

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

City budget situation worsening

More funds may not be available for schools

BY ANDY FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

After a massive rally at City Hall for more education funding Tuesday, City Council members said there isn't much more they can do to help the city's schools.

Santa Monica is facing a looming \$15-million budget deficit that will likely be closed by a series of tax and fee hikes and across the board cuts in services and programs, city officials announced Tuesday.

The council unanimously voted for city staff to come back with recommendations where cuts can be made, but to spare affordable housing and social services as much as possible.

"To me, there are no sacred areas except for public safety and vital public services," said Councilman Bob Holbrook. "We exist to make a safe community, and that means public safety and welfare. That's our core. Everything above that is frosting."

Activists asked Santa Monica to double the \$3 million it currently earmarks for the public school system to \$6 million. Holbrook, who served eight years on the school board, said the city will have a difficult time plugging its deficit, let alone finding more funding for schools.

Educators find themselves in difficult financial times. Dramatic cuts in state funding has led to a \$3.5-million shortfall this year and another projected \$11-million deficit next year. Among decreasing its spending and cut-

ting programs, the district is asking Santa Monica and Malibu, which gives \$227,000 annually, to increase their allocations.

However, council members said the city finds itself in the same economic turmoil.

"It's obvious they are in a desperate situation," Holbrook said. "We have to make up \$15 million, so if we give them another \$3 million it would mean \$18 million in cuts. And I don't know if we have that to cut."

Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Superintendent John Deasy said he was happy with the City Council's response and understood the city is under intense financial pressures as well.

"They acknowledge clearly the state's failure to fund the schools, and they indicated they hoped they can do more," he said. "And we hope that can become a reality, and we trust they can make that a reality."

Holbrook said he voted for Measure EE, the \$300 parcel tax measure that failed at the ballot box in November, and said he plans to send the school district a check for the amount of the parcel tax he would have paid had it passed.

"The school district isn't asking people who voted for Prop. EE to send in their \$300, but I'm going to," he said. "I voted for it, so I'm going to send \$300 to the school district as if it had passed. And I think everyone else should, too."

Including its annual donation, the city this year is spending \$7.5 million on school-linked youth programs and another \$7.4 million on non-school related youth programs.

See BUDGET, page 5

Hovering and hauling



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

A helicopter hovers over a parking structure near the Saint John's medical building, carefully lowering and lifting construction materials onto the roof for crews to repair the structure as a part of maintenance.

A violent neighborhood nullifies lease, judge says

Santa Monica real estate firm told to refund tenants' security deposit

BY ANDY FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

A property management company should have told three young women the apartment they were about to rent wasn't exactly in the safest of neighborhoods, a judge ruled Wednesday.

Santa Monica-based Wellman Property Management Inc., located at 1415 Stanford St., acted as the landlord when it rented an apartment last fall to Erica Sullivan, Andrea Hopkins and Kiran Multvent in Silver Lake.

When the young women asked if the neighborhood was safe, Wellman representatives indicated it was. Shortly after moving into the apartment, there was a shooting on Nov. 6, 2002, directly outside the apartment building.

The three women obtained a quarterly crime report the next day from the Los Angeles Police Department that indicated the neighborhood was a high-crime area with a history of violent crime.

They immediately moved, but Wellman wouldn't refund the security deposit because the women broke the one-year lease they had signed.

So the women — all of whom are in their early 20s — took the local property management company to Santa Monica Small Claims Court. The women, who dressed in business suits, laid out a barrage of documents and case law to support their arguments. After 15 minutes of testimony, they successfully convinced Judge Pro Tem Donna Greenstein that they should get their money back.

Greenstein ruled that the lease was void because Wellman had not disclosed the true criminal nature of the neighborhood and it must refund the \$1,300 security deposit. However, Wellman can keep the \$1,000 rent for November, the month the women moved out.

The company also cannot collect \$1,766 in back rent, which company representatives argued was owed since the apartment remained vacant from Nov. 11 to Jan. 8.

"I'm going to call it a wash," Greenstein said. "While you can't guarantee a neighborhood's safety, you must disclose it."

Under California state law, if a tenant inquires about the criminal statistics of the neighborhood, a landlord must reveal them. If that's not done, then the lease becomes null and void, according to Greenstein.

But Vanessa Tineve and Christina McKay of Wellman Property Management said it's impossible for them

to guarantee the safety of a neighborhood.

"Safety is a very subjective thing," Tineve argued. "People think if they live on Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica then they're safe, but I can't guarantee that."

However, the women weren't asking

See LEASE, page 5

Discarded hard drives prove a trove of personal information

BY JUSTIN POPE
AP Business Writer

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — So, you think you cleaned all your personal files from that old computer you got rid of?

Two MIT graduate students suggest you think again.

Over two years, Simson Garfinkel and Abhi Shelat bought 158 used hard drives at secondhand computer stores and on eBay. Of the 129 drives that functioned, 69 still had recoverable files on them and 49 contained "significant personal information" — medical correspondence, love letters, pornography and 5,000 credit card numbers. One even had a year's worth of transactions with account numbers from a cash machine in Illinois.

About 150,000 hard drives were "retired" last year, according to the research firm

See SECURITY, page 5

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ Use your imagination, and you'll create possibilities. Close down, and you could have a problem. Friends and associates mean well. Do a better job of listening. Your creativity takes you in a new direction. You're encouraged to act. Tonight: Happy at home.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Review recent discussions with an associate before launching into action. You could be uncomfortable with what you hear. Try to get clarity in that situation. Ask questions. Seek out answers. Your ability to realize what others are asking could make or break you. Tonight: Stretch and get out.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Put your best foot forward and reach out for loved ones. Think through answers and find out what needs to happen. You could find news rather diffuse and extremely confusing. Seek facts; dump opinions. You will find the right path this way. Tonight: Treat another to dinner.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★★ Your personality helps melt barriers and change others' opinions. Laughter will take you in a new direction if you can help those around you loosen up. There are many answers to the current issue. Brainstorm with associates. Tonight: Do your thing.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Be creative, even if a part of you wants to withdraw from a problem. You have the answers. Getting others to listen might be difficult. Review recent decisions involving a relationship. Not everything is as clear as it seems. Tonight: Vanish while you can.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ Pressure builds in an unprecedented manner. You might not be happy with what others share. You want something different, though you might not know how to ask for it. Start aiming higher. A family member agitates for more of what he or she wants. Tonight: Start your week-end early.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Pressure builds whether you realize it or not. Think in terms of more positive happenings. Make an effort. Reach out to others. Your efforts come back in multiples. Consider your options that involve a child or loved one more carefully. Tonight: Make that additional

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Keep asking questions about your financial status. You have difficulty staying on top of what is necessary. Someone at a distance is a constant source of ideas. Check in if you would like to find an alternative. Tonight: Surf the Net.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Mars moves into your sign, energizing you and pointing you in a new direction. You might react angrily at first, but later you change gears. Work with others on a one-on-one level. Your discomfort marks your interactions. Tonight: Go along with a loved one's plans.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ Others run with the ball. You're a sign who enjoys being in control and resents others making decisions without you. Be careful with your anger. You might say something that you are not able to take back later. Tonight: Say "yes" to an invitation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ You might not be sure of a friend, especially if he or she suddenly becomes ballistic. Nurture others, understanding more of what needs to happen in order to gain the control you desire. Carefully think through a decision. Tonight: Clear off your desk.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ A boss is on the warpath. You could feel out of sync when dealing with loved ones and friends because of pressure at work. Don't respond so much to others' demands. Follow through on what you need to do. Tonight: Use your imagination.

QUOTE of the DAY

“Never accept an invitation from a stranger unless he gives you candy.”
— Linda Festa

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LOCAL



Obituary

Melvin (Mel) Asch, retired film publicity executive who worked with studios such as 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros., Universal and MGM in New York and Hollywood, died Sunday, Jan. 5 at his Santa Monica home after a brief illness.

He was 77.

