

# The path to a new pope

Francis’ funeral will be followed by days of mourning and a conclave to choose his successor.

By Karen Garcia

Pope Francis’ funeral will be held Saturday in St. Peter’s Square, marking the beginning of a highly choreographed process to select a new pope that is steeped in both history and politics.

All of the 252 cardinals from across the globe will attend the funeral — and at least 120 will then convene to elect the next leader of the Catholic Church’s 1 billion members in a sacred process known as the conclave. There is already much speculation about whom the cardinals will select and whether that new pope will continue Francis’ pastoral priorities of concern for the poor and reform of the Vatican bureaucracy.

On Monday morning, the Vatican announced the 88-year-old pope had died of a stroke and “irreversible cardiocirculatory collapse,” according to the Vatican News, an official publication of the Vatican.

As the church’s 266th leader, he was revered by many Catholics and theologians for his commitment to social justice and focus on church ministry to migrants, poor and oppressed people. Although he followed the church’s conservative doctrines on abortion and LGBTQ+ rights, he shook up the conservative norms of the church when he told clerics not to be “obsessed with” those issues.

The funeral is scheduled for 1 a.m. Pacific time.

Keeping with tradition, the Vatican’s health department verifies the pope’s death in his home, and his body is placed in a coffin and transferred to St. Peter’s Basilica for public viewing, the funeral Mass and burial.

During this time, Cardinal Kevin Farrell is acting as the cardinal camerlengo, a person appointed by the pope and tasked with certain duties during the transition to a successor, NPR reported. Those duties include destroying the late pope’s symbolic fisherman’s ring (used to seal Vatican documents) and preparing for the conclave.

The pope’s body must be

[See Pope, A6]



PRESIDENT TRUMP greets Sylvester Stallone at the America First Policy Institute Gala in 2024. Days before taking office, Trump named Stallone, Jon Voight and Mel Gibson his “special ambassadors.”

# Hollywood has yet to hear from Trump ‘ambassadors’

Just days before beginning his second term as president, Donald Trump called Hollywood “a great but very troubled place.”

Then, with his usual aplomb and bombast, he named Jon Voight, Sylvester Stallone and Mel Gibson to be his “special ambassadors.” The actors would be his “eyes and ears, and I will get done what they suggest,” he wrote on his social media platform.

Hollywood had “lost much business over the last four years to For-

Film industry doubts Jon Voight, Sylvester Stallone and Mel Gibson can keep production local

By Stacy Perman

eign Countries,” said Trump, and his trio of envoys will help bring it “back — bigger, better, and stronger than ever before!”

Three months later, many of those who work in Hollywood — industry players and officials who have been actively engaged in efforts to boost production — say as far as Trump’s envoys are concerned, it has been mostly “crickets.”

Although the administration has

[See Hollywood, A7]

# Has YouTube become television itself?

## 20 years in, video pioneer is a power in industry it disrupted

By Wendy Lee

The grainy 19-second YouTube video that started it all hardly had the makings of a viral sensation.

Shot at the San Diego Zoo, the primitive video clip showed Jawed Karim, the platform’s co-founder, complimenting the elephants in the frame behind him. “The cool thing about these guys is they have really, really, really long trunks,” Karim said.

The clip, titled “Me at the zoo,” was the first video uploaded to YouTube 20 years ago, opening the door to a new medium of television.

From those modest beginnings, the site opened the gates for users from around the world to post funny, viral videos that could take the internet by storm, racking up millions of views and earning some millions of dollars.

YouTube has evolved into not a mere tech operation, but a formidable force in television.

Popular music artists such as Justin Bieber rose to fame on YouTube and social media stars including Mr. Beast turned their large followings into powerful entertainment companies. The destination for homemade videos such as “Charlie bit

[See YouTube, A9]



DHAR MANN Studios’ Ruben Ortiz on a Burbank set. It has steadily built an audience on YouTube.

# A weak spot in child vaccine laws

Unlike other public schools in California, online charters have had low inoculation rates, data show.

By Laura J. Nelson and Hannah Wiley

Heartland Charter School in Kern County has several dream field trips on the calendar this spring, including tours of In-N-Out Burger, an Amtrak train ride along the Central Coast and a matinee performance of “Harry Potter and the Cursed Child” at the Hollywood Pantages.

The outings may not seem unusual, but Heartland’s student body differs from other California schools in one major way.

Just 5% of Heartland’s 810 kindergarten students received all their childhood vaccines last year, and 9% were vaccinated against measles, according to a Times analysis of data that California schools report to the state. The vaccination rate for kindergarten students across the state last year was 93.7%.

Heartland is among the largest of California’s independent study charter schools, which allow parents to enroll their children in the public school system but avoid the state’s strict vaccine requirements by educating them at home or online.

Such programs — sometimes called homeschool charters, online charters or virtual charters — boomed during the COVID-19 pandemic and offer more flexibility than a traditional school.

They also serve as a legal refuge for California parents who don’t want to vaccinate their children or leave the public school system. Some public health departments in the Golden State attribute declining vaccination rates to such programs, which can enroll hundreds or even thousands of children.

The publicly funded schools are among the few remaining soft spots in California’s stringent childhood vaccination laws, which law-

[See Schools, A6]

## Rubio unveils department plan

The secretary of State wants to cut staff in U.S. by 15% and close or consolidate more than 100 bureaus. **NATION, A4**

## Lakers look to even their series

Tuesday night’s Western Conference first-round game ended after this edition’s deadline. For full coverage, go to **latimes.com/sports**.

## Weather

Fog, then some sun. L.A. Basin: 69/53. **B6**

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

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DAVID BUTOW For The Times

## HISTORIC HOUSES STAND STRONG

Villa Aurora and the Mann house, now museums that survived the Palisades fire, were occupied by writers Leon Feuchtwagner and Thomas Mann, who fled Nazi Germany and warned that what happened there could happen anywhere, a message worth heeding, Gustavo Arellano writes. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

# High court may allow parents to pull children from LGBTQ+ lessons

By David G. Savage

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court justices sounded ready Tuesday to give parents a constitutional right to opt out of public school lessons for their children that offend their religious beliefs.

At issue are new “LGBTQ-inclusive” storybooks used for classroom reading for pre-kindergarten to fifth grade in Montgomery County, Md., a suburb of Washington where three justices reside.

In recent years, the court’s six conservatives have invoked the “free exer-

cise of religion” to protect Catholic schools from illegal job-bias claims from teachers and to give parents an equal right to use state grants to send their children to religious schools.

During an argument on Tuesday, they strongly suggested that they would extend religious liberty rights to parents with children in public schools.

“They are not asking to change what is taught in the classroom,” Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh told an attorney for the court.

“As a lifelong resident of the county, I’m mystified at how it came to this. They

[See Court, A5]



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Voices **BY MICHAEL HILTZIK**

# A barrage of autism fallacies and pseudoscience

Experts are appalled by the disregard of research and fire hose of misinformation from Health secretary.

A number of otherwise skeptical senators took at face value the pledge by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. at Senate hearings in January to “follow the science” on issues related to the causes of disease in the U.S., helping him receive confirmation as secretary of Health and Human Services.

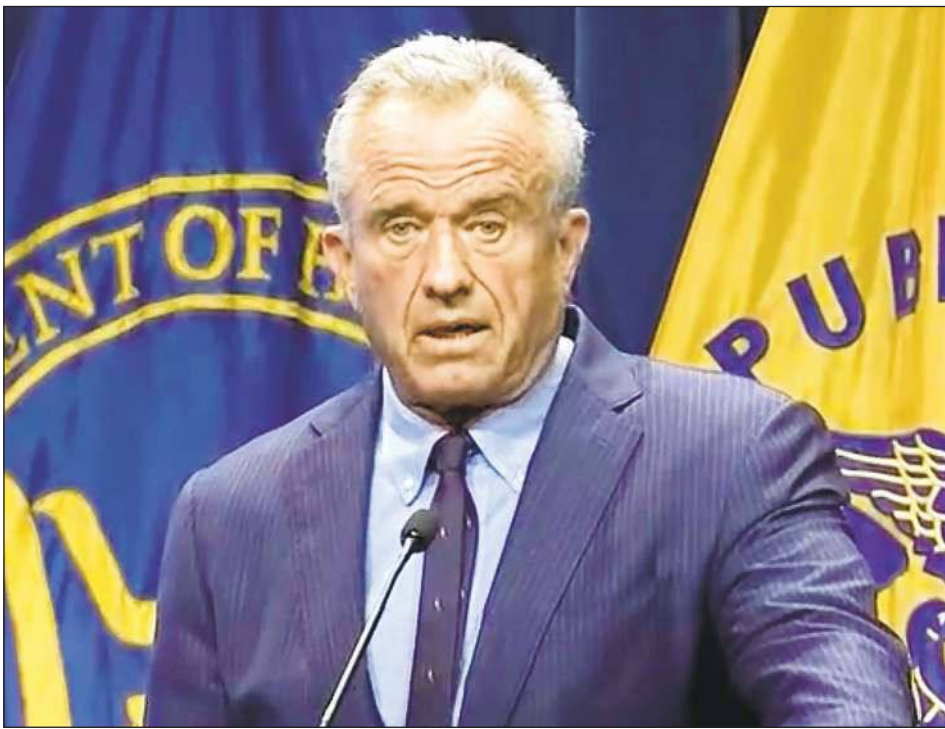
As he demonstrated last week at his very first news conference as the government’s top healthcare official, he was blowing smoke.

The topic was what he described as an “alarming ... epidemic” of autism, supposedly documented by a new report by the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

His advice was to ignore what decades of scientific research have established as contributors to the reported increase in autism prevalence. These include genetic factors; the ever-broadening definition of autism itself, now known as autism spectrum disorder, or ASD; and vastly improved screening programs nationwide.

The inescapable conclusion is that Kennedy’s Health and Human Services Department is in the grip of a pseudoscience revolution in which misinformation and disinformation are ascendant.

Kennedy’s words left much of the autism community aghast. At his news conference and in an accompanying HHS press release, “Kennedy repeated false claims that autism was a



C-SPAN  
**HEALTH** and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has long favored the thoroughly debunked claim that autism is related to childhood vaccinations.

‘preventable’ ‘epidemic’ ” and that the CDC report’s findings “could not be explained by improved access to screening,” stated the Autistic Self Advocacy Network. ASAN accused Kennedy of having “cherry-picked” data and having misinterpreted basic science.

Observes Holden Thorp, the editor of Science, who disclosed last year that he was diagnosed with autism at the age of 53 (he’s now 60), “almost everything in the CDC report talked about better identification and better diagnosis being the source of the increase.”

Kennedy’s words were so averse to understanding the truth about autism that they deserve to be set forth here in some detail. To a great extent, they’re refuted by the CDC report itself, which Kennedy referred to repeatedly at his news con-

ference.

The CDC estimated the rate of autism in the general population at about 1 in 31 children born in 2014. That’s a higher rate than was found even two years earlier.

But it doesn’t amount to an “epidemic” that is “running rampant,” as Kennedy said. He said “most cases now are severe,” which is untrue. In fact, the vast majority of new cases involve children without the intellectual disabilities often associated with stereotypical autistic behavior, such as sensitivities to touch and an absence of verbal skills. The prevalence of more severe cases has actually declined in recent years, according to a 2023 study from Rutgers.

Kennedy took special aim at what he called “the ideology that ... the relentless autism prevalence increases are simply arti-

facts of better diagnoses, better recognition or changing diagnostic criteria.” He said “this epidemic denial has become a feature in the mainstream media and it’s based on an industry canard” perpetrated by “people who don’t want us to look at environmental exposures.”

Well, no. The contributions made by updated diagnostic standards and improved screening to changes in prevalence rates aren’t concoctions of the media, but findings from professional research — including the CDC report.

Kennedy painted a dire picture of the lives of autistic people. “Autism destroys families,” he said. “These are kids who will never pay taxes, never hold a job, they’ll never play baseball, they’ll never write a poem, they’ll never go out on a date, many of them will

never use a toilet unassisted.”

Just to be plain, given Kennedy’s effort to shroud autistic people in stigma, many pay taxes. Many hold jobs. Many play baseball. Many write poetry, go on dates, don’t need help to use a toilet.

Put it all together, and Kennedy’s performance raises urgent questions about whether he understands autism at all or is just using it as a stalking horse to promote his assertion that “environmental toxins” are the root of chronic diseases.

Kennedy’s erroneous ideas about autism aren’t new. He has long favored the long-debunked claim that autism is related to childhood vaccinations. He didn’t specifically mention vaccines during his appearance, but more than once he claimed that “someone is putting environmental toxins into ... our medicines.”

Kennedy seems impervious to the findings of scientific researchers. That was the conclusion of Peter Hotez, a leading vaccine expert whose daughter Rachel is autistic. In 2017, the National Institutes of Health asked Hotez to meet with Kennedy to move him off the hobbyhorse of a vaccine-autism link. “I couldn’t engage him,” Hotez told me. “He was so deeply dug in about vaccines that he wasn’t interested in listening.”

His encounter with Kennedy was what prompted Hotez to write his 2018 book “Vaccines Did Not Cause Rachel’s Autism.”

The truth is that researchers have made great strides in unearthing the causes and characteristics of autism. They’ve identified some genetic anomalies that lead to a predisposition to the spectrum.

Scientists at the University of North Carolina, Stanford and UC Davis have found unusual prenatal growth patterns in the brain that appear to correlate with ASD diagnoses in early childhood, though it’s unclear what triggers that growth. Some have found evidence of environmental factors, chiefly experienced by women in pregnancy, though some question whether any such factors can be primary determinants of ASD.

Kennedy would have been well-advised to spend more time reading his own agency’s report before citing it at his news conference. That’s because it refuted much of what he claimed.

The report takes a more nuanced view of autism than the horrific picture he painted of autism sufferers. Throughout, it refers to ASD — “autism spectrum disorder” — rather than painting it as “autism” with a single broad brush, as he did.

Among other factors, the report states that ASD diagnoses among Black, Hispanic and other ethnic groups have increased because those “previously underserved groups” have received “increased access to ... identification services” in recent years.

Until about 10 years ago, the report notes, the highest prevalence of ASD was found among white children and those from wealthier neighborhoods, plainly those with both the incentive to track their children’s intellectual development and the best resources to obtain services. Black, Hispanic and other ethnic groups have been catching up.

The report further documented how reported rates of ASD are related to differing approaches to screening and diagnostic services among states and local communities. The reported ASD rate was 9.7 per 1,000 children in Texas, but 53.1 in California.

## Planting a sequoia forest on Earth Day in ... Detroit?

Motor City provides a safe space away from fire-prone California, getting shade and clean air in return.

By COREY WILLIAMS

DETROIT — Arborists are turning vacant land on Detroit’s eastside into a small urban forest, not of elms, oaks and red maples indigenous to the city but giant sequoias, the world’s largest trees that can live for thousands of years.

The project on four lots will not only replace long-standing blight with majestic trees but could also improve air quality and help preserve the trees that are native to California’s Sierra Nevada, where they are threatened by ever-hotter wildfires.



PAUL SANCYA Associated Press  
**GIANNA HOLLIDAY** plants a sequoia sapling in Detroit last month. Dozens more were installed in four lots in the city Tuesday to mark Earth Day. The group that donated the saplings wants to plant in Los Angeles too.

Giant sequoias are resilient against disease and insects, and are usually well adapted to fire. Thick bark protects their trunks, and their canopies tend to be too high for flames to reach. But climate change is making the big trees more vulnerable to wildfires out West, Kemp said.

“The fires are getting so hot that it’s even threatening them,” he said.

**Where did the saplings come from?**

Archangel, based in Copemish, Mich., preserves the genetics of old-growth trees for research and reforestation.

The sequoia saplings destined for Detroit are clones of two giants known as Stagg — the world’s fifth-largest tree — and Waterfall of the Alder Creek grove, about 150 miles north of Los Angeles.

In 2010, Archangel began gathering cones and climbers scaled high into the trees to gather new-growth clippings from which they were able to develop and grow saplings.

A decade later, a wildfire burned through the grove. Waterfall was destroyed, but

Stagg survived. They will live on in the Motor City.

**Why Detroit?**

Sequoias need space, and metropolitan Detroit has plenty of it.

In the 1950s, 1.8 million people called Detroit home, but the city’s population has since shrunk to about one-third of that number. Tens of thousands of homes were left empty and neglected.

The city has demolished at least 24,000 vacant structures since it emerged from bankruptcy in 2014, but thousands of empty lots remain. Kemp estimates that only about 10% to 15% of the original houses remain in the neighborhood where the sequoias will grow.

“There’s not another urban area I know of that has the kind of potential that we do to reforest,” he said. “We could all live in shady, fresh air beauty. It’s like no reason we can’t be the greenest city in the world.”

Within the last decade, 11 sequoias were planted on vacant lots owned by Arborum Detroit and nine others were planted on private properties around

the neighborhood. Each has reached 12 to 15 feet tall. Arborum Detroit has 200 more in its nursery. Kemp believes the trees will thrive in Detroit.

“They’re safer here. ... We don’t have wildfires like [California]. The soil stays pretty moist, even in the summer,” he said. “They like to have that winter irrigation, so when the snow melts they can get a good drink.”

**How will the sequoias affect Detroit?**

Caring for the sequoias will fall to future generations, so Milarch has started what he calls “tree school” to teach Detroit’s youths how and why to look after the new trees.

“We empower our kids to teach them how to do this and give them the materials and the way to do this themselves,” Milarch said. “They take ownership. They grow them in the classrooms and plant them around the schools. They know we’re in environmental trouble.”

Some of them may never have even walked in a forest, Kemp said.

“How can we expect children who have never

seen a forest to care about deforestation on the other side of the world?” Kemp said. “It is our responsibility to offer them their birthright.”

City residents are exposed to extreme air pollution and have high rates of asthma. The Detroit sequoias will grow near a heavily industrial area, a former incinerator and two interstates, he said.

Kemp’s nonprofit has already planted about 650 trees — including around 80 species — in some 40 lots in the area. But he believes the sequoias will have the greatest impact.

“Because these trees grow so fast, so large and they’re evergreen, they’ll do amazing work filtering the air here,” Kemp said. “We live in pretty much a pollution hot spot. We’re trying to combat that. We’re trying to breathe clean air. We’re trying to create shade. We’re trying to soak up the stormwater, and I think sequoias — among all the trees we plant — may be the strongest, best candidates for that.”

Williams writes for the Associated Press.

Why would it be so high in California? The report notes that California has trained local pediatricians to screen and refer children for assessment as early as possible — at an average of 36 months, compared with the Texas average of nearly 70 months — which “could result in higher identification of ASD, especially at early ages.”

What is Kennedy’s endgame here? He portrays himself as a seeker of scientific truth, but throughout his news conference he denigrated scientists for purportedly ignoring what he said were clear signals of an autism epidemic, rendering “thousands of profoundly disabled children somehow invisible.” In doing so, he overlooked decades of fruitful research efforts aimed at uncovering the causes and nature of autism.

He left the impression that research into genetic or prenatal causes will get short shrift in grants from the National Institutes of Health, which comes under his jurisdiction. Instead, he’ll favor studies aimed at identifying specific environmental toxins. He has already indicated that he plans to revive research tying vaccines to autism, though that connection consistently has been disproved.

Perhaps most disturbing is that Kennedy showed almost no awareness of the diversity of ASD — and the contribution that it has made to humanity. “Some neurodivergent people are meticulously observant and are able to connect seemingly disparate concepts — assets in the world of science,” Thorp wrote in connection with his own diagnosis.

There’s reason to fear that Kennedy’s quest for a cause or even a cure for autism will shoulder aside other research more important for those with ASD. As Emily Hotez, Rachel Hotez’s older sister and a leading autism researcher at UCLA, noted in an article she co-wrote after the CDC report’s release, the effort to identify autism’s cause has overlooked “something far more urgent: improving the lives of autistic people and their families, here and now.”



## THE WORLD

# Russia batters 2 cities, warns talks will take time

Peace settlement is too complex to rush, Kremlin says. Western nations are to meet with Ukrainians.

By ILLIA NOVIKOV

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian drones battered the Ukrainian port city of Odesa and glide bombs hit Zaporizhzhia, local authorities said Tuesday, as the Kremlin again warned that negotiators are unlikely to obtain a swift breakthrough in peace talks on the war.

Ukrainian, British, French and U.S. officials are due to meet in London on Wednesday to discuss the war. Anticipation is building over whether diplomatic efforts can stop more than three years of fighting since Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbor. Hostility has run deep since Russia invaded and illegally annexed Ukraine's Crimean peninsula in 2014.

U.S. President Trump said last week that negotiations were "coming to a head" and insisted that neither side is "playing" him in



**POLICE** officers try to calm an injured dog while a body lies near a building damaged by a Russian strike on a residential neighborhood in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine.

his push to end the war. That came after Secretary of State Marco Rubio suggested that the U.S. might soon back away from negotiations if they don't progress.

Rubio has suggested that Wednesday's meeting could be decisive in determining whether the Trump admin-

istration continues its involvement.

But Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov cautioned that "the settlement issue is so complex that it would be wrong to put some tight limits to it and try to set some short time frame for a settlement, a viable settlement — it would be a thankless

task."

Western analysts say Moscow is in no rush to conclude peace talks because it has battlefield momentum and wants to capture more Ukrainian land.

Russia has effectively rejected a U.S. proposal for an immediate and full 30-day halt in the fighting by impos-

ing far-reaching conditions.

Odesa came under a "massive attack" by Russian drones overnight, injuring at least three people, the head of the regional administration, Oleh Kiper, wrote on his Telegram page.

A residential building in a densely populated urban area, civilian infrastructure and an educational facility were hit, he said.

Later Tuesday, Russia hit the southern city of Zaporizhzhia with two massive aerial glide bombs — a retrofitted Soviet weapon that for months has been used to lay waste to eastern Ukraine.

The attack killed a 69-year-old woman and injured 24 people, including four children, according to regional Gov. Ivan Fedorov.

Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, said there are no plans for talks on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's proposal to halt strikes on civilian facilities. He said Moscow is prepared to consider such a step but noted that reaching an agreement could take time.

"While talking about civilian infrastructure, it's necessary to clearly define when such facilities can be a military target and when they can't," he said. "If a mili-

tary meeting is held there, is it a civilian facility? It is. But is it a military target? Yes, it is. There are some nuances here that need to be discussed."

The Ukrainian air force said Russia fired 54 Shahed and decoy drones at Ukraine overnight, marking a resumption of long-range attacks that have blasted civilian areas and sown terror.

Russia has stepped up its use of Shahed drones, expanding its production of the weapon and refining its tactics, the International Institute for Strategic Studies said in a recent analysis.

After Putin declared a unilateral ceasefire Saturday, Ukraine said it was ready to reciprocate but said Russian attacks continued. Zelensky asserted that Russia violated the ceasefire more than 2,900 times.

The Associated Press was unable to verify whether a ceasefire was in place along the roughly 620-mile front line.

Meanwhile, both Russia and Ukraine are preparing for the spring-summer military campaign, Ukrainian and Western officials say.

Novikov writes for the Associated Press.

## In Argentina, some ask why Francis never came back for a visit

Vatican insiders and others say it was not a snub but an effort to avoid being swept up in polarizing politics.

By ALMUDENA CALATRAVA AND ISABEL DEBRE

BUENOS AIRES — Jorge Mario Bergoglio, born in Buenos Aires, never set foot in his homeland after becoming Pope Francis in 2013.

That left many of the faithful in Argentina feeling puzzled and snubbed by the world's first Latin American pope. The question of why he never returned quickly dominated airwaves and headlines on Tuesday in Buenos Aires.

Francis, who died Monday, said little about his decision to steer clear of Argentina. But Vatican insiders and interlocutors said the pontiff wanted to avoid being swept up in the polarizing politics that characterized his country.

"It's sad, because we should have been proud to have an Argentine pope," said Ardina Aragon, 94, a longtime friend and neighbor from the middle-class neighborhood of Flores, where Francis was born in 1936. "I think there were political factors that influenced him."

Francis, a devotee of soccer, tango and other signature aspects of Argentine culture, was known to have tense relationships with some of his country's leaders. His ideological clash with President Javier Milei, who took office in 2023, created even more challenges.

### Popularity decline

Argentina celebrated Francis' becoming pope with an ecstasy otherwise reserved for the country's three World Cup soccer championships. But that initial excitement over the former archbishop of Buenos Aires faded as the years passed.

A recent Pew Research Center report showed that Francis' popularity had dropped more in Argentina than anywhere else in the region over the last decade. About 64% of respondents said they had a positive view of Francis in September 2024, compared with 91% in 2014.

"There are many among us who think he made mistakes. Not everyone in our community is proud of the association," said Adriana Lombardi, 62, a retired teacher in Buenos Aires, referring to traditionalist Catholics in Argentina and beyond who accused Fran-

cis of leading the church astray.

Some in Buenos Aires felt slighted by Francis' avoidance of Argentina.

"Despite his history here, it seems like he doesn't care about us," said Bruno Rentería, 19, who was praying in front of an icon of the Virgin Mary at the Basílica de San José de Flores in Buenos Aires. Older churchgoers recalled the very confessional where Bergoglio, at age 16, had first heard the call to the priesthood. "It's odd because it seems like he has time for everyone else."

### Political tensions

Some trace those tensions to when he was archbishop of Buenos Aires during the leftist tenures of late former President Néstor Kirchner and his successor and wife, the divisive Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, whose strain of populism dominated Argentine politics for decades.

Francis and Fernández de Kirchner were unfriendly neighbors in Plaza de Mayo, the central square that hosts both the government headquarters and the cathedral where Francis delivered homilies during much of her presidency from 2007 to 2015.

From the pulpit, Francis criticized the "exhibitionism" and autocratic tendencies of Argentina's political class — a subtle dig that the Kirchners interpreted as a direct attack. His support for the Vatican's conservative positions on key social issues deepened rifts with Fernández de Kirchner's progressive government as it expanded sex education and, in 2010, legalized same-sex marriage — a first for Latin America.

Perhaps most significantly, supporters of the Kirchners accused Francis of complicity in Argentina's 1976-83 military dictatorship, when as many as 30,000 people were estimated by human rights groups to have been killed or simply "disappeared." Francis was head of Argentina's Jesuit order during those violent years, when the junta targeted radical clerics and priests who worked with the poor.

Francis rejected the accusations of complicity. In his 2024 memoir, "Life: My Story Through History," he recalled hiding wanted activists and pressing military officials behind the scenes to free two abducted priests from his order.

Eventually, Kirchner's social welfare policies resonated with Bergoglio. The two drew closer after he became pontiff and set about softening the image of an institution that had long appeared forbidding.

"Conservatives in Argentina failed to understand his change of attitude," said Ser-



**"IT'S CLEAR** that he felt at ease in Rome," one Argentine man said of the future pope, shown in 2009.

gio Berensztein, who runs a political consultancy in Buenos Aires.

### A 'Peronist pope'

Unsettled by his critiques of the excesses of capitalism, right-wing critics branded Francis the "Peronist pope" — a reference to the Argentine populist movement founded by three-time President Juan Domingo Perón, who employed an authoritarian hand and powerful state to champion social justice causes.

From that point on, Berensztein said, Francis "felt everything he said or did would lead to fighting on either side of the divide."

Francis' politics came under more scrutiny in 2016, when he wore an unusually grim expression while posing for a photo beside former President Mauricio Macri, Kirchner's conservative successor, whose austerity program battered the poor.

The awkward photo op paled in comparison with Francis' discomfort with what followed.

Before coming to power in 2023, Milei, a former television pundit and corporate economist, called Francis an "imbecile" and "the representative of the Evil One on Earth." He lashed out at the pope for promoting social justice, supporting taxes and sympathizing with "murderous communists."

Francis expressed sympathy for the strife of Argentines pulled into poverty as they bore the brunt of Milei's fiscal shock therapy, voicing concern over what he called a "save yourself approach" to doing politics and publicly criticizing Argentine security forces for using pepper spray against Argentine retirees protesting for better pensions.

The Vatican described a meeting between Francis and Milei in 2024 as "cordial," but ideological differences resurfaced with the ascension of Milei's political ally, President Trump.

Since Trump's reelection, Francis has intensified direct attacks on the U.S. administration, criticizing its mass deportation of migrants and other policies.

"Francis cultivated a social doctrine in the church

that generated opposition, particularly among conservatives in the United States," said Sergio Rubin, an Argentine journalist and Francis' authorized biographer.

### Grateful followers

After a dozen years of papal travel — including to nearly all of Argentina's neighbors — Francis referenced a plan to visit his homeland last year. Nothing came of it.

"He went to Brazil, Peru, Chile; he passed over our heads," said Lucia Vidal, a retired nurse who attended Bergoglio's Mass when he was archbishop. "That pains me."

In contrast, Pope John Paul II visited his native Poland less than a year after becoming pontiff in 1978. His successor, Pope Benedict XVI, chose his native Germany for his first foreign trip in 2005.

Other Argentines appeared less indignant about the snub and more grateful for his contributions to the impoverished neighborhoods of Buenos Aires, where Bergoglio first earned fame as the "slum bishop," leading processions, creating a cadre of priests who follow in his footsteps and founding shelters for homeless addicts and community centers on violence-scarred streets.

"I can't express what his humility, his open hands, meant to me, my family, my neighborhood," said Angela Cano, 51, at a Mass in his honor Monday at Villa 21-24, a neglected suburb near the railroad. "We saw up close how he was the pope of the people. He helped us find God."

Back in Flores, Carlos Liva, 66, a retired cabdriver, said that he couldn't begrudge the pope for prioritizing the rest of the world after spending most of his years in Argentina.

"It's clear that he felt at ease in Rome," Liva said. "In his own country, people found every reason to question him."

Calatrava and Debre write for the Associated Press. AP writer Natacha Pisarenko contributed to this report.

## Gunmen kill at least 26 visiting Kashmir resort, Indian authorities say

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN

SRINAGAR, India — Gunmen killed at least 26 tourists at a resort in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir, police said Tuesday, in what appeared to be a major shift in the regional conflict in which tourists largely have been spared.

Police described the incident as a terrorist attack and blamed militants fighting against Indian rule. "This attack is much larger than anything we've seen directed at civilians in recent years," Omar Abdullah, the region's top elected official, wrote on social media.

Two senior police officers said at least four gunmen, whom they described as militants, opened fire on dozens of tourists at close range. The officers said at least three dozen others were injured, many in serious condition.

Most of the tourists killed were Indian, the officers said, speaking on condition of anonymity in keeping with departmental policy. Officials recovered at least 24 bodies in Baisaran meadow, about three miles from the disputed region's resort town of Pahalgam. Two others died while being transported for medical treatment.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. Police and soldiers were searching for the attackers.

"We will come down heavily on the perpetrators with the harshest consequences," India's home minister, Amit Shah, wrote on social media. He was heading to Srinagar, the main city in the Indian-held part of Kashmir. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on an official visit in Saudi Arabia, has been briefed.

Modi was cutting short his visit and returning to New Delhi early Wednesday, the Press Trust of India news agency reported.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, a key opposition politician and Kashmir's top religious cleric, condemned what he described as a "cowardly attack on tourists," writing on social media that "such violence is unacceptable and against the ethos of Kashmir which welcomes visitors

with love and warmth."

The gunfire coincided with the visit to India of Vice President JD Vance, who called it a "devastating terrorist attack."

He added on social media: "Over the past few days, we have been overcome with the beauty of this country and its people. Our thoughts and prayers are with them as they mourn this horrific attack."

President Trump on social media noted "deeply disturbing news out of Kashmir. The United States stands strong with India against terrorism." Other global leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, condemned the attack.

Nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan each administer part of Kashmir, but both claim the territory in its entirety.

Kashmir has seen a spate of targeted killings of Hindus, including immigrant workers from Indian states, after New Delhi ended the region's semiautonomy in 2019 and drastically curbed dissent, civil liberties and media freedoms.

Tensions have been simmering as India has intensified its counterinsurgency operations. But despite tourists flocking to Kashmir for its Himalayan foothills and exquisitely decorated houseboats, they have not been targeted.

The region has drawn millions of visitors who enjoy a strange peace kept by ubiquitous security checkpoints, armored vehicles and patrolling soldiers. New Delhi has vigorously pushed tourism and touted it as a sign of normality returning.

The meadow in Pahalgam, surrounded by snow-capped mountains and dotted with pine forests, draws hundreds of tourists daily.

Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi, while condemning the attack, said the Modi government should take accountability instead of making "hollow claims on the situation being normal" in the region.

Hussain writes for the Associated Press. AP writer Sheikh Saaliq in New Delhi contributed to this report.



**POLICE** blamed militants fighting against Indian rule in Tuesday's attack. Above, tourists in Srinagar.



THE NATION

# Rubio unveils his plan to slash and overhaul the State Department

The secretary would reduce staff in U.S. by 15% while closing and consolidating over 100 bureaus globally.

By FARNOUGH AMIRI AND MATTHEW LEE

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Marco Rubio unveiled a massive overhaul of the State Department on Tuesday, with plans to reduce staff in the U.S. by 15% while closing and consolidating more than 100 bureaus worldwide as part of the Trump administration's "America first" mandate.

The reorganization plan, announced by Rubio on social media and detailed in documents obtained by the Associated Press, is the latest effort by the White House to reimagine U.S. foreign policy and scale back the size of the federal government.

"We cannot win the battle for the 21st century with bloated bureaucracy that stifles innovation and misallocates scarce resources," Rubio said in a department-wide email obtained by the Associated Press. "That is why, under the leadership of President Trump and at my direction, I am announcing a reorganization of the Department so it may meet the immense challenges of the 21st Century and put America First."

Plans include consolidating 734 bureaus and offices to 602 as well as transitioning 137 offices "to another location within the Department to increase efficiency," according to a fact sheet obtained by the AP.

There will also be a "reimagined" office focused on foreign and humanitarian affairs to coordinate the remaining foreign assistance programs left at State after the recent dismantling of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Some of the bureaus that are expected to be cut include the Office of Global Women's Issues and the department's diversity and inclusion efforts, which have been cut government-wide since Trump took office in January. State is also expected to eliminate some offices previously under the

Undersecretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, but the fact sheet says that much of their work will continue in other sections of the department.

It is unclear whether the reorganization would be implemented through an executive order or other means. Draft reorganization proposals shared within the department in recent weeks outlined an even more drastic shift of priorities than the one revealed Tuesday. The official plans came a week after the AP learned that the White House's Office of Management and Budget proposed gutting the State Department's budget by almost 50% and eliminating funding for the United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters.

The budget proposal was still in a highly preliminary phase and not expected to pass muster with Congress.

Ahead of the changes at the State Department, the Trump administration has been slashing jobs and funding across agencies.

On foreign policy, beyond the destruction of USAID, State has also moved to defund other so-called soft power institutions such as news outlets delivering objective news, often to authoritarian countries, including the Voice of America, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Radio Free Asia and Radio/TV Marti, which broadcasts to Cuba.

Amiri and Lee write for the Associated Press.



JULIEN DE ROSA Pool Photo  
**SECRETARY** of State Marco Rubio cited "bloated bureaucracy that stifles innovation."



ALEX BRANDON Associated Press  
**DEFENSE** Secretary Pete Hegseth, shown Monday, has not directly acknowledged that he set up the second Signal chat. His wife and his brother were on the chat group, where details of the Yemen airstrike were shared.

# Hegseth pulled airstrike details from secure channel, report says

New Signal chat bore same specifics as first one, raising question of whether secretary leaked classified data.

By TARA COPP

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth pulled the airstrike information he posted into Signal chats with his wife, brother and dozens of others from a secure communications channel used by U.S. Central Command, raising new questions as to whether the embattled Pentagon head leaked classified information over an open, unsecured network.

NBC News first reported that the launch times and bomb drop times of U.S. warplanes that were about to strike Houthi targets in Yemen — details that multiple officials have said are highly classified — were taken from secure U.S. Central Command communications. A person familiar with the second chat confirmed that to the Associated Press.

The information posted in the second chat was identical to the sensitive operations details shared in the

first chat, which included members of President Trump's National Security Council, the person said.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of reprisal for speaking to the press.

**It's the second chat with sensitive data**

This is the second chat group in which Hegseth posted Yemen airstrike information. The first leaked Signal chat accidentally included the editor of the Atlantic magazine and led to an inspector general investigation in the Defense Department.

Hegseth has not directly acknowledged that he set up the second chat, which had more than a dozen people on it, including his wife, his lawyer and his brother Phil Hegseth, who was hired as a senior liaison to the Pentagon for the Department of Homeland Security. Instead, the secretary blamed the disclosure of the second Signal chat on leaks from disgruntled former staff members.

Hegseth has aggressively denied that the information he posted was classified. Regardless of that, Signal is a commercially available app that is encrypted but is not a

government network and not authorized to carry classified information.

"I said repeatedly, nobody is texting war plans," Hegseth told Fox News on Tuesday. "I look at war plans every day. What was shared over Signal then and now, however you characterize it, was informal, unclassified coordinations, for media coordinations and other things. That's what I've said from the beginning."

**Predecessor calls it a 'serious' breach**

Based on the specificity of the launch times, that information would have been classified, former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told the AP in a phone interview.

"It is unheard of to have a secretary of Defense committing these kind of serious security breaches," said Panetta, who served during the Obama administration, and who was director of the Central Intelligence Agency during President Obama's first term. "Developing attack plans for defensive reasons is without question the most classified information you can have."

The news comes as Hegseth has shaken up much of his inner circle. He is said to have become increas-

ingly isolated and suspicious about whom he can trust, and is relying on an increasingly smaller circle of people.

In the last week, he has fired or transferred six of his inner support circle, including his aide Dan Caldwell; the chief of staff to Deputy Defense Secretary Stephen Feinberg, Colin Carroll; and Hegseth's deputy chief of staff, Darin Selnick.

Those three were escorted out of the Pentagon as the department hunts down leaks of inside information. In his "Fox and Friends" interview Tuesday, an agitated Hegseth accused those staff members — whom he had worked with and known for years — of "attempting to leak and sabotage" the administration.

Hegseth confirmed Tuesday that his chief of staff, Joe Kasper, would be transitioning to a new position. Former Pentagon chief spokesman Sean Parnell is also temporarily shifting to a more direct support role for Hegseth, and former Pentagon spokesman John Ulyot announced he was resigning last week, unrelated to the leaks. The Pentagon said, however, that Ulyot was asked to resign.

Copp writes for the Associated Press.

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# Collection of student loans in default to resume

Borrowers failing to pay debts will see funds withheld by the federal government starting next month.

By ANNIE MA

WASHINGTON — The Education Department will begin collection next month on student loans that are in default, including the garnishing of wages of potentially millions of borrowers, officials said Monday.

Currently, roughly 5.3 million borrowers are in default on their federal student loans.

The Trump administration's announcement marks an end to a period of leniency that began during the COVID-19 pandemic. No federal student loans have been referred for collection since March 2020, including those in default. Under President Biden, the Education Department tried multiple times to give broad forgiveness of student loans, only to be stopped by courts.

"American taxpayers will no longer be forced to serve as collateral for irresponsible student loan policies," Education Secretary Linda McMahon said.

Beginning May 5, the department will begin involuntary collection through the Treasury Department's offset program, which withholds government payments — including tax refunds, federal salaries and other benefits — from people with past-due debts to the government. After a 30-day notice, the department also will begin garnishing wages of borrowers in de-



JOSE LUIS MAGANA Associated Press

**THE DEPARTMENT** of Education's announcement sparked criticism from advocates for borrowers.

fault. The decision to send debt to collections drew criticism from advocates, who said borrowers had experienced whiplash with the changing policies between the Biden and Trump administrations.

"This is cruel, unnecessary and will further fan the flames of economic chaos for working families across this country," said Mike Pierce, executive director of the Student Borrower Protection Center.

Already, many borrowers have been bracing for obligations coming due.

In 2020, President Trump paused federal student loan payments and interest accrual as a temporary relief measure for student borrowers. The pause in payments was extended multiple times by the Biden administration through 2023, and a final grace period for loan repayments ended in October 2024. That meant tens of millions of Americans had to start making payments again. Borrowers who don't make payments for nine months go into default, which is reported on their credit scores and can go to

collections.

Along with the borrowers already in default, about 4 million others are 91 to 180 days late on their loan payments. Less than 40% of all borrowers are current on their student loans, department officials said.

Layoffs at the Federal Student Aid office at the Education Department have made it harder for students to get their questions answered, even if they wanted to pay their loans, said Kristin McGuire, executive director of Young Invincibles, a group that focuses on economic security for younger adults. And questions are swirling about certain income-driven repayment programs after a February court ruling blocked some Biden-era payment plans, placing borrowers in the more lenient SAVE Plan in forbearance. The Education Department in February took down applications for income-driven repayment programs — which tie a monthly payment to a person's income level — only to bring them back online a month later.

"Things are really diffi-

cult to understand right now. Things are changing every day," McGuire said. "We can't assume that people are in default because they don't want to pay their loans. People are in default because they can't pay their loans and because they don't know how to pay their loans."

For borrowers in default, one step to avoid wage garnishment is to get into loan rehabilitation, said Betsy Mayotte, president of the Institute for Student Loan Advisors.

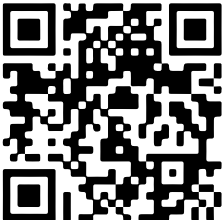
Borrowers must ask their loan servicer to be placed into such a program. Typically, servicers ask for proof of income and expenses to calculate a payment amount. Once a borrower has paid on time for nine months in a row, they are taken out of default, Mayotte said. A loan rehabilitation can be done only once.

Biden oversaw the cancellation of student loans for more than 5 million borrowers. Despite the Supreme Court's rejection of his signature proposal for broad relief, he waived more than \$183.6 billion in student loans through expanded forgiveness programs.

In her statement Monday, McMahon said Biden had gone too far.

"Going forward, the Department of Education, in conjunction with the Department of Treasury, will shepherd the student loan program responsibly and according to the law, which means helping borrowers return to repayment," she said.

Ma writes for the Associated Press. AP writer Adriana Morga in New York contributed to this report.



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MARY ALTATTAFFER Associated Press

**PRO-ISRAELI** protesters, foreground, and pro-Palestinian activists, across the street, hold rallies at New York University last year. A new report on hate incidents adds to a debate on what constitutes antisemitism.

# Anger at Israel lifted antisemitism incidents to new high, report says

By DAVID CRARY

NEW YORK — The Anti-Defamation League says that the number of antisemitic incidents in the United States reached a record high last year and that 58% of the 9,354 incidents were related to Israel, notably chants, speeches and signs at rallies protesting Israeli policies.

In a report released Tuesday, the ADL, which has produced annual tallies for 46 years, said it's the first time Israel-related incidents — 5,422 of them in 2024 — made up more than half the total. A key reason is the widespread opposition to Israel's military response in the Gaza Strip after the Hamas attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

The ADL's findings add grist to an intense, divisive debate among American Jews — and others — over the extent to which vehement criticism of Israeli policies and of Zionism should be considered antisemitic.

## Political backdrop

The debate has broadened as President Trump's administration makes punitive moves against universities it considers too lax in combating antisemitism and seeks to deport some pro-Palestinian campus activists.

The upshot, for numerous Jewish leaders, is a balancing act: decrying flagrant acts of antisemitism as well as what they consider to be the administration's exploitation of the issue to target individuals and institutions it dislikes.

"The fears of antisemitism are legitimate and real — and we don't want to see those real fears exploited to undermine democracy," said Amy Spitalnick, chief executive of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. "I feel that a majority of American Jews can believe that two things are true at the same time."

The ADL said in its new report it is "careful to not

conflate general criticism of Israel or anti-Israel activism with antisemitism." But there are gray areas. For example, the ADL contends that vilification of Zionism — the movement to establish and protect a Jewish state in Israel — is a form of antisemitism, yet some Jews are among the critics of Zionism and of the ADL itself.

Incidents at anti-Israel rallies that counted as antisemitism in the new ADL tally include "justification or glorification of antisemitic violence, promotion of classic antisemitic tropes ... and signage equating Judaism or Zionism with Nazism." Also counted were celebrations of the Hamas attack on Israel and "unapologetic support for terrorism."

"In 2024, hatred toward Israel was a driving force behind antisemitism across the U.S.," said Oren Segal, who leads the ADL's efforts to combat extremism and terrorism.

## Protecting students

The report depicted university campuses as common venues for antisemitic incidents, saying many Jewish students "face hostility, exclusion and sometimes physical danger because of their identity or their beliefs."

The experience of those students was evoked by Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union for Reform Judaism — an umbrella group for more than 800 Reform congregations in North America — as he discussed the complexities arising from current antisemitism-related developments.

"We have an obligation to our students on campus," Jacobs said. "Can they go to Seder? Can they feel safe wearing a yarmulke?"

"At the same time, this current administration has weaponized the fight against antisemitism by weakening core democratic institutions," Jacobs said.

He referred to the detention and threatened deportation of Mahmoud Khalil, a

30-year-old graduate student who served as a negotiator and spokesperson for pro-Palestinian activists at Columbia University. Khalil has been detained since March 8 despite facing no criminal charges.

"There has to be a legal case — not just you don't like what he says," Jacobs said. "What has kept Jewish people safe is the rule of law, due process. If it is undermined for Palestinians, it will be undermined for all of us."

## Criticism of ADL

The ADL dismayed some progressive Jewish leaders by welcoming Columbia's acquiescence in March to Trump administration demands and by initially commending the campaign targeting pro-Palestinian activists such as Khalil.

Recent critics of the ADL include Michael Roth, the first Jewish president of Wesleyan University; political commentator Peter Beinart; and Columbia professor James Schamus, who has been urging his fellow Jews on the faculty to oppose the university's compliance with administration demands.

Washington Post columnist Matt Bai wrote a scathing column about the ADL on April 1.

"You can't call yourself a civil rights organization in the United States right now — let alone a civil rights organization for a minority that has been brutally evicted all over the world — and not loudly oppose the cruel and unlawful removal of foreigners whose views happen to be out of fashion," Bai wrote.

