Los Angeles Times

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ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

A HOME destroyed by the Eaton fire on Palm Street in Altadena, a town that served as an enclave for artists and independent thinkers.

Bad flu season getting worse in state

Officials report surge in hospitalizations and at least 10 deaths among children.

BY RONG-GONG LIN II

The worst flu season in years is swamping California, prompting a renewed surge in hospitalizations as officials warn the disease could continue circulating at high levels for weeks to come.

By one measure, this season has already been more potent than any seen since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, according to data from the California Department of Public Health. The rate at which flu tests returned positive results at the state's clinical sentinel labs surged to 27.8% for the week ending Feb. 1, the most recent for which complete data are available.

That's higher than the peak of the "tripledemic" winter of 2022-23, when California's hospitals were stressed by simultaneous high circulation of flu, COVID and respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV.

"We're still on the way up," Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, an infectious-disease expert at UC San Francisco, said of flu. Since the pandemic began, he said, "this is the first time that we're mainly talking about flu rather than COVID."

There have been at least 10 pediatric flu deaths this season in California, according to data from the Department of Public Health. That includes three teenagers in San Diego County.

"These recent flu deaths among our youth are tragic and concerning as we head into what historically is the peak of flu season," Dr. Ankita Kadakia, the county's interim public health officer, said in a statement.

None of the teens had received a flu vaccine, which Kadakia said remains "the

[See **Flu,** A11]

U.S. ARMY CORPS BEGINS DEBRIS CLEANUP

Newsom calls pace of clearing the Eaton and Palisades fire zones 'unprecedented.'

BY LAURA J. NELSON AND JULIA WICK

In a pivotal milestone in Los Angeles County's long road to recovery from the deadly wildfires in early January, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Tuesday began clearing debris from burned properties in Altadena and Pacific Palisades.

The cleanup marks the start of a years-long rebuilding process for thousands of Californians who lost homes and businesses in the Eaton and Palisades fires. More than 9,400 structures were destroyed in Altadena, and more than 6,800 in Pacific Palisades.

The cleanup will be a massive logistical operation, with thousands of contractors from the Army Corps and private firms working to dispose of as much as 4.5 million tons of fire debris, more than 10 times as much as from the fire that devastated Maui in 2023.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said federal, state and local officials had worked to hack through "bureaucratic thickets" to speed L.A.'s cleanup and recovery process. Debris clearance beginning 35 days after the wildfire was twice as fast as the timeline after the 2018 Woolsey fire, which destroyed more than 1,600 homes in the Thousand Oaks, Oak Park, Agoura Hills and Malibu areas.

"This is unprecedented in California history," Newsom said at a news conference Tuesday morning in Altadena, alongside Maj. Gen. Jason Kelly of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other state and local officials.

Surrounded by blocks of wreckage, the group stood in

[See **Cleanup,** A6]

Will Altadena hold on to its spirit after a rebuild?

Some residents wonder if they should stay following the fire



JULIANA YAMADA Los Angeles Times

GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM speaks at a news conference at Odyssey Charter School ahead of the cleanup process that began Tuesday.

BY COLLEEN SHALBY

Miles Loudermilk's family home survived the Eaton fire. But the neighborhood he grew up in was destroyed. The smell of toxic smoke has lingered in Altadena and homes still standing on West Terrace Street have been boarded up as residents stay away.

His parents are in their 70s; they never considered moving. But a month after a fire tore through their town, Loudermilk's family and other residents have found themselves at a crossroads over whether to stay and rebuild their community, or leave.

"The landscape around the area is just decimated. We don't know if that's going to be looking that way for the next two or three, four, five, 10 years," Loudermilk, 54, said.

"Altadena is not for sale" has become a rallying cry throughout neighborhoods. A growing number of yard signs dot the burned area where

[See **Altadena,** A6]

A standard-bearer for academic gains

Compton Unified's focus on addressing students' weak spots has raised test scores.

BY HOWARD BLUME

The Compton Unified School District is winning recognition for its success with students, who are showing significant, long-term academic improvement that is outpacing growth in California and the nation.

An analysis of recent standardized test scores shows Compton has proved to be a standout exception to overall poor math and reading test scores — even though its overall student proficiency rates have much room to grow.

In recent years, Compton Unified teachers have intently studied how students are performing on tests and targeted lessons to weak spots. The district — where nearly all students come from low-income families — also brings in corps of tutors who walk the class and offer on-the-spot help. And teacher training in math and reading has been bolstered.

When compared with other districts with similar demographics, Compton is among several that have

[See **Compton,** A8]



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

FROYLAN DIAZ, an honors math student at Compton High School, said it was hard to get back on track academically after the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

Jordan responds to Gaza plan
King Abdullah II warns Trump against the mass expulsion of Palestinians. **NATION, A5**

What to expect from major storm
Forecasters warn of possible debris flows in burn areas and flooded roads. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Trump casts chill over Hollywood
Films' fates illustrate a muting of resistance to his actions so far this term. **BUSINESS, A10**

Weather
Rain and drizzle.
L.A. Basin: 54/53. **B6**

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PERSPECTIVES

Bid to kill watchdog agency will cost consumers

MICHAEL HILTZIK



Back in 2018, during Donald Trump's first term, his appointed director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Mick Mulvaney, gleefully described his plan to emasculate the bureau by bringing the financial firms victimizing Americans under its protective umbrella.

"We are there to help protect people who use credit cards," he told an appreciative audience of credit union executives. "We're also there to help and protect the people who provide that credit.... We are there to help people who borrow money; but we're mindful and respectful of the people who provide those loans."

Mulvaney isn't part of the current Trump administration, but his successors as the Trump-appointed overseers of the CFPB have taken his approach much further. Rather than direct the CFPB staff to be more solicitous of the financial services firms that the bureau is charged with regulating, they've completely shut the bureau down.

Acting CFPB director Russell Vought, in an email reportedly issued Monday, instructed all the bureau's employees to "stand down from performing any work task." The bureau's Washington headquarters building has been closed and will remain shuttered at least until Friday. Vought was an author of the right-wing Project 2025 blueprint for an incoming Trump administration.

Anyone clicking on the bureau's home page as recently as Tuesday was greeted by a message indicating the page couldn't be found, along with the image of an electric plug dangling uselessly next to a power outlet.

Vought's order puts on indefinite hold on all the CFPB's enforcement and investigative activities. It reflects the Trump administration's approach to governing, which has instilled chaos in the workings of the U.S. Agency for International Development and other federal agencies whose funding has been frozen. Rather than trying to redefine an agency's purposes and goals, it's so much easier to simply stop them from working at all.

That brings us to the reasons for Republican and conservative hostility toward the CFPB.

"The CFPB targets financial predators, lawbreakers and crooks," says Dennis Kelleher, co-founder and chief executive of the financial services watchdog Better Markets. "That's why Wall Street and its allies in the Trump administration and the Republicans on Capitol Hill have been fighting the CFPB from the beginning. It's powerful and it's effective, and it's forced them to give back the money they rip off."

Curiously, the Trump White House seems to think that protecting Main Street Americans from rip-offs is an argument for the bureau's extinction. In defending its shutdown, the White House issued a release Monday headlined, "CFPB Isn't a Wall Street Regulator, It's a Main Street Regulator." Most people might regard that as a compliment rather than a criticism.

According to its latest financial report, from its inception in 2012 through Jan. 30, the bureau had returned $19.7 billion to 195 million people, via actual compensation from financial firms, reductions in loan principal and canceled debts. It also collected $5 billion in civil penalties.

Big Business tried to hamstring the bureau with lawsuits that eventually made their way to the Supreme Court. The first asserted that the bureau's management structure, with no board and a single director who could be removed by a president only for inefficiency or malfeasance, was unconstitutional. The court agreed, which is why Trump was empowered to fire the bureau's Biden-appointed director, Rohit Chopra, as he did Feb. 1.

The second case challenged the bureau's funding, which comes from the Federal Reserve, not directly from Congress. That argument was shot down last year in a 7-2 decision written by Justice Clarence Thomas , who found that the bureau's funding procedure was perfectly legal and constitutional.

The bureau's foes have resorted to ginning up dubious claims that some of its rules "may actually hurt ...



JACQUELYN MARTIN Associated Press

CFPB acting director Russell Vought told employees in an email Monday to not perform any work task.

the people you're trying to help," as Sen. Katie Britt (R-Ala.) told Chopra at a Senate Banking Committee hearing in December. Chopra crisply countered this absurd claim by noting that just the previous week, the bureau had sent $38 million to 93,000 of Britt's own constituents "involved in a very harmful scam." He didn't identify the scam.

Compensation has been paid to residents of every state, according to CFPB data on disbursements through the end of October, ranging from $6 million paid to residents of North Dakota and Wyoming, to $317 million paid to residents of Texas.

It's obvious whose ox has been gored by the CFPB: Banks accused of ripping off depositors and mortgage borrowers, such as Wells Fargo, which agreed to pay $3.7 billion in compensation and penalties in 2022, for allegedly misapplying consumer loan payments, wrongfully foreclosing on homes and repossessing vehicles, and charging surprise overdraft fees. (The bank didn't admit to or deny the charges.) "Credit repair" agencies, credit reporting firms and other lenders and loan servicing firms have also ended up in the bureau's sights.

The bureau's most dangerous enemy may be Elon Musk, who has infiltrated the executive branch at Trump's invitation. Musk's DOGE minions are in place at the CFPB, according to Bloomberg. On Feb. 7, he posted a tweet that read "CFPB RIP," next to an emoji of a tombstone. What's his beef? It isn't clear, but Musk's ambition to turn his X, formerly Twitter, into a digital payment processing service might bring it within the bureau's jurisdiction. (I reached out to Musk via SpaceX, his spacecraft company, but haven't received a response; X doesn't have a portal to receive press media inquiries.)

When Mulvaney took over the CFPB in 2018, he suspended a regulation, five years in the making, aimed at preventing payday lenders and other profiteers from lending to customers who can't repay the loans, running up fees on customers, and engaging in other abuses. He abruptly withdrew, without explanation, a federal lawsuit against four allegedly abusive installment lenders. And he closed an investigation into World Acceptance Corp., a payday lender in his home state of South Carolina that had been accused of abusive practices, but had contributed at least $4,500 to Mulvaney's congressional campaigns.

"For the record, decisions to complete bureau investigations are made in the normal course by career enforcement staff, not the Director, and that is what occurred in this instance," a CFPB spokesman said at the time. "Any suggestion that Acting Director Mulvaney had any role in the decision is simply inaccurate."

Numerous CFPB rulemaking cases and lawsuits alleging financial wrongdoing hang in the balance today. On Jan. 14, for instance, the bureau sued Capital One for allegedly misleading depositors about the interest rates they were entitled to on their accounts. Capital One hasn't responded to the bureau's charges, though it has asked a federal court to consolidate the case with private lawsuits making similar allegations. The bank declined to comment specifically on the CFPB lawsuit.

It's probably unwise to expect that the Capital One lawsuit will stand once Vought or his bosses start examining pending rulemakings and legal cases on the CFPB's docket. The Trump-era CFPB won't resemble the bureau that Chopra headed during the Biden administration, when he was roundly flayed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as "out-of-control," "ideologically driven," "radical," "extreme" and "heavy-handed."

Those words were bankers' terms for what consumers might describe as "effective." Now the shoe will be on the other foot. Bankers and other financial service firms will get a green light to treat their customers any way they please. Consumers will have to watch their wallets, because there won't be much, if any, consumer financial protection coming from the federal government.

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

Embracing the art of dealing with Trump

Newsom, amid state's fire crisis, has shown restraint and flattery. A smart strategy.

MARK Z. BARABAK



Poor Gavin Newsom. The governor hasn't swallowed this much indigestion-inducing fare since he visited the French Laundry.

In the three weeks since Donald Trump took office, not a day has passed without some presidential assault on democratic norms, executive branch overreach or obnoxious emission from the nation's pot-stirrer in chief.

The response from Newsom, who once fancied himself at the vanguard of the resistance to Trump, has been to largely ignore the president's actions, or to issue some airy platitudes with the throw weight of a down pillow.

When Newsom signed legislation last week authorizing $50 million to fund court battles against the Trump administration and support legal services for immigrants, the governor — who is not exactly publicity-averse — did so with nary a news camera in sight.

Good for him.

All that reticence has to leave a bad taste in Newsom's mouth. (We're not talking about the soigné wine country cuisine that got the governor in so much trouble after he enjoyed a Michelin-starred meal with friends during the pandemic lockdown.)

But if that's what it takes to stay on Trump's good side and see to it California receives the federal wildfire relief it desperately needs — and tens of thousands of stricken Los Angeles-area residents deserve — then so be it.

It's instinct in some political circles to scream and stomp and vent at every Trump provocation. That's one way to release tension, and it's not an unreasonable response to the horror show he's put on the last fortnight and a half.

But, really, how politically productive has that been?

It's not as though Trump kept his roughshod-running plans a secret during the presidential campaign. He still managed a clear-cut victory over Kamala Harris and even won the popular vote, though he fell shy of a 50% majority.



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN Associated Press

GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM crashed President Trump's arrival in L.A. last month. They have since met to discuss fire recovery and issues they've clashed over.

That's not at all to suggest that capitulation is in order. Myriad legal fights are underway to check Trump's authoritarian actions, and California's attorney general, Rob Bonta, is among those who've worn a groove in the courthouse steps fighting Trump and his co-president, Elon Musk.

By contrast, Newsom has chosen a more, shall we say, diplomatic approach, playing to Trump's puppy-like need for constant praise and attention.

The governor crashed the president's arrival when Trump flew into LAX last month to survey the fire damage in Pacific Palisades, and their forced encounter proved to be all bonhomie and bromance. An extended handshake. Shoulder clasps.

"I appreciate the governor coming out and meeting me," Trump said graciously, notwithstanding the lack of an invitation.

"Thank you for being here," Newsom offered demurely. "It means a great deal."

Last week, the two huddled in the Oval Office for 90 minutes, a session that touched on wildfire recovery aid and California's pushback against Trump, among other issues.

Afterward, Newsom described their get-together as "real and substantive" and "positive."

"There's a familiarity and there was a relationship that was born of a crisis around COVID," Newsom told Taryn Luna of The Times' Sacramento bureau, noting how Trump delivered for California during the pandemic. "I wanted to go back to that space."

The fact that Trump chose to leave the first, last and only public word on their meeting to Newsom — or "Newscum," as the president has childishly called him — said a great deal about the current state of their relationship.

Of course, none of the blandishment would be necessary if Trump, in a heartless break with precedent, hadn't threatened to withhold disaster relief until he obtains certain political concessions: a needless overhaul of California's elections system and more water for his political benefactors in the state's farm country.

But that's the world we're living in.

And who knows how long the Newsom-Trump detente will last. A "large-scale" immigration enforcement action reportedly planned soon for the Los Angeles area will surely test their political cease-fire.

Inevitably, every move that Newsom makes is weighed against his perceived presidential ambitions.

That's silly for any number of reasons, not least the fact the campaign is political light-years away.

As Lis Smith, a national Democratic campaign strategist, suggested, "Anyone viewing this through the lens of politics in 2028 probably needs to log off."

(For those holding their breath, the next presidential election isn't for another 1,363 days.)

That said, one of very best things Newsom could do for his presidential hopes is oversee a smashingly successful recovery from January's firestorm, one of those epic crises that could very well make or break political careers. "The most important thing for any governor or any candidate for any office," Smith observed, "is that they do a good job."

Once the Democratic nominating contest begins, candidates will surely face a litmus test gauging just how fiercely anti-Trump each has been.

It's not hard to imagine some bristling at Newsom's accommodation of this most transactional of presidents, or seizing on the kind things the governor has said about Trump and using that flattery against him.

But Newsom is doing precisely what he should, setting aside any personal animus and political ambition for the aid and comfort of those he was elected to serve.

He shouldn't be made to eat those words.

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Los Angeles Times

Panamanians say canal is theirs and always will be

Trump's mentions of seizing the channel strike at the heart of national identity, uniting the country.

By Tracy Wilkinson

PANAMA CITY — A black, massive Hong Kong-registered ship inched its way through the churning waters of the Panama Canal — guided by tugboats stern and aft, and sweating Panamanians hoisting yellow ropes to latch onto the ship's higher levels.

The ship, named Zim Mount Blanc, carried some 17,000 rust-trimmed containers, blue, red and white, stacked seven- and eight-high. It barely skirted the sides of the channel, close enough, it seemed, to scrape its edges.

Each day dozens of Chinese, American, European and other ships traverse this 50-mile canal, which connects the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and was expanded about a decade ago to accommodate newer, more massive ships.

It has long been a vital route in international shipping, as well as being key to Panama's economy.

And now President Trump wants to seize it.

Complaining about what he sees as dangerous Chinese influence over the water passage, Trump dispatched his secretary of State, Marco Rubio, long a specialist in Latin America, to reinforce the message this month on Rubio's maiden voyage as a member of the new Cabinet.

"We didn't give the canal to the Chinese. We gave it to Panama," Rubio declared after he toured one section of the locks, or the multiple complex of "water elevators" that flow ships up over the middle of the Panamanian isthmus and then down again to sea level.

The Panamanian reception was angry. Through Rubio's visit to Panama City, and before and after, demonstrators waved placards and chanted, "The canal is ours!"

"Trump and Rubio have managed to revive Panamanian nationalism," said Edwin Cabrera, a Panamanian political analyst.

Rarely do Panamanians unite on political topics, Cabrera and other analysts said, but threats to the ownership of the canal go to the heart of national identity and erase ideological differences.



Tracy Wilkinson Los Angeles Times

THE Hong Kong-registered Zim Mount Blanc makes its way through the 50-mile-long Panama Canal.

There is no question that China has made major economic and diplomatic inroads into Latin America. But in his inaugural address, Trump claimed that the canal and its port were being "controlled" or "run" by China, including "Chinese soldiers."

Five companies operate the ports: two Chinese, one Taiwanese, one Singaporean and one U.S. The consortia that oversee shipping include companies from numerous other countries.

Trump is especially bitter that President Carter, in 1977, entered into agreement with Panama to relinquish control of the canal by the year 1999. It was built in 1914 by Black Caribbean workers and others, with thousands dying in the process.

In 2015, the canal complex underwent a $5.25-billion expansion to accommodate wider locks and mechanical, retractable gates that allowed passage of substantially larger ships with the capacity to carry about 2.5 times the number of containers transported by previous ships, according to canal officials.

Trump has said that U.S. troops could be used to "take back" the canal, awakening dark memories of when Americans invaded Panama in 1989. At the time, the U.S. still controlled the Canal Zone, but dictator Gen. Manuel Noriega, an erstwhile CIA operative and indicted drug trafficker, increasingly found himself in American crosshairs, including on the United States' most-wanted list.

Hundreds of mostly Panamanians were killed — the exact numbers never clear — and the capital's historic Casco Viejo largely destroyed. Noriega was captured.

Trump's revival of some of that bellicose language especially inflames nerves in Panama, said political scientist Miguel Antonio Bernal. "The trauma of invasion still lives," he said. "This is a word not yet healed."

Panama is one of three countries in the Western Hemisphere invaded by the U.S. in the last century, along with Haiti and Grenada.

"The canal is ours and always will be," Bernal added.

To this day, Panamanians mark a national holiday annually that remembers the 1964 killing by U.S. troops and police of 21 Panamanians who wanted to raise the country's flag in the then-U.S.-controlled Canal Zone.

Many Panamanians question Trump's motives on the canal, suggesting they may have to do with business pursuits or imperialistic expansionism, which has also seen Trump express interest in Greenland, Canada and even the Gaza Strip.

Some suggest Trump never forgave Panama for being one the first places where a Trump development was rebranded, in this case to Marriott.

Trump actually would have had a natural ally in Panama's President José Raúl Mulino, a conservative, no-nonsense pro-U.S. politician. Mulino early on worked to reduce the migration flows through Panama's portion of the Darien Gap and has been helping to facilitate immigration deportation flights from the U.S. to parts of Central and South America. But the canal was another matter.

Mulino is "the kind of guy who should get on very well with Donald Trump, if Donald Trump hadn't kicked sand in his face and threatened the existential asset that Panama has: the canal," said John Feeley, a former U.S. ambassador to Panama.

After Rubio's meeting with Mulino last week, the State Department announced Panama had agreed to exempt the U.S. Navy from the fees that every country in the world pays to traverse the canal.

Mulino shot back, saying no such agreement had been reached, and the Trump administration was engaged in "lies and falsehoods." He said he contacted U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth regarding the matter. A call with Trump was also hastily arranged.

Earthquake swarm near Greece's Santorini island stirs alarm

Associated Press

ATHENS — Scientists have detected several thousand earthquakes, the vast majority with small magnitudes, in just over two weeks near Greece's volcanic island of Santorini, the University of Athens' crisis management committee said Tuesday, adding that a larger quake cannot be ruled out.

The highly unusual barrage of earthquakes that began in late January has alarmed authorities. They have declared a state of emergency on Santorini, one of Greece's most popular tourist destinations, deploying rescue crews and putting coast guard and navy vessels on standby.

Thousands of residents and visitors have left the island, while schools on Santorini and nearby islands have been ordered to remain closed for the week.

Extra doctors and paramedics have been sent to Santorini's hospital, while six disaster medicine teams are on standby.

Medical staff practiced an evacuation drill Tuesday, running out of the building while wheeling stretchers with people posing as patients.

Scientists have been closely monitoring the earthquake swarm occurring between the islands of Santorini and Amorgos, and the two volcanoes in the area.

They say it's unclear whether the dozens of quakes each day — ranging from magnitude 3 to 5.2 — are a precursor to a significantly larger, main earthquake or will continue with frequent lower magnitude quakes for several weeks or months.

Overall, about 12,000 earthquakes with magnitudes greater than 1 have been registered since Jan. 26, with 109 on Monday alone, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens' crisis management committee said in a statement Tuesday.

Thirteen of Monday's quakes registered magnitudes greater than 4, and several more with similar magnitudes struck Tuesday. The largest so far, with a magnitude 5.2, struck Monday night and was followed about two hours later by another with magnitude 5.

"The possibility of a main earthquake following cannot be ruled out," the statement said.

Scientists were deploying more surveying equipment in the area Tuesday to monitor the situation, the university said, while seismologists and volcanologists were to meet with government officials Tuesday evening as part of regular discussions of the situation.



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Free hostages or truce is over, Israel warns Hamas

Prime minister's threat comes as militants reiterate plan to delay scheduled release of more Gaza captives.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday threatened to withdraw from the cease-fire deal in the Gaza Strip and resume the fight against Hamas if the militant group does not go ahead with the next scheduled release of hostages Saturday.

Hamas reiterated Tuesday that it planned to delay the release of three more hostages after accusing Israel of failing to meet the terms of the cease-fire, including by not allowing enough tents and other aid into Gaza.

President Trump has emboldened Israel to call for the release of even more remaining hostages Saturday, but it wasn't immediately clear whether Netanyahu's threat referred to the release of all hostages, or just the three scheduled for release Saturday. Netanyahu's office said it "welcomed President Trump's demand."

An Israeli official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a private meeting, said Israel was "sticking to Trump's announcement regarding the release of the hostages. Namely, that they will all be released on Saturday."

Trump's statements about the pending releases and plans for postwar Gaza have destabilized the cease-fire's fragile framework.

Netanyahu's office also said it ordered the military to mobilize troops in and around the Gaza Strip in preparation for scenarios that could arise.

So far, Hamas has released 21 hostages in a series of exchanges for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. Trump has said Israel should revoke the cease-fire if all of the roughly 70 hostages held by Hamas aren't freed by Saturday. Hamas on Tuesday brushed off his threat, doubling down on its contention that Israel has violated the cease-fire.

"Trump must remember there is an agreement that must be respected by both parties. This is the only way to bring back prisoners," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said Tuesday. "The language of threats has no value; it only complicates matters."

Trump hosted Jordan's King Abdullah II at the White House on Tuesday and escalated pressure on the Arab nation to take in Gazan refugees — perhaps permanently — as part of his controversial notion to "own" Gaza. Hamas on Tuesday said Trump's remarks amounted to a "call for ethnic cleansing."

During the first six-week phase of the cease-fire, Hamas committed to freeing 33 of the hostages captured in its Oct. 7, 2023, attack in southern Israel, while Israel said it would release nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. The sides have carried out five swaps since Jan. 19.

A more complicated second phase of the cease-fire calls for the return of all remaining hostages and an indefinite extension of the truce.

If Israel resumes the war, it will face a drastically different battlefield. After forcing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to evacuate to southern Gaza in the early stages of the war, Israel allowed many of those displaced people to return to what is left of their homes, posing a new challenge to its ability to move ground troops through the territory.

In Gaza, much of the territory has been obliterated in the Israeli offensive triggered by the 2023 Hamas-led attack that killed 1,200 people in southern Israel and saw 250 taken hostage. Israel's bombardment and ground attacks have killed more than 47,000 Palestinians, according to local authorities, who do not differentiate between civilians and combatants in their tally but say the majority of the dead are women and children.

Pope takes Trump administration to task over mass deportations

In letter, Francis appears to correct Vice President JD Vance's defense of the migrant crackdown.

BY NICOLE WINFIELD

ROME — Pope Francis issued a major rebuke Tuesday of the Trump administration's plans for mass deportation of migrants, warning that the forceful removal of people purely because of their legal status deprives them of their inherent dignity and "will end badly."

Francis took the remarkable step of addressing the U.S. migrant crackdown in a letter to U.S. bishops in which he appeared to take direct aim at Vice President JD Vance's defense of the deportation program on theological grounds.

U.S. border czar Tom Homan responded by noting the Vatican is a city-state surrounded by walls.

History's first Latin American pope has long made caring for migrants a priority of his pontificate, demanding that countries welcome, protect, promote and integrate those fleeing conflicts, poverty and climate disasters. Francis has also said governments are expected to do so to the limits of their capacity.

The Argentine Jesuit and President Trump have long sparred over migration, including before Trump's first administration when Francis famously said anyone who builds a wall to keep out migrants was "not a Christian."

In the letter, Francis wrote: "The act of deporting people who in many cases have left their own land for reasons of extreme poverty, insecurity, exploitation, persecution or serious deterioration of the environment, damages the dignity of many men and women, and of entire families, and places them in a state of particular vulnerability and defenselessness."

Citing the biblical stories of migration, the Book of Exodus and Jesus Christ's experience, Francis affirmed the right of people to seek shelter and safety in other lands and said he was following the "major crisis" unfolding in the U.S. with the deportation plan.

He said anyone schooled in Christianity "cannot fail to make a critical judgment and express its disagreement with any measure that tacitly or explicitly identifies the illegal status of some migrants with criminality."

"What is built on the basis of force, and not on the truth about the equal dignity of every human being, begins badly and will end badly," he wrote.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said last week that more than 8,000 people had been arrested in immigration enforcement actions since Trump took office Jan. 20. Some have been deported, others are being held in federal prisons and still others are being held at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Vance, a Catholic convert, has defended the administration's America-first crackdown by citing a concept from medieval Catholic theology known in Latin as "ordo amoris." He has said the concept delineates a hierarchy of care — to family first, followed by neighbor, community, fellow citizens and lastly those elsewhere.

In his letter, Francis appeared to correct Vance's understanding of the concept. "Christian love is not a concentric expansion of interests that little by little extend to other persons and groups," he wrote. "The true ordo amoris that must be promoted is that which we discover by meditating constantly on the parable of the 'Good Samaritan,' that is, by meditating on the love that builds a fraternity open to all, without exception."

David Gibson, director of the center for religion and culture at Fordham University, said on social media that Francis' letter "takes aim at every single absurd theological claim by JD Vance and his allies in conservative Catholicism [and the Catholic electorate]."

"This is the pope also directly countering misinformation about the Catholic faith that is being expounded by the Catholic vice president," he added to the Associated Press. "And it is the pope supporting the bishops as well."

Vance's ordo amoris reference had won support from many on the Catholic right in the U.S., including the Catholic League, which said he was right about the hierarchy of Christian love.

Homan, a Catholic, said Francis should fix the Catholic Church and leave U.S. border protection to his department. "He wants to attack us for securing our border. He's got a wall around the Vatican, does he not?" Homan told reporters in a video from the Hill posted on X.

The Vatican, a 108-acre city-state in Rome, has been fortified by a wall since the 9th century. It recently increased sanctions for anyone who illegally enters the territory. The December law calls for a prison term of up to four years and a fine of up to $25,873 for anyone who enters with "violence, threat or deception," such as by evading security checkpoints.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops had already put out an unusually critical statement after Trump's initial executive orders. It said those "focused on the treatment of immigrants and refugees, foreign aid, expansion of the death penalty, and the environment, are deeply troubling and will have negative consequences, many of which will harm the most vulnerable among us."

It was a strong rebuke from the U.S. Catholic hierarchy, which considers abortion to be the "preeminent priority" for Catholic voters and had cheered the 2022 Supreme Court decision to end constitutional protections for abortion that was made possible by Trump-appointed justices. Trump won 54% of Catholic voters in the 2024 election, surpassing the 50% in the 2020 election won by President Biden, a Catholic.

The Trump-Francis collision course on migration dates to the 2016 presidential campaign, when Francis traveled to the U.S.-Mexico border and said anyone who builds a wall rather than a bridge to keep out migrants was "not a Christian." He made the comment after celebrating Mass at the border.



ALESSANDRA TARANTINO AP

POPE Francis, shown Sunday, and President Trump have long sparred over migration issues.

Winfield writes for the Associated Press.





Jordan makes its case against Trump's Gaza plan

King Abdullah II skirts questions about the proposed transfer of war-torn Palestinians to his country.

By Tracy Wilkinson and Nabih Bulos



Evan Vucci Associated Press

KING ABDULLAH II departs the White House on Tuesday. He would not address President Trump's Gaza proposal, saying only that he and other Arab leaders would come up with "a plan" to present to Washington.

WASHINGTON — Jordan's King Abdullah II, long one of the United States' closest allies, visited the White House on Tuesday to tell President Trump why a mass expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza to Jordan is not only illegal, but also could spell disaster for the Hashemite kingdom.

Seated alongside Trump in the White House, Abdullah said it is "our collective responsibility in the Middle East to continue to work with you, to support you to achieve" the goals of "stability, peace and prosperity to all of us in the region."

But the king would not address the most stunning elements of Trump's latest proposal for the Gaza Strip, announced days before Abdullah's arrival, when Trump hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Trump announced last week that the U.S. would seize the Gaza Strip and oversee the forced displacement of nearly 2 million Palestinians.

Trump said they should be relocated in Jordan and Egypt, an idea roundly rejected by those two nations, Palestinians and the international community, which would regard such an action as ethnic cleansing. On Tuesday, Abdullah would say only that Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia would come up with "a plan" to present to Washington.

The issue of Palestinian refugees cuts deeply in Jordan. About 750,000 Palestinians were expelled — some of whom fled to Jordan — during what Arabs refer to as the 1948 Nakba, or "catastrophe," when Israel was created. An additional 300,000 refugees streamed into the kingdom after the 1967 Middle East War, including those from Gaza.

Palestinian refugees now number nearly 2.4 million, according to the United Nations.

Most — but not all — were granted citizenship in Jordan. Many maintain strong ties to their Palestinian origins and care deeply about what happens in the West Bank and Gaza.

The Hashemite monarchy has had an uneasy relationship with Palestinian activism. In 1970, King Hussein — Abdullah's father — crushed Palestinian factions operating in the country, going so far as to shell refugee camps in the capital and the country's north. He also repeatedly clashed with the Palestine Liberation Organization over stewardship of Palestinian affairs.

Current and former Jordanian leaders say the influx of a new wave of Palestinians would pose an existential threat to the country and destabilize the Hashemite dynasty represented by Abdullah and his ancestors.

Appearing somewhat nervous as he sat next to Trump, Abdullah dodged questions about the president's plan, saying he and a group of Arab leaders headed by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman — would present a plan to Trump at a later date.

"While it's clear the king didn't want to appear confrontational in public, at the same time he couldn't agree to what the president was proposing, which amounts to ethnic cleansing of 2 million people," Marwan Muasher, a former Jordanian foreign minister, told The Times. "I think the king's suggestion, to wait until there's a unified Arab position, is well placed, because it will show that there is very strong opposition to President Trump's plans."

Later Abdullah released a series of social media posts that elaborated his position — and his opposition to Trump.

"I reiterated Jordan's steadfast position against the displacement of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. This is the unified Arab position," he wrote on X. "Rebuilding Gaza without displacing the Palestinians and addressing the dire humanitarian situation should be the priority for all."

The monarch added: "Achieving just peace on the basis of the two-state solution is the way to ensure regional stability. This requires U.S. leadership."

He went on to praise Trump for helping to secure the Gaza cease-fire.

"It's clear the most important issue for the king now is to maintain a strategic relationship with this current U.S. administration — that's why you didn't hear outright rejections," said Amer Sabaileh, a Jordan-based analyst.

The challenge for Abdullah, he said, is to convince Trump of Jordan's importance for stability in the region and to not jeopardize the kingdom's status.

The meetings in Washington came against the backdrop of events in Israel, where Netanyahu threatened to end the latest cease-fire in Gaza and resume "intense fighting" there unless Israeli hostages were freed Saturday. He echoed, almost word for word, a threat by Trump that "all hell is going to break out" if remaining hostages are not freed.

Over the weekend, the militant group Hamas threatened to postpone indefinitely the next handover, scheduled Saturday, of three Israeli hostages under the terms of the truce.

"If Hamas does not return our hostages by Saturday noon, the cease-fire will end, and the [Israel Defense Forces] will resume intense fighting until the final defeat of Hamas," Netanyahu said after a meeting of his security Cabinet, during which he instructed the Israeli military to mass forces anew in Gaza.

By Israeli media count, 76 Israelis remain in Gaza, nearly half of them thought to be dead.

Wilkinson reported from Washington and Bulos from Amman, Jordan. Times staff writer Laura King in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.

Russia frees American teacher held for 3½ years

Trump administration says Marc Fogel was released in 'an exchange' but doesn't say what U.S. gave up.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Marc Fogel, an American teacher who was deemed wrongfully detained in Russia, has been released in what the White House described as a diplomatic thaw that could advance negotiations to end the war in Ukraine.

Fogel, a history teacher from Pennsylvania, left Russian airspace with Steve Witkoff, a special envoy for President Trump, and was expected to be reunited with his family by the end of the day.

Fogel was arrested in August 2021 and was serving a 14-year prison sentence. His family and supporters said he was traveling with medically prescribed marijuana. He was designated by the Biden administration in December as wrongfully detained.

Mike Waltz, Trump's national security advisor, said the U.S. and Russia "negotiated an exchange" to ensure Fogel's release. He did not say what the U.S. side of the bargain entailed. Previous negotiations have occasionally involved reciprocal releases of Russians by the U.S. or its allies.

Waltz described the development as "a sign we are moving in the right direction to end the brutal and terrible war in Ukraine." Trump has promised to find a way to end the conflict.

Trump also has talked about having a good relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine three years ago.

Last month, Trump said that his administration was having "very serious" conversations with Russia about the war.

Fogel's relatives said they were "beyond grateful, relieved and overwhelmed" that he was coming home.

"This has been the darkest and most painful period of our lives, but today, we begin to heal," they said.

"For the first time in years, our family can look forward to the future with hope."

There was no immediate comment from Moscow about Fogel's release on Tuesday.

Although a massive prisoner swap in August freed Americans including Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, others remain detained in Russia.

Those include U.S.-Russian dual national Ksenia Khavana, who was convicted in August of treason and sentenced to 12 years in prison on charges stemming from a donation of about $52 to a charity aiding Ukraine. The Biden White House at the time called the conviction and sentencing "nothing less than vindictive cruelty."

Bannon accepts plea deal in border wall fraud case

Longtime Trump ally avoids prison time by pleading guilty to scamming donors to private building fund.

Associated Press



Yuki Iwamura Associated Press

STEPHEN K. BANNON has asked U.S. Atty. Gen. Pam Bondi to investigate his New York prosecutors.

NEW YORK — Stephen K. Bannon pleaded guilty Tuesday to a New York fraud charge related to duping donors who gave money to a private effort to build a wall along the southern U.S. border — a case the conservative strategist has decried as "political persecution."

Bannon, a longtime ally of President Trump, reached a plea agreement with the Manhattan district attorney's office that spares him from prison time for the "We Build the Wall" scheme.

He pleaded guilty to one count of scheming to defraud and received a three-year conditional discharge, which requires that he stay out of trouble to avoid additional punishment.

Asked how he was feeling as he left the courtroom, Bannon said: "Like a million bucks."

Bannon spoke to reporters afterward and called on U.S. Atty. Gen. Pam Bondi to begin a criminal investigation into New York Atty. Gen. Letitia James and Manhattan District Atty. Alvin Bragg. Bannon's deal comes days after Bondi ordered the Justice Department to investigate what the president claims is the "weaponization of prosecutorial power."

Bragg's office had charged Bannon in state court after a Trump pardon in 2021 wiped away federal charges on the same allegations.

The district attorney's office said that under the plea agreement, Bannon is barred from fundraising for or serving as "an officer, director, or in any other fiduciary position" for any charitable organization with assets in New York state. He's also barred from using, selling or possessing any data gathered from donors to the border wall scheme.

"This resolution achieves our primary goal: to protect New York's charities and New Yorkers' charitable giving from fraud," Bragg said in a statement.

In November, Judge April Newbauer ruled prosecutors could show jurors certain evidence, including an email they say shows Bannon was concerned the fundraising effort was "a scam."

Bannon had been planning an aggressive defense strategy and had recently hired new lawyers who sought to portray the case to jurors as a selective and malicious prosecution.

In January, Bannon's lawyers filed papers asking Newbauer to throw out the case, calling it an "unconstitutional selective enforcement of the law." Bannon's plea deal made the request moot before the judge could rule on it.

Bannon, 71, pleaded not guilty in September 2022 to a state court indictment charging him with money laundering, fraud and conspiracy. He was accused of falsely promising donors that all money given to the We Build the Wall campaign would go toward building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. Instead, prosecutors alleged, the money was used to enrich Bannon and others involved in the project.

The wall campaign, launched in 2018 after Trump fired Bannon as his chief strategist, quickly raised more than $20 million and privately built a few miles of fencing along the border. It soon ran into trouble with the International Boundary and Water Commission, came under federal investigation and drew criticism from Trump.

Two other men involved in the project pleaded guilty to federal charges and were sentenced to prison. Another was convicted and also sentenced to prison.

Bannon went to prison in an unrelated case last year, serving four months at a federal lockup for defying a subpoena in the congressional investigation into the U.S. Capitol attack on Jan. 6, 2021. He was released in October.

U.S. owes businesses millions over USAID shutdown, suit says

American firms and organizations claim government refuses to pay for aid-related work already done.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration's dismantling of the U.S. Agency for International Development is stiffing American businesses on hundreds of millions of dollars in unpaid bills for work that has already been done, according to a lawsuit filed Tuesday.

The administration's abrupt freeze on foreign aid also is forcing mass layoffs by U.S. suppliers and contractors for USAID, including 750 furloughs at one company, Washington-based Chemonics International, the lawsuit says.

"One cannot overstate the impact of that unlawful course of conduct: on businesses large and small forced to shut down their programs and let employees go; on hungry children across the globe who will go without; on populations around the world facing deadly disease; and on our constitutional order," the U.S. businesses and organizations said.

A group representing 170 small U.S. businesses, major suppliers, an American Jewish group aiding displaced people abroad, the American Bar Assn. and others joined the court challenge.

It was filed in U.S. District Court in Washington against President Trump; Secretary of State Marco Rubio; acting USAID Deputy Administrator Peter Marocco, a Trump appointee who has been a central figure in hollowing out the agency; and Russell Vought, Trump's head of the Office of Management and Budget.

It is at least the third lawsuit over the administration's rapid unraveling of the U.S. aid and development agency and its programs worldwide. Trump and his billionaire ally and aide Elon Musk have targeted USAID in particular, saying its work is out of line with Trump's agenda.

Marocco, Musk and Rubio have overseen an across-the-board freeze on foreign assistance and agency shutdown under a Jan. 20 executive order by Trump. A lawsuit brought by federal employees associations has temporarily blocked the administration from pulling thousands of USAID staffers off the job. The funding freeze and other measures have persisted, including the agency losing the lease on its Washington headquarters.

The new administration terminated contracts without the required 30-day notice and without back payments for work that was already done, according to a U.S. official, a businessperson with a USAID contract and an email seen by the Associated Press. They spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal by the Trump administration.

For Chemonics, one of the larger of the USAID partners, the funding freeze has meant $103 million in unpaid invoices and almost $500 million in USAID-ordered medication, food and other goods stalled in the supply chain or ports, the lawsuit says.

For the health commodities alone, not delivering them "on time could potentially lead to as many as 566,000 deaths from HIV/AIDS, malaria, and unmet reproductive health needs, including 215,000 pediatric deaths," the lawsuit says.

The filing asserts that the administration has no authority to block programs and funding mandated by Congress without approval.

Marocco defended the funding cutoff and push to put all but a few USAID staffers on leave in an affidavit filed late Monday in the lawsuit brought by the workers' groups.

"Insubordination" and "noncompliance" by USAID staffers, Marocco wrote, made it necessary to stop funding and operations by the agency to allow the administration to carry out a program-by-program review to decide what aid programs could resume overseas.

Residents refuse to leave Altadena behind

[**Altadena,** from A1]
a rich tapestry of homes once stood. The unincorporated community's eclecticism was a draw for many. Now on many blocks, all that's left of the town's history are the trees.

"Everyone loved Altadena in his or her own way, but the wildness of it and the freedom of it is something that is deeply important to people," said Hans Allhoff, the chair of Altadena Heritage. "I think there is a concern that with a heavily supervised, regulated rebuild, we'll lose some of that."

Allhoff lost his home on Sunny Oaks Circle and has remained an evacuee. He understands that people have to make decisions that are best for them; he also hopes the community can slow down and work together to develop a plan to move forward.

Listings have emerged in recent days for land that burned in the fire. At least one property has been sold. Residents fear that if much of the community does not band together and commit to returning, or to ensure that vacated properties go to people who will preserve the sanctity of the town, Altadena could reemerge unrecognizable not just in look but in spirit.

Before the fire, roughly 42,000 people lived in Altadena. The foothill town served as an enclave for artists and independent thinkers who preferred the small-town feel over the hustle of other parts of the county — it wasn't uncommon for people to own chickens or horses, with easy access to hiking trails and mountain views. Nearly 10,500 residents lived and worked in Altadena, where many businesses were locally run fixtures in the community.

Families planted multigenerational roots, including in historical Black neighborhoods on the west side.

Joe Kilanowski, a resident of Altadena and a board member for Pasadena Heritage, said it will take disparate interests to ensure all parts of the community are represented in a new vision.

"How do you rebuild a community like that? It's not going to be done by people who want to build a homogeneous, monotonous world," he said.

On a recent rainy night, Loudermilk brought his parents to a town hall in the hopes of learning more about where the community stood on the matter. Alongside hundreds of others who gathered inside La Cañada Congregational Church, they sought answers — and inspiration.

"They're just trying to get some reassurance that Altadena will survive — and it's not going to be taken over by a big development firm," Loudermilk said about his parents' dilemma.

Freddy Sayegh organized the event. His parents' home on Gaywood Drive, where he grew up, burned down in the fire. It had been a central meeting place for his family; they had just celebrated Christmas together.



Genaro Molina Los Angeles Times

FREDDY SAYEGH stands in the ruins of the home he grew up in, where his father and other family members were still living before it was destroyed. He has since organized a town hall for residents and pitched an idea for the community to band together to rebuild.

The sight of what's left hurts.

"It always catches my breath when I come here. It's easier to talk in La Cañada or somewhere else," Sayegh, 51, said in the rubble of a bedroom. "I rolled down as a 5-year-old and scraped my knees here . ... When my children were born, they huddled in this house. When my grandparents died, they huddled in this house. The funerals, the gatherings — this was the center of our community."

While his own house on Sonoma Drive survived, he has remained an evacuee. He is committed to returning and has made it a mission to unify the community, but he knows a rebuild won't be easy.