He was born in Brooklyn, New York, on Dec. 2, 1925, as the son of Charles and Helen Asch. Mel was the great nephew of writer Sholem Asch, who inspired him to seek knowledge and an understanding of society through language and history.

He enlisted in the Army Air Force in July 1943 at 17 years old and was trained as a radio operator/gunner. The war ended before he could use his skills. After WWII, he pursued his education at the University of Illinois, Champagne (B.A. in journalism) and the University of Minnesota (masters in political science).

After completing college, Mel went to work as a staff reporter at various newspapers on the East Coast and Midwest. He met and married Doris Marcil. After extensively traveling through Europe, Mel and Doris settled in Indianapolis, Ind. where Mel worked for the Indianapolis Times. Mel and



Melvin (Mel) Asch

He held various public relations positions in the publicity departments of 20th Century-Fox, MGM and Universal; and was assistant studio publicity director at Warner Bros. He made friends with Frank Sinatra while serving as his publicist on the Fox movie "Tony Rome" in 1967. Mr. Sinatra insisted to the Fox studio bosses that Mel be assigned to any and all pictures the singer/actor made for the studio. The studio gave Mr. Sinatra his wish and Mel went to work on Fox's "Tony Rome" sequel, "Lady In Cement."

Other films Mel helped create, market and publicize include "10," "The French Connection," "The Pink Panther," "11 Harrowhouse," "Planet of the Apes" (with Charlton Heston) and "The Valley of

the Dolls," among others.

Mel later served as director of public relations for The Lorsch Group and the Greater Los Angeles Chapter of the National Safety Council before retiring in 1991.

Mel dedicated himself to his family, his job and to the pursuit of the truth. He had a thirst for knowledge and learned something new every day. He loved being in the company of young people; he never considered himself "old." He was happiest when he could share an intelligent conversation with a friend or relative over coffee or a game of pool.

Mel is survived by his daughter, Laurelee; his son, David, and his son-in-law, Russell Morris.

Mel will be remembered as a giving, caring, loyal, intelligent and gentle man whose bark was bigger than his bite. Those who weren't intimidated by him made a friend for life and benefited from knowing him.

His favorite quotes were "the truth will set you free" and "discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen and thinking what nobody has thought."

Memorial services will be private.

Southern California blood supply now at lowest level

By Daily Press staff

For the first time in almost two years, Southern California is at risk of a life-threatening blood shortage.

Emergency workers are pleading for people to donate blood immediately.

Blood shortages already have reached crisis levels in other parts of the country. The New York Blood Center is reporting the worst shortage in history.

Currently, there is less than a one-day supply of types O and B blood. A five-day supply of blood is considered optimal.

In Southern California, the American Red Cross imports from other states about 40 percent of the blood used for hospital patients. However, blood centers else-

where have curtailed blood shipments to Southern California because of the shortages in their own communities.

To compensate for this shortfall of imports, more blood must be collected locally. Unfortunately, as in other parts of the country, blood donations are down. Since the holidays, blood collections in Southern California have plummeted to 70 percent of projections.

The American Red Cross is appealing to local residents to donate blood immediately to avert a crisis. Local hospital patients need more than 16,000 units of blood every week.

To donate blood, people can call 1-800-GIVELIFE to schedule an appointment.



Information compiled by Jesse Haley

Rumors of a huge swell seem to have been exaggerated. The swell filled in better in the afternoon, but winds picked up, making for bumpy, blown out waves on Tuesday.

We should see the same kind of surf today, decent size, more in the chest- to shoulder-high range and mediocre conditions; better in the morning when the winds are calm.

Leftover swell will wind down today. Expect mostly waist to chest-level waves at good breaks, smaller at shadowed spots.

Today's Tides:	
High-	5:29 a.m. 5.16'
Low-	1:01 p.m. 0.39'
High-	7:32 p.m. 3.20'
Low-	11:35 p.m. 2.46'

Location	Thursday	Friday	Water Quality
County Line	3-4'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	A
Zuma	3-4'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	A
Surfrider	1-2'/Poor	1-2'/Poor	D
Topanga	2-3'/Fair	1-3'/Fair	A
Breakwater	3-4'/Poor	2-3'/Poor	A
El Porto	4-5'/Poor	3-4'/Poor	A

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The Q-Line

A recent city survey notes that the top concerns of Santa Monicans are the increasing number of homeless people living on the streets, too much development and too much traffic.

The results of the survey probably don't surprise many, since the concerns have been the same for at least three years in a row. However, the survey only polled 400 people in a city with a population of 84,000.

So this week Q-Line wants to know: "Are the top concerns revealed in the city's survey also your concerns? How can our elected officials rectify the problem?"

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

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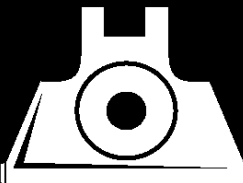


OPINION

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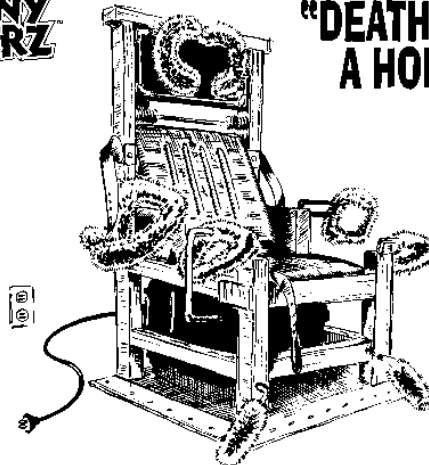
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Road rage: SUV backlash masks greater problem



TITTINGER'S TAKE

By Michael J. Tittinger

A pair of new television ads aimed at curbing Americans' reliance on foreign oil fires upon a familiar foe — the venerable sports utility vehicle.

Once portrayed as the ultimate motor vehicle for the red-blooded American, enticing owners with images of independence, attitude and free will, the SUV and its place in the American lexicon has done a complete turnabout. The 4-by-4s are currently the bane of liberal existence, representing all that is evil in this world due to their larger gas tanks and their compromised fuel efficiency.

A pair of 30-second spots produced for the Detroit Project, a nonprofit organization started by syndicated columnist Arianna Huffington, began airing in six U.S. cities this week, including Los Angeles. Especially Los Angeles!

Of course, California is also where gas-guzzling muscle cars come to die and are continually given stays of execution.

The ads were created in part by the team that brought us the universally rec-

ognized "Got Milk?" campaign. They mimic existent anti-drug commercials that connect recreational drug use here with crimes against humanity in South America. The new spots make inference to the growing opinion that gas-guzzling SUVs are empowering the very terrorists we're flying across the world to destroy.

Television stations in New York and Detroit, as well as both KABC and KCBS in Los Angeles, have rejected the new ads.

"This campaign is not designed to demonize SUV owners," says Huffington. "We want to encourage customers to connect the dots."

Kind of like how PETA asks fur coat consumers to connect the dots when they splatter red paint all over their sheared beaver bomber coats. Opponents of the ads are critical of the Detroit Project's approach, likening it to an unregulated guilt trip. A spokesman for the Competitive Enterprise Institute dismissed the spots as "elitist nonsense."

Where the ads appear to fall short is in their lack of ingenuity or problem solving. The commercials are imaginative in that they attract attention with their use of comic irony, depicting SUV owners, in one instance, as equally proud of their vehicle's features as they are contributing to a nightclub's bombing overseas.

The commercials are intended to be tongue in cheek, and their use of the

embattled SUV is to be taken as an example of how we all could stand to be more fuel conscious. Point taken. Let's move on. Most people who have researched and purchased an SUV are either well aware of the sacrificed fuel efficiency and decide to pull the trigger anyway, or don't believe their passing on buying one will make much difference.

Still, the message is out that SUVs waste more fuel than most cars.

One problem with the ads is that they pick on the conventional target and, in effect, do "demonize" the SUV owner because it polarizes the commuters — placing guilt on the SUV owners and letting all others temporarily off the hook. We all need to "make socially responsible choices," claims Huffington.

