



NEWS

No more pride flag? Downey considers flag policy for public facilities

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NEWS

Church neighbors rage over proposed low-income housing project

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Barbara Hayden, former mayor and council member, passes away

■ Elected in 1988, she served one term on the council, including one year as mayor.

By Eric Pierce
Editor

DOWNEY – Barbara Jo Hayden, a former Downey mayor, council member and civic leader, died March 7, her family announced. She was 83.

Hayden and her husband, Bob, were married Nov. 19, 1960, the day after he graduated from Finley Engineering College.

They moved from Missouri to Downey in October 1969 after Bob landed a job with Sierra Bullets in Santa Fe Springs.

With three young children, Hayden became an active PTA mom, planning school events and fundraisers. She wrote a cookbook, “The Wild Gourmet,” and was often asked to cook breakfast or dinner for high school service clubs, local police and fire department recognition days, and her kids’

athletic team parties.

She became interested in local politics in the late ‘80s. She served on the Downey Planning Commission, the Cerritos College Board of Trustees and the Los Angeles Republican Central Committee, 54th District.

In 1988 she ran for the Downey City Council at-large seat, defeating incumbent James S. Santangelo, who had been criminally charged with misdemeanor conflict of interest.

Hayden did not seek reelection as her family decided to move back to Missouri.

In Sedalia, MO, the Haydens purchased WoodDale Farm, built a new home and Barbara settled in as the chief financial officer for Starline Brass, Inc., her husband’s business. She also served on the State Law Review Board and was appointed by the governor as a Missouri State Fair Commissioner for nearly two decades.

In 2015, Hayden was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, which she fought until her death.



Mural honoring girl who died of cancer removed

DOWNEY – A mural painted in honor of an 8-year-old girl who died from cancer has been removed, six months after it was put up in Downtown Downey.

According to Jackie Glaz, mother of Jaelyn Glaz, whom the art piece memorialized, the mural was painted over at the request of the building owner.

Contrary to rumors that spread across Facebook over the weekend, Glaz said that the building’s owner had approved the mural to be painted on the side of an office building at Downey Avenue and 4th Street but later deemed the work “unprofessional.”

The mural – depicting a dinosaur, unicorn, and the message “Today be Amazing, Brave, Strong, Be You” — was painted in October last year by street artist Bumblebee.

Jaelyn Glaz passed away June 12, 2018, a week shy of her ninth birthday. **By Alex Dominguez, Staff Writer**

STREET FAIRE APPROACHING



The 30th annual Downey Street Faire is set to take place Saturday, May 11, on Brookshire Avenue, between Firestone Boulevard and 5th Street.

The Street Faire is presented annually by the Downey Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with Downey Collective.

This year’s event will feature live entertainment, a petting zoo, beer garden, food trucks, business showcase, kids zone, shop small, and more.

99 Cent Store workers could receive help from L.A. County

■ The discount retailer is liquidating its assets; elected leaders pledge to help workers.

By City News Service

COMMERCE – The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday directed its staff to prepare a report on ways the county might be able to provide financial and other support to people losing their jobs due to the closure of 99 Cents Only stores in the area.

“I am worried about the thousands of 99 Cents Store workers across L.A. County who are going to lose their jobs, but L.A. County is ready to help,” Supervisor Janice Hahn

said in a statement. “We have a department that can step in during an event like this and help workers with not only short-term assistance to get through this difficult time, but job training and support to help them get a better job.”

On Thursday, the Commerce-based operators of the stores announced they would shutter all 371 locations, affecting stores in California, Arizona, Nevada and Texas. The stores began liquidation sales on Friday.

“This was an extremely difficult decision and is not the outcome we expected or hoped to achieve,” interim company CEO Mike Simonic said in a statement issued Thursday.

“Unfortunately, the last several years have presented significant and lasting challenges in the retail environment, including the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting consumer demand, rising levels of shrink, persistent inflationary pressures and other macroeconomic headwinds, all of which have greatly hindered the company’s ability to operate.”

According to the company, it has partnered with Hilco Real Estate to facilitate a liquidation of all merchandise, along with “certain fixtures, furnishings and equipment at the company’s stores.”

The 99 Cents Only stores were founded in 1982.

Weekend at a Glance

Friday 70° ☁️

Saturday 62° ☁️

Sunday 61° ☁️

ON THIS DAY

1815:

The eruption of Mount Tambora, a volcano on the island of Sumbawa in what is now Indonesia, killed about 10,000 people.

1895:

José Julián Martí, a philosopher, journalist and political theorist, landed in Cuba and became a national hero for his role in the liberation of his country from Spain.

1951:

President Harry S. Truman relieved General Douglas MacArthur of his command of United Nations and U.S. forces during the Korean War.

1959:

Dodgers pitcher Don Drysdale hit a home run on Opening Day, accounting for the Dodgers’ only run in their 6-1 loss to the Chicago Cubs.

1961:

The trial of Nazi leader Adolf Eichmann began in Jerusalem; eight months later it ended with the only death sentence ever imposed by an Israeli court.

1964:

The Beatles set a record with 14 songs on the Top 100 music charts; “Can’t Buy Me Love” was No. 1 and “Love Me Do” was the lowest at No. 81.

1970:

Apollo 13 was launched from Cape Kennedy (now Cape Canaveral), Florida; although scheduled to be the third lunar landing, the mission was aborted after an oxygen tank exploded en route to the Moon.

1979:

Ugandan President Idi Amin, whose brutality earned him the nickname “Butcher of Uganda,” fled the country as Tanzanian-led forces neared Kampala.

2000:

The baseball stadium Oracle Park, home of the San Francisco Giants, opened.

