



Partly cloudy,
temps in the
mid-60s

BEVERLY PRESS

INSIDE

• Piano teacher
arrested pg. 4

• A bumpy ride on
Van Ness
pg. 8

Volume 34 No. 52

Serving Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, Hancock Park and Miracle Mile

December 26, 2024

Hanukkah begins with services, celebrations

■ Jewish community observes 'Festival of Lights'

BY TABOR BREWSTER

As 2024 comes to an end, the Jewish community around the world will mark the eight-day festival of Hanukkah, which began on the night of Dec. 25 this year. The winter holiday commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple

in Jerusalem – a moment in Jewish history where Jews reclaimed what was once desecrated – and offers the chance to celebrate through joyous tradition and hopeful reflection. While Hanukkah is traditionally celebrated at home, many synagogues across Beverly Hills, West

See **Hanukkah** page 22



photo courtesy of Temple Emanuel Beverly Hills

Temple Emanuel in Beverly Hills will offer the community a chance to come together with a Hanukkah lighting ceremony on Sunday, Dec. 29.

Looking back on a dynamic year

■ Major changes occur in 2024 in Beverly Hills, WeHo and L.A.

BY EDWIN FOLVEN

The past year was a time of expansive growth and significant change in Beverly Hills, West Hollywood and Los Angeles, with new leadership at many levels of government, fresh perspectives on community issues and new projects taking form or poised to shape the future.

The 2024 election was among the top stories of the year, with representatives for the local area elected to the U.S. Senate and California Assembly, two council members and three school board members elected in Beverly Hills, and two council members elected in West Hollywood. Voters also approved a measure to expand the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors from five to nine members. To address the intractable problem of homelessness, voters approved Measure A, a county-wide quarter-cent sales tax increase to create housing, programs and services.



photo by Edwin Folven

The city installed flags in Beverly Gardens Park in January to commemorate lives lost during the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack in Israel.

The Olympics were also a major focus in 2024, with delegations from Los Angeles and West Hollywood visiting Paris in preparation for the 2028 Los Angeles

Olympic Games. Along with Beverly Hills, the cities are preparing for sporting events including the FIFA World Cup in

See **2024** page 21

Car wash construction causes concern

■ WeHo residents claim project will add more traffic congestion

BY RANCE COLLINS

A dozen West Hollywood residents gathered on Dec. 18 for a meeting to discuss the future of a Chevron station located at the corner of La Cienega Boulevard and

Holloway Drive.

Currently, an auto service station and food mart are located on the property, but the plan – long in gestation – will transform part of the lot into an automated car wash and a 24-hour convenience store. The meeting was held at the station, in conversation with the owners and construction team.

Some local residents have protested the development since the

project was first proposed, with concerns focused on additional traffic. The West Hollywood City Council approved the construction in August 2020.

The portion of La Cienega Boulevard on which the Chevron station is situated is on a steep incline from Santa Monica Boulevard to Sunset Boulevard. Last week, a collision at the intersection involved five vehicles, and gridlock is already a frequent problem. Residents including Carolyn Campbell believe that lines forming for the car wash would exacerbate the traffic even further. She said that on a typical day, cars sit in the intersection through light cycles during rush hour.

"[The other day], I stood there for three changes to the light, and never once were people safe to cross this intersection because there were cars backed up," Campbell said.

Campbell wrote a letter to the City Council asking them to review its approval, attaching a petition signed by more than 100 community members. When the project was approved in a 3-1 vote, Councilwoman Lauren Meister was the lone "no" vote, citing the potential negative environmental

See **Residents** page 22



photo by Rance Collins

The service center at the La Cienega Boulevard Chevron station is set to be replaced with an automated car wash.



photo by Tabor Brewster

A long-unused building in West Hollywood that sits just over the border from Beverly Hills will find new life as a bar and restaurant.

The return of Trader Vic's

■ Iconic Polynesian restaurant plans 2025 opening in WeHo

BY TABOR BREWSTER

Seventy years since it first came ashore in Los Angeles, the iconic Polynesian-themed restaurant and bar, Trader Vic's, will make its return to Southern California.

The restaurant, now a worldwide chain with 17 locations, has a long and storied history as an early pioneer of tiki cocktails – elaborate combinations of fresh fruit juices, exotic spices and more often than not, rum.

The first Trader Vic's was founded in Oakland in 1934 by its titular character, a peg-legged businessman named Victor Bergeron. Partly inspired by fel-

See **Trader Vic's** page 22



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CALENDAR

LACMA gallery tour

Join a LACMA for a gallery tour of “We Live in Painting: The Nature of Color in Mesoamerican Art” on Thursday, Dec. 26, at 3 p.m. in the Resnick Pavilion. Mesoamerican artists held a cosmic responsibility. In adorning the surfaces of buildings, clay vessels, textiles, bark-paper pages and sculptures with color, they literally made the world. The power of color emerged from the materiality of pigments, the skilled hands that crafted it and the communities whose knowledge imbued it with meaning. “We Live in Painting: The Nature of Color in Mesoamerican Art” explores the science, art and cosmology of color in Mesoamerica. The tour is free with museum admission. 5905 Wilshire Blvd. lacma.org.



Dina Martina Christmas Show

Enjoy the Dina Martina Christmas Show from Thursday, Dec. 26, through Monday, Dec. 30, at Dynasty Typewriter. For five glorious nights, the unwittingly hilarious Martina will celebrate with holiday ridiculousness. The Christmas show conjures delirium with a mix of beautifully warbled songs, hysterically funny videos, pointless stories and bizarre gifts for lucky audience members. Advance tickets are \$30; \$35 at the door. 2511 Wilshire Blvd. dynasty-cal.loxi.io/dina-martina-7779.

Frankie Quiñones

Get ready for an evening of laughs

with Frankie Quiñones on Thursday, Dec. 26, at 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. at the Hollywood Improv. Quiñones is a stand-up comedian, actor and creator known for his character work. He stars in Hulu’s “This Fool,” for which he was nominated for Best Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series at the Independent Spirit Awards. The comic also recently finished a pilot for his own sketch show on Hulu titled “Get Frankie” and appears in reoccurring roles on FX’s “What We Do in the Shadows” and the animated series “Fired on Mars” and “Victor & Valentino,” on HBO MAX. Tickets are \$24.19. 8162 Melrose Ave. improv.com.



Cars & Coffee at the Petersen

Mark the calendar for Friday, Dec. 27, from 8-11 a.m. as the Speed Traveler hosts the Mulholland 100th Anniversary Cars & Coffee event at the Petersen Automotive Museum. Enjoy complimentary coffee and bagels, mingle with car enthusiasts and admire an incredible mix of vehicles, from daily drivers to celebrity rides. Vehicle exhibiting spots are limited. Arrive before 9 a.m. for free parking and don’t miss discounted VIP tours of the Petersen’s famous Vault. The once-in-a-lifetime celebration is an opportunity to be part of L.A. history. Cars & Coffee entry is free. Museum admission is \$25. 6060 Wilshire Blvd. petersen.org.



Outdoor music

Enjoy the Sounds of Santa Monica on Friday, Dec. 27, from noon-6 p.m. at Santa Monica Place. The live music series takes place on the Center Plaza and showcases a diverse range of musical talents including interactive kid-friendly entertainment, energetic DJ sets, emerging local artists and student performances. 395 Santa Monica Place. (310)260-8300, santamonica-place.com.

‘Moonstruck’

Go back to the 1980s during “The Greg Proops Film Club Presents Moonstruck” on Friday, Dec. 27, at 7 p.m. at the Los Feliz Theatre. In her Academy Award-winning role, Cher, while waiting for her timid fiancé to decide between her and his mother, falls in love with her fiancé’s estranged brother (Nicolas Cage), a bakery worker with a love of opera and life. Supporting actress Olympia Dukakis and screenwriter John Patrick Shanley also won Oscars for the 1987 comedy classic. The program begins with a live recording of the “Greg Proops Film Club” podcast, followed by the movie at 7:30 p.m. General admission is \$15. 1822 N. Vermont Ave. americancine-matheque.com.



Bob Baker Marionettes

Brings the kids to “Holiday on Strings,” a family-friendly show by Bob Baker Marionette Theatre on Friday, Dec. 27, and Saturday, Dec. 28, at 7:30 p.m. Join Demetrius Nova Twinklestar III (Demi Star for short)

and the Wizard as they embark on a magical tour of the holiday galaxies. On a voyage through the stars, stop at Santa’s Workshop, celebrate the eight days of Hanukkah and enter the world of Charles Dickens. Enjoy the hour-long spectacular of merry marionettes celebrating the holidays. Additional performances are available from Jan. 2-5, and Jan. 10-12. See schedule for showtimes. Tickets are \$25. 4949 York Blvd. bobbakermarionettetheater.com.



DrexTheJoint

Goldenvoice presents musical artist DrexTheJoint on Friday, Dec. 27, at 9 p.m. at The Roxy on the Sunset Strip. DrexTheJoint, from Orange County, is known for tracks such as “Keep It On Me,” “527 FREESTYLE,” “Block Hot” and “Make It Right.” Tickets are \$37.22. 9009 W. Sunset Blvd. theroxy.com.

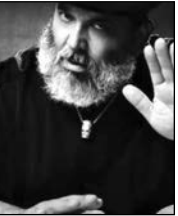
Son Rompe Pera

Join an evening of musical exploration with Son Rompe Pera in concert on Saturday, Dec. 28, at 9 p.m. at the El Rey Theatre. Born and raised in Naucalpan, on the outskirts of Mexico City, the Gama brothers and their band Son Rompe Pera developed the now-global genre cumbia punk, rooted in their history of rebellion. The brothers began playing and performing the marimba when they were children alongside their father, Batuco. Later, they put their own punk twists on traditional cumbia songs, creating a wildly danceable fusion that unites audiences. The concert also includes performances by Spaghetti Cumbia and DJ Dave Salvaje. Tickets are \$38.28. 5515 Wilshire Blvd. theelrey.com.



Poncho Sanchez

Ring in the new year with Poncho Sanchez and his Latin jazz extravaganza on Tuesday, Dec. 31, at 8:30 and 11 p.m. For more than three decades as both a leader and a sideman, conguero Sanchez has stirred up fiery jazz, gritty soul music and infectious melodies and rhythms from a variety of Latin American and South American sources. Tickets start at \$65 for the 8:30 p.m. performance; \$75 for the 11 p.m. show. Dinner or two-drink minimum is also required. 6725 W. Sunset Blvd. catalinajazzclub.com.



New Year’s Eve with D-Nice & Friends

Celebrate New Year’s Eve with D-Nice & Friends on Tuesday, Dec. 31, at 10:30 p.m. at the Walt Disney Concert Hall. The performance is part of the LA Phil’s Deck the Hall Holiday Concerts. Legendary artist and DJ D-Nice ushers in 2025. His uplifting spirit and positivity brought millions together for Club Quarantine, online and as a highlight of the 2021 Hollywood Bowl season. The New Year’s Eve performance follows appearances at the 94th Academy Awards and concerts at Carnegie Hall and the Apollo Theater. Tickets start at \$74. 111 S. Grand Ave. laphil.org.



photo by Edwin Folven

Metro recorded more than 25.8 million boardings on the bus and rail system last month.

Public transit ridership continues upward trend

Metro celebrated its 24th consecutive month of year-over-year ridership growth in November with more than 25.8 million boardings. Combined bus and rail ridership reached nearly 88% of its 2019 pre-pandemic ridership level. While Metro typically sees a drop in ridership during November and December due to the holiday season, Metro’s average weekday boardings reached 84.4% of the 2019 pre-pandemic levels and on weekends, ridership attained 99.3% of the pre-pandemic level.

The Metro bus system experienced a 4.5% ridership increase compared to November 2023. Weekday bus ridership recorded an average of 760,985 daily boardings, and weekends had an average of 528,078 trips on Saturdays and 434,233 trips on Sundays. Weekend bus ridership in November surpassed pre-pandemic levels for the first time, marking a 102.9% increase over the November 2019.

Rail boardings increased 11.2% in November over the numbers in November 2023. Rail ridership last month reached 75.3% of its November 2019 pre-pandemic level.

Metro’s Low-Income Fare is Easy (LIFE) program, which provides free rides and reduced fares to low-income customers, experienced a 16% year-over-year ridership increase in November. People are encouraged to utilize the system. Metro conducted 100 outreach and pop-up events last month and enrolled more than 6,100 new people in the program.

For information on Metro’s reduced fare programs, including discounts for low-income persons and families, seniors, persons with disabilities and students, visit metro.net/riding/fares.



photo courtesy of the Tournament of Roses

The Rose Parade starts at 8 a.m. at the corner of Green Street and Orange Grove Boulevard in Pasadena.

Go Metro to Rose Parade and Rose Bowl Game

The Los Angeles County Transportation Authority is encouraging people to use public transit to get to the 136th annual Rose Parade and Rose Bowl Game in Pasadena on Wednesday, Jan. 1.

Avoid traffic and parking congestion by taking the Metro A Line to Pasadena. The A Line is accessible at Union Station and riders should board trains heading toward Azusa. Stations closest to the Rose Parade route include the Del Mar Station, Memorial Park Station, Lake Station and Allen Station.

To get to the Rose Bowl Game,

take the A Line to the Memorial Park Station in Pasadena and take a short walk to Parsons Parking Lot B for a free bus shuttle to the stadium. Shuttle service begins at 10 a.m. on Jan. 1 and runs until two hours after the game. Game day parking at the Parson’s lot is \$60.

Metro is also offering public transportation options to Floatfest, which takes place after the parade from Jan. 1-3. Shuttles will run every 10 minutes between the A Line Sierra Madre Villa Station and Floatfest.

For information, visit metro.net.

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Beverly Hills plans Hanukkah celebration

■ City will light menorah during annual ceremony

BY TABOR BREWSTER

The city of Beverly Hills is home to one of Southern California’s most vibrant Jewish communities, and this year it is marking the festival of Hanukkah with its annual Menorah Lighting Celebration on Dec. 30 at the Beverly Gardens Park Lily Pond.

“Once again, we will be coming together for our annual Menorah Lighting Celebration to celebrate Hanukkah and the festival of lights,” Beverly Hills Mayor Lester Friedman said. “Lighting the menorah is always a powerful moment when we can stand beside friends and loved ones to commemorate the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.”

Hanukkah, also called the festival of lights, is an eight-day cele-

bration marking the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem after it was desecrated in the second century BCE by the Greek Empire. Traditions include playing the game of dreidel, eating latkes and lighting the menorah – a multibranched candelabra with one candle representing each night of Hanukkah.

With the Oct. 7 attack and the Israel-Hamas war in mind for many in the Jewish community, the event will symbolize the spreading of light during a dark time in history. On top of the tragic loss in Israel, reports of antisemitism have increased dramatically in the year since the war began – both worldwide and in the United States. The city recently held a nationwide summit against antisemitism, where it hosted more than 200 leaders from around the U.S. and Canada. Mayors and dignitaries from across North America participated in workshops, panels and speaker events on recognizing and fighting antisemitism through local

governance and activism. The lighting ceremony on Dec. 30 will be the one of many actions taken by the city to support and celebrate its Jewish community.

“Lighting the menorah is about coming together as a community and bringing light to a world that often feels so dark,” Vice Mayor Sharona Nazarian said. “Especially this year, when we see so much pain and hardship around us, the simple act of gathering, celebrating and sharing hope is incredibly meaningful. Beverly Hills has always been a place where we stand united, and Hanukkah reminds us that even in the darkest times, a little light can grow into something much greater when we come together.”

The celebration will begin at 5:30 p.m at the lily pond in Beverly Gardens Park. The mayor will give remarks followed by the lighting of the menorah. The event is free and open to the public.

Beverly Gardens Park is located at 9439 Santa Monica Blvd.



photo courtesy of the city of Beverly Hills

The mayor and City Council will light the menorah in Beverly Gardens Park on Dec. 30 at 5:30 p.m.




photo courtesy of the 5th District council office

Leaders light menorah near L.A. City Hall

The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles hosted the “Shine A Light” annual L.A. Leaders Hanukkah Celebration on Dec. 18 in Gloria Molina Grand Park in Downtown Los Angeles. Federal, state and local elected officials joined civic, faith and community leaders from across the county to celebrate diversity and the Los

Angeles Jewish community. The leaders participated in a menorah lighting ceremony near City Hall and recited blessings. They included U.S. Rep.-Elect Laura Friedman (D-Glendale); Assemblyman Rick Chavez Zbur (D-Hollywood); Los Angeles City Councilmembers Katy Yaroslavsky, 5th district, and Hugo Soto-Martinez, 13th District; Los

Angeles City Attorney Hydee Feldstein Soto; Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn, 4th District; Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman; Beverly Hills Vice Mayor Sharona Nazarian; Beverly Hills City Councilmembers Craig Corman, John Mirisch and Mary Wells; and LAUSD Board of Education Member Nick Melvoin.



