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DAILY SUNDIAL

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

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IS WAGE INCREASE A LIFESAVER?

A state law will increase minimum wage, but some say this could hurt the economy



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Students 'speed date' mentors

MICHELLE DOMINGUEZ
DAILY SUNDIAL

STUDENTS WERE given the opportunity to glean wisdom from engineering and business professionals at the second annual Career Speed Mentoring event Tuesday evening.

Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) established their first meet and greet in 2010 after being inspired by the cultural phenomenon of speed dating.

Xerox, Northrop Grumman, Nestle, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and Aerospace

Corporation were some of the few companies that were present. Nearly 20 mentors from the above-mentioned companies were stationed at individual tables.

Every 15 minutes students walked around and chose a station. Once there, they had a chance to ask industry professionals questions regarding their workforce, education and available resources.

Around 30 students were gathered in the presentation room at the Oviatt Library, triple the amount compared to last year's eight attendees, according to the event coordinators.

Co-chairman of the event Kappy Paulson, an industrial ventilation expert for the



LUCAS ESPOSITO / DAILY SUNDIAL

Sheida Rahmani (right), 25, a graduate student in applied mathematics, listens intently to Cheryl Bhence (left), a senior system engineer for Xerox Corporation.

Naval Facilities Engineering Command said she was thrilled with the turnout.

"We're happy with the turnout but it's always a gamble. We could have 300 people or it could be ten," Paulson said.

Graduating senior Stefan Adam, who is an engineer management major took advantage of the opportunity to speak to business professionals regarding their areas of expertise. Adam's professor canceled class for the day so that students could attend the meet and greet worry free.

"I came here to make some contacts and (to) get to know some people but it's going to help me for the future," said Adam.

As for the mentors, this

event lets them connect with students on a personal level.

Olivia Sanchez, who works for the Metropolitan Water District said their company is committed to mentoring and helping students get into the water industry and believes this event is supremely beneficial to everyone.

"I've had some remarkable students come by here and some who aren't even the science or engineering background students ask about cover letters or how important internships (and) their gpa's are," Sanchez said. "Those are things that we can help them with and if they can learn earlier rather than later it's going to benefit them."

PREVIEW

More than 100 employers at fall Job Fair

The Career Center will be hosting the fall Job Fair at the Northridge Center in the USU, today from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

"We get a bunch of employers to come to CSUN who are all looking to hire either part time, full time or for internships," said Hannah Pham, student assistant and the events and employer relations team member at the Career Center.

The Fall Job Fair is an opportunity for CSUN students to meet over 100 potential employers. They are able to turn in their resumes and have an interview with companies interested in hiring CSUN students.

"Many companies like the quality of CSUN students so they keep coming back every year," Pham said.

The company representatives that will be present at the fair are the same people who will eventually decide who gets hired.

"It is a great opportunity for students to meet employers and to hand in their resumes," Pham said. "It is also a great opportunity for students to work on confidence, self-marketing skills, and ability to approach employers."

Students are required to dress professionally for the Job Fair. Pham also advises students to bring multiple copies of their resumes and to adhere to the dress code in order to make a positive first impression.

"Come out and tell your friends," Pham said. "It is a great privilege to have big names come out and seek to hire CSUN students."

—CALVIN RATANA, DAILY SUNDIAL



LUCAS ESPOSITO / DAILY SUNDIAL

CSUN students talked to professional engineers and scientists and participated in the Speed Career Mentoring event, at the Jack & Florence Ferman Presentation Room on Tuesday.

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Wage law yields mixed reactions

ANNE CHRISTENSEN
DAILY SUNDIAL

THE MUNDANE tasks of flipping burgers while wearing a hairnet or cleaning offices in the middle of the night have been considered a reliable way for college students to pay for their education while attempting to enter a competitive job market.

But as living expenses across the nation have continued to rise, the minimum wage has until now remained stagnant.

"I still have the same wage that I had entering my job three years ago," said Jeanine Guerrero, a Chicano/a major at CSUN. "Since then, I've been paid \$8.50 (an hour) and continue to have the same pay. The prices at the gift shop where I work have gone up, and people continue to buy (goods), but my pay remains the same and because the job is part-time, my paychecks come out very low."

In a move intended to keep up with rising living expenses, the California Assembly passed AB10, a bill approved by a 51-25 vote in September.

Gov. Jerry Brown (D-CA) signed the bill, which will gradually raise the minimum wage from \$8 to \$10 by January 2016. The two dollar increase makes California the first state to approve raising the state minimum to \$10, well above the federal minimum of \$7.25 per hour.