2007:

Author Kurt Vonnegut, who was noted for such wryly satirical novels as “Slaughterhouse-Five,” died at age 84.

2013:

Maria Tallchief, whose exquisite technique made her one of the greatest ballerinas in the United States, died at age 88.

Jennifer DeKay named Woman of the Year

DOWNEY – Jennifer DeKay, owner and publisher of The Downey Patriot, was honored by Assemblywoman Blanca Pacheco as a Woman of the Year.

DeKay was chosen from a field of candidates that included businesswomen, artists, community organizers, teachers, medical professionals, activists, religious leaders and more.

Ten women were chosen in total, each representing their city within the 64th Assembly District.

“I was thrilled to celebrate their remarkable contributions to our community and state,” Pacheco said. “Thank you for being an inspiration!”



The awards ceremony was held at Cerritos College with California state treasurer Fiona Ma providing the keynote address.

DeKay is pictured above with Mayor Mario Trujillo, Mayor Pro Tem Hector Sosa and Councilwoman Dorothy Pemberton, and at right with Assemblywoman Pacheco.



City Council may consider creating flag guidelines

■ **CITY COUNCIL ROUNDUP:** Downey could explore options to limit the types of flags flown at public facilities.

By Alex Dominguez
Staff Writer

DOWNEY – Mayor Pro Tem Hector Sosa on Tuesday asked city staff to “agendize a conversation” on the subject of a neutral flag policy, and what litigation the city could potentially expose itself to in the absence of adopting one.

A neutral flag policy would ban the flying of nongovernmental flags on city buildings.

Voters in Huntington Beach approved a similar measure last month. Critics – notably within the LGBTQ+ community – called it discriminatory.

Sosa’s request came after a handful of residents Tuesday lobbied for a flag policy.

The City of Downey flies four flags – the American, state, city and MIA-POW flags – year-round. In 2021, the city council voted to fly the LGBTQ Pride flag every June.



Then-mayor Blanca Pacheco raises the Pride flag outside Downey City Hall in 2021. City of Downey photo

According to city staff’s report, there are 61 on-street spaces, 38 of which would be impacted by the proposed zone.

On June 15 and 16, 2023, Downey police conducted a license plate survey between the hours of 2 am and 6 am, within the boundaries of the proposed zone. Results found that on June 15, 34 spots were occupied, 26 of which by non-residents, and 33 spots were occupied on June 16, 16 by non-residents.

With the approval, 50% of residents must apply for parking permits within 60 days, then signs establishing a parking prohibition between the hours of 2 am and 6 am with an exemption to permitted vehicles will be posted. Permits will be purchasable for \$50 annually.

If 50% of residents do not purchase permits, then the preferential parking permit district could be repealed.

Police Assessment

The city of Downey will hire a firm to conduct an organizational assessment

Parking Zone

The City Council voted to implement a new preferential parking district on the north and south sides of Baysinger Street, between Vultee and Haledon Avenues.

The zone comes at the request of neighborhood residents who say they have been impacted by overflowing on-street parking from nearby apartment buildings on Florence Avenue.

Paging Dr. Frischer...

By Dr. Alan Frischer

I’ve been practicing medicine in this wonderful community for many years. Can you guess the number one concern among my patients?

Anxiety. The world has changed so dramatically, and so rapidly, that it sometimes makes my head spin. It isn’t only our health that worries and threatens us; it’s

the economy, politics, the environment, our jobs, our savings. Add to that the leftover effects of the pandemic, which include for some a self-imposed isolation from family and friends. Yes, anxiety is running rampant.

Anxiety manifests in many ways. Some find themselves in a constant state of worry; overthinking plans and dwelling on worst-case outcomes. Some have difficulty handling uncertainty; becoming indecisive and fearful of making the wrong decision. Some find it difficult to relax; feeling restless, keyed up, on edge. Some have difficulty concentrating.

Clearly, anxiety is not merely a mental disorder. Physical manifestations include fatigue, trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, headaches, palpitations, abdominal pain, muscle tension and aches, nervousness, being easily startled, sweating, nausea, diarrhea, flare-ups of irritable bowel syndrome, and irritability.

None of what follows will surprise you, but consider incorporating some of these coping mechanisms to help manage life during these challenging times:

- Schedule time every day for relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, tai chi, breathing exercises, massage, music, and walks or other forms of exercise.

- Encourage yourself to pursue hobbies.

- Make a conscious effort to maintain a positive attitude.

- Instead of becoming angry, defensive, or passive, work on stating your feelings, opinions, or beliefs. In other words, be assertive, rather than aggressive.

- Work on developing time management skills.

- Keep an anxiety journal, ranking events on a scale of 1 to 10. Note those activities which make you feel anxious (watching TV news, perhaps?), and the thoughts going through your mind before and during. Note what makes you feel less anxious.

- If you hyperventilate (experiencing dizziness, numbness/tingling, and/or lightheadedness), exhale into a paper bag and then inhale from the bag. This increases your carbon dioxide level, which can reduce the urge to breathe rapidly, and reduces the dizziness and tingling.

- Seek out support from your community: your family, friends, neighbors, or religious organization. Spend time with those you love, even if it’s merely over the phone or online.

- Limit alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, sugar, and recreational drugs.

- Take care of your body with exercise, hydration, nutrition, and sleep. Your body will handle stress far more easily when it is fit and healthy.

Let’s remind ourselves to periodically evaluate our lifestyle, and incorporate some proven coping techniques. If they don’t seem to help, I urge you to seek treatment with your physician, therapist, or other health care professional.

Dr. Alan Frischer is former chief of staff and former chief of medicine at Downey Regional Medical Center. Write to him in care of this newspaper at 10927 Downey Ave., Suite C, Downey, CA 90241.