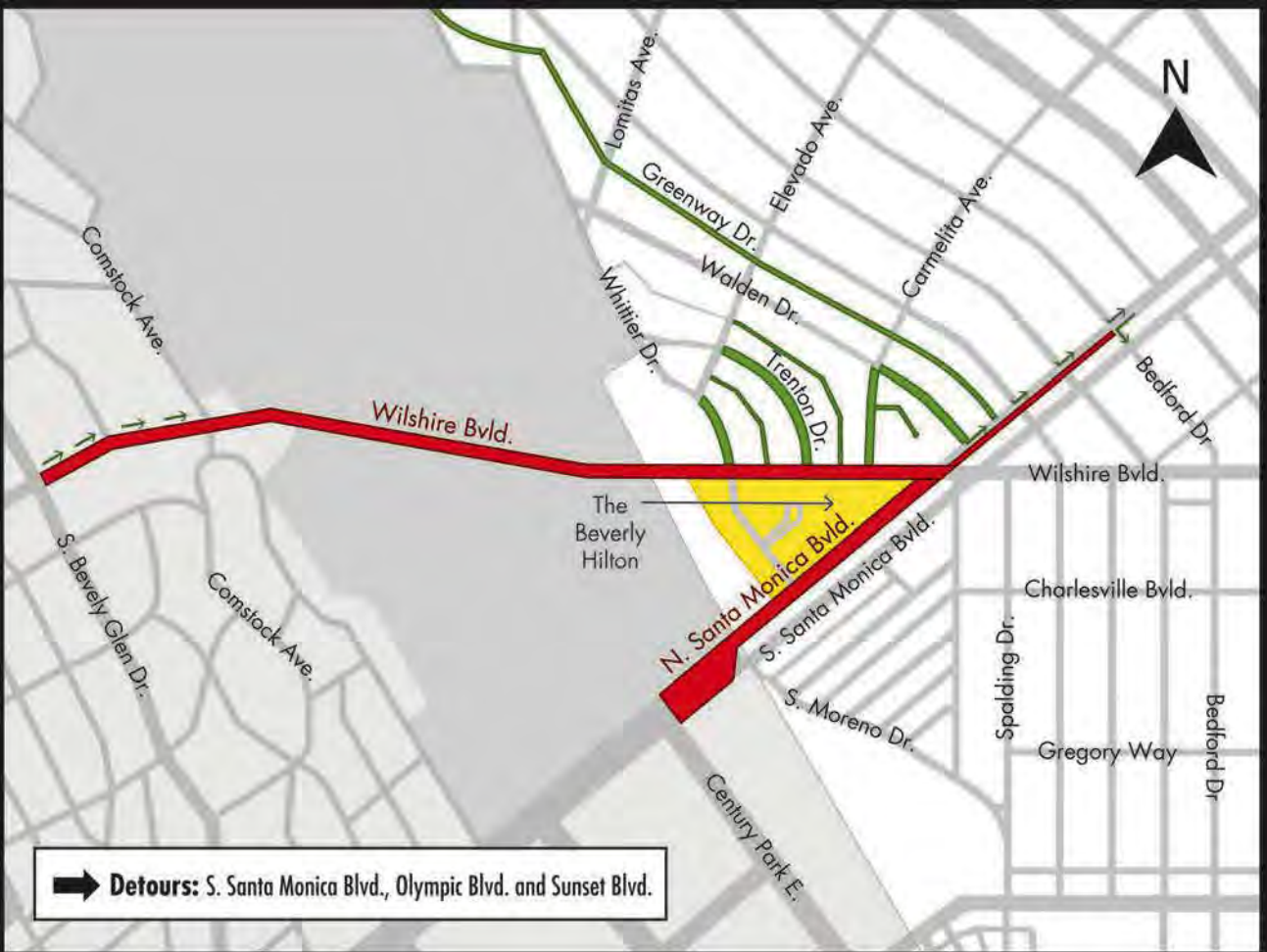
2025 GOLDEN GLOBES ROAD CLOSURES

January 3, 2025 - January 6, 2025
Event Date: **January 5, 2025**

EVENT AREA

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CLOSURE



Defours: S. Santa Monica Blvd., Olympic Blvd. and Sunset Blvd.

North Santa Monica Blvd.:

- **Westbound Lanes:** Complete lane closures, from Wilshire Blvd. to Century Park East, from **9:00 p.m. on Friday, January 3, 2025, through 5:00 a.m. on Monday, January 6, 2025.**
- **Eastbound Lanes:** Complete lane closures, from Century Park East to Wilshire Blvd. from **2:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 4, 2025, through 5:00 a.m. on Monday, January 6, 2025.**

Wilshire Blvd.:

- **Eastbound/Westbound Lanes:** Lane reductions take place at **9:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 4, 2025.**
- **Eastbound/Westbound Lanes:** Complete lane closures, all of Wilshire Blvd. between Comstock Ave. and South Santa Monica Blvd. will be closed from **5:00 a.m. on Sunday, January 5, 2025, until 5:00 a.m. on Monday, January 6, 2025.**
- **Eastbound Lanes of Wilshire Blvd.:** Limited closure at Beverly Glen Blvd. with local access only to residents in the 10200 - 10300 blocks of Wilshire Blvd. beginning **9:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 4, 2025, until 5:00 a.m. on Monday, January 6, 2025.**

Whittier Dr., Trenton Dr., Greenway Dr., Carmelita Ave., Elevado Ave. and Lomitas Ave.:

- Select streets will have limited closures beginning at **5:00 a.m. Sunday, January 5, 2025, to 5 a.m. Monday, January 6, 2025.**

For questions and concerns before the day of the event, please call our askBH Customer Service line at (310) 285-1000 from 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Monday – Friday and the after-hours Golden Globes Hotline that will be active on Sunday, January 5th from 2 p.m. – 8 p.m. at (310) 550-4680.

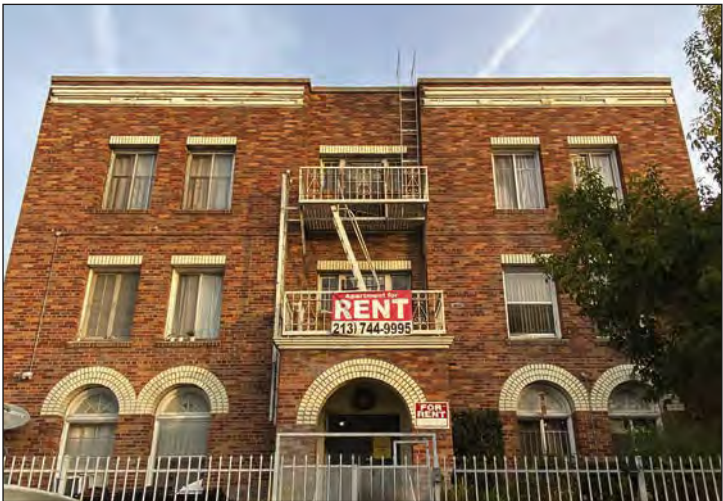


photo by Edwin Folven

A fire started in an elevator room on the roof of the building.

Fire erupts at apartment building in Hollywood

BY EDWIN FOLVEN

The Los Angeles Fire Department extinguished a fire on Dec. 21 in an apartment building at 5613 W. Lexington Ave. in Hollywood. The fire was reported around 11:50 a.m. and firefighters found flames inside an elevator machine room on the

roof of the three-story building. The flames were confined to the utility room and attic and were extinguished in just over 30 minutes.

No injuries were reported. Firefighters remained at the building, constructed in 1926, to ensure there were no flare-ups, spokesman Cody Weireter said.

Beverly Hills man charged in cryptocurrency scam

A six-count indictment was unsealed on Dec. 20 charging two men with perpetrating a scheme that defrauded investors of more than \$22 million in cryptocurrency.

Gabriel Hay, 23, of Beverly Hills, and Gavin Mayo, 23, of Thousand Oaks, are charged with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, two counts of wire fraud and one count of stalking. Authorities said Hay and Mayo defrauded investors through a series of digital asset project “rug-pulls,” a type of fraud scheme in which the creator of a nonfungible token, or NFT, or other digital asset project solicits funds from investors and then abruptly abandons the project.

“Whenever a new investment trend occurs, scammers are sure to follow,” United States Attorney Martin Estrada said. “My office and our law enforcement partners will continue our efforts to protect consumers and punish wrongdoers involved in crypto fraud.”

“Gabriel Hay and Gavin Mayo allegedly defrauded investors in digital asset projects of tens of millions of dollars and threatened an individual who attempted to expose their roles in these fraudulent schemes,” said principal deputy attorney general Nicole M. Argentieri, head of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division. “Fraudsters take advantage of new technologies and financial products to steal investors’ hard-earned money. The department is committed to protecting investors and will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to root out fraud involving cryptocurrency and other digital assets and bring offenders to justice.”

From May 2021 to May 2024, Hay and Mayo sponsored several NFT and other digital asset projects. Hay and Mayo allegedly made false statements regarding

the projects, and provided false and misleading “roadmaps” detailing plans for the NFTs after their launch that they never intended to fulfill, according to court documents. For example, the indictment alleges that in promoting the Vault of Gems NFT project, Hay and Mayo falsely claimed that the project would be the “first NFT project to be pegged to a hard asset.” However, instead of pursuing the Vault of Gems project or others as they had represented, Hay and Mayo allegedly abandoned the projects after collecting millions in funds from investors.

Hay, Mayo and others allegedly used the tactics with other digital asset projects, including Vault of Gems, Faceless, Sinful Souls, Clout Coin, Dirty Dogs, Uncovered, MoonPortal, Squiggles and Roost Coin. Hay and Mayo also allegedly used a variety of means to conceal their involvement in the fraudulent projects. When a project manager on the Faceless NFT project exposed the defendants’ involvement, Hay and Mayo allegedly embarked on a harassment campaign, sending intimidating messages to the project manager and his parents, authorities said.

“Using NFTs to commit fraud not only exploits emerging technology but also erodes trust in the broader digital ecosystem,” Homeland Security Investigations Special Agent in Charge Michael McCarthy said. “The alleged actions of Hay and Mayo, who defrauded investors out of millions over several years, highlight the profound harm these schemes cause. These crimes may not involve violence, but they leave countless victims in their wake.”

The defendants each face a maximum of 20 years in prison on each of the conspiracy and wire fraud counts, and a maximum of five years on the stalking count.

Music teacher faces sex abuse charges

BY EDWIN FOLVEN

A piano instructor who formerly taught at a studio in Beverly Hills was charged on Dec. 20 with sexually abusing a teenage student.

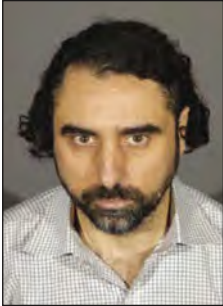
The defendant, Hovanes John Jihanyan, 41, of Van Nuys, is charged with one felony count of continuous sexual abuse of a child under 14, one felony count of forcible oral copulation of a minor, one felony count of sexual penetration of a minor, one felony count of unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor, one felony count of sodomy of a child and one felony count of a lewd act upon a child age 14 or 15. The crimes allegedly occurred between Aug. 1 and Nov. 9 and involved a single victim, who turned 14 during the period when the crimes took place, authorities said.

The Santa Monica Police Department is investigating the case. SMPD detectives served arrest and search warrants and arrested Jihanyan on Dec. 12. Investigators could not be reached for comment.

The SMPD previously said in a

press release that investigators received a report on Nov. 19 about the abuse and launched an investigation. Police said the incidents took place at the student’s home, in the teacher’s vehicle and at a studio at the French Conservatory of Music at 9887 South Santa Monica Blvd., in Beverly Hills.

“I am appalled by these horrific acts of sexual abuse against a vulnerable child,” Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman said. “Our office has a long history of aggressively prosecuting child abuse cases and we are fully committed to seeking justice for the victim and their family. The skilled and dedicated prosecutors in our Sex Crimes Division will ensure any criminal who targets children is held accountable. We believe there may be additional victims, and we



Hovanes John Jihanyan

encourage anyone with information to come forward and contact the Santa Monica Police Department.”

Skander Ladjimi, CEO and founder the French Conservatory of Music, disputed that the crimes occurred at the school. He said Jihanyan formerly taught at the studio, but left prior to the period when authorities allege the sexual abuse took place.

“He went on sabbatical at the end of June. He stopped teaching to go on sabbatical and was not teaching here since July 1,” said Ladjimi, who abruptly ended the call and did not provide any further information.

Jihanyan is being held on \$1 million bail at the Men’s Central Jail. He is expected to be arraigned on Jan. 15. Jihanyan faces 29 years in state prison if convicted and will be required to register as a sex offender for life.

Anyone with information or who believes they have been a victim is urged to contact SMPD Detective Lizette Hardgrave at (310)458-2256 or Sgt. David Haro at (310)458-8952. During weekends and off-hours, call (310)458-8427.

Suspect arrested for auto theft in Beverly Hills

The Beverly Hills Police Department arrested a suspect for grand theft auto on Dec. 22 in the 600 block of North Palm Drive.

The suspect stole a vehicle in Beverly Hills earlier the same day and the city’s fixed cameras located the car as it was heading over the

city’s border. A short time later, the suspect returned to Beverly Hills and abandoned the vehicle on North Palm Drive. Officers found the car, searched the surrounding neighborhood and arrested the suspect, BHPD Lt. Kevin Orth said.

The suspect was identified as

Samuel Sarmiento, 28, of Cudahy. Sarmiento was booked for grand theft auto, assault on a police officer, evading a police officer and resisting an officer.

Anyone with information is urged to call the BHPD at (310)550-4951.



We’re building better transit from DTLA to the Westside.

December Updates

Happy Holidays from the D Line Subway Extension Project! Stay tuned for more updates in 2025.



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metro.net/dline



A STARRY HOLIDAY

Create your own holiday story under the stars at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where a new exhibition looks to the heavens for inspiration and insight. All galleries are open and filled with stellar moments—from a room filled with Picassos to 1,000 toy cars speeding through an imaginary city. Make LACMA your place to gather in wonder with friends and family.

The museum is open New Year's Day, Wednesday, January 1!



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Images: Josiah McElheny, *Island Universe*, 2008, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by an anonymous donor, © Josiah McElheny, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA; Visitors with Chris Burden's *Urban Light* (2008) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2020, art © Chris Burden/licensed by The Chris Burden Estate and Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA; *Metropolis II* image by John Rice, ©Museum Associates



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Speed bumps are latest attraction on Van Ness Ave.

BY MICHAEL KRIKORIAN

My cousin Jeff is coming to town with his wife Mary and her family from New Jersey who have never been to Los Angeles. Jeff asked me what tourist attractions he should take Mary’s family to see in the only three days they are going to be here.

With such a short time, I just told him the usual classic attractions. The tour of the movie stars’ homes, the Chinese Theater on Hollywood Boulevard with the movie stars’ footprints and handprints, the speed bumps on Van Ness Avenue between Beverly Boulevard and First Street, Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, the Watts Towers and maybe Venice Beach.

I’m quite sure everyone who reads the Beverly Press knows of all these legends, though I would bet it’s been a while for many to have been to see the Watts Towers. If ever. As for the others, I know they’ve been there. Especially the renowned Van Ness Speed Bumps.

You know how some streets have those signs posted that read “No Trucks Over 3 Tons” or “No Vehicles Over 12’ Tall?” Well, there should be a sign at southbound Van Ness Avenue at Beverly Boulevard that reads “No Lamborghinis,

Ferraris or McLarens allowed.” Throw in 911 Porsches, too.

The reason is because of the “speed bumps” installed on Van Ness. Bumps? They’re more like miniature versions of El Captain and Half Dome. I have been driving in Los Angeles for decades – before there were any speed bumps – but I have never driven over any that compare to the jarring mounds on Van Ness Avenue between Beverly Boulevard and First Street. I would know. I live on Van Ness – between Second and Third – and, though I often go out of my way to avoid them, I usually get jarred a few times a week. Every time I do, I am stunned by these three bumps.

For the record, I have been meaning to finish this story for over a year. I saw former L.A. Times editor Noah Goldberg quite a while back on a walk and told him I am writing about the bumps. He said he had considered that himself and would look forward to reading my piece.

The problem is not the bumps. It’s me. Up front, let me say this is not an investigative piece. Like how the hell were they allowed to be built. I’m not going Woodward and Bernstein to get to the bottom – or top – of this. I know what happened. The regular city bump people

weren’t available, and some outside team did the job. As for this piece, like I said, no investigation, merely a series of ledes, journalistic lingo for the opening paragraph.

I liked that original lede, with the Lamborghinis and all, cousin Jeff and showing tourist attractions, so I kept them up top. But, every time I make the mistake of not avoiding these jarring bumps and “go over,” I come up with a new lede.

Here they are.

There is construction along Van Ness Avenue just south of Beverly Boulevard this week. A new Urgent Care is being built. BUMPS R US URGENT CARE.

The other day I was driving on Van Ness between Beverly Boulevard and First Street and I noticed an incredible amount of ants. Using a device I got from an Instagram ad, there were 56,000 ants along the curbs near my address, an ant for every seat at Dodger Stadium. I pulled over and talked to one of them. Turns out one of the outdoorsy ants was attempting to “Free Solo” the Northern most of the speed bumps on Van Ness, the so-called North Face, the El Capitan of the bumps.

I was flying into LAX from Beirut the other day and as we banked to line up with the runways, the pilot came on the intercom and said, “If you look out to your left you can see the Van Ness Bumps.” That’s all he had to say and passengers craned to get a look.



photo by Michael Krikorian

The speed bumps are jarring on Van Ness Avenue between Beverly Boulevard and First Street.

There are six “bumps.” Three facing north, three south. Of them, the northernmost, the one you first confront while driving south on Van Ness from Beverly – that one is the one. The El Capitan of them all.

You know, for some reason, near LAX there are numerous billboards advertising lawyers for injuries. That’s happening on Van Ness. Many billboards from lawyers have popped up recently about neck whiplash, about sudden jar injuries.

Every time I drive down the “El Cap” bump, an oxygen tank drops from my car’s overhead due to the sudden loss of attitude.

A resident of Van Ness near the “El Cap” said that when the city repaved Van Ness years back they neglected to put in speed bumps.

