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Santa Monica Daily Press
FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 2013
Volume 12 Issue 47



Santa Monica Daily Press

We have you covered

NEW TAKE ON FREUD
SEE PAGE 3

THE WARMING UP ISSUE

Man sentenced for German tourist murder

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES A South Los Angeles man who went on the run for a decade was sentenced to 32 years to life in prison Thursday for a botched robbery that killed a German tourist.



CARPENTER

Paul Carpenter, 35, was sentenced for his role in the October 1998 killing of Horst Fietz near a Santa Monica hotel. Fietz, 50, a building supervisor from Lobau, Germany, was shot when he refused to hand over his wife's handbag to three robbers who fled without taking anything.

A hotel security camera recorded the

SEE MURDER PAGE 9

Landlord to pay more than $12K in tenant harassment lawsuit

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Editor-in-Chief

CITY HALL The owner of an 18-unit apartment building on Hollister Avenue and his property manager have been ordered to pay more than $12,000 and attend a fair housing class after city officials sued them for harassing a longtime tenant.

The court judgment and injunction against George Bassiry and his manager, Gilbert Rodriguez, was reached Dec. 20, 2012, the same day that the city attorney's Consumer Protection Unit filed a tenant harassment lawsuit against them, city officials stated Thursday in a news release.

City attorneys claimed the pair tried to get Cordula Ohman, a senior citizen, to

SEE SUIT PAGE 10



Daniel Archuleta *daniela@smdp.com*

HELPING HAND: **Pico Youth & Family Center is located on Pico Boulevard. The center was created to help at-risk youth.**

City staff recommends cutting funding to Pico youth center

Alleged organizational weakness, persistent problems doom center

BY ASHLEY ARCHIBALD
Daily Press Staff Writer

PICO BLVD City officials are recommending the City Council cut off funding to a youth center less than a month after half of its board members resigned over differences with the executive director.

The board members' departures as well as an unflattering report by an outside consultant raised red flags for City Hall, which felt the Pico Youth & Family Center (PYFC) was falling apart, said Julie Rusk, assistant director of the Community & Cultural Services Department.

"That was a major signal that the organizational structure had collapsed," Rusk said. "We fund organizations, so we look for organizational stability and strength."

PYFC Executive Director and co-founder Oscar de la Torre, who took the brunt of the ex-board members' criticism in their letters of resignation, blames the chaos on internal squabbles and a poorly-handled attempt to transition him out of his leadership role.

Ignored in the equation is the work that the center has done to address at-risk youth and gang violence, he said.

"The sum of our good is 100 times better than the sum of our faults," de la Torre said.

Against the backdrop of the upheaval at the center, de la Torre has also filed a complaint against City Manager Rod Gould alleging character assassination and efforts to repress free speech.

The recommendation comes as the youth center reaches the end of a six-month "Last Chance Agreement" that the City Council approved in May 2012.

Officials in the Human Services Grant Program, which put $7.4 million into local nonprofits in 2011-12, raised concerns about PYFC's organization and leadership, pointing to duplicate paychecks, excess payments into retirement accounts and an over-reliance on city funds rather than the center's own fundraising.

The Social and Environmental

SEE CENTER PAGE 11

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What's Up Westside

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA

Friday, Jan. 4, 2013

Game break
Main Library
601 Santa Monica Blvd.,
2 p.m. — 4 p.m.
Spend a little quality time with family and a few games. There's everything from video to board games available. Ages 4 and up. For more information, visit smpl.org.

Enter the cage
Mi's Westside Comedy Theater
1323-A Third Street Promenade, call for times
Cagematch is an improv comedy showdown where two teams enter, but only one will emerge victorious. For more information, call (310) 451-0850.

Saturday, Jan. 5, 2013

Drop it off
City Yards
2500 Michigan Ave.,
9 a.m. — 2 p.m.
Residents are invited to drop off household hazardous materials to the city's waste center. A technician will unload and process the materials for you. For more information, visit www.smgov.net.

Get published
Montana Library
1704 Montana Ave.,
12:30 p.m. — 2:30 p.m.
In this informative seminar, you will learn to self-publish your book, convert it to an e-book, sell it, make it available for download, create podcasts and protect your intellectual property. Author Mike Rounds leads the class. For more information, visit smpl.org.

Sunday, Jan. 6, 2013

Happy b-day, Marion
Annenberg Community Beach House
415 PCH, 11 a.m. — 2 p.m.
In honor of her birthday, Santa Monica Conservancy docents turn the spotlight on Marion Davies: actress, philanthropist, famed party hostess and mistress of media tycoon William Randolph Hearst. Guests are invited to come in their favorite Gold Coast era attire or dress as if attending one of Marion's famed costume parties. This year's celebration will include music and dancing. Cost: free. For more information, call (310) 496-3146.

Art by Iris
Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica
1260 18th St., 11 a.m.
Iris Klein paints, sculpts, acts, directs and coaches talent in Los Angeles and around the globe. She paints landscapes, real and imagined, exploring the human condition. She also collaborates with her husband, Jim Klein, and their work can be found in many private collections. Each Sunday in January, Iris' work will be on display. For more information, call (310) 829-5436.

To create your own listing, log on to smdp.com/submitevent

For help, contact Daniel Archuleta at 310-458-7737 or submit to editor@smdp.com

For more information on any of the events listed, log on to smdp.com/communitylistings





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Photo courtesy Broad Stage

THE CAST: **Judd Hirsch and Tom Cavanagh star in 'Freud's Last Session,' which is set to open at the Broad Stage.**

Hirsch and Cavanagh team up for 'Freud' at the Broad

MARK KENNEDY
AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK When the play "Freud's Last Session" opened in a Manhattan YMCA in 2010 it became an unlikely hit, but few could have predicted just how widely seen the session would become.

This fictional conversation between C.S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud has since been seen in Atlanta, Seattle, Philadelphia and Chicago — as well as Argentina and Sweden, among other places.

It goes next to Santa Monica with its most famous stars yet: Judd Hirsch and Tom Cavanagh, who say they were lured by a moving and provocative piece.

"My hat's off to the playwright," says Hirsch, 77, probably best known for TV roles in "Taxi" and "Numb3rs." "It could have been a really dull play."

"It might still be with us in it," replies Cavanagh.

Hirsch thinks about that.

"We could prove it," he finally agrees, smiling.

Mark St. Germain's play is set in 1939 with Europe on the brink of World War II. Lewis, a youthful Oxford professor and an atheist-turned-Christian, stops by the London home of the elderly and ailing world-renowned psychoanalyst Freud. For 90 minutes, they go head-to-head over God, love, sex and the meaning of life.

"It's a made-up conversation between a couple of intellectuals," admits Cavanagh, who has been on the TV series "Ed" and on Broadway in "Urinetown." "But it sings."

Adds Hirsch: "They both have faults — wonderful, human faults."

Adding to the tension in the play is that the atheist Freud, suffering from cancer, will kill himself a few weeks later. He has invited Lewis, the author of "The Screwtape Letters" and "The Chronicles of Narnia," for something of a last-ditch attempt to disprove God's existence.

"Everyone is either going to be on one side or the other. And so that involves a

SEE **BROAD** PAGE 9

State receives approval for health exchange

JUDY LIN
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. The federal government on Thursday approved California's plan to run its own health insurance market, a milestone in the state's effort to meet requirements of the national health care reform law.

California was among seven states that received conditional approval from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to operate their own insurance exchanges. Arkansas was approved to operate a partnership exchange with the federal government.

In all, 19 states and Washington, D.C., have been partially or fully approved. Other states have until Feb. 15 to apply for a partnership exchange.

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said Thursday's action will accelerate development of the health insurance marketplaces, where she said consumers will be able to buy affordable, high quality insurance. Conditional approval "will provide the information states need to guide their continued work."

California was the first state to authorize a health insurance exchange after passage of the federal Affordable Care Act in 2010.

The California Health Benefit Exchange board, which now goes by Covered California, submitted its operational plan last month to expand coverage by at least 2 million. The California HealthCare Foundation estimates the state has about 7.1 million people —or about 18 percent of its total population — without health insurance.

The federal health care law seeks to increase health coverage by 2014 by creating new online insurance markets for individuals and small businesses to shop for subsidized private coverage, and by expanding Medicaid for low-income people. Medicaid is known as Medi-Cal in California and currently serves 7.7 million adults and children.

In her letter to Gov. Jerry Brown, Sebelius said she was granting approval to California because of the "substantial progress the California exchange has made ..."

The approval was granted on the condition that California demonstrates it can meet exchange requirements and comply with deadlines and regulations.

Covered California plans to have its exchange up and running in time for open enrollment on Oct. 1. Health coverage would take effect Jan. 1, 2014.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Full of it

Editor:

To the Santa Monica parking office,

I ran into an absurd situation at the parking garage under the Main Library this afternoon. My attempt to reach you by phone resulted only in an endless voice-mail loop, with no opportunity to talk to a human being.

Are you aware that it is the policy of the library garage to post the "full" sign whenever the two levels devoted to monthly parkers are full, regardless of the number of spaces left on the main level for cars looking to park for less than three hours? Yes, I know this seems so absurd as to be eligible for a satirical article in The Onion, but it is indeed true.

Having noticed three or four cars exiting the garage, I concluded that there had to be a few spaces despite the sign, so I entered the garage. There were dozens of empty spaces. When I mentioned to the toll booth attendant that the sign erroneously indicated that the garage was full, she told me, with a straight face, that because monthly parkers had complained that they couldn't tell if their levels were full, it was now policy to display the "full" sign regardless of the number of spaces remaining for general use! Really? Can that possibly be official policy? It boggles the mind.

My understanding is that City Hall is trying to encourage locals and visitors to look beyond the structures at the Third Street Promenade. Way to go, folks, this should really help in that effort, right? I guess we locals may eventually realize that the "full" sign is meaningless, though it would certainly be helpful if you put out a press release advising everyone of this ridiculous policy. As for the tourists, forget it. How could they possibly know?

Surely, surely, the combined IQs of everyone in the parking department can think of a better idea than this one?

Policies don't get much dumber.

Laurie Brenner
Santa Monica



Laughing Matters

Jack Neworth

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Using fiscal CliffsNotes

EVEN THOUGH EVERYONE KNEW ABOUT the crisis for over a year, it took until hours shy of the deadline before the White House and congressional leaders avoided the fiscal cliff. Guess what? In two months we'll be repeating the process when spending cuts and the debt ceiling come due. As they say online in instant messages, "Grr!"

This outgoing 112th Congress' legislative record (worst in modern history) and the term "fiscal cliff" somehow remind me of my collegiate study habits, also the worst in modern history. (However, I wasn't getting $174,000 annually for working two days a week plus health benefits and pensions, and voting myself a raise whenever it suited me.)

At UCLA, even though I had all semester, often I would wait until the last few days (or last few hours) to cram for finals. Switching to crisis mode, I would drink coffee, take NoDoz and make use of "study guides" known as CliffsNotes, which summarized literature and history into pamphlets with a glossy yellow and black cover that were sold at the campus bookstore. For me, they were a life saver.

In 1958, Cliff Hillegass started his unique "study guide" business in his Lincoln, Neb., basement with 16 Shakespeare titles. Today there are 300 titles in 7,000 retail outlets. Critics claimed students bypassed assigned reading while Cliff insisted his "guides were not a substitute for original reading material." (I hate to break the news to you Cliff, ol' boy, but they were for me.)

By now it's obvious that perhaps I wasn't the most mature college student. How I graduated at all could make for a funny novel although today I'll settle for a funny column.

A perfect example was a fiasco in an advanced speech class in my sophomore year. I should point out that at UCLA, roll was not taken so attending class was voluntary. (At least that was my interpretation on sunny days when debating going to the beach or sitting in class.)

I rationalized, "How much would I learn from hearing other people's speeches as long as I did a good job on my own." It somehow worked until one fateful Wednesday before the Thanksgiving break. (All these years later, if I eat too much spicy food before bed, I can still have nightmares about it.)

Tuesday a classmate called out of the blue about my speech due the next day. Having not attended class in a while I didn't realize. Even worse, while the subject was "civil disobedience," I didn't know which side of the issue I was to speak on. Yikes!

I had no choice but to write and memorize two speeches on civil disobedience, one in favor and one opposed. (Good training for schizophrenia.) When I entered class the following morning, suffering from a bad case of coffee nerves, I saw my name on the blackboard as fourth up to speak and that I was "against" civil disobedience. In my mind I immediately tried to replace Gandhi's quotes with J.Edgar Hoover's but it wasn't working.

My only hope was to stall for time so that my turn would be postponed until Monday. After each speech I asked endless questions and made as many comments as I could muster. Classmates found it odd that a guy who ditched class so often was suddenly so intently interested. I shrugged sheepishly. Meanwhile, the hands on the clock moved so slowly I thought they were broken.