Two days later, the ADL's CEO, Jonathan Greenblatt, wrote an opinion piece for eJewishPhilanthropy seeking to distance the ADL from aspects of the Trump administration's crackdown on pro-Palestinian activists.

"As an organization that has fought for a minority community for more than 100 years, ADL is incredibly sensitive to the importance

of allowing all views to be expressed — even those that we or the majority of Americans disagree with," Greenblatt wrote. "We should be holding people accountable for actual crimes, not Orwellian thought crimes."

"We can protect the civil liberties of Jewish students even as we preserve the civil liberties of those who protest, harass or attack them because they are innocent until proven guilty," he said. "If we sacrifice our constitutional freedoms in the pursuit of security, we undermine the very foundation of the diverse, pluralistic society we seek to defend."

Beyond the Israel-related incidents, these were among the findings in the ADL report:

- The total number of antisemitic incidents in 2024 was up by 344% from five years ago.

- There were 196 incidents, targeting more than 250 people, categorized as assault. None were fatal.

- There were 2,606 incidents categorized as vandalism. Swastikas were present in 37% of these cases.

- There were 647 bomb threats, most of them targeting synagogues.

- Antisemitic incidents occurred in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. More than 10% of the incidents occurred in New York City.

- There were 962 "antisemitic propaganda incidents" linked to white supremacist groups. Three groups — Patriot Front, Goyim Defense League and the White Lives Matter network — were responsible for 94% of this activity.

The ADL says its annual report tallies criminal and noncriminal acts of harassment, vandalism and assault against individuals and groups as reported to the ADL by victims, law enforcement, the media and partner organizations, and then evaluated by ADL experts.

Crory writes for the Associated Press.

# Judge extends ban on deportations from Colo. tied to 1798 law

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI

DENVER — A federal judge has extended her order temporarily preventing the Trump administration from moving or deporting anyone from Colorado under an 18th century wartime act that has become ensnared in a U.S. Supreme Court battle.

District Judge Charlotte N. Sweeney cited the high court's weekend order barring removal of anyone from north Texas, where the American Civil Liberties Union had contended the administration was preparing to deport Venezuelans under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 without giving them the legal notice required under a prior Supreme Court ruling.

Sweeney continued her freeze on removals from Colorado until May 6 and indicated she may extend it further.

She required the federal government to provide 21 days' notice to anyone it seeks to deport so they can contest their removal. She also expressed skepticism about the legality of President Trump's use of the law to claim the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua was invading the United States.

"At a bare minimum, 'invasion' means more than the Proclamation's description of TdA's 'infiltration,' 'irregular warfare,' and 'hostile actions' against the United States," Sweeney wrote.

The Supreme Court earlier this month allowed deportations under the act but required the government to give those targeted a "reasonable" chance to contest the removals in court. The act has been invoked only three times, most recently during World War II, and the Supreme Court has yet to hear arguments about whether Trump can use it against a gang.

Several federal judges, including Sweeney, issued orders temporarily halting deportations in their areas in response to the initial high court ruling. The ACLU asked the Supreme Court to halt removals from an immigration detention center in north Texas, where a judge had not barred deportations, because it said Venezuelan migrants were given notice in English of their pending removal and not told they had the right to contest it in court. The court barred those removals in an unusual order early Saturday.

The federal government argued it was too soon for the courts to act because it wasn't trying to remove the individual plaintiffs who filed the lawsuit at the time. But Timothy Macdonald, an ACLU attorney, contended that was a "shell game" that could lead the government to quickly deport someone the second a court decides it doesn't have jurisdiction over their case.

Riccardi writes for the Associated Press.

# ICE temporarily blocked from operating at NYC jail

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ

NEW YORK — A New York judge has ordered city officials to temporarily halt a plan allowing federal immigration agents to operate within the Rikers Island jail complex ahead of a hearing later this week.

In a written order Monday, Judge Mary Rosado barred the city from "taking any steps toward negotiating, signing, or implementing any Memorandum of Understanding with the federal government" before a hearing Friday in a suit challenging the plan.

That hearing will focus on a lawsuit brought last week by the New York City Council against Mayor Eric Adams that seeks to block his recent executive order permitting U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and other federal agencies to maintain office space at the jail complex.

The suit accuses Adams, a Democrat, of entering into a "corrupt quid pro quo bargain" with the Trump administration in exchange for the Justice Department dropping criminal charges against him.

Adams has repeatedly denied making any deal with the administration over the criminal case. He has said that the presence of ICE and other federal agencies within the jail complex will allow them to assist in gang and drug-related investigations but that they would

have no role in civil immigration enforcement.

A spokesperson for Adams said the city would not execute any agreement with the Trump administration ahead of the hearing.

Adams previously announced he would deputize his first deputy mayor, Randy Mastro, to handle all decision-making on the return of ICE to Rikers Island in order to "ensure there was never even the appearance of any conflict."

Mastro said last week that discussions with the federal government over the plan were ongoing.

ICE agents previously had a presence at the Rikers Island facility, which is on a hard-to-reach island in the East River. But they were effectively banned from operating there in 2014 under New York City's sanctuary laws.

"The Council stands firm in our efforts to protect the rights and safety of all New Yorkers against attacks by the Trump administration and its agents," said Julia Agos, a spokesperson for City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, who is running for mayor. "We appreciate Judge Rosado's decision to prevent any negotiation or execution on an agreement between the administration and federal agencies until this Friday's hearing to ensure communities are protected."

Offenhartz writes for the Associated Press.

# Justices seem to favor parents' rights on LGBTQ+ storybook issue

[Court, from A1]

They had promised parents they would be notified and allowed to opt out if they objected to the new storybooks, he said. "But the next day, they changed the rule."

Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and Justice Neil M. Gorsuch also live in Montgomery County, and both have been reliable supporters of religious liberty claims.

Nearly every state, including Maryland and California, has a law that allows parents to opt out of sex education classes for their children.

When the books were introduced in fall 2022, parents were told their young children could be removed from those lessons. But when "unsustainably high numbers" of children were absent, the school board revoked the opt-out rule.

They explained this state rule applied to older students and sex education but not to reading lessons for elementary children.

In reaction, a group of Muslim, Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox parents filed a suit in federal court, seeking an order that would allow their children to be removed from class during the reading lessons.

They said the books conflicted with the religious and moral views they taught their children.

A federal judge and the 4th Circuit Court refused to intervene. Those judges said the "free exercise" of religion protects people from being forced to change their conduct or their beliefs, neither of which were at issue in the school case.

But the Supreme Court voted to hear the parents' appeal in the case of Mah-



CELAL GUNES Anadolu Agency

**PARENTS** in Montgomery County, Md., in 2023 protest the policy on LGBTQ+ lessons for children.

moud vs. Taylor.

Representing the parents, Eric Baxter, an attorney for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, stressed they "were not objecting to books being on the shelf or in the library. No student has a

right to tell the school which books to choose," he said. "Here, the school board is imposing indoctrination on these children."

Alan Shoenfeld, an attorney for the school board, said its goal for the new

storybooks was "to foster mutual respect. The lesson is that they should treat their peers with respect."

He cautioned the court against adding a broad new right for parents and students to object to ideas or messages that offend them.

The Becket attorneys in their legal brief described seven books they found objectionable.

One of them, "Pride Puppy," is a picture book directed at 3- and 4-year-olds. It "describes a Pride parade and what a child might find there," they said. "The book invites students barely old enough to tie their own shoes to search for images of 'underwear,' 'leather,' 'lip ring,' '[drag] king' and '[drag] queen.'"

Another — "Love, Violet" — is about two young girls and their same-sex playground romance.

"Born Ready" tells the story of a biological girl named Penelope who identifies as a boy.

"Intersection Allies" is a picture book also intended for early elementary school classes.

"It invites children to ponder what it means to be 'transgender' or 'non-binary' and asks 'what pronouns fit you?'" they said. Teachers were told "to instruct students that, at birth, doctors 'guess about our gender,' but '[w]e know ourselves best.'"

They said teachers were instructed to "disrupt the either/or thinking" of elementary students about biological sex.

After the case reached the Supreme Court, two of the seven books were dropped by the school board, including "Pride Puppy."



# Low vaccination rates at online charter schools

[Schools, from A1] makers tightened after a measles outbreak that began at Disneyland in 2014 sickened more than 300 people.

In 2015, lawmakers passed Senate Bill 277, which banned personal belief exemptions for childhood vaccinations. In 2019, they tightened scrutiny of medical exemptions for unvaccinated children. The laws still allow parents to skip immunizations for children who are enrolled in independent study programs and do not “receive classroom-based instruction.”

But the state's vaccination laws don't specify what “classroom-based instruction” means, including whether students must be vaccinated if they attend some in-person classes offered by their school or by a third-party vendor, or if they attend school-sanctioned activities such as field trips, soccer practice or prom.

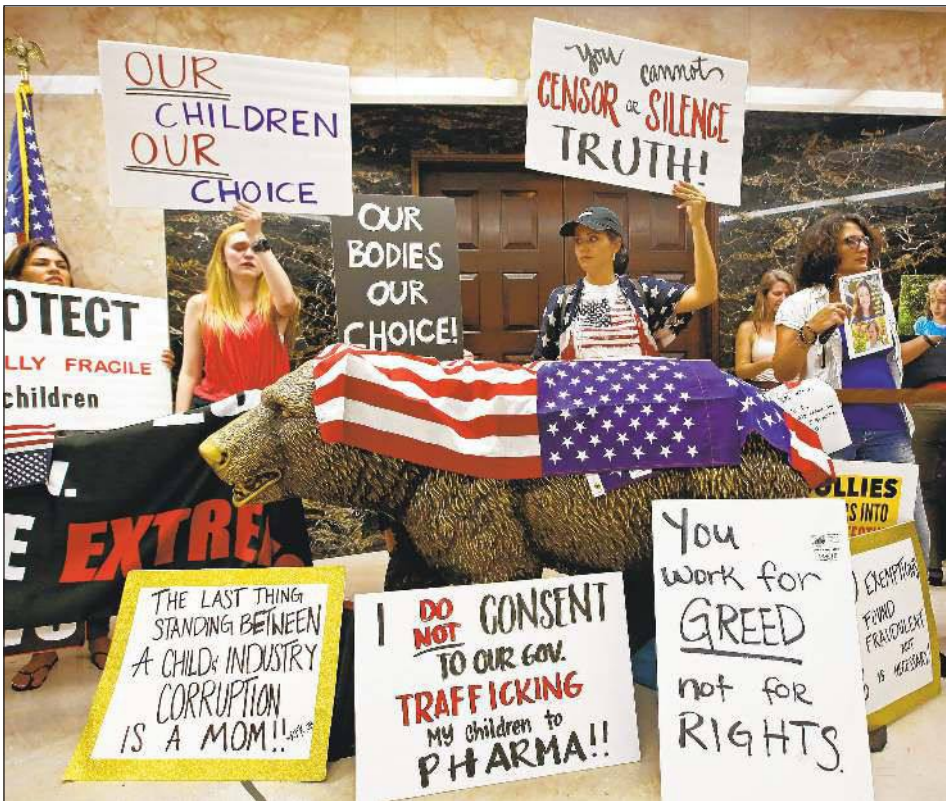
“There is a tremendous amount of gray area,” said Jeff Rice, the founder and director of Assn. of Personalized Learning Schools & Services, or APLUS+, a trade group for charter schools with students who pursue a mix of in-person, at-home and online learning.

Under California's education code, a school is “non-classroom-based” if 80% of learning occurs off campus.

When California tightened its vaccination laws, Rice said that he pressed for clarity in immunization requirements for students who don't attend traditional in-person schools five days a week. Rather than define what “nonclassroom-based instruction” meant, he said, the state left that decision to the school boards and county education offices that regulate charter schools.

Among the 100 schools that are APLUS+ members, Rice said, two-thirds of students take classes in person at least one day a week.

“Vaccinations are an issue for a small percentage of parents who have very strong and passionate feel-



RICH PEDRONCELLI Associated Press

**CALIFORNIA** allows children in nonclassroom-based instruction to skip vaccinations. Above, people protest a law tightening vaccination exemptions in 2019.

ings about it,” Rice said. Schools with low vaccination rates, he said, “are a reflection of the values of that individual community.”

According to a state Department of Education statement, the Department of Public Health oversees the California law that “outlines the rules for mandatory immunizations.” A spokesperson for Public Health said the department “does not have regulatory authority over this issue,” and added that “decisions on student participation in school field trips or athletics are decided at the local level.”

The U.S. is in the midst of the largest measles outbreak in six years, with 800 cases and three deaths reported in 25 states, including nine cases in California.

Dr. Shannon Udovic-Constant, a pediatrician in San Francisco and the president of the California Medical Assn., said measles is “incredibly contagious,” spreading when someone coughs or sneezes and lingering in the air for up to two

hours. She said 90% of unvaccinated people who are exposed will contract measles.

To be unvaccinated, she said, “is a risk, and it's a risk you can't see.”

The vast majority of unvaccinated students are enrolled in individualized education plans or independent study programs, which under state law means they don't have to be vaccinated. The number of students who reported medical exemptions granted by doctors is very low.

Most of the state's largest online charter schools had low vaccination rates, but not all. River Springs Charter in Riverside County, which reported a mix of online and in-person instruction, said that 77% of its 1,036 kindergarten students were up to date on all their vaccines last year, state data show.

Feather River Charter School in Sutter County, part of the Sequoia Grove Charter Alliance in Northern California, reported to state regulators that the

program is 100% “nonclassroom-based.” Last year, 18% of the school's 321 kindergarten students were up to date on all their vaccines and 21% were vaccinated against measles. Two other schools in the alliance also reported overall vaccination rates below 20% last year.

The alliance's website includes a calendar featuring a “Tween/Teen Games Meet Up” in Elk Grove, regular library visits and a masquerade-themed prom night Friday. A video posted on Feather River's Facebook shows a large group of kids attending a recent field trip to Shasta Caverns.

At Visions in Education in Sacramento County, 40% of the school's 580 kindergarten students were up to date on all their shots last year and 44% were vaccinated against measles, according to state data. The school requires students in seventh grade and above to get their Tdap booster, which provides elevated immunity against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis, or whooping cough. On its In-

stagram account, the school has marketed a middle school soccer club and an ice-skating field trip.

Representatives for Heartland, the Sequoia Grove alliance and Visions in Education did not respond to requests for comment.

Former state Sen. Richard Pan, a Sacramento Democrat who wrote California's vaccine laws, said regularly gathering in person “certainly violates the spirit of the law.”

Still, he said the low vaccination rates at online charter schools didn't surprise him, because he knew when he wrote SB 277 that not every parent would vaccinate their kids.

“Having an online school or an independent study program where they're not in school with all the other kids was a deliberate option that we provided to those families,” Pan said. But, he said, getting a cohort of unvaccinated children together puts them in danger of contracting communicable disease.

“They shouldn't be doing that on a regular or frequent basis,” he said.

Lance Christensen, a vice president of education policy and government affairs at the California Policy Center, a conservative think tank, disputed the idea that some schools and parents are using the online programs to avoid vaccination requirements while still operating in similar ways to traditional in-person classrooms.

“There is no such thing as loopholes in the law,” Christensen said. “They are using whatever legal means they have to do whatever they want to do. Whether I agree with it or not, I don't care.... I'm not everybody's dad.”

Christensen, who unsuccessfully ran for superintendent of public instruction in 2022, said he vaccinated his five children and believes in the importance of some childhood immunizations.

Like many families during the pandemic, he also enrolled his children in virtual charter schools when their Sacramento-area schools remained closed.

Many families, he said, choose these schools for a variety of reasons, whether vaccine-related or because they think they offer better education than traditional in-person public schools.

Tom Reusser, the Sutter County Schools superintendent, said such virtual schools were largely to blame for the county's childhood immunization rate, which, at 73%, is the state's lowest. Most of the traditional, in-person public schools in his district have reported vaccination rates largely about 95%, he said.

“Pull the charters out, and we're doing just fine,” Reusser said.

Public health officials in Sutter County also attributed their decline in vaccination rates to a “small number of charter schools and independent study students.” The “majority” of the students enrolled in those schools don't live in the county, they said.

Homeschool and online charters can enroll students from both their home counties and surrounding counties. Feather River, for example, serves students in Sutter, Butte, Yuba, Placer, Sacramento, Yolo and Colusa counties, according to the school's website. Kern County schools such as Heartland can also enroll students from San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Kings, Tulare and Inyo counties, a potential attendance area of hundreds of miles.

At Heartland, parents are asked to keep their children home if anyone in the household is sick, but vaccination requirements aren't mentioned. In a Q&A posted on its website, Feather River, the school in Sutter County, notes that because the school is an “independent study program with no classroom-based instruction,” immunizations are not required.

“While you will be asked to submit an immunization form at the time of enrollment, it does not need to be complete and will not affect your enrollment status,” the website reads.



## A PRECIOUS COMMODITY

By Sylvia M. Stachura



**What is the true cost of success when the currency is trust, family, and time?**

In *A Precious Commodity*, author Sylvia M. Stachura delivers a stirring family drama that explores the unraveling of a carefully built life when unexpected challenges arise.

As pressure mounts and relationships are tested, those closest to the center must navigate shifting dynamics, unspoken tensions, and the weight of long-held expectations.

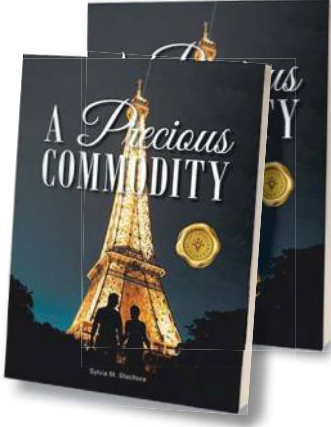
*“...compelling and deeply resonant novel that delves into the complexities of family dynamics, the fragility of life, and the relentless pursuit of success”*

Set against the backdrop of a high-stakes industry, the novel explores deeply human themes: legacy, vulnerability, loyalty, and the delicate balance between personal desire and familial duty. With each chapter, Stachura peels back the layers of a powerful man facing mortality, and a family grappling with what truly matters when the illusion of control fades.

Rich in emotion, layered with suspense, and strikingly relatable, *A Precious Commodity* invites readers to question how they measure success—and what they're willing to sacrifice for it.

 Experience the story beyond the page.

Scan the QR code below to watch the official book trailer and step into the world of *A Precious Commodity*.



SCAN ME

# Funeral for pope, then cardinals gather to choose his successor

[Pope, from A1] interred between the fourth and sixth day after death. Last year, Francis changed the practice of popes being buried in three coffins to only two: a wooden coffin with a zinc coffin inside, PBS reported. In keeping with the changes, he will be buried at St. Mary Major basilica near the Vatican, a church devoted to the Virgin Mary that he visited at the beginning and end of every apostolic trip he took during his 12-year papacy.

After the funeral, there are nine days of official mourning known as the *novendiali*. This is when the College of Cardinals will gather in the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City for the conclave.

**How the next pope will be chosen**

The conclave is a gathering of 120 cardinals who hold a secret ballot in the Sistine Chapel to elect the next pope.

There isn't a set date for the conclave; however, it must be held 15 to 20 days after the *sede vacante*, a vacancy of the papacy caused by a pope's death or resignation, is declared.

During the voting sessions, ballots are filled out, tallied, then burned. After every round of voting, smoke is released from a chimney atop the church. Black smoke means no pope has been selected and a new round of voting will take place. White smoke means a pope has been chosen.

To be elected, the next pope needs two-thirds of the vote.

That vote will include cardinals from countries with historically large congregations such as France, Italy and the United States, but also others from more distant locations such as Mongolia, presided over by Cardinal Giorgio Marengo, whom Francis appointed in 2022, said Father Allan Deck, scholar of theology and Latino studies at Loyola Marymount University and professor of theological studies.



JULIA DEMAREE NIKHINSON Associated Press

**A PARISHIONER** photographs a portrait of Pope Francis at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York.

“While there are still cardinals from some of the largest Catholic cities in the world, he would choose cardinals that came from places that were on the periphery,” Deck said of the late pope. “This was consistent with the idea he had that the church needed to go to the periphery and not just stay with the center, those that are getting the most attention, but to give attention to those that aren't it. Usually it's the people in the poorer areas who are the people that are forgotten.”

Currently 80% of the cardinals who will participate in the conclave were hand-picked by Francis.

“It's a different composition than what we've had in the past, to some extent, because of the inclusion of so many of the cardinals from smaller areas in the world,” Deck said.

**No cardinal from California**

For the first time in a long time, California won't have a cardinal at the conclave.

Cardinal Roger Mahony — who led the L.A. Archdiocese from 1985 to 2011 — is barred from the process for two reasons: His involvement in concealing sexual

abuse in the church prohibits his involvement in public or administrative duties, and at 89, he is aged out because conclave participants must be under 80.

California did have Cardinal Robert McElroy, who was born in San Francisco and has long worked in churches in San Francisco, San Mateo and more recently San Diego. McElroy steadily moved his way up to becoming the archdiocesan vicar for parish life and development and served in that role until his appointment to be the sixth bishop of San Diego in March 2015.

Francis appointed then-Bishop McElroy to the College of Cardinals in 2022, and three years later he appointed Cardinal McElroy the eighth archbishop of Washington on Jan. 6.

Archbishop José H. Gomez of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles is unable to participate because he is not a cardinal. Francis considered his views too conservative to elevate him to the position, said David Gibson, director of the Center on Religion and Culture at Fordham University.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.





CHRIS PIZZELLO Invision/AP; ARTHUR MOLA Invision/AP; KATY WINN Invision/AP  
**MEL GIBSON**, from left, Sylvester Stallone and Jon Voight were named “special ambassadors” in January. Industry players question if this is “a serious effort.”

# Trump’s Hollywood envoys all quiet on the film production front

[**Hollywood**, from A1] taken a protectionist stance on American manufacturing and business, implementing a slew of global tariffs, it has not made any further announcements regarding the Hollywood envoys, their roles, goals or priorities to revitalize the struggling entertainment industry here.

The ambassadors themselves have, for the most part, kept a low profile.

“We have reached out to all three and never heard back,” said Pamala Buzick Kim, co-founder of Stay in L.A, a grassroots campaign aimed at spurring local film and TV production.

She said the lack of communication has left many wondering whether Trump’s envoys are “just a bumper sticker, or are they going to actually understand what the needs and issues are and fight for the industry as a whole here in the States?”

A spokesperson for the California Film Commission said its executive director, Colleen Bell, had a “productive” conversation with Voight, but did not elaborate on their discussion.

An individual involved with Mayor Karen Bass’ entertainment business task force formed last year, who was not authorized to speak publicly, said they were unaware of any contact with the envoys.

Others, including the Motion Picture Assn., which represents the major media companies and streamers, declined to comment on whether they have had any interaction with Trump’s ambassadors.

“I haven’t heard of anyone having any outreach from anyone from that group,” said Rep. Laura Friedman (D-Glendale), a former film producer and a longtime advocate for the entertainment industry.

Friedman announced a new push to bolster production earlier this month with members of various Hollywood unions and 10 other members of Congress. “It doesn’t seem like a serious effort to me,” she said.

The White House declined to comment.

Trump’s announcement did put a national spotlight on the homegrown film industry, which continues to struggle to rebound following a trifecta of hits: the pandemic, labor strikes and, more recently, the wildfires.

More problematic, California has lost its competitive edge as film crews continue to be enticed by generous incentives — leading to an exodus of productions to hubs such as Georgia and New Mexico and countries including Australia, Britain and Canada.

Although Gov. Gavin Newsom has proposed raising the amount of money allocated annually to California’s film and TV tax credit program to \$750 million from \$330 million, the Legislature has yet to approve the measure and the industry remains under pressure.

In the first quarter of this year, on-location production dropped 22.4% compared with the same period last year, according to a report released in April by FilmLA, a nonprofit organization that tracks shoot days in the Greater Los Angeles region.

“I think part of the problem with California is they came to take this industry for granted a little bit,” Ben Affleck told the Associated

Press in an interview last week while promoting his latest film, “The Accountant 2,” in Los Angeles.

Within the industry, the surprise appointment of the three actors as the president’s special emissaries was received with a mixture of shock, bemusement and eye rolls.

“When they were announced, I think we were all curious about what those three think and what they think is the issue,” said Buzick Kim. “Because I don’t know if any of them have a history of speaking out on this front.”

Indeed, it appears that no one was more taken aback by the appointment than the actors themselves.

“I got the tweet at the same time as all of you and was just as surprised. Nevertheless, I heeded the call. My duty as a citizen is to give any help and insight I can,” said Gibson in a statement. “Any chance the position comes with an Ambassador’s residence?” he quipped, in reference to the loss of his Malibu properties in the wildfires.

Neither Stallone nor Voight has commented publicly. Representatives for the actors did not respond to requests for comment.

Following Voight’s appointment as ambassador, his longtime business partner Steven Paul, an independent film producer and chairman/chief executive of SP Media Group, issued a news release saying that the actor had tapped him as a “special advisor.” Along with Voight’s fellow ambassadors, “we will be working within the industry to find ways to bring runaway productions back to America while working with the government to explore a potential federal tax incentive tied to a pro-American cultural standard, among other initiatives that support independent American productions,” the statement said.

Voight, Paul and Trump had discussed a new “America first” initiative pertaining to film production over dinner in February, according to the statement.

A representative for Paul said he was not immediately available for comment.

All three Hollywood emissaries have been avid supporters of the president: Voight attended events at both inaugurations, Stallone has visited Mar-a-Lago and Gibson, who has a history of making racist and antisemitic remarks (for which he later apologized), ridiculed Democratic candidate Kamala Harris during the election, saying she had “the IQ of a fence post.”

They all generated celebrity wattage during the 1980s (said to be Trump’s favorite decade) — Voight was nominated for an Oscar for “Runaway Train.” It was an era when mainstream action films rose to prominence in popular culture (think Stallone’s “Rambo” and Gibson’s “Lethal Weapon” franchises) that promoted the idea of American strength and masculinity.

None has been known to be particularly involved in the nuts and bolts of Hollywood production issues of tax incentives and permits.

For the last three years, Stallone has starred in the Taylor Sheridan drama “Tulsa King,” about a New York mobster who sets up shop in Oklahoma after his release from prison. Inciden-

tally, the Paramount+ series was originally called “Kansas City Mob” and was set to film in Missouri, until it received a more than \$14-million rebate to shoot episodes of the first season in Oklahoma City.

Although Trump’s announcement has largely been met with skepticism in liberal Hollywood, many see this as an opportunity to bring needed attention to an important American industry.

“I don’t know if any one of those three can move the needle but the fact that it’s being discussed at the federal level is a positive,” said Gregg Bilson, whose Sunland-based ISS Props has served the industry for three generations.

Bilson is a member of the California Production Coalition, a group that voices the concerns of the small businesses serving the film and TV industry.

Although few believe the actors will roll up their sleeves on the issues — at least so far — their appointment has renewed interest in the idea of implementing federal tax credits.

“If Trump is willing to fight for all these other industries with tariffs, what’s he doing for us? What’s he doing to ensure that our jobs are protected here in the United States?” asked Rachel Cannon, an actor who had a recurring role on “Fresh Off the Boat.” She later moved back to Oklahoma City, where she founded Prairie Surf Studios and more recently Rock Paper Cannon, a venture to bring television production to Oklahoma.

Cannon, a production advocate who helped recruit “Tulsa King” and the film “Twisters” to Oklahoma, sees a federal incentive as a path to making the American film industry more competitive with nations whose generous rebates have shifted the axis of power away from Hollywood to the U.K., Canada and other countries.

“I think what we really need to be doing is banding together and asking for a federal rebate program that can stack, because that can help subsidize these productions to stay in America. States can only offer so much that you need to have some federal support,” she said.

Friedman, who has long supported the idea of a federal film tax credit, agrees.

“L.A. still has to be that dream factory, that place where people go to make it in the movies or TV. That’s incredibly important to our local economy,” she said. “But we also have to recognize that we are losing not just to other states, but we’re losing to other nations. And we have to do something about that.”

For now, everyone is waiting to see what Trump and his chosen trio will do.

“I don’t know how much Trump has really drilled into the desire for that program that he said he wants to keep Hollywood here at home,” Cannon said.

“I just want to make sure there’s a policy that follows up to ensure that it happens because, throwing out a press release with nothing behind it — it’s not going to help us.”

Times Washington bureau chief Michael Wilner contributed to this report.

## For the mom who loves quality

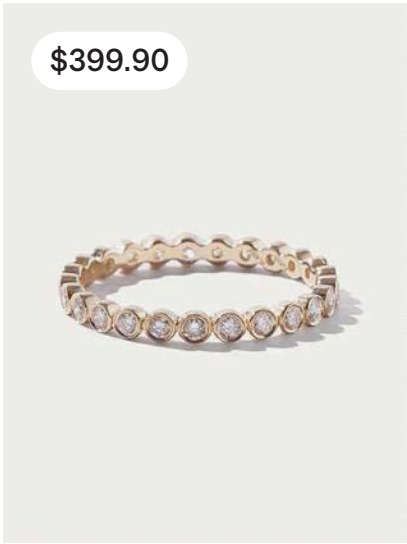
GIFTS STARTING AT \$24



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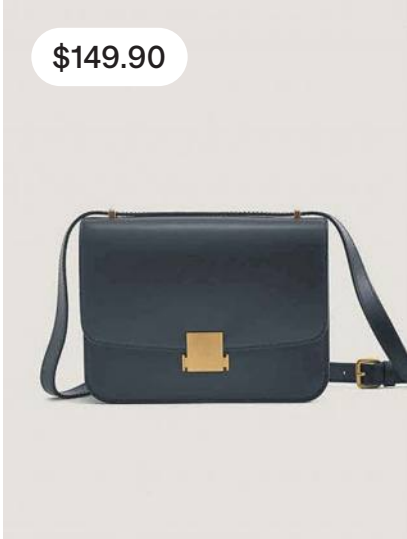
\$50  
Mongolian Cashmere Crewneck Sweater



\$399.90  
14K Gold Diamond Bezel Eternity Band



\$24  
English Rose Candle



\$149.90  
Italian Leather Box Shoulder Bag



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# BUSINESS



**A SALESMAN** prepares his booth near Santee Alley in Los Angeles last week. The ports of L.A. and Long Beach are the busiest container complex in the country and the ninth-largest worldwide, a report says.

## Report warns of devastation in Southland's trade industry

Trump's tariffs and trade war threaten a \$300-billion engine that supports 2 million jobs, analysis says.

BY MALIA MENDEZ

President Trump's tariffs, along with growing land-use and environmental regulations, could devastate Southern California's nearly \$300-billion trade and logistics industry in the coming years, according to a Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. report released Tuesday.

The report, commissioned last year by the public policy group Southern California Leadership Council, comes as economists and business owners alike raise alarm about the toll an escalating trade war could take on the U.S. economy.

Particularly in Southern California, home to the nation's two largest ports, goods exchange with China — subject to the steepest of Trump's tariff hikes — is a boon to local industry.

Jeopardizing that long-term trade relationship could have severe consequences, former California governor and SCLC co-

Chair Gray Davis said Tuesday in a news conference.

"This is like having a winning sports team and deciding to trade all your players," Davis said.

Southern California's trade and logistics industry in 2022 contributed nearly \$300 billion in direct economic output and generated an estimated \$93.3 billion in tax revenue, according to the development corporation's report.

The sector also supported nearly 2 million jobs, directly employing more than 900,000 workers with an average salary of more than \$90,000, which was 26% higher than the average annual wage reported across Southern California.

As for trade volume, the San Pedro Bay ports in 2022 handled 19 million 20-foot container equivalent units (nearly 35% of all U.S. waterborne containerized trade) with total cargo value surpassing \$469 billion — making it the busiest container complex in the country and the ninth-largest worldwide, the report said.

An escalating trade war with China joins a growing list of threats to Southern California's competitive edge in the trade industry.

"China represents Southern California's larg-

est trading partner, with about \$130 billion of Chinese imports flowing through the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach in 2024," the report said. "A 145 percent tariff on Chinese goods — coupled with a retaliatory 125 percent Chinese tariff on U.S. goods — can be expected to dramatically curtail the region's trade with China."

The report added that the Port of Los Angeles already expects cargo volumes to drop by at least 10% as early as May. Loads aren't expected to recover again for the rest of the year.

"This translates into less work across the region's supply chains, affecting port operators, haulers, wholesalers and other workers," the report said. "It also leaves thousands of Southern California importers facing inputs that potentially are two-and-a-half times more expensive, and these cost increases would get passed down to consumers across the region."

Economic uncertainty surrounding the tariffs could threaten foreign investment in the region, the report said, leaving foreign-owned enterprises — which currently employ nearly 67,000 workers and generate \$5.8 billion in wages in the Southern California region

— to take their business elsewhere.

Davis said that while he supports some of the underlying goals of the tariffs, including bringing manufacturing to the U.S., he doesn't believe Trump's strategy of "hammering people over the head" will be effective with business leaders.

Instead, Davis said, officials should implement financial incentives such as those established by the 2022 CHIPS Act, which provided funding for chip manufacturing facilities and offered tax credits for investments in chip production. The LAEDC report recommended similar incentive programs for pushing the industry toward clean energy solutions.

While the LAEDC did not provide any projections Tuesday for financial losses as a result of the tariffs, Chief Executive Stephen Cheung said the 2018 U.S.-China trade war might provide clues.

At that time, China imposed retaliatory tariffs on goods including wine. Immediately afterwards, the amount of U.S. wine exported to China dropped 25%, Cheung said.

"If you use the same logic model, you can see how it's going to hit us pretty significantly," he said.

## Tesla profit falls 71% amid brand controversy and Trump's tariffs

First-quarter revenue drops 9% from year earlier as vehicle deliveries slide.

BY CAROLINE PETROW-COHEN

Tesla is off to a bumpy start this year.

The electric vehicle giant's profit plunged 71% in the first quarter to \$409 million as the company faced a flurry of setbacks, including looming tariffs and a brand crisis perpetuated by Chief Executive Elon Musk's prominent role in the Trump administration.

The Austin, Texas-based company reported adjusted earnings per share of 27 cents, well below analysts' expectations of 41 cents.

Revenue during the period dropped 9% from a year earlier to \$19.3 billion.

Tesla's stock has fallen nearly 40% this year amid a decline in automotive sales and increasing competition from other electric vehicle manufacturers.

Tesla's share price, which rose 4.6% on Wednesday to close at \$237.97, has been subject to turbulence for months.

Shares rose after President Trump purchased a Model S on the White House lawn in March, but fell significantly in early April as investors became increasingly worried about a backlash against the Tesla brand.

The treasurers of eight states wrote an open letter to Tesla's board of directors last week, voicing concern that "Tesla's recent performance signals deeper governance and leadership challenges."

The treasurers questioned Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, and cited dropping share prices and vehicle delivery numbers.

Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives previously slashed his price target for Tesla shares by more than 40% to \$315 from \$550.

Driving Tesla's woes is Musk's deteriorating reputation, Ives said, which has led to protests and boycotts against Tesla and incidents of vandalism on Tesla vehicles and chargers.

Musk's DOGE team has made controversial cost cuts for the Trump administration.

"Tesla has become a political symbol around the

world and that's not a good thing," Ives said in an interview. "Musk needs to recommit to Tesla and officially take a step back from DOGE to do damage control."

Tesla drivers who were once drawn to the environmental benefits of electric vehicles are growing embarrassed by their cars' association with Musk, The Times has reported. Several celebrities have gotten rid of their Teslas as part of a public stand against the company.

Meanwhile, the vehicles' falling resale value suggests a drop in demand, said IseeCars.com analyst Karl Brauer. In February, Tesla topped the list of brands that lost the most resale value year over year.

Although Musk has found himself securely in Trump's corner, the president's actions on tariffs pose a significant challenge for Tesla, which now faces a 25% tax on auto imports.

This month, Tesla suspended imports of crucial auto parts from China after Trump announced a 145% tariff on Chinese goods. Tesla had relied on China for components used to build its Cybercab, Musk's budding robotaxi effort that has yet to hit public roads.

Musk unveiled the Cybercab in October and said Tesla's autonomous driving technology would be ready for use in the near future. He has been touting the capabilities of the company's Full Self-Driving mode for years, though the feature cannot be used without a human driver behind the wheel.

The decision to halt imports from China could disrupt plans to mass-produce the Cybercab, which are vital to investor confidence in the company. Tesla will also stop importing Chinese parts for its electric semi truck.

Tesla said it produced 362,615 vehicles in the first quarter and delivered 336,681 vehicles. Deliveries fell 13% from last year.

In the company's quarterly webcast, Musk touted the potential of autonomous driving and said that Optimus, Tesla's humanoid robot, would lower labor costs and increase productivity.

"Tesla will be the most valuable company in the world by far but there will be a few bumps in the road before that happens," Musk said on the call.

## '60 Minutes' exec resigns amid a lawsuit by Trump

Bill Owens fought against settling the president's \$20-billion suit over an interview with Kamala Harris.

BY STEPHEN BATTAGLIO

Bill Owens, the beleaguered executive producer of "60 Minutes," resigned Tuesday.

Owens had been fighting efforts at CBS parent Paramount Global to settle a \$20-billion lawsuit filed by President Trump regarding the network's October interview with then-Vice President Kamala Harris. Trump alleges the program was deceptively edited to favor Harris.

Owens' departure could be a sign that a settlement is forthcoming. Paramount Global executives see the suit as an obstacle to getting approval of a merger agreement with David Ellison's Skydance Media. Trump and Paramount recently agreed on a mediator to assist with the process.

"Over the past months, it has become clear that I would not be allowed to run the show as I have always



**"60 MINUTES"** executive producer Bill Owens, left, with correspondents Bill Whitaker and Lesley Stahl in 2019. Owens spent 24 years at the newsmagazine.

run it," Owens wrote in a message obtained by The Times. "To make independent decisions based on what's right for the audience. So, having defended this show — and what we stand for — from every angle, over time with everything I could, I am stepping aside so the show can move forward."

Owens worked at CBS News for 37 years. He is only the third executive producer in the 57-year history of "60 Minutes," following Jeff Fager and the show's founding showrunner, Don Hewitt.

Owens also oversees "CBS Evening News," which has been in a ratings tailspin since it overhauled its for-

mat in January, replacing Norah O'Donnell with the anchor duo of Maurice DuBois and John Dickerson.

Owens spent 24 years at "60 Minutes." He took the executive producer reins from Fager, who was fired in 2018 after he sent a harsh text to a CBS News correspondent covering sexual harassment allegations

against him. Owens maintained the newsmagazine's status as the most-watched news program on TV. "60 Minutes" typically has the largest audience on television outside of live sports telecasts.

In his message to staff members, Owens had kind parting words for Wendy McMahon, the CBS executive overseeing news and TV stations, saying she "has always had our back."

McMahon said in a memo that Owens will be at the network for the next few weeks. She did not name a successor, but a likely candidate is Tanya Simon, the program's executive editor and the daughter of one of its best-known correspondents, the late Bob Simon.

Owens offered encouragement for the program's mission to live on.

"The show is too important to the country, it has to continue, just not with me as executive producer," he wrote in his staff note. "60 Minutes" will continue to cover the new administration, as we will report on future administrations. We will report from war zones, investigate injustices and educate our audience."

"60 Minutes" has enough veteran staff members with the institutional knowledge

to maintain the show's journalistic rigor. But a settlement of Trump's lawsuit would be a gut punch to a news division that's already feeling adrift amid the uncertainty about the network's future.

Trump and other conservatives targeted CBS after it was revealed that "60 Minutes" producers had edited Harris' jumbled response to a question about the Biden administration's handling of the Israel-Hamas war. CBS News aired a portion of her response in a preview that aired on "Face the Nation," but ran a more succinct part of her answer in the final edit that aired on "60 Minutes."

Trump chose not to sit for an interview on the same broadcast. His campaign opposed the condition set by CBS News that his responses would be fact-checked.

First Amendment experts have called Trump's case frivolous. Journalism organizations commonly edit interviews for brevity and clarity. Nevertheless, Trump has demanded significant financial remuneration to settle the case. Federal Communications Commission Chair Brendan Carr has also launched an investigation of CBS News regarding the program.



That has opened up opportunities for video creators like Dhar Mann, a former weed entrepreneur who started posting videos on



"I didn't have to wait two years for a studio to green light my deal and send me a check," 40-year-old Mann said. "I was able to get in-

They envisioned it as a dating site where people would upload videos and score them. When that didn't work, the founders decided to open up the platform for all sorts of videos. Users drove traffic to YouTube by sharing videos on MySpace.

"I'm living proof that you can turn your passion into a profession, and your purpose into power," wrote Starr, 35, in an email. "YouTube gave me the mic, and I haven't put it down

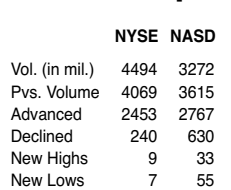
The company also navigated concerns from parents over what kids could see on the platform. In 2015, YouTube launched a kids app with child-appropriate videos and parental controls. In 2019, YouTube and Google reached a \$170-million settlement with the Federal Trade Commission and

"It's really just kind of a wild thing to see," 37-year-old Hecox said. "I have full-grown adults come up to me and tell me that I was their childhood."

A suite of better-than-expected profit reports from

Stocks also showed how Trump's tariffs could create winners and losers as he

Choe writes for the Associated Press.



	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	CHG	%CHG	WK	MO	QTR	YTD
DOW	39,272.03	38,516.23	38,168.98	+1016.57	+2.66%	▲	▼	▼	-7.89%
DOW Trans.	13,443.33	13,200.29	13,167.99	+201.35	+1.53%	▼	▼	▼	-15.90%
DOW Util.	1,027.63	1,007.96	1,025.05	+25.89	+2.59%	▲	▲	▲	+43.1%
NYSE Comp.	18,491.26	18,032.37	18,455.14	+422.77	+2.35%	▲	▲	▲	-3.36%
NASDAQ	16,410.56	16,039.10	16,300.42	+429.52	+2.71%	▲	▼	▼	-15.59%
S&P 500	5,309.61	5,207.67	5,287.76	+129.56	+2.51%	▲	▼	▼	-10.10%
S&P 400	2,757.23	2,706.41	2,749.19	+68.30	+2.55%	▲	▼	▼	-11.91%
Wilshire 5000	52,924.56	51,401.04	52,708.71	+1307.67	+2.54%	▲	▼	▼	-10.62%
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Voices DANIEL R. DePETRIS GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

# Trump 1.0 walked away from an Iran deal. The road back will be arduous

The U.S. wants a do-over after bailing in 2018. Can Trump and the ayatollah reach a nuclear deal?

ARE THE UNITED STATES and Iran, adversaries for more than 45 years, on the cusp of striking a new nuclear agreement?

After two rounds of indirect diplomacy between high-ranking officials of the two powers, it's still too early to answer that question with confidence. What is abundantly clear is that Washington and Tehran are at least trying to determine if there is a mutually agreeable deal to be had, one that will resolve the legitimate concerns of both sides and stave off a potential military conflict that neither President Trump nor Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei want.

The latter observation might seem surprising. Trump, after all, has threatened to bomb Iran multiple times over the last few weeks, most recently on April 17 when he told reporters in the Oval Office that it "would be very bad for Iran" if it didn't make a deal. You don't need an international relations degree to get Trump's message.

However, Trump is also the man who chose to give diplomacy a chance rather than green-light Israel's plans to militarily destroy Tehran's nuclear program. The president blusters and brandishes a big stick, but he's often reticent to use it, in part because starting wars is far easier than ending them. Surely the last thing Trump wants is to plunge the United States into another full-blown conflict in the Middle East, particularly when he has eviscerated America's past wars in the region as expensive and stupid. If he thought the war in Iraq was a mistake — and it was — then launching a war against a country with more than double Iraq's population, and with a government stronger today than Saddam Hussein's was back in 2003, would be a gross error in judgment.

Which is why he's rolling the dice on diplomacy. Thus far, the process has worked as well as anyone could expect. U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi are uttering the same notes about progress, and they have agreed to meet a third time this Saturday. But today's progress can easily turn into tomorrow's failure. There is no guarantee the ongoing diplomatic process will succeed.

The road to a nuclear accord is a long, difficult one made even more arduous by three key factors.

First, the Trump administration appears divided as to what the appropriate endgame for these negotiations should be. In Trump's mind, the goal is clear: Iran can't have a nuclear weapon. But he often changes his mind depending on who he last spoke with. Days after he tabled the relatively limited "no weapon" objective, Trump said, "Iran has to get rid of the concept of a nuclear weapon," which implies that Tehran's enrichment plants would need to be sealed up once and for all.

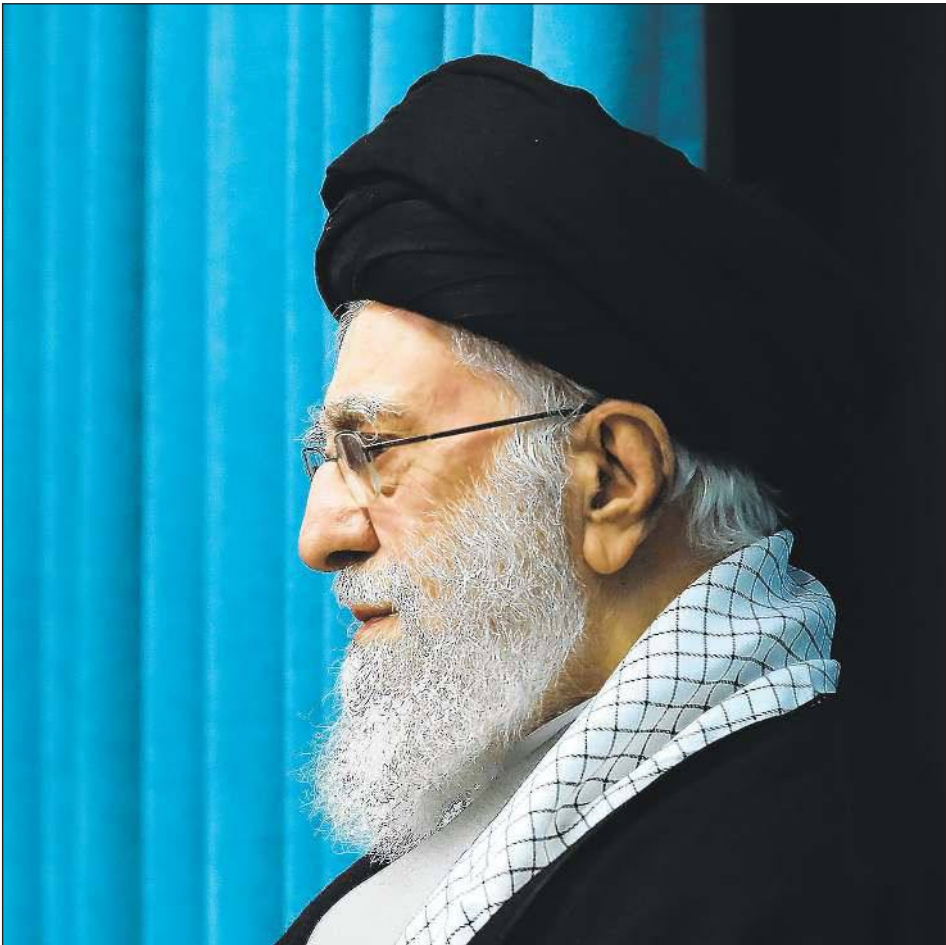
Witkoff has brainstormed about instituting a strict verification and monitoring program to ensure Tehran can't weaponize its nuclear knowledge. Ironically, this sounds exactly like the deal Trump could have inherited if he hadn't withdrawn from the Obama administration's Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2018.