“People were speeding down our block and we were getting on them,” said the resident. “Where are our bumps?” she and others asked the city. When it came time to put in the bumps, according to the resident, the regular city crew was not available, so they hired out. The result? The tourist attraction.

City, maybe when you can, go over to Van Ness and redo the “speed bumps.” Lamborghinis are cars, too.

LGBTQ+ publisher Troy Masters dies

BY RANCE COLLINS

In the height of the AIDS crisis, journalist and editor Troy Masters stood as one of the few voices dedicated to getting the truth to the public. Masters died on Dec. 11, leaving behind a legacy of advocacy for his community.

He was born in 1961 and raised in Tennessee, in an environment hostile to gay men. After graduating from the University of Tennessee, he moved to New York City. While he was forging a promising career in publishing at PC Magazine, Masters took a risk in 1988 and joined OutWeek, a short-lived but radical LGBTQ+ news magazine.

He then helped launch a few more queer-related news sources, including the Gay City News, where he was the longtime publisher. Among other stories, Masters entered and wrote about early HIV vaccine trials during the 1990s.

He moved to Los Angeles in 2015, ultimately establishing the Los Angeles Blade, which is a sister newspaper to the Washington Blade. The L.A. Blade has since grown to be the LGBTQ+ publication of record on the West Coast.

“Troy ... was passionate about



photo by Richard Settle

Troy Masters launched The Los Angeles Blade in 2017.

making sure that news concerning our community was reported accurately,” West Hollywood Councilman John Heilman said. “He was a warm and generous person. It’s a big loss for our community.”

“Troy Masters was an incredible leader and advocate for the LGBTQ community,” West Hollywood Mayor John Erickson said. “He was also a dear friend and his loss is

being felt by many. We must continue the work he championed and ensure we do all we can to uplift LGBTQ voices in journalism.”

While serving as the L.A. Blade’s publisher, Masters helped raised awareness of risks related to both the COVID-19 pandemic and the monkeypox epidemic, organizing town halls to help educate the public.

As a local resident, Masters was heavily involved in West Hollywood and the surrounding communities, becoming an advocate for creatures with both two and four legs.

“Troy was a devoted advocate for animal welfare and played a significant role in improving the lives of pets in our community,” West Hollywood Councilwoman Lauren Meister said. “It was through Troy’s partnership and advocacy that I initiated, and the

city of West Hollywood brought forward, important updates to our municipal code, establishing new standards and certification requirements for animal grooming. His commitment to the safety and well-being of animals made a tangible difference in our city. Troy was also a loving and devoted pet father to his dog Cody.”

Masters was only 63 when he died by suicide, according to the Los Angeles County Medical Examiner.

“The holidays are difficult times for lots of people, especially people who are experiencing a mental health crisis,” Heilman said. “The city has a mental health team and other resources to help. There are other resources available from various nonprofits. I hope people will reach out for themselves or will help a neighbor or friend to connect with services if they are experienc-

ing a crisis.”

Those experiencing thoughts of suicide can text or call 988 or call 988lifeline.org. The Trevor Project also is available to help LGBTQ+ people at thetrevorproject.org.

Masters is survived by his sisters Tammy Masters and Dawn Masters-Perry, as well as his mother Josie Hesson Masters.

In the first issue of the Los Angeles Blade on March 23, 2017, Masters wrote of the importance of quality LGBTQ+ journalism.

“We are living in a paradigm shifting moment in real time,” he wrote. “You can feel it. Sometimes it’s overwhelming. Sometimes it’s toxic. Sometimes it’s perplexing, even terrifying. On the other hand, sometimes it’s just downright exhilarating. This moment is a profound opportunity to reexamine our roots and jumpstart our passion for full equality.”

Notable Quotes

“The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written. We can help write that story by setting goals.”

Melody Beattie (b. 1948)

The Beverly Press and Park Labrea News team wishes our readers a safe and prosperous 2025.

Source: “The Language of Letting Go: Daily Meditations on Codependency” (1990)

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ANISHA BRADY 2:30-4:15pm

JANUARY 5, 2025

ECLECTUALS STORY TIME 11:00-11:30 am

ESTILO Y GRACIA 12:00-1:45pm

ADRIANA BRAVO 2:30-4:15pm

WB tour is the perfect visiting family activity

BY RANCE COLLINS

The holidays can provide confounding familial problems... essentially, there is the necessity to entertain one's family, particularly after the gifts are unwrapped. Luckily, if they've descended upon Los Angeles, there is no shortage of potential activities. Beyond the after-Christmas deals at The Grove, "Wicked" (the musical) at the Pantages or driving down to Disneyland, Warner Bros. Studios offers what is perhaps the best bang-for-your-buck available.

It is no secret that WB has long provided perhaps the most comprehensive studio tour out of the wealth of L.A. tours available, in no small part because the studio itself remains virtually untouched since the Golden Age – and it also is incredibly active today, with popular series like “Abbott Elementary,” “The Jennifer Hudson Show” and “Night Court” calling the lot home. Additionally, recent movies like “Joker: Folie à Deux” and “MaXXXine” have used its stages.

On Friday, I had the pleasure of taking the tour ... again. Full disclosure, I have done this tour literally thousands of times because, a decade ago, I was a tour guide at the studio. But in the years since I left in 2014, the experience has evolved greatly. Two museums have sprung up. A couple of virtual interactions have launched and tour-specific buildings have been constructed.

So, while I know the lot's history pretty well, there was plenty of new attractions for even me to enjoy. It all starts off familiar enough.

The main tour center has a large gift shop – don't worry, you end up back there when the tour is over – which currently has a large "Batman Returns" display, with several of the costumes, vehicles and set pieces used in the movie. I was also impressed with a little address book on view, safely under glass, that belonged to one of the original brothers, Jack Warner. It was opened to a page that had the numbers for Walt Disney, Salvador Dali, "Miss" Bette Davis and Cecil B. DeMille.

For the tour itself, they kick off with a short film that gets you into that WB spirit – flying through Superman, “Friends,” Harry Potter and Humphrey Bogart. Then comes the guide – ours was a walking encyclopedia named Tyler – who definitely earned his tip. He had all that baseline knowledge that was inputted into my memory way back when, plus 10 more years of titles and even a few throwback stories I had never heard.

Every tour is different, largely because the availability of sets is dependent upon what is or isn't filming on a given day. Some activity was happening near some stages for what Tyler told us was a pilot, but during the next couple of weeks, most crews will be on their holiday hiatus. These are great days to take a tour since nothing is shut down for filming. So, if you're dead set on seeing the façade that was once the "E.R." hospital

entrance and now has “Abbott Elementary” sitting in front of it, you’ve got a very good chance of getting your photo.

I'm a big classic Hollywood fan, and my love of the studio lots stems from that magical history behind the sets and stages. Hennessy Street, a grungy Brooklyn-esque backlot set, is where James Cagney earned his gangster credentials and where Annie had a hard knock life. Head over to New York Street, and the classics range from Bette Davis in "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?" to Harrison Ford in "Blade Runner." Unique to Warner Bros. is a jungle set, built in the 1950s and used in "Jurassic Park," "The Muppet Movie," "True Blood" and "The Last Samurai."

Currently, a self-guided pop-up has taken over the Midwestern town on the lot, themed after perhaps the most famous television series to use it, "Gilmore Girls." This is also the hometown of "The Waltons," those "Pretty Little Liars," and James Dean in both "Rebel Without a Cause" and "East of Eden."

Tyler also showed us a sound stage a sitcom set for the "Young Sheldon" spinoff "Georgia & Mandy's First Marriage," which premiered earlier this year. There appeared to be a few stages available, so your tour might see something different.

After the guided portion was complete, guests are able to explore Stage 48, a kind of museum/activity center that has numerous costumes and props from various films including “My Fair Lady,” “The Adventures of Robin Hood,” as well as two complete sets, Central Perk from “Friends” and the apartment from “The Big Bang Theory.” For an extra fee, you can have a green screen moment against “Batman” and “Harry Potter” backdrops. This is also the section with perhaps, I believe, the coolest thing ever: the “Casablanca” piano. If you’re parched, there’s a “Friends”-themed café here, as well.

And there is still more museum to be had – just back where you started. All of the “Game of Thrones,” some “Harry Potter” and a huge junk of DC Comics superhero artifacts are housed back in the tour center, where guests are shuttled to complete the experience. Here, you’ll find Christopher Reeves and Henry Cavill’s capes, Lynda Carter’s and Gal Gadot Wonder Woman costumes, Michael Keaton’s (and even George Clooney’s) bat cowls and a few Batmobiles. Additionally, you have the opportunity to hold an Oscar – ours was the Best Picture trophy for “The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King.”

It is difficult to fully describe the breadth of cool that the tour provides. To give an idea, while the guided portion of the tour and the museum areas are supposed to take about an hour each, I managed to spend nearly four hours there from start to finish. Which is OK, guests are encouraged to take their time through the self-guided portions. It can really take a half-day or more,

particularly if you do to the “Gilmore Girls” Stars Hallow pop-up, available through Jan. 6 where they had cookie decorating stations, games, photo ops and plenty of snack food.

In short, if you're looking for a venue to entertainment visiting guests, or if you're just wanting a reminder about what makes Los Angeles so dang special, Warner Bros. has everything and then some.

Even "as time goes by" I can't deny that WB is "the stuff that dreams are made of." For information, visit wbstudiotour.com. The Warner Bros. Studio Tour is located at 3400 Warner Blvd.



photo by Rance Collins

Guests are encouraged to take a photo on the Central Perk set from "Friends."

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photo by Rance Collins

A sampling of every Warner Bros. Batman is found in the museum, including (from right) Michael Keaton, Val Kilmer, George Clooney, Christian Bale, Ben Affleck and Robert Pattinson.

Still the best idea anybody ever had

Thank you for the ham.
Thank you for the cards, the hugs, the gumbo the Facebook photos.
Thank you for the infants, tender and mild.
For a few weeks, thank you for being a little better version of your usual snide and cynical self.

Not that there's anything wrong with snide and cynical. They are positive and necessary virtues in this oft-ornery world.
You be you.

But for a few weeks, maybe you held a door, or dropped a twenty in the kettle. Maybe you let the stranger with one item cut in front of you at checkout. Maybe you dropped a toy in a box for a kid you'll never know.

Christmas is still the best idea anyone ever had, right up there with the wheel, the loom, smoked gouda and Jimmy Stewart.

As Garrison Keillor noted, the basic holiday pleasures resonate the most: "The benediction, the rousing Bach postlude, the handshakes, and the luxury of the warm taxi ride home ..."

That's Christmas. And that's what we're thankful for today as the commotion fades and the celebration begins to die down.

See, Christmas isn't things, Christmas is a million little moments.

Didn't those kids sound good in church?



Did you smell the roast beast crisping in the oven ... the pies cooling on the shelves the gift candles scented with frat-house party basements (that's actually a thing this year)?

Were you naughty? Were you nice?

You can be both, you know. A little naughty is kind of refreshing once in a while, at least among adults. Makes you less ornery, makes you more nice.

Were you generous? Were you wise?

Did you pause to see the twinkle in a grandmother's eyes?

Did you buy someone a book they'll never forget? Or a special ornament they'll now tuck carefully away?

Did you have enough AA batteries for all the toys, enough whisky to sedate Uncle Roy?

Did the milk and butter run out before the mashed potatoes swirled to life? Or were they more like mortar mix. Could you tuck-point the chimney with them? Could you

patch the driveway?
No worries. Your guests would eat Cleveland.

Indeed, no Christmas is perfect. Even that first one was marked by poverty and need.

From that first Christmas sprang the concepts of generosity and gifts. It helped launch the very notion of charity itself, a tradition that exists to this day, at least in some spots.

Maybe you skipped the whole holiday ordeal and went for a nice walk, then ordered Chinese. Cool.

Sneer at the rest of us for all our crass impulses, all our silky holiday traditions. Fine. We kind of deserve it. Hope you had a great walk and that the moo goo gai pan was delicious. And those little ribs with the heavy glaze.

Sinatra soared extra high at the holidays, as did Barbra, as did Mariah Carey. As did your Aunt Marji, for the record, with that special egg casserole that takes her two days.

Bravo for not following the crowd.

Maybe you spent the day quietly on the couch with Mary and Rhoda, or Chevy Chase or Tiny Tim. Our best movies are set at Christmas, our best TV.

Sinatra soared extra high at the



photo by Chris Erskine

Thank you for the gumbo. And the stiff mashed potatoes.

holidays, as did Barbra, as did Mariah Carey.

As did your Aunt Marji, for the record, with that special egg casserole that takes her two days.

Is your house now a holy mess? Is the oven shot? Should FEMA come in?

Is your best knife missing? Did the new puppy gnaw your favorite slippers?

Christmas reminds us of all we don't have, but also what we do.

That's Dickens' influence. He gave a modern twist to Christmas. Some critics blame him for commercializing what was once a very somber religious celebration.

One more reason to ignore the critics. Bunch of puritans.

So stoke the fire, splash me a little more nog.

Look, I've been chasing after Christmas since I was 4, when I

could tell by the amped-up laughter and the extra lights that the house was about to explode.

Folks dropped in unannounced. Rudolph spoke. Claymation was king.

On your list, a sled or a slot car.

As a kid, you never got all you wanted, but you did get what you needed: warmth on a winter's night. Carols. Camaraderie. Memories. Hugs. Socks.

That's still the case, of course. We get what we need at Christmas: warmth and memories, amid a collapsing world order, amid mankind's mayhem and chronic needs.

Just like 2,000 years ago, right?

So take a moment. God rest ye merry, gentlemen.

And especially you merry moms. Rest ye too.

Merry Christmas.



photo by Chris Erskine

Thank you for the rousing Bach postludes and the holiday recitals.

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Subway work rolls into the next year

Much progress was made in 2024 on Metro’s D Line subway extension project, which extends from Wilshire/Western to the Westwood/VA Hospital station. Crews have been working along the route, which is anticipated to open in three sections over the three years.

Work is ongoing at many locations along the route and will continue in the new year. Metro is holding a webinar on Jan. 8 with updates on all three segments of the project, covering construction timelines and major milestones. To join the webinar, visit zoom.us/j/96626476708, and use the webinar ID: 966 2647 6708. To participate by phone, call (213)338-8477.

Crews are conducting street restoration work on the eastern end of the project. K-rail work zones are in place along Wilshire/Western, Wilshire/La Brea and Wilshire Fairfax.

Through March, a K-rail work zone will be in place in the middle

of Wilshire Boulevard between Courtyard Place and Masselin Avenue. The work zone supports construction in the tunnel below Wilshire Boulevard. West of Fairfax Avenue, a K-rail enclosure is located at the Wilshire/La Jolla intersection through March to support the completion of a tunnel cross passage. Wilshire Boulevard is reduced to two lanes in each direction in the area.

At the Wilshire/La Cienega station, material deliveries continue in the new year. A K-rail work zone remain in place along the north side of Wilshire Boulevard, which is reduced to two lanes in each direction between San Vicente and La Cienega boulevards. Motorists are advised about a right lane closure on northbound La Cienega Boulevard just north of Wilshire Boulevard.

At the Wilshire/Rodeo station, crews are working within the construction staging areas underground

and from 10 p.m.-7 a.m. on certain sections of Wilshire Boulevard east of the station. Deck removal and street restoration work is expected to start in January, requiring up to 18 full weekend street closures of Wilshire Boulevard between Crescent and El Camino drives from 8 p.m. on Friday through 7 a.m. the following Monday. Beverly Drive will also be closed at Wilshire Boulevard when work takes place. Detour routes will be implemented for eastbound and westbound traffic on Wilshire Boulevard.

Station construction is ongoing in Century City. Placement of structural concrete for the station is substantially complete, and construction of the interior and roof structures is ongoing 24 hours, Monday through Saturday, underground beneath Constellation Boulevard. Partial lane closures are in place on Constellation Boulevard to support daytime station construction and material delivery. Crews are also working on storm drain construction and side structures adjacent to the station. Eastbound and west-



photo by Edwin Folven

A K-rail work zone is in place along the north side of Wilshire Boulevard near Fairfax Avenue for street restoration work.

bound vehicle access on Constellation Boulevard is maintained between Century Park West and Century Park East.

No work will occur on New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day.

For questions and concerns about the D Line Extension project, call the 24-hour project hotline at (213)922-6934, email the project team at purplelineext@metro.net, or visit metro.net.

Goldberg recognized for years of public service

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chair Kathryn Barger, 5th District, recognized retired Los Angeles Unified School District board member Jackie Goldberg on

Dec. 10 for her extraordinary contributions to public service.

Goldberg retired at the beginning of December after four decades of advocacy and public service. She

announced in August that she would step down as the LAUSD Board of Education’s 5th District representative when her term ended in December. She most recently served on the LAUSD Board of Education since 2019, and previously served on the LAUSD Board from 1983-87. Goldberg also previously served as California Assemblywoman representing the 45th District from 2000-04, and represented the 13th District on the Los Angeles City Council from 1993-97. LAUSD Board member Karla Griego was elected on Nov. 5 and succeeded Goldberg.

Barger said Goldberg’s career has left an indelible mark on Los Angeles County.

“Jackie Goldberg has been a true champion for fairness and civil rights throughout her remarkable career,” Barger said. “I’ve had the pleasure of knowing Jackie for

most of my career. I greatly valued her opinion when she worked for Supervisor Gloria Molina and consulted with her often. Because I respect her insights so much, she was one of the first people I sat down with when I decided to run for office. Jackie’s leadership and advocacy have inspired countless individuals and changed the lives of so many in Los Angeles County. It is an honor to celebrate her legacy.”

