

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

12 15 23 32 37
Meganumber: 18
Jackpot: \$81 Million

FANTASY 5

8 10 18 31 37

DAILY 3

Daytime: 4 3 5
Evening: 3 8 6

DAILY DERBY

1st: 04 Big Ben
2nd: 12 Lucky Charms
3rd: 07 Eureka

RACE TIME: 1.41.07

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPARD

In Ruthin, Wales, the owners of the bull Picston Shottle said in November that they believe that piped-in Mozart music helped develop his amazing productivity as a stud; his semen is sold out until April, with enough output to create about 500 "doses" a day (at a price of about US\$65 a dose). And sheep farmer Barry Walker touted his flock's production of superfine Australian merino wool at his operation in New South Wales, helped along, he said, by a secret diet of grains and the piped-in music of Italian singer Andrea Bocelli.

TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1913, the first sedan-type automobile, a Hudson, went on display at the 13th Automobile Show in New York.

In 1935, aviator Amelia Earhart began a trip from Honolulu to Oakland, Calif., that made her the first woman to fly solo across the Pacific Ocean.

In 1942, Japan declared war against the Netherlands, the same day that Japanese forces invaded the Dutch East Indies.

In 1943, the United States and Britain signed treaties relinquishing extraterritorial rights in China.

In 1964, U.S. Surgeon General Luther Terry issued the first government report saying smoking may be hazardous to one's health.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We are always getting ready to live but never living."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON
AMERICAN ESSAYIST, POET AND PHILOSOPHER

INDEX

Horoscopes

Detach Gemini 2

Surf Report

Water Temperature: 59° 3

Opinion

Car dealer and city conflict? 4

Mommy Page

Rain, rain go away 6

Comics

Laugh it up 8

Classifieds

Ad space odyssey 9

People in the News

Duff breaks out the dough 16

Santa Monica weathers out the storm

Road closures, threat of mudslides slows traffic

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

PCH — The threat of mudslides and flooding in Santa Monica on Monday forced the closure of the California Incline and the on-ramp to Pacific Coast Highway from Ocean Avenue.

"This is just an incredible amount of rainfall," said Craig Perkins, director of the city's environmental and public works department. "The problem with the bluffs is that they're totally saturated at this point. Any rainfall that occurs now is flowing over the surface and carrying little clumps of mud down onto the incline and onto PCH ... There's

not much we can do until it stops raining."

A major bluff collapse could happen at any time, Perkins said.

"It's impossible to predict when that may occur," he added, saying major slides historically have occurred after wet weather and earthquakes. "All we can do is hope."

In addition to closing the California Incline, which leads from the top of the bluffs down to PCH, as well as the closing of the on-ramp to PCH from Ocean Avenue, the McClure Tunnel at the juncture of Interstate 10 and PCH was closed briefly at times through Monday due to flooding, officials said. At other times, it was reduced to one lane. On Sunday, Moomat Ahiko Way, the off-ramp from PCH to Ocean

See STORMS, page 5



Nicky Five Aces/Five Aces Photo

Workers break down the big top tent near the Santa Monica Pier on Monday in the rain. The big top since November has served as the mainstage for Cavalia. The traveling show is moving on to Phoenix.

SMC ready to let other players on its home turf

By Daily Press staff

SMC — Coveted by parents and cherished by their children, the inventory of athletic fields in Santa Monica has just risen.

In an effort to open up Corsair Field for greater community use — particularly youth and adult soccer leagues — the Santa Monica College Board of Trustees approved on Monday to allow Corsair Field to be turned into an all-weather artificial turf.

The board approved a \$35,000 contract with Caldwell Architects to design and plan an upgrade of Corsair Field to an all-weather artificial turf surface — a project estimated to cost \$1 million. The new turf also will reconfigure the

field slightly so that it can be used not only for football but also community soccer teams, which would be a first. Funding for the project will come from Measure S, the bond approved by Santa Monica and Malibu voters this past November.

"Santa Monica College is demonstrating its commitment, as stated in Measure S, to providing the community with playing fields, which are in such short supply," said SMC Athletic Director Rhonda Hyatt. "At the same time, our football and women's soccer teams will have upgraded facilities, and the college will no longer have to constantly repair damage to the grass surface."

See NEW TURF, page 5



Photo courtesy of Santa Monica College

Corsair Field at Santa Monica College won't be just for football anymore. College officials approved a \$1 million renovation to lay down artificial turf.

\$2 million to be spent tonight under 'consent'

BY KIM CALVERT

Special to the Daily Press

COUNCIL CHAMBERS — Elected officials here are expected to spend tonight more than \$2 million on a new parking garage,

improvements to the Civic Auditorium, neighborhood street upgrades and a spring festival.

The City Council is poised to spend more than \$1.1 million for improvements to the Civic Auditorium, which is an historic landmark and used for a host of community events.

About \$958,000 will be spent to replace what city staff say is a severely damaged air conditioning system. An additional \$199,100

will be used to renovate the ceiling and lighting in the auditorium's east wing. HEC Construction, Inc., which has completed similar projects for the Los Angeles Unified School District, submitted the winning bid for the project.

The lighting and ceiling renovation will allow City Hall to better market the auditorium and will

meet the future expansion of the facility, city staff said.

Improvements to the cooling system, which is more than 50 years old, is expected to result in long-term savings for City Hall, city staff said. The auditorium, which used to host the Academy Awards, is located next to the

See CONSENT, page 5

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LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ The day starts with a bang. You're on the phone, running errands and moving around. Certainly you'll get a lot done, but don't count on being able to concentrate. Everyone seems to be knocking on your door. Tonight: You are irrepressible.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ Carefully consider an investment for your home or one involving property. You easily might go overboard spending. Don't spend your funds before they come in. Use caution and play it conservatively. No risks, please! Tonight: Quiet at home.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Your energy soars. A problem might occur if you don't have the right outlet. You might irritate someone, as you have so much vavoom. Calm down and listen more. Your intuitive sense kicks in. Tonight: Catch up on calls and news.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ You might be angry, which will impact your finances. Use care with money decisions; otherwise, you might be waving goodbye to your checking-account balance. Money easily slips through your hands. Tonight: Use your judgment.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You hit your high cycle. Be aware of pushing someone too hard. Don't assume that he or she has your energy or drive. If you get flak, know when to apologize. Your efforts toward others really count. Share your ideas. Tonight: Whatever makes you happy.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ When others push, you might instinctively react. A problem that ensues might not be worth it in the long run. Control your temper. Ultimately, you will be a lot happier. Music and time alone help soothe your nerves. Tonight: Vanish and be mysterious.



ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ You are determined to communicate your vision. You will do whatever you need to do to get your point across. Recognize that some of your concepts might be too highbrow for quite a few associates. Relate the basics. Tonight: Hook up with your friends.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ You might be shouldering more responsibility than you want. Understand that sometimes you will need to delegate or say "no." A partner could be irritated that you aren't spending more time with him or her. Listen and be aware of your priorities. Tonight: Count on being in demand.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ You are challenged by others' attitudes. As a result, you stretch and understand other points of view. Your understanding and ability to detach could change a hassle or a disagreement into an enlightening and closer bond. Tonight: Feed your mind.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ You naturally plunge into whatever you do. As a result, you achieve a lot more than you'd anticipated. Relate to others individually, not in groups. Your intensity helps others feel cared about. Tonight: Wave goodbye to moodiness.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ You might be quite happy to let others take charge. Meanwhile, you might squeeze in a long lunch or a chat with a friend. A romance could become volatile. A child also might create his or her share of uproar. Tonight: Go along with another's ideas.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ Read Cancer for a sense of direction. Better yet, find a hardworking Moon Child to team up with, making your middle names "accomplishment." You have a sense of duty. Make your office homier, or perhaps consider a home office. Tonight: Busy, busy and busier.



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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Dance series poster needs a new look

By Daily Press staff

Staff at the pier are calling all designers to be part of promoting the annual summer concert series.

The Santa Monica Pier Restoration Corp. once again invites talented student, amateur and professional designers to submit their vision for the 21st Annual Twilight Dance Series in the third annual poster contest. The winning design becomes the primary communications piece for the 10-week concert series, used in display advertising, posters, flyers, banners and more.

The prize for this year's winning design has been increased to \$750 — up from \$250 in past years. In addition, the winner will receive a VIP package for the summer, including a backstage pass to the concerts.

All entries are due on April 1. This year's winner will be chosen via a secure Internet poll on www.santamonicapier.org. Visitors to the site will only be able to vote one time, for one poster. Voting will take place throughout April and the winner will be announced at the Santa Monica Festival, scheduled for May 7 in Clover Park.

Past winners include Stephanie Donon with her work, "Dancers;" and Carrie Carmody with "Hitchcock."

Contest rules, design specifications and entry forms are available at www.santamonicapier.org under "What's Happening." Entries are due at the pier's offices by April 1. More information is available by calling (310) 458-8901.

Baking for relief

By Daily Press staff

A tsunami relief fund bake sale and motorcycle/car wash with musical guests is planned for Jan. 16 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Velocity Cafe, 2127 Lincoln Blvd. Proceeds go to Oxfam. For more information, call (310) 314-3368.



Joe Weichman is this week's mystery photo winner. Weichman accurately described that this photo was taken at the Archstone Apartments at Broadway and Fourth Street. Weichman has won a gift certificate to Izzy's Deli on Wilshire Boulevard. Check out Monday's edition for the next mystery photo.

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SURF REPORT

Look for small-scale surf early Tuesday morning off a mixture of WSW wind swell and minor SSW Southern Hemi swell. Most breaks are below waist high, while top combo breaks in the South Bay are a bit better. New NW wind swell fills in through the day to help boost the surf. The NW'er looks best by Wednesday morning when many breaks see knee-waist high waves and top South Bay breaks see some shoulder high sets. SW winds from 10-20 knots prevail Tuesday morning, shifting to the WNW by the afternoon. Major high tide of 7.1 feet at 9 a.m., with a -1.8 low around 4:30 p.m.

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

Today the water is:

59°

	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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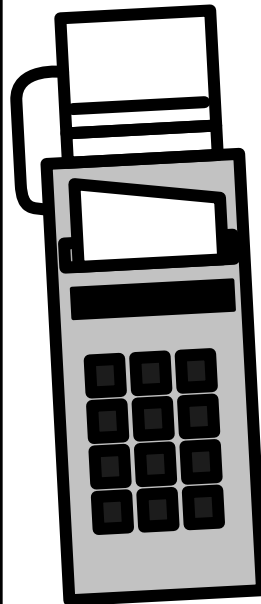
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The Q Line

It's the beginning of the new year, and with it comes a whole new set of issues.

This week, the SMDP would like to give residents an opportunity to sound off. So this week, Q-Line asks, "What's on your mind in this city by the sea?"

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



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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Choir sings justification

Editor:

Between the article written with the author’s own twist on the topic and the follow up editorials, we feel compelled to let the public know the real facts regarding SAMOHI’s Choral Tour (SMDP, Jan. 4, page 1).

One hundred fifty-seven students are going on this trip, over 40 requested financial assistance. As stated at the City Council meeting, any trip involving airfare for our number of students even to San Francisco, would mean that almost a third would require financial assistance. We are careful in choosing the venues that our students tour. Educational value and musical expectations of the invitations we receive are always our top priorities in choosing a location. Reviewing our choices, including international options, this festival was the one that best met our high standards. Our choirs, which require no prior training to join, embrace all who choose to participate. This results in a very diverse group of students. This diversity is the reality of Santa Monica’s economic composition.

The grant awarded by the City Council is a “matching” grant. The matching funds are coming from our own fundraising events including every student participating in gift wrapping for donations over the holidays, an upcoming car wash and garage sale, three concerts and two cabaret nights, a silent auction, direct donations, choir merchandise sales, CD sales from our concerts, and performances on the Promenade and Montana Avenue.

In the past, the City Council has given similar matching grants to other musical groups for touring. This is the first time the choir has requested money. City funds were not requested for previous trips to New York and Boston. Those included a smaller number of students and our fundraising efforts alone were able to cover the costs. That is not true for this tour.

For many of our students, this will be the first time they are on a plane. For others it will be the first time they are away from home. And for all, it will be an opportunity to meet with choirs from across the country, experience a different culture, to view Pearl Harbor and to learn about the history of Hawaii and our participation in its development.

In direct response to Don Krok’s letter (SMDP, Jan. 7, page 4) asking why the choirs are not going to a local event, they are. Our students have been invited to and will be participating at the American Choir Director’s Association (ACDA) conference. However, they can only accommodate one small choir of 25 singers.

