Juneteenth welcomes all to Saturday celebration

MATTHEW HALL  
Daily Press Editor

Santa Monica will celebrate Juneteenth this Saturday with its annual festival at Virginia Ave. Park. This weekend’s events will be held from 1 to 7 p.m. The celebration includes music, unique food and craft vendors, and local resources under the theme of Coming Together in Appreciation, Reconciliation, and Commemoration.

This year the main stage will feature a lineup of musicians emceed by KJLH’s Arrom “Bobo” Armel and DJ Sucfree. Performers include:

Local Blues artist Sonny Green who will kick off the event with a lively set of classic soul and blues.

Chazz Ross will lead his traditional participatory drumming performance.

Rising solo artist Victory Boyd will perform original and classic soul, jazz, folk and gospel music. Presented in partnership with BroadStage.

Arise Roots, a prominent American roots reggae band rising up from the streets of Los Angeles.

And to culminate the event, American all-female pop/R&B band KLYMAXX featuring Cheryl Cooley will perform their classic songs.

The event will also feature a CRJ Live Community Stage sponsored by Committee for Racial Justice, children’s area, food vendors, community information booths and over 20 different vendors ranging from original artwork to African carvings to jewelry and more.

The longstanding and rich Juneteenth celebration in Santa Monica is thanks to 65 year local resident LaVerne Ross, who in 1992 successfully convinced City Council to establish a Juneteenth event.

SMC 2023 GRADUATION: The city of Santa Monica was bathed in glorious sunshine on Tuesday afternoon as thousands of graduating students gathered at Corsair Field to collect their bachelor degrees, associate degrees and other certifications.

Dr. Kathryn E. Jeffrey, Superintendent and President of Santa Monica College gave an inspiring address to the crowd, which was followed by the commencement speech by guest speaker Christopher P. Lu, US Ambassador to the UN. However, it wasn’t until after student speaker Monique Janee Johnson gave an emotional account of her personal journey that the celebrations really started, kicking off hours of non-stop screaming, cheering and shouting as students made their way to the podium to collect their certifications.

This year, over 8,000 degrees and certificates were awarded to over 6,000 students, with over 30 percent graduating with honors. Among the students was Jose Rosales, who majored in business administration and has totally transformed his life following time spent incarcerated.

“There’s some mixed emotions, pride, happiness and a big sense of accomplishment, but mostly happiness,” Rosales laughed.

The youngest graduate in the Class of ’23 was just 15 and the oldest was 82, which just goes to show that you “there’s some mixed emotions, pride, happiness and a big sense of accomplishment, but mostly happiness,” Rosales laughed.

The Class of 2023 graduate from Santa Monica College

Scott Snowden

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smdp.com

Council open to the sale of adult-use cannabis in Santa Monica

SCOTT SNOWDEN  
SMDP Staff Writer

Santa Monica’s restrictive cannabis regulations throttle the local marketplace based on information presented to City Council this week. Ajay Kolluri, HdL’s Director of Cannabis Services (a municipal finance consulting firm that provides advice and guidance on cannabis business regulation) gave an extremely comprehensive and succinct presentation, highlighting – among other things – in a not-too-subtle manner just how Santa Monica stands alone, behind the rest of Los Angeles County and indeed, the state of California, in terms of legalizing retail cannabis.

While medical marijuana has been legal in California since 1996, it wasn’t until 2021 that Santa Monica issued its first permit. Per the Santa Monica municipal code, only two dispensaries are allowed in the city and they are limited to medical use only, which means that customers will be required to have a doctor’s recommendation to purchase products.

“Santa Monica residents therefore can, and most certainly do, cross city limits to purchase adult-use cannabis from LA based businesses,” Kolluri said.

While Council debated issues like their cap on the number of licenses in town and the proximity of dispensaries to schools or sports fields, it was Mayor Gleam Davis who raised an extremely pertinent question, “Could we allow the two current medical dispensaries to convert to recreational dispensaries?”

Sad state of the bay.

Letter to the Editor
When state Sen. María Elena Durazo introduced a bill in March to bolster the California Tenant Protection Act, she called for lowering the cap on rent increases to 5%, while closing loopholes landlords use to evict tenants when there’s no “just cause.”

By the time her “homelessness prevention” bill moved to the Senate floor on May 31, negotiations and compromise had watered it down. The rent cap provision was gone and several other provisions were significantly curbed.

That the bill lost some of its strength disappointed renters’ rights groups that had made the proposal their top priority. But the measure still passed the Senate. And other pro-tenant legislation, such as a bill by Assemblymember Matt Haney to limit security deposits, also is still alive this session.

