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Santa Monica Daily Press



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TREE LOT

Santa Monica Boy Scouts Troop 2 annual Christmas Tree Lot will open on November 30 with trees for sale through December 22. The lot is run by Scouts under the supervision of adult volunteers and 100% of proceeds support Troop 2. The lot is located at 2923 Wilshire Blvd (Wilshire and Stanford) Nov. 30 - Dec. 22 from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Courtesy Photos

City seeks to control spiraling workers' comp claims

KATE CAGLE

Daily Press Staff Writer

The City's risk manager sees no way to immediately stall Santa Monica's ballooning workers' compensation costs. A recent report encourages the City Council to be open to "unconventional methods" to manage and reduce claims, as an aging workforce begins to weigh on the General Fund.

The City of Santa Monica spent about \$9.6 million on medical treatment and other payments to injured employees during the most recent fiscal year, according to a

new report from the director of finance. Less than half of the money went to medical costs, with \$5.8 million comprised of indemnity payments for lost wages and permanent disabilities (\$1.9 million and \$3.9 million each).

The report warns the City's claim profile should be a cause for concern.

"A high frequency of continuous trauma-oriented injuries, coupled with an aging workforce, suggests that program costs will continue to rise well into the future," Gigi Decavalles-Hughes wrote. "It's

SEE CLAIMS PAGE 7

Hawke Media tops list for Southern California places to work

KATE CAGLE

Daily Press Staff Writer

If you ask nicely, Erik Huberman will let you bang his gong.

The large, bronze hanging disk is exactly the sort of thing you expect to find in the lobby of a tech start-up. Huberman says the distinct, old-world sound usually signals the signing of a new client. Sure enough, as this reporter strikes the center and the gong reverberates through the Hawke Media office on Fifth Street, employees start poking their heads

around office doors wondering if they should clap.

Over the past four years, Huberman's company has slowly been taking over the office building that also contains the Daily Press. His employees lounge on chairs in the center courtyard while their dogs play on leashes, they travel on the Expo line and zip around the city on now ubiquitous Bird electric scooters. Just four years ago, there were only seven of them. Now there are 120.

SEE HAWKE PAGE 6

City Council slashes fees for cab drivers

KATE CAGLE

Daily Press Staff Writer

The City Council voted last week to slash taxicab franchise fees in the latest attempt to save the struggling industry. The annual franchise fee per cab will be reduced from \$1,100 to just \$452 for the coming year. The Council

also extended the franchises and permits of the five taxicab companies remaining in Santa Monica.

"We cannot go into an agreement where the fees stay as is," said Marco Soto, a representative for four out of the five companies. "We just won't survive. We can't afford to continue

SEE FEES PAGE 10

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What's Up Westside

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA

Saturday, Nov. 25

L.E.A.R.N.: Learn, Excel, Achieve and Read Now

One-on-one access to volunteers available to help students with homework assignments and reading comprehension. Bilingual volunteers available. Pico Branch Library, 2201 Pico Blvd, 12 - 2 p.m.

Writer in Residence Office Hours

Visit Sakae Manning during her public office hours. Ask about her work and Beach House residency, receive literary advice, and more. Annenberg Community Beach House, 415 PCH, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Tailor Made: a Pop-up Alterations Shop with Frau Fiber

Frau Fiber presents a pop-up alterations shop providing mending, alteration and tailoring services. All are welcome to drop in to discuss their tailoring needs. The twist: each customer spins the Wheel of Wages to determine the cost of service (plus materials). The wheel is divided into countries that produce the bulk of our fast fashion garments. Get that pocket mended, those trousers hemmed, that uniform badge sewn, and expand holiday gifting plans to include repurposing, mending and making do, while learning about how we are connected to wages and working conditions around the globe. Please allow between 1-24 hours for service. 1450 Ocean, free to visit; alterations cost variable, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Santa Monica Certified Farmers Market

The Saturday Downtown Farmers Market, also known as the Organic Market, opened in May 1991. As Santa Monica's second CFM, it had a different mission to fulfill. With the passage of the California Organic Foods Act of 1990, consumers were eager for more organic produce and another market for weekend shopping. The Organic Market boasts the largest percentage of Certified Organic growers of the City's four markets. 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. 2nd @ Arizona Avenue

Sunday, November 26

Guest House open

Free tours begin at 11 a.m., 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. No reservations needed. Annenberg Community Beach House, Marion Davies Guest House, 415 PCH.

A Watercolor Journey with Timothy Kitz

Start Time: 10:00 AM
End Time: 1:00 PM
Description:

Join watercolorist and urban sketcher Timothy Kitz in a 4-week immersive watercolor course, open to all levels with drop-ins welcome. Cost: \$110 + \$20 cash material fee - Drop-in participation is available for \$35, cash only. (please bring exact change!) Call (310) 458-2239 to confirm drop-in availability if you are not bringing your own rig. https://apm.activecommunities.com/santamonicarecreation/Activity_Search/62663, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Santa Monica Certified Farmers Market

The Main Street market hosts a variety activities including bands, a bi-weekly cooking demonstrations, arts and crafts, a face painter, a balloon animal designer as well as seasonal California grown fruits, vegetables, nuts, meats and cheeses. 2640 Main St. @ Ocean Park, 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Monday, November 27

Social Services Commission Meeting

Meetings are held on the 4th Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Ken Edwards Center (1527 4th St).

