



A VENDOR sells snacks to truck drivers waiting to cross the border in Tijuana. Experts say American consumers may find higher prices for fresh vegetables, fruits and other perishable imports in a matter of days.

COUNCIL WILL NOT REINSTATE CROWLEY

The 13-2 vote against former L.A. fire chief gives Mayor Bass a much-needed boost.

BY DAVID ZAHNISER,
JULIA WICK
AND DAKOTA SMITH

The Los Angeles City Council rejected former Fire Chief Kristin Crowley's bid to get her job back, despite fierce support for her from the firefighters' union.

The council voted 13 to 2 on Tuesday against Crowley's reinstatement, handing embattled Mayor Karen Bass a much-needed political victory. Bass was in Ghana when the Palisades fire broke out, leaving council President Marqueece Harris-Dawson as acting mayor, and delivered a choppy performance in the days after she returned.

Crowley used Tuesday's hearing to push back publicly, for the first time, against the arguments that Bass offered for terminating her from her post as the head of one of the nation's largest fire departments. Seated before the council, Crowley argued that she was

[See **Ex-fire chief**, A12]



FORMER L.A. Fire Chief Kristin Crowley gets a hug from a firefighter after the vote on Tuesday. Crowley said she should not be punished for speaking honestly.

Bass' aides were warned of fire danger before trip

An emergency official emailed the mayor's team a forecast for 'damaging winds.'

BY DAKOTA SMITH
AND DAVID ZAHNISER

The day before Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass left for Ghana, her aides received an email from the city's Emergency Management Department warning of a

"high confidence in damaging winds and elevated fire conditions occurring next week."

The mayor nevertheless went on the trip, attending the Ghanaian president's inauguration, as well as a U.S. Embassy cocktail party, on Jan. 7, the day the Palisades fire broke out.

Bass' team did not inform her of the Friday, Jan. 3, email, which advised of a meeting the following Monday to coordinate preparations for the anticipated

high winds. In the days before Bass' flight, the National Weather Service had also begun alerting the public on social media about the growing wildfire risk.

Bass, over the last few weeks, has accused former Fire Chief Kristin Crowley of failing to warn her of the potential for a cataclysmic wind event. She told Fox 11 she would not even have traveled as far as San Diego had she been informed of the fire danger.

[See **Warnings**, A9]

Trump tariffs end decades of free trade in North America

The sweeping taxes threaten the intricate U.S.-Mexico-Canada commercial colossus.

BY KATE LINTHICUM AND
PATRICK J. McDONNELL

MEXICO CITY — Sweeping tariffs imposed Tuesday by President Trump are sending shock waves through global supply chains, roiling markets and shaking the very foundations of the more than three-decade free trade regimen that made Mexico, Canada and the United States a unified commercial colossus.

Beginning with the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, the three-nation bloc embraced the principle that duty-free commerce was a winning strategy and a hedge against competition from Asia, Europe and elsewhere — an assumption that now seems very much under threat.

As of Tuesday, Washington began levying a 25% tax on all products imported from Mexico and Canada, with the exception of Canadian oil and gas, which are subject to a 10% tariff. Trump also imposed a new 10% tax on imports from China.

Canada and China swiftly announced retaliatory taxes on U.S. goods, and Mexico said it would soon announce its own counter-tariffs.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, describing a plan to start taxing more than \$100 billion of American goods over the course of three weeks, said Trump's economic attack on Canada

[See **Tariffs**, A4]

Get ready for pricier avocados

Tariffs will also hit Mexican tequila and beer — items popular in California. **BUSINESS, A8**

Probation officers indicted in fights

The 30 L.A. County overseers are accused of child endangerment in allowing brawls.

BY JAMES QUEALLY
AND REBECCA ELLIS

Thirty officers from the Los Angeles County Probation Department have been indicted on criminal charges after an investigation into allegations they allowed — and in some cases encouraged — fights between teens inside the county's juvenile halls.

An indictment unsealed late Monday afternoon contains 71 counts of child abuse, conspiracy and battery against 30 probation officers, alleging their involvement in a series of fights that took place from July to December 2023. Two officers — Taneha Brooks and Shawn Smyles — are accused of telling other officers not to intervene or make reports

when fights happened, according to the indictment.

Smyles told youths involved in fights not to seek medical attention, in order to cover up the brawls, the indictment said. Late Monday, California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta referred to the coordinated brawls as "gladiator fights."

The indictments were the result of a California Department of Justice investigation launched after state investigators were leaked security video — published last year by The Times — that shows eight probation officers standing idly by while a group of teens attacked a 17-year-old inside Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall in Downey. The teen suffered a broken nose and a "traumatic brain injury," according to a civil claim filed last year. Details of the indictments were first reported by The Times last month.

"The officers look more like referees or audience members at a prizefight, not

[See **Fights**, A12]

Trump's address to Congress

Visit latimes.com for coverage of president's speech to a joint session of both chambers.

Newsom orders return to office

Mandate of four days a week is decreed by labor union and legal group. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Oscars draw in more viewers

The number tuning in to Academy Awards rises slightly to 19.7 million. **BUSINESS, A8**

Weather

Rain; cooler.
L.A. Basin: 60/48. **B6**

For the latest news, go to **latimes.com**.



Federal cuts hit water agency staff in state

Musk team slashes 10% of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's regional workers.

BY IAN JAMES

The Trump administration has ordered firings and buyouts at the federal agency that operates water infrastructure in California, potentially jeopardizing the agency's ability to manage dams and deliver water, according to Central Valley water officials.

The job cuts at the Bureau of Reclamation were ordered by Elon Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, according to two bureau employees who were not authorized to speak publicly.

The bureau, which employs about 1,000 people, is set to lose about 100 employees in California through terminations and buyouts, eliminating about 10% of its regional staff, one of the employees said. But larger workforce reductions are planned, and the bureau has been ordered to prepare plans to cut its staff by 40%, this person said.

Those targeted first for dismissal have been employees in their first year and others who have been at the agency the shortest.

The Trump administration has offered millions of government workers eight months of salary if they voluntarily agree to leave.

The employees who have applied for "deferred resignation" buyouts include Karl Stock, the bureau's regional director for the California

[See **Water**, A7]



THE FRIANT DAM, completed in 1942 and operated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, relies on employees for increasingly frequent repairs and inspections.



Don't miss L.A.'s next big story.
Download the app for breaking news notifications.



PERSPECTIVES

Voices MICHAEL HILTZIK COLUMNIST

Alarm bells as Trump goes after Social Security

Perhaps the most frequently cited quote from Donald Trump relevant to his purported efforts to root out government waste has been “we’re not touching Social Security,” or variations thereof.

I expressed skepticism about this pledge shortly after the election by listing all the oblique ways the Trump administration could hack away at the program.

It gives me no pleasure to update my observation with the words, “I told you so.”

Among the weapons Trump could wield, I wrote, was starving the program of administrative resources — think money and staff. Sure enough, on Friday the program, which is currently led by acting Commissioner Leland Dudek, announced plans to reduce the program’s employee base to 50,000 from 57,000.

Its press release about the reduction referred to the program’s “bloated workforce.”

To anyone who knows anything about the Social Security Administration, calling its workforce “bloated” sounds like a sick joke. The truth is that the agency is hopelessly understaffed, and has been for years.

In November, then-Commissioner Martin O’Malley told a House committee that the agency was serving a record number of beneficiaries with staffing that had reached a 50-year low.

I asked the Social Security Administration to reconcile its claim of a bloated workforce with the facts. I got no reply.

Nearly 69 million Americans were receiving benefits as of Dec. 31, according to the agency. That figure encompassed 54.3 million retired workers, their spouses and their children, nearly 6 million survivors of deceased workers and more than 8.3 million disabled workers and their dependents. Agency employment peaked in 2009 at about 67,000, when it served about 55 million people.

“Without adequate staff at the agency,” Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) said at a news conference Monday, “there will be people who can’t get their benefits, period.”

Not only beneficiaries



ALEX BRANDON Associated Press

SOCIAL SECURITY’S administrative resources are being starved under the guise of cutting fraud and waste, an effort led by Elon Musk and President Trump.

could be affected by Trump’s raid on Social Security. About 183 million people pay Social Security taxes on their earnings. Their right to collect what they’re entitled to based on their contributions is dependent on the system recording those payments and calculating their benefits accurately, to the last penny. Any incursion into the program’s systems or the scattershot firings that Dudek forecasts puts all that at risk.

In his testimony, O’Malley talked about how the agency had struggled to establish an acceptable level of customer service. In 2023, he said, wait times on the program’s 800 number had ballooned to nearly an hour. Of the average 7 million clients who called the number each month for advice or assistance, 4 million “hung up in frustration after waiting far too long.” The agency had worked the wait down to an average of less than 13 minutes, in part by encouraging customers to wait off the line for a call back.

Disability applicants faced the worst frustrations, O’Malley said. The backlog of disability determinations, which often require multiple rounds of inquiries, hearings and appeals, had reached a near-record 1.2 million. The program estimated that about 30,000 applicants had died in 2023

while awaiting decisions.

O’Malley had asked for a budget increase in fiscal 2025 to add at least 3,000 workers to the customer-service ranks, but it wasn’t approved.

Make no mistake: The starving of Social Security’s administrative resources, which is currently taking place under the guise of ferreting out fraud and waste, is no accident. It’s part of a decades-long Republican project aimed at undermining public confidence in the program.

Back in 1983, for example, the libertarian Cato Institute published an article by Stuart Butler and Peter Germanis calling for a “Leninist” strategy to “prepare the political ground” for privatizing Social Security on behalf of “the banks, insurance companies, and other institutions that will gain from providing such plans to the public.” Political opposition, as it happens, resulted in the death of George W. Bush’s push to privatize Social Security in 2005.

Germanis has since become a fierce critic of conservative economics and politics. Butler, who had spent 35 years at the right-

wing Heritage Foundation before joining the Brookings Institution in 2014, told me by email he now advocates a private retirement system as an “add-on” private option rather than an alternative to Social Security. He also said he thinks “cutting staff and the claim that Social Security is rife with fraud and abuse are both ridiculous.”

The Trump acolytes have already taken an ax to some Social Security operations, as announced by Dudek — a former mid-level agency worker who stepped into the vacuum created by the departure of several managers who had dustups with Elon Musk’s DOGE outfit and by a delay in Senate confirmation of Commissioner-designate Frank Bisagnano, a banking and Wall Street veteran.

Last week, Dudek closed the agency’s office of transformation, which he called “wasteful” and “redundant.” The office was engaged in helping to keep the agency’s website operational and to develop usable online resources for beneficiaries and applicants. He closed its office of civil rights and equal opportunity, certainly functions relevant to the

program’s operations. Employees in both offices were laid off or fired, and their pages on the website were removed.

On Monday, Dudek bragged about having “identified” some \$800 million in cost savings, including through the cancellation of contracts that, for all he knows, may be crucial to the agency’s functioning. The largest “savings” came from a freeze on hiring and overtime in disability determination services, worth \$550 million, according to Dudek.

But that’s an area where hands-on contact between applicants and the agency is indispensable. Academic researchers reported in 2019 that the closing of field offices dealing with disability applications led to “a persistent 16% decline in the number of disability recipients in surrounding areas, with the largest effects for applicants with moderately severe conditions and low education levels.”

In an appearance Friday on Joe Rogan’s webcast, Musk called Social Security “the biggest Ponzi scheme of all time,” a repetition of an ancient meme that demonstrates only that he knows nothing about Social Security, and nothing about Ponzi schemes. The program boasts an 85-year unbroken record for paying beneficiaries what they’re owed, and currently holds a reserve of nearly \$2.8 trillion in Treasury securities, all publicly disclosed.

The GOP brain trust has accepted the claim that Social Security is rife with fraud without devoting a moment’s thought to it. House Speaker Mike Johnson absurdly claimed Sunday on “Meet the Press” that Musk’s “algorithms crawling through the data” are “finding enormous amounts of waste, fraud and abuse.”

There’s absolutely zero evidence for that. Can we trust Musk to find it? This is the guy whose claim that “millions” of people aged 150 or older were receiving payments was decisively debunked — the notion that benefits were going to people that old was merely an artifact of the software program used by the

agency. No payments are going to anyone in that category; Social Security automatically ceases payments to anyone who has reached the age of 115. The chief bug in the system is Musk’s ignorance.

By the way, the search for waste, fraud and abuse — call it WFA — has a long and discreditable history. Ronald Reagan pledged to ferret out enough WFA to cut the federal budget by more than 6% (sometimes he said 10%). One of his first steps, however, was to fire 15 departmental inspectors general, whose jobs involved finding WFA. Sound familiar? One of Trump’s first orders upon taking office was to fire inspectors general at 17 federal agencies.

Reagan impaled the so-called Grace Commission, whose chairman, industrialist J. Peter Grace, promised to unearth billions of dollars of the elusive WFA. The commission’s eventual proposals included taxing Social Security benefits, adding soy meat-extender to school lunches (\$84-million savings over three years), and eliminating the regulatory agencies that oversaw industries represented by the panel’s members.

The truth is that Social Security is one of the most efficient agencies in the federal government. Its administrative costs are one-half of one percent of its total costs, which include benefit payments.

What’s the goal of this raid on Social Security, the nation’s premier anti-poverty program and one whose beneficiaries live by the tens of thousands in every congressional district in the land?

It’s as if Trump and Musk are intent on staging a natural experiment on whether Republicans can tick off or terrify 69 million Americans in one fell swoop by taking away their sustenance in old age or disability — and still win election.

They’re bound to learn, to the contrary, that there isn’t a federal program that Americans value more than Social Security. Are they dumb enough to try killing it? We shall see.

In Santa Fe, Hackman was ‘just a regular guy’

The Oscar winner and his musician wife enjoyed a simple life away from show business, friends say.

By NATHAN SOLIS

Out of the Hollywood spotlight, actor Gene Hackman painted, did Pilates and rode his bike in the Santa Fe, N.M., community where he and his wife, Betsy Arakawa, were woven into the fabric of the local community.

Friends said Hackman came to cherish the simpler life away from paparazzi and hype of the show business machine. In Santa Fe, he made friends, took part in community events and dined at the local eateries.

“He was a pretty low-key individual even though he was someone who had amazing stories to tell about Hollywood and other celebrities,” longtime friend Stuart Ashman said. “He was just a regular guy.”

But this peaceful anonymity did not follow the Oscar winner into death.

Last week, Hackman, 95, and Arakawa, 65, were found dead in their home, along with one of their three dogs. Investigators have ruled out carbon monoxide poisoning, but are awaiting toxicology results. They are working to rebuild a timeline of the couple’s final days through phone records, emails and other means.

On Tuesday, the sheriff’s office said that a “minuscule” gas leak was discovered within a stove burner in the home, but it was not a lethal amount. Still, the information was passed along to investigators.

The couple were described as private but neighborly by those who got to know them over the years.

Ashman was one of those



Associated Press

GENE HACKMAN and wife Betsy Arakawa, shown in 1993, were found dead in their home last week.

people — befriending the two-time Oscar winner nearly 30 years ago after the two ended up sitting next to each other at a community arts meeting. Ashman was director of the New Mexico Museum of Art at the time, while Hackman had a seat on the board of the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, on which he served from 1997 to 2004.

“He told me his name and I said, ‘Of course I know who you are,’” Ashman said. “He just smiled that big smile of his and our friendship went from there.”

For two years, Ashman was Hackman’s part-time egg supplier, giving him the occasional dozen from the chickens he was raising. One day, Hackman returned the favor with a painted landscape of a tree-lined river. When Ashman initially declined to take it, Hackman politely insisted.

“Gene tells me, ‘You’ve been giving me eggs for two years. I think a painting is a fair trade,’” Ashman recalled.

The two would also chat it up between Pilates classes, where they shared the same instructor.

“She would say, ‘Gene, are you here to work or do you want to visit with Stuart?’” Ashman said,

laughing.

Ashman said Hackman years ago discussed renting a home in the Florida Keys in the winter and possibly meeting up after their vacations, but then the pandemic happened, and the men drifted apart.

Longtime friend Doug Lanham didn’t think of Hackman as a movie star, but as one half of Gene and Betsy, the couple that was always helping in the community.

Their friendship also started out of happenstance. The couple went into his restaurant, Jinja Bar & Bistro, in the early 2000s, and ended up chatting with Lanham and the other owners, Lanham said. The topic of Arakawa’s cooking skills came up.

Lanham invited Arakawa to come by the next day, when the kitchen would be tasting some new recipes. Arakawa apparently had some ideas of her own.

“The next day, here comes Betsy just looking so wonderful and confident,” Lanham said. “And here comes Gene behind Betsy, lugging a cooler with all the food that Betsy was going to prepare for everyone to sample.”

Eventually, the couple

put a financial stake in the restaurant. Over the years, Hackman contributed his artworks that now hang inside, including one large piece that occupies much of a 5-by-13-foot wall.

Initially, Hackman was intimidated by the scale of that piece, Lanham said.

“You did all these movies that are great, and we got this little wall that we want to just put a piece of art on. I never heard you say you can’t do anything,” Lanham said he teased Hackman over a few beers.

But three weeks later, Hackman called the restaurant owners up to his artist studio. There they found a bunch of tropical leaves hanging from wires on the ceiling that he used as models and on the back wall a large triptych painting of a woman looking out on a sunset in a South Pacific setting.

While Arakawa marveled at the piece once it was shown, Hackman was much more subdued, Lanham said.

The reaction from customers was overall positive, but there were also critics.

“You see them crossing their arms and looking at the mural and going, ‘It’s kind of a Gauguin, look at the color. And then I’d go, ‘Oh, this is a go-Gene. Look at this color,’” Lanham said.

The couple slowed down in the last few years, according to news reports.

Arakawa and Hackman’s friends Daniel and Barbara Lenihan, along with their son Aaron, told People magazine that Hackman was “essentially kind of homebound” and had stopped riding his bike around his neighborhood. He had been showing his age in the last few months, while his wife was “in perfect health,” the family told the magazine. She tried to keep him active and engaged, including doing puzzles and yoga over Zoom.

How to contact us

(800) LA TIMES

Home Delivery and Membership Program

For questions about delivery, billing and vacation holds, or for information about our Membership program, please contact us at (213) 283-2274 or customerservices@latimes.com. You can also manage your account at myaccount.latimes.com.

Letters to the Editor

Want to write a letter to be published in the paper and online? E-mail letters@latimes.com. For submission guidelines, see latimes.com/letters.

Readers' Representative

If you believe we have made an error, or you have questions about our journalistic standards and practices, our readers' representative can be reached at readers.representative@latimes.com, (877) 554-4000 or online at latimes.com/readersrep.

Advertising

For print and online advertising information, go to

latimes.com/mediakit or call (213) 237-6176.

Reprint Requests

For the rights to use articles, photos, graphics and page reproductions, e-mail reprint@latimes.com or call (213) 237-4565.

Times In Education

To get the digital Los Angeles Times at no cost (along with our newspaper-based teaching materials), contact us at latimes.com/tie, or email Heidi.stauder@latimes.com

The Newsroom

Know something important we should cover? Send a secure tip at latimes.com/tips. To send a press release go to the newsroom directory at latimes.com/staff.

Media Relations

For outside media requests and inquiries, e-mail commsdept@latimes.com.

L.A. Times Store

Search archives, merchandise and front pages at latimes.com/store.

Los Angeles Times

A California Times Publication

Founded Dec. 4, 1881

Vol. CXLIV No. 92

LOS ANGELES TIMES (ISSN 0458-3035) is published by the Los Angeles Times, 2300 E. Imperial Highway, El Segundo, CA 90245. Periodicals postage is paid at Los Angeles, CA, and additional cities. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the above address.

Home Delivery Subscription Rates (all rates include applicable CA sales taxes and apply to most areas)

Print + unlimited digital rates: Seven-day \$28/week, \$1,456 annually. Thursday–Sunday \$16/week, \$832 annually. Thursday & Sunday \$10/week, \$520 annually. Saturday & Sunday \$9/week, \$468 annually. Sunday \$8.50/week, \$442 annually. Monday–Saturday \$18/week, \$936 annually (also includes Sundays, except 3/31, 5/26, 9/1, and 10/13). Monday–Friday \$15/week, \$832 annually.

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



Download the app. Discover more.

Los Angeles Times

Zelensky ready to work with Trump for peace

Ukraine’s leader calls Oval Office shouting match ‘regrettable’ after the White House pauses aid.

By SAMYA KULLAB AND HANNA ARHIROVA

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Tuesday that the Oval Office blowup with President Trump last week was “regrettable,” adding that he stands ready to work under Trump’s “strong leadership” to get a lasting peace.

Zelensky’s remarks — an apparent attempt to placate Trump — came in a social media post on X, hours after the White House announced a pause in military aid to Ukraine that is critical to fighting Russia’s invasion.

But later during his nightly address, Zelensky indicated that Ukraine didn’t receive direct notification from the U.S. that aid had been cut, and was seeking confirmation.

“I have instructed Ukraine’s Minister of Defense, the heads of our intelligence agencies, and our diplomats to contact their counterparts in the United States and obtain official information. People should not have to guess,” he said.

“Ukraine and America deserve a respectful dialogue and a clear position from one another. Especially when it comes to protecting lives during a full-scale war,” he added, saying that military aid had been cut once before, briefly in January.

Zelensky said Ukraine is ready to sign a deal on rare earth minerals and security with Washington.

In an apparent reference to Trump’s criticism after the contentious White House meeting on Friday that Zelensky does not want a peace deal, the Ukrainian leader said: “None of us want



ROMAN CHOP Associated Press

A UKRAINIAN soldier scans the sky for Russian drones as he gets ready to fire an M777 howitzer toward Russian positions at the front line near Donetsk.

an endless war.”

“Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring lasting peace closer. Nobody wants peace more than the Ukrainians. My team and I stand ready to work under President Trump’s strong leadership to get a peace that lasts,” he said.

Asked by reporters in Moscow about Zelensky voicing readiness for the resumption of talks, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, “It’s good, it’s positive.”

In his post, Zelensky said the Oval Office meeting “did not go the way it was supposed to be.”

“It is regrettable that it happened this way. It is time to make things right,” he added. “We would like future cooperation and communication to be constructive.”

The pause of U.S. military aid catapulted Ukraine into alarm and apprehension. Zelensky’s statement came before Trump was to address Congress later Tuesday.

“Regarding the agreement on minerals and security, Ukraine is ready to sign it in any time and in any convenient format,” Zelensky

said. “We see this agreement as a step toward greater security and solid security guarantees, and I truly hope it will work effectively.”

French President Emmanuel Macron spoke by phone successively with Trump and Zelensky, Macron’s office said, and “welcomes” the Ukrainian’s “willingness to reengage in dialogue with the U.S.” It released no details about the discussion with Trump.

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer also spoke to the Ukrainian leader and “welcomed President Zelensky’s steadfast commitment to securing peace.”

Zelensky’s post came as officials in Kyiv said they were grateful for vital U.S. help in the war and want to keep working with Washington. Ukraine’s prime minister, though, said the country still wants security guarantees to be part of any peace deal and won’t recognize Russian occupation of any Ukrainian land. Those are potential stumbling blocks for Washington and Moscow, respectively.

Ukraine and its allies are concerned Trump is pushing for a quick cease-fire that

will favor Russia, which Kyiv says cannot be trusted to honor truces.

A White House official said the U.S. was “pausing and reviewing” its aid to “ensure that it is contributing to a solution.” The order will remain in effect until Trump determines that Ukraine has demonstrated a commitment to peace negotiations, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the assistance.

The pause in U.S. aid isn’t expected to have an immediate effect on the battlefield. Ukrainian forces have slowed Russian advances along the 620-mile front line, especially in the fiercely contested Donetsk region in the east. The Russian onslaught has been costly in troops and armor but hasn’t brought a strategically significant breakthrough for the Kremlin.

Ukraine, which depends heavily on foreign help to hold back Russia’s full-scale invasion that began on Feb. 24, 2022, has feared that aid could be stopped since Trump took office.

U.S.-made Patriot air defense missile systems, for ex-

ample, are pivotal to protecting Ukraine. Just as vital is U.S. intelligence assistance, which has allowed Ukraine to track Russian troop movements and select targets.

“I feel betrayed, but this feeling is not really deep for some reason. I was expecting something like that from Trump’s side,” said a Ukrainian soldier fighting in Russia’s Kursk region, where Ukraine launched a daring incursion in August 2024 to improve its hand in negotiations. The soldier spoke by phone to the Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

On the front line, where Ukraine is struggling to fend off the larger and better-equipped Russian army, another soldier said the U.S. decision would allow further battlefield gains for Moscow.

“War is very pragmatic,” he told AP, speaking on condition of anonymity in compliance with military regulations. “If we have weapons, enough ammunition, infantry, armored vehicles and aviation — great. If not, then we’re done,” he said.

He recalled a seven-month delay in U.S. aid that ended in April 2024 but opened a door for Russia’s capture of the strategic city of Avdiivka.

U.S. support is vital because Europe cannot fully provide what Ukraine needs in air defense systems, leading to increased civilian casualties, said lawmaker Yehor Chernov.

The suspension of U.S. aid is already being felt at a hub in eastern Poland that has been used to ferry Western weapons into neighboring Ukraine, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said.

The U.S.-Ukraine relationship has taken a downturn since Trump took office and his team launched bilateral talks with Russia.

Trump had vowed during his campaign to settle the war in 24 hours, but later

changed that time frame and voiced hope that peace could be negotiated in six months.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said U.S. help is “vital” and has saved “perhaps tens of thousands” of civilian and military lives. But he emphasized that any peace agreement must be “on Ukraine’s terms.”

Ukraine wants “concrete security guarantees” from Washington, European countries and Group of 7 leading industrialized nations, he said. Giving up territory to Russia, which occupies nearly 20% of Ukraine, “is not possible” under the U.N. Charter, he said.

Noting that the U.S. has been “the chief supplier” of aid to Ukraine, Peskov said that if Washington suspends these supplies, “it will make the best contribution to peace.”

Poland’s Foreign Ministry said the U.S. had neither consulted nor informed North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries before announcing the pause.

Russia will probably try to use the halt in supplies to extend its territorial gains and strengthen its position in prospective peace talks.

Andreï Kartapolov, a retired general who heads a defense committee in parliament, told Russia’s state RIA news agency that Ukraine would exhaust its current ammunition reserves within months.

Ukraine’s European allies, meanwhile, reaffirmed their commitment to Kyiv.

The chief of the European Union’s executive proposed an \$841-billion plan to bolster defenses of EU nations and provide Ukraine with military muscle.

Kullab and Arhirova write for the Associated Press. AP writers Volodymyr Yurchuk in Kyiv, Vanessa Gera in Warsaw and Aamer Madhani, Zeke Miller and Lisa Mascaro in Washington contributed to this report.



By 
health net

Medicare Advantage & more.

MEDICARE

MEDICAID

Get Wellcare & get more benefits.

If you have Medicare and Medi-Cal, limited income, recently lost employer coverage, are turning 65, or you’ve just moved, you may be eligible for benefits you don’t have today. You may qualify for a Wellcare Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan (D-SNP) that offers you a lot more benefits and helpful support you can count on:

- & \$0 or low monthly plan premium
- & Prescription drug coverage
- & Dental coverage
- & Vision coverage
- & The all-in-one Wellcare Spendables® debit card for over-the-counter health items, gas, groceries, rent, utilities, and qualified home improvement items. Your Wellcare Spendables® debit card balance rolls over every month so you never lose a cent.



- & Twill: A self-guided digital program to focus on overall well-being and provide access to social support resources.

The coverage you need & more

Enrollment rules for many Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans (D-SNPs) have changed for 2025.

Call now to learn more and enroll today.

Remy Foster
7992764
Licensed Representative
1-818-235-6545
WellcareRep.com/7992764

Benefits and allowance amounts vary by plan. Please call for more details. Allowance amounts cannot be combined with other benefit allowances which may be on the prepaid card. Limitations and restrictions may apply.

Wellcare is the Medicare brand for Centene Corporation, an HMO, PPO, PFFS, PDP plan with a Medicare contract and is an approved Part D Sponsor. Our D-SNP plans have a contract with the state Medicaid program. Enrollment in our plans depends on contract renewal. For Wellcare CalViva Health Dual Align members: CalViva Health is a Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan (MCP) and is the Local Initiative Health Plan for Medi-Cal managed care in Fresno, Kings, and Madera Counties. CalViva Health is a full-service health plan contracting with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to provide Medi-Cal Covered Services to Medi-Cal managed care enrollees under the Two-Plan model in all zip codes in Fresno, Kings, and Madera Counties. CalViva Health contracts with Health Net Community Solutions, Inc. on a capitated basis to provide and arrange for Medi-Cal Covered Services in all zip codes in Fresno, Kings, and Madera Counties. Health Net Community Solutions, Inc. is a subsidiary of Health Net, LLC and Centene Corporation, and is the CalViva Health MCP's Contracted Administrator in all zip codes in Fresno, Kings, and Madera Counties. For accommodations of persons with special needs at meetings, call 1-877-699-3552 (TTY: 711). There is no obligation to enroll. Dental benefits work in addition to the Medi-Cal dental coverage that includes, Initial examinations, X-rays, cleanings and fluoride treatments, restorations and crowns, root canal therapy, and partial and complete dentures adjustments, repairs, and relines. For more information please contact, Medi-Cal Dental Fee-for-Service 1-800-322-6384 (TTY: 1-800-735-2922) 8:00a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday or visit <http://www.dental.dhcs.ca.gov/>. By calling this number you agree to speak with a licensed insurance agent about Medicare Products. Not affiliated with any Government agency including Medicare.

H3561_WCM_133810E_M Final2 CMS Accepted 10012024

NA5WCMAD33810E_AGNE

©Wellcare 2024



ERIC GAY Associated Press

A PRODUCE truck passes through Pharr, Texas, on the day the tariffs went into effect. Canada and China announced retaliatory taxes on U.S. goods, and Mexico said it would soon announce its own counter-tariffs.

Trump activates tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China

[**Tariffs**, from A1] and Mexico was a troubling realignment of foreign policy.

“Today the United States launched a trade war against Canada, their closest partner and ally, their closest friend,” Trudeau said at a news conference. “At the same, they are talking about working positively with Russia, appeasing Vladimir Putin, a lying, murderous dictator. Make that make sense.”

Trump, who has repeatedly spoken of Canada becoming the 51st U.S. state, replied in a social media post: “Please explain to Governor Trudeau, of Canada, that when he puts on a Retaliatory Tariff on the U.S., our Reciprocal Tariff will immediately increase by a like amount!”

To justify his tariffs, Trump has cited the trafficking of fentanyl, but he has also named illegal immigration and a desire to lure manufacturing back to the U.S.

U.S. stocks fell over fears that the tariffs would trigger a wider trade war, precisely what NAFTA and its successor, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement — signed during the first Trump administration — were meant to avert.

“It’s the very idea of free trade in North America that has been thrown out the window,” said Juan Carlos

Moreno-Brid, an economist at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. A relationship based on co-operation instead of competition, he said, “has been invalidated.”

Supply chains built up over decades — manufacturing a wide array of products including automobiles, computers and TVs, many produced with components that cross borders many times — are being thrown into disarray.

“We’re heading full bore into the buzz saw,” said Jerry Pacheco, director of the Border Industrial Assn., a trade group based in Santa Teresa, N.M., who added that the mere threat of tariffs had already had a chilling effect on cross-border business. “I’d hate to be a supply chain manager right now,” he said. “I don’t think the Trump administration understands how integrated we are.”

However, others say that Trump — who casts himself as the consummate dealmaker — isn’t likely to scrap entirely the notion that North America is stronger economically if its nations work together, and is well aware of the higher prices for U.S. consumers that could result from a trade war.

“This is a stumbling block, especially for Mexico,” Jorge Castañeda, a former foreign secretary of Mexico, said of the tariffs. “But I think the basic thrust of

North American integration will continue.”

The ex-diplomat compared the predicament faced by Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum with Trump’s tariff pledges to that of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky — who was told by Trump last week that he doesn’t have “the cards” to play in trying to end Russia’s war against his

‘We’re heading full bore into the buzz saw. I’d hate to be a supply chain manager right now.’

— JERRY PACHECO, director of the Border Industrial Assn. trade group

country.

“Mexico also has few chips to play,” Castañeda said.

While Mexico has already gone out of its way to placate Trump, Castañeda said, Washington is likely to demand more — possibly additional Mexican troops stationed permanently along the northern border, U.S. inspectors posted at Mexican seaports to help stop trafficking of precursor chemicals used in production of fentanyl, and a reduction in the growing Chinese investment in Mexico.

Sheinbaum “has no choice” but to do what Trump demands, Castañeda said.

Three decades ago, Mexico jettisoned its historically protectionist policies to embrace free trade and become largely export-dependent. The United States is now the destination of more than 80% of Mexico’s exports, with a quarter of its economy depending directly on trade with the United States.

But there were always skeptics who argued that Mexico should not put too many of its eggs in the U.S. basket, and should instead seek to broaden its trading horizons. Today, those warnings seem prescient.

Analysts said the tariffs, if prolonged, could send Mexico’s already shaky economy into recession.

“The tariffs come at the worst possible time,” said Rodrigo Aguilera, an independent economist who has warned that if work becomes scarce in Mexico, more people without proper documentation will seek to enter the U.S.

Trump’s measures threaten to upend the global economy and were expected to drive up prices for U.S. consumers, with some effects being felt almost immediately.

Sheinbaum said Tuesday that Mexico would also retaliate — but said her government will hold off on revealing which products Mexico plans to target until a public event Sunday in Mexico

City’s central plaza. Her response suggested that Mexico still seeks to avert a full-blown trade war. Sheinbaum said she hopes to speak with Trump in coming days.

“There is no motive, reason or justification that supports this decision that will affect our people and our nations,” she said at her daily news conference.

She also highlighted all that Mexico has done on immigration — helping to bring illegal border crossings to the lowest levels in years — and drug trafficking. Mexico has increased seizures of fentanyl, the synthetic opioid that has caused tens of thousands of U.S. deaths.

Last week, Mexico handed over to the United States 29 drug trafficking suspects, including Rafael Caro Quintero, the alleged mastermind of the 1985 slaying of Enrique Camarena, an undercover U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent in Mexico.

Mexico, Canada and China are the top trading partners of the United States, accounting for more than 40% of all U.S. imports. They supply the U.S. with food, medicine, cars, timber and electronics.

Experts say American consumers may find higher prices for fresh vegetables, fruits and other perishable imports in a matter of days.

For other products, prices may start to increase only as inventories are depleted. Car prices will almost surely go up. U.S. auto manufacturing is deeply intertwined with Mexico and Canada, with parts crossing the border many times. Now, those parts will be taxed 25% every time they enter the U.S.

Gas prices are also likely to rise, particularly in the Great Lakes and Rocky Mountain West, which depend on Canadian oil.

The new 10% tariffs on China add to duties that Trump imposed on Chinese imports last month, and during his first term. They are expected to hit American households because China is a big supplier of a broad range of consumer items.

Trump has acknowledged that the new tariffs could cause pain for consumers, but he has argued that they are worth it to draw manufacturing back to the U.S. and rebalance trade with the impacted countries, each of which sells more goods to the U.S. than it buys.

“Come make your product in America,” he told companies in a speech via video at the World Economic Forum this year. If not, he said, “then very simply you will have to pay a tariff.”

The tariffs upend the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, which Trump himself negotiated and which, in 2020, he praised as “the fairest, most balanced and beneficial trade agreement we have ever signed into law.”

What tariffs are and how they work — or don’t

By PAUL WISEMAN

WASHINGTON — Tariffs are in the news at the moment. Here’s what they are and what you need to know about them.

Tariffs are a tax on imports.

Tariffs are typically charged as a percentage of the price a buyer pays a foreign seller. In the United States, tariffs are collected by Customs and Border Protection agents at 328 ports of entry across the country.

U.S. tariff rates vary: They are generally 2.5% on passenger cars, for instance, and 6% on golf shoes. Tariffs can be lower for countries with which the United States has trade agreements. Before the U.S. began imposing 25% tariffs on goods from Canada and Mexico as of Tuesday, most goods moved between the United States and those countries tariff-free because of President Trump’s U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement.

Mainstream economists are generally skeptical about tariffs, considering them an inefficient way for governments to raise revenue.

There’s much misinformation about who actually pays tariffs.

Trump is a proponent of tariffs, insisting that they are paid for by foreign countries. In fact, it is importers — American companies — that pay tariffs, and the money goes to the U.S. Treasury. Those companies typically pass their higher costs on to their customers in the form of higher prices. That’s why economists say consumers usually end up footing the bill for tariffs.

Still, tariffs can hurt foreign countries by making their products pricier and harder to sell abroad. Foreign companies might have to cut prices — and sacrifice profits — to offset the tariffs and try to maintain their market share in the U.S.

Yang Zhou, an economist at Shanghai’s Fudan University, concluded in a study that Trump’s tariffs on Chinese goods inflicted more than three times as much damage to the Chinese economy as they did to the U.S. economy.

What has Trump said about tariffs?

Trump has said tariffs will create more factory jobs, shrink the federal deficit, lower food prices and allow the government to subsidize child care.

“Tariffs are the greatest thing ever invented,” Trump said at a rally in Flint, Mich., during his presidential campaign.

During his first term, Trump imposed tariffs with a flourish — targeting imported solar panels, steel, aluminum and pretty much everything from China.

“Tariff Man,” he called himself.

The United States in recent years has gradually retreated from its post-World War II role of promoting global free trade and lower tariffs. That’s generally a response to the loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs, widely attributed to unfettered free trade and China’s ascent as a manufacturing power.

Tariffs are intended mainly to protect domestic industries.

By raising the price of imports, tariffs can protect homegrown manufacturers. They may also serve to punish foreign countries for unfair trade practices such as subsidizing their exporters or dumping products at unfairly low prices.

Before the federal income tax was established in 1913, tariffs were a major revenue source for the government. From 1790 to 1860, tariffs accounted for 90% of federal revenue, according to Douglas Irwin, a Dartmouth College economist who has studied the history of trade policy.

Tariffs fell out of favor as global trade grew after World War II. The government needed vastly bigger revenue streams to finance its operations.

In the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, the government collected about \$80 billion in tariffs and fees, a trifle next to the \$2.5 trillion that comes from individual income taxes and the \$1.7 trillion from Social Security and Medicare taxes.

Still, Trump favors a budget policy that resembles what was in place in the 19th century.

Tariffs can also be used to pressure other countries on issues that may or may not be related to trade. In 2019, for example, Trump used the threat of tariffs as leverage to persuade Mexico to crack down on waves of Central American migrants crossing Mexican territory on their way to the United States.

Trump even sees tariffs as a way to prevent wars.

“I can do it with a phone call,” he said at an August rally in North Carolina.

