



FREE

Santa Monica Daily Press

January 8-9, 2005

A newspaper with issues

Volume 4, Issue 49

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

9 11 32 41 42
Meganumber: 2
Jackpot: \$68 Million

FANTASY 5

2 17 27 35 38

DAILY 3

Daytime: 4 7 1
Evening: 7 9 0

DAILY DERBY

1st: 08 Gorgeous George
2nd: 03 Hot Shot
3rd: 10 Solid Gold

RACE TIME: 1:46:31



NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

New Scientist magazine reported in September that Chris Melhuish (University of the West of England, at Bristol) was readying his EcoBot II, a self-powered robot that runs on energy produced by catching and digesting houseflies (and breaking down their sugars to release electrons). The major downside: The most efficient way to attract flies is with sewage, which makes EcoBot II unfriendly to humans.

TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1973, secret peace talks between the United States and North Vietnam resumed near Paris.

In 1975, Judge John J. Sirica ordered the release of Watergate figures John W. Dean III, Herbert W. Kalmbach and Jeb Stuart Magruder from prison.

In 1982, American Telephone and Telegraph settled the Justice Department's antitrust lawsuit against it by agreeing to divest itself of the 22 Bell System companies.

In 1985, the Rev. Lawrence Martin Jenco was kidnapped in Lebanon (he was released 19 months later).

INDEX

Horoscopes

Keep it close, Libra 2

Surf Report

Water Temperature: 56° 3

Opinion

Lame duck 4

Recreation

Stairing contest 6

State

The beef with Kobe 7

National

Gone to the dogs 9

Comics

Laugh it up 12

Classifieds

Need a job? 13-15

People in the News

Usher in the new year 16

Olympic champ clears legal hurdles

Prosecutors dismiss charges against Danny Harris nearly two months after he was arrested for kidnapping

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

LAX COURTHOUSE — A judge on Friday ordered Olympic silver medalist Danny Harris freed, after prosecutors said they no longer could prove Harris committed a pair of Santa Monica kidnappings last fall.

Harris, who earned the silver medal in 1984 in the 400-meter hurdles, spent nearly two months in custody for the kidnappings, even after DNA evidence was

recovered that linked a different man to the crimes.

Prosecutors agreed to dismiss the seven felony charges against Harris after the 75-year-old kidnapping victim, who was assaulted twice in her Sunset Park home, positively identified the other suspect in a live police lineup this week.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Katherine Mader apologized to Harris during Friday's proceedings, saying innocent people sometimes get trapped in the legal system.

"I know you've been in for a while ... and I apologize on behalf of the court system for having you in for this length of time," Judge Mader said.

Dressed in a jail-issued blue jumpsuit, and standing with his wrists bound behind his back, Harris turned to a small group of friends and relatives in the courtroom, smiled and mouthed the words, "I'm coming home."

Police arrested Harris in November after trained bloodhounds following the scent of a hat left by the kidnapper led authorities to Harris' room at the Clare Foundation, a rehabilitation facility

located off of Lincoln Boulevard south of Interstate 10. Harris tested positive for drugs in 1996 and was barred from competing in the Olympics. He has struggled for years with a cocaine addiction.

Subsequent laboratory tests showed the kidnapper's hat contained the DNA of Alonzo Taylor, a three-strike criminal who was arrested in late November for allegedly stealing a car in East Los Angeles. The two men, who share similar physical characteristics, claimed not to know one another.

Prosecutors initially refused to drop the charges against Harris,

See **DROPPED CHARGES**, page 5

Coming attraction



Nicky Five Aces/Five Aces Photo

A crowd packed into the new Aero Theater on Montana Avenue on Thursday night to take part in the historic theater's reopening.

Cavalia packs it in

After two months in SM, the circus-like horse show rides off into the sunset

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

SM BEACH — Two months and more than 100,000 sold tickets later, the circus-meets-horse show Cavalia will pack up and leave Santa Monica after its final show tonight.

Since opening night on Nov. 10, performances of the show have kept the white tent in the parking lot north of Santa Monica Pier an average of 80-percent to 90-percent full, said Normand Latourelle, artistic director and producer of Cavalia. The tent holds up to 1,962 people.

Latourelle, 49, will next take

the show to Phoenix, Ariz. He called the Santa Monica beach parking lot the best venue locale in the world.

"I first brought Cirque Du Soleil here to Santa Monica back in '87-'88 and I had a great memory of bringing Cirque to Santa Monica," Latourelle said. "I came to the pier and I said, 'This is the most beautiful site, a beautiful site — this is where Cirque Du Soleil should set up.'"

"At the time, I thought it was the best site in Los Angeles," he added. "When I came back with Cavalia, I knew this was the best site in the world."

Specifically, Latourelle pointed to the ocean setting and the central location of the pier, which has access to the largest population center in North America. Latourelle

See **PACKING IT IN**, page 5

Tsunami memorial postponed ... due to bad weather

By Daily Press staff

The tsunami memorial service planned for the Santa Monica Pier has been postponed due to bad weather.

The event, hosted by the Surf

Academy, is now scheduled to take place next Saturday, Jan. 15, between the hours of 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

The service is designed as a community gathering to share the grief for victims and survivors of

the Dec. 26 tsunami that struck 11 countries in and around southeast Asia. It also will be a fundraiser for the Santa Monica Red Cross, UNICEF and Save the Children. The memorial is unique in that it will include talks from five differ-

ent clergy members and will include a "paddle out." People will paddle out to the end of the pier and sit on their boards in a circle formation.

For more information, call (310) 372-2790.

