

**California:** Judge strikes down voter-approved law classifying ride-hailing drivers as independent contractors. A5

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# LOCAL NEWS

Saturday + Sunday, Aug. 21 - 22, 2021 » MORE AT SGVTribune.COM PASADENASTARNEWS.COM AND WHITTIERDAILYNEWS.COM

## EXPLORING

### 'Secret Stairs' an uplifting L.A. history path

The pandemic had some people climbing the walls. Me, I climbed stairs.

Of the 42 walks in "Secret Stairs: A Walking Guide to the Historic Staircases of Los Angeles," it had taken me 10 years to notice them just under half of them. Over the past year, with my weekends suddenly cleared of social or cultural engagements, I zoomed through the rest, as well as an equal number in the related book "Walking L.A."

The self-guided, roughly



**David Allen**

Columnist

one-hour "Secret Stairs" walks largely around Echo Park, Silver Lake and the Hollywood Hills, were just the tonic I needed: a change of scene, outdoor exercise, a challenge, a goal.

I knew I was taking on a secret task, I took seriously when, for Labor Day weekend last year, I got a motel in Santa Monica in part to knock off walks in Rustic Canyon and Pacific Palisades.

After recently completing 41 of the 42 walks came the one I'd been saving for last: the "Mu-

sic Box" Steps in Silver Lake. To make an occasion out of it, I extended an invitation to "Secret Stairs" author Charles Fleming to join me on my victory lap.

Fleming, L.A.'s stair master, meets me one morning last week at the walk's starting point, Cal Tropical Sunset Boulevard, with his dog, Biscuit, is 100% mutt but also 100% trooper, making the 2-mile loop, which included 689 steps up or down, without complaint.

A member of the Silver Lake Litter League, Fleming totes a grabber to pick up trash along

ALLEN » PAGE 4



Charles Fleming picks up litter while walking one of Los Angeles' old public staircases with his dog, Biscuit, on Aug. 10. Fleming, a walking guide, "Secret Stairs," gained renewed interest during the pandemic when indoor exercise was curtailed.

DAVID ALLEN — STAFF

## PASADENA



AbilityFirst participant Hanna-John showcases his skills during a ribbon-cutting event to celebrate AbilityFirst's merger with FVO Solutions Inc. at Ability First in Pasadena on Friday.

## DOUBLING UP ON HELPING DISABLED

Nonprofits AbilityFirst, FVO Solutions Inc., which provide critical services, merge

By Brennon Dixson  
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With 95 years of experience and more than 50 years in Pasadena, two nonprofit organizations, AbilityFirst and FVO Solutions Inc., celebrated a successful merger during a ribbon-cutting ceremony this week.

Local dignitaries such as Rep. Judy Chu, D-Monterey Park, state Sen. Anthony Portantino, D-La Cañada Flintridge, and Pasadena City Council members were there to witness the merger and celebrate the new alliance between AbilityFirst and FVO Solutions, which have traditionally focused on delivering critical support services to residents with developmental disabilities in Los Angeles County.

During the pandemic, the community and those they serve were unable to recognize

NONPROFITS » PAGE 5



An AbilityFirst participant gives a tour of the facility during a ribbon-cutting event to celebrate AbilityFirst's merger with FVO Solutions Inc. The nonprofit focuses on delivering services to those with developmental disabilities in L.A. County.

## PAWS AND THE CITY

### A little cat trivia as you consider adopting

The spring and summer months are the busiest for animal shelters because of the number of kittens being born.

That's especially true for the past couple of weeks, and our team is working hard to provide the best care possible for these adorable furballs until we can find permanent placement for them. But we're nearing our capacity and need to get them adopted



**Jack Hagerman**

Columnist

as quickly as possible to make room for more litters coming in by the day. I might be a little biased, but astrologically speaking, cats are the most fascinating creatures in the world. Here are some fun facts:

• The oldest known pet cat existed 9,500 years ago.

Originally, thought that Egyptians domesticated the cat. But in 2004, French archaeologists discovered a

HAGERMAN » PAGE 5



SARA (A499243) is a rather calm kitty, with rather relaxed eyes. The 5-month-old kitten has a black dot on her nose that points to a black dot on her chin surrounded by a field of white. She is a beautiful cat ready for a new home that is willing to give her time and space to get adjusted.