If another country tries to start a war, he said, he’d issue a threat:

“We’re going to charge you 100% tariffs. And all of a sudden, the president or prime minister or dictator or whoever the hell is running the country says to me, ‘Sir, we won’t go to war.’”

Economists generally consider tariffs self-defeating.

Tariffs raise costs for companies and consumers that rely on imports. They’re also likely to provoke retaliation.

The European Union, for example, punched back against Trump’s tariffs on steel and aluminum by taxing U.S. products, including bourbon and Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Likewise, China has responded to Trump’s trade war by slapping tariffs on American goods, including soybeans and pork, in a calculated drive to hurt his supporters in farm country.

A study by economists at MIT, the University of Zurich, Harvard and the World Bank concluded that Trump’s tariffs failed to restore jobs to the American heartland.

Despite Trump’s 2018 taxes on imported steel, for example, the number of jobs at U.S. steel plants barely budged: They remained right around 140,000. By comparison, Walmart alone employs 1.6 million people in the United States.

Worse, the retaliatory taxes imposed by China and other nations on U.S. goods had “negative employment impacts,” especially for farmers, the study found. These retaliatory tariffs were only partly offset by billions in government aid that Trump gave out to farmers. The Trump tariffs also damaged companies that relied on targeted imports.

If Trump’s trade war fizzled as policy, though, it succeeded as politics. The study found that support for Trump and Republican congressional candidates rose in areas most exposed to the import tariffs: the industrial Midwest and manufacturing-heavy Southern states such as North Carolina and Tennessee.

Wiseman writes for the Associated Press.



PAUL SANCYA Associated Press

TRUCKS ENTER Detroit from Canada last month. Mainstream economists are skeptical about tariffs.

LA Times STUDIOS
OC EXECUTIVE
LEADERSHIP AWARDS

HONOR ORANGE
COUNTY'S TOP
IN-HOUSE COUNSEL
& C-SUITE LEADERS

Be recognized among OC's
most influential executives. Nominate
yourself or an exceptional leader today.

SCAN THE QR
CODE TO
NOMINATE

Produced by LA Times Studios.
Content does not involve the Los Angeles Times newsroom.

Arab leaders back postwar plan to let Gazans stay

Support represents rejection of President Trump’s push to oust Palestinians from strip.

By **SAMY MAGDY AND MOHAMMAD JAHJOUH**

CAIRO — Arab leaders on Tuesday endorsed Egypt’s postwar plan for the Gaza Strip that would allow its roughly 2 million Palestinians to remain, in a counterproposal to President Trump’s plan to depopulate the territory and redevelop it as a beach destination.

It was unclear whether Israel or the United States would accept the Egyptian plan, whose endorsement by Arab leaders, announced by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Sisi, amounted to a widespread rejection of Trump’s proposal. The office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declined to comment.

Tuesday’s summit in Cairo included the emir of Qatar, the vice president of the United Arab Emirates and the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia — countries whose support is crucial for any postwar plan. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres also attended.

Addressing the summit, Sisi said that the plan “preserves the right of Palestinian people in rebuilding their nation and guarantees their existence on their land.”

Arab League chief Ahmed Aboul Gheit said the summit’s final communicate calls on the U.N. Security Council to deploy an international peacekeeping force in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

“Peace is the Arabs’ strategic option,” he said at a news conference, adding that the communicate rejected the transfer of Palestinians and endorsed Egypt’s reconstruction plan.

“The Egyptian plan creates a path for a new security and political context in Gaza,” he said.

Israel has embraced what it says is an alternative U.S. proposal for the cease-fire and the release of hostages seized during the militant group Hamas’ attack in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, which triggered the war. Israel has blocked the entry of food, fuel, medicine and other supplies to Gaza to try to get Hamas to accept the new proposal and has warned of additional conse-



JEHAD ALSHRAFI Associated Press

EGYPT said its plan preserves Palestinians’ right to rebuild and “guarantees their existence on their land.” Above, Gaza’s Shati camp.

quences, raising fears of a return to fighting.

The suspension of aid drew widespread criticism, with human rights groups saying that it violated Israel’s obligations as an occupying power under international law.

The new plan would require Hamas to release half its remaining hostages — the militant group’s main bargaining chip — in exchange for a cease-fire extension and a promise to negotiate a lasting truce. Israel made no mention of releasing more Palestinian prisoners — a key component of the first phase.

Egypt’s proposal

Egypt’s \$53-billion plan foresees rebuilding Gaza by 2030 without removing its population. The first phase calls for starting the removal of unexploded ordnance and clearing more than 50 million tons of rubble left by Israel’s bombardment and military offensives.

The final communicate said Egypt will host an international conference in cooperation with the United Nations for Gaza’s reconstruction, and a World Bank-overseen trust fund will be

established to receive pledges to implement the early recovery and reconstruction plan.

According to a 112-page draft of the plan obtained by the Associated Press, hundreds of thousands of temporary housing units would be set up for Gaza’s population while reconstruction takes place. The rubble would be recycled, with some of it used as infill to expand land on Gaza’s Mediterranean coast.

In the following years, the plan envisages completely reshaping the strip, building “sustainable, green and walkable” housing and urban areas, with renewable energy. It renovates agricultural lands and creates industrial zones and large park areas.

It also calls for the opening of an airport, a fishing port and a commercial port. The Oslo peace accords in the 1990s called for the opening of an airport and a commercial port in Gaza, but the projects withered as the peace process collapsed.

Under the plan, Hamas would cede power to an interim administration of political independents until a reformed Palestinian Au-

thority could assume control. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, head of the Western-backed authority and an opponent of Hamas, was attending the summit.

Israel has ruled out any role for the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and, along with the United States, has demanded Hamas’ disarmament. Hamas, which doesn’t accept Israel’s existence, has said it’s willing to cede power in Gaza to other Palestinians, but won’t give up its arms until there is a Palestinian state.

Speaking at the summit, Sisi said there is a need for a parallel path for peace to achieve a “comprehensive, just and lasting settlement” to the Palestinian cause.

“There will be no true peace without the establishment of the Palestinian state,” the Egyptian leader said. “It’s time to adopt the launching of a serious and effective political path that leads to a permanent and lasting solution to the Palestinian cause according to the resolutions of international legitimacy.”

Israel has vowed to maintain open-ended security control over both territories,

which it captured in the 1967 Middle East War and which Palestinians want for a future state. Israel’s government and most of its political class are opposed to Palestinian statehood.

Trump shocked the region last month when he suggested that Gaza’s roughly 2 million Palestinians be resettled in other countries. He said the United States would take ownership of the territory and redevelop it into a Middle Eastern “Riviera.”

Netanyahu embraced the proposal, which was roundly rejected by Palestinians, Arab countries and human rights experts, who said it would probably violate international law.

Riccardo Fabiani, North Africa director at the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based think tank, said Egypt was “trying to present a credible alternative focused on reconstruction and an indirect consultation mechanism for Hamas that could reassure Israel and the U.S.”

Medical treatment

Trump has suggested Egypt and Jordan, two close U.S. allies, could take in large

numbers of Palestinian refugees from Gaza. Both countries have adamantly rejected any such plan.

Meeting with Trump last month, King Abdullah II of Jordan offered to take in about 2,000 children for medical treatment. The first group of around 30 children, accompanied by up to two family members, left Gaza for Jordan on Tuesday, according to Nasser Hospital in the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis.

Jordan said the children are amputees and will return to Gaza when their treatment is complete. The kingdom has also set up field hospitals in Gaza and delivered aid by air and land.

The latest war began with Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack on Israel, in which militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took about 250 people hostage.

Israel’s offensive killed more than 48,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry. It doesn’t say how many were fighters, but the ministry says women and children made up more than half the dead.

Magdy and Jahjouh write for the Associated Press.

U.N. says over 200 children raped in Sudan since 2024

Victims include boys, and sexual violence is being used as tactic of war, agency reports.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO — Children in conflict-ravaged Sudan as young as a year old have been raped since the beginning of 2024, according to the United Nations children’s agency on Tuesday. It said sexual violence is being used as a tactic of war.

UNICEF said 221 children, including boys, were raped by armed men, according to records compiled by gender-based violence service providers in the North African nation.

The war in Sudan broke out in April 2023 between the military and its rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces with battles in Khartoum and around the country. Since then, at least 20,000 people have been killed, though the number is

probably far higher. The war has driven more than 14 million people from their homes and pushed parts of the country into famine.

Right groups say that atrocities, including sexual violence and forced child marriages, have been committed by both sides. An estimated 61,800 children have been internally displaced since the war began, UNICEF reported last month.

On Tuesday, the agency reported documented cases involving children who were raped during attacks on cities.

More than 30% of the child rape victims were boys, UNICEF said. The victims include 16 children under the age of 5 and four infants. The cases were reported in the states of Gedaref, Kassala, Gezeira, Khartoum, River Nile, Northern State, South Kordofan, North Darfur and West Darfur.

Of the 221 children raped, 73 cases were conflict-related and 71 were not, while the others were unidentified, Tess Ingram, a spokes-



TESS INGRAM UNICEF

THE VICTIMS include 16 children under age 5 and four infants. Above, a rape victim at a UNICEF office.

person with UNICEF, told the Associated Press.

“In a culture of really serious social stigma and at a time when access to services has been severely hampered, the fact that this group came forward tells us that it is only a small sample,” she said.

“It is only the tip of the iceberg of what are undoubtedly hundreds more children who have been

raped.”

Survivors are often reluctant to report that they were subject to sexual violence due to stigma and fear of retribution from armed groups and rejection from family.

UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said in the report that sexual violence, including rape, is “being used as a tactic of war” in violation of interna-

tional law and laws protecting children.

The SIHA Network, a nonprofit organization that documents violence against women and girls, said last month that around 23% of the conflict-related sexual violence it documented since the war began involved girls. In South Kordofan, a boy was raped at gunpoint and several children, including a 6-year-old, were also raped. They were all out picking fruit.

Ingram, who was in Sudan in December, said she met with victims who “endured horrors that no person would want to experience in their lifetime, and in the aftermath of those horrors, their suffering doesn’t stop.”

She said many of them dealt with physical injuries and “serious psychological scars,” including a girl who experienced seizures linked to her trauma and others who told Ingram they attempted suicide.

A girl from Omdurman who gave recorded testi-

mony to UNICEF, which was shared with the AP, said she moved multiple times looking for shelters as some displacement centers would turn her away after learning that she was impregnated by her rapist.

An unidentified woman abducted by armed men recounted in a video testimony harrowing details of her 19 days of captivity in a room with four other women and girls. She was severely beaten and along with the others forced to cook and clean for the men detaining them. She said she wanted to kill herself.

She recounted how one of the girls, a 15-year-old, was detained after being kidnapped by two men who forced her to swallow pills. The girl would often be transferred to another room for rape by random men.

“I heard her screams, while she was getting raped. Every time she was raped and came back to our room she was covered with blood,” the woman said while crying and hyperventilating.

Justices skeptical of Mexico’s case against American gun makers

By **DAVID G. SAVAGE**

WASHINGTON — President Trump blames Mexico for fentanyl and other dangerous drugs that come across the southern border.

But Mexico blames the United States and its gun makers for arming the drug cartels with high-powered, military-style rifles that cross the border from the north.

“Mexico has one gun store in the entire nation, yet the nation is awash in guns,”

lawyers for the Mexican government told the U.S. Supreme Court.

They said these American-made assault weapons are used to “assassinate politicians, attack the military and kill and injure judges, journalists, police and ordinary citizens.”

The issue was before the Supreme Court on Tuesday because the Mexican government sought the help of U.S. courts. It sued seven gun makers and a gun distributor in a federal court in Massachusetts seeking bil-

lions in damages and new limits on the marketing of military-style weapons.

To the surprise of the gun industry, Mexico won a preliminary round in the U.S. Court of Appeals in Boston.

Congress in 2005 adopted a law that shields gun makers and gun sellers from liability for murders, crimes and other harm caused by the “unlawful misuse” of a firearm.

A federal judge dismissed Mexico’s lawsuits based on the shield law, but the appeals court disagreed. The

three-judge panel cited the allegations that the gun makers chose to supply the violent drug cartels by sending huge numbers of military-style weapons to dealers along the border.

“One dealer knowingly sold 650 guns to straw purchasers recruited by a drug cartel after advising the purchasers on how to evade law enforcement,” they told the court.

However, the justices voted to hear an appeal from the gun makers, and they sounded inclined to dismiss

the suit.

“It’s hard to imagine a suit more clearly barred by” the shield law passed by Congress, said Washington attorney Noel Francisco. “Mexico has sued a group of leading American firearms companies, seeking to hold them liable under Mexican law for harms incurred by the Mexican government as a result of Mexican drug cartels committing crimes with firearms in Mexico.”

During Tuesday’s argument, most of the justices, liberal and conservative,

sounded skeptical of Mexico’s lawsuit.

Justice Clarence Thomas questioned whether there was any evidence that the gun makers had violated the law.

Justice Elena Kagan said it was not clear that gun makers are working with or were responsible for dealers who are selling guns along the border.

It will be several months before the court hands down a decision in the case of Smith & Wesson vs. Estados Unidos Mexicanos.

Pick to lead FDA has made his name decrying it

Marty Makary's views align with those of his would-be boss, Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

By Matthew Perrone

WASHINGTON — Dr. Marty Makary rose to national attention by skewering the medical establishment in books and papers and bashing the federal response to COVID-19 on TV. Now the Johns Hopkins University surgeon and researcher has been nominated to lead the Food and Drug Administration. The agency — responsible for regulating a range of products including toothpaste and vaccines — is famously understated, issuing carefully worded statements devoid of opinion or scientific speculation.

That's the opposite approach of Makary, whose sweeping rhetoric and biting criticism often veer into hyperbole, according to an Associated Press review of recent speeches, interviews and podcast appearances.

Makary has called the U.S. food supply “poison,” says the federal government is the “greatest perpetrator of misinformation” about COVID-19 and regularly suggests that pesticides, fluoride and overuse of antibiotics may be to blame for rising rates of infertility, attention deficit disorder and other health conditions. He'll appear Thursday before a Senate panel considering his nomination.

Makary's views align with those of the man who would be his boss: Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the U.S. Health secretary who built a following by sowing doubts about vaccines, ultraprocessed foods and fluoride. Notably, Makary has never embraced Kennedy's discredited idea that vaccines might cause autism.

Experts who have worked with Makary say his contrarian approach could be useful at the FDA — but only if he's able to resist political pressure from Kennedy and others on hot-button issues like vaccines.



House Oversight Committee

MARTY MAKARY, the nominee to lead the Food and Drug Administration, has called the U.S. food supply “poison” and says the federal government is the “greatest perpetrator of misinformation” about COVID-19.

“He has this reputation of being someone who cares about evidence and transparency,” said Dr. Reshma Ramachandran of Yale University, who was part of an informal research group with Makary. “The question is whether he's going to preserve and defend the integrity of the agency or is he going to fall in line with the administration.”

Makary did not respond to an AP interview request.

Critic of pandemic safety measures

Trained as a pancreatic surgeon, Makary focused his initial work on uncontroversial topics such as hospital costs and surgical checklists.

In 2016, he made headlines with a paper stating that medical errors were “the third leading cause of death in the U.S.” That conclusion was quickly disputed by other experts, who said the paper's death estimate was 10 times higher than

more rigorous reviews.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Makary reached a much broader audience as a regular on Fox News, where he opposed vaccine mandates and called the FDA “broken” and “mired in politics and red tape.”

Makary often directs his harshest criticism toward the “medical hubris” of fellow doctors, as in his latest book, “Blind Spots,” which catalogs a number of cases in which he claims experts “got the science perfectly backwards.”

For example, he examines early recommendations that parents delay giving babies peanut-based foods due to allergy risks. Today, pediatricians generally recommend earlier introduction to prevent food allergies.

Many researchers view such examples differently.

“These are cases of people doing the best they can with evolving information and needing to make decisions along the way,” said Dr. Aaron Kesselheim of Har-

vard Medical School. “As commissioner, he's going to have to be OK with making decisions based on evolving evidence — and some of those decisions might be wrong.”

Focus on pesticides and food additives

Like others in Kennedy's “Make America Healthy Again” movement, Makary says many of the chronic health problems afflicting Americans may be related to food additives, pesticides and other chemicals.

“How about research on the pesticides that have hormone effects in children that may explain the declining fertility and lowering age of puberty?” Makary asked in a podcast.

New York University food researcher Marion Nestle says Makary's questions “are extremely difficult to settle,” because there's no way to ethically do the type of research needed to reach a firm conclusion: give one

group of children food with pesticides and compare them with a control group getting food not grown with pesticides.

“I sympathize with his frustration and think we would be much better off with a lot fewer pesticides in our food supply, but I tend to view these issues more cautiously,” Nestle said.

Nutrition experts also say it's overly simplistic to declare all ultraprocessed foods harmful, since the category includes an estimated 60% of U.S. foods, including granola and ice cream.

Attacking COVID booster shots

“The greatest perpetrator of misinformation during the pandemic has been the United States government,” Makary told House lawmakers during a 2023 roundtable hosted by Republicans.

Among the many COVID-19 policies Makary attacked was the recom-

mendation for booster shots in teens and young adults, particularly boys and young men. That group received particular attention because early vaccinations showed a higher rate of myocarditis, a rare form of heart inflammation that is usually mild. Complicating the issue was the fact that COVID-19 itself also caused cases of myocarditis that were usually more severe.

A 2022 paper co-written by Makary concluded that requiring booster shots in young people would cause more injury than benefit. None of the authors specialized in studying infectious diseases or vaccine reactions.

“They made mistake after mistake, and every time it either minimized the vaccine's benefits or exaggerated the risks,” said Dr. Robert Morris of the University of Washington, who published a critique of the work. “This paper really fed the whole notion that the vaccine is worse than the disease.”

Makary's conclusion contradicted that of U.K. experts and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which estimated the booster prevented 114 hospitalizations for every seven it caused in young people. He told Congress that the CDC and FDA “lied to the American people” about the need for boosters and other COVID measures.

Dr. Paul Offit, an FDA vaccine advisor, says the Biden administration made missteps in rolling out boosters, including plans to make them available for all age groups before outside experts had weighed in. But, Offit said, Makary's language has damaged public trust in health institutions.

“It's rhetoric that's purposefully inflammatory to win over a certain crowd, which is part of today's zeitgeist of disdaining public health agencies,” Offit said. “So he's offered the position at FDA because he has disdain for the agency.”

Perrone writes for the Associated Press. AP writer Lauran Neergaard contributed to this report.



LOREN ELLIOTT For The Times

SAN FRANCISCO city and county officials argued that they should not be at fault for ocean pollution.

Justices curb EPA power over water regulation

By David G. Savage and Ian James

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court's conservative majority ruled for San Francisco on Tuesday, limiting the power of environmental regulators to prevent ocean discharges of polluted stormwater.

At issue was a regulatory dispute over the permitting standards used by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Storm runoff from coastal cities can pollute bays and the ocean, but San Francisco officials argued they should not be held responsible for ocean pollution unless it came from their wastewater treatment plants.

Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. agreed with San Francisco city and county officials and said an “end result” permit is unfair.

Even a city that “punctiliously follows every specific requirement in its permit may nevertheless face crushing penalties if the quality of the water in its receiving waters falls below the applicable standards,” he said for a 5-4 majority in San Francisco vs. EPA.

He said the EPA retains ample authority to prevent water pollution.

“If the EPA does its work,

our holding should have no adverse effect on water quality,” he wrote.

Justice Amy Coney Barrett dissented, noting that the law authorizes the EPA to enforce “any limitation” needed to protect clean water. The court's three liberals — Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson — agreed with her dissent.

The Sierra Club said the ruling “significantly hinders the EPA's authority to protect America's water.”

Sanjay Narayan, its chief appellate counsel, said the decision “ignores the basic reality of how water bodies and water pollution [work] and could stymie the ability of the EPA to implement the Clean Water Act, a bedrock environmental law that has kept water safe for the last 50 years.”

Washington attorney Kevin Minoli, a former acting general counsel at the EPA, said the decision is likely to affect many cities across the country. “It's quite common to have a permit provision that prohibits anything that ‘causes’ or ‘contributes’ to polluting the water,” he said, quoting one of the disputed provisions that the court threw out.

Two years ago, the court's conservative majority restricted the EPA's authority to protect wetlands.

Boston, Chicago, New York and Denver mayors will face a House committee.

By Rebecca Santana

WASHINGTON — Republicans in Congress are taking aim at four cities — often called “sanctuary cities” — over their policies limiting cooperation with immigration enforcement with a hearing this week that comes as President Trump presses ahead with his campaign of mass deportations.

Mayors Michelle Wu of Boston, Brandon Johnson of Chicago, Mike Johnston of Denver and Eric Adams of New York are to appear Wednesday before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

There's no strict definition for sanctuary policies or sanctuary cities, but the terms generally describe limited cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. ICE enforces U.S. immigration laws nationwide but seeks state and local help, particularly for large-scale deportations, in requesting that police and sheriffs alert it to people they want to deport and hold them for federal officers.

But some cities and states say cooperating with ICE means crime victims and witnesses who aren't in the U.S. legally won't come forward. And, to varying degrees, officials argue that they want their localities to be welcoming places for immigrants.

Courts have repeatedly upheld the legality of most sanctuary laws. But Trump administration officials have targeted sanctuary policies, seeing them as a key impediment to deporting people in large numbers. The administration has sued Chicago and Illinois as

well as New York state over various immigration laws.

The immigration policies of the four targeted cities:

Boston

The city's Trust Act generally restricts how much the police can cooperate with ICE, although it does allow some cooperation with a division called Homeland Security Investigations when it comes to such issues as combating human trafficking or drug and weapons trafficking.

The city also must follow a 2017 ruling by the state's highest court that forbids Massachusetts authorities from holding a person otherwise entitled to release from custody based solely on a federal request.

Those requests, called detainers, typically ask federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies to give at least 48 hours' notice before suspected immigrants are released from jail — or to hold them for up to 48 hours after they would normally be released so ICE can pick them up. Otherwise, ICE must go out into the community to arrest them.

Trump's border czar, Tom Homan, hammered Boston's police commissioner and promised to go to Boston and “bring hell.”

That has not sat well in Boston.

Wu, a Democrat up for reelection this year, said that it was “clueless” and “insulting” for Homan to attack the police commissioner and that she wants Boston to be a welcoming place for immigrants.

Chicago

Chicago has some of the country's strongest immigrant protections, barring cooperation between federal agents and city employees, including police.

The nation's third-largest city became a sanctuary location in the 1980s and has amped up its policies multiple times since. That in-

cludes a 2012 ordinance that bars federal agents from accessing city resources in assisting with immigration operations.

City officials beefed up protections after Trump first took office in 2017 and again in 2020, when it required police to document requests for assistance from federal agents. Illinois also has protections allowing anyone, regardless of immigration status, to get a driver's license.

Johnson, who took office in 2023, inherited a migrant crisis his first year. Short on shelter space, Chicago's leaders used police station lobbies, airports, parked buses and hotels to house asylum seekers.

At its height, roughly 15,000 migrants lived in dozens of temporary shelters, although the city has closed those as the number of people arriving decreased.

There have been a handful of City Council attempts to weaken Chicago's sanctuary protections, but they have been unsuccessful.

Denver

Denver became a hub for migrants coming across the U.S.-Mexico border, with the city seeing arrivals of 43,000 over the last two years.

Johnston struggled to cobble together the resources to house and feed them, gouging parts of the city budget and pleading with the federal government alongside other mayors for funding, which only partially came.

The spotlight intensified when a video of armed men in an apartment building in the Denver suburb of Aurora went viral, prompting then-candidate Trump to claim that the city of some 400,000 people was overrun by a Venezuelan gang. The idea was swiftly repudiated by local officials, but the limelight stayed on Colorado.

In early February, heavily armed federal agents in masks and armored vehicles

appeared across the metro area. The results of the operation are unclear, and Homan said news media leaks hindered the raids.

The mayor has repeated that he wants Denver to be a welcoming place while drawing the line at those who commit violent crimes.

New York

In New York City, an estimated 231,000 immigrants have arrived since 2022 — at a cost that the city estimates to be more than \$7 billion for shelters, food, security and legal support.

Last month, the city sued the Trump administration over \$80.6 million in reimbursements for congressionally approved immigrant aid after officials paid the money and then clawed it back.

As in other cities, New York's immigrant arrivals have fallen dramatically over the last year.

Mayor Eric Adams continues to voice support for policies that ensure all residents have access to social services regardless of immigration status.

But Adams wants to roll back policies prohibiting city employees from working with immigration enforcement, saying he wants to “remove dangerous people from our streets.” He's also called on the City Council to make changes allowing New York to honor ICE detainer requests to hold people in jails beyond their release dates. And he's invited ICE agents to work out of the Rikers Island city jail.

Adams' critics say his desire to work with the White House is an effort to wriggle out of federal corruption charges.

Santana writes for the Associated Press. AP writers Cedar Attanasio and Jennifer Peltz in New York, Jesse Bedayn in Denver, Sophia Tareen in Chicago and Michael Casey in Boston contributed.

Bureau of Reclamation hit by major job cuts

[Water, from A1]
fornia-Great Basin Region. Those taking the buyouts are set to leave in March and be paid through September under the program, which Musk is leading.

Unions representing federal employees have challenged the program in court.

Internal documents reviewed by The Times show that the positions being eliminated include maintenance mechanics, engineers, fish biology specialists and others.

“It’s going to significantly impact our operations,” said one Bureau of Reclamation employee.

Musk’s DOGE team didn’t respond to a request for comment. The staff cutbacks were reported previously by Politico.

The loss of jobs at the agency worries leaders of California water districts. Managers of 14 water agencies in the Central Valley warned in a Feb. 25 letter to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum and acting Reclamation Commissioner David Palumbo that making such major reductions at the Bureau of Reclamation would “compromise its ability to fulfill its mission of delivering water and power.”

“Reclamation’s employees in this region have critical knowledge of the many quirks of our aged infrastructure. This knowledge is absolutely *essential* to assuring the continued safe and reliable delivery of water throughout the state,” the water agency managers said in their letter. “A reduction in force that eliminates Reclamation employees with the specialized knowledge needed to manage, operate, and maintain our aging infrastructure could negatively impact our water delivery system and threaten public health and safety.”

The water agencies that registered concerns include agricultural suppliers such as the Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District and municipal suppliers such as the Contra Costa Water District. The agencies receive water from the federally operated Central Valley Project, a system



BRIAN VANDER BRUG Los Angeles Times

MANAGERS of 14 Central Valley water agencies warned in a letter written Feb. 25 that the reductions at the Bureau of Reclamation would “compromise its ability to fulfill its mission of delivering water and power.”

of more than 20 dams and reservoirs that extends more than 400 miles and delivers water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to farmlands and communities in the San Joaquin Valley.

Sandy Day, the Bureau of Reclamation’s chief of public affairs, said the agency “remains focused on providing essential water and hydro-power to Americans across the 17 Western states.”

“While we do not comment on personnel matters, we are committed to en-

hancing workforce management and are collaborating closely with the Office of Personnel Management to embrace new opportunities for optimization and innovation,” Day said in an email.

Large agricultural water agencies in the Central Valley have supported President Trump’s recent order for the federal government to “maximize” water deliveries.

The 14 water agencies said in their letter that they are ready to collaborate with the Interior Department

and the Bureau of Reclamation “to develop a strategic and thoughtful approach to implement actions in accordance with the President’s policies while protecting, maintaining, and efficiently and effectively operating the vital infrastructure.”

The Bureau of Reclamation operates major California dams including the Shasta Dam, as well as the C.W. “Bill” Jones Pumping Plant, which draws water from the Delta and sends it flowing south in the Delta-

Mendota Canal.

The Regional Water Authority, made up of municipal water suppliers in the Sacramento area, has also told the Trump administration that staff cuts to the Bureau of Reclamation would “impair the agency’s ability” to operate and maintain water infrastructure and bring “risks to public safety.”

Jim Peifer, the authority’s executive director, wrote in a Feb. 24 letter to Burgum and Palumbo, “The flood control element of public safety and the disruption to

the nation’s food supply should be considered.” He noted that the Bureau of Reclamation’s water deliveries are critical for agriculture and that, this year, the agency’s infrastructure has protected the Sacramento region from dangerous flooding.

“It is no secret that our water supply infrastructure is badly outdated and in need of upgrading,” Peifer wrote. “A reduction in force that eliminates Reclamation employees with the specialized knowledge needed to move water through our aging infrastructure could cripple our water delivery system and create a significant safety risk.”

Peifer said that the organization is already “extremely lean on staffing” and that further workforce cuts would put people who live near dams in danger.

The staff cuts at the Bureau of Reclamation coincide with similar mass firings at other agencies, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Weather Service. The firings have been condemned by Democrats, scientists and former government employees as a destructive effort that will undermine vital work, from delivering weather alerts to managing fisheries and protecting beaches from pollution.

Gordon Lyford, a former employee of the Bureau of Reclamation who is now vice president of the Water League, a nonprofit advocacy group, said the federal water infrastructure is complex and requires specialized knowledge to operate.

He noted that Shasta and Friant dams, for example, were built in the 1940s, and they increasingly need repairs and inspections to ensure safety. “Having too few employees can increase the chance of a disaster or failure,” Lyford said.

“The current cuts in employees make no sense. There was no evaluation or planning, just cutting a lot at one time,” he said. “It just harms the country and the economy.”

Be prepared before the next power outage.



It’s not just a generator.
It’s a power move.™

Receive a free 5-year warranty with qualifying purchase* – valued at \$535.

Call 626-478-0017
to schedule your free quote!

GENERAC®

*Terms and Conditions apply.

BUSINESS

Trump’s tariffs are likely to end up on your plate

25% duty will be added to Mexican avocados, beer and tequila — all popular in California

By SEEMA MEHTA

That extra dab of guacamole on a burrito is likely to cost more in coming days.

President Trump’s new tariffs, which went into effect Tuesday as scheduled, are expected to increase the price of Mexican avocados, beer and tequila — all very popular imports among Californians.

The state’s business owners and consumers expect costs and tabs to surge.

“We’re bracing,” said Luis Navarro, the owner of two Mexican restaurants in Long Beach named after his late mother, Lola. “Immediately, we started trying to figure out what our reaction was going to be because we’re going to be directly impacted. [And] we sell a lot of tequila.”

Alcohol and produce sellers urged Navarro to place orders before Saturday, when Trump’s 25% tariff on Mexican imports was initially expected to go into effect.

The tariffs were first proposed in early February and then delayed for 30 days on Mexican and Canadian imports in response to concessions from the two nations on immigration issues. Trump ordered the tariffs to take effect Tuesday because of the continued influx of drugs, notably fentanyl, across American borders, the president said last week.

“We cannot allow this scourge to continue to harm the USA, and therefore, until it stops, or is seriously limited, the proposed TARIFFS scheduled to go into effect on MARCH FOURTH will, indeed, go into effect, as scheduled,” Trump posted on Truth Social, his social media platform, on Thursday.

On Monday, Trump reiterated that the 25% tariffs on Mexican and Canadian goods as well as an additional 10% tariff on Chinese goods would go into effect as planned.

Even before the tariffs took effect, prices started rising.

The wholesale cost of a crate of 48 large avocados increased from \$75 to \$85 last week, Navarro said.

He worried that he will have no choice but to raise the prices on his enchiladas suizas, which are garnished with a fan of avocado slices, as well as his spicy watermelon margaritas and Mexican mules.

“Modelo Especial is the



ERIC THAYER For The Times

A WORKER prepares guacamole at Lola’s restaurant in Long Beach. Lola’s owner, Luis Navarro, says he may have no choice but to raise menu prices because of the new tariffs on Mexican products including avocados.

No. 1 selling beer in the restaurants. All of the avocados we get, all our dried chiles and our beans, a lot of that stuff is coming from Mexico. It’s a tough one,” Navarro said, adding that these cost increases occur in the aftermath of pandemic shutdowns, inflation, minimum-wage increases and growing insurance costs.

Restaurant chains may be more likely to weather the increased costs than mom-and-pop outfits.

Chipotle Chief Executive Scott Boatwright said the fast-casual Mexican restaurant does not plan to raise its guacamole prices, though he cautioned that this may change depending on how long the tariffs remain in effect.

“We don’t think it’s fair to the consumer to pass those costs off to the consumer, because pricing becomes permanent,” he told “NBC Nightly News” on Sunday. “That’s our intent this year. Let’s hold pricing constant, because we don’t know if the tariffs are transitory, if they’re going to be permanent, how sticky they’ll be in the new administration.”

In 2024, Mexico exported \$505.9 billion of goods to the United States, according to the Office of the United

States Trade Representative. Top exports include vehicles, machinery and produce, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. In addition to avocados, other top agricultural imports include tomatoes, strawberries, raspberries and peppers, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Economists with the Brookings Institution think tank have predicted that the tariffs will reduce the United States’ gross domestic product, employment, wages and exports while increasing inflation, particularly if the targeted nations responded with retaliatory tariffs. Canada and China did so Tuesday while Mexico is expected to announce its plans Sunday after Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and Trump have a phone call this week.

Californians are the nation’s top consumer of Mexican avocados, importing \$602 million of the Hass variety in the 2023-24 fiscal year, according to a report by Texas A&M professors for the Mexican Hass Avocado Import Assn.

Beyond being mashed to create guacamole, avocados have become an American culinary staple because of

their creamy texture and healthy fat and fiber content — exemplified by the ubiquity of avocado toast on Southland brunch menus.

Per-capita consumption in the United States has grown from 1.5 pounds in 1998 to more than 9 pounds in 2023, according to a University of Florida report. And although American farmers once grew nearly all of the avocados consumed here, 9 out of 10 avocados currently consumed in this country are imported from Mexico, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“Americans consume a lot of avocados, and virtually all of the avocados we consume come from Mexico,” said Mark Jones, a political science professor at Rice University in Houston who focuses on public policy in Latin America.

He said that while costs will certainly increase, the amount will depend on how much exporters, importers, wholesalers, retailers and grocers absorb the extra cost.

“The idea of tariffs often sounds good in the abstract for many Americans, the idea of protecting United States industries and protecting the United States

from foreign competition,” Jones said. “Avocados provide a concrete example: When you have tariffs, consumers pay more for the goods and services they consume.”

First Step Fitness gym owner Javier Torres, 33, said potential price spikes will affect his life for two reasons: his work as a personal trainer, because he urges his clients to eat avocados for their nutritional content, and his Mexican roots.

“This will affect every aspect of my life, in the sense of what we eat and how we eat, and what we’ve been eating forever,” said Torres, a Long Beach resident.

The tariffs, depending on how long they remain in place, could affect the price of other produce later in the year because of the growing seasons in different locales, such as berries. More immediately, they will affect Mexican beer and tequila; the latter can be produced only from blue agave plants in the state of Jalisco and a handful of other swaths of Mexico.

Americans are the largest consumers of tequila, and Californians drink the most — roughly 6.3 million 9-liter cases in 2023, according to Statista, which tracks

market and consumer data.

Chris Swonger, president and CEO of the Distilled Spirits Council, said that although it supports Trump’s efforts to secure the border, crack down on fentanyl, increase American manufacturing and reduce trade deficits, the tariffs will have a disproportionate effect on his industry because of its unique nature.

“You can’t make tequila in the United States,” he said.

The council has been working with its counterparts in Mexico and Canada to try to stop a trade war over liquor exports, Swonger said. He added that tariffs on tequila and Canadian whisky probably would result in reciprocal tariffs that harm American craft distillers, whose numbers have increased exponentially in recent decades, including in California.

“If we get caught in a tit-for-tat trade dispute with tariffs, it will have a significant impact,” Swonger said. “It will impact American consumers — it will have an impact on prices.”

Brad Sims, 52, an engineering consultant, said he’s most concerned about how the tariffs affect the price of tequila. The Republican said he voted for Trump in 2016 and 2024 because of his economic views despite disliking the president.

“I don’t need him to be my moral compass. I don’t need him to be my pastor. I’m more concerned about things that affect me personally, selfishly — taxes, inflation,” Sims said. “And if he can help control those, I’ll be happy. But it remains to be seen at this point.”

Sims made the comment while he was lunching with Matt Troyka, a Democrat who voted for Kamala Harris in 2024.

Despite their differing political views, the Long Beach residents said they viewed the tariffs as a strategic effort by Trump to force concessions from the nation’s largest trading partners.

“I think there’s a lot of positioning, a lot of posturing,” said Troyka, a 52-year-old marketer for food companies. “He probably knows that it’s not a good idea long term.”

Although Troyka said he would be irked if he sees an extra charge for guacamole, it comes at a time when many costs have increased.

“Everything’s going up,” he said.

Oscars 2025 surprise: Viewership increases slightly to 19.7 million

By STEPHEN BATTAGLIO

The audience for Sunday’s Oscars telecast saw a slight uptick from last year despite the lack of blockbuster box-office hits among the front-runners.

Updated Nielsen data issued Tuesday showed the ceremony at the Dolby Theatre averaged 19.7 million viewers for ABC and sister streaming service Hulu, an increase of 200,000 from the 2024 figure.

Walt Disney Co.-owned ABC released data late Monday showing the telecast was down around 8% to 18 million viewers. But Nielsen then tallied viewing from mobile streaming devices, which added 1.6 million people, erasing the decline.

The added viewing from

digital devices may have been the result of the decision to make the Oscars telecast available to stream on Hulu, which is also owned by Disney. In the past, the Oscars was streamed only on ABC.com, which required a pay-TV subscription.

ABC did not break out the numbers for Hulu viewing. But based on the audience growth among the 18-to-49 age group — up 19% from last year — Hulu clearly helped lift the total as younger consumers are more likely to stream video programming.

The revised figures assuaged fears that fewer viewers would show up for a broadcast that largely celebrated indie film hits such as “Anora,” which won best picture and four other awards.

Last year, the average au-



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

MIKEY MADISON collects her lead actress trophy Sunday for “Anora.” The film won for best picture.

dience for the Oscars was 19.5 million viewers, when two blockbusters that accounted for nearly \$2.3 bil-

lion in combined box-office receipts — “Oppenheimer” and “Barbie” — were featured throughout the night.

“Anora” director Sean Baker’s \$6-million film about a sex worker’s ill-fated romance with the son of a Russian oligarch has taken in \$16 million in domestic ticket sales. The 10 best picture nominees collectively took in \$1.6 billion in global receipts, led by Universal Pictures’ “Wicked” and Warner Bros.’ “Dune: Part Two.”

Conan O’Brien, a former staple of late-night network TV who is now a podcast mogul, was the first-time host of the ceremony.

The audience for the Oscars hit an all-time low of 10.5 million in 2021, when live awards shows were hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The telecast — which attracted nearly 30 million viewers as recently as 2019 —

has seen its audience shrink as younger viewers eschew live three-hour-plus telecasts for clips on social media. It still attracts enough viewers to be one of the highest-rated nonsports programs of the year.