Toddler Time

Story series for toddlers ages 18 to 35 months accompanied by an adult. (20 min.) Pico Branch Library, 2201 Pico Blvd, 10:30 - 10:50 p.m.

Baby Time

Story series for babies ages 0 to 17 months accompanied by an adult. Fairview Branch Library, 2101 Ocean Park Blvd, 10 - 10:20 a.m.

Tuesday, November 28

Movie: The Red Turtle (2016)

In this breathtaking, animated parable from Studio Ghibli, a man is shipwrecked on a deserted island and encounters a red turtle, which changes his life. (80 min.) Main Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. 7 - 8:30 p.m.

City Council Meeting

Regular Meeting of the Santa Monica City Council, City Hall, 1685 Main Street, 5:30 p.m.

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Your column here

By Pete Bosen

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Extreme vacancy control

I AM A LONG TERM SANTA MONICA resident, and can remember the days before Costa-Hawkins well.

There is talk of having a ballot initiative to repeal Costa Hawkins - which would return vacancy control to Santa Monica, and so cap the price of rents to new renters, often at very low levels - and over time inflation will send those capped rents lower and lower.

(All of what follows is not about the usual rent control, but about the extreme form of rent control called "vacancy control.")

It is well known that capping the price of goods below market price always leads to inefficient use of those goods and the collapse of supply. Just look at the gas crisis of the 1970's; where price caps turned a minor price adjustment into a disastrous loss of supply: (<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2006/may/15/20060515-122820-6110r/>).

Apartments are no different: Price caps encourage inefficient use of gas (wasteful driving) and apartments (cheap rent means not having to rent out a spare bedroom, or using an apartment part time or as a weekend retreat.) And price caps discourage new supply (digging new oil wells or building new apartments or pulling super cheap rentals off the market). Price caps also create black markets and the reselling on of the goods at well above market price (illegal subletting/fraud.)

Inefficient use of housing supply would be where a \$1000 per month 2-bedroom apartment is occupied by a single person. But in a \$2000 a month 2-bedroom you might find two roommates. This creates a home for an additional person and helps ease any housing shortage. And since more demand has been satisfied it will lower the market price of all other apartments throughout the city. Thus a higher price for one apartment leads to lower prices for all other apartments - it sounds irrational, but any economist will confirm it is completely rational.

If I were a landlord forced to rent out an apartment for \$900 that should go for \$2000 I would leave it vacant. The rent control fees, gas and water costs, maintenance and hassle mean it would make more sense to leave it empty. Plus if it is rented out at \$900, then that renter will never, ever move out. Better to leave it empty and wait till a change in the law, or even demolish the whole thing. Thus price caps will have directly caused loss of supply.

It is also common that when a low rent apartment comes available it will go the well connected. (As, doubtless the wealthy and powerful were unaffected by the gas crisis). So much for the working class benefiting (<https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/2014/04/30/new-york-city/rent-stabilized-apartments-are-being-occupied-by-millionaires-records-show>).

Once a tenant has rented an apartment, there is an argument that they should be protected from eviction or excessive rent increases, as moving apartments is a costly and difficult process. That is the current situation in Santa Monica and there is merit in this normal form of rent control - but the abnormal vacancy control is utterly self-destructive.

Political rationale for strict vacancy control includes:

It costs nothing to legislate into place and, unlike the gas crisis, the damage is inflicted slowly and insidiously over time. Thus the renters who can't find a home at any price don't understand why it's happening and can only cry out for more rent control, which would be like pouring gasoline on a house fire.

It sounds like you are helping the poor. (But usually the wealthy and well connected

get the low rent places.)

Cheap rents for everyone! (How about gas as well? Which is just as essential to modern life.) But of course only a lucky few get the low rents and cheap gas. The rest face dry pumps and no vacancies at any price.

In Santa Monica the fees have created the Rent Control Board, a captive bureaucracy whose very jobs depend on the survival of rent control. This creates a powerful political lobby.

Renters already in low rent apartments feel trapped and are fearful of the loss of rent control. They think that vacancy control will give them a chance to move with cheap rents. (But they never will snag such a rare unicorn. And their buildings will be in ruins and facing demolition as the owners fight bankruptcy.). Those renters are captive voters of politicians who preach the vacancy control nonsense.

It is claimed that vacancy control will discourage owners from harassing low rent tenants into leaving. But in reality such cases are uncommon and are always resolved in the tenants favor very quickly. Santa Monica has very strict laws and heavy penalties, even imprisonment, against harassment. If harassment were common we would see an army of owners being locked up - but that is clearly not so. But the city still trumpets there that there is a wave of criminal harassment sweeping the city. That fanning of fear keeps renters voting for those who now trumpet vacancy control.