How unfortunate that the SMDP article did not take this opportunity to applaud our City Council in giving recognition to our extremely talented students through financial support of what will surely be an experience of a lifetime for many. For anyone that may still question this decision, please join us on April 29 at our Masterworks performance in Barnum Hall. We guarantee to knock your socks off.

Lisa Kannof, Choral Parents Association Steering Committee
Santa Monica

Conflict interest on tonight’s agenda

Editor:

If any resident doubts the corruption of “our” Santa Monica City Council, they need only take a glance at the agenda for the council meeting of Jan. 11. On that agenda, Mayor Pro Tem Herb Katz asks his colleagues to quickly adopt new laws for the benefit of the automobile dealers of Santa Monica.

It is well known that Katz’s wife is the general manager of one of the largest dealerships in Santa Monica, and that company owns at least one other dealership in town. It is also well known that Katz is the architect for most of the automobile dealerships in Santa Monica. In case it’s not clear, Katz is asking for laws to make it easier for his architectural clients and the company his wife manages to redevelop their properties.

Why aren’t the mayor and the other city councilmen speaking out on this obvious conflict of interest? Or, will they get something out of it, too?

Maxine Pratt Sandusky
Santa Monica

Service station should service community

Editor:

The controversy regarding the Canyon Service Station has been framed in such a way as to all but obliterate its true cause. Rather than seeing this as a dispute between a well-deserving family and historical preservationists, the cause should be laid at the door of those well-heeled homeowners who brought pressure to bear such that the service station was unable to function as a service station. It is these homeowners, Chris Hoffman and Ted Stolman, to name two, in their insistence on living in some sterile simulacrum of the real world, who have deprived working people of their livelihood and the community of a treasured resource.

The solution to the problem isn’t to cart off a viable business to a museum, it’s to permit it to function the way it has for generations. As for the seemingly aggrieved adjacent homeowners, here’s a thought: If living in close proximity to a service station is all that onerous, next time don’t buy property next door to one. Go instead to a gated community without gas stations or stores or cars parked on the street and leave Santa Monica Canyon to the rest of us.

William Finkelstein
Los Angeles

Rain, rain go away and come back next year



**ANY DAY
IN LA**

BY HEIDI MANTEUFFEL

Nearly everyone I’ve encountered this week has the same topic on his or her mind — the weather. It’s normal to discuss the weather but when did it get promoted from conversation filler to topic of the hour? When it rained 13 days in the past two weeks. This slew of bad weather has been recorded as the highest amount of consecutive precipitation LA has experienced in several years. It’s also the most I’ve heard about it, too.

I’m convinced since many of us live for sunny pristine weather, this slew of anarchy cloud patterns doesn’t quite live up to par. I can see it now: Faces become downtrodden, hair turns from cute and feathered to frightening. In fact, the whole scenario could be the opening to a “horror” after school special called “The Rain.”

CLOSE UP: Clouds — cloudy, eerie and foreboding. Music matches green unsettling feeling reflected in the skies, and rises in volume as we see a spawn droplet forming. The droplet grows, swelling in degree until it plummets with a vengeance. The speed increases to a frenetic pace, falling mercilessly until it ravages the flesh of its next victim.

Mr. Jones’ suede hat died that day, sparing the life of his loving owner’s hair follicle. The drop cursed as his plans had been foiled. He would find a time to strike again, once the water cycle presented him with the opportunity.

FADE TO WHITE: OK, OK, perhaps it’s not as melodramatic as that, but tell me if you’ve heard any of the following at least five times each: “Be careful driving in this weather!” “Can you believe it’s raining again?” “I can’t go out in this

weather.” “We shouldn’t have to work in this weather.” Well, maybe the last one was just at my office.

Grant it, large boulders lay strewn alongside PCH, and canyon roads such as Kanan are becoming completely unmaneuverable. So maybe there is a little something to talk about.

But still — it’s just rain. When did we get so affected by hydrogen and oxygen bonding? Everyone needs a bit of love and yet I can’t seem to handle it when these molecules post a “Do Not Disturb” sign. That’s not fair. If you ask me, the world needs a little more tender care.

Yes of course, tsunamis and monsoons are certainly too much water, but is that what we’re facing here in LA? No. We’re incurring the same weather the rest of the country experiences on a more regular basis. Unfortunately, our eroding cliffs can’t really handle the pentathlon of downpour. And we who live in LA pay more for the sun, and will start a petition to elect a governor that can better handle the situation.

Yes, I too came out here for the sun. But the constant dripping from my apartment’s roof reminds me of something: Why pay for something you can’t control? More importantly, why get upset when it rains?

I can’t stop it from raining, clogging the canyons and PCH, but I can stop it from pouring all over my thoughts. A little water never hurt anyone, especially if it helps our wildfire season be that much less drastic, which I’m hoping is the payoff.

Of course, watch my nonchalant attitude get washed away alongside my car with 27 more days of this downpour. But as long as this 40-day and night deal is a thing of a past, I’m content to get out my galoshes and frequent Panera’s soups and bread bowls just a few days longer.

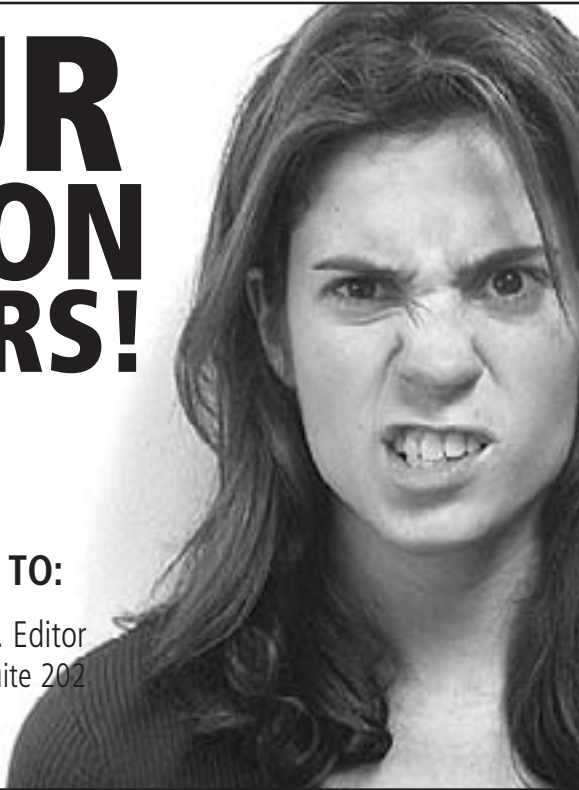
(Heidi can be reached at anydayin-la@gmail.com).

