



BACK AND BEARDED
SEE PAGE 16

Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE GOING TO GRAMMAR'S HOUSE ISSUE

Santa Monica Daily Press

The changing face of SMC

While the campus modernizes, some residents are worried

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SMC At Santa Monica College, the times they are a-changin'.

Enjoying a break between winter session courses, Valerie Pobjoy plopped her books down on a concrete wall, taking a short breather before her next class, oblivious to the sounds of construction taking place within earshot, the pounding of the jackhammers and the rumblings of the bulldozers.

"Having lived in Los Angeles my whole life, I never notice it," the college freshman said on Thursday. "It's an everyday thing for an L.A. person."

Pobjoy sat amongst the college's past, present and future, right in the middle of a campus, whose physical makeup is constantly in a state of flux — the student facing the construction site for the new quad while her back was situated against a library that was renovated just a few years ago, a library that sat adjacent to one of the original structures on the SMC campus, the Physical Education building.

It's all part of an effort to modernize the facilities of a junior college that ranks among the top in the state.

Those efforts will soon extend to the northern part of the campus as three major projects are in the pipeline, includ-



Brandon Wise brandonw@smdp.com

COMING SOON: The side of SMC that faces Pico Boulevard is slated to experience a considerable amount of improvement in the coming years.

ing the construction of the Student Services Center at the northeast corner of the campus, the renovation of Drescher Hall and a series of landscaping improvements along Pico Boulevard.

The intent, according to SMC officials, is to create a clearly identifiable frontage for the college, a much more physically

pleasant main entrance along Pico Boulevard than what currently exists.

"These students should have first-class service when they come to SMC," said college President Dr. Chui L. Tsang. "It's time for us to treat our students in the right way by providing these students ... (with) the type of quality service that these stu-

dents deserve."

The estimated \$80-million project is slated to kick off in the summer with the new Student Services Center, which will be erected on the current site of the amphitheater, finally consolidating the

SEE SMC PAGE 11



Brandon Wise brandonw@smdp.com

OUT OF SIGHT: A homeless man seeks shelter under a staircase in Santa Monica Place's parking structure on Broadway.

Searching for comfort

Rough weather forces homeless population to scramble

BY KEVIN HERRERA | Editor in Chief

DOWNTOWN Seated near an alley on Santa Monica Boulevard with a tattered black suit case at his feet, Ronald D. looked up at the gray sky and shook his head in despair.

"It's definitely going to rain soon, and rain hard," said Ronald, a former construction worker who injured his back four years ago and has since lived on the streets of Santa Monica and West Los Angeles. "It's going to be a long night."

With significant rainfall expected this weekend, many of Santa Monica's homeless population are forced to scramble

to find shelter, but the reality is many will end up spending nights on the move or huddled underneath awnings and in parking structures to stay dry and avoid getting sick.

"There's just not that many places you can go," said Ronald, who did not want to give his last name. "A lot of the shelters are full and if you don't get assistance [such as social security] then you can't afford a hotel, so you're left walking the streets."

To protect the less fortunate from the elements the Los

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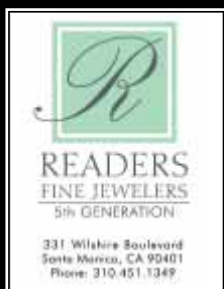
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Calendar

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WEEKEND EDITION, JANUARY 5-6, 2008

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues



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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS



Angels and Airwaves

6126 Hollywood Blvd., 8 p.m.

Tom DeLonge and company perform tonight at the Henry Fonda Theater. For tickets and information, visit www.ticketmaster.com.

Monthly Musical: 'Hairspray'

601 Santa Monica Blvd., 3 p.m. — 5 p.m.

The Main Library presents the hit movie musical, "Hairspray," starring Nikki Blonsky and John Travolta. All ages are welcome to this free program. Seating is first come, first served in the MLK Jr. Auditorium.

Psychic Faire & Spiritual Healing Festival

1737 21st St., 1 p.m. — 4 p.m.

Find out what awaits you in 2008 with 20-minute readings of your choice including Tarot, Past Lives, Career, Love Life, Money and more. Readings are a \$10 contribution or contribute \$25 for three. Admission and healings are free. For further details, call (310) 587-3536.

Be well

601 Santa Monica Blvd., 2 p.m. — 3:30 p.m.

Dr. Michael Hollis, from the Santa Monica BWELL Clinic, will discuss how hormone analysis provides clues to eating right for each body type, which can make dieting easier.

Sunday, Jan. 6, 2008

Motherless daughters presentation

1133 Seventh St., 4 p.m. — 6 p.m.

This meet-up is for women dealing with the loss of their mothers. Every meeting will be attended by a guest who introduces an alternative healing modality. For more information, contact Lynda at (310) 228-3160.

Ice, ice, baby

1324 Fifth St., 10 a.m. — 10 p.m.

Bring back childhood memories — or create new ones — as you slice through the city's new public ice rink. Admission is \$10; including skate rental.

The other Jerry's kids

1348 14th St., 7:30 p.m. — 11:30 p.m.

CUBENSIS brings the sights and sounds of a live Grateful Dead concert to 14 Below every Sunday. Don't forget to bring a tie-dye shirt and tinted glasses, man.

For more information on any of the events listed, log on to smdp.com and click the "Events" tab for the given day's calendar.



Appeal denied for Paleologus

Daily Press Staff Writer

A man sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for strangling a 21-year-old Santa Monica woman he lured with promises of getting her a part in a "James Bond" movie had his appeal turned down Friday by the California Supreme Court.

Victor Paleologus pleaded guilty to killing Kristine Johnson on Feb. 15, 2003.

In October, he tried to appeal his sentence, but a three-justice panel of the Appellate Court noted he had waived his right to appeal when he pleaded guilty to first-degree murder midway through his trial in 2006.

The high court announced it would not consider his petition for review.

The plea spared him from a possible death sentence. He unsuccessfully tried to withdraw his guilty plea before being sentenced in September 2006, saying his attorney, Andrew Flier, pressured him into pleading guilty — an accusation the lawyer vehemently denied.

Johnson's body was found in a Hollywood Hills ravine about three weeks after she told her roommate she had met a man at the Century City shopping mall and planned to see him about a part in a "James Bond" action-type movie.

Paleologus was arrested in May 2003 for the woman's murder and has been behind bars since then.

Prosecutors said he had previously been convicted of a half-dozen crimes, including assault with intent to commit rape.

During a trial that lasted more than a week, prosecutors said Paleologus approached at least seven women over a 12-year period and asked them to audition for a minor, but very lucrative role in an upcoming film.

There was no film. The offer was merely a ruse so that Paleologus could get the women alone, rape them and kill them, prosecutors said.

The act almost worked on several occasions, but the women were able to fight their way free from his clutches, all except for Johnson, a trusting Michigan transplant who was attending Santa Monica College.

She was found partially covered by a sleeping bag, her hands and feet bound by shoe laces, her face badly decomposed. It is believed she was killed several weeks before her body was discovered.

Her disappearance gained national attention as Terry Hall, Johnson's mother, pleaded publicly for her daughter's safe return.

Hall said shortly after the trial that she will forever be haunted by thoughts about her daughter's final minutes.

Building to a halt

BY MELODY HANATANI

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL Concerned with the growing density of the city over the past few decades, an advocacy group comprised of local residents is seeking to place a measure on the ballot that would limit the rate of commercial development.

The Santa Monica Coalition for Livable Cities (SMCLC) plans to file an application next week to the City Clerk's Office to begin the process of gathering the necessary signatures to qualify the measure for the November ballot, an election sure to draw

scores of residents considering that it coincides with the presidential election.

The proposed measure has some city officials concerned that it could have a negative impact on current efforts to update the Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE), a document that will guide developmental in the city for the next 20 years or more.

"The way you really have long-term participation of the community and the way that people in the community build consensus is through a process that involves everyone and out of that process, you come to an agreement ... a consensus and a vision for the future," said Planning and Community

Development Director Eileen Fogarty, referring to the numerous community workshops on LUCE that have taken place over the past year. "A single issue on the ballot is not the way to bring all the different constituencies together and assign a future where there is a shared vision."

The coalition seeks to limit all new commercial development in the city to less than 75,000 total square feet a year, which is about the size of two supermarkets. The initiative would allow the development approvals to exceed the maximum so long as

SEE LUCE PAGE 13



MELTING AWAY

Families on Thursday flock to Santa Monica's only ice skating rink, a popular attraction over the holidays with an estimated 25,000 visitors so far. The rink, which was sponsored by the Bayside District Corp., City Hall and Starbucks, will close this Sunday. Kathleen Rawson, executive director of Bayside, said the rink cost roughly \$225,000 to operate and at \$10 a pop, she believes the venture will break even.

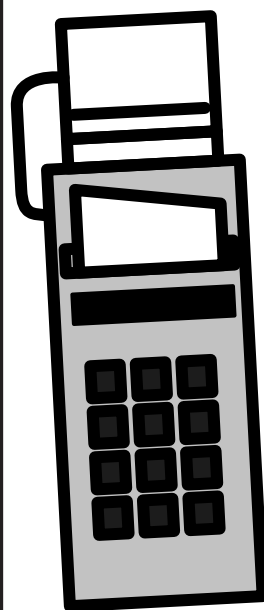
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Don't forget about Old Glory
Editor:

Your Dec. 29,2007 edition, particularly the front page article ("The '07 stories that shaped Santa Monica"), surprised me for what I would call a glaring omission.

The wonderful 4th of July Parade, organized by the good people of the Ocean Park Association, certainly deserved at least a mention considering the title of your article.

The people, all ages and sizes, who marched down Main Street represented the best of Santa Monica. People of good will from all parts of the world , different backgrounds, different colors, joined together to celebrate an especially American tradition.

For me, a new citizen of Santa Monica, this was a particularly wonderful introduction to Santa Monica life.

Ellen Wiest
Santa Monica

Many thanks to the DP
Editor:

I wanted to pass along my thanks to Brandon Wise and the Daily Press in featuring the Kiwanis International float from the Rose Parade on the cover of the Thursday, Jan. 3 issue ("In full bloom").