The wage battle has been focused on those working in traditionally low-paying jobs that don't require specific skills, like the food service or hospitality industries.

But another group afflicted by low income is highly trained emergency medical technicians who staff the city's ambulances. "These are pretty doggone

skilled people who go through training to help people," said Alan Cowen, department chair of the Los Angeles Valley College Emergency Services Department. "They're underpaid by 100 percent."

Some medics start their careers with private ambulances to gain enough experience to start paramedic training with the county fire department, Cowen said. The initial pay is low and the conditions are tough; \$10 to \$14 an hour for 12 to 24 hour shifts. But "it's a foot in the door," according to Cowen.

"They should be getting \$20 to \$30 an hour more than what they get at the private ambulance services. The private companies get away with murder when they pay so low," Cowen said.

Despite having one of the highest minimum wages of all states, with Washington at the top with \$9.19 per hour, California is also among one of the most expensive states to live in.

To compare income with living expenses, Dr. Amy Glasmeier of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a private research university, developed the Living Wage Calculator. The calculator relies on statistics from the Department of Labor and the U.S. Census Bureau.

For those residing in Los Angeles County, the minimum is \$8 per hour. But the actual living wage, the amount of money it takes to support one adult, is \$11.37 working full time, according to the calculator. That

number increases when adding dependents, like a spouse and children: the living wage then rises to almost \$28 per hour.

"People have lived on limited income and in poverty for many years," Guerrero said. "Extra income can make the difference for a striving family. I think that with pay going up, other prices are going to go up as well. We are barely going to have extra income at all."

More than half of Joon Hur's students are working part time, but he hasn't noticed much anxiety about low wages. Hur, an assistant professor of economics,

has been teaching at CSUN for three semesters and said students may experience a disconnect between the textbook theories and what happens in the real world.

"Students are not aware that the minimum wage has an impact on their lives," Hur said. "Maybe they worry, but don't tell me about it. If labor demand is elastic, where wages are going up and employers reduce the number of jobs [because of the increase], it will hit."

Opponents of the increase cite the potential threat to small businesses who may be unable to pay staff more without also increasing the price of goods.

"The \$10 minimum wage, I believe, wouldn't really do much because it will just raise prices of goods in the end," said Liza Wright, 21. "The stores will have to find a way to pay their

employees more, thus raising prices in their stores."

Wright, geography major who graduated from CSUN in May, is spending a year in Australia where the base pay is close to \$18 per hour. Returning to the California job market will "be a shock," she said.

Comparing the U.S. minimum wage and living expenses with those of other countries does not fully account for variables, like government provided health care and subsidized education, or the lack thereof. That's why economists use a population's buying power to paint a clearer picture of how much service or goods one unit of money can buy.

Living in Melbourne, Australia, may automatically grant a higher income. But the buying power is diminished due to higher living expenses. According to The Economists' Intelligence Unit, Melbourne is 36 percent more expensive to live in than New York.

California last increased its minimum wage in 2008, from \$7.50 to \$8, according to the Industrial Welfare Commission, a five-member group tasked with overseeing labor conditions in the state. The first recording started in 1916, clocking in at 16 cents per hour, and increased to \$1.30 in 1964.

The federal minimum wage would be almost \$11 today if keeping up with inflation, according to the National Employment Law Project, which is why some say the increase is not enough to keep up with rising living costs.

"Compared to the salaries of the 1960s, \$10 minimum wage is not enough," Guerrero said. "Back then, employees were making \$1.25. Fifty years later and we are barely at \$10. That's pretty insane to me."

"Compared to the salaries of the 1960s, \$10 minimum wage is not enough. Back then, employees were making \$1.25. Fifty years later and we are barely at \$10. That's pretty insane to me."

—JEANINE GUERRERO
Chicano/a Major

CAMPUS VOICE

NEELOFER LODHY / DAILY SUNDIAL

CSUN students share their thoughts



RENE CABANZA
PSYCHOLOGY

"Right now I feel like minimum wage is at a fine position, but in other jobs, in the medical field it should be higher because people's lives are being saved. Considering that the cost of living rises every year, nobody wants to earn \$10 and then be charged extra for living expenses, so it shouldn't be increased."



LORYN DAGER
MUSIC INDUSTRIES

"The increase of minimum wage is bad because it's going to increase inflation and it will increase the cost of living. In the long run increasing minimum wage devalues the dollar, it won't be helpful to people who need the extra help."