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Neighbors fume over church's plan to build low-income housing

■ St. Mark's Episcopal Church is exploring plans to build 60 housing units on its former school campus.

By Alex Dominguez
Staff Writer

DOWNEY – Plans by a local church to build a housing development for foster kids and homeless families has caused an uproar with neighbors and city officials alike.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, with the Abbey Road nonprofit organization, is eyeing a project that would see the demolition of its school building and fellowship halls, and the construction of a 60-unit building to house transition-aged foster youth, small families impacted by homelessness, and low-income individuals and families in its back parking lot.

The school has been closed since 2020 due to a combination of financial, enrollment and maintenance issues.

According to Daniel Vaughn, Senior Warden at St. Mark's, no plans have been finalized or submitted to the city, though he says the idea "has been percolating" since 2017. Vaughn says the church "stumbled upon Abbey Road."

"We contacted them, and they said, 'Well, that's exactly what we do, we come in, we build low-cost housing,'" said Vaughn. "They have several projects, one that we visited in North Hollywood. I think they have two in the Lancaster area, and they have others."

Vaughn said that the church "liked what we heard," but still reached out to a couple of different contractors "to do our due diligence." The church ultimately signed a memorandum of understanding with Abbey Road (MOU).

"Abbey Road came in, gave a presentation to the whole parish, and talked about what the process would be like and what they do, which for us was key," said Vaughn. "In essence, we lease them the land. The length of time has not been determined; we haven't gotten this far. We only signed an MOU with them, and the MOU simply states that during the, I believe it's six months, maybe nine months, that during that time they will start getting their plans, start trying to find their funding, and in the meantime, we promise not to go try and find another contractor."

According to Vaughn, it will be at least three years before any construction takes place. Still, he says "nothing is set in stone."

Flyers were sent out to surrounding neighbors inviting them to what was called a "community outreach meeting" last Thursday,

drawing a larger and fiercer response than St. Mark's and Abbey Road were initially anticipating.

Many in attendance were visibly and audibly concerned – if not outright angry – about the project, voicing concerns about safety, parking, and the effect the development would have on the surrounding property values.

Doris Morejon is a realtor who lives next door to the church. She said "This is our backyard."

"My concerns are that on its face, this project seems like it's a great project, but unfortunately these are very big companies, with big agendas, with big salaries, and I feel like the help is really not going to reach the people that need the help the most," said Morejon.

"I am very disappointed in this church, because being a church - and I know that they have a lot of deferred maintenance in this church, and that they have a lot of issues managing their money – but I wish they wouldn't further make more bad decisions on top of bad decisions they've made in the past that are going to affect this community forever."

Penny Watson, also a realtor living next door to the church, said she was "very

concerned about the property values." She implied that the church and Abbey Road had not been as transparent as suggested in regards to the flyers they sent out prior to Thursday's meeting.

"The actual mailing was very sporadic," said Watson. "They said [they sent it to everyone within] 500 feet, but it looked like junk mail."

Morejon said she threw her notice away, mistaking it for junk mail.

Another neighbor, Ralph Peck, said "this is not the place to do this."

"They're talking a three-story building here in the middle of our residential properties, towering over all of our houses, looking in our backyards," said Peck. "These people are going to be wandering up and down our streets; I don't know if they're drug addicted or what, but this is not the place to do this."

Vaughn expressed disappointment with the reaction, saying that the purpose of the meeting was "to provide information."

"We felt that they didn't give us much of a chance to explain our plans. They were not there to listen, they were there to attack," said Vaughn. "I was very discouraged at just how closed a lot of those



Nicole Poole, of Abbey Road, addresses a crowd of concerned neighbors at St. Mark's Episcopal Church as Senior Warden Daniel Vaughn looks on. Photo by Alex Dominguez

people were."

The meeting also angered Councilwoman Claudia M. Frometa, whom represents the district in which the church resides. Frometa called the meeting "irresponsible," adding that the city had not been made aware of the project.

"It is irresponsible to be conducting a meeting to

discuss future plans on this site, particularly involving a homeless transitional housing center there, across the street from OLPH School without the city's knowledge and/or involvement," said Frometa. "I'm disappointed informal flyers are circulating regarding this proposal without any notification or communication with the city or its representatives. This is

not how we go about doing business in Downey.

"Churches are not exempt from following city plans, approvals and processes, especially relating to a homeless transitional housing."

Both St. Mark's and Abbey Road refuted this claim, saying it is untrue that the city was not made aware of the project.

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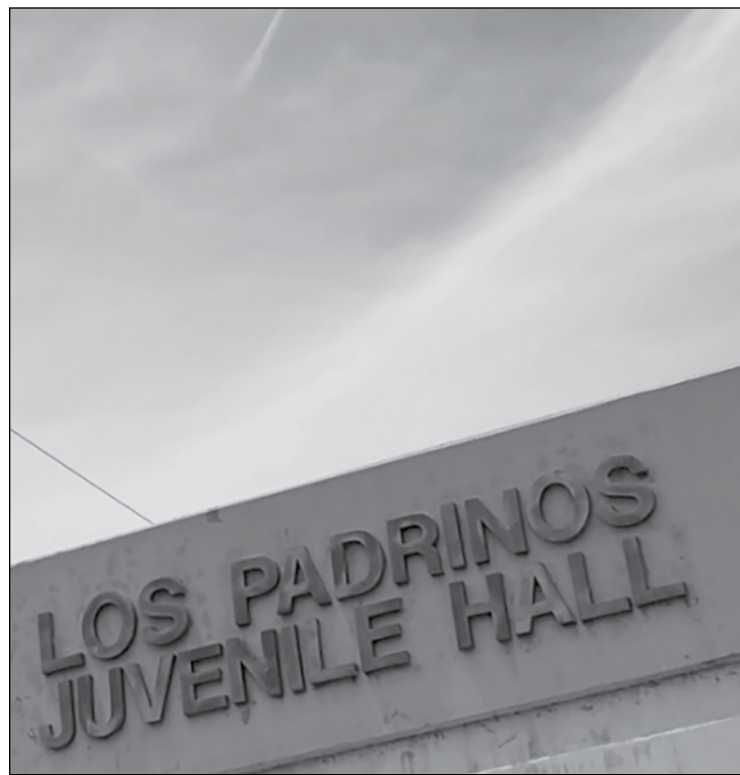
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Los Angeles County is hiring detention officers to work at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall. Photo by Eric Pierce

