# Los Angeles Times

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CARLIN STIEHL For The Times

**JENNIFER ROGERS,** Will Rogers' great-granddaughter, takes in the ruins of the humorist's ranch house in Pacific Palisades.

# Will Rogers' home: What now?

## At his century-old Pacific Palisades ranch house, fans of the famed cowboy-humorist tried to preserve his legacy. Then everything burned.

**By Hailey Branson-Potts**

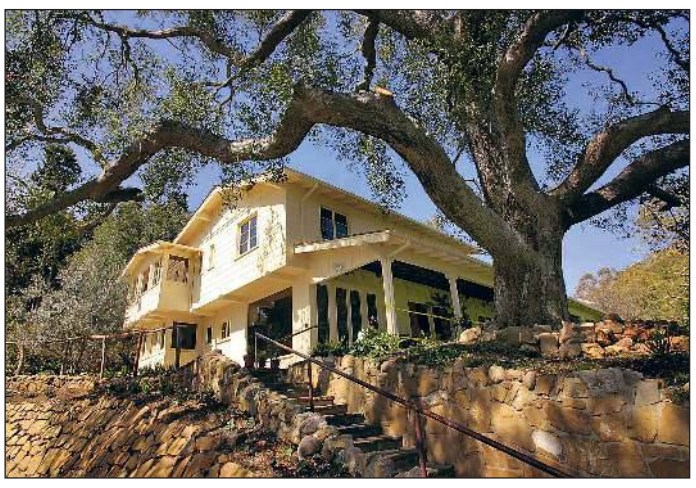
The sun had just set on the West Coast on Jan. 7 when Jennifer Rogers' phone pinged in Oklahoma.

What played on her screen was a 14-second video message: A dark, smoky sky. A friend speaking, his voice steady and sad, as he pointed toward the orange glow of the fast-encroaching Palisades fire.

"OK, Jenn, it's in the park," he said. "Without a doubt."

The park — named after Rogers' great-grandfather — was Will Rogers Historic State Park in Pacific Palisades. A two-story wooden ranch house, the last place the cowboy-humorist had called home, stood there.

After watching the video, Jennifer Rogers, who lives near her great-grandfather's grave site in Claremore, Okla., "just put my phone on silent and sat and cried."



AL SEIB Los Angeles Times

**IN A 1927** letter to his architect, Rogers said he wanted the cream-colored house to be a simple, box-like structure.

The fire destroyed Will Rogers' century-old house, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. And it incinerated his white-and-green stable with its stately central rotunda.

In the surrounding park — 186 wooded acres cut with ocean-view hiking and equestrian trails — more than 200 trees planted in the 1920s and '30s at Rogers' behest were so badly charred they soon will be removed, according to California State Parks officials.

Four months after the fire, a portion of the still-closed park is being used as a processing site for

[See **Rogers,** A9]

# Disruptive scene for screenwriters

## Recent graduates struggle to break into film, TV as industry shrinks

BY MALIA MENDEZ

Since the start of the year, Brandy Hernandez has applied to nearly 200 entertainment jobs.

The 22-year-old film school graduate, who works as a receptionist at the Ross Stores buying office in downtown Los Angeles, said that for most of those applications, she never heard back — not even a rejection. When she did land follow-up interviews, she was almost always ghosted afterward.

"I knew that I wouldn't be a famous screenwriter or anything straight out of college," said Hernandez, who graduated from the USC School of Cinematic Arts in 2024. But she thought she'd at least be qualified for an entry-level film industry job.

"It shouldn't be this hard," she kept thinking.

[See **Screenwriter,** A12]



ROBERT HANASHIRO For The Times

**YOUNG** screenwriters like Brandy Hernandez, left, Peter Gerard and Lore Olivera face a tough market as strikes and the rise of streaming have taken a toll.

# NPR stations Trump aims to cut have been disaster lifelines

BY JOHN RABY AND JAMIE STENGLE

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — After Hurricane Helene devastated Asheville, N.C., the sound coming from open car windows as residents gathered on a street at the top of a ridge trying to get cell service in the fall was Blue Ridge Public Radio.

And as they stood in line for water or food, the latest news they'd heard on the station was a frequent topic of conversation.

"The public radio station was alerting people what was going on," said Lisa Savage, who volunteered at an area church after the hurricane.

Now public radio stations are being targeted for cuts by President Trump. Last week, he signed an executive order aimed at slashing public subsidies to National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting Service, alleg-

[See **Public radio,** A8]

**Trump unsure on due process rights**
President says he does not know if U.S. citizens and noncitizens alike deserve that guarantee. **NATION, A5**

**Bomb plot foiled at Gaga concert**
Brazilian police arrest pair in an alleged plan to target LGBTQ+ fans in Rio. **WORLD, A4**

**SpaceX site on path to cityhood**
Voters endorse incorporation for Musk's Texas launch area, known as Starbase. **NATION, A10**

**Weather**
Low clouds may clear. L.A. Basin: 68/57. **B5**

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# State gained people again in 2024

## California saw its population grow for second straight year after an exodus during pandemic emergency.

BY TERRY CASTLEMAN

California's population increased for the second consecutive year, with much of the growth coming to the state's biggest cities, according to new data from the state Department of Finance.

The latest numbers for calendar year 2024 confirm the end of the so-called California exodus that saw the Golden State's population shrink for the first time in decades.

Seven of the state's 10 largest cities recorded population growth as they bounced back from the shrinking seen earlier in the pandemic, which hit hardest in most of the state's urban centers.

By the end of 2024, the state's population nearly eclipsed its pre-pandemic peak, but was still about 9,000 people short of the high-water mark from April 2020, reflecting slow growth in the years since then.

From April 2020 to January 2022, the state lost about 360,000 residents, according to the data released by the Department of Finance on Thursday. California added about 108,000 people in 2024 after adding nearly 200,000 in 2023. If growth continues,

[See **Population,** A8]

# 3 quit in protest of deputy's plea deal

## Prosecutors resign after offer by new U.S. attorney in Lancaster excessive force case.

BY BRITTNY MEJIA, JAMES QUEALLY AND KERI BLAKINGER

Several federal prosecutors — including the chief of the Public Corruption and Civil Rights Section — have submitted their resignations after a plea deal offered by the new U.S. attorney in Los Angeles to a sheriff's deputy who had already been found guilty of using excessive force.

Two sources confirmed to The Times that Assistant U.S. Attys. Eli A. Alcaraz, Brian R. Faerstein and section chief Cassie Palmer resigned from the office over a "post-trial" plea agreement filed Thursday in the case of Trevor Kirk, an L.A. County sheriff's deputy who was convicted of a felony for assaulting and pepper-spraying a woman outside a Lancaster supermarket.

Reached Saturday afternoon, Faerstein said he had no comment. None of the other prosecutors said to have resigned responded to

[See **Prosecutors,** A8]


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*Voices* **SAMMY ROTH** COLUMNIST, *BOILING POINT*

# Bass' shortsighted proposal on climate change

The mayor wants to eliminate a city office that protects people from deadly extreme heat.



BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

**FIREFIGHTERS** battle the Palisades blaze. As part of an order to help people rebuild, L.A. Mayor Karen Bass waived a rule that new homes be all-electric. Many builders will now install gas furnaces and water heaters.

Los Angeles is still reeling from its most devastating wildfires ever. In the next few months, temperatures could hit triple digits. Yet Mayor Karen Bass wants to eliminate the city's climate emergency office.

Yes, L.A. faces a $1-billion budget shortfall. But shutting the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office and firing five people who work to safeguard Angelenos from global warming, as Bass proposed last month, is an absurdly shortsighted plan from a mayor who has never made climate change much of a priority — especially when the savings, roughly $700,000, could potentially force the city to forfeit a $750,000 state grant.

City Council members should refuse to go along with this terrible proposal.

The budget cuts would undermine efforts to keep L.A. residents safe during heat waves, which at a national level kill more people than hurricanes, floods and tornadoes combined. Extreme heat has caused or contributed to the deaths of more than 21,500 Americans in the last quarter of a century, researchers estimate, with the numbers rising in recent years as the planet heats up. Last year was the hottest on record globally.

L.A.'s climate office is led by Marta Segura, the city's chief heat officer. Los Angeles is one of just three localities in the U.S. with such a job, along with Phoenix and Miami-Dade County — until now a point of pride for City Hall.

Although it's unclear whether the budget cuts would eliminate the chief heat officer position — the mayor's office won't say — Bass is seeking approval to delete the language in the Municipal Code establishing the role.

Either way, one of the climate office's main jobs is coordinating with other city departments during heat waves to keep people safe, especially low-income families and other vulnerable individuals, including the elderly and those without homes. If the climate office is shut down, people who don't have air conditioning or can't afford to blast it may have more trouble finding cooling centers. Some neighborhood may not have enough of those centers.

In the long run, Los Angeles could lose momentum on planting trees, adding shade structures at bus stops and taking other steps to bring down urban temperatures — especially if it loses a $750,000 state grant to develop a heat action plan, which the climate emergency office is working to finalize.

"Should this Office be deleted, the grant would need to be forfeited," Vahid Khorsand, president of L.A.'s Board of Public Works, warned in a letter to City Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky.

Bass' office says climate change is top of mind.

The mayor's press secretary, Clara Karger, said in an email that despite a tough budget cycle, Bass is "committed to her bold climate goals." She pointed me to an Earth Day news release describing efforts to reduce pollution at the Port of L.A., expand food scrap recycling and add electric car chargers across the city, among other initiatives. She noted that Bass created a "Climate Cabinet" of city officials, which includes an extreme heat working group.

"Climate priorities will continue as a core responsibility of every department," Karger said.

She also said that L.A. will keep developing its heat action plan, and that Khorsand's letter warning the city could lose the $750,000 state grant was misleading. She sent me a new statement from Khorsand that contradicted his previous missive: "We do not have any indication from the State that the City would need to forfeit grant funding. Other staff in the City will be available to administer and execute the grant."

Those are all very nice words. I hope the ones about the grant are true. But they do little to hide the plain truth.

As more than a dozen advocacy groups — including Los Angeles Waterkeeper, the Center for Biological Diversity and East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice — wrote in a letter to the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee, the mayor's proposal signifies "an abdication of the leadership on climate, environmental health and justice that the City has demonstrated over the past decade."

"Not long ago, Los Angeles was considered one of the world leaders in climate policy and action," they wrote.

No thanks to Bass.

When I interviewed her ahead of the 2022 mayoral primary, I was underwhelmed. To her credit, she had released a detailed climate plan, which was a lot more than I could say for her leading opponent, billionaire developer Rick Caruso (who released no climate plan until well after the primary and declined my interview requests).

But Bass clearly wasn't as well-versed in climate issues as several other candidates.

Tellingly, she downplayed the dangers of heat, saying that older folks dying in their homes has "historically been a problem in Chicago" but not Los Angeles. This despite a Times investigation from several months earlier finding that heat killed an estimated 3,900 Californians over the previous decade, with people over age 65 especially at risk.



GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

**FELISA BENITEZ,** 86, wipes sweat from her brow during a heat wave in Pacoima in August 2021.

Since then, there have been continued signs that climate is not one of the mayor's top priorities.

She declined to take a position on Measure HLA, a ballot measure approved by voters that will result in hundreds of miles of new bus and bike lanes and make it easier to get around L.A. without a car. She withdrew her support for studying plans to turn the three-mile Marina Freeway into parkland and housing. Her promise of a car-free 2028 Summer Olympics appears certain to fail amid a huge funding shortfall for buses and trains.

Bass did commit to powering the city with 100% climate-friendly electricity by 2035, a goal set by her predecessor, Eric Garcetti. But that promise didn't prevent a strange incident in which the L.A. Department of Water and Power quietly seemed to back away from the ambitious 2035 timeline. The department changed course only after climate advocates and Yaroslavsky raised concerns.

More recently, Bass responded to the Palisades and Eaton fires — which killed 30 people, and which scientists say were made worse by global warming — by suspending a crucial clean energy requirement for new homes.

As part of a wide-ranging order to help people rebuild in Pacific Palisades, Bass waived a rule that new homes be all-electric. As a result, many builders will install gas furnaces and water heaters that emit planet-warming carbon pollution. Although Bass framed the decision as a way to make rebuilding faster and cheaper, I talked with several experts who said suspending the clean energy requirement would accomplish neither goal.

Speaking of which, do you know which city employees are developing plans to help Angelenos switch from gas to climate-friendly electric appliances? The staffers at the climate emergency office whom Bass wants to fire.

"The city and the state have goals to transition to clean energy. If we eliminate this [office], it's going to make it so much harder for the city to actually reach those goals," said Agustin Cabrera, policy director at the social justice nonprofit Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education.

It's not just the climate emergency office that Bass wants to cut.

In their letter to the budget committee, environmental groups accused Bass of taking "a chain saw to other key departments," including a proposal to cut 159 positions at L.A. Sanitation, which they said could increase the risk of sewage spills, like the one that dumped millions of gallons of raw sewage into Santa Monica Bay in 2021.

The groups also noted that Bass would cut the planning department's entire environmental justice team. L.A. has a long history of forcing low-income people of color to live alongside busy freeways, oil and gas drilling and other polluting industries. Hence the planning department's environmental justice work, which the agency describes as "ensuring meaningful community participation in the planning process to promote equity."

If anything, Los Angeles should invest more than ever in climate and environmental justice as temperatures rise, wildfires get worse and scientists learn more about the how unhealthful it is to breathe dirty air.

Instead, Bass' budget cuts would tell the world that L.A. is no longer interested in being a climate leader — right as city officials advertise the Olympics. And as President Trump's efforts to support planet-warming oil and gas leave Americans — the vast majority of whom want strong climate action — desperate for leadership.

As several people have written to the City Council since Bass announced her proposal: "I urge the Budget and Finance Committee NOT to attempt to fix one crisis while causing another."

This article is taken from the latest edition of Boiling Point, a weekly newsletter about climate change and the environment in California. Sign up at latimes.com/boilingpoint.

# Zimbabwe stone carvers seek revival through U.K. show

BY FARAI MUTSAKA



AARON UFUMELI Associated Press

**WALLACE MKANKA'S** sculpture will be part of an Oxford University exhibition that aims to contextualize the legacy of British colonialist Cecil John Rhodes.

CHITUNGWIZA, Zimbabwe — A pair of white hands blinding a Black face. A smiling colonizer with a Bible, crushing the skull of a screaming native with his boot. Chained men in gold mines, and a pregnant woman.

These stone sculptures from Zimbabwe will take center stage at an upcoming exhibition at Oxford University in England, aiming to "contextualize" the legacy of British imperialist Cecil John Rhodes with depictions of religious deception, forced labor and sexual abuse.

Rhodes conquered large parts of southern Africa in the late 19th century. He made a fortune in gold and diamond mining and grabbed land from the local population. His grave lies under a slab of stone atop a hill in Zimbabwe.

Oxford's Oriel College, where the exhibition will be held in September, is a symbolic setting. A statue of Rhodes stands there despite protests against it since 2015. Rhodes, who died in 1902, was an Oriel student who left 100,000 pounds to the school — about $13.5 million by today's standards. His influence endures through a scholarship for students from southern African countries.

For Zimbabwean stone carvers at Chitungwiza Arts Center near the capital, Harare, the exhibition is more than an opportunity for Western audiences to glimpse a dark history. It is also a chance to revive an ancient art form.

Stone sculpture, once a thriving local industry, has suffered due to vast economic challenges and declining tourism.

"This will boost business. Buyers abroad will now see our work and buy directly from the artists," said sculptor Wallace Mkanka. His piece, depicting the blinded Black face, was selected as the best of 110 entries and will be one of four winning sculptures on display at Oxford.

Zimbabwe, meaning "House of Stone," derives its identity from the Great Zimbabwe ruins, a 1,800-acre Iron Age city built with precision-cut stones delicately stacked without mortar. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The southern African country has long used stone sculpture as a form of storytelling to immortalize history. The craft survived nearly a century of colonial rule that sought to erase local traditions, religion and art forms.

It thrived internationally instead. Thousands of pieces were plundered from Africa. Some later became subjects of repatriation campaigns. Others became prized by tourists and collectors. A permanent collection of 20 Zimbabwean stone sculptures is displayed in a pedestrian tunnel at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the world's busiest.

At its peak after independence, Zimbabwe's stone sculpture industry thrived, with local white farmers purchasing pieces for their homes and facilitating international sales.

"Customers were everywhere. They would pay upfront, and I always had a queue of clients," recalled Tafadzwa Tandi, a 45-year-old sculptor whose work will be featured in the Oxford exhibition.

But the industry has struggled over the last two decades.

Zimbabwe's global image suffered after controversial land reforms more than two decades ago displaced more 4,000 white farmers to redistribute land to about 300,000 Black families, according to government figures. Late ruler Robert Mugabe defended the reforms as necessary to address colonial-era inequities, but they had unintended economic consequences.

"Many of our customers were friends of the farmers. That is where the problem originated from," said Tendai Gwaravaza, chairman of Chitungwiza Arts Center.

At the center, the sound of grinders filled the air as sculptors carved. Hundreds of finished pieces, ranging from small carvings to life-size sculptures, waited for buyers.

"The only solution now is to get out there to the markets ourselves. If we don't, no one will," Gwaravaza said.

The Oxford exhibition represents such an opportunity, he said.

It is the brainchild of the Oxford Zimbabwe Arts Partnership, formed in response to the "Rhodes Must Fall" campaign that coincided with the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States.

The group, consisting of Zimbabwean artists, an Oxford alumnus and a professor of African history, initially envisioned a larger project titled "Oxford and Rhodes: Past, Present, and Future."

But the project was to have cost an estimated $265,000, far beyond available resources. Eventually, Oriel College provided about $13,000 for a scaled-down exhibition.

Mutsaka writes for the Associated Press.

THE WORLD

# Houthi missile halts flights at main Israel airport

Iranian-backed rebels in Yemen attack hours before crucial vote on intensifying Gaza war.

By Ohad Zwigenberg and Tia Goldenberg



Ohad Zwigenberg Associated Press

**ISRAELI** security forces inspect the site at Ben Gurion International Airport struck by a projectile launched by Houthi rebels in Yemen on Sunday. Israel's paramedic service says four people were lightly wounded.

BEN GURION INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, Israel — A missile launched by the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen briefly halted flights and commuter traffic at Israel's main international airport Sunday after its impact on the airport grounds left a plume of smoke and caused panic among passengers.

The attack on Ben Gurion International Airport came hours before Israeli Cabinet ministers were set to vote on whether to intensify military operations in Gaza. The army was calling up tens of thousands of reserves, said Israel's chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir.

Israel's army said it was the first time a missile struck the airport grounds since the war in the Gaza Strip began. The military said initial findings indicated the likely cause was a technical issue with the interceptor, which usually blocks incoming projectiles.

The Houthis have targeted Israel throughout the war in solidarity with Palestinians.

Israel's paramedic service Magen David Adom said four people were lightly wounded.

Multiple international airlines canceled or postponed flights. The war with Hamas militants in Gaza and then Hezbollah in Lebanon had led a wave of airlines to suspend flights to Israel. Many have resumed in recent months.

## Israel promises to respond to attack

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree said in a video statement that the group fired a hypersonic ballistic missile at the airport.

The rebels have been firing at Israel since its war with the militant group Hamas began on Oct. 7, 2023. The missiles have mostly been intercepted, although some have penetrated Israel's missile defense systems, causing damage.

Israel has struck back against the rebels in Yemen, and the United States, Israel's top ally, launched an ongoing campaign of strikes against them in March.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the U.S. was supporting Israeli operations against the Houthis. "It's not bang, bang, and we're done, but there will be bangs," he said in a video posted on social media.

Netanyahu in a later statement said Israel would respond to the Houthi attack, and, "at a time and place of our choosing, to their Iranian terror masters."

## Cabinet to vote on expanding Gaza war

Netanyahu said the security Cabinet was meeting Sunday evening to vote on plans to expand the fighting in Gaza.

"We will operate in additional areas and we will destroy all of the infrastructure above and below ground," Zamir said.

Far-right Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir told Israel's Army Radio that he wanted to see a "powerful" expansion of the war, and demanded that Israel bomb "the food and electricity supplies" in Gaza.

An eight-week ceasefire with Hamas brought a lull in fighting, allowed more aid into Gaza and freed some Israeli hostages, but it collapsed in March when Israel resumed strikes. The military has since captured swaths of the coastal enclave. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed, according to local health officials.

Israel in March also halted the entry of goods into Gaza as part of efforts to pressure Hamas to negotiate on Israel's terms for a new ceasefire. That has plunged the territory of 2.3 million people into what is believed to be the worst humanitarian crisis of the war.

In a confrontation over efforts to support Gaza, Malta's prime minister, Robert Abela, said his country had offered to send a marine surveyor to look into the damage caused to a ship that was said to be carrying aid and organized by pro-Palestinian activists. Abela said the captain refused.

The activists said Friday that their vessel was struck by drones, blaming Israel, and the ship remained in international waters off Malta. The Israeli military has not commented.

## New airstrikes kill more Palestinians

Israeli airstrikes killed at least seven Palestinians, including parents and their two children, ages 2 and 4, early Sunday in southern and central Gaza, Palestinian medics said. The military had no comment.

The military said two soldiers were killed in combat in Gaza, bringing the number killed since fighting resumed in March to six.

The war in Gaza began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostage. Israel says 59 captives remain in Gaza, although about 35 are believed to be dead.

Israel's offensive has killed more than 52,000 people in Gaza, most of them women and children, according to Palestinian health officials, who do not distinguish between combatants and civilians in their count. The fighting has displaced more than 90% of Gaza's population, often multiple times. Hunger has been widespread and the shortage of food has set off looting.

Zwigenberg and Goldenberg write for the Associated Press and reported from Ben Gurion International Airport and Tel Aviv, respectively. AP writers Natalie Melzer in Nahariya, Israel; Samy Magdy in Cairo; Melanie Lidman in Jerusalem and Kevin Schembri in Birkirkara, Malta, contributed to this report.

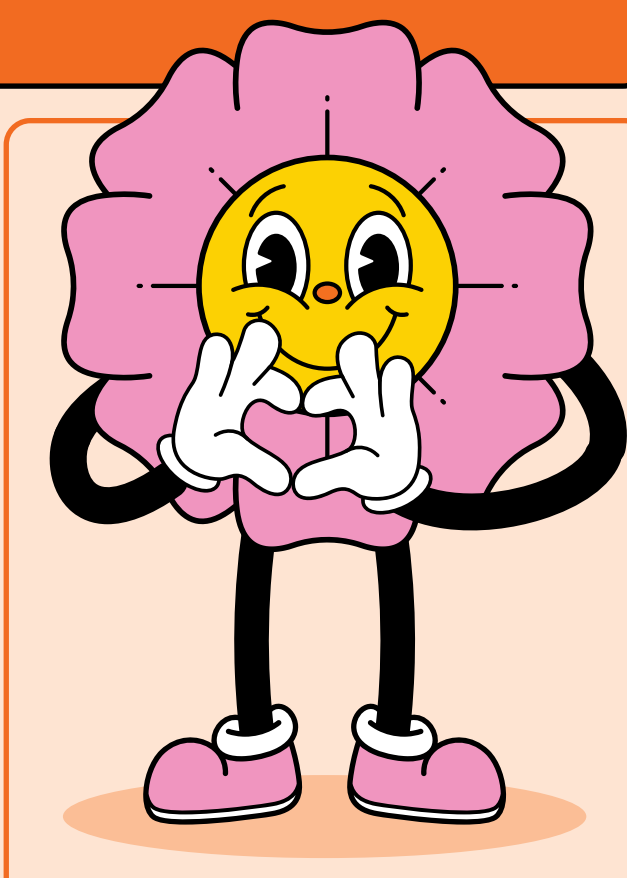
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# Nicaragua leaves UNESCO over award

Agency's pick for press freedom prize angers government, which sees recipient as a pro-U.S. outlet.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARIS — UNESCO on Sunday announced the withdrawal of Nicaragua from the United Nations' cultural and educational body because of the awarding of its prize celebrating press freedom to a Nicaraguan newspaper.

Nicaragua announced its withdrawal from the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in a letter that agency Director-General Audrey Azoulay said she received Sunday morning.

In the letter, seen by the Associated Press, Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Valdrack Jaentschke denounced the awarding of a UNESCO press freedom prize to La Prensa.

The prize jury hailed the newspaper's work in the face of "severe repression" and reporting from exile that "courageously keeps the flame of press freedom alive" in the Central American country.

Nicaragua's government, led by President Daniel Ortega and his wife and co-president, Rosario Murillo, has been cracking down on dissent since it violently repressed protests in 2018, claiming the rallies were backed by foreign powers that sought his overthrow.

In his letter to UNESCO, Jaentschke claimed La Prensa is a pro-U.S. news outlet and "represents the vile betrayal against our Motherland."

Nicaragua was one of 194 member states in the United Nations agency, which promotes education, science and culture and works for the preservation of outstanding cultural and natural heritage around the world. Its departure comes at a time when UNESCO is also in President Trump's crosshairs.

Here's a look at the dispute:

## Prize for journalists

UNESCO member states created the World Press Freedom Prize in 1997. The only U.N. prize awarded to journalists, it is named after Colombian newspaper journalist Guillermo Cano Isaza, who was assassinated in Bogota, the capital, in 1986.

An international jury of media professionals that recommended La Prensa for the 2025 award on Saturday said through its chairman that the newspaper, founded in 1926, "has made courageous efforts to report the truth to the people of Nicaragua."

UNESCO said that "since 2021, following the imprisonment and expulsion of its leaders from the country as well as the confiscation of its assets, La Prensa has continued to inform the Nicaraguan population online, with most of its team in exile and operating from Costa Rica, Spain, Mexico, Germany and the United States."

Other recent laureates include Belarus' top independent journalists' organization, recognized in 2022, and, in 2019, journalists Kyaw Soe Oo and Wa Lone, who were jailed in Myanmar for their reporting on the military's brutal crackdown on Rohingya Muslims.

## Nicaragua's stance

Jaentschke's letter said that UNESCO recognition for La Prensa was "undeserved" and that the agency's actions were "unacceptable and inadmissible."

The minister alleged, without offering evidence, that La Prensa has promoted U.S. military and political intervention in Nicaragua.

"It is deeply shameful that UNESCO appears as the promoter, and obviously as an accomplice, of an action that offends and attacks the deepest Values of Nicaragua's National Identity and Culture," his signed and stamped letter said.

Nicaragua's government later issued a statement that echoed Jaentschke's claims.

"When UNESCO gives prominence to the traitors, slaves and lackeys of colonialism and imperialism, it totally abandons any sense of objectivity," it said.

## UNESCO's reply

In a statement announcing Nicaragua's decision to leave, Azoulay said that "UNESCO is fully within its mandate when it defends freedom of expression and press freedom around the world."

"I regret this decision, which will deprive the people of Nicaragua of the benefits of cooperation, particularly in the fields of education and culture," she said.

## Trump's review

In his first term, Trump looked dimly on Ortega's rule. In 2018, Trump signed into law a bill to cut off resources to the government of Nicaragua. But he has also been critical of UNESCO.

In an executive order in February, Trump called for a review of U.S. involvement in the agency. His previous administration in 2017 announced that the U.S. would withdraw from UNESCO, citing anti-Israel bias. That decision took effect a year later.

The United States formally rejoined UNESCO in 2023 under President Biden.

# 2 arrests in suspected plot to bomb Lady Gaga show

Brazilian police say they thwarted effort to target LGBTQ+ fans at Rio concert for 2.5 million people.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

RIO DE JANEIRO — Police in Brazil said Sunday that two people have been arrested in connection with a suspected plot to detonate a bomb at a free Lady Gaga concert before a crowd of about 2.5 million fans at Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro.

Felipe Cury, secretary of the Rio police, said authorities believed the suspects sought to target Brazil's LGBTQ+ community at the Saturday night event.

"They were clearly saying that they were planning an attack at Lady Gaga's concert motivated by sexual orientation," Cury said at a news conference Sunday.

Rio Police Chief Luiz Lima said the group disseminated hate speech and violent content online "aimed at gaining notoriety in order to attract more viewers, more participants — most of them teenagers, many of them children."

Even as Brazilian authorities said they arrested suspects in the hours before the show, the biggest of Lady Gaga's career, the event went ahead without disruption, leading some to question the seriousness of the threat. Serious security concerns typically lead organizers to cancel such massive events, as happened with Taylor Swift's concerts in Vienna last year.

Police said nothing about the alleged plot at the time in an effort to "avoid panic" and "the distortion of information," authorities said.

A spokesperson for Lady Gaga said the pop star and her team "learned about this alleged threat via media reports this morning. Prior to and during the show, there were no known safety concerns, nor any communication from the police or authorities to Lady Gaga regarding any potential risks."

The statement added: "Her team worked closely with law enforcement throughout the planning and execution of the concert and all parties were confident in the safety measures in place."

Security was tight at Saturday's concert, with 5,200 military members and police officers deployed to the beach where fans were reveling in the pop singer's classic hits such as "Born This Way," which became something of an LGBTQ+ anthem after its 2011 release.

Authorities arrested two people in connection with the suspected plot — a man described as the group's leader in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul on illegal weapons possession charges and a teenager in Rio on child pornography charges. Police did not elaborate on their exact roles in the alleged plot or on how the group came to target Lady Gaga's beach concert.

"Those involved were recruiting participants, including teenagers, to carry out integrated attacks using improvised explosives and Molotov cocktails," police said.

The Justice Ministry said that it determined the group posed a "risk to public order." It said the group falsely presented itself online as "Little Monsters" — Lady Gaga's nickname for her fans — in order to reach teenagers and lure them into "networks with violent and self-destructive content."

During a series of raids on the homes of 15 suspects across several Brazilian states, authorities confiscated phones and other electronic devices. Even as police said they believed homemade bombs were intended for use in the planned attack, there was no mention of the raids turning up any weapons or explosive material.

Cury said one of the suspects whose home was raided in the city of Macaé, near Rio, "had a religious motivation" and "claimed the singer [Lady Gaga] was a Satanist."

In an Instagram post, Lady Gaga said nothing of the suspected plot, but expressed gratitude for the enormous crowd.

"Nothing could prepare me for the feeling I had during last night's show — the absolute pride and joy I felt singing for the people of Brazil," she wrote. "The sight of the crowd during my opening songs took my breath away. Your heart shines so bright, your culture is so vibrant and special, I hope you know how grateful I am to have shared this historical moment with you."

Her free beach concert stood out at a time of surging ticket prices for live music around the world as concertgoers pay budget-busting costs to see their favorite artists.



SILVIA IZQUIERDO Associated Press

**LADY GAGA** performs at a free concert at Rio's Copacabana Beach on Saturday. Her spokesperson said she didn't know about the suspected plot before the show.

## FOR THE RECORD

**Soil testing:** In the May 4 A Section, an article about toxic substances found in the Palisades and Eaton fire zones included an illustration that gave the atomic number of molybdenum as 40. It is 42.


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Los Angeles Times


# Pakistan tests missile amid India tensions

Launch follows deadly attack on tourists in Kashmir, blamed on Islamabad, that has stoked hostilities.

BY MUNIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Pakistan test-fired a ballistic missile Saturday as tensions with India surged over last month's deadly attack on tourists in the disputed Kashmir region.

The surface-to-surface missile has a range of about 280 miles, the Pakistani military said. There was no immediate comment from India, which blames its archrival for the April 22 gun massacre in the Kashmiri resort town of Pahalgam, a charge Pakistan denies.

Pakistan's military said the launch of the Abdali Weapon System was aimed at ensuring the "operational readiness of troops and validating key technical parameters," including the missile's advanced navigation system and enhanced maneuverability features.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated those behind the successful test. Missiles are not fired toward the border area with India; they are normally fired into the Arabian Sea or the deserts of Baluchistan province in the southwest.

Islamabad-based security analyst Syed Muhammad Ali said Saturday's missile was named after a prominent Muslim conqueror of India, underlining its symbolic significance.

"The timing of this launch is critical in the current geopolitical context," Ali told the Associated Press. He said the test was intended as a signal to India after it had threatened to suspend a crucial water-sharing treaty.

India's navy said April 27 that its vessels had successfully undertaken antiship firings to "revalidate and demonstrate readiness of platforms, systems and crew for [a] long-range precision offensive strike."

Ashok Malik, a former policy advisor for India's Foreign Ministry, said there was anger across the country after the gun attack. The 26 victims came from 13 states.

"Internationally, there is enormous sympathy for India and little patience with Pakistan," Malik said. "I don't believe anybody in India wants a full-fledged war. Even so, there is domestic pressure and diplomatic space for a sharp, targeted and limited response."

The ongoing "muscle flexing" by both countries' troops was reflective of the tense mood and also apparent in the "unremitting hostilities" on the Line of Control, the de facto border dividing Kashmir, he said.

Kashmir is split between India and Pakistan and claimed by both in its entirety.

They have fought two of their three wars over the stunning Himalayan region, and their ties have been shaped by conflict, aggressive diplomacy and mutual suspicion, mostly due to their competing territorial claims.

The latest flare-up led the two countries to expel each other's diplomats and nationals. Airspace was closed.

On Saturday, India suspended the exchange of all mail from Pakistan through air and surface routes and imposed an immediate ban on the direct and indirect import of all goods from its neighbor.

India has also banned Pakistani-flagged ships from entering its ports and prohibited Indian-flagged vessels from visiting Pakistani ports.

India's military said Saturday that Pakistani troops had fired at positions across the border for a ninth consecutive night. The statement called the firing unprovoked and said Indian troops "responded promptly and proportionately."

Pakistan did not confirm the exchange of fire at the Line of Control.

The incident could not be independently verified. In the past, each side has accused the other of starting border skirmishes.

Passions ran high among the Pakistanis who traveled to the Wagah crossing with India to see the famous flag-lowering ceremony.

The spectacle involves Pakistan's Rangers and India's Border Security Force in a dramatic parade on either side of the crossing, with just a gate between them, their high kicks stretching skyward.

Shoaib ur Rehman said that no other experience stirred such powerful feelings of patriotism in him and that he witnessed "extraordinary emotions" during Saturday's ceremony.

Rehman expressed his opposition to a war with India, but said he would fight alongside Pakistan's military if one broke out.

Sundas Batool wanted India to provide evidence about Pakistan's involvement in the Pahalgam attack.

"The other side must have seen our energy, our spirit," said Batool, referring to the crowds on the other side of the border. "My message to India is: We are ready for anything."



K.M. CHAUDARY Associated Press

**PAKISTANI RANGERS** during the flag-lowering ceremony Saturday at the Wagah crossing with India.

Ahmed writes for the Associated Press. AP writers Aijaz Hussain in Srinagar, India; Rajesh Roy in New Delhi; and Babar Dogar in Wagah, Pakistan, contributed to this report.

# Trump noncommittal on due process rights

President says he's unsure that citizens and noncitizens alike deserve a guarantee.

By Aamer Madhani



Alex Brandon Associated Press

**PRESIDENT TRUMP**, holding notes about Kilmar Abrego Garcia last month at the White House, has sought to turn the legal U.S. resident's deportation into a test case for his campaign against illegal immigration.

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — President Trump is circumspect about his duties to uphold due process rights laid out in the Constitution, saying in a new interview that he does not know whether U.S. citizens and noncitizens alike deserve that guarantee.

He also said he does not think military force will be needed to make Canada the "51st state" and played down the possibility he would look to run for a third term in the White House.

The comments in a wide-ranging, and at moments combative, interview with NBC's "Meet the Press" came as the Republican president's efforts to quickly enact his agenda face sharper headwinds with Americans just as his second administration crossed the 100-day mark, according to a recent poll by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Trump, however, made clear that he is not backing away from a to-do list that he insists the American electorate broadly supported when they elected him in November.

Here are some of the highlights from the interview with NBC's Kristen Welker that was taped Friday at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida and aired Sunday.

## Deportation case and due process

Critics and many analysts have argued that Trump is chipping away at due process in the United States. Most notably, they cite the case of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran-born man — and legal U.S. resident — who was living in Maryland when he was mistakenly deported to El Salvador and imprisoned without communication.

Trump says Abrego Garcia is part of a violent transnational gang. The president has sought to turn deportation into a test case for his campaign against illegal immigration despite a Supreme Court order saying the administration must work to return Abrego Garcia to the U.S.

Asked in the interview whether U.S. citizens and noncitizens both deserve due process as laid out in the 5th Amendment of the Constitution, Trump was noncommittal.

"I don't know. I'm not, I'm not a lawyer. I don't know," Trump said when pressed by Welker.

The 5th Amendment provides "due process of law," meaning a person has certain rights when it comes to being prosecuted for a crime. Also, the 14th Amendment says no state can "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Trump said he has "brilliant lawyers ... and they are going to obviously follow what the Supreme Court said."

He said that he was pushing to deport "some of the worst, most dangerous people on Earth," but that courts are getting in his way.

"I was elected to get them the hell out of here, and the courts are holding me from doing it," Trump said.

## Rhetoric on Canada as the '51st state'

The president has repeatedly threatened that he intends to make Canada the "51st state."

Before his White House meeting Tuesday with newly elected Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Trump is reiterating the rhetoric that has angered Canadians.

Trump, however, told NBC that it was "highly unlikely" that the U.S. would need to use military force to make Canada a state.

He offered less certainty about whether his repeated calls for the U.S. to take over Greenland from NATO ally Denmark can be achieved without military action.

"Something could happen with Greenland," Trump said. "I'll be honest, we need that for national and international security. ... I don't see it with Canada. I just don't see it, I have to be honest with you."

## 'Trump economy' vs. 'Biden economy'

Trump said the U.S. economy is in a "transition period" but he expects it to do "fantastically" despite the economic turmoil sparked by his tariffs.

He responded sharply when Welker noted that some Wall Street analysts now say the chances of a recession are increasing.

"Well, you know, you say, some people on Wall Street say," Trump said. "Well, I tell you something else. Some people on Wall Street say that we're going to have the greatest economy in history."

He also deflected blame for the 0.3% decline in the U.S. economy in the first quarter. He said he was not responsible for it.

"I think the good parts are the Trump economy and the bad parts are the Biden economy because he's done a terrible job," referring to his Democratic predecessor, Joe Biden.

Trump reiterated his recent comments at a Cabinet meeting that children might have to have two dolls instead of 30, denying that is an acknowledgment his tariffs will lead to supply shortages.

"I'm just saying they don't need to have 30 dolls. They can have three. They don't need to have 250 pencils. They can have five."

## Discussion of a third term as president

The president has repeatedly suggested he could seek a third term in the White House even though the 22nd Amendment of the Constitution says that "No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice."

Trump told NBC that there is considerable support for him to run for a third term.

"But this is not something I'm looking to do," Trump said. "I'm looking to have four great years and turn it over to somebody, ideally a great Republican, a great Republican to carry it forward."

Some observers view Trump's comments about a third term as provoking outrage on the political left. The Trump Organization is selling red caps with the words "Trump 2028."

## Name-dropping Vance and Rubio

Trump said in the interview that Vice President JD Vance is doing a "fantastic job" and is "brilliant." Secretary of State Marco Rubio, whom Trump last week tasked to simultaneously serve as acting national security advisor, is "great," the president said.

But Trump said it is "far too early" to begin talking about his potential successor.

He is confident that his "Make America Great Again" movement will flourish beyond his time in the White House.

"You look at Marco, you look at JD Vance, who's fantastic," Trump said. "You look at — I could name 10, 15, 20 people right now just sitting here. No, I think we have a tremendous party. And you know what I can't name? I can't name one Democrat."

## Secretary Hegseth's job is 'totally safe'

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has been under fire for his participation in several Signal text chains in which sensitive information about military planning was shared. But Trump said he is not looking to replace his Pentagon chief.

"No. Not even a little bit. No. Pete's going to be great," Trump said. Hegseth's job is "totally safe."

The president also said his decision to nominate national security advisor Mike Waltz to be the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations was not punishment for starting one of the Signal text chains to which Waltz inadvertently added a reporter.

"No. I just think he'll do a nice job in the new position," Trump said. He said his decision to have Rubio take over Waltz's duties will probably be temporary.

"Marco's very busy doing other things, so he's not going to keep it long term. We're going to put somebody else in," Trump said, adding that it would nonetheless be possible to do both jobs indefinitely. "You know, there's a theory. Henry Kissinger did both. There's a theory that you don't need two people. But I think I have some really great people that could do a good job."

One person he said he is not considering for the post? Top policy aide Stephen Miller.

"Well, I'd love to have Stephen there, but that would be a downgrade," he said. "Stephen is much higher on the totem pole than that, in my opinion."

## Crypto and other business ventures

Trump denied he is profiting from the presidency, even as he continues to promote a series of business ventures, including cryptocurrency holdings.

"I'm not profiting from anything. All I'm doing is, I started this long before the election. I want crypto. I think crypto's important because if we don't do it, China's going to. And it's new, it's very popular, it's very hot," Trump said, asserting that he hasn't "even looked" at how much he's made from the venture.

Just days before taking office, Trump launched his own meme coin, which surged in value after it announced that top holders would be invited to an exclusive dinner at the president's Washington-area golf club later this month and a tour of the White House. He also helped launch World Liberty Financial, another cryptocurrency venture, last year.

That's in addition to a long list of other business ventures, including Trump Media & Technology Group, which runs his social media site, and branded sneakers, watches, colognes and perfumes.

"Being president probably cost me money if you really look," Trump said. "In fact, I do something that no other president has done, they think maybe George Washington has done. ... I contribute my entire salary to the government, back to the government. And I'm doing it again."

## Talk of another TikTok extension

Trump said he is open to extending the deadline for a deal on TikTok once again.

"I'd like to see it done," he said. "I have a little warm spot in my heart for TikTok. TikTok is — it's very interesting, but it'll be protected."

He added: "If it needs an extension, I would be willing to give it an extension; might not need it."

Last month, Trump used executive action to keep TikTok running in the U.S. for 75 more days to give his administration more time to broker a deal to bring the social media platform under American ownership.

White House officials had believed they were close to a deal in which the app's operations would have been spun off into a new company based in the U.S. and owned and operated by a majority of American investors. But Beijing hit the brakes after Trump imposed wide-ranging tariffs on nations across the globe, including massive rates on China.

"We actually have a deal. We have a group of purchasers, very substantial people. They're going to pay a lot of money. It's a good thing for us. It's a good thing for China. It's going to be, I think, very good," he said.

But a deal will take a while, Trump said, "because of the fact that I've essentially cut off China right now with the tariffs that are so high that they're not going to be able to do much business with the United States. But if we make a deal with China, I'm sure that'll be a subject, and it'll be a very easy subject to solve."

Madhani writes for the Associated Press. AP writer Jill Colvin in New York contributed to this report.

# Man charged in deputy's death a day after son's killing

By John Seewer



WCPO

**THE SCENE** Friday in Cincinnati where a county deputy was struck and killed by a car while directing traffic. Officials say the crash appeared to be intentional.

CINCINNATI — A man who struck and killed a county deputy with his car Friday is the father of a young man who was shot and killed by a Cincinnati police officer a day earlier, police said. Authorities said the crash appeared to be intentional.

The driver of the car, 38-year-old Rodney Hinton Jr., was charged with aggravated murder in the deputy's death, police said.

Hinton appeared in court Saturday, with a wall of deputies standing at the back of the room. A prosecutor said evidence and witnesses will show that Hinton drove directly at the deputy in an attempt to kill him. A judge ordered that Hinton be held until another hearing Tuesday.

An attorney representing Hinton said in court that he has no prior felonies and understands it's a serious charge, WLWT-TV reported.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said in a statement that he was "sickened by what appears to be an intentional act of violence."

Just a few hours before the crash, Hinton and other family members met at the police chief's office Friday morning and watched a police body camera video showing an officer shoot Hinton's son, said Michael Wright, an attorney hired by the family of 18-year-old Ryan Hinton.

Rodney Hinton could not make it through the entire video and did not say a word, said Wright, who is not representing Hinton on the crash charges. "He was distraught, he was upset," Wright said Saturday.

In a statement issued later on behalf of Ryan Hinton's family, the law firm offered heartfelt condolences to the family and colleagues of the deputy who was killed. The firm called it "an unimaginable tragedy" for the community and said Ryan Hinton's family was heartbroken by the events and devastated for the deputy's family.

The Hamilton County sheriff's deputy was directing traffic near the University of Cincinnati on graduation day when he was hit by a car that drove into an intersection, Cincinnati Police Chief Teresa Theetge said. Authorities did not identify the deputy, who retired from the department a few months ago but was continuing to work off-duty assignments, Sheriff Charmaine McGuffey said.

"He was so well-liked and so well-known," McGuffey said. "What a tremendous loss we have all suffered."

Authorities said the circumstances of the crash were being investigated.

"If the facts show this act was intentional, as the charge suggests, I will throw the full force of the law at the perpetrator," Hamilton County prosecutor Connie Pillich said in a statement Friday.

Ryan Hinton was shot twice and killed by police Thursday during a chase. The officer who fired told investigators that the suspect pointed a gun at him, Theetge said. Police showed photos during a news conference Friday of a semiautomatic handgun that they said he was carrying and another gun that was found in the car.

One officer could be heard in body camera video released by police saying, "He's got a gun, he's got a gun," before several shots were fired as Hinton was running behind an apartment complex.

While the blurred images did not clearly show Hinton pointing a gun as he and the officer were running, Theetge said, the officer told investigators that he had the firearm in front of him, it was pointed at the officer and the officer feared for his life.

There was no indication that Hinton fired at police before he was shot, she said.

Seewer writes for the Associated Press.

ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

# ARASH FARIN, MING-TAI HUH AND SHERRY JACKMAN SHARE INSIGHTS ON THE FOOD & BEVERAGE INDUSTRY IN 2025

The **Food & Beverage** Roundtable panel is produced by the LA Times Studios team in conjunction with Centerstone Capital; Greenberg Glusker LLP; and Square.



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With the ever-evolving operational changes that businesses in every sector have had to make over the last few years, a whole new landscape has emerged in the food and beverage sector in terms of tariff, legislative, employment and supply chain issues. Even the most seasoned industry pros have found themselves having to get creative to determine solutions in today's complicated climate.

Are shifts in protocols and best practices that have emerged temporary or here to stay? What should restaurants, manufacturers, distributors and vendors be focusing on in terms of new trends and standards?

To address these issues, as well as many other topics, the LA Times Studios team turned to three leading food and beverage industry experts for their thoughts, insights and assessments regarding the current state of the industry and the various trends that they have been observing.

## Q: ARE THERE ANY NEW REGULATORY ISSUES THAT FOOD AND BEVERAGE COMPANIES NEED TO BE AWARE OF IN 2025?

**A: JACKMAN**

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is likely the biggest new regulatory issue for food and beverage companies in 2025. States like California and Oregon now require producers selling into those states to take financial and operational responsibility for packaging waste. Companies must register with Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs), report packaging data, and pay fees based on material type and recyclability. To manage costs and comply, businesses may need to redesign packaging to use more recyclable or sustainable materials.

**A: FARIN**

There are a number of regulatory issues to be aware of: 1) updated FDA "healthy" labeling definition; 2) brominated vegetable oil (BVO) bans; 3) extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws for packaging; 4) food traceability rule; 5) state-level chemical bans and labeling requirements; 6) front-of-pack nutrition labeling; and 7) potential FDA overhaul and reduced inspections.