The local club, Santa Monica Kiwanis, and other community service organizations in this town do a terrific job in giving back to the community in which its members work and live.

We focus on the youth of the Westside and help support many of the local organizations that have the day-to-day involvement with our young citizens. I encourage all Santa Monican's to come out to these service groups such as Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary and more and lend your time and join our cause.

Ronald T. Davis
Immediate Past President 2006-07
Santa Monica Kiwanis Club

Meat eaters should go veggie
Editor:

I, being a vegetarian, am saddened to see of all the people who look down upon us or ignore us all together. Most people believe we're annoying to tell them to change their eating habits. I'm here to be another one of those people. You should be vegetarians because many studies show that it lowers your risk of certain diseases, it saves lives of animals, and it gives you more energy during the day.

Many people may say that being a vegetarian helps you live longer. This is a proven fact. According to the German Cancer Research Center, vegetarians have a less likely risk of diseases like cancer, any digestive disorders, and more. In the long run you don't have to worry about diseases as much. You might think that vegetarians are fatigued because they don't eat meat, but really they're perfectly fine. Why wouldn't someone become a vegetarian if they know it'll lower their risk of dying from diseases?

Vegetarians don't eat meat and therefore save animals. I personally have a soft spot for animals and what they must go through just because some people want food. On petakids.com, it says that each vegetarian saves 100 lives a year. I'm proud to be someone who saves 100 lives a year. Why take lives when you could be saving them? More people should be vegetarians for the sake of the animals that are slaughtered just for food.

Finally, I will say that being a vegetarian gives you more energy. In 6th grade, my science teacher taught us about distribution of energy. She told us that on a pyramid of energy the most energy-rich thing you could eat was plants. People who eat meat only get a small percent of the energy. There I can conclude that being a vegetarian gives more energy during the day and in general.

Being a vegetarian saves animals' lives, lowers your risk of certain diseases, and gives you more energy. So why wait any longer? Go vegetarian today.

Katie Hobkirk
Santa Monica



Modern Times
Lloyd Garver

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

The Rose Bowl was like a war

I USHERED IN THE NEW YEAR BY seeing "the granddaddy Of them all." I'm not talking about some irresponsible pro athlete or polygamist Warren Jeffs. I'm talking about the Rose Bowl. Because it's the oldest post-season football game, it has that "granddaddy" nickname. This year's game featured the favored University of Southern California Trojans against my wife's alma mater, the University of Illinois' Fighting Illini. We went because Illinois was her school, and because we had never gone to the Rose Bowl before. I'm a big believer that one of the functions of sports is to provide people with an escape from the real world. If you don't like sports, maybe you escape by knitting, or reading, or traveling. Regardless, every once in a while, we all need to get away from thinking about things like the war, the dropping dollar, and who's going to be living in the White House next year. But even in the midst of 93,000 cheering fans at the Rose Bowl, it was impossible for me to escape completely from these things.

Getting to the game was much easier than I had thought. Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus will take you there. Unfortunately, I learned too late that you needed reservations for the bus. Whoever heard of reservations for a bus? The good news was that there were other available buses, and I found one that took us from Loews Santa Monica Hotel and back.

We arrived almost two hours before kickoff, so my wife and I had a picnic on the grass while we listened to the partisan fans cheer. Over and over again, I heard the Illinois loyalists loudly spell, "I-L-L." It seemed strange that they would cheer for a synonym for sickness. However, after a while, I realized that the "I-L-L" was followed by an "I-N-I." The USC fans also cheered, and although I knew their team is called the "Trojans," every time I heard them call out that word, it sounded like they were cheering for safe sex.

Once we got into the stadium, the massive crowd was overwhelming. If it was amazing to a sports fan like me that so many people traveled thousands of miles just to go to a football game, I can only imagine what the non-fan must think. And in this political year, a question suddenly occurred to me: How many of these 93,000 people will be too busy, too tired, or too lazy to vote on Election Day? In fact, over a million people attended the five bowl games on Jan. 1. Another 71,000 went to the first-ever NHL regular outdoor hockey game in Buffalo. So, it's obvious that if we really want to increase voter turnout, all we have to do is make everyone attending a sporting event show proof

that he or she has voted in the most recent election.

Before the game even started, we were all reminded of the war as Navy SEAL paratroopers majestically glided and then landed on the field. Fighter planes flew over the stadium, and there was a color guard for the national anthem.

Football is often considered a metaphor for war (and vice versa). This Rose Bowl game was no exception. USC easily defeated Illinois 49-17 because USC was faster and more powerful. The nicknames and costumes should have been a giveaway: Illinois' tribe, the Illini, and the Trojans who dress as warriors. I mean, historically, how often did Native Americans defeat soldiers with armor and swords?

FOOTBALL IS OFTEN CONSIDERED A METAPHOR FOR WAR (AND VICE VERSA). THIS ROSE BOWL GAME WAS NO EXCEPTION.

The official program for the game cost \$10, which, any day now, might be equal to about one euro.

Despite these glimpses of the real world, watching the game was pretty much escapist. And fun. When your biggest problem is the fact that the fake bright orange hair on the girl in front of you keeps blocking your view, you know you are not in the middle of any serious pursuit.

One of the most affecting moments of the afternoon occurred before the game started. On the huge television screen, we were shown soldiers stationed in the Middle East. One group was from California, and one was from Illinois. As they cheered on their teams, the stadium roared. I hoped that the soldiers were going to see the game thousands of miles away and scream even louder as their team scored. Those were some people who really deserved an escape from reality.

LLOYD GARVER has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Home Improvement" to "Frasier." He writes online for "The Huffington Post," and can be reached at smdp@lloydgarvermoderntimes.com

PUBLISHER
Ross Furukawa
ross@smdp.com

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Kevin Herrera
editor@smdp.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Daniel Archuleta
daniela@smdp.com

STAFF WRITER
Melody Hanatani
melodyh@smdp.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Bill Bauer, David Pizarra,
Meredith Carroll, Kenny Mackk,
Jack Neworth, Lloyd Garver,
Seth Barnes, Taylor van Arsdale,
Dane Robert Swanson,
Mark Marchillo, Ken Tarr,
Mike Heayn, Brian Hepp
and Mariel Howsepian

NEWS INTERNS
Gabrielle Harradine
news@smdp.com

Jared M. Feldschreiber
news@smdp.com

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Brandon Wise
brandonw@smdp.com

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Morgan Genser
news@smdp.com

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER
Rob Schwenker
schwenker@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
Julie Martinez
juliem@smdp.com

Liam Blume
Liamb@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ASSISTANT
Cynthia Vazquez
advertising@smdp.com

OPERATIONS MANAGER
Connie Sommerville
connies@smdp.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Tessa Vergara
tessav@smdp.com

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Frances Casareno
production@smdp.com

CLASSIFIEDS SALES MANAGER
Annie Kotok
anniek@smdp.com

CIRCULATION
Keith Wyatt
Oswaldo Paganini
circulation@smdp.com

EDITOR AT LARGE
Mike Tittinger
miket@smdp.com

Santa Monica Daily Press
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410 Broadway, Suite B
Santa Monica, CA 90401
OFFICE (310) 458-PRESS (7737)
FAX (310) 576-9913

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STRAY talk

A CENTER-CUT, NO-FAT REVIEW OF WHAT WAS SAID THIS PAST WEEK BY FOLKS THE WORLD OVER AND RIGHT AT HOME

“You don’t know how many people come up to me and say, ‘This child was conceived listening to you.’”

— Janet Jackson on the effect her songs have on her fans

“The age of books isn’t yet over.”

— Lee Rainie, Director of the Pew Internet and American Life Project, on a new study indicating that young adults are the heaviest users of public libraries despite easy access to information over the Internet

“You’re watching the only show on the air that has jokes written by union writers. I hear you at home thinking to yourself, ‘This crap is written?’”

— David Letterman, returning to the air after a two-month hiatus with striking writers from other shows

“It hit me hard and I felt there was this big injustice, I couldn’t understand why they couldn’t at least afford shoes because they have to walk a long way to get fresh water.”

— Blake Mycoskie, creator of TOMS shoes, on the Argentinian children who inspired the shoe’s creation and the company, which donates a pair with every pair purchased

“No. I’m English, it doesn’t make sense — lots of balls going all over the place — I don’t understand it.”

— Keira Knightley, on whether she’ll watch the Super Bowl

“I’m not a fan of the government telling us what we can do in our private lives, but I’m also in favor of protecting children.”

— Corey Trimble, father of two and a non-smoker on the new state ban on smoking in cars when riding with children

“People would rather elect a president who reminds them of the guy they work with, not that guy who laid them off.”

— Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee at a campaign stop this week

“Cher hooked-up with Sonny when she was just 16. Bo Derek met her husband John when he was in his 40s while she was under 18. I suppose all this trailer trash debauchery will make for a good single by Jamie-Lynn when the smoke clears.”

— Santa Monica Daily Press columnist Ken Tarr on the rumors that the father of Jamie-Lynn Spears’ baby isn’t her teenage boyfriend, but an older man

“She’s confirming everything bad that people think. It is really a shame.”

— Britney Spears’ former dance teacher, Renee Donewar, on her former pupil

Quotations captured and compiled with care by CYNTHIA VAZQUEZ.

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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The QLine

SAYONARA 2007, YOU WON'T BE MISSED

This past week, Q-line asked:

What negative thing happened to you in 2007 that you would like to leave in the past?

Here are your responses:

"THE BIGGEST NEGATIVE THING ABOUT 2007 for me is being a pedestrian in Santa Monica. I have tripped and fallen over the cracked and misaligned sidewalks and even once on Santa Monica and Lincoln boulevards in the middle of the badly paved road. I have also been nearly run over on the sidewalk many times by inconsiderate and speedy bicyclists, and on occasion some speedy skateboarders and dawdling homeless with packed shopping carts and other conveyances. I would like to have a little more pleasant experience on the sidewalks of Santa Monica. The police should cite these misdemeanors before they kill, maim or injure someone who is trying to walk on the sidewalks of this crowded city. I don't walk much any more because of this annoyance and frightening experiences."