Finally it was my turn. Like a condemned man, I walked slowly toward the podium, my head spinning. Imagine "The Godfather" scene at the Italian restaurant where Michael Corleone is about to kill a drug kingpin and his corrupt cop bodyguard. Michael's brain races so fast that he can't hear a word even though they are talking directly at him. Finally, he pulls the trigger.

Apparently, I was more like Fredo than Michael. (Ouch!) Stepping toward the podium, at the last moment I opened the door and casually left the room. What had I done? I wasn't sure but as I walked down the hallway I could hear the laughter echo off the walls. It was deafening.

Over Thanksgiving I frantically tried to come up with a plausible story. By Monday my excuse was that I had a gym class before speech (which I had) and had left my notes in my locker and went back to retrieve them. (Which I hadn't.) I eventually got a C in the class instead of a B, and the teacher told me my "disappearing act" was the reason. Frankly, I was relieved I didn't get an F.

Whereas I had Thanksgiving weekend, Congress has two months. My guess is their story will be just as lame as mine. And with Congress' approval polls at 9 percent, I have a feeling very few voters will give them a passing grade. (And yet most members of Congress will undoubtedly get re-elected. Grr No. 2.)

As for Cliff Hillegass, he died in Lincoln, Neb., in 2001 at the age of 83. I hoped he'd find it poetic justice that I researched him on the modern day CliffsNotes — Wikipedia.

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Bieber calls for tougher rules after paparazzo death

GREG RISLING
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES The 29-year-old photographer had just snapped shots of Justin Bieber's exotic white Ferrari when he was struck and killed by a passing car — a death that has spurred renewed debate over dangers paparazzi can bring on themselves and the celebrities they chase.

The accident prompted some stars including the teen heartthrob himself on Wednesday to renew their calls for tougher laws to rein in their pursuers, though previous urgings have been stymied by First Amendment protections.

The Los Angeles County coroner's office confirmed Thursday that the photographer was Christopher James Guerra. Officials did not know his hometown, coroner's Lt. Larry Dietz said.

In a statement, Bieber said his prayers were with the photographer's family. Ironically, the singer wasn't even in the Ferrari on Tuesday.

"Hopefully this tragedy will finally inspire meaningful legislation and whatever other necessary steps to protect the lives and safety of celebrities, police officers, innocent public bystanders, and the photographers themselves," Bieber said in the statement released by Island Def Jam Music Group.

Much of Hollywood was abuzz about the death, including Miley Cyrus, who sent several tweets critical of some of the actions of paparazzi and lamenting that the unfortunate accident was "bound to happen."

"Hope this paparazzi/JB accident brings on some changes in '13," Cyrus said on her Twitter page. "Paparazzi are dangerous! Wasn't Princess Di enough of a wake-up call?!"

Paparazzi roaming the streets of Southern California have been commonplace for more than a decade as the shutterbugs looked to land exclusive shots that can fetch hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Industry veterans recalled incidents where paparazzi chasing celebrities have been injured, but they couldn't remember a photographer being killed while working.

"Here in the state of California, I'm surprised this hasn't happened before," said Giles Harrison, a celebrity photographer and owner of London Entertainment Group.

Harrison is familiar with the backlash against paparazzi. He and another photographer were convicted of misdemeanor false imprisonment and sentenced to jail for boxing in Arnold Schwarzenegger and his family as they sat in their Hummer in 1998.

Citing that incident and the death of Princess Diana, the state Legislature passed its first anti-paparazzi measure a year later. It created hefty civil penalties that could be paid to stars whose privacy was invaded.

Six months ago, a paparazzo was charged with reckless driving in a high-speed pursuit of Bieber and with violating a separate, 2010 state law that toughened punishment for those who drive dangerously in pursuit of photos for commercial gain.

However, a judge last month dismissed the paparazzi law charges, saying the law was overly broad.

The judge cited problems with the statute, saying it was aimed at newsgathering activities protected by the First Amendment, and lawmakers should have increased penalties for reckless driving rather than target those who photograph celebrities.

City prosecutors said they would appeal the judge's ruling.

The law was prompted by the experiences of Jennifer Aniston, who provided details to a lawmaker about being unable to drive away after she was surrounded by paparazzi on Pacific Coast Highway.

On Tuesday, a friend of Bieber's was behind the wheel of the Ferrari when a California Highway Patrol officer pulled it over for speeding along Interstate 405, authorities said.

The driver, whose name was not released, was given a verbal warning and wasn't ticketed, CHP Officer Vince Ramirez said Thursday.

"This photographer evidently had been following the white Ferrari" and when it was pulled over after sundown he stopped, parked and crossed the street to snap photos, Los Angeles police Detective Charles Walton said.

The photographer stood on a low freeway railing to shoot photographs of the traffic stop over a chain-link fence, authorities said.

"The CHP officer told him numerous times that it wasn't safe for him to be there and to return to his vehicle," Walton said.

There were no sidewalks or pedestrian crossings along the street where the photographer had parked, so the driver of the car that struck him had no reason to expect a pedestrian, Walton said of the accident.

"It would have been very difficult for her to see him," the detective said.

It wasn't immediately clear how fast the motorist, a 69-year-old woman, was traveling, but she was not believe to be at fault and was unlikely to be cited, police said.

The Q Line

Priorities for 2013

Everyone is talking about making resolutions for the new year. Plenty of people are going to focus on their finances or their bulging waistlines. Others will try and be more compassionate by volunteering. It's all about charting a new course in life. Which had us thinking about the future of Santa Monica.

So, this week's Q-Line question asks:
What course should the City Council, the school board and other powers that be take in the new year? Where do you want to see Santa Monica end up at the end of 2013?

Contact **qline@smdp.com** before **Friday at 5 p.m.** and we'll print your answers in the weekend edition of the Daily Press. You can also call **310-573-8354**.


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Speaker: Navid M. Ziran, MD
Reservation Code: #1211N

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[1] Comparison THA procedure data on file at DePuy Orthopaedics, Inc.
[2] Matta JM, Ferguson TA. THA After Acetabular Fracture. Orthopedics. September 2005;28(9):959-960.
[3] Matta JM, Shahrdar C, Ferguson T. Single-Incision Anterior Approach for Total Hip Arthroplasty on an Orthopedic Table. Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research. December 2005;441:115-124.

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NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE SANTA MONICA PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: A Public Hearing will be held by the Planning Commission on the following:

Conditional Use Permit 12-010, 395 Santa Monica Place, #308. The applicant requests approval of a Conditional Use Permit (12CUP010) to allow the on-site sale and consumption of distilled spirits, beer and wine (Type 47) in conjunction with a full-service restaurant in Santa Monica Place. The proposed restaurant, Redwood Grille, occupies an 8,822 square foot tenant space and consists of 187 interior seats and 109 exterior seats. Pursuant to SMMC 9.04.10.18.020, a Conditional Use Permit shall be required when existing alcohol outlet operations have been discontinued for a period of over one year. [Planner: Grace Page] **APPLICANT: Redwood Grille Santa Monica, LLC. PROPERTY OWNER: Macerich Santa Monica Place, LLC.**

Conditional Use Permit 12-011, 1329 Santa Monica Boulevard. A Conditional Use Permit to allow the on-site sale and consumption of beer, wine and distilled spirits at a new 1,986 square-foot restaurant in the C4 District. [Planner: Russell Bunim] **APPLICANT: Truxton's American Bistro Santa Monica, LLC. PROPERTY OWNER: Henry & Regina Yarmark Lifetime Trust.**

WHEN: **Wednesday, January 16, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.**

WHERE: Council Chambers, City Hall
1685 Main Street
Santa Monica, California

HOW TO COMMENT
The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment. You may comment at the Planning Commission public hearing, or by writing a letter or e-mail. Information received prior to the hearing will be given to the Planning Commission at the meeting.

MORE INFORMATION
If you want additional information about this project or wish to review the project, please contact the Project Planner (310) 458-8341. The Zoning Ordinance is available at the Planning Counter during business hours or available on the City's web site at www.smgov.net. The meeting facility is wheelchair accessible. If you have any disability-related accommodation request, please contact (310) 458-8341, or TYY Number: (310) 458-8696 at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting. Santa Monica "Big Blue" Bus Lines #1, #2, #3, Rapid 3, #7, and #9 service the City Hall and the Civic Center. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65009(b), if this matter is subsequently challenged in Court, the challenge may be limited to only those issues raised at the Public Hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Santa Monica at, or prior to, the Public Hearing.

ESPAÑOL: Esto es una noticia de una audiencia pública para revisar applicaciónes proponiendo desarrollo en Santa Monica. Si deseas más información, favor de llamar a Carmen Gutierrez es en la División de Planificación al número (310) 458-8341.

STATE BRIEFS

LOS ANGELES

Property tax hike possible to reduce pollution

Homeowners in Los Angeles County could see an average $54 hike on property tax bills to reduce storm and urban runoff pollution.

County officials are pushing for a ballot measure that would impose a new clean water parcel fee for 2.2 property owners. Antelope Valley homeowners aren't included.

The Los Angeles Times says it would raise about $290 million, money that would be divided among cities, watershed authorities and the county flood control district.

The Board of Supervisors could decide on Jan. 15 to move forward with an election on the parcel fee. Mail ballots are likely.

Most county watersheds do not consistently meet water quality standards despite more than $100 million spent last year by the county and flood control district. Cities spent millions more.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES

Schools face rising special education costs

A state report on special education in California has found that school districts are shouldering an increasing share of the cost of educating students with disabilities.

The report released Thursday by the state Legislative Analyst's Office says state and federal funds for special education have remained flat while the costs of educating children with disabilities has risen, leaving school districts to pay the difference.

The report says in 2005, districts assumed 32 percent of their special education costs. In 2011, that figure had risen to 39 percent.

The report also notes that many students with disabilities struggle academically. Only 11 percent of California schools met federal benchmarks for English language arts and math proficiency in 2011.

California provides special services to 686,000 children, 10 percent of public school enrollment.

AP

LOS ANGELES

Orange peels help rescuers find missing sisters

Authorities say discarded orange peels helped point rescuers to two sisters who were lost in freezing mountains north of Los Angeles.

KCBS-TV says 16-year-old Ariel Fitzmorris and 21-year-old Allison Fitzmorris went hiking near Frazier Park on New Year's Day and didn't return. They left their cells phones at home.

Searchers couldn't find them that night.

However, Sgt. Ken Smith of the Kern County Sheriff's Department says early Wednesday morning searchers found some orange peels the hikers had dropped.

That clue helped them locate the sisters about 1 ? miles from where they were last seen.

They were taken to a hospital for evaluation.

AP

LOS ANGELES

Medical pot clinic plan passes hurdle

A proposal to regulate medical marijuana clinics in Los Angeles has passed a hurdle.

The city clerk determined last week that the measure has enough signatures to go to the City Council, which can decide whether to pass it or place it on a city ballot.

The measure, sponsored by a union, pot clinic owners, employees and patients, would limit the number of dispensaries in town to 100 and set other restrictions.

A separate but similar initiative qualified last month, and the city Planning Commission has approved a third proposal that would permit about 180 clinics.

All three plans aim to replace the City Council's total ban on clinics, which was passed last year but then rescinded.

Clinics also still face federal and state prohibitions against marijuana sales.

AP

SAN FRANCISCO

AG Harris sues ConocoPhillips, Phillips 66

California Attorney General Kamala Harris is suing ConocoPhillips and its spinoff, Phillips 66, over underground tanks used to store gasoline at more than 500 gas stations in the state.

Harris alleges the companies have tampered with or disabled leak detection devices and failed to properly inspect and maintain the tanks since November 2006.

Harris accuses the companies of violating state laws intended to protect residents from contaminated groundwater.

Her civil lawsuit was filed on Wednesday in Alameda County. She was joined by district attorneys from numerous counties in the state.

ConocoPhillips spun off its refineries and pipelines last year into Phillips 66, a separate company.

AP

SACRAMENTO

Laughing gas abuser blames head shops for injury

A nitrous oxide abuser is blaming California head shops for injuries during his laughing gas highs.

Doctors say Jason Starn, who must now use a walker to get around, suffered degeneration of his spinal cord because of his nitrous oxide use.

The 35-year-old former Modesto school teacher filed a Sacramento Superior Court lawsuit last year against head shops in Modesto, Folsom and Foothill Farms, where he bought the drug in the form of gas chargers that go by the trade name Whip-It.

AP

ROCKLIN

Police: Teens drug parents to use Internet

Police say two California teenagers used a prescription sleeping medication to spike the milkshakes of too-strict parents so they could log onto the Internet.