The 2022 show bounced back from the low ratings when Will Smith walked on the stage and struck presenter Chris Rock. That was the year the Sundance hit “CODA” won best picture.

The Hulu stream experienced technical problems for some viewers, cutting out before “Anora” star Mikey Madison collected her lead actress trophy and her film was named best picture. The stream stopped at 10:30 p.m. Eastern time, the scheduled end for the telecast, which continued for an additional 20 minutes.

The Oscars are notorious for running well over the 3½-hour period ABC allots for the telecast. The program began at 7 p.m. Eastern this year for the second time to stem the loss of viewers that typically occurs after 11 p.m.

Disney apologized for the service interruption and is offering the full telecast for on-demand viewing.

The show opened with Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande performing “Defying Gravity” from “Wicked,” the biggest commercial hit in contention. There also was a tribute to the first responders involved in the Los Angeles-area fire rescue efforts, with two LAFD officials making showbiz gags onstage.

Politico veteran Eugene Daniels joining MSNBC as a host

By STEPHEN BATTAGLIO

Eugene Daniels, a White House correspondent for Politico, is joining MSNBC full time as a host.

The Comcast Corp.-owned news channel announced Monday that Daniels, 36, will join the morning edition of “The Weekend,” a three-hour program airing Saturdays and Sundays. He will be joined by Washington Post journalist Jonathan

Capehart and another co-host to be named soon.

The current hosts of “The Weekend” — Michael Steele, Alicia Menendez and Symone Sanders-Townsend — are moving to the 7 p.m. Eastern weekday time period vacated by Joy Reid. The new program will begin in late April.

Daniels also will be senior Washington correspondent for MSNBC, which is building its own news operation after being part of NBC

News since its launch in 1996.

He is the first outside hire under MSNBC President Rebecca Kutler, who is leading the news network as it becomes part of a new company spun off from Comcast.

Daniels has been an MSNBC contributor since 2021, appearing on “Morning Joe.” He will leave Politico to take on his new role.

Daniels joined Politico in 2018 and was co-author of its popular morning newsletter “Politico Playbook.” He cur-

rently serves as president of the White House Correspondents Assn., a post he was elected to last year.

A Texas native, Daniels is a graduate of Colorado State University, where he was a defensive end on the football team.

While Reid was considered the most left-leaning of MSNBC’s hosts, her departure does not portend a change in direction at the network, which has a tribal following among political

progressives.

Capehart is joining “The Weekend” after having his own evening MSNBC program on Saturday and Sunday since 2020. His program will end, along with those hosted by Katie Phang and Ayman Mohyeldin, when the network’s new schedule takes effect.

Mohyeldin will be part of a new evening edition of “The Weekend.” Phang will remain with MSNBC as a legal analyst.

Bass aides were warned of high winds before fire

[Warnings, from A1]
“It didn’t reach that level to me, that something terrible could happen, and maybe you shouldn’t have gone on the trip,” she said.
Bass fired Crowley on Feb. 21, criticizing the chief’s handling of the Palisades fire, which destroyed thousands of homes and killed 12 people.
Correspondence obtained by The Times through a public records request showed that the Emergency Management Department was advising mayoral staffers of the weather outlook, in the Jan. 3 email and messages over the following days, as the forecasts grew increasingly dire.

More than a dozen Bass aides received the Jan. 3 email, which included multiple attachments from the National Weather Service. An EMD official also wrote that a “tentative calendar invite” to the Monday meeting would follow.

Deputy Mayor Zach Seidl, who received the email and oversees communications for Bass, downplayed its importance, saying it did not suggest imminent catastrophe. At that point, he said, the email was referring to a meeting that was tentative. “That is not a warning of disaster,” he said. “That sends the opposite message.”

EMD spokesperson Joseph Riser told The Times that “tentative” referred to the exact date and time of the Monday meeting, not whether it would take place.

The Jan. 3 email was sent at 2:30 p.m. by Jillian de Vela, a duty officer with the EMD, to an internal group called “EMD Adverse Weather,” which includes more than 100 officials, including firefighters, police officers, and Department of Water and Power and L.A. Unified School District employees, according to a list provided by EMD officials.

Christopher Anyakwo, who is Bass’ executive officer for emergency operations, and more than a doz-



LOS ANGELES Mayor Karen Bass listens to Altadena resident Jean Ingram talk about the loss of her home during an event to help fire victims in Bell last month.

en other Bass aides are on the EMD Adverse Weather email list. The mayor and her chief of staff are not on the list, which was provided by the EMD.

The Jan. 3 email included a 10-page attachment with a National Weather Service forecast, which featured a graphic showing a large red flame icon and the header “Critical fire conditions.” The graphic said wind gusts could reach 80 mph starting Jan. 7, which, combined with low humidity and very dry vegetation, created a major fire risk for L.A. and Ventura counties.

On Jan. 3, De Vela also directly emailed two Bass aides — Anyakwo and Jacquelyne Sandoval, the mayor’s policy director for emergency management — sending them Zoom links to the Monday meeting, which was formally known as an adverse weather coordination call.

Seidl, in an email to The Times, said no one from Bass’ staff told her about the information in the Jan. 3 email. He declined to say whether any aides advised Bass of the worsening weather conditions while she was in Ghana.

Seidl also did not respond to a question about whether the information in the Jan. 3 email raised concerns in the mayor’s office or was serious enough to warrant canceling the Ghana trip. Instead, he repeated the mayor’s assertion that Crowley should have contacted her about the weather.

“Before other major weather emergencies, the Mayor — or at minimum, the Mayor’s Chief of Staff — has received a direct call from the Fire Chief, flagging the severity of the situation. This time, that call never came,” he said.

Crowley has repeatedly

declined to weigh in on the mayor’s allegations in recent days, saying she is “extremely proud of the work” performed by city firefighters. Los Angeles Fire Department officials have said they followed protocol before and during the fire.

City Councilmember Monica Rodriguez, a Crowley supporter, said the Jan. 3 emails — the group email and the ones to the two Bass aides — show that EMD officials were advising Bass’ team of the potential for dangerous fire weather before she left the country.

“She keeps saying, ‘I wouldn’t have left had I known.’ But her staff did know,” Rodriguez said. “This verifies that her staff was notified of the potential threat by EMD, whose responsibility it is to let us know of these potential weather events.”

The EMD, one of the city’s smaller departments,

monitors and distributes weather warnings to an array of agencies and elected officials. In 2024, the EMD organized 20 adverse weather coordination calls, according to the agency.

The mayor is responsible for supervising the EMD, according to the 2024 edition of the city’s Elected Official Emergency Response Handbook. The department’s duty officer, a position that rotates among staffers, is charged with notifying “relevant stakeholders” — including the mayor’s team — about preparations that have been made before threatening weather conditions, according to the agency’s 123-page adverse weather guidebook.

The duty officer collects information about weather forecasts, such as heat waves, atmospheric rivers and high winds, and may recommend initiating an adverse weather coordination conference call, according to EMD guidelines.

In the final days of December, the National Weather Service began conducting 1 p.m. briefings on the fire risk, inviting fire departments and emergency preparedness agencies from L.A. and Ventura counties.

The first “fire call” took place Dec. 30, followed by another on Jan. 2, said Susan Buchanan, a spokesperson for the National Weather Service. After that, the afternoon conference calls occurred daily, followed by a daily webinar for the media and others, she said.

On Jan. 2, two days before Bass’ flight to Ghana, the weather service warned during its fire call of the potential for a “DAMAGING OFFSHORE WIND EVENT” in L.A. and Ventura counties and the “long duration of Red Flag conditions,” according to a chronology provided by the weather agency.

The forecast included a 50% chance of a strong wind event starting Jan. 7, with peak gusts of up to 80 mph.

On Jan. 3, the chance of a strong, sustained wind event starting Jan. 7 had in-

creased to 60%, with gusts potentially exceeding 80 mph.

On Sunday, Jan. 5, the day after Bass left for Ghana, forecasters replaced the red flame icon with a purple one, upping the fire risk to the highest level, “extreme.”

That day, De Vela emailed the EMD Adverse Weather group, advising of the extreme fire conditions forecast.

On Jan. 6 at 11 a.m., the National Weather Service ratcheted up its warning again, saying on X: “HEADS UP!!! A LIFE-THREATENING, DESTRUCTIVE, Widespread Windstorm is expected Tue afternoon-Weds morning across much of Ventura/LA Co.”

Three hours later, the meeting De Vela referenced in her Jan. 3 emails took place.

According to Seidl, two people from the mayor’s office participated in the Zoom: Sandoval and press secretary Gabby Maarse.

In a seven-page summary of the Jan. 6 meeting, emergency management officials compared the coming winds to the fierce windstorm that battered the region in December 2011.

“This windstorm event has the potential to produce life-threatening and destructive wind gusts of 80 to 100 mph,” said the summary, which was obtained through The Times’ public records request.

That document listed storm preparations planned by various city agencies, including the Department of Water and Power and the Department of Recreation and Parks. The Fire Department was slated to “pre-deploy field resources” ahead of the extreme Santa Ana winds.

Bass returned from Ghana shortly before noon on Jan. 8, more than 24 hours after the Palisades fire erupted. She told reporters she took the “fastest route back,” staying in contact with public safety officials as she traveled.

California bill seeks to expand protections for migrant workers

Measure requires contracted foreign labor recruiters to register, follow rules against exploitation.

BY SUHAUNA HUSSAIN



GERARDO RIVERA of Mexicali, Mexico, works with other visa holders on a California farm in 2017.

well as that recruiters pay bonds to cover funds for any potential violations, and prohibits retaliation against workers exercising their labor rights.

However, only a sliver of foreign labor recruiters who bring in those migrant workers are subject to these rules, said Stephanie Richard, director at the Sunita Jain Anti-Trafficking Initiative, an organization at Loyola Law School that is backing the newly introduced legislation.

During the regulatory process to hash out how SB 477 would be enforced, the law was narrowly interpreted to apply only to H-2B visas, she said.

Out of the roughly 350,000 migrant workers who come to California employed through temporary work visa programs, only about 5,000 are brought through H-2B visas, according to Kalra’s office.

AB 1362 would extend existing protections to foreign labor contractors recruiting for all other temporary work visa programs, with two exceptions: recruiters for J-1 exchange visitor visas — typically used by researchers and students — and talent agency recruiters.

Richard said she believes it’s crucial that lawmakers pass these protections, given the looming threat of immigration enforcement actions by the Trump administration.

“We know that business

will demand more temporary workers if some of our workforce is deported, and that there will be less oversight from the federal government that will lead to more exploitation,” she said.

Previous efforts to amend language to expand protections to other workers on temporary work visas have been opposed by the Western Growers Assn. The business group, which represents farmers growing produce in California, Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico, generally opposes changes that it has said could slow down the process or increase the cost of bringing migrant agricultural workers to California through the H-2A visa program.

The president of the Western Growers Assn., Dave Puglia, has said in recent weeks that crucial aspects of America’s food production are increasingly strained by a lack of workers.

In a recent opinion piece for a trade publication, he wrote that the foreign visa program that helps bring workers here should be expanded to better fill the needs of farmers, and that any obstacles — whether they be threats of workplace immigration enforcement raids or bureaucratic bottlenecks — should be removed as much as possible.

The Western Growers Assn. did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the new bill.

MARKET ROUNDUP

Stocks’ post-election gains erased

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Stocks racked up more losses on Wall Street on Tuesday as a trade war between the U.S. and its key trading partners escalated, wiping out all the gains since election day for the S&P 500.

The Trump administration imposed tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico starting Tuesday and doubled tariffs against imports from China. All three countries announced retaliatory actions, sparking worries about a slowdown in the global economy.

The S&P 500 fell 1.2%, with more than 80% of the stocks in the benchmark index closing lower. The Dow Jones industrial average slid 1.6%.

The Nasdaq composite slipped 0.4%. The tech-heavy index briefly saw a 10% decline from its most recent closing high, which is what the market considers a correction, but gains for Nvidia,

Microsoft and other tech heavyweights helped pare those losses.

Financial stocks were among the heaviest weights on the S&P 500 index. JP-Morgan Chase fell 4% and Bank of America lost 6.3%.

Markets in Europe fell sharply, with Germany’s DAX falling 3.5% as automakers suffered sharp losses. Stocks in Asia saw more modest declines.

“The markets are having a tough time even setting expectations for what this trade war could look like,” said Ross Mayfield, investment strategy analyst at Baird. “This is clearly a level step higher than anything we saw during [President Trump’s] first term.”

The recent decline in U.S. stocks has wiped out all of the market’s gains since Trump’s election in November.

That rally had been built largely on hopes for policies that would strengthen the U.S. economy and businesses. Worries about tariffs

raising consumer prices and reigniting inflation have been weighing on both the economy and Wall Street.

The tariffs are prompting warnings from retailers, including Target and Best Buy, as they report their latest financial results.

Target fell 3% despite beating Wall Street’s earnings forecasts, saying there will be “meaningful pressure” on its profits to start the year because of tariffs and other costs.

Best Buy plunged 13.3% for the biggest drop among S&P 500 stocks after giving investors a weaker-than-expected earnings forecast and warning about tariff impacts.

Imports from Canada and Mexico are now to be taxed at 25%, with Canadian energy products subject to 10% import duties. The 10% tariff that Trump placed on Chinese imports in February was doubled to 20%.

China, Canada and Mexico responded with retaliatory tariffs and other actions.

ADVERTISEMENT

rateSeeker.com

LA Times

Check rates daily at
www.rateseeker.com/savings-rates

Deposit & Loan Guide

Institution	Int Chking Acct	Money Mkt Acct	3 mo CD	6 mo CD	12 mo CD	18 mo CD	24 mo CD	36 mo CD	60 mo CD	Phone / Website
COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL BANK	NA	NA	3.04	3.04	4.39	4.28	4.13	3.76	3.56	909-450-2050 www.ccombank.com
Community Commerce Bank	NA	NA	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	
Equal Housing Lender - Member FDIC										
Tustin Community Bank	0.05	1.26	1.26	1.51	4.40	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	714-730-5662 www.tustincmtybank.com
Tustin Community Bank	100	50,000	2,500	2,500	100,000	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	
12 Month CD Available For New Money Only										

TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS FEATURE, CALL SALES DEPARTMENT @ 773-320-8492

Check rates at www.rateseeker.com/savings-rates

Rate Criteria: Rates effective as of 3/3/2025 and may change without notice. RateSeeker, LLC. does not guarantee the accuracy of the information appearing above or the availability of rates in this table. Banks, Thrifts and credit unions pay to advertise in this guide. NA means rates are not available or not offered at the time rates were surveyed. All institutions are FDIC or NCUA insured. Yields represent annual percentage yield (APY) paid by participating institutions. Rates may change after the account is opened. Fees may reduce the earnings on the account. A penalty may be imposed for early withdrawal. To appear in this table, call 773-320-8492.

Voices JONAH GOLDBERG COLUMNIST

What’s driving Trump’s approach to Ukraine

I DON’T SAY THIS OFTEN, but let’s give Donald Trump the benefit of the doubt.

During Trump’s instantly infamous Oval Office meeting with Volodymyr Zelensky last week, the Ukrainian president was determined to make one point above all: that Russian President Vladimir Putin is not to be trusted. Again and again, Zelensky noted that Putin has a long record of breaking promises. “Twenty-five times he broken his own signature,” Zelensky explained in clunky English. “Twenty-five times he broken cease-fire.”

Zelensky kept returning to this point because he knows Putin’s paper promises are worthless. Putin has made it very clear that he wants to reclaim as much of the old Soviet empire as he can get away with, which is why he invaded Georgia in 2008, turned Belarus into a vassal state, refused to remove troops from Moldova, annexed Crimea in 2014 and launched a full-blown invasion of Ukraine in 2022. As Putin once put it, “Russia’s borders do not end anywhere.”

Trump’s response to Zelensky? Putin didn’t break any promises while Trump was president.

This is the key to Trump’s entire understanding of the war. If he were president, he always says, the war never would have happened.

So let’s give Trump the benefit of the doubt and assume Putin would never violate an agreement brokered by Trump while Trump is in office.

So what? National security operates on a longer timeline than a single presidency.

One reason Germany was incorporated into NATO and the European Union was to ensure that it would never again threaten the continent or the world. Another was to ensure that the Soviet empire would not expand farther into Europe, beyond the Eastern European states it occupied at the end of World War II. And the time frame of this alliance wasn’t just as long as Harry

The president wants credit for ending the war as a talking point regardless of the peace’s durability



SEAN KILPATRICK Associated Press

UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT Volodymyr Zelensky in London on Sunday. He may have provoked Trump by obstructing the short-term political victory he wants.

Truman or German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer remained in office. The time frame was as long as necessary.

Similarly, our European allies are scrambling to adapt to an international order in which America can no longer be relied on not because they fear an imminent invasion of Poland or the Baltic states. What they’re concerned about is the long run.

Indeed, Putin might love a deal allowing him to keep much of what he’s stolen — and the Trump administration has already said it’s fine with that — and prepare for another

stab at taking all of Ukraine and maybe more a few years down the road.

Trump doesn’t care about down the road. He wants to be able to claim he achieved peace in the short term. If Putin invades Ukraine again on Jan. 20, 2029, that’s not his problem.

In fact, he might even like it: He could point to it as more evidence that Putin would never invade the country while Trump was president.

This is how Trump thinks about politics, international and domestic alike. He cares

less about serious, lasting policy than what he can take credit for immediately.

One popular theory for Trump’s dislike of Zelensky is that the Ukrainian leader failed to help him tarnish Joe Biden’s political prospects in 2019, which became the subject of Trump’s first impeachment. Trump just wanted the Ukrainians to say Biden was under investigation for corruption and let him handle the rest. As an inducement, he threatened to withhold military aid to Ukraine even though it had been appropriated by Congress.

Trump’s second impeachment revolved partly around a similar plea to Justice Department officials: “Just say the election was corrupt and leave the rest to me and the Republican congressmen.” In both cases, the talking point was more important to Trump than the truth.

This is the context of his maneuvering to “end” the war in Ukraine. He wants to be able to say he delivered peace; he couldn’t care less whether it’s a durable peace. He just wants the talking point.

His foreign policy team understands this, which is why administration officials scoff at the idea of providing Ukraine with actual security guarantees. “Everybody is saying security guarantees to secure the peace,” Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Sunday on ABC News’ “This Week.” “You first have to have a peace.”

Rubio once understood how deterrence works. As he put it in 2015, “Vulnerable nations still depend on us to deter aggression from their larger neighbors. Oppressed peoples still turn their eyes toward our shores, wondering if we hear their cries, wondering if we notice their afflictions.”

He endorses a backward notion of deterrence now because he wants to help Trump secure a talking point, not a lasting peace.

Zelensky isn’t an obstacle to peace; he’s an obstacle to a talking point. And Trump and company hate him for it.

@JonahDispatch

LETTERS



DAMIAN DOVARGANES Associated Press

DEMONSTRATORS march at UCLA last June. Since the Gaza war began, many campuses have struggled to draw a line between valid critiques and hate speech.

Antisemitism or anti-Zionism?

Re “Antisemitism task force to visit UCLA, USC, others,” March 3

Can a distinction be drawn between antisemitism and negative feelings and opinions about the actions taken by the state of Israel? It seems the protesters at UCLA were objecting to what they considered immoral actions taken by the Benjamin Netanyahu regime against Palestinians in Gaza rather than actions based solely on the religious status of people who support that state action.

Before 1948, such protests would have been characterized as anti-Zionism instead of antisemitism. I suggest the same distinction exists today; the former is a form of protected political speech while the latter is simply unlawful discrimination.

NOEL JOHNSON
Glendale

It’s about time the Department of Justice looks into antisemitism at UCLA. The so-called protesters were detaining Jewish students from going to classes and destroying campus property.

In fact, it should be taken a step further — suspend and revoke student visas (when applicable) of any student caught involved in the chaos.

NEIL SNOW
Manhattan Beach

::

“Antisemitism task force to visit UCLA, USC” is a very misleading headline. A more accurate one would be listing this federal group as a pro-Zionist task force.

There were plenty of Jewish students and members of Jewish Voice for Peace demonstrating at those campuses for an end

to Israel’s genocide in Gaza and the West Bank.

JOHN ZAVESKY
Riverside

Defend DEI on campus

Re “USC scrubs DEI from some webpages as Trump cracks down on campus diversity programs,” Feb. 28

I am not a USC alumna, but I am moved to write because the university’s craven actions regarding diversity, equity and inclusion have stained the reputation of all Los Angeles residents. The city’s diversity and commitment to social justice is its superpower. As a university that is linked in the minds of many to this city, USC has higher standards to main-

tain. Speaking of standards, the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism’s actions stand out as particularly egregious because they undermine its mission. The school is not upholding standards of journalistic excellence when it obfuscates language and a top administrator and faculty member refuse to speak to the press.

USC has bowed to authoritarian pressure by “obeying in advance.” It can and must do better for the sake of our city and all of the good it represents.

JANINE PERRON
Los Angeles

::

I was angered but not surprised when I read about USC capitulating to President Trump’s anti-DEI tyranny. But without even a direct threat, USC adminis-

trators fear an artificial intelligence scrubber might notice their DEI-speak and drain the college of some unknown amount of federal funding. Please. Is this the journalistic and scholastic leadership students should expect in 2025? If USC wants to continue to be one of the most respected journalism schools in the nation, it should put down this cowardice, stand up to Trump and “Fight On.”

CARRIE POPPY
Los Angeles

::

Unless Trump requires a mind wipe, USC staff and administrators can still follow DEI guidelines; they just don’t have to advertise it.

PAT CONWELL
La Mesa

Defiance is our only option

Re “Are we free thinkers or a compliant nation?,” Opinion, Feb. 28

Sunita Sah’s article concerning the compliance of most Americans should be required reading in every school, from the sixth grade through the 12th.

It is of course in our nature to be nice and not make waves, as it is characteristic of most human beings everywhere. We dislike aggressiveness and, mostly, defiance. I recall berating a sales clerk for being racially disrespectful to a customer and being subjected to glares from others in the store because I dared to speak up.

Having lived, albeit as a child, under the yoke of the Nazi regime that had invaded the Netherlands in World War II, I still ponder this question: How did people allow this monstrous totalitarianism to exist?

Among the answers, according to Sah, is that we are largely compliant when faced with choices that may compromise our acceptance in our community. I will add that, through this passivity, a nation could conceivably become complicit in evil, as happened in Germany.

This is the danger that increasingly confronts us today. When we are compli-

ant — for example by following edicts on banning diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives — we set the stage for an authoritarian government that will inevitably affect us all.

ANNEKE MENDIOLA
Santa Ana

State needs to pull back funds

Re “How California schools, colleges are responding to Trump’s DEI crackdown,” Feb. 25

It is time for California’s elected leaders to have a serious discussion about how Californians can withhold our federal tax dollars.

Enough is enough. When Democrats were in office, they didn’t cut off money to Florida and other red states that banned certain books in schools or banned abortion. How dare the Trump administration threaten to cut funds to our public schools because we recognize that curriculum and policies that recognize and teach about the diverse communities in our state are important?

When we went to college in the late 1970s and ‘80s, there were hard-fought struggles to create women’s studies, African American studies and other programs recognizing that the history of the world is not just about white men.

Individual California taxpayers send more than \$230 billion to the federal government, about 15% of the national total. We pay for the services provided to less wealthy red states that would be happy to have us punished for our values. Enough is enough.

LESLIE SIMON
AND MARC BENDER
Woodland Hills

Trump and consequences

Re: “Trump is cheering Elon Musk now, but if anything goes wrong it will be the president’s problem,” March 3

The article supposes that public disapproval and

distress at the disruption caused by Elon Musk’s actions will eventually result in negative consequences for President Trump in the midterm elections.

The key to that assumption is that Trump cares about the public. In my opinion, all of his actions to shape each segment of the government to be as subservient as the Republican Senate and Congress will lead to an inevitable attempt to establish himself as president-king for life.

PHILLIP DELAO
Long Beach

::

Doyle McManus — presumably a beneficiary of the 1st Amendment — of course defends a liberal European political community intent on rigid elimination of any speech opposing their views (“Column: Trump says he wants to end Russia’s war on Ukraine. But he’s acting like Putin’s wingman,” Feb. 24). He also apparently supports an enormously expensive war that has no discernible ending and cares less about thousands of Ukrainians and, in fact, Russians, dying on a daily basis. Finally, it is the very politicians that McManus has long endorsed who put the United States in the position we face.

KIP DELLINGER
Santa Monica

::

While many Americans are shocked by President Trump’s assertion that Ukraine started the war with Russia, maybe the leader of the free world is on to something. Perhaps we should send inspectors to Ukraine. Not to look for yellow cake uranium — you can only do that once — but instead to search for a massive magnetic device that somehow pulled all those Russian tanks and artillery into Ukraine.

JOE KEVANY
Mount Washington

HOW TO WRITE TO US

Please send letters to letters@latimes.com. For submission guidelines, see latimes.com/letters or call 1-800-LA TIMES, ext. 74511.



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

Executive Chairman Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong

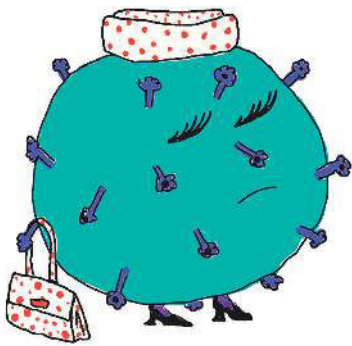
News: Executive Editor Terry Tang • Managing Editor Hector Becerra • Editor at Large Scott Kraft • Deputy Managing Editors Shelby Grad, Amy King, Maria L. La Ganga • Assistant Managing Editors John Canalis, Steve Clow, Angel Jennings, Iliana Limón Romero, Monte Morin, Craig Nakano, Ruthanne Salido • General Manager, Food Laurie Ochoa • Opinion: Op-Ed Editor Susan Brennen • Business: President and Chief Operating Officer Chris Argentieri • Chief Human Resources Officer Nancy V. Antoniou • President of L.A. Times Studios Anna Magzanyan • Chief Information Officer Ghalib Kassam • General Counsel Jeff Glasser • V.P., Communications Hillary Manning

OPINION VOICES

Voices KATHRYN BAECHT AND ERIN MCREYNOLDS GUEST CONTRIBUTORS

Vaccines are out, measles is in

They say everything old is new again.
Here are a few outdated bacteria and viruses looking to trend again as vaccination rates fall.



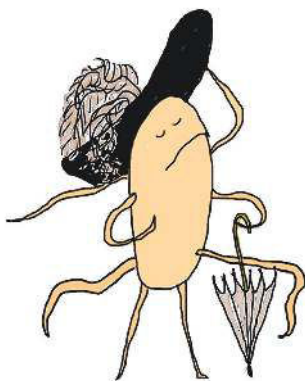
Measles Virus

Measles is in the air! That is to say that this highly infectious airborne virus has been spotted in a handful of states, at Los Angeles International Airport and, in particular, west Texas and neighboring New Mexico. Before the vaccine was introduced in 1963, measles cases led to approximately 48,000 hospitalizations and 400-500 deaths per year. But thanks to the vaccine, measles went the way of the pillbox hat and was declared eliminated in the year 2000. Twenty-five years later, more than 100 people have been infected in the U.S. and one child has died. Fashion fail.



Corynebacterium diphtheriae

The 1920s were roaring — with diphtheria bacteria. Infecting the offspring of the rich and poor alike, diphtheria was commonly known as the children's disease. But the development of a vaccine sent this terrible illness out the window faster than speakeasy patrons on the run from the cops. The last known case of diphtheria in the United States was in 1997, but like the flapper dress, it could be back in style again one day soon. That's not the cat's pajamas.



Bordetella pertussis

The glamorous looks of the early 1900s are rarely seen today, and neither is pertussis, thanks to whooping cough vaccines. First developed in 1914, pertussis vaccines went through years of refinement before eventually reducing the number of cases by 97% between 1922 and 2022. If pertussis returns, dig into Grandma's closet and snag a lacy vintage handkerchief for coughing up blood.



Clostridium tetani

This long and lean bacterium is a tall drink of water, but you won't be drinking anything if you catch tetanus, better known as lockjaw. Dapper outfits and lockjaw were both a lot more common in the early 20th century, but the advent of the tetanus vaccine caused cases to decline by 95% and deaths to decline by more than 99%. If you step on a rusty nail, be sure to foxtrot your snazzy oxfords to the doctor for a booster shot.



Rubella virus

Peace, love and freedom from the rubella virus — a.k.a. the German measles — finally arrived in 1969 when a rubella vaccine first came onto the scene. Just a few years earlier, a major rubella outbreak infected 12.5 million people (about twice the population of Arizona): 11,000 women lost their pregnancies, 2,100 newborns died and 20,000 babies were born with possible birth defects due to congenital rubella syndrome. Combined since 1971 with measles and mumps shots, the groovy vaccine means rubella is no longer endemic in the United States. Far out.



Poliovirus

Poodle skirts, cat's eye glasses, and iron lungs were all the rage the last time this roly-poly virus rocked around the clock. The advent of the polio vaccine decreased cases from a high in 1952 of about 20,000 cases of paralytic poliomyelitis, with 3,145 deaths, to 0 cases of wild polio since 1979. Why don't we keep polio in the past and bring back the Hula-Hoop craze instead?

Text by KATHRYN BAECHT, who teaches English as a second language in Austin, Texas. Illustrations by ERIN MCREYNOLDS, who is a writer and cartoonist in Austin.

Voices SCOTT JENNINGS CONTRIBUTING WRITER

President Trump came through for Los Angeles

Trump's federal government isn't punishing California. It's helping it recover from the Eaton and Palisades fires in record time.

AS THE EATON AND Palisades fires raged in Los Angeles, more than a few Democrats and at least one Times columnist claimed President Trump would punish California rather than help it recover from the devastation. If the record-breaking cleanup of properties — led by the administration's Environmental Protection Agency — is any indication, those fears were drastically overblown.

On Jan. 24, Trump signed Executive Order 14181 calling for the EPA to "expedite the bulk removal of contaminated and general debris" from the zones affected by the devastating Los Angeles wildfires, in order to accelerate efforts to help the survivors recover and rebuild their lives.

At the time, the EPA interpreted the order to mean that the initial cleanup of hazardous material had to be completed by Feb. 25. CBS News, reporting on the president's ambitious one-month deadline, quoted anonymous government officials as highly skeptical that cleanup could be done that fast. In fact, most estimates were that debris removal would take at least three months and more than a year for some properties.

"An EPA official on the ground described the expedited cleanup deadline to CBS News as 'bananas,' while another former EPA official said it may be nearly impossible to meet this deadline," the CBS News report said.

White House national security advisor

Mike Waltz oversees interagency coordination related to disaster response efforts. "Just three days after his inauguration," Waltz told me, "President Trump was on the ground in Los Angeles, saw first-hand the devastation from the wildfires and vowed a historic sense of urgency from federal agencies. Thanks to the president's decisive action, the Trump administration led a cleanup of hazardous materials at a pace never seen before."

It was and still is a Herculean cleanup effort: For the Phase 1 cleanup, crews cleared properties by hand, searching for such substances as bleach, paint, weed killer and pesticides, as well as batteries, propane tanks and asbestos. More than 9,000 properties were searched and cleared (4,852 homes in Altadena; 4,349 in the Palisades) and more than 1,000 lithium-ion batteries were disposed of in just 28 days.

EPA administrator Lee Zeldin, who was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on Jan. 29, five days after Trump signed the Los Angeles cleanup order, told me he is "immensely proud of the dedicated men and women from the EPA who have worked tirelessly to complete the largest wildfire cleanup in the history of our agency."

For a frame of reference on how quickly the Trump administration moved in Los Angeles, consider what happened following the 2023 fire that destroyed Maui, a place with far fewer properties. Phase 1 cleanup there took 112 days.

An official with the EPA told me the Trump administration, working with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, essentially threw everything but the kitchen sink at the president's cleanup directive.

The effort required more than 1,500 people — EPA staff, state workers, some mem-



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

TO CLEAN UP hazardous materials, more than 1,500 people worked by hand on thousands of properties destroyed in the Eaton fire, above, and the Palisades fire.

bers of the military — in nearly 50 teams "doing reconnaissance, hazardous materials removal and lithium ion battery work."

State officials have praised Trump's L.A. effort as well. In a letter dated Feb. 26, Yana Garcia, California secretary for environmental protection, thanked Zeldin profusely for the EPA's "historic collaboration with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) to achieve this significant milestone."

"When we met in early February, prior experiences suggested that Phase 1 could take months. Yet the work was completed in a matter of weeks," Garcia wrote.

The Army Corps of Engineers was able to begin Phase 2 of the cleanup — requiring more complicated efforts at 4,400 properties — as Phase 1 was in progress, which again should help speed the work required to let residents rebuild.

The point is simple: The Trump administration is showing extreme governing competence in helping Los Angeles recover from the wildfires, and no signs at all of punishing a deeply blue state.

There is widespread, bipartisan agreement that federal and local officials are working well together. And despite some clear political differences the president has with certain California policies, it has obviously not affected the vital work of the federal government helping local citizens get back on their feet.

This was a massive test for Trump, and he passed it with flying colors. The pearl-clutching and political fear-mongering from Democrats was obviously overblown.

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

Crowley unsuccessful in bid to get job back

[**Ex-fire chief**, from A1] facing retaliation for publicly highlighting a lack of resources at her department.

“The truth is that the fire chief should not be prevented from, or punished for, speaking openly and honestly about the needs and capabilities of the LAFD, or for doing her best to protect our firefighters and our communities,” she told the council.

Councilmember Imelda Padilla, who represents the central San Fernando Valley, criticized Crowley for her decision last month to discuss the Fire Department's budget with the news media while the Palisades fire was still raging.

“The chief chose the wrong time and wrong place to raise an issue,” she said.

Crowley's bid for reinstatement was almost certain to fail, given the fact that she needed 10 votes, or a two-thirds majority. Only Councilmembers Monica Rodriguez and Traci Park, who have been strong Crowley supporters, voted in her favor.

Nevertheless, Tuesday's proceedings created a headache for Bass, who ousted Crowley as chief nearly two weeks ago. During public comment before the council vote, firefighters repeatedly aired complaints that their department has been underfunded for too long, with some saying that Bass was trying to deflect blame from her own actions.

Chuong Ho, who serves on the board of United Firefighters of Los Angeles City Local 112, urged council members to reinstate Crowley, saying she was fired for “telling the truth” about the lack of resources.

“She stood up, she spoke out, and she had our backs,” Ho said. “I’ve never seen a fire chief in my career consistently speak out about the constant understaffing and lack of funding for our Fire Department.”

Crowley's appeal, which she submitted Thursday, has only added to the sense of volatility that has engulfed City Hall since the fire erupted Jan. 7, destroying thousands of homes and killing 12 people. For more than a week, Crowley's backers have accused Bass of scapegoating the fire chief.

Bass supporters, in turn, have accused Crowley of mismanagement and insubordination, calling her push



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

FORMER L.A. Fire Chief Kristin Crowley pushed back at her hearing on Tuesday, arguing that she was facing retaliation for publicly highlighting a lack of resources at her department during the wildfire in the Palisades.

for reinstatement part of a much larger political attack on Bass, the city's first Black female mayor.

Sylvia Castillo, who worked for Bass while the mayor was in Congress, said that “divisive” political actors were trying to do a “public lynching” of Bass.

Benjamin Torres, president and chief executive of the South L.A.-based group CD Tech, called the proceedings a “political move to cut off Black leadership.”

“This would not be done if [Bass] was a white male of privilege,” he told the council.

Bass fired Crowley on Feb. 21, citing two major reasons. She said the chief had failed to pre-deploy as many as 1,000 firefighters on the morning the blaze exploded in size amid hurricane-force Santa Ana winds. She also accused Crowley of refusing to participate in an internal after-action report after being asked to do so.

In the days leading up to Crowley's ouster, Bass said that the chief had failed to warn her of the increasingly dire wind forecasts.

Crowley's defenders, in turn, accused Bass of firing a veteran firefighter well before the completion of the after-action reports that would assess the city's preparation for, and response to, the Palisades fire. They said the mayor's staff had received warnings about the coming winds and the heightened wildfire risk from the city's Emergency Management Department, which tracks dangerous weather conditions.

Rodriguez, who represents the northeast San Fernando Valley, said Crowley has been unfairly scapegoated by a mayor desperate for a reset after the fire. She said the council, under the City Charter, has the power to reverse the firing of a general manager.

Crowley's firing sends a bad message to city employees and department heads — that it's “safer to stay silent than to call out what's wrong,” Rodriguez said.

“The only failure I believe Chief Crowley had was thinking people had their back. And so, for that I apologize,” Rodriguez said, ad-

ressing Crowley. “Because as a leader of this department, you don't deserve it.”

Crowley, the first woman to lead the LAFD in its 139-year history, was picked for the top job in 2022 by then-Mayor Eric Garcetti, after rising through the ranks of a department where female firefighters had complained about harassment and hazing.

Tensions between Crowley and Bass quickly emerged after the fire started. On Jan. 10, Crowley went on multiple television stations to decry what she described as insufficient funding for her agency.

In one interview, she said the city had failed her and her department. In another, she drew a link between cuts to her department and the city's handling of the fire.

The firefighters' union praised Crowley as a truth teller — someone with the courage to call out decades of underinvestment in their agency. Bass responded by summoning Crowley to a meeting that went so long that the mayor missed her own news conference to up-

date the public on the fire.

“Chief Crowley had the guts and the courage to speak out, to make sure her troops on the ground have what they need to do their jobs,” said firefighter union President Freddy Escobar. “For the first time, the public and this City Council started paying attention. But her honesty cost her her job.”

Crowley used Tuesday's hearing to offer her first major rebuttal of the mayor's allegations. She said she did not refuse to conduct an after-action report on the fire, but rather supported having state officials, who are slated to produce an outside review, do the job.

“The LAFD is not capable, nor do we have the proper resources to adequately conduct an after-action report for the Palisades fire, due to the sheer magnitude, scope and complexity of the incident,” said Crowley, who now has a lower-level position in the department.

Crowley also asserted that her department could not have deployed an extra 1,000 firefighters to the Pali-

sades because it lacked sufficient fire trucks, ambulances and other vehicles to transport them. Because the city has reduced the number of mechanics, she said, those trucks were “broken down in our maintenance yards, unable to be used to help during one of the worst wildfire events in our history.”

Zach Seidl, a spokesperson for Bass, welcomed the vote, saying that the city is “moving forward.”

Tuesday's proceedings appear to be virtually unprecedented in modern city history, with the closest parallel being Bernard C. Parks' bid for a second term as police chief in 2002. That year, appointees of Mayor James Hahn on the Board of Police Commissioners declined to renew Parks for a second five-year term.