And when vacancy control has killed all supply, the next step is a government-managed waiting list. And then you end up with 20-year waits for an apartment, as currently happens in Stockholm, Sweden (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/19/why-stockholm-housing-rules-rent-control-flat>). Of course the well connected at city hall will jump the list and get the choicest apartments.

The real cause of high rents is lack of supply, caused by restrictive zoning, gold-plated parking requirements, building offices at the expense of housing and high permit fees that cripple new construction. Of course when new construction is proposed everyone protests, but more rent control gets loud cheers. But where will all those who don't snag a bargain rent live when there is no new construction?

Trying to legislate away the loss of supply caused by price caps only makes things worse. The government has tried (many times in many different ways) to cap the price of gasoline and always ended up with dry pumps and fist fights in the resulting lines. The Swedes aren't fools (apart from when it comes to rent control) and the best result they have come up with is 20-year waiting lists, and a huge black market of illegal subletting that leaves sub-tenants renting at gigantic markups with no protections. They tried it in Santa Monica before and ended up with crippled supply and decrepit ruins for buildings.

Santa Monica in the 1980's really was in a distressing state. We are lucky (no, very unlucky) to have a real example of what really happened when vacancy control existed in Santa Monica, and what will happen should it come back: Santa Monica really was called "Skidrow-by-the-sea." The apartment buildings really were decrepit slums. There really was a 'demolition-derby' as apartments were torn down and replaced with condos. There really weren't any apartments to rent. People visiting from other cities really were appalled by the horrific, crumbling, Eastern-Bloc appearance of the place. (What a coincidence: Stalin believed in price caps too). It really will all happen again, should Costa-Hawkins be repealed.

PETE BOSEN is a Santa Monica resident



Your column here

By Greg Dill

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Fight Medicare Fraud – Guard your Card

IF YOU HAVE MEDICARE, YOU CAN protect your identity and help prevent health care fraud by guarding your Medicare card like you would a credit card.

Identity theft arising from stolen Medicare numbers is becoming more common. Medicare is in the process of removing Social Security numbers from Medicare cards and replacing them with a new, unique number for each person with Medicare.

Medicare will mail new Medicare cards with the new numbers between April 2018 and April 2019.

The new card won't change your Medicare coverage or benefits. And there's no charge for your new card.

But watch out for scammers!

Thieves may try to get your current Medicare number and other personal information by contacting you about your new Medicare card.

THEY MAY CLAIM TO BE FROM MEDICARE AND USE VARIOUS PHONY PITCHES TO GET YOUR MEDICARE NUMBER, SUCH AS:

- Asking you to confirm your Medicare or Social Security number so they can send you a new card.
- Telling you there's a charge for your new card and they need to verify your personal information.
- Threatening to cancel your health benefits if you don't share your Medicare number or other personal information.

Don't fall for any of this.

Don't share your Medicare number or other personal information with anyone who contacts you by phone, email, or by approaching you in person, unless you've given them permission in advance.

MEDICARE, OR SOMEONE REPRESENTING MEDICARE, WILL ONLY CALL AND ASK FOR PERSONAL INFORMATION IN THESE SITUATIONS:

- A Medicare health or drug plan can call you if you're already a member of the plan. The agent who helped you join can also call you.
- A customer service representative from 1-800-MEDICARE can call if you've called and

left a message or a representative said that someone would call you back.

Only give personal information like your Medicare number to doctors, insurers acting on your behalf, or trusted people in the community who work with Medicare, like counselors from the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).

If someone calls you and asks for your Medicare number or other personal information, hang up and call us at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

There are other steps you can take to protect yourself from identity theft that can lead to health care fraud.

Don't ever let anyone borrow or pay to use your Medicare number. And review your Medicare Summary Notice to be sure you and Medicare are being charged only for items and services you actually received.

We're in the midst of Medicare open enrollment season right now. This is the time every year when you can sign up for, switch, or drop a Medicare health plan (Part C) or a Medicare prescription drug plan (Part D). Open enrollment ends Dec. 7.

Scam artists often try to take advantage of open enrollment season. So if someone calls and tries to get you to sign up for a Medicare plan, keep in mind there are no "early bird discounts" or "limited time offers."

Don't let anyone rush you to enroll by claiming you need to "act now for the best deal." And be skeptical of promises of free gifts, free medical services, discount packages or any offer that sounds too good to be true.

It probably is.

To learn more about protecting yourself from identity theft and health care fraud, visit www.Medicare.gov/fraud or contact your local Senior Medicare Patrol (www.smpresource.org).

GREG DILL is Medicare's regional administrator for Arizona, California, Nevada, Hawaii, and the Pacific Territories. You can always get answers to your Medicare questions by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Los Angeles

Concert Promoter Who Raised Money for Events that Would Never Take Place Pleads Guilty to Bilking Investors

A concert promoter who operated in Dallas, Texas and West Hollywood has pleaded guilty to a federal fraud charge for defrauding investors, promoters and performers who invested in concerts and World Wrestling Entertainment events.

Gabriel Martin Reed, 46, a former Malibu resident who currently lives in McKinney, Texas, pleaded guilty this morning to one count of wire fraud.