Those victories are evidence, advocates say, that renters are gaining influence in the Capitol. Though groups representing landlords and real estate continue spending millions on lobbying and supporting candidates, tenants rights groups are starting to chip away at their influence.

“It’s still an uphill battle for tenants in Sacramento,” said Shanti Singh, legislative director for the Tenants Together coalition. “But, at the same time, you do see the tide turning.”

The shift comes as housing and homelessness crises touch every corner of California, injecting a sense of urgency into potential state legislation.

Does that urgency counteract the rental industry’s influence?

Housing and tenants’ rights groups published a joint report in May quantifying the lobbying footprint of the California Apartment Association, one of the largest groups representing landlords.

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Advocates for renters are working to counter the influence of landlords with lawmakers in Sacramento.

The report used data from the California Secretary of State to show that since 2017, the apartment association has spent:

- Nearly $7 million directly lobbying state lawmakers;
- More than $140 million in political committees it controls, to affect state and local candidate races and ballot measures;
- Another $86 million in “blended” political committees it doesn’t necessarily control.

Advocacy and renters’ groups don’t come close to matching that kind of political cash. Some prominent tenant organizations in California survive on at most several million dollars of revenue a year, according to tax documents.

“You’re talking about a fight between a U.S. battle cruiser versus a dinghy,” said Assemblymember Alex Lee, a Democrat from Milpitas.

In other ways, landlords have long been well represented in the state Capitol. In 2020 alone, a quarter of California’s legislators were landlords.

Renters, on the other hand, don’t have nearly the same presence. Currently at least five state lawmakers rent their homes. They make up a new renters caucus that includes Assemblymembers Haney, Lee, Isaac Bryan and Tasha Boerner, plus Sen. Aisha Wahab, all Democrats.

“Renters almost have zero influence in the state legislature, based on the amount of money that is being spent on ... elected officials,” said Wahab, who represents Fremont. “We can’t compete.”

Tenant advocates say lopsided political representation and the landlord and realtor lobbies’ financial power are leading to slow progress on tenant protections and weakened

SEE RENT PAGE 4
Who’s running for president? See a rundown of the 2024 candidates

MEG KINNARD
Associated Press

With roughly a year and a half until the 2024 presidential contest, the field of candidates is largely set.

Former President Donald Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis have dominated the early Republican race as the other candidates look for an opening to take them on. President Joe Biden faces a couple of Democratic challengers but is expected to secure his party’s nomination.

Here’s a look at the candidates competing for the Republican and Democratic nominations:

REPUBLICAN PRIMARY FIELD

DONALD TRUMP
The former president announced his third campaign for the White House on Nov. 15 at his Mar-a-Lago resort, forcing the party to again decide whether to embrace a candidate whose refusal to accept defeat in 2020 sparked the U.S. Capitol attack and still dominates his speeches.

The GOP front-runner remains hugely popular in the Republican Party, despite making history as the first president to be impeached twice and inciting the Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6, 2021.

In March, he became the first former U.S. president to be criminally charged, facing 34 felony counts of falsifying business records as part of a hush money scheme. He is now under indictment on dozens of charges related to alleged mishandling and retention of classified documents.

RON DESANTIS
The Florida governor officially launched his 2024 presidential campaign on May 24 in a glitch-marred Twitter announcement, casting himself as Trump’s only legitimate Republican rival.

Heralding his state as a place “where woke goes to die,” DeSantis has framed his campaign around a desire to bring the conservative policies he championed in Florida to the national stage. He has made a name for himself battling with Disney over the entertainment giant’s opposition to a bill dubbed by critics as the “Don’t Say Gay” law, which targets LGBTQ youth and blocks public colleges from a classroom discussion of LGBTQ issues in Florida public schools for all grades.

Under his governorship, the state has also banned abortions after six weeks of pregnancy and blocked public colleges from using federal or state funding on diversity programs.

MIKE PENCE
The former vice president opened his White House bid on June 7 in Iowa with forceful criticism of Trump, accusing his onetime boss of abandoning conservative principles and arguing Trump’s Jan. 6 action and inaction amounted to a dereliction of duty.

While lauding the accomplishments of the “Trump-Pence administration,” Pence has said Trump endangered the vice president’s family and the lives of everyone at the U.S. Capitol by falsely insisting that Pence had the power to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

He faces an uphill battle in a party in which Trump remains the most dominant figure.