"Everybody says, 'Thank God your house is still standing.' But what does that mean? When every school, every church is gone?" Sayegh said. "Every time I leave my house, I'm going to see the devastation."

At the town hall meeting, representatives from FEMA and the Small Business Administration tried to reassure residents that resources were available to help them rebuild if they chose to. FEMA encouraged residents to apply for assistance even if insurance provided help and SBA said that despite its name, it also helps homeowners. Experts on real estate and insurance told residents to take time in deciding what to do next — they shouldn't feel pressured to sell.

Leslie Aitken, a 49-year resident of Altadena who runs a community Facebook page that is followed by thousands, lost her home in the fire. While she hopes Altadena will rebuild, she made a plea on behalf of senior residents who might want to leave in the end.

"Be gentle with us. Because we don't have maybe another 15 years looking in front of us. We have most of our years in Altadena behind us and some of us are going to have to make some really hard decisions," she said. More than 21% of the residents are 65 or older, according to the U.S. Census. That is more than the national average, which is less than 18%.

"Don't make them a pariah."

Since the fire, neighbors Lark Crable, 72, and Sophia Newton-Welcome, 38, said they have been bombarded with calls and messages from real estate agents asking if they were interested in selling their properties. They have remained steadfast in returning to their homes — just a few that survived on their street — but they know others will decide differently.

"I have a place to move back to. But all of my friends don't," Crable said at a recent Altadena Not For Sale rally. "I have friends who say they're going to sell. It's too much for them — they can't do it."

Heavenly Hughes, 49, helped organize the rally. Her family's house on Altadena Drive survived the fire, but she said it will likely have to be gutted after smoke damage. She said her family remains evacuated, possibly for 18 months, but plans to return.

Hughes' nonprofit My Tribe Rise is a mutual aid organization focused on the Black community. She is trying to reach residents who are unsure if their future will be tied to the town and believes that the community must take action together to protect Altadena's future.

"We want to be sure that the officials, the county supervisors, the governor — those who are making decisions for *our* Altadena — make sure that we're in the forefront of that messaging and in that action," Hughes said. "We know the Altadena that we were raised in, that we developed, that we created here is no more, as far as a visual. But we are the community, we are the culture of Altadena, we are the people of Altadena. And we're not going to get erased."

L.A. County Supervisor Kathryn Barger, who oversees Altadena, has introduced a commission to focus on recovery efforts. Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed more than $2.5 billion in disaster relief benefits for communities affected by the wildfires here and in Pacific Palisades, and leaders such as Rep. Judy Chu (D-Monterey Park), whose district includes Altadena, have vowed assistance.

But residents worry that Los Angeles County's other focuses around preparations for the 2028 Olympics and 2026 World Cup could sidestep priorities, or that the community, whose local representation is a volunteer-run town council, will be overlooked at the federal level. Sayegh's first town hall, for example, was rescheduled in anticipation of President Trump's visit to California after the wildfires. But Trump never made it to Altadena — a decision that left residents fearing they will be forgotten.

At the town hall, Sayegh made a pitch for collective action: The community should form a coalition to rebuild. If they approached contractors as a group and sourced materials together, he believed they could save money and ensure a smoother path toward restoration.

"We must fight for each other because that's all who's going to care about us — our neighbors and you," Sayegh said.

Steven Lamb was sold on Sayegh's proposal. The designer lost his home in Altadena and has no intention of selling it — he'd rather declare his land a park than sell to a developer, he said. Lamb and others told Sayegh they were on board to lend their services and help.

Others were apprehensive. One woman who lost her home said she was overwhelmed by the road ahead and while she believes that the community needs to dream big, she is assessing what makes sense for her.

Loudermilk was invigorated. This was the motivation he and his parents needed to move forward, and to imagine what a rebuilt community could become.

"I can see there's going to be cohesiveness," he said. "It's just a lovable city and I don't think people want to part with that."

Before the meeting ended, singer Aloe Blacc, whose children lost their school in the fire, delivered a familiar song:

Lean on me, when you're not strong
I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on.

The crowd rang out in chorus.

Army Corps begins debris cleanup in burn areas

[**Cleanup,** from A1]
the parking lot of a school that appeared miraculously untouched by the flames. But behind them, the fire's destruction stretched as far as the eye could see, reducing once-vibrant neighborhoods to a lunar landscape of charred homes punctuated with yellow bulldozers and the bright California and U.S. flags.

Margot Stueber of Altadena, whose house was first in line for debris clearance, said she had cried every day since losing her home in Janes Village, a collection of historic 1920s cottages, in the Eaton Fire.

"This is my first happy day," Stueber told the gaggle of reporters lined up in front of her. She leaned in to hug Newsom after she spoke.

Within a few minutes, workers in vests and hard hats piloting hulking excavator bulldozers would begin collecting the debris, scooping up fields of twisted metal, charred concrete, ash and other unrecognizable remnants of family homes lost in the fires and preparing to truck it away.

But before the Army Corps can clear a property, contractors from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency complete what's known as "phase one" debris removal, sifting through the rubble to gather potentially hazardous household items — such as paint, propane tanks and lithium ion batteries — that cannot be trucked to normal landfills.



Juliana Yamada Los Angeles Times

WORKERS PREPARE to clear charred debris near Odyssey Charter School in Altadena, where the Eaton fire burned more than 9,400 structures last month.

The EPA is working under a Feb. 28 deadline, said Robert Fenton, the Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator for Region 9. Newsom said Tuesday that nearly two-thirds of the EPA cleanup will be finished this week. That cleanup is mandatory, and property owners will not be billed, officials said.

Hazardous household items from the burn areas are being sorted and temporarily stored at four sites nearby: Irwindale's Lario Park and the Altadena Golf Course for debris from the Eaton fire, and the former Topanga Ranch Motel and Will Rogers State Beach for the Palisades fire. The debris will stay at those sites until it is shipped to specialized facilities for disposal or recycling.

Before starting fire debris removal, known as "phase two," the Army Corps needs opt-in paperwork from homeowners who want the corps to clear their land. More than 7,300 L.A. County property owners had completed those forms by Monday, an "unprecedented" number, Fenton said. The paperwork, called a right-of-entry form, is due March 31.

Property owners can also choose to clear debris themselves by paying out of pocket for a specialized, licensed contractor or going through their insurance companies. So far, 315 property owners have opted out of having the government remove their debris, Newsom said.

"The vast majority of people have decided to get this done — it's done for free," Newsom said.

Newsom stressed that different phases of the cleanup are happening concurrently, with debris removal beginning on properties where hazardous waste was already cleared. And eventually, rebuilding can begin even as debris removal continues on nearby properties, Newsom said.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said Tuesday that residents can further speed the debris clearance process by organizing with their neighbors to submit opt-in forms for a whole block. That way, she said, the corps "can clear an entire area instead of going house by house."

Bass joined Los Angeles County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath and other officials in Pacific Palisades on Tuesday afternoon as debris clearance began in those devastated neighborhoods. On Livorno Drive, a street in the Palisades overlooking the ocean, dozens of people wearing neon construction vests and hard hats stood by the twisted wreckage of burned homes.

Property owners will receive a phone call three to five days before the corps enters their property, and again a day in advance, said Col. Eric Swenson of the Army Corps on Monday. He said crews will walk around the property when they arrive to tally what debris will be removed. He encouraged owners to attend the site assessment and talk to the crew about any areas of their property that "they're interested in us using additional caution around."

Swenson said general fire ash and debris will be carted into lined trucks and driven to approved landfills. Those facilities include the Simi Valley Landfill, the Azusa Land Reclamation site, Badlands Sanitary Landfill in Moreno Valley, Calabasas Landfill in Agoura, El Sobrante Landfill in Corona, Lamb Canyon Landfill in Beaumont and Sunshine Canyon Landfill in Sylmar.

Other forms of waste, including metal and concrete, will be sent to staging areas for repackaging and sorting before going to a specialized landfill. Swenson said the corps will also scrape off the top six inches of contaminated soil from the burn area.



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The fires that devastated Los Angeles County have also consumed our hearts. From supporting our friends and neighbors who've lost homes and businesses, to witnessing the outpouring of compassion from communities across Southern California, we've seen firsthand the power of resilience and unity.

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District stands out for improved test scores

[**Compton,** from A1]
succeeded in raising scores beyond pre-pandemic levels of 2019, according to the Education Recovery Scorecard project — a collaboration by researchers at Harvard, Stanford and Dartmouth.

Recovery Scorecard researchers used test scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which is based on a relatively small sample of fourth- and eighth-graders, and determined a correlation to state testing programs that measured virtually all third- through eighth-grade students. This calculation allowed for a comparison of 8,719 school districts across 43 states.

The Compton turnaround — which also is reflected in other analyses — has rewritten the script for a school system that for decades made headlines with bad news: a district bankruptcy, a state takeover, corruption allegations, cheating scandals and perpetually low student achievement.

Students in Compton are scoring more than half a grade level better in math than in 2019 and approaching half a grade level better in reading.

In contrast, state and national scores show the average student remains half a grade level behind pre-pandemic achievement in both reading and math. In reading, especially, students are even further behind than they were in 2022, the new analysis shows.

"Test scores in Compton were increasing rapidly before the pandemic and have continued increasing," said Sean F. Reardon, professor of poverty and inequality in education at Stanford University.

In 2015, Compton students scored two grade levels below the California average and 2.5 grade levels below the national average. Today, Reardon said, Compton has matched the state average in math and stands about one-third of a grade level below the state average in reading: "That's a remarkable and sustained pattern of improvement over the last decade."

District's formula

Compton's formula, which includes prepping students for standardized testing, is an approach considered controversial in some quarters. An overemphasis on test prep can narrow the curriculum and make school less engaging and less academically and socially nurturing in the long run, some educators say.

Compton administrators think they've found a reasonable balance. The district justifies a test-centered strategy on the grounds that the state testing is aligned with what students are supposed to be learning. The Compton approach includes frequent diagnostic tests that are used to get students accustomed to the language of testing and also to adjust teaching and to single out students for extra help — in school, after school or on Saturdays.

The data analysis in Compton happens at all levels. Teachers meet weekly with their colleagues within their schools. Principals at each academic level — elementary, middle and high school — gather every four to six weeks with one another and Supt. Darin Brawley.



Photographs by MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

COMPTON UNIFIED students are scoring more than half a grade level better in math than in 2019 and nearly half a grade level better in reading, an analysis found. Above, Compton High's yet-to-open new campus.

Students are included in the analysis so they know where they stand.

"Looking at my data, it kind of disappoints me" when the numbers are low, said sixth-grader Harmoni Knight, a student at Davis Middle School. "But it makes me realize I can do better in the future, and also now."

Compton also has relied heavily on a form of tutoring that researchers have deemed most effective — immediate in-person, in-class help. The district deploys more than 250 tutors daily to classes across the school system of about 17,000 students.

The district has benefited too from philanthropy and higher levels of state and federal aid — and appears to have used such resources effectively.

Compton received $9,064 per student from the federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief program for COVID-19 pandemic recovery — one of the highest amounts in California, according to the researchers.

By comparison, L.A. Unified, the nation's second-largest school system, also fell into this high funding category, receiving nearly $200 more per student than Compton. L.A. has fared much better since the pandemic than a number of other large school systems, but it has not kept pace with the rate of improvement in Compton.

The researchers concluded that, across the nation, more money made a positive difference, but that it helped some school districts more than others.

Stable leadership

Stable leadership also could be a factor for Compton: Brawley joined the school system as superintendent in 2012 after leading school turnaround efforts as a deputy superintendent in Adelanto.

"When I first got here," Brawley said, "every surrounding district was kicking our tail, whether it was Lynwood, Paramount, L.A. Unified, Bellflower — you name it. They were all outperforming us. So we began literally benchmarking their performance so that our performance would become



A FOCUS on testing prep is key to the school district's success as a national leader in raising student scores. Above, Compton High Principal Larry Natividad.



THE DISTRICT also relies on immediate in-person, in-class help for students. Above, Eric Foster, an 11th-grader at Compton High, works on a math problem.

better. And we started establishing smart goals to produce better results."

Compton high school math instructor Annie Belonio, who started teaching in Compton in 2002, said that early in her career the training and curriculum guidance was "hit-and-miss."

"They would give one day of training at the start of the year and then give you the curriculum and you're on your own," she said.

But for the last decade or more, "we started having curriculum councils with teachers of different levels," she said. "We meet, talk, plan out things that should be included and how to deliver and how to assess."

The district targets areas that the state measures — reading and math test scores — but also graduation rates, college preparation, chronic absenteeism and suspension rates.

"We wanted Compton Unified to become one of the best districts ... within the districts that we benchmark ourselves against," Brawley said. "And we've pretty much done that."

Brawley's presentation includes a list of school districts across the state with a poverty rate similar to the 93% of Compton students who qualify for a free or reduced-price school lunch because of low family income. Among those districts, Compton is a leader in overall academic achievement, not just rate of improvement.

California's own test data back up Brawley's claims, while also making clear the challenges that lie ahead. In Compton, for grades 3 through 8, 41.9% of students were reading at a proficient level in tests administered in the spring. This compares with 39.8% in L.A. Unified and 44.8% for the state.

In math, Compton's proficiency rate was 36.7%, compared with 34.6% for L.A. Unified and 36.9% for California.

"Even though we gained, and we celebrate the gains, at the end of the day we all know that we can do better," Brawley said.

Brawley said his current goals include a 50% proficiency rate for math and 60% for reading.

Inside the class

On a recent Friday, second-year instructor Nathalie Robles was teaching Compton High 11th-graders about exponents in her integrated math class — and had multiple strategies to make sure students were keeping up.

She carried cards with student names — so that she would call on everyone. She set a timer for certain math problems — so all students knew they were being challenged to pay attention and move quickly. She called students up to a white board to explain how they solved math problems.

But it's hard to know in the moment whether all 28 students are keeping up, even though she moved from table to table to help them.

For this class, she had two tutors also moving from table to table.

One of them, Joseph Flores, glided toward a student table to help a girl with a quizzical expression. She was hesitating over a problem involving the manipulation of exponents.

"We take the exponent from the top minus the exponent from the bottom, right?" explained Flores, who majored in math at Cal State L.A. After about a minute of coaching, the student was ready to finish the problem.

"We're immediately reinforcing what they're learning," Flores said. "We are able to really key in on any type of concerns that they might have, anything that they might have missed, really just making sure that they get all their questions answered there and then before they forget.

"I see a drastic improvement in the students from the beginning of the semester to the end of the school year."

This approach also builds on research stressing the importance of having students learn a concept when it's first taught to them — because it's harder to catch up.

Delshanae Williams, a Compton High 11th-grader, recalled that in middle school she had worked with math tutors every day. Now she's in honors math.

Her classmate Froylan Diaz said it was hard to get back on track — academically and socially — when campuses reopened after the pandemic emergency was over.

"The pandemic affected me in the way where I didn't understand the subject or the math as much as I do now, in person," he said. "I felt that I struggled more during the pandemic because it wasn't hands-on ... working out the problems in person."

Associated Press reporters Annie Ma, Jocelyn Gecker and Sharon Lurye contributed reporting and analysis.

Criminal case against NYC mayor may be dropped

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The criminal case against New York City Mayor Eric Adams hung by a thread Tuesday after the Justice Department ordered federal prosecutors to drop the charges, though it remained unclear how quickly that might happen or if the acting U.S. attorney in Manhattan might try to resist the directive.

In a memo Monday, acting Deputy Atty. Gen. Emil Bove directed federal prosecutors to dismiss the bribery charges, saying they were disrupting Adams' ability to assist in President Trump's crackdown on immigration and crime.

Bove said the Justice Department decided to dismiss the case "without assessing the strength of the evidence" due to political considerations, including to free up Adams to campaign for reelection as a Democrat who will support Trump's policy objectives.

Carrying out the order falls to Danielle Sassoon, acting U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York. Her office declined to comment and has not indicated what its plans are. Last month, prosecutors praised the strength of the evidence, dismissing Adams' claim of political prosecution as an attempt "to shift the focus away from the evidence of his guilt."

Sassoon, appointed acting U.S. attorney in Manhattan days after Trump took office, has limited power to oppose the order. She can be replaced at will by the Justice Department. Trump in November nominated Jay Clayton, former chair of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, to lead the office. His appointment must be confirmed by the Senate.



KENA BETANCUR Associated Press

ERIC ADAMS, facing federal charges, has been cultivating a warm relationship with President Trump.

Adams said Tuesday that he was eager to "put this cruel episode behind us and focus entirely on the future of this city."

Bove said the charges could be refiled after the November mayoral election.

That means the threat of prosecution will hover over Adams in his dealings with the Trump administration.

After the memo was issued, Adams faced criticism from some allies who say he is now beholden to the Trump administration's agenda. Elected as a centrist Democrat, he had already shifted rightward since his indictment in September. He has cultivated a warm relationship with Trump — praising his agenda and showing a willingness to roll back some of the city's protections for people in the country illegally.

"It certainly sounds like President Trump is holding the Mayor hostage," the Rev. Al Sharpton, an influential Adams ally, said in a statement Tuesday. "I have supported the Mayor, but he has been put in an unfair position ... of essentially political blackmail."

Arlo Devlin-Brown, former chief of public corruption at the U.S. attorney's office in Manhattan, said the unusual conditions attached to the memo made it uncertain when the charges would be dismissed.

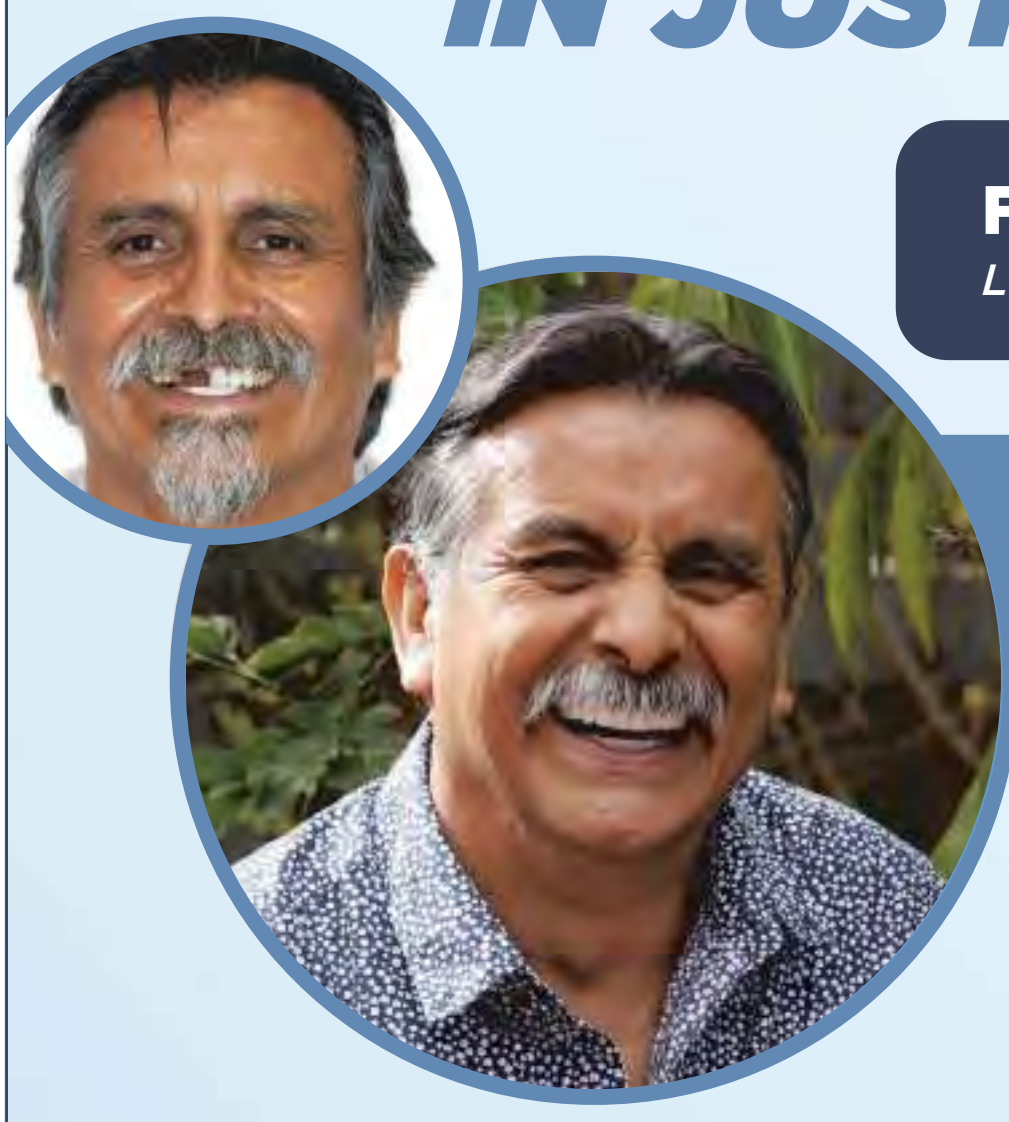
"I have not seen anything like this before," he said. "For a case that's already been charged to be reversed in the absence of some real new development in the merits of the case is highly unusual."

The indictment against Adams alleges he accepted illegal campaign contributions and lavish travel perks worth more than $100,000 while serving in his previous job as Brooklyn borough president.

The indictment said a Turkish official who helped facilitate the trips then leaned on Adams for favors.

Prosecutors also said they had evidence Adams directed campaign staffers to solicit foreign donations, then disguised those contributions to qualify for city matching funds. Foreign nationals are banned from contributing to U.S. election campaigns under federal law.

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BUSINESS

Signs of Trump's chilling effect on Hollywood

Observers see efforts to curry favor and avoid ire. 'It's hard to be creative when you're afraid.'

By Samantha Masunaga



Festival de Cannes

"THE APPRENTICE," featuring Jeremy Strong, left, and Sebastian Stan, struggled to get distribution.

Eight years ago, Hollywood proudly donned the mantle of anti-Trump resistance.

This time around, the industry's reaction can best be summed up by the tale of two Trump films.

Just two weeks before President Trump's inauguration, Amazon Prime Video made an unexpected announcement — the company would release a documentary about Melania Trump, with the first lady serving as an executive producer.

Meanwhile, another Trump-related movie — "The Apprentice," a biopic that chronicles the president's rise to power decades ago — still has not secured a streaming deal, despite two Oscar nominations for lead actor (Sebastian Stan as Trump) and supporting actor (Jeremy Strong as New York legal pit bull Roy Cohn).

The contrasting fates show the more muted mood in liberal Hollywood. There is a general sense of unease among industry insiders about what's to come, the speed with which Trump has enacted sweeping executive orders across the federal government — and the seeming buy-in from corporate leaders — and how that all could influence future creative content.

"I don't think that people have really figured out what to do yet, how to express themselves or what's going to be the most effective," said Tom Nunan, co-head of the graduate producers program at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. "It's hard to be creative when you're afraid."

Major Hollywood players were loathe to confront Trump, even before his election. Despite its much-anticipated debut in Cannes last May, "The Apprentice" struggled to lock down a domestic theatrical distributor, particularly after Trump's then-presidential campaign threatened to file a lawsuit to stop the film.

"There was definitely reticence about getting involved with the movie after our Cannes premiere," said Amy Baer, one of the film's producers. "Enough to cool any potential interest we had."

While some distributors passed outright, there were others that "politely stepped away," she said.

Briarcliff Entertainment then took on the film. The distributor is no stranger to controversial or political topics, as it also released Michael Moore's documentary "Fahrenheit 11/9" about the first Trump presidency. By the time the deal closed, the team had just weeks to mount a theatrical release and marketing campaign before the election.

The film is available to rent and buy digitally through Apple TV, Amazon Prime Video and YouTube. Briarcliff is in conversation with "various streamers," but a company spokesperson said by email that there wasn't anything yet to report.

Other films with political messages have faced a similar predicament. "Union," a documentary about the first organizing effort at an Amazon warehouse, has also failed to get a distribution deal, despite making it to the Oscars short list, according to the Ankler.

Even in that climate, the news of the Melania Trump documentary caught some in the industry off guard. Not only has the documentary market this year been tough, but the quick pickup seemed in contrast to the fates of other politically minded films.

The naming of the documentary's director, Brett Ratner, also turned some heads, as it will be his first major film since he faced allegations of sexual harassment that were raised nearly a decade ago by some female associates. Ratner has denied the allegations.

Besides the hefty $40-million price tag Amazon reportedly paid to license the documentary, the news came just months after Amazon Executive Chair and Washington Post owner Jeff Bezos declined to run a planned editorial endorsement in his paper of former Vice President Kamala Harris. (Bezos said at the time that not endorsing presidential candidates would help restore trust in the Post.)

Observers saw the two actions as linked, an attempt to curry favor with the new administration, and very much at odds with how the entertainment industry mounted a public resistance against the first Trump presidency.

During the last Trump administration, the entertainment industry launched a number of colorful and rich projects that challenged the norms of the time, just as Hollywood saw cultural shifts during the presidencies of George W. Bush and Richard Nixon.

After Trump left office, films like A24's "Everything Everywhere All at Once" and Netflix's comet satire "Don't Look Up" explored themes of large-scale destruction and what it takes to stop it. Former President Obama and Michelle Obama's media company Higher Ground Productions last year expanded its high-profile first look deal with Netflix.

The recent fires in Southern California probably have also damped the mood in Hollywood, which was already dour because of an ongoing financial retrenchment.

"Right now with crisis and the fires, there's a little bit of fatigue and certainly a little bit of shell shock from the speed with which the Trump administration has rolled out some of their proposals," said Steve Caplan, principal strategist at Los Angeles-based communications firm Message, who has worked in politics, advertising and entertainment for decades. "But people will be taking stock as the midterms and the governor's race grow nearer."

Nunan of UCLA described Trump as a "tipping point" or "force multiplier" for more liberal people in the industry who were already facing difficulties due to the current production slowdown.

"Just kind of a feeling of defeat has pervaded this place," he said. "And it's really unfortunate."

It's no secret that Hollywood has backed Democratic politicians for decades. Stars including George Clooney and Julia Roberts appeared at fundraisers for former President Biden, with many in the entertainment industry later calling for Biden to quit the race after his disastrous first debate performance. Many of those Hollywood power players enthusiastically switched to support Harris during her campaign.

That may partly explain the current mood in Hollywood. At the Golden Globe Awards, held just weeks before Trump's inauguration, the show was largely politics-free, with host Nikki Glaser and presenters mostly staying away from commentary on current events. (By the time the Grammy Awards were held earlier this month, however, award winners did not hold back.)

The long lead time for film development means that it's too soon to tell whether the new administration — and Hollywood's reaction to it — could have any effect on current or future projects. But Caplan of Message says the signs aren't good.

"If you look at the direction things are going, and the strategic decisions that are being made by brands of all kinds, companies of all types, it would indicate it's a very difficult environment to get these things done," he said. "We will see if creative and content is part of that, but early indications are that it will be a challenge."

Super Bowl scores a record audience

By Stephen Battaglio



Matt Slocum Associated Press

AN AVERAGE of 127.7 million viewers watched Sunday's game. Above, Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts.

The Super Bowl may have developed immunity against a terrible game.

An average of 127.7 million viewers watched Sunday's Fox telecast of the Philadelphia Eagles' 40-22 drubbing of the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl LIX, setting a new record based on data from Nielsen, Adobe Analytics and the streaming service Tubi.

The figure is up 3% from last year's record of 123.7 million viewers who watched the Chiefs' 25-22 win over the San Francisco 49ers on CBS.

Fox said an average of 13.6 million viewers watched the game on Tubi, the free ad-supported streaming platform owned by parent company Fox Corp., which carried the event for the first time. An additional 900,000 watched on the NFL's streaming app. The combination made it the most streamed Super Bowl ever.

Spanish-language networks Telemundo and Fox Deportes brought in an additional 1.9 million viewers.

The addition of Tubi as an option probably brought in casual fans and the growing number of consumers who watch video only on digital devices without cable or a TV antenna. Tubi has about 97 million active users as of January.

In addition to the TV commercials that went for as much as $8 million for a 30-second spot, Fox sold spots placed exclusively on Tubi's audience at around $2 million each, according to AdAge. The Tubi audience far exceeded the 8.5 million viewers projected by Fox.

Last year's Super Bowl was streamed on Paramount+ and the NFL streaming app, both of which require a subscription.

The Super Bowl has regularly topped 100 million viewers since 2009 and fluctuated based on the competitiveness of the game. But that may no longer matter as the event has evolved into a national viewing holiday available on an array of free platforms.

The showdown at Caesar's Superdome in New Orleans peaked at 137.7 million viewers between 8 and 8:15 p.m. Eastern time. With the Eagles leading the Chiefs 24-0 going into the third quarter, viewing dropped off but was still strong enough to set a record for the entire game.

Super Bowl LIX had the ingredients of another ratings record-setter, with the return of Taylor Swift to cheer on boyfriend Travis Kelce, the Chiefs' star tight end. President Trump heightened the anticipation by being the first sitting commander-in-chief to attend a Super Bowl.

The lopsided outcome of Sunday's contest was reminiscent of the run of terrible Super Bowl matchups of the mid-1980s, when there were five consecutive blowouts decided by 19 points or more.

Viewers surveyed in USA Today's annual Super Bowl Ad Meter chose a Budweiser commercial featuring the beer brand's iconic Clydesdale horses as their favorite.

The halftime show featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar was polarizing on social media, but provided the liveliest conversation of the night amid the Chiefs' dismal performance on the field. It was also the most-watched halftime show ever with 133.5 million viewers, up 3% over last year's performance by Usher.

Powell signals a firm grip on rates

Fed chief is prepared to keep monetary policy unchanged amid solid job market and elevated inflation.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Federal Reserve is prepared to keep its key interest rate unchanged for now as inflation remains elevated and the job market is solid, Chair Jerome H. Powell said Tuesday on the first of a two-day appearance before Congress.

After cutting its key rate a full percentage point in the final three months of last year, with "the economy remaining strong, we do not need to be in a hurry to adjust our policy stance," Powell said in written remarks to the Senate Banking Committee.

Powell's appearance comes with inflation still above the Fed's 2% target and the Trump administration upending many longtime U.S. policies by imposing tariffs on steel and aluminum and seeking to cut government spending drastically.

President Trump has frequently attacked the Fed in the past, raising concerns about the central bank's historical independence from politics.

Powell was quickly thrust into the partisan turmoil surrounding Trump's flurry of executive orders and the efforts of billionaire Elon Musk, through the so-called Department of Government Efficiency, to slash government programs.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) urged Powell to maintain the Fed's support for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, a consumer protection agency that was essentially shut down over the weekend when the Trump administration ordered officials at the bureau to stop work and closed the building for a week. The CFPB gets its funding from the Fed.

"Do not make the Federal Reserve an accomplice to this illegal act, and forever sully the reputation of the Fed," Warren said.

Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.), chair of the committee, criticized banking regulators, including the Fed, for the alleged "debanking" of cryptocurrency firms and individuals in the industry. Debanking occurs when banks shut down customer accounts because they believe they pose financial, legal or reputational risks to the banks.

Powell said that it was "fair to take a fresh look at debanking."

Powell did not mention Trump's tariffs and other policy changes in his statement but said that the Fed is "well positioned to deal with the risks and uncertainties that we face."

The Fed chair also said the central bank has launched a second review of its policy strategies and its communications tools. Powell reiterated that the review would not focus on whether to change its 2% inflation target, which some economists argue is too low. Powell has repeatedly said that the Fed shouldn't change the target while it is still struggling to get inflation down to 2%.

Last week, comments by many Fed officials — as well as a decline in the unemployment rate — suggested that the odds of a rate cut any time soon have dwindled.

Although Fed officials penciled in two rate cuts this year at their December meeting, economists and Wall Street investors are increasingly skeptical, with some predicting no reductions at all in 2025. On Friday, economists at Morgan Stanley said they now expect just one rate cut this year, and investors also expect just one — in July — according to pricing in futures markets.

Fewer cuts could translate into a longer period of elevated mortgage rates and high borrowing costs for automobiles, credit card purchases and more. Still, mortgage rates are closely tied to the yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which can move independently of the Fed's actions.

Steady hiring and a mostly healthy job market suggest that there is less of an urgent need for the Fed to reduce borrowing rates. It implemented a steep half-point cut in September after weak hiring over the summer spurred fears that the economy was stumbling, possibly into recession.

The jobs report "bolsters our confidence that the Fed cutting cycle is over," economists at Bank of America wrote in a note Friday.

Tesla fined for workplace heat violation, the latest issue at Fremont plant

By Suhauna Hussain

Tesla has been fined for violating California's workplace heat protection rules at its Fremont plant.

Although the $13,500 penalty is a pittance for the electric car maker, which boasts a market capitalization of more than $1 trillion, state regulators categorized the company's violation as "serious," meaning it could result in injury, illness or death.

The findings stem from Tesla's failure to provide employees working outdoors with adequate cooldown breaks in shaded areas, according to a citation issued by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health, known as Cal/OSHA, in December.

Tesla did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Cal/OSHA did not provide specifics on the conditions workers experienced at the Fremont plant.

The citation references a section of California's heat safety rules that mandate that employees be allowed and encouraged to take cooldown rests in the shade when they feel the need to do so to prevent themselves from overheating. Any employee who takes this type of preemptive break is supposed to be monitored for symptoms of heat illness by a supervisor and should not be asked to return to work until symptoms have subsided.

Tesla co-founder and Chief Executive Elon Musk has had a hostile relationship with the state in recent years, accusing California of "overregulation, overlitigation, overtaxation." And the new regulatory scrutiny comes at a time when Musk is leading an aggressive effort to scale back or entirely dismantle swaths of the federal government on behalf of the Trump administration.

The carmaker has previously tussled with California workplace safety regulators over conditions at the Fremont plant.

An investigation by the Center for Investigative Reporting in 2018 found that Tesla has failed to report some serious workplace injuries, skewing the company's injury statistics. Tesla rebutted the findings, but Cal/OSHA cited the company the next year for omitting hundreds of injuries listed in logs at its factory from annual summary data that the company sends each year to government regulators.

Tesla also constructed an open-air structure outside its main Fremont vehicle facilities in an effort to speed up assembly and production of its Model 3 sedan, but in 2019 was hit with fines from Cal/OSHA for safety violations, including a failure to obtain a permit to build the open-air facility, failure to protect workers from exposed metal rods and rebar that posed risks and failure to properly train employees to prevent heat illness.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, Musk restarted production at the plant in defiance of a countywide stay-at-home order, although the company eventually reached an agreement with Alameda County to resume operations. Hundreds of infections were reported in the aftermath of the reopening.

And Cal/OSHA in 2023 slapped Tesla with four safety violations after an employee at the Fremont plant was seriously injured when she got stuck in a Model Y. Tesla had allegedly failed to ensure power was cut to a conveyor belt while workers were performing quality inspections, leading to the worker becoming trapped in the car.

MARKET ROUNDUP

Wall Street not ruffled by latest tariff escalation

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Wall Street held relatively firm Tuesday after President Trump's latest tariff escalation and after the Federal Reserve hinted that interest rates may not change for a while.

The Standard & Poor's 500 was virtually unchanged and edged up less than 0.1% in the market's first trading since Trump announced 25% tariffs on all foreign steel and aluminum coming into the country. The Dow Jones industrial average added 0.3%, and the Nasdaq composite slipped 0.4%.

The moves were modest not only for U.S. stocks but also in the bond market, where Treasury yields rose only a bit.

The threat of a possible trade war is very real, of course, with high potential stakes. Most of Wall Street agrees that substantial and sustained tariffs would push up prices for U.S. households and ultimately lead to big pain for financial markets around the world. The European Union's chief, Ursula von der Leyen, said Tuesday that "unjustified tariffs on the EU will not go unanswered — they will trigger firm and proportionate countermeasures."

But trading remained mostly calm in part because Trump has shown he can be quick to pull back on such threats. That's what he did earlier with 25% tariffs he had announced for all imports from Canada and Mexico, suggesting that tariffs may be merely a negotiating chip rather than a true long-term policy. That has much of Wall Street hoping the worst-case scenario may not happen.

"The metal tariffs may serve as negotiating leverage," according to Solita Marcelli, chief investment officer, Americas, at UBS Global Wealth Management.

In the meantime, much of Wall Street's focus Tuesday swung to a different part of Washington. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome H. Powell said again in testimony on Capitol Hill that the Fed is in no hurry to ease interest rates any further.

The Fed had cut its main interest rate sharply through the end of last year, hoping to give a boost to the economy. But worries about inflation potentially staying stubbornly high have forced the Fed and traders alike to cut back expectations for cuts in 2025.

"We're in a pretty good place," Powell said about where the economy and interest rates are currently. He said again he's aware that going too slowly on rate cuts could damage the economy, while moving too quickly could push inflation higher.

Higher rates tend to put downward pressure on prices for stocks and other investments, while pressuring the economy by making borrowing more expensive. That could be risky for a U.S. stock market that critics say already looks too expensive. The S&P 500 is not far from its all-time high, set late last month.

One way companies can offset such downward pressure on their stock prices is to deliver stronger profits. And big U.S. companies have been mostly doing just that recently, as they report how much profit they made during the last three months of 2024. That, though, hasn't always been enough.

Marriott International fell 5.4% even though it reported a better profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. Investors focused instead on its forecast range for an important underlying measure of profit in the upcoming year, which fell short of analysts' expectations.

Humana sank 3.5% despite reporting a milder loss than analysts expected. The insurer and healthcare company offered a forecast for profit in 2025 that fell short of Wall Street's expectations.

Helping to offset such losses was Coca-Cola, which rallied 4.7% after reporting stronger profit and revenue than analysts expected. Growth in China, Brazil and the United States helped lead the way.

DuPont climbed 6.8% after the chemical company likewise reported better profit than Wall Street expected.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 2.06 points to 6,068.50. The Dow climbed 123.24 points to 44,593.65, and the Nasdaq composite fell 70.41 points to 19,643.86.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.53% from 4.50% late Monday. The two-year Treasury yield, which moves more closely with expectations for upcoming action by the Fed, held steady. It remained at 4.28%, where it was late Monday.

In stock markets abroad, indexes were mixed across Europe and Asia. Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 1.1% and South Korea's Kospi rose 0.7%. Japanese markets were closed for a national holiday.

Major stock indexes

Index	Close	Daily change	Daily % change	YTD % change
Dow industrials	44,593.65	+123.24	+0.28	+4.82
S&P 500	6,068.50	+2.06	+0.03	+3.18
Nasdaq composite	19,643.86	-70.41	-0.36	+1.72
S&P 400	3,194.10	-14.23	-0.44	+2.34
Russell 2000	2,275.70	-12.24	-0.53	+2.04
EuroStoxx 50	5,390.91	+32.61	+0.61	+10.11
Nikkei (Japan)	38,801.17	+14.15	+0.04	-2.74
Hang Seng (Hong Kong)	21,294.86	-227.12	-1.06	+6.16

Associated Press



CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

PHARMACIST DEEP PATEL gives Heidi Salguero a flu shot at a CVS store in Huntington Park in August. It is not too late to get the vaccine, given how potent this flu season has already proved to be, officials say.

Flu activity 'high, increasing' in state, weekly report says

[**Flu,** from A1]

best protection against getting seriously sick." Nationally, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates there have been at least 11,000 deaths from flu this season, including 47 children, and at least 250,000 hospitalizations.

"I think in COVID, we got used to the idea that kids are, quote-unquote, fine," Chin-Hong said. Flu, however, "can be very severe in kids. Pediatricians are telling me that they're seeing tons of flu in kids right now."

Complicating matters has been an unusually low vaccination rate against flu for children this winter — the lowest since at least the 2019-20 season. Nationally, 44.5% of children age 17 and younger were vaccinated against flu as of late January, down from 49.1% at the same time last year and 51.7% the year before.

The trend is similar in California: 47.7% of California's children have been vaccinated against flu as of late January, also the lowest since at least the 2019-20 flu season. Last year at this time, 53.7% of children were vaccinated against flu.

The CDC recommends everyone 6 months or older get a flu shot — ideally by the end of October to boost protection against the disease during high-circulation winter months.

But given how potent this flu season has already proved to be, officials say those who have yet to be vaccinated should consider doing so.

"This has been a particularly long and difficult flu season compared to recent years. And it's not over yet," Kadakia said.

The two types of flu generally circulating now are H1N1 — related to the swine flu strain that caused a flu pandemic in 2009 and 2010 — and H3N2, which "is notorious for just causing more serious illness in general," Chin-Hong said.

Health officials say the current risk to the public from bird flu remains low, as no person-to-person spread has been detected. Nationwide, 68 human cases have been confirmed, including 38 in California. The vast majority of those cases are associated with exposure to infected poultry or cattle.

Overall, flu activity "is high and increasing," California health officials said in their latest respiratory virus weekly report, but they are not seeing similarly concerning spread of either COVID or RSV at the moment.

COVID activity is low statewide, and RSV activity is low and decreasing. The most recent test positivity rate for COVID was 2.4%, and for RSV, 5%.

Some experts caution that the test positivity rate isn't necessarily the best metric to compare flu seasons with one another, as testing practices and healthcare usage vary from season to season.

Levels of flu detected through surveillance in California's wastewater are "very high," as is the case in most other states, data show. In California, RSV levels are considered "high," while COVID levels are considered low.

California's rate of hospital admissions from flu is also on the rise, possibly indicating a second peak of the winter. According to the latest state report, the hospitalization rate had climbed to 10.1 new admissions per 100,000 people, the highest mark of the season.

"Influenza predictions suggest that emergency department visits will remain high and may increase in most states," the CDC said.

At UC San Francisco, staffers got an alert that the hospital is full, "and I haven't seen that for a while," Chin-Hong said. "A lot of people have flu in the hospital, so that could be part of it."

The situation is much the same in Los Angeles County, where this winter's flu season appears to be the most durable and potent of the post-COVID-emergency era.

The test positivity rate for flu has been above 20% for seven straight weeks in L.A. County and rose to 28.83% for the most recent week available.

The last time there was such a sustained surge in positive flu tests was during the 2019-20 season, where there were 10 straight weeks the test positivity rate for flu was above 20%.

Nationwide, emergency room visits are very high for flu and moderate for RSV, according to the CDC. But they're low for COVID-19.

The rate at which flu tests are coming back positive nationally is 31.6% and has been increasing. The RSV test positivity rate is 6.6% and decreasing. The COVID test positivity rate is also decreasing and was at 4.9% as of the last report issued Friday.

Should that trend hold, this would be the first winter of the COVID era in which California does not see a pronounced surge of the disease.

"The late surge of COVID seen last summer and early fall likely decreased the portion of the population susceptible to COVID-19 this winter," the L.A. County Department of Public Health said in a statement.

Also possibly helping matters, Chin-Hong said, was that a new blockbuster COVID subvariant has not emerged in recent months.

Vaccines for COVID and RSV are also available, and health officials recommend residents, particularly those at high risk of developing severe symptoms, consider getting those shots as well. RSV immunizations were first approved for use in the U.S. in 2023.

A report published in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report in October noted that flu vaccination rates have declined in other countries, including in South America, where they were below pre-pandemic norms.

"This finding is consistent with postpandemic declines in vaccination coverage across the Americas associated with vaccine misinformation, hesitancy and disruptions in routine immunization services," the report said.

Some health experts have expressed alarm about the rise in skepticism surrounding vaccine safety — including from Robert F. Kennedy Jr., President Trump's nominee to run the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Health experts say the nation's recommended vaccines are safe.

"I just wonder if it's part of a general, you know, with RFK Jr., all that stuff, just more questions about vaccines," Chin-Hong said. The reduction in flu vaccination rates among children, he added, "is kind of striking to me."

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OPINION

Make America safe again?

JACKIE CALMES



At the windup of his MAGA rallies, Donald Trump liked to mix it up when he got to his crowd-pleasing promise to "Make America Great Again." He'd shout fill-in-the-blank variations as he built to the finale. A favorite: "Make America *safe* again!"

Promise broken.

Mere weeks into his comeback presidency, Trump's myriad moves are making Americans less safe at home and abroad. (Grocery prices aren't lower, either, but that's a broken-promise column for another day.)

