



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

ESPERANZA ELEMENTARY School recently invited students, family members and others to plant trees.

D.A.’s handling of cases debated

Dropped charges, losses and plea deals mount over alleged police misconduct.

By JAMES QUEALLY

A probation officer who was caught on video bending a teen in half.

A Torrance police officer who shot a man in the back as he walked away from a crime scene.

Seven California Highway Patrol officers who piled atop a man screaming “I can’t breathe” as he died following a drunk driving stop.

All three cases had similar outcomes: charges dropped or reduced to no time behind bars after a plea deal.

After a year in office, a pattern has emerged for L.A. County Dist. Atty. Nathan Hochman, who found himself saddled with a number of misconduct and abuse cases against police officers filed by his predecessor, George Gascón.

During his 2024 campaign, Hochman often chastised Gascón for filing cases he claimed wouldn’t hold up before a jury — while also promising to continue bringing prosecutions against police when warranted.

In recent months, Hochman has downgraded or outright dismissed charges in many high-profile cases that Gascón filed. In the two misconduct cases Hochman’s prosecutors have brought to trial, the district attorney’s office failed to win a conviction.

Those outcomes have infuriated the loved ones of victims of police violence, local activists and even former

[See Hochman, A5]

Reinventing a region ‘overbuilt with asphalt’

In a parcel-level analysis, experts suggest nearly half of L.A. County’s hardscape is not necessary

By MEG TANAKA

Los Angeles is often described as a concrete jungle, a city shaped by asphalt, parking lots and other hardscape. Now, for the first time, researchers have mapped that concrete in detail, and they claim a lot of it doesn’t need to be there.

A new analysis finds that some 44% of Los Angeles County’s 312,000 acres of pavement may not be essential for roads, sidewalks or parking, and could be reconsidered.

The report, DepaveLA, is the first parcel-level analysis to map all paved surfaces across L.A. County, and to distinguish streets, sidewalks, private properties, and other areas. The researchers divided all pavement into “core” and “non-core” uses. A street, for example, is core. Then they paired that map with data on heat, flooding and tree canopy, creating what they intend as a new framework for understanding where removing concrete and asphalt could make the biggest difference for people’s health and the climate.

Paved surfaces get hotter than those with plantings, absorbing and radiating out the sun’s energy rather than converting it into plant growth, which in turn creates shade. Hotter areas also create more ozone smog. Greener areas are known to bring people psychological relief as well.

The authors are the nonprofit Accelerate Resilience L.A., founded by Andy Lipkis, who also founded TreePeople, the Los Angeles tree planting organization, and Hyphae Design Laboratory, a nonprofit that works to bridge health and the built environment.

What surprised them most, said Brent Bucknum, founder of Hyphae, was seeing where the pavement is concentrated. Nearly 70% of what they deemed non-core pavement is on private property.

Rather than a sweeping removal of pavement, the report highlights small changes that could add up.

The most potential they found was in parking areas, especially large, privately

[See Pavement, A6]

IOC considers Russia’s return in L.A. ’28; backlash expected



ANDREW MILLIGAN PA Images

UKRAINIAN skeleton athlete Vladyslav Heraskevych holds his helmet showing images of war victims.

By KEVIN BAXTER

MILAN — Leaders of the International Olympic Committee appear ready to lift suspensions of Russia and Belarus, clearing the way for athletes from those countries to return to major international competitions perhaps as early as the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

But those plans may have hit a snag last week with the international show of support for Ukrainian skeleton slider Vladyslav Heraskevych, who was disqualified from the Milan-Cortina Games for refusing to com-

[See Olympics, A7]

All wrapped up in World Cup highlights



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A DETAIL of a “sportrait” by Lyndon J. Barrois Sr. features a soccer scene captured with gum wrappers.

The exhibition ‘Fútbol Is Life’ at LACMA re-creates iconic moments in miniature.

By JASMINE MENDEZ

Lyndon J. Barrois Sr. always knew he wanted to be an artist, even as a child.

From crafting figures out of chewed gum stuck underneath the pews at his Catholic school’s church after he was forced to scrape them as punishment from teachers to collecting his mother’s

discarded gum wrappers, Barrois felt a creative itch to make something out of nothing.