“I appreciate you inviting me here to honor me,” Goldberg told Barger at the Dec. 10 board of supervisors meeting. “We’ve known each other a long time and I’ve always been grateful for our friendship and collaboration. Throughout my work, I always looked forward to talking through different challenges and topics with you, because you listened and engaged. Thank you again, so much, for this honor.”

Barger presented a commendation to Goldberg, highlighting her unwavering dedication to public education, social justice and com-

munity empowerment. Goldberg was also a longtime educator, having started her career as a teacher. The board of supervisors commended Goldberg for initiatives to improve educational outcomes for all students, as well as her focus on affordable housing, LGBTQ+ rights, environmental sustainability and employee rights.



photo courtesy of Supervisor Kathryn Barger’s office

Former LAUSD Board member, state assemblywoman and L.A. City Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg, right, received a commendation from Supervisor Kathryn Barger on Dec. 10.

spcaLA issues bird flu safety tips for pets

California has declared a state of emergency over growing concerns from the spread of the H5N1 bird flu virus. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles suggests taking precautions to protect pets.

According to reports, about 60 people nationwide have contracted the virus, most likely due to their

association with the poultry or dairy industries. However, in California, 33 people contracted the virus from ingesting infected dairy. Two cats also became ill after ingesting raw milk from an infected cow.

spcaLA reminds the public that cats of any age should not drink cow’s milk. Unweaned kittens should be given kitten milk replacer.

Furthermore, spcaLA recommends: keeping cats indoors to avoid contact with sick or infected birds; when outdoors, always keep dogs on leash to avoid exposure; don’t feed pets raw milk or raw meat.

Signs of bird flu in pets include difficulty breathing, lack of coordination, sneezing, coughing, fever and discharge from eyes and nose. If your pet exhibits a drastic change in behavior, take them to the vet.

Since 1877, spcaLA has been the premiere independent, nonprofit animal welfare organization serving Southern California. There is no national SPCA, parent organization, or umbrella group that provides financial support to spcaLA. Donations run programs and services including Cruelty Investigation, Disaster Animal Response Team, Humane Education and a variety of shelter services.

For information, visit spcala.com.

Letters to the Editor

Fountain redesign is not about safer streets

Re “WeHo commission steers speed limit plan forward,” Dec. 12 issue

West Hollywood Mayor John Erickson was quoted as saying “... sadly, some members of the Public Safety commission actively campaigned about [not] making any of our streets safer.” This is a lie. I spoke out against plans he supports to put protected bike lanes on Fountain Avenue because it will cost residents their parking spaces, cause gridlock, increase emissions from idling vehicles and send drivers through neighborhoods to Santa Monica or Sunset Boulevards, increasing congestion there, and more importantly, nega-

tively impact the response times of our first responders. Yet Mayor Erickson and his supporters claim these bike lanes are the key to making our streets safe.

On Oct. 10, a woman was killed in a terrible car accident at Spaulding and Fountain. Erickson and his supporters seized on her death to blame me, and others who question their bike lane plans. They even held a rally holding up pictures of car accidents, exploiting these tragedies.

The driver of the vehicle which crashed into the one in which the victim was a passenger has been charged with murder and reckless driving on a highway causing bodily injury (which requires multiple moving violations). At the same Public Safety Commission meeting covered in this article, it was revealed that he was also possibly

under the influence of an as yet unspecified substance. And yet Mayor Erickson’s argument is that a man under the influence, driving recklessly on Spaulding, would have somehow magically been stopped by bike lanes on Fountain.

The reality is that there are a number of things which should and can be done to make Fountain Avenue safer for everyone. Additional stoplights, crosswalks, making the sidewalks ADA compliant and very importantly, the enforcement of existing laws. These are things for which I have advocated as a neighborhood watch co-captain for years. Some of the changes have already been made.

As I have said since the beginning, the Los Angeles County Fire Department must be consulted and have input on these plans for

Fountain. Those of us who have dealt with Mayor Erickson for years know that when he says, “So, I think the council is going to need to step in and actually make big, strategic moves to make sure our streets are actually safe,” he means his bike lanes. After the election, Streets For All, one of the outside special interest groups who spent heavily to get him reelected, sent out a jubilant email proclaiming that since their endorsed candidates (Erickson and Hang) won we can expect council to “... get the protected bike lane on Fountain done.”

This is not about making our streets safer. This is flawed ideology dictating policy and it is dangerous.

*George Nickle
West Hollywood*

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY HOSPITAL CLOSURE

Effective January 1, 2025

This is to provide public notice that DOCS Surgical Hospital, located at 6000 San Vicente Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036, will be closing temporarily on January 1, 2025, in order to complete construction of an entirely new hospital facility to replace the existing facility. The new facility, which will be a state-of-the-art hospital facility located at the same address and which will meet all seismic safety and other legal requirements, is expected to open after approximately one year.

The three nearest facilities offering comparable services are as follows:

- Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
8700 Beverly Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90048
- Kaiser Permanente
West Los Angeles
Medical Center
6041 Cadillac Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90034
- Southern California Hospital at Culver City
3828 Delmas Terrace
Culver City, CA 90232

DOCS Surgical Hospital provides services to Medicare patients, as do all of the above facilities.

Further information regarding the Hospital’s temporary closure may be obtained by contacting the facility or its owner:

- Facility:
DOCS Surgical Hospital, LLC
6000 San Vicente Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90036
Tel. (323) 930-1040
- Owner:
DOCS Surgical Hospital, LLC
8436 W. Third St. Suite 900
Los Angeles, CA 90048
Tel. (310) 746-5918
Attn: Khawar Siddique, Co-CEO

This notice is provided in compliance with California law.

RESTAURANT NEWS

Masquerade solves the final Puzzle for 2024

Step into a world of intrigue and allure at Puzzle’s Masquerade Party. As the year fades into shadows, uncover secrets, stories and breathtaking wonders behind every mask. The party starts at 10 p.m. and tickets are \$55. Bottle service reservations are also available. For tickets and information, visit puzzle.love or call (213)657-9552. Puzzle is located at 8947 Sunset Blvd.

person or \$300 per person with a champagne cocktail, this menu is filled with celebratory bites like Nori Taco with caviar, King Salmon spicy cilantro, lobster truffle with soba, smoked black garlic wagyu with pickled salad, and momoko panna cotta with sake cream. Nobu Los Angeles will also be offering a limited-time mocktail for the month of January called Coco Shiso and the ingredients include coconut water, agave, yuzu juice and shiso leaves. Nobu Los Angeles is located at 903 N La Cienega Blvd. For information, visit noburestaurants.com or call (310)657-5711.

Nobu offers special menu for holiday

To celebrate New Year’s Eve and close out the year omakase style, diners can head to Nobu Los Angeles for a special occasion omakase menu. Priced at \$275 per

Katana brings 2025 to the Sunset Strip

Ring in the new year at Katana with a view of the Sunset Strip and a special New Year’s Izakaya Feast featuring sushi favorites like bluefin burrata, Alaskan king crab

and hammer roll. DJ Scott will also be performing, plus party favors + a midnight champagne toast. Katana is located at 8439 Sunset Blvd. For information, visit katanarobata.com or call (323)650-8585.

Ring in the New Year by the sea

Dance into 2025 by the Sea. Celebrate New Year’s Eve in style at Hotel Casa del Mar in Santa Monica. Immerse yourself in oceanfront elegance and Cardinal Gold – local L.A. favorites – for the exclusive New Year’s Eve party.

Tickets are \$225 per person plus tax and gratuity, including three drink tickets premium brands, passed appetizers and late night bites, and champagne toast at midnight starting at 9 p.m. and a balloon drop at midnight, of course.

VIP cabanas and premium tables by the dance floor are available.

A chef curated dinner starts at 8:30 p.m. including a four-course dinner, three premium drinks, champagne toast, complimentary parking (one car per person) and access to the Terrazza party. Price



photo courtesy of Desert 5 Spot

Ring in the New Year with a country spin at Desert 5 Spot.

Desert 5 Spot ‘Walks the Line’

Ring in the New Year at the iconic country rooftop bar, Desert 5 Spot, for their unforgettable Honky Tonk celebration. Dance the night away and sing your heart out to live performances, savor passed hors d’oeuvres and enjoy an exclusive 5-hour open bar from 9 p.m.-2 a.m. Sip on signature cocktails like the popular Jolene, a refreshing blend of

tequila, watermelon, and strawberry, or opt for Walk the Line, a Mezcal-based drink with a crisp cucumber twist. Guests can expect a special countdown to midnight and a tequila toast to welcome the new year. Tickets are available for \$100 by visiting desertfivespot.com. Desert 5 Spot is located at 6516 Selma Ave.

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Have an Asterid-nomical holiday

Asterid is inviting Angelenos to ring in the New Year with an unforgettable dining experience featuring two seatings at 5:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Begin the evening with a welcome cocktail, the Dear Elena, with Flowers – a refined gin-based creation with dry vermouth, aperitivo, elderflower and orange blossom. The \$165 per person menu highlights asterid's signature caviar bite and concludes with a decadent gold bar dessert, paying tribute to renowned British chef and restaurateur Paul Liebrandt. Enhance the meal with an optional wine and cocktail pairing, expertly crafted by Asterid's bar team, for an additional \$50. Extend your celebration at Asterid's bar, open until midnight, where one can toast to the new year with champagne dur-

ing the countdown.
Asterid is located at 141 S. Grand Ave. For information, visit asterid-la.com or call (213)972-3535.

Watch the fireworks from InterContinental rooftop

Where better to indulge in festive fun and catch the city's many firework displays than the tallest skyscraper in Los Angeles and the tallest open-air bar in the Western Hemisphere? Take in the breathtaking views of the surrounding city and celebrate New Year's Eve at Spire 73, including a DJ, dancing, dinner, a countdown and champagne toast at midnight. For reservations, visit opentable.com/r/no-dive-bar-los-angeles.
Ring in the New Year in luxury at elegant sky-high restaurant La Boucherie, located on the 71st floor of InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown. The venue will be offering special prix fixe menus

See page 15

Festival of Lights at A.O.C. for Hanukkah

A.O.C., the west side location of Suzanne Goin and Caroline Styne's beloved small-plates restaurant, is thrilled to welcome author Amelia Saltsman for a very special Hanukkah dinner celebrating Olio Nuovo to commemorate the Festival of Lights holiday on Sunday, Dec 29.
The menu will showcase small producers of the revered olio nuovo, the season's new oil, featured in recipes from Saltsman's cookbook, The Seasonal Jewish Kitchen, and of course, a bounty of produce from our local farmers.
Amelia Saltsman, a seasonal foods expert and a well-known authority on the Santa Monica Farmer's Market, will be present throughout the evening to meet guests. Reservations begin at 5:00 p.m. and are recommended.
Hanukkah, which celebrates the story of Judah and the Maccabees and the miraculous oil that burned for eight nights, aligns with the late-autumn olive harvest – a tradi-



photo courtesy of A.O.C.

Potato latkes with applesauce are one dish available on Dec. 29 at A.O.C.

tion predating the holiday by thousands of years. For millennia, olive oil was already vital to the region's economy, and played a central role in the lives of ancient Hebrews, who harvested and pressed olives in the fall.
This festival not only marks the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem, but also reflects an agricultural thanksgiving tied to the olive crush.
Today's late-autumn olive harvest delivers the gift of olio nuovo, the first-of-the-season ultra-fresh oil from California and Italian producers. Featured new oils from the 2024 harvest include California's Olivaia's OLA, Bondolio, Like

Family, McEvoy Ranch, and from Sicily, Spedalotto Tonda Iblea, all honored in Goin's s menu. This special dinner weaves together history, flavor, tradition and friends, for a unique celebration of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.
The menu is priced at \$85 per person, excluding beverages, tax and gratuity. Toast Hanukkah with friends and family with wine pairings selected by Styne or one of A.O.C.'s seasonal cocktails crafted by Ignacio Murillo. To book, the public may call the restaurant at (310)806-6464 or reserve online at opentable.com/r/aoc-brentwood-los-angeles. A.O.C. Brentwood is located at 11648 San Vicente Blvd.

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POLICE BLOTTER

The following crimes occurred in West Hollywood, Beverly Hills and the areas patrolled by the LAPD’s Wilshire and Hollywood divisions between Dec. 15 and Dec. 21. The information was compiled from crimemapping.com. To report a crime, call local law enforcement agencies: Los Angeles Police Department, Wilshire Division (213)473-0476, Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department West Hollywood Station (310)855-8850, and the Beverly Hills Police Department (310)550-4951.

Beverly Hills Police Department

Dec. 15

An unknown suspect burglarized a vehicle parked in the 200 block of N. Doheny at 5 p.m.

At 9:13 p.m., a suspect was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs near La Cienega and Wilshire.

Dec. 16

At 12:30 a.m., an unknown suspect burglarized a vehicle parked in the 400 block of S. Oakhurst.

An unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 9800 block of Santa Monica at 11:06 a.m.

At 5:59 p.m., an unknown suspect burglarized a vehicle parked in the 100 block of N. Palm.

An unknown suspect robbed a victim in the 8900 block of Santa Monica at 7 p.m.

Dec. 17

An unknown suspect assaulted a victim in the 700 block of N. Rexford at 1:04 a.m.

At 6:58 a.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 9800 block of Santa Monica.

An unknown suspect stole auto parts in the 9100 block of Wilshire at 9:30 a.m.

At 4:11 p.m., an unknown suspect committed a burglary in the 300 block of N. Cañon.

An unknown suspect committed a grand theft in the 300 block of S. Beverly at 5:20 p.m.

At 9:34 p.m., a vandalism incident was reported in the 400 block of N. Crescent.

Dec. 18

An unknown suspect assaulted a victim in the 8500 block of Sherwood at 10:45 a.m.

At 2:20 p.m., a vandalism incident was reported near Charleville and Beverly.

An unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 100 block of S. Swall at 9:48 p.m.

Dec. 19

At 8:15 a.m., an unknown suspect committed a grand theft in the 700 block of N. Oakhurst.

An unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 100 block of S. Almont at 3:15 p.m.

At 4:11 p.m., an unknown suspect robbed a victim in the 8800 block of Wilshire.

A vandalism incident was reported in the 400 block of S. Maple at 4:45 p.m.

At midnight, an unknown suspect committed a burglary in the 300 block of S. Elm.

Dec. 20

At 8:46 a.m., a vandalism incident was reported in the 9300 block of Wilshire.

An unknown suspect burglarized a vehicle parked near Wilshire and Willaman at 12:21 p.m.

At 5:24 p.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 300 block of N. Cañon.

A vandalism incident was reported in the 100 block of S. Elm at 6:15 p.m.

At 9:53 p.m., an unknown suspect assaulted a victim in the 200 block of N. Cañon.

Dec. 21

At 12:15 a.m., a vandalism incident was reported in the 9800 block of Wilshire.

West Hollywood Sheriff’s Station

Dec. 15

At 5:13 a.m., an unknown suspect committed a burglary in the 7300 block of Santa Monica.

An unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 1200 block of N. La Brea at 1 p.m.

Dec. 16

At 3:39 a.m., an unknown suspect committed a burglary in the 700 block of Westmount.

An unknown suspect robbed a victim in the 8400 block of Sunset at 11:45 a.m.

At 2:40 p.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 7100 block of Santa Monica.

An unknown suspect assaulted a victim in the 8400 block of Sunset at 8:35 p.m.

Dec. 17

A suspect assaulted a victim during a domestic violence incident in the 8700 block of Sunset at 8:45 p.m.

At 1:15 p.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 9000 block of Beverly.

An unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 7700 block of Romaine at 5 p.m.

At 6:20 p.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 7100 block of Santa Monica.

Dec. 18

An unknown suspect assaulted a victim in the 8400 block of Sunset at 3:50 a.m.

At 9:42 a.m., an unknown suspect assaulted a victim in the 1100 block of N. La Brea.

Dec. 19

At 8:45 p.m., an unknown suspect assaulted a victim in the 8200 block of Santa Monica.

Schiff announces housing grants for L.A.

U.S. Sen. Adam Schiff (D-Calif) announced \$4.5 million in federal grants on Dec. 12 for the Housing Authority of the city of Los Angeles, which will use the funds to support affordable housing improvements and community sustainability initiatives.

The funding was allocated through the Congressionally Directed Economic Development Initiative under the Community Project Funding program. The allocation was passed under the bicameral, bipartisan fiscal year 2023 appropriations bill.

“This critical funding will ensure that dozens of families can live safer and healthier lives in the places they call home,” Schiff said. “I’m grateful to have worked with HACL A to secure these grants, and I’m looking forward to seeing these improvements implemented in the



photo courtesy of Senator Adam Schiff’s office
U.S. Senator Adam Schiff

very near future.”
“These seven funded projects exemplify HACL A’s commitment

to building thriving communities,” HACL A President and CEO Lourdes Castro Ramirez said. “From energy-efficient upgrades to revitalized sports fields including much-needed housing and green spaces, these investments will improve the quality of life, reduce the effects of heat and bring residents together. We appreciate every member of Congress for their support and thank HUD for working with our HACL A team to bring these transformative projects to life.”

Joining Schiff in advocating for these grants were Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Los Angeles), Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-Los Angeles), Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove (D-Los Angeles) and Rep. Nanette Barragán (D-San Pedro).

For information, visit schiff.senate.gov.

Health authorities warn about spread of illness

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is reminding residents to remain vigilant and protect themselves from COVID-19. With a rise in gatherings and travel during the holidays, public health officials said it is critical to remember that the elderly, those with pre-existing health conditions and individuals with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of severe illness from the virus. Given the vulnerability of skilled nursing facility residents associated with advanced age and serious health conditions, preventing the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses at facilities remains of paramount importance, authorities said.

