



FREE

Santa Monica Daily Press

January 1-2, 2005

A newspaper with issues

Volume 4, Issue 43

NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

Chutzpah: John Michael Dunton's infant daughter died in September when Dunton accidentally left her in his minivan, having forgotten to drop her off at the baby sitter's before work. However, upon learning that no criminal charges would be filed against him, Dunton appeared at a press conference, boasting that a jury would have acquitted him, anyway, and then imploring automakers to invent something to keep parents from forgetting about their kids.

In a June lawsuit in Albany, N.Y., Mark Hogarth, 45, asked a court to protect his constitutional right to privacy by exempting him from child-pornography laws so that he can reclaim 269 lewd photos of himself, taken when he was a kid, but which his now-deceased father had hidden away in another country. In his petition, he said that his father approved of, but did not participate in, the photo sessions (some of which featured other children) and that Hogarth would like to keep the pictures as, basically, mementos of his childhood.

TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1959, Fidel Castro led Cuban revolutionaries to victory over Fulgencio Batista.

In 1979, the United States and China held celebrations in Washington and Beijing to mark the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In 1984, the break-up of AT&T took place as the telecommunications giant was divested of its 22 Bell System companies under terms of an antitrust agreement.

In 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully split into two new countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect.

INDEX

Horoscopes

Early to bed, Libra 2

Surf Report

Water Temperature: 57° 3

Community

Red-letter day 3

Opinion

Something wicked this way comes 4

Q-Line

Mop and they'll glow 4

National

Amendment unlikely 5

Comics

Hardy har har 12

Classifieds

Need a job? 13-15

People in the News

A fine catch 16

2004 YEAR IN REVIEW



Presidents past and present dominate headlines in 2004

By Daily Press staff

News in Santa Monica is never boring. High-profile politics, individuals and issues propelled Santa Monica into the spotlight in 2004.

Bobby Shriver, a Kennedy family scion, ran for local office and won after he felt mistreated by City Hall over the height of his hedges. The corner of 20th Street and Arizona Avenue became a media frenzy when Ronald Reagan's body was brought to a local funeral home as the first stop during the president's week-long memorial.

Also in 2004, a local community leader announced she was stepping down at Santa Monica Community College, and despite crime being at a 40-year low, three homicides occurred within city limits.

For the first time in the history

of Santa Monica politics, the chamber of commerce officially played a role in local elections by endorsing candidates, two of whom gained office.

One of the biggest developments to hit the city in decades was unveiled a few months ago, which if approved, could dramatically change the downtown skyline. Philanthropist Wallis Annenberg donated \$21 million to restore a beach club originally built for William Randolph Hearst's mistress, actress Marion Davies. And Saint John's Health Care Center opened up its main hospital after a decade of rebuilding following the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

The Santa Monica Daily Press revisits the top 10 news stories of the year. Friday highlighted the top five news stories of the year. Today, a list of the No. 6 through

No. 10 news stories of 2004.

Here's a list of the top news stories of 2004:

1. Bobby Shriver wins City Council race
2. Smokers snuffed out at beaches
3. City Hall forced into \$6 million schools contribution
4. Mall developer unveils plans for high-rise towers downtown
5. \$21 million given to City Hall to restore beach club

NO. 6: ELECTION 2004

The election of 2004 was of historic and unprecedented proportions. Bobby Shriver, brother-in-law of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and a Kennedy family member, was the top vote-getter after raising more money than anyone else in city politics history. And for the first time, the Santa



File photo

Voters turned out en masse in November to chime in on the Presidential election and crucial city races.

Monica Chamber of Commerce officially involved itself in local elections by endorsing candidates.

Santa Monica's ruling party, Santa Monicans For Renters' Rights, which has had its candidates in office for the better part of three decades, felt a real challenge this year as a result of the cham-

See **YEAR IN REVIEW**, page 6

Red Cross keeping the light on to assist tsunami survivors

By Daily Press staff

Due to the overwhelming outpouring of support for the victims of the Southeast Asia earthquake and tsunami, the Red Cross of Santa Monica has opened a toll-free hotline to assist residents who want to donate to the disaster victims.

So far, Santa Monica residents have donated in upwards of \$133,000 toward the effort, according to John Pacheco, executive director the Santa Monica Red Cross chapter.

"It's been just amazing," he said. "The outpouring has been so significant that our regular phone

lines aren't able to handle it."

The hotline will be open over the New Year's holiday to help process donations and provide updated information on the disaster. The Santa Monica chapter also will be open for those who wish to make donations in person.

To donate, residents are urged to call 1-866-733-5010. Donations can also be made in person at the Red Cross office located at 1450 11th St., or online at www.redcrossofsantamonica.org.

Checks should be made payable to the American Red Cross Southeast Asia Earthquake/Tsunami

Relief Effort.

In support of the effort, the American Red Cross already has deployed personnel to hard-hit Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Additional volunteers and employees trained in disaster relief and tracing are preparing to leave within the next few days. The Red Cross is preparing to ship \$350,000 in relief supplies such as plastic sheeting, family-size tents and hygiene kits.

The best way to get help to Southern Asia is with cash contributions to the American Red Cross International Response Fund. With

funding, most relief supplies can be purchased in the affected areas. Contributions not only help the economies of the affected countries, but also save huge shipping costs and ensure that the supplies are culturally appropriate.

The complexities of this disaster, the number of countries and people affected, the vast geographical area, and the roster of agencies and governments involved in the response are virtually unprecedented. For this reason, American Red Cross involvement and needs will change and expand over time, officials said.

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JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

★★★★-Dynamic ★★★★★-Positive ★★★-Average ★★-So-so ★-Difficult





ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★ Ease up. Flex. Plans change, whether by your design or someone else's. You might discover that you need this break, being somewhat worn out by the holidays. Laze around, snooze and watch the Rose Bowl or whatever suits your fancy. Tonight: Head for bed ASAP.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Someone close could be cantankerous and difficult. You could get upset, or you could choose to be understanding. Express your caring. Give in to spontaneity. Give difficult people space. Tonight: Spend quality time with a child or sweetie.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ To the disappointment of others, you decide to stay close to home and relax. You might have some invitations to parties. You don't need to explain. Take all the recharging time you need. Tonight: Play it cozy and low-key.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★ Read Gemini for direction. You might want to do most of your socializing on the phone. Visit with neighbors, if you must. You probably have had enough and need time to yourself. Tonight: Are your thank-you notes done?