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ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★★ Head out the door and meet friends or explore a new area. Hop into the car and take a drive. Use your innovative and creative mind when making plans. Refuse to do the same old thing. Allow yourself to adapt plans to the moment. Tonight: Different works.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Plan on spending quality time with a special person. You might want to look at this person as if he or she is a new acquaintance. Revise your perspective; he or she might be transforming before your very eyes. Understand that everyone changes. With your rose-colored glasses off, you'll relate better. Tonight: Dinner for two.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ Demonstrate flexibility with others. People, events and plans could change radically. Openness to a new style or approach adds to your desirability. Others run the show. Assume a passive, easy role; you might not have a choice. Others reveal their true colors. Tonight: Out and about.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★ Respond to your needs and responsibilities. Cancel plans if need be. Honor your priorities right now, which might entail taking a nap. Work on being in your prime, as your social life will bloom as soon as this afternoon. Tonight: Accept an invitation.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ Seize the moment and run with it. Single or attached, your romantic, fun personality emerges. Not only do you add spice to your life but also to those around you. Flex, and others will adapt as well. A child could be tough but adorable at the same time. Tonight: Romp the night away.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★ Others seek you out for help. Be sensible and touch base with parents, older relatives and friends. Reach out when others don't. Home and family demand your attention. Avoid a quarrel if possible. Move furniture. Clean up. Invite others over. Tonight: A spontaneous get-together.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Your actions and words punctuate the day of others. Don't stand on ceremony. Drop a barrier. Catch up on neighbors' news. Swap jokes. Use caution with a loved one, child or flirtation. One or both of you are wearing rose-colored glasses. Tonight: Roam within your immediate surroundings.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★ Put yourself on a budget before it is too late. A family member might be hiding or keeping information from you. Communication could be touchy. Confirm important conversations. Be careful with money transactions too! Tonight: Fun doesn't always have to cost an arm and a leg.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ You are in prime form. Do avoid a manipulative person — or might this person be you? Power plays will not work. Just express who you are and your natural authenticity. You might be surprised by how others respond. Tonight: What would delight you most.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★ Sometimes taking time to process and think through recent events, conversations and your responses gains a different perspective. Open up to a long-term friend or loved one. New people aren't the way you think they are. Tonight: Cocoon.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ Don't even think of spending time alone. Though others might change your plans, you'll enjoy yourself. Make new friends. Touch base with old friends. Your immediate desires could transform without your realizing it. Tonight: Where the party is.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Take charge and deal with a difficult parent or associate. You need to take responsibility for your side of a hassle. Accept the lime-light. Accept the fact that you cannot change others. Responsibilities call. Tonight: Bring others together.

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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

‘Play It Again, Sam’ plays it at Samohi

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica Civic Light Opera, the professional presenting organization of the Santa Monica High School Theatre Arts Program, has announced the extension of its first show of the 2004-05 season, “Play It Again, Sam.”

Two encore performances of the timeless Woody Allen romantic comedy “Play It Again, Sam” will be presented in the Humanities Center Theater tonight at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased by calling (310) 458-5939, or online at www.smclo.org.

“‘Play It Again, Sam’ is the finest script Woody Allen ever wrote,” said Dr. Frank X. Ford, artistic director of the SMCLO and Samohi theatre arts program, who is directing the student-actors in the show. “It’s a play that sends absolutely everyone home happy.”

The play centers on Allan Felix, a nerdy film critic with no “dame,” who conjures up the spirit of “legendary tough guy” Humphrey Bogart to help fix his love life. Of course, Bogey’s ways aren’t for everyone, as Allan finds out.

“Play It Again, Sam” is the high school’s first mainstage offering of the season, which also includes “The Music Man,” bonus productions of “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf” and David Ives’ “One-Acts,” and the SMCLO’s professional-alumni-student production of “My Fair Lady.”

A perennial favorite, “Play It Again, Sam” was produced at Samohi in 1985 and 1993. “This show is uniquely appropriate for high school students and high school actors,” said Dr. Ford. “‘Play It Again, Sam’ a journey of self-discovery, like many great works, but it’s outrageously funny and thereby lessens the pain of the truths it reveals.

“I’ve done this play three times,” he added. “And it’s been three completely different plays because the actors have had the chance to make each role uniquely theirs.”

The cast for “Play It Again, Sam” includes Anthony Alvarez, Rose Bloomfield, Casey Corn, Stevie Evans, Nicole Fellows, Sara Frier, Nicole Jellen, Nick Leonard, Caitie McNamara, Alex Nicolaou, Alex Pucci, Matt Rapore, Jessie Schechter, and Nick White; the production team includes Noe Avila, Zoey Baldwin, Jo Davis, Rachel Robinson, Logan Van Briesen, Joe Cincotti and Brett Fisher.

“Play It Again, Sam” follows the tradition of many of Samohi’s most memorable productions, including “The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby,” “Little Shop of Horrors,” “Noises Off,” “The Diary of Anne Frank,” “Having Our Say,” “Cyrano de Bergerac,” “Peter Pan,” and the joint Samohi-SMCLO production of Grease.

Samohi is proud of its illustrious alumni, including actors Glenn Ford, Gene Nelson, Oscar-winner Sean Penn, Oscar-nominee Robert Downey, Jr., Rob Lowe, Charlie Sheen, Emilio Estevez, Holly Robinson, Dean Cain, Ryan Hurst, Wallace Smith, Tessa Thompson, Matt Walker, Keith Coogan, John Augustine, Amber Tamblyn, and Colleen Ford; and writers/producers Meredith Stiehm, and Zack Estrin — among many others.

Samohi roller hockey team advances

By Daily Press staff

In an exciting 4-3 victory in the semi-final playoff game, the Santa Monica High School Roller Hockey Team sunk the Venice Gondoliers to advance to the championship game, to be played today against Redondo Beach. Redondo beat Mira Costa in their semi-final game, 6-3. This will be the fourth time Samohi has advanced to the championship, seeking that elusive first title banner ever.

The game will be played today at 3 p.m., at the LA Kings Healthsouth Training Center, 555 N. Nash Street in El Segundo. Admission is free.

Big Blue alters schedule for MLK Day

By Daily Press staff

The Big Blue Bus will operate on a Saturday schedule on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which is Jan. 17. Also, the Big Blue Bus customer service office will be closed.



SURF REPORT

P-block be waitin’ – bumpin’ tricky trackz in wait. Wind waves from the WSW fade quickly through the day. The stormy WSW wind waves penetrate pretty evenly throughout LA County, but central beaches face the swell better, and consequently bigger. Generally, waist- to head-high waves can be expected throughout, with sets hitting 1-2 feet overhead at those more exposed spots — locally, larger waves are possible. Beaches protected from the wind and open enough to the swell may offer ridable storm peaks. Major high tide of 7 ft at 7am. Winds blow from the south 10-20 knots.

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	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	12:15	2.3	2:15	1.6	6:45	6.7	8:52	3.7
SUNDAY	1:08	2.2	3:00	1.9	7:33	7.1	9:34	3.9
MONDAY	2:00	2.0	3:43	2.0	8:21	7.2	10:16	4.0
TUESDAY	2:51	1.9	4:27	1.8	9:09	7.1	10:58	4.1
WEDNESDAY	3:45	1.8	5:10	1.5	9:58	6.7	11:42	4.3
THURSDAY	4:42	1.8	5:52	0.9	10:48	6.0	N/A	N/A
FRIDAY	N/A	N/A	1:31	1.0	5:57	6.2	8:07	3.5

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THE Q-LINE RESPONSES ARE IN!

WE HAVE THE QUESTIONS.
YOU HAVE THE ANSWERS.
CHECK OUT THIS WEEK’S Q-LINE RESPONSES ON PAGE 4.

