

## WATER

Continued from A1

Groundwater Authority board meeting, where the first reading of the pump fee ordinance was voted on.

Kicinski mentioned that he has five acres and yet managed to not use two acre-feet of water per year. But he added he strictly observes how much water he uses via a meter for irrigation and which periods of the year he doesn't use water.

Pat Farris expressed concerns about the apparent lack of data the Groundwater Authority had regarding de minimis well owners are in the IWV basin.

"Until we get this to be more definitive, I don't know how this will work and be fair until it's more definitive of how many are de minimis," she said. "For fairness, there's got to be a way we can get a complete record of all the well owners."

While Kicinski mentioned old-fashioned canvassing might be necessary, Cordell noted the

idea might meet with resistance from local property owners.

"With individual well owners, you're maybe going to get 20 percent of people saying they got a well, and that's common especially with the way government acts these days," Cordell said.

Kicinski said he's heard similar attitudes, adding "I don't know how we're going to get people on board."

Resident Stan Rajtora suggested an alternative to the pumping fee.

"I would like to propose the water district support an initiative to transfer or kill the pumping fee for these next few months totally and go to an agency assessment," Rajtora said. "Whatever the shortfall can be paid for by the agency assessment."

He noted that was what Kern County did with the Cuyama Groundwater Authority in the Central Valley when the board of supervisors agreed to advance \$38,000 on June 26. Kern County is only a minor part of that basin.

The county also agreed

to advance \$500,000 to the IWV Groundwater Authority to address cash flow concerns until revenue from the pump fees start rolling in. However, the nature for the advance is different from the money given to Cuyama.

Rajtora said the logical way to do it would be based on how much water is pumped in which area overseen by each of the five general agency members.

"My feeling is that the member agencies need to be value-added, and right now they're just sitting up there making demands, adding to our taxes and bills," Rajtora said. "People are already paying for health and safety issues right now through the taxes through the city or county. I would like to see through the [groundwater sustainability plan] that the agencies stand up and pay their share of costs through an assessment."

He said Kern County's jurisdiction includes Inyokern and most of the agricultural-zoned area. San Bernardino County has water going to Searles

Valley, and Inyo County's involvement in water ends in Pearsonville. Rajtora said that the water district and Ridgecrest should figure out a reasonable split on their end.

Cordell noted the water district already contributed a \$500,000 advance in December to help with cash flow issues. Rajtora said perhaps his proposed assessment would factor that in.

"This pumping fee, I think, has gotten out of hand ... and everyone who says their water and need to be part of the GA should pay," Rajtora said. "I think all this problem with the pump fees should just go away until after we have a GSP."

Kicinski said the possibility of closing the gap is already close, given the county's advance. He said the water district — through its board member and groundwater authority representative Peter Brown — has already floated the idea that the city could forego reimbursement of an estimated \$210,000.

He said the budget gap at that point would be reduced to a few hun-

dred thousand dollars, reducing the amount or time of a pump fee or negating it all together. Doing so, he said, will allow the groundwater authority some breathing room to obtain the data needed for the sustainability plan.

Resident Larry Mead suggested using the option as a public relations piece for the most vocal opponents.

"Clean it up and get the people that are being boisterous, calm them down, get to through the process," Mead said.

Resident Sophia Merk called the pumping fees an ironic twist on the nation's founding principals moving away from taxation without representation.

"I don't think they're going to come forward with registering their wells if there's a pumping fee right off the bat," Merk said. "A lot of these people don't have a lot of money; some of them do ... and it's really unfair to take advantage of a disadvantaged community."

She added that without an accurate count and definition of the wells in

the valley, it might cause the Department of Water Management to raise an eyebrow and likely step in to assume management of the basin.

Kicinski said he's noticed that the groundwater authority board has been inching closer to implementing no fees until after the sustainability plan is established — something being pushed by Peter Brown. At that point, the plan would require a series of fees or assessments in order to be enforced and overseen.

Kicinski said he thinks the point is taken from suggestions by the public.

"We really want to look out for things," he said. "Even though we represent our ratepayers, we feel that we represent the basin in its entirety and the community. Everybody needs to pay to play."