## Q: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, HOW DO YOU SEE THE INDUSTRY EVOLVING OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

**A: HUH**

The restaurant industry's evolution over the next five years will be powered by AI, but not in the flashy, robots-flipping-burgers way that some predict. Instead, we'll see a more subtle but profound transformation that starts with the basics. AI will first make its mark by enhancing the systems restaurants already use – making inventory predictions more accurate, scheduling more efficient and menu pricing more dynamic. These foundational improvements will pave the way for more visible innovations like voice AI and predictive kitchen systems. The key is that this transformation will be gradual and practical. The winners in 2030 won't necessarily be the restaurants with the most advanced technology but those who thoughtfully integrate AI to support their fundamental mission: serving great food and creating exceptional dining experiences.

## Q: WHAT CHANGES MADE DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS DO YOU THINK WILL REMAIN IN PLACE WITH THE FOOD & BEVERAGE INDUSTRY GOING FORWARD?

**A: FARIN**

Digital ordering and delivery dominance; contactless and cashless payments; focus on health and sustainability; labor-saving automation; hybrid dining models; supply chain resilience; and premium and experiential offerings.

## Q: WHAT ARE CONSUMERS SEEKING FROM FOOD & BEVERAGE COMPANIES IN 2025?

**A: HUH**

In 2025, consumers are demanding more value, convenience and transparency from food and beverage businesses while also showing increasing acceptance of technology solutions. According to Square's most recent Future of Restaurants report, when it comes to service, today's diners are pragmatic about staffing challenges – 74% welcome automation to fill critical operational gaps during labor shortages. The modern consumer also expects to be rewarded for their loyalty, with 69% valuing personalized loyalty programs and ranking exclusive discounts as their top desired benefit. Simplicity in ordering and payment has become non-negotiable, with 59% of customers saying they would abandon restaurants that offer complicated experiences. This preference for streamlined service is reflected in the dramatic rise of self-service kiosk adoption, which jumped from 15% preference last year to 64% acknowledging their convenience this year. And finally, while customers understand inflationary pressures, they're pushing back against certain charges – more than half resist credit card fees, kitchen appreciation fees, living wage surcharges, and preset minimum tips, suggesting that transparency and perceived value remain crucial to maintaining customer satisfaction. Consumers are still hoping for deals, too, with half of consumers expecting restaurants to maintain or expand their value offerings, too, with 51% having already purchased new value menu innovations in the past year.

> *"Economic pressures push consumers toward value-driven purchases, but they still crave premium experiences – affordable indulgences, like craft coffee or artisanal snacks, are popular."*
>
> – ARASH FARIN

**A: FARIN**

They seek a number of things: 1) Health and wellness: Consumers prioritize nutritious, functional foods with clean labels; 2) Sustainability and transparency: Eco-conscious choices drive purchases. Consumers want sustainably sourced ingredients, minimal packaging and clear info on carbon footprints; 3) Convenience and digital experience: Seamless online ordering, fast delivery and user-friendly apps are critical; 4) Affordable quality: Economic pressures push consumers toward value-driven purchases, but they still crave premium experiences. Affordable indulgences, like craft coffee or artisanal snacks, are popular; 5) Unique and authentic experiences: Diners seek memorable, shareable moments such as immersive pop-up restaurants or culturally authentic flavors; 6) Ethical practices: Support for brands aligning with social values is growing. Consumers favor companies championing fair labor, diversity or community initiatives; and 7) Innovation and novelty: Interest in bold flavors, global cuisines (e.g., West African or Filipino fusion) and tech-driven products like lab-grown meat or 3D-printed desserts is rising.

## Q: AS A TRUSTED ADVISOR, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY PIECES OF ADVICE YOU HAVE PROVIDED TO THE BUSINESSES YOU WORK WITH IN TERMS OF MANAGING SUPPLY CHAIN IN THE CURRENT CLIMATE?

**A: JACKMAN**

In today's litigious climate, I advise businesses to strengthen supplier, distributor, and retailer agreements with clear risk allocation and robust indemnity provisions. Contracts should require upstream parties to indemnify against claims related to product claims, labeling, or regulatory violations and to carry appropriate insurance. Defining quality standards and dispute resolution mechanisms is essential for compliance and quick response to issues. Solid agreements create predictability and manage risks.

**A: HUH**

If you're starting or expanding your business in today's climate, there are numbers that are critical to monitor. Some are evident, such as your weekly sales numbers, while others,

like the costs associated with your food and beverage split, may be less obvious. There are two core business metrics that are important to pay attention to: your prime costs and your bottom-line profit. Prime costs, covering labor and the cost of goods sold, should ideally be kept under 65%, though top-performing restaurants might achieve closer to 50%. Understanding these numbers and managing them effectively can transform hypothetical growth into reality. At Square, we're committed to providing restaurant owners with easy access to essential metrics through our POS system, which includes built-in reporting capabilities for tracking sales trends, kitchen performance and more. This empowers you to make informed decisions about staffing, inventory and menu adjustments. With tools like Square Inventory Management, you can seamlessly update your menu based on stock levels and use staffing solutions to efficiently manage your team. Our integrated approach ensures that even if you're away from your restaurant, you have the data you need at your fingertips to keep your business running smoothly.

## Q: HAVE GLOBAL CONFLICTS AFFECTED THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY?

**A: FARIN**

Yes, global conflicts have significantly impacted the food and beverage industry, particularly in recent years, with effects likely to persist into 2025. These impacts stem from disruptions in supply chains, price volatility and shifts in consumer behavior, driven by conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war and tensions in the Middle East. Supply chain disruptions and ingredient shortages are big factors, for example. With the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Ukraine, a major exporter of wheat (4% of global supply), corn (13%), and sunflower oil (over 33%), saw its exports disrupted due to the ongoing war, particularly after the Russia-Ukraine grain agreement lapsed in 2023. This caused shortages and price spikes for grains and oils, critical for products like bread, snacks and cooking oils. The war also disrupted fertilizer supplies, as Russia and Ukraine are key producers. Ghana and Ivory Coast, major cocoa producers, faced crop losses (up to 60% in one season) after switching to inferior fertilizers like chicken manure due to shortages. This drove cocoa prices up by 300% in 2024, affecting chocolate and confectionery products. These disruptions challenge consumer demand for transparency and affordability. Companies are forced to diversify sourcing (e.g., olive oil from Algeria or Peru) or reformulate products, which can raise costs and conflict with expectations for clear ingredient labeling. Conflicts will continue to drive supply chain volatility, with climate change and trade tensions amplifying risks. The industry must balance consumer demands for health, sustainability and affordability against rising costs and regulatory pressures. Companies are likely to maintain diversified sourcing, invest in resilient supply chains and leverage technology to meet consumer expectations. However, transparency about these changes will be critical to align with demands for authenticity and ethical practices. Economic instability from conflicts may push consumers toward "treat culture" (affordable indulgences like small snacks) while still seeking high-quality, sustainable products, creating a complex market dynamic.

> *"One of the biggest mistakes food and beverage companies make is operating on intuition rather than insights. In today's dynamic market, running a restaurant on gut feel alone is a recipe for underperformance."*
>
> – MING-TAI HUH

## Q: WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST REGULATORY CHALLENGES FACING FOOD AND BEVERAGE BUSINESSES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TODAY, AND HOW ARE COMPANIES ADAPTING?

**A: JACKMAN**

One of the biggest regulatory challenges is the surge of consumer class actions targeting product labeling and advertising under statutes like the CLRA, UCL, and FAL. Claims often focus on "natural," "clean," and health-related marketing, even when they seem unfounded. Plaintiffs are aggressively pursuing litigation without waiting for regulators, using broad legal tools to seek injunctions, restitution and attorneys' fees. In response, companies are adapting by auditing labels and ads, training staff, substantiating claims with scientific evidence, and closely tracking legal trends to reduce exposure and mitigate risk.

## Q: WHAT ARE SOME EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH LABOR SHORTAGES AND RETAINING TALENT IN AN INDUSTRY KNOWN FOR HIGH TURNOVER?

**A: HUH**

While hiring has gotten a bit easier in 2025 (60% of restaurant owners say it's improved since last year), keeping good staff around is still a major headache for most operators. But right now, the secret to hanging onto great employees isn't just about higher wages – it's about making their work lives actually work for them. Smart operators are getting creative with tech tools that take the headaches out of the daily grind. Think AI scheduling that makes sure people get the shifts they want, payroll systems that never miss a beat, and data insights that help managers make better calls about staffing. Plus, when your team can easily swap shifts or check schedules from their phones, it shows you respect their time. The restaurants winning the retention game aren't just running a tighter ship – they're building places where people want to stick around. When you invest in tools that make your team's lives easier, you're really investing in a workplace that people don't want to leave.

## Q: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE HOTTEST TRENDS IN THE RESTAURANT SPACE?

**A: FARIN**

There are several, including hyper-local and sustainable sourcing; plant-based everything; tech-driven experiences; global fusion flavors; smaller, shareable plates; ghost kitchens and virtual brands; wellness-focused menus; and nostalgia remixes.

## Q: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST MISTAKES THAT FOOD AND BEVERAGE COMPANIES MAKE?

**A: HUH**

One of the biggest mistakes food and beverage companies make is operating on intuition rather than insights. In today's competitive landscape, successful operators leverage real-time data to make informed decisions that directly impact their bottom line. Technology like Square provides immediate visibility into critical metrics – from comparing sales across different sections to monitoring kitchen performance and ticket times. But having access to data isn't enough – it's the ability to act on it quickly that matters. Owners need reporting tools that are accessible anywhere, whether they're on the floor using their POS, in the back office or checking in remotely via mobile app. The real power comes when these insights are integrated with operational tools that allow for immediate action. When your reporting system connects seamlessly with inventory management, staff scheduling and team communication platforms, you can quickly implement changes based on what the data is telling you. In today's dynamic market, running a restaurant on gut feel alone is a recipe for underperformance.

## Q: HOW IS FOOD SAFETY IMPACTING THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY?

**A: JACKMAN**

Food safety concerns – especially around heavy metals – are significantly impacting the food and beverage industry. Heavy metals like lead, cadmium and arsenic occur naturally in soil and water, making them difficult to fully eliminate from food ingredients despite strict sourcing and testing protocols. The challenge has grown due to global supply chain disruptions, which have forced companies to rely on alternative or less vetted suppliers. This increases the risk of receiving ingredients with elevated heavy metal levels, potentially exceeding regulatory limits. Such exceedances can trigger recalls, litigation and loss of consumer trust. In response, companies are ramping up testing, tightening supplier oversight and enhancing transparency throughout the supply chain to ensure compliance and protect their brands.

## Q: WHAT HAS CHANGED WITH FOOD LABELING COMPARED TO FIVE YEARS AGO?

**A: FARIN**

Five years ago, in April 2020, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was in the midst of rolling out a revised Nutrition Facts label, finalized in 2016. By January 1, 2020, large manufacturers (those with $10 million or more in annual sales) were required to adopt it, with smaller companies given until January 1, 2021, and some specialty products (like certain sugars and cranberry items) until July 1, 2021. Compared to 2020, when adoption was still in progress, today the updated label is fully implemented across most packaged foods. Key differences from five years ago include: 1) Serving sizes: Updated to reflect what people actually eat, e.g., ice cream servings increased from ½ cup to ⅔ cup; 2) Calories: Displayed in larger, bolded text for emphasis; 3) Added sugars: Now listed separately under total sugars, with a % Daily Value (%DV), addressing a gap from 2020 when this wasn't yet widespread; 4) Nutrient shifts: Vitamin D and potassium are now mandatory, while vitamins A and C became optional, reflecting current dietary deficiencies; and 5) Removal of calories from fat: This was dropped as focus shifted to types of fat rather than total fat content.

> *"Businesses must approach labeling and packaging with greater precision and legal oversight than ever before."*
>
> – SHERRY JACKMAN

**A: JACKMAN**

Food labeling has become a major focus of consumer class actions and regulatory scrutiny over the past five years. Companies now face increased legal risk for using terms like "natural," "clean," and "non-toxic" without clear qualification. Ingredient disclosures are under pressure, especially for synthetics, and controversial compounds. Environmental claims, such as "sustainable" or "eco-friendly," are also frequently challenged as "greenwashing." Health claims not backed by strong scientific evidence, misleading pricing tactics like "fake discounts," and deceptive packaging have all become litigation targets. As a result, businesses must approach labeling and packaging with greater precision and legal oversight than ever before.

## Q: WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE TODAY FOR A FLEDGLING RESTAURATEUR LOOKING TO LAUNCH A NEW DINING DESTINATION?

**A: HUH**

Starting a new restaurant in 2025 takes more than just a great concept and killer menu. While exceptional food and hospitality are still the heart of any successful restaurant, today's winners are the ones who combine that passion with smart data practices from day one. Modern platforms like Square give you real-time insights into everything from food costs to labor percentages to menu performance, letting you make smart adjustments before small issues become big problems. The good news? You don't have to be a data scientist – today's tools make it easy to track the metrics that matter most. My advice is to start with the fundamentals – great food, warm service and a clear vision – but make data your constant companion. Because in today's competitive landscape, the restaurants that thrive are the ones that combine culinary creativity with business intelligence.

This supplement was produced by LA Times Studios. It did not involve the editorial or reporting staffs of the Los Angeles Times. Contact us with comments or questions at *studios@latimes.com.*

# Prosecutors quit after plea deal for L.A. County deputy




GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

**CESAR ROMERO**, president of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Professional Assn., is backed by plainclothes deputies last month in Monterey Park as he addresses what they say is the wrongful prosecution of Trevor Kirk.

[**Prosecutors,** from A1]
inquiries. The sources who confirmed the resignations requested anonymity because they feared retaliation. A spokesperson for the U.S. attorney's office declined to comment.

Kirk, who has been "relieved of duty" by the Sheriff's Department, was found guilty in February of one felony count of deprivation of rights under color of law and faced up to 10 years in prison. Under the plea deal filed Thursday, which still requires approval from a judge, he would serve a maximum of one year in prison. The government agreed to recommend a year of probation.

In June 2023, Kirk was responding to a reported robbery when he threw a woman to the ground and pepper-sprayed her in the face while she filmed him outside a Lancaster WinCo. Although the woman matched the description of a female suspect Kirk had received from a dispatcher, she was not armed or committing a crime at the time he first confronted her, court records show.

Under the new agreement, Kirk would plead guilty to a lesser included misdemeanor violation of deprivation of rights under color of law.

If the plea is approved by the judge, according to the agreement, the U.S. attorney's office would "move to strike" the jury's finding that Kirk injured the victim.

Alcaraz, Palmer, Faerstein and another prosecutor, Michael J. Morse, all withdrew from the case on Friday, according to court filings. The only assistant U.S. attorney who signed off on the plea agreement, Robert J. Keenan, was not previously involved in the case.

Bill Essayli, appointed U.S. attorney for Los Angeles last month by President Trump, is also listed on the agreement.

Kirk's attorney, Tom Yu, declined to comment Friday evening. Previously, he described Kirk as a "hero, not a criminal" and said video showed he acted within the law to "detain a combative robbery suspect."

Essayli's move to offer a misdemeanor plea to a defendant who had already been convicted was extremely unorthodox, according to Carley Palmer, a former supervisor in the federal prosecutor's office in Los Angeles who is now a partner at Halpern May Ybarra Gelberg.

"It's not unprecedented, but it is extraordinary, to try to have a jury verdict withdrawn and replaced by a plea agreement to a lesser crime. The government invests extraordinary resources to take a case like that to trial," she said. "You have the agency's investigation, you have all the man or woman hours ... then you have a jury that says you got it right beyond a reasonable doubt."

To justify seeking a post-conviction plea deal, prosecutors would need to have found evidence that the defendant was innocent or that there was some serious misconduct on the part of the trial team, according to Palmer.

Last month, U.S. District Judge Stephen V. Wilson denied a motion from Yu for an acquittal. Wilson ruled footage of the incident was sufficient evidence for a jury to find Kirk had used "objectively unreasonable force."

"J.H. did not have a weapon, did not attack Defendant, was not attempting to flee, and was not actively committing a crime," Wilson wrote, identifying the woman involved by initials.

The judge also noted in his ruling that while Kirk acted aggressively toward the woman from the outset, his partner managed to lead the arrest of the other robbery suspect without using force.

There are noticeable differences in the way the new plea agreement describes what Kirk did, as compared with a press release issued by the U.S. attorney's office in February when the jury returned a guilty verdict.

> 'They're taking creative liberty with the facts and deciding to give a jury of Trevor Kirk's peers the middle finger and it should not be tolerated.'
>
> — CAREE HARPER, attorney representing a woman in a civil lawsuit who reached a settlement this year

The agreement makes references to the woman having "resisted" Kirk's attempt to detain her and describes her as "swatting" at the deputy's arm.

In his ruling last month, Wilson determined this could have been seen as the victim reacting reflexively to Kirk's actions, and noted it's unclear if she even hit Kirk.

The plea agreement also makes no reference to the woman's injuries, while the February release says she "was treated for blunt-force head trauma and injuries to her head, arms, and wrist."

Attorney Caree Harper, who is representing the woman in a civil suit who reached a settlement earlier this year, said the new plea deal is "changing the facts" and is not supported by video footage of the incident.

"They're taking creative liberty with the facts and deciding to give a jury of Trevor Kirk's peers the middle finger and it should not be tolerated," she told The Times. If Wilson approves the agreement, Harper said, she expects civil rights groups will launch protests and urge state or county prosecutors to take up the case.

Harper noted that downgrading Kirk's charge from a felony could allow him to continue working as a law enforcement officer. He will also retain his right to own a firearm without a felony conviction.

"He definitely should not be able to wear a badge again, anywhere in any state," she said.

According to Robert Bonner, a former federal judge who now chairs the county's Civilian Oversight Commission, a post-conviction plea deal is an extreme rarity. Allowing pleas after trial, Bonner said, could undermine prosecutors' ability to negotiate in the future.

"If you did this routinely, you could never get a plea bargain," he said.

Even though federal prosecutors and the defense have both agreed to the deal, Bonner said, the judge doesn't have to adhere to it.

"He could reject the whole plea deal, or he can accept the plea deal and say I'm not going to give one year probation, I'm going to give six months in custody or some other period of time up to one year in prison," he said.

Wilson last month refused to delay Kirk's May 19 sentencing hearing, after prosecutors told him Essayli wanted more time to review the case.

Support for Kirk began gaining steam on social media after his indictment in September.

In January, Nick Wilson, founder of a first responder advocacy group and spokesperson for the Los Angeles Sheriff's Professional Assn., wrote a letter to Trump urging him to intervene before the case went to trial. Former Sheriff Alex Villanueva, who has become increasingly popular in right-wing circles online, has also championed Kirk's case, posting Instagram video of himself and Wilson consoling the deputy at the courthouse after trial.

Wilson, the Sheriff's Professional Assn. spokesperson, on Friday said he was "encouraged by the recent development in Deputy Trevor Kirk's case and will continue to monitor the upcoming sentencing closely."

"While this case should never have been prosecuted in the first place, we are deeply grateful the Department of Justice took a second, impartial look at the facts and merits," he said in an email. "This action sends a powerful message — not just in Trevor's case, but to law enforcement officers across the state and nation who too often feel abandoned or politically targeted in today's climate."

A spokesperson for the L.A. County Sheriff's Department did not immediately comment on the developments in Kirk's case.

The wave of resignations comes amid other recent controversy in the federal prosecutor's office.

In March, a White House official fired Adam Schleifer as an assistant U.S. attorney, in a one-line email informing him that the dismissal was "on behalf of President Donald J. Trump."

Schleifer recently challenged his firing, calling it "unlawful" and alleging it was motivated in part by his prosecution of Andrew Wiederhorn, the former chief executive of Fat Brands, which owns the Fatburger and Johnny Rockets restaurant chains. Schleifer had also posted negative comments about Trump during a period when he had left his job as prosecutor to run for office as a Democrat.

# Big cities in California see population slowly rebound

[**Population,** from A1]
the state should eclipse its pre-pandemic population figure in 2025.

"People from across the nation and the globe are coming to the Golden State to pursue the California Dream, where rights are protected and people are respected," Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a statement. "As the fourth largest economy in the world — from the Inland Empire to the Bay Area — regions throughout California are growing, strengthening local communities and boosting our state's future.

"We'll continue to cut tape, invest in people, and seek real results from government to ensure we build on this momentum — all of which are at risk with the extreme and uncertain tariffs," Newsom said.

The biggest population winners were Bakersfield, which grew by 1.2% in 2024, and San Diego, which grew by 1%. Los Angeles grew by 0.4%.

In the Bay Area, San José and San Francisco saw their populations contract slightly — each by less than half a percentage point. Anaheim was among the state's three major cities to lose people in 2024.

Natural increase, or the difference between births and deaths, was responsible for a gain of 114,805 people in 2024, but the state's population increased by only 108,000 overall. The difference is explained by net migration out of California of about 7,000 people.

Over the last few years, California has recorded more people leaving for other states such as Texas and Arizona than it gains from internal migration. International immigrants, who now mostly come from Asia, bolster the state's population against the loss from those who leave for other states.



JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

**BAKERSFIELD'S** population grew 1.2% in 2024, data show. Above, cooling off at Jastro Park in June.

On the housing front, the state's slow growth continued: Housing grew at 0.84% in 2024, a similar figure to 2023, which lagged behind those of many other states. One in 5 new homes built in 2024 within California were accessory dwelling units.

ADU production has increased by more than 10% in each of the last two years, and with each passing year ADUs constitute a larger fraction of new housing in the state.

The population growth is a welcome development but is still smaller in magnitude than California's pre-pandemic history of growth, said Dowell Myers, a professor of policy, planning and demography at USC.

"It's very small movement, but it's two years in a row on the upswing. That's good," he said.

A bright spot in the data is the housing numbers, he said. The state's housing stock grew more than its population, which is "a step in the right direction" as "we're losing people because they can't find enough housing."

Still, over the years, Californians have "accumulated a huge housing deficit and are catching up," as an aging population typically requires more housing, Myers said.

"It's a very big group that was grossly underplanned for," Myers said. After the housing bubble crash in 2008, a tight credit market made it difficult for home builders and buyers to get loans, and "the housing recovery was stalled all the way until 2017."

The "failure to recognize demographic changes was brutal" and cost a generation access to affordable housing, Myers said.

The whole nation faces a housing shortage, but Californians have been hit particularly hard, he said.

# Key source of news in rural areas

[**Public radio,** from A1]
ing bias in the broadcasters' reporting.

Public radio stations have been a lifeline for residents during natural disasters that take out power, the internet and cell towers. And in many remote and rural areas across the U.S., they can be a lone source of local news.

About a week after she'd volunteered in the Asheville area, Savage recalled driving through another hard-hit community and hearing updates on Blue Ridge Public Radio about where residents could pick up water.

"So that was crucial," Savage said.

In the west Texas desert, Marfa Public Radio provides listeners a mix of local and national news and music. It's based in Marfa, a city of about 2,000 that draws tourists to its art scene.

"Marfa Public Radio is the only radio service in a lot of the geographic area that we cover," said Tom Livingston, the station's interim executive director.

"So it's really essential in terms of if there's news events, if there's safety things that happen in the community."

## Federal funding

Trump's order instructs the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and other federal agencies "to cease Federal funding for NPR and PBS" and requires that they work to root out indirect sources of public financing for the news organizations.

The broadcasters get roughly half a billion dollars in public money through the private CPB, which has contended that it is not a federal executive agency subject to Trump's orders.

The heads of PBS, NPR and CPB all suggested Friday that the order was illegal, and a court fight seems inevitable.

The White House has also said it will be asking Congress to rescind funding for the CPB as part of a $9.1-billion package of cuts.

> 'Yeah, we get on the air and joke around. But ... we're a pretty critical link in this area for the emergency alert system.'
>
> — SCOTT SMITH, general manager of Allegheny Mountain Radio

Local stations operate on a combination of government funding, donations and philanthropic grants, and stations in smaller markets are particularly dependent on the public money.

WMMT, based in the eastern Kentucky community of Whitesburg, can be heard in parts of five Appalachian states. The station's general manager, Teddy Wimer, said listeners "want to hear people that sound like folks that they know from Appalachia," and the station, which operates from a renovated Winnebago called the Possum Den, relies on CPB funding.

"We're in an economically disadvantaged area of the country," Wimer said. "Most of our listeners who really rely upon our programming don't have the funds to ramp up their support."

Livingston said about 30% of the Marfa station's funding comes from the CPB. Right now, he says, it's too early to know whether the cuts will actually happen or what their effect might be.

## 'Local flavor'

Along the West Virginia-Virginia border, more than three hours from Washington, D.C., residents can pick up signals from radio stations far away. But those "aren't going to have the local flavor and impact that we do," said Scott Smith, general manager of Allegheny Mountain Radio. "This is the only game in town for that sort of thing."

In his home base of Monterey, Va., Smith said there's about a 4-square-mile area of cell coverage with one cell tower.

The station has proved to be a vital source of information during natural disasters. In 2012, residents relied on it after a derecho knocked out power to 680,000 customers across West Virginia and it took nearly two weeks for some areas to get their service restored.

"Yeah, we play music. Yeah, we get on the air and joke around," he said. "But we're here providing basic level services of information, emergency information, that sort of thing, to our communities. And as part of that, we're a pretty critical link in this area for the emergency alert system."

Smith has a staff of 10 at Allegheny Mountain Radio, which receives 68% of its annual budget from CPB.

"What CPB does fund the most is small rural radio," Smith said. "When you take 60% of our income away, that's not readily or easily replaceable."

Smith calls it a "wait-and-see game" on whether Congress will act on the CPB funding.

"The answer to how we move forward is vague," Smith said. "We will still continue to be here as long as we can be."

Raby and Stengle write for the Associated Press and reported from Charleston and Dallas, respectively. AP writer Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, S.C., contributed to this report.

# A sad ending for famed humorist's house

[**Rogers,** from A1]
trees and shrubs removed from the fire zone, according to the state parks department.

The site also is being used to pulverize concrete removed from burned properties, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

As for the twisted remains of Will Rogers' 31-room ranch house: They had not yet been cleared as of Friday.

For Jennifer Rogers, the question she faces the most is the one that's hardest to answer: What comes next?

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It is hard to overstate the grip Will Rogers had on Americans in the early 20th century.

Rogers was the country's first multimedia superstar: Nationally syndicated newspaper columnist. Book writer. Radio broadcaster. Hollywood's highest-paid actor and the star of more than 70 movies.

The "Cherokee Kid," as he was known, was born in 1879 in Indian Territory near modern-day Oologah, Okla.

With his country twang and aw-shucks mannerisms belying a keen intellect, he was the lasso-roping star of vaudeville and the Broadway stage. And his wry political commentary is widely considered the precursor to the modern late-night TV monologue. ("All I know is just what I read in the papers," he once quipped, "and that's an alibi for my ignorance.")

"He was born in the Old West, the dying days. And by the time he's 21, it's the 20th century, and everything is changing and he's adapting like some kid jumping on the internet in the '80s or YouTube in the aughts," said Larry Nemecek, board president of the nonprofit Will Rogers Ranch Foundation. "He became the king of all media while it was being invented."

In 1919, Hollywood — the up-and-coming center of the film industry — came calling.

Rogers, fresh off his first silent film, "Laughing Bill Hyde," moved with his wife, Betty, and their four children to Southern California at the behest of movie producer Samuel Goldwyn. A few years later, the couple bought more than 200 undeveloped acres in the Santa Monica Mountains, in the nascent community of Pacific Palisades.

There, the family built what started as a six-room weekend cabin. It was added onto over the years until it became a 31-room, year-round residence.

In a 1927 letter to his architect, Rogers said he wanted the cream-colored house to be a simple, box-like structure, "very [plain] and ordinary" and with "a big wide porch." It was built on a gentle slope. But, he wrote, he wanted some level ground in front of the porch "so we can ride our horses up and hitch 'em right in front of the house."

The house had a wagon-wheel chandelier and barn-like rafters — and a high ceiling that Rogers had raised while his wife was traveling abroad so he could practice roping indoors.

There were Navajo rugs; custom, western-style Monterey couches and chairs; and hundreds of books, including signed first editions by Theodore Roosevelt, Helen Keller and Harry Houdini. A stuffed roping calf given by a friend, artist Ed Borein, who had grown tired of Rogers lassoing him, stood in the living room.

The ranch, Betty wrote in her memoir after her husband's death in a 1935 Alaska plane crash, "was the joy of his life."

Shortly before her death in 1944, Betty deeded the ranch to the state.

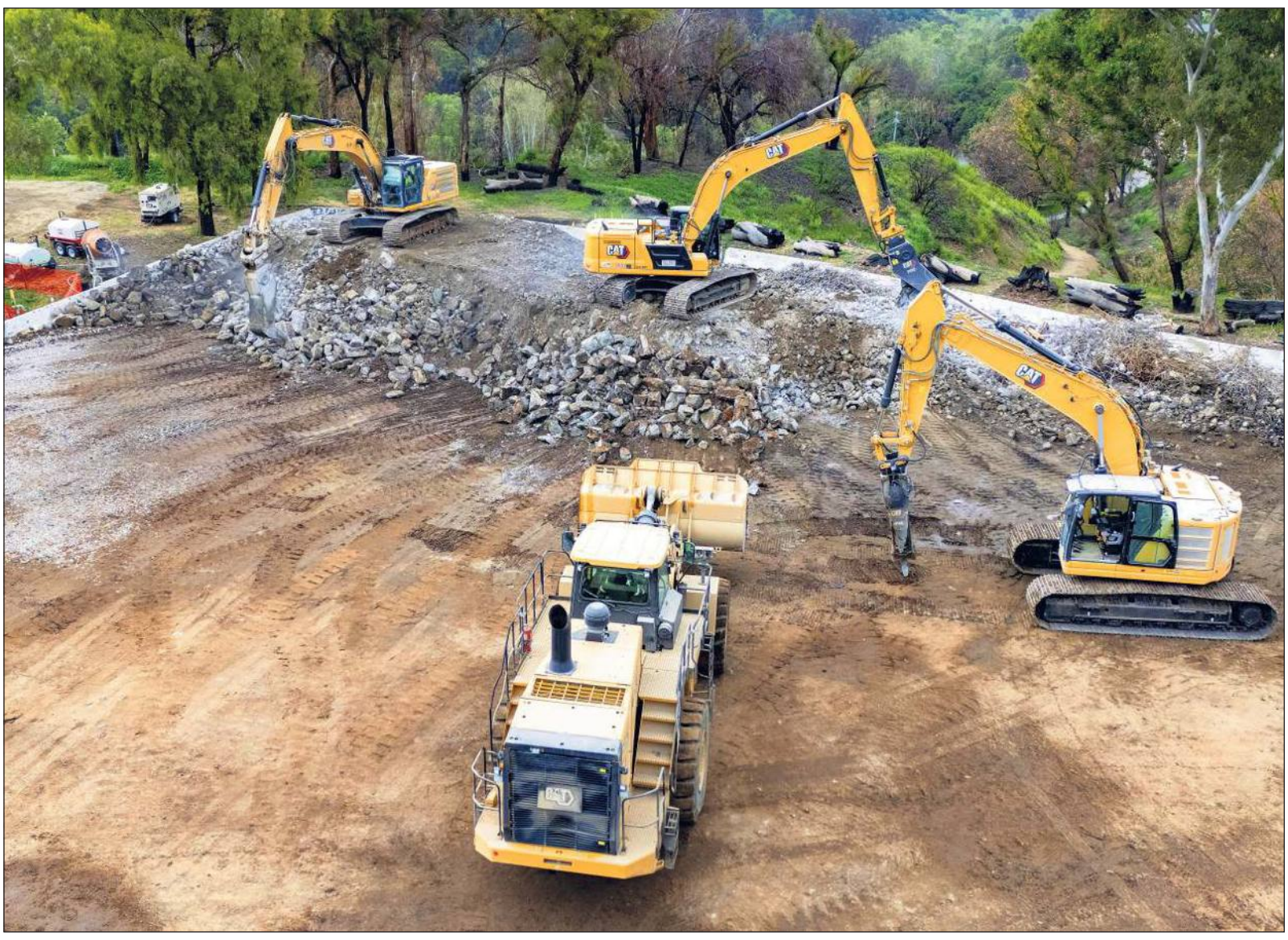
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On the morning of Jan. 7, Barbara Tejada joined fellow State Parks employees from across California at Malibu Creek State Park for a long-planned fire training session.

"We were all here, and then, of course, it was Santa Ana wind conditions," said Tejada, a cultural resources program supervisor. "Everyone was on edge. We all had our fire gear. ... We've all got basic fire training."

Just after 10:30 a.m., attendees' phones started pinging: A fire had started in the Palisades.

Tejada and a colleague grabbed boxes, tape, moving blankets and bubble wrap from the Malibu Creek facility. They took off for Will Rogers' ranch house, slowly weaving around traffic gridlocked on Pacific Coast Highway.



CHRISTOPHER ROSARIO U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**LAST MONTH,** the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began using a 3-acre area south of Will Rogers' polo field to process wildfire debris.

Tejada said 10 State Parks employees — two of whom would lose their homes — worked on-site, packing. Maintenance and restoration staffers started sprinklers atop the buildings and on hillsides, she said.

For about 2½ hours, workers stuffed State Parks pickup trucks and personal vehicles with historic treasures.

"We have an emergency evacuation plan for Will Rogers with a list of priority items by time — if you have one hour, get these things; if you have two hours, get these," Tejada said.

But as the flames approached, she said, "people just started grabbing whatever was easily reachable."

They saved paintings, pottery and Native American rugs. They got the typewriter Rogers used to compose his newspaper columns. Tejada carried out sculptures and paintings by artist Charles M. Russell, a friend of Rogers'.

The stuffed roping calf burned. So did all the furniture, the book collection, and a newly restored hand-crank barrel piano.

Sometime around 5 p.m., Tejada said, they fled. Flames were visible in their rearview mirrors.

"We did the best we could do," she said.

The next morning, the sprinklers — no match for the wind-driven fire — were still spraying.

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Growing up, Jennifer Rogers knew little about her famous great-grandfather.

"We didn't really talk much about Will Rogers. My family was very humble," said Rogers, 59, who lived in New Mexico and Texas in her youth. When her late grandfather, Jim, spoke of him, "he always said, 'When Dad would come home, he wasn't Will Rogers; he was just Dad.' "

Rogers did not visit the ranch until she was about 21. And in 1991, when her grandfather took her family to New York City for the debut of the musical "The Will Rogers Follies," based on the humorist's life, she "sat there on Broadway in disbelief."

"I had no idea, the magnitude of Will Rogers," she said. "I just said to my grandpa: 'I want to learn more.' "

In 2006, as the state was finishing a $5-million restoration of the ranch house, Rogers co-founded the Will Rogers Ranch Foundation, to support the park.

Rogers — who for two decades ran a Bakersfield-based almond company called My Husband's Nuts — became the public face of her famous family.

After the fire, she received phone calls and emails from Will Rogers fans around the world — an outpouring of grief she never expected. In Claremore, Okla., a man dropped off a huge bouquet of flowers to the Will Rogers Memorial Museum, she said, "because he just felt so sad and didn't know what to do."

"I realized he's still alive. He's *still* alive," Rogers said of her great-grandfather.

Chuck Hoskin Jr., principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, which has more than 28,000 citizens in California, said that "more than a century after his heyday, we're still talking about him because the things he said are timeless."

Rogers joked that "my ancestors didn't come over on the Mayflower, but they met the boat." He never shied away from his Cherokee heritage at a time when many did not talk about it out of fear of persecution, Hoskin said.

"The loss of the ranch is a tragedy, because Will Rogers is a singular figure in Cherokee history," he said.

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Nemecek, a docent at the ranch for more than two decades, said it was challenging to keep Rogers' memory alive even when the house was still standing.

For years, people would come for tours and declare, "I love Will Rogers and his horse, Trigger!" — a mixed-up reference to the actor and rodeo star Roy Rogers. In time, Roy was largely forgotten too.

Nemecek, 66, loved showing off Rogers' typewriter. ("What's a typewriter?" one child whispered to his mother.) And he would lead kids to the dining room table, telling them to peek underneath. Rogers' petrified gum was still stuck to the wood.

Rogers, he would explain, was always gnawing on a wad of gum. Even during one of his most famous speeches, a nationwide broadcast dubbed "Bacon, Beans and Limousines" recorded at the downtown L.A. studios of the radio station KFI in 1931, in the midst of the Great Depression.

Then-President Hoover had invited him to speak. Wearing a cowboy hat and bow tie, Rogers chews his gum. He jokes. He's amiable but outraged, delivering a blistering critique of the country's high unemployment rate, bread lines and uneven wealth distribution.

"It wasn't the working class that brought this condition on at all," he declared. "It was the big boys themselves who thought that this financial drunk we were going through was going to last forever. ... There's as much money in the country as there ever was. Only fewer people have it."

Amid the state budget crisis in 2008, then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger — who, along with celebrities such as Billy Crystal and Tom Cruise, once boarded his horses at the park — threatened to close Will Rogers State Historic Park and dozens of other money-losing state parks with flagging visitation. The governor eventually backed away from the proposal.

After working to boost interest in the ranch, Nemecek had been thrilled to learn that every week of the current school semester was booked with school field trips for the first time in years. And plans for centennial celebrations were just getting underway.

Nemecek, an actor, author and native Oklahoman, said "the ironic thing is that so many people now are reawakened to Will because of the tragedy."

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It remains unclear when Will Rogers State Historic Park will reopen.

Beginning On April 14, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began using just over 3 acres at Sarah's Point, an area south of Will Rogers' polo field, to process vegetative debris and concrete from the burn zone. The work is expected to take three to four months, according to the Army Corps.

"The concrete that we are recycling is generally the foundation of a home," Patrick Moes, a spokesman for the Army Corps, said in an email to The Times.

The concrete, he said, is washed at its original property before being brought to the park, where it is ground into tiny pieces while being sprayed with water to mitigate the spread of dust.

Marty Greenstein, a State Parks spokesman, said in a statement to The Times that "this is not a waste disposal site — long-term storage is not occurring, nor is the site processing hazardous materials."

Tejada said the removal of debris from Rogers' house and barn and other structures is expected to be completed by early June.

In the park, roughly 400 trees, mostly non-native — and notoriously flammable — eucalyptuses, were considered part of the cultural historic landscape. The fire killed about 200, primarily around Inspiration Loop Trail, Tejada said.

"Will had directed them to be planted to line all the pastures and roads," Tejada said. "The benefit was they grow tall and straight. Back in the day, they were used as wind breaks, and they grow quickly."

Although State Parks officials are "trying to retain as many of the original trees as possible" because of their historic significance, there are ongoing discussions about whether different tree species should be planted, she said.

The 99-year-old polo field, where Rogers played with friends including Walt Disney and Clark Gable, is still a grassy green oasis. But the announcer's booth and goalposts burned. So did the equipment used to maintain what is the only outdoor polo field in Los Angeles County, said Felice Densa, manager of the Will Rogers Polo Club, which has about 80 players.

"I am determined to reopen this club, one way or the other," she said. "We can rebuild the club. And we will. As soon as they start letting us in."

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On a recent Thursday, Jennifer Rogers stepped gingerly across ruins of the ranch house.

She pointed out what she recognized: Rusted springs from the bed in Will's upstairs office that crashed through the ceiling. Yellow tiles from her great-aunt Mary's bathroom.

"My brother got married right in front of this tree," she said, pointing to a charred trunk in front of the house. "I'm still in shock — still in shock."

Three chimneys still stand, and Rogers said there are plans to bring in scaffolding and secure them. The visitor center in Will's garage has extensive damage but potentially could be rebuilt, she said. And the roughly 150 items rescued from the ranch house are stored in Sacramento.

Rogrers Rogers hopes that some kind of tribute to her great-grandfather will eventually stand where the house once did.

But the truth is, she said, "I don't really know what's next."




CARLIN STIEHL For The Times

**JOE FIELD** of Los Angeles City Fire Station 69 looks at the burnt remains of Rogers' home. Jennifer Rogers hopes that some kind of tribute to her great-grandfather will eventually stand where the house once did.

# In Texas, vote gets SpaceX launch area cityhood

Those who who live there — mostly the firm's workers — OK Starbase proposal.

By Valerie Gonzalez and Jim Vertuno

McALLEN, Texas — The south Texas home of Elon Musk's Southern California-born rocket company, SpaceX, is on its way to becoming an official city with a galactic name: Starbase.

A vote Saturday to formally organize Starbase as a city was approved by a lopsided margin among the small group of voters who live there — mostly Musk's employees at SpaceX. With all the votes in, the tally was 212 in favor to 6 against, according to results published online by the Cameron County Elections Department.

Musk celebrated in a post on his social platform X, saying it is "now a real city!"

Starbase is the facility and launch site for the SpaceX rocket program that is under contract with the Department of Defense and NASA, and which aspires to send astronauts back to the moon and someday to Mars.



Eric Gay Associated Press

**THE ELECTION** victory was personal for SpaceX founder Elon Musk. Above, a SpaceX test flight launches from Starbase in Boca Chica, Texas, in March.

Musk first floated the idea of Starbase in 2021, and approval of the new city has been all but certain. Of the 283 eligible voters in the area, most are believed to be Starbase workers.

The election victory was personal for Musk. The billionaire's popularity has diminished since he became the chain-saw-wielding public face of President Trump's federal agency cuts, and profits at his Tesla car company have plummeted.

SpaceX has generally drawn widespread support from local officials for its jobs and investment in the area.

But the creation of an official company town also has elicited criticism amid concern that it will expand Musk's personal control over the area, with potential authority to close a popular beach and state park for launches.

Companion efforts to the city vote include bills in the state Legislature to shift that authority from the county to the new town's mayor and city council.

All these measures come as SpaceX, formerly based in Hawthorne, Calif., is asking federal authorities for permission to increase the number of south Texas launches fivefold to 25 a year.

The city-to-be at the southern tip of Texas near the Mexican border is only about 1.5 square miles, criss-crossed by a few roads and dappled with Airstream trailers and modest mid-century homes.

SpaceX officials have said little about why they want a company town and did not respond to emailed requests for comment.

"We need the ability to grow Starbase as a community," Starbase General Manager Kathryn Lueders wrote to local officials in 2024 with the request to get the city issue on the ballot.

The letter said the company already manages roads and utilities, as well as "the provisions of schooling and medical care" for those living on the property.

SpaceX officials have told lawmakers that granting the city authority to close the beach would streamline launch operations.

SpaceX rocket launches and engine tests, and even just moving certain equipment around the launch base, require the closure of a local highway and access to Boca Chica State Park and Boca Chica Beach.

Critics say beach closure authority should stay with the county government, which represents a broader population that uses the beach and park.

Cameron County Judge Eddie Trevino Jr. has said the county has worked well with SpaceX and there is no need for change.

Another proposed bill would make it a Class B misdemeanor, punishable by up to 180 days in jail, if someone doesn't comply with an order to evacuate the beach.

The South Texas Environmental Justice Network, which has organized protests against the city vote and the beach access issue, held another demonstration Saturday that attracted dozens of people.

Josette Hinojosa, whose young daughter was building a sandcastle nearby, said she was taking part to try to ensure continued access to a beach that her family has enjoyed for generations.

With SpaceX, Hinojosa said, "some days it's closed, and some days you get turned away."

Protest organizer Christopher Basaldú, a member of the Carrizo/Comecrudo Tribe of Texas, said his ancestors have long been in the area, where the Rio Grande meets the Gulf of Mexico.

"It's not just important," he said, "it's sacred."

Gonzalez and Vertuno write for the Associated Press and reported from McAllen and Austin, Texas, respectively.

# Trump asks high court to let DOGE access Social Security systems

By Lindsay Whitehurst

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration has asked the Supreme Court to clear the way for the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency to access Social Security systems containing personal data on millions of Americans.

The emergency appeal Friday is the first in a string of applications to the high court involving the advisory team's swift-moving work across the U.S. government. It comes after a judge in Maryland restricted the team's access to Social Security under federal privacy laws.

Social Security holds personal records on nearly everyone in the country, including school records, bank details, salary information, and medical and mental health records for disability recipients, according to court documents.

The administration says the team needs access to target waste in the federal government. Musk, now preparing to step back from his work with DOGE, has been focused on Social Security as an alleged hotbed of fraud. The billionaire entrepreneur has described it as a "Ponzi scheme" and insisted that reducing waste in the program is an important way to cut government spending.

Solicitor Gen. D. John Sauer argued Friday that the judge's restrictions disrupt important work and inappropriately interfere with executive branch decisions. "Left undisturbed, this preliminary injunction will only invite further judicial incursions into internal agency decision-making," he wrote.

He asked the justices to block the order from U.S. District Judge Ellen Hollander in Maryland as the lawsuit plays out.

An appeals court previously refused to immediately to lift the block on DOGE access, though it split along ideological lines. Conservative judges in the minority said there's no evidence that the team has done any "targeted snooping" or exposed personal information.

The lawsuit was originally filed by a group of labor unions and retirees represented by the group Democracy Forward. The Supreme Court asked them for a response to the administration's appeal by May 12.

More than two dozen lawsuits have been filed over DOGE's work, which has included deep cuts at federal agencies and mass layoffs.

Hollander found that DOGE's efforts at Social Security amounted to a "fishing expedition" based on "little more than suspicion" of fraud.

Her order does allow staffers to access data that has been made anonymous, but the Trump administration has said DOGE can't work effectively with those restrictions.

The nation's court system has frequently been in conflict with President Trump's sweeping conservative agenda, with about 200 lawsuits filed challenging policies on immigration, education and mass layoffs of federal workers.

In the cases that have reached the Supreme Court, the justices have handed down some largely procedural rulings siding with the administration but have rejected the government's broad arguments in other cases.

Whitehurst writes for the Associated Press.