Although the number of open outbreak investigations across Los Angeles County is low in comparison to previous winter seasons, skilled nursing facilities continue to experience a higher number of outbreaks compared to other sectors. Cumulatively, over the course

of the pandemic, there have been more than 90,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases among residents

By following sensible precautions including getting an updated COVID-19 and flu vaccine, wearing masks as appropriate, practicing good hand hygiene and staying home when feeling unwell, we can protect the most vulnerable members of our community.”

-Dr. Barbara Ferrer, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

and staff at skilled nursing facilities, and more than 6,000 deaths have been reported among resi-

dents, highlighting the vulnerability of individuals receiving care at the sites.

“The holidays are a time for connection and celebration, and we are grateful that this season, we can safely gather with others,” said Dr. Barbara Ferrer, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. “However, because some of us will be spending time with residents at higher risk of bad outcomes should they become infected with COVID-19 or other respiratory viruses, it makes sense to continue to take steps to minimize transmission. By following sensible precautions including getting an updated COVID-19 and flu vaccine, wearing masks as appropriate, practicing good hand hygiene and staying home when feeling unwell, we can protect the most vulnerable members of our community.”

For information and resources, visit publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/LTCF/index.htm.

Dec. 20

An unknown suspect committed a grand theft in the 900 block of Orange Grove at 11:04 a.m.

At noon, an unknown suspect burglarized a vehicle parked in the 600 block of N. Robertson.

Dec. 21

At 12:54 a.m., an unknown suspect assaulted a victim near Santa Monica and Larrabee.

An unknown suspect committed a grand theft in the 8400 block of Sunset at 1:20 a.m.

An t 8:20 a.m., an unknown suspect committed a grand theft in the 7100 block of Santa Monica.

Los Angeles Police Department

Dec. 15

At 2:52 a.m., an unknown suspect burglarized a vehicle parked in the 300 block of N. Sycamore.

An unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 6600 block of Santa Monica at 1:06 p.m.

At 3 p.m., an unknown suspect stole a vehicle parked in the 300 block of S. Western.

An unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 8500 block of Beverly at 3:53 p.m.

At 9:30 p.m., an unknown suspect burglarized a vehicle parked in the 1200 block of N. Citrus.

An unknown suspect burglarized a vehicle parked in the 1600 block of N. Wilton at 10:50 p.m.

Dec. 16

An unknown suspect committed a grand theft in the 7900 block of Beverly at 11 a.m.

At 3 p.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 300 block of S. Burnside.

An unknown suspect committed a grand theft in the 5300 block of Hollywood at 3 p.m.

At 4:05 p.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 1200 block of N. Cahuenga.

An unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 8400 block of Beverly at 4:12 p.m.

At 6 p.m., an unknown suspect burglarized a vehicle parked in the 7500 block of Hollywood.

An unknown suspect burglarized a vehicle parked in the 5900 block of Wilshire at 7:30 p.m.

At 7:30 p.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 5900 block of Wilshire.

An unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 5800 block of Santa Monica at 8:50 p.m.

Dec. 17

At 7 a.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft near the corner of Hollywood and Highland.

An unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 7000 block of Hollywood at 9:42 a.m.

At 7:50 p.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 1400 block of N. Formosa.

An unknown suspect burglarized a vehicle parked in the 1500 block of Cassil at 11 p.m.

Dec. 18

An unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 7000 block of Hollywood at 8:30 a.m.

At 12:57 p.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 7000 block of Hollywood.

Dec. 19

At 7:16 a.m., an unknown suspect committed a petty theft in the 7000 block of Hollywood.

‘Sonic 3’ is immune to hate

Think about all the times a third film hurt a franchise, marking a clear drop in quality. The “Sonic” films are immune to such concerns. The fans are all in unless something qualifies as a bona fide shark jump. But after “Sonic the Hedgehog 3,” who knows what that looks like?

If two Jim Carreys dancing won’t turn you off, then anything is permissible. These films can wear the video game label or children’s entertainment as a shield against attacks. But “Sonic 3” sure tries to be a bit more than juvenile shenanigans thanks to a new villain.

Sonic (voiced by Ben Schwartz) isn’t the first extraterrestrial hedgehog to befriend humans. More than half a century ago, Shadow (Keanu Reeves) mysteriously appeared and served as a guest of G.U.N., the global organization that’s hot and cold on human-alien relations. But something went wrong and Shadow was buried and forgotten in a special prison. Until now.



“Sonic the Hedgehog 3” offers a double dose of Jim Carrey.

Freed by an unknown assailant, Shadow is out for vengeance. We’ll find out why he’s mad and who helped him soon enough (it’s quite heartbreaking). Team Sonic tries to subdue this new foe who looks so much like Blue, but Shadow makes easy work of them. Eventually, the trio – including tech-savvy fox Tales (Colleen O’Shaughnessey) and ultra-strong echidna Knuckles (Idris Elba) – seek help from an unlikely source, Dr. Robotnik (Carrey), the dastardly Eggman who twice tried to capture and kill Sonic.

All the marketing provides the story’s main beats, including Carrey’s secondary role as Robotnik’s gramps, and the threequel’s outcome borrows – to a degree – from the previous sequel, so nothing shocking occurs. And like the other films, stick around for a couple credit teasers because this franchise ain’t going anywhere.

First, let’s address the good.

ON SCREEN

WITH
TIM POSADA

These films don’t skimp on featuring villains. Shadow’s backstory provides more emotional depth and is the most mature element of the entire franchise. He’s an interesting character with visually enticing powers, which compliments the third act incredibly well.

Shadow’s first and final confrontation with Sonic are the best action sequences. The showdown traverses continents and a little beyond those even. The third act easily provides the franchise’s best action moment.

But a problem emerges between those two acts. The middle spends a lot of time on the Robotniks. Way too much time. Perhaps going all in on Jim Carrey this time was a bit much. This time around, he plays the villainous Ivo Robotnik and his own grandfather, Gerald Robotnik. At one point, the reunited pair enjoy a dance number together. If that’s your jam, rock on. If not, the sequence will likely serve as one of many batty moments that remind you that a film under two hours can feel much longer.

For a second time, a primary frustration is how far the film series continues to distance itself from what made the first film so charming: the buddy relationship between Tom (James Marsden) and Sonic. Tom and Maddie (Tika Sumpter) are around still, kinda operating as Sonic’s adoptive parents, but they



photo courtesy of Paramount Pictures

The latest “Sonic” film is a fast-paced fun adventure with plenty of thrills.

were sacrificed to make room for way too much Jim Carrey and an entirely unnecessary new character, G.U.N. director Rockwell (Krysten Ritter).

Other familiar faces only appear in single scenes, including Maddie’s sister Rachel (Natasha Rothwell) and officer Wade (Adam Pally), who served as a leading character in the “Knuckles” series

on Paramount+ earlier this year. Not that more of these characters would help the story but they’d certainly be better than Carrey’s performance as Gerald.

These films are perfectly fine. Brisk and silly with narrative choices that are simple. The formula is easy. If only they tried to grow up just enough to welcome other hopeful spectators as well.

Camp connects kids with animals

This holiday break, Wallis Annenberg PetSpace will keep those animal-loving kiddos busy at its PetSpace Winter Day Camp. Held Dec. 26 and 27 and Jan. 2 and 3, it features four, single-day sessions of fun for youth ages 8 to 11. Each day has a different itinerary, so campers can choose one, two, three or all four to attend.

From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily, campers will take part in fun and informative pet-centric activities that will explore a variety of animal-themed topics, including the human-animal bond, characteris-

tics of various animals, animal health, behavior, grooming, nutrition, exercise and physical therapy, veterinary medicine, and animal adoption.

Each daily itinerary incorporates a new theme that makes the most of PetSpace’s interactive indoor and outdoor environment with live demonstrations, crafts, educational games, and pet encounters.

For information, visit annenbergpetspace.org/events/3691821. The Wallis Annenberg PetSpace is located at 12005 Bluff Creek Drive, Playa Vista.

From page 13

with tiered pricing and two seatings at 6 and 9 p.m.

The prices are, \$325 or \$450 per guest with the latter price including a glass of Perrier Jouet Brut. Menu highlights include a duck liver éclair, yellowfin tuna tartar, wagyu rib eye cap and white chocolate champagne mousse dome. Guests who reserve the Starlight booths are not subject to seating timeslots and are able to choose whatever time they would like, \$1500 per couple.

Head to the heart of InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown and relax in the Lobby Lounge as you listen to jazz music and sip craft cocktails as you countdown to 2025. Admission is not ticketed and seating will be available on a first come, first served basis.

For information, visit ihg.com/intercontinental/hotels/us/en/los-angeles/laxhc/hoteldetail. InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown is located at 900 Wilshire Blvd.

It’s a glamorous holiday at The Peninsula

On the evening of Tuesday, Dec. 31, Angelenos and travelers alike can step into a cabaret-inspired soiree where every corner will glimmer with allure at The Peninsula Beverly Hills.

From 9 p.m.-1 a.m., The Living Room transforms into a magical affair of dramatic drapery, sultry lighting and exquisite ambiance. Savor decadent canapés, complemented by Dom Pérignon Champagne service, and be captivated by burlesque dancers, the enchanting sounds of a jazz trio and a performance by renowned pianist

Adam Chester.

Steps away from The Living Room, The Belvedere creates an unforgettable dining experience with two seatings offering sumptuous four- or five-course menus that promise to delight every palate. Guests joining for the 2nd seating will be entertained by live musicians and vocalists along with dazzling burlesque performances. Seatings are available 6:00-7:30 p.m and 8:30 p.m.-1:00 a.m.

The Club Bar will set the stage for an exclusive experience with a delectable dim sum menu, and intimate entertainment, making it the perfect prelude to the grand finale. The Club Bar experience is from 9 p.m.-1 a.m.

For information, visit peninsula.com/en/beverly-hills or call (310)551-2888. The Peninsula Beverly Hills is located at 9882 S. Santa Monica Blvd.

‘CUT’ in to Beverly Hills New Year’s meal

Enjoy a special four-course menu by executive chef Drew Rosenberg and All That Glitters themed New Year’s Eve in CUT on Tuesday, Dec. 31. Dinner includes the choice of a spiced carrot soup, Japanese Hamachi crudo, Girl & Dug farm lettuce, duck liver mousse, fresh pasta or Berkshire pork belly a la plancha. Choose from a variety of cuts from dry aged ribeye to filet mignon, braised beef cheek, Japanese Kobe wagyu filet, European Dover sole and roasted Jidori chicken. Shareable sides include crispy brussels sprouts, stone ground heirloom polenta and roasted honey nut squash. For the grand finale, enjoy the CUT chocolate bar made with mascarpone cof-

fee mousse and candied caracara oranges. Book one of two seatings, the first at 5:30 p.m. at \$255 per adult and \$95 per child 6-12. The second seating begins at 8:30 p.m. at \$295 per adult (must be 21 years or older) and includes access to CUT Lounge for the after-dinner party. Enjoy a glass of Telmont Champagne at midnight, a DJ and party favours to kick off the new year in style.

CUT Beverly Hills is located inside the Beverly Wilshire, A Four Seasons Hotel, 9500 Wilshire Blvd. For information, visit fourseasons.com/beverlywilshire/dining/restaurants/cut. To make a reservation, visit exploretock.com/cutbeverlyhills.

It’s a disco-tastic New Year at the EDITION

Bryan Rabin’s legendary Giorgio’s Discotheque is set to make its dazzling return this New Year’s Eve at The West Hollywood EDITION, bringing back its iconic Black & White Masquerade Ball. A night of elegance, glamour, and disco decadence, this highly anticipated celebration will be the ultimate way to welcome 2025 in style.

The evening promises a star-studded lineup of entertainment, beginning with special host Susanne Bartsch, the queen of nightlife and fashion icon known for her boundary-pushing events. The legendary Joey Arias will deliver an unforgettable performance. Los Angeles-based DJ Daisy O’Dell, celebrated for her work with top fashion and film events, will provide the soundtrack for the dinner portion of the evening.

The legendary DJ Jellybean

Benitez, a resident DJ at the original Studio 54 and current executive producer of Studio 54 Radio on SiriusXM (Channel 54), will helm the decks to ring in 2025 at Bryan Rabin’s Giorgio’s Discotheque. Known for curating rare 1970s and 1980s dance classics from his personal collection and the archives of Studio 54 insiders, Jellybean brings an unmatched authenticity to the night.

The celebration will be held at sunset at The West Hollywood

EDITION, a venue steeped in the disco legacy of its creator, Ian Schrager, the legendary partner behind Studio 54. The venue’s iconic design and sophisticated atmosphere provide the perfect backdrop for Giorgio’s Discotheque’s glamorous revival.

For information and to make a reservation, visit editionhotels.com/weho/giorgios-discotheque. The West Hollywood EDITION is located at 9040 Sunset Blvd.



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Grand Park gears up for the New Year

Gloria Molina Grand Park is the ultimate destination for Angelenos of all ages to ring in 2025. The West Coast’s largest free New Year’s Eve party will take center stage – for the 13th consecutive year – on Tuesday, Dec. 31, when revelers immerse themselves in the tantalizing beats and sounds of global music with local and international artists and DJs who will perform on two stages.

From afrobeats and reggaeton to hip-hop, the nearly five-hour festivity will be the toast – and the talk – of the town. To top off the epic celebration, the park’s awe-inspiring art show will be projected onto L.A.’s iconic City Hall as partygoers count down to midnight. The dazzling projections, produced by A3 Visual, will highlight L.A.’s beauty, diversity, culture and natural landscapes as well as heighten

Angelenos’ awareness of environmental green living.

“Without a doubt, Gloria Molina Grand Park’s NYELA will bring us together in joy, as a unified community, to welcome a new year,” said Rachel S. Moore, president and CEO of The Music Center. “This year’s festivities showcase an electrifying list of homegrown and global performers who will transport and uplift us through the beauty of music, dance and artistry. I invite Angelenos of all ages to connect and celebrate with each other this New Year’s Eve in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles at the park for everyone.”

With gates opening at 8:00 p.m., Gloria Molina Grand Park’s NYELA will encompass the six city blocks that comprise the park. Attendees may access the park’s grounds through three specially

marked entrances: Hill and First streets, Broadway and Second Streets, and Hill and Temple Streets.

“As Gloria Molina Grand Park’s NYELA closes out an extraordinary year of reimagination with our year-round programming and salute to sustainable practices, we look forward to celebrating the new year with unforgettable music and dance experiences that reflect the rich diversity and resilience of Los Angeles,” said Gloria Molina Grand Park director Robert Gonzalez. “The park team is ready to usher in 2025 with more innovative and exciting events for all Angelenos throughout the year, beginning with an epic New Year’s Eve celebration that will outshine the rest.”

The Countdown Stage, hosted and deejayed by Novena Carmel from KCRW’s Morning Becomes



photo courtesy of The Music Center

City Hall will be lit up to ring in 2025.

Master artists receive L.A. grants

The city of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs has announced the recipients of the 2024-25 City of Los Angeles Independent Master Artist Project. The nine master artists will each produce a series, set, or singular new artwork in performing, literary, design and/or visual arts with a grant of \$10,000 from the city of Los Angeles. The original works will premiere at DCA’s Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in the spring of 2025 and in partnership with Grand Performances in the summer of 2025 as part of the 28th edition of DCA’s COLA-IMAP annual initiative.

“The COLA-IMAP program provides recognition, financial support, and resources for mid-career artists while fostering career development and community engagement, enriching both the artist and the cultural landscape of Los Angeles,” said Daniel Tarica, general manager of the Department of Cultural Affairs. “For 28 years, COLA-IMAP has served as a catalyst to incubate, promote and cultivate artists deepening our local culture.”

“The 2025 COLA-IMAP cohort consists of nine distinguished local artists with outstanding records in their creative fields,” said Ben

Espinosa, arts manager with the Grants Administration Division. “Selected by peer experts, this spectrum of artists represents a range of visual, design, literary, and performing practices. DCA is proud to promote the past accomplished and support the next body of work by each of these superb mid-career artists.”

The 2024-25 city of Los Angeles Independent Master Artist Project recipients in design, literary, visual and performing arts are: Bryan Ida, Olivia Booth, Flora Kao, Carmen Argote, Jemima Wyman, Charles Jensen, Yozmit Kwon (Yozmit The DogStar), Azar Lawrence and Wilfried Souly (Willy).

For information, please visit culture.lacity.gov.

Gagosian announces new exhibitions

Gagosian, a contemporary art gallery located at 456 N. Camden Drive, announced an exhibition of paintings, a sculpture and works on paper by Cy Twombly. Organized in association with the Cy Twombly Foundation, it includes key bodies of work from 1968-1990, including pieces that have never been shown before.

The exhibition is accompanied by two Gagosian publications – an illustrated two-volume catalogue featuring essays by Suzanne Hudson and Jenny Saville, and a facsimile of the artist’s book of Five Day Wait at Jiayuguan, originally published by Gabriele Stocchi in 1981 for the Biennale di Venezia presentation of a suite of works of the same title.