He added that perhaps one good thing to come out of the negative feedback was "that people are now listening, are now perking up and saying something is going on." It's everyone's responsibility, he said, to provide people with the correct information.



JESSICA WESTON/DAILY INDEPENDENT

**Newly crowned 2018 ICD Queen Tia Roberts speaks at the International Community Day fundraiser last Saturday. The Hawaiian-themed fundraiser was held at the Homestead Family Restaurant in preparation for International Community Day, which will be held Sept. 14 at the Kerr McGee Center.**

## ICD

Continued from A1

surprisingly competitive, but in the end the title was taken by 10-year-old Naomi Newton who managed to keep the hula hoop going for an impressive four minutes, 16 seconds. The young winner said she did nothing special to prepare for the competition, but that, yes, she was proud of the accomplishment.

Tia Roberts was crowned 2018 ICD

Queen. The ICD Queen from 2016 Evelyn Buelna did the honors of crowning the new queen. The queen was selected by the ICD committee.

Roberts is from Biloxi, Mississippi, and is married with a son. She has been in the area for two years. She is currently a fitness instructor at In-Shape.

The coronation hit a snag when it was not initially noticed that Roberts' sash was upside down. This was quickly corrected, with someone quipping "it takes a village."

"It's an honor to be this year's queen. Thank you guys for coming, thank you for your support," Roberts said.

The event featured a 50/50 drawing as a fundraiser for the big event in September.

This will be the third annual International Community Day. The idea was first suggested by Mayor Peggy Breeden, who floated the concept of a food-centered event to bring the community together. International Community Day was born, an annual event to celebrate the

community's diversity in food, music, dance, costumes and cultural displays. In addition to free international food, the event feature a parade of international fashions and flags and dancing.

The first year far exceeded expectations with more than 400 people attending. The following year's event was successful also. This year's event is scheduled for Sept. 14 at the Kerr McGee Center. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

## Waste Managment reminds customers of July 4 schedule

Waste Management's curbside residential and commercial trash and recycling pick-up schedule will be delayed by one day beginning on Wednesday, July 4, and throughout the week in observance of Independence Day.

In addition, all Waste

Management operations will be closed on Wednesday, July 4, with normal operations resuming on Thursday, July 5.

Ridgecrest customers should place their carts out for pick-up one day later than usual, beginning July 5 through July 7.

## AMBULANCE

Continued from A1

sis of quality measures and response times, as well as cost of ambulances," Suver said. "This is consistent with what I've seen in other counties based on the judge's ruling. It's not the judge's decision that is troublesome, it's how Kern County will be implementing the decision."

Suver said an outside company coming could potentially drive costs up.

I am particularly concerned because I think, like many things, having

something locally owned is very important," Suver said. "Certainly Liberty has done an excellent job for members of our community, and I am concerned that potentially if the county goes to an open bidding process, we may have other entities that do not have the same local focus."

He added that "many ambulance companies are owned by multi-national firms and that could be a challenge for our community" and that locally-operated companies are "absolutely paramount to the community."

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# Trump revokes Obama policy using race in school admissions

**BY ERIC TUCKER**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is rescinding Obama-era guidance that encouraged schools to take a student's race into account to promote diversity in admissions.

The shift gives schools and universities the federal government's blessing to take a race-neutral approach in admissions and enrollment decisions.

The affirmative action policies were among 24 documents rescinded by the Justice Department on Tuesday for being "unnecessary, outdated, inconsistent with existing law, or otherwise improper." Attorney General Jeff Sessions called the changes an effort to restore the "rule of law" and blamed past administrations for imposing new rules without any public notice or comment.

"That's wrong, and it's not good government," Sessions said in a statement.

The action comes amid a high-profile court fight over admission at Harvard University as well as Supreme Court turnover expected to produce a more critical eye toward schools' affirmative action policies.

The court's most recent significant ruling on the subject bolstered colleges' use of race among many factors in the admission process. But the opinion's author, Anthony Kennedy, announced his retirement last week, giving President Donald Trump a chance to replace him with a justice who may be more reliably skeptical of admissions programs that take race and ethnicity into account.