Meanwhile, national security advisor Mike Waltz and Secretary of State Marco Rubio are talking as if Iran must give up everything, as the late Libyan dictator Moammar Kadafi did when he handed over his weapons of mass destruction to American inspectors in 2003 and 2004.

In short, there are competing factions within the Trump administration duking it out over Iran policy, and this debate will need to be settled before any substance is actually discussed with the Iranians. If Waltz and Rubio win out, the talks don't have a leg to stand on.

Diplomacy will succeed or fail depending on how flexible the parties are at the negotiating table. U.S. demands must be reasonable, not maximalist. The same goes for Iran. According to press accounts, Iranian officials want Trump to guarantee that he or a future U.S. president won't withdraw from any deal that is negotiated. Given the recent history of Washington pulling out of the JCPOA three years after it was signed, and then re-imposing sanctions on Iran, you can't blame Khamenei for requesting it.

The problem is that no U.S. president can make that promise. The Trump administration will give Iran the same answer the Biden administration gave when it conducted its own talks with Iran in 2021 and 2022: No president can legally bind the choices of a future U.S. administration. Even a Senate-ratified treaty, the most durable international relations agreement the United States can have, doesn't guarantee lasting implementation.



Office of the Iranian Supreme Leader

**IRAN'S** Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei attends a ceremony in Tehran in March. Diplomacy will succeed or fail depending on how flexible the parties are.

Presidents have withdrawn from treaties in the past — Trump withdrew from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty during his first term — and presidents will no doubt do so in the future. If Iran doesn't budge on this issue or the two parties fail to come up with another arrangement that would at least promote accountability during the implementation stage, then diplomacy runs the risk of failing.

One thing is certain: The more progress the U.S. and Iran make toward a nuclear deal, the louder the critics of a diplomatic solution will be.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who convinced Trump to leave the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in his first term, is publicly claiming he will only support an agreement that strips Tehran of

its enrichment capability. But if the Iranians wouldn't agree to that in 2004, when their nuclear program was much more rudimentary than it is now, it's illogical to expect them to do so now. Netanyahu is deliberately pitching conditions Iran will reject outright, hoping this will persuade Trump to ditch diplomacy for military force. Trump needs to be prepared for this scenario and, unlike in his first term, willing to resist bad advice.

Although Trump will never admit this publicly, his negotiations with Iran now are an attempt to clean up a mess he created, and one the Biden administration did nothing to fix, when he scuttled the JCPOA. Time will tell if he can actually do it.

DANIEL R. DePETRIS is a fellow at Defense Priorities.

## LETTERS



ANDREW MEDICINI Associated Press

**POPE FRANCIS**, the first pontiff from Latin America and the Catholic Church's 266th leader, died on Monday, the Vatican announced. He was 88.

## Remembering 'the people's pope'

Re "Humble Jesuit from Latin America shook up the scandal-ridden church," April 22

IT is with great sadness that I learned of the passing of Pope Francis. He was unlike any who came before him. For decades, he served the most vulnerable across Argentina and his mission of serving the poor never ceased. As pope, he was a loving pastor and challenging teacher who reached out to different faiths. He commanded us to fight for peace and protect our planet from a climate crisis. He promoted equity and an end to poverty and suffering across the globe. And above all, he was a pope for everyone. He was the people's pope — a light of faith, hope and love.

PAUL BACON  
Hallandale Beach, Fla.

Pope Francis will be sorely missed by millions worldwide.

He was a moral voice who never ceased to raise awareness about the repercussions of climate change, biodiversity loss, global disparities, environmental degradation and food insecurity. In his last Easter sermon, a day before his sad demise, he remembered the wretched people of Gaza.

He lamented a senseless and cruel war that inflicted grave wounds on women and children who continue to bear a disproportionate burden.

He prayed for peoples and leaders alike to resolutely pursue the path of peace and alleviate suffering. Let us hope that his tireless tenacity, steadfastness and unwavering determination will serve as a

model for humankind.

MUNJED FARID  
AL QUTOB  
London

⋮

After a months-long battle with double pneumonia, it's almost as though Pope Francis rallied for the sole purpose to preside over Easter Sunday Mass. And how surreal for Vice Presi-

dent JD Vance, who met with the pope just hours before his passing and will no doubt cherish the visit for the rest of his life.

After dedicating his entire life to the Lord and the church, Francis can rest in peace knowing that he not only made a significant difference for the Catholic Church, but his influence is worldwide.

JOANN LEE FRANK  
Clearwater, Fla.

## Concerns about Trump tariffs

Re "Trump's sorely needed trade war with China," Opinion Voices, April 13

I admit that Hammer's column illustrates that Trump has been, for years, on the right side about China's trade policies and has justification for his demands for high tariffs on Chinese exports. He correctly notes (in my opinion) the elite "acted in myopic and ruinous fashion" when it comes to China.

But he implodes when he suggests the Chinese Communist Party "must be crushed ... by the class traitor par excellence Donald Trump." First, the word "communist" has long ago lost any resemblance to anything other than an oligarchy and means pretty much the same thing as MAGA.

China has had a stable (mostly) functioning oligarchy for 47 years while the U.S. has had a stable (mostly) functioning democracy for nearly 250 years. Trump is trying to create an oligarchy via chaos that no wannabe oligarch has been able to establish in modern times.

Trump is far more likely to be crushed.

CARL MARIZ  
Irvine

## Bright signs for San Francisco

Re "San Francisco's Lurie feels shift as he becomes city's hype man," April 17

As a former San Francisco resident, I have followed the news about the troubles my former town has had with homelessness, graffiti, trash and business vacancy with interest. Last week, I spent five days visiting San Francisco and walked all over downtown, from the Ferry Building to the U.N. Plaza at City Hall and the Castro. I found the city remarkably clean with little graffiti and few visible homeless people. Not so true in the Tenderloin, but even there I saw few camps, just people congregating on the sidewalks.

I was relieved to see that the city seems to now be on the right track in presenting itself in a better light, more like it was when I lived there in the 1980s and 1990s. Yes, there continues to be many vacant retail locations in downtown and near Union Square, but if you can create a clean and safe environment, it will lure back retail businesses when they can see increased pedestrian foot traffic.

GEORGE MEYER  
Long Beach

## Principals right in denying feds

Re "Answeers sought after feds visit schools," April 15

I was a board member for the Capistrano Unified School District during the first Trump administration. Bullying of Latino students and children from Middle Eastern regions shot up in our schools. There was also concern that the Border Patrol might come onto campuses to deport families.

I asked our district's attorneys what protections, if any, exist to prevent border agents from entering classrooms and removing children. First, I learned that all children in the U.S. have a right to an education regardless of their family's immigration status. Children cannot be denied an education because they or their parents are undocumented. I also learned that our district prohibits anyone from taking a child away from school who is not authorized by the child's family or guardian. This is to prevent child abduction and abuse.

Now the Trump administration has dismissed a long-standing policy of preventing arrests in "sensitive areas," such as schools. Yet even so, immigration agents must properly identify themselves and cannot detain children without a judicial warrant. Those L.A. Unified principals were right to deny federal agents access to vulnerable kids without a warrant. Undocumented or not, children have a right to due process in this country.

PATRICIA HOLLOWAY  
San Clemente

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OPINION VOICES

**Voices** **JONAH GOLDBERG** COLUMNIST

# Is Abrego Garcia a criminal? Great question

**I**S KILMAR ABREGO Garcia a good person? I don't know. In 2021 his wife petitioned for, and received, an order of protection against him after she alleged domestic violence; she said last week that their marriage grew stronger after they worked through that low point and that Abrego Garcia "has always been a loving partner and father."

The government has claimed that he is a member of a truly heinous criminal gang, MS-13. If that were true, given that he was in the United States illegally, I'd have no problem with deporting him, though perhaps not to a prison that our own State Department has condemned. We'll get back to that.

The Trump administration, by its own admission, mistakenly deported Abrego Garcia in defiance of a court order to a Salvadoran prison. A judge had previously granted Abrego Garcia's request not to be deported to his native El Salvador, because he feared for his safety. No one said he couldn't be deported somewhere else.

On the other hand, is Abrego Garcia a terrorist or vicious criminal, as the administration claims? I don't know that either. Is he even a member of MS-13? When the president sought to back up that claim, he posted a doctored image of Abrego Garcia's hand tattoos to which the characters "MS13" had been digitally added.

The Trump administration has offered no evidence, in court or out, that Abrego Garcia is guilty of any violent crimes (save for the allegations that he abused his



Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), right, met with his constituent Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who is detained in El Salvador.

wife, and he never faced charges over those claims). He was originally apprehended for "loitering." Andrew McCarthy, a former federal prosecutor and prominent conservative legal analyst, wrote for National Review that "the proceedings in the lower courts have shown that, to date, the government's evidence tying Abrego Garcia to MS-13 is gossamer thin."

As for the charge of being a terrorist, this is ... misleading. Trump has arrogated to himself war powers to thwart what he incessantly calls an "invasion." His administration has invoked the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 as a way to bypass what it considers oner-

ous legal and constitutional niceties in pursuit of deporting illegal immigrants it deems "terrorists." So the administration can now apply that label without much, if any, factual rigor.

MS-13 and Tren de Aragua, another gang the administration has designated as a foreign terrorist organization, are terrible. But the argument that they meet anything but a politically convenient definition of terrorist organizations is weak.

Much of the political argument over Abrego Garcia is what legal scholars might call "stupid." The Trump administration and its supporters are going full tilt to paint Abrego Garcia as a vile and

That's why he should be in a U.S. court, not a Salvadoran prison: He, like anyone accused of a crime, needs a chance to be convicted or cleared.

dangerous terrorist. Many Democrats, outraged by Trump's methods, prefer benign descriptions like "Kilmar Abrego Garcia is an innocent man and the father of three," as Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) put it.

This framing — "Abrego Garcia innocent and good" vs. "Abrego Garcia guilty and bad" — is what is so stupid. None of the relevant legal and constitutional issues have anything to do with whether this individual is good (or a father). By insisting that he is an innocent man, Democrats are implying that if he were not innocent, what the Trump administration has done to him would be unobjectionable.

The relevant questions are whether the administration has the power to bypass due process — a right conferred to even illegal immigrants — and whether it has to try to remedy the mistake it made in sending Abrego Garcia to a foreign prison.

The administration has contracted with the authoritarian Salvadoran government to take

"terrorists" off our hands, but Trump officials also claim that they are powerless to retrieve anybody mistakenly sent there. Judges, including the nine on the Supreme Court, think this is problematic, because it is problematic.

The idea that the government can simply assert that people on American soil, possibly including American citizens or legal residents, are criminals or terrorists runs completely counter to our legal system. The government has broad authority to deport illegal immigrants. It also has the authority to put *convicted* criminals in any prison it deems appropriate. It doesn't have any authority to put people in prison without first proving — *in court* — that they are charging the right person and then convicting them of a crime.

If you were snatched up by ICE by mistake, you would want a chance to prove they got the wrong person. That right goes by habeas corpus, which has been a keystone of Anglo-American law and the heart of due process for centuries. The administration doesn't seem to know this — or care.

The Constitution is designed to limit abusive government power. That is the only relevant issue here. Consider the case of Ernesto Arturo Miranda. He was a truly awful person. But so what? His case gave us the "Miranda rights" that are read to suspects upon arrest. The only way to make sure innocent people get such protections is to make sure everyone gets them.

@JonahDispatch

**L**ANGUAGE IS FAR less neutral than we usually think it is: Questions can be leading and words can be biased, and they are more likely to be biased the more controversial the topic. In general, attempts to manufacture neutrality in language result in the opposite effect. If something horrific is happening, describing it with euphemisms becomes an endorsement of the horror itself.

In recent months, the second Trump administration has become notorious for sending masked plainclothes agents without warrants to apprehend U.S. residents outside the judicial system, and for sending them overseas and claiming to have no authority to bring them back when ordered by the Supreme Court to do so. In cases like these, then, what's a neutral observer to do? How can someone like a journalist or a judge aim to be apolitical rather than partisan when discussing these actions?

Some words and phrases can be neutral and unbiased, such as "prime number." There's really only one term for a prime number because its meaning (a number divisible only by one and itself) couldn't be more straightforward or innocuous. There isn't more than one take on what makes a number prime, so we don't need more than one term for the concept.

At the other end of the spectrum are issues so volatile that neutral language is almost impossible. There are many terms for supporters of the rights that were guaranteed by Roe vs. Wade, and many terms for those who opposed the ruling. The label "pro-choice" implies others are "anti-choice"; the label "anti-abortion" implies others are "pro-abortion."

Linguists and philosophers who study meaning have long appreciated that any given word has a literal or explicit meaning alongside a more elusive, implicit meaning. The original example from German philosopher Gottlob Frege contrasted "dog," a neutral term, with "cur," a sort of canine slur. Other pairings have positive implications for one and negative for the other: Is that task a "challenge" or a "slog"? Are those demonstrators "fostering" an uprising or "inciting" one?

Word choices can also be used to reinforce or undermine the legitimacy of government, because when it comes to acts of force, we generally have certain terms that we use when we consider the act to be lawful (such as "arrest" and "execution") and other terms when we consider the act unlawful (such as "kidnapping" and "killing"). None of these terms are neutral; they all carry a legal judgment, and it's very hard to find a way to characterize acts of force that doesn't.

The philosopher H. Paul Grice observed that directness of form corresponds to directness of meaning; the use of a roundabout euphemism to replace a direct word amounts to shifting from a direct meaning to an indirect one, not shifting from a direct meaning to a neutral one. Direct words like "kill" or "break" often imply directness of action, possibly because their indirect, wordy counterparts ("cause to die" or "wordy to break"), by virtue of their indirectness, imply the act was done accidentally. This is one reason the euphemism "officer-involved shooting" is widely and plausibly interpreted as nonneutral wording that often inaccur-

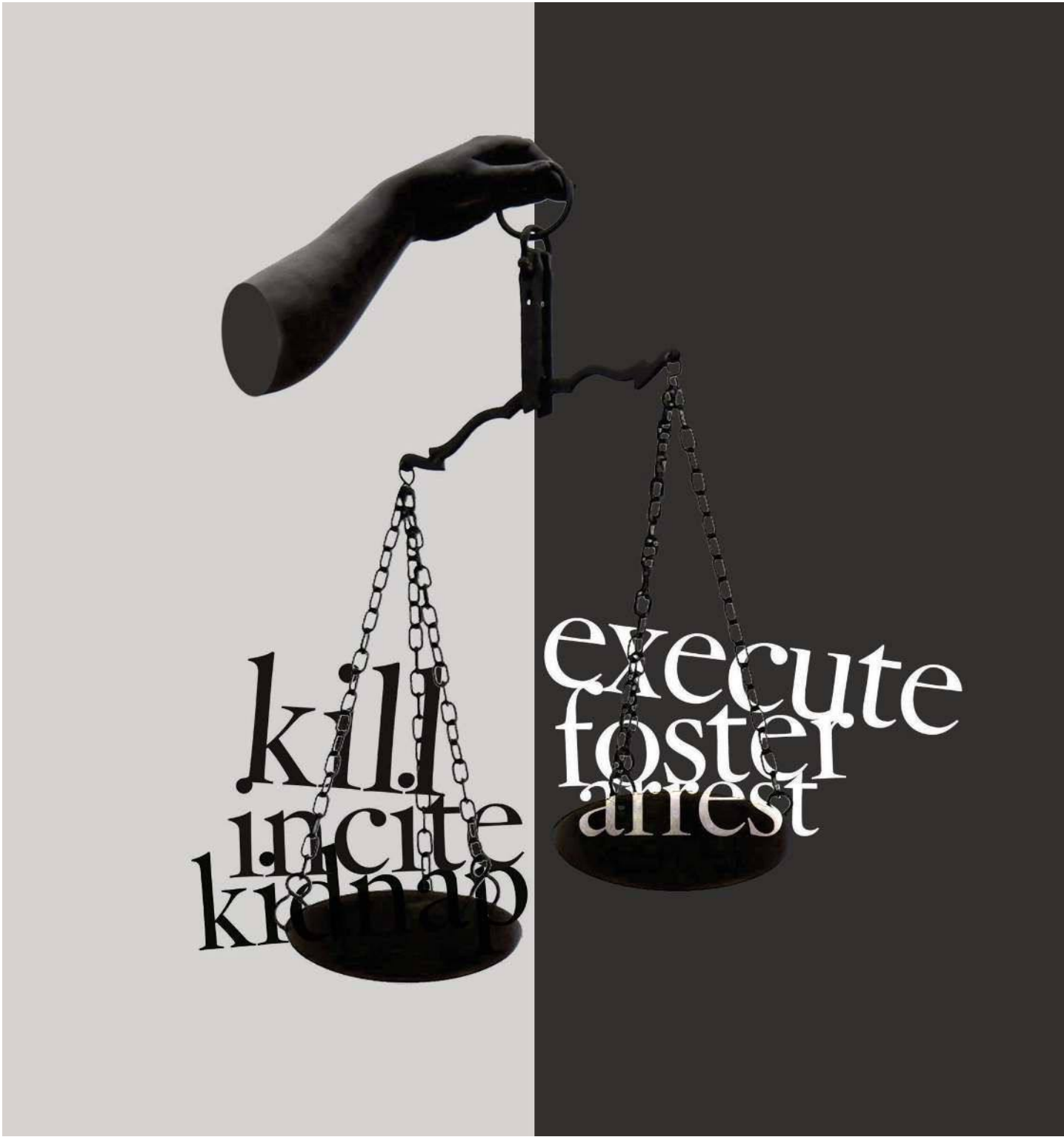


Illustration by ALLISON HONG Los Angeles Times, Unsplash

**Voices** **JESSICA RETT** GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

# There's no neutral language to describe horrific actions

rately eliminates any suggestion of agency on the part of the officer.

So language is full of biased terms, especially pertaining to controversial topics, and attempts to avoid these terms result in their own bias. What are the linguistic options for someone who wants to remain morally or legally neutral while describing or reporting controversial acts such as the federal government's recent immigration actions? How can one do so without emphasizing the administration's lawlessness (as a Trump critic might), or without playing down the lawlessness (as a Trump defender might)?

The simple answer, from the point of view of semantics, is that such a thing is practi-

cally impossible: Language generally does not afford us the ability to describe controversial and high-stakes circumstances without also implicitly weighing in on them. Different languages differ in their lexical inventory, sure — there are languages that have innovated words for concepts that other languages generally don't have — but there is also a general tendency toward biased terms for controversial topics. This is not a necessary property of language, but a reflection of how we tend to think about the world.

This message is nothing new: Journalists have long been warned that objectivity is an impossible ideal, and there has been support from social movements and political science

scholars for the claim that being "apolitical" amounts to a political stance in support of existing power imbalances and injustices.

As with most things in life, choosing to not take a side amounts to taking a side, and the same is true with language use. The sooner we can come to terms with this linguistic reality, the sooner we can start to grapple with our sociopolitical reality, which is in shambles.

JESSICA RETT is a professor of linguistics at UCLA. Her research investigates the meaning of words and how they contribute to the meanings of sentences, either in isolation or in broader contexts.



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# CALIFORNIA

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Photographs by DAVID BUTOW For The Times

**THE THOMAS MANN** House, which survived the Palisades fire, serves as a museum and cultural center that offers residency programs for writers and artists whose work embraces the spirit of its former owner.

**Voices** GUSTAVO ARELLANO COLUMNIST

## The Thomas Mann House still stands, and so does its message

German writer's words remain relevant with strongmen on the rise

**O**n the morning of the Palisades fire, Claudia Gordon quickly accepted that there was only so much she could do to save everything under her watch. She helps manage the Pacific Palisades homes once owned by Thomas Mann and Lion Feuchtwanger, bestselling German writers who moved to Los Angeles in the 1940s as part of an exodus of European intellectuals fleeing the Nazis. They transformed their residences into salons for fellow refugees and warned Americans that what happened in their homeland could happen anywhere.



**THOMAS MANN**, seen above, was a best-selling German writer who moved to Los Angeles in the 1940s as part of an exodus of European intellectuals fleeing the Nazis.

Today, the Mann House and Villa Aurora, which is Feuchtwanger's home, are cultural centers that offer residency programs for writers and artists whose work embraces the spirit of their former owners. The fate of the houses was out of Gordon's hands, once it became apparent that the Palisades fire was going to rage. She did what she could to save everything else, coordinating with staffers to make sure everyone was evacuated from the homes. At the Mann House, someone grabbed the complete works of Goethe, as [See Mann, B3]

## Suspect in major gang case to remain jailed

Judge cites flight risk, violence allegations in ruling against Eugene 'Big U' Henley.

BY BRITTNY MEJIA

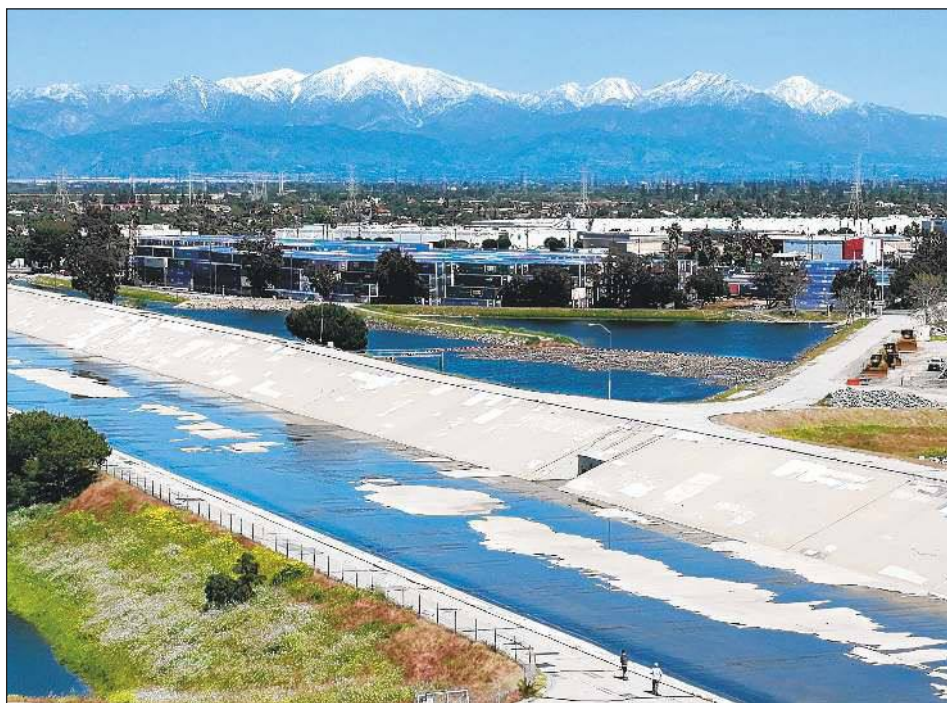
Eugene "Big U" Henley, an accused Crips leader, will remain behind bars while he faces charges of fraud, robbery, extortion and running a racketeering conspiracy, a federal judge in Los Angeles ruled Tuesday. As Henley, 58, sat quietly in a white jumpsuit, U.S. Magistrate Judge A. Joel

Richlin cited the violent allegations against him, including the murder of an aspiring rapper, and what he called "a lot of evidence of obstruction of justice." In ordering Henley to remain in custody pending trial, Richlin said that he was concerned that Henley might flee and that he was potentially a danger to the community. "There's no condition or combination of conditions that would reasonably assure Mr. Henley's future appearance at court proceedings or the safety of the community," Richlin said before

ruling. Arturo Hernandez, Henley's attorney, said his client could be confined to his home and monitored electronically. He also cited the fact that his client's loved ones were putting up millions of dollars' worth of property to secure his release, which he said made it unlikely Henley would flee. "You've got to give him a chance," said Hernandez, who has represented cartel members and, in the 1980s, serial killer Richard Ramirez, known as the Night Stalker. "This has been defend-

ant's second chance," Assistant U.S. Atty. Kevin Butler told the judge soon after. Henley previously served 13 years in prison for trying to rob an undercover sheriff's deputy of 33 pounds of cocaine. He was indicted last month on 43 counts, including tax evasion; embezzlement of donations to his charity, which receives public money; and running a racketeering conspiracy in which he allegedly kidnapped and fatally shot a young rapper named Rayshawn Williams. Henley has pleaded not [See Henley, B5]

## L.A. area's deep aquifers low despite '23 storms



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

**THE STUDY** included the San Gabriel, L.A. Central and Santa Ana basins. Above, the Rio Hondo Coastal Basin Spreading Grounds in Pico Rivera.

Scientists using seismic data find rebound for region's shallow water levels.

BY IAN JAMES

The rainstorms that drenched Southern California two years ago weren't enough to replenish deep underground aquifers that had been depleted by pumping over the last two decades, a new study has found. Stanford University scientists analyzed how the historic 2023 storms affected groundwater levels across Los Angeles and Orange counties. They found that although shallow aquifers rebounded, deeper aquifers more than 150 feet underground regained only about 25% of the water they had lost to pumping since 2006. "The rain that comes

## Mayor calls for 2,700 job cuts to close fiscal gap

Layoffs would include hundreds of civilians at LAPD. Bass holds out hope for state aid.

BY DAVID ZAHNISER AND JULIA WICK

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass released a proposed budget on Monday that would eliminate a nearly \$1-billion financial gap by cutting more than 2,700 city positions — about 1,650 of them through layoffs.

The \$14-billion spending plan, which covers the 2025-26 fiscal year, would provide funding for scores of new hires at the Fire Department, three months after the Palisades fire destroyed thousands of homes and killed 12 people.

However, many other agencies would face deep spending reductions, with layoffs hitting 5% of the workforce as the city copes with rising personnel costs, soaring legal payouts and a slowdown in the local economy.

At the Los Angeles Police Department, more than 400 workers would be targeted for layoffs, all of them civilians, according to figures prepared by city budget officials. The number of police officers would continue on its gradual downward trajectory, with new hires failing to keep pace with attrition.

By July 1, 2026, the LAPD would have 8,639 officers — the lowest level since 1995, according to city budget officials.

Five years ago, the department had about 10,000 officers. Last week, the department reported that it had 8,735.

Bass, during her State of the City address on Monday, described the layoff strategy as "a decision of absolute last resort." In recent weeks, she and other city officials have been lobbying Gov. Gavin Newsom and the state Legislature to provide a relief package that would stave off most or even all of those job cuts.

The mayor is scheduled to make another trip to Sacramento on Wednesday.

"I believe there are some solutions, like from the state, that will help us so that we don't have to do layoffs ultimately," Bass said last week at an event hosted by Black Lives Matter-Los Angeles.

Nearly 1,100 of the positions targeted for elimination by Bass are already va-

cant, city budget officials said.

The mayor's spending plan heads to the City Council's budget committee for several weeks of deliberations. If the council does not change course and state financial aid fails to materialize, the city would lay off an estimated 62 workers in the Animal Services Department, which has struggled to provide humane care for the animals in its shelters.

More than 260 workers in the Transportation Department have been targeted for layoffs, according to city budget officials. An additional 159 layoffs are planned at the Bureau of Sanitation, which handles trash pickup and the removal of bulky [See Layoffs, B4]

## Budget includes funds to add fire personnel

In wake of Palisades disaster, Bass proposes hiring 227 even as she plans cuts elsewhere.

BY NOAH GOLDBERG

Months after the most destructive wildfire in modern Los Angeles history, Mayor Karen Bass is seeking to add scores of new employees to the Fire Department, even as an array of other agencies face layoffs.

The mayor, who has been working to close a nearly \$1-billion budget gap, called for adding 227 positions to the Fire Department in her budget proposal for 2025-26, released Monday.

About half the new hires would be firefighters, in a department of just under 3,250 firefighters. The remaining new positions include 25 new emergency medical technicians in addition to mechanics and others.

Genethia Hudley Hayes, president of the city's Fire Commission, said Monday that the Fire Department has been under-resourced for more than a decade.

"I feel very hopeful," she said about Bass' budget proposal. "The mayor has absolutely said that she understands we are going to have to have more funding."

In the days after the Palisades fire broke out, then-Fire Chief Kristin Crowley said that budget cuts had hampered the department's ability to fight the wind-driven blaze. Bass and her team responded by saying that, once employee raises were factored in, the Fire Department budget actually grew this year.

In the wake of the fire, which destroyed nearly 7,000 structures and killed 12 people, both Crowley and the firefighters union described the department as severely underfunded.

In an interview with CNN anchor Jake Tapper on Jan. 10, Crowley said her department did not have enough firefighters and lacked enough mechanics to repair broken-down emergency vehicles.

At one point, Tapper asked whether budget cuts hurt her agency's ability to fight the wildfire.

"I want to be very, very clear. Yes," Crowley re- [See Hiring plan, B4]



# Papers in abuse case never turned over, lawyers say

Attorneys suing L.A. County over child sexual misconduct say info was withheld.

By Rebecca Ellis

Thousands of documents that could contain key details about rampant childhood sexual abuse inside a defunct Santa Clarita detention camp — including so-called “grooming drawings” — were left scattered inside the facility and never turned over to the victims’ attorneys, according to a firm suing L.A. County over the decades-old incidents.

As part of the preparation for a looming June trial, attorneys with law firm Manly, Stewart & Finaldi had arranged April 15 to visit Camp Scott, a shuttered L.A. County probation camp where many of their clients say they were sexually abused as children.

Inside the facility were reams of records that the county should have turned over to the firm more than a year ago through discovery, said attorney Courtney Thom, whose firm has about 150 civil cases alleging sexual abuse by county probation staff.

“You can understand my shock when I’m walking through where my clients got raped as children, and there are documents everywhere,” Thom said at a Monday superior court hearing in downtown Los Angeles.

Thom said she discovered thousands of paper grievances, a locked file cabinet labeled “Personnel Files CAMPS A – W,” and a drawing she believed was signed by Thomas Jackson — a probation deputy accused by at



BARBARA DAVIDSON Los Angeles Times

**YOUTHS** at Camp Scott sit on their beds and wait for movement instructions. The county announced that it plans to pay \$4 billion to settle nearly 7,000 claims of sexual abuse inside juvenile facilities and foster homes.

least 20 women of sexually assaulting them at the camp.

The drawing, included in a court filing, was of the name “TAMI” in big orange block letters and appeared to be signed by a “Jackson. T.”

Attorney James Sargent, who is representing the county and accompanied Thom for the tour last week, called her claims “inflammatory and incorrect.”

“They want to air what they deem as dirty laundry,” said Sargent, who told L.A. Superior Court Judge

Lawrence Riff that the personnel files they discovered had nothing to do with the staff named in the lawsuits.

Nor did the drawing, he said. Tami Wilson, a former supervisor at the camp, told him she recalled being given the hand-drawn card by a youth, he wrote in a court filing.

The county announced earlier this month it planned to pay \$4 billion to settle nearly 7,000 claims of sexual abuse inside the county’s juvenile facilities and foster homes. The settlement — believed to be the largest sex

abuse settlement in U.S. history — arose from Assembly Bill 218, a 2020 state law that gave victims of childhood sexual abuse a new window to file civil suits against alleged predators and the agencies that employed them.

A handful of prominent firms — including Manly, Stewart & Finaldi — declined to participate in the settlement and have ongoing litigation.

In the aftermath of AB 218, state legislators have introduced several bills to attempt to make it easier for

governments and school districts to deal with the financial fallout from the deluge of suits.

One of these bills — SB 577 — was set for a hearing Tuesday. The bill’s author, State Sen. John Laird, said the legislation is intended to “restore some equilibrium,” lessening the financial blow to public agencies while still upholding a victim’s right to sue.

County lawyers claim one reason the state law change has had such a devastating financial toll is because many of the records they

# Death of whale in Long Beach is linked to harmful algae

The same type of poisoning has killed sea lions, dolphins off Southern California.

By Summer Lin

A minke whale that was swimming in Long Beach Harbor earlier this month died from domoic acid poisoning associated with a toxic algal bloom that has stricken many other sea creatures, according to officials.

Michael Milstein, spokesperson for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s West Coast regional office, said test results showed that the whale had high levels of domoic acid in its urine at the time of its death.

“This is consistent with the many other marine mammals we have seen affected by domoic acid produced by the harmful algal bloom off Southern California first detected in February,” Milstein said in a statement. “The tests are taking longer since the lab is processing so many.”

Domoic acid is a neuro-



West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network

**THE MINKE** whale had been in Long Beach Harbor for several days, and efforts were made to push it out to sea. It returned and was found dead April 3.

toxin produced by harmful algal blooms that accumulates in filter-feeding fish — including anchovies and sardines — which are then eaten by seals, sea lions and dolphins.

This is the fourth con-

secutive year there has been a domoic acid event, but this year’s started much earlier than previous ones, according to Milstein. The algae bloom was the result of an upswell in the ocean that brought up enough nutri-

ents to the surface to allow the algae to thrive, he said. Other experts also point to climate change and the runoff from the recent fires in the Palisades as contributors to the algae bloom.

Hundreds of sea lions

and dolphins have been affected so far, Milstein said.

“This has probably been the most severe, particularly this early in the year,” he said. “How long it continues is the question.”

The 24-foot-long minke whale was swimming in the harbor for several days and officials had tried to push it out to sea, only for it to come back, Milstein said. The whale, which was male, was then found dead April 3.

Minke whales are considered the smallest of the great, or baleen, whale family, and can grow to more than 26 feet long and weigh as much as 14,000 pounds, according to NOAA.

There are about 900 minke whales off the coasts of Oregon, Washington and California. They’re protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Last week, a dead gray whale was found washed ashore on Huntington Beach. The Pacific Marine Mammal Center in Laguna Beach is performing a necropsy to determine the animal’s cause of death.

Although most of the marine mammals affected by domoic acid toxicity are California sea lions, other

animals are also susceptible to its effects, according to the Marine Mammal Center.

Domoic acid has been found in blue and humpback whales, as well as Guadalupe fur seals, which are a threatened species.

Ingesting domoic acid from harmful algal blooms can cause sea lions and other animals to have seizures or to crane their heads in a motion known as “stargazing.” They can also fall into a comatose state. Experts advise people not to interact with animals believed to be sick because they might aggressively lunge or even bite.

Milstein said it’s unlikely that the domoic acid event will have a significant effect on the overall population of marine mammals off the Western coast.

“There’s a silver lining to the incredible productivity of the California ecosystem,” he said. “On one hand it is feeding the algae bloom, but it’s also responsible for the incredible diversity of species we’re fortunate to have off the West Coast. These species are pretty strong and resilient, and they have shown that over the year.”

# Texas man sentenced in San Diego spider monkey trafficking case

Six babies, ‘ripped’ from their mothers, were put up for sale online, authorities say.

By Clara Harter

A Texas man was busted for trafficking vulnerable Mexican baby spider monkeys, which were too young to be separated from their mothers, into San Diego and selling them on Facebook.

Sarmad Ghaled Dafar, 33, was recently sentenced to four months in custody and 180 days of home confinement for trafficking six of the young primates, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents uncovered his crimes in 2023 when they intercepted three baby Mexican spider monkeys that had been smuggled across the border in Calexico by someone working for him, prosecutors said.

Not only is it illegal to



U.S. attorney’s office

**TWO OF** the trafficked Mexican primates, Chrissy and Jack, are shown at Brookfield Zoo Chicago with Frankee and Bucees, also seized from smugglers.

own primates as pets in California, but it’s also especially frowned upon to possess baby spider monkeys. The species is endangered, and infants require constant, skilled care to survive.

“This crime ripped weeks-old baby monkeys from their mothers, disrupted fragile ecosystems, endangered a vulnerable

species, and posed significant public health risks,” U.S. Atty. Adam Gordon said in a statement Friday.

After officials seized the three monkeys in August 2023, they searched the smuggler’s phone and found messages indicating that he was bringing the animals across the border for Dafar.

In his plea agreement,

Dafar admitted to coordinating the trafficking of baby spider monkeys, receiving them in the U.S. and arranging their sale.

The three confiscated monkeys — named Chrissy, Jack and Janet — were temporarily quarantined at the San Diego Zoo. As part of his sentence, Dafar was ordered to pay more than \$23,500 in restitution for the cost of their quarantine.

The monkeys have since been permanently housed at the Brookfield Zoo Chicago, alongside two other baby spider monkeys, named Frankee and Bucees, who were seized in a separate Southwest border smuggling case, prosecutors said.

During the investigation, officials discovered Dafar previously smuggled and sold at least three other baby Mexican spider monkeys, in June 2022 and July 2023.

Their whereabouts are unknown.

These three additional monkeys were not quaran-

tined, which is required by law to prevent the spread of deadly diseases — such as Ebola, Marburg and mpox — from primates to humans, prosecutors said.

“This is not merely an economic crime; it is a severe and lasting injury to both wildlife and public safety,” Gordon said. “Border security is not just about interdicting drugs and preventing illegal entries. It also involves protecting the public from dangerous diseases.”

The investigation indicated that Dafar intentionally trafficked baby spider monkeys, despite the risk of separating them from their mothers, because he believed they were easier to hide.

When a Facebook user sent Dafar a news article about spider monkeys seized by U.S. Border Patrol agents, he responded, “He stupid brin[g] to[o] many of them and all adults they make a lot noise and they active. Baby’s most be sleeping and small to hide,” ac-

cording to court documents.

Dafar messaged potential customers on Facebook and sent photos of baby spider monkeys in diapers and under a heat lamp, both signs indicating that the primates are too young to survive on their own, prosecutors said.

Spider monkeys typically nurse for their first two years of life, and most will stay close to their mothers until they are 4 years old.

Their mothers are protective, and the entire troop will work together to defend the baby in the face of a threat, according to testimony from U.S. Fish and Wildlife agents. As a result, poachers will often kill the mother and troop when trying to capture babies.

Genetic testing of Chrissy, Jack and Janet indicated that they all had separate mothers, meaning it is possible that poachers killed many monkeys to capture them.

Dafar has been ordered to surrender on or before May 29, prosecutors said.



# Words from a writer who fled Nazis still ring true

[Mann, from B1] well as Mann's handwritten papers. Gordon and others took some paintings and a Renaissance-era Purim scroll from Villa Aurora but had to leave thousands of rare books and personal mementos behind.

Back in her own home, Gordon took solace and strength in the lives of the two men. She especially thought of Feuchtwanger, who refused to succumb to despair after losing homes in Germany and France to the Nazis and then building a new life in the U.S.

"If the worst happened" and the Mann House and Villa Aurora burned down, Gordon said, "that's what we would have to do" — start over.

We were standing outside the sleek, two-story Thomas Mann House on a Friday morning this month. Accompanying us were the house's director, Oliver Hartmann, and program director Benno Herz. Inside, high-powered air filters were sucking out all the toxic substances left over from the fire — the only damage incurred by the house, built in 1942 for Mann and his family and purchased by the German government in 2016 to save it from demolition.

"I never understood how a surgeon could operate for 20 hours," said Gordon, 55, who has been director of Villa Aurora off and on since 2002 and is also director of administration for both houses. "But now I know how it works that adrenaline carries you so far."

She looked at the Mann House's gleaming white exterior, which had to be scrubbed down by hand after the fire. "It's never been so clean," she said with a sad chuckle.

This was going to be a big year for the institutions, which are funded by the German government. The Mann House had a full program planned for the 150th birthday of its namesake. Villa Aurora was readying for the 30th anniversary of its residency program. All events so far have been canceled, postponed or hosted at other spots across L.A.

The Mann House hopes to bring back its fellows in May. Villa Aurora also survived but is closed indefinitely as it awaits its own deep cleaning. But the two structures are at least



**CARETAKERS OF** the Thomas Mann House, from left, Benno Herz, Claudia Gordon and Oliver Hartmann. "We're a young institution but very experienced in crises," Herz said, referencing COVID and the L.A. fires.

standing. The homes of many of Mann's and Feuchtwanger's fellow European refugees didn't make it.

Herz, who joined the Mann House when it started its residency program in 2018, said the situation reminds him of the COVID years.

"We're a young institution," the 35-year-old deadpanned, "but very experienced in crises."

In 2023, I contributed to a German-language book where writers were asked to reflect on a feature in the Mann House that spoke to modern-day L.A. I focused on a news release hanging near the staircase to Mann's bedroom that quotes him saying, "In times of so deeply depressing circumstances a harmonious home background is of great significance."

While writers like Mike Davis and Joan Didion were rightfully cited as prophetic voices after the Palisades and Eaton fires, we should pay attention to Mann and Feuchtwanger, whose words are especially relevant in an era where strongmen are on the rise worldwide and people are escaping from failing countries.

In his 1938 lecture "The Coming Victory of Democracy," Mann said: "Even

America feels today that democracy is not an assured possession, that it has enemies, that it is threatened from within and from without."

Feuchtwanger, meanwhile, was criticizing the Nazis as early as the 1920s, culminating in his Wartesaal ("The Waiting Room") trilogy, a set of novels that tracked the rise of Hitler and the Nazis' persecution of Jews and others. That led the Nazis to burn Feuchtwanger's books and his imprisonment in France under the Vichy regime.

"There's the artistic Thomas Mann," said Hartmann of the author, who won a Nobel Prize for literature in 1929. "But there's also the political Mann, waiting to be rediscovered by each generation."

"And for Lion," the 47-year-old Hartmann continued, "for him it was so important to counter stupidity with reason."

He led us around the Mann House, as workers weaved around us with extension cords and ladders. Electric tape and spray cans were everywhere. At one point, Gordon nearly walked into a plastic sheet that sealed off a hallway from the living room.

We ended up in Mann's

study. Among the books that remained was a copy of Sinclair Lewis' 1935 novel "It Can't Happen Here," which imagined an America ruled by a fascist.

"It's always dangerous to draw political parallels between the past and present," Herz said, "but Mann went from becoming an admirer of FDR to experiencing the political shift to McCarthyism." He eventually returned to Europe, after the House Un-American Activities Committee and the FBI began to target him.

"The takeaway that always stays with me is that things can always change," Gordon added. "Lion never dared leave the United States because he was afraid they wouldn't let him back in. But he wrote about not having self-pity in that. It was his hope and expectation that exile literature would stand the test of time."

Outside, 25-year-old Isaac Rosales was looking at a bronze plaque with

Mann's face on it. I asked if he knew who Mann was.

"I'm assuming he's really important," the Colton resident replied in Spanish. "We [workers] always ask ourselves, 'Who must that man be?'"

I gave Rosales a quick overview, highlighting how Mann fostered a community for immigrants from the house that Rosales was now helping to restore. The native of Mexico then smiled.

"L.A.'s always been a sanctuary for us, right?" he said.

Gordon and I bid farewell to Hartmann and Herz, then proceeded to Villa Aurora on the other side of the Palisades. The capriciousness of the fire quickly revealed itself.

An intact apartment complex stood across Sunset Boulevard from another that was completely devastated. The fenced-off Palisades Village, which owner Rick Caruso had hired private firefighters to protect, looked eerily im-

## Deep L.A.-area groundwater levels still low despite storms

[Groundwater, from B1] sistant professor at the University of Texas at Austin. "It appears that a single epic storm season is not enough to restore the groundwater depletion accumulated over the recent droughts. It will take many more wet years for the deep aquifers to fully recover."

An estimated one-third of the region's water supply comes from wells pumping groundwater, according to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Other supplies are imported in aqueducts and pipelines from Northern California, the Colorado River and the eastern Sierra.

When it rains, water percolates into the ground naturally, where it isn't shunted into storm drains and concrete channels. Local agencies also have invested in projects in recent years that route stormwater to spreading basins or use purified wastewater to replenish groundwater.

Municipal wells typically draw drinking water from hundreds of feet underground, often tapping into aquifers that lie beneath impermeable clay and silt layers called aquitards. These layers can block the downward movement of water in places, slowing infiltration to deeper levels.

The scientists said they hope their findings will help local water officials have access to additional data to inform decisions about water use and conservation, and guide efforts to replenish groundwater.

The researchers developed a new approach for tracking groundwater levels by repurposing seismic data from California's earthquake monitoring network, which includes dozens of highly sensitive seismometers in the region.

Mao and her colleagues

used the data not to monitor quakes, but rather to track minute vibrations underground — "background noise," as they described it, created by movements including ocean waves, traffic passing on freeways, trains rumbling and winds blowing through mountain passes.

"All these things generate noise," Ellsworth said. "These are vibrations that are going on in the earth all the time from all sorts of different sources."

"We can use the ambient seismic vibrations and analyze the speed of seismic waves to sense the aquifers," he said.

The technique is called seismic interferometry. Ellsworth said it's the first research to use the approach to assess groundwater levels in such detail and at different levels underground, down to 2,600 feet.

Mao also developed a new "seismic drought index" for assessing water deficits at different depths.