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★ You might be dealing with some financial pressure and a need to entertain. You can opt to dip into your creativity, bite the bullet or just say "no." You often feel obligated, but no one will take care of you as well as you. Tonight: Do what works for you.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ You might be energetic and ready to christen the year. Those close to you could be dragging, causing a change in plans. You could go out and about socializing alone. Don't drag along a party pooper with you. Tonight: Kick up your heels.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★ If you find that you are reactive, you might want to pull back. Take a walk, soak in a hot tub or exercise. Discussions take a wayward direction. You could easily misunderstand someone. Let go and relax. Tonight: Early to bed.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Focus on the plusses of the day, though you might identify with Leo's horoscope. You might be surrounding yourself with friends, parties and other such fun happenings. Just be careful about how much you spend. Tonight: Enjoy yourself to the max.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★ If you encounter flak, look at how you are coming across. Others might be reacting to you. Take a personal inventory. Consider areas of transformation that you might choose. Tonight: Call that special person.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Flex. You might be projecting your "stuff" onto others. Detach and don't get plugged into emotional reactions. Try to pull away and look at where others are really coming from. You might be a lot happier. Tonight: Relax to a good movie or music.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ A partner might force your hand, causing you to say "no" to others. You are coming from a grounded space and understand your priorities. Reflect on long-term investments and insurance policies. Take a gander at your 2004 taxes. Tonight: You might even start your taxes. The funds could help you pay for recent splurging.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★ Others might be cranky and not want to be out and about. You deal with everyone but yourself. If you feel stressed out, understand that you are giving away too much of yourself. Consider changing your priorities. Tonight: Go along with plans for now!

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Illegal drivers taken off road

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica police nabbed 10 illegal drivers Thursday night during a sobriety checkpoint.

The Santa Monica Police Department conducted a checkpoint in the 1400 block of Marine Avenue in accordance with a State of California Office of Traffic Safety law enforcement grant. The grant, also known as "LEADD: Law Enforcement Against Drunk Driving" is designed to improve traffic safety in the community.

The Santa Monica Police Department issued 10 citations for a variety of vehicle code offenses and towed seven vehicles for drivers that were unlicensed or had a suspended license. A total of 129 vehicles were stopped in a 90-minute period.

The goal of the programs are to educate and bring awareness to the community, while at the same time detecting and removing irresponsible drivers from our roadways.

Westside resident renews her vowels in big fashion

By Daily Press staff

A Westside resident went for spin on national television and wound up \$24,300 richer.

Pamela Beaver of Westchester was a winning contestant on the Dec. 22 episode of Wheel of Fortune during "Happy Holidays Week."

"I am ecstatic about being here today," said Beaver minutes before the taping.

Beaver, an executive assistant, took home a haul that included a trip to Las Vegas valued at \$6,500. She credits her success to staying focused on winning. In her free time, Beaver enjoys singing and playing guitar in her bluegrass band.

Wheel of Fortune marked its 22nd season in syndication in September. Last year, more than 1 million people requested the chance to audition for Wheel of Fortune. Fewer than 600 people were selected to appear on the show. Within the last 22 years of being on-air, Wheel of Fortune has awarded approximately \$143 million in cash and prizes to its contestants.



SURF REPORT

On Saturday, expect 3-4 ft., waist- to chest-high sets, occasionally 5 ft., and poor-fair conditions. On Sunday, look for 2-3 ft., knee- to waist-high, occasionally 4 ft., and fair conditions.

Look for the WNW swell mix to hold good energy into Saturday as the southerly wind swell backs down. All swells fade on Sunday, when the WNW swell mix backs down for waist-high waves at most spots, while best breaks hit shoulder high.

Write us at wood@smdp.com and tell us what the surf is doing today at your local break.

Today the water is:

57°

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	7:53	2.6	7:45	1.0	2:22	4.0	12:54	3.6
SUNDAY	9:35	2.2	8:29	1.5	3:02	4.3	2:30	3.1
MONDAY	9:35	2.2	8:29	1.5	3:02	4.3	2:30	3.1
TUESDAY	10:56	1.5	9:20	1.9	3:43	4.7	4:28	2.9
WEDNESDAY	11:55	0.6	10:19	2.1	4:26	5.2	6:06	3.0
THURSDAY	12:45	-0.2	11:18	2.3	5:11	5.7	7:14	5.2
FRIDAY	12:45	-0.2	11:18	2.3	5:11	5.7	7:14	5.2

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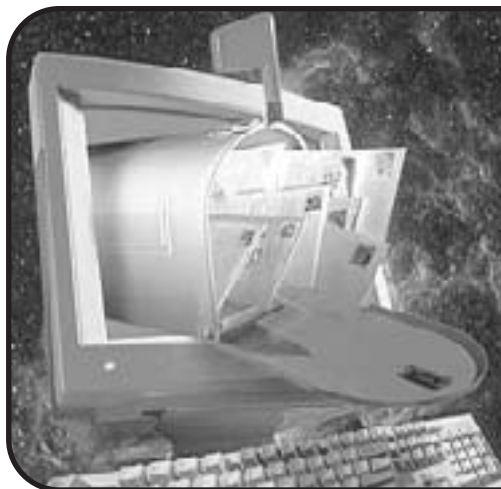
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RESPONSES ON PAGE 4.