The City Council declined to overturn the commission's decision, during a debate that inflamed racial divisions in the city. The council's three Black members sided with Parks, the department's second Black chief, and against Hahn, who was politically wounded by the battle. Parks won a seat on the council the following year, while Hahn lost reelection in 2005.

Councilmember Tim McOsker, who was Hahn's chief of staff during the Parks battle, said he didn't want to force two people who don't get along — Bass and Crowley — to work together. He said he had lived through that, and “it can be disastrous.”

“I'm going to put a functional city above what might be more politically expedient for me,” McOsker said.

Park, whose district includes Pacific Palisades, supported the move to reinstate Crowley, saying neither she nor her colleagues have received any after-action reports that would show who was to blame for an array of failures — a lack of firefighters, a lack of water in fire hydrants and a lack of an orderly evacuation.

Getting those answers “might very well mean firing everyone who has culpability across multiple departments, and I have no problem with that,” Park said.

“But I wouldn't do it without a well-informed record and actual evidence to support that decision,” she added. “And I don't have it today.”

Probation officers are accused of allowing brawls

[**Fights**, from A1] adults charged with the care and supervision of young people,” Bonta said at a news conference. “The officers don't step in, don't intervene and don't protect their charges.”

Bonta said the office reviewed videos and found 69 fights that occurred among 143 youths ages 12 to 18. The fights took place at Los Padrinos in the chaotic first six months after the hall opened in July 2023.

“They did have multiple gladiator-type fights between individuals with probation officers employed by L.A. County right there in the room, watching, not intervening, not keeping the young people they were charged with taking care of safe,” he said.

Bonta said prosecutors believed the fights were orchestrated by the probation officials.

“We believe that this was planned. It was intended. There was a desire on the part of the juvenile probation officers for these fights to occur,” he said. “They often wanted them to happen at the beginning of the day and a certain time in a certain place.”

The indictment echoed Bonta's allegations. In the December 2023 attack on the 17-year-old, Brooks and Smyles told several new detention services officers that fights would happen before they took place. They instructed the rookie officers “not to say anything, write down anything and just watch when youth fights occurred,” according to the indictment.

The video published last year by The Times shows the 17-year-old sustaining punches and kicks from youths who attack him one at a time inside a “day room” at Los Padrinos. On more than one occasion, the victim falls to the ground while officers do little to stop the

violence. At one point in the video, Brooks steps out of the way as a youth charges the victim and delivers a running kick.

The victim's public defender alleged last year that Brooks “instigated” the brawls by telling the attackers that the 17-year-old was a racist and a member of a rival gang. At one point in the video, Brooks can be seen checking her watch, as if timing out each brawl.

Another officer — identified in court last year as Smyles — can be seen in the video shaking hands with one of the assailants while the 17-year-old crumples under a flurry of punches in another part of the room.

The teen, who was charged with robbery at the time of the attack, remains in the custody of the Probation Department but is no longer being housed at Los Padrinos, according to his civil attorney, Jamal Tooson.

Smyles also was charged with one count of battery for an unlawful use of force against a youth Oct. 9, 2023, according to the indictment.

Brooks ignored questions from a reporter in the courthouse Monday. Smyles declined to comment through his attorney.

In her written report on the incident, Brooks said that the 17-year-old and his attackers were engaged in mutual combat and each fight stopped when she gave an oral warning.

Supervisor Janice Hahn, whose district includes Los Padrinos, said in a statement that all of the officers involved in the abuse had been placed on leave last year.

“I support the Chief Probation Officer in firing any officers who are found guilty,” she wrote. “This is only further proof that the culture of our probation department needs to change dramatically.”



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

ONE VIDEO shows eight probation officers standing by while a group of teens attacked a 17-year-old inside Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall in Downey, above, in 2023.

Dozens of current and former probation officers could be seen milling around the 13th floor of the downtown Los Angeles criminal courthouse on Monday afternoon, many of them still unsure what they were being charged with or why.

Retired officers also appeared in support of the defendants, arguing that their colleagues were victims of a chronically understaffed and mismanaged agency that put them in an impossible job.

“Our members have been working under extremely difficult conditions — understaffed and ill-equipped facilities that house individuals accused of murder, sexual assault, terrorism, and other serious crimes,” Stacey Ford, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 685, the union that represents probation officers, said in a statement. “Despite these challenges, our professional peace officers remain committed to maintaining the

highest level of professionalism while upholding their sworn duties.”

Probation Chief Guillermo Viera Rosa suspended at least 14 officers in relation to the Los Padrinos video months before it was published, according to a department spokeswoman. In a statement released Monday, the department said it sought an outside investigation immediately after discovering the video. Every officer caught up in Monday's indictments is now on leave without pay, according to the department.

“While these incidents are deeply troubling, we believe this marks an important step toward rebuilding trust and reinforcing our commitment to the meaningful changes we are proposing in our juvenile facilities,” the statement read. “Our vision for them is one that prioritizes rehabilitation, support, and positive outcomes for justice-involved youth, as well as upholding the highest standards of professionalism and

integrity for our staff.”

The majority of the officers charged were lower-level staff, many of whom had been with the agency for more than a decade.

At least one of the officers who was indicted, Ramses Patron, is a director at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall, meaning he supervised the staff involved in the incidents. His attorney, Tom Yu, dismissed the allegations as a “political hit” and said Patron, who has been with the department for 30 years, wasn't even in the room when the fights happened.

“It appears that the indictment arose from a failure to act by my client, which presupposes he had direct and actual knowledge of the ‘gladiator’ style fights,” Yu said in a text message to The Times. “From my knowledge of the case, I do not believe that such evidence exists.”

The December 2023 incident raised questions about whether the violence was condoned by officers and the validity of probation officers' reports on fights and other

uses of force within the halls.

A supervisor who reviewed Brooks' notes on the fighting incident captured on video said during a court hearing that he never questioned her account or reviewed the video before entering her report into a court file.

The indictments are the latest in a string of controversies surrounding the Probation Department.

California's Board of State and Community Corrections ordered Los Padrinos closed late last year after it repeatedly failed inspections and was deemed “unsuitable” to house youths. The majority of the juveniles incarcerated in Los Angeles County are housed in Los Padrinos because the board previously closed the county's other two juvenile halls — Barry J. Nidorf in Sylmar and Central Juvenile Hall in L.A. — after increases in violence and instability in the halls exacerbated by a staffing crisis.

The Probation Department refused the state's order to close Los Padrinos, and state board members have said they don't know what legal recourse they have to enforce it. The California attorney general's office has previously declined to address the issue.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Miguel Espinoza is weighing a request from the L.A. County public defender's office to remove all of its clients from Los Padrinos, based on the board's finding that it's unsafe for youths.

“The probation system and its underlying culture are broken,” Los Angeles County Public Defender Ricardo Garcia said in a statement Monday. “Accountability for those who have failed to protect our youth is long overdue — there is no justice in a system that abuses the very youth it is entrusted to care for.”

CALIFORNIA

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025 :: LATIMES.COM/CALIFORNIA



The Friends of Big Bear Valley

INTERNET FAMOUS eagle pair Jackie and Shadow have welcomed two hatchlings after years of heartbreak. Thanks to the Friends of Big Bear Valley, viewers who tuned in were able to watch the eaglets enter the world.

Proud eagle parents Jackie and Shadow welcome hatchlings

Thousands joyfully watch life emerge on Big Bear nest livestream

By Amy Hubbard

Big Bear bald eagles Jackie and Shadow have welcomed two hatchlings.

Thousands of eager viewers who have been watching the eagles' nest via webcam since the first pip showed over the weekend got to see one of the hatchlings emerge, with glimpses of tiny feathers and a beak appearing just before 11:30 p.m. Monday.

The second hatchling arrived around 4:30 a.m. Tuesday, according to Sandy Steers, the executive direc-



THE FRIENDS OF BIG BEAR VALLEY The Friends of Big Bear Valley

THE 24-HOUR webcam capturing Jackie and Shadow's growing family sits 145 feet up in a Jeffrey pine that overlooks Big Bear Lake.

tor of Friends of Big Bear Valley. A third hatchling is expected to reach full development Tuesday evening and could hatch in the coming week.

"I'm thrilled that they have hatchlings and they have two chicks after two years of no hatching," she said. "I'm thrilled for everyone watching. People are talking about tears of joy and that's how I feel."

The organization announced Sunday that the hatchlings' arrival could be imminent after the first pip appeared. The group op-

[See **Eaglet**, B4]

Newsom orders 4 days in office for state workers

Labor union calls the weekly mandate 'reckless'; legal group says it's misguided.

By Taryn Luna

Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an executive order directing state workers to return to the office four days a week, shifting California government away from a post-pandemic model that allows roughly 95,000 government employees to clock in remotely for most of the week.

The change, which is expected to take effect July 1, comes after President Trump called many federal government workers back to the office last month and as corporations continue to retract remote work options.

"In-person work makes us all stronger — period," Newsom said in a statement Monday. "When we work together, collaboration improves, innovation thrives, and accountability increases. That means better service, better solutions, and better results for Californians, while still allowing flexibility."

California has more than 220,000 full-time state employees and about 60% work in positions — janitors and highway patrol officers, for example — that already require them to report in person daily. The policy change is expected to apply to about 40% of the workers who are currently required to report to an office at least two days a week. Newsom's order does not apply to those who were hired under agreements to exclusively work from home.

The move put the Democratic governor at odds with the powerful public sector labor unions that represent

state workers in California.

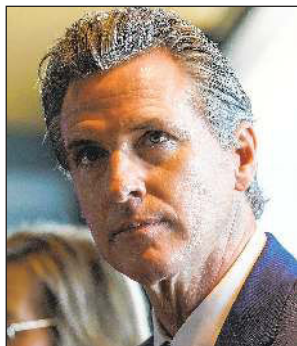
SEIU Local 1000, the largest public-sector union in the country, called on Newsom to "reverse this reckless decision" and accused the governor of "political posturing at workers' expense."

In a statement, the union local's president, Anica Walls, said returning workers "will face higher costs for gas, parking, and commuting" as the cost of living in California squeezes working families. She condemned California, the "tech capital of the world," for "clinging to outdated policies instead of embracing the modern workplace."

"Gov. Newsom's decision to force state workers back into the office four days a week is out of touch, unnecessary, and a step backward," Walls said in a statement. "State employees kept this state running through the pandemic, proving that remote and hybrid work increase productivity, improve work-life balance, and make state jobs more competitive — all while saving taxpayer dollars."

The California Attorneys, Administrative Law Judges, and Hearing Officers in State Employment blasted the decision as "misguided."

[See **Office**, B5]



JULIANA YAMADA Associated Press

CALIFORNIA Gov. Gavin Newsom's executive order takes effect July 1.

Test score labels that seek positivity run into a reality check

State board will pick which terms to use. Some were seen as misleading or vague.

By Howard Blume

In a quest to help parents understand how their children are really doing in school — but not make them feel bad in the process — state officials are moving

this week to change the way they describe student performance on standardized tests.

Student scores have been ranked in one of four categories on California's annual tests in math, reading and science: Standard Exceeded; Standard Met; Standard Nearly Met, or Standard Not Met.

But the consortium that manages the Smarter Balanced test told California officials in a presentation

in September that there has been confusion about what those levels mean. The consortium — which includes representation from California — suggested new labels, according to state officials: Advanced, Proficient, Foundational and Inconsistent. The State Board of Education was prepared to adopt them in November.

But concerns were raised by advocacy groups, who said the terms for the two lower levels were confusing

and potentially misleading. They also chastised the board for not seeking any public input, which officials then agreed to do.

The process pushed back the decision to the Wednesday meeting of the State Board of Education, where officials can take into consideration the work of focus groups that included students, parents, educators and advocates.

Some participants didn't like the original terms

Standard Nearly Met and Standard Not Met, calling them vague, according to a state report. Some perceived the term for the lowest level as failure and noted that it "was often received as discouraging or demotivating," the report said. And they didn't like Foundational or Inconsistent, again saying the terms were confusing.

Another set of labels is also up for consideration: [See **Education**, B2]

State Bar is told to return to in-person testing

California's high court orders the change after major glitches in new exam format.

By Jenny Jarvie

After California's bar exams were plagued last week with technical problems and irregularities, the California Supreme Court directed the State Bar on Tuesday to plan on administering the July exams in a traditional in-person format.

"The court is deeply concerned by the troubling reports of technical failures, delays, and other irregularities," the Supreme Court said in a statement, noting that it had asked the State Bar and the vendor that administered the exam to provide an expedited, detailed report.

The Supreme Court weighed in after State Bar of California staff recommended that the agency return to in-person tests as it scrutinizes whether the vendor behind the new testing system met the obligations of its contract.

"Based on the administration of the February Bar Exam, staff cannot recommend going forward with Measure Learning," Donna [See **Bar exam**, B5]

Voices GUSTAVO ARELLANO COLUMNIST

Before Trump, California enshrined English first

Talk about a failure: The promised benefits of one official language never materialized

It was the spring of 1985, and Californians were waging civic war on behalf of English.

Some Monterey Park residents were pushing their City Council to ban Chinese-language business signs. Voters who had passed Proposition 38 a year earlier were waiting for Gov. George Deukmejian to implement the initiative, which required that he ask the federal government to print election material only in English.

Former U.S. Sen. S.I. Hayakawa, one of Proposition 38's co-authors, was preparing for Proposition 63, which would enshrine English as the state's official language, after Whittier-area Assemblymember Frank Hill introduced a bill proposing just that. Tiny Fillmore in Ventura County had already

become one of the first cities in the country to go English-official.

These shepherds of Shakespeare argued that their efforts were necessary to save the American way from ignorant immigrants who just wouldn't let go of their native tongues. The official argument for Proposition 63, co-signed by Hayakawa, proclaimed that the state was moving toward "language rivalries and ethnic distrust" and that declaring English as the official language would help residents "respect other people, other cultures, with sympathy and understanding."

While this was all happening, I was in kindergarten trying to learn English.

I started at Thomas Jefferson Elementary in Anaheim knowing only [See **Arellano**, B2]



MEL MELCON Los Angeles Times

IN 1986, California voters passed Proposition 63, making English the official language of the state. Above, a Spanish lesson at a school in Orange in 2020.

Trump’s English order could divide, not unite, us

[Arellano, from B1] Spanish, the tongue of my Mexican immigrant parents. We lived in a neighborhood where the only white people were the family who lived in front of our granny flat. Our social life was centered on my parents’ native ranchos, whose residents transplanted themselves from Zacatecas to Southern California along with their music, culture and *español*.

We were Hayakawa’s Babelish prediction personified. But by the time Proposition 63 passed with 73% of the vote in the fall of 1986, I was in second grade and speaking fluent English. So were my friends and cousins. Our parents were beginning to learn English too.

Our growing embrace of English — one part classroom instruction but mostly marathon Saturday morning cartoon sessions for the kids and Charles Bronson movies for my parents — wasn’t the only thing Hayakawa and his crew were wrong about. All the societal kumbaya they insisted would sprout if English was elevated in California unsurprisingly turned out to be a bunch of — excuse my Spanish — caca.

Copycat laws soon spread around the country — 32 states have since declared English as their official language. Californians passed propositions in the 1990s that sought to make life miserable for undocumented immigrants, ended government-sponsored affirmative action and banned bilingual education. The embers from those political wildfires spread across the U.S. and helped blaze the trail for Donald Trump to win in 2016 and last year.

On Saturday, President Trump threw our country back to those ugly days of my youth when he signed an executive order declaring English the official language and promising that the move will “reinforce shared national values, and create a more cohesive and effi-



S.I. HAYAKAWA, shown with President Nixon in 1969, was a driving force behind California’s Proposition 63 in 1986. The ballot measure passed with 73% of the vote and made English the official language of the state.

cient society.”

But as it did in California, the opposite is more likely to happen.

Coming in the wake of executive orders ending diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives across the federal government, ending birthright citizenship and renaming the Gulf of Mexico the “Gulf of America,” this is Trump’s latest gift to people who despise a multicultural society. These are the worst Americans of all, motivated not by love of country but rather fear of newcomers, whose ways they seek to extinguish under the cloak of patriotism and the cudgel of the law.

Anxiety about immigrants’ attachment to their mother tongues goes back to colonial days. In the 1750s,

no less a national icon than Benjamin Franklin complained to a friend that Germans “will soon so outnumber us, that all the advantages we have will not in My Opinion be able to preserve our language.” This type of skepticism continued even as wave after wave of immigrants — Irish, Italians, Jews, Chinese, Mexicans — ended up assimilating.

Yet xenophobes continued to use the specter of other languages crowding out English to urge immigration clampdowns. No one knew this better than John Tanton, the intellectual architect of today’s “America first” movement.

An ophthalmologist by trade, Tanton funded organizations that fought

immigration and birthright citizenship and published white nationalist tracts. The son of a Canadian immigrant reserved a special enmity for Latinos, warning confidants of a “Latin onslaught” and wondering, “As whites see their power and control over their lives declining, will they simply go quietly into the night? Or will there be an explosion?”

In 1983, Tanton and Hayakawa — born in Canada to Japanese immigrants — formed U.S. English, a nonprofit pushing a constitutional amendment to make English the nation’s official language and opposing bilingualism in general.

U.S. English helped fund all the English-is-great propositions of my child-

hood to whet the xenophobic appetite of some Americans. It even asked members to write angry letters to Pacific Bell about the decision to publish the Yellow Pages in Spanish.

“California,” Tanton told The Times in 1986, “can be a laboratory for the nation.”

Forty years later, all of his racist dreams seem to be coming true through Trump. And the California Constitution still declares that English is our official language, commanding the Legislature to “insure that the role of English as the common language of the State of California is preserved and enhanced.”

Daniel HoSang is an American studies professor at Yale and author of the 2010 book “Racial Proposi-

tions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California,” which tracks the 1980s-era English-only battles in the Golden State. Tanton and Hayakawa’s consultants told them that their campaign had “the stink of rank nativism,” HoSang said, but if “you can come to California and figure out how to mask that,” they could go nationwide, which they eventually did.

The professor described Trump’s executive order as a “deep reminder that language has been a site of nativism” but dismissed it as a “desperate act of political symbolism” that will be ignored, just as it was in California.

“The lesson there is important because it failed,” HoSang said. “Most Californians either don’t know or don’t care that English is the state’s official language.”

He pointed out that even the Republican Party uses Spanish to reach out to Latino voters across the country.

“That’s why it’s hard to take [Trump’s English-language executive order] seriously as a policy, because they don’t,” HoSang said.

His book shows how all the 1980s-era “official English” measures were basically test balloons for the nastier legislation that followed, I noted.

He conceded the point, speculating that local governments could use Trump’s executive order as an excuse to end multilingual forms of communication, which would harm immigrant communities.

“So much of the anti-immigrant sentiment over public benefits is particularly sharp, because we’re a moment where all of them are slashed,” he said. People who speak only English “could think multilingual access is a luxury that’s responsible for the cuts in other people’s benefits.”

HoSang paused. “I could see that logic work insidiously down.”

State board to decide on new terms for test score rankings

[Education, from B1] Whereas Advanced and Proficient remain unchanged, the proposed names for the two lower-scoring categories are Basic and Below Basic.

Advocacy groups appear to support the latest proposal, which the state board can adopt or further modify.

If approved, the new terms would be the same as those used for many other standardized tests, including the National Assessment of Educational Progress or NAEP, known as the nation’s report card.

The debate over test score labels comes as national and state state scores remain low and have generally failed to recover from the pre-pandemic levels of 2019. Math and English test scores of fourth- and eighth-graders largely held steady or declined nationwide over the last two years — results that were about the same in Los Angeles and California.

The current proposal “is a step forward in providing parents with an accurate picture of how well their children perform in school,” said Natalie Wheatfall-Lum, director of education policy for EdTrust-West, an Oakland-based advocacy group. “However, our focus should be on providing clear descriptions of these labels so that parents can understand how well their children are performing in school, recognizing that a state assessment is one way to measure that.”

Given that grades, teacher feedback and comparison with peers can be subjective or vary from class to class or from school to school, “the standardized score and its label might be important in shaping how well students and parents understand the students’ skill levels relative to a common standard,” said Sean F. Reardon, professor of poverty and inequality in education at Stanford. “For that purpose, [tests] should have simple, transparent labels.”

All the same, he added, “a once-a-year, four-category score label is a pretty crude way of telling parents or students how they’re doing. Teachers and schools can convey information to parents much more frequently and with more nuance than a state test report.”



ONE SET of labels under consideration proposes Advanced and Proficient for high-scoring levels and Basic and Below Basic for the lower-scoring categories. Above, Common Core-aligned testing in New Cuyama, Calif.

Low achievement in standardized tests

California’s Smarter Balanced test is computer-based. If students are doing well, the program sends the student harder questions. If the student is faring poorly, the program sends easier questions. The goal is to get a more precise reading of a student’s skills, but the test represents only a snapshot of a student’s performance.

Experts acknowledge that the prime goal of education is not high scores on standardized tests — which are an imperfect measure of deep and relevant learning. Still, tests provide a marker to help keep students, teachers and schools on track toward skills students are supposed to be learning in each grade.

And by this marker, students in California and across the nation could be doing much better.

Not only are few students scoring as Advanced or Proficient, but fewer are also achieving this test’s version of a Basic ranking, the next level down, according to the

overall results from NAEP.

On the most recent results from this test, for example, the percentage of L.A. students who scored as Proficient or better in fourth-grade math was 27%. For California it was 35%.

In fourth-grade reading, 25% of L.A. students tested as proficient or better. California’s rate was 29%.

On California’s tests, student proficiency rates are higher, but still widely trailing pre-pandemic achievement levels that themselves were considered unacceptable at the time.

And yet this reality is coupled with research indicating that parents think their children are doing quite well in school — possibly because of grade inflation.

Euphemistic terms for lower levels

Both rounds of proposed changes were meant to provide clarity. There also was a goal of expressing student performance in a positive way — called an “asset-based” approach — even if the scores are low.

So, rather than sending out the message of Standard Not Met, the term proposed in November was Inconsistent. One board member suggested that term, too, might be too negative. Maybe “developing” was a better choice.

Even the original terms had euphemistic elements to them.

The phrase Standard Nearly Met, for example, includes a wide range of scores — some that were in fact nearly Proficient and others that ranged nearly to the lowest category.

In the November proposal, Foundational and Inconsistent drew strong outside objections.

“We are deeply concerned,” wrote the groups, which included EdTrust-West, Children Now, California Charter Schools Assn., Alliance for a Better Community and Teach Plus.

“The reality we are facing is many students across California are facing significant challenges when it comes to meeting grade level standards, particularly many low-income students,

students of color, English learners, and students with learning differences,” the letter stated. “The proposed changes to these achievement level descriptions would make the data more confusing and misleading.”

Calling scores Foundational or Inconsistent would “only serve to obfuscate the data and make it even more challenging for families and advocates to lift up the needs of our most underserved students and ensure they have the support needed to thrive.”

Improving clarity of the categories

If approved, the new categories are “the most common set of labels across the 50 states,” said Morgan Polikoff, professor of education at the USC Rossier School of Education, who was not involved in the decision. “My personal preference would probably be for as many states as possible to use consistent labels.”

The latest proposal is an improvement, said Robin Lake, director of the Center

on Reinventing Public Education at Arizona State University.

“I do question whether what may be a slight improvement in clarity is a distraction from the real issue: solving for the fact that California students are not mastering core subjects.”

The four achievement labels used by NAEP will not mean exactly the same thing if they are adopted in California. In general, the NAEP labels represent a more rigorously evaluated exam. In general, the NAEP labels represent a more rigorous grading standard, with a higher threshold for achieving a rating of Proficient or Advanced. This means the higher levels are harder to achieve on NAEP than on California tests based on research that compared state tests with the national NAEP exams.

In addition, the discussion at the state board meeting in November included the concept that students who are one level below Proficient should still be viewed by the public as working at grade level — even if they might require extra support to achieve grade-level standards.

This direction alarmed advocates who said they want families to get a clear message when their child is not proficient.

Overall, the state tests offer a more precise check than NAEP on what students in California are supposed to be learning. The NAEP test, in contrast, tests a small sample of students to allow for state-to-state comparisons and does not send student scores to families.

It’s what happens with the information that’s ultimately important, said Thomas Kane, professor of education and economics at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

If teachers explain to parents what a low score means, “parents are more likely to listen to their child’s teacher than to take to heart a government form letter that arrives in the mail. But it’s a difficult conversation to have and many teachers avoid it. It would benefit teachers, parents and students to provide an excuse (i.e. requirement) to have that conversation.”

CITY & STATE



GINA FERRAZZI Los Angeles Times

FRANCO RODRIGUEZ, left, and Manuel Flores take advantage of a dry day to play in Riverside on Monday.

Get ready for more rain — just a sprinkling at first — in days ahead

Below-average water year is expected to get a boost from storms hitting Southland.

By HANNAH FRY

After a lackluster start to the rainy season in Southern California, the region is expected to see a surge of moisture this week that forecasters say could be the beginning of a soggy March.

A warm front arrived across the Central Coast late Tuesday and will spread south into Los Angeles through the day Wednesday, bringing with it a sprinkling of moisture ahead of the brunt of the storm. The bulk of the rain is expected to arrive late Wednesday and last through early Friday in Los Angeles County, said Robbie Munroe, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Oxnard.

Next week is expected to deliver even more rain to Southern California's parched landscape. The region endured one of its driest starts to the rainy season in recorded history, which helped fuel one of the most destructive fire seasons ever.

As of Tuesday, downtown L.A. had received 5.58 inches of rain since the water year began Oct. 1. That is below the average for this point in the water season, 11.08 inches. The annual average is 14.25 inches.

"We've been playing catch-up, it feels like, the whole winter after an ex-

tremely dry period through January," Munroe said. "February was still a little below normal, but at least it kind of got us closer to what we might see this time of year."

Between a tenth of an inch and an inch of rain is expected for the coastal regions during this week's storm. South-facing mountain slopes could see 1 to 2 inches of rain. Two to 5 inches of snow could fall in elevations above 4,500 feet, according to the weather service.

The storm is also expected to unleash strong winds. Gusts could peak between 30 and 50 mph Thursday.

The weather system also brings the potential for thunderstorms, particularly late Wednesday through Thursday, which could deliver heavy downpours along with gusty winds, lightning, small hail and even weak tornadoes.

Although forecasters expect the moisture will be mostly beneficial, too much rain too quickly could result in debris flows and damage for the Palisades and the Eaton fire burn scars.

"We're not going to get continuous rain. It'll come in episodes, and there could be a lot of dryness between those episodes," said Ariel Cohen, the meteorologist in charge at the National Weather Service in Oxnard. "Don't let your guard down after the first round of rain comes. It might be coming back really soon."

Peak rainfall rates could reach between a tenth of an

inch and a third of an inch per hour, with rain rates in some areas reaching half an inch per hour. Experts say the risk of mud and debris sliding off burned hillsides rises once rain starts falling at a rate of half an inch per hour.

There's a 10% to 20% chance of significant flooding and debris flows in the Los Angeles County burn areas, according to the weather service.

"There's no guarantee at all, but the possibility does exist," Cohen said of dangers in the burn areas. "It's something to really keep an eye on because our confidence in those significant debris flows occurring may not be particularly high until right before they occur."

The burn zones have already seen the effects of wet weather this winter.

Heavy rain last month sent mud and debris surging onto Pacific Coast Highway — sweeping a vehicle into the ocean — and forced the indefinite closure of Topanga Canyon Boulevard between Pacific Coast Highway and Grand View Drive.

However, this week's storm is not forecast to be as strong.

The system is also expected to bring fresh powder to California's mountain ranges.

In Northern California, the weather service issued a winter weather advisory for the Lake Tahoe area warning of snow accumulations of 2 to 6 inches at elevations below 7,000 feet and 6 to 12 inches at higher elevations between 4 a.m. Wednesday

and 10 p.m. Thursday. Winds are expected to gust as high as 55 mph over the highest peaks.

In Southern California, the weather service issued a winter weather advisory for Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties' mountain ranges. The warning, which will last from 7 p.m. Wednesday to 7 a.m. Friday, says snow accumulations could be 3 to 6 inches for elevations above 6,000 feet, except locally up to 10 inches near Wrightwood.

Elevations of 4,000 to 6,000 feet could see a dusting of up to 3 inches, according to the weather service.

The coming storms could help bolster the state's snowpack, which has suffered during the warm, dry winter. As of Tuesday, the snowpack — which typically melts to supply nearly a third of the state's water — was 83% of average for this time of the year.

A wet March could also help the region delay its return to high fire season, Munroe said.

"The longer we can have wet weather into the spring, it will usually help us delay when things get a chance to really dry out," Munroe said.

After Friday, the region could see a few days of dry weather before more rain returns Sunday night. That system could bring light to moderate rain through Tuesday. Another storm forecast to arrive the day after that and last through March 13 could potentially bring bands of heavier rain, but exact amounts aren't yet certain.

Bass' opponents form committee to fund recall bid

Any effort would need signatures from 15% of voters, a level that's proved hard to reach.

By DAVID ZAHNISER AND JULIA WICK

Foes of Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass have formed a fundraising committee to pursue a recall campaign against her, according to paperwork filed with the city's Ethics Commission on Monday. The paperwork was originally filed with the state last week.

The filing, submitted nearly two months after a wildfire destroyed swaths of L.A.'s Pacific Palisades neighborhood, will allow Bass' opponents to raise money to put a recall on the ballot.

The City Clerk's office did not immediately respond when asked if a recall petition had been filed, or if a signature gathering effort had been initiated.

Several of the operatives pursuing the Bass recall campaign appear to be Republicans, a fact that could limit its appeal in a heavily Democratic city.

Douglas Herman, a political strategist for Bass, said in a statement that the recall committee's filing is "nothing more than another extreme right-wing political stunt designed to divide Los Angeles when we need to move forward."

with the College Republicans while attending USC and was named "campaigner of the year" by the California Federation of College Republicans in 2019, according to the USC Republican Alumni Facebook page.

Nandwani referred questions about the committee to political strategist Gerald Sirotnak, who did not immediately respond to inquiries from The Times.

On his LinkedIn page, Sirotnak is listed as the executive director of the San Diego Republican Party. He also identified himself as a onetime campaign manager for Calvert, saying that victory "helped secure a majority in the House for the Republican Party."

The committee's paperwork lists its campaign treasurer as Kelly Lawler, a registered Republican who runs a Merced County-based firm that supports Republican and independent candidates nationwide.

Only one Los Angeles mayor has ever successfully been recalled. In 1938, voters ousted the ignominiously corrupt Frank Shaw, electing reformer Fletcher Bowron in his place.

To trigger a recall election, opponents of Bass would need to collect approximately 330,000 signatures, or 15% of the city's registered voters, within 120 days of the filing date. That percentage has proved an extremely high bar in recent years.

Efforts to recall Councilmember Nithya Raman, former Councilmember Kevin de León and former Mayor Eric Garcetti were launched and then fizzled out.

The most potent effort took place in 2021, when critics of Councilmember Mike Bonin gathered nearly 26,000 valid voter signatures supportive of a recall.

The Bonin recall drive still fell short by 1,350 signatures.

In 2022, Bonin decided not to run for reelection.

She has been at odds with her former fire chief, Kristin Crowley, removing Crowley on Feb. 21.

The mayor also has had strained relations with Los Angeles County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath, who represents the Palisades. Bass' handpicked recovery czar, Steve Soboroff, recently said he was lied to about his compensation, then walked back the accusation.

Paperwork filed with the Ethics Commission lists Sahil Nandwani, a real estate agent, as the recall committee's principal officer. Nandwani has been a donor to the state Republican Party, the San Bernardino County Republican Central Committee, Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Corona) and San Diego Republican Kevin Faulconer's gubernatorial bid during the 2021 attempted recall of Gov. Gavin Newsom, according to federal campaign finance data.

Nandwani also was active



ALLEN J. SCHABEN L.A. Times

A POLITICAL strategist for Karen Bass called the filing a "right-wing political stunt designed to divide" L.A.

San Bernardino official accused of harassment

Ex-staffer's legal filing claims Supervisor Joe Baca Jr. engaged in bullying and sexism.

By CLARA HARTER

The former district director for San Bernardino County Supervisor Joe Baca Jr. is accusing the politician of fostering a toxic workplace where she was cursed at, harassed and paid nearly \$50,000 less than male employees in similar roles.

Sonja Pang filed a government tort claim against the county last week seeking damages for her recent termination and the alleged abuse she suffered while working under Baca.

Pang in her claim alleges Baca was a bullying boss who called one staffer "pubehead" and said another needed to be pushed out of her job because she was aging, always sick, and didn't do "s— but soak up his budget." Pang also alleges that Baca stared at her breasts, made sexual comments about his employees and openly said he preferred female job candidates who were physically attractive.

In a statement to The Times on Friday, Baca said there is "not a kernel of truth" to any of Pang's allegations and he's disappointed to think that someone would "fabricate such completely false allegations."



STEVE YEATER Associated Press

SUPERVISOR Joe Baca Jr., shown in 2004, denied the allegations by a former staff member. She is seeking damages for her termination and alleged abuse.

"Many people have worked for me in the California Legislature and as a County Supervisor, and I have always treated each member of my staff with the utmost respect and shown appreciation for the work they do for me and the public we serve," he said. "I have long been and always will be a champion for the advancement of women and fair treatment for all workers, always beginning with my own staff."

A spokesperson for the county said they were unable to comment on pending litigation.

The tort claim is a necessary precursor to filing a lawsuit against Baca and the county, which Pang intends to do soon, according to her attorney, Joe Richardson of McCune Law Group.

Pang worked for Baca from when he assumed office in 2020 until her termination on Feb. 21. At the time she was fired, she says, she was serving as his district director/acting chief of staff.

She alleges that Baca ran a retaliatory workplace and told her that "if anyone reported any complaints against him to the HR department, they would be removed," according to the claim. She says she knows of at least two other employees who were apparently forced to resign or terminated for speaking up.

"Many times, Baca would abusively shout orders to Pang and threaten her with her job if she did not comply," the claim states. "He would yell and curse at her, and he would threaten to 'make big changes' if she did

not do what he asked."

She further alleges that she was "grossly underpaid" compared with her two male predecessors as well as staffers with similar responsibilities in other county offices.

She claims that when she asked Baca about a raise she said he had promised her, he said something to the effect of, "I can get another person for [her] position that is 'younger, prettier, and with no kids,'" according to the claim.

Pang also accuses Baca of overworking county employees and having them assist with his campaign work, which is not permitted.

She also claims he sabotaged her efforts to get hired in a different office at the county, alleging that managers who were previously open to discussing opportunities with her shut her out after she was terminated.

She alleges that Baca "influenced this change, effectively freezing her out of future employment opportunities within county."

Baca is a former high school teacher who served one term in the state Assembly, from 2004 to 2006, before stepping down to unsuccessfully run for state Senate. He went on to serve on the Rialto City Council before being elected to the Board of Supervisors. He represents the board's 5th District encompassing the cities of San Bernardino, Rialto and Colton.

'Human cannonball' hurt after target missed at fair

Chachi 'The Rocketman' Valencia fell through a safety net at Indio event.

By JASMINE MENDEZ

His job description is "human cannonball." And for 23 years that seemed to be working out for Chachi "The Rocketman" Valencia. Even his wife, Robin Valencia, is in the human-cannonball line of work.

But on Sunday at the Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival, one could see why being a daredevil isn't for the faint of heart as the Rocketman missed his target.

The performer is recovering from his injuries after slipping through a safety net during a performance at the Indio festival, officials said.

Valencia began his performance around 2:30 p.m., fair officials said via Instagram. He routinely pumps up the audience with a 20-minute speech before climbing into a cannon, according to his website.

Valencia was launched about 65 feet high at 55 mph across a distance of 165 feet

— where a narrow net was set up to catch him. The net is about 20 feet off the ground, according to his website. But instead of delivering a final heartfelt salute to the crowd, Valencia fell to the ground.

He was rushed to a hospital around 3 p.m., fair officials said. The Riverside County Sheriff's Office told the Press-Enterprise on Sunday that Valencia sustained injuries that were not life threatening. Riverside County Fair officials said Valencia was released that night.

Valencia says on his website that he has more than two decades of experience as a human cannonball. He performed at the closing ceremony of the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London and at the 2014 Carnival festival in Rio de Janeiro.

Human cannonballs are said to be a small and select group, and they are no strangers to catastrophe. After the death of one performer in 2011, a daredevil told the British online outlet the Independent that it's a skill that requires the performer "to understand physics, mathematics and engineering" — and "you can't be scared of anything."

Obituaries

Place a paid notice latimes.com/placeobituary | Search obituary notice archives: legacy.com/obituaries/latimes



Jose A Debasas

July 27, 1937 - February 26, 2025

Jose A. Debasas, the first lay person to head the financial operations of the largest Roman Catholic Archdiocese in the U.S., the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, passed away peacefully at home on February 26, 2025.

A lifelong devoted Roman Catholic, Jose was the son of his beloved parents, Jose and Maria Debasas of Havana, Cuba. In Cuba, he was educated by De La Salle Order Brothers in his formative years and did his undergraduate work in Economic Sciences. Jose culminated his education in the United States via the Jesuit, Santa Clara University earning a Master of Business Administration.

Before coming to the United States, his professional endeavors encompassed banking in Cuba and executive in a large manufacturing business in Spain. He immigrated to San Jose, California in the early sixties, where he established himself at the Santa Clara University ascending through several financial positions to become the Vice President for Business and Finance in 1974. After 20 years in Santa Clara University, Jose became the Chief Executive Officer and General Partner of Westland Investments, a diversified real estate investment company.

In 1985, then Archbishop Roger Mahony offered him the position of Archdiocesan Finance Officer for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Jose served as the Chief Financial Officer for Cardinal Roger Mahony until his retirement in 2002. One of the services he was most proud of was recruiting donations to build the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angeles. He felt it was a legacy to his career personally and for the people of Los Angles and beyond. Jose was an active member as a board of director/officer in over 35 religious, charity, medical, business, education and financial entities.

After retiring in 2002, Jose and his wife, Pauline traveled extensively throughout the globe; especially to Spain to visit with his extended family in Galicia and to Miami to visit his lifelong best friends.

Jose was a very knowledgeable, cultured, gentle, caring, fair, and generous person with a great sense of humor. He loved reading, communicating with friends via computer, swimming, playing cards and golfing with his California buddies and neighbors. His greatest pride and joy, however, was hosting and spending time with his grandchildren every summer, with much swimming, eating, playing games and cards, art-sketching figures and other fun activities.

Jose leaves four accomplished children: Ana, Nelson, Marisa Debasas and Augustin Eichwald-Romero that he was very proud of and his dearly beloved five grandchildren: Emmett and Luna Dyer (Ana/Micah), Devin, Conner and Makena Debasas (Nelson/Katy).

