

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

00000

FANTASY 5

33, 29, 35, 4, 18

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 4, 5, 2

Evening picks: 5, 3, 5

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 7, Eureka

2nd Place: 5, California Classic

3rd Place: 1, Gold Rush

Race Time: 1:43.96



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

News of the Weird reported in 2001 that Dr. Stuart Meloy had inadvertently discovered a side effect of an electrical implant whose purpose is to block spinal pain: It taps into the nerve that produces orgasms in women. By November 2003, Meloy had Food and Drug Administration approval for clinical tests of this "side effect," but said, surprisingly, he was having trouble attracting volunteers at his clinic in Winston-Salem, N.C. He said the only volunteer to that point had had a terrific experience, but that at least eight more women were needed.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Blessed are the young, for they shall inherit the national debt."

— Herbert Hoover



INDEX



Horoscopes

Wrong side of the bed, Gemini? . . . 2



Local

Mystery photo winner ID'd 3



Opinion

What's right with City Hall 6



Mommy Page

How to pick your hospital 8



State

College costs go through roof . . . 10



People

Killer Cunnanan hits center stage . 16

City Hall targeted in new living wage

Government workers are just the beginning in new minimum wage movement

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — Workers here will earn at least \$11.51 an hour and have better health benefits if local officials approve a new minimum wage expected to be presented later this month.

The plan, which is scheduled for discussion before the City Council on Jan. 27, also calls for companies with government contracts to pay the higher wage. The proposal was drafted by activists from the non-profit group, Santa Monica's Allied for Responsible Tourism.

For nearly five years, SMART has pushed for a "living wage" — most recently \$12.25 an hour without benefits — targeted largely toward workers in the tourism industry. The current effort doesn't address that goal, but SMART spokesman Danny Feingold said activists haven't given up.

"Clearly, there's a need to

"Santa Monica is behind the curve on the issue of the living wage."

— **DANNY FEINGOLD**
Spokesman, SMART

address poverty in the tourism industry in Santa Monica," he said, adding there is currently no living wage proposal that extends to private business. "This is where we're at right now. We feel that it's important that the city passes this and then we'll continue the discussion."

Council members are expected to decide whether City Hall staffers should explore the financial implications of the minimum wage — which would apply to City Hall workers, as well as contractors and subcontractors who have \$25,000 or more in govern-

See LIVING WAGE, page 4

Bayside the latest victim in Farmers' Market saga

Nonprofit could be sued for allegedly failing to protect shoppers

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN — Lawyers from a top law firm announced Monday they might sue the non-profit organization that runs downtown in an attempt to recover damages caused in the July 16 Farmers' Market crash.

Bayside District Corp. will be named along with City Hall in nine claims for damages expected to be filed at City Hall on Wednesday, lawyers said. By law, a claim against a government entity must be made within six months of any alleged wrongdoing. That

means victims have until Friday, Jan. 16 to file.

Though Bayside's \$1 million annual budget is largely fueled by City Hall, local attorney Geoff Wells said it was important to pursue both Bayside and City Hall because they have separate insurance policies.

"Our investigation has found out that (Bayside) had a services agreement with the city of Santa Monica that may have involved safety and security issues for the Farmers' Market. And if that's true, they may be on the hook for not taking the proper safety measures — in addition to the city," said Wells, who works at Greene, Broillet, Panish & Wheeler, LLP, a law firm located at Ocean Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard.

Kathleen Rawson, executive

See CIVIL SUITS, page 5



Del Pastrana/Daily Press

A couple watches the sunset on Monday at the stairway located below Montana and Ocean avenues in Palisades Park. The stairway is one of two that will be repaired — a \$430,000 project.

From brighter smiles to a hydrogen SUV, City Hall to spend \$1.5M tonight

(Editor's note: This is part of an ongoing series that tracks the city's expenditures which appear on the upcoming Santa Monica City Council consent agenda. Consent agenda items are routinely passed by the city council with little or no discussion from elected officials or the public. However, many of the items have been part of public discussion in the past).

By Daily Press staff

COUNCIL CHAMBERS — More than \$1.5 million could be spent tonight by the Santa Monica City Council on everything from improved pedestrian pathways to fluoridated water and a \$200,000 hydrogen-powered sports-utility vehicle.

Replacing the battered paths leading to the beach from Palisades Park will cost City Hall about \$430,000. Stairway repairs at Broadway and Montana Avenue would include improved lighting, erosion control, landscaping and maintenance for two years. Even though the city owns the stairways and paths, the state government has agreed to chip in some money for the project.

See CONSENT, page 5

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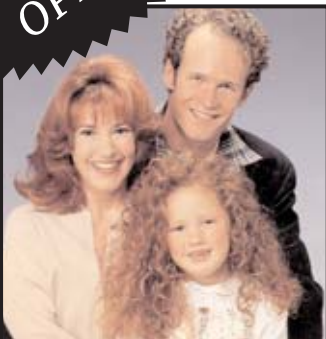
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JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

★★★★-Dynamic ★★★★★-Positive ★★★-Average
★★-So-so ★-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★ Others appear to have pushed way too hard. Misunderstandings seem to be the natural trend. Let others sort through and figure out what has really happened here. Take a strong stance with a parent or boss who might be overly demanding. Tonight: Don't buck the trend.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★ You might be amazed by how someone handles him- or herself right now. You might opt to stand back some and not get into the thick of things. Focus on your work. Screen calls if at all possible. You might be overwhelmed. Tonight: Release stress in a healthy way.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★ You could wake up on the wrong side of the bed. Re-establishing what you need and want could take some time. First, you need to clear the cobwebs from your brain. Financial restraints could hold you back with a loved one. Tonight: Play away.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★ A stern approach could leave you out in the cold if you're not careful. Be indulgent and at least hold back your opinions for now. You might not understand all the different options and ideas around you just yet. Tonight: Head home, where you can relax.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ You might not think what you say is inflammatory, but someone else could read more into your words than you intend. You need to be careful not to do the same, either. Be open to talking and questioning. Return messages. Tonight: Visit with a friend on the phone.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Expenses easily go overboard, and you might need to say "no" to someone or to an expenditure. Listen to others carefully, even if their words are a bit harsh. Right now, the going could be rough, but know that this too will pass. Tonight: Do something just for you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ You might be in the pink of things, but you will find that others are very testy. In fact, you might want to steer clear of both family and work-related people. Your Libran charm might not even work at the moment! Tonight: Be spontaneous.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★ If you can avoid getting up, you might want to. Others might be very difficult and testy. Getting information from a key person could be like pulling teeth. Shut your door and do what you do well, leaving the world to its frenzy. Tonight: Cocoon.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Right now, it is instrumental to keep your eye on the big picture. You might want to carefully think through a decision that involves mixing your funds with someone else's. You might not like the end results if it's done today. Tonight: Where your friends are.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ Avoid questioning someone who is in charge, because that can only take you down a difficult path. Relax, despite the tension. People are going through their own problems. Try not to add to what is happening, if possible. Tonight: Work late if you want to.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ Reach out for those at a distance who might hold the answers you are seeking. You might not like what you hear, but you can integrate the information well. If you think someone said something that isn't nice, don't hold on to it. Tonight: Relax to music.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ How you deal with others right now could make a difference in how you feel about yourself. Your creativity could be stumped, but in a discussion with a trusted associate or friend, doors will open up. Brainstorm away. Tonight: Be nice to that special person in your life.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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LOCAL

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Health clinic chips in for child care

By Daily Press staff

In response to many families losing jobs and health insurance, the Venice Family Clinic has announced it will chip in for children's health care.

"So many of my patients have been telling me that job loss is increasing and with it access to health care is lost," said Dr. Susan Fleischman, the Venice Family Clinic medical director. "The clinic's response is to extend its pediatric services to families of children on the westside who are living below poverty — \$18,396 for a family of four — even if the children have public health insurance like Medical, Healthy Families, Healthy Kids or California Kids."