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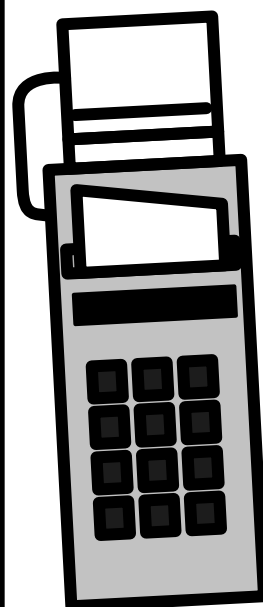
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OPINION

The QLine

DIRTY POLITICS: RESIDENTS WANT CLEAN CITY

This past week, Q-line asked:

What should your elected leaders' New Years Resolutions be for 2005?

Here are your responses:

© "Our elected officials should begin with cleaning up this filthy, dangerous city. Enforce the vagrancy laws. Stop all of the hand outs. Stop the overall permissive attitude to those vagrant, homeless, drunks and druggers flocking to this city. Then we can deal with traffic, parking, tourism, etc. Let's get real. This out-of-control vagrancy is our major problem."

© "The Santa Monica City Council can do very little regarding the plague of air pollution that inundates the city of Santa Monica on a daily basis. Santa Monica west is the end of the line for Pico, Olympic, Santa Monica and Wilshire boulevards. These roadways dump thousands of automobiles on Santa Monica on a daily basis. These roadways are the main source of congestion and pollution in Santa Monica. Then add Pacific Coast Highway and the 10 Freeway. No wonder I'm dizzy all the time. Fortunately, we in Santa Monica have the wind that blows from the ocean from the west to the east, returning some of the smog from where it started. When Playa Vista opens into full swing, all of our hopes for clean air will be dashed, especially for those folks who reside on 11th Street as Playa Vista folks plod their way north to San Vicente Boulevard. The Santa Monica City Council's resolution for the new year should be to fight pollution and congestion. No more high-rise buildings that invite traffic."

© "The officials should resolve to resign unless they can do something about the bum problems and messing up the traffic. They should resolve not to mess up traffic ..."

© "I just want to commend the SMDP for the fair, truthful coverage of the Fisher Lumber accident. And condemn the whiny, simplistic attitude expressed by Bill Bolte in his ridiculous letter in today's paper (SMDP, Dec. 28, page 4). He is probably one of the halo polishing so-called do-gooders that help to proliferate this horrible chaotic, dangerous vagrancy problem in our community ..."

© "Prioritize the needs is No. 1. The number No. 1 need is to take care of the homeless problem which includes the drunks and the drug addicts. One way to

do this is to utilize the drunk tank first and then transport those folks to the Veterans Administration for further treatment. One of the items that has been overlooked with regards to the homeless and drunks and the addicts in Santa Monica is the fact that many of them are veterans. Principally of the Vietnam War. I don't see that many WWII vets wandering around our town or Korean War vets. It's mostly the Vietnam War and these folks are getting SSI and free health accommodations from the Veterans Administration on Wilshire Boulevard in West LA. It should be where they can be treated properly and assisted in re-engaging into society."

© "All of our leaders should resign. In this city we are punished for driving a car. We are punished by having to pay for wherever we park. The owners of apartment buildings are punished with rent control. We are all punished for paying for low-income housing. Everyone is punished with the bums. We are punished with these constant taxes for schools, and the library, civic center buildings. The hotels are punished with an increase in the hotel bed tax. We are punished with high density living, wall-to-wall apartments in this city. We are punished with a huge bureaucracy at City Hall — overpaid bureaucracy. Your question is incorrect. We have no leaders, just socialist comrades. We should send them all to Sweden."

© "The continuing influx of vagrants and homeless into this city already overwhelmed has to stop. This is new year priority No. 1."

© "Our elected leaders should do all they can to get the U.S.A. promptly out of President Bush's war quagmire which affects Santa Monica in deaths, wounded and high taxes."

© "Clean up this open air jail and insane asylum that this city has become."

© "I want elected leaders to cut down on those people who smoke at bus stops. I mean, non-smokers shouldn't have to put up with that. I've been cursed at and told I was stupid and everything else. They should do something about them."

Extra! Extra! Get 2005's top news stories today



MODERN TIMES

BY LLOYD GARVER

Why wait for next year to read next year's news? You can read it right now. Here are my predictions for 2005.

KEN JENNINGS GOES HOLLYWOOD: When squeaky-clean Jeopardy winner Ken Jennings leaves his wife, his kids, and his religion and moves to Hollywood to host a talk show, he will not marry Britney Spears. They will just be good friends and Kabbalah partners.

TOO MANY MEDALS: President Bush will inexplicably continue to give Presidential Medals of Freedom to officials who resigned because of their failures in security and other policy areas. New medals will have to be made of plastic because of the resulting shortage from so many metal medals.

THE CRAWL ON WASHINGTON: Millions of babies will jump out of their strollers and crawl to Washington to protest their concern that they will never collect a penny in Social Security.

FDA PAIN: In February, the FDA will declare that aspirin is the only safe medicine for Americans to take.

BUSH REACHES OUT TO MICHAEL MOORE: President Bush appoints Michael Moore Baghdad Chief of Police — and insists that Moore accept the position.

BCS RULES CHANGE: In college football, the BCS revises its rules and declares every college No. 1 in the nation.

EX-CHAMP STILL PUNCHING: Mike Tyson gets in yet another barroom brawl, and is sentenced to 30 days in jail. Soon after that, President Bush awards him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

RUMSFIELD STILL NOT SIGNING: A waiter in a posh Washington restaurant informs Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld that he must use an actual pen to sign for his credit card, not an "autopen."

SAME OLD CONDI: Condoleezza Rice goes for the entire year — yet again — without ever breaking into a smile.

TONIGHT SHOW COVERS ITS BASES: NBC names the successor to Conan O'Brien, Jay Leno's successor. Unborn baby, John Smith, will take over the Tonight Show from O'Brien in 2048.

NEW SUV PERFECT FOR SHORT COMMUTES: General Motors introduces the biggest SUV, which is designed for short commutes. It is five miles long. It doesn't actually move anywhere. You just get in the rear door, walk through the car, exit the front door, and you're at work.