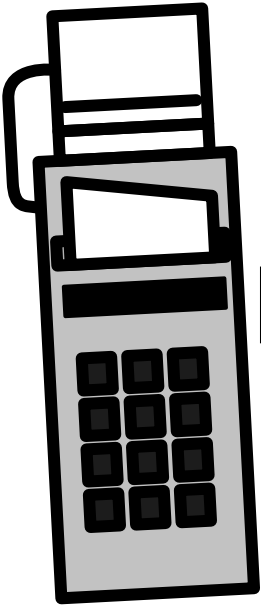


Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy

The Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy is seeking donations. Situated in a courtyard garden visible to the community, the fountain will be a respite for those seeking faith, peace and hope amongst the challenges of the world.

Donations to the Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy may be sent to:

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OPINION

The Q Line

THESE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS

This past week, Q-line asked:

What do you like about living in Santa Monica?

Here are your responses:

☉ “The beach is world-class. The city is world-class. The people who pay their taxes in our city are world-class. The people who live here who pay their taxes are world-class. Last, but not least, the weather is world-class. One footnote, the Santa Monica Daily Press is world-class.”

☉ “I’m sorry to say there is nothing no longer really attractive or pleasant about Santa Monica. If I had the opportunity and resources, I would leave immediately and for good.”

☉ “When I first moved here I hated it. I came from a small resort town and wasn’t used to the grit of the city, especially the homeless. I still don’t like them since most of them are rude, bitter and are criminals. But some of them add character to the town. Anyway, after about two years I began appreciating what Santa Monica has to offer. I never drive my car. I ride my bike to work and spend a lot of time at the beach — walking, running, bike riding, surfing and hanging out. And I also like that the city has many different neighborhoods that have completely different feels. I love Main Street and it’s so much different than downtown, where I spend a lot of time, as well as Montana Avenue, where I live.”

☉ “It’s a very innovative city. We’re on a track star in a lot of countries and also in this country. We’ve instituted a lot of things and I think it’s just wonderful. I really enjoy watching Bobby Shriver, and ever since we’ve gotten this Annenberg grant, that’s making our community better. So let’s redevelop and let’s not put in those huge towers that that particular corporation wants to

do because that will destroy this city, which is already too tight as it is with the traffic.”

☉ “My answer is always the same: The Santa Monica bike path. Anyone who has rode a bicycle north of the Santa Monica Pier to the end of the bike path and has stood and looked out west and north at the beautiful ocean and the bay area between Pales Verdes and Point Dume understands what I am speaking of.”

☉ “Normally, I would say the wonderful weather, but lately I can’t say that. I will say that you can put up a sign that says ‘Bush is a war criminal, impeach Bush’ and nobody gets mad.”

☉ “What I like about living in Santa Monica is absolutely nothing, except it serves its purpose when you live under rent control and that’s it. The day I move out of Santa Monica will be one of the happiest days of my life.”

☉ “Santa Monica is a good place to live, and thanks to the majority of the City Council not being controlled by the self-serving ploys of the chamber of commerce.”

☉ “Well, I don’t live in Santa Monica, but my girlfriend does so I spend a lot of time here. What we both like about Santa Monica is that it’s easy to get around. You can get around without a car. You can go shopping. You can go to the movies. If we were driving, you can park your car and get around very easily.”

OPINIONS EXPRESSED are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Santa Monica Daily Press staff. Guest editorials from residents are encouraged, as are letters to the editor. Letters will be published on a space-available basis. It is our intention to publish all letters we receive, except those that are libelous or are unsigned. Preference will be given to those that are e-mailed to sack@smdp.com. All letters must include the author’s name and telephone number for purposes of verification. Letters also may be mailed to our offices located at 1427 Third Street Promenade, Suite 202, Santa Monica, 90401, or faxed to (310) 576-9913. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content.

This Presidential hopeful a dead duck in politics



MODERN TIMES

BY LLOYD GARVER

With the dawning of the New Year, I’ve come to accept a reality: I will never be elected President of the United States. It’s not just because of my lack of qualifications and my disinterest in public life. It’s the hunting thing.

In the recent campaign, it became obvious that Americans still like to see photos of their candidates hunting. For some bizarre reason, some voters feel that getting dressed up like a tree and killing animals is an obvious demonstration of leadership qualities necessary to run the United States.

As more and more women are national political figures, will they participate in these photo opportunities, too? Might we soon see photos of Hillary Clinton or Elizabeth Dole driving their SUVs down a country road with a dead moose tied to the luggage rack?

Hunters call what they do a “sport.” In most sports, there is an attempt at having an equal opponent. A heavyweight boxer doesn’t fight a lightweight. The New York Yankees don’t play a high school team. And a world-class sprinter doesn’t race against me. Long ago, hunting fell into this category, too. Speedy hunters chased fierce animals and then bravely risked their lives as they subdued their prey so their families could have something to eat. Sometimes they won the battle and sometimes they tragically lost.

To suggest that today’s hunter is heroically up against an equal opponent seems pretty far-fetched. He might not succeed every time, but what are the odds that the brave hunter might actually get shot by a duck?

If you put on your best running shoes, chase after a bear, catch it, and wrestle it into submission, I’ll be impressed. If you jump off a cliff, and grab a flying goose in mid-air, that’s something to brag about. If you dive into the ocean, catch a marlin with your bare hands, bring it back to shore and then cook it for dinner, I guess I’d have to call you a sportsman or sports-

woman. But if you’ve got the latest scientific equipment, spend most of the time hiding from your prey, and then kill it just for fun, why should that make me want to vote for you?

Hunters will tell you that part of the joy of what they do is being outdoors, enjoying nature. But can’t they enjoy nature without shooting at it?

So why is hunting so symbolically important to American voters? Why would anyone think that a hunter would necessarily make a better leader than someone who doesn’t hunt? Perhaps hunting represents an earlier, idyllic America in which men really did need to hunt for their dinners. Hunters might say that hunting demonstrates certain qualities that are important to leadership. It requires patience, concentration and focus. I can’t argue with that. But there are lots of other things that require patience, concentration and focus. Like flossing. Is hunting any more admirable of a quality for a candidate than proper dental hygiene? Why should an endorsement from the National Rifle Association mean more than one from the American Dental Association?

Is the only remaining conclusion that a large segment of our population feels reassured, knowing that a candidate has the ability to kill something? I hope not. I hope it’s just a tradition that candidates have gotten so used to that they don’t question. Like kissing babies. Like \$1,000-a-plate dinners. Like giving the “thumbs up” when they don’t know what to say.

Regardless of the reason, it seems like it’s a tradition that’s going to be around for a while. So, it’s clear I’ll never be president. However, I still feel there’s a chance I might someday be named to the Supreme Court. After all, it would not be a great compromise of my principles to be photographed brandishing a macho fly swatter.