The Venice Family Clinic currently provides 5,510 children with medical, mental health, developmental and family support services. Well-child care offers immunizations, preventative care, lead screenings and developmental assessments. Children with chronic conditions such as asthma also are treated, and kids receive dental screenings and dental care referrals by the clinic. The clinic also enrolls children in public health insurance programs.

To make an appointment, call (310) 392-8636.

Samohi salutes winter, big-band style

By Daily Press staff

After months of practicing, the local high school's bands are ready to perform at their best.

The Samohi Concert Bands Winter Concert will be held Thursday, Jan. 15, at 7 p.m. at 601 Pico Blvd. in Barnum Hall on the Santa Monica High School campus.

Performances will include "Into the Raging River" by Steven Reineke, "Hands Up!" by Andrew Boysen, Jr., the "Overture to Candide" by Leonard Bernstein, and the final performance of the marching band's competition show, "Pirates." The public is invited to listen to the 250 students in the five Samohi bands.

Tickets are \$7 at the door or \$3 for students.

Waste not, want not: Local businesses compete

By Daily Press staff

Athletes have the Olympics, actors have the Oscars, and local businesses have the Sustainable Quality Awards. Nominations are now open until Feb. 9, and awards businesses for making Santa Monica a clean and livable city.

The SQA program honors organizations that make an "extraordinary" contribution to their community. This year marks the 10th anniversary of Santa Monica's Sustainable City Plan and presents an opportunity to highlight the sustainable achievements of local businesses.

Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center, a top winner of the 2003 awards, started a program that resulted in a 45 percent reduction in medical waste during a two-year period. Other winners last year included the Library Alehouse, ZJ Boarding House and The Real Earth Environmental Co.

"Many businesses in Santa Monica contribute to their local community and help protect the environment by their own choice," said Jean McNeil-Wyner of the Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center. "The SQA recognizes these voluntary efforts and

See BRIEFS, page 4

Mystery photo winner

Last Saturday's mystery photo was identified by Shane Peters, a native of Santa Monica. While many respondents guessed that the owl sits atop a building at the Santa Monica Pier, Peters was correct in identifying it as a landmark atop the Village Car Wash on Main Street and Ocean Park Boulevard. Look for a new mystery photo in this Saturday's paper. The first person to identify the location of the photo will win a prize.



surf report

The W swell peaked overnight and will gradually fade through today. In the morning many spots see chest-high waves, but look for the surf to be smaller through the afternoon.

OUTLOOK: The surf will fade further on Wednesday. New W swell builds by Thursday afternoon.

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

Today the water is:

58°

	LOW TIDES		HIGH TIDES	
	LOW ONE	LOW TWO	HIGH ONE	HIGH TWO
SATURDAY	3:49 AM	5:14 PM	9:58 AM	N/A
SUNDAY	4:32 AM	5:48 PM	12:04 AM	10:35 AM
MONDAY	5:32 AM	6:23 PM	12:43 AM	11:21 AM
TUESDAY	6:49 AM	7:06 PM	1:24 AM	12:15 PM
WEDNESDAY	8:31 AM	7:48 PM	2:07 AM	1:41 PM
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The Q Line

Last week, a very well organized group of school supporters filed an amendment to the city charter that would mandate City Hall fork over a minimum of \$6 million annually to the local school district, which faces severe budget cuts from the federal and state governments.

School supporters have continuously thanked the City Council for financially helping the district out in past years, but they want to ensure they get more money to keep local schools top-notch. Voters most likely will be asked in November if taxpayer money should be dedicated to

the schools. City officials, however, aren't too keen on the idea of not having control over the cash.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know, "Should the schools have a set amount of money put aside every year or should the discretion be left up to the City Council?"

Call (310) 285-8106 with your response before Thursday at 5 p.m. We'll print them in Friday's paper. Please limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.

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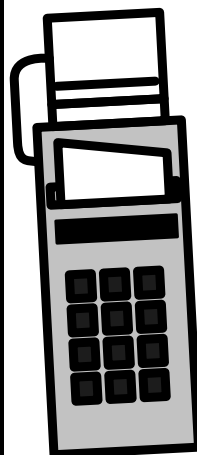
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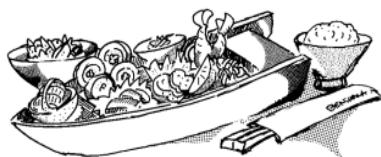
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LOCAL

Living wage battle looming

LIVING WAGE, from page 1

ment work.

How many workers in City Hall and contract employees the plan would affect is unclear.

"There's really no way to tell for sure," City Manager Susan McCarthy said. "We made some estimates a long, long time ago on the original SMART proposal ... but there's no perfect way to crystal ball it."

McCarthy said in 2000 — when the proposed minimum wage was \$10.69 an hour, which would have applied to businesses with 50-plus workers — the costs to City Hall ranged from several hundred thousands of dollars to millions each year. With the current proposal, the bulk of the expense will likely come from contractors, as most City Hall staffers already make the higher wage, except possibly some entry-level workers like interns and police cadets, McCarthy added.

Councilman Herb Katz, who has taken a stand against previous wage increases, said he plans to support the analysis of the proposal. But Katz stopped short of saying he would back the \$11.51 mandate.

"I want to think about it for awhile," he said. "I haven't made up my mind why we're doing this ... We are in a heck of a budget crunch and what is this going to do to our government, to our finances? Why is it that we pay more money to everybody when we're doing government work than we do in private enterprise? It's something that you say, 'Wait a minute, shouldn't a living wage be a living wage across the board — period?' It's either a living wage or it isn't, and why isn't it for everybody?"

"It's a burden to the public," Katz added. "Who in heaven's name is paying these bills?"

The battle over the living wage began in 1999, when SMART first recommended to the City Council that tourism workers be paid a higher wage. Hoping to find a different solution, hotel and tourism groups in 2000 put Proposition KK on the ballot. But that measure did too little to promote wages and more to protect busi-

nesses against future wage increases, many people argued. It was overwhelmingly defeated at the polls — 79 percent to 21 percent.

Half a year later, the City Council approved SMART's living wage, but the issue was forced onto the ballot by opponents, who gathered thousands of signatures against it. In November of 2002, Proposition JJ failed at the polls by a mere 1.7 percent. It would have guaranteed workers in businesses near the beach that gross more than \$5 million a year a wage of \$12.25 an hour without health benefits or \$10.50 with benefits. The law didn't apply to unionized businesses, giving the large companies an incentive to organize their labor.

Though it's substantially weaker than past proposals, the current minimum wage promoted by SMART is likely to result in a divided community.

Local attorney Tom Larmore, who actively campaigned against Proposition JJ, said he's willing to examine the proposal but added it may cause too severe a strain on City Hall's budget and should be viewed in context, especially with local schools suffering severe financial problems. He called upon the City Council to form an ad hoc committee comprised of people on all sides of the issue to work towards a mutually agreeable solution.

Larmore said the current proposal could be a political move, adding that relatively few City Hall workers or contractors are likely to benefit under it.

"I don't know how they're thinking, strategically," he said. "I'm quite sure this isn't the only thing they want to accomplish and they may view this as a stepping stone to something else."

But SMART officials said the current proposal was long overdue.

"Santa Monica is behind the curve on the issue of the living wage," Feingold said. "Over 100 cities have passed a living wage law similar to what we're proposing and it's simply time that Santa Monica join with the mainstream of American cities and pass a living wage law."

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

inspires businesses to do even more."

In order to be eligible for the award, a company must demonstrate commitment to their community in one or more categories, including economic development, stewardship of the natural environment or social responsibility. A grand prize is given to companies that excel in all three categories.