The new policy would dramatically depart from the stance taken by the Obama administration,

which in a 2011 policy document said courts had recognized schools' "compelling interest" in diverse populations. The guidance said that while race should not be the primary factor in an admission decision, schools could lawfully consider it in the interest of achieving diversity.

"Institutions are not required to implement race-neutral approaches if, in their judgment, the approaches would be unworkable," the guidance said. "In some cases, race-neutral approaches will be unworkable because they will be ineffective to achieve the diversity the institution seeks."

That guidance has now been rescinded, as have more than a half-dozen other similar documents, including some that sought to explain Supreme Court rulings affirming the use of race as one of several factors in the admissions process.

The Obama approach replaced Bush-era policy from a decade earlier that discouraged affirmative action and instead encouraged the use of race-neutral alternatives, like percentage plans and economic diversity programs.

The Trump administration's announcement Tuesday is more in line with Bush administration policy, and though the guidance does not have the force of law, schools could use it to help defend themselves against lawsuits over their admission policies.

The Justice Department in the Trump administration had already signaled its concern about the use of race in admissions decisions.

The department, for instance, has sided with Asian-American plaintiffs suing Harvard University who argue that the school unlawfully limits how many of Asian students

are admitted.

Students for Fair Admissions, the group suing Harvard, is led by Ed Blum, a legal strategist who also helped white student Abigail Fisher sue the University of Texas for alleged discrimination in a case that went to the Supreme Court.

Blum said Tuesday the organization "welcomes any governmental actions that will eliminate racial classifications and preferences in college admissions." Harvard, meanwhile, said it would continue considering race as an admissions factor to create a "diverse campus community where students from all walks of life have the opportunity to learn with and from each other."

Civil liberties groups decried the move, saying it went against decades of court rulings that permit colleges and universities to take race into account.

"We condemn the Department of Education's politically motivated attack on affirmative action and deliberate attempt to discourage colleges and universities from pursuing racial diversity at our nation's colleges and universities," Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, said in a statement.

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities said it was "very disappointed." Lily Eskelsen García, president of the National Education Association, said "affirmative action has proven to be one of the most effective ways to create diverse and inclusive classrooms."

The Supreme Court has been generally accepting

of considering race in admissions decisions to achieve diversity. In 2016, the court, in an opinion written by Kennedy, handed affirmative action policies a victory by permitting race to be among the factors considered in the college admission process.

The ruling bitterly disappointed conservatives who thought Kennedy would be part of a Supreme Court majority to outlaw affirmative action in education. Justice Antonin Scalia died after the court heard arguments in the case but before the decision was handed down.

The new affirmative action guidance could add to an already contentious fight over the next justice. With Trump expected to announce his nominee next week, the issue should be a central part of any confirmation process, said Howard University law school dean Danielle Holley-Walker.

She called the new guidance "highly unfortunate and counterproductive" and said the decision is another indication that the Justice Department under Sessions is likely to be aggressive toward schools that do continue to factor in race in admissions decisions.

"People have been talking about precedent in regard to Roe v. Wade" — the landmark 1973 ruling affirming a woman's right to abortion — "but it's important to remember that affirmative action has been a precedent for the past 40 years," she said. "This is a clear attack on precedent. Any Supreme Court nominee needs to be asked if they support precedent related to affirmative action."