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



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Santa Monica Daily Press: Att. Editor 1427 Third Street Promenade Suite 202 Santa Monica, CA 90401
Or email: sack@smdp.com

LOCAL



Lineups help Harris win freedom

DROPPED CHARGES, from page 1

claiming the two men may have been working together. Though the victim only saw one kidnapper, at one point she said the kidnapper threatened to kill her and burn down her house, and referenced two accomplices.

In addition, prosecutors pointed to three eyewitnesses who picked Harris out of a photo lineup. The three witnesses were a next-door neighbor who chased off the kidnapper with a gun, a nearby resident who saw the kidnapper strip off his shirt while fleeing the scene and the victim, who picked Harris along with two other people in the photo lineup as possibly the person who assaulted her.

Authorities said the shirt the kidnapper left as he fled the scene also contained Taylor's DNA. A glove was found at the victim's home that investigators believed belonged to the kidnapper, but no DNA was recovered from it.

Harris remained in custody in lieu of \$1.44 million bail. The bail was set high partly because Harris had a criminal record, including a conviction for stealing from a family member last year. Despite that history, two of Harris' sisters at a recent court hearing said Harris had begun living a clean and sober life. Weeks before his arrest, he had taken out one of the sister's children and bought them gifts, and he planned to go to the other sister's house for Thanksgiving, the sisters said.

Two live police lineups were conducted this week to see if the eyewitnesses would tie Taylor to the kidnappings. In the first lineup, Taylor stood in a line with five inmates. In the second lineup, Harris stood with five dif-

ferent inmates.

None of the witnesses picked Harris. The elderly victim identified Taylor, and the other witnesses picked different prisoners, lawyers said.

"He is and always was innocent," said Matt Huey, Harris' public defender, at the Friday hearing. "It highlights the problem with the photo identification, because when these witnesses got the chance to actually see these people live, the correct person was identified and the innocent person was excluded."

Asked if any explanation had been offered for how the police hounds ended up at Harris' room, Huey replied, "Not that I'm aware of — and it's awfully hard to cross examine a dog."

Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney Donna Lebowitz told the court prosecutors were unable to proceed because of factual weaknesses in the case. She later declined to say if Harris remained a suspect or when charges might be pressed against Taylor.

"If they bring a case in and file it, then we'll review it," she said outside the courtroom. "Right now, on this evidence, I am unable to proceed."

While prosecutors decide whether to build a case against Taylor, Harris was expected to spend Friday night with his family for the first time in nearly two months. Joyce Harris, Harris' sister and one of five relatives and friends who attended the Friday hearing, said she was anxious to have him back.

"He's going home," said Harris, a 40-year-old judge's assistant. "He's going home with me. Tell them all — he's going home."

Cavalía run helped fuel city coffers

PACKING IT IN, from page 1

also joked the horses enjoyed being near the ocean.

"Since this time we have horses, we have created a paddock in the back of the parking lot and the horses have the feeling they are on the beach daily," he said.

Only two bumps have cropped up during the show's Santa Monica run. The first was when a cable snapped on opening night, dropping a performer about 15 feet. She was bruised, but walked away from the incident. The second bump was when foul weather rolled in, forcing workers to scramble to get the show's equipment to higher ground.

"I told my people, 'Well, I've been there many times and Los Angeles is a desert,' so everybody looks at me and tells me I'm a liar," Latourelle said.

Cavalía mixes the acrobatic athleticism of skilled riders with professionally groomed and trained horses from around the world, set to a soundtrack of modern music that's played differently each night by live musicians.

Before coming to Santa Monica, where the show's run was twice extended because of its popularity, Cavalía played at several other west coast cities. It started in San

Francisco, then went to Glendale, up to Seattle, back to San Francisco and down to Del Mar before settling in Santa Monica, according to Latourelle. The show's end is nowhere in sight, he added during a Friday interview.

"At first, we talked three years, but now we see a much greater future," Latourelle said. "We don't see the end of it. We have such great demand all across the United States."

In addition to selling more than 100,000 tickets to 56 shows, at an average cost of \$79, Latourelle said Cavalía employed more than 200 area residents, who did everything from groom the horses to sell concessions, drive the parking shuttles and set up the tent. The tent is scheduled to come down Monday, weather permitting.

City Hall also profited from the show's run. The beach parking lot often is rented out to large movie shoots and for other events at a daily rate of about \$10,000 to \$12,000, officials said. With Cavalía, a lower total rate likely was negotiated because of the duration of the show, though show managers declined to say how much they paid. City officials also couldn't peg an exact figure on Friday, because they were away from their desks.

See PACKING IT IN, page 7

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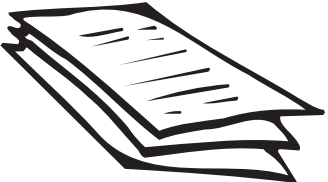
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Stepping up workouts in '05 an uphill battle



EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT

BY THADDEUS REICHLEY

How are those resolutions coming this first week of 2005? I gave up drinking. That was until last night at dinner when a glass of wine sounded really good. But I did start swimming, again. Actually, I started thinking about starting swimming again but I am really going to the pool next week. I did, however, give up coffee. That is, until I woke up on New Year's Day with a little bit of a hangover. Oops. When I went to bed at 11:30 p.m. on New Year's Eve, I spent exactly eight hours as the exact person I was resolved to be for the coming year. Then I woke up and there they were — all of those temptations, time-constraints, traffic jams and alarm clocks that make it impossible for all of us to reach perfection. My suggestion — hit the sleep button and relax.

The problem with life is that it's hectic, messy and never quite what you are expecting. In a perfect world, I would get paid more for teaching middle school than my younger brother does as a bell hop. Days would be 28 hours long with two extra hours for sleeping and two for working out, and bread products everywhere would be allowed back into pantries and lunch boxes where they belong. Oh yeah, beer would also come in seven-packs, or we could just get rid of Mondays. I am really open to either option. Until these things happen though, we will have to work with what we have and adjust our goals, resolutions, and workouts accordingly.

Probably the biggest constraint for most of us is time, or lack thereof. Most people are off to work in the dark and stuck in traffic as the sun is setting. That doesn't leave much daylight for working out. That, however, is why God created gyms. I have never been much of a gym fan in the past, but living in LA has made me realize that it's a wonderful option for those people smarter than me who would rather not run around dodging cars after dark. Gyms also are great because you can cruise in, get a quick 30-minute workout, and get out before your body really has time to know what's going on. The other great thing about gyms is that there are always other people there. Misery loves company, and for some reason it's always easier to sweat if there are other people around you sweating too.

