THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2006 Volume 5, Issue 46

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO
5 15 19 20 35
Meganumber: 20
Jackpot: $56 Million

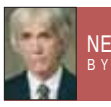
FANTASY 5
3 8 16 22 32

DAILY 3
Daytime: 7 3 5
Evening: 5 8 4

DAILY DERBY
1st: 08 Gorgeous George
2nd: 02 Lucky Star
3rd: 07 Eureka!

RACE TIME: 1:45.40

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: http://www.calottery.com



NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

People who accidentally shot themselves recently: A 22-year-old driver, in the abdomen (gun in waistband) while reaching down to pick up money (Colorado Springs, Colo., October). A 34-year-old hunter, in the foot, where his rifle was pointed while he was loading it (Barrington, N.H., November). A 15-year-old boy, in the hand with a shotgun he was building based on instructions he had downloaded from the Internet (Round Rock, Texas, November). A 59-year-old man, in the hand, while removing his gun from a hook in the men's room at a gun show (Faribault, Minn., November). A 22-year-old man, in the leg, when his propped-up rifle fell over while he was posing for photographs with a deer he had just killed (Lawrenceburg, Tenn., December).

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the fifth day of 2006. There are 360 days left in the year.

On Jan. 5, 1896, the Austrian newspaper Wiener Presse reported the discovery by German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen of a type of radiation that came to be known as X-rays.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Wisdom is divided into two parts: (a) having a great deal to say, and (b) not saying it."

ANONYMOUS

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Branching out in the new year



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

A resident tosses his Christmas tree into a recycling pile at Reed Park on Wednesday. The city of Santa Monica will pick up recycled trees at four area parks through Jan. 15: Reed Park, located at the corner of California Avenue and Lincoln Boulevard; Donald Douglas Park, located at Chelsea Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard; Memorial Park, located at 16th Street and Olympic Boulevard; and Clover Park, located at 25th Street and Ocean Park Boulevard. Christmas trees also can be dumped at the city's recycling center at 2401 Delaware Avenue until Jan. 31, from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Residents who live in single-family homes can dump their trees in their yard waste containers as long as the trees are chopped up.

LAHSA's homeless count still coming

BY RYAN HYATT
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE — Census data collected nearly a year ago to address the regional homeless problem will be revealed publicly this month, that is if Southland politicians who want to take action on the issue can make it to the press conference.

Organizers attribute scheduling difficulties among Los Angeles county and city political representatives for the reason why detailed demographic information concerning the regional homeless population continues to be withheld from the public.

However, now that the holiday

See LAHSA, page 6

Size matters: District studies ways to stay small

BY RYAN HYATT
Daily Press Staff Writer

MALIBU — Efforts to ensure that classroom sizes at local schools remain as small as they can be will be explored for the first time by elected leaders on Thursday, with many wondering what they will find in their discussion.

Board of education members for the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District — which will meet at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday at Malibu City Hall — said they are looking forward to reviewing a report which will begin to analyze class sizes among local schools.

The request for the information, made by SMMUSD governing board member Shane McLoud, is intended to be a first look at what can be done to guarantee students are receiving as much one-on-one instruction with teachers as needed.

"I'm concerned about the challenges facing teachers and lower-performing students in larger classrooms."

SHANE MCLOUD
SMMUSD,
Governing board member

"I've been on the board for three years and one of my concerns are class sizes for 4th grade and on," McLoud said. "I'm concerned about the challenges facing teachers and lower-performing

See CLASS SIZES, page 5

Don't mess with Texas



Alejandro Cesar Cantarero II/Daily Press

Fans at Barney's Beanery on the Third Street Promenade react during Wednesday night's Rose Bowl. The Texas Longhorns snapped USC's 35-game winning streak with a thrilling 41-38 victory in Pasadena, squashing the Trojans' bid for an unprecedented third straight national championship.

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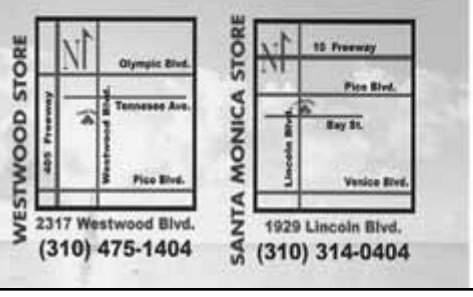
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HOROSCOPE

Vanish tonight, Taurus

Santa Monica Daily Press



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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Smile, as the Moon in your sign gives you an edge. Nevertheless, communications could run amok. Is this you or the other person? Don't assign blame; rather, use your creativity and ingenuity to get past a hassle. Tonight: Level out wherever you are.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★ You can be sure misinformation is heading your way. Don't take anything you hear or what anyone does personally. Listen to a family member. You are more solid and anchored than you realize. Tonight: Vanish.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ You clearly are goal-oriented. A partner or key associate could toss a rock in your path, and it might not stop you. Rather than take what happens personally, figure out what needs to happen. Diplomacy will help pave your way. Tonight: Catch up on a friend's news.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Your mood swings radically because of difficulty communicating. It appears that others don't get it. You also might be assuming a stronger position than normal. Communication could stir up strong feelings. Tonight: Lead rather than follow.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ You could be dancing to a different tune without even realizing it. You have the unique ability to see past present confusion to the solution. Others have difficulty seeing what you see. Walk a key associate step by step through your thought process. Tonight: As you like.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ A partner might nix what you believe is a very creative idea. Your ideas have a way of being practical, but right now others have difficulty seeing your logic. Togetherness marks an important partnership. Tonight: Listen to a dear friend.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Others approach you. How you see someone could radically change as a result of a personal issue. Be aware of how you might be eyeing a situation. Others dominate, whether you like it or not. Tonight: Say yes to another's invitation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ You might be saying one thing, but others could be hearing what they want to hear. Be aware of an element of confusion as you approach your day. You might need to demonstrate your intentions through actions. Tonight: Schedule some time for exercise.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ You could discover that a risk or financial matter might not be all that it's cracked up to be. Establish your limits carefully. Be careful dealing with money and love. Tonight: Brainstorm outside of the box.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★ Some of the chaos swirling around you could be self-induced. You are coming from a more secure point of view. Realize that someone might be trying to break through the fog that surrounds you. Let this person in. Tonight: Curl up at home.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ Talk to someone directly. Listen well to others who have much to share. You could be confused or slightly off. Resist worrying too much or burdening yourself needlessly. Air out a problem without accusation. Tonight: Chat up a storm.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ You might want to deal with your finances carefully. Don't overspend to achieve a goal or make someone else happy. Know that there is a cheaper way of handling a problem. Keep your goals in mind, and you will be OK. Tonight: Your treat.

CIRCULATION VERIFICATION COUNCIL AUDIT PENDING

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1427 Third Street Promenade, Ste. #202 • Santa Monica, CA 90401 • www.smdp.com

PUBLISHER
Ross Furukawa . . . . . .ross@smdp.com
EDITOR
Carolyn Sackariason . . . .editor@smdp.com
STAFF WRITER
Ryan Hyatt . . . . . .ryanh@smdp.com
SANTA MONICA PARENTING
Nina Furukawa . . . . . .nina@smdp.com
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Fabian Lewkowicz
NEWS CLERK
Michelle Lanz . . . . . .michelle@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Robbie P. Piubeni . . . . . .rob@smdp.com
ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Rob Schwenker . . . .schwenker@smdp.com
ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Stewart O'Dell . . . . . .stewarto@smdp.com
TRAFFIC MANAGER
Connie Sommerville . . .connies@smdp.com
PRODUCTION MANAGER
Alejandro Cesar Cantarero II . . . . . .alex@smdp.com

NIGHT EDITOR
Lori Luechtefeld . . . . . .lori@smdp.com
NIGHT EDITOR
Michael Tittinger . . . .MoNeY.T.LaRoK@$mdp.¢hum
CLASSIFIEDS SALES MANAGER
Annie Kotok . . . . . .anniek@smdp.com
CIRCULATION
Keith Wyatt
CIRCULATION
Glenn Bolan
SPECIAL PROJECTS
Dave Danforth . . . . . .dave@smdp.com
MASCOT
Maya Furukawa . . . . . .maya@smdp.com

LOCAL

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Conservancy pulls up seat at Casa Del Mar

By Daily Press staff

The Conservancy will continue its tradition of holding its annual meeting in an important, local historic building. This year Hotel Casa Del Mar will host the meeting on Jan. 29, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., 1910 Ocean Front Walk in Santa Monica.