The parents called police and the 15-year-old Rocklin girl and a 16-year-old friend were taken to Juvenile Hall. Rocklin is 20 miles northeast of Sacramento.

AP

Pension bonds add risk to public retiree crisis

JUDY LIN
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. Oakland's city leaders took a risk when, rather than lay off more staff or cut services, they decided to borrow nearly $213 million to cover pension payments owed to retired city workers. They're betting that the pension fund's investments will earn more than the cost of issuing pension obligation bonds.

If they're right, a financial burden is eased. If not, the city is saddled with paying interest on top of the payments it has promised retirees.

Len Raphael, an accountant and former candidate for city council, says officials who approved the bonds last year acted without understanding the risks or crafting a long-term plan to bring the city's finances in order.

"They were saying, 'Let's borrow the money now, and later we'll figure out how are we going to repay it,'" Raphael said. "That was nuts."

The struggling city in the San Francisco Bay Area made a similar gamble on pension bonds 15 years ago, and the move ended up costing taxpayers $250 million because the pension fund's investments didn't yield as much as the interest owed on the bonds.

This time, Oakland officials believe the combination of record-low interest rates and an improving stock market make it a prudent move to take out a loan to cover soaring pension costs for public employees.

Governments across the country, including Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and the state of Illinois, have taken the same approach as Oakland in recent years, borrowing a combined $53 billion between 1986 and 2009 as their retirement liabilities have grown, according to a 2010 study by the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College.

Cities and states struggling with pension obligations can choose to borrow, or they can make difficult choices, as some governments have, to raise taxes, cut services and staff, or try to reduce retirement benefits.

By some estimates, Oakland has an unfunded liability of $2 billion for the pensions and medical benefits owed to all its current and retired workers. It's trying to reduce the amount owed to 1,000 retired police and firefighters with the $213 million it borrowed in July at an interest rate of 4.46 percent.

If the investments in the city's police and firefighter pension fund yield at least that much, Oakland's gamble will pay off. The borrowing has improved the status of Oakland's system from 37.5 percent funded to nearly 70 percent, with assets now valued at $466 million.

Assistant City Administrator Scott Johnson said the move is fiscally responsible because interest rates are low and the city will be able to repay the bonds using a dedicated parcel tax.

The city is projecting a return of 6.75 percent a year — a conservative rate compared with the stock market's long-term average. But there's always the possibility of a poorer performance. The average return on Oakland's pension fund for the past five years — amid the housing market crash and the Great Recession — was 2.5 percent, according to the fund's September performance report.

It can be a dangerous gamble, said Marcia Van Wagner, a senior analyst at Moody's Investors Service.

"It's like borrowing money to pay your groceries. If you do that every month, you're going to end up with a lot of debt, and you continue to need to pay your groceries," Van Wagner said.

The Government Finance Officers Association advises state and local governments to use "considerable caution" when considering pension obligation bonds. Despite low interest rates for borrowing, the stock market remains volatile.

Still, against the backdrop of municipal budget deficits, borrowing can be an appealing alternative for elected officials who otherwise would have to cut jobs and services or raise taxes to give retirees their pension checks. That helps explain why, in the three decades since Oakland became the first government to use bonds to cover pensions costs, hundreds have followed suit despite the risk.

The Center for Retirement Research's study, which examined nearly 3,000 pension obligation bonds issued by 236 governments between 1986 and 2009, found that most of the bonds did not work as government officials had hoped.

"Only those bonds issued a very long time ago and those issued during dramatic stock market downturns have produced a positive return; all others are in the red," the report stated.

Issuing such bonds can also hurt a government's credit rating and increase the cost of borrowing. According to a December report by Moody's, pension obligation bonds tend to reflect poorly on the quality of management and is viewed as "part of a continuous pattern of reliance on one-time resources."

When the city of Stockton, Calif., filed for bankruptcy, it blamed its problems in part on pension bond debt.

"They're assuming the bond proceeds will be invested and earn a healthy rate of return, and that creates savings for them in their budget," said Tim Blake, managing director in Moody's public finance ratings group. "But our view would be that those savings are subject to risk."

Illinois, which has one of the lowest state credit ratings, is by far the largest issuer of pension bonds, with more than $17 billion. Much of that was used to keep up with required contributions to pension funds. Illinois issued the bonds in 2003, 2010 and 2011 but will not use the strategy again, said John Sinsheimer, the state's director of capital markets.

Kansas, New Jersey and Oregon are among the other states that have borrowed to keep up with public employee pension costs.

In Kentucky, the Pew Center on the States recommended issuing pension bonds along with other reforms to cover an ever-growing unfunded liability that now stands at about $33 billion.

Yet a legislative task force studying the state's pension crisis rejected that recommendation in November and instead embraced other recommendations, such as repealing cost-of-living increases for new retirees and moving workers to a hybrid plan that blends defined benefits with defined contributions.

Other governments continue to take the plunge. Fort Lauderdale approved borrowing up to $340 million in pension obligation bonds to cover much of the city's $400 million in unfunded pension liabilities at an estimated 3.9 percent interest rate.

Last month, officials in Baltimore County, Md., sold $256 million in pension bonds, projecting the move will save $343 million over 30 years.

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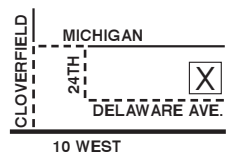


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CRIME WATCH
BY DAILY PRESS STAFF



Don't toy with guns

Crime Watch is a weekly series culled from reports provided by the Santa Monica Police Department. These are arrests only. All parties are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

FRIDAY, DEC. 28, AT 5:30 P.M.,
Santa Monica police officers were flagged down along the 1300 block of the Third Street Promenade regarding a man with a gun. A woman told the officers that she saw a man with a gun in his right hand. She said the man then placed the gun in the waistband of his trousers. Officers saw the suspect at the corner of Fourth Street and Santa Monica Boulevard. Officers approached the suspect and located the gun in the suspect's trousers. Officers examined the gun and determined that it was a toy replica. The suspect put black tape around the barrel, trigger and hammer in an attempt to make it look real, police said. Officers arrested the suspect for altering a firearm. He was identified as Dylan Stall, 18, a transient. His bail was set at $500.

SATURDAY, DEC. 29, AT 1:26 A.M.,
Officers were on routine patrol along the 1200 block of Arizona Avenue when they saw a man leaving a carport to the rear of an apartment building. He was dressed in dark clothing and wore a backpack. Officers drove around to the alley and saw the suspect kneeling down adjacent to a Ford Mustang. The vehicle was parked in an adjacent carport the suspect was previously seen in. When the suspect saw police, he sat down and leaned against a wall. Officers spoke with him and the suspect could not explain why he was in the carport. He also allegedly provided a false name. When officers learned his real name, they learned he was on parole and placed him under arrest for prowling, providing false information to police and a parole violation. He was identified as Daniel Moretti, 33, a transient. No bail was set.

MONDAY, DEC. 31, AT 8:23 P.M.,
Officers responded to the 2100 block of Lincoln Boulevard — Santa Monica Motel — regarding a report of a man with a knife. When officers arrived they made contact with the woman who called police. She said that the suspect was intoxicated, aggressive and attacked another guest at the motel. That guest was cut on his hand. Officers saw the suspect trying to leave the motel and detained him without incident. The woman who called police said that she tried to evict the suspect because he had stayed past the checkout time. That's when he allegedly became abusive and started chasing the woman with the knife. The other guest stepped in and that's when he was cut, police said. Officers found the knife in the motel room where the suspect was staying. He was placed under arrest for assault with a deadly weapon. He was identified as Nicholas Chasin, 27, of Malibu, Calif. His bail was set at $30,000.

MONDAY, DEC. 31, AT 11:12 A.M.,
Officers responded to the 1600 block of Cloverfield Boulevard — Ralphs — regarding a report of a drunk customer. When officers arrived they found paramedics already on scene. The suspect allegedly exhibited symptoms of being under the influence of alcohol. He was placed under arrest for public intoxication. He was identified as Kevin Flowers, 44, of Venice, Calif. His bail was set at $250.

TUESDAY, JAN. 1, AT 12:37 A.M.,
Officers responded to the 3100 block of Highland Avenue regarding a family disturbance. When officers arrived they made contact with a woman who said that after midnight her husband was receiving phone calls and texts on his cell phone. When she picked up the phone to check the messages, he allegedly tried to grab the phone away. A struggle ensued and the woman was struck in the head by her husband, police said. She did not have any visible signs of injuries. The suspect, Timothy Stewart, 53, of Santa Monica, was arrested for battery on a spouse. His bail was set at $20,000.

TUESDAY, JAN. 1, AT 2:20 A.M.,
Police officers on routine patrol on the 2100 block of Wilshire Boulevard saw LAPD officers placing handcuffs on a handful of people at the rear of the Gaslight bar. Police said that an alleged victim of an assault flagged down the LAPD officers for assistance. The man told police that several men beat him up. He pointed out one of them and asked that he be arrested. The man said he was knocked to the ground and was punched and kicked. He had a cut to his upper lip and complained of pain to his head and torso. Officers arrested the suspect, identified as Saleem Allahi, 34, of Mississippi, for assault. His bail was set at $30,000.

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news@smdp.com

Editor-in-Chief Kevin Herrera compiled these reports.



BROAD
FROM PAGE 3

choice. These characters are expressing how they arrived at their particular choice," says Cavanagh, 44, during a break as the two rehearse in New York before going West.

"Depending on how open your ears are and how much you want to hear, you're either going to have your position calcified a little bit or perhaps it'll be chipped into a little bit. I think both instances are interesting for an audience."

The acting duo, who both live in New York, will be appearing in the play at the 499-seat Broad Stage at the Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center from Jan. 11 to Feb. 10.

The play marks the first time Cavanagh and the Tony, Emmy and Golden Globe Award-winner Hirsch have worked together. Cavanagh saw the play off-Broadway before it closed this summer, but Hirsch hadn't seen a production before signing on, though he says he's been lately asked to play Freud several times.

The youthful-looking Cavanagh threw himself into the project. "I researched like crazy, nonstop. Videos, books, articles — I just tore it upside-down," he says.

"I came into the first day of rehearsal and they said, 'You're playing Lewis.' I was like, 'What?' I even had the accent," he jokes. "It just goes to show you — read the emails."

This play may mark the first time they are collaborating, but their chemistry both onstage and off reveals a comfortable collegiality and a willingness to banter.

"This is the first of I'm sure many combinations," says Cavanagh.

Hirsch agrees: "I expect to encounter Tom many, many times in this life."

MURDER
FROM PAGE 1

crime and police matched fingerprints found in the getaway car to two suspects who were arrested two months later. A third suspect was arrested in January 1999.

Carpenter, however, took off and remained a fugitive for nearly a decade. In 2007 the FBI sought public help in solving the cold case, noting that he used 11 aliases and four birth dates, may have traveled to San Diego and South Carolina and could be living abroad.

He was working at a BMW dealership in Kingston, Jamaica, under an assumed name when he was arrested in 2009 following a tip to the FBI.