The funeral service for our beloved Jose will be held on Friday, March 21, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, 555 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012-2707, (213) 680-5200. Private entombment at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels Mausoleum will follow for family members. Lunch will be served after the services.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you please donate to The Jose A. Debasas Endowment Scholarship Fund at Santa Clara University, 500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, CA 95053, (408) 554-4000.

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

Susan Beth Feldman

June 1, 1961 - February 24, 2025

Susan "Sue" Feldman, PhD 6/1/1961-2/24/2025 Sue was a highly intelligent, passionate, independent, creative, and engaging soul. She always strived for excellence in all endeavors. She is survived by her siblings Nancy (Isaac), Gary (Sonny), Jeff (Susan); 5 nieces and nephews; 3 great nieces and nephews; and many friends. We will miss her greatly.

Share a memory

To sign a guest book please go to latimes.com/guestbooks



Los Angeles Times

To place an obituary ad please go online to: latimes.com/placeobituary

or call 1-800-234-4444

Los Angeles Times

Lawrence Joe Clement

June 16, 1939 - December 15, 2024

Larry was born in Santa Monica, California to Barbara Stearns Clement and George Clement, graduated from Glendale Academy in 1957, La Sierra College in 1961, and he married Olga Zeiner in 1961. Their daughter Michelle was born shortly thereafter, and Larry started a series of jobs alternating between private investigator and claims adjuster that he would continue for the next 40 years. A lover of culture, he frequently dragged the family to art shows and museums. Larry and Olga divorced in 1983, and he married his second wife, Bobbie Alley, in 1989. They then moved to Laguna Beach, where Larry cultivated a collection of sports cars, which he loved to drive. Larry was a man of simple pleasures, and he was unendingly optimistic. Even in later years with health issues, he rarely referred to these and was instead interested in his stamp collection and things like the animals and cars in other people's lives. Larry is survived by Bobbie, first wife Olga Clement, daughter Michelle Clement, nephews Jeff (Robin) Campbell and Rob Campbell and their children and grandchildren. He was preceded in passing by his mother (1999), father (1996), sister Marjorie LaFerriere (2022), and former brother-in-law Robert Campbell (2024).



Nicholas Toland Ryan

April 21, 1949 - February 28, 2025

Nicholas T. Ryan of Princeton, New Jersey and Downey, California, the eldest son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Francis Joseph Ryan of the Bronx, New York and Princeton, New Jersey, passed away February 28, 2025. He is predeceased by his former spouse, Michele M. Ryan of Princeton, New Jersey. He leaves behind daughter Kelly K. Ryan of Princeton, New Jersey; son Richard T. Ryan of Princeton, New Jersey; granddaughter Alexa Trani of Princeton, New Jersey; grandson Nicolas Trani of Toms River, New Jersey; nephew Christopher D. Ryan of Princeton, New Jersey, currently Brookeville, Maryland and his spouse Rachel L. Ryan of Baltimore, Maryland, currently Brookeville, Maryland; grand nieces Katherine L. Ryan and Emma Lynn Ryan of Brookeville, Maryland; grand nephew Joshua D. Ryan of Brookeville, Maryland; and brother Geoffrey T. Ryan of Florida. Mr. Ryan was a member of the Princeton High School Class of 1968. He graduated from the Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon in 1972, and Wichita State University, Kansas in 1979, and served in the United States Army from December 1976 – December 1979. Mr. Ryan was a Physical Education and English teacher with the Los Angeles Unified School District in Los Angeles, California from 1987 to 2019. He retired in June of 2019. Additionally, Mr. Ryan worked for Cooper and Schafer Roofing and Sheetmetal Company in Princeton, New Jersey for a number of years. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to The Little Sisters of the Poor, 2100 S. Western Avenue, San Pedro, California 90732. A Funeral Mass will be on March 6, 2025, 8:45 am. at Saint Dominic Savio in Bellflower, with interment following at Riverside National Cemetery at 11:15 am.



Glenn Padnick

September 8, 1947 - February 27, 2025

Glenn Padnick, whose passion for movies and television brought about decade-defining sitcoms, including the iconic show "Seinfeld," died February 27, 2025, at age 77, surrounded by his wife and children. Although Glenn lived with a rare disease for 25 years, he never let it define him.

Glenn was born September 8, 1947 in Brooklyn and grew up in Farmingdale, New York. Glenn was a first-generation college student and the first from his high school to attend Harvard College. He wrote for The Harvard Crimson and expected a career in journalism.

In 1968, Glenn married his high school girlfriend Eleanor Rimai and began reporting for Long Island's Newsday. After a year of being a reporter, he entered Harvard Law School and was on the Harvard Law Review. While in law school, Glenn wrote TV movie blurbs for the Boston Herald Traveler.

Upon graduation, Glenn moved to Los Angeles to join O'Melveny and Myers' Entertainment Department. After a year of writing contracts for Norman Lear's shows, Glenn was recruited by Alan Horn to serve as Lear's in-house legal counsel. Glenn agreed on the condition that he be given an opportunity to work on the creative side of television. Glenn transitioned to television executive and went on to produce canonical comedy shows of the 1980s and 1990s: "Diff'rent Strokes," "Who's the Boss?," "The Facts of Life" and "Married With Children." Glenn co-founded Castle Rock Entertainment, and as President of Television, he developed "Seinfeld." Glenn's distinctive laugh can be heard in almost every episode.

Glenn was a family man in word and deed. He took care of their young children, Susan, Steven and Robert, while Eleanor attended UCLA Dental School. This was an uniquely egalitarian approach to marriage for that time. He drove carpools, cheered at all his childrens' weekend games and organized Fun Family Outings, "FFOs" ("fun" being a relative word, depending on which family member you ask).

Glenn retired from full-time work in 2003 because of a rare illness, Erdheim Chester Disease. But he never let his chronic medical issues — including a kidney transplant made possible by his son Robert — diminish his zest for life.

Glenn's lifelong goal was to visit every USA National Park Service site. At last count, he had visited 398 sites and recorded every visit with a stamp in his National Park Passport. He believed that he had to drag his reluctant family and friends along, but in truth, everyone enjoyed the adventure of seeing America through his eyes. Glenn's love of our National Parks led him to serve on the board of the National Parks Conservation Association for many years.

Sunday poker with show tunes and Thursday trips to local casinos (and Gus' Fried Chicken) were weekly favorites. Glenn organized yearly road trips with his poker friends, combining gambling, BBQ, National Parks and usually a visit to a local emergency room. He also loved baseball, rooting for the Angels but sharing season tickets to the Dodgers.

Glenn was known to have a savant-like knowledge of classic movie trivia. Watching black-and-white films with his dog at his feet was a favorite pastime.

Padnick is survived by his wife Eleanor, daughter Susan (Chris Cohen), son Steven (Sara Hames), son Robert (Sarah Wick), six grandchildren, sisters Dale Braunschweig and Jill Martin, nieces and nephew and loving cousins and friends, and countless others who will truly appreciate Glenn whenever they hear his laugh.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Glenn's honor to the National Parks Conservation Association or the Erdheim Chester Global Alliance.



Don't let the story go untold.

Share your loved one's story. placeanad.latimes.com/obituaries

Los Angeles Times
In partnership with
Legacy.com

To place an obituary ad please go online to: latimes.com/placeobituary



The Friends of Big Bear Valley

MOM AND DAD Jackie and Shadow welcomed two hatchlings on Monday night and Tuesday morning after the first pip was captured over the weekend.

Eaglets finally get a chance in Big Bear

[Eaglet, from B1] erates a 24-hour webcam that monitors the eagles' nest 145 feet up in a Jeffrey pine above Big Bear Lake.

Pipping is when a baby bird uses its beak to crack open its shell, and a pip watch is the online vigil and hoopla surrounding that activity.

In 2023, Jackie and Shadow's eggs were eaten by ravens. And last winter also

held heartbreak. The pair added a rare third egg to their clutch in late January, but the cold weather was severe. At one point, a storm kept Jackie on her nest for 62 hours straight, sometimes completely covered in snow.

Low oxygen levels at high altitude are one of the reasons the Friends of Big Bear Valley group suspects Jackie's three eggs failed to hatch that year.

On-duty deputy overdosed on seized fentanyl, report says

Former Sacramento County lawman kept drugs for his personal use, investigators find.

By KAREN GARCIA

An on-duty Sacramento County sheriff's deputy survived after overdosing on fentanyl he had seized during an arrest, a recently published internal investigation has revealed.

The 2023 incident initially sparked alarm as officials believed he had collapsed after being "exposed" to fentanyl. The sheriff's spokesperson alerted the media, and some deputies who had witnessed their colleague's near-death sought therapy, according to the 468-page internal report.

Deputy Marvin Morales was discovered unresponsive on the floor of a sheriff's station bathroom. Drug paraphernalia was in the pocket of his uniform.

Morales later told sheriff's officials that he had ingested the drug "with the intent to commit suicide" because he had been suffering from depression. The investigation would reveal, however, that this was not the first time Morales had used drugs he'd seized.

In the Oct. 24, 2023, incident that led to his overdose, Morales conducted a "suspicious subject stop" around 5:40 p.m. and found a tinfoil bundle with methamphetamine in it sticking out of the suspect's pants. A laboratory test on the narcotics would later identify the seized drug as fentanyl, the report states.

Nearly three hours later, Morales, who was on duty and in full uniform, entered the public lobby and restroom of the sheriff's Central Division Station in south Sacramento. The investigation found that Morales smoked some of the methamphetamine he'd seized using a glass pipe "he obtained at some point during the course of his duties and a torch lighter that had been in his patrol vehicle."

Another deputy found Morales unconscious on the bathroom floor; a glass pipe with burned residue was nearby, the report states. Of-

ficers administered Narcan in an effort to reverse the overdose. Morales was transported to a hospital for further treatment and survived.

Responding officers found the tinfoil of methamphetamine that Morales had seized earlier in a pants pocket of his uniform.

The investigation also found that, on two separate occasions in August, Morales had cited individuals for misdemeanor possession of drug paraphernalia, then lied about how he disposed of the items.

In his routine crime reports on each incident, Morales said he secured a glass methamphetamine pipe and "due to the fragile state of the glass pipe and to avoid breaking it, I took a photograph of it with my department-issued iPhone as I would be using this photograph as evidence," and disposed of the pipe at the sheriff's station.

In an internal interview, the report says, Morales confessed that he had lied in one of the crime reports and had taken the methamphetamine pipe home and smoked the drug residue from the pipe three or four times over four months.

Morales told officials he did it because it "gave him the 'energy' he needed to write in-custody reports."

Investigators challenged Morales' assertions, citing a toxicology report of his blood and hair samples as evidence of chronic drug use.

The report recommended that Morales be terminated, and the deputy was informed of the results on Jan. 4, 2024. Documents show that Morales resigned Feb. 2 that same year.

He voluntarily surrendered his peace officer certification this month, according to the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training.

Speaking of his colleagues who sought therapy after he nearly died, Morales said in an internal interview that he wanted to "apologize to them so bad, but I can't. I'm not that strong, bro."

He went on to apologize to his partner and the Sheriff's Office.

"That's why I did it in that bathroom," he said. "I didn't want the public to see me."



Sacramento County Sheriff's Office

SACRAMENTO COUNTY Sheriff's Deputy Marvin Morales was hospitalized after suffering a fentanyl overdose in a sheriff's station bathroom in 2023.

Newsom calls state workers back in office 4 days a week

[Office, from B1]
The group said the order ignores the “well-documented benefits of telework, including higher productivity, improved employee well-being, and cost savings for the state” and will make it more difficult to recruit attorneys.
“The governor’s order is not aimed at improving services — it’s about optics,” Timothy O’Connor, president of the group’s board of directors, said in a state-

ment.
The societal shift back to in-person work has been embraced by local officials, who blame remote work policies for the degradation of downtown districts that have experienced restaurant and business closures due to a shortage of patrons. Sacramento County has nearly 90,000 state workers, the most in California, followed by Los Angeles County with 20,000, according to data from the state controller’s

office.
Newsom’s order also calls for the state to “streamline the hiring process for former federal employees seeking employment” to fill vacant state disaster response and emergency roles, including in firefighting, forest management and weather forecasting. With the help of billionaire Elon Musk, Trump is reducing the size of the federal workforce and has cut thousands of employees from the payroll.

High court orders State Bar to return to in-person testing

[Bar exam, from B1]
Hershkowitz, chief of admissions for the State Bar, wrote to the agency’s Board of Trustees in a staff memo, referring to the vendor. Instead, she wrote, staff recommend reverting to in-person testing for the next round of exams in July.
The State Bar’s 13-member board is scheduled to meet March 5 to decide on plans for the July bar exam and remedies for test takers who faced problems.

In a statement Monday, the State Bar said it is “closely scrutinizing whether Meazure Learning met its contractual obligations” in administering the February State Bar exam and will be “actively working with its psychometrician and other stakeholders to determine the full scope of necessary remediation measures for February 2025 bar exam test takers.”

It is not yet clear exactly how much this episode will cost the State Bar.
The agency has not conducted an updated fiscal analysis, a spokesperson for the agency said. “However, given that the Board authorized expansive refunds for February and free July exams for those February applicants who do not pass the February exam or who withdrew before the exam,” he added, “we are unlikely to realize any cost savings in 2025.”

Saving money was the key reason the State Bar overhauled its exams. Facing a budget deficit last year of \$22.2 million, the agency decided to save money by ditching the National Conference of Bar Examiners’ Multistate Bar Examination, a system used by most states, and switching to a new system of in-person and remote testing. It cut a deal with test prep company Kaplan Exam Services to create test questions and hired Meazure Learning to administer the exam.

The result was a disaster for many test takers: Some reported they were kicked off the online testing platforms, experienced screens that lagged and displayed error messages, and had proctors who could not answer basic questions. Others raised issues with the multiple-choice test questions, complaining that they consisted of nonsense questions, had typos and left out important facts.

The State Bar said the Committee of Bar Examiners will discuss possible remedial measures, which could include a discussion of the Provisional Licensure Program.

“The Board of Trustees has expressed its support for the PLP program in the past,” most recently in a proposal submitted to the Supreme Court in 2023, it said in a statement. “Only the California Supreme Court can authorize a new provisional licensure program or extension of the current program.”

As the State Bar homed in on the problems with Meazure Learning, deans of some of California’s top law schools noted that the issues were not confined to the technology.

“While the State Bar has focused on the issues caused by the platform administrator (Meazure), our graduates also reported typos and errors in the new multiple-choice questions that mirrored those we saw in the practice questions published this past fall, as well as disruptive conditions at the testing centers,” 17 deans of California’s American Bar Assn. accredited law schools wrote Monday in a letter to the California Supreme

Court.

The deans urged the California Supreme Court to allow test takers who sat through the exam and were unsuccessful to obtain provisional licenses under the supervision of experienced attorneys.

“Provisional licensure would allow candidates with offers of employment contingent on bar passage to retain them,” the deans wrote. “It would give those who have spent down savings or taken out loans to study for the bar examination the opportunity to earn the income they may need to prepare for another attempt.”

The deans also urged the state to go back to using the Multistate Bar Exam multiple-choice questions instead of the Kaplan questions, noting there was not enough time to fully investigate and solve the problems with the technology and the multiple-choice questions.

“We understand that the initial departure from the nationally used MBE was prompted by budgetary considerations caused in part by the need to rent large spaces for test-takers,” the deans wrote. “The alternative exam has proven to cost far more than initially anticipated, so the shift did not solve the financial problem, but likely exacerbated it while creating many others.”

If the State Bar returned to the Multistate Bar Exam and California essays for the July exam, the deans said, they would offer spaces on their campuses to the agency at no cost.

Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of UC Berkeley School of Law, applauded the State Bar staff for recommending a return to in-person exams.

“Last week was a fiasco and returning to in-person makes total sense,” he told The Times, adding that he hoped the State Bar also would reconsider California’s departing from national standards to work with Kaplan. “The problem is much larger than Meazure Learning. It was the choice to abandon the National Conference of Bar Examiners prepared tests for Kaplan.”

Last year, when the State Bar announced a new \$8.25-million, five-year deal authorizing test prep company Kaplan Exam Services to create multiple-choice, essay and performance test questions, it promoted its new exam system as saving up to \$3.8 million annually.

In September, the board approved up to \$4.1 million for Meazure Learning to carry out the February and July 2025 exams. But Hershkowitz noted in the staff memo that the State Bar planned to seek additional funding from the board for Meazure to execute the July exam.

The hybrid model with Meazure was projected to cost \$3.9 million for the July exam — about \$1 million less than the traditional in-per-



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

SAVING MONEY was the key reason the State Bar overhauled its exams and tried a new vendor. But last month’s testing fiasco could be costly for the agency.

son model, Hershkowitz noted in the memo. But “actual costs may be higher,” she noted, “as we are anticipating increased numbers of test takers due to the offer to waive July exam costs for many applicants.”

Switching the plan five months ahead, Hershkowitz also wrote, would create additional challenges. “There may be fewer locations for applicants to select from, resulting in higher costs for applicants who may have to travel further from their local community to take the exam.”

About 1,066 of the 5,600 people who had registered for the February exam withdrew. About 67 applicants who took the test were notified Friday that they were eligible for a March 18-19 re-take.

Michael Kaufman, the dean of Santa Clara University School of Law, said there was always a question about whether the State Bar’s shift away from the national system was a wise decision.

“Another question is whether it’s actually been realized,” he said, noting that last week’s fiasco could ultimately cost the State Bar more money rather than less. “I think their efforts to save money have gone by the wayside.”

Law school deans, he said, were motivated to work with the state to come up with new and fair ways to assess aspiring attorneys’ competency.

“The time is now for a productive, careful, measured conversation with decision makers, including the California Supreme Court, so this doesn’t happen again,” Kaufman said. “And so that we can actually come up together collaboratively with a fair, reliable mechanism for assessing competency to practice law in a way that will serve the public in the community and the clients. That’s the goal.”

Some test takers who opted to take the exam remotely did not welcome a return to in-person testing.

Ray Hayden, who took the test from Lake County, Fla., said he refused to waste his money traveling across the country and finding accommodation for several nights.

“What they really need to do is to push through with remote,” he said. “Find a better provider that can actually handle the bandwidth.”

RFP Billboard Sign

The El Monte City School District invites responses from qualified firms, partnerships, or organizations to enter Leasing, Designing, Permitting, Constructing and Operating one (1) double-sided LED digital billboard sign. Questions may be submitted to Terra Realty Advisors, Inc., Attention: mhightower@tra-inc.net. Submissions are due by 5/20/25 at 3:00 pm.



JUNGHO KIM For The Times

SACRAMENTO County has nearly 90,000 state workers, the most in the state, followed by L.A. County with 20,000, data show. Above, the state Capitol.

MARKETPLACE

JOBS · REAL ESTATE · MORE

latimes.com/placead
To place an ad call 1.800.234.4444

Los Angeles Times

HOMES FOR SALE
1100

HOMES FOR SALE
RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Fully Furnished Home
2bd/2bth in 55+ community. 1720 sq ft. Bright open living spaces. \$200,000. 209-612-6957 Pp

Out of State

Washington Wine Country
Visit DaytonLodge.com for a wonderful tour. \$799,000 Miles Miller (503) 887-6339 or DaytonLodge.com Pp

East Tennessee Land
Beautiful 21.2 acres with mountain view. Country living near the cities of Kingsport, Johnson City and Bristol. Build your dream estate. \$685,000 Also 5 acre tracts available.
Mike 423-921-4317 Pp

LEGAL NOTICES
1300
Legal Notices

Lost Title Application No: 2608593, Government of Jamaica, Office of Titles, Notice Pursuant to Section 82 of the Registration of Titles Act (RTA). Whereas the applicants in the above stated application have declared that the following duplicate Certificate of Title has been lost, I hereby give notice that I intend to cancel the said Certificate of Title and issue a new one in duplicate fourteen days after the last publication of this advertisement. Volume: 083; Folio: 453; Place: Walks Road, number One Hundred and Thirtyfour Brunswick Avenue, Spanish Town, Parish: St. Catherine, Jamaica; Registered proprietor(s): Dorothy May Aitken and Alice Tracey-Ann Falloon. The following transactions lodged with this application will be registered pursuant to section 81 of the RTA: Application to Note Death 2608587. L. Dunbar, Deputy Registrar of Titles.

EMPLOYMENT
1500
Employment

Art Program Education Administrator: AM Art Institute, Inc. 880 Roosevelt Suite #100 Irvine, CA 92620

You're connected.
Log on to latimes.com and you'll get breaking news, calendar live, business, sports, classified and travel. All brought to life with great photos and links to keep you moving.

More information. In a flash.

Los Angeles Times
latimes.com.

You're connected.
Log on to latimes.com and you'll get breaking news, calendar live, business, sports, classified and travel. All brought to life with great photos and links to keep you moving.

More information. In a flash.

Los Angeles Times
latimes.com.

love is...

3/5

TM Reg. U.S. Pat. Off. — all rights reserved
© 2025 Minikim Holland B.V.

JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ARIYH

KLECR

BPAUTE

SMTAOC

©2025 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All Rights Reserved.

Yesterday's

Jumbles: LASSO PANDA GUILTY
Answer: The carpenter was willing to pay a little more for a hammer that would be — TOUGH AS NAILS

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Kneurek

We're going to put him back. He's not exactly a trophy fish.

OK, I think his name is Nemo! I'll be back next year, Nemo!

THE FISH WAS SMALL, SO SHE RELEASED IT BACK INTO THE WATER AND SAID ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Legal Notices

SUMMONS (CITACION JUDICIAL)
Case Number (Numero del Caso): 20STCV15927

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: (AVISO AL DEMANDADO):
ABS Construction Group, Inc. Felix Hurtado Primo Construction, Inc. Modern One Plastering, Inc. Borik Jeovany Rosales Miranda Pyramid General Contractor Mission City Glass, Inc. Robert Madrazo Anahita Construction Alireza Haghighat Kypseli Construction and Pools, Inc. Nader Kashani

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):
K7, LLC, a California limited liability company; DIANAFARAJOLLAHZADEH, LLC, a California Limited Liability Company

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.

IAVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 dias, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su version. Lea la informacion a continuacion.

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):
Santa Monica Courthouse
1725 Main Street,
Santa Monica, CA 90401

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):
acob H. Zadeh, Esq. - JZ Law Group, P.C.
10880 Wilshire Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90024
(310) 598-2813

Date: (Fecha) July 2, 2024

David W Slayton Clerk
(Secretario)
J. Hernandez Deputy
(Adjunto)

HOW TO PLACE AN AD

Self-service 24/7:
latimes.com/placead

Contact us by phone 24/7:
800-234-4444

ADVERTISING POLICIES
For Los Angeles Times advertising terms and conditions go to:
www.latimes.com/about/la-ads-terms-20181105-hmtlstory.html

You're connected.

Log on to latimes.com and you'll get breaking news, calendar live, business, sports, classified and travel. All brought to life with great photos and links to keep you moving.

More information. In a flash.

Los Angeles Times
latimes.com.

Today in Southern California

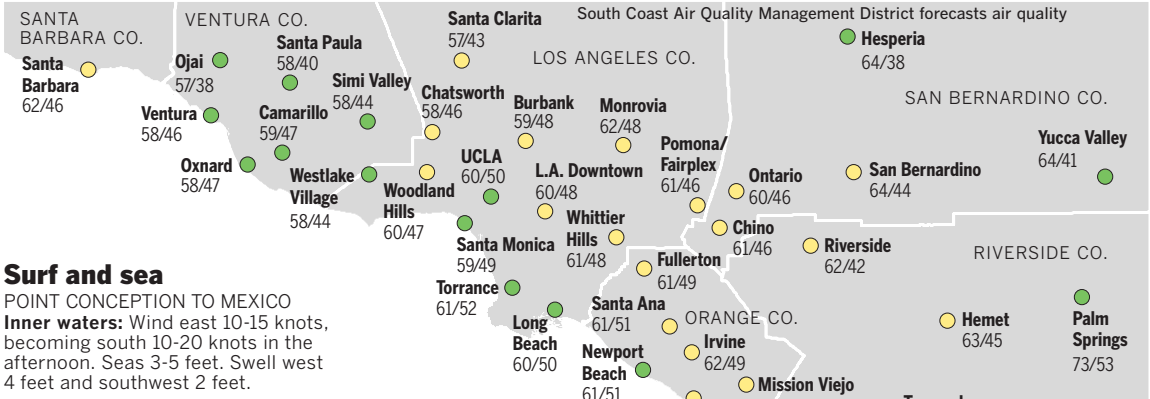
Rain returns: An eastward-moving trough coming from the Pacific will bring wet weather Wednesday with rain advancing from northwest to southeast, reaching southern L.A. County toward noon. After a lull Wednesday night into Thursday morning, a storm dropping southward will send another round of rain with low snow levels across the region during the afternoon into the night.

5-day forecasts

High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin	Valleys	Beaches	Mountains	Deserts
Today	60 48 Rain; cooler	59 46 Rain; cooler	59 49 Rain; cool	50 24 A p.m. shower or two	73 53 A little p.m. rain
Thursday	P.M. rain 60/47	P.M. rain 60/45	P.M. rain 61/48	A p.m. shower 34/22	Showers 64/47
Friday	Warmer 67/44	Sunny; cool 64/44	Sunny 65/45	A flurry 37/12	Sunny; cool 70/49
Saturday	Sunny 70/48	Sunny 72/46	Sunny 65/46	Not as cold 44/19	Warmer 80/52
Sunday	Sunny 69/49	Sunny 71/46	Sunny 66/48	Sunny 53/26	Sunny 81/55

Air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO

Inner waters: Wind east 10-15 knots, becoming south 10-20 knots in the afternoon. Seas 3-5 feet. Swell west 4 feet and southwest 2 feet.

Surf zone: The potential for strong and dangerous rip currents is moderate at L.A. and Ventura county beaches and low elsewhere.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	1-3'	7 sec	W	54
Ventura	2-4'	7 sec	W	54
Los Angeles	2-4'	8 sec	W	55
Orange	1-3'	9 sec	SSW	55
San Diego	1-3'	9 sec	SSW	57

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

Today	12:24a	5.4 Hi	8:03a	0.3 Lo
	2:45p	2.7 Hi	6:15p	2.3 Lo
Thu.	1:28a	5.2 Hi	9:48a	0.1 Lo
	----- Hi		----- Lo	

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people

Las Vegas, 60	Phoenix, 45
Los Angeles, 60	San Francisco, 45

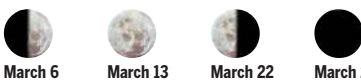
California cities*

City	Tue.*	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today	Hi	Lo	Thu.	Hi	Lo
Anaheim	68	47	--	--	62	48	62	47		
Avalon/Catalina	57	48	--	--	54	42	50	43		
Bakersfield	66	47	--	--	57	43	53	44		
Barstow	69	44	--	--	67	46	59	41		
Big Bear Lake	50	28	--	--	50	24	34	22		
Bishop	64	38	--	--	54	34	52	30		
Burbank	67	46	--	--	59	48	58	45		
Camarillo	63	46	--	--	59	47	63	41		
Chatsworth	69	45	--	--	58	46	59	45		
Chino	69	44	--	--	61	46	60	44		
Compton	65	50	--	--	62	51	63	47		
Dana Point	63	48	--	--	60	50	59	48		
Death Valley	77	54	--	--	68	57	67	56		
Del Mar	73	49	--	--	59	53	57	47		
Escondido	70	43	--	--	66	48	58	41		
Eureka	53	41	13	53	40	53	38			
Fallbrook	67	44	--	--	56	48	59	40		
Fresno	65	47	--	--	64	53	57	41		
Fullerton	69	50	--	--	61	49	63	45		
Hemet	67	41	--	--	63	45	55	38		
Hesperia	64	44	--	--	62	37	53	34		
Huntington Beach	64	50	--	--	61	51	62	50		
Idyllwild	55	39	--	--	53	33	38	31		
Irvine	67	48	--	--	62	49	62	48		

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set

	Los Angeles Co.	Orange Co.	Ventura Co.
Sun	6:17a/5:53p	6:15a/5:52p	6:21a/5:57p
Moon	9:45a/home	9:44a/home	9:48a/home



Almanac

Tuesday Downtown readings

Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
High/low	67/50	73/51	63/44
Normal high/low	69/51	70/50	66/46
High/low a year ago	67/49	64/47	63/46
Record high/date	94/1972	95/2012	83/1968
Record low/date	35/1976	40/2018	36/1976

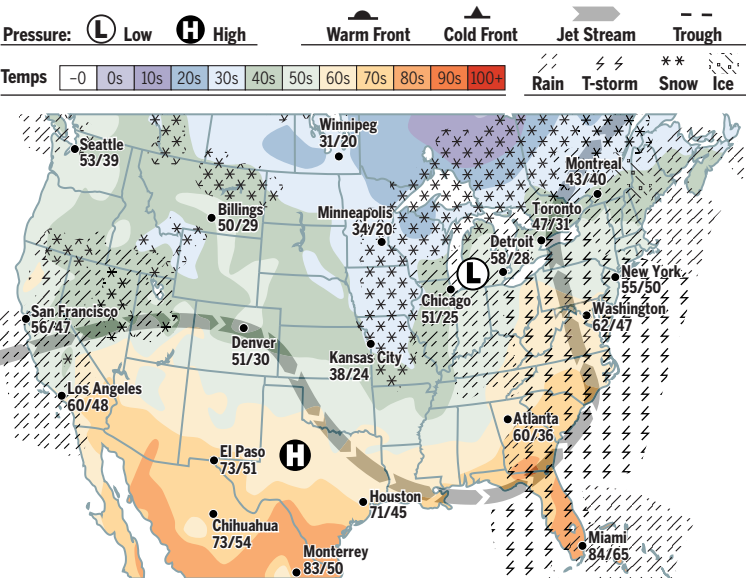
Precipitation	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
24-hour total (as of 2 p.m.)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Season total (since Oct. 1)	5.52	2.98	4.24
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	18.27	13.55	21.56
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	11.18	9.32	12.36
Humidity (high/low)	92/51	74/39	85/59

City	Tue.*	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today	Hi	Lo	Thu.	Hi	Lo
L.A. D'town/USC	66	47	--	--	60	48	60	47		
L.A. Int'l. Airport	63	50	--	--	59	51	60	47		
Laguna Beach	59	49	--	--	60	50	60	49		
Lancaster	67	41	--	--	56	40	53	37		
Long Beach	65	50	--	--	60	50	62	48		
Mammoth Lakes	47	27	--	--	39	22	31	13		
Mission Viejo	67	46	--	--	61	47	60	44		
Monrovia	66	47	--	--	62	48	61	43		
Monterey	60	48	--	--	55	46	54	43		
Mt. Wilson	55	38	--	--	45	27	33	28		
Needles	74	50	--	--	76	55	70	46		
Newport Beach	62	50	--	--	61	51	62	50		
Northridge	68	46	--	--	60	46	61	46		
Oakland	56	50	Tr	--	56	45	58	42		
Oceanside	70	46	Tr	--	67	51	62	44		
Ojai	65	43	--	--	57	38	57	36		
Ontario	67	47	--	--	60	46	59	44		
Palm Springs	77	53	--	--	73	53	64	47		
Pasadena	66	46	--	--	61	47	60	44		
Paso Robles	65	44	--	--	58	39	57	33		
Redding	57	39	Tr	--	62	41	62	38		
Riverside	64	41	--	--	61	42	55	40		
Sacramento	61	45	--	--	58	42	57	38		
San Bernardino	66	45	--	--	64	44	58	41		

City	Tue.*	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today	Hi	Lo	Thu.	Hi	Lo
San Diego	63	51	--	--	63	55	62	51		
San Francisco	57	50	Tr	--	56	47	57	44		
San Gabriel	68	48	--	--	61	47	63	44		
San Jose	64	50	--	--	58	45	61	42		
San Luis Obispo	66	49	--	--	58	46	58	41		
Santa Ana	66	50	--	--	61	51	62	49		
Santa Barbara	64	48	--	--	62	46	61	44		
Santa Clarita	68	42	--	--	57	43	57	43		
Santa Monica Pier	64	48	--	--	59	49	61	48		
Santa Paula	64	45	--	--	58	40	59	37		
Santa Rosa	56	46	Tr	--	61	39	62	35		
Simi Valley	66	44	--	--	58	44	59	40		
Tahoe Valley	44	31	--	--	40	24	33	17		
Temecula	67	42	--	--	65	46	57	40		
Thousand Oaks	63	44	--	--	59	44	60	38		
Torrance	64	50	--	--	61	52	62	50		
UCLA	63	48	--	--	60	50	61	48		
Van Nuys	68	47	--	--	59	46	61	45		
Ventura	62	47	--	--	58	46	59	43		
Whittier Hills	67	48	--	--	61	48	63	45		
Woodland Hills	70	46	--	--	60	47	63	45		
Wrightwood	54	42	--	--	53	29	42	27		
Yorba Linda	68	45	--	--	60	47	60	44		
Yosemite Valley	52	37	Tr	--	47	29	41	19		

Today in North America

Snow, rain and severe thunderstorms: A storm center moving toward the Great Lakes region will bring strong winds to a large part of the eastern half of the country. Snow will fall to the northwest of the low, while rain and locally severe thunderstorms push to the east.



U.S. cities

TUESDAY'S EXTREMES AS OF 2 P.M. FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 94 in McAllen, Texas

Low -12 in Presque Isle, Maine

City	Tuesday*	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today	Hi	Lo	Sky
Albany	48	22	--	--	54	48	R	
Albuquerque	59	33	--	--	64	44	Su	
Anchorage	41	29	--	--	41	34	R	
Aspen	34	25	23	42	30	Pc		
Atlanta	71	44	--	--	60	36	W	
Austin	78	54	22	72	40	Su		
Baltimore	63	28	--	--	57	45	R	
Boise	54	32	.01	53	34	Pc		
Boston	50	28	Tr	53	50	Cy		
Buffalo	56	29	.02	57	34	R		
Burlington, Vt.	41	21	.07	52	47	R		
Charleston, S.C.	72	41	.04	72	45	Tr		
Charlotte	67	36	Tr	71	38	Tr		
Chicago	48	43	.49	51	25	R		
Cincinnati	67	39	.01	54	28	Sh		
Cleveland	63	36	.02	60	29	R		
Columbia, S.C.	71	32	Tr	73	40	Tr		
Columbus	66	38	--	59	29	R		
Dallas/Ft.Worth	68	50	.56	61	41	Su		
Denver	46	33	.16	51	30	Pc		
Detroit	50	32	.15	58	28	Tr		
El Paso	64	44	--	73	51	Su		
Eugene	56	42	.12	55	36	Cy		
Fort Myers	83	62	.04	82	63	Tr		
Hartford	51	23	--	55	50	R		
Honolulu	82	76	.02	85	73	Sh		
Houston	78	70	.48	71	45	Su		
Indianapolis	65	41	.08	52	26	Tr		
Jacksonville, Fla.	77	47	.02	77	48	Tr		
Kansas City	54	53	.66	38	24	W		
Knoxville	68	32	--	63	34	Sh		
Las Vegas	68	47	--	67	49	Cy		
Louisville	69	45	.09	56	32	Sh		
Medford	54	42	.03	54	38	Sh		
Memphis	64	57	.27	47	32	W		
Miami	80	71	.06	84	65	Pc		
Milwaukee	51	34	.25	47	24	Sn		
Minneapolis	45	42	.15	34	20	Sn		
Nashville	72	47	.15	56	33	W		
New Orleans	75	61	.11	69	47	Su		
New York	52	34	--	55	50	R		
Norfolk	68	34	Tr	67	49	Tr		
Oklahoma City	61	48	.86	54	32	Su		
Omaha	58	50	.53	35	20	W		
Orlando	78	59	.02	84	54	Tr		
Philadelphia	62	29	--	59	47	R		
Phoenix	70	49	--	77	58	Pc		
Pittsburgh	67	37	Tr	64	32	R		
Portland, Ore.	57	45	.14	56	37	Cy		
Providence	48	21	.00	53	48	R		
Raleigh/Durham	67	36	--	70	43	Tr		
Reno	54	33	--	47	33	R		
Richmond	64	33	--	64	44	Tr		
St. Louis	63	55	.33	42	27	Sn		
Salt Lake City	54	39	--	54	41	Pc		

City	Tuesday*			Today		
	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Sky
Seattle	48	41	.17	53	39	Cy
Tampa	81	64	--	76	57	Tr
Tucson	68	41	--	80	56	Su
Tulsa	62	52	2.25	53	30	W
Washington, D.C.	64	36	--	62	47	Tr
Wichita	57	52	.21	50	28	W

USC's Watkins, Gottlieb earn Big Ten awards

Star guard is voted player of the year and coach also wins top honor in conference.

By RYAN KARTJE

After a stellar season that included a Big Ten regular-season championship, USC guard JuJu Watkins has been named Big Ten player of the year and the Trojans' Lindsay Gottlieb earned coach of the year honors in a vote by league coaches and media members.

USC posted a 17-1 run through the Big Ten, with its wins coming by an average margin of 17 points. The Trojans capped that run with a rout of rival UCLA on Saturday to capture the Big Ten conference crown, marking the first time the Trojans have won a regular-season league title in 31 years.

Watkins was central to that dominance, establishing herself as one of college basketball's preeminent stars. Watkins actually averaged fewer points (24.4) and rebounds (6.7) as a sophomore than she did as a freshman, but her efficiency on the floor improved significantly. She shot better from both inside the arc — up from 40% to 43% — and outside — up from 32% to 34%. She averaged fewer turnovers and more assists, while also averaging more blocks per game (two) than all but one other guard in college basketball.

In the process, Watkins became one of the fastest in women's basketball history to pass the 1,000-point mark, outpacing former Iowa star Caitlin Clark, who won the previous three Big Ten player of the year awards.

For Gottlieb, the Trojans' run this season marked the culmination of a four-year rebuild that began in 2021, when she inherited a program that hadn't won an NCAA tournament game

during the previous 15 years. USC finished 12-16 in her first season but hasn't missed the NCAA tournament since.

This season, Gottlieb brought in a star-studded class of transfers and top recruits to surround Watkins, and the revamped Trojans responded with a 27-2 regular season. USC's two losses were tied for its fewest ever in the regular season, a mark matched only by the 1982-83 Trojans, who won the national title and are widely considered to be one of the best women's college teams of all time.

Three of USC's other four starters earned Big Ten honors.

Kiki Iriafen, who transferred to USC from Stanford last spring to team with Watkins, joined her on the All-Big Ten first team after a season in which she averaged 18.1 points and 8.3 rebounds per game.

Watkins and senior Rayah Marshall were named to the Big Ten's all-defensive team, and freshman Kennedy Smith earned all-freshman team honors. Marshall and Smith also earned All-Big Ten honorable mentions.

UCLA center Lauren Betts earned Big Ten defensive player of the year honors and was named to the Big Ten all-defensive team, and fellow Bruin Janiah Barker earned Big Ten sixth person of the year.