Consider this self-inflicted security peril for starters: At the Justice Department and the FBI, Trump toadies are executing his vendetta for his past legal woes by firing, demoting or reassigning hundreds and potentially thousands of career employees nationwide who, all told, have centuries' worth of experience in domestic and foreign extremism. And yet former FBI Director Christopher Wray, who resigned rather than be fired, repeatedly warned that extremists are a top threat.

Fuhgedaboutit: The supine Republican-run Senate is expected soon to confirm Kash Patel as Wray's successor, a Trump loyalist who sees the president's political enemies as the real danger. Republican senators are falling in line even though Patel arguably lied to them, under oath, during his confirmation hearing. Even as the purge was underway of agents assigned to the now-erased Jan. 6 and classified documents cases against Trump, Patel was testifying that no FBI employees "will be terminated for case assignments."

I was reminded of the scene in "The Godfather" juxtaposing Michael Corleone in church for his nephew's baptism, mouthing the ritual responses over the babe while his mafiosi fanned out across New York City to execute his rivals.

Similarly, Patel's soon-to-be superior, Atty. Gen. Pam Bondi, was no sooner confirmed last week than she created a "weaponization working group" at the Justice Department to prosecute the prosecutors and investigate the investigators on the Trump cases. As the FBI agents' association objected, using Trump's own words, the purges are "dangerous distractions" from the work "to make America safe again." Nice.

FBI agents who used to monitor terrorist suspects reportedly are being reassigned either to Bondi's — make that Trump's — retribution squad or to helping the Department of Homeland Security deport migrants. Personally, I'd rather the government keep eyes on militia groups, lone wolf extremists, child traffickers and some of the vengeful Jan. 6 convicts that Trump pardoned (one of whom was also found guilty of plotting to assassinate FBI agents) than have the feds spend a minute rousting migrants from meatpacking plants, construction companies and homes.

Heed lifelong Republican William H. Webster, the only person to serve as both FBI and CIA director and, post-9/11, chair of a homeland security advisory council to Presidents George W. Bush, Obama and Trump. Still on fire at 100, Webster last week admonished Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Charles E. Grassley of Iowa to help kill Patel's nomination in the committee.

"This administration is intent on destroying the FBI and eschewing the rule of law," Webster said in the letter, which I was given. "I urge you," he added, "to consider the risks to national security, the integrity of the Bureau, *and the safety of the American people* [emphasis mine] before allowing this nomination to proceed unchecked."

Complicity in the FBI's destruction "would not be a legacy I would want," Webster pointedly told Grassley. But apparently the 91-year-old Grassley is fine with it. He announced his committee would vote on Patel perhaps later this week.

Here's another new threat to Americans' security: Thanks to Trump's unelected and unvetted co-president — Elon Musk, world's richest man and a top U.S. corporate-welfare recipient — packs of young and unvetted Musk-rats have been invading federal agencies and IT systems. They're gaining access to the personal and tax data of millions of Americans, including recipients of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, federal contracts and student loans.

Much the same purging and disruption is going on at the CIA and other intelligence agencies that protect Americans from dangers abroad. CIA operatives have been identified in unclassified emails, putting "a direct target on their backs for China," said Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee. Being pushed out the doors are officers fluent in Arabic, Russian, Chinese and more, a cohort with essential skills that took agencies years to build.



Brendan Smialowski AFP/Getty Images

A MURAL at the 2024 Republican National Convention in Milwaukee last summer said, "Make America Safe Once Again."

Meanwhile, on track for confirmation as director of national intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard — a former congresswoman who, like Trump, has previously rejected U.S. intel in favor of Kremlin talking points — will be responsible for the daily briefing that goes to the president. What could go wrong?

And of course there's Trump's self-own: the decimation of the U.S. Agency for International Development. For six decades, that humanitarian office under the State Department has enjoyed bipartisan support for its "soft power" contribution to America's global security and goodwill. Through its relationships in 100 countries, including trouble spots, USAID also has been an early warning system for overseas risks.

As retired Marine Gen. James N. Mattis famously warned Congress in 2013: "If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition ultimately." He reiterated that years later as Trump's unhappy first Defense secretary — more good advice that Trump rejects, at our peril. Same with Mattis' pitch for maintaining U.S. alliances: "In history, nations with allies thrive, nations without them die."

Trump has alienated allies including Canada, Mexico, Denmark and Panama with his imperialist taunts. Yet nothing has so inflamed the world, and especially the Mideast tinderbox, as his call to take Gaza, expel 2.2 million Palestinians and build a "Riviera." Trump's own DHS "sent a chilling message" to police nationwide after the president's remarks, warning them to be on alert for retaliatory acts, Washington Post columnist David Ignatius reported.

We should all feel the chill. Make America safe again? Not like this.

@jackiekcalmes

LETTERS



Susan Walsh Associated Press

VICE PRESIDENT JD Vance has questioned judicial authority. Above, the Supreme Court in Washington.

'Unfortunately, the courts stand alone'

Re "Vance, Musk question the authority of courts," Feb. 10

Thank goodness for the American judicial system. It's gratifying to see that our judges still believe in the Constitution and the rule of law.

Then, reality sets in. The federal courts don't have their own enforcement power. Rulings, in effect, rely on people's obedience to them. The threat of being held in contempt of court might affect law-abiding citizens, but it appears not to affect others.

Unfortunately, the courts stand alone. Congress, the media and Big Business have already rushed to fall in line behind President Trump. "We the people" are being being pushed out, both conceptually and in real time.

Betty Rome, Culver City

I did not attend Yale Law School, but I can't imagine that Vice President JD Vance's constitutional law class failed to include the study of Marbury vs. Madison.

Often considered the most important constitutional law case ever decided by the U.S. Supreme Court, it established in 1803 that the judiciary has the final say when it comes to what is the law. Probably the most important line says, in essence, that there can be no legal right if there is no legal remedy to enforce that right.

Anyone who believes that this transitory clown car of an administration should have the final say needs a refresher course in civics.

Jeffrey S. Weiss
Thousand Oaks

Why is The Times treating what is happening in Washington as business as usual?

An executive coup is underway with an unelected private citizen being giving unfettered access to multiple federal agencies, and rarely are there articles about it on your front page. The Associated Press article you published about Vance and Elon Musk questioning the legitimacy of the courts to check the administration was published on Page A5 of the Feb. 10 print edition.

Our country is under threat, our information is being accessed, our institutions are in effect being illegally shut down, and President Trump, Vance, Musk and Republican members of Congress are saying that federal judges have no right to stop them.

Why is this not getting greater attention? Your abdication of journalistic responsibility is heartbreaking.

Megan Torrey-Payne
Glendale

::

Vance has stated (I am paraphrasing) that if the courts rule against executive authority, the president can ignore it. Courts have no enforcement authority of their own.

Now we know why Trump picked Vance to be his vice president.

Thomas Oatway
Valencia

::

Who gave the president the power to appoint a citizen who is immune to the power of the federal judiciary?

If the courts cannot control the actions of a citizen appointed by the president, who will?

If Trump cannot be impeached, how will he and his office be controlled?

If Trump cannot be controlled, what prevents him from establishing a monarchy or dictatorship?

If financial markets become nervous, will the U.S. dollar be replaced as the global reserve currency?

If billionaires are pulling the strings, who will protect the financial well-being of the middle and lower economic classes?

If you have children, what do they have to look forward to?

Richie Locasso
Hemet

What was the mayor thinking?

Re "Wildfire recovery chief to forgo his pay," Feb. 10

Can anyone explain how a seemingly intelligent person such as L.A. Mayor Karen Bass can have remarkably poor judgment?

Steve Soboroff, appointed to lead the city of L.A.'s recovery effort after last month's fires, appears to be a successful businessman. Yet Bass approved his salary of half a million dollars, to be funded entirely by charitable organizations, for three months' work. Did it not occur to her that the donations for that salary should go toward assisting all those who lost every single thing in their lives?

Eventually, Bass reversed course and said Soboroff would work for free. But I'm not sure what was worse — Bass at first approving the salary, or Soboroff accepting it.

Diane Lowderback
Tustin

English, Korean: *Vive les langues*

Re "Say what? In South Korea, a different sort of term limits," Column One, Feb. 8

Language, by its very nature, is dynamic, reflecting changes in society. English is a perfect example.

Old English, used in much of present-day Britain before the year 1066, was based on West Germanic dialects with influences of Celtic and Old Norse. After the Norman conquest of Britain in 1066, many French loanwords infiltrated the language, when French became a sign of prestige.

Many of these words are related to food. Instead of eating an animal such as a "cow," one ate "boeuf," or beef. Sheep became "mouton," or mutton. About one-third of English words have French origin — revenue, religion, pardon, army, gown, taste and stomach are just several examples.

The South Korean government is fighting an uphill battle in trying to keep English loanwords from wide use. Language transforms. (See, I did it there!)

Wendy Prober-Cohen
Tarzana

No one elected Elon Musk

Re "The bigger, darker picture," letters, Feb. 9

I agree with the letter writer from South Dakota that Americans want our government to act in a fiscally responsible way. However, to bestow this task upon an unelected billionaire with no government experience is the antithesis of responsibility.

Fiscal policies begin with the president's proposed budget. Congress considers that budget, votes on legislation and appropriates money. The judicial branch can decide on the legality or constitutionality of policies.

Nowhere in the Constitution does it say that an unelected individual can arbitrarily seize control of numerous agencies and fire employees without cause.

If Musk, Trump and Republicans in Congress were truly concerned about the debt, the first action they would take would be to increase taxes on wealthy individuals. Democrats have been trying to do this, but Republicans have always blocked this fair and responsible policy because their ability to stay in office has depended on undertaxing the wealthy.

Maryanne Rose
Laguna Niguel

::

A letter writer says that what the unelected billionaire Musk is doing to the U.S. government is "common sense."

This conclusion takes my breath away because it implies that whatever the Trump government says it does for the common good is indeed for the common good. No questions. No analysis. No investigation. If the Trump administration says it is doing good, necessary stuff, then it must be.

That is a sure path to dictatorship. I pray that is not what the American people want.

Tom Brayton
Long Beach

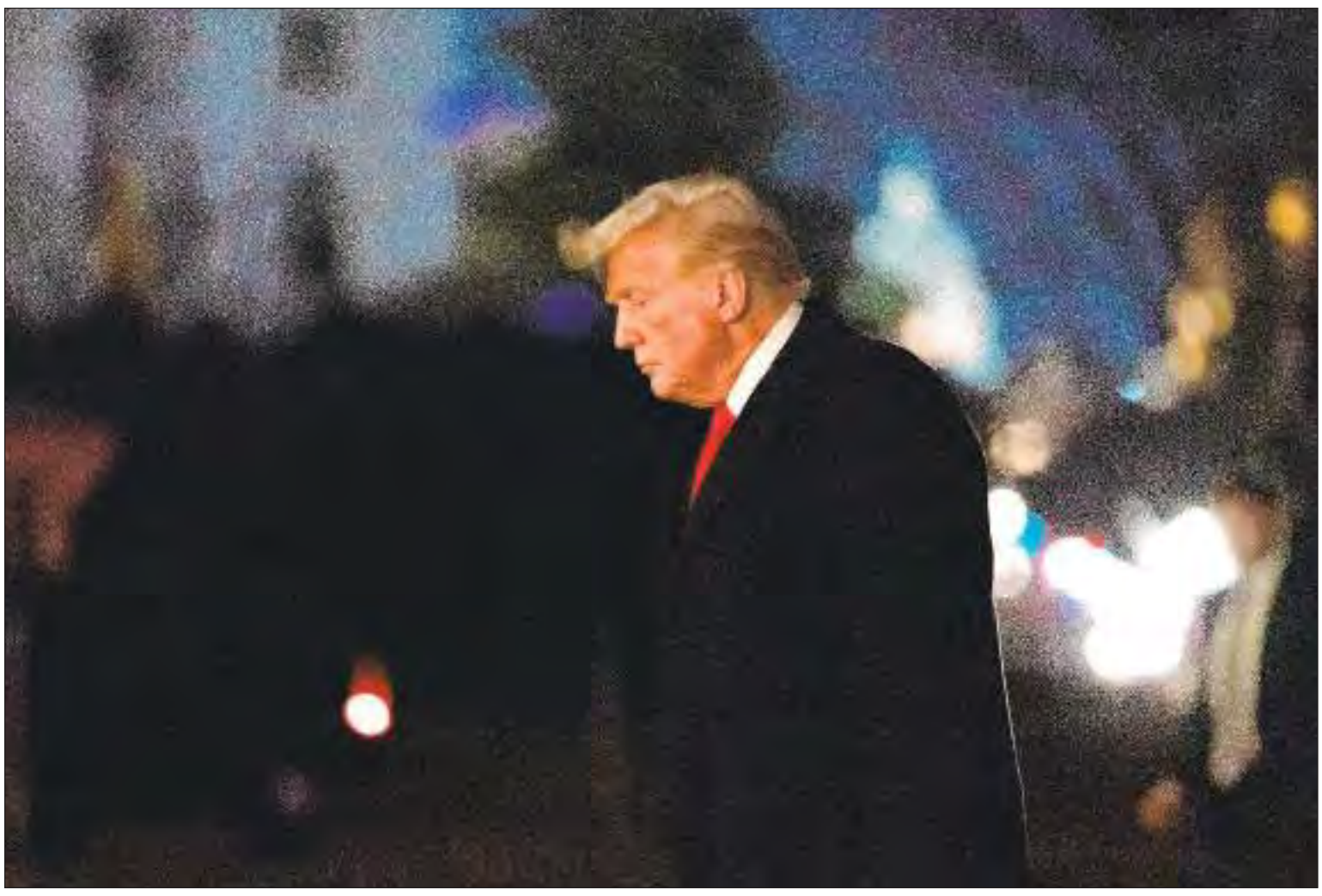
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ALLISON ROBBERT AFP via Getty Images

PRESIDENT TRUMP arrives at the White House on Sunday night, after a trip to New Orleans to catch part of the Super Bowl.

Love it or hate it, the president's zone-flooding can't go on forever

Arguments over Trump's opening gambits will eventually play themselves out in courts and Congress.

JONAH GOLDBERG

Whether you're feeling queasy or euphoric, or even a bit of both about the opening weeks of the second Trump presidency, my advice is to remember Stein's Law. Richard Nixon's former chief economic advisor, Herb Stein, declared: "If something cannot go on forever, it will stop."

I've found this to be a valuable, if obvious, insight for the stock market, unhappy teenagers and, of late, political junkies.

For those who follow such things closely, the sheer pace and audacity of Donald Trump's opening gambits have breathed new life into cliches such as "drinking from a firehose." The cadres of lawyers trying to impede both Elon Musk's DOGE and OMB Director Russell Vought look like someone trying to change a tire on a moving car.

It's especially difficult to make discerning judgments about the various efforts in a climate where Trump's most ardent fans seem to support all of it and Trump's foes oppose all of it. I have a variety of opinions on these zone-flooding efforts. One key distinction is between the policy and the process. I'd put some things in the bucket where I agree with both the policy and the process, including his executive order on trans athletes and school sports. Others, I may agree or disagree with the policy but the process looks illegal or unconstitutional. His executive order revoking birthright citizenship seems patently unconstitutional to me. Though I am decidedly ambivalent about the goal.

The Musk-led effort to dismantle government agencies from within contains all of these tensions, and the arguments over all of it will play out in the courts, and eventually, Congress.

And that's the key word: eventually. Because the pace and process of the last three weeks is unsustainable. My American Enterprise Institute colleague Yuval Levin makes a valuable point: Every new administration — with the notable exception of the first Trump presidency when Trump was effectively the dog that caught the car — controls the political agenda at the outset. As Levin notes, "They've made plans. And you don't know those plans, generally. They do, and they're rolling them out at a certain pace and in a certain way. And it just feels like they are in command of the world."

It's not just that they have plans. New presidents command maximal loyalty and enthusiasm from their own party and voters. The opposition party is demoralized, licking its wounds and second-guessing its mission and message. Press coverage tends to be maximal too because reporters are looking to cultivate sources in the new administration and that requires ample "beat-sweetening" coverage.

But eventually, whether you see this period as a glorious honeymoon or a dismaying horror show, this chapter ends. Outside events put the White House on defense. The plunge in the stock market over Trump's threat to impose tariffs on Canada and Mexico caused the White House to beat at least a temporary retreat.

To be sure, the debut of Trump 2.0 is an exaggeratedly steroidal replay of this dynamic, but it's the familiar dynamic all the same. Soon, Trump will have to get the narrowly GOP-controlled Congress to pass a budget, raise the debt ceiling and work on his legislative agenda. That will require Republicans to behave less like pundits and more like legislators. And the hostility Trump is earning from Democrats will make bipartisan legislation exceedingly difficult if not impossible. This drama will also cause the political spotlight to move down Pennsylvania Avenue in ways that will take Trump out of his comfort zone.

Meanwhile, the courts are already demonstrating the limits of presidential power. The legal system moves slowly, but it also moves according to its own imperatives. Many worry that Trump will refuse to show appropriate deference to the courts when they inevitably deliver political setbacks. If or when he refuses to comply in whole or in part, or even merely launches rhetorical attacks on the judiciary, it will change the political dynamic. If he overplays his hand, members of his coalition might break with him, financial markets panic and some voters surely will blanch. It's unlikely he'll attract new supporters in the process.

Trump obviously sees the presidency as a quasi-monarchical, "personalist" institution with sweeping powers. He is committed to testing that theory. But he is also more interested in the appearance of such authority than the reality of it. That's a check on his range of action as well. If overstepping makes him look weak, he might prefer to do less and continue to appear strong to his fans.

Regardless, the window of appearing unchecked and in command of the agenda will close sooner rather than later.

@JonahDispatch

Far-flung partners can help L.A. prevent fires, not just fight them

By Jonathan S. Blake and Joe Mathews

As Los Angeles burned, firefighters from near and far rushed to our city. Crews from all over California; from Texas, Oregon, Arizona, tribal reservations and Mexico and Canada (despite the U.S. tariff threats) joined the fight against the blazes. Even embattled Ukraine offered help.

This is mutual aid in action — a "spirit of cooperation," as the Los Angeles Fire Department declared in a November statement about the policy, to "ensure that no one jurisdiction faces a major emergency alone."

It's great that localities offer each other mutual aid during emergencies. But we shouldn't have to wait for a crisis to come together. Cities such as Los Angeles can and should help each other figure out how to mitigate the fires of the future, using new technology, policy, and prevention and suppression strategies.

Wildfires are an increasingly grave risk to cities around the world. Two major trends drive the threat: Climate change is making fires worse, and cities are growing, pushing more and more residents into what's called the wildland-urban interface, where people live next to combustible vegetation. The destruction we've witnessed in Pacific Palisades and Altadena will happen again; the only questions are when and where. The departing commissioner of Australia's largest firefighting service says Sydney could see fires very similar to those in L.A.

Every vulnerable city needs to prepare, and it's a daunting task. Getting ready for urban wildfire is not just about training, staffing and equipping fire departments. It also requires long-term, slow-moving changes in building codes and materials, urban planning, land use, housing density and more.

But luckily, no city has to go it alone. All the world's wildfire-prone cities, including Los Angeles, Lisbon, Cape Town, Athens, Jakarta and Melbourne, can share information, expertise and practices to learn from one another.

For example, Singapore's strict fire prevention laws, enforced by an active civil defense force, offer lessons in how to stop fires before they start. The Portland, Ore., utility uses AI modeling to determine where and when fires might break out and position fire equipment and personnel accordingly; Pittsburgh similarly employs predictive tech modeling.



CARLIN STIEHL For The Times

GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM greets firefighters from Mexico arriving in Los Angeles to combat the region's wildfires on Jan. 11. Others came from Texas, Oregon, Arizona, tribal lands and Canada.

After Canberra, Australia's capital, experienced deadly fires in 2003, the city implemented detailed fire prevention and response planning for individual pieces of land. It's also developing a model of "shared responsibility between the community and fire services" to reduce risk and prepare for fires, according to the chief of the Australian Capital Territory's Rural Fire Service. The Canberra model is replicable — and getting attention in L.A.

Promoting policy cooperation and coordination is a job for city networks, which, happily, are a trend in world politics. A 2021 study identified more than 100 transnational city networks, with a collective membership of 10,500 cities. Organized networks connect cities on many topics, such as economic inequality, participatory democracy and peace-building, and responding to climate change is one of the most prominent.

Climate-focused city networks can help municipal governments reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the local impact of planetary climate change. Learning to live with wildfires is an example of the latter, and many networks support municipal-level climate adaptation. For instance, the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group consists of 97 major world cities; according to the group's 2023 report, its members are home to approximately 600 million people and produce just under one-quarter of the global gross domestic product. It supports a number of risk-specific networks in which cities facing similar climate challenges exchange information and jointly develop solutions. C40 groups include the Connecting Delta Cities Network, Urban Flooding Network and Cool Cities Network, a hub for tackling urban heat, of which Los Angeles is a member.

What there isn't yet is a dedicated urban wildfire network to focus on best approaches and lessons learned among cities facing a high risk of wildfires. To be sure, there are transnational networks of relevant officials, such as the international associations of emergency managers, wildland fire management experts and fire chiefs, adding to the international mutual aid agreements that facilitate the deployment of first responders. Such groups are necessary — but not sufficient.

Addressing fire risk requires solutions that involve all of local government and aim to reduce our reliance on first responders. Urban planners, public works engineers, neighborhood groups, park managers and elected officials from wildfire-prone cities around the world should be in regular conversation. Together, they can support research and planning to produce novel fire strategies.

Los Angeles is particularly well-positioned to help lead translocal efforts. It is the only city in the U.S. with an official city diplomat, the deputy mayor for international affairs. Los Angeles has also been a leader in city networks; former Mayor Eric Garcetti was previously chair of C40.

L.A. is only now starting on a long road to recovery. The city may feel an understandable pull to turn inward. But it also has an opportunity to look outward and learn from others who have walked this road before. Just as we relied on other cities to help fight these fires, we must rely on other cities to recover in a way that prevents or at least minimizes the destruction of the next one.

JONATHAN S. BLAKE directs the Planetary Program at the Berggruen Institute and is co-author of "Children of a Modest Star: Planetary Thinking for an Age of Crises." JOE MATHEWS is a fellow in Berggruen's Renovating Democracy program.

Trump stance on holy site arrests draws suit

Christian and Jewish groups are challenging greater leeway for immigration agents.

By David Crary



Alan Youngblood Associated Press

FATIMA Guzman prays this month during a church service in Kissimmee, Fla. The lawsuit contends that the new policy on arrests at houses of worship is spreading fear of raids, thus lowering attendance at services.

More than two dozen Christian and Jewish groups representing millions of Americans — ranging from the Episcopal Church and the Union for Reform Judaism to the Mennonites and Unitarian Universalists — filed a federal court lawsuit Tuesday challenging a Trump administration move giving immigration agents more leeway to make arrests at houses of worship.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Washington, contends that the new policy is spreading fear of raids, thus lowering attendance at worship services and other valuable church programs. The result, says the suit, infringes the groups' religious freedom — namely their ability to minister to migrants, including those in the United States illegally.

"We have immigrants, refugees, people who are documented and undocumented," said the Most Rev. Sean Rowe, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church.

"We cannot worship freely if some of us are living in fear," he told the Associated Press. "By joining this lawsuit, we're seeking the ability to gather and fully practice our faith, to follow Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves."

The new lawsuit echoes and expands on some of the arguments made in a similar lawsuit filed Jan. 27 by five Quaker congregations and later joined by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and a Sikh temple. It is pending in U.S. District Court in Maryland.

There was no immediate Trump administration response to the new lawsuit, which names the Department of Homeland Security and its immigration enforcement agencies as defendants. However, a memorandum filed Friday by the Justice Department opposing the thrust of the Quaker lawsuit outlined arguments that may also apply to the new lawsuit.

In essence, the memo contended that the plaintiffs' request to block the new enforcement policy is based on speculation of hypothetical future harm — and thus is insufficient grounds for issuing an injunction.

The memo said that immigration enforcement affecting houses of worship had been permitted for decades, and that the new policy announced in January simply said that field agents — using "common sense" and "discretion" — could now conduct such operations without pre-approval from a supervisor.

One part of that memo might not apply to the new lawsuit, as it argued that the Quakers and their fellow plaintiffs have no basis for seeking a nationwide injunction against the revised enforcement policy.

The plaintiffs in the new lawsuit represent a vastly larger swath of American worshipers — including more than 1 million followers of Reform Judaism, the estimated 1.5 million Episcopalians in 6,700 congregations nationwide, nearly 1.1 million members of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and the estimated 1.5 million active members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church — the country's oldest predominantly Black denomination.

Among the other plaintiffs are the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), with more than 3,000 congregations; the Church of the Brethren, with more than 780 congregations; the Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas, encompassing about 1,100 Hispanic Baptist churches; the Friends General Conference, an association of regional Quaker organizations; the Mennonite Church USA, with about 50,000 members; the Unitarian Universalist Assn., with more than 1,000 congregations; the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, with more than 500 U.S. congregations; and regional branches of the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ.

"The massive scale of the suit will be hard for them to ignore," said Kelsi Corkran, a lawyer with the Georgetown University Law Center's Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection who is lead counsel for the lawsuit.

The plaintiffs joined the suit, she said, "because their scripture, teaching, and traditions offer irrefutable unanimity on their religious obligation to embrace and serve the refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants in their midst without regard to documentation or legal status."

Before the recent Trump administration change, Corkran said, immigration agents generally needed a judicial warrant or other special authorization to conduct operations at houses of worship and other "sensitive locations" such as schools and hospitals.

"Now it's go anywhere, anytime," she said. "Now they have broad authority to swoop in — they've made it very clear they'll get every undocumented person."

She cited a recent incident in which a Honduran man was arrested outside his family's Atlanta-area church while a service was being held inside.

The lawsuit includes details from some of the plaintiffs as to how their operations might be affected. The Union for Reform Judaism and the Mennonites, among others, said many of their synagogues and churches host on-site food banks, meal programs, homeless shelters and other support services for undocumented people who might now be fearful of participating.

One of the plaintiffs is the Latino Christian National Network, which seeks to bring together Latino leaders with different traditions and values to collaborate on pressing social issues. The network's president is the Rev. Carlos Malavé, a pastor of two Virginia churches, who described what network members areseeing.

"There is deep-seated fear and distrust of our government," he said. "People fear going to the store, they are avoiding going to church."

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which leads the nation's largest denomination, did not join the lawsuit, though it has criticized Trump's migration crackdown. On Tuesday, Pope Francis issued a rebuke of the deportation plan , warning that the forceful removal of people purely because of their illegal status deprives them of their inherent dignity and "will end badly."

Many conservative faith leaders and legal experts across the U.S. do not share concerns about the new arrest policy.

"Places of worship are for worship and are not sanctuaries for illegal activity or for harboring people engaged in illegal activity," said Mat Staver, founder of the conservative Christian legal organization Liberty Counsel.

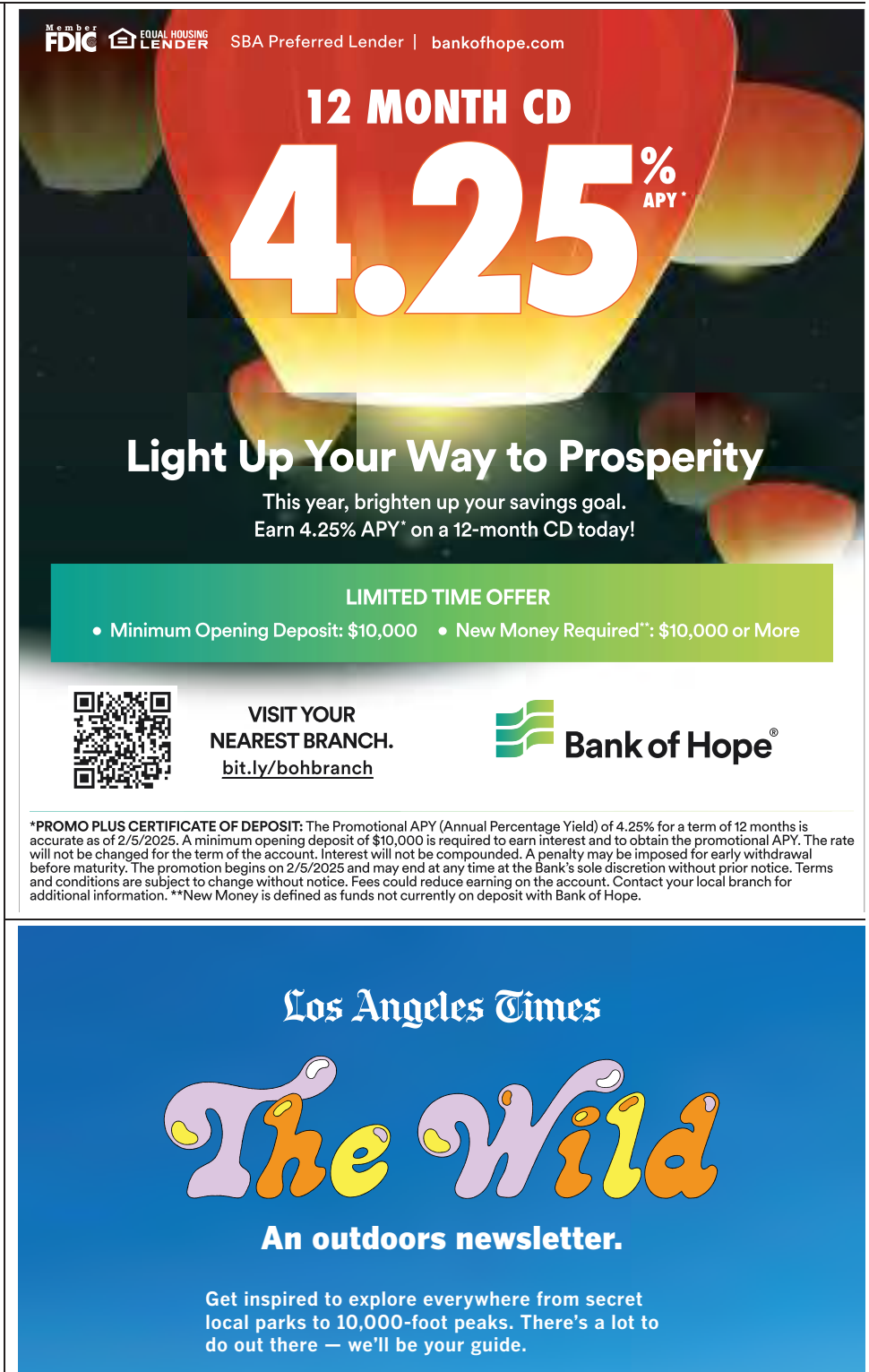
"Fugitives or criminals are not immune from the law merely because they enter a place of worship," he said via email. "This is not a matter of religious freedom."

Professor Cathleen Kaveny, who teaches in the theology department and law school at Boston College, questioned whether the plaintiffs would prevail with the religious freedom argument, but suggested the administration might be unwise to disregard a traditional view of houses of worship as places of sanctuary for vulnerable people.

"These buildings are different — almost like embassies," she said. "I think of churches as belonging to an eternal country."

Crary writes for the Associated Press.









Energy Vault

WATER TREES at full capacity are shown last year in Sardinia, Italy. An idea aims to use the storage system to help L.A.'s firefighters.

Could inflatable tanks have helped?

Some say an energy company's Water Trees could be a game-changing solution to create storage where needed to fight infernos like the Palisades and Eaton blazes

By Ian James

When wind-driven flames raged through Pacific Palisades, Marco Terruzzin and his family were not at home. They soon learned that the inferno had destroyed the two-story Spanish-style home they had moved into just one month earlier.

As Terruzzin followed the news of the catastrophic losses, he felt powerless and was struck by the accounts that firefighters had trouble getting water because many hydrants lost pressure and ran dry.

Then the Italian-born engineer had an idea: a technology he helped invent with colleagues at his energy company that he felt certain could have helped. This solution, he thought, would ensure there is plenty of water on hand in the right places to contain wildfires and keep hydrants flowing.



Genaro Molina Los Angeles Times

MARCO TERRUZZIN, an Energy Vault executive whose family lost its home in the Palisades fire, believes his company's water storage system would help firefighters faced with such blazes.

"This problem must be solved," Terruzzin said. "It's solvable."

The way to do that, Terruzzin believes, would be to repurpose a low-cost water-storage system that his company, Energy Vault, has in operation at a former coal mine in Sardinia, Italy. There, the system is used to store intermittent energy by pumping water uphill during the day, when solar power is plentiful, and letting water run downhill to generate power at night.

The water is stored in balloon-like inflatable tanks that the company calls Water Trees, which stand 39 feet tall and resemble giant onions, each contained in a du-

[See **Water,** B5]

Lawsuit filed over school funding for arts

Proposition 28 money meant for lessons in creativity has been misused, plaintiffs say.

By Howard Blume

Los Angeles Unified officials repeatedly violated Proposition 28 — a state law requiring the hiring of arts teachers — misusing millions in state funds and denying promised arts instruction to students across the school system, according to allegations in a lawsuit filed Monday.

The L.A. Superior Court suit was brought by former L.A. schools Supt. Austin Beutner, who is a plaintiff, along with eight students, represented by their guardians. Three school district labor unions on Monday announced their endorsement of the litigation.

Monday evening, an L.A. Unified spokesperson said the district had not been served with the suit.

"That said, we have sought to clarify any misunderstandings regarding Prop. 28 and we continue to follow implementation guidance as provided by the state of California to ensure that we are fully complying with the requirements of Prop. 28," the district said in a statement.

In earlier public comments, district officials have said they have properly used Proposition 28 money plus other funding sources to increase overall arts-related spending by more than the amount required by the voter-approved measure.

The lawsuit alleges that L.A. Unified provided a false certification to the state that Proposition 28 arts funding has been used properly, and that "LAUSD has defrauded the State of California and its taxpayers."

Proposition 28 was approved by a nearly two-thirds majority of voters in November 2022. It requires that a portion of California's general fund, equal to 1% of the minimum state funding levels for K-12 schools and community colleges, be added to education funding to expand visual and performing arts instruction.

This translated to $938 million statewide last year and about $77 million for L.A. Unified.

From the get-go, Beutner, who wrote and financed the proposition, was concerned that some school systems would use the new arts money to pay for existing arts programs — leaving students no better off than be-

[See **Arts,** B2]

State officials call for rules to protect renters in extreme heat



Genaro Molina Los Angeles Times

REQUIRING the installation of air conditioning or other cooling measures for all rentals has previously been fought by landlords and businesses as too costly.

Housing agency urges lawmakers to require that rentals can be cooled to 82 degrees.

By Molly Castle Work

Citing the hundreds of lives lost to extreme heat each year, California state housing officials are urging lawmakers to set residential cooling standards long opposed by landlords and builders who fear such a measure would force them to make big-ticket upgrades.

In a 60-page report sent to the Legislature last week, the California Department of Housing and Community Development recommended lawmakers set a maximum safe indoor air temperature of 82 degrees for the Golden State's estimated 14.6 million residential dwelling units.

"This is a big deal," said C.J. Gabbe, an associate professor of environmental studies at Santa Clara University. "We're seeing more and more concerns about the increase in heat-related morbidity and mortality in California, which is leading to these kinds of maximum indoor temperature guidelines."

If the housing proposal is adopted, California could have the most comprehensive requirements in the nation, Gabbe said.

Some jurisdictions, including Phoenix, Dallas and New Orleans, have set their own standards, and the city and county of Los Angeles are exploring their own protections.

Last year was the plan-

[See **Cooling rules,** B5]

Major storm is approaching; forecasters offer safety tips

By Rong-Gong Lin II and Hannah Fry

The strongest storm in a year is set to pound Southern California this week, with forecasters warning of potential widespread roadway flooding and the chance of landslides throughout the region — especially in areas recently charred in the devastating Los Angeles County firestorms.

The rain will be nothing like the relatively modest storms that have brought largely beneficial rain to Southern California the last two weeks. Forecasters suggest avoiding travel if possible Thursday.

"Thursday is just not a great day to be on the road," said Ryan Kittell, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Oxnard. "If nothing else, [expect] lots of slick roads, lots of traffic accidents. There will be some roadway flooding. Not all areas ... but certainly more than we've seen this winter so far."

The storm is expected to bring 1.5 to 3 inches of rain across much of Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, with 3 to 6 inches in the mountains, including around several burn scars.

The heaviest bands of rain are anticipated to arrive between 2 p.m. Thursday and 2 a.m. Friday, said Ariel Cohen, another National Weather Service meteorologist in Oxnard.

Those living in or around recently burned areas should plan to leave their homes before the storm or, if they choose to remain, hunker down and stay off the roads. The National Weather Service said the next few days could end up delivering the wettest storm of the entire winter.

Cohen urged the public to remain vigilant and pre-

[See **Storm,** B2]



Myung J. Chun Los Angeles Times

LIGHT RAIN falls on downtown Los Angeles last week. The incoming storm will be much stronger than those in the last two weeks, and forecasters warn of roadway flooding in the Southland and suggest avoiding travel if possible Thursday.

SPORTS ON THE BACK: It's a Luka lovefest as Doncic plays first game for Lakers. **B10**

LAUSD defends its use of funding for arts education

[**Arts,** from B1]
fore. For that reason, the law forbids maintaining the old funding levels with the new money.

Moreover, Proposition 28 states that the arts funding, which is generated by student enrollment, must go to the school in which those students are enrolled. Also, school leadership, such as the principal or a school committee, controls the use of the dollars.

"LAUSD has done exactly what the law prohibits," the lawsuit alleges. "It has eliminated existing funding sources for existing art teachers, and replaced those funds with Proposition 28 funds, thereby violating the requirement that the funds *supplement* rather than *supplant* existing sources."

The lawsuit lists 37 elementary schools with the same or reduced money for arts instruction from 2022-23 to 2023-24 and alleges that most L.A. Unified schools faced a similar funding situation.

"Presented with a historic opportunity" for a "meaningful expansion" of arts education, "LAUSD has squandered the opportunity and violated the law. As a consequence, hundreds of thousands of students have been harmed," according to the lawsuit.



JULIANA YAMADA Los Angeles Times

"AFTER we passed Prop. 28, I was really surprised that we weren't seeing an improvement in the arts across the board," says Vicky Martinez, standing at Franklin High School with her son, who she asked not be named.

District explains its use of the funds

In June, district officials quietly added $30 million to the elementary school arts budget for the 2024-25 school year amid ongoing accusations from Beutner, union leaders and parents scattered across L.A. Unified that the district was violating the law. They had become concerned when, despite the flow of new dollars, nothing appeared to have changed at their elementary schools during the 2023-24 school year, the first year that Prop. 28 funds became available.

Supt. Alberto Carvalho and Deputy Supt. Pedro Salcido said during a June school board meeting that adding $30 million to elementary arts funding for the current school year was not an admission of wrongdoing.

"We decided, considering the degree of confusion and because ultimately we believe in the benefit of arts education ... to create this additional fund," Carvalho said during the meeting. "Notwithstanding the letter of the law, we decided to lean on the intent, not just the letter, but the intent. How are people perceiving that? And we're paying a price for that. So ... $30 million is above and beyond full compliance with the letter of the law, leaning more towards what we believe is the understanding of individuals in schools."

Salcido added: "We want to make sure that as we move forward this is not a place of contention, controversy or questioning."

In interviews, on social media and in public meetings, critics continued to fault the district — for not restoring redirected funds from the prior school year. They also contend the added arts instruction for the current school year remains well short of what was required by Prop. 28, an allegation also made in the lawsuit.

The district has refused for more than a year to publicly release relevant budget documents to parents and to The Times that would clarify how the money intended for arts instruction was handled.

Board member Scott Schmerelson — who has since become board president — aired some of the concerns at public meetings. Carvalho partly addressed them in an Aug. 15 internal memo.

In that memo, which was cited in the lawsuit, L.A. Unified officials acknowledged to the Board of Education that they had used new arts money, for example, to replace existing funding for 167 out of 227 elementary arts instructors during the 2023-24 school year.

Meanwhile, money that had been used for arts was redirected for other purposes, which were not described in the memo.

"Given historic staffing challenges in filling Arts educator roles ... the District prioritized the use of Prop. 28 funds to cover existing staff as well as hire new staff," the memo stated.

District officials said in the memo that their actions were legal because overall district spending on the arts increased in an amount surpassing what was provided by Prop. 28.

In response to questions from The Times, the state education department agreed with L.A. Unified on this point — that to determine compliance with Prop. 28 rules, district arts spending is measured at the district level and not the school level.

L.A. Unified supported their claim of overall increased arts expenditures, in large part citing higher spending for field trips funded through a different source.

With this different funding source added in, the district states in the memo that arts staffing increased from 273 to 520 full-time equivalent positions from 2022-23 to 2023-24 and that arts-related spending increased from $74.7 million to $206.2 million over that same period.

These figures are challenging to assess because of internal inconsistencies and incomplete information.

As one example, the August memo said there were five high school arts teachers in 2022-23. The following year, the number grew to 126 thanks to Prop. 28 and other funding, the memo said. The school system has 86 senior high schools.

However, in written responses to questions from The Times, the district said there were 918 high school arts teachers in 2022-23, not five.

To further justify the Prop. 28 funding shifts, a district spokesperson, in written responses to queries from The Times, stated that L.A. Unified relied on an auditing guide from the California Department of Education, which allowed for districtwide tabulation of arts spending.

The lawsuit contends that the auditing instructions do not outweigh all other factors. "This does not give defendants the right to violate every other portion of the statute's plain-language requirements," the suit alleges.

Education officials haven't taken sides

State education officials, including state Supt. of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, have avoided taking sides in the dispute and advised districts to consult their own attorneys as needed.

Even so, "it is unlikely that the use of arts funding for field trips unrelated to the arts would be an appropriate use of funds," said department spokesperson Elizabeth Sanders.

Sanders added: "We don't know one way or another if LAUSD is operating within the audit guidelines when it comes to their use of Prop. 28 funds."

The field trips have been organized under a program called Cultural Arts Passport, or CAP. Field trips were apparently tabulated as arts spending, including trips to amusement parks, professional sporting events, game shows, the zoo, recreation areas and activities such as indoor sky diving, according to the lawsuit and internal L.A. Unified records.

These CAP field trips are paid for from a different state-funding source, the state-funded Expanded Learning Opportunities Program, the school district has confirmed to The Times.

"Defendant Carvalho has repeatedly used CAP to attempt a cover-up: by incorrectly including funding for CAP in its calculations of how much funding was spent on arts education," the lawsuit alleges.

At a June meeting, Chief Academic Officer Frances Baez defended the classification of all field trips as arts instruction, saying, in part, that "Arts lives everywhere."

Proposition 28 states that 80% of funding must pay for the salaries and benefits of either new arts teachers or arts teachers working additional hours. The remaining 20% is to pay for costs related to this instruction.

Field trips could fall under that 20% — although that 20% also should cover such needs as art supplies, musical instruments and arts teacher training, state officials and other experts told The Times.

A lot of money and jobs are at stake

The unions endorsing the litigation are United Teachers Los Angeles, Local 99 of Service Employees International Union, which represents most non-teaching workers, and Teamsters Local 572, which represents drivers, plant managers, cafeteria managers and some other workers. UTLA or Local 99 would represent the vast majority of the new arts instructors who would be hired.

UTLA President Cecily Myart-Cruz emphasized the benefits of arts education and the importance of honoring the intent of the law.

"I am frustrated and exasperated by this kind of shell game that we're playing with voters' money, and we're also playing with students, our babies, in this district, that deserve to have arts education on a daily basis in their schools," Myart-Cruz said.

Highland Park parent Vicky Martinez, a plaintiff in the suit, said she actively campaigned for Prop. 28 but became frustrated when she saw no discernible increase in arts education at the schools her three children attend — and no satisfactory answers to questions raised by her and other parents.

When she had attended public school, "I had the honor of having art. I was able to take dance," Martinez said. The arts made school engaging and "I knew that if I wanted to continue to do these things, I had to be in school, and I had to do good in school."

"So when my kids went to the same school I attended, I thought, if I had it, surely they have to have it. And lo and behold, that wasn't the case," Martinez said. "So after we passed Prop. 28, I was really surprised that we weren't seeing an improvement in the arts across the board. It's very important to me and ... to the kids in my community."