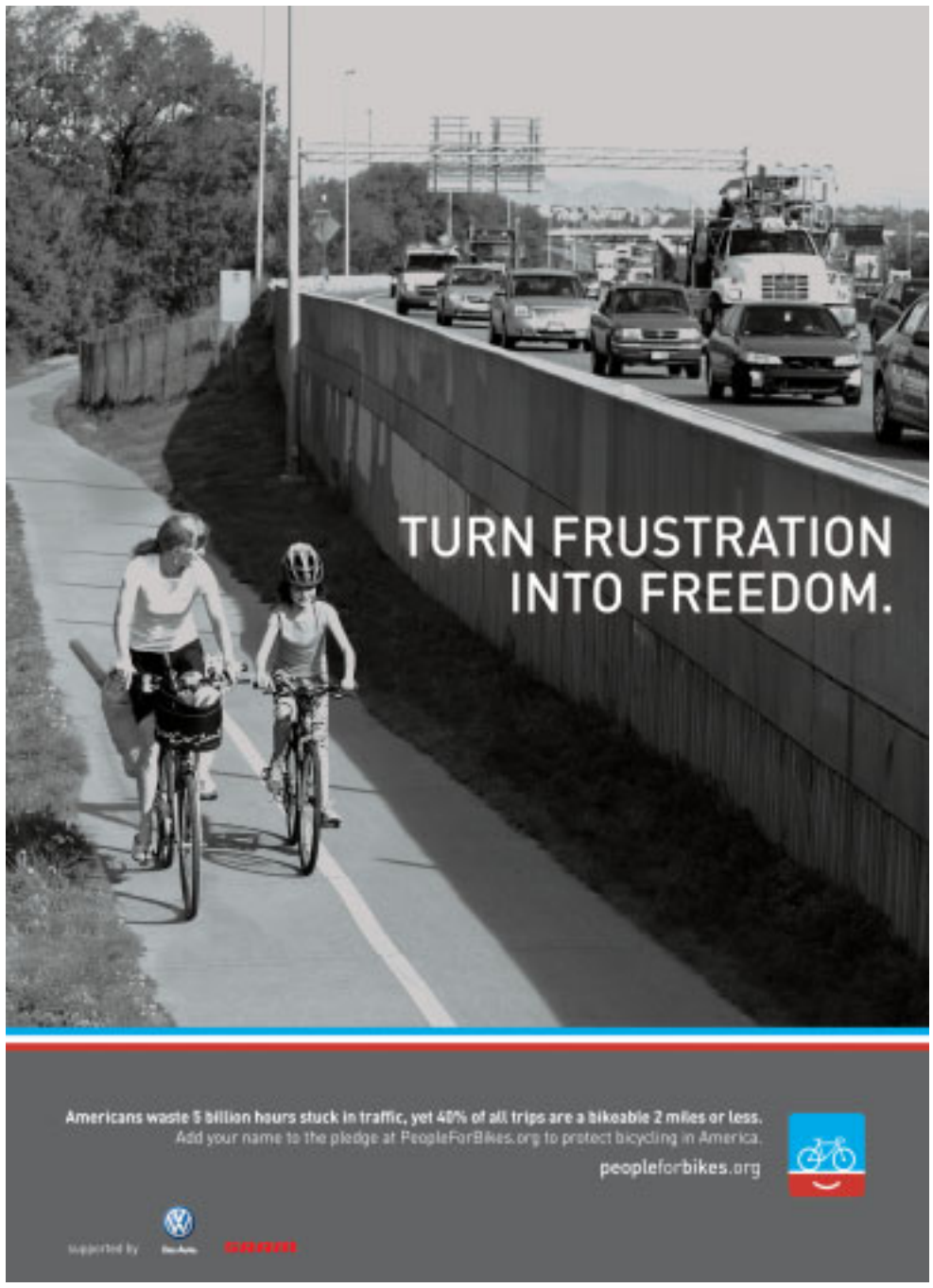
In 2011, Carpenter was convicted of first-degree murder with a special circumstance that the killing occurred during a robbery. He also was found guilty of three counts of attempted second-degree robbery with a special circumstance that he had a gun.

He was sentenced to a total of 32 years to life in state prison but will have a chance for parole, Los Angeles County district attorney's spokeswoman Jane Robison said.

Carpenter made no statement in court during his sentencing, she said.

Three other defendants were convicted in 2001 for their roles in the holdup. The gunman, Lamont Dion Santos, was sentenced to 35 years to life in prison with a chance of parole. The getaway driver, Roshana Latiesha Roberts, was sentenced to more than 13 years. An accomplice, Tyrina Lakeisha Griffin, was sentenced to 16 years to life in prison.









Daniel Archuleta *daniela@smdp.com*

THE SITE: **The property at 143 Hollister Ave. was at the center of a tenant harassment suit.**

SUIT
FROM PAGE 1

move out of her longtime, rent-controlled apartment through a series of "baseless eviction notices, lawsuits and threats."

"It was a year of hell," Ohman said.

Ohman, who lived at the property at 143 Hollister Ave. for 32 years and helped manage it for more than a decade, fought back, securing the pro-bono services of the Legal Aid Foundation and of the law firm Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher to help her defend the evictions.

"This case involved a landlord's campaign of baseless eviction attempts aimed at each tenant," said Deputy City Attorney Gary Rhoades. "Each lawsuit was dismissed by the landlord as soon as it became clear that the tenant was not going to vacate but fight."

Santa Monica law prohibits landlords from inducing rent-controlled tenants to vacate their homes through fraud, intimidation or coercion; as well as through false evictions.

The City Council in 1996 approved the Tenant Harassment Ordinance in response to a 1995 state law that weakened local rent-control ordinances. The state law allowed landlords to raise rents whenever a tenant moved out of an apartment, a significant change in Santa Monica, where the tough rent control law had long prohibited rent increases when people moved.

Bassiry was the first landlord to be sued under that ordinance when the City Attorney's Office filed a lawsuit against him for allegedly trying to coerce his tenants to move so he could raise rents, according to a report by the L.A. Times published in 1997.

"While we appreciate the landlord's cooperation in resolving the case, this is exactly the kind of misconduct the tenant harassment law was designed to prevent," Rhoades said.

Bassiry and Rodriguez could not be reached for comment.

In addition to the financial penalty and the fair housing training, both men were ordered to cease direct contact with Ohman, who complained of harassment throughout 2012.

Of the $12,800 judgement, $6,000 will go to the City Attorney's Office, $5,000 to Ohman for damages and Bassiry will have to deduct $150 from her rent each month in 2013.

"This new year is starting off very well for me," Ohman told the Daily Press Thursday. "I am delighted and very surprised. I did not expect any money."

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Hollywood


CENTER
FROM PAGE 1

Entrepreneurs organization, SEE, was brought on to act as a receiver for city funds directed to PYFC and to provide organizational support.

There was a sense of optimism through early October, bolstered by a $1.615 million gift from the estate of philanthropist Peggy Bergmann, the biggest in PYFC's history, according to its leadership.

The board also felt that it had an agreement with de la Torre to take a consultant position and give up the executive director spot, said Amanda Seward, who served as board chair for three years until she resigned in December.

Board members had hoped that de la Torre would use the consultant position to facilitate a community process to determine the future of PYFC and at the same time go out for grants and other forms of funding, Seward said.

It would have solved what Seward saw as a chief problem in the organization, that de la Torre as both co-founder and executive director misconstrued his role in the nonprofit and his relationship with his board of directors.

That caused problems in the past when de la Torre hired a person without a background check who ultimately ended up dealing drugs at the facility, Seward wrote in her letter of resignation.

"He thinks he's the board. He didn't understand we are his bosses, and we didn't understand that. We gave him chance after chance and the facts are it isn't being run right," Seward said Thursday.

Although de la Torre confirmed to the Daily Press that he wanted to leave the executive director position, he said he had no desire to take the consultant job, which cut him out of the organization's leadership and disagreed with what he perceived to be changes to the organization's mission.

That offer fell apart at a closed meeting on Nov. 20 when de la Torre and a group of supporters protested outside. Eventually, a Change.org petition directed to Seward surfaced, ostensibly to support de la Torre as executive director and ensure that the PYFC mission statement included advocacy, peace, unity and justice.

Within three weeks of that meeting, the six board members resigned, leaving the organization with no board officers.

"I do believe that peace, unity and social justice applies to everyone, and I will not participate or support any person or organization which does not actively demonstrate this belief," wrote Jan Book, former PYFC board treasurer in her letter of resignation.

Within two weeks of the Nov. 20 meeting, Sonya Sultan, one of the attorneys working on the Peggy Bergmann estate, "agreed to hold the $1.6 million check" that had been given to PYFC, according to an organizational assessment of PYFC written by Judy Spiegel, a consultant hired by SEE.

In an e-mail sent to de la Torre on Dec. 13, Sultan wrote, "… when we learned of the disarray, resignations and allegations of possible misconduct within the organization, we agreed, upon request, to hold the check pending clarification of the organization's status and/or instructions from the attorney general or from the court."

It's unclear who made that request. Seward denies doing so.

Later that month, it came to light that the center had been closed for two days in late November, although de la Torre had been paid a full day's work.

Spiegel, the consultant responsible for the organizational assessment, also asked to be taken off the PYFC assignment, saying that de la Torre and one board member had "communicated and shown a lack of respect and trust of my work."

Allegations were made that Spiegel took the consulting position to direct the Bergmann funds to the YWCA Santa Monica/Westside, and that she wanted the role of executive director, according to her letter to SEE Executive Director Jennifer Hoffman.

That's not the case, de la Torre said, although Spiegel's role as the incoming president of the YWCA, which also received Bergmann funds, raised "a question of a conflict of interest."

City officials identified other problems with the center that persisted through the six-month period, including a lack of documentation about the number of youth helped and services provided by the center.

It's difficult to determine how effective a program is if there's no evidence to back up the claims, Rusk said.

"It's a little difficult to tell from the records and files what the outcomes have been," she said.

If the City Council votes to cut the over $300,000 it gives to PYFC each year on Tuesday, there are concerns that the center will not have the cash to operate its space at 715 Pico Blvd.

Should that turn out to be the case, Rusk said, officials are prepared to step in to assume the lease and keep the doors of the center open to the youth that use it.

The City Council on Tuesday will not be discussing de la Torre's complaint, which stems from three incidents, two in 2010 and one in May 2012.

de la Torre alleges in the complaint to City Attorney Marsha Moutrie that city officials prevented him from speaking in an August 2010 "Know Your Rights" panel discussion on the grounds that he was running for Board of Education at the time.

Also in 2010, de la Torre was investigated by the Santa Monica Police Department for child endangerment after he broke up a fight near Santa Monica High School. Ultimately no charges were filed and the Office of Independent Review was critical of the lead investigator.

That same officer was involved with de la Torre's third incident, which occurred in City Council chambers this summer. He claims that he was questioned for his presence in the chambers after the City Council went into closed session and that the officer reported the information to the city manager and later made a threatening gesture toward de la Torre.

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DAVID ESPO
AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON A new Congress opened for business Thursday to confront long-festering national problems, deficits and immigration among them, in an intensely partisan and crisis-driven era of divided government. "The American dream is in peril," said House Speaker John Boehner, re-elected to his post despite a mini-revolt in Republican ranks.

Moments after grasping an oversized gavel that symbolizes his authority, Boehner implored the assembly of newcomers and veterans in the 113th Congress to tackle the nation's heavy burden of debt at long last. "We have to be willing — truly willing — to make this right."

Also on the two-year agenda is the first significant effort at an overhaul of the tax code in more than a quarter century. Republicans and Democrats alike say they want to chop at a thicket of existing tax breaks and use the resulting revenue to reduce rates.

There were personal milestones aplenty as the winners of last fall's races swore an oath of office as old as the republic.

Sens. Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, Mazie Hirono of Hawaii and Deb Fischer of Nebraska were among the newcomers sworn in, raising the number of women in the Senate to a record 20. Tim Scott of South Carolina became the first black Republican on the Senate in more than three decades.

On the first day of a new term, one veteran made a stirring comeback. Republican Sen. Mark Kirk of Illinois returned to the Capitol for the first time since suffering a stroke a year ago, walking slowly up the 45 steps to the Capitol with the use of a cane. "Good to see you, guys," he said.

Across the Capitol, children and grandchildren squirmed through opening formalities that ended with Boehner's election as the most powerful Republican in a government where President Barack Obama will soon be sworn in to a second term and his fellow Democrats control the Senate.

"At $16 trillion and rising, our national debt is draining free enterprise and weakening the ship of state," said the Ohio Republican, whose struggles to control his members persisted to the final weekend of the 112th Congress when "fiscal cliff" legislation finally cleared. "The American dream is in peril so long as its namesake is weighed down by this anchor of debt. Break its hold and we will begin to set our economy free. Jobs will come home. Confidence will come back."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said he, too, is ready for attempts to rein in federal spending, but laid down a few conditions. "Any future budget agreements must balance the need for thoughtful spending reductions with revenue from the wealthiest among us and closing wasteful tax loopholes," he said. That was in keeping with Obama's remarks after Congress had agreed on fiscal cliff legislation to raise taxes for the wealthy while keeping them level for the middle class.

Boehner and Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell have other ideas, both having said in recent days that the days of raising taxes are over.

"Now is the time to get serious about spending," McConnell said. "And if the past few weeks have taught us anything, that means the president needs to show up early this time." People won't "tolerate the kind of last-minute crises that we've seen again and again over the past four years as a result of this president's chronic inactivity and refusal to lead on the pressing issues of the day."

While neither Boehner nor Reid mentioned immigration in their opening-day speeches, Obama is expected to highlight the issue in the first State of the Union address of his new term. Lawmakers are already working toward a compromise they hope can clear both houses.

Most Democrats have long favored legislation to give millions of illegal immigrants a chance at citizenship, and Republicans have stoutly resisted. Now, though, many within the GOP appear ready to reconsider, after watching with alarm as Obama ran up an estimated 71 percent of the Hispanic vote in winning re-election over Mitt Romney in November.

There is little doubt that fiscal issues are at the forefront, though, as they have been since the economy cratered more than four years ago. The issue dominated the just-ended Congress from beginning to end as tea party-backed lawmakers pressed relentlessly to cut spending and reduce deficits.

They met with decidedly mixed success.