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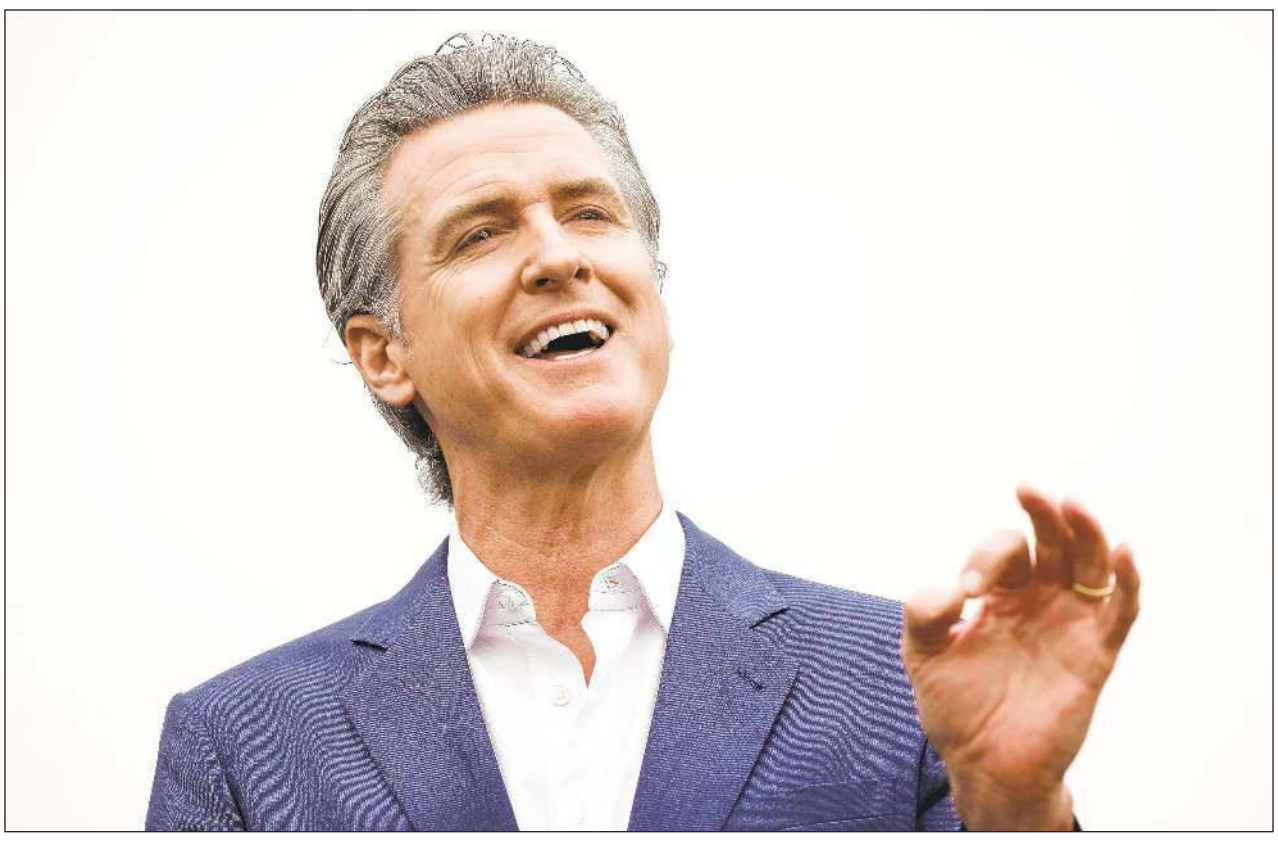
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# BUSINESS

*Voices* **MICHAEL HILTZIK** COLUMNIST

# California economy is No. 4 in world. So what?

Since the state is not an independent country, should its global ranking matter?



ERIC THAYER Associated Press

**GOV. GAVIN** Newsom, shown in 2024, cited California's national leadership in high technology, agriculture and access to venture funding, among other spheres, while touting its higher global economic ranking recently.

Forget the wildfires, earthquakes, water shortages and all the other factors that place the California dream in doubt, according to pundits. Gov. Gavin Newsom has some good news, citing federal and international statistics: California has just moved up a notch to become the world's fourth-largest economy.

That happened because the state's gross domestic product was measured at $4.1 trillion as of the end of 2024, eclipsing Japan ($4.02 trillion). All that stands between California and the top spot are the United States ($29.18 trillion), China ($18.74 trillion) and Germany ($4.65 trillion).

"California isn't just keeping pace with the world — we're setting the pace," Newsom declared in announcing the latest figures from the Bureau of Economic Analysis and the International Monetary Fund. "Our economy is thriving because we invest in people, prioritize sustainability and believe in the power of innovation."

Newsom made some good points in his announcement, citing the state's national leadership in high technology, agriculture and access to venture funding, among other spheres. But he also voiced a cautionary note about the Trump administration's "reckless tariff policies," which are already pointing to a steep downturn in imports landed at the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles.

Word of California's somersault over the fading Japan generated coverage in newspapers coast to coast, cable news and even as far afield as the BBC. None of this reportage, however, addressed the most pertinent question about the feat, which is: So what?

Some of the reports did qualify California's ranking, by acknowledging that it would be germane if California were a country, not a state. But they didn't go very deeply, if at all, into why that should make a difference. So let's take a closer look.

Californians do take pride in the state's economic potency. While I traveled around the state recently, giving talks to promote my newly published book about California's history, it was a rare stop where I didn't get a question about whether California should secede from the union in order to inoculate itself from the depredations of the Trump administration.

I gave a short answer and a longer one. The short answer is that the issue of whether a state can secede was settled, permanently, in 1865. The long answer is that California, for all its economic primacy, is not only tightly bound with the entire domestic U.S. economy, but its role in international trade is also dependent on federal trade policies — for good or ill.

We can see the effects of that at the ports — traffic grew by leaps and bounds over recent decades due to the explosive growth in trade with China and Southeast Asia, even though it's currently threatened by President Trump's preposterous tariff war.

Despite its size, California has discovered that it can't go it alone on many important goals. The state was unable to enact its own universal healthcare insurance system, a goal of then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. It can't finance its state-level health programs without billions of dollars annually in federal funding.

In normal times, its universities are the largest recipients of federal research grants. (Never mind that those are threatened by Trump — he won't be around forever.) In February, Newsom asked Congress for nearly $40 billion in emergency funding for relief in the wake of January's devastating Southern California wildfires.

One reason for circumspection is that the international rankings are notoriously squishy. They're dependent on numerous factors that may have less to do with economic growth as such than with factors such as currency exchange rates. Indeed, the main factor in California's leapfrogging over Japan was the decline in the yen's value against the dollar, an artifact of the Bank of Japan's decision to maintain low, even negative interest rates.

Since national GDP is typically calculated in dollar terms, that hurt Japan in relation to its nearest rival in the rankings, Germany — even though Japan's growth rate in GDP in recent years has actually exceeded Germany's.

Nothing about all this ensures that some combination of factors in California or the rest of the world won't rejumble these rankings, perhaps to the state's disadvantage.

The last time I wrote about California's international ranking (in 2003), most news reports placed the state fifth, but some placed it sixth or even seventh. At that time, China didn't rank in the top five, though it was scuttling upward. The year before, California had fallen to sixth from fifth because of currency fluctuations.

Another source of squishiness is the disconnect between raw GDP figures and the standards of living in individual countries. "While California enjoys a high GDP, it dissipates the effective purchasing power through high and increasing costs of living," the California Center for Jobs and the Economy observed after the latest announcement.

Adjusting California's GDP for the purchasing power of its residents, the center calculated, would drop California's ranking all the way down to 11th, behind Japan (fifth), but also behind Russia, Brazil and Indonesia.

For those reasons, it may make more sense to measure California's economy against those of other states. In that respect, at least, everyone occupies a similar playing field — same currency and same trade policies — which allow us to better examine the states' differences in tax rates, export goods and social environments and try to judge their effect on economic growth.

There, however, we run into trouble assessing how those factors actually do affect growth. That's because those assessments tend to be encrusted in partisan ideologies.

Consider a couple of state rankings based on their supposed friendliness to business: the "Best and Worst States for Business" published by Chief Executive magazine, and the ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitive Index, published annually under the title "Rich States, Poor States."

Both rosters purport to explain why some states grow faster than others. Neither does a very good job of it. In fact, both are very bad at it.

The Chief Executive rankings are based on, naturally enough, a survey of more than 650 CEOs and business owners. In the 2025 edition, Texas and Florida rank first and second, and California ranks 50th. Third and fourth are Tennessee and North Carolina.

The top-ranked states earned their positions in part by having right-to-work (i.e., anti-union) laws and low corporate tax rates: Texas has no corporate tax at all, and the others range from a maximum of 2.25% (North Carolina) to 6.5% (Tennessee); Texas, Florida and Tennessee don't tax personal income. California is dinged for not being a right-to-work state and having notoriously high taxes — a top rate of 8.84% on corporate income and 13.3% on personal income.

The ALEC-Laffer index is more granular. Its top five states, in order, are Utah, Tennessee, Indiana, North Carolina and North Dakota, with Texas at No. 9 and Florida at No. 15. California is down in the dungeon, at No. 47, besting only New Jersey, Vermont and New York.

What do the index authors look for? Utah has a top tax rate of only 4.55% on personal and corporate income, no estate tax, a rock-bottom minimum wage of $7.25 an hour and a right-to-work law. Texas, in addition to having no personal income tax or estate tax, has a $7.25 minimum wage and a right-to-work law. Florida gains by having no personal income or estate tax and a right-to-work law, though it's punished a bit for having a $13 minimum wage.

One assumes that the authors of the ALEC-Laffer index, including conservative economist Arthur Laffer himself, held their noses in laying out California's dismal business environment. There are those sky-high personal and corporate tax rates (though California charges no estate tax), a minimum wage of $16.50 and no right-to-work law.

If these rankings are of any value at all, they should be reflected in economic strength. They're not. In fact, as I've reported in the past, there's a *negative* correlation between a state's ranking in the ALEC-Laffer index and its economic growth. Economist Menzie Chinn of the University of Wisconsin noticed this a few years ago, prompting him to label the index "a manifestation of faith-based economics." (I asked Laffer to comment on the gap between the index and reality, but didn't hear back.)

Many of the categories tracked by the ALEC index aren't drags on a state's business climate, but reflections of its appeal. California is downgraded for its cost of living, which is reasonable enough, but it's expensive in part because it's a desirable place to live. The state with the lowest cost of living is Mississippi, but who wants to live there? Yes, there are lots of regulations in California, but that's because some of the features that draw people in, such as its natural beauty and its climate, need safeguarding.

That leaves us with the most reliable measure of a state's economy: The *size* of the economy. On that metric, California, for all its problems and costs, leaves the rest of the country in the dust.

California's economy is about one-third larger than that of the second-largest state, Texas, and nearly two-thirds larger than Florida's. The gap between California and those two states has even widened since 2009, the end of the Great Recession. North Carolina, Utah and Tennessee are barely large enough to occupy the same chart.

What this all means is debatable. If Californians wish to bask in the sunshine of having the strongest and most durable economy in the nation, so be it. But that's not an excuse to ignore all the headwinds that might face our economy in the short term (that is, under Trump) or the longer term, when global warming, water and housing shortages and other contributors to the cost of living will need to be solved to keep the California dream alive.

California doesn't need to think of itself as an independent nation to have pride in what has been built here. The factors that have made the state so big and rich are still mostly in place. Among them are an intellectual and financial infrastructure that makes Silicon Valley and its entrepreneurs the envy of the world; the largest commercial market in the nation, which makes this a place that retailers and service providers can't ignore; a wealth of natural resources and a landscape of such beauty that it beckons multitudes. Isn't that enough?

# Judge's Apple rebuke sets stage for App Store changes

Commission fees on outside purchases are blocked. Developers, buyers could benefit.

BY WENDY LEE



KATHY WILLENS Associated Press

**APPLE** says it will appeal a federal judge's ruling that it violated a court order on charging commission fees.

SAN FRANCISCO — Apple Inc. suffered a major blow last week when a federal judge ruled that the iPhone maker violated a court order to stop charging commission fees for purchases made outside its own marketplace.

In a scathing rebuke, U.S. District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers upped the stakes for Apple by referring the case to prosecutors for a possible criminal investigation.

The judge sided with "Fortnite" maker Epic Games, which alleged that the Cupertino, Calif., tech giant ran afoul of an order she issued in 2021 after finding the company engaged in anticompetitive behavior.

The ruling could ultimately mean lower costs to Apple developers and consumers because app makers would have a way to circumvent Apple's up to 30% fee for in-app purchases by directing consumers to their goods and services with links to outside sites.

"That [Apple] thought this court would tolerate such insubordination was a gross miscalculation," the judge wrote in her Wednesday ruling. "As always, the cover-up made it worse."

**What's the case about?**

Epic Games filed a lawsuit against Apple in 2020, accusing the company of engaging in anticompetitive practices.

The company's "Fortnite" makes money by letting players buy digital goods within the popular online multiplayer game. Epic wants to enable users to buy stuff outside the Apple system and avoid the company's fee, which developers call an "Apple tax."

But Epic alleged that Apple blocked it from doing so.

The court ordered Apple to let app developers put links in its apps so customers could make outside purchases and bypass the company's commission fee.

Apple, however, defied the order, the court said.

After the ruling, Apple limited the ways that developers could communicate with its customers about out-of-app purchases and used wording that discouraged users from clicking on those links, the ruling said.

Apple would charge a commission fee for any goods or services purchased within seven days of a consumer clicking on a link that took them out of the app, the ruling said.

Gonzalez wrote that Apple made efforts to conceal documents that discussed these practices by abusing attorney-client privilege and using code names such as "Project Michigan" in reference to the injunction or related topics, and that an Apple vice president of finance lied under oath.

Apple said it strongly disagreed with the decision and would comply with the court's order.

**How big of a deal is this for Apple?**

The court's ruling could have a significant effect on Apple's business.

Not taking commissions from outside app purchases could reduce Apple's revenue by hundreds of millions or billions, the company estimated, according to the 80-page ruling.

"It's very material to them, and so they're unwilling to give that up," said Rob Enderle, principal analyst with advisory services firm Enderle Group.

Apple is facing other headwinds, including an antitrust lawsuit and Trump's trade war with countries including China, where Apple makes the majority of its iPhones.

**Will the ruling save consumers and developers money?**

Several companies that develop apps cheered the judge's ruling, saying it will save money and make life easier for consumers.

Spotify, for example, said allowing outside purchases will simplify the process of buying audiobooks, which is an important new line of business for the Swedish audio streamer.

Andy Yen, chief executive of Proton, which offers encrypted email and VPN services, said his company will lower its prices as a result of the decision.

"No Apple tax means we will lower prices for users by up to 30%," Yen wrote on X, later calling the ruling "one of the most effective way[s] to cut inflation in the US."

Epic Games CEO Tim Sweeney on Wednesday wrote on X that "Fortnite" will return to the U.S. App Store this week and possibly worldwide if Apple extends "the court's friction free, Apple tax-free framework" globally.

**What will Apple do now?**

Apple said it will appeal the ruling.

The U.S. attorney for the Northern District of California will be left to determine whether to bring a criminal contempt proceeding. The attorney's office did not return a request for comment.

Analysts said Apple's relationship with President Trump could play a role in whether the company will face a criminal investigation.

Tech companies and their leaders have tried to build closer relationships with the Trump administration by making inaugural contributions or pledging to bring more manufacturing to the U.S.

Bloomberg contributed to this report.



Los Angeles Times photo illustration; Warner Bros. Pictures

THE WIDE SHOT

# How 'Minecraft' and 'Sinners' went viral in totally different ways

## The two films don't have much in common, but both were able to capitalize on internet fame at a time when audiences' attention spans are shorter than ever

**By Ryan Faughnder**

Aside from their commercial prowess, "A Minecraft Movie" and "Sinners" don't seem to have much in common. One is a PG-rated, special-effects-heavy comedy based on a video game with a huge fan base, and the other is an original Ryan Coogler-directed, R-rated period thriller with vampires.

However, both went viral online in ways that drove their success at the box office, in a boon to struggling theater owners and the studio that backed both projects, Warner Bros., which was in dire need of a pair of wins after a rough several months.

"Minecraft," co-produced by Legendary with a reported production budget of $150 million, has grossed $816 million worldwide, while the acclaimed $90-million "Sinners" has collected $162 million. The latter film grossed $45 million domestically during its second weekend, a drop of only 6% from its opening — a clear sign that the movie has become a must-see.

The common thread is that both films created a wave of excitement on social media that the studios were able to capitalize on to create a cultural moment.

With "A Minecraft Movie," for example, screenings took on a "Rocky Horror Picture Show"-like atmosphere for Gen Z moviegoers, with audiences shouting lines back to the screen and videos of the mayhem taking over TikTok.

The madness in the auditoriums has understandably irked theater operators and unsuspecting patrons, especially when one attendee brought a live chicken into a showing. Nonetheless, it has clearly contributed to the film's popularity, and Warner Bros. and Legendary are cashing in on the momentum. Last week, the studios announced a series of "Block Party Edition" screenings, encouraging fans to sing and talk during the movie.

For "Sinners," the company was able to lean on the enthusiasm and emotional responses that moviegoers, including social media influencers, were having to the film.

None of this was expected, said Warner Bros. marketing co-lead Christian Davin. But it helped expand the audiences beyond people who were already fans of the "Minecraft" game, Coogler, "Sinners" star Michael B. Jordan and horror movies.

"At the outset of 'Minecraft,' did we think that people were going to be screaming 'Chicken Jockey' back to the screen on opening weekend? Absolutely not," Davin said. "At the outset of 'Sinners,' did we think that there was going to be this entire discourse on TikTok about various scenes? ... But as we started to see those things, we started to fan the flames."

The two have key lessons for marketers as they contend with intense competition for audiences' attention and the unique interests and habits of younger consumers.

At a time when audiences' attention spans are short, studios have to work harder than ever, especially in the last days of the campaign, executives said.

The Gen Z audience — so crucial to "A Minecraft Movie's" performance — is suspicious of anything that feels overly corporate or inauthentic.

This was certainly the case for the early "Minecraft" campaign, which got off to a rocky start. The first teaser trailer was pilloried online by fans of the game, who were fiercely protective of the property. "Minecraft," after all, is a game that rewards creativity, so players tend to feel a sense of ownership.

So the studios had to adjust. The second trailer included a cheeky intro ("Minecraft trailer, take two"), which acknowledged the misstep. From there, fans started to come around, sometimes begrudgingly. A key factor, executives said, was the involvement of Mojang Studios, the Stockholm-based developer behind "Minecraft," which promoted the movie heavily, including with activations in the game itself.

From the start with both "Minecraft" and "Sinners," it was all about listening to the audience and being willing to adapt, said Warner Bros. Pictures global marketing co-lead Dana Nussbaum. Another instance was the introduction of a Lava Chicken "menu hack" at McDonald's through the companies' co-branding initiative.

"The audience will tell you every single time," Nussbaum said.

Nussbaum and Davin were tapped to lead Warner Bros.' film marketing efforts after the dismissal of marketing chief Josh Goldstine in January, which was widely seen as a risky move, coming ahead of a high-stakes slate of films including "Superman" from James Gunn and "One Battle After Another" by Paul Thomas Anderson.

The people who made "Minecraft" — including stars Jack Black and Jason Momoa and director Jared Hess ("Napoleon Dynamite") — understood that the campaign wouldn't work if players felt that they were being force-fed their own game back to them.

That was part of the rationale behind calling it "A Minecraft Movie," rather than "*The* Minecraft Movie," said Legendary Entertainment marketing chief Blair Rich.

Getting the quirky comedy right was also crucial. The "Minecraft" example is particularly instructive because of what it says about Gen Z, which responded to the chance to go out and celebrate something their parents don't necessarily understand.

"For these fans, the game is such a strong community. ... They have pride of ownership, and it's their game. It's not some corporation's game," Rich said. "And so the marketing had to always draft off of that sensibility."

For both movies, influencers played an important role. Podcaster and movie influencer Juju Green (aka Straw Hat Goofy), for example, interviewed Coogler for "Sinners" and promoted the film with video breakdowns on social media. Those moves helped stoke interest among Black audiences and cinephiles more broadly.

"A Minecraft Movie's" marketing strategy leaned heavily on digital influencers, even bringing some on set. Dozens of "Minecraft" gaming influencers were brought to the movie's global premiere in London, where they had access to talent. The companies made sure to get not just the video game influencers but also general entertainment and family creators.

That helped lead to a meme-fueled campaign. One influencer went viral after singing a bombastic parody of "Pure Imagination" with catchphrases from the movie.

It's the kind of thing that works for young audiences. According to a recent Deloitte survey of U.S. consumers, the majority of Gen Zers say they feel a stronger personal connection to social media creators than to TV personalities and actors.

Studio executives have been picking over both movies for tangible lessons as box-office revenue overall struggles to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hollywood labor strikes and the long-term decline in theatrical attendance. Are video game movies replacing superhero movies? Does "Sinners" show that audiences want more original films?

One key takeaway is that audiences seek experiences in theaters that can't be replicated at home.

That doesn't mean every movie needs a "Gentleminions" campaign or "Wicked"-style sing-along. "Sinners" has this advantage too but in a different way, where audiences are having intense emotional responses in the theater, Nussbaum said.

"It was an incredibly emotional and visceral reaction that people were having and were wanting to have in groups and in communities," she said. "And I think that was what was so rewarding about it."

This article is taken from the April 29 edition of the Wide Shot, a weekly newsletter about the business of entertainment. Sign up at latimes.com/newsletters.

# Young screenwriters face shrinking industry

[**Screenwriter,** from A1]

Since the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a widespread production slowdown, the entertainment industry's recovery has been delayed by the dual Hollywood strikes, some of the costliest wildfires in California's history and an industry-wide contraction.

Studios scrambling to cut costs amid the turbulence were quick to slash low-level positions that historically got rookies in the door.

"You almost feel cursed," said Ryan Gimeson, who graduated from Chapman University's Dodge College of Film and Media Arts in 2023, in the early days of the writers' strike.

And while screenwriting has always been a competitive field, industry veterans attested that the conditions have rarely ever been harsher for young writers.

"In the past 40 years of doing this, this is the most disruptive I've ever seen it," said Tom Nunan, founder of Bull's Eye Entertainment and a lecturer in the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television.

The landscape is especially dry in television writing, according to a jobs report released earlier this month by the Writers Guild of America.

TV writing roles dropped 42% in the 2023-2024 season that coincided with the strikes, the report said. About a third of those cuts were to lower-level appointments.

It's a far cry from the TV business Liz Alper broke into 15 years ago.

Alper, an L.A.-based writer-producer and co-founder of the fair worker treatment movement #PayUpHollywood, came up in the early 2010s, when opportunities in scripted television were still plentiful.

The CW, for instance, was putting out three original one-hour shows a night, or about 18 to 21 original pieces of programming a week, Alper said. That translated to anywhere between 100 and 200 staff writer slots.

But in the last five years or so, the rise of streaming has essentially done the opposite — poaching cable subscribers, edging out episodic programming with bingeable on-demand series and cutting writing jobs in the process.

The job scarcity has driven those in entry-level positions to stay there longer than they used to. A 2021 #PayUpHollywood survey found that most support staffers were in their late 20s, several years older than they were on average a decade ago.

Without those employees moving up and creating vacancies, recent graduates have nowhere to come in.

"I think if you have a job, it feels like you've got one of the lifeboats on the Titanic, and you're not willing to give up the seat," Alper said.

The entertainment job market has also suffered from the ongoing exodus of productions from California, where costs are high and tax incentives are low.

Legislation that would raise the state's film tax credit to 35% of qualified spending — up from its current 20–25% rates — is pending after winning unanimous votes out of the Senate revenue and taxation committee and the Assembly arts and entertainment committee. Supporters say the move is critical for California to remain competitive with other states and countries, state legislators have argued.

Meanwhile, young creatives are questioning whether L.A. is the place to launch their careers.

Peter Gerard, 24, moved to L.A. from Maryland two years ago to pursue TV writing. After graduating with a data science degree from the University of Maryland, he sensed it was his last chance to chase his dream.

Within weeks of arriving in L.A. in April 2023, he landed a handful of job interviews and even felt hopeful about a few.

Then the Writers Guild went on strike.

"I came moments before disaster, and I had no idea," he said.

During the slowdown, Gerard filled his time by working on independent films, attending writing classes and building his portfolio. He was fine without a full-time gig, he said, figuring L.A. would work its magic on him eventually.

Such "cosmic choreography" touched writer-producer Jill Goldsmith nearly 30 years ago, she said, when she left her job as a public defender to pursue TV writing. After seven trying months in L.A., her luck turned when she met "NYPD Blue" co-creator David Milch in line at a Santa Monica chocolate shop. Goldsmith sent him a script, the show bought it and she got her first credit in 1998.

Goldsmith, a lecturer in the UCLA MFA program in the School of Theater, Film and Television, said she tells her students such opportunities only come when they meet fate halfway.

But hearing veteran writers mourn their lost jobs and L.A.'s bygone glory led Gerard to question his own bid for success.

"I felt sorry for them, but it also made me realize, like, 'Wow, there's a lot of people who want to do this, and a lot of them are much further along than me, with nothing to show for it,' " he said.

As the youngest staff writer in her current writers room, Lore V. Olivera, 26, has gotten used to her senior counterparts waxing nostalgic about the "good old times."

"I think they're definitely romanticizing a bit," she said, "but there is some truth in there."

Olivera landed her first staff writer job in 2023, a year after graduating from Stanford University. The process was straightforward: her reps cold-emailed her samples to a showrunner, he liked them, she interviewed and got the job. But Olivera said such success stories are rare.

"I was ridiculously lucky," she said. Still, getting staffed is no finish line, she added, just a 20-week pause on the panic of finding the next gig.

Olivera is also the only staff writer in her current room, with all her colleagues holding higher titles such as editor or producer. It's a natural consequence, she said, of showrunners facing pressure to fill limited positions with heavy hitters already proven capable of creating hits.

Olivera said she knows not every 26-year-old was getting hired a few decades ago, but even her elder peers agreed the industry has lost a former air of possibility.

"It's definitely a slap in the face when you get here and you're like, 'Yeah, it's going to be a few miserable years, and then I might not even make it,' " Olivera said. "Not even because I'm good or bad ... but just because the industry is so dead and so afraid of taking chances."

Jolaya Gillams, who graduated from Chapman's Dodge college in 2023, said that her class had talent in spades. But the industry hasn't given them anywhere to put it.

Instead, studios are pouring money into remakes, the 24-year old said, even as consumers have displayed their appetite for original material.

"I hope that we move into an era of film where it's new, fresh ideas and new perspectives and having an open mind to the voice of our generation," Gillams said.

Until then, the filmmaker said she'll continue to create work for herself.

During the strikes, Gillams and a production team with no budget made the short film "Sincero," which won the audience award for short documentary at the 2023 Newport Beach Film Festival. As she continues the search for a distributor for the doc, she already has another project in the works.

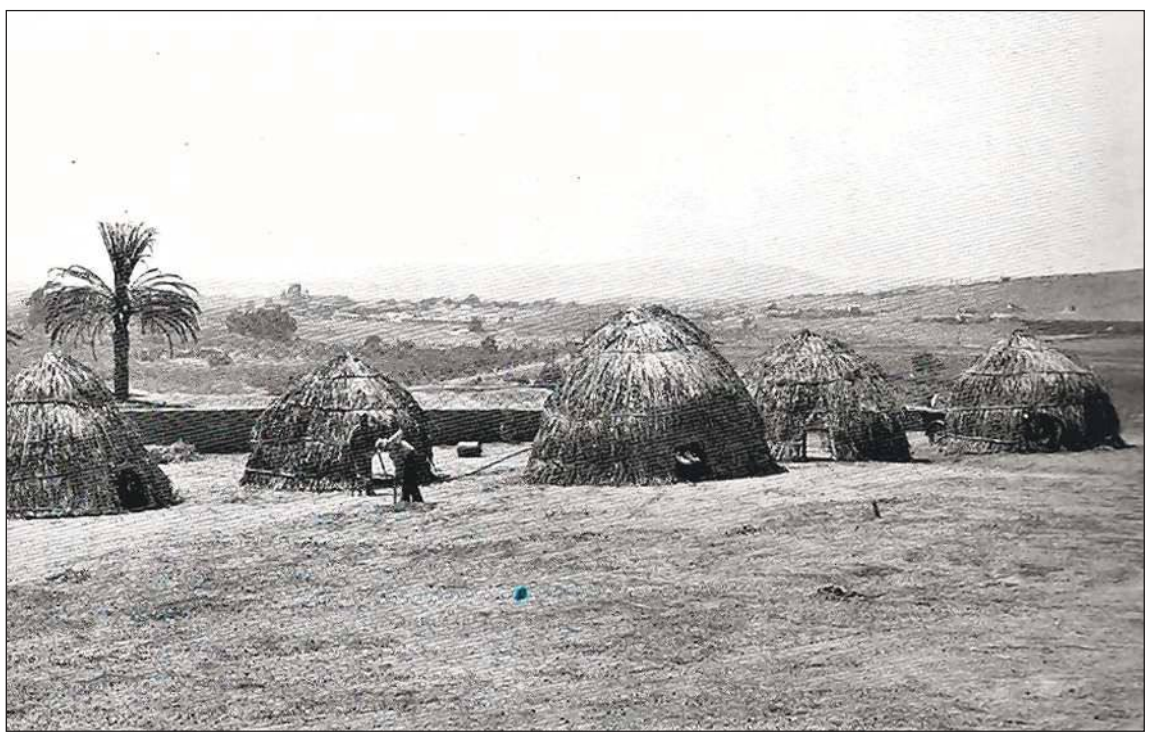
Weary from the "black hole" of job applications, Hernandez said she, too, is focused on bringing her own work to life. In an ideal world, that leads to a film festival or two, maybe even agency representation. But mostly, what drives her is pride in the work itself.

"If I'm successful in my mind," said Hernandez, "I'm content with that."

*Voices* **STEVEN W. HACKEL** GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

# Trickle of funding led to a flood of information

## The National Endowment for the Humanities helped us learn our history



Courtesy of San Diego History Center

**KUMEYAAY** *ewaas* built in 1929 simulated the village of Kosa'aay in what is San Diego today. Starting in the 1770s, in Southern California, Native populations resettled around missions.

We humans, if we are to live intentional and thoughtful lives, almost always return to a series of timeless questions: Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going? To answer those questions, some turn to religion. Some to psychology. Some to literature. And others to history, philosophy or the arts.

I have spent 30 years as a professor of history trying to answer fundamental questions about the history of California and its peoples. That work has largely been made possible by the National Endowment for the Humanities, a small, underfunded government agency gutted by President Trump and his Department of Government Efficiency.

It is impossible to quantify the vital role that the NEH has played in our national search for meaning and self-knowledge, but the endowment's website begins to tell the story. Since its inception in 1965 by Congress, the NEH has funded more than 70,000 projects in all 50 states. It has made possible the research and publication of 9,000 books including 20 Pulitzer Prize winners, the creation of 500 film and media programs, and the editing and publication of the papers of 12 U.S. presidents as well as such towering figures as Mark Twain, Thomas Edison, Willa Cather, Martin Luther King Jr. and Ernest Hemingway.

In creating the organization, Congress sought to affirm and acknowledge that a healthy democracy "demands wisdom and vision in its citizens" and that the federal government must give "full value and support" to the humanities "in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future." While it would be hard to argue that Congress has ever lived up to those words, the money that it has allocated has been vital to the humanities across the country.

In what now appears to have been a Golden Age of federally funded humanities projects, over its 60 years of existence the NEH disbursed about $6.5 billion, all of it administered through a rigorous peer-review process. This averages out to about $100 million per year over three generations. Most of that funding has been parceled out in grants of $50,000 or less, and more than half of that funding flowed directly to individual states' humanities councils.

Funding the NEH has been a tremendously successful investment in our nation's cultural fabric that has enriched the lives of countless individuals and strengthened our union. Some of the projects, such as the publication of the papers of presidents, go to the heart of the ideas of those who founded the United States and have informed generations of scholars. Others, such as the creation of a database of the transatlantic slave trade, have touched the lives of millions and changed how the history of the U.S. and its peoples is understood.

My own studies of colonial California have had a more regional impact, with a little bit of money going a very long way. In 1993 I was a graduate student struggling to write a dissertation on colonial California. Out of money and facing dwindling support, I was fortunate to receive a dissertation fellowship from the NEH that allowed me a final year to complete my thesis.

It was one of the first studies of colonial California anchored in Spanish-language sources and the experiences of Indigenous Californians. The fellowship allowed me to take chances, and in the book that the thesis became — whose writing was also in part funded by the NEH — I argued that California had its own colonial history that for reasons of "chronology, geography, and teleology" had been left out of our national narrative, one historically focused on the founding fathers and the 13 British colonies.

It may just have been a few words in the book's introduction, but that one statement and the book that it introduced were an early call for historians of colonial America to look beyond Virginia and Massachusetts and to work collectively toward a more comparative and continental vision of early America, one that today is widely embraced as Vast Early America.

In the early 2000s I worked with the Huntington Library Research Division to secure a large NEH grant to help create an online database of all people — Natives, soldiers, settlers, missionaries — who were in one way or another affiliated with the California missions before 1850. The database has informed dozens of articles and books on early California and has allowed thousands of people to trace their own ancestry back to 18th century California pueblos, presidios and Native villages. In a real and life-changing way, that NEH-funded database helps people today understand who they are, where they came from and how they fit into contemporary California.

In the 2010s, again with NEH support, I worked with a team of researchers to create visualizations of the movements of Natives to the California missions that have been featured in museums across Southern California and that allow us to see how California was transformed by Spanish colonization.

And in 2022, I received an NEH-supported grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation that made possible the creation and installation of a new gallery exhibition at Mission San Gabriel that centers the history of the mission on Native experiences and helped decolonize the collection by inviting Native voices and Native practitioners into the curatorial process. Visited by 1,000 people a month, the exhibit again helps Southern Californians understand their place in the world.

These projects of mine are just a small fraction of the NEH's contributions to the cultural fabric of Southern California.

NEH funding in 2024 amounted to about $200 million, or 0.0029% of the $6.8-trillion federal budget. The savings in zeroing out the endowment are trivial, but the loss to our society today and to future generations will be incalculable. When each day brings new challenges to the constitutional order, the economy and the fabric of our society, and education and science are singled out for budget cuts and ideological conformity, more than ever, we need a robust humanities sector as we strive to understand and live up to the nation's motto, "out of many, one."

As the congressional legislation creating the National Endowment for the Humanities articulated, the federal government has a "necessary and appropriate" role "to help create and sustain not only a climate encouraging freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry but also the material conditions" facilitating humanistic inquiry. Wise words worth heeding then and now.

Steven W. Hackel, chair of the Department of History at UC Riverside, is the author of, among other books, "Junipero Serra: California's Founding Father."

## LETTERS



William Liang For The Times

**THIS YEAR**, $1.5 billion or more will be flowing in to help L.A. address its homelessness problem — but there's confusion over who is responsible for the funds.

# Doubts over city homeless funds

Re "Who is overseeing homelessness funds?," April 29

You don't need buckets of money and new homeless committees. What you need is the following: Dedicated "camping" sites for tent living; city/county parking lots for recreational vehicle living; and city/county parking lots for car living. All of these with full wrap-around services, education and job training.

Until officials get their heads around these truths, it doesn't matter how many buckets of money we give them. They — and we — will continue to fail the homeless.

Mindy Taylor-Ross
Venice

What a troubling and sad state of affairs regarding homelessness in Los Angeles and its vicinities. Even after the approval of billions of dollars pursuant to prior city and county propositions, the people in charge aren't even able to communicate effectively, let alone use the money to create housing.

When I read that Los Angeles City Councilmember Nithya Raman said that this most recent funding will allow them to communicate more effectively, I shook my head and rolled my eyes. Over the last 10 years, a great number of administrators and politicians have proved their incompetence by not being able to effectively use the billions that have already been approved.

I can only hope that Mayor Karen Bass can achieve better results than Eric Garcetti did to bring housing to the unhoused.

But considering all the demands that will come as a result of the fires, it seems hopeless to believe that the additional $1.5 billion on the table will actually see unhoused people get off the streets.

Loren Mark
Los Angeles

# Tutors forced to scramble by cuts

Re "States sue over cuts to volunteer program," April 30

I was one of those affected by President Trump's disgraceful cuts to AmeriCorps. I'm a retired nurse practitioner, and this semester I started tutoring two young Pasadena Unified School District students in reading as a volunteer with Reading Partners, which gets funding from AmeriCorps. On April 27, I received a message from the executive director of Reading Partners L.A. informing us that the nonprofit's AmeriCorps program had been "put on pause."

That touched off a bureaucratic scramble. Happily, funding was secured to switch the staff from AmeriCorps to Reading Partners, so we only missed a few tutoring sessions. I'm glad I can resume my work with my students, a 6-year-old first-grader and a 7-year-old second-grader.

Why did we have to jump through all those hoops to keep the tutoring program alive? Because in Trump's America, God forbid we teach our young people to be better readers when we need to scrape together enough money for another massive tax cut for the president's billionaire pals. I mean, let's keep our priorities straight, right?

Janetta Yanez
Sherman Oaks

# Could library fines return?

Re "An attack on an essential service: Trump targets library funding," Opinion Voices, April 30

I grew up loving to go to the library. The beautiful North Hollywood branch in the park was like a second home. My children walked there from school with their classes in the '80s. I hope President Trump doesn't kill this experience for children or adults.

One consequence that I could imagine from his cutting of funds is the possible return of overdue fines. I may need to search for a book my then-5-year-old son borrowed from the Anaheim Hills Library that I forgot to return before we moved back to the Valley 41 years ago. That fine could make up for the cuts!

Joanne Serin
Sherman Oaks

# What Amazon drama really says

Re "Amazon's plan to disclose cost of tariffs angers White House," April 30

The White House called Amazon's proposal to disclose cost increases due to tariffs "a hostile and political act." So, apparently President Trump does not want the American people to know how much the tariffs are costing them. And yet, Trump has said that the U.S. has made billions of dollars from tariffs.

How ironic, since that number could actually be how much the tariffs are costing Americans. That cost is likely added to the cost payable by the companies or individuals buying the product. When companies have a big percent increase in their cost, in most cases, they have no choice but to pass that cost on to their customers, meaning the American people.

Bottom line: It is virtually certain that the beautiful tariffs won't be so beautiful when Americans experience significant increases in their cost of living.

Perhaps, Trump might demonstrate how he really cares about the American people by developing a process to pass on all the tariff collections to those medium- and low-income people and struggling small businesses. If not, what's the point of it all other than political appearances?

Sid Pelston
Beverly Hills

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I note that Amazon confirmed to the White House that it is not planning on displaying tariff information when customers are purchasing on its platform. The state of California is, at the same time, suing the federal government over the imposition of these tariffs.

My suggestion is for California to quickly pass legislation to require all vendors operating physically or virtually in the state to display on the sales record, invoice and in advertising the amount of tariff that has been imposed since Jan. 1 on any goods sold or offered for sale with a value greater than $50. This would provide buyers with information about the true impact of the taxes that are being imposed.

Joseph Fogarty
Palm Desert

# Fond memory of 'Sopranos' star

Re "The 'teddy bear' who made us feel for a menacing mobster," April 30

Back when my now 30-year-old son was a teenager, he and I went to Magic Mountain for a day of roller-coaster riding. As we prepared to get on a ride, the line was held and from the other side of the platform, a very shy-looking James Gandolfini, along with two young boys, was seated on the coaster first.

We were then seated at the very front, a couple of rows ahead of him. It was a wild ride and I could hear Gandolfini behind us laughing and screaming like a little kid. We saw him later a couple of times in the park just being an unassuming dad, dressed in dad clothes and a rumpled sailor hat.

I thoroughly enjoyed him as an actor, but the image I have of him from that day is the one I will always remember.

Jacob Furgatch
Newport Beach

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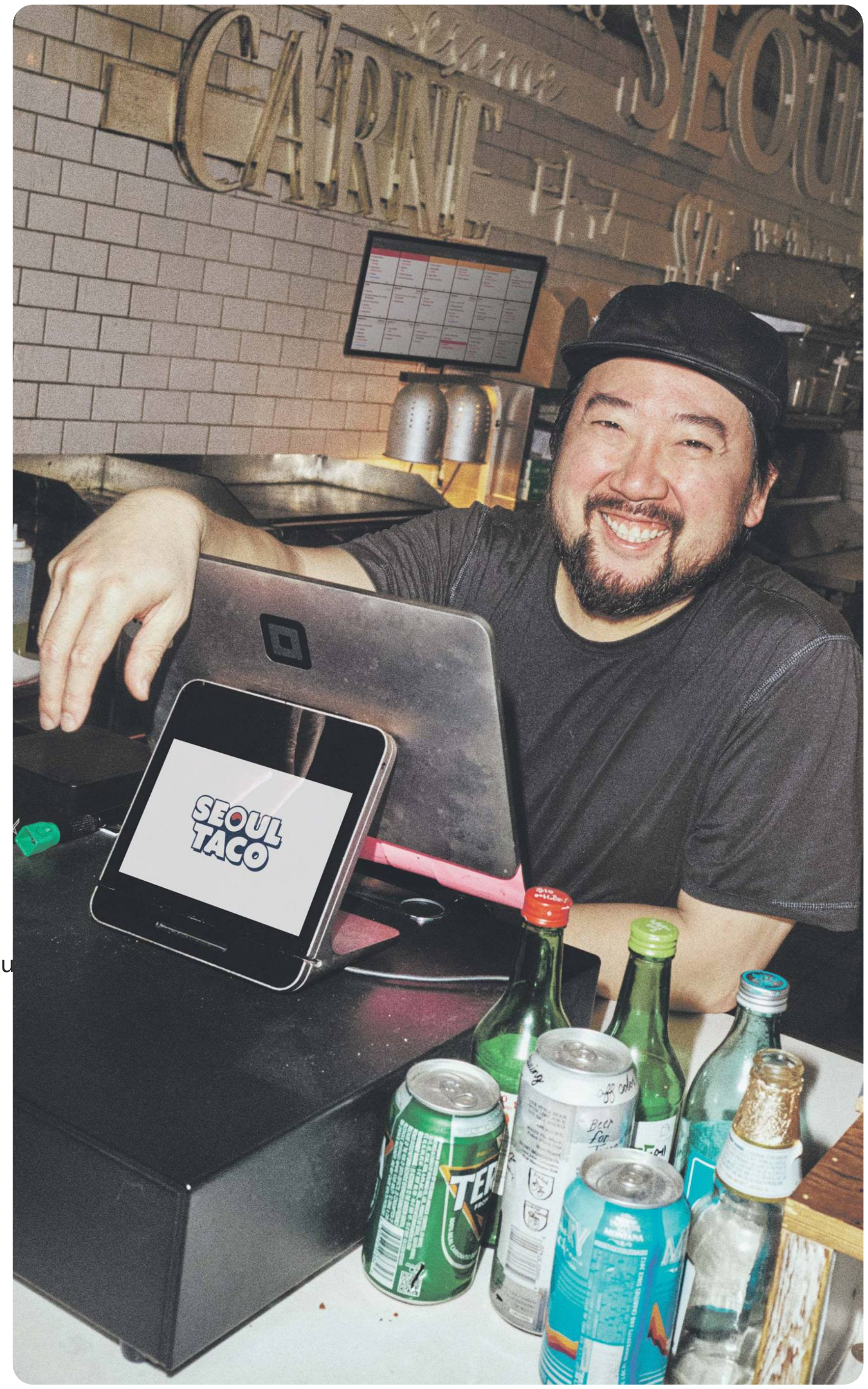
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# CALIFORNIA

MONDAY, MAY 5, 2025 :: LATIMES.COM/CALIFORNIA



CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

**MAIL** carriers Rick Ellis, left, and Frank Bajenting prepare for their routes at the Long Beach Post Office last summer. The Postal Service is planning to cut 10,000 positions as it works to modernize operations.

## Get ready for changes in mail, package deliveries

With the Postal Service and UPS expecting major job cuts, here's what to know about potentially longer waits and operational shifts

BY KAREN GARCIA

Jobs for thousands of letter and package delivery workers at the U.S. Postal Service and UPS could be cut this year, with both looking to slash costs and streamline operations as the effects of President Trump's tariffs and digital innovation ripple through the economy.

But what that means for people who have a package to ship or who are waiting for an important bill or letter may depend on where they live.

Here's what we know so far.



JUSTIN SULLIVAN Getty Images

**UPS PLANS** to cut 20,000 jobs this year as part of a reconfiguration that includes more automation.

### How many jobs are being cut?

The chief executive of United Parcel Service recently announced that the company will cut 20,000 jobs this year, or about 4% of its global workforce, and plans to close 73 distribution facilities by the end of June.

"We are executing the largest network reconfiguration in UPS history," the company said in a statement. "This strategic initiative will optimize the capacity of our network to align with expected volume levels and enhance productivity through additional

[See **Mail,** B4]

## Arcadia leader sheds rare light on questions of China influence

Mayor pro tem has been under fire for her former campaign manager's Beijing ties.

BY REBECCA ELLIS



ROBERT GAUTHIER L.A. Times

**MAYOR PRO TEM** Eileen Wang at City Hall.

After being sworn in as second-in-command of the Arcadia City Council, Eileen Wang addressed a controversy that has taken a back seat in the months since the Eaton fire devastated nearby Altadena.

"We broke up the fiance relationship," Wang said of her former campaign manager, Yaoning "Mike" Sun. "We keep the friendship."

Wang said their romantic relationship ended last spring, eight months before federal prosecutors charged Sun with conspiracy and acting as an illegal agent of a foreign government.

The April 15 statement from Wang, now mayor pro tem of the San Gabriel Valley city, was one of the few times she has publicly addressed the charges against Sun, who allegedly worked with China to cultivate Wang, in hopes that she would rise in politics and help promote pro-China policies, including opposition to Taiwan.

Facing calls for her resignation, Wang had vowed in January not to step away from the council, emphasizing that she was "not responsible for the action of others."

Wang did not respond to several calls and emails from The Times. The other four council members also did not respond to emails.

"I have a lot of questions," said former Councilmember Sheng Chang, who ran against Wang in 2022 and recalled being stunned by the fundraising prowess and plum endorsements of "the new kid on the block."

Arcadia City Manager Dominic Lazzaretto released a short statement soon after Sun was charged in December, saying Wang was cooperating with the FBI and that Sun "had no involvement whatsoever with City of Arcadia business or decision-making."

Wang, who immigrated to the U.S. from China three decades ago, was never charged, and it's unclear whether she was aware of the alleged scheme. In a criminal complaint against Sun, prosecutors identified her only as "Individual 1."

The complaint provides a rare glimpse into the covert influence the Chinese government allegedly seeks to have on politicians and organizations in the San Gabriel Valley, a landing spot

[See **Arcadia,** B2]

## Bass seeks to close agency serving youths

It would be absorbed by larger department, and some functions would be preserved.

BY NOAH GOLDBERG

Four years ago, Los Angeles City Councilmember Monica Rodriguez stood on the steps of City Hall and celebrated the creation of the Youth Development Department.

She had pushed since 2018 for the department, which oversees programs for young people, including a Youth Council to educate them about city government.

Last week, with the city deep in a budget crisis, Rodriguez pleaded for Mayor Karen Bass not to get rid of the department.

In her proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year, Bass suggested that the city fold the Youth Development Department — along with the Department of Aging and the Economic and Workforce Development Department — into the larger Community Investment for Families Department.

The Youth Development Department would no long-

[See **Youths,** B2]

*Voices* **ANITA CHABRIA** COLUMNIST

## Hot Trump summer arrives on the heels of winter of our discontent

Power grab escalates with military maneuvers, dubious arrests and sanctuary city crackdowns

President Trump dropped an executive order last week about "sanctuary cities," of which California has many.

Not to mention we are a sanctuary state.

Alone, that order should grab the attention of cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento, where the commitment to protecting our immigrant neighbors, regardless of documentation, is strong.

But stack it with a few other recent Trump moves, and we have what promises to be a summer filled with dissent, fear and a flurry of military maneuvers, questionable arrests and attempts to hobble efforts to protect immigrants, documented or not.

At the nexus of these efforts by the administration is a push to centralize ever-greater power at the federal level, never mind that Republicans have long

[See **Chabria,** B5]




GENARO MOLINA Los Angeles Times

**PROTESTERS** rally for immigrant rights last month in downtown Los Angeles, decrying mass deportations and what they see as threats to democracy.

## Battle over news website erupts in dueling lawsuits

Dispute centers on control of Knock LA and journalists' rights to their work.

BY MATT HAMILTON AND JULIA WICK

The question of who controls a small independent media outlet has roiled Los Angeles' left for more than a year.

Last week, the clash over Knock LA exploded into the legal system, with dueling lawsuits that allege copyright and trademark infringement, defamation and even theft of trade secrets.