Major storm is coming; forecasters warn of debris flows in burn areas

[**Storm,** from B1]
pare ahead of the rain's arrival given the destructive nature of debris flows, a type of landslide in which water rapidly flows downhill, moving as fast as 35 mph and picking up not only mud but also rocks, branches and sometimes even boulders and cars.

Large debris flows can result in "raging torrents of rockslides and mudslides that can be damaging and even deadly," Cohen said. Forecasters have estimated a 50% to 70% chance of debris flows in the region.

"With so many burn scars across the area and the rain having the character more of a bursting type of pattern, we're looking at very intense rainfall rates to bring the potential for significant debris flows," Cohen said.

Even if significant debris flows don't happen, there may be street closures around the burn scars and roads that still end up caked in mud.

Since a fire tore through Pacific Palisades last month, killing a dozen people and scorching more than 23,000 acres, workers have installed more than 7,500 feet of concrete barriers, more than 6,500 sandbags and other erosion control mechanisms across the area. Crews have also cleared catch basins and storm drains in preparation for the wet weather, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said during a news conference Tuesday.

"Our city departments are on high alert," she said, adding that the Fire Department will pre-deploy resources and the Bureau of Sanitation has readied trucks, generators and other equipment.

"Just to emphasize, of course, we're concerned about the Palisades and the burn areas, but this is for all of Los Angeles to be concerned about the rain and the impacts," Bass said.

The Palisades fire burn scar could see 3.35 inches of rain between Wednesday and Friday.

The Eaton fire burn zone could see 4.53 inches during the same period.

The Bridge fire burn scar in the San Gabriel Mountains could receive nearly 5 inches, according to the weather service.

The last time Los Angeles saw more rain was about a year ago when 8.51 inches pelted downtown over a three-day period. That storm triggered damaging mudflows in Beverly Glen, Studio City, Tarzana, Baldwin Hills and Hacienda Heights.

A flood watch or flash flood watch is expected to be in effect for much of Southern California and the Sierra foothills east of the San Joaquin Valley.

On Tuesday, Santa Barbara County issued an evacuation warning for the area in and around the burn zone of the Lake fire, which scorched more than 38,000 acres in Los Padres National Forest in 2024.

This storm is arriving through an atmospheric river. Atmospheric river storms are long plumes of water vapor that can pour over from the Pacific Ocean into California. They carry so much water that they're said to be like a river in the sky. Just a few atmospheric river events can bring California from one-third to one-half of its annual precipitation.

Timing

Heavy rain is expected in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties Thursday and in Los Angeles and Ventura counties from Thursday afternoon through Friday morning.

In the Inland Empire and San Diego and Orange counties, the heaviest rain is expected Thursday afternoon and evening. The storm isn't expected to be as potent there, but it's "still a significant event for this winter," said Adam Roser, a meteorologist with the weather service's San Diego office.

Thursday is also shaping up to be the strongest day of the storm in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Sierra Nevada.

Shallow landslides are likely, large river flooding and localized flash flooding are possible, and urban and small stream flooding is expected in the Bay Area, as well as Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, according to the weather service office in Monterey.

Rainfall amounts

Lancaster could get 1.12 inches of rain; Redondo Beach, 2.04 inches; downtown L.A., 2.09 inches; Long Beach, 2.22 inches; Thousand Oaks, 2.19 inches; Canoga Park, 2.32 inches; Santa Clarita, 2.38 inches; Covina, 3.07 inches; Santa Barbara, 3.02 inches; San Luis Obispo, 3.82 inches; and Cambria, 4.88 inches.

Getting about 2 inches of rain in a single storm is not particularly unusual for downtown L.A., but such a storm can cause problems including localized flooding.

"That is the way it tends to go in Southern California: We don't have all that many storms with just light rain. We tend to have more of an 'It rains, it pours' scenario here," said Rose Schoenfeld, a weather service meteorologist.

During the lighter round of rain expected Wednesday, Riverside could get up to three-tenths of an inch; Anaheim and Irvine, up to two-fifths of an inch; Ontario, Lake Elsinore and San Clemente, up to half an inch; and San Diego, Escondido and Oceanside, up to seven-tenths of an inch.

For the heavier rain expected Thursday through Friday, San Diego and Escondido could get 1 to 1.5 inches of rain; Anaheim, Irvine, San Clemente, Riverside, Lake Elsinore and Oceanside, 1.5 to 2 inches; and San Bernardino, Ontario and Temecula, 2 to 2.5 inches.

Although it's not routine for places such as Orange County to get 1.5 to 2 inches of rain in a single storm, Roser said, "it definitely happens in winter storms like these."

Farther north, San José, Concord and Livermore could get 1.5 to 2 inches of rain; San Francisco, Napa, Monterey and Santa Rosa, 2 to 3 inches; and Big Sur, 4 to 6 inches.

Bakersfield could receive 0.73 to 1.67 inches of rain; Fresno, 0.82 to 1.78 inches; and Merced, 0.6 to 1.36 inches. The Sacramento Valley has a 50% to 80% chance of receiving 1 inch or more of rain over a two-day period; the neighboring Sierra foothills and Shasta County have a 50% to 85% chance of 2 inches or more.

Burn areas on alert

Southern California has endured one of its driest starts to the rainy season in recorded history and one of the most destructive fire seasons ever. As a result, there are many burned areas now on high alert for potential landslides, given that vegetation has burned away and can no longer hold soil in place.

Experts say the risk of mud and debris sliding off burned hillsides rises once rain starts falling at a rate of half an inch per hour. That could happen this week, as rainfall rates are expected to peak between half an inch and 1 inch per hour in Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

The weather service forecasts a 10% to 20% chance of thunderstorms Thursday, which can result in higher rain rates.

"We do expect quite a few enhanced cells" of precipitation, Kittell said, with "some of them maybe even organizing into some very narrow bands of fairly intense rainfall."

A flood watch will be in effect for recent burn scars, likely from midday Thursday through Friday morning.

Most concerning are the Eaton fire scar in the Altadena area, the Palisades and Franklin fire scars in Pacific Palisades and Malibu, and the Bridge fire scar in the San Gabriel Mountains west and southwest of Wrightwood.

Residents of burn areas who have returned to their homes may want to consider relocating temporarily, Kittell said.

"If you have an option to go somewhere else, that's great," the meteorologist said, "especially on Thursday."

Otherwise, he advised, avoid leaving and try not to drive in recently burned areas through Thursday.

In San Diego and Orange counties and the Inland Empire, rain may fall at rates of more than half an inch per hour Thursday in higher-elevation areas.

Flood risk

Expect roadway flooding, including on freeways, as well as at onramps and offramps. A few roads could be closed due to floods, and creeks and rivers will swell and strengthen. Swiftwater rescues could be necessary if people become trapped by rising water in rivers and other waterways.

There's a moderate risk for small-stream flooding in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. The highest risk in San Luis Obispo County is near Cambria and other communities downslope of the Santa Lucia Range, the mountains that tower over the coast.

Strong winds

The storm is also expected to bring the strongest winds from a rainstorm this winter, with peak gusts of 40 to 60 mph in the mountains, deserts and Central Coast and 20 to 40 mph elsewhere.

Downtown L.A. and Santa Barbara could see peak gusts of 23 mph; Long Beach, 26 mph; Redondo Beach, 30 mph; Santa Clarita and Canoga Park, 32 mph; Thousand Oaks, 35 mph; Pyramid Lake, 37 mph; San Luis Obispo, 44 mph; and Lancaster, 52 mph.

Strong winds could down trees and power lines, causing electrical outages.

Winds are expected out of the east at Los Angeles International Airport, which could alter flight patterns and cause delays.

There is also a very low risk of water spouts and tornadoes, Kittell said.

The storm probably will move out of the region sometime Friday — kicking off what could be a bit of a dry spell.

No significant rain is expected in Southern California through next week and possibly for the rest of February, Kittell said.



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

SAFETY CHECK

A spray-painted note on a car destroyed by the Eaton fire in Altadena identifies it as a non-electric vehicle. Precautions need to be taken with the batteries in electric cars during the cleanup phase.

Kanye West was abusive to worker, lawsuit alleges

Jewish employee's suit says he told her he was a Nazi, fired her after she complained.

BY JAMES QUEALLY

Kanye West told a Jewish employee that he was a Nazi, compared himself to Adolf Hitler and fired her the day after she complained about his behavior, according to a lawsuit filed Tuesday in Los Angeles.

West — who now goes by Ye and made similar remarks during a hate-fueled series of posts on X last week before deactivating his account Monday — also repeatedly called the employee "ugly as f—" and a "b—" before daring her to sue him, according to the 33-page complaint.

The suit seeks monetary damages and accuses West of discrimination, retaliation, creating a hostile work environment and breach of contract. The plaintiff filed the suit anonymously to protect herself, given West's celebrity and status, according to her attorney, Carney Shegerian.

Emails to West and his attorneys seeking comment were not immediately returned Tuesday.

Two days before the suit was filed, West appeared in an awkward Super Bowl advertisement in which he filmed himself rambling on a cellphone in a dentist's chair while text appeared urging viewers to go to Yeezy.com. The website, which appeared to have been taken down Tuesday morning, was a blank page with the exception of a white T-shirt with a black swastika on it, labeled "HH-01," which could be purchased for about $20.

In the years since his divorce from Kim Kardashian, West has spiraled from a perch as one of the most influential voices in fashion and hip-hop to a walking controversy dropped by his managers and record label after he engaged in erratic behavior that included courting attention from conspiracy theorists and far-right figures.

Since 2022, West has praised Hitler in an interview with Alex Jones, threatened to go "death con 3 On JEWISH PEOPLE," promoted antisemitic stereotypes including the idea that Jews control the music industry, and cuddled up to extreme personalities such as white nationalist and Holocaust denier Nick Fuentes.

The woman who filed suit said she was hired as a marketing specialist for West's Los Angeles-based fashion and media brand, Yeezy, in 2023 and "quickly found success within her new role, landing Ye favorable business opportunities for his music, shoes and technology," according to the lawsuit.

In January 2024, she suggested West issue a statement condemning Nazism following criticism that the cover of his album "Vultures 1," a collaboration with Ty Dolla Sign, used a font style and artwork that has been appropriated by Nazis and white supremacist metal bands, according to the lawsuit.

"I Am A Nazi," West wrote in reply, according to the lawsuit.

In another incident, the lawsuit alleges, in June, West criticized several Jewish employees over text message, complaining about how much money they made, before adding, "welcome to the first day of working for Hitler."

The civil suit contains screenshots of text messages from two numbers, listed as "Kanye West" and "Ye Private," but it does not corroborate that either number belongs to the artist. Shegerian said it would be "simple to show at trial" that West "communicated directly" with multiple employees from the phone numbers.

The day after the woman made complaints about West's behavior, she was fired.

West's newest album, "Bully," is set to debut in June.



ALLEN J. SCHABEN L.A. Times

KANYE WEST at the Grammy Awards this month in Los Angeles.

Huntington Beach's city attorney joins Trump's Justice Department

BY FAITH E. PINHO

WASHINGTON — Michael Gates, Huntington Beach's city attorney for the last decade and tireless antagonist of the state's liberal politics, has joined the U.S. Department of Justice's civil rights division, he said in a statement Monday.

"I am profoundly humbled and honored for this opportunity to serve the American people at a time like this — to advance President Trump's 'America First' agenda, fight to restore law and order throughout the country, and fight to restore faith in the Nation's justice system," Gates said in a statement announcing his departure and his new position as a deputy assistant attorney general.

Gates, 49, joins the Justice Department under U.S. Atty. Gen. Pam Bondi, who was confirmed by the Senate last week. Bondi, a close ally of Trump, promised to bring reforms to the department, which investigated the president during the Biden administration. She has also indicated that securing election systems and fighting sanctuary cities would be a priority.



ALLEN J. SCHABEN L.A. Times

MICHAEL GATES, seen in 2022, will be in the Justice Department's civil rights division.

"The voters put Trump in office to restore a lot of what has been damaged across the country," Gates said in an interview Monday, adding that he has been an "unapologetic supporter" of the president since 2015. "I'm glad to take a role as being a part of that restoration — that we need to put America back to where it was ... a nation of laws."

Gates gained attention in Orange County as an aggressive litigator on behalf of Huntington Beach, frequently picking legal battles with the state's Democratic leaders.

Most recently, the city sued California over the state's sanctuary law, which the first Trump administration also fought, alleging that it is unconstitutional.

Some of Gates' lawsuits rested on Huntington Beach's status as a charter city, which grants localities power to trump state laws when dealing with municipal affairs. Gates argued in a case fighting California's housing requirements that as a charter city, Huntington Beach could escape state laws it deemed overreaching.

"I believe that Huntington Beach will continue to play a pivotal role in restoring the State of California," Gates said in a statement. "So many other cities in California now look to Huntington Beach for leadership. As I have told so many in recent years, Huntington Beach really is the 'land of the free and home of the brave' here in California."

At the forefront of frequent fights against California, Gates and Huntington Beach quickly became legal foils for leaders such as Gov. Gavin Newsom and California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta.

The state sued Huntington Beach over the city's voter-backed Measure A, which allows officials to ask voters for ID before they can cast ballots. The courts dismissed the case, but the state appealed last month and Newsom signed SB 1174 to counter the measure, prohibiting election officials from requiring ID.

"I'm looking forward to rolling up my sleeves and diving in and helping out," he said. "When we bring — at least in our department — order back, things will calm down."

Gates, a lifelong Republican working in a largely conservative city, graduated from Pepperdine University and Chapman University's law school. He grew up in Huntington Beach, where he wrestled and played football in high school.

Gates was the subject of a lawsuit by former employees who alleged that he discriminated against older and disabled attorneys. The case was settled, and one of the employees, Scott Field, lost an election to Gates in 2022.

In his resignation announcement, Gates recommended that Huntington Beach replace him with Chief Asst. City Atty. Mike Vigliotta.

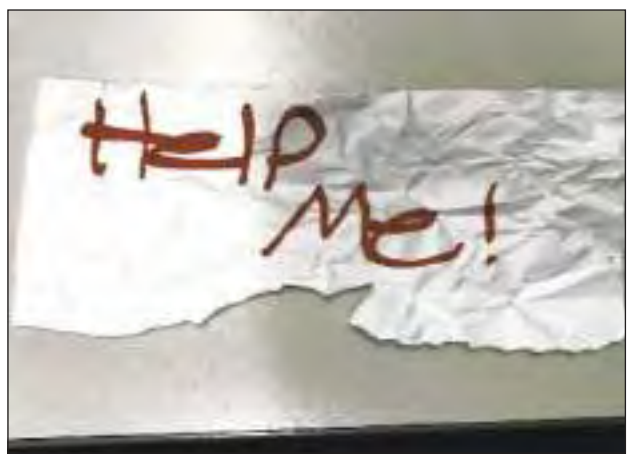
Kidnapper of 13-year-old to serve 35 years

BY SUMMER LIN

A Texas man was sentenced to 35 years in federal prison for kidnapping a 13-year-old girl in San Antonio, driving her to California, threatening her with a firearm and sexually assaulting her before he was arrested in Long Beach, according to authorities.

Her rescue from her captor, now 63, took place July 9, 2023, outside a laundromat on East 10th Street in Long Beach.

The girl scrawled the words "Help Me!" in red pen on a ripped piece of paper as she sat in a silver Nissan Sentra, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California. Someone passing by saw the plea for help and called police, officials said. When officers arrived, she mouthed the word "help" and they removed her from the car.



U.S. Department of Justice

A PLEA for help written by a 13-year-old girl led to her rescue outside a Long Beach laundromat. Her captor has been in federal custody since July 2023.

Steven Robert Sablan, of Cleburne, Texas, pleaded guilty in January 2024 to kidnapping. He has been in federal custody since the incident, authorities said. He also was ordered to pay $1,158 in restitution.

"The 35-year sentence imposed ensures this defendant will not have the opportunity to victimize children," said Acting U.S. Atty. Joseph T. McNally in a news release. "There is nothing as important as protecting our young people. I commend our federal and local law enforcement partners for their efforts to secure justice here."

Sablan said that he abducted the victim — who told him that she was 13 years old — in San Antonio and drove her to Long Beach, using a firearm to keep her under control, according to the release.

The girl was sexually assaulted during the journey to California.

"[Sablan] violently abducted a child and repeatedly sexually assaulted her while driving her thousands of miles from her home," prosecutors said in a sentencing memorandum. "And while [Sablan] spent days abusing her for his own pleasure, her parents agonized over their missing child, fearing the worst. The worst was not far from reality."

Battered homeless woman found dead on Santa Monica Beach

Body was discovered Monday in a sleeping bag. Police suspect the death was homicide.

BY CLARA HARTER

Police are investigating the death of a woman experiencing homelessness as a possible homicide after her injured body was discovered close to the ocean on Santa Monica Beach, authorities said.

Beach maintenance personnel with the city reported the discovery of an unresponsive person near Lifeguard Tower 1550 in the 1500 block of the beach early Monday, according to the Santa Monica Police Department.

Police responded about 7 a.m. and found the woman in a sleeping bag with visible trauma to her face, police said.

Santa Monica Fire Department personnel pronounced her dead at the scene.

The victim's identity has not been determined; authorities believe she was about 30 years old. The circumstances around her death remain under investigation, police said.

Anyone with information related to this incident is asked to contact Det. Peter Zamfirov at *Peter.Zamfirov@santamonica.gov*, Sgt. Alfonso Lozano at *Alfonso.Lozano@santamonica.gov* or the watch commander at (310) 458-8427.

San Bernardino jolted by three magnitude 3 or above quakes in a day

One at 9:44 a.m. and one about 12 hours later bookend the series of temblors.

BY RUBEN VIVES

After a pair of small earthquakes shook San Bernardino on Monday morning, the city was jolted by another earthquake just before 10 p.m., according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

It was the second magnitude 3.5 earthquake of the day.

The first occurred at 9:44 a.m. less than a mile from San Bernardino and was followed by a magnitude 3.0 earthquake four minutes later, the USGS reported.

The Monday night earthquake struck at 9:58 p.m. in San Bernardino, two miles from Highland and three miles from Lake Arrowhead, the agency said. It occurred at a depth of 5.1 miles.

The earlier temblors occurred in the same area.

The initial quake occurred at a depth of 4.7 miles near Harrison Canyon Road and the second at a depth of 4.5 miles near David Way North in San Bernardino. A spokesperson for the USGS could not immediately be reached for comment.

Residents of San Bernardino reported feeling light shaking during the third quake. Surrounding communities including Ontario and Riverside reported weak shaking.

When the morning earthquakes struck, Dorothy Chen-Maynard, a nutritional science expert who also teaches at Cal State San Bernardino, was in the middle of a lecture about metabolism with future dietitians.

"Initially it felt like a jolt, then a bit of a rumble," she said. "The first [quake] was a little stronger than the second one."

Chen-Maynard was surprised to learn that the epicenter of the second quake was just a street over from her house.

"I hope my home is OK," she said. "I'll find out later in the day."

She said that after the quakes, the lecture on metabolism switched to a discussion about earthquake preparedness and safety.

In the last 10 days, there have been no earthquakes of magnitude 3.0 or greater centered nearby.

An average of 234 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3.0 and 4.0 occur per year in California and Nevada, according to a recent three-year data sample.

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Los Angeles Times

LEGAL NOTICES 1300

Bids Wanted

NOTICE OF PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS
Notice is hereby given that proposals will be accepted by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765 for the following: **PA2025-02**Lower Emission School Bus Program (LESBP) Closing Date: 4/18/25 3:00 PM Contact: Kristina Voorhees 909-396-2440 Yuh Jiun Tan 909-396-2463 The PA may be obtained through the Internet at: http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/grants-bids If you have questions or would like a copy of the PA mailed to you, call the contact person. It is the policy of the South Coast AQMD to ensure that all businesses including minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, disabled veteran-owned businesses and small businesses have a fair and equitable opportunity to compete for and participate in South Coast AQMD contracts. **South Coast AQMD Procurement Unit**
2/12, 2/19/25
CNS-3894987#

Legal Notices

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) TO PROVIDE SECURITY GUARD SERVICES FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION DEPARTMENT

For details see **February 9, 2025** ad County of Los Angeles Probation Department.
CN113905 Feb 10,12, 2025

Name Change

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR A CHANGE OF NAME
CASE NO. 25VECP00046
Petitioner or Attorney (name, state, bar, and address):

Name Change

Joseph Ksander
14553 Tiara St, Sherman Oaks CA 91411
TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED:
Petitioner Joseph Ksander filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
Present Name
Zora Nairy Ksander
Proposed Name
Zora Nairy Hacopian Ksander
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING
DATE: 03/21/2025
TIME: 8:30 am
DEPT: B
ROOM: 530
The address of the court is: SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA County of Los Angeles 6230 Sylmar Ave, Van Nuys CA 91401 A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county.
Dated: 01/31/2025
P. Diaz
Deputy
Published in the Los Angeles Times 02/05/25, 02/12/25, 02/19/25, 02/26/25

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EMPLOYMENT 1500

Employment

Assistant Fashion Designer: f/t; women's clothing; $46696/yr; Mail Resume: Dress Forum Inc 3812 S Grand Ave Los Angeles CA 90037

HG Plus Consulting Inc seeks a Marketing Research Analyst to strengthen marketing data & recruiting. Requirement: Master's in Economics/Marketing. Address: 1609 W Valley Blvd. #300, Alhambra, CA 91803. Contact: info@hgplus.com.

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Legal Notices

SUMMONS
(CITACION JUDICIAL)
Case Number (Numero del Caso): 24STCV09280

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:
(AVISO AL DEMANDADO):
GIORGIO PASCAL DILORI, an individual

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:
(LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):
T-BOYS PROPERTIES, LLC, a California limited liability company; 17K MUSKRAT 1, INC., a California corporation; and VASKEN TATARIAN, an individual

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of $10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 dias, la corte puede decider en su contra sin escuchar su version. Lea la informacion a continuacion.

Tiene 30 DIAS DE CALENDARIO despues de que le entreguen esta citacion y papeles legales para presenter una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefonica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y mas informacion en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede mas cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentacion, pida al secretario de la corte que le de un formulario de exencion de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podra quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin mas advertencia.

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es):
Los Angeles County Superior Court, Stanley Mosk Courthouse
111 N. Hill St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):
Aaron J. Malo, Esq., SHEPPARD, MULLIN, RICHTER & HAMPTON LLP
650 Town Center Drive, 10th Floor
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
(714) 513-5100

Date: (Fecha) 09/13/2024
David W. Slayton Clerk (Secretario)
D. Kim Deputy (Adjunto)

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Legal Notices

LEGAL NOTICE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Court-appointed Receiver for the estate of Direct Lending Investments, LLC, Direct Lending Income Fund, L.P., ("DLIF"), Direct Lending Income Feeder Fund, Ltd., ("DLIFF"), DLI Capital, Inc., DLI Lending Agent, LLC, DLI Assets Bravo LLC (in Receivership) (collectively "DLI Receivership Entities"), the Joint Official Liquidators of Direct Lending Income Feeder Fund, Ltd. (in official liquidation) (together with DLI Receivership Entities "DLI Entities"), and the Party Investors of the DLI Entities (collectively "Claimants") have reached an agreement to settle all claims asserted or that could have been asserted against certain directors and officers of the DLI Entities ("D&Os") by Claimants or any DLIF Investor (that does not exclude itself from the Settlement ("Participating DLIF Investors"), that are based upon, related to, or in connection with the professional services provided by the D&Os to the DLI Entities, among other Released Claims (the "Settlement Agreement"). All capitalized terms not defined in this notice are defined in the Settlement Agreement.

Pursuant to the Settlement Agreement, the D&O Policy Insurers will pay the amount of $18,000,000 ("Settlement Amount") to be deposited into escrow account(s) for DLIF Investors, DLIFF, and Party Investors, from which will be paid a reserve of $1,200,000 for the sole benefit of the Ross Parties, a reserve of $500,000 for the sole benefit of the D&Os other than Ross, $2,000,000 to the Receiver for DLIF Investors and DLIFF, Court approved attorneys' fees which have been requested by counsel for the Receiver and Party Investors of up to 30% or $5,400,000, and $8.9 million (the "Net Settlement Amount") to be distributed to the Receiver for DLIFF and Participating DLIF Investors and to the Party Investors.

As part of the Settlement Agreement, the Receiver has requested entry of a final order approving the Settlement Agreement from the United States District Court, Central District of California, Securities and Exchange Commission v. Direct Lending Investments, LLC, Case No. 19-cv-2188 ("SEC Action").

If the Court in the SEC Action approves the Settlement Agreement, Claimants and Participating DLIF Investors will be eligible to receive their portion of the Net Settlement Amount as determined by the distribution method approved by the Court in the SEC Action. A separate portion of the Net Settlement Amount will be distributed by the JOLs of DLIFF in accordance with Cayman Islands law.

Investors have the right to exclude themselves from the Settlement Agreement pursuant to the procedures described in the notices to be sent to Investors ("Opt-out Notices"). The deadline to opt-out is March 31, 2025.

Claimants and Participating DLIF Investors will release any claim or cause of action of every nature and description against the Released Parties whether arising under federal, state, statutory, regulatory, common, foreign, or other law, based upon, arising out of, or related in any way to (a) professional services provided to the DLI Entities by the D&Os; (b) the conduct, transactions, or occurrences set forth in any of the pleadings in the Underlying Litigations, or that could have been brought in or which arise out of or relate in any way to the institution, prosecution, or settlement of any of the Underlying Litigations; and (c) the conduct and subject matter of the Mediations between the Parties, the Settlement negotiations, and the negotiation of the Settlement Agreement. Claimants and Participating Investors will be barred from pursuing a lawsuit or seeking monetary or other relief against the D&Os in the United States related in any way to the Released Claims.

Additionally, Claimants and Participating DLIF Investors agree, and by order of the Court in the SEC Action will be required to, reduce the amount of any final verdict or judgment they obtain against any Third Party by an amount that corresponds to the percentage of responsibility of the Released Parties for damages. However, where the law governing such final verdict or judgment ("Other Governing Law") requires a reduction in a different amount, the final verdict or judgment shall be reduced by an amount as provided by Other Governing Law.

If a DLIF Investor excludes itself, that Investor will not be entitled to receive any portion of the Settlement Amount but keeps any right to sue or continue to sue the D&Os on claims related in any way to the Released Claims. If a DLIFF Investor excludes itself, that Investor will retain any claims it may have against the D&Os and any rights it has to share in the distribution proceeds as determined under Cayman Islands law. Specific information regarding these rights and options, and how to exercise them, is provided in the applicable Opt-out Notices.

The Court in the SEC Action will hold a hearing to consider whether to approve the Settlement Agreements and enter the Final Approval Orders at 1:30 p.m. on April 14, 2025, in Courtroom 7D of the United States District Court for the Central District of California, First Street Courthouse, 350 West 1st Street, Los Angeles, California 90012. The Court will consider whether the Settlement Agreement is adequate, fair, and reasonable. If you wish to object to the Settlement Agreement or appear at the hearing, you must email any objections in writing to TeamDLI@stretto.com on or before March 24, 2025. Specific information on objecting is provided in the Opt- out Notices and the Notices of Proposed Settlement (collectively "Notices").

A complete copy of the Settlement Agreement, the proposed Final Approval Order, and other Settlement documents are available on the Receiver's website: http://case.stretto.com/dli or by emailing: TeamDLI@stretto.com or by calling: 855-885-1564. PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT THE COURT DIRECTLY

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Rentals Other Areas

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Rentals Vacation

Lahaina, Maui

"Kahana Nui Special Discount for California Fire Victims"

This Discount for California Fire Victims is for a home on the ocean in Maui. With this Discount a Guest will pay approximately half of KN's June rental rate.

The Guest will sign the standard Kahana Nui Rental Contract, showing the rental rate of $1600.00/day and 37 days rented, with the total payment of $59,200.

The rental days are from noon of April 15, 2025 and terminate on noon of May 21, 2025.

Payment must be made 30 days before the start of the Rental or by March 7, 2025.

The Guests must agree to all the terms of the Contract including a "Hold Harmless Agreement".

The Kahana Nui Villa is a large beautiful home directly on the ocean that sleeps 12.

To take advantage of this offer, Guests must book through the owner and pay a Security Deposit directly with Kahana Nui, c/o Suzanne Moffett, and not go through an agent. www.kahananui.com, (808) 870-6795

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

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RNAKD
CLFIEK
LEBGTO

Get the free **JUST JUMBLE** app • Follow us on Twitter **@PlayJumble**



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: AGAIN TUNER WRENCH GLOOMY
Answer: She had doubted that she'd like his new beard, but it was — GROWING ON HER

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LEGAL NOTICE

SECTION 8 PROGRAM INFORMATION MEETING

You are invited to attend the annual meeting of the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) of the Burbank Housing Authority. The RAB is a group that volunteers their time to review and comment on the Burbank Housing Authority's administration of the federal Section 8 Program. Housing staff will be providing an overview of the Section 8 Program in Burbank for the upcoming year, along with proposed Administrative Plan changes. Finally, staff will present the proposed Public Housing Agency (PHA) Five Year Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-2030 to be presented to the Housing Authority Board on April 8, 2025, for consideration. *This is a general information meeting only. The Housing Authority will not be discussing personal files or accepting additional applications for the Program.*

Resident Advisory Board Meeting

DATE: Tuesday, February 18, 2025
WHERE: Community Services Building
150 N. Third Street - Room # 104
Burbank, CA 91502
TIME: 9:30 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if any special assistance is needed to participate in this meeting, please contact the ADA Coordinator at 818.238.5021 voice or 818.238.5035 TDD. Notification 48 hours in advance of this meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements for special assistance.

Questions or for more information, please call 818.238.5160

Publish Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Legal Notices | Legal Notices | Legal Notices

LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

AVAILABILITY FOR REVIEW: PROPOSED UPDATES TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN FOR THE SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM AND THE PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY (PHA) FIVE YEAR PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2025-2030 AND RELATED BURBANK HOUSING AUTHORITY PUBLIC HEARING

The Burbank Housing Authority is soliciting public review and comment on the proposed PHA Five Year Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-2030, in compliance with the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Rule (24 CFR Part 903 and 982.54), and Public and Indian Housing (PIH) Notice 2000-43. The Burbank Housing Authority will also consider changes to the Administrative Plan. The PHA Five Year Plan and DRAFT Administrative Plan is available for public review beginning Wednesday, February 12, 2025.

The PHA Five Year Plan is a planning document which describes the mission of the Burbank Housing Authority in serving the needs of low-income and extremely low-income rental assistance program participants in the City of Burbank. The Five Year Plan must be available for public review, and comments on the Plan are requested and encouraged. Housing Authorities are also required to adopt a written Administrative Plan that establishes local policies and procedures for administering the Section 8 Program in accordance with HUD regulations and requirements. The updated Administrative Plan with proposed changes, along with the proposed 2025-2030 PHA Five Year Plan for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program are available for public view at:

Burbank Housing Authority
150 N. Third Street, Window 13
Burbank, CA 91502
During office hours of: Monday – Friday between 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Or on-line at www.burbankca.gov. Written comments should be mailed or emailed to:

City of Burbank
Community Development Department
Burbank Housing Authority
150 N. Third St.
P.O. Box 6459
Burbank, CA. 91510
Attn: Maribel Leyland, Housing Authority Manager
E-mail: mleyland@burbankca.gov

The City of Burbank Housing Authority hereby gives notice that the proposed PHA Five Year Plan for Fiscal years 2025-2030 will be considered for approval at a public hearing of the Burbank Housing Authority Board on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard. ALL INTERESTED AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS who wish to be heard on this matter are invited to attend this public hearing and speak to the Housing Authority Board at the time and place stated.

Publish Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Inflatable storage concept eyed as possible fire tool

[**Water,** from B1]
rable plastic membrane held secure by steel cables. Supported by a steel pole and a concrete foundation, each can hold about 148,000 gallons of water, weighing more than 600 tons.

Terruzzin, the company's chief commercial and product officer, believes California should install these pop-up reservoirs in strategic locations to provide an extra supply for containing and fighting fires such as those that devastated Pacific Palisades and Altadena last month.

The patented system has not yet been used for firefighting, but Terruzzin and his company plan to ship two prototypes soon from a facility in Texas so they can be demonstrated for California fire agencies.

Terruzzin envisions some of the Water Trees being placed near fire hydrants, with others arranged in rows where neighborhoods meet wildlands, creating a sort of shield that acts as a firebreak by spraying water to extinguish flames and drifting embers.

Once the inflatable tanks are installed in high-fire-risk areas, they would be filled by pumping water from the existing municipal system, and the stored water would then be isolated from the drinking supply and kept for an emergency.

In the event of a fire, water would flow down out of the tanks by gravity. That would generate a strong enough flow to nearby fire hydrants to maintain pressure for hours, Terruzzin said.

The tanks that are lined up between homes and flammable vegetation would be equipped with networks of flexible pipes and sprinklers, which would douse a wide area to prevent flames from advancing.

"It's ideal," Terruzzin said. "It can be implemented today."

He estimates that if more than 4,000 Water Trees were installed throughout the Los Angeles area, the cost would be approximately $80,000 for each — substantially less than the cost of traditional storage tanks or reservoirs.

A single Water Tree, Terruzzin said, can hold enough water to release about 800 gallons a minute for three hours. Installing 40 or 50 of them in Pacific Palisades as neighborhoods are rebuilt would help make the community safer, he said.

Dean Florez, a member of the California Air Resources Board and former state senator, learned about the idea from Terruzzin, who is a friend, and said he likes the concept as a "forward-thinking innovation that could change the game in how we approach wildfire preparedness."

Los Angeles and other fire-prone areas need a decentralized water storage strategy to address the repeated problems of hydrants losing pressure and power outages cutting off access to water sources during fires, Florez said. The limitations of the existing infrastructure, he said, call for rethinking how water is stored to better defend communities.

"It seems like one of those ideas that could have been a game-changer already — if only we had started thinking bigger sooner," Florez said. "Would that have prevented all the destruction? Maybe not. But would it have bought firefighters more time, slowed the spread and reduced losses? Absolutely."



Photographs by Energy Vault

WORKERS in Sardinia, Italy, last year inspect the membrane that holds water, which is designed to last more than 20 years. A concept envisions installing 40 or 50 of them in Pacific Palisades as areas are rebuilt.



WATER TREES are filled in Sardinia, Italy, last year. One 39-foot-tall tank can hold enough water to release about 800 gallons a minute for three hours.

The concept probably will be one of many that local and state officials consider as they analyze ways of remaking water systems in L.A. and other areas to be better equipped for large wildfires.

The January firestorms revealed the significant limitations of Southern California's urban water systems, which experts say were not designed with the capacity for large wildfires that rage through entire neighborhoods. When the system lost pressure in parts of Pacific Palisades, some hydrants ran dry in high-elevation areas, hindering the firefighting effort.

Gov. Gavin Newsom has ordered an investigation into the loss of pressure and the lack of water available from a reservoir in Pacific Palisades that was out of commission for repairs. The L.A. City Council has ordered the city's Department of Water and Power to present its findings on why firefighters ran out of water.

Terruzzin said he was puzzled about why officials had left the 117-million-gallon reservoir empty for nearly a year for repairs. That said, he thinks having the reservoir filled would not have fully solved the problem. The current system of pipes, he said, does not allow for shunting all the necessary water from the reservoir at once because the limited flow capacity presents a "gigantic bottleneck" — even if all the water were released, it couldn't all get to where it needs to go.

"We need distributed water resources," Terruzzin said. "You have water strategically distributed to protect the residential areas. We have to just bring the water nearby."

Having Water Trees installed across L.A. could help solve this problem, he said. Valves operated with a remote control system could be quickly opened on the pop-up tanks to send water into pipes and "make sure that there is higher pressure in the system" whenever a fire is causing heavy demand. And the gushing spray from tanks on hillsides, he said, would flood the landscape to keep flames at bay.

Terruzzin has spent years working on energy storage projects that reduce carbon emissions to help address climate change. The energy storage project with Water Trees began operating in Italy last year.

The company began studying the possibility of using the inflatable tanks for firefighting after deadly 2023 wildfires in Greece. But it was only after the Palisades blaze, Terruzzin said, that he and his colleagues "connected the dots and realized that this solution must be implemented."

The Water Trees, which the company plans to produce in the U.S., will hold water in a 4.8-millimeter-thick plastic membrane designed to resist fire and last for more than 20 years. Terruzzin said the reservoirs, which are 35 feet wide, were designed in the shape of a water drop, an optimal form as gravity pulls down the massive contents.

Water experts who were shown information about the concept said it seems promising, though they also raised some questions.

"Los Angeles needs more water storage capacity, particularly in elevated areas, for fire protection," said Sanjay Mohanty, an associate professor of engineering at UCLA. "Investing in these systems can be beneficial."

Mohanty said he sees several challenges, such as complying with drinking water regulations and demonstrating that the system would be safe in an earthquake. (Terruzzin said the system has been tested to withstand quakes.)

"They have also to demonstrate that the amount of water needed is actually going to make the difference that they plan to," Mohanty said. "There are a lot of calculations to go, but we need reservoirs and that definitely is a very promising technology to put in a location where you can't have a large reservoir."

Upmanu Lall, director of Arizona State University's Water Institute at the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory, questioned the extent of the tanks' effectiveness in reducing fire losses.

"That would depend on the scale of deployment, because if you can't get a high density of deployment, you're not going to really reduce the losses very much," Lall said. Also, he said, strategically choosing where to install the tanks would be particularly important.

Another challenge, Lall said, would be persuading homeowners to allow large onion-shaped reservoirs in their neighborhoods and in the natural landscape.

"How socially acceptable is it, to these high-net-worth individuals, to have these balloon-looking things sitting behind them?" Lall said. "Of course, you have to get the public buy-in."

Terruzzin agreed that "some work has to be done" to make the big white drops "aesthetically acceptable." But as he sees it, they can be like freeways: functional and necessary.

"Without new infrastructure that helps California to have water available in the right place at the right time, you don't solve the problem of these wildfires, and they will be more and more frequent," Terruzzin said.

The costs of investing in this type of solution, he said, would be small when compared with the risks.

New push for lifesaving rental cooling rules

[**Cooling rules,** from B1]
et's warmest on record, and extreme weather is becoming more frequent and severe, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Even though most heat deaths and illnesses are preventable, about 1,220 people in the United States are killed by extreme heat every year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Heat stress can cause heatstroke, cardiac arrest and kidney failure, and it's especially harmful to the very young and the elderly.

State law protects renters in the winter by requiring all rental residential dwelling units to include functioning heating equipment that can keep the indoor temperature at a minimum of 70 degrees, but there is no similar standard giving renters the right to cooling.

The release of this report is a key milestone, but it's just the first step of a long road, vulnerable to legislative politics and an influential housing industry that has successfully delayed similar proposals in the past.

In 2022, state lawmakers directed the housing department to issue cooling recommendations after proposed legislation stalled when landlords, real estate agents and builders raised concerns such a standard would be cost-prohibitive.

Those concerns remain. Many California rental units are older homes, sometimes 90 to 100 years old, and installing air conditioning would require expensive changes, including upgrading their electrical systems, said Daniel Yukelson, chief executive of the Apartment Assn. of Greater Los Angeles.

"These types of government mandates, absent some kind of financing or significant tax breaks, would really put a lot of smaller owners out of business," said Yukelson, who added that he's concerned it would lead to housing getting bought by large corporations that would dramatically increase rent prices.

The report recommends lawmakers provide incentive programs for owners to retrofit residential units so the cost isn't passed along to renters.

It also suggested a variety of strategies that could be deployed to keep homes cool: central air conditioning, window units, window shading, fans and evaporative room coolers.

For new construction, housing officials suggested new standards incorporating designs to keep indoor temperatures from topping 82 degrees, such as cool roofs and cool walls designed to reflect sunlight, or landscaping to provide shade.

Whether the Legislature will take up the housing department's recommendations is unclear. Spokespeople for Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas and Sen. Henry Stern, Democrats who co-wrote the 2022 cooling standard bill, declined to comment.

Californians largely stand behind such efforts, according to a 2023 poll from the UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies, cosponsored by the Los Angeles Times: 67% of voters polled said they supported the concept of the state establishing cooling standards for residential properties.

As temperatures rise and heat waves become longer and more intense, the report cautions, deaths in California could rise to 11,300 a year by 2050.

And deaths from all causes "may be up to 10% higher on hot nights compared with nights without elevated temperatures," according to a presentation earlier this month by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

That's because it can be particularly dangerous when people can't cool off at night during extended heat waves, said David Konisky, a professor of environmental policy at Indiana University.

"When you can't count on evening cooling off and allowing the body to readjust," he said, "that's when things get really dangerous for people's health."

This article was produced by KFF Health News, a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues and is one of the core operating programs at KFF — the independent source for health policy research, polling and journalism. KFF Health News is the publisher of California Healthline, an editorially independent service of the California Health Care Foundation.

Obituaries

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Marilyn R Berg

July 22, 1930 - February 7, 2025

Resident of Beverly Hills. Married to Leon (d. 2015). Mother of Eric, Leslie & David (d.2016); grandmother of Taneisha, Michael, Mandisa, Tyler Sagerstrom & Cory Sagerstrom; sister of Stanley Roschelle. Long-time volunteer at LACMA and Friends of the Beverly Hills Public Library.

To place an obituary ad please go online to: latimes.com/placeobituary
or call
1-800-234-4444
Los Angeles Times

Services Scheduled

G. Patterson Cramer

December 22, 1946 - November 30, 2024

The memorial service for Pat Cramer has been rescheduled for Saturday, Feb. 15, at 11am, at Bel Air Presbyterian Church, 16221 Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles 90049, with a reception immediately following. For those unable to attend, it will be available through this link:

www.Youtube.com/@PatCramerMemorial/live

THE WEATHER

Today in Southern California

Showers Wednesday, heavy rain Thursday: There will be brief rounds of showers through the day Wednesday with expansive cloud cover. An atmospheric river is set to bring heavy rainfall with the risk of significant flooding Thursday. Mudslides and debris flows are a concern, especially in fresh burn-scar areas. Showers will linger through Friday. Saturday will be dry, though skies will remain cloudy.