“I had seen too much art [and thought to myself], ‘Someone had to be doing this, why not me?’,” Barrois said with a chuckle. “I always dreamt of doing this. Other kids played with Play-Doh. I made stuff with anything I could get my hands on like clay, aluminum foil and discarded phone wire.”

Now the 61-year-old New Orleans native is debuting his latest project at the Los Angeles County Museum of

[See LACMA, A7]

Voter trust in elections falls steeply in a poll

Declines are seen in both parties, and that could hurt turnout in midterms, experts say.

By KEVIN RECTOR

President Trump and his allies are questioning ballot security. Democrats are warning of unconstitutional federal intervention. Experts and others are raising concerns about partisan redistricting and federal immigration agents intimidating people at the polls.

Voter trust in the upcoming midterm elections, meanwhile, has dropped off sharply, and across party lines, according to new research by the UC San Diego Center for Transparent and Trusted Elections.

Out of 11,406 eligible voters surveyed between mid-December and mid-January, just 60% said they were confident that midterm votes will be counted fairly — down from 77% who held such confidence in vote counting shortly after the 2024 presidential election.

Shifts in voter confidence are common after elections,

with voters in winning parties generally expressing more confidence and voters in losing parties expressing less, said Thad Kousser, one of the center’s co-directors. However, the new survey found double-digit, across-the-board declines in confidence in the last year, he said.

According to voting experts, such drops in confidence and fears about voter intimidation are alarming — and raise serious questions about voter turnout in a pivotal midterm election that could radically reshape American politics.

While 82% of Republicans expressed at least some confidence in vote counting after Trump’s 2024 win, just 65% said they felt that way in the latest survey. Among Democrats, confidence dropped from 77% to 64%, and among independents from 73% to 57%, the survey found.

“Everyone — Democrats, Republicans, independents alike — have become less trusting of elections over the last year,” Kousser said, calling it a “parallel movement in this polarized era.”

Of course, what is causing

[See Elections, A8]

Newsom memoir tells of dual youth

Brushes with wealth were tempered by the fight for self-esteem in a broken home.

By TARYN LUNA

SACRAMENTO — Gavin Newsom writes in his upcoming memoir about San Francisco’s highborn Getty family fitting him in Brioni suits “appropriate to meet a king” when he was 20 years old. Then he flew aboard their private “Jetty” to Spain for a royal princess’ debutante-style party.

Back home, real life wasn’t as grand.

In an annual performance for their single mom, Newsom and his sister would pretend to find problems with the fancy clothes his dad’s friends, the heirs of ruthless oil baron J. Paul Getty, sent for Christmas. Poor fit. Wrong color. Not my style. The ritual gave her an excuse to return the gifts and use the store credit on

presents for her children she placed under the tree.

California’s 41st governor, a possible suitor for the White House, opens up about the duality of his upbringing in his new book. Newsom details the everyday struggle living with his mom after his parents divorced and occasional interludes into his father’s life charmed by the Gettys’ affluence, including that day when the Gettys outfitted him in designer clothes at a luxury department store.

“I walked out understanding that this was the split personality of my life,” Newsom writes in “Young Man in a Hurry.”

For years, Newsom asserted that his “one-dimensional” public image as a slick, privileged politician on a path to power paved with Getty oil money fails to tell the whole story.

“I’m not trying to be something I’m not,” Newsom said in a recent interview. “I’m not trying to talk about, you know, I was born

[See Newsom, A6]



ROBERT F. BUKATY Associated Press

SHIFFRIN IN GIANT SLUMP

American ski star finishes 11th in the giant slalom as her Olympic woes continue despite positive run-up to Winter Games. **SPORTS, D6**

Secrecy in hiring of LAPD advisor

New role gets city’s OK even as the department tried not to identify the preferred candidate, a Hollywood figure. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather

Rain, a thunderstorm. L.A. Basin: 59/46. **B5**

Opinion Voices **A11**

Fantasy vision of the ’70s onstage

In “Brassroots District: LA ’74,” drama and dancing mix with audience participation. **ENTERTAINMENT, E1**

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