In one corner is a group of prominent journalists, including Cerise Castle and Ben Camacho, who have built large public followings for tough reporting on local law enforcement.

On the opposing side stands Ground Game LA, a scrappy advocacy group whose ascent has been inextricably tied to the leftward shift in the city's political power structure.

Ground Game LA formed Knock LA in 2017, billing the nonprofit community journalism project as "by and for Los Angeles progressives." The publication flourished during the pandemic, as public health restrictions and protests over police reform put fresh focus on city government.

Knock LA and its extremely online reporters helped channel that frenzy of attention into activism, with popular voter guides and live coverage of public meetings.

Amid a particularly fertile moment for local leftist politics, Ground Game LA also soared.

Meghan Choi, Ground Game LA's co-founder and executive director, led Nithya Raman's and Eunisses Hernandez's insurgent City Council bids, helping them unseat incumbents. The group also rallied behind Councilmember Hugo Soto-Martínez and City Controller Kenneth Mejia's successful campaigns in 2022.

But there were deep fissures between the organization's leadership and some of the journalists who had become synonymous with Knock LA's work.

Camacho and Castle charge that Ground Game LA has continued to profit off their work without authorization, even after blocking their access to the site, and are seeking nearly $5 million in damages. Ground Game LA argues that the journalists essentially tried to hijack the news outlet, taking its trademarked name, stealing its confidential mailing list and misrepresenting themselves as the outlet's rightful leaders.

On Tuesday, Castle and Camacho filed a federal copyright infringement lawsuit against Ground Game as well as Liberty Hill Foundation and the California Endowment, two leading philanthropic groups that have provided it with financial backing.

Castle and Camacho said in their lawsuit that Ground Game and the nonprofits have "maliciously and systematically" exploited their copyrighted journalistic works "across multiple platforms."

At issue is Castle's 15-

[See **Lawsuits,** B2]

# Wang stays firm after foreign influence scandal

[**Arcadia,** from B1]
for many Chinese and Taiwanese immigrants.

Campaign records examined by The Times indicate that Sun served as Wang's campaign manager, lending money and helping bring in donations — some of which came from sources with ties to the Chinese government.

James Su, president of EDI Media in West Covina, donated $500 to Wang's campaign on Oct. 10, 2022. Su's media company, which includes several L.A.-based media groups, including the Chinese-language website iCity News, had to register as a foreign agent in May 2022 because it formerly printed the U.S. version of a newspaper considered a "foreign mission" of the Chinese government.

As the November 2022 election neared, iCity News published a slew of glowing articles on Wang, a political novice and owner of an afterschool tutoring company.

"Remember! You must vote for Eileen!" concluded an article, one of roughly half a dozen the outlet published that year on Wang, who would receive an endorsement from Su as well as the $500 donation.

There were no stories on Chang, Wang's opponent, a Taiwanese immigrant who ran a bare-bones campaign with $34,000 he lent himself.

Lina Li, an office manager for EDI who said she was responding on Su's behalf, wrote in an email that the $500 donation was made from Su's personal funds because he believed Wang was a "good candidate." The company has not had to register as a foreign agent since 2022, she said.

The L.A. arm of Sing Tao US, a subsidiary of a Chinese-owned newspaper that is registered as a foreign agent, also donated to Wang's campaign, giving $3,300 on Aug. 9, 2022, according to campaign finance records. Wang paid the company the same amount for print ads, according to the records.



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

**SHENG CHANG,** who served two terms before losing his Arcadia City Council seat to Eileen Wang in 2022, recalled being stunned by the fundraising prowess and plum endorsements of "the new kid on the block."

The Sing Tao Daily is one of the oldest newspapers in Hong Kong and has long been featured on newsstands in Chinatown and the San Gabriel Valley. Sing Tao US wrote in a government filing it is "editorially independent" from its Chinese parent company.

Robin Mui, chief executive of Sing Tao US, said Wang's campaign made an error on its campaign finance forms. Sing Tao never contributed to Wang's campaign and only received payment from it for ads, Mui said.

The "L.A. [branch] never made any political contribution — unless you prove to me otherwise," Mui said.

The criminal complaint against Sun described extensive interactions between Sun and John Chen, who was sentenced to federal prison last year for acting as an illegal Chinese agent and plotting against Falun Gong, a spiritual practice banned in China.

Chen reportedly described a former L.A. County supervisor, identified only as M.A., as "friendly to China." Chen's Chinese handler told him that he would be given funds to "socialize with" the former supervisor in the hopes of getting an introduction to M.A.'s successor, identified as C.B.

Former Supervisor Mike Antonovich, who oversaw a district including parts of the San Gabriel Valley from 1980 to 2016, said he first met Chen at a dinner for a Chinese association and would occasionally run into him at community events. He never felt Chen was pushing a political agenda, he said.

Antonovich said the only time he felt pressure from the Chinese government was before Double Ten Day, a national holiday in Taiwan on Oct. 10. Every year, the Chinese consulate would reach out to each supervisor and ask them not to attend local celebrations, Antonovich said.

Antonovich said he didn't heed the guidance and spoke at Double Ten celebrations twice.

Supervisor Kathryn Barger, who succeeded Antonovich, said she has never met with Chen or Sun and has no records of either man reaching out to her office, according to her spokesperson.

::

Much of the campaign Sun orchestrated for Wang would be considered standard fare for an up-and-coming San Gabriel Valley politician.

Wang, a longtime resident of Arcadia, hired Santa Maria Group, a prominent lobbying firm. She nabbed plum endorsements from big-name politicians: L.A. County Supervisor Hilda Solis, U.S. Rep. Judy Chu (D-Monterey Park) and Chu's husband, former state Assemblymember Michael Eng. In total, Wang raised $119,000, mostly from donors with addresses in the San Gabriel Valley. Another top fundraiser, Councilmember Michael Cao, brought roughly $125,000 into his campaign that year.

Chang, who was seeking a third term on the City Council after winning a seat in 1994 and 2000, said that for the first time, his heritage became a talking point during an election, when a supporter asked him to remove her name from his list of endorsements because she had heard that he supported Taiwan's independence.

Wang's Instagram account from that time is full of videos of her on the campaign trail, set to zippy pop songs. She previously told The Times that she knocked on every door in her district multiple times to make sure she reached every resident.

"I walked about 140 days ... I never stopped," she said over a dim sum lunch in November, before the criminal charges against Sun. "I walked my district five times."

# Founders and journalists clash over rights to Knock LA

[**Lawsuits,** from B1]
part series, "A Tradition of Violence," on gangs of deputies within the L.A. County Sheriff's Department. The account of violent law enforcement cliques went viral when Castle published it on Knock LA in 2021, winning accolades and contributing to heightened scrutiny of the Sheriff's Department.

Camacho is known for obtaining the photos, names and serial numbers of 9,000 LAPD officers, then providing them to Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, which published the records, prompting two lawsuits from L.A. City Atty. Hydee Feldstein Soto. He identified 23 images and articles that he said Ground Game had infringed upon.

The duo trace the infringement to March 2024, when Castle led an effort to separate Knock LA from Ground Game. The move, according to the suit, was prompted by reasons including "editorial overreach," "demands for unpaid labor," "racial discrimination" and "lack of support for Mr. Camacho" after Feldstein Soto's office sued him.

Within weeks, Camacho and Castle contend, they were cut off from Knock LA's email and other systems "in a deliberately hostile and retaliatory action."

They say the move kept their journalistic work captive and allowed Ground Game "to profit from their unauthorized use." As independent journalists, both assert that they had retained the copyrights and never "executed any work-for-hire agreements" or transferred their intellectual property.

The pair accuse Ground Game of misappropriating their work to boost its fundraising and stature. By providing grant money and social media promotion, the California Endowment and Liberty Hill "materially contributed" to the infringement, the suit alleges. Both organizations declined to comment.

Castle and Camacho are seeking an injunction barring Ground Game from using their copyrighted works and an award of damages "totaling no less than $4,650,000," among other demands.

"This lawsuit is about protecting years of investigative work that I developed independently, often under difficult and dangerous conditions," said a statement by Castle, who now works for Capital & Main. "No one should be allowed to take your work, take credit for your work, and use it to fundraise without consent. That's not solidarity — it's exploitation."

On Wednesday, Ground Game countered with force, filing a federal lawsuit and exhibits spanning 119 pages that cast Camacho, Castle and two others as villains in a "scheme" to seize the reins of Knock LA, register it as their own company and unlawfully use its trademarks for their own offshoot site.

Ground Game's suit also focuses on spring 2024, when Castle — Knock LA's then-managing editor — along with Camacho, the photography editor, and Katja Schatte, the editor in chief, asked to separate from Ground Game and form their own new entity.



JAMES MICHAEL JUAREZ For The Times

**JOURNALISTS** Cerise Castle, above, and Ben Camacho are embroiled in litigation with the nonprofit group Ground Game LA over the local outlet Knock LA.

When Ground Game's board rejected that proposal, the trio "began interfering" with Knock LA, and the parent organization shut down their Knock email accounts soon after.

The quarrel quickly spilled into public view. Castle, who is Black, accused Ground Game LA of racism, and a social media "toolkit" — complete with talking points, hashtags and draft posts — alleged that the nonprofit was holding the news outlet "hostage." Other contributors joined with Castle, recording a video that accused Ground Game LA "of killing local journalism" and appealing to the public to stand with them.

Ground Game LA alleges that around that same time, the offshoot group took the organization's confidential mailing list and sent multiple emails without permission, "representing themselves as the legitimate successors of Knock LA" and "misrepresenting" their separation from the broader group to divert donations.

The offshoot group used the contact list to "advertise, promote, and grow ... their individual and personal interests," according to the suit, calling such actions a "theft" of trade secrets.

Ground Game LA also accuses the offshoot group of hijacking Knock LA's social media accounts and trying to lock the organization out of them, "including by changing the Two-Factor Authentication for Knock LA's Instagram account, removing the administrator email on Knock LA's Facebook account, and taking down multiple YouTube videos from Knock LA's YouTube account."

Their lawsuit seeks to prevent the offshoot group from using the mailing list or Knock LA trademarks and demands that they restore access to "blocked social media accounts."

Knock LA continues to publish new material, and its website still prominently features Castle's series on the Sheriff's Department. But its Instagram and Twitter accounts have been dark for months.

Neither side directly responded to the allegations but both lamented that the acrimony had escalated to litigation.

"Our folks worked very hard and did everything that they could to prevent it from getting to this place," Choi, Ground Game LA's executive director, said of the dueling lawsuits. "Fundamentally, this is just about somebody trying to hijack our project and our identity."

Camacho, in a statement shared by his attorney, Almuhtada Smith, emphasized the sacrifice of "time, risk and dedication" that went into his photography and writing — and that now motivates his and Castle's fight.

"We didn't want to take legal action, but our efforts to resolve this privately were ignored," Camacho said in the statement. "No creator — especially those from historically excluded communities — should be expected to let others profit off their work without permission or credit."

# In budget move, Bass plans to eliminate youth-focused department

[**Youths,** from B1]
er exist, though some of its functions would be preserved. Under Bass' proposal, the budget dedicated to those functions would decrease to less than $1.6 million from $2.3 million. Eight employees would be laid off, with 10 remaining.

"Don't undermine and wipe away all those years of work," Rodriguez said at a news conference at City Hall on Wednesday.

She called the mayor's proposed budget "a hatchet to so many programs that Angelenos rely on" and said there was no "rhyme or reason" to some of the suggested cuts.

Matt Hale, the city's deputy mayor of finance, innovation and operations, said the three departments being absorbed by the Community Investment for Families Department have responsibilities that sometimes overlap.

"Like most things in the city, we have divided them into silos, and people who come through our doors saying 'I need help' are then given a scavenger hunt to perform," Hale said.

At a City Council budget committee meeting Tuesday, Hale said the consolidation would save $5 million and "result in better outcomes and more effective services."

Bass spokesperson Zach Seidl said the mayor's office is not considering reversing course on the consolidation.

Bass' proposed budget, which is being considered by the budget committee in several weeks of hearings, attempts to close a $1-billion shortfall caused in large part by rising personnel costs, soaring legal payouts and a slowdown in the local economy.

The mayor's budget eliminates more than 2,700 city positions — about 1,650 of them through layoffs.

In addition to running the 30-member Youth Council, the Youth Development Department organizes the Youth Summit and the Youth Expo, annual events that help young people get jobs and internships. The department also is reviewing city programs to determine whether they are reaching youths and meeting youths' needs.

If the cuts suggested by the mayor are made, the Youth Development Department would reach about 6,900 constituents, down from about 10,000 last year.

"To take [the department] away now would not just be a step backwards, it would be a betrayal of the youth ... who deserve to be invested in, not ignored," said Monica Rodriguez — no relation to the council member — who was a member of the inaugural Youth Council.

Councilmember Rodriguez said that instead of being consolidated, the department should grow, suggesting that the Gang Reduction and Youth Development program should come under its purview. The program, which provides gang intervention and prevention services and community engagement programs, is under the mayor's office and has a proposed budget of nearly $40 million.

"The department doesn't have to go away. The department can sustain itself," the council member said. "This budget document needs to be a reflection of the values of this city, and what's being communicated at this time is young people's voices are subordinate to other priorities — and that's not OK."



CARLIN STIEHL Los Angeles Times

**NEVER TOO YOUNG TO COOK UP HOPE**

Henry Rice, 9, pitches in Sunday at the Meatball Madness event from Hope the Mission and the office of Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel (D-Encino). Volunteers aimed to make 250,000 meatballs by hand in a bid to raise awareness of food insecurity in L.A.

# 2 people, dog killed in plane crash in Simi Valley

Single-engine aircraft en route to Camarillo damages two homes in a residential area.

BY DAKOTA SMITH AND NATHAN SOLIS

A small plane crashed into a residential area of Simi Valley on Saturday afternoon, killing two people and a canine onboard and damaging two homes, authorities said.

The Federal Aviation Administration said the plane was a Vans RV-10, a fixed-wing single-engine aircraft with four seats that is sold in kit form and typically home-built.

The plane departed from William J. Fox Airfield in Lancaster and was traveling to Camarillo Airport when it crashed in Simi Valley, according to the FAA.

The National Transportation Safety Board said the pilot and one passenger were killed as well as a canine that was in the plane.

The identities of the victims had not been released as of Sunday afternoon.

The accident happened around 2 p.m. in the 200 block of High Meadow Street in the Wood Ranch area of Simi Valley. The FAA and NTSB are investigating.

The plane crashed in the backyard and dining room of Arman and Armineh Hovakemian. Arman Hovakemian said he was doing yardwork when he noticed the plane circling lower and lower in the hillside neighborhood.

Fearful that the craft was spiraling toward his home, he ran inside to get his wife and their Pomeranian, Koko. A loud bang followed and the fuselage landed where he had stood in the yard, he said.

The smell of gas filled the air and the side of their home caught fire, he said. The couple fled as neighbors called 911.



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

**A SMALL PLANE** en route from Lancaster to Camarillo crashed on High Meadow Street in Simi Valley.

"I'm overwhelmed," Arman Hovakemian said, standing in the street as dozens of firefighters and police officers surrounded his home. A light rain fell as neighbors watched a fire truck with a ladder hoisted over the Hovakemians' residence.

"I'm numb. It hasn't sunk in yet," he said. "We're fortunate we were able to get out."

The plane's movements just before the crash alarmed some residents. In security video taken by a neighbor that was viewed by The Times, the craft can be heard circling the neighborhood for nearly three minutes and at times flying close to homes. In another video, the plane can be seen shooting straight up into the clouds before dropping down again.

The other home damaged by the plane belongs to P.J. Van Kralingen and his wife, Iris. The couple were at the Getty Center when they received a text about the crash.

Two of their three dogs somehow escaped the home during the incident and are still missing, P.J. Van Kralingen said.

He expressed gratitude that no one was home at the time. The plane shattered windows in their family room, which is where his wife's parents, who live with the couple, usually sit.

"It's a little bit unsettling," he said. He said officials told him he couldn't enter the home for at least 24 hours because the NTSB needed to come to the site.

Times staff writer Queenie Wong contributed to this report.

# Kayaker is missing after he capsized

BY QUEENIE WONG

The search for a missing kayaker who fell into the water along the American River near Auburn, Calif., was placed on hold Sunday because of poor conditions, the Placer County Sheriff's Office said.

The missing man was on a kayak with another man when their vessel capsized Friday evening in fast-running water beneath the No Hands Bridge near Auburn, the Sheriff's Office said.

The other man reached nearby rocks and safely made it back to shore, the Sheriff's Office said. The missing person wasn't identified, and officials said it wasn't known whether he might still be alive.

"It's tough to say," said Elise Soviar, a spokesperson for the Sheriff's Office. "You never want to give up hope until you know."

Authorities started to search for the missing kayaker Friday. A dive team also went out on the water Saturday morning as aerial and water search efforts continued throughout the day, she said.

Soviar said the search was suspended Sunday because of water flow and visibility. Conditions will determine whether the search will resume Monday.

Although the river might look inviting during a sunny day, authorities say people should avoid going into the water during this time of year.

"The water is very, very swift and it's very, very cold because it's coming from the mountains," she said.



Placer County Sheriff's Office

**SEARCHERS** work on the American River.

# Jeffries rips Trump budget cuts at desert town hall

BY SEEMA MEHTA

RANCHO MIRAGE — A day after President Trump proposed a budget that would deeply slash the federal government, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) on Saturday vowed that his party is unified in its opposition to cuts to Medicaid, Social Security, veterans' services and other safety net programs for vulnerable Americans.

"We are committed to doing everything we can at this moment to stop the Republicans from trying to jam this reckless, extreme budget down the throats of the American people," he told a few hundred people gathered in a high school performing arts center for a congressional town hall. "It will hurt children and families and seniors and women and older Americans and Americans with disabilities. Hospitals will close, nursing homes could shut down, and in fact, people could die."

Jeffries said the budget comes from an out-of-control Trump administration, and described the proposal as un-American and unconscionable.

"We're going to do everything we can to stop this budget in its tracks, bury it in the ground and make sure it never rises again," he said.

Christian Martinez, a spokesperson for the National Republican Congressional Committee, criticized Jeffries' appearance at the town hall, calling him "delusional, destructive, and drenched in hypocrisy."

The event occurred in the congressional district of one of Trump's late rallies in the 2024 presidential campaign. It was the first stop on a nationwide tour of the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, as well as a town hall hosted by Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-Indio).




CHIP SOMODEVILLA Getty Images

**HOUSE MINORITY LEADER** Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.), center, joins other Democratic lawmakers at a news conference in Washington on Wednesday to criticize President Trump's first 100 days in office.

Ruiz represents all of Imperial County and parts of Riverside and San Bernardino counties, including Cathedral City, Indio, Coachella, El Centro, Calexico, San Jacinto, Hemet and Needles. In recent elections, the district has been viewed as safely Democratic.

But this year, the nonpartisan Cook Political Report deemed it "likely Democratic" because of Trump's performance in the region in the recent election. In 2024 he won 10 counties in California that voted for Joe Biden in the previous election, including three in Southern California, and lost to former Vice President Kamala Harris in Ruiz's district by a scant 2 percentage points.

Ruiz far outperformed his fellow Democrat, winning the district by 13 points. But depending on who the GOP congressional candidate is in next year's midterms, and whether the party puts resources behind him or her, the race could be more competitive in 2026.

First elected to Congress in 2012, Ruiz said he was especially concerned about potential cuts to Medicaid, which provides coverage for low-income Americans and is known as Medi-Cal in California, because of his experience as a physician.

"I have anxiety because many of the patients I took care of were on Medi-Cal, and I know that without Medi-Cal they won't get their treatment, and they'll come in, even in more dire circumstances, into the emergency department," he said.

He argued that the budget cuts Trump is proposing are so large that there is no way to enact them without cutting Medicaid. Ruiz said he was told by the Inland Empire Health Program that three hospitals in his district will probably have to close if there are significant Medicaid cuts.

"So if you don't have Medicaid, where are you going to go? If there's an emergency, where are you going to go to get your chronic care?" Ruiz said. "So this affects all of us."

Ruiz's comments were in response to a question from an audience member about healthcare. Other inquiries concerned deportations, due process, Social Security and cuts to federal departments including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Education.

The town hall also featured Rep. Nanette Barragan (D-San Pedro), a co-chair of the Steering and Policy Committee, and Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández (D-N.M.), the chair of the House's Democratic Women's Caucus. The latter delivered an impassioned plea about the impact of federal cuts to the women who rely on federal healthcare coverage during their pregnancies and to their children.

"When those babies are born, we want them to be born strong and healthy," Leger Fernández said. "And then those children will go to school, and we want to make sure that they are not hungry, right? Because kids cannot learn where their stomachs are growling. ... But right now, Medicaid, the nutrition programs, education, they are all proposed to be cut ... so that they can give trillions of dollars of tax cuts to the wealthiest who backed them."

Jeffries said such efforts are part of a broader assault on the nation and democracy, and are why Democrats are holding town halls not only in their party's districts but also those represented by Republicans.

"Congress is a separate and co-equal branch of government," he said. "We don't work for this president. We don't work for any president. We don't work for Donald Trump. We don't work with Elon Musk. We don't work for far-right extremists. We work for you, the American people."

# Vet returns fallen Vietnam soldier's belongings

By Sara Cardine

For more than 57 years, the objects never saw the light of day.

Shut inside an old box bound with tape, they remained out of sight but never really out of mind for Adolph Novello, the U.S. Marine who placed them there, alongside a prayer book and a string of rosary beads, at age 20 after a 13-month stint in Vietnam.

Some identification papers, old coins, a lighter and a homemade wallet containing a tiny black and white photo of an unnamed North Vietnamese soldier in his teens, who died in combat in 1967.

The artifacts didn't amount to much — they could be held in two cupped hands — but their weight was immeasurable for Novello, who carried them with him from Vietnam to his hometown of Chicago and eventually to California, locked up tight inside that box, and in his heart.

Today, the 76-year-old Murrieta resident recalls acquiring the objects after some skirmish or other in North Vietnam, where servicemen were ordered to scour the field for still-living soldiers to take into custody and to search the bodies of the fallen for intel or maps that might reveal enemy war plans.

"I had an empty C-rations box and I put everything in there, whatever it was I'd acquired, and before I left [Vietnam], I sent it home," Novello said of the now-relics. "I really hadn't touched it, because I kind of knew what was in there, and I think I didn't want to remember what was in there."

It wasn't until this March, while attending a speaker series hosted by the Heroes Hall veterans museum on the Orange County fairgrounds, that Novello was inspired to open the box.

After the event, Novello went into his garage to search through his memorabilia and was confronted by the C-rations box gathering dust on a high shelf. It took about 10 times for him to muster up the courage, but thinking it might be of use at Heroes Hall, he eventually forged forth.

That simple act kicked off a journey that would take the septuagenarian and Heroes Hall historian Brenton Ogden across the globe, retracing the former Marine's steps through Vietnam just as the nation prepared to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon.

Ogden recalled how Novello brought the box of artifacts to him, thinking they might be of interest to the museum, which had recently debuted "Echoes of Conflict: Remembering Vietnam," an immersive exhibit including personal items from Southern California veterans.

"He brought in objects and ephemera he had from his service in Vietnam that were from a North Vietnamese soldier," the historian said Friday. "And Adolph nonchalantly mentioned he wanted to see if his family could be located to give the artifacts back."

Working with his personal and professional connections, including historians who advised the makers of Vietnam-era video games on historical accuracy, Ogden identified the soldier in the photo: Kha Van Viet, who came from an ethnic Thai family living in the central highlands of Vietnam.

On April 23, the pair undertook the long journey from Los Angeles International Airport to Ho Chi Minh City, then to Hanoi. They met with Kha's nephew and cousin, who officially received the objects in a ceremony late last month, attended by numerous national dignitaries and televised by Vietnam's state-owned VTV-4.

Novello was interviewed multiple times by journalists eager to hear the details of his story, but recounting events long suppressed wasn't easy. The veteran choked up during a broadcast when talking about some of what he experienced.

"You figure if you just stayed tight-lipped about it and didn't say anything to anybody, it would be OK," he said. "But truthfully it really wasn't. It was terrible and still is."

Ogden and Novello did not participate in the televised ceremony, choosing to stay out of the limelight during what was still, 50 years later, a highly emotional and politicized occasion. But, in addition to the artifacts, the Vietnamese soldier's family received a portrait of the youth, enlarged from the tiny photo that had lived more than half a century inside a C-rations box.

That gesture is vitally important to Kha's family, Ogden said, as Vietnamese religious tradition places a high importance on praying before an altar holding the belongings of someone who has passed as a way to tie their spirit to their ancestral home.

"It's extremely important to have any kind of [personal] effect from that individual to have that connection, so not having anything was kind of allowing his soul to be lost," he said. "And this was bringing that back."

And, perhaps, the same could be said of Novello. Although his return to Vietnam was difficult, he believes it was the right thing to do.

The old box has been emptied, and maybe that clearance will make room for more in his life.

"I did sleep pretty good last night, for a change," he said Friday, one day after returning stateside. "Hopefully, with all the different interviews and talking to people there I can talk to my kids and my wife about it.

"I think it will clear some stuff up — I think it will change everything."

Cardine writes for Times Community News.



Brenton Ogden

**FORMER MARINE** Adolph Novello last month flew to Vietnam to return artifacts he had locked in a box for more than 57 years. A historian at Orange County's Heroes Hall helped him identify the owner of the objects.

# What's in store as Postal Service, UPS plan job cuts

[**Mail,** from B1]
automation."

The closures are part of a long-term plan to modernize the operations of distribution centers, including adding automation, either fully or in part, to 400 of its facilities, according to CNN. Earlier this year, UPS announced that it had reached a deal with Amazon, its largest customer, to reduce business-related operations by more than 50% by the second half of 2026.

"Further, the actions we are taking to reconfigure our network and reduce cost across our business could not be timelier," UPS Chief Executive Carol Tomé said during a recent conference call. "The macro environment may be uncertain, but with our actions, we will emerge as an even stronger, more nimble UPS."

For its part, the Teamsters union, which represents thousands of UPS workers, said it would fight any cuts that harm its members.

"The United Parcel Service is contractually obligated to create 30,000 Teamsters jobs under our current national master agreement," Sean M. O'Brien, president of Teamsters General, said in a statement.

"If UPS wants to continue to downsize corporate management, the Teamsters won't stand in its way," he said. "But if the company intends to violate our contract or makes any attempt to go after hard-fought, good-paying Teamsters jobs, UPS will be in for a hell of a fight."

In March, then-Postmaster General Louis DeJoy announced that the U.S. Postal Service would be cutting 10,000 positions as well as slashing the Postal Service's budget with the help of Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, according to a letter sent to members of Congress. Musk's group is not a government agency.

The move comes as the Postal Service has experienced close to $100 billion in losses and was projected to lose an additional $200 billion, DeJoy stated in his letter.

USPS employed 533,724 people as of 2024.

The Postal Service has been working toward modernizing its operational efficiency, service reliability and financial stability with its Delivering for America plan, introduced in 2021.

The 10-year plan was updated last year to revisit initial goals, highlight changes and lay out plans for future initiatives. Within the updated report, the Postal Service stated that the number of pieces of mail collected through its post offices and by carriers on their routes has sharply declined over the last decade.

The number of collected letters and postcards dropped from 57 billion pieces in 1997 to just 12 billion in 2023, an 80% reduction.

Now, the Postal Service is reconfiguring its collection and transportation processes to address that decline.

Mail is currently transported to and from processing facilities and post offices twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Those deliveries will be cut to a single daily trip in the morning, according to the report.

"This will optimize our regional transportation, cut unnecessary routes and expedite processing," the report stated.

## How will this affect delivery times?

Despite cutting 20,000 positions and automating work at 400 facilities, UPS says the changes to its operations will not affect the experience of customers.

But for the U.S. Postal Service, some changes should be expected.

These changes will be implemented in two phases. The first phase began April 1 and the second will begin July 1.

Delivery times for first-class mail, which includes letters and postcards, will remain between one and five days.

The delivery time for priority mail express, a service that allows customers to ship packages up to 70 pounds to any state, will now take one to three days. Previously, it was one to two days, depending on how late in the day the item was dropped off.

Delivery of end-to-end marketing mail, what most people call junk mail, along with magazines and newspapers, will be faster, but USPS did not provide specifics.

"As with mail, most competitive shipping products will retain the same service standard, some packages will have a faster standard, and some will have a slightly slower standard," the report stated.

You can learn more about how long a package will take to arrive by visiting your local post office or checking the "Service Commitments" tool online at *postcalc.usps.com*. The tool asks for the ZIP Code of where the package will be sent from and mailed to, on which date and at what time; it then generates the average expected delivery time based on that information.


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Los Angeles Times


Legal Notices

**SUMMONS**
**(CITACION JUDICIAL)**
**Case Number (Numero del Caso): 24CV05717**

**NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:**
**(AVISO AL DEMANDADO):**
Emma Skillman

**YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:**
**(LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):**
Malia Kresser

**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):**
Santa Barbara Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

**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):**
Jared Katz, Esq.
112 E. Victoria Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101
(805) 966-1501

**Date: (Fecha)** 10/15/24, amended 12/12/24

Terri Chavez Clerk (Secretario)
Terri Chavez Deputy (Adjunto)

Legal Notices

**LEGAL NOTICES 1300**

Legal Notices

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**
**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**
**Coastal Development Permit Application No. 5-02-009-A1**

Project Description: Request for after the fact approval to increase the size of 111 existing lifeguard tower advertsing signs from 28`` x 54`` to 48`` x 60``, and a second sign per tower, relocate the current rear sign and proposed new sign to both sides of each tower, and retain existing public safety signage.

Project Location: Lifeguard Towers on beach between Will Rogers State Beach and Cabrillo Beach, Los Angeles County.

Hearing Date and Location (Item No. F16b): Friday, May 9, 2025, at 9:00 am at the Oceano Hotel located at 280 Capistrano Road, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019.

Please see the Coastal Commission's Meeting Procedures and Definitions posted on the Coastal Commission's webpage at www.coastal.ca.gov for details on the procedures of the hearing.

CN116244 05-09-2025
May 4,5,6,7,8, 2025


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JUMBLE

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

DDOEG

TKTIY

PYODOR

RIANPS

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




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

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: GOING BOXER BONNET FINALE
Answer: It took a long time to get the fish into the boat because it was a — "REEL" BIG ONE

# THE WEATHER

## Today in Southern California

**Cool; some sun; a mountain shower:** A closed upper low will drift eastward Monday, leaving us with clouds mixing with some sunshine along with a continuation of cool weather. The cool air, combined with the heating of the day, will lead to showers and even a thunderstorm or two over the mountains. Coastal regions will be experiencing a deep marine layer into Tuesday. A warming trend will take place inland.

### 5-day forecasts

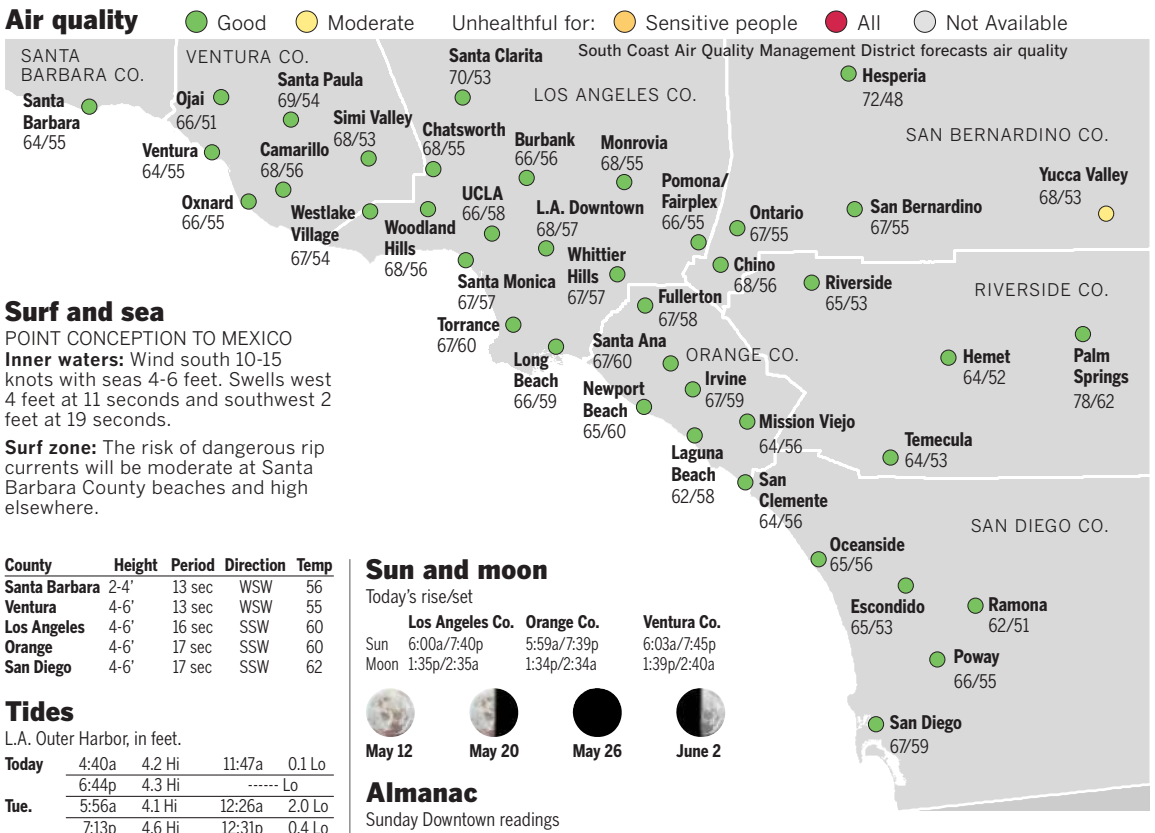
High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

| | L.A. Basin | | Valleys | | Beaches | | Mountains | | Deserts | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Today** | 68\|57 | | 68\|55 | | 67\|57 | | 53\|34 | | 78\|62 | |
| | Low clouds may clear | | Low clouds may clear | | Low clouds may clear | | Cloudy with a shower | | Rather cloudy | |
| **Tuesday** | Partly sunny | 69/58 | Mostly sunny | 66/54 | Partly sunny | 66/58 | Partly sunny | 59/36 | Mostly sunny | 86/65 |
| **Wednesday** | Sunny | 73/57 | Sunny | 78/55 | Sunny | 68/56 | Mostly sunny | 63/37 | Mostly sunny | 90/68 |
| **Thursday** | Mostly cloudy | 77/61 | Mainly cloudy | 83/61 | Mainly cloudy | 72/58 | Mostly cloudy | 68/39 | Hot | 98/71 |
| **Friday** | Partly sunny | 77/61 | Partly sunny | 84/58 | Partly sunny | 72/59 | Partly sunny | 75/42 | Hot | 100/74 |

### 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:** Wind south 10-15 knots with seas 4-6 feet. Swells west 4 feet at 11 seconds and southwest 2 feet at 19 seconds.

**Surf zone:** The risk of dangerous rip currents will be moderate at Santa Barbara County beaches and high elsewhere.

| County | Height | Period | Direction | Temp |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Santa Barbara** | 2-4' | 13 sec | WSW | 56 |
| **Ventura** | 4-6' | 13 sec | WSW | 55 |
| **Los Angeles** | 4-6' | 16 sec | SSW | 60 |
| **Orange** | 4-6' | 17 sec | SSW | 60 |
| **San Diego** | 4-6' | 17 sec | SSW | 62 |

### Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Today** | 4:40a | 4.2 Hi | 11:47a | 0.1 Lo |
| | 6:44p | 4.3 Hi | ------ | Lo |
| **Tue.** | 5:56a | 4.1 Hi | 12:26a | 2.0 Lo |
| | 7:13p | 4.6 Hi | 12:31p | 0.4 Lo |

### UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people

Las Vegas, 45 · Phoenix, 10
Los Angeles, 45 · San Francisco, 25

### Sun and moon

Today's rise/set

| | Los Angeles Co. | Orange Co. | Ventura Co. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sun | 6:00a/7:40p | 5:59a/7:39p | 6:03a/7:45p |
| Moon | 1:35p/2:35a | 1:34p/2:34a | 1:39p/2:40a |

May 12 · May 20 · May 26 · June 2

### Almanac

Sunday Downtown readings

| Temperature | Los Angeles | Fullerton | Ventura* |
|---|---|---|---|
| High/low | 60/55 | 61/57 | 60/54 |
| Normal high/low | 73/57 | 76/56 | 69/50 |
| High/low a year ago | 67/58 | 68/57 | 62/53 |
| Record high/date | 93/1987 | 93/2018 | 91/1953 |
| Record low/date | 44/1899 | 50/1999 | 40/1964 |

| Precipitation | Los Angeles | Fullerton | Ventura* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24-hour total (as of 2 p.m.) | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.00 |
| Season total (since Oct. 1) | 7.93 | 3.93 | 6.50 |
| Last season (Oct. 1 to date) | 22.02 | 16.49 | 24.61 |
| Season norm (Oct. 1 to date) | 13.74 | 11.35 | 15.64 |
| Humidity (high/low) | 83/64 | 83/33 | 80/59 |

### California cities*

| City | Sun.* Hi | Lo | Prcp. | Today Hi | Lo | Tue. Hi | Lo |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Anaheim** | 65 | 56 | -- | 67 | 58 | 70 | 59 |
| **Avalon/Catalina** | 54 | 48 | -- | 59 | 50 | 60 | 50 |
| **Bakersfield** | 73 | 59 | Tr | 83 | 59 | 89 | 60 |
| **Barstow** | 74 | 56 | -- | 79 | 56 | 85 | 56 |
| **Big Bear Lake** | 45 | 32 | .14 | 53 | 34 | 59 | 36 |
| **Bishop** | 65 | 50 | .03 | 74 | 45 | 80 | 44 |
| **Burbank** | 60 | 55 | .01 | 66 | 56 | 66 | 54 |
| **Camarillo** | 65 | 55 | -- | 68 | 56 | 66 | 55 |
| **Chatsworth** | 61 | 53 | -- | 68 | 55 | 66 | 54 |
| **Chino** | 64 | 54 | Tr | 68 | 56 | 72 | 57 |
| **Compton** | 63 | 58 | -- | 69 | 58 | 69 | 59 |
| **Dana Point** | 63 | 56 | Tr | 64 | 58 | 66 | 59 |
| **Death Valley** | 84 | 72 | .01 | 93 | 81 | 97 | 79 |
| **Del Mar** | 62 | 57 | .01 | 61 | 57 | 64 | 56 |
| **Escondido** | 61 | 53 | .04 | 65 | 53 | 69 | 54 |
| **Eureka** | 54 | 41 | -- | 61 | 43 | 57 | 47 |
| **Fallbrook** | 62 | 53 | .15 | 64 | 53 | 67 | 54 |
| **Fresno** | 73 | 56 | -- | 82 | 59 | 87 | 58 |
| **Fullerton** | 65 | 57 | .01 | 67 | 58 | 67 | 57 |
| **Hemet** | 59 | 51 | -- | 64 | 52 | 70 | 51 |
| **Hesperia** | 62 | 48 | -- | 69 | 49 | 71 | 49 |
| **Huntington Beach** | 64 | 59 | -- | 65 | 60 | 67 | 60 |
| **Idyllwild** | 46 | 42 | .05 | 53 | 47 | 61 | 48 |
| **Irvine** | 64 | 57 | Tr | 67 | 59 | 69 | 58 |

| City | Sun.* Hi | Lo | Prcp. | Today Hi | Lo | Tue. Hi | Lo |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **L.A. D'ntown/USC** | 62 | 55 | -- | 68 | 57 | 69 | 58 |
| **L.A. Int'l. Airport** | 63 | 57 | -- | 67 | 58 | 65 | 56 |
| **Laguna Beach** | 60 | 56 | Tr | 62 | 58 | 63 | 59 |
| **Lancaster** | 67 | 51 | -- | 73 | 52 | 77 | 50 |
| **Long Beach** | 63 | 57 | -- | 66 | 59 | 67 | 59 |
| **Mammoth Lakes** | 47 | 35 | -- | 57 | 28 | 65 | 28 |
| **Mission Viejo** | 63 | 55 | .01 | 64 | 56 | 66 | 56 |
| **Monrovia** | 59 | 54 | -- | 68 | 55 | 67 | 56 |
| **Monterey** | 61 | 50 | -- | 70 | 49 | 68 | 51 |
| **Mt. Wilson** | 42 | 39 | -- | 46 | 45 | 49 | 44 |
| **Needles** | 78 | 60 | .07 | 71 | 61 | 81 | 64 |
| **Newport Beach** | 64 | 59 | -- | 65 | 60 | 66 | 61 |
| **Northridge** | 61 | 54 | -- | 69 | 56 | 67 | 55 |
| **Oakland** | 67 | 52 | -- | 82 | 53 | 71 | 54 |
| **Oceanside** | 61 | 55 | .06 | 65 | 56 | 69 | 54 |
| **Ojai** | 67 | 50 | -- | 66 | 51 | 67 | 50 |
| **Ontario** | 62 | 55 | .02 | 67 | 55 | 69 | 54 |
| **Palm Springs** | 74 | 60 | .01 | 78 | 62 | 86 | 65 |
| **Pasadena** | 60 | 55 | -- | 67 | 56 | 69 | 55 |
| **Paso Robles** | 74 | 44 | -- | 76 | 47 | 73 | 49 |
| **Redding** | 82 | 59 | -- | 89 | 65 | 93 | 54 |
| **Riverside** | 60 | 52 | -- | 65 | 53 | 70 | 54 |
| **Sacramento** | 82 | 58 | -- | 86 | 56 | 88 | 53 |
| **San Bernardino** | 62 | 53 | .17 | 67 | 55 | 70 | 54 |

| City | Sun.* Hi | Lo | Prcp. | Today Hi | Lo | Tue. Hi | Lo |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **San Diego** | 64 | 59 | .02 | 67 | 59 | 68 | 59 |
| **San Francisco** | 66 | 54 | -- | 78 | 54 | 71 | 53 |
| **San Gabriel** | 62 | 56 | -- | 67 | 57 | 68 | 57 |
| **San Jose** | 72 | 54 | -- | 84 | 53 | 80 | 54 |
| **San Luis Obispo** | 63 | 48 | -- | 67 | 52 | 68 | 53 |
| **Santa Ana** | 65 | 58 | Tr | 67 | 60 | 69 | 60 |
| **Santa Barbara** | 68 | 54 | -- | 64 | 55 | 65 | 55 |
| **Santa Clarita** | 63 | 51 | -- | 70 | 53 | 68 | 52 |
| **Santa Monica Pier** | 62 | 57 | -- | 67 | 57 | 66 | 58 |
| **Santa Paula** | 67 | 53 | -- | 69 | 54 | 67 | 54 |
| **Santa Rosa** | 79 | 58 | -- | 86 | 51 | 75 | 49 |
| **Simi Valley** | 61 | 52 | -- | 68 | 53 | 67 | 52 |
| **Tahoe Valley** | 47 | 34 | .24 | 58 | 29 | 64 | 33 |
| **Temecula** | 58 | 51 | .02 | 64 | 53 | 70 | 51 |
| **Thousand Oaks** | 64 | 52 | -- | 68 | 54 | 67 | 52 |
| **Torrance** | 64 | 58 | -- | 67 | 60 | 67 | 59 |
| **UCLA** | 62 | 56 | -- | 66 | 58 | 65 | 56 |
| **Van Nuys** | 61 | 55 | -- | 67 | 56 | 67 | 54 |
| **Ventura** | 61 | 54 | -- | 64 | 55 | 63 | 55 |
| **Whittier Hills** | 61 | 57 | -- | 67 | 57 | 68 | 60 |
| **Woodland Hills** | 62 | 54 | -- | 68 | 56 | 69 | 53 |
| **Wrightwood** | 51 | 42 | -- | 57 | 47 | 60 | 46 |
| **Yorba Linda** | 61 | 55 | -- | 66 | 56 | 69 | 57 |
| **Yosemite Valley** | 57 | 46 | .08 | 70 | 42 | 71 | 39 |

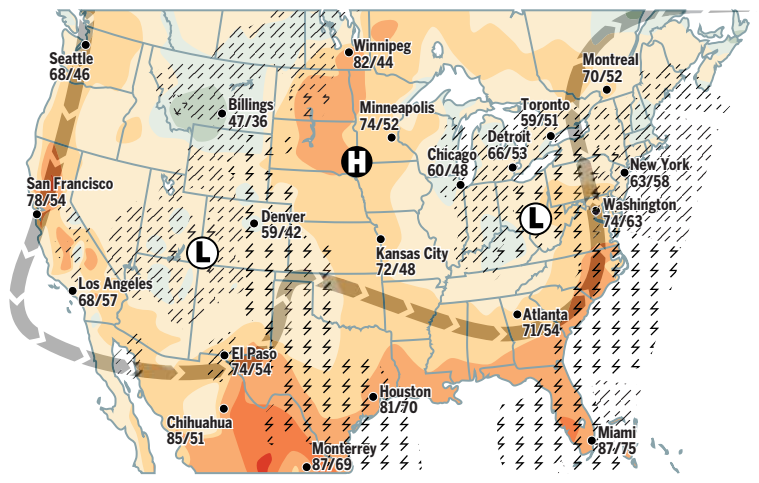
## Today in North America

**Showers and storms in the mid-Atlantic:** An upper-level storm system will keep the Northeast cool and wet, and there is a chance for severe thunderstorms stretching from central Pennsylvania to eastern North Carolina. The main threats will be downpours and hail.