TIM SCOTT
The South Carolina senator launched his campaign May 22 in his hometown of North Charleston with what he’s casting as an optimistic and compassionate message that can serve as a contrast with the rest of the field.

The Senate’s sole Black Republican, Scott has rejected the notion that the country is inherently racist and repudiated the teaching of critical race theory. He has said his party and the country are at a crossroads and must choose between “victimhood or victory.”

NIKKI HALEY
The former United Nations ambassador and South Carolina governor became the first major GOP challenger to Trump when she kicked off her campaign on Feb. 15 in Charleston. She is the only woman in the GOP field.

The former Trump Cabinet official once said she wouldn’t challenge her former boss for the White House in 2024. But she changed her mind, citing the country’s economic troubles and the need for “generational change,” a nod to the 77-year-old Trump’s age.

LARRY ELDER
The conservative talk radio host announced his campaign on April 20 on Fox News’ “Tucker Carlson Tonight.” He made his first bid for public office in 2021 in a failed effort to replace California Gov. Gavin Newsom in a recall election.

FRANCIS SUAREZ
The Miami mayor announced his presidential bid on June 15 on ABC’s “Good Morning America.” Suarez, a two-term mayor first elected in 2017, is also president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. He is the only Hispanic candidate in the race.

DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY FIELD

JOE BIDEN
President Joe Biden formally announced his reelection campaign on April 25 in a video, asking voters for time to “finish this job.”

Biden, the oldest president in American history, would be 86 at the end of a second term. A notable swath of Democratic voters has indicated they would prefer he not run, though he is expected to easily win the Democratic nomination.

Biden, who has vowed to “restore the soul of America,” plans to run on his record. He spent his first two years as president combating the coronavirus pandemic and pushing through major bills such as the bipartisan infrastructure package and legislation to promote high-tech manufacturing and climate measures.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR.
The bestselling author and environmental lawyer launched a long-shot bid to challenge Biden on April 19 in Boston.

A nephew of President John F. Kennedy and son of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, he has emerged as one of the leading voices of the anti-vaccine movement, with public health experts and even members of his own family describing his work as misleading and dangerous. He has also been linked to far-right figures in recent years.

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON
Self-help author Marianne Williamson entered the Democratic primary on March 4 in Washington, calling for “a vision of justice and love that is so powerful that it will override the forces of hatred and injustice and fear.”

During her unsuccessful 2020 presidential campaign, she proposed the creation of a Department of Peace and argued the federal government should pay large financial reparations to Black Americans as atonement for centuries of slavery and discrimination.

For centuries of slavery and discrimination.
efforts to resolve homelessness.

For instance, the California Apartment Association recently told lawmakers Durazo’s proposal for stronger tenant protections and lower rent caps was unnecessary because it would amend the California Tenant Protection Act, which also was the result of much debate and compromise before it passed in 2019.

That tenant protection law requires landlords to have “just cause” before most evictions, and it sets a cap on rent increases for tenants at 5% annually plus inflation, up to 10%. Durazo’s bill would have strengthened it.

Debra Carlton, spokesperson for the California Apartment Association, said in an interview the Legislature has been increasing regulations on the rental industry, which restricts housing production and hurts mom-and-pop landlords.

“I don’t know that we’ve seen anything in the last decade or so that we would tally, if you will, as a complete win for the rental housing industry,” she said. “That just doesn’t happen in this Legislature.”

The apartment association also noted in its statement that the state already extended pandemic-era tenant protections multiple times in recent years, further hurting landlords.

“There is no justification for SB 567,” the association said of Durazo’s bill, “especially when hundreds of rental property owners have tenants who have failed to apply — or who failed to qualify — for rental assistance and who have gone three years without paying the rent.”

RENTERS’ REALITY CHECKS

Durazo, a Los Angeles Democrat, countered that a near recession and the pandemic do justify her bill, because many tenants were pushed to the brink of eviction and homelessness and so need more protections.

Her proposal passed the Senate Judiciary Committee, but Sen. Tom Umberg, its chairperson, added a condition that Durazo negotiate certain changes before the Senate voted for it.

Durazo said the changes to her proposal are not unusual.

“Having said that, of course there are enormous economic interests in opposition by the apartment association and the Realtors,” she said. “I’m not going to deny that reality!”

Umberg, a Santa Ana Democrat, said there wasn’t enough support in the Senate Judiciary Committee to pass Durazo’s bill with its lower rent cap, but there was support for creating better enforcement mechanisms for the original tenant protection law.

