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SOME JEWISH students at UCLA said they felt intimidated as protesters scrawled graffiti and blocked access on campus with barricades and human walls. Above, tagging near Powell Library on April 29. BRIAN VAN DER BRUG Los Angeles Times

‘Are you a Zionist?’ Fear, debate among Jews at UCLA

Eilon Presman was about 100 feet from the UCLA Palestinian solidarity encampment when he heard the screams: “Zionist! Zionist!”

The 20-year-old junior, who is Israeli, realized the activists were pointing at him.

“Human chain!” they cried.

A line of protesters linked arms and marched toward him, Presman said, blocking him from accessing the heart of UCLA’s campus. Other activists, he said, unfurled kaffiyeh scarves to block his view of the camp.

“Every step back that I took, they took a step forward,” Presman said. “I was just

Before melee, frustration rose as Gaza protesters restricted access near camp

By Jenny Jarvie

forced to walk away.”

It’s been more than a week since police swarmed the UCLA campus and tore down the pro-Palestinian camp, arresting more than 200 people. But the legacy of the encampment remains an issue of much debate, particularly among Jewish students, who make up nearly 8% of the university’s 32,000 undergraduates.

In the days leading up to April 30 — when pro-Israel counterprotesters attacked the camp with fists, bats and chemical spray, and police took hours to stop the violence — frustration had swelled among many Jews: Viral videos showed activists [See UCLA, A6]



FAR-RIGHT election deniers have spread disinformation since former President Trump lost his reelection bid. Above, Trump supporters rally in Atlanta in 2020. JASON ARMOND Los Angeles Times

BREAKING THE BALLOT

Co-opting civil rights law

A far-right plan to block election certification could sow doubts about integrity of Biden-Trump rematch

By Sarah D. Wire and Mackenzie Mays

SACRAMENTO — At a diner just off the freeway north of Sacramento, a mostly white crowd listened intently as it learned how to “save America” by leaning on the same laws that enshrined the rights of Black voters 60 years ago.

Over mugs of coffee and plates of pot roast smothered in gravy, attendees in MAGA and tea party gear took notes about the landmark Voting Rights Act and studied the U.S. Constitution. They peppered self-

proclaimed “election integrity” activist Marly Hornik with questions about how to become skilled citizen observers monitoring California poll workers.

The nearly 90 people gathered in the diner in February were there to understand how they can do their part in a plan to sue California to block certification of the 2024 election results unless the state can prove that ballots were cast only by people eligible to vote.

If any votes are found to be ineligible, Hornik explained, then all voters are being disenfranchised — just like those decades ago

who couldn’t vote because of their race.

“If we think our right of suffrage ... has been denied or diluted, we have to stop that immediately. We have to stop it right in its tracks,” said Hornik, co-founder of a group called United Sovereign Americans, which is led by a man who helped push former President Trump’s baseless challenges to Joe Biden’s election in 2020.

The two-hour meeting at the Northern California diner — one of several similar presentations that have taken place across the country in recent months — is [See Far right, A5]

A struggle with highs that won’t go away

A rare condition has puzzled experts, raised alarm as psychedelics go mainstream.

By Connor Sheets

A.J. took two small hits off a cannabis vape pen, a common ritual with his morning coffee. Moments after exhaling, a transfigured, kaleidoscopic version of the world emerged before his eyes.

“Some colors are seeping into the other colors,” the 30-year-old said, gesturing across his art-filled living room in Yorba Linda. “In that Persian tapestry on the wall, the flowers are flowing like the wind, back and forth, and the centerpieces of the horses and other animals, they’re stagnant still but I can feel them kind of moving, almost like a gallop.”

A.J. — who requested anonymity to discuss his drug use and medical history — was on no other mind-altering substances beyond the caffeine in his mug. The fantastical visions, which he’s come to expect and in some ways even enjoy, were a lingering effect of past drug use. They’re a manifestation of a rare condition called hallucinogen persisting perception disorder, or HPPD, which has puzzled psychiatrists and researchers and raised alarms as [See Drugs, A12]

Big groundwater gains can’t offset long-term deficit

State’s aquifer levels rose significantly in ’23, one of the wettest years in decades.