Measuring groundwater levels in deep aquifers traditionally has involved drilling deep wells, which is costly and can record water levels only in a single location. The new method using seismic data can measure water levels in entire groundwater basins, and at significantly lower cost.

"The seismic infrastructure is already in place and the data has been captured continually for decades," Mao said. "It's a buy-one-get-one-free technology."

Ellsworth called the new method a revolutionary tool for studying aquifers.

Gregory Beroza, a co-author and professor of Earth science at Stanford's Doerr School of Sustainability, said the approach is a big leap for groundwater management.

"It moves us to a possible future where we can mea-

sure groundwater recharge — how much there is and where it's going — much as we do with stream gauges for surface water," he said.

The study examined trends in several watersheds and groundwater basins, including three large basins — San Gabriel basin, Los Angeles Central basin and Santa Ana basin — and smaller basins such as Santa Monica and Hollywood.

It found that more groundwater recharge occurred in some areas and less in others. For example, there were large increases in groundwater levels after the 2023 storms in parts of the San Gabriel Valley, Mao said, including the deep aquifers along the base of the San Gabriel Mountains.

The researcher didn't see much long-term depletion of aquifers in the Santa Ana basin in Orange County over the last two decades. Mao said this shows that the area's groundwater has been benefiting from managed recharge efforts.

One significant factor appears to be Orange County's Groundwater Replenishment System, where purified wastewater percolates and is injected into the aquifer for use.

Roy Herndon, the Orange County Water District's chief of hydrogeology, said the study confirms that local groundwater recharge efforts are "effectively maintaining a sustainable amount of groundwater pumping."

The research also corroborated the district's water-level data, Herndon said.


He said the study's method offers a cost-effective way to use existing seismic sensors to measure changes in groundwater in parts of California that don't have extensive wells dedicated to monitoring water levels.

Los Angeles Times

IX

Ideas Exchange

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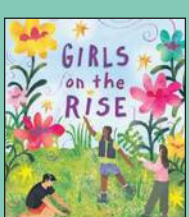
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**FIREFIGHTERS UNION** leader Freddy Escobar said the mayor's budget "is prioritizing the Fire Department and first responders. We're grateful for that."

ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

# Bass proposes adding 227 workers at Fire Department

**[Hiring plan, from B1]** sponsored.

Bass, speaking at a news conference on the budget in North Hills on Tuesday, declined to say whether her decision to add so many Fire Department staffers in effect validated Crowley's complaints about the size of the budget.

"I'm not going to re-litigate comments that were made by the former chief," Bass said. "The positions that we put in the budget yesterday are positions we feel are vitally needed."

Bass ousted Crowley less

than two months after the fire broke out, complaining that she had not heard from the chief, amid worsening wind forecasts, until after the blaze started. She also questioned the chief's deployment decisions.

A Times investigation found that LAFD officials chose not to order roughly 1,000 firefighters to remain on duty for a second shift as winds were building — which would have doubled the personnel on hand when the Palisades fire began the morning of Jan. 7.

Freddy Escobar, president of United Firefighters of Los Angeles City Local 112, asserted that the department did not have enough firetrucks and engines for those 1,000 firefighters.

But several former LAFD chief officers told The Times that keeping the firefighters on duty would have enabled the department to send dozens of extra engines to the Palisades and other high-risk areas. And firefighters not assigned to the additional engines would have been available for other tasks.

On Monday, Escobar said the mayor's proposed budget is a step in the right direction.

"These are difficult decisions the mayor has to make, and she is prioritizing the Fire Department and first responders. We're grateful for that," he said.

Still, Escobar said the department is "woefully" understaffed and underfunded.

The City Council has until the end of May to make changes to the mayor's budget and then approve it.

Hudley Hayes emphasized the need for additional mechanics to ensure that fire equipment and vehicles are in working order. She said those mechanics need to be better compensated so they do not leave for higher-paying positions. The mayor's budget includes funding for four heavy-duty equipment mechanics and nine mechanical helpers,

along with a maintenance laborer.

The budget also includes new Fire Department initiatives, including the creation of a Homeless Fire Protection and Street Medicine Program, which would "provide adequate fire protection, enforcement, and medical care for individuals experiencing homelessness." The new program would be staffed by more than 50 firefighters and an array of other employees, accounting for 67 of the department's 227 new positions.

In 2024, 16,742 fires in the city were connected to people experiencing homelessness, up from 4,124 in 2018, according to Fire Department data.

City Councilmember Traci Park, whose district includes Pacific Palisades and who has advocated for more Fire Department funding, said that the mayor's proposal was a good sign but that the city should go further.

"This is a tiny drop in the bucket of what is actually necessary to right-size our Fire Department in Los Angeles," she said.

Park pointed to a motion the council passed last month to explore a ballot measure that would provide additional funding for Fire Department facilities.

Some Palisades residents also expressed hope about the proposal to provide additional resources to the Fire Department.

Larry Vein runs the Pali Strong Foundation, which helps people with problems related to the Palisades fire. Vein's own home suffered smoke damage in the fire.

"Were many of the residents frustrated? Were there allocations of proper resources in the right place? Did we have enough of a fire budget? Perhaps not," Vein said. "But we have to look forward."

Times staff writer David Zahniser contributed to this report.

# Obituaries

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**Joel A. Katz**  
A Visionary in Music: Joel A. Katz, a transformative force who reshaped the entertainment industry, passed away peacefully in Atlanta on Friday morning, April 18, 2025, with his beloved wife Rikki by his side. He was born in the Bronx, New York on May 27, 1944.

His legacy lives on through his cherished family: his wife Rikki Katz, sisters Judy Harrow and Janie Emerson, brother Aaron Katz, his daughters Dr. Leslie Katz Lestz and Jeni Katz Paul, son-in-law Marshall Lestz and his adored grandchildren, Yossi, Ezra, Tzila, and Skylar.

Joel's profound impact on the entertainment world stemmed from his groundbreaking work facilitating entertainment-related corporate acquisitions and mergers. Multi-national and multi-media entertainment companies sought his insightful counsel and innovative approach, recognizing him as a true architect of the industry's evolution.

His influence reached the pinnacle of the music business, with Billboard magazine ranking him as the No. 1 entertainment attorney in its prestigious "Power 100." Known as "the dealmaker who thinks outside the box," Joel's strategic thinking and unparalleled negotiation skills left an enduring mark that spanned from individuals to global corporations.

Beyond his legal achievements, Joel was deeply committed to education. His passionate endowment and leadership in creating the commercial music program at Kennesaw State University stand as a testament to his commitment. The program has flourished into one of the largest in America, shaping the futures of over 500 students.

A respected voice in legal scholarship, Joel authored and co-authored numerous articles on entertainment law. His significant contributions were further honored by the University of Tennessee College of Law, which dedicated its library as the Joel A. Katz Law Library.

Joel's legacy extends beyond his professional triumphs. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother and a cherished friend to many. His warmth, wisdom, and innovative spirit will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

The service was held Tuesday April 22nd at 3:00 PM Arlington Memorial Park 201 Mt Vernon Hwy NW Sandy Springs, GA 30328 followed Shiva at 5:00PM Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at Temple Sinai 5645 Dupree Dr Atlanta, GA 30327.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that donations in Joel's memory may be made to the Mayo Clinic: Joel and Rikki Katz PSP Research Fund. Mayo Clinic 200 First Street SW Rochester, MN 55905 <https://www.mayoclinic.org/giving-to-mayo-clinic>

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**Edmund Hill Shea**  
III  
August 10, 1960 - April 20, 2025

Ed Shea died peacefully on Easter Sunday surrounded by his family after a quarter century battle with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Despite the physical limitations that illness eventually imposed on him, he lived an active and inspiring life: raising four children, building a successful business, and demonstrating grace and strength.

Throughout his life, Ed managed to engage with his family and the world even as the disease robbed him of his ability to walk and to talk. He kept his sense of humor and retained the ability to laugh. He was not one to complain, instead he emphasized how the disease had taught him patience and the importance of listening.

He was born in Redding, California in 1960, the son of Edmund and Mary Shea, and spent his early years in Northern California. His family began spending summers at Lake Tahoe, where he returned annually to reconnect with the Sierras and his family and to spend hours fishing for Mackinaw trout in the lake. He loved being on and near the water with his children and grandchild, whether cruising around the lake and Newport Harbor or simply taking in the view from his Bayfront home or the pier at Lake Tahoe.

He was graduated from Loyola High School (1979) and USC's Marshall School of Business (1984). At USC, he played club lacrosse and was a member of Kappa Alpha fraternity. He also met Elizabeth Snow, whom he married in 1990 and whose tireless devotion to him and their family demonstrated the depth of her love.

After college, he went straight to work for his family's company, J. F. Shea Co. He started in Redding in its construction division before moving to San Diego. There he ultimately joined Shea Homes' San Diego division and ran that division's land acquisitions.

In 1995, he and two cousins started a home building business in North Carolina. He moved his young family to Charlotte and started buying land, developing communities and selling homes. Over the next three decades they profitably built nearly 6500 single family detached homes and over 400 condominiums. In early 2021, they sold the business and Ed returned to California, settling in Newport Beach and participating in the family business as an active director.

He is survived by Liz, his wife of 35 years, his three sons Edmund IV, Charlie and Patrick, his daughter Reilly and granddaughter Luna Shea. His mother Mary Shea, sisters Colleen Morrissey, Mary McConnell, Katie High and Ellen Dietrick and brother Tim also survive him. He was predeceased by his father Edmund and sister Maureen.

The Rosary will be recited on April 29th at 6:00 p.m., and a Mass of Christian Burial will be held on April 30th at 11:00 a.m., at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Newport Beach. In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations to ALS United Orange County: [alsuoc.org/donate/](https://alsuoc.org/donate/)

**Veda Veach**  
October 27, 1929 - November 22, 2024

Veda Veach (née Carter) passed away peacefully at home on November 22, 2024. She was born on October 27, 1929, in Breckenridge, Texas, to Henry Carter and Annie Belle Price. Veda was preceded in death by her parents; her siblings, Lee Hampton, Shirley Radley, and Bill Carter; and her beloved husband, Harold. She is survived by her children: Vicki, Brad (Radha), Ben (Eileen), and Bob (Linda); her grandchildren: Angel (Taylor), Nathan, Megan (Ryan), Jonathan (Ashah), Emma, Katie, and Benjo; and great-grandchildren: Vinnie and Jack.

A celebration of life will be held at 11:00 AM on May 3 at Culver Palms United Methodist Church, 4464 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City, 90230. A repast with food and fellowship will follow in the church hall.



**Marilynn Levitt GLUCK**  
May 21, 1928 - April 21, 2025

Marilynn lived a long and wonderful life. In the days up to her passing, shortly before her 97th birthday, she was surrounded by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, each of us enjoying her lasting beauty, her sweet smile and her humor.

Marilynn was born in Los Angeles. After schooling locally, she attended the University of California at Berkley and graduated, from UCLA, with a teaching credential. She educated elementary school children until she met and married Howard Gluck in 1952. This was a love affair that lived until Howard's passing in 2015 (the only acrimony, ever, concerned Marilyn's consumption of chocolate). Marilyn embraced that love ever after. As her 3 children grew, she volunteered her time and knowledge for various organizations. She served, for decades, at The Los Angeles County Museum of Art and was highly appreciated for her outstanding administrative contributions, her sweet personality and the proud manner in which she represented the Museum.

Marilynn was the matriarch of her extended family. She took loving care of all of us, including friends and neighbors, in many ways. She hosted almost every holiday and life celebration event at the long-standing Brentwood home, always with her warm ways and great cooking – her chicken soup has been the standard by which all others are judged.

Marilynn was predeceased by her husband Howard Gluck, her brother Paul Richards, her grandson, Michael Gluck and her daughter in law Alva Gluck. She is survived by her children Susan Cunningham (Tim), Tom Gluck (Julie) and Dan Gluck; her grandchildren Sara Cunningham (Cesar Iglesias), Kelly Lonsberry, Brian Gluck (Paulina), Richard Gluck, Cameron Gluck and Kasey Gluck and her greatgrandchildren Scarlett, Maddison, Miles, Dante, Artemis, Sophia, Mason and Anthony.

Mom/Grandma/GG will forever be in our hearts. We shall honor her memory, always.

Memorial Services will be held on Thursday, April 25, 2025, 10:00 am at Hillside Memorial Park

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Los Angeles Times

# ‘Absolute last resort’: Budget calls for job cuts across agencies

**[Layoffs, from B1]** items such as mattresses and couches from the curb. At the Bureau of Street Services, which oversees street repairs, the mayor's budget recommends 130 layoffs, according to a summary prepared by city budget analysts.

On Monday, one union leader vowed to stop those cuts from happening.

"We're going to fight every single layoff. Even one layoff is too many," said David Green, president of Service Employees International Union Local 721, which represents more than 10,000 city workers.

Green said his union is putting together a coalition of labor leaders to head to Sacramento to voice their support for Bass' request for state financial assistance.

Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez, who represents part of the Eastside, also voiced alarm at the planned reductions.

"It already takes us 10 years to fix the sidewalk, five years to put in a full hand-capped curb, a year to fix a streetlight. We can't afford to slow down city services any longer," she said.

Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky, appearing Monday evening at a community meeting on the budget, expressed concern about the proposal to lay off hundreds of civilian workers at the LAPD, calling it "problematic." If those desk jobs disappear, police officers will have to pick up the extra work, she said.

Yaroslavsky said she suspects the LAPD layoff proposal is part of a larger strategy to force the city's unions to make financial concessions.

"My guess is that's part of it," she said. "Because I don't think anybody thinks eliminating those civilian positions is smart from a public safety standpoint."

City labor negotiators have already begun speaking to union leaders about postponing this year's raises, which are expected to



CHRISTINA HOUSE L.A. Times  
**MAYOR KAREN BASS** has been lobbying the state for a relief package to stave off job cuts.

cost about \$250 million. No deals have been announced so far.

The City Council has taken other steps to address the budget gap in recent weeks, voting to approve a major hike in the trash fees collected from single-family homes and apartments with up to four units. That increase is expected to generate as much as \$90 million in the upcoming budget year.

The mayor's spending plan does protect some core services. Hours at libraries and recreation centers will be maintained, according to the mayor's budget team.

Szabo, the top municipal budget analyst, said the spending plan would provide the Fire Department with money to hire an additional 227 employees, roughly half of them firefighters. As part of that expansion, the department would create a new program for addressing homelessness, one that includes street medicine teams.

Bass' budget calls for the city to combine several smaller agencies into a single entity. Under her proposal, the Department of Aging, the Youth Development Department and the Economic and Workforce Development Department would be merged into the Community and Investment Department.

The city would also shut down citizen commissions that focus on health, innovation and climate change.







Today in Southern California

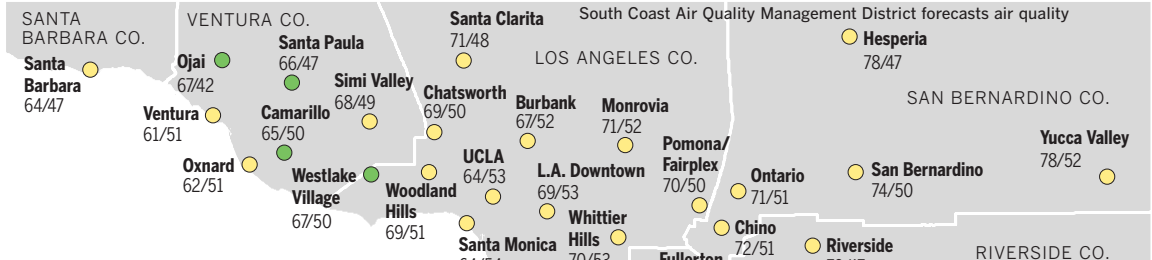
**Coastal fog, some sun inland:** A weak upper-level low will slide across Northern California, producing a cooler day across the region while increasing the onshore flow. Cooler weather and low clouds and fog into the valleys will be the main theme heading into the end of the week. Beaches may see very little sun as the marine layer thickens. A larger upper-level low will come ashore to start the weekend, with a chance for showers.

5-day forecasts

High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin	Valleys	Beaches	Mountains	Deserts
Today	69 53 Fog, then some sun	69 51 Mostly sunny; cool	64 54 Fog, then some sun	62 35 Sunny	91 61 Breezy in p.m.
Thursday	Mostly cloudy 68/54	Partly sunny 70/51	Mostly cloudy 64/54	Partly sunny 63/36	Breezy 89/58
Friday	Mostly cloudy 67/52	Clearing 66/47	Mostly cloudy 63/50	Sunny; cool 53/29	Breezy 84/53
Saturday	Sunny 66/52	A shower 65/46	Mostly sunny 64/50	A shower 46/28	Breezy 78/52
Sunday	Mostly sunny 70/56	Partly sunny 71/52	Sunny; cool 64/53	Cold 48/31	Mostly sunny 79/55

Air quality



Surf and sea

**POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO**  
**Inner waters:** Wind variable less than 10 knots early, then becoming west at 10 knots in the afternoon. Seas 2-3 feet with a SW swell 2 feet at 18 seconds.

**Surf zone:** The risk of strong rip currents is low at the S.B. County beaches and moderate elsewhere with surf of 2-4 feet.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	1-3'	15 sec	SSW	56
Ventura	2-4'	15 sec	SSW	56
Los Angeles	2-4'	17 sec	SSW	59
Orange	2-4'	17 sec	SSW	59
San Diego	2-4'	17 sec	SSW	62

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.				
Today	6:18a	4.6 Hi	12:34a	2.0 Lo
	7:30p	4.7 Hi	12:59p	-0.1 Lo
Thu.	7:15a	4.8 Hi	1:22a	1.1 Lo
	7:55p	5.3 Hi	1:33p	0.0 Lo

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people  
Las Vegas, 25  
Phoenix, 25  
San Francisco, 25

California cities\*

City	Tue.*			Today		
	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	H
Anaheim	69	56	--	70	53	
Avalon/Catalina	60	49	--	57	46	
Bakersfield	88	58	--	85	52	
Barstow	89	60	--	86	57	
Big Bear Lake	63	35	--	62	35	
Bishop	80	45	--	81	42	
Burbank	71	54	--	67	52	
Camarillo	67	53	--	65	50	
Chatsworth	73	52	--	69	50	
Chino	76	52	--	72	51	
Compton	67	56	--	68	55	
Dana Point	63	57	--	64	54	
Death Valley	98	71	--	97	78	
Del Mar	65	56	--	61	55	
Escondido	70	51	--	69	50	
Eureka	56	42	--	55	47	
Fallbrook	65	52	--	69	50	
Fresno	86	54	--	81	49	
Fullerton	71	56	--	69	54	
Hemet	79	47	--	74	46	
Hesperia	76	48	--	73	47	
Huntington Beach	63	57	--	65	56	
Idyllwild	66	45	--	64	45	
Irvine	66	57	--	68	54	

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set			
Los Angeles Co.	Orange Co.	Ventura Co.	
Sun 6:12a/7:31p	6:11a/7:29p	6:16a/7:35p	
Moon 3:45a/3:07p	3:43a/3:06p	3:49a/3:11p	
April 27	May 4	May 12	May 20

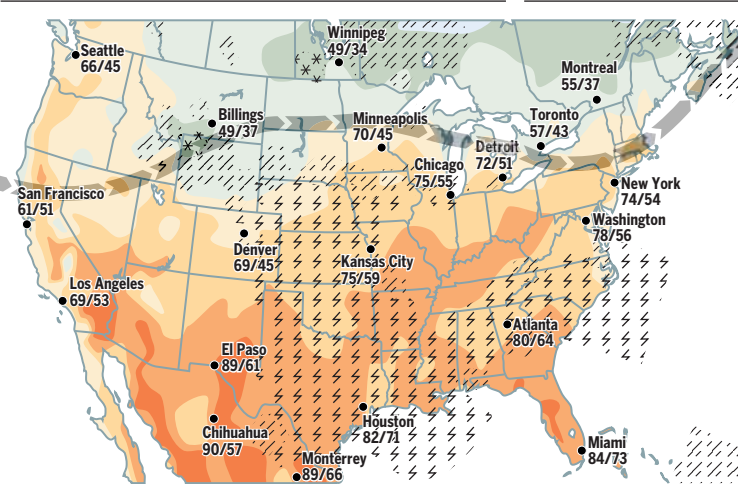
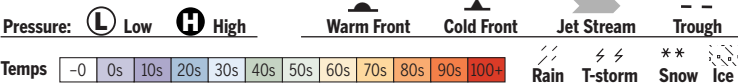
Almanac

Tuesday Downtown readings			
Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
High/low	69/52	67/54	59/53
Normal high/low	73/55	75/54	68/49
High/low a year ago	68/60	65/59	61/54
Record high/date	99/1910	91/2017	83/1987
Record low/date	44/1882	46/2010	37/1970

Precipitation			
Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*	
24-hour total (as of 2 p.m.)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Season total (since Oct. 1)	7.71	3.72	6.15
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	22.02	16.49	24.61
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	13.58	11.20	15.43
Humidity (high/low)	83/59	43/25	86/64

Today in North America

**Thunderstorms in Texas:** A stationary boundary between air masses will fire up storms from Nebraska southward into western Texas. Any of these storms could produce large hail and isolated tornadoes. Meanwhile, warm and dry weather will cover the mid-Atlantic region.



U.S. cities

TUESDAY'S EXTREMES AS OF 2 P.M. FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 93 in Needles, Calif.

Low 15 in Stanley, Idaho

City	Tuesday*			Today			City	Tuesday*			Today		
	Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Sky		Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Hi	Lo	Sky
Albany	71	49	.06	69	40	Su	Seattle	61	41	--	66	45	Su
Albuquerque	80	48	--	81	50	Su	Tampa	85	71	--	88	69	Su
Anchorage	45	38	.14	49	37	Su	Tucson	89	55	--	90	56	Su
Aspen	61	28	.02	63	34	Cy	Tulsa	82	50	--	78	62	R
Atlanta	76	66	Tr	80	64	Ts	Washington, D.C.	82	65	Tr	78	56	Pc
Austin	85	60	.20	81	70	Ts	Wichita	80	53	--	75	60	Ts
Baltimore	80	56	Tr	76	50	Pc	<b>World</b>						
Boise	64	34	--	66	40	Pc	Acapulco	88	70	--	90	76	Su
Boston	59	46	.33	70	48	Su	Amsterdam	59	50	--	59	50	Sh
Burlfalo	53	46	--	64	49	Pc	Athens	75	55	--	75	59	Pc
Burlington, Vt.	63	50	.05	62	37	Cy	Bangkok	97	82	--	100	84	Pc
Charleston, S.C.	86	62	--	83	65	Ts	Barcelona	68	54	Tr	67	55	Su
Charlotte	79	64	.12	76	62	Ts	Berlin	66	42	.13	66	48	Cy
Chicago	73	41	.04	75	55	Ts	Cabo San Lucas	86	64	--	80	63	Pc
Cincinnati	73	45	--	78	55	Pc	Cairo	104	82	--	93	67	Pc
Cleveland	61	48	--	74	54	Pc	Dubai	97	77	--	100	78	Su
Columbia, S.C.	84	61	Tr	82	63	Ts	Dublin	55	41	.36	55	44	Pc
Columbus	71	48	--	79	54	Su	Havana	88	67	--	87	64	Su
Dallas/Ft.Worth	86	58	--	81	68	Ts	Ho Chi Minh City	93	82	--	96	80	Ts
Denver	73	34	--	69	45	Pc	Hong Kong	87	76	.09	86	77	Ts
Detroit	65	44	Tr	72	51	Sh	Istanbul	68	52	--	65	51	Ts
El Paso	88	53	--	89	61	Su	Jerusalem	87	60	--	94	61	W
Eugene	64	36	--	72	39	Su	Johannesburg	71	47	--	68	51	Ts
Fort Myers	87	66	--	91	66	Su	Kuala Lumpur	91	76	.53	88	75	Ts
Hartford	79	46	.19	73	44	Sh	Lima	73	66	--	73	64	Su
Honolulu	84	71	.04	85	73	Sh	London	59	43	--	56	44	R
Houston	86	67	.12	82	71	Ts	Madrid	64	50	.03	73	47	Su
Indianapolis	71	45	--	78	53	Pc	Mecca	106	79	--	103	84	Hz
Jacksonville, Fla.	86	62	--	86	65	Pc	Mexico City	83	57	--	84	60	Pc
Kansas City	79	56	--	75	59	Ts	Montreal	53	46	.18	55	37	Cy
Knoxville	69	63	.76	76	58	Ts	Moscow	73	55	--	80	49	Su
Las Vegas	88	64	--	86	62	Su	Mumbai	99	78	--	94	82	Hz
Louisville	76	52	--	81	59	Pc	New Delhi	104	75	--	105	74	Su
Medford	69	38	--	75	41	Pc	Paris	61	45	.02	59	48	Sh
Memphis	81	58	--	80	64	Cy	Prague	64	45	--	67	51	Pc
Miami	82	73	--	84	73	Su	Rome	72	52	--	67	54	Pc
Santa Ana	66	58	--	67	56	Sh	Seoul	70	63	.52	71	48	Pc
Santa Barbara	60	51	--	64	47	Sh	Singapore	90	79	.02	87	77	Ts
Santa Clarita	77	50	--	71	48	Tr	Taipei City	90	72	--	84	70	Sh
Santa Monica Pier	62	56	--	64	54	Sh	Tokyo	71	55	.52	68	62	R
Santa Paula	66	52	--	66	47	Sh	Vancouver	56	39	--	59	43	Su
Santa Rosa	70	42	Tr	69	45	Sh	Vienna	70	57	--	72	52	Pc
Simi Valley	69	51	--	68	49	Sh							
Tahoe Valley	61	33	--	59	26	Sh							
Temecula	71	49	Tr	72	47	Tr							
Thousand Oaks	66	52	--	66	50	Sh							
Torrance	64	57	--	65	56	Sh							
UCLA	62	55	--	64	53	Sh							
Van Nuys	73	53	--	68	51	Sh							
Ventura	59	53	--	61	51	Sh							
Whittier Hills	71	55	--	70	53	Sh							
Woodland Hills	73	52	--	69	51	Sh							
Wrightwood	65	46	--	62	46	Sh							
Yorba Linda	71	54	--	69	50	Sh							
Yosemite Valley	68	38	--	66	35	Sh							

Trojans pick up coveted guard in portal

By RYAN KARTJE

One of the most coveted transfer guards in college basketball committed to USC, giving Eric Musselman the difference-maker he desperately needed in his second portal class.

Rodney Rice chose USC over more established powers Villanova, Tennessee and Gonzaga, all of whom reportedly were willing to shell out major money to reel in the 6-foot-4 junior combo guard.

Exactly what it cost for the Trojans to win the bidding war for Rice, their top transfer target, was not immediately clear. As name, image and likeness paydays for basketball transfers have skyrocketed ahead of a House vs. NCAA settlement set to change athlete compensation rules, reports Tuesday suggested USC paid upward of \$3 million for the former Maryland stand-out.

A four-star recruit, Rice started his college career at Virginia Tech, where he played only eight games because of injury. He sat out the 2023-24 season before breaking out as a redshirt sophomore at Maryland last season. Rice started 32 games for the Terrapins, averaging 13.8 points, 2.2 rebounds and 2.1 assists per game while shooting 37.3% from three-point range.

At USC, the expectation is Rice will play more point guard than he has in the past, handling the ball and facilitating the offense alongside Desmond Claude, who served as the Trojans' primary floor general last season.

Claude still hasn't made



NICK WASS Associated Press

**RODNEY RICE** shot 37.3% from three-point range last season at Maryland. Now he's headed to USC.

clear his plans for next season. He was expected to evaluate his NBA draft standing before returning to USC for one more season, a person familiar with the Trojans' expectations not authorized to discuss the subject publicly said. But with Rice in the fold handling more of the point guard duties, it wasn't entirely clear as of Tuesday afternoon whether Claude would remain in L.A. The portal was set to close Tuesday night.

If he does return, Claude and Rice would give the Trojans a potent one-two punch in the backcourt. The arrival of five-star freshman Alijah Arenas should only raise that ceiling.

USC likely still could use more depth at guard, considering Claude is the only returning player at the position. Freshman guard Jerry Easter and Cal State Northridge transfer Keonte Jones are the only other ball-handlers on the roster.

Musselman already has managed to remake the Trojans' now-supersized front court with six new transfer wings and forwards, all of whom are 6 feet 6 or taller. He brought in a high-potential, 6-10 sophomore big man from Virginia in Jacob Coffe, along with a starting-caliber power forward from Utah in

Ezra Ausar. Musselman mined the mid-major ranks for rising stars, reeling in the likes of Amari Dickerson, the Horizon League's defensive player of the year, from Robert Morris; Jones, an All-Big West first-team selection from Northridge; and Jaden Brownell, a stretch forward from Samford. To solve USC's rim-protection issues, he added the NCAA's leader in blocks last season, 7-3 center Gabe Dynes from Youngstown State.

Adding Rice is Musselman's biggest move yet, one that should help soften the blow of losing sophomore star Wesley Yates III, who surprisingly entered the portal this month. He has since committed to Washington, returning to the school he attended prior to USC.

As of Tuesday, the final day for players to enter the transfer portal, the Trojans had the No. 11 transfer class in college basketball, according to 247 Sports, while Rice was the 25th-ranked transfer, one spot behind Yates.

USC still has room to add to its haul. Pending the NCAA's decision on the eligibility of senior forward Saint Thomas, the Trojans will have either two or three available slots on the roster.

Buzz around Bruins builds upon arrival of Iamaleava

[Iamaleava, from B10] edly asking Tennessee for more than the \$2 million-plus he was set to make with the Volunteers next season, Foster would say only that it was "a success."

"I don't know what he was looking for or whatnot," Foster said of the Long Beach native who starred at Warren High in Downey. "I know that he accepted our contract and he wants to be a Bruin, so that's all I'm focused on."

It appears to be a package deal given that Iamaleava's younger brother, Madden, is expected to join Nico in Westwood after entering the transfer portal. Also a quarterback, Madden committed to UCLA out of Long Beach Poly before signing with Arkansas in December. Foster said there was no smoothing over of the situation needed before Nico agreed to become a Bruin but could not comment on the potential addition of any players from the transfer portal.

There had been speculation that the arrival of Madden Iamaleava as the heir apparent to his older brother could prompt UCLA freshman quarterback Robert McDaniel to enter the portal, but Foster said McDaniel was at practice Tuesday and had not informed the coaching staff of a possible departure.

Given that Nico Iamaleava cannot join the team before enrolling for summer classes, the Bruins will complete their final spring practices without the quarterback who almost surely will take the first snap in the season opener against Utah on Aug. 30 at the Rose Bowl. If nothing else, McDaniel and fellow quarterbacks Demarcus Davis, Luke Duncan, Henry Hasselbeck, Nick Billoups and Colton Gumino will have opportunities during the next two weeks to make their case to be the top backup.

Foster said he was not concerned that missing



WADE PAYNE Associated Press

**NICO IAMALEAVA** threw for 2,616 yards and 19 touchdowns for Tennessee last season.

spring practice would hinder Iamaleava's ability to quickly learn new offensive coordinator Tino Sunseri's system.

"I don't think it will hurt him at all," Foster said, noting Sunseri's recent success working with quarterbacks for only one season, including Kurtis Rourke at Indiana. "You know, it's pretty cool that these other guys are going to be able to get some more reps so we can really see who can get out there





Photographs by DAVID ZALUBOWSKI Associated Press

**KAWHI LEONARD** drives past Denver's Aaron Gordon in the Clippers' 105-102 win Monday in Game 2 of their first-round series. Leonard scored 39 points on 15-for-19 shooting to help L.A. bounce back from a loss.

# Leonard 'willed us to a win,' Clippers coach Lue confirms

[Clippers, from B10] these games are hard to play. You got to play every possession every minute."

The game wasn't decided until Denver's Christian Braun missed a three-point shot and Jokic, who had a triple-double with 26 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists, missed a three with one second left.

Game 3 is Thursday night at the Intuit Dome.

"I thought Kawhi willed us to a win," Clippers coach Tyronn Lue said.

Denver's Jamal Murray, who had 26 points, tied the score at 100 on a three-point shot with 2:05 left. Michael Porter Jr. rebounded a miss by Leonard, but Porter turned it over with 1:35 left.

Norman Powell then drilled a three-pointer to give the Clippers a 103-100 lead with 1:30 left, forcing the Nuggets to call timeout. Jokic, who had seven turnovers, then made two free throws to make it a one-point score.

But Leonard made sure the Clippers wouldn't have a repeat of Game 1, when they failed to hold a late lead and lost in overtime. He scored the game's final basket on a 21-foot jumper with 54.5 seconds left.

"This is what Kawhi lives for," Lue said. "He's trying to get to this point where he's healthy for the playoffs. So we know if we got a healthy Kawhi, we can win any series. That just shows you tonight what he's capable of doing."

Ivica Zubac finished with 16 points and 12 rebounds, and Powell had 13 points.



**JAMES HARDEN** was swarmed by Denver's defense but still managed to contribute 18 points in the win.

The game figured to turn testy after all the physical play between the teams, and things got heated between Powell and Murray in the third quarter. Murray felt the game's final basket on a 21-foot jumper with 54.5 seconds left.

After a review by the officials, Dunn, Powell and Braun were called for technical fouls. It was all settled with Murray shooting a free

throw. "I thought we responded well," Lue said. "It actually got Norm going. He made three shots after that. Jamal said he was just competing. It wasn't anything dirty. Just playing hard and competing. When you are in the playoffs, if things like this don't happen, then I don't know if you are playing hard enough. So, it's going to happen."

Leonard was playing hard from the start, giving the Clippers his all, refusing to let anything get in his way. At the end of the first half he calmly drilled a three-point shot just before the buzzer, giving

ing the Clippers a 55-52 half-time lead. Leonard had 21 points while playing all 24 minutes of the first half, missing just one of 10 shots.

"It felt like he didn't miss a shot," James Harden, who had 18 points, said about Leonard. "His shot-making ability is elite. That's the aggressiveness that we need from him. No matter what's going on, no matter who is guarding him, he just got to his spot and raised up. So, big-time player. He played big-time tonight."

## MONDAY'S LATE BOX CLIPPERS 105, NUGGETS 102

CLIPPERS										
	Min	FG-A	FTA	OR-T	A	P	T			
Leonard	39	15-19	5-5	0-3	5	1	39			
Powell	33	5-14	1-2	0-0	3	3	13			
Zubac	40	6-10	4-5	3-12	4	5	16			
Dunn	28	2-7	0-0	2-6	2	3	5			
Harden	38	7-17	0-0	0-3	7	1	18			
Jones Jr.	19	3-7	0-0	1-2	0	0	6			
Batum	18	2-5	0-0	0-4	0	1	6			
Bogdanovic	15	0-5	0-0	0-1	2	3	0			
Simmons	7	1-1	0-0	1-1	1	1	2			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>41:45</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<b>7-32</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>102</b>				

Shooting: Field goals, 48.2%; free throws, 83.3%. Three-point goals: 13-34 (Leonard 4-7, Harden 4-11, Powell 2-4, Batum 2-5, Dunn 1-4, Bogdanovic 0-1, Jones Jr. 0-2). Team Rebounds: 5. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 5 (Harden 2, Batum, Dunn, Leonard). Turnovers: 11 (Harden 4, Bogdanovic 2, Zubac 2, Jones Jr., Leonard, Powell). Steals: 13 (Dunn 3, Powell 3, Batum 2, Leonard 2, Bogdanovic, Harden, Zubac). Technical Fouls: Powell, 5:18 third.

DENVER										
	Min	FG-A	FTA	OR-T	A	P	T			
Gordon	38	5-13	3-3	2-6	1	3	14			
Porter Jr.	33	6-11	1-2	6-15	1	0	15			
Jokic	43	8-16	6-10	3-12	10	2	26			
Braun	34	2-7	1-2	2-6	2	4	5			
Murray	42	9-17	1-1	0-2	6	3	23			
Westbrook	23	5-11	1-2	2-4	1	1	14			
Watson	13	1-2	1-2	0-4	1	0	3			
Pickett	7	1-2	0-0	0-0	1	1	2			
Jordan	4	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37:79</b>	<b>14-32</b>	<b>15-50</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>102</b>				

Shooting: Field goals, 46.8%; free throws, 83.3%. Three-point goals: 14-32 (Jokic 4-8, Murray 4-8, Westbrook 3-6, Porter Jr. 2-4, Gordon 1-3, Pickett 0-1, Braun 0-2). Team Rebounds: 9. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 1 (Murray). Turnovers: 20 (Jokic 7, Murray 4, Porter Jr. 3, Braun 2, Westbrook 2, Gordon, Pickett). Steals: 8 (Jokic 3, Braun, Murray, Porter Jr., Watson, Westbrook). Technical Fouls: Braun, 5:18 third.

CLIPPERS	25	30	23	27	105
DENVER	31	21	24	26	102

A-19,989. T-2:19.

# Leonard's epic feat was months in the making

BY BRODERICK TURNER

Kawhi Leonard's teammates marvel at how much the Clippers' star forward has dedicated himself to get his body back to peak level.

They have watched how Leonard has stayed the course despite the frequent times his body betrayed him. They have supported Leonard during the trying times with his health issues because they have seen how he refuses to wallow in self-pity.

They know what Leonard has done behind the scenes during rehabilitation when the media is not around and on those days and nights when a lot of teammates are not around.

The culmination of all those days in the lab this season working to get his right knee healthy was Leonard's dominance in Game 2 of the Western Conference playoffs against the Nuggets on Monday night in Denver.

He missed only four of 19 shots while pouring in 39 points over 39 minutes to help the Clippers even the series at 1-1 before they returned home for Game 3 on Thursday night and Game 4 on Saturday afternoon at the Intuit Dome.

James Harden was succinct in his praise for Leonard's willingness to continually work on his body.

"Every. Single. Day. Like, it's the preparation," Harden said late Monday night after Game 2 in Denver. "It's the treatment. It's the strengthening of his body. It's the correctives. And then it's like going on court and putting it all together and it's consistent. Every. Single. Day..."

"Luck hasn't been on his side or whatever the case you might call it. But he loves to hoop. And as you see, when he's on the court, he's a killer. Kawhi is just special."

Leonard missed the first 34 games because of his ailing right knee. Then he played in only 37 games and just one set of back-to-back games.

He missed the last eight regular-season games last season because of right knee inflammation and played in only two of the Clippers' six playoff games against the Dallas Mavericks because of the knee injury. When Leonard was invited to USA Basketball workouts in Las Vegas last summer, he was sent home to rest the knee and was unable to participate in the Paris Olympics.

None of that stopped Leonard from continuing his work.

Harden was asked if fans and NBA people have an appreciation for what Leonard has endured to get back here.

"Naw," Harden answered immediately. "Naw, not even a little bit. It's always negative. It's always what he's been through, what he's not able to do because of some-



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI AP

**KAWHI LEONARD** hit his peak form in Game 2 after sitting out the first 34 games of the season.

thing he can't control. Like, we don't appreciate how great he is when he's actually out there and putting on performances like this tonight.

"I feel like that about everybody that's in the league that goes through something that's out of their hands and they can't control. It's like it's always the negative, it's always the hate that people talk about, which is something that we got to live with, I guess, in this world. But as for me being close with him, every single day and seeing the work he puts in, you appreciate him."

In interviews this season, Leonard has talked about how his "love" for the game keeps bringing him back and how he just grinds and keeps his head down.

Before his difficult end to last season, he played in just two playoff games during the Clippers' series against the Phoenix Suns in 2023 because of a meniscus tear. He missed the entire 2021-22 season with a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee. Now he is healthy and wants to be there for his teammates in the playoffs.

"I'm just happy that I'm able to move and I'm coming out the game feeling well and that's what I'm taking my pride in is just being healthy," he said. "I sat and watched these playoff games and series the past few years. So, being able to be frontline out there, it just feels good to me no matter which way the game goes. That's what I'm taking pride in. I just want to be out there and play and be frontline with my team."

Over six seasons with the Clippers, he has played in 266 out of a possible 492 regular-season games. Injuries have robbed him of so many games yet he keeps coming back.

"Every time someone gives up on him, he comes back," coach Tyronn Lue said. "He's a hard worker. He's dedicated to keeping his body right and sometimes some unfortunate things happen. But you can't control that. But it's not a lack of work. It's not from a lack of wanting to be here and just sometimes some bad luck hits. But he's going to keep coming back and he's going to get to this point where he is right now and that's why I'm so happy for him."

## NBA PLAYOFFS

# Pistons halt record postseason skid

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cade Cunningham wasn't thinking about himself after the first postseason victory of his career. His focus was on all the Detroit fans who stuck by the Pistons during 17 years since the last one.

Now Cunningham and his teammates want to give those fans more than just a game. They want to get them a series.

Cunningham had 33 points and 12 rebounds, Dennis Schroder made the tiebreaking three-pointer with 55 seconds left, and the Pistons ended their NBA-record, 15-game postseason losing streak by beating the host New York Knicks 100-94 on Monday night in Game 2 of their playoff series.

"It's a great feeling. It feels good to represent the city like we did tonight," Cunningham said.

The Pistons, who hadn't even been to the postseason since 2019, recovered after the Knicks erased a 15-point deficit to earn their first playoff victory since Game 4



ANGELINA KATSANIS Associated Press

**JOSH HART** and New York couldn't hold off Detroit and Dennis Schroder, who hit the tiebreaking three.

of the 2008 Eastern Conference finals against Boston. The Celtics won the final two games of that series and the Pistons were then swept in 2009, 2016 and 2019 before dropping Game 1 at Madison Square Garden.

Now they are back in the win column, all tied in the series and will host Game 3 on Thursday night.

Schroder, who wasn't even on the Pistons until a trade in February, nailed the three-pointer after the

Knicks used a 16-4 run to tie it at 94 on Josh Hart's dunk. He finished with 20 points off the bench.

The Pistons engineered one of the biggest turn-arounds in NBA history, going 44-38 after a 14-win season in 2023-24 that included a 28-game losing streak, longest in a season.

They were in good shape to win Game 1 with an eight-point lead after three quarters, before the Knicks used a 21-0 run in the fourth to win

123-112. Detroit built another eight-point advantage after three Monday and this time made the big plays after another Knicks rally.

Jalen Brunson scored 37 points for the No. 3-seeded Knicks, but Karl-Anthony Towns and OG Anunoby both were limited to 10 after each had 23 in the opener.

"And now it's on us to respond," Brunson said.

Cunningham bounced back with a strong performance after the All-Star guard was just eight for 21 in Game 1. The Knicks struggled to keep him out of the paint and defend him without fouling, as the Pistons shot 14 free throws to the Knicks' two while building a 55-49 lead at halftime.

## Notes

Damian Lillard was in the starting lineup Tuesday night when Milwaukee visited Indiana for Game 2 of their first-round series. He'd been sidelined since March 18 after being diagnosed with deep vein thrombosis in his right calf. ... Payton Pritchard of Boston won sixth man of the year.

