fox News narrative about San Francisco, rather than standing up and defending this city and embracing and strengthening our policies of compassion and of getting things done," he told The Times.

Breed has countered that compassion has its limits, and that the city needs to take a tougher stance with homeless people who have refused shelter or won't seek treatment for drug addiction.

During a July mayoral debate hosted by the local firefighters union, Breed said her decision to get tough on the homelessness crisis may not be popular but was necessary to propel San Francisco forward.

"We have had to move from a compassionate city to a city of accountability," she said.

Peskin said he is focused on leading San Francisco beyond the "doom loop" narrative that has dogged the city nationally for much of the last four years and into its recovery era.

If elected mayor, he's promised to prioritize low-income housing and expand rent control. On homelessness, he wants to open more treatment facilities and expand shelter capacity, rather than continue the encampment sweeps that Breed has pushed over the last two months.

Peskin said he knows something about recovery.

In 2021, Peskin entered treatment for problem drinking amid allegations that he had joined a government meeting inebriated. The episode unleashed broader complaints that Peskin for years had bullied colleagues and lower-level staff, and that people feared retaliation if they reported his behavior.

Peskin ultimately apologized. And after spending the initial weeks after the uproar in shame, he said he's now grateful for the wake-up call and is more than three years sober.

"I always thought that my job was to care for the community, and I never realized that people actually cared about my well-being," he said. "The amount of support and love and encouragement that I've gotten from the most unlikely places and people has been just remarkably heartening."

But even as Peskin touts his personal and professional journey, local polls show him trailing Breed, Farrell and Lurie in the city's ranked-choice voting system. All three have made tough positions on property crime, fentanyl dealing and homelessness a centerpiece of their campaigns.

Whereas Breed, Farrell and Lurie are getting financial support from tech executives and wealthy business owners, Peskin touts his campaign as a grassroots effort fueled by working-class people. His endorsements include left-leaning LGBTQ+ and tenant rights organizations, labor unions and progressive politicians including former Mayor Art Agnos, former Supervisor Jane Kim and former state Sen. Mark Leno.

"Aaron Peskin was built for public service," Agnos said. "What we have today are tech multibillionaires. Tech multibillionaires who live like monarchs, and now we are seeing they're trying to rule San Francisco like they were monarchs."

"I think San Francisco has always led on the social issues," said Kim, who unsuccessfully ran against Breed in 2018. "Where we struggle and fight as progressives has been on the economic agenda, and who benefits economically in this city. Is it the ultra-wealthy and the billionaires, or is it our working class and our low-income workers? And that's the fight that Aaron is leading on."

Along with staunch supporters, Peskin has accumulated fierce critics during his years in office — particularly around housing.

Peskin represents some of the city's most historic neighborhoods, including North Beach, Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf and downtown's Financial District.

He often distinguishes himself as someone who sticks up for neighborhood

identity — what some consider a dog whistle for "NIM-BYism," a colloquial term for opposition to large multi-family housing projects or other unwelcome development. He has resisted efforts to amend zoning rules for certain neighborhoods to allow for denser housing.

"Peskin would be an unbelievable step backwards," said Laura Foote, executive director of the advocacy coalition YIMBY Action, a housing organization that endorsed Breed. "We need to protect these people in our communities from the ever-escalating cost of housing, and that means building more."

San Francisco has one of the longest housing approval processes in the country, and is tens of thousands of units shy of its state-mandated production goals.

Breed has called for more housing development across all income levels in San Francisco as rental costs skyrocket and the median home price exceeds \$1 million. Farrell, Safai and Lurie have also endorsed denser housing, though to varying degrees and in some cases only in certain neighborhoods.

Peskin rejects the idea that he is anti-housing as a "developer-funded narrative." But he also argues that it's possible to build more housing "without turning Ocean Beach into Miami Beach."

The disagreement over development highlights another layer of San Francisco's drift toward the political center, with more leaders coming out in favor of multi-family housing projects despite outcry from prog-

ressive groups concerned about gentrification and neighborhood changes.

State Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco), who has authored some of the state's strongest housing production laws, has criticized Peskin's devotion to the "existing broken housing structure."

Wiener, who has endorsed Breed, complimented Peskin as skilled and "incredibly smart." But he also warned that Peskin's brand of progressivism would set San Francisco back.

"San Franciscans are quite progressive. But there is a strain among some people — I think it's a minority, but some people — where they equate progressivism to having no change," Wiener said. "A city that isn't changing is a city that is dying."

Peskin has been willing, at times, to buck the progressive label. He has supported laws to retain police staffing, and he recently told The Times he supports a controversial November ballot measure, Proposition 36, that would roll back a 2014 voter-approved law that turned some nonviolent drug and theft felonies into misdemeanors. Critics of the initiative, including Wiener and Gov. Gavin Newsom, say it would mark a return to an era of mass incarceration.

Peskin uses those examples to argue that he can be compassionate while also being practical.

"I've always thought the root of progressive is progress," Peskin said, "and progress is actually getting things done."

California has lowest maternal mortality rate in country

[Maternal, from A1] California occur the day of delivery, but the majority happen in the days, weeks and months that follow, according to state data.

In California, about 70 pregnant and birthing people die annually from pregnancy or childbirth complications, according to the state public health department.

The crisis has been especially stark among Black women, who have faced a maternal mortality rate more than three times that of white women in California. In Los Angeles County, there has been a public outcry in recent years over the deaths of women like April Valentine, 31, and Bridgette Burks, 32 — Black mothers who left behind devastated families.

Health researchers have faulted numerous factors for the higher rates of maternal mortality among Black women, including the physical effects on the body of enduring years of racism; higher rates of diabetes and other chronic conditions that increase risk; and inequities in the care received by Black patients.

California officials said they are also concerned about rising rates of maternal mortality among Lat-

inos and Asian/Pacific Islander communities in the state.

The "Strong Start & Beyond" initiative, officials said, would help patients understand potential risks before they become pregnant and prompt earlier action to address hazards such as heart disease. It would also alert Californians to doula services and other programs intended to support people before, during and after birth.

Ramos said California had reached the lowest rate of maternal mortality in the nation through its system of reviewing maternal deaths and other efforts centered on hospitals, physicians and other healthcare professionals. Up until now, "the focus has been primarily on the healthcare setting," she said.

But "if we keep on doing the same thing — just focusing on the healthcare team — we're going to get the same results," Ramos said. Health officials and experts decided they needed to bolster that work, "and that's why we're bringing in the patient."

"It seems so simple, but oftentimes, the pregnant person doesn't feel like they have a voice or they have the information they need to



GARY CORONADO Los Angeles Times

JENNIFER Siebel Newsom, right, wife of Gov. Gavin Newsom, and state Surgeon General Diana E. Ramos appear at a women's health panel at USC in March 2023.

make informed decisions," Ramos said.

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra said in a statement accompanying the launch of the new effort that "reducing maternal mortality isn't a 'should,' it's a 'must.' California gets it."

The planned strategies outlined in the California Maternal Health Blueprint released Tuesday include a new questionnaire that patients can take at home to assess their risk of pregnancy complications and get recommendations for next steps based on their re-

sults. As an obstetrician-gynecologist, Ramos said she found that it was often at their first prenatal appointment that a patient would first hear, "You're going to be a high-risk patient." And more times than not, patients would say ... "I wish I

would have known that I could have done X, Y or Z to decrease my risk."

California officials also want all medical facilities in the state to use an existing screening tool for gauging the risk levels of pregnant patients.

Ramos said those results could help guide where patients go for births. Hospitals with limited resources could refer patients with a higher risk of complications — such as someone who "is going to be at risk for hemorrhage, is going to be at risk for ICU admission" — to the medical facilities best equipped to handle them.

The new effort comes as pregnant patients may face dwindling choices for hospital births: Nationally, roughly 1 in 25 obstetric units closed in 2021 and 2022, according to a March of Dimes report. Experts say that because labor and delivery units require considerable staffing, they can be costly for hospitals when births are scarce.

California has faced a wave of such closures in the last decade, including at many hospitals in L.A. County. A CalMatters analysis found that such closures had disproportionately affected Black, Latino and low-income communities.

BUSINESS

A work in progress: Snap unveils new AR glasses

Tech giants including Meta, Google are also racing to create eye gear that could alter lives. It's a tough sell.

BY QUEENIE WONG

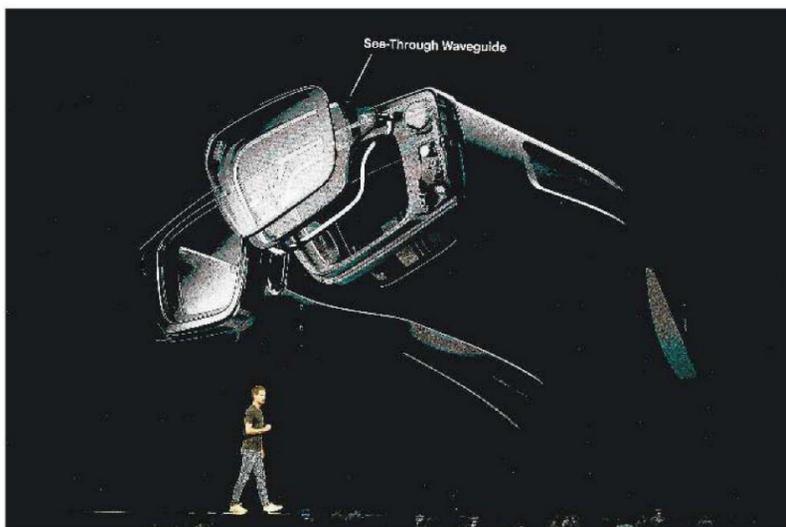
In its relentless search for ways to weave digital products into people's lives, Big Tech has achieved some big wins. Smart phones are ubiquitous. Apple Watch users talk to their wrists. Artificial intelligence-powered assistants are everywhere.

But convincing people to wear computers on their faces has been a dud. So far, at least.

Augmented reality glasses overlay digital images onto a person's view of the physical world. They're different from virtual reality headsets that fully immerse people into a computer-generated environment.

Tech giants have been focused in the last decade on developing glasses that project digital screens in front of a user's eyes. The fact that they have so far failed to convince people to wear smart glasses daily hasn't deterred Google and other companies from pouring money into the effort as they pursue a belief that the hardware could one day reshape how people socialize, work and learn.

Although dwarfed by the Silicon Valley behemoths to the north, Snap, the Los Angeles-based company behind the disappearing messaging app Snapchat, is competing in this smart glasses arms race. The company, which unveiled its fifth version of AR glasses at its annual conference Tuesday, hopes improving the device



CHARLEY GALLAY Getty Images for Snap Inc.

SNAP CEO Evan Spiegel unveiled the Spectacles on Tuesday. Snap isn't selling the glasses to the public but is making them available to software developers.

will drive mass consumer adoption.

"Making augmented reality glasses is really hard. And we know that the industry is littered with companies that have tried, and we've been working for a really long time on these," Snap Chief Executive Evan Spiegel said Tuesday from the stage at the conference as he unveiled the glasses.

Other industry giants including Google and Samsung are also working on smart glasses, and Apple is exploring the idea. The competition raises the stakes for the publicly traded Snap as it looks to new products to help reassert itself in the tech world as rivals such as Instagram and TikTok have surged past it to capture eyeballs and market dominance.

But a future in which augmented reality glasses are a part of our daily lives hasn't arrived yet and a long road

still remains ahead, experts say. The future of smart glasses is still murky.

"This is a marathon. It's not a sprint," said Tuong Huy Nguyen, an analyst at Gartner who is part of a team that researches immersive technologies including AR. "We need an ecosystem of not just hardware and software but content to work together to create seamless experiences."

Snap first released smart glasses that could record video in 2016, selling them in vending machines in Los Angeles before making them available online. The company reported selling 150,000 pairs, but most people stopped using them after a month and underwhelming demand for the gadget resulted in hundreds of thousands of unsold pairs.

Named Spectacles, Snap's latest eyewear overlays computer-generated images onto a person's view

of the physical world. The new device builds on the first AR glasses Snap released to software developers in 2021. Snap isn't selling them to the public but is making them available to software developers in hopes they'll design experiences for the platform.

What people can do with AR glasses remains limited. Snap's glasses can track a person's hands, allowing users to pick up and assemble virtual Legos, swing a phantom golf club, draw with friends and punch numbers in a digital calculator. The device also incorporates some artificial intelligence features that allow users to get answers to questions and conjure an image with a voice command.

In an attempt to drum up interest, Snap has been leaning into whimsical applications and gaming experiences that it knows users are used to, said Ben Ba-

jarin, chief executive and principal analyst at Creative Strategies, a consulting firm that works with tech companies.

But Snap is still treading cautiously as it releases new AR glasses.

"What we can't predict is consumer adoption and so that's why we're taking this more thoughtful approach to how we're releasing this version," said Sophia Dominguez, Snap's director of AR Platform. "It could change at any time, and if it does change... we're ready to go."

Donning AR glasses could interfere with how people socialize in the physical world, making them feel less present, said Jeremy Bailenson, a Stanford University professor who founded the college's virtual human interaction lab.

"Wearing glasses that connect you to digital content, whether it's AR or VR, should be done sparingly for special experiences," he said. "I am not an advocate of blocking your perceptual system, sight and sound, for constant surveillance."

Researchers, who were accompanied by a chaperone for safety reasons, wore Meta's headsets while chatting with people, walking around campus and cooking food. They reported that people in the physical world felt less real, as if they were watching television rather than interacting with someone face to face.

People wearing AR glasses will see a different view of the world than people not wearing the devices, and losing that "common ground" will probably affect the way people socialize, Bailenson said.

Previous attempts at integrating smart glasses into people's lives have not gone

well. When Google released smart glasses in 2013 that could shoot photos and videos, they sparked privacy and safety concerns from consumers, lawmakers and business owners. People started calling Google Glass owners who used the smart glasses in ways that were socially unacceptable "glassholes." Among the social no-nos: surreptitiously recording others and reading on the device while seeming to ignore others.

And while AR glasses have the potential to be helpful in several arenas, including training, education, shopping and gaming, industry analysts said it will be difficult convincing consumers to embrace the devices.

"Our eyes are very precious real estate," said Bajarin, who tried out Snap's AR glasses ahead of the conference. "Consumers are going to guard that very, very heavily."

Keeping the price low enough to entice people to buy also will be a challenge. Meta, which partnered with Ray-Ban on a pair of smart glasses that enable people to capture photos, listen to music and take video calls with the help of an AI assistant, sells its device for about \$300. Snap has not said what it will charge for its latest glasses should they become available to the public.

Snap's glasses remain a work in progress. They're heavier than regular glasses, heat up to an uncomfortable degree after extended use and have a battery that lasts less than an hour. They require foreign hand movements, such as reaching out to pinch digital objects in the air and tapping the front and back of one's hand to adjust the volume or launch a menu.

The device is powered by Snap's own operating system, giving the company more control over the experience. During a recent preview of the AR glasses held in a San Francisco home, a Times reporter used voice commands to create images that appeared almost instantly — a robot dog, Elsa from Frozen and the San Francisco skyline.

In another activity, a wide-eyed, yellow creature appeared before making its way outside to a real San Francisco patio with a stunning view of the city. Niantic, the maker of AR game Pokémon Go, created the experience Peridot Beyond for Snap's AR glasses.

Asim Ahmed, who leads global marketing at Niantic, said AR glasses give the company the opportunity to experiment and design a "new kind of paradigm of gameplay." What works in a game played on a mobile phone might not work on AR glasses, which offer a wider field of view and don't rely so heavily on hands to play. Niantic also had to think about safety issues, including making sure the virtual pet doesn't get too close to the owner and block their view.

With an array of challenges, including figuring out how to jam processing power and other computing hardware into a device that is smaller than a smartphone, analysts predict it will take several years at least before smart glasses gain mainstream adoption, if they ever do.

In the first quarter of 2024, shipments of VR and AR headsets dropped 67.4% year over year, but they are expected to improve as consumers transition to new types of devices, according to market intelligence firm IDC. Meta led the market, followed by ByteDance, Xreal and HTC.

With companies still testing out AR glasses or developing them, a clear front-runner hasn't emerged yet, analysts said.

Jacob Bourne, an analyst at Emarketer, said Snap's rivals, including Meta and Google, have more money to invest in research and development of AR glasses. Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, has 3.27 billion people using one of its apps every day. Snapchat has 432 million daily active users.

"I would probably put my money more on Meta as having the key to the [research and development] capabilities to really get that to market," Bourne said. "But I wouldn't rule Snap out at all."

Emmys show draws 6.87 million viewers, best since 2021

Ratings improvement notwithstanding, the ceremony is hindered by audience shifts in the streaming era.

BY STEPHEN BATTAGLIO

The 76th Primetime Emmy Awards scored an average of 6.87 million viewers Sunday on ABC, a significant increase over the trophy show's recent doldrums and the best showing since 2021, according to Nielsen.

The evening ceremony at the Peacock Theater in downtown L.A. was the second go-around for the Television Academy in nine months. The 75th Primetime Emmy Awards were held in January after being delayed by the dual writers' and actors' strikes of last year. That telecast, which aired on Fox, was watched by 4.3 million viewers, an all-time low.

The delay of the last ceremony put the Emmys in the same month as the Golden Globe Awards and Critics Choice Awards, which may have made it one kudos fest too many for viewers. The telecast also faced an NFL playoff game.

The last Emmy telecast held in its traditional September time slot, in 2022, set the previous low with 5.9 million viewers.

Eugene Levy and his son Dan, who co-starred in the beloved Emmy-winning comedy "Schitt's Creek," were hosts of the Sunday ceremony, which saw a surprise comedy win with Max's "Hacks" unexpectedly beating the favorite, FX's acclaimed restaurant series "The Bear." "The Bear," which came in with a record 23 nominations, emerged with 11 wins, topping the record for a comedy that the series set last year.

FX also had a record-setting winner with "Shogun," a drama set in 17th century feudal Japan, which earned



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

EUGENE LEVY and his son Dan, who co-starred in "Schitt's Creek," were hosts of the Sunday ceremony.

18 awards, the most of any program in a single year.

The ratings for the Emmy Awards have been battered by audience shifts in an industry that has seen viewing options proliferate in the streaming era, making mass audience hits harder to come by. Shows on the broadcast networks, which

rotate carrying the ceremony, get scant attention from the voters in the Television Academy outside of late night programming.

In recent years, the Emmys program has tended to honor prestigious fare from streaming services and premium cable outlets such as HBO. But it still carries

many segments that salute TV's more culturally recognizable past.

The awards remain a valuable promotional tool for networks and streamers trying to get attention for shows in a crowded market.

Walt Disney Co. was the most-decorated conglomerate of the night with 60 awards across its various brands, thanks largely to the success of FX, including Creative Arts Emmys doled out before the prime-time showcase.

Other big-winning Disney properties this awards season included Disney+'s documentary "Jim Henson Idea Man" and Hulu's "Only Murders in the Building," starring Steve Martin, Martin Short and Selena Gomez.

Netflix's drama "Baby Reindeer" won for limited series, and its creator Richard Gadd won for writing and acting, for a total of six awards, making it the third-winningest series of the season.

Commissioner defends home insurance plan for wildfire areas

BY LAURENCE DARMIENTO

Bruce Breslau has lived in his Chatsworth condo since 2009 and figures that last year he and his partner paid \$1,200 in fees to help keep their 290-unit townhouse complex insured in case of fire and other calamities.

That was before Breslau's California West housing development was dropped by Farmers Insurance and the homeowners board had to hunt around the world to replace the Los Angeles insurer, which was providing \$92 million worth of coverage for about \$350,000 each year, Breslau said.

After cobbling together a patchwork of insurers including Lloyd's of London, the complex still has insurance, but the cost rose to \$1.7 million for just \$50 million in coverage, he said. As part of the deal, homeowners must pay an extra \$4,700 special annual assessment.

"There are people in this community, when this was

announced at the board meeting, who were losing their minds. They were panicking," said Breslau, 71, who is still working and thus more able than others to absorb the added costs. "Where are you going to come up with that?"

Breslau was one of two homeowners who spoke out Tuesday morning at a news conference on the steps of Los Angeles City Hall before a hearing inside held by the state's Assembly Insurance Committee. Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara testified at the hearing about his efforts to resolve the state's worsening homeowners insurance crisis.

The Chatsworth complex is just one of countless casualties of the crisis, which has witnessed insurers sharply raise rates and pull out of the state, not renew coverage or stop writing new policies, amid escalating losses due to wildfires that have raged up and down California and have been attributed to climate change.

On Tuesday, firefighters were still trying to contain

the Bridge fire in the East Fork of the San Gabriel Canyon; it has burned some 55,000 acres and damaged or destroyed more than 50 homes. The more destructive Airport fire in Trabuco Canyon in Orange County had destroyed 120 homes as of Monday.

A Farmers spokesperson declined to comment specifically on California West but said that Farmers regularly reviews its financial exposure and that "when we find risks no longer meet our underwriting guidelines, we inform customers that we are unable to continue offering them coverage."

The news conference was organized by Consumer Watchdog, a prominent Los Angeles advocacy group that has been critical of a reform plan by Lara called the Sustainable Insurance Strategy, which includes multiple initiatives to lower the cost of insurance and make it more attractive for insurers to resume writing fire coverage in California.

A key part of the strategy, as wildfire losses accelerate,

is allowing insurers to use complex computer models — called "black boxes" by the advocacy group — that simulate possible losses from fires in calculating their premiums, rather than relying on past claims data.

In exchange for that concession, the state industry has agreed to start writing policies again in high-wildfire-risk communities using a formula that requires insurance companies to issue a certain number of policies based on the percentage of the market they control. Under the terms of the formula, for example, if an insurer had a 10% statewide market share, it would have to cover at least 8.5% of homes in high-risk communities.

Lara also plans to allow insurers for the first time to include in the cost of homeowner premiums reinsurance they buy from large firms to protect their own bottom line from catastrophic events.

Consumer Watchdog says the changes amount to little more than a giveaway to the industry that will re-

sult in higher premiums without improving coverage. It suggests insurers be required to offer policies to homeowners and businesses that have taken steps to reduce fire risks on their property.

"Insurance Commissioner Lara has been worse than asleep at the switch. He's been in the back rooms making deals with the insurance companies," Jamie Court, president of the group, said at Tuesday's event.

At the hearing, Lara defended his plan, saying his Sustainable Insurance Strategy is the biggest reform of the industry since the 1988 passage of Proposition 103, which created an elected insurance commissioner with the authority to review, reduce and reject insurer rate hike requests.

Lara also announced during the hearing that the department would be working with Cal Poly Humboldt to develop a public computer model that could be used by insurers, communities and other parties to calculate possible wildfire losses.

Rap's Combs denied bail in sex-trafficking case

[Combs, from A1] eral courtroom Tuesday. During the hearing, a judge ruled that Combs will remain in custody while awaiting trial.

His attorneys had requested that he remain free on bail and criticized prosecutors' attempts to remand him into custody.

"We are disappointed with the decision to pursue what we believe is an unjust prosecution of Mr. Combs by the U.S. Attorney's Office," Combs' attorney Marc Agnifilo said in a statement. "Sean 'Diddy' Combs is a music icon, self-made entrepreneur, loving family man, and proven philanthropist who has spent the last 30 years building an empire, adoring his children, and working to uplift the Black community."

The attorney said Combs was "an imperfect person, but he is not a criminal" and encouraged the public to "please reserve your judgment until you have all the facts. These are the acts of an innocent man with nothing to hide, and he looks forward to clearing his name in court."

The indictment alleges Combs and his associates lured female victims often under the pretense of a romantic relationship. Combs then allegedly used force, threats of force, coercion and controlled substances to get women to engage in sex acts with male prostitutes that Combs referred to as "freak offs." Williams said Combs gave the women ketamine, ecstasy and GHB to "keep them obedient and compliant" during the performances.

The freak offs, which prosecutors say sometimes lasted for days, were elaborately produced sex performances that Combs arranged, directed, masturbated during, and often recorded, according to the indictment. Prosecutors allege in a detention memo filed in court that the freak offs occurred regularly from



DAMIAN WILLIAMS, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, explains the case against Sean "Diddy" Combs at a news conference Tuesday.

at least 2009 through this year and that the hotel rooms where they were staged often sustained significant damage.

"He used the embarrassing and sensitive recordings he made of the freak offs as collateral against the victims," Williams said, adding that when the musician didn't get his way he would hit, kick, throw objects at the victims and at times drag them by their hair.

Combs would offer women career opportunities and pay their rent or for cars to keep them financially reliant on him and ensure their participation in the freak offs, according to the memo.

During searches of Combs' homes in Miami and Los Angeles in March, according to the indictment, authorities seized narcotics and more than 1,000 bottles of baby oil and lubricant that Combs' staff would stock in hotel rooms for the freak offs. Agents also discovered a large-capacity drum magazine with 59 rounds in his Los Angeles home and three

AR-15 rifles with the serial numbers defaced in the closet of his Miami home, according to court records.

The indictment doesn't identify any of Combs' alleged victims by name but includes allegations echoed by his former girlfriend, Cassie Ventura, in a lawsuit settled last year and in several lawsuits by other women and a male producer.

Prosecutors accuse Combs and his associates of pressuring women — and in some cases attempting to bribe them — to deter them from coming forward with their experiences.

Just three days after Ventura filed her lawsuit, Combs called another of his victims multiple times, prosecutors say in their memo requesting to keep Combs in custody. During the calls, Combs repeatedly asked for the victim's support and "friendship," and attempted to convince the woman that she had willingly engaged in acts. Combs told her that if she "needed" him, she "ain't got worry about nothing

else," the memo states.

Prosecutors allege the conversation was a "thinly veiled attempt to coerce the victim into adopting and supporting the defendant's false version of events."

The detention memo also alleges that Combs was violent toward his employees and others, including by throwing them to the ground, throwing objects at them, choking, dragging and shoving them.

In one instance in December 2011, Combs and a co-conspirator allegedly kidnapped an individual at gunpoint to break into someone's home. About two weeks later, the memo alleges, Combs' co-conspirators set fire to a car belonging to the person they kidnapped by slicing open its convertible top and dropping a Molotov cocktail inside.

Prosecutors did not name the person who had been kidnapped and whose car was destroyed.

Before Tuesday's indictment, Combs' legal troubles

had been building for months.

In civil lawsuits, four women have accused Combs of rape, assault and other abuses, dating back three decades. One of the allegations involved a minor. The claims sent shock waves through the music industry and put Combs' entertainment empire in jeopardy.

Last week, Dawn Richard, a former member of the singing groups Danity Kane and Diddy-Dirty Money and solo artist, sued Combs in New York, alleging sexual assault, harassment and inhumane treatment.

She alleged that Combs groped her without her consent, falsely imprisoned her and deprived her and her bandmates of basic needs, and that "submission to his depraved demands was necessary for career advancement."

Richard's attorney, Lisa Bloom, said in a statement to The Times after his arrest that "given Sean Combs' brutal beating of his girlfriend caught on video and the eight people who have now accused him of abuse in court filings, including my brave client Dawn Richard, this arrest seems long overdue. It's a big, moving day for victims, but an arrest is only the beginning. May justice be delivered to Mr. Combs. We implore other accusers to come forward in solidarity and join us in this fight."

Combs' former girlfriend, Ventura — the singer known as Cassie — accused him of rape and repeated physical assaults and said he forced her to have sex with male prostitutes in front of him. Combs quickly settled a lawsuit that Ventura brought against him last year. Months later, a 2016 video published by CNN showed Combs chasing, kicking and dragging Ventura at an L.A. hotel.

Prosecutors allege in the detention memo that Ventura was attempting to leave a freak off when Combs attacked her. When hotel secu-

rity staffer intervened, Combs offered the man "a stack of cash to ensure his silence." When the security guard refused the money, Combs' staff contacted other members of the security team. Within days of the incident, the surveillance video disappeared from the hotel's server, according to the memo. The video, the offer of cash and then the attempted cover-up are all critical pieces of evidence, prosecutors say.

Agnifilo, Combs' attorney, said that Ventura sued after a discussion with Combs' attorney to buy the rights to her book for \$30 million did not go well. He added that Combs apologized for what was shown in the video and said the woman seen in it had attacked Combs and stole his clothes after going through his phone and discovering he had another girlfriend.

In the spring, producer Rodney "Lil Rod" Jones filed a federal lawsuit against Combs accusing him of sexually harassing and threatening him for more than a year.

Another accuser, Joi Dickerson-Neal, said in a lawsuit that Combs drugged and raped her in 1991, recording the attack and then distributing the footage without her consent. Liza Gardner filed a third suit in which she alleged Combs and R&B singer Aaron Hall sexually assaulted her. Hall could not be reached for comment.

Another lawsuit alleges that Combs and former Bad Boy label President Harvey Pierre gang-raped and sex-trafficked a 17-year-old girl. Pierre said in a statement that the allegations were "disgusting," "false" and a "desperate attempt for financial gain."

Amid the barrage of lawsuits, Combs wrote on Instagram: "Enough is enough... Sickening allegations have been made against me by individuals looking for a quick payday. Let me be absolutely clear: I did not do any of the awful things being alleged. I will fight for my name, my family and for the truth."

Prosecutors argued in the detention memo that Combs should not be granted bail because he is a flight risk given his connections and estimated \$1-billion net worth. If convicted, Combs faces at least 15 years in federal prison.

In a separate letter to the court, Combs' legal team argued that he has been cooperative and should be granted bail. Combs had offered to turn himself in and said he's willing to put up his Miami estate as collateral, is in the process of selling his jet, and that he and his family have surrendered their passports.

"He has never run from a challenge, and he will not run from this one," his attorneys wrote.

Combs is the latest high-profile figure in the music industry to face criminal charges related to sexual misconduct. In 2022, R. Kelly was sentenced to 30 years in prison for racketeering and sex trafficking.

Times staff writers Alexandra Del Rosario, Nardine Saad and August Brown and researcher Scott Wilson contributed to this report.

MARKET ROUNDUP

Wall Street stays stuck in place as it awaits a Fed rate cut

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — U.S. stock indexes remained stuck in place on Tuesday as Wall Street made few big moves ahead of what's expected to be the first cut to interest rates in more than four years.

The Standard & Poor's 500 edged up by 149 points, or less than 0.1%, to 5,634.58. It remains 0.6% below its all-time closing high set in July, and it briefly rose above that mark during the morning.

The Dow Jones industrial average slipped 15.90 points, or less than 0.1%, to 41,606.18 from its own record set the day before, while the Nasdaq composite edged up 35.93 points, or 0.2%, to 17,628.06.

Intel helped drive the market with a gain of 2.7% after a series of announcements, including an expansion of its partnership with Amazon Web Services to produce custom chips. Intel also detailed plans to build its foundry business.

That helped offset a 2.2%

Major stock indexes

Index	Close	Daily change	Daily % change	YTD % change
Dow industrials	41,606.18	-15.90	-0.04	+10.39
S&P 500	5,634.58	+1.49	+0.03	+18.13
Nasdaq composite	17,628.06	+35.93	+0.20	+17.43
S&P 400	3,070.30	+16.37	+0.54	+10.38
Russell 2000	2,205.48	+16.31	+0.74	+8.80
EuroStoxx 50	4,860.78	+33.15	+0.69	+7.50
Nikkei (Japan)	36,203.22	-378.54	-1.03	+8.19
Hang Seng (Hong Kong)	17,660.02	+237.90	+1.37	+3.59

Associated Press

drop for Philip Morris International, which said it expects to record a loss of \$220 million against its third-quarter results because of the sale of its Vectura Group inhaled-therapeutics subsidiary.

The calm movements for the U.S. stock market overall were a sharp departure from prior weeks, during which the S&P 500 briefly fell nearly 10% below its all-time high.

At the time, global markets were reeling on worries that a slowing U.S. economy could fall into a recession,

along with some technical factors that forced hedge funds around the world to back out of a popular trade all at once.

Since then, excitement has built about an announcement scheduled for Wednesday afternoon from the Federal Reserve. The unanimous expectation on Wall Street is that the Fed will cut the federal funds rate, which has been sitting in a range of 5.25% to 5.50% for more than a year.

Lower rates would make things easier for the economy, which has already begun

to slow because it has become so expensive to borrow money.

The Fed has been keeping its main interest rate at a two-decade high in hopes of grinding down on the economy enough to stifle high inflation.

Now that inflation is down substantially from its peak two summers ago, the Fed believes it can shift its focus more toward protecting the job market and economy. The only question is how much the Fed will cut rates, and that is a delicate balancing act.

Lowering rates gives a boost to the overall economy and to financial markets, but it can also give inflation more fuel. Some critics say the Fed is already moving too late to help the economy, while others warn of inflation staying stubbornly higher than in the past.

The general expectation on Wall Street is for the Fed to deliver a larger-than-usual cut of half a percentage point on Wednesday, according to data from CME

Group. But it's not a certainty. Traders are still betting on a 35% probability for a traditional-size move of a quarter of a percentage point.

Economic reports released Tuesday did little to change those expectations. One said U.S. shoppers spent more at retailers last month than expected.