“While I didn’t support the original (Tenant Protection Act), I did think that once we had a law on the books that we had to have a mechanism to enforce that law,” he said.

Carlton defended the apartment association’s lobbying and spending.

“Just like all politically active groups and individuals, we have historically supported lawmakers who understand and support the rental industry,” she said. “Lawmakers understand that over-regulating the market is not going to encourage housing production and is not going to encourage small owners to stay in the business.”

In recent years large corporations and equity investors have bought growing shares of residential rental property throughout the country. The advocates’ study points out some of these large investors are represented on the apartment association’s board of directors.

Carlton added that the association has spent more time defending existing protections for landlords and the rental industry than on sponsoring new legislation.

IS THE TIDE TURNING?

Renter-friendly legislation has been gaining momentum.

After California adopted the Ellis Act in 1985, letting landlords evict tenants if the landlord doesn’t want to rent units anymore, lawmakers added amendments requiring property owners to pay relocation assistance to displaced tenants.

Lawmakers also tried several times to amend its eviction provisions. Most recently, Lee proposed adding a holding period, so landlords must own a property five years before they can invoke the law to evict tenants. Lee said he withdrew his bill because it didn’t have enough votes to pass the Assembly.

Real estate groups still spent $1.1 million in 2022 trying to unseat him, Lee said. During his first reelection campaign, real estate groups sent Sen. Lee a “Socialist Democrat who lives with his mom.”

In 1995, lawmakers passed the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act to halt the spread of rent control laws in cities throughout California. The law prevents communities from imposing rent controls on units built after 1995 and lets landlords reset rental rates on rent-controlled units once they become vacant.

Lawmakers tried but failed multiple times to change the law. Recently a measure by Wahab, a Democrat from Fremont, failed in the Senate 15-16, with nine abstentions.

Wahab noted lawmakers did not debate the bill.

“Not a single word was mentioned in opposition on the floor at all,” she said. “Does housing not merit a full, robust conversation?”

Though the bill failed, advocates saw it as a silver lining: It’s one of the few times lawmakers had to publicly record votes on a bill related to the Costa-Hawkins law.

“They had not been put in that uncomfortable position for a very long time,” Singh said. “Obviously we would have preferred that it passed, but it’s still a sign of progress.”

POLITICAL TALKING POINTS

The debate may not be over. The AIDS Healthcare Foundation, which has tried before to get the Costa-Hawkins rent control exemptions repealed, is collecting signatures for another try to get it on the ballot.

In 2019, when lawmakers passed the California Tenant Protection Act, it was considered the largest expansion of tenant protections in recent decades.

Amy Schur, campaign director for the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment Institute, said voters now are prioritizing homelessness and housing rights groups have become better organized.

“Politicians are both concerned about the issue and concerned about their chances of reelection if they don’t address it,” Schur said.

San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu agreed, saying when he authored the 2019 tenant protection act, the housing crisis had not yet spread throughout the state.

“Politicians are both concerned about the housing crisis and they want to be elected,” he said.

Now, California has more than 170,000 homeless residents, and housing prices and rents have soared. The pandemic also revealed greater needs for tenant protections, Chiu said.

Schur described increased efforts to organize tenants and building coalitions among housing justice groups in recent years. Last fall about 30 tenants rights organizations held their first Zoom retreat to discuss plans and strategy. Durazo’s proposal arose as one of their top priorities.

Before legislative committee hearings, tenant groups mounted a “Herculean” on-the-ground effort, Schur said, to inform communities about the bill and when their representatives would vote on it. At least 800 tenants rallied at the state Capitol to support the bill a day before the Senate Judiciary Committee voted on it.

Paul Scott, Co-Founder of Plug In America Santa Monica

It’s sad to read of our polluted Bay, and it’s especially galling that Santa Monica Pier is the most polluted part of the Bay. While our local and state governments are doing yeoman’s work trying out the latest tech to clean up what’s already getting into our waterways, there is one simple action most individuals can take that will significantly reduce pollutants from ever being generated in the first place. I’m speaking of oil and its derivatives; gasoline and diesel.

For all our lives, those are the two fuels used for over 99% of travel and deliveries. Tens of millions of internal combustion crankcases dripping oil on the roads combined with the massive pollution from the six refineries in the South Bay constitutes a significant portion of the pollution in Santa Monica Bay.

Now that electric vehicles (EVs) have reached cost parity with gas-burning cars and trucks, it is important to end your life-long relationship with gasoline engines. From this point on, the most effective action you can take is to never buy a gas car again, and to the extent you have influence, don’t let your friends, family, co-workers, or neighbors buy one either.