The award program recognizes companies that voluntarily contribute to cleaner air and water, less waste and pollution, conservation of energy and natural resources, job creation, improved wages and benefits, improved quality of life for residents and workers, and a strong, viable local economy.

Any business in Santa Monica or member of the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce may apply, and self-nominations are encouraged.

Nomination forms are available on www.smsqa.com.

Local Elks shoot hoops for scholarships

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica Elks recently held its annual "Hoop Shoot" contest, consisting of 25 shots from the free throw line and more than 300 girls and 1,600 boys took part.

Chairman Grady Sain said more than 30 Elks and 100 others spent nearly 900 hours hosting the contests. Aniese Palmore and Isaac Shanley won the 8- and 9-year-old category, both with scores of 15. In the 10- and 11-year-old category, Crystal Bautista won with a score of 10, and Zachary McMillan won with a score of 16. Jennie Harding and Ben Lushing won in the 12- and 13-year-old category, both with scores of 22.

The shooters will compete at the district level, which will include competitors from Culver City, Gardena, Redondo Beach, Torrance and Westchester. The contest will be held Jan. 24 at the Santa Monica Boys and Girls Club.

The levels of competition are local, district, state, regional and national. At each level, scholarship money and trophies are awarded. The national winner receives a \$60,000 scholarship.

LOCAL



City Hall to get involved in arts complex funding

CONSENT, from page 1

The council might approve more than \$340,000 in environmental services at the Big Blue Bus and the City Yard facilities. As part of its ongoing operations, the city undertakes environmental assessments, investigation and monitoring which requires highly specialized and technical services, city staff said.

The council also is expected to spend \$300,000 to fluoridate the city's water, which will be fully treated by 2006. Santa Monica's water already contains a natural fluoride level of about 0.3 parts per mil-

lion. But to achieve dental benefits, fluoride levels must be about three times the natural level. To reach that goal, the money will be used to fund a new water pump station that will transfer the water from one reservoir to another.

The City Council will likely lease for 30 months a new hydrogen-powered vehicle — the Toyota Highlander SUV — for City Hall use. While Toyota and others have agreed to split the bill, it will still cost City Hall \$200,000.

Santa Monica will retire a 10-year-old sewer jetter used to remove tree roots and clean sewers. A replacement machine will

likely cost the city \$176,000.

City Hall is expected to invest more than \$50,000 for those who want to build green. The City Council will partner with Santa Monica's non-profit Global Green USA to establish the "Green Building Resource Center" for one year to allow designers, builders and other Santa Monicans to research environmentally friendly building methods. After a year, the City Council has the option to extend the project for up to five years for an additional \$39,000.

While 18th Street Arts Center already has secured \$20,000 from private sources, City Hall would match those funds to study how the arts complex can correct the shortage of affordable, cultural facility space in Santa Monica, and meet the needs of the city's arts agencies and artists.

The study will examine the cost of building and operating affordable artist live-work housing by upgrading studio, gallery, theater, dance and office facilities, and developing on-site parking to generate revenue.

The arts center will provide opportunities for public input, and 18th Street hopes city agencies — including the Santa Monica Arts Commission and the Environmental Task Force — will weigh in.

Thirty percent of non-profit arts agencies in Santa Monica call 18th Street home, and another 20 percent are on the waiting list for office space. The only nine non-profit live-work studios for artists in Santa Monica reside in the complex.

The City Council also will likely approve \$6,000 to improve Big Blue Bus' maintenance training and programs.

The Big Blue Bus will participate in developing more efficient transit maintenance training, coordinate training materials and programs, share information within Southern California to improve existing transit maintenance practices and to keep pace with technology changes in the industry.

The United States lacks standardized procedures for transit maintenance, and the Big Blue Bus could become a model for regional coordination among transit agencies.

Nine new claims to be filed against City Hall

CIVIL SUITS, from page 1

director at Bayside, said she hadn't been contacted regarding the pending lawsuits, but said Bayside doesn't provide security for the twice-weekly market.

"We've never been in this situation. It was just such a horrible, horrible tragedy and, unfortunately, this is one of the things that happens as a result. The agony just continues for everyone," Rawson said.

Civil litigators maintain that the city should have foreseen the potential dangers of the crash, which left 10 dead and 63 injured after Russell Weller, 87, of Santa Monica, sped through the market in his 1992 Buick LeSabre. They suggested a barrier should have been erected that would have protected shoppers at the market from motorists.

To date, City Hall has received 37 claims related to the crash, said Deputy City Attorney Jeanette Schachtner, who is handling the claims related to the crash. Wednesday's new filings will bring that total to 46, however no formal lawsuits have been served. City Hall officials maintain that they couldn't have foreseen the potential dangers of the Farmers' Market environment.

The criminal case against Weller also has moved forward. Weller pleaded not guilty last week to 10 counts of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence, a felony. If convicted, he faces a sentence ranging from probation to 18 years behind bars.

Michael Piuze, another well-known civil litigator planning to pursue City Hall for damages, has said the decision by the Los Angeles

District Attorney's Office to press charges may have been designed to protect the city of Santa Monica. If Weller is found grossly negligent in criminal court, that finding could be used to protect the assets of City Hall in civil court.

Wells and lawyer Brian Panish plan to hold a press conference in front of City Hall at 10 a.m. Wednesday. Speaking at the conference will be the two attorneys, an injured victim of the crash and family members of several of the deceased, according to a prepared statement.

In the meantime, local residents and officials are waiting to see how the tragedy will play itself out in court. City Councilman Herb Katz said he was disappointed with the civil claims.

"It's a deep pocket run," he said. "It has nothing to do with justice. It has to do with, 'Gee golly, we got a deep pocket' — that's why they're going after the city."

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OPINION

Martha Stewart suffering from 'Tall Poppy Syndrome'

As the Martha Stewart case finally goes to trial, it is clear that Ms. Stewart has already been convicted in the court of public opinion.

Observe the undisguised delight with which reporters and pundits describe the prospect of seeing Stewart hauled up before the courts.

Listen to the constant stream of jokes about jail cells with matching curtains — the malicious glee of news anchors and commentators contemplating the idea of Martha Stewart behind bars, before any of the evidence against her has been formally presented.

Then ask yourself: Why do so many people have a reflexive hatred of Martha Stewart? How has a home-decorating expert with a wholesome public persona come to be regarded as a major cultural villain?

The answer: Martha is hated because she's a tall poppy.

There is a notorious saying in Australia: "You have to cut down the tall poppies." In other words, anyone who dares to poke his head above the crowd must be attacked, denigrated, and brought down to the common level. I don't know whether this "Tall Poppy Syndrome," as it is called, is really typical of Australian culture, but it is a widespread trend in American culture — and Martha Stewart has long been one of its

favorite targets.

Long before she was accused of insider trading, Martha-hatred was already an established industry peddled in dozens of books and television profiles purporting to reveal Stewart as a shrewish employer, a neglectful mother, a cold wife, an ungrateful daughter, and everything else you could dream up. One charge keeps recurring as the central thread — and real motive — of all these claims: Martha is too perfect. The problem with Martha

Stewart, we are told, is that the lifestyle she promotes in her books, magazines, and television shows projects an "unattainable" perfection. Her kitchen is too clean, her house is too beautiful, her parties are too elegant. She gets too much done in a day. Such perfection, the charge goes, merely makes everyone else feel inadequate because they can't measure up.

This attitude is not shared by Martha's many fans (and customers), even those whose housekeeping is not as lavish as hers. Most people are able to appreciate the accomplishments of others, even if they cannot match them. But for those who suffer from "Tall Poppy Syndrome," other people's achievements are an affront, an intolerable reminder of their

own shortcomings. These are the people who desperately search for dirt to sling at celebrities, to show that they aren't so good after all — and who rush to join any witch hunt.