That's an encouraging signal indicating strength for the heart of the U.S. economy, but details under the surface may have been more discouraging. After ignoring automobiles and fuel, sales at U.S. retailers last month were a touch weaker than economists expected.

A separate report said U.S. industrial production returned to growth in August and was stronger than economists expected.

In the bond market, the 10-year Treasury yield rose to 3.64% from 3.62% late Monday. The two-year yield, which more closely tracks expectations for the Fed's actions, rose to 3.59% from 3.56%.

Los Angeles Times

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OPINION

EDITORIAL

ELECTION 2024

Adrin Nazarian for Council District 2

A former Assembly member, Nazarian has the relationships and knowledge of the district to be an effective leader immediately.

THE PRIMARY ELECTION for Los Angeles City Council District 2 in the east San Fernando Valley was packed with seven candidates seeking to fill the soon-to-be-open seat now held by Council President Paul Krekorian. We picked the person with the most legislative experience — former Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian — and we again recommend him in the Nov. 5 runoff.

Nazarian served in the state Assembly for a decade until 2022, and his district overlapped with much of Council District 2, which stretches from Toluca Lake and Studio City in the south through North Hollywood and Valley Glen to Sun Valley in the north. He was also Krekorian's chief of staff, first in the Assembly and then in the City Council when Krekorian took office in 2010.

He's deeply familiar with the district's challenges and opportunities, and he has the

relationships and knowledge to be an effective member of the council immediately.

Nazarian describes himself as a problem solver — an elected official who spends the time listening to constituents, understanding their concerns and then working collaboratively to get issues resolved. That's not always easy, especially with deep-rooted problems such as housing affordability, homelessness and street safety that evolved from decades of bad decisions and inaction.

Nazarian has shown persistence in fighting for change, even when it's difficult. In the Assembly, he repeatedly introduced bills to increase seismic safety, even after governors vetoed his efforts. Still Nazarian didn't give up and passed smaller reforms, including opening up financing programs to help people afford to retrofit their properties, knowing that even modest steps could help make homes and businesses more resilient to earthquakes.

He's an advocate for not just building a lot more housing in the district but also diversifying the types of new development. That means he will encourage a mix of affordable, middle-income, market-rate, rental and for-sale homes in this district. He wants to see more housing on major corridors and near

transit, which is good. But Nazarian should also be willing to consider opening single-family zone areas near transit and commercial corridors for low-rise apartments, townhomes and bungalow courts, which will facilitate the kind of diverse housing portfolio he promotes.

Nazarian said he's committed to a humane approach to addressing homeless encampments, including working with Mayor Karen Bass' Inside Safe program to move people into temporary housing and then permanent housing. He supports hiring more mental health and crisis intervention workers to respond to nonviolent service calls instead of police. But he also supports hiring more police officers so the department has sufficient staff to be responsive to community concerns and to investigate and solve crimes.

Nazarian is facing off against Jillian Burgos, an optician and owner of a theater company who joined the North Hollywood Neighborhood Council in 2021. Burgos has helped organize support for tenant protections and unarmed response pilot programs. Like Nazarian, she wants the city to spend more money on civilian teams that can respond to calls for mental health and home-



MICHAEL BLACKSHIRE Los Angeles Times

CANDIDATE Adrin Nazarian

lessness issues, but she supports reallocating money from the police budget to pay for these services.

Burgos is a smart and committed grassroots advocate, but Nazarian is the stronger of the two candidates because of his on-the-ground experience, his lengthy record of service and his demonstrated ability to collaborate and deliver for the community. We think he will be a strong representative for the district and a valuable voice on the City Council.

LETTERS



Los Angeles Times

STREETLIGHTS by the Westlake Theater site near MacArthur Park remained off at night Sept. 10.

Get MacArthur Park out of the dark

Re "Lights are out, patience is thin," column, Sept. 15

REGARDING THE ENORMOUS PROBLEMS at Los Angeles' MacArthur Park and the surrounding neighborhood, the very last thing that the city needs to do is spend a single penny on redesigning that park during this crisis. I learned long ago in my landscape architecture education a truism that still holds: You cannot solve a social problem with an architectural design.

Clean up that park. Fix the damn lighting. Get people into drug rehab if they want it. Get them into housing. Do something. Do anything.

And take that money from the preposterously bloated Los Angeles Police Department budget to do it. The department is bleeding this city's coffers dry while Los Angeles falls apart and people suffer and die.

MICKEY FIELDING, Los Angeles

Steve Lopez hits the nail on the head with what's wrong systematically with L.A. County and city government. The nonresponse by local authorities and bureaucrats continues, with just a few exceptions.

Los Angeles cannot rebound from the current state of despair and decay on our streets unless all of the city and county leadership starts doing its job.

As for the broken lighting around MacArthur Park, at least someone please say, "Let there be light."

MARK SILVERMAN
Marina del Rey

He's not the only one in danger

Re "The specter of violence returns," Sept. 16

Eric Trump has been quoted as saying, "How many more rifles are going to get within assassination distance of my father?"

Does that not also apply to all other senseless killings in our country? Children,

teens, concertgoers, people in church, tourists, shoppers — no one is safe anywhere when people can easily buy assault weapons.

Our elected officials, who can change laws to make our country and its people safe, turn a blind eye to innocents being slaughtered. Let's hope the latest attempt on former President Trump's life will open their eyes and spur them into action.

Let's make America safe again.

CARMELA ELSLEY
Thousand Oaks

::

The Secret Service reportedly has trouble providing adequate protection for Trump on his own golf courses. It warned him that parts of his courses are visible from public streets and sidewalks.

So, the public must pay for additional protection. The simple solution is for Trump not to play on his own properties when he is in the public eye. He could play at more isolated courses or at military golf courses.

But if he insists on

playing at a course that the Secret Service warns is difficult to secure, let this billionaire cover the cost of his own protection while golfing.

ROBERT SCHECHTER
Los Angeles

::

Some of Trump's supporters say the Democrats have put the former president at risk by calling him a danger to democracy. But the MAGA crowd has cried about a stolen election and unproven vote cheating for years. This has caused election workers to be threatened.

So, it's not OK for Trump to be in danger, but it's fine for volunteers and working-class Americans to receive death threats?

MARTY FRIEDMAN
Manhattan Beach

::

The claim that Trump is a "danger to democracy" is not a fear-mongering prediction about what may happen if he is reelected. It is an objective description of

what he has already done over the last four years and more.

His continuous lies about the results of the 2020 election have persuaded millions of Americans that they cannot trust our election processes. This has severely damaged our democracy and given comfort to our authoritarian adversaries around the world.

JOHN MILLER
Irvine

No praise for pope's comments

Re "Pope denounces both Trump and Harris as being 'against life,'" Sept. 14

In criticizing former President Trump's stance on immigration, Pope Francis (and those advising him) made the same mistake that too many others make.

Republicans and Trump are in favor of immigration. We welcome and want legal immigrants. The United States legally admits many hundreds of thousands of

immigrants each and every year. Immigrants who are in this country illegally, however, are often unvetted.

Be a responsible citizen and moral human by seeking and considering facts, not propaganda and feelings.

F. STEPHEN MASEK
Mission Viejo

::

The pope said Vice President Kamala Harris, in supporting abortion rights, supports killing humans.

No woman, teen, girl or child ever had an abortion "just because." Her pregnancy was toxic for any number of reasons — maternal fatality if the pregnancy is carried to term, an ectopic pregnancy, fetal death in utero, rape, incest, life-threatening domestic abuse and much more.

Women have had to abort a much-wanted pregnancy with great sorrow and then go on to bear healthy children with joy and gladness. It is no one's business but their own.

CAROLINE BROWN
Sierra Madre

::

Recently, Francis slammed both Trump and Harris on the issues of abortion and immigration and asked Americans to vote for the least evil candidate.

It is admirable that he speaks out against abortion as murder, but what happened to "who am I to judge"?

It is admirable that he is supportive of immigrants and opined that building a wall "is not Christian," but what if they choose to settle in the Vatican?

It is admirable that he said bishops should keep out of politics, but what is he doing?

THOMAS PAVEY
Perth, Australia

Pop star who can sing and think

Re "It's a business, not a campaign," letters, Sept. 15

A number of letter writers seemed alarmed by Taylor Swift's endorsement of Kamala Harris for president. Some even mentioned that entertainment is a business, and therefore many stars decline to make endorsements.

Well, how weak are they? Money, rather than integrity, is a driving force for them.

To me and I am sure to many others, it's refreshing to see someone like Swift do what's correct and necessary regardless of finances. I am thrilled she has displayed so much integrity

and love of country by issuing her endorsement.

How wonderful it would be if people in all walks of life did the same.

JIM SHAHAN
Oak Park

::

Do some people really believe that Swift, simply because she is a celebrity, has no right to engage in democracy and voice her opinion?

She's willing to put her money where her mouth is to stand up for what she believes. This is just like former Republican Reps. Liz Cheney and Adam Kinzinger, who put their careers on the line to stand up for what they believed in.

DARLENE MOSES
OLYMPIUS
Yorba Linda

::

Is it worth mentioning to the letter writer who suggests Swift stay out of politics because some Republicans buy her music that many Republicans are voting for Harris?

CRAIG ARNOLD
Long Beach

He made L.A. traffic fun

Re "SigAlert is dead. Long live SigAlert," Sept. 15

Patt Morrison's article was excellent. However, I want to correct a glaring omission.

Her part about Los Angeles traffic reporters didn't mention one of the most prominent ones: the late, great Bill Keene, who reported on traffic and weather for KNX for nearly 40 years.

Keene was known for his bad puns. When there was a report of several dogs running loose on the freeway, he called it a "six pack of curs."

When car phones became common in the 1980s, Keene started his KNX tipster line. My handle was "Ventura Pete." He would answer the calls himself when he wasn't broadcasting, and he even hosted an event for his tipsters at which KNX gave away special Thomas Guides (I still have mine).

Keene enlivened and informed the commutes of many Angelenos over the years.

PETER STEINMAN
Palm Desert

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OP-ED



STEPHANY MATAT Associated Press

PHOTOS of the AK-47 rifle, backpack and camera found near a Trump rally site.

Democrats' rhetoric isn't what is sparking violence

But Trumpists keep promoting dangerous speech aimed at Biden and Harris.

JONAH GOLDBERG

ANOTHER UNWELL person sought to kill Donald Trump, according to the FBI and other officials. We should all be grateful that no one was hurt, and that the Secret Service and local law enforcement appear to have done their jobs properly.

I'm also grateful to former President Trump for assigning blame for the foiled assassination attempt to Democratic rhetoric, specifically that of "Biden and Harris." On Monday, he told Fox News Digital, "Their rhetoric is causing me to be shot at, when I am the one who is going to save the country, and they are the ones that are destroying the country — both from the inside and out."

Why am I grateful to Trump? For starters, because he saved me an enormous amount of time. I planned to

address this claim using examples from Trump boosters. "Dems Still in 'Stop Hitler' Incitement Mode" read one headline at Breitbart.com before it got muted. But collecting such quotes — often from second- or third-rate MAGA sycophants and apologists — is tedious and it requires arguing with people I'd rather not elevate by taking seriously.

But here we have the claim stated concisely by the presidential candidate, and target, himself. Even better, it contains the fundamental cynicism and hypocrisy of much lengthier versions of this talking point.

Trump believes that the "threat to democracy" charge against him is inciting people to violence. This could be possible, though there is little evidence that the would-be assassin in Butler, Pa., in July was motivated by politics. The latest assailant, a onetime Trump supporter turned critic, certainly seems to have been very political, whatever his specific motivation.

In a country of 337 million people, it's always going to be the case that some tiny fraction of unwell people will be motivated to violence by "extreme" claims. But here's the

problem with the argument as its made by Trump and his defenders. They are not against allegedly violence-inciting, rhetorical extremism, they're against such rhetoric deployed against Trump. Similar rhetoric targeting Biden and Harris is just fine.

Go back and look at Trump's complaint. "They are the ones that are destroying the country," he insists. Later he adds, "It is called the enemy from within. They are the real threat."

In other words, Trump believes the problem isn't apocalyptic rhetoric that incites violence. No, the problem is that people believe the rhetoric about him, when what they should believe is his similar rhetoric about his political opponents. Indeed, Trump routinely insists that if Harris — whom he calls a communist and fascist — is elected "the country will be over."

Few of the people, including Trump himself, who will blame "hateful rhetoric constantly aimed at Trump," in the words of the New York Post's Miranda Devine, for Sunday's assassination attempt, have any problem with Trump's hateful rhetoric. It's a remarkable double standard. We can wax Jesuitical about the differ-

ences between saying Harris will "destroy" the country and saying that Trump is a "threat to democracy." But logically and empirically, the differences between the claims are nugatory.

There is an objective divergence however. People — including some unhinged ones — find the charges against Trump plausible. That might have more to do with Trump's past behavior (say, on Jan. 6) or his stated positions (his call to terminate the Constitution so he can retake power, perhaps) than with the persuasiveness of his critics or the power of the media.

Indeed, whether the claim that Trump is a threat to democracy is extreme depends largely on whether it is true. If he is a threat to democracy, then calling him one is merely an accurate description. It's irresponsible — or "extreme" in the colloquial argot of politics these days — to falsely shout, "Fire!" in a crowded theater. If you actually see a fire, it's a defensible warning.

This assassination attempt came amid a broiling controversy over baseless claims by Trump and JD Vance about Haitian immigrants feasting on pet cats and dogs in Springfield, Ohio. These claims resulted in school closures over bomb threats and shooting threats against Haitians in Springfield. Bear in mind that Trump routinely refers to migrants as blood-poisoning vermin. And yet, complaints and concerns from the hand-wringers about inciteful rhetoric aimed at Trump have not been forthcoming.

It's worth recalling that conservatives used to denounce efforts to blame politicians for the actions of madmen. When then-Rep. Gabby Giffords was shot in Arizona in 2011, many liberals ludicrously insisted that Sarah Palin was to blame and conservatives rightly objected. Now, many conservatives sound like those liberals, only in defense of Donald Trump.

If hypocrisy was helium, many people would have funny voices, and some would just float away.

@JonahDispatch

The politics of hate have come for Taylor Swift

Former President Trump, whose vile rhetoric has no boundaries, sums up his campaign as he tells Americans how he feels about their singing idol.

ROBIN ABCARIAN

LAST MONTH ON Truth Social, former President Trump reposted a collage of young women wearing "Swifties for Trump" T-shirts. Most of the images clearly looked as if they'd been generated by AI.



"I accept!" Trump told his 7.1 million followers, prompting the world's most famous childless cat lady to come at him with her claws out.

"Recently I was made aware that AI of 'me' falsely endorsing Donald Trump's presidential run was posted to his site," Taylor Swift wrote on Instagram right after Vice President Kamala Harris wiped the floor with Trump in their first and probably only debate. "It really conjured up my fears around AI, and the dangers of spreading misinformation. It brought me to the conclusion that I need to be very transparent about my actual plans for this election as a voter. The simplest way to combat misinformation is with the truth."

And so, she wrote, she will be voting for Harris for president, and signed her post "Childless Cat Lady."

"I think she is a steady-handed, gifted leader and I believe we can accomplish so much more in this country if we are led by calm and not chaos," Swift told her 284 million followers.

I don't know how many of them are American voters, but it takes only a tiny fraction of that number to change an outcome in a battleground state. In 2020, for example, Wisconsin voters chose President Biden over then-President Trump by 20,682 votes. In Georgia, it was even closer. Biden won the state by 11,779 votes, prompting Trump's infamous and arguably illegal plea to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" him 11,780 more votes. But I digress.

Swift also urged her legions of fans to register to vote, telling them, "Your research is all yours to do, and the choice is yours to make. ... Remember, that in order to vote, you have to be registered!" She linked to a voter registration site operated by the federal government and the effect was immediate. More than 405,000 visitors clicked on the link in the 24 hours after Swift posted.

Those clicks alone don't necessarily translate into new registrations, or to votes. But Tom Bonier, of the data firm TargetSmart, said they might. "What we saw was this massive increase, we're calling it the Swift Effect now," Bonier said last week on "Face the Nation." And, he added, according to data compiled since 2020, about 80% of voters who register this late in the election cycle actually end up voting.

A day after Swift's endorsement, Trump melted down like the Wicked Witch of the West. "I HATE TAYLOR SWIFT!" he screeched on Truth Social.

That seemed even less presidential than usual for Trump. The outburst prompted MSNBC's Lawrence O'Donnell to declare that he "has the most hateful mind and spirit in presidential history."

O'Donnell researched presidential statements and was able to find only one other president who used the word "hate" so publicly, George H.W. Bush. I thought O'Donnell was going to mention Bush's famous antipathy for broccoli, but he was referring to Bush's 2002 profession of hatred for Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

The thing about hate is that, like fear, it's a powerful motivator. Hatred and fear, in fact, are the most important arrows in Trump's political quiver, integral to his dark vision of an America that is falling apart and in need of a savior.

The Trump-Vance campaign's scapegoating of legal immigrants from Haiti who have settled in Springfield, Ohio, is a natural, if inexcusable, extension of the politics of hate. Likewise, his bizarrely close relationship with kooky racist Islamophobe Laura Loomer and, of course, his enduring embrace of the white nationalists and Holocaust deniers who swirl around Mar-a-Lago.

His vice presidential pick, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, is an exemplar of how hatred is integral to Trump's success.

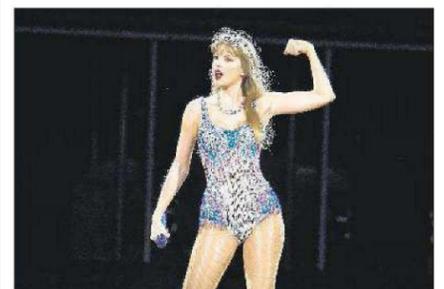
"I think our people hate the right people," Vance said in an interview with the American Conservative in 2021, when he was seeking his Senate seat. Maybe this was supposed to be a clever throwaway quote, along the lines of comparing Democrats to childless cat ladies, a trope Vance originated at around the same time.

In profound ways, Vance's hate comment distills the very ethos of the MAGA movement.

It's too soon to know whether turning Trump's hose of hatred on Swift will backfire on him.

But how delightful would it be for a Harris victory to come in on little cat feet?

@robinkabarian



GEORGE WALKER IV Associated Press

MUSIC'S most famous "childless cat lady."

Assassination attempts are just the start

By Jacob Ware and Colin P. Clarke

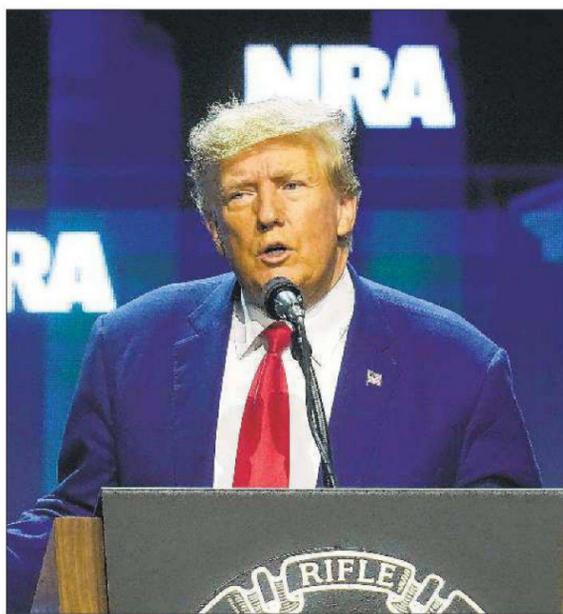
LAST WEEK, we gathered with other scholars at Ground Zero for a summit on terrorism and political violence. The mood was somber, not only because of reflections on 9/11 but also because of pained predictions of violence to come. It would have surprised nobody in attendance had they been told another assassination attempt against the former president would occur days later.

This was, of course, not merely the second assassination attempt against Donald Trump. There have been many more plots over the past several years — aimed at politicians of all stripes — that never reached the point of gunfire being exchanged. The plots are indicative of a broader zeitgeist: We are under heightened threat of political violence.

For instance, recent Republican rhetoric against a community of Haitian migrants in Springfield, Ohio, led to dozens of bomb threats against that community, closing schools and hospitals. In October 2022, a man attacked the husband of former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat, during an attempt to kidnap her. In 2020, authorities foiled a plot to kidnap Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan.

There is a distinct and frightening possibility of a violent wave of assassination attempts and domestic terrorism now breaking, not only against the former president but also against Democratic officials and Trump supporters.

During this presidential election, both Democrats and Republicans are framing the other side as an existential threat to the country, and so unstable individuals are being inundated with messages that have exacerbated an already volatile situation. This feeds vi-



DARRON CUMMINGS Associated Press

INCITEMENTS by Donald Trump and others fuel bloodshed. Expect a spike regardless of who wins in November.

olence before election day, but that won't be the end: Imagine what could happen following the election.

If Vice President Kamala Harris wins election in November, there is serious concern over violence waged by Trump supporters who may believe that the election was rigged, or "stolen," as Trump claimed in 2020 after he lost the popular vote and the electoral college, leading to the "Stop the Steal" movement and fueling the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol insurrection.

If Trump is elected, many expect a visceral reaction from segments of the far left, including some who may resort to violence. Trump's election could also embolden any followers prone to violence, which could fuel more terrorism against immigrants, people of color, women, LGBTQ+ people and others. If he continues to praise the Jan. 6 terrorists and even par-

sons those who were convicted, Trump would be inviting continued vigilantism.

Because we have witnessed two assassination attempts against Trump in the past two months, some Republicans are wondering how to reverse the apparent threat. They are right to call for the lowering of the political temperature, and they should reflect on their own party's role in promoting violent rhetoric — the creeping normalization of extremely violent political speech, what some have called "mainstreaming extremism." Trump himself not only dubbed the Jan. 6 defendants "hostages," "political prisoners," "martyrs" and "warriors," but also reacted to the assault on Paul Pelosi with a jest in a campaign appearance: "We'll stand up to crazy Nancy Pelosi, who ruined San Francisco — how's her husband doing, anybody know?" In 2020, he publicly told mem-

bers of one far-right white supremacist group to "stand back and stand by."

In response to the latest assassination attempt, vice presidential candidate JD Vance mused, "The big difference between conservatives and liberals is that no one has tried to kill Kamala Harris in the last couple months." His analysis, simply put, is outright wrong. For instance, in western Virginia, a 66-year-old man was arrested for threatening Harris. His social media posts included the warning, "AR-15 LOCKED AND LOADED." This is just one of countless threats and plots; most investigated by the Secret Service are not publicly disclosed.

Politicians have contributed to the violent uptick not only with rhetoric but also with their actions and inaction in recent decades on gun policy, bringing us to this moment when assault weapons are widely available to any single individual with a grievance.

The fact is, the United States remains in the eye of the perfect storm — a highly polarized political climate in which extreme rhetoric is prized over moderation, in a country awash in weaponry and susceptible to disinformation and digital manipulation.

Combating the threat of political violence is the duty of every American, but it is also the responsibility of our elected officials to tamp down the violent rhetoric. It will be difficult to navigate this crisis, and doing so effectively requires bipartisan condemnation of political violence from across the ideological spectrum.

JACOB WARE is the Council fellow at a research on Foreign Relations, where he studies domestic and international terrorism and counterterrorism. COLIN P. CLARKE is the director of research at the Soufan Group, an intelligence and security consulting firm in New York.

O.C. pastor freed after years in Chinese prison

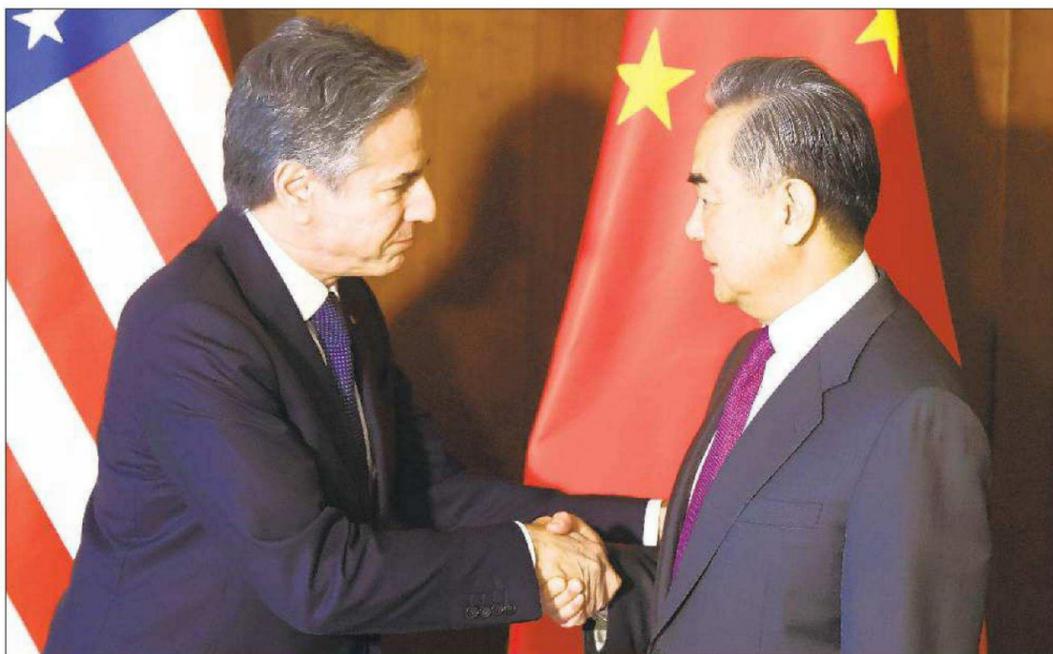
[Pastor, from A1]

Lin was one of three Americans that the State Department considered “wrongfully detained” by China, a formal designation that allows the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs to negotiate for their release. Miller declined to say whether any concessions had been made to China for Lin’s release.

The others still in Chinese custody are Kai Li, a businessman from Long Island held for eight years on espionage charges, and Mark Swidan, held for 12 years on a drug-related offense.

On Wednesday, a bipartisan congressional committee will hold a hearing to draw attention to Li, Swidan and other Americans in Chinese prisons. The San Francisco-based human rights group Dui Hua Foundation, which helped work for Lin’s release, estimates that more than 200 Americans are being held in China against their will.

China detains more Americans than any other foreign country, according to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, with detention defined as either being held in police custody or being banned from leaving the country. The Chinese Consulate in Los Angeles did not respond to a re-



U.S. SECRETARY of State Antony J. Blinken, shown with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Germany in February, pressed for David Lin’s release when the two diplomats met again a few months later in Laos.

quest for comment.

Lin, who was born in China, is a naturalized American citizen. He began returning to China in the 1990s to spread the gospel, according to China Aid, a Texas-based Christian advocacy group that was working for his release.

In 2006, the Chinese gov-

ernment detained Lin for his efforts to build a “house church,” or a place of worship independent from state-sanctioned religious institutions. In 2009, Lin was arrested, convicted of fraud and sentenced to life in prison. His sentence was eventually reduced, and he was scheduled to be released in

2029.

Bob Fu, founder and president of China Aid, argued that Lin’s conviction was a case of entrapment by the Chinese government.

“David had been promised that he could build a church,” Fu said, “and so he started to build support, selling some properties and

borrowing money.”

Fu called Lin’s release “wonderful news” but doesn’t believe Chinese authorities are loosening their grip on religious freedom.

“The current regime is not happy with anyone trying to advance religious freedom,” he said.

In 2019, the U.S. Commis-

sion on International Religious Freedom named Lin as part of its prisoners of conscience project. The commission cited Lin’s work ministering to fellow prisoners and translating the Bible into Chinese. It also called attention to reports of his declining health and to threats to his safety in prison.

On Sunday, Lin was flown from China to San Antonio, according to his daughter, Alice Lin.

“No words can express the joy we have,” she told Politico. “We have a lot of time to make up for.”

Alice Lin last saw her father in 2010. She and her brother traded off visiting him in prison until their visiting privileges were canceled, she told The Times last year.

During brief phone calls, she said, he didn’t like to discuss his health, but she believed he was growing frail and suffering from malnutrition.

This year, in a letter to the Wall Street Journal, she made an emotional plea for her father’s release.

“I dream of him meeting my husband and my 8-year-old son for the first time,” she wrote. “I yearn to hug him again myself. I don’t know how much time either of us has left. ... He is elderly now, and I have cancer. We can’t afford to wait.”

Federal agency warns of risks of allowing election bets, wants ban

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — Allowing people to bet on the outcome of U.S. elections poses a great risk that some will try to manipulate the betting markets, which could cause more harm to the already fragile confidence voters have in the integrity of results, according to a federal agency that wants the bets to be banned.

The Commodities and Futures Trading Commission is trying to prevent New

York startup Kalshi from resuming offering bets on the outcome of this fall’s congressional elections.

The company accepted an unknown number of such bets Friday during an eight-hour window between when a federal judge cleared the way and when a federal appeals court slammed the brakes on them.

Those bets are now on hold while the appellate court considers the issue, with no hearing scheduled.

At issue is whether Kalshi, and other compa-

nies, should be free to issue predictive futures contracts — essentially yes-no wagers — on the outcome of elections, a practice that is regulated in the U.K. but is currently prohibited in the U.S.

The commission warns that misinformation and collusion is likely to happen in an attempt to move those betting markets. And that, it says, could irreparably harm the integrity, or at least the perceived integrity, of elections at a time when such confidence is already low.

“The district court’s or-

der has been construed by Kalshi and others as open season for election gambling,” the commission wrote in a brief filed Saturday. “An explosion in election gambling on U.S. futures exchanges will harm the public interest.”

The commission noted that such attempts at manipulation have already occurred on at least two similar unapproved platforms, including a fake poll claiming that singer Kid Rock was leading Michigan Sen. Debbie Stabenow, which

moved the price of reelections contracts for the senator during a period in which the singer was rumored to be considering a candidacy. He ultimately did not run.

It also cited a case in 2012 in which one trader bet millions on Mitt Romney to make the presidential election look closer than it was.

“These examples are not mere speculation,” the commission wrote. “Manipulation has happened, and is likely to recur.”

Unlike unregulated online platforms, Kalshi

sought out regulatory oversight for its election bets, wanting the benefit of government approval.

“Other election prediction markets ... are operating right now outside of any federal oversight, and are regularly cited by the press for their predictive data,” it wrote. “So a stay would accomplish nothing for election integrity; its only effect would be to confine all election trading activity to unregulated exchanges. That would harm the public interest.”



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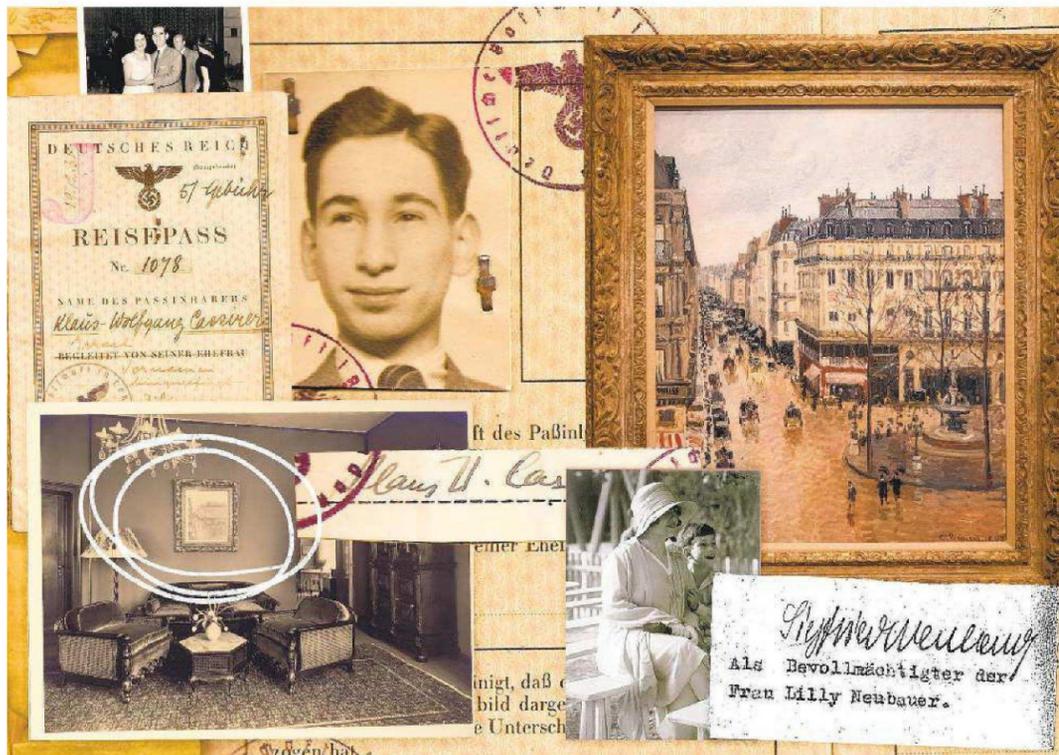
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Photos from David Cassirer, U.S. District Court for the Central District of California, Manu Fernandez/AP, photo illustration by JIM COOKE Los Angeles Times
LILLY Cassirer Neubauer surrendered the Impressionist masterpiece to the Nazis for a visa to flee Germany.