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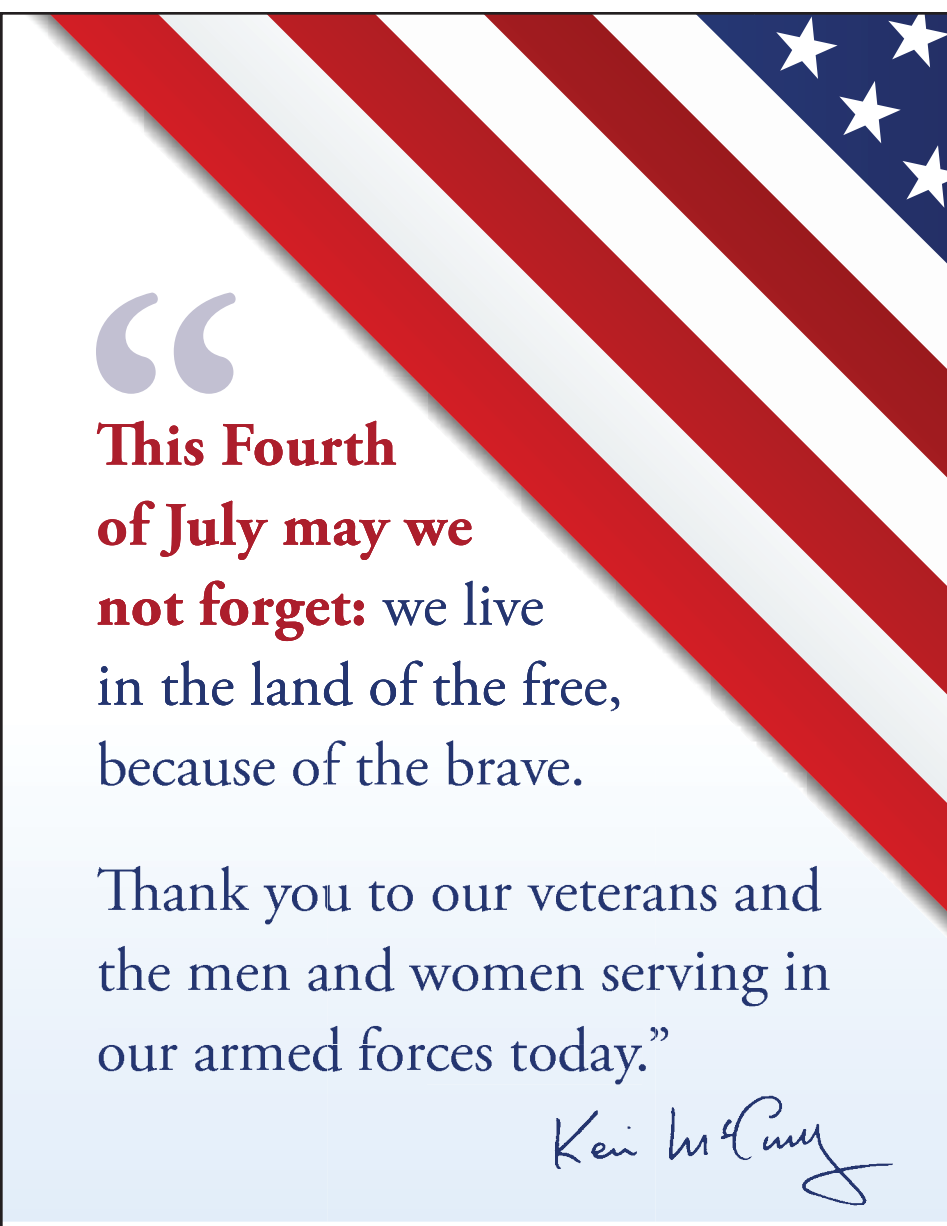
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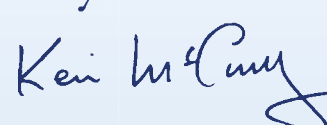


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**S&P 500 snaps 3-day winning streak; Trade fireworks ahead?**

**BY ALEX VEIGA**  
AP Business Writer

U.S. stocks closed lower Tuesday as a swift sell-off in the final minutes of trading wiped out earlier gains and snapped a three-day winning streak for the market.

Technology companies and banks led the market slide, outweighing gains in health care and energy stocks. The Dow Jones Industrial Average and S&P 500 each fell 0.5 percent. The Nasdaq composite fell nearly 1 percent, while smaller companies bucked the trend with modest gains.

The trading session was shortened ahead of the Independence Day holiday. Once investors return Thursday, they'll have no shortage of reasons to snap out of the holiday lull by the end of the week.

On Friday the U.S. is set to impose a 25 percent tariff on \$34 billion worth of Chinese imports. And China is expected to strike back with tariffs on a similar amount of U.S. exports. The big question is how far the two countries will go in their dispute over trade.