JENNIFER CASTILLO
SOCIOLOGY

"I feel that the increase is good, because by the time 2016 gets here, I'll be looking for a job then, but living expenses in LA are really high, so it won't help out families that have one source of income, but it would help me as a student."



EMMANUEL REYES
POLITICAL SCIENCE

"I feel that minimum wage should be increased, but we have to look at the repercussions it has on small business owners. With the cost of living increasing, minimum wage should be increased, but only big businesses will be able to handle it."

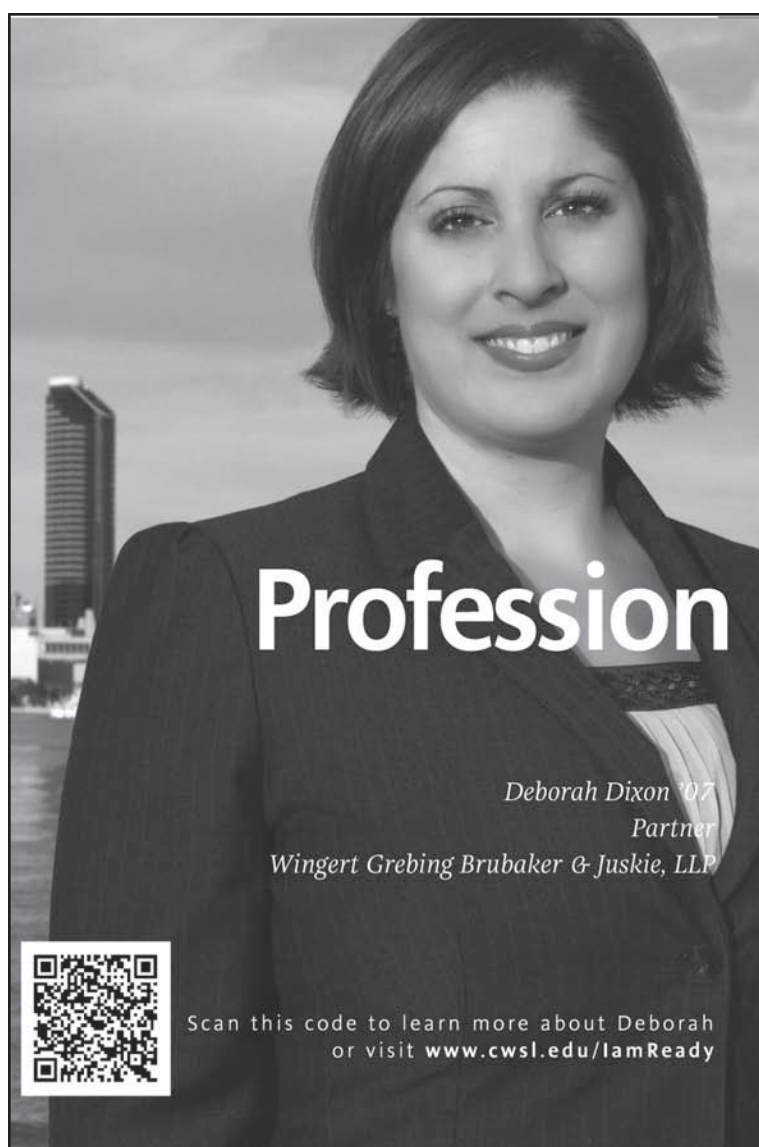
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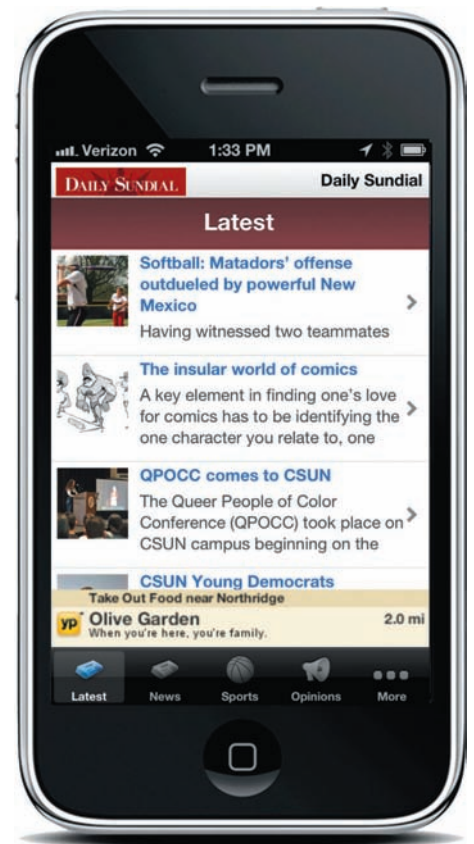
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Students urged to preserve environment

**ANA RODRIGUEZ
JAZZMYNE BOGARD**
DAILY SUNDIAL

THE 5TH ANNUAL Campus Sustainability Day encouraged students to participate in sustaining a healthy environment by not compromising future generations ability to meet their needs.