The Martha Stewart prosecution is a case study in the "Tall Poppy Syndrome."

Consider the arbitrary nature of the charges against Stewart, which include the non-crime of "insider trading." The initial accusation against Stewart was that she was tipped by her broker that ImClone executives were selling the company's stock. This "inside information" supposedly gave Stewart an "unfair"

advantage. In a "fair" world, apparently, investors are forced to hold on to their stock even when they know it's going to crash. Martha's alleged "crime" is not wanting to lose money.

But even the evidence for this pseudo-crime is thin, which is why federal prosecutors did not actually indict Stewart on criminal insider-trading charges. Instead, she is on trial for lying to prosecutors (about a crime they can't prove she committed). More ominously, she is on trial for the mere act of publicly proclaiming her innocence — a declaration protected

by the Fifth Amendment, but described by prosecutors as a "fraud" against her shareholders.

Stewart's lawyers suggest she is being targeted because she is a successful woman in a "man's world." But ask Bill Gates what kind of welcome a successful man can expect today. In fact, both are the target of a deeper hatred.

The basis for this hatred is not mere envy, but a moral code that makes that ugly emotion seem legitimate: The morality of altruism. We have been told for centuries that the weak, the incompetent, the most down-and-out bums on the street are the most worthy objects of our moral concern while the highest achievers are at best the bum's servants, at worst his exploiters. The result is an upside-down morality, a code in which the better you are, the worse you are. The more you achieve, the more you are hated.

This hatred of the good is not merely ugly, it is destructive. A culture that attacks its highest achievers will mow down its tall poppies — and end up with nothing but weeds.

(Robert W. Tracinski is a senior writer for the Ayn Rand Institute (www.aynrand.org) in Irvine, Calif. The Institute promotes the philosophy of Ayn Rand, author of "Atlas Shrugged" and "The Fountainhead").

Guest Commentary

By Robert W. Tracinski

A short list of all that's good in the city of Santa Monica



THE FLORA FILES

By Todd Flora

(Editor's note: This is the first installment of an ongoing series that looks at what's right in our city).

As my regular readers know, I love this city. And after getting to know a few of our elected officials, former elected officials, and other community leaders through my own civic involvement in recent years, I have also come to appreciate all they have done to make Santa Monica a better place. At times I become perplexed by much of the negativity towards them personally, and about the wave of bitter discontent illustrated by letters to the editor in this newspaper.

Make no mistake. Even as someone experienced in politics and public affairs, I — like anyone — dislike government that

lacks responsiveness, wisdom, and even an occasional knack for popular will. But government can be messy. The Santa Monica City Council and its City Hall staff are not perfect. News flash: Neither is any other city. Even in small cities, we don't all get what we want, and pluralism is king. That is especially true in a city like Santa Monica, so full of diversity — of age, ethnicity, economic status, and opinion — that we're bound to have some policy debates that evoke a reaction.

But as I wrote last week, I hope 2004 can become more of a celebration of Santa Monica. To that end, I have begun to compile a varied list of things that I think work in Santa Monica, and at City Hall.

■ **Rent Control and the Rent Control Board:** Few cities have been so shaped by strong rent control protection. Few cities have fought for the degree of access to affordable housing and rents that Santa Monica has for middle and working class people. While the "Costa-Hawkins" legislation made "vacancy decontrol" a reality for individual units beginning in 1999, the Rent Control Board still has a tremendous role in this city. I for one am grate-

ful that we have elected a strong list of community leaders to the Rent Control Board who largely look out for the interests of those of us who rent in order to live here.

■ **Santa Monicans for Renters Rights (SMRR):** The one body that really gives Santa Monica a "community competitive advantage." What other renters' city has the grassroots organization and support network to organize tenants and inform them of their rights and resources? Further, I compliment the City Council for passing tough new provisions in the last year that extend anti-tenant harassment laws to protect roommates of departed tenants, grandchildren and those with pets.

■ **The fight against MtBE:** After years of battling 18 major oil companies for their complicity in allowing MtBE to seep into Santa Monica's precious water supply, the city won a \$313 million settlement. Included in the settlement is \$92 million in cash, plus a commitment to build the city a new water treatment facility.

■ **Renewable energy conversion:** The City Council voted to convert City Hall and other city facilities to 100 percent

renewable energy sources. Buying "green power" at lower cost than standard electricity was a fiscally responsible stroke of genius, and the right thing to do.

■ **The sustainable city plan:** Santa Monica has begun to implement a bold plan to bring the city's environment, social services, housing, and other programs into more harmonious balance with what is required of a modern city to thrive. It hasn't nearly received the attention it deserves from this or other newspapers.

That's just a short list of what's good in Santa Monica. If you have other ideas of what works in Santa Monica, please respond to the e-mail below and let me know. I will include them — anonymously if preferred — in the next few columns.

(Todd Flora is a government relations professional with a statewide children's network. A six-year resident of Santa Monica, Flora is active in Heal the Bay, the Democratic Party, and the living wage movement in Santa Monica. To respond or reach Todd, e-mail him at:

reformadvocate@yahoo.com

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OPINION

LETTERS

Affordable housing a burden?

Editor:

Columnist Bill Bauer, (SMDP, Jan. 8, page 4) pointed out the particularly disturbing facts of our City Council's continuing obsession with affordable housing. In case you don't realize, affordable housing is not creating houses that are affordable in Santa Monica, which many people think. Affordable housing as used by the City Council is deed-restricted apartments with minimal zoning requirements (in order to build more units) that feature lower-than-market rates for those low-income people who qualify. Sounds acceptable except because other government matching funds are involved, these apartments are available to non-residents of Santa Monica. That means for all those two- and three-bedroom apartments being built in that massive project at Pacific and Main streets, new families with children are moving into our city. These children will not be going to private school, but to our public schools. These are the same schools that the City Council is having such a problem supporting.

Note to those on the City Council: If you don't want to be a rich uncle to the schools, stop building these dense affordable housing projects which can only further burden us.

It's time we let our leaders know that this type of housing development is not a priority any more. Our schools are.

Larry Mollin
Santa Monica

Walking across street a deadly prospect

Editor:

I am writing this letter in concern for the safety of myself, as well as other pedestrians. There is a pedestrian crosswalk on Pico Boulevard and Third Street, the crossing between the bowling alley and the Civic Center parking lot, and between Fourth and Main streets.

I cross that street on average of four times a day, which I am always taking a chance of getting hit by one of the rude drivers who have no regard for pedestrians. You see many of them on those cell phones and not paying attention. There's a flashing signal stripe in the road, which I imagine are hard to see during the daytime, but



I am a big man and you can't help but to see me when I am crossing.

I have on numerous occasions informed the Santa Monica Police traffic department of many incidents with this crosswalk and drivers not yielding to the pedestrians. I have been told they will step up the patrol. I have yet to see the patrol step up in any way. I have even suggested a stop signal be put there. That crossing is truly dangerous.

Michael E. Daniels
Santa Monica

Immigration proposal: Solution in search of a problem

LEGAL
VIEWS AND
NEWS

By David Pissarra

President Bush has announced an immigration reform proposal that would allow those undocumented aliens who currently reside in the United States and those in foreign countries seeking employment to apply for, and receive, a temporary worker permit. I have taken the official press release "fact sheet" from the White House Web site and in an effort to explore precisely what the president proposes, I will review several of the key elements.

The question to begin with though, is do we have a need for such a program? Currently those jobs that are attractive to illegal aliens are the types of job that most Americans are not interested in performing. They are hard labor, don't pay well, often times grueling, and for someone who is desperate for a better life. The primary workers this program will be dealing with are the seasonal field workers, the day maids and the guys on the corner of Home Depot looking for construction jobs.

From the White House press release:

■ The program would be open to new foreign workers, and to the undocumented men and women currently employed in the U.S. This new program would allow workers who currently hold jobs to come out of hiding and participate legally in

America's economy while not encouraging further illegal behavior.