Need a job? Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall is hiring

DOWNEY – The Los Angeles County Probation Department is leading a recruitment effort to hire people to work at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall and other youth detention facilities.

Positions are available as Detention Services Officers and Group Supervisor, Nights. Below are descriptions of the positions as provided by the Probation Department:

Detention Services Officers play a crucial role in the Probation Department's 24-hour, seven-day-a-week facilities, where they have direct supervisory responsibility for youth. These dedicated professionals oversee youth safety during various scheduled activities and movements, ensuring a secure and supportive environment for rehabilitation and growth. To qualify, candidates must have completed 60 semester units (or 90 quarter units) from an accredited college, including coursework in social or behavioral science fields. The salary range for this position is \$64,789 - \$78,330 annually.

Group Supervisor, Nights, oversees living units during sleeping hours in facilities dedicated to youth custody, care, treatment, and rehabilitation. This role requires a high school diploma or equivalent, and candidates must demonstrate the ability to provide adequate supervision and support to youth during overnight hours. The salary range for this position is \$48,318 - \$61,675 annually.

"We are seeking individuals who are passionate about making a positive impact in the lives of youth and contributing to the safety and well-being of our community," said Guillermo Viera, Chief Probation Officer. "These positions offer rewarding opportunities for personal and professional growth, as well as the chance to work in a supportive team environment."

For more information and to apply, visit the county website joinlacountyprobation.com.

Red Cross holding blood drives in Downey

DOWNEY – The American Red Cross has scheduled several blood drives in the local area as it looks to protect its blood supply.

- In Downey, the Red Cross is conducting blood drives at:
 - Furman Park - April 13, 8 am to 2 pm
 - Downey Promenade - April 15, 10 am to 4 pm
 - Los Angeles County Office of Education - April 17, 8 am to 2 pm
 - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints - April 18, 11 am to 5 pm
 - St. Raymond's Catholic Church - April 28, 9 am to 3 pm
- Appointments can be made online at redcrossblood.org.

Downey comedy show to feature local talent

DOWNEY – A lineup of homegrown comedians are taking the stage at a comedy show Thursday, April 25, at the Downey Brewing Company.

Several comics are scheduled to perform, including alumnus from Downey, Warren and St. John Bosco high schools.

The lineup includes host Ryan Radusinovic along with Shaman Johal, Alex Farivar, Nessa Vasquez, Jerry Hernandez, Joe Mezzerrani and surprise guests.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased on Eventbrite. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door.

Doors open at 7:30 pm and the show begins at 8. The show is reserved for audience members ages 21 and older.

Fair housing workshop set

DOWNEY – The Fair Housing Foundation will hold a fair housing workshop Wednesday, May 15, from 2-4 pm at the Downey City Library.

Topics will include federal and state fair housing laws, discrimination, notices, evictions, security deposits, and more.

Register by calling (800) 446-3247.

In Memory of

Sharon Benson-Smith

February 04, 1938 - December 23, 2023



As she so dearly wanted, with her children at her side, Sharon Darlene Benson (Sharon Benson-Smith), age 85, passed away on December 23, 2023. She was born February 4, 1938. Sharon was born and raised in the family home with her five siblings, and parents. She had many fond memories of Gleason Street. She attended Kern Junior High and Garfield High, both in Los Angeles, where many loving and long-term friendships were created and maintained over the years.

Raising her children, providing them a home and a family life was paramount to her. She was blessed with a great ethic, working many years for Firestone Tire and Rubber and later with Mayfair Markets where she was the administrative secretary to the company president. All the while she managed to make ends meet and provide a loving, supportive and warm household for her three children.

She is survived by her children; Steve, Mark and Tracy, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, a brother, as well as a multitude of family and friends across the country, each holding a very special place in her heart and memory. She will be forever missed by all.

In her later years she joined a senior's writing class and found creative writing to be a great way of expression. She wrote about her life experiences and had a number of short stories, including award winners, published in The Downey Patriot newspaper. She so enjoyed writing and was greatly appreciative of her writing friends and The Downey Patriot.

A private memorial service was held.

Her ashes will be scattered at Rose Hills Meadows Scattering Garden in Whittier and her name, Sharon Benson, entered on the Memorial Wall alongside other family members.

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NASA was never the same after the Columbia tragedy

The 2003 Columbia space shuttle disaster altered NASA’s place in the space industry.

By Douglas Brinkley

Douglas Brinkley is a professor of history at Rice University. He is author of “American Moonshot: John F. Kennedy and the Great Space Race.”

Around the start of this century, the world counted only two major players in manned space exploration: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and Roscosmos, the Russian Space Agency. Ten years later, the heavens were crowded by comparison, with a number of private companies vying to restart the space race with Russia. Internationally, China had regular manned missions and the United Arab Emirates, Japan and the European nations were drawing close to success.