5-day forecasts

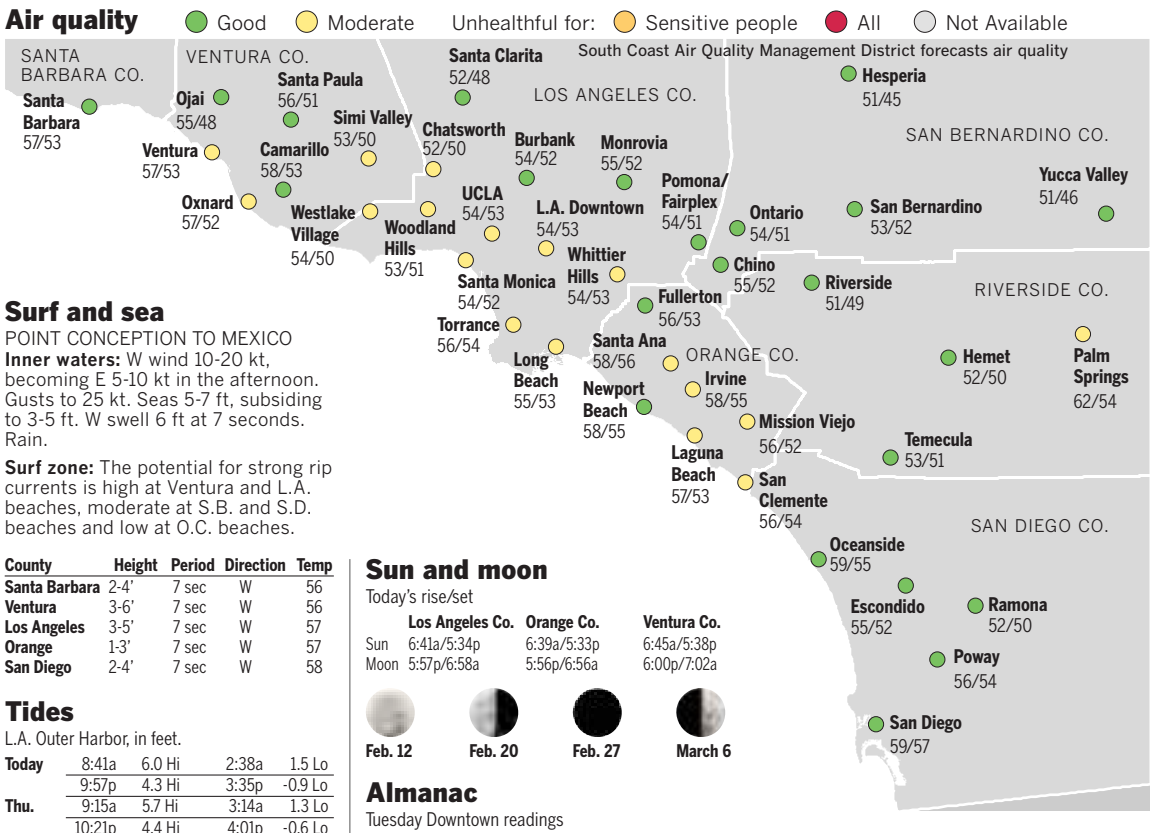
High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin		Valleys		Beaches		Mountains		Deserts	
Today	54|53		53|50		54|52		39|35		62|54	
	Rain and drizzle		Rain and drizzle		Rain and drizzle		A touch of rain		Cloudy and cool	
Thursday	Downpours	59/53	Heavy rain	57/51	Heavy rain	60/51	Rain; chilly	42/29	Rain; cool	63/53
Friday	Showers	65/49	Showers	64/45	Showers	62/48	A few showers	40/19	Showers	69/48
Saturday	Partly sunny	65/48	Clouds, sun	68/47	Mostly cloudy	61/49	Milder	49/25	Some sun	76/51
Sunday	High clouds	68/53	Some sun	69/49	High clouds	65/49	High clouds	51/26	High clouds	76/55

Air quality

Good · Moderate · Unhealthful for: Sensitive people · All · Not Available

South Coast Air Quality Management District forecasts air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO

Inner waters: W wind 10-20 kt, becoming E 5-10 kt in the afternoon. Gusts to 25 kt. Seas 5-7 ft, subsiding to 3-5 ft. W swell 6 ft at 7 seconds. Rain.

Surf zone: The potential for strong rip currents is high at Ventura and L.A. beaches, moderate at S.B. and S.D. beaches and low at O.C. beaches.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	2-4'	7 sec	W	56
Ventura	3-6'	7 sec	W	56
Los Angeles	3-5'	7 sec	W	57
Orange	1-3'	7 sec	W	57
San Diego	2-4'	7 sec	W	58

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

Today	8:41a	6.0 Hi	2:38a	1.5 Lo
	9:57p	4.3 Hi	3:35p	-0.9 Lo
Thu.	9:15a	5.7 Hi	3:14a	1.3 Lo
	10:21p	4.4 Hi	4:01p	-0.6 Lo

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people

Las Vegas, 45 · Phoenix, 45
Los Angeles, 60 · San Francisco, 60

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set

	Los Angeles Co.	Orange Co.	Ventura Co.
Sun	6:41a/5:34p	6:39a/5:33p	6:45a/5:38p
Moon	5:57p/6:58a	5:56p/6:56a	6:00p/7:02a

Feb. 12 · Feb. 20 · Feb. 27 · March 6

Almanac

Tuesday Downtown readings

Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
High/low	61/50	61/50	60/43
Normal high/low	68/50	69/48	67/45
High/low a year ago	66/44	66/39	67/49
Record high/date	88/1971	88/2015	84/2015
Record low/date	35/1894	37/2019	35/1965

Precipitation	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura*
24-hour total (as of 2 p.m.)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Season total (since Oct. 1)	2.58	0.95	3.10
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	15.80	11.41	15.59
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	8.42	7.05	9.51
Humidity (high/low)	82/59	49/33	88/47

California cities*

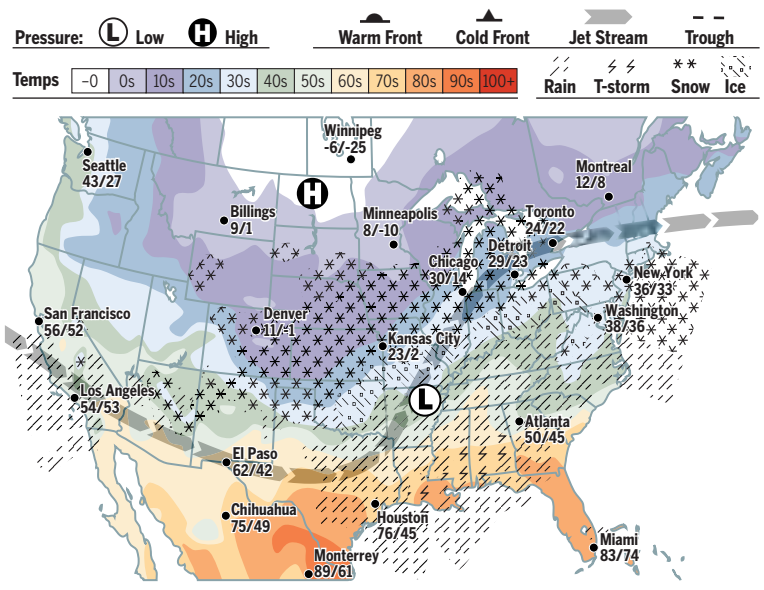
City	Tue.* Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Thu. Hi	Lo
Anaheim	59	50	--	56	53	59	53
Avalon/Catalina	51	44	--	53	51	59	50
Bakersfield	59	44	--	56	51	66	50
Barstow	60	44	--	53	45	61	50
Big Bear Lake	37	30	--	39	35	42	29
Bishop	53	24	--	52	35	44	30
Burbank	62	46	--	54	52	56	51
Camarillo	60	47	--	58	53	62	53
Chatsworth	60	44	--	52	50	58	51
Chino	61	46	--	55	52	60	52
Compton	60	50	.01	56	54	59	53
Dana Point	60	53	--	57	54	61	54
Death Valley	68	44	--	66	56	65	58
Del Mar	60	52	--	55	54	60	56
Escondido	57	49	--	55	52	59	51
Eureka	46	29	--	55	47	53	45
Fallbrook	56	48	--	54	52	58	52
Fresno	59	43	--	60	51	64	51
Fullerton	61	49	--	56	53	59	54
Hemet	54	43	--	52	50	57	48
Hesperia	53	42	--	50	46	53	43
Huntington Beach	60	52	--	57	55	61	56
Idyllwild	39	36	--	40	39	46	40
Irvine	61	52	--	58	55	61	53

City	Tue.* Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Thu. Hi	Lo
L.A. D'ntown/USC	60	48	--	54	53	59	53
L.A. Int'l. Airport	59	49	Tr	55	53	59	54
Laguna Beach	55	53	--	57	53	59	54
Lancaster	50	42	--	50	46	56	48
Long Beach	62	50	Tr	55	53	61	54
Mammoth Lakes	33	11	--	38	26	36	26
Mission Viejo	57	49	--	56	52	58	52
Monrovia	62	47	--	55	52	58	52
Monterey	54	43	--	55	50	61	52
Mt. Wilson	46	35	--	38	35	40	34
Needles	67	45	--	63	48	64	53
Newport Beach	58	53	--	58	55	61	57
Northridge	63	45	--	54	51	58	52
Oakland	53	44	Tr	57	52	58	51
Oceanside	64	51	--	59	55	63	52
Ojai	60	44	--	55	48	58	48
Ontario	58	47	--	54	51	56	51
Palm Springs	71	52	--	62	54	63	53
Pasadena	61	48	--	53	52	58	52
Paso Robles	59	40	--	55	50	58	48
Redding	53	30	--	57	38	49	46
Riverside	56	44	--	51	49	58	48
Sacramento	53	36	--	56	49	61	50
San Bernardino	59	46	--	53	52	59	50

City	Tue.* Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Thu. Hi	Lo
San Diego	62	54	--	59	57	64	57
San Francisco	54	44	Tr	56	52	59	52
San Gabriel	61	49	--	54	53	59	52
San Jose	56	45	--	58	53	63	52
San Luis Obispo	59	49	--	59	54	62	52
Santa Ana	60	51	--	58	56	60	54
Santa Barbara	69	46	--	57	53	62	53
Santa Clarita	60	42	--	52	48	58	50
Santa Monica Pier	60	48	--	54	52	60	51
Santa Paula	61	45	--	56	51	60	50
Santa Rosa	55	37	--	56	47	58	49
Simi Valley	59	44	--	53	50	58	50
Tahoe Valley	35	4	--	39	28	39	29
Temecula	55	46	--	53	51	57	49
Thousand Oaks	57	44	--	54	51	59	50
Torrance	59	52	--	56	54	60	55
UCLA	58	49	--	54	53	58	52
Van Nuys	63	46	--	53	51	59	51
Ventura	59	49	--	57	53	60	53
Whittier Hills	62	49	--	54	53	58	53
Woodland Hills	60	46	--	53	51	58	50
Wrightwood	44	38	--	42	39	45	35
Yorba Linda	60	48	--	55	52	59	52
Yosemite Valley	42	22	--	48	38	47	35

Today in North America

Storms continue: Storms will continue to move through the East, with rain showers over the Southeast and snow and sleet across the Midwest and Northeast. Conditions will be very cold across the northern Plains, with some snow showers. The Southwest will be mainly dry.



U.S. cities

TUESDAY'S EXTREMES AS OF 2 P.M. FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 88 in McAllen, Texas · **Low** –43 in Ingomar, Mont.

City	Tuesday* Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Albany	30	7	--	29	25	Pc
Albuquerque	57	43	Tr	51	24	W
Anchorage	26	11	--	21	10	Su
Aspen	34	16	.01	20	-6	Sn
Atlanta	48	45	.09	50	45	Sh
Austin	53	49	3.19	79	37	Pc
Baltimore	36	27	.10	37	35	Sn
Boise	25	16	--	25	11	Cy
Boston	32	19	--	34	31	Pc
Buffalo	30	14	Tr	30	27	Sn
Burlington, Vt.	30	9	.04	20	12	Pc
Charleston, S.C.	58	45	Tr	72	63	Cy
Charlotte	41	40	.16	41	39	R
Chicago	24	22	.02	30	14	Sn
Cincinnati	35	32	.11	42	29	I
Cleveland	32	22	--	38	29	I
Columbia, S.C.	43	40	.18	50	47	Sh
Columbus	34	28	Tr	41	32	I
Dallas/Ft.Worth	46	41	.42	54	25	R
Denver	17	6	.03	11	-1	Sn
Detroit	33	16	--	29	23	Sn
El Paso	73	49	.01	62	42	W
Eugene	42	24	--	43	27	Su
Fort Myers	83	67	--	86	69	Su
Hartford	34	11	--	37	30	Pc
Honolulu	84	69	.02	83	65	Sh
Houston	72	65	1.77	76	45	R
Indianapolis	37	31	--	37	24	R
Jacksonville, Fla.	74	57	Tr	86	65	Su
Kansas City	28	20	--	23	2	Sn
Knoxville	43	37	1.23	52	49	R
Las Vegas	64	43	--	53	41	Cy
Louisville	36	33	.48	46	31	R
Medford	44	24	--	45	33	Su
Memphis	44	40	1.37	54	32	R
Miami	81	72	--	83	74	Su
Milwaukee	20	14	.01	28	13	Sn
Minneapolis	6	-8	--	8	-10	Sf
Nashville	44	38	1.83	60	36	R
New Orleans	82	66	.04	81	58	Sh
New York	36	28	.02	36	33	Sf
Norfolk	41	36	.60	45	43	R
Oklahoma City	38	33	.01	32	11	Sn
Omaha	16	6	.02	13	-10	Sn
Orlando	84	66	Tr	87	68	Su
Philadelphia	37	27	.10	37	35	Sf
Phoenix	70	52	--	64	51	Cy
Pittsburgh	33	23	.05	39	36	I
Portland, Ore.	43	29	Tr	43	31	Su
Providence	32	13	--	36	31	Sf
Raleigh/Durham	40	36	.24	44	41	R
Reno	37	22	--	45	29	Pc
Richmond	34	28	.62	39	36	Sn
St. Louis	38	35	--	34	17	Sn
Salt Lake City	28	24	.05	29	20	Pc

City	Tuesday* Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Seattle	37	23	--	43	27	Su
Tampa	80	68	--	82	70	Su
Tucson	73	52	--	63	44	Cy
Tulsa	37	34	.09	33	14	Sn
Washington, D.C.	39	34	.16	38	36	Sn
Wichita	31	25	--	22	4	Sn

World

City	Tuesday* Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Acapulco	88	73	--	88	71	Su
Amsterdam	39	34	1.84	41	32	Cy
Athens	50	37	.01	51	39	Pc
Bangkok	92	70	--	96	73	Pc
Barcelona	57	48	.02	58	49	Sh
Berlin	41	25	--	39	32	Su
Cabo San Lucas	82	65	--	74	53	Su
Cairo	63	50	--	63	49	Pc
Dubai	77	61	--	85	68	Su
Dublin	41	39	.75	43	40	R
Havana	86	65	--	87	67	Su
Ho Chi Minh City	95	75	.31	92	77	Pc
Hong Kong	70	59	.12	69	61	R
Istanbul	37	34	.91	41	36	R
Jerusalem	52	42	.16	49	40	Sh
Johannesburg	75	54	--	75	57	Ts
Kuala Lumpur	92	75	.11	94	76	Ts
Lima	82	71	.04	81	72	Sh
London	42	36	--	44	36	Cy
Madrid	57	39	.33	58	32	Pc
Mecca	87	65	.06	82	68	Pc
Mexico City	75	51	--	77	47	Su
Montreal	25	16	.07	12	8	Su
Moscow	20	19	.02	28	19	Cy
Mumbai	88	72	--	91	73	Hz
New Delhi	81	52	--	78	51	Hz
Paris	43	36	--	44	37	Cy
Prague	43	23	--	35	32	Cy
Rome	59	41	.01	58	49	Sh
Seoul	45	16	.09	38	18	Sn
Singapore	88	76	--	90	77	Pc
Taipei City	76	51	Tr	74	57	Sh
Tokyo	48	36	--	56	47	W
Vancouver	34	18	--	37	22	Su
Vienna	43	28	--	33	30	Sn

Key: **Su** sunny; **Pc** partly cloudy; **Cy** cloudy; **Fg** foggy; **Prcp** precipitation; **Dr** drizzle; **Hz** hazy **Sh** showers; **Ts** thunderstorms; **R** rain; **Sn** snow; **Sf** snow flurries; **I** ice; **Rs** rain/snow; **W** windy; **Tr** trace. **Notes:** National extremes exclude Alaska and Hawaii. * - data estimated. Tuesday's readings as of 2 p.m.

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New general manager changes power dynamic

With Bowden in charge of revamped front office, Riley gives up total control and will focus on coaching.

RYAN KARTJE
ON USC



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

LINCOLN RILEY said he is happy to have new general manager Chad Bowden handle personnel.

Since USC hired Chad Bowden to be its general manager last month, there has been a lot of discussion about power dynamics within the football program.

And there's no denying that Bowden's arrival has shifted that balance. That's because before USC set out to revamp its football front office, the entire operation ran largely through one man: Lincoln Riley. And while that approach might have worked a few years ago, everyone at the top of USC's athletic department understood by last fall that that simply wasn't sustainable.

As one person told The Times, "This wasn't a sudden realization."

USC already had a general manager when Jennifer Cohen took over as athletic director in the fall of 2023. Dave Emerick had been handpicked a year earlier by Riley as a friend and confidant plucked straight from the staff of his mentor, Mike Leach, at Mississippi State.

But name, image and likeness was in its infancy then, and the transfer portal floodgates had yet to open. The job, just two years later, had become completely different — and far more complicated — with tampering rampant and revenue sharing on the horizon and agents negotiating and renegotiating deals on players' behalf.

The result, at USC, was a setup that frustrated players, parents and NIL agents alike. The Times spoke to several people over the last year who described phone calls that went unreturned, mixed messages about NIL offerings and general confusion in the negotiation process. The consensus, from all involved, was that USC's approach wasn't going to cut it. Not with the landscape set to shift even more dramatically this fall.

Cohen understood that. So too did Riley.

This wasn't a case of Cohen marching into Riley's office and demanding he give up personnel power within the program. There was more nuance to the situation. Cohen and Riley brought candidates to the table during USC's search for a new general manager, according to people with knowledge of the situation not authorized to speak publicly, and the coach was integrated in every step of that process.

The changes undoubtedly wrested some control from Riley. And that's a good thing. When Mike Bohn was leading USC's athletic department, the coach was in control of every facet of the program, for better or worse.

That dynamic looks a lot different now. And Riley seems to be OK with that. Or at the very least resigned to it.

His expectation for Bowden, he said last week, is that the GM will "run the show" when it comes to personnel. That's not something we've heard Riley say before about ... well, anything.

"That's what we wanted," Riley said. "That's what I wanted. One of Chad's first things when we talked, he said, 'I want to make it where you can just coach, coach the team, run the team, run the organization, and you can know these things are handled. We're gonna handle it, and we're gonna build a team that's going to take care of it for USC.' "

Bowden has since built his own staff with people he trusts from past stops. And more changes are expected, including building out more robust analytics and scouting structures within the front office.

We don't know yet how much of an influence those changes will have, no matter the declarations of USC now having "the best front office in America." A team of young personnel directors isn't going to suddenly turn around a program that's been struggling for a decade. I, for one, am old enough to remember when hiring a team of videographers and branding folks away from Louisiana State's athletic department was portrayed as a program-altering move.

But with Riley left to focus only on the job he was hired to do, we can say one thing for sure: No matter how unified the coach and his athletic director are at the moment, there are no more excuses left to make for Riley falling short.

Extra points

■ **Bowden didn't reveal many specifics about his approach last week. But he did offer some idea of his plans for roster construction**. And it starts with emphasizing Southern California on the recruiting trail. That hasn't always been the plan under Riley, which has rankled plenty of USC fans over the last year, but the coach had made a concerted effort to shift that focus even before Bowden was hired. Now, Bowden plans to "be on offense" and "attack" roster building. "We're going to do everything we can to get the best players in California to stay here and play for USC," Bowden said. It helps that he added two ace recruiters in Chad Savage and Trovon Reed to the full-time staff. They'll be key as Bowden said that USC will "major in high school" and "minor in the portal" as it sets out to build a better foundation for the future.

■ **Luke Huard is USC's new offensive coordinator in name only.** So for those hoping Riley was relinquishing control on offense, that's not what's happening. But Huard's promotion is certainly a show of faith from Riley in his quarterbacks coach, who has earned his trust since becoming a full-time assistant in 2022. Huard was instrumental in landing five-star quarterback Husan Longstreet, and when I spoke to Ja'Kobi Lane's high school coach last season, he was effusive in his praise. "He's unreal. The guy is one of the best in the business as far as recruiting," Red Mountain coach Kyle Enders told me in September. Huard's stock has only risen since.

■ **Rob Ryan is going to fit in just fine at the college level.** Last week, the Super Bowl-winning assistant had one of the more memorable — or unhinged, depending on your perspective — introductions by any college coach that I can remember. No description will do it justice, so do yourself a favor and watch the video. But in between stories and random streams of consciousness, it wasn't hard to see the appeal of having someone such as Ryan on your staff. Ryan even came along on the recruiting trail in recent weeks. "They didn't trust me going out by myself," Ryan said. "I probably would have broke every rule? No, I wouldn't. Maybe a few." Whether he continues to travel on the recruiting trail remains to be seen — USC must designate one of its 11 staff members to not travel. But Ryan's role in building back the linebackers room will be critical, after USC lost two starting inside backers. He did, however, inherit Eric Gentry, whom he raved about. "He [makes] the unnatural natural," Ryan said. "Like, I love this kid. This guy's going to be fun to work with. He's got these vines for arms."

■ **Desmond Claude's injury came at an especially unfortunate time for the men's basketball team.** Claude fought through the pain in a win over Michigan State, but he sat out the next two games. The timing couldn't be worse considering USC had just climbed into bubble consideration and is in the midst of a critical part of its schedule. Clark Slajchert played well in his absence, but as Michigan State coach Tom Izzo put it, Claude is "the straw that stirs the drink" for USC.

■ **One of the biggest games of the women's basketball season is on tap at Galen Center on Thursday.** UCLA has been the most dominant team this season. USC has the best player in the game in JuJu Watkins. That combo should make for an electric atmosphere. UCLA has beaten every opponent but one by double digits, while USC last week just suffered its first loss since before Thanksgiving. The Trojans might be the only Big Ten team capable of upending the top-ranked Bruins. But doing so will require a better effort than what they've put together lately. Watkins especially will need to play better — she's shooting just 33% over her last six games.

If you enjoyed this excerpt of The Times of Troy newsletter, you can sign up to receive it every Monday in your inbox by visiting latimes.com/newsletters.

Dodgers focused on new identity

[**Dodgers,** from B10]
impactful offseason changes (and, the Dodgers hope, upgrades) the front office made during a $500-million spending spree.

Returning players, meanwhile, were firmly looking forward as well, trying to keep the memories of last October's postseason run in the past as they embarked upon a championship defense.

"We can't keep thinking about being champions again," shortstop Mookie Betts said. "We haven't even played Game 1. We have to take care of spring training and then when Game 1 comes, then Game 1 comes. But we can't keep talking about the World Series."

This has been a common refrain from the Dodgers throughout the offseason. On more than one occasion, club brass and players insisted that for all that last year's team accomplished, this squad will have to form its own identity and create a new clubhouse culture.

"What is in the past is in the past," outfielder Teoscar Hernández said at his January news conference after re-signing with the team. "We're not gonna think about what we did the year before. We got our minds clear with what we can do."

"I really don't think you can take anything from last year and expect it to carry over to the start of the season," veteran utilityman Chris Taylor echoed at the DodgerFest team's preseason fan fest event. "We have new faces. It's a new team. It's gonna be a new identity."

Muncy said he hopes to one day look back at this team as one of the best in recent history. Infielder Miguel Rojas said he believes an unprecedented 120-win season is possible.

"When [ownership] went out there and got all those free agents and re-signed guys, they sent us a message," Rojas said. "Like, 'We're not just happy winning one championship. We want to do more. That's why we're going to put the pressure on you guys to develop and deliver another championship here. We gave you the pieces you need to make another great run.' "

In the short term, though, the Dodgers' primary focus is on resetting mentally after the highs of last year's title, and using this spring to build a new foundation for a new-look roster once again facing World Series-or-bust expectations.

"We're hungrier than ever," Muncy said. "We've had guys out here for almost two weeks working on ground balls, going full bore. We're not trying to let up at all."

The Dodgers have some questions to address this spring.

Shohei Ohtani and Freddie Freeman still are working their way back from offseason surgeries, though both are expected to be in the lineup on opening day next month. Ohtani, who also is coming back as a pitcher from a 2023 Tommy John revision surgery, likely won't be ready to pitch by then, but was playing catch Tuesday and is scheduled to begin ramping up off a mound again in the coming weeks.

Defensively, Betts is continuing his move back to shortstop on a full-time basis and earned praise from Muncy and Rojas for the progress he has made.

The hierarchy of the reshaped starting pitching staff will be another storyline to follow. New signings Blake Snell and Roki Sasaki will battle returning frontline arms Yoshinobu Yamamoto and Tyler Glasnow for opening-day honors. Dustin May and Tony Gonsolin, meanwhile, are back after missing last season because of elbow surgeries and are slated to round out the season-opening rotation.

If the Dodgers can make all those moving pieces fit together, they should have more than enough firepower to return to the postseason and make a bid at becoming MLB's first repeat champion in a quarter-century.

But first, the team will have to shake off the lingering effects of its World Series hangover and start anew in a season in which where anything less than another title will feel like a failure.

"Guys know that there's only so much celebrating you can do in the offseason, especially when we have to show up so quickly," Muncy said. "You got to make sure you get your body right, reset it, get healthy, and show up ready to go for spring. And I think from what I've seen so far, we've done a pretty good job."

Kershaw close to re-signing

His name isn't officially on the Dodgers' roster yet.

But future Hall of Fame pitcher Clayton Kershaw was in attendance for the first workout.

As had been expected all offseason, Kershaw is finally in the process of completing a new contract with the Dodgers. The 36-year-old still has to complete a physical, according to a person with knowledge of the situation who wasn't authorized to speak publicly.

His deal could be finalized as soon as Wednesday.

Kershaw is returning to the Dodgers for the 18th season of his illustrious career — having decided before the end of last year he wouldn't retire, or test free agency and possibly play with any other club.

Kershaw managed only seven starts last year, going 2-2 with a 4.50 earned-run average. He missed the first half recovering from shoulder surgery. Then, a late-season toe injury sidelined him for all of September and October.

In November, Kershaw had surgery on both his toe and knee.

Because of that procedure, Kershaw likely won't be ready to pitch early in the season. However, the three-time Cy Young Award winner has begun a throwing program and played long toss at Tuesday alongside other pitchers.

Like Kershaw, veteran utility man Kiké Hernández also was in camp, even though his re-signing with the team also has not yet been finalized.

Hernández struck a one-year deal with the Dodgers on Sunday that will pay him $6.5 million, according to a person with knowledge of the situation not authorized to speak publicly.



CHRIS CODUTO Getty Images

FREDDIE FREEMAN works out at Camelback Ranch as the Dodgers embark on their championship defense with big expectations and the challenge of creating a new clubhouse culture.

Jansen and the Angels agree on 1-year deal

Former longtime Dodgers closer returns to Southern California after brief stints with Braves and Red Sox.

BY MIKE DIGIOVANNA

Kenley Jansen is returning to Southern California, the veteran closer agreeing to terms on Tuesday to a one-year, $10-million contract with the Angels pending a physical, according to a person familiar with the deal but not authorized to speak publicly about it.

Jansen, a 37-year-old right-hander, is baseball's active leader in saves (447) and appearances (871), the majority of those coming during his 12-year stint with the Dodgers, when he went 37-26 with a 2.37 ERA and 350 saves in 701 games from 2010 to 2021.

After the Dodgers let the 6-foot-5, 265-pound Jansen go, Jansen signed a one-year, $16-million deal with the Atlanta Braves, going 5-2 with a 3.38 ERA and a National League-best 41 saves in 2022.

Jansen then signed a two-year, $32-million deal with the Boston Red Sox, going 7-8 with a 3.44 ERA and 80 saves in 2023 and 2024, striking out 114 and walking 37 in 99 ⅓ innings.

He went 4-2 with a 3.29 ERA in 54 games last season, converting 27 of 31 save opportunities, striking out 62 and walking 20 in 54 ⅔ innings before missing the final week of the season because of shoulder inflammation.

Though the average velocity of Jansen's fastball is down from its peak of 95.3 mph in 2016 to 92.2 mph last season, his cut-fastball is still effective, with Jansen limiting opponents to a .215 average (34 for 158) in at-bats ending with his signature pitch in 2024.

Opponents were also hitless in 15 at-bats ending with Jansen's 82.2-mph slider.

His best year with the Dodgers came in 2017, when Jansen went 5-0 with a 1.32 ERA and 41 saves in 65 games.

The addition of Jansen to a young and experienced Angels bullpen will allow the team to give flame-throwing 24-year-old right-hander Ben Joyce, whose fastball touched 105 mph while going 2-0 with a 2.08 ERA and four saves last season, another year to grow into the closer role.

Joyce and left-hander Brock Burke, who went 2-1 with a 3.54 ERA after being claimed off waivers from Texas in August, are expected to be the primary setup men for the Angels, who will hold their first workout for pitchers and catchers in Tempe, Ariz., on Wednesday.

The team will also be leaning on right-handers Hans Crouse and Ryan Zeferjahn, who have combined for 39 career major league appearances, to pitch in high-leverage situations while awaiting the return of right-hander Robert Stephenson from Tommy John surgery.

Closing out a career

Kenley Jansen tops MLB's active leaders in saves.

Name	IP	SV
Kenley Jansen	868 1/3	447
Craig Kimbrel	809 2/3	440
Aroldis Chapman	760	335
Edwin Díaz	453	225
Raisel Iglesias	668 2/3	224

120 wins possible? Focus is on one at a time

[**Hernández,** from B10]
becomes self-explanatory.

Mookie Betts, Shohei Ohtani, Yoshinobu Yamamoto and Roki Sasaki on one side. Freddie Freeman, Max Muncy and Teoscar Hernández on an adjacent wall. Blake Snell, Tyler Glasnow and Clayton Kershaw near the doorway leading to the weight room.

"We have the talent on this team," Rojas said. "It's a really special team. If we combine that with the character and we get everybody on the same boat, I think we can win a lot of games."

Other players said they weren't thinking about winning a specific number of regular-season games, which, ironically, is why the Dodgers could take down the Cubs' and Mariners' joint record.

"I don't care about that at all," Betts said. "We haven't played Game 1, man. We have to take care of Game 1."

The importance of focusing on the next game rather than the win total or the championship also was emphasized by Muncy.

"We're just trying to take care of business and put ourselves in a good position to make the postseason," Muncy said. "That's the most important thing, making the postseason. It doesn't matter if it's 90 wins, 120 wins."

Muncy said the team has established a culture of staying present.

"You can't look at what we've already done," he said. "You can't look at what we're trying to do. We're just focusing on what we can do at this moment."

For Muncy and Betts and the other infielders, the priority during the team's first workout on Tuesday was to become better acquainted with each other. Betts, who moved back to his natural position in right field after a midseason injury last year, has returned to shortstop. Their projected starter at second base, Hyeseong Kim, is a newcomer who played last year in the Korean Baseball Organization.

Along with Rojas and Chris Taylor, Muncy said, the group has "been out there for about a week and a half now, every single day for several hours, trying to get ground balls, just trying to get better on defense."

Such attention to detail was critical in October. In the World Series against the New York Yankees, the Dodgers weren't just the more talented team. They were also the more fundamentally sound team, taking advantage of the Yankees' garbage defense to erase a five-run deficit in their series-clinching Game 5 victory.

"What I can tell you is the mentality of everybody in this room is to win every single day," Rojas said. "So if we can win 162, we're gonna try to win 162. I know it's impossible, and it's really hard to win 120 games, but at the end of the day, that's the expectation."

The approach has resulted in 11 division titles and two World Series championships in 12 years. Now, with the most expensive collection of talent in baseball history, the same mindset could produce a record-breaking season.

Half of their starters could go down with injuries and the Dodgers still would have the deepest rotation in baseball. They spent $85 million on Tanner Scott and Kirby Yates to improve what was already one of the most dependable bullpens in the game. They still have a historically dangerous lineup that includes the likes of Ohtani, Betts and Freeman. They have a steady and trusted leader in manager Dave Roberts.

History is inevitable. One-hundred twenty wins feels within reach.

NHL STANDINGS

Through Monday

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Edmonton	34	17	4	72	182	152
Vegas	33	17	6	72	185	155
KINGS	29	17	7	65	151	136
Vancouver	26	18	11	63	155	166
Calgary	26	21	8	60	148	165
DUCKS	24	24	6	54	137	165
Seattle	24	29	4	52	169	183
San Jose	15	35	7	37	148	216
Central	**W**	**L**	**OL**	**Pts**	**GF**	**GA**
Winnipeg	39	14	3	81	202	134
Dallas	35	18	2	72	182	139
Minnesota	33	19	4	70	163	159
Colorado	33	22	2	68	186	174
Utah	24	23	9	57	158	170
St. Louis	25	26	5	55	154	171
Nashville	19	28	7	45	144	179
Chicago	17	31	7	41	149	191

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Metropolitan	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	36	11	8	80	196	140
Carolina	33	19	4	70	184	154
New Jersey	31	20	6	68	175	142
Columbus	26	22	8	60	184	186
NY Rangers	27	24	4	58	165	168
NY Islanders	25	23	7	57	152	162
Pittsburgh	23	25	9	55	164	201
Philadelphia	24	26	7	55	162	192
Atlantic	**W**	**L**	**OL**	**Pts**	**GF**	**GA**
Florida	34	20	3	71	192	165
Toronto	33	20	2	68	169	156
Tampa Bay	31	20	4	66	197	153
Ottawa	29	23	4	62	158	156
Detroit	28	22	5	61	160	171
Boston	27	24	6	60	157	182
Montreal	25	26	5	55	163	194
Buffalo	22	27	5	49	171	185

Note: Overtime or shootout losses are worth one point.

THE DAY IN SPORTS

Saints hire Eagles coordinator Moore as coach

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Kellen Moore, who oversaw the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles' offense, agreed to return to the site of his latest triumph as the next coach of the New Orleans Saints.

The 36-year-old Moore joins a team that has been floundering since the retirement of quarterback **Drew Brees** and departure of Super Bowl-winning coach **Sean Payton.** The Saints haven't made the playoffs since the 2020 season — the last of Brees' career.

Their interest in Moore became increasingly evident as the club waited longer to fill its vacancy than any other team seeking a coach. Moore could not be hired until after Sunday's title game.

The Saints' decision mirrors that of several teams that have found success after hiring relatively young offensive coaches. They include the Rams with **Sean McVay,** Green Bay with **Matt LaFleur,** Miami with **Mike McDaniel** and Minnesota with coach of the year **Kevin O'Connell.** All four were hired in their 30s.

A standout college quarterback at Boise State, Moore had a six-year career as a practice squad or reserve quarterback with Detroit (2012-14) and Dallas (2015-17). He played in just three regular-season games, all with the Cowboys in 2015. He moved into coaching in 2018 as a quarterbacks coach and was promoted to offensive coordinator in 2019. He left Dallas to join the Chargers in 2023 before moving to Philadelphia last year.

While Moore tended to favor pass-heavy schemes in his early years as a coordinator, he adapted when he joined the Eagles. Recognizing Philadelphia's strength as a running team — with its big, physical offensive line, star running back **Saquon Barkley** and mobile quarterback **Jalen Hurts** — Moore oversaw the NFL's second-ranked ground game.

Moore takes over an offense featuring versatile running back **Alvin Kamara** and receiver **Chris Olave.** Quarterback **Derek Carr** has two years left on his contract, but his future is cloudy after missing the playoffs two years in a row.

The Chargers hired former Florida State defensive coordinator **Adam Fuller** as their safeties coach.

— THUC NHI NGUYEN

ETC.

UCLA great Moomaw dies

Donn Moomaw, UCLA's first two-time All-American football player and a longtime pastor who performed the invocations at both of **President Reagan's** inaugurations, died Monday in Pasadena from undisclosed causes. He was 93.

Moomaw played a variety of positions for the Bruins from 1950 to 1952, starting as an end before moving to center and linebacker, his dominance at the latter position making him one of the best to play the position in school history. His big plays often prompted UCLA fans to chant "Moo-Maw!" in celebration. The school retired his No. 80 and he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1973.

As a senior in 1952, Moomaw finished fourth in voting for the Heisman Trophy while helping the Bruins finish 8-1 and reach the Pacific Coast Conference championship game.

A first-round pick of the Rams in 1953, Moomaw never played in the NFL, saying he did not want to play on Sundays, before playing briefly in the Canadian Football League while attending Princeton Theological Seminary. He went on to become a senior pastor at Bel Air Presbyterian Church for nearly 30 years.

— BEN BOLCH

The Department of Education took another step in advancing the Trump administration's new transgender policy for sports by asking the NCAA and a key high-school sports organization to restore titles, awards and records it says have been "misappropriated by biological males competing in female categories."

Forward **Brandon Ingram** agreed to a $120-million extension after being acquired by the Toronto Raptors at the trade deadline.

The U.S. Open is moving its mixed doubles championship to the week before singles play begins, hoping a revamped format and $1 million prize will persuade top players to chase a Grand Slam doubles title.

Americans **Breezy Johnson** and **Mikaela Shiffrin** paired to win gold in the team combined race at the world skiing championships.

NBA STANDINGS

Through Monday

Standings have been arranged to reflect how the teams will be determined for the playoffs. Teams are ranked 1-15 by record. Division standing no longer has any bearing on the rankings. The top six teams in each conference qualify for the playoffs. Teams seven through 10 will participate in a play-in tournament with the top-seeded team playing the lowest qualifying play-in team. The next-lowest qualifying team would play the second, etc. Head-to-head competition is the first of several tiebreakers, followed by conference record. (Western Conference divisions: S-Southwest; P-Pacific; N-Northwest; Eastern Conference divisions: A-Atlantic; C-Central; S-Southeast).

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	Rk.
1. Oklahoma City	43	9	.827		8-2	N1
2. Memphis	35	17	.673	8	8-2	S1
3. Denver	35	19	.648	9	7-3	N2
4. LAKERS	32	19	.627	10½	9-1	P1
5. Houston	33	20	.623	10½	4-6	S2
6. CLIPPERS	29	23	.558	14	5-5	P2
7. Minnesota	30	24	.556	14	7-3	N3
8. Dallas	28	26	.519	16	5-5	S3
9. Golden State	27	26	.509	½	6-4	P4
9. Sacramento	27	26	.509	½	4-6	P3
11. Phoenix	26	26	.500	1	5-5	P5
12. San Antonio	23	28	.451	3½	4-6	S4
13. Portland	23	31	.426	5	7-3	N4
14. Utah	12	40	.231	15	2-8	N5
15. New Orleans	12	41	.226	15½	1-9	S5

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	Rk.
1. Cleveland	43	10	.811		7-3	C1
2. Boston	38	16	.704	5½	7-3	A1
3. New York	34	18	.654	8½	7-3	A2
4. Indiana	29	22	.569	13	7-3	C2
5. Milwaukee	28	24	.538	14½	3-7	C3
6. Detroit	27	26	.509	16	5-5	C4
7. Miami	25	26	.490	17	4-6	S1
8. Atlanta	26	28	.481	17½	4-6	S2
9. Orlando	26	29	.473	½	3-7	S3
10. Chicago	22	31	.415	3½	4-6	C5
11. Philadelphia	20	32	.385	5	5-5	A3
12. Brooklyn	19	34	.358	6½	5-5	A4
13. Toronto	16	37	.302	9½	5-5	A5
14. Charlotte	13	38	.255	11½	2-8	S4
15. Washington	9	44	.170	17½	3-7	S5

MONDAY'S LATE BOX

LAKERS 132, JAZZ 113

UTAH

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Collins	35	5-10	6-7	3-11	0	4	17
Markkanen	28	8-18	0-0	1-3	1	1	17
Kessler	34	5-7	3-3	5-12	2	1	13
Clarkson	28	6-15	1-2	0-1	4	3	16
Collier	32	6-12	0-0	0-4	10	4	13
George	32	2-9	6-6	0-2	8	0	11
Juzang	17	4-8	3-4	2-4	2	2	14
Sensabaugh	12	0-1	1-2	0-1	2	1	1
Filipowski	9	3-4	1-1	0-1	0	0	9
Potter	5	0-0	2-2	0-0	0	0	2
Harkless	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Totals		**39-84**	**23-27**	**11-39**	**29**	**17**	**113**

Shooting: Field goals, 46.4%; free throws, 85.2%

Three-point goals: 12-40 (Juzang 3-7, Clarkson 3-10, Filipowski 2-3, Collins 1-2, Collier 1-3, George 1-6, Markkanen 1-8, Sensabaugh 0-1). Team Rebounds: 7. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 3 (Collins, Kessler, Markkanen). Turnovers: 19 (Collins 5, George 5, Collier 4, Kessler 3, Clarkson, Markkanen). Steals: 6 (Collins 2, Filipowski 2, Markkanen, Sensabaugh). Technical Fouls: None.

LAKERS

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Hachimura	29	8-14	2-2	2-6	0	4	21
L.James	29	10-17	1-2	1-7	8	2	24
Hayes	23	6-6	0-0	0-2	2	3	12
Doncic	23	5-14	3-3	1-5	4	3	14
Reaves	31	6-10	7-7	3-9	4	1	22
Finney-Smith	25	1-4	2-2	0-4	1	2	4
Goodwin	21	8-11	0-0	3-8	1	1	17
Vincent	17	4-9	0-0	0-0	4	1	11
Vanderbilt	17	0-3	0-0	0-2	1	1	0
Milton	7	0-2	2-2	0-1	1	0	2
Jemison III	6	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	3	2
Morris	6	1-1	0-0	0-0	2	1	3
Totals		**50-92**	**17-18**	**10-44**	**28**	**22**	**132**

Shooting: Field goals, 54.3%; free throws, 94.4%

Three-point goals: 15-42 (Reaves 3-5, Hachimura 3-6, L.James 3-7, Vincent 3-8, Morris 1-1, Goodwin 1-2, Doncic 1-7, Vanderbilt 0-1, Milton 0-2, Finney-Smith 0-3). Team Rebounds: 2. Team Turnovers: 2. Blocked Shots: 2 (Hayes, Reaves). Turnovers: 11 (L.James 7, Doncic, Hachimura, Jemison III, Vanderbilt). Steals: 11 (Hayes 3, Finney-Smith 2, Goodwin 2, Hachimura 2, L.James, Reaves). Technical Fouls: None.

Utah	25	22	28	38—113
LAKERS	37	35	28	32—132

A—18,997. T—2:14.

Fans, players enjoy a night of pure joy

[**Plaschke,** from B10]
during pregame warmups. They screamed it during introductions in which he, and not LeBron James, was announced last. They screamed it during every pause in the national anthem, finally singing it like it was the anthem itself.

"Luu-ka!...Luu-ka!"

Then the game started and they really screamed it, celebrating the new kid in the most buzzy Lakers regular-season game since Kobe Bryant's retirement night in 2016.

They screamed it when Doncic lofted a pretty ally-oop pass to a dunking Jaxson Hayes in the first minute. They screamed it when he nailed a three-pointer over Walker Kessler a few minutes later.

They screamed it when, clearly winded, he walked over to the bench for a cup of water.

They screamed it when he nonetheless hustled back to throw in a second-chance layup. They screamed it when he capped his night with a three-quarter-court pass to James for a picturesque layup.

They not only screamed his name, but they also wore it, on the backs of souvenir T-shirts that were laid across every seat before the game, "77" everywhere, the usually too-cool Lakers crowd donning the cotton from the lower bowl to the upper deck and, believe it or not, at least one courtside hipster even squeezed into the freebie.

The Lakers' 132-113 victory was a Luka Lovefest and, watching this oh-so-very serious team engage in three hours of circus, one got the feeling that things around here will never be the same.

"I'm most excited by just the spirit of the group that we laid the foundation of who we're going to be," Lakers coach JJ Redick said afterward.

That foundation rests on the shoulders of one of the two most promising incoming sports superstars in this city's history. Doncic is the Lakers' Shohei Ohtani, and in just a week he has taken this city by an inclusive storm.

How is this for a daily double? In his first postgame interview, Doncic answered a question in Spanish and acknowledged a $500,000 donation to fire relief efforts.



Gina Ferazzi Los Angeles Times

LUKA DONCIC, scoring here, said: "The amount of cheering ... was unbelievable, that was my favorite part."

"The amount of cheering in the arena, that was unbelievable, that was my favorite part," Doncic said, completing the triple play.

His game totals were average. He scored 14 points in 24 minutes, missed six of seven three-point tries and added five rebounds and four assists.

It was his first action since injuring a calf on Christmas, so he was on a minutes restriction, but there was no limit to his unselfishness, and he immediately made everybody better.

"He didn't make it about Luka, he made it about playing good basketball and playing Laker basketball," Redick said.

It wasn't about how much Doncic played, it was about how much fun it was to watch him play.

He constantly smiled, great plays, bad plays, it was as if nothing could wipe the grin off his face. He consistently gestured, like when he vigorously shook his head after sinking a jumper in the face of Johnny Juzang.

He was animated, attentive and, when it came to finding teammates with wild, whipping passes, otherworldly. He also lived up to his reputation for too strenuously yapping at officials — he didn't even wait two quarters until he was on their case! — but the Lakers will take a little bark for his tremendous bite.

He's 25, and it coolly shows. His shirt is slightly untucked as if he's in a rec league. He stutters and struts downcourt as if he's on a playground. He sticks his head down and shoots in opponents' faces as if he's trying to prove something.

One game in and he's already proved something.

This is a new Lakers culture. James is no longer their best player. Drudgery is no longer their best friend. Mediocrity is no longer their best hope.

"Luka is motivated and Luka is a competitor, and I expect that spirit to continue," said Redick, whose streaking team is suddenly in fourth place in the West.