The two category of workers the program is focused on are people who are currently gainfully employed and those who are not here yet. The workers who are here have no reason to pay an application fee, get processed and suddenly become, "semi-legal." They have their jobs, their apartments and for the most part, are living a better life than they had in their home countries. And the risk of deportation is slight, and even if they are deported, they just come back across the border anyway. The workers who are in a foreign country — if they had the money to file an application fee — probably have a job there, and do not need to come illegally across the border.

■ President Bush also asked Congress to work with him to achieve significant immigration reform that protects the homeland by controlling the borders. It also would serve America's economy by matching a willing worker with a willing employer, promote compassion for unprotected workers, provide incentives for temporary workers to return to their home countries and families, and protect the rights of legal immigrants while not unfairly rewarding those who came here unlawfully or hope to do so.

This is a tall order at first blush, but what happens when you look behind the curtain to see what is really being sought? Homeland protection and border control. No illegal alien from Mexico is trying to blow us up, and our border is too large to be completely blocked. It is impractical to expect that we will be able to close our

borders completely, and anyone that wants to blow us up is not all that concerned with observing our laws in the first place. We are a capitalist society and that seems to be working quite well right now with no great need for employees going unmet. The fields are picked, the stores are full of our products and the employees keep coming from south of the border to fill whatever positions need to be filled. The compassion argument from this president is just a smokescreen. He has no compassion for his own citizens so why would he care about the "furners," as he pronounces them.

As for "incentives for them to return home," what the president does not realize is that many of the seasonal workers already go home, and then return the next season to make their living. Lastly, he wants to protect the rights of the legal workers, and not reward the illegals. That sounds to me like the documented field workers would be entitled to a minimum wage law, all employment laws and protections. This is ironic considering that the president is not willing to give American citizens the rights to which they are entitled as natural citizens, unless they own a major corporation. Of course, this would also increase the costs of goods and those would be passed on to us the consumers as a \$7 head of lettuce.

■ Illegal immigration, however, creates an underclass of workers, afraid and vulnerable to exploitation. Current immigration law can also hinder companies from finding willing workers. The visas now available do not allow employers to fill jobs in many key sectors of our economy.

Workers risk their lives in dangerous and illegal border crossings, and are consigned to live their lives in the shadows. Without harming the economic security of Americans, reform of our nation's immigration laws will create a system that is fairer, more consistent, and more compassionate.

The president's sudden compassion for the underclass is laudable, if only it weren't so laughable. This program does nothing to help people out of their environment. It offers no skills training or education, and provides no way for people to increase their value in the marketplace. In theory, it requires companies to seek to fill their needs with Americans first. In fact, the only people it will be helping are those hired by the government in what will be an increase in bureaucracy to administer this new program, thus adding to the federal budget deficit.

The proposal provides no real safeguards to the nation's safety and will only increase the number of immigrants because there will be a new class of workers — those few who have their temporary cards, and it will not eliminate the illegal immigrant class of people who will continue to be employed in our society as field workers, maids, day-workers in all of the places they work now. The fact is our society needs illegal immigrants who work for below minimum wage rates, and that is not going to go away.

(David Pissarra is a partner in the Santa Monica law firm of Pissarra & Grist, he welcomes questions, and can be reached at (310) 664-9969 or e-mailed at DPISARRA@PISARRA.COM).



Santa Monica

A weekly look at events and programs for Santa Monica

Gauging hospitals for your infant isn't about numbers

By Daily Press staff

Referring infants with very low birthweights to hospitals that treat a large number of similar cases is an unreliable way to direct patients to the highest quality medical providers, according to a new study headed by RAND Corp. researchers.

The findings challenge the widely followed practice of encouraging patients to seek out the most experienced hospitals for their medical care when no direct information is available about a hospital's track record in treating patients with a similar condition.

"Our study shows that direct quality indicators, such as patient death rates, are much better at predicting quality than indirect barometers such as volume of patients," said Jeanette Rogowski, lead author of the study and a senior economist at RAND, which is based in Santa Monica. "These findings have broad implications for the health system as we try to improve medical quality."

Studying patients treated at 332 hospitals nationwide over a five-year period, researchers found that hospitals that treated the largest number of very low birthweight infants were not always the hospitals that had the lowest rate of infant deaths.

"We found there is no factor better in predicting which hospitals would have low mortality rates for these small babies than their actual experience in the preceding years," Rogowski said. "The number of cases treated by an individual hospital was not a very good predictor of which hospitals would have the best results."

Infants who are under 3 pounds at birth — typically premature infants — require prolonged care in neonatal intensive care units that are found in many hospitals across the nation. Previous studies have shown that death rates differ significantly among the very low birthweight infants treated in the nation's neonatal intensive care units, even when researchers consider the severity of patients' medical problems.

Insurance companies and others have been interested in identifying quality indicators that can be used to direct patients with high-risk medical conditions to higher quality hospitals.

Some groups have begun to substitute measurements of hospitals' patient volume on certain illnesses or procedures as a proxy for outcome information, based on research that has linked higher patient volumes with better end results, such as fewer deaths and complications.

For example, the Leapfrog Group, a

business roundtable-sponsored collaborative of large employers and insurers, recently started an "evidence-based" referral standard for five surgical conditions and two neonatal conditions, including very low birthweight babies.

The group based its standards for very low birthweight infants on the number of patients treated, requiring that infants likely to be born with low birthweights be delivered at hospitals with a regional neonatal intensive care unit with an average patient load of 15 or more per day.

To test the strategy employed by the Leapfrog Group and other health payers, the RAND-led study examined the experiences at hospitals that were a part of the Vermont Oxford Network from 1995 to 2000. The cooperative group collects information from about 40 percent of the nation's neonatal intensive care units and accounts for about half of all very low birthweight infants.

Researchers analyzed information about the death rate among very low birthweight infants at the hospitals, including information about the severity of each child's condition.

Researchers found that patient volume was associated with better patient outcomes, with busier hospitals generally

having lower death rates. But researchers found that past experience was a far better predictor of which hospitals would have lower death rates in the future.

Hospitals that ranked in the lowest 20 percent for very low birthweight infant mortality between 1995 and 1998 also were found to have significantly lower-than-average mortality in 1999-2000. Meanwhile, hospitals in the highest 20 percent for mortality rates from 1995 to 1998 had significantly higher-than-average mortality rates in 1999 to 2000, according to researchers.

Viewed by another measure, the difference in mortality between the best and the worst hospitals was more than five times larger when hospitals were ranked on past mortality rates rather than on past volume. In addition, researchers reported that basing a patient referral system on historical mortality experience would save an estimated 115 lives annually in the Vermont Oxford Network, versus 11 saved lives for a system based upon historical volume standards, a 10-fold difference.

The findings are published in the Jan. 14 edition of the Journal of the American Medical Association. In addition to researchers from RAND Health, other authors of the report are from the University of Vermont College of Medicine, Dartmouth College, the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Vermont Oxford Network. Support for the study was provided by the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Other authors of the study are Jeffrey Horbar from the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Vermont College of Medicine and the Vermont Oxford Network; Douglas Staiger from Department of Economics at Dartmouth College and the National Bureau of Economic Research; Michael Kenny of the Biometry Division of the University of Vermont; Joseph Carpenter from the Vermont Oxford Network; and Jeffrey Geppert from the National Bureau of Economic Research.

RAND Health is the nation's largest independent health policy research organization, with a broad research portfolio that focuses on health care quality, costs and delivery, among other topics.