The internal combustion industry is going to end its 100 year reign of power over our transportation over the next couple of decades. While it did a lot of good work for us, there was always the downside of pollution, military excursions to grab oil, and serious health problems. Now that we can get the benefits of motorized transportation without most of the negative consequences, it’s important we make the right choice going forward.

CalMatters data journalist Jeremia Kinelman contributed to this report. This article was originally published by CalMatters.
Race has emerged as a central issue — and one that could play a role in the 2024 presidential contest as the GOP’s primary field features five candidates of color, making it the party’s most racially diverse ever.

Miami Mayor Francis Suarez, who is of Cuban descent, announced his candidacy on Thursday, vowing to create a new brand of politics.

South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, the first Black senator in the South since Reconstruction, entered the contest last month. He joined Nikki Haley, a former South Carolina governor and U.N. ambassador who is of Indian descent, as does Vivek Ramaswamy, a biotech entrepreneur who describes himself as “a cultural thought leader who is in the race in Larry Elder, an African American raised in Los Angeles’ South Central neighborhood who came to national attention as a candidate in the failed effort two years ago to recall California Gov. Gavin Newsom.

The candidates of color are considered underdogs in a field currently dominated by former President Donald Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

The Republican presidential contenders of 2024 walk a fine line when addressing race with the GOP’s overwhelmingly white primary electorate.

In most cases, the diverse candidates in the Republican field play down the significance of their racial heritage. They all deny the existence of systemic racism in the United States even while discussing their own personal experience with racial discrimination. They oppose policies around policing, voting rights and education that are designed to benefit disadvantaged communities and combat structural racism.

The NAACP recently issued a travel advisory for Florida under DeSantis’ leadership, warning of open hostility “toward African Americans, people of color and LGBTQ+ individuals.” The notice calls toward African Americans, people of color largely support DeSantis’ positions.

Marc Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League, said the GOP’s policies are far more important than the racial and ethnic diversity of their presidential candidates. He noted there also were four Republican candidates of color in 2016, the year Trump won the White House after exploiting tensions over race and immigration.

“White nationalists, insurrectionists and white supremacists seem to find comfort in the (Republican) Party,” Morial said. “I think that’s beyond the politics of just the face of a person of color by itself appealing to people of color. What do you stand for?”

With few exceptions, the Republican candidates who have entered the presidential primary field have embraced the GOP’s “anti-wake” agenda, which is based on the notion that policies designed to address systemic inequities related to race, gender or sexuality are inherently unfair or even dangerous.

DeSantis this past week described such policies as “cultural Marxism.”

Still, the GOP’s diverse field is not ignoring race. Indeed, some candidates are making their race a central theme in their appeal. They’re beyond the Republican primary voters even as they deny that people of color face systemic challenges.

Scott insisted that America is not a racist country in his recent announcement speech.

“We are not defined by the color of our skin. We are defined by the content of our character. And if anyone tells you anything different, they’re lying,” he said.

In her announcement video, Haley noted that she was raised in a small town in South Carolina as “the proud daughter of Indian immigrants — not black, not white, I was different.” Like Scott, she has defended the GOP against charges of racism.

“Some think our ideas are not just wrong, but racist and evil,” Haley said. “Nothing could be further from the truth.”

Elder is quick to criticize the Democrats’ “woke” agenda, Black Lives Matter and the notion of systemic racism.

Critics say such messages are actually designed to win over suburban white voters more than to attract voters of color. But at a town hall meeting Ramaswamy hosted on the South Side of Chicago on a recent Friday afternoon, there were signs that some Black voters were open to the GOP’s new messengers, given their frustration with both political parties.

One audience member waved a flyer for a “Biden boycott” because the Democratic president has not signaled whether he supports reparations for the descendants of slaves, although Joe Biden did back a congressional effort to study the issue.

None of the GOP’s presidential candidates supports reparations, either.

Others condemned Democrats, in Chicago and in Washington, for working harder to help immigrants who are in the country illegally than struggling African American citizens.

Federal officials were preparing to relocate hundreds of migrants from the U.S.-Mexico border to the South, even as many local residents struggled with violence and difficult economic conditions.