The program will include a short business meeting and board of directors election, followed by a brief talk by historic consultant Christy MacAvoy about the rehabilitation of Casa Del Mar. MacAvoy's company, Historic Resources Group, assisted the hotel owners in their restoration plans and in obtaining a significant financial benefit in the form of a historic rehabilitation tax credit for the resurrected building. Participants can tour the public areas of the hotel. Light refreshments will be served with a no-host bar available in this lovely setting.

In 1926, when the Hotel first opened as Club Casa Del Mar, it was the grandest of the opulent Santa Monica beach club/hotels. Built in a Renaissance Revival style by noted Los Angeles architect Charles F. Plummer, Club Casa Del Mar, with its plush Oriental rugs, intricately hand-painted ceilings and heavy bronze statuary, immediately became the Grande Dame of Santa Monica — and arguably of the entire Pacific coast. It was the place to see and be seen, renowned for its swinging social scene and frequented by many of the city's elite, including a number of Hollywood celebrities.

The partying lasted until World War II when Casa Del Mar was converted to a military hotel. After the war, it continued as a beach club and hotel but never regained its former grandeur. Starting in 1959, it served for 20 years as the headquarters for the Synanon drug therapy program; and then from 1978 to 1997, as the Pritikin Longevity Center. For a time it was closed due to earthquake damage and seismic safety work.

The hotel re-emerged to its storied past as one of the most luxurious hotels on the west coast in October of 1999, when more than $50 million was spent to restore the historic landmark to its former grandeur. Though none of the original furnishings remain, the traditional look and feel from the 1920s was recreated.

The seven-story building features a brick and sandstone façade; red-tile roof; brown-iron balconies; elaborate relief work with escutcheons over the front door; and a variety of sculpted figures throughout the facade including cupids, angels, and Renaissance personalities. It houses 129 elegantly appointed guest rooms and suites.

The meeting is open to members only, though all are welcome to join. Valet parking is available for $5 and there is limited street parking.

For more information, call (310) 485-0399.

SNOW AND SURF REPORTS

CONDITIONS

DATA PROVIDED BY ONTHESNOW.COM

BEAR MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	12"-12"	8:00am - 4:00pm	8	9/12

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Groomed

JUNE MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	40" - 72"	8:30am - 4:00pm	35	6/6

CONDITIONS: Powder, Packed Powder, Machine Groomed

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	120" - 144"	8:30 am - 4 pm	100	16/28

CONDITIONS: Powder, Packed Powder, Machine Groomed

MOUNTAIN HIGH

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	8"-10"	8:00 am - 10:00 pm	12	19/16

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made, Machine Groomed, Hard Packed

MT. BALDY

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	8"-12"	8:00 am - 4:30 pm	4	3/4

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made

SNOW SUMMIT

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	12"-12"	8:00 am - 4:30 pm	8	8/13

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Groomed

SNOW VALLEY

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	12"-12"	8:30 am - 4:30 pm	2	4/11

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Groomed

CONDITIONS WATER TEMP: 59°

DATA PROVIDED BY WETSAND.COM

SWELL FORECAST (6-15 FT)

Thursday the 5th this swell should back down, with the best size in the early morning with sets running a few feet overhead to at times, nearing the DOH mark. By nightfall, this swell should have faded to a more consistent head high.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS

Next NW swell due tomorrow...

NW due end of the week...

Tracking NW for 11th...

Offshore event on tap this week...

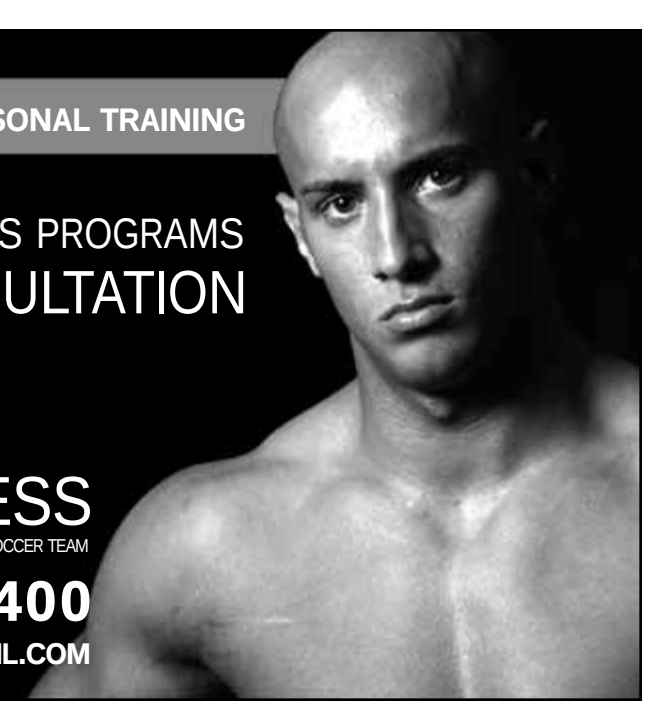
TIDE FORECAST FOR SANTA MONICA

WEDNESDAY				
LOW TIDE:	6:01AM	2.1FT	6:54PM	0.2FT
HIGH TIDE:	12:51AM	4.3FT	11:53AM	.2FT
THURSDAY				
LOW TIDE:	7:26AM	2.0FT	7:40PM	0.5FT
HIGH TIDE:	1:42AM	4.6FT	1:01PM	4.2FT
FRIDAY				
LOW TIDE:	9:05AM	1.7FT	8:29PM	1.1FT
HIGH TIDE:	2:35AM	4.9FT	2:33PM	3.4FT

SURF AND SNOW QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? EMAIL ALEX@SMDP.COM

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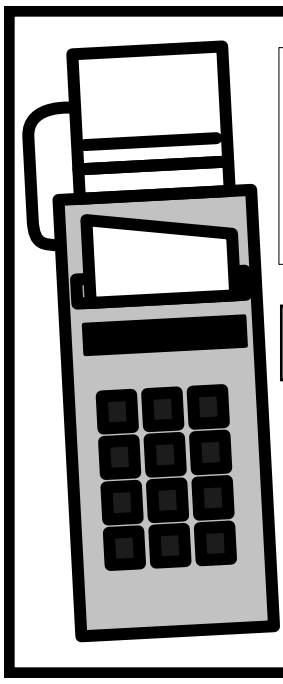
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Now that a new year is upon us, 2006 will prove to be 365 days of opportunities and challenges. The city of Santa Monica has many of both — a new city manager will start his job this month, as will a "homeless czar" who is charged with effectively dealing with our growing residentially-challenged citizens.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know, **"What is the biggest issue facing Santa Monica and how should we as a community deal with it?"**

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your responses in the weekend edition. Please try to limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.

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OPINION

GUEST COMMENTARY **BY BENNET G. KELLEY**

The 'Illusion Decade' has been rife with lies

As we stand at the mid-point of the millennium's first decade, there is no doubt that we will long remember its colossal tragedies — the Sept. 11 attacks, the tsunami and Hurricane Katrina. Yet the vivid realities of these events are the exception to a decade otherwise defined by an Orwellian triumph of illusion over reality.