The Institute of Sustainability prepared four sessions Tuesday that took place in the Northridge Center throughout the course of the day. A showing of the "Bag It" documentary took place at 11 a.m. The film documented the build up of trash and waste, exposing the effects that plastic bags and other plastic merchandise have

on the land ecosystems, marine life and human body.

Each of the four sessions encouraged students to do their part to eliminate waste and to be conscious about the environment.

"I find it very important even if it's not your minor, all students need to learn because sustainability is the future," said Mireya Arizmendi de Haddad, 39, public health major. "It goes with every major and who doesn't need the environment? Everything applies to it."

The Campus Sustainability Day is an event that is held on college campuses throughout the country. It is a day used to educate individuals on the topic of sustainability by discussing various issues within our environment as well as possible solutions that students can help with.

"I think it creates a platform. You have this day where you can choose a topic...and then you just get people engaged and educate them," said Sarah Johnson, coordinator at the Institute for Sustainability at CSUN. "We're just trying to find different ways to reach out to students to educate and engage them in sustainability issues."

The final session featured Stephanie McMillan, award-winning political artist and writer.



TREVOR STAMP / DAILY SUNDIAL

The Campus Sustainability Day, put on by the CSUN Institute for Sustainability, focused on waste and recycling during their event on Oct. 22, 2013 in the Northridge center, USU. The event had several lectures and booths to make students aware of waste management.

McMillan spoke on her views of capitalism in her lecture "Capitalism Must Die! Our Planet is not Expendable." McMillan presented her cartoons through a slideshow and she read them out loud before explaining their intended meaning.

"Nothing we're doing is more important than (stopping) capitalism. We can't extract from an economy that dominates the country around us," said McMillan during her presentation.

During the lecture McMillan also stressed how the production

methods of capitalism must be destroyed. Some students who attended the lecture weren't clear how effective a change in the government structure would help sustain the planet.

"I agree with what she says about capitalism, but I kind of see it as a distraction from global warming or what I see as the problem with the climate. I think to overthrow the government or to propose to overthrow the government is not going to be a solution to helping climate change," said 28-year-old math major Cord Perillo.

McMillan's political car-

toons will be displayed in the West Gallery for the remainder of the week until Thursday.



SCAN THIS QR CODE
to view a video of
Sustainability Day.



TREVOR STAMP / DAILY SUNDIAL

Stephanie McMillan, political cartoonist, gave a lecture titled, "Capitalism Must Die! Our Planet is Not Expendable," during Campus Sustainability Day on Oct. 22, 2013, in the Northridge Center, USU.

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Opinion

Minimum wage increase is past due

Workers deserve to be paid a higher wage in California, regardless if it is considered a low-level service job

ALEX VEJAR
DAILY SUNDIAL

I GET PAID \$10 an hour at a dance studio in Santa Monica to sit at a desk, make and take a few phone calls, accept people's money and watch people dance. I work part-time and am able to pay my monthly bills because I live at home with my parents.

On the other hand, a full-time food service worker deals with people all day, wears a ridiculous uniform, makes unhealthy food and probably goes home to their children smelling like french fries, but only gets paid minimum wage, which is \$8 per

hour in California, and barely makes their monthly rent.

Something is tremendously wrong with this picture.

Nowadays, with cost of living constantly increasing, it's getting harder for someone to make ends meet on the measly weekly paychecks they receive from minimum-wage jobs.

An employee working 40 hours a week at the federal minimum wage — \$7.25 per hour — would make \$15,080 in a year, before taxes. That is just below the poverty line of a two-person household in the United States, which is \$15,510 per year, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services.

So if you're a single parent trying to put your kid through school, it doesn't matter if you

have a full-time job; if you make minimum wage, you are poor.

And what does it mean to be poor? You are unable to save up money. People with disposable income have the privilege to save up for college, to eat healthier, go on family trips, etc. Needless to say they don't have to live day by day.