Reed, who conducted business under the name Gabe Reed Productions, admitted in court today that he received money from victims after falsely telling them that events would take place, certain performers had agreed to participate in those events, and their money would be used to organize and promote the events. Instead of using the money for concerts and other events as promised, Reed used investor funds to pay his personal expenses, including rent, utility bills and travel expenses.

According to court documents, over an 8?-year period, Reed represented himself as a promoter and organizer of hard rock and wrestling events. Reed solicited investors by touting what he claimed were longstanding relationships with well-known musicians, showing props from alleged previous tours, and fabricating records related to music events.

"To execute his scheme to defraud, [Reed] used sophisticated means, including, but not limited to, creating email addresses in the names of other individuals and entities to convince his victims that their funds were legitimately invested," according to a plea agreement filed in federal court. "In addition, [Reed] produced and distributed to victims fraudulent and fabricated artist contracts, bank statements, and correspondence."

One Los Angeles investor agreed to put \$100,000 into a 2016 concert tour Reed was calling "Titans of Rock." However, many of the promised artists had not agreed to participate in the tour, according to the plea agreement. The FBI reviewed bank records that showed the victim's money was used to pay for Reed's personal expenses, including child support, costs related to a birthday party, and meals at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse and Mr. Chow in Beverly Hills, according to an affidavit previously filed in this case.

Documents previously filed in this case state that victims suffered losses of at least \$1.4 million.

Reed pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Philip S. Gutierrez, who scheduled a sentencing hearing on March 19, 2018. As a result of today's guilty plea, Reed faces a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison.

The case against Reed is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Poonam G. Kumar of the Major Frauds Section.

- SUBMITTED BY TRACY WEBB, DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Citywide

Ralphs Launches Home Delivery Service Powered by Instacart

Ralphs shoppers can now have their groceries delivered to their doorsteps.

Ralphs has announced that it is offering home delivery at select locations in Southern California through a partnership with Instacart, a nationally-recognized on-demand retail delivery service.

"We strive to provide our customers with the best shopping experience and believe that offering home delivery adds a new convenience when shopping at Ralphs," said Valerie Jabbar, president of Ralphs. "Our customers are busier than ever. Providing home delivery is another way Ralphs is giving our customers the shopping experience that they desire."

Ralphs delivery powered by Instacart is offered in addition to its ClickList store locations. Home delivery is currently available at two supermarket locations: Downtown Los Angeles located at 645 West 9th Street in Los Angeles and Irvine-Woodbury at 6300 Irvine Boulevard in Irvine.

The supermarket company plans to introduce this service at 38 additional locations in Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange County, Pasadena, the San Fernando Valley, Thousand Oaks and Los Angeles County's South Bay beach communities by the end of November.

Customers place their home delivery orders through www.ralphs.com/delivery. The customer selects a participating store and chooses from 40,000 offered products, including perishables, which are categorized and sorted for easy viewing and selection. The customer builds their digital cart by clicking and adding products. Once the customer has completed their online home delivery shopping, they select a preferred delivery time between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. An Instacart shopper then hand-picks the items and delivers the order within a preferred one-hour time window.

Ralphs Grocery Company was founded in 1873 and currently operates 191 supermarkets from its headquarters in Los Angeles. Last year, Ralphs contributed more than \$6 million to support education, hunger relief, women's health and local nonprofit organizations in the communities served by the company's stores. Ralphs is a subsidiary of The Kroger Co., (NYSE: KR), one of the world's largest retailers, based in Cincinnati, Ohio.

For more information visit www.ralphs.com or <https://www.instacart.com>.

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Educator Spotlight

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

LaShawn Moore

MCKINLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LASHAWN MOORE SAYS SHE IS inspired by “learning and opportunities to grow.” A Psychology major as an undergrad, she did not set out to become a teacher. However, she found herself volunteering at a local elementary school where the teacher she worked with encouraged her to pursue teaching. She’s now in her twentieth year, all in SMMUSD. She began in the preschool program for over 2 years, then afternoon kindergarten. After that she moved to a multi-age K/1 class, and now she’s back in Kindergarten again.

MOORE SPEAKS

Every day (or every five minutes) is different in this job, and that’s one of the things that I enjoy. There’s always something to learn, and it’s almost impossible to describe the thrill of seeing a light turn on for a child as they learn/discover new things throughout the year. Having the opportunity to be a part of that unique and awesome experience with kids day after day is truly a joy.

I want my students to continue to be accepting and kind to all. I want them to remember that we learn more from our mistakes than when we get things “right.” I want them to always have questions, and to never be afraid to get outside of their comfort zone.



LASHAWN MOORE

Watching the growth of my kids every year makes it all worthwhile when all is said and done. I feel appreciated when former students return to share/recount their experiences in my classroom, and when parents take the time to say thank you.

I am a lifelong learner, which is what I hope my students become. I continue to love what I do, and I consider myself very fortunate to be able to do a job that I am so passionate about.

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HAWKE

FROM PAGE 1

Those employees recently helped name Hawke one of Fortune Magazine's 50 best places to work in Southern California. Santa Monica based information technology company Edmunds.com and gaming company Activision Blizzard also made the list.