The turning point between the two eras was an unforeseeable tragedy: the disintegration of the Columbia space shuttle on February 1, 2003. It occurred almost exactly 17 years after a previous shuttle, the Challenger, burned just after lift-off.

That 1986 disaster had resulted in a towering wave of public anger at NASA, mainly because top officials had been advised very specifically to scrub the launch. Simply put, the weather was too cold for the equipment. The intrepid American space program survived the Challenger horror, but NASA’s self-doubt never subsided. Not even two decades later, after the Columbia exploded during re-entry, the two deadly failures broke the faith that many among the American people had in NASA.

Seven astronauts were onboard the Columbia for its 16-day mission, primarily to perform scientific experiments. The launch in mid-January had been uneventful – except for one thing. The team assigned to

review video of the voyage noticed what seemed to be a loose piece of the protective foam layer insulating the shuttle’s external tank. Soon thereafter a chunk of foam about as big as a briefcase dislodged and struck the front of the left wing. The analysis of the malfunction was communicated to others at NASA, but the problem was considered minor.

Shuttles were invariably damaged during missions. It was only to be expected. “There’s this term in NASA called accepted risk,” explained Nancy Currie-Gregg, who flew four shuttle missions, the last in 2002, “There is no such thing as zero-risk space flight, but how do you decide how much risk is acceptable?”

Because other shuttle missions had returned safely with “shredded” surface tiles – and because the stalwart Columbia had brought astronauts home from 27 previous flights – many NASA officials were lulled into complacency. They went so far as to assure the pilot and commander via email that “there is no concern ... We have seen the same phenomenon on several other flights and there is absolutely no concern for entry.”

NASA officials also decided against enlisting spy satellite photography to examine the shuttle damage more thoroughly. If they had, it’s possible that the astronauts could have repaired the spaceplane or at least abandoned it for refuge on the International Space Station. Instead, as the Columbia made its descent from space, superheated atmospheric gases entered through the gaping hole left by the dislodged chunk of foam. The structure was compromised and the shuttle broke apart in midair. Wreckage spread over Texas and Louisiana.

In the wake of the disaster, NASA Administrator Sean O’Keefe said in a statement, “This is indeed a tragic day for the NASA family, for the families of the astronauts who flew on STS-107, and likewise is tragic for the Nation.”

As the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB) noted in its final report, “the NASA organizational culture had as much to do with this accident as the foam.” All of NASA’s launches were suspended for two years. While

the shuttles eventually flew again, post-Columbia, the program was stunted and curtailed.

But as NASA floundered, Elon Musk’s upstart SpaceX scheduled its own launches. Musk’s undertaking initially proved just how hard rocket science is, though his company finally found success in 2008 with its reusable Falcon Heavy rocket. The billionaire’s club was usurping NASA in space. At about the same time, Jeff Bezos’ Blue Origin was developing rockets aimed mainly at suborbital flight. United Launch Alliance brought two legacy aerospace companies together, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, in a concerted effort to develop and launch massive rockets. All four companies are thriving today in the space industry.

Virgin Galactic, an American company operated by Sir Richard Branson, is dedicated to space tourism rather than exploration. Likewise, Axiom Space was founded in 2016 to establish a space station for adventurers. And now, SpaceX has set its sight on returning humans to the moon.

Space entrepreneurs were themselves launched into action, driven by the chance to make money during NASA’s lull after the demise of the Columbia. NASA, far from feeling threatened, has encouraged many of the private companies with massive contracts. The agency already had a long history of dealing with sub-contractors, using its pocketbook to steer aerospace development; that tradition has adjusted seamlessly to the current space economy.

Whether the rapacious current era in space will be propelled by the idealism of President John F. Kennedy’s American Moonshot is an uncertain question. Certainly, the seven astronauts doing round-the-clock experiments in physics on the Columbia had, just as JFK hoped, “set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained, and new rights to be won, and they must be won and used for the progress of all people.”

Opioid crisis, homelessness problems compounded by bad actors

A multi-faceted approach is required to address the issues facing our county.

By Jonathan Solomon

As a proprietor of a gun store nestled in the vibrant community of Burbank, California, I am afforded a unique vantage point from which to witness the intricate web of societal challenges that beset our city.

Foremost among these trials is the insidious grip of opioid addiction, a blight that not only ravages lives but also fuels a dangerous uptick in crime rates. Yet, as we confront this epidemic, it is imperative to recognize the multifaceted nature of our county’s woes, which are compounded by factors such as corporate malfeasance, rampant homelessness, and the staggering cost of living.

The steady influx of patrons seeking firearms for self-defense serves as a stark reminder of the pervasive sense of fear and vulnerability that permeates our neighborhoods. This phenomenon, though often attributed solely to individual anxieties, is inextricably linked to broader systemic failures, chief among them

being the opioid crisis. McKinsey Consulting’s strategic partnership with Purdue Pharmaceuticals, engineered to maximize profits from highly addictive opioids like OxyContin, cannot be overstated in its role in exacerbating addiction and the ensuing surge in criminal activity. The consequences are dire: fractured families, embattled communities, and lives shattered by violence.

As custodians of public safety, we cannot ignore the systemic failures that fueled the opioid crisis. We must hold accountable the corporate entities who played a significant role in its devastation, and implement stricter regulations to prevent similar tragedies.

Undeniably, powerful players like Purdue Pharma bear heavy responsibility. In 2023, the company pleaded guilty to three criminal charges related to its marketing of OxyContin, agreeing to pay over \$5 billion in fines and resolve thousands of lawsuits from individuals and communities harmed by the drug. McKinsey & Company, a consulting firm that advised Purdue on marketing strategies, agreed to pay over \$640 million to settle lawsuits that they helped fuel the crisis. Yet they’re still powerful actors fueling socio-economic disparities in Los Angeles County.