## NBA PLAYOFFS, FIRST ROUND

### WESTERN CONFERENCE

**1 Oklahoma City vs. 8 Memphis**  
Thunder lead, 1-0

<b>61</b>	Oklahoma City 131, Memphis 80
<b>62</b>	Tuesday at OKC, late
<b>63</b>	Thursday at Memphis, 6:30, TNT
<b>64</b>	Saturday at Memphis, 12:30, TNT
<b>65</b>	Monday at OKC, TBD*
<b>66</b>	May 1 at Memphis, TBD*
<b>67</b>	May 3 at OKC, TBD*

**2 Houston vs. 7 Golden State**  
Warriors lead, 1-0

<b>61</b>	Golden State 95, Houston 85
<b>62</b>	Wednesday at Houston, 6:30, TNT
<b>63</b>	Saturday at Golden St., 5:30, Ch. 7
<b>64</b>	Monday at Golden State, 7, TNT
<b>65</b>	April 30 at Houston, TBD*
<b>66</b>	May 2 at Golden State, TBD*
<b>67</b>	May 4 at Houston, TBD*

**3 LAKERS vs. 6 Minnesota**  
Timberwolves lead, 1-0

<b>61</b>	Minnesota 117, LAKERS 95
<b>62</b>	Tuesday at LAKERS, late
<b>63</b>	Friday at Min., 6:30, SpecSN, ESPN
<b>64</b>	Sunday at Minnesota, 12:30, Ch. 7
<b>65</b>	April 30 at LAKERS, TBD*
<b>66</b>	May 2 at Minnesota, TBD*
<b>67</b>	May 4 at LAKERS, TBD*

**4 Denver vs. 5 CLIPPERS**  
Series tied, 1-1

<b>61</b>	Denver 112, CLIPPERS 110 (OT)
<b>62</b>	CLIPPERS 105, Denver 102
<b>63</b>	Thur. at CLIPPERS, 7, FDSC, NBA TV
<b>64</b>	Saturday at CLIPPERS, 3, FDSC, TNT
<b>65</b>	Tuesday at Denver, TBD
<b>66</b>	May 1 at CLIPPERS, TBD*
<b>67</b>	May 3 at Denver, TBD*

\*if necessary

### EASTERN CONFERENCE

**1 Cleveland vs. 8 Miami**  
Cavaliers lead, 1-0

<b>61</b>	Cleveland 121, Miami 100
<b>62</b>	Wednesday at Cleve., 4:30, NBA TV
<b>63</b>	Saturday at Miami, 10 a.m., TNT
<b>64</b>	Monday at Miami, TBD
<b>65</b>	April 30 at Cleveland, TBD*
<b>66</b>	May 2 at Miami, TBD*
<b>67</b>	May 4 at Cleveland, TBD*

**2 Boston vs. 7 Orlando**  
Celtics lead, 1-0

<b>61</b>	Boston 103, Orlando 86
<b>62</b>	Wednesday at Boston, 4, TNT
<b>63</b>	Friday at Orlando, 4, ESPN
<b>64</b>	Sunday at Orlando, 4, TNT
<b>65</b>	Tuesday at Boston, TBD*
<b>66</b>	May 1 at Orlando, TBD*
<b>67</b>	May 3 at Boston, TBD*

**3 New York vs. 6 Detroit**  
Series tied, 1-1

<b>61</b>	New York 123, Detroit 112
<b>62</b>	Detroit 100, New York 94
<b>63</b>	Thursday at Detroit, 4, TNT
<b>64</b>	Sunday at Detroit, 10 a.m., Ch. 7
<b>65</b>	Tuesday at New York, TBD
<b>66</b>	May 1 at Detroit, TBD*
<b>67</b>	May 3 at New York, TBD*

**4 Indiana vs. 5 Milwaukee**  
Pacers lead, 1-0

<b>61</b>	Indiana 117, Milwaukee 98
<b>62</b>	Tuesday at Indiana, late
<b>63</b>	Friday at Milw., 5, ESPN, NBA TV
<b>64</b>	Sunday at Milwaukee, 6:30, TNT
<b>65</b>	Tuesday at Indiana, TBD*
<b>66</b>	May 2 at Milwaukee, TBD*
<b>67</b>	May 4 at Indiana, TBD*

All times PDT, p.m. except noted



STANDINGS

Through Monday

NATIONAL LEAGUE

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
DODGERS	16	7	.696	—	7-3
San Diego	16	7	.696	—	6-4
San Francisco	15	8	.652	1	5-5
Arizona	13	9	.591	2½	7-3
Colorado	4	17	.190	11	2-8
Central	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
Chicago	14	10	.583	—	5-5
Milwaukee	12	11	.522	1½	5-5
Cincinnati	11	12	.478	2½	6-4
St. Louis	9	14	.391	4½	3-7
Pittsburgh	8	15	.348	5½	3-7
East	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
New York	16	7	.696	—	7-3
Philadelphia	13	10	.565	3	5-5
Miami	10	12	.455	5½	4-6
Atlanta	9	13	.409	6½	6-4
Washington	9	13	.409	6½	4-6

AMERICAN LEAGUE

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
Texas	13	9	.591	—	5-5
Seattle	12	10	.545	1	8-2
ANGELS	11	10	.524	1½	4-6
Houston	11	11	.500	2	6-4
Athletics	10	12	.455	3	5-5
Central	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
Detroit	14	9	.609	—	6-4
Cleveland	13	9	.591	½	7-3
Kansas City	9	14	.391	5	2-8
Minnesota	7	15	.318	6½	3-7
Chicago	5	17	.227	8½	3-7
East	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
New York	14	9	.609	—	7-3
Boston	13	11	.542	1½	6-4
Toronto	12	11	.522	2	4-6
Baltimore	9	12	.429	4	4-6
Tampa Bay	9	13	.409	4½	4-6

Today's games

Dodgers at Chicago (NL)	4 p.m.
Angels vs. Pittsburgh	6:30 p.m.
St. Louis at Atlanta	9:15 a.m.
San Diego at Detroit	10 a.m.
Philadelphia at New York (NL)	10 a.m.
Cincinnati at Miami	10 a.m.
New York (AL) at Cleveland	10 a.m.
Baltimore at Washington	3:45 p.m.
Seattle at Boston	3:45 p.m.
Colorado at Kansas City	4:30 p.m.
Toronto at Houston	4:30 p.m.
Chicago (AL) at Minnesota	4:30 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Arizona	6:30 p.m.
Milwaukee at San Francisco	6:45 p.m.
Texas at Athletics	7 p.m.

He's stepping up to Dodgers' fashion plate

Japanese artist Murakami's bright team gear so popular it sparks a new collection.

By STEVE HENSON

A month ago Dodgers gear festooned with colorful flowers in the unmistakable designs of acclaimed Japanese artist Takashi Murakami sold out in minutes at a pop-up on Fairfax Avenue. A couple of hundred Angelenos lined up overnight to purchase gear.

The pop-up, called the MLB Tokyo Series collection, preceded the two-game, season-opening series in Japan between the Dodgers and Chicago Cubs, and items soon hit the secondary market for four times the purchase price. Players and their families donned the collection, fueling the fervor.

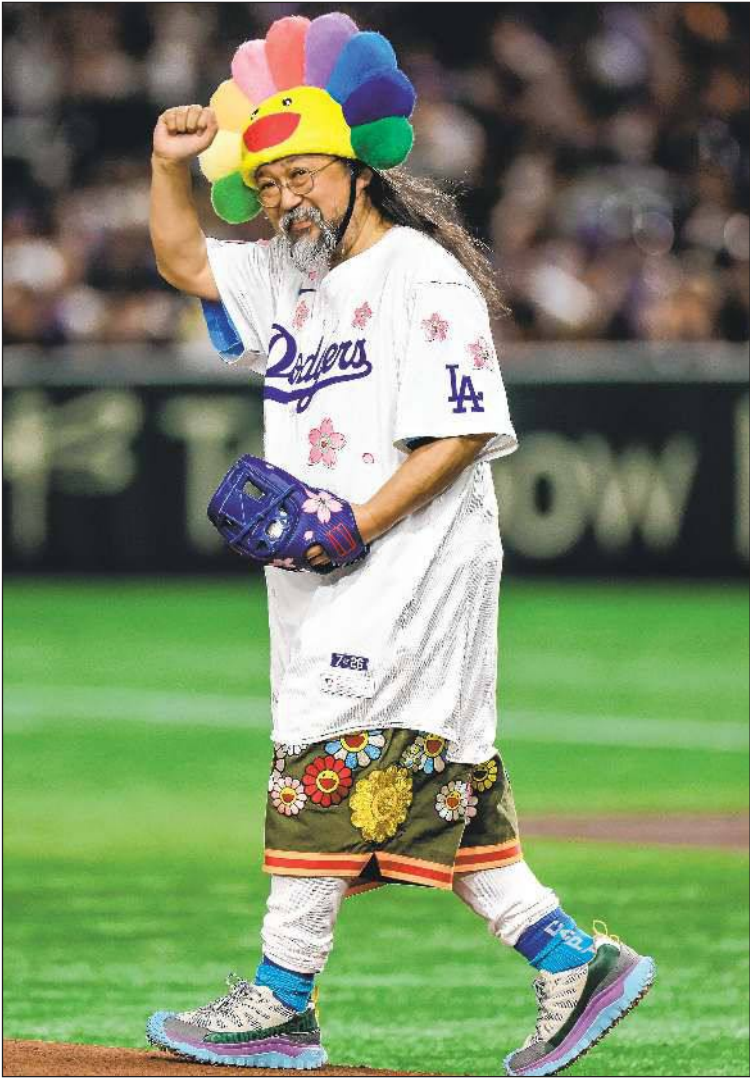
The merchandise was so popular that Murakami and the Dodgers responded by reprising the memorable words of Hall of Fame Cubs shortstop Ernie Banks: "Let's play two!"

A new collection presented by Complex and Fanatics will be available next Monday during Japanese Heritage Night at Dodger Stadium and the Dodger Clubhouse store, then can be purchased only online. Murakami, 63, will throw out the ceremonial first pitch as he did before an exhibition between the Dodgers and Yomiuri Giants at the Tokyo Dome on March 15.

"It's been two months since I started practicing for the first pitch in Tokyo, but given my age, it's not so easy to pick up new skills," Murakami said playfully in an interview with The Times. "Still, compared to the first day when I couldn't throw the ball at all, I've improved significantly.

"My hope this time is to throw the ball without it bouncing."

Murakami is unquestionably adept with a brush, a pen or a computer, creating iconic art that features manga, anime, cartoons and brightly colored anthropomorphic cherry blossoms, mushrooms and assorted flowers. He began delivering commissioned projects for luxury brands and celebrities 20



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

**TAKASHI MURAKAMI**, throwing out the first pitch in Tokyo, is known for colorful designs featuring flowers and cartoons.

years ago, and a financial pinnacle came in 2008 when his provocative, life-size figure "My Lonesome Cowboy" sold for \$15.1 million at auction.

Since then Murakami has integrated his art on Louis Vuitton handbags, a Kanye West album cover and the Kid Cudi collaboration "Kids See Ghosts." He also had a solo exhibition in 2022 at the Broad titled Takashi Murakami: Stepping on the Tail of a Rainbow that included sculpture, painting, wallpaper and immersive installations.

Now his attention has turned to baseball. The MLB Tokyo Series collection had his familiar colorful flora sprinkled across jerseys, bats, balls, hoodies, flip-flops and a Shohei Ohtani bobblehead. The surprise medium might have been collaborating with Topps on baseball cards.

The Murakami gear was part of a record-breaking special event for Fanatics, in which the company reportedly took in \$40 million across related merchandise and trading cards.

"Since 2023 I have been creating

trading cards and trading card games with my team, so I felt I approached this project with a good understanding of the context," Murakami said. "But when we filmed the unboxing event for the Topps Complex Series and Tokyo Series on YouTube, I recognized anew how profound the world of American sports trading cards is, which shook me with excitement."

The overall success of the Tokyo Series collection delighted Murakami, who said he remembers playing catch with his father as a child.

"Honestly, I had thought baseball wasn't as major a sport in Japan these days, so I was surprised by the overwhelming response," he said. "I received messages from childhood friends and was approached by neighbors afterwards, which made me realize that baseball remains the beloved sport among the Japanese public."

The addition of Japanese megastars Ohtani, Yoshinobu Yamamoto and Roki Sasaki made collaborating with the Dodgers a natural fit. The team's popularity in Japan never has been greater.

"The Dodgers are the team Hideo Nomo joined when he first played Major League Baseball, overcoming various obstacles," Murakami said. "His success had a significant impact on Japanese players entering the majors, and his achievements are vivid in my memory."

"Shohei Ohtani joining the Dodgers feels like a fateful story for Japanese baseball, and I'm deeply moved by it. In that sense, I consider myself a Dodgers fan."

Murakami added that he has felt comfortable in L.A. since his exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in 2007 and 2008.

"I believe my career as an artist in the contemporary art world took off in Los Angeles," he said. "The [MOCA] exhibition, curated by Paul Schimmel, was pivotal in establishing my career in America. Whenever I visit Los Angeles, I feel a strong connection, as if it's my second hometown, with fans saying hello to me around the city. So I'm especially grateful for this new relationship with the Dodgers in Los Angeles."

BASEBALL: MONDAY FLASHBACK

CLEVELAND 6, N.Y. YANKEES 4											
New York	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.	Cleveland	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Wells c	5	0	0	.182		Kwan if	4	2	2	.333	
Judge dh	4	0	1	.384		a-Jones rf	3	0	0	.173	
Bellinger cf	4	0	1	.183		Noel rf	1	0	0	.179	
Goldsch 1b	3	1	2	.372		Ramirez 3b	5	1	2	.476	
Chishlm 2b	4	1	1	.2161		Mnazdro dh	3	1	1	.217	
Volpe ss	3	1	1	.217		Santana 1b	4	0	0	.224	
Dominguez lf	4	1	1	.232		Arias 2b-ss	4	1	0	.275	
Reyes rf	3	0	1	.182		Martinez cf	4	1	2	.364	
b-Rice	1	0	0	.263		Soto rf	4	0	0	.202	
Cabrera 3b	4	0	2	.302		Rocchio ss	2	1	2	.250	
Totals	35	4	10	4		1-Schman	0	0	0	.019	
						Totals	34	6	10	6	

New York	000	000	220	—	4	10	0
Cleveland	004	101	00x	—	6	10	1

a-gopped for Jones in the 8th. b-grounded out for Reyes in the 9th.

1-run for Rocchio in the 8th.

**Walks**—New York 3: Judge 1, Goldschmidt 1, Volpe 1. Cleveland 4: Kwan 1, Jones 1, Manzardo 1, Rocchio 1. **Strikeouts**—New York 12: Wells 1, Judge 2, Goldschmidt 1, Chisholm 2, Dominguez 3, Reyes 2, Cabrera 1. Cleveland 7: Jones 2, Manzardo 1, Santana 1, Arias 2, Taylor 1. **E**—Rocchio (5). **LOB**—New York 7, Cleveland 9. **2B**—Judge (6), Martinez (3), Kwan (3). **HR**—Dominguez (2), off G.Williams; Chisholm (7), off Sewald; Ramirez (8), off Schmidt; Ramirez (7), off Schmidt. **RBIs**—Dominguez 2 (11), Chisholm 2 (14), Manzardo 4 (13), Manzardo (77), Rocchio (6). **SB**—Kwan (3). **Runners left in scoring position**—New York 3 (Chisholm, Judge, Bellinger); Cleveland 4 (Manzardo 3, Santana). **RISP**—New York 0 for 5; Cleveland 3 for 9.

**New York**

IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Schmidt, L, 0-1	4	7	5	3	7	80	7.45
Gohmert	3	1	1	1	0	1	12.00
Yarborough	1	0	0	0	0	13	5.40

**Cleveland**

IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
G.Williams, W, 2-1	6½	7	2	2	8	104	4.15
Sewald	1½	2	2	2	0	1	19.610
Canillo, H, 1	½	0	0	1	1	9	1.54
Smith, K, 1-1	1	0	0	2	2	11	1.50

**HR**—Yarborough (Rocchio). **U**— Nick Mahlich, Iv Carapazza, Mark Ripberger, Chad Fairchild. **T**—2:42. **Tickets sold**—20,896 (34,788).

N.Y. METS 5, PHILADELPHIA 4											
Philadelphia	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.	New York	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Stott 2b	5	1	2	.395		Lindor ss	3	2	2	.284	
Turner ss	3	0	0	.263		Soto rf	4	0	0	.244	
Harper 1b	3	0	0	.262		Alonso 1b	4	0	1	.341	
Schwab dh	4	0	1	.268		Nimmo if	4	0	1	.205	
Castellans rf	4	0	0	.289		Winker dh	3	1	2	.205	
Kepler lf	4	1	2	.233		b-Marte dh	1	0	0	.179	
Realuto c	4	1	1	.232		Torrens c	3	0	0	.226	
Bohm 3b	3	1	1	.198		Acuña 2b	3	1	1	.292	
Rojas cf	2	0	0	.324		Baty 3b	2	0	0	.192	
a-Clemens	1	0	0	.000		Taylor cf	3	1	1	.211	
Stevenson cf	1	0	0	.333		Totals	30	5	8	5	
Totals	34	4	7	4							

Philadelphia	000	000	004	—	4	7	0
New York	110	000	30x	—	5	8	0

a-flied out for Rojas in the 7th. b-struck out for Winker in the 8th.

**Walks**—Philadelphia 4: Turner 2, Harper 2. New York 2: Lindor 1, Baty 1. **Strikeouts**—Philadelphia 13: Stott 1, Turner 2, Harper 2, Schwabter 1, Castellanos 2, Kepler 1, Realuto 2, Bohm 1, Rojas 1. New York 9: Lindor 1, Soto 1, Alonso 2, Nimmo 2, Marte 1, Acuña 1, Taylor 1. **LOB**—Philadelphia 8, New York 3. **2B**—Kepler (8). **HR**—Stott (2), off Diaz; Lindor (4), off Nola; Winker (1), off Nola; Soto (3), off Nola; Lindor (5), off Reyes. **RBIs**—Realuto (7), Stott (13), Nola (4) (3), Winker (7). **Runners left in scoring position**—Philadelphia 3 (Schwabter 2, Realuto); New York 2 (Nimmo 2). **RISP**—Philadelphia 2 for 5; New York 1 for 6. **Runners moved up**—Soto. **DP**—Winker. **GIDP**—Torrens. **DP**—Philadelphia 2 (Turner, Stott, Harper, Harper).

**Philadelphia**

IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Nola, L, 0-5	6½	7	4	4	2	6	101.643
Ruiz	1	1	1	0	0	9	6.75
Banks	1	0	0	0	0	3	16.270

**New York**

IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Megill, W, 3-2	5½	1	0	4	10	92	1.09
Garrett, H, 7	½	1	0	0	1	12	0.00
Krivanich, H, 4	2	4	3	0	0	36	2.93
Diaz, S, 6-6	1	1	1	0	2	11	5.59

**Inherited runners scored**—Ruiz 2-2, Garrett 1-0, Diaz 2-2. **HBP**—Megill (Bohm). **U**—Shane Livensparger, Nate Tompkins, Mark Wegner, Bruce Dreckman. **T**—2:40. **Tickets sold**—35,430 (42,136).

ATLANTA 7, ST. LOUIS 6											
St. Louis	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.	Atlanta	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Noothair lf	5	0	0	0	.238	Verdugo if	3	1	0	0	.294
Contreras 1b	5	1	2	1	.182	Riley 3b	3	2	2	2	.278
Donovan ss	3	0	1	2	.356	Ozuna dh	3	0	0	0	.323
Arenado 3b	5	1	1	0	.282	1-White dh	0	0	0	0	.235
Burleson dh	3	0	0	0	.239	Olson 1b	3	1	1	1	.237
Walker rf	4	0	0	0	.215	Albers 2b	3	1	0	0	.235
Siani cf	0	0	0	0	.250	Harris cf	3	1	0	1	.220
Gorman 2b	4	1	2	1	.258	Murphy c	4	1	1	2	.305
Pagés c	4	2	2	2	.255	Kelenic rf	4	0	0	0	.167
Scott cf-rf	4	1	3	3	.264	Allen ss	3	0	0	0	.250
Totals	37	6	11	5		Totals	29	7	8	7	
St. Louis						020	001	003	-6	11	0
Atlanta						020	000	056	-7	8	2

St. Louis	020	001	003	—	6	11	0
Atlanta	002	000	05x	—	7	8	2

1-run for Ozuna in the 8th.

**Walks**—St. Louis 2: Donovan 1, Burleson 1. Atlanta 5: Verdugo 1, Riley 1, Ozuna 1, Walker 1, Strikeouts—St. Louis 6: Noothair 1, Arenado 1, Burleson 1, Olson 1, Albers 1. Atlanta 6: Verdugo 1, Olson 1, Murphy 1, Kelenic 2, Allen 1. **E**—Ozuna (1), Albers (1). **LOB**—St. Louis 7, Atlanta 4. **2B**—Gorman (3), Arenado (7), Pagés (3), Scott (3). **HR**—Contreras (2), off Iglesias; Riley (6), off Fedde; Murphy (5), off Romero. **RBIs**—Scott 2 (9), Gorman (4), Contreras 2 (9), Riley 2 (5), Donovan (4), Harris (10), Murphy 3 (11). **SB**—Scott (8). **SF**—Harris. **On-base**. **Runners left in scoring position**—St. Louis 3 (Burleson, Noothair, Scott), Atlanta 2 (Albers, Allen). **RISP**—St. Louis 5 for 13; Atlanta 2 for 5. **Runners moved up**—Ally. **GIDP**—Walker, Olson, Kelenic. **DP**—St. Louis 2 (Contreras, Donovan, Contreras); Atlanta 1 (Allen, Albers, Scott).

**St. Louis**

IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Fedde	6	5	2	2	3	84	3.33
Leahy, H, 3	0	0	0	0	1	13	1.93
Romer, L, 0-1, BS, 1-2	½	2	4	4	2	1	19.300
Matoso	1	1	1	0	1	7	5.40

**Atlanta**

IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Schwellenbach	7	8	3	2	0	92	2.56
Hernandez, W, 2-0	1	0	0	1	0	11	7.70
Iglesias	1	3	3	1	1	25	6.00

**Inherited runners scored**—Romero 3-3. **U**—Mark Canjan, Jordan Baker, Stu Schewater, Dan Merzel. **T**—2:11. **Tickets sold**—30,180 (41,149).

BOSTON 4, CHICAGO WHITE SOX 2											
Chicago	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.	Boston	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Maton 1b	1	1	1	0	.163	Duran cf-if	4	1	1	0	.232
b-Dalbec 1b	1	0	0	0	.000	Devers dh	3	0	0	0	.213
Benintendi dh	3	1	2	1	.245	Bregman 3b	2	1	1	0	.297
Robert cf	4	0	0	0	.145	Story ss	4	1	3	1	.337
Quero c	4	0	1	0	.267	Abreu rf	3	0	0	0	.274
Sosa 2b	4	0	1	0	.270	Campbell 2b	3	0	2	2	.316
Vargas 3b	4	0	0	0	.139	Casas 1b	4	0	0	0	.158
Baldwin lf-ss	4	0	0	1	.254	Reynolds if	4	1	1	1	.333
Taylor f	3	0	0	0	.149	Rafaela cf	4	0	0	0	.209
c-Thaiis	1	0	0	0	.000	Navarrez c	4	0	0	0	.200
Amaya ss	2	0	0	0	.091	Totals	31	4	8	4	
a-Palacios if	1	0	0	0	.150						





ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

**PHILLIP DANAUT**, left, drawing a penalty from Jake Walman, played a big role in a game that featured everything before ending on Danault's knuckling shot with 41 seconds left. "I got all of it," Danault joked.

# Kings survive opening thriller

[**Kings**, from B10]  
Tonight was one of those nights where, from an entertainment perspective, you just had to sit back and see how it ended. We played well."

But did they play well enough to win?

"It's doesn't really matter how, at this point," Hiller said.

Indeed it doesn't. Because after adding up all of the goals, all of the penalties, the missed chances and the blown advantages, the only numbers that matter are the number of wins each team has. And the Kings have the advantage.

"We're up 1-0," Byfield said. "A win's a win and we'll take that."

The Kings have been in this position before, however. They're playing the Oilers in the first round of the playoffs for a fourth straight year and in two of the three previous series, the Kings won the first game only to lose the series. But each of those playoffs opened in Edmonton; this year the Kings have the home-ice advantage — and it truly is an advantage since the Kings had the best home record in the NHL.

The venue may not be the only difference. In the last three playoffs the Oilers dominated on special teams, holding the Kings scoreless on 47 of 57 power-play opportunities while scoring nearly half the time they had the man advantage. That script flipped early Monday with Andrei Kuzmenko, making his playoff debut, giving the Kings a 1-0 lead 41 seconds into their first power play. Kevin Fiala then added a second power-play goal in the third period, four seconds after the Kings had taken a five-on-three advantage.

The two goals — two more than the Kings had on the power play in all of last spring's playoffs — gave them what looked to be a comfortable 5-2 lead. But that look proved deceiving with Corey Perry scoring to start Edmonton's comeback with just more than 12 minutes left. Importantly, that

goal also gave the Oilers enough hope that coach Kris Knoblauch pulled Skinner with about three minutes to play — and the strategy worked, with Zach Hyman scoring with 2:04 to play before Connor McDavid tied the score with 88 seconds left.

The first time the Kings beat the Oilers in a playoff series, in 1982, they rallied from a 5-0 deficit to win Game 3 at the Forum in overtime, a game that became known as the "Miracle on Manchester." McDavid's goal Monday appeared to set up another overtime and a potential "Fiasco on Figueroa" before Danault rescued the Kings with his

second goal of the game on perhaps the strangest play of a strange night.

It began with the Oilers winning a face-off deep in the Kings' end and sending the puck to McDavid, who circled back toward the blue line. When he tried to flip the puck back up the ice, Kings defenseman Vladislav Gavrikov poked it away, then caromed a pass off the boards and around Edmonton's Evan Bouchard to teammate Trevor Moore charging up center ice.

With a defender closing in, Moore pulled up at the top of the left circle, slipped the puck back to Danault, then watched as Danault's shot tumbled end over end

— barely avoided a leaping Warren Foegele, who was shielding Skinner in the crease — into the back of the net.

"I got all of it," Danault joked.

"It's a house-league shot. Like a little rainbow," Byfield said.

"No lead is safe in the playoffs," Byfield continued. "They're coming all the time. We'll learn from that."

So will the Oilers, who left the ice on the short end of the score but riding a massive wave of momentum just the same. Not only did they rally from a 4-0 deficit, but also they did so behind two goals and four assists from Leon Draisaitl and McDavid, who were playing together for the first time in more than a month. Draisaitl, who led the NHL with 52 goals, and McDavid, who was fourth with 74 assists, missed most of the last five weeks of the regular season because of injury, leaving their fitness for the playoffs in doubt.

Not any longer. "Now, every single shift, every play matters," Edmonton forward Adam Henrique said. "Even when you're down and something happens, you know it all matters because you push right to the end, and we showed that coming back and sticking with it and tying it up late. We gave ourselves a chance."

Their next one comes Wednesday.

MONDAY'S LATE SUMMARY									
KINGS 6, OILERS 5									
EDMONTON	.....	0	1	4	—	5			
KINGS	.....	2	2	2	—	6			
FIRST PERIOD: 1. KINGS, Kuzmenko 1 (Fiala, Kempe), 2:49 (pp). 2. KINGS, Byfield 1 (Anderson, Doughty), 19:27. Penalties—Kulak, Edm. (Holding Stick), 2:08. Doughty, KINGS (Cross Checking), 7:26.									
SECOND PERIOD: 3. KINGS, Kempe 1 (Kopitar, Kuzmenko), 14:47. 4. KINGS, Danault 1 (Byfield), 17:43. 5. Edm., Draisaitl 1 (Bouchard, McDavid), 19:54. Penalties—None.									
THIRD PERIOD: 6. Edm., Janmark 1 (Skinner, Frederic), 2:19. 7. KINGS, Fiala 1 (Kempe, Kuzmenko), 4:59 (pp). 8. Edm., Perry 1 (McDavid, Bouchard), 7:43. 9. Edm., Hyman 1 (McDavid, Perry), 17:56. 10. Edm., McDavid 1 (Draisaitl, Bouchard), 18:32. 11. KINGS, Danault 2, 19:18. Penalties—Hyman, EDM (Illegal Check to Head), 3:16. Walman, Edm. (Roughing), 4:55. Walman, Edm. (Delay of Game), 8:53. Edm. bench, served by Perry (Delay of Game), 8:53. Anderson, KINGS (Hooking), 13:14.									
SHOTS ON GOAL: Edm. 6-4-15—25. KINGS 8-9-13—30. Power-play Conversions—Edm. 0 of 2. KINGS 2 of 5.									
GOALIES: Edm., Skinner 0-1-0 (30 shots-24 saves). KINGS, Kuemper 1-0-0 (25-20). Att.—18,145 (18,230), T—2-43. R—Trevor Hanson, Kyle Rehman. L—Kiel Murchison, CJ Murray.									

## NHL PLAYOFFS: FIRST ROUND

### WESTERN CONFERENCE

**Winnipeg 1C vs. St. Louis WC2**  
Jets lead, 2-0

<b>G1</b>	Winnipeg 5, St. Louis 3
<b>G2</b>	Winnipeg 2, St. Louis 1
<b>G3</b>	Thursday at St. Louis, 6:30, ESPN2
<b>G4</b>	Sunday at St. Louis, 10 a.m., TBS
<b>G5</b>	April 30 at Winnipeg, TBD*
<b>G6</b>	May 2 at St. Louis, TBD*
<b>G7</b>	May 4 at Winnipeg, TBD*

**Dallas 3C vs. Colorado 2C**  
Series tied, 1-1

<b>G1</b>	Colorado 5, Dallas 1
<b>G2</b>	Dallas 4, Colorado 3 (OT)
<b>G3</b>	Wednesday at Colorado, 6:30, ESPN
<b>G4</b>	Friday at Colorado, 6:30, TBS
<b>G5</b>	Monday at Dallas, 6:30, ESPN
<b>G6</b>	May 1 at Colorado, TBD*
<b>G7</b>	May 3 at Dallas, TBD*

**Vegas 1P vs. Minnesota WC1**  
Golden Knights lead, 1-0

<b>G1</b>	Vegas 4, Minnesota 2
<b>G2</b>	Tuesday at Vegas, late
<b>G3</b>	Thursday at Minnesota, 6, TBS
<b>G4</b>	Saturday at Minnesota, 1, TBS
<b>G5</b>	Tuesday at Vegas, TBD*
<b>G6</b>	May 1 at Minnesota, TBD*
<b>G7</b>	May 3 at Vegas, TBD*

**KINGS 2P vs. Edmonton 3P**  
Kings lead, 1-0

<b>G1</b>	KINGS 6, Edmonton 5
<b>G2</b>	Wednesday at KINGS, 7, FDSC, TBS
<b>G3</b>	Friday at Edmonton, 7, TNT
<b>G4</b>	Sunday at Edmonton, 6:30, TBS
<b>G5</b>	Tuesday at KINGS, TBD*
<b>G6</b>	May 1 at Edmonton, TBD*
<b>G7</b>	May 3 at KINGS, TBD*

\*if necessary

### EASTERN CONFERENCE

**Toronto 1A vs. Ottawa WC2**  
Maple Leafs lead, 1-0

<b>G1</b>	Toronto 6, Ottawa 2
<b>G2</b>	Tuesday at Toronto, late
<b>G3</b>	Thursday at Ottawa, 4, ESPN2
<b>G4</b>	Saturday at Ottawa, 4, TBS
<b>G5</b>	Tuesday at Toronto, TBD*
<b>G6</b>	May 1 at Ottawa, TBD*
<b>G7</b>	May 3 at Toronto, TBD*

**Tampa Bay 2A vs. Florida 3A**  
Best-of-seven series

<b>G1</b>	Tuesday at Tampa Bay, late
<b>G2</b>	Thursday at Tampa Bay, 3:30, TBS
<b>G3</b>	Saturday at Florida, 10 a.m., TBS
<b>G4</b>	Monday at Florida, 4, ESPN
<b>G5</b>	April 30 at Ottawa, TBD*
<b>G6</b>	May 2 at Florida, TBD*
<b>G7</b>	May 4 at Tampa Bay, TBD*

**Washington 1M vs. Montreal WC2**  
Capitals lead, 1-0

<b>G1</b>	Washington 3, Montreal 2 (OT)
<b>G2</b>	Wednesday at Washington, 4, ESPN
<b>G3</b>	Friday at Montreal, 4, TNT
<b>G4</b>	Sunday at Montreal, 3:30, TBS
<b>G5</b>	April 30 at Washington, TBD*
<b>G6</b>	May 2 at Montreal, TBD*
<b>G7</b>	May 4 at Washington, TBD*

**Carolina 2M vs. New Jersey 3M**  
Hurricanes lead, 1-0

<b>G1</b>	Carolina 4, New Jersey 1
<b>G2</b>	Tuesday at Carolina, late
<b>G3</b>	Friday at New Jersey, 5, TBS
<b>G4</b>	Sunday at New Jersey, 12:30, TBS
<b>G5</b>	Tuesday at Carolina, TBD*
<b>G6</b>	May 2 at New Jersey, TBD*
<b>G7</b>	May 4 at Carolina, TBD*

All times PDT, p.m. except noted

## PRO CALENDAR

	WED 23	THU 24	FRI 25	SAT 26	SUN 27
DODGERS	at Chicago Cubs 4 SNLA		PITTSBURGH 7 SNLA	PITTSBURGH 6 SNLA	PITTSBURGH 1 SNLA
ANGELS	PITTSBURGH 6:30 FDW	PITTSBURGH 6:30 FDW	at Minnesota 5 FDW	at Minnesota 11 a.m. FDW	at Minnesota 10:30 a.m. FDW
LAKERS			at Minnesota* 6:30 ESPN		at Minnesota* 12:30 Ch. 7
CLIPPERS		DENVER* 7 FDSC, NBA TV		DENVER* 3 FDSC, TNT	
KINGS	EDMONTON* 7 FDSC, TBS		at Edmonton* 7 TNT, truTV, Max		at Edmonton* 6:30 TBS, truTV, Max
GALAXY					PORTLAND 6 Apple TV+
LAFC					ST. LOUIS 4 Apple TV+
ANGEL CITY			at Orlando 5 Amazon Prime		

\*playoffs Shade denotes home games. Times Pacific.

## TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
<b>BASEBALL</b>		
10 a.m.	Philadelphia at New York Mets	<b>TV:</b> MLB
4 p.m.	Dodgers at Chicago Cubs	<b>TV:</b> SNLA <b>R:</b> 570, 1020
4:30 p.m.	Toronto at Houston	<b>TV:</b> MLB
6:30 p.m.	Pittsburgh at Angels	<b>TV:</b> FDW <b>R:</b> 830, 1330
<b>BASKETBALL: NBA PLAYOFFS, FIRST ROUND</b>		
4 p.m.	Game 2, Orlando at Boston	<b>TV:</b> TNT, truTV
4:30 p.m.	Game 2, Miami at Cleveland	<b>TV:</b> NBA
6:30 p.m.	Game 2, Golden State at Houston	<b>TV:</b> TNT, truTV
<b>COLLEGE LACROSSE</b>		
8 a.m.	Women, ACC tournament, quarterfinal, North Carolina vs. Virginia Tech	<b>TV:</b> ACC
11 a.m.	Women, ACC tournament, quarterfinal, Duke vs. Clemson	<b>TV:</b> ACC
2 p.m.	Women, ACC tournament, quarterfinal, Boston College vs. Virginia	<b>TV:</b> ACC
3 p.m.	Women, Big Ten tournament, quarterfinal, Michigan vs. USC	<b>TV:</b> Big Ten+
5 p.m.	Women, ACC tournament, quarterfinal, Stanford vs. Syracuse	<b>TV:</b> ACC
<b>COLLEGE SOFTBALL</b>		
5 p.m.	Texas at Oklahoma State	<b>TV:</b> ESPNU
<b>HOCKEY: IIHF MEN'S U18 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP</b>		
5 p.m.	Group play, U.S. vs. Czechia	<b>TV:</b> NHL
<b>HOCKEY: STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS, FIRST ROUND</b>		
4 p.m.	Game 2, Montreal at Washington	<b>TV:</b> ESPN
6:30 p.m.	Game 3, Dallas at Colorado	<b>TV:</b> ESPN
7 p.m.	Game 2, Edmonton at Kings	<b>TV:</b> FDSC, TBS <b>R:</b> 710
<b>HORSE RACING</b>		
10 a.m.	America's Day at the Races	<b>TV:</b> FS2
<b>RUGBY</b>		
2:45 a.m. (Thurs.)	NRL, Brisbane vs. Canterbury-Bankstown	<b>TV:</b> FS2
<b>SOCCER</b>		
10 a.m.	Spain, Athletic Club vs. Las Palmas	<b>TV:</b> ESPN+, ESPND
10 a.m.	Spain, Vigo vs. Villarreal	<b>TV:</b> ESPN+
Noon	England, Arsenal vs. Crystal Palace	<b>TV:</b> USA, Universo
Noon	Coppa Italia, Inter Milan vs. AC Milan	<b>TV:</b> Paramount+
12:30 p.m.	Spain, Getafe vs. Real Madrid	<b>TV:</b> ESPN2, ESPND
12:30 p.m.	Spain, Alavés vs. Real Sociedad	<b>TV:</b> ESPN+
5:30 p.m.	USL, San Antonio vs. Colorado Springs	<b>TV:</b> CBSNN, Paramount+
7 p.m.	CONCACAF Champions Cup, Tigres UANL vs. Cruz Azul	<b>TV:</b> FS1, TUDN, UniMas
<b>TENNIS</b>		
6 a.m.	WTA/ATP Madrid, early rounds	<b>TV:</b> Tennis
2 a.m. (Thurs.)	WTA/ATP Madrid, early rounds	<b>TV:</b> Tennis

## SPORTS EXTRA

For coverage of late Dodgers, Angels, Lakers and Clippers games and more, see our daily digital eNewspaper. Subscribers get free access to an exclusive "Sports Extra." View it on your phone, tablet or computer at [latimes.com/enewspaper](https://latimes.com/enewspaper).



# Rams aren't likely to draft quarterback in the first round

[**Rams**, from B10]  
Sean McVay acknowledges much interest.

"We're very well aware that there is a life after Matthew coming at some point," Snead said last month at the NFL's annual meeting. "When that is — it could be two, three years from now, so it's not urgent for us."

Like Snead, when asked if the Rams would consider using a first-round pick on a quarterback, McVay was cagey.

"I think that's unlikely," McVay said. But he also quipped, "That's not something that I would see us doing, but maybe not, huh?"

On Monday, Stafford reported for the start of voluntary offseason workouts. Unlike last year, when a contract impasse lasted until the first day of training camp, the quarterback's contract situation was not hanging over the organization.

The Rams and Stafford worked out another contract adjustment on the final day of February. Details

have not been made public. But as they did last year, the Rams are expected to move money due Stafford next year to this year.

A year-to-year contract scenario with the record-setting passer is "a good problem to have," said Tony Pastors, the Rams' vice president of football and business administration.

"We all would acknowledge here — you probably have to start planning and figuring out the future," Pastors said. "But in the here and now, you appreciate that you've got a guy like Matthew. .... You feel like you've got a chance every time you step on the field."

"And so, is it ideal? Probably not. But I don't think anyone's complaining."

Why would they? Since trading for Stafford in 2021, the Rams have won a Super Bowl and made the playoffs three times. Last season Stafford led the Rams to a 10-7 record and the NFC divisional round before losing to the eventual Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles.



ERIN HOOLEY Associated Press

**SEAN McVAY** and the Rams hold the No. 26 pick in the NFL draft that starts Thursday.

At 37, Stafford still ranks among the NFL's top passers and savvyest leaders. And he has given no indication publicly that he plans to retire anytime soon.

But a couple of years ago the Rams made at least one attempt in the draft to identify a potential successor. In 2023 they selected former Georgia quarterback Stetson Bennett in the fourth round. However they no longer regard Bennett, who

is No. 3 on the depth chart, as a viable replacement. Jimmy Garoppolo re-signed in March and the 11-year veteran could be a bridge if Stafford retires or is traded after this season.

So the Rams once again could select a quarterback in the draft. Along with the 26th pick — which Snead might opt to trade back from — the Rams have two picks in the third round, one in the fourth and four in the sixth.

"If the right guy fell to 26, maybe he's the right guy for another team — they might want to move into the first round to draft that right guy," Snead said. "Maybe that's better for the Rams than picking that right guy."

But Snead apparently could not help himself in introducing some gamesmanship to the conversation.

"So that's how I'd honestly answer that question," he said. "And then to be honest about the dishonesty, if we were really looking at a QB at 26, we'd probably say an answer like that because you're maybe hoping they would fall."

If the Rams do not find Stafford's heir apparent, there is always next year. Next year's class includes quarterbacks such as Arch Manning of Texas and Drew Allar of Penn State.

Whenever that day comes, Stafford said that if the Rams "feel the need" to take a quarterback, the team would welcome him with open arms.

"And I'll try to teach him as much as I possibly can," Stafford said.

## Ramsey return?

Jalen Ramsey helped the Rams win a Super Bowl title in the 2021 season before he was traded to the Miami Dolphins a year later in a cost-cutting move.

Could the Rams and the three-time All-Pro cornerback reunite?

As NFL teams prepare for this week's draft, the Dolphins have made it known that Ramsey is available to be traded. Snead said Tuesday that he had been in contact with the Dolphins as part of annual draft-week conversations.

"There's a lot of nuances to that situation based on all the things that come with a trade, contracts and things like that," Snead said when asked about Ramsey during a videoconference with reporters. "So not sure where they're at in the process."

Ramsey, 30, is scheduled to earn \$24.2 million in guaranteed salary this season, according to overthecap.com.

"He's a great player," McVay said. "We know him very well — we know him intimately."

"You would certainly never rule out the possibility of that.... There's a lot of layers that would need to be worked out with a player of his magnitude, and some of the different things that accompany that. But you would never eliminate the possibility of adding a total stud."

Adding Ramsey would bolster a secondary that includes cornerbacks Darious Williams, Ahkello Witherspoon, Cobi Durant and Emmanuel Forbes Jr. among others.



# SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS

## NHL PLAYOFFS :: KINGS VS. EDMONTON

KINGS LEAD, 1-0 | **GAME 2:** TODAY AT CRYPTO.COM ARENA, 7 P.M. | **TV:** FDSC, TBS



Photographs by ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

**QUINTON BYFIELD**, mobbed by Kevin Fiala and Alex Laferriere (14) after a goal, said he was “still in shock” after Monday’s thriller.

# Deep exhales from the Crypt

Kings survive frantic rally by Oilers in wild Game 1 that reminds no lead is safe

By KEVIN BAXTER

Kings forward Phillip Danault has played in more than 760 NHL games, including the postseason, in his 11-year career. But he’s not sure he’d ever played a game like Monday’s playoff opener with the Edmonton Oilers.

“It was a little bit shocking,” he said. “Big ups and big downs and up again. That’s emotional. And it’s hard to play a game like that mentally.”

The Kings and Oilers still might be playing had Danault not knuckled a poorly hit shot past Edmonton goalie Stuart Skinner in the final minute to give the Kings a wild 6-5 win and 1-0 lead in the best-of-seven series, which resumes Wednesday at Crypto.com Arena.

“I’m still in shock,” teammate Quinton Byfield added.

And it’s only Game 1 — al-



**ADRIAN KEMPE** (9) and L.A. seemed to be in control in the second period with a 4-0 lead before Edmonton stormed back and nearly forced overtime.

though it was a game that featured a little bit of everything, except, perhaps, logic.

The Kings had two power-play goals. Edmonton scored twice after pulling its goalie. The Kings had two five-on-three advantages less than four minutes apart in the third period while the Oilers trailed by four goals late in the second period and three goals with 15 minutes to play, only to tie the score in the final minute and a half on two goals 36 seconds apart.

If you blinked in the final period, there was a chance you missed something you had never seen before.

“It’s why we all love it,” Kings coach Jim Hiller said. “You don’t know exactly what’s going to happen when you come to the hockey game. That’s why it’s so exciting.”

“Guys out there were playing passionately and different things can happen. [See Kings, B9]

# Leonard refuses to let Clippers lose two

He hits 15 of 19 shots for 39 points and a split of opening two games in Denver.

By BRODERICK TURNER

DENVER — There was a moment late in Game 2 when Kawhi Leonard leaned over, looking down at the court, exhausted from all the work he was putting in for the Clippers.

But Leonard didn’t let fatigue stop him, his will and spirit leading the Clippers to a 105-102 win over the Denver Nuggets on Monday night to even the best-of-seven playoff series at 1-1.

Leonard finished with 39 points in 39 minutes. He was 15 for 19 from the field, his jumper with 54.5 seconds left providing the final margin of victory. He also had a key steal in the final minute off a bad pass from Nikola Jokic.

“It’s difficult,” Leonard said about the energy it takes to play in an NBA game. “Like I said, playing here, playing against this great team, they got great players, know their roles. ... Any NBA game is very hard to play, especially in the playoffs. It might look easy by just watching us and seeing how skilled we are. But [See Clippers, B7]

## NBA PLAYOFFS FIRST ROUND



### Clippers vs. Denver

Series tied, 1-1

**Game 3:** Thursday at the Intuit Dome, 7 p.m. **TV:** FDSC, NBA TV

**Hardest working man:** Teammates and coaches marvel at Leonard’s ability to stay in shape. **B7**

### Lakers vs. Minnesota

Tuesday’s Western Conference first-round game ended after this edition’s deadline. For full coverage, go to [latimes.com/sports](https://latimes.com/sports).

# Iamaleava under center kicks buzz into overdrive

Bruins are the talk of college football after signing quarterback ‘we couldn’t pass up.’

By BEN BOLCH

Early signs of the Nico Iamaleava effect were evident to DeShaun Foster as the UCLA football coach scanned the group of seven reporters standing before him, more than twice the usual number.

“When was the last time we had this many people here talking to us, you know what I’m saying?” Foster said Tuesday morning. “So this is a good buzz for us.”

Foster has his quarterback, and now he’s starting to enjoy the perks.

Largely an afterthought a little more than a week ago,

the Bruins are now the talk of the college football world after landing the quarterback from Tennessee who was widely regarded as the top player in the transfer portal after leading the Volunteers to the College Football Playoff as a redshirt freshman.

Calling the addition of Iamaleava “just something that we couldn’t pass up,” Foster said it did not necessitate using name, image and likeness funds earmarked for quarterback Joey Aguilar, who is now headed to Tennessee as part of what is being jokingly called a trade between the Bruins and Volunteers.

“If he wanted to stay and compete,” Foster said of Aguilar, “that was fine.”

Asked to characterize UCLA’s NIL package for Iamaleava, who was report-

[See Iamaleava, B6]

# On the clock as he’s winding down



WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

**ALTHOUGH MATTHEW STAFFORD** remains among the NFL’s top passers at 37, the Rams attempted to identify a potential successor in the draft in 2023.

Rams unlikely to draft a quarterback in first round but need a plan for post-Stafford era.

By GARY KLEIN

Matthew Stafford is the Rams’ starting quarterback. For now. And perhaps for several more seasons.

But how much longer the 16-year veteran and Super Bowl champion will play is unclear, and the team is preparing for the post-Stafford era.

Perhaps a replacement will fall into place as soon as this week’s NFL draft, which begins Thursday. The Rams have the No. 26 pick in the first round and seven other picks.

Cam Ward of Miami, Shedeur Sanders of Colorado, Jaxson Dart of Mississippi, Tyler Shough of Louisville and Jalen Milroe of Alabama are among the top quarterbacks in this class. Not that Rams general manager Les Snead or coach [See Rams, B9]



Los Angeles Times

# SPORTS EXTRA

A TIMES E-NEWSPAPER EXCLUSIVE :: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2025



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

**TIMBERWOLVES** center Rudy Gobert steals the ball from Luka Dončić in the second quarter Tuesday night, but the Lakers guard recovered to finish with 31 points.

## Lakers win physically demanding Game 2

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

The only thing that moved slower than the Lakers was the clock.

They had poured their energy into fighting for everything while building a lead that stretched to 22 points in the first half and lived at 20 deep into the second half. They had grabbed and clawed and got clawed and got grabbed and it was still there, a big lead, the Timberwolves and the clock left to beat to even the series at 1-1 and save a split on their home court.

But Minnesota got stronger, faster and smarter. And the Lakers mentally and physically got slower.

Two big mistakes from Jaxson Hayes led to five fast Minnesota points. Luka Dončić, who had been fully engaged on the defensive side of the ball, was flat-footed as Anthony Edwards rammed into the paint. Wide-open threes rimmed

out.

And the kind of two-on-one fast break with Austin Reaves and LeBron James that usually would be an alley-oop became an alley-oops when Reaves threw the ball too high and James missed the layup.