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PLEASE SEND LETTERS TO:

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LOCAL



Heavy rains cause power outages, school closures

STORMS, from page 1

Avenue, was closed for several hours after a tree fell onto the roadway, Perkins said.

Seasonal rainfall in Los Angeles had already exceeded 22 inches Monday, more than seven inches over the average of 15 inches, with another six months remaining in the rain season, according to Perkins. Heavy showers were expected to continue through Monday night and Tuesday morning.

The storms had claimed at least 10 lives in Southern California as of Monday evening. An additional six to 12 people reportedly were missing after a major mudslide in La Conchita, a sleepy beach-front community between Santa Barbara and Ventura. At least one person died in the slide, which injured 15 people.

Despite cautionary road closures and areas of minor flooding, officials said Santa

Monica was faring well through the heavy storms. They credited an advanced drainage system and the natural topography of the city, which slopes from the northeast corner down to the southwest corner.

"Everything drains off pretty good now," said Santa Monica Fire Department Chief Jim Hone. "Things are going quite well. I hope they stay that way."

Neighboring communities apparently have had more difficulty with the storms. Low-lying Venice is susceptible to flooding, and slides have been triggered in the canyons and bluffs of Pacific Palisades and Malibu. At least one motorist was killed Sunday when he reportedly drove into a mud patch in Malibu and careened off of PCH into the ocean.

Ricardo Quintero, a public affairs officer for the California Highway Patrol, urged motorists to depart earlier, drive slower and leave extra space between

theirs and the car in front of them. He said cars can hydroplane at speeds of 45 to 50 miles per hour, in as little as half an inch of water, adding center lanes typically are safer because freeways are taller in the middle and puddling occurs on the outer lanes.

Additionally, Quintero pointed to a new 2005 law that requires motorists to use their headlights when continuously running their windshield wipers.

The message for heightened safety on the roadways apparently is being heard, according to Quintero, who said there were 169 reported car accidents in Los Angeles County early Monday morning, compared to more than 203 last Monday morning. Both mornings experienced heavy showers.

"I think a lot of people are starting to realize, 'Wait a minute, it is dangerous,'" Quintero said.

Locally, smaller effects of the storm were widely felt. Jose Barba of the Big Blue Bus said buses were delayed and in some instances rerouted. Mark Olson of Southern California Edison said there were local power outages within several of Santa Monica's 36 power grids. Jeanne Wells of the local school district announced early Monday all of Malibu's public schools would be closed.

To help residents deal with encroaching water, all four Santa Monica fire stations are providing sand bags, and free sand can be picked up at Memorial Park off of Olympic Boulevard.

"We've had sandbags available to residents and from everything we can tell they've been well used," said Judy Rambeau, a spokeswoman for City Hall. "Certainly, any sustained rainstorm like this we do watch the bluffs closely, and the storm drains, to make sure they don't back up."

New SMC field to be completed by the fall semester

NEW TURF, from page 1

When completed, the renovation project will open up Corsair Field to at least 30 hours a week of community use, primarily for soccer leagues. The field also will be able to accommodate postseason adult and youth soccer games during the

day or night. The field will be designed to meet NCAA standards for intercollegiate soccer play.

SMC plans to begin the renovation in May and be done in late August. During renovation, the track, which is open to students and the community, will continue to be open most of the time.

Corsair Field is currently used by both the college and the community for football. SMC, as well as Santa Monica High School and St. Monica's High School, play their home games at Corsair Field.

However, the field is currently not used to its full potential, particularly in the

spring, officials said. By renovating it and reconfiguring it for both sports, the field will get greater use in a community that faces an acute shortage of playing fields.

The artificial surface also would provide SMC with greater flexibility in course offerings and scheduling, as well as reduce "down time" for maintenance.

Santa Monica Festival to cost upwards of \$80,000 a year

CONSENT, from page 1

Santa Monica Courthouse on Main Street.

PAYING FOR PARKING

The City Council also is expected tonight to spend \$544,123 for the initial phase of a parking structure in the Civic Center. City staff said the structure is needed because of the increased demand for parking, as well as the ongoing retrofitting of downtown parking structures.

Of the amount allotted for the initial construction, \$223,258 will be paid to the Smith-Emery Co. to inspect and test materials. Nearly \$67,000 will be paid to D7 Consulting to perform waterproofing inspection, according to city staff. Another \$204,700 will be paid to Ninyo

and Moore to perform soils inspection and environmental oversight. An additional \$49,465 was planned for contingencies.

The structure will be constructed on city land bounded by Fourth Street, Civic Center Drive, Avenida Mazatlan and Olympic Drive.

LINING THE STREETS

Close to \$1.2 million is expected to be spent to improve a Mid-City neighborhood. About \$875,000 would come from property owners and City Hall would kick in \$320,000, the amount originally allotted for the project.

The City Council has scheduled a public meeting for Feb. 1 at 7 p.m. at the Ken Edwards Center to discuss the improvement plans that could result in property

owners paying as much as \$9,750 for a parcel with a frontage of 50 feet. Property owners will be given the opportunity to vote on whether or not they should be assessed for the cost of the improvements.

After objecting to City Hall's plans to remove existing trees to complete sidewalk and pavement repairs on Yale Street between Montana Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard, property owners will have an opportunity to select improvement alternatives that will preserve the street's tree canopy and widen parkways on either side of the street by four feet, according to city staff. The improvements would not result in the loss of travel or parking lanes, city staff said. Property owners of rent controlled units would not be able to pass on the cost of the assessment to renters.

INKING THE FESTIVAL DEAL

City staff has recommended that the council authorize the City Manager to negotiate a \$80,000 per year, three-year contract with the production company, Community Arts Resources (CARS), to produce the Santa Monica Festival. The annual event, held at Clover Park, celebrates the history of Santa Monica and includes music, dance, crafts from local artists and environmental workshops.

