FREE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2004 Volume 3, Issue 57

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

FANTASY 5
35, 15, 32, 33, 6

DAILY 3
Afternoon picks: **4, 6, 2**
Evening picks: **9, 6, 7**

DAILY DERBY
1st Place: 1, Gold Rush
2nd Place: 6, Whirl Win
3rd Place: 5, California Classic
Race Time: 1:44.48

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
by Chuck Shepard

In October in Hennepin County, Minn., Rafiq Abdul Mortland, 38, was sentenced to eight to 10 years in prison as the man who habitually asked store clerks whom he robbed to also hand over some Rolaids. When asked by police why he did that, Mortland said it was to relieve the stress he got from committing robberies. [St. Louis Park Sun/Sailor, 10-15-03]

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"As you know, these are open forums, you're able to come and listen to what I have to say."

– George W. Bush

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Northridge Quake: 10 years later

Photo courtesy

The Northridge Earthquake rocked Santa Monica 10 years ago and left 530 buildings uninhabitable.

Cracking quake funding a very shaky experience

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

THE FAULT LINE — It's been a decade since this city was rocked by the Northridge Earthquake, and many parts of it are still rebuilding.

The quake, which registered at 6.7 on the Richter Scale, caused an estimated $250 million in damages city-wide and countless nightmares for residents who were awoken at 4:17 a.m. on Jan. 17, 1994, in absolute panic and fear as the earth came out from underneath them.

Police and emergency and city workers responded swiftly to the 12 fires that broke out as a result of the quake, as well as the 300 reported gas leaks and hundreds of injured people. Both hospitals — Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center and Saint John's Health Center — were hit especially hard. Doctors scrambled to attend to patients in facilities that were inoperable. Both hospitals were closed for months and are still rebuilding today.

The devastation included 530 buildings, containing 2,300 housing units, that were uninhabitable. Approximately 1,500 buildings with 16,000 units sustained damage. Of those, 118 were city-owned buildings. And while nearly every building at Santa Monica College sustained damage, its science, liberal arts, library and parking structures had to be entirely replaced. All of them have been demolished and rebuilt, except the liberal arts building, which is scheduled to be constructed this spring and completed in 2006.

And while emergency workers responded quickly to the incident, so too did elected officials who immediately passed several laws and approved procedures to get the city back to normal for residents and businesses. They also called upon the federal government to help pay to clean up the mess. But because Northridge had been the focus of the media's and federal government's attention, Santa Monica almost got lost in the fray.

The Santa Monica Freeway was shut down, and it was nearly impossible to get here just days after the quake. Santa Monica remained iso-

See ANNIVERSARY, page 7

Guardian angel appears in quake

By Caroline Delijani

It was a shivering-cold January morning. I was standing in front of Santa Monica Hospital — which is now the Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center — in absolute awe as I stared at the huge crack that ran down the five-story building. Water was pouring down from the top floor, and it sounded much like the Bride's Veil in Yosemite. No. This was not a bizarre nightmare.

The Northridge Earthquake had zigzagged throughout most of the westside at 4:17 a.m. on Jan. 17, 1994.

Photo courtesy

The quake devastated the SM-UCLA Medical Center.

Santa Monica — on that early morning — was a mess of fallen bricks and shattered glass, quiet streets with barely hanging store signs, and piles of hangers and clothes were covering Wilshire Boulevard. My tears gushed uncontrollably, and I didn't know if I would ever see my twin baby boys again. Only 10 days old and premature, Kevin and Ryan stayed at the hospital for prop-

See QUAKE, page 6

Money rolls in from earthquake recovery

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL —Taxpayers are still feeling the pain of the Northridge Earthquake even a decade after the natural disaster wreaked havoc on the city.

While the estimated damage to the city was $250 million, hundreds of millions more have been spent rebuilding. The city of Santa Monica has received about $100 million in public assistance and nearly $78 million of that has gone to ongoing sewer repair work. The rest has gone to repairing and replacing city-owned buildings, including eight downtown parking garages, the municipal swimming pool, the historic Miles Playhouse and the recently opened Public Safety Facility.

At Santa Monica College, about $45 million was given in FEMA

See MONEY, page 6

Gates and his family buy out neighborhood

By The Associated Press

MEDINA, Wash. — What happens when Bill and Melinda Gates want their privacy? They buy up the neighborhood, that's what.

Over the past decade, representatives for the world's richest man and his wife have bought 11 properties, including nine houses, that surround their massive waterfront estate in this suburb across Lake Washington from Seattle.