"I don't think it's the perks," Huberman said of the office environment that led to making the list. Instead, he says his employees simply want the company to succeed and that influences the way they describe the office on surveys like the one that landed them in Fortune.

"We call this the most comfortable place to be uncomfortable," Huberman said. "People work their butt off here."

Hawke Media is a marketing agency that offers strategy, email marketing, social media and creative services (among others) a-la-carte or on a month-to-month basis for businesses. The company is valued at \$60 million, according to Huberman. Their clients include Red Bull, Evite and Verizon Wireless.

The Santa Monica entrepreneur is used to making lists. At 29, Huberman appeared on Forbes' 30 under 30 list for the media and entertainment industry alongside Oscar winning actress Brie Larson and John Boyega, the star of Star Wars: The Force Awakens.

Huberman was born in Santa Monica but grew up in nearby Ojai. He says the City by the Sea is the only place he would grow a business – over nine years he's grown three commerce companies here.

"The lifestyle is just there," Huberman said. "The balance is there. There's industry and beach and hiking and outdoors. It's just the perfect combination of life to me."

But it's not all bliss. The entrepreneur

says a healthy ecosystem keeps him in the city but he feels that the local government takes it for granted.

"They really need to build a bridge with this community because I've heard lines from the City – 'oh, we don't need to support local business; they'll come anyways,'" Huberman said. "That mentality has actually hurt. There are great companies who have gone over to Venice because (Los Angeles Councilmember Mike) Bonin will come right over."

Huberman recently got into a disagreement with the City over a sign he wants to hang on the office building facing the Fourth Street off-ramp of Interstate-10. When the CEO looks out his window and sees cars stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic, he sees thousands of potential clients who could be staring at a sign for Hawke Media near the famous girl on a surfboard by graffiti artist Bumblebee.

After getting permission from the landlord, Huberman went to the City but ended up in a disagreement over where the sign could be hung, and whether the basement garage constitutes the first floor of the building.

"I can't even find someone to talk to and then they spent three months talking internally and sent us a letter that just said 'no,'" Huberman said.

The entrepreneur is still fighting to get his sign. He says the City should have a business liaison to help with these sorts of disagreements. In the meantime, he's focused on hiring and training more marketing experts to grow Hawke into a bigger company.

"That being said, I love it here," Huberman said. "I'm not going anywhere. I bought a place here. It's just a great place to live in and work."

kate@smdp.com



BAYSIDE
RETROFIT

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CLAIMS

FROM PAGE 1

important to note the City's experience is not unique. Public agencies across the State, particularly in southern California, continue to see significant year-over-year growth in workers' compensation expenses."

While the problem may be common throughout the state, it is magnified in Santa Monica because of the City's sizable staff – nearly 2,300 employees account for nearly 75 percent of the General Fund operating budget. Each new staff member not only increases salary payments, but pension and workers' comp costs as well.

The City settled 99 workers compensation claims during fiscal year 2016-17, down from 131 settlements the year before, according to the 8-page report. However, there were 16 more disability claims from the Police Department and a 5 percent increase in total claim inventory.

The City's contribution to the Worker's Compensation Self-Insurance Fund will increase by more than 50 percent, from \$13.4 million to \$20.6 million year over year. The next year, it is expected to increase by another ten percent.

The City Council has approved several programs to attempt to keep down the costs. For example, the Big Blue Bus recently became a test group for a pilot program to determine a more cost-effective model for managing claims by transferring the administration to a private company. This is coupled with the "Wow, that's Fast" comprehen-

sive case management program now used in the police and fire departments to reduce the number of claims that must be litigated.

"To date, program results are very encouraging," Decavalles-Hughes said in the report. "Over the past three fiscal years, the Police Department received 23 fewer litigated claims."

That can make a significant difference: the average litigated claim costs the City \$182,682 compared to \$55,884 for those that don't require litigation.

The City is also three years into a pilot to evaluate City employees' capacity to perform strenuous activities related to their jobs. The pilot focused on pre-employment testing of Motor Coach Operators who must be able to safely board and secure wheelchair passengers and complete pre-trip inspections. The operators who underwent the testing had a lower injury rate and fewer lost days of work.

"It is still too early to precisely calculate the savings of the program," the report says. "However, if Big Blue Bus could sustain the results achieved during the pilot, it is safe to assume the City could save millions of dollars in workers' compensation expenses over the long-term."

Similar functional evaluation programs may be extended to all physically demanding jobs.

Despite the escalating rate of claims, the finance director predicts an \$8 million surplus for next year's budget. The third quarter of the fiscal year produced 3.5 percent growth.

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Gardening and Community

By Allison Starcher

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Growing more than vegetables at the Ishihara Learning Garden



Courtesy photos

LESSONS: The learning garden is proving to be a valued asset for the community.