To comprehensively mend the tears in our social fabric, we must also squarely face the looming specter of homelessness that casts a shadow over our streets. The visible presence of individuals grappling with homelessness not only underscores systemic failures in our social safety net but also exacerbates feelings of insecurity among residents. As resources are strained and support systems falter, marginalized individuals are left vulnerable to exploitation, some of whom succumb to the numbing allure of substance abuse, perpetuating the vicious cycle of addiction and crime.

The exorbitant cost of living in Los Angeles serves as another potent accelerant, stoking the flames of desperation that drive individuals to desperate measures. Skyrocketing rents, coupled with stagnant wages, force many residents to grapple with the harsh

reality of financial precarity, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and entrapment in the cycle of addiction and crime. In such an unforgiving environment, the quest for survival often trumps concerns for public safety, breeding a sense of lawlessness that further exacerbates our city’s challenges.

Personally, I have firsthand experience of the dire consequences of this desperation, having fallen victim to retail crime when my gun store was targeted for robbery last year. This violation left an indelible mark, deepening my understanding of the urgent need to exercise my Second Amendment rights to safeguard myself, my establishment, and my clientele. Now, more than ever, we must redouble our efforts to address the systemic issues that drive individuals to resort to such violent and desperate measures.

While firearms may provide a temporary sense of security for some, they alone cannot address the deep-seated challenges that confront our communities. It is only through a comprehensive approach that addresses the intersecting issues of corporate misconduct, homelessness, and economic inequality that we can truly create safer, more equitable communities for all.

Pharmacy middlemen

Dear Editor:

Too many patients in our state must jump through hoops to receive the medications we rely on, and it’s time our leaders step up and hold rogue middlemen known as pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) accountable.

These companies have a stranglehold on the prescription drug marketplace, and they leave patients with higher out-of-pocket costs and fewer options for treatment.

When PBMs negotiate coverage with drug manufacturers, they extract large rebates on the prescriptions countless patients rely on. However, instead of passing down the savings intended for their customers, PBMs hold on to large chunks, forcing patients and their families to carry the lion’s share of the cost burden.

While federal legislation fails to pass in Congress time and again, I’m thankful our state lawmakers are taking up legislation like Senate Bill 873, which would require PBMs to pass down the fair share of savings to patients. I hope our state lawmakers pass this legislation and that California’s Congressional Delegation takes a page out of their playbook by passing similar reforms on a federal level. Leaders in both Sacramento and Washington should remember why they chose public service – the time to help Californians is now.

If they fail to step up, patients across our state will feel the effects.

Omar Castillo
Downey

Bad location for Costco

Dear Editor:

I reviewed the newspaper article about placing a Costco store on Firestone Boulevard next to the Nissan dealership.

My opinion is traffic is terrible going and coming from South Gate already. I’ve personally waited 15 minutes just to get on the freeway from the Downey/ South Gate border. A Costco store should be located in a different location.

Jeff Hart
Downey

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Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación. Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia. Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con

los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en sitio web de California Legal Services, (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a relamar las cuotas y los costos exentos pro imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 ó más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso. The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y dirección de la corte es): Pasadena Courthouse 300 East Walnut Street Pasadena, CA 91101 The name, address and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): Moustafa Harfoush, 100 Pine Street, Suite 1250, San Francisco, CA 94111, Telephone: 415-964-0040 Date (Fecha): 08/08/2023 DAVID W. SLAYON, EXECUTIVE OFFICER/ CLERK OF THE COURT, J. CALDERON, DEPUTY The Downey Patriot 4/11/24, 4/18/24, 4/25/24, 5/2/24

TRUSTEE SALES

T.S. No. 108942-CA APN: 6251-019-042 NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE IMPORTANT NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER: YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST, DATED 10/25/2004. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER On 4/17/2024 at 10:30 AM, CLEAR RECON CORP, as duly appointed trustee under and pursuant to Deed of Trust recorded 11/1/2004 as Instrument No. 04 2810936 of Official Records in the office of the County Recorder of Los Angeles County, State of CALIFORNIA executed by: ELVA MONICA AVINA, A SINGLE WOMAN WILL SELL AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO HIGHEST BIDDER FOR CASH, CASHIER'S CHECK DRAWN ON A STATE OR NATIONAL BANK, A CHECK DRAWN BY A STATE OR FEDERAL CREDIT UNION, OR A CHECK DRAWN BY A STATE OR FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION, SAVINGS ASSOCIATION, OR SAVINGS BANK SPECIFIED IN SECTION 5102 OF THE FINANCIAL CODE AND AUTHORIZED TO DO BUSINESS IN THIS STATE; BEHIND THE FOUNTAIN LOCATED IN CIVIC CENTER PLAZA, 400 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA, POMONA, CA 91766 all right, title and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust in the property situated in said County and State described as: MORE FULLY DESCRIBED ON SAID

DEED OF TRUST The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 7935 2ND ST, DOWNEY, CA 90241 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. Said sale will be held, but without covenant or warranty, express or implied, regarding title, possession, condition, or encumbrances, including fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust, to pay the remaining principal sums of the note(s) secured by said Deed of Trust. The total amount of the unpaid balance of the obligation secured by the property to be sold and reasonable estimated costs, expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale is: \$552,480.72 If the Trustee is unable to convey title for any reason, the successful bidder's sole and exclusive remedy shall be the return of monies paid to the Trustee, and the successful bidder shall have no further recourse. The beneficiary under said Deed of Trust heretofore executed and delivered to the undersigned a written Declaration of Default and Demand for Sale, and a written Notice of Default and Election to Sell. The undersigned or its predecessor caused said Notice of Default and Election to Sell to be recorded in the county where the real property is located. NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS: If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a trustee auction does not

automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same lender may hold more than one mortgage or deed of trust on the property. NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER: The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call (844) 477-7869 or visit this Internet Web site WWW.STOXPOSTING.COM, using the file number assigned to this case 108942-CA. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the Internet Web site. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. NOTICE TO