But the clock kept ticking. And the Lakers kept fighting, drawing enough charges, grabbing enough rebounds, scoring enough (barely) to beat Minnesota 94-85 on Tuesday at Crypto.com Arena.

If Game 1 showed that the Lakers' standing as heavy favorites in the series was wrong, Game 2 showed that whatever comes next might leave scars.

After coach JJ Redick challenged his team to meet Minnesota's intensity and physicality, the teams ripped and reached and held and hammered while they played like each possession would determine who won and lost.

The all-capital, bolded-letter story from the first quarter of the

Lakers' playoffs Saturday was Luka Dončić showing why he's one of the NBA's most gifted difference-makers. He can be a one-man show, too hard for any player to stop, too skilled to be denied.

But it was singular. The Lakers' excellence? It needed to be plural.

The playoffs would demand more than Dončić getting buckets. It would require James cutting sharply into the paint to create extra space. It would force Reaves to fight like hell for every step on the defensive end.

It doesn't work the other way. It didn't work when it was that way in Game 1.

So Tuesday night, facing the first unofficial "must-win" of the playoffs, the Lakers played in unison early, even if Dončić was the only one really hitting shots.

And while Dončić was able to create the usual mismatch advantages, the Lakers found themselves totally stifled by Minnesota's defense.

Dončić scored 31, James had 21 and Reaves scored 16, but the Lakers shot just 20.7% from three-point range. Luckily, Minnesota wasn't any better, getting 52 combined points from Julius Randle and Anthony Edwards and not more than nine from anyone else.

— DAN WOIKE

### Pacers up 2-0 on Bucks

Pascal Siakam and Tyrese Haliburton played the perfect pair for the Indiana Pacers. Again.

Now they're two wins away from ousting the Milwaukee Bucks in the first round of the playoffs. Again.

Siakam had 24 points, 11 rebounds and a crucial three-pointer to start Indiana's decisive final run, while Haliburton added 21 points and 12 assists to lead the Pacers past the Milwaukee Bucks 123-115 for a 2-0 series lead.

Indiana has won five of the last

six playoff games between the teams, leading this one wire to wire. And against a team that won three of this season's four regular-season matchups, the Pacers still haven't trailed since the early minutes of the first quarter in Game 1.

"It's kind of hard to play from behind," two-time league most valuable player Giannis Antetokounmpo said after finishing with 34 points, 18 rebounds and seven assists.

Bucks guard Damian Lillard had 14 points in his first game back after being diagnosed with deep vein thrombosis in his right calf. He was four for 13 in 37 minutes, playing for the first time since March 18.

### Thunder take 2-0 lead

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 27 points, and the Oklahoma City Thunder dominated the Memphis Grizzlies 118-99 to take a 2-0 lead.

## Dodgers outslugged in walk-off setback symbolic of season

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Tuesday night's game mirrored what much of this young season has felt like.

Every time the Dodgers looked to be gaining real traction, they quickly spun out. Every time they seemed to find their top gear, they instead slipped back into reverse.

Despite leading by three runs in the first inning, then three again entering the eighth, the Dodgers couldn't hold on in a wild 11-10, extra-innings loss to the Chicago Cubs, getting outplayed — or, at the very least, outslugged — on a night the wind was blowing out at Wrigley Field.

The result represented a backward step for the Dodgers in this opening month, another dose of reality just when it appeared they were turning a corner.

After winning five of six games entering the night, the challenge now will be avoiding the same kind of prolonged stumble that followed their 8-0 start to the season, when they dropped six of nine games.

Tuesday's game finally ended in the 10th inning, when, in what was the night's fourth and final lead change, Ian Happ walked it off with a single to right field.

Long before then, the Dodgers squandered chances to effectively close it out.

Momentum built, then vanished. A team of supreme talent is still clearly far from top form.

In the first inning Tommy Edman opened the scoring with a three-run home run — only for pitcher Dustin May to immediately give five runs back in the bottom of the inning.

The Dodgers steadied the ship from there, with Andy Pages hitting a towering solo homer in the second and May working out of trouble in the next three innings — only for the right-hander to leave a fastball right down the middle to Pete Crow-Armstrong in the fifth inning, giving up a two-run homer that made it 7-4.

The Dodgers seemed to flip the script in the top of the seventh, scoring five times in an inning keyed by Freddie Freeman's go-ahead, two-run double down the left field line.

But even with a 10-7 lead and six outs to get, the Dodgers face-planted down the stretch.

Kyle Tucker took Alex Vesia deep in the eighth for a two-run homer. Miguel Amaya forced extra innings with a tying, two-out homer in the ninth off Tanner Scott, giving him his second blown save in 10 opportunities. Then, after the Dodgers stranded their automatic runner at third in the top of the 10th, recently called-up right-hander Noah Davis threw just one



ERIN HOOLEY Associated Press

**SHOHEI OHTANI** reacts to his first-inning strikeout in an 11-10 loss to the Cubs in which the Dodgers squandered a three-run lead in the ninth inning and fell on Ian Happ's 10th-inning single.

pitch in the bottom half of the inning: a hanging screwball Happ slapped to right for his walk-off single.

— JACK HARRIS

### ANGELS

## Back to .500 after Pirates' 18-hit attack

Andrew McCutchen hit a three-run homer and Pittsburgh had 18 hits for the first time in two years in a 9-3 win over the Angels that stopped the Pirates' three-game losing streak.

Bryan Reynolds and Isiah Kiner-Falefa each had three hits with two RBIs as the Pirates won the opener of a three-game series at Angel Stadium. The 18 hits were the Pirates' most since April 19, 2023, at Colorado, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Taylor Ward homered and Jo Adell had an RBI double for the Angels, who lost for the sixth time in eight games and dropped back to .500 at 11-11.

José Soriano (2-3) yielded five runs and eight hits in 3⅓ innings, one start after giving up a career-high 10 hits at Texas.

Pirates starter Bailey Falter left after four innings because of lower

back tightness. He struck out Kyren Paris to strand a runner at second base in the fourth, his final batter. Chase Shugart (1-0) pitched two hitless innings with three strikeouts to win his first major league decision as the Pirates improved to 9-15.

Pittsburgh took a 2-0 lead in the third on singles from Joey Bart and Ke'Bryan Hayes. Ward hit his sixth home run in the bottom half and McCutchen hit his 321st homer in the fourth for a 5-1 lead.

McCutchen's 237th home run with the Pirates moved him three behind Roberto Clemente for third place. Willie Stargell leads with 475, followed by Ralph Kiner with 301.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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‘Legend of Ochi’ puppets had to feel real

Director Isaiah Saxon wants kids to wonder whether the film’s creatures really exist.

BY CARLOS AGUILAR

Hidden in the thick forest of the fictional island of Carpathia lives the Ochi, an orange-furred primate that communicates through distinct whistling sounds — a song, if you will.

Though these wondrous creatures don’t actually exist, they were very much alive and tangible on the set of A24’s “The Legend of Ochi,” filmmaker Isaiah Saxon’s debut feature, in theaters Friday.

The physically grounded fantasy tracks Yuri (German actor Helena Zengel), a valiant teenage girl, as she tries to reunite a baby Ochi with its mother. She’s caught between the paranoid fears that her father (Willem Dafoe) has about the Ochi, and her estranged mother (Emily Watson), who’s spent her life researching them.

Brimming with impressive practical effects, Saxon’s handcrafted movies — he describes them as “sculptural films” — include music videos for Icelandic musician Björk, who became aware of his work after Saxon co-directed the music video “Knife” for the band Grizzly Bear in 2007 with Sean Hellfritsch (through their L.A.-based studio Encyclopedia Pictura).

For Björk, they made 2008’s “Wanderlust,” which involved puppets, CG elements, stunning matte paintings (one of Saxon’s specialties, also seen in “Ochi”) and live-action performers in stereoscopic 3D to create the illusion of depth. The mind-bending journey feels at once tactile and too fantastical to be real.

When “Ochi” first came to mind, the 42-year-old Saxon first envisioned a relationship between a kid and a strange, misunderstood being, a classic pairing in [See ‘Ochi,’ E3]



ALEXANDRU IONITA A24  
**HELENA ZENGEL**, the backpack puppet and puppeteers work on set.



MARCUS UBUNGEN For The Times  
**A.K. PAYNE** says “Furlough’s Paradise” speaks to how “Black life is always a little bit askew.”

a.k. payne tackles freedom headfirst

The award-winning playwright of ‘Furlough’s Paradise,’ having its West Coast debut at the Geffen, on making space for others

BY ASHLEY LEE

**A**mong the notes included in the “Furlough’s Paradise” script is an etymology of the word “furlough” — as in, “permission, liberty granted to do something.” Its various definitions throughout the history of language make clear that, whether by going away, retreating from or abstaining from having to do with, to leave is, essentially, to allow to survive.

This idea is at the core of a.k. payne’s moving two-hander, which stars DeWanda Wise and Kacie Rogers as estranged cousins — one on a three-day furlough from prison, another an Ivy League graduate on a break from her tech job — who reunite in their hometown for a funeral. They begin to process their conflicting memories, clarify their respective resentments, share their dreams of freedom and, in the

safety of each other’s company, they each allow themselves to let go of everything to just be who they are, wholly and fully, alongside the one person in the world who sees them in their entirety.

The West Coast premiere of “Furlough’s Paradise” — which just won the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the prestigious international award that honors women+ playwrights — is directed by Tinashe Kajese-Bolden and runs through May 18 at the Geffen Playhouse. Between rehearsals, payne tells The Times about the real-life inspirations for these on-stage cousins, the necessity of a choreographer for this production and the lessons learned from their graduate school professor, Geffen Playhouse Artistic Director Tarell Alvin McCraney. This conversation has been edited for [See ‘Paradise,’ E6]



CHRISTINA HOUSE L.A. Times  
**COMIC** Ramy Youssef is a co-creator and star of “#1 Happy Family USA.”

Satirical look at post-9/11 hysteria in States

Ramy Youssef and Pam Brady’s ‘#1 Happy Family USA’ skewers panic after the attacks.

LORRAINE ALI  
NEWS AND  
CULTURE CRITIC

What happens when the political satire of “South Park” collides with a Muslim kid’s coming-of-age story in post-9/11 New Jersey? You get the animated sitcom “#1 Happy Family USA.”

Co-created and co-showrun by Ramy Youssef and Pam Brady, the A24 production, which premieres Thursday on Prime Video, follows Rumi Hussein (voiced by Youssef) and his family as they navigate the “see something, say something” paranoia of the early 2000s.

The semiautobiographical story of Egyptian American comedian, actor and director Youssef is at the center of this period comedy where Michael Jordan, music piracy and Britney Spears still dominate the news. Everything is normal in 12-year-old Rumi’s world on Sept. 10. He’s crushing on his teacher Mrs. Malcolm (voiced by Mandy Moore — who happened to rise to fame in the 2000s). He’s tolerating the cluelessness of his Egyptian immigrant parents, father Hussein (also voiced by Youssef) and mother Sharia (Salma Hindy). He’s fighting with his oh-so-perfect/closeted sister, Mona (Alia Shawkat). His devout grandparents also live at home, always on hand to make whatever Rumi’s doing feel haram.

But within 24 hours, the Al Qaeda attacks turn the Husseins from an average dysfunctional family with unfortunate names into a suspected terror cell.

[See Youssef, E6]

This ‘Star Wars’ story stays in the family

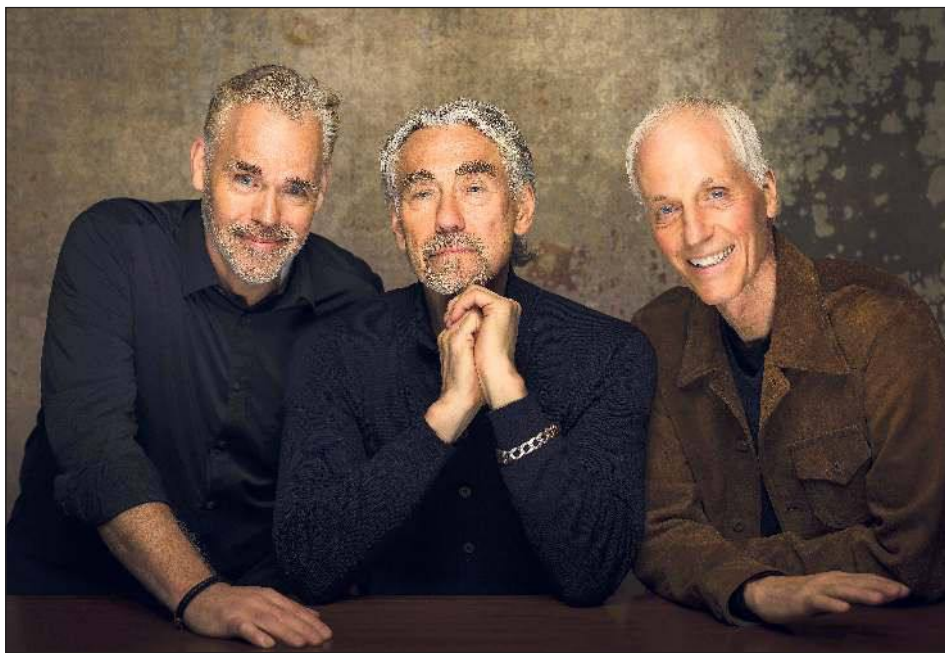
Tony, Dan and John Gilroy talk about how they brought ‘Andor’ to a close together.

BY TRACY BROWN

Brothers and filmmakers Tony, Dan and John Gilroy credit their late mother for their creative drive.

Growing up in upstate New York, they were kept busy at home by their mother, Ruth, with a variety of activities that included crocheting, knitting, doing embroidery, building walls, planting trees and even beekeeping. They described her as curious, adventurous, creative, “the smartest of all of us” and someone who was “always trying something new.”

“Our mother was the per-



JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times  
**BROTHERS** John, left, Tony and Dan Gilroy have worked on both seasons of “Andor.” The first was interrupted by COVID; the second was affected by strikes.

son who made everything in her house and who taught us how to make everything,” says Tony, creator and executive producer of the Disney+ series “Andor.” “I don’t even remember when the satisfaction of making things wasn’t part of [us]. I’m not happy if I’m not making something.”

“I think that’s much more about the fabric of who we are and what we do, and why we get along and why we keep doing what we do than anything else that [our father] Frank had to say,” he adds.

So it’s no coincidence that one of the most significant characters introduced in “Andor” has been a resourceful mother whose strength of spirit and sense of justice helps spark the flames of resistance against the oppressive Empire.

[See ‘Andor,’ E2]



Netfix  
**JOSH DUHAMEL** in “Ransom Canyon.”

**Soapy western romance fun**

Josh Duhamel and Minka Kelly star in “Ransom Canyon,” based on the books by Jodi Thomas. **E3**

**Surreal life in the 1960s Valley**

A Black family in Chatsworth has big dreams in the visually striking “Government Cheese.” **E2**

**Comics** ..... **E4-5**  
**Puzzles** ..... **E5**



Review ROBERT LLOYD TELEVISION CRITIC

# ‘Government Cheese’ has a funny way with reality

AppleTV+’s visually striking comic drama plays with the form in 1969 Chatsworth.

Set in a version, or a vision, of the northwest San Fernando Valley in 1969, “Government Cheese,” premiering Wednesday on Apple TV+, belongs to a class of visually striking comic dramas that slip in and out of the naturalistic “real” world while remaining emotionally coherent. I’m thinking of “Lodge 49,” with which this show shares an aerospace company (and a ... lodge), “Mrs. Davis” and “I’m a Virgo,” and certain seasons of “ Fargo. “ If “Government Cheese” isn’t quite to the level, or the depth, of the best of these, it’s a kind of show I like very much, and plenty of good things are therein.

Created by Paul Hunter and Aeysha Carr, the series starts with the Chambers Brothers’ “Time Has Come Today” on the soundtrack, a musical pun because our hero is named Chambers — Hampton Chambers (David Oyelowo) — and he’s doing time at California Institution for Men in Chino for writing bad checks with “time added for assorted other misdeeds.” (I can’t swear that was the intention, but everything in “Gov-

ernment Cheese,” even the seemingly random parts, feels thoroughly thought out.)

He’s rough when we meet him there, two years before the main action of the series, but ripe for change; his Native American cellmate, Rudy (Adam Beach), suggests he talk to Gus (Mykelti Williamson), some sort of nondenominational quasi-cleric, who tells him, “To God we’re just pieces on a chessboard and he’s the master. ... But if you don’t follow his path, God will f— you up.” Hampton leaves prison with a head full of scripture and plans for a self-sharpening drill, cooked up during his time in the machine shop.

Hampton returns home to his family, unannounced, as if he were merely back from work. Wife Astoria (Simone Missick), working as a receptionist at an interior design firm, sighs uneasily. Younger son Harrison (Jahi Di’Allo Winston), who calls his father Hampton — “You’re not my father,” he says — has steeped himself in local Native culture, thanks to a quasi-paternal friendship with Rudy, and dresses like Tom Laughlin in “Billy Jack” two years before that movie came out. He sports a feather Rudy gave him; eagles will be a motif in his storyline.

Only cheerful younger son Einstein (Evan Ellison), an eccentric, prophetically



Apple TV+

DAVID OYELOWO is a man with a mission and a whole lot of challenges in “Government Cheese.”

named genius who has decided to become a champion pole-vaulter, seems happy to see him. He calls Hampton “pop,” like David and Ricky did Ozzie. That they are the only Black family in their middle-class suburb is significant of nothing much, surprising given the tenor of the times, but that’s the suburbs for you.

Hampton has “a plan that will make our family the toast of Chatsworth.” But, says Astoria, “Some of us have aspirations that are bigger than Chatsworth.” So there’ll be trouble.

Exiled by Astoria to the garage, Hampton fabricates his special drill as the family watches from afar. “Dad’s making something out of nothing,” says Einstein, impressed. “He’s like an alchemist.” (He will dub the drill, which works as advertised, the “Bit Magician.”)

“His mother was the

same way,” says Astoria. “She could make the best sandwiches out of nothing but government cheese and white bread.” And there is your title.

The focus of Hampton’s plans to sell his invention is a company called Rocket Corp (standing in for the real-world Rocketdyne, which had facilities in the hills above Chatsworth), also the focus of environmental protests.

To complicate matters — matters, of course, must be complicated — Hampton will learn that he’s in debt \$2,000 for an unasked-for service from a crime family composed of seven brothers (French Canadian but straight out of “ Fargo”) and that they would quite happily kill him if he doesn’t pay up, like, now. He doesn’t have the money, but his old friend Bootsie (Bokeem Woodbine) has a line on a

job, by which he means a crime.

Throughout the series, Hampton will encounter various characters, some he knows, some just emerging from the underbrush or out of a vent — Sunita Mani, approachably mysterious, is a series highlight — who will guide or push or bully him along his way, as if he were a figure on a fairy tale quest. At one point he becomes the biblical Jonah.

Ultimately any story that plays with form, as “Government Cheese” does, is itself about storytelling. Of the Jonah story, we learn from Rabbi Marty, played by Bob Glouberman, that in the end “nothing happens; it’s a cliffhanger, and nobody got around to finish the sequel. ... It means you get to choose how you proceed next.” (That is certainly how they do it in television.)

One episode opens with a black-and-white low-budget revisionist movie western — titled “The Long Road Home,” after this series’ own theme — in which Harrison winds up as an extra. (Many westerns were shot in the rocky hills north of Chatsworth.) Another begins with an inept “A Day in the Life at Temple Hillel Public Access Film,” in which Rabbi Marty points out that the bound Torah is called a “Chumash” — it’s left to the viewer to make the connection to the Chumash people who first lived in the

area, from whom Rudy is descended and in whom Harrison is interested. Indeed, the fact that there’s a synagogue in this story at all may be down to that coincidence.

And in an episode dedicated to Astoria — a nice change of view — a stereotypical housewife from a TV coffee commercial materializes in her living room. (“Don’t you want to be defined by more than just making coffee to make your husband happy? ... I’m only alive for 30 seconds every 32 hours; I don’t have time to do anything else.”)

One does worry for Hampton, whether he’ll get out of his own way, or out of the way of the people trying to put him out of the way, even though he’s not the series’ most attractive character. Or perhaps better said, he has the disadvantage of his travails, mishaps and bad decisions occupying the foreground.

“Stop trying to control everything, Hampton,” says Mani’s briefly seen, unexplained yet very interesting character. “And once you accept that everything that happens is meant to happen, then you’ll be free.” It doesn’t mean people aren’t still out to kill you, or put you back in jail.

Valley historians will enjoy a cameo appearance by the Newport Pop Festival, the biggest thing to happen in that neck of the woods in 1969.



Lucasfilm Ltd.

CASSIAN Andor (Diego Luna) and K-2SO (Alan Tudyk) fight anew in the second and last season of “Andor.”

## Brothers band together to send ‘Andor’ off

[‘Andor,’ from E1]

The Gilroy’s latest collaboration — set in a galaxy far, far away — is perhaps the biggest thing they have made together so far. A prequel series of a prequel spin-off film of an ever-expanding franchise, “Andor” follows Cassian Andor (Diego Luna) and other key figures on both sides of the nascent war during the formative years of the Rebel Alliance. The second and final season, which premiered Tuesday, leads directly into the events of the 2016 film “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story.”

The first season of the gritty, grounded spy thriller, which launched in 2022, was hailed by critics and audiences for its mature storytelling and political themes. Among Andor’s accolades were eight Emmy nominations and a Peabody Award.

“This show has ... all the

stuff that I did when I was a kid, but for real,” says Tony, who broke into the “Star Wars” franchise as a co-writer for “Rogue One” before being tapped as “Andor’s” showrunner. John joined him on the show as an editor and also served as an executive producer for Season 2 (after also editing on “Rogue One”). Tony tapped Dan, who wrote Episodes 4 through 6 of the first season as well as Episodes 7 through 9 of the second, even before officially convening the writers room.

It’s far from the first time the brothers have worked together. John was the editor on both his brothers’ directorial debuts — “Michael Clayton” (2007) for Tony and “Nightcrawler” (2014) for Dan — as well as other subsequent films; the trio worked together on “The Bourne Legacy” (2012).

But, as Tony explains,

they’re “always kind of working together.”

Over drinks in a curved booth at the Polo Lounge on a March afternoon, the Gilroy brothers reminisced about the roundabout way they all wound up in the family business: Hollywood. Their father, Frank D. Gilroy, was an award-winning playwright, known for “The Subject Was Roses,” who also wrote for television and film.

Among their memories growing up is how their father would come out to Los Angeles for months at a time, living and working out of hotels as he tried to land gigs or put movies together. Dan and John also remember staying with him at the Beverly Hills Hotel for a couple of weeks during one of these trips while he was working on the 1976 film “From Noon Till Three,” starring Charles Bronson

and Jill Ireland.

Having this close-up view when they were younger “demystified the job of being a writer,” Dan says. “It was watching my father go upstairs to his office and type away for eight or nine hours and then come downstairs. Or we didn’t see him for two or three months.”

However, none of the brothers had any interest in following in their father’s footsteps. John went to college thinking he would become a lawyer, only to eventually find himself in a cutting room as a film editor after he became interested in directing. Dan worked as a journalist at the trade publication Variety but eventually started screenwriting. Tony, who was an aspiring musician, saw Dan get into screenwriting and thought he could do it too.

“It’s much more difficult than I had anticipated,” says Tony of screenwriting. “But during that time, [Dan and I] started writing together occasionally. Sometimes we would, sometimes we wouldn’t, but we started as a team, sort of.”

They joke about how their desire for separate paychecks led them to pursue their individual careers. But they still tend to show each other what they are working on, sending their earliest drafts for feedback.

“We trust each other very much creatively, and we do send each other our things,” Dan says. “At this point in our career, we’re all so in tune creatively.”

“It’s huge actually, to be able to pass around work like that to each other,” says John, of that level of trust.

Exchanging honest feedback is one of the things that was instilled in them from their father, the Gilroys say. They also inherited his “epic” work ethic.

Still, Tony acknowledges that when he signed on for “Andor,” he had no idea the amount of work that it would be. This is because just about everything mentioned in the script — objects, languages, customs, locations — needed to be designed before they could be

introduced. There was so much he had to figure out with production designer Luke Hull that Tony says Hull deserves as much credit as anyone in the writers room.

Season 2 will see Cassian and his adversaries and allies in new locations, including those that have been previously mentioned in “Star Wars” lore but remained unseen. The world-building for this 12-episode season, which is broken up into four three-episode arcs, also included crafting new historic anthems and traditional ceremonies.

“You’re making cultural ethnography” when working on “Star Wars,” Tony says.

The stories within the “Star Wars” franchise are also often a family affair. The core series of film trilogies center generations of Skywalker and their legacies. “Andor’s” adventures started off with Cassian’s search for his long-lost sister, and also features the (troubled) family dynamics of a number of characters.

In addition to the usual challenges that come with working on a TV show with the scale of “Andor,” the project has faced additional obstacles during the production of both of its seasons.

The first season of the show was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which then required Tony and his crew to pivot because of the new realities such as limited crowd sizes and travel when production finally moved forward. (Though Tony credits COVID for saving the show because it prevented him from directing the initial episodes while trying to juggle all of his other responsibilities as showrunner.)

For Season 2, the dual Hollywood strikes in 2023 meant the showrunner had to step away from the show for five months. While Tony had finished working on the scripts before the WGA strike was called, all 12 episodes of the season were essentially shot without his presence.

“It was a spooky thing for everybody,” says John, who Tony says helped “build the show in the most fundamental way” with him. “He normally weighs in on a lot of things. Now, everybody had to step up, but everybody knew their job from the season before.”

When the strike was over, John immediately delivered the rough cuts of all 12 episodes to Tony. He was confident that his brother would be happy with what he saw and that they “didn’t break his show.”

“I was really terrified to look at it,” says Tony, but that soon dissipated. “I binged it after two days, and I got to be able to watch the show in the most unusual way. ... I’m not sure if I ever would have gotten there if I didn’t have the freshness as an audience and gone, ‘I’m confused here, I don’t get that there.’ ”

After generating what he estimates were around 200 pages of notes, he headed to London, where four cutting rooms were open with all of the directors and editors for what he describes as “the most exciting two weeks ever, creatively.”

Though the Gilroys are mindful of spoilers, they do tease some of what’s to come in Season 2.

Dan says he particularly enjoyed Mon Mothma’s (Genevieve O’Reilly) arc and backstory — which is fitting because his episodes include a significant moment for the Chandrilan senator. Tony Gilroy teases how complicated Syril Karn’s (Kyle Soller) story becomes as well as episodes exploring the events around the Ghorman massacre, a brutal clash between Imperial forces against peaceful protesters that led to the formal rise of the Rebel Alliance.

“Living with these characters for 4 ½ years was the most comfortable thing,” says John. “I never got bored. I’m in a dark room all the time by myself, mostly, and just spending time with those characters. They’re my biggest hang. So I do love them.”

Both John and Tony credit their time on “Rogue One” as helping to inform their approach to working on a “Star Wars” project.

“I just knew that we were working on something a lot of people were counting on us to do a good job [on], and I’ve never felt that before,” says John, adding he was immediately conscious of the built-in audience and sense of responsibility that came with working on the project.

“On ‘Rogue’ we learned how much people cared, and the depth of the passion,” adds Tony. “Sometimes it’s scary, but mostly it’s really beautiful. ... We decided in the very beginning we’re never going to mess with that. Our secret formula is, we are never going to wink, we’re never going to joke, we’re never going to be cynical. We’re going to take it more seriously than anybody else ever did.”

For them, this meant taking every opportunity to stay within and underscore “Star Wars” canon and making sure to avoid things that undermined the story or doing things just for the sake of nostalgia.

In “Andor” Season 2, for example, audiences will learn the backstory behind an iconic line from “Rogue One.” It’s a callback to events fans will recognize that expands upon existing lore. (Tony credits his son for bringing the opportunity to his attention.)

And while Tony is ready for his time on “Andor” and in “Star Wars” to be over, he does admit he misses it.

“I’ve been hiding out in this show for five years,” he says. “It was a really powerful drug to be in that because you’re just creating s— from morning to night.”

“What a great place to get lost in,” adds Dan.

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<b>ROYAL</b> 11523 Santa Monica Blvd. West L.A. <b>THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE</b> NR 1:00 3:10 5:15 7:30 <b>A MAN AND A WOMAN</b> 1:20 4:20 7:10 <b>WHEN FALL IS COMING</b> 1:10 PM <b>THE PENGUIN LESSONS</b> PG-13 4:00 PM <b>WHITE WITH FEAR</b> 7:00 PM <b>TOWN CENTER</b> 17200 Ventura Blvd. Encino <b>THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE</b> NR 4:30 PM <b>PRIDE AND PREJUDICE 20TH ANNIVERSARY RE-RELEASE</b> PG 4:00 PM <b>THE WEDDING BANQUET</b> R 1:20 4:00 7:00 <b>ONE TO ONE: JOHN &amp; YOKO</b> R 1:30 7:00 <b>WARFARE</b> R 12:50 PM <b>THE FRIEND</b> R 1:00 7:10 <b>THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND</b> PG-13 1:10 4:00 7:20 <b>A VANISHING FOG</b> 7:00 PM <b>AIRPLANE 2025</b> 4:20 PM	<b>MONICA</b> 1332 Second Street Santa Monica <b>ONE TO ONE: JOHN &amp; YOKO</b> R 1:30 4:10 7:00 <b>SACRAMENTO</b> R 1:00 3:05 5:10 7:30 <b>THE UNINVITED</b> R 1:20 PM <b>WARFARE</b> R 1:00 3:05 5:10 7:30 <b>THE FRIEND</b> R 1:10 4:00 7:10 <b>THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND</b> PG-13 1:10 4:00 7:10 <b>A VANISHING FOG</b> 7:00 PM <b>ALL THE LOST ONES</b> 4:20 PM <b>CLAREMONT</b> 480 W. 2nd Street Claremont <b>SINNERS</b> R 1:00 4:10 7:15 <b>THE WEDDING BANQUET</b> R 1:20 4:20 7:00 <b>THE AMATEUR</b> PG-13 1:10 4:10 7:10 <b>WARFARE</b> R 12:50 3:00 <b>A MINECRAFT MOVIE</b> PG 1:30 4:30 7:30 <b>THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND</b> PG-13 5:10 PM <b>A VANISHING FOG</b> 7:00 PM	<b>NEWHALL</b> 22500 Lyons Ave. Santa Clarita <b>PRIDE AND PREJUDICE 20TH ANNIVERSARY RE-RELEASE</b> PG 4:00 PM <b>SINNERS</b> R 1:00 4:10 7:10 <b>THE WEDDING BANQUET</b> R 1:10 4:20 <b>DROP</b> PG-13 12:50 7:30 <b>THE AMATEUR</b> PG-13 1:10 4:00 7:00 <b>THE KING OF KINGS</b> PG 1:20 4:00 7:00 <b>WARFARE</b> R 12:50 3:05 7:40 <b>A MINECRAFT MOVIE</b> PG 1:30 4:30 7:20 <b>THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND</b> PG-13 5:15 PM <b>A VANISHING FOG</b> 7:00 PM	<b>GLENDALE</b> 207 N. Maryland Ave Glendale <b>IT FEEDS</b> 4:20 PM <b>SINNERS</b> R 1:00 4:10 7:15 <b>THE TEACHER</b> 1:10 4:00 7:00 <b>WARFARE</b> R 12:50 3:00 <b>A NICE INDIAN BOY</b> 4:30 PM <b>GAZER</b> R 1:20 7:10 <b>WHEN FALL IS COMING</b> 1:30 7:20 <b>A VANISHING FOG</b> 7:00 PM <b>NoHo 7</b> 5240 Lankershim Blvd. No. Hollywood <b>SINNERS</b> R 1:00 4:10 7:10 <b>THE WEDDING BANQUET</b> R 1:20 4:20 7:00 <b>DROP</b> PG-13 12:50 3:05 5:15 7:30 <b>THE AMATEUR</b> PG-13 1:10 4:10 7:10 <b>WARFARE</b> R 12:50 3:05 5:15 7:30 <b>HIGH ART</b> R 1:30 4:30 7:20 <b>THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND</b> PG-13 1:10 4:00 7:00
BARGAIN IN ( )    CLOSED CAPTION    NON-STANDARD PRICING    FOR 4/23/2025 ONLY			



**Review** ROBERT LLOYD TELEVISION CRITIC

# ‘Ransom Canyon’ does western romance right

Josh Duhamel and Minka Kelly sizzle in Netflix’s adaptation of Jodi Thomas series.

Now streaming on Netflix, the home of “Virgin River” (six seasons, seventh on the way), is “Ransom Canyon.” Like “Virgin River,” it adapts the work of a bestselling romance novelist — Jodi Thomas, who sets her books in her home state of Texas — putting pretty people against a magnificent landscape and complicating their lives with love, hate, calamity and a little sex. Feels like a sure bet, in other words.

As in most every such show, there is at its center a couple — quantum entangled, their spooky action expressed sometimes at a distance, sometimes clinch-close. But wherever the story leads them, wherever else their attention turns, however long it takes them to get together in the first place, it’s a given they’ll find their way to or back to each other, at least until one of them leaves the show. I’m

not delivering a spoiler here; it’s in the manual.

In my mind “Ransom Canyon,” developed by April Blair (“Jane by Design”), keeps coming out “Handsome Canyon,” and no one here is handsomer than Staten Kirkland (Josh Duhamel), a big-time rancher with moody hair and a peppery beard. His cosmically intended partner, if he would only admit it, is Quinn O’Grady (Minka Kelly), once a classical pianist of great note — “Leonard’s adamant about doing Prokofiev’s Piano Concerto No. 2 and, you, my dear are the only pianist I’ve heard to do it justice,” says her manager (Kate Hudson), trying to coax her back to Manhattan — though we’ll hear nothing more from her than a few pensive arpeggios.

Walking away from her keyboard career like Jack Nicholson in “Five Easy Pieces,” Quinn hied home from New York when Staten’s wife, her best friend, took ill; she stuck around after she died, then stuck around after Staten’s son died in a car crash. Waiting for Staten to lift his head from mourning and see her for the catch she is, she

farms lavender and runs a bar — excuse me, a “dance hall” — with bartender Ellie (Marianly Tejada). As can happen in fiction and in life, Staten’s brother-in-law, Davis (Eoin Macken), has been carrying his own torch for Quinn; though a man of ulterior motives, he does seem sincere in this, which makes trouble all the more likely, and sad.

Davis’ bellicose football hero son, Reid (Andrew Liner), has just been dumped by sad-eyed cheerleader Lauren (Lizzy Greene), daughter of the sheriff Dan Brigman (Philip Winchester) and occasionally recovering alcoholic mother Margaret (Sarah Minnich). Her new squeeze is Lucas (Garrett Wareing), sensitive and blond and essentially an orphan — dad has gone off — and tied to his troublesome brother, Kit (Casey W. Johnson).

This is all just setting the stage. You have guessed by now that this is a show full of confrontation and secrets and characters generally out of sorts; any happy interlude is liable to lead to an argument, any gathering to a fistfight or someone who should know better shooting their



ANNA KOORIS Netflix

**EOIN MACKEN** as Davis, from left, James Brolin as Cap and Jack Schumacher as Yancy Grey in “Ransom Canyon,” the soapy drama series streaming on Netflix.

mouth off. I had to keep writing down names and connections to keep everyone straight — who was whose son or grandson, etc. It seemed they all were one family. For a while I thought that one character and her sister were the same person.

Meanwhile, a company called Austin Water & Power wants to run a pipeline into Ransom Canyon’s ginormous aquifer. It has been tossing money around like confetti but has come upon a pair of immovable objects in the persons of cantankerous old rancher Cap Fuller (James Brolin), to whom the thing just smells bad (he has a dead son too), and Staten, who wants nothing to come between him and his “60,000

acres of unspoiled Texas grassland” and the 30,000 head of cattle that graze upon it. (We are shown a representative few.)

“The world’s drying up,” Staten says. “That aquifer feeds wells, our crops and our cattle, and I’m not going to let them run it dry.”

Into this cozy community comes darkly handsome Yancy Grey (Jack Schumacher), possibly dangerous Yancy Grey — it’s a dangerous name, anyway — who reads poetry and slides into a job with Cap and a flirtation with Ellie. Eventually, after she sews up his cut hand — she was a nurse before she worked a bar, and aren’t they kind of the same thing? — he will explain his

scars, like Indy to Marion at the end of “Raiders of the Lost Ark.” There is a certain type of character in such stories whom love will improve, and you can see in his eyes he might be one.

There is no reason on Earth not to enjoy this well-made, nicely acted, soapy, soap-bubble show, whose 10 episodes have been laid out whole for you to binge. Come for the messy lives, the promise of love, the old-fashioned values. Come for the hats, the boots, the horses, the ruggedness once used to sell cigarettes. Stay for the country music cameo. It’s not everywhere you’ll hear a line like “Tell the boys to saddle up.” But you’ll hear it here.

# It took dozens of people to bring the ‘Ochi’ to life

['Ochi,' from E1] cinema most popularly exemplified by Steven Spielberg’s “E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial” (a movie the director born in the central Californian town of Aptos says he didn’t watch until he was in his 20s).

Before landing on the small primate of “The Legend of Ochi,” Saxon first considered a giant oaf and then something closer to the slumbering beast of Hayao Miyazaki’s “My Neighbor Totoro.” Keeping in mind the arc of the narrative, Saxon realized the imagined life form needed to fit in a backpack to travel with Yuri wherever she goes.

A self-anointed “amateur primatologist” who has given talks about the evidence for the existence of Sasquatch, Saxon leaned into real-life primates for his design, primarily the endangered golden snub-nosed monkey found in remote Chinese mountains.

“The goal was that it felt like it was something from nature, not something from a movie,” says Saxon, boyish with wispy brown hair, during a recent Zoom interview from Sebastopol, Calif. “I want kids to accept that maybe this is a real place and maybe this is a real animal that they just haven’t discovered yet.”

Saxon maximized the disarming appeal of the snub-nosed monkey by giving his adorable Baby Ochi larger eyes and ears. Though some early reviews of the film have pointed to the “Gremlins” films or “The Mandalorian’s” Grogu (a.k.a. Baby Yoda) as likely references, Saxon maintains he has never seen those.

As for his key inspiration for the practical creature in “Ochi,” Saxon recalls being moved by the animatronic mouse in Nicolas Roeg’s “The Witches” (1990), which he watched as a kid and describes as a “correct adaptation of Roald Dahl.”

To achieve that level of in-camera wonder, the filmmaker enlisted John Nolan Studio, the storied London-based animatronics outfit with credits on productions including the “Harry Potter” franchise and “Jurassic World: Dominion.”

For Saxon, who first wanted to become an illustrator before going to film school, his choice of mixing puppets with other mediums in his work comes from a desire to make the viewer rethink what’s possible on-screen. “We wanted to confuse the audience to create cinematic magic tricks where your brain gets short-circuited because you can’t fathom what’s happening,” he says.

It’s an impulse that goes

back to his time in film school, where Saxon began crafting maquettes of characters, which turned into learning to do stop-motion animation and eventually into making puppets and prosthetics.

During that span, he met key figures in his creative development: Daren Rabinovitch, a young artist at Industrial Light & Magic, the visual effects powerhouse, who was working on the puppets for Wes Anderson’s “The Life Aquatic,” and Hellfritsch. The trio formed Encyclopedia Pictura.

“We fell in love with each other’s art and started making films together,” Saxon remembers. “But we weren’t satisfied with just making it purely animated or purely live-action — or purely anything.”

Saxon first received development funds in 2018 and started working with John Nolan and his team on a prototype of the Baby Ochi puppet. His sketches were converted into 3D digital designs by David Darby, head of sculpting and concept art at Nolan’s studio, working on software called ZBrush.

A preliminary physical version of the Baby Ochi puppet had no fur and no mechanical functions but was proportionally correct and could be manipulated using rods attached to each limb and its head, allowing the production to test its movement.

They discovered that the length of the rods between the puppeteer and the puppet resulted in small, unpredictable variations in the way the fictional quadruped moved.

Saxon refers to this as the “failure space,” which lends realism and charm to the creature.

“If you look at a video of a real baby primate, they have the exact same wiggles and imperfections,” says the filmmaker.

Lead puppeteer Robert Tygner is a veteran in the field whose career began on the David Bowie-starring 1986 cult favorite “Labyrinth.” He recalls that during their early technical rehearsals, Saxon brought along director of photography Evan Prosofsky and production designer Jason Kisvarday so they could determine how the sets should be built and where the camera would be placed, considering the space required for the puppeteers.

“That was a real advantage,” Tygner says. “It hasn’t happened to me in many years that a director comes along and wants to really find out the best way to make this puppet work on film.”

It wasn’t until 2021, when



ALEXANDRU IONITA A24

**NEARLY 40** artists and technicians worked on Baby Ochi, honing everything from motorized facial movements to skin and fur so the “Legend” looks real.

Saxon got the green light to go ahead with “Ochi,” that more detailed animatronic puppets were created. In addition to figuring out the ideal dimensions of the body, part of Darby’s initial digital renderings dealt with the prospective fur.

“You can look at anatomy books and try and imagine what a monkey would look like without the fur on,” says Nolan, “but we have to sculpt that in 3D and use Photoshop to work out what the length of hair needs to be and get that sculpt signed off before we actually apply any hair to the physical creature.”

Then it went to the molding team, who 3D-printed the main shape of the puppet with fiberglass molds. The next step was with the skin department, where silicon skins were fabricated and painted.

Nolan explains that all these animatronics are bespoke parts created using 3D printers. The Baby Ochi proved singularly challenging given its small size. Inside its tiny head — about the size of a grapefruit — complex mechanics with around 25 servos were meant to produce subtle facial expressions.

“It’s definitely one of the more complex builds I’ve ever had to design,” says Karl Gallivan, “Ochi’s” animatronic designer.

Baby Ochi’s face was mechanically divided into two segments. This meant that operating the face required two puppeteers: one in charge of the eyes and the eyebrows, the other controlling the mouth. Baby Ochi’s astounding facial performance is fully practical, without any CGI embellishments, Saxon says.

“There are six to seven different departments and there are easily four or five people in each,” says Nolan. “Between 35 and 40 people worked just on Baby Ochi. It’s crazy.”

The painstaking labor, however, pays off the first time the finished product comes alive.

“When you switch on something like Baby Ochi for the first time and you hear the crew gasp, that’s the magic,” adds Nolan. That means believable

enough to interact with actors, including a once-dubious Dafoe.

“Philosophically, he was deeply skeptical that a puppet could share a scene with him,” Saxon says. “Afterwards, he was shook. It had provided a challenge to his philosophy because it was such a convincing performance across from him. It felt so real, and he was completely drawn into the illusion of it.”

In total, three full-body Baby Ochis were built: the “hero puppet,” as the animatronics team refers to the main creature used in most shots; a stunt Ochi that was more durable; and a “backpack Ochi.” That last one saved the production time on set: Normally rigging a puppet into a backpack can take up to an hour, but the backpack Ochi was already in place.

Aside from the three full-body Baby Ochis, a separate removable head was cre-

ated, which had a screaming expression, which required a more extreme range of motion, and could be replaced onto the hero puppet’s body.

For the adult Ochi, Adrian Parish of Nolan’s team designed animatronic heads with about 30 servos in them that were worn by suit performers. British performer and martial artist Zoe Midgley was cast as Mother Ochi, while two actors local to Romania (where the movie was shot) played the other two adult Ochis.

“It’s a 60-pound head that has to be completely worn naturally and it’s also remote-controlled to get all of what’s happening on the face of Mother Ochi,” says Saxon. Nolan’s team started with a scan and a life cast of Midgley’s body. On top of that they sculpted a muscle suit.

Seasoned primate choreographer Peter Elliott, whose credits include 1988’s “Gorillas in the Mist,”



A24



ALEXANDRU IONITA A24

**DIGITAL RENDERINGS**, top, were used as a guide for building three real-world Baby Ochis. On set, above, animatronics operators and performers in creature suits received direction like all actors.

worked with the actors to bring the adult Ochi to life. “Peter was always right there off-camera becoming an ape, snorting, sniffing, acting out and getting the performers into the mood,” says Saxon.

Baby Ochi’s performance, on the other hand, entailed an even more complex dynamic developed from rehearsal sessions in which the puppeteers practiced the creature’s body language enough so that they could improvise on set.

Tygner would manipulate the head and the upper portion of the torso, and there would be one person on the right arm and another on the left arm. A fourth person would work the back legs and another would work the rear end. Two more people would operate the facial expressions remotely, bringing the total to seven.

Depending on the scenery, the five puppeteers operating the body wore blue, green or black suits so they could be digitally removed in postproduction.

“All we’ve done is remove the puppeteers,” says Nolan. “It’s still a puppet that’s in camera.”

There are, of course, shortcomings to the puppets. For example, the dexterous hands of the Baby Ochi proved difficult to get to Saxon’s satisfaction given the scale and the film’s budget. And for the puppeteers, showing the feet of the creature making contact with the ground in a believable manner was a challenge. A prop to hide the feet helped the illusion.

“We understand the limitations of animatronics and practical effects, but our job, really, is to keep people guessing,” says Nolan.

Although Saxon has dedicated his life to practical visual wizardry, he believes CG has been too harshly maligned and that there’s a place for the material and digital worlds to coexist. On “Ochi,” the wide shots that show the creatures jumping or running were entirely created as CG animation.

“The reason that CG and digital VFX got maligned is that there was an overreliance and a kind of laziness that started to develop in the industry where it was like, ‘Just shoot everyone on a blue screen and figure it out later,’” Saxon says.

Saxon does believe there’s been an overreliance on CG in the entertainment industry. And that even when working with the most renowned companies in VFX, there are still qualities, like the way light falls on an object, that look different when there’s something physical on set. We notice it unconsciously, he thinks.

“Our brains are so accepting of puppetry, even when you see the puppeteer above the puppet, your brain can so easily just tune them out and be like: This thing is alive,” says Saxon.

Is it real? Saxon hopes the audiences watching “The Legend of Ochi” are kept in thrall, wondering. As far as these artists know, it is.