The decade began with the collapse of two of the greatest financial illusions in the post-war era. Blinded by the lure of the internet and the mirage that profitability did not matter in the new economy, investors from Wall Street to Main Street lost millions when the NASDAQ index dropped 78 percent as part of the Dot-Com crash.

Meanwhile in Houston, the leaders of Enron were making money the old fashioned way — by fraud. Through smoke and mirrors, Enron jumped to seventh on the Fortune 500 list, boasting a market capitalization of $65 billion before its house of cards collapsed. Enron's pièce de résistance was manipulating the electricity market to create the illusion of a supply shortage in California that forced rolling blackouts throughout the state and cost Californians more than $70 billion.

This would pale in comparison to the feats of the decade's master illusionist — George W. Bush. Whether it was using poster-board photo-ops displaying an Orwellian image of the president unveiling his "Healthy Skies" and "Healthy Forest" initiatives, despite the fact that these proposals actually would have very "unhealthy" results, or convincing Americans that they could have could "have their cake and eat it too" through record tax cuts which would not threaten the budget surplus, the Bush administration made the art of deception central to governing.

Without question, the administration's greatest illusion has been the Iraq War. From the launch of its public relations offensive in September 2002 — because as White House Chief of Staff Andy Card explained "you don't introduce new products in August" — the administration painted a parallel picture of looming mushroom clouds and U.S. troops being welcomed as liberators by weary Iraqis. After going to war based on those myths, the administration fed us even more illusions such as Jessica Lynch's staged rescue or President Bush's Top Gun declaration of "Mission Accomplished."

At the same time, the press played into the administration's web of deceit by abandoning any notion of indisputable facts. This was evident in 2004 with the coverage of the Swift Boat Veterans' attacks on Sen. John Kerry, in which the press minimized or ignored the fact that those allegations were contradicted by military records and, instead, reported the story as one of competing illusions.

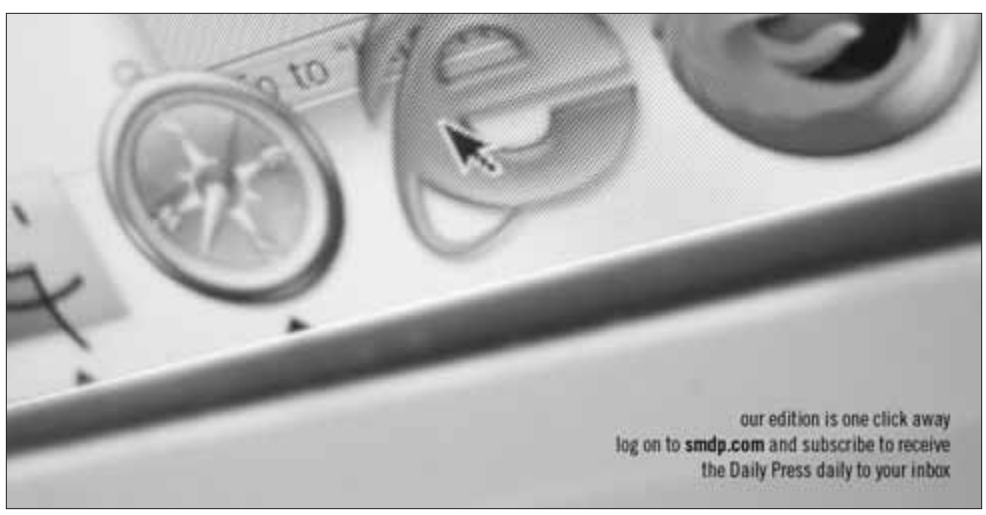
It is ironic, however, that "reality television" has thrived in this illusion decade. Yet only in such a decade can a scripted program about a Beverly Hills heiress' summer in rural Arkansas be considered "reality" television.

While the "faux reality" of Paris Hilton's "Green Acres" experience may be harmless, the decade's principal illusions have been more pernicious as demonstrated by the thousands of soldiers killed or maimed in Iraq, or the scores of workers who lost their jobs and life-savings in the Enron crash. These illusions have also distracted us from or lulled us into false complacency about other pressing problems such as the precarious financial security of middle-class Americans which rests upon a housing bubble and record household debt, global warming or the threat posed by nuclear weapons programs in North Korea and Iran.

In 1961, historian David Boorstin explained that, "(w)hat ails us most is not what we have done with America, but what we have substituted for America. We suffer primarily not from our vices or our weaknesses, but from our illusions. We are haunted not by reality, but by those images we have put in place of reality." What Boorstin foresaw and is increasingly apparent, is that the illusions which fueled the first half of this decade are likely to haunt us for its remainder or longer unless we "disillusion ourselves."

It has been said that experience consists of illusions lost, not wisdom gained. As we enter 2006, let us hope that we have the benefit of both wisdom and experience during the remainder of this decade.

(Bennet G. Kelley is a Santa Monica attorney and the publisher of BushLies.net.)



GUEST COMMENTARY **BY JOHN W. WHITEHEAD**

The breakdown of rule of law is upon us

The "accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands … may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny."
—James Madison, Federalist Paper No. 47

George W. Bush assumed near-absolute power soon after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. The recent revelation that Bush authorized the National Security Agency to secretly spy on American citizens, thus violating federal law and bypassing judicial oversight, raises serious questions concerning presidential power — especially since Bush claims that he possesses "inherent" authority to suspend laws during wartime. Chief among them are a decrease in congressional power to influence wartime decisions and a large increase in power for the executive branch, which would effectively set a historical precedent for unlimited presidential powers.

At stake here is the "rule of law." If the president can simply chart his course and establish his own rules, not being bound by the legislative or judicial branches of the government, he is effectively "above the law." In fact, he is the law.

Indeed, if the judiciary and Congress have significantly diminished roles during perceived times of war, what rule of law binds the president? The frightening answer is that there isn't one.

Generally, history has demonstrated that presidential powers have a constant and evolving ebb and flow. The president's power typically increases dramatically during a time of war and steadily decreases during times of peace.

For example, during the presidency of John Adams, James Madison was shocked out of retirement by what he perceived as an unconstitutional abuse of power. At issue were the Alien and Sedition Acts, which significantly curtailed the rights of foreigners and the press during a time of national crisis. Addressing these laws, Madison, whose words are relevant for today, wrote: "The bill is a monster that must forever disgrace its parents." He added, "It dispenses with trial by jury, it violates the judicial process … and it bestows upon the president despotic power." And this is from the framer who, unlike others who feared a powerful president, supported a strong and independent executive leader. Madison summed up his disapproval of the increasingly powerful executive branch, while also understanding its necessity, when he said, "As there is a degree of depravity in mankind, which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust, so there are other qualities in human nature which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence. Republican government presupposes the existence of these qualities in a higher degree than any other form."

Later, it was Lyndon Johnson who expanded the role and powers of the president. In order to escalate the war in Vietnam, Johnson assumed major war-making powers with little regard for the views of Congress, the judiciary or the general public.

But undoubtedly the most recent glaring example of swelled presidential war powers is illustrated by President Ronald Reagan throughout the 1980s. Reagan successfully embarked on a trail leading to unfettered presidential power and discretion. Strikingly, in addressing his role as "Commander-in-Chief," Reagan once remarked, "I do not and cannot cede any of the authority vested in me under the Constitution as President and Commander-in-Chief of the United States Armed Forces."

Even congressional and judicial attempts to limit the powers of the president during times of war have failed through time. Therefore, it seems that history, if an adequate and accurate indicator, shows that the president's "imperial power" is virtually unlimited.

However, a "strict constructionist's" view of the Constitution indicates that President Bush is clearly exceeding his power. In fact, while there is a clear tension between the legislature and executive built into the Constitution regarding wartime powers, any objective reading forces one to conclude that Congress must, at the very least, be involved in decisions made by a president. The Constitution clearly divides wartime responsibilities among both the president and Congress.