Funds for the 2005 festival come from City Hall's cultural affairs and environmental programs division. Additional non-city funding comes from private non-profit foundations and corporate sponsorships.

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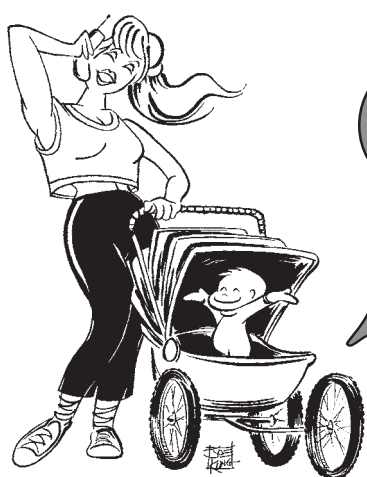
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DEAR DORIE

What to do with rainy days

Dear Dorie,

I am a stay-at-home mom with a baby and a preschooler. On those cold, wet days when the park is off limits, what should I do with my children? I've tried staying at home and I go berserk by 4 p.m. Help!

— Cold and Cranky with the Kids

Dear Cold,

Southern California's good weather spoils us most of the year. We're accustomed to lots of park time, back yard time and beach activities. We should all take a lesson from the Midwest and get creative in our indoor activity. As I'm a native Southern California mom, my ideas may be limited but I hope they help.

■ **Bright Child:** Indoor playground on Fourth Street in Santa Monica, about \$10 each for you and your toddler. Your baby should be free. Good for two hours of heavy activity.

■ **Santa Monica Public Libraries:** The main branch is still under construction but the Fairview, Ocean Park and Montana branches are open and kid-friendly. They have youth computers with educational software, and plenty of books and magazines to read together.

■ **Movies:** Loewe's Cinema usually offers a "Mom's Movie" during the day, with reduced volume and brighter lighting to accommodate mothers with infants. Check your local Loewe's for listings.

■ **Playdates:** Another person's house for a few hours can break up the monotony — and the mess — of a full day at home with two kids.

(Dorie Meek is director of the Infant & Family Support Program, provided by Saint John's Health Center in partnership with the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. Meek answers questions concerning children ages birth to 5 years old. Submit your questions to "Dear Dorie" at meek@smmusd.org, or call (310) 452-6132; fax (310) 452-6392).

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GUEST COMMENTARY BY JEAN ILLSLEY CLARKE PH.D.

'Little mama' didn't buy into overindulgence

Parents run their families. Mostly. Well, at least parents make their families function. At the very least, some parents do the best they can and avoid conflict and uproar. They make smooths.

Look at Lucy. Lucy likes smooth. She was shopping at a post-holiday sale when 5-year-old Mitch grabbed a toy off the shelf and announced, "I want this." Mom said, "no," and Mitch's demands got louder. Mom said, "be nice," several times and then, in exasperation and a voice that could be heard in the next aisle, she threatened, "I'm going home and take away all the toys you got for Christmas unless you put that thing down! Now will you put it down?" Mitch's "No! I won't!" carried six aisles away. Mom turned and walked away, making smooths. Mitch followed her to the checkout counter, added the toy to her purchases, and Lucy paid for it. Mom got smooths and Mitch got the toy. Do you think he got to keep his Christmas toys too?

Poor Mitch. He is learning to get what he wants by bullying. Poor Lucy. She just wanted smooths. Don't we all? Who wants to subject other shoppers to a tantrum? Sometimes it's hard to be the parent and run the family. Sometimes it's hard to face down a demanding kid when you are alone.

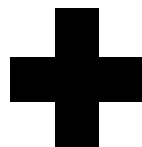
Julie also likes smooths but she was lucky. She and her sister Georgette were choosing a gift for a mutual friend. Four-year-old Katlin spotted a pink car — just right for her new doll. She held the car up to her mom, but mom was talking with Georgette. A store employee chatted with Katlin, "You really want that car? Little mama buy it for you?" As they approached the checkout counter, Katlin handed the car to her mother who put it in the shopping basket. Georgette was surprised. "You said just before we left that you had cleaned Katlin's room this morning and she has way too much stuff. Why buy more?"

Julie paused, "Because she wants it?"

See OVERINDULGENCE, page 7

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RAINY DAY FUN! A listing of places to play on these rainy days....

BRIGHT CHILD – 1415 4th St., 393-4844, open daily 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., ages 10 and under. Admission is \$9.75 per child for two hours (each paid child includes one free adult). Facilities are bright and colorful with a large play area slides, tunnels and a special toddler area. No shoes, socks required.

CHILD'S PLAY – 2299 Westwood Blvd., LA, 470-4997, ages 9 months to 12 years. Open MWF - 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., TH - 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Admission is \$8 per child per day, adults free. This colorful play space has a moon bounce, crawling apparatus with slides and balls, cars to ride in, trains and track, dress-up clothes, separate eating area. No shoes, socks required.

ZIMMER CHILDREN'S MUSEUM – 6505 Wilshire Blvd., LA, 323-761-8989, www.zimmermuseum.org. Open Tues. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Wed., Thurs. & Sun. 12:30 – 5 p.m. Adults \$5.00, ages 3 –12 \$3.00, ages 2 and under are FREE! Grandparents are free with a child. This super fun place features a water table, real airplane, dress-up clothes and theatre, and the Museum Main Street complete with restaurant, grocery store, house and temple. There's also a toddler tumbling room filled with mats and a library with books and puppets. Free parking in the visitor's lot just west of the building.

BOONE CHILDREN'S GALLERY at LACMA WEST – corner of Wilshire and Fairfax, LA, 323-857-6000, www.lacma.org. Open M-F noon – 3 p.m., Sat. & Sun. 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Admission is free. Paint, draw and build in this newly remodeled art-making space for artists of all ages! Family Sundays feature special artist-led, hands-on workshops.SPECIAL EVENTS

TUESDAY

Movies for Moms! Jan. 11 - "William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice" starring Al Pacino, Jeremy Irons and Joseph Fiennes. Drama; Rated "PG-13." 11:00 a.m., Loews Broadway, 1441 3rd St. Promenade – for Moms and babies newborn – 1 year old. Doors open early for socializing and getting comfortable. Visit www.enjoytheshow.com/reelmoms for details.

Storytelling

Main Library – held at Reed Park, corner of 7th and Wilshire.
Toddler Storytime; 10:00 a.m. For 2 year olds with adult.