Pressure: L Low · H High · Warm Front · Cold Front · Jet Stream · Trough

Temps: –0 · 0s · 10s · 20s · 30s · 40s · 50s · 60s · 70s · 80s · 90s · 100+

Rain · T-storm · Snow · Ice




### U.S. cities

SUNDAY'S EXTREMES AS OF 2 P.M. FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

**High** 91 in Mayport, Fla. · **Low** 18 in Angel Fire, N.M.

| City | Sunday* Hi | Lo | Prcp. | Today Hi | Lo | Sky |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Albany** | 58 | 52 | .63 | 63 | 55 | Sh |
| **Albuquerque** | 66 | 49 | .21 | 64 | 44 | W |
| **Anchorage** | 48 | 39 | .03 | 52 | 39 | R |
| **Aspen** | 60 | 41 | .05 | 56 | 32 | Sh |
| **Atlanta** | 69 | 54 | .32 | 71 | 54 | Su |
| **Austin** | 83 | 51 | Tr | 73 | 68 | Ts |
| **Baltimore** | 73 | 63 | .11 | 72 | 62 | Ts |
| **Boise** | 63 | 46 | .38 | 71 | 43 | W |
| **Boston** | 77 | 57 | .07 | 53 | 48 | R |
| **Buffalo** | 54 | 47 | .06 | 68 | 57 | Ts |
| **Burlington, Vt.** | 59 | 51 | .23 | 63 | 54 | Cy |
| **Charleston, S.C.** | 84 | 65 | .03 | 84 | 58 | Ts |
| **Charlotte** | 74 | 57 | .75 | 75 | 52 | Pc |
| **Chicago** | 59 | 45 | .15 | 60 | 48 | Cy |
| **Cincinnati** | 59 | 48 | .29 | 58 | 46 | Pc |
| **Cleveland** | 55 | 46 | .17 | 61 | 51 | Ts |
| **Columbia, S.C.** | 77 | 60 | .93 | 78 | 53 | Pc |
| **Columbus** | 66 | 49 | .78 | 61 | 49 | Ts |
| **Dallas/Ft.Worth** | 78 | 53 | -- | 74 | 61 | Ts |
| **Denver** | 78 | 42 | -- | 59 | 42 | Ts |
| **Detroit** | 53 | 44 | .66 | 66 | 53 | Sh |
| **El Paso** | 83 | 60 | Tr | 74 | 54 | W |
| **Eugene** | 65 | 33 | Tr | 73 | 42 | Su |
| **Fort Myers** | 85 | 72 | .24 | 90 | 70 | Ts |
| **Hartford** | 74 | 61 | .15 | 63 | 55 | R |
| **Honolulu** | 87 | 75 | .03 | 87 | 74 | Cy |
| **Houston** | 83 | 59 | -- | 81 | 70 | Ts |
| **Indianapolis** | 51 | 47 | .63 | 61 | 48 | Sh |
| **Jacksonville, Fla.** | 85 | 64 | .12 | 87 | 60 | Ts |
| **Kansas City** | 69 | 42 | -- | 72 | 48 | Su |
| **Knoxville** | 65 | 53 | .15 | 63 | 49 | Su |
| **Las Vegas** | 67 | 59 | .32 | 65 | 55 | Sh |
| **Louisville** | 54 | 51 | .75 | 59 | 49 | Cy |
| **Medford** | 69 | 37 | -- | 78 | 44 | Su |
| **Memphis** | 68 | 51 | -- | 71 | 54 | Pc |
| **Miami** | 84 | 74 | 1.21 | 87 | 75 | Ts |
| **Milwaukee** | 56 | 40 | -- | 53 | 45 | Cy |
| **Minneapolis** | 80 | 50 | -- | 74 | 52 | Su |
| **Nashville** | 58 | 50 | .03 | 63 | 49 | Pc |
| **New Orleans** | 78 | 68 | -- | 82 | 71 | Su |
| **New York** | 69 | 62 | 1.14 | 63 | 58 | R |
| **Norfolk** | 71 | 66 | .89 | 79 | 64 | Ts |
| **Oklahoma City** | 73 | 47 | -- | 71 | 56 | Pc |
| **Omaha** | 75 | 41 | -- | 77 | 48 | Su |
| **Orlando** | 85 | 70 | 1.55 | 89 | 67 | Ts |
| **Philadelphia** | 73 | 66 | .13 | 69 | 61 | R |
| **Phoenix** | 82 | 71 | Tr | 70 | 60 | Pc |
| **Pittsburgh** | 69 | 58 | .38 | 73 | 52 | Ts |
| **Portland, Ore.** | 67 | 42 | -- | 77 | 49 | Su |
| **Providence** | 77 | 57 | .02 | 61 | 55 | R |
| **Raleigh/Durham** | 75 | 65 | .70 | 80 | 56 | Ts |
| **Reno** | 57 | 47 | .16 | 67 | 43 | Su |
| **Richmond** | 72 | 64 | .62 | 79 | 59 | Ts |
| **St. Louis** | 62 | 47 | .25 | 64 | 48 | Pc |
| **Salt Lake City** | 71 | 57 | .12 | 62 | 49 | Sh |

| City | Sunday* Hi | Lo | Prcp. | Today Hi | Lo | Sky |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Seattle** | 61 | 43 | Tr | 68 | 46 | Su |
| **Tampa** | 87 | 75 | -- | 87 | 70 | Ts |
| **Tucson** | 80 | 65 | -- | 73 | 55 | Pc |
| **Tulsa** | 71 | 47 | -- | 74 | 53 | Su |
| **Washington, D.C.** | 73 | 65 | .63 | 74 | 63 | Ts |
| **Wichita** | 72 | 43 | -- | 74 | 53 | Pc |

### World

| City | Sunday* Hi | Lo | Prcp. | Today Hi | Lo | Sky |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Acapulco** | 89 | 73 | -- | 89 | 75 | Su |
| **Amsterdam** | 55 | 48 | .40 | 58 | 42 | Pc |
| **Athens** | 80 | 55 | -- | 76 | 62 | Su |
| **Bangkok** | 91 | 77 | .14 | 95 | 81 | Hz |
| **Barcelona** | 70 | 61 | .39 | 69 | 56 | Sh |
| **Berlin** | 61 | 46 | .02 | 58 | 33 | Su |
| **Cabo San Lucas** | 86 | 65 | -- | 77 | 60 | Su |
| **Cairo** | 77 | 64 | -- | 82 | 66 | Su |
| **Dubai** | 106 | 86 | -- | 107 | 83 | Su |
| **Dublin** | 54 | 34 | -- | 53 | 34 | Pc |
| **Havana** | 88 | 69 | .01 | 90 | 72 | Sh |
| **Ho Chi Minh City** | 95 | 79 | .01 | 96 | 81 | R |
| **Hong Kong** | 84 | 76 | .11 | 90 | 78 | R |
| **Istanbul** | 72 | 50 | -- | 74 | 60 | Hz |
| **Jerusalem** | 67 | 56 | .06 | 68 | 50 | Sh |
| **Johannesburg** | 59 | 40 | -- | 67 | 44 | Su |
| **Kuala Lumpur** | 87 | 76 | .07 | 90 | 75 | Ts |
| **Lima** | 70 | 63 | .02 | 71 | 63 | Cy |
| **London** | 59 | 46 | -- | 56 | 42 | Cy |
| **Madrid** | 63 | 52 | .08 | 66 | 44 | Sh |
| **Mecca** | 99 | 74 | -- | 97 | 72 | Su |
| **Mexico City** | 82 | 57 | Tr | 83 | 59 | Su |
| **Montreal** | 68 | 48 | Tr | 70 | 52 | Pc |
| **Moscow** | 63 | 43 | .05 | 56 | 32 | W |
| **Mumbai** | 90 | 82 | -- | 94 | 82 | Hz |
| **New Delhi** | 95 | 79 | -- | 94 | 75 | Ts |
| **Paris** | 62 | 48 | -- | 58 | 47 | Cy |
| **Prague** | 63 | 50 | .13 | 54 | 38 | Cy |
| **Rome** | 70 | 55 | .02 | 72 | 57 | Ts |
| **Seoul** | 70 | 41 | -- | 61 | 45 | Cy |
| **Singapore** | 88 | 75 | -- | 88 | 79 | Ts |
| **Taipei City** | 83 | 75 | .03 | 88 | 75 | Ts |
| **Tokyo** | 75 | 61 | .03 | 73 | 62 | Cy |
| **Vancouver** | 59 | 45 | -- | 62 | 47 | Pc |
| **Vienna** | 66 | 55 | .20 | 53 | 45 | Sh |

**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.
Sunday's readings as of 2 p.m.

Forecasts by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2025
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# More chaos, danger ahead from Trump



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

**GARMENT WORKERS**, many of whom are immigrants, show their support for the city's downtown development plan at City Hall as well as for an ordinance enshrining Los Angeles as a sanctuary city in December.

[**Chabria,** from B1]

been the standard-bearers for the federalist principle of states' rights. Remember all those 1776 patriots who have suddenly gone silent? "Don't tread on me" has morphed from a MAGA war cry to a Democratic plea.

"We're still a federal state, and that means that there are powers that are given to the federal government in D.C. and powers that are given to states and localities," Ross Burkhart told me. He's a political science professor at Boise State University who studies patterns of democracy. "I worry about the balance being tipped toward a heavily centralized state."

First, there's Trump's executive order from April 11 that hasn't made too many ripples, despite being a bonkers expansion of military authority over civilians. Trump turned over from the Interior Department to the Department of Defense a swath of land at the southern border that crosses three states — California, Arizona and New Mexico — known as the Roosevelt Reservation.

That 60-foot-wide strip is now considered part of Ft. Huachuca, though the Arizona military base is in reality 15 miles away. No matter. The Roosevelt Reservation is now patrolled by military personnel, and entering it is considered trespassing on a military base — a criminal act.

The overt premise of this unusual military takeover is to detain those crossing the border illegally.

But what happens if a U.S. citizen crosses into that zone without permission? Maybe protesters, for example? Or aid workers, the kind who bring water to the desert?

They too could be subject to military detention.

Of course, federal law, in the form of the Posse Comitatus Act, forbids the use of the military for civilian law enforcement. Elizabeth Goitein, senior director of the Liberty and National Security Program at the Brennan Center, a nonprofit law and public policy institute, called the act "an absolutely critical protection for our freedoms and our democracy."

Its single sentence reads: "Whoever, except in cases and under circumstances expressly authorized by the Constitution or Act of Congress, willfully uses any part of the [armed forces] ... to execute the laws shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both."

That sentence was originally written as a compromise to remove federal troops from the South during Reconstruction after the Civil War. Those troops had been protecting Black voters. But a disputed presidential election threatened stability, and so a deal was struck with still-angry white Southerners that soldiers couldn't be used to enforce civil laws — thereby removing the largest impediment to the Jim Crow era, but also putting that critical protection in place that prevents the military being used to suppress citizens. A doubled-edged sword with profound consequences.

The Posse Comitatus Act in the most simplistic of terms eventually led to the rebellion that was the civil rights movement, and subsequent laws that have pushed for equality and equity. That in turn has led us to this moment, when the powers that be are seeking to undo those gains.

Which brings us to the "except in cases and under circumstances" part of the Posse Comitatus Act, a Trumpian loophole if ever one was written.

If Trump's first 100 days have proved anything, it's that anything is on the table. Take the Insurrection Act, for example, another piece of loophole-filled law Trump has recently mentioned with interest.

Imagine, for example, if sanctuary cities were deemed to be violating federal law. If their leaders were accused of harboring and helping undocumented fugitives who somehow made it past the Roosevelt Reservation, or protests in the street were deemed violent rebellions.

In his executive order last week titled "Protecting American Communities from Criminal Aliens," Trump hinted at such scenarios.

"Yet some State and local officials nevertheless continue to use their authority to violate, obstruct, and defy the enforcement of Federal immigration laws," it reads. "This is a lawless insurrection against the supremacy of Federal law and the Federal Government's obligation to defend the territorial sovereignty of the United States."

That sounds a lot like the Insurrection Act getting ready to leap through the Posse Comitatus loophole.

The order then suggests that some state and local officials could even be in violation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, most commonly used against organized criminal enterprises such as the Mafia, and promises to "pursue all necessary legal remedies and enforcement measures to end these violations."

"The thing about the Insurrection Act is that it is intended to be used only in very extreme, severe emergencies where there's an immediate and overwhelming threat to public safety or to constitutional rights that the state and local authorities cannot or will not address," Goitein said. "Unfortunately, the actual text of the law is much broader and so it is vulnerable to being exploited by a president who is unconstrained by norms."

The same day, Trump also signed another executive order, "Strengthening and Unleashing America's Law Enforcement to Pursue Criminals and Protect Innocent Citizens," which instructs the Defense and Justice departments to "determine how military and national security assets, training, non-lethal capabilities, and personnel can most effectively be utilized to prevent crime."

Taken together, those orders are a huge expansion of the federal powers of policing, a move toward a "security state" where the president could have the ability to enforce martial law, and arrest or detain anyone who opposes him.

Although the idea of arresting politicians, activists or even everyday folks still seems a surreal bit of exaggeration, it has already happened.

Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Hannah Dugan was arrested by FBI agents last month, charged with obstruction of justice and concealing an individual to prevent an arrest.

Well-known social justice activist the Rev. William Barber was arrested with other religious leaders while praying in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda last week, as part of a protest against Republican budget cuts.

An Oklahoma woman and her daughters, all U.S. citizens, were rousted from their beds in the middle of the night last month, in their underwear and at gunpoint, by federal authorities (who refused to identify themselves) looking for undocumented immigrants.

And Stephen Miller, the Santa Monica native and Trump immigration architect, had this to say after Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker called for peaceful protests against Trump's authoritarian moves: "His comments, if nothing else, could be construed as inciting violence."

Maybe the type of "violence" that leads Trump to invoke the Insurrection Act?

Although a hot Trump summer is on the horizon, Goitein said she has hope that people will push back successfully.

She points out that although Trump does not seem to care about crossing boundaries, he does care about his image. Currently, his popularity in polls is tanking and he is persona non grata on the international stage. The pressure, and power, of nonviolent protests may still keep this administration from treading on democracy.

The people, Goitein said, are not helpless.

"We are not there yet," she said. But things are heating up.



# The Lakers Newsletter

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Los Angeles Times

Los Angeles Times

# SPORTS

MONDAY, MAY 5, 2025 ▪ LATIMES.COM/SPORTS



NBA PLAYOFFS ▪ CLIPPERS VS. DENVER



Photographs by DAVID ZALUBOWSKI Associated Press

**THE CLIPPERS'** Bogdan Bogdanovic, left, Kawhi Leonard and Ben Simmons watch the clock run out in their 120-101 loss to the Nuggets in Game 7 on Saturday night.

# 'Disappointing' exit brings the questions

## Nuggets pull away in the second half as Clippers fall short in 19-point loss

By Broderick Turner

DENVER — The coach of the Clippers had never lost a Game 7, and so his players knew they could lean on Tyronn Lue to shepherd them in the most important game of their season.

But Lue was the first to say that he is the coach and doesn't play, that his 4-0 mark in the seventh game of a playoff series is because "it takes really good players" to accomplish that tough feat and that he believed he had those really good players in Kawhi Leonard, James Harden and the rest of his crew to deal with the Denver Nuggets on Saturday in Game 7 at Ball Arena.

The odds, however, were against the Clippers winning this deciding game on the road and the Nuggets made sure they kept it in their favor with a 120-101 beatdown.

The home team had won 74.2% of the time

[See **Clippers,** D3]



**JAMES HARDEN** (1) of the Clippers drives to the basket against the Nuggets' Nikola Jokic on Saturday. Harden had a disastrous Game 7, with just seven points.

## After a tough loss, will Harden exercise player option this offseason?

By Broderick Turner

Don't tell the Clippers they overachieved this season based on preseason NBA predictions that had them vying for a play-in spot in the uber-competitive Western Conference because Kawhi Leonard started the season dealing with right knee injury management and Paul George had bolted to the 76ers.

Don't tell the Clippers they exceeded expectations with a 50-32 record and a fifth seed in the West despite odds against that happening.

They always viewed themselves in a different light and refused to listen to the "outside noise" that pointed to the Clippers finishing in the bottom half of the conference.

By losing to the Denver Nuggets in the first round of the playoffs, the Clippers failed to achieve their goals for the season.

"Whether you overachieve or not, when

[See **Offseason,** D3]

# Iamaleava shows shades of stardom just from sidelines

By Ben Bolch

As UCLA players and coaches milled about on the field a half hour before the team's spring showcase at the Rose Bowl, the present met the future.

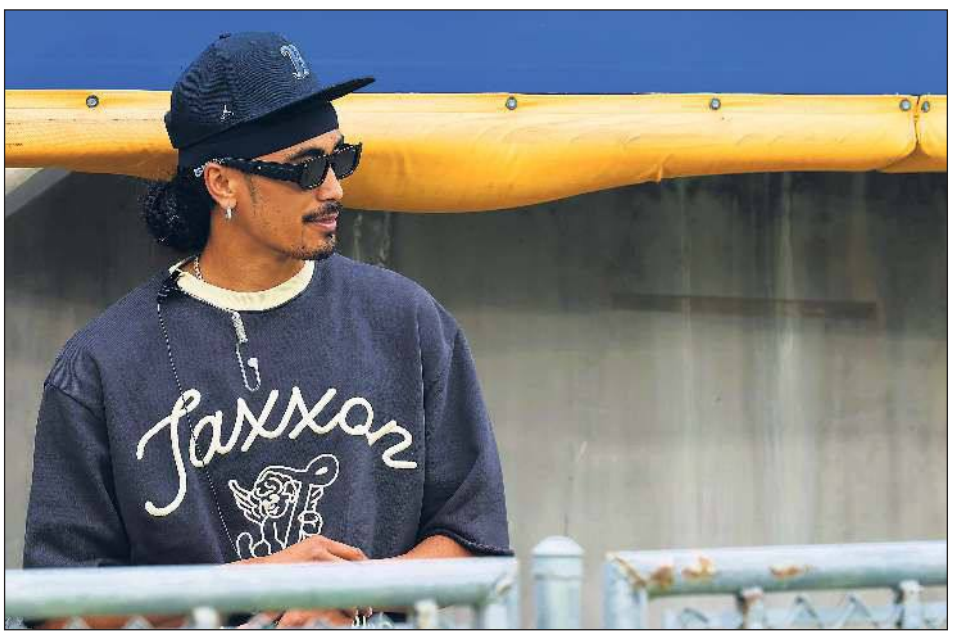
Nico Iamaleava and his younger brother, Madden, emerged from a tunnel in one corner of the end zone.

The transfers who could immediately become the team's top two quarterbacks once they enroll this summer exchanged hugs with their new coaches Saturday afternoon before watching the final practice of spring. Wearing a designer T-shirt and sunglasses while towering over everyone he stood beside, the 6-foot-6 Nico Iamaleava exuded a rock-star aura.

"It just feels good because you know you're around somebody that you can tell he has presence," UCLA coach DeShaun Foster said of visiting with Nico Iamaleava, the newcomer from Tennessee. "He kind of commands attention being [6-6], he's a huge guy and he's not somebody that's just seeking that attention but he just kind of has a poise to him that ... it's just comforting."

Nico Iamaleava brings some much needed cachet to the Bruins after leading the Volunteers to the College Football Playoff in his redshirt freshman season. Madden is returning after executing a double flip — the Long Beach Poly High graduate switched his allegiance from UCLA to Arkansas on signing day, only to change it back recently through the transfer portal. Foster cannot comment on the younger

[See **UCLA,** D5]



CARLIN STIEHL Los Angeles Times

**NEW UCLA** quarterback Nico Iamaleava was a big presence as UCLA wrapped spring practice. DeShaun Foster said the transfer's off-field poise is "comforting."

### Canelo decisions Scull to unify belts

Mexican boxer becomes undisputed super middleweight champion and could face Crawford next. **D2**

### LMU runner-up in beach volleyball

The Lions knock off USC and UCLA on their way to title match, where they lose to Texas Christian. **D2**

### Sasaki earns his first MLB win

The Japanese pitcher waits out rain delay as Dodgers offense comes alive in 10-3 victory over the Braves. **D4**

LA Times

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## PRO CALENDAR

| | MON 5 | TUE 6 | WED 7 | THU 8 | FRI 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DODGERS | at Miami 3:30 SNLA | at Miami 3:30 SNLA | at Miami 1:30 SNLA | at Arizona 6:30 SNLA | at Arizona 6:30 SNLA |
| ANGELS | | TORONTO 6:30 FDW | TORONTO 6:30 FDW | TORONTO 6:30 FDW | BALTIMORE 6:30 FDW |
| GALAXY | NEXT: SATURDAY AT N.Y. RED BULLS, 4:30 P.M., APPLE TV+ | | | | |
| LAFC | NEXT: SUNDAY AT VANCOUVER, 4 P.M., APPLE TV+ | | | | |
| ANGEL CITY | | | | | UTAH 7:30 NWSL+, Paramount+ |

**SPARKS:** Tuesday at Golden State (preseason), 7 p.m., League Pass

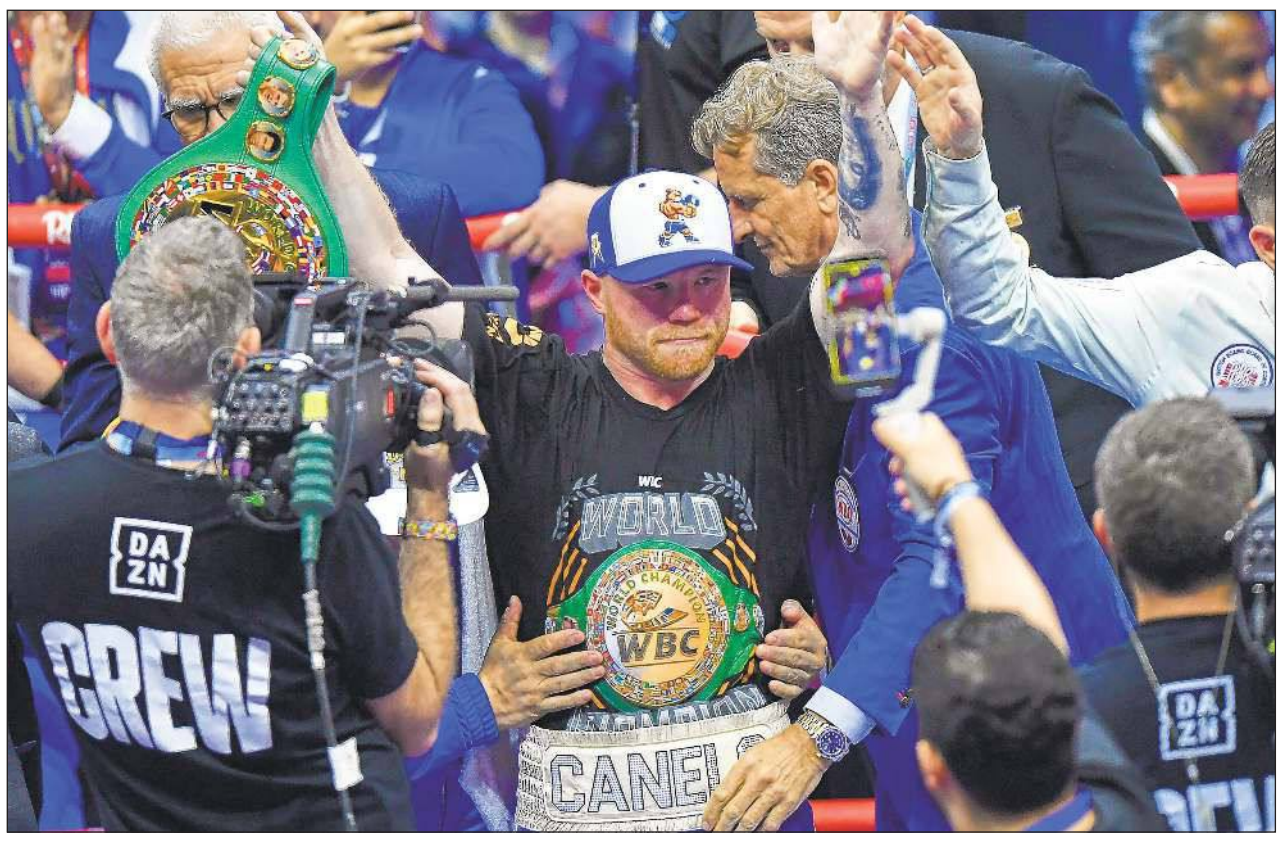
Shade denotes home games. Times Pacific.

## TODAY ON THE AIR

| TIME | EVENT | ON THE AIR |
|---|---|---|
| **BASEBALL** | | |
| 3:30 p.m. | Dodgers at Miami | **TV:** SNLA **R:** 570, 1020 |
| 4 p.m. | San Diego at New York Yankees | **TV:** MLB |
| **BASKETBALL: NBA PLAYOFFS, FIRST ROUND** | | |
| 4 p.m. | Game 1, New York at Boston | **TV:** TNT, TruTV |
| 6:30 p.m. | Game 1, Denver at Oklahoma City | **TV:** TNT, TruTV |
| **COLLEGE GOLF** | | |
| 1 p.m. | PGA WORKS College Championships, first round | **TV:** Golf |
| **HOCKEY** | | |
| 4 p.m. | NHL draft lottery | **TV:** ESPN |
| **HOCKEY: STANLEY CUP PLAYOFFS, SECOND ROUND** | | |
| 5 p.m. | Game 1, Florida at Toronto | **TV:** ESPN |
| **SOCCER** | | |
| 8 a.m. | FIFA Beach World Cup, Japan vs. Seychelles | **TV:** FS2, Universo |
| 9:30 a.m. | FIFA Beach World Cup, Iran vs. Portugal | **TV:** FS2, Universo |
| 11:45 a.m. | Italy, Genoa vs. AC Milan | **TV:** Paramount+, FOXD |
| Noon | England, Crystal Palace vs. Nottingham Forest | **TV:** USA, Universo |
| Noon | Spain, Girona vs. Mallorca | **TV:** ESPN+, ESPND |
| 4 a.m. (Tue.) | FIFA Beach World Cup, El Salvador vs. Italy | **TV:** FS2, Universo |
| 5:30 a.m. (Tue.) | FIFA Beach World Cup, Senegal vs. Chile | **TV:** FS2, Universo |
| **TENNIS** | | |
| 2 a.m. (Tue.) | Italian Open (WTA, early rounds) | **TV:** Tennis |

## SPORTS EXTRA

For coverage of late Dodgers, Angels, Rams and Chargers games and more, see our daily digital eNewspaper. Subscribers get free access to an exclusive "Sports Extra." View it on your phone, tablet or computer at *latimes.com/enewspaper*.




Associated Press

**CANELO ÁLVAREZ**, center, revels after defeating William Scull to become the undisputed super middleweight champion in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Promoters want the Mexican boxer to face Terence Crawford next.

# It's morning glory for Álvarez as he defeats Scull in Saudi Arabia

ASSOCIATED PRESS

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — Moments after Canelo Álvarez fended off William Scull to become undisputed super middleweight champion again, he was facing off against Terence Crawford in the same ring in Riyadh to promote a showdown in September.

Álvarez became an undisputed champion in the division for the second time when the judges scored his ho-hum bout early Sunday Saudi local time against Scull 115-113, 116-112, 119-109. The 34-year-old Mexican boxer improved to 63-2-2, with 39 knockouts, and is unbeaten in 10 fights in the super middleweight category.

The decision had barely been announced before Turki Alalshikh, head of the General Entertainment Authority of Saudi Arabia, stepped into the ring and ordered it cleared out so that he could bring four-division champion Crawford out of the crowd to face Álvarez, who was wearing one belt around his waist, another over his shoulder and holding one in each arm.

"Now we want to do the face off for the fight of the century," Alalshikh told the crowd, "between the two great fighters in our generation."

Álvarez is a four-weight world champion and entered the fight against Scull with the WBA, WBC and WBO titles at 168 pounds. The 37-year-old Crawford (41-0) has won titles in four divisions from lightweight to light middleweight.

Álvarez was stripped of the IBF belt last July when he declined to make a mandatory defense against Scull. He'd owned that title since November 2021 when he defeated Caleb Plant.

The fight against Scull didn't live up to the hype. The Cuba-born Scull entered unbeaten in 23 professional fights. He constantly moved around, dodging, shuffling and frustrating Álvarez, who later said he hated fighting that style of boxer.

Álvarez was fighting outside the U.S. or Mexico for the first time and had to make plenty of adjustments, including to the time zone. The fighters walked into the ring and the anthems started around 6:20 a.m. local time (11:20 p.m. ET Saturday) for the main bout in Riyadh, timed so it was in prime time on the U.S. West Coast.

The opening rounds were slow with both boxers feeling for range and the intensity gradually lifted with Scull throwing many more punches but not landing enough. Álvarez, by contrast, stayed patient and was landing body shots. In the end, Álvarez threw almost half as many punches as Scull (152-293) but landed one more (56-55), predominantly power shots to the body.

"It's OK, we won. We're here with the title as the champion," Álvarez said, adding that neither the timing of the bout nor the quality of the contest was a problem because he'd plenty of time to prepare. "I'm a champion. I'm a professional, so that's all, no excuse or anything."

Crawford was in the crowd watching in the Saudi capital.

"I'm feeling great. I'm feeling blessed. Things happen for a reason, and there's a reason why I'm here," he said. "In September I'm showing the world what greatness look like."

THE DAY IN SPORTS

# Loyola Marymount runner-up in beach volleyball

WIRE REPORTS

Texas Christian's **Daniela Álvarez** and **Tania Moreno** came from behind to win the final match on Sunday as the second-seeded Horned Frogs wrapped up their first NCAA beach volleyball championship with a 3-2 victory over No. 4 seed Loyola Marymount in Gulf Shores, Ala.

TCU (32-5) is the first school other than USC and UCLA to win the title. The Trojans won the first two and the previous four, while the Bruins won in 2018 and 2019.

Álvarez and Moreno, who took a year off to play in the Olympics, returned to finish unbeaten in four years as a duo. Álvarez and Moreno dropped the first game 18-21 to LMU's **Michelle Shaffer** and **Anna Pelloia** before rallying to win the final two 21-15 and 15-6. The Lions (38-7) eliminated No. 5 seed USC in the quarterfinals and top-seed UCLA in the semifinals.

LMU twos pair **Chloe Hooker** and **Vilhelmiina Prihti** earned a point with a 21-16, 21-17 sweep. Fives pair **Tanon Rosenthal** and **Giuliana Poletti Corrales** had the other point with a pair of 21-16 wins.

Texas San Antonio associate head coach **Jamie Carey** was hired as the new women's basketball coach at Omaha, athletic director **Adrian Dowell** announced. The 44-year-old Carey takes over for **Carrie Banks**, who was fired last month after she posted five straight losing seasons. Omaha's last winning season was 2016-17.

**GOLF**

## Scheffler's 253 matches mark

**Scottie Scheffler** matched the PGA Tour's 72-hole scoring record on Sunday, finishing at 253 and running away with an eight-shot victory at his hometown CJ Cup Byron Nelson in McKinney, Texas.



PATRICK T. FALLON AFP via Getty Images

**FRANCE'S** Enzo Benmegal is tackled by Australia's Jayden Blake during their match in the Rugby Sevens LA tournament World Championship in Carson.

The top-ranked player, who closed with a 63 to finish at 31 under par, tied the mark set by **Justin Thomas** at the 2017 Sony Open and equaled six years later by **Ludvig Aberg** at the RSM Classic.

Scheffler was in position to break the record before a flubbed chip that led to bogey on the par-three 17th hole and a par from a greenside bunker on the par-five closing hole. His 8-foot putt for birdie and the record slid by the left side of the hole.

Scheffler tied the 54-hole Nelson record with an eight-shot lead, and nobody got closer than six during the final round. **Erik van Rooyen** of South Africa matched Scheffler's 63 to finish at 23 under, three shots ahead of **Sam Stevens** and four ahead of **Jordan Spieth**, another hometown favorite.

**Haeran Ryu** made an 8-foot eagle putt during a flawless back nine that allowed her to pull away with an eight-under 64, giving her a five-shot victory at the inaugural Black Desert Championship in the LPGA Tour's return to Utah after a 61-year absence. Ryu became the second player to go wire-to-wire on the LPGA Tour this year, and it was her second time winning a new event. ... **Bryson DeChambeau** held off a big charge from **Charles Howell III** with birdies on his last two holes for a six-under 66 for a two-shot victory at LIV Golf Korea in Incheon, South Korea, his first title since winning the U.S. Open last summer. ... On the Champions Tour, **Stewart Cink** made birdie on the first playoff hole to beat **Retief Goosen** and claim the Insperity Invitational at The Woodlands, Texas.

**ETC.**

## Piastri wins third straight Fl race

**Oscar Piastri** maintained his advantage in the Formula One championship fight by winning the Miami Grand Prix for his fourth win through six races this season.

Piastri has won three consecutive races for McLaren Racing, where he and teammate **Lando Norris** are trying to dethrone four-time defending champion **Max Verstappen** of Red Bull.

Piastri is the first McLaren driver to win three consecutive F1 races in 28 years; **Mika Hakkinen** did it with a win in the 1997 season finale and then victories in the first two races of 1998.

Norris earned his first Grand Prix victory last year at Miami when he ended Verstappen's two-year winning streak at the course surrounding Hard Rock Stadium. Norris also won the sprint race on Saturday — Piastri dominated but a late safety car cost him the victory — but Verstappen won the pole in qualifying.

In the waning laps, Norris was able to close the gap but could never catch Piastri and settled for second in a 1-2 finish for McLaren. The two held a nearly 40-second advantage over **George Russell** of Mercedes, who finished third.

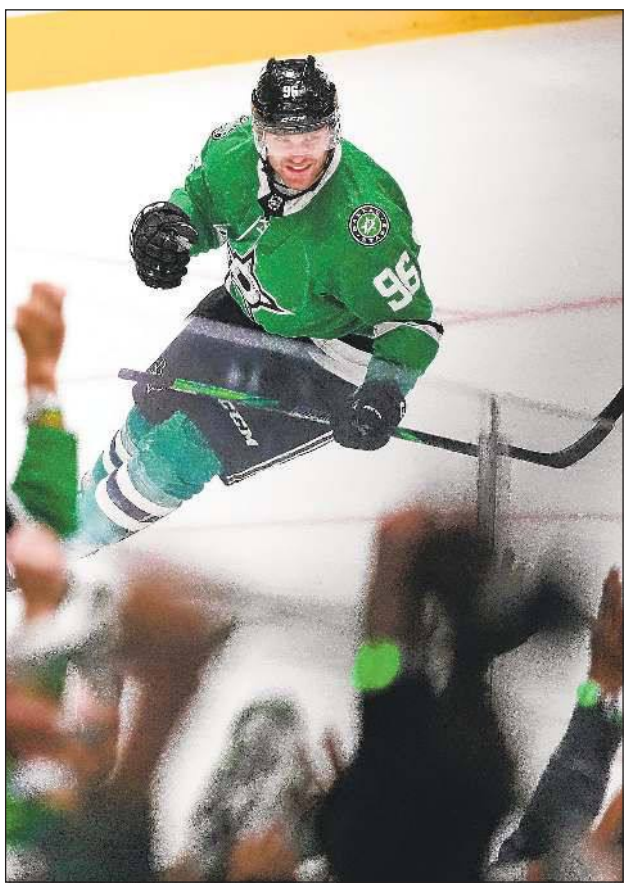
Defending Cup champion **Joey Logano** held off **Ryan Blaney** and **Ross Chastain** to win the NASCAR Cup Series race at Texas Motor Speedway, his first top five finish of the season. **Kyle Larson**, who won the Xfinity race Saturday, finished fourth... Pole-sitter **Alex Palou** of Spain dominated from the start as he captured the Alabama Indy Grand Prix in Birmingham and extended his IndyCar points lead in his quest for third consecutive season title. Palou won for the third time in four races with Denmark's **Christian Lundgaard** second and New Zealand's **Scott McLaughlin** third. Palou's only race he hasn't won was the Long Beach Grand Prix. It was the 14th IndyCar career victory for Palou.

The man who fell from the top of a 21-foot-high wall onto the warning track at PNC Park during a game between the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Chicago Cubs on Wednesday night is awake and alert. The organizer of a GoFundMe page for **Kavan Markwood**, the 20-year-old who slipped off a railing and onto the field during the seventh inning of Pittsburgh's 4-3 win over the Cubs, shared an update Saturday that Markwood is improving. ... Shortstop **Anthony Volpe** was out of the New York Yankees' starting lineup Sunday against the Tampa Bay Rays while appearing to escape serious injury when he hurt his left shoulder on a dive trying to get to a grounder. "X-rays, MRI — good news," Yankees manager **Aaron Boone** said. "He's sore today, but I feel like we're probably in a good spot. We'll see. Kind of day to day right now." ... Chicago Cubs left-hander **Shota Imanaga** left Sunday's game at Milwaukee after hurting his left leg while running toward first base on a potential double play in the sixth inning. ... **Harrison Bader** hit a go-ahead double off the Green Monster in the eighth inning, and the Minnesota Twins took the weekend series against the Boston Red Sox with a 5-4 victory on Sunday. The win follows Saturday's victory over the Red Sox when the Twins' **Kody Clemens** hit a two-run homer in his first career game at Fenway Park with his father, Red Sox pitching great **Roger Clemens**, in attendance.

Four-time Grand Slam winner **Naomi Osaka** claimed her first WTA title since winning at the 2021 Australian Open — and on her seemingly worst surface. Osaka beat **Kaja Juvan** 6-1, 7-5 to win L'Open 35 de Saint-Malo in France — a WTA 125 tournament — and secure her first ever trophy on clay. ... **Casper Ruud** became the first Norwegian to win a Masters 1000 title after beating **Jack Draper** 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 in the Madrid Open final. The former second-ranked Ruud rallied from 5-3 down in the first set and sealed the victory after capitalizing on his lone break at 2-2 in the third.

**Nathan Ordaz** opened the scoring in the 10th minute, **Jeremy Ebobisse** added a goal and LAFC beat Houston 2-0 on Saturday night and stopped the Dynamo's unbeaten streak at four games. LAFC (5-4-2) is unbeaten in four straight games dating to a 1-0 loss to the Dynamo on April 5.

NHL REPORT



JULIO CORTEZ Associated Press

**FANS CHEER** for Mikko Rantanen, the second player with a four-point third period of a Game 7.

# Rantanen's record night lifts Stars as key players return

WIRE REPORTS

**Mikko Rantanen** carried the Dallas Stars past his former team in the first round of the NHL playoffs, punctuated with a hat trick that was part of his historic four-point third period in Game 7.

Now the Stars could soon be getting back two players who were part of their deep runs the past two postseasons before Rantanen was acquired in a deadline trade in March and promptly signed a $96-million, eight-year contract extension.

Top defenseman **Miro Heiskanen** and prolific forward **Jason Robertson**, an Arcadia product who was their leading goal scorer in the regular season, missed the seven-game series against Colorado because of lower-body injuries.

Heiskanen hasn't played since Jan. 28, and Robertson got hurt in the regular-season finale 2½ weeks ago. Both are experienced 25-year-old players.

"I consider them both day to day now but, you know, there's still some hurdles," Stars coach **Peter DeBoer** said after their 4-2 series-clinching win over Colorado on Saturday night. "I believe you're going to see them both play in the second round. I don't know whether it's going to be Game 1, Game 3 or Game 5."

Dallas has now won a Game 7 in each of DeBoer's first three postseasons, and made it to the Western Conference final each of the past two.

The Stars were waiting to find out the winner of top-seeded Winnipeg and St. Louis on Sunday night.

Rantanen had only one assist in the first four games against Colorado before 11 points (five goals, six assists) the rest of the series. That scoring output set a Stars franchise record for any three-game postseason stretch, and made him the first player in NHL history — playoffs and regular season combined — to have consecutive games with four-point periods.

He was only the second NHL player to have four points in the third period of a Game 7. He also is the only one of nine players with a Game 7 hat trick to score all his goals in the final period.

"You can't write it up any better than that," Stars goalie **Jake Oettinger** said. "A guy comes over and knocks out his old team, puts the team on his back, and one of the best individual performances I've seen in the playoffs in my life."

Rantanen had 101 points (34 goals, 67 assists) in 81 playoff games for the Avalanche the past seven seasons, including their 2022 Stanley Cup run.

While it was often pointed out that those impressive numbers came when playing with **Nathan MacKinnon** and **Cale Makar** in that stretch, they were on the opposite side for Rantanen's postseason debut with the Stars.

"I think he answered that question," DeBoer said. "I've had a lot of playoff runs and I haven't had a player string together the three games he's strung together — Games 5, 6 and 7 — how dominant he's been shift to shift."

With the pending return of Heiskanen and Robertson, Dallas certainly has every reason to feel confident moving forward. The Stars just beat a division rival that outscored them 24-21 and outshot them by nearly eight a game.

"I have a hard time believing that there's any team that's much better than Colorado out there," said Oettinger, who is 3-1 in Game 7s.

## Etc.

Winnipeg forward **Mark Scheifele** was ruled out of Game 7 on Sunday night. Scheifele left Game 5 with an undisclosed injury after taking a pair of big hits and was absent from Game 6. ... Florida Panthers star **Matthew Tkachuk** did not practice Sunday but is expected to play in Game 1 of the second-round series against Toronto on Monday, according to NHL.com.

## NHL PLAYOFFS

### WESTERN CONFERENCE

FIRST ROUND

**Winnipeg 1C vs. St. Louis WC2**
Series tied, 3-3

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Winnipeg 5, St. Louis 3 |
| G2 | Winnipeg 2, St. Louis 1 |
| G3 | St. Louis 7, Winnipeg 2 |
| G4 | St. Louis 5, Winnipeg 1 |
| G5 | Winnipeg 5, St. Louis 3 |
| G6 | St. Louis 5, Winnipeg 2 |
| G7 | at Winnipeg, late |

**Dallas 3C vs. Colorado 2C**
Stars win, 4-3

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Colorado 5, Dallas 1 |
| G2 | Dallas 4, Colorado 3 (OT) |
| G3 | Dallas 2, Colorado 1 (OT) |
| G4 | Colorado 4, Dallas 0 |
| G5 | Dallas 6, Colorado 2 |
| G6 | Colorado 7, Dallas 4 |
| G7 | Dallas 4, Colorado 2 |

**Vegas 1P vs. Minnesota WC1**
Golden Knights win, 4-2

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Vegas 4, Minnesota 2 |
| G2 | Minnesota 5, Vegas 2 |
| G3 | Minnesota 5, Vegas 2 |
| G4 | Vegas 4, Minnesota 3 (OT) |
| G5 | Vegas 3, Minnesota 2 (OT) |
| G6 | Vegas 3, Minnesota 2 |

**KINGS 2P vs. Edmonton 3P**
Oilers win, 4-2

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | KINGS 6, Edmonton 5 |
| G2 | KINGS 6, Edmonton 2 |
| G3 | Edmonton 7, KINGS 4 |
| G4 | Edmonton 4, KINGS 3 (OT) |
| G5 | Edmonton 3, KINGS 1 |
| G6 | Edmonton 6, KINGS 4 |

### EASTERN CONFERENCE

SECOND ROUND

**Florida 3A vs. Toronto 1A**
Best-of-seven series

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Monday at Toronto, 5, ESPN |
| G2 | Wednesday at Toronto, 4, ESPN |
| G3 | Friday at Florida, TBD |
| G4 | Sunday at Florida, TBD |
| G5 | May 14 at Toronto, TBD* |
| G6 | May 16 at Florida, TBD* |
| G7 | May 18 at Toronto, TBD* |

**Carolina 2M vs. Washington 1M**
Best-of-seven series

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Tuesday at Washington, 4, ESPN |
| G2 | Thursday at Washington, 4, ESPN |
| G3 | Saturday at Carolina, TBD |
| G4 | May 12 at Carolina, TBD |
| G5 | May 15 at Washington, TBD* |
| G6 | May 17 at Carolina, TBD* |
| G7 | May 19 at Washington, TBD* |

Games 5-7 *if necessary
All times PDT, p.m. except noted

# Clippers' season ends on road with a Game 7 rout by Nuggets

[**Clippers,** from D1]
in Game 7s, and by winning the best-of-seven series 4-3 over the Clippers, the Nuggets left little doubt. They blew the game open in the fourth quarter, building a 35-point lead.

"You hate to see them go out like this in a Game 7," Lue said. "So, that's very disappointing."

When the Nuggets opened a 65-50 lead on an Aaron Gordon dunk to force a timeout, the fans began to chant, "Beat L.A."

And they did in a big way, breaking their opponent's spirit in the third quarter with a 35-19 outburst. That began sending the Clippers home for the summer to contemplate what might have been and sending the Nuggets for the second round against Oklahoma City.

"I think we could have given a better effort, for sure," said Leonard, who had 22 points. "At the time, I don't think this team is 30-points better than us, as you seen throughout the first six games of this series. But got to give them credit. They came out and fought, ran hard in transition, got easy points and they made shots."

Harden was a disappointment again, his seven points on two-for-eight shooting and 13 assists were another low point for him in this series. He didn't talk after the game, just as he didn't talk after losses in Game 4 and 5.

"They played harder," said Ivica Zubac, who had a double-double with 10 points and 14 rebounds. "They beat us in every aspect of the game. That was the difference."

Nikola Jokic wasn't as sharp as he has been this series, but he finished with 16 points on six-for-14 shooting, eight rebounds, eight assists and five fouls that limited his time on the court.

Gordon worked over the Clippers for 22 points, Christian Braun had 21, Jamal Murray had 16, and Clippers nemesis Russell Westbrook relished all of his 16 points against his former teammates.



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI Associated Press

**THE NUGGETS'** Aaron Gordon slams a reverse dunk over Clippers center Ivica Zubac. "They beat us in every aspect of the game. That was the difference," Zubac said after the loss to Denver Saturday night.

Lue made a change to his lineup, inserting Derrick Jones Jr. as a starter in place of Kris Dunn and then starting Nicolas Batum in the third quarter over Jones, which was a sign to his team that he was willing to do what's necessary in a Game 7.

"In a Game 7, there are no tactics," Batum said. "It's who wants it more. They clearly wanted it more than us."

Defense is where it was going to start for the Clippers and it's what allowed them to be in control at the outset of the game.

They swarmed Jokic in the first, making it so tough that he missed his first five shots in the quarter and scored just two points.

They stifled Murray in the first 12 minutes, making it so difficult for him that he missed his first four shots and had just one point.

They put a grip on the Nuggets in the first quarter, holding them to 38.1% shooting from the field and 25% from three-point range and 21 points.

But all that momentum the Clippers had in the first shifted in the second quarter.

They were unable to hold the Nuggets for those 12 minutes, giving up 37 points, allowing them to make 50% of their shots and 50% (four for eight) from three-point range.

It went downhill from there for the Clippers.

They went 50-32 during the regular season, the same record as the Nuggets. They were the fifth-seeded team in the Western Conference.

But in the end, none of that mattered. The Clippers' season is over.

"This group deserves a better finish," said Bogdan Bogdanovic, who had 12 points off the bench. "Not a way to finish it. But we got to look ourselves in the mirror. That's it."

**SATURDAY'S LATE BOX**

**Denver 120, Clippers 101**

CLIPPERS

| | Min | FG-A | FT-A | OR-T | A | P | T |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jones Jr. | 16 | 5-10 | 1-4 | 1-2 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Leonard | 33 | 6-13 | 8-9 | 1-5 | 2 | 3 | 22 |
| Zubac | 31 | 5-10 | 0-2 | 2-14 | 2 | 3 | 10 |
| Harden | 35 | 2-8 | 2-2 | 0-5 | 13 | 0 | 7 |
| Powell | 32 | 4-11 | 1-1 | 0-2 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| Batum | 28 | 1-3 | 0-0 | 0-2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Bogdanovic | 17 | 5-9 | 1-1 | 1-3 | 1 | 4 | 12 |
| Dunn | 16 | 1-4 | 0-0 | 0-1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Brown | 8 | 6-7 | 1-1 | 0-0 | 3 | 0 | 13 |
| Eubanks | 6 | 0-1 | 1-2 | 0-0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Miller | 6 | 2-3 | 0-0 | 0-1 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Christie | 6 | 2-3 | 0-0 | 0-1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| **Totals** | **39-82** | **15-22** | **5-36** | | **30** | **17** | **101** |

Shooting: Field goals, 47.6%; free throws, 68.2%
Three-point goals: 8-27 (Leonard 2-4, Christie 1-2, Dunn 1-2, Batum 1-3, Harden 1-4, Jones Jr. 1-4, Bogdanovic 1-5, Powell 0-3). Team Rebounds: 9. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 9 (Jones Jr. 3, Batum 2, Leonard 2, Harden, Powell). Turnovers: 14 (Bogdanovic 3, Powell 3, Zubac 3, Harden 2, Dunn, Jones Jr., Leonard). Steals: 10 (Dunn 2, Harden 2, Miller 2, Batum, Bogdanovic, Jones Jr., Zubac). Technical Fouls: None.