COMICS

LA CUCARACHA By Lalo Alcaraz



CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia



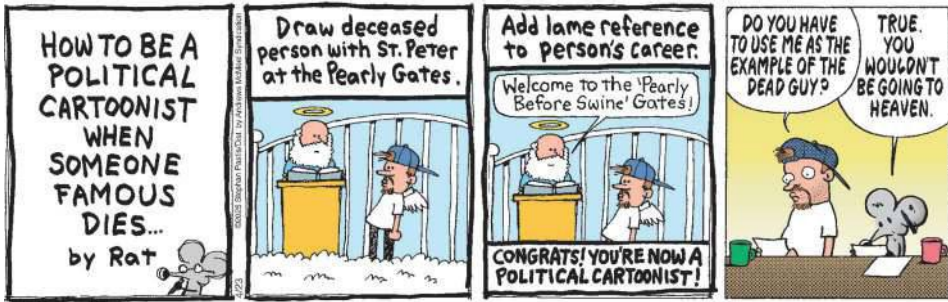
CURTIS By Ray Billingsley



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



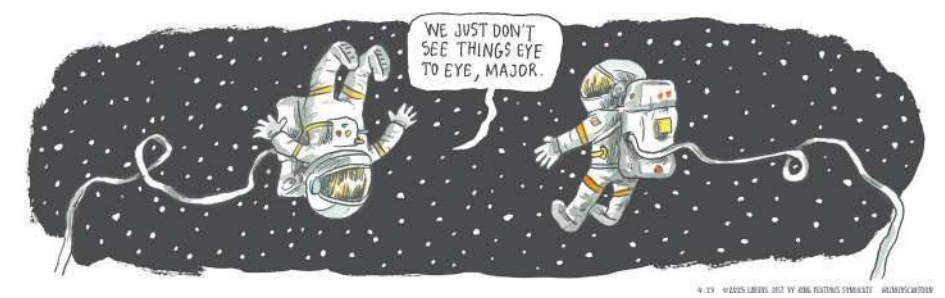
CRANKSHAFT By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers



JUMP START By Robb Armstrong



MACANUDO By Liniers



BLONDIE By Dean Young & John Marshall



BETWEEN FRIENDS By Sandra Bell-Lundy



BIZARRO By Wayno and Piraro



DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan



MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell



PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz





COMICS

SUDOKU

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Level: Moderate

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3	5	1	6	4	2
1	3	2	5	6	4
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4/23/25

Solutions to Tuesday's puzzles

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 or 2-by-3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 6 for the smaller grid). For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit [www.sudoku.org.uk](http://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

2-	9+	2÷	
		3×	2
2÷			
	12×		

CHALLENGING

9+	3÷		5×
	72×	8+	
5	2÷		24×
		120×	
13+		1	11+
4	2÷		

PREVIOUS ANSWERS

7+	8÷
3	4
1	2
2	3
4	3
2	1
4	3

6	1	2	3	4	5
3	5	6	1	2	4
4	2	3	5	6	1
5	4	1	6	3	2
2	3	5	4	1	6
1	6	4	2	5	3

4/23/25

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HOROSCOPE

By HOLIDAY MATHIS

**Aries** (March 21-April 19): Change will happen exponentially. Whatever you give, make sure it's something that will have a benefit when duplicated and amplified.

**Taurus** (April 20-May 20): You'll be detoured, but that doesn't mean you're off course. This is the right path for you.

**Gemini** (May 21-June 21): Trust in the processes you can't control, which will be most of them. Life is a barge, and the hands on the captain's wheel are yours.

**Cancer** (June 22-July 22): To be overly focused on seeking approval or trying to be liked by others would only diminish your ability to be graceful in social situations.

**Leo** (July 23-Aug. 22): Balance is key, not just in work but in play and passion. Taking breaks and moderating your intensity lets you sustain your energy.

**Virgo** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You're not always in the mood to compete, but when it's game time, that winning instinct will kick in.

**Libra** (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): Let go of something you were doing just to gain someone's approval.

**Scorpio** (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): You could point out problems around you, but why not save them for your notebook? You'll put it to good use, jotting down both issues and what's going right.

**Sagittarius** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): It takes someone new on the scene to stir things up and reveal the hidden magic still waiting to be explored.

**Capricorn** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): The need for approval and acceptance is primal. It's a fact of the human condition. It's totally natural to care a little more about validation than we want to.

**Aquarius** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): The opposite of love isn't hate — it's neglect. You'll

take the initiative to actively engage and nurture connections. Love thrives.

**Pisces** (Feb. 19-March 20): It would be easy to get so caught up in advanced techniques or ideas that you overlook the power of fundamentals. Going back to core principles will uncover anything you might've missed.

**Today's birthday** (April 23): Your year sparkles with happy news, exciting events and outrageous fun. You live by optimism and a sense of adventure that extends to your creative endeavors, social life and the relationships you seek. Highlights: hot tickets; justice served; a business that booms, keeping your skills sharp and resources plush enough to be generous. Leo and Sagittarius adore you. Lucky numbers: 28, 5, 7, 30, 26.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol  
By Katherine Simonson

- ACROSS**
- 1 Fish tacos fish, familiarly
  - 5 Give a ring
  - 10 Portland-to-Boise dir.
  - 13 Reversed figures
  - 15 Ingested
  - 16 Bolt
  - 17 \*Call to Rapunzel
  - 20 Largest African antelope
  - 21 Party with a piñata
  - 22 \*Outmoded forms of payment for some commuters
  - 26 Move stealthily
  - 27 Tension
  - 28 Home to three of Massachusetts' Five Colleges
  - 30 Bagel shop
  - 31 Free, in a way
  - 33 \*Like a beagle but not a corgi
  - 38 Puffed on an e-cigarette
  - 39 Honey liquor
  - 42 Innocence
  - 46 NPR White House correspondent — Keith
  - 48 Big name in kitchen appliances
  - 49 \*Western vacation destination
  - 52 Vitriolic rant
  - 54 Get fit for competition
  - 55 Rocket mishap, or what can be found at the start of the answer to each starred clue
  - 60 Stone or ice follower
  - 61 Eco-friendly vehicles
  - 62 Smooth change in topics
  - 63 K'Nex connector
  - 64 Clairvoyants
  - 65 "So many!"
- DOWN**
- 1 Domain suffix for a private employer
  - 2 Star pitcher
  - 3 Like cayenne
  - 4 With painstaking precision
  - 5 Tubular pasta
  - 6 Composer Joseph who mentored Mozart and Beethoven

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55								56				57	58
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60						61					62		
63						64						65	

7 Great Plains Native

8 Nine, in Normandy

9 Agent that gets good results

10 Soft end of a pencil

11 Multiroom accommodations

12 Mesmerized

14 Pilots' milestones

18 Ship follower

19 Present

22 Sign of spring

23 Half of deux

24 Subject of an autobiography

25 Quenched

29 Soccer star Hamm

31 Boosted

32 "Science Guy" Bill

34 Layers audio tracks

35 Gentle touch

36 President of France

37 College bigwig

40 Path of a fly ball

41 "Well, lah-di-!"

42 In the vicinity

43 Italian cheese with a nutty flavor

44 "Did my best"

45 Scaloppine meat

46 Blue-green hue

47 Prima donnas' songs

50 Vocalize

51 Trivial matter

53 Great Lake that drains into the Niagara River

56 \_\_ out a living

57 Private aid gp.

58 Trim

59 "\_\_ making a list ..."

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

L	A	P		C	A	L	L	B	A	S	I	L	
A	D	E		T	A	H	O	E	E	C	O	L	I
R	I	K	I		S	N	O	S	E		R	E	T
H	I	O	J	A		E	N	I	N	E	E		
B	E	A	N	S		P	R	A		P	L	O	W
				C	A	G	O			S	T	O	R
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A	D	I	S		F	E	U	R	O		F	R	A
W	O	H	S		I	S	N	I			H	E	P

4/23/25

BRIDGE

By FRANK STEWART

It isn't true that you can't exercise at the bridge table: Digging for facts is aerobic. But some players prefer jumping to conclusions.

In today's deal, North's raise to 4NT was quantitative, not ace-asking. South had a 17-point maximum and bid slam. Declarer won the first club in dummy and let the queen of spades ride. West took the king and led a second club, and South won as East threw a heart.

South next led the A-Q and a third diamond. When West followed low, South promptly put up dummy's king. East discarded again, and South had only 11 tricks.

"East had only one club," said South. "He didn't figure to have only two diamonds."

South should have excavated for a count of the defenders' distribution. After he wins the second club, he takes his spade tricks and the A-K of hearts. As it happens, West discards on the second heart and third spade, so South has a complete count: West's pattern was 2-1-4-6. Then South knows what to do in diamonds.

You hold: ♠ Q J 10 ♥ A 7 4 ♦ K 9 5 2 ♣ A Q 8. Both sides vulnerable. The dealer, at your right, opens one heart. What do you say?

Answer: You have the strength and pattern to overcall 1NT, showing a hand similar to a 1NT opening. I would be nervous about that call here, vulnerable, with only one heart stopper and no source of winners. If partner is broke,

you might be doubled for a telephone-number penalty. I would pass but would accept a double.

South dealer  
N-S vulnerable

NORTH

♠ Q J 10  
♥ A 7 4  
♦ K 9 5 2  
♣ A Q 8

WEST

♠ K 7  
♥ 5  
♦ J 8 7 4  
♣ 10 9 7 5 3 2

EAST

♠ 6 4 3 2  
♥ Q J 9 8 6 2  
♦ 10 6  
♣ 6

SOUTH

♠ A 9 8 5  
♥ K 10 3  
♦ A Q 3  
♣ K J 4

SOUTH  
1 NT  
6 NT

WEST  
Pass  
All Pass

NORTH  
4 NT

EAST  
Pass

Opening lead — ♣ 10

Tribune Content Agency

ASKING ERIC

**Dear Eric:** Over the years I noticed one of my spouse's sisters seemed generally overly sensitive with sudden emotional outbursts and a tendency to play the victim.

My spouse's last living parent died, and the estate needed to be divided equally between all of the siblings. Sister loaded up her car with many valuable items before making her way back home after the funeral. That annoyed the other siblings, as these items should have been part of the estate accounting to be divided, but they didn't confront her.

Spouse and the other siblings decided to let her get her way, resulting in her inheriting a very sizable inheritance, much more than any of the siblings. It became clear that spouse and siblings are afraid of her, and I told spouse this. What's done is done, but how am I supposed to act around the sister in the future?

Spouse does not want me to discuss this with her. I'm not a good actor. I don't want her to stay at my home if she visits, but spouse does. I'm disappointed in spouse's and siblings' timid behavior, but I'm angry at her selfishness and total disregard for fairness. I don't know how to move forward.

INAPPROPRIATE INHERITANCE

**Dear Inheritance:** Sometimes we just have to let

other people's toxic families be toxic. There is an unhealthy dynamic between your spouse, your spouse's siblings and their sister. Attempting to rearrange these relationships is just going to cause marital strife for you.

The relationship you can and should focus on is the one between you and your spouse. You've said what you needed to say about what happened with the inheritance. Your spouse has also expressed an opinion about how to move forward. I would encourage you to follow your spouse's lead. You don't have to acquiesce to the sister's future demands or even be friendly. You might choose to be out of town when the sister visits. But I implore you to make peace with your disappointment in your spouse. The sister has already poisoned so many wells with her own behavior; don't let her poison your marriage also.

**Dear Eric:** I am the oldest of five siblings, all now in our 70s and all professionals. We grew up blue-collar and "genteel poor." The problem arises with the jealousy and hatred the others harbor toward me. They spent their lives acquiring pricy trinkets and foreign cars and generally living well beyond their means, while I planned, saved and invested well.

I retired comfortably eight years ago and now,

with my wife, travel extensively and enjoy life. My siblings bitterly resent this and the painful reality that they can never afford to retire.

It's late in the day, and I'd like to set matters straight. We stopped speaking 10 years ago. What do you suggest?

FRUSTRATED ELDEST SON

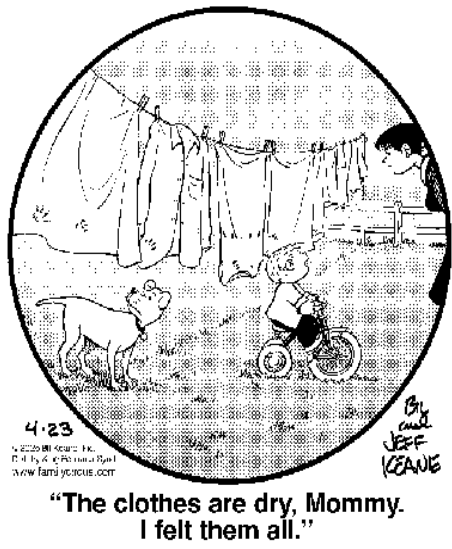
**Dear Son:** I'm curious what you mean by "set matters straight." If what you want is for your siblings to realize the error of their thinking and stop resenting you, you're likely to remain frustrated. It sounds like you resent them for their resentment, which is totally understandable. But do you also judge them for the way they chose to live?

You haven't spoken in a decade, but you write that they resent your happy retired life of the last eight years. How is this information getting to you and what are you doing with it when it does?

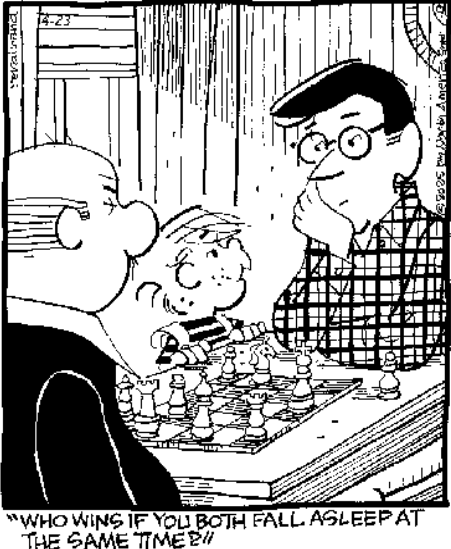
Reach out to them and acknowledge that you've had your differences in the past, you wish them well and you don't want to spend the rest of your days estranged. If they can listen to you without judgment, and you can do the same, you have something to build on.

Email questions to [eric@askingeric.com](mailto:eric@askingeric.com).

**FAMILY CIRCUS** By Bil Keane



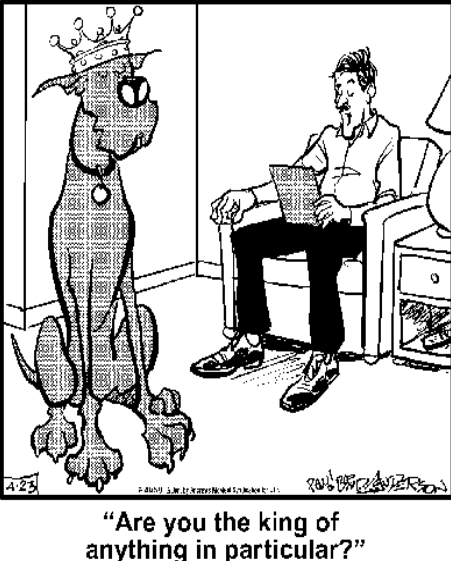
**DENNIS THE MENACE** By Hank Ketcham



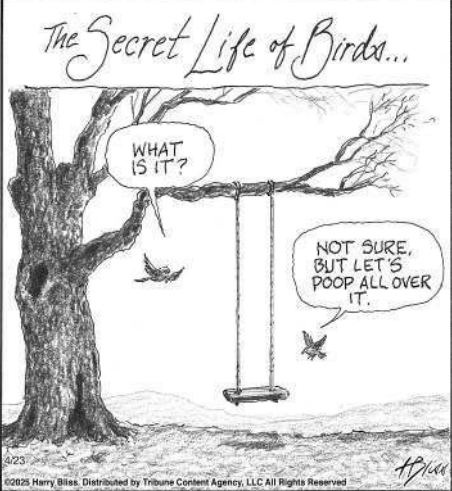
**FREE RANGE** By Bill Whitehead



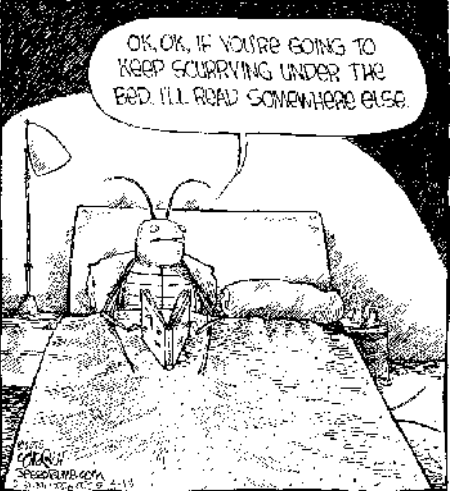
**MARMADUKE** By Brad & Paul Anderson



**BLISS** By Harry Bliss



**SPEED BUMP** By Dave Coverly





# ‘Furlough’s Paradise’ explores the Afro-surreal at Geffen

[‘Paradise,’ from E1] length and clarity.

### What inspired this play?

The play first was conceived when I was in grad school, but I was thinking about it for years before then, without the language for it. The initial impulse came from my own curiosity around the ways that incarceration impacts families. Where I’m from, everybody who is Black in our city has a reference point to the Allegheny County Jail, which is in the middle of Pittsburgh. My earliest memories are writing letters to family members who were incarcerated; as a young person, seeing family who was in that place transformed how I saw the world.

I also wanted to write a play that was inspired by the relationship between my cousin and I. We’re both only children; we’re almost siblings. And though the play traffics realism and has an illusion of realism, I’m really passionate about it not being a living room play; it’s a play about the Afro-surreal and the ways that Black life is always a little bit askew, like our experience of it doesn’t always match the way people perceive it or understand it.

### Who are these two characters to you?

Frederick Douglass talks about being free in form versus free in fact — the idea of seeking a freedom in your mind and how you see the world, and the fact that systems of oppression and power don’t get all of us because we’re able to imagine alternative ways to exist. Both of these characters are wrestling with real instances of denials of freedoms, and I want this play to invite us to see the ways that these different systems have impacted both of them.

Because Sade’s body is physically incarcerated, she really fights for her mind to be free. She stands on business, she speaks truth and names things as they are, and she doesn’t shy away from that. There’s something honorable about her absolute refusal to lie or cheat, even in the midst of what this world has deemed criminal, and the ways in which people who have committed crimes are not always seen in their full humanity or in their integrity. That’s why Sade is so clear about what her dreams are. I wanted to really center that in the play because it’s important to listen to folks who have existed inside and honor the dreams of those who are most affected by these systems.

Mina is trying to be free in many different ways. The life she’s lived has colonized her mind, her body, everything, and she’s fighting to let herself feel comfortable in a space for a few days. She can’t even find the language for what her dreams are



MARCUS UBUNGEN For The Times

**PLAYWRIGHT** a.k.a. payne says the initial idea for “Furlough’s Paradise” derived from “my own curiosity around the ways that incarceration impacts families.”

because she’s trying to free her tongue from these institutions. So though the play started as a love letter to a lot of my family who’ve been affected by incarceration, I wanted to also draw a love letter to versions of myself and my friends who have been in academic institutions, and have really suffered as Black and brown people and people of color in these spaces.

### What do you hope audiences experience during these three days with Mina and Sade?

Sometimes it’s hard to sit in the rehearsal room with this play, because I want another world for these characters; I want to just get them out of this room and get them somewhere else, away from everything. Who were they before all the stuff they put on each other, and how can they be able to just not have to carry all of that?

To me, that’s evocative of what abolition means; it’s the capacity to exist together, and to break apart the rigid ways that we contain and police ourselves. So my hope is that audiences watch the play and want to create alternative spaces for Black people to actually be and exist and care for each other, and cherish being present with each other without being confined.

**Geffen Playhouse’s Artistic Director Tarell Alvin Mc-**

### Craney, also the chair of playwriting at Yale School of Drama, described you as “one of the most powerful writers I’ve encountered in my time as a professor.” What was it like to be taught by him?

Tarell is an extraordinary teacher and mentor, as well as artist, of course. I started at Yale School of Drama in 2019 — I had gone straight through from undergrad, which was really difficult because of the elitism, the white supremacy and all the things. Tarell was extraordinary at crafting an oasis and fugitive space within an institution that honestly had caused a lot of harm for so many people who looked like me.

Grad school had its challenges, but the community I found in the playwriting department was such a gift. Our entire nine-person cohort was students of color, and Tarell created a horizontal leadership model

in the program that allowed me to feel supported as an artist and a full person, where you can really listen to your own voice as a playwright and trust that voice. He created such fertile ground for exploration and play.

### “Furlough’s Paradise” made its world premiere at Atlanta’s Alliance Theatre last year. What did you learn from that staging that you’re integrating into this one?

One of the biggest things is embodiment — it’s an endless question and the conundrum of being a Black writer in America and writing in English. I love this quote by Ntozake Shange: “I cant count the number of times i have viscerally wanted to attack deform n maim the language that i was taught to hate myself in.” That feels so relevant to how I think about language — there’s the constant

### ‘Furlough’s Paradise’

**Where:** Gil Cates Theater at Geffen Playhouse, 10886 Le Conte Ave., L.A.  
**When:** 8 p.m. Wednesdays-Fridays, 3 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays. Ends May 18  
**Tickets:** \$36-\$139 (subject to change)  
**Info:** (310) 208-2028 or [geffenplayhouse.org](http://geffenplayhouse.org)  
**Running time:** 75 minutes, no intermission

awareness that this is a colonial language that my people were forced to speak, and so much that we do and experience just cannot fit into English.

So in this rendition, I’ve been thinking more about the body. Mina and Sade keep doing these comparisons [of each other] where, in all of that language, there’s no space to actually fully see both of them. But in these dream sequences at night, we see what they’re wrestling with outside of language.

My hope is that those allow us to go to the limits of language, and see what our bodies do when language isn’t enough. There were movement consultants for a few gestural beats in other renditions, but having choreographers from day one of this process has been incredible.

### How did you first start writing plays?

I grew up doing some musicals and operas in Pittsburgh, and my mom is a music teacher so I was always in her choirs. When I went to an arts magnet school, I majored in literary arts, and I wrote my first play in seventh grade. I entered it in City Theatre’s Young Playwrights Contest and I remember being in rehearsals for my play and thinking, “I love making stuff, being with people and imagining stuff together. I just want to do this forever.” Theater making for me is not just about my own little independent vision; there’s so much collaboration that goes into a show and I love making space on the page for other artists.

In undergrad, I directed a lot because I didn’t see the spaces that I wanted to create work in and I didn’t feel comfortable acting. I

didn’t really feel there were structures for the work I wanted to write. But I fell in love with the practice of making theater and building ensemble to support that — specifically Black theater, the histories of Black theater and the ways that Black theater artists have imagined alternate worlds.

### What structures can theater institutions prioritize to encourage more of the work you want to make?

Institutions are trying to improve things — even Tarell being here [at the Geffen] and being deeply committed to the work of Black and brown people and bringing in voices that are not traditionally in white American theater spaces.

But I find it critical to create alternative spaces entirely, because there’s always going to be a limit to what institutions that are not owned by us can do. I love the concepts of fugitivity and how people have created spaces that are not always visible to the institutional or public eye, that go deeper and aren’t necessarily trying to be big or fit into the systems. I wonder if there are ways that larger institutions can support many different kinds of theater making, like pouring into smaller artist collectives in a way that enables them to create with autonomy.

I’m also obsessed with maroonage, a Black cultural tradition in which people who were enslaved would escape to the mountains and form independent communities. In a theatrical tradition, what does it mean to create our own stuff and center our own gaze in our making of things? I’ve been building a theater collective in line with these things, and it’s Black folks who gather by bodies of water and just make experimental stuff. This past summer, we gathered in New Rochelle and did double Dutch lessons, clowning classes and Pilates.

Spaces like that are so critical to creating community and ensemble, which is hard when working on a small play like “Furlough’s Paradise.” So for the next renditions on the East Coast next year, I’m hoping to gather all the artists working on it [at the various theaters] and spend three days mapping out freedom dreams.

## Having a laugh at post-9/11 paranoia

[Youssef, from E1]

Rumi’s father, a doctor turned halal cart owner, goes into assimilation overdrive to prove his family is 110% American and absolutely not associated with anyone named Osama. Old Glory, Christmas decor and Easter trimmings pop up in their frontyard. He shaves his beard off. He insists that his wife stop wearing her hijab, which makes Sharia, who is a receptionist for an eccentric dentist (Kieran Culkin), all the more determined to don her headscarf.

Meanwhile, Rumi’s classmates eye him suspiciously despite his attempts to fit in with other boys by wearing his new basketball jersey. But the bootleg “Bulls” shirt reads “Balls” instead. It’s also three sizes too big and looks like a dress. Clearly, he’s not like the others.

Elements of the storyline mirror Youssef’s childhood montages in his Hulu series “Ramy,” but the medium of adult animation allowed him to “go wild” with the story and characters. He also got to work with Brady, an authority on pushing animated satire to hilarious extremes.

“Animation became the vehicle for how this idea should live. I wanted to look at a wholly unexplored period outside of the lens of a cop drama or the news ... and go to the wildest extremes with premises,” said Youssef. “I definitely had the desire to make something stupid in a really great, sophisticated and almost comedia dell’arte way. Just dumb and loud [laughs]. You can put ‘Ramy’ in a dramedy category and you could, to an extent, put ‘Mo’ there, but here it’s really bursting open in a medium with no limits. Then Pam’s name came up and it was a no-brainer.”

Brady collaborated with Trey Parker and Matt Stone on “South Park” from the



CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

**MONA CHALABI**, Ramy Youssef and Pam Brady, the producing team behind “#1 Happy Family USA.”



Prime Video

**THE SERIES’** hand-drawn animation is inspired by late-’90s and early-2000s series such as “Daria.”

show’s start, going on to co-write with them the film “Team America: World Police” and co-creating the Netflix comedy series “Lady Dynamite.” “As soon as I saw ‘Ramy’ and I saw his stand-up, I was a fan,” said Brady. “I kept begging my manager: ‘Please, can I meet Ramy?’ So I came at it honestly as a fan, knowing that this guy’s doing some next-level stuff. I keep joking with my friends that Ramy’s a real writer. He explores characters. That’s why this experience has been so amazing because it’s pushed me. It’s like, ‘Oh, this is how you do it.’”

Illustrator and executive producer Mona Chalabi designed the characters, each harkening back to anima-

tion styles of the late ’90s and early 2000s shows like “Futurama” or “Daria.”

“I wanted it to feel like a found tape,” said Youssef. “You pop it in and it looks like it could have been on Comedy Central or MTV [back then]. It’s hand-drawn animation, and we made it with an animation studio in Malaysia [called Animasia]. It’s an all-Muslim animation house, which is so crazy. They were so happy to draw hijabs and all these characters. They were like, ‘We relate to it!’ But we even downgraded our computers here in order to make it like it would have been made. Whatever we did took a while and it was like the opposite of AI.”

Adds Brady, “We wanted to make sure, especially with the visuals and the direction and the pacing, that the show felt familiar. That you’d seen a show like this before. We didn’t want to reinvent the form, but we also didn’t want to make it look like ‘Family Guy.’ So it’s like, ‘Oh, this show existed in 1998. You remember it, right?’”

Though the show takes place some 24 years ago, it’s not hard to see the plot’s resonance today in the wake of the deportations and round-ups of immigrants and students.

The Husseins are up against a wave of Islamophobia, triggered by the 9/11 attacks. They embody the very real fear of being profiled by the outside world, including FBI agent Dan Daniels (voiced by Timothy Olyphant), who happens to live across the street. A dark period, to be sure, but also one rich in comedic value if you’re willing to go there as “#1 Happy Family USA” does. Its characters break out into song while on the verge of being swept up by Homeland Security, or inadvertently cause a widespread panic by dropping on the carpet at the airport to pray when they learn of the terror attacks.

“We were trying to kind of create this time capsule, like around the old DHS of this moment,” said Youssef. “But right now is a time when an immigrant family, and surely a Muslim family, would feel the need to shout, ‘We’re No. 1! Happy Family USA!’ Pam and Mona and I have all been looking at each other with like, ‘Whoa.’ Of all the times this thing could have dropped, it’s dropping right now, when [it’s hard] to joke about this stuff in any other medium.”

At a time when everything feels like a cruel joke, “#1 Happy Family USA” bites back with the satire we need.

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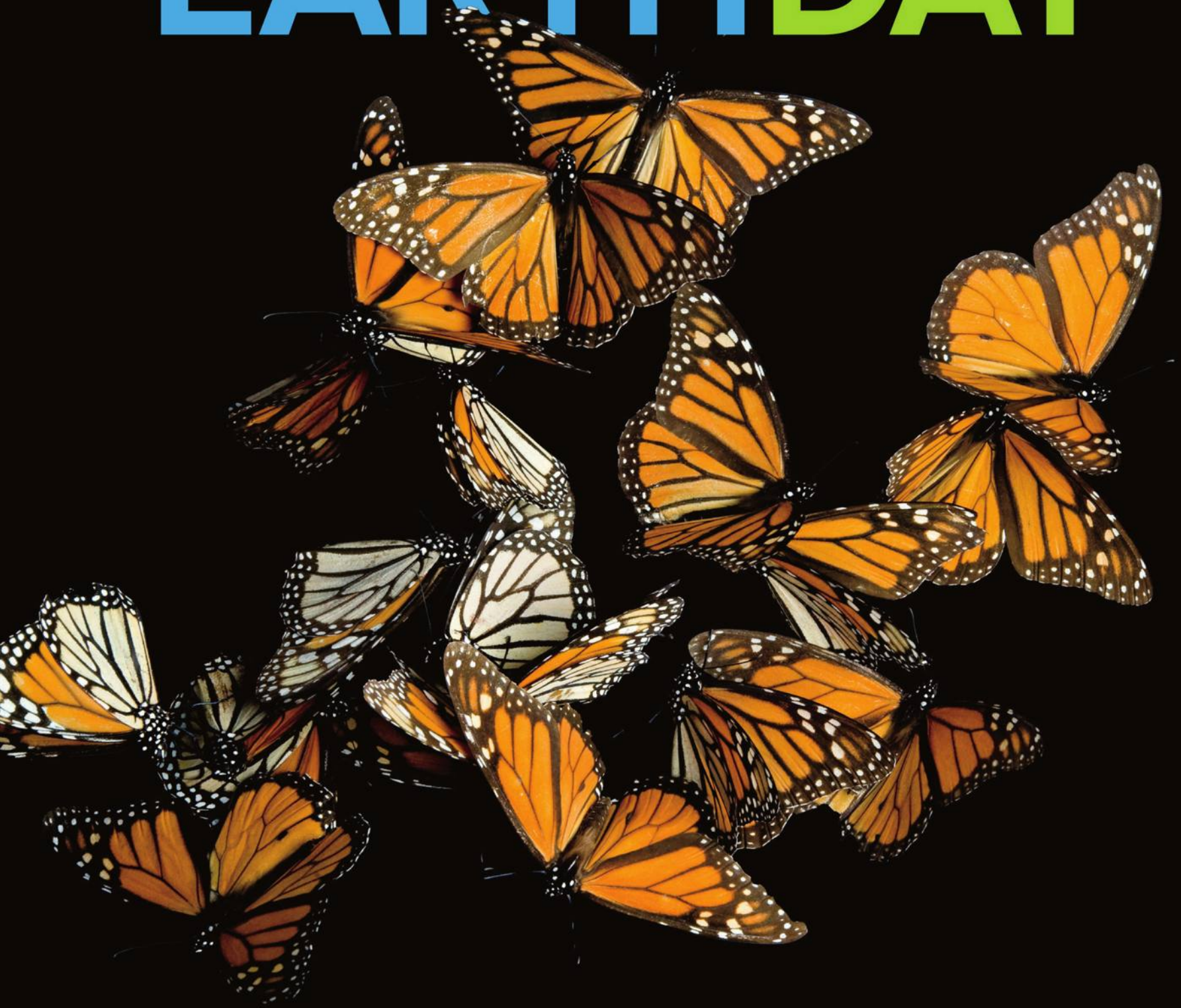
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Elizabeth Smilor  
birding in  
Rocky Mountain  
National Park  
photo by Alex Smilor

# We Are Nature

As a lifelong outdoors enthusiast who greatly values the natural world, it is easy to be discouraged when I read the daily news.



Elizabeth Smilor  
Executive Editor

Not only are environmental protections being threatened (not new in political cycles), but the very people who devote their lives to our public lands and conduct the science vital to Earth's survival are losing their jobs and seeing their life's work put on hold.

National Wildlife Federation's Beth Pratt shared with me from her home near Yosemite that she's saddened and angry. "I never thought in my lifetime that I'd have to be defending the value of our National Parks. It's one thing we almost all agree on, that we love our public lands." NWF is a bipartisan non-profit that she said will continue to protect America's natural resources for all, as well as the science that guides conservation.

"Without science we would not have known why and how to build the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing," Pratt said. And as you'll read in this edition of Southern California Earthday, Angelenos have rallied behind this project because it will reconnect habitat vital to the survival of species from mountain lions to monarch butterflies.

National Geographic Explorer and Photo Ark founder Joel Sartore continues his mission to document the world's 20,000 species in human care before some of them disappear. He's at 16,625 species and counting. He sees the monarch butterfly as a beautiful example of the plight of many species. "If you can't save the most beautiful insect in North America. If you don't even try, what hope is there for the other things?"

These experts, naturalists and scientists have a reminder for us: We are nature. We are part of this ecosystem we call Earth. What we do, and don't do, matters. I implore you to care. Step outside and observe the nature around you. Watch the smallest insect, listen to the birds, and, yes, stop to smell the roses.

Stuck at your desk? Go to the Friends of Big Bear Valley live webcam [FOBBV Eagle Nest Cam](#) and be inspired by this bald eagle family along with tens of thousands of other human beings. Or tune into another live cam at [Explore.org](#). Pick up one of Sartore's photo Ark books and look into an animal's eyes via his photographs.

Find hope. It is out there, literally. Then, take action.

Cut down on a destructive habit such as plastic use, pesticide use, and driving. Start small and build upon new habits.

Start something new. Plant a pollinator garden. Pick up trash. Become a citizen scientist (Examples: [ebird.org](#), [inaturalist.org](#) and [monarchwatch.org](#)). Support a non-profit with money or service hours, or both.

"Human beings are very destructive, but we are also very caring when we need to be," Sartore said to me.

The time to care is now. For the sake of every species. For the sake of planet Earth. Ultimately, for our own survival.

*Civic Publications Executive Editor Elizabeth Smilor is a freelance writer and former editor for the Southern California News Group and the Ventura County Star. A Colorado native, she has lived in Southern California since graduating from USC, and is the proud mom of two Eagle Scouts.*

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# Can We Save the Monarchs?



## Iconic Butterfly Facing Sharp Decline Due to Habitat Loss, Climate Change

By Elizabeth Smilor  
Special Sections Writer

Imagine a world without the iconic orange and black monarch butterfly.

"What will future generations say if we allow the monarch butterfly to go extinct, the biggest, most showy insect on the North American continent," speculated National Geographic Explorer and Photo Ark Founder Joel Sartore. "If we didn't care enough to plant native plants. We didn't care enough to do the right thing. I think they will be angry and disappointed. How bad does it have to get?"

The monarch butterfly population has declined sharply over the past 20 years. Though genetically similar, there are two geographically distinct Monarch populations. The eastern monarch overwinters in Mexico and breeds east of the Rocky Mountains. The western population overwinters along the California coast and breeds in areas west of the Rockies. The eastern population has decreased by an estimated 80% and the western by about 95% in two decades, according to the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

Overall, butterfly populations in the U.S. have declined by almost 25%, according to a study published in March in the journal *Science*. The team of more than 30 researchers collected data from scientists and community volunteers and analyzed 12.6 million butterfly sightings to reach their conclusion.

"We need insects or we can't survive ourselves. We need pollinators to grow fruit, but others, like ants, clean the plants. If they go away, so do we," said Sartore, whose Photo Ark book catalog includes one

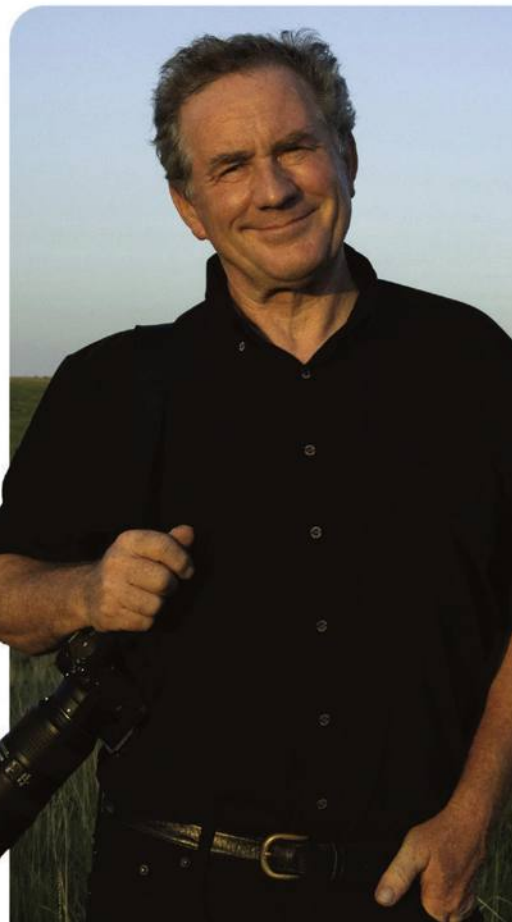
dedicated to insects. "That's why everyone should care."

The main reasons for the population decline are habitat loss, climate change and pesticide use. Monarchs need host plants (milkweed) for breeding and flowering plants that provide nectar for adults. They also need overwintering sites. While the eastern monarchs make a 3,000-mile migration in winter to Michoacán, Mexico, western monarchs have many overwintering sites along the coast and some have been lost to development. Climate change, with extreme storms and an earlier spring in some areas, has affected monarch life cycles. Finally, the widespread use of

pesticides and herbicide-resistant crops has decimated native plant habitats vital to many insects.

"The thing that people don't understand very well is that monarchs and other pollinators have to have habitat that is not constantly sprayed with

[Continue Monarch, Page 4](#)



National Geographic Explorer Joel Sartore started the National Geographic Photo Ark in 2006 to create a photo archive of global biodiversity that will feature portraits of more than 25,000 species of birds, fish, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates. He has traveled to more than 60 countries for the project, photographed more than 16,000 species, published multiple Photo Ark books, the most recent is *Photo Ark: Babies*, started a YouTube Video Ark and addressed many live audiences. He estimates the project will take 25 years to complete.

Joel Sartore, photo by Ellen Sartore.



insecticides,” Sartore said. At his office building in Lincoln, Nebraska, a huge native prairie garden is filling in all the landscaped spaces. “It’s important that people start planting native, nectar bearing plants everywhere we can in order to save insects.”

Orange County resident Susie Vanderlip is a volunteer Monarch Conservation Specialist for Monarch Watch, a University of Kansas-based education, conservation and research group. Vanderlip was inspired when she discovered monarch caterpillars in her back yard 15 years ago after an emergency appendectomy slowed her down. She started learning all about them, taking photos, and even writing a children’s book.

“They literally float across the garden. I think people feel this connection to them in part because monarchs are so calm and you can get so close to them,” said Vanderlip. “Then, when I watched their metamorphosis it made me think about my own healing. I think it gives us all hope that the trials and tribulations of life will turn out to create something beautiful in our lives.”

Vanderlip created a Facebook group with about 1,600 members throughout Southern California who share information. She also helps coordinate volunteers for projects, such as Dana Point’s campaign to plant 10,000 square feet of monarch habitat over 10 years in public spaces. And, of course, she cultivates her own monarch garden space.

While she used to tag monarchs, California Fish and Wildlife



regulations now prohibit human contact with monarchs. Unfortunately, Vanderlip explained, when people raised large populations of monarchs in netted environments conservation professionals said it may do more harm than good. “Some people were raising 200 to 1,000 monarchs every season in an effort to create more monarch butterflies and then release them. That is not healthy conservation, because that means you’re collecting eggs and you’re not letting natural selection happen, in which normally one out of a thousand monarch eggs becomes a butterfly,” she said.

Everyone is still encouraged to create monarch habitats. The Monarch Watch Waystation Program is nearing 50,000 registered habitats after almost 20 years. Monarch Watch also distributed 100,000 free milkweed plants last year. “However, we are still losing more monarch habitat each year than we are gaining through these efforts and others,” the website states. “We

need to register 50,000 Monarch Waystations every year (or every few months!) instead of every 20 years, and we need to distribute 1 million or more milkweed plants each year.”

As Vanderlip pointed out, monarchs are a complex species and research on their decline and how to help them is ongoing. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed to list the monarch butterfly as threatened under the



Photo by Susie Vanderlip



**Susie Vanderlip** is a Monarch Conservation Specialist for Southern California for Monarch Watch. She is the author of a children’s photo storybook *The Story of Chester* about the butterfly life cycle, maintains a blog and Facebook group, and is available to speak about monarchs and butterfly habitat. For more information, go to [www.MonarchButterflySpeaker.com](http://www.MonarchButterflySpeaker.com)



Endangered Species Act. The comment period for the proposed rule published on Dec. 24, 2024, is open until May 19. [Learn more about the reopened comment period.](#)

“Human beings are very destructive, but we’re also very caring when we need to be. Saving nature now needs to be intentional. We can’t take it for granted that all of this will be here,” said Sartore. “If you can’t save the most beautiful insect in North America. If you don’t even try, what hope is there for the other things?”

## What You Can Do to Help Monarchs

- Plant a pollinator garden with locally appropriate flowering plants and native milkweed species. (See Xerces Society California plant list [here](#)). Susie Vanderlip (See more tips on her blog: [www.tinyurl.com/AllAboutMonarchs](http://www.tinyurl.com/AllAboutMonarchs)) suggests planting at least 3-5 gallon-size milkweed and about the same number of flowering plants, that bloom at different times. Space them out as female monarchs like to spread their eggs out. Plants need plenty of sun and water. (Caution: Wash hands if you touch the milkweed leaves or a caterpillar as the oils are toxic to the human eye.)
- Ensure any plants you purchase from nurseries are pesticide-free.
- Do not use pesticide, fungicide, or herbicide on any milkweed plants or nectar plants as this can poison and kill monarch caterpillars and butterflies. Absolutely no pesticide should be used adjacent to overwintering sites during the overwintering period (October - March).
- Become a community scientist by volunteering to collect data on monarchs and milkweed or help create butterfly habitats in public spaces
- Useful links:  
[monarchwatch.org](http://monarchwatch.org)  
[xerces.org](http://xerces.org)  
[monarchjointventure.org](http://monarchjointventure.org)  
[www.westernmonarchadvocates.com](http://www.westernmonarchadvocates.com)

# JUST ONE PIECE CAN RUIN THE PICTURE.



Zero litter is the goal.  
[CleanCA.com](http://CleanCA.com)



# FOBBV Eagle Nest Cam

Watch Live:  
The Big Bear Bald  
Eagle Family



Tens of thousands of people, including many classrooms of students, are tuning in to watch the Big Bear bald eagle family via a live nest webcam operated by the Friends of Big Bear Valley (FOBBV). The world-famous pair, Jackie and Shadow, had three eggs hatch in March. It was the first hatching since 2022 for the pair. Up to 100,000 viewers tuned in from around the world during the hatchings. The FOBBV YouTube channel has more than 600,000 subscribers.

The observers share how watching the bald eagles brings them joy and peace, and sometimes sorrow \_ as when one chick did not survive a snowstorm in mid-March. FOBBV volunteers named the deceased chick Misty, in honor of a dedicated FOBBV volunteer Kathi Mysterly who was lost to cancer “and is still very missed.”

As is tradition, Big Bear elementary students (this year third, fourth and fifth graders) chose the surviving chicks names from a randomly drawn list of names sent in by nest watchers. About 54,000 names were submitted during the online FOBBV fundraiser with 30 finalists drawn. The students voted for Sunny and Gizmo. The

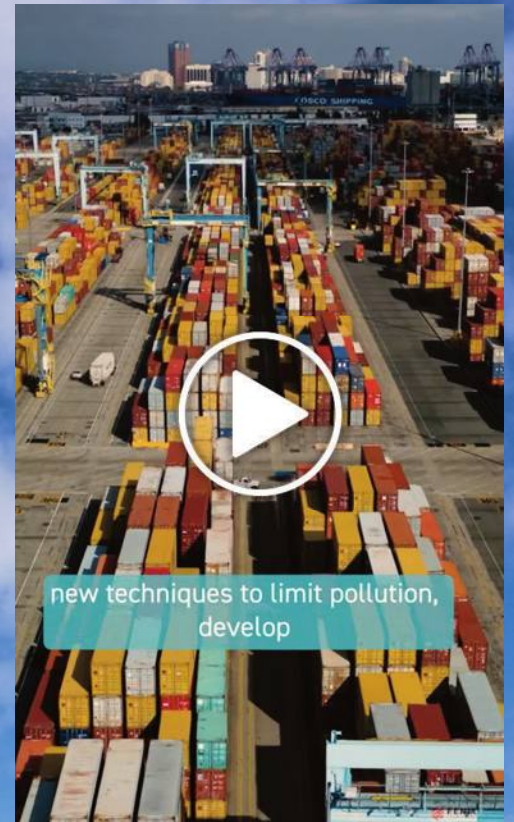
older and bigger chick is Sunny and the one previously known as Little Chick is Gizmo.

FOBBV, a nonprofit educational group, operates two webcams near the nest, 24/7 advertising free; and moderates daily live chats. Cam1, nearest the nest, lost sound and IR light capabilities in the March snowstorm, so sound and nighttime IR light video is from the wide-view Cam2. Per wildlife regulations, no one is allowed to go near the nest which is 145 feet up a Jeffrey pine tree. In fact, the San Bernardino National Forest closes hiking trails in the area every year during the brooding season.