It is absolutely clear that the framers did not give the president a vast array of unilateral foreign policy powers. The structure of the Constitution simply fails to support the notion that the president, as George Bush claims, has unfettered — or even more than slightly limited "inherent" — wartime powers. Even the provision describing the president as the commander-in-chief fails to support modern ideas of presidential wartime powers assumed by George W. Bush. This language, on its face, provides the President with the clear and unmistakable power to be the leader of the military — not, as has been done, to bypass domestic and foreign law.

This view of the Constitution is consistent with early documents. For instance, the Declaration of Independence was a scathing indictment of a monarch the framers believed had too much power. Consequently, one of the chief concerns of the framers when they created a constitutional system including separation of powers was to significantly limit the power of the president.

(John W. Whitehead is founder of The Rutherford Institute. He can be contacted at johnw@rutherford.org.)

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LOCAL

Schools taking first peek at limiting classroom sizes

CLASS SIZES, from page 1

students in larger classrooms."

McLoud said he was hesitant to comment further on the issue until he had an opportunity to hear the report and discuss it with his colleagues.

The report is expected to cover what research shows about students' performances in classrooms with varying sizes. The report will also examine the average class sizes for elementary school and middle school English, math, science and social studies courses.

Board members will likely have the opportunity to compare how performance varies in classes with fewer than 25 students to those that exceed 35 students. They will also look at the process by which full-time teachers are assigned to a school.

Board member Oscar de la Torre is looking forward to the discussion.

"All the studies I've read show that reducing classroom size tends to increase academic performance," de la Torre said. "I'd like to see how we can better instill the principles of equity within that framework.

"In the end, we want to align the best teachers for those who need the most help."

De la Torre said he will also be looking to see what can be done to ensure that teachers in schools that struggle the most have the best work environment.

Superintendent John Deasy said he also welcomes the discussion and any suggestions the board might offer, but isn't sure what the outcome of the dialogue might lead to.

Deasy said classroom size is certainly one factor that may contribute to a student's performance, but there are other factors that may also play a part and also may need to be looked at in the long haul.

Deasy said he is pleased with the district's classroom sizes overall, compared to the rest of the state, but he would like the district to be more competitive with public schools back East.

"Inside the relative context of California, we do well," Deasy said. "But I'd like it to be more competitive with Connecticut and New York."

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LOCAL

Homeless count results should be finalized soon

LAHSA, from page 1

shuffle is winding down, organizers hope the release of the 200-plus page report may come as soon as Jan. 12.

In June, the Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority — the government agency which organized the first homeless census for the county — released preliminary data regarding the region's down and out.

However, information specific to cities concerning their respective homeless inhabitants — which officials in Santa Monica want to use to tailor its servicing — has been withheld since last summer. The information is expected to include demographics about the age, gender, family and mental health status of homeless individuals within the county's 88 cities.

The delay is attributable, in part, to the fact that Applied Research, the firm which prepared the report, has periodically had to update it since June. In addition, tentative plans to release the report two months ago were bumped as the calendar closed in on the holidays, said Scott Ito, LAHSA spokesman.

"As we came close to Thanksgiving it became difficult to coordinate the release of the report between Christmas and New Year's Eve, so we pushed it to the beginning of the year," Ito said.

Ito also said the later timing of the report's release has nothing to with organizational changes underway at LAHSA. In October, news outlets reported that the agency had a $5 million operational shortfall. Several Santa Monica service providers were affected by the financial crisis, some of which LAHSA owed hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Ito said those financial issues are being cleared up.

As LAHSA has undergone some tough times, its representatives hope this year will be more promising. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, which help fund LAHSA, gave the agency a a $24.6 million budget boost for the next fiscal year.

A large portion of that money is expected to be used to better improve services for the chronic homeless population. Of the nearly 90,000 people in the Southland who are homeless, 37,800 of them — or 42 percent — are considered chronically homeless. That means they've been on the streets for more than a year, or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. They also suffer from one or more disability, mental illness, or from a form of substance abuse.

However, Ito was hesitant to discuss how the county's money would be used. Officials have held off allocating the funds in part because they hope the demographic information to be released in the report will help them determine the kinds of programming they should support.

Despite the reasons, some residents in Santa Monica question the delay. Don Gray, who lives in the Pico neighborhood, believes it's more important that uncorrupted data reach the public in a timely manner before political players have a hand in interpreting it.

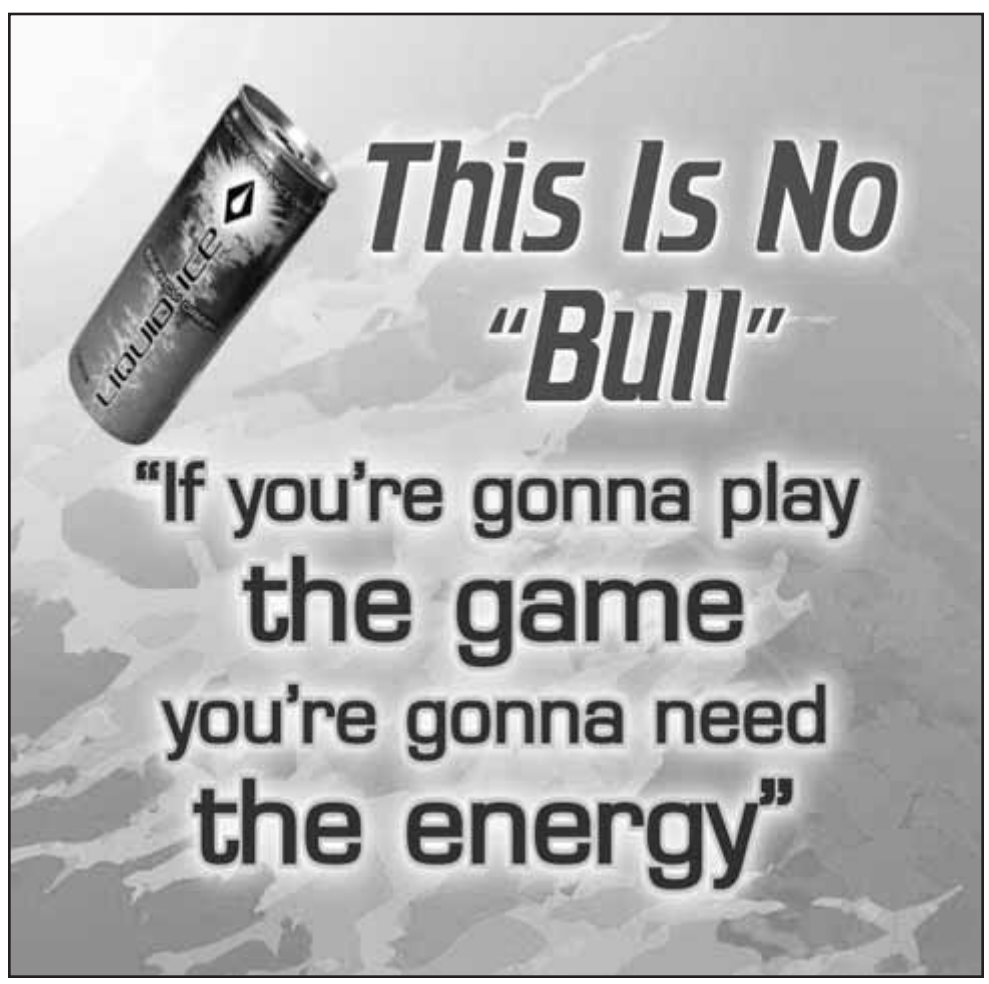
"We understood this homeless count would be an unbiased analytical performance, and the fact it's taken a year for these numbers to be released makes me question the results of the survey," Gray said. "We should get the raw numbers first, and the politicians should interpret them later.