Doncic said his motivation Monday came from different places.

First, there was the pregame text from James offering to give up his trademark spot at the end of introductions. Doncic jumped on the offer, then clarified that the honor now would be passed back to James.

"So it shows what kind of person he is, and he let me have my moment, so I really appreciate it," Doncic said.

Then, he was motivated by a pregame speech from James in which Doncic was urged just to be himself.

"After that speech, it was chills," Doncic said.

Finally, Doncic acknowledged he was blown away by walking in the arena and seeing some 19,000 fans holding or wearing his shirt.

"You could see when I came to the arena, I saw all the Luka jerseys, it was just a surreal feeling," Doncic said.

Granted, this first game was against the tanking Jazz, the same franchise that played patsy to Bryant's 60 points nine years ago. Certainly, Doncic and James and Austin Reaves have to show they can play defense with the same intensity as they score.

And even with the signing of Alex Len, certainly there's still a big question at center. They needed one so badly that several days after acquiring Doncic, they rushed through a trade for Charlotte 7-foot center Mark Williams to placate Doncic's request for a big man to catch his lobs and protect his back.

One problem. They didn't do their due diligence. Beyond various back, ankle, knee and foot injuries — this guy was a human ice pack — Williams had other injuries that showed up in his physical exam that caused the Lakers to rescind the trade.

Awkward!

This failure was not exactly a strong sales pitch to Doncic, who can become a free agent in 2026. He and his business associates surely must wonder, does the Rob Pelinka front office have its act together?

This was also not exactly a vote of confidence for rookie Dalton Knecht, the key Laker who was sent to Charlotte in the deal and then had to return to a Laker team where he now knows he's not entirely embraced.

Here's guessing he'll get over it. The Lakers suddenly created a bandwagon that is worth climbing aboard. A new destination fueled not by flimsy hopes, but a hammered chant.

"Luu-ka! Luu-ka!"

Doncic makes debut

[**Lakers,** from B10]
Lakers debut Monday was as much about the partnership between their two best players, No. 23 and No. 77 turning the building's energy all the way to 100.

Before the Lakers' 132-113 win against Utah, James and Doncic gathered in the team's huddle after introductions. Notably, Doncic, instead of James, heard his name last. And if Doncic needed another reminder of how he was being embraced, James gave it to him.

"Don't fit in," James told Doncic while addressing the team. "Fit the f— out. Be yourself."

"Chills," Doncic said of the moment.

James' enthusiasm was obvious. Before the game he warmed up in one of the Doncic No. 77 giveaway shirts. On the court, he didn't shoot for nearly the first six minutes of the game, setting the stage for the kind of team basketball the Lakers want to play despite having two of the best scorers in the same uniform.

Doncic's debut went predictably — moments of brilliance such as the step-back three for his first bucket, the full-court laser to James for the pair's first connection and the lockdown defensive possession on Jordan Clarkson. Others were signs of accumulated rust, Doncic missing six threes and nine shots overall in his first game since Christmas because of a calf strain. Before the game, coach JJ Redick said Doncic would be on a minutes limit as the Lakers "ease" him back into action, and Doncic logged just 24 minutes.

"Special," Doncic said of the moment. "The way they received me, everybody, it was amazing to see. I was a little bit nervous before. I don't remember the last time I was nervous before the game. But once I stepped on the court, it was fun. And just being out there again felt amazing."

He finished with 14 points, five rebounds and four assists — well below his season averages. But the reaction was purely positive.

"He handled it well," Redick said. "And, you know, knowing Luka, whether he will admit this or not, like there was probably a little bit of nerves playing for the Lakers for the first time. And the anticipation that our fans have, this building had, his teammates had, our coaching staff had. He kinda gets that, he sees that.

"And I thought he's handled it really well and he played really well tonight. He could not make a three outside of the first one, but he just, again, it goes back to all our guys, they just played agenda-free basketball. What tonight was not, he didn't make it about Luka. He made it about playing good basketball and playing Laker basketball."

Around him, the Lakers (32-19) were the kind of excellent they've been for the last 14 games. During that stretch the Lakers have won 12 times, losing only to the Clippers and the Philadelphia 76ers, discovering a toughness on both ends of the court.

Monday, James was again terrific on both ends, scoring 24 points and playing with incredible defensive energy. Austin Reaves, fresh off a 45-point game Saturday, scored 22 on only 10 shots while grabbing nine rebounds. Jaxson Hayes, the Lakers' new starting center after Mark Williams failed his physical, scored 12 points on six-of-six shooting. And Rui Hachimura had 21 points and six rebounds in a game the Lakers led by as many as 34.

Reserve guard Jordan Goodwin, playing just his second game since signing a two-way contract with the Lakers, scored 17 points and grabbed eight rebounds while playing terrific defense — a real need on the perimeter after the team dealt Max Christie.



Gina Ferazzi Los Angeles Times

LeBRON JAMES led the Lakers to a sixth straight win as his partnership with Luka Doncic began.

"He knows what we're trying to do," Redick said of Goodwin. "And frankly, he's kind of the prototypical guy that we want in one of those spots because he plays hard, he crashes the offensive glass, he has a toughness about him, he has a team-first attitude. I just think it speaks volumes to the type of person that he is, that he was prepared and is willing to go to battle with these guys."

Battle is a good word for the way the Lakers have played, showing more fight and toughness in their final home game before the All-Star break. Doncic, who has been watching the team win all three of its games since he joined, saw the template. Fit in, fit out, whatever.

The real takeaway Monday was that with the NBA's hottest team, the No. 77 gold jersey looked like a big part of it all.

"Since I came here, I just wanted to play with them," Doncic said.

"So every game I saw, they played amazing, very connected, and for me, it was just I want to be there with them."

The wait is over; Doncic is here. He's a Laker.

"It was awesome," Reaves said. "I thought the energy from that point forward was great. His introduction in the starting lineup was one of the loudest I've heard since I've been here. Lakers nation, continue to do that because he deserves it."

Lakers sign center Len; Wood waived

The Lakers are signing free-agent 7-foot center Alex Len for the remainder of the season, the team announced Tuesday afternoon.

The team is waiving veteran big man Christian Wood, who has not played since last February while dealing with a left knee injury.

Len, 31, played 36 games for Sacramento before being sent to Washington at the trade deadline.

He was waived following the three-team trade and intended to sign with Indiana, but when the Lakers' trade for Mark Williams was rescinded last weekend, Len saw an opportunity for playing time with a contender behind new starter Jaxson Hayes.

In limited playing time, the 250-pound Len is averaging 1.4 points, 1.8 rebounds and 0.5 blocks.

A former lottery pick by the Phoenix Suns, Len has spent the majority of his 680-game NBA career as a backup.

He's averaged 6.7 points, 5.3 rebounds and 0.9 blocks. He provides some size and insurance for the Lakers behind Hayes, the only other true center on the roster.

Cheers in L.A., catcalls in Dallas greet big trade

While Lakers fans embrace Doncic, Mavericks supporters want GM fired.

By Steve Henson

Yes, it was a tale of two arenas Monday night, where visceral reactions to the blockbuster trade that shook the NBA a week ago were evident in Los Angeles and Dallas.

Lakers fans rejoiced during Luka Doncic's debut at Crypto.com Arena, donning team-issued No. 77 shirts and chanting *"Luu-ka"* at every opportunity during a win over the Utah Jazz.

Meanwhile at American Airlines Center, Mavericks fans were dejected and ejected because they objected to the trade by hoisting signs and loudly calling for the firing of general manager Nico Harrison during an overtime loss to the Sacramento Kings.

Harrison has been the subject of intense resentment from fans since trading the immensely talented and popular Doncic to the Lakers for the immensely talented but often injured Anthony Davis. It certainly didn't help the mood in Texas when Davis exited his Mavericks debut Saturday because of an adductor injury after dominating with 26 points, 16 rebounds and seven assists in 31 minutes. Davis is expected to be sidelined for a month.

A thousand or so people, some wearing "Fire Nico" T-shirts, protested outside the arena before that game. The ire escalated Monday night, with the crowd booing lustily each time a fan was led from their seats to the exit for violating the code of conduct.

Two fans held up "Fire Nico" signs, and one was seen mouthing those same words on the video screens before being ejected. Later in the game, two men were shown the door after a profane shouting match with Mark Cuban, the longtime Mavericks owner.

Cuban, who sold 69% of the team to casino magnates Miriam Adelson and Patrick Dumont in 2023, told ESPN the fans yelled, "Fire Nico" while the Mavericks shot free throws and again later.

Harrison wasn't seen in his usual seat in the arena's lower bowl, but Dumont was booed when he returned to his courtside seat in the third quarter. Mavericks players, for their part, took the fan reaction in stride.

"It's not our job to get deflated because people are upset," Klay Thompson told reporters. "Our job is to convince them that there are really great days ahead, not just for this year but for the next few years.

"People are going to say stuff, and that's understandable. I was a fan, I'm still a fan. If I didn't agree with a trade, I'd probably voice my opinion too. That's the beauty of sports. You go there to yell and be rambunctious sometimes."

Kyrie Irving alluded to Mavericks fans experiencing a grieving process.

"To see the emotions come out like that over basketball, that just shows you that basketball is not just a game to certain people," Irving said. "It's a spiritual experience. It's a connector piece, and they watch their favorite players and they want to see them forever."



KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH Associated Press

ALYSSA THOMPSON jumps over England's Lucy Bronze during an international friendly on Nov. 30.

Thompson sisters called up to U.S. roster for SheBelieves Cup

Angel City teammates will continue their development with Alyssa in a larger role.

BY KEVIN BAXTER

Sisters Alyssa and Gisele Thompson were called up Tuesday to the U.S. women's soccer team for this month's SheBelieves Cup, marking just the third time siblings have been named to the same senior national team. But there were big names missing from the 23-woman roster, among them defender Naomi Girma, who last month moved to Chelsea on a $1-million transfer, the most expensive in women's soccer history.

Girma, who last year was named to the FIFA global Best XI after helping the U.S. to a gold medal in the Paris Olympics, was one of 10 Olympians left off the team. Others missing include midfielder Rose Lavelle and forwards Sophia Smith, Mallory Swanson and Trinity Rodman. Meanwhile four of the women coach Emma Hayes called up never have appeared in a senior national team and seven others have eight or fewer caps.

That gives coach Hayes a chance to audition a new wave of players.

"These are opportunities for both of the Thompsons to not only show a lot about who they are as players, but listen, they're great characters off the pitch and I'm sure they're both pretty excited to be coming to camp as sisters," Hayes said. "I know I grew up playing football with my sister and how much fun that was. So I'm sure both of them are dizzy as hell today."

But the first competitive matches of the year for the team will be about more than fun and games for the sisters.

"Alyssa, we have been working hard on her development and particularly understanding of the way we want to play," Hayes said. "I feel like it will take maybe half a dozen experiences with Alyssa and us to really get her into a place where I think we will start taking next steps.

"With Gisele, we need to develop more fullbacks. We have to prepare a deeper pool of players as we progress in the buildup to qualify for the next World Cup. We need to develop certain players in certain positions and what better way to give them exposure [than to] put them in situations like the SheBelieves."



FERNANDO VERGARA Associated Press

GISELE THOMPSON celebrates scoring during a U20 Women's World Cup match in September.

U.S. women's soccer team roster

GOALKEEPERS

Jane Campbell (Houston Dash), Mandy McGlynn (Utah Royals)

DEFENDERS

Tierna Davidson (NJ/NY Gotham), Crystal Dunn (Paris Saint-Germain), Emily Fox (Arsenal), Tara McKeown (Washington Spirit), Jenna Nighswonger (Arsenal), Emily Sams (Orlando Pride), Emily Sonnett (NJ/NY Gotham), Gisele Thompson (Angel City FC)

MIDFIELDERS

Korbin Albert (Paris Saint-Germain), Sam Coffey (Portland Thorns FC), Lindsey Heaps (née Horan, Olympique Lyon), Claire Hutton (Kansas City Current), Jaedyn Shaw (North Carolina Courage), Lily Yohannes (Ajax)

FORWARDS

Lynn Biyendolo (née Williams, Seattle Reign FC), Michelle Cooper (Kansas City Current), Catarina Macario (Chelsea FC), Yazmeen Ryan (Houston Dash), Emma Sears (Racing Louisville), Ally Sentnor (Utah Royals), Alyssa Thompson (Angel City FC)

The Thompson sisters signed with Angel City as teenagers; Alyssa, a forward, in the winter of 2023 and Gisele, a defender, a year later. Alyssa, now 20, went on to play in the World Cup as a rookie while Gisele, 19, was called into a previous training camp but has not appeared in a game and won't at the SheBelieves Cup.

The first pair of sisters called up for senior national team games were twins Lorrie and Ronnie Fair in the 1990s. More recently Samantha and Kristie Mewis were on the 2021 Olympic team together.

Sixteen of the players called up this month play in the NWSL, while seven others come from five European clubs. One of those is Chelsea forward Catarina Macario, who had to withdraw from the Olympic team because of a knee injury last summer. She hasn't played for the U.S. since last June.

Defender Savy King, recently acquired by Angel City in a trade with Bay FC, will be in camp as a training player but also will not appear on any game rosters. Hayes said King, 20, who never has played for the senior team, is with Gisele Thompson in the pool of young players being considered for a spot on the back line.

PRO CALENDAR

	WED 12	THU 13	FRI 14	SAT 15	SUN 16
LAKERS	**at Utah** 6 SpecSN				
CLIPPERS	**MEMPHIS** 7:30 Ch. 5	**at Utah** 6 FDSC			
KINGS	**NEXT: VS. UTAH, FEB. 22, 6 P.M., FDW**				
DUCKS	**NEXT: AT BOSTON, FEB. 22, 4 P.M., CH. 11, VICTORY+**				
GALAXY	**OPENER: VS. SAN DIEGO, FEB. 23, 4 P.M, APPLE TV+**				
LAFC	**OPENER: VS. MINNESOTA, FEB. 22, 1:30 P.M., CH. 11, APPLE TV+**				

Shade denotes home games

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
AUTO RACING		
7 a.m.	NASCAR Cup, Daytona 500, opening practice	**TV:** FS1
5 p.m.	NASCAR Cup, Daytona 500, qualifying	**TV:** FS1
BASKETBALL: G LEAGUE		
7 p.m.	Austin at South Bay Lakers	**TV:** SNLA
BASKETBALL: NBA		
4 p.m.	San Antonio at Boston	**TV:** ESPN
6 p.m.	Lakers at Utah	**TV:** Spec SN **R:** 710, 1330
6:30 p.m.	Golden State at Dallas	**TV:** ESPN
7:30 p.m.	Memphis at Clippers	**TV**: 5 **R:** 570
COLLEGE BASKETBALL: MEN		
3 p.m.	St. John's at Villanova	**TV:** FS1
3:30 p.m.	Iowa at Rutgers	**TV:** Big Ten
4 p.m.	Mississippi at South Carolina	**TV:** SEC
4 p.m.	Louisville at North Carolina State	**TV:** ESPN2
4 p.m.	Oklahoma State at Texas Christian	**TV:** CBSSN
4 p.m.	Florida State at Wake Forest	**TV:** ESPNU
4 p.m.	Stanford at Georgia Tech	**TV:** ACC
5:30 p.m.	Washington at Ohio State	**TV:** Big Ten
6 p.m.	California at Duke	**TV:** ACC
6 p.m.	Louisiana State at Arkansas	**TV:** ESPN2
6 p.m.	Arizona State at Texas Tech	**TV:** CBSSN
6 p.m.	Oklahoma at Missouri	**TV:** SEC
6 p.m.	Notre Dame at Boston College	**TV:** ESPNU
7 p.m.	Wyoming at New Mexico	**TV:** FS1
COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL		
6 p.m.	Men, USC at UC Irvine	**TV:** ESPN+
7 p.m.	Men, Long Beach State at UCLA	**TV:** Big Ten+
GOLF		
1:30 a.m. (Thurs.)	Ladies Euro Tour, Saudi Ladies International, first round	**TV:** Golf
HOCKEY: 4 NATIONS FACE-OFF		
5 p.m.	Canada vs. Sweden	**TV:** TNT, TruTV
RUGBY		
12:45 a.m. (Thurs.)	NRL, Canberra vs. Cronulla-Sutherland	**TV:** FS2
SKIING		
12:45 a.m. (Thurs.)	FIS World Cup, women's giant slalom, first run	**TV:** Peacock
4:15 a.m. (Thurs.)	FIS World Cup, women's giant slalom, second run	**TV:** Peacock
SOCCER		
9:45 a.m.	UEFA Champions League, Club Brugge vs. Atalanta	**TV:** Paramount+, UniMas, TUDN
11 a.m.	MLS preseason, Galaxy vs. Minnesota	**TV:** 13
11:30 a.m.	England, Everton vs. Liverpool	**TV:** USA, Universo
Noon	UEFA Champions League, Celtic vs. Bayern Munich	**TV:** Paramount+
Noon	UEFA Champions League, Monaco vs. Benfica	**TV:** Paramount+
Noon	UEFA Champions League, Feyenoord vs. AC Milan	**TV:** Paramount+, UniMas, TUDN
1 p.m.	CONCACAF U17 championship, Grenada vs. Dominican Republic	**TV:** FS2
5 p.m.	CONCACAF Champions Cup, Guadalajara vs. Cibao	**TV:** FS2, TUDN
7 p.m.	CONCACAF Champions Cup, Tigres UANL vs. Real Esteli	**TV:** FS2, TUDN
TENNIS		
6 a.m.	WTA Doha; ATP Marseille, Buenos Aires, Delray Beach, early rounds	**TV:** Tennis

Simmons relishes his shot at being backup point

He says he's set to go after joining Clippers, possibly as early as Wednesday night.

BY ANTHONY DE LEON

Ben Simmons has yet to take the court for the Clippers, but after his first full practice with the team, he looked fresh and rejuvenated. Both sides are counting on a change of scenery to help him rediscover his All-Star form.

Simmons is coming off a turbulent 2 ½ seasons with the Brooklyn Nets marked by injuries, unfulfilled expectations and criticisms. Now, he's looking to move past those struggles and contribute to a Clippers team that holds the No. 6 seed in the Western Conference just days before the All-Star break.

"I just want to compete, regardless of all the bulls— said online," Simmons said. "I'm here to do that, and playing alongside some of these great players... Everyone's just going to push each other to be better and expect greatness."

The Clippers (29-23) are rolling the dice on the oft-maligned Simmons, who sees the move as a comfortable fit. He joins a veteran squad led by Kawhi Leonard, Norman Powell and James Harden — whom he was traded for at the 2022 deadline, sending him to Brooklyn and Harden to Philadelphia.

"Making the decision to come here, I felt wanted," Simmons said. "That's something you want to feel when you go to work."

Simmons has welcomed the move to L.A., which he anticipated because of his longtime relationship with Clippers coach Tyronn Lue. The two nearly connected in Philadelphia when Lue was a previous coaching candidate, and their relationship goes even further back to when Simmons was with Klutch Sports, which represents Lue.

Simmons had several suitors after being released by the Nets and said conversations with Lue and the franchise's honesty about his role ultimately attracted him to L.A.

"Everyone was just very transparent," Simmons said. "They know what I'm capable of and what they expect from me. I'm willing to give that and ready to go."

Simmons' immediate role is to come off the bench as the point guard for the second unit. His main focus will be pushing the ball and providing a defensive presence, bolstering one of the NBA's top two defenses and creating tough matchups as the team enters the second half.



WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

BEN SIMMONS practices at the Intuit Dome after signing with the Clippers over the weekend.

"I spoke to a few different teams, that was the first thing they [the Clippers] said to me, 'We see point guard,'" Simmons said. "That's my position... I want to get my guys going, get them easy buckets, control the pace. And then, on the defensive end, I want to be a dog."

Simmons has played in 33 of the Nets' 52 games, starting 24. He's averaging 6.2 points, 5.2 rebounds, and 6.9 assists over 25.4 minutes per game.

Lue acknowledges it will take time to figure out where Simmons fits in the scheme, saying, "You have a point guard who can play both center and point, so it depends on which unit he's with." There is an expectation that there will be a learning curve as Simmons integrates into the rotation and gets a feel for how the Clippers want the second unit to play.

He is one of several newly acquired players, joining others added around the trade deadline. Lue believes the organization excels at helping players adjust to a new setting, offering them a much-needed reset.

"Giving someone a fresh start," Lue said of the players who come to the organization. "It's always good to get a fresh start and start over. Not worry about the past and what you've done in the past. Get to a new place where you know you're welcome."

At 28, a more experienced Simmons says he doesn't let outside chatter — especially on social media — affect his mentality. He's completely avoiding it, instead focusing on his journey toward becoming true to himself.

"I really don't look at it," Simmons said of social media. "Once you're comfortable knowing who you are as a person, it's irrelevant — all of that, the extra noise. I try to stay away from it."

Simmons' health has been a concern for much of his career and remains so, primarily because of lingering nerve damage in his lower back. A combination of back, calf and knee soreness this season has forced him to miss almost 20 games, a pattern that has become all too familiar.

Simmons says he isn't dealing with any limitations and is ready to play, but questions remain about when he will make his Clippers debut.

The decision will come tomorrow after he meets with the training staff, who will have the final say on whether he plays at home Wednesday against the Memphis Grizzlies or waits until Thursday's game against the Jazz in Utah. If he suits up for the former, he may sit out against Utah because he has yet to be cleared for back-to-backs.

SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025 ⁘ LATIMES.COM/SPORTS



Photographs by GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

NEWEST Laker Luka Doncic, left, gets love from Dorian Finney-Smith after scoring Monday against Utah. Doncic was cheered by fans all night.

Joyful debut for L.A.'s latest star

Thunderous chants of *Luu-ka!* show he's new face of the franchise

BILL PLASCHKE



Luu-ka!...Luu-ka!

For three exhilarating hours they screamed his name.

For three franchise-changing hours, these were the Los Angeles Lukas.

It was only his first game in purple and gold since being stolen from the Dallas Mavericks nine days ago, yet Luka Doncic and the Lakers fans already were on a first-name basis.

On a wondrous night against the Utah Jazz at Crypto.com Arena, a new era began with two syllables and a prayer.

"Luu...ka! Luu...ka!"

They screamed it when he showed up on the court [See **Plaschke,** B8]



LAKERS guard Jordan Goodwin forces a turnover by Utah's Keyonte George during L.A.'s blowout win, its 12th in the last 14 games.

Doncic shows flashes of brilliance amid buzz with new partner James

BY DAN WOIKE

It wasn't like any other night, not in the story of this season, not in the history of this franchise.

Before Luka Doncic played his first second as a Laker, his name and number were on a T-shirt draped over every seat in Crypto.com Arena. His aura was inescapable, from the Serbian pregame music to the buzz in the building each time his face appeared on the scoreboard.

It'd been more than a week since the Lakers shocked everyone by dealing for Doncic, a move that seemingly secured the organization its future. This was what people wanted to see.

And among those people? LeBron James.

Someday, this will be Doncic's franchise, but his [See **Lakers,** B8]

NO GUARANTEES

Of the five MLB teams with history's best regular-season records, only the 1998 New York Yankees' season culminated in a World Series title.

1906 CHICAGO CUBS	2001 SEATTLE MARINERS	1998 NEW YORK YANKEES	1954 CLEVELAND INDIANS	2022 DODGERS
116-36-3 (.763)	116-46 (.716)	114-48 (.704)	111-43-2 (.721)	111-51 (.685)
Lost in World Series	*Lost in ALCS*	*Won World Series*	*Lost World Series*	*Lost in NLDS*

Reigning champions rein in playoff glory

Dodgers open spring training focused on putting World Series title behind them.

BY JACK HARRIS

PHOENIX — As the Dodgers opened spring training at Camelback Ranch on Tuesday, reminders of the team's World Series title were everywhere.

On the side of the hitting facility building, a banner had been added to the seven other championship markers. On a grass hill behind one of the backfields, a large painting of the club's World Series championship logo loomed behind the backstop. That same logo was plastered around the clubhouse too, printed on nameplates adorning every locker.

"It's a little bit of a relief we got over the hump," third baseman Max Muncy said of the club's second title in five years and first in a full season since 1988.

"It's an exciting time to be part of this organization," veteran catcher Austin Barnes echoed.

Yet, as pitchers and catchers reported for their first workout of camp — alongside a majority of other position players who arrived early to the training facility — signs of change were evident too.

The team's six new signings were getting acquainted with their new surroundings, representing the [See **Dodgers,** B7]



ROSS D. FRANKLIN Associated Press

SHOHEI OHTANI, who will pitch this season after exclusively hitting in 2024, gives the Dodgers a deep rotation that could make for a record-setting season.

Looking at magic number of 120 is not a pipe dream

DYLAN HERNÁNDEZ



PHOENIX — The Dodgers have fielded stacked teams during the previous 12 years, but none of them was as stacked as the team they have now.

A $1.4-billion winter last offseason was followed by a $465-million winter this offseason, the continued investments in the roster offering them a chance to do more than become the first team to defend its World Series title in 25 years.

The Dodgers have a chance to become the greatest team in baseball history.

They have a chance to win 120 games.

Hold on — 120 games?

Is that really possible?

"Of course," veteran shortstop Miguel Rojas said.

Rojas mentioned how the record for wins in a season is 116, shared by the 1906 Chicago Cubs and 2001 Seattle Mariners.

"It's just four more wins," Rojas said.

Look at the nameplates above the lockers at the team's spring-training facility and Rojas' claim [See **Hernández,** B7]

Simmons wants to block out the noise

Newest Clipper seeks a fresh start and says "I just want to compete" as he prepares for backup role. **B9**

Jansen back in Southern California

Longtime Dodgers closer agrees to $10-million, one-year deal with Angels to help stabilize bullpen. **B7**

New power center at USC football

General manager Bowden will control personnel decisions, leaving Riley to focus on coaching Trojans. **B6**

Los Angeles Times

SPORTS EXTRA

A TIMES E-NEWSPAPER EXCLUSIVE :: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025



CRAIG PESSMAN Associated Press

ILLINOIS guard Kasparas Jakucionis drives past UCLA guard Skyy Clark, who was taunted all night by the opposing fans after transferring to the Bruins.

UCLA sees winning streak come to end

BY BEN BOLCH

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Skyy Clark's three-pointer was well off the mark, UCLA's latest empty possession triggering more vitriol.

"Skyy you suck!" chanted the Illinois students who felt jilted by the Bruins guard's departure from their beloved team more than a year ago.

The Illini were no less forgiving on the court.

Scoring with ease and disrupting every UCLA player besides Tyler Bilodeau, Illinois ended the Bruins' nearly monthlong winning streak after withstanding an epic comeback over the final minutes.

Trailing by 16 points with less than five minutes to play, UCLA was within two points after the Bruins made 10 consecutive shots and Sebastian Mack made two free throws with 12.8 seconds left.

After the Illini broke the Bruins' press, UCLA's William Kyle fouled Ben Humrichous, who made the first free throw and missed the second. But Illinois' Tomislav Ivisic tipped out the offensive rebound, the Bruins were forced to foul again and two more Illini free throws sealed their fate during an 83-78 loss Tuesday night inside State Farm Center.

UCLA's defense was too pliable in enabling the Illini to shoot 50.9% on the way to ending the Bruins' seven-game winning streak. Illinois was also the far tougher team, outrebounding UCLA (18-7 overall, 9-5 Big Ten) by 13 while grabbing 10 offensive rebounds.

Bilodeau finished with 25 points, making nine of 17 shots and seven of 12 three-pointers while fueling a comeback that seemed unlikely given the way the Illini were getting almost everything they wanted offensively.

Kasparas Jakucionis scored 24 points to lead Illinois (17-8, 9-6).

Clark's return to Illinois was not a quiet one. Students were on the UCLA guard — who spent his freshman season here — from the moment they spotted him before the game.

"Quitter!" the students chanted before heckling him while he shot practice free throws.

As if that wasn't enough, two students positioned behind UCLA's basket scribbled messages on whiteboards.

"#55 5 teams 5 years" one message read, alluding to Clark having also played at Louisville in addition to a series of high schools.

"When you guys leave, Skyy knows where the door is," another message read.

There was another more pressing irritant for the Bruins.

Coming off a stretch in which they took care of the ball at a historic level, committing just three turnovers in back-to-back games for the first time since the statistic was tracked starting with the 1976-77 season, the Bruins were not nearly as meticulous Tuesday.

When Dylan Andrews lost the ball to conclude a sloppy stretch by his team, UCLA had its fourth turnover and only 6:10 had elapsed.

The Illini paired the extra possessions with some cold shooting by the Bruins to zip into an early 11-point lead that they eventually extended to 15.

A turning point came when UCLA's Aday Mara entered the game with about six minutes before halftime, the big man disrupting Illinois' offense as the Bruins went on a 12-5 run fueled by two Bilodeau three-pointers.

With his team trailing only 31-25 at the game's midpoint despite a fairly dreadful showing, UCLA coach Mick Cronin turned toward his bench and clapped in encouragement as the Bruins headed for the locker room.

They would not be in nearly as good of a mood the next time they headed there.

Agbo and teammates ailing but get Trojans much-needed victory

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Wesley Yates III wiped the sweat already pouring from his forehead and steeled himself for the 40 brutal minutes to come. It already had been a miserable week, as an illness wreaked havoc on USC's rotation, right after the Trojans returned from a two-loss trip. Yates and fellow starter Chibuzo Agbo had been among the hardest hit. Both were on IV drips Tuesday afternoon, leaving their status very much in question for a game that USC desperately needed.

But by tipoff Tuesday night against Penn State, they took their places as usual, with little more than flop sweat to suggest something was amiss. So too did Desmond Claude, the point guard whose bruised knee held him out of the previous two games.

None of USC's three top scorers were anywhere near 100%. Claude fought through a minor limp all night, tending to his knee at each stoppage, while Agbo and Yates looked a bit sluggish in stretches, still fighting through symptoms. But with the Trojans' tournament hopes hinging on turning around their season in a hurry, the trio delivered in a 92-67 victory over the Nittany Lions.

Agbo, whose status was perhaps the most in doubt, looked as smooth as ever from three-point range as he hit seven of nine attempts to lead the team with 21 points, tying a season high.

Yates added two of his own from deep, finishing with 13 points, four rebounds and four assists.

Neither looked at all like he'd spent the last several days sick and depleted.

An aching knee couldn't slow Claude as he knifed through the lane with ease, exploding for 10 first-half points before dialing it back after halftime. Without him the previous two games, USC (14-10, 6-7 Big Ten) had been largely aimless on offense. But in his return, Claude scored 16 points and dished out eight assists as the Trojans quickly regained their footing on offense.

It couldn't have come soon enough, considering how tightly the Trojans are clinging to the NCAA tournament bubble. With four losses in their last seven games, USC can't afford to drop many more winnable games, especially against teams below them in the Big Ten standings.

That was never really in doubt Tuesday.

After a sloppy start in which the Trojans turned the ball over five times in four minutes, USC hit 12 of its first 16 shots from the field. Penn State (13-12, 3-11) went nine minutes without converting a field goal, and the Trojans built a 17-point lead in the first half.

Nothing could hold them back from there, as USC was lifted by a trio of players who hadn't been sure they'd play just a few hours earlier.

—RYAN KARTJE



MARK J. TERRILL Associated Press

COACH ERIC MUSSELMAN, shown last month, had his top three scorers sick or injured on Tuesday night, but USC's win over Penn State kept the Trojans on the NCAA tournament bubble.

MLB

Boone: We'd have 'more class' than L.A.

Three months after the World Series, Yankees manager Aaron Boone remains unhappy with some of the Dodgers' remarks after they beat a sloppy New York team in five games for the title.

Speaking on Tuesday at the start of spring training in Tampa, Fla., Boone was asked whether his players took the comments personally.

"Probably a little bit," he said, "but the reality is we didn't play our best in the series and they won, so they have that right to say whatever. Hopefully, we're in that position next year and handle things with a little more class, but the reality is it's a great team, it's a great organization with a lot of great people that I happen to know and respect too.

"So a few people sounding off isn't necessarily how I would want to draw it up. But they're the champs. They have that right."

Dodgers pitcher Joe Kelly said on his "Baseball Isn't Boring" podcast the Dodgers entered each game saying: "Just let them throw the ball into the infield. They can't make a play."

—ASSOCIATED PRESS

Los Angeles Times

The Times of Troy

AN L.A. TIMES SPORTS NEWSLETTER









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ENTERTAINMENT

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CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

COMIC Felipe Esparza just released his fifth stand-up special on Netflix and is touring the U.S.

ONE VEGAN SPECIAL, PLEASE

Comedian Felipe Esparza talks about 'Raging Fool,' going on a meat-free diet and why 'humor is definitely a lifesaver'

BY ALEX DISTEFANO

Before Felipe Esparza became a star comedian traveling all over the world at his leisure, it was a struggle for the L.A. comic to get around without a car. For years, he got to all his gigs by public transit, hopping buses and trains to local clubs until he could afford his own set of wheels.

That all changed after he won NBC's "Last Comic Standing" in 2010. He leveled up, began touring the country, then the world, and never looked back. Since his big break, Esparza has also ventured into acting, with roles in such movies as "You People," "Daddy Daughter Trip" and "Guest House." He has also appeared on TV shows including "Gentefied" and "The Eric Andre Show."

His raw, personal narrative-like jokes delve into topics that are dark and taboo, like domestic violence, the sex lives of married couples, drug and alcohol abuse and other dysfunctions growing up in a Mexican family. Esparza also hosts the comedy podcast "What's Up Fool?" which has been one of the top comedy podcasts for the last 10 years.

Esparza recently spoke with The Times about his fifth full comedy special, "Raging Fool," which [See **Esparza,** E6]

Joe Cocker, Maná, Outkast are up for Rock Hall of Fame

Ballot includes Bad Company, Chubby Checker, Billy Idol, Phish, Black Crowes.

MIKAEL WOOD
POP MUSIC CRITIC



CHERYL GERBER AP



GREG ALLEN Invision / AP

CLASS of 2025 nominees to the Rock Hall of Fame include Joe Cocker, top, and Mariah Carey.

Bad Company, Chubby Checker, Outkast, Maná and the late Joe Cocker are among the acts nominated for the first time for induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, the organization announced Wednesday.

Also on the ballot for the Class of 2025 are the Black Crowes, Billy Idol and Phish (all first-time nominees) as well as six acts that have previously been up for induction: Mariah Carey, Cyndi Lauper, Oasis, Soundgarden, the White Stripes and a combined entry for Joy Division and its later incarnation, New Order.

The group of artists representing rock, pop, R&B, grunge, hip-hop, post-punk and rock en español reflects the increasing diversification of the hall, which after years of criticism that it overvalued the work of older white men has recently broadened its selection process along gender, race and style lines.

"Continuing in the true spirit of rock 'n' roll, these artists have created their own sounds that have impacted generations and influenced countless others that have followed in their footsteps," John Sykes, chairman of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation, said in a statement. Last year's inductees were Mary J. Blige, Cher, the Dave Matthews Band, Foreigner, Peter Frampton, Kool & the Gang, Ozzy Osbourne and A Tribe Called Quest.

[See **Rock Hall,** E6]



TIMOTHY A. CLARY Agence France-Presse

GRAMMY WINNER Kendrick Lamar performs surrounded by dancers dressed in red, white and blue.

'The revolution' stirs up Super Bowl stage

Kendrick Lamar's halftime show has fans decoding its political and social symbolism.

BY CERYS DAVIES

Standing atop a Buick GNX, rapper Kendrick Lamar warned, "The revolution 'bout to be televised. You picked the right time, but the wrong guy."

Flipping Gil Scott-Heron's 1971 poem about Black liberation, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," (and possibly taking aim at President Trump, who was in attendance), Lamar utilized his 13-minute Super Bowl halftime performance to tell a uniquely American story — all while dissing Canadian rapper Drake.

Fresh off a clean sweep earlier this month at the Grammys, the 37-year-old Compton rapper elicited a slew of theories and interpretations, from both fans and peers, about his performance, which celebrated Black culture. As his dancers, dressed in red, white and blue, assembled to create a divided American flag, with Lamar at its center, his storytelling was subtle but powerful.

[See **Halftime,** E6]



Antipode Films

LIVES under siege in "No Other Land."

Harrowing doc on destruction

In "No Other Land," a cry of conscience over the West Bank takeover. Review, **E2**

Novelist known for irreverence

Tom Robbins was an author who spun playful, subversive tales. He was 92. **E2**

Comics **E4-5**
Puzzles **E5**

Painting a picture of Hockney's L.A. haunts

With a Palm Springs retrospective on, it's a great time to visit the artist's local hangouts.

BY ANGELLA D'AVIGNON

Artist David Hockney was a driver: After visiting and then moving to Los Angeles in 1964, he'd zip around the Hollywood Hills in his red 450 SL Mercedes, perhaps to Chateau Marmont, his spot in Malibu or the studio at multimedia workshop Gemini G.E.L. on Santa Monica Boulevard.

"For David in the 1960s, Los Angeles was an enigma — a unique city different from his native London or even from New York City, where he had his first encounter with 'America,' " says his close friend and fellow artist Doug E. Roberts.

The drives were a way not only to catalog the landscapes he would later paint but also to understand the way the sun affected the visual identity of the city. "Southern California has a different light than any place he had ever visited," Roberts says.

If a friend were visiting for lunch at the beach, Hockney would take them on a "Wagner Drive," something he devised as an opera-loving motorist. He'd drive up through Malibu Canyon to Mulholland Drive and then west to Decker Canyon, where he would time the turns and crests to the crescendos of the classical composition. "He's always fooling around," says Roberts. As Hockney drove he'd fast-forward the CD in the player to match the view in order to maximize the drama of the landscape.

One of Hockney's first drives to Los Angeles was a cross-country dash with a pal: Brian Epstein had written on a napkin in Chicago inviting Hockney to see the Beatles in Los Angeles. He and a friend drove straight from Chicago to California in order to make it to the Hollywood Bowl in time, napkin in hand as his ticket backstage.

Many of the places Hockney loved simply don't exist the way they once did. For [See **Hockney,** E3]



MICHAEL CHILDERS

DAVID HOCKNEY in a friend's pool on Rising Glen Road in the Hollywood Hills. He often worked there.

TOM ROBBINS, 1932 – 2025

Counterculture novelist known for irreverence

His journey spanned odd jobs and restless travels before he found literary fame.

By Dorany Pineda



Ulf Andersen Getty Images

LIVING BETWEEN IMAGINATION AND REALITY
American author Tom Robbins at a 2007 book fair in France. Robbins is known for his playful, boundary-pushing novels like "Another Roadside Attraction."

Tom Robbins, a 1970s counterculture author hailed as "the most dangerous writer in the world" by a leading Italian critic and named one of the 100 best writers of the 20th century by Writer's Digest magazine in 2000, has died. He was 92.

His son Fleetwood confirmed his death Sunday to the New York Times. No cause was cited.

Born Thomas Eugene Robbins, the iconoclastic American author was known for his silly, irreverent novels from the 1970s and '80s. In them, characters burst with life through his wordplay and fervent philosophical opinions. The best-selling author of more than 11 books, including classics like "Another Roadside Attraction," "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues" and "Jitterbug Perfume," morphed the 1960s optimistic hippie sensibility into bizarre and playful stories.

His first novel, "Another Roadside Attraction," was published in 1971 when Robbins was 39 — more than three decades after declaring to his parents, at age 5, that he'd be a writer. The novel became an underground classic.

His subsequent novel in 1976, "Even Cowgirls Get the Blues," spotlighted the dynamic Sissy Hankshaw, a woman with supersized thumbs who capitalizes on her mutation by becoming a hitchhiker. American novelist Thomas Pynchon called it "a piece of working magic, warm, funny and sane."

The story was adapted into a 1993 film directed by Gus Van Sant, starring Uma Thurman and Keanu Reeves, and was narrated by Robbins. It received poor reviews and was a commercial failure.

Though quoted as once saying that he'd never write a memoir, his "Tibetan Peach Pie: A True Account of an Imaginative Life," published in 2014, stitched together stories of his extraordinary life. From his childhood in the Appalachian mountains during the Great Depression to the '60s psychedelic revolution on the West Coast, the memoir, he told New York Times Magazine in 2014, "was precipitated by a desire to please women."

"His stories were just as bit as magical as his writing, where you just can't tell the boundaries of reality and fantasy," said George Mason, co-founder of the Authors Road. Mason and Salli Slaughter, his wife, interviewed Robbins in his home in 2011 and were charmed as much by his playfulness as they were awed by stories from his past.

"He's just an incredibly loving soul," said actor Debra Winger, a pen pal and close friend of Robbins'. "There's nothing better than having Tom as a friend because he's just always rooting for you."

The two met in the late '70s and quickly became friends. "He sort of just walked out of his books," said Winger, who was continuously awed by his "unbelievable positivity."

"I never saw Tommy dark or in despair ... he could just see the light side of anything. He could write about the other but he could always see the light side. ... He's just a sunny, sunny guy, and I think he lived his life exactly the way he wanted to."

And whenever he could, he manifested the same light and silliness from his novels into reality.

Robbins was particular about how and where his editors read his book manuscripts. His preferred editorial conference location was at Two Bunch Palms, a resort and spa near Desert Hot Springs. Until his editors soaked in the pool and had a massage, Robbins refused to show them his work.

"They weren't allowed to read them anywhere else," Winger recalled. And his editors, though at first begrudgingly, would comply. "These were the kinds of demands he made on you that were good for you as well."

Nicknamed Tommy Rotten in his childhood, Robbins was born July 22, 1932, in Blowing Rock, N.C., to George Thomas Robbins, a company executive, and Katherine Robinson, a nurse. Both his grandparents were Baptist preachers. At 10, his family moved to eastern Virginia. He was the oldest of four, including twins Mary and Mariane, and Rena, who died after being administered an ether overdose at the hospital before Robbins was 7.

In the early 1950s, Robbins attended Washington and Lee University in Virginia, briefly studying journalism and writing for the college newspaper under Tom Wolfe, its sports editor at the time. After his sophomore year he dropped out to find himself and embarked on a "pre-beatnik hitchhiking" trip and worked construction jobs.

Weeks before his 21st birthday, he enlisted in the United States Air Force and was sent to South Korea to teach meteorology to the South Korean Air Force.

After being discharged, he returned to the U.S. in 1957 and enrolled at Richmond Professional Institute — which later became Virginia Commonwealth University. There, he was a columnist and editor for his college newspaper. He then joined the staff of the Richmond Times-Dispatch as a copy editor.

But Robbins didn't jibe with the newspaper's conservative slant. Eventually, after some mounting tensions with its managing editor, he left for Washington. He settled there for the rest of his life.

"Seattle was the farthest place from Richmond on the map without leaving the country," he once told Rolling Stone. "And I couldn't afford to leave the country." But his affinity for the western country stemmed also from his art school studies. He was particularly intrigued by the school of mystic painters inspired by the West Coast's landscapes.

By early 1962, Robbins had moved to Seattle. He took a job working for the Seattle Times as an assistant features editor, eventually becoming an art critic and an art columnist for Seattle Magazine.

The following summer Robbins experienced "the most rewarding day of my life." On July 16, 1963, he took LSD. His encounter with psychedelics, he said, pushed him to quit his Seattle Times gig.

"I called in well one day," he wrote in his memoir. "What do you mean, well?" his editor responded. "Well, I've been sick ever since I've been working there, and now I'm well, and I won't be coming in anymore."

And he up and left for New York in search of others who had taken the drug. He befriended psychedelic advocate Timothy Leary, but it wasn't long before he got tired of the bustling city and returned to Seattle, taking a brief stint as a weekly radio host.

Robbins' writing earned him the 1997 lifetime achievement award in the arts at Seattle's Bumbershoot arts festival and the 2012 Literary Lifetime Achievement prize from the Library of Virginia. But his goals as a writer weren't ever to garner accolades or top-tier prizes.

Instead, his objective was to "twine ideas and images into big subversive pretzels of life, death and goodliness on the chance that they might help keep the world lively, and give it the flexibility to endure," he once said.

His words and imaginations were his incantations to the world, and to himself.

