



MEMBERS of the Silver Lake Reading Club immerse themselves in the printed word on a Tuesday night at Lamill Coffee. Photographs by WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

COLUMN ONE

Shhhh. The Silver Lake Reading Club has started

So much of L.A. life is about coming and going, but the page-turners here inhabit a space where motion has stopped and time is suspended

By Thomas Curwen

A woman pulls into a desert town at sunset. A writer sees her mother rooting through a dumpster. A Herald of the Almighty stumbles upon a dying stone monster, and a businessman admits to the shame of being a businessman.

Pages of books slowly turn. Readers have fallen under their spells.

They made their reservations days in advance, found their way to a coffee shop in Silver Lake, where they greeted their host, paid \$17 and quietly let the world outside slip away.

Rain falls on Lake Geneva, 1816. A Buddhist monk remembers a mon-



THE CLUB'S reading time is divided into two 45-minute sessions, with a 15-minute break for stretching, chatting and nibbling.

astery in Thailand. A children's author recalls playing beneath tables and inside forts.

The readers number just shy of two dozen. They have scattered throughout the bright early evening space — “closed for a private event,” the sign outside reads — slouching in upholstered chairs or along a bench, leaning over small tables, sitting alone or with a partner.

The Silver Lake Reading Club — every Tuesday evening, 6 to 8:30 at Lamill Coffee — is now in session.

Few activities are as simple and complex as reading. Neuroscientists have charted the mind's incantation of words that lights up the temporal [See Club, A10]

Matthew Perry and the ketamine boom

The drug is en vogue among the rich and famous, fueled by off-label prescriptions and a black market.

BY SALVADOR HERNANDEZ AND RICHARD WINTON

When Los Angeles County medical examiners worked last year to determine how Matthew Perry had died, they discovered something startling. The amount of ketamine in the actor's bloodstream was about the same as what would be used during general anesthesia, the autopsy showed.

Perry's death — now the subject of an investigation by the Los Angeles Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration — is putting a spotlight on the growing use of ketamine. There are more prescriptions, dedicated clinics and a burgeoning black market that is fueled by the wealthy, medical and law enforcement professionals say.

Far removed from its days as a club drug, when it was known as “Special K” or “Super Acid,” ketamine has found a niche among the rich and famous.

“These kinds of en vogue, money-making drugs have just exploded with certain strata of society,” said Dr. David Goodman-Meza, an addiction-medicine and infectious-disease specialist at UCLA.

The boom, medical experts say, is being driven partly by clinics and online services offering intravenous treatments and prescriptions for in-home use — in the form of tablets and nasal sprays — for ailments that include depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse. It doesn't come cheap. A [See Ketamine, A9]

Will Mexico's likely leader curb cartel violence?

Presidential favorite brought down crime as Mexico City mayor. But skepticism lingers.

By KATE LINTHICUM

MEXICO CITY — As mayor of Mexico City, Claudia Sheinbaum celebrated a dramatic drop in violent crime, including a 50% plunge in homicides.

Now the front-runner in Mexico's presidential election, Sheinbaum says she is uniquely qualified to bring peace to a nation battered by nearly two decades of cartel violence. “We already did it,” she said. “Of course we will continue.”

If she wins Sunday's election as expected, she will confront a country in crisis,

one plagued by a largely inept criminal justice system, one of the world's highest homicide rates and a dangerous patchwork of well-armed gangs that control wide swaths of territory and even some local governments.

Experts say the novel security strategies that Sheinbaum embraced in Mexico City — improving investigations, professionalizing cops and implementing community policing models developed in U.S. cities such as Oakland — may be difficult to repeat elsewhere in the country, where organized crime is more violent and more deeply embedded than it is in the capital.

Her efforts to improve policing in Mexico City were also expensive — and would be costly to reproduce on a [See Mexico, A4]

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE GETS BLESSING

Researchers examine years of data and find no negative consequences

By KAREN KAPLAN

Twenty years ago this spring, Marcia Kadish and Tanya McCloskey exchanged wedding vows at Cambridge City Hall in Massachusetts and became the first same-sex couple to legally marry in the United States.

The couple had been together since 1986, but their decision to wed was radical for its time. In 2004, only 31% of Americans supported same-sex marriage, while 60% were opposed, according to a Pew Research



MARCIA KADISH, left, and Tanya McCloskey were the first same-sex couple to legally marry in the U.S. DINA RUDICK Boston Globe

Center poll.

Much of that opposition was fueled by fears that expanding the definition of marriage beyond the traditional union of a man and a woman would undermine the institution and be destabilizing to families. Researchers at the Rand Corp. decided to find out whether those predictions turned out to be true.

A team from the Santa Monica-based think tank spent a year poring over the data. The result is a 186-page report that should be reassuring to supporters of marriage. [See Marriage, A8]

Caruso behaving like a candidate

Developer who lost to Karen Bass appears to be eyeing another run for L.A. mayor, possibly governor. CALIFORNIA, B1

Dodgers lineup looks half empty

Bottom of batting order hit the skids during the slump, worsening malaise and exposing potential trouble. SPORTS, D1

Some help with your Vegas luck

We have tips for the best immersive experiences, restaurants, shops and more for your next trip to Sin City. WEEKEND, L1

Weather

Clouds, then sun. L.A. Basin: 74/59. B10

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