Freshman of the year was the only major Big Ten award that didn't go to a Southern California team, with Ohio State's Jaloni Cambridge and Michigan's Olivia Olson splitting the honors.

Betts joined UCLA's Kiki Rice on the All-Big Ten first team. UCLA's Londynn Jones earned league honorable mention honors.

USC will need three consecutive wins in Indianapolis to add Big Ten tournament champions to its list of accomplishments.



MARK J. TERRILL Associated Press

COACH Lindsay Gottlieb, center, hugs Trojans guard Malia Samuels after Saturday's victory over UCLA.



GEOFF STELLFOX Getty Images

DYLAN ANDREWS dribbles past Northwestern's K.J. Windham during the second half of Monday night's game at Welsh-Ryan Arena in Evanston, Ill.

Bruins living dangerously

[UCLA, from B10]

"My buddy, Scott Van Pelt, likes having us on 'Bad Beats,'" UCLA coach Mick Cronin cracked in one corner of Welsh-Ryan Arena, alluding to the ESPN segment devoted to epic meltdowns that lead to betting losses. "So I'm trying to get on that show."

Cronin could joke about the circumstances given the way things turned out. His Bruins shrugged off their self-inflicted misfortune to hold on for a 73-69 victory after another breathless finish.

The critical sequence came after Northwestern fouled UCLA's Skyy Clark, who made one of two free throws to extend his team's advantage to two points with 21 seconds remaining.

Wildcats forward Nick Martinelli drove toward the basket before losing the ball as he tried to squeeze between William Kyle III and Eric Dailey Jr., the crowd screaming for a foul that never came. Instead, Kyle grabbed the ball and passed to Kobe Johnson, whose outlet pass to Dailey left the Wildcats no choice but to intentionally foul him with 8.4 seconds left.

Dailey made both free throws and the Bruins (21-9 overall, 12-7 Big Ten) prevailed on a night that it looked as if Aday Mara was going to be the big story.

Entering the game after Bilodeau picked up his third foul early in the second half, Mara changed everything. In a savvy move, Mara's teammates repeatedly got him the ball near the basket, leading to five consecutive points on a layup, a jump hook and a free throw after the 7-foot-3 sophomore was hacked as a result of the Wildcats being unable to stop him any other way.

"The times they looked at me and they passed me the ball," Mara said of his teammates, "it was easy because I was under the rim. Just turn and score, get fouled, you know?"

At first, a few pockets of UCLA fans showed their appreciation for the big man. Then nearly the entire

MONDAY'S MEN'S BOX

UCLA 73, NORTHWESTERN 69

	Min	FG-A	FFA	OR-T	A	P	T
Bilodeau	24	8-14	2-2	2-3	2	4	19
Andrews	30	2-7	0-1	0-2	3	0	4
Clark	25	3-9	3-4	1-4	7	0	10
Johnson	31	2-4	0-0	2-7	3	2	5
Dailey	24	3-6	4-4	1-6	1	3	12
Mack	22	2-6	0-0	1-5	2	2	5
Mara	16	5-8	1-3	6-10	1	1	11
Stefanovic	15	2-3	2-2	0-1	0	2	7
Kyle	7	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Perry	6	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Totals	27:58	12-16	13-38	19	16	73	

Shooting: Field goals, 46.6%; free throws, 75.0%. Three-point goals: 7-19 (Dailey 4-9, Windham 2-5, Stefanovic 1-2, Johnson 1-3, Bilodeau 1-5, Clark 1-5, Perry 0-1, Andrews 0-3). Team Rebounds: 0. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 6 (Mara 3, Andrews, Clark, Johnson). Turnovers: 12 (Andrews 4, Bilodeau 3, Clark 2, Johnson, Mara, Stefanovic). Steals: 6 (Clark 2, Johnson 2, Bilodeau, Kyle).

	Min	FG-A	FFA	OR-T	A	P	T
Martinelli	39	6-13	8-10	2-6	3	2	20
Nicholson	31	3-5	0-0	2-3	1	3	6
Berry	35	7-13	4-4	0-7	2	4	22
Clayton	21	0-3	0-0	0-6	7	2	0
Mullins	34	2-4	0-0	0-0	2	0	5
Windham	28	4-11	0-0	0-2	2	2	10
Fitzmorris	8	3-4	0-0	0-0	0	3	6
Ciargvino	4	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals	25:53	12-14	4-24	17	16	69	

Shooting: Field goals, 47.2%; free throws, 85.7%. Three-point goals: 7-19 (Berry 4-9, Windham 2-5, Mullins 1-1, Clayton 0-2, Martinelli 0-2). Team Rebounds: 0. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 3 (Nicholson 2, Windham). Turnovers: 8 (Berry 2, Mullins 2, Clayton, Martinelli, Nicholson, Windham). Steals: 6 (Berry 3, Clayton, Martinelli, Windham).

UCLA	34	39-73
Northwestern	35	34-69

A-6,099 (8,117).

crowd did.

Fans of both teams unleashed audible astonishment when Mara threw down his second dunk.

"When you see a 7-3 guy do that," Bilodeau said of the murmurs, "it's great."

Mara went on to log a double-double in only 16 minutes, finishing with 11 points, 10 rebounds and three blocks while making his latest case for more playing time.

"When he's in there, he's the best offensive player we have," Cronin said, noting that Mara needed to continue to work on his conditioning because he was exhausted by the time he left the game. "You can't stop him one on one and he's our best passer, so get it to him close to the rim and let him do his thing."

Bilodeau (19 points) sustained his team's momentum when he returned, grabbing an offensive rebound that led to a jump hook. It was a theme for the Bruins, who grabbed 13 offensive rebounds and outrebounded Northwestern (16-14, 7-12) by 14. A change in how the Bru-

Rams trading offensive lineman

After just four games in L.A., Jonah Jackson is heading to Chicago for a sixth-round pick.

By GARY KLEIN

The Rams have agreed to trade offensive lineman Jonah Jackson to the Chicago Bears, a person with knowledge of the situation said Tuesday.

The Rams will receive a 2025 sixth-round pick for Jackson, and the Bears will absorb Jackson's salary, said the person, who requested anonymity because the deal has not been finalized. The trade cannot be finalized until after the new league year starts March 12.

Jackson's tenure with the Rams lasted one injury-plagued season. He played in only four games.

In March 2024, the Rams gave Jackson a three-year contract that included \$34 million in guarantees, according to Overthecap.com. Jackson, 28, was scheduled to earn \$9 million next season, which would have become guaranteed if he was on the roster March 15, according to the website.

After signing Jackson, the Rams initially planned to move Steve Avila from left guard to center, and to have Jackson, a Pro Bowl selection in 2021 with the Detroit Lions, play left guard.

But Jackson did not participate in offseason workouts while recovering from knee surgery. He suffered a shoulder injury early in training camp, and when he returned to practice, coach Sean McVay moved Avila back to left guard and Jackson played center.

But Jackson aggravated the shoulder injury in the second game, and he was on injured reserve for six games. He returned to start in a Week 10 loss to the Miami Dolphins but did not play in seven of the final eight games.

In late February, the Rams gave Jackson's representatives permission to explore a trade.



TERRANCE WILLIAMS AP

JONAH JACKSON has been plagued by injuries.

Trojans' Bowden will take aggressive approach in NIL era

[Bowden, from B10]

USC could become — and would provide the resources to make it happen.

Those factors weren't always in his full control at Notre Dame.

"I knew I was coming to USC when, in an hour's time span, I spoke to Jen and Lincoln and had voiced my aspirations and what I believe college football is going to be and how aggressive I'd like to be in that new era," Bowden said. "They shared a lot of the same thoughts as I did."

"That's a huge reason as to why I chose to leave a great situation. Because I felt like this was better."

His arrival at USC has since been heralded as one of the biggest moves of the college football offseason to date. But while Cohen and Riley have raved about their new general manager, no one seems happier about these new circumstances than Bowden.

Every morning, he says, he looks into his closet stocked with cardinal and gold apparel and has to pinch himself.

"I always felt like USC was the sleeping giant of college football," Bowden said, "and I remember thinking if I ever got that opportunity, deep down, I'd want to take it because I know what this place can do."

He's been thrilled with Cohen, whom he called both

"a friggin' animal" and the "best [athletic director] in the country." He's overjoyed with Riley, whom he says "can do it all," including grilling up a mean balsamic steak, one Bowden was still thinking about weeks later.

Where there were concerns in the past about USC having enough resources to compete with other blue bloods, Bowden says he has no such worry.

USC "won't be slowed down" by the new era of revenue sharing, he assured. And its NIL approach would be among "the most aggressive" in the country.

"USC has everything," he says. "There's not one thing that this place doesn't have."

What it lacked was a vision — and the necessary infrastructure — to keep up in the incoming era of revenue-sharing in college football. But since Bowden's arrival, USC has put a tremendous amount of trust in its new general manager to fill in those blanks.

That's led naturally to questions about the dynamics around the new general manager role. Bowden technically reports to both Riley and Cohen. But he shrugged off any suggestion of a potential "power struggle."

"We're all in this together," Bowden said. "I've always viewed it that way."

Already, the plans Bowden laid out in those calls



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

LINCOLN RILEY'S out-of-state recruiting focus is changing under his new GM.

with Cohen and Riley are starting to come to fruition. Bowden has stocked the front office with rising star personnel staffers that he worked with at both Notre Dame and Cincinnati, three of whom — Dre Brown, Max Stienecker and Weston Zernechel — Bowden said were general managers in their own right.

The focus since has almost entirely been on the re-

cruiting trail, where in recent years, Riley has spent a lot of time chasing big-time prospects outside of the state, many of whom ended up flipping to local schools late in the process.

But that approach has been scrapped since Bowden's arrival, as USC now plans to focus most of its effort on recruiting Southern California.

"Back when national

championships were won here, when Rose Bowls were won here, you know, you look back at Pete Carroll's classes — '02, '03, '04 — over 80% of the recruiting classes were from the state of California," Bowden said. "History repeats itself. It always does. And if you look into the fine details of how programs are built and how the place was built and when success had happened, that was a key

part of USC being on top. My plans and my vision is to bring that back and take care of the state."

It's an important time to start seriously recruiting the state, considering the wealth of talent in the 2026 class. Bowden said he believes it's "the best class that California has had in two decades."

With that in mind, he has spent the better part of the past 30 days dropping by local high schools and meeting with the sport's local power-brokers. He prefers to say he's "enhancing" those local ties, rather than "restoring" them; though, it's clear in recent years that they'd faded.

"We're going to take care of those people and they're going to know that we're here," Bowden said. "That's not done over one call. That's not a text message every day. It's done through consistent communication and action."

A new general manager and new vision won't change a program overnight on their own either. But as Bowden sees it, USC is "a lot closer than people think."

As for the remaining distance? Bowden seems content to carry USC himself.

"I'm gonna give every ounce of me to whatever is necessary for USC to win," Bowden said. "Whatever this place needs, I'm gonna do it."

THE DAY IN SPORTS

Eagles give Barkley record extension

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Saquon Barkley will become the highest-paid running back in NFL history after his record-setting season helped the Philadelphia Eagles win the Super Bowl.

The Eagles are giving Barkley a two-year contract extension worth \$41.2 million with \$36 million guaranteed, a person with knowledge of the deal told the Associated Press on Tuesday. The person, speaking on condition of anonymity because the extension hasn't been announced, said Barkley's new deal includes \$15 million in incentives.

Barkley ran for 2,504 yards in the regular season and playoffs, breaking **Terrell Davis'** record for most yards rushing combined in one season.

The Minnesota Vikings passed on the opportunity to place the franchise tag on **Sam Darnold** before the league's deadline on Tuesday, maximizing their options for bolstering the roster and potentially making the first-time Pro Bowl pick available to every team when free agency opens next week. ... The New York Jets are releasing receiver **Davante Adams** ahead of the start of the NFL's new league year next week, according to AP. The move, which was expected, will save the Jets \$29.9 million in salary cap space. ... The Dallas Cowboys and defensive tackle **Osa Odighizuwa** agreed on an \$80-million, four-year contract with \$58 million guaranteed, his agent said. ... The Seattle Seahawks cut outside linebacker **Dre'Mont Jones**, along with safety **Rayshawn Jenkins**, defensive tackle **Roy Robertson-Harris** and offensive lineman **George Fant** to create salary cap space. ... Kicker **Brandon McManus** is staying with the Green Bay Packers after agreeing to a three-year, \$15.3-million contract with a \$5- million signing bonus, according to a person familiar with the situation.

ETC.

Moustakas set to retire as a Royal

Mike Moustakas is going to retire with Kansas City after spending 13 years in the majors and winning the World Series with the Royals in 2015.

The Royals announced it



JOHN FROSCHAUER Associated Press

MIKE MOUSTAKAS spent 13 seasons in the majors and won a World Series title with the Royals in 2015.

Monday. The 36-year-old infielder will sign a one-day contract with his first big-league team on May 31, and he will be honored that day at home against Detroit. The Chatsworth High product was the City Section player of the year in 2006 and 2007.

Texas Rangers outfielder **Adolis Garcia** was scratched from the lineup for Tuesday's spring training game and will undergo an MRI exam on his left oblique, the same one that he injured during their World Series run two years ago. ... Veteran left-handed pitcher **Jose Quintana** is joining the Milwaukee Brewers on a one-year, \$4.25-million deal with \$1 million in potential bonuses, according to a person familiar with the negotiations. ... Boston Red Sox slugger **Rafael Devers**, who was expected to make his spring training debut Tuesday, has pushed it back after telling manager **Alex Cora** that he did not feel ready while taking live batting practice. ... St. Louis Cardinals outfielder **Jordan Walker** left the team's split-squad game with left knee pain on Tuesday. ... Cleveland Guardians outfielder **Chase DeLauter**, who is widely considered one of the organization's top prospects, had surgery to repair a sports hernia and is expected to miss the first couple of months of the season.

The Edmonton Oilers made their first big move ahead of the NHL trade deadline, acquiring hard-nosed forward **Trent Frederic** from the Boston Bruins for a 2025 second- and a 2026 fourth-round pick and prospect **Max Wanner**, with the Bruins retaining half of Frederic's \$2.3-million salary.

The New Jersey Devils retained another quarter and received the rights to unsigned draft pick **Shane Lachance** from the Oilers and **Petr Hauser** from the Bruins in return.

The Atlantic Coast Conference, Clemson and Florida State each approved a settlement to end the cross-fire of lawsuits between the member schools and the conference, signing off on a deal that changes the revenue-distribution model in a way that would theoretically benefit both schools with marquee football brands. The deal also revises and clarifies the long-term costs for a school to leave the conference.



BRANDON SLOTER Getty Images

THE DODGERS will give Tanner Scott, above, the "brunt" of the save opportunities, Dave Roberts said.

Scott developed into top closer

[**Scott**, from B10]

from each — later, Scott and Phillips could still vividly recall the moment in the Dodgers' clubhouse last week, using it as an example to illustrate how far they've come.

In Baltimore, the two were fringe big-leaguers just looking for opportunity. Now, after Phillips' rise with the Dodgers and Scott's four-year, \$72-million signing with the team this offseason, they are teammates again on a juggernaut Dodgers roster, expected to serve key late-innings roles as two of the sport's best current relief arms.

"It was not a fun [situation]," Scott said, reflecting back on their shared time in Baltimore. "But you've got to appreciate the journey you've been on."

Dodgers fans are plenty familiar with Phillips' journey, having watched the 30-year-old veteran blossom with the club to the tune of a 2.28 ERA and 44 saves over the last four seasons.

Scott, also 30, arrives in Los Angeles having experienced a similar ascension, transforming over the last two years into a shutdown late-game option thanks to a 2.04 ERA and 34 saves with the Miami Marlins and San Diego Padres.

"He's someone that we have watched and admired from afar over the years and have tried to acquire multi-

ple times," general manager Brandon Gomes said at Scott's introductory news conference this offseason. "Tanner possesses all of the qualities we value as an organization when looking to bring on a free agent."

Scott was not always so coveted.

An Ohio native and sixth-round pick in 2014 out of tiny Howard College in west Texas, the 6-foot southpaw has long wowed scouts with his upper-90s mph and swing-and-miss slider. During his first five MLB seasons with Baltimore from 2017 to 2021, he showcased his premium stuff by racking up 208 strikeouts in his first 156 innings in the majors.

The problem, at that stage, was his command.

In that same period, Scott issued 96 walks and found the strike zone on just 44% of his pitches. After a promising performance in the pandemic-shortened 2020 season, when he posted a 1.31 ERA and gave up just 12 hits over 20% innings, he regressed in 2021, posting the fifth-worst walk rate among qualified MLB relievers (14.7%). When he was traded to the Marlins the following offseason, his career ERA was 4.73.

"I was always just trying to stay [in the majors]," Scott said.

In Miami, Scott started to turn a corner. Under the tutelage of veteran Marlins

pitching coach Mel Stottlemyre Jr., he cut down on his walks and found confidence attacking the strike zone. In June 2022, he began getting opportunities as the club's closer, collecting 20 saves that season and 12 more during the Marlins' surprise run to playoffs in 2023, when he also posted a 2.31 ERA (best in his career for a full season).

Then, last year, he finally unlocked the full potential of his arsenal.

During the season's first four months, Scott posted a 1.18 ERA and earned his first career All-Star selection. At the trade deadline, he was sent to the San Diego Padres in a blockbuster deal, helping them make the playoffs and push the Dodgers to the brink of elimination in the National League Division Series.

"The fear in the batter's box against him is certainly real," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said of Scott, who pitched three scoreless innings in the NLDS and memorably struck out Shohei Ohtani all four times he faced him.

"I'm happy he's on our side [now]," Roberts added, comparing the quiet, bearded pitcher to an "assassin" on the mound.

Before he landed in San Diego last year, the Dodgers made a push to acquire Scott themselves; coming "pretty close" to a deal with

the Marlins at the deadline, according to Gomes, before the Padres swooped in.

This winter, the Dodgers made sure not to miss again. When Scott became a free agent, he said the Dodgers were the first team that reached out. And after small tastes of the postseason the past two Octobers, he craved the opportunity to join the defending World Series champions.

"I mean, you look at the lineup, you look at the pitching staff, it's gonna be fun," Scott said. "They do a lot of things the right way."

In recent seasons, one part of the Dodgers' way has been a closer-by-committee approach. And while Scott will get the "brunt" of save opportunities now, Roberts said he hasn't been designated as the closer yet, with the Dodgers also viewing Phillips, Blake Treinen, Michael Kopech and others as ninth-inning options.

Asked about that dynamic this week, Scott said he was on board with however the Dodgers choose to use him.

Remembering the revolving door (and chance airport encounters) he endured in Baltimore, he said he's simply happy to pitch "whenever my name is called."

"It was tough, but you gotta enjoy the process," Scott said. "Because it makes you who you are."

NHL STANDINGS

Through Monday

WESTERN CONFERENCE						
Pacific	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	36	18	6	78	199	166
Edmonton	35	21	4	74	195	174
KINGS	31	20	8	70	167	159
Calgary	28	23	9	65	155	176
Vancouver	27	22	11	65	165	184
Ducks	26	26	7	59	154	183
Seattle	26	31	4	56	180	198
San Jose	16	37	9	41	160	232
Central	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Winnipeg	42	15	4	88	214	143
Dallas	39	19	2	80	206	155
Minnesota	35	22	4	74	173	176
Colorado	35	24	2	72	198	182
St. Louis	29	27	6	64	179	187
Utah	27	25	9	63	172	181
Nashville	21	32	7	49	153	201
Chicago	19	35	7	45	169	214
EASTERN CONFERENCE						
Metropolitan	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	39	14	8	86	220	161
Carolina	35	22	4	74	195	170
New Jersey	33	23	6	72	186	154
Columbus	30	22	8	68	205	196
NY Rangers	31	26	4	66	187	183
Philadelphia	27	26	8	62	180	202
NY Islanders	27	26	7	61	165	180
Pittsburgh	24	29	10	58	183	233
Atlantic	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto	38	20	3	79	196	175
Florida	38	21	3	79	206	172
Tampa Bay	35	21	4	74	212	158
Detroit	30	24	6	66	176	191
Ottawa	30	25	5	65	170	173
Boston	28	26	8	64	167	195
Montreal	30	26	5	65	184	204
Buffalo	24	29	6	54	189	202

Note: Overtime or shootout losses are worth one point.

Kings' offense stagnant as slide hits four games

They're held to one goal again as Knight makes 41 saves to win his Blackhawks debut.

WIRE REPORTS

CHICAGO — Spencer Knight made 41 saves in his first game with Chicago to help the Blackhawks beat the Kings 5-1 on Monday night.

Former Kings defenseman Alec Martinez and Ethan Del Mastro scored for the Blackhawks, who opened a three-game home-stand with their second consecutive win. Ilya Mikheyev, Andreas Athanasiou and Ryan Donato also scored.

Knight was acquired by Chicago when it traded defenseman Seth Jones to Florida on Saturday night.

Anze Kopitar scored his 14th goal for the Kings, who dropped a season-high-tying fourth straight game. L.A. was held to one goal for the second straight game



PAUL BEATY Associated Press

QUINTON BYFIELD (55) of the Kings battles Teuvo Teravainen (86) and Ilya Mikheyev (95) for the puck in L.A.'s 5-1 loss at United Center on Monday night.

and has scored six goals its losing streak.

Darcy Kuemper stopped

14 shots.

Mikheyev broke a 1-1 tie with his 12th goal 46 seconds

into the second period. The Blackhawks then caught a break when Del Mastro sent

the puck toward the net and it went in off the left skate of Kings defenseman Jacob Moverare.

Del Mastro was credited with his second goal in 13 career games. He also scored in Chicago's 7-5 loss at Vegas on Thursday night.

Athanasiou made it 4-1 when he scored 1:20 into the third. It was his first goal in his second game since he was recalled from the minors on Friday.

The Blackhawks closed it out when Donato got an empty-netter with 1:30 left.

MONDAY'S LATE SUMMARY		
BLACKHAWKS 5, KINGS 1		
KINGS	1	0 0 - 1
Chicago	1	2 2 - 5
FIRST PERIOD: 1. Chi., Martinez 5 (Bertuzzi), 10:57. 2. KINGS, Kopitar 14 (Turcotte, Kempe), 11:39. Penalties —Spence, KINGS (Holding), 7:05. Jeannot, KINGS (High Sticking), 14:12.		
SECOND PERIOD: 3. Chi., Mikheyev 12 (Teravainen, Donato), 0:46. 4. Chi., Del Mastro 2 (Reichel, Maroon), 13:30. Penalties —Slaggett, CHI (Tripping), 6:29.		
THIRD PERIOD: 5. Chi., Athanasiou 1 (Dach), 1:20. 6. Chi., Donato 22 (Mikheyev, Teravainen), 18:30 (en). Penalties —None.		
SHOTS ON GOAL: KINGS 17-9-16-42. Chi. 7-9-3-19. Power-play Conversions —KINGS 0 of 1. Chi. 0 of 2.		
GOALIES: KINGS, Kuemper 18-8-6 (18 shots-14 saves). Chi., Knight 13-8-1 (42-41). Att —16,254 (19,717). T —2:23. R —Stephen Hiff, Francois St. Laurent. L —Scott Cherrey, Derek Nansen.		



WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

DERRICK JONES JR., left, battles for a loose ball with Golden State’s Buddy Hield in a December game.

Clippers’ high-flying Jones is staying grounded on defense

Although his dunks delight fans, veteran’s work on other end is what’s paying off.

By Broderick Turner

Over the course of what has become his best NBA season with the Clippers, Derrick Jones Jr. has been seen leaping into the stratosphere to catch a lob pass from James Harden and then throwing down an exciting dunk. The crowd inside Intuit Dome usually goes into a frenzy from the spectacular play.

The Clippers’ public address announcer, Eric Smith, will then let loose with a “Flight 55 has been cleared for takeoff,” the 55 the number on Jones’ jersey.

In many ways, that particular play has been a microcosm of Jones’ play with the Clippers this season. He has been performing at a high level for the Clippers, his game reaching new heights.

“This really has been my first year I heard where people called me ‘Flight 55,’”

said Jones, who has had other nicknames such as “Airplane Jones” and “Airplane Mode” because of his leaping ability. “But it’s cool. I like Flight 55. It seems to get the fans hyped.”

As the Clippers continue to fight for a top-six playoff spot in the ultra-competitive Western Conference and avoid the NBA’s play-in tournament, Jones has done his part.

His career highs in points (10.4 per game) and three-point shooting (35.6%) have provided them a lift. He’s shooting 51.6% from the field and is second on the team in offensive rebounds and third in steals (66).

“We all know defensively that’s where he stands out,” Clippers coach Tyronn Lue said. “But he’s got a career year in field-goal percentage, three-point percentage, minutes played, a lot of different things. He’s taken a huge step forward.”

Defense is where the 6-foot-6 Jones has found his niche.

His defensive rating is 111.4, making him one of the best in the NBA.

His assignments are always against the best the

league has to offer — such as Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Timberwolves guard Anthony Edwards, the dynamic duo from the Celtics of Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown, and the top twosome with the Lakers, LeBron James and Luka Dončić.

“When I first came into the league, I wasn’t known for defense, I can tell you that,” said Jones, who is dealing with a right groin strain. “But my rookie year in Phoenix, [Suns assistant coach] Earl Watson — I’ll always give him credit for that — he was a guy that, not forced me, but he was like, ‘Yo, this how you are going to get on the floor. You’re an undrafted rookie. The only way you are going to get on the floor is if you go out there, you lock up and you guard the best players.’”

“That’s when I realized being long, athletic and having quickness to move my feet laterally and just being able to stay in front of guys is just a big part of it for me.”

Jones played alongside Dončić last season with the Dallas Mavericks, who lost in the NBA Finals to the Celtics.

They forged a friendship and a respect for each other.

“First of all, he’s an amazing guy just to be around,” Dončić said. “Second of all, his defense, his ability to jump, his ability to shoot — together, we were great. I think. Obviously one guy I miss. We’ll get some dinner now that we’re in L.A.”

The Clippers signed Jones to a three-year, \$30-million deal last summer after Paul George departed for Philadelphia.

Jones, 28 and in his ninth season, appreciates the Clippers for showing him so much love.

Right down to his bobblehead night scheduled for Wednesday, when the Clippers host the Pistons.

“It’s the first time I’ve ever had one and it’s amazing. I said in the video, ‘Mama, I made it.’” Jones said, laughing. “But, now, it’s just funny to me because I never had a bobblehead. Like I said before, I never felt like I had a secure place. Now I feel like that the organization has shown me nothing but love, the team shows me nothing but love, the fans show me nothing but love. So, I love it here.”

NBA REPORT

Irving tears ACL, out rest of season

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Kyrie Irving is out for the season after the Dallas Mavericks star tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee Monday night.

The Mavericks initially indicated that Irving had suffered a left knee sprain during their loss to the Sacramento Kings but said Tuesday that an MRI exam had revealed the tear.

“Kai, you are resilient,” the Mavericks wrote on X. “Excellence, leadership and dedication is who you are. We know you’ll come back stronger than ever.”

Irving appeared on Instagram Live on Tuesday afternoon, telling fans of his situation, “It’s tough,” but adding that he is “at peace” with what happened.

“I will be back,” said the nine-time All-Star who leads the Mavericks in points and assists. “I will be better. It’s gonna take some time, but I don’t question any of God’s works or God’s planning. It’s no time to question the power of God.”

Irving’s injury is devastating for the Mavericks, but it’s hardly surprising considering how the last several weeks have gone for the defending Western Conference champions.

Dallas was 19-10 going into a Christmas Day matchup against the Minnesota Timberwolves. During

that game, then-Mavericks superstar **Luka Dončić** suffered a strained left calf. It turned out to be the reigning NBA scoring champion’s final game with the Mavericks.

In a surprise Feb. 1 trade, Dallas general manager **Nico Harrison** sent 25-year-old Dončić to the Lakers as part of a deal that brought 31-year-old forward **Anthony Davis** to the Mavericks. It was a move that was widely celebrated in Los Angeles, and wildly unpopular among Mavericks fans.

Dončić joined **LeBron James** and the rest of his new Lakers teammate on the floor for the first time Feb. 10. Since then, L.A. has gone 7-2 and moved into second place in the Western Conference standings.

Meanwhile, Dallas’ fortunes have gotten worse. They lost the Dec. 25 game in which Dončić was injured and 19 of the 32 they’ve played since to find themselves at 32-30 and in 10th place in the West.

Davis had 26 points, 16 rebounds, seven assists and three blocked shots during his Mavericks debut Feb. 8 against the Houston Rockets. But at the 2:11 mark of the third quarter, Davis left the game because of what was later revealed as a strained left adductor and hasn’t played since. He is scheduled to undergo an evaluation Thursday.

Starting center **Dereck Lively II** has been out since mid-January with a stress fracture in his right ankle, and his replacement, **Daniel Gafford**, suffered a right knee sprain Feb. 10. Both players could be weeks away from returning.

—CHUCK SCHILKEN

Gilgeous-Alexander has 51-point game

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 51 points and the Oklahoma City Thunder defeated the Houston Rockets 137-128 on Monday night for their 50th win of the season.

Gilgeous-Alexander reached 50 points for the fourth time this season, all in the last seven weeks. The NBA’s scoring leader finished with at least 40 for the ninth time in 2024-25. He made 18 of 30 field-goal attempts, was five of nine on three-pointers and hit all 10 of his free throws.

Etc.

Two-time All-Star **Jaren Jackson Jr.** is week to week because of a sprained left ankle for Memphis after the center-forward was hurt a couple of minutes into the Grizzlies’ latest loss. ... Golden State’s **Gary Payton** left the Warriors’ game against Charlotte on Monday night because of a head injury following a collision with Hornets point guard **LaMelo Ball**.

NBA STANDINGS

Through Monday

Standings have been arranged to reflect how the teams will be determined for the playoffs. Teams are ranked 1-15 by record. Division standing no longer has any bearing on the rankings. The top six teams in each conference qualify for the playoffs. Teams seven through 10 will participate in a play-in tournament with the top-seeded team playing the lowest qualifying play-in team. The next-lowest qualifying team would play the second, etc. Head-to-head competition is the first of several tiebreakers, followed by conference record. (Western Conference divisions: S-Southwest; P-Pacific; N-Northwest; Eastern Conference divisions: A-Atlantic; C-Central; S-Southeast).

WESTERN CONFERENCE						
Team	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	Rk.
1. Oklahoma City	50	11	.820	8-2	N1	
2. LAKERS	38	21	.644	11	8-2	P1
3. Denver	39	22	.639	11	7-3	N2
4. Memphis	38	23	.623	12	3-7	S1
5. Houston	37	24	.607	13	5-5	S2
6. Golden State	33	28	.541	17	8-2	P2
7. CLIPPERS	32	28	.533	17½	4-6	P3
7. Sacramento	32	28	.533	17½	7-3	P4
9. Minnesota	33	29	.532	17½	4-6	N3
10. Dallas	32	30	.516	18½	5-5	S3
11. Phoenix	28	33	.459	22	2-8	P5
12. Portland	28	34	.452	22½	5-5	N4
13. San Antonio	25	34	.424	24	3-7	S4
14. New Orleans	17	44	.279	33	5-5	S5
15. Utah	15	46	.246	35	3-7	N5
EASTERN CONFERENCE						
Team	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	Rk.
1. Cleveland-x	50	10	.833	10-0	C1	
2. Boston	43	18	.705	7½	7-3	A1
3. New York	40	20	.667	10	7-3	A2
4. Indiana	34	25	.576	15½	6-4	C3
4. Milwaukee	34	25	.576	15½	7-3	C2
6. Detroit	35	27	.565	16	9-1	C4
7. Miami	29	31	.483	21	4-6	S1
8. Orlando	29	33	.468	22	4-6	S2
9. Atlanta	28	33	.459	22½	5-5	S3
10. Chicago	24	37	.393	26½	2-8	C5
11. Brooklyn	21	39	.350	29	4-6	A3
11. Philadelphia	21	39	.350	29	1-9	A4
13. Toronto	19	42	.311	31½	3-7	A5
14. Charlotte	14	46	.233	36	1-9	S4
15. Washington	11	49	.183	39	2-8	S5

x-clinched playoff spot

PRO CALENDAR

	WED 5	THU 6	FRI 7	SAT 8	SUN 9
LAKERS		NEW YORK 7 TNT, Max		at Boston 5:30 Ch. 7, ESPN+, Disney+	
CLIPPERS	DETROIT 7:30 FDSC		NEW YORK 7:30 FDSC		SAC. 6:30 FDSC
KINGS	ST. LOUIS 7:30 FDW			ST. LOUIS 5 FDW	at Las Vegas 5 FDW
DUCKS	at Vancouver 7:30 Ch. 13, Victory+		ST. LOUIS 7 Victory+		N.Y. ISLANDERS 6 Ch. 13, Victory+
GALAXY	at Herediano* 5:30 FS2				ST. LOUIS 4 Apple TV+
LAFC				at Seattle 1:45 Ch. 11 Apple TV+	

DODGERS: Today at Angels at Tempe, Ariz., noon., SNLA^
ANGELS: Today vs. Dodgers at Tempe, Ariz., noon, FDW^

^Spring training. Shade denotes home games. Times PST.

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL		
12:30 a.m. (Thurs.)	AFL, Brisbane vs. Geelong	TV: FS1
BASEBALL: SPRING TRAINING		
10 a.m.	Philadelphia at Detroit	TV: ESPN, ESPN2
Noon	Dodgers at Angels	TV: SNLA, FDW R: 570, 830
BASKETBALL		
4 p.m.	Miami at Cleveland	TV: ESPN, ESPN2
6:30 p.m.	Oklahoma City at Memphis	TV: ESPN
6:30 p.m.	Dallas at Milwaukee	TV: ESPN2
7:30 p.m.	Detroit at Clippers	TV: FDSC R: 570, 1330
COLLEGE BASKETBALL: MEN		
3:30 p.m.	Maryland at Michigan	TV: Big Ten
3:30 p.m.	DePaul at Providence	TV: FS1
4 p.m.	Florida at Alabama	TV: ESPN2
4 p.m.	Clemson at Boston College	TV: ESPNU
4 p.m.	Xavier at Butler	TV: CBSSN
5:30 p.m.	Wisconsin at Minnesota	TV: Big Ten
5:30 p.m.	Marquette at Connecticut	TV: FS1
6 p.m.	Tennessee at Mississippi	TV: ESPN2
6 p.m.	California at Louisville	TV: ACC
6 p.m.	Stanford at Notre Dame	TV: ESPNU
6 p.m.	Davidson at Loyola Chicago	TV: CBSSN
7:30 p.m.	Washington at USC	TV: Big Ten R: 710
COLLEGE BASKETBALL: WOMEN		
8 a.m.	SEC tournament, Texas A&M vs. Tennessee	TV: SEC
10 a.m.	ACC tournament, Syracuse vs. Boston College	TV: ACC
10:30 a.m.	SEC tournament, Arkansas vs. Georgia	TV: SEC
12:30 p.m.	ACC tournament, Pittsburgh vs. Virginia	TV: ACC
12:30 p.m.	Big Ten tournament, Minnesota vs. Washington	TV: Peacock
3 p.m.	SEC tournament, Missouri vs. Mississippi State	TV: SEC
3 p.m.	Big Ten tournament, Rutgers vs. Nebraska	TV: Peacock
3:30 p.m.	ACC tournament, Clemson vs. Stanford	TV: ACC
5:30 p.m.	SEC tournament, Auburn vs. Florida	TV: SEC
5:30 p.m.	Big Ten Tournament, Wisconsin vs. Iowa	TV: Peacock
7:30 p.m.	Nevada Las Vegas at Wyoming	TV: FS1
COLLEGE GOLF		
11:30 a.m.	Women, Darius Rucker Intercollegiate, final round	TV: Golf
GOLF		
8 p.m.	LPGA Tour, Blue Bay LPGA, first round	TV: Golf
3 a.m. (Thurs.)	World Tour, Joburg Open, first round	TV: Golf
HOCKEY		
4:30 p.m.	Washington at New York Rangers	TV: TNT, TruTV
7 p.m.	Toronto at Vegas	TV: TNT, TruTV
7:30 p.m.	St. Louis at Kings	TV: FDW R: ESPNLA
7:30 p.m.	Ducks at Vancouver	TV: 13, Victory+ R: Ducks stream
SOCCER		
9:45 a.m.	UEFA Champions League, Feyenoord vs. Inter Milan	TV: CBSSN, Paramount+, UniMas
Noon	UEFA Champions League, Benfica vs. Barcelona	TV: Paramount+, TUDN
Noon	UEFA Champions League, Bayern Munich vs. Bayer Leverkusen	TV: Paramount+
Noon	UEFA Champions League, Paris Saint-Germain vs. Liverpool	TV: Paramount+
5:30 p.m.	CONCACAF Champions Cup, Herediano vs. Galaxy	TV: FS2, Tubi
5:30 p.m.	CONCACAF Champions Cup, Guadalajara vs. América	TV: TUDN, Tubi
7:30 p.m.	CONCACAF Champions Cup, Seattle vs. Cruz Azul	TV: FS2, Tubi
7:30 p.m.	CONCACAF Champions Cup, Vancouver vs. Monterrey	TV: Tubi
TENNIS		
11 a.m.	ATP/WTA, Indian Wells, first round	TV: Tennis



MANISH SWARUP Associated Press

NAOMI OSAKA, shown in January, is set to play in the BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells on Wednesday.

SPORTS EXTRA

For coverage of late Lakers, Clippers, UCLA and USC games and more, see our daily digital eNewspaper. Subscribers get free access to an exclusive “Sports Extra.” View it on your phone, tablet or computer at latimes.com/enewspaper.



SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS



TANNER SCOTT is eager to join the Dodgers, whom he once tormented: “You look at the lineup, you look at the pitching staff, it’s gonna be fun.”

WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

From the revolving door to heart of reliever corps

Dodgers’ Scott evolved from fringe player to elite closer

By JACK HARRIS

PHOENIX — As Tanner Scott walked off the plane, Evan Phillips was waiting to board.

This was late June 2019, when Scott and Phillips were in the early stages of their MLB careers. At the time, each was trying to establish himself as a big-league talent. But both watched flashes of potential be overshadowed by inconsistent overall performance.

On bad Baltimore Orioles teams focused more on rebuilding their roster, it made both pitchers victims of regular roster shuffles. During 2018 and 2019 alone, they were

optioned to the minors a combined 17 times.

“The revolving door,” Scott quipped. “It was not a fun one.”

On this day, that turnstile created a chance encounter in the Seattle airport. Scott, a hard-throwing left-hander battling command issues, had received a call-up to join the team during a road series against the Mariners. Phillips, who profiled similarly from the right side of the mound, was being sent down along with another Orioles player.