Another major constraint, especially in LA, is space. Going for a jog in many places means dealing with traffic, intersections and pavement. Still, I am continually impressed with the creativity that I have seen from people determined to get their daily workouts in. When I first moved here, I stumbled upon just such an example — the Santa Monica stairs. If you are not familiar with "the stairs," they are at the dead-end of Fourth Street, just north of San Vicente Boulevard. If you are already a regular stair user, I apologize for giving up your secret workout stash.

On any given day, at any given hour, you are bound to find people dragging themselves up and down the stairs, all 165

of them. I didn't count, they're numbered. When I first ran by the stairs I have to admit that I turned my nose up at the thought. However, as I was planning my strength training routine for the winter, I started looking for a nearby hill suitable for running repeats. Unable to find anything free of stoplights that was long enough, I finally put aside my snobbery and made my way to the stairs. Now, I am hooked.

If you have not run the stairs before, let me suggest a few reasons you might want to add a few sets of stairs to your weekly routine.

1. Stair work is a great way to build strength, speed and muscle definition. If you are a runner or a cyclist, this can mean a little extra power on the hills and flats come racing season. If racing is not your thing, it will help tone those places you want to show off if the sun ever comes out again.

2. As with the gym, misery loves company. You will never be alone when running the stairs, and there is usually someone else there who looks like they must be feeling worse than you. However, this can also be a bad thing. From what I can tell, Boeing designed the stairs, and they apparently used the same measurements for an average person as they do in the coach class of their planes. So, if you go to the stairs, be prepared to get sweaty. And, it's not always from your own sweat.

3. You never know what you will see on the stairs. I have seen plastic suits, ankle weights, a guy wearing a scuba tank, and women lugging wedding rings that make the guy with the scuba tank look like a wimp. And, this is LA, so you might even see someone famous.

4. A set of stairs will give you a lot of physical bang for your fitness buck. If you go at a quick clip and minimize your rest between repeats you can get a good cardio session along with your strength training.

5. Though it really is not much different than a stairmaster, at least it's outside.

Before you run out and run 20 sets of stairs you should know a few things. First, you will be sore after your first time, your second time, and... well, you will probably be sore every time, but if you stick with it, it gets easier. If it is dark or wet, the stairs can be a little treacherous. There's my warning, no lawsuits please. Finally, running the stairs is not a magical ticket to a new body. It should be a part of a training routine that includes other forms of exercise and rest. Running the stairs every day will not get you anywhere, literally.

As you seek perfection in 2005 you will undoubtedly get a little down at some point and start to feel like you are just running in place. When this happens, come on out and join the rest of us on the stairs who are "literally" running in place. It probably won't change your life, but it might take your mind off of everything else for a while as you concentrate on not tripping. If you do hit the stairs this year, look for me. I'll be the sweaty guy ... without the scuba tank.

(Thaddeus Reichley is a local teacher and pro triathlete. He recently won the solo division in the "24 Hours Of LA." Look for his column every other week in the Daily Press weekend edition).

STATE



Airball: Fans shunning Bryant's jersey

BY RUKMINI CALLIMACHI

Associated Press Writer

PORTLAND, Ore. — Kobe Bryant is no longer a fashion icon. For the last month, Bryant's No. 8 Lakers jersey — previously one of the best sellers in the world — has fallen out of the top 50, according to point-of-sale data tabulated by a Florida market research firm.

Bryant's NBA jersey was still the 10th-highest selling jersey for the year, but he finished the month of December at No. 72 — and in one week plunged to No. 90, a drastic slide for the player many once saw as the sport's next marketing golden boy.

"I would never have thought it would have dropped off like this," said Neil Schwartz, director of marketing and business development for SportsScanINFO in West Palm Beach, which tracks weekly sales data from sporting goods retailers nationwide.

Bryant's marketability has likely been hurt by the flurry of bad press he's been receiving lately, analysts say. It began with his rape case and included his feud with former teammate Shaquille O'Neal, his spat with current teammate Karl Malone and a new book by former coach Phil Jackson that portrays Bryant as an aloof prima donna.

Before the season started, O'Neal was traded to the Miami Heat and Jackson retired — departures that many fans have blamed on Bryant.

"I was a big fan, but I just can't wear his jersey anymore," said Patrick Buan, 27, of Victorville, Calif., who last month put up for sale his four Bryant jerseys on eBay.

Bryant's agent, Rob Pelinka, did not return calls seek-

ing comment. Nike Inc., Bryant's main sponsor, also declined to comment, saying only that Bryant remains under contract with the company.

Officials at AEG, which owns Staples Center, said sales of Bryant's jersey had dipped noticeably at the store in the arena in recent weeks. They said the problem began early this summer as Bryant prepared to face criminal rape charges — which were later dropped after his accuser said she did not want to participate in the trial.

"He's such a significant player that we weren't willing to make all those goods and have him go to jail," said Alan Fey, vice president of merchandising for AEG.

Schwartz said Bryant's legal troubles could account for a drop in sales in the summer.

In June — when the preparations for Bryant's rape trial were going full tilt — three of Bryant's jerseys occupied the first, third and fifth spots in terms of units sold, according to Schwartz, whose company tallies numbers from a wide range of retailers.

Industry insiders say that while fans may have been willing to look the other way during the rape scandal, they seem far less willing to forgive him now for what they see as the breakup of a championship team.

"I think a lot of people were understanding of the rape trial, because there are a lot of cases of players being entrapped," said Bob Dorfman, executive vice president of Pickett Advertising in San Francisco.

"But it's all about winning — that's what tickles the cash register. When he jeopardized that by single-handedly blowing apart the team, it was the final straw for a lot of people."

Big top to disappear from city skyline

PACKING IT IN, from page 5

Most city departments are closed every other Friday in an effort to reduce automobile trips and thereby help the environment.

"The arrangement made with Cavalia certainly had a positive impact on city revenues, and it's a good thing for the community to utilize those parking lots in a season when they're not fully utilized," said finance director Steve Stark, reached Friday afternoon on his mobile phone.

City Councilman Richard Bloom, who said he saw the show twice, added Cavalia also paid for security and inspection services during their Santa Monica run. Bloom said he would miss the white "big top" that's

become part of the recent horizon.

"It's been a good run, and I think it does add a kind of festive feel there to the beach area, to see the tent," Bloom said. "It's very beautiful when it glows at night and compliments the pier quite nicely."

For Latourelle, Phoenix beckons. His first show is scheduled for Jan. 25, giving him just enough time to set up in yet another city. A co-founder of Cirque Du Soleil who worked with the outfit for five years until 1990, Latourelle said he never was bitten by the acting bug.

"I've never been on a trapeze, never performed," he added. "I'm a grounded guy. I always, you know, have my two feet very solid on the ground, but my head is very high in the sky."