DENVER

| | Min | FG-A | FT-A | OR-T | A | P | T |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gordon | 35 | 9-16 | 4-4 | 2-4 | 5 | 5 | 22 |
| Porter Jr. | 29 | 6-11 | 0-0 | 0-6 | 0 | 2 | 15 |
| Jokic | 32 | 6-14 | 3-4 | 0-10 | 8 | 5 | 16 |
| Braun | 38 | 8-15 | 2-4 | 3-5 | 4 | 1 | 21 |
| Murray | 41 | 7-15 | 2-3 | 0-5 | 2 | 2 | 16 |
| Westbrook | 27 | 5-9 | 4-6 | 3-5 | 5 | 4 | 16 |
| Watson | 17 | 4-4 | 0-0 | 1-4 | 0 | 2 | 9 |
| Jordan | 6 | 1-1 | 0-0 | 0-4 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Pickett | 3 | 0-1 | 0-0 | 0-1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Strawther | 3 | 1-3 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Nnaji | 2 | 0-0 | 0-0 | 1-1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tyson | 2 | 0-1 | 0-0 | 1-1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Totals** | **47-90** | **15-21** | **11-46** | | **24** | **23** | **120** |

Shooting: Field goals, 52.2%; free throws, 71.4%
Three-point goals: 11-29 (Braun 3-5, Porter Jr. 3-8, Westbrook 2-4, Strawther 1-1, Watson 1-1, Jokic 1-2, Pickett 0-1, Tyson 0-1, Gordon 0-3, Murray 0-3). Team Rebounds: 8. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 4 (Gordon, Jokic, Murray, Watson). Turnovers: 12 (Jokic 5, Murray 4, Westbrook 2, Gordon). Steals: 11 (Westbrook 5, Jokic 3, Braun, Gordon, Watson). Technical Fouls: None.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **L.A. Clippers** | **26** | **21** | **19** | **35—101** |
| **Denver** | **21** | **37** | **35** | **27—120** |

A—19,995. T—2:19.

# Will Harden exercise his player option in offseason?

[**Offseason,** from D1]
you lose in the playoffs, it's tough," Clippers coach Tyronn Lue said after the team's 120-101 loss in Game 7 on Saturday. "And, so, I feel bad. ... our players feel bad. Like I said, that's all you think about is this game. You're not thinking about the season. You're just thinking about things you could have done better when we got to this point and it's frustrating to go out like this.

"So, how I feel, I'm pissed off," he said.

The Clippers became one of the best defensive teams in the NBA, holding teams to 108.2 points per game (fifth-best in the league) while posting a defensive rating of 109.4 (third-best).

But with George gone and Leonard out the first 34 games, did the Clippers achieve more than they should have?

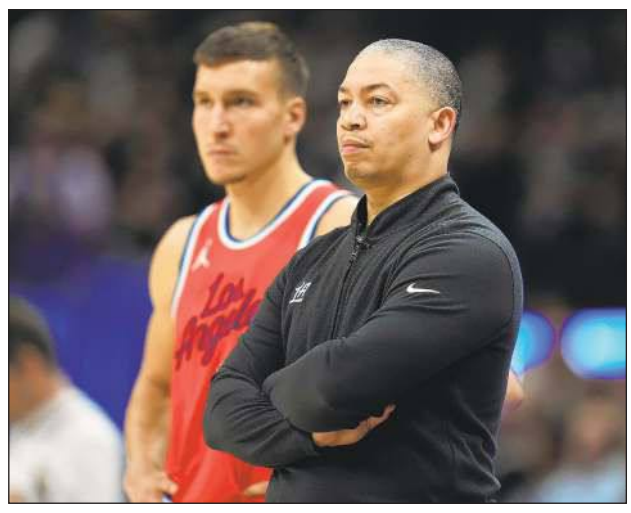
"Hell naw. Hell naw. We didn't overachieve nothing," said Derrick Jones Jr., a top defender for the team this season. "We believed from Day 1. The outside noise is the outside noise. We don't care for it. We believe who we believe in and we knew that we could make it to where we made it to and go further. ... We fell short."

The Clippers have 12 players under contract and two players on two-way deals.

Leonard, 33, has two years left on his contact at about $50 million per season. He played in 37 regular season games and all seven playoff games. Importantly, Leonard is going into the offseason healthy.

"To be able to start a training camp and to be able to start the season, which would be great," Leonard said. "I am happy that I'm healthy coming out of the game. But I wished we would have had a better outcome."

"To start a training camp with him healthy, I think will be great for us," Lue said. "I think putting guys in their position where they can be successful and not having to do too much and having your best player to start the season, I think is very encouraging."



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI Associated Press

**CLIPPERS COACH** Tyronn Lue, right, says the team is reflecting on what went wrong in the series.

James Harden had a very good regular season, averaging 22.8 points and 8.7 assists (fifth-best in the NBA). But he had a disastrous Game 7 — he scored just seven points — and had an uneven series that was yet another disappointment for the point guard.

He has a player option for $36 million and must give the Clippers a decision by June 29. Harden is not eligible for an extension if he opts in, but can get one if he opts out. Considering he turns 36 in August, it'll be interesting to see what Harden does and what the Clippers are willing to do.

Norman Powell, 31, turned in a career-best season, averaging 21.8 points per game. He has one year left on his deal at $20.4 million and probably will be looking for an extension.

Ivica Zubac became one of the league's best centers. He averaged career highs in points (16.8), rebounds (12.6), assists (2.7) and games played (80). He begins his three-year, $58.6-million extension next season.

Zubac and Powell were two of the big reasons why the Clippers were so successful during the regular season.

"That was a natural progression," Zubac said. "That was a good regular season, but we don't play for the regular season. We play for the playoffs. We play for the championship. So, we went out in the first round."

Nicolas Batum also has a player option for $4.9 million and has a June 29 deadline to make a decision. Known as the team's connector, the 36-year-old was asked if he planned on returning.

"If they want me to," Batum said.

Jones, Kris Dunn, Bogdan Bogdanovic, Jordan Miller, Kobe Brown, Cam Christie and Drew Eubanks are under contract for next season.

Ben Simmons, Patty Mills and Amir Coffey are set to become free agents June 30.

The Clippers have a first-round pick (29), a second-round pick and can use their non-tax mid-level exception to improve this offseason.

"I guess we did a good job during the season," Leonard said. "I guess you said a lot of people counted us out, but we were able to get here. But that's never the goal, to just get here."

## NBA PLAYOFFS

### WESTERN CONFERENCE

FIRST ROUND

**1 Oklahoma City vs. 8 Memphis**
Thunder win, 4-0

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Oklahoma City 131, Memphis 80 |
| G2 | Oklahoma City 118, Memphis 99 |
| G3 | Oklahoma City 114, Memphis 108 |
| G4 | Oklahoma City 117, Memphis 115 |

**2 Houston vs. 7 Golden State**
Series tied, 3-3

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Golden State 95, Houston 85 |
| G2 | Houston 109, Golden State 94 |
| G3 | Golden State 104, Houston 93 |
| G4 | Golden State 109, Houston 106 |
| G5 | Houston 131, Golden State 116 |
| G6 | at Houston 115, Golden State 107 |
| G7 | Sunday at Houston, late |

**3 LAKERS vs. 6 Minnesota**
Timberwolves win, 4-1

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Minnesota 117, LAKERS 95 |
| G2 | LAKERS 94, Minnesota 85 |
| G3 | Minnesota 116, LAKERS 104 |
| G4 | Minnesota 116, LAKERS 113 |
| G5 | Minnesota 103, LAKERS 96 |

**4 Denver vs. 5 CLIPPERS**
Nuggets win, 4-3

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Denver 112, CLIPPERS 110 (OT) |
| G2 | CLIPPERS 105, Denver 102 |
| G3 | CLIPPERS 117, Denver 83 |
| G4 | Denver 101, CLIPPERS 99 |
| G5 | Denver 131, CLIPPERS 115 |
| G6 | CLIPPERS 111, Denver 105 |
| G7 | Denver 120, CLIPPERS 101 |

SEMIFINALS

**1 Oklahoma City vs. 4 Denver**
Best-of-seven series

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Today at Oklahoma City, 6:30, TNT |
| G2 | Wednesday at Okla. City, 6:30, TNT |
| G3 | Friday at Denver, 7, ESPN |
| G4 | Sunday at Denver, 12:30, Ch. 7 |
| G5 | at Oklahoma City, TBD* |
| G6 | at Denver, TBD* |
| G7 | at Oklahoma City, TBD* |

### EASTERN CONFERENCE

SEMIFINALS

**1 Cleveland vs. 4 Indiana**
Best-of-seven series

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Sunday at Cleveland, late |
| G2 | Tuesday at Cleveland, 4, TNT |
| G3 | Friday at Indiana, 4:30, ESPN |
| G4 | Sunday at Indiana, 5, TNT |
| G5 | May 13 at Cleveland, TBD* |
| G6 | May 15 at Indiana, TBD* |
| G7 | May 18 at Cleveland, TBD* |

**2 Boston vs. 3 New York**
Best-of-seven series

| | |
|---|---|
| G1 | Today at Boston, 4, TNT |
| G2 | Wednesday at Boston, 4, TNT |
| G3 | Saturday at New York, TBD, Ch. 7 |
| G4 | May 12 at New York, TBD |
| G5 | May 14 at Boston, TBD* |
| G6 | May 16 at New York, TBD* |
| G7 | May 19 at Boston, TBD* |

*if necessary
All times PDT, p.m. except noted

BASEBALL : SATURDAY FLASHBACK

## STANDINGS

Through Saturday

**NATIONAL LEAGUE**

| West | W | L | Pct. | GB | L10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DODGERS | 23 | 10 | .697 | – | 7-3 |
| San Diego | 21 | 11 | .656 | 1½ | 5-5 |
| San Francisco | 21 | 13 | .618 | 2½ | 6-4 |
| Arizona | 17 | 16 | .515 | 6 | 3-7 |
| Colorado | 6 | 27 | .182 | 17 | 2-8 |
| **Central** | **W** | **L** | **Pct.** | **GB** | **L10** |
| Chicago | 21 | 13 | .618 | – | 7-3 |
| Cincinnati | 18 | 16 | .529 | 3 | 7-3 |
| Milwaukee | 16 | 18 | .471 | 5 | 3-7 |
| St. Louis | 14 | 19 | .424 | 6½ | 5-5 |
| Pittsburgh | 12 | 22 | .353 | 9 | 3-7 |
| **East** | **W** | **L** | **Pct.** | **GB** | **L10** |
| New York | 22 | 11 | .667 | – | 6-4 |
| Philadelphia | 19 | 14 | .576 | 3 | 6-4 |
| Washington | 15 | 19 | .441 | 7½ | 4-6 |
| Atlanta | 14 | 18 | .438 | 7½ | 5-5 |
| Miami | 13 | 19 | .406 | 8½ | 3-7 |

**AMERICAN LEAGUE**

| West | W | L | Pct. | GB | L10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Seattle | 20 | 12 | .625 | – | 8-2 |
| Houston | 17 | 15 | .531 | 3 | 6-4 |
| Athletics | 18 | 16 | .529 | 3 | 7-3 |
| Texas | 16 | 18 | .471 | 5 | 2-8 |
| ANGELS | 13 | 19 | .406 | 7 | 2-8 |
| **Central** | **W** | **L** | **Pct.** | **GB** | **L10** |
| Detroit | 21 | 13 | .618 | – | 7-3 |
| Cleveland | 19 | 14 | .576 | 1½ | 5-5 |
| Kansas City | 18 | 16 | .529 | 3 | 8-2 |
| Minnesota | 14 | 20 | .412 | 7 | 5-5 |
| Chicago | 9 | 24 | .273 | 11½ | 4-6 |
| **East** | **W** | **L** | **Pct.** | **GB** | **L10** |
| New York | 19 | 14 | .576 | – | 5-5 |
| Boston | 18 | 17 | .514 | 2 | 4-6 |
| Toronto | 16 | 17 | .485 | 3 | 4-6 |
| Tampa Bay | 15 | 18 | .455 | 4 | 6-4 |
| Baltimore | 13 | 19 | .406 | 5½ | 4-6 |

### Today's games

| | |
|---|---|
| Dodgers at Miami | 3:30 p.m. |
| Cleveland at Washington | 3:45 p.m. |
| San Diego at New York (AL) | 4 p.m. |
| Cincinnati at Atlanta | 4:15 p.m. |
| San Francisco at Chicago (NL) | 4:30 p.m. |
| Chicago (AL) at Kansas City | 4:30 p.m. |
| Houston at Milwaukee | 4:30 p.m. |
| Pittsburgh at St. Louis | 4:45 p.m. |
| New York (NL) at Arizona | 6:30 p.m. |
| Seattle at Athletics | 7 p.m. |

# Not too late for Sasaki's first win in majors

Right-hander achieves it in early morning after lengthy rain delay as Dodgers run win streak to seven games.

By Jack Harris

ATLANTA — The national anthem had been sung. A sold-out crowd was in its seats. The field was raked, chalked and ready for baseball.

More than three hours later, the first pitch was finally thrown.

What was scheduled as a 7:15 p.m. local start at Truist Park in Atlanta on Saturday didn't actually kick off until 10:21 p.m., with the Dodgers and Braves getting delayed by a thunderstorm that rolled in shortly after the game was supposed to begin.

The three-plus hour delay could have been enough to force a cancellation, and trigger a doubleheader on Sunday. But with the Braves already in the midst of 17 straight games, the Dodgers were instead asked to "hunker down," as manager Dave Roberts quipped before the game, and wait.

"I think that the Braves and Major League Baseball were very motivated to play tonight," Roberts said.

"When we got to about 8:30, I kind of figured we were gonna be playing this game," added first baseman Freddie Freeman. "Which is OK. We're here, we might as well play it."

The Dodgers ultimately did play, and rolled to a 10-3 win, as well, looking unfazed by the weather, the conditions or a late night that stretched into the early hours of Sunday morning before their seventh straight victory was finally complete.

"Give credit to our guys, just to stay focused," Roberts said. "We came out with some intent tonight."

Despite the long delay, Roki Sasaki survived his latest big-league test, dancing in and out of danger in a five-inning, three-run start for his first MLB win.



Mike Stewart Associated Press

**SHOHEI OHTANI** broke a tie with third-inning homer in a 10-3 win over Atlanta that ended at 1:26 a.m. local time at Truist Park.

Freeman and Shohei Ohtani hit home runs; Ohtani to break an early 1-1 tie in the third, Freeman to put the game out of reach in the eighth.

Most of all, a Dodgers team that spent most of the opening month trying to get synced up on the mound and at the plate — despite still posting the best record in the majors — continued to round into increasingly dominant form, inching ever closer to hitting their tantalizing top gear.

"Just a lot of good things [have] happened in the last week or so," Freeman said, after the Dodgers' third double-digit run total in their last four games. "The offense has obviously been swinging the bat really well."

Few sequences better exemplified that than the crooked numbers the Dodgers (23-10) posted in the third and fourth innings.

In the third, the Dodgers played both long-ball and small-ball to produce two runs. Ohtani led off with his eighth home run, launching a towering solo blast to straightaway center field. Then, Betts hit a single, took second base on a hit-and-run play that likely would've resulted in a double-play grounder otherwise, and scored when Teoscar Hernández sneaked a ground ball through the infield — giving Hernández his 33rd RBI to tie Aaron Judge for the MLB lead.

In the fourth, their offense went station-to-station in a four-run rally, all of the runs coming with two outs. Ohtani roped a single to center. Betts followed with an RBI double down the left-field line, marking his fourth-straight multi-hit game. Freeman then chased Braves starter Spencer Schwellenbach with an RBI single to left.

Sasaki didn't make life easy on himself after waiting around for the delayed first pitch.

He had to strand two runners in the first, the latter of which reached on a two-out walk. He hung a slider to Ozzie Albies for a leadoff single in the second, then gave up a run when Eli White hit a half-swing double the other way to right. Another two-out walk created more stress in the third. And despite taking the mound with a 7-1 lead in the fourth, he gave up a leadoff homer to Albies and a one-out RBI double to Nick Allen, prompting a mound meeting from pitching coach Mark Prior.

"I'm just relieved that I was able to do what I was supposed to do as a starting pitcher, knowing the circumstances," Sasaki said through interpreter Will Ireton. "Knowing the fact that we were gonna play [later] today."

Even though the game didn't end until 1:26 a.m. local time, the Dodgers didn't abandon one important postgame tradition. As they do with all their young pitchers who earn a first-career win, the team serenaded Sasaki with a shower of all manner of unspecified liquids in the clubhouse.

"A lot was thrown on me," Sasaki said, smiling.

That it came at the end of such a long day, Freeman added with a laugh, "we might have celebrated a little bit harder."

### DODGERS 10, ATLANTA 3

| Dodgers | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ohtani dh | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | .293 |
| Betts ss | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | .267 |
| Fremn 1b | 5 | 2 | 3 | 4 | .338 |
| E.Hrdz 1b | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .188 |
| T.Hrdz rf | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | .306 |
| Smith c | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | .321 |
| Muncy 3b | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .184 |
| Pages cf | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .269 |
| Conforto lf | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | .144 |
| Kim 2b | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | --- |
| Taylor 2b | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .200 |
| **Totals** | **39** | **10** | **12** | **9** | |

| Atlanta | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Verdugo lf | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .302 |
| Riley 3b | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | .286 |
| Ozuna dh | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .276 |
| Olson 1b | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .230 |
| Murphy c | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .217 |
| Albies 2b | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | .248 |
| Harris cf | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .220 |
| White rf | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | .308 |
| Allen ss | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | .278 |
| **Totals** | **37** | **3** | **10** | **3** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dodgers | 012 | 400 | 030 – 10 |
| Atlanta | 010 | 200 | 000 – 3 |

**Walks**—Dodgers 4: Ohtani 1, Betts 1, Muncy 2. Atlanta 3: Ozuna 1, Olson 2. **Strikeouts**—Dodgers 12: Ohtani 1, T.Hernández 2, Smith 1, Pages 2, Conforto 3, Taylor 3. Atlanta 9: Riley 2, Ozuna 2, Olson 1, Murphy 2, Harris 1, Allen 1. **E**—Bummer (1). **LOB**—Dodgers 7, Atlanta 11. **2B**—Smith (6), Betts (4), Allen (4), Ozuna (4). **3B**—White (2). **HR**—Ohtani (8), off Schwellenbach; Freeman (6), off Blewett; Albies (5), off Sasaki. **RBIs**—Conforto (6), Ohtani (11), T.Hernández (33), Betts (21), Freeman 4 (21), Smith (19), White (8), Albies (14), Allen (7). **SB**—Albies (5). **Runners left in scoring position**—Dodgers 1 (Pages); Atlanta 6 (Murphy 3, Ozuna, Verdugo, Olson). **RISP**—Dodgers 5 for 8; Atlanta 1 for 10. **Runners moved up**—Pages, Freeman, Verdugo.

| Los Angeles | IP | H | R | ER | BB | SO | NP | ERA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sasaki, W, 1-1 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 98 | 3.86 |
| Banda | 1⅓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 14 | 3.68 |
| Yates | ⅔ | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 2.93 |
| Vesia | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 2.87 |
| García | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 26 | 3.94 |
| **Atlanta** | **IP** | **H** | **R** | **ER** | **BB** | **SO** | **NP** | **ERA** |
| Schwellenbach, L, 1-3 | 3⅔ | 8 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 91 | 3.92 |
| Bummer | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 36 | 4.05 |
| De Los Santos | 1⅓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 26 | 4.30 |
| Blewett | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 24 | 7.11 |
| Iglesias | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 5.25 |

**Inherited runners-scored**—Bummer 1-1, De Los Santos 1-0. **HBP**—Schwellenbach (Muncy), Sasaki (Riley). **U**—Ryan Wills, Ryan Additon, Lance Barksdale, Will Little. **T**—3:05. **Tickets sold**—42,159 (41,149).

### SAN DIEGO 2, PITTSBURGH 1

| San Diego | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tatis rf | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | .342 |
| Arraez 1b | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .301 |
| Machado 3b | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .280 |
| Bogaerts ss | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .234 |
| Campsno dh | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 |
| González lf | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .250 |
| Iglesias 2b | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .253 |
| Lockridge cf | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .206 |
| a-Wade cf | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .302 |
| Maldondo c | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .229 |
| b-Heyward | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .204 |
| Díaz c | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .207 |
| **Totals** | **29** | **2** | **3** | **1** | |

| Pittsburgh | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cruz cf | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | .252 |
| Reynolds rf | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .237 |
| McCtchn dh | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .266 |
| Bart c | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .272 |
| Valdez 1b | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .218 |
| Hayes 3b | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | .246 |
| Frazier 2b | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .232 |
| Canario lf | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | .132 |
| Triolo ss | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .160 |
| **Totals** | **30** | **1** | **6** | **1** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| San Diego | 000 | 000 | 101 – 2 |
| Pittsburgh | 010 | 000 | 000 – 1 |

a-grounded out for Lockridge in the 8th. b-pinch hit for Maldonado in the 8th.

**Walks**—San Diego 2: Machado 1, Campusano 1. Pittsburgh 8: Cruz 4, McCutchen 1, Bart 1, Frazier 1, Triolo 1. **Strikeouts**—San Diego 9: Tatis 1, Machado 1, Bogaerts 2, González 1, Iglesias 1, Lockridge 1, Maldonado 1, Heyward 1. Pittsburgh 3: McCutchen 1, Canario 2. **E**—Machado (6). **LOB**—San Diego 2, Pittsburgh 10. **2B**—Tatis (4). **HR**—Machado (3), off Falter. **RBIs**—Machado (14), Cruz (18). **SB**—Triolo (2), Tatis (8). **Runners left in scoring position**—San Diego 0; Pittsburgh 5 (Valdez, Reynolds 2, Canario 2). **RISP**—San Diego 0 for 2; Pittsburgh 2 for 7. **Runners moved up**—Reynolds. **DP**—Reynolds. **GIDP**—Tatis, Bart, Reynolds. **DP**—San Diego 3 (Bogaerts, Iglesias, Arraez; Machado, Iglesias, Arraez; Machado, Arraez, Machado); Pittsburgh 1 (Frazier, Valdez).

| San Diego | IP | H | R | ER | BB | SO | NP | ERA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vásquez | 5 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 89 | 3.90 |
| Matsui | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 2.57 |
| Jacob | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 11 | 2.16 |
| Adam, W, 3-0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 1.00 |
| Suarez, S, 13-13 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 11 | 0.60 |
| **Pittsburgh** | **IP** | **H** | **R** | **ER** | **BB** | **SO** | **NP** | **ERA** |
| Falter | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 89 | 5.06 |
| Shugart | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 1.23 |
| Bednar, L, 0-3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 18 | 5.62 |

**WP**—Bednar. PB_Maldonado (4). **U**—Mike Estabrook, Derek Thomas, Erich Bacchus, Brian O'Nora. **T**—2:18. **Tickets sold**—17,675 (38,753).

### PHILADELPHIA 7, ARIZONA 2

| Arizona | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Carroll rf | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .279 |
| Marte 2b | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .303 |
| Smith dh | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .316 |
| a-Grichuk dh | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .217 |
| Naylor 1b | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .306 |
| E.Suárez 3b | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | .197 |
| Moreno c | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | .244 |
| Gurriel lf | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | .214 |
| Thomas cf | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .298 |
| Perdomo ss | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .270 |
| **Totals** | **33** | **2** | **7** | **2** | |

| Phila. | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stott 2b | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .272 |
| Turner ss | 5 | 1 | 2 | 0 | .303 |
| Harper 1b | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .228 |
| Schwrbr dh | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | .243 |
| Castellns rf | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | .270 |
| Kepler lf | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | .264 |
| Realmuto c | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | .240 |
| Bohm 3b | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .220 |
| Marsh cf | 4 | 0 | 2 | 1 | .130 |
| **Totals** | **36** | **7** | **11** | **6** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arizona | 000 | 000 | 200 – 2 |
| Philadelphia | 033 | 100 | 00x – 7 |

a-grounded out for Smith in the 8th.

**Walks**—Arizona 1: Marte 1. Philadelphia 2: Harper 1, Schwarber 1. **Strikeouts**—Arizona 13: Carroll 3, Marte 1, Smith 1, Naylor 2, Moreno 2, Gurriel 1, Thomas 2, Perdomo 1. Philadelphia 6: Stott 2, Turner 1, Harper 1, Schwarber 1, Kepler 1. **E**—E.Suárez (7). **LOB**—Arizona 6, Philadelphia 9. **2B**—Thomas (6), Gurriel (7), Realmuto (5), Marsh (1), Turner (6). **HR**—Gurriel (5), off Hernández; Kepler (5), off Pfaadt; Realmuto (3), off Pfaadt. **RBIs**—Gurriel 2 (18), Kepler 2 (10), Marsh (6), Realmuto 3 (11). **Runners left in scoring position**—Arizona 2 (Thomas, Marte); Philadelphia 5 (Turner, Kepler, Schwarber, Harper 2). **RISP**—Arizona 0 for 5; Philadelphia 3 for 11. **Runners moved up**—Harper. **GIDP**—Thomas. **DP**—Philadelphia 1 (Stott, Turner, Harper).

| Arizona | IP | H | R | ER | BB | SO | NP | ERA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pfaadt, L, 5-2 | 4⅓ | 9 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 93 | 3.79 |
| Castillo | 1⅓ | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 7.71 |
| McGough | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 37 | 0.00 |
| **Philadelphia** | **IP** | **H** | **R** | **ER** | **BB** | **SO** | **NP** | **ERA** |
| Nola, W, 1-5 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 109 | 4.61 |
| Hernández | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 18 | 6.92 |
| Banks | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 2.93 |
| Ross | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 22 | 4.15 |

**Inherited runners-scored**—Castillo 1-0. **IBB**—off Pfaadt (Schwarber). **HBP**—Pfaadt 2 (Schwarber, Bohm), Nola (Carroll). **U**—Mike Muchlinski, Gabe Morales, Emil Jimenez, Doug Eddings. **T**—2:51. **Tickets sold**—42,650 (42,901).

### ANGELS 5, DETROIT 2

| Detroit | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Carpenter rf | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .274 |
| a-Malloy | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .175 |
| McKinstry lf | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .302 |
| b-Ibáñez | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | .245 |
| Torres 2b | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .298 |
| Greene cf | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | .275 |
| Keith dh | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .173 |
| Torkelson 1b | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .233 |
| Jung 3b | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .107 |
| Sweeney ss | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .206 |
| Dingler c | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .301 |
| **Totals** | **32** | **2** | **6** | **2** | |

| Angels | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neto ss | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .278 |
| Schnuel 1b | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | .250 |
| Soler dh | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | .235 |
| Ward lf | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .172 |
| d'Arnaud c | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | .238 |
| Rengifo 3b | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | .227 |
| Campero rf | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .250 |
| Paris cf | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | .220 |
| Andersn 2b | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .179 |
| **Totals** | **33** | **5** | **10** | **4** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Detroit | 000 | 000 | 011 – 2 |
| Angels | 010 | 004 | 00x – 5 |

a-flied out for Carpenter in the 9th. b-singled for McKinstry in the 9th.

**Walks**—Angels 1: d'Arnaud 1. **Strikeouts**—Detroit 3: McKinstry 1, Torres 1, Jung 1. Angels 10: Neto 2, Soler 2, Ward 1, Rengifo 1, Campero 2, Paris 1, Ti.Anderson 1. **E**—Carpenter (1), Neto (1). **LOB**—Detroit 3, Angels 5. **2B**—Torres (3), d'Arnaud (4). **HR**—Torkelson (10), off Hendricks. **RBIs**—Torkelson (27), Greene (21), Rengifo 2 (9), Paris 2 (10). **SB**—Neto (5), Rengifo (1). **Runners left in scoring position**—Detroit 2 (Keith, Dingler); Angels 3 (Neto, Ti.Anderson, Ward). **RISP**—Detroit 0 for 3; Angels 2 for 11. **Runners moved up**—Greene, Rengifo. **GIDP**—Torkelson, Soler, Rengifo. **DP**—Detroit 2 (Sweeney, Torkelson; Sweeney, Torres, Torkelson); Angels 1 (Ti.Anderson, Schanuel).

| Detroit | IP | H | R | ER | BB | SO | NP | ERA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Flaherty, L, 1-4 | 5⅔ | 8 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 8 | 91 | 3.79 |
| Brieske | ⅓ | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 8.22 |
| Guenther | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0.00 |
| Hurter | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 2.50 |
| **Angels** | **IP** | **H** | **R** | **ER** | **BB** | **SO** | **NP** | **ERA** |
| Hendricks, W, 1-3 | 7⅓ | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 102 | 5.28 |
| Burke | ⅔ | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 5.25 |
| Jansen, S, 7-7 | ⅔ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5.79 |

**Inherited runners-scored**—Brieske 1-0, Burke 1-0, Jansen 2-1. **U**—Manny Gonzalez, Alex Tosi, Ron Kulpa, Cory Blaser. **T**—2:16. **Tickets sold**—31,335 (45,517).

### SAN FRANCISCO 6, COLORADO 3

| Colorado | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Doyle cf | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | .237 |
| Beck lf | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | .265 |
| McMahn 3b | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .153 |
| Goodman c | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | .266 |
| Toglia 1b | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .200 |
| Martini dh | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .231 |
| a-Buchrd dh | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .170 |
| Farmer ss | 4 | 0 | 2 | 1 | .250 |
| Moniak rf | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .190 |
| Amador 2b | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .179 |
| **Totals** | **33** | **3** | **5** | **3** | |

| San Fran. | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yastrzmski rf | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | .275 |
| Adames ss | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | .215 |
| Lee cf | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .312 |
| Chapman 3b | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | .205 |
| Ramos lf | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .244 |
| Wade 1b | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .125 |
| Bailey c | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .161 |
| Matos dh | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | .167 |
| Wisely 2b | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 |
| **Totals** | **27** | **6** | **5** | **6** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Colorado | 000 | 003 | 000 – 3 |
| San Francisco | 001 | 005 | 00x – 6 |

a-pinch hit for Martini in the 8th.

**Walks**—Colorado 3: Doyle 1, McMahon 1, Toglia 1. San Francisco 6: Yastrzemski 1, Adames 2, Chapman 1, Matos 2. **Strikeouts**—Colorado 9: Beck 2, Goodman 1, Toglia 1, Martini 1, Moniak 1, Amador 3. San Francisco 7: Yastrzemski 2, Adames 1, Ramos 2, Bailey 1, Wisely 1. **E**—Chapman (3). **LOB**—Colorado 6, San Francisco 3. **2B**—Bailey (5). **HR**—Matos (2), off Blalock; Chapman (7), off Bird. **RBIs**—McMahon (6), Goodman (16), Farmer (7), Matos (2), Lee (19), Chapman 4 (21). **Runners left in scoring position**—Colorado 2 (Amador, Moniak); San Francisco 2 (Lee 2). RISP_Colorado 3 for 7; San Francisco 2 for 5. **Runners moved up**—Moniak, Toglia, Wisely. **DP**—Chapman. **GIDP**—Wade. **DP**—Colorado 2 (Beck, Toglia, Beck; Toglia, Farmer, Toglia).

| Colorado | IP | H | R | ER | BB | SO | NP | ERA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blalock | 5⅓ | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 75 | 8.03 |
| Bird, L, 0-1, BS, 0-1 | 1⅓ | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 38 | 2.21 |
| Herget | 1⅓ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 12 | 2.08 |
| **San Francisco** | **IP** | **H** | **R** | **ER** | **BB** | **SO** | **NP** | **ERA** |
| Hicks | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 88 | 6.03 |
| Rodríguez, W, 2-0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 15 | 1.23 |
| Doval, H, 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 1.72 |
| E.Miller, H, 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 15 | 0.82 |
| Walker, S, 6-7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 5.40 |

**Inherited runners-scored**—Bird 2-2, Herget 3-0, Rodríguez 2-2. **WP**—Bird. **U**—Tom Hanahan, Chris Guccione, David Rackley, Edwin Moscoso. **T**—2:21. **Tickets sold**—40,049 (41,915).

### WASHINGTON 11, CINCINNATI 6

| Wash. | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Abrms ss | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | .289 |
| Rosrio 3b | 6 | 1 | 3 | 4 | .276 |
| Wood dh | 6 | 2 | 4 | 0 | .273 |
| Lowe 1b | 5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | .252 |
| Call lf | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .328 |
| García 2b | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | .231 |
| Crews rf | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | .195 |
| Adams c | 5 | 0 | 1 | 2 | .182 |
| Young cf | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | .224 |
| **Totals** | **41** | **11** | **15** | **11** | |

| Cincinnati | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friedl cf | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | .271 |
| McLain 2b | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | .160 |
| DLCruz ss | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | .275 |
| Lux dh | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .311 |
| Steer 1b | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | .204 |
| Stephnsn c | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .286 |
| Fraley rf | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | .216 |
| Espinal 3b | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | .347 |
| Callihan lf | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | .200 |
| a-Marte 3b | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .297 |
| **Totals** | **37** | **6** | **12** | **5** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Washington | 200 | 104 | 121 – 11 |
| Cincinnati | 210 | 001 | 011 – 6 |

a-struck out for Callihan in the 6th.

**Walks**—Washington 5: Abrams 1, Lowe 1, Call 2, Crews 1. Cincinnati 4: McLain 1, De La Cruz 1, Fraley 2. **Strikeouts**—Washington 8: Abrams 1, Wood 1, Lowe 1, Call 1, García 1, Adams 2, Young 1. Cincinnati 10: Friedl 2, McLain 1, De La Cruz 2, Lux 1, Stephenson 2, Espinal 1, Marte 1. **E**—Rosario (4), McLain (1), Stephenson (1). **LOB**—Washington 13, Cincinnati 8. **2B**—Wood (8), Rosario (4), Steer (4), De La Cruz (5). **3B**—Lux (1). **HR**—Rosario (2), off Lodolo; Fraley (3), off Williams. **RBIs**—Call (12), García (10), Rosario 4 (7), Lowe 2 (27), Young (2), Adams 2 (5), Steer 2 (11), Callihan (1), Fraley (9), De La Cruz (25). **SB**—Friedl (7), Abrams (6), Young (3), Crews (8). **CS**—Espinal (1), De La Cruz (4). **SF**—García. **S**—Young. **Runners left in scoring position**—Washington 6 (Young, Lowe, Crews 3, García); Cincinnati 6 (Steer 2, De La Cruz, Friedl 2, Stephenson). **RISP**—Washington 7 for 18; Cincinnati 2 for 12. **Runners moved up**—Abrams, Adams, García, Callihan. **DP**—Washington 1 (Adams, Abrams, Adams).

| Washington | IP | H | R | ER | BB | SO | NP | ERA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Williams, W, 2-3 | 5⅓ | 9 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 87 | 5.86 |
| Chafin, H, 1 | ⅔ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 0.00 |
| Ferrer | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 9 | 6.11 |
| Rutledge | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 26 | 2.19 |
| Salazar | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 15 | 9.20 |
| **Cincinnati** | **IP** | **H** | **R** | **ER** | **BB** | **SO** | **NP** | **ERA** |
| Lodolo, L, 3-3 | 5⅓ | 10 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 98 | 3.27 |
| Zulueta | 1⅓ | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 24 | 6.75 |
| Suter | 1⅓ | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 33 | 2.30 |
| Mey | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 30 | 4.50 |

**Inherited runners-scored**—Chafin 1-0, Zulueta 1-0. **HBP**—Lodolo 2 (Young,Abrams), Suter (Crews). **WP**—Chafin, Lodolo. **U**—Sean Barber, James Hoye, D.J. Reyburn, John Libka. **T**—2:53. **Tickets sold**—26,224 (43,891).



Jon Blacker Associated Press

## A GRAND FINISH FOR GUARDIANS

The Guardians' Daniel Schneemann celebrates his grand slam in the ninth inning as Cleveland rallied from a 3-1 deficit in Toronto.

### CLEVELAND 5, TORONTO 3

| Cleveland | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kwan lf | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | .328 |
| Jones cf-rf | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .160 |
| Santana 1b | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .225 |
| 1-Arias 3b | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | .242 |
| Manzardo dh | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .206 |
| Noel rf | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .169 |
| d-Naylor | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | .192 |
| Schnemn 2b | 4 | 2 | 2 | 5 | .276 |
| Wilson 3b | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .188 |
| c-Martínz 2b | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .313 |
| Rocchio ss | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .185 |
| Hedges c | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .133 |
| **Totals** | **31** | **5** | **4** | **5** | |

| Toronto | AB | R | H | BI | Avg. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bichette ss | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | .284 |
| Guerrero 1b | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .272 |
| Santandr dh | 4 | 1 | 2 | 0 | .184 |
| Springer rf | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | .322 |
| Varsho cf | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .214 |
| Barger 3b | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .147 |
| a-Clemnt 3b | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | .225 |
| Lukes lf | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .268 |
| b-Straw lf | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .280 |
| Heinemn c | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | .406 |
| Giménez 2b | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | .179 |
| **Totals** | **33** | **3** | **8** | **3** | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cleveland | 000 | 000 | 014 – 5 |
| Toronto | 101 | 010 | 000 – 3 |

a-doubled for Barger in the 5th. b-flied out for Lukes in the 5th. c-struck out for Wilson in the 8th. d-walked for Noel in the 9th. 1-ran for Santana in the 9th.

**Walks**—Cleveland 3: Santana 2, Naylor 1. Toronto 5: Bichette 1, Santander 1, Barger 1, Lukes 2. **Strikeouts**—Cleveland 16: Jones 3, Manzardo 4, Noel 1, Wilson 2, Martínez 2, Rocchio 2, Hedges 2. Toronto 12: Bichette 1, Guerrero 2, Santander 1, Springer 1, Varsho 3, Barger 1, Straw 1, Heineman 2. **LOB**—Cleveland 2, Toronto 9. **2B**—Springer (8), Santander (5), Clement (4). **HR**—Schneemann (3), off Green; Schneemann (4), off García; Bichette (1), off Williams. **RBIs**—Schneemann 5 (9), Bichette (14), Lukes (8), Heineman (6). **SB**—Giménez (9). **CS**—Lukes (2). **SF**—Heineman. **Runners left in scoring position**—Cleveland 0; Toronto 6 (Giménez 2, Barger 2, Varsho, Guerrero). **RISP**—Cleveland 1 for 2; Toronto 1 for 10. **Runners moved up**—Straw. **DP**—Cleveland 1 (Hedges, Rocchio, Hedges).

| Cleveland | IP | H | R | ER | BB | SO | NP | ERA |
|---|---|---|---|---



MARK J. TERRILL Associated Press

**THE TIGERS'** Kerry Carpenter celebrates his home run in the sixth inning of Sunday's game. Carpenter and Trey Sweeney combined to drive in 11 runs.

# Tigers hit three homers as they rout the Angels

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Trey Sweeney and Kerry Carpenter each homered and had four hits, and they combined to drive in 11 runs as the Detroit Tigers pounded the Angels 13-1 on Sunday to win three of four in the series.

After Sweeney singled in the first run off Jack Kochanowicz (1-5) in the second inning, Carpenter made it 3-0 with a two-run double to the right-field wall that Jo Adell kept inside the park but couldn't catch.

Carpenter's eighth homer was a three-run shot off reliever Michael Darrell-Hicks for an 8-0 lead in the sixth. Sweeney homered off Jose Fermin with two on in the seventh and added a two-run single in the eighth off Touki Toussaint. Sweeney finished with six RBIs and Carpenter drove in five — both career highs.

Colt Keith hit a two-run homer, his third, for a 5-0 lead in the third.

Reese Olson (4-2) tossed 5⅔ shutout innings, yielding three hits and three walks while striking out eight. Brenan Hanifee gave up a run in 1⅓ innings. Beau Brieske and Will Vest closed it out.

Zach Neto had two hits and drove in the lone run for the Angels. Kochanowicz was tagged for five runs in five innings.

The Angels, last in the AL West, are 1-3 to begin a 10-game homestand.

Carpenter's fifth double this season ignited the AL Central-leading Tigers in the middle of a 10-game trip that saw them lose two of three to the Astros on the first stop.

## Hendricks helps Angels stop skid

Kyle Hendricks pitched into the eighth inning for his first win with the Angels, who stopped a seven-game losing streak by defeating the Detroit Tigers 5-2 on Saturday night.

Luis Rengifo and Kyren Paris each had a two-run single in a four-run sixth that made it 5-0.

The 35-year-old Hendricks (1-3) gave up one run and four hits over 7⅔ innings in his sixth start for the Angels after spending his first 11 seasons with the Chicago Cubs.

He entered with a 6.65 ERA but faced only one batter more than the minimum through seven innings.

Spencer Torkelson ended Hendricks' shutout bid with his 10th home run — a one-out shot in the eighth.

Brock Burke got the final out of the eighth and the first one in the ninth before giving way to Kenley Jansen with runners on second and third.

Jansen, who gave up three homers and his first six runs of the season in the ninth inning Friday, finished off his seventh save by retiring Riley Greene on an RBI grounder and Keith on a lineout.

Travis d'Arnaud doubled and scored with two outs in the second when Carpenter and Greene collided in right-center, allowing Paris' flyball to drop. Carpenter was charged with an error.

Tigers starter Jack Flaherty (1-4) permitted five runs — four earned — and eight hits in 5⅔ innings.

The Angels loaded the bases with one out in the sixth against Flaherty, and Rengifo hit the first pitch up the middle to drive in two. Rengifo is seven for 16 (.438) with runners in scoring position — tops on the team.

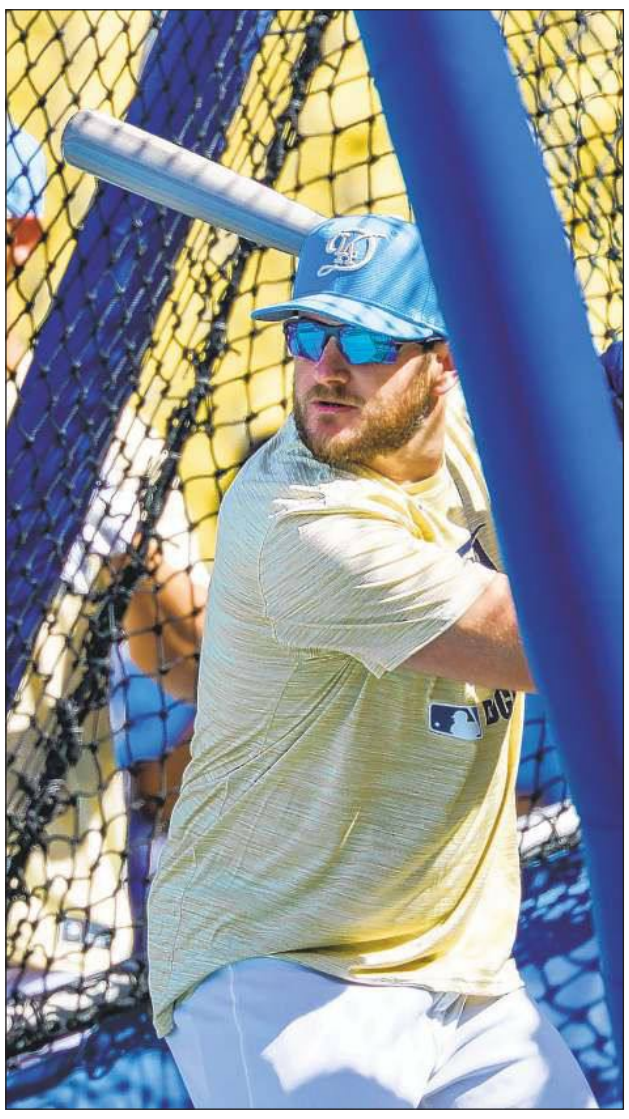
Taylor Ward is stuck in an 0-for-26 slump.

The Angels scored five runs for the second time in their last 20 games and the first since April 20 against the Giants.

# Prescription glasses help Muncy focus at the plate

Dodgers' left-handed hitter hopes new gear corrects astigmatism in his right eye.

BY JACK HARRIS



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

**THE DODGERS'** Max Muncy takes swings during a recent pregame batting practice with new eyeglasses.

ATLANTA — Max Muncy has a new look.

And, he hopes, slightly better sight.

On Friday night at Truist Park, Muncy took the field for the Dodgers' series opener against the Atlanta Braves wearing clear prescription eyeglasses. He subtly did the same during the Dodgers' last game of the most recent homestand on Wednesday afternoon, using sunglasses with prescription lenses when he hit his first home run of the season.

It's not that Muncy has bad eyesight. His vision, he said, is actually an excellent 20/12.

However, Muncy did learn he has astigmatism in his right eye, making him slightly left-eye dominant. Given that he's a left-handed hitter — positioning him with his right eye forward in the batter's box — he thus decided the glasses were worth a try.

"If there's anything that can help out a little bit," Muncy said, "I'll try it."

Based on his results from Wednesday, the benefits might have already been felt.

After enduring a career-long 28-game home run drought to start the season, Muncy went deep in his first at-bat Wednesday, launching a low-and-away sinker to straightaway center field.

He struck out in his next trip to the plate, then flied to left in the fifth inning. After that, however, he tripled and drew a walk, giving him his most productive performance of what had been a slow start to the season.

Granted, Muncy's performance had started to tick up before he started using his new glasses.

Thanks to some recent swing adjustments, he entered Wednesday with three hits in his previous two games (he'd recorded just four in the 11 before that) and as many walks as strikeouts in his prior 13 contests overall (10 each).

"The swing feels like it's getting closer and closer," said Muncy, who entered Sunday with a . 184 batting average after going 0 for 2 with two walks in the Dodgers' 10-3 win Saturday night. "I still have to clean some things up. Have to be better in certain situations. It's a work in progress. But ... it's just getting the ball to go forward."

Still, in recent days, Muncy decided it was time to break out the glasses, too.

The 34-year-old third baseman had been testing his glasses in pregame batting practice and infield drills since the start of last week's homestand. He'd initially been hesitant to take them into game action, noting a "fish-bowl" effect he felt while wearing them, but said he has since adjusted by using them even when he's away from the field.

Muncy isn't the first Dodger player to begin utilizing glasses midseason.

Last year, Kiké Hernández did the same thing after discovering astigmatism (a condition caused by imperfections in the curvature of the eye that can impact vision) in his own right eye.

Like Muncy, Hernández described an adjustment period when his glasses arrived midseason.

"It took me like a week or two to really feel like my depth perception felt normal," Hernández recalled.

Unlike Muncy, Hernández began wearing them in games as soon as they arrived.

"You can't be afraid to fail," he quipped.

Fail, Hernández did not. Before last year's All-Star break, Hernández was batting .191 with just five home runs in 71 games, wearing glasses for only the final series of the opening half. After the break, once his eyesight adjusted to his new lenses, Hernández finished the year batting .274 with seven home runs in his final 55 games. He then proceeded to have a monster postseason (.294 average, two home runs, six RBIs) during the Dodgers' run to a World Series title.

This year, the glasses have remained a fixture. And even though he batted just .188 in March and April, he did tally five home runs and 13 RBIs.

The biggest benefit Hernández noticed from his glasses: An ability to see the actual spin on the baseball, and more easily identify each pitch type.

"Before the glasses, I was trying to see the shape of each pitch," Hernández said, which forced him to wait a split-second to see if the ball would dive or slide away from its starting location.

"Once I got the glasses," he added, "I could actually see the spin."

# Iamaleava the main attraction as Bruins conclude spring

[**UCLA,** from D1]

Iamaleava until he's officially signed with the team, which is considered a formality.