Law seeks return of looted art

It could reunite a family with a Pissarro stolen by Nazis in 1939

BY KEVIN RECTOR

California lawmakers have bucked one of the nation's most powerful federal courts by enacting a new state law designed to reunite a Jewish family with an exquisite Impressionist painting that was looted by the Nazis at the dawn of World War II.

The law, which Gov. Gavin Newsom put into immediate effect with his signature Monday, was crafted in response to a U.S. 9th Circuit

Court of Appeals ruling in January. That ruling found that the painting — “Rue Saint-Honoré in the Afternoon, Effect of Rain” by Camille Pissarro — was lawfully owned by a Spanish museum and need not be returned to the American descendants of Lilly Cassirer Neubauer, who surrendered the masterpiece to the Nazis for a visa to flee Germany in 1939.

The law's passage after nearly two decades of court battles sets the stage for a re- [See Painting, B4]



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times
CLAUDE CASSIRER — seen in 2010 with his wife, Beverly, and a copy of the painting — tracked the original to a Spanish museum in the early 2000s.

After groundwork, officials face real groundwater work

A decade on, the hard parts of carrying out a historic sustainability law still lie ahead.

BY IAN JAMES

In 2014, Gov. Jerry Brown signed historic legislation establishing a framework for California to begin managing groundwater in an effort to curb widespread over-pumping, which had sent aquifer levels into rapid decline, left hundreds of wells dry and caused the ground to sink in parts of the Central Valley.

The law was based on the idea that groundwater could best be managed at the local level, and it called for newly formed local agencies to gradually adopt measures to address chronic declines in groundwater levels. The legislation laid out an implementation timeline stretching more than a quarter of a century, giving many areas until 2040 to address their depletion problems.

Today, experts and state officials say implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, or SGMA, is unfolding largely as expected. But although California has made some preliminary progress toward safeguarding groundwater, the hardest tests loom ahead.

“This is a generational shift in water management in the state,” said Joaquin Esquivel, chair of the State Water Resources Control Board. “What we do in these next years is critical.”

The state has taken several foundational steps, including the creation of local

agencies and the adoption of more than 100 local groundwater plans. The law has led to the collection of more groundwater data and nearly \$1 billion in state funding, and has raised public awareness about how heavy pumping, particularly for agriculture, has depleted underground supplies.

However, water levels have continued to decline in many areas as pumping restrictions have yet to be fully imposed and as local agencies continue to issue permits for more high-capacity wells. Research has shown that parts of California have recently had some of the fastest-declining aquifer levels in the world. In some places, the land has been sinking as much as 1 foot per year.

According to state data, more than 5,000 wells have run dry in the last decade, and scientists warn that thousands more could be at risk unless stronger measures are put in place.

Achieving sustainability goals in groundwater basins deemed to be in “critical overdraft” will be particularly challenging and is expected to require allocation and pumping restrictions that will sharply reduce agricultural water use. Researchers project that large portions of the Central Valley's irrigated cropland will need to be permanently left dry to comply with the restrictions.

“We have good momentum here, 10 years on,” Esquivel said. “But we also are starting to see the phase of implementation and the difficulty that that will pose.”

Initial steps toward regulation, such as collecting wa- [See Groundwater, B2]

Metro is sued over contract for subway cars

Group alleges agency didn't follow rules in awarding \$730-million deal. Rebid is sought.

BY RACHEL URANGA

Labor advocates are suing to force the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority to rebid a \$730-million order for subway cars meant to replace much of its aging subway fleet and run on the D Line extension to West Los Angeles that is set to be fully open ahead of the 2028 Olympics.

A delay in getting new rail cars could push back Met-

ro's expansion and leave passengers stuck with the dingier older cars as hundreds of thousands of people descend on the region for the Games.

The research and advocacy organization Jobs to Move America contends that when Metro officials awarded South Korean Hyundai Rotem, a part of Hyundai Motor Group, a contract in January to build at least 182 rail cars, they left out required provisions that would force them to detail worker pay and benefits and hire “disadvantaged workers,” including homeless people, single parents, veterans and others who have struggled in the workforce.

Those Metro contract provisions were agreed to in 2022 as part of a new manufacturing policy intended to provide well-paying blue-collar jobs. And they include strict reporting requirements and penalties for non-compliance.

When Metro learned of the lapse, the agency allowed Hyundai to modify the contract, instead of rebidding it as is legally required, according to the lawsuit filed on Monday in Los Angeles County Superior Court.

“It was clear to us that state and federal open bidding laws have been violated,” said Madeline Janis, co-executive director of Jobs to Move America. “This is a

very large contract, and as Angelenos, we should expect significant, enforceable good job commitments in exchange for three-quarters of \$1 billion.”

The group, whose board members represent some of the nation's largest unions, is asking the court to order Metro to rebid the contract, pointing out that the bids from other companies were competitive. If the agency had complied with its own policy, the group argues, a different bidder could have won out.

Ahead of the lawsuit's filing, Metro spokesperson Patrick Chandler said in an emailed statement that the agency was still reviewing [See Metro, B5]

Speaking truth amid political violence

Trump may be a target, but he's the one escalating the rhetoric

ANITA CHABRIA

Thanks to yet another unglued individual with a semiautomatic weapon, we have sunk deeper into the quagmire of political upheaval.

Ryan Wesley Routh, who was spotted by Secret Service agents as Donald Trump played golf on one of his Florida courses over the weekend, was charged with two gun felonies Monday and is suspected of plotting to assassinate the former president. Ironically or maybe sadly, at least one of those gun charges — being a felon in possession — will be under constitutional scrutiny after Trump's ultraconservative Supreme Court majority [See Chabria, B4]



Utility shutoffs widen as land shifts on Palos Verdes Peninsula

In Rolling Hills, 37 homes have lost gas service and 50 are set to lose electricity.

BY KERI BLAKINGER, PAUL PRINGLE AND GRACE TOOHEY

Utility shutoffs have again expanded on the Palos Verdes Peninsula amid worsening landslide movement. After the loss of gas and electricity threw parts of Rancho Palos Verdes into turmoil, dozens of residents in the adjacent city of Rolling Hills are — for the first time — facing the loss of vital utilities.

The additional power shutoffs appear to confirm growing concerns that the

land movement's recent acceleration and expansion stem from a problem much larger than what officials have long identified as the slow-moving Portuguese Bend landslide complex.

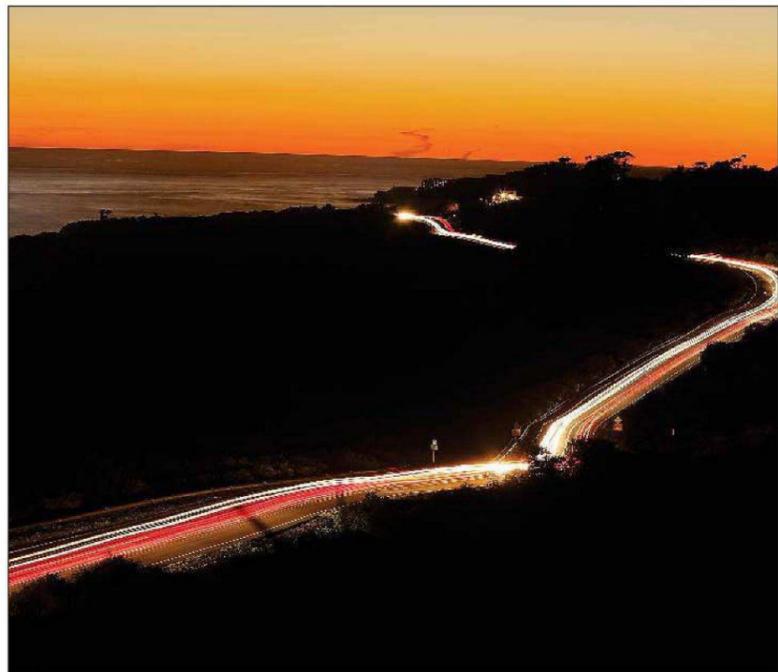
Late last week, Rolling Hills officials — citing communications from utility companies — announced that about three dozen homes were expected to lose gas service Monday at 3 p.m. and 50 were slated to lose power by 6 p.m. Wednesday because of ongoing land movement that has prompted evacuation warnings and at least one fire in recent weeks. Southern California Gas Co. officials confirmed that a total of 37 homes lost gas service Monday afternoon.

Like many of the power shutoffs affecting the Por-

tuguese Bend area in Rancho Palos Verdes, these latest cutoffs are for an indefinite period.

Rolling Hills said in last week's statement that it had asked both Southern California Gas and Southern California Edison to “look aggressively at engineering solutions” to provide service again as soon as possible. Rolling Hills Mayor Leah Mirsch reiterated that Sunday night in a statement to The Times.

“The safety and well-being of our residents remains the City's top priority,” Mirsch wrote. “We are all impacted by the outages and are committed to holding the utility companies accountable — pushing them to implement solutions that will restore services both [See Landslide, B2]



LUIS SINCO Los Angeles Times
LIGHTS from passing vehicles streak along Palos Verdes Drive South in Rancho Palos Verdes, where a stretch of road is uneven because of land movement.

Land shifts are a widening worry on the peninsula

[Landslide, from B1] quickly and safely.”

The city of Rolling Hills on Monday clarified that the local fire station and sheriff's deputies would not be affected by the shutoffs, and that officials were working to expedite permits for residents who want to install alternative power, such as generators and solar panels. The city's statement also said that the Rolling Hills Community Assn., a private homeowners group that includes the affected homes, hired a geologist who has installed land movement monitors.

The association did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Times.

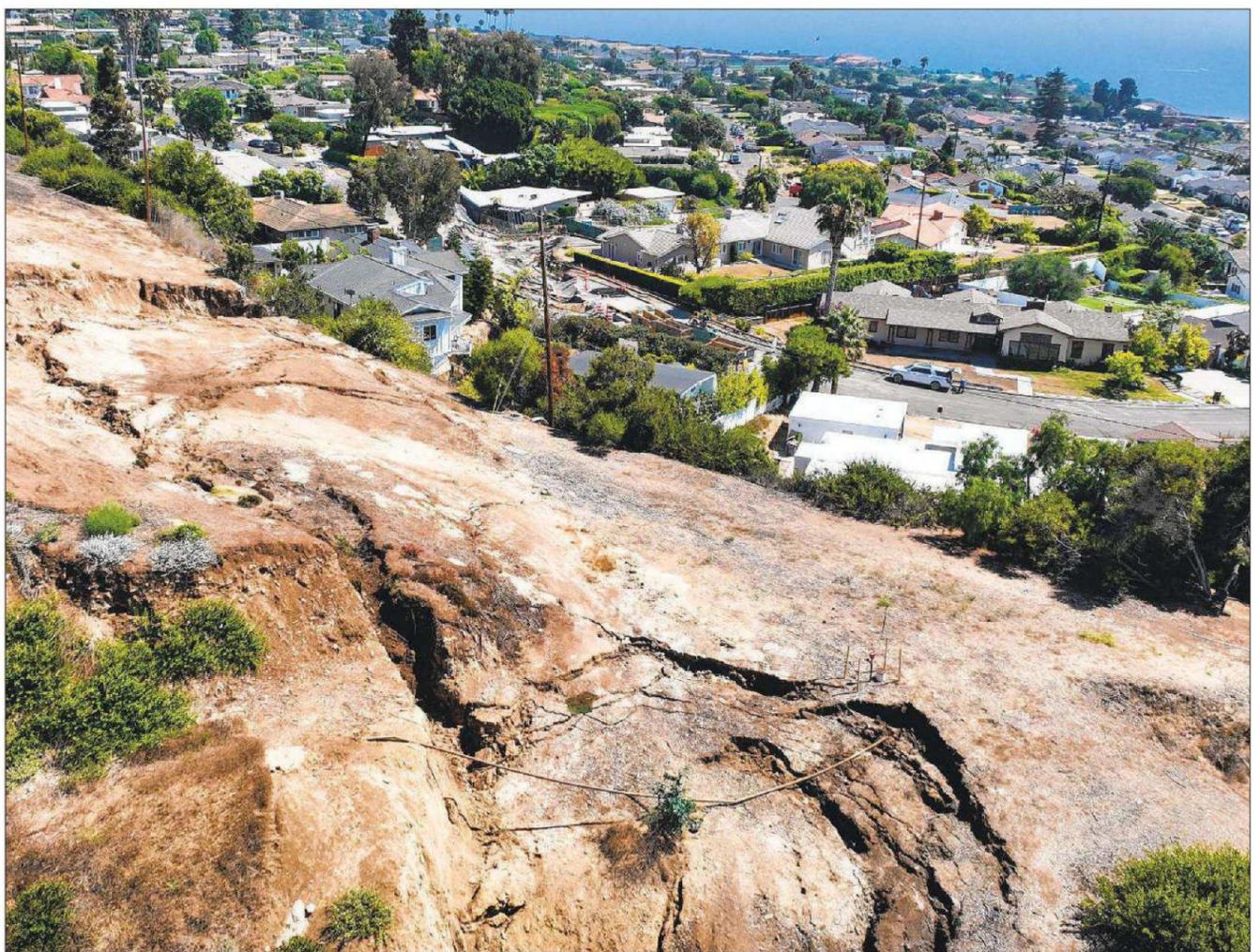
For months, neighborhoods in Rolling Hills have not been included in the ongoing mapping and geological reviews about the worsening land movement across Rancho Palos Verdes — including cracked foundations, destroyed roadways and transformed landscapes — though parts of the city border many areas that have recorded major ground shifts.

But in August, after Rancho Palos Verdes officials determined that the landslide forces affecting the region were much deeper and probably more widespread than previously thought, the city geologist's team met with some Rolling Hills residents about new, nearby movement spotted there.

Mike Phipps, the city geologist, said last month that the new movement in Rolling Hills, along Cinchring and Quail Ridge roads, could be related to the larger landslide complex in Rancho Palos Verdes, but it would require additional monitoring to confirm that.

Gas company officials said the new shutoff in Rolling Hills follows a “recent geological hazard survey and an incident with the water system.”

California Water Service spokesperson Yvonne Kingman confirmed that Rolling Hills had a water main leak last week, which she said



THE SEAVIEW neighborhood of Rancho Palos Verdes continues to suffer damage from shifting land. SCE cut power there out of caution.

ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

was the “fourth leak we’ve experienced due to land movement in Rolling Hills in recent months.” She said the first of those leaks occurred in late July.

However, she said crews were able to repair the break quickly, and that the utility has no plans to cut off its service.

“Based on the current circumstances, yes, we still plan to continue providing water service in the landslide areas, both for customers’ everyday needs and for fire protection,” Kingman said in a statement. “We also

continue to address and repair any leaks that occur due to the land movement as quickly as possible.”

She said the utility’s multifaceted leak detection system has not been affected by the electrical shutoffs, and noted that many of its sensors operate on cellular service.

The shutoffs in Rolling Hills come days after SCE shut off power to several dozen homes in the Portuguese Bend Beach Club and western Seaview neighborhoods of Rancho Palos Verdes. Power and gas were

previously cut off to about 140 homes in the Portuguese Bend neighborhood.

When electricity is cut Wednesday to the 50 homes in Rolling Hills, there will be a total of almost 300 in the area facing an indefinite power shutoff because of the land movement. Reggie Kumar, an SCE spokesperson, declined to definitely say whether more shutoffs were expected but said cutting electricity is a last resort for the utility.

“We are still assessing the situation and looking for ways to provide power to

these communities in a safe and reliable way,” Kumar said. “It’s a very fluid situation, it all depends on the conditions — electrical equipment needs stable ground.”

Some areas also have been grappling with cable and internet shutoffs and evacuation warnings — though many residents have decided to stay in their homes, using generators and other off-the-grid power providers.

Previously, officials have said power shutoffs on the shifting peninsula are in-

tended to reduce the risk of wildfires caused by electrified wires. Last month, a power line fell and sparked near dry vegetation, igniting a small fire in the Portuguese Bend neighborhood.

On Sept. 3, Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for the city of Rancho Palos Verdes. In his declaration, Newsom said land in the area had been shifting as much as a foot a week, and that land movement had significantly accelerated after the severe storms of 2023 and 2024.

Efforts toward groundwater sustainability face obstacles

[Groundwater, from B1] ter-use data, charging fees and imposing water allocations and mandatory reductions in pumping, have been contentious and in places have sparked lawsuits.

State Department of Water Resources officials have reviewed plans submitted by local agencies and approved many of them. But in six areas of the San Joaquin Valley, officials have declared the local groundwater plans inadequate, a step that allows the state water board to place an area on probationary status to compel a local agency to take stronger measures.

After the board took its first vote to intervene in one area, the Tulare Lake subbasin, farmers sued in an effort to overturn that decision, arguing that the state is making demands that are unreasonable, damaging to the local economy and “overreaching” beyond the law’s requirements. That case in Kings County Superior Court has effectively placed the state’s determination on hold and paused a requirement that growers begin measuring and reporting how much water they pump.

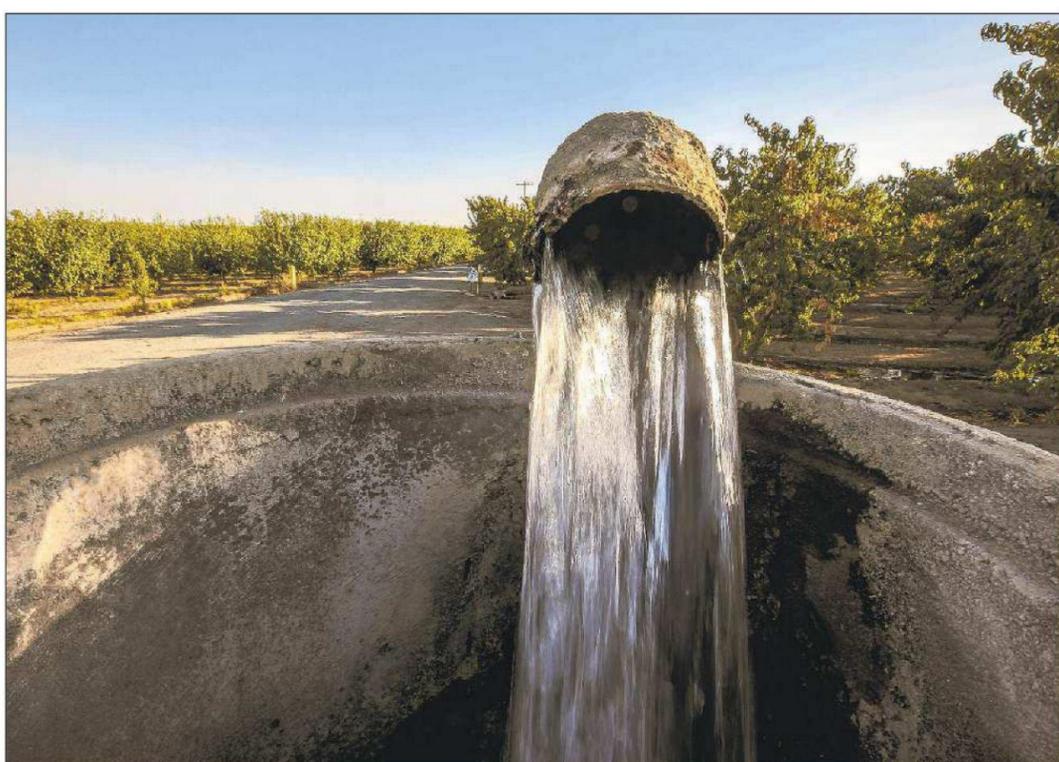
When a judge last week temporarily blocked the state’s measures and called the water board’s actions nontransparent, Dusty Ference of the Kings County Farm Bureau said it was a major win for the area’s farmers and California agriculture.

“We agree as an industry that efforts need to be made to balance groundwater extractions and overdraft, but that all has to be done in a way that doesn’t decimate our industry and our community,” Ference said.

The state’s approach to intervention, he said, would saddle growers with an estimated \$10 million annually in pumping fees, and would bring rapid and “extreme” restrictions on water use. He said farmers hope the court will overturn the state’s decision, allowing the region to implement plans for sustainability in other ways that will support the economy.

State regulators disagreed with the judge’s preliminary ruling, saying the water board has clear authority to intervene.

“Under SGMA, local



WATER flows from an underground well to irrigate an orchard in Visalia in 2021. From 2020 through 2022, California’s driest three-year period on record, more than 2,600 wells were reported dry, state data show.

IRFAN KHAN Los Angeles Times

agencies are responsible for the sustainable management of their groundwater basins,” said Edward Ortiz, a spokesperson for the state water board. “However, state agencies — namely the Department of Water Resources and State Water Board — are responsible for ensuring local groundwater management achieves SGMA’s goals.”

State officials say the temporary freeze on state requirements affects only the Tulare Lake subbasin, and they are moving ahead with separate processes to consider probationary measures in other areas of the San Joaquin Valley.

Groundwater accounts for approximately 40% of the state’s total water supplies in an average year and can make up roughly 60% of supplies during droughts.

The last two wet winters have helped boost aquifer levels after years of pervasive declines. State water managers have also sought to promote efforts to capture stormwater to replenish aquifers.

In recent months, dry conditions have reemerged alongside extreme heat. As of this week, the U.S. Drought Monitor reported 71% of the state as abnormally dry or in moderate drought.

Esquivel said the law was intended to help California adapt to worsening droughts brought on by global warming.

“It’s climate change that brought us the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act to begin with,” Esquivel said. When the law was developed a decade ago, rural communities were dealing with hundreds of dry wells during the 2012-2016 drought.

The latest drought, from 2020 through 2022, set a record as California’s driest three-year period on record, and state data show more than 2,600 dry wells were reported during that time.

The state has been providing assistance for low-income residents in rural communities that have run out of water, including paying for water deliveries to fill

household tanks while people wait to have new wells drilled or to be connected to nearby water systems.

According to state agencies, about 95% of all groundwater pumping in California is now subject to a locally adopted sustainability plan.

“I’m absolutely confident we are going to be successful in achieving groundwater sustainability,” said Paul Gosselin, the Department of Water Resources’ deputy director of sustainable water management.

The state agency is responsible for reviewing annual reports from local agencies and determining whether they are taking adequate steps to avoid undesirable results, such as “significant and unreasonable” lowering of groundwater levels, degraded water quality, land subsidence, seawater intrusion or effects on surface water and ecosystems.

The Department of Water Resources’ staff is also preparing to give local agencies guidance on how to manage land subsidence

and how to prevent levels of pumping that cause significant depletion of surface water, Gosselin said.

He and other state officials say major challenges for communities include protecting vulnerable wells during droughts and establishing “demand management” through mandatory reductions in pumping, which some areas have begun to do.

The state has started some programs intended to help, such as grants paid to growers who agree to limit pumping, and a program that aims to support “multi-benefit land repurposing,” helping to convert fallow farmland for other uses, such as solar farms or habitat restoration areas.

Another challenge is coordination among various local water-managing agencies. In some areas, groundwater agencies have recently been splitting and forming new agencies, increasing the number of entities that must work together on a single local blueprint.

“My fervent hope is that

that coordination is happening in the context of really moving the entire region forward, versus bifurcating into ever smaller jurisdictions that sort of solve the problem at the expense of their neighbor,” said Karla Nemeth, director of the Department of Water Resources. “They are solvable problems if we’re working together and if we’re communicating together.”

Speaking at a UC Davis conference ahead of the law’s 10th anniversary, Nemeth said the state is on track to manage groundwater sustainably, even though officials “don’t have all the answers” about what steps will ultimately be needed to achieve the law’s goals.

“I believe we are well-positioned to address those challenges as they come,” Nemeth said. “There’s a whole lot of change that’s coming, particularly in our overdrafted areas, but what’s really important about it is in 2040 everybody who lives in those areas, their water supply will be more reliable than it is today.”

Advocates for rural communities that are dealing with dry wells or contaminated water supplies have urged state officials to prioritize measures to protect drinking water and limit overpumping.

“We can’t wait until 2040 to be in sustainability. We need to make sure we have demand management now,” said Tien Tran, a senior policy advocate for the group Community Water Center.

Tran pointed out that reviews of the first round of local plans found many wouldn’t adequately protect drinking water, small farmers or the environment. She said the fragmentation of agencies that should be working together is also a problem.

When a moderator asked her to give a letter grade for the law’s implementation so far, Tran said it’s been between a C-plus and a B-minus.

“There’s still so much in-fighting that’s happening because there’s not a culture of collaboration,” Tran said. “There’s a scarcity mindset where people are fighting over water.”

CITY & STATE

AIDS Healthcare Foundation settles suit over Skid Row building conditions

Tenants alleged pervasive problems. The nonprofit will pay them \$575,000.

BY LIAM DILLON

The nonprofit AIDS Healthcare Foundation will pay current and former tenants of a Skid Row residential hotel \$575,000 to resolve a long-running class-action lawsuit over conditions at its property.

Residents of the Madison Hotel alleged pervasive problems, including mold, vermin, and plumbing and electrical issues that they said the foundation has failed to fix.

The case was filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court in 2020, and the settlement was reached Monday, when the trial was scheduled to begin. A series of rulings from Judge William Highberger had narrowed the tenants' claims so that they could seek rent reimbursements only due to conditions in the building's common areas. Most of the 200 residents in the century-old, single-room occupancy hotel share bathroom facilities on each floor.

Jennifer Kramer, an attorney representing the tenants, said the amount of the settlement represents about 25% of rent paid during the 4½-year period at issue. Residents who lived at the Madison the entire time would get close to \$5,000



A TENANT and her pet use the stairs at the Madison Hotel in Los Angeles' Skid Row in 2022. Under the settlement, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation will hire a consultant to assess the building's faulty elevator.

each, she said.

"We think we worked out a deal that was just as good as if we went to trial," Kramer said.

The figure does not include attorneys' fees, which the plaintiffs' lawyers continue to seek.

The settlement requires Kramer to provide a statement on tenants' behalf acknowledging that the foundation has invested significant resources into upgrading the Madison as part of an effort to improve conditions in Skid Row.

The foundation paid \$8 million for the property in 2017. Foundation officials say they've since paid \$7 million in repairs and upgrades to the Madison.

Foundation spokesperson Jacki Schechner

said the settlement "fully vindicated" the nonprofit, pointing to Kramer's statement.

"The small payments made to 300 residents recognized that they experienced certain hardships while the building was being improved," Schechner said in a statement.

Besides the financial settlement, the agreement requires the foundation to consult with experts and receive training on maintenance and management issues at the Madison. The foundation also agreed to hire a consultant to assess the building's elevator.

Last year, the foundation paid at least \$832,000 to settle a separate lawsuit from elderly and disabled tenants who alleged they were stuck

in their apartments or had to sleep in the lobby because of the elevator's failures. Since the settlement, the elevator has continued to malfunction.

In April, the foundation won a \$1.5-million default judgment against the Madison's prior owner, who the nonprofit said failed to disclose the elevator's condition.

Since buying the Madison, the nonprofit, which received \$2.5 billion in revenue last year largely from its chain of pharmacies, has acquired more than a dozen underused low-income buildings in Los Angeles and worked to renovate them and lease rooms to tenants.

A Times investigation last year found that many of

the foundation's more than 1,300 residents live in squalid conditions, with dozens under the threat of eviction.

The foundation still faces multiple lawsuits from its tenants over conditions at the Madison and elsewhere.

The foundation is involved in multiple initiatives on the November statewide ballot. It's sponsoring Proposition 33, which would expand rent control in California after two similar initiatives failed in 2018 and 2020. It's also defending itself against Proposition 34, which is financed by the California Apartment Assn., the foundation's opponents in the rent control fight. If passed, Proposition 34 would in effect ban the foundation from funding political and housing campaigns.

Google to invest in AI, satellites to detect wildfires

FireSat will use the technology to identify blazes while they are small, the firm says.

BY MELISSA GOMEZ

Amid an outbreak of recent wildfires in California, Google announced a commitment to spend \$13 million to improve satellite imaging to help track and detect wildfires, starting as early as next year.

FireSat, a constellation of more than 50 satellites, will be able to detect wildfires as small as the size of a classroom, about 16 by 16 feet, and the first satellite will launch in early 2025, the media giant announced Monday.

Firefighting authorities currently rely on satellite imagery that detects wildfires but only when they reach about the size of a football field, or more than an acre.

"We realized that if we can pair satellites with machine learning and artificial intelligence, it was the perfect platform to generate real-time operational intelligence on fires," Christopher Van Arsdale, who leads the Google Research Climate & Energy group and is chairman of the Earth Fire Alliance, said in a video announcement.

The initiative is being led by the Earth Fire Alliance, a nonprofit that was launched in May to create FireSat and develop wildfire datasets, with funding from Google and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

Satellite images currently might confuse clouds or a smokestack for fires, Van Arsdale said. Using machine learning, a team at Google built a camera that optimized the technology for fire detection, and the team tested it over controlled burn areas.

The constellation of satellites will be able to provide updated satellite imagery to firefighters every 20 minutes to help them put out fires before they become large and destructive.

"In addition to supporting emergency response efforts, FireSat's data will be used to create a global historical record of fire spread, helping Google and scientists to better model and understand wildfire behavior and spread," the company said.

Google said the project is part of the company's effort to help communities address the effects of climate change.

California officials already have moved toward using AI to better track wildfires. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection partnered with UC San Diego to develop a new AI pilot project that maintains 1,039 high-definition cameras on towers and mountain peaks throughout the state to keep an eye out for smoke and other anomalies and alerts CalFire.

Jason Forthofer, a research mechanical engineer with the U.S. Forest Service, said the FireSat project also will help to collect data to better train firefighters on how to interact with wildfires and understand how they are affected by changing conditions.

"We'll be able to teach firefighters what dryness does to a fire, or wind, or a change in fuel type, because we have seen so many firefighters die on fires when they don't anticipate what the fire's going to do," he said.

Southern California is enduring an extremely active wildfire season, with three fast-moving blazes burning more than 100,000 acres and forcing thousands to evacuate as well as destroying dozens of structures.

Newsom condemns Norwalk's ban on shelters

New ordinance blocks housing for homeless people. The state threatens legal action.

BY LIAM DILLON

Gov. Gavin Newsom is threatening legal action against the city of Norwalk unless it reverses a ban on homeless shelters and other housing.

"It is unfathomable that as our state grapples with a homelessness crisis, Norwalk would pass an ordinance banning the building of homeless shelters," Newsom said in a statement. "It is counterproductive and immoral for any community to throw up their hands and say they've done enough while they still have people in need."

Last month, Norwalk passed an ordinance temporarily banning homeless shelters, single-room occupancy housing and supportive housing. The ordinance additionally banned liquor stores, laundromats, car washes and payday loan establishments.

"By virtue of their operational characteristics, the uses listed and defined above, may have detrimental effects (i.e., maintenance of property, over proliferation, security noise, and possible economic impacts) on the community," according to a Sept. 17 city staff report.

The report recommends that the City Council extend the ban on homeless shelters, liquor stores and the other developments for another 10½ months.

Newsom's administration sent a notice of violation of various housing laws to the city and warned that it may refer the matter to the Attorney General's Office for enforcement unless the ordinance is rescinded. Norwalk has until Monday to respond.

"Norwalk's residents — indeed all Californians — should be outraged," Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta said in a statement. "If necessary, my office stands ready to take legal action against Norwalk."

Mountain lion in Malibu attack was a 1-year-old female and underweight

Big cat that went after boy, 5, in park had nothing in stomach, necropsy results show.

BY NATHAN SOLIS

A mountain lion that was put down by park rangers after it attacked a 5-year-old boy in Malibu Creek State Park this month was identified as a slightly underweight female just over a year old.

The lion weighed nearly 53 pounds and had nothing in her stomach during the attack, according to the necropsy results released by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife last week. The lion was roughly 12 to 16 months old and 3 to 5 pounds underweight for her age, officials said.

And she appeared to have been relatively healthy. According to a spokesperson for the agency, the cat did not have rabies, mange or any "obvious internal organ abnormalities to indicate illness."

Officials did not release any additional information about the animal.

The lion attacked the boy while he was out for a picnic Sept. 1 with his family at the park. He was playing with a group of children in a designated picnic area when the large cat attacked, officials said. The lion tried to drag him away, but the boy's father fought the lion until she released him, family members told KTLA-TV.

Park rangers who arrived on the scene found the cat in a tree and shot her with a gun, according to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Mountain lion attacks on humans in California are rare. The incident at Malibu Creek State Park is the 24th reported attack in California since 1986, with four of those being fatal.



THE MALIBU Creek State Park incident on Sept. 1 was the 24th reported attack in California since 1986. Above, a mountain lion in the Verdugo Mountains in 2016.

While the rangers' decision to kill the mountain lion drew criticism online, experts explained that the action was not taken lightly.

"It attacked a small child, and we were concerned if we didn't remove the animal, it may attack and possibly kill another child," California Department of Fish and Wildlife spokesperson Patrick Foy said shortly after the incident.

Officials pointed to a fatal mountain lion attack in 2004, where a big cat killed a mountain biker in Orange County and then nearly killed a woman hours later.