"The market might get worked up about a tit-for-tat retaliation, which we'll probably see," said Scott Wren, senior global equity strategist for the Wells Fargo Investment Institute. "There's a relatively low probability of an all-out trade war."

The Trump administration has said it won't target an additional \$16 billion worth of Chinese goods until it gathers further public comments. It's also identifying an additional \$200 billion in Chinese goods for 10 percent tariffs, which could take effect if Beijing retaliates.



**QUESTIONS?** Contact Sports Editor  
Andrew Salmi at (760) 375-4481 x114 or at  
asalmi@ridgecrestca.com

## LAKERS

Continued from B1

NBA Finals to the Warriors in Cleveland.

And with innumerable variables still to be settled before the regular season, it's impossible to predict what James will be able to accomplish with a revamped Lakers roster.

But at least the worst half-decade in franchise history should become a bad memory for Lakers fans, who seethed through five irrelevant seasons highlighted mostly by Bryant's retirement tour.

The Lakers' 35 victories last year were their best performance during five years without a postseason game for a team that had never missed the playoffs more than two seasons in a row.

After James announced his decision to join the Lakers on a four-year, \$153.3 million deal Sunday, the Lakers' jersey sales skyrocketed and prices spiked on the secondary ticket market. Fans gathered among the statues in Star Plaza outside Staples Center, tossing chalk into the air in a simulation of James' famed gesture.

Los Angeles also made a

flurry of complementary moves as Johnson attempted to assemble an immediate playoff contender on the wreckage of five playoff-free years.

Rajon Rondo, JaVale McGee and Lance Stephenson are joining along with James. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope is staying, along with — for now — the young core of Brandon Ingram, Lonzo Ball, Kyle Kuzma and Josh Hart.

Julius Randle, Isaiah Thomas and several others are out. The Lakers will build around James, and they'll continue to attempt to land Kawhi Leonard or

another superstar to team up with him over the next year.

With Randle's departure, the Lakers will have no players left on their roster who played with Bryant in his final game in 2016. The Lakers are steaming toward a new future, with little tying them to the lamentable recent past.

But with the signing of a free-agent superstar, the Lakers already have followed through on the most important part of the plan set forth 16 months ago by Magic Johnson when he took over the club's basketball operations. Although

he spent his entire career with LA, Magic knows the magnitude of the Lakers' lure.

Chamberlain made this move in 1968, with the NBA's reigning Most Valuable Player requesting a trade from Philadelphia to join Baylor and West.

Abdul-Jabbar did it in 1975 after requesting a trade from Milwaukee to a cosmopolitan city, and he went on to become the NBA's career scoring leader during 14 seasons with the Lakers.

O'Neal went west as a free agent in 1996, embracing the advantages of living in Hollywood while

moonlighting as an actor and rapper.

James is arguably bigger than them all, a multimedia star with a legitimate entertainment production company already churning out content for the likes of NBC, the History Channel and Starz.

When James suits up for the season opener, six of the top eight scorers in NBA history will be Lakers.

"This is a special place," Johnson said recently. "We know what's special about this franchise. The people we choose to come here are going to know that, too."

## SWEDEN

Continued from B1

game he contributes in so many ways and he has those decisive moments."

Forsberg didn't get much power behind his shot and it was likely heading straight for Switzerland goalkeeper Yann Sommer. However, it took a deflection off the foot of center back Manuel Akanji and bounced up and into the net.

Sweden became the fifth European team to reach the quarterfinals and will next play either England or Colombia on Saturday in Samara. Limited but with a highly effective game plan, the Swedes should not be underestimated.

This was another opportunity spurned by the Swiss, who have reached the last 16 in four of their last five appearances at the World Cup only to be eliminated without scoring a goal. They haven't scored in a knockout game in soccer's biggest tournament in 64 years, when they last reached in the quarterfinals at home in 1954.

They finished the game with 10 men after right back Michael Lang was sent off in stoppage time for a professional foul on Sweden substitute Martin Olsson. The referee initially awarded a penalty kick but later gave a free kick on the edge of the area after a video review.

Switzerland was fortunate to still be in the

match at that point.