They won Obama's signature on $1 trillion in cuts over a decade after using the debt limit as leverage, but were forced into a humiliating surrender a year ago after trying to block an extension in payroll tax cuts. And in the last major act of the 112th Congress, they were forced to swallow legislation that contained next-to-no spending cuts, raised tax rates on the wealthy while keeping them even for the middle class and boosted deficits by an estimated $4 trillion over a decade.

And now, the newly enfranchised Congress will begin by raising deficits. National flood insurance legislation to help victims of Hurricane Sandy will create slightly more than $9 billion in red ink if it passes as expected on Friday. A follow-up disaster aid measure that Boehner has said will be brought to a vote on Jan. 15 would add $27 billion — more if the bill grows, as seems likely, after it is reconciled with a $60-billion Senate version.

The next big clash is expected to begin within weeks. A two-month delay in automatic spending cuts expires at the end of February. As well, the administration will seek authority to borrow more money in late winter or early spring, and financing expires for most government agencies on March 27.

Republicans have said they intend to seek significant savings from Medicare, Medicaid and other government benefit programs to gain control over spending. Obama has said he won't bargain over the government's borrowing authority. He has also said is open to changes in benefit programs, but would face resistance on that from liberal Democrats.

Boehner will lead a House that has a Republican majority of 233-200, with two vacancies, a loss of eight seats for the GOP. Fourteen Republicans declined to vote for him, a reflection of their unhappiness with his leadership, but several more defections would have been needed to deny him a first-ballot victory.

Democrats hold a 55-45 majority in the Senate, and control two more seats than they did the past two years.

Reid and McConnell are negotiating over possible changes in the Senate's filibuster rules to make the movement of legislation more efficient, even when it is hotly contested.

Economy, year-end sales help auto industry in 2012

DEE-ANN DURBIN & TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writers

DETROIT A steadily improving economy and strong December sales lifted the American auto industry to its best performance in five years in 2012, especially for Volkswagen and Japanese-brand vehicles, and experts say the next year should be even better.

Manufacturers on Thursday announced their final figures, which were expected to total 14.5 million — 13 percent better than 2011.

More than three years after the federal government's $62 billion auto-industry bailout, Americans had plenty of incentive to buy new cars and trucks in the year just ended.

Unemployment eased. Home sales and prices rose. And the average age of a car topped 11 years in the U.S., a record that spurred people to trade in old vehicles. Banks made that easier by offering low interest rates and greater access to loans, even for buyers with lousy credit.

"The U.S. light vehicle sales market continues to be a bright spot in the tremulous global environment," said Jeff Schuster, senior vice president of forecasting for LMC Automotive, a Detroit-area industry forecasting firm.

Sales were far better than the bleak days after the U.S. economy tanked and GM and Chrysler sought bankruptcy protection. Back then, sales fell to a 30-year low of 10.4 million, and they are still far short of the recent peak of around 17 million set in 2005.

The best part of 2012 came at the end, when special deals on pickup trucks and the usual round of sparkling holiday ads helped December sales jump 10 percent to more than 1.3 million, the TrueCar.com auto pricing site predicted. That would translate to an annual rate of more than 15.6 million, making December the strongest month of 2012.

Volkswagen led all major automakers with sales up a staggering 35 percent, led by the redesigned Passat midsize sedan. VW sold more than five times as many Passats last year as it did in 2011.

Jesse Toprak, vice president of industry trends for TrueCar, said VW has the right mix of value and attractive vehicles and called the company "the force to watch in the next several years in the U.S. market."

Toyota, which has recovered from the earthquake and tsunami in Japan that crimped its factories two years ago, saw sales jump 27 percent for 2012. December sales were up 9 percent. Unlike 2011, the company had plenty of new cars on dealer lots for most of last year.

Honda sales rose 24 percent for the year. Nissan and Infiniti sales were up nearly 10 percent as the Nissan brand topped 1 million in annual sales for the first time. Hyundai sales rose 9 percent for the year to just over 703,000, the Korean automaker's best year in the U.S.

Chrysler, the smallest of the Detroit carmakers, had the best year among U.S. companies. Its sales jumped 21 percent for the year and 10 percent in December. Demand was led by the Jeep Grand Cherokee SUV, Ram pickup and Chrysler 300 luxury sedan.

But full-year sales at Ford and General Motors lagged. Ford edged up 5 percent and GM rose only 3.7 percent for the year. For December, Ford was up 2 percent and GM up 5 percent.

GM executives said the company has the oldest model lineup in the industry, yet it still posted a sales increase and commanded high prices for cars and trucks. The company plans to refurbish 70 percent of its North American models in the next 18 months and expects to boost sales this year.

North American President Mark Reuss said the company won't give away cars and trucks with discounts like it has in the past, especially in the midst of its biggest product update ever.

"Give us 18 months and you're going to see the whole portfolio turned," Reuss said.

Even though the congressional deal to avoid the fiscal cliff deal raised tax rates on the wealthiest Americans, Ford said it doesn't see a huge impact on auto sales.

Its chief economist, Ellen Hughes-Cromwick, said only 2 percent of new-vehicle buyers have income in that upper tax bracket, and they tend to purchase even if there is a change in after-tax income.

She said Ford is more concerned about an increase in the payroll tax, which is scheduled to climb to 6.2 percent this year from 4.2 percent in 2011 and 2012. That amounts to a $1,000 to $1,500 tax increase per household, she said.

"We will look at that closely because it will crimp spending in the months ahead," she said.

December featured year-end deals on GM's big pickup trucks. The company offered discounts up to $9,000 to help clear growing inventory, and it worked. GM cut its full-size pickup supply by more than 20,000 in December to about 222,000.

Overall, though, analysts said the industry eased up on promotions such as rebates and low-interest financing. Car and truck buyers paid an average of $31,228 per vehicle last month, up 1.8 percent from December 2011.

The Polk auto research firm predicted even stronger U.S. sales for 2013, forecasting 15.3 million vehicle sales as the economy continues to improve. Polk, based in Southfield, Mich., expects 43 new models to be introduced, up 50 percent from last year. New models usually boost sales.

The firm also predicts a rebound in sales of large pickups and midsize cars. All eight of the top manufacturers are introducing new vehicles, and that should bring competition and lower prices in those segments, according to Tom Libby, lead North American analyst for Polk.

But the firm's optimistic forecasts hinge on Washington reaching an agreement on government debt limits and spending cuts.

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NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE SANTA MONICA PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: The Planning Commission will hold study session on the following:

Downtown Specific Plan: Review information regarding the emerging Downtown Specific Plan including information presented at the December 5, 2012 workshop, concepts for urban form, and an update on work underway on supporting land use, circulation, open space and arts/culture elements. Planning Commission will provide comments and direction to staff to be incorporated in subsequent work efforts.

WHEN: **Wednesday, January 9, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.**

WHERE: Council Chambers, City Hall
1685 Main Street
Santa Monica, California

HOW TO COMMENT
The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment. You may comment at the Planning Commission public hearing, or by writing a letter or e-mail. Information received prior to the hearing will be given to the Planning Commission at the meeting.

MORE INFORMATION
If you want additional information about this project or wish to review the project, please contact the Project Planner (310) 458-8341. The Zoning Ordinance is available at the Planning Counter during business hours or available on the City's web site at www.smgov.net. The meeting facility is wheelchair accessible. If you have any disability-related accommodation request, please contact (310) 458-8341, or TYY Number: (310) 458-8696 at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting. Santa Monica "Big Blue" Bus Lines #1, #2, #3, Rapid 3, #7, and #9 service the City Hall and the Civic Center. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65009(b), if this matter is subsequently challenged in Court, the challenge may be limited to only those issues raised at the Public Hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Santa Monica at, or prior to, the Public Hearing.

ESPAÑOL: Esto es una noticia de una audiencia pública para revisar applicaciónes proponiendo desarrollo en Santa Monica. Si deseas más información, favor de llamar a Peter James en la División de Planificación al número (310) 458-8341.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA LANDMARKS COMMISSION

SUBJECT: Public hearings will be held by the Landmarks Commission on the following:

101 Wilshire Boulevard, 12LM-002, Zoning: RVC (Residential Visitor Commercial) District. The City Landmarks Commission will be conducting a public hearing to consider Landmark Designation Application 12LM-002, at 101 Wilshire Boulevard, for consideration of an amendment to the existing landmark designation of the Moreton Bay fig tree (Founders Tree) on the Miramar Hotel site to include the designation of Palisades Wing of the hotel as a landmark building and identify an associated Palisades Wing Buffer Zone; identify an associated landmark parcel and consider the conversion of the existing 50-foot radius around the Founders Tree as a tree protection zone; identify contributing elements of the site; consider the adoption of a Miramar Hotel Regulatory Review Program and Activity Matrix which sets forth procedures for handling the review and approval for ongoing and potential work activities that involve the Individually Significant Landmark Features, Non-Contributing Structures, New Structures on the Landmark Parcel, Exterior Grounds and Improvements inside the Palisades Wing Buffer Zone and Exterior Grounds and Improvements outside the Palisades Wing Buffer Zone; and discussion and possible adoption of Resolution 13-001 (LC Series), which amends the Guidelines for Staff Review and Approval of Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness to include certain projects and activities identified in the Miramar Hotel Regulatory Review Program. The Landmarks Commission will make a decision regarding this amendment based on whether the application, research and public testimony presented show that one or more of the required criteria are met. Applicant: Ocean Avenue, LLC. Owner: Ocean Avenue, LLC. ***(Continued from November 12, 2012 and December 10, 2012 meeting.)***

When: **Monday, January 14, 2013 at 7:00 pm**

Where: City Council Chambers, City Hall, Room 213
1685 Main Street, Santa Monica

Questions/Comments
The City of Santa Monica encourages public comment on this and other projects. You or your representative, or any other persons may comment on the application at the Public Hearing, or by writing a letter addressed to Scott Albright, AICP, Senior Planner, City Planning Division, 1685 Main Street, Room 212, Santa Monica, California, 90401-3295. Or, you may contact Mr. Albright by phone at (310) 458-8341 or by email at scott.albright@smgov.net.

More Information
The meeting facility is wheelchair accessible. If you have any disability-related accommodation requests, please contact (310) 458-8341 or TTY (310) 458-8696 at least three days prior to the event. All written materials are available in alternate format upon request. Santa Monica Bus Lines 1, 2, 3 and 7 serve City Hall. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65009(b), if this matter is subsequently challenged in Court, the Challenge may be limited only to those issues raised at the Public Hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Santa Monica at, or prior to, the Public Hearing.

Espanol
Este es un aviso de una audiencia publica para considerar la designación de una propiedad en la ciudad como un monumento histórico. Para mas información, favor de llamar a Carmen Gutierrez en la División de Planificación al número (310) 458-8341.

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City of Santa Monica

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
SANTA MONICA ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE/TIME: January 7, 2013, 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Council Chambers, (wheelchair accessible)
Santa Monica City Hall, 1685 Main Street

PROPERTIES:

- ARB 12-457, 2901 Santa Monica Boulevard: Mixed Use
- ARB 12-487, 1415 Third Street Promenade: Fast Food Restaurant
- ARB 12-501, 2010 Wilshire Boulevard: Commercial
- ARB 12-507, 1427 Third Street Promenade: Retail
- ARB 12-511, 1801 Wilshire Boulevard: Commercial/Office

More information is available on-line at http://santa-monica.org/planning/planningcomm/arbagendas.htm or at 310/458-8341 en espanol tambien). Plans may be reviewed at City Hall during business hours. Comments are invited at the hearing or in writing (FAX 310-458-3380, e-mail laura.beck@smgov.net, or mail Santa Monica Planning Division, 1685 Main St., Rm. 212, Santa Monica, CA 90401). The meeting facility is wheelchair accessible. For disability-related accommodations, please contact 310-458-8701 or TTY 310-450-8696 a minimum of 72 hours in advance. All written materials are available in alternate format upon request. Big Blue Bus lines, 2, 3, Rapid #3, 7, & 9 serve the Santa Monica Civic Center and City Hall.

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Stocks fade after Fed officials disclose split on stimulus

MATTHEW CRAFT
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) A two-day rally in the stock market came to an end Thursday afternoon when an account of the Federal Reserve's last meeting revealed a split between bank officials over how long the Fed should keep buying bonds to support the economy.

The Dow Jones industrial average and the Standard & Poor's 500 index treaded water for much of the day, then slid into the red around 2 p.m. Eastern, after the Fed released the minutes from its December meeting.

The Dow ended with a loss of 21.19 points at 13,391.36.

The S&P 500 lost 3.05 points to 1,459.37 and the Nasdaq composite fell 11.70 to 3,100.57.

At last month's meeting of the Federal Reserve's policy-making committee, the central bank pledged to buy $85 billion of Treasurys and mortgage-backed bonds and also keep a benchmark interest rate near zero until the unemployment rates drops below 6.5 percent.