"I've always wanted to lead a life of enchantment," he said in a Rolling Stone interview, "and writing is part of that. Magic is practical and pragmatic — it's making connections between objects or events in the most unusual ways. When you do that, the universe becomes a very exciting place. I'm a romantic, and I don't apologize for that. I think it's as valid a way of looking at life as any. And a hell of a lot more fun."

A notoriously private and mysterious man, Robbins spent his life enchanting readers with clever wordplay and bizarre, highly whimsical stories that oozed with philosophical musings and quips.

But his greatest gift in life, he wrote in his memoir, was not his writing. It was his ability to live in two distinct worlds concurrently: in the planets of imagination and reality.

Robbins is survived by Alexa, his third wife of more than 30 years, and three sons from his previous marriages.

Pineda is a former Times staff writer.

MOVIE REVIEW

A harrowing chronicle of Palestinian villages under siege

'No Other Land' turns bulldozing of West Bank community into a cry of conscience.

By Tim Grierson



AFI Fest

THE TOLL on residents of a West Bank community in the middle of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the focus of the documentary "No Other Land."

'No Other Land'

Not rated
In Arabic, Hebrew and English, with English subtitles
Running time: 1 hour, 35 minutes
Playing: Laemmle Monica Film Center, Laemmle Glendale

Futility is one of the hardest things for cinema to convey. Storytelling is inherently geared to forward momentum and obstacles that can potentially be overcome. The ending doesn't have to be a happy one, but viewers expect some sense of an arc, the feeling that where we started is different from where we ultimately landed.

So many documentaries, hoping to cater to a commercial audience, unconsciously or not operate in a traditional three-act structure, wanting to leave us with a feeling of closure. Even real life needs to be tidied up at the movies.

Standing in solemn opposition to such considerations, "No Other Land" examines an unconscionable and ongoing atrocity and simply lets it play out in all its unresolved anguish.

Few recent documentaries seem so committed to insisting that viewers sit in their despair without any glimmer of release or catharsis. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has raged for generations — who could possibly expect a 95-minute film, even one as rivetingly assembled as this one, to provide a solution?

Spanning four years and concluding around October 2023, "No Other Land" takes us to Masafer Yatta, a mountainous West Bank community of 20 small villages.

Basel Adra, one of the documentary's two principal subjects, has spent his entire life in Masafer Yatta, growing up with friends and family and resisting Israel's occupation of their land. We see low-res videos of him as a child, already familiar with the clashes between Palestinian residents and armed Israeli soldiers.

Now in his late 20s, he continues that fight as a lawyer, journalist and filmmaker. Early on in "No Other Land," he meets Yuval Abraham, an Israeli filmmaker and reporter who wants to chronicle the forced evictions in Masafer Yatta, where buildings and homes are being destroyed to make way for an Israeli military training ground.

These villages have existed since the 19th century, but Israel wants them eradicated, sending in troops to stop anyone who attempts to slow that effort.

Adra and Abraham, who are about the same age, serve as two of the movie's four directors, alongside Israeli filmmaker Rachel Szor and Palestinian filmmaker Hamdan Ballal. (All four are also credited as editors.)

Both in front of and behind the camera, "No Other Land" is a work of cooperation among people whose countries' war has divided them. Adra and his neighbors initially have misgivings about opening up to Abraham, but a bond eventually develops as we grasp the magnitude of this erasure of Palestinian villages.

Just don't expect feel-good uplift as these two men join forces to document the cruelty. Instead, there is only frustration and fear. We see frightening images of bulldozers on the horizon, preparing to descend on communities like vultures. There are angry confrontations between residents and Abraham, who is scapegoated because of his nation's seizing of their land.

And throughout, a tension exists between Adra and Abraham: They both want to end this mass expulsion, but, as Adra points out, Abraham can travel freely across the region whereas Palestinians like himself are not permitted to leave the West Bank. They may be united in their mission, but their situations are vastly different.

"No Other Land" superbly compresses four years into a series of heartaches that slowly escalate in severity. The filmmakers' cameras confront the Israelis assigned to clear out the area, the soldiers' eyes often hidden behind sunglasses.

Structures are demolished, their occupants forced to live in nearby caves. The usual clichés apply: After Israeli crews rip through Masafer Yatta, the area looks like a war zone, like a bomb went off, like a tornado touched down and leveled the place. No one is coming to save residents.

Adra hopes in vain that mainstream media will report on these indignities, then has a visiting journalist talk grimly about doing such a piece: People "paid attention to that for 10 minutes."

Families in Masafer Yatta doggedly rebuild their homes, and Israel then comes back and tears them down again. Eventually, the soldiers are accompanied by antagonistic settlers looking to impose their will through violence. Resistance can take the powerless only so far.

By personalizing Israel's occupation of the West Bank, the filmmakers tell a story of two likable, passionate activists. Mostly sobering, "No Other Land" sometimes gives us glimpses of their friendship as they hang out and reflect on the absurdity of their lives. Despite the relentlessness of their well-armed adversary, they show no signs of losing their resolve. (Among other things, the film poignantly captures the bountiful confidence and optimism of young people dedicated to a cause.)

But one wonders when reality will simply become too crushing. "No Other Land" bears witness to some harrowing physical altercations — culminating in a scene of a man being shot in the stomach — as the filmmakers disabuse viewers of any illusions they might have that this conflict will resolve itself.

"If we keep silent," Adra warns, "they're just going to do it," referring to Israel's ongoing mass expulsion. The worry, of course, is that even raising his voice might not be enough.

Perhaps you have heard that "No Other Land," which is nominated for documentary feature at next month's Oscars, has had a difficult time securing distribution in the U.S.

Most observers, including the filmmakers, have attributed that to concerns about the movie's criticism of the Israeli occupation — a volatile situation made even more explosive after Hamas' attack on Israel in October 2023, which led to Israel's pummeling of Gaza, leading to the death of more than 47,000 Palestinians, according to the Gazan Health Ministry. Pointedly, the film concludes just after that Hamas attack, the terrible repercussions reverberating in Masafer Yatta and so many other communities.

"No Other Land's" sense of grim futility is very much the point — it's what the strong count on to suppress those who oppose them.

Anyone who sees this devastating film may share in that sense of hopelessness. But we can no longer say we had no idea what was going on. "Somebody watches something, they're touched," Abraham says of their documentary. "And then?" he continues, trailing off. Only the audience can answer that question.

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ROYAL — 11523 Santa Monica Blvd. — West L.A.
ARMAND R 1:10 4:10 7:10
I'M STILL HERE PG-13 1:00 4:00 7:00
LIZA: A TRULY TERRIFIC ABSOLUTELY TRUE STORY 1:20 4:20
DINNER IN AMERICA 7:00 PM

MONICA — 1332 Second Street — Santa Monica
WHEN I'M READY 1:10 7:10
LOVE ME R 4:20 PM
NO OTHER LAND 1:30 4:30 7:20
MA MERE NC-17 7:00 PM
THE BRUTALIST R 1:00 6:30
SEPTEMBER 5 R 1:20 4:10 7:00
THE LAST SHOWGIRL R 1:10 PM
A COMPLETE UNKNOWN R 1:00 4:00 7:00
THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG PG-13 3:50 PM

TOWN CENTER — 17200 Ventura Blvd. — Encino
I'M STILL HERE PG-13 1:00 PM
BRING THEM DOWN R 1:20 4:10 7:00
LIZA: A TRULY TERRIFIC ABSOLUTELY TRUE STORY 1:10 7:30
MA MERE NC-17 7:00 PM
THE BRUTALIST R 1:30 6:30
SEPTEMBER 5 R 1:10 4:00 7:20
THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG PG-13 3:50 PM
A KNIGHT'S WAR 4:20 PM

NEWHALL — 22500 Lyons Ave. — Santa Clarita
I'M STILL HERE PG-13 1:10 7:10
LOVE HURTS R 1:00 3:10 5:15 7:30
COMPANION R 1:30 4:30
DOG MAN PG 12:50 3:05 5:15 7:30
LIZA: A TRULY TERRIFIC ABSOLUTELY TRUE STORY 1:20 7:20
MA MERE NC-17 7:00 PM
THE BRUTALIST R 1:10 6:30
SEPTEMBER 5 R 4:20 PM
A COMPLETE UNKNOWN R 12:50 4:00 7:00
THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG PG-13 3:50 PM

GLENDALE — 207 N. Maryland Ave — Glendale
I'M STILL HERE PG-13 1:10 7:00
ARE YOU THERE? 4:30 PM
NO OTHER LAND 1:30 4:20 7:10
LIZA: A TRULY TERRIFIC ABSOLUTELY TRUE STORY 1:20 7:20
MA MERE NC-17 7:00 PM
THE ROOM NEXT DOOR PG-13 4:10 PM
HAZARD R 12:55 PM
A COMPLETE UNKNOWN R 1:00 PM
FLOW PG 3:05 7:30
BLACK PANTHERS OF WWII 4:00 PM
SUZE 5:10 PM

NoHo 7 — 5240 Lankershim Blvd. — No. Hollywood
I'M STILL HERE PG-13 1:00 7:00
BRING THEM DOWN R 1:10 4:10 7:00
HEART EYES R 1:30 4:30 7:20
LOVE HURTS R 1:00 3:10 5:15 7:30
RENNER 1:20 7:10
COMPANION R 1:20 4:20 7:30
SING SING R 4:10 PM
THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG PG-13 12:50 3:50 6:50
ANORA R 4:00 PM

CLAREMONT — 450 W. 2nd Street — Claremont
I'M STILL HERE PG-13 1:20 7:00
LOVE HURTS R 1:00 3:10 5:20 7:40
COMPANION R 1:00 4:30
DOG MAN PG 12:50 3:05 5:15 7:30
LIZA: A TRULY TERRIFIC ABSOLUTELY TRUE STORY 4:20 PM
MA MERE NC-17 7:00 PM
A COMPLETE UNKNOWN R 1:10 7:00
THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG PG-13 3:40 PM

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TONY ROBERTS, 1939 – 2025

Stage, film actor who often worked with Woody Allen

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Tony Roberts, a versatile, Tony Award-nominated theater performer at home in plays and musicals and who appeared in several Woody Allen movies — often as Allen's best friend — has died. He was 85.

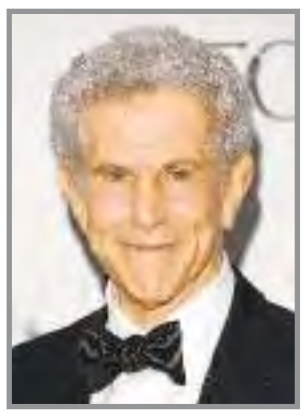
Roberts' death was announced to the New York Times on Friday by his daughter, Nicole Burley.

Roberts had a genial stage personality perfect for musical comedy and he originated roles in such diverse Broadway musicals as "How Now, Dow Jones" (1967); "Sugar" (1972), an adaptation of the movie "Some Like It Hot" and "Victor/Victoria" (1995), in which he co-starred with Julie Andrews when she returned to Broadway in the stage version of her popular film. He also was in the campy, roller-disco "Xanadu" in 2007 and "The Royal Family" in 2009.

"I've never been particularly lucky at card games. I've never hit a jackpot. But I have been extremely lucky in life," he write in his memoir, "Do You Know Me?" "Unlike many of my pals, who didn't know what they wanted to become when they grew up, I knew I wanted to be an actor before I got to high school."

Roberts also appeared on Broadway in the 1966 Allen comedy "Don't Drink the Water," repeating his role in the film version, and in Allen's "Play It Again, Sam" (1969), for which he also made the movie.

Other Allen films in which Roberts appeared were "Annie Hall" (1977), "Stardust Memories" (1980), "A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy" (1982), "Hannah and Her Sisters" (1986) and "Radio Days" (1987).



PETER KRAMER Associated Press

TONY NOMINEE Roberts found enormous success on Broadway.

"Roberts' confident on-screen presence — not to mention his tall frame, broad shoulders and brown curly mane — was the perfect foil for Allen's various neurotic characters, making them more funny and enjoyable to watch," the Jewish Daily Forward wrote in 2016.

In Eric Lax's book "Woody Allen: A Biography," Roberts recalled a complicated scene in "A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy" that Allen shot over and over — even after the film had been edited — to get his intended effect.

"When you go back to see [Allen's work] two, three, four times, you begin to see the amazing amount of art in it, that nothing is accidental," Roberts said.

Among his other movies were "Serpico" (1973) and "The Taking of Pelham One Two Three" (1974).

He was nominated twice for a Tony Award — for "How Now, Dow Jones" and "Play It Again, Sam," when he was billed as Anthony Roberts.

One of Roberts' biggest Broadway successes was Charles Busch's hit comedy "The Tale of the Allergist's Wife" (2000), in which he played the title character's husband.

Roberts, who made his Broadway debut in 1962 in the short-lived "Something About a Soldier," also was a replacement in some of its longest-running hits including "Barefoot in the Park," "Promises, "Promises," "They're Playing Our Song," "Jerome Robbins' Broadway," "The Sisters Rosensweig" and the 1998 Roundabout Theatre Company revival of "Cabaret."

"I was lucky enough to get in on the last years of the Golden Age of Broadway. In that era there was a lot more going on that seemed to have high quality about it and great conviction," he told Broadway World in 2015.

In London, he starred with Betty Buckley in the West End production of "Promises, Promises," playing the Jack Lemmon role in this stage version of "The Apartment."

Roberts' television credits include the short-lived series "The Four Seasons" (1984) and "The Lucie Arnaz Show" (1985) as well as guest spots on such well-known shows as "Murder, She Wrote" and "Law & Order."

Roberts was born in New York on Oct. 22, 1939, the son of radio and television announcer Ken Roberts.

"I was raised in the middle of a lot of actor talk," he told the AP in 1985. "My cousin was Everett Sloane, who was a very fine actor. My father's friends were mostly actors. I'm sure that in some way I needed to prove myself in their eyes."

He attended the High School of Music and Art in New York and graduated from Northwestern University in Illinois.

His marriage to Jennifer Lyons ended in divorce. He is survived by his daughter, who is an actor.

He first met Allen backstage when he was starring in "Barefoot in the Park," having replaced Robert Redford. Roberts had unsuccessfully auditioned four times for Allen's first Broadway play, "Don't Drink the Water." Seeing Roberts perform in "Barefoot in the Park" convinced Allen that Roberts was worth casting. According to his memoir, Allen told him, "You were great. How come you're such a lousy auditioner?"

An L.A. journey through artist David Hockney's eyes

[**Hockney,** from E1]

example, one of his favorite restaurants was a Japanese spot on the Sunset Strip, Imperial Gardens; it's now the recently shuttered Pink Taco Hollywood location, nestled beneath the Chateau Marmont.

Hockney also took long drives in order to find interesting landscapes to doodle. Many of these destination drawings, photocollages and paintings are being shown, some for the first time, at the Palm Springs Art Museum (PSAM). Through March 31, PSAM will have "David Hockney: Perspective Should Be Reversed, Prints From the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation" on view. The exhibition features nearly 200 works spanning over six decades of Hockney's career — from his earliest etchings in the mid-1950s and '60s to his recent experiments with iPad and photographic drawings — which underscore the artist's innovative experiments as a printmaker.

Beyond Palm Springs — which Roberts described as more of a pit stop than a destination — Hockney was far more fascinated by what lay beyond. Like his famous photo collage "Pearblossom Highway" in 1986, which depicts an intersection along California Highway 138, north of Los Angeles, he much preferred a landscape he could draw, and often visited the Mojave and Joshua Tree to do just that. As Roberts put it, "For him [these drives] were adventures to find the obscure landscape in which to draw."

Hop in your automobile, with your proverbial convertible top down, to go on some of Hockney's favorite drives and see what inspired him so much.



ANGELLA D'AVIGNON For The Times



ANGELLA D'AVIGNON For The Times

THE MUTUAL LIFE BUILDING in Pershing Square, left, is one of Hockney's favorite locations to paint. He often painted scenes on Santa Monica Boulevard, particularly the stretch between Western and La Cienega.



Palm Springs Art Museum

HOCKNEY'S painting "Gregory in the Pool (Paper Pool 4)" is on display at the Palm Springs Art Museum.

The Mutual Life Building in Pershing Square

"Pershing Square was a natural destination for a first-timer to the city with no center," says Roberts. "And the tall square high-rises of downtown were a perfect thing for a new visitor to paint."

After reading "City of Night" by John Rechy, Hockney saw Pershing Square as a sort of fantastical queer destination — and in the 1960s, it very much was. Many of the International Style buildings in downtown L.A. inspired a handful of sketches providing a glimpse into Hockney's first impressions of the city.

A lithograph of Hockney's famous 1974 drawing "Pacific Mutual Life" features the historically preserved PacMutual building with a large clock and the same palm trees lining the plaza. Although the old graphic clock is gone and the plaza's design has been radically changed, this building still stands in DTLA's Pershing Square.

The pool at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel

Looking out the plane window as he flew into Los Angeles for the first time, Hockney became enamored with the dozens of blue swimming pools he spied from above. These little luxuries would become a Hockney calling card and subject of several works, including "Gregory in the Pool (Paper Pool 4)" (1978) and "Pool Made With Paper and Blue Ink for Book" (1980), both of which are on view at PSAM.

His fascination with California began with drawing its water — from the ocean to city fountains — driven by his interest in the way light danced on the surfaces of pools.

Painting the bottom of the Tropicana pool at the Roosevelt Hotel was a spontaneous favor for a friend who worked at the hotel — one that became a permanent fixture at the famous hotel in Hollywood.

As the story goes, Hockney appeared on deck with a bucket of blue paint and a broom affixed with a paintbrush to get the job done. To this day, when the pool is drained, the hotel retouches the lines, refreshing Hockney's iconic blue half-moon marks every year or so.



ANGELLA D'AVIGNON For The Times



ANGELLA D'AVIGNON For The Times



ANGELLA D'AVIGNON For The Times

GEMINI G.E.L., above, was Hockney's main printmaking studio in L.A. He lived at the Chateau Marmont for a while, and drove to friends' homes on Nichols Canyon Road, above right, which has shown up in his paintings.

The Santa Monica Boulevard strip in West Hollywood

Santa Monica Boulevard, a major thoroughfare that runs through West Hollywood and connects much of Los Angeles, features heavily in the cultural and visual landscape that Hockney has often explored. Hockney's relationship to this area is most visible in how he captured Los Angeles' unique sense of place — bright light, urban architecture and laid-back California living.

Though it has changed significantly since Hockney's era, the long stretch between Western and La Cienega is immortalized in a massive painting series aptly titled "Santa Monica Boulevard (1978–80)."

His signature flat perspective celebrated the colorful modernist boxy buildings along the famed thoroughfare in 1960s West Hollywood, featuring a quotidian sidewalk scene of an old auto shop and other storefronts in vibrant teal, orange and yellow hues.

The Chateau Marmont

In the mid-'70s, prior to acquiring his house up in the hills, Hockney had an extended stay at the Chateau Marmont for several weeks while working on the series of lithographs of "friend portraits" at Gemini G.E.L. (Graphic Editions Ltd.), a renowned print workshop on Melrose Avenue. Since it was built in 1929 as the first earthquake-proof building, the Chateau Marmont has long been home to iconic out-of-towners and chic Angelenos.

The Chateau figured prominently in Hockney's personal life and in his compositions: One of his famous paintings, "House Behind the Chateau Marmont" (1976), features the Spanish Revival-style house that peeks above from just behind the Chateau, while a 1967 lithograph features an intimate moment between friends, "Henry and Christopher in the Chateau Marmont Hotel, Hollywood." Both paintings are at the PSAM exhibition.

Gemini G.E.L.

Established in 1966, Gemini G.E.L. was Hockney's main printmaking studio in L.A., collaborating exclusively with him to produce and sell prints and editions of works. The famed publisher was also an artists workshop and produced legendary prints by some of Modern art's most prominent artists, including Frank Stella, Robert Rauschenberg and, of course, Hockney. Among his early L.A. projects was a suite of prints featuring portraits and scenes of his friends sitting around the Chateau, in their apartments, lounging on couches and pools, and sleeping in together — aptly named "Friends" (1976) — that he worked on while living at the Chateau.

Hockney continued his lithographic and print work through the 1980s and still works with the studio to produce his iPad images and subsequent drawings. Many of his drawings and prints of friends were set up in the studio space at Gemini, making it a more subtle but historic spot for Hockney's legacy. If those walls could talk!

Nichols Canyon Road in Hollywood

In 1963, Hockney bought a house in the Hollywood Hills, and drove up and down the steep, winding roads as he went to work, to parties, dinner and exhibitions with friends and colleagues. Nichols Canyon was the road less traveled; Hockney preferred the drive downhill to Sunset Boulevard via Nichols for its solitude and serpentine charm.

In the 1980s, he painted the route by memory in "Nichols Canyon" (1980), which depicts a flattened perspective of the road from the hilltops to Sunset, capturing every hairpin turn and the roadside flora and fauna in a cascade from the top to the bottom of the canvas.

Take the vertical loop to the top of the hill and stop at Trebek Open Space or Bantam Trailhead for sweeping views of Hollywood and beyond. Be careful of fawns and other skittering critters as you drive.

The top of Rising Glen Road

Another road Hockney liked to cruise was Rising Glen Road, just over from the tony Bird Streets neighborhood, where a friend of his lived nestled in the hills. He made much work at his friend's house, spreading photos for collages and drawings all across the floor and dinner table.

In addition to rare lithographs, Hockney's PSAM show includes a personal 1978 photograph of the artist, which features him lounging in a pool, looking over the view from a house that sits on Rising Glen Road.

To obtain the same perspective, spiral up from Sunset Plaza Road or Thrasher Avenue, and drive up to the tip-top of Rising Glen Road — be mindful of the neighbors while you wind your way up.

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

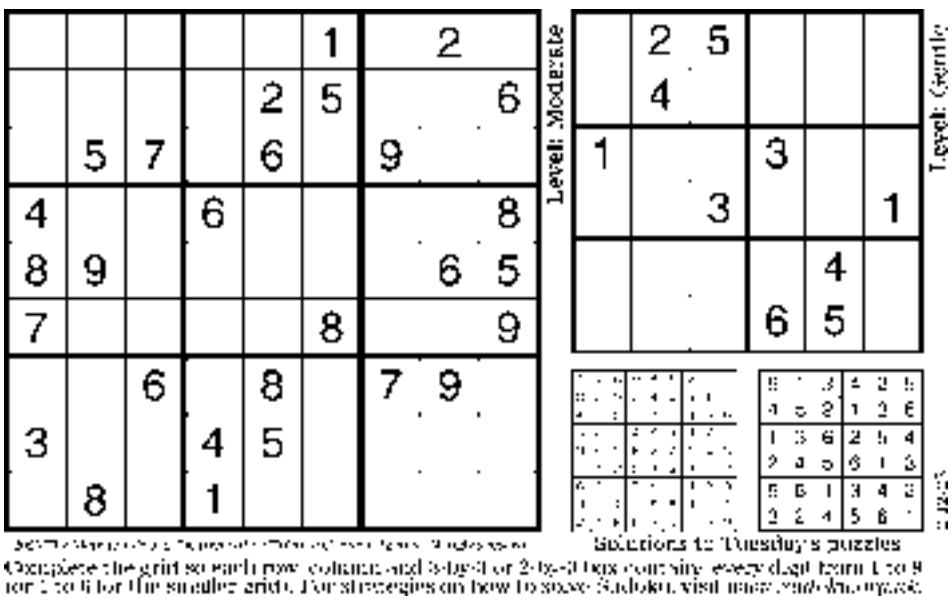


PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz



COMICS

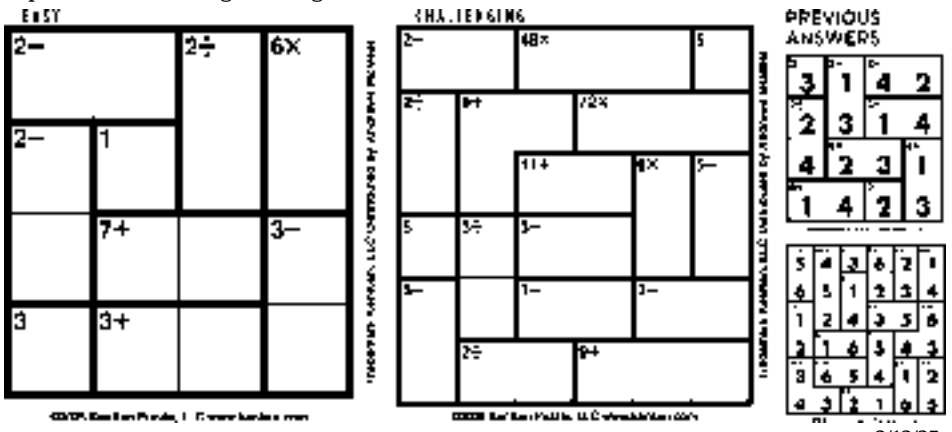
SUDOKU



Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (or 2-by-3 box in any outlined region) 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.com.

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.



2/12/25

HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis

Aries (March 21-April 19): If you do well, you'll be in unknown territory. Remember you faced the unknown before and not only managed it but learned to own it.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): Your personal life is like a house party where people come and go, giving the festivities a kind of arc. The natural rhythm of arrivals and exits is for the best.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): Something calls for attention, urging you to track it. Recording data gives you gain clarity and control, setting the stage for change.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): Your personal life may feel short-staffed, and that's because there really are a few openings. Define the position and you're more likely to get a qualified candidate

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): A bold playfulness is inside you, just waiting for the recess bell to ring. Liberate yourself. Ring your own bell.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Establish boundaries that honor your limits and energy. Define what you're willing to give and hold firm. Let fairness guide your actions.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): You're working on your relationship with food. Instead of being hard on yourself, reflect on what might help.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): You're not doing what's expected because it's expected, though the expected thing might happen to also be what you feel like doing.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): If only you could flip a switch to protect yourself from getting hurt by certain people. Trust that your empowerment is organic, resilient and intelligent.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Certain people have a way of getting under your skin. Give yourself some breathing room to focus on other things, and it will help reduce the emotional intensity of these relationships.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You are full of potential, love and wisdom. Make room in your life for people who truly match your energy, intentions and values.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): A lot of people are working from their own wounds or unresolved stuff, which can make it difficult for them to show up for others.

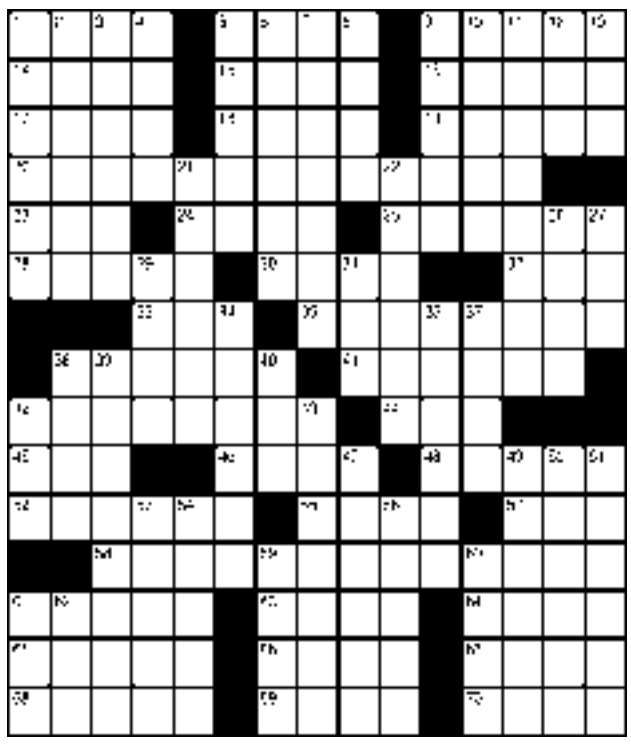
Today's birthday (Feb. 12): You are uniquely compelling and magnetic. Also, you guide people to roles where they light up. Highlights: You pay closer attention, notice more and feel bigger, and you'll be astoundingly creative. Also, the tables will turn in a situation that is decades old. Leo and Scorpio adore you. Lucky numbers: 5, 6, 7, 20, 42.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol
By Hoang-Kim Vu

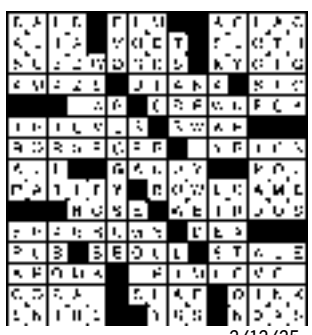
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ACROSS
1 Random __ of kindness
5 Range for a yodeler
9 Instrument in Hindi cinema
14 Engage in costumed gaming, slangily
15 The Big Easy, for short
16 Start with a clean slate?
17 Omnia vincit __
18 Morose
19 Solemn recitations
20 Olsen twins teen comedy set in the Big Apple
23 Wrath
24 Apply crudely
25 Some phone notifications
28 Common part of a lunch combo
30 Inca Trail to Machu Picchu locale
32 Cal. column
33 Grab a chair
35 Jackie Chan/Chris Tucker buddy cop film with two sequels
38 Ice hockey gear
41 Absolute gems
42 Amy Adams rom-com about a February 29 tradition
44 Syst. in which "A" is a closed fist
45 Ga. capital
46 Has a debt
48 Hard __ to break
52 "Just suppose ... "
55 Attention to detail
57 Single
58 Highlights of many bowl games, and an apt description of 20-, 35-, and 42-Across?
61 Animal also called the zebra giraffe
63 Resting on
64 Word said while pointing
65 Concur
66 Astronauts' org.
67 Additional
68 "Fun, Fun, Fun" car
69 Kill it on the runway, say
70 Ore deposit

DOWN
1 "Jagged Little Pill" singer Morissette
2 Kodak innovation
3 Garden tool
4 Agile
5 "The United States vs. Billie Holiday" Oscar nominee Day
6 "It's right above your head!"
7 Expert at handling snakes?
8 Dress in Hindi cinema
9 South Korean capital
10 Apoplectic
11 Curly fry alternative
12 Some barbecue remains
13 Low-__
21 Quirky thing
22 Queasy feeling
26 Ergo
27 __ La Table: cookware retailer
29 "Now!" letters
31 Massage
34 Begin a round of golf
36 Figures (out)
37 Polynesian dance
38 MacFarlane of "Family Guy"
39 Desert that covers much of Botswana
40 Adage
42 Murphy's __
43 Solo performance
47 Appetizer before a curry, maybe
49 "Cry me a river!"
50 To the middle
51 Proctor's charge
53 Dwindle (down)
54 "OK, that was untrue"
56 Settle a debt
59 Basks in the sun
60 Webpage medium
61 Muesli morsel
62 Old CIA foe

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE



2/12/25

BRIDGE

By Frank Stewart

"I know you don't put much faith in defensive 'rules,' " Unlucky Louie said, "but if there were no rules, how would we break them?"

"You don't necessarily need to break rules," I replied, "but you can certainly test their elasticity."

In today's deal, North's jump to three clubs was invitational to game. South didn't have much help in clubs, but he still liked his hand enough to try 3NT.

South won the first heart with the king and led the jack of clubs — and West played the king, obeying the rule of "cover an honor with an honor." That play backfired when South let the king win.

West saw that the clubs would come in; he shifted in desperation to the king and a low spade. East took the queen and ace, but South won the next spade with the jack and claimed the rest. Making three.

It wasn't a time for West to rely on rules. If he ducks the jack of clubs, South can get three club tricks but can't run the whole suit. South should go down two.

You hold: ♠ K 7 ♥ Q J 10 9 4 ♦ Q 5 ♣ K 10 8 7. Your partner opens one spade, you respond two hearts, he rebids two spades and you try 2NT. Partner then bids three clubs. What do you say?

Answer: Partner is likely to have six spades, four clubs and minimum values. With A Q 9 6 2, 7, A 7 6, Q J 6 5, he would have little reason to disturb 2NT. He might instead hold Q J 9 6 5 3, 3, K 9, A J 5 4. You might make four spades, but your red-suit honors are probably worthless. Bid three spades.

South dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH
♠ 5 2
♥ 6 2
♦ J 4
♣ A Q 9 6 4 3 2

WEST
♠ K 7
♥ Q J 10 9 4
♦ Q 5
♣ K 10 8 7

EAST
♠ A Q 8 6 3
♥ 8 7 3
♦ 10 9 8 7 2
♣ None

SOUTH
♠ J 10 9 4
♥ A K 5
♦ A K 6 3
♣ J 5

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 NT	Pass	3♣	Pass
3 NT	All Pass		

Opening lead — ♥ Q

Tribune Content Agency

ASKING ERIC

Dear Eric: I have a mid-20s nephew who appears to be afflicted with a severe case of failure-to-launch syndrome. He dropped out of college after six months, moved in with his mom (my sister), only interacts with peers via gaming and comes across as utterly apathetic and disengaged from the world.

There was a ray of hope when he went back to school and got an associate degree, but he has taken very few steps in the intervening year to find a job in his field. I offered some resume/job-hunting support. But after spending many hours patiently and sensitively trying to help him, I came to the realization that none of it is being absorbed or acted upon.

Other family members and I are worried about his trajectory. It is a sensitive subject with my sister, who is dealing with her own issues, and I don't know how or whether to approach her with my concerns. I would love your thoughts.

Concerned Aunt

Dear Aunt: Sharing your concerns with your sister may be less helpful than expressing support and helping her find potential solutions. You've already started down this road, of course. But I worry that telling your sister about problems she's likely already aware of will add more to her burden instead of lightening it.

It would be wise of your sister to talk with her son about getting a job, paying rent to her, and discussing with him his vision for his life. You can coach her through this conversation. But your first priority should be checking in to see how you can help her in other ways.

You mention that she's going through her own issues. A good first step is just letting her know that you see how much she's carrying, and you want to be of assistance. Listening is going to go a lot further than reminding her of another thing she should be concerned about. And, by listening, you may discover another path to help your nephew move through this phase.

Dear Eric: I have a good friend who has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer that has metastasized to her kidneys. She informed me of this in a brief text also saying that she just couldn't talk to me yet. I've sent her comforting gifts and cards as well as texted her a few times with no response.

We taught together on the same middle school team for years. We retired the same day. We met for lunch once a month for the last 10 years. I have only learned from a group email sent by our former principal that she is refusing chemo and any other treatment. She is also not accepting any calls or visitors. Her daughter is staying with her at the moment and her husband is taking care of said daughter's children in another state.

I continue to send cards with brief notes, which are hard to compose. What should I do? What can I do?

Friend in Pain

Dear Friend: I'm so sorry for what your friend is going through and I'm so sorry for the pain you're experiencing too. One of the kindest things you can do for your friend may also be the hardest: accept that this is how she's navigating this period in her life and love her through it from afar.

Some of the ways she chose to communicate suggest that the task of updating and engaging with her friends and loved ones about her health is overwhelming. That's completely understandable.

You did the right thing by sending the cards and texts. She may have the emotional fortitude to read them but not the capacity to respond. You may want to write her a letter expressing what she's meant to you, knowing that even if she is not able to respond it may help her or her family, and it may help you to process what you're feeling too.

Email questions to *eric@askingeric.com*.

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham



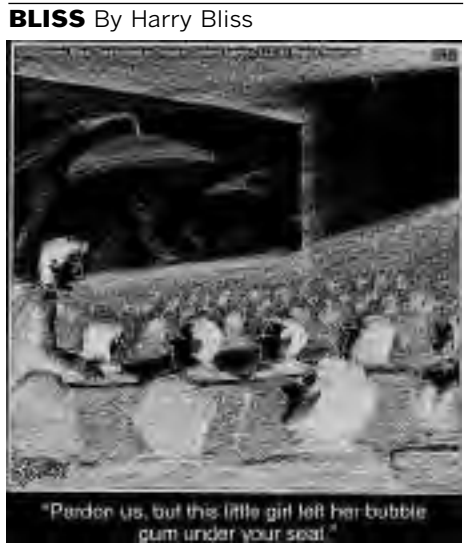
FREE RANGE By Bill Whitehead



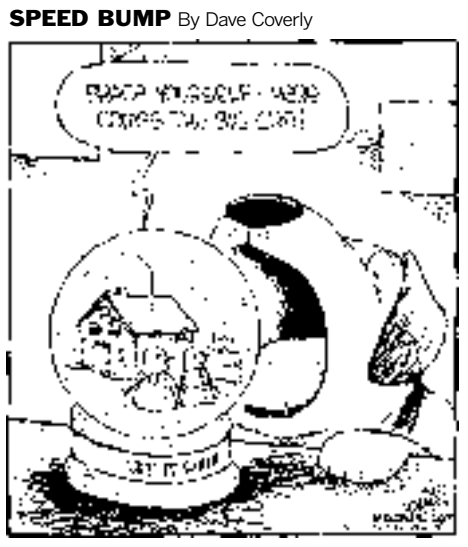
MARMADUKE By Brad & Paul Anderson



BLISS By Harry Bliss



SPEED BUMP By Dave Coverly



Rock Hall nods for 2025 class

[**Rock Hall,** from E1]

An artist or band becomes eligible for induction into the hall 25 years after the release of their first commercial recording. Nominations, which are determined by a committee of music industry insiders, are then voted on by more than 1,200 musicians, executives, historians and journalists.

Several of this year's nominees have been particularly visible of late, including Oasis, whose warring Gallagher brothers will come together this summer for a highly anticipated reunion tour, and Outkast, the influential Atlanta hip-hop duo whose André 3000 earned a surprise nod for album of the year at this month's Grammy Awards with his experimental jazz LP, "New Blue Sun."

Last fall, Lauper began what she's calling a farewell tour. And Carey made headlines in October after she talked with The Times about not being voted into the hall on her previous nomination.

"Everybody was calling me going, 'I think you're getting in,' and I was so excited about it," Carey said. "But then it didn't happen. My lawyer got into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame before me," she added, referring to Allen Grubman, the veteran entertainment attorney who received the hall's Ahmet Ertegun Award in 2022.

This year's inductees will be announced in late April, with a ceremony to take place in the fall in L.A. The 2025 induction event will be the third since the hall's cofounder, former Rolling Stone editor Jann Wenner, was ousted from the organization in the wake of disparaging comments he made about Black and female musicians in a 2023 interview with the New York Times.

The hall said it would announce its plans for a broadcast or streaming partner at a later date. In 2023, the show moved to Disney+ after nearly three decades at HBO.



Per Ole Hagen Redferns

ANDRÉ 3000 of hip-hop duo Outkast, among nominees for Rock Hall.



Christina House Los Angeles Times

FELIPE ESPARZA shares dark personal stories in his stand-up. For him, comedy is like therapy, a powerful way to work through issues.

'Humor is definitely a lifesaver'

[**Esparza,** from E1]

premiered Tuesday on Netflix.

Tell us about your new special, "Raging Fool," and how it differs from your last Netflix special in 2020.

The jokes are different, but I'm still dealing with the same topics. Family issues, marriage, drugs, sex, s— like that. But when I filmed my last special, "Bad Decisions," which was shot in two days — I did one show in English and the next night in Spanish — the timing was unfortunate. It came out, and I was just going to tour, then two days later the COVID pandemic broke out. We had the lockdowns and everything, so that kind of sucked, but it came out online and got a good response from people. But with my new special, "Raging Fool," I feel like I get to tour this material now, it's a fresh start.

You're touring the U.S. now, as part of the At My Leisure Tour, but last year you were international. What was it like touring outside the country as a stand-up? Did you find there to be any differences in audiences?

Touring standing up anywhere is just fun. I love doing shows. But last year, part of my tour was in England, Dublin, Amsterdam and Sydney and Melbourne, Australia. The cool thing is that I would think my audience would change when I leave the country and play different places, but it's funny how it doesn't. Just to show you that there are Mexicans, Hispanics and Latinos in all parts of the globe, every major city pretty much at this point. For instance, just two examples: There's a huge population and community of El Salvadorans in Alberta, Canada, and also in Alexandria, Va., in the States. So yeah, all over there are people who speak Spanish and appreciate the humor I do, and the shows are always fun and we have a good time.

You made some jokes in your last special about being a vegan, but are you really a vegan?

Yes, I am really a vegan. I've been a vegan since 2011. What happened was that I was on the Atkins diet but doing it totally wrong. I was eating nothing but meat and cheese. Tons of just carne asada, carnitas and al pastor, steaks, burgers and lots of cheese. But I f— up by not drinking any water. It caused me some very painful health problems; I had horrible constipation for a week, and so after this episode I just decided to give up all meat and became a vegan.

My wife was raised vegan by her mom. But then when she met me, she stopped being vegan, because I introduced her to Jack in the Box and In-N-Out and all kinds of fast food and other junk food. So she wasn't a vegan anymore.

But then around 2011, she became a vegan once more when I decided to try it, and we both have been vegan since. Here in the San Fernando Valley where I live, there are a lot of Mexican restaurants that cater to vegan people. They make vegan meats and vegan cheese. This one spot, El Cocinero in Van Nuys, makes homemade vegan carnitas out of jackfruit and homemade vegan cheeses, all the best Mexican food but with vegan options. Vegan food years ago used to be horrible. You'd eat a head of lettuce, white rice and a sandwich of pickles. My mom was scared when I told her I would be vegan. "Ay mijo que vas a comer?" [What will you eat, my boy?]

Your wife works with you producing your podcast and comedy specials, so how do you balance family personal time and work?

I don't know how we balance it, but it just happens organically. Naturally, we just make it work. She produces my podcast and also my comedy specials, which is hard work behind the scenes. We've been together since 2006 so she saw me and knew me before I won "Last Comic Standing," and before I was famous. She knows the rhythm of my jokes she helps me write.

Your comedy contains some dark personal stories. Do you find stand-up comedy to be therapeutic?

Oh yeah, I absolutely do. I am still alive because of my stand-up comedy, for sure. I speak about some really dark, twisted stuff in my life in my comedy onstage, in the new special and in previous ones. It's stuff I would not talk about in any other setting unless it was my therapist. Like for example, I do this one joke about how my mom got beat up by my dad when I was younger. It took me a long time to do that joke, but I finally did it in front of my mom and she laughed and I knew then it was OK. It was very cathartic and therapeutic for her to watch me do this joke, it was very powerful. Humor is definitely a lifesaver.

How do you feel about censorship as a comedian? Do you think comedians have total freedom of speech to joke about any topic?

I think as a comedian, you can make a joke about anything you want. But you gotta be prepared to take the consequences of your words. You can't forget that part. This one time early on in my career, many years ago, I was asked to do a clean comedy show with no vulgarity, and so I didn't cuss, but I did some jokes about racism and religion and I said the wrong thing, and it pissed some people off and the microphone was cut off. It had a lot to do with the content, not necessarily just cursing. But it's important that as a comedian you know the audience, especially when you get hired for private or corporate events. Now, though, if I'm hired or when I do shows, people know when you hire me you get what you get. If you know my shows you know I'm gonna make jokes about drugs, sex, marriage, race, religion and more. I'm gonna use vulgarity. But, as a stand-up comic, I've evolved from a one-liner to a comedian that tells stories, and it's some really dark stuff but it's all funny.

Do current events and politics play into your stand-up comedy routines at all?

Well, yes, but not too overtly. I don't like to be way too political, but I do touch on immigration and race somewhat in a soft way to make people laugh. For instance, in this one joke, I mentioned how white people don't work all month at their jobs, then send money back to Scotland or Ireland. White people don't have immigrant relatives from Germany or Belgium showing up at their door with blankets saying they need a place to live. If I get people to laugh at some of these topical jokes, then that's a good thing. I made things funny now, with the current events.

One thing we proved in this last election is that you can't put Hispanics and Latinos in the same category anymore. We're not all the same brown people. There are some Mexicans that want other Mexicans and Central Americans deported from the country. It's insane. But overall, I try not to take the angle where I come out saying all whites are racist and kill all white people, because that's not really funny, there isn't really a joke there. I try to make little jokes about these topics and get people to laugh.

Aside from your tour, are there any other acting roles or movie parts on the horizon for you?

Oh yeah, I am gonna be on the ABC series "Shifting Gears" with Tim Allen. It's an episode where I play a mechanic. It's very cool, because it's a paying acting gig. ... The funny thing is I don't know anything about tools or cars. Sometimes in Hollywood it's not who you know, it's who you smoke weed with in the back of the Improv.