DOLLAR VALUE SOMETHING TO SNEEZE AT: Problems in the timber industry cause an unexpected shortage in tissue. Inventive Americans solve this problem by blowing their noses into almost worthless \$20 bills.

IT'S KOBE'S BALL: Kobe Bryant will fire the rest of his Laker teammates, but continue to play one-against-five for the rest of the season. The Lakers still make the playoffs.

MORE FDA PAIN: In June, the FDA will declare that aspirin is dangerous — may cause headaches.

FOX OUTFOXES SELF: Fox's new reality show, "Let's All Boycott Watching TV Until They Stop Putting On Dumb Reality Shows," is a huge success.

CONFUSED CONSUMERS: A new cellular phone is introduced. It doesn't take pictures, it doesn't have an alarm clock, and you can't use it for the Internet. It just makes telephone calls. Public doesn't know what to make of it.

DEMOCRATS CALL IT QUILTS: The Democratic Party dissolves and disbands. They will no longer run any candidates for national office. The Chairman of the Democratic National Committee explains, "Oh, what's the point anymore?"

WE'VE GOT HIM: While searching for a possible cabinet appointee without a skeleton in his or her closet, administration officials accidentally stumble on Osama Bin Laden. They capture the evil mastermind, imprison him, and the free world celebrates his capture. Two weeks later, President Bush awards him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Have a happy and healthy New Year.

(Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier." He also has read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's opinion page and can be reached at smdp@lloydgarvermoderntimes.com.)

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NATIONAL



Constitutional amendment on gay marriage unlikely

BY DAVID ESPO
AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Opponents of gay marriage concede victory will not be swift in their attempt to amend the U.S. Constitution, even after prevailing in all 11 states where the issue was on the ballot last month.

While the Nov. 2 election also increased the ranks of amendment supporters in both houses of Congress, the gains were relatively small.

"We're going to have to see additional court cases come down" supporting gay marriage before congressional sentiment shifts dramatically, predicted Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who supports the amendment that failed in both houses of Congress this year.

Critics of gay marriage have long warned of such court rulings. Cornyn and others who support changing the Constitution to ban gay marriage say several cases have the potential to produce a sharp shift in congressional sentiment toward their viewpoint. They point to suits in Florida, California, Nebraska and elsewhere.

But Matt Coles of the ACLU's Lesbian

and Gay Rights Project said that's unlikely _ and not entirely by accident.

Many of the cases making their way through the courts were filed by individuals not affiliated with leading gay rights organizations, he said, and were not framed to make a targeted challenge to a 1996 law known as the Defense of Marriage Act.

Frontline groups have held off, he said. "People think that neither the country nor the courts are ready for it and probably we'll lose. Nobody likes to take cases and lose."

The 1996 law defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman. It also says no state is required to recognize same-sex marriages sanctioned by any another state.

Purely by the numbers, prospects for passage of an amendment in Congress "have definitely improved" following the election, said Tom McClusky of the Family Research Council. "But by enough? That's going to be wait and see."

Leaders on both sides of the issue say supporters of the amendment gained four votes in the Senate on Nov. 2, and a small, undetermined number in the House. Based on votes in 2004, amendment opponents still have more than enough

strength to prevail in a second showdown.

The measure drew 48 Senate votes on a procedural roll call, far below the two-thirds majority needed for passage. The vote in the House was 227-186, 49 less than the required two-thirds. Passage by Congress would send the issue to state legislatures for ratification. Three-fourths of them also would have to approve it.

It's not clear how aggressively the White House or Republican leaders in Congress intend to push the issue, with the election over and priorities such as Social Security and tax overhaul competing for attention.

White House political adviser Karl Rove said after the election that President Bush intends to continue seeking a constitutional amendment that says marriage must consist of a man and a woman.

At the same time, GOP congressional aides who attended a series of closed-door meetings recently said Rove did not mention the amendment when he outlined the administration's key legislative goals for the year ahead. Nor did the issue figure prominently in strategy sessions held by GOP congressional leaders, added these officials, who declined to be identified by name because the proceedings were

closed to the press.

McClusky, director of government affairs for the Family Research Council, said his organization wants more than rhetorical support from the administration.

"We're hoping for a vote early on in 2005 and we're hoping that the president will make the phone calls again," he said. "It's going to be another one of those things of wait and see whether this is going to be something he did for the 2004 elections or this is something he truly believes in."

Bush urged Congress to act last February, when San Francisco officials were performing thousands of same-sex marriages and after the Massachusetts Supreme Court legalized them in that state.

The president endorsed an amendment that would ban same sex marriage, while letting states decide whether to sanction relationships such as civil unions or domestic partnerships.

While the amendment headed toward defeat in Congress, Bush's decision to speak out elevated the issue during the campaign, and conservative groups successfully passed state constitutional changes in all 11 of the states where they tried.



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LOCAL

Out with the old, in with the new in Santa Monica



File photo

A homeless man was found dead in front of the parking garage of the YMCA on Sixth Street in June, the apparent victim of assault. The murder was one three homicides in the city this year.

YEAR IN REVIEW, from page 1

ber's involvement. While only two of the chamber's candidates were elected — Shriver and incumbent Herb Katz — chamber officials believe they were victorious.

City Hall's SMRR contingency and the chamber have butted heads for decades over the many issues facing Santa Monica, namely the policies surrounding the homeless population and government bureaucracy.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent during the campaign by an unidentified group with chamber ties, sending mailers throughout the city lambasting City Hall's failures in citizen responsiveness, customer service and the homeless issue. Stories by disgruntled business owners detailed their own experiences with City Hall in securing business licenses and their respective delays due to government bureaucracy.

But it wasn't enough to dramatically alter the makeup of the City Council — the only change to the elected board was Shriver. Incumbents Katz and two SMRR members, Richard Bloom and Ken Genser, were all reelected.