"THE MOST NEGATIVE THING THAT happened to me this year just happened last week. I drove my car into a wall and fractured and broke my sternum and put me in tremendous pain and the car I don't have anymore. I will not drive anymore. I am an old man in my 80s and no way can I drive. The pain is too excruciating. In no way will I drive again."

"WELL, EXCEPT FOR MY TRIPS TO Disneyland, Disney World, Euro Disney and the Simpsons movie, I'd say the year has pretty much been a waste of time and you can forget the whole thing."

"ALTHOUGH IT WAS NOT A NEGATIVE experience, still I will leave behind that at the beginning of 2007 I began my international search for Elvis Presley. After my locating Elvis, who is alive and well living in reclusive seclusion, I asked Elvis to honor me by taking a picture of us together to verify our meeting. Elvis said he would take a photograph with me if I would assure him that I ain't nothing but a hound dog and promised not to step on his blue suede shoes and find him a woman that would love him tender and old enough that he would not end up doing the jailhouse rock. I agreed, but seemingly out of nowhere came a man the size of Kong who I was certain could spank Hulk Hogan before pinning him to the mat. He stated that I better take off to blue Hawaii now or I would be dancing the hula with two out-of-place kneecaps. I then bid Elvis aloha and headed back to Santa Monica. As you can read, 2007 did not have an effect on me, on me, on me."

"THE QUESTION THIS WEEK FOR ME, personally, should have been what negative thing didn't happen to me in 2007. Come on 2008, baby needs new shoes, but for me, it should be baby needs a new year. Praise God 2007 is over and done. Thank you."

"THE NEGATIVE THING THAT HAPPENED to me in 2007 was the realization that the current City Council is anti-envi-

mental given their plan to destroy the trees on Second and Fourth street and they don't want to listen to the community. I think it is time, if they continue this way, to vote them out of office and possibly consider a recall campaign."

"I LOST MY 94-YEAR-OLD FATHER in 2007. Most of his friends say he certainly got his money's worth. The negative angst is because of my perceived loss, but being dimwitted I can't see his fantastic gain. Whether you believe in one life or 100,000, where he's at has to be infinitely better relatively time wise than the history of brutality and stupidity of this plane of existence. As I sometimes view the light from the torch of the Statue of Liberty, no matter how thin it seems, it still lights the path to divine thought than any country in the history of our world. Happy new year."

"IN 2007 I LOST MY JOB, MY SOURCE of income and in the first time in 20 years I have to be on unemployment, and I am. But that's not the worst thing that's happened. Like a phoenix I will rise any way. The worst thing is having the mobility taken away from me by selfish people who ride their bikes on sidewalks very fast, especially at night. I don't own a car and I walk everywhere. I also run and I've had more than one frightening experience of being practically knocked down and run over by a streaming line of bikers making their way to the Friday night Critical Mass bike ride. Also random incidents of people with no horns, nothing to alert me to their presence, almost knocking me down on the sidewalk. The sad and scary thing is once someone has knocked you down you have no recourse. There's no license plate, very minimal ways to get retribution from that person. Please don't ride your bikes on the sidewalk. Please don't. Health is the most important thing. Without health we have nothing. That's worse then being unemployed."

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State hunkers down for rain

BY SAMANTHA YOUNG
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO A fierce arctic storm pounded California on Friday, threatening to soak mudslide-prone canyons already charred by wildfires and to paralyze the mountains with deep snow.

Power already was knocked out to hundreds of thousands of residents, and the California Highway Patrol encouraged drivers to stay off the roads. Truckers were told to hunker down in blizzard-like conditions over mountain passes in the Sierra Nevada, and even some ski resorts closed.

"It's a whiteout here," said Neil Erasmus, general manager of Ice Lake Lodge and Rainbow Lodge in Soda Springs. "We're plowing and grooming, plowing and grooming to keep us from being buried in."

Forecasters said the mountains could see 10 feet of snow total from the trio of storms that was expected through the weekend. The sprawling, swirling system spanned the length of the West Coast.

Winds howled in the mountain areas, gusting up to 85 miles an hour, and in the Sacramento Valley, gusts topped 65 mph, the strongest in a decade.

Parts of highways from Sacramento to San Francisco were closed because debris blocked lanes. Ferry service in the San

Francisco Bay was interrupted, as well.

"It isn't the weather that causes these collisions, it's the way people drive in them," said Sgt. Les Bishop, a spokesman for California Highway Patrol. "It's no secret that we've got a major storm rolling in, and it's everybody's responsibility to drive in a safe manner."

Hundreds of thousands of residents lost power across Northern California, from the Bay Area to the Central Valley.

"Because of the strong winds and heavy rains, restoration is taking longer than normal," said Darlene Chiu, a spokeswoman for Pacific Gas and Electric.

Homeowners rushed to stack sandbags around houses, and scurried to stock up on last-minute provisions.

"People were waiting in line for shopping carts," said Barbara Sholle, of Mammoth Lakes. Sholle went to the supermarket after receiving a call from the eastern Sierra ski town's reverse-911 system. She waited an hour to pay for her groceries amid a crush of residents.

In Southern California, the storm was gathering strength off the coast and was expected to strike the region by mid-afternoon, National Weather Service forecaster Andrew Rorke said.

"We're watching it really blossom on satellite," he said.

STATE BRIEFS

LOS ANGELES

Teen killed, three wounded in nightclub melee

A teenager was shot to death and two men were wounded when a dance floor stabbing escalated into a melee outside a downtown Los Angeles nightclub.

Police say violence erupted at about 1:30 a.m. Friday at the L.A. Crash Mansion, a newly reopened and renamed nightclub at Olympic Boulevard and Grand Avenue that caters to an 18-and-over crowd.

Detectives say a young woman was stabbed in the arm on the dance floor and the crowd began to leave in large numbers.

Lt. Paul Vernon says "that's when a man with a gun started shooting at other men in the parking lot."

Joseph Cosina was shot multiple times. The 19-year-old Downey man died later at California Hospital.

Two other men and the woman who was stabbed were treated at the hospital for non-life threatening wounds.

ASSOCIATE PRESS

VENTURA

Homicide rate drops to record low

There were 19 homicides in Ventura County last year, the lowest number since 1974 when the coroner's office began tracking killings.

There were 35 homicides countywide in 2006. The peak for homicides in Ventura County was 59 in 1974 and 1979, while the previous low was 20 in 1987.

Oxnard, the county's largest city with nearly 200,000 residents, had the most homicides last year with 10. There were 13 homicides in Oxnard in 2006.

Simi Valley had three last year, Thousand Oaks had two and Santa Paula, Port Hueneme, Fillmore and Ventura each had one.

Deputy Medical Examiner Shasta Gainer says the coroner defines a homicide as a death at the hands of another, including police shootings.

AP

LOS ANGELES

Six men take marijuana dispensary cash, pot

Six men burst into a Granada Hills marijuana dispensary and took \$10,000 and thousands of dollars worth of pot in a takeover heist.

One of the robbers fired a gun, but no one was hurt during the Thursday night robbery at the Balboa Boulevard dispensary.

Police Sgt. Jace Kessler says the cash and up to four pounds of marijuana were scooped up and the robbers fled in a sport utility vehicle.

AP



SANTA MONICA PIER RESTORATION CORPORATION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Santa Monica Pier Restoration Corporation (PRC) invites sealed proposals for:

Santa Monica Pier 100th Anniversary Marketing/PR, Events, Programs and Sponsorship Services

The PRC is requesting proposals from qualified candidates (individuals or agencies) to develop and execute a marketing/pr plan, events, programs and sponsorship for the Santa Monica Pier's 100th Anniversary program titled "100 Years in the Past, 100 Years in the Future." Candidates are invited to submit event concepts and their qualifications for the program to take place between January and September 2009.

The selected contractor will work with the 100th Anniversary Steering Committee and the Pier Restoration Corporation to produce a program of events, activities, partnerships and programs which celebrate the Pier's 100 years of history, its status as an international icon and the promise of its future.

The RFP is available for viewing/download at www.santamonicipier.org

Please submit proposals no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, January 18, 2008 in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format to info@santamonicipier.org or mail proposals to:

Santa Monica Pier Restoration Corporation
100th Anniversary RFP
200 Santa Monica Pier, Suite A
Santa Monica, CA 90401

For more information, please contact the Santa Monica Pier Restoration Corporation at 310-458-8901 or email info@santamonicipier.org

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Via Veneto 3009 Main St. (310) 399-1843
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Agra Indian Kitchen 2553 Lincoln Blvd. (310) 396-8749
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Benice 1715 Pacific Ave. (310) 396-9938
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Running for cover in Santa Monica

FROM SHELTER PAGE 1

Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), a joint powers authority established in 1993 by the county and the city of Los Angeles to provide homeless services, uses armories in Westwood and Culver City to provide roughly 300 beds during cold weather.

That helps, but with nearly 2,000 homeless in Santa Monica and Venice alone, there is not enough room to accommodate everyone.

"We definitely see an increase in people when it rains or starts to get cold," said David Martel, a unit manger for LAHSA "It's first come first serve. We try to help everyone and find beds [in one of the 15 cold weather shelters around the county], but the reality is, we just don't have enough beds for everyone we want to serve."

The cold weather shelter program begins in December and runs through March. Those looking for a dry place to rest their heads line up at the OPCC Access Center on Fifth Street and take a bus to the armories, Martel said.

Santa Monica no longer provides beds for those who are not already enrolled in the Chronic Homeless Program, which targets those who have been on the streets the longest, said Julie Rusk, human services director for City Hall. Instead of making beds available to everyone, City Hall has set aside spaces for those who are serious about turning their lives around.

"We just can't continue to serve anyone who comes into the community," Rusk said. "You can't just come in and get a bed and



Brandon Wise brandonw@smdp.com

SAFE HAVEN: A number of homeless people gather outside of an OPCC shelter located at Fifth Street and Olympic Boulevard on Friday afternoon. OPCC is a popular destination to seek shelter.

then leave the next morning. We encourage people to use the cold weather shelters and we try our best to reconnect people with their families because that is the best way for them to get the help they need."

