

Rival races against Gascón, time

Hochman, pushing an anti-crime theme, is fighting for name recognition first.

By SONJA SHARP

While she waited for the man she hopes will defeat Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. George Gascón in November, Mary Klein slathered her face with a fresh coat of sunscreen. Klein — the survivor of a random attack along the Venice canals — sat with other crime victims, chasing slivers of shade in a muggy downtown L.A. courtyard, chatting about one of California's most hotly contested races.

"People should vote to protect their family," Klein said. "Safety is the preeminent issue for every single family and every single person — especially women and children. We're intimidated on a daily basis."

Klein's April 9 assault was brutal — and in the case of a second victim, 53-year-old Sarah Alden, deadly. The story of two women being raped and bludgeoned in the beachside enclave seemed to confirm many residents' worst fears about growing lawlessness.

(The Times does not normally identify victims of sexual assault, but Klein, 55, has spoken out publicly about what happened.)

Gascón's opponent, Nathan Hochman, is not a household name — something Klein and the others hoped to change when they agreed to parley with him in front of TV cameras in late June. They were joined by a familiar face in local politics, billionaire mall magnate Rick Caruso, who had recently announced his endorsement of the defense attorney and former federal prosecutor.

To Klein — and a vocal subset of voters — almost anyone would be preferable to Gascón. The incumbent's progressive policies are far less popular now than when he swept into office on a reformist wave in 2020, and for many, crime feels out of control, even if the statistics in some categories suggest otherwise.

Gascón won just 25% of the vote in the March primary — a weak showing for an incumbent — and a recent poll from UC Berkeley and The Times found that if the Nov. 5 election were held this month, 45% of likely voters would choose Hochman and 20% would vote for Gascón.

After recall attempts, more than a dozen lawsuits from inside his office and a vote of no confidence from the county deputy district attorneys association, the so-called godfather of prog-

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[See **Hochman**, A12]



DANIA MAXWELL Los Angeles Times
NATHAN HOCHMAN is a defense attorney and former prosecutor.



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

CHEESEHEADS FOR HARRIS

Wisconsin delegates in native headgear rally at the Democratic National Convention, where former President Obama was set to speak Tuesday night. Scan this code to read our coverage at latimes.com and in our eNewspaper, where subscribers get an exclusive "LATExtra."



Harris' fellow 'Desis' thrilled

Those with South Asian roots add to Democratic convention buzz for nominee

By JAMES RAINEY AND FAITH E. PINHO

CHICAGO — To Sumathi Madhure, feeling different just came with the territory in her new country. From the time she arrived in Nashua, N.H., at age 20, the sense would wash over her on long drives to get to an Indian restaurant or while pushing her cart around the grocery store.

"When I saw another brown person in the supermarket, it was so rare, I would just invite them to my home for dinner," Madhure



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

CALIFORNIA'S Harpreet S. Sandhu, in turban, is among many South Asians attending the convention.

said with a chuckle. "Building a sense of place, building a community; it doesn't just happen. It doesn't happen if you don't make the effort."

Four decades later, her adoptive country has changed. Now Madhure — physical therapist, mother of two and political dynamo in Nashua — feels the small stream of her journey in America has flowed with many, many others into a mighty river.

She and other immigrants and others who have roots in India and other parts of South Asia gathered

[See **Harris**, A5]

At DNC, abortion is a rallying point

Democrats hammer GOP on reproductive rights, an issue that resonates with voters.

By SEEMA MEHTA AND FAITH E. PINHO

CHICAGO — Democrats gathering in Chicago were greeted with a giant inflatable intrauterine device,

trucks offering free vasectomies, condoms condemning Project 2025 and several speakers focused on using the issue of abortion to persuade Americans to vote blue.

Messaging about abortion is playing a key role in much of the programming at the Democratic National Convention this week, and it particularly resonates with young people, women of color and women in general —

including Republicans, said Jodi Hicks, chief executive officer and president of Planned Parenthood California.

"It's absolutely top of mind for folks. It's a motivating issue, more importantly," Hicks said. "That ability to be able to be the full person that you want to be, have rights to have a family how you want — that's not partisan."

Since the Supreme Court

overturned Roe vs. Wade, abortion has become one of Democrats' top motivating issues. It is widely credited with helping many Democrats win in the 2022 midterm elections.

Although Republican Party leaders may have cheered the end of Roe, they have split over their next steps on the issue. Some conservatives have pushed for a nationwide abortion

[See **Abortion**, A5]

Wildfire adds to threats facing California salmon

By IAN JAMES

California's spring-run chinook salmon were already in the midst of a population crash before the Park fire exploded into the state's fourth-largest wildfire in history. Biologists now worry the fire could push the fish closer to extinction by scorching forests along creeks that provide critical spawning habitat.

The wildfire has been burning through the upper Mill and Deer Creek watersheds, threatening forested canyons that provide some of last intact spawning habitat for spring-run chinook salmon.

"This fire entering the upper watershed, where we have sensitive spawning and rearing habitat, is concerning," said Matt Johnson, a senior environmental scientist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. "You have a wildfire that is coming at a very inopportune time for the species and a wildfire that's being driven by a hundred years of fire suppression activities and a warming climate."

The two creeks are considered vital strongholds for federally threatened spring-run chinook salmon, which have suffered long-term declines because of water diversions,

[See **Salmon**, A9]



JOSH EDELSON AFP/Getty Images

FIREFIGHTERS watch as the Park fire, the fourth-largest in California's history, moves through a valley near Chico last month.

Two men charged in killing of actor

The pair implicated themselves in jailhouse discussions, sources say. **CALIFORNIA**, B1

An unscripted TV slowdown

Reality show workers discuss the challenges of a sluggish industry. **ENTERTAINMENT**, E1

Dramatic twist for Paramount

Edgar Bronfman Jr. and an investor group make an offer two days before a deadline. **BUSINESS**, A8

Weather

Sunny, very warm. L.A. Basin: 94/67. **B6**

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