Although Californians fell in love with P-22, a male mountain lion who managed to coexist with humans while living in Griffith Park, that big cat was part of an ongoing study and was collared. P-22 roamed the hillsides around the residential

neighborhoods over the years, but there were no reported attacks on humans.

State wildlife officials are often confronted with the difficult decision of what to do when wildlife become accustomed to humans.

This year, a pack of coyotes tormented residents in Mar Vista as the creatures set up a den in the neighborhood. The coyotes stalked children and probably devoured numerous pets as they claimed the neighborhood as their territory.

Residents said the coyotes grew bold and were just not afraid of their human neighbors. City officials cautioned residents to not create a welcoming environment for the animals and to not feed them, but the call to coexist with the animals left many residents feeling that they were at the coyotes'

mercy.

Rebecca Dmytryk, co-owner of Humane Wildlife Control, a private pest control business, said this year that the coyotes' actions seemed aggressive because coyote parents are territorial and want to convey to other canines in the neighborhood that they have pups.

Sometimes the wildlife guests weigh 500 pounds, like the black bear called Victor who frequented the Mammoth Lake campgrounds.

The bear was put down after it swiped at a woman's leg in August as it sauntered through a picnic area, according to a video of the encounter.

Officials defended their decision, stating that the bear was deemed a threat because it attacked the woman unprovoked.

State law aims to return painting taken by Nazis

[Painting, from B1] newed, last-ditch effort by the family to reclaim the masterpiece, estimated to be worth tens of millions of dollars. Assembly Bill 2867 makes clear that California law requires that Nazi looted artworks such as the Pissarro — as well as other valuables stolen during past or future acts of genocide or political persecution — be returned to their rightful owners.

“For survivors of the Holocaust and their families, the fight to take back ownership of art and other personal items stolen by the Nazis continues to traumatize those who have already gone through the unimaginable,” Newsom said in a statement. “It is both a moral and legal imperative that these valuable and sentimental pieces be returned to their rightful owners, and I am proud to strengthen California’s laws to help secure justice for families.”

Newsom signed the bill during a small gathering with the families of Holocaust survivors at the Holocaust Museum I.A. Neubauer’s great-grandson David Cassirer, who lives in Colorado, attended the event and praised Newsom and the lawmakers behind the bill — including Assemblyman Jesse Gabriel (D-Encino), co-chair of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus — for “taking a definitive stand in favor of the true owners of stolen art.”

Cassirer said his late father, Claude Cassirer, who discovered the Pissarro painting had survived the war and launched the family fight for its return two decades ago, would be thrilled with his adopted state’s support.

“As a Holocaust survivor, the proudest day of my father’s life was in 1947, when he became a U.S. citizen,” Cassirer said. “He would be so happy, and grateful, that the people of the state of California have taken action to ensure the return of looted art to its rightful owners.”

Thaddeus Stauber, an attorney for the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, the Madrid museum that holds the Pissarro, said late Monday that he could not immediately comment.

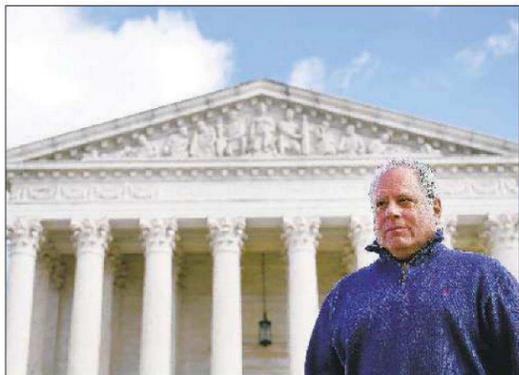
The new law is broad in the sense that it sets out clear standards for how claims of looted artwork should be handled under California law — providing a clearer path to reclaiming such art for American families suffering political persecution in the past, present or future.

However, it is also ex-



Cassirer Family Trust

THE MASTERPIECE, by the Impressionist artist Camille Pissarro, hangs above the sofa in the Cassirer family’s Berlin home in the 1920s.



SUSAN WALSH Associated Press

DAVID CASSIRER, whose great-grandmother surrendered the painting in exchange for safe passage out of Germany in 1939, has fought to get it back.

tremely precise in its application to the Cassirer case, which it was built around and references.

Neubauer looked for the painting for years after the war with no luck and died without knowing whether it had survived the war.

Four decades later, in the early 2000s, her grandson Claude Cassirer discovered that the painting, to which she had left him the rights, had survived and was in the vast collection of the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Borne-

misza, a prominent museum owned by the Kingdom of Spain.

When Claude Cassirer asked for the painting’s return, the museum refused. So he sued in U.S. federal court.

In January, a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit ruled that the nature of the dispute required it to apply an

archaic Spanish law allowing titles to stolen goods to be transferred over time — and justifying the museum’s acquisition of the painting — rather than a modern California law that comports with international agreements by calling for Nazi looted artwork to be returned to its original, rightful owners.

One of the judges on the panel, appointed entirely by President George W. Bush, said she agreed with the ruling even though it went against her “moral compass.” When a larger group of judges reviewed the decision, some found that the smaller panel had misapplied the law — but they were overruled.

With the passage of the new law, California’s lawmakers made it explicit that they think the court misinterpreted state law. The text of the new legislation specifically states that it applies to the Cassirer case and should change the outcome.

Sam Dubbin, the Cassirers’ longtime attorney, said

the family will now formally challenge the 9th Circuit’s decision, including by citing the new law, which he called a “bright line” that will “prevent the ability of museums with stolen art to delay and distort, when truth and justice lie within easy reach.”

“This new law is essential for truth, history, and justice, for the Cassirer family, and future cases as well,” Dubbin said. What form the family’s legal challenge will take, and in which court, was not yet clear.

The long court battle has substantially raised the profile — and likely the value — of the Pissarro painting itself and could set precedent useful for other families seeking the return of looted art. Attorneys, art historians and others involved in such litigation the world over have watched the Cassirer case closely.

Gabriel said his intent was for the state’s new law to protect all victims of genocide, persecution and political plundering.

“Our effort will make it

crystal clear that California law must triumph over foreign law, that California stands with Holocaust survivors, and that cases must be decided based on truth, justice, and morality, not the misapplication of legal technicalities,” he said.

David Schaecter, president of the Holocaust Survivors Foundation USA, said Holocaust survivors and their families are “very grateful” to Gabriel, Newsom and other lawmakers for passing the new measure.

“Looting art and other assets from Jewish families was an essential part of Hitler’s plan to annihilate the Jewish people, and eradicate all traces of Jewish life and culture. Spain’s insistence on keeping the Cassirers’ Pissarro perpetuates the crimes of the Nazi regime, and demeans the memory of six million Jewish souls,” Schaecter said.

“The people of California should be proud that their lawmakers will not allow this to happen.”

Stakes in election demand the truth

[Chabria, from B1] crippled gun control laws beginning in 2022.

Meanwhile, the city of Springfield, Ohio, is under siege. Springfield, of course, is the town in Sen. JD Vance’s state about which he started the false story that Haitian immigrants were stealing and eating people’s pets. He threw more dung on that bonfire of refuse by alleging that these legal immigrants, who have been instrumental in boosting the city’s economy (and who are his own constituents), have brought in disease and crime.

That has led to actual threats — 33 of them so far. By Monday, nearly two dozen institutions had been closed, evacuated, locked down or searched because of bomb and shooting threats. The list includes City Hall, the Clark County Department of Family Services, Clark County Board of Elections and at least nine schools or universities.

The Haitian community (as well as the Black community in general) is afraid, and the situation has devolved so far that Gov. Mike DeWine announced that state troopers will start doing daily bomb sweeps of local schools.

All of which raises the question, should we all just shut up for the sake of peace and safety?

The bad news about the current state of political violence in the United States is that there will probably be more of it.

Since 2016, when Trump began his campaign of white Christian nationalism, stoking fear of a “great replacement” in which white Americans would be subjugated by immigrants of color, that violence has been inevitable. It was 2018 when Trump referred to

Haiti and some other nations as “shithole” countries, reportedly saying, “Why do we need more Haitians, take them out.”

That actually seems tame by today’s measure. Now he slams people, not nations. “Rapists,” “murderers,” “lunatics,” “animals.” He makes it personal.

Eight years of demonization, dehumanization and denial. That’s the foolproof diet for growing an average Joe into a political vigilante, and Trump and crew have mastered how best to serve that meal, steaming hot and full of lies.

The aim is to create enough fear and anxiety to garner votes. But for some, that terror — whether in agreement or opposition — seems greater than what a ballot can fix.

“It starts with the weakest individuals who are just looking for a reason to act out,” Monty Marshall said. He is the director of the Center for Systemic Peace and studies how democracies rise and fall.

And indeed that is what we have seen — remember David DePape with his hammer and unicorn costume inside Nancy Pelosi’s house?

These would-be assassins and attackers are largely amateurs with disorganized beliefs, lone wolves disenfranchised and confused by their isolation long before they picked a target.

DePape swung wildly between left and right, living in a garage on the fringes of society and trading beliefs seemingly as often as underwear. Routh was once a Trump supporter, before becoming obsessed with the conflict in Ukraine, even traveling there on some sort of self-assigned mission.

That doesn’t make them less dangerous. In fact, they are terrifying because they are alone, yet many. There are more such men out there, and as the pressure builds on democracy, it also builds on them.

Republicans have once again jumped at the opportunity to frame Democrats as the aggressors when it comes to inciting violence, though. They are demanding that — with two assassination attempts in recent weeks — Democrats stop calling him a threat to democracy.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.), known among other things for claiming that “Jewish space lasers” caused California wildfires, posted on X Monday that “Democrats and their partners in the mainstream media are responsible for the attempts to murder President Trump. Their rhetoric has not been unclear. They have placed a target on President Trump’s back, and many have outright called for his execution.”

Trump took the same position on the debate stage days ago, claiming, “They talk about democracy. I’m a threat to democracy. They’re the threat to democracy.”

But of course, Trump is a threat to democracy. He has repeatedly and falsely claimed that the last election was stolen from him, and has already — before a single ballot has been counted — started laying the groundwork to claim a rigged election again if things don’t go his way in November.

The first time he tried to reverse a lost election by force, he bumbled and fumbled. But as Marshall pointed out to me, most authoritarians flop at their first insurrection. It’s the

second and third tries that are worrisome.

“Almost all people who attempt a coup and succeed have previously attempted a coup and failed,” Marshall said.

But the assassination attempts do put pressure on Democrats to parse their every word, because Democrats love to fret.

Trump, on the other hand, is “the one person who is escalating the rhetoric constantly in order to remain on the cutting edge,” Marshall told me.

So when MAGA Republicans call for calm, they are really just trying to further hobble Democrats with their own decency. It’s not really about preventing violence. Because at the same time, MAGA Republicans continue to escalate with lies like those told about Springfield.

“If I have to create stories so that the American media actually pays attention to the suffering of the American people, then that’s what I’m going to do,” Vance said on CNN recently. He then claimed he meant only that he was focusing the story, not making it up.

Meanwhile, forever-Trump tech bro Elon Musk tweeted, “And no one is even trying to assassinate Biden/Kamala,” as if it were a dare. He later took the post down and called it a joke.

It wasn’t funny, any more than Vance’s lies weren’t intentional. And that kind of two-faced attack is dangerous, because we are being told if we take it seriously, we are the problem.

But democracy is at risk, and being cowed into polite silence won’t save it.

A version of this column originally appeared in the L.A. Times Politics newsletter. To subscribe, visit latimes.com/newsletters.

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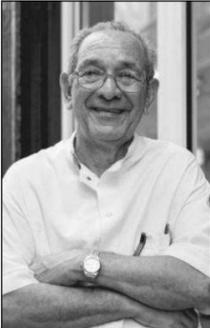
Barbara H Bergen
August 30, 1938 -
September 15, 2024

Barbara was a loving mother, grandmother, aunt and friend. Her passion in life, besides doting on her grandchildren, was working as an attorney in the non-profit sector and teaching step aerobics well into her 85th year. She was known for her intellect and her strongly held belief that humans deserve to be treated with respect and fairness in this beautiful country of ours. The combination of her brilliance and personal convictions led to political action and scores of letters to the editor published in the Los Angeles Times. Barbara always did the New York Sunday crossword in blue ink and was a “crack” mahjong player. She attended high school in Queens, NY and graduated from Hofstra University. In her 30’s she decided to go back to law school at Mid Valley College of Law graduating as Summa Cum Laude and class valedictorian. Her work with the ADL and Mazon fulfilled both her love of the law and social justice. Barbara is survived by her son Michael (Beth) Bergen, daughter Samara (Ken) Fabrick, grandchildren Zachary and Eli and niece Penny Hart. She was kind, caring, and the people she has left behind will miss her presence.

In Memoriam

Harry Steinbaum
1919 - 1986

Miss your every day
Lynn and Harriet



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Will suit over subway car contract delay Olympic plans?

[Metro, from B1] the accusations, but found several of Jobs to Move America's assertions to be "inaccurate and based on incomplete information."

"Hyundai Rotem is on track to deliver not just well-paying jobs and benefits, and capital investment in manufacturing capabilities for the benefit of Los Angeles County, but to deliver rail cars that will be moving athletes and those attending the LA Olympics in 2028," he stated.

The roots of the policy stem from a lengthy legal battle with another Metro contractor, New Flyer of America. Jobs to Move America accused the company, one of the nation's largest bus manufacturers, of misstating worker compensation in its factories. Eventually, the lawsuit was settled. New Flyer admitted no wrongdoing, and the Metro board subsequently approved the new policy for projects over \$50 million.

Jobs to Move America closely tracked the Hyundai project that was approved in January. Early on, Janis said, it became clear that Metro didn't follow its own policy.

"Metro asked to try to be able to fix it," she said. "They admitted that this was a messed-up situation."

In July, Hyundai amended the contract and told Metro in a letter that it "continues to evaluate price implications" of the changes, raising the specter that the price tag could jump even higher.

Jobs to Move America



ETIENNE LAURENT Los Angeles Times
The track of the future Wilshire/Fairfax subway station in April after tunneling work was completed.

THE TRACK of the future

sees the suit as an effort to bring transparency to the process and force the agency to comply with its own policy intended to ensure that billions of federal and state dollars being spent on infrastructure are paying off for workers.

"Hyundai is the lowest of the low-road vehicle manufacturers in the United States, and we have done our best to warn L.A. Metro about this problem," Janis said.

In May, the U.S. Labor Department sued Hyundai

after finding a 13-year-old working up to 60 hours a week on heavy machinery along an assembly line that made car parts for SMART Alabama, a subcontractor in which the Korean giant owns a majority stake. The lawsuit named Hyundai, SMART and a staffing service, saying they were jointly responsible for the child labor law violations.

"We were hoping that Metro would be as concerned as we were and thus hold Hyundai's feet to the fire by enforcing strong la-

bor standards in implementing this significant contract," Janis said.

In a statement Hyundai released after the lawsuit, it said that it "took immediate action upon learning of the alleged underage labor law violations at independent suppliers" and that its suppliers terminated their relationships with the third-party staffing agencies.

Labor, construction and other interests have often battled it out on these big-money contracts at the \$9-billion agency. Metro and

its rail construction have long been viewed as a regional job creator that can stimulate the economy and help boost a company's bottom line.

Former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, who envisioned the rail system in the 1970s, saw its construction as comparable to New Deal programs, said Ethan Elkind, a UC Berkeley climate policy researcher and author of the book "Rail-town: The Fight for the Los Angeles Metro Rail and the Future of the City."

"Union politics have always been a major factor in pushing rail development," Elkind said. And union members have helped win approval for sales tax measures that fueled rail expansion in Los Angeles.

But the cost of building rail has created tension at the Metro board, composed of the mayor, members of the county Board of Supervisors and other local officials and leaders. The upcoming Olympic Games have added new deadline pressures. Larger projects can take years to complete, and bidding for these complex contracts can eat up precious time.

Earlier this year, Metro approved a \$66-million contract to upgrade its current tap-to-pay program with San Diego-based Cubic Transportation Systems. The agency didn't publicly request bids for the contract, saying the system was too integrated in Metro to change directions, especially with the Games and the 2026 World Cup around the corner.

Instead it, modified a 24-year-old contract, said Juan Matute, deputy director of UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies.

"The downside of this is that Metro can use the compressed timelines of delivering transportation services and infrastructure to its advantage to constrain procurement choices," Matute said. "With Cubic, there was an appearance that the agency ran down the clock to limit the feasibility of switching to alternatives."

Body of man, 61, is found in Yosemite after he went missing on hike

BY NATHAN SOLIS

The body of a 61-year-old man was discovered in Yosemite National Park more than 20 days after he was expected to return from his solo hike.

Yosemite National Park announced in a Facebook post Thursday that rangers were searching for Kirk Thomas-Olsen, who had gone missing on a planned

backpacking trip around the Ostrander Lake area from Aug. 23 to 27. On Friday, a niece of Thomas-Olsen said in a Facebook post that his body had been found, and on Saturday officials confirmed his death but gave no other information.

Thomas-Olsen traveled from San Luis Obispo to the park and left a note on his vehicle announcing when he would return, his niece Holly Leeson told the San Fran-

cisco Chronicle. He was declared missing when park rangers discovered the note Thursday, she said.

Leeson then posted on Facebook to ask for the public's help to find her uncle. She described him as a "an experienced hiker and former park ranger" and said her family was "struggling to understand what has happened to him out there" in the national park.

The trail that he was re-

portedly following includes an 11.4-mile loop that takes an estimated eight to 10 hours to complete and includes a gentle incline through forest and meadow, according to the National Park Service. A portion of the trail climbs to an elevation of 1,500 feet.

Thomas-Olsen previously worked as a ranger at Hearst San Simeon State Park in San Luis Obispo County, his family told the

Chronicle.

On Friday, Leeson updated the Yosemite Tourist Information Facebook page to confirm that her uncle died.

"His body was found which is not the outcome we as a family hoped for but I would like to say a genuine thank you to Yosemite National Park for their diligent efforts to find him, and to this community for the support," Leeson wrote.

While her uncle was an experienced hiker, she added, "unfortunately Mother Nature in all of her glory does not account for past experience, and solo hiking is never an endeavor that is without risks."

"Please, whenever possible, travel with a companion and be safe," she wrote.

The National Park Service did not respond to requests for more information.

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JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

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CELHEK

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

THE PRAGUE WAITER ASKED HOW THE CUSTOMERS WANTED THEIR BILL. THEY SAID

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

LEGAL NOTICES 1300

Legal Notices

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Notice is hereby given that proposals will be accepted by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765 for the following: **P2025-02** Outreach For South Coast AQMD's 2024 Residential Electric Lawn And Garden Rebate Program Optional Bidder's Conference **P2024-08r** Implementation of Green Space Projects in the Assembly Bill 617 Community of Southeast Los Angeles/Optional Bidder's Conference **10/24/24** Opens: 9/6/24 Closing Date: 11/8/24 2:00 PM Contact: Robert Dalbeck 909-396-2139

The RFP may be obtained through the Internet at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/grants-bids> If you have questions or would like a copy of the RFP emailed to you, call the contact person.

It is the policy of the South Coast AQMD to ensure that all businesses including minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, disabled veteran-owned businesses and small businesses have a fair and equitable opportunity to compete for and participate in South Coast AQMD contracts. South Coast AQMD Procurement Unit 9/11, 9/18/24 **CNS-3850714#**

Legal Notices

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS/QUOTATIONS/PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Notice is hereby given that proposals will be accepted by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765 for the following: **P2025-01** AB 617 Public School Air Filtration Program Closes: 12/20/24 3:00 PM Contact: Liliana Garcia 909-396-2832 Kelly Trainor Gamino 909-396-2382 **Q2024-08** Language Interpretation and Document Translation Providers Closes: 10/4/24 2:00 PM Contact: Alicia Lizarraga 909-396-2646 **Q2025-01** PM2.5 Speciation Samplers Closes: 10/8/24 2:00 PM Contact: Eric Holden 909-396-2646 **Q2025-02** Carbonyl Cartridge Samplers Closes: 10/8/24 2:00 PM Contact: Eric Holden 909-396-2646 The RFP/RFQ/PA may be obtained through the Internet at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/grants-bids> If you have questions or would like a copy of the RFP/RFQ/PA mailed to you, call the contact person. It is the policy of the South Coast AQMD to ensure that all businesses including minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, disabled veteran-owned businesses and small businesses have a fair and equitable opportunity to compete for and participate in South Coast AQMD contracts. South Coast AQMD Procurement Unit 9/11, 9/18/24 **CNS-3850605#**

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NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Notice is hereby given that proposals will be accepted by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765 for the following: **RFI2025-01** Goods Movement Zero-Emission Infrastructure in the Long Beach - East Los Angeles Corridor Closing Date: 10/7/24 Contact: Cynthia Ravenstein, MSRC Contracts Administrator 909-396-3269 Ray Gorski, MSRC Technical Advisor 909-396-2479 The RFI may be obtained through the Internet at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/grants-bids> If you have questions or would like a copy of the RFI mailed to you, call the contact person. It is the policy of the South Coast AQMD to ensure that all businesses including minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, disabled veteran-owned businesses and small businesses have a fair and equitable opportunity to compete for and participate in South Coast AQMD contracts. South Coast AQMD Procurement Unit 9/11, 9/18/24 **CNS-3850618#**

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Legal Notices

Legal Notice

Notification is hereby given that JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., 1111 Polaris Parkway, Columbus, Ohio 43240 has filed an application with the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (the "OCC") on or about September 18, 2024, as specified in 12 CFR Part 5, for permission to establish a domestic branch at the northwest corner of the intersection of West Cesar Estrada Chavez Avenue and North Broadway, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California 90012. If you have any additional comments, you can send them to the Director for Large Bank Licensing, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, 7 Times Square, 10th Floor Mailroom, New York, New York 10036 or LicensingPublicComments@occ.treas.gov, within 30 days of the date of this publication. The public portion of the filing is available upon request from the OCC. The public may find information about the filing (including the closing date of the comment period) in the OCC's Weekly Bulletin available at www.occ.gov.

Legal Notices

Legal Notices

STATE OF CONNECTICUT SUPERIOR COURT JUVENILE MATTERS

ORDER OF NOTICE

JD-JM-61 Rev. 10-11 C.G.S. 45a-716(c), 46b-129(a), 52-52; P.A. 11-51 Sec. 19 Pr. Bk. Secs. 11-6, 11-7, 33a-5

Notice to: Michael Haney, father of female child born to Jocelynn S on 08/27/2011 Of parts unknown

A petition has been filed seeking:

Commitment of minor child(ren) of the above named or vesting of custody and care of said child(ren) of the above named in a lawful, private or public agency or a suitable and worthy person.

The petition, whereby the court's decision can affect your paternal rights, if any, regarding minor child(ren) will be heard on **10/24/2024 at 2:15 p.m. at SCJM 25 School Street, Rockville, CT 06066.**

Hearing on an Order of Temporary Custody will be heard on **09/20/2024 at 09:00 a.m. at SCJM 25 School Street, Rockville, CT 06066.**

Therefore, ORDERED, that notice of the hearing of this petition be given by publishing this Order of Notice once, immediately upon receipt, in **Los Angeles Times**, a newspaper having a circulation in the town/city of Los Angeles, CA.

Judge: Hon. Margaret Murphy
Clerk: Amy Sheffield
Date signed: 09/11/2024.

RIGHT TO COUNSEL: Upon proof of inability to pay for a lawyer, the court will make sure that an attorney is provided to you by the Chief Public Defender. Request for an attorney should be made immediately in person, by mail, or by fax at the court office where your hearing is to be held.

L.A. Times Automotive Classified Los Angeles Times

L.A. Times Employment Classified Los Angeles Times

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Los Angeles Times Classified Los Angeles Times

Legal Notices

Legal Notices

SUMMONS (CITACION JUDICIAL)

Case Number (Numero del Caso): 21STCV38372

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: (AVISO AL DEMANDADO): DANIEL DERHY, an individual; SKYLINE CAPITAL MANAGEMENT, LLC, a corporation.

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE): JAVIER RIVERS and CHRISTIAN LARA

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación.

Tiene 30 DIAS DE CALENDARIO despues de que le entreguen esta citacion y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefonica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y mas informacion en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede mas cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentacion, pida al secretario de la corte que le de un formulario de exencion de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podra quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin mas advertencia.

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es): Los Angeles County Superior Court, Central District 111 N. Hill Street Los Angeles, CA 90012

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Albert F. Coombes SBN 60861 15915 Ventura Blvd, Penthouse 4 Encino, CA 91436 818-986-1533

Date: (Fecha) 10/21/2021

Sherril R. Carter Clerk (Secretario) M. Mariano Deputy (Adjunto)

Yesterday's Jumbles: WITCH GRAND HELMET Answer: The morning moisture on the ground made it easy to track the animal heading — "DEW" NORTH

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THE WEATHER

Today in Southern California

Staying on the cool side: Another strong upper-level low will line the coast Wednesday before moving into Southern California on Thursday. The day will be relatively dry today, with a chance of some showers through the night. Temperatures will remain unseasonably cool through the end of the week before warming back up on Sunday. Breezy to windy conditions will accompany the low, with some morning low clouds.

5-day forecasts

High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

Table with 5 columns: L.A. Basin, Valleys, Beaches, Mountains, Deserts. Rows: Today, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Includes weather conditions and temperature ranges.

Air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO Inner waters: Light winds, becoming SW 10 to 15 kt in the afternoon; seas 2 to 3 ft. W swell 3 ft at 7 seconds. Surf zone: Potential for strong rip currents is low, although rip currents are always possible.

Table with 5 columns: County, Height, Period, Direction, Temp. Lists tide data for Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego.

Tides

Table with 5 columns: Time, Height, Direction, Low/High. Lists tide data for L.A. Outer Harbor.

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people. Las Vegas, 30; Phoenix, 30; Los Angeles, 30; San Francisco, 60.

California cities*

Table with 5 columns: City, Tue. Hi, Tue. Lo, Today Hi, Today Lo, Thu. Hi, Thu. Lo. Lists weather for various California cities.

Sun and moon

Table with 4 columns: County, Rise/Set Times. Lists sun and moon data for Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura counties.

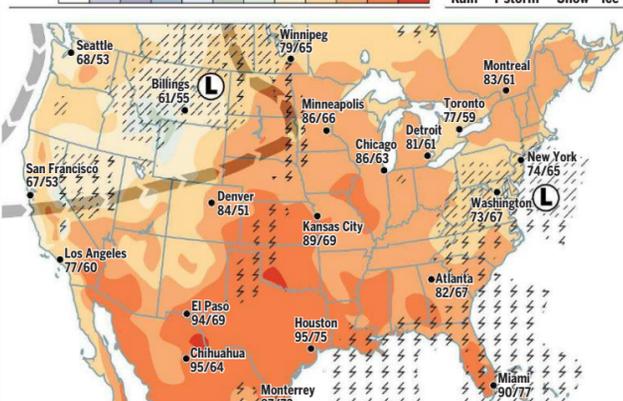
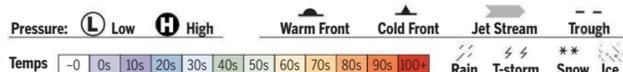
Almanac

Table with 4 columns: Temperature, Precipitation, Humidity. Lists weather data for Los Angeles, Fullerton, Ventura.

Table with 4 columns: City, Tue. Hi, Tue. Lo, Today Hi, Today Lo. Lists weather for various cities including San Diego, San Francisco, San Gabriel, etc.

Today in North America

Abundant rain: A tropical rainstorm will bring rain, some heavy, as well as the risk of flooding, to the Mid-Atlantic states. Severe thunderstorms will move through the northern Plains, bringing the risk for localized damaging winds, downpours and hail.



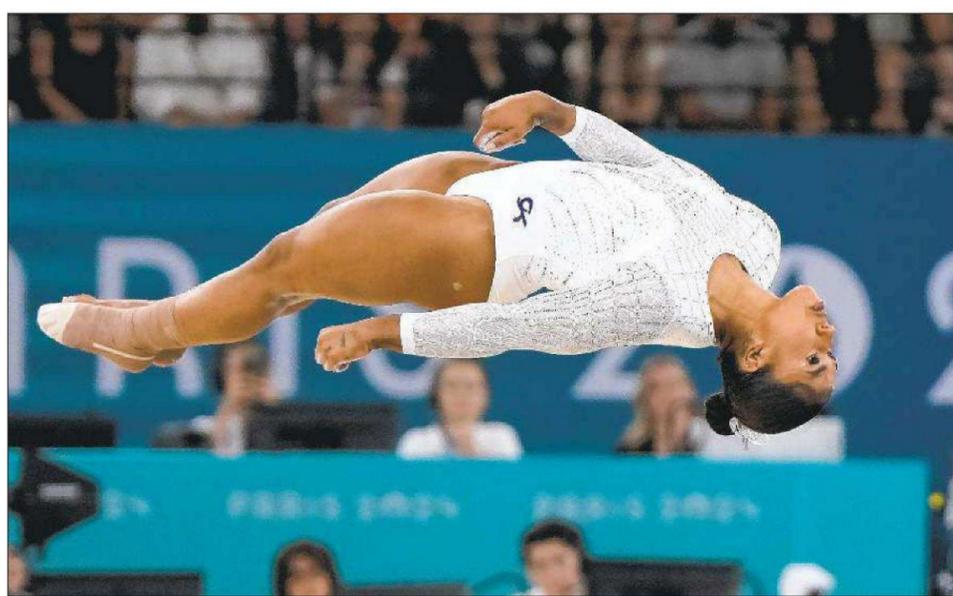
U.S. cities

TUESDAY'S EXTREMES AS OF 2 P.M. FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES High 99 in Eagle Lake, Texas. Low 20 in Mammoth Lakes, Calif.

Table with 5 columns: City, Tuesday Hi, Tuesday Lo, Today Hi, Today Lo. Lists weather for various U.S. cities.

World

Table with 5 columns: City, Tuesday Hi, Tuesday Lo, Today Hi, Today Lo. Lists weather for various world cities.



U.S. gymnast Jordan Chiles had been awarded a bronze medal Aug. 5 after an inquiry by her coach. Days later, an arbitration court said the coach missed the one-minute inquiry window. But did she?

Video evidence could aid Chiles' attempt to keep Olympic medal

Footage from documentary on Biles could help her U.S. teammate's appeal of ruling that stripped her of bronze.

By CHUCK SCHILKEN

U.S. gymnast Jordan Chiles is looking to overturn a decision that stripped her of her first individual Olympic medal. Video footage shot for the Netflix docuseries "Simone Biles Rising" might help her do it. Attorneys for Chiles filed an appeal Monday to the Federal Supreme Court of Switzerland looking to reverse a decision by the Court of Arbitration for Sport that named Ana Barbosu of Romania the bronze medalist in the floor exercise last month at the Paris Games. Chiles had been awarded the medal Aug. 5 after an inquiry by her coach Cecile Landi resulted in the judges improving Chiles' score, which lifted the UCLA gymnast from her initial fifth-place ranking to third place. It led to a historic moment, with gold medalist Rebeca Andrade, silver medalist Biles and Chiles making up the first all-Black gymnastics podium

in Olympics history. But days later, following a hearing requested by Romanian officials, the CAS ruled that Landi's inquiry missed the one-minute time window by four seconds, leading the International Olympic Committee to award the bronze to Barbosu and move Chiles back to fifth place. USA Gymnastics immediately appealed the decision to the CAS, submitting video evidence that was said to show that Landi's inquiry came 47 seconds after Chiles' score was published. That appeal was denied. The footage was submitted as evidence to the Swiss court Monday, with Chiles' attorney noting in the filing that it came from "Simone Biles Rising" director Katie Walsh and production company Religion of Sports. Walsh and her team had been on hand in Paris to film Biles' Olympic journey for the second part of the series — and they also ended up capturing footage key to Chiles' case. According to the court document, which was filed in German, Walsh reached out to Landi to express her support after the Chiles decision. Landi inquired if the director had any footage of what had transpired following Chiles' floor

performance and ended up receiving a video that contained footage from the three cameras Religion of Sport had at the event, as well as from NBC's live broadcast and a running clock. Religion of Sports and Chiles' attorney, Maurice Suh, did not respond to a request for comment for this article. According to the court document, the video shows Landi heading to the judges' table 47 seconds after Chiles' score was displayed. Two seconds later, the filing states, Landi can be heard making a verbal objection while a technical assistant can be seen making eye contact with her and acknowledging the objection was received. Landi verbalized the objection at least one more time before the 60-second limit had expired. In a statement Monday, Suh said that Chiles' "right to be heard" was violated when the CAS refused to allow the video evidence. He also alleges "a serious conflict of interest" with Hamid G. Gharavi, the head of the CAS panel that handled Chiles' case, was also representing Romania as a lawyer at the time of the hearing. Chiles and Biles are among the gymnasts appearing in the Gold Across America Tour, which stops at Crypto.com Arena on Friday.

help Tennessee attract and keep the best talent. Miami Marlins right-hander Sandy Alcantara took the mound for his first live batting practice since the 2022 Cy Young Award winner had Tommy John surgery. Justin Steele is going to rejoin the rotation for the Chicago Cubs on Wednesday. Steele, Chicago's opening-day starter, has been on the 15-day injured list since Sept. 1 with left elbow tendinitis. ... Two-time All-Star shortstop Bo Bichette was activated from the IL and returned to the Toronto Blue Jays' lineup for the first time since July 19 following a calf injury. ... Tampa Bay Rays ace Shane Bieber is set to face hitters for the first time next week since undergoing Tommy John surgery last year. ... Cleveland Guardians All-Star left fielder Steven Kwan was placed on the 10-day IL with mid-back inflammation. ... Francisco Lindor said an MRI exam of his ailing back on Monday did not detect any structural damage and he hopes to return to the New York Mets lineup this week. ... In Monday's late games, Colorado right-hander Antonio Senzuela went three-plus innings against Arizona in his first start in 16 months following Tommy John surgery. ... Yu Darvish had his best outing since being sidelined for more than three months, with three hits given up in six scoreless innings, as the San Diego Padres beat the Houston Astros 3-1. Padres leadoff hitter Luis Arraez struck out for the first time since Aug. 10, ending a streak of 141 plate appearances without whiffing. Arraez later left the game with an apparent injury. A'ja Wilson became the first WNBA player to score 1,000 points in a season when she finished with 29 in the Las Vegas Aces' 84-71 win over the Connecticut Sun on Sunday. The Dallas Stars signed defenseman Esa Lindell to a \$26.25-million, five-year contract extension. Harry Kane of Bayern Munich scored his 30th career goal in the Champions League, equating a record set by Wayne Rooney for most goals by an English player.