This is why the recent vote by the California Legislature in favor of a bill that would increase the state's minimum wage to \$10 per hour by 2016 arrived just in time.

But actually, it's long overdue. The federal minimum wage has stayed stagnant since 2008, when it was raised from \$6.55 per hour to its current rate at \$7.25. It previously increased yearly since 2007, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

The bill, which was signed by Gov. Jerry Brown in September, will first raise California's minimum wage to \$9 on July 1, 2014, and then to \$10 on Jan. 1, 2016.

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) want to take it a step further. In March, the congressmen introduced companion versions of the Fair Minimum Wage Act to the House of Representatives and Senate, which would increase the federal minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour over three years, then have it increase annually, adjusting for inflation.

The act would also increase pay for tipped workers — those who work in restaurants, valets, etc. — to 70 percent of the federal minimum wage. The current federal pay rate for tipped employees is an ungodly \$2.13 per hour.

According to the Raise the Minimum Wage website, the nation's minimum wage should be at \$10.74 if the U.S. had followed inflation rates for the past 40 years.

A 2012 study conducted by the Center for Economic and Policy Research contends that inflation is the not the only variable at work in this issue. According to the study, increased productivity since 1968 should put the minimum wage at above \$21.

Twenty-one dollars an hour is pushing it, but the idea makes sense. Technology allows tasks to be performed faster, and therefore, employees get more done with the time allotted to them.

If an employee is getting more done during a day on the job, their hourly pay should reflect that. No matter how you slice it, American workers are getting paid too little for the work they do.

Opponents of the new California legislation argue raising the minimum wage will cause employers to hire less people. In a recent LA Times editorial, Kevin A. Hassett said that unemployment and poverty rates will be unaffected and there are better ways to pump money into households with low income, such as expanding the earned income tax credit.

Rush Limbaugh, during his radio show on Aug. 29, made the case that those who advocate higher wages for food service employees don't think about the repercussions of paying a McDonald's

worker \$15 per hour, an amount they and other fast food employees protested for in recent months.

"Maybe the consumer doesn't want to pay \$10 for a Big Mac so that people working at McDonald's make \$15 an hour," Limbaugh said on his show. "It's not just a one-way strata."

These opposing arguments make valid points. No one wants to pay more for something just because the government decided to increase a worker's minimum pay by a few bucks.

But look at the work they do for that money.

These employees are on their feet for hours, often times doing manual labor, and they get mistreated by the people they serve far too often.

Whether an employee is a teenager who landed their first job, or a wife who wants to help make more money for her household, increasing the minimum wage puts more cash in the pockets of consumers, which translates into increased spending and helps the economy grow.

On top of that, it puts more money where it belongs — into the hands of those who work their asses off for it. This country could use a little more appreciation for those types of people.

Service workers who get paid minimum wage deserve to be recognized and paid like other workers in higher positions in our society.



ILLUSTRATION BY JAE KITINOJA / ILLUSTRATOR

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Student workers might catch a break

Meet Miguel, a CSUN graduate who's life could change due to higher minimum wage

MICHELLE DOMINGUEZ
DAILY SUNDIAL

EVERYDAY AT 6 a.m. Miguel Cortez hits the alarm clock and wakes up from his heavy slumber. As he sleepily slithers across the living room floor to his kitchen, he frantically grabs a bite to eat. Then, pushing himself out of the house toward his car door, he sits inside and takes a deep breath.

It's time to go to work. As a teacher's assistant at an elementary school in Van Nuys, Cortez faces the heavy burden of supervising about 500 students for five hours a day. The job entails teaching kindergarten through fifth grade for an hour and a half, supervising recess and lunch and creating physical activities for all grades.

"It's a lot," Cortez said as he organizes his early education books. "I want to be a teacher and I love working with kids, but I don't get paid enough for all that I do."

Cortez, a recent CSUN graduate, currently earns about \$9 per hour and would not mind receiving a few more bucks.

Fortunately for him, Gov. Jerry Brown signed a new law on Sept. 25 increasing the state's minimum wage to \$10 per hour, the highest among any other state. The bill would raise

the current \$8 an hour to \$9 on July 1, 2014 and then to \$10 on Jan. 1, 2016.

This is a big leap from the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. The last time California raised its minimum wage was in 2008.

So how will this new bill affect the CSUN student population?

For Cortez, the increase means he will be able to set more money aside for his expensive master's degree, which will require him to take out a loan.

"The increase won't make me rich, obviously, but at least I'll have more money to spend on the fun stuff like bills, bills and more bills," Cortez said laughingly.