Zach Evans is one of those new arrivals who has been unable to access a bed in Santa Monica. On Friday he was sitting in a parking structure at Santa Monica Place with a wool blanket and some plastic bags containing toiletries and clean clothes. Drops of rain

were falling, forcing him to find cover in the structure.

"I'm not sure what I'm going to do this weekend," said the 21-year-old from Bakersfield who has a history of mental illness. "I have some money that I could use to get a hotel room, but then I wouldn't have anything to eat with. I think I'm going to just see if I can find a place around downtown where I can go and lay low."

Many businesses in downtown have post-

ed signs in their windows warning people to not sit or sleep in their doorways after hours, a violation of the municipal code. Some homeless will sneak into apartment complex carports to find refuge or camp out in the old industrial area of the city that is relatively abandoned at night.

Those caught can be cited by the police.

In many cases, officers use the cold or wet weather as an opportunity to make contact with the homeless and help them access services, said SMDP Officer Jacob Holloway with the Homeless Liaison Program, which works closely with various social service agencies in an effort to place homeless individuals in short-term shelter and long-term housing.

"When it's sunny and warm, people tend not to access services, but when we have weather like this, you definitely see an increase, which allows us to make contact with these individuals and offer them assistance," said Holloway, who has found homeless people sleeping under freeway overpasses and in carports to get out of the rain.

"The important thing is that we have our arms open and want to help," Holloway said.

As the rain started to fall Friday afternoon, Ronald picked up what little belongings he had and began walking toward the mall, where he planned to hang out in the food court until he figured out his next move.

"I know of a place where I can go," Ronald said. "But I don't want to say where it is or other people will go there and then it will be too crowded. Hopefully the rain won't be too bad."

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Photo courtesy SMC

THE FUTURE IS NEAR: Santa Monica College has embarked on an ambitious construction project to drastically improve the college's main entrance, which faces Pico Boulevard.

Construction shapes college

FROM SMC PAGE 1

various student services offices that are scattered throughout the 37-acre main campus.

It's a plan that some SMC officials call a "dream project."

"We are having to pinch ourselves from time to time to really remind ourselves this is something that could be a reality at SMC," said Brenda Benson, the college's acting vice president of student affairs.

The multi-phase project also includes the relocation of the parking lot on the northeast corner of the campus to a three-level underground structure that will accommodate 500 cars, and the renovation of Drescher Hall, which will become the home of the bookstore. Drescher Hall currently has a series of unsightly wings that jettison out toward Pico Boulevard, which will also be removed. The combination of the demolition of the wings and the relocation of the parking lot will create one long open-space promenade, which is where the third phase of the project will come into play.

The promenade, which will feature a line of trees and possibly a water fountain, is meant to reinvent the Pico Boulevard side of the campus as the gateway to SMC, creating a friendly and open environment, rather than the stonewall effect of the current frontage.

"It is to provide a connection between Santa Monica College and the community at large," said Sonnet Hui, the project architect with Los Angeles-based Steinberg Architects.

The project will be funded by a series of bond measure money as well as state and local funding, Tsang said.

All of the buildings will be designed with environmentally friendly elements.

But the project isn't without controversy.

Some residents of the Sunset Park neighborhood expressed their frustration that a community meeting introducing the project was held on Jan. 3, just a few days into the New Year when many of the neighbors were still on vacation and out of town. Neighbors also complained that

college officials scheduled the community meeting on the same night as another meeting where the controversial Sunset Ride bus service was discussed.

As a compromise, SMC officials scheduled two presentations of the construction projects for Wednesday night in order to accommodate those residents that wanted to attend both meetings. Both the project and Sunset Ride meetings were reported to have low attendance.



WE ARE HAVING TO PINCH OURSELVES FROM TIME TO TIME TO REALLY REMIND OURSELVES THIS IS SOMETHING THAT COULD BE A REALITY AT SMC."

Brenda Benson, Acting vice president of student services, Santa Monica College

"The relationship [between neighbors and the college] has been very contentious through the years and it's for this very reason that the college does what it wants to do with pro forma involvement of the neighborhood," said Lorraine Sanchez, the vice-president of neighborhood group the Friends of Sunset Park, and a member of the Bond Oversight Committee at SMC.

College officials stressed they are taking every measure possible to ensure that the community is informed about the pair of Pico Boulevard construction projects to be sure that the impact to the neighborhood is minimized as much as possible once ground breaks.

"We have always been very concerned in taking great care in the community," Tsang said. "We will continue to do that with this construction project."

Sunset Park resident Susan Hartley, who also serves on the Friends of Sunset Park board, said she was worried that the new buildings would generate more traffic in the neighborhood, which is already inundated with vehicular congestion.

"People need to remember that a very small percentage of the student population at SMC is from Santa Monica or even the Westside," Hartley said. "The notice to

the neighborhood was severely deficient and came when people were away or busy with the holidays."

A LOOK AT THE PAST

Santa Monica College was established in 1929 as a junior college program for the public school district, but didn't become its own college district until the 1970s. The public school district's Board of Education served as the governing body

destroyed and three additional buildings sustained damages in excess of \$1 million. The school received about \$55 million in FEMA assistance.

"It's been a very long recovery process," Girard said.

As a result of the earthquake came the drafting of the Facilities Master Plan in 1998 which guided the redevelopment of the college campus. The upcoming projects along Pico Boulevard are said to be the final implementation of that master plan.

ESSENTIAL TO HIGHER LEARNING

A second-year student at SMC, Clark Smith remembers the days when the college campus seemed to be a collection of old buildings.

It was in 2000 when Smith first took a few classes at SMC, before the new Humanities and Social Sciences building and the Theater Arts building.

While construction can be a nuisance, Smith sees it only as beneficial for students.

"It's definitely an inconvenience," Smith said on Thursday during his break-time, sitting near the clock tower. "However, the facilities need to be improved and you need to understand that and make due."

Smith sees a clear difference between the learning environment in an old and new building. Pointing to the Letters and Science building, Smith said he has taken classes in the old structure during the summer when the classrooms are warm and during the winter when it's cold.

"The newer buildings definitely offer a better study environment," he said.

The goal for Tsang, who became the president of the college in February 2006, is to have a college with modern facilities. He also wants a college with a sound transportation system that will encourage students to utilize public transit and in effect, reduce congestion.

"By and large, we want to have a facility that can match the service that we're providing," Tsang said.

for the college until 1984 when the Board of Trustees became a separate elected body, according to Don Girard, the senior director of government relations and Institutional Communications for SMC.

"In some ways, it's an 80-year-old institution, in some ways it's a 20-year-old institution," Girard said.

The campus was purchased in the 1940s and development began in the early 1950s on the Pearl Street side of the campus, which served as the front entrance and the address for the college until about 25 years ago.

The clock tower on the southeastern part of the campus served as the center of the college in its early days and several surrounding structures, including the Liberal Arts building and the Letters and Science building, are original to the campus. Among other original structures is the football stadium and the gymnasium, Girard said.

Much of the remainder of the campus has been renovated or reconstructed, mainly due to the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

A total of 16 buildings overall suffered significant damage from the earthquake. Two buildings were red-tagged and

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A DYING BREED? Bayley Construction Co. has reached the halfway mark on the ongoing construction project at 3301 Exposition Blvd. Construction projects like this commercial development may be limited if a local coalition is successful in its bid to pass a ballot measure.

City officials fear measure

FROM LUCE PAGE 3

the average annual square footage over the following four years would be below 75,000 square feet, according to Diana Gordon, an attorney and member of the coalition.

"This is a clear reminder of who's really in charge of local government, the voters," said Councilmember Kevin McKeown. "The initiative acknowledges that our congestion woes are worsened primarily by office and retail, not housing, and if residents want to cap commercial growth at a more sustainable level, we should listen."

The proposed measure would not affect renovations, residential developments or remodelings, leaving future projects like the facilities improvement in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District and Santa Monica Place untouched.

The impetus for the initiative can be attributed to the fact that after City Hall adopted the 1984 General Plan, the projections for new commercial growth had been exceeded by 1990, Gordon said.

"By 1990, (City Hall) had already approved 5.7 million square feet in new commercial development and after that, it continued to approve new commercial development at an accelerating rate," she said. "We believe if the city is not forced to pace development, it will not put any reasonable limits on new commercial growth in the future."

"It will have the same problem in the next 20 years as in the last 20 years," Gordon said, adding that new commercial projects generate about three to four times as much traffic as their residential counterparts.

Also taken into account in formulating the initiative is the fact that the City Council had ignored a development moratorium request last year by the neighborhood groups and SMCLC, a request made because of the amount of time it was taking to update the 1984 General Plan, Gordon said.

"We didn't think projects should continued to be approved based on old development standards that wouldn't be in effect

(once LUCE was updated)," Gordon said. "We asked (the council) to place a moratorium on at least the industrial land area, which is the largest undeveloped area of the city."

Gordon stressed that the initiative should have no effect on the updated General Plan.

"Nothing in this would likely change any outcome," Gordon said. "What this does is something the city has never done before — it sets a mechanism for pacing development so that only a certain amount of development can be approved in a given year."

City officials said such an initiative would curb the public process that has been going on through the past year through the LUCE meetings, which have attracted hundreds of residents, voicing their concerns of the lack of parking, volume of traffic and need for smarter development management.

The appropriate way to determine the developmental future of the city is through the various community workshops that have taken place with the LUCE update process, not around the ballot box, City Manager Lamont Ewell said on Thursday, a day after meeting with Gordon about the proposed initiative.

"I hope this community will continue to rally around LUCE, let their voices be heard as to what makes sense for our community over the next 20 years," he said.

Ewell added that while he understands the coalition's concerns, such an initiative — meant to reduce traffic in the city — could have unintended consequences.