By chance, the plane that brought Scott from Baltimore’s triple-A affiliate in Norfolk, Va.,

was the same one operating Phillips’ flight back to the minor leagues. In the gate area, the two literally passed each other when Scott walked out of the jetway.

“I remember seeing him and I was like, ‘Ugh,’ ” Scott recalled, having grown close with Phillips during their time in the organization. “I mean, you’re happy to see your friend. But you’re also like, ‘Dang, it’s those guys who are in the revolving door.’ ”

Phillips’ reaction? “I gave him a little high-five,” he joked, “and said, ‘Good luck!’ ”

Six years — and a remarkable amount of personal improvement [See Scott, B8]



USC Athletics

CHAD BOWDEN sees USC as a “sleeping giant of college football” with all the requisite resources.

HE’S CARDINAL AND BOLD

New Trojans GM Bowden taking an aggressive approach to NIL era

By RYAN KARTJE

When he lived in Los Angeles before, Chad Bowden worked at one point as a telemarketer. He was 18 at the time, making calls for a Google ad services company based out of the Flynt Building in Beverly Hills. Every day, hundreds of times per day, people on the other line would find colorful ways to share how unhappy they were to hear from him.

It was a thankless job. For a while, it wore him down emotionally. But “it was the greatest experience,” he says.

Turns out, as Bowden learned later, it was perfect

training for a career in major-college football.

“Because I’m so used to people telling me no,” Bowden says, “and trying to get them to say yes.”

That conviction is part of the reason why Bowden has risen so quickly through the front-office ranks and why USC made him one of the highest-paid personnel directors in the nation in late January, plucking him from Notre Dame with a seven-figure salary.

But at USC, he hasn’t had to do much convincing in his first six weeks. Since his first conversations with coach Lincoln Riley and athletic director Jennifer Cohen, it was made clear to Bowden that they believed in his vision for what [See Bowden, B7]

UCLA makes it a little too interesting

Bruins survive a close call at Northwestern after more blunders in game’s final minutes.

By BEN BOLCH

EVANSTON, Ill. — It was a frighteningly familiar tale for UCLA.

From fully locked in and comfortably ahead to being on the verge of collapse.

What had been a 14-point lead over Northwestern with a little more than two minutes left Monday night was down to one with 21 seconds to go after Bruins forward

Tyler Bilodeau was triple-teamed and called for traveling, eventually leading to a backdoor layup for the Wildcats.

It was another late-game blunder in a series of turnovers, missed free throws and empty possessions that seemed so recognizable.

This was the same scenario that had unfolded earlier this season during losses to North Carolina and Minnesota, as well as victories over Indiana and Oregon that were a lot more harrowing than they needed to be.

What is it about these Bruins that tends to go so wrong in the final minutes? [See UCLA, B7]



Geoff Stellfox Getty Images

THE BRUINS’ Tyler Bilodeau, who scored 19 points, is fouled by Northwestern’s Matthew Nicholson.

Clippers’ Jones reaching new heights

Forward is known for dunks, but his prowess on the defensive end is where he has found his niche. **B9**

Watkins and Gottlieb collect awards

USC’s star guard is named Big Ten player of the year and coach also takes league honors for Trojans. **B7**

Rams’ Jackson heading to Bears

Team agrees to trade the often-injured offensive lineman after he played only four games for L.A. **B7**

Los Angeles Times

SPORTS EXTRA

A TIMES E-NEWSPAPER EXCLUSIVE :: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025



LeBRON JAMES reacts after his three-pointer made him the first player with 50,000 points in the regular season and playoffs in the Lakers' seventh straight win. GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

No letup from Lakers as James hits mark

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Seven times.
Since the Lakers listlessly began their post-All-Star break stretch with a disappointing loss against Charlotte, they've played seven times.
Seven times in 13 days.
They won in Portland, they dominated in Denver. They beat the Mavericks, they bested the Timberwolves and took care of the Clippers twice. And Tuesday, on a night when some kind of letup felt like a possibility if not an all-out likelihood, they dominated New Orleans 136-115 after the Pelicans won four of their previous five.
It's the Lakers longest winning streak of the season.
Energy and complacency were never issues for them Tuesday, not

with Luka Doncic skipping after made threes and posing after no-look passes, not with LeBron James making history and then making big play after big play and not with the Lakers, once again, playing with the kind of full-throttle effort that has them in second place in the Western Conference.
Doncic made six threes, including three straight during one wild stretch of dominance in the first quarter, on his way to 30 points. And for as much as his shot-making knocked the Pelicans back early, his passing put them away. He found Jaxson Hayes over and over again at the rim for easy lobs and he swung to the open corner shooter whenever the rim was covered.
His 15 assists tied a season high. James, who entered the game one point shy of an unprecedented

50,000 total in regular-season and playoff scoring, got across the threshold with a first-quarter three before making four more.
He scored 34 to lead the Lakers, along with getting eight rebounds and six assists, either he or Doncic perfectly picking the opposition apart at all times.
The Lakers, still without Rui Hachimura and Austin Reaves, got 13 points from Dalton Knecht and 12 each from Jarred Vanderbilt and Shake Milton.
Zion Williamson led New Orleans with 37 points, but the Lakers flew around the court and stifled everyone else. And even though they turned the ball over 15 times for 24 Pelican points, the game was never really in danger, particularly late as James and Doncic were much too good.
The team wraps its six-game

homestand Thursday with another big game, this one against the New York Knicks.
Reaves, who was questionable to play Tuesday before being downgraded, could return before the team heads out for a four-game trip.
—DAN WOIKE

CLIPPERS

Suns pull off huge rally from 23 down

Kevin Durant scored 34 points, Devin Booker added 17 and the host Phoenix Suns rallied from a 23-point deficit late in the third quarter to beat the Clippers 119-117.
The Suns trailed by 19 entering the fourth but came all the way

back thanks to big baskets from Durant and backup guard Collin Gillespie. Phoenix had a 43-22 advantage in the fourth, reviving its playoff hopes.
Gillespie scored 10 points on four-of-six shooting, including two for three from three-point range, to give the Suns a much-needed spark in the second half.
The Clippers lost despite Ivica Zubac's 35 points — a career high. He added 10 rebounds and shot 15 of 19 from the field. Kawhi Leonard and James Harden both scored 21.
Harden made a three-pointer with 4:12 left in the third quarter to give the Clippers an 89-66 lead. But then Booker answered with a three and the Suns slowly clawed their way back.
Phoenix won all four games against the Clippers this season.
—ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAFC posts shutout against Columbus in first leg of playoff

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

When defender Christie Pearce was roaming the backline for the women's national soccer team, she lived by a simple adage.
"If we score, we might win," she said. "If they never score, we can't lose."
For the most part that worked, with the U.S. losing just 20 times in the 311 games Pearce played in, more than half of them ending in clean sheets.
Pearce's philosophy is now one LAFC appears to have adopted. In four of the five matches the team has played this season, goalkeeper Hugo Lloris hasn't conceded a goal. LAFC has won all four.
The latest win came Tuesday, with Denis Bouanga scoring twice in a 3-0 victory over the Columbus Crew in the first leg of a round of 16 CONCACAF Champions Cup playoff at BMO Stadium. The second and deciding leg will be played March 11 in Columbus with the winner advancing on aggregate goals.
Tuesday's victory was LAFC's first in four games against Columbus since Wilfried Nancy took over the Crew three years ago. Two of those losses came in finals, the 2023 MLS Cup final and last summer's Leagues Cup final.
Although LAFC has been solid on both sides of the ball in its short

history, it has primarily won with offense, producing three MLS scoring champions in its first six seasons. It has never scored fewer than 53 goals over a full season.
But after a winter in which the team lost three of last season's four leading scorers, replacing them with three defenders and a holding midfielder, LAFC coach Steve Cherundolo has asked his club to play defense first. And it has worked. Not only is LAFC giving up few goals, it's giving up few shots, with Lloris needing to make just six saves in his four shutout wins.
Columbus put just one shot on goal Tuesday, with the clean sheet giving Lloris 17 in all competition since coming to LAFC last season. It also ran his scoreless streak to 370 minutes. Lloris tied the MLS record with a five-game scoreless streak last season.
But if LAFC has conceded few goals, it has also scored few of its own, with its first three wins all coming by 1-0 scorelines.
Bouanga gave LAFC the lone goal it needed in the 20th minute, taking the ball off the foot of indecisive defender Andres Herrera deep in the Columbus end, then beating Crew keeper Patrick Schulte one on one from the center of the box for his first goal of the season.
It was also the first goal LAFC has scored in the first half this season.



ROKI SASAKI tossed three scoreless innings against the Reds in his first action against major-league competition Tuesday. The highly-coveted offseason acquisition recorded five strikeouts. DARRYL WEBB Associated Press

Bouanga doubled the advantage 40 seconds into the second half, curling a shot from the left edge of the penalty area into the side netting at the far post.
Substitute Nathan Ordaz closed out the scoring in the 81st minute, with the three goals matching LAFC's total from the previous three wins combined. That also left Columbus with a massive hill to climb in the aggregate score in next week's rematch.
If LAFC holds on to its lead, it would probably face Lionel Messi and Inter Miami in the two-leg tournament quarterfinals next month.
—KEVIN BAXTER

DODGERS

Sasaki solid in brief spring training debut

In his first official Major League Baseball contest, 23-year-old phenom Roki Sasaki pitched three scoreless innings in the Dodgers' 4-2 win against the Cincinnati Reds in Cactus League play at Camelback Ranch. He recorded five strikeouts, gave up just two hits and allowed four to reach base.
"I thought he was fantastic," manager Dave Roberts said.
—JACK HARRIS

DUCKS

First-period flurry topples Edmonton

Mason McTavish had a pair of goals and Jackson LaCombe and Cutter Gauthier each had three assists as the Ducks scored four goals in the final eight minutes of the first period en route to a 6-2 victory over the host Edmonton Oilers.
Leo Carlsson, Sam Colangelo, Ryan Carlsson and Alex Killorn also scored for the Ducks, and goalie Lukas Dostal made 32 saves.
—ASSOCIATED PRESS

latimes.com/sports

BONUS COVERAGE
Go to our website for takeaways from The Times' staff on your favorite home teams at latimes.com/sports.



THE SPORTS REPORT
Sign up for our daily sports newsletter at latimes.com/newsletters/sports-report.

STAY CONNECTED
■ On Instagram @latimes_sports
■ On X @latimesports

Los Angeles Times High School Insider

Help inspire the next generation of journalists

with a donation to the Community Fund.



High School Insider gives students curious about careers in journalism the opportunity to learn from experienced L.A. Times reporters, build their skills and publish their work. This free program is powered by the L.A. Times Community Fund and the generous donations of readers like you.



Powered by **Los Angeles Times**
COMMUNITY
FUND Supporting L.A.
together.

Scan the code or visit
calfund.org/latimes to give now.

ENTERTAINMENT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025 :: LATIMES.COM/ENTERTAINMENT



A TOURIST played by Carrie Coon and resort health mentor played by Arnas Fedaravicius do yoga in Season 3 of “The White Lotus.”

FABIO LOVINO/HBO

A SPOOF, SPONSOR OF LUXE TRAVEL

The Mike White HBO series critiques how distant places have become playgrounds for the rich. It’s also courting them with its brand partnerships

By MEREDITH BLAKE

When it premiered back in 2021, “The White Lotus” was a sharp class satire aimed at skewering high-end tourism and the elite one-percenters willing to pay \$9,000 a night to relax. Written and directed by Mike White, the darkly comic mystery followed the entitled guests and beleaguered employees at a luxurious Maui hotel over the course of an increasingly tense week.

A destination that was supposed to be a refuge from the world’s problems instead became a microcosm for them, a place where the class divide and legacy of American imperialism were on vivid display. “The White Lotus,” which filmed its first season on location at the Four Seasons in Maui, somehow made an exclusive resort seem like a toxic pressure cooker. Working there was not just soul-crushing, it could even kill you.

Season 2, a bedroom farce set at a gor-



STEFANIA DELIA/HBO

LALISA MANOBAL, left, plays a resort worker on HBO’s anthology series.

geous beachfront resort in Sicily, looked at sex, money and power. Both installments lampooned the wealthy and depicted people dying under tragic circumstances in picturesque locations. And perhaps counterintuitively, both seasons led to a tourism boom in

the filming locations. Somehow, a show that sharply critiqued luxury travel also functioned as a glossy advertisement for it.

This contradiction is even more pronounced in Season 3 of “The White Lotus,” which premiered on HBO last month. Set on the island of Koh Samui in Thailand, the latest installment follows tradition by opening with a dead body. But it also explores new themes, including the clash between Western materialism and Eastern spirituality, particularly Buddhism. This season’s fictional White Lotus is known for its wellness program. Guests are encouraged to put away their phones for the duration of their stay and avail themselves of offerings like yoga, meditation and massage.

Hollywood movies and TV shows tend to focus on the more decadent aspects of Thai culture — from the all-night Full Moon Party to sex tourism in Bangkok. The team behind “The White Lotus” [See ‘White Lotus,’ E6]

Review

CHARLES McNULTY
THEATER CRITIC

Voices captivate in ‘44,’ a musical satire

The show written and directed by a former Obama campaign insider returns to L.A.

An affectionate spoof of the Barack Obama White House years, “44 the Musical” had its premiere at the Bourbon Room Hollywood in 2022. The show has returned to L.A. for a run at the Kirk Douglas Theatre, but don’t let the higher-profile theatrical address fool you: This fringe-style show still wants theatergoers to metaphorically get their drink on. Audience members are encouraged to make some [See ‘44,’ E6]



BELLA MARIE ADAMS

CHAD DORECK, T.J. Wilkins, Jenna Pastuszek in “44 the Musical.”

The last of the New York Dolls

David Johansen, the leader of the gritty proto-punk band that defined ’70s glam rock, dies at 75. **E2**

R&B singer and songwriter

Angie Stone, a Grammy nominee who scored hits with her neo-soul sound, dies at 63. **E3**

Comics **E4-5**
Puzzles **E5**

Rocker’s ‘tapestry’ of songwriting

Jerry Cantrell delves into the multilayered meaning of his lyrics in latest solo album.

By KATHERINE TURMAN

Jerry Cantrell’s signature stylings consistently land him near the top of “best guitarist” polls. His heavy, nuanced songs and personal lyrics — from Alice in Chains’ “Rooster” to “Cut You In” and his four solo records — are multilayered, often willfully opaque and always powerful. Yet he sometimes finds that only a German word gets the point across.

In the opening lines of “Vilified,” the first track of his latest album, “I Want Blood,” he sings, “Simulate the feel / Of all that’s true and real / Hey-a schadenfreude crescendo / Hey-a skew the innuendo.”

“Yeah, you don’t get to use ‘schadenfreude’ in a lyric very often, so I was kind of happy to check that one off the list,” Cantrell says with a hearty chuckle.

“At different times, [people] seem to take a little bit



NICK FANCHER

“IT’S ALWAYS fun to ... see what the hell I can pull off,” says Jerry Cantrell, Alice in Chains frontman.

more pleasure in creating chaos and pointing fingers at each other,” he notes of the song’s topical gist. “It seems like we’ve kind of been living through that, one of those periods where it’s a little more prevalent, in your face. That word gets thrown around, and I think it’s an appropriate descriptor.”

It can be hard to find an appropriate descriptor for Cantrell. Since 1990 he’s come across as prickly, goofy (proof positive: 1990s shenanigans clad in a blue Speedo at New Jersey’s Action Park on MTV’s “Headbanger’s Ball”), thoughtful, serious, wasted and now, thankfully, 20 years sober.

Born in Tacoma, Wash., the onetime high school choir president was an aspiring rock star who hung around at a Guns N’ Roses concert to hand a demo tape to Axl Rose. Which, the story goes, the redheaded stranger promptly tossed into a nearby trash bin. Sans an Axl assist, Alice in Chains still emerged from a crowded Seattle grunge scene and found deserved fame thanks to several timeless, hit-laden studio albums [See Cantrell, E2]

Ione Skye will say anything in memoir about her turbulent life

Actor details how quest for father’s love drove her into many starry romances.

By CAT WOODS

“I often fantasized that one day my dad would stumble across my face on a magazine cover and be overcome with regret for not getting to know such a wonderful girl,” writes Ione Skye. The 54-year-old actor and Gen X it girl pieces together her turbulent life in her memoir, “Say Everything.”

Her father, the famous folk musician Donovan, didn’t acknowledge her until she was 17. In 1987, not long after Skye starred in “River’s Edge,” her father’s lawyer sent an official letter to Skye’s mother requesting that Skye undertake a DNA test to establish whether or not she was Donovan’s biological daughter.

Was that why her father



ATILGAN OZDIL/Anadolu / Getty Images

IONE SKYE covers family, co-stars and relationships in memoir.

had always referred to her as “the girl,” she wondered?

Skye says, “There’s so much I relate to with my father: his avoidance and fear of intimacy, his selfishness. But, for sure, it’s very different the way my brother, husband and [my daughter] Kate’s fathers are so dutiful. ... My father wasn’t alone in being that kind of [absent] father, as an artist of his generation.”

But Skye’s dad is the least interesting aspect of [See Skye, E3]

DAVID JOHANSEN, 1950 – 2025

Frontman of New York Dolls, flamboyantly gritty proto-punk band

By August Brown

David Johansen, the frontman and last surviving member of the flamboyantly gritty proto-punk band New York Dolls, has died. He was 75.

Johnasen died at his home in Staten Island, N.Y., as confirmed by his daughter Leah Hennessy to multiple outlets. Johansen had suffered from cancer and a broken back in recent years, according to Johansen's fundraiser on Sweet Relief, a music charity.

In the New York Dolls, Johansen defined an era when '70s glam rock was getting leaner and meaner as the seeds of punk rock began to sprout. With a transgressive, gender-bending style — lip-stick and eyeliner, skin-tight leather and pinup-worthy hair — the Dolls were under-heralded in an era still dominated by arena-rock giants.

But amid a wave of acts like MC5, T. Rex and Suicide, they recast rock 'n' roll Americana and British Invasion panache for a new era of decadent, insistent and streetwise music that would become punk.

"Brimming with a sloppy insouciance, their debut album often is cited as one of

the building blocks of the late '70s punk movement," The Times wrote in an early review. "There's no denying David Johansen's bratty vocalizing. ... But unlike the MC5 — fellow revolutionaries who more directly presaged the hard-core aspects of the coming punk rebellion — the Dolls had clearer roots in the rock mainstream."

Johansen, a Staten Island native, joined the Dolls in 1971, playing an auspicious early gig at a local homeless shelter. Their instantly arresting look pulled from David Bowie's androgyny and the drag-culture underground in New York. Johansen had the sharp, pouty features of Mick Jagger, but the sneer and savvy of his hometown.

"All the record companies have been to see us," Johansen told Rolling Stone in 1972. "They think we're too outrageous. They know we're real and we'll stop at nothing, and it scares the s— outta them."

The group's self-titled 1973 debut LP — featuring the members in full regalia on the cover — had the bones of a future rock classic. Produced by Todd Rundgren, the LP sported tracks such as "Personality Crisis," "Bad Girl" and "Trash" that



VICTOR LLORENTE For The Times

BLURRING BORDERS

David Johansen's gender-bending style and bratty vocals set the Dolls apart from arena-rock giants.

packed tons of girl-group melody and grimy, loose-limbed riffing (courtesy of guitarist Johnny Thunders) into a few short minutes. "Lonely Planet Boy," a more somber acoustic ballad, and bluesy "Looking for a Kiss" showed a genuine range and close study of rock history.

The album was acclaimed in the era's small circle of tastemakers — they were beloved at the Mercer Arts Center, a downtown club frequented by Andy Warhol. The Smiths' frontman, Morrissey, was entranced by a BBC broadcast

of the Dolls' performing "Jet Boy" and became president of their U.K. fan club. But the LP sold poorly, peaking at No. 116 on the Billboard charts. Their followup, 1974's "Too Much Too Soon," didn't make much commercial impact either.

Addiction issues sidelined much of the band, and despite a late-career management shift to the Sven-gali of the Sex Pistols, Malcolm McLaren, the Dolls broke up in 1976.

Johansen reemerged as a solo act indebted to the Dolls' catalog, often playing

with former bandmate Sylvain Sylvain. He had an unexpected pop resurgence in the 1980s after reinventing himself as Buster Poindexter, a louche lounge-lizard persona who scored an unlikely Hot 100 hit and MTV fixture with a cover of the calypso staple "Hot Hot Hot" (even if, as he later claimed, the song was "the bane of my existence").

The novelty hit also attracted attention from Hollywood. Johansen made his TV debut in a 1985 episode of "Miami Vice," and won roles as the Ghost of Christmas Past in the beloved Bill Murray 1988 holiday staple "Scrooged" and as a priest in "Married to the Mob." That kicked off a busy career as a character actor in the '80s and '90s, in films including "Let It Ride" and "Mr. Nanny."

A Dolls reunion seemed unlikely — Thunders and drummer Jerry Nolan both died in 1991. But in 2004, the group's three surviving members reunited for a Morrissey-curated edition of the Meltdown festival in London.

"[Morrissey] called me, and he said, 'I understand you're a pretty big Maria Callas fan,'" Johansen said in the 2022 documentary "Personality Crisis: One Night Only." "He said, 'Well, you know that film she made where she did a fantastic concert at the Royal Festival Hall? ... How would you like to play the Royal Festival Hall? ... All you have to do is get the Dolls back together.'"

"I combed every opium den in Chinatown, and I pulled that band together," Johansen said. "We were fan-

tastic."

Although bassist Arthur "Killer" Kane died weeks later, Johansen and Sylvain continued on with a new Dolls lineup and released three more albums: 2006's "One Day It Will Please Us to Remember Even This," 2009's "Cause I Sez So" and 2011's "Dancing Backward in High Heels."

To support the last record, the Dolls opened for Mötley Crüe and Poison — '80s stadium acts with deep debts to the Dolls' fashion sense and hooky hard rock — on a massive tour, but did not return to the road or studio afterward.

In 2020, director Martin Scorsese — a '70s New York peer and Dolls devotee — teamed with David Tedeschi to film a Johansen solo set at New York's Café Carlyle. They used it as the backbone of the 2022 documentary "Personality Crisis: One Night Only," tracing Johansen's life and immeasurable impact on an era of rock.

"Over the years, in the history books ... [it] would always say, 'They were trashy. They were flashy. They were drug addicts. They were drag queens,'" Johansen told Terry Gross in 2004. "That whole kind of trashy blah, blah, blah thing over the years kind of settled in my mind as, oh, yeah, that's what it was, you know? And then by going back to it and deconstructing it, and then putting it back together again, I realized that, you know, it really is art."

Johansen's survivors include wife Mara Hennessy and daughter Leah Hennessy.

Jerry Cantrell taps into the zeitgeist in latest LP

[Cantrell, from E1] and EPs in the early to mid-'90s.

Addiction also found the band, ending the lives of half its members, singer Layne Staley in 2002 and ex-bassist Mike Starr in 2011. Cantrell relocated part-time to L.A. where he found a strong community of sober creatives, and he's now thrived substance-free for 20 years. Cantrell, 58, explains, "I still live in the Seattle area as well, but L.A. kind of became my adopted sober home, and my Bermuda Triangle is basically Seattle, Oklahoma and L.A."

COMING HOME

Which makes his gig at the Tulsa Theater a hometown show, with his dad's side of the family based in Oklahoma "for generations."

Speaking by phone ahead of his concert, Cantrell has already had a full day. After soundcheck, an afternoon meet-and-greet and interview, he'll "jump in the shower, get my body working and do a rock show." Oh, and his younger brother David is probably waiting for him to get off the phone, he says.

Life seems as good as the music he's making, yet no shortage of Cantrell lyrics delve into a drug-pervasive darkness. "I Want Blood" seems rife with double meanings and entendres, with titles and lyrics like "Off the Rails" or "Throw Me a Line" that could refer to struggling with desire and substances or seeking salvation. Which were once maybe the same thing.



DARREN CRAIG

"**MY JOB IS** to take my experience in the world and spit it back at itself," says singer, songwriter and guitarist Jerry Cantrell of his often dark lyrics. The Alice in Chains frontman's latest solo album is "I Want Blood."

"That's a part of who I am," Cantrell explains. "I'm a sober alcoholic, so that's all the ways going to be in there. But I wouldn't say that any particular song or the whole record is geared toward that. It's a thread in the tapestry. When I'm writing songs, I try

to put multiple meanings of certain phrases or lines. My job is to take my experience in the world and spit it back at itself. And do it in some sort of fashion that feels authentic and honest to [me]," Cantrell says.

Successful touring and

records with both Alice in Chains (featuring singer William DuVall since 2006) and solo — among myriad other projects — can never ease the trauma of losing so many friends in the Seattle scene. And more pointedly, the death of Cantrell's mother Gloria from cancer when he was just 21. But the singer-songwriter is adept at funneling past pain into the present, and seems driven and solid in his creativity and life.

"Records for me are a lot of hard work," Cantrell says. "You have to maintain a lot of focus over a period of time, and be able to keep your vision intact through all the turbulence. Making a record is [seriously] turbulent as hell," he says. "You're bringing something that does not exist out of the f— darkness into being."

That said, both musically and personally, there's often an undercurrent of sarcasm and even some levity in and around the darkness. "You've got to be able to have a little bit of a sense of humor about yourself, and also the world in general, you know, or it's gonna be a [really] long grind."

A prime example? Spinal Tap. Not just the movie, but Cantrell's brief moment onstage with the band at the Universal Amphitheater, the storied venue whose incarnation since 2016 has been the Tap-appropriate Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Cantrell's memory is slightly hazy, but he recalls

being invited to play "Christmas With the Devil" with Tap. Virtuoso Toto guitarist Steve Lukather was at the gig, and "I think Jennifer Batten [of Michael Jackson fame] was there too. You've already got two heavyweights. I show up. I don't have a guitar. I don't have an amp," he recalls. "They've got all their big Bradshaw systems, aircraft control tower-sized amplifiers set up on stage."

Harry Shearer and Michael McKean — bassist Derek Smalls and guitarist David St. Hubbins in their metallic alter egos, respectively — approached Cantrell somewhat sheepishly. "I know we invited you down, but we've got these guys and we don't have an amp for you," they told the guitarist. "On a counter they had a little battery-powered Marshall, a little mini amp," Cantrell remembers. "I'm like, 'Dude, put that on the stage and tape it down and put a big boom mic all the way down to it. That's [pure] comedy.'"

The duo was surprised Cantrell was up for the shtick, Shearer questioning, "You'll do that?"

"I'm like, 'Yeah, dude, that's f— Spinal Tap. I'll play through that thing.' They thought it was a great idea, and we did it." Cantrell got his Stonehenge moment, and he's still stoked by the memory. "I had my own personal Spinal Tap moment, which I helped create with Michael McKean!"

That "making it up as you go along" spirit found its way into the deluxe version of "I Want Blood." Seeking to create something cool for collectors but without extra songs to release, Cantrell thought he'd try a spoken-word take on "Vilify." He felt the result wasn't "quite cool enough." Fortunately, in making "I Want Blood," Cantrell was "surrounded by a bunch of talented people, and my demo partner, Maxwell Urasky, is a talented musician. I'm like, 'Hey, man, you want to try to put some music to this? I just wrote a record. I don't want to write another piece of music.'"

Urasky composed a "score" for a spoken-word version of "Vilify" and Cantrell showed the completed version to "I Want Blood" producer Joe Barresi (Queens of the Stone Age, Tool, Bad Religion), "and I think [collaborators] Greg Puciato and Tyler [Bates, musician/composer] as well." The consensus? Cantrell needed to do a spoken-word version of every song on the just-finished album. There was a two-week deadline. The singer recited the lyrics for each song, then sent them to his musical allies.

"Everybody rallied. I'm just as surprised as anyone at the end of the day," Cantrell says with a laugh. "You never would have got there if you weren't engaged and in the process and trying to figure it out. It's always fun to just to see what the hell I can pull off, or be a part of pulling off, or creating."

THE SPOKEN SPACE

He joins the grand tradition of dark artists like Jim Carroll or William Burroughs in the spoken-word world, or as Cantrell quips, "[William] Shatner and [Leonard] Nimoy." "It was kind of fun to get into that space, that kind of calm, audiobook kind of voice," he admits, and while he's currently reading Cormac McCarthy (which seems the perfect accompaniment to Cantrell's songwriting), he's focused on music rather than a career in audiobooks for the foreseeable future.

Cantrell doesn't write the simplest of songs to parse, but it seems he wants to be seen, as well as have listeners see parts of themselves in his music. The aural dig is worth it for all. While the reward of making a record is certainly in the creation, it's also in the reception, as the singer-songwriter notes.

"This is a good record. It was like, 'I want to release this, and put my name on it; I stand behind it.' You throw it out there. I've been lucky enough to have people react to it, support it and get it. *Get it*," he emphasizes, concluding, "You know, that's the whole thing."

LAEMMLE™ Info Line 310.478.3836		NOT AFRAID OF SUBTITLES www.LAEMMLE.com	
ROYAL 11523 Santa Monica Blvd. West L.A. ARMAND R 4:10 PM I'M STILL HERE PG-13 1:10 4:30 7:00 UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE 1:20 7:20 NO OTHER LAND 1:30 4:30 7:30	TOWN CENTER 17200 Ventura Blvd. Encino MY DEAD FRIEND ZOE R 1:30 4:20 7:00 RIFF RAFF R 1:10 4:30 7:10 EX-HUSBANDS 1:20 7:20 2025 OSCAR NOMINATED SHORT FILMS - LIVE ACTION 1:10 7:30 I'M STILL HERE PG-13 4:10 PM PARTHENOPE R 4:00 PM THE BRUTALIST R 1:00 PM MY MOTHERLAND 7:00 PM	NoHo 7 5240 Lankershim Blvd. No. Hollywood LAST BREATH PG-13 12:50 3:05 5:15 7:30 MY DEAD FRIEND ZOE R 1:30 4:30 7:20 RIFF RAFF R 1:30 4:10 7:00 ART SPIEGELMAN: DISASTER IS MY MUSE 7:00 PM THE MONKEY R 1:10 4:20 2025 OSCAR NOMINATED SHORT FILMS - ANIMATION 1:20 7:20 2025 OSCAR NOMINATED SHORT FILMS - LIVE ACTION 1:10 7:10 BECOMING LED ZEPPELIN PG-13 1:00 7:10 I'M STILL HERE PG-13 4:10 PM PARTHENOPE R 4:00 PM A COMPLETE UNKNOWN R 1:00 7:00 MY MOTHERLAND 7:00 PM	GLENDALIE 207 N. Maryland Ave. Glendale MY DEAD FRIEND ZOE R 1:30 4:10 7:30 2025 OSCAR NOMINATED SHORT FILMS - DOCUMENTARY 12:55 6:55 I'M STILL HERE PG-13 1:10 7:10 PARTHENOPE R 4:00 PM FLOW PG 4:20 PM THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG PG-13 12:50 6:40 ANORA R 1:00 PM MY MOTHERLAND 7:00 PM RATSI 4:20 PM THE JOLLY MONKEY 4:30 PM CLAREMONT 450 W. 2nd Street Claremont MY DEAD FRIEND ZOE R 1:30 4:30 7:20 THE MONKEY R 1:20 4:20 2025 OSCAR NOMINATED SHORT FILMS - ANIMATION 1:00 PM 2025 OSCAR NOMINATED SHORT FILMS - LIVE ACTION 7:10 PM CAPTAIN AMERICA: BRAVE NEW WORLD PG-13 1:00 4:00 7:10 PADDINGTON IN PERU PG 1:10 4:10 7:00 PARTHENOPE R 4:00 PM MY MOTHERLAND 7:00 PM
BARGAIN IN () CLOSED CAPTION NSI NON-STANDARD PRICING FOR 3/5/2025 ONLY			

Review ANITA FELICELLI

Dreams lead to waking nightmares in this tale

Laila Lalami's latest novel is a wake-up call about corporations snooping on our lives.

It's overwhelming to think of how carefully tracked we are by private interests at this point in time: what we buy, what we watch, what we search online, what we want to know about other people — and who we know and how well. Shoshana Zuboff's "The Age of Surveillance Capitalism" describes the perfect storm of extractive profit-seeking and privacy erosion that drives so much of contemporary life.

When it comes to today's corporations, she explains, our lives are the product, and the power that's accrued to surveillance capitalism abrogates our basic rights in ways that we have not yet figured out how to fight through collaborative action. Our ability to mobilize, she suggests, "will define a key battleground upon which the fight for a human future unfolds."

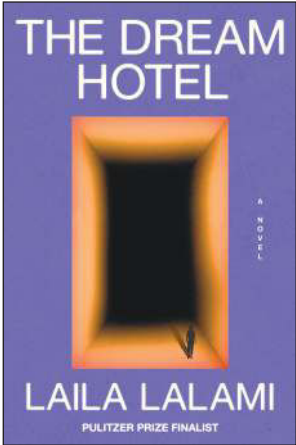
You can feel the influence of these concerns in Laila Lalami's powerful, richly conceived fifth novel about pre-crime, "The Dream Hotel" — released Tuesday. Set in the near future, the book's corporatized reality is slightly more twisted than ours but entirely plausible, a place where private greed has resulted in a disturbing bureaucracy with no true due process. As the novel opens, Moroccan American mother and archivist Sara Hussein is in Madison, a 120-bed "retention" center near Los Angeles run by a private company, where, in the interests of crime prevention, people whose dreams have marked them as high-risk for committing crimes are kept under steady, intrusive observation. According to the powers that be, Sara is

being held because she dreamed of killing her husband. And while she refuses to believe this means something bigger, she also worries about all the holes in her knowledge; throughout the novel, Lalami plays out the shiftiness and uncertainty of reality when dreams are given more predictive weight than facts to stunning effect.

Sara has been inside so long — at the start of the book, 281 days — that communication from her husband has slowed, and she fears that he has started to believe she is guilty. When a new woman is admitted to the facility, her naive assumptions about how the system works — the result of ignorance that seems at first to mirror our own — counter Sara's experience-driven awareness of problems.

After having twins, and struggling to get enough sleep, Sara had agreed to surgery that outfitted her with a neuroprosthetic — the company's promise was that you could feel rested after shorter periods of sleep, but under the principles of surveillance capitalism, its reach has since expanded into people's private, inner lives and become a basis for what amounts to incarceration, though it's not labeled such. "Once dreams became a commodity, a new market opened — and markets are designed to grow. Sales must be increased, initiatives developed, channels broadened." We'll later discover that, in line with surveillance-capitalist impulses, the company is not only watching but also cultivating product placement in dreams.

Here, rendering this edge-of-nightmare world, Lalami skates along at the height of her powers as a writer of intelligent, complex characters. By training, Sara is a historian of post-colonial Africa, and her career has been spent as a digital archivist at the Getty



Pantheon

AUTHOR Laila Lalami's new novel imagines a near-future in which people are punished for their dreams.

Museum. She maps what she knows of archives to the operation of algorithms, understanding that the latter work is based on search terms provided by a human with limited knowledge, and that, therefore, its method for seeking out pre-crime is profoundly fallible.

The book kicks off with Lalami's clever marketing language for the dream surveillance device: "You're a good person; if you were in a position to stop disaster, you probably would." By flattering people's sense of themselves as good, as wanting to stop crimes against women and children — not so different from the curtailment of civil liberties after 9/11, where the risks of terrorism were treated on balance as drastically more significant than preserving individual freedoms — the device has become normalized.

What makes the device so insidious is not simply the monitoring, of course, but that trivial actions, and even non-actions, mere thoughts, lead inexorably to nightmarish scenarios. The retention center has procedures that purportedly adhere to due process, but as in Franz Kafka's "The Trial" or Vladimir Sorokin's "The Queue," where bureaucracy stands in the way of getting any-



BEOWULF SHEEHAN

where, every time it seems like Sara's time in the facility is about to be over, something trivial occurs to push her hearing date back, or to otherwise deny her release.

Unlike those atmospheric novels in which the central authority in the bureaucracy remains inaccessible, Lalami not only renders Sara relatable through mentions of mundane things like hiking with her husband or caring for babies but also builds the perspectives of some of the villains of the piece with nuance.

It's not only the claustrophobia of an enclosed space with strangers or control-seeking authorities but time itself that creates the feeling of dread. Lalami writes, "Each day resembles the one that came before it, the monotony adding to the women's apprehension and leading them to make decisions that damage their cases."

The novel takes a fascinating turn, one that calls up Zuboff's insights that we haven't yet developed forms of collaborative action to counter surveillance capitalism, when Sara realizes that she and other retained people do have a tool to fight back, namely the work they do while incarcerated. It's a clever progressive pivot that tamps down the dystopian

vibes that support the original premise of the book. At one point, Sara looks at a mural and notices that the laborers depicted are watched by a painted foreman, "and later by the artist in his studio, and later yet by her, the process transforming them from people into objects."

But, even in its awareness that subjectivity is stripped away when people are treated as data points, the novel refuses a grim understanding of how people might become damaged in their behavior toward one another while under surveillance (changes to behavior seen in East Berlin, North Korea, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and other places in the world that have fallen to totalitarianism). Rather, there's a softhearted universalism to Lalami's treatment of surveillance capitalism. Hers is one in which humans retain the ability to trust one another enough to forge working solidarities and authentic collaborations.

Although it relies on a speculative technology for its plot, "The Dream Hotel" is astounding, elegantly constructed, character-driven fiction. Lalami's realistic approach to Sara and others, inflected with leftist politics and history, elides any sharp division we might imagine about where we've been and what we face ahead. "Maybe past and present aren't all that different," Sara thinks at a critical moment. "The strange thing — the amazing thing, really — is that we've managed to find workarounds to surveillance." Within the latter part of the novel, it's not the stuff of tragedy or alarm about the human condition we encounter, but surprising, unadulterated hope.

Felicelli is a novelist and critic who served on the board of the National Book Critics Circle from 2021-24.



PRINCE WILLIAMS WireImage

MUSICIAN
Angie Stone died in a vehicle collision at 63.

ANGIE STONE,
1961 – 2005

R&B singer was part of neo-soul movement

MIKAEL WOOD
POP MUSIC CRITIC

Angie Stone, a Grammy-nominated R&B singer and songwriter who found success as part of the 1990s neo-soul movement after nearly two decades in the music business, died early Saturday in a traffic accident in Alabama, according to the Associated Press. She was 63.

Her death was confirmed by the music producer Walter Millsap III, who told the AP that Stone had been traveling in a van to Atlanta after a concert when the van "flipped over and was subsequently hit by a big rig." Millsap said the other passengers in the van survived the crash.