PASADENA HUMANE

## LA VERNE

### City has picked new fire chief

Christopher Nigg, currently the fire marshal for Fullerton and Brea, officially takes over Aug. 30

By Javier Rojas  
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After more than two years of revolving interim leadership, the La Verne Fire Department has a new chief.

The City Council on Monday unanimously approved hiring Christopher Nigg, a 20-year veteran of fire and emergency medical services, to lead the department. Nigg, currently fire marshal for both Fullerton and Brea, is expected to step into his new role Aug. 30.

"I am honored to have been selected as La Verne's incoming fire chief," Nigg said in a news release Wednesday. "I intend to deliver standout and innovative leadership to this great Fire Department. The collaborative effort ahead will work to best position the department so that its proud firefighters can provide a sustainable yet innovative service model for the community's needs."

Nigg's background includes experience in fire department operations and training, fire prevention, community risk reduction and emergency management. He also has served as president of the Orange County Fire Marshals and president of Fullerton Fire Management Association, among other positions.

At the La Verne council meeting Monday, Mayor Tim Hepburn said hiring Nigg will help to stabilize the department, which has seen years of constant turnover. In June, fire personnel within the department departed for other opportunities after the council meeting.

FIRE CHIEF » PAGE 4



Nigg

## RIO HONDO COLLEGE

### Coronavirus vaccinations are now mandatory for students, employees

Following in the footsteps of many colleges, Rio Hondo College is now requiring mandatory vaccinations for all students and college employees to follow the spread of coronavirus and variants.

Voting unanimously on Wednesday, the school's governing board approved the requirement, which will take effect for the fall 2021 semester, which starts today.

"Rio Hondo College takes the safety and welfare of our community very seriously, and vaccination against COVID-19 will go a long way toward making our campus a safe environment for everyone," Superintendent/President Teresa Dreyfuss said in an emailed release. "We are committed to providing a secure learning environment to our students and we believe this mandatory vaccination, coupled with our safety protocols, will allow us to continue our mission."

The college will also host a free walk-up vaccine clinic on campus in lot C from noon to 4 p.m. on Sept. 1. The clinic, in partnership with the Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis and Curative (a coronavirus vaccine provider), will be available to anyone 12 and older. More information can be found at [riohondo.edu/vaccine/](http://riohondo.edu/vaccine/).

— Mike Sprague

EARLY WEEKEND » SATURDAY + SUNDAY, AUGUST 21 - 22, 2021

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY TRIBUNE/PASADENA STAR-NEWS/WHITTIER DAILY NEWS | OBITUARIES  5**CALIFORNIA**

# Uber's ballot win on driver pay voided by judge

**By Josh Eidelson and Peter Blumberg**  
Bloomberg

A California state judge struck down a voter-approved ballot measure bankrolled by Uber Technologies Inc., Lyft Inc., DoorDash Inc. and Instacart Inc. that declared drivers for the companies were independent contractors.

Proposition 22, which passed in a statewide vote in November, exempts the so-called gig economy businesses from a state labor law requiring more companies to hire workers as employees and provide

them benefits.

The judge found that Proposition 22's provisions tying the legislature's hands regarding which workers are covered by worker's compensation law, and regarding collective bargaining in future gig work, violate the state's constitution.

"If the people wish to use their initiative power to restrict or qualify a 'plenary' and 'unlimited' power granted to the legislature, they must first do so by initiative constitutional amendment, not by initiative statute," Alameda County Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch said

in the ruling issued Friday.

Uber vowed to appeal and said it expects to win. "This ruling ignores the will of the overwhelming majority of California voters and defies both logic and the law," Uber spokesperson Noah Edwardsen said in an email. "Meanwhile, Prop. 22 remains in effect, including all of the protections and benefits it provides independent workers across the state."

The California attorney general's office, which defended Proposition 22 in court, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

University of California

Hastings law professor Veena Dubal said the ruling is an "important first decision in what will end up being a very consequential legal battle."

The California workers compensation law issues presented in the case are relatively novel, making it harder to predict what will happen on appeal, said Dubal, who supported the plaintiffs in a friend-of-the-court filing. "There's not a lot of case law here to draw on," she said.

Uber, Lyft, DoorDash and Instacart spent about \$200 million on the campaign to pass the measure, which deems app-based

drivers contractors while providing them some alternative perks.