The initiative is also sure to spark litigation by property owners if passed, said Councilmember Bob Holbrook, who added that the process in changing the language of a law put into effect by an initiative is a much more lengthy and cumbersome one than changing an ordinance.

The measure could also have an impact on the economic vitality of the city, Holbrook added.

"I want to make sure our vitality remains in place," he said.

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NEW RELEASES REVIEW BY KEN TARR



A portrait in bold colors

The comparisons between "There Will Be Blood" and "Citizen Kane" are not ludicrous. No – this film is no where near as entertaining or original as "Kane." However, in terms of style, pacing, sound effects and shot design, this film is so wholly original and primitive that this release is all the more amazing for being made in 2007.

That in the 66 years since the release of "Citizen Kane" very few filmmaking techniques and attempts at visual poetry have been attempted does not show well for the commercialization of the medium as a whole. This is a classic, not necessarily for its story, which is relatively basic. From its opening sequence of oil drilling, it is clear that this film is meant to be enjoyed by the eyes.

Daniel Plainview (Daniel Day-Lewis) gains success and calls himself an oil man and "as such deals with matters plainly." It is from his character of contradictions that this film springs to life. Through 30 years we follow this character and never fully understand his quirks. I will permit the viewer to appreciate the performance and the details of the plot, but suffice it to say, the film explores the nature of man and its mystery. Hours into "Blood," one still does not have a pulse on



Photo courtesy Paramount Vantage

AWARDS TALK: Daniel Day-Lewis shines in 'Blood.'

Plainview and what the story wants from him.

Paul Dano ("Little Miss Sunshine") adds further archetypal opera into the plot as a compelling preacher in a small, barren oil town. The film could very easily be his story, or his family's story. Dano is slight of build

and slight of voice, but still theatrically enthralls the audience like few characters have. Day-Lewis and he work very well together and director Paul Thomas Anderson is completely comfortable letting entirely theatrical scenes unfold and mystify viewers.

This film will be a thematic and moralistic mystery to most, much in the way that "No Country For Old Men" has become. Whereas "Old Men" has already caught on and caught people's hearts and minds for its killer-on-the-run plot and dark postulates, "Blood" should struggle to completely ensnare every filmgoer's imagination. It may leave many empty or wondering why it turns out the way it does. But life turns and weather turns on a dime, and in the time and world and mentality of "Blood," the film works as a filmmaking odyssey into California in the times of the oil boom. If it succeeds at the box office, so be it. Its long-standing critical praise and guaranteed Oscar recognition for Day-Lewis should be enough.

Anderson as director of "Hard Eight," "Boogie Nights" and "Punch Drunk Love" has shown no fear while holding his camera on a shot or a subject. Now, in

SEE BLOOD PAGE 20



Photo courtesy Warner Bros.

CUTTING DEEP: Johnny Depp and Helena Bonham Carter star in 'Sweeney Todd.'

'Sweeney Todd'

Tim Burton's sixth collaboration with Johnny Depp is a debacle. In Depp's first bad movie since "The Astronaut's Wife" (1998), blood and meat pies are served up by the dozen and the joys are few and far between. This film features talk-singing, a sort of mumbling diatribe that I was frankly bored by. Depp appears lifeless and most of the set pieces and mood shots seem right out of "Sleepy Hollow." The movie goes from being quiet to loud to obnoxious to downright gruesome and I was left wondering "For what reason?" Its plot of redemption is unoriginal and was poorly executed. Go into this film with very bare expectations and you may walk away with your thumb up. If you expect a lot, prepare for a non-reward.

'Charlie Wilson's War'

Tom Hanks stars and co-produces this dark comedy about a congressman who seizes control of the weapons funding for Afghanistan to resist the commie Russians during the 1980s. In the self-titled role, Hanks excels against type as a man content to play a fool in order to get his agenda enacted. Phillip Seymour-Hoffman is exceptional as a loose cannon CIA operative. The film lacks a cohesive flow or any real "character desires" but if the viewer rides along with the "Destroy Russia" anthem that is blared throughout the film, then "War" is fun for moviegoers of all ages. A witty script by Aaron Sorkin provides some nice-sized laughs and irony to a story that lacks big excitement. The film could have used some lengthening, weighing in at a paltry one-and-a-half hours.

'I Am Legend'

Once there was a man so appealing he could open any movie at number one with a bullet. He could do family drama or futuristic horror or romantic comedy all in one decade and still bring in \$70 million opening weekends. In this, his first winter tent-pole, Will Smith again shows what it takes to be number one and in doing so makes a strong storyline stronger and our hero more likable. That said, despite a creepy, quiet and well-photographed first hour, "Legend" manages to fall apart by film's end. Smith stars as scientist Robert Neville. He may or may not be the last man on earth. He and his dog frolic through Manhattan as he searches for a cure to heal whatever of humanity may be left. He is intense and intelligent in this

role, playing the scenes for all they are worth. Its worthiness is akin to "Castaway."

With only one fleshed-out character, "Legend" loses sight of its plot and forces us to care for a larger good, when really all we as an audience would delight in is larger thrills and more of them. As a narrative story of a man in a post-apocalyptic ruin, "Legend" is believable if all too simple. As a "care-if-the-survivors-actually-survive" horror flick, it struggles to compel and serves to confuse and darken the viewer's mood. An ending that doesn't necessarily fit the logic of the protagonist only further hurts this film's ranking.

'Walk Hard'

In case you are wondering if this film is actually funny – it is. It happens in bursts, mostly in the first hour. See the second hour if you want to see how the flick turns out. It is still funny, but not as funny as the first hour. John C. Reilly is fully-functional and hilarious as the Johnny Cash-ish Dewey Cox. In spoofing "Walk the Line," "La Bamba," "The Doors," and "Ray" this film actually is funnier than "Knocked Up" and as funny as "Superbad" but far less entertaining as a whole. Many jokes don't grow tired however and although Reilly couldn't sell the film on talk shows and build a big opening weekend, "Hard" will make everyone laugh who sees it.

KEN TARR is a student at Santa Monica College, an actor and writer and is also taller than 99 percent of the population. He can be reached telepathically or at trutoulouse@yahoo.com.

CHANNELSURFING

BY JACK NEWORTH

HBO's 'Wire' heads down homestretch

From the first episode of "The Wire," HBO's critically acclaimed police drama set in Baltimore, I sensed this was no ordinary cops and robbers series. It felt inspired and authentic. And with good reason.

Creator David Simon is a former crime reporter known for his in-depth coverage of the drug trade in Baltimore during the '80s and early '90s. (His book, "A Year on the Killing Streets," was the basis for the Emmy-winning show "Homicide" that ran from 1993 to 1999.) Simon's co-creator, Ed Burns, was a 20-year veteran of the Baltimore police department. "The Wire" has been called by some the best drama on television and a good argument could be made to support that statement.

The formula takes one investigation and follows it through an entire season, focusing on one aspect of Baltimore. Season one was the business-wise drug dealers in the projects, a series of low-rise, four and five-story apartment buildings. Season two focused on union corruption at the docks. Season three featured the compromised ethics of the mayor's race, while the fourth season followed a quartet of school-age boys as they navigated rough streets and a decaying school system. The drama is intense but not neatly wrapped up at the end of the hour, or even after a few episodes, which is part of its realistic charm.



Photo courtesy Nicole Rivelli/HBO

SO REAL: Michael Kenneth Williams plays a street tough on HBO's 'The Wire.' The realistic drama will begin its new season Sunday.

The characters of "The Wire" are remarkably rich as though they sprang from the pages of a novel. They're drawn from the street, the police, city hall, the port, the schools and even the Baltimore Sun newspaper. The faces of the huge cast are appropriately unfamiliar. If

there's a "lead" it might be hot-headed homicide detective Jimmy McNulty (Dominic West.) who's beset with personal demons but dedicated to the job.

SEE CHANNEL SURFING PAGE 20

Santa Monica Daily Press

The Agent Directory

Your guide to local real estate agents



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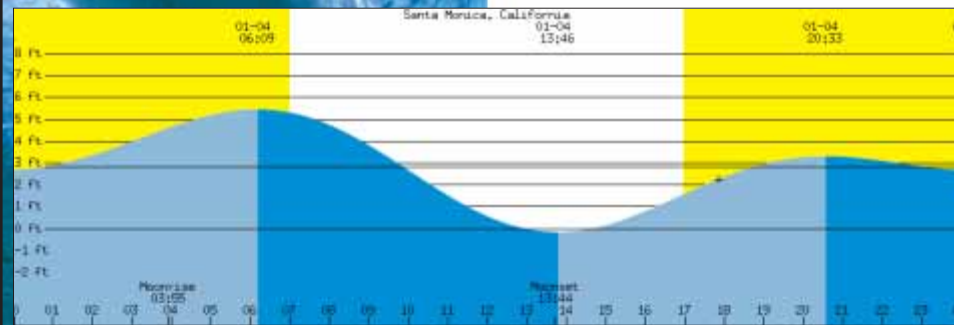
SURF CONDITIONS**WATER TEMP: 55°**

SWELL FORECAST (8-11 FT)

Saturday the 5th the swell should turn more wind-swell-ish with periods running 9-11 seconds. Size should increase well overhead at west facing breaks, DOH at times at west facing breaks. Slop is the watchword for the weekend though as storm conditions worsen.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS

NW INCREASES FRIDAY, EVEN MORE OVER WEEKEND...
HEAVY RAIN ON THE WAY...

TIDE FORECAST FOR TODAY IN SANTA MONICA

BEACH REPORT CARD

NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous four weeks up to the ending date of

January 1, 2008

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

QUICK STATS
(for the last 28 days)

Number of sewage spills -- 0

Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0

Number of wet days -- 11

Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 43 / 27

Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 4 / 19

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Leo Carrillo Beach, at Arroyo Sequit Creek mouth (leocarrillo)	A+	A+
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth	A+	A+
El Pescador State Beach, between Lachusa and Los Aliso creeks	A+	A+
Encinal Canyon at El Matador State Beach	A+	A+
Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth	A+	C
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth	A+	A+
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildlife Rd. (private)	A+	A+
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth	B	B
Escondido Creek, just east of Escondido State Beach	A+	A+
Latigo Canyon Creek mouth	A+	A+
Solstice Canyon at Dan Blocker County Beach	A+	A+
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	A	A
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+	C
Pena Creek at Las Tunas County Beach	A+	A+
Tuna Canyon	A+	F
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth	A	D
Castlerock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	F
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	C
Will Rogers State Beach at 17200 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain)	A+	A+

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.