Preschool Story Time; 10:30 a.m.; for ages 3-5.
Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.

Cuentos Para Pequenos – 10:00 a.m., six-week series in Spanish for 24 – 36 month olds with adult. Thru Feb.8.

Lap Time – 11:00 a.m, six-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the

OVERINDULGENCE, from page 6

Georgette grinned, “Not good enough.”

Julie’s expression was tentative. “Because I want to make her happy?”

“Will more stuff make her happy?” Georgette asked with a tilt of her head.

Julie’s expression shifted from consternation to recognition. “I suppose not. Julie wanted to make smooths.

“Because she’ll cry?”

Georgette grinned, “Knowing her, I’ll guarantee it!”

Julie handed the car to the clerk and said, “We’re not taking this.” Katlin let out a howl. The clerk who had been talking with Katlin gave her a resigned look and said, “Little mama didn’t buy.” Julie and Georgette burst into laughter. They ignored the girl’s cries and moved toward the car. Now when something comes up that either of them wants but won’t be getting, they giggle and say, “Little mama didn’t buy!”

Julie says that if you know it will be

SMMUSD Infant & Family Support Programs. Thru Feb.8.

Twilight Story Time -7pm – an ongoing program for 3-5 year olds.

Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.

Family Story Time – 7:00 p.m., all ages.

Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. – 310-392-3804.

Toddler Storytime, 10:00 and 10:30. Music, rhymes and stories for 24-36 month olds.

Tiny Tuesday Storytime at Storyopolis For ages infant to 3. 11:00 a.m. 116 North Robertson, Plaza A, LA. 310-358-2500, www.storyopolis.com

Barnes and Noble at the Grove

Storytime for ages 2 – 6. 10:00 a.m. 189 Grove Drive, LA, 323-525-0270

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents – Toddler & Me (1-3 years) – 9:15 – 10:15 a.m.; Infant & Me, Transitional Group (7 – 14 mos.) – 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.; Infant & Me (0-12 mos.) – 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.; classes in partnership with the Infant and Family Support Program. 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA

10:00 – 11:00 a.m and 7:30 – 8:30 p.m; Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Thursday nights 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721. ext. 117 for more info.

Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:40 p.m., \$15. Mommy and Me – 1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Mommy Care – at the Dance Factory, 11606 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood, 310-394-6711. Combined Pregnancy/Recovery Exercise Group – 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)

Itsy Bitsy Yoga – Tots (crawling to 24 months) – 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. (Register now for new session beginning Jan. 4.) Baby (6 weeks to pre-crawling) – 11:30 – 12:30 a.m.

With Khefri Riley at Ocean Oasis, 1333 Ocean Ave. Register at www.khefri.net or call 323-549-5383.

Stroller Strides – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 866-FIT-4MOM or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774 - no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Storytelling

The Talking Stick Coffee Lounge – 1630 Ocean Park Blvd., 450-6052

10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4 at this neighborhood coffee shop.

Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.

Preschool Story Time – 10:30 a.m.; six-week series for 3-5 year olds with adult.

Thru Feb. 9.

Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.

****New Time - Lap Time** - 10:15 & 11:15 a.m., ages 0-2. Thru Feb. 9.

Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. –392-3804.

Preschool Twilight Story Time – 7:00 – 7:30 p.m. Parents/children ages 3-5.

Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion – 2 pm – ages 2-5 – 310-475-4144

Border's, Westwood – 11am – 310-475-3444.

Classes

Rhythm Child Parent & Me Rhythms, Santa Monica Studios, 3025 Olympic Blvd., 9:30 – 10:15 a.m. Next session is Jan. 19 – March 5. Children explore rhythms through drum play. Ages 6 mos. – 3.5 years; \$100 for 8 weeks. Call 204-5466 or visit www.rhythmchild.net for more info.

YWCA – A Place for Parents – Parent Support (3 – 5 years) – 9:15 – 10:15 a.m.; Infant Plus (0-12 mos.) – 10:30 a.m. – noon; Parents of Adolescents Support Group – 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45pm, \$15

Fitness for Moms – Babies Welcome! Step Aerobics, 10:30 a.m. at the YMCA, 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info. Free for members, non-members pay \$90 for 10 classes.

Stroller Strides – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 866-FIT-4MOM or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774, no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Other

Puppetolio – 1:00 p.m., 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested

THURSDAY

Babystyle, 1324 Montana Avenue, 434-9590 10:30 a.m. Free story time for moms and kids ages 0-4.

Main Library – held at Reed Park, corner of 7th and Wilshire.

Toddler Storytime; 10:00 a.m.; for 2 year olds with adult.

Preschool Story Time; 10:30 a.m.; for ages 3-5.

Fairview Branch Library – 2101 Ocean Park Blvd – 310-450-0443.

Toddler Story Time – 10:30 a.m; for ages 2 –3.

La Hora Del Cuento – 7:00 p.m. Spanish stories, songs and rhymes for all ages.

Montana Avenue Branch Library – 1704 Montana Ave – 310-829-7081.

Toddler Story Time – 10:15 a.m., for 2 year olds.

Preschool Story Time – 11:15 a.m.; for 3-5 year olds.

Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main St. – 310-392-3804.

Lap Time – 9:20 & 10:20 a.m., 6-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by SMMUSD Infant & Family Support Program.

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents – Toddler & Me (1-3 years) – 9:15 – 10:15 a.m. and 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.; classes in partnership with the Infant and Family Support Program.

Parent Support (3 – 5 years) – 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA

7:30 – 8:30 p.m; Free for members, non-members \$90 for 10 classes. (also Tuesdays at 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 – 8:30 p.m.) 393-2721. ext. 117 for more info.

Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:40 p.m., \$15. Mommy and Me – 1:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Stroller Strides – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 866-FIT-4MOM or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774 - no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 4-8 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

FRIDAY

La Leche League of LA/Mar Vista – meets the 2nd Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Call 310-390-2529 for info.

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents – Toddler & Me (1-3 years) – 9:20 – 10:20 a.m.; Parent Support (1-3 years) – 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Mommy and Me Dance– celebrate the wonderful world of imagination Fridays at the Electric Lodge. 9:45 – 10:45 a.m. ages 14 - 24 months; 10:45 – 11:45 a.m. ages 2 – 4.