THE DAY IN SPORTS

O'Meara retiring after Hall of Fame golf career

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mark O'Meara is ready to retire, and he has picked the ideal spot in Pebble Beach.

O'Meara won the California State Amateur in 1979, the first of his six titles over three decades at Pebble Beach. Five of those were the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, the last one in 1997 when at age 40 he held off Tiger Woods and David Duval.

O'Meara, 67, is ending his career this week at the Pure Insurance Championship, held at Pebble Beach and Spyglass, a unique PGA Tour Champions events that puts pros with kids from The First Tee.

O'Meara, who grew up in Mission Viejo and played at Long Beach State, was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2015 at a ceremony at St. Andrews, ends his career with 16 wins on the PGA Tour, three on the European tour, two on the Japan Golf Tour, one on the PGA Tour of Australasia and the 1994 Argentina Open.

The Masters and CBS are expanding television coverage next year by five hours, which includes two hours on Saturday and Sunday through the Paramount+ streaming service of CBS.

The Masters said the broadcast will continue with only four minutes of commercials each hour.

ETC.

Wisconsin QB Van Dyke out for season

Wisconsin quarterback Tyler Van Dyke has a torn anterior cruciate ligament and will miss the remainder of the season, according to the Associated Press.

Van Dyke hurt his right knee during Wisconsin's 42-10 loss to No. 4 Alabama on Saturday.

Tennessee has announced a price hike for football tickets starting in 2025 with most of the increase going specifically to help pay players.

The increase announced in an email to season-ticket holders notes a new 10% talent fee for all invoices to "help fund the proposed revenue share" for athletes and

help Tennessee attract and keep the best talent.

Miami Marlins right-hander Sandy Alcantara took the mound for his first live batting practice since the 2022 Cy Young Award winner had Tommy John surgery.

Justin Steele is going to rejoin the rotation for the Chicago Cubs on Wednesday. Steele, Chicago's opening-day starter, has been on the 15-day injured list since Sept. 1 with left elbow tendinitis. ... Two-time All-Star shortstop Bo Bichette was activated from the IL and returned to the Toronto Blue Jays' lineup for the first time since July 19 following a calf injury. ... Tampa Bay Rays ace Shane Bieber is set to face hitters for the first time next week since undergoing Tommy John surgery last year. ... Cleveland Guardians All-Star left fielder Steven Kwan was placed on the 10-day IL with mid-back inflammation. ... Francisco Lindor said an MRI exam of his ailing back on Monday did not detect any structural damage and he hopes to return to the New York Mets lineup this week. ... In Monday's late games, Colorado right-hander Antonio Senzuela went three-plus innings against Arizona in his first start in 16 months following Tommy John surgery. ... Yu Darvish had his best outing since being sidelined for more than three months, with three hits given up in six scoreless innings, as the San Diego Padres beat the Houston Astros 3-1. Padres leadoff hitter Luis Arraez struck out for the first time since Aug. 10, ending a streak of 141 plate appearances without whiffing. Arraez later left the game with an apparent injury.

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Harry Kane of Bayern Munich scored his 30th career goal in the Champions League, equating a record set by Wayne Rooney for most goals by an English player.

Forecasts by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2024 AccuWeather Visit AccuWeather.com

Rookies must adjust to life in the big city

[Chargers, from B10] just talk and hang out with her. She's my support system."

McConkey's family still lives in Georgia, so he stays connected through frequent phone calls, which helps ease the challenge of being so far from home. Family visits during preseason games also helped.

"It sucks because my whole family lives in Chatsworth," McConkey said. "Not being able to drive home and see them is definitely different."

As with McConkey, a mix of country boys, East Coasters and Floridians are trying to adjust to the faster-paced life in Los Angeles after spending training camp at the team hotel in El Segundo. For rookies, navigating these changes is easier with the help of people such as Arthur Hightower.

As the Chargers' senior director of player engagement, Hightower has guided rookies into NFL life since 2005, from the team's days in San Diego to its current home in Los Angeles. His role involves overseeing their financial education, life skills, relocation and overall development off the field.

"The one thing they all have in common is that they're rookies, and everything is new," Hightower said. "People just assume because they make X amount of dollars, they know everything. But they're still young professionals. This is their first real job."

Hightower and his staff's efforts to help players settle are all-encompassing — from deciding if living with a roommate is more suitable to considering the importance of proximity to the facilities or handling unexpected needs, such as finding a barbershop.

"There are stressors, no matter where you are in life," Hightower said. "The faster they can get acclimated, the better they will perform."

Offensive tackle Karsen Barnhart is quickly adjusting to city life after growing up in small towns, though the reality of L.A. has turned out quite different from what he imagined.

"I had the perception of it being like New York," which he dislikes, Barnhart said. "The perception was completely off with how everything's spread out here. There's a big town every five minutes, and it's not as packed."

He sees similarities between El Segundo, where the team's facility is located, and Ann Arbor, where he played for the Michigan Wolverines — though now the ocean is closer for Barnhart, thanks to fellow rookie Joe Alt, who offered him a place to stay in Manhattan Beach. "After training camp, I had found a place and wasn't going to use some of the rooms, so I just said, 'Hey, you want to room with me?'" Alt said.

The two tackles became close friends at the NFL combine in February, and



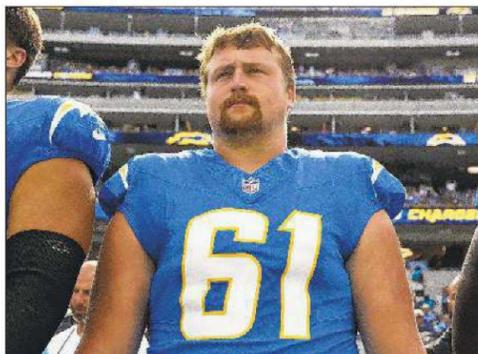
ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times
TRE'MON MORRIS-BRASH is learning the defense rooming with a fellow rookie linebacker.



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times
JOE ALT, the team's first-round pick, opened his home to another rookie offensive lineman.



RUSTY JONES Associated Press
LADD McCONKEY grew up in Chatsworth — not the Valley suburb, but a Georgia town of 4,871. The rookie receiver's transition has been eased by his fiancée's presence. "She's my support system," he said.



BROOKE SUTTON Getty Images
KARSEN BARNHART is rooming with Alt and is surprised by how much he enjoys living here.



TONY GUTIERREZ Associated Press
JEREMIAH JEAN-BAPTISTE leans on roommate Morris-Brash and calls family in Florida.

their friendship grew stronger throughout training camp, according to Alt.

After years of living alone, he liked the idea of sharing a space with someone going through a similar experience.

"It's great to be tested with somebody else and see what they're thinking and how they're processing

things," Alt said.

With both towering more than 6 feet 5 and weighing well over 310 pounds, space is at a premium, which could have led to quibbles. However, the sleeping arrangement was straightforward. As Barnhart put it, "He gets the bigger room. There was no arguing. He was kind enough to let me stay."

The starkest contrast comes when Barnhart thinks of his hometown, Paw Paw, Mich., a village of just 3,395 residents nestled off I-94.

"Paw Paw is completely different," Barnhart said. "For a kid growing up in the country... the Cali lifestyle is a completely different transition. But I'm loving it so

far."

It isn't his first visit to the area. Earlier this year he traveled with Michigan to play Alabama in the Rose Bowl on the way to a national championship.

It hasn't taken long for the rookies to embrace California culture.

Barnhart already has adopted one quintessential

Angeleno complaint — the traffic. Others are enjoying the South Bay's scenic ocean views, soaking up the endless sunshine and indulging in local delicacies.

"I'm not going to lie, I done run into a lot of good taco places," Jeremiah Jean-Baptiste said. "I eat tacos at least three times a week."

With a look of betrayal, his roommate, Tre'mon Morris-Brash, asked from a neighboring locker, "You getting tacos, bruh?"

Jean-Baptiste shared his love for al pastor and carne asada, a passion he apparently enjoys by himself.

"Nah, he ain't put me on," Morris-Brash said. "That's fine."

Jean-Baptiste, who plays inside linebacker, and Morris-Brash, who plays outside linebacker, find their living arrangement reminiscent of another college year. They were teammates for four years at Central Florida and lived just a few doors apart in the same residence hall. Now they're both on the Chargers' practice squad, continuing a shared experience.

"It's cool going to college with him and then having him be here," Morris-Brash said. "It's great to see a familiar face every day, and even cooler that we became roommates. It's definitely sweet."

The two share a luxury apartment just minutes from team facilities and kept it civil when deciding who got the bigger bedroom, settling it with a game of rock, paper, scissors. Jean-Baptiste came out on top.

Despite their fondness for the complex, the cost came as a bit of a shock.

"Oof, one thing I can say is that the rent in California is very different than where I'm from," said Jean-Baptiste, who grew up in Florida City, Fla., (population 13,000). "Very pricey."

The two moved in a few days before the Chargers' season opener. While they were game planning on the field, off the field they focused on setting up their Wi-Fi, which they handled themselves.

"We really just been trying to get our house set up first," Morris-Brash said.

This move isn't a first for Morris-Brash or Jean-Baptiste. Morris-Brash left his hometown of Richmond, Va., to play at Central Florida in Orlando. Jean-Baptiste moved to Oxford, Miss., for his final year at Ole Miss as a graduate transfer.

The distance from family can be challenging, but Jean-Baptiste credits their support — and the phone — for easing his transition. He often talks with his father, who keeps him updated on the weather in Dade County.

"I talked to my dad yesterday," Jean-Baptiste said. "He just says one day it's raining, one day it's hot as hell. One day it's raining, one day it's hot."

"My family's behind me," he added, "and being over here allows me to stay focused on my dream."

NFL STANDINGS

NATIONAL CONFERENCE						
West	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Seattle	2	0	0	1.000	49	40
Arizona	1	1	0	.500	69	44
San Francisco	1	1	0	.500	49	42
RAMS	0	2	0	.000	30	67
North	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Minnesota	2	0	0	1.000	51	23
Chicago	1	1	0	.500	37	36
Detroit	1	1	0	.500	42	40
Green Bay	1	1	0	.500	45	44
South	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
New Orleans	2	0	0	1.000	91	29
Tampa Bay	2	0	0	1.000	57	36
Atlanta	1	1	0	.500	32	39
Carolina	0	2	0	.000	13	73
East	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Dallas	1	1	0	.500	52	61
Philadelphia	1	1	0	.500	55	51
Washington	1	1	0	.500	41	55
N.Y. Giants	0	2	0	.000	24	49

AMERICAN CONFERENCE						
West	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Kansas City	2	0	0	1.000	53	45
CHARGERS	2	0	0	1.000	48	13
Las Vegas	1	1	0	.500	36	45
Denver	0	2	0	.000	26	39
North	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	2	0	0	1.000	31	16
Cleveland	1	1	0	.500	35	46
Baltimore	0	2	0	.000	43	53
Cincinnati	0	2	0	.000	35	42
South	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Houston	2	0	0	1.000	48	40
Indianapolis	0	2	0	.000	37	45
Jacksonville	0	2	0	.000	30	38
Tennessee	0	2	0	.000	34	48
East	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA
Buffalo	2	0	0	1.000	65	38
Miami	1	1	0	.500	30	48
N.Y. Jets	1	1	0	.500	43	49
New England	1	1	0	.500	36	33

Monday's result
Atlanta 22, Philadelphia 21

Thursday's game
New England at N.Y. Jets..... 5:15 p.m.

Sunday's games
CHARGERS at Pittsburgh..... 10 a.m.
San Francisco at RAMS..... 1:25 p.m.
Chicago at Indianapolis..... 10 a.m.
Denver at Tampa Bay..... 10 a.m.
Green Bay at Tennessee..... 10 a.m.
Houston at Minnesota..... 10 a.m.
N.Y. Giants at Cleveland..... 10 a.m.
Philadelphia at New Orleans..... 10 a.m.
Carolina at Las Vegas..... 1:05 p.m.
Miami at Seattle..... 1:05 p.m.
Baltimore at Dallas..... 1:25 p.m.
Detroit at Arizona..... 1:25 p.m.
Kansas City at Atlanta..... 5:20 p.m.

Monday's games
Jacksonville at Buffalo..... 4:30 p.m.
Washington at Cincinnati..... 5:15 p.m.

NFL NOTES

Tagovailoa goes on IR, out at least four games

The Miami Dolphins placed **Tua Tagovailoa** on injured reserve Tuesday after the quarterback was diagnosed with his third concussion in two years.

Tagovailoa will be sidelined at least four games and be eligible to return in Week 8 against Arizona, but first has to complete tests and assessments required by the NFL's concussion protocol. Tagovailoa was hurt last Thursday when he collided with Buffalo defensive back **Damar Hamlin** on a run and hit his head on the turf.

Backup **Skylar Thompson** will start Sunday at Seattle. He made two starts as a rookie in 2022, came out of the first one because of an injury, won the second one and didn't throw a touchdown pass or an interception in either game.

Also going on IR: Indianapolis' three-time Pro Bowl defensive tackle, **DeForest Buckner** (ankle), Green Bay rookie running back **Mar-Shawn Lloyd** (ankle) and New York Giants kicker **Graham Gano** (hamstring). The Giants signed kicker **Greg Joseph** off Detroit's practice squad.

With Kansas City run-



MICHAEL OWENS Getty Images
SAQUON BARKLEY of the Eagles can't pull in a late pass Monday night in Philadelphia, leaving Atlanta the time to mount a 65-second touchdown drive to win.

ning back **Isiah Pacheco** expected to go on IR after sustaining an ankle injury that could keep him out the rest of the season, the Chiefs are signing **Kareem Hunt** to their practice squad, according to the Associated Press, reuniting with the running back who was a Pro Bowl player with them.

Fields likely to start against Chargers
Justin Fields likely will

make his third straight start at quarterback when the Pittsburgh Steelers host the Chargers on Sunday.

Coach **Mike Tomlin** said Fields would practice with the starters this week while **Russell Wilson** continues to rehab a calf injury he aggravated ahead of the opener. Tomlin said there has been no change in Wilson's status and declined to answer questions on whether Fields has supplanted Wilson as the full-time starter.

Cousins rallies Falcons past Eagles

Kirk Cousins, returning from a torn Achilles tendon, bounced back from a shaky effort in Atlanta's opener and a slow start Monday night at Philadelphia to make all the clutch throws that his Eagles counterpart, **Jalen Hurts**, could not. Cousins led a flawless last-minute drive and connected with **Drake London** for a seven-yard touchdown with

34 seconds left to give the Falcons a 22-21 victory.

"That's how you put together a great season," Cousins said. "When you have these games that could go either way, you find a way to have it break your way."

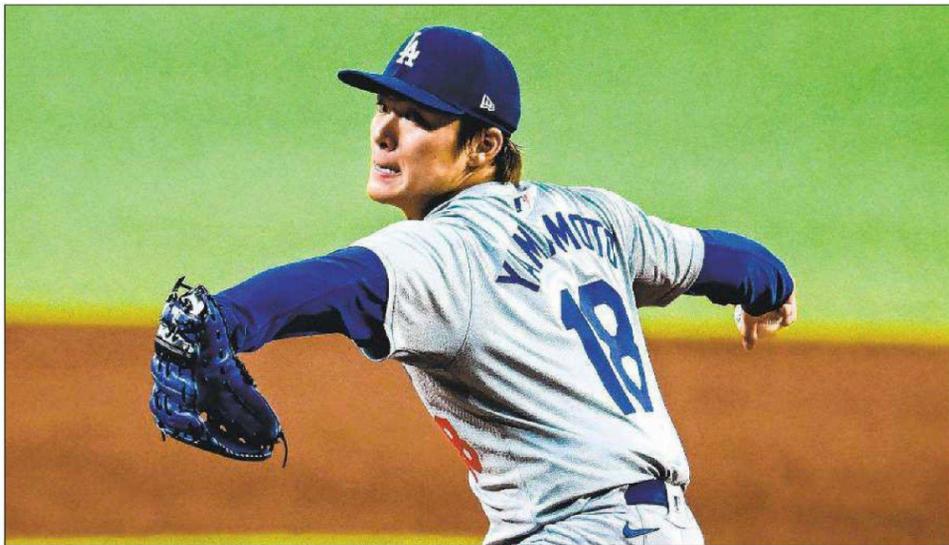
Saquon Barkley dropped a short pass to stop the clock with 1:46 left and force the Eagles to settle for a field goal instead of a game-sealing first down. That was plenty of time for Cousins, who was five for six for 70 yards on the final drive, including completions to **Darnell Mooney** for 21 and 26 yards on consecutive plays. Cousins found London on a short pass to his right and London torched **Darius Slay** for the tying score before **Youngboe Koo** put Atlanta on top with a 48-yard extra point.

"We saved just enough time for those guys to go down and march down and get that game-winning touchdown," coach **Raheem Morris** said.

Hurts had his final pass intercepted by **Jessie Bates III** and finished 23 for 30 for 183 yards and a touchdown and gave the Eagles a late lead with a one-yard, tush-punch touchdown. Cousins was 20 of 29 for 241 yards and two touchdowns.

BASEBALL: MONDAY FLASHBACK

Rookie helps Dodgers salvage a split



RICH VON BIBERSTEIN Icon Sportswire

YOSHINOBU YAMAMOTO pitched four scoreless innings Monday in a 9-0 win at Atlanta.

STANDINGS

Through Monday

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Table showing National League standings for West and Central divisions, including teams like Dodgers, San Diego, Arizona, and Atlanta.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Table showing American League standings for West and Central divisions, including teams like Houston, Seattle, Texas, and Detroit.

Today's games

Table listing today's games, including matchups like Dodgers at Miami, Angels vs. Chicago (AL), and Oakland at Chicago (NL).

[Dodgers, from B10] mand, contributing to a couple of first-inning walks. He sprayed more off-speed pitches, leaving him routinely behind the count. He also averaged only 95 to 96 mph with his heater, a tick down from his adrenaline-fueled return, while giving up four hits, three of them for extra bases.

Yet every time his back was against the wall, Yamamoto found a way to respond. "I focused on one hitter at a time," Yamamoto said through an interpreter. "And stayed calm."

With runners on the corners in the first, he induced a weak ground ball to end the inning. After both a leadoff double from Sean Murphy in the second inning and a leadoff triple from Ramon Laureano in the fourth, Yamamoto retired the next three batters.

The only time the \$325-million offseason signing needed help was in the third. Following a leadoff single from Michael Harris II, Jorge Soler hit a double to deep center that had Harris trying to score. From second base, however, Kiké Hernández made a perfect, tumbling relay throw to the plate, completing half a front flip to nail Harris in a momentum-shifting sequence.

"The throw was unbelievable," Roberts said. "That's a hard throw. That's a hard play."

At the plate, the Dodgers were in full factory mode, manufacturing nine runs on just four hits while walking seven times and going three for seven with runners in scoring position.

Miguel Rojas scored off a lead-off walk in the third, after avoiding a double play at second base, stealing third and then getting a good jump on a wild pitch by Braves starter Max Fried to race home.

Tommy Edman and Rojas both scored in the fifth inning after hitting a double and single, respectively, to lead off the frame.

Then, the Dodgers hung a six-spot against Atlanta's bullpen in the seventh, playing more small ball until Freddie Freeman broke things open with a three-run homer over the short wall down the left field line.

The Dodgers remained 3 1/2

games ahead of the second-place San Diego Padres in the National League West entering Tuesday, with their magic number to clinch the division crown at nine.

But more important, it offered another blueprint of how they could win games in a potential playoff run, with a Yamamoto-led template almost certain to be required for the team to make a serious World Series run.

"It's a shot in the arm," Roberts said of Yamamoto's return. "He knows how valuable [he is] and what he means to our ballclub. And he's delivered. So now these last two starts [he will make in the regular season], I feel good that we've got a good foundation. We're almost there to the point where we can just let him go."

Yamamoto is not without limitations.

He is still in build-up mode, limited to 72 pitches Monday as he continues to regain stamina after his time on the IL. He also has been extremely selective with his use of the slider — a pitch known to give him arm troubles during his time in Japan's Nippon Professional Baseball league — throwing it only three times Monday while mixing in

more cutters, though he said he wasn't intentionally shying away from his slider.

Before the game, Roberts also confirmed that Yamamoto will not pitch on regular four days' rest in any of his remaining regular season starts, continuing the custom of five days off or more he was accustomed to in Japan. Yamamoto has not pitched on four days' rest all season, and it's unlikely he would do so in a potential playoff run.

"It's kind of where we're at," Roberts said. "We've got to figure out how best to keep him fresh, sharp, prepared, No. 1. Then No. 2, fill in the pieces. Shoot, I'd love to have four guys that can go on short rest or regular rest. But it's just not feasible."

Indeed, the pitching staff is not in the place the Dodgers hoped it would be at this point. Tyler Glasnow's season is over because of a sprained elbow. Gavin Stone is almost certain to remain sidelined because of shoulder inflammation, though he still plans to try playing catch again this week. Clayton Kershaw's status also is unclear as he continues to battle his toe injury.

But the Dodgers still have Jack

Flaherty, their top trade deadline acquisition. They're optimistic about Walker Buehler, a tested postseason pitcher who has mostly looked better in recent weeks. And most of all, they have Yamamoto, who backed up his big return from injury with an equally auspicious, if not dominant, second act.

"To muscle through four innings and get out of massive jams probably boosted his confidence, and ours," Freeman said. "It's a good end to the series and a big confidence boost for everyone in here."

Barnes on injured list

As expected, backup catcher Austin Barnes was placed on the injured list a day after suffering a broken left big toe. It's the second time in two months that Barnes fractured the toe, but the Dodgers are hopeful he will be able to return before the end of the regular season. Triple-A catcher Hunter Feduccia was called up.

"I hope it's one of those things, given his role, that if we can calm it down, keep it at bay, we can get him back in 16 days," Roberts said. "Hopefully it's not the end of the season for him."

DODGERS 9, ATLANTA 0

Box score for Dodgers vs Atlanta, showing individual player stats and team totals.

DETROIT 7, KANSAS CITY 6

Box score for Detroit vs Kansas City, showing individual player stats and team totals.

CLEVELAND 4, MINNESOTA 3

Box score for Cleveland vs Minnesota, showing individual player stats and team totals.

COLORADO 3, ARIZONA 2

Box score for Colorado vs Arizona, showing individual player stats and team totals.

ST. LOUIS 4, PITTSBURGH 0

Box score for St. Louis vs Pittsburgh, showing individual player stats and team totals.

CHICAGO CUBS 9, OAKLAND 2

Box score for Chicago Cubs vs Oakland, showing individual player stats and team totals.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX 8, ANGELS 4

Box score for Chicago White Sox vs Angels, showing individual player stats and team totals.

SAN DIEGO 3, HOUSTON 1

Box score for San Diego vs Houston, showing individual player stats and team totals.

N.Y. METS 2, WASHINGTON 1

Box score for N.Y. Mets vs Washington, showing individual player stats and team totals.

MILWAUKEE 6, PHILADELPHIA 2

Box score for Milwaukee vs Philadelphia, showing individual player stats and team totals.

PHILADELPHIA 1, PITTSBURGH 0

Box score for Philadelphia vs Pittsburgh, showing individual player stats and team totals.

PHILADELPHIA 1, PITTSBURGH 0

Box score for Philadelphia vs Pittsburgh, showing individual player stats and team totals.

Trout open to a position change to stay healthy

Angels' star slugger says 'everything's on the table,' including move to corner outfield or games as DH.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mike Trout acknowledged that his days as the Angels' primary center fielder might be over. The Angels superstar has missed most of the season for the third time in the last four years. He spoke to reporters Monday for the first time since his season-ending left knee surgery and said he's open trying something else if that's what the organization deems is the best way to keep him healthy.

"I think everything's on the table," Trout said before the Angels' 8-4 loss to the Chicago White Sox. "I think ultimately my goal is to be in that batter's box, in the field every single day. Whether that's moving to a corner, DH more, that's just something I'll leave up to the front office to come with a plan.

"I think, for where I'm at and what's happened in the last few years, definitely try to explore every option that could keep you out there."

Trout, 33, has not played since April 29. He suffered torn meniscus, had surgery and seemed to be on his way back to the lineup by late July. Trout had a setback, though, and required a second, season-ending meniscus surgery.

"I can't look back and pinpoint exactly what I did or how I did it," Trout said.

Trout said he's feeling "great." He was cleared to hit last week, and this week he's expecting to start running on an anti-gravity treadmill.

Trout said he is looking forward to having a "normal offseason."

Angels post 90th loss

Andrew Benintendi homered twice for the third time this season and drove in four runs, and the Chicago White Sox beat the Angels for their first three-game winning streak in nearly three months.

It was only the fourth time the White Sox have won as many as three in a row — and the first since June 27 to 29, when they beat Atlanta and Colorado. Oakland took two of three from Oakland over the weekend to stop a string of 20 consecutive series losses.

Chicago entered Tuesday night trying to match its season-high winning streak of four, which happened May 8 to 11 against Tampa Bay and Cleveland.

The White Sox took a 36-115 record into Tuesday with 11 games

left and are trying to avoid the post-1900 record of 120 losses by the expansion 1962 New York Mets. Chicago was 16-57 away from home, well off the post-1900 mark of 65 road losses by the 1935 Boston Braves.

The White Sox grabbed a 3-0 first-inning lead in a matchup of teams with the worst records in the American League. Benintendi hit a two-run shot to right field off Angels left-hander Reid Detmers (4-7). Two pitches later, Andrew Vaughn drove a fastball over the wall in left-center.

In the second inning, Benintendi's grounder drove in Zach DeLoach to make it 5-0. The left fielder hit his team-leading 19th homer run in the seventh inning on a solo shot to right-center.

White Sox rookie Jonathan Cannon (4-10) went 6 2/3 innings.

The Angels dropped their sixth straight despite Eric Wagan's first big-league homer. Charles Leblanc also had a solo shot.

The Angels' 90th loss came in their 150th game, the quickest they reached that mark in franchise history.

With 10 straight losing seasons, the Angels are trying to avoid having the most losses in franchise history in Ron Washington's first year as manager. The record is 95, set in 1968 and 1980.

"You could see the body language out there. He didn't have the feel for things he wanted to do, and when it didn't happen, he didn't stay focused and tried to make it happen. It looked like he just gave into it," Washington said about Detmers, who yielded seven runs in 5 1/3 innings.

Chicago White Sox 8, Angels 4. Chicago 010 010 100-8 9 0. Angels 010 010 200-4 5 1.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX 8, ANGELS 4

Box score for Chicago White Sox vs Angels, showing individual player stats and team totals.

WALKS—Chicago 5; Strikouts—Chicago 10; Delgado 2; Robert 1; Ramos 2; Robinson 3; Amaya 2; Angels 11; Ward 1; Neto 1; Kadzas 2; Thaiss 3; Waganman 1; Leblanc 1; Adams 1; Campero 1; E-Schauerl (7); LOB—Chicago 6; Angels 3; 3B—Vaughn (1); HR—Benintendi (18), off Zuhair; Waganman (18), off Detmers; Sosa (5), off Detmers; Benintendi (19), off Zuhair; Vaughn (18), off Cannon; Leblanc (2), off Cannon; RBIs—Benintendi (4 (5)), Vaughn (2 (6)), Sosa (26), Waganman (2), Leblanc (6), Adams (3), Campero (2); SB—Schauerl (9); Runners left in scoring position—Chicago 3 (Ramos 3); Angels 2 (Thaiss, Ward); RISP—Chicago 2 for 5; Angels 2 for 4; Runners moved up—Benintendi, Waganman, GIDP—Schauerl; DP—Chicago 1 (Sosa, Amaya, Vaughn).

Table showing individual player stats for the Chicago White Sox vs Angels game, including batting averages and RBIs.

Inherited runners scored—Kuhl 2; HBP—Cannon (Kwadras); U-Anderson Johnson, David Arrieta, Ramon De Jesus, Alex Mackay; T-24; Tickets sold—35,587 (45,517).

WALKS—Atlanta 3; Dodgers 1; Strikouts—Atlanta 10; Batters out—Atlanta 1; Dodgers 1; Freeman 1; Rojas 2; Maney 1; Lu 1; Atlanta 4; Harris 1; Ojeda 2; Murphy 3; Strikouts—Dodgers 8; Ojeda 2; Betsis 2; Hernandez 2; Freeman 1; Kiermaier 1; Hernandez 1; Atlanta 5; Soler 1; Laureano 1; Murphy 1; Ushela 1; Biggio 1; E-Smith (6); LOB—Dodgers 3; Atlanta 7; 2B—Edman (4), Murphy (5), Soler (8); 3B—Laureano (1), HR—Freeman (22), off Bummer; RBIs—Rojas (13), Ojeda 2 (108), Betsis (9), Hernandez (90), Freeman 3 (87); SB—Rojas (8); SF—Betsis; Runners left in scoring position—Dodgers 0; Atlanta 5 (Arcia, Ushela, Olson, Merrifield, Laureano); RISP—Dodgers 3 for 7; Atlanta 0 for 12; Runners moved up—Munoy, K-Hernandez, Arcia, Laureano, Murphy; GIDP—Smith; DP—Atlanta 1 (Arcia, Merrifield, Olson).

Table showing individual player stats for the Dodgers vs Atlanta game, including batting averages and RBIs.

Inherited runners scored—Bumner 3; HBP—Fried (Munoy); WP—Fried, U-Jordan Balfanz, Stu Schewter, John Libka, Dan Merrett; T-23; Tickets sold—37,109 (41,149).

WALKS—Detroit 3; Greene 2; Rogers 1; Kansas City 2; Renfro 1; Frazier 1; Strikouts—Detroit 11; Meadows 2; Pérez 1; Vierling 1; Greene 1; Keith 1; Torkeston 2; Sweeney 1; Usher 1; Jung 1; Kansas City 9; Pham 3; Massey 1; Renfro 1; Melendez 2; Gurniel 1; Isbel 1; E-Witt (14), McKinstry (14); LOB—Detroit 10; Kansas City 4; 2B—Pérez (14), McKinstry (14); 3B—McKinstry (5), Melendez (3), Isbel (8); HR—Keith (13), off Logo; Witt (32), off Olson; RBIs—Sweeney (13), Keith 2 (58), Pérez 2 (34), Vierling (55), Witt (108), Garcia (58); SB—Witt (29), McKinstry (16); SF—Sweeney; DP—Detroit 3 (Torkeston, Sweeney, Torkeston); Rogers; Keith; McKinstry; Torkeston).

Table showing individual player stats for the Detroit vs Kansas City game, including batting averages and RBIs.

Inherited runners scored—Guenther 1-0; Vest 1-0; Long 1-0; Schreiber 1; Zepa 2-0; WP—Lugo, Long, Schreiber; U—Larry Vanover, Nate Tomlinson, Chris Segal, David Rackley; T-25; Tickets sold—18,920 (38,427).

WALKS—Washington 1; Nueñez 1; New York 3; Winker 1; Nimmo 1; Taylor 1; Strikouts—Washington 10; Crews 2; Wood 1; Yezzer 1; Chapman 1; Tena 2; Ylvesez 2; Nueñez 1; Martinez 2; Alonso 2; Nimmo 1; Alvarez 2; LOB—Washington 5; New York 7; 2B—Yezzer (15), Taylor (19); RBIs—Tena (4), Iglesias (24), Marte (38); SB—Wood (13); CS—Tena (1); S—Ylvesez; Runners left in scoring position—Washington 3 (Young, Tena, Wood); New York 3 (Vientos 2, Martinez); RISP—Washington 1 for 10; New York 3 for 9; Runners moved up—Chaparro, Garcia, Winker, Alvarez 2; GIDP—Vientos; DP—Washington 1 (Tena, Nueñez, Yezzer).