"This is a family that holds privacy very dearly to them," Gates family spokesman Joe Cerrell told The Seattle Times. "The properties create a buffer around the Gates home."

In 1997, after several years of construction, the co-founder and chairman of Microsoft Corp. and his family moved into their 48,000-square-foot high-tech home on the five-acre Medina estate.

The Times reported Friday that

See GATES, page 13

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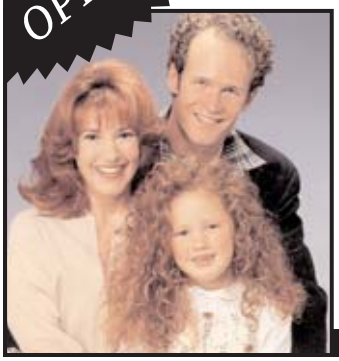

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Go enjoy yourself, Gemini

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)
★★★★★ Make time for that special person in your life, and you will be well-rewarded. Don't force anyone into a mold, or you could be surprised by what he or she does. You might even be startled by what happens if you relax and let go. Tonight: Follow the music.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ You might want to take a second look at what is going on within a relationship. On some level, you might like the ups and downs. Share your feelings. Explore options. Work together as a team. Tonight: The only answer is "yes." Go along with a loved one's plans.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ Finish off some last-minute errands, and you'll obtain the results you want. Unexpected developments could toss plans in a new direction. A boss, parent or loved one really cares. You exude a special quality of friendship. Tonight: Now, go enjoy yourself.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★★ Investigate what might be going on with a partner or special friend. You might have a hard time understanding, so go with the flow. Try to imagine what it would be like to be in this person's shoes. Understanding will help here. Tonight: Relax. Stop pushing so hard.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Use your imagination, and you'll go in a new direction. Unexpected developments within partnerships make you smile. You know what you want and where you are going. Work through any obstacles. The twinkle in your eye says everything. Tonight: Take off.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ You make all the difference within your immediate circle. You could find others acting in strange ways. Get used to that behavior, as it will continue. Those around you become less predictable, making you more independent. Tonight: Homeward bound.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Expenses climb upward, but your clout can and will make a difference. You need to network, make calls and perhaps change some patterns. Trust that through your strong social abilities you will gain. A boss or co-worker likes you a bit too much. Tonight: Out on the town. Visit a preferred spot.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★★ Handle key matters in the morning. Though you have a strong personality and a lot of charisma, be careful with commitments. You might not want to take any risks at all right now. Schedule time for a loved one. Tonight: Out with the gang.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ You could be all smiles by the afternoon, if you let go and worry less about having certain things happen in a way that pleases you. Your personality helps others bounce over problems. Be yourself. Keep smiling. Tonight: All grins. You have plenty to smile about, too.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★ Use the morning to accomplish something that is very important. By the afternoon, you will want to slow down and perhaps do a little less; with any luck, you could leave work early. Take care of yourself as well as others. Tonight: Get some extra sleep while you can.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You are in the limelight in the morning. Others willingly respond to your energy and drive. You might want to think through a decision that involves a friend before taking a key action. You must follow your heart. Tonight: Where the gang is.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★★ Reach out for others at a distance, especially if you think you could learn something from them. You have a very soft way of presenting yourself that makes a big difference in others' reactions. Take care of your responsibilities. Tonight: You're a force to be dealt with.

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LOCAL

Pole, 1; car, 0

Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

A car, which smashed head-on into a utility pole at the northwest corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Third Street, is towed away early Friday morning. It's unknown if the driver was injured.

surf report

The W swell will fade today. Many spots see chest- to head-high waves, while top spots are even bigger in the morning.

OUTLOOK: By Sunday a new W swell will build and looks strongest in the afternoon. As this swell peaks, many spots will again be in the head-high to overhead range, while standout spots see sets in the double overhead zone.

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	**12:18 PM**	**11:03 PM**	**4:44 AM**	**6:55 PM**
SUNDAY	1:09 PM	5:40 AM	7:47 PM	N/A
MONDAY	12:08 AM	1:54 PM	6:29 AM	8:32 PM
TUESDAY	1:03 AM	2:37 PM	7:18 AM	9:13 PM
WEDNESDAY	1:49 AM	3:19 PM	8:08 AM	9:57 PM
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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Music at the pier today

By Daily Press staff

Pier JAMS, a new music program for area student/youth performing groups is beginning this weekend at the Santa Monica Pier with two a cappella groups from Stanford University.