Ibrahimovic, now 36 and playing out his illustrious career in the United States, would surely have put away some of the first-half chances created by his countrymen against a fragile Switzerland defense which was missing the suspended Fabian Schaer and Stephan Lichtsteiner.

Striker Marcus Berg was the biggest culprit, spurning two openings in quick succession, while Albin Ekdal volleyed over with the goal at his mercy.

The Swedes were limited but played to the strengths that got them past Italy in the two-leg World Cup playoff and to the top of a group containing defending champion Germany, Mexico and South Korea. Their long balls forward caused panic and they were more bullish in their tackling in midfield.

The Swiss certainly weren't playing like a team ranked No. 6 in the world and with only one loss in their previous 25 games. Their build-up play was sloppy, with the best effort falling to Remo Freuler with a late header that was saved by Robin Olsen.

"They have done precisely what they're very good at," Switzerland coach Vladimir Petkovic said, "and that might have been enough to beat us."

"When they score a goal, it is always extremely difficult to crack that tough nut."

The last time Sweden

made it this far at the World Cup was in 1994, when the team reached the semifinals.

### SUSPENDED

Sweden right back Mikael Lustig will miss the quarterfinals after collecting his second yellow card of the tournament for a tug on Switzerland striker Josip Drmic in the first half.

The team will have Sebastian Larsson back from a ban, however, and the holding midfielder should go straight back into the starting lineup.

### BIG BLUNDERS

A low-quality match featured some of the worst finishing seen so far at the World Cup, and two efforts stood out.

In the first half, Lustig dragged a long-range attempt sideways and it went out for a throw-in. Then, in the second half, Switzerland midfielder Granit Xhaka lined up a shot from outside the area and very nearly whiffed.

### BABY WATCH

Sweden captain Andreas Granqvist chose to play even though his wife, Sofie, was due to give birth to the couple's second child on Tuesday.

In a post on her Instagram page, she said she "told her to stay in the stomach until at least tomorrow!"

Switzerland forward Breel Embolo, who returned home last week to attend the birth of his first child, came on as a second-half substitute.

## ENGLAND

Continued from B1

that. We were calm. We stuck to our plan."

England trailed 3-2 in the penalty shootout after Jordan Henderson's shot was saved, but Mateus Uribe hit the bar and goalkeeper Jordan Pickford then saved Carlos Bacca's kick.

"I did a whole bunch of research," Pickford said. "Falcao is the only one who didn't go his way. I

don't care if I'm not the biggest keeper in the world. I have the power and agility."

Pickford succeeded where Peter Shilton, David Seaman and Paul Robinson failed as the 1990, 1998 and 2006 World Cup campaigns ended in shootout losses. On top of that, England was knocked out of the 1996 European Championship semifinals and the quarterfinals in 2004 and 2012 on penalties. The country's only shootout success came earlier at Euro

'96.

With a fresh generation of players not burdened by past misery, England coach Gareth Southgate has helped to banish painful memories of his own: Missing the final kick at Euro '96 against Germany.

After exiting the 2014 World Cup without winning a game in the group stage, the squad has been remodeled with a youthful, more street-wise mentality by Southgate at his first major tournament as coach.

### BASKETBALL & BASEBALL ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Cerro Coso Summer Basketball Camp

**Camp 2: July 16-20, from 8:30am-1:00pm for ages 7-16 @ Kerr McGee Center. Cost is \$75 and each camper will get free t-shirt.**

**Camp 3: July 30- Aug. 3, 8:30am-1:00pm for ages 7-16 @ Cerro Coso Gym. Cost is \$75 and each camper will get free t-shirt.**

Contact Tom Heck at 760-384-6384 or theck@cerrococo.edu

#### Cerro Coso Baseball Fundamentals Camp

**July 9-July 12 from 8:00am-12:00pm for Ages 5-15. Camper Cost \$100, Pre-Registration is \$90. (Includes T-shirt)**

**July 16-July 19 from 8:00am-12:00pm for Ages 5-15. Camper Cost \$100, Pre-Registration is \$90. (Includes T-shirt)**

Contact Head Coach Justus Scott with any questions @ 916-622-6690 or justus.scott@cerrococo.edu.