At this point, railing against the SUV — the target du jour — is about as effective and imaginative as blasting the cigarette smokers for fouling up the air. Few smokers can excuse their habit today as a practice they took up "before we knew it was bad for you." They are cognizant that it kills and yet they lay down their money and their lungs regardless. They've weighed their options and continued to smoke. Guilt trips won't likely prompt them to butt out. SUV owners know the tale of the tape as well when they take out a second mortgage for a car as big as a second house.

A second problem with the ads is that they offer us no solutions, no suggestions, no guidelines in which to follow towards the light of sensible oil use aside from, of course, selling the SUV. There are plenty of ways to squander fossil fuels — heating unoccupied houses, splashing around in motor boats, shrugging off public transportation — that a hackneyed attack on the usual suspect, the SUV, is getting old.

There's little doubt the Detroit Project's heart is in the right place. Attacking Americans' tendency to over-consume natural fuels is in the best interest of the country. And putting their faith in others to willingly surrender their beloved SUVs is noble, but it's unlikely to have any real impact aside from a backlash towards the drivers of such vehicles. The goal to rid our highways of such automobiles is not only narrow but also shortsighted.

Real change must come from within and until we convince one another of the need to alter our day-to-day behavior — shutting windows when the heat's on, hopping on a bus, flying in coach, exerting physical energy — we're really not going to make much of a change at all.

(Mike Tittinger, who lives in Santa Monica, is a regular columnist.)

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LOCAL □ NATIONAL

Protesters think city should stop spending

BUDGET, from page 1

Increasing what the city gives to the school district could diminish many of those other social service programs currently being offered, city officials said.

Councilwoman Pam O'Connor said in California the state bears the responsibility of funding public education, not cities. She said while Santa Monica can assist its school district, it must focus on providing municipal services.

"Of course we can help with the schools, but we also have to make sure the streets are safe so they can get to school," she said. "We also have to make sure there is housing for them to live in. And there are parks for them to play in."

But others argue the city should make

its schools more of a priority. They argue City Council members need to rethink how they spend taxpayer dollars.

One elementary student at the rally said instead of buying four new street cleaners for \$850,000, the council should use that money for education.

"My mom says kids are more important than trash trucks," said 11-year-old Miles Leavitt, a fifth-grade student at Roosevelt Elementary School. "Maybe they could use that money for my school."

Community activist Don Gray said the city should stop spending money on extras like street sweepers, and focus on more core issues, like education.

"I think residents have always supported their schools," he said. "The problem is the disconnect with the council."

Landlord required to disclose crime figures

LEASE, from page 1

for a guarantee, just some information about their prospective neighborhood.

"We asked her if it was a safe area because we are three single young women living together," Sullivan said. "So we feel we are entitled because Ms. McKay downplayed the safety of the area."

Sullivan also argued that while a landlord can't be expected to answer for a lone

incident, they should know about any ongoing criminal activity in the neighborhood where they are renting apartments.

"You can't guarantee against a single incident," she said. "But you can take into consideration past events and make an educated prediction about what's likely to happen in the future. And in this neighborhood, it was very likely there were going to be future incidents."

Deleted files are recoverable

SECURITY, from page 1

Gartner Dataquest. Many end up in the trash, but many also find their way back onto the market.

Over the years, stories have surfaced about personal information turning up on used hard drives, raising concerns about privacy and the danger of identity theft.

Last spring, Pennsylvania sold used computers that contained information about state employees. In 1997, a Nevada woman bought a used computer and discovered it contained prescription records on 2,000 customers of an Arizona pharmacy.

Garfinkel and Shelat, who reported their findings in an article to be published Friday in the journal IEEE Security & Privacy, said they believe they are the first to take a more comprehensive — though not exactly scientific — look at the problem.

On common operating systems such as Microsoft's Windows, simply deleting a file, or even following that up by emptying the "trash" folder, does not necessarily make the information irretrievable. Those commands generally delete a file's name from the directory. But the information itself can live on until it is overwritten by new files.

Even reformatting a drive, or preparing the hard drive all over again to store files, may not do it. Fifty-one of the 129 working drives in the MIT study had been reformatted, and 19 of them still contained recoverable data.

The hard-to-erase quality of hard drives is seen as a good thing by some. Many users like believing that, in a pinch,

an expert could recover their deleted files. Law enforcement officers can examine a computer and lift incriminating e-mails or porno images from the hard drive.

The only sure way to erase a hard drive is to "squeeze" it: writing over the old information with new data — all zeros, for instance — at least once, but preferably several times. A one-line command will do that for Unix users, and for others, inexpensive software from companies such as AccessData works well.

But few people go to the trouble. Many ordinary computer users toss their old drives into the closet, or take a sledgehammer to it.

As it turned out, most of the hard drives acquired by the MIT students came from businesses that apparently had a misplaced confidence in their ability to "sanitize" old drives.

Tom Aleman, who heads the analytic and forensic technology group at the accounting firm Deloitte & Touche, often encounters companies that get burned by failing to fully sanitize, say, the laptop of an employee who leaves the company for a job with a competitor.

"People will think they have deleted the file, they can't find the file themselves and that the file is gone when, in fact, forensically you may be able to retrieve it," he said.

Garfinkel has learned his lesson. As an undergrad at MIT in the 1980s, he failed to sanitize his own hard drive before returning a computer to his father. His father was able to read his personal journal.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Daly Report: Stars love, learn and get married

BY SEAN DALY

Special to the Daily Press

The cat is finally out of the bag. Turns out Canadian swimmer-turned-actress ESTELLA WARREN, 24, did in fact have a brief off-screen romance with actor JERRY O'CONNELL, 28, shortly after completing their new movie "Kangaroo Jack."

"We never dated during the filming," she assures us. "But after the movie completed, we dated for a little while. We are still really good friends. He lives right around the corner from me. He comes over all the time. He even helped me pick out my Christmas tree."

In the new family comedy (opened Friday), O'Connell — who is single and recently dated Olympic swimmer JANET EVANS — stars as the stepson of a New York mobster who chases a kangaroo around the Australian Outback, trying to recover a pouch full of cash. Warren, currently dating actor-director Peter Berg ("The Great White Hype," "Very Bad Things"), is an American animal wrangler who comes to his aid.

ANGIE EVERHART AXES HANDLERS

SLY STALLONE's former girlfriend ANGIE EVERHART kicked off the new year by wiping the slate clean — literally. "I fired everyone in my life," the fiery redhead revealed last week at a Hollywood bash honoring the new line of Sony-Ericsson cellular telephones. "My business manager, my agent, my lawyers ... all gone! And I did it right before the new year so I could get a fresh start."

Everhart, 28, has since assembled a new team of handlers, and will next appear in the NBC mini-series "First To Die" during May sweeps.

"I just needed to take a left turn," she said. "And I did. Now I feel fabulous."

STARS OPEN "THAT '70s RESTAURANT"

Three young stars of Fox's "That 70s Show" will team up to open a new Italian eatery in Los Angeles next month.

Wilmer Valderrama (Fez), Ashton Kutcher (Kelso) and Danny Masterson (Steven) join "Malcolm In The Middle's" Chris Masterson (Danny's brother) as proud proprietors of Dolce on trendy Melrose Avenue. But don't expect to find any of them in the kitchen.

"I can only make fried egg sandwiches," confesses Danny, 26. Fortunately Valderamma, 22, is a bit more handy in the kitchen.

"I am a pretty good cook," he shares. "I grew up with lots of great food. I know how to make a mean pasta."

"Official" cooking detail will be overseen by the experts at Belly Lounge, owned by Mike "Boogie" Malin of "Big Brother 3." The motivation for their investment?

"We are big fans of food," says Valderamma.

'N SYNC STAR MOURNES LATE BEE GEE

'N Sync star JOEY FATONE called the passing of Bee Gee MAURICE GIBB "a

tragedy" on Sunday night after accepting the People's Choice Award for Favorite Movie along with other cast members from "My Big Fat Greek Wedding."