"It puts Santa Monica at a disadvantage because we could be utilizing the numbers already for programs. This is not the way social science should be done."

Ito insists Applied Research has taken painstaking steps to ensure the quality of the data in its report.

Local politicians also share some of Gray's frustration. City Councilman Bobby Shriver, who has campaigned on the homeless issue, said he believes the information will be helpful when it's released.

"I look forward to seeing it," Shriver said.



Business

Calculate your net worth; reset your priorities



MIND YOUR BUSINESS
BY KIRK G. AGUER

To manage your money successfully, you need a standard by which you can measure your economic progress. One gauge of your financial headway is your personal net worth. You can estimate your net worth by preparing a simple personal balance sheet and income statement that will allow you to see your assets and liabilities and where your money is going. You can then take steps to make your net worth grow by finding ways to control spending, reduce debt and increase savings and investments.

PREPARE YOUR PERSONAL BALANCE SHEET

You will need a block of uninterrupted time, pen and paper or your personal computer. Once you have an initial estimate, you can go into a more in-depth analysis, if you wish. Here's what to do:

1. List your assets — everything you own that can be sold or swapped for another item of value. Include your house, car, household goods, jewelry, bank accounts, stocks and other investments, vested holdings in company savings and pension plans, individual retirement accounts (IRAs) and cash-value in permanent life insurance.

2. List the market value next to each asset.

3. Total your assets.

4. Separately, list your liabilities. Record all debts, including credit card and charge accounts, mortgage, home equity line of credit and other loans, such as automobiles or college.

5. Note the principal amount due next to each liability. Do not include interest.

6. Total your liabilities and subtract them from your assets.

The result of these calculations is your net worth. If assets exceed liabilities, you have a positive net worth. If liabilities exceed assets, you net worth is negative. You now have a foundation for working toward making your bottom line grow.

REORGANIZE YOUR PRIORITIES

Your balance sheet can help you determine whether your finances are in line with your goals. Depending on your objectives, you may want to pay down old debts or postpone new ones, initiate a savings plan, go on a stricter budget or begin a more aggressive investment policy.

Recalculate your net worth annually, and you'll be able to assess your progress and work toward improving your money management. Your financial record keeping will benefit, too.

(Kirk Aguer is a financial advisor at Morgan Stanley. Call (310) 319-5220 or e-mail kirk.aguer@morganstanley.com.)

Same old, same old? Risk management in 2006



THE WEEKLY RECKONING
BY BILL BONNER

It is a new year … and a new world.

But the view of most analysts and forecasters is that both look surprisingly like the old world and the old year we just left.

We have been reading predictions and forecasts for the coming year. Almost without exception, the experts see a year coming that's not very different from the one that just went. The consensus view is that real estate will weaken in the nation's hottest markets; that stocks will be a decent, but not spectacular, place for investment and that the economy will be OK, but not great. Oil, inflation and interest rates, too, are expected to be about the same in 2006 as they were in 2005.

Usually, the consensus view is right. That is not because the group of analysts and experts whose views are amalgamated to form the consensus is especially bright or perceptive. To the contrary, mostly numbskulls and poseurs shape the consensus view. These fellows can't really read tomorrow's headlines any sooner than the rest of us. Instead, their forecasting talent can be traced only to a lack of imagination. They cannot imagine that tomorrow will be much different from today. Since tomorrow usually is like today, they generally turn out to be correct.

If that were all there were to the story, you could make your investments based on the consensus view and you would be OK. But anytime you make a decision you have to consider not only the likelihood of the consequences, but also the gravity of them. You can cross the highway blindfolded. Most likely, the cars will see you and stop. But who would do such a thing? The gain is so marginal, and the potential loss so great.

Likewise, it may be true that in 2006, stocks will be all right and real estate will not be a disaster, but what are you likely to gain from them? And what is the risk that the consensus is wrong?

The trouble with investing along with the consensus is that there is little profit in it. You are merely going along with the great mass of lumpeninvestors — you are betting on the favorites. Stocks are still near all time highs, even though 2005 was a losing year for the Dow. And property? It depends on where you are.

In the nation as a whole, reports Paul Krugman in the New York Times, the cost of owning a home is still only 23.7 percent of income, not much different from where it has always been. But in the bubble areas on both coasts the cost of homeownership varies from 38 percent of income in New York to 42 percent in Miami to 55 percent in Los Angeles.

The consensus view is that these markets will soften, but not collapse. Yet, the last time the United States saw such expensive housing was in the late '70s — and then, they did collapse. In 1978, there were more than 2 million housing starts. Four years later, there were only half as many housing starts, and house prices were far below their peaks in many areas. But the damage was not limited to housing — the nation fell into the worst recession since that Great Depression of the '30s, with unemployment over 10 percent.

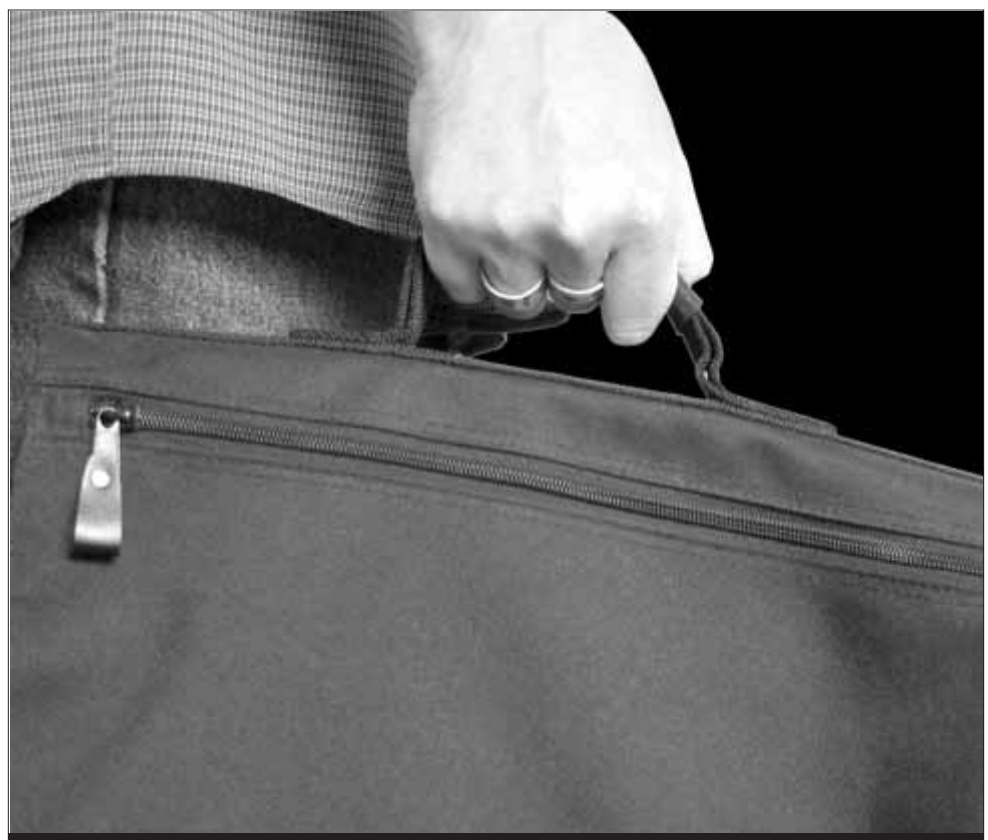
Today, investors and analysts look back at last year and the year before. They think they are looking forward as well as to the rear. They see no risk. They see no change. They think they can invest on yesterday's favorites for tomorrow's profits.