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CINDERELLA - January 10 - 25. The single most requested of all the Santa Monica Playhouse Family Theatre musicals returns. This delightfully romantic, original classic features the handsome prince, zany fairy godmother, silly stepsisters and a zealously well-meaning stepmother. Saturday & Sunday, January 10 - 25, 12:30 & 3:00 p.m., \$9 children, \$10 adults. Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 Fourth St., 394-9779, www.santamonicaplayhouse.com

DISNEY'S PRINCESS CLASSICS ON ICE - January 14 - 19. Featuring nimble skating, amazing costumes, creative choreography and a musical story with Cinderella, Jasmine, Ariel, Belle, Snow White and other Disney characters. January 14 - 19 at the Long Beach Arena. Visit www.disneyonice.disney.go.com for more info.

STORYTELLING TRIBUTE TO MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. - January 17. Featuring Jennifer and Jon, founding members of the interactive theatre company "Imagination Station." 10:30 a.m. ages 4 - 8, free. Children's Book World, 10580 Pico Blvd., LA, 310-559-B00K.

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION AT THE LOS ANGELES ZOO - January 17 & 18. See the lion dance, learn about how Lunar New Year is celebrated in Asia and make your own crafts to take home. \$4 children, \$9 adults; 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. LA Zoo, Griffith Park, 5333 Zoo Dr., 323-644-6400, www.lazoo.org

ANNIE JR. - January 18. An adapted 90-minute version of the popular classic musical based on the comic strip, Little Orphan Annie. \$8 adults; \$7 children. Robert Frost Auditorium, 4401 Elenda St., Culver City, 310-397-2283, www.dee-lightful.org

TUESDAY

Movies for Moms sponsored by:



"Elf" showing January 13th
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. Will Ferrell stars in this holiday comedy as a human being who mistakenly ends up in Santa Claus's gift bag as a baby and is raised as an elf. Years later, he returns to Earth to try and find his place in contemporary society. Needless to say, there's an adjustment period...as Buddy the Elf learns the intricacies of how to use the revolving door, light up the Christmas tree, throw snowballs and generally become accustomed to the finer points of modern life. Also starring Ed Asner and James Caan; directed by Jon Favreau. Rated PG - some mild rude humor and language.

Storytelling

Main Library - Toddler Storytime at Reed Park; 10:00 & 10:30 a.m. Stories for two year olds with adult.
Fairview Branch Library - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443.
Cuentos Para Pequeños - 10:00 a.m., Jan. 6 - Feb 10; six-week series in Spanish for 24 - 36 month olds with adult.
Lap Time - 11:00 a.m., Jan. 6 - Feb. 10; six-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the SMMUSD Infant and Family Support Program.
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. Terrific Tuesdays, Jan. 13 & 27, 3:30 p.m. Stories and crafts for K - 3rd graders.
Ocean Park Branch Library - 2601 Main St. - 310-392-3804.
Toddler Storytime - 10:00 & 10:30 a.m., Jan.

6 - Feb 10. Music, rhymes and stories for 24 - 36 month olds with adult. Registration is required.
Tiny Tuesday Storytime at Storyopolis
Themes change weekly; 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

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381 - Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) - 10 - 11 a.m.; Pre-natal yoga - 7- 8:15 p.m.
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 - 11870 Santa Monica Blvd, at the Dance Factory, West LA, 310-394-6711. Pregnancy Exercise - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m.; Post Partum Exercise - 10:15 - 11:15 a.m. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station - 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

Fairview Branch Library - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443.
Preschool Story Time - 10:30 a.m., Jan. 7 - Feb. 11; six-week series for 3-5 year olds with adult.
Montana Avenue Branch Library - 1704 Montana Ave - 310-829-7081.
Lap Time - 10:00 & 10:30 a.m., Jan. 7 - Feb. 11. Six-week series for children up to 24 months of age with adult.
Toddler Story Time - 11:15 a.m., Jan. 7 - Feb. 11. Six-week series for 2 year olds with adult.
Ocean Park Branch Library - 2601 Main St. - 310-392-3804.
Preschool Twilight Story Time - 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. An ongoing story time for parents and their children ages 3 - 5.
Barnes and Noble, Westside Pavilion - 2 pm - ages 2-5 - 310-475-4144
Border's, Westwood - 11am - 310-475-3444.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381 - Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) - 10 - 11 a.m.; (infants only) - 1 - 2 p.m. Pre-natal yoga - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/postnatal - 12:15 - 1:45pm, \$15

Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 5:30 - 6:45 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717

Breastfeeding Group

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

THURSDAY

Storytelling

Main Library - Toddler Storytime at Reed Park; 10:00 a.m. Stories for two year olds with adult.
Preschool Story Time at Reed Park; 10:30 a.m. Stories for 3-5 year olds with adult.
Fairview Branch Library - 2101 Ocean Park Blvd - 310-450-0443.
Toddler Story Time - 10:30 a.m., Jan. 8 - Feb. 12. No program Feb. 12; six-week series for 24-36 month olds with adult.
Montana Avenue Branch Library - 1704 Montana Ave - 310-829-7081.
Toddler Story Time - 10:15 a.m., Jan. 8 - Feb. 12. Six-week series for 2 year olds. Preschool Story Time - 11:15 a.m. Stories for 3-5 year olds with adult.
Ocean Park Branch Library - 2601 Main St. - 310-392-3804.
Lap Time - 9:20 & 10:20 a.m., Jan. 8 - Feb. 19, six-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the SMMUSD Infant and Family Support Program.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381 - Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) - 10 - 11 a.m.; Pre-natal yoga - 7- 8:15 p.m.
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 - 11870 Santa Monica Blvd, at the Dance Factory, West LA, 310-394-6711. Pregnancy Exercise - 9:15 - 10:15 a.m.; Post Partum Exercise - 10:15 - 11:15 a.m. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station - 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

Yoga & Exercise

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

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381 - Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) - 10 - 11 a.m.; (infants only) - 1 - 2 p.m. Pre-natal yoga - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.; Yoga for Fitness - noon - 1 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717

SATURDAY

Storytelling

Tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. at Children's Book World - 10:30 a.m. Featuring Jennifer and Jon, founding members of the interactive theatre company "Imagination Station." Ages 4 - 8, free. 10580 Pico Blvd., LA, 310-559-B00K.
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.

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381; Prenatal yoga - 9:15 - 10:45 a.m., \$13
Mommy Care - 11870 Santa Monica Blvd, at the Dance Factory, West LA, 394-6711; Pregnancy Exercise - 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.; Post Partum Exercise - 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. (babies welcome, includes baby massage and workout at the end)
Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.; Yoga for Fitness - noon - 1 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717

Other

Puppetolio - 1:00 and 3:00pm, 310-656-0483, 1255 2nd St., ages 3 & up, reservations suggested
Magickopolis - 2 and 8 p.m., 1418 4th St., Admission is \$20 for evening, \$15 for matinee. Call 310-451-2241 for info.
Cinderella - 12:30 & 3:00 p.m., Jan. 10 - 25, \$9 children, \$10 adults.
See Special Events section for details. Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 Fourth St., 394-9779, www.santamonicaplayhouse.com
Nature Walk - January 17 - (Children's Nature Inst.) - Temescal Canyon (Pac. Palisades) - 10:00am. Reservations required - 310-998-1151 or www.children-snatureinstitute.org

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

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

Cinderella - 12:30 & 3:00 p.m., Jan. 10 - 25, \$9 children, \$10 adults.
See Special Events section for details. Santa Monica Playhouse, 1211 Fourth St., 3 9 4 - 9 7 7 9 , www.santamonicaplayhouse.com

Save the Environment by Recycling Workshop - January 18. A drop-in workshop at the Zimmer Children's Museum where kids can create a piece of collaborative recycled art. Ages 2 - 10; 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.; \$3 per child plus admission, \$5 adults, \$3 ages 3-12, free for ages 2 & under. 6505 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 100, LA, 323-761-8998