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Heal the Bay's Beach Report CardSM 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.



Notes from the film scoundrel

Kenn Tarr

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Late-night TV is still terrible

I HAVE BEEN GETTING NAUSEOUS a lot lately and it culminated last night. Watching late night talk shows without writers is like watching a fleet of Titanics set sail from Merry Old England.

Dave Letterman in a beard looks even more degenerate and Conan O'Brien in his beard looked heavily unsure of his surroundings. He was the only one operating without any writers whatsoever – the other shmoes operated with half-staffs who were granted permission to scab up with their usual employers.

Aren't these idiots tired of striking, yet?

Late-night TV is very basic and very essential. No one really enjoys it and the numbers are preposterously low. This is all evidence that the genre is finished, especially when considering the struggling nature of "SNL." People go to bed earlier and if they stay up late, they don't watch the networks. Each host looked uncomfortable as heck on Wednesday night after a two-month layoff. They all cow-towed to the WGA and made uncomfortable humor about the strike. The first guests were Mike Huckabee on Leno and Bob Saget on O'Brien, while Letterman boasted the self-consumed, bloated Robin Williams.

The ratings had dwindled in recent weeks, so I bet this come-back thing will raise the ratings a mere fraction of a point. I personally liked watching the old Leno shows each night. Mind you, I haven't even tuned in for Jimmy Kimmel yet. The Film Scoundrel rarely trounces in the scandalous sub-earth that is television.

The fact has been proven that comedians can't host talk shows, that they obviously do need writers. I always knew this, and Conan as funny as he is, looks awkward when working in a non-monologue, non-schtick format. I found entertaining original content in Egypt on television that was as more entertaining than Leno's ineptitude.

NOTE TO THE STRIKERS

Writers, quit complaining and meeting in "secret" with the other unions. You are not Freemasons or Bilderbergers and certainly not the heavy-hitters you posture as. The writers are currently engaged in a phantom

strike that is an actual menace to the entertainment industry. Don't believe that all writers are on strike. The majority are out there striking while many are pretending solidarity while working in secret, bet your bottom dollar on that. Writers are entirely destined to be paid less.

With evaporating ratings for television, I am sure you fellows are very happy that cocaine dealers have not gone on strike as well.

A NEW PHASE FOR 'BORAT'

The year 2010 will bring the Jim Carrey-ization of Sacha Baron Cohen. "Ali G" was retired last week, "Borat" was next. Now, Cohen will lead in Steven Spielberg's presumed 2010 production of "The Trial of the Chicago Seven."

Maybe Spielberg thinks Ali G showed something in the film version of "Sweeney Todd," I personally thought his Pirelli character was the only likable and exciting thing in the entire Tim Burton debacle of dread. The film is about Abbie Hoffman and the Chicago Seven rabble-rousers. Vincent D'Onofrio memorably portrayed Abbie Hoffman in 2000's "Steal This Movie."

The slender Brit will likely put on some weight to portray the infamous Yippee Hoffman. This marks a turn for Cohen that many have attempted. Carrey had solid results that eventually turned sour with the commercial failure of "The Majestic." But "The Truman Show" and "Man On The Moon" are strong serio-comic turns with heavy themes to boot.

Adam Sandler is back to comedy full-time after his art-house turns in "Punch Drunk Love" and "Spanglish."

Robin Williams has succeeded remarkably whereas Steve Martin's results were decidedly mixed in in "Parenthood" and "Leap Of Faith."

Mike Myers tried meekly with "54," Vince Vaughan with "Domestic Disturbance" and "Psycho" and thankfully, Owen Wilson never has gone there. Eddie Murphy wasn't recognized by the Academy for "Dreamgirls," further evidence that the funny man transition may never yield an even result.

KEN TARR is a student at Santa Monica College, an actor and writer and is also taller than 99 percent of the population. He can be reached telepathically or at trutoulouse@yahoo.com.

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NEWRELEASES

REVIEW

BY JARED
FELDSCHREIBER

In Search of an Iranian identity

What a panoramic, impressionistic and surrealistic journey is Vincent Paronand and Marjane Satrapi's "Persepolis," a poignant coming-of age story of an Iranian girl experiencing the tumultuous changes in her country and abroad. Shot in mostly a deceptively simple black and white animation (with occasional colorful images), the film traces Marjane Satrapi's autobiographical beginning with the Iranian Revolution through the 1980s.

The viewer is left in a hypnotic daze watching this kaleidoscopic, even Dali-esque whirlwind portrait. Despite the dense and serious undercurrents of an Iranian conflicted by her country's regimented structure (and her off-"Western" influences), the film works as animation since it seeks to be both true to the graphic novel approach as well as satirizing the very nature of government as merely comical.

Marjane is a precocious tomboy with a vivid imagination aspiring to be Bruce Lee. In between playing with her friends and making grandiose plans for her future, she learns from her middle-class, politically active family about the Shah's autocratic regime. The black-and-

white animation is befitting since it depicts how an outmoded, perhaps archaic nature of a country that is so medieval and dictatorial can be so difficult for a young, spirited girl. Brilliantly spliced within the film is her obvious love for the "West" with songs by Iron Maiden, even "Eye of the Tiger." One sequence involving a depiction of the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s with an Iron Maiden song bellowing in the background might be homage to "Forrest Gump" with Jimi Hendrix's version of "All Along the Watchtower," suggesting the absurdity of war and chaos.

The anchor of the film, and Marjane, is her grandmother, voiced by Danielle Darrieux, who continually inspires her granddaughter to live a wholesome and free-spirited life. In an unlikely parallel the grandmother resembles Laurence Fishburne's Jason Styles in "Boyz in the Hood," the father of Tre, who warns his son of the dangers and travails of living on the worst streets of L.A. He is the anchor figure for his son in much the same way as Marjane's encouraging grandmother. Marjane is convinced to ask for more out of life knowing there is a liberated world outside of Iran.

Persepolis is a wry film that is just as revealing as it is thrilling. It is hard to conceive of a more inventive mode of storytelling, perhaps comparable (though different media) to the graphic novel, "Maus: a Survivor's Tale" by Art Spiegelman. In that story, Spiegelman recounts the struggle of his father to survive the Holocaust as a Polish Jew, drawing largely on his father's recollections of his experiences. It depicts the effects of war felt through generations of a family, as the Jews are depicted as mice and Nazis as cats, Americans as dogs, and so forth. Steven Spielberg once said the hardest aspect of making 'Schindler's List' was that he had to "explain the ineffable" – that is why the absurdity of the graphic novel "Maus" works so well and clearly so does "Persepolis." It is remarkably inventive and captivating in its allegorical depiction of repressive Iran. It serves as a visual study-aid, clearly surrealistic in its ability to bring up images from the subconscious. Marjane's journey is continually juxtaposed, reformed and even metamorphosed to fit the plotline.

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MOVIEGUIDE

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AMC LOEWS BROADWAY 4
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Aliens vs. Predator - Requiem (R)
10:50am, 1:05, 3:25, 5:45, 8:05, 10:30
Atonement (R)
11:00am, 1:50, 4:40, 7:30, 10:20
The Great Debaters (PG-13)
11:10am, 2:00, 4:50, 7:45, 10:40
P.S. I Love You (PG-13)
10:45am, 1:35, 4:25, 7:15, 10:10

AMC 7 SANTA MONICA
1310 3rd Street
(310) 289-4262

Charlie Wilson's War (R)
12:15, 2:50, 5:30, 8:10, 10:45
Enchanted (PG)
11:15am, 1:50, 4:25, 7:05, 9:45
The Kite Runner (PG-13)
1:10, 4:10, 7:35, 10:30
National Treasure: Book of Secrets (PG)
10:45am, 1:40, 4:40, 7:45, 10:50
Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (R)
10:50am, 1:30, 4:20, 7:15, 10:05
There Will Be Blood (R)
11:40am, 3:25, 7:00, 10:35
The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep (PG)
11:20am, 2:05, 4:45, 7:20, 10:00

LAEMMLE'S MONICA
FOURPLEX
1332 2nd Street
(310) 394-9741

Juno (PG-13)
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
No Country for Old Men (R)
1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 9:55
Persepolis (PG-13)
12:45, 3:00, 5:25, 7:50, 10:15
The Savages (R)
1:40, 4:25, 7:10, 9:55
Starting Out in the Evening (PG-13)
11:00am
Yiddish Theater: A Love Story (NR)
11:00am

MANN'S CRITERION
THEATRE
1313 3rd Street
(310) 395-1599

Alvin and the Chipmunks (PG)
11:40am, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:30
The Bucket List (PG-13)
12:00, 1:30, 2:30, 5:00, 6:30, 7:30, 10:00
I Am Legend (PG-13)
12:10, 2:50, 3:50, 5:20, 7:50, 9:00, 10:20
One Missed Call (PG-13)
12:20, 2:40, 5:10, 7:20, 10:10
Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story (R) DLP-Digital Projection
11:50am, 2:20, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30

More information email news@smdp.com

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

Claim your power, Sagittarius

Happy Birthday!

The unexpected marks your year. You will learn to deal with many unanticipated happenings. The surprise is that you are more in control than you realize this year. If you are single, the potential suitors seem to increase to such an extent that you might not be sure whom to choose. If you are attached, defer a tad bit more to your sweetie. You might be surprised by the results. SAGITTARIUS is fiery and direct.