Alas, life is full of surprises. And it is the surprises that make money, or lose it. Who would have thought — in 1978 — that the rate of housing starts would be cut in half? Who would have thought, back then, that the 40-year trend towards higher rates of inflation and higher interest rates was soon to reverse? Who would have thought that housing would crash, and from the wreckage a new bull market in stocks would begin, taking the Dow from under 1,000 to over 10,000? Or, that a real estate bubble on both coasts would surge up just as the Dow finally began to lose momentum?

Who would think now that those trends, too, have exhausted themselves? Most years, investors can cross the road as blindfolded as consensus analysts. Most of the time, things work out one year as they did in the last. But at every turning point they get run down. We don't know what will happen in 2006. The consensus view may turn out to be right. But we see little profit in the consensus view, and much risk

(For more insight and analysis, visit www.dailyreckoning.com)

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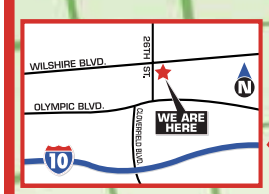
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STATE

STATE BRIEFS

Dirty water to get good rinsing

By The Associated Press

ONTARIO, Calif. — Water quality officials said a plume of contaminants recently discovered in groundwater south of Ontario International Airport will be cleaned up by industrial firms and military agencies responsible for the pollution.

The Regional Water Quality Control Board said the responsible parties are working on a plan to remove the chemicals before they enter the drinking water supply.

"We are giving the companies the opportunity to voluntarily come together, hire a consultant, perform an investigation and reach an agreement to fully fund the cleanup," regional water board executive Gerard Thibeault said.

The contaminants apparently seeped into the groundwater between the 1940s and 1980s when there were a variety of industrial operations at the airport. The main component of the plume is trichloroethylene, a solvent used for cleaning metal.

The toxic plume was only recently detected because the area is largely dedicated to agricultural uses. Agricultural wells are not as closely scrutinized as water used for human consumption, Thibeault said.

But the contamination is a larger concern now because local agencies are relying more on groundwater pulled from wells in that area for drinking water.

"The Chino Desalter Authority has a series of extraction wells and a desalting facility that is pumping up salt-contaminated groundwater, pumping salt out and supplying it to local water agencies," Thibeault said. "This plume from Ontario is migrating toward those wells."

Firms and agencies working on a cleanup plan included Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, General Electric as well as the Department of Defense and the California Air National Guard.

Darkness descends on 'Electronic Stonehenge'

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — These are dark days for the 30 towering glass-and-steel pylons decorating the entrance to Los Angeles International Airport.

Unveiled five years ago and proclaimed the city's "Electronic Stonehenge," the $15 million pylon lighting system with changing colors have been turned off, awaiting repairs and improvements in the electronic colors.

Lighting inside the cylinders was designed to produce 300 vibrant color variations, treating passengers and local businesses to light shows featuring pinks, blues, oranges and yellows.

"It's an icon for this area, something people really enjoy seeing," said Laurie Hughes, executive director of Gateway to L.A., a business improvement district that represents 35 area hotels and businesses.

The lighting system got balky a couple of years ago. Colors didn't change on some of the pylons and the lights went out completely on others. On Tuesday, Los Angeles World Airports turned the system off.

"Anyone who has visited LAX after sundown recently has no doubt noticed that the pylon lights along Century Boulevard and at the airport entrance do not convey the type of positive image we want," said Lydia Kennard, the agency's executive director, at a recent Airport Commission meeting.

The pylons will remain dark for the next few months for a $1.8 million makeover. Fifteen pylons that stand 25 to 60 feet tall in the median along Century Boulevard and 15 100-foot-high towers that form a ring at the airport's entrance will be overhauled.

The fix will include small LED lighting and a new system featuring software that will allow technicians to create 16 million color combinations by manipulating red, blue and green colors in each LED light.

Soft-Spoken Bandit will likely get hard time

By The Associated Press

TORRANCE, Calif. — A serial bank robber dubbed the Soft-Spoken Bandit for heists in the 1980s was arrested after he allegedly held up a Citibank branch in Torrance and led police on a chase to Wilmington, investigators said.

James David Wilson, 49, of Wilmington was arrested at gunpoint Tuesday after Torrance police officers bumped his pickup truck and it spun around. Wilson escaped from federal custody in 1989.

Investigators had been searching for Wilson after a bank surveillance photograph was published following a Dec. 14 robbery of a Washington Mutual bank in Torrance. A Daily Breeze reader contacted authorities to identify him, FBI spokeswoman Laura Eimiller said.

On Tuesday, Wilson allegedly walked into the Citibank branch on Pacific Coast Highway and demanded cash, police Lt. Rod Irvine said. He escaped with $2,000, but a witness saw him drive away and provided police with a description and his license plate number.

Wilson's car was spotted a short time later and there was a brief chase before his arrest. He is also suspected of holding up the same branch, a nearby Washington Mutual branch two weeks ago and a Bank of America branch in Hemet on Christmas Eve, police said.

In April 1989, Wilson was arrested in Harbor City for 15 area bank robberies. FBI agents estimated he netted up to $30,000 in robberies in Torrance, Redondo Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Hermosa Beach and Huntington Beach.

Wilson was nicknamed the Soft-Spoken Bandit because he usually wore plaid flannel shirts, presented a note and quietly demanded money after telling bank tellers he had a gun.

NATIONAL

Group looking to limit services to immigrants

BY JON SARCHE
Associated Press Writer

DENVER — Saying America "can only take so many," an advocacy group announced Wednesday it will start gathering signatures to put a measure on Colorado's November ballot to deny many government services to illegal immigrants in the state.

The proposed constitutional amendment would bar people who are in the country illegally from getting any state or local government services except emergency health care and education mandated by the federal government.

Later Wednesday, Republican legislators outlined a series of bills designed to enlist local law enforcement agencies to enforce immigration laws, punish companies that hire illegal immigrants and require school districts to record students' immigration status.

The two initiatives set the stage for what could be a bruising political battle this year.

The constitutional amendment was proposed by Defend Colorado Now, whose members include former Gov. Dick Lamm, a Democrat.

Lamm said the proposed amendment is not an attempt to "demonize" illegal immigrants.

"This is a referendum on whether or not (illegal immigration) is acceptable to Coloradans," he said. "We are trying to say, 'Look, folks, this hurts the average Coloradan and this is a drain on your taxpayer dollars."'

Defend Colorado Now member Waldo Benavidez said the group feels sorry for immigrants trying for a better life, "but this country and this society can only take so many."

"We just need to get control of our borders and let people come in the right way," he said.

Arizona and other states have limited illegal immigrants' access to services, but it's difficult to measure the effects, said Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies in Washington.