On Thursday, the minutes from that meeting showed Fed officials were divided over the bond purchases. Some of its 12 voting members thought they should continue through this year, while another group thought they should be slowed or stopped much earlier. Just "a few" members saw no need for a time frame, according to the minutes.

"It's pretty surprising," said Thomas Simons, market economist at the investment bank Jefferies. "I think everybody thought there was broad agreement on policy, but now it seems like few of them really wanted to vote for it."

The stock market opened on a weak note after retailers reported mixed holiday sales and as the prospect of a new budget battle in Congress loomed. UnitedHealth Group led the Dow lower. The insurance giant's stock fell $2.55 to $51.99 after analysts at Deutsche Bank and other firms cut their ratings on the stock.

"It's natural to relax a bit after such a huge day as yesterday," said Lawrence Creatura, who manages a small-company fund at Federated Investors.

The Dow soared 308 points Wednesday, its largest point gain since December 2011. The rally was ignited after lawmakers passed a bill to avoid a combination of government spending cuts and tax increases called the "fiscal cliff."

That deal gave the market a jump start into the new year. The Dow and the S&P 500 are already up more than 2 percent.

"We're off to a very strong start," Creatura said. "The dominant reason is the resolution of the fiscal cliff. But January is usually a strong month, as investors all shift money into the market at the same time. When the calendar flips, it's as if you're allowed to begin the race anew."

Economists had warned that the full force of the fiscal cliff could drag the country into a recession. The law passed late Tuesday night averted that outcome for now, but other fiscal squabbles are likely in the months ahead. Congress must raise the government's borrowing limit soon or be forced to choose between slashing spending and paying its debts.

In other Thursday trading, prices of U.S. government bonds fell, sending their yields higher. The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note rose to 1.90 percent from 1.84 percent late Wednesday, a sign that some bond traders believe the Fed minutes hinted at an early end to its bond buying.

Family Dollar Stores sank 13 percent after reporting earnings that fell short of analysts' projections. The company also forecast a weaker outlook for the current period and full year. Family Dollar's stock lost $8.30 to $55.74.

Nordstom Inc. surged 3 percent after the department-store chain reported strong holiday sales, especially in the South and Midwest. Nordstrom's stock was up $1.64 to $55.27.

Among other stocks making big moves:

— Transocean jumped $2.96 to $49.20. The owner of the oil rig that sank in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 after an explosion killed 11 workers reached a $1.4 billion settlement with the Justice Department.

— Hormel Foods, known for making Spam and other meat products, said that it's buying Skippy, the country's No. 2 peanut butter brand, from Unilever for about $700 million. Hormel's stock jumped $1.19 to $33.20.



Retailers report higher December sales

MAE ANDERSON
AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK A last-minute surge in spending saved the holiday shopping season.

Major retailers including Costco, Gap and Nordstrom on Thursday reported better-than-expected revenue in December. That comes as a relief for stores, which can make up to 40 percent of their annual revenue in the last two months of the year.

Americans spent cautiously early in the season as the Northeast recovered from Superstorm Sandy. Then they held back because of fears that the U.S. economy would fall off the "fiscal cliff," triggering massive budget cuts and tax increases that would have amounted to less money in their pockets. But shoppers spent more freely in the final shopping days of the year.

Twenty retailers reported that revenue at stores open at least a year — an indicator of a store's health — rose an average of 4.5 percent in December compared with the same month a year ago, according to the International Council of Shopping Centers. That's on the high end of the expected range of 4 percent to 4.5 percent. Only a small group of stores that represent about 13 percent of the $2.4 trillion U.S. retail industry report monthly revenue, but the data offers a snapshot of consumer spending.

"I wouldn't be doing cartwheels that it was a particularly great or strong holiday season, but it could have been worse given the headwinds," said Ken Perkins, president of RetailMetrics, a research firm. "The government and Mother Nature were not as cooperative as retailers would have liked. But it was definitely not as bad as feared."

December's results provide a brighter picture than reports last month that proclaimed that the holiday shopping season was shaping up to be the worst since 2008 when the U.S. was in a deep recession.

To be sure, the season had multiple fits and starts, with healthy spending during certain periods followed by stretches of tepid sales. Overall, revenue for the combined months of November and December rose 3.1 percent, roughly on par with the 3 percent rise that the ICSC had predicted.

Sales were weak at the beginning of November in the wake of Superstorm Sandy and the distraction of the U.S. presidential campaign, followed by a surge later in the month during the four-day Thanksgiving weekend. Spending fell off after that until a rush before and after Christmas when some stores began offering bigger discounts.

Nordstrom, for instance, had a particularly strong December, with revenue at stores open at least a year up 8.6 percent, more than double the 3.4 percent analysts expected. The Seattle-based department store operator said revenue was particularly strong in the last week of the season.

"That last-minute shopping, coupled with post-Christmas bargain hunting and early gift-card redemption, helped propel sales at the end of the month," said Michael P. Niemira, ICSC's chief economist.

Kelly Tenedini, 35, decided to pick up some "filler" gifts for her mom and her sister on the Sunday before Christmas at the Target in the Edgewood Retail District in Atlanta. Tenedini, who spent about $400 during the season, bought a sweater for her mom and gloves for her mother and sister that day.

Tenedini, who works in marketing, said the biggest deal she found was for herself: $50 off a pot and pan set on Target.com.

Manuel Gonzalez, 52, from Manhattan borough of New York City, spent about $150 on the Saturday before Christmas when he went to The Garden State Plaza in Paramus, N.J. He scooped up bargains, including 75 percent off Sketcher sneakers at Macy's.

For the season, he was planning to spend about $400 to $500 for gifts for his three boys, ages 5, 8 and 22 -- the same amount he spent a year ago.

Gonzales, who works at a bank, said he's glad he waited until later in the season to shop: "I am budgeting."

While the last-minute promotions may have drawn shoppers like Tenedini and Gonzalez, they also ate into stores' profits.

For instance, Kohl's said its December revenue at stores open at least a year increased 3.4 percent, beating Wall Street predictions. But the retailer said that the growth came from heavy discounts, and it cut its profit outlook for the current quarter and full year.

"Sales came late in the holiday shopping season and, as a result, were at deeper discounts than planned," said CEO Kevin Mansell. "We are taking the necessary markdowns in the fourth quarter to manage our inventory as we transition into the Spring season."





SURF REPORT



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Surf Forecasts

Water Temp: **56.1°**

FRIDAY – **FAIR** – SURF: **2-3 ft** Knee to chest high
WNW swell holds early, then eases; favorable winds/weather

SATURDAY – **FAIR** – SURF: **2-3 ft** knee to waist high
Fading WNW swell; small new South swell; favorable winds/weather

SUNDAY – **POOR TO FAIR** – SURF: **2-3 ft** knee to waist high
Small blend of WNW and South swell; winds/weather looking suspect

Tides

Are very manageable to start the week, becoming more of an issue as the tide swings are a bit more extreme towards the end of this week. Deep morning high tides of 5'+ just before sunrise will slow the more tide sensitive breaks down Thursday and into the weekend. Keep it in mind when planning a surf.

BEACH REPORT CARD

NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous 30 days up to the ending date of **December 19, 2012**

HEAL THE BAY - 1444 9th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401 - beachreportcard.org - brc@healthebay.org - 800 HEAL BAY

QUICK STATS (for the last 30 days)
- Number of sewage spills -- 2
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0
- Number of wet days -- 11
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 19 / 10
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 0 / 0

The Beach Report Card is made possible by: simplehuman, LAcurGUY, SIMA, and Grousbeck Family Foundation

Heal the Bay reminds you not to swim or surf within 100 yards of any flowing storm drain or for 3 days after a rainstorm. After a rain, indicator bacteria counts at beaches throughout California usually far exceed health criteria in the state's Beach Closure and Health Warning Protocol.

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Leo Carrillo Beach, at Arroyo Sequit Creek mouth.	A+	A+
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth.	C	A+
El Pescadero State Beach, between Lachusa and Las Alisos creeks.	ns	ns
Encinal Canyon at El Matador State Beach.	A	A
Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth.	B	A+
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth.	A+	A+
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildlife Rd. (private).	A+	F
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth.	B	B
Escondido Creek, just east of Escondido State Beach.	A+	B
Latigo Canyon Creek mouth.	C	B
Solstice Canyon at Ben Blocker County Beach.	F	C
Puerco State Beach at creek mouth.	A+	A+
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerco Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd.	A	F
Surfrider Beach at Malibu Colony fence.	A+	A+
Surfrider Beach (beach location) - daily.	F	F
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east.	F	C
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon.	A	A
Las Flores State Beach at Las Flores Creek (point zero).	A+	A+
Big Rock Beach at 19948 PCH stairs.	A+	A+
Pena Creek at Los Tunas County Beach.	A+	A+
Tuna Canyon.	ns	ns
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth.	F	C
Castlerock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach.	B	A+
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach.	F	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at 17208 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain).	A+	C

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club drain near fence.	A+	F
Will Rogers State Beach at Pulga Canyon storm drain.	A	F
Will Rogers State Beach at Temescal Canyon drain.	A+	D
Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Chautauqua).	D	F
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain.	A+	F
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain.	A+	F
Santa Monica Municipal Pier.	F	F
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kenter storm drain.	F	F
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restrooms).	A+	F
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain.	F	F
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain.	F	F
Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain.	A+	F
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain.	A	D
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south.	A+	F
Venice Beach- projection of Topsail St..	B	F
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach - lifeguard tower.	D	C
Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth.	F	F
Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain.	A	F
North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach.	A+	D
Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of CBW jetty).	A	B
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain.	F	F
Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant.	A	B
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain.	A+	F

LEGEND
DRY -- each location is graded on an A – F scale based on bacterial pollution levels present in the surf zone
WET -- grades for days of recorded rainfall and the following 3 days
ns -- no sample taken

Heal the Bay is a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to making Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters safe and healthy for people and marine life.
Heal the Bay

Heal the Bay's Beach Report Card™ is based on weekly water quality monitoring data provided by the City of Los Angeles' Environmental Monitoring Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Data is analyzed as soon as it is made available to us by the public agencies. Beaches are graded on an A-F scale based on the risk of ocean users becoming ill. Samples are analyzed for bacteria—enterococcus, total and fecal coliforms—that indicate biological pollution. A fact sheet detailing the exact methodology used in determining grades for each location is available from the office or on our web site. The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at local beaches.

The Beach Report Card is an indication of past water quality and is not a warranty of the current safety of those areas surveyed. Our lawyers are happy.

New winter sports to experience on snowy terrain are emerging

KAREN SCHWARTZ
Associated Press

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo. After nearly 50 years of living in the Rocky Mountains, I thought I knew how to enjoy the winter. I've gone skiing, skating, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, tobogganing, sleigh riding, dog-sledding and more.

But until this winter, I'd never heard of bumper cars on a skating rink. And it wasn't until recently that I had my first chance to carve turns down a ski hill on a snowbike.

It's part of a trend to provide visitors to ski resorts and other snowy destinations with a wider variety of choices, said Troy Hawks, managing editor of the National Ski Areas Association Journal.

"What we're seeing is a larger swath of the family — you've got the grandkids all the way to the grandparents — and all of them have their idea of how they want to spend their day," he said.

Some activities are more popular in certain regions, and some aren't well advertised, so for a different spin on a snow-destination vacation, here are some things to look for:

AIR BAGS

These massive, inflatable air bags are placed at the bottom of jumps to allow skiers and boarders to try flips and spins. Nail the landing on your feet and you ride off down the hill. Fail, and you have a soft landing; http://www.bagjump.com or http://www.bigairbag.com .

AIRBOARDS

A high-tech spin on winter tubing, these snow body boards are inflatable sleds with molded plastic runners on the bottom and handles on the top. The sleds can reach speeds of 60 mph or more (nearly 100 kilometers per hour), and users steer by shifting their body weight. They're offered at some ski areas (though banned at others) as well as through some private operators; http://www.airboard.com has a partial list of rental locations.

BUMPER CARS ON ICE

Just what it sounds like, these are turning up at skating rinks from coast to coast. The battery-operated "cars" are large rubber tubes with molded seats that can hold one adult or an adult and small child. Controlled by two joysticks, they are easy to steer or spin as they bump along on wheels with tiny cleats. Most rinks have age, height or weight restrictions.

FIRST TRACKS

The opportunity for intermediate and advanced skiers to take the first runs in the morning before the slopes open to the public is an option at more resorts. Some, like Northstar in California, require skiers to stay with a guide; others, like Aspen, Colo., include a gourmet breakfast. Steamboat Springs, Colo., has been experimenting with multiple day First Track passes, some of which can be shared among buddies.