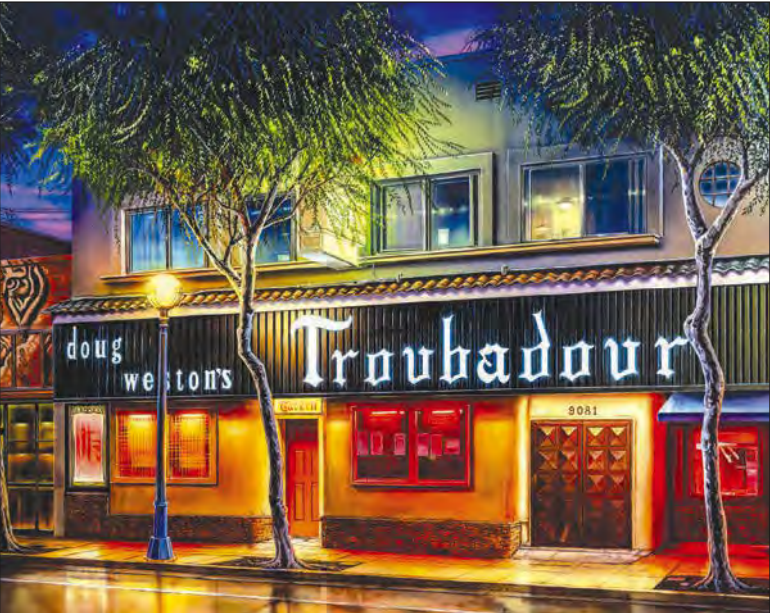


photo by Josh White

The new exhibitions include Alex Israel’s “Tribador,” which depicts the iconic nightclub in West Hollywood.

Gagosian also announced new works by Setsuko in Kingdom of Cats. The show will include new ceramics, paintings and sculptures in bronze. The ceramic works were created in her studio at Astier de Villatte in Paris.

Noir, Alex Israel’s forthcoming exhibition at Gagosian Beverly Hills, will mark the L.A.-based

artist’s first hometown show in nearly ten years. The new body of work comprises a series of paintings of Los Angeles at night. Each work features a location the artist refers to as a “third-tier monument”

– institutions that may be familiar to locals, imbued with lesser-known L.A. lore, or personally meaningful to the artist.

For information, visit gagosian.com/locations/beverly-hills.

Levoy Exil exhibit opens at Galerie Lakaye

Hollywood-based Galerie Lakaye is hosting “Of Spirits & Sirens” an exhibition of paintings on canvas by Haitian painter Levoy Exil, along with Vodou flags by four acclaimed artists working in the beaded and sequined textile tradition from Haiti. The exhibition runs through Feb. 7. Guests will be able to immerse themselves in a world of magic and mystery featuring the ethereal spirits and captivating sirens that permeate Haitian

culture. Exil belongs to the renowned Saint Soleil tradition in which artists go into a Vodou trance before painting. The resulting work is dictated by what the artists see while in trance or what the spirits tell them to paint. The Saint Soleil school and movement was established in 1973. Exil is the only remaining living artist from the original group of painters.

Galerie Lakaye is Los Angeles’ premiere gallery of contemporary

Haitian and ethnic art for 33 years. The gallery lives in Hollywood in a 1913 Craftsman house with two sculpture gardens. For information about the exhibition and the gallery, contact gallery director Carine Fabius at galerie@galerielakaye.com or (323)528-4076. Galerie Lakaye is located at 1550 N. Curson Ave. Opening night celebrations are open to the public; all other times, gallery visits are by appointment.

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Janna Ireland exhibit opens for Hollyhock House’s 100th

Commissioned on the occasion of Hollyhock House’s centennial, “Janna Ireland: Even by Proxy” presents twenty-one photographs by the artist that introduce new perspectives on Los Angeles’ only World Heritage site. The exhibit opens Jan. 16.

Ireland’s photographs privilege the quiet, subtle details of Hollyhock House and make visible the care and conservation that sustain the site over time.

The title of the exhibition comes from Frank Lloyd Wright’s autobiography, in which he describes the process of realizing Hollyhock House. For Ireland, Wright’s phrase “even by proxy” points to the fraught relationship between client and architect in building the house as well as the ongoing project of preservation.

“I regard the story of Hollyhock House, and how it came to be in spite of the often contentious relationship between heiress Aline Barnsdall and architect Frank Lloyd Wright, as one of the great

L.A. stories,” Ireland said. “It is a tale of ego and conflicting ambitions, as so many of the best stories are. My photographs are about light and shadow, wood and concrete, and the labor involved in preserving Wright and Barnsdall’s complicated project for future generations.”

“At the site’s centennial, Janna Ireland beautifully documents the landmark structure, showing signs of life, scars and activity along with striking interplay of light and shadow,” said Abbey Chamberlain Brach, Hollyhock House director and curator. “This commission builds a rich photographic legacy for Hollyhock House, including work by Margrethe Mather, Edmund Teske and Julius Shulman, and here Ireland reframes the storied site, capturing its continued resonances into the 21st century.”

Even by Proxy is presented in partnership with Project Restore and the Julius Shulman Institute at Woodbury University. Janna Ireland is the 2024 recipient of the

Julius Shulman Institute Excellence in Photography Award, which is presented to a photographer who honors Shulman’s legacy by challenging the way we look at physical space.

Janna Ireland lives in Los Angeles, where she is an assistant professor in the Department of Art and Art History at Occidental College. Her photographic work is primarily concerned with the themes of family and domestic life, the built environment, and interactions between humans and the natural world.

Her 2024 mid-career survey, “Janna Ireland: True Story Index,” was jointly hosted by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. In 2016, she began photographing structures designed by legendary Black architect Paul R. Williams. A collection of 250 of these photographs was published in a monograph entitled Regarding Paul R. Williams: A Photographer’s View, in 2020.

Advance tickets recommended. For visitor information and ticket purchase, visit hollyhockhouse.org. Hollyhock House at Barnsdall Art Park, located at 4800 Hollywood Blvd., is open Thursday–Saturday, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.



photo by James Ireland, courtesy of the L.A. Department of Cultural Affairs

Photographs by James Ireland will be on display in the “Even by Proxy” exhibit.

Black Film Festival honorees announced

The seventh American Black Film Festival has announced the honorees of its annual awards ceremony recognizing excellence in the motion picture and television industry. Presented by NICE CROWD, the 2025 ABFF Honors will take place on Monday, Feb. 17 at the SLS hotel in Beverly Hills, hosted by actress and comedian Zainab Johnson. The intimate, non-televised dinner will feature ABFF honorees and festival partners.

An Oscar-nominated actress, acclaimed for her portrayal of

Oracene Price in “King Richard,” which earned her numerous awards and nominations, Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor will soon star in the adaptation of Colson Whitehead’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel “Nickel Boys.” Ellis-Taylor will receive the Excellence in Arts Award (Female), which recognizes a highly acclaimed artist for their body of work and distinguished career achievements

An Emmy-nominated and award-winning actor, director and producer, celebrated for his iconic

role as Gustavo “Gus” Fring in “Breaking Bad” and “Better Call Saul,” Giancarlo Esposito has earned multiple accolades including Critics Choice and NAACP Image Award. Esposito will receive the Excellence in Arts Award (Male), which recognizes a highly acclaimed artist for their body of work and distinguished career achievement.

An Emmy award-winning multi-hyphenate entertainer, Keke Palmer (“Nope,” “Turnt Up With the Taylors”) is singer/songwriter, pro-

ducer, author, television host and passionate voice of the millennial generation. Palmer will receive the Renaissance Award, which is presented to a trendsetting content creator in recognition of their outstanding work and commitment to championing diversity, equity and inclusion in the motion picture and television industry, through their

work.

NICE CROWD is a Los Angeles-based live events company that develops and produces properties that showcase BIPOC culture and talent. The company’s flagship event is the American Black Film Festival, founded in 1997. To learn more about NICE CROWD events, visit nicecrowd.com.

WeHo offers glimpse of public art planned in 2025

The city of West Hollywood continues its celebration of 40 years of cityhood with a line-up of special arts and cultural events through November 2025.

Seven projects highlighting and celebrating the city of West Hollywood’s 40th year of Cityhood have been selected to receive 40th Anniversary Cultural History Grants, a category specific to 2025. Projects will highlight the history of West Hollywood and explore the people, policies and stories that make West Hollywood a unique and vibrant community through the

genre of a cultural history exhibition or activity, film screening, panel discussion or walking tour. The 40th Anniversary Cultural History Grant recipients are Dante Alencastre, Arts Bridging the Gap, Samara Goodman, Jason Jenn, Crystal Lake, Kultur Mercado and the ONE Archives Foundation. For information, visit weho.org/40.

A hand-painted mural by Timothy Robert Smith is located on the North Sweetzer Avenue exterior façade of West Hollywood City Hall, 8300 Santa Monica Blvd., through 2025, portraying drag per-

formers Jasmine Masters, Cake Moss and Pickle, the city’s inaugural drag laureate, surrounded by recognizable images of daily life in West Hollywood. As part of the Art on the Outside program, three banners titled “Everything and Everybody” by Sarah Foelske are on display in the West Hollywood City Hall Community Plaza, creatively representing a diverse array of the West Hollywood community’s favorite recreational activities.

For three days next July, West Hollywood will present “Art in Odd Places,” a citywide public art festival curated by Ed Woodham, a community-based art educator and activist from New York who often employs humor and irony in his work to encourage close consideration of the urban environment. Woodham presented free workshops in September 2024 and will return to West Hollywood in February to inform artists, curators, creatives, local businesses and community members about how to participate in the July festival, which will include visual and performance art presented in unexpected public spaces throughout West Hollywood.



photo by Edwin Folven

A hand-painted mural by Timothy Robert Smith is located on the Sweetzer Avenue side of West Hollywood City Hall.

Next fall, the city will present a new exhibition at the West Hollywood Library showcasing artworks that feature the unique locales and landmarks of West Hollywood. The exhibition will remain on view until Spring 2026.

For information, visit weho.org.

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‘Insidious’ experience to premiere at Dolby Theatre in April

Brace for the scare of a lifetime, as the world of Insidious jumps off the screen and directly into theater seats with “Insidious: The Further You Fear” – a live immersive horror experience that will bring the darkest fears to life right before your eyes, based on the box office

hit horror film franchise from Blumhouse, director James Wan, and writer Leigh Whannell. GEA Live, Blumhouse, Sony Pictures Entertainment and RoadCo Entertainment have joined forces to unveil a spine-tingling, live immersive show that will haunt 80+ seat-



photo courtesy of Broadway in Hollywood

On April 30 and May 1, the live “Insidious” experience will hit the Dolby Theatre.

VINTAGE PARKLABREA NEWS

Jewish community comes together to celebrate Hanukkah



The Chabad Russian Synagogue in West Hollywood celebrated Hanukkah in this photograph in the Dec. 17, 1998, issue of the Beverly Press and Park Labrea News.

The synagogue’s director Rabbi Naftali Estulin said it was a very special time for West Hollywood’s Russian Jewish immigrants, as many of them moved to the city in the 1990s after the fall of communism and had not previously experienced an elaborate Hanukkah celebration. The Soviet Union banned the celebration of Jewish holidays. The temple held a nightly candle-lighting during Hanukkah and distributed more than 2,000 gifts to children.

“Hanukkah is very special for Russian kids,” Estulin said in the accompanying article. “They never had anything Jewish and now they do. And now they’re free, in a beautiful place like the United States. It means a lot.”

This year, Hanukkah commenced at sunset on Dec. 25 and runs through Thursday, Jan. 2.

ed theaters across North America including Los Angeles’ Dolby Theatre, on April 30 and May 1.

“Insidious: The Further You Fear” is a heart-pounding live theatrical experience where the lines between reality and fiction blur, constantly challenging what’s real and what’s imagined, what’s safe and what’s dangerous. This groundbreaking immersive experience is meticulously crafted to always keep the audience on edge, with no fourth wall to separate them -or protect them- from the unfolding terror. Each attendee will go face-to-face with the protagonists, making the audience an integral character in the chilling story as it unravels.

“We have brought some of the most respected names in the horror and entertainment industries together to make this groundbreaking show possible and ensure a hauntingly unforgettable experience for audiences everywhere,” Floris Douwes from GEA Live said.

“We’re excited to bring the eerie and otherworldly thrills of ‘Insidious’ to cities around the country,” co-director Toby Park said.

Park, who is also composing the original music for the show, and co-director Aitor Basauri are artistic directors for Spymonkey, and serve as creative directors for “Insidious: The Further You Fear.”

The iconic “Insidious” franchise, consistently gaining momentum over the years, is a box office sensation generating more than \$742 million in revenue across five highly successful films. The growing legion of fans includes an active community of five million social media followers. However, while the show is a must for “Insidious” fans, it’s also created for those who don’t know the films, particularly those who love a fun, thrill-filled night out at the theatre.

Tickets are now available for purchase in Los Angeles at broadwayinhollywood.com or ticketmaster.com. Tickets may also be purchased in person at the Dolby Theatre box office, located at 6801 Hollywood Blvd. For current box office operating hours, visit the official website.

Zoo will keep the ‘Animals Aglow’ through the New Year

Celebrate the holidays at L.A. Zoo Lights: Animals Aglow presented by The Angela Collier Foundation with two exciting events that promise to bring joy and excitement to all.

Ring in the New Year at the Family New Year’s Eve Celebration on Tuesday, Dec. 31. Celebrate the arrival of the New Year at this all-ages event, which includes express entry to L.A. Zoo Lights, a buffet dinner featuring lemon herb chicken, short rib, roasted spiced carrots and garlic mashed potatoes, along with dessert, hot chocolate station, dancing and a live broadcast of the Times Square ball drop. Celebrate with a New Year toast featuring sparkling wine or apple cider at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$95 for adults (18+) and \$79 for children (2–17), available online only. It’s a wonderful opportunity to create lasting memories with your loved ones as you welcome 2025.

L.A. Zoo Lights is a dazzling world of lantern sculptures and lights, with exciting new elements that will delight and entertain the entire family. Journey through enchanting landscapes of alpine forests, rainforests and rivers, all illuminated by spectacular sculptural lights showcasing large-scale animal and vibrant nature-themed wonders. New this year is a festive holiday sections featuring immersive lights and displays, spectacular holiday photo spots, rides on the carousel, and other cheery fun. Guests 21 and older can enjoy beer, wine and spiked hot cocoa available every night, and cash bars Friday-Sunday.

The L.A. Zoo welcomes guests to celebrate the holidays in its illuminated magical setting, creating a truly beautiful and memorable way to celebrate the season. For information and to purchase tickets, visit lazoolights.org.



photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Zoo

L.A. Zoo’s Animals Aglow exhibit makes for festive holiday fun.

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Sewing workshops for drag artists held in WeHo

The city of West Hollywood will present a free four-workshop series Sewing Workshops for Drag Artists, led by West Hollywood Drag Laureate Pickle and professional sewing instructors.

The workshop series will take place on Jan. 8, 15, 22 and 29 from 5-7 p.m. at the West Hollywood Library Community Meeting Room, located at 625 N. San Vicente Blvd. The workshop on Jan. 29 will take place at the San Vicente Room in the West Hollywood Park Aquatic and Recreation Center, located at 8750 El Tovar Place, adjacent to West Hollywood Library. Space is limited and RSVP is required at go.weho.org/drag.

Upon reaching capacity, a wait-

list will be started for interested community members.

Workshop series participants will learn how to sew with professional sewing instructors. The workshop series will cover the basics of working with a sewing machine, making patterns and bringing creative visions to life. Sewing machines and basic materials will be provided, and all levels of experience are welcome. For more advanced sewers, there will be an additional instructor to assist with independent projects or to answer questions. All participants must bring their own fabrics.

Pickle is a powerhouse host, performer, and community activist. She is a singing drag queen and comedienne who values education, community, and humor. She has been

performing in drag professionally for ten years and has collaborated with many people and organizations to bring drag into people's lives. Pickle has focused on blending education initiatives into her drag work and runs the L.A. chapter of Drag Story Hour. In 2024 she founded Drag Arts Lab to expand and elevate the art of drag in Los Angeles County through public programming, drag education initiatives, and empowering drag artists by connecting them to resources.

For information about the West Hollywood's Drag Laureate program, visit weho.org/arts or contact Rebecca Ehemann, West Hollywood's arts manager, at (323)848-6846 or at draglaureate@weho.org.



photo courtesy of BODYTRAFFIC

BODYTRAFFIC is currently preforming "This Reminds Me of You" across the county.

Critics Choice awards nominations announced

The Critics Choice Association has announced its nominees for the 30th annual Critics Choice Awards. The winners will be revealed at the star-studded Critics Choice Awards gala hosted by Chelsea Handler, which will broadcast LIVE on E! on Sunday, Jan. 12 at 7 p.m. from the Barker Hangar in Santa Monica. The show will also be available to stream the next day on Peacock.

"Conclave" and "Wicked" lead this year's film contenders, having earned 11 nominations each. "Conclave" collected nods for Best Picture and Best Acting Ensemble, with Ralph Fiennes recognized in the Best Actor category and Isabella Rossellini up for Best Supporting Actress.

In addition to Best Picture, "Wicked"'s 11 nominations include a nod for Best Acting Ensemble, while castmates Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande racked up nominations for Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress respectively.

"Dune: Part Two" and "Emilia Pérez" follow closely behind with 10 nods apiece, including Best Picture nominations for both films. Rounding out the Best Picture category are "A Complete Unknown," "Anora," "The Brutalist," "Nickel Boys," "Sing Sing" and "The Substance."

"Shōgun" leads the television contenders for the 30th annual Critics Choice Awards with six

nominations. The show earned a nod for Best Drama Series, while the cast was recognized in multiple categories.

"Abbott Elementary," "Disclaimer," "Hacks," "The Diplomat," "The Penguin" and "What We Do in the Shadows" followed with an impressive four nominations each. "Abbott Elementary," "Hacks" and "What We Do in the Shadows" will all face off in the Best Comedy Series category, while "Disclaimer" and "The Penguin" are up for Best Limited Series and "The Diplomat" earned a nod for Best Drama Series.