Loans, tuition and textbooks are a few of the many expenses an average college student stresses about. The CSUN cost of attendance for the 2013-2014 fall and spring semester totals \$15,752 if they live at home and \$23,952 if they live off-campus.

According to a study done by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2012, college students equal about 60 percent of minimum wage earners.

John Paul Albarca, a CTVA major, justifies the minimum wage increase by professing that California is an expensive state to live in.

"For those who currently seek and are only able to work minimum wage the increase will benefit their financial situation and well-being,"



ILLUSTRATION BY JASMINE MOCHIZUKI / VISUAL EDITOR

Albarca said. "But inflation will eventually catch up by the time the new wage goes into effect."

While many are excited about the pay raise, CSUN economics professor Robert Krol said the increase could have a negative side effect, as it could mean less work for students.

"People fixate on the wage but what's more important for these individuals is just getting a job, any job and working there for a while to get experience," Krol said.

Krol said that the majority believe that a large amount of people are trying to support a family on minimum wage, which isn't the case. The

Bureau of Labor statistics show that only three percent of workers over the age of 25 earn minimum wage.

He said all young adults normally start out working a minimum wage job, but the vast majority eventually move up from earning that minimum.

What economists are truly worried about is the loss of job opportunities for young adults.

"The biggest problem most economists have with minimum wage is when you increase the price to a firm of hiring an inexperienced worker, it becomes not worth it to hire them," Krol said. "What they're weighing is the cost of hiring that

worker to what that worker is going to contribute to the business."

Krol stresses that without a job students will not receive much needed practice.

For Krol, a higher minimum wage could not only equal less employment for inexperienced young adults, but also more pay for those who are already employed.

Suppose a worker earns \$10.75 per hour. Once the new bill comes to its full effect that worker will now be at minimum wage. Krol said it is possible that the employer would then hire less inexperienced workers and instead distribute those extra hours to their experienced employees, dodging the need to retrain anyone.

When asked if the new wage increase would affect the school's tuition, since CSUN employees would be paid more, Krol said he doubts the salary will have any real effect and that tuition normally raises when the economy is down.

At the end of the day the new bill will allow those earning minimum wage to have a \$2 increase, and though some argue that inflation will inevitably increase as well, the majority of workers are complacent with the increase for now.

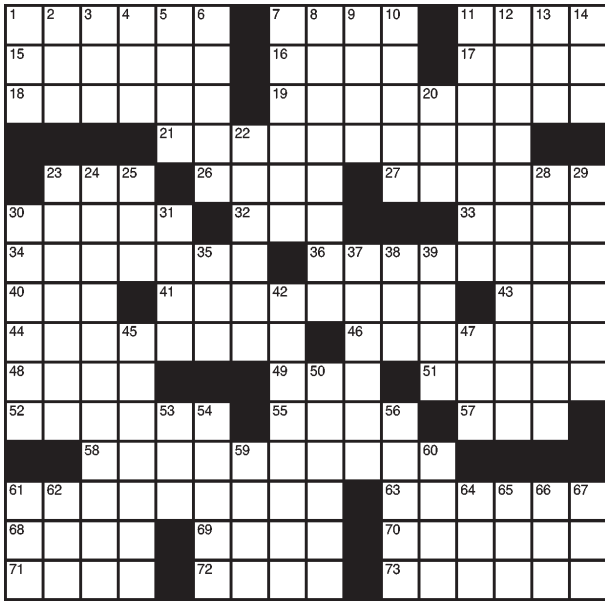
As Miguel Cortez opens his paycheck, you can see the static look in his eyes. He raises his head and chuckles with exasperation as he jokingly shouts, "Guess I won't be going out tonight!" Stuffing the paper inside his pant pocket, Cortez walks out closing the office door behind him with optimistic glee.