NO. 7: TRIO OF HOMICIDES IN SANTA MONICA

Three homicides occurred this year in Santa Monica. The first homicide was classified by the Los Angeles Police Department as "justifiable." LA officers shot a Malibu man on Pico Boulevard near Santa Monica High School in February. The victim, who apparently robbed a gas station, led officers on a high-speed chase throughout the LA area

for close to an hour before ending up in Santa Monica.

Nicholas Hans Killinger, 23, was shot on Pico Boulevard near Sixth Street after Killinger allegedly rammed his vehicle into a Los Angeles Police car. The pursuit began after Killinger robbed a gas station in Augora Hills at knifepoint, police said. Killinger reached speeds of up to 80 miles per hour as he led police throughout the city, including driving on the wrong side of the 101 Freeway, all of which was aired live by news helicopters.

Killinger drove down the Third Street Promenade shortly before he was cornered in front of Samohi. He threw his white Ford Tempo into reverse, smashing the front end of an LAPD squad car, police said. That's when three police officers fired at least 12 shots into Killinger's vehicle. Killinger tried to flee on foot, but was shot. He was taken to Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center and pronounced dead a short time later.

The second homicide of the year occurred in March in an Ocean Park Santa Monica-subsidized apartment complex, operated by the Community Corp. of Santa Monica.

Gabriel Edward Becerrada, 38, was shot multiple times in front of a low-income housing project at 815 Ashland Ave. shortly before 1:20 a.m. on March 7.

Sandra Alfaro, 34, her 17-year-old son and his friend, Luke Yeron, 19, were arrested for murder by Santa Monica Police after an extensive investigation. Becerrada, who had been recently released from state prison and was on parole, was found dead in front an apartment door after police officers received a call from a resident who heard a woman

screaming and shots fired.

Becerrada was a four-time felon that had been out of prison for four months when he was killed. He had spent nearly 11 years behind bars. In 1986, Becerrada, then 20, was sentenced to five years in prison for attempted robbery. He served two years and was released on probation. Then, in 1992, Becerrada served seven months for second-degree burglary. Three months after being released, he was arrested for possessing a firearm and spent a year in prison. Most recently, Becerrada served seven years for drug possession.

The accused killers are expected to go on trial this year.

The third and final homicide of the year involved a 35-year-old homeless man who was found on June 30 in front of the parking garage entrance of the YMCA on Sixth Street.

The man was dead when officers arrived, and detectives noted that the man

Education Richard Riordan to weigh in on education issues at the state level, Robertson was largely unpopular among her own faculty and campus workers. She received a vote of no confidence from both groups last spring, after Robertson recommended to a supportive college board that academic programs be cut in order to meet the funding shortfall from the state.

SMC and City Hall have had a tumultuous relationship in the past, mostly because of the college's continuous growth in Santa Monica and its perceived communication problems with city officials. Elected leaders hope a newly-elected college board and new SMC president will mend the strained relationship.

NO. 9: NEW BEGINNINGS AT SAINT JOHN'S

Emerging from the rubble and more than a decade of preparation, Saint John's Health Care Center has moved into its next phase of serving Santa Monica.

Leading up to the grand opening of its new hospital, a host of ceremonies were staged, including a blessing by Cardinal Roger Mahony and several local priests in a special community mass, as well as an official dedication by California First Lady Maria Shriver.

Just weeks ago, Saint John's opened its north pavilion, a 200,000-square-foot facility which serves as the main inpatient hospital. The multi-million dollar facility is a result of the catastrophic Northridge Earthquake, which forced the hospital to close its doors for nine months back in 1994. The pavilion services critical care, labor and delivery, neonatal intensive care and general surgery.

Designed by HOK and the Smith Group, which specializes in health care facilities, the north pavilion stands 85 feet tall and 600 feet long. It faces 23rd Street off of Santa Monica Boulevard. It is the largest of the buildings on site. Crews began constructing it in 1999 and it is was

See **YEAR IN REVIEW**, page 7



File photo

SMC President Dr. Piedad F. Robertson announced her impending departure from the school following a tumultuous 10-year reign.

was an apparent victim of an assault.

The case remains unsolved.

NO. 8: SMC PRESIDENT STEPS DOWN

After nearly 10 years at the helm, Dr. Piedad F. Robertson announced in November that she planned to step down as president of Santa Monica Community College.

Next month, she will begin her new job as president of a national education think tank based in Denver, Colo., called the Education Commission of the States.

Robertson is leaving behind her \$205,000-a-year position during a time of unprecedented growth, and in the wake of controversy over cut academic programs and a faltering budget.

College officials have yet to select a permanent replacement, but have appointed her assistant, Tom Donner, as interim president.

Despite being tapped by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Secretary of



File photo

Cardinal Roger Mahony gave his blessing to the new north pavilion at St. John's Health Center

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LOCAL



Reagan tribute draws eyes, ears of nation to city

YEAR IN REVIEW, from page 6

supposed to be done two years ago, but the general contractor went bankrupt, leaving hospital officials scrambling to find another one.

The building is the first phase of an extensive rebuilding plan. The replacement hospital is the only one on the westside with a state-of-the-art base isolation system that allows the facility to remain fully operational if another earthquake strikes, up to a magnitude of 6.8 on the Richter scale.

The second phase of the construction plan — a four-story, 275,000-square-foot diagnostic and treatment facility — will be constructed where the original hospital now sits. It's scheduled to be completed in 2009.

NO. 10: RONALD REAGAN BEGINS FINAL JOURNEY IN SANTA MONICA

All eyes were on Santa Monica in June when President Ronald Reagan's body was taken from his Bel Air home to Gates Kingsley & Gates Moeller-Murphy Funeral Home at the corner of 20th Street and Arizona Avenue.

Thousands of onlookers and journalists converged on the quiet residential neighborhood for two days, paying their respects to one of the most popular presidents in U.S. history.

The Reagan family began the week-long memorial in Santa Monica before taking the former president's body to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in the Simi Valley, and then to Washington D.C. for a state funeral before heading back to the library for a sunset burial.



Former First Lady Nancy Reagan, accompanied by children Patti Davis and Ron Reagan, begin a long goodbye to President Ronald Reagan in Santa Monica in June. The former president's posthumous tribute began in earnest at a local funeral home.