“It is certainly true that there are multiple shades of melanin in this Republican race,” Ramaswamy said in an interview before the event. “I think that in some ways dispels the
ON MAY 29 AT 5:45 AM

Officers assigned to the Homeless Liaison Program (HLP) conducted a periodic check at Reed Park. Officers located two individuals that they have had multiple prior contacts with, laying on the ground surrounded by luggage, multiple bags and food items. Officers also located a glass stem/pipe with a white powdery residue. Both individuals have received multiple citations and advisals along with offers for assistance from the HLP Team members. During the officers’ investigation they learned that one party had a court ordered “stay away” from the park. Both parties were arrested, transported to the Santa Monica Jail, and issued citations with a July 12, 2023 court date.

Ross has celebrated Juneteenth every year since she was born in Texas, where her parents worked as sharecroppers and her paternal grandfather was a former slave. Ross moved to Santa Monica in 1957 and continued celebrating the holiday with her family before making it her mission to share it and have it recognized by the local community.

The holiday marks the anniversary of June 19, 1865, when more than two years after the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln declared all slaves in Texas to be free.

Juneteenth 2023 Stage Schedules at VAP 6/17/23

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Many thanks to those who voted for me! I very much appreciate your support!

“I highly recommend that you enlist Ted to represent you when selling or buying real estate! His professional expertise, coupled with his humanity and attention to detail, made this experience easier, and more profitable, than I ever imagined.”

- Abby, recent client
Since we’ve opened, we’ve only had about a 20 percent conversion rate. I think it’s closer to 10 percent, but you can see how far off that is, it’s people just not wanting to wait.

- Erin Carachilo, CEO of Calyx Peak

the only existing dispensary in Santa Monica, the Local Cannabis Company was losing the interest of the majority of walk-in customers who, upon learning they need to apply for a medical card, simply leave without purchasing anything.

“Since we’ve opened, we’ve only had about a 20 percent conversion rate. I think it’s closer to 10 percent, but you can see how far off that is, it’s people just not wanting to wait,” Erin Carachilo, CEO of Calyx Peak, the parent company of the Local Cannabis Company, told the Daily Press just last week.

Davis continued her reasoning, “Because why should I go get a doctor’s prescription if I can go down to Lincoln Boulevard in Venice and buy it without that? I don’t know if this is a legal question, or a land use question or some combination thereof, but is there a way to address the issue of the two [dispensary licenses] that we’ve already vetted through a very tough process and allow them to convert while we study all these other things so that they don’t go out of business?”

Kolluri responded, “There are a number of cities and counties that have done that as a first step to a larger effort to allow for more cannabis activity.”

“I can’t think of any reason that you couldn’t do that,” confirmed City Attorney Doug Sloan, later adding, “Under state law, we cannot legally prohibit delivery that legally originates from outside the city,” when the potential issue of regulating cannabis delivery was raised.

Councilmember Jesse Zwick suggested that Council should be weary of overregulating the issue and Councilmember Phil Brock said, “I think they should be allowed to convert to retail, both the one that’s already open and the one that’s planned further up the street, as long as they follow the regulations we established.”

“We should abandon our much more restrictive city requirement and use the state requirement as the method most cities are using as it seems to work. It keeps businesses away from sensitive areas, retailers away from sensitive areas, but still allows for a wide enough swath of the city to be covered and not oversaturated.”

Councilmember Caroline Torosis said, “We should think about any money that we’re generating from the taxation be reinvested back into the community,” adding, “I’m very pro retail uses. I’m pro all types of uses. I also think that we shouldn’t regulate cannabis just because we have gun control on the agenda tonight, let’s not regulate cannabis more than we’re regulating guns.”

Through the course of discussion, the fate of the mysterious second dispensary was revealed — the current license holders want a way out.

According to David Martin, Community Development Director for the City of Santa Monica, construction has not even begun on the proposed dispensary, which was planned to open on 1416 Wilshire Blvd. “They approached us about being able to sell their entitlement to someone else. And so we were working with the city attorney’s office to figure out if we can do that, it’s a little bit awkward, because there was such a lengthy process there,” Martin said.

Davis said she was in favor of storefront dispensaries that could fill empty retail outlets, was hesitant to put a cap on the number and was totally opposed to any discretionary processes.

No one was opposed to allowing adult-use consumer access including delivery and additional investigation was recommended to determine the appropriate standards of consumption lounges. However, Council asked the City for further clarification on the effects of a cap on the number of license applications together with zoning clarification.

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VOTERS
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myth that much of the left will perpetuate that this is somehow you know, a racist party or whatever drivel.”

He added: “But personally, I could care less what someone’s skin color is. I think what matters is, what are they going to accomplish? What’s their vision?”

Before Suarez’s announcement, the GOP did not have any Hispanic candidates in the 2024 contest. He said his ethnic background matters.