6 classes for \$75 or \$14 per class. First class free! 1416 Electric Ave, Venice, 306-1854.

Yoga & Exercise

Fitness for Moms – Babies Welcome! Indoor Cycling, 10:30 a.m. at the YMCA, 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info. Free for members, non-

members pay \$90 for 10 classes.

Yoga Works – 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150; Pre/postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45 p.m., \$15.

Stroller Strides – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 866-FIT-4MOM or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Other

Baby Attuned - Fridays, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., A new program promoting sensitive parenting and developmental awareness Parent-completed developmental screening, with review and feedback from a licensed clinical developmental psychologist and experienced pediatric nurse practitioner, Eileen Escarce, PhD, MSN. (PSY 18819). Introductory fee: \$15 per screening with feedback. 1137 2nd Ave, Suite 213. By appointment only 310-367-1155.

SATURDAY

Storytelling

Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Promenade – Kid's Story Time – 10am – 310-260-9110

Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion – 10:30am – ages 2-5 – 310-475-4144.

Children's Book World – 10580 1/2 Pico Blvd, LA - 10:30 a.m., 310-559-800K.

Village Books, 1049 SwarthmoreAve, Pacific Palisades – 10:30 a.m. – 454-4063.

Yoga & Exercise

Santa Monica Yoga – Pre- & Post-Natal Yoga, Saturdays – 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

1640 Ocean Park Blvd, 396-4040, www.santamonica-yoga.com

Mommy Care – at the Dance Factory, 11606 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood, 310-394-6711. Combined Pregnancy/Recovery Exercise Group – 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.(babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)

Stroller Strides – 9:00 a.m., Palisades Park, call 866-FIT-4MOM or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Other

Cinderella at the Santa Monica Playhouse Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m.; Jan. 8, 9, 15 and 16. \$12 adults, \$10 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 2 for reservations, www.santamonicaplayhouse.com

Puppetolio – 1:00 and 3:00pm, 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested

Magicopolis – 2 and 8 p.m., 1418 4th St., Admission is \$20 for evening, \$15 for matinee. Call 310-451-2241 for info.

Precious Prints – Ceramic Heirlooms for a Lifetime

Second Saturday every month at The Pump Station, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Contact Kristan Ritchie at 310-802-8013 or visit www.preciousprintsstudios.com for more info.

Breastfeeding

Working Mother's Support Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd. -

10:00 – 11:30 a.m., \$12 fee, led by Ilka Sternberger, certified lactation educator. Call 826-5774 for more info.

SUNDAY

Main Street Farmer's Market – 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., corner of Main St. and Ocean Park Blvd. Pony rides, live music, lots of vendors and great family socializing.

Puppetolio – 1:00 and 3:00pm, 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested

Magicopolis – 2 p.m., 1418 4th St., Admission is \$15. Call 310-451-2241 for info.

Cinderella at the Santa Monica Playhouse

Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m.; Jan. 8, 9, 15 and 16. \$12 adults, \$10 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 2 for reservations, www.santamonicaplayhouse.com

MONDAY

Storytelling

Main Library – Lap Time at Joslyn Park, Craft Room, 9:30 a.m. A series for babies up to two years old. (No lap time Jan. 17 & Feb. 21)

“Family Connections” – 10:00 a.m., immediately following Lap Time - a series of discussions related to early childhood development and growth. Children welcome, free.

Ocean Park Branch Library – 2601 Main Street, 310-392-3804.

“Spanish for Little Ones”, 11:15 a.m. Next session begins Jan. 24.

Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Promenade – Toddler Story Time – 10am – 310-260-9110

MOMS Club of Santa Monica – New Mother Group – for new moms with babies ages 0-6 months. Meet for conversation, support and playtime. All new Moms welcome! Call Clare at 395-7422 for time, location and more info.

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents – Toddler & Me (1-3 years) – 9:20 – 10:20 a.m.; Parent Support (1-3 years) – 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd., 310-826-5774 - no pre-reg required, first class free, \$10 fee thereafter. Moms/babies 0-4 months, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45pm, \$15

Yoga Garden, - Restorative yoga for pre/postnatal – 6:30 p.m., 310-450-0133. www.yogagardenstudios.com

Stroller Strides – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 866-FIT-4MOM or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

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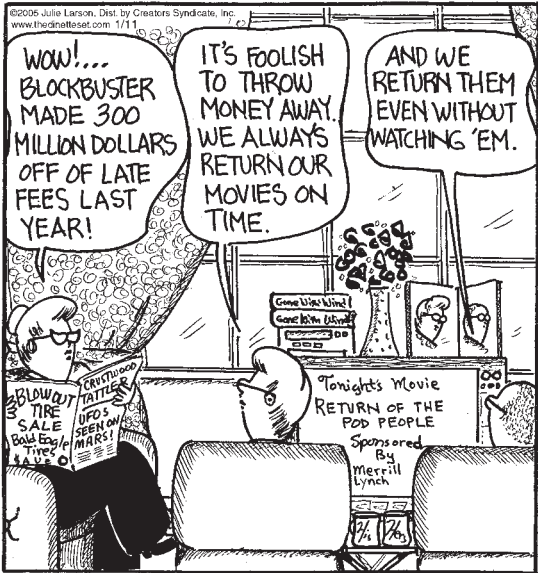


Santa Monica **UCLA** Medical Center



COMICS

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



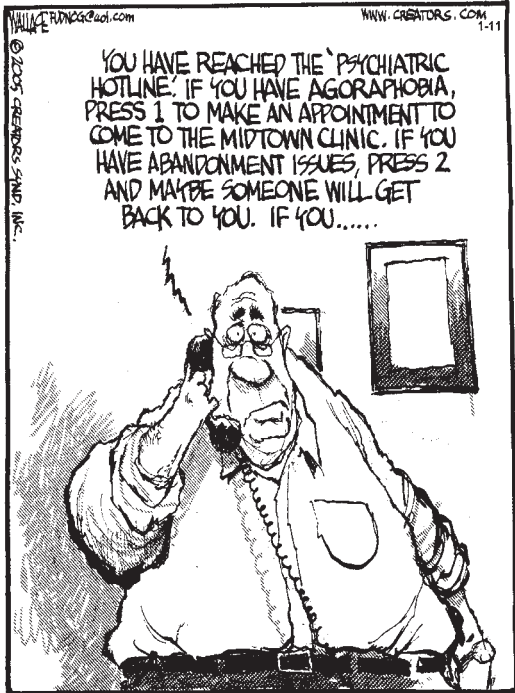
edge city by TERRY & PATTY LABAN



Reality Check® By Dave Whammond



Natural Selection® By Russ Wallace



Speed Bump® By Dave Coverly



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By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