Table showing individual player stats for the N.Y. Mets vs Washington game, including batting averages and RBIs.

Inherited runners scored—Law 1; IBB—off Barnes (Taylor); U—Janzen Vicconti, Charlie Ramos, Mike Mutschinski, Andy Fletcher; T-22; Tickets sold—21,694 (42,136).

WALKS—Milwaukee 4; Wilson 1; Bleday 1; Nevin 1; Schumann 1; Chicago 1; Hays—Arnsdorf (67); Paganis (23); Donovan (64); Noothair (38); SB—Yorker (1); SF—Noothair; DP—Pittsburgh 1 (Niger-Falera, Lugo); Pittsburgh: IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA Skenes, L, 10-3.....% 6 4 1 1 1 7 102 2.07 Borucki.....% 0 1 1 2 0 1 11 8.22 Holderman.....% 1 0 0 0 1 15 3.28 Nicolas.....% 2 0 1 1 0 5 3.92 Beeks.....% 1 2 1 0 0 0 13 2.55 St. Louis: IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA Pallante, W, 7-8.....% 7 4 0 0 1 9 100 3.87 Kittredge, H, 3-4.....% 1 0 0 0 1 11 2.92 Fernandez.....% 1 0 0 0 2 13 3.13

Table showing individual player stats for the Milwaukee vs Philadelphia game, including batting averages and RBIs.

Borucki pitched to 3 batters in the 7th, Nicolas pitched to 1 batter in the 8th. Inherited runners scored—Holdren 3-1; Beks 1-1; U-James Hays, Chad Whittson, John Bacon, D.J. Reayburn; T-25; Tickets sold—30,138 (44,494).

WALKS—Oakland 4; Wilson 1; Bleday 1; Nevin 1; Schumann 1; Chicago 1; Hays—Arnsdorf (67); Paganis (23); Donovan (64); Noothair (38); SB—Yorker (1); SF—Noothair; DP—Pittsburgh 1 (Niger-Falera, Lugo); Pittsburgh: IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA Skenes, L, 10-3.....% 6 4 1 1 1 7 102 2.07 Borucki.....% 0 1 1 2 0 1 11 8.22 Holderman.....% 1 0 0 0 1 15 3.28 Nicolas.....% 2 0 1 1 0 5 3.92 Beeks.....% 1 2 1 0 0 0 13 2.55 St. Louis: IP H R ER BB SO NP ERA Pallante, W, 7-8.....% 7 4 0 0 1 9 100 3.87 Kittredge, H, 3-4.....% 1 0 0 0 1 11 2.92 Fernandez.....% 1 0 0 0 2 13 3.13

Table showing individual player stats for the Oakland vs Chicago Cubs game, including batting averages and RBIs.

Inherited runners scored—Harris 1-0; WP—Neely; U—Edwin Moscoso, Vic Carapazza, Paul Clemens, Adam Hamari; T-23; Tickets sold—34,532 (41,363).

Top three players with the most to prove

And they're all guards who will be needed to show growth on both offense and defense.

DAN WOIKE
ON THE LAKERS

The pathways for the Lakers to get better this season existed outside of roster-altering trades. And even if the team didn't make the coaching changes it did, internal development was going to be a big part of the Lakers' plan.

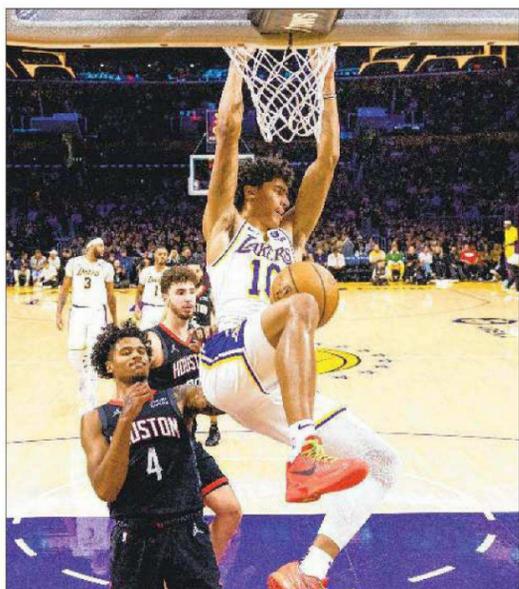
The stage is set for these three Lakers — coincidentally, all guards — who have the most to prove this upcoming season. Let's rank the three players.

3. Austin Reaves

This could've been Rui Hachimura on this list, but Reaves' season, honestly, is just more interesting to me.

Three years into his career, Reaves already has achieved way more than you could hope for an undrafted free agent. He's won playoff games for the Lakers, he's on what's considered to be one of the best contracts in the NBA, and he's one of the most efficient scorers at his position.

But, for Reaves to be as untouchable as he's been in every trade conversation to date (and surely in the ones to come), there's still more ground that needs to be covered.



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

MAX CHRISTIE should get more minutes and shots, but where the Lakers really need him is on defense.

Some indication coming out of the Lakers' facility this summer is that Reaves is in line for a big opportunity, with another uptick in usage.

Despite the starter/sixth-man/starter yo-yo last year, Reaves had the ball in his hands more and saw his production go up. But he also committed more turnovers and saw his efficiency tick down.

If the Lakers can get Reaves to move another step forward (and they do believe he can), a few things

have to flip.

One, he's got to shoot more. Two, he's got to get back to getting to the free-throw line, a huge tool for him two seasons ago that took a 20% dip in terms of attempts per game last year. Three, he's got to handle the demands on both ends of the court that the Lakers need him to take on if the team is again light on perimeter defenders.

The good news is that Reaves is set up to succeed. He had his first true off-season since entering the

league and should get real chances to showcase more of what he can do under new coach JJ Redick.

2. Gabe Vincent

Vincent is the last big free-agent deal Rob Pelinka got done (not counting LeBron James re-signing this summer). When we last saw Vincent, he was working his way back into form after missing most of last season because of a bothersome knee injury that lingered and eventually required surgery.

When the Lakers opened free agency last year by getting Vincent on board in the opening minutes, it wasn't totally clear whether they envisioned him as a third guard with Reaves and D'Angelo Russell or whether they thought he ultimately could be the starting point guard like he was with the Miami Heat in the 2023 NBA Finals.

The injury-lost season has taken a lot of shine off the good vibes from last summer. But Vincent still is a winning player, someone who can affect the game defensively with his physicality and who can provide some scoring punch.

Vincent has another year on his contract following the upcoming season, the clock feverishly ticking on a healthy, bounce-back season the Lakers and Vincent both need.

1. Max Christie

Christie has been talked

about a lot in Lakers circles, a player who, depending on your mood, is either representing the team's scouting and development strengths or its weaknesses.

On one hand, Christie's flashed enough to justify the Lakers' aggressive signing of him in restricted free agency to a four-year, \$32-million deal. He's got prototypical NBA size, a projectable three-point shot and the right attitude to find a real role on the team.

On the other hand, he hasn't carved out consistent minutes yet. Some of that can be put on the coaching staff and a crowded backcourt, but some of that can be attributed to the incon-

sistencies that you probably should expect from a 21-year-old.

This year, especially after the contract and the coaching change, opportunity probably won't be an issue for Christie.

He's on track for real minutes at the start of training camp, a first for him as a pro.

The keys for him are going to be on the defensive end, where he's going to have to show he can be competitive against top scorers. He's shown, at times, that he can be effective.

The next step is for "at times" to no longer be an applicable qualifier.

PRO CALENDAR

	WED 18	THU 19	FRI 20	SAT 21	SUN 22
DODGERS	at Miami 3:30 SNLA	at Miami 1:30 SNLA	COLORADO 7 SNLA	COLORADO 6 SNLA	COLORADO 1 SNLA
ANGELS	CHICAGO WHITE SOX 1 BSW	at Houston 5 BSW	at Houston 5 BSW	at Houston 5 BSW	at Houston 11 a.m. BSW
RAMS					SAN FRANCISCO 1:25 Ch. 11
CHARGERS					at Pittsburgh 10 a.m. Ch. 2
SPARKS		at Minnesota 4 SpecSN			
GALAXY	at Portland 7:30 Apple TV+			VANCOUVER 7:30 Apple TV+	
LAFC	AUSTIN 7:30 Apple TV+, FS1			at Dallas 5:30 Apple TV+	
ANGEL CITY	NEXT: MONDAY VS. PORTLAND, 7, BSSC, CBSSN				

Shade denotes home game.

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL		
2 a.m. (Thurs.)	AFL women, Richmond vs. Carlton	TV: FS1
BASEBALL		
11:15 a.m.	Oakland at Chicago Cubs	TV: MLB
1 p.m.	Chicago White Sox at Angels	TV: BSW R: 830
3:30 p.m.	Dodgers at Miami	TV: SNLA R: 570, 1020
4:30 p.m.	Philadelphia at Milwaukee	TV: MLB
6:30 p.m.	New York Yankees at Seattle	TV: MLB, ESPN+
COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL		
4 p.m.	Women, Louisville at Kentucky	TV: ESPN
4 p.m.	Women, Penn State at Pittsburgh	TV: ACC
5 p.m.	Women, Stanford at Nebraska	TV: Big Ten
6 p.m.	Women, Texas at Baylor	TV: ESPN
CURLING		
5 p.m.	North American club championship: U.S. vs. Canada	TV: CBSSN
FUTSAL		
8 a.m.	FIFA World Cup, Spain vs. New Zealand	TV: FS2, Universo
5:30 a.m. (Thurs.)	FIFA World Cup, Iran vs. Guatemala	TV: FS2
GOLF		
4 a.m. (Thurs.)	World Tour, PGA Championship, first round	TV: Golf
SOCCER		
9:45 a.m.	UEFA Champions League, Bologna vs. Shakhtar Donetsk	TV: Paramount+, UniMas
9:45 a.m.	UEFA Champions League, Sparta Prague vs. RB Salzburg	TV: Paramount+, Univision
10 a.m.	Spain, Betis vs. Getafe	TV: ESPN+, ESPND
11:45 a.m.	England, Brighton & Hove vs. Wolverhampton	TV: Paramount+
Noon	UEFA Champions League, Club Brugge vs. Borussia Dortmund	TV: CBSSN, Paramount+
Noon	UEFA Champions League, Celtic vs. Slovan Bratislava	TV: Paramount+
Noon	UEFA Champions League, Manchester City vs. Inter Milan	TV: Paramount+, UniMas
Noon	UEFA Champions League, Paris Saint-Germain vs. Girona	TV: Paramount+
Noon	England, Coventry City vs. Tottenham	TV: Paramount+
2:30 p.m.	FIFA Women's U20 World Cup, U.S. vs. South Korea	TV: FS2
5 p.m.	CONCACAF W Champions Cup, Frazsiers vs. Tigres UANL	TV: ESPN+, ESPND
5:15 p.m.	MLS, Orlando vs. Charlotte	TV: FS1, Apple TV, FOXD
6 p.m.	Mexico, Guadalajara vs. León	TV: Telemundo, Universo, Peacock
6 p.m.	FIFA Women's U20 World Cup, Japan vs. Netherlands	TV: FS2
7 p.m.	CONCACAF W Champions Cup, San Diego vs. Portland	TV: ESPN+, ESPND
7:30 p.m.	MLS, LAFC vs. Austin	TV: FS1, Apple TV, FOXD R: 710, 980
7:30 p.m.	MLS, Portland vs. Galaxy	TV: Apple TV R: Galaxy stream
8 p.m.	Mexico, Monterrey vs. Juárez	TV: TUDN
TENNIS		
6 a.m.	Seoul, Hua Hin (WTA); Hangzhou (ATP), early rounds	TV: Tennis
Midnight (Thurs.)	Seoul, Hua Hin (WTA); Hangzhou (ATP), early rounds	TV: Tennis

SPORTS EXTRA

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Buss amazed by the ageless James

[Buss, from B10] misguided or not, they were willing to make a stand for something. I found that very empowering, and I fell in love with it."

WOW ended in late 2001 because of a changed marketplace following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, McLane said. But more than a decade later, Buss still hadn't forgotten how she had been wowed by WOW.

"Jeanie and I were having dinner one night and she talked about how women's sports was growing," McLane said. "She saw the future of what women's sports was going to be and she thought there was going to be a change in the marketplace to which she said, 'Why don't we relaunched WOW — Women of Wrestling?'"

So they did. After years of various formats on different platforms, WOW landed a syndication deal with Paramount Global Content Distribution in 2021. The third season of the resulting weekly TV show — which is shown throughout the U.S. (including in Los Angeles, on Ch. 9 on Saturdays at 11 p.m.) and several other countries — premieres this weekend.

Pluto TV also recently launched a 24-hour streaming channel dedicated to the show.

And, in a full-circle moment for Buss this summer, she, McLane and a handful of WOW "Superheroes," as the wrestlers are now called, spoke as part of a panel at the 2024 San Diego Comic-Con.

Buss and McLane spoke with The Times last Thursday about the past, present and future of WOW. And with the Lakers starting training camp in a few weeks, Buss also answered a few questions regarding LeBron James, Bronny James and the rest of the team after an interesting summer.

(The questions and answers have been edited for length and clarity).

This year has been huge for women's sports. What has it been like for you as co-owners of an all-women league?

Buss: Yeah, it seems like women's sports sprouted up overnight, even though it's taken 40 years to get here. So I'm loving the moment. I'm loving just watching what's happening. ... And of course, Women of Wrestling is my passion project, my contribution, because it takes women in positions like me to invest back in women's sports to make these things possible. And it's just creating more opportunities to showcase talented women, and that's what I love about WOW.

Tell us about WOW's journey to where it is now.



FRANCIS SPECKER CBS Studios/Paramount+

AS A COMIC BOOK fan who sees women wrestlers as empowering, Jeanie Buss, second from left, was part of the WOW panel at San Diego Comic-Con in July.

McLane: When we rebooted this, Jeanie said we gotta do it correctly, we gotta take the right steps, we've got to invest in this so it has a long-term success that lasts beyond us. She didn't look at it — neither have I — as just a television show and/or something to put on TV. We want to build a franchise that lasts.

Buss: I really didn't want to do something that would last a year and just disappear off the landscape. We had to find the right partners, find the wrestlers, find all the pieces that would come together that would give us the show that we could build on and continue to grow the product. And here we are on the eve of launching Season 3, which is so exciting for me because we're getting that longevity, that we're now part of the discussion.

How has the project evolved over the years and how do you see it continuing to do so in the future?

Buss: I think in professional sports it's always the delivery platform — how are you going to deliver your product to your fans? So that's changed over the decades. ... What hasn't changed is the ability, the talent of — you know, female athletes deserve the spotlight. That is a belief that I've held and will continue to hold, and that's what Women of Wrestling has done. It's just trying to figure out the right way to deliver it to our audience — and having Paramount Global as our partner and finding the syndicated package and creating something that made sense so that our fans could find us and that we can build from there.

Why are the wrestlers called Superheroes?

Buss: To me, it's clear — that's who they are. They're larger-than-life characters, some good, some evil. I think it's important that young women, young girls see their role models as people who are willing to fight for what they believe in. That's what the Super-

heroes are. **McLane:** Superheroes come in all forms and sizes, and we have the most diverse cast of wrestlers of any professional wrestling organization, period, and we're proud of it. ... We tell the stories and the back-grounds of our Superheroes outside of the ring, not just inside, and I think that connects the audience with the performers.

Jeanie, are you a comic book fan?

Buss: Yes, I think I attended the second or third Comic-Con ever in history, and it was at the El Cortez Hotel. I was 12 years old and I hounded my mom. ... She drove me there, dropped me off for four hours. So I'm a 12-year-old kid negotiating with the comic book dealers trying to get Wonder Woman, Supergirl, the whole Superman family, Lois Lane — that's what I collected. So this was like '74. I'm just one of those crazy people that loves superheroes.

What was it like for you to actually be speaking on a panel at Comic-Con decades later?

Buss: Like, I'm a fan — I should be in the audience, not up on the dais. That was a dream come true for me. I was very honored to be part of Comic-Con at any level.

Moving to the Lakers, LeBron James has said that his son, rookie Bronny James, is not allowed to call him "Dad" at work. As someone who has been in a similar situation, did you offer them any advice?

Buss: You know, I never had that conversation with LeBron or Bronny, but in business situations, I addressed my father as Dr. Buss. I wanted to keep that boundary clear because that helped us out — we weren't bringing work home to the dinner table. So I think LeBron and Bronny are very prepared for this. And I'm excited just for them to have this opportunity. But Bronny is a good

player. I'm excited to see what our new coach, JJ Redick, has in store. It's definitely gonna be an interesting season for sure. I mean, LeBron, the way he played at the Olympics? He might be the greatest of all time.

LeBron will be 40 this season. What do you expect from him this year and beyond?

Buss: He consistently delivers. He puts in the work. He's not only a worldwide brand, but he is our leader. He's the captain of our team and he sets the tone, sets the pace by putting in the hard work. Nobody can complain about the work if you see somebody with his résumé and his longevity of career, nobody can complain about having to practice if he's willing to do it. And he does. He just amazes me. I don't know what else to say.

In terms of my expectations for the team, I can sit here and tell you — Lakers always play for a championship, as we know, between Kobe Bryant and Magic Johnson and Phil Jackson and Pat Riley and Dr. Buss. That's who we are. But it's just me talking.

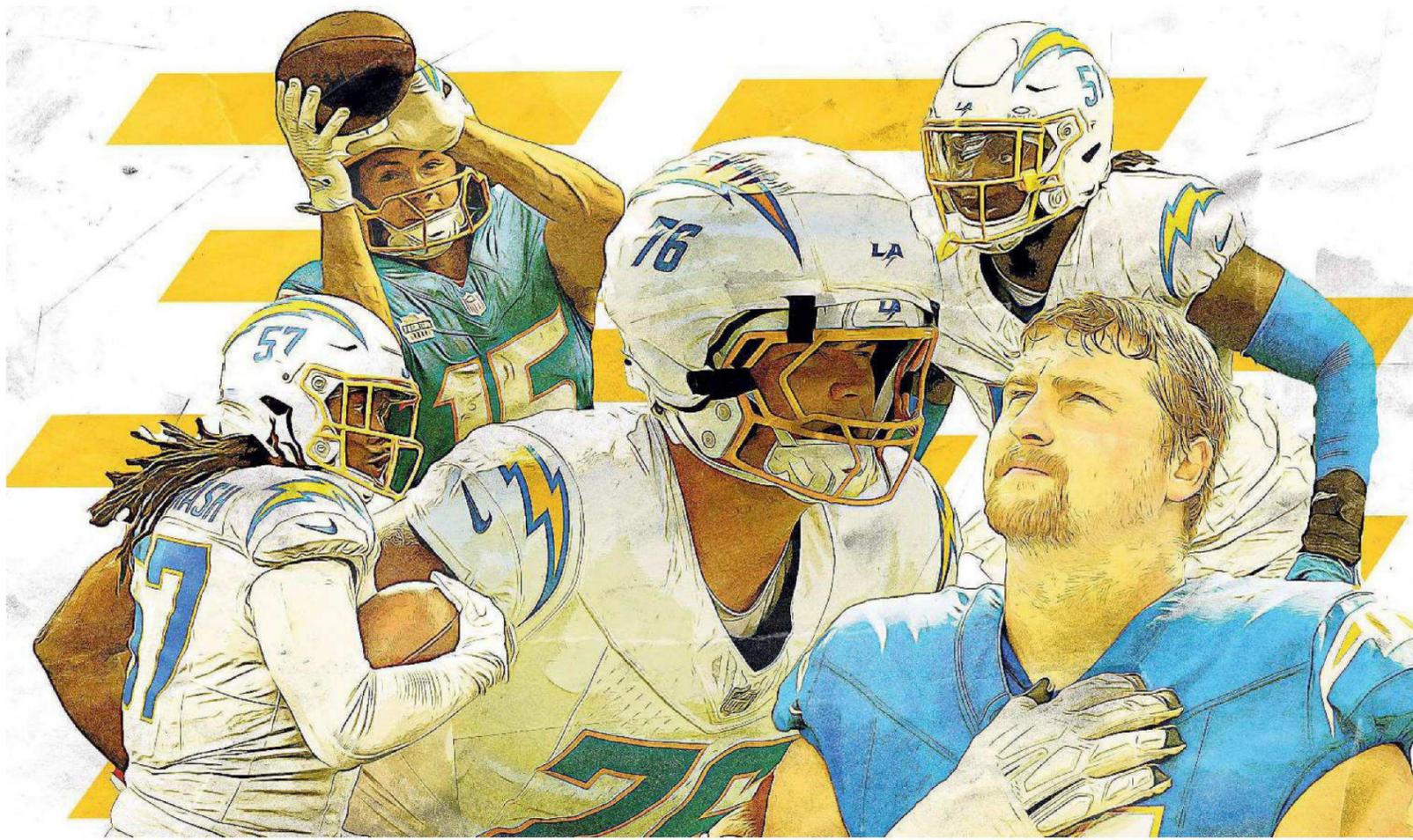
What I really want is for the games to start so that we can watch what these guys are gonna do. I'll let them tell the story 'cause they're the ones that are really going to show us what they've got.

The Lakers have been criticized a lot this off-season. What does the team need to do to silence the critics?

Buss: Really, you gotta play basketball and win games. I know the criticism out there. I know social media is rough waters for everybody. There's always controversy being stirred up in social media. That's why it doesn't really serve me to hype everything up. It's just, you gotta do the work. And that's how our organization operates. We do the work. We worry about what we can control and let the work speak for itself.

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS



Photographs by Associated Press; photo illustration by TIM HUBBARD Los Angeles Times

CHARGERS rookies clockwise from left: Tre'Mon Morris-Brash, Ladd McConkey, Joe Alt, Jeremiah Jean-Baptiste and Karsen Barnhart adjust to life in the NFL.

CHARGERS ROOKIES NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE

Compared to the countryside of Chatsworth, Ga. — population of 4,871 — Los Angeles might as well be another planet for Chargers rookie Ladd McConkey. He is a Southern-twanged Martian adjusting to a new frontier in this sprawling metropolis.

“Chatsworth is a small town, and everybody knows everybody,” McConkey said. “Here, you have a lot more people, and I was not expecting everything to be on top of each other.”

A rural Georgian through and through, all he’s known is the Peach State. McConkey grew up in Chatsworth, two hours north of Atlanta. He played at North Murray High before spending four years in Athens at the University of Georgia.

McConkey visited L.A. when the Bulldogs capped back-to-back national championships at SoFi Stadium in 2022 against

High rents.
Clogged freeways.
For players from small towns, L.A. a big adjustment

By ANTHONY DE LEON

Texas Christian.

This is much different.

Life as an NFL rookie comes with immense pressure. High draft picks, such as McConkey, a second-rounder, look to justify the draft capital spent on them. Then there are practice squad rookies, who carry the anxiety of being one organizational decision away from unemployment.

The transition off the field, however, is just as challenging. To help, McConkey is living with his fiancée, Sydney Horne, in Redondo Beach, a much more manageable spot for him than the heart of L.A. Having his fiancée by his side has made McConkey’s move to the NFL much smoother, offering him support to help combat the grind of an NFL season.

“It’s awesome,” McConkey said. “After practice, whether it’s a good or bad day, I get to go home and [See Chargers, B7]

Q&A JEANIE BUSS

Her pursuit of rings includes wrestling

By CHUCK SCHILKEN

Jeanie Buss went to her first women’s wrestling match with low expectations.

“My only experience with women wrestling was like Jell-O wrestling or mud wrestling,” she said. “I thought it was something that I would not appreciate.”

Buss attended that WOW — Women of Wrestling show in 2000 mainly to humor close friend David McLane, a businessman and promoter who started WOW as a successor to his successful

Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling program from years earlier.

And she was blown away.

“As soon as I saw it, all the light bulbs went off,” said Buss, now the controlling owner of the Lakers, “because I was a kid [who grew] up collecting comic books, tying a towel around my neck wanting to be Supergirl.

“And here were these comic book characters come to life, fighting battles among themselves — not running to a man to save them, but standing up for what they believe in. Whether their opinion’s

[See Buss, B9]



FRANCIS SPECKER CBS Studios/Paramount+

LAKERS OWNER Jeanie Buss helped reboot Women of Wrestling and sees it growing women’s sports.



RICH VON BIBERSTEIN Icon Sportswire

WILL SMITH tags out Atlanta’s Michael Harris II at home on a perfect relay by Kiké Hernández.

Yamamoto bends but doesn’t break

Not as dominant as in his return, he still escapes jams as Dodgers salvage split

By JACK HARRIS

ATLANTA — Last week, Yoshinobu Yamamoto looked almost unhittable in his long-awaited return from the injured list.

In Monday night’s encore at Truist Park, the Japanese rookie right-hander had to be unbreakable instead.

In all four of Yamamoto’s innings

against the Atlanta Braves, the leadoff man reached base. All four times, he eventually made it to third.

But, in a 9-0 Dodgers win that secured a four-game series split, Yamamoto managed to escape each jam, pitching four scoreless innings in another encouraging sign for his October prospects.

“It wasn’t as sharp command-wise as his first one back, but he made pitches when he needed to,” manager

Dave Roberts said. “I just love the way he navigated.”

Yamamoto was not as crisp as he was in his return from the injured list against the Chicago Cubs, when he struck out eight batters and gave up just an unearned run in his first start in three months after battling a strained rotator cuff.

Against the Braves, Yamamoto didn’t replicate his nearly perfect fastball com- [See Dodgers, B8]

These Lakers have most to prove

A close look at three guards who need to up their games, both on offense and defense, this season. **B9**

Trout open to position change

After another lost season, the Angels superstar says “everything is on the table” for the 2025 season. **B8**

Video could help gymnast’s appeal

Chiles’ next step in overturning ruling that cost her medal will include footage from documentary. **B6**

Los Angeles Times
SPORTS EXTRA

A TIMES E-NEWSPAPER EXCLUSIVE :: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2024



MARTA LAVANDIER Associated Press

DESIGNATED HITTER Shohei Ohtani blasts his 48th home run against Miami as he tries to become the first player with 50 homers and 50 stolen bases in a season.

Ohtani closes in on 50-50, but L.A. loses

BY JACK HARRIS

MIAMI — As his march toward history has neared its final destination, Shohei Ohtani has tried to sidestep the chatter surrounding his chase for 50-50.

“It’s something I will look back on at the end of the season,” the Dodgers slugger, who is attempting to become the first player in Major League Baseball history with 50 home runs and 50 steals in the same season, said last week. “I’m trying to be less cognizant of it [for now].”

His manager, however, is calling his bluff.

“He cares,” Dave Roberts said with a sly grin recently. “I think he wants to be the best player that’s ever played this game, and one way to do that is to do something nobody has ever done. Which he has already done. But, you also like round numbers.”

Indeed, Ohtani already is in unprecedented territory.

Before this year, no player had ever had 43 homers and steals in a season. After Tuesday, when the Dodgers lost 11-9 to the Miami Marlins at loan Depot Park, Ohtani was at 48-48, snapping a four-game homer drought — long for him — with a second-deck blast in the top of the third inning.

The homer wasn’t enough to help the Dodgers overcome a shaky performance from the pitching staff.

Bobby Miller gave up four runs in a two-inning start, once again failing to command the baseball (only 38 of his 65 pitches were strikes) or put batters away (four of his seven hits surrendered and his lone walk came with two strikes) as his earned-run average rose to 8.52.

Michael Grove was charged with three runs in a 1²/₃-inning relief appearance, while Ryan Brasier and Daniel Hudson yielded two

more apiece in the sixth and eighth innings, respectively.

The Dodgers (89-62) were close to coming back against the last-place Marlins (56-95) a couple of times.

Ohtani’s home run sparked a tying four-run outburst in the third inning, the fifth time in the last 10 games the Dodgers have scored at least four runs in an inning.

Miguel Rojas knotted the score at 5-5 with a home run in the fourth, before the Marlins scored twice off Grove in the following inning to take the lead for good.

Ohtani had another chance to do some damage in the sixth inning, coming to the plate with runners on the corners in a one-run game. However, he struck out on three pitches, his third strikeout of the night.

In Dodgers land, the only number that mattered in the wake of Tuesday’s loss was 3¹/₂ — the number of games by which they are

leading the San Diego Padres in the National League West.

To the rest of the baseball world, Ohtani’s 402-foot, upper-deck blast was the biggest story, moving him another step closer to 50-50 history.

With 11 games to go, Ohtani needs two more long balls and stolen bases to achieve the once-unthinkable milestone. For reference, he hasn’t had an 11-game stretch with fewer than two stolen bases since June 20 to July 3, and hasn’t had an 11-game stretch with fewer than two home runs since May 21 to June 4.

Fifty-fifty, of course, is no guarantee. But at this point, the bigger surprise would be if Ohtani somehow doesn’t reach it.

Gonsolin rehab update

Entering the year, the Dodgers weren’t anticipating Tony Gonsolin returning this season from Tommy John surgery.

But with Gonsolin continuing to make progress in his recovery, and the Dodgers in desperate need of whatever pitching help they can get before October, the right-hander might be an option after all.

Roberts announced Tuesday that Gonsolin will make his third minor-league rehab start with triple-A Oklahoma City this weekend, and the club hopes Gonsolin can complete four innings.

If that goes well, Roberts said, the Dodgers could have a conversation about activating Gonsolin before the end of the regular season — leaving the door open for him to either start games or pitch bulk innings out of the bullpen down the stretch and, potentially, into the postseason.

“It’s still a longer shot, but I’m really impressed that Tony has taken this really seriously as a potential opportunity,” Roberts said of the 2022 All-Star who underwent Tommy John surgery last August.

Second-half struggles send Sparks to their eighth straight loss

BY ANDRÉS SOTO

If you’ve watched the Sparks at all this season, their home finale went exactly as you might have expected.

The Sparks got off to a hot start, building an advantage on the boards that led to a 12-2 margin in second-chance points as they took an eight-point lead into halftime. Then, an absolutely horrid third-quarter stretch snowballed as the Phoenix Mercury came roaring back to defeat the Sparks 85-81, handing L.A. its eighth consecutive loss, tying a franchise record to close out the home schedule.

After a back-and-forth first quarter, the Sparks opened the second quarter on a 10-2 run to take control of the game thanks in large part to strong performances off the bench from Li Yueru and Zia Cooke, who each scored nine points and tied Dearica Hamby for the team lead at the half.

Rookie Rickea Jackson was starting to find her groove in the second half as well, getting to the line and making all four of her free throws.

The Sparks were in full control of the game, with Brittney Griner the only Mercury player with more than five points (14) in the first half.

But the mood shifted in the final seconds before halftime when

Griner threw an elbow at Jackson, who took exception as the two got in each other’s faces and exchanged shoves.

After a lengthy official review, double technical fouls were handed out and Jackson and Griner were ejected.

Almost as if on cue, things began to unravel for the Sparks once the second half was underway.

The Mercury got off to a quick 10-2 run to erase the Sparks’ lead, and finished the quarter on a 9-4 run to push the Phoenix lead to double digits.

In Griner’s absence, it was 20-year veteran and Chino product Diana Taurasi (13 points, three rebounds, five assists), Sophie Cunningham (14 points, three rebounds, two assists) and Natasha Cloud (13 points, 12 assists) who stepped up to lead the Mercury.

Nothing went the Sparks’ way in the third period. They had eight turnovers in the quarter, which matched their total in the first half. For the game, they gave up 31 points off of 20 turnovers, as both the ball and the game slipped away.

The loss left the Sparks with an abysmal 5-15 record at Crypto.com Arena this season and a 7-32 mark overall.

Their final game will be on Thursday as they visit the Minnesota Lynx.



RONALD MARTINEZ Getty Images

DIANA TAURASI drives against Kia Nurse at Crypto.com Arena, where the Sparks took their franchise record-tying eighth straight loss. Taurasi had 13 points, three rebounds and five assists.

ANGELS

Wagaman homers as six-game slide ends

Rookie Eric Wagaman homered for the second straight game and Griffin Canning threw six innings of three-hit ball as the Angels dealt the Chicago White Sox their 116th loss with a 5-0 victory at Angel Stadium.

The White Sox were trying to equal a season-high, four-game winning streak. Instead, they moved one step closer to the majors’ post-1900 record of 120 losses

by the expansion 1962 New York Mets.

The Angels stopped a six-game slide. They scored in the third through seventh innings and had 10 hits for the first time in five games.

Wagaman — who lived 20 minutes south of Angel Stadium in Aliso Viejo and grew up rooting for the Angels — connected on an elevated fastball from Enyel De Los Santos in the sixth inning for a 432-foot solo shot to left-center.

Five of Wagaman’s six hits have gone for extra bases, including the two homers. The third baseman also had an RBI single in the fourth to make it 2-0.

Canning (6-13) struck out six and walked two while earning his third win since the All-Star break.

Taylor Ward opened the scoring in the third when he lined a base hit to left field off Davis Martin (0-5), driving in Charles Leblanc. Ward also scored on Jake Eder’s wild pitch in the seventh inning.