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THE NEW LEARNING GARDEN AT Ishihara Park has quickly gone from a topic of debate to a valued asset in our eastern Santa Monica neighborhood. Wedged between Olympic and Pico, it is a place where gardeners, novice and experienced, young and mature can impart knowledge, exchange ideas, and ask questions all while working together to grow hundreds of pounds of food. Some of the harvested bounty is taken home to dinner tables by our eager volunteer work force and the rest is either distributed to food banks or our grateful neighbors. A garden based upon this very successful model would be an excellent addition to the proposed Community Garden component of the Santa Monica Airport Park.

We watched with guarded interest as the city transformed a series of storage buildings and parking lots into a beautiful Mia Lehrer designed buffer park between our neighborhood and the Metro Maintenance facility. We wondered how much the citizens would have a say in how a small, fenced in vegetable garden, nestled within the larger park, would be planted, maintained and harvested.

Our collective fears of city regulations, pest infestations and stolen vegetables have not materialized. With the wise support and guidance of Teague Weybright, our Community Gardens Program Specialist for the City of Santa Monica, we have organically come together and crafted a dedicated group of volunteers who bring their skills and enthusiasm to the garden twice weekly. As neighborhood gardener Marlene Suzuki expresses, "Our garden is more than just growing vegetables together. I truly feel the garden is almost like growing a family. We share everything: work, food, recipes, and see this as a prototype for a better world."

The garden is not divided into individually "owned" plots like other Community Gardens. Here, we plan and work the beds together. Our regular participants range in age from elementary school to early 20's and late 70's, some have been gardening for decades while others are just beginning to catch the bug and are picking up tips with every visit. Martha Bardach, a longtime Palisades resident, drops off her grandchildren at Edison Elementary and is the first to

arrive every Monday and Wednesday at 9:30 am. Travis Marziani, one of our millennials, works from home and is just starting to dabble in growing edibles. As he so eloquently states, "It's an amazing experience to be able to reconnect with nature, and learn skills that were essential to survival for most of human history. What makes it especially enjoyable is the fact that I get to learn these things interactively from a community, something that Google, Youtube and Facebook can't provide."

This truly communal garden allows him the opportunity to ask for pointers from seasoned gardeners while contributing his hard work and eager curiosity. Martha believes that "the unity building capacity of our shared experience is even more vital than simply growing food." While we work, we chat about our lives beyond the garden gate forming friendships between people who have lived near each other for years, admired their respective gardens and never before spoken. In this day of virtual reality and online shopping, how many opportunities do we get to forge new human connections that enhance our lives?

Every Monday we try to cook something we have grown and share it with the group. Tomatillo, jalapeño and tomato salsa; Butternut Squash Soup; Zucchini ravioli with a kale pesto and Lemon glazed zucchini bread have all been on the menu and illustrate another level of sharing inspired by our experience.

Not only do the neighbors in the park's immediate vicinity benefit but so do a myriad of community organizations, from local public and private school classes to local non-profit groups assisting individuals transitioning from homelessness to self-sufficiency.

There are few venues in Santa Monica for intergenerational community building. Bringing these shared edible gardens to other locations throughout the city will work as a gathering place and teaching space for all of our citizens.

Want to learn more about the Santa Monica Community Gardens? Contact us at santamonica-roots@gmail.com and follow Santa Monica Roots on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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WELL NEWS BY SCOTT LALEE

Medical myths

Some folks say you shouldn't wake a sleepwalker, that it may cause harm, like cause a heart attack. Somnambulism – or walking or talking while sleeping – occurs in stage 3 sleep; that's deep sleep. There's no physical harm in waking a sleepwalker, but it might be hard to do. They may become startled, disoriented or agitated, which may pose more of risk to you. No one likes being woken from a deep sleep, even if they were doing it vertically while moving.

Observation

"After you find out all the things that can go wrong, your life becomes less about living and more about waiting."

—AMERICAN NOVELIST CHUCK PALAHNIUK IN "CHOKE" (2001)

Life in Big Macs

One hour of riding in a car or truck burns 68 calories (based on a 150-pound person) or the equivalent of 0.1 Big Macs. Exception: If you're driving one of the Flintstones' cars.

Doc Talk

O-sign: Used to describe a comatose patient with his mouth agape.
Q-sign: Similar to an O-sign, but with the patient's tongue protruding.
Q-dot sign: Similar to a Q-sign, but with a fly on the tongue. Considered to be a poor prognostic indicator.

Get Me That, Stat!

Two of the downsides of an aging population: You go to the doctor more often and there's a

greater chance you won't hear what he or she tells you. In a recent survey of 100 adults, researchers at University College Cork in Ireland reported that 43 said they had misheard a physician, nurse or both during either a primary care visit or hospital stay.
 The study didn't look at whether any of the miscommunications resulted in medical errors but noted that the prevalence of errors generally rises with patients' age.

Medical History

This week in 1895, Daniel David Palmer reportedly gave the first chiropractic adjustment to Harvey Lillard in Davenport, Iowa, now the home of Palmer College of Chiropractic.