By Ian James

After years of pervasive declines, groundwater levels rose significantly in much of California last year, boosted by historic wet weather and the state’s expanding efforts to replenish depleted aquifers.

The state’s aquifers gained an estimated 8.7 million acre-feet of groundwater — nearly double the total storage capacity of Shasta Lake — during the 2023 water year that ended Sept. 30, according to newly

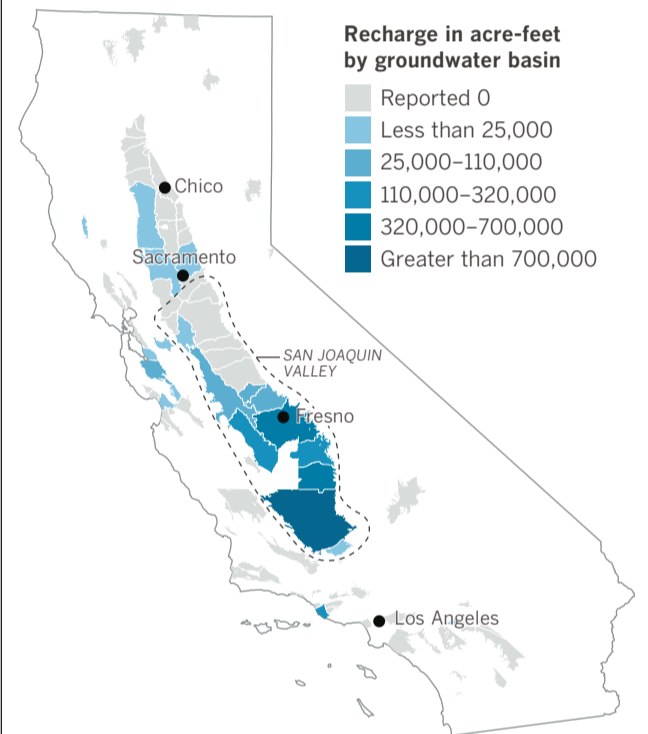
compiled data from the California Department of Water Resources.

A large portion of the gains, an estimated 4.1 million acre-feet, came through efforts that involved capturing water from rivers swollen by rains and snowmelt and sending it to areas where the water percolated into the ground to recharge aquifers. The state said the amount of managed groundwater recharge that occurred was unprecedented, and nearly double the amount of water replenished during 2019, the prior wet year.

Still, the increase in underground supplies follows much larger long-term declines, driven largely by chronic overpumping in agricultural areas. The gains [See Groundwater, A7]

A big year for groundwater recharge in California

Historic storms enabled an unprecedented amount of managed groundwater recharge during the 2023 water year, totaling 4.1 million acre-feet, and 93% of the recharge occurred in the San Joaquin Valley.



Department of Water Resources GABRIELLE LAMARR LEMÉE Los Angeles Times

Heated exchanges at Trump trial

Stormy Daniels defends her testimony as defense attorney tries to undermine it.

By Michael R. Sisak, Jake Offenhartz, Jennifer Peltz and Colleen Long

NEW YORK — Donald Trump’s defense attorney on Thursday accused Stormy Daniels of slowly altering the details of an alleged 2006 sexual encounter

with Trump, trying to persuade jurors that a key prosecution witness in the former president’s hush money trial cannot be believed.

“The details of your story keep changing, right?” attorney Susan Necheles asked at one point.

“No,” Daniels said. As the jury looked on, the two women traded barbs over what Necheles said were inconsistencies in Daniels’ description of the encounter with Trump in a hotel room. He denies any such encounter took place. [See Daniels, A5]

USC president, provost are censured

Faculty vote shows anger over pair’s mishandling of events around commencement. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Despite scandals, leaders gain roles

L.A. Councilmembers Kevin de León and Curren Price each join four panels. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather
Clouds, then sun.
L.A. Basin: 73/55. **B6**

Rivals team up on streaming bundle

Walt Disney Co. and Warner Bros. Discovery to introduce a joint plan in summer. **BUSINESS, A8**

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