### BURROUGHS VOLLEYBALL

The Burroughs girls volleyball team will be hosting a 4-on-4 volleyball tournament fundraiser benefiting BHS volleyball at the Burroughs High School gymnasium in Ridgecrest on Saturday, July 21 at 9 a.m. The cost to enter is \$80.00 per team (\$20.00 per player) and will include a free t-shirt for each person who enters the tournament. The event is 18 years old and up.


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Prepare soft pretzel bites according to instructions on the box. Lightly coat soft pretzel bites with melted butter. Season soft pretzel bites with everything bagel seasoning and soft pretzel salt. Bake in 350-degree oven until golden brown. Serve with whipped cream cheese if desired.



COMPETITIONS

FUN TEAM NAMES

Entering a cooking or eating competition? Dr. Odd has compiled a list of cool team names at drodd.com that includes the following:

Meat Masters, The Gouda Life, Wok This Way, Funky Coal Brothers, Red Hot Chili Preppers, Pits Don't Quit, Grubs and Rubs, Simmer Down, Up in Smoke, Team Cuisine, Natural Born Grillers, Holy Smokes, Chop It Like It's Hot, Flame Kings, Smoker's Wild, Rib Ticklers, Killer Grillers, Jalapeño Business and Slice, Slice, Baby.

GARDENING

INDOOR HERBS

There's nothing like a fresh-cut sprig of parsley, basil, rosemary or any number of other herbs to liven up a meal.

The experts at Burpee Plants say an indoor herb garden brings fresh flavors and scents to your home. It's a perfect solution for those who might not have outdoor gardening space but crave the benefits that fresh herbs provide.

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By Ari LeVaux  
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The southwestern edge of Hawaii's Big Island includes the Kona and Ka'u coasts, both of which boast coffee plantations carved into old lava fields. The climate in this region is perfect for coffee, and my suitcase brimmed with bags of local, freshly roasted product. Alas, not one of our Airbnb rentals stocked a decent coffee maker, or even a French press. Each time I opened my suitcase in a new rental, I was tortured by the release of air-borne coffee particles, while upon the kitchen counter sat the same worthless Mr. Coffee that had stalked us from place to place. Dante would have been impressed with my fate.

I did not bear this injury without a fight, aka without wasting inordinate amounts of expensive coffee trying, and failing, to brew a decent cup. I adjusted the ratio of coffee grounds to water, adjusted the grind, but it never tasted nearly as good as it should have.

I'm a sucker for the clear tones and dull, syrupy bitterness of espresso, which is made by forcing pressurized boiling water through finely ground coffee. Even when it's made with a better machine, drinking drip coffee is like watching a mud wrestling match at a nudist colony: a lot going on; not exactly sure what to make of it.

Obsessing over coffee in Hawaii sharpened my palate, which bore some unintended consequences when I returned home. It was like Hawaii all over again; I was making bad coffee with good beans. Except this time it was my own coffee maker, a moka stovetop espresso pot, and with beans from a talented roaster. By this point, only one shop in town made espresso I could drink.

The tools

I turned my powers toward mimicking that flavor. I even purchased a bag of their beans, foregoing the superior beans of my guy for the sake of eliminating that important variable.

I tossed my old aluminum moka pot, which I suspected of harboring bitter flavors, and bought a stainless steel version. The moka pot uses steam pressure to force boiling water up through the coffee grinds. It screws apart into three pieces: the bottom of which is filled with water, the middle of which holds espresso grounds, and a top part



A moka pot is the next best thing to a "real" espresso machine. And you don't have to spend a fortune to get a good one. [VEE SATAYAMAS/FLICKR]

**Ristretto translates to "restrained" in Italian, and refers to the fact that the amount of coffee in a ristretto shot is less than the amount in a normal shot, but it's made with the same amount of beans. While you get less espresso from the same amount of beans, the espresso is of higher quality.**

that will hold the finished coffee. A moka pot is the next best thing to a "real" espresso machine. The fancy machines can generate greater pressure, but I'm not convinced that helps.