TENANT: Effective January 1, 2021, you may have a right to purchase this property after the trustee auction pursuant to Section 2924m of the California Civil Code. If you are an "eligible tenant buyer," you can purchase the property if you match the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. If you are an "eligible bidder," you may be able to purchase the property if you exceed the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. There are three steps to exercising this right of purchase. First, 48 hours after the date of the trustee sale, you can call (855) 313-3319, or visit this internet website www.clearreconcorp.com, using the file number assigned to this case 108942-CA to find the date on which the trustee's sale was held, the amount of the last and highest bid, and the address of the trustee. Second, you must send a written notice of intent to place a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 15 days after the trustee's sale. Third, you must submit a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 45 days after the trustee's sale. If you think you may qualify as an "eligible tenant buyer" or "eligible bidder," you should consider contacting an attorney or appropriate real estate professional immediately for advice regarding this potential right to purchase. FOR SALES INFORMATION: (844) 477-7869 CLEAR RECON CORP 8880 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 725 San Diego, California 92108 STOX 944017 The Downey Patriot 3/28/24, 4/4/24, 4/11/24

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Disabled Cudahy man shot by sheriff deputies settles lawsuit for \$25 million

■ Isaias Cervantes was shot by deputies called to the home for a mental health crises.

By City News Service

CUDAHY – The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Tuesday approved a \$25 million settlement for a hearing- and mentally impaired man who sued the county and two sheriff’s deputies, alleging he was left paralyzed when he was shot by a deputy in 2021 at his Cudahy home.

Attorneys in the case of Isaias Cervantes filed court papers last year saying that a “conditional” resolution of the case had been reached, but no terms were disclosed. According to a staff report prepared in advance of Tuesday’s Board of Supervisors vote, the settlement was being recommended “due to the high risks and uncertainties of litigation,” noting that “a reasonable settlement at this time will avoid further litigation costs.”

The board approved the settlement unanimously and without comment.

Cervantes’ attorney, community activists and family supporters gathered outside the Hall of Administration prior to the board’s vote, calling for changes within the sheriff’s department regarding responses to calls for help involving people suffering from

mental health or other issues.

“It is about this larger systemic change,” attorney Austin Dove told reporters. “... This action, regardless of what you say about the settlement, they cut their losses in this one. Because this family has been devastated beyond belief.”

Cervantes’ suit was filed in August 2021, alleging assault, battery, negligence, civil rights violations and other causes of action. The deputies named as defendants along with the county were David Vega and Jonathan Miramontes.

“Isaias Cervantes has lived a life riddled with mental disabilities...” his lawyers stated in previous court papers.

Cervantes’ mother, Rosa Padilla, is his court-appointed conservator. Born 29 months prematurely, Cervantes was diagnosed at age 3 with hearing impairment and a year later was found to have a speech impairment, obsessive-compulsive disorder, social anxiety and other intellectual disabilities, according to his lawyers’ court papers.

The plaintiff’s attorneys further stated that their client has cerebral palsy. Cervantes was left paralyzed when he was shot at age 25 and bullet fragments remain imbedded in his back, the suit stated. He is unable to control his bowels or urine, according to the suit.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department

previously reported that deputies were called at about 8:40 p.m. on March 31, 2021, to a home in the 5100 block of Live Oak Street after a caller said Cervantes was experiencing a mental health crisis and causing a disturbance by pushing other family members. The caller also told a dispatcher that Cervantes had obsessive compulsive disorder, depression, anxiety and was hard of hearing, deputies said.

Two deputies approached the home and asked Cervantes to come outside with them, but when he declined, they entered the home and attempted to detain him with handcuffs, according to the department. An LASD video then shows Cervantes fighting with the deputies with both body cameras falling to the floor.

One of the deputies can be heard in the video saying, “He’s going for my gun, he’s going for my gun,” and the other deputy can then be heard asking, “Does he have your gun?”

The first deputy did not answer and one shot is heard being fired. According to the lawsuit, Cervantes’ sister was the one who called 911 and she “plainly and specifically requested mental health support” for her sibling after telling the dispatcher her brother was deaf and disabled.

Vega and Miramontes were met on the sidewalk outside the home by Padilla and Cervantes’ therapist, the



Attorney Christian Contreras, right, speaks at a press conference organized by the Integrated Community Collaborative to talk about the shooting of Isaias Cervantes at the Hall of Justice.

suit stated. After Cervantes’ mother told the deputies that her son was afraid of LASD deputies because he believed they often harm people and he feared they would harm him, Vega’s demeanor became “noticeably more aggressive,” the suit stated.

The deputies entered the home, went into the living room, flanked Cervantes and told him to stand up, the suit stated. They began handcuffing him, causing him to turn away, the suit stated.

Miramontes grabbed Cervantes around the neck

and pushed him to the floor, causing Cervantes to lose his hearing aid, according to the suit, which also accuses Miramontes of falsely saying that Cervantes was trying to get the deputy’s gun.

The deputy’s holster has a dual safety lock system that prevents the gun from being removed by anyone in the position Cervantes found himself, the suit stated. Nonetheless, Vega, “encouraged” by Miramontes, drew his gun, pressed it against Cervantes’ back and fired, causing a bullet to tear through

Cervantes’ lungs and spine, the suit stated.