The program kicks off at noon today with performances by the Mendicants and Counterpoint. Both are the longest-standing male and female vocal groups, respectively, in Stanford's history. They are visiting the pier as part of their annual tour through the Los Angeles area.

Pier JAMS is an acronym for the Santa Monica Pier Junior Acoustic Music Series, a program dedicated to giving young musicians the opportunity to perform in a fun, high profile venue. Community and student musical groups that would like to schedule a concert may call (310) 458-8901.

Man's invention sticks it to competition

By Daily Press staff

The spirit of invention is alive and well in California.

This past fall, more than 8,000 ideas were entered in the Staples Invention Quest — the first national search for a new office product to make work-life easier.

Neil Grimwood, of Marina del Rey, has been selected as one of 100 semi-finalists in the Invention Quest for his StickDot, "the mini-bulletin board that goes everywhere and anywhere."

Grimwood said he was inspired to create the StickDot out of the need to stick notes to his computer monitor. He said he missed an important business meeting because a reminder note fell on the floor.

Grimwood said he does his most inventive thinking while rollerblading by the ocean and gets his invention inspiration from people "who take the simple things that they have available to them and create solutions for themselves."

As a semi-finalist, Grimwood will pitch his idea to a panel of Invention Quest judges at one of six regional semi-final events being held this month in Baltimore, Dallas, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Boston and Cincinnati.

Staples Invention Quest was launched Sept. 25. Staples gift cards for $100 went to 100 semi-finalists, and 12 finalists will be selected by Feb. 7 to head to New York City for the Invention Quest finals March 10.

An expert panel of inventors and entrepreneurs will decide who walks away with the $25,000 grand prize.

Winners also will receive royalties if their ideas are created and sold by Staples.

Staples is headquartered outside of Boston and sells a range of office products, including supplies, technology, furniture and business services.

Vintage postcards show city's history

By Daily Press staff

The life and landscapes of Santa Monica — from Venice to the canyon — are captured via vintage postcards.

The Santa Monica Historical Society Museum will exhibit Feb. 3 through Mar. 31 more than 150 vintage postcards of Santa Monica Bay during late 19th century and early 20th century from the Roger Genser Collection. The museum, located at 1539 Euclid St. in Santa Monica, is open Tuesday and Friday 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and the second and fourth Sundays of each month from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

General admission is $5. Seniors and students pay $2, and admission is free for children 12 and under. For more information call (310) 395-2290.

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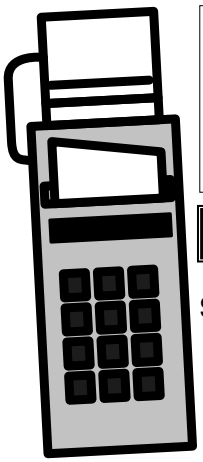

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LETTERS

Uhh, *duh*

Editor:

In response to Mike Kirwan's letter (SMDP, Jan. 14, page 4): I do know how to spell hypocrite: R-E-P-U-B-L-I-C-A-N

In response to John Marciano of Santa Monica's letter (SMDP, Jan. 14, page 4), entitled "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer" which reads "... The pain will be felt by the middle and the lower classes, however, not corporations and millionaires like Schwarzenegger."

I agree, and say: Duh, duh and duher

Heidi Brennan-Darby
Santa Monica

Taxpayer says 'not a dime more'

Editor:

The Jan. 7 headline reads "School supporters give City Hall ultimatum." Well here's my ultimatum to that out-of-control arrogant group. If it was up to me you guys would not get a dime more, you just raised my property tax by over $300. I was already paying over $100 a year in school taxes, now I'm paying more than $400 to the schools and you are giving ultimatums. We all know that any money the city gives comes from us so if the city agrees to this outrageous demand we will have another fee to pay. No one likes to call them taxes, they like the "fee" word. Well, whatever you call, it someone pays and I'm not buying it.

Irving Baron
Santa Monica

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

Sumo wrestling making its way into American culture

MODERN TIMES

By Lloyd Garver

Many of us have sat back on our comfy couches and watched the exercise parade of things like aerobics, Jazzercise, Jane Fonda-ercize, step climbing, aqua-aerobics, Pilates, and "executive" boxing. So, what's the latest thing for those who want to huff and puff? Sumo wrestling.