Madden could be his brother's top backup next season, though he might be pushed by Luke Duncan considering the way Duncan continued to show mastery of the offense as part of a group of quarterbacks that thinned from seven at the start of spring to four by the end.

"Each day, you could tell he was getting better, getting more comfortable," Foster said of Duncan. "There was a lot of outside noise and he was still finding ways to focus on exactly what he needed to focus on, and that was just improving his play. So I commend Luke for the way he approached this whole spring and then coming to this stadium and having a good practice."

Duncan took first- and second-team repetitions Saturday as part of a surreal scene in which fellow quarterback Nick Billoups also participated despite being in the transfer portal. That status also applied to edge rusher Jacob Busic, who made a stop on a ball-carrier despite also being in the transfer portal and not listed on the roster that was distributed before the showcase.

Meanwhile, the player who will be the Bruins' starting quarterback in their season opener watched from the sideline while the player he's replacing, Joey Aguilar, is still taking classes at UCLA on his way to taking Iamaleava's place at Tennessee.



CARLIN STIEHL Los Angeles Times

**RECEIVER MIKEY MATTHEWS** (7) cheers on teammates during UCLA's spring showcase. Matthews may be part of a new era of the Bruins' offense headed by Nico Iamaleava, and potential backup Madden Iamaleava.

It's all part of the bizarre nature of college football in 2025.

"It's just where college football is at," said linebacker Isaiah Chisom, himself a product of the transfer portal after recently arriving from Oregon State, "and what I always tell people [is], everybody has to do what's best for them, whatever that really looks like, and we don't know the real stories behind what's actually making people make these type of decisions, so I'm not mad at anybody for going or coming."

Offensive lineman Julian Armella, a transfer from Florida State who projects to start at right guard, said he was able to speak with Nico Iamaleava during a campus visit a few weeks ago and was eager to add him to the team.

"At the end of the day, I know that UCLA and all of this fan base is excited to have him," Armella said, "so I know that once he gets up here we're going to be able to roll."

Foster said once Nico Iamaleava completes his final semester at Tennessee this month, he'll be able to start corresponding online with coaches as part of a transition that might be easier than it seems.

"When you're switching teams, it's not the hardest thing to do," Foster said. "It's mostly just figuring out what we call something that they already call, so it's not like we have to teach him a whole new playbook, it's more of him figuring out the calls and what we call something he already had. Him being an intelligent kid, has a high GPA, smart on and off the field, we're just looking forward to getting the opportunity to teach him."

Given the way a host of transfers have come together quickly this spring, Armella said, he anticipated Nico Iamaleava having a similarly smooth transition.

"Our coaching staff has done a great job of getting guys like me and these other transfers up to par and up to speed," Armella said, "so I have no doubt in my mind that he'll be able to come in here and be able to fit into the system. He's going to be new here, but at the end of the day he'll be able to get it done."

Questions persist about the team that will surround Nico Iamaleava. Will the offensive line hold up after struggling to protect quarterback Ethan Garbers last season? Can the Bruins generate a running game after failing to produce in that department a year ago?

For now, the vibes are all positive. The next time Nico Iamaleava walks out of the Rose Bowl tunnel, it will be for his UCLA debut against Utah on Aug. 30, all eyes focused on the new quarterback.

"It's gonna be a good season and — what do they say, get your popcorn ready?" Foster said. "So you get your popcorn ready."

# Prep teams bearing down for May Madness

Get ready for playoffs, championships, and spring football as the 2024-25 season closes.

By Eric Sondheimer



Craig Weston For The Times

**BISHOP ALEMANY** sophomore Demare Dezeurn, center left, ran the second-fastest 100 meters in the state this year, at 10.32 seconds.

May Madness has arrived for high school sports. It's the final month of the 2024-25 season, with lots of spring championships to be won and preparation for the fall football season under way.

Let's examine the calendar and potential news to be made.

## Swimming

The Southern Section finals are Saturday at Mt. San Antonio College with the City Section finals the same day at L.A. Valley College. The state championships are May 15-17 at Clovis West.

All eyes will be on four-year Santa Margarita standout Teagan O'Dell before she heads off to California to begin her college career with the Golden Bears. She has dominated in Division 1 and is hoping to break more records while leading her team to a sixth straight girls' state championship.

## Lacrosse

Palisades won the boys' and girls' City Section championships this past week. The Southern Section will hold its girls' finals on May 16 at El Modena and the boys' finals on May 17 at El Modena.

Loyola is seeded No. 1 in boys and Mira Costa is No. 1 in girls.

## Baseball

Corona is 26-2 and atop the Southern Section power rankings. Playoff seedings will be announced on May 12 and the championship games will be played May 30 and 31 at Cal State Fullerton and Blair Field in Long Beach. Division 1 will have its strongest 32-team bracket ever. Regional championships are June 7.

It's a last chance to see Corona pitcher Seth Hernandez before he goes No. 1, No. 2 or No. 3 in baseball's amateur draft this summer. He has 88 strikeouts and three walks in 42 ⅓ innings. The Panthers also have another likely top-10 selection in shortstop Billy Carlson.

The City Section championships are set for May 24 at Dodger Stadium. Playoff pairings are announced on May 10. Either Birmingham or El Camino Real will be the No. 1 seed as they battle it out for the West Valley League championship with a two-game series this week. Venice is 24-2 and looking good for a top-four seed.

The Open Division playoffs change from 12 teams to eight teams and playoff games scheduled for May 14 and May 20 make it possible for a team to use a single pitcher to get to Dodger Stadium. "It's not who has the best team but who has the best pitcher," Birmingham coach Matt Mowry said of the scheduling.

## Softball

Norco, Rosary and Orange Lutheran look like the teams to beat in Southern Section softball. Pairings come out on May 12. The finals are May 30-31 in Irvine.

With the absence of a dominant pitcher, the hitters have a chance to lead their team to a championship, and few have been better than Orange Lutheran's Kai Minor, an Oklahoma commit.

In the City Section, who wouldn't want to see a third straight final between Granada Hills and Carson? Last season Carson won on a 14th-inning walk-off home run. The final will be played May 31 at a college field to be announced. San Pedro has won the Marine League title over Carson, so beware of the Pirates.

## Volleyball

Mira Costa is the No. 1 seed in the Southern Section Division 1 playoffs that conclude May 16-17 at Cerritos College. The regional playoffs are the following week, then the state championships May 31 at Santiago Canyon College.

The City Section championships will be held May 17 at Birmingham. Venice received the No. 1 seed on Thursday for the Open Division tournament.

## Tennis

Palisades won its 16th consecutive City Section boys' tennis championship for legendary coach Bud Kling, who has won 53 combined boys' and girls' titles. Imagine where he finds room to store all the championship plaques.

Irvine University and Beckman are the favorites to win a Southern Section Open Division title. The finals are May 16 at the University of Redlands.

## Football

This month schools are ending spring practices by holding college showcases and playing seven-on-seven competitions against other schools.

One of the most intriguing should take place Tuesday at Sierra Canyon, where Newbury Park and quarterback Brady Smigiel will be facing the Trailblazers' talented secondary, led by USC commit Madden Riordan.

Long Beach Millikan is hosting the first big seven-on-seven event on May 17 that will feature 20 teams.

This month, the National Federation of State High School Assns. will release its first national rules for girls' flag football. It will have a big influence in California, with special teams used for the first time (punting) and defenses allowed to rush from one yard back of the line of scrimmage instead of seven last year. Coaches say that will lead to fewer touchdowns and fewer long passes.

## Track

The Southern Section track and field finals are set for May 17 at Moorpark High, followed by the Masters Meet on May 24. The City Section finals will be May 22 on Birmingham's new Mondo track. The state championships are May 30-31 at Buchanan High in Clovis.

The Arcadia Invitational was a good sneak peek for athletes to watch, including Servite's group of young sprinters, Temecula Valley's Jack Stadlman in the 400, Santa Margarita's Leo Francis in the long jump and Aliso Niguel's Jaslene Massey in the girls' shotput.

Bishop Alemany sophomore Demare Dezeurn ran the second fastest 100 meters in the state this year when he won the Mission League finals in 10.32 seconds on Thursday.

## Golf

The City Section championships will be held May 21 at Harding Golf Course. Luke Schultz of Palisades is back to defend his individual title.

The Southern Section team finals are May 19-20, followed by the individual final on May 22. The state championships are June 3 at Poppy Hills in Pebble Beach.

Watch to see if St. Francis freshman Jaden Soong can contend for an individual title.

## PREP BASEBALL TOP 25

By Eric Sondheimer

| Rk. | School (W-L) | Comment (last week's ranking) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | CORONA (26-2) | 88 strikeouts in 42⅓ innings for Seth Hernandez (1) |
| 2 | CRESPI (23-3) | Clinched the Mission League championship (2) |
| 3 | HUNTINGTON BEACH (22-4) | Trevor Goldenetz has 30 hits, 19 RBIs (3) |
| 4 | ST. JOHN BOSCO (22-4) | Noah Everly is rising as hitter, pitcher (4) |
| 5 | AQUINAS (22-2) | Jonathan Tena is batting .435 (5) |
| 6 | ORANGE LUTHERAN (21-6) | Finished second in Trinity League (6) |
| 7 | HARVARD-WESTLAKE (18-8) | Sophomore Ira Rootman having big season (7) |
| 8 | LA MIRADA (19-6) | Faces Arcadia, Tesoro to close out regular season (8) |
| 9 | VILLA PARK (21-5) | Huge week for junior Aidan Young, now hitting .430 (9) |
| 10 | CYPRESS (16-10) | Two-game series with El Modena for league title (10) |
| 11 | SUMMIT (22-3) | Finishes with two-game series against Rialto (11) |
| 12 | NEWPORT HARBOR (22-6) | Surging Sailors have won five straight (13) |
| 13 | NORCO (20-8) | Surging Cougars have won 12 of last 13 games (12) |
| 14 | VISTA MURRIETA (19-5-1) | Southwestern League champion (14) |
| 15 | EL DORADO (19-7) | Showdown with Villa Park this week (15) |
| 16 | MIRA COSTA (24-2) | Unbeaten Bay League champion (16) |
| 17 | ARCADIA (24-2) | Unbeaten Pacific League champion (18) |
| 18 | SANTA MARGARITA (15-12) | Third place in Trinity League (20) |
| 19 | AYALA (18-7) | Palomares League champion (19) |
| 20 | LOS ALAMITOS (17-9-2) | Third place in Sunset League (22) |
| 21 | ARLINGTON (20-6) | Ivy League champion (23) |
| 22 | ROYAL (22-4) | Showdown with Simi Valley to decide league title (24) |
| 23 | SERVITE (14-13) | Hoping for at-large berth to Division 1 playoffs (25) |
| 24 | LOS OSOS (18-6) | Leading Baseline League with three games to play (NR) |
| 25 | PALM DESERT (24-4) | Zach Gibbs (7-0) and Jake Brende (8-1) are one-two duo (NR) |

# Redondo rallies to beat rival Mira Costa for title

Jones, Namimatsu win deciding match to lift the Sea Hawks over Mustangs in CIF play.

By Steve Galluzzo



Steve Galluzzo For The Times

**BELLA JONES,** right, and her Redondo Union teammates celebrate her championship-winning kill Saturday against Mira Costa at Long Beach City College.

The moment of truth arrived ... and Bella Jones rose to the occasion.

Leaping as high as she could from her right-side position, the Redondo Union senior angled a crosscourt kill that clipped the top of the net and dropped into the open court to complete a 12-21, 21-14, 15-13 comeback for Jones and partner Kara Namimatsu to lift the Sea Hawks to a thrilling 3-2 dual victory over defending champion Mira Costa in the CIF Southern Section Division 1 beach volleyball final Saturday afternoon at Long Beach City College.

The Bay League rivals had split the first four matches, with Redondo Union winning on the first two courts and Mira Costa prevailing on the last two, so the championship came down to Court 3, where Jones and Namimatsu were down 11-8 to the Mustangs tandem of Lily Sprague and Allyn Hilt before rallying back to take a 14-12 lead on an ace by Jones. Sprague's spike landed on the baseline to stave off the first championship point, setting the stage for Jones' heroics.

"I told Kara let's go out swinging ... win or lose I'm going to be aggressive," said the teary-eyed Jones, who is headed to San Diego State to play indoor volleyball. "I was really nervous and it wasn't the best swing, it hit the tape, but all these girls mean so much to me and I wanted to win it for them."

It was only the second time Jones and Namimatsu had played together — the first being two days before in the semifinals.

"We had an injury so we switched our lineup on the bus for JSerra and we just went with it," Jones confessed. "Yesterday we served and passed to each other for about an hour and that helped."

"Our chemistry works well together and in the timeouts our coach told us to trust in each other, trust in your training," added Namimatsu, a junior transfer from Bishop Montgomery and early USC beach volleyball commit.

The result was practically a carbon copy of the Sea Hawks' semifinal triumph, only that time it was Abby Zimmerman and Avery Junk winning 15-13 in the third set of the deciding match on Court 1. On Saturday, the pair swept Mira Costa's top duo of Olga Nikolaeva and Simone Roslon, 21-17, 21-14.

"This is a really big win for us and it's really exciting to have all five matches going on at the same time," said Zimmerman, an All-CIF junior outside hitter who is going to California for indoor. "Our coaches trusted me and Avery to go up against their best. It was just our day."

"We beat them earlier this year which gave us confidence that we could do it but we lost to them in the finals the last two years so we knew we had to play our best," added Junk, a senior head to Florida State to play beach with twin sister Addy, who won 22-20, 20-17 on Court 2 with partner Leah Blair.

Mira Costa juniors Audrey Flanagan and Anabelle Redaelli prevailed easily 21-11, 21-18 on Court 4 while sophomores Lerin Rosenthal and Sammy Nammack won 21-17, 25-23 on Court 5.

On March 4, Redondo Union snapped Mira Costa's 170-match winning streak spanning over a decade (the majority of them coming in Interscholastic Beach Volleyball League play before the CIF sanctioned beach volleyball). Mira Costa won the rematch 5-0 on March 26 and was poised for a three-peat.

Saturday, however, belonged to the Sea Hawks.

A similar scenario unfolded in the first dual Saturday morning and the ending was equally dramatic as Long Beach Poly's Simone Millsap and Alyssa Luna overcame a match point on Court 4 to win the deciding set 17-15, with Millsap serving an ace to clinch the Jackrabbits' 3-2 triumph over Anaheim Canyon in the inaugural Division 3 final.

"My thought was 'I need to get this in,'" Millsap said of her last serve ag ainst Canyon's Erin Ly and Hannah Huang. "I just closed my eyes and envisioned it going to the left corner— and luckily it did."

Poly's Aleeya Salima and Lindyn Foster pulled out a 13-21, 21-17, 15-11 win on Court 1 to level the score.

"Going into the last set we knew it come down to us and I think it was about 8-8 when we heard cheering and saw everyone running over to our court that we knew for sure," Millsap said.

"When a game's going point by point, your goal is to get the last two," said Luna, who was called up from JV to play with Millsap in the third round of the playoffs. "Our indoor team won CIF in November so this is extra special."

The second match of Saturday's championship tripleheader pitted two Long Beach schools against each other and again it came down to Court 4, where Wilson sophomore Iyla Alvarado and junior Jane Morrison prevailed 21-19, 18-21, 15-11 over Millikan's Mikayla Brumbelow and Johanna Swerdloff to secure the title for the Bruins.

Moments later, Rams juniors Sophia Orbiso and Aubrey Greene pulled out a 21-17, 17-21, 21-19 win on Court 2 but by then Wilson had already clinched. Millikan was trying to avenge 3-2 and 4-1 losses in Moore League play.

"It was 2-1 at that point, but I was like 'we need to do this!'" Morrison said. "It helps having people there supporting me. Even though we'd beaten them twice this is the finals and we knew it could go either way."

"No matter what's going on with the other matches, we want to win ours," Alvarado added. "This is our second year playing together, we have good chemistry, we talk strategy and pride ourselves on being mentally stronger than the other team."

Los Angeles Times

# SPORTS EXTRA

A TIMES E-NEWSPAPER EXCLUSIVE :: MONDAY, MAY 5, 2025



MIKE STEWART Associated Press

**THE BREAKING BALL** is critical to Dustin May's arsenal, but his struggles with it resulted in two Braves homers that stopped the Dodgers' seven-game win streak.

# May's key pitch on the fritz as streak ends

BY JACK HARRIS

ATLANTA — Dustin May knew how key his sweeper would be this season.

"It's going to be huge," the Dodgers right-hander said earlier this spring. "Being able to land that is probably going to be my biggest thing for the whole year."

Lately, however, he's learning there's a flip side to that coin, as well.

For as good as May's Frisbee-esque breaking ball looked, when he returned from a nearly two-year absence by giving up just two earned runs in his first three starts, the pitch has been more inconsistent in the three outings since, dragging May's overall performance down with it.

In a 4-3 loss to the Atlanta Braves on Sunday at Truist Park, it was two bad sweepers — both to Braves slugger Austin Riley — that sank May on a night the Dodgers saw their seven-game winning streak stopped.

In the first inning, May had two strikes against Riley before throwing a sweeper up and over the plate. Riley launched it to left for a two-run homer.

In the third, May tried his sweeper again against Riley, throwing it over the outer edge of the plate in a 1-and-1 count. But Riley was on it once more, belting another two-run blast that gave the Braves an early 4-0 lead.

Outside of those pitches, May was mostly effective. He got through 5⅔ innings. He struck out six batters. He didn't give up any other runs.

But for this new version of May — who, in search of better health after two major elbow surgeries, has dialed back on his fastball velocity and drastically dropped the arm angle of his already somewhat side-arm delivery — even a couple of misplaced mistakes can spell trouble.

The Dodgers (23-11) didn't give May much support.

With Braves starter Bryce Elder painting the corners of the strike zone, their recently streaking offense went cold. Max Muncy supplied their lone early RBIs, plating one run on a fourth-inning double and another on a sixth-inning groundout.

Miguel Rojas came off the bench in the sixth inning as a pinch-hitter for ice-cold outfielder Michael Conforto — who struck out twice to extend his slump to 0 for 28 and six for 73 going back to early April — and hit a home run off left-handed reliever Dylan Lee to cut the deficit to 4-3.

But that was as close as the Dodgers would come against the Atlanta bullpen that helped the Braves avoid getting swept.

In the eighth, they were twice robbed of hits by diving plays from the Braves' defense. In the ninth, they stranded Hyeseong Kim at third after he stole second as a pinch-runner for Andy Pages and advanced to third on a dropped third strike.

Still, for a banged-up Dodgers rotation looking for someone else to step up alongside staff ace Yoshinobu Yamamoto, May's recent regression has been the bigger disappointment.

In his last three outings, the 27-year-old has yielded 14 runs in 16 innings.

And each time, an inability to consistently land his sweeper has served as a source of frustration.

Two weeks ago, when an overall lack of command led to May getting knocked around at Wrigley Field by the Chicago Cubs, he was asked how difficult it is to be successful when that pitch isn't working.

"I think you can see how important it is," he said that night.

May remained dissatisfied after giving up three runs to the Miami Marlins last Monday.

"I still wasn't executing very well at all," he said then. "I just got away with some stuff."

On Sunday against the Braves, it was a similar story, May looking frustrated with himself as Riley took his two trots around the bases, bemoaning poorly executed sweepers again.

# Warriors eliminate Rockets, will take on Timberwolves next

WIRE REPORTS

Stephen Curry scored 14 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter, Buddy Hield made nine three-pointers and scored 33 points, and the Golden State Warriors advanced to the Western Conference semifinals with a 103-89 win over the Houston Rockets in Game 7 Sunday night.

The Warriors will face the Timberwolves in Minnesota on Tuesday night.

Hield had a scorching first half with six three-pointers and 22 points to carry the Warriors to a 12-point lead, with Curry scoring just three points before the break. Then Curry took over in the closing minutes and performed his signature "night night" gesture as the Warriors put the Rockets away.

The Warriors became the seventh No. 7 seed in NBA history to advance to the semifinals and eliminated Houston in the playoffs for a fifth time.

They sent the James Harden-led Rockets squads packing four times between 2015 and 2019.

Hield was nine of 11 from three-point range, setting an NBA record for a Game 7 and making more threes than the Rockets, who were six of 18 from long range.

Amen Thompson scored 24 points to lead Houston.

### Pacers upset Cavaliers in semifinals opener

Indiana point guard Tyrese Haliburton scored 22 points — including a go-ahead three-pointer midway through the fourth quarter — had 13 assists and made crucial defensive plays that propelled the upset-minded Pacers to a 121-112 victory over the top-seeded Cavaliers on Sunday night in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference semifinals at Rocket Arena in Cleveland.

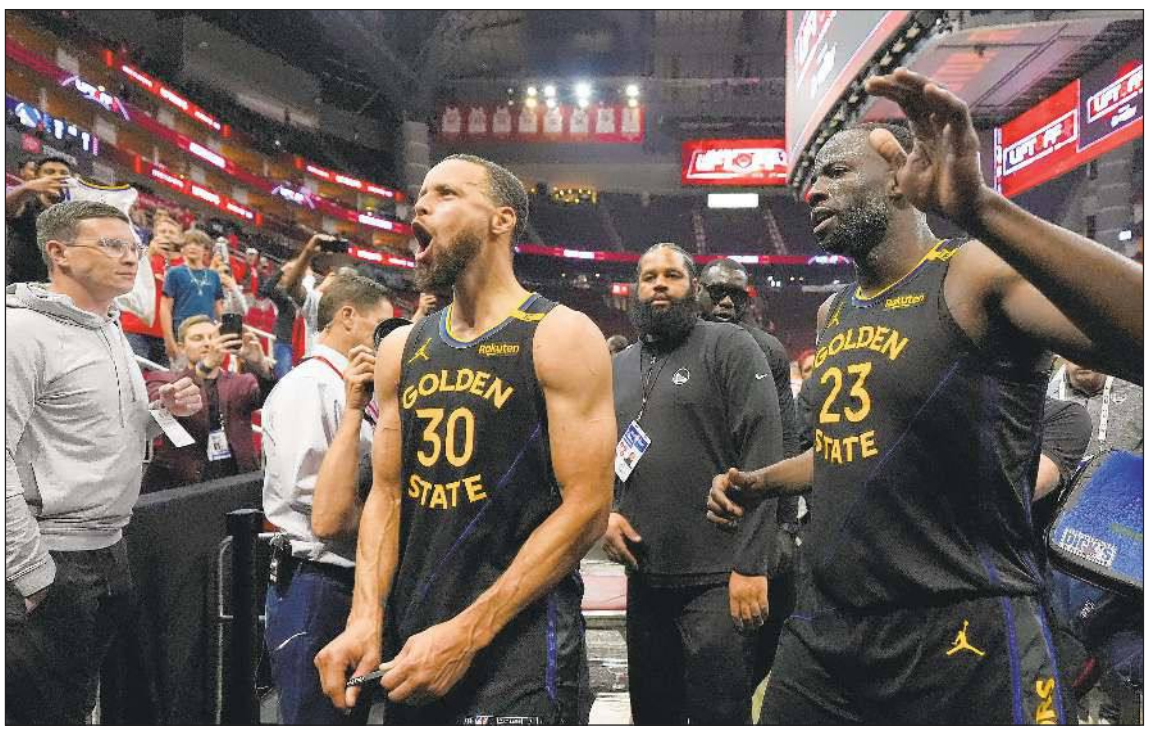
Andrew Nembhard scored 23 points and made two of his five three-pointers during the four-minute stretch when the Pacers pulled away.

All five Indiana starters scored in double figures. Aaron Nesmith and Pascal Siakam had 17 points each.

Donovan Mitchell led Cleveland with 33 points and broke Michael Jordan's NBA playoff record with his eighth straight game of at least 30 points in a series opener.

Evan Mobley added 20 points and 10 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who were without point guard Darius Garland for the third straight playoff game due to a sprained left big toe.

Cleveland coach Kenny Atkinson is hoping his team can find ways to control the flow during Game 2 on Tuesday night.



ASHLEY LANDIS Associated Press

**THE WARRIORS'** Stephen Curry (30) and Draymond Green (23) celebrate their 103-89 win on Sunday. Golden State became the seventh No. 7 seed in NBA history to advance to the semifinals.

**NHL**

## Jets take Game 7 in second overtime

Adam Lowry scored on a tipped shot 16:10 into the second overtime and the Winnipeg Jets rallied to beat the St. Louis Blues 4-3 on Sunday night to advance to the second round of the NHL playoffs.

Cole Perfetti had two goals, Vladislav Namestnikov also scored, and Kyle Connor and Neal Pionk each had three assists for Winnipeg, which scored twice in the final two minutes of regulation to tie the score. Connor Hellebuyck finished with 26 saves.

Jordan Kyrou, Mathieu Joseph and Radek Faksa scored for the Blues. Jordan Binnington had 43 saves.

The Jets will face the Dallas Stars starting Wednesday at home.

**MLS**

## Own goal extends Galaxy losing streak

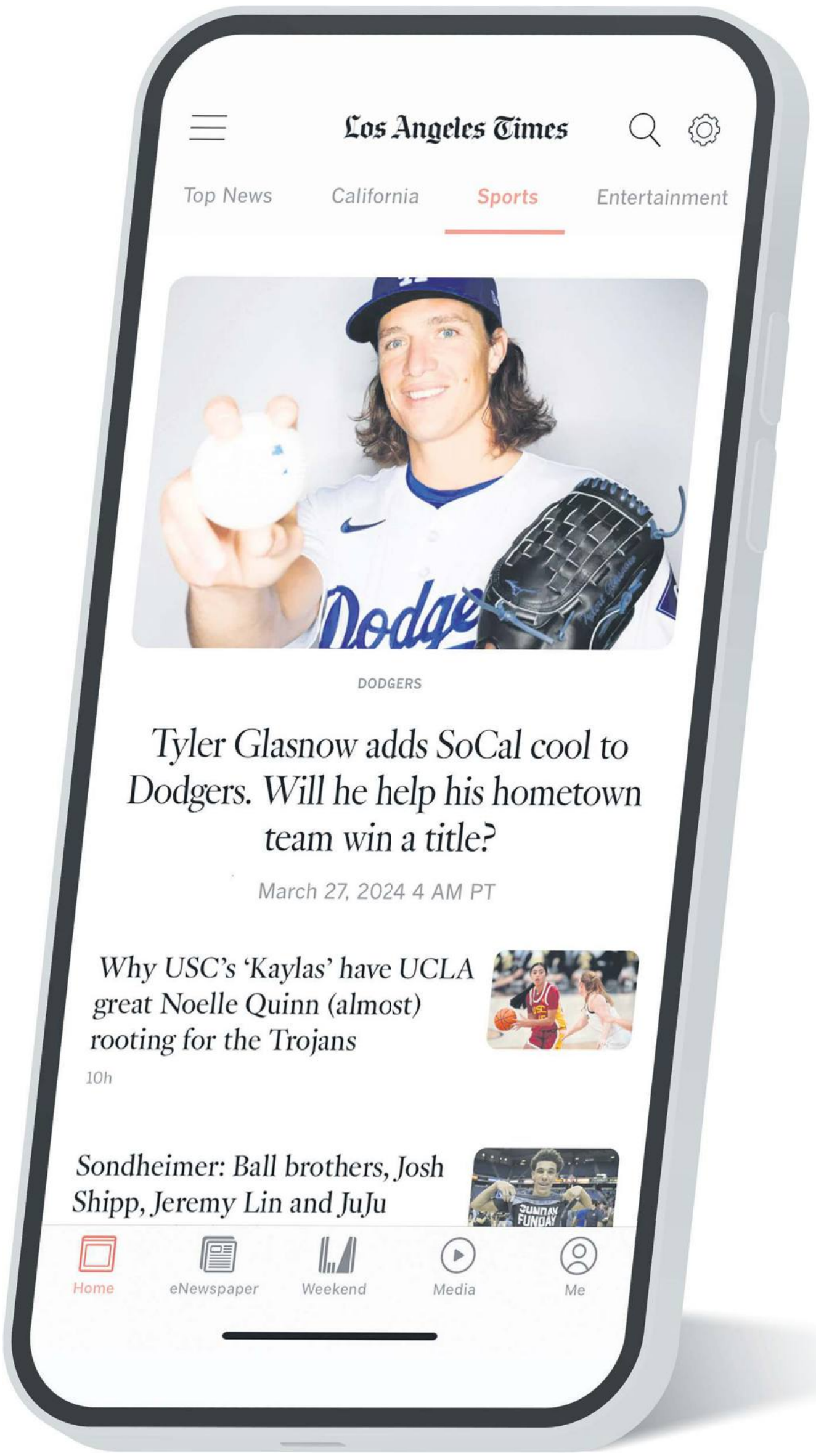
Galaxy defender Maya Yoshida had the only score on Sunday night. Unfortunately, it was an own goal that led to a 1-0 victory for Sporting Kansas City — continuing the worst start by a defending champion in league history.

The Galaxy (0-8-3) are still looking for their first victory 11 matches into the season, and a 3-0-2 record in five previous matchups with Sporting KC (3-7-1) didn't help.

Yoshida's own goal came in the 13th minute.

John Pulskamp had to make one save, and it came in the first half on the way to his second clean sheet in his 11th start of the season for Sporting KC.

The Galaxy travel to play the New York Red Bulls on Saturday.




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# ENTERTAINMENT

MONDAY, MAY 5, 2025 ⁘ LATIMES.COM/ENTERTAINMENT



HUNTER HART For The Times

**COUNTRY** star Eric Church at Chief's, his six-story bar in the heart of downtown Nashville on Broadway, which opened a year ago.

# The gospel according to Eric Church

The singer on his New Orleans-inspired album, that polarizing Stagecoach 2024 performance and his entrepreneurial spirit

**BY MIKAEL WOOD**
POP MUSIC CRITIC

Nearly 25 years after he moved to Nashville to make it as a country musician, Eric Church can count among his achievements 11 No. 1 country radio hits, five platinum-or-better albums, four CMA Awards and one six-story bar on Nashville's crowded Broadway called Chief's. (You'll remember the bar's opening weekend last year, when Church's pal Morgan Wallen was arrested for hurling a chair off the roof.)

Chief's is just one of several business pursuits Church has undertaken lately, along with a line of whiskeys, co-ownership with Wallen of the Field & Stream brand and a minority stake in the NBA's Charlotte Hornets. Yet last week the singer and songwriter, who turned 48 on Saturday, returned to music with "Evangeline vs. the Machine," his first album since 2021.

Produced by his longtime collaborator Jay Joyce, "Evangeline" moves away from the hard-rocking sound of earlier tunes like "Springsteen," "Give Me Back My Hometown" and the weed enthusiast's "Smoke a Little Smoke" toward a lusher, more orchestral vibe complete with strings, horns and a choir. "Johnny" is a kind of response song to the Charlie Daniels Band's 1979 "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," while "Darkest Hour" offers help to someone in need — an idea Church actualized last year when he said he'd do-

[See **Church,** E2]

# Bringing Disney to 'Life' in robot form

Imagineering's lifelike animatronic salute to the park patriarch draws mixed response.

**BY TODD MARTENS**

"It's kind of fun to do the impossible." That's one of Walt Disney's most popular quotes, often used in the context of the theme park marvels imagined by the company he created.

Over the decades Walt Disney Imagineering, the secretive arm of the Walt Disney Co. devoted to theme park experiences, has dreamed up a room full of singing birds and flowers, brought to life a mini New Orleans, captured the idealism of space flight and re-envisioned modern transportation, to name just a few of its many varied accomplishments.

For its latest trick, Imagineering will attempt to resurrect a life of sorts, that is to fully animate a highly accurate robotic creation of one of the most recognizable figures of the 20th century, Walt Disney himself. First unveiled last summer at the company's fan convention D23, the goal, said Disney Experiences Chairman Josh D'Amaro at the event, is to capture "what it would have been like to be in Walt's presence."

That means finding a middle ground between romanticism and realism.

Last week, Imagineering previewed for a select group of media the upcoming show "Walt Disney — A Magical Life," set to premiere July 17 to coincide with Disneyland's official 70th anniversary, when it will temporarily displace an attraction centered on a robotic Abraham Lincoln. An early sculpt of what would become the animatronic

[See **Disney,** E3]

**What's to come in the MCU**
An explainer on the post-credits scenes in "Thunderbolts*." **E2**

**A guilt-filled cinematic debut**
"Rust" can't help but be haunted by its on-set loss. Review, **E3**

**Comics** ..... **E4-5**
**Puzzles** ..... **E5**

*Voices* **ROBERT LLOYD** TELEVISION CRITIC

# Late-night lows on, off 'Hacks'

Deborah Vance is finally a host, but the format falters in both fiction and reality.

I will never hesitate to declare that the most important show in the modern age of television, and one of the best in its entire history, is "The Larry Sanders Show," Garry Shandling's 1990s HBO series about a neurotic talk-show host, his support staff and guests — real-world celebrities playing versions of themselves, a new idea — who came and went out of his life.

It brought new depth and possibilities to situation comedy, and paved the way for shows that operated at

[See **'Hacks,'** E6]



JAKE GILES NETTER Max

**JEAN SMART** is joined by late-night host Jimmy Kimmel in a cameo on "Hacks."

# 'Miss Austen' takes a unique look at a literary family

Creators of the new 'Masterpiece' series discuss the novelist's legacy and popularity.

**BY MAIRA GARCIA**

For decades, English novelist Jane Austen has been a constant source of inspiration for filmmakers and TV creators looking to adapt her work, but also authors who want to expand her world and our understanding of it.

Such is the case with "Miss Austen," the 2020 novel by Gill Hornby. The fictional account focuses on Jane's sister, Cassandra, and her decision to destroy much of Jane's correspondence from over the years — something rooted in fact. "Miss Austen" is the first of three novels by Hornby that immerses readers in the lives of Jane and her close-knit family, which the author found "completely captivating."

"They were all bright and all rather extraordinary, although Jane was the most extraordinary of all," Hornby said. "She would write in the day and then read aloud in the family circle at night, which they all did."

Hornby's novel is not unlike a Jane Austen novel, filled with wit, playful bicker-

[See **'Miss Austen,'** E6]

# The next phase of the MCU

A guide to the post-credits scenes of 'Thunderbolts*' and what's ahead.

By Tracy Brown

*This story contains spoilers for "Thunderbolts*" and is meant to be read after seeing the film.*

Marvel's "Thunderbolts*" has been released into the world, which means it's finally time for that other longstanding MCU tradition — discussing its post-credits scenes.

Directed by Jake Schreier, "Thunderbolts*" follows a group of villains-turned-antiheroes from disparate corners of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, led by Yelena Belova (Florence Pugh) and Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan), as they reluctantly join forces to help save the world.

The film is a return to familiar form for the ever-expanding superhero franchise. It's a classic Marvel team-up featuring not-so-classic characters including John Walker (Wyatt Russell) from "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier," Ava Starr, a.k.a. Ghost (Hannah John-Kamen) from "Ant-Man and the Wasp," Alexei Shostakov (David Harbour) from "Black Widow," Antonia Dreykov a.k.a. Taskmaster (Olga Kurylenko) from "Black Widow" and new character Bob (Lewis Pullman).

In another return to form, "Thunderbolts*" features two end-credits scenes. The first, a mid-credits scene, offers a glimpse of how life has changed for the newly minted superhero squad now that they aren't disgraced former heroes or mercenaries operating in the shadows. Alexei, also known as Red Guardian, stops a customer in the cereal aisle of a grocery store in order to call attention to a box featuring the New Avengers. Alexei's American dream of being on a box of Wheaties has finally come true. Whether the team has been accepted by the world, though, is another question.

The second scene, which is shown after the full credits finish rolling, is the more significant of the two as it teases what's to come for the superhero squad as well as the MCU.

Set 14 months after the events of the main story, the team formerly informally known as the Thunderbolts* has hit a bit of a roadblock with its branding. While they had been dubbed the New Avengers by Valentina Allegra de Fontaine (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) by the end of the movie, Sam Wilson, the new Captain America, is not at all pleased that they have claimed the Avengers' name.

In "Captain America: Brave New World," Sam had been given the go-ahead to assemble his own new team of Avengers. According to Yelena, Sam is threatening legal action to keep her team from using the name. This potentially sets up a tension between the two Avengers squads that could come into play whenever audiences finally see them cross paths, likely in the upcoming "Avengers: Doomsday." The cast of the movie, slated for 2026, includes Chris Hemsworth (Thor), Anthony Mackie (Captain America), Paul Rudd (Ant-Man), Tom Hiddleston (Loki), Simu Liu (Shang-Chi), Danny Ramirez (Joaquín Torres), Letitia Wright (Black Panther) and Tenoch Huerta (Namor). But it has not yet been revealed which of these characters are officially members of the Avengers.

This second "Thunderbolts*" post-credits scene concludes with the appearance of a mysterious extradimensional spaceship with the number "4" displayed on its hull. The logo on the ship is that of the Fantastic Four, who are set to be introduced in July's "The Fantastic Four: First Steps."

The upcoming "Fantastic Four" film, which will kick off Phase 6 of the MCU, stars Pedro Pascal, Vanessa Kirby, Joseph Quinn and Ebon Moss-Bachrach as Reed Richards, Sue Storm, Johnny Storm and Ben Grimm, respectively. Also known as Marvel's First Family, the team in the comics gained superpowers while on a mission in space. "First Steps," which will be set on an alternate 1960s-inspired retrofuturistic earth, will see the Fantastic Four take on a giant planet-eating cosmic entity called Galactus and his herald, the Silver Surfer (Julia Garner).

The Fantastic Four are also set to appear in "Doomsday," which will mark former "Iron Man" actor Robert Downey Jr.'s return to the MCU as Doctor Doom. While "Thunderbolts*" is the last film of the MCU's current phase, Phase 5, which started with 2023's "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania," will officially wrap with the upcoming "Ironheart" series, premiering on Disney+ in June.



Chuck Zlotnick Marvel

**HANNAH** John-Kamen, left, Lewis Pullman, Florence Pugh and Wyatt Russell in "Thunderbolts*."



Hunter Hart For The Times

**ERIC CHURCH** at Chief's. He returns to music with "Evangeline vs. the Machine," his first album since 2021.

# Church without boundaries

[**Church,** from E1]

nate royalties from the song to victims of Hurricane Helene in his native North Carolina.

The LP, which closes with a spooky rendition of Tom Waits' "Clap Hands," follows Church's controversial headlining performance at 2024's Stagecoach festival in Indio, where he and more than a dozen gospel singers blended the singer's originals with spirituals like "Amazing Grace" and "I'll Fly Away" and far-flung covers including Al Green's "Take Me to the River" and Snoop Dogg's "Gin and Juice." ("This is Friday night, not Sunday morning!" I recall one guy near me shouting.)

Church, who's married with two sons — and who will take "Evangeline" on tour this fall, including a Nov. 15 stop at Inglewood's Intuit Dome — called from Nashville to talk about the Stagecoach set, the new album and his hobnobbing with billionaires.

**You opened Chief's a little over a year ago. What are the headaches you've run into as a business owner?**

S—, there's been a bunch of those. I think just managing the messaging of why we're different than other places. Listen, it's been a roaring success — maybe the best bar down there. But we're leaning into songwriter shows and shows by upcoming artists versus being somewhere to hear "Friends in Low Places" and get blackout drunk. The biggest challenge is just trying to make sure that people know what it is when they walk in the room.

**Take me back to the Morgan Wallen of it all.**

Morgan called me from the street after it happened. I was watching college basketball, and he said, "Hey, this just happened." I said, "Uh-oh." I knew it was gonna be noisy, and it was — it was damn noisy. The next day on Fox News, the No. 1 story was Morgan throwing a chair, and No. 2 was Israel and Gaza.

It was actually a good thing for Mo. I think that was a line for him, and he's done really well since then — it was a thing he's reacted positively to as a person. I used the old Billy Joe Shaver line on him: "I'm just an old chunk of coal, but I'll be a diamond one day." He went down [to Chief's] and apologized to the staff, shook everybody's hand. I was proud of him.

**What motivated you to get involved with these extra-musical endeavors?**

For me, it was COVID. All of a sudden, you can't play shows, and I just remember thinking, I need to do a better job of widening out what I do.

**Any entrepreneurial models in your mind?**

Jay-Z's done a great job. When I did the national anthem at the Super Bowl with Jazmine Sullivan [in 2021], I remember I was like, "How does all this work?" And they said, "Jay-Z runs it." I went, "What do you mean?" They said, "Jay-Z runs the entertainment at the Super Bowl." OK, well, that's f— cool.

Artists who get to a high level, they have these opportunities because they have the Rolodex. They meet people at shows, they meet people backstage. For me, I play golf with 'em. You've got Fortune 500 guys and billionaires and CEOs, so what do you actually do with that opportunity?

**Ten years ago, would you have seen yourself hanging out with rappers and billionaires?**

Negative [*laughs*].

**Couple of questions about Stagecoach last year before we get into the new album. I was there that night —**

So *you* were the one.

**It was a polarizing gig.**

F— that — it was great. PBS did a documentary, and there's a moment midway through the show where you can actually see me start to grin. I'm like, this is going interesting. But as soon as it was over, I went back and listened to "Springsteen" a cappella in 30-mile-an-hour winds that night, and I knew it was good.

I kind of knew going in: This is probably not the place for this show. I'd played Stagecoach five or six times — you know there's gonna be 30,000 TikTokers out there on people's shoulders trying to take pictures of themselves. But I did it because it was the biggest megaphone and it would get the biggest reaction.

**Maybe it's because it happened right after Beyoncé's "Cowboy Carter" came out, but I got the impression that one of your goals with the performance was to draw attention to the Black roots of country music.**

Sure. I was trying to show an arc musically — that this goes way back. I was trying to show where it all began. And I mean, maybe it was a little bit of a "f— you." I know we ran people off. But it wasn't *for* the people that left — it was for the ones that stayed.

I got a text from Lukas Nelson the following day. He was there with his surf buddies. He said, "We came in from Maui, and I just want to tell you that reminded me so much of my dad." He said, "I put my arms around my buddies, and we all sang along." I thought, well, he probably had plenty of room.

**What would you say not to a hater but to an Eric Church fan — someone who did stay for the show but just didn't get it?**

What I hope fans understand is that it would have been easy for me to do what a lot of artists do and take too much money to come play the hits, then get back on the plane and go home. But I actually thought, I respect this festival enough that I'm gonna work my ass off for a month. I didn't just the day before go, "Let's do this." I know the effort that went into it. And what we gave you, good or bad, was a show you're never gonna see again.

People talk about Dylan going electric at Newport, but in the moment that didn't go well for Dylan. He was booed — people threw s—. But now that's a paradigm shift, right? You and I are going, "F—, I wish I was there." Ten years from now, people are gonna go, "I was at that Stagecoach show, and I stayed till the end."

**Would you do it again?**

Oh, hell yeah. Tomorrow.

**I hear "Evangeline vs. the Machine" as being on a continuum with Stagecoach.**

Yeah, but I'll tell you where it started. Trombone Shorty came and played a show with me in New Orleans on the Gather Again tour [in 2022], and we ended up in the dressing room after and got in this incredible conversation about brass instruments and string instruments and the history of music. Later he invited me to come play this show he does during Jazz Fest.

So we do my song "Cold One" and [the Beatles'] "Come Together." I've done "Cold One" a thousand times, but I had never done "Cold One" like that. It was a Black New Orleans band with horns and background singers and a violin player — not Juilliard violin but like a janky New Orleans violin. The dude had the damn thing on his shoulder, not under his chin. Everything was wrong for what that song is. I'm not convinced anyone even knew the song [*laughs*]. But we found our spot in the middle of it, and it was killer. I flew home thinking: I want to do a record this way.

**Your falsetto in "Darkest Hour" — it's almost uncomfortably vulnerable.**

The song actually started three or four keys lower. But I was listening to Jim Ford and Sly & the Family Stone — honestly, I was thinking about Andy Gibb — and I just kept moving it up. I was incredibly insecure the first time in the studio, but I think that insecurity is what led to the authenticity of the emotion.

**You've said you wrote "Johnny" after the Covenant School shooting in Nashville in 2023. Do you envision the song reassuring a listener or making them angry?**

Maybe both? The hardest thing I've ever done in my life is dropping my boys off at school the day after the shooting. I sat in the parking lot for I don't even know how long because I didn't know what to do. Do I stay here just in case? Not like I could do anything. But just to be close. And for whatever reason, Charlie Daniels came on. What hit me was that the devil was *not* in Georgia — he was here in Nashville.

**Why finish the record with a Tom Waits cover?**

I had four years off [between albums], and I wrote a ton of songs. And a bunch of them are hit songs. I don't mean that arrogantly — I just know after this amount of time that they're hit songs. But some of them didn't work with the room and with the instrumentation. We were going in [the studio] at 10 o'clock the next morning, and I was watching some show on Netflix, and "Clap Hands" came on. All of a sudden, I was like, "Oh, s—..." I paused it, grabbed my guitar, laid down just me with the riff and sent it to Jay.

**What's your relationship with weed these days?**

Mainly edibles. I don't really smoke anymore. And edibles are interesting — you have to learn that environment because you never know how it's gonna work out.

**Gimme a circumstance where you'd be like, "All right — I'll do this again."**

When a certain person passes you a joint, I'm gonna smoke it. I was on Willie [Nelson]'s bus one night. Toby Keith came up — this was when he was alive. Robert Earl Keen was up there. Lance Armstrong was up there. It was a whole vibe.

**You played tribute concerts in L.A. last year honoring Jimmy Buffett and Robbie Robertson.**

I've done a bunch of those tribute shows — too many of them — but those guys meant the world to me. Jimmy and I were campmates at a club out there in California, so I spent a lot of time with him.

**At some of these tributes you'll be like the one country guy on the bill.**

What's funny is that backstage everybody's the same. I'll tell you this story: At the Jimmy show, I was standing side-stage watching the Eagles with my wife. Paul McCartney was about to come out, and a guy comes up and says, "Hey, when Paul comes out, just kind of hug the wall, because Paul likes to have a clear lane." No big deal — it's Paul McCartney. So I hug the wall and Paul comes out. He's watching the Eagles, and I look back and we kind of lock eyes. I'm uncomfortable [*laughs*]. Then he walks up to me and he goes, "Eric." I said, "Yeah?" He goes, "Jimmy and I played tennis together, and he thought the world of you. You wanna come sing 'Hey Jude' with me?"

I'd thought he was gonna say, "Could you please move further to the left and get the f— out of my way?" And instead he's asking if I want to sing with him. I was like, "Yes, Sir Paul, I would love to come sing 'Hey Jude' with you." So me and Brandi Carlile and a few others, we went out and sang with Paul McCartney. That's one of those moments where you go, "What the f— am I doing here?"


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**ROYAL** 11523 Santa Monica Blvd. West L.A.