I also purchased a burr grinder, which grinds the beans between hard plates rather than by way of a dull spinning blade. A burr grinder produces a more even, controllable grind and can grind the beans much finer, which is crucial for espresso. The beans should be freshly roasted (within the last three or so weeks) and ground right before use, which maximizes the flavor and primes the air in the room with the flavor of the coffee you're about to brew.

Then I set out to learn what they are doing at my favorite shop. Nothing gets a barista talking faster than a \$5 tip and some nerd questions about coffee. That's how I learned about the ristretto pull.

The method

Ristretto translates to "restrained" in Italian, and refers to the fact that the amount of coffee in a ristretto shot is less than the amount in a normal shot, but it's made with the same amount of beans.

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The idea of a ristretto shot is similar to the first cold pressing of olive oil, or the skimming of cream from milk. Imagine you spilled some chocolate chips onto the beach; if you scoop them up with big handfuls you will get a lot of sand, but if you use restrained handfuls you will only get chocolate chips and no sand. Put another way, a ristretto shot contains a higher proportion of good stuff.

I went home to my \$34 stainless steel AMFOCUS moka pot, aiming to make a ristretto-based Americano that rivaled that of my favorite shop, which uses a \$21,000 Synesso. I began with an experiment to test the theoretical foundation of my approach.

I made a pot like I always do, filling the lower chamber with about 400 milliliters of water. When the finished coffee began spilling into the upper chamber of the pot, I began pouring it out into separate cups, sequentially. The first cup contained the first coffee to emerge, analogous to the ristretto. I poured four separate samples this way, with the final cup consisting of the dregs, the last bit of finished coffee to be prepared from those grinds.

The first cup was pure gold. It was coffee elixir. And the second cup was nearly as good. But the third cup, not so much, and the fourth cup was awful.

So now when I brew, I only add half the normal amount of water to the lower chamber, which results in about half the amount of finished coffee in the upper chamber, which I dilute with water up to 8 or 10 ounces of perfect coffee. The only way to make it more perfect would be with cream.

IN THE KITCHEN

Turn back the clock to plan for wedding fare



Prudence Hilburn

When my husband and I were married more than 60 years ago, wedding celebrations were simple. The menu consisted of a bride's cake (no groom's cake), salted nuts and mints. The mints and nuts made up part of my tidbit table. Orange Sugared Pecans and Bonbons would be a great addition to this table.

One of my favorite parts of the wedding reception was the slush punch. Check out this version below.

Orange Sugared Pecans

- ¼ cup Pet milk
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp. white Karo syrup
- Pinch of salt
- 1 ½ cup pecans
- 1 tbsp. orange zest

Mix all ingredients except pecans and bring to a good boil. Stir in pecans. Remove from the heat and stir until begins to sugar. Pour on a platter or foil and when cool, break into bites.

Strawberry Slush Punch

- 2 c. sugar
- 4 c. water
- 2 (6 oz. each) boxes strawberry gelatin
- 64 oz. fruit punch
- 46 oz. Hawaiian Punch

- 46 oz. pineapple juice
- 2 (2 liter each) bottles 7-Up or Sprite

Combine the sugar and water in a medium size saucepan. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in the gelatin, stirring until completely dissolved. Add remaining ingredients (except 7-Up or Sprite) and stir to mix well. Pour into two 1-gallon plastic containers and freeze. Remove from freezer 1 to 2 hours before you plan to serve it so that it will begin to thaw. Break up the punch a little before pouring it into the punch bowl. Pour in the 7-Up or Sprite and gently slush the mixture using a dull knife. You probably will want to divide this punch into portions when serving, especially if you don't have a large punch bowl.

Bonbons

- 4 c. confectioners' sugar
- 1 (14 oz.) pkg. coconut
- 1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
- White and dark chocolate coating (or candy melts)

Combine sugar, coconut and condensed milk in large bowl. Mix until thoroughly blended. Refrigerate covered for about 2 to 3 hours, or until firm enough to shape into balls. Line a large baking sheet with wax paper. Roll the coconut mixture into balls about ½ inch in diameter. Refrigerate until firm. Melt coating and dip bonbons into mixture, coating well. Place on wax paper until set. Decorate.

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