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- 12 Visibly sad
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- 27 High point
- 28 Chain unit
- 29 Mideast nation
- 31 Annie's dog
- 32 Up to this point
- 34 Fitting
- 37 — de plume
- 38 Promis-sory note
- 41 "Star Wars" character
- 44 First-string players
- 45 Love to pieces
- 46 Limerick part
- 47 Sub sys-tem

DOWN

- 1 Cave sound
- 2 Sketch
- 3 "American Gigolo" star
- 4 Sum up
- 5 Kansas City team
- 6 Betting amounts
- 7 For each
- 8 Pearl Harbor setting
- 9 Mideast nation
- 10 Harp's kin
- 14 Color
- 18 Crates
- 19 Kind of bear
- 20 Put down

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Yesterday's answer

- 21 Copy
- 22 Sparkler
- 24 Jumble of noise
- 25 Further-more
- 26 Cloud setting
- 30 Generic dances
- 31 Brazilian gift-tag word
- 34 Not completely closed
- 35 Way
- 36 Low card
- 38 A party to
- 39 Gumbo vegetable
- 40 Manipulative one
- 42 Toast spread
- 43 Altar words

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1-11

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DBAS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAMES STATEMENT FILE NO. 05 0054962 FIRST FILING. The following person(s) is (are) doing business as Bette Stuy's Charity Account for Tsunami Relief, 2200 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90404. The full name of registrant(s) is/are : Sharon Meriel Smith, 2200 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90404 This Business is being conducted by, an individual. Signed: The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed on (Date)1/5/2005. /s/: Sharon Meriel Smith This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 1/5/2005. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 1/11/2005, 1/17/2005, 1/24/2005, 1/31/2005

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Duff's 'Most Wanted' provides some tsunami relief

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Teen actress-singer Hilary Duff is donating a portion of all ticket sales from her sold-out "Most Wanted" tour to aid tsunami relief efforts.

"I, just like everyone else, have watched this terrible tragedy and feel so sorry for the children and the families who have lost so much," Duff said in a statement Monday. "I want to do everything I can to help those that have survived."

Duff, 17, will give the money to Kids With a Cause, which helps children who suffer from poverty, hunger, sickness, lack of education, abandonment, neglect and abuse. The "So Yesterday" singer and "A Cinderella Story" star will present the check to officials at the United Nations in March.

Duff has 15 dates left on her "Most Wanted" tour.

BANGKOK, Thailand — Pop star Ricky Martin will visit tsunami-battered areas during a visit to Thailand this week.

Martin, chairman of the Ricky Martin Foundation, will focus on orphans and "families broken by the disaster," Foreign Ministry spokesman Sihasak Phuangketkeow said Monday.

The People for Children project, under the San Juan, Puerto Rico-based foundation, helps to monitor and combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

"Out of his personal concern, he's coming over to Thailand to mobilize international support," Sihasak said by phone.

Martin, 33, was scheduled to meet with Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai after he arrives Wednesday.

"I know he wants to see the devastation because he's concerned about orphans. I'm sure he will want to meet some of the orphans there in Phuket," Sihasak said. He

didn't know if Martin planned to perform during his four-day visit.

The tsunami has claimed nearly 5,300 lives in Thailand and another 3,716 people are missing.

In October, Martin appealed to governments at the United Nations in New York to declare war on tourists who sexually exploit children around the world.

The singer's hits include "She Bangs," "Shake Your Bon-Bon" and "Livin' La Vida Loca."

LAS VEGAS — Call her a real-life superhero.

Battling a painful injury that had sidelined her for over a week, Jennifer Garner helped electrify Las Vegas Saturday at the world premiere of her new action movie, "Elektra."

Walking the red carpet at The Palms Hotel and Casino, Garner told reporters: "I wasn't feeling well over Christmas. I didn't know why. I thought I had some kind of infection. It turned out that I had messed up my back a little bit."

The 32-year-old actress, dressed in a sleek, sleeveless black gown, added: "I did get a couple of extra days off on my Christmas break out of the bargain so it has all turned out OK and I'm fit as a fiddle and ready to get back on the horse."

Garner first brought the comic-book character Elektra to the big screen in 2003's "Daredevil," which also starred Ben Affleck.

Affleck, who has been dating Garner, wasn't spotted on the red carpet.

Where was he?

The actress smiled and replied, "I don't know. That's a good question."

Although Garner had a stunt double, she performed most of her own stunts in the film. The actress said she was physically prepared because of her demanding role on ABC's "Alias."

While the night belonged to Garner, the red carpet was abuzz with talk of Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston's separation.

"I can't speculate on what's happening with them," Garner said. "I think it's awful that people would be talking about their relationship at all."

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — Nicole Kidman walked a soggy red carpet for the gala awards presentation at the 16th annual Palm Springs International Film Festival.

Kidman attended Saturday's event with her father, Anthony Kidman, who flew in from Australia. Kidman, who is nominated for a Golden Globe for her performance in "Birth," received the festival's Chairman's Award after sitting through a montage of video highlights from her movies.

"I usually never look back at any of my work," Kidman told AP Television News on the arrivals line. "I have a lot of trouble looking at the stuff I do at the moment. But it is wonderful to have reached a stage in life where people think what I've done has some sort of artistic merit."

Kidman, 37, won a best-actress Oscar in 2003 for her role in "The Hours." Her screen credits also include "Cold Mountain," "Moulin Rouge!" and "Eyes Wide Shut."

Other contenders for the Golden Globes who braved a rainy weekend included "Kinsey" co-stars Liam Neeson and Laura Linney, who received the festival's Desert Palm acting honors.

"A film awards show is the last place I ever dreamed of ending up," said Linney, a stage veteran. "I've always been somewhat camera-shy. Only now, it seems, am I finally starting to get over it."

Longtime Palm Springs resident Kirk Douglas was present to receive the festival's Lifetime Achievement Award, and Samuel L. Jackson accepted the Career Achievement Award.

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