“I’m the only Hispanic candidate in both parties who’s running. I think that’s incredibly important,” he said in an interview on ABC, noting that roughly 20% of the U.S. is made up of Hispanics, who have trended Republican recently. “I’m focused on not just winning the 2024 election. I’m focused on creating a brand of politics that can win generational elections.”

A majority of Latino voters supported Biden in the 2020 presidential contest, according to AP VoteCast, an extensive national survey of the electorate. But Trump cut into that support in some competitive states, including Florida and Nevada, revealing important shifts among Latinos from many different cultural backgrounds.

In last fall’s midterm elections, support grew for Republican candidates among Black voters, although they remained overwhelmingly supportive of Democrats, AP VoteCast found. Overall, Republican candidates were backed by 14% of Black voters, compared with 8% in the midterm elections four years earlier.

While the shifts may be relatively small, strategists in both parties acknowledge that any shift is significant given how close some elections may be in 2024.

In Chicago, Tyrone Muhammad, who leads Ex-Cons for Social Change, lashed out at Republicans for being “losers” for not seizing a very real opportunity to win over more African Americans. While sitting next to Ramaswamy on stage, he also declared that the Republican Party is racist.

Later, he said he actually voted for Trump in 2020 because Trump enacted a criminal justice bill that aimed to shorten prison sentences for nonviolent drug offenders and address racial inequalities in the justice system. While the GOP has since embraced tough-on-crime rhetoric, Muhammad noted that Biden as a senator helped pass the 1994 crime bill that led to the mass incarceration of Black people.

Muhammad said he might vote Republican again in 2024, despite the party’s shortcomings. He pointed to the GOP’s fight against illegal immigration as a core reason for support.

“I may not like you as an individual, but I like your issues, I like your policies,” he said.

Fields reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Thomas Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report. The Associated Press receives support from several private foundations to enhance its explanatory coverage of elections and democracy. The AP is solely responsible for all content.
Today's Birthday

(April 1923 – November 2023)

ARIES (March 21-April 19). An exchange of practical knowledge happens that you'll build on later. Take notes, stick to the business and try not to get distracted by emotional content, which will come and go like weather. Focus on using resources well and you'll succeed.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You have a soft spot for someone, and it will remain so unless it gets leaned on too much, in which case it's only natural to develop layers of protection. Employ distancing and other tactics to prevent yourself from getting calloused.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The universe will flow blessings to you, though it might need a reminder to open that tap. The nudge to give is a grateful heart. Acknowledge what's good around you.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Perfectionism is dangerous — it misses deadlines and thwarts progress. Make your work excellent, then toss it to the world for feedback. Accept the first version as a starting point.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You're a real boss when it comes to taking control and owning your decisions. But you also know it's just not practical or fun to have that level of discipline all the time. Let loose and enjoy tonight.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Avoid overthinking. Make a plan and move through it quickly, leaving no room for doubt. Simplicity and momentum go hand in hand. Tune out the noise. This is a signal-only kind of day.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You fantasize about lifestyle and aesthetic upgrades. Put work into it now and you'll soon be on your way. This is all doable. Friends and family will be there to lend ideas and support, but you have to ask.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your water sign energy can take many forms. You can be warm and relaxing, or steamy in a cinematic way. You can boil, flow or freeze. Don't let your form be dictated by external weather. Choose your own temperature.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Discussions are not stories, monologues or instructions. The volley of conversation is a test of curiosity and intelligence. Pay attention to who passes this test. Pseudo-conversationalists think that the opposite of talking is waiting.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Each time you make a decision that works out, it enforces your trust in yourself. But things don't have to go your way to build your confidence, as long as you feel good about how you handle them.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). There's a kind of safety in fear, but it's not very fun to enact since fear leads to cowering and hiding. For a more adventurous experience, seek the safety found in preparation and a good defense.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There are those who go through hard times and those who define themselves through suffering. Either way, you're happy to help where you can. And when you can't, put space between you to avoid being dragged down by a litany of grievances.
Agnes
By TONY COCHRAN

Dogs of C-Kennel
By MICK & MASON MASTROIANNI & JOHNNY HART

Zack Hill
By JOHN DEERING & JOHN NEWCOMBE

Heathcliff
By PETER GALLAGHER

Strange Brew
By JOHN DEERING

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**FRIDAY | JUNE 16**

**SAMO PRIDE DRAG QUEEN STORYTIME**
Celebrate Pride Month with Drag Queen Storytime! Our guest of honor, Pickle, will lead an interactive storyline designed to challenge restrictive gender stereotypes, encourage self-expression, and promote diversity and inclusion. Annenberg Community Beach House. 415 Pacific Coast Hwy. Santa Monica, CA 90402

**SATURDAY | JUNE 17**

**SUMMER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION**
Ishihara Park Learning Garden, 2909 Exposition Blvd, Santa Monica 90404 Join us at the Ishihara Park Learning Garden as we celebrate the impending Summer Solstice by focusing on your energy on the sun!! by building a SOLAR OVEN. What is a Solar Oven you may ask? Come and find out.