Born Today

Actress Diane Keaton (1946)
Singer Marilyn Manson (1969)

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at <http://www.jacquelinebigar.com>
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ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★★ Sometimes you might be a touch out of kilter and need to stop. Someone drains you. The unexpected occurs when you least expect it. Let go and relax with the company of another person. Tonight: Opt for different or unusual.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ A partner assumes a more dominant role than in the past. How you see a situation could make a big difference in the outcome. Think about it: If you are uptight, what would happen? If you hang loose, what would happen? Tonight: Surprises hit left and right.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ Others become insistent about what they want, and they want it now. Your ability to land on your feet will be marked by a change in events. You have the ability to flex, perhaps more than many. Tonight: Say yes.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ You might not believe the information some people are feeding you. You wonder "how come" or "why." Let your mind open up and get past a problem or mental filter. The more you understand, the wiser and more successful you will be. Tonight: Break barriers.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ You might believe you have solutions, but in reality you could see some swift changes. Keep a tight hand on your finances. No one knows as well as you what is happening. Tonight: An emotional risk could be fun.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★ Family and security need to continue to be priorities, even if a partner is flagrantly difficult and testy. How you deal with others could change because of the sudden and perhaps uncomfortable perspective you will gain. Tonight: Mosey on home.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Don't allow someone to intimidate you or do anything a tad bit eccentric that would add to your discomfort. You might need to turn in another direction, whether you like it or not. Keep communication flowing. Tonight: Fun and games.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★ A possessive streak could be a tad uncomfortable and cause a hassle where you would least like to experience one. Think about what a friend might be doing and its long-term implications. Tonight: Ever fun.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ You are full of energy. However, you might not understand the impact of the shockwaves that come from you. If you want, you can head in a new direction if you are uncomfortable with what seems to be brewing. Tonight: Claim your power.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ What is not said could be more significant than what is said. Study people's actions with an eye to this type of thinking. If you are uncomfortable, it is probably for good reason. Tonight: Get some extra rest. You are going to need it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ Hold on tight to your checkbook. The unexpected occurs when you least expect it. You are on top of your game no matter what happens. You pull the wild card financially. You can deal with it! Tonight: Find your pals.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★ Extremes punctuate your day. You might have difficulty dealing with others. Listen to your sixth sense with a boss. Don't push this person too hard, too fast. You could live to regret what occurs as a result. Tonight: A must appearance.

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Janric Classic 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 Bronze (easiest) to Silver to Gold (hardest).

Difficulty
GOLD

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

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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

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

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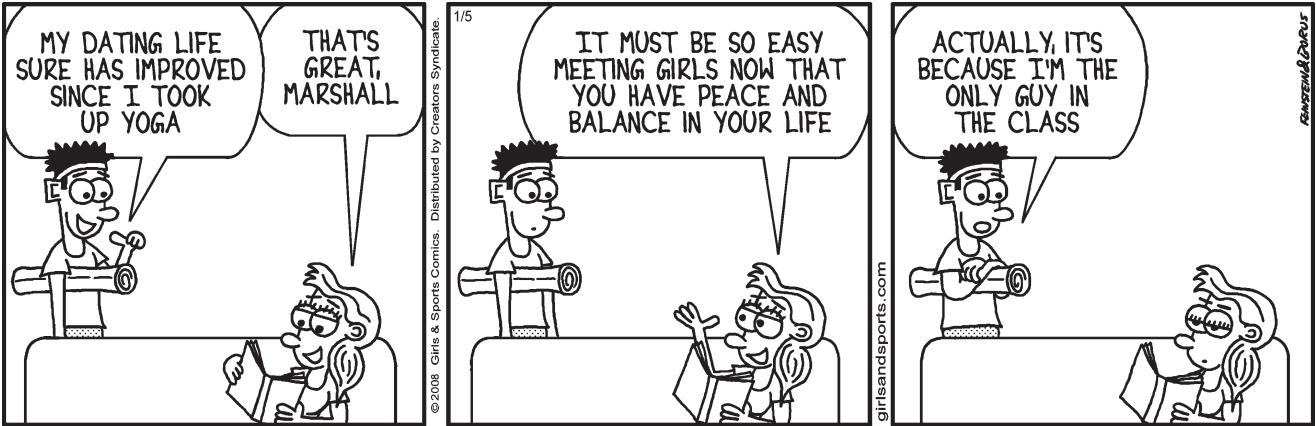
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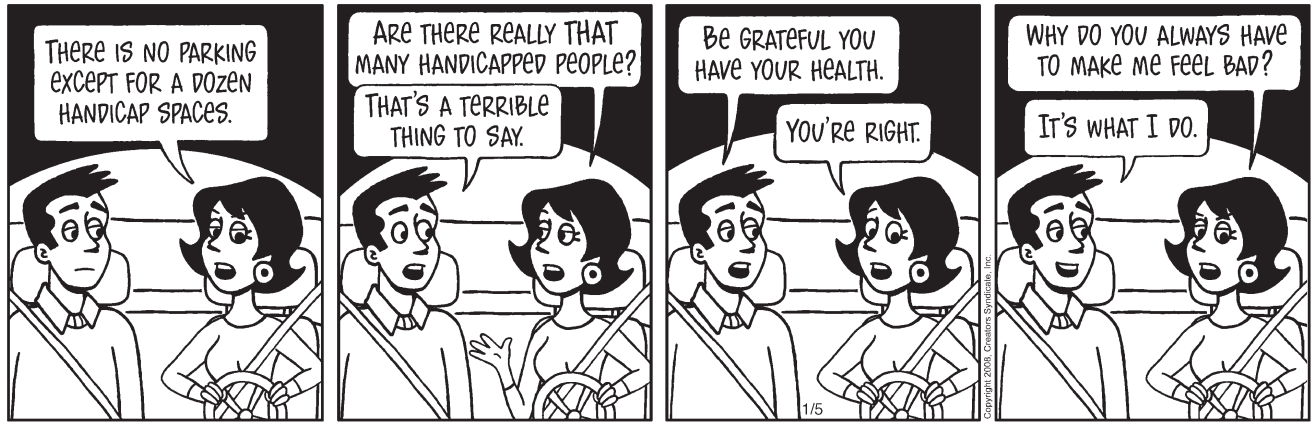
Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



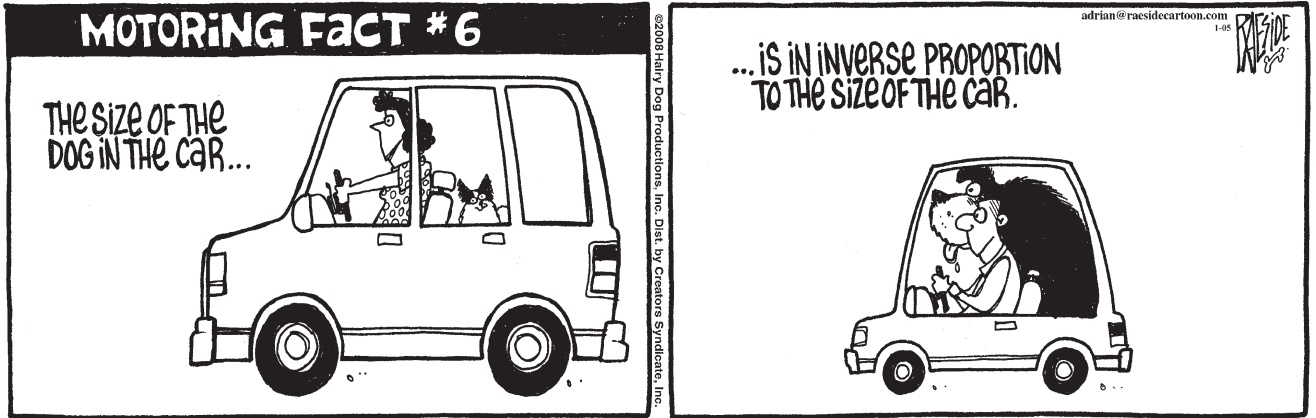
The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



The Other Coast

By Adrian Raeside



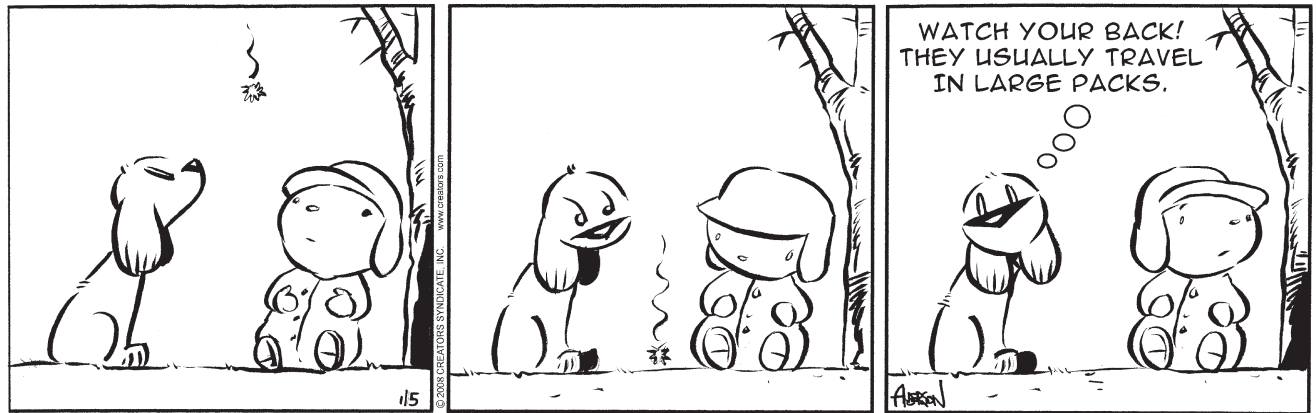
Garfield

By Jim Davis



Dog eat Doug

By Brian Anderson



The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



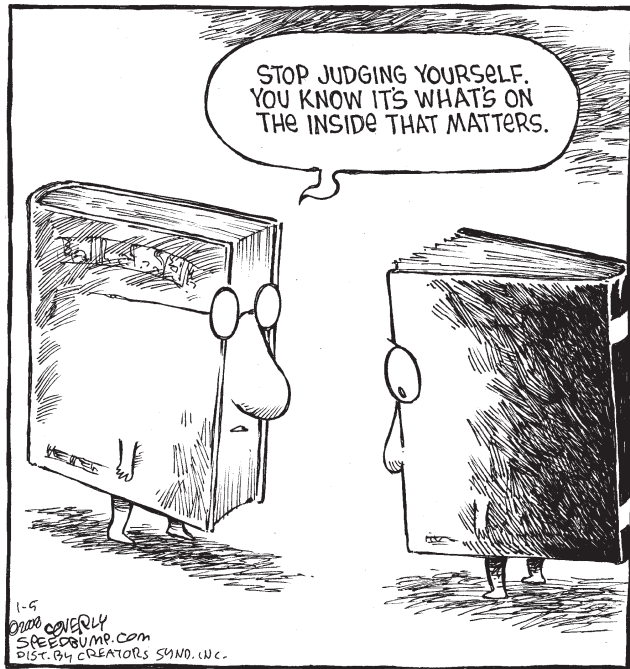
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Brandon Wise brandonw@smdp.com