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

ACROSS

- 1 "Let's hear it!"
- 7 Beginning on
- 11 "Essence of Man" cologne
- 15 Bar game fodder
- 16 Old Roman coin
- 17 Light, to a moth
- 18 Cooks, in a way
- 19 Up the creek
- 21 *Small fruit first cultivated in Oregon
- 23 Ruler divs.
- 26 '80s-'90s German chancellor
- 27 Brief brawls
- 30 Kansas City footballer
- 32 L.A. commuter org.
- 33 16-Across replacer
- 34 Daniel Barenboim's opera house
- 36 "Agreed!"
- 40 Surg. sites
- 41 Humanitarian symbol, and a hint to what happens where the answers to starred clues intersect
- 43 BART stop
- 44 Jumble
- 46 Haiti's elder Duvalier
- 48 Somewhat, in music
- 49 Oaf
- 51 Facebook option
- 52 Facebook option
- 55 Tool with teeth
- 57 Part of Mac OSX: Abbr.
- 58 *Vin Scully will be its 2014 Grand Marshal
- 61 Chevy pickup
- 63 "My goose is cooked!"
- 68 Clothing patch site
- 69 72-Across speaker
- 70 Angry outburst
- 71 "It's for you," on an env.
- 72 69-Across's tongue



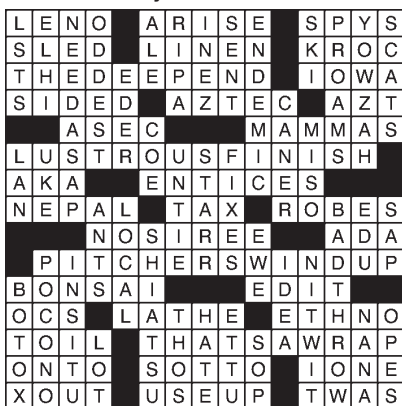
By C.C. Burnikel

10/23/13

DOWN

- 1 Rehab symptoms
- 2 Crumb
- 3 Bind
- 4 Actress Longoria
- 5 Life partner?
- 6 Vision-correcting surgery
- 7 Come down to earth
- 8 "Arrowsmith" Pulitzer decliner Lewis
- 9 Sports MD's specialty
- 10 Orbit info
- 11 Said suddenly
- 12 *Chain named for a Stones hit
- 13 Google revelation
- 14 Titleist holder
- 20 Valuable rock
- 22 Oasis seekers
- 23 Ben-Hur's vehicle
- 24 "Clue" suspect
- 25 "Gimme a ___"
- 28 Stump figures
- 29 Comfort
- 30 Treads heavily
- 31 Henhouse locale
- 35 Rural expanse

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



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- 37 Brown v. Board of Education city
- 38 FICA-funded org.
- 39 Nile snakes
- 42 Game in which one player doesn't speak
- 45 Pizza-making need
- 47 Contented sighs
- 50 It can shorten a sentence
- 53 Put to work
- 54 Suit material
- 56 Trims text, perhaps
- 59 Allen's successor on "The Tonight Show"
- 60 Give off, as rays
- 61 Reggae kin
- 62 Bankbook abbr.
- 64 Sixers' #6
- 65 Vichy water
- 66 Put in
- 67 Start to dig?

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WORLD SERIES

Boston and St. Louis meet again



COURTESY OF MCT

David Ortiz of the Boston Red Sox looks to win his third World Series championship against the St. Louis Cardinals who are currently playing their best baseball of the season.

ANDREW MARTINEZ
DAILY SUNDIAL

AFTER AN EXCITING month of playoff baseball, the best records in the major leagues will battle for the championship as the American League champion Boston Red Sox will host the National League champion St. Louis Cardinals in the World Series.

The Cardinals are playing their best baseball of the season at the perfect time, coming off a convincing National League Championship Series (NLCS) win versus the Dodgers in six games. St. Louis rookie starting pitcher Michael Wacha has emerged as the star of the playoffs, baffling hitters in October with a 0.43 ERA and earning NLCS MVP honors with two shutout victories in head-to-head match-ups with Dodgers' likely Cy Young winner Clayton Kershaw. Staff ace Adam Wainwright is a playoff-tested veteran with two championships under his belt and a career 2.10 ERA in the postseason. Although back-of-the-rotation starters Lance Lynn and Joe Kelly have been inconsistent, they have been supported by a strong bullpen full of homegrown

talent highlighted by closer Trevor Rosenthal, who has not allowed a run in the playoffs.

Boston's lineup should have their hands full with Cardinal pitching, as the number one offense in the AL during the regular season struggled to score at times against Detroit's starting pitchers. The Sox pulled through with clutch hitting, as three of their victories in the ALCS came by one run, the clincher being decided by a dramatic 7th-inning grand slam to take the lead. Designated hitter David Ortiz remains the biggest threat in the lineup, but the batting order is balanced out with pesky .300 hitters like second baseman Dustin Pedroia and home run threats including infielders Mike Napoli and Will Middlebrooks. Speedster center fielder Jacoby Ellsbury would normally run wild on the base paths, but he should be held in check by five-time gold glove catcher Yadier Molina, who threw out 43 percent of would-be base stealers this season.