File Photo

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NATIONAL

New state laws tackle tigers, unruly sports fans

BY ROBERT TANNER

AP National Writer

Resolved for 2005: No tigers as pets in New York, better access to health care for everybody in Maine, and no lawyers or juries arguing about whether a restaurant is to blame for obesity, at least in Illinois and Missouri.

Along with dried-out Christmas trees and garbage bags full of torn wrapping paper, the new year dawns with a stack of new laws. Many states set Jan. 1 as the effective date for laws passed last year, offering a few clues to the priorities, concerns and quirks of state lawmakers and the citizens who elect them.

Health care is among legislators' biggest concerns.

Maine continued to phase in its ambitious state-supported universal health care program, with coverage beginning for small businesses and the self-employed. The voluntary program provides access to affordable health care, and premiums are based on people's ability to pay.

Rhode Island expanded health insurance for disabled poor people, giving them access to a Medicaid buy-in program.

Violence in sports drew attention in

Illinois, where fans can now get up to a year in prison for assaulting umpires, referees or coaches — something that has happened at Chicago White Sox games.

In Missouri, a new law toughens inspections of bungee cords and climbing walls, after the death of a woman on a mobile climbing wall at a fair.

Wild animals are no longer allowed as pets in New York, a year after a 400-pound tiger kept in a Harlem apartment chomped on its owner's right leg. The law carries a \$500 fine for a first offense, \$1,000 for each subsequent violation.

At least two more states approved measures to protect the restaurants and fast-food chains that serve up fattening food from being sued. Illinois and Missouri joined at least 10 other states to outlaw such litigation. Their message: People make people fat, not restaurants.

"This is one more thing we don't really need on our plates," Sam Toia, owner of 17 Chicago-area restaurants serving Italian-American cuisine such as pizza and lasagna, told Illinois lawmakers, urging them to impose the ban and give restaurant management a clearer conscience.

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich said: "Obesity is a serious problem in Illinois.

... But blaming a restaurant for weight gain is not the answer."

Food also was on the minds of lawmakers in Indiana, in terms of making sure it is safe to eat. Now all restaurants, day care programs and schools will have to have at least one food handler certified in food safety.

For government itself, financial health depends on taxes. Colorado and Montana raised them on cigarettes and other tobacco products, with at least some of the money going toward health care. Pennsylvania raised its fees on boaters and anglers.

Montana cut its income taxes by an average of 7 percent, saving an average household roughly \$170 and costing the state some \$40 million each year. The cut was approved in 2003 but delayed for a year.

Rhode Island continued to restructure its government, shifting more power to the governor by barring legislators from serving on, or making appointments to, many of the state's boards and commissions.

Crime and punishment, as always, came up for more scrutiny in many states.

Florida judges can now order that people with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or manic depression get outpatient

treatment. The law was the project of Linda Gregory, whose husband, a deputy sheriff, was shot and killed by a mentally ill man.

"The sheriff and I decided to make good come of it," she said. "If we wait until someone becomes an imminent danger to themselves or others, at that point it becomes too late."

Elsewhere, Georgia has made it a felony carrying a five-year prison term to remove or destroy an electronic monitoring bracelet. Illinois will now require arsonists to register with the state like sex offenders, and Missouri expanded its collection of DNA from just violent felons to all felons and provided for restitution for those convicts who are cleared by DNA evidence.

Meanwhile, in Illinois, teenagers can no longer drop out of school at 16; they must wait until they are 17.

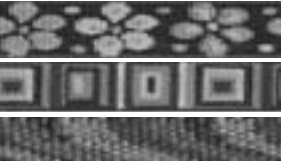
And in New York, legislators overrode Gov. George Pataki's veto to give minimum-wage workers a \$2 raise — lifting their pay to \$7.15 an hour in phases over the next two years.

"It's ridiculous in one of the most expensive cities in the world to have to survive on \$5.15," said Rafael Duran, a Manhattan restaurant worker. "Pataki doesn't know what it's like to live on that."



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Agency infighting leaves door open for terrorists

BY CURT ANDERSON
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — More than three years after the Sept. 11 attacks, the Bush administration has failed to create a unified U.S. fingerprint database because of agency infighting, meaning most visitors to the country still aren't fully screened for terrorist or criminal ties, the Justice Department's watchdog warned Wednesday.

The continued bureaucratic clashing — the very behavior the Bush administration pledged to end after the attacks — is causing serious delays in solving the problem. In his fourth report about the situation, Inspector General Glenn A. Fine said the situation "creates a risk that a terrorist could enter the country undetected."

Despite some improvement, the Justice, State and Homeland Security departments are at an impasse over such basic issues as whether two or 10 fingers should be printed at U.S. borders and which law enforcement agencies should have access to immigration information.

"Progress toward the longer-term goal of making all biometric fingerprint systems fully interoperable has stalled," Fine's report concluded.

Without an integrated system, the review found that watch lists used to check certain visitors at the borders contain only a small portion of the 47 million records in FBI fingerprint files — the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System, or IAFIS — and that these incomplete lists are prone to error.

Current Homeland Security plans call for fingerprint checking against FBI files of fewer than 1 percent of the estimated 118,000 daily U.S. visitors whose prints should be checked, or fewer than 1,180. Yet by the end of 2005, the officials expect to check only about 800 people a day against the FBI database.

"The likelihood of missing a criminal alien or terrorist is increased" without expanded use of the FBI files, Fine said.

Sen. Charles Grassley, a senior member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said creation of a single system should be "counterterrorism 101."

"What more will it take for these bureaucracies to realize that integration of these databases is not only necessary but essential to the war on terror?" said Grassley, R-Iowa.

Since the 2001 attacks, Congress has repeatedly pushed the agencies to devise a single, quick fingerprint identification system that could be used by all law enforcement agencies as well as immigration and intelligence officials. The agencies' inability to reach common ground runs counter to the repeated pledges of cooperation that followed the Sept. 11 attacks.