Resident Lise Hill is this week's Mystery Photo winner, having correctly identified the image, which features the magical monkey in front of Magicopolis on Fourth Street in downtown.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 P.M. times
 - 5 Lose it
 - 10 Dickens's Edwin
 - 12 Speak
 - 13 Uncertain state
 - 14 Sam of "Jurassic Park"
 - 15 Musical princess
 - 16 Harbor boat
 - 18 Keg need
 - 19 Secure
 - 21 Relaxed
 - 22 "Amen!"
 - 24 Map dots
 - 25 And the like
 - 29 Stadium group
 - 30 Ellison and Nader
 - 32 It's picked in Hawaii
 - 33 Risk
 - 34 Hurler's stat
 - 35 "The Lion King" hero
 - 37 Florida attraction
 - 39 Some messages
 - 40 Western classic
- DOWN**
- 41 Inferno describer
 - 42 Tea type
 - 1 Wing it
 - 2 Casual day
 - 3 Soup choice
 - 4 Blubber
 - 5 Big ringer
 - 6 Iron source
 - 7 Rum drink
 - 8 Finally
 - 9 Julie of "Before Sunset"
 - 11 Adores
 - 17 Oblivious

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Yesterday's answer

- 20 Ballet costumes
- 21 Collectible car
- 23 Cons
- 25 Washing-ton city
- 26 Kind of band
- 27 Drug-yielding
- 28 Regal seat
- 29 Combined by melt-ing
- 31 Unable to eat another bite
- 33 Hay unit
- 36 Drill need
- 38 Frat letter

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MEGA MILLIONS	13 16 25 30 54 Meganumber: 11 Jackpot: \$12M
Super LOTTO	5 14 22 24 30 Meganumber: 25 Jackpot: \$30M
Fantasy 5	10 15 20 35 36
DAILY 3	MIDDAY: 4 7 1 EVENING: 4 7 5
DAILY DERRY	1st: 02 Lucky Star 2nd: 03 Hot Shot 3rd: 04 Big Ben RACE TIME: 1.45.75

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ In parts of India's Uttar Pradesh state, according to a November BBC News dispatch, women are hopelessly oppressed by poverty, abusive husbands and corrupt officials, but two years ago, Ms. Sampat Pal Devi got fed up. She organized bands of vigilante women (with several hundred members), dressed in pink saris, to protect their sisters using both nonviolence (heaping public shame on wrongdoers) and violence (with axes and the traditional Indian stick, the "lathi"). Said Sampat Devi, "Village society in India ... refuses to educate (women), marries them off too early (age 9, in her case), barter them for money. Village women need to study and become independent to sort it out themselves."

■ Dr. Paul Schum, 50, the principal of the Catholic Bethlehem High School in Bardstown, Ky., was arrested in October on prostitution-related charges after he was discovered loitering in an alley, dressed as a woman, in leather and fishnet stockings and with fake breasts. A local priest, presumably intending to help Dr. Schum, said dressing as a woman didn't sound like something Schum would be involved in, "(b)ut again, we're in the Halloween season." (Dr. Schum eventually resigned, and the prosecutor chose to drop the charge.)

TODAY IN HISTORY

1914 Ford Motor Company announces an eight-hour workday and a minimum wage of \$5 for a day's labor.

1919 Free Committee for a German Workers Peace, which would become the Nazi party, is founded.

1925 Nellie Tayloe Ross becomes the first female governor (Wyoming) in the United States.

1933 Construction of the Golden Gate Bridge begins in San Francisco Bay.

1948 Warner Brothers shows the first color newsreel (Tournament of Roses Parade and the Rose Bowl).

1970 The soap opera: All My Children premieres.

1972 President of the United States Richard Nixon orders the development of a space shuttle program.

2005 Eris, the largest known dwarf planet in the solar system, is discovered by the team of Michael E. Brown, Chad Trujillo, and David L. Rabinowitz using images originally taken on October 21, 2003, at the Palomar Observatory.

WORD UP!

obdurate \OB-duh-rit; -dyuh-, adjective: 1. Hardened in wrongdoing; stubbornly wicked. Hardened in feelings; hard-hearted. 2. Resistant to persuasion; unyielding. 3. Hard; harsh; rugged; rough.

'The Wire' is a gritty street drama

FROM CHANNEL SURFING PAGE 15

The first season opened with a murder charge against a drug dealer getting overturned after a key witness is intimidated. Furious, McNulty breaks protocol and complains to a judge. He's reprimanded but soon an inter-departmental taskforce is established to go after the widespread drug trafficking problem plaguing the city. It's that taskforce we follow.

"The Wire" always opens with a short scene that suggests the tone of the show, followed by a quote from one of the characters. In this first episode of this fifth season beleaguered Police Detective Bunk Moreland grills a punk who's accused of murder. The acting is brilliant as Bunk, who's bluffing, tries to convince the kid that his partner is cooperating so much so they've rewarded him with a trip to Mickey D's for Big Macs, fries and a Dr. Pepper.

The streetwise kid is having none of it, until he catches a quick glimpse (pre-arranged by Bunk) of his buddy wolfing down some fries. Convinced he's been ratted out, he folds. We find out moments later his partner, while enjoying the fast food, hasn't said an implicating word. The screen goes to black and we see the quote, "The bigger the lie, the more they believe." — Bunk Moreland.

The premier episode is entitled "More With Less" as hard economic times have hit Baltimore. As McNulty and the detail continue to stake out Marlo's crew of drug dealers, recently promoted Sgt. Carver is welcomed by a cauldron of discontent from officers coping with unpaid overtime. At City Hall, though he wants to keep his campaign promise to lower crime, Mayor Carcetti is strapped by his commitment to schools, and faces tough choices. The future of the task force is in jeopardy.

The fifth season expands its focus into the role of newspapers in the twisted bureaucracy of the city. At the Baltimore Sun, city editor Augustus "Gus" Haynes and the staff are reeling from corporate cutbacks, losing key personnel from the metro and international divisions. I particularly liked the scene when Gus edits a young female reporter's story about a fire in which she writes "120 people were evacuated." In correcting the copy, Gus



Photo courtesy Paul Schiraldi/HBO

TELLING IT LIKE IT IS: Andre Royo (center) is part of a relatively unknown cast that helps give 'The Wire' its realistic feel.

correctly points out, "Buildings get evacuated, not people. If people do it generally involves an enema."

Even with a reduced staff, the Sun is able to break a front-page story that links a politician to a notorious drug dealer. In the meantime, the business savvy dealers meet in a hotel conference room to discuss divvying up drug frontiers across East Baltimore's county line.

"The Wire" is brilliant and realistic drama but it's not easy to watch. It doesn't provide quick payoffs and, gritty as it is, lacks the glamour of other crime shows. But

it's authentic and compelling. The dialogue, especially as portrayed on the street, is filled with colorful expressions. One of my favorites is, "true dat!" for something that is correct or real. (Though I can't foresee my using that in my daily conversations.)

The first four seasons of "The Wire" are available on DVD. The fifth premieres this Sunday, Jan. 6, at 9 p.m.

JACK NEWORTH also writes the column "Laughing Matters" which appears every Friday. He can be reached at Jackneworth2003@aol.com.

Rich scenery punctuates 'There Will Be Blood'

FROM BLOOD PAGE 14

the past and in the great wide open outdoors, he has taken his patience to high levels of cinematic achievement. John Ford shot the west beautifully. So does Paul Thomas Anderson. The attention to detail in this movie is exceptional. It is frequently a very boring piece of work,

and that is where "Citizen Kane" and umpteen other movies have it beat. With its title and strength of character, the filmmaker intentionally plays with our expectations of the film and where the plot dares to go.

Based on the lives of many a oil baron (mostly Edward Doheny), "Blood" is far from perfect but neither was "No

Country." It seems clear that we have a two horse race for best picture. In terms of sheer weirdness, originality and technique, my favorite of the two is "Blood." There will be carnage on Oscar night as "No Country for Old Men" and "Blood" compete for the big awards. Fans of old-time epics should be prepared for a genre-busting, brave-

ly-acted, oil-covered piece of work that is a technical achievement and a work of more literary merit than most contemporary fiction.

Ken Tarr is a student at Santa Monica College, an actor and writer and is also taller than 99 percent of the population. He can be reached telepathically or at trutoulouse@yahoo.com.

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Obituaries

MARGARET C. BONACHEA
Bonachea, Margaret C. Passed away on December 5, 2007 at the age of 92. Beloved mother, grandmother, and aunt. Services will be held on Tuesday December 11, 2007 at 10 A.M. Spalding Mortuary (323) 934-1181 may be contacted for further info.

Miscellaneous

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		<u>Single Family Homes</u>	<u>Condos & Townhomes</u>
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North of Montana	=	\$ 3,375,650	\$ 2,062,294
Between Wilshire & Montana	=	\$ 2,124,500	\$ 977,654
South of Wilshire	=	\$ 1,099,000	\$ 669,500
Sunset Park	=	\$ 1,308,059	\$ 683,385
Ocean Park	=	\$ 2,122,800	\$ 996,865

Statistics updated every Friday

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