



A **HIKER** takes advantage of lower morning temperatures Wednesday. Phoenix's string of highs surpassing 100 degrees reached 102 days on Thursday and is likely to continue for at least the next seven days.

COLUMN ONE

## Informant nearly brokered alliance

Ralph 'Perico' Rocha infiltrated discussions between the Mexican Mafia and a cartel for the U.S. government.

By MATTHEW ORMSETH

From a federal penitentiary in Virginia, Jose Landa-Rodriguez reconnected with an old friend in California.

"Long time no hear, you know?" he told Hugo Montes in Spanish in a recorded call.

Pleasantries gave way to business when Montes pitched Landa-Rodriguez on a deal.

"This is something that is going to interest you for the rest of your life," he promised.

Both men were from Michoacán, a state in western Mexico where a drug cartel called La Familia was producing enormous amounts of methamphetamine. [See Mafia, A5]

### Hamas releases video of hostage

Hersh Goldberg-Polin, one of six people killed in captivity, hoped to see his family again.

WORLD, A3

### Georgia suspect denied threats

Police questioned teen about school shooting posts last year but say they didn't warrant arrest.

NATION, A10

### WGA joins hotel boycott in L.A.

Hollywood writers vow to support Unite Here actions against Cameo and Marriott in Beverly Hills.

BUSINESS, A7

### Weather

Sunny, very hot. L.A. Basin: 102/77.

B6

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## UCLA aims to rebuild trust after fierce protests

New initiatives seek to restore unity, sense of safety

By TERESA WATANABE

UCLA, riven by violent protests over the Israel-Hamas war in the spring, on Thursday unveiled a plan to rebuild campus trust and connections with enhanced safety measures, broader dialogue across differences, free speech guidelines and stronger efforts to support diversity.

In a letter to the Bruins community three weeks before fall classes begin, inter-

im Chancellor Darnell Hunt said the "challenging spring" underscored the pressing need for new initiatives to repair the damage to campus trust and unity.

UCLA drew global attention in April, when video captured a violent nighttime attack on a pro-Palestinian encampment by counter-protesters armed with metal pipes, wooden planks, fists and fireworks. Law enforcement forcibly dismantled the encampment shortly afterward and arrested 231

people, including about 90 students. The security lapses prompted UCLA to reassign the police chief. Faculty members outraged by the police actions held votes to censure and express no confidence in then-Chancellor Gene Block, which failed.

Meanwhile, a congressional committee summoned Block to confront him over his handling of antisemitism, and three Jewish students sued UCLA [See UCLA, A10]



**DARREN LEVATON**, center, of Las Vegas, holds a flag as demonstrators rally in support of Israel alongside pro-Palestinian counterprotesters at UCLA in April.

## Trump tramples over debates like a creationist

LORRAINE ALI  
NEWS AND CULTURE  
CRITIC

Kamala Harris. Donald Trump. Gish Gallop.

All three are expected at Tuesday's presidential debate, even if most of America is unfamiliar with one name in that lineup.

GG, as I've come to call it, is a shell game/debate tactic that takes its name from Duane Gish, a prominent figure in the creationist movement who deployed dubious arguments, selective factoids and rapid-fire lies to overwhelm his opponents in public discussions about the theory of evolution.

The disinformation technique, dubbed the Gish Gallop in 1994 by the National Center for Science

Education's founding director, Eugenie Scott, is essentially the art of burying one's opponent in falsehoods, outlandish rhetoric and red herrings, making it nearly impossible for them to cut through the subterfuge and correct the lies within the timed confines of a debate.

Making the GG method work in one's favor requires criminal levels of confidence and showmanship. I'm not suggesting that former President Trump studied the late creationist's playbook, if there is such a thing. That would require reading. But there is a set of instructional videotapes.

On those recordings, Gish advises potential debaters to avoid talking about too many subjects on the public stage, steer clear of arguments that are too [See Debate, A6]



**DONALD TRUMP**, debating Hillary Clinton in 2016, is sure to use the Gish Gallop against Kamala Harris, with more falsehoods than she has time to refute.

## Southland heat wave is nothing like Phoenix's

Arizona city tops 100 for 102 days in a row with no relief in sight. L.A. area to cool off next week.

By SUMMER LIN  
AND ASHLEY AHN

To get an idea of how the forces of climate change and extreme heat are transforming the West, consider the summer Phoenix has endured.

On Wednesday, the city experienced the 101st day in a row with temperatures topping 100 degrees, with little relief in sight.

Residents of the desert city are used to scorching summers, but 2024 has been one for the record books.

At SixPoints Hardware, BreAnna Larson said her customers have been coming in to buy personal fans and anything they can get their hands on to stay cool while working on construction sites.

Larson, who has lived in Phoenix for six years, said this summer's sweltering heat is nothing like anything she has experienced. The cooling system at her apart-

ment complex has already failed three times this summer because of the excessive heat.

"It has really shown [how] the impact of dark pavements and such can heat up the city, as well as increase electricity bills," she said.

Phoenix is expected to see triple-digit temperatures for the foreseeable future; it's supposed to stay above 110 degrees until at least Friday and remain in the 100s for the next seven days, according to the National Weather Service.

"This year, the heat started early and it's been persistent," said weather service meteorologist Ted Whittock. "We haven't really had a break. This is, on average, the record hottest summer for the Phoenix area."

Southern California is in the midst of a heat wave that is expected to last through the weekend. But it's nothing compared with the con-

[See Heat waves, A10]

## Why cougar was killed after attack

'We don't have mountain lion jail,' wildlife advocate says after cat lunges at boy.

By NOAH GOLDBERG

After a mountain lion attacked a 5-year-old boy over the weekend, some commenters on social media blasted officials' decision to kill the big cat and accused the boy's family of provoking the animal.

It was hard for some to understand why there wasn't another way to deal with the issue, given all the efforts to help the dwindling mountain lion population in Southern California and the love L.A. had for its favorite cat, P-22.

"That's what happens when we are in their territory!" wrote one woman on Facebook.

"Couldn't relocate the lion had to kill it!! But that's ...

what we do we destroy everything like a plague to make more room for more in the way people," wrote another.

But experts said that the killing of the puma probably was the only responsible answer after the cat pounced on the young boy, who was in a designated picnic area with dozens of other people.

"It attacked a small child, and we were concerned if we didn't remove the animal, it may attack and possibly kill another child," said Patrick Foy, a spokesperson for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Foy pointed to a deadly attack in 2004 in which a mountain lion killed a mountain biker in Orange County, then attacked and nearly killed a woman hours later.

Foy also stressed that the attack was not the fault of the family or the child.

"There are people who say we moved into their habitat. Yes, that's true, but a [See Cougars, A6]



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