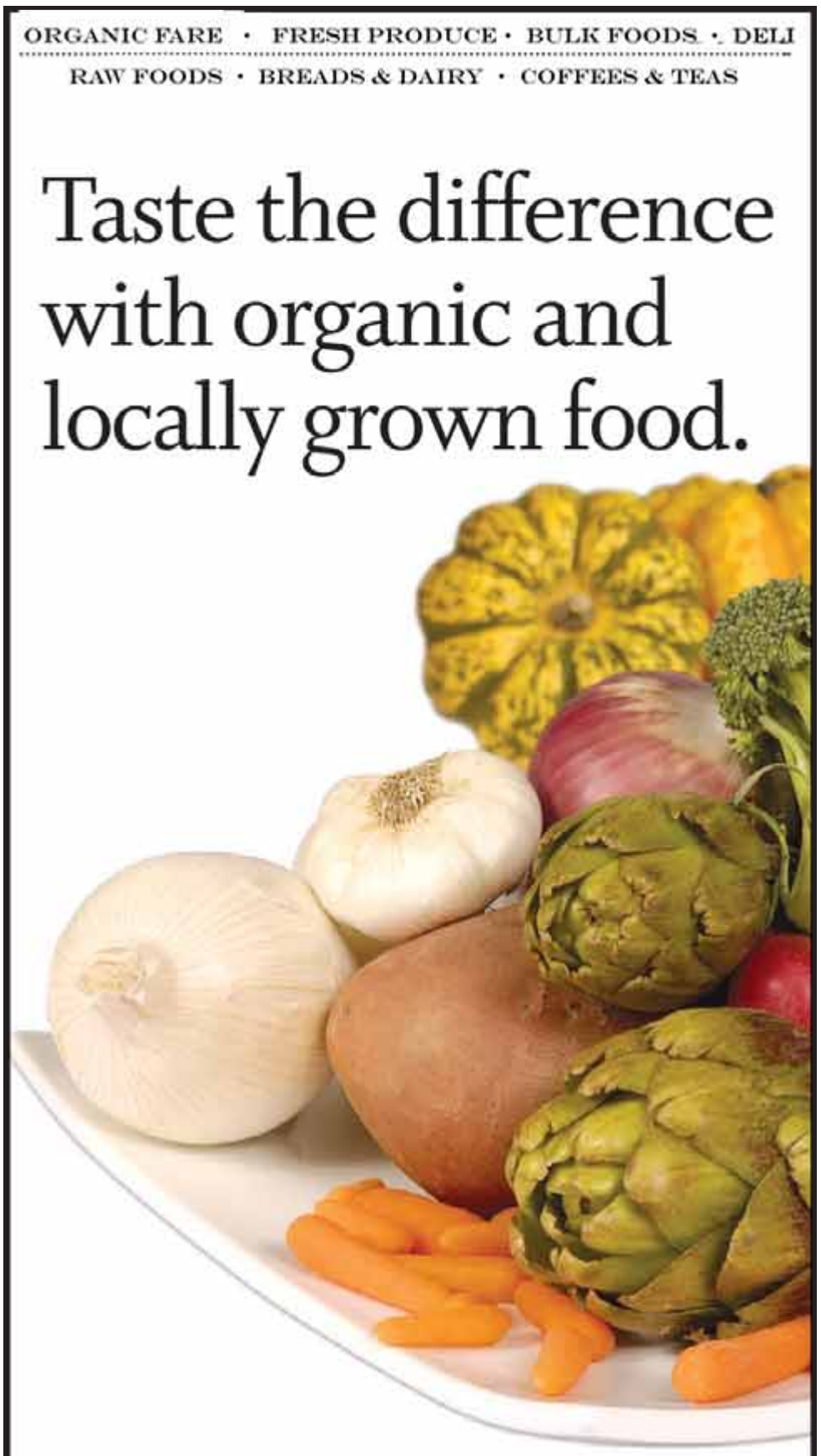
Krikorian's group supports tighter immigration controls such as Defend Colorado Now's proposal. He said such measures are designed to make it harder for illegal immigrants to remain in the United States.

"The only way you can genuinely reduce illegal immigration is to turn off the magnets that pull people into the United States in the first place," he said.

Defend Colorado Now originally wanted to put its proposal on the 2004 ballot, but an unsuccessful court challenge delayed its plans.

Fred Elbel, director of the group, said it needs about 68,000 valid signatures of registered voters to get on the ballot.





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NATIONAL



Abramoff probe puts Congress on hot seat

BY PETE YOST
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — In a deal that clears the way for the next phase of a widespread Capitol Hill corruption probe, lobbyist Jack Abramoff has agreed to tell prosecutors and the FBI about alleged bribes to lawmakers and their aides on issues ranging from Internet gambling to wireless phone service in the House.

The full extent of the investigation is not yet known, but Justice Department officials said Tuesday they intended to make use of the trove of e-mails and other material in Abramoff's possession as part of a probe that is believed to be focusing on as many as 20 members of Congress and aides.

"The corruption scheme with Mr. Abramoff is very extensive and we will continue to follow it wherever it leads," said Assistant Attorney General Alice Fisher, head of the Justice Department's criminal division.

Court papers in Abramoff's case refer to an aide to then-House Majority Leader Tom DeLay who helped stop anti-gambling legislation regarding the Internet. Abramoff, the papers state, paid the staffer's wife $50,000 from clients that benefited from the actions of the staffer, identified by a person close to the investigation as Tony Rudy, DeLay's former deputy chief of staff.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the probe is ongoing. Rudy did not return a phone call Tuesday at his lobbying firm.

DeLay, R-Texas, voted against his party on the Internet anti-gambling legislation which was designed to make it easier for authorities to stop online gambling sites.

DeLay attorney Richard Cullen said he believes that when the investigation is completed and the truth is known that the Justice Department will conclude that his client, who had risen to House majority leader before stepping down from the post last year, did nothing wrong.

Abramoff pleaded guilty Tuesday to conspiracy, mail fraud and tax evasion, with his conduct outlined in court papers that refers to "a stream of things of value to public officials in exchange for a series of official acts and influence."

On Wednesday, Abramoff was to plead guilty in Miami to criminal charges stemming from Abramoff's 2000 purchase of SunCruz Casinos, a case that touches on Rep. Bob Ney, R-Ohio.

The political ramifications of the Abramoff probe were apparent, with minority Democrats intending to make ethics a campaign issue in this election year. House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi said Abramoff's confession in court was "not a surprise because this Republican Congress is the most corrupt in history and the American people are paying the price."

Some political consultants and analysts are comparing potential damage from the Abramoff investigation to the 1992 House banking scandal that led to the retirement or ouster of 77 lawmakers.

Abramoff's cooperation has made lawmakers nervous.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., became the most recent addition to the roster of politicians announcing plans to donate Abramoff's campaign contributions to charity.

The court papers in the Washington case refer to Ney, saying that regarding SunCruz, the congressman placed a statement drafted by Abramoff partner Michael Scanlon in the Congressional Record. The statement, the court papers say, was calculated to pressure the owner of SunCruz to sell on terms favorable to Abramoff.

Ney denies wrongdoing, saying that "at the time I dealt with Jack Abramoff, I obviously did not know, and had no way of knowing, the self-serving and fraudulent nature of Abramoff's activities."

Abramoff and his former partner, Adam Kidan, are charged with concocting a false $23 million wire transfer making it appear they contributed a sizable stake of their own cash into the $147.5 million purchase of cruise ships.

The court papers released Tuesday in Washington raised questions about Ney's former chief of staff, Neil Volz. The documents say the ex-staffer contacted the congressman on behalf of an Abramoff client that won a lucrative deal from Ney to improve cell phone reception in House buildings.

Volz contacted his ex-boss within one year of leaving the congressman's staff, the court papers say, a possible violation of federal conflict of interest laws which impose a one-year lobbying ban.

Volz referred questions to his attorney, who was not immediately available for comment.

Abramoff was once a well-connected lobbyist able to command almost unimaginable fees: A Louisiana tribe once paid Scanlon and him more than $30 million over 26 months. Now facing up to 11 years in prison, Abramoff apologized after pleading guilty.

"Words will not ever be able to express my sorrow and my profound regret for all my actions and mistakes," Abramoff said. "I hope I can merit forgiveness from the Almighty and those I've wronged or caused to suffer."







INTERNATIONAL

Russian, Ukrainian gas companies sign pact

BY STEVE GUTTERMAN
Associated Press Writer

MOSCOW — The Russian and Ukrainian natural gas companies agreed Wednesday on a plan to resume gas shipments to Ukraine that allowed both sides to claim victory after a commercial and political dispute that had raised fears of gas shortages in Europe.

The complex pricing plan Russia and Ukraine agreed to drew in a third company: a Russian-Swiss trading business — partly owned by a subsidiary of the Russian natural gas monopoly Gazprom — that will be the sole gas provider to Ukraine.

"The talks ended successfully for Gazprom and Gazprom is completely satisfied," Chief Executive Alexei Miller said as he and Naftogaz head Oleksiy Ivchenko announced the five-year contract.