SKIJORING

From the Norwegian word meaning "ski driving," skijoring is still primarily the stuff of winter carnivals and cowboy competitions. But some places, like the adult-only Triple Creek Ranch in Darby, Mont., offer guests the chance to see what it's like to be pulled on Alpine skis behind a horse. Other resorts, like Eden Mountain Lodge in Eden Mills, Vt., and Devil's Thumb Ranch in Tabernash, Colo., work with experienced skiers and their own dogs to learn what it's like to go mushing on Nordic skis.

ICE CASTLES

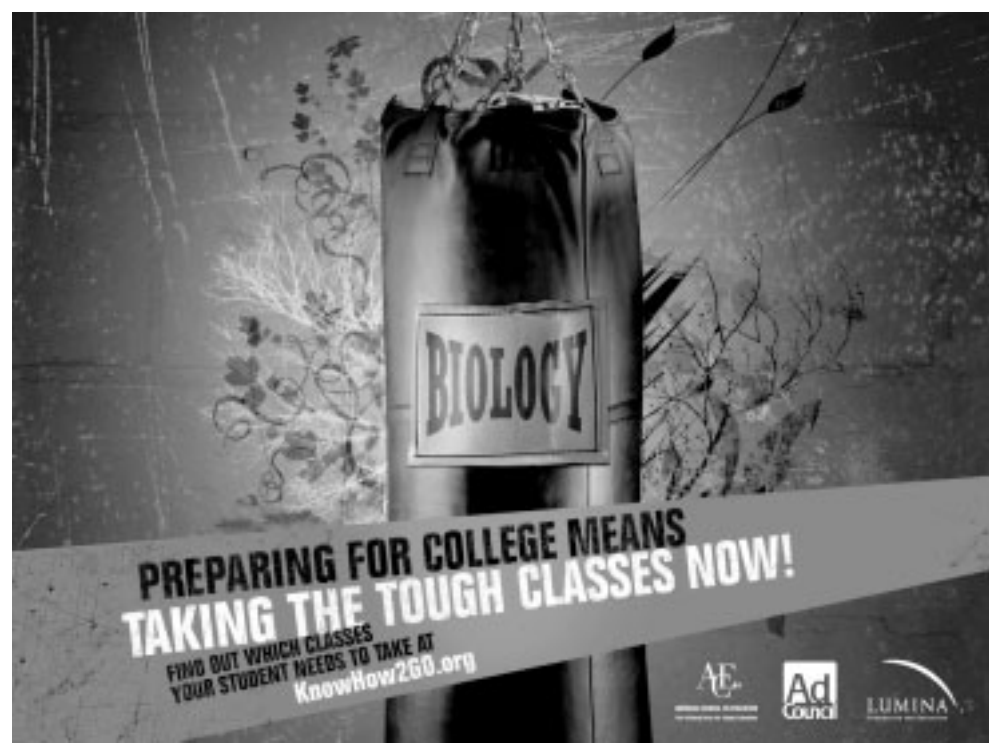
These massive ice castles are formed by thousands and thousands of icicles. A series of pathways take visitors through ice columns, tunnels, caverns and archways. Introduced last year in Silverthorne, Colo., the castles were being built this winter in Steamboat Springs, Colo., and at the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn.

SNOWBIKES

Bicycles that ride on skis, rather than wheels, have been around in various forms for decades, but now they have the blessing of some ski resorts, which rent the bikes and offer instruction. Smaller skis clip to your ski boots, helping with balance and maneuvering. The bikes can be taken on the chairlifts to access a variety of terrain; http://www.snowbike.info .

SNOWKITING

Snowkiting or kite boarding is a cousin to ocean kite surfing. For the winter version, an experienced, fearless skier or snowboarder is harnessed to a kite and uses wind power to propel themselves around. An extreme sport, it requires strength and an understanding of wind patterns. Lessons are recommended.



MOVIE TIMES

Aero Theatre
1328 Montana Ave.
(310) 260-1528

Play Dead (NR) 1hr 15min
Penn & Teller Get Killed (R) 1hr 29min
Discussion between films with Teller.
7:30pm

AMC Loews Broadway 4
1441 Third Street Promenade
(888) 262-4386

Not Fade Away (R) 1hr 52min
11:30am, 2:20pm, 5:15pm, 8:00pm, 10:55pm

Skyfall (PG-13) 2hrs 23min
12:45pm, 4:05pm, 7:30pm, 10:45pm

Les Miserables (PG-13) 2hrs 37min
11:45am, 3:30pm, 7:15pm, 11:00pm

Lincoln (PG-13) 2hrs 30min
11:30am, 2:45pm, 6:15pm, 9:45pm

AMC 7 Santa Monica
1310 Third St.
(310) 451-9440

Life of Pi 3D (PG) 2hrs 06min
11:15am, 2:05pm, 5:00pm, 7:50pm, 10:40pm

Django Unchained (R) 2hrs 45min
11:00am, 2:55pm, 6:50pm, 10:45pm

Zero Dark Thirty (R) 2hrs 37min
11:40am, 3:30pm, 7:15pm, 11:00pm

Jack Reacher (PG-13) 2hrs 10min
10:30am, 1:40pm, 4:45pm, 8:00pm, 11:15pm

Parental Guidance (PG) 1hr 44min
11:55am, 2:45pm, 5:30pm, 8:15pm, 10:55pm

This Is 40 (R) 2hrs 13min
10:35am, 1:55pm, 5:05pm, 8:20pm, 11:15pm

Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey in HFR 3D (PG-13) 2hrs 46min
10:45am, 2:30pm, 6:30pm, 10:30pm

Laemmle's Monica Fourplex
1332 Second St.
(310) 478-3836

On the Road (R) 2hrs 20min
1:00pm, 4:00pm, 7:00pm, 10:00pm

Argo (R) 2hrs 00min
1:30pm, 7:10pm, 9:55pm

Sessions (R) 1hr 38min
4:30pm, 10:10pm

West of Memphis (R) 2hrs 30min
1:10pm, 7:00pm

Impossible (PG-13) 1hr 47min
1:20pm, 4:10pm, 7:20pm, 10:10pm

Hitchcock (PG-13) 1hr 38min
4:20pm

AMC Criterion 6
1313 Third St.
(310) 395-1599

Guilt Trip (PG-13) 1hr 35min
11:30am, 2:15pm, 5:00pm, 7:45pm, 10:20pm

Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (PG-13) 2hrs 46min
11:30am, 3:15pm, 7:15pm, 11:00pm

Texas Chainsaw 3D (R) 1hr 32min
11:55am, 2:30pm, 5:15pm, 8:00pm, 10:40pm

Les Miserables (PG-13) 2hrs 37min
11:00am, 2:40pm, 6:15pm, 10:00pm

Silver Linings Playbook (R) 2hrs 00min
11:00am, 2:00pm, 4:50pm, 7:40pm, 10:30pm

Promised Land (R) 1hr 46min
11:05am, 1:50pm, 4:40pm, 7:25pm, 10:10pm

For more information, e-mail news@smdp.com

Be spontaneous tonight, Aquarius

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ You could be jolted awake this morning. You might find yourself walking into a big problem; however, you'll be pleased how easily this issue can be resolved. All you need to do is focus on the outcome, and the right path will appear. Tonight: Do not play devil's advocate.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ You might not believe how someone's wish could be misinterpreted. Rather than clarifying, decide to let it go. A boss, friend or older relative could be difficult at best. A change in plans is likely. Tonight: Relax. You need to unwind more than you realize.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Where others might be jolted by news, you'll go right in and solve the issue. You see possibilities where others don't, and you'll take a different approach. Your energy pushes you to act and think outside of the box. Tonight: Settle in with a favorite person.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Pressure builds around an obligation, a personal matter and someone's expectations. You could be in a situation where you might want to rethink a personal matter. Do one thing at a time; otherwise, your mind could go on overload. Tonight: Happy at home.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Be aware of your options, as the unexpected does occur. Do not get locked into either/or thinking. To clear up what is happening, you will need to analyze the situation and brainstorm with a pal. Together, you'll come up with a solution. Tonight: Choose a favorite spot.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Remain sensitive to your budget. You might be having trouble switching modes from prior holiday shopping to now. Tonight: Handle some must-do errands, and pay bills before deciding whether you want to go out.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ You are capable of experiencing one extreme after another. An element of confusion will straighten out, especially if you detach from the situation. Tonight: Honor what you want.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ You could feel pushed by a personal matter that you might choose not to share. Listen to your inner voice. It is likely that you need some downtime for yourself or space away from others. Take a walk or choose some other relaxing hobby. Tonight: Play it low-key.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Zero in on what you want. You could find a partner highly supportive and upbeat. You might want to reorganize your finances as you look at recent developments. Know that you can be positive and assertive when you need to be. Tonight: Where people are.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ If you want to take a stand, the right time will appear very soon. Remember, others model their behavior off of how you conduct yourself. Stay away from a control game, even if you could win. Your efforts count more than you know. Tonight: In the limelight.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Keep reaching out to someone at a distance. Your feelings need to be honored more often. When you decide that the jig is up, you will not change your mind. Your creativity flourishes, especially when dealing with a loved one. Tonight: Be spontaneous.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ How you deal with a child or loved one could change radically as a result of handling a different situation that is causing you some stress. If you can, separate the two matters. Try to direct your frustration where it belongs, for everyone's sake. Tonight: Make nice.

Happy birthday

This year others become aware of your plethora of innate skills. You often find that you are being placed on a pedestal. Recognize the fragility of your position. Accept the responsibility of the limelight, but remind others that you are only human. If you are single, you'll have many opportunities to change your status, but it's up to you whether you choose to take advantage of it. You simply might enjoy playing the dating game. If you are attached, a community commitment could keep you busy. Find a way of drawing in your significant other, as it would bring the two of you closer together. LIBRA gets into a power struggle with you.

JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS
The stars show the kind of day you'll have:
★★★★★Dynamic ★★ So-So
★★★★ Positive ★ Difficult
★★★ Average

Speed Bump
By Dave Coverly



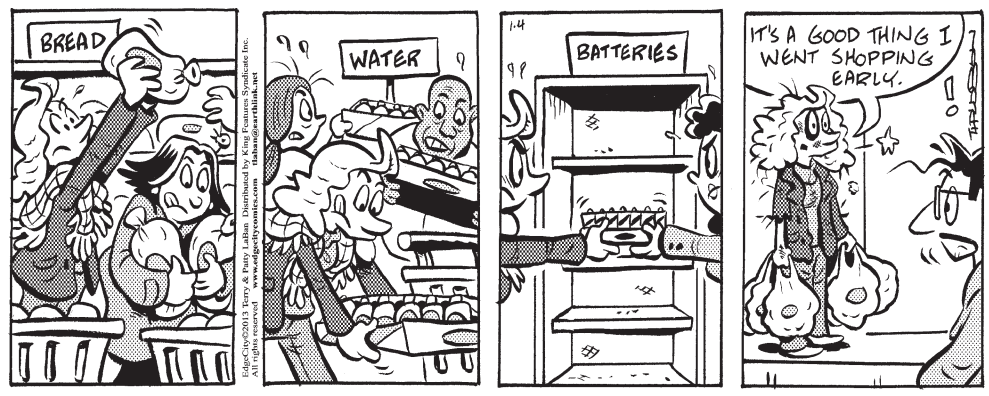
Strange Brew
By John Deering



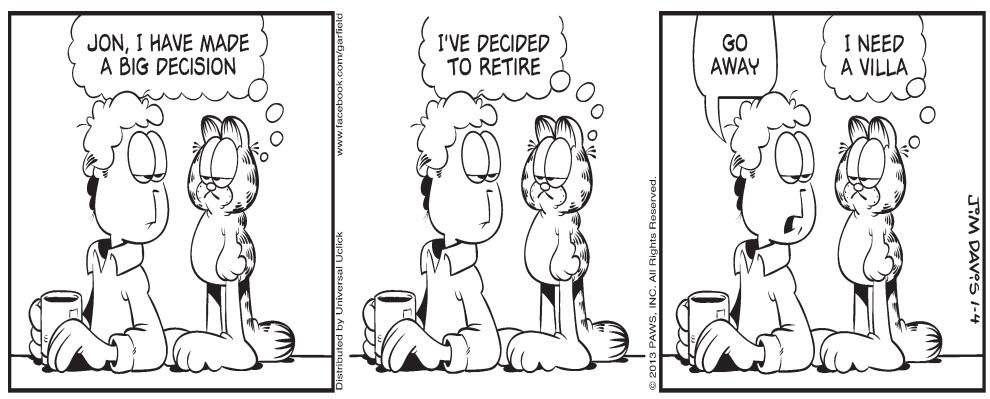
Dogs of C-Kennel
By Mick and Mason Mastroianni



Edge City
By Terry & Patty LaBan



Garfield
By Jim Davis



The Meaning of Lila
By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



Sudoku

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column, and 3x3 block. Use logic and process of elimination to solve the puzzle. The difficulty level ranges from ★ (easiest) to ★★★★★ (hardest).