Tune in and you'll feel like you're right there in the nest with this bald eagle family. Get to know protective mom Jackie, fastidious dad Shadow and the adorable Sunny and Gizmo, who grow exponentially every day. Take it from someone who knows, you will not be able to stop yourself from checking in, and you will learn so much from the dedicated moderators.

~Elizabeth Smilor





# 92. 71. 98.

Big numbers for big reductions in emissions at the Port of Long Beach. This Earth Day, the Port of Long Beach is celebrating Leading Green. Over the past 20 years, we've reduced diesel soot by 92%, nitrogen oxides by 71% and sulfur oxides by 98% as cargo has increased to record levels.



# Reconnecting Nature



ROCK  
DESIGN  
ASSOCIATES

## Phase 1 Construction of Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing Nearly Complete

By Elizabeth Smilor  
Special Sections Writer

In the dark of night last May, a barn owl followed the path of the unfinished Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing over the 101 Freeway in Agoura Hills.

"For the first time in decades, there was a dark spot over the freeway and Dr. Travis Longcore (UCLA adjunct professor and director of the Urban Wildlands Group) and a group of students witnessed this unexpected flyover," said National Wildlife Federation (NWF) California Regional Executive Director Beth Pratt, who led the crossing fundraising effort. The sighting was exciting for the many people involved in the public-private partnership behind the planning and building of what will be the largest wildlife crossing in the world and the first of its kind in California.

**"From the tracking collars used by scientists in the National Park Service on bobcats and mountain lions, we see that for years they have tried to cross the freeway at this point."**

Michael Comeaux,  
retired Caltrans District 7 Public Information Officer

"It corroborated what researchers already knew, that once we block out the headlight glare and much of the traffic noise, animals of all types will in fact cross there," said Michael Comeaux, recently retired Caltrans District 7 Public Information Officer for the project. "It's been almost magical watching this project coming

together. This isn't just a wildlife crossing, it is reconnecting a really significant wildlife habitat, so that all kinds of species can continue to live successfully in the Santa Monica Mountains."

The project broke ground on Earth Day 2022 and was inspired in part by the story of P-22, the only mountain lion known to have successfully crossed the maze of freeways to live in and around Griffith Park, until his death in December 2022. It involves the collaboration of Caltrans, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), the National Park Service (NPS), NWF, and the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCD) along with a number of additional supporting agencies and organizations. Over 5,000 individuals, foundations, agencies and businesses from around the world have raised more than \$98 million. The total cost comes from about equal parts private and public monies, Comeaux said, adding that all public funds were from environment-specific grants, such as Prop. 68, not transportation funds.





# Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing *By The Numbers*

26,700,000

Pounds of concrete for the phase 1 crossing

82

Girders holding up the main crossing

100

Weight in tons of each hollow concrete girder

5,000

Approximate number of plants for the main crossing (phase 1). Phase 2 will have 10 times as many plants.

30

Native plant species

2,364

LEGO® bricks in the crossing model designed by Rock Design Associates and Martin Egemo. Vote for it in the LEGO® Ideas contest here:

<https://ideas.lego.com/projects/75c9526f-98f6-43bc-8411-b6ff5b2eda43>

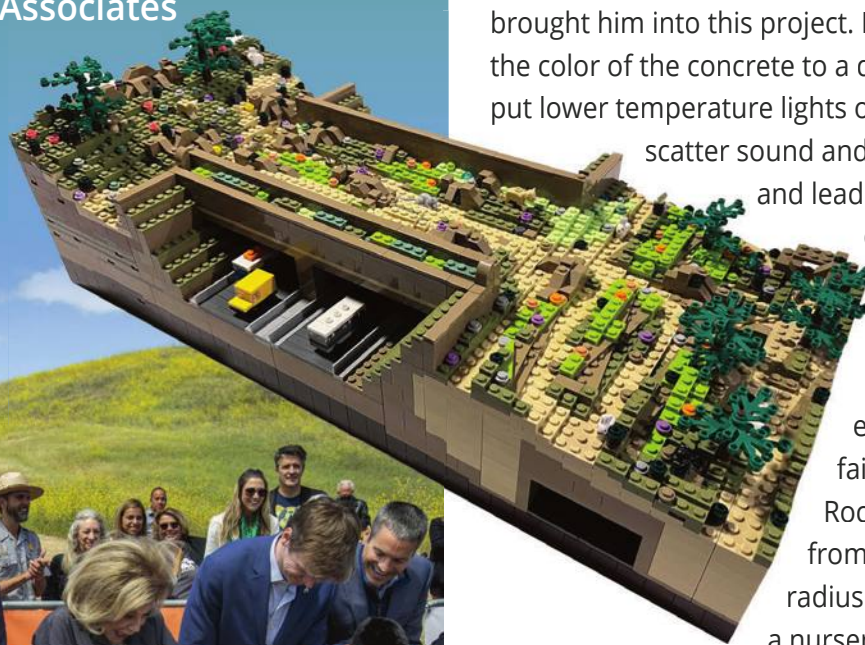


Photo by Mel Melcon, Los Angeles Times

"It is the most hopeful project," Pratt said. "It is not just an L.A. story or a California story, it's a story that the world is really behind."

Phase 1, the structural construction of the 174-foot-wide crossing spanning 10 lanes of the Ventura 101 Freeway at Liberty Canyon Road, is now substantially complete. Phase 2, a smaller crossing over Agoura Road and slopes connecting the crossing to the landscape on both sides, will begin soon. In the meantime, rocks, soil, seeds and plants will be placed on the main crossing to have a year to establish before the estimated opening toward the end of 2026.

## Designed for Wildlife

Caltrans worked with expert partners and applied research by NPS wildlife biologists, to choose the crossing site and design every last detail. First, the location: "This is the last place on Ventura freeway where there is open space on both sides of the freeway," Comeaux said. "From the tracking collars used by scientists in the National Park Service on bobcats and mountain lions, we see that for years they have tried to cross the freeway at this point."

The size of the crossing was also mandated by science. "You cannot build something very long and narrow, because animals will view it as a trap. That's why tunnels have limited success," Comeaux explained. "It had to be very open and natural."

NWF's Pratt had worked on other wildlife crossings with Robert Rock, President and CEO of Rock Design Associates in Chicago, and brought him into this project. Rock worked with Caltrans to alter the color of the concrete to a dusky mocha that reflects less light, put lower temperature lights on shorter poles, and to use walls that scatter sound and decrease light both on the crossing and leading up to it. Rock led the landscape design and plant propagation.

"We are using exclusively native plant species, all part of the coastal sage scrub family to fit the environment of the structure and the fairly shallow soil depth of 1-4 feet," Rock said. "All the plants grown are from seeds sourced within a five-mile radius of the crossing, and propagated in a nursery. We're literally stitching the land back together with plant species from either side of the crossing."

In addition to the collection of more than 1 million hyper-local seeds, Rock said the team has collected native soil biology – mycorrhizal fungi, beneficial bacteria, and soil microorganisms – from local reference sources that are being used to propagate the plants in the nursery and will be installed with the plants on the crossing as well. This attention to detail was



accomplished with a great deal of collaboration to reach a common goal.

"It was like putting a puzzle together on top of a bridge," Pratt said. "Some wildlife that will cross need open space, some need shelter, and some wildlife will live on it. How do you stitch an ecosystem back together? This was an exquisitely planned project, because we recognize that this is restoring, reconnecting, restitching the habitat for 100 years or more. It had to be done right for the future of the Santa Monica Mountains and the wildlife that lives there."

## The Human Component

This is the first wildlife crossing to be built in an urban area so heavily trafficked by people and cars. Every day, about 300,000 cars use the 101 Freeway at this site. To build the crossing, the freeway was closed in one direction overnight for five nights a week in April and May of 2024. Temporary closures alongside the freeway will continue during the construction of Phase 2. Comeaux said he's been overwhelmed by the public support for the project and the absence of complaints during construction.

"The request from the community was to let them know in advance about closures and that's what we did and what Caltrans will continue to do," Comeaux said. "I was totally blown away by the incredible public support beginning at the early environmental meetings for this project."

A total of 8,859 comments were received in response to the draft environmental document, with only 15 opposed. At those early meetings, most community members also said they did not support a hiking trail on the crossing.

"It was proposed to put a trail for people across, but the overwhelming public sentiment that they wanted it just for wildlife," Pratt said. When the crossing initially opens, she said they will probably have security and volunteers to keep people off and educate them. After that, they will determine if other measures are needed. "I think for the most part people will do the right thing."



Newport Beach philanthropists Frank and Joann Randall gave \$5 million for educational overlooks on both sides of the freeway with interpretive panels and benches. So, from a short walk away, people can get two distinct views of the crossing and the wildlife using it, Pratt said.

Rock said he too has been amazed by how much people care about this project. From his 11-year-old son who wants to sell his uncle's toy cars to raise money (he calls it "Cars for Cougars") to university students, Rock said, the curiosity is inspiring.

"What makes me most proud is that this project is influencing the next generation," Rock said. "It is creating a substantive and palpable level of change for kids in elementary school right now, who are going to understand the need for connected habitat for species because we're all a part of this unique habitat we call planet Earth."

Along with many other Angelenos, Comeaux said he is eager for the opening and looks forward to using the nearby trails. "For this to be happening in L.A., makes this an extraordinarily special place," he said. "If we can do anything to keep our home healthy and diverse, it makes it better for all of us."

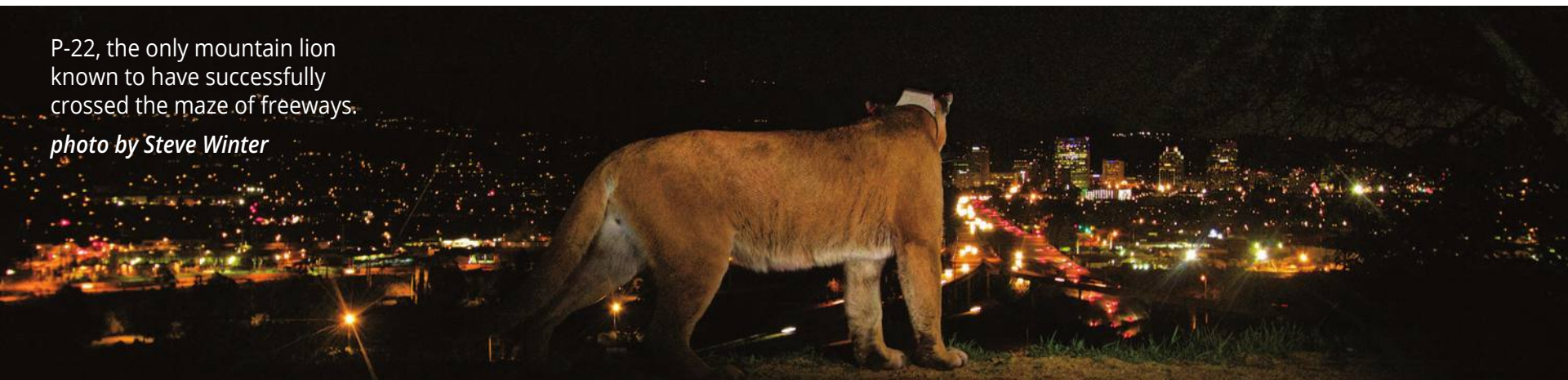
Pratt said the project is a great example of the power of public-private partnerships and hopes the model can extend to more crossings in California.

"We humans messed with the ecosystem. We didn't know back when the 101 Freeway was built what we were doing, but we now know from research that islands of habitat don't work. Biologically, we need to do this. We are designing this for everything from mountain lions to monarch butterflies, because this impenetrable wall of the 101 impacts them all," she said.

"Even if you don't care about wildlife, I think we all care about our own survival. We are nature. We are part of these ecosystems. I think we fool ourselves into thinking we can mess with it and it will all be OK for us."

P-22, the only mountain lion known to have successfully crossed the maze of freeways.

photo by Steve Winter








# Make Every Day Earth Day



*A great blue heron at Rio Hondo Spreading Grounds, which uses recycled water to replenish groundwater.*

We all have a role in protecting our planet. The Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts help protect the environment by converting sewage into clean water and waste into recycled commodities and green energy.

## You can help by:

-  Properly disposing of your household hazardous and electronic waste at one of our free local roundups ([www.lacsd.org/hhw](http://www.lacsd.org/hhw)).
-  Keeping trash off of streets by placing in trash cans.
-  Putting paper, cans, bottles and other recyclables in the bin for recyclables.


For more ways to be green, visit [www.lacsd.org/begreen](http://www.lacsd.org/begreen).



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# Transit for a Resilient Los Angeles

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) embodies the Earth Day values of environmental awareness, responsibility and action into every service they provide and every project they build.

“Using public transportation is one of the best ways people can reduce their personal environmental impact,” said Stephanie Wiggins, CEO of Metro. “Sustainability isn’t just a buzzword: it’s who we are; and we’ve taken concrete actions over the past few years to combat climate change and build a healthier, more sustainable, and resilient Los Angeles.”

In recognition of this basic principle and in support of state carbon neutrality targets, Metro has set goals for reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and implemented a requirement for VMT analysis to be included in board reports. This builds accountability into these targets and ensures that the full range of VMT impacts are being considered during the decision-making process.

Metro’s initiatives are guided by its 10-year Sustainability Strategic Plan (Moving Beyond Sustainability), which provides the blueprint to accomplish its goals. The plan makes bold commitments to tripling Metro’s on-site renewable energy generation by 2030; reducing total

agency greenhouse gas emissions by 79%; reducing nitrogen oxide emissions by 54%; and reducing potable water use by 22%.

Metro is making significant progress on the priorities outlined in the Sustainability Strategic Plan, which is exemplified by its progress on efforts to electrify the bus. Metro currently operates one of the largest clean-air bus fleets in the U.S., with the transition from renewable natural gas fueled buses to zero-emissions buses underway.

Last fall, the Metro Board of Directors took a big step toward helping the greater region by approving another policy to support U.S. zero -emission bus manufacturers by approving \$49.84 million in state Zero Emission Transit Capital Program (ZETCP) funds for Los Angeles County Municipal Operators Association (LACMOA) member agencies. The policy allows purchase of zero-emission buses and charging infrastructure through a Regional Zero-Emission Bus (ZEB) Procurement Policy, one of the largest collaborative procurement

**“Sustainability isn’t just a buzzword: it’s who we are; and we’ve taken concrete actions over the past few years to combat climate change and build a healthier, more sustainable, and resilient Los Angeles.”**

*Stephanie Wiggins, CEO of Metro*



The LA Metro G (formerly Orange) Line in the San Fernando Valley is fully electric.





efforts of its kind in the U.S., increasing competition and interest among U.S. bus manufacturers.

“This is the first time Metro is partnering with transit agencies across LA County to buy new buses together. It’s an opportunity to pool our purchasing power while also supporting zero-emissions bus manufacturing jobs here in the U.S.,” said Metro Board Chair and LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn. “This is the sort of creative approach we need to get all of our transit providers closer to a zero-emissions, clean air future.”

Conversion of Metro’s J (Silver) Line BRT into a fully electric fleet is underway and is anticipated to be completed in 2025. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure construction has begun at Division 9 and is slated to be completed by 2026. Planning for the electrification of El Monte Transit Center has begun and is also slated to be completed by 2026.

From 2022 to 2023, Metro saw a more than 14% reduction in air pollution emissions and a 15% decrease in its Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Expansion of the transit system and increased utilization of that system will continue to reduce GHG emissions throughout the region. Metro has been working to identify creative opportunities to scale its efforts to cut greenhouse gases. For example, in 2022, the agency adopted a tree policy and has partnered with cities and communities to support tree canopy along transit corridors and near stations.

A Los Angeles County Climate Vulnerability Assessment found that, by 2050, nearly 2.2 million people will be residing in areas with exposure to extreme heat — many of whom are transit riders.

“Metro’s tree policy will mean cleaner air, more shade for pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders, and more walkable, livable, and beautiful neighborhoods,” said Chair Hahn.

The upcoming 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to invest in a transit-first future for Angelenos. In 1984, LA lacked today’s public transportation network. Today, the region includes more than 100 miles of rail and over 40 miles of bus-only lanes. With currently planned expansions to Metro’s network, there will be high-quality transit service for most of the major 2028 Games venues.

Metro’s Twenty-Eight by ’28 Initiative outlines projects slated for completion by 2028. Five projects have already been completed, including the transformational Regional Connector in Downtown LA, which opened in June 2023, closing a missing link in the rail system,

creating better transit access to the core of downtown, and providing a seamless journey for riders.

Additionally, during the Games and in partnership with Caltrans, a Games Route Network (GRN) of roads will be designated for the Games vehicles traveling between official accommodation venues, competition venues, and other key sites.

A Games Enhanced Transit System (GETS) also will be created to link rail/bus stations and temporary park and ride sites to the venues. The GETS is expected to be comprised of ZEB and Compressed or Renewable Natural Gas buses (CNG or RNG) from Metro’s fleet and donated buses from partner agencies. The permanent transit improvements — from tree-shaded bus stops to rapid bus routes and new rail lines — will ultimately benefit all residents and businesses long after the 2028 Games are over. Angelenos that have no or limited experience taking transit prior to the 2028 Games will gain familiarity with the system, addressing a major barrier to system utilization.

“The 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games are a real opportunity for Metro, to show LA County and the world how transit can protect our environment, improve our health, and give us a better quality of life,” said Wiggins. “For decades, LA County has been infamous for its

**“This is the first time Metro is partnering with transit agencies across LA County to buy new buses together. It’s an opportunity to pool our purchasing power while also supporting zero-emissions bus manufacturing jobs here in the U.S.”**

*Janice Hahn, Metro Board Chair and LA County Supervisor*



traffic and air pollution. The 2028 Games will give us the opportunity to show the world how serious we are about embracing transit and reducing our environmental impact here in LA County.”

Metro is the lead transportation planning and funding agency for LA County and carries nearly 1 million boardings daily on four light rail and two subway lines and 119 bus lines utilizing a fleet of over 2,000 clean-air buses, including battery electric and CNG models, fueled by renewable energy. The agency seeks out and implements innovative solutions to improve air quality, protect and preserve natural resources, reduce and reuse waste, and more importantly, create connected communities.

To highlight the benefit of public transportation and encourage ridership, Metro offers free rides on Earth Day and California Clean Air Day in October. The agency works with its employees and strategic partners in communicating its efforts through social media, blog posts, employee training programs, after-school activities and stakeholder engagement through community-based organizations. On a global scale, Metro creates awareness for sustainable public transit and serves as an example, inspiring others to take on leadership roles in their own networks and locations



# Bentley Mills Incorporates Design, Style and Environmental Sustainability in Carpet

By Amy Bentley  
Special Sections Writer

Bentley Mills, headquartered in the City of Industry, is a leader in design, quality, customer service and environmental responsibility in the carpet industry.

Their building is the world's first and only LEED-EB Gold carpet manufacturing facility. All carpet manufactured by Bentley is Red List Free, meaning they are free from the most dangerous chemicals prevalent in building materials that pose a risk to human health and the environment.

"Sustainability has been a large focus since 1994. The CEO at the time was very concerned with what we were going to leave behind for our children. So that's what really started us on this journey," said Sandy Eppard, Bentley Mills' Senior Director of Sustainability and Technical.

Jay Brown, Bentley Mills' President and Chief Operating Officer, said, "We feel a lot of humility in receiving this award. We have a great legacy not only in the carpet industry but in the community."

Bentley Mills manufactures award-winning broadloom, carpet tile, and area rug products for commercial interiors



Jay Brown receives the Heart of the City Award from Mayor Cory Moss



USC-AECOM  
Iconic Intensity

## City of Industry—2025 Heart of the City Award Winner

worldwide, such as corporate offices, retail spaces, education facilities, multifamily housing, healthcare and hospitality spaces. The design work and products are all developed on site in the City of Industry, offering customers a one-stop shop experience.

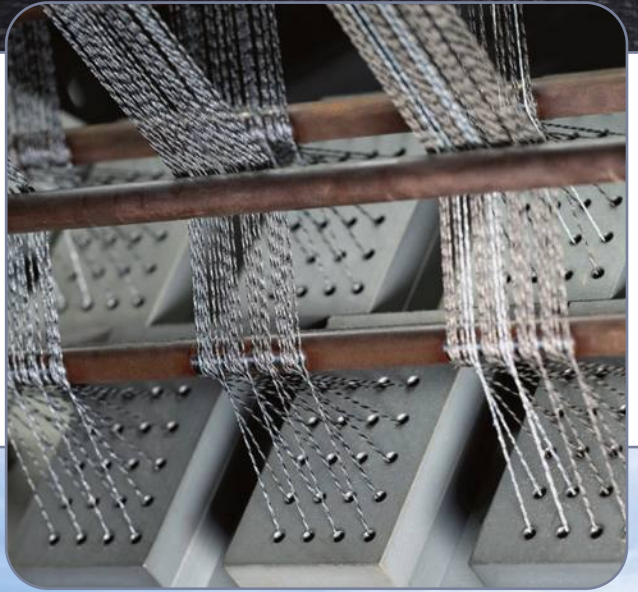
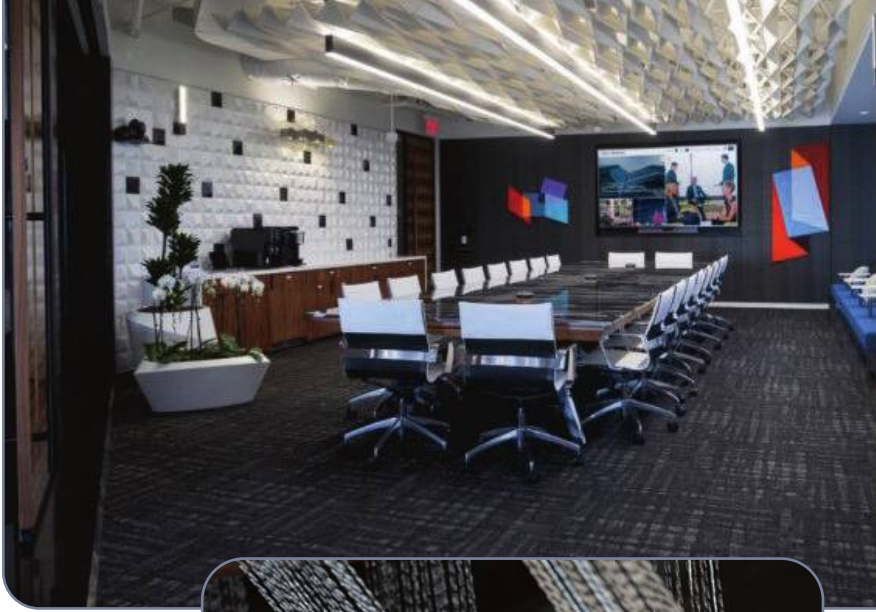
Bentley Mills is committed to sustainable commerce, safety and social responsibility, evolving product lines with an eco-conscious focus and achieving top industry certifications, including Cradle to Cradle and NSF/ANSI 140. The company proudly operates in a LEED-EBOM® Gold carpet manufacturing facility, where it has been located since 1984. The LEED Green Building Rating System is



Bentley Mills also practices social responsibility, giving back to the nearby LA Food Bank and other charities.

"Bentley Mills proves that innovation, sustainability, and social responsibility do go hand-in-hand," said City of Industry Mayor Cory Moss in presenting the company with the 2025 Heart of the City Award. "They aren't just making a product. They're making a difference."





the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings.

Bentley Mills is always striving to reduce its environmental footprint, which includes reducing its use of energy and water and purchasing all renewable energy. The company proudly shares its environmental policy on its website, explaining that Bentley Mills will continually:

- Improve our Environmental Management System.
- Address high-risk environmental issues identified during the environmental risk assessment process.
- Promote waste elimination and pollution prevention.
- Meet or exceed applicable environmental laws and regulations.
- Establish environmental goals and objectives to support our sustainability missions.
- Communicate our environmental policy to our internal & external communities.

*Bentley Mills was established in 1979 as a privately owned boutique carpet manufacturer. It has consistently been recognized for leadership in design, performance, and customer service in the architecture and interior design community. Headquartered in City of Industry, Bentley Mills has about 400 employees and maintains showrooms in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, New York, San Francisco and Washington D.C.*

City of Industry City Council | email: [COICouncil@cityofindustry.org](mailto:COICouncil@cityofindustry.org) | phone: (626) 333-2211



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**Council Member**  
Steve Marcucci



# Spring Melt Replenishes Basin Stores

As the snow on the San Gabriel Mountains melts in spring, water flows downhill where it is diverted into spreading grounds to percolate into a massive groundwater basin beneath the communities of the San Gabriel Valley. The Main San Gabriel Basin surface area spans 167 square miles and it lies about 100 yards beneath homes, businesses and streets.

This groundwater basin, which can store 8.6 million acre-feet of fresh water, supplies about 90% of the water that 1.5 million residents depend upon every day. The Main San Gabriel Basin is the primary source of drinking water for 25 cities and unincorporated areas of the San Gabriel Valley. Rainfall, snowmelt, as well as imported water fill the basin, which is managed by the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster (Watermaster).

"San Gabriel Valley communities are extraordinarily fortunate



to have such a massive source of drinking water right beneath their feet," said San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) Executive Director Randy Schoellerman.

Since 1973, Watermaster has managed the replenishment and withdrawal of water from the Basin. In 1984, the EPA placed a large portion of the Basin on the federal Superfund cleanup list, due to industrial contamination. The State legislature established the WQA in 1993 to "to coordinate, plan, and implement groundwater quality management programs to efficiently remediate groundwater contamination and assist in preventing future contamination."

"The improper disposal and handling of chemicals for decades forced the shutdown of wells and threatened to render this huge drinking water source unsafe," said Schoellerman. "From the beginning, WQA's role has been to coordinate the cleanup of the Basin to ensure the sustainability of the groundwater supply for today and for future generations."

There are 34 active groundwater treatment plants in the San Gabriel Basin. To date, WQA has coordinated and supported cleanup efforts that have resulted in the



**SAN GABRIEL BASIN  
WATER QUALITY AUTHORITY**







## BOARD MEMBERS

treatment of more than 2.1 million acre-feet of water while removing 110 tons of contaminants. An acre-foot is equal to 326,000 gallons.

The cleanup coordinated by the WQA includes funding from state and federal sources as well as contributions from the responsible parties. This funding helps to lessen the burden on local ratepayers.

Watermaster manages water levels in the basin by regulating how much water can be pumped out each year, which is balanced by inflows from rainfall or imported water. The water table is currently 73 feet higher than its historic low elevation just a few years ago. Though

**“As recent statewide drought conditions and variability in rainfall affect the big water picture, a clean Basin becomes even more important.”**

*Randy Schoellerman*  
Executive Director



variable, on average about 200,000 acre-feet of water is pumped from the Basin annually for use by residents as drinking water.

Meanwhile, the WQA coordinates the cleanup of the Basin to ensure safe drinking water whether the area is in a state of drought or abundance.

“As recent statewide drought conditions and variability in rainfall affect the big water picture, a clean Basin becomes even more important,” said Schoellerman.”

Through the years, new contaminants and drinking water regulations have emerged, making WQA's job as vital today as it was at the start. PFAS (Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances), known as “forever chemicals” because they remain in the environment, are of particular concern for the WQA and throughout the nation. The California Legislature has extended the life of the WQA to July 1, 2050. The WQA will continue to safeguard one of the San Gabriel Valley's most valuable assets: The Main San Gabriel Basin Aquifer.

*The WQA keeps its focus on the key mission of making sure your water is safe. Learn more at [www.wqa.com](http://www.wqa.com)*



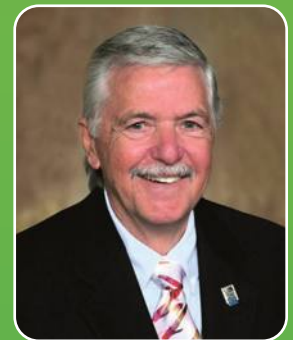
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**(626) 338-5555**

[info@wqa.com](mailto:info@wqa.com)



**[www.wqa.com](http://www.wqa.com)**



# From the 'Human Right To Water' to Long-Term Water Sustainability

By Mike Eng  
SGVMWD Board Member



Over a dozen years ago, when I was a member of the California Legislature, I championed a bill that would make clean water a right for all Californians. My interest in writing Assembly Bill 685 – which passed in 2012 – grew after I had learned from water advocates that residents in disadvantaged communities in California were buying clean water at supermarkets and convenience stores each morning to take home because their tap water was brown and dirty. This was not right, especially considering the families were also paying for their unclean water at home.

Around the same time, the United Nations was conducting a survey of water around the world with the idea that clean water should be a human right. I thought, "Let's start here with California."

Despite initial opposition from water agencies fearing litigation, my bill became law in 2012. On Sept. 25, 2012, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed Assembly Bill (AB) 685, making California the first state in the nation to legislatively recognize the human right to water. The law says, "It is hereby declared to be the established policy of the state that every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes."

It turned out the United Nations declared my bill to be one of the most significant bills for that year. I couldn't have been more

thrilled at the international attention paid to this issue.

Today, to keep our human right to water promise fulfilled, the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District is focused on California's water future and the long-term sustainability of imported water. The SGVMWD supports the Delta Conveyance Project, which would build a tunnel under the Delta to improve supply reliability. In November 2020, the SGVMWD board approved the use of \$2.68 million to assist with environmental planning for the Delta Conveyance Project. And, in October 2024, the Board unanimously approved \$2.37 million to support pre-construction work for the Delta Conveyance Project.

The SGVMWD also supports Pure Water Southern California, a regional water recycling project by developed by Metropolitan and the L.A. County Sanitation Districts, that would purify and reuse cleaned wastewater that currently flows into the ocean, producing 150 million gallons of purified water daily and providing a new, climate-resilient supply of locally available water. We need these projects for a secure water future.

Lastly, I hope to encourage young people and students to become interested in water issues and carry on this important work in the future. How do we get young people to be excited about water?

We have to reach out. Our district does a lot of work with local schools. We fund conservation programs to help young people evaluate things like drought tolerant plants. We give many grants to school districts to work on student projects so they can learn and take their water saving ideas home to their families. There is a need for young people to get involved and our water district remains devoted to this essential effort.

*Mike Eng is a board member of the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District and represents the city of Monterey Park. Previously, Director Eng served in the California State Assembly representing cities in the San Gabriel Valley. He authored the "Human Right to Water" legislation and AB153 which brought millions of dollars to the San Gabriel Valley to clean polluted groundwater, and worked on legislation leading to the 2009 State Water Bond. Director Eng also served as Mayor and Councilmember for the City of Monterey Park and helped lead the efforts to clean the city's drinking water from the perchlorate pollutant. He started the region's first Environmental Commission to address long-term environmental issues. He was also elected to the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District. Director Eng has been a San Gabriel Valley resident for over 35 years with his wife, U.S. Representative Judy Chu.*

The San Gabriel River cuts through the mountains into the canyon spreading grounds.



SAN GABRIEL VALLEY  
MUNICIPAL

WATER DISTRICT

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THIS EARTH DAY, THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT IS PROUD TO CELEBRATE THE OVER \$250,000 IN GRANTS WE'VE AWARDED TO LOCAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS. THESE GRANTS HELP FUND STUDENT-LED PROJECTS, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, AND WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS THAT MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN OUR SERVICE AREA.

LEARN MORE: [WWW.SGVMWD.COM](http://WWW.SGVMWD.COM)



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# Delta Conveyance Needed for Water Resilience

## The Proposed Project Discussed at Three Valleys MWD Leadership Breakfast

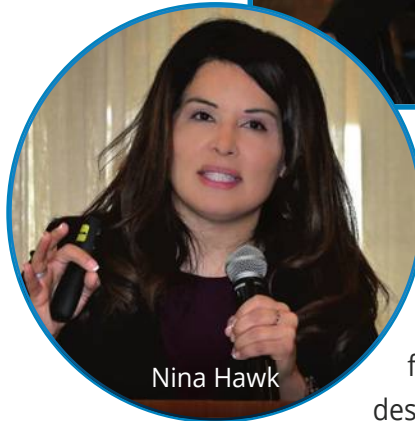
By Amy Bentley  
Special Sections Writer

Local government and water agency officials from across the San Gabriel Valley gathered for the Three Valleys Water District Leadership Breakfast to learn more about the Delta Conveyance Project, an ambitious project to make Southern California's water delivery system more resilient against climate change.

Nina Hawk, Bay-Delta Initiatives Group Manager/Chief of Bay-Delta Resources for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan), was the keynote speaker at the Three Valleys Municipal Water District Leadership Breakfast, held on Feb. 27 at the Kellogg West Conference Center at Cal Poly Pomona.

She gave a brief overview of the State Water Project, which provides Southern California with high-quality, affordable water, and reviewed the main threats to California's drinking water supply in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta): seismic events, levee failures, saltwater intrusion, the need to protect endangered fish, water scarcity, and climate change. She said Metropolitan is monitoring levees with drones and satellite imagery; using a robust science program to examine these issues; and looking at developing additional water storage and delivery options.

However, the solution that Metropolitan has been considering



Nina Hawk



for years, Hawk said, is the massive infrastructure project called the Delta Conveyance Project, commonly referred to as the DCP. The DCP entails the construction of a new underwater pipeline, spanning roughly 45 miles and measuring about 36 feet in diameter, beneath the Delta. This pipeline is designed to transport water from the Sacramento River north of the Delta, where fresh water flows from snowmelt and runoff are routed deep under the Delta to a pumping facility on its southern end. The proposed pipeline is intended to bypass the Delta to protect endangered fish species, provide resistance to earthquakes, sea level rise, salt water intrusion and ensure that water can be transported during large rain or snowstorms without being wasted to the ocean.

Today, the \$20 billion-plus project is on schedule and on budget, Hawk said. Outreach to local water agencies and the public, planning and permitting work, and financing work continues. By 2027, the project should reach the final stages and be ready for final approval and construction, she said.

"The next two to three years will be some of the most important to make this project come to life," Hawk said.

Three Valleys MWD supports the project, said TVMWD General

**"We like water to move downhill by gravity, without the expensive energy cost of pumping water. We had to flip our operation completely around during the zero percent allocation period."**

*TVMWD General Manager  
Matthew Litchfield, P.E*



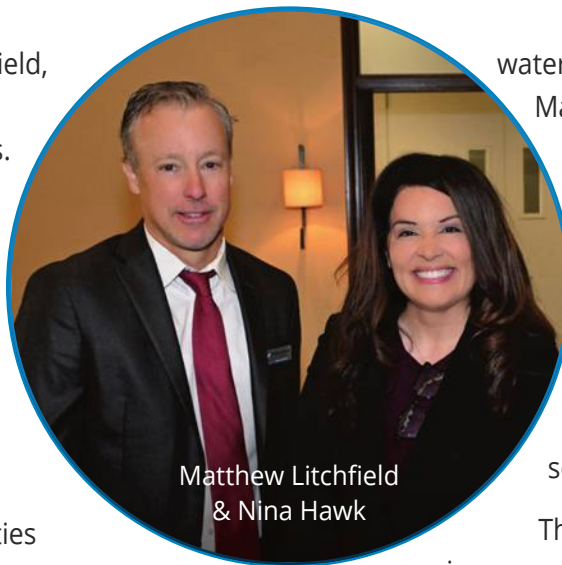
TVMWD Directors, from left to right, Bob Kuhn, Jorge Marquez, Jeff Hanlon, Carlos Goytia and David De Jesus.



From left to right: TVMWD Director Jody Roberto, Upper District Board President Jennifer Santana, keynote speaker Nina Hawk of Metropolitan, and WQA Board President Lynda Noriega.



Manager and Chief Engineer Matthew Litchfield, P.E.; giving an example of how this project would affect his water district's service areas. Portions of Three Valley's service area can only receive imported water from the State Water Project, not from Colorado River water, Litchfield explained. During the recent prolonged drought, Metropolitan and its member agencies, including Three Valleys, received, for the first time, a zero percent allocation from the State Water Project. To provide imported water to the cities of La Verne and Claremont, the district had to pump water uphill.



Matthew Litchfield  
& Nina Hawk

water supply. "I believe it's a viable plan, absolutely," Marquez said.

Another supporter is Jennifer Santana, President of the Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District. She said, "We have been wanting for this to be done for a long time. We know it is going to be done and this is quite necessary for the Southern California water supply. This solution makes so much sense."

Three Valleys Director Jody Roberto is also impressed by the Delta Conveyance Project. "Had we had this in place already, we could have captured and stored so much water," Roberto observed.

"We like water to move downhill by gravity, without the expensive energy cost of pumping water. We had to flip our operation completely around during the zero percent allocation period," Litchfield said. He said that if the Delta Conveyance Project had been in place, Three Valleys would have had access to more stored water on the State system and could have avoided using drought contingency plans and severe outdoor water restrictions.

"It is going to improve the reliability of the State Water Project. We need to build this project," he said.

Three Valleys Director Jorge Marquez agreed. He said he is concerned about climate change and saltwater intrusion into the

## Keynote



## Interviews





# Save a Butterfly, Save a Planet

By Joe Haworth



Life on this planet probably began around 3 billion years ago. Our most ancient ancestors may have begun their existence in an undersea sulfur vent. We don't really know. The evolving life created organisms that produce the oxygen we breathe. They produced the atmosphere we live in. And now we are trying to keep that atmosphere from being too dangerous for much of the life on this planet.

More than 50 years ago, the Endangered Species Act was passed. Little did we know that it might someday apply to us. Not since the invention of the atomic bomb, have we had the threat to our very existence stare us in the face. The buildup of carbon dioxide and methane in our atmosphere, primarily caused by our use of fossil fuels for energy, has reached a possible tipping point. We humans need energy production for survival. It powers our very existence; however, we have reached a time at which we need to find new sources of energy that are not so damaging to our planet's oceans and atmosphere.

We are experiencing the beginnings of climate change much earlier than we anticipated. The obvious manifestation is weather whiplash causing extreme heat; fire and drought; extreme storms, causing floods; and rising oceans from melting glaciers. I know, it sounds like it can be handled, that we can adapt to it with science. However, the massive damage that could be done to the human and animal kingdom could be prevented, or at least reduced, with a sufficient investment in alternative energy sources; and preparations for controlling these environmental effects.

We're not going to get off Scot-free, but the old saying, "a stitch in time saves nine" reminds us that money spent now is dwarfed by the amount we will spend repairing the damage. A trillion dollars now saves tens of trillions in the future.

For the sake of the creatures on this planet, including us, we need to take action now. We should begin by maximizing our efforts in conservation of energy, water, and other natural resources. This is always the first basic step in reducing our planetary impact, our carbon footprint, that is propelling climate change. We all hope science will continue to progress in cleaner ways to produce the energy we all count on. You've heard about renewables and sustainability. These will become the baseline steps for animal and human survival.

If you need motivation, just take a look at the creatures in



this edition.

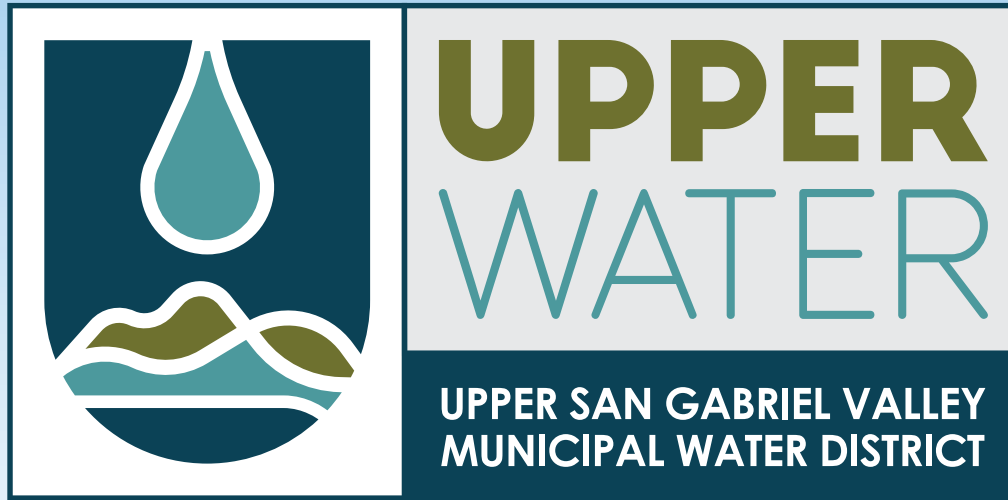
Think about how long it took nature to make these incredible creatures take shape. Picture that beautiful Monarch butterfly that you first saw as a child. Our children are creatures too, and they need to know what steps to take so they have hope for their future. Don't rob them of that. Demonstrate the "planetary manners" that can improve their lives. Then, teach them the basic rules of conservation and sustainability. They are the ones who have to face this future environment, and they deserve to know how to contribute positively to their coming world. If we or they freeze in place, like deer in the headlights of an oncoming car, and don't act, we will get clobbered by a degrading atmosphere, and the changes it will cause.

There is a wonderful program specifically designed to inspire kids to take action. It's called Think Earth at [www.thinkearth.org](http://www.thinkearth.org). The objective, give kids hope for the future by taking action now. The lessons, grades K-6, take as little as one hour a day for one week per year. Basic conservation is at the core: save water; save energy; don't waste; conserve natural resources; recycle, reduce, reuse... Go online, Think Earth is free. Hope is the best resource we can give our kids and taking action creates hope.

Thank you, National Geographic, for reminding us what we could lose. All those pictures of nature through all those years of your publication show us it's not just that endangered butterfly, but a planet full of critters, including us.







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From left to right, the Perez family owners: David M. Perez, President/CEO of GCR and VVS; Pete Perez, VP/General Manager of GCR, Vince Perez; and Chris Perez.

# Making Organics Recycling More Efficient

The Grand Central Recycling and Transfer Station, Inc. (GCR) and Valley Vista Service (VVS) expanded state-of-the-art organic waste processing area will greatly improve the efficiency and capacity of organic waste recycling.

The new Organic Waste Processing Facility opened March 6. The most recent upgrade adds 15,000 square feet and incorporates state-of-the-art processing equipment from Green Machine of Whitney Point, NY, and Scott Equipment of New Prague, MN.

VVS and GCR have added a total of \$35,000 square feet with a \$20 million investment into the station to meet the state Organics Recycling Law. With the goal of diverting up to 95% of source-separated organic waste, over 90,000 customers from the cities of Industry, La Puente, Walnut, Diamond Bar, El Monte, Huntington Park, and Cypress, as well as the unincorporated communities of East Los Angeles, Hacienda Heights, Bassett, Valinda, and South San Jose Hills, can take comfort in knowing their organic waste is being diverted from landfills, thus minimizing methane emissions.

In addition to the facility expansion and equipment upgrades, VVS and GCR are proud to be designated as a “High-Diversion Organic Waste Processing Facility” by CalRecycle — one of only

four such facilities in the entire state.

The Green Machine’s picking line efficiently removes packaging and contaminants from source-separated organic waste before it is processed by Scott Equipment’s THOR de-packaging system. This innovative system uses swing hammers to break open bags and packaging, transforming the organic waste into a smoothie-like consistency for processing at the Rialto Bioenergy Facility. There, the organic waste is processed in the largest high-solid anaerobic digester in the country, converting waste into valuable commodities such as energy, fertilizer, and renewable natural gas (RNG). The facility is expected to process between 20 and 40 tons of organic waste per hour, with a maximum annual capacity of approximately 83,000 tons.

By effectively removing contaminants from collected organic waste, VVS and GCR aim to reduce rising processing costs and broaden the acceptance of pre-processed material at various disposal sites.

VVS and GCR are fourth generation family owned and operated California companies in the San Gabriel Valley. VVS has been providing waste hauling and recycling services since 1957, and GCR since 2001.

From left to right: David M. Perez; Chris Perez; Joanne McClaskey, Executive Director Industry Business Council; Alma Martinez, City Manager of El Monte; Vince Perez; Pete Perez; Michelle Perez; Cory Moss, City of Industry Mayor/IPUC President; Manny Perez.





# Valley Vista Services

*Waste Disposal and Recycling*



## PROVIDING QUALITY WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICE FOR OVER 65 YEARS

Valley Vista Services is a family-owned and operated organization that has been providing high-quality solid waste and recycling collection services to the greater Los Angeles area since 1957. We believe in our commitment to maintaining the quality of life in the communities we serve. That is why we are involved in building and sustaining strong relationships with our community partners.



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# JUST ONE PIECE CAN RUIN THE PICTURE.



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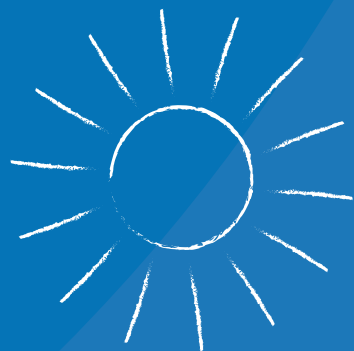


Zero litter is the goal.  
[CleanCA.com](http://CleanCA.com)





# Earth Day

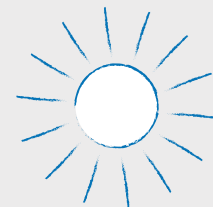


## Working Together in All Kinds of Weather

*Sun, rain and snow* are the natural elements at the heart of how we take care of the water that connects 1.5 million of us in the San Gabriel Valley—our groundwater. Here's their story.

### Sun

Sunny, dry conditions that Southern California is known for also create more demand and stress on our groundwater and the natural earthen basin that holds it. These ongoing dry conditions mean we are always in a drought cycle.



### Rain

There's nothing like the sound of a gentle rain, but this year, like most years, we are experiencing below-average rainfall. So in the special moments when rain does fall, our aim is to capture it with our stormwater systems to help its journey back into our groundwater basin.



### Snow

Like rain, snow is another welcome sight and source of water. Stormwater systems that catch rain also help to capture and hold snowmelt in reservoirs until it can be released into spreading grounds where it, too, can make its way back into our groundwater.



To learn the story of our groundwater, visit:  
[thewatersthatconnectus.com](http://thewatersthatconnectus.com)



**For Earth Day and everyday,  
our groundwater is our common  
ground and common cause.**





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