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THE WORLD WELCOMES 2024

Celebrating the new year is a global event. Clockwise from top left, a kiss ushers in 2024 for two revelers in Paris, and a promenade in Mumbai is packed on New Year’s Eve. In Dubai, lights illuminate the Burj Khalifa, the world’s tallest building. In the United States, Los Angeles is one of the last major cities in the world to ring in the new year.

Mexico’s violence is a key issue for voters

Many can’t reconcile recent mass shootings with tallies suggesting killings are on decline.

BY PATRICK J. McDONNELL AND CECILIA SÁNCHEZ VIDAL

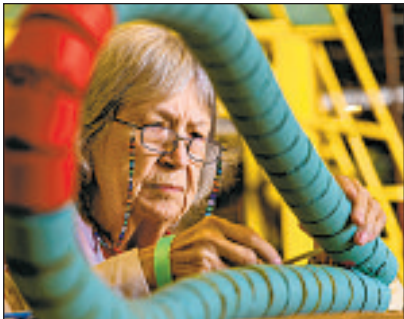
SALVATIERRA, Mexico — They crashed the Christmas bash after midnight bearing assault rifles. “The gunmen just went in and began shooting,” said Luis Almanza, whose son was among the revelers smashing a piñata and dancing to a live *norteño* band inside a former hacienda. “They wanted to kill everyone.” Authorities later counted at least 195 shells expended in the Dec. 10 assault, which left 11 people dead, including Almanza’s son. The attack was one of three high-profile massacres last month in Guanajuato state, an industrial and agricultural hub that in recent years has mutated into a battleground for organized crime. With the country preparing for national elections in June, it was not surprising that the violence quickly became politicized. “This barbarism cannot continue,” Xóchitl Gálvez Ruiz, the leading opposition [See **Mexico**, A4]

Fly in, then petal the rest of the way

Meet some longtime volunteers who decorate the Rose Parade floats

BY THOMAS CURWEN

Just as the trees have begun to lose their leaves in Granite City, Ill., and fall begins to take on the early shades of winter, Victoria Boyd feels the pull of California. Just as the Santa suit goes off to the cleaners, boots polished and stored in the closet of his home in neighboring Madison, David Becherer feels the pull of California. But the California that the two longtime friends are drawn to is not a land of palm trees, blue skies and sunny waves on the beach.



IRFAN KHAN Los Angeles Times
FOR THE last 36 years, Victoria Boyd, 79, has flown out from Illinois to work on Rose Parade floats.

Instead it’s a land of glue and make-believe in a drafty warehouse next to the 210 Freeway in Irwindale, where pink flamingos are as tall as blossoming yuccas, butterflies have the wingspan of condors and lotus flowers are the size of hubcaps. If they see the sun, it will be during a break. The beach is not on their itinerary, and if they’re looking for a moment of rest, it will be when they get back home. They have a job to do and a deadline to meet. Dec. 31 waits for no one, especially for volunteers like Boyd and Becherer who put in the 12-hour days [See **Volunteers**, A6]

COLUMN ONE

TV legend adjusts to unexpected twists



FRANCINE ORR Los Angeles Times
“DEADWOOD” creator David Milch, center, has written a new feature film with wife Rita and longtime friend John Hallenborg.

Alzheimer’s won’t stop David Milch or his devoted collaborators from seeing his new screenplay through.

BY GREG BRAXTON

David Milch sat in a Playa Vista restaurant, eyeing a small cheese pizza in front of him. The story he was telling is true. “I was running bets for my old man and half a dozen people when I was a boy,” Milch said, flashing a soft smile at the recollection of hanging out at the racetrack. “They’d tell me, ‘Bet \$10 on the seven horse and shut up!’ For the big races, it was frightening, carrying around \$1,000 when I was 7 years old.” [See **Milch**, A10]

New housing hope in state for ex-cons

California now bans local ‘crime-free’ rental laws, long criticized as unfair and discriminatory.

BY LIAM DILLON AND BEN POSTON

In 2021, four years after finishing her last jail term and living in transitional housing in Riverside County, Erica Smith was ready for a permanent home. She’d saved enough to cover a security deposit and the first and last month’s rent for an apartment for her and her daughter. But after three months of searching, Smith ran out of money, having burned through \$10,000 on stays in motel rooms. She’d never found a place to live. Smith had a series of drug-related and theft convictions on her record. Numerous cities within Riverside had adopted laws called crime-free housing that aimed to prohibit landlords from renting to tenants with criminal histories. “It’s just terrible,” said Smith, 54. “Why am I not able to provide a place for me and my daughter to live?” Smith will now have more opportunities for housing courtesy of a new state law. Assembly Bill 1418, which took effect Monday, bans local governments across California from enforcing crime-free housing policies. Not only do crime-free housing rules stop landlords from renting to those with prior convictions, but many also call for the eviction of tenants based on arrests or contact with law enforcement. Dozens of cities and counties in California began implementing the laws during the wave of “tough on crime” measures in the 1990s, with local elected officials, police and prosecutors contending they helped keep neighborhoods safe. But crime-free housing policies have come under increasing criticism as unfair, unforgiving and racially discriminatory. The blanket [See **Housing**, A6]

U.S. copters kill Houthi rebels

Military says its forces opened fire on fighters after they attacked a cargo ship in the Red Sea. **WORLD, A3**

How new state laws affect you

Homeowners, renters, workers, students, drivers — almost everyone — should take note. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Rams clinch playoff berth

After L.A. ekes out a 26-25 win over Giants, a Seahawks loss seals the deal for an NFC wild card. **SPORTS, D3**

Weather

Clouds clearing. L.A. Basin: 65/45. **B6**

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