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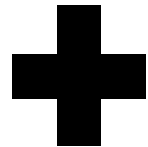
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STATE

The road less travelled offers reprieve at a price

BY RYAN PEARSON

Associated Press Writer

LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE — Dawn was breaking across the twisting, two-lane mountain road that Bertha Escutia always took from her Palmdale home to her job some 60 miles away in the Los Angeles suburb of Glendale.

A voice on the radio warned against driving while sleepy, but she was alert when her small Ford Focus hit a slippery spot. Panicking, she pushed hard on the brake. The car veered left then right before leaving the road and crashing into a large bush.

A few feet farther was a nearly sheer drop.

Escutia escaped with minor cuts and now prefers the headaches of the main highway over the risky back road.

"I feel like I was born again, like I was given a second chance to live again," said Escutia, who normally commutes with her husband. "So we're thinking we won't take any chances."

In sprawling cities across the West, commuters long ago extended rush hour to hours, clogging freeways until they feel more claustrophobic than free. Fed up with the daily crawl, coffee-swigging workers are turning to once-quiet back roads as shortcuts from far-flung bedroom communities to urban jobs.

The flood of traffic on roads that sometimes lack guardrails, lights and turnouts can be a killer combination. Federal sta-

tistics analyzed by The Road Information Program reveal the danger.

The Washington-based group found that in 2003, the death rate on major highways was 0.78 people for every 100 million miles traveled, compared to 1.79 deaths on smaller roads.

"We know clearly that if you're on a two-lane winding country road — as opposed to an interstate — regardless of the speed, you're more likely to be in an accident," said Peter Kissinger, president and CEO of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

Transportation planners are struggling to keep pace with the changing traffic patterns, said Alan Pisarski, a transportation consultant.

"Fundamentally what we're talking about is a conflict between the design of the road and its function," he said.

Some officials are urging the quick installation of "rumble strips" and warning signs, said Frank Moretti, director of policy and research for The Road Information Program. Long-term, they want to make the roads bigger.

Officials in Portland have knocked down trees and homes to expand two-lane Scholls Ferry Road into a five-lane commuter highway connecting suburban neighborhoods to downtown.

Outside Seattle, where farmland and evergreen forests have given way to subdivisions and strip malls, engineers are spending \$30 million to widen key stretches of State Route 9.

"I feel like I was born again, like I was given a second chance to live again. So we're thinking we won't take any chances."

BERTHA ESCUTIA
Commuter

Most intersections don't have traffic lights and crashes have occurred when impatient drivers took their chances entering traffic or making left turns.

As traffic has increased, accidents on a 37-mile stretch of the road jumped from 235 in 1993 to 406 in 2003, according to the Washington Department of Transportation.

East of San Francisco, commuters in fast-growing suburbs are flooding two-lane Vasco Road. A task force was formed in 2003 to study the situation after there were 46 crashes and seven deaths along the 15-mile road.

Recent improvements include rumble strips, feedback signs that display speeds and other information, and the designation of one stretch for daytime use of headlights.

On Angeles Crest Highway, near the scene of Escutia's accident, three people died and seven were injured last month when a van pool headed to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory plunged 200 feet down the mountain. Highway Patrol officials haven't yet determined the cause.

Escutia glimpsed the white crosses marking the deaths just before she crashed.

"I didn't even have time to scream, or like in the movies to cover my face or anything," she recalled. "You really don't have to do much for something to happen."

Law enforcement officials warned that the eye-glazing familiarity of daily travel can breed contempt for rules of the road.

CHP officer Vincent Bell said stepped-up law enforcement reduced accidents on Angeles Crest and nearby roads — for a time. After 24 fatal crashes in 2 1/2 years, Bell's office used a state grant in 1999 to fund a two-year boost in motorcycle and helicopter patrols.

There were just five traffic deaths on the mountain during the program, but the money ran out and the troubles returned. Eleven people died there in 2004.

"They feel very comfortable," Bell said of mountain commuters. "A lot of times that'll give people a false sense of security. They'll speed, they'll tailgate. ... It's frightening."

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Going to the dogs: Effort to aid Iraqi canines starts

BY KEN RITTER
Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS — An impromptu relief effort was mobilizing Thursday in southern Nevada after an Army Reserve officer sent home a plea for food to feed starving Iraqi police dogs at a training center in Baghdad.

Army Reserve Capt. Gabriella Cook begged her friends to come to the aid of 12 undernourished German shepherds and one black Labrador retriever trained for bomb-detection and attack at the Iraqi Police Academy. She said the Iraqi animals have been eating table scraps and garbage.

"The dogs are starving and urgently need dry dog food," Cook wrote in an e-mail to friends in Las Vegas. "Some of them have already died. Half of them are sick. We have no way of buying any actual dog food here."

The Las Vegas Valley Humane Society was swamped with offers of cash and bags of dry dog food for the 13 dogs after a Nevada newspaper reported Cook's plea Wednesday. Cook said the animals were the Iraqi Interior Ministry's only bomb-sniffing police dogs.

Judith Ruiz, president of the nonprofit humane society, accepted a \$5,000 check from a Las Vegas sports gambling handicapper and said she was trying to arrange transportation for the food.

Cook was elated, said Diana Paivanas, a friend in Las Vegas who said offers of help came from people in states including New Hampshire, Florida, Texas, Ohio and New York. Paivanas said pallets of dry dog food had been contributed, and the humane society was looking for storage space while awaiting shipment to Iraq.

"I've heard from her twice this morning," Paivanas said Thursday. "She's so excited."

A Henderson, Nev., veterinarian said

his telephone started ringing with offers of help after he was quoted in the Las Vegas Review-Journal report about Cook's request to "please send all the dog food you can."

"If one dog smells one bomb and saves a platoon's life, it's worth it," Terry Muratore told The Associated Press. Muratore treats several pet cats and dogs that Cook has at home in Las Vegas.

Cook, a Las Vegas police officer, is commander of the Las Vegas-based 313th Military Police Detachment. The unit arrived in Baghdad on Dec. 13 to train Iraqi police, including Iraqi officers with dogs trained to detect explosives.

"That is so wonderful," she said in a Wednesday e-mail thanking Paivanas for the quick response. "It's neat that it comes all together now."

"PS," she wrote, "the Iraqi bomb dogs helped us Americans to sniff out a building."

In Washington, an aide to Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., said the senator was asking the Army about the health of the U.S. military's working dogs in Iraq. Ensign also is a veterinarian.

"The concern is that these animals play a vital role in the security operations out there by sniffing for weapons that could take lives," Ensign aide Jack Finn said. "They have to be taken care of, and if they are not we have to find out why."

In Baghdad, military officials at the Combined Press Information Center said they were checking Cook's report. But military spokesman Staff Sgt. Don Dees said Thursday the care and feeding of Iraqi police dogs was separate from U.S. military working dogs.

