



PORTLAND, ORE., resident Bryan Hance, 48, a cybersecurity engineer and avid cyclist, uncovered a multinational bike theft ring.

Photographs by RICHARD DARBONNE For The Times

Turning bicycle wheels of justice

Cyclist aimed to crack bike theft ring — and exposed lapses in trafficking enforcement

By JESSICA GARRISON

PORTLAND, Ore. — The story of how Bryan Hance became one of the most celebrated and cynical investigators of multinational bike theft began in the spring of 2020, in the dark heart of the pandemic.

Bikes were suddenly in short supply, because so many people — trapped at home and afraid of catching COVID-19 on public transportation — wanted to buy them. Predictably, bike theft exploded across the country.

Hance, 48, saw it happen in real time. A cybersecurity engineer with flowing brown locks and a taste for soy lattes, Hance is co-founder of a site called Bike Index. It's a nonprofit where cyclists can register their bikes and con-



A CYCLIST in southeast Portland. When Hance co-founded the nonprofit Bike Index in 2013, bicycle theft was mostly a crime of opportunity.

tact information, making it easier to reunite lost or stolen bikes with their owners.

Bike Index now registers the descriptions and serial numbers of about 1.3 million bikes worldwide. But when Hance started the site in 2013, it was a simpler era of theft. Back then, it was mostly a crime of opportunity: Single bikes would disappear from garages or street corners, taken by petty thieves usually wielding nothing more than bolt cutters. Hance's site allowed police to reunite bikes with their owners if they were found or discarded. And it allowed buyers who cared about such things to do their due diligence to make sure they weren't buying a stolen bike.

[See Hance, A8]

Bridge fire's speed sends mountain community into action

Those who expected more time to evacuate save what they can of Mount Baldy Village.

By NATHAN SOLIS

The handful of locals at Mt. Baldy Lodge eating lunch Tuesday afternoon were startled when someone screamed that the Bridge fire was barreling toward the village. But perhaps they shouldn't have been.

A day before, emergency officials issued evacuation orders for Mount Baldy Village and closed off the highway. Residents who stayed behind thought they would have more time to act.

Instead, strong wind gusts had fanned the flames, pushing the fire rapidly across several miles of rural countryside and right to their community. The fire now crested on the ridge overlooking the village, sending those who hadn't evacuated scrambling.

They raced to tap water from a nearby stream and a swimming pool. Residents [See Bridge fire, A8]

Could \$20 billion end homelessness in L.A.?

City housing officials' draft budget analysis calls for most funding streams to increase.

By LIAM DILLON AND DOUG SMITH

It would cost \$20.4 billion to end homelessness in Los Angeles in a decade, a price

tag requiring local, state and federal governments to more than double their spending on the problem, according to a draft budget analysis from city housing officials.

The money would produce 36,000 permanent housing units for homeless residents with chronic health needs and build or subsidize 25,000 additional apartments for very low-in-

come residents. The proposal assumes the city maintains nearly 17,000 beds in shelters and other interim housing locations through 2029 before ramping down.

If implemented, the analysis projects homelessness to decline annually before reaching what's known as "functional zero" by the end of 2032. That means episodes of homelessness are rare and brief and anyone

who needs a shelter bed — the city and private missions and other providers would maintain 6,000 per the analysis — can access one.

There are about 45,000 people who are homeless in the city of Los Angeles, 29,000 of whom are unsheltered, according to the most recent point-in-time count of the homeless population.

There's no timeline for [See Homelessness, A10]

Sex tourists pay for short-lived marriages



"IT'S ALL TORTURE," an Indonesian woman said of her contract marriages, which began when she was 17. "All I had in my mind, every time, was I wanted to go home." The practice, though officially illegal, is an economic lifeline for some.

KALEB SITOMPUL For The Times

BY STEPHANIE YANG AND DERA MENRA SIJABAT

CISAAT, Indonesia — Her first contract marriage was to a tourist from Saudi Arabia. He was in his 50s, and she was 17. They wed in a small ceremony in a guest room at a three-star hotel in Jakarta under a controversial provision of Islamic law.

An older sister came as her guardian, and the agent who brokered the deal served as the witness.

The man paid a dowry of about \$850, and after the agent and the officiant took their cuts, she was left with about half that.

The newlyweds decamped to the man's vacation villa in the mountain resort of Kota Bunga, a two-hour drive south. When they [See Tourists, A4]

Quake 'drought' persists despite flurry

Modest temblors are up, but the state's long dearth of major ones is unusual, experts say.

By RONG-GONG LIN II

Despite an unusual number of modest earthquakes this year in Southern California, the state overall remains in the midst of a "drought" of major earthquakes.

There have been no significant damaging earthquakes underneath California's most populous cities in the last 30 years, when the Northridge quake hit.

That's a stark contrast to the prior three decades, when earthquakes in suburban or mountainous areas did catastrophic damage in the urban infrastructure, causing freeway and building collapses and resulting in the deaths of scores of people.

"If you take the last 30 years as your definition of how often you should expect to be feeling earthquakes, you are underestimating the long-term rate," said seismologist Lucy Jones, a Caltech research associate.

"Since Northridge, in the L.A. area, we've been seeing fewer earthquakes, and having fewer damaging ones, than the long-term rate would imply."

Between 1964 and 1994, Los Angeles faced two big earthquakes, which both hit the suburban San Fernando Valley hard: the magnitude 6.6 Sylmar earthquake of 1971, which resulted in 64 deaths; and the magnitude 6.7 Northridge earthquake of 1994, in which about 60 people died.

The Northridge quake caused up to \$20 billion in damage and an additional [See Earthquakes, A12]



CHRISTINA HOUSE L.A. Times

Trump criticizes Newsom at home

In California, he says that if elected he'd withhold federal aid if governor didn't follow his lead. **NATION, A6**

Fewer feel safe at L.A. Unified

District's data also show a rise in fights and other physical aggression in its schools. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Rose Bowl visits excite Big Ten

Fans of Minnesota, Iowa and Indiana will flock to Pasadena for their games against UCLA. **SPORTS, B12**

Weather
Clouds clear.
L.A. Basin: 79/63. **B8**

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