For a full list of nominations, visit criticschoice.com.

Newsom announces new framework to create high-paying career pathways

Recognizing that traditional four-year degrees and non-college experiences both provide pathways to stable, well-paid work, Gov. Gavin Newsom on Dec. 16 unveiled the final framework for the Master Plan for Career Education to strengthen career pathways, prioritize hands-on learning and real-life skills, and advance educational access and affordability. The Master Plan will be supported by funding in the upcoming state budget.

"Every Californian deserves the opportunity to build real-life skills and pursue a fulfilling career – including those that don't require college degrees," Newsom said. "California is working to ensure that every person has what they need to get a well-paying, long-lasting job so we can build an economy for the future that supports all families. We are proud to stand with our local partners in the North State to advance the Master Plan for Career Education, working collaboratively

with our Jobs First Economic Blueprint, and create pathways toward new jobs while strengthening California's regional economies to benefit local communities."

The Master Plan for Career Education recognizes the need for a more coherent skill-building infrastructure that is forward-looking, accessible and aligned with California's diverse workforce needs. The framework paves the way to help ensure that all Californians can navigate toward career-sustaining jobs. It stands as a testament to California's commitment to equip all students and workers – regardless of background or circumstance – with the tools necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The framework will be followed by the final Master Plan for Career Education, which will be published early in 2025.

As part of the Master Plan, the state will establish Career Passports

to help workers showcase their skills and experiences to potential employers. This tool is designed to make it easier for people, especially those without a four-year degree, to prove their qualifications and access good jobs.

The digital tool will combine traditional academic records, like college transcripts, with verified skills and credentials earned outside the classroom, such as military service, job training, or volunteer work. The concept, also known as a Learning and Employment Record, provides a mechanism for workers to demonstrate knowledge and skills already learned. Employers will be able to use the Career Passport to see a clear, validated record of a person's abilities, helping to shift hiring practices toward valuing skills over just degrees.

By recognizing and validating prior learning, California is also efficiently closing workforce gaps, advance opportunity, support veterans and strengthen the economy.

For information, visit gov.ca.gov.

Dance company receives Perenchio Foundation grant

BODYTRAFFIC, the Los Angeles-based contemporary dance company founded in 2007, has received a \$1,020,000 multi-year General Operating Support Grant from Perenchio Foundation. The funding will strengthen BODYTRAFFIC's Los Angeles operations, performances, training programs and community outreach.

Perenchio Foundation's General Operating Support Grants provide flexible funding to Los Angeles County arts organizations to bolster operational resilience. With a commitment for multiple years, these grants aim to help arts organizations address immediate needs, strengthen infrastructure, plan from a place of greater confidence and stability, and build capacity for a long-term future in the region.

"The organizations in which we are investing have a proven track record of artistic excellence, community partnerships, and steady leadership. What is often missing for such organizations is the kind

of stable, multi-year funding that allows them to fully plan for the future," Perenchio Foundation chief executive officer Stephania Ramirez said. "Our grants are designed to fill that gap with sustained, flexible support."

Since its creation in 2007, BODYTRAFFIC has become acclaimed across the U.S. and the world, touring regularly. In 2020, the company underwent a strategic shift, envisioning a significant expansion of performances, programming and outreach in its home community of Los Angeles. BODYTRAFFIC established a home season, performing at touchstone locations across L.A. The company's 2024-25 "This Reminds Me of You" home season doubles the number of performances offered at The Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts (Dec. 6-7), Skirball Cultural Center (March 18-19, 2025) and Avalon Hollywood (June 4-5, 2025).

For information, visit bodytraffic.com.



photo courtesy of the office of Gov. Gavin Newsom

The framework will advance educational access and affordability in California.



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‘Not That Jewish’ finds laughs are the ties that bind

BY RANCE COLLINS

When it comes down to the brass tacks, we’re all human. That’s the big idea, presented with a quaint helping of heart and humor, in Monica Piper’s “Not That Jewish.” As the title foreshadows, Piper has been dealing with her level of “Jewish-ness” her entire life, and her journey through existence presents a recurring theme – how Jewish is she really?

Now, full disclosure, I am not Jewish – but I thoroughly related to the journey all the same. Identity is a lifelong struggle, no matter cultural, racial, sexual or religious. To be fair, I believe that there are swaths of people whose struggle may be one of which they are completely unaware. Perhaps born into some privileged vessel, the only challenges they face in their life’s station are ones that never penetrate their consciousness.

Others are born into a world that inherently takes issue with who they are, and their journey becomes one of choosing paths between assimilation or activism or finding acceptance.

Beyond who you may be, what skin you might be born into, identity shifts as one gets older. Looks fade. Health and financial situations change. People move. Relatives die.

Regardless of how your individual identity crisis hits you, or when, there is one fact that does or should remain at the center: humor. At least, that’s what the (admittedly humor-gifted) Piper argues. Through her 90-minute one-woman show, Piper presents her life story, from inception to the present day.

What unfolds presents a good argument for the adage that “every person has a story.” Of course, the gift of telling a story is not something everyone possesses. Thankfully, Piper knows how to hold an audience. She knows how to use a beat, in particular. At one point during the performance I attended, someone’s phone went off – and, as it happens, the ring tone blasted during the show’s most emotional moment.

Piper’s a pro. She took a pause, and deadpanned, “That better be your new kidney.” It took the air out of the awkwardness.

In “Not That Jewish,” Piper explains how humor has always been the blood beating through her “Jewish heart.” Through laughs, she’s gotten through a failed marriage, motherhood, loss, a busy career – now, she’s imparting all that wisdom to her audience.

Her Jewish-ness, as mentioned before, is at the core. She wasn’t

raised religiously, and her own level of devoutness has varied through the years. But in tragic periods of her life, that thousands-year-old thread comes back as a comfort, as a connector.

She imparts to the audience the very nonjudgmental love that was passed down to her. One story she relates finds her in line at the store with her grandmother. In front of them are two men holding hands. Another customer hurls an insult at them, and the grandmother snaps back in defense of the men. Being as humorous as her granddaughter, she also has a good punchline for the moment, but I’ll leave that for you to hear directly from Piper.

Each story has that little bit of humanity. In the exploration for self-identification, you see, Piper stumbled upon the interconnectivity of us all.

It’s a message that hits especially hard during the holiday season, as a year comes to a close that has brought about so many “unprecedented” moments.” The future we look to right now seems uncertain – it feels oftentimes like everything is under attack. It feels like hate speech is currency, frequently cashed in for notoriety or advancement. That being on the “right side of history” is a myth of



photo courtesy of David Chiu

Monica Piper stars in the one-woman show.

martyrdom, and that being rude to our neighbors carries more weight than a “please” or a “thank you.”

But Piper’s message cuts through the pessimism and presents something honest. We just have to laugh. It doesn’t mean the fight for equality or the fight for our fellow man or the fight for peace on Earth ends. It means that, with a laugh, goodwill can live to sustain the world for another day. It’s how we know we’re still alive. That there’s still a purpose in our very existence.

And, I think most importantly, it’s how we know that it doesn’t really matter who we are or what

our identity is, we are all human beings. Maybe that sounds trite, but aren’t these trite phrases oft-repeated for a reason? Might I posture that there is truth in the trite?

Playing now at The Braid through Jan. 30, I invite all to give humanity, friendship and fellowship another chance. Laugh a little bit (or maybe a lot), and let Piper’s message beat into your heart – be it not that Jewish, Jewish or not Jewish at all.

For no matter who we are, we all have to find reasons to smile.

The Braid is located at 3435 Ocean Park Blvd., Ste.107-85, Santa Monica. For tickets and information, visit the-braid.org.

Jewish Solar Challenge announces 2024 grant winners

The Jewish Solar Challenge announced the winners of its 2024 grant cycle. Seven Jewish organizations worldwide will be awarded money for the purchase and installation of solar panels and solar batteries.

This year’s grantees are: Temple Emanu El, a temple and early childhood center in Burbank; Beth El Congregation of South Hills, a synagogue in Pittsburgh; Hillel at UCLA; Tikvah Chadasha, a nonprofit focused on women and children with disabilities in eastern

Uganda; Valley Beth Shalom, a synagogue in Encino; Camp Jori, a summer camp in South Kingstown, R.I.; and Hamakom Synagogue in West Hills.

“We are honored to award grants to such an incredible and diverse range of organizations this year,” Jewish Solar Challenge Founder Mitchell Schwartz said. “These grantees exemplify our mission by demonstrating a deep commitment to sustainability that extends beyond the institution and into the greater community.”

The announcement of the grant winners corresponds with Hanukkah, often called The Festival of Lights. The Hanukkah story tells of the Maccabees recapturing the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem from the Seleucid Greek Empire. When the Maccabees rededicated the temple, they found only enough oil to light the menorah for one day, but miraculously the oil burned for eight days.

“In many ways, Jewish values coincide with environmental issues and of being stewards of the land which God has given us, given to the people for future generations,”

JSC Board Member Miriam Prum Hess said. “Through the gift of solar panels, we embody these values and the story of Hanukkah, by bringing the miracle of the sun, the light that doesn’t go out, to communities in a sustainable and impactful way.”

During the grant cycle, JSC is awarding a total of \$318,000, and five of the seven organizations will receive the maximum matching grant of \$50,000. This brings the total amount awarded for solar panels to nearly \$1 million since the Jewish Solar Challenge launched two years ago. Additional funds for winners were made possible by a \$2,500 grant from the Jewish

Community Foundation.

JSC chose winners based not only on their commitment to solar but other sustainability measures, as well.

“It is our responsibility, as Jewish people, to honor, respect, and care for our natural resources for the living and the future generations,” said Paula Russell, president of Hamakom Synagogue. “Hamakom is committed to this responsibility, and we have taken action through native landscaping, water filling stations, reusable food wares and now solar energy to turn this responsibility into a reality.”

For information, visit jewishsolarchallenge.com.



photo courtesy of Jewish Solar Challenge

Tikvah Chadasha, a nonprofit for women and children with disabilities in eastern Uganda, will receive solar panels as one of this year’s grant recipients.

BHPD and BHUSD launch e-vehicle safety program

The Beverly Hills Police Department and Beverly Hills Unified School District launched a comprehensive education and enforcement program for e-vehicles, prioritizing the safety of our students, residents and community.

In this joint effort, BHUSD will implement an E-Vehicle Permit Program, where BHUSD students and parents will need to sign an

agreement form acknowledging their understanding of the laws and rules of both the California Vehicle Code and BHUSD to park on campus.

The BHUSD Board of Education will be formalizing the initiative into board policy, further solidifying its commitment to safety and fostering community collaboration.

For information, visit bhUSD.org/evehicle.

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2024 was a dynamic and eventful year

From page 1

2026, the Super Bowl in 2027 and the Olympic Games in 2028 that will bring millions of people to the region and provide a boost to the economy.

The city’s skyline is also changing, as evident with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art’s new David Geffen Galleries spanning Wilshire Boulevard in the Miracle Mile. Temporary supports came down in October, offering a glimpse of the sweeping structure set for a 2026 opening.

Also nearing completion is Metro’s D Line subway project, with a late 2025 opening planned for the first leg from Wilshire/Western to La Cienega Boulevard. Two other sections extending through Beverly Hills and ending in West L.A. will follow, opening by 2027, ahead of the Olympics.

Los Angeles

The city and county of Los Angeles significantly addressed homelessness in 2024. Mayor Karen Bass’ Inside Safe program expanded efforts early in the year to house people at encampments, including sites on Poinsettia Place in the Melrose area, and Highland Avenue and Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. The annual Homeless Count conducted in January found a decrease in homeless for the first time in many years, including a 2.2% overall drop in Los Angeles and a 10% decrease in unsheltered homelessness.

The election heated up early in 2024 with the race for the 30th Congressional District, left open by



photo by Jon Viscott
West Hollywood celebrated Pride in June with a parade and festival.

Adam Schiff’s bid for U.S. Senate. Following the March 5 primary, Assemblywoman Laura Friedman and physician Alex Balekian entered a run-off election, with Friedman ultimately emerging victorious. She will be sworn in on Jan. 3. Schiff was also victorious in his bid for U.S. Senate, and was sworn in on Dec. 9.

The Access to Hollywood project launched in 2024 and includes a redesigned street layout. Bike lanes were installed from Gower Street to Fountain Avenue, opening ahead of CicLAvia, which welcomed thousands of cyclists to Hollywood Boulevard in August.

In the Fairfax District, the Television City project continued through the planning process and received approval from the City Council’s PLUM Committee on Dec. 3. Television City’s owner Hackman Capital Partners plans to modernize the studio and is seeking approval for an approximately 1.8 million-square-foot redevelopment project. Opponents believe it is too big and will adversely impact the surrounding neighborhood. The Television City Plan is now headed for full council consideration in January.

West Hollywood

City government made headlines throughout the year in West Hollywood. Mayor John Erickson took the reins in January and guided the city through a sometimes difficult and uncertain period. The fall election was hotly contested, with Erickson and first-time councilman Danny Hang emerging victorious among a nine-candidate field. The new leaders took their seats in December. Another change in leadership is just around the corner, with Chelsea Byers and John Heilman becoming mayor and vice mayor, respectively, in January.

Developments in the city such as the 8550 Sunset project, which includes the Viper Room, received approval from the City Council. Another proposed project became highly controversial as plans to potentially redesign Fountain Avenue came under consideration. The redesign may add bike lanes and reduce traffic lanes and parking. Some residents claim the

removal of parking is unfair and the reduction in lanes will force traffic into surrounding neighborhoods. Supporters believe it will provide significant benefits and will increase safety.

West Hollywood also made significant improvements to public safety in 2024, with the council approving the Safer WeHo Plan. West Hollywood plans to use drones, fixed cameras and a real-time watch center at the sheriff’s station to better fight crime in 2025, similar to a system in place in Beverly Hills.

West Hollywood hosted its annual Pride celebration in June, attracting thousands of people from around the world. Pop icon Cindy Lauper was named the first Ally Icon and led the 2024 Pride Parade along Santa Monica Boulevard. Plans are already being formulated for an even bigger celebration in 2025. West Hollywood also celebrated 40 years of cityhood this fall and launched a year-long series of festivities in 2025 to mark the milestone.

Beverly Hills

In Beverly Hills, the year began with the race for two open seats on the City Council. Ten candidates competed in the election, which was decided on March 5. Attorney Craig Corman and former BHUSD Board member Mary Wells were elected and began serving in April.

The Israel-Hamas War was also a major concern for Beverly Hills and its large Jewish population. Rallies in support of Israel were held in Beverly Gardens Park and the city installed a large memorial with hundreds of flags illustrating lives lost during the attacks by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023.

The city also faced legal issues that made headlines during 2024, including a lawsuit alleging the city blocked the DuPont reproductive rights clinic from opening. Emails and communications from then-Mayor Julian Gold and other high-ranking city officials were unearthed that DuPont Clinic attorneys and pro-choice advocates said proved the city colluded to block the clinic. California Attorney General Rob Bonta called the city’s



photo by Edwin Folven
The supports came down around LACMA’s new David Geffen Galleries, showing the building’s sweeping curves.

actions blatantly illegal. After a state investigation, the city entered into an agreement – legally referred to as a stipulated judgement – mandating that the city train its employees on protecting reproductive rights. However, a judge ruled in favor of the city in December by granting an anti-SLAPP motion that strikes certain evidence in the case because the city’s actions were deemed protected activity. Despite the December ruling, the DuPont Clinic lawsuit will move forward in court in 2025.

Beverly Hills also faced hurdles in 2024 with its housing element, a state mandated plan outlining where housing will be built in the city to accommodate growth. The city’s housing element was rejected multiple times over three years before finally gaining state approval in May.

During the period when the housing element was uncertified, developers were allowed to submit plans for buildings with affordable housing much larger and taller than the city generally permits under the state’s builder’s remedy law. Multiple builder’s remedy projects are currently in the planning process in Beverly Hills, although none have been approved. Lawsuits are pending over the city’s rejection of a builder’s remedy project on South Linden Drive, and more lawsuits will likely be filed over other builder’s remedy projects in the coming year.

The Beverly Hills Unified School District made headlines for multiple reasons during the past year. In February, Beverly Vista Middle School came under scrutiny after

students created obscene photos of classmates using AI. As a result, the BHUSD expelled five students and established a new “civility” policy.

Election season started a second time in Beverly Hills in August, when the race intensified for three seats on the BHUSD Board of Education. On Nov 5, voters narrowed a field of four candidates, electing incumbent Amanda Stern, construction contractor Sigalie Sabag and firearms dealer and security professional Russell Stuart, who were sworn in on Dec. 17.

The new board members took their seats during a tumultuous period for the BHUSD, which is also facing legal hurdles. Two Black teachers have filed claims against the district – precursors to lawsuits – claiming racism and discrimination. One teacher alleges she and a group of Black students were victims of racism during a demonstration celebrating the victory of President-Elect Donald Trump at Beverly Hills High School on Nov. 6. Another teacher alleges she was wrongfully terminated after commenting about the election and the pro-Trump demonstration at the high school on social media, during personal time and away from the school campus.

In December, Beverly Hills hosted the Mayors Summit Against Antisemitism. The city brought together more than 200 leaders from across the U.S. and Canada from Dec. 11-13 to develop strategies to combat hate and racism. The city also recognized leaders who have taken significant steps to fight antisemitism.

Grocery store merger plan blocked

From page 6

improved working conditions.”