MONDAY

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Storytelling

Libraries are closed today.
Main Library - Lap Time at Joslyn Park, 9:30 a.m., Jan. 5 - June 4 (No meeting on Jan. 19th and Feb. 16th.) Ages 0-24 months with adult in conjunction with the Infant and Family Support program of SMMUSD.
Ocean Park Branch Library - 2601 Main Street, 310-392-3804.
"Spanish for Little Ones", 11:15 a.m., Jan. 5 - Feb. 23 (no program Jan. 19). Rhymes, songs and very simple stories in Spanish for ages 2-5 with adult.
Barnes and Noble, 3rd St. Promenade - Toddler Story Time - 10am - 310-260-9110

Breastfeeding Group

The Pump Station - 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
Yoga Baby (Venice) - 310-306-9381 - Mommy & Me (ages 0-5 years) - 10 - 11 a.m.; (infants only) - 1 - 2 p.m. Pre-natal yoga - 11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Ocean Oasis Day Spa, 1333 Ocean Avenue, 458-8190. Pre/Post Natal Yoga/Gentle Flow - 10:30 - 11:45 a.m.; Yoga for Fitness - noon - 1 p.m. Private sessions available; call Kate Thomas, RN - 408-1717

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DID YOU KNOW?: The world's youngest parents were 8 and 9 and lived in China in 1910.

STATE

Higher education in California a pricey proposition

BY MICHELLE LOCKE

Associated Press Writer

OAKLAND — Mahershal Adams would like to go to college, but what he's getting is a lesson in Catch-22 logic.

He wants to get a better job and make more money. But for that he needs money to pay for classes, costs that are expected to go up under Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed budget.

"It's really bad, especially for people who don't have family to support them," said Adams, a certified nursing assistant who says he can't afford to pay the higher prices of college classes. "You're just kind of stuck."

In his budget released Friday, Schwarzenegger is proposing raising undergraduate student fees 10 percent and graduate fees by 40 percent at the University of California and California State University systems. His budget also reduces the amount of financial aid available to middle-income students.

Administration officials say the cuts are necessary given California's multibillion-dollar deficit. They point out that higher education is still a bargain in California — undergraduate fees for prestigious UC would average about \$6,000 a year, even with the fee increase. That is hundreds of dollars less than other major public universities and a quarter of what some elite private schools charge.

At CSU, average fees would be about \$2,800. Community college, meanwhile, would cost \$26 per unit, up from \$18.

The final decision on fees will be made by the boards of the college systems, decisions that aren't expected to come until later this year.

Schwarzenegger is proposing a long-term fee policy of limiting hikes on undergraduate fees to no more than

10 percent a year, to avoid sharp increases in bad economic times. He also said he is committed to funding a 10th UC campus, in Merced, which is expected to expand access to Central Valley residents and had been delayed a year because of the state's fiscal troubles.

Still, officials are concerned about the cuts — especially with the state's economy stuck in the doldrums.

"It's really bad, especially for people who don't have family to support them."

— MAHERSHAL ADAMS
Nursing assistant

UC President Robert C. Dynes acknowledged that the governor is making "difficult choices," but said "it should also be understood that these cuts, coming on top of deep previous budget cuts, would have a very serious impact on the University of California and its tradition of providing a top-quality, accessible, affordable education for Californians."

Earlier budget cuts prompted fee increases of about 40 percent over the past 13 months for students at UC and CSU. Meanwhile, community college costs have increased from \$11 per unit to the current \$18.

CSU officials say the governor's proposed budget cuts 9 percent, or \$240 million, from their 2004-05 funds, leaving a state-funded budget of \$2.4 billion, and could mean cutting enrollment by 20,000 students.

At UC, which has nine campuses and about 200,000 students, officials say the governor's proposals would cut funding by \$372 million and would also mean enrollment

cuts. UC's net state-funded operating budget would be \$2.7 billion, 8 percent less than the current \$2.9 billion.

Of particular concern is the governor's proposal to cut funding for college outreach, \$33 million for UC in 2004-05 and \$52 million for CSU.

Outreach programs link campuses and low-performing public schools in an effort to prepare disadvantaged students for college. The programs have existed for years, some going back to the 1970s, but drew more attention after UC dropped affirmative action admissions in 1998.

While outreach programs can't target specific races, they are serving low-performing schools which generally have high percentages of black and Hispanic students, two groups underrepresented at UC.

State outreach funding reached a peak of about \$184 million at UC following the economic boom of the 1990s, but has been decreasing.

Officials at UC and CSU say they will fight to keep at least some level of state funding for the programs.

Supporters say cutting outreach would be a huge mistake.

"It's so heartbreaking," said Mayra Canizales, a 16-year-old senior at Hayward High who has been involved with a UC outreach program called the Early Academic Outreach Program.

The daughter of immigrants who work as janitors, Canizales isn't the most likely candidate for college. But since 7th grade she's been getting advice and encouragement, meeting on Saturdays with mentors, taking SAT prep courses and practicing applying to college, even taking some summer courses on the Berkeley campus.

Canizales' two older sisters have both graduated from Berkeley and she's confident she'll get a degree, too, possibly from Berkeley where she has applied for fall.

"If it wasn't (for the program) I would not be going to college because I just wouldn't know," she said. "I just can't imagine doing it myself. It's just really heartbreaking to think that (others) are not going to get the same help that I did."

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NATIONAL □ INTERNATIONAL

WORLD BRIEFLY

U.S. seizes weapons, Iraqi election slowed

By The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. forces announced Monday the seizure of a large cache of weapons as Iraq's top Shiite Muslim cleric demanded the next legislature be elected, denying the United States crucial backing for its plan to let regional caucuses select a provisional assembly.

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani's hardened stand came as hundreds of protesters clashed with British troops in a southern city and an ongoing purge of Saddam Hussein's Baath party members reportedly removed 28,000 Iraqis from their jobs.

Under the U.S. plan, a transitional Iraqi assembly — to be chosen by regional committees — would select an interim government ahead of full elections in 2005.

On Monday, the U.S. military said in a statement that U.S. soldiers uncovered a "large weapons cache" on Friday with the help of an Iraqi in Ramadi, a town west of Baghdad.

The Iraqi led the troops to a house, where they found dozens of rocket-propelled grenades and a handful of launchers, nearly 220 pounds of explosives, 16 remote controlled homemade bombs and two surface-to-air missiles, the statement said.

Chinese man suspected of having SARS

By The Associated Press

BEIJING — A 35-year-old man hospitalized with SARS symptoms in southern China was officially pronounced a "suspected case" by the government on Monday, becoming the country's third patient of the season linked to the still-mysterious virus.

Wang Zhiqiong, deputy chief of the health bureau in Guangdong province, said the patient is a resident of the provincial capital, Guangzhou, where the other two cases also emerged in recent weeks. He was transferred Friday to the Guangzhou hospital that specializes in SARS, Wang said.

The Chinese Health Ministry also confirmed the newly classified suspected case, saying the man began running a fever Dec. 31. Fourteen people who came into close contact with him and 14 who came into casual contact have been isolated and are showing no symptoms, the ministry said on its Web site.

It said the man was in stable condition. Further tests will be conducted to determine definitively if he has severe acute respiratory syndrome.

The patient's fever has subsided and X-rays on his lungs appeared normal Monday, Wang said.

Bush, Fox meet to mend relations

By The Associated Press

CRAWFORD, Texas — President Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox's meeting, just days after the White House announced a new U.S. immigration initiative, is a chance for the two leaders to end their strained relationship — and earn political capital as well.

Bush annoyed Fox when he put immigration reform on the back burner after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. Their relationship further soured when Mexico failed to back the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

But the two were expected to be smiling — at least for the cameras — when they met Monday in Monterrey, Mexico, at the Summit of the Americas, a gathering of 34 democratically elected leaders in the Western Hemisphere.