Gibb died suddenly of heart failure last week in Miami. He was 53.

"Fortunately their songs are memorable and I know they will live on," says Fatone, a long time fan of the influential disco group.

"We actually did a thing with the Bee Gees in Germany — we gave them a Bambi Award and sang a medley of their songs," he recalled. Fatone is currently in negotiations to appear on the upcoming CBS TV spin-off "My Big Fat Greek Life."

JESSICA BIEL TRANSFERS TO UCLA

Teen queen JESSICA BIEL will be returning for the 150th episode of the hit WB series "7th Heaven" but she won't be returning to Tufts University.

"I actually decided I am going to take this semester off and then transfer to UCLA," the 20 year-old beauty announced on Dec. 9. "I loved Boston, loved my friends and loved my school. But my dog, my boyfriend (actor Chris Evans) and my house are all here. It's a little easier of a commute."

Biel, a sophomore, spoke of the difficulty of having a long distance relationship during an interview last fall to promote her role in the teen movie, "Rules of Attraction."

"I think we both feel really secure in the relationship and we're making it happen, but it's always tough to be far away," she said.

COREY FELDMAN WEDS ON REALITY TV

1980s film icon COREY FELDMAN tied the knot on Oct. 30, 2002. Now his wedding will be shown on primetime TV as the season finale of the new WB reality series, "The Surreal Life." Feldman, 31, is one of six washed up celebrities chosen to live together for 10 days in Las Vegas and have their lives videotaped for the series, which debuted to blockbuster ratings.

His wedding to Susie Sprague, 20, was presided over by housemate MC Hammer ("Can't Touch This"), an ordained minister, and was followed by a reception where housemate Vince Neil performed a rousing version of "Girls, Girls, Girls."

"I did it for posterity reasons," Feldman says. "I wanted to find a way of merging the two worlds. As a Jewish person marrying someone who is not Jewish, it was kind of impossible to have an orthodox wedding."

The vows were originally to be exchanges on a tropical island under a water fall, says Feldman, who returned from a 10-day honeymoon in Bora Bora to begin promoting his latest record, "Negativity."

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STATE

CALIFORNIA BRIEFS

Teacher pleads guilty to kidnapping

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A Drew Middle School teacher pleaded innocent to kidnapping and assaulting a teenage girl as she waited for a school bus in May.

Raul Ramirez, 26, entered the pleas Tuesday to charges of kidnapping to commit forcible oral copulation, making criminal threats, using a tear gas weapon and assault with a firearm. He could be sentenced to life in prison if convicted.

Bail was set at \$5 million.

Prosecutors alleged Ramirez abducted a 16-year-old girl at gunpoint about 5:45 a.m. on May 16, drove to another location and attempted to perform a sex act on the girl. She struggled before managing to escape, Deputy District Attorney Victor Rodriguez said.

Ramirez was arrested Jan. 10 after the girl spotted his car and told police, prosecutors said.

Raw sewage spill closes beach

By The Associated Press

LAGUNA BEACH — A stretch of Aliso Beach will remain closed at least through Thursday because of a raw sewage spill from a pump station in the beach parking lot.

Orange County health officials closed 2,000 feet of Aliso Beach Tuesday after a surfer reported sewage overflowing from manhole covers in the beach parking lot. About 1,000 gallons escaped, and workers were able to recover about 440 gallons.

Officials are investigating the cause of the leak but believe it originated with an electrical problem at the station, which pumps sewage to a treatment plant.

The beach was ordered closed for at least three days.

Construction workers unearth 2,000-year-old skull

By The Associated Press

LONG BEACH — Workers installing a new playground behind St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran Church unearthed a human skull and authorities determined it was that of an Indian possibly buried there 2,000 years ago.

"My big fear was that someone had jumped our fence and buried a body in our yard," the Rev. Gary Mohr said Tuesday in recalling the telephone call alerting him to the discovery.

Within hours, the Los Angeles County coroner determined the skull was the remains of an Indian. Officials speculated it could be up to 2,000 years old.

The discovery of Indians remains at construction sites in California probably happens more than 100 times each year, said Larry Myers, a spokesman for the state Native American Heritage Commission.

Representatives of the Gabrieleo-Tongva tribe were notified of the find. Tribal members lived in villages across the Los Angeles Basin before the Spanish missionaries arrived in the late 1700s.

Robert Dorame, a tribal official, said he wanted the remains reburied on church grounds.

"Because they removed the skull, that means that the landowner now has to make a judgment call about where on the property the remains can be reinterred," Dorame said. "Because we are not federally recognized, we have no lands."

Child shot by officer sent to juvenile hall

By The Associated Press

VENTURA — A 14-year-old foster girl shot by a Ventura police officer last year while brandishing a large kitchen knife was sentenced to a group home.

Anna Guo sat in a wheelchair Tuesday as Superior Court Judge Brian Back tried to reassure her about her chances for living a normal life. He then ruled she should spend no more than five years in "suitable placement," which could be a group home in a neighborhood or a more structured environment.

"Life is like a team sport," the judge told the teenager. "You don't get through on your own. ... You've got to be part of the team."

The teenager will likely be placed in a Los Angeles County program that offers more services for Chinese-Americans, although she could go anywhere in the state, Deputy District Attorney Miles Weiss said.

Back denied the girl's request to be reunited immediately with her father, who lives in Alhambra. But in time, if she does well in the placement program and her father attends counseling, the two could become a family again, Back said.

The girl's father lost custody of her two years ago after hitting her with a belt.

The teenager was shot twice May 5 inside a Ventura home where she lived with her foster parents, who called police after she armed herself with the knife and appeared to be suicidal.

When police arrived, Anna raised the knife in a threatening manner at rookie Officer Kristin Rupp, who fired three shots, two of the bullets hitting the girl in the pelvis. Last month, a judge ruled after a two-week trial that the girl had assaulted Rupp with a deadly weapon, a felony.

DID YOU KNOW?: There are more TV sets in the US than there are people in the UK.

STATE



Attorney General asks court to reconsider ruling

BY STEVE LAWRENCE
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — Attorney General Bill Lockyer asked an appeals court Wednesday to reconsider a ruling that could undermine state coastal protection efforts, telling judges they disregarded the intentions of California Constitution writers.

A three-judge panel of the 3rd District Court of Appeals ruled Dec. 30 that because legislative leaders appoint a majority of coastal commissioners and can remove them at will that gives lawmakers too much control over an executive branch agency and violates the separation of powers doctrine.

The decision threw into doubt the state Coastal Commission's ability to regulate development along California's 1,100-mile shoreline.

In a 24-page petition asking the court for a rehearing, Lockyer said Wednesday the three judges relied too heavily on a federal court case instead of the intent of the California Constitution.

"The opinion never answers the threshold question: What did the makers of the 1849 (California) constitution have in mind when they assigned the powers of appointment and removal to the Legislature?" Lockyer said.

"California rejected the federal strong executive model in favor of one that placed greater authority in the Legislature as the branch most responsive to voters. ... Consequently, when the Legislature exercises this power, there cannot be a separa-

tion of powers violation because the Legislature is only exercising the power assigned to it in the first instance."

The appeals court ruling stemmed from a lawsuit filed by the Marine Forests Society, a nonprofit group that sued the commission after it was ordered to stop building an artificial reef off Newport Beach.

Ronald Zumbrun, a Sacramento attor-

ney representing the society, said it was "highly unlikely" the court would grant Lockyer's motion and it was "clearly appropriate" for the judges to follow federal court decisions in deciding this case.

"The Coastal Commission continues to make the same error," he said. "The fact that the Legislature can specify how an agency is to have its members appointed

has nothing to do with the Legislature then implementing that by making the appointments, because that would be subject to the constitutional separation of powers doctrine."

Zumbrun said the state and federal separation of powers doctrines "came out of the same source material, going back to the Federalist Papers and beyond."

