



Photographs by MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

“I DO NOT think [lithium-ion batteries] should be in anybody’s backyard,” says Christina Weyer, who cares for equines in Acton.

A threat to Acton’s serenity?

Fire-prone town’s residents fear what will happen if planned energy storage sites burn

By JACLYN COSGROVE

On five acres in Acton, Christina Weyer and her husband care for rescued senior and special-needs equines. At the moment, six horses and 13 donkeys, along with a dog and a clutter of feral cats, share the property.

In this dry, windswept rural landscape dotted with homes and ranches about 50 miles from downtown Los Angeles, wildfires have always been a threat. Insurers have recently raised premiums to what residents say are unaffordable levels, as climate change worsens the frequency and intensity of the blazes.

With a proposal to build a 12-acre lithium-ion battery storage facility, as well as another plan for a similar facility on 68 acres, residents such as Weyer worry that their slice of rural tranquility could be ruined.

Many fear what would happen if a wildfire from the nearby Angeles National Forest spreads to the battery sites, sending toxic chemicals into the air and potentially threatening the groundwater.

Save Our Rural Town, which advocates for rural communities in the Antelope Valley, is suing the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, which governs the unincorporated community of about 7,300, to stop the 12-acre battery proposal from Chicago-based Hecate Energy. Several Acton residents have donated thou-
[See Acton, A6]



STEVE KAPLAN, a retired elevator inspector who has lived in Acton for 28 years, says he’ll move if a battery energy storage facility comes to town.

1,700 vacant jobs cut in L.A. budget

City Council passes a \$12.8-billion plan that adds 574 police officers, with three progressives opposed.

By DAVID ZAHNISER

The Los Angeles City Council has signed off on Mayor Karen Bass’ \$12.8-billion budget, cutting 1,700 vacant positions and engaging in a back-and-forth over police spending.

In a 12-3 vote, the council on Thursday approved a spending plan that eliminates the positions at agencies responsible for animal shelters, public works, transportation programs, cultural activities, maintenance of city buildings and many other services. The cuts are not expected to result in layoffs.

The reductions were needed, in large part, to cover a series of pay increases for much of the city workforce — police officers and civilian employees, including gardeners, clerks, mechanics, custodians, librarians and others, according to the budget analysts. The raises were negotiated by Bass and the council over the last year with the unions that represent those employees.

“There’s no sugarcoating the reality that we face next year,” said Councilmember Bob Blumenfeld, who heads the five-member budget committee. “Services will remain stagnant at best, because we will be operating under a bare-bones budget.”

Councilmembers Nithya Raman, Hugo Soto-Martínez and Eunisses Hernandez — the leftmost end of the council — all voted no, voicing dismay over the spending reductions.

Hernandez, who represents part of the Eastside, [See Budget, A6]



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

UCLA experts are working to create a freely available, ethically sourced road map to the entire body that eclipses a Nazi-tainted anatomy text long used by doctors.

In medicine, an answer to a Nazi evil

By EMILY ALPERT REYES

As Dr. Kalyanam Shivkumar pondered how to fix the human heart, he was given a gift laced with horror.

Shivkumar, a cardiac electrophysiologist known as “Shiv” to friends and co-workers at UCLA, was trying

to better understand the intricate details of nerves in the chest. He hoped doing so might help him improve treatments for cardiac arrhythmias — aberrant rhythms of the heart — that can prove dangerous and even deadly.

A Canadian colleague sent him a set of anatomy

books renowned for the beauty and detail of their drawings, but tipped him off that the “atlas” had an appalling history.

Shivkumar was aghast to learn it was the work of an ardent Nazi whose Vienna institute had dissected the bodies of prisoners, many
[See Anatomy, A10]

LAPD review links two anti-gang units accused of corruption in Valley

By LIBOR JANY AND RICHARD WINTON

As Los Angeles police internal investigators dig deeper into one of the bigger scandals in recent department history, they have uncovered links between two troubled anti-gang units in the San Fernando Valley, law enforcement sources told The Times.

When the controversy spilled into public view in August — with officers accused of illegally searching and stealing from Angelenos and attempting to cover it up by turning off their body cameras — then-Chief Michel Moore said the problems appeared to be confined to the Mission Division.

But three sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they feared retaliation for dis-

cussing a pending investigation and sensitive personnel matters, said the probe had broadened to focus on a group of officers who initially worked together in another division, Foothill, which neighbors Mission to the east.

One of those officers, Alan Carrillo, last week pleaded not guilty to charges of theft and evidence tampering. He had worked on the Foothill gang squad, whose other officers have in recent years been accused of violent tactics against protesters and at least one out-of-policy shooting of an unarmed man, according to court records and sources familiar with the LAPD’s ongoing investigation.

Carrillo, a six-year department veteran, is the first of several officers expected to be charged, ac-
[See LAPD, A8]

‘Mild and meek’ cop was hit man

Imprisoned 38 years, William Leasure blames his crime spree on “low self-esteem.” CALIFORNIA, B1

Millennials’ debt adding up

Delinquency rates, especially on credit cards, are highest among those 28 to 34 years old. BUSINESS, A7

Robot umpires unlikely in 2025

Major League Baseball leader says the automated strike zone used in the minors has not been a hit. SPORTS, B12

Weather

Turning sunny. L.A. Basin: 70/56. B8

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