I'm not kidding. Japan's national sport, the thing that to us uncultured observers looks like a pushing contest between two fat guys in diapers, is getting some unlikely participants in America.

Traditionally, sumo wrestlers are very big men, sometimes weighing as much as 600 pounds. They also are agile and graceful athletes. The rules are simple: Two wrestlers, wearing only a loincloth called a "mawashi," try to push each other out of the ring, or make any part of their opponent's body other than the feet touch the ground.

In the kind of sumo that's starting to catch on here, you don't have to be fat to participate. You don't even have to be a man. You just have to be someone who wants to try a new way to get into shape. You burn a lot of calories in sumo, so it's bound to be popular with the fitness-obsessed set. There already are sumo classes at UCLA and at some martial arts studios in Santa Monica and West LA. And if it's starting to get popular here in Southern California, you can bet your bottom latte that it will soon be spreading all over the country.

I predict that it's going to be the "in" thing among the "in" crowd. Once they get rid of the beautiful rituals and the mutual respect, it will be the perfect sport for spoiled celebrities. Before beginning, both wrestlers stamp their feet, clap their hands and then stare at each other. Then the actual match lasts only about one minute. It's a lot like a Britney Spears marriage.

After Madonna and Demi Moore go to their Kabbalah class, and before they get their Botox injections, they'll stop off to do a little sumo wrestling. Paris Hilton will be modeling designer loincloths, and Richard Gere will be talking about how pushing another man out of the ring awakened his spiritual side.

But I don't think it's only going to appeal to celebrities. Sumo just might be the perfect exercise for America today. After all, we keep buying diet books, we keep joining gyms, and the fat keeps piling onto America's waist, hips and butts. Today, something like 61 percent of American adults weigh more than they should. What could be more perfect for this country than an activity in which you can exercise and be fat?

Obviously, there are many people who either ignore medical science or the nagging of their loved ones. And there are others who, for various reasons, just can't lose weight. Should they have to continue to be the object of public scorn? Must they be filled with guilt and shame forever? Not once sumo spreads its chunky thighs across the land.

When they're in training, Japan's sumo wrestlers consume a great deal of food, containing an enormous number of calories. And they don't have to do it in secret after everybody else has gone to bed. You won't either after you put on your first loincloth. Sumo wrestlers aren't ashamed of being fat. They celebrate it. Nobody looks down at them because of the extra baggage they carry. On the contrary, they're heroes. Maybe soon in this country, people will start looking at overweight folks differently, too. They'll no longer shake their heads and think, "What happened to him? He really put on some weight." Instead, they'll think, "Good for him. Looks like he's into sumo wrestling."

And I don't think we're too far away from hearing the following exchange:

"Are you going to just sit on the couch, eat junk, and drink beer all day?"

"I have to. I'm in training."

Note to those who read my column last week:

I didn't win the lottery. I don't get it, either. I thought I did everything right. It's possible the lottery people messed up. I've written to them and asked them to make sure they published the correct numbers. I haven't heard back yet.

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

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Do you have something to say in response to the opinion pages? Your opinion matters. Write a letter to the editor and tell us what's on your mind.

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OPINION

Remembering Northridge: 4:17 a.m., Jan. 17, 1994

TITTINGER'S TAKE

By Michael J. Tittinger

A very dear friend took some time recently to read for me her favorite poem — "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold. It was a poem with which I was not previously familiar, but there it was — smack on page 794 of my "Anthology of Poetry" textbook from college.

"The sea is calm to-night"

"The tide is full, the moon lies fair…" she began.

And while art is eternally open to interpretation, upon my first exposure to the poem I was struck by the continual references to reminders past, both good and bad, and how one symbolic object can represent one and the same. In this case, the ocean moves Arnold to tears. It is now seemingly retreating, when in years past it was crashing forth with wave after wave of optimism.

What once represented love and serenity and contentment, now only serves to render sadness and confusion and loneliness.

"The Sea of Faith"

"Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore"

"Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd."

"But now I only hear"

"Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,"

"Retreating, to the breath"

"Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear"

"And naked shingles of the world."

Symbols such as the one Arnold speaks of — the eternal sea outside his English estate — exist in each of our lives on one level or another. I was reminded of one such symbol last summer when an article appeared in the Daily Press detailing the refurbishment of the former Crocker Bank Building ("Downtown clock tower to begin ticking again," July 7). The depression-era art-deco treasure of a building is capped with a clock tower frozen in time.

