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CSUN fraternity recruitments revamped after death of pledge

California State University, Northridge has launched strict guidelines for Greek groups and other clubs after the death of a fraternity pledge on an alleged hazing ritual hike. The university will now demand groups submit plans in advance regarding recruitment and related initiation activities, and new members will be required to undergo education prior to fraternity outreaches. Greek and club members will be retrained in recruitment policies, and any organization that fails to...

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USC football team features freshmen all over depth chart

Almost every time USC practiced during training camp, freshman wide receiver Juju Smith made at least one play that stood out. Smith's highlight catches made him the standout freshman, but outside the spotlight, freshman offensive guard Toa Lobendahn quietly secured a starting position. USC's depth issues are widely known but a larger-than-usual number of true freshmen are either pushing for starting spots or finding ways into rotations. Smith (Long Beach Poly) is...

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Federal appeals court affirms begging ban at LAX

A federal appeals panel Wednesday upheld a city ordinance that bans begging for funds inside the terminals, parking areas or sidewalks at Los Angeles International Airport. The city and the Hare Krishnas have been battling over the issue since the Los Angeles City Council adopted the ordinance in 1997. In its opinion, a three-judge panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in Pasadena determined that because the law is limited in nature and leaves open alternative channels...

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Domhnall Gleeson faces down 'Frank,' certain death, his dad in upcoming movies

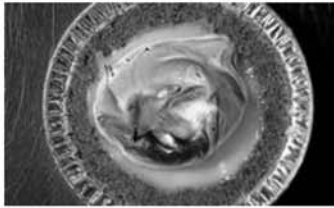
Domhnall Gleeson is the face of "Frank." Not the head. That's fellow Irishman Michael Fassbender encased in the papier-mache, cartoon noggin throughout almost the entire movie. He's the musical genius of the title, leader and main composer of an art rock band so inaccessible that its name, The Soronprfb, is the most commercial thing about it. Gleeson plays Jon, a young English pianist and would-be songwriter whose dreams far outreach the grasp of his...

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Pie Hole, Coolhaus, Pressed Juicery offers tasty trifecta in Old Pasadena

For many years, the space at 59 East Colorado Boulevard in Old Pasadena was home to a branch of the Foot Locker athletic shoe chain that, at some point in the recent past, packed up its shoes. Then the space opened up in a most curious way. It is now essentially a food court, with the sort of culinary options not found at food courts in our grander shopping malls. The décor is spare to the point of feeling like you're eating in a warehouse, but it's a groovy place...

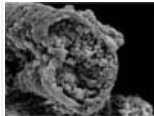
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Outgoing mayor credited with driving down crime rates in L.A.

By Christina Villacorte, Staff Writer

Posted: 06/27/13, 9:00 PM PDT |

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In his final press conference on the topic before being termed out, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa announced violent crimes in Los Angeles have dropped 12.5 percent in the first half of 2013, for an overall decline of almost 50 percent since he took office eight years ago.

"It's no small feat," Villaraigosa said Friday at Los Angeles Police Department headquarters.

Police Chief Charlie Beck described the achievement as unprecedented, and attributed it largely to the outgoing mayor's steadfast commitment -- even during the Great Recession -- to expand the LAPD during his tenure.

"There has never been a time in recorded history where crime has dropped this precipitously in the city," Beck said.

Dan Schnur, director of the Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics at USC, agreed Villaraigosa deserved credit.

"If you compare the drop in violent crime here in L.A. against the challenges that the nation's other largest cities are facing, it's clear Villaraigosa's efforts have made a significant difference," he said.

But Robert Stern, former president of the Center for Governmental Studies, noted L.A.'s falling crime rate was not unique.

"If L.A.'s crime rate had gone down while everyone else's had gone up, then there's really something going on here in L.A.," Stern said. "I think we're just doing a better job of policing across the country, using more up-to-date tactics."

"I'd certainly give Villaraigosa a good grade but it's clear he's not the only reason," Stern added. "He certainly didn't stand in the way, and maybe he was of some help."

When Villaraigosa came to City Hall in 2005, Los Angeles had 9,284 sworn officers. It now has 10,023.

Beck said the expansion was crucial.

"If your policing is based on just answering 9-1-1 calls, you'll never make progress," he said. "Having a 10,000-member police department allows us to get ahead of crime."

Beck said the mayor's public safety strategy was effective because it also included diverting at-risk youth from gangs; recruiting gang members to prevent conflicts between rival gangs from flaring up; and handing out grocery store gift cards in exchange for guns.

He said the mayor's efforts to reform schools in poor neighborhoods also helped.

"I can post cops on corners and make crime go away while they stand there, but what you want to do is make crime go away when the cops are not there," Beck said. "What you want to do is create a space that doesn't require constant police presence and that's what we've been able to do."

With Beck and his predecessor, William Bratton, at the helm, the LAPD has become a more professional, modern and diverse organization -- far different from the one placed on a federal consent decree following the Rampart corruption scandal.

LAPD statistics released Friday showed 7,600 violent crimes from January through most of June -- or half as many as during the same period in 2005, when Villaraigosa became mayor.

Over the last eight years, the number of homicides, robberies and rapes slid 40 to 45 percent; aggravated assaults, 50 percent; gang crimes, 50 percent; and property crimes, 30 percent.

"Think back eight years. If somebody had told you then that we would cut violent and gang crime in half in the city of Los Angeles during the mayor's two terms, nobody here would have supported that as a possibility -- and yet it has happened," Beck said.

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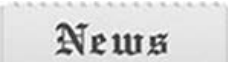
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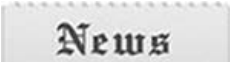


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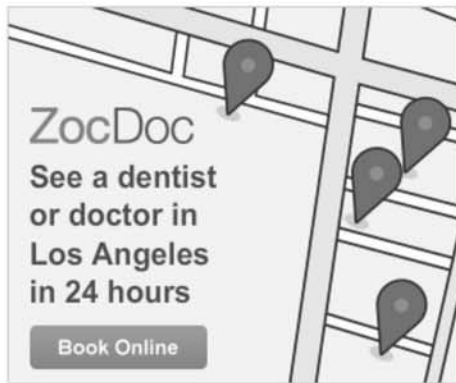
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