"Each dog handler deploys with their dog and 180 days of rations," Dees said of U.S. canine teams. "The MPs tell me sometimes the dogs eat better than the handlers."



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NATIONAL

Peering into crystal ball never Americans' forte

BY WILL LESTER

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The American public has a pretty cloudy crystal ball.

Polls were never intended to predict the future — and that's probably a good thing, given their limited success at forecasting.

While the American public's reading of the economy is usually quite accurate and can hint at future spending trends, the public struggles when trying to predict the future.

For example, most Americans in mid-1965 said they thought the United States would be more successful than the communists at winning over the Vietnamese people.

Most said in the late 1980s that a cure for AIDS was likely before 2000.

In early 2001, most thought health problems would keep Vice President Dick Cheney from completing a full term.

None of these predictions came true.

"The American public doesn't have a good track record as a predictor of events," said Karlyn Bowman, a polling specialist at the American Enterprise Institute who has studied public attitudes about the future.

When done carefully, polling fares well at measuring attitudes. Poll questions about future expectations can provide an important part of that picture.

For instance, the information that a majority of Americans fear a terrorist attack says plenty about their continuing anxiety.

And when more than half say they don't expect Iraq will be able to establish a stable government, that's a good indicator people have shaky confidence in how things are going there.

One of the most reliable predictors of behavior can be found in economic polling.

"Where questions about the future are most relevant is with regard to economic expectations and purchasing," said Robert Shapiro, a public opinion specialist at Columbia University. Expectations and future spending behavior become closely linked in economics.

The public has a very good vantage point to sense what's happening with the economy — talking with relatives, friends and neighbors while watching what goes on with prices of items like food and gasoline.

They are especially good at sensing when there are problems in the job market, said Richard Curtin, director of consumer surveys at the University of Michigan.

"Personal information drives their views about the unemployment rate," Curtin said. "If your employer lays some people off, you know about it that day. That's about the same if it's your neighbor's employer or spouse's employer."

Consumer confidence surveys are less about predicting the future than understanding influences that could affect consumer behavior.

"Asking people about the future tells you more about what they think at the present than anything else," said Thomas Riehle, president of Ipsos-Public Affairs, which does its own consumer confidence survey for The Associated Press. For example, people worried about job security might be less likely to make major purchases.

When people are asked about situations of which they have little firsthand knowledge, their responses are largely guesswork. But even in those cases, there have been instances when public expectations were on the mark.

Seven in 10 in the late 1980s said they thought it was unlikely that communism would largely disappear in the next decade. While diminished, communism didn't disappear.

In January 1973, people were slightly more inclined to think a peace agreement in Vietnam would not last. Within a couple of years, their doubts were proved correct.

And sometimes people just tend to believe the worst will happen.

Asked in the late 1990s whether the crime rate will rise over the next 50 years, a majority said they thought it would.

"When asked questions on expectations about the nation's social fabric," Bowman said, "people are generally pessimistic."

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NATIONAL



World pays little heed to suffering in Congo

BY GEORGE GEDDA

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The skies over Asia are being darkened these days by an abundance of relief-bearing cargo planes, reflecting the huge outpouring of international sympathy and support in response to the tsunami crisis.

But in eastern Congo and other regions of Africa afflicted by humanitarian hardship, people might reasonably ask, "How about some relief for us?"

The crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is widely viewed as the world's deadliest.

A study released Dec. 9 by the New York-based International Rescue Committee reports that 3.8 million people in eastern Congo have died since 1998 and that about 31,000 continue to die monthly as a result of continuing conflict.

However tragic the fallout from the Indian Ocean tsunami may be, the number of victims will not be comparable to those in Central Africa. As of Tuesday, the tsunami death toll was about 150,000.

Led by a \$500 million commitment from Japan, some \$2 billion has been pledged thus far for the tsunami's victims. According to the IRC study, international humanitarian aid for Congo was \$188 million — \$3.23 per person — 2004.

The U.S. Agency for International Development spent \$54 million on Congo in fiscal 2004. The request for 2005 is \$32 million. The \$19 million decline mostly reflects an elimination of food aid.

In contrast, the Bush administration has pledged \$350 million thus far for the tsunami tragedy.

Dr. Richard Brennan, an IRC specialist on Congo, said Tuesday: "I've been impressed with the outpouring of solidarity for victims of the tsunami. I'm baffled as to why there isn't a similar level of solidarity or concern for the people of the Congo."

Brennan was reached by telephone in Indonesia, where he is doing tsunami relief work.

Much of the instability in eastern Congo stems from the presence of thousands of Rwandan Hutu rebels who took part in the genocide against Rwandan Tutsis in 1994. The region is rife with cross-border and ethnic tensions. About 11,000 U.N. peace-

keepers are deployed there.

The mortality data for the IRC study was collected between January 2003 and April 2004. It found that 1,000 people a day died in excess of normal mortality. Almost half were children under 5 killed by disease and malnutrition — an outgrowth of a destroyed health care system.

There are obvious differences between the eastern Congo's misery and that of the tsunami's target area. The latter is generally at peace while the Congo remains riven with conflict, impeding humanitarian assistance.

David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, a Christian pro-development group, says Congo is getting short shrift.

"The world is not overreacting to the tsunami but is underreacting to misery in other places," he said, citing Congo as an example.

He added that the slower-paced accumulation of victims in Central Africa, compared with the Indian Ocean rim, has meant less international attention — and less humanitarian aid.

Beckmann also believes race may be working against the Congolese. "We've managed to callous ourselves to the idea that millions of Africans are dying," he said.

Salih Booker, executive director of Africa Action, a research and advocacy group, said there is a "class system" for resolving humanitarian crises. There is "a global predisposition to accepting a higher level of suffering in Africa," he said.

That thesis does not appear to apply to the western Sudanese region of Darfur, where ethnic conflict has displaced an estimated 2 million people since early 2003 and killed tens of thousands.

During that period, U.S. emergency assistance to Darfur has totaled \$373 million, according to government statistics.

Mary McClymont, president of InterAction, an umbrella group for U.S. private voluntary organizations, said the suddenness of the tsunami crisis, coupled with saturation news coverage, contributed to the surge of international generosity.

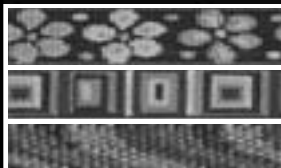
She regrets that these elements often have not been present in humanitarian disasters in Africa and elsewhere.

"I only hope that we can work to sensitize Americans in this process to the forgotten crises in the world," she said.



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Notice of Public Hearing Tuesday, January 11, 2005

City Council meeting starts at 6:45 p.m.