U.S. heading toward Big Brother society

BY DAVID KRAVETS
AP Legal Affairs Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Spurred by loosened legal standards following the 2001 terrorist attacks, the United States is evolving into a Big Brother society as technology advances and surveillance grows, the American Civil Liberties Union warned in a report released Wednesday.

The report, titled "Bigger Monster, Weaker Chains: The Growth of an American Surveillance Society," says Americans' privacy and liberty are at risk.

"A combination of lightning-fast technological innovations and the erosion of privacy protections threatens to transform Big Brother from an oft-cited but remote threat into a very real part of American life," the report says.

The report is a wide-ranging briefing on technology, privacy rules and new laws being employed in the government's war on terrorism.

"The reasonable expectation of privacy has been dramatically diminished," Barry Steinhardt, an ACLU director, said in an interview.

The report says a growing "surveillance monster" is emerging in which the private and the public sector are monitoring Americans with video cameras to the extent that it is becoming almost impossible to walk the streets of major cities without being filmed.

Yet there are virtually no rules governing what is allowed to be done with those tapes, like employing face-recognition technology to investigate and identify people.

Also, computer chips used for motorists' tollbooth speed passes might one day be used on identification cards to allow police officers to "scan your identification when they pass you on the street," the report says.

The study points to the Total Information Awareness pilot project, in which the Pentagon is seeking to maintain a database of Americans' medical, health, financial, tax and other records. Yet there are few privacy laws to prevent businesses from selling the government such information, Steinhardt said.

"If we do not act to reverse the current trend, data surveillance — like video surveillance — will allow corporations or the government to constantly monitor what individual Americans do every day," the report says.

Moreover, under the Patriot Act, the anti-terrorist legislation passed by Congress immediately after the Sept. 11 attacks, the government can demand that libraries turn over reading habits of patrons. Authorities can more easily attain telephone and computer wiretaps, and conduct searches in secret without immediately notifying the target.

Viet Dinh, an assistant U.S. attorney general and one of the government's spokesmen on security topics, said in a recent interview that the Bush administration would not abuse these far-reaching powers.

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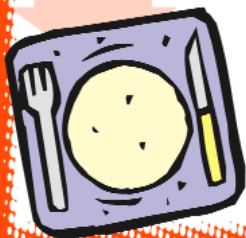
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NATIONAL

Rumsfeld briefs Senate committee



Lisa Nipp/Associated Press

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, right, accompanied by Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sen. John Warner, R-Va., gestures while talking to reporters on Capitol Hill Wednesday, after attending a closed-door hearing of the committee to examine current and potential military operations Rumsfeld briefed the panel on the situations in Iraq, North Korea and Afghanistan.

White House sees future budget picture worsening

BY ALAN FRAM
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Federal deficits should balloon to the \$200 billion to \$300 billion range over the next two years, President Bush's budget director said Wednesday, a far bleaker view of the fiscal horizon than the White House had painted.

In remarks to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and later to reporters, budget chief Mitchell Daniels also spoke of federal shortfalls "for the foreseeable future" and declined to say when surpluses might reappear, saying, "Stand by." The White House estimated last July that the red ink could fade to black by 2005.

Daniels' somber outlook — which would put deficits near record levels — further roiled this year's budget fight between Bush and congressional Democrats, particularly over the president's \$674 billion, 10-year tax-cutting proposal. Republicans say the plan would spark an economic revival that would help shrink deficits, which reappeared last year to the tune of \$159 billion after four consecutive annual surpluses.

Democrats say Bush's plan would worsen red ink even as possible war with Iraq, a potential Medicare expansion and other items threaten to widen the budget gap. They say now is when the government should be running surpluses to help buttress Social Security and Medicare for the retirement of baby boomers in less than a decade.

"It is the most reckless fiscal policy imaginable for our country," said Sen. Kent Conrad of North Dakota, the Senate Budget Committee's top Democrat.

Last summer, the administration projected that there would be deficits of \$109 billion this year and \$48 billion in 2004. At the time, Democrats criticized those numbers as overly optimistic.

In recent weeks, private forecasters have been issuing their own dreary fiscal

assessments. Last week, the investment bank Goldman Sachs said it believes this year's deficit will hit \$300 billion and soar to \$375 billion in 2004.

Daniels minimized the impact of the near-term deficits, saying they were so small compared to the size of the nation's economy that they would be manageable.

The budget chief provided no specific numbers, but said deficits the next two years will be 2 percent to 3 percent of the size of the economy, currently estimated at \$10.5 trillion.

"It's important to keep our heads about this," he said.

One Republican familiar with White House budget deliberations said he expected the deficits to hit about \$200 billion this year and about \$250 billion next year, excluding costs of a war.

Deficits of the size discussed by Daniels would approach the record \$290 billion shortfall set in 1992 under the first President Bush. But compared to the size of the economy — which many analysts consider the best way to measure the country's ability to afford deficits — the shortfalls peaked at 6 percent in 1983 and remained in the 4 percent and 5 percent range for much of the 1980s and 1990s.

"By historical perspectives, they are modest, they are manageable at this level," Daniels said. "Our common goal ought to be to contain them."

But Democrats said the White House was merely trying to contain the political damage of a budget spinning out of control. Just a decade ago, several noted, many in the GOP were adamant about controlling the era's rising deficits.

"They're whistling past the graveyard, they're putting the best face they can on a bad situation," said Rep. John Spratt of South Carolina, top Democrat on the House Budget Committee. "They want to cushion the impact as much as possible to make it seem like it doesn't matter."

INTERNATIONAL



Reports intensify about a possible Saddam exile

BY DONNA ABU-NASR
Associated Press Writer

CAIRO, Egypt — Libya, Mauritania, Egypt, Belarus, Cuba or North Korea — could one become Saddam Hussein's next home?

Arab diplomats say the idea — which has not been publicly confirmed — has been presented to Saddam as a way out not only for him and his family, but also for his people, suffering for 12 years under punishing U.N. sanctions.

But denials have come as quickly as new countries are raised, and many experts say they do not believe Saddam will leave Iraq.

The United States has threatened war to topple Saddam, whom it accuses of hiding nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters in Washington this week that, "it would be a good idea if (Saddam) took the opportunity to leave."

Arab leaders have tried before to lure Saddam into exile. In 1991, Egypt offered Saddam a haven to avert the Gulf War; he declined.

Some analysts believe there's not enough pressure on the Iraqi leader to force him to consider such an option now. The Americans may have him in their gun sights, but the bombs have not started falling and there is no collective Arab and Western support for military action against him.

Arab leaders are urging the United States to give them one more opportunity to resolve the crisis peacefully.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak noted "Arab and non-Arab efforts being

made to avert the war and to reach a formula that will be accepted by all parties without the use of force."

Asked about reports of "the secret dispatch of emissaries to Baghdad" with proposals to end the crisis, Mubarak said, without denying the reports: "The era of secrets is over. Today's world is a world with no secrets and everything is known, monitored and followed." He spoke to Egyptian newspaper editors on a flight Tuesday from Saudi Arabia, where he had gone to consult on Iraq.

Saddam would have to be given guarantees he will not face a fate like that of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, who is on trial on war crimes charges. Thousands of Iraqis have been slaughtered since Saddam came to power in 1979, and the Iraqi leader could face calls for retribution.

Moreover, Saddam might worry about vulnerability to assassination or extradition if he leaves Iraq.

If he decides to step down, Saddam could join a host of fallen Arab leaders who have sought shelter in other Arab nations, especially Egypt. Egypt hosted King Saud of Saudi Arabia when he was forced to abdicate in 1955, Yemeni President Abdallah al Salal when he was overthrown in 1966, the Shah after Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution and Sudanese President Gaafar Nimeiri after he was ousted in 1985.

Tariq Aziz, Saddam's longtime deputy prime minister, laughed when asked about the prospect of Saddam going into exile.