MYSTERY PHOTO

Matthew Hall matt@smdp.com



The first person who can correctly identify where this image was captured wins a prize from the Santa Monica Daily Press. Send answers to editor@smdp.com.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

F	A	Z	E	S		A	L	P	H	A		S	P	A	
A	L	I	V	E		R	U	L	E	R		A	L	T	
C	A	P	A	N	D	T	R	A	D	E		L	A	S	
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B	I	C		D	E	L	A	Y	O	F	G	A	M	E	
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R	E	D		C	I	T	E	S		W	A	S	N	T	

Sudoku

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column, and 3x3 block. Use logic and process of elimination to solve the puzzle.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU

1	6	3	9	8	2	5	7	4
5	8	9	3	4	7	6	2	1
2	7	4	1	5	6	8	3	9
8	3	1	4	7	9	2	5	6
6	5	7	2	1	8	4	9	3
4	9	2	5	6	3	7	1	8
7	1	6	8	9	5	3	4	2
3	4	8	7	2	1	9	6	5
9	2	5	6	3	4	1	8	7

				2				
		2	1		5	7		3
5				6	7			2
					1		6	
6		8		4		5		9
	3		6					
8			9	1				7
1		9	8		6	2		
				5				

Newsday Crossword

SATURDAY STUMPER by Andrew Bell Lewis

Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

- 1 Half a converse phrase
- 6 Road blocker, at times
- 15 Received avidly
- 16 Salsa verde ingredient
- 17 Certain wedding official
- 18 Strapped
- 19 "The scales fell from my eyes"
- 21 Hyperbolize, with "on"
- 22 Dalai Lama's former home
- 26 Hail in Oz
- 28 Spots for wallet-size Kahlo portraits
- 32 Corporate cheque abbr.
- 33 From this day forward
- 35 Unassailable
- 38 Special-event compositions
- 41 Southeast Asian hot sauce
- 42 Command the attention of
- 43 Legs on a lobster
- 44 Throws out
- 47 Italian nickname for Anthony
- 48 Smooth pivot
- 51 Lilylike garden plant
- 53 Terribly awkward
- 59 Monsoon region designator
- 62 42% of Scrabble tiles
- 63 Becomes more driven about
- 64 Make clear, or confuse
- 65 Sesame, on Southern menus
- 66 Open-pore material

DOWN

- 1 Starter suggesting miscellany
- 2 Congestion is likely to affect them
- 3 Portfolio adjustments
- 4 Urban graffitist's "canvas"
- 5 "That's unfortunate!"
- 6 Former Miss Florida pageant home
- 7 Time for some wrap parties?
- 8 Semi-doubled
- 9 Designer in the U.S.
- 10 German leaf-blower brand
- 11 Soil's growth potential
- 12 Festive cry
- 13 Author admired by Sirs ACD and JMB
- 14 Criminal signatures
- 20 Plugged in
- 23 Mitigating
- 24 Home for organic filaments
- 25 Swells
- 26 Mere shadows
- 27 Potentate's proclamation
- 29 Exodus 19 setting
- 30 Blessing-curse connector
- 31 Energy source
- 34 Peruvian pronoun
- 36 900+-station network
- 37 Liquid in some flambéed desserts
- 39 Word before pack or pick
- 40 Voltage/amperage researcher
- 45 Approval, so to speak
- 46 Promulgate
- 49 New England "Public Ivy"
- 50 Clear a storage unit
- 52 Reaches a new level
- 54 Whom Cleopatra identified with
- 55 End of an early-dealing maxim
- 56 Starting ___
- 57 Started a growing season, maybe
- 58 Time for some wrap parties?
- 59 Northern Rockies region: Abbr.
- 60 Commission, e.g.
- 61 Bolted

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15						16								
17						18								
19						20								
			21							22		23	24	25
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59	60	61										62		
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65												66		

FEES

FROM PAGE 1

with these franchise terms."

The move from the City Council comes after several nearby cities including West Hollywood and Hermosa Beach slashed their fees as well, Soto said. After a short debate at the Nov. 14 meeting, the Council ultimately decided the fee reduction may help struggling drivers hold onto their livelihoods.

"If we keep the fees up and we lose cab services we're not making money by driving people out of business," City Manager Rick Cole said. "So whatever the Council thinks is fair and appropriate ... we are prepared to implement."

The number of trips in Santa Monica is down 79 percent since 2013 - bringing the industry's gross revenue down from \$14.8 million to \$5.3 million over the five-year span. The industry continues to decline as ride-hailing apps like Uber and Lyft take

over the market.

While each franchise operates differently, drivers who own and operate their own cabs typically pay the licensing fee to drive in the city. Most drivers have a dual license to drive both here and in Los Angeles.

There are currently 199 cabs operating in Santa Monica between Bell Cab, ITOA, Metro Cab, Taxi! Taxi! and Yellow Cab.

In October, Governor Jerry Brown signed AB 1069 in an attempt to modernize the taxicab industry and help it compete with Uber and Lyft. The new law aims to limit the number of cities in which a cab company must obtain an operating permit, in order to ease regulations on the industry. Beginning on Jan. 1, taxicab companies will collect and report trip data to determine where their services are "substantially located." The data may shift the permitting process for certain companies.

Senior administrative analyst Cheryl Shavers says she was caught off guard when Brown signed the bill because many city governments had opposed it.