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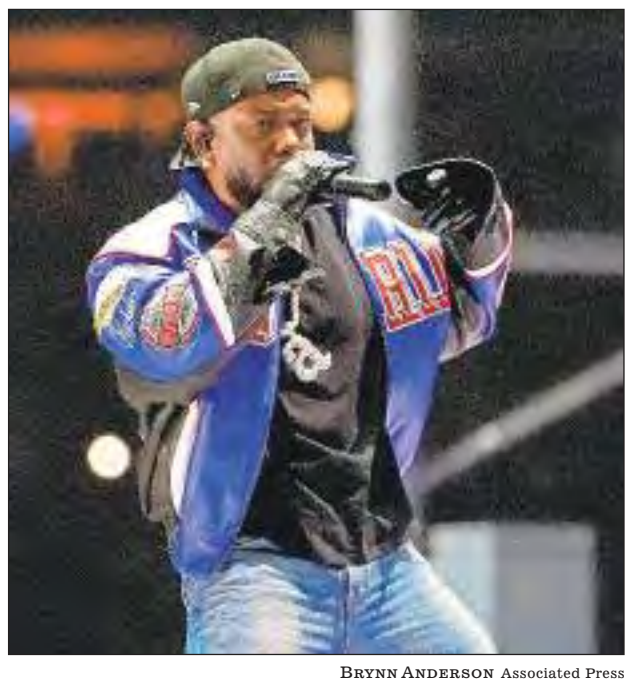
'The revolution' gets televised with a message

[**Halftime,** from E1]

Inside New Orleans' Caesars Superdome, actor Samuel L. Jackson appeared as Uncle Sam in a star-patterned top hat and introduced the crowd to "the great American game." Guiding the audience through halftime, he made remarks like "Too loud, too reckless, too ghetto" after Lamar's performance of "Squabble Up."

When longtime collaborator SZA joined the rapper to sing "Luther" and "All the Stars," the Oscar-nominated song from "Black Panther's" soundtrack, Jackson exclaimed, "That's what America wants! Nice and calm." The actor's performance and commentary led to comparisons to his Uncle Tom role in Quentin Tarantino's "Django Unchained," where he played a loyal house slave named Stephen.

Throughout the show, Lamar openly toyed with the idea of performing the Drake diss and L.A. anthem "Not Like Us," saying, "I want to play their favorite song, but you know they love to sue" — referring to Drake's defamation lawsuit. But as the recognizable beat echoed, Lamar flashed a sly smile while rapping the line "Say, Drake, I hear you like 'em young," and let the audience fill in the blank, calling him a "certified pedophile."



Brynn Anderson Associated Press

KENDRICK LAMAR delivers hit songs such as "Humble" and "Not Like Us" at the halftime show.

Rapper Flavor Flav was among the celebrities who took to X to praise the performance, writing, "The way the WHOLE stadium just yelled 'A MINOOOOOOOOOORRRRR.' " Ab-Soul, who's signed to Lamar's label, Top Dawg Entertainment, also wrote on X, "BIG AS DA SUPER BOWL," referencing Drake's "First Person Shooter" — the track that instigated the feud between the rappers. Doechii, who recently won top rap album at the Grammys, congratulated SZA and Kendrick, saying, "So proud of yall so inspired."

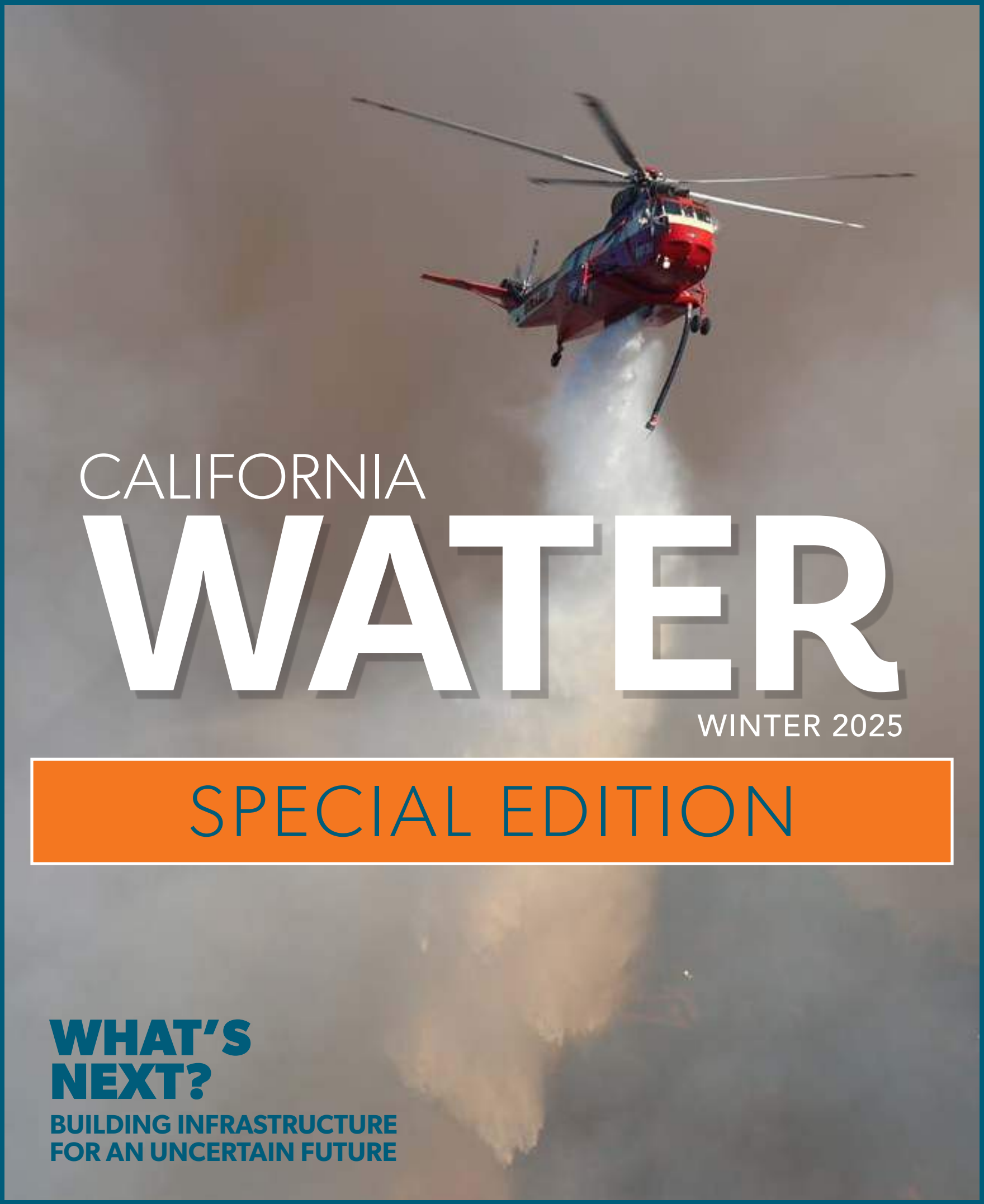
Also, during Lamar's performance of "Not Like Us," the camera flipped to show tennis star Serena Williams Crip-walking. After receiving backlash for doing the same dance in 2012 following her Olympic win, the fellow Compton native brought the dance back for the big game.

The athlete was also rumored to be in a relationship with Drake in the early 2010s. After years of speculated disses by Drake in songs like "Worst Behavior" and "Nothings Into Somethings," Williams took the opportunity to perform with his biggest adversary.

Lamar ended the show with an electric performance of "TV Off." Joined by collaborator DJ Mustard, it was a full-circle moment in which he called for viewers to turn away from distractions and focus on the reality around them.

Mike Carson, co-creative director and production designer of the halftime performance, told Wired that the stage had a video game motif. The performance spaces in the shape of Xs, Os and triangles resembled PlayStation controller buttons.

The performance concluded with the words "Game Over" spelled out in the crowd — referencing both the game and his beef with Drake.



CALIFORNIA WATER

WINTER 2025

SPECIAL EDITION

WHAT'S NEXT?

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

CIVIC Digital

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Water at Climate Change Forefront

As 2025 begins, I'm excited to welcome you to this Special Edition of California Water. I'm proud to partner with California Water magazine and Civic Publications to highlight critical water challenges in our region.

Environmental expert Peter Gleick famously said, "If climate change is the shark, then water is its teeth." Water is where we first see the most significant impacts of climate change, making it central to California's sustainability efforts.

This year marks a major milestone with California's new water efficiency regulations taking effect January 1. These permanent rules require urban water suppliers to cut water delivery by up to 39% by 2040, transforming water use and conservation statewide. While a vital step toward preparing for a hotter, drier future, implementing these changes may bring challenges, including rising costs.

California's leadership extends beyond reducing carbon emissions. Our commitment to net-zero emissions by 2045 and investments in renewable energy set the national standard. But sustainability isn't just about cutting carbon—it's about safeguarding water, too.

In December 2024, the Metropolitan Water District advanced the Delta Conveyance Project by funding final studies. This crucial initiative will modernize our infrastructure and bolster its reliability against climate impacts.

To learn more about how Southern California is tackling these challenges, I encourage you to explore the Southern California Water Coalition's 2024 Annual Report. This resource highlights progress and partnerships driving water solutions in our region.

At California Water, we tell stories that inspire action – spotlighting solutions, innovators, and practical steps for a sustainable future.

Let's make 2025 a year of progress, innovation, and impact.

Warm regards,
Charley Wilson



Charles Wilson is the Executive Director of the Southern California Water Coalition, a nonprofit dedicated to informing Californians about our water needs and resources.



CIVIC Digital

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Fire and Water:

How They Are and Are Not Linked

*By **Elizabeth Smilor***
Special Sections Writer

The devastating wildfires that swept through Pacific Palisades and Altadena, brought to the forefront many critical issues from climate change to the California insurance crisis to water supply. Regional water managers, say statements of blame based on water supply are simplistic and unfounded.

"Once those fires ignited with the extremely high winds, I don't think it matters how much water you have, you're not going to stop that," said General Manager Tom Love of the Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Upper District). "We did not have a water supply issue when those fires broke out. In fact, regionally Metropolitan has a record amount of water in storage."

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which has 26 member agencies including Upper District, Three Valleys Municipal Water District (TVMWD) and the Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA), has three reservoirs that combined currently store nearly 1-million acre-feet of water or enough to supply 3 million Southern California households for a year. There are also three reservoirs managed by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and multiple groundwater storage basins, including the San Gabriel Basin and Chino Basin.

Did an inadequate supply of water cause hydrants to run dry?

"We have adequate supply for firefighting, but they were fighting an out-of-control wildland fire with a domestic water system," said TVMWD General Manager and Chief Engineer Matt Litchfield. "Domestic water systems are not designed to fight that kind of fire. They're designed to fight one to two structure fires at a time. That's why wildfires are fought from the air."

Extreme winds grounded air support for about 12 hours as both fires spread rapidly.

"Just like climate change affects our water supply, it is affecting our weather patterns. The intensity of the winds and the severe dryness is a bad combination," said IEUA General Manag-

Continue Fire, Page 7

Metropolitan Vote Improves Water Supply Outlook

*By **Elizabeth Smilor***
Special Sections Writer

The raging wildfires bring to the forefront the need for climate resilience, something regional water managers are working toward every day. In fact, at the end of 2024, the water supply and long-term infrastructure investment outlook improved. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) voted overwhelmingly to approve additional funding for the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP), and the state Department of Water Resources (DWR) increased the State Water Project allocation forecast to 15% following Northern California storms.

In an hours-long meeting with more than 60 public comments, the Metropolitan Board of Directors voted to approve $141 million in additional funding for planning and permitting for the DCP, a single-tunnel proposal to move excess water along the east side of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to the California Aqueduct and storage reservoirs.

"What was so remarkable and significant at the meeting was that there was a majority of speakers from the business community, the labor community, other areas across the state who told the board they are in support of the Delta Conveyance Project," said Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District General Manager Tom Love. "The fact that 99% of the board voted yes to continue funding the project was unexpected. For us, that strong margin was significant. We don't have other options on the table. It's important to keep this option open."



Adán Ortega Jr.

Love and Upper District Board President Elizabeth Santana were special guests of Metropolitan Board Chair Adán Ortega Jr. at the Dec. 10 meeting. Upper District is one of 26 Metropolitan member agencies and cities that rely on the cooperative for imported water from the State Water Project (SWP) and the Colorado River. Some other members are: Three Valleys Municipal Water District and the Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA). Metropolitan is one of 27 SWP Contractors and the one with the largest stake in the DCP.
Other SWP contractors include the San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District and the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District.

"After careful consideration, our board took this step because it allows us to gather critical information about the project's benefits and costs that will allow us to evaluate whether we will participate in the full construction of the project," said Metropolitan Board Chair Ortega. "Along with our investments in storage, a more resilient distribution system, conservation and local supplies, the State Water Project remains a cornerstone of water reliability for the 19

Continue Metropolitan, Page 12



A serpentine stretch of the California Aqueduct in Palmdale.

Florence Low / California Department of Water Resources

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Walnut Valley Water full page AD

WVWD in the Community

WVWD actively engages with residents and participates in local events. You can find us at various events in the City of Walnut and City of Diamond Bar, where we are excited to connect and share resources. Be sure to visit walnutvalleywater.gov/events for more details on upcoming events, workshops, and water conservation programs.


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Community Events


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Cyber Security Discussed at Three Valleys MWD Leadership Breakfast

*By **Amy Bentley***
Special Sections Writer

The importance of cyber security and how to avoid devastating cyberattacks led the keynote talk at Three Valleys Municipal Water District's third Leadership Breakfast of 2024. Heather Collins, Director of Water Treatment for Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, was the keynote speaker at the Oct. 31 event at the Kellogg West Conference Center at Cal Poly Pomona. Collins told a large audience of water leaders and other government officials how the water and wastewater industries are at risk from cyber security threats, data breaches and cyberattacks, similar to the way the energy and transportation sectors have been attacked.

> **"The landscape is just exploding. It's unknown when the attacks are going to happen."**
> *Heather Collins, Metropolitan Director of Water Treatment on cyberattacks.*

"The landscape is just exploding. It's unknown when the attacks are going to happen," Collins said. She played news clips of government officials warning that hackers can come from Russia, China and Iran. "These threat actors are from all over the place, they're even from our own backyard."

"The threat is that punch they are going to throw. But the vulnerability is you don't know when that is going to happen," Collins said. "I ask you all, what is your risk factor and what is your risk tolerance for such a punch? Are you ready to get knocked out? Are you ready to be losing balance a little bit?"

Collins discussed the various information and technology systems vulnerable to cyberattacks and hacks: employee payroll, service contracts, customer billing, telecommunications, HVAC and more. "Know your full inventory," she said.

Collins shared best practices including having strong and unusual passwords, changing passwords often, having multi-factor authentication, knowing how to recognize email scams, dealing with old computer software, not leaving work laptops in parked cars where they could be stolen, having a business resumption and continuity plan, and using the free government vulnerability scanning service.

The takeaway of her talk, Collins told the crowd, is: have action plans and "do something at your agencies." "I implore you all to go back and talk about all of this with your manage-



Three Valleys Municipal Water District invited Heather Collins, Present-Elect of the American Water Works Association, to deliver a keynote address during a Leadership Breakfast recognizing "Cybersecurity Awareness Month."

"Cyber security is no longer just IT's responsibility. It's all of our responsibility."

Matt Litchfield, Three Valleys General Manager and Chief Engineer



ment and your agency."

Wrapping up the event, TVMWD General Manager and Chief Engineer Matt Litchfield, commented: "Cyber security is no longer just IT's responsibility. It's all of our responsibility. As Heather stated, the best defense for cyber threats is to play offense and be prepared."

Three Valleys is a wholesale water district serving 13 retail agency customers and is one of the 26 water agencies that make up the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Three Valleys Board Changes

Three Valleys Municipal Water District welcomed one new director and selected new leaders at year's end.

Jorge Marquez was elected to represent Division 6 in November. Marquez, a resident of Pomona and a San Gabriel Valley native, has extensive regional water experience. He represented cities with pumping rights as Chairman of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA), is an appointed member of the Water Appeals Board for L.A. County, and served on the Covina Irrigating Company board. Marquez also served two terms as Mayor of Covina and is active in many community groups.

Four-year Board Director and past Vice President Mike Ti was unanimously chosen as Board President on Dec. 18, 2024. Ti replaced Jody Roberto who served as president for three years.

"We appreciate the deep level of involvement and experience that Mike has demonstrated since he joined the board," Roberto said. "His growing knowledge of the district and extensive water industry experience make him an important asset as our new President."

"My experience with each of my fellow board members has always been one of admiration and respect for the work they do for the agency and its member agencies," Ti said. "I look forward to continuing that in the role as Board President."

Carlos Goytia was selected to serve as Vice President and Jeff Hanlon as Secretary/Treasurer.

The leadership team expressed a commitment to fostering collaboration, enhancing district operations, and addressing the critical water challenges facing our communities.



Mike Ti
President (Division II)



Jorge Marquez
Director (Division VI)



Carlos Goytia
Vice President
(Division I)



Jeff Hanlon
Secretary/Treasurer
(Division III)



David De Jesus
Director
(Division II)



Jody Roberto
Director
(Division V)



Bob Kuhn
Director
(Division IV)

From Fire, Page 3

er Shivaji Deshmukh. "The systems are designed to handle a certain amount of fire, but this was overwhelming."

That formidable demand led to fire hydrants going dry. "A firefight with multiple fire hydrants drawing water from the system for several hours is unsustainable," said L.A. County Public Works Director Mark Pestrella at a news conference. "This is a known fact."

Love explained that in the case of the Eaton Fire, uphill reservoirs were filled ahead of the wind event but that when those ran dry, water had to be pumped up using pumping stations, many of which ran for hours on diesel-fueled backup generators. Metropolitan sent diesel trucks to the Rose Bowl, but some water pressure was lost, he said.

Additionally, DWR quickly brought a pipeline back online from Castaic Lake when the fires started and indefinitely delayed maintenance work, Love said. It was thus operating long before the Hughes Fire ignited nearby on Jan. 22. Typically, maintenance on water systems is performed in winter when water demand is lower, Litchfield said. He and Love agreed that one reservoir in Pacific Palisades empty for maintenance would not have made much of a difference if it were full.

In a press conference, LA DWP Chief Executive and Chief Engineer Janisse Quiñones said firefighters battling the blaze in the Palisades created four times the normal demand in the area for 15 straight hours.

Is the ongoing Delta Conveyance Project debate connected to water supply for the fires?

No, said Love: "It's not the fact we have difficulty moving water from Northern California, that's a different issue all together."

Litchfield agreed but still welcomed any attention on the issue (featured on page 4 of this section): "The Delta is a statewide issue and it's an important project for capturing water lost to the Pacific Ocean for drought conditions. It has become a hot topic political issue. I'm OK with that if it helps us get that project across the finish line, it's long overdue."



Matthew Litchfield, P.E.



Tom Love

Could you build a municipal water system that could combat massive wildfires?

"With fires of this magnitude, I don't care how big your system is, it's just not going to be sufficient to stop a fire fueled by those intense winds," Love said.

"Anything can be designed, it will just come at a tremendous cost," added Deshmukh. Water affordability is top of mind for all water managers, so they wouldn't want the cost to fall on ratepayers.



The remains of Altadena Baptist Church on Jan. 26 after the Eaton Fire.
Photo by Elizabeth Smilor

All agreed that maximizing water storage is always a priority for everyday and emergency situations. Shivaji pointed out a benefit of groundwater storage is a natural filtration that keeps the water usable for long periods of time. Love said water in above-ground reservoirs has a "shelf life" because the quality becomes compromised by exposure.

In the case of emergencies, the water agencies provide mutual aid as they are able. Upper District also offers firescaping classes to help property owners landscape for fire mitigation. Three Valleys is planning a remodel of its administrative building in Claremont that will include fire mitigation materials.

"You need to be proactive before these events," Litchfield said. "We can harden our facilities to be resistant to fire, so they don't burn down and once the fire is over, we can minimize the amount of time a water system is down and speed up recovery."

UPPER WATER

UPPER SAN GABRIEL VALLEY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

SPRING EVENTS

Our Landscaping Workshops and Spring events are back! Join us virtually or in person to learn more about drought tolerant landscaping and other fun activities.

- **4 Mar** — CA Friendly and Native Plant Landscaping
  Virtual - 6pm - 7pm
- **20 Mar** — Outdoor Leak Detection
  Upper District - 6pm - 7pm
- **29 Mar** — Watershed Restoration Program
  San Gabriel Canyon - 8am - 12pm
- **8 Apr** — Landscape Transformation on a Budget
  Virtual - 6pm - 7pm
- **12 Apr** — Watershed Restoration Program
  San Gabriel Canyon - 8am - 12pm
- **26 Apr** — Firescaping
  Upper District - 10am - 11am
- **3 May** — WATERFEST
  Arcadia County Park - 10am - 2pm
- **8 May** — Garden Design
  Virtual - 6pm - 7:00pm
- **29 May** — Advanced Garden Design
  Upper District Office - 6pm - 7:30pm
- **3 Jun** — Firescaping
  In Person; location TBD - 6pm
- **19 Jun** — Firescaping
  In person; loction TBD - 6pm

EPA WaterSense 2024

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Director
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Director
Jennifer Santana
President
Division 5

San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority: Providing Clean Groundwater for Future Generations

With cycles of drought a fact of life in Southern California, local residents know the importance of maintaining a safe, abundant and reliable water supply. The San Gabriel Valley is fortunate to have a local water supply – the Main San Gabriel Basin – and it needs to be protected. This is what the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) is doing: keeping your water safe.

The WQA has coordinated the cleanup efforts since its creation more than 30 years ago. As a result, 2.1 million acre-feet of water has been treated, thus making the region less dependent upon imported water.

In 1979, industrial solvents and other contaminants were discovered in the San Gabriel Basin, a large underground aquifer that provides 90 percent of the water supply to the San Gabriel Valley. The contamination is believed to be the result of decades of improper chemical handling and disposal practices. Over time, chemicals seeped into the groundwater and began showing up in wells pumping drinking water out of the aquifer. As a result, water suppliers had to shut down wells and large portions of the 167-square-mile Basin were placed on the federal Superfund cleanup list in 1984.

On Feb. 11, 1993, the California Legislature established the WQA to develop, manage, finance and implement groundwater treatment programs in the San Gabriel Basin. The WQA identified polluters and worked to secure funding from them as well as the state and federal government, so ratepayers are not left footing the cleanup bill. The WQA coordinates these efforts with local, state and federal agencies and water producers, and also works to prevent future contamination.

Today, 34 treatment plants are successfully removing the contaminants from the Basin, which is the primary source of drinking water for over 1.5 million people in Alhambra, Irwindale, La Puente, Rosemead, Azusa, Baldwin Park, City of Industry, El Monte, South El Monte, West Covina and other areas of the San Gabriel Valley. Seven new treatment plants are under construction. The WQA is using the newest and most innovative technology to finish cleaning the Basin before the agency is scheduled to sunset in 2050.

Since the WQA's inception, WQA-sponsored projects have been responsible for treating over 2 million acre-feet of water in the Basin and removing nearly 217,267 pounds of contaminants.

The WQA keeps its focus on the key mission of making sure your water is safe. Learn more at **www.wqa.com**.



Over 2 million acre-feet of water treated and nearly 217,267 pounds of contaminants removed.

WQA Names Lynda Noriega as 2025 Chairperson



Lynda Noriega
Chairwoman

The San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Lynda Noriega as Chairperson of its Board of Directors for the year 2025. Noriega, who represents the water producers in the Main San Gabriel Basin, brings extensive experience and a deep commitment to improving water quality and managing resources in the region.

As Chairperson, Noriega will lead the WQA's efforts to oversee critical water quality initiatives, advocate for innovative solutions, and guide the Authority's policies and projects that impact millions of residents across the San Gabriel Valley.

"I am honored to serve as Chairperson of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority," said Noriega. "The work of the WQA is vital to ensuring that our communities continue to have access to clean, safe water, and I look forward to collaborating with my fellow board members, stakeholders, and local agencies to continue advancing our mission."

Noriega has been an active member of the WQA board, where her leadership in representing the interests of water producers has been instrumental in advancing key water quality programs. She has been an advocate for sustainable water management, supporting efforts that ensure long-term water security for the region.

The WQA plays a crucial role in monitoring and enhancing the quality of groundwater in the San Gabriel Basin, a vital source of drinking water for over 1.5 million people. Through collaborative efforts with local agencies, the WQA works to address contamination issues and fund cleanup projects to restore the Basin's water resources.

"We are excited to have Lynda Noriega as our Chairperson for 2025," said WQA Executive Director Randy Schoellerman. "Her experience, knowledge, and dedication to the Basin will be essential as we continue our work to protect and improve the water quality in the San Gabriel Basin. We look forward to a productive year under her leadership."

BOARD MEMBERS



Robert Gonzales
Vice Chairman



Valerie Muñoz
Secretary



Bob Kuhn
Treasurer



Ed Chavez
Board Member



Robert DiPrimio
Board Member



Mark Paulson
Board Member



Randy Schoellerman
Executive Director

WQA SAN GABRIEL BASIN WATER QUALITY AUTHORITY

(626) 338-5555 | info@wqa.com
www.wqa.com

From Metropolitan, Page 4

million people in our service area."



Shivaji Deshmukh P.E.

The Metropolitan vote followed decisions by 11 other agencies to continue funding the next phase of the project. Metropolitan's $141 million represents just over 47% of the phase cost. Governor Gavin Newsom met with Metropolitan leaders and staff prior to the vote and state Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot attended the meeting and spoke briefly before the vote.

"This backbone of water is the most affordable source. Southern California is the conservation leader, but we have to be able to continue to move two-thirds of the state's water," Crowfoot said. "This is about maintaining your options in an unprecedented time."

The SWP supplies water to 27 million people and 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland. If its service area were a nation it would rank as the world's eighth-largest economy. The DCP would modernize the Delta infrastructure to better capture and move water in wet years and also protect the Delta from salinity intrusion and earthquake risk.

"The Delta Conveyance Project will build climate and earthquake resiliency into the foundation of California's water infrastructure, better preparing us for increased periods of drought and climate extremes. Agencies like Metropolitan want to continue the important work that has already begun to fully study and construct this project," said State Water Contractors General Manager Jennifer Pierre.

California DWR's 2023 State Water Project Delivery Capability Report indicates that with no significant climate adaptation, water deliveries will drop by up to 21% in 20 years.

"Living through the past drought of 2020 through 2022 when the SWP allocation was at 5% and 0%, it exposed how important the water supply generated from the SWP is to Southern California," said Three Valleys General Manager and Chief Engineer Matt Litchfield, adding that TVMWD had to rely solely on Colorado River water.

"While local supplies and conservation measures are important and effective, the volumes of new water produced from local projects and conservation pales in comparison to the amount of water the DCP can deliver during wet years," Litchfield said. "Delivery of those large volumes of water are essential to refill storage reservoirs such as Diamond Valley Lake and vital for recharging local groundwater basins. The stored water acts as our savings account to draw on during extended dry periods."

IEUA General Manager Shivaji Deshmukh, P.E. takes pride in the region's diverse water supply portfolio that includes recycled water, stormwater capture, and stored groundwater, but also about 30% from the SWP. IEUA is the only Metropolitan member in San Bernardino County and the only one that buys exclusively untreated SWP supplies.

A bioacoustic fish fence, installed by DWR, uses a combination of bubbles, flashing LED lights and low-frequency sound to discourage young sensitive fish species from entering the interior Delta where their chances of survival decrease.
Xavier Mascareñas / California Department of Water Resources



"We have to take a long-term sustainability approach. The investment now is going to help enhance our resilience when it comes to dealing with natural disasters, particularly earthquakes. The tunnel project is designed to address future water scarcity concerns, so to us that's ensuring a stable water supply for ratepayers even in dry years," Deshmukh said. "We believe investing in the Delta Conveyance now will avoid larger, more costly water shortages or infrastructure failures in the future, which could end up costing ratepayers more."

As both a wholesale water supplier and wastewater collection and treatment agency, IEUA prioritizes protecting public health and will continue to stay informed on statewide initiatives and maintain productive relationships with both Metropolitan and IEUA customer agencies throughout the DCP analysis process, Deshmukh said.

"This work is going to give us the final blueprint," said SGVMWD General Manager Darin Kasamoto of the pre-construction process planned for 2026-'27. "This will iron out the cost-benefit numbers. The key thing is that this isn't a yes or no on the project. It's a yes to keep the project moving so that we can come to a final decision."

Charley Wilson, Executive Director & CEO of the non-profit Southern California Water Coalition summed it up this way: "Think of Delta Conveyance like a house needing repair – do you abandon it, or do you fix it? Committing to this project is not just about repairs; it's an investment aimed at having no regrets. It's a promise to future generations for a resilient and thriving California."

Be Water-Wise Every Day!

Check out these quick tips for keeping your home water-wise:

- Check and repair your sprinklers to prevent leaks and overspray.
- Turn off your sprinkler system during and for 48 hours after rain.
- Use an automatic shut-off hose nozzle when watering your lawn or garden.

Take advantage of our water saving rebates and programs for household items including clothes washers, toilets, sprinkler nozzles, and more!

SCAN ME

Be Sewer Smart!

Do you know how to dispose of fats, oils, and greases (FOG) properly?

If disposed of improperly, FOG can lead to sewer backups and household & city plumbing issues.

1. **Collect** FOG in a heat safe container!
2. Allow it to **cool.**
3. Throw cooled FOG into the trash **can**!

Can it be flushed?

- ✘ Wipes
- ✘ Napkins
- ✘ Tissues
- ✘ Paper Towels
- ✓ Toilet Paper

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L.A. County: Recovery Is the Hard Part

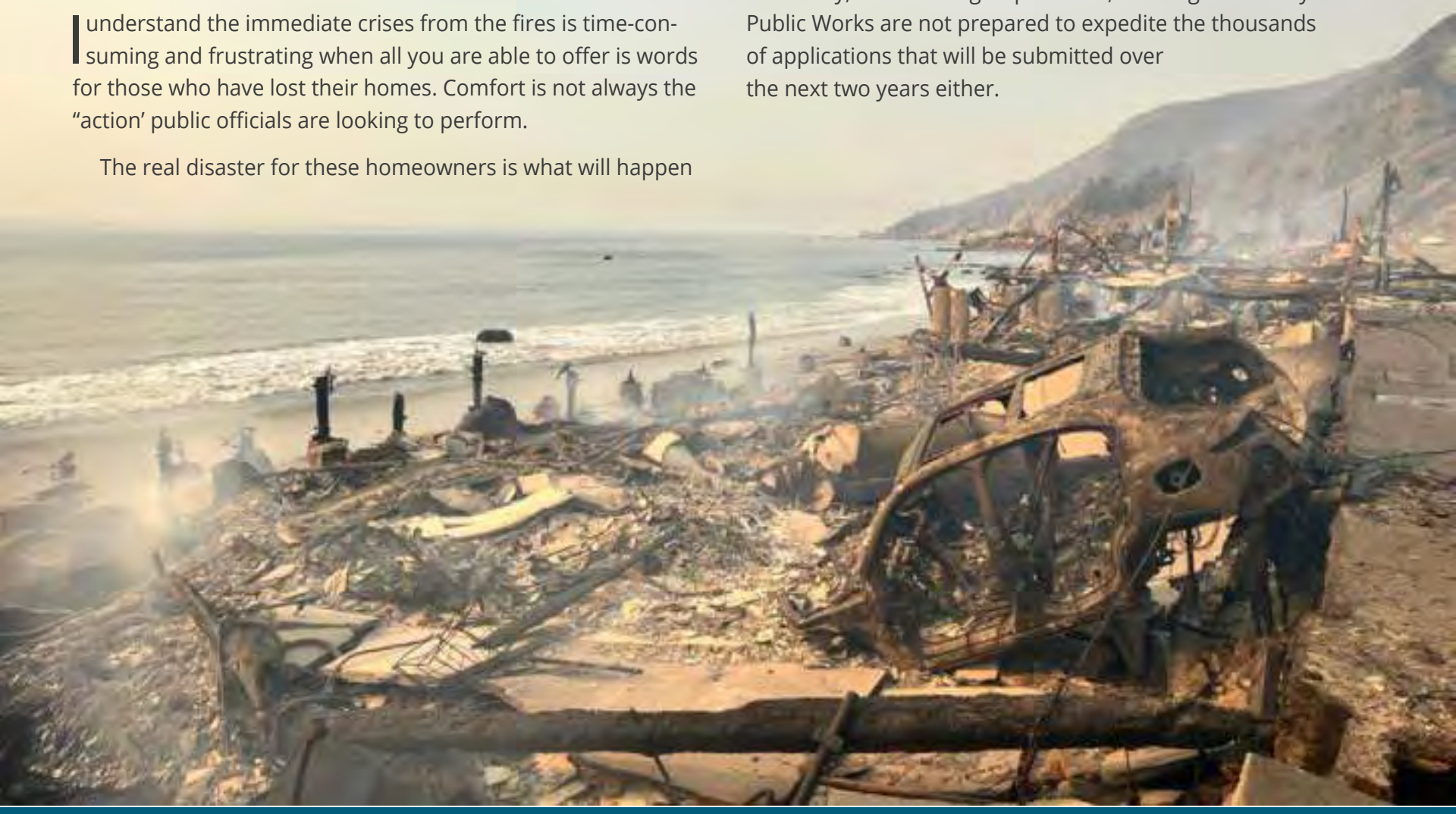
Below are excerpts from a letter to the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors from Mike Lewis, Senior Vice President of the Construction Industry Air Quality Coalition and a former Chief Deputy to a past L.A.County Supervisor.

I understand the immediate crises from the fires is time-consuming and frustrating when all you are able to offer is words for those who have lost their homes. Comfort is not always the "action' public officials are looking to perform.

The real disaster for these homeowners is what will happen next when they try to rebuild. That is where you can offer the most assistance from the County.

The task of rebuilding is daunting, and most of these folks have little or no experience dealing with the bureaucracy for permits and approvals. For most, their insurance probably doesn't cover the cost of fees and permits, which could easily total $100,000. Nor does it cover the increased cost of compliance with new Title 24 building codes since their homes were originally built. Today's requirements will simply not allow someone to replace what they had.

Frankly, the Planning Department, Building and Safety and Public Works are not prepared to expedite the thousands of applications that will be submitted over the next two years either.





Suggested Action

I think you need to establish a special office to handle rebuilding applications. It should have dedicated staffing with designated county staff from the relevant departments, engineering, fire, parks, planning, inspectors etc., along with specialty private permit contractors to help manage the workload. Applicants should not have to wait months for approvals or for inspections once construction commences. There should be a 30-day deadline set for plan-checking turnaround. The County should waive all the fees—demolition, plan check, application, hook-up, school, park, etc. You may have to muscle the other public agencies including utilities (gas, water, electricity, cable) into agreeing to waive their fees as well.



Helping Homeowners

The removal of debris will become a major issue. Much of it will be designated as toxic. It will become a public health issue if it is not removed immediately. Demolition fees and permits should be waived. ... FEMA money should pay for all of this and the County should contract the work out, get homeowner permission, and expedite it quickly.

The special office should include specialists in all the funding opportunities such as grants and FEMA reimbursements etc. For example, AQMD should be offering these property owners grants to upgrade their appliances to zero emission as they

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Photo: Norm Hughes / California Department of Water Resources

San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District: *Investing* in Our Future

$2.37 Million Allocated for Delta Conveyance Project Pre-Construction

The San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (SGVMWD) has taken a significant step towards securing a reliable water future for our communities by allocating $2.37 million for the Delta Conveyance Project. This pivotal decision affirms our commitment to long-term water reliability for the cities of Alhambra, Monterey Park, Azusa, and Sierra Madre.

A Collaborative Effort for California's Water Security

Our $2.37 million investment is part of a large effort from 18 State Water Contractors across California, emphasizing the critical importance of the Delta Conveyance Project. This joint investment by water agencies collectively contributes to the California Department of Water Resources' $300 million funding goal to continue the final phase of pre-construction and permitting. Highlighting the critical importance of this initiative, these agencies are addressing the state's water security needs to ensure that precious water resources are protected for generations to come.

The Final phase of pre-construction and permitting for the Delta Conveyance Project involves several critical activities designed to ensure the project's readiness for construction. This phase includes extensive environmental review, engineering design refinements, and securing necessary state and federal permits.

What is the Delta Conveyance Project?

The Delta Conveyance Project, planned by the Department of Water Resources, is a modernization initiative aimed at bolstering the reliability of the State Water Project (SWP). While it won't increase the amount of water conveyed, this project will optimize the delivery of allocated water. The SWP is vital, moving 50% of California's water supply through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for 27 million Californians, diverse wildlife, and 750,000 acres of farmland.

Innovative Infrastructure for a Resilient Future

The Delta Conveyance Project aims to modernize California's aging water delivery system by constructing a 45-mile underground tunnel, two new intakes on the Sacramento River, and a pumping plant. This infrastructure upgrade will enhance water reliability, protect against earthquakes and climate threats, and ensure a steady supply for millions of residents, businesses, and farms. As part of the State Water Project, which supplies 30% of Southern California's water, the project has been carefully refined over the years to address environmental concerns while securing the region's long-term water future.

Regional Benefits to the San Gabriel Valley

The San Gabriel Valley relies on a mix of local groundwater and imported water supply coming primarily from Northern California. However, this imported supply faces growing risks from aging infrastructure, earthquake threats to Delta levees, climate change impacts, and increasing water demand. Additionally, fluctuations in the State Water Project allocation can further impact the region's imported water reliability, especially during drought years. The Delta Conveyance Project will help address these challenges by modernizing the state's water delivery system, ensuring a more reliable and resilient imported water supply for the region. This investment is critical to maintaining long-term water security for residents, businesses, and local communities.

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

www.deltaconveyanceproject.com

www.sgvmwd.com

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rebuild. Measure W grants for rainwater collection and treatment systems should also be considered. These upgrades are expensive and would otherwise be something to avoid on top of all the other costs of rebuilding.

The County also should consider incentivizing these property owners to rebuild with ADUs so that some additional good, in the form of additional housing, can come from this tragedy. Also, rental units that were under rent control will need to be clearly exempted from future controls or there will be no incentive whatsoever to rebuild them

There needs to be a special team created to deal with the properties where the owner has chosen to walk away. Those properties could remain eyesores for years otherwise. Getting them acquired and rebuilt should be a priority. Every other similar fire area has had this problem.



Rebuilding Infrastructure

Rebuilding the roads and reinstalling the infrastructure should be the county's first priority. Repaving could take years. Repairing water lines and other utilities must be done before anyone can build. Simple question. With today's regulations and policies will the gas company be allowed to reinstall their gas lines or is everybody going to be required to build all electric homes? If so, can Edison supply the considerable additional electrical capacity?

This tragedy should present a unique opportunity to develop a new model for government cooperation with private property owners who are the victims of natural disasters. Defaulting back to "business as usual" is not a solution. This is the County's opportunity to demonstrate their nimbleness at a time when the residents need to know that you have their back when they really need it.

GUEST COMMENTARY

The Politics of Fire and Water



Mike Lewis
Senior Vice President
Construction Industry Air Quality Coalition

Mark Twain once wryly observed: "Whiskey is for drinking; water is for fighting over." Nowhere has that become more apparent than in the kerfuffle between President Trump and Governor Newsom over the recent Palisades and Eaton fires.

Both of them are right and both of them are wrong.

Has our water system been mismanaged for the benefit of political expediency? Yes! Would more water from the north have benefitted the firefighters? No! Can the President force some changes in the decades old California water policies? Yes! Does the public understand where their water comes from? No!

That last question is the reason the President is able to conflate water allocations from the north with dry fire hydrants in the Palisades, although there is little direct relationship. We have plenty of water right now. Our local reservoirs are full due to conservation and careful management by our water agencies.

When California Senator Rubin Ayala chaired the water committee, he often said, "People think water comes out of their wall." In those days, droughts were rare, water was plentiful and as long as it kept flowing the details were not important to most consumers.

California's water system is a clever, aging, Rube Goldberg construct that counts on snowpack accumulating as storage in the western Sierras, melting slowly, refilling reservoirs that drain slowly to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, where it is picked up by pipes and pumps and canals and lakes that send it to the desert in the south where 27 million people live. For the south, that is just 30% of their supply. Another 25% comes from the Colorado River that gets its snowmelt from the Rockies. The Los Angeles aqueduct gets its water from all the land that William Mulholland bought for the City of Los Angeles in Owens Valley near the Bishop area; drawing its water from the snowpack in the eastern Sierras. The remainder is generated locally from groundwater sources (recharged from stormwater captured in local dams) and recycled/treated wastewater.

With all those sources it's been easy to juggle supplies when one

runs short for any particular reason. Unfortunately, the Colorado users are fighting over allocations, the residents around Bishop want their land and their water rights back and Delta pumping is severely limited due to the Delta smelt, a tiny fish that is considered endangered and functionally extinct in the wild because only single digit numbers have been found for nearly a decade. All of those have squeezed the water supply from outside the SoCal region.



The John E. Skinner Delta Fish Protective Facility, contains behavioral guidance devices, known as louvers, that divert most fish away from the pumps that lift water into the California Aqueduct.
Florence Low / California Department of Water Resources

It has made even more urgent the need to assure a reliable and resilient local water supply.

Local leaders have proposed building pipelines and intakes from the south of the Delta to the north to take the water out before it gets to where the fish live. That's a $20 billion project. We have proposed a $3.6 billion local project to take highly treated wastewater and pipe it to the foothills to increase groundwater recharge. Voters have also approved a $300 million a year tax to build stormwater capture and treatment facilities to take advantage of every drop of the little rain we get in California. Taxpayers are also providing $250 million a year to fund a flood control system that needs to be modified to capture stormwater rather than letting it go directly to the ocean. The federal government has begun funding the repair of the five local dams that could be able to hold stormwater for groundwater recharge as well. Finally, the state voters have approved billions for new dams that have yet to be built.

All the local water agencies have collectively offered millions in incentives and rebates for low-flow toilets, water-saving appliances and irrigation systems, leak detection, rain barrels, and turf removal and replacement with drought-tolerant plantings.

One thing is for sure; we can't conserve our way out of the problem. California's per capita water use is 85 gallons per day. In 2015, it was 150 gallons per day. The state has set a goal of 47 gallons per person. That would be the lowest in the nation. Wasting water is not the problem in Southern California.

With all of that, how is it that we still have a water problem? Politics!

Northerners don't think Southerners should be taking "their" water. Even though we only take 4% of what goes through the Delta to the sea.

Environmentalists don't believe in surface storage (dams). They fight every one of them. But they don't offer any realistic alternative.

Community groups want community benefits with each taxpayer investment. That drives up the price, and delays every project.

Bureaucratic inertia has delayed projects for years. We could be capturing twice as much stormwater in local dams if we would just clean out the muck and sediment that has accumulated behind the 14 dams we control.

The cities have spent less than 20% of the hundreds of millions they have been given for stormwater capture projects.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has been the weapon of choice to delay or kill any project that someone disagrees with. It's the policy equivalent of an AR-15, but no politician will touch it.

Our water supply is being dictated by special interests that have no concern for the consumers who are footing the bill for everything. Those interests have the ear of the politicians, and the result is a water policy based on bias and preference rather than engineering.

In comes President Trump, the disrupter and chief, and he knocks all the checkers off the table. Right or wrong, he put everyone on the defensive. The public thinks he makes sense, because, in much of it, he does. Politicians and bureaucrats aren't used to being challenged in front of a TV camera. The public doesn't understand their leaders' explanations, or excuses. The voters have a right to think, with the billions they are paying, everything should be working. Now they find out, under the worst of circumstances, it isn't.

That's a problem for the water industry. If the public loses confidence in their plans, the money will dry up.

Now is the time for the Governor and our state water leaders to sit down with the President and the federal water managers and talk openly and plainly about how we are going to fix our teetering water infrastructure and provide a long-term, reliable and resilient water supply for consumers and agriculture. Waiting it out isn't an option.

Mike Lewis is Senior Vice President of the Construction Industry Air Quality Coalition and a former Chief Deputy to a past Los Angeles County Supervisor.

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