The District Attorney’s Office reviewed the shooting and declined to file any criminal charges against the deputy who fired the shot. An internal sheriff’s department investigation concluded that the shooting was within department policy, although the deputies “received additional training pertaining to the circumstances surrounding this incident,” according to a summary presented to the Board of Supervisors.



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Learn more: web.DUSD.net

CRIME REPORT

On 3/18/2024 at 12:25 am, officers were patrolling the area of Firestone Blvd. and Paramount Blvd. when they conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle. A search revealed a loaded handgun and the driver was arrested.

On 3/22/2024 at 10 am, officers responded to the area of 10000 Paramount Blvd. regarding a commercial burglary. Officers determined the suspect(s) had entered the

business and removed a large amount of copper wiring. Detectives are investigating.

On 3/22/2024 at 5:35 pm, officers responded to the area of 9000 Apollo Way regarding a robbery. Three suspects had entered a business, selected various items and exited the store without paying for the items.

When confronted by the victim, the suspects began punching and kicking the victim, causing moderate injuries. The suspects fled, but all three were located by responding officers. The victim was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment and the suspects were all arrested for robbery.

On 3/23/2024 at 12:45 am, officers on patrol observed a vehicle doing "doughnuts" in the area of Brookshire Ave. and Manatee St. Officers stopped the vehicle, arrested the driver for reckless driving and impounded the vehicle for 30 days.

On 3/23/2024 at 5:15 am, officers responded to Golden Park regarding suspects writing graffiti in the park. Officers arrived and located four suspects, one of which was in possession of a loaded gun. Officers arrested

all four suspects for vandalism and being in possession of the firearm.

On 3/30/2024 at 9:40 pm, officers responded to the area of 9000 Telegraph Rd. regarding an armed robbery. The suspect entered the location, demanded money while armed with a handgun and fled the scene with the loss. No injuries were sustained by the victim and detectives are investigating.

On 3/31/2024 at 10:05 pm, officers on patrol in the area of Firestone Blvd. and Stonewood St. observed the suspect throw an object at a passing vehicle. The object shattered the vehicle's front windshield.

Officers detained the suspect and he was placed under arrest for throwing an object at a moving vehicle. No injuries to the driver were reported.

On 4/1/2024 at 8:20 pm, officers responded to the area of Old River School Rd. and Stewart and Gray Rd. regarding an assault with a deadly weapon. The victim stated he was riding a scooter in the area when he was shot. Detectives responded and the investigation is ongoing.

On 4/2/2024 at 10:25 pm, officers responded to the area of 7200 Firestone Blvd. regarding an armed robbery. The victim stated he was exiting a business in the area when he was approached by two armed suspects, demanding his property. The victim gave the suspects his property and they fled the scene. No injuries were reported and detectives are investigating.

On 4/6/2024 at 2:05 am, officers on patrol in the area of Paramount Blvd. and Leeds St. conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle. A passenger in the vehicle became upset, exited from the vehicle, and assaulted one of the officers with an object. The suspect was arrested for assault with a deadly weapon and sent to county jail.

On 4/6/2024 at 4:10 pm, officers responded to the area of the Downey Promenade regarding a grand theft in progress. The victim stated two suspects had entered their business and stolen merchandise from the store.

Man found shot to death in Bell early Wednesday

BELL – A 35-year-old man who was fatally shot in Bell was identified by county authorities Thursday.

The victim was identified as Oscar Gonzalez, according to the Los Angeles County Department Medical Examiner's office.

Authorities were sent to the 4700 block of Florence Boulevard, several blocks west of the Long Beach (710) Freeway, at about 2 a.m. Wednesday, according to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Authorities said the victim was apparently shot while driving a vehicle that crashed and caught fire.

"Officers and detectives from the Bell Police Department responded ... to investigate a fatal traffic collision," a sheriff's statement said. "During their investigation they observed bullet holes in the victim's vehicle. They also noticed the victim appeared to have sustained a gunshot wound to his torso."

Sheriff's homicide detectives were sent to assist Bell detectives in the investigation.

"Investigators learned the victim was traveling, in his vehicle, westbound on the 4700 block of Florence Avenue, in the city of Bell, when he collided with a pole at Vinevale Avenue," the sheriff's statement said. "Officers in the area heard the collision and responded. Observing the vehicle engulfed in fire, the officers removed the victim from the vehicle and began life-saving efforts. Los Angeles County Fire Department responded to the scene and pronounced the victim deceased."

No suspect information was immediately available.

Man killed in Cerritos shooting identified

CERRITOS – A man who was found fatally wounded in Cerritos was identified Thursday.

Enrique Vega, 42, was identified by the Los Angeles County Department Medical Examiner's office.

Deputies from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Cerritos station responded to the 13300 block of Artesia Boulevard regarding a vehicle collision call at about 1:15 a.m. Sunday. They found a vehicle with significant front-end damage and a man inside suffering from gunshot wounds to the upper body.

Paramedics rushed Vega to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Lyft driver accused of sexual assault

SANTA MONICA – A man has been arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a female passenger in his vehicle while he was employed as a Lyft driver in September.

Officers were sent to the 2900 block of Pennsylvania Avenue on Sept. 7, 2023, "regarding a sexual assault," according to Lt. Erika Aklufi

of the Santa Monica Police Department.


"A woman reported that a Lyft driver picked her up from a restaurant in West Hollywood and sexually assaulted her during the ride home," Aklufi said in a statement.

"The victim, a Santa Monica resident, fell asleep in the car and woke up to inappropriate touching," she continued. "The suspect then offered to walk her to her door, which she refused. Once home, she realized several hours had passed since she was picked up."

Santa Monica police detectives identified the driver as Fernando Macias Morales, 34, of Los Angeles.

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