"Saddam Hussein is a brave leader and a hero, and will remain in his country for

Inspectors visit Saddam's palace



Sabah Arar/Associated Press

U.N. weapons inspectors visit on Wednesday the Republican Palace in Baghdad. Inspectors spent four hours searching the presidential palace in the heart of the Iraqi capital Wednesday, making their second visit to a residence of President Saddam Hussein since inspections resumed.

a long time, God willing, and will fight until the last Iraqi bullet is fired. We are in it with him," Aziz told BBC radio.

Arab diplomats in Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan say the asylum idea has gained momentum in recent weeks, with Mauritania and Belarus increasingly mentioned as possible sanctuaries. Mauritania has denied the reports.

One diplomat, speaking in Cairo, said Syria sent an emissary to Baghdad last month to persuade the Iraqi leader to accept the asylum solution.

Another diplomat, based in Jordan, said Saddam has been told about the exile plan and guarantees for his safety, but wasn't aware an Iraqi response had been made.

In August, Qatari Foreign Minister Sheik Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani visited Baghdad, and newspaper reports said he offered Saddam exile in an unspecified country. Iraqi officials denied the reports, and al-Thani said his visit was aimed only at persuading Saddam to accept the return of U.N. weapons inspectors.

Ecuador mob twice burns man they said raped child

BY EDISON LOPEZ
Associated Press Writer

QUITO, Ecuador — An enraged mob killed a suspected child rapist, dragging him from a rural jail and then from a hospital where he had been taken by police — twice dousing him with gasoline and setting him on fire, authorities said Wednesday.

Television news programs broadcast footage of the grisly attack by about 1,000 residents of Cayambe, a highland village 30 miles north of the capital, Quito, which was videotaped by townspeople.

The angry mob broke down the metal door of the Cayambe jail and overpowered four policemen Monday to reach Marcelo Quinonez, 26, police chief Cesar Espinoza said.

Dragging him into the street, the mob beat and kicked Quinonez, then doused him with gasoline and set him on fire.

Police used tear gas to break up the crowd and rescue Quinonez, but when they took him to a hospital the crowd followed. They dragged Quinonez back into the street and torched him a second time.

Police again broke up the crowd and transferred Quinonez to a government hospital in Quito, some 30 miles south, where he died, Espinoza said.

Quinonez, a black man in a town of mostly Indians and mestizos, had been detained on Friday to protect him from townspeople who accused him of raping a child, Espinoza said.

Anger escalated as word spread that Quinonez was in custody and by noon on Monday, hundreds of people had surrounded the jail shouting, "death to the rapist and murderer" and "we want justice."

Mayor Diego Bonifaz said the attack should serve as a "clear message" of security concerns in Cayambe, a town of about 50,000 people and only five policemen.

"There is no God, no law, no judge to issue arrest war-

rants, no prosecutors," Bonifaz said of the town, located at the foot of Cayambe volcano. "We have been asking for help for a long time."

The large number of people involved in the attack made it nearly impossible to prosecute those responsible,

the mayor said.

Television reporters interviewed several townspeople who appeared unrepentant.

Espinoza said Cayambe residents burned a teenager to death five years ago after accusing him of criminal activity.

New York City mayor tours rough Mexico City in effort to fight crime

BY GRETCHEN PETERS
Associated Press Writer

MEXICO CITY — Mobbed by local reporters, the crimefighting former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani on Wednesday ended a two-day visit to Mexico's capital by saying that fighting government corruption will be crucial in lowering crime.

Mexican newspapers reporting his visit, also listed a series of crimes that occurred not far from where he walked. Among them was a Tuesday evening incident in which several policemen were arrested as they tried to rob a house while stowing the loot in police cars.

"Dealing with corruption is going to be a major factor here," Giuliani said.

As Giuliani neared Mexico's central plaza, the Zocalo, shop worker Maricruz Ayala, 31, expressed hope but little optimism about chances for reducing crime.

"I hope he can, but it looks to be difficult," she said. "Corruption goes to the core here in Mexico and I don't see that changing."

Crowded by dozens of local media, Giuliani said that he would have preferred to have traveled in a less conspicuous way and added that his advice for the city is still four months away.

"I would have preferred to have come here alone and

quietly and walked about secretly and talked to people," Giuliani told a news conference at the end of his stay.

Instead, he wandered through the streets at the eye of a storm of reporters, cameramen and police guards that made it nearly impossible for him to see anything on Wednesday.

He managed a few relatively calm hours of strolling on Tuesday before local news media discovered him at about dawn.

"Giuliani patrols, guarded by 400" announced the newspaper El Universal, exaggerating the crowd, but not by much.

More than four dozen television and still photographers and dozens of reporters crowded around him on Wednesday as he tried to make his way through Mexico City's narrow downtown streets.

Mexican business leaders collected \$4.3 million to hire Giuliani's consulting company in hopes he could help Mexico City follow New York in cutting crime.

Giuliani repeatedly insisted that he never advocated a "zero tolerance" approach to crime, saying it was more an approach of taking small crimes such as broken windows seriously while closely monitoring crime patterns.

Met with the traditional Mexican skepticism over advice from north of the border, Giuliani lavished praise on his hosts and assured that the report due in May would take account of legal and cultural differences.



SPORTS

Venus moves ahead



David Callow/Associated Press

USA's Venus Williams hits a return against compatriot Ansley Cargill during their second round match at the Australian Open Tennis Tournament, Wednesday, in Melbourne. Williams won 6-3, 6-0.

After season, NFL owners will have a lot to talk about

BY DAVE GOLDBERG

AP Football Writer

The NFL playoffs have provided plenty of fodder for league owners, executives and coaches to discuss — with officiating and overtime at the top of the list.

The discussions, however, won't occur until the end of March at the league meetings in Phoenix. By then, emotions will have cooled and coaches currently vexed about bad calls might be more eager to head for the golf course than debate issues that have no easy answers.

"A lot is being made of it and something has to be done," Baltimore owner Art Modell said Tuesday. "But there's no automatic cure for the officiating. They're human and the players are human, too. They all do the best they can."

One thing that could hamper efforts to make improvements: League rules require a 75 percent vote on any change. That means 24 of the 32 teams must concur not only on changing a policy but also the remedy, something that has been extremely difficult to do on any issue with a hint of controversy.

That includes overtime and officiating. The debates over instant replay for nearly two decades have always been heated and the votes have always been very close.

Take overtime.

The Tennessee Titans' overtime win over the Pittsburgh Steelers' last week was another example of a team winning the toss and driving downfield to kick a game-winning field goal without the other team even getting the ball.

With overtimes becoming more common — there were a record 25 this season — there is continuing discussion about a way to make the outcome depend on more than just a coin toss. And the toss has become more important because offense is improving and kicking and kick coverage isn't, allowing a team taking the overtime kickoff to get good field position and

move the ball easily.

But there's no consensus on how to change the rule.

Pittsburgh owner Dan Rooney, for example, said he favors both teams getting the ball — with reservations.

"We'd have to put some restrictions on it," Rooney said. "Say, if the other team kicks a field goal, you've got to go for a touchdown."

Modell says he might favor some variation of the college rule, in which each team gets the ball at the opponents' 25-yard line and attempts to score. If the teams are tied after the first possessions, they keep going until someone wins.

But all NFL people agree that the 25 is too close for professionals because the kickers are too good and the 42- or 43-yard attempt would be too easy even if a team doesn't move the ball.

"I'd say push it back to the 40 and give a team four downs to do something," Modell said.

Nor is there any simple cure for officiating woes.

NFL officials were locked out for one game last year and finally agreed on a salary package for part-time work that gets many into six figures for part-time jobs as they get seniority.

Owners worry that the cost for full-timers would be prohibitive and wouldn't increase proficiency. They argue it might hurt because those with high-paying regular jobs would keep them and leave the NFL.

The wait until March, meanwhile, will cool things down to the point where very little may be changed.