*Read more: The Gig Economy Is Coming for Millions of American Jobs*

Along with shielding the companies from liability in California, where the state attorney general has been suing Uber and Lyft for not providing drivers with employment benefits like the state's hourly minimum wage, the ballot measure was an important boon for the firms in their efforts to deter state and federal lawmakers and officials elsewhere from targeting their business models.

A coalition including

Uber and Lyft has petitioned to place a similar measure on the ballot in Massachusetts, and the companies have held talks in New York aimed at forging a compromise that supporters said would help head off a ballot box battle like in California.

"For two years, drivers have been saying that democracy cannot be bought," Bob Schoonover, president of the Service Employees International Union California State Council, one of the plaintiffs, said in a statement. "And today's decision shows they were right."

**MANHATTAN BEACH**

## Beach volleyball tournament kicks off

**By Chris Haire**  
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The AVP Manhattan Beach Open got underway on Friday — with Olympic gold medalists April Ross and Alix Klineman spiking the competition in their first-round match.

Klineman is a Manhattan Beach native and she and her partner, Ross, took home the gold in beach volleyball during the Tokyo games earlier this month.

They will now try to win a three-day beach volleyball

tournament on Klineman's home courts.

She and Ross stopped by Manhattan Beach on Thursday as well. They met with local officials, with Klineman saying the ability to practice at her hometown's beach courts helped pave the way to her success.

The pair won the Manhattan Beach Open in 2018 and came in second in 2019. There was no Manhattan Beach tournament last year because of the coronavirus pandemic. The 2021 iteration runs through Sunday.



PHOTO BY AXEL KOESTER

Olympic gold medalists April Ross and Alix Klineman win their opening match at the AVP Manhattan Beach Open against Falyne Fonimoana and Geena Urango in three sets on Friday.

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

## Bear wanders from forest to Pasadena backyard

**By Ruby Gonzales**  
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A male bear left the forest and wandered several miles south to a Pasadena neighborhood where it took a nap in a backyard on Friday.

Fish and Wildlife officials shot the bear with a tranquilizer dart, tagged him and took him back to the forest, according to city spokeswoman Lisa Derdeian.

The bear is an adult and about 200 pounds, Rebecca Barboza, a biologist with Fish and Wildlife said. Their biologist at the scene said it was healthy, she added.

The ursine visitor ended up north of the 210 Freeway.

A resident spotted the bear in a backyard in the 3200 block of Mataro Street around 8:30 a.m., Derdeian said. It was snoozing a few houses down from the Best Buy on Foothill Boulevard and Sierra Madre Street.

Another resident, James Farr, said he's shocked the



COURTESY OF JAMES FARR

A bear turned up in the 3200 block of Mataro Street in Pasadena and took a nap in a backyard on Friday. Fish and Wildlife officials tranquilized the bear and took him back to the forest.

"I walked out and there it was by the gate," Farr said. "It was at the gate and went back. I guess it went to sleep."

The bear woke up, got darted by Fish and Wildlife, then jumped north of Mataro Street into a yard on La Tierra Street, where the drug took effect, according to Derdeian.

Farr said the bear jumped a tree and ended up on a roof.

"You could see it dozing and kind of nodding. Then it lost balance. It must have fallen 10 feet," Farr said.

Barboza didn't know how many bears are in the Angeles National Forest. A study on the bear population in the forest has just started, she said.

But statewide, she said, the bear population has nearly tripled in 30 to 40 years.

"The animals are persisting into urban areas," Barboza said. "We can't say for sure it's due to the drought."

She said there are sources of water in the forest.

ering health care, but who could be exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted in the health care setting, such as correctional officers, maintenance workers and laundry staff.

It's unclear how many people this will affect. Neither California's Department of Public Health nor the state's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation could provide more details Friday. The office of Gov. Gavin Newsom did not respond to an email seeking more information.

Previously, the governor announced vaccination requirements involving state workers and school employees.

Even union leaders were in the dark.

Glen Staley, president of the California Correctional Peace Officers Association, said through spokesman Nathan Ballard on Friday that the union is "awaiting CDCR's plan for implementation of the order and the impact to our members."

## Nonprofits

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this notable milestone in both these nonprofits' history, however vaccines made it possible for a small group to welcome in the next chapter of care

in Pasadena, organizers said prior to Friday's event.

"As we celebrate more than 95 years of service," a news release said, "we are focusing our efforts on programs that are proven to have the greatest impact on a person's success."



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