Amid the congenial handshakes will be disagree-

ments. Latin American nations butted heads with the United States until nearly dawn Sunday in failing to agree on several points of a draft document to be debated at the two-day summit.

The United States wants the draft to call for re-emphasizing a 2005 deadline for finishing negotiations on a Free Trade Area of the Americas, a hemisphere-wide trade zone that is one of Bush's top policy goals for Latin America. Brazil and Venezuela say the summit is not the place to discuss it.

The United States also wants to kick corrupt governments out of the Organization of American States, a move opposed by several Latin American nations.

GOP senators back Rowland investigation

By The Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. — Republican state senators have unanimously backed a state House proposal that would convene a bipartisan committee to investigate the corruption scandal surrounding Republican Gov. John G. Rowland.

The Republican senators did not ask for the three-term governor to resign.

"The governor, like any private citizen accused of wrongdoing, is entitled to due process and a thorough investigation of the facts," Senate Republican Leader Louis C. DeLuca said Sunday.

Republicans in the state House on Friday proposed that a select committee investigate the scandal. State Senate Democrats as a group have already called on the governor to resign and said they would support an impeachment investigation.

Dean Pagani, Rowland's chief of staff, said Sunday that if an investigative committee is formed, the governor hopes the process will be fair. Rowland is under fire for accepting gifts from politically connected friends and contractors.

If impeached in the House, Rowland would stand trial in the Senate, which has 21 Democrats and 15 Republicans. A two-thirds majority would be required to remove him from office.

FACE-to-FACE with the Women & Children of Iraq

Local resident Kelly Hayes-Raitt visited Iraq twice this year — once in February, just 5 weeks before the U.S. bombings and invasion, and in July, where she found some of the children and women who touched her so deeply during her first visit. She saw firsthand the impact of the bombings and invasion on innocent people's lives, homes and hearts.

She will be speaking about the people she met — and remet — in Baghdad, Hillah, Babylon, Fallouja, Basra and Umm Qasr.

Saturday, January 17th

The National Association of University Women

Dept. of Water & Power - 4030 S. Crenshaw Blvd. in L.A.

A political consultant and dynamic speaker, Kelly Hayes-Raitt has addressed over 100 audiences, including religious congregations, state conferences, school classes, community clubs, large peace rallies and small neighborhood meetings. To address your group, call (310) 581-4421 or e-mail C2CCampaigns@aol.com. Photos may be viewed at www.CommunityCampaigns.com/Iraq.



NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS CITY OF SANTA MONICA SUSTAINABLE CITY TASK FORCE

Applications are invited for the creation of an eleven member Sustainable City Task Force (SCTF). All persons who reside or work in Santa Monica are invited to apply regardless of race, sex, age, disability, religion, marital status, national origin, sexual preference, or ancestry. Appointment will be made at a City Council meeting in March or April 2004.

Application forms and information are available at the Environmental Programs Division, 200 Santa Monica Pier, Suite J, Santa Monica, CA 90401. You may request an application by mail or fax by calling (310) 458-2213.

To be eligible, applications must be received at the Environmental Programs Division office by 5:00pm Wednesday, February 4, 2004.

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Multiple murderer to be portrayed in theatrical piece

By The Associated Press

■ **MIAMI** — A music-theater piece in California about Andrew Cunanan's 1997 cross country killing spree is drawing opposition on both coasts.

Some members of South Florida's gay community and a friend of Cunanan's in California oppose the production.

"No, no it's not a good idea," said Delfin Labao of San Diego, who called himself a family friend and Cunanan's godfather. "That door is closed. It should remain closed."

Cunanan, a 27-year-old reputed gay escort and drug user, was linked to five murders across the country, including the slaying of fashion designer Gianni Versace.

"Cunanan was sick and do you celebrate that? People's lives were gone and do you celebrate that?" asked Bill Peters of the Gay and Lesbian Community Center in Fort Lauderdale.

The La Jolla Playhouse in California received a \$35,000 grant for the project from the National Endowment for the Arts. The piece would be called "Disposable" and would be "loosely based on the life of Andrew Cunanan," said associate artistic director Shirley Fishman.

■ **TUCSON, Ariz.** — There will be no trial for pop diva Diana Ross on drunken driving charges.

During a pretrial hearing in Tucson City Court, Ross' lawyers said she's ready to accept a plea agreement and will change her earlier "not guilty" plea at a hearing scheduled for Feb. 9.

Her trial had been scheduled for this month.

Details of the agreement, including what type of plea Ross may enter or whether any type of sentence might be involved, were not released.

The 59-year-old singer wasn't present at Friday's hearing and she won't be required to appear in person next month. Instead, she's expected to appear "telephonically."

Ross faces three DUI-related charges after being stopped by police on Dec. 30, 2002 after authorities received a report of a car traveling the wrong way on a city street.

■ **LOS ANGELES** — Tony Shalhoub is back for another set of "Monk" mysteries on USA Network and he's happy that this time, not all the attention is directed at him.

For the first time Shalhoub and Bitty Schram, who plays his street-wise and savvy assistant Sharona Fleming on the show, both received Golden Globe nominations.

"She's like Judy Holliday with a real edge," Shalhoub told The Hollywood Reporter in an interview posted online Monday.

Last year, the 50-year-old actor won Emmy and Golden Globe awards for "Monk."

Shalhoub, who plays a phobia-addled, obsessive detective on the show, said he wishes his "Monk" schedule afforded him more time for outside projects. But he managed to fulfill a professional dream by making his feature directorial debut with the indie comedy "Made-Up."

The movie, in which he co-stars with his wife, Brooke Adams, and pals like Gary Sinise, is done in a mock documentary style and "deals with beauty in our culture," Shalhoub said.

"Directing truly does legitimize our control-freakish tendencies," the actor added. "It brought out the most Monk-ish aspects of my character."

■ **ATLANTA** — When Ryan Seacrest launched his entertainment talk show "On-Air With Ryan Seacrest" Monday, it marked only his latest in a fast-growing list of ventures.

The 29-year-old Atlanta native, best known as the host of "American Idol," recently was named as the replacement for the legendary Casey Kasem on the radio countdown show "American Top 40." He also hosted the Billboard Music Awards and the Fox New Year's Eve special last year.

Seacrest has even subbed for CNN's Larry King — but he acknowledges he runs a risk of being overexposed.

"You have to look at the broadcast world differently," he told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "In broadcast, it's conventional to be on five days a week."

Seacrest is following the business model of his American idol, 74-year-old Dick Clark, who established himself in the 1950s as the host of the weekly music TV show "American Bandstand" and built a production company that now produces the American Music Awards and his "New Year's Rockin' Eve" special.

"I've had a game plan for a long time," Seacrest said. "I want to do what Dick Clark did: Build businesses out of what we do."

■ **BOSTON** — Red Sox general manager Theo Epstein traded business slacks and a tie for jeans and sneakers as he played with his rock band, Trauser, in a benefit concert at the city's Paradise nightclub.

"It makes you feel like you're living the rock 'n' roll lifestyle a little bit," Epstein said before his band's four-song set Sunday night.

He and other notable names in baseball also celebrated a much-discussed 2003 Red Sox season at the fourth annual Hot Stove, Cool Music concert, hosted by ESPN baseball analyst Peter Gammons. During the offseason the team added pitching ace Curt Schilling and star closer Keith Foulke, and made a failed bid to acquire American League MVP Alex Rodriguez from the Texas Rangers.

Others in baseball made up the nine-band lineup, including Seattle Mariners third baseman Scott Spezio and his band, Sandfrog, and former White Sox pitcher Jack McDowell and his group, Stickfigure.

New manager Terry Francona and first baseman Kevin Millar also went to the stage and greeted the crowd of about 800 who attended.

"What was it about the Yankees? What was that?" Francona asked the audience, which subsequently began an anti-Yankees chant.

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