Time stopped at the Crocker Building, as it did for so many in and around the city of Santa Monica, at precisely 4:17 a.m., Jan. 17, 1994, when the Northridge earthquake struck a sleeping and unsuspecting Southern California. A decade later, today, reconstruction projects abound throughout the area, including the UCLA Medical Center across the street from me, where jackhammers and power drills have become my alarm clock by default.

Ever since moving to Santa Monica in recent years I have heard story upon story about that day — where people were, what they were doing, how they responded and rebuilt their lives — a day no one who lived here will forget, to be sure, nor should they forget. For Santa Monicans, it is a day akin to the moon landing, O.J.'s white Bronco "getaway" and 9-11 in terms of sheer "Where were you?" indelibility.

Yet, maybe it is time we let go. Maybe it is time we forged ahead.

I have driven, jogged or walked past the Crocker clock tower hundreds of times since finally landing here on the left coast, as have most of us when we are not so caught up in the hustle and bustle to take note of the majestic clock tower frozen at "4:17."

For the aftershocks of the Northridge earthquake were felt across the nation, in more ways then we can possibly imagine.

"Are you awake?" I remember my mom calling upstairs. I seldom was. I had been working the graveyard shift at a printing company and couldn't wait to quit. The week before, I had secured a job with a Santa Monica production company some 3,000 miles away from my childhood home. My clothes and possessions were packed neatly into a series of boxes sitting idle in the center of my stripped-down boyhood bedroom.

"Yeah … why?"

"Did you hear what happened out in California?"

Soon after, my plane tickets were refunded, my job with the now-defunct production company nixed and my pre-drafted resignation letter for the printing plant was filed away for another day. But those boxes remained, sitting idle in the center of my room. I had neither the heart nor the will to unpack them for weeks, maybe months. Once a symbol of optimism and excitement and the future, they had since come to symbolize isolation and frustration and the past.

"… For the world, which seems"

"To lie before us like a land of dreams,"

"So various, so beautiful, so new,"

"Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,"

"Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;"

"And we are here as on a darkling plain"

"Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,"

"Where ignorant armies clash by night."

Those boxes stacked in the middle of my room vexed me for the longest time, as my dreams of faraway success seemed swallowed up by an earthquake across the country while I slept. But, as it always does, time ticked on … life moved on. Eventually, it was time to unpack those boxes. Eventually, it was time to stop dwelling on the past and begin looking to the future anew.

Ultimately, I did move to Santa Monica, and upon reflection, the life experiences I had during those interim years changed my life in ways I couldn't have imagined — there was love and loss, euphoria and sorrow. But the image of those stacked boxes sitting idle no longer vexes me. It has since taken on yet another meaning — rebirth and renewal.

Finally, it was time to move on, as should we all. It's time to reset Santa Monica's stopwatch and let time heal the wounds, not let them bleed and bleed. The Crocker clock tower, according to developers, will soon be ticking once again.

It's time to create new memories and forge ahead. Let the symbols of the fleeting past be reborn and take on a positive meaning once again.

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LOCAL

Pence: Infants' earthquake savior

QUAKE, from page 1

er supervision and care, according to doctor's orders.

A nurse named Cindy was rushing to the hospital to volunteer her services. She remembered me and said she had seen my babies. She said that Wanda had saved them, and I could find them in the auditorium where all the patients were being transferred. Like a tidal wave, the crowd of the injured — pieces of cloth wrapped around their arms, faces bleeding, limping as best they could — carried her away in a moment.

I rushed to the auditorium and saw what resembled the movie portrayal of a war zone. The earthquake, at 6.7 on the Richter scale, had hit hard but also continually shook us every half-hour during the aftermath. Everyone in the auditorium screamed, embraced and prayed.

Old people were being carried in on sheets to recline on the bare floor side by side; a woman was pacing up and down, screaming — about to go in labor. Another woman, almost unconscious, had just been C-sectioned. Nurses ran as doctors frantically paced every which way — checking on patients, making calls on hopeless landline phones. (Cell phones would have been handy, but back then, at best, you would have a pager.) Some even thought of bringing a camera to work to take photos of what they were witnessing.

President Bill Clinton had announced a state of emergency.

My heart was pounding, and I didn't know where to look for two, tiny bundles that hardly weighed four pounds each. I found another mom. One of her triplets had stayed at the natal intensive care ward. She showed me where I could find Wanda. By then, everyone knew about "Wanda and the twins." In a quiet corner, Wanda held a clear, plastic hospital bassinet — which sheltered both my babies, side by side. She had covered them with many layers of blankets and whatever else she could find.