As a teenager growing up in Columbia, S.C., Stone formed the early hip-hop trio the Sequence, which landed a recording contract with Sugar Hill Records; she later sang in a group called Vertical Hold and wrote songs for and performed with the likes of D'Angelo, Lenny Kravitz and Mary J. Blige. Yet Stone didn't break out widely until 1999 with the release of her debut solo album, "Black Diamond," which earned rave reviews on its way to being certified gold and spun off the hit single "No More Rain (In This Cloud)," which topped Billboard's Adult R&B Airplay chart for 10 weeks. In 2002 she scored another big hit with "Wish I Didn't Miss You," which has more than 136 million streams on Spotify.

Both songs embodied the earthy ideals and throwback spirit — "Wish I Didn't Miss You" prominently sampled the O'Jays' early-'70s "Back Stabbers" — that made stars of fellow neo-soul artists such as Erykah Badu, Maxwell and D'Angelo after years in which R&B had moved steadily closer to the attitude of hip-hop.

In a 2000 interview with The Times, Stone said Lauryn Hill "broke the mold" with her Grammy-winning 1998 LP, "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill." "Our society is so image-conscious, and she said that it's OK to be natural and beautiful and sing about something with substance," Stone said.

Angela Laverne Brown was born in Columbia in 1961 and started singing in church; her father, an attorney's assistant, performed on the side in a gospel quartet. Under the name Angie B, she formed the Sequence with Gwendolyn Chisholm and Cheryl Cook and moved to the Bronx, N.Y. The trio, one of rap's first female groups, had a hit with 1979's "Funk You Up," which Dr. Dre later sampled for his "Keep Their Heads Ringin'."

After the Sequence broke up in 1985, Stone worked with Mantronix and toured as Kravitz's sax player before joining Vertical Hold, which released two LPs on A&M Records in the mid-'90s. She met D'Angelo around that time and the two became creative and romantic partners; she contributed to his 1995 debut, "Brown Sugar," and the two later had a son in 1998.

Stone's song "Everyday," which she wrote with D'Angelo, was featured on the soundtrack of the 1997 movie "Money Talks," which led to a deal with Clive Davis' Arista Records for "Black Diamond." Stone continued to release albums throughout the 2000s, including "The Art of Love & War," which reached No. 1 on Billboard's R&B chart in 2007.

In addition to music, Stone worked as an actor, appearing in films such as "The Fighting Temptations" and "Ride Along" and on Broadway in the musical "Chicago." Her survivors include her son, Michael, and a daughter, Diamond.



METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER Getty Images

IONE SKYE had a whirlwind romance with Keanu Reeves, her co-star in 1986 teen drama "River's Edge."

Book is nothing but clear true Skye

[**Skye**, from E1] her life, as her book reveals. Skye's mother and her mom's curious, eccentric boyfriends as well as Skye's older brother Donovan Jr. provide plenty of stories. Growing up in Hollywood with aspiring actors, musicians and starstruck fans also makes for endless drama.

"I'm pretty open as a person," she says. "Whether that's growing up in L.A., where people have a very open culture because everyone does therapy, or whether I'm just like this. ... I'm not rattled. It wasn't a divergence from how I am naturally. When I feel that I can trust people and share, I'm good at it. With this book, I want people to get to know me, in a way."

As for the timing, Skye says, "I'm at an age where I trusted myself. I felt really supported by my husband and the publisher and editor. And while the book definitely gets vulnerable, people seem really interested in the '90s and what it was like to be an actor, to know those people."

Skye recalls her early life and the sense of desperation



JEFF KRAVITZ FilmMagic / Getty Images

SKYE with Red Hot Chili Peppers frontman Anthony Kiedis.

for love that drove her into whirlwind romances with Keanu Reeves, River Phoenix, Matthew Perry, Jenny Shimizu, Ingrid Casares, (a heartbreakingly heroin-addicted) Anthony Kiedis and Robert Downey Jr., among others. She married Beastie Boy Adam Horowitz in the 1990s. The pair divorced in 1999 after seven years and Skye's affairs with women. She wed another musician, Ben Lee, about a decade later. Her marriage to the Australian singer is the epilogue, intentionally removed from the

former life and lovers she documents.

"I'd thought that would be one of the hardest times of my life, when Adam and I broke up. But I kind of liked all of that freedom I had when I was in New York, and I had my own apartment. It was the first time I was doing what I should have been, what was age-appropriate in your mid-20s," Skye says.

Until that point, Skye rues that she had lived like an adult since childhood, the inevitable consequence of entering Hollywood as an adolescent and lacking conventional parental guidance. Now a parent herself, Skye says she understands her father, even if her approach to raising children is vastly different.

The book is a wild ride — from the fantastic, messy 1990s Hollywood parties of her youth to ashrams, backstage at rock shows and on movie sets like "Wayne's World," "River's Edge," "Say Anything" and "Gas Food Lodging." She recalls a soft-spoken, beautiful young Reeves on the brink of stardom in "River's Edge," the assuredness of director Cameron Crowe on "Say

Anything" and the intense friendship she developed with John Cusack on that film, though the pair never dated. At 15, Skye sought to be legally emancipated because other child actors had done the same as a means of averting the legal requirements of minors on set. She writes: "It was a dream, going from high school to this incredible universe where I got to play make-believe all day long."

She also had to embrace an adult life while barely out of childhood. Skye's first serious relationship threw her right into the quagmire of trying to love, care for and leave a heroin addict. "There was me before Anthony, and me after," she writes of her relationship with Red Hot Chili Peppers frontman Kiedis. "Sometimes I'd drive all night looking for him, trawling the usual spots over and over: the corner of Sixth and Union, the market where he bought bleach for his needles, the Eat'n Hound Thai restaurant on Fountain. ... My world-inside-of-Anthony's-world was shrinking by the day. Little by little, I was closing myself off to anyone who cared

enough to question my choice in dating a junkie eight years my senior."

It is a relationship Skye views differently as the mother of a 16-year-old daughter.

She has no regrets in recalling the heartbreaking teenage years she spent watching her boyfriend in the hooks of addiction, since Kiedis bared his own demons in his 2004 memoir.

"I don't want to expose someone's life, and legally you can't anyway. He really laid it all out in [his book] 'Scar Tissue,'" she says. "I thought people might be interested in my side of the story."

Skye concedes that writing a memoir is a challenge, but not so much emotionally as narratively — contouring the flow and storytelling with an editor's sharp eye.

"I've loved writing since I was young so I have a good memory. It wasn't as if I was uncovering any of these stories that I'd mentally locked away; I've thought about it. So writing this was good, and hard, to do. Some of those chapters were harder to go through during editing, while some were really delicious."

It's easy to draw a clear parallel between her father's early rejection and her hunger for acknowledgment, desire and attention.

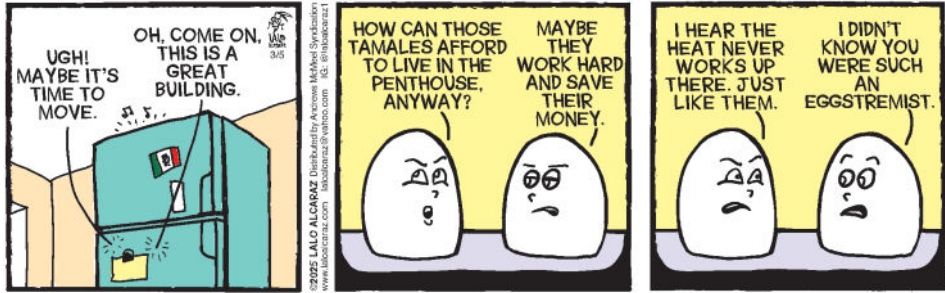
Still, she counters, "I didn't want it to be all about chasing love and romance. I don't want to use the word 'love addict,' but I saw that I was really looking for security and the minute someone was out of sight, it was 'out of sight, out of mind!' What calmed me down was having someone with me, even my girlfriends. I needed a sidekick at all times, which I saw very clearly in writing this book."

She adds, "More clearly than ever, I saw that if I could do over one part of my life, it would be to meet the whole [Red Hot] Chili Peppers scene when I was 10 years older, or just to have been friends with them. I wished I'd had a lighter touch with that whole group. I love a lot of people in that group, but it definitely went too deep, and that's partially why I got married so young. I thought I was so mature."

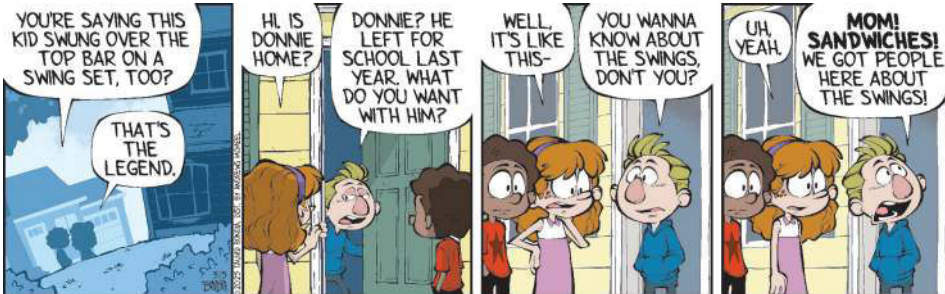
Having purged stories both sad and seductive, Skye wraps her memoir with an homage to the husband and adult children she adores. And — with film roles and work as a painter — this memoir is far from a full stop to her creative life.

COMICS

LA CUCARACHA By Lalo Alcaraz



CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia



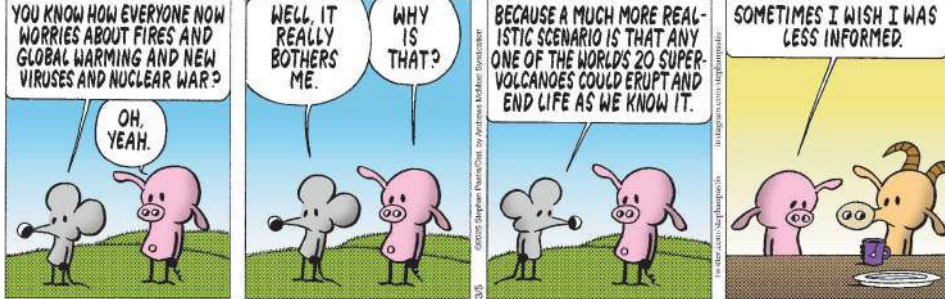
CURTIS By Ray Billingsley



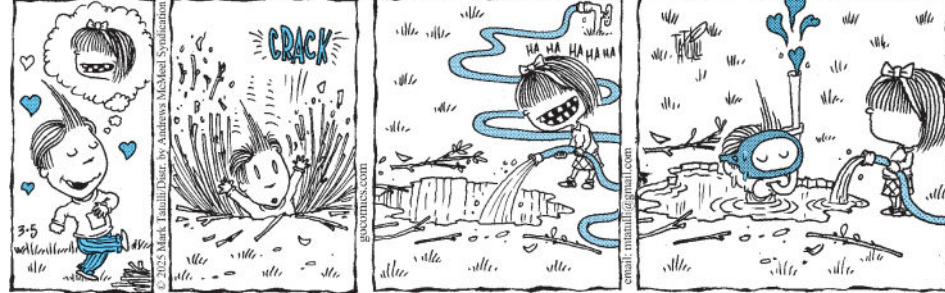
LOOSE PARTS By Dave Blazek



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By Stephan Pastis



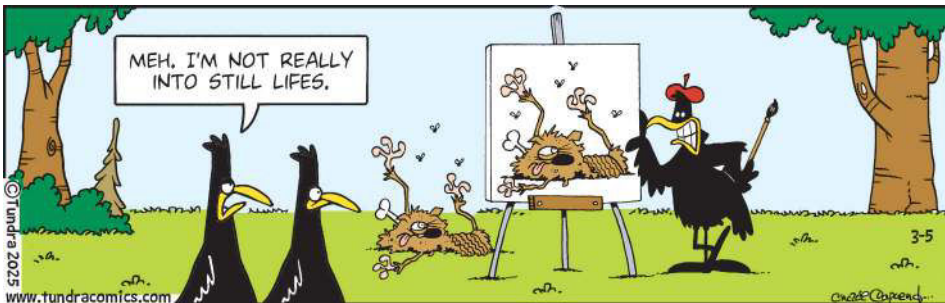
LIO By Mark Tatulli



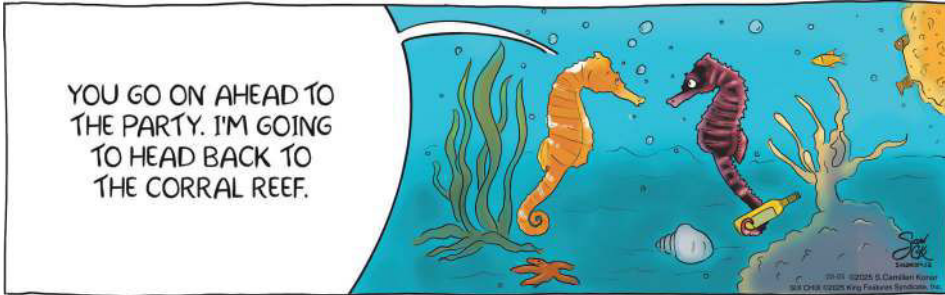
ZITS By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



TUNDRA By Chad Carpenter



SIX CHIX By Susan Camilleri Konar



FRAZZ By Jef Mallett



NON SEQUITUR By Wiley



PICKLES By Brian Crane



BABY BLUES By Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



CRANKSHAFT By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers



COMICS

SUDOKU

	2			4				9
	6		3	5	1			2
					7			4
		6	5					
				8				9
					4	8		
2			4					
7			8		3		4	
	5			2				3

Level: Moderate

				6	4			
					2			
						6		
	4							
		1	3					
2		4						

Level: Gentle

9	8	7	1	2	6	3	4	5
4	2	5	9	7	3	1	8	6
3	1	6	5	8	4	9	7	2
8	4	1	7	6	2	5	9	3
2	7	3	4	5	9	6	1	8
5	6	9	3	1	8	4	2	7
1	3	2	8	9	5	7	6	4
7	5	8	6	4	1	2	3	9
6	9	4	2	3	7	8	5	1

2	5	3	4	1	6
4	6	1	2	3	5
3	4	6	1	5	2
1	2	5	6	4	3
6	3	4	5	2	1
5	1	2	3	6	4

©2025 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

3-	2÷	2-		
			6×	
1-	4+	9+	2	

Trademark KenKen, LLC Distributed by Andrews McMeel

CHALLENGING

3÷	11+	1-	15×		2÷
				12+	
13+		5-	6×		
	2÷			3-	
		3÷			90×
3÷	1-		2		

Trademark KenKen, LLC Distributed by Andrews McMeel

PREVIOUS ANSWERS

3+	24×	8÷
1	3	4
2	4	3
4	2	1
3	1	2
4	3	2

30×	11÷	8÷	24×	8÷
3	6	1	5	4
4	5	6	2	1
5	4	2	3	6
6	1	3	4	2
1	2	5	6	3
2	3	4	1	5
6	3	4	1	5

HOROSCOPE

By HOLIDAY MATHIS

Aries (March 21-April 19): Some decisions get more difficult the longer you dwell on them. Wait just long enough to gather your courage but not so long that overthinking makes you step back.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): It's so hard when a person seems on your wavelength but can't or won't be there the way you want them to be. It really is better to have known this than not.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): You can do it happy, sad, scared, tired, robotically or with feeling. Just do it.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): Don't get discouraged. As you do even a little bit of work toward a change, you are becoming your best self.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): You're wise to say yes to only the things that solve a problem. Check to make sure you're having the impact that matters to you.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): It's not just learning from other people's mistakes that matters. It's moving forward willing to make your own.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): If you wait to feel worthy of or ready for an experience, you may be waiting forever. There's always going to be something to overcome before the victory.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): You're mourning something that's not quite gone but not quite there. You can hold both the ache of missing something and the acceptance that all is unfolding for the best.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You'll take on responsibilities that align with your larger goals and vision, ensuring that each task you embrace naturally fits into the bigger picture.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Thoughtful choices about where you invest your time and energy help you build momentum without

stretching yourself too thin.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): This sky is an encouragement to look outward when you feel lost — whether that's to books, mentors, art or the actual sky.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): You're setting yourself up for something good, whether it's for you directly or for the people around you.

Today's birthday (March 5): Your combination of talents culminates in something unique this year. You'll be driven to give what only you can. Personal success comes in waves; momentum builds until you're riding high. An ally helps make a long-held dream a reality. You'll be at the center of a vibrant, supportive community. Virgo and Taurus adore you. Lucky numbers: 8, 14, 21, 39, 47.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol
By Sala Wanetick & Emily Biegas

- ACROSS**
- 1 Update a historic home, say
- 6 Quick look
- 10 "Dream on"
- 14 Enlighten
- 15 Crooner Paul
- 16 Novela introduction?
- 17 Fleetwood Mac hit with the lyric "I'll settle for one day to believe in you"
- 19 Jai _
- 20 Pro vote
- 21 Ingrid's "Casablanca" role
- 22 Strenuous
- 24 Prefix with tech
- 26 Taylor Swift hit that features a sweater metaphor
- 28 Milwaukee team
- 31 "The Daily" podcast producer, briefly
- 32 Special glow
- 33 Paul of "The Batman"
- 35 Venomous snake
- 40 Elvis Presley hit about someone who only looks like an angel
- 43 Be of _; help
- 44 _ Point, California
- 45 Summer getaway
- 46 Govt. intel org.
- 48 Gets to giggle
- 50 Rihanna hit about friends who stick together rain or shine
- 55 For fear that
- 56 See 50-Down
- 57 Quite bright
- 59 Alley_
- 62 Actor Alda
- 63 Musical remakes, and what 17-, 26-, 40-, and 50-Across all are, in a way
- 66 Rare rocks
- 67 Sinister
- 68 Verdi work
- 69 "Gotcha"
- 70 "The Voice" host Carson
- 71 Elevates
- DOWN**
- 1 Depend (on)
- 2 Actress Falco
- 3 Touched on something touchy
- 4 Back of the boat

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
40				41						42				
43						44					45			
					46	47		48		49				
50	51	52	53				54		55					
56							57	58			59	60	61	
62						63	64				65			
66						67				68				
69						70					71			

5 Author credit

6 Buds

7 Pioneering computer

8 Scrape (by)

9 Danish, e.g.

10 Pong platform

11 Former baseball commissioner Bud

12 Glazer of "Broad City"

13 Pretend

18 "Euphoria" actor Jacob

23 Pet collar attachment

25 Stand by for

27 Designate as a successor

28 Grammy winner Erykah

29 Feels remorse

30 Flip-flop, e.g.

34 Confidentiality contract, for short

36 Dodges

37 Landline sounds

38 "Twilight" vampire Cullen

39 Gym count

41 Not a people person, say

42 Mariner

47 Prepared to serve, as pie

49 Black out

50 With 56-Across, grilled eel dish

51 Odometer units

52 Not one's best effort

53 Flush

54 Blacksmith's block

58 Wriggly

60 Fantasy monster

61 Unpaid ads

64 Egg cells

65 Maker of Lincoln Park After Dark nail polish

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

T	O	W	N	S		S	C	A	T		M	E	A	N
I	N	A	N	E		H	U	S	H		A	P	S	O
N	O	V	E	R		M	I	S	S	A	T	R	I	C
A	L	E		B	E	N	T		T	A	I	P	E	I
T	R	K		M	E	O	W		O	N	E	N	D	
S	N	I	F	F	E	R	D	O	G		A	N	T	S
H	E	N	C	E		Y	O	U	R	S				
E	R	G		S	P	A		D	N	A		B	R	A
				S	T	E	W	S		M	O	L	E	S
C	H	O	W		P	E	A	R	L	S	B	U	O	C
H	E	X	E	S		S	L	O	E		I	R	E	
A	T	T	L	E		T	U	C	K		T	S	P	
S	E	A	L	E	D		W	I	T	H	A	K	I	S
E	R	I	E		G	O	N	E		M	I	N	E	S
S	O	L	D		E	W	E	R		A	N	G	S	T

BRIDGE

By FRANK STEWART

"Who put a stop-payment on my reality check?" — graffiti

Finesses are apt to lose as much as they win, but some declarers are reluctant to accept that reality.

At today's 3NT, South took dummy's ace of hearts and led the nine of diamonds for a finesse. Reality set in when West took the king and led another heart. South had only eight tricks — four diamonds, two hearts and two spades. When he led a club, West won and cashed three hearts. Down one.

South could have done better. At Trick Two he leads a club from dummy. If East had, say, A-8-3 and rose with the ace, South would have four club tricks, two hearts,

two spades and a diamond. If instead East played low, South would win and shift to diamonds for at least nine tricks.

As the cards lie, West captures declarer's queen and leads another heart, and South wins and takes the king of clubs. When East's jack falls, South is home. If East-West played low clubs, South would finesse in diamonds.

You hold: ♠ Q 6 ♥ 10 9 7 6 3 ♦ K 5 4 ♣ A 9 3. Your partner opens one spade, you respond 1NT and he bids two hearts. The opponents pass. What do you say?

Answer: Though you have only nine high-card points, and partner's hand may be a minimum, there is too much potential to hang below game. Bid four hearts. Give partner a hand such as

A K 7 5 3, A K 4 2, 7 6, 8 7, and on a lucky day, with a friendly lie of the cards, he will win 12 tricks at hearts.

South dealer
N-S vulnerable

		NORTH		
		♠ A 7 5		
		♥ A 8		
		♦ J 9 6		
		♣ K 10 6 5 4		
WEST			EAST	
♠ Q 6			♠ J 10 9 4 2	
♥ 10 9 7 6 3			♥ Q 5 4 2	
♦ K 5 4			♦ 3 2	
♣ A 9 3			♣ J 8	

		SOUTH		
		♠ K 8 3		
		♥ K J		
		♦ A Q 10 8 7		
		♣ Q 7 2		
SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All Pass	

Opening lead — ♥ 10

Tribune Content Agency

ASKING ERIC

Dear Eric: I have had the same dentist for the past 15 years. Within the last year, I have found myself wanting to know him on a personal level. I know he is not involved in a relationship, and he seems interested as well. How should I proceed?

MAKES ME SMILE

Dear Smile: First, find a new dentist. The American Dental Assn.'s Code of Ethics states, "Dentists should avoid interpersonal relationships that could impair their professional judgment or risk the possibility of exploiting the confidence placed in them by a patient."

So, if he were to date you while you were under his care, he risks compromising himself. He also puts himself at risk. For instance, if a relationship with a patient went sour, he opens himself up to accusations of malpractice.

Before making any moves, stop seeing him professionally and start seeing someone else. At that point, you could reach out through nonprofessional means (so, not his office number) to gauge his comfort with a personal connection. But you really ought to be careful, almost to a fault. It's not appropriate for him to express interest in a relationship with a patient, especially one he's been seeing for 15 years. Honestly, it's better to direct your well-cared-for smile elsewhere.

Dear Eric: My mom is almost 92 and is recovering from a stroke. She no longer drives; her poor motor skills don't allow her to cook or handle hot items on a stove, nor shower or bathe herself.

My siblings and I agree that Mom needs to be in assisted living with nursing care, but one sibling insisted on looking after Mom herself. But she now realizes that it has become burdensome. Because I am retired, Sister thinks she can just snap her fingers, and I arrive to relieve her for a month or more at a time. I have no problem visiting mom, but her level of care is something I am not comfortable with.

Every time the topic of assisted living comes up, Sister has a different reason why she is against it. First, it was because assisted living facilities are "not nice places and hire sub-par people." Then it was that assisted living is OK, but she doesn't want to do it against mom's will. (Mom has told her she wants to go.)

While the rest of us siblings are thankful Sister has stepped in to look after mom, we knew it would eventually come to this. We are all married with families and homes of our own, we live in other states, but Sister is single and thinks it's no longer her turn. Yes, she should be able to go on a vacation, go check on her house and have her life back.

She could do all of that if she would just concede to mom going into assisted living. Mom has the funds to provide for her care. Thoughts on how to settle this?

CARE CONFLICT

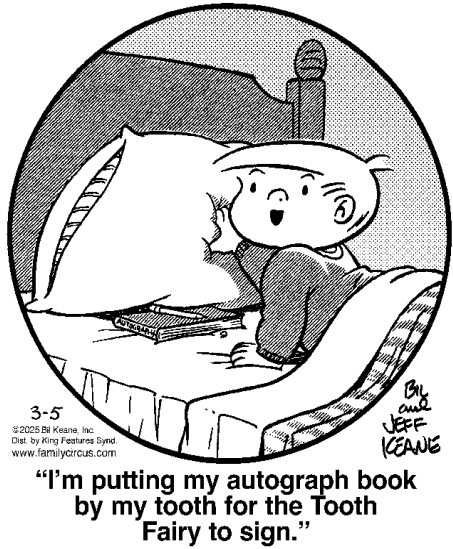
Dear Care: I have sympathy for your sister; it's clear she's having trouble accepting what's best for your mother. That struggle is preventing her from navigating this clearly. She may think that she (or you) can provide better care than an assisted-living facility with trained professionals, but that goes against your mother's stated wishes for herself.

Your sister has some work to do internally, but the first priority is making sure that your mother's desires are heard and honored. You, your siblings and your mother should have a meeting where your mother is able to, again, confirm that she wants to move to an assisted-living facility. Reinforce that the goal is to honor your mother's wishes, not to debate.

One of the siblings — perhaps you, but not the sister who is currently caregiving — should take the lead on finding a facility, then getting her set up and acclimated. Your sister can have input, but she doesn't get the final say.

Email questions to eric@askingeric.com.

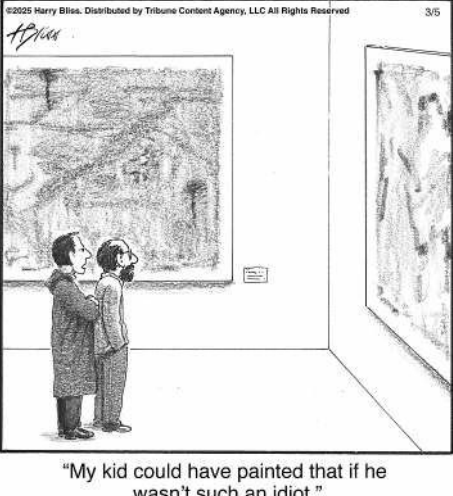
FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



FREE RANGE By Bill Whitehead



BLISS By Harry Bliss



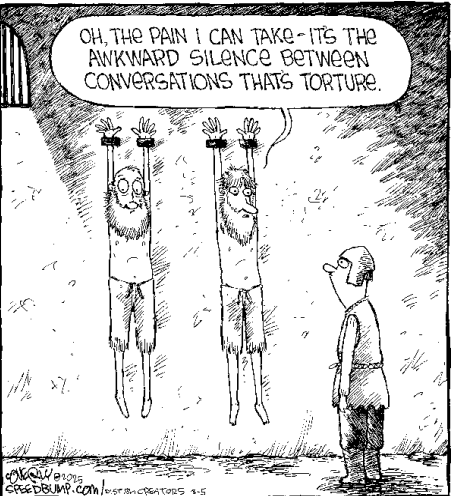
DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham



MARMADUKE By Brad & Paul Anderson



SPEED BUMP By Dave Coverly



HBO’s ‘The White Lotus,’ sponsored by ...

[‘**White Lotus**,’ from E1] wanted to showcase other sides of the country.

“Obviously that exists here, but it doesn’t define Thai culture,” executive producer David Bernad said in a phone interview last month from Bangkok, where the show was having a splashy local premiere attended by its cast, including Thai-born K-pop star Lalisa Manobal, a.k.a. Blackpink’s Lisa, who stars as a worker at the hotel. “What we attempted to do is depict Thailand in an authentic way — the beauty of the people and the culture — in a way that hopefully brings more positive interest back to Thailand.”

The season was made in partnership with the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the Four Seasons, which once again served as a filming location for the series. The government of Thailand also offered generous tax rebates to the production. HBO collaborated with a slew of brands to create an array of “White Lotus”-inspired products, including \$98 scented candles, \$48 sunscreen, \$325 overnight bags, \$725 dresses and \$4.50 flavored coffee creamers. Despite its often dark themes and cynical take on humanity, the show clearly has become an aspirational marketing vehicle for brands across the spectrum. Why, exactly, is a show about terrible people behaving badly (and dying) so appealing to these companies?

“I genuinely don’t know the answer. It’s a very weird thing,” Bernad said. “It’s surreal, knowing that the original construction of the show was so intimate and small. For me, it still feels strange that anyone is paying attention.”

Given what a pop culture juggernaut “The White Lotus” has become, it is easy to forget it was conceived as a stopgap — a show that could be made quickly and safely in a single, isolated location during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when HBO was in desperate need of fresh programming.

The original plan was to film in Australia, where strict lockdowns helped keep the pandemic in check. When that proved too difficult, Hawaii became the obvious choice. The setting offered stunning natural beauty but also rich themes to explore, particularly American colonialism and the plight of Native Hawaiians.

Similarly, Season 2 was almost set in France but wound up in Sicily after a scouting trip to Taormina, where a tour guide told them the legend behind the decorative moor’s head statues found in the region that became a motif in the series. “That was the kickoff to Mike wanting to write this



FABIO LOVINO HBO

SAM NIVOLA, left, Sarah Catherine Hook and Patrick Schwarzenegger play vacationers in Thailand in Season 3 of “The White Lotus.”

bedroom farce season about sexual politics,” Bernad said.

Season 3 was always envisioned as an “exploration of Eastern versus Western philosophy,” Bernad said. But Plan A was to film in Japan, a country where they’d been keen to make something for years. Largely as a courtesy to HBO, White and Bernad also visited Thailand. (White had negative associations with Koh Samui in particular because he’d been sequestered on the island after getting eliminated from “The Amazing Race.”)

But ultimately they were charmed by the country and its people. White also was struck by a fit of inspiration when he came down with bronchitis while in the city of Chiang Mai. He was treated with potent steroids and “hallucinated the entire season,” Bernad said. “Honestly, the next day, we were scouting in the van, and he told me about his dream. It’s basically what we shot — his steroid-induced dream.”

Relocating the show to Thailand, where more than 90% of the population is Buddhist, “allowed us to explore Buddhism as a religion and a philosophy,” Bernad said. One of their creative goals was presenting a more nuanced version of Thai culture than is typical of Western media. “It’s usually like ‘The Hangover Part II,’ exploiting the darker side of Bangkok. But that’s not

what we set out to do,” he said.

One of the characters this season, Piper Ratliff (Sarah Catherine Hook), is a religious studies major who has dragged her wealthy Southern family to Thailand so that she can interview a Buddhist monk for her thesis. Her spiritual curiosity is baffling to her family, who are skeptical of the many wellness offerings at the hotel.

Koh Samui is “like detox island,” a place well-heeled tourists come to engage in practices they associate with Buddhism but are often a mishmash of different spiritual traditions, said Brooke Schedneck, a religious studies professor at Rhodes College whose research centers on Buddhism and religious tourism in Thailand. “Everyone coming off the plane [in Koh Samui] has their yoga mats,” she said. Places like the fictional White Lotus “draw on this idea of Thailand as a Buddhist place but [offer] wellness options that don’t necessarily connect to Buddhism.” (You’d never practice yoga in a Buddhist temple, for instance.)

“I think it’s really funny how ... most of them are going to this wellness resort, and then they’re like, ‘I don’t want to do wellness. Why do I have to do this?’” Schedneck said of the hotel’s spoiled guests. “It shows the individualistic, Western mindset of ‘I want to do whatever I want.’”

Yet the contradiction between East and West may not be as stark as one might assume. Some Westerners wrongly assume that because Buddhism is so prevalent in Thailand, it means people are less interested in material things. “The idea that Buddhism can encompass and encourage wealth is something that’s difficult for people to grasp,” Schedneck said.

For the Four Seasons, “The White Lotus” has been an undeniably powerful marketing tool — despite the death and dissolute behavior that goes on at the resorts in the series. The formal partnership, launched ahead of Season 3, means the company can use “White Lotus” IP and do branded activations, including poolside cabanas and viewing parties, at its resorts. The Four Seasons also recently announced a 20-day excursion in which guests will travel aboard the company’s private jet to the show’s three filming locations.

As part of its marketing research, the company conducts monthly surveys with high-net-worth individuals. The questionnaire now includes questions about “The White Lotus.” Of the millennials surveyed, 88% were aware of both brands, and 71% said they were highly likely to visit properties featured in the series.

“We know that if we pick the right show, and if the ho-

tel has been featured in the right way, it has a huge business impact, and it’s the best PR we can do,” said Marc Speichert, executive vice president and chief commercial officer at the Four Seasons. He is already seeing a surge of online interest in the Koh Samui property: Visits to the site are up nearly 600% over the same time last year.

“Everybody knows that this is obviously a fiction. The White Lotus isn’t the Four Seasons, per se. It just uses the hotel as a backdrop. The PR that we’re getting is about how incredible the hotel looks,” Speichert said. (He said that characters like Belinda, played by Natasha Rothwell in Seasons 1 and 3, and Valentina, played by Sabrina Impacciatore in Season 2, reflect the kind of people who do work at the Four Seasons.)

Previous seasons of “The White Lotus” led to a surge of visitors to Maui and Sicily. In Thailand, where tourism is a major industry, an influx would be welcome. The country saw 35 million foreign visitors last year, according to the Tourism Authority of Thailand, which aims to increase that number to 40 million in 2025.

“Thailand acting as the setting of ‘The White Lotus’ Season 3 allows us to reach a truly global audience, and offers a unique opportunity to showcase Thailand’s breathtaking landscapes, rich culinary scene, vibrant

culture, natural beauty and, most importantly, the people and the warmth of Thai hospitality,” said Chompu Marusachot, director of the TAT’s New York office.

An increase in visitors would be an economic boon for Thailand, but there is also concern about the potential environmental impact more visitors would have on the country, particularly Koh Samui, which already struggles with a shortage of fresh water and an overflowing landfill, according to reports from local residents. Other Hollywood productions offer cautionary tales: “The Beach,” released in 2000, helped turn Maya Bay on the island of Ko Phi Phi Leh into a major tourist destination that received as many as 5,000 visitors a day. Because of the resulting pollution, an estimated 80% of the coral in the bay was destroyed. Authorities eventually closed the beach for several years and now restrict access. HBO did not provide comment when asked about the environmental impact of filming “The White Lotus” in Koh Samui.

But for Bernad, making the series in Thailand taught him the importance of treading lightly. “You have to come in with a humility that you’re not imposing your way of production,” he said. “You’re learning from the local crew and producers, and adjusting to their needs.” Good advice for producers, and tourists, alike.

The show and jokes go on too long in ‘44 the Musical’

[‘**44**,’ from E1] noise as they fall into the R&B groove of a musical overflowing with captivating voices. Tops among them is T.J. Wilkins, who lends Barack a smoky timbre as seductive as the patented sounds of Teddy Pendergrass and Marvin Gaye.

Shanice (one name will do for this singing talent) gives Michelle Obama the feisty warmth of a Faith Evans singing her truth. Rest assured Shanice’s Michelle will tell Barack how she feels — without worrying in the least whether he can handle her straight talk.

Chad Doreck plays Joe Biden, the show’s narrator, whose “hazy” version of events gives the show’s creator, Eli Bauman, a TV writer who worked on Obama’s campaign, a vehicle for getting into the nation’s first Black president’s private business. (If someone doesn’t feel comfortable with a white artist imagining Barack and Michelle’s sexy talk after hours at the White House, you can put the blame on poor Joe.)

Doreck’s portrayal begins with a shuffling gait, sending up in “Saturday Night Live”-style Biden’s geriatric decline. Trim and perversely puppyish, the character doesn’t let age keep him down for long. When the music erupts, he’s the first to show off his moves, regardless of whether he’s even welcome in the scene.

The show’s baddies — Larry Cedar’s pony-tailed good ol’ boy Mitch Mc-

‘44 the Musical’

Where: Kirk Douglas Theatre, 9820 Washington Blvd., Culver City

When: 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays-Saturdays, 1 and 7:30 p.m. Sundays. Ends March 23.

Tickets: Start at \$44

Contact: 44theobama musical.com/tickets

Running time: 2 hours, 30 minutes (including one intermission)

Connell, Michael Uribes’ snarling Ted Cruz, Jane Pa-pageorge’s pole-dancing Sarah Palin and Jeff Sumner’s parasol-twirling Lindsey Graham — have banded together to thwart Obama’s presidency at every turn. Herman Cain (Dino Shorté) is scripted into WHAM (White, Heterosexual, Affluent Men) as the token Black representative of this group of right-wing loonies. He can’t figure out what he’s doing there either, but he galvanizes the show with a version of Prince’s “Purple Rain” retitled “Herman Cain” and ultimately proves that he’s nobody’s puppet.

The music, under the lively music direction of Anthony “Brew” Brewster, is enjoyably derivative. Bauman’s score made me imagine a musical theater software program that would take R&B hits and recombine them into new tunes.

The effect is like karaoke



BELLA MARIE ADAMS Bella Marie Adams

SHANICE AND T.J. Wilkins, center, star as Michelle and Barack Obama in “44 the Musical” at the Kirk Douglas Theatre. The musical was written by Eli Bauman, who worked on Obama’s presidential campaign.

only with a live band, original material and professionals who can really sing, such as Summer Nicole Greer, who serves as the Voice of the People. Perhaps the most memorable number is the one with an unprintable title that invites the audience to flip off Ted Cruz.

There’s an ephemerality to the theatrical experience. The jokey, gleefully profane lyrics are stimulating in the moment but then quickly forgotten, like novelty songs in a clever college cabaret. Even Bauman’s funniest musical bits get swallowed in the show’s frothy, frolic-

some relentlessness.

Sometimes the humor is a little cringey. I’m the last person to defend Sarah Palin, but the misogyny of the stripper caricature seemed excessive. So too was the grudge-bearing, Obama-frenemy cartoon of Hillary Clinton (Jenna Pastuszek). Everybody is a target, it’s true, but some parodies land better than others.

The real problem of “44 the Musical,” though, is its overstretched nature. In his writing, composing and staging, Bauman doesn’t know when enough is enough. The show is a

species of pub theater, but somewhere along the way it seems to have convinced itself that it could be the next “Hamilton.”

The sprightly production design is set up for rapid transit, but the traffic onstage isn’t in any hurry. It was nearly three hours with opening-night delays before I emerged from my seat for a musical that should be half that length.

The comedy can’t help but grow stale left out so long. The hardworking ensemble never quits. Doreck’s Joe, the show’s secret weapon, slingshots across the

stage. But exhilaration runs neck and neck with exhaustion.

Wilkins’ Barack gives “44” a soul. Shanice’s Michelle gives the musical a spine. Cedar’s Mitch gives the story a wily villain with freaky dance moves.

But what a strange, tumultuous, unjoyful moment it is to encounter this winking recap of our 44th president’s political journey. Nostalgia for a president whose greatest sins were expanding healthcare access and wearing a tan suit is a luxury we can ill afford at the moment.