On Dec. 11, the day after the merger was blocked, Albertsons terminated its merger agreement with Kroger and filed litigation against Kroger for breach of contract. Albertsons accused Kroger – which owns Ralphs – of “refusing to divest assets necessary for antitrust approval, ignoring regulators’ feedback, rejecting stronger divestiture buyers and failing to cooperate with Albertsons,” according to a company statement.

“A successful merger between Albertsons and Kroger would have delivered meaningful benefits for America’s consumers, Kroger’s and Albertsons’ associates and communities across the country,” Albertsons’ general counsel and chief policy officer Tom Moriarty said in a statement. “Rather than fulfill its contractual obligations to

ensure that the merger succeeded, Kroger acted in its own financial self-interest, repeatedly providing insufficient divestiture proposals that ignored regulators’ concerns. Kroger’s self-serving conduct, taken at the expense of Albertsons and the agreed transaction, has harmed Albertsons’ shareholders, associates and consumers.

We are disappointed that the opportunity to realize the significant benefits of the merger has been lost on account of Kroger’s willfully deficient approach to securing regulatory clearance.”

The blocked merger comes as the property owners for the Beverly Hills Pavilions location plan a development project that would vastly change the layout of the location. In March, the Aflalo Family Trust submitted a preliminary application for an eight-story, 110-unit

mixed-use residential building with ground floor retail space, a rooftop deck and three-level underground parking structure.

While a project of this scope would usually be prohibited in Beverly Hills, the developers are hoping to utilize the builder’s remedy, a state provision that allows developers to bypass local building restrictions when the proposal contains a certain percentage of affordable housing units and the city’s housing element does not meet state requirements. The proposed project at 9467 W. Olympic Blvd. reserves 22 units for low-income residents.

The project is being designed by Ottinger Architects, a firm that designed plans for a similar – and controversial – 19-story builder’s remedy project at 125-129 S. Linden Drive that was blocked by

the city and is the center of multiple lawsuits seeking its approval.

Property owner of the 9467 W. Olympic Blvd. site Sammy Aflalo said the current plans include space for a future grocery store on the ground floor. According to Aflalo, the future supermarket would face Olympic Boulevard, with separate retail businesses facing South Beverly Drive.

The lease for the current Pavilions lasts for another five years, and the property owners do not have the right to terminate the lease early to begin development. However, Aflalo said Albertsons expressed interest in terminating the Pavilions lease early if it could move into the redeveloped location.

The project is currently under review by city staff and the application has yet to be deemed complete.

The proposed project at the current Pavilions isn’t the only possible redevelopment in the immediate area. Aflalo has submitted applications for three other mixed-use development projects at the

same intersection – a 10-story building at 9430 W. Olympic Blvd., a 10-story building at 9441 W. Olympic Blvd. and an eight-story building at 333-353 S. Beverly Drive. If approved, the four developments would significantly transform the intersection of Olympic Boulevard and Beverly Drive with over 350 new housing units.

“We wanted to really enhance the intersection,” Aflalo said. “Right now, they’re older buildings that don’t really operate properly – including vacant offices that just don’t really have as much of a need in this post-COVID era with remote work. And there’s obviously a housing crisis as well, so we’re eliminating obsolete offices and replacing them with much-needed housing, and eliminating an old grocery store that can’t really compete and operate with more modern grocers. We’re going to be able to deliver a product to a grocery store that’s state of the art, that will serve the community and will drive more revenue for the city.”

Trader Vic’s plans 2025 opening in WeHo

From page 1

low rum runner Donn Beach – a Los Angeles-based adventurer credited with inventing the concept of a “tiki bar” – Bergeron set out to create his own Polynesian-themed restaurant. Combining Caribbean-inspired libations with Asian fusion cuisine and authentic décor from islands of the South Pacific, Trader Vic’s offered a tropical escape for visitors from across generations.

The business became a successful chain and perhaps the most well-known destination for tiki drinks, even making its way into pop culture. It’s referenced in Warren Zevon’s 1978 hit “Werewolves of London” – I saw a werewolf drinkin’ a piña colada at Trader Vic’s. It served as the inspiration for the name and Hawaiian shirt-clad aesthetic of every college student’s favorite grocery store, Trader Joe’s. It was also Richard Nixon’s favorite restaurant.

Beyond just pop culture, the restaurant left an indelible mark on dining. It was one of the first successful themed restaurants, long before the Rainforest Café cropped up in shopping malls across America. Bergeron made several contributions to the rum cocktail canon – the Fog Cutter, the Scorpion Bowl and – depending who you ask – the Mai Tai (Donn Beach also took credit for that one).

Trader Vic’s is also known as the birthplace of Crab Rangoon, now a staple of Chinese-American fare.

Perhaps it’s fitting, then, that one of the restaurant’s most beloved locations was in the heart of Los Angeles, where escapism and entertainment go hand in hand. In 1955, Trader Vic’s opened shop in the Beverly Hilton on Wilshire Boulevard, and soon became a favorite haunt of Hollywood stars including Marlon Brando, Marilyn Monroe and the entirety of The Rat Pack. Many in the Beverly Hills community fondly remember celebrating a birthday there, or being struck with a sense of awe and wonder in the restaurant as a child.

But in 2007, after 62 years in business, the restaurant met the same fate of many other locations across the U.S. – gone, to the dismay of loyal patrons. The construction of the adjacent Waldorf Astoria demolished a wing of the Beverly Hilton – where Trader Vic’s was located. As of 2024, the only Trader Vic’s still open in the U.S. is in Emeryville.

But the ship that some thought had sailed years ago is soon going to dock again in Los Angeles. Trader Vic’s has confirmed that it plans to open a new location at 9091 Santa Monica Blvd. in West Hollywood. At the helm is Rhett Rosen, the company’s CEO, who

said in an interview with the Beverly Press that he has been planning the restaurant’s comeback in L.A. for years. After multiple opportunities that he said just weren’t right, he finally settled on the “perfect” building on the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Doheny Drive – where Beverly Hills meets West Hollywood.

“It’s a landmark building. We love the character, because it’s just like us. We’re not the shiny, brand new building restaurant. It doesn’t work for the brand. It doesn’t fit with us and our character and the heritage and all of that,” Rosen said. “The façade is going to stay the same. The city of West Hollywood is really excited about bringing back that old look with a neon sign.”

Rosen also noted the new location’s proximity to the Beverly Hilton and the adjacent businesses – Dan Tana’s, Andys and The Troubadour.

Rosen’s vision for the West Hollywood Trader Vic’s is something of a full-scale revival – a “flagship” location, he said. The menu will include all of Bergeron’s classics – pupu platters, crab Rangoon and a variety of grogs served in, of course, specialty mugs. The menu will also feature a new drink and mug only available at the West Hollywood location. The décor will include the classic rattan

furniture, floating glass lights and artifacts from many closed locations – including London, Beverly Hills and “all over the world.” Rosen has even inherited Bergeron’s enigmatic role as a wandering collector of artifacts.

“I’m still traveling around the world finding pieces of art, finding artists and carvers,” Rosen said.

He added that the restaurant will truly feel like an original Trader Vic’s, keeping the hallmark immersive atmosphere without unnecessary additions.

“I think Trader was ahead of his time when he did this whole thing and designed the restaurants like this and did what he did. I still think what he did stands the test of time. So it’s not like we have to come in and go over the top with new technology or anything like that,” Rosen said.

Rosen believes the post-pandemic restaurant scene is the perfect opportunity for Trader Vic’s to return to Los Angeles, as people going out to dinner often crave an “experience” over anything. He hopes to draw both longtime fans of the Beverly Hills location and people who have never before stepped foot inside a Trader Vic’s. He said a modern Trader Vic’s offers the opportunity for patrons to immediately connect to its story.

“Because you’ve got a computer in your hand, you can look up the authenticity and look up the history right away. I think, especially younger people, love stories, and love the connection and love that authenticity. Obviously, we can

deliver that,” he said.

The new Trader Vic’s won’t be the only place to get a Mai Tai in West Hollywood. Earlier this year, The Lucky Tiki opened as a tiki speakeasy hidden behind hot dog stand Tail O’ The Pup on Santa Monica Boulevard. The Lucky Tiki’s owner Bobby Green said he was excited to find out about Trader Vic’s comeback after hearing rumors for years.

“I’m really happy to hear they finally did it,” Green said.

Although the two businesses will both cater to a tiki-loving audience, Green said he doesn’t anticipate a rivalry.

“I think it’s going to be great for The Lucky Tiki, to be honest. It just makes West Hollywood more of a destination for people who love that vibe,” he said.

Indeed, for those who love tropical cocktails, immersive atmosphere and an entertaining dining experience, the return of Trader Vic’s to Southern California will undoubtedly be celebrated.

Rosen, who lives in West Hollywood, noted his personal connection to the reopening.

“[From] the minute I took this job, this has been my dream, to bring this back to L.A., to do it right, to pay homage to the city – bring back something that I think was such a big part of this city for so long,” Rosen said. “It’s so important to so many people. I want to be a small part of the city’s history.”

While an official opening date hasn’t been set, Rosen said he hopes to open by November 2025.

Hanukkah celebrations held in community

From page 1

Hollywood and Los Angeles will be offering services and events to mark the “Festival of Lights.”

“Hanukkah is a holiday that ultimately celebrates miracles. Its modern relevance is really looking at the miracles of our history but also the miracles of every day,” Temple Emanuel Beverly Hills Cantor Lizzie Weiss said. “Each one of us brings our own light to the darkness. A lot of people are having a really hard time this year, ever since Oct. 7. But I also think back to the past many years – the pandemic – there have been so many things that have been challenging.”

Weiss said that Hanukkah celebrations can offer members of the Jewish community the opportunity to come together in solidarity, especially at places of worship like local temples. Temple Emanuel Beverly Hills recently hosted its ChaiVillage Hanukkah Party – a celebratory gathering for seniors from Temple Emanuel and Temple Isaiah, in addition

to a “Latkes and Lo Mein” Hanukkah concert and dinner. The event was a listening party for the temple’s newest album, released on Dec. 24. The original songs celebrate Jewish faith and were composed by Rabbi Jonathan Aaron and Weiss. The album, “Generations,” is available on all streaming services.

While Hanukkah events at most synagogues span the entire month of December, there is still much programming for residents to enjoy.

Temple Emanuel Beverly Hills will be hosting a lighting ceremony for the Hanukkiah – also known as the Hanukkah menorah – on Sunday, Dec. 29, from 4:30-6 p.m. Attendees can participate by bringing their own menorahs.

“Over the last many years we’ve created a new family, a more connected family within our community,” Weiss said. “It feels really good to come together with your temple family to be together at the temple. We’ll

light the Hanukkiah, we’ll do a bunch of singing and then we’ll have latkes and sufganiyot.”

Temple Emanuel Beverly Hills is located at 300 N. Clark Drive.

Temple Israel of Hollywood hosted a family shabbat program on Dec. 19 with Israeli music and a decadent latke bar. The temple also hosted “Gelt Pleasures: L.A.’s Largest Queer Hanukkah Celebration,” in partnership with JQ International, which included a live DJ, performances, menorah lighting and festive food and drinks.

Temple Israel’s holiday celebrations even extend beyond Hanukkah. The temple held an event called the “Jewish Gift of Christmas,” which highlighted the history of contributions from Jewish people to modern Christmas celebrations – including various Christmas songs that were composed by Jews. Additionally, in collaboration with Hollywood United Methodist Church, the tem-

ple co-hosted a Christmas dinner on Dec. 25 where all were welcomed with open arms.

Temple Israel’s executive director Zach Lasker said that although the Christmas dinner may be closely tied to a non-Jewish holiday, it’s still a part of the annual Hanukkah programming.

“It’s part of our Hanukkah celebration because it’s our way of ensuring that everybody who wants to have a winter holiday to celebrate has access to it,” Lasker said. “We host a dinner, we give out toys, we give out hygiene kits for about 1,000 of our unhoused and low-income neighbors in Hollywood. It’s a massive volunteer event.”

For those interested in participating in the temple’s events, it will be hosting a Hanukkah-themed shabbat service on Friday, Dec. 27, from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

“Anybody who wants [to attend] is always welcome to come,” Lasker said. “Anybody who would like to bring their own Hanukkah menorah can do so and we will light as many lights as possible, and there will be some yummy refreshments after-

wards.”

Temple Israel of Hollywood is located at 7300 Hollywood Blvd.

Beverly Hills Temple of the Arts held its pre-Hanukkah shabbat on Dec. 20, an intimate dinner and service which included live music, led by Rabbi David Baron and Cantor Ilysia Pierce. The temple’s next shabbat service will be on Friday, Jan. 17 at 6 p.m.

Beverly Hills Temple of the Arts is located at 8444 Wilshire Blvd.

Wilshire Boulevard Temple will be hosting a number of Hanukkah events, including a “Menorah and Egg Rolls” themed shabbat dinner with Chinese food on Friday, Dec. 27, at the Resnick Family Campus. Rabbi Susan Nanus and Cantorial Soloist Scott Senior will lead the service with popular Chanukah songs, prayer and stories about the connection between Jews and Chinese food. Tickets are \$25 and available at simpletix.com/e/menorahs-and-egg-rolls-shabbat-chanukah-wi-tickets-196817.

Wilshire Boulevard Temple’s Resnick Family Campus is located at 11960 Sunset Blvd.

Residents upset about car wash

From page 1

impacts. Campbell noted that the city waived environmental studies for the project.

“I voted for the residents’ appeal of the planning commission’s approval because I had concerns about traffic circulation, air quality and noise,” Meister said. “That intersection is already quite congested, so I understand the neighborhood’s frustration.”

“[There are] all kinds of red flags about car washes and pollution and traffic, and the city waived the [California Environmental Quality Act] requirements,” Campbell said. “It kind of concerned me, because

the city pledges strongly about public safety. So, if the city is in fact, very committed to public safety, why do they waive traffic and environmental impact studies?”

Councilman John Heilman, then the mayor pro tempore, recused himself since he lives near the gas station.

“I know that the project was reviewed extensively before it was approved several years ago,” Heilman said. “The issues which were raised recently are the same objections which were raised when the project was first reviewed.”

Mayor John Erickson declined a

request for comment, but noted that he was on the planning commission when the project was initially approved.

Now, the construction is expected to begin next month, and it will take several months to complete the project, likely regardless of community concerns.

“I don’t believe the council would have a legal basis for reversing its previous approval of the project,” Heilman said.

“The times that the city has sided with community concern are zero, and that’s 30 years of going to City Council meetings and participating in quite a few things just where we were concerned about public safety,” Campbell said. “This is never going to stay Mayberry. I know that. Just don’t bury us in pollution, please.”

Mid City West, Cedars-Sinai host blood drive at Pink’s Hot Dogs

Pink’s Hotdogs and Mid City West Neighborhood Council are partnering with Cedars-Sinai Medical Center’s Community Blood Program to host the first blood drive of 2025 on Saturday, Jan. 4, from 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

The Cedars-Sinai Bloodmobile will be at Pink’s Hot Dogs, 709 N. La Brea Ave. The first 50 donors will receive a \$20 gift certificate for Pink’s. January is designated as National Blood Donor Month. The winter months are often a time of reduced donations and increased risk for blood shortages, organizers said. To RSVP, visit

donatebloodcedars.org/index.cfm?group=op&expand=9191&zc=90038.

Answers From Page 23

1	A	M	P	2	A	V	I	S	3	A	R	O	M	A	S
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Crossword Puzzle by Myles Mellor

- Across
1. Roadie's load
4. Rental car agency
8. Bouquets
14. Roman numeral
15. Grocery store need
16. Venus's sister
17. Celebration of future wedded bliss
20. Lamented
21. They get out early
22. Band-aid
26. Suffers from
27. Bard's nightfall
28. Sculls
30. Bawl out
35. Hebrew scriptures
37. "Money, money, money" singers
38. Given a much desired position
43. Potion
44. Safari country
45. Wild cards
48. Cash drawer
49. Line made with a compass
52. Software program, briefly
54. Chase
56. Strangeness
61. Teensy bit
62. Unable to offload a problem car
66. Small cylindrical structure
67. Polly, to Tom Sawyer
68. "Seeing red" feeling
69. Put down, slangily
70. Back of the house
71. Abbr. in a price
- Down
1. Opposing
2. Insignificant
3. Mark
4. Junior high subj.
5. Compete with a rival
6. Suffix with ideal
7. Rank
8. Off the straight and narrow
9. Rest
10. Exam for an advanced degree
11. No more than
12. Feed the kitty
13. Affirms
18. Payroll processing company
19. "Uh-uh"
23. "Well done!"
24. Rhine feeder
25. Milan-based fashion house
29. Mine passage
31. Tibetan priest
32. Follower of J.F.K.
33. Blood system
34. Bill
35. Ancestry.com's offering
36. Floral addition
38. Dictionary abbreviation
39. Romance
40. Plead for
41. Disney character from Hawaii
42. John Wooden's school
46. Stick in one's craw
47. Gushed
49. Infinitesimal

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16					
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56	57	58	59				60				61			
62								63	64	65				
66							67					68		
69							70					71		

50. Parting shot, say
51. Whooping birds
53. Pressure unit, briefly
55. Cry of disgust
56. Abbr. on company letterheads
57. Ornamental purse
58. Chafes
59. Critical hosp. areas
60. Dwarf or giant, maybe
63. Lemon or orange
64. Suffix with Shakespeare
65. Paper size

answers on page 26

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(left to right) Dylan Dordick, Esq., Taylor Dordick, Esq., Gary A. Dordick, Esq., Nava T. Dordick, Esq., Michelle Dordick, Esq.

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