The babies were fast asleep, safe and sound, in the arms of their guardian angel. I held Wanda in my arms and cried for a few minutes before I could find the words to thank her. I wiped my tears with my bare hands and asked her to tell me exactly what happened.

Wanda Pence, at an age when most people have retired, has served as a nurse in the labor and delivery and nursery departments of the hospital for almost six decades. She had actually kept count of the number of babies she had taken care of since 1975. They totaled 15,000. She said that because she didn't have children, she treated every newborn as her own. Twenty minutes before the quake, Wanda was doing a routine check on the babies in the nursery. When she took Ryan's temperature, she noticed it had dropped slightly. She explained that happens often with premature babies whose systems simply "forget" to warm up their bodies.

According to hospital procedure, she placed Ryan in an isolette — a large green machine with a warm chamber. The colossal machine covered most of the wall in the nursery. Before she closed the door of the isolette, she looked at Kevin, sleeping all alone and thought that because they were twins and had lived all their lives together in their mother's tummy, there was no reason to separate them.

Wanda slipped Kevin in the chamber along with his brother, unaware that her decision would save lives. She said she didn't really know why she thought of such an idea, especially given that hospital rules stated that two babies shouldn't stay in the isolette at the same time for health and hygiene reasons.

Shortly after, Wanda finished her rounds and took the remaining three babies in the nursery to their mothers to be fed. Wanda said she was teaching a new mom how to breast feed when a great jolt, "like a massive truck hitting the building," rocked everyone and all electricity was lost.

The noise — metal beams ripping through ceilings, patients screaming, debris falling in all directions — was endless. But Wanda, calm and strong, unlike her fragile appearance, made sure the three mothers had their newborn babies and husbands near and said to them, "You can walk yourselves down to safety. Your husbands will help. I need to find the Delijani twins. They don't have their parents with them."

Then she hurried back to the nursery only to find a huge pile of bassinets blocking the entrance. Minutes earlier, five babies were sleeping in those bassinets. She made her way in the pitch dark to the back door of the nursery. She felt water all over her feet and smelled heavy fumes of gas. The pipes had burst, and one of the nurses had collapsed on the floor.

Wanda knew exactly where to look for the babies. The only object intact in the entire nursery was the isolette. She took the babies out, filled her shirt with as many tiny bottles and diapers as she could get her hands on and rushed down the stairs. When she made it downstairs, she asked some people to go back upstairs and bring down her colleague from the nursery.

I trembled as I listened to her. I noticed she was uncomfortable and rubbing her ankle. I asked her about it. She lifted up her pant cuff to reveal a huge bruise on her swollen ankle. She said she twisted her ankle as she rushed down the stairs with the babies in her arms. Later, I found out her ankle was broken.

Wanda ended the story by saying when she reached the ground floor, she looked around and thought about what to do next. It was cold outside, and the sun was barely out. She went to her car, set the babies on the passenger seat, turned on the heat and started to feed them one by one.

They stayed in the car for a while before the authorities could decide if the auditorium was safe enough to temporarily house hospital patients.

I share this story with whomever I meet. I tell everyone there is hope in desperate times. A miracle worker like Wanda could show up and change your life forever.

Wanda, you remain in all my prayers. Thank God for you.

Wanda Pence continues caring for newborns part time at the Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center. Kevin and Ryan turned 10 years old on Jan. 7.

They are in the fourth grade at Sinai Akiba Academy, where they are learning the importance of community help and good citizenship. They recently raised more than $1,600 for the Hadassah Hospital Children's Pavilion.

When receiving Kevin and Ryan's little sister, Shannon, in the same nursery in March of 1996, Wanda looked at me and said, "You again?"

Photo courtesy

Nurse Wanda Pence rescued twin infants, Kevin and Ryan Delijani, after the hospital crumbled around them.

FEMA funding has helped rebuild city

MONEY, from page 1

funds to replace buildings — $20 million for the science building, $3 million for a new parking structure, $2.8 million for the library and $3 million for the liberal arts building.

Tens of millions dollars in FEMA funds also went to the hospitals, which are still rebuilding their facilities and expect to be finished by 2008, when they are required to have their facilities meet seismic standards. Combined, Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center and Saint John's Health Care Center will spend nearly $600 million in new facilities.

But the money from the federal government has trickled in slowly — something Santa Monica officials anticipated just days after the quake.