The agencies "have different sets of mission objectives, and each one has been a forceful advocate for its respective posi-

tion," said Justice Department top administrative official Paul Cortis.

One key unresolved question is how many fingers should be printed and how. The Justice Department sides with the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which has recommended taking 10 "flat" fingerprints along with a digital photograph of the individual. These "flat" prints, NIST says, are almost as accurate as the "rolled" fingerprints favored by the FBI and should take only 10 to 15 seconds longer than taking just two finger prints.

The Homeland Security and State departments, which now take only two finger prints, disagree with NIST. In a letter to Fine, Homeland Security Undersecretary Asa Hutchinson cited "inaccuracies and incorrect assumptions" in the review, including estimated costs, time delays and workload increases of moving to a 10-print system.

The system "is not designed for booking criminals," Hutchinson said, but is intended as a "lookout" for suspect individuals.

Janice L. Jacobs, the State Department's top visa services official, said a test program in Monterrey, Mexico, found that it took up to a minute longer to take 10 prints. "Adding one minute of processing time to 7 million visa applications annually has significant workload implications," Jacobs wrote to Fine.

Homeland Security officials also have resisted giving the FBI and other law enforcement agencies access to its visitor records, partly to ensure the privacy of those individuals.

In addition, the problem of inaccuracies in various watch lists has occurred repeatedly since Sept. 11, and some groups have complained loudly that they are unfairly singled out for scrutiny.

One such incident occurred earlier this week when about 40 American Muslims were held for questioning and fingerprinted as they returned to the United States via Niagara Falls, N.Y., from an Islamic conference in Toronto, Canada. Some were held for up to six hours Sunday night and early Monday.

"The image of a room full of American Muslim citizens apparently being held solely because of their faith and the fact that they attended an Islamic conference is one that should be disturbing to all Americans who value religious freedom," said Nihad Awad, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Fine made a number of recommendations intended to accelerate progress on the fingerprint system, warning that further delays will increase costs.

On top of that, he warned that the current FBI fingerprint file's capacity to handle search requests could be severely taxed — meaning more system outages and delays — if all foreign visitors envisioned are checked.

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NATIONAL

Opportunity knocks for fiscal conservatives

BY WILL LESTER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Political conservatives have their best opportunity in years to push successfully for changes to taxes, entitlements and the courts — but they face a special set of obstacles.

"If we don't get it done now, we may never get it done," said Steve Moore, president of the Club for Growth, an anti-tax group. Citing former leaders of the Democratic Party, Moore said, "There's no more blaming Tom Daschle, Dick Gephardt and Bill Clinton."

With President Bush elected to a second term and Republicans strengthening their control in both the House and Senate, the GOP appears well-positioned to push for changes conservatives have sought for a decade or more.

Fiscal conservatives say they're eager to see the federal tax system overhauled, permanent tax cuts and Social Security revamped to allow private accounts for investment.

Social conservatives want to push for a federal ban on gay marriage, new restrictions on abortion and rollbacks of laws limiting a church's participation in politics.

They all agree on one priority. "The Supreme Court trumps everything for conservatives," said Karlyn Bowman of the American Enterprise

Institute. "The shape of the court has the most long-term effects."

The president, whose nominees are likely to be young and conservative, will probably get one or more openings to fill on the Supreme Court during his second term. Chief Justice William Rehnquist is seriously ill with thyroid cancer, and all the justices on the Supreme Court except Clarence Thomas are over age 65.

The Christian Coalition placed confirming Bush nominees for judgeships — and especially the Supreme Court — high on its list of priorities.

"It's very important that the president gets his choices for judges confirmed," said Roberta Combs, president of the Christian Coalition. "Judges are supposed to interpret the law, not legislate."

Phyllis Schlafly, a longtime conservative activist, said simply, "We want a pro-life nominee."

Senate Democrats have consistently voted to block judicial nominees they find objectionable, said Douglas Johnson, legislative director of the National Right to Life Committee. "There's substantial evidence that was politically costly this year," he said.

In the meantime, Johnson wants Congress to pass legislation that would make it a federal offense to take minors across state lines to get an abortion — that and other measures aimed at curbing

See **COURTING CHANGE**, page 11

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NATIONAL



GOP courting change in Bush's second term

COURTING CHANGE, from page 10

abortion.

Yet the path for the GOP and its conservative allies is not clear of potential barriers:

■ The president's job approval rating is hovering around 50 percent, a level that could keep Republican members of Congress on edge as they tackle high-risk projects.

■ GOP members of Congress will be wary about voters' tendency to cast ballots in midterm elections against lawmakers from the party holding the White House.

■ Some Republicans will be skittish about supporting broad proposals without knowing more specifics.

■ Opposition groups and their Democratic allies in Congress are likely to fight harder than ever to block changes in entitlement programs and the courts.

Conservatives are happy that Bush is pushing for changes to Social Security,

the income tax system and the limits on damage lawsuits, said David Keene, chairman of the American Conservative Union. Along with many other conservatives, Keene wants more restraint in spending.

"Like a lot of presidents during wartime, the president wasn't minding the store on domestic spending," said Keene.

"Conservatives agree on the end goal," said Michael Franc, a congressional analyst at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank. "The problems come in how to get from here to there. Republicans don't want to do something that would jeopardize their majority."

Traditional conservatives acknowledge mixed feelings about the Iraq war, which has been strongly supported by the "neo-conservatives" who prefer an aggressive foreign policy.

"Going after Saddam Hussein was justifiable," Keene said. "But staying around in Baghdad to create a little America is questionable."

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41 All in

teacher

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Employment

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ConAm Management Corporation, a national property management company, is looking for an experienced regional property manager ASAP for 2,000+ unit Los Angeles-area portfolio. Qualified candidates will have a proven track record of success in a similar position along with a minimum 5-year experience in the property management industry and at least 2-years in a multi-site supervisory role. Experience in the local Los Angeles-area preferred but not required. Strong leadership, financial analysis, marketing, and associate development skills will be essential for candidate to successfully manage portfolio. Prior experience with Yardi Voyager 5.0TM software a plus. Competitive salary and benefits package with a progressive company and dynamic regional team. Desired start date mid-January but no later than 2/1/05. Please fax confidential resume and salary requirements to (858) 614-7577. EOE. Drug screen required.