Difficulty Level ★★★★

	3							
5	7				6	3		
				2		8	1	
					4		5	
		5				2		
	4		6					
	9	2		8				
		3	1				2	6
							7	

King Features Syndicate

GETTING STARTED

There are many strategies to solving Sudoku. One way to begin is to examine each 3x3 grid and figure out which numbers are missing. Then, based on the other numbers in the row and column of each blank cell, find which of the missing numbers will work. Eliminating numbers will eventually lead you to the answer.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

2	3	7	1	4	8	6	9	5
9	5	8	6	7	2	1	4	3
6	4	1	5	9	3	7	8	2
7	1	2	3	8	9	5	6	4
3	6	4	7	1	5	9	2	8
5	8	9	4	2	6	3	7	1
8	7	3	9	5	4	2	1	6
4	9	6	2	3	1	8	5	7
1	2	5	8	6	7	4	3	9

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MYSTERY PHOTO

Daniel Archuleta *daniela@smdp.com*

The first person who can correctly identify where this image was captured wins a prize from the Santa Monica Daily Press. Send answers to *editor@smdp.com*. Send your mystery photos to *editor@smdp.com* to be used in future issues.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Urban fleet
5 Whip
9 Subs
11 Computer key
13 Deal maker
14 Absinthe flavoring
15 Porpoise's place
16 Personal property
18 Move to the side
20 Colorful carp
21 "Separate Tables" star
22 Sibelius, for one
23 Homer's neighbor
24 Coal holder
25 Hangs down
27 Chest contents
29 Strike caller
30 Sawbuck
32 Earth science
34 Flamenco cry
35 UFO flier
36 Korean or Thai
38 Free of suds
39 The time being
40 Bar assn. members
41 Proofing mark

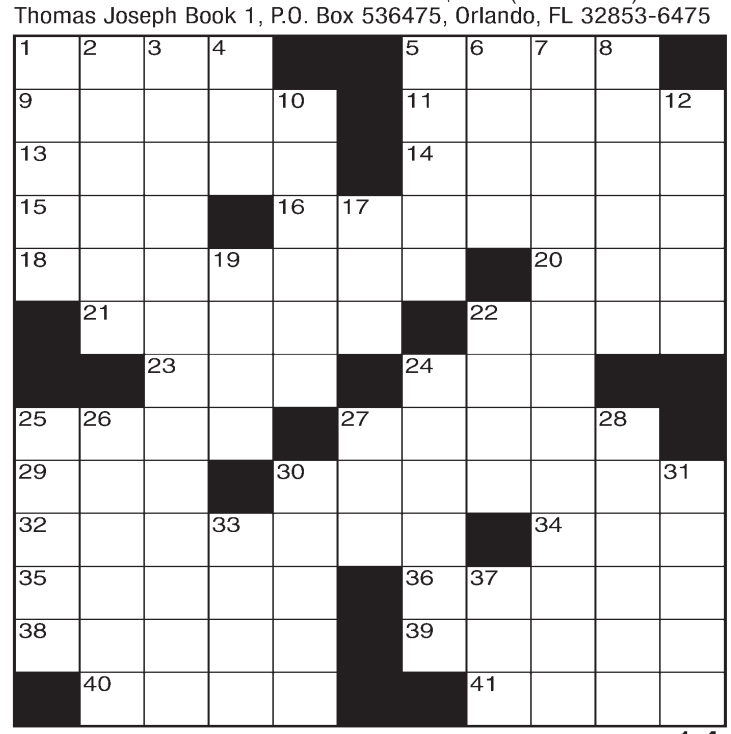
DOWN

1 Deep gorge
2 Sea off Greece
3 Critical moment
4 Heir, often
5 Like an arbor
6 One of the Brontës
7 Cause of an impasse
8 "El Cid" star
10 Blotto
12 Pine product
17 Summer cooler
19 Times for preparation
22 Fish features
24 Lumberjack of lore
25 Bakery need
26 Henry Fielding book
27 Table part
28 Comfort
30 Sounds
31 Principle
33 For fear that
37 Sinking signal

S	T	A	Y	■	■	G	L	O	B	E
T	O	M	E	S	■	L	U	N	A	R
A	N	I	S	E	■	E	L	E	N	A
F	A	T	■	C	A	N	U	C	K	S
F	L	Y	E	R	S	■	■	E	S	E
■	■	■	R	E	A	M	■	N	O	D
■	P	O	R	T	■	A	T	T	N	■
F	A	R	■	E	T	T	E	■	■	■
A	L	I	■	■	O	I	L	E	R	S
R	A	N	G	E	R	S	■	L	A	P
A	D	O	R	N	■	S	P	I	C	E
D	I	C	E	D	■	E	A	T	E	N
S	N	O	W	S	■	■	N	E	R	D

Yesterday's answer

NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send $4.75 (check/m.o.) to Thomas Joseph Book 1, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475



1-4

DAILY LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS
Draw Date: 1/1
4 11 21 25 44
Meganumber: 29
Jackpot: $39M

SUPER LOTTO PLUS
Draw Date: 1/2
4 6 22 24 29
Meganumber: 18
Jackpot: $10M

Fantasy 5
Draw Date: 1/3
21 22 27 30 31

DAILY 3
Draw Date: 1/3
MIDDAY: 8 5 0
EVENING: 4 4 9

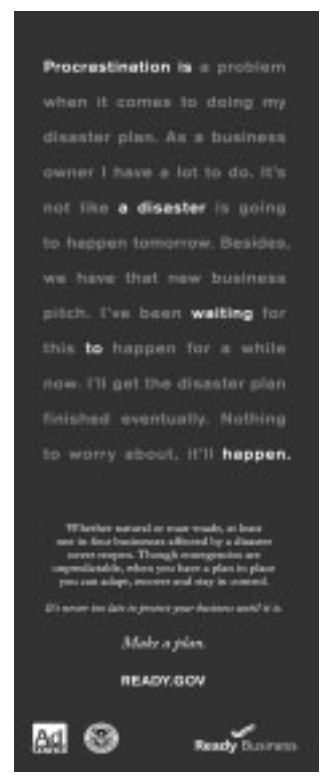
SANTA ANITA PARK
Draw Date: 1/3
1st: 07 Eureka
2nd: 06 Whirl Win
3rd: 11 Money Bags
RACE TIME: 1:46.41

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the winning number information, mistakes can occur. In the event of any discrepancies, California State laws and California Lottery regulations will prevail. Complete game information and prize claiming instructions are available at California Lottery retailers. Visit the California State Lottery web site at http://www.calottery.com

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ Researchers from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston found recently in tests that 10th-grade students who play video games (especially shooting and sports games) regularly score just as high in robotic surgery dexterity as resident doctors. The lead researcher said that surgery simulations (for example, suturing) have built-in unpredictability, for training purposes, but since complex video games are laden with unpredictability, players logging at least two hours a day with the joystick in fact may even slightly outperform the residents.

■ Homeless man Darren Kersey, 28, was jailed overnight in November in Sarasota, Fla., after being busted for charging his cellphone at an outlet at a public picnic shelter in the city's Gillespie Park. The police report noted that "(T)heft of city utilities will not be tolerated ...." However, for owners of electric cars (less likely to be homeless!), the city runs several absolutely free charging stations, including one at city hall. The American Civil Liberties Union has accused the city for years of being aggressively inhospitable toward the city's homeless. (Kersey was released the next day when a judge ruled the arrest improper.)



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NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TO SELL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSE(S)
Date of Filing Application: 08/01/2012
To Whom it may concern:
The Name(s) of the Applicant(s) is/are:
OZUMO OCEAN AVE. LLC
The applicants listed above are applying to the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to sell alcoholic beverages at: 1541 OCEAN AVE. STE 120,150,160 SANTA MONICA, CA 90401-2104
Type of License(s) Applied for: 47-ON-SALE GENERAL EATING PLACE
Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control INGLEWOOD.
SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME
Case No. SS022974
Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles
Petition of ABTIN SHAKOURI for Change of Name
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner or Attorney: ABTIN SHAKOURI filed a petition with this court for a decree of changing names as follows: ABTIN SHAKOURI to MICHAEL ABTIN SHAKOURI. The court orders that all persons interested in this matter shall appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.
Notice of Hearing:
Date: JANUARY 25, 2013 Time: 9:00 am, Dept. A, Room 104
The address of the court is 1725 Main Street Santa Monica, CA 90401
A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: Santa Monica Daily Press.
Date: JANUARY 25, 2013
JOSEPH S. BIDERMAN, JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

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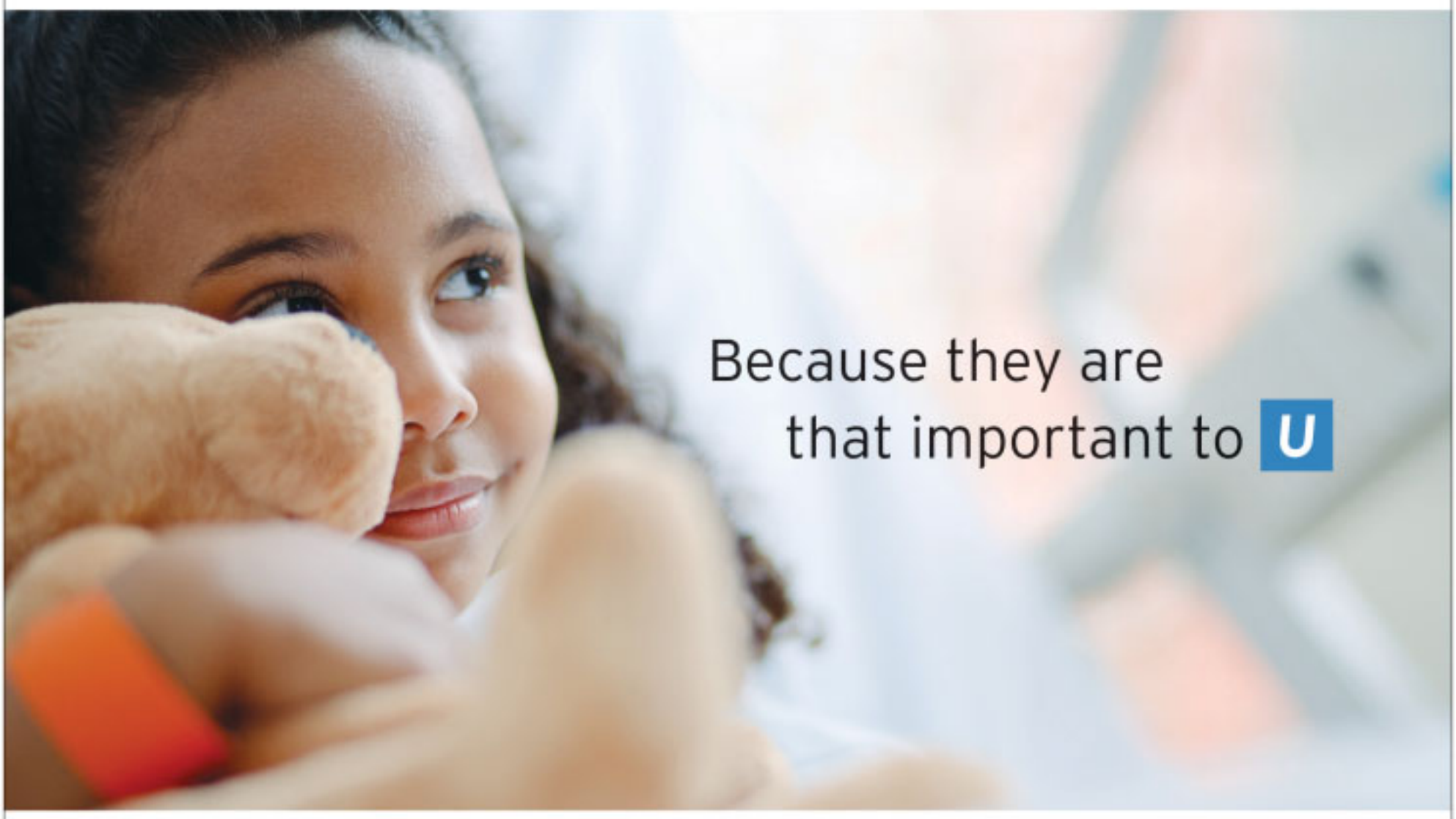
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