"The city really took the initiative to assist in the recovery process and not wait for FEMA," said Paul Weinberg, emergency management coordinator for the city. "The importance of getting recovery up and running was recognized by the City Council right away.

"It was a unique disaster and a unique response," he added.

The Santa Monica City Council almost immediately created funding for a "Redevelopment Agency," which assesses properties to pay for public infrastructure in what is called the "Earthquake Recovery Redevelopment Project Area." The area includes most of the city, and the tax partially funds city-owned buildings and the liberal arts building at SMC.

"It took several years to get it into the positive," said Jeff Mathieu, director of resource management for the city. The agency was created in 1994 and by 1996, several million dollars had been generated through a portion of local taxes. And although 20 percent must be dedicated to repairing or rebuilding residential complexes, 47 percent has been used toward that end, Mathieu said.

"In Santa Monica, there is always a higher quality of public service," he said.

Although it's unknown how much money the agency has collected, last year $6.5 million was generated for housing and $20 million was taken in to retrofit the downtown parking structures and help rebuild SMC's $19 million liberal arts building, said Tina Rodriguez, the Redevelopment Agency's administrator. The year prior, $5.1 million was set aside for housing and $15.5 million was put toward community projects, Rodriguez said.

Officials expect to collect hundreds of millions more because the tax increases as assessment valuations go up. The tax is set to expire in 2039.

The city also applied for and received $33 million in a federal block grant — $25 million devoted to community development and $8 million to what's called a "home presidential supplemental program," Mathieu said.

Another source of funding, the "Disaster Recovery Center" also directly helped residents through 15 state and federal agencies by helping homeowners and renters acquire low-cost loans, interest rates and grants to repair and rebuild their properties, Mathieu said.

At SMC, FEMA funding wasn't nearly enough to pay for the damage. The college has relied on the city through the Redevelopment Agency, which helped fund the swimming pool, the new parking garage and now the liberal arts building. SMC also has used funds generated through its own revenue sources like Proposition T, which was a bond measure passed in 1992 dedicated to school facilities, as well as Measure U, passed in 2002. SMC even received private donations — $250,000 was given by the John Paul Getty Foundation to replace books and supplies for the art department, said SMC spokesman Bruce Smith.

Although most agree that the quake was a devastating experience for the entire city, it did pump millions into aging buildings that would have been replaced eventually.

"FEMA has really helped SMC get new facilities; the face of the college has changed," Smith said. "But we are still working to get more because we feel we deserve more."

Facilities replaced at SMC:

Science building: Completed in 1999. Cost: $30 million. FEMA funding: $20 million.

Parking garage: Completed in 2002. Cost: $5.2 million. FEMA funding: $3 million.

Library: Completed in 2003. Cost: $23.6 million. FEMA funding: $2.8 million.

Liberal arts building: Construction to begin in spring of 2004. Cost: $19 million. FEMA: $3 million.

SM mayor's persistence pulled city out of the rubble

ANNIVERSARY, from page 1

lated, and most of the country was unaware of the devastation that had occurred.

"We had much more damage than any other city," said then mayor Judy Abdo. "People didn't know our hospitals were being closed and all these buildings were red tagged."

The quake happened on Martin Luther King Day, a Monday. By Wednesday, federal officials, including President Bill Clinton had arrived in Los Angeles. Abdo attended a meeting at a Burbank Airport hangar that included President Clinton, members of his cabinet, state legislators and more importantly, LA Mayor Richard Riordan — as Abdo would soon learn.

"There was a whole string of people there explaining how the money was going to come through one block grant, and I realized we would have gotten little money," Abdo said, adding she was sitting in the back of the hangar with hundreds of others. "I was getting a little agitated because I could see they weren't going to help us — it was all going to be funneled through LA."

She raised her hand and because she and Riordan had become mayors at the same time, he spotted her in the crowd. A microphone was brought to her, and she was able to address the politicians on stage.

"I informed everyone of what had happened to us," she said, adding the meeting was being aired on national television. "I said 'This won't work as suggested,' and it went everywhere, and everyone knew what had happened to us."

Abdo was invited up to the podium after the meeting and was able to speak directly to President Clinton and other legislators.

"He asked if the Loews Hotel was okay because that's where he liked to stay," she recounted. "It was then that they started inviting me to meetings with the feds."

Photo courtesy

Santa Monica officials and residents pulled together to rebuild the city.