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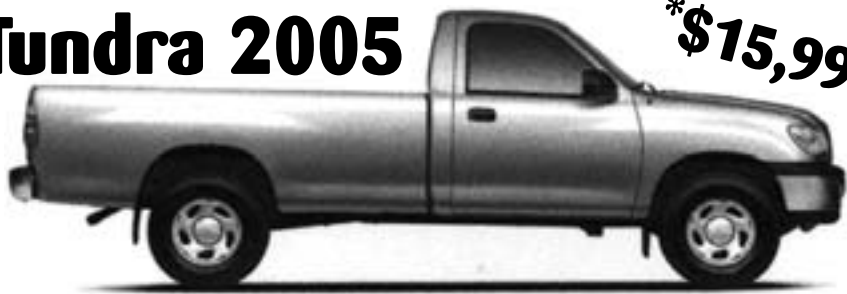
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

BoSox' Damon goes yard again, this time at altar

By The Associated Press

BOSTON — Red Sox center fielder Johnny Damon, still sporting his trademark long locks, married Michelle Mangan in a ceremony in Florida this week.

The bride wore an ivory Vera Wang gown with a chapel-length train and long veil; the groom was dressed in a tux and silver tie.

AC/DC lead singer Brian Johnson, celebrity chef Todd English and Damon's Red Sox teammates Doug Mientkiewicz, Mike Timlin, Kevin Millar, Bronson Arroyo and Kevin Youkilis were among the 175 guests who attended the ceremony Thursday at Orlando's Ritz Carlton Grande Lakes Hotel.

"Michelle's a great girl, and it's time I started settling down," Damon told The Boston Globe. "She's had a huge influence on me. She lets me be me. She's amazing."

It was the second marriage for the 31-year-old Damon, whose 5-year-old twins, Madelyn and Jackson, served as flower girl and ring bearer.

The reception capped three days of events, including a private comedy show for guests featuring Mike O'Malley, Craig Shoemaker and Seth Meyers of NBC's "Saturday Night Live."

Damon walked down the aisle to "Brand New Man" by Brooks & Dunn. Mangan walked in to Lauryn Hill's "Can't Take My Eyes Off of You."

NEW YORK — Indian actress Aishwarya Rai has never had an on-screen kiss, but that doesn't mean she won't smooch on the silver screen once she makes Hollywood movies.

"It would definitely be a topic of discussion," Rai told CBS' "60 Minutes" in an interview to air Sunday. Excerpts of the interview were released in advance.

Rai has starred in some two dozen Bollywood films and adorned overseas ad campaigns for DeBeers, L'Oreal and Coca-Cola.

The 30-year-old actress, a former Miss World, said a kiss is not just a kiss in Bollywood movies, where song and dance routines are often metaphors for sex and passion.

"In our society, you don't really see people around the street corner kissing or being extremely or overtly physically demonstrative," she said.

Her latest film, "Bride & Prejudice," will be released in U.S. theaters next year. The British romance movie, directed by "Bend It Like Beckham" filmmaker Gurinder Chadha and based on Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," combines elements of Indian and Western film.

"We'll cross the bridge when we reach it," Rai said of future love scenes.

SPANISHBURG, W.Va. — Ryns Boschma followed his ears and heart to a small Mercer County bridge named in honor of country singer Hank Williams Sr.

Boschma, 40, an art teacher from Leystad, Netherlands, traveled to the United States to visit the places of Williams' last ride and to participate in a ceremony scheduled Saturday in Montgomery, Ala. He made it to the Hank Williams Sr. Memorial Bridge near Spanishburg earlier this week.

The 29-year-old singer was pronounced dead at an Oak Hill hospital on New Year's Day in 1953. He had been traveling from Montgomery to a concert in Canton, Ohio. The official cause of death was heart failure.

Boschma said he became curious about Williams in the 1980s after seeing his photo on the cover of an album.

"I was curious about his looks. His white suit and white hat made him look different," he said. "It wasn't very hip to look like that in the '80s."

Boschma borrowed the album and was immediately moved by Williams' music.

"I liked the emotion and I liked his words," he said. "I

liked how he worked his phrases and sentences and the simplicity of his music. His music made me very quiet."

Williams' hits included "Your Cheatin' Heart," "Jambalaya (on the Bayou)," "Hey, Good Lookin'" and "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry."

LOS ANGELES — Married filmmakers Chris Kentis and Laura Lau escaped being pulled into a real-life version of their thriller "Open Water" when the resort island of Phuket in Thailand was struck by last week-end's tsunami.

"I heard people yelling, 'Run, run!'" said Kentis, who wrote and directed the 2003 sleeper hit about two scuba divers stranded in shark-infested waters. "I looked behind me and I thought, 'This is what happens in a movie when there's a tidal wave.' You could hear the rumbling and this wave was coming right at us."

Kentis, 41, told The Associated Press by phone Thursday from Singapore that he fled to his upper-story hotel room, where he found his sister-in-law and other relatives.

But at that moment, his wife and 7-year-old daughter, Sabrina, were in a second-floor Internet cafe, trapped by a phone booth lodged in the stairwell. The power went out and electric lines popped all around them.

"I saw the wave come over the street. It just washed away absolutely everything in its path. I just couldn't believe my eyes," said Lau.

The government in Thailand said Friday its death toll from Sunday's massive earthquake and tsunami waves had doubled to more than 4,500 people, almost half of them foreigners who had been vacationing on the country's renowned white-sand beaches.

Lau, 41, said she pulled about a half-dozen Swedish tourists to safety using a bamboo ladder before using it herself to escape from the cafe's balcony with Sabrina on her back. They reached Kentis by hiking in waist-deep water back to the hotel.

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