Nolan Schanuel, who scored on Wagaman’s base hit, doubled to the right-field wall to bring home Gustavo Campero and extend the Angels’ lead to three runs in the fifth.

Chicago is 36-116 and has the fourth-most losses in a season since 1900.

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Los Angeles Times

ENTERTAINMENT

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2024 :: LATIMES.COM/ENTERTAINMENT

Ominous look at Trump and the 'Steal'

Insiders talk about administration's aim to subvert 2020 election in a timely new film.

LORRAINE ALI
NEWS AND CULTURE
CRITIC

Getting folks to watch a documentary about the Big Lie is a Big Ask. Who wants to relive that horrible chapter in America's political history, especially while we're writing a new, possibly less-horrible chapter?

Despite its title, HBO's "Stopping the Steal" is as much about what lies ahead of us as it is about that other election that put Joe Biden in office and then-President Trump on a warpath. The 90-minute film, which premiered Tuesday night on HBO, explores the depth and veracity of Trump's scheme to overturn the election results through the first-hand accounts of the people who were there.

The collective stories of former Trump appointees, staffers and Republican elected officials, who worked and served behind the scenes in the months before and after the election, paint a picture of Trump's brazen scheme to try to steal the election and what it took to stop him and his allies from succeeding.

Directed by Dan Reed ("The Truth vs. Alex Jones"), "Stopping the Steal," E2

Cleats, carnage and the hefty cost of fame

FX series looks at rise and fall of NFL star turned murderer Aaron Hernandez.

BY STUART MILLER

In 2009, superstar tight end Aaron Hernandez helped the Florida Gators win a national championship. In 2012, Hernandez played in a Super Bowl for the New England Patriots and signed a \$40-million contract extension.

But that same year he was investigated in connection with a double homicide. A year later, he shot Alexander Bradley, one of his best friends, through the eye and murdered another man, Odin Lloyd. Two years later, Hernandez was convicted of Odin's murder, and in 2017, Hernandez killed himself while in prison.

Those are the headlines of Hernandez's brief and violent life and death, the details that reach beyond the die-hard football fan and create a hard-to-shake image in popular culture. While Hernandez clearly had drug problems, committed violent crimes and grew in-

[See Hernandez, E6]

Guitarist in Jackson 5 dies

Tito Jackson was an original member of the seminal Motown group whose hits included "ABC." E2

Comics E4-5
Puzzles E5



DAVID URBANKE For The Times

JOANNA "JoJo" Levesque, who hit it big as a teen with "Leave (Get Out)," looks back in her memoir, "Over the Influence."

A woman of 'Influence'

With a memoir, a Broadway turn in 'Moulin Rouge!,' a planned tour and new music, Joanna 'JoJo' Levesque is back in control of her career

BY SCARLETT HARRIS

For a long time, Joanna "JoJo" Levesque resented "Leave (Get Out)," her best-known, breakout track released in 2004 when she was just 13. "This song was on some Disney Channel—," she writes in her memoir, "Over the Influence." Although she was the target demographic for the family-friendly programming she likened her song to, Levesque thought of herself as a wise-beyond-her-years R&B and soul singer, the genres that she had been firmly working in up to that point in her young life and that the rest of her self-titled debut album consisted of.

"I like it now. I just didn't get it then," Levesque, 33, says on a video call from her New York apartment.

"It's a totally different experience singing 'Leave (Get Out),'

'Too Little Too Late' or 'Disaster' or any of these songs that are about breakups or relationships as an adult, versus being 12, 15, even 20. You get more grit and texture and experience under your belt. It's the difference between phoning it in and feeling it. I'm thinking about this person as I'm singing it, and I'm able to drop into that because I have a memory of telling someone to get ... out of my house, it's done."

Far from a one-hit wonder, Levesque has been working steadily since her debut single, as a singer and actor, including in the films "Aquamarine" and "G.B.F." and the TV show "All American." Admittedly, her recording career has never again reached the heights of "Leave (Get Out)," which made her the youngest female solo performer to hit No. 1 on the Billboard Pop

[See JoJo, E6]

Kathy Griffin's voice just won't be silenced

The comedian returns with new material for her 'My Life on the PTSD-List' tour.

BY JULIE SEABAUGH

Kathy Griffin has her voice back.

Recently, a new implant in her left vocal cord has fixed the squeaky whisper marring her speech for four years.

"It's a freaking miracle," Griffin says.

Her original voice is back in a broader sense, too.

"Honey, it's been a rough few years," the Grammy-winning comic, actor, producer, best-selling author and activist elaborates.



JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

AFTER six years away from the stage, Griffin is performing again. Her tour, which touches on sobriety and death threats, reaches the Wiltern on Wednesday.

"The Trump thing, the cancer, the divorce."

The 2017 "Trump thing" (holding a severed Trump head mask covered in ketchup) included being investigated by the government, placement on the national no-fly list and being unable to travel for performances. Griffin's mother died in March 2020, and a pill addiction led to Griffin's suicide attempt that June.

After six years away from the stage, Griffin now returns with resilient, new material for her extended "My Life on the PTSD-List" tour, which reaches the Wiltern Theatre on Wednesday. The tour name references her Emmy-winning TV series as well as ongoing challenges like staying sober, ignoring

[See Griffin, E3]



MARK VON HOLDEN Invision/Associated Press

ON HIS OWN

Tito Jackson made official solo debut in 2016 with "Tito Time"; "One Way Street" followed in 2017.

TITO JACKSON, 1953 - 2024

With his brothers, he founded the Jackson 5

The group, including future King of Pop Michael, had hits with 'ABC,' 'I'll Be There.'

BY NARDINE SAAD

Tito Jackson, one of the original members of the seminal Motown group the Jackson 5, has died at 70.

Jackson's death was announced late Sunday by his three sons. They did not disclose a cause of death for the late guitarist and background singer but said they were "shocked, saddened and heartbroken."

However, police in New Mexico said Monday that the performer had experienced an emergency requiring medical attention at a shopping center in Gallup on Sunday and that he was later pronounced dead at a hospital.

An autopsy report is expected in six to eight weeks.

"Our father was an incredible man who cared about everyone and their well-being," sons Taj, Taryll and TJ Jackson said in a statement posted on Instagram.

"Some of you may know him as Tito Jackson from the legendary Jackson 5, some may know him as 'Coach Tito' or some know him as 'Poppa T.' Nevertheless, he will be missed tremendously. It will forever be 'Tito Time' for us. Please remember to do what our father always preached and that is 'Love One Another.' We love you Pops."

Jackson, born Oct. 15, 1953, as Toriano Adaryll Jackson, was one of seven siblings of the late King of Pop Michael Jackson and superstar Janet Jackson.

He was among the founding members of the hit-making Jackson 5, which came together in the 1960s under domineering patriarch Joe Jackson, then caught the eye of Motown Records founder Berry Gordy Jr.

After being introduced to the nation by Diana Ross, the Jackson 5 put forth the beloved "bubble-gum soul" singles "ABC," "I Want You Back" and "I'll Be There."

Consisting of brothers Jackie, Jermaine, Marlon and Michael as well as Tito, the group from Gary, Ind., gave rise to "Jacksonmania" that consumed the nation.

The group was nomi-

nated for three Grammy Awards. The hitmakers were inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1997. In saluting them at the ceremony, Gordy declared that the group gave "Black kids from the ghetto a license to dream."

Tito Jackson, who was chided for having an insignificant role in the Jackson 5, was the last of the nine siblings to release a solo project. Although he launched his solo career in 2003 as a blues musician, he made his official debut in 2016 with "Tito Time" and released "One Way Street" in 2017.

He told the Associated Press in 2019 that he purposely held back from pursuing a solo career because he wanted to focus on raising his sons, who formed their own music group, 3T, and released the songs "Love One Another" with Stevie Wonder, "Anything" and "Stuck on You."

"I took that sort of personal," Jackson told the Associated Press, dismissing criticism from sports commentator Charles Barkley that he didn't contribute enough to the Jackson 5.

"I am not upset about it. But it just hurts in a way where I tried to do the right thing in life, you know, raise my sons as good young Black men who do the right thing by people."

Jackson primarily raised his sons on his own after the 1994 death of his ex-wife, Delores "Dee Dee" Martes, whom he wed at age 18 and divorced in 1988.

Her death was originally ruled an accident, but Donald Bohana — a businessman Martes dated for three months — was convicted of second-degree murder in her drowning in Ladera Heights. He was sentenced to life in prison in 1998.

Days before his death, Jackson wrote on Instagram about visiting a memorial dedicated to Michael Jackson in Munich, Germany. He expressed his gratitude

for "this special place that honors not only his memory but also our shared legacy. Thank you for keeping his spirit alive."

In addition to his sons, Jackson is survived by his brothers Jermaine, Randy, Marlon and Jackie, sisters Janet, Rebbie and La Toya and their mother, Katherine. Their father, Joe Jackson, died in 2018. Michael Jackson died in 2009.

MICHAELA DePRINCE, 1995 - 2024

Orphan became acclaimed ballerina

Trailblazing performer worked with Beyoncé and pressed for more diversity in dance.

BY ALEXANDRA DEL ROSARIO

Ballet dancer Michaela Mabinty DePrince, who defied the odds of her early childhood in war-torn Sierra Leone to become a trailblazing performer and choreographer, has died.

DePrince died Sept. 10, her family said in a statement Sunday on her sister Mia DePrince's Instagram. In a previous statement released Friday, the family said the dancer, who performed with the Dance Theater of Harlem, the Dutch National Ballet and Boston Ballet, leaves "an indelible mark on the world of ballet, and beyond." She was 29.

A cause of death was not disclosed in either statement, though Sunday's missive shut down speculation that DePrince's death was related to that of her mother, Elaine DePrince, who adopted Michaela and Mia in the 1990s. Elaine DePrince "died during a routine procedure in preparation for a surgery" on Sept. 11 and did not know of her daughter's death "at the time of her procedure," Sunday's statement clarified.

"The only way we can make sense of the senseless is that Elaine, who had already lost three children many years ago, was by the grace of God spared the pain of experiencing the [loss] of a fourth child," the family said. "What the family is going through right now is truly unimaginably painful."

Grieving two family members to die within a 24 hour period is tragic and devastating."

As news of DePrince's death spread over the weekend, ballet and dance luminaries, including trailblazing American Ballet Theatre principal dancer Misty Copeland and choreographer Debbie Allen, paid tribute to her.

"Michaela had so much more to give, not just to ballet, but to the world. Her legacy will continue to inspire generations of dancers, but her absence leaves a void that will be felt deeply," Copeland said on Instagram.

"Your footprints will forever reverberate around the world," Allen said of DePrince, who was recently a guest artist at Allen's dance academy's summer program. "You brought a light that inspired millions of brown girls to rise to an unprecedented level of resilience and continue to dream."

DePrince seemingly knew no bounds onstage as she executed pieces — from ballet classics such as "Don Quixote," "Swan Lake" and "Coppélia" to George Balanchine's "Who Cares" and "Jewels" — with undeniable grace, strength and precision. Beyond the ballet world, DePrince brought her talents mainstream, appearing on "Dancing with the Stars" and collaborating with brands Nike and Tommy Hilfiger. She also worked with pop divas Beyoncé, for her "Lemonade" visual album, and Madonna, who was set to adapt the dancer's life for the screen.

DePrince was prominently featured in the ballet competition documentary



CHARLES SYKES Invision/AP

RESILIENT

DePrince's biological parents died in the Sierra Leone civil war.

"First Position," in which she spoke of the "miracle" of her survival. "Everywhere you looked you saw someone die and it was just for no reason," she said in the film before recalling how rebels had shot her biological parents.

Offstage, DePrince used her platform to raise awareness for children affected by war as an ambassador for War Child, speak about her vitiligo and her experiences as a Black dancer, and advocate for more diversity in the ballet world.

"I would like to change the way people see Black dancers," she told the Guardian in 2012. "I just want to be a great role model for kids. I would hate to disappoint anybody."

DePrince was born Jan. 6, 1995, in Sierra Leone amid a civil war that counted her parents among its tens of thousands of casualties. Labeled "the devil's child" for her vitiligo at her orphanage, DePrince found hope in a magazine photo of an American ballerina in pointe shoes.

"I ripped the page out

and I stuck it in my underwear because I didn't have any place to put it," she told the Associated Press in 2012.

Elaine DePrince and Charles DePrince adopted Michaela and her sister in 1999. DePrince studied at the Rock School of Dance in Pennsylvania and had competed at Youth America Grand Prix, the prestigious international ballet competition at the center of "First Position." The ballet competition awarded DePrince with a scholarship to continue her studies at the American Ballet Theatre's Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School.

She graduated in 2012 and joined the Dance Theater of Harlem, where she became the company's youngest dancer to perform principal roles. In 2013, she took her career overseas to perform with the Dutch National Ballet, where she climbed the ranks from the junior company to soloist in the main troupe. She returned to the U.S. in 2022 as a soloist with Boston Ballet.

"We were so fortunate to know Mabinty," Boston Ballet said in an Instagram tribute. "She was a beautiful person, a wonderful dancer, and she will be greatly missed by us all."

DePrince published her memoir, "Taking Flight: From War Orphan to Star Ballerina," in 2014. She also received recognition in Time's Inspiring Women in the World and Forbes 30 Under 30 in Arts & Culture.

Michaela is survived by her sisters, Mia, Beelee, Jaye, Mariel and Amie, and her brothers, Adam and Erik.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Insiders' disturbing stories in 'Stopping the Steal'

['Steal,' from E1] Steal" takes viewers back to July 2020, when the president's popularity was slipping and the election was looming. "By late summer, President Trump starts to grease the wheels for excuses if he lost," says Alyssa Farah Griffin, who served in 2020 as White House director of strategic communications and assistant to the president. And the film cuts to a summer presser where the former president proclaims, "These elections will be fraudulent. They'll be fixed or rigged."

Spanning to the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection, the film explores chronologically how Trump attempted to hang onto the presidential office, no matter the cost. News and events were already familiar with — Trump's vaguely threatening call to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger demanding he "find" the president the votes he needed and Trump's private admissions that he knew he lost to Biden — take on a new light through the accounts of those who stood between Trump and his nefarious plans.

"Up until the election, you could always appeal to his self-interest — 'Mr. President, this is a bad idea for



HBO

A STAFF member for then-Vice President Mike Pence, seated, is among those interviewed about the 2020 election chaos in HBO's "Stopping the Steal."

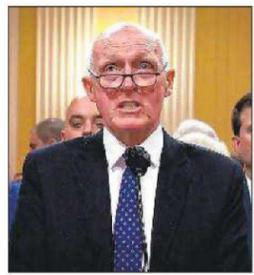
you. This will hurt you," says former Atty. Gen. William Barr, who served under Trump. "That would work if you appealed to his self-interest. That is what helped keep things within the guardrails."

Barr says Trump embarked on a "destructive" campaign that reached new levels of depravity immediately following projections that Biden had won the election. "At 2 in the morning [Trump held a news conference], and for him to go out and claim that fraud was underway, it was very dangerous. I started worrying a lot from then on," Barr says.

Former Trump campaign and White House official Stephanie Grisham says when the president doubled down on the falsehood that the election was rigged, his staff likely knew better. They played along, though, because no one wanted to be the target of his anger. "I guarantee anyone that was around him at the time, despite what they were thinking inside, they were saying, 'Oh it was stolen, sir,'" Grisham says.

The film juxtaposes accounts such as Grisham's with footage of Trump and his Big Lie team (who included Rudy Giuliani, Jenna Ellis and Sidney Powell) spewing accusations about ballot tampering by poll workers, voting by "illegal aliens" and deceased people, and claims that Dominion Voting Systems' electronic ballot machines had been hacked.

None of it was true, of course, but that didn't stop them from leaning on local officials in critical swing states such as Arizona and



FedNet

FORMER Arizona Assembly Speaker Rusty Bowers testifies at a hearing about Jan. 6.

Georgia. "I was for Trump the whole time ... and then it started. The steal," says former Arizona House of Representatives Speaker Rusty Bowers.

Bowers faced intense pressure from the president and Giuliani to go along with their illegal scheme to replace the state's slate of electors with ones who would elect Trump. The Arizonan recalls an in-person meeting with Giuliani, where Bowers asked for evidence of election fraud. "Rudy, you have the proof? Yeah, yeah! [Then Jenna said] 'Oh, I left it back at the hotel.'"

Like many others who refused to prop up the false allegations, Bowers was doxxed and threatened by legions of Trump's supporters. The film makes it clear that Bowers is among the Republican officials who stood by their principles, but often at great personal cost.

Former Arizona Atty. Gen. Mark Brnovich was another avid Trump supporter heading into the 2020 election. "President Trump did a great job," he says in the film. "I was right there with him."

[Then] he called me and said, 'Hey, you'll be the most popular guy in America. You'll be able to run for president. All you gotta do is say there's fraud or find some fraud.' Brnovich didn't succumb to Trump's demands, but he also didn't investigate the matter of the fake electors scheme.

Other participants in the film, however, did put it all on the line to protect democracy, including Raffensperger; Maricopa County Board of Supervisors appointees Clint Hickman and Bill Gates; and Georgia Election Operations Manager Gabriel Sterling. Marc Short, then chief of staff for Vice President Mike Pence, also offers gripping insight into his former boss' dangerous and precarious position.

Among those in the film who still insist the Big Lie is the Truth are Trump attorney and insurrection architect John Eastman. Also making an appearance is self-proclaimed "QAnon Shaman" Jacob Chansley. You may remember seeing footage of Chansley on Jan. 6, shirtless, clad in a furry, horned helmet and sporting red, white and blue face paint. There's no need to quote him here.

"We've lived through this story, so "Stopping the Steal" isn't a cautionary tale. But it is a powerful reminder of what we should prepare for. 'I think Jan. 6 is like the trailer to a movie,' Grisham says. "That's the one thing with Donald Trump that I've learned. You think he'll just go this far and there's not more. There's always more. He takes it as far as it will go."

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FOR 9/18/2024 ONLY

If motherhood were a genre, would it be horror?

Her debut ghost story explores postpartum hormones' impact on the female psyche.

By **BETHANNE PATRICK**

Jacquie Walters' debut, "Dearest" — released Tuesday — is a horror novel about new motherhood, including the demands of a breastfeeding infant, as well as how postpartum hormones affect a woman's psyche. Since Walters and her husband have two young children, she knows her terrain well. The family lives in Brentwood, where Walters has built a career as a scriptwriter with several television pilots to her name, including the upcoming adaptation of Melissa de la Cruz's bestselling vampire series, "Blue Bloods."

The road to screenwriting and fiction writing has been circuitous for the new author, who graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in film and theater and moved to Los Angeles with the intention of acting. "I had always been a straight-A student who put in the work and got results. When I was going on auditions, I put in the work, but I rarely got the A. It felt so arbitrary and out of my control. So I did a total 180 to find something in which I could be accountable, and it

happened to be working on a National Geographic reality show."

Clearly, Walters has a story to tell beyond the one in her chilling new novel. She spoke from her home office by video conference about her professional life in Hollywood, how she used one of Tina Fey's scripts as a textbook and why horror fiction can help teach us about taboo subjects.

You started out at the University of Virginia, which doesn't seem like the immediate choice for a scriptwriter.

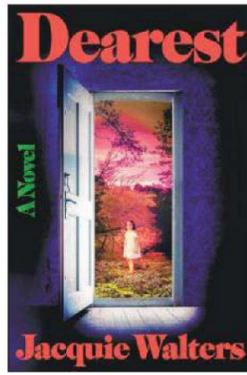
At UVA, I was in the Echols Scholars Program, which allows you to design a self-directed major. Mine was in film and theater. I hadn't wanted to go to a conservatory program or anything focused on one industry because I wanted a full college experience. I believe it's really important for creatives not to silo ourselves because we're meant to reflect humanity. You want to be able to access all of that when you're acting or writing or directing.

How did your experience with the National Geographic show lead to your current work?

The showrunner asked me if I was prepared to travel. I immediately replied yes, envisioning that I'd swim with sharks in South



Dana Patrick Photography



Mulholland

JACQUIE WALTERS' debut, "Dearest," is a horror novel about new motherhood and taboo subjects.

Africa or track polar bears in Alaska, so, of course, I got sent to a down-and-dirty campsite in Vermont for a show called "Building Wild." Which, by the way, is why "Dearest" is set in Vermont. I got to know that state's weather and geography well. I also became a very fast typist, because I was in charge of taking field notes and sometimes I'd have three producers running on-the-fly interviews all at once.

But you missed being more creative.

I did. At the time, I was heavily into comedy. I admired Amy Poehler, Kristen Wiig, all of these great comedians who had started as writers. So I thought, "Maybe the way in here is through

writing." I know myself and I need some kind of deadline when I work. The Austin Film Festival was coming up and I sent something. When my script made it to the second round, it gave me confidence. I never took any screenwriting courses. My very first pilot was written by printing out one of Tina Fey's early "30 Rock" drafts and using it as a blueprint.

Let's talk about "Dearest." Haven't you heard that books are dead?

First, I think I was way too naive to know that books are dead. I've always had a book in my hand and I've always had this pipe dream of writing a book in the back of my head. When I started thinking about

writing a novel, I knew, once again, that I would need accountability. So I found the Stanford novel writing program, applied and was accepted. I was a little bit of a fish out of water. Most people in the program want to write the next Great American Novel. I was like, "I want to write the next 'Gone Girl.'" I did write a novel through that program, but it was not the next "Gone Girl." It wasn't even "Dearest." But what I learned about structure was really propulsive for my career, because I finally saw that I was more interested in writing dark crime thrillers than I was in writing comedy. I followed that impulse and wrote my first drama pilot, which sold to ABC network. We were three days from cameras rolling when we got shut down because of COVID-19. It was March 2020.

You also had a baby that year, correct?

Yes, our first child was born in August 2020. We were supposed to use a gift of a night nurse for two weeks but couldn't do it because of the pandemic. There I was, trying and yet failing to breastfeed through so many lonely nights. I feel like I'm going to cry right now just talking about it. It just was so hard to accept that I wasn't going to be able to do this thing and I felt guilty too. I had

mom friends who would talk about nursing as this amazing bond and how easy they found it. I tried everything. Nothing worked for us except round-the-clock pumping, and that's even more isolating because you're not with your baby in that moment. When I decided to use formula with our second child, it was the best decision I ever made.

As you demonstrate in "Dearest," those who give birth are also influenced by powerful hormones.

I remember being in the hospital bed, nursing in those early hours after birth and experiencing horrible abdominal pain. The nurses finally said, "Oh, your uterus is contracting." And it was even more painful the second time around — no one tells you that it gets worse with each baby. Things that you think will get easier, don't. I think it's taboo culture that has landed so many women in this position. We don't talk about the birth process. Few of us see breastfeeding in action before we're supposed to do it ourselves. I think this is why I love horror. Not everyone would be comfortable reading a story about postpartum psychosis, but everyone loves a ghost story. If that ghost story can get them thinking about something like postpartum psychosis, then I've done my job.

It was 'rough,' but Griffin finds her voice again

[Griffin, from E1] death threats, moving past lost CNN deals and committing to therapy for complex PTSD.

Griffin's comedy remains story-oriented. Her shows are filled with repeat diehards and locally tailored tales, including personal roasts of audiences in each city. She hasn't had an opener in 25 years, and Griffin still stays onstage for two-plus hours.

Some of her stories take a more serious tone these days. For example, "a story about how I very seriously tried to take my life, wrote a note, the whole thing, and ended up 5150 psych hold at Cedars."

Yet for Griffin, the Guinness World Record holder for most comedy specials, celebrity sells. "And bookend that sh— with a funny story about going to Paris [Hilton's] house," she says. "A funny story about going to Mexico with Sia, where everything went wrong."

At her home in Malibu, a week after popping up as a surprise guest on an already jaw-dropping "Barbies" lineup at local L.A. theater Dynasty Typewriter at the Hayworth alongside Rosie O'Donnell, Aparna Nancherla, and Anjelah Johnson-Reyes, a post-recovery Griffin recommends yelling at the TV while watching politics, knowing one's value and learning how to fight long-term in the face of inequality.

What did the process of having your voice repaired entail, and how has the recovery process been?

I was getting shots every six months where I had to go under general [anesthesia] and they would shoot in a collagen-like substance, which would fatten my left vocal cord. My right one was moving, and my left one was dead. Once again, my mortal enemies — middle-aged white heterosexual men — let me go around show business with a voice [squeaks] like this!

I could cry thinking about it. It was so awful for almost four years. Finally the singer Sia, she's one of my besties, she's like, "Oh, no no no. There is a female surgeon whose name is Dr. Anca Barbu." Sia's singing coach is a woman named Amy Chapman. And Amy works for Barbu. I know I'm being a bitter b—, but I just find it very hard to believe that "Oh, well this old white guy cured this celebrity. And this one made it so Ozzy [Osbourne] can sing again. And this one brought this singer back to life. And blah, blah, blah." I could have gotten this the day after my cancer surgery!

When they took out half of my left lung, they injured me so severely that they killed my left vocal cord for



JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

WITH HER vocal cords repaired, Kathy Griffin is back on tour. Her comedy for "My Life on the PTSD-List" remains story-oriented.

life. I currently still have an aperture, which means a tear above my cords. You can still see the scar. I just had the surgery five weeks ago and then I had to be on two weeks vocal rest, which was living hell. But it has been such a game changer. It's a mood lifter. Now I like to yell at the TV screen. Last night during that very emotional Harris/Walz rally, I got to yell at the screen like other good solid Democrats.

My house isn't on the beach, but it's a water view. And I find that very comforting. When I was coming back from the lung cancer surgery or this one where I had to be quiet, just looking at the water was big time. Never in my born days did I think that this little lady from Forest Park, Ill., would be able to live in Malibu, look at the ocean and run in fear from Mel Gibson.

Your material on this "My Life on the PTSD-List" tour hadn't been political. Did that change after the Trump assassination attempt and Vice President Kamala Harris entered the presidential race?

I don't mention Trump in the new show. It's not that I am afraid to, honestly. I did a whole tour about that incident, and I made a documentary called "Kathy Griffin: A Hell of a Story." You can see it free on Amazon because no one, I mean no one, would distribute it because I'm a toxic terrorist who's on the no-fly list.

But I really, really hope

to get a special with this material. I think it's ageism and sexism. These dudes getting specials, they don't know what it's like to play Carnegie. I don't mean to sound like a braggart, but I think I should have a special. It's kind of appalling that there are still so many male heterosexual executives that are my age or older that are secret Trumpers, and they own everything. What people don't know, and what I'm not afraid to say even though it gets me in trouble, is that five old white guys, most of whom are Trumpers, control every bit of media we consume.

I don't think people understand that nothing's changed. It's still the boys club, especially when it comes to stand-up. I'm just shocked, because that's the conversation Joan Rivers and I used to have right up until she passed away. She said she had that conversation with Phyllis Diller, and I'm sure Phyllis had it with Totie Fields, and her with Moms Mabley. It's still like that.

Yet the benefit of your own theater tour means your demographics and audiences can still come directly to you. You have the opportunity to be much more intimate and revealing with them and to go anywhere, talk about anything with them. There's no machinery or anyone else in the way.

At 63, if I had to go back

and play clubs, I would retire. Yeah, it's heaven. And I purposely do a long show because I'm so used to doing specials. I've done 21 specials, which certainly no guy has, living or dead of any level, not even close. And I have a Grammy for best comedy special. I'm one of only four women to this day in the entire history of the Grammys. I keep thinking they're going to eventually have to get a little bit better. But once you're 63, it's a whole other level. The ageism almost takes the place of the sexism. So yes, women are for sure getting more opportunities, but how many women can you name over 60 that really are at this level? Four?

I have asked countless [times] of my straight bro friends, "OK, it's a bro weekend. You and your bro want to go see a comedy show, but you don't want to go to a club. You want to see somebody with a name. Would it ever occur to you, you and your bro friend, to go see me, Chelsea, Sarah Silverman, Wanda?" And every single one of them said, "To be honest, Kath, no. We want to see Chappelle, Rock, Mulaney." It's like, "Oh, it's didn't even occur to me to think of a girl." I don't know how to fight that. So I keep saying it, even though my agents and managers hate when I say that.

How have you gone about fostering those kind of connections and opportunities that work toward

creating that kind of change?

When I was blacklisted, I was like, "OK, how do you make new friends when you're 57?" And then I thought about the salons I used to go. I was trained by two women on how to have them: Sue Mengers, the first female, really big power agent, and my dear friend Gloria Vanderbilt.

Mengers said you have to cast them. So I put the introvert next to the extrovert. I separate couples. I have somebody like Meredith Lynch, who's just starting stand-up, but also is an expert on private equity. Some folks stuck by me like the beautiful Aubrey Plaza, who brought me a casserole two days after the Trump thing. Not everybody dumped me, but it was a lot. These salons became just a way for me to talk to people, and listen to people. Something magical happens when you put your phones away and you just share a meal. We joke around a lot, but we talk about substantial sh—.

There's something about that environment. People get vulnerable. They talk about stuff that they wouldn't talk about if it was a cocktail party with 30 people milling around. I used to do two a year, and now I'm trying to do one a month. The first one I had was for a guest of honor named Sidney Poitier. I had two for Dylan Mulvaney. I also had two for E. Jean Carroll, because everybody

wants to meet Jean. I tend to try to pick a guest of honor that's typically a woman who's been through the fire in some way, shape or form.

The new tour and new material represents a point of culmination and healing for you, and a new beginning both professionally and in your personal life. Are there new goals that you've set for yourself once the tour is over?

When the tour's over, I'm back on the breadline, honey. I don't have one goddamn offer. I'm a grinder. It's been like that my whole life. I've never been a turner-downer. I say yes to the opening of an envelope.

But the truth of the matter is, I've been doing this for so long, I get a lot of repeat business. I'm very lucky in that way, because my fans know I'm going to give them new s— every time. Just in these first 40 cities, I've done shows that are two hours and 30, 40 minutes.

I'm not shortchanging those tickets. Those tickets aren't cheap. I'm fearful people would think that health-wise, I'm not up to it anymore. And that's not the case, especially since the implant. So I am still there.

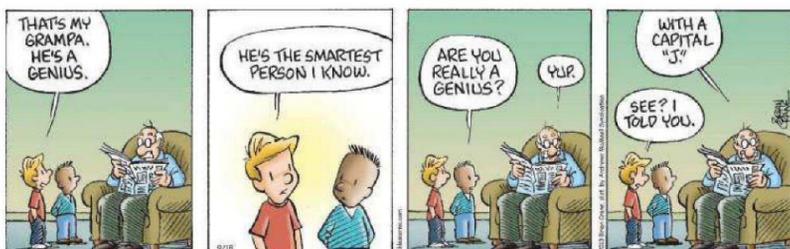
I do my shows for the people that buy the tickets. And so far, literally every show, I've gotten a standing ovation. ... I know a lot of it is because of the cancer, but I don't care. I'll take it!

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 Susan Camilleri Konar



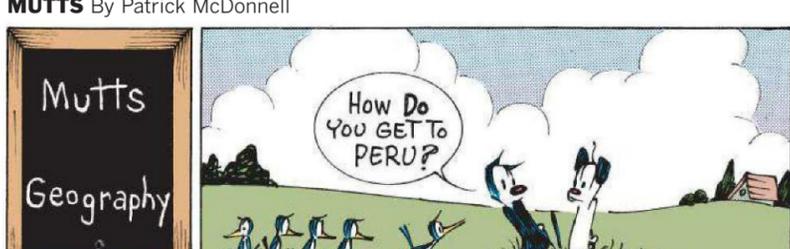
DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan



FRAZZ By Jef Mallett



MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell



NON SEQUITUR By Wiley



PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz



COMICS

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©2024 The Mepham Group. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency. All rights reserved. Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 or 2-by-3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 6 for the smaller grid). For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk.

KENKEN

Every box will contain a number; numbers depend on the size of the grid. For a 6x6 puzzle, use Nos. 1-6. Do not repeat a number in any row or column. The numbers in each heavily outlined set of squares must combine to produce the target number found in the top left corner of the cage using the mathematical operation indicated. A number can be repeated within a cage as long as it is not in the same row or column.

EASY

4+	7+	2	2÷
		3-	
3+			4+
4	6x		

CHALLENGING

2÷	80x	10x	
1-	11+	3-	3÷
		4-	
2÷	8+	3÷	24x
80x			12x
	5-		1-

PREVIOUS ANSWERS

22	4	2	3	1
23	2	3	1	4
24	1	4	2	3
25	3	1	4	2

HOROSCOPE

BY HOLIDAY MATHIS

Aries (March 21-April 19): "Quit while you're ahead," they say, but how far ahead? If you pull back too soon, you'll never discover the true limits of what's possible.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): You have many ways of keeping your mind in a beautiful balance. You could use a few more tools and strategies to keep trouble out. You'll pick one up today.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): You're preparing for something important, and mindset will make the event a winner. The right ritual will help you get into the spirit of this.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): Change in any direction because they all go to the same place today. You're like the water of your sign. Water always finds the way.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): When you're displeased with what you get, you usually adjust what you give. Today,

you're not so sure. If you don't change a thing except in the timing it takes to try again, things improve.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Stay aware of a wider array of options. You'll be offered something unique and will be in position to run with it.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): The road that feels right for you will actually be right. But it won't be the shortcut.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): It seems it should be easy to get to know people, but it's a little trickier than it seems, requiring curiosity, awareness and the ability to retain and correlate information.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): As much as you try to make sense of inconsistencies, it's not always possible. To accept the disparate pieces of reality without trying to close the gaps brings deep peace.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): The invitation seems casual enough, but it holds the key to a transformative

opportunity.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): A dream can never be fully finished, as it keeps dreaming itself into the unreachable horizon.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Today's plays will include pushing forward as a team, regrouping to fortify one another and taking a few crucial shots too.