Annual Review of the City's Coordinated Plan for Homeless Services

As required by Municipal Code Section 2.69.030, the City Council will hold a Public Hearing on the Annual Review of the City's Coordinated Plan for Homeless Services to gain public input on:

- the impact of the City's homeless population on other residents of the City;
- the effectiveness of the delivery of services to the homeless by the City and various social service agencies;
- the cost of those services; and
- the changes which should be made in the plan in order to carry out its primary goals and objectives

HUD Consolidated Plan

As part of the community priorities budget hearing, the City Council will receive public input on the use of the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership Act (HOME) funds. Public input will assist in preparation of the City's FY 2005-10 Consolidated Plan, a HUD-required planning document that assesses how the City is assisting its low and moderate income population in meeting the HUD requirements of decent housing, a suitable living environment and economic opportunities, and provides housing and community development strategies for the next five years. A draft Consolidated Plan will be released in May 2005 for a 30-day community review period. A public hearing and Council adoption of the Plan, prior to its submittal to HUD, is scheduled for June 2005.

For more information, call (310) 458-8701, TTY (310) 458-8696; Fax (310) 458-3380; Email: human-services@santa-monica.org. City Hall and the Council Chambers are wheelchair accessible. If you have disability-related accommodation requests or language interpretation, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (310) 458-8211; TTY (310) 458-8696 at least 3 days prior to the scheduled meeting. This flier is available in alternate format upon request. Santa Monica Blue Bus Lines #2, #3, and #8 serve City Hall. Limited parking.

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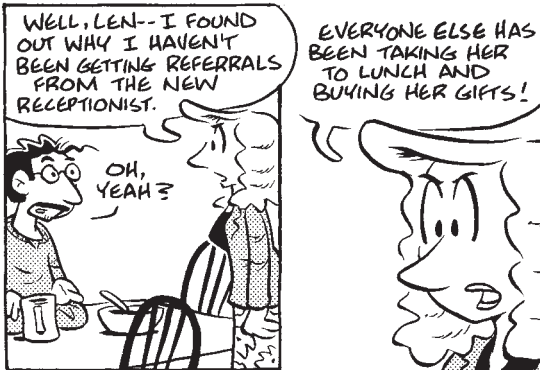


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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Oh 'Yeah!' — Usher agrees to live television gig

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — It's time to Usher in the new year.

After a very good 2004 for the R&B singer, Usher will perform a live concert on Showtime March 5. The show, "One Night, One Star: Usher Live," will be a 90-minute live broadcast from San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"Usher is, without question, the biggest thing in the music business right now, and we're thrilled he wanted to do his live concert with us," said Robert Greenblatt, the cable network's president of entertainment, in a statement released Friday.

Usher's "Confessions," featuring hits "Yeah!" and "Burn," was the best selling album of 2004, moving 7.9 million copies. His tour raked in \$29.1 million in North America, and he's currently nominated for eight Grammys, including album of the year.

The concert will air Saturday, March 5 at 9 p.m. (ET/PT) live on the east coast, tape delayed on the west coast.

Showtime, a premium cable network, is offering a free preview nationwide March 4-7.

LAS VEGAS — Basketball legend Michael Jordan is looking for a slam dunk investment in Las Vegas.

Jordan has teamed up with Diversified Real Estate Concepts Inc. of Chicago to build a \$600 million luxury condominium-hotel resort off the Las Vegas Strip, company owner Michael Peterson announced Thursday.

The 825-unit development will be located on a six-acre site about a half block east of the Bellagio and Caesars Palace resorts.

The project, dubbed Aqua Blue, includes a casino, spa, rooftop nightclub, two Michael Jordan restaurants and a 65,000-square-foot Michael Jordan Athletic Center, the first of its kind.

"I'm pleased to be expanding my group of restau-

rants into Las Vegas, which has become one of the country's top dining destinations," Jordan said in a statement.

Project officials hope to break ground in the fall of 2005.

PHOENIX — Call him Citizen McCain.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., spent Thursday in Phoenix Municipal Court awaiting possible jury duty and fielding questions from other potential jurors. Asked what he was doing there, he responded, "I'm a citizen."

His congressional schedule kept him from serving jury duty until this week.

"Since a lot of citizens inconvenience themselves to serve, there's no reason for me not to inconvenience myself. You meet nice people, too," he said.

He spent the morning reading newspapers and fielding occasional questions in the jury assembly room but was called into a courtroom in the afternoon to be considered for a DUI case.

McCain did not make the jury.

LOS ANGELES — Late punk guitarist Johnny Ramone is being immortalized with a bronze statue at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery.

Ramone, co-founder and guitarist of The Ramones, was 55 when he died of prostate cancer on Sept. 15, 2004, at his Los Angeles home. The statue is near the grave of bandmate Dee Dee Ramone, who died of a drug overdose in 2002.

The Johnny Ramone monument, created by artist Wayne Toth, shows Ramone playing his Mosrite guitar and it features the words, "If a man can judge success by how many great friends he has, then I have been very successful — Johnny Ramone."

Ramone's widow Linda will unveil the statue Jan. 14

during a two-hour afternoon public ceremony featuring testimonials from friends. Johnny Ramone was cremated and his wife has the ashes, spokesman Jason Padgett said Thursday.

Hollywood Forever is the final resting place for hundreds of Hollywood icons, including Rudolph Valentino, "Ten Commandments" producer Cecil B. DeMille and Bugs Bunny voice Mel Blanc.

The Ramones were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2002.

CHICAGO — Denyce Graves will sing Carmen to open the Lyric Opera of Chicago's 2005-6 season, which also will include new productions of Puccini's "Manon Lescaut," Tippet's "The Midsummer Marriage," Verdi's "Rigoletto" and Gluck's "Orfeo ed Euridice."

"Carmen," which opens Sept. 24, features Neil Shicoff as Don Jose and Ildebrando D'Arcangelo as Escamillo, the company announced Thursday. Music director Sir Andrew Davis conducts.

Karita Mattila sings the title role in "Manon Lescaut," with Vladimir Galouzine as Des Grieux. Artistic director emeritus Bruno Bartoletti conducts in the Olivier Tambosi production, which opens Oct. 31.

"The Midsummer Marriage," with a production by Sir Peter Hall conducted by Davis, opens Nov. 19 with a cast that includes Janice Watson as Jenifer and Hugh Smith as Mark.

"Rigoletto" bows Jan. 21, 2006, with Carlos Alvarez in the title role, Dina Kuznetsova as Gilda and Frank Lopardo as the Duke of Mantua. Jesus Lopez Cobos conducts in a Stefano Vizioli production.

Countertenor David Daniels and soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian headline "Orefo ed Euridice," which will be conducted by Harry Bicket. The Robert Carsen production opens Feb. 25, 2006.



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