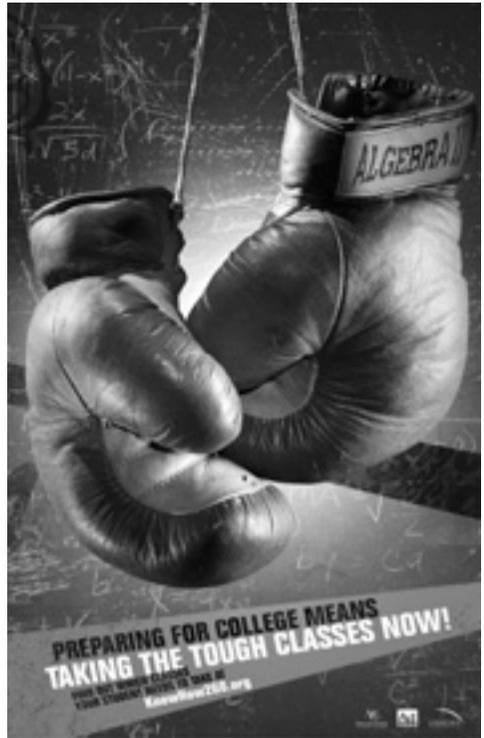
As a result, several Santa Monica taxicab companies may not be deemed to be "substantially located" in the city because of their regional reach, according to a staff report.

Shavers, who is responsible for responding to complaints from passengers, says it has been a tense year for the remaining 199 drivers in the City who compete for a chance to take hotel guests and locals on long trips, usually to LAX.

"If I could be frank, it's pretty cutthroat out there," Shavers said.

It's been a year since a coalition of cab companies wrote to the city asking for permission to take dozens of drivers off the road, promising they would still meet demand for service. Last December, the Council responded by reducing the number of cabs by 30 percent. An annual report showed most cab companies still respond for requests for service within 15 minutes of getting a request.

kate@smdp.com



TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 25)

You will be drawn to the people who are good for you this year - a cosmic gift. At the top of 2018, you'll learn fast by going slow. Work gradually through challenges and you'll claim a reward in January. An important deal will go down in March. June offers travel at a discount, and the inspiration is free. Cancer and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 20, 17, 39 and 22.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

For a peaceful, tranquil environment, less excitement and drama is the rule. It's best when the alarm's left for emergencies. Not even your alarm clock needs to be alarming. So what else needs to go?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Everyone is flawed, and someone is really liking the way you're flawed today. That in and of itself isn't a good enough reason to keep going in the same direction, though.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

This thing you're doing isn't going to work in the same way for very much longer. It needs a new idea. Of course, trying to have an idea isn't a really good way to have one. So don't try. Live, and know it's coming to you.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

You have a really good answer to the question "What's the point?" and that's why you're the best person for the leadership role. Step up and step in.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

It can be a dangerous thing when people get too wrapped up in their own experiences to relate to the needs and wants of others. Get out; ask questions. Get involved so you won't have this problem.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Be confident about your sense of timing, because it is stellar right now. You're not likely to give up too soon, nor will you be oblivious about when to quit. Trust yourself.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

You seek emotional knowledge. Your history is part of this. Maybe you can go back to the love you knew and ask questions, or simply do this in your mind. You'll still be satisfied and maybe surprised by the answers.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

You begin each interaction with a humble heart and a willingness to help. With this attentive flexibility, you'll create a great deal of affinity between you and a person who will play a key role in your future.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You don't have to have swagger or think you're the greatest. You just have to believe you can do it. With a little more confidence, you'll rise. You will persist in the face of a challenge and ultimately overcome it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Good luck comes the same way as bad luck does, in spurts. You'll get on a good run with three beautifully timed interactions today. Play this for all it's worth!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

A smile should be backed by a joyful heart. But some smiles are bankrupt. You've given them and received them. You'll recognize them today and have compassion for the spirit-poor. Try and spread cheer.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

You are not of one mind. You are of many minds and possibilities. Some aspects of your personality are being pushy right now because they need an outlet. Find one. It could just lead to your greatness.

Mercury-Uranus Trine

Would you rather be loved by one who doesn't know you well or known by someone who doesn't love you well? The right answer is none of the above. The trine of Mercury and Uranus lends extra luck for finding and sticking with people who have the capacity and curiosity to understand you and hearts that speak your language.

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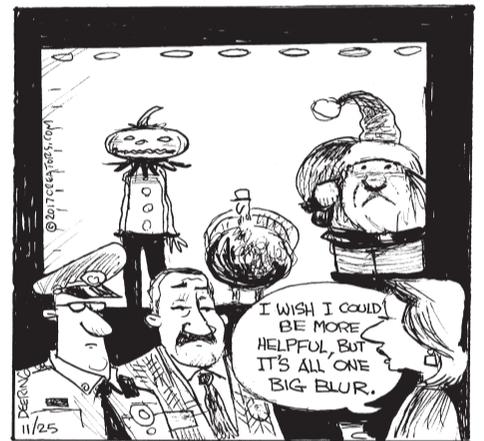
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