Much was made, for example, of the acknowledgment by the league that the officials erred at the end of San Francisco's 39-38 win over the New York Giants in the wild-card round. The league said there should have been pass interference on the botched attempt by the Giants at a game-winning field goal and New York should have gotten another chance

S.F. 49ers fire Mariucci

BY GREG BEACHAM

AP Sports Writer

SANTA CLARA — Coach Steve Mariucci was fired by the San Francisco 49ers on Wednesday after years of growing division with owner John York.

Just a few days after Mariucci's fourth trip to the playoffs in his six seasons ended in a 31-6 loss to Tampa Bay, York released Mariucci from the final year of his contract. The men hugged Wednesday morning after a 90-minute meeting at team headquarters.

"It's a very emotional and unpleasant situation for both of them," general manager Terry Donahue said. "Dr. York has a very strong idea about how he wants the 49ers structured. ... This is a philosophical split between what John wanted to do and what Steve wanted."

According to Donahue, Mariucci wanted a bigger role in the 49ers' football decisions, including the position of vice president of football operations. But Mariucci's agent, Gary O'Hagan, said Mariucci never made those demands.

York and Mariucci had a phone conversation Monday that went poorly, and York flew from his home in Youngstown, Ohio, to California to complete the first coaching change since he took charge of the team in 1998.

The Jacksonville Jaguars have the NFL's only other coaching vacancy, and Mariucci was thought to be a prime candidate for the job. But Jaguars spokesman Dan Edwards said the team doesn't have any plans to interview Mariucci, and he isn't considered a candidate.

"I was as shocked as anyone else," Jaguars owner Wayne Weaver told The Associated Press. "His agent told us that Steve's interest right now is taking some time off and doing some broadcasting."

Dennis Green, who coached the Minnesota Vikings from 1992-01, is a logical candidate to replace Mariucci. Green was on 49ers consultant Bill

Walsh's staff when Walsh was coaching the NFL team, and at Stanford.

Mariucci went 57-39 in San Francisco, with a remarkably brief rebuilding period sandwiched between four seasons of double-digit victories. This season, San Francisco went 10-6 and reclaimed the NFC West title before making the second-biggest comeback in NFL playoff history to beat the New York Giants 39-38.

But no matter the owner or the circumstances, ruthless firings are nothing new for an organization that always expects to add to its collection of five championships.

San Francisco parted ways in 1997 with George Seifert — who won two Super Bowls — after the 49ers lost in the second round of the playoffs.

For as much success as Mariucci had, Walsh and Seifert led San Francisco to a total of five Super Bowl championships, the first in 1982 and the most recent in 1995.

Mariucci made \$2.1 million this season, 19th among the NFL's 32 head coaches and a bargain rate for a coach with his track record.

But he angered the 49ers' front office last winter by campaigning for a new contract through the media, and then talking to Notre Dame and the Buccaneers about their vacancies. The teams worked out a compensation package, but when Mariucci waffled on his decision, Tampa Bay hired Jon Gruden instead.

The 49ers won their first-round playoff game by rallying from a 24-point deficit to beat the New York Giants, but they were never in the second-round game against Tampa Bay.

Defensive tackle Sean Moran called Wednesday "a sad day for the players."

"I can't believe they let him go. He's a great coach and a wonderful human being," Moran said outside the team's training complex. "You could actually talk to him. He wasn't one of those dictator types who you're afraid to meet with because you don't know what will happen."

National Football League Playoffs at a glance

By The Associated Press

WILD-CARD PLAYOFFS

Saturday, Jan. 4

AFC
N.Y. Jets 41, Indianapolis 0
NFC
Atlanta 27, Green Bay 7

Sunday, Jan. 5

AFC
Pittsburgh 36, Cleveland 33
NFC
San Francisco 39, N.Y. Giants 38

DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

Saturday, Jan. 11

AFC
Tennessee 34, Pittsburgh 31, OT
NFC

Philadelphia 20, Atlanta 6

Sunday, Jan. 12

NFC
Tampa Bay 31, San Francisco 6
AFC
Oakland 30, N.Y. Jets 10

CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sunday, Jan. 19

NFC Championship
Tampa Bay at Philadelphia, noon (FOX)
AFC Championship
Tennessee at Oakland, 12:30 p.m. (CBS)

SUPER BOWL

Sunday, Jan. 26

At San Diego
AFC champion vs. NFC champion,
12:18 p.m. (ABC)

to kick.

Commissioner Paul Tagliabue, among others, was outspoken about the egregiousness of the error.

The Giants, however, seemed the least outraged. Owner Wellington Mara and general manager Ernie Accorsi said their team lost because they blew a 24-point lead, not because of one officiating mistake.

"I think there's some room for improvement, so you do what you can to

help the officials," said Rooney, whose coach, Bill Cowher, was angry about a running into the kicker call against his team that allowed Tennessee to kick its winning field goal last Saturday.

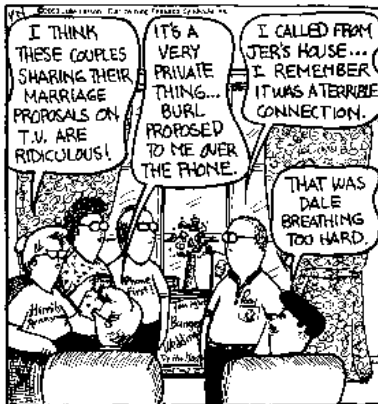
"But you don't want to overreact because of something that happened in the Giants' game."

By March, that sentiment is likely to be widespread.

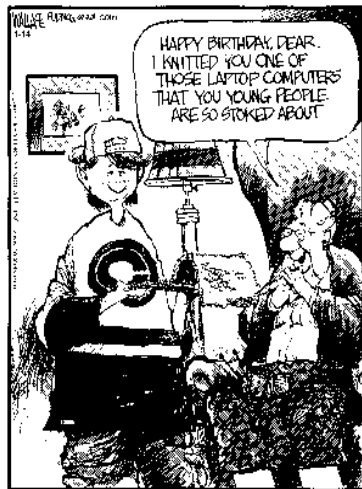
COMICS



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Natural Selection® By Russ Wallace



edge city

by TERRY & PATTY LABAN



Reality Check® By Dave Whammond



Speed Bump® By Dave Coverly



CROSSWORD By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Storage spot
 - 5 Crime outing
 - 10 Radium discoverer
 - 12 "— of Two Cities"
 - 13 In the thick of
 - 14 All in
 - 15 Like Carnaby Street clothes
 - 16 In front of the audience
 - 18 Magic word
 - 20 Calendar box
 - 21 Half of zwei
 - 23 Translation of 21-Across
 - 24 Particles
 - 26 School book
 - 28 Witty word
 - 29 Kit item
 - 31 Do something
 - 32 "The Joy Luck Club" writer
 - 36 — Scott King
 - 39 Fury
 - 40 Dodge
 - 41 Lion tamer's prop
- DOWN**
- 1 Rascal
 - 2 Wit
 - 3 Wear away
 - 4 Racket
 - 5 Long-running musical
 - 6 Fighting
 - 7 Contradictory idea
 - 8 Posh
 - 9 Late flight
 - 11 Selfish one
 - 17 Opposite of oui
 - 19 Collection
 - 22 Tolerate
 - 24 Pastoral
 - 25 Trespass
 - 27 Ron of "Tarzan"
 - 28 Indiana team
 - 30 Bran type
 - 33 Pageant topper
 - 34 Spring sign
 - 35 Bookish ones
 - 37 Perfect place
 - 38 Exam
 - 42 With it

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1-16

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD by Chuck Shepard

Live dogs massacred, eaten for war training

■ London's Daily Telegraph reported in December on a recent Peruvian military video that showed a dog being massacred and its innards eaten by troops training to become ruthless killers; a Peruvian official admitted that live dogs had been used in the past, but not since August 2002.

■ According to a December Reuters report, a surreptitious videotape surfaced of a ritual of elephant domestication in Thailand, in which a young elephant is forced from his mother and beaten for hours, to make him suitable for tourist attractions. (Thai officials defend their domestication program because the country has far more elephants than habitat necessary for them to survive in the wild.)