"We reached an agreement — on mutually beneficial, mutually acceptable terms — that will make it possible to supply Ukraine with the full volume of gas it needs and provide for the transport of Russian gas to Europe," Ivchenko said.

OAO Gazprom will sell gas to the RosUkrEnergo trading company for $230 per 1,000 cubic meters as of Jan. 1.

Ukraine will then buy gas from the company for $95.

RosUkrEnergo can pay and charge the different prices because it also buys gas from the Central Asian nation of Turkmenistan that will be added to the mix, Gazprom spokesman Sergei Kupriyanov said. The Turkmen gas sells for about $50 per 1,000 cubic meters, according to Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko.

Kupriyanov said that the agreed price for Russian gas was $230 as of Jan. 1 but that it would fluctuate with the market. He did not indicate how often the price would be adjusted.

"Two nations won — Russia and Ukraine; Europe won; it is common sense that won," Ukrainian Prime Minister Yuriy Yekhanurov told reporters in Kiev.

Wednesday's agreement looked on balance to be a greater victory for Russia. The deal leaves Ukraine at the mercy not only of market prices but of Turkmenistan and its mercurial president, Saparmurat Niyazov, who has been trying to raise his country's gas prices.

And while the agreement was presented as a victory for market economics, it puts the Russian-Ukrainian gas trade in the hands of a non-transparent company. RosUkrEnergo is owned by Gazprom bank and a Swiss subsidiary of Austria's Raiffeisen Bank, but the beneficiary owner of the latter share is unknown.

Yekhanurov indicated one clear consequence of the crisis for Ukraine's energy-gobbling industry: "We will do everything possible to sharply reduce gas consumption."

Europe gets about a quarter of its gas from Russia, some 80 percent of that arriving in pipelines that cross Ukraine. Russia stopped selling natural gas to its neighbor on Sunday as their price dispute reached a climax, and European customers reported a sharp drop-off in gas supplies on Monday.

After a wave of criticism from Europe, Russia boosted the amount going into Ukrainian pipelines late Monday and supplies appeared to have returned to normal Wednesday. Russia had accused Ukraine of siphoning off gas intended for Europe.

Ivchenko and Miller said the two companies had also agreed to raise the transit fee Gazprom pays to Ukraine to send its gas through the pipelines from $1.09 to $1.60 per thousand cubic meters to travel about 60 miles. Ukraine will pay cash for gas deliveries and Russia will pay cash for transit, Kupriyanov said, ending a barter system that had displeased Russia.

EU officials expressed satisfaction that an agreement was reached, saying in a statement that they welcomed the "swift and positive response" to EU appeals for a settlement and the acknowledgment in Russia and Ukraine of "the importance placed by the Union on the maintenance of their role as secure long-term suppliers of natural gas to the EU."

Despite the resolution, the dispute forced many European countries to question their dependence on Russian energy supplies and Russia's reliability as a political and economic partner as the country assumes the chairmanship of the Group of Eight.

"We should discuss what happened in those 24 hours when a number of European countries suffered from a reduced gas supply, which happened for the first time in over 40 years," Austrian Economy Minister Martin Bartenstein said Wednesday. Austria currently holds the EU's presidency.

Russia supplied about a third of the gas consumed in Ukraine last year. Gazprom had demanded Ukraine pay $230 and Ukraine had resisted mightily, saying that while it favored paying market prices it needed them phased in over a transition period of several years.

Talks broke down late last week amid a barrage of accusations of blackmail, sabotage and thievery.

Turkmenistan is Ukraine's main gas provider, but its gas runs through Russian pipelines.

Kupriyanov said that in 2006, "RosUkrEnergo will be the exclusive supplier of all imported gas in Ukraine."

The trading company has come under scrutiny in Ukraine, where last summer the State Security agency was investigating Naftogaz, RosUkrEnergo and groups affiliated with Semyon Mogilevich, a Ukrainian-born Russian citizen and reputed organized crime figure who is wanted by the FBI.

The probe was aimed at establishing links between Russian and Ukrainian organized criminal groups, the two companies, and exports of Turkmen gas to Ukraine.

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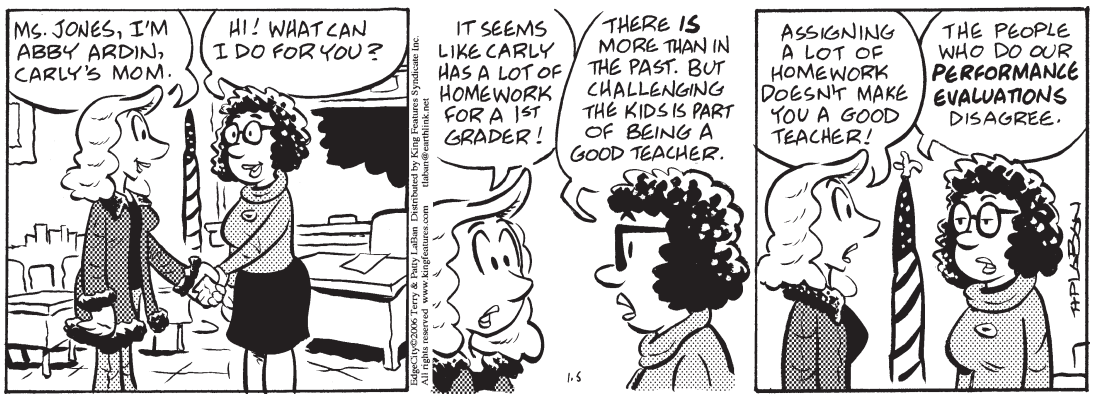
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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAMES STATEMENT FILE NO. 05 2776403 FIRST FILING. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as Phree Ya Mind, Flower Funk, 4126 Jefferson Blvd., Studio A, Los Angeles, CA 90016. The full name of registrant(s) is/are : Patrick Henry Johnson, 4126 Jefferson Blvd., Studio A, Los Angeles, CA 90016, Sherree Lenore Saperstein-Johnson, 4126 Jefferson Blvd., Studio A, Los Angeles, CA 90016 This Business is being conducted by, husband and wife. Signed: Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious name or names listed herein.. /s/: Patrick H. Johnson, Sherree L. Saperstein-Johnson
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 11/16/05. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 12/15/2005, 12/22/2005, 12/29/2005, 1/5/2006

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAMES STATEMENT FILE NO. 05 2938643 FIRST FILING. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as First Look Sonogram, AI #/ON 200524210069, 10657 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90064. The full name of registrant(s) is/are : Virces, LLC, 10657 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90064 This Business is being conducted by, a limited liability. Signed: Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious name or names listed herein.. /s/: Virces, LLC, President, Eumea Yun
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 12/1/2005. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 12/29/2005, 1/5/2006, 1/12/2006, 1/19/2006

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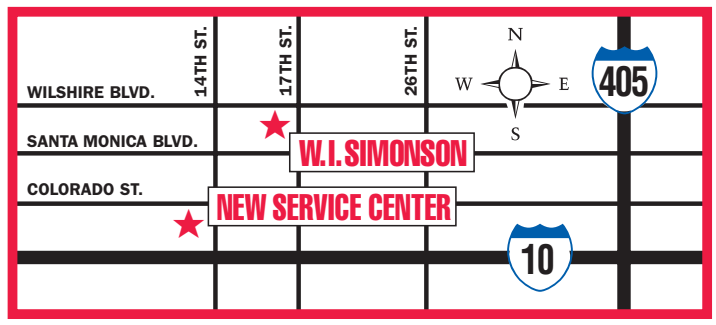
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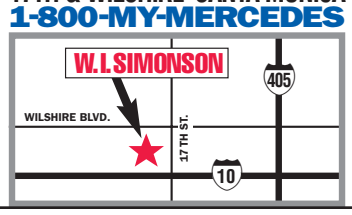
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