The Red Sox starting rotation is their biggest weakness, as starters Jake Peavy and Clay Buchholz have been wildly inconsistent with ERAs over 5. Jon Lester and John Lackey have proven to be Boston's most reliable starters, as they have been able to hold leads long enough for the lights-out bullpen

to take over. Setup men Craig Breslow and Junichi Tazawa have allowed a combined one run in 12 postseason innings, and closer Koji Uehara's dominance has carried over from the regular season, as he picked up ALCS MVP honors with three saves and a victory, closing out every Red Sox win in the series.

St. Louis' lineup will have to score runs early, and should be able to do some damage with a lineup that tagged Dodger ace Clayton Kershaw for an unlikely seven runs in the clinching game of the NLCS. Molina and outfielders Carlos Beltran and Matt Holiday are all .300 hitters and occasional power threats, while breakout star second baseman Matt Carpenter and 2011 playoff hero third baseman David Freese provide solid protection in the lineup. The offense will also be bolstered by the platoon of slugging first basemen Matt Adams and Allen Craig, who has returned from injury in time for the World Series.

The Red Sox and Cardinals are too evenly matched to predict a sweep, but a clutch Sox hitting and a stronger bullpen should prove the difference in what should shape up to be an exciting series that goes the distance.

Prediction: Boston in 7

COLUMN

Kobe disrespected with No. 25 rank

In a recent preseason ranking, ESPN shockingly has Kobe Bryant as the 25th best player coming into the season

BRIAN BERNSTEIN
DAILY SUNDIAL

KOBE BRYANT finished fifth in last year's MVP voting, averaging 27.3 points per game, the highest average by any player in NBA history to start a season at least 34 years old. But TrueHoop Network and ESPN.com have ranked the Black Mamba the 25th best player in the 2013-14 season.

It is understandable that Bryant, who was ranked sixth last year, would drop a few spots this season, but 25th? This is Kobe Bryant, one of the greatest NBA players ever, and including him on a list outside the top 10 is disrespectful and blasphemous.

Despite entering his 18th NBA season at the age of 35, rehabilitating a ruptured Achilles tendon that was surgically repaired last April, he is still one of the greats. Kobe will not be ready to play when the Lakers tip-off their season Oct. 29 against the Los Angeles Clippers, but everyone knows the mindset of Bryant will push him to return even stronger.

His 27.3 ppg was his sixth best seasonal average of his career, so it is safe to say there has been no drop in talent as Bryant ages. He showed signs of his 20-year old self by exploding past defenders and turning back the clock to dunk on fools.

Bryant was the sole reason the Los Angeles Lakers were fighting for the playoffs late last season prior to his injury and his injury derailed any playoff hopes that they had.

On March 8, 2013, the Lakers hosted the Toronto Raptors in a 118-116 overtime victory. Bryant finished the game with 41 points and 12 assists, but what was impressive about that game was Bryant hitting three straight three-point shots in the final 1:40 to send the game into extra time and the game winner. He is clutch personified.

How did Kobe Bryant, a 17-time all-star, NBA MVP, five-time NBA Champion, and two-time Finals MVP, drop 19 spots? The injury alone cannot be the determining factor because the 2010-11 NBA MVP Derrick Rose of the Chicago Bulls, who missed all last season recovering from an ACL tear, is ranked ninth.

Bryant is ranked behind

players such as Chris Bosh (24), Roy Hibbert (22), Dwyane Wade (18), Tim Duncan (16), Blake Griffin (14), Marc Gasol (10), and even Kyrie Irving (8). No disrespect to any of these players, but they cannot do what Kobe can do, nor are they as valuable to their team as the Black Mamba. None of these players have the heart, determination, will power, killer instinct and skill that Bryant possesses.

According to team officials, doctors and Bryant himself, there is no timetable set for him to return, but Bryant is ahead of schedule. He has just been given the green light to amp up his rehab.

According to an interview with ESPN.com, there are two things he needs to do to be ready to play: regain his explosiveness in his left leg and "...get my fat ass back in shape."

Kobe Bryant has never dealt with an injury of this magnitude; therefore, he will make sure he is 100 percent before returning.

There is no doubt when he does return to action, he will be stronger and more determined to prove to haters that he is still a top 10 player.



COURTESY OF MCT

Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant is coming off an Achilles injury at the age of 35. Despite that, he should still be regarded as a top 10 player in the NBA as he has shown no signs of slowing down.