**CARDBOARD YACHT REGATTA**
Have you ever dreamed of setting sail across the waters in your very own yacht? Now you can build your own cardboard yacht and test its seaworthiness in a race across the Beach House Pool. Build a yacht using just corrugated cardboard and duct tape, decorate it, cross your fingers and hope you can make it to the other side. $20 to participate. Register online at https://anc.apm.activecommunities.com/santamonicarecreation. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**UC MASTER GARDENERS AT PICO MARKET**
Visit with the UC Master Gardeners at the Saturday Pico Farmers Market. he booth is filled with free advice on how to care for plants, how to troubleshoot a gardening problem, and much more. Free seeds and seedlings are available on a limited basis. Market attendance is subject to change based on weather and holidays. 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

**NOTHIN’ BUT SAND BEACH CLEANUP**
Join Heal the Bay for our June Nothin’ But Sand Beach Cleanup. 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Register online at https://healthebay.org/event/nothin-but-sand-beach-cleanup-6/.

**31ST ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION**
Join the City of Santa Monica and the Juneteenth Celebration Committee, Inc. for an afternoon of music, unique food and craft vendors, and local resources to celebrate the 31st annual Juneteenth on Saturday, June 17th, from 1 to 7 p.m. in Virginia Avenue Park under the theme of Coming Together in Appreciation, Reconciliation, and Commemoration! Virginia Avenue Park, 2200 Virginia Ave. 1 - 7 p.m.

**SUNDAY | JUNE 18**

**CHESS SUNDAYS**
Make your move! Chess players of all ages and levels are invited for weekly casual play on Third Street Promenade! Every Sunday through the summer, from 11am-3pm, play a game with a friend or meet a new one. Chess sets (including a few giant ones) will be provided, but you’re welcome to bring your own! This event is in partnership between the Santa Monica Chess Club and Downtown Santa Monica, Inc.

**MONDAY | JUNE 19**

**SANTA MONICA ARTS COMMISSION**
The Arts Commission of the City of Santa Monica exists to ensure a regular and ongoing assessment of arts programs in the City, develop arts programs of innovative form, recognize and encourage the arts as a service of local government and enrich the lives of all citizens by exposure to art in its various forms. Civic Center Parking Structure. 333 Civic Center Dr. Santa Monica, CA

**TUESDAY | JUNE 20**

**DORADO 808 GROUP ART SHOW: FORAGE**
A group show featuring 40+ emerging and established artists. This is a themed exhibition titled “Forage”, that explores the concept of foraging in all its forms. The theme revolves around the idea of seeking and gathering, foraging for inspiration and finding something new in the world around us, or the inner workings of the human mind. 806 Broadway. Santa Monica, CA 90401

**WEDNESDAY | JUNE 21**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**
Established in 1946, the Planning Commission envisions Santa Monica as a city of wellbeing, sustainability, and equity, and seeks to balance the many needs and priorities within our community in accordance with the City’s General Plan and Specific Plans. The Commission acts through open and civil discourse that is informed by public input, impartial analysis, and best practices in land use and planning. City Council Chambers Santa Monica, CA.

**MAKE MUSIC DAY**
Make Music Day is a free celebration of music around the world on the Summer Solstice, June 21. It is the world’s largest annual music event held on the same day in more than 1,000 cities in 120 countries. Colorado Center Park. 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.

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**Weather**

**Friday:** Cloudy through mid morning, then gradual clearing, with a high near 67. 
**Friday Night:** Patchy fog after 11pm. Otherwise, increasing clouds, with a low around 59.

**Saturday:** Patchy fog before 11am. Otherwise, cloudy, with a high near 70.

**Saturday Night:** Patchy fog after 11pm. Otherwise, cloudy, with a low around 61.

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**Surf Report**

**FRIDAY**  
**Surf:** 2-3ft+  
**Water Temp:** 63.0

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**Advertising**

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