Today's birthday (Sept. 18): The hand of destiny guides you to the most auspicious path. You'll finally gain the position you've been working toward or accept one that was unknown, though a vast improvement. Highlights: Help with admin so you can have more fun, a conflict resolved, and several small plans converging into a huge deal. Gemini and Capricorn adore you. Lucky numbers: 2, 24, 3, 14, 6.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol
By Larry Snyder

- ACROSS
- Pillow structure
 - Quick reminder
 - Mario racing vehicle
 - Wading bird
 - Board game based on pachisi
 - Pelvic bones
 - Argulata researcher at Cambridge?
 - "Is it clear?"
 - Be for Halloween
 - Deep-fryer compartment
 - Shower time?
 - Grand crime
 - Pristine field for Manchester United?
 - Flying
 - Hostess snack cake
 - Yoko who said, "You can be very wild and still be very wise"
 - Trapped fluff
 - Schematics
 - Saharan country next to Sudan
 - Island ring
 - Some Korean compacts
 - Cran cocktail
 - Sweater for a thrill-seeker's leap off Tower Bridge?
 - Prioritizes patients
 - Afro-Cuban dance
 - to the core
 - Digital indulgence, casually
 - Vintage TV brand
 - Pure sausages at the Rose & Crown pub?
 - Highlighter tone
 - Doughnut, mathematically
 - Frantically
 - Randomly generated IDs
 - Soaks (up)
 - Sutures

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
13				14					15					
16				17					18					
19				20					21					
		22	23				24							
25	26						27							
28							29			30	31	32		
33						34	35				36			
37						38					39			
						40					41	42		
43	44	45									46			
47											48	49	50	51
52											53			54
55											56			57
58											59			60

- Part of TNT
- Safety stations in some labs
- Lowbrow art
- Tough to tell apart
- Out of bed
- Frayed
- Immovable
- Wading bird
- DEA agent
- Deflating sound
- Animal helped by a mouse in a fable
- Shadow
- Author Wiesel
- Temporary stage
- "For crying out loud"
- Identify
- What wavy lines might represent in a comic
- Pesto to
- Falls behind
- Word with over or through
- Passover potato pie
- Chutney seed
- Conductors' tools
- Darkness personified, in Greek mythology
- Notorious apostle
- Like one honored by a pink, blue, and white flag
- Garb donned by Oxford dons
- "Them's fightin' words!"
- Crime drama suspect
- Cornfield nuisance
- Queries
- All -- often
- Electric alternative

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

I	R	A	N	P	A	L	M	P	A	V	E	D
C	A	R	E	A	R	I	A	A	D	A	G	E
K	N	E	W	E	T	O	N	R	U	N	G	S
G	A	S	O	L	I	N	E	A	L	L	E	Y
M	O	L	E	G	O	T						
C	O	F	E	P	A	R	T	M	E	N	T	
A	C	I	D	S								
M	I	N	T									
P	E	N	A									
S	R	S										
G	I	N										
C	O	N	T	A	I	N	E	R	S	H	I	P
R	O	B	O	T	M	O	A	T	O	D	O	R
A	N	I	M	E								
M	E	T	E	R								

BRIDGE

BY FRANK STEWART

Cy the Cynic says that if you think patience is a virtue, try surfing without high-speed internet.

Cy is apt to seize on the first line of play or defense he sees. When he was today's East, North-South got to four spades after they each bid clubs. West led the 10 of hearts: six, ace, king.

Cy was sure South had four clubs to jump to three clubs — and West had none. So at the second trick, Cy led a club.

West ruffed and led another heart, but declarer ruffed and led a trump. The Cynic won and led another club, but when West couldn't ruff, South won the rest, drawing trumps and finessing in diamonds. Making

four.

Cy was impatient; he neglected to count defensive tricks. Since West surely has two trumps on the bidding, his ruff can wait. Cy must lead the 10 of diamonds at Trick Two. South wins and leads a trump, but Cy grabs his ace, gives West a club ruff and ruffs the diamond re-entrant for down one.

You hold: ♠ A97 ♥ A Q 5 2 ♦ 10 ♣ 10 8 7 4 3. Your partner opens one diamond, you respond one heart, he bids one spade and you try 1NT. Partner next bids two spades. What do you say?

Answer: Partner has five spades and at least six diamonds. With 5-5 in those suits, he would have opened one spade. Since he did not jump to two spades at his second turn, his high-card strength is limited. Still,

your spade support and side ace merit a raise to four spades.

North dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH
♠ J63
♥ J76
♦ A Q 9
♣ K Q 9 6

WEST
♠ 42
♥ 10 9 8 4 3
♦ K 8 6 5 3 2
♣ None

EAST
♠ A 9 7
♥ A Q 5 2
♦ 10
♣ 10 8 7 4 3

SOUTH
♠ K Q 10 8 5
♥ K
♦ J 7 4
♣ A J 5 2

NORTH
1♣ Pass
1NT Pass
3♣ Pass

SOUTH
1♣ Pass
3♣ Pass
4♣ All Pass

Opening lead — ♥ 10

ASKING ERIC

Dear Eric: I have a group of three girlfriends from middle school/high school. We stayed close during college and were in one another's weddings, etc. I have known these women for more than 50 years.

There is one person in the group that I have been consistently close with over the many years. With the other two, there was a more than 15-year gap in our friendships when I moved away. The problem is that I have outgrown those two.

These two always insist that we get together as a group four times a year. They're very difficult to deal with and inflexible with their schedules but insist on these get-togethers.

I would like to withdraw from these gatherings. I've tried to beg off, but they insist on waiting for me to be available. It's ridiculous and I'm exhausted from it. These are people that don't take no for an answer. How do I end this madness?

be clear about what you want.

I asked friendship expert Anna Goldfarb, author of the book "Modern Friendship," for a kind but clear breakup script.

"Be polite yet firm. Say, 'Thanks for the invitation, ladies, but I'm unavailable for these kinds of events. While I appreciate you thinking of me, these birthday get-togethers aren't my thing.'" Anna also said that you shouldn't be afraid to disengage if they push back. You may need to mute the invites.

Dear Eric: My husband and I dated long distance for a year before we married. During this time, he told me he had post-selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor syndrome. After stopping the medication, he could still "perform" but no longer desires sex. He said before the SSRI his drive was fine.

While we were dating this seemed OK because, although infrequent, he seemed like he was enjoying sex. Then we got married. After 11 months without sex, we went to see a therapist where it came out that he actually didn't like having sex when we were dating. He was never really into it. He's just not able to feel desire anymore. He's tried sex-enhancement drugs, Wellbutrin, herbal supplements, therapists, testosterone.

Nothing has worked.

We are both still in our 20s and I am undecided about children. I'd never heard of this syndrome before, but after researching it, it doesn't seem that uncommon. I love my husband. Do you have any advice on how to cope with this?

DEPRESSED DESIRE

Dear Desire: It sounds like marriage (and therapy) allowed your husband enough comfort to stop performing his enjoyment. Try to see his honesty as an invitation to be honest about how you feel as well. Is sex with your husband a key component of your ideal marriage? Is sex with you a key component of his ideal marriage? Ask yourself; ask him.

This is likely as confusing for him as it is for you. There are still a lot of unknowns about post-SSRI syndrome. A 2023 study estimated that roughly 4 out of every 100,000 people who took SSRIs developed sexual dysfunction after taking them. He's not alone, but he may feel like he is.

On the logistical side, your husband's post-SSRI syndrome doesn't preclude having kids. If you two decide to try for a family, everything you've written indicates he would be willing and able to participate.

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham



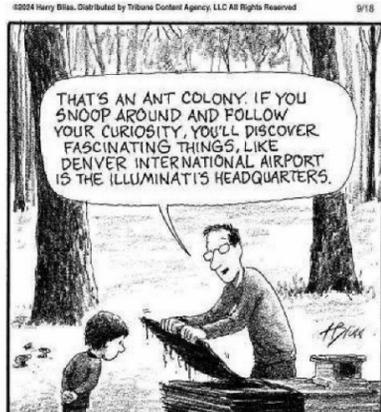
FREE RANGE By Bill Whitehead



MARMADUKE By Brad & Paul Anderson



BLISS By Harry Bliss



SPEED BUMP By Dave Coverly



20 years after teen hit, JoJo is back in control

[JoJo, from E1] Songs chart, largely due to a prolonged legal battle with her record label.

In 2013, Levesque filed a lawsuit against Blackground Records to be released from her contract, which she signed as a minor and, under New York law, should have elapsed after seven years.

Unable to release albums, she put out mixtapes and “tringles” (trios of singles) instead. Both parties came to an agreement out of court, but Levesque found similar creative differences at her next label, Atlantic Records.

“It was like every Tom, Dick and Harry was encouraged to voice their opinions about what they thought I should do,” Levesque writes. “I came in with a vision, but I don’t even remember what it was anymore.”

She finally found independence by launching her own imprint, CloverMusic—a joint venture with Warner Records—in 2017.

Long before Taylor Swift began rerecording her albums in 2021 after losing ownership when Scott Borchetta, the chief executive of her former record label, Big Machine, sold her masters to music manager Scooter Braun, Levesque embarked on a similar journey in 2018.

“That was between me and my fans so that I could feel some sense of empowerment when my music was not available on streaming services because my record label didn’t make a deal with the DSPs [digital service providers],” she says.

“I was so sick of feeling like things were happening to me as opposed to me being in control.”

Although Swift and Levesque did have a “moment” during Swift’s “squad” era in which they were friendly, Le-

vesque says Swift did not approach her for advice about rerecording her “Taylor’s Versions.” “I do appreciate those who noticed that I did it a few years before,” Levesque says.

This battle for control is one that has followed Levesque throughout her career and, indeed, her life. The title of her memoir, “Over the Influence,” has a double meaning.

First, it refers to intergenerational trauma—her parents met at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, and her father, Joel, died of complications from drug addiction in 2015. Levesque says she’s cautious of coming across as “judgmental” of her parents. But she need not be: She crafts a remarkably compassionate portrait of not only “my story [but also] our story” that’s bolstered by fastidious journal entries she’s kept throughout her life. “It was interesting to see the things I thought I had overcome that I hadn’t,” she says.

She also had a lot of deep and meaningful conversations with her mom, Diana, who helped Levesque fill in the blanks of her own childhood memories as well as her parents’ early relationship. “I’m grateful that she was even open to going there with me,” Levesque says.

Things could have certainly gone a lot worse for Levesque as a child star. “Maybe I dodged a bullet,” she writes in the just-released “Over the Influence.” “I’ve seen the doc and listened to the podcasts, and OH MY GOD,” she says of “Quiet on Set: The Dark Side of Kids TV,” which alleges abuse at Nickelodeon.

Levesque’s mom was her reluctant manager who shielded her from a lot of it. Momagers often get a bad rap, but Levesque says she



DAVID URBANKE FOR THE TIMES

“IT’S A REALLY exciting time,” Joanna “JoJo” Levesque says of her memoir, Broadway show and more.

wasn’t pressured into pursuing fame at a young age.

“I wanted a different life than the one my mom and I had, and I felt like I could be the one to get us there,” she says. Still, that’s a lot for a preteen.

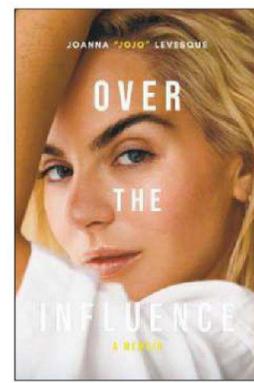
“She did a great job of trying to keep me humble, but from a young age, I really wasn’t told no, and I do think that that can create a monster. It gave me a false sense of the world. Already, [I’m] an only child. People are telling [me] that [I’m] so great and talented and [I] deserve certain things, and

then I become famous?” she muses. “It’s only in hindsight that I can see that I might have been spared some growing pains if I had had more parenting, in a sense.”

The second allusion in the book’s title is to the freedom to determine her own career path.

“For so much of my life, [I’ve felt] under the influence of other people’s visions [as to] what I should want and what my values should be: ascension or topping the success I had as a teenager,” she says.

“I am eternally grateful



Hachette

“TRIPLE THREAT” performer looks back at life and taking back her career in new memoir.

for [‘Leave (Get Out)’] because I now have a life that I really enjoy,” she later adds.

That includes Levesque’s return as Satine in the Broadway production of “Moulin Rouge!” opposite Aaron Tveit.

“Her voice is very moving to me,” Tveit says. “There’s so much emotion conveyed by [it].”

Levesque made her Broadway debut as Satine in 2023, following a pandemic closure she spent singing showtunes with her mom. She thrives on the repetition and stability that musical theater offers.

“I didn’t have a lot of that growing up. I was always doing different things—being in a different city, being around different people, moving a lot,” she says. “As an adult who has an inner child, I’m giving her the structure that she might’ve needed.”

Although Levesque did perform in musical theater as a kid, she’s newly inspired by the combination of singing and acting that Broadway affords. “It’s a really exciting time for me, because a

lot of my passions can intermingle pretty seamlessly,” she says, adding that she’s been workshopping an original musical during the day while performing as Satine in the evenings.

“It’s not something for the faint of heart,” Tveit adds, but “I think she has a lot to offer to musical theater.”

After Tveit and Levesque take their final bow Oct. 13, Levesque has a tour and new music planned, under the tutelage of her co-manager Randy Jackson—yes, that Randy Jackson. Although the two connected in 2021 when Levesque was a contestant on “Name That Tune” (Jackson is bandleader of the Fox game show), they actually had met years earlier when Levesque was starting out. Jackson was interested in signing her to his record label at the time.

“I’m interested in people who’ve had longevity. [I’ve been doing this for a long time], but there’s people who’ve been doing this for a really long time, and I want to know, how do you maintain good relationships, how do you nurture business relationships?” Levesque says of Jackson.

Jackson calls Levesque a “triple threat” of music, screen and stage.

“You have to be inspired by the person and their personality first, and [talent second],” he says.

The cool girl at the fairground from the “Leave (Get Out)” music video is certainly on display in “Over the Influence” and is a persona Levesque has adopted as a kind of “eccentric auntie” to her fans and others coming up in the industry.

“I’m an only child, so I’m nobody’s aunt, but I think I could be a help to people,” she says. “I want to share what I have to give.”

The fatal intersection of football, violence and mental health

[Hernandez, from E1] creasingly paranoid, his fuller story is a complicated one: Hernandez suffered physical abuse in a violent and dysfunctional family; was sexually abused as a boy; felt compelled by society’s strictures to hide his homosexuality; was chewed up and spit out by college football’s powers-that-be; and his brain was severely damaged, resulting in chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE, that likely affected his behavior.

Those nuances and much more were uncovered and laid out by the Boston Globe’s Spotlight investiga-

tive team in 2018, in a series of newspaper articles and a podcast. That was followed by a 2020 Netflix docuseries, “Killer Inside: The Mind of Aaron Hernandez.”

But these days, more Americans get their facts from newspaper series, podcasts and documentaries, whether it’s “When They See Us,” Ava DuVernay’s Netflix limited series about the Central Park Five, or the “American Crime Story” retellings of the O.J. Simpson saga and the murder of Gianni Versace. Now the “American Crime Story” producing team is branching out with

“American Sports Story: Aaron Hernandez,” a 10-episode retelling of Hernandez’s life and death based on the Globe’s reporting. The limited series premiered Tuesday at 10 p.m. on FX with two episodes and is streaming on Hulu.

Brad Simpson, one of the series’ executive producers, says they were tipped off by FX’s top executives, Nick Grad and John Landgraf, that the podcasts were about to be released, so they read the Globe’s articles.

“It had this deep reporting that we love to have in our shows, and we started developing the series with an eye toward it being part of our different franchises about the culture of America,” he says.

Simpson says fellow executive producer Ryan Murphy loved that this was a story about “a person with a fractured identity, as so many of our shows are.”

The reporting revealed a story that was “far more heartbreaking and complex than I had considered,” says Nina Jacobson, another executive producer. “When you think you know a story and then you come across something deeply reported, that really changes how you see it [and] that always makes me stand up at attention.”

She adds that since football is our national religion, Hernandez’s rise and fall were “not just the story of one person but a mirror back to us as a country.”

Numerous writers were interested in tackling the tale, but the producers chose Stuart Zicherman because of his résumé—Simpson cites “The Americans”—but also because he is a passionate football fan who nonetheless has the emotional distance to see the damage that the game can wreak on people. Simpson says Zicherman had a compelling pitch about the intersection of celebrity, sports, sexuality and masculinity.

“It’s character first and football second, and what made this story different from a million sports stories out there is the story about Aaron as well as his family, the people on his team and the coaches,” he says. “It becomes a Shakespearean tragedy with compelling characters at the center.”

Zicherman says he went in for his initial pitch with a huge scroll that, when unfurled, laid out all of the story’s twists and turns.

“I love writing about stories people think they know but they really don’t,” he



MICHAEL PARMELEE FOR FX

JOSH RIVERA as the titular character in a scene from “American Sports Story: Aaron Hernandez.”

says. “We tend to label people, and Hernandez was a monster, but no one’s born a monster, and I wanted to tell that story without forgiving him for what he did.”

Zicherman drew on the “American Crime Story” concept of “taking a crime or event and making it about something much bigger in the fabric of America.”

The show explores toxic masculinity at home and in locker rooms, how violence on the football field can spill into daily life, and how a dysfunctional family can be both a support and a trap.

There’s also the issue of CTE, the brain injury caused by repeated blows to the head.

“We obviously don’t want to say CTE is what turned Aaron into a murderer—he’d been exposed to violence and was prone to violence—but he did become very paranoid with an even shorter temper,” Zicherman says, noting that Hernandez’s drug use also would have exacerbated his brain injuries.

He lays out the story to show the people and institutions who directly harmed Hernandez or at least failed to “change the narrative” because of their own selfish motivations, like then-Florida coach Urban Meyer, who seduced Hernandez and his family with promises he didn’t keep and then shoved the young man out the door when he became a challenge.

“We make commodities out of our athletes and we don’t always see what’s best for them,” Zicherman says. “The Patriots were also blinded by his talent.”

“But I also want the audience to see that there’s a much bigger picture here and that we’re all a bit complicit—we raise our athletes up and pay them a fortune and build them up as heroes,” he says, only to turn on them when things go awry.

Beyond the big picture, Zicherman focused on Hernandez’s story as someone “trying to find his authentic self,” giving him a throughline as Hernandez jumps from childhood to high school to Florida, the NFL and eventually the world of drugs and crime that consumed him. “By the end he’s gone mad with all the secrets he was keeping.”

Zicherman says the Globe’s Spotlight team not only provided a meticulous and thorough story, they let him come to Boston “to ask a million questions” and then they visited the writers’ room to answer even more. “They’d talked to everybody and they’d done that work, and they were a tremendous resource,” he says.

But journalists and documentary filmmakers are hemmed in by what they can demonstrably prove. Zicherman says the series resists overt fictionalization, but they felt it had to go further than the Spotlight series.

“In the writers’ room we spent a lot of time connecting the dots and trying to emotionally figure out why things happen and give the answers to things,” he says.

Most important was explaining why Hernandez murdered Lloyd. “It always bothered me that in all the research no one knew,” Zicherman says. “It was a clumsy attempt that seemed unpremeditated and it didn’t make sense.”

Theories include that Hernandez wanted to keep a lid on his sexuality or his involvement in the double homicide, but Zicherman thinks it was more about how far Hernandez had descended.

“I built to the murder from the stew of all the moments throughout the season,” Zicherman says. “Hernandez is hiding so many secrets and suffusing them

with drug use, and he’s paranoid as hell because he’s taken a lot of hits to the head. It’s all of those things combined; I don’t think it was a singular thing.”

Beyond the scripts, the most important factor would be casting Hernandez. Here, the team got lucky. Jacobson was producing “The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes” and watching Josh Rivera at work. “I got to really see what he was made of,” she says of Rivera, who had previously co-starred as Chino in Steven Spielberg’s “West Side Story.” “He’s an incredibly sophisticated, grounded, natural and charismatic actor. And he was that on every take.”

But while Jacobson was sold, she also trusted Murphy’s judgment and wanted to let the audition process play out “to see if he would float to the top for Ryan as well.”

At the end of callbacks, Murphy turned and said, “Well, it’s obviously Josh,” so they called him back in before he could leave the audition.

Zicherman says a lot of the other actors emphasized the violence and darkness, but Rivera “played the vulnerability and other emotional components and the interior emotionality. Once we had him I started stripping dialogue away to let moments play on his face—the other characters could talk and we can watch his heartbreak.”

(Rivera, he adds, is also a “goofball who likes to sing and dance and make jokes,” and that Hernandez, before things went bad, was the class clown.)

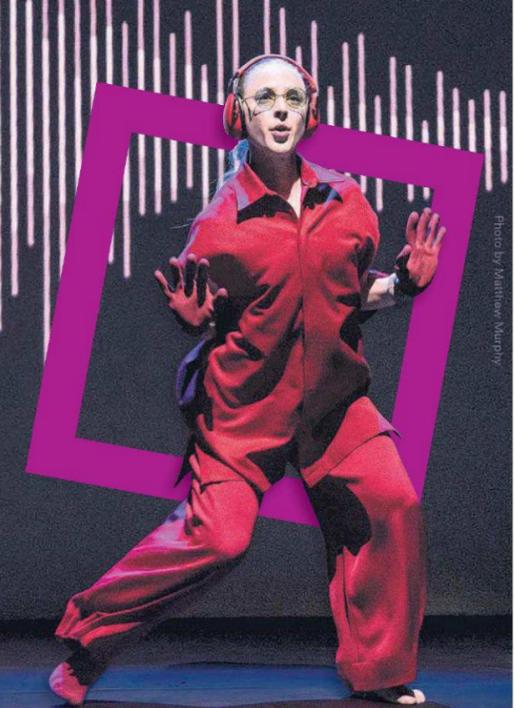
Rivera is in nearly every scene. Simpson notes that he had to work out regularly to stay big and endured multiple hours of makeup for the tattoos. “He shouldered it incredibly well and he was always game and enthusiastic,” Simpson says. “He was often exhausted, but the fact that he didn’t slip into a dark place is a testament to who Josh is as a human being. He set the tone for the set.”

Simpson recalls only one day where Rivera was, understandably, overwhelmed by the task.

“We were in a muddy field at 3 a.m. reenacting the murder of Odin Lloyd, and there was just a moment where Josh had to stop. He turned to everybody and said, ‘This is just too incredibly sad,’” Simpson says. “I think we were all haunted by that moment.”

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Advances in Cancer Research Close to Home

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Accredited by the Association of Human Research Protections Programs, MemorialCare is a leader in conducting scientifically sound research. With over 300 ongoing research projects at any given time, MemorialCare's research program brings the latest clinical devices and treatments to the community, ensuring that innovative cancer treatment options are always available closer to home.

Research and clinical trials are essential to providing access to optimal treatment options at MemorialCare Cancer Institute, especially for patients with later-stage or difficult-to-treat cancers.

MemorialCare Orange Coast Medical Center is one of only two sites in California offering a phase 3 lung cancer clinical trial called Pacific-8 Global trial. The trial helps those diagnosed with stage III non-small cell lung cancer live longer without their cancer worsening. The trial looks at the efficacy of combining FDA-approved durvalumab and omvalanlimab (a new treatment not yet approved by the FDA).

"This is a type of immunotherapy that blocks a signal preventing the immune system from seeing cancer cells and directing it to attack the cancer," says Amol Rao, M.D.,

medical director, research, MemorialCare Cancer Institute. "We hope the secondary drug can help support the first drug in attacking and slowing down cancer cells."

In Laguna Hills, MemorialCare Saddleback Medical Center is one of only two hospitals in California to offer the innovative VAPOR 2 Study for prostate cancer. This study utilizes a minimally invasive and nonsurgical procedure using water vapor to target and destroy the walls of cancer cells, minimizing damage to the surrounding healthy tissue. This treatment does not require chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery, sparing patients from the side effects of traditional treatments.

"If this trial shows positive results, it will be the first-of-its-kind of prostate cancer treatment with minimal side effects," says Daniel Su, M.D., medical director, urology, MemorialCare Saddleback Medical Center. "The VAPOR2 study utilizes a gentle and natural approach by using water rather than chemicals to kill the cancerous cells. If this study succeeds, we can attack the cancerous cells while mitigating side effects."

MemorialCare is continually looking for innovative approaches to cancer treatment. Bispecific T cell Engager (BiTE®) therapies

have shown to be a promising class of immunotherapy. BiTE molecules form a bridge between cancer cells and cytotoxic T cells – white blood cells that destroy other cells that pose a threat. One arm of the BiTE molecule binds with the surface of the T cell, and the other binds to a tumor-associated antigen. This forms a synapse between the T cell and cancer cell, releasing toxic molecules that attack the cancer cells.

"At the core of BiTE therapies lies the concept of redirecting the body's immune defenses to recognize and eliminate cancer cells," says Milan Sheth, M.D., hematologist/oncologist, MemorialCare Todd Cancer Institute, Long Beach Medical Center. "BiTE therapies specifically target cancer cells while sparing normal tissue, offering new hope to patients with relapsed multiple myeloma or follicular lymphoma, or newly diagnosed diffuse large B-cell lymphoma.

MemorialCare brings cutting-edge clinical trials and treatments to the community while ensuring safety and security. To learn more, visit [memorialcare.org/research](https://www.memorialcare.org/research).



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How medical research improves health care for everyone



Expert Advice from:
Lauren Privitera, MPH, MS,
vice-president, research
administration, MemorialCare

MemorialCare is dedicated to advancing medical knowledge and patient care by investing in research and clinical trials. These trials are crucial for developing new treatments, medical devices, and diagnostic tools which significantly enhance patient outcomes. By conducting rigorous research, MemorialCare ensures that the treatments provided are based on solid scientific evidence, keeping them at the forefront of medical innovation and offering the latest and most effective treatments to patients.

"At MemorialCare there are more than 300 ongoing research projects underway in diseases

such as cancer, heart disease, cystic fibrosis, stroke, testing and evaluating treatment and device therapies intended to set higher standards in health care, not just locally, but globally," said Lauren Privitera, MPH, MS, vice-president of research administration, MemorialCare.

Many of these studies are clinical trials and are part of regional, national and international investigations, and often in collaboration with physicians throughout Los Angeles and Orange Counties.

Clinical trials are research studies designed to learn how well new medical treatments work in people. All clinical trials testing new drugs or devices are reviewed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB).

"The IRB determines if the proposal is well developed and that risks and benefits are defined and balanced," Privitera said. "If approved, researchers can begin conducting the research."

"Each potential participant undergoes an informed consent process," explained Privitera. "This is where the patient can consent to participating in the clinical trial, if they are eligible and interested."

"It is vital to share the facts," said Privitera. "We let the patient know what we know about the trial, what the potential risks and potential benefits may be, and what this could mean for them and future patients should they choose to participate in the trial."

There are many phases to a clinical trial and it can take several years for a product to come to market. Once a clinical trial is complete, the results are analyzed and if there is evidence that the product is safe and effective, the information is provided to the FDA for review and approval for commercial use. If

approved, post market safety monitoring is performed by means of a Phase IV study.

Research has resulted in significant advancements in health care, including the use of the minimally invasive transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) as an alternative to open heart surgery.

"It has changed the lives of so many patients since it was first introduced in 2011, most of them older adults who had too high a risk for a traditional heart valve replacement," Privitera said.

Significant advances in the treatment of HER2-positive breast cancer include the discovery, through clinical trials, of a drug that releases a powerful cancer-killing agent specifically to cancer cells with a lot of HER2 protein.

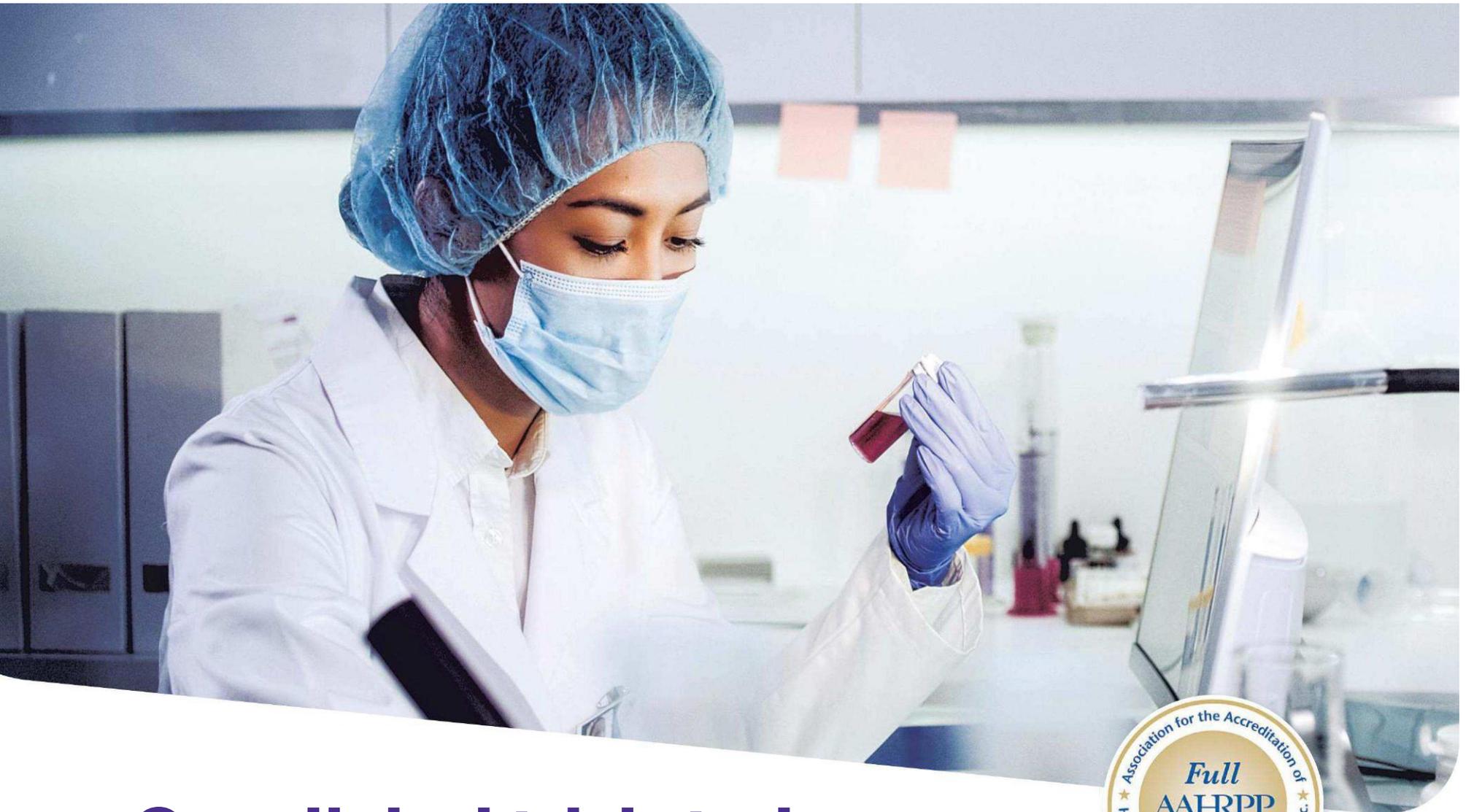
MemorialCare will begin enrollment in the All of Us Southern California Consortium (AOUSCC) Research Program, aiming to gather data from one million Americans to accelerate research and improve health by considering individual differences in genes, environment, and lifestyle.

"By creating a database inclusive of demographics and ethnicity, researchers hope to uncover paths toward delivering precision medicine that will benefit every patient equally," Privitera said.

Drugs and biologics are being developed and introduced as the new standard of care at an unprecedented rate and clinical trial volunteers are a crucial part of efforts to advance medical care.

"People can learn more about our clinical trials by visiting our website," said Privitera.

Visit [memorialcare.org/research](https://www.memorialcare.org/research) to find out more.



Our clinical trials today create the cures of tomorrow.



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By participating in breakthrough research studies and clinical trials, MemorialCare offers many of the newest and best treatment opportunities and technologies for our patients throughout Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Providing medications, devices, and patient therapies to our communities long before they become available elsewhere, the MemorialCare Research Program a recognized leader in providing innovative, life-saving care.

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