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2003

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O'Briens Irish Pub, 2941 Main St., Santa Monica, pours A Pint of Funny, every Thurs., 8 p.m. FREE! (310)396-4725.

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Cardio-Funk "CHICAGO" style! Jazz Age 20's meets New Millennium Hip-Hop in an exhilarating workout for all fitness levels. Admission is \$12.00. There will be food giveaways courtesy of Miramax Film. Hosted by: The Center for Physical and Spiritual Fitness, 1455 19th St., Santa Monica. For more information please call (310)453-4536.

Unurban Coffee House presents Comedy Crunch every Thursday evening. Showtime is 7pm. 3301 Pico Blvd. (310)315-0056

FRIDAY

Artful Science: The Social-Cultural Relationship Between Built and Natural Environments. Sam Francis Gallery at Crossroads School in Santa Monica presents an exhibition of drawings, paintings, photographs, and sculpture. Mon-Fri, 10am to 4pm through February 14.

1714 Twenty-First St., 2nd Floor, Peter Boxenbaum Arts Building. For more information please call (310)829-7391 ext. 425.

Santa Monica High School Theater Arts Department presents Romeo & Juliet. Friday and Saturday nights at 8:00pm. November 22nd through December 21st. \$10.00 for students, children, and seniors, \$15.00 for adults. Humanities Center Theater at Santa Monica High School, 601 Pico Blvd. For more information please call (310)458-5939.

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LOEWS CINIPLEX BROADWAY CINEMA

1441 Third St. at Broadway
About Schmidt (R) 12:40, 3:40, 6:40, 9:40. **Two Weeks Notice** (PG-13) 12:25, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30. **Antwone Fisher** (PG-13) 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00. **The Hours** (PG-13) 1:20, 4:20, 7:20, 10:20.

MANN CRITERION

1313 Third St.
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (PG) 11:00, 2:30. **Treasure Planet** (PG) 12:00. **The Hot Chick** (PG-13) 2:25, 5:00, 7:45, 10:10. **Gangs of New York** (R) 11:30, 3:15, 7:00, 10:30. **Narc** (R) 11:45, 2:35, 5:15, 8:00, 10:35. **Adaptation** (R) 12:30, 3:45, 7:30, 10:25. **Confessions of a Dangerous Mind** (R) 1:00, 4:00, 7:05, 10:00.

AMC THEATRE SM 7

1310 3rd Street
Just Married (PG-13) 2:15, 4:50, 7:35, 9:55. **Maid in Manhattan** (PG-13) 2:00, 4:35, 7:15, 9:45. **The Lord of the Rings The Two Towers** (PG-13) 1:20, 5:00, 8:45. **Catch Me If You Can** (PG-13) 1:15, 3:00, 6:15, 7:00, 9:30. **Chicago** (PG-13) 1:50, 4:15, 5:15, 8:15, 10:00. **25th Hour** (R) 1:25, 4:20, 7:20, 10:15.

LANDMARK NU-WILSHIRE

1314 Wilshire Blvd.
Love Liza (R) 12:15, 2:30, 4:45, 7:30, 10:00. **The Pianist** (R) 12:30, 3:45, 7:00, 10:15.

LAEMMLE MONICA

1332 2nd St.
Far From Heaven (PG-13) 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45. **Frida** (R) 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:05. **Max** (R) 1:30, 4:35, 7:25, 10:05. **The Quiet American** (R) 1:45, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40.

AERO THEATER

1328 Montana Ave.
My Big Fat Greek Wedding 5:30, 7:30, 9:30.



BACK PAGE

Key to obesity treatment may be found in lab worms

BY ALEX DOMINGUEZ

Associated Press Writer

Gene manipulation that created sleek and trim roundworms may ultimately help scientists develop new obesity treatments.

Harvard biologist Gary Ruvkun used a new technique to identify about 400 genes in the roundworm's genetic code related to fat production and storage.

His team deactivated, or "turned off," about 300 of the genes in experiments and "the worms are thin and happy," Ruvkun said. When they knocked out the activity of the other 100 genes, worms grew fatter.

Details of the roundworm experiments and the new genetic technique appear in Thursday's issue of the journal *Nature*.

"If someone told me we'd be using this kind of protocol even three years ago, I'd have said that's crazy — don't even think about it," Ruvkun said.

Scientists frequently conduct basic experiments with roundworms — known by their scientific name as *C. elegans* — because they are inexpensive and simple. Scientists can fit 100,000 on a lab dish, and they reproduce within four days.

Yet humans share about half of the roundworm's 19,000 genes, including 200 of the fat-storage genes. Whether the same gene knockout technique will work in humans is unclear, but obesity drugs might be developed based on the basic understanding of the genes, Ruvkun said.

Other biologists cautioned that drug companies would need at least a decade to safely develop a genetic therapy for obesity. One in five Americans is obese, and obesity is implicated in cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other illnesses.

"The worm studies will allow the identification of many more genes much more rapidly. It'll also speed up the process of figuring out how they work," said Leon Avery of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, which is conducting its own fat gene experiments with roundworms. "For the drug companies,

this means a much longer list of 'targets' that they can try to find drugs for."

Ruvkun used a novel gene identification method developed at the Wellcome Trust/Cancer Research UK Institute in England.

Scientists study a gene by deactivating it and examining the organism in the gene's absence. But creating that version of an organism isn't always easy; scientists have needed up to six weeks to create a knockout roundworm.

In the new method, British researchers added genetic material from a roundworm to bacteria. When they fed

the bioengineered bacteria to the worms, their immune systems recognized the genetic material carried by bacteria as foreign and destroyed that sequence in their own genetic coding. In doing so, the worms rapidly turned themselves into knockout versions.

The technique takes advantage of the roundworm's defense against viruses and "jumping DNA" from hijacking its own genetic code, said Julie Ahringer, a Wellcome Trust researcher and the author of the second *Nature* paper.

"We can inactivate hundreds of worm genes in a day," Ahringer said. "It's amazing."

Budget woes force to cut 'porn czar' job

BY C.G. WALLACE

Associated Press Writer

SALT LAKE CITY — Budget troubles have forced Utah to eliminate its controversial "porn czar," whose job was to give legal help to local governments and citizens worried about smut.

Paula Houston, whose formal title was obscenity and pornography complaints ombudsman, will lose her job April 1, one of numerous expected reductions as the state works to close a \$117 million budget hole. Houston worked in the Utah attorney general's office.

Houston, who had spent 15 years as a prosecutor in the Salt Lake suburb of West Valley City, was believed to be the nation's first state official whose job was solely to fight pornography. She fielded calls daily about how parents and businesses could fight unsolicited e-mail promoting pornography, Internet pornography and unsavory shops in their communities.

"I think it's really important that thousands of people called for information. People want to protect their kids. This is a huge issue that's growing daily and it's not going away," she said.

During her two years in office, she prosecuted three cases and has 15 others moving through the courts, she said.

She has helped draft legislation, including a measure

that clarified Utah's indecent public display law which had been so vague that it could have included works of art, she said.

Her office had an annual budget of \$150,000, including her salary and that of clerical help, Houston said.

Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff said his office had to make \$750,000 in cuts from its budget for this year.

Houston's caseload will be divided up among other attorneys, he said, but he praised her work.

"This is the hardest cut, because I really am committed to the problem of pornography," he said. "Despite the fact she has been personally ridiculed, persecuted and made fun of, she never gave up. That's the kind of behavior you want to reward."

Critics, worried over free-speech implications, wondered how Houston, a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, could fairly address pornography, which the denomination views as an addiction akin to drugs.

Though the American Civil Liberties Union expressed those concerns when Houston was appointed, the ACLU didn't take a stance against Houston during her tenure. Houston helped clarify some legislation regarding indecency, said Dani Eyer, executive director of the ACLU's Utah affiliate.

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