APRIL 1:00 4:00 7:00

BONJOUR TRISTESSE NR 1:10 4:10

I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT 1:30 4:30 7:30

**MONICA** 1332 Second Street Santa Monica

RUST 1:10 7:10

THE SURFER R 1:30 4:30 7:30

WORDS OF WAR R 1:00 4:00 7:00

ON SWIFT HORSES R 4:10 PM

THE LEGEND OF OCHI PG 4:20 PM

SINNERS R 1:00 4:00 7:00

A MAN AND A WOMAN 1:10 PM

THE FRIEND R 4:15 PM

THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND PG-13 1:20 7:20

NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: VANYA 7:00 PM

**TOWN CENTER** 17200 Ventura Blvd. Encino

RUST 1:00 4:00 7:00

THUNDERBOLTS* PG-13 1:10 4:10 7:10

THE ACCOUNTANT 2 R 1:10 4:10 7:10

THE FRIEND R 4:20 PM

THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND PG-13 7:30 PM

NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: VANYA 7:00 PM

OUR CHILDREN 7:00 PM

BONJOUR TRISTESSE NR 1:20 PM

FAKIR 3:00 PM

THE SKY ABOVE ZENICA 5:00 PM

**GLENDALE** 207 N. Maryland Ave Glendale

A DESERT 1:10 PM

ELECTRA 4:30 PM

THUNDERBOLTS* PG-13 1:10 4:10 7:10

BLUE SUN PALACE 7:10 PM

ON SWIFT HORSES R 4:00 PM

SINNERS R 1:00 4:00 7:00

NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: VANYA 7:00 PM

BONJOUR TRISTESSE NR 1:20 4:20 7:20

FEAR BELOW R 1:30 PM

**NEWHALL** 22500 Lyons Ave. Santa Clarita

A MINECRAFT MOVIE: BLOCK PARTY EDITION PG 7:00 PM

THE SURFER R 1:30 4:30 7:30

THUNDERBOLTS* PG-13 1:10 4:10 7:10

THE ACCOUNTANT 2 R 1:00 4:00 7:00

UNTIL DAWN R 1:20 7:20

SINNERS R 1:00 4:10 7:10

THE KING OF KINGS PG 1:20 PM

WARFARE R 4:00 PM

A MINECRAFT MOVIE PG 1:10 4:20

NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: VANYA 7:00 PM

BONJOUR TRISTESSE NR 4:15 PM

**NoHo 7** 5240 Lankershim Blvd. No. Hollywood

THE SURFER R 1:30 4:30 7:30

THUNDERBOLTS* PG-13 1:10 4:10 7:10

DAAGI 1:00 7:00

ON SWIFT HORSES R 4:10 PM

THE ACCOUNTANT 2 R 1:00 4:00 7:00

THE LEGEND OF OCHI PG 4:30 PM

THE SHROUDS R 1:10 7:20

SINNERS R 12:50 4:00 7:10

BONJOUR TRISTESSE NR 1:20 4:20 7:15

**CLAREMONT** 450 W. 2nd Street Claremont

A MINECRAFT MOVIE: BLOCK PARTY EDITION PG 7:20 PM

THE SURFER R 1:30 4:30 7:30

THUNDERBOLTS* PG-13 1:10 4:10 7:10

THE ACCOUNTANT 2 R 1:00 4:00 7:10

THE LEGEND OF OCHI PG 4:10 PM

SINNERS R 1:00 4:00 7:00

A MINECRAFT MOVIE PG 1:20 PM

NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: VANYA 7:00 PM

BONJOUR TRISTESSE NR 4:20 PM

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*Review* ROBERT ABELE

# ‘Rust’ finally arrives, loaded with guilt

Tragedy unavoidably haunts the western, a showcase of the skill of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins.



Falling Forward Films

**ALEC** Baldwin plays grizzled outlaw Harland Rust who goes on the run to protect grandson Lucas (Patrick Scott McDermott) in “Rust.”

Ideally, we like to watch movies in a state of willful ignorance regarding their making, even if the whole machinery of selling and promoting a movie seems to defy that. But taking in the western “Rust” is a different matter.

It’s the film on which up-and-coming cinematographer Halyna Hutchins was accidentally killed by a live round in a prop gun meant to hold blanks, discharged during a rehearsal by its star, Alec Baldwin. Writer-director Josh Souza was also wounded by the bullet.

That terrible and avoidable incident is a context that no movie should have to bear, even if the thematic matter of “Rust” — violence’s aftermath, atonement’s hard road and, yes, loaded guns in the wrong hands — makes this cursed production’s release, 3½ years after Hutchins’ death, feel more like a solemn performance at a wake than a work to be accepted on its own terms.

Anybody who might have assumed that “Rust” was some fly-by-night exploitation flick should know that its bones are very much that of a moody indie with a heart and a conscience. Death and tragedy are through lines meant to haunt a viewer. Justice is sought after, but is also portrayed as inadequate and hardly the last word. Guns are plentiful but for the most part, their unholstering and firing carries proper weight. In fact, Clint Eastwood’s masterpiece of reckoning “Unforgiven” feels like a tonal lodestar to “Rust,” itself far from a glib, flashy shoot-em-up.

Before Baldwin even appears as a grizzled outlaw with a mission of mercy, “Rust” sets itself up — uncannily, it must be said — as a woeful story about an unintended shooting death. When trying to scare off a wolf, orphaned Wyoming farm boy Lucas (Patrick Scott McDermott) mistakenly kills a local rancher with his family’s prized Henry rifle, a weapon we can tell he’s been reluctant to use. He’s arrested, thrown in jail, then sentenced to the gallows.

Bloody escape comes in the form of murdering thief Harland Rust (Baldwin), the grandfather Lucas never knew he had. Their destination is Mexico, but they’ve got pursuers in the form of a posse led by a steadfast, morosely philosophical U.S. Marshal played by a solid Josh Hopkins and, separately, a creepy Bible-quoting bounty hunter (Travis Fimmel, a tad overcooked).

**‘Rust’**

Not rated
**Running time:** 2 hours, 19 minutes
**Playing:** Laemmle Monica Film Center, Laemmle Town Center, Encino

Frontier characters with colorful language come and go in spurts of saloon musing and fireside dialogue. “Rust” talks a good game about the brutality and despair that are readily called up when living is hard.

But the central relationship between Baldwin’s veteran killer and McDermott’s scarred innocent never quite gels into meaningful cross-generational intimacy, and the chase around them feels meandering.

In its well-worn trail of hunter and hunted, damned and doomed, “Rust” struggles to warrant its two-hours-plus running time. (If only the storytelling economy of Anthony Mann or Budd Boetticher were other genre inspirations.)

“A man makes his choices,” Baldwin’s crusty, guilt-ridden drifter says to his grandkid at one point. It bears mentioning that “Rust,” a movie director Souza went on to agonizingly complete at Hutchins’ family’s request, stands as a lasting testament to her obvious talent. (Bianca Cline completed the cinematography when the production resumed filming, and the film is dedicated to Hutchins.)

There’s an elegant severity to the natural elements that share the frame with the movie’s characters, manifested in silhouettes against vast cloudy skies, delicate snowfalls, shafts of light in dark interiors and crisp air filled with smoke and dust. A testament to lives cut short, “Rust” is beautifully filmed and all the sadder for it.

# Saluting Disney in robot form



Disneyland

**THE SHOW** “Walt Disney — A Magical Life” will feature a lifelike audio-animatronics figure of Disney.



MIKE PUCHER Disneyland Resort

**IMAGINEERS** Jeff Shaver-Moskowitz, left, and Tom Fitzgerald worked on “Life.”

[**Disney,** from E1]
was revealed, one complete with age spots on Disney’s hands and weariness around his eyes — Imagineers stressed their intent is faithful accuracy — but much of the attraction remains secretive. The animatronic wasn’t shown, nor did Imagineering provide any images of the figure, which it promises will be one of its most technically advanced.

Instead, Imagineering sought to show the care in which it was bringing Disney back to life while also attempting to assuage any fears regarding what has become a much-debated project among the Disney community. When D’Amaro unveiled “A Magical Life” last summer, he did so noting he had the support of the Disney family, singling out Disney’s grandnephew, Roy P. Disney, who was in the audience.

Yet soon a social media missive critical of the attraction from Walt’s granddaughter would go viral. It raised anew ethical questions that often surround any project attempting to capture the dead via technology, be it holographic representations of performers or digitally re-created cinematic animations, namely debates surrounding the wishes of the deceased and whether such creations are exploitative. “Dehumanizing,” wrote Joanna Miller in her Facebook post on the figure.

The animatronic somewhat represents a shift in thinking for the Walt Disney Co., as the majority of its robotic figures are representations of fictional characters or overly-saturated political figures such as those in Florida’s Hall of Presidents, in which new politicians are added while they are living. Arguably, the Walt Disney Co. first tested the public’s willingness to embrace a resurrected Disney via a holographic-like projection for its touring “Disney 100: The Exhibition,” which initially raised some eyebrows.

Longtime Imagineer Tom Fitzgerald, known for his work on beloved Disney projects such as Star Tours and the Guardians of the Galaxy coaster in Florida, said Wednesday that “A Magical Life” has been in the works for about seven years. Asked directly about ethical concerns in representing the deceased via a robotic figurine, Fitzgerald noted the importance of the Walt Disney story, not only to the company but to culture at large.

“His life story had been told in these other formats already,” Fitzgerald says, referencing the film “Walt Disney: One Man’s Dream,” which currently airs at Florida’s Hollywood Studios. “What could we do at Disneyland for our audience that would be part of our tool kit vernacular but that would bring Walt to life in a way that you could only experience at the park? We felt the technology had gotten there. We felt there was a need to tell that story in a fresh way.”

Disneyland, in contrast to the company’s other parks around the globe, places a premium on historical attractions, in part because it’s the only park Disney walked in. The park’s patriarch even had a small apartment on Main Street, U.S.A., in which he would occasionally spend the night. After its initial run during the 70th celebration, “A Magical Life” will play in tandem with “Great Moments With Mr. Lincoln” thanks to a newly constructed revolving stage. A new pre-show gallery will feature a mini-recreation of Disney’s apartment and also unveil some never-before-seen artifacts, such as early master plans of Disneyland.

The figure, essentially, was created in part to anticipate criticism. Fitzgerald notes modern audiences, with the ability to zoom in on a character via smartphone, are far more discerning. The animatronic will aim to represent Disney in 1963. Disney died in 1966 at 65.

“He needs to be able to speak with his hands. Hands, very important,” Fitzgerald says. “When you watch Walt Disney talking, he’s very expressive with his hands when he talks. He also has expressive eyebrows, which many of you had heard about. When he speaks, he speaks with his eyebrows. ... One of the things I discovered in watching the footage, he doesn’t blink when he speaks.” Thus, when animating the figure’s eye movements, Fitzgerald says, there was much discussion over his “blink profile,” ensuring it matched up with filmed footage.

Though the exact arc of the show, which will run about 17 minutes, wasn’t revealed, Fitzgerald and fellow Imagineer Jeff Shaver-Moskowitz, who was instrumental in the recent reimagining of Disneyland’s Toontown, noted that all dialogue will be taken directly from Disney’s speeches. The setting will be in Disney’s office, and for much of the show Disney will be leaning on his desk, although the figure was teased as being able to stand up.

Fitzgerald and Shaver-Moskowitz note that they researched Disney’s shoe size, looked at molds of his hands and even attempted — and failed — to find out which hair products Disney used. He will be wearing a tie emblazoned with the logo for Palm Springs’ Smoke Tree Ranch, a favorite retreat of Disney’s.

“We didn’t order an animatronic to look like Walt,” Shaver-Moskowitz says. “We built a Walt animatronic to deliver a performance that was specifically Walt.”

Yet can any animatronic capture the essence of a human, even a theatrical interpretation of one?

“You could never get the casualness of his talking,” Disney’s granddaughter Miller wrote in her post. While those who know the Disney family have confirmed the veracity of the post, attempts to reach Miller have been unsuccessful. Members of the Walt Disney family are said to be divided, with many supporting the animatronic and some others against it, say those in the know who have declined to speak on the record for fear of ruining their relationships.

“He was so fascinated with technology, and also the intersection between technology and art,” says Kirsten Komoroske, executive director of the Walt Disney Family Museum, of Disney.

Multiple descendants of Disney’s sit on various boards that the Family Museum is associated with, and Komoroske says those working with the institution have pledged their support of the animatronic. “They really feel that he would have liked this project.”

Others who knew Disney, such as legendary Imagineer Bob Gurr, the designer of the Disneyland Monorail, the Matterhorn Bobsleds and more, as well as a pivotal collaborator on the Lincoln figure, have confirmed that they have seen the animatronic but have chosen not to discuss it. “I am embargoed,” Gurr told The Times, adding only that the public would have “quite a reaction.”

Imagineers were asked about Miller’s comments. Dusty Sage, executive editor of Disney fan site Micechat, told the audience he has spoken with Miller and her primary concern was that Disney never wanted to be turned into a robotic figure.

“In all our research, we never found any documentation of Walt saying that,” Shaver-Moskowitz says. “We know that it’s anecdotal and we can’t speak to what was told to people in private and we can’t speak to Joanna’s specific feelings about the project. But we have worked very diligently for many years with the Walt Disney Family Museum and members of the Disney and Miller family. ... We’ve taken care to make sure that the family is along the journey with us and we feel that we’ve presented a faithful and theatrical presentation that keeps Walt alive in the medium that he pioneered.”

The Walt Disney Co. has made a significant effort over the years to mythologize Disney. Statues of Disney can be found at both Disneyland and Disney California Adventure, and trinkets bearing his image, including an ornament of the latter, can occasionally be spotted for sale in the park’s gift shops. The reality of who Disney was has arguably become obscured.

“Walt Disney — A Magical Life” will walk a fine line when it opens, attempting to inspire a new generation to look into Disney’s life while also portraying him as more than just a character in the park’s arsenal.

“Why are we doing this now?” Fitzgerald says. “For two reasons. One is Disneyland’s 70th anniversary is an ideal time we thought to create a permanent tribute to Walt Disney in the Opera House. The other: I grew up watching Walt Disney on television. I guess I’m the old man. He came into our living room every week and chatted and it was very casual and you felt like you knew the man. But a lot of people today don’t know Walt Disney was an individual. They think Walt Disney is a company.”

And now nearly 60 years after his death, Disney will once again grace Main Street, whether or not audiences — or even some members of his family — are ready to greet him.

# COMICS

**LA CUCARACHA** By Lalo Alcaraz




**CRABGRASS** By Tauhid Bondia



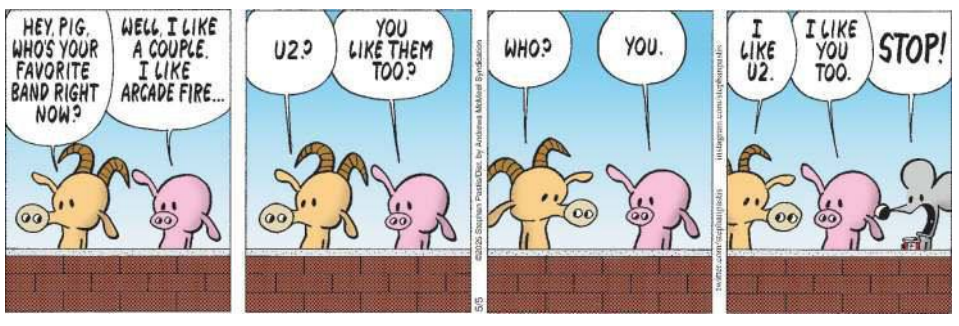

**CURTIS** By Ray Billingsley



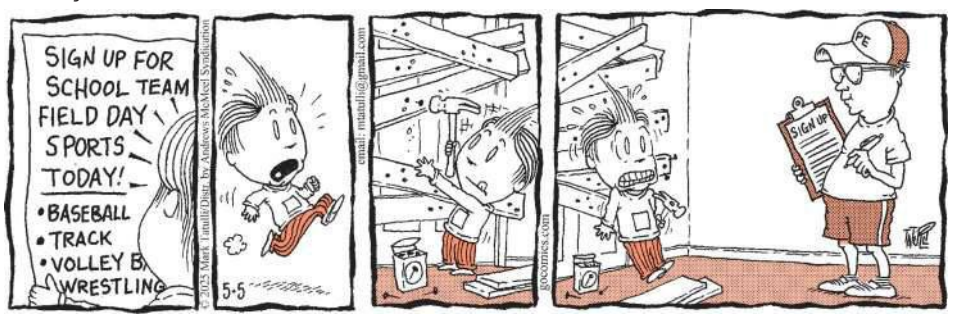

**LOOSE PARTS** By Dave Blazek




**PEARLS BEFORE SWINE** By Stephan Pastis




**LIO** By Mark Tatulli




**ZITS** By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman




**TUNDRA** By Chad Carpenter




**SIX CHIX** By Isabella Bannerman




**FRAZZ** By Jef Mallett




**NON SEQUITUR** By Wiley



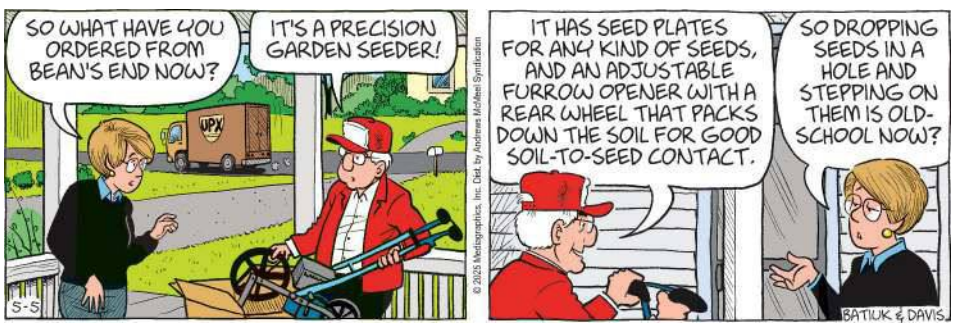

**PICKLES** By Brian Crane




**BABY BLUES** By Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman




**CRANKSHAFT** By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers




**JUMP START** By Robb Armstrong




**MACANUDO** By Liniers




**BLONDIE** By Dean Young & John Marshall




**BETWEEN FRIENDS** By Sandra Bell-Lundy



**BIZARRO** By Wayno and Piraro




**DRABBLE** By Kevin Fagan




**MUTTS** By Patrick McDonnell




**PEANUTS** By Charles M. Schulz



# COMICS

## SUDOKU

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5/5/25

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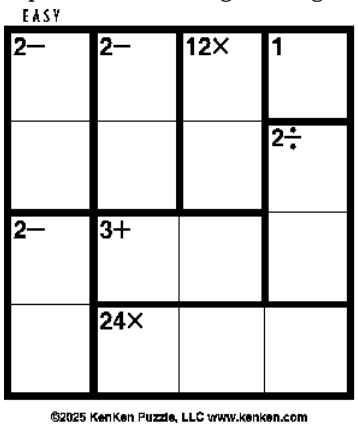
Solutions to Sunday's puzzles

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 or 2-by-3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 6 for the smaller grid). For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit *www.sudoku.org.uk*.

## KENKEN

Every box will contain a number; numbers depend on the size of the grid. For a 6x6 puzzle, use Nos. 1-6. Do not repeat a number in any row or column. The numbers in each heavily outlined set of squares must combine to produce the target number found in the top left corner of the cage using the mathematical operation indicated. A number can be repeated within a cage as long as it is not in the same row or column.

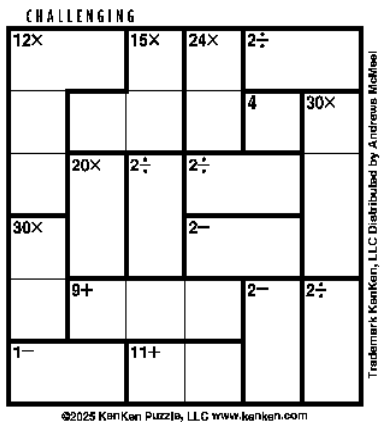
EASY




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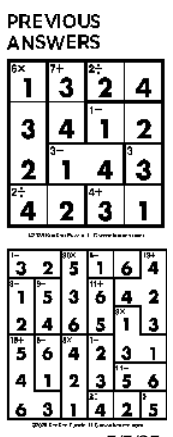
CHALLENGING




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PREVIOUS ANSWERS



5/5/25

## HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis

**Aries** (March 21-April 19): Clarity is attractive, calm is powerful, and most of all, joy is magnetic. Discovering what lights you up lights the way for others to reach you.

**Taurus** (April 20-May 20): No need to force what's already aligning. You'll draw people and opportunities in like gravity, without effort.

**Gemini** (May 21-June 21): Though you're gifted in many ways, one talent shines especially bright today: your ability to make others feel truly seen.

**Cancer** (June 22-July 22): The best reason to stay mellow and patient isn't just to improve someone else's experience. It's because you will feel calm, in control and quietly powerful in your skin.

**Leo** (July 23-Aug. 22): When you encourage one's strengths and passions, you help them grow into more of who they truly are. That's where healing happens.

**Virgo** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Pacing matters. A relationship needs rhythm and flow before anyone can truly lead or follow. It's especially true in group work. Sync first.

**Libra** (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): Impactful guidance uplifts rather than reduces. Encouragement is emotional sunlight that lets the grower do the growing.

**Scorpio** (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): Transformation doesn't happen in comfort — it happens on the edge. Shed old skins, take bold steps and meet the new version of you.

**Sagittarius** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You like being pushed past your comfort zone. But growth needs room to rest too. You'll get it.

**Capricorn** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Sometimes, just showing up is huge. There's so much richness in you — courage, artistry, vulnerability, a love that can be fierce.

**Aquarius** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Pretend you're writing a message in a bottle to someone who needs to hear that they'll rise again. That person is out there, or in there.

**Pisces** (Feb. 19-March 20): A ritual will eventually bring clarity, joy and the results you want. But for now, it just feels like one more thing. Ease is coming.

**Today's birthday** (May 5): You'll build something lasting from the vapors of a dream. You'll gain the confidence of someone influential, and their faith in you will ignite a new fire. A bold decision will change the trajectory of your career. Harmony replaces tension in your personal realm. A heartfelt correspondence will affirm your path. Investments of time, money and trust will bring strong returns. Pisces and Aries adore you. Lucky numbers: 6, 15, 28, 5, 19.

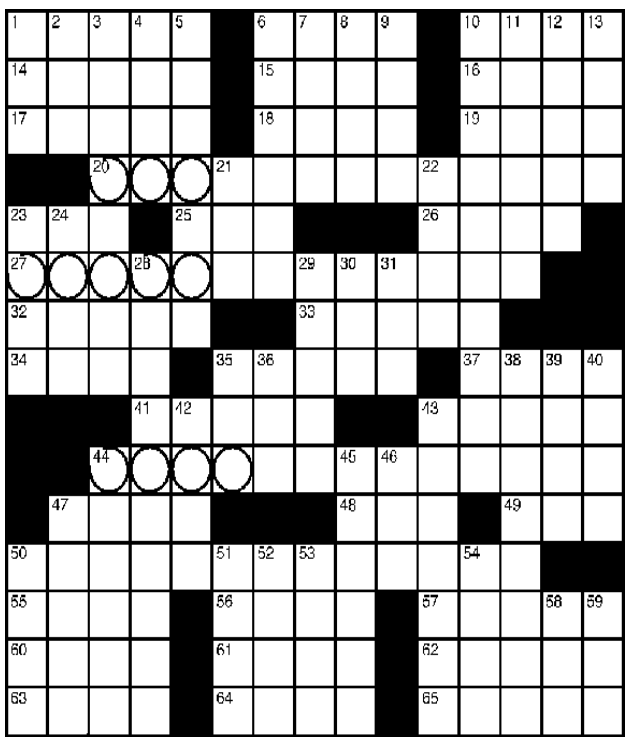
Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

## CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol

By Kevin Christian & Andrea Carla Michaels

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**ACROSS**
**1** Flat floaters in a pool
**6** "Fuhgeddaboudit!"
**10** Small amounts of face cream
**14** Assign portions
**15** Visa competitor, informally
**16** Mallorca, por ejemplo
**17** Savanna hunter known for its laugh
**18** Spinner on a roof
**19** Canned Hormel product
**20** Offerings at some cocktail parties
**23** "How ya doin'?"
**25** Prez after JFK
**26** Just that single time
**27** Improvement that may be based on psychology instead of medicine
**32** Follow as a result
**33** Need to and from the dog park
**34** Lightbulb unit
**35** Apple beverage
**37** All excited
**41** Copy using very thin paper
**43** Jumper cable connection
**44** Accessory that may coordinate with bath mats
**47** Mountaintop
**48** BofA convenience
**49** Explosive material
**50** First leg of the Triple Crown, whose levels of success can be found in this puzzle's circled letters
**55** Post-WWII transnational gp.
**56** Bygone Apple player
**57** Wed in secret
**60** Beige kin
**61** Spelling of "BH90210"
**62** Coffee shop freebie
**63** One of the five W's of journalism
**64** Pentathlon blade
**65** Fantasy league deal

**DOWN**
**1** "Go team!"
**2** Gymnastics gold medalist Raisman
**3** Was over in no time
**4** "Breathe Again" singer Braxton
**5** Comics legend who co-created Spider-Man and the X-Men
**6** Language of WWII code talkers
**7** Persian Gulf sultanate
**8** Hang in the balance
**9** CFO or VP
**10** Turn off, in a way
**11** Characteristic
**12** Supremely unconcerned
**13** "I think so too!"
**21** Go out, as the tide
**22** Weeding tools
**23** Gush forth
**24** Funny bone neighbor
**28** "Stop it!"
**29** Respected tribal member
**30** Overdue fine, e.g.
**31** A long way away
**35** Crow's cry
**36** Cooler cubes
**38** Exercise with barnyard animals
**39** Creator of Norse mythology?
**40** Polite fellow
**42** Streaming option
**43** Spot frequently shared by flyers
**44** Nissan sedan
**45** Golfer's helper
**46** Sport-__: off-road auto
**47** Bellini fruit
**50** Was in the loop
**51** Quote from, as a legal case
**52** BTS music genre
**53** Days of knights
**54** Hazy memory
**58** Word after mattress or mouse
**59** Before, to Byron

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| A | L | I | S | T | | P | I | E | C | E | M | E | A | L |
| S | I | A | I | C | | A | S | K | | P | E | H | M | |
| H | O | L | E | C | A | R | D | S | | B | E | D | E | |
| | | | L | E | V | I | | | D | U | R | I | A | M |
| | F | A | L | S | E | S | T | A | R | T | | E | W | E |
| A | H | G | O | | M | E | A | I | Y | | P | L | A | I |
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| U | R | B | A | N | M | Y | T | I | | C | I | A | R | A |
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## BRIDGE

By Frank Stewart

A senior member of my club — a good player — had begun to wear glasses.

"My eyesight isn't what it was," he admitted, "but I can still see through people about as well as ever."

As declarer at 3NT in a penny game, my friend took the ace of spades and led the four of hearts: deuce, queen ... and East played low smoothly.

"I wasn't fooled," declarer told me. "I led a diamond to my queen next, winning. Next I led a heart to dummy's ace — no second finesse — and a diamond to my jack. When West followed low, I took the ace, conceded the fourth diamond and had nine tricks: four diamonds, two spades, two hearts and a club."

South saw through East's defense. Any competent East would duck the first heart finesse, but West was unlikely to duck the queen of diamonds if he had the king. (East might have J-10-8.) Even if West won the first diamond and led another spade, South could hope that diamonds split 3-3 or dummy's hearts came in.

This week: which finesse?

You hold: ♠ A K ♥ 10 4 ♦ A Q J 6 3 ♣ A 10 4 3. You open one diamond, your partner responds one spade, you bid two clubs and he jumps to 3NT. What do you say?

Answer: Your hand is worth about 19 points, counting a point for the fifth card in diamonds that may be a winner. Partner could have as few as 13 points but maybe 15 or 16. Slam is possible; raise to 4NT — quantitative, not ace-asking, since no trump suit is agreed.

South dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH
♠ J 9
♥ A Q J 9 6
♦ 5 2
♣ 9 6 5 2

WEST
♠ Q 10 7 3 2
♥ 7 5 2
♦ 7 4
♣ K Q 8

EAST
♠ 8 6 5 4
♥ K 8 3
♦ K 10 9 8
♣ J 7

SOUTH
♠ A K
♥ 10 4
♦ A Q J 6 3
♣ A 10 4 3

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 ♦ | Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| 2 ♣ | Pass | 2 ♥ | Pass |
| 2 NT | Pass | 3 NT | All Pass |

Opening lead — ♠ 3

Tribune Content Agency

## ASKING ERIC

**Dear Eric:** When my daughter married 25 years ago, both she and her husband decided to go vegan. My husband and I respected and fully supported them.

Sure, it was hard to ditch the turkey at Thanksgiving and the roast beef at Christmas, but we handled it. Instead, we experimented making unique ethnic dishes emphasizing real vegetables and unusual grains even if it did take three times more effort and time and taxed stomachs not used to all the beans.

What was more disappointing was not being able to use butter and eggs to make the traditional cakes and cookies that had been passed with pride through my mother's side of the family. I tried hard to make new plant-based desserts with substitute ingredients, but they just do not taste the same. Without these memorable recipes, our family gatherings always feel lacking.

The last straw came after we had a barbecue with our daughter's family and grilled some of the new vegan burgers. Afterward I became ill and only then discovered it contained a new synthetic ingredient that irritates digestive systems of people who have inflammatory conditions like mine.

Now that I'm 75, I am done. I just don't have the body, time or energy to fight the veganism battle anymore. What can be done?

Unhappy at the Holiday Table

**Dear Holiday Table:** I believe that you've made a good effort to honor your daughter's veganism, but I also believe that your resentment over this life choice is coloring your experience. You characterize this as a battle, but who is fighting?

For instance, if you want the traditional cakes and cookies, what's stopping you from making them for yourself and other nonvegan guests, while still making (or assigning someone to make) vegan alternatives?

I don't see demands from your daughter in your letter. Now, they might be there in reality and, if that's the case, then the situation is slightly different. But, either way, ask yourself what's necessary for reasonable accommodations and what's too much for you.

**Dear Eric:** We live in a 14-unit, mostly self-managed condo building. We have been here 17 years. The woman above us had been here 25 years (or more) when we moved in.

Over the last several years, she has become increasingly difficult. It did not help that I was on the condo board when she was not paying her assessments, not fulfilling her chapter 13 plan, etc. She is upset that she hears noises from other units. In retaliation, she makes noise so that the rest of us will have to experience what she is going through.

She plays music or her TV loud enough to interfere with my concentration. And she occasionally bangs on walls or ceilings and screams "Go back where you came from" and other invective at the tenant, who is a refugee.

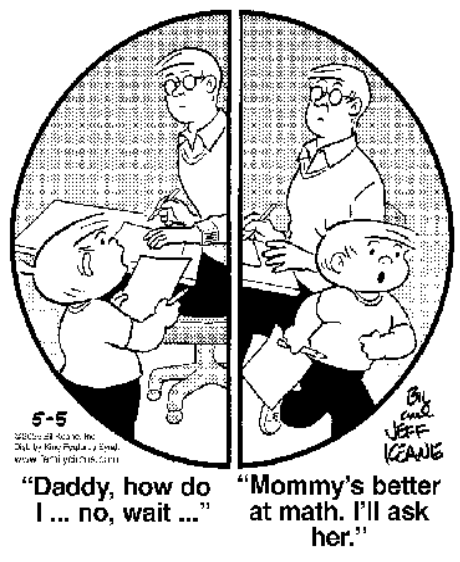
Worse than that, she has called the police to complain about the noise from the upstairs tenant more than once when it was just a mom and baby. What do you recommend?

Want Quiet

**Dear Quiet:** As a former member of your condo's board, you're probably familiar with the building's rules. Is there a quiet enjoyment clause that your neighbor is violating? If so, you should bring this ongoing issue to the current board. Now, as you write, she has a history of not paying her assessments, so it sounds like this board isn't especially effective at enforcing its own rules. Should the current board prove unhelpful, you can consult with an attorney who specializes in condo boards and HOAs for more options for resolving internal disputes.

Email questions to eric@askingeric.com.

**FAMILY CIRCUS** By Bil Keane




**DENNIS THE MENACE** By Hank Ketcham




**FREE RANGE** By Bill Whitehead

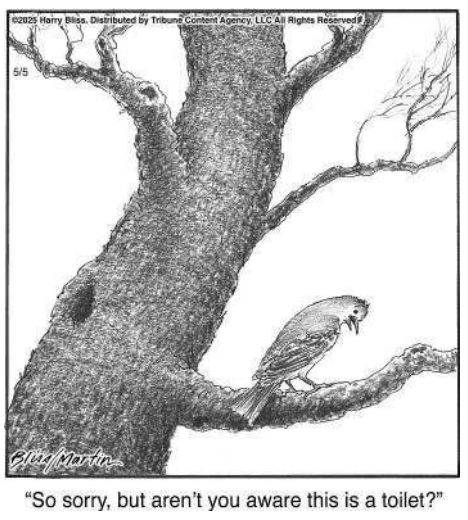



**MARMADUKE** By Brad & Paul Anderson



"The next time I say my soup is too hot, please don't blow on it."

**BLISS** By Harry Bliss

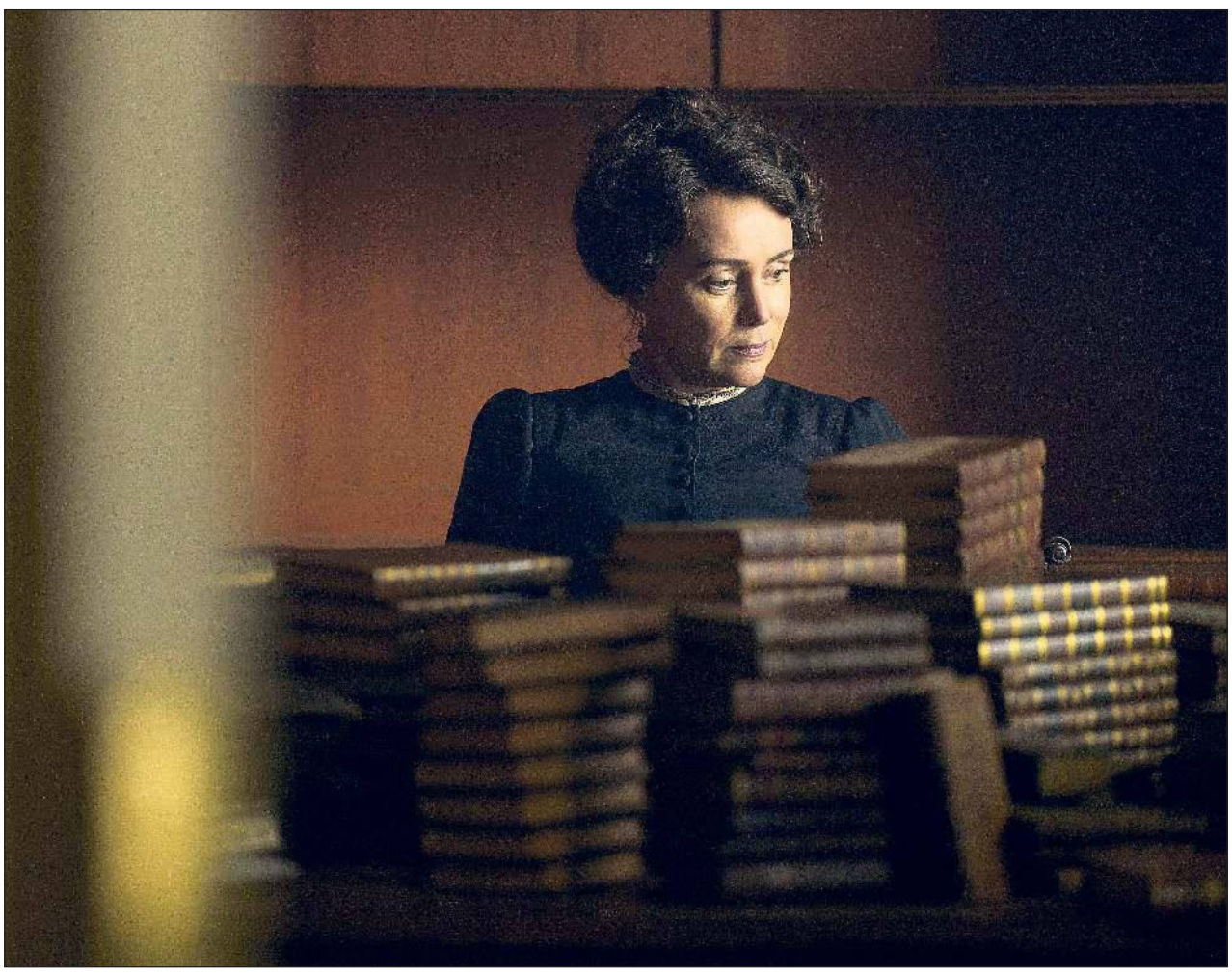



"So sorry, but aren't you aware this is a toilet?"

**SPEED BUMP** By Dave Coverly



# A new take on Austen's family



Photographs by ROBERT VIGLASKY Bonnie Productions for Masterpiece





**THE CAST** of miniseries "Miss Austen" features Keeley Hawes as Cassandra Austen, clockwise from top; Synnøve Karlsen as young Cassandra, left, and Patsy Ferran as Jane Austen; and Calam Lynch as Tom Fowle.

['**Miss Austen,**' from E1]
ing, tragedy and romance. But it was the love between sisters Jane and Cassandra that inspired this particular book, which has now been adapted for television.

"Miss Austen," a four-part miniseries, premiered Sunday on PBS as part of "Masterpiece." (Subsequent episodes will air on Sundays, with the final two airing May 18; they also will stream on the PBS app and *pbs.org*.) The period drama, starring actor Keeley Hawes as Cassandra Austen, premiered in the U.K. on BBC One in February to favorable reviews.

Hornby was joined by executive producer Christine Langan of Bonnie Productions, which produced the series for "Masterpiece," at a screening of "Miss Austen" at the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books last weekend, where they discussed Jane's legacy and adapting the book for TV. It's the production company's first TV series.

"I absolutely loved the read," Langan said about why she chose to produce it. "I was moved to tears by the end, and I found it a completely unique angle on a writer I have adored for decades, and very immediate and gripping and relatable."

Langan, who has previously produced award-winning series and films including "Cold Feet," "The Deal" and "The Queen," said she loved the idea of rehabilitating the reputation of Cassandra, who was "an ever-present good influence, good source of support and love to one of the world's most famous writers."

In the series, Cassandra is slightly younger than her counterpart in the book, and that partly had to do with Hawes, whose dramatic and comedic abilities were crucial to the role.

"We had already decided to make Cassandra a little younger than she is in the novel, the feeling being that middle-aged women are every bit as invisible in this society as elderly women," Langan said. "We loved [Hawes'] versatility and her grace, and then she met us on an equal footing with the same vision and passion."

"Keeley has a huge and brilliant reputation in the U.K. She's hugely loved," she added.

That stands in contrast with Cassandra, who has long been viewed with some consternation by historians of her sister. She burned all but 160 of Jane's letters, which could have provided scholars and fans alike with more details about the author and her life. There are various theories as to why Cassandra chose to destroy them, including preventing negative scrutiny of Jane and wanting to preserve her sister's legacy.

The series, like the book, attempts to recast Cassandra more positively, along with her motive for destroying Jane's letters, which includes keeping them away from family members like the sly Mary Austen (played by Jessica Hynes), who was married to James Austen, brother to Cassandra and Jane. We also see flashbacks of young Cassandra (Synnøve Karlsen) and Jane (Patsy Ferran) as the events in the letters come to life, revealing their true nature.

The story is mostly set in Kintbury, a village in Hampshire, England, where Hornby has resided for more than 30 years and where she first learned about Cassandra. "I feel that Cassandra found me," she said.

While the letters are central to the drama, "Miss Austen" is also about Cassandra and her fiancé, Tom Fowle (Calam Lynch), whose family resided in Kintbury. He died of yellow fever during a voyage to the Caribbean, and Cassandra never married.

"I knew that she [Cassandra] was there on the last Christmas that they had together, and that she went down to our gate at dawn on a January morning and said goodbye to Tom and never saw him again," Hornby said. "And she began slightly to haunt me because I've always been quite obsessed about those women in history."

It's a notable time to reconsider Cassandra's role in Jane's life: This year marks the 250th anniversary of Jane's birth. Hornby said it was Cassandra who gave Jane the ability to produce "six of the greatest novels in the English language" by taking care of her when she was sick and running the household so Jane could write. And 2 ½ centuries later, Jane's stories continue to delight readers and inspire creators like Hornby and Langan.

"She wrote about what it's like to have a mom, a sister, to fall in love, have a roof over your head, what the weather's like and how annoying the neighbors are — all stuff we all still do," Hornby said. "She speaks to us in a way that none of her contemporaries do."

"And she's fantastically funny," Langan adds.

Imagining the Austens and their lives has been fruitful territory for Hornby, whose subsequent works, "Godmersham Park" and the upcoming novel "The Elopement," slated for release in the U.K. in May and in the U.S. in October, also are centered on the family.

And Hornby's partnership with Langan will continue; the producer has already optioned "The Elopement."

This year also marks the 30th anniversary of the TV adaptation of "Pride and Prejudice" that starred Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle and the 20th anniversary of the film version, with Keira Knightley and Matthew MacFadyen. (Netflix recently greenlighted a limited series too.) "Miss Austen" also contains references to the novel — making the show's premiere this year feel like a full-circle moment.

"It's so fascinating that she's still going," Hornby said. "She's very much a posthumous success, and she really wanted success. She was clever enough to know that what she was writing was really good."

# In 'Hacks,' Deborah wins, but late night loses

['**Hacks,**' from E1]
the intersection of the fictional and the real.

"One thing Garry used to say that had a big impact on me," Judd Apatow, who wrote, produced and directed on "Sanders," once told me, "was that the show was about people who loved each other but show business got in the way." According to Shandling, speaking in 2010, the real subject of the show was "the human qualities that have brought us to where we are now in the world: the addiction to needing more and wanting more and talking more. We were examining the labels put on success — is it successful to be on TV every day, to be famous, to have a paycheck? And you see what's missing is love and heart."

Something of the same is being asked in the current, fourth season of the Max series "Hacks." Venerable stand-up comedian Deborah Vance (Jean Smart) has finally landed her dream job, hosting her own late-night network talk show, following a pilot canceled years before amid tabloid rumors that Deborah had burned down her husband's house.

Young modern comedy writer Ava Daniels (Hannah Einbinder), with whom she has been locked in a generational, quasi-familial, mutually beneficial, mutually frustrating, codependent love-hate relationship since the series debuted in 2021, has blackmailed her way into the position of head writer, launching the enterprise on a sea of tension. (The network has assigned Deborah and Ava a full-time HR chaperone.)

Within the context of the series, Deborah's hiring as the first female late-night show is historic — Joan Rivers, who chaired Fox's "The Late Show" from 1986 to 1988, does not exist in this universe; neither does "The Faye Emerson Show" (CBS, 1949-1951), nor Cynthia Garrett (the first African American woman in late-night), who hosted NBC's "Later" from 2000 to 2001.

"This network has never hired a woman for 11:30," Deborah says. "Or anyone as old as me. Or, let's be honest, a blond. It'd be easier to get elected president." Notwithstanding the cable shows of Chelsea Handler, Samantha Bee, Sarah Silverman and Busy Philipps or Taylor Tomlinson, working for CBS on "After Midnight" until her contract runs out in June and she goes back to stand-up — her choice, with the show canceled in its wake — this has been and remains substantially true. It didn't matter that these women were younger than Deborah, or, some of them, as blond. The long-term late-night hosts are now, and have always been, dudes.

But even as Deborah's dream comes true, in the real world, late-night is troubled. Ratings are falling. "I don't know if there will be any late-night television shows on network TV in 10 years," Jimmy Kimmel said last summer on Gov. Gavin Newsom's "Politickin' " podcast. "Maybe there'll be one, but there won't be a lot of them." (Kimmel made a cameo appearance on "Hacks' " most recent episode, angrily confronting Deborah after she tried to poach Kristen Bell as a guest: "Everyone knows that when she has a new project she does my show first — I got full custody when Conan died.") As Helen Hunt's Winnie, the network executive overseeing "Late Night," tells Deborah, the choice was not between her and a different host, but between her and canceling the franchise. Her hiring, on the basis of massive success in Season 3, represents a sort of "Hail Deborah" play.

Like most everything in our confusing century, post-prime-time television has been reshaped and undercut by the internet. Late-night TV, which once had to be watched, well, late at night — it had a sort of circadian component — has been atomized into clips to watch when you like. And the competition has become fierce: Never in human history have there been so many people talking to so many other people for public consumption, entertainment or education, on podcasts and panels and personal appearances.



JESSICA PEREZ Max

**JEAN SMART** plays a late-night host — just as the format is fading in real life.

Not every big or baby star who'd appear opposite Jimmy Fallon or Kimmel or Stephen Colbert or even at 12:30 a.m. with Seth Meyers, whose "Late Night" is the last talk show standing in that time slot — "After Midnight" is a game show in which comedians riff off pop culture and social media — is going to show up on YouTube. But many will, in situations where they're allowed to stretch out, go deep, get silly, or eat hot wings while trying to answer questions.

Into this space in time streams "Everybody's Live With John Mulaney," a sort of sequel to "John Mulaney Presents: Everybody's in L.A.," which ran for six weeks last year as part of the Netflix Is a Joke Festival, and is now two-thirds of the way through its 12-week run. Episodes premiere Wednesdays, airing live at 10 p.m. on the East Coast and 7 p.m. on the West (Mulaney announces the time and temperature in L.A. at the start of each), so it's not technically a late-night show. Neither is it any kind of competition with network late-night series, living, as it does, on Netflix time.

But it's built like one, more or less, featuring a monologue, banter with sidekick Richard Kind — in full Richard Kind effect — brief filmed sketches, interviews and a musical guest. Each episode features a theme in the form of a question — "Should I Lend People Money?"; "What's the Best Way to Fire Someone?"; "Can Major Surgery Be Fun?" — discussed by a motley panel of celebrities and a relevant expert. (Guests have included David Letterman, Conan O'Brien, Tina Fey, Quinta Brunson, Bill Hader, Joan Baez, Fred Armisen, John Waters and Ayo Edebiri, none of them promoting a project.)

There are also phone-in callers, possibly to reinforce the show's liveness; but these segments have not been particularly successful — or rather, they have been particularly unsuccessful. The callers often seem confused; there is dead air, and Mulaney, who does not hold the tightest rein over the show, will summarily end a conversation by asking what kind of car they drive.

Mulaney is one of the funniest comics working, and a great talk-show guest. The best parts of the show, where he seems most present, in control and at ease, are when his monologues eschew jokes for stories; he's hilarious talking about a botched booking for Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, or a trip to the doctor, or teaching his son about urination. "Everybody's Live" can come off a little unfocused; the weekly themes rarely develop into anything significant, conversations can be lopsided and, professional production values notwithstanding, there is something sort of ... public access cable about it all.

This is not exactly in the show's disfavor. Its looseness is appealing, if you don't expect more than a pleasant time. In any case, its departure is already scheduled. The fate of Deborah Vance's late-night show — which, in the snippets shown, is getting good — is known only to its showrunners, depending, of course, ironically, on whether Max renews "Hacks." (It seems a safe bet.)

That series' arguments about art versus "selling soap" aren't raised in order for the show to express an opinion — "Hacks" itself is a popular entertainment, serious about its characters, or most of them, but out for laughs — but because they're banners for the war that Ava and Deborah have been waging from the beginning. It's only in their periods of truce, when their differing ambitions conjoin, that things move forward.

Both need their show to thrive; they're insecure, if opinionated people, who crave approval and ultimately make each other better, though they'll only occasionally admit it. We want their show to live because we're invested in their relationship, though the real possibility of a fifth season of "Hacks" — reportedly designed with a five-season arc — means that, for their near future, it will be a bumpy late-night.