From then, things just changed, Abdo said. FEMA officials had to rethink how they were going to administer money to residents, particularly renters, most of who live in Santa Monica. Housing assistance and loans were given directly to renters and homeowners as a result.

Abdo spent the days after the quake answering phones at City Hall and touring the city with federal officials. Many places in the city were intact — like Ocean Park — where Abdo lives. But as many residents later learned, her house ended up sustaining serious structural damage.

City Councilman Herb Katz, who has lived in LA since he was a child and now lives in Santa Monica's Sunset Park neighborhood, woke up to his house shaking.

"It was probably the scariest thing I've ever experienced," he said.

Hospital isolates itself from disaster

By Daily Press staff

MID CITY — Saint John's Health Center, which was closed for nine months after the Northridge Earthquake, is putting the final touches on a new inpatient facility, specifically designed to withstand a quake with force levels twice those of the 1994 tremble.

The deadly quake shook the hospital with devastating force in 1994 and caused severe structural damage, forcing the hospital to close.

As the creation of the new Saint John's began to take shape in the months following the quake's aftermath, hospital officials made a key decision early on to devote a substantial portion of their $314 million construction budget to a state-of-the-art structural system that would keep the facilities operational during a quake.

The estimated final cost of the base isolation system for the entire project, which includes 192 base isolators, is between $12 and $15 million. The entire 500,000-square-foot inpatient building at Saint John's sits on seismic isolators, which consist of large rubber bearings reinforced with steel, with a lead core for dampening. The bearings are 24 inches high and 48 inches in diameter and weigh 2.5 tons each. They form the foundation of the system.

The isolators dampen and deflect much of the ground movement caused by temblors. With the isolators, the inpatient building, which is scheduled to open this summer, can absorb a displacement of up to 27 inches during a quake. As a result, the building can withstand force levels of up to 2 Gs (gravitational force) — which is twice the force of the Northridge Earthquake, estimated at .9 Gs of ground acceleration.

Saint John's is one of only three hospitals in Southern California to feature a base isolation system and the only one on the westside.

Photo courtesy

After the Northridge Earthquake, St. John's was closed for nine months.

Saint John's also has built a number of back-up systems to help maintain full operations during a natural disaster. There are dual electrical feeds from separate substations, dual fuel for boilers, dual water supplies from separate water mains and enough on-site water and fuel storage to keep the hospital operating under normal capacity for up to five days. Emergency generators also will allow the hospital to operate under 80 percent normal power in the event of a major black-out or power shortage.

Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center also is rebuilding its facilities, a $275 million overhaul. It has recently completed a central plant on Arizona Avenue to power both the existing and replacement hospitals. It has more reliable equipment than the old one, which was between 35 and 40 years old. The new plant meets federal seismic standards, is more energy efficient and produces less emissions.

"It's the best of both worlds," said hospital spokesman Ted Braun. "It's safer and reliable."

If another earthquake hits, how prepared are we?

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER — The Northridge Earthquake might have lasted only a few seconds, but it has taken more than 120 months of meetings and countless hours of work by city officials and emergency responders to learn lessons from the disaster.

Ten years out, Santa Monica officials still meet regularly with FEMA and the state's Office of Emergency Services over the status of ongoing rebuilding projects. The Disaster Recovery Group, formed shortly after the quake, has been meeting monthly since Jan. 17, 1994, to monitor the status of funding, repairs and reconstruction. And the city's own emergency operation center team — which includes a representative from nearly every department in City Hall — meets monthly. The city's team of public information officers also meets monthly with every department.

"Everybody has a role to play and is ready to perform," said Paul Weinberg, the city's emergency services coordinator. "The more you practice, the better you are able to respond."

Although he didn't work in Santa Monica during the quake, Weinberg realized immediately when he started on the job more than a year ago that the city had an unusually strong handle on disaster recovery efforts.

"This is one of the most disaster-aware cities I've ever seen," he said. "This city has kept its eye on the ball for 10 years."

Officials continually discuss how they can better respond to natural disasters. What they've learned is that property retrieval is critical — in 1994 city officials recovered property from 81 red- and yellow-tagged buildings in about 1,800 units. They also learned that equipping residents with knowledge on how to prepare for an emergency — such as knowing how to turn off utilities and recover their own property — is vital.

The city offers a free, one-day class, "Disaster Assistance Response Training," three times a year for residents to better prepare themselves in case of an emergency. The next one will be scheduled for February or March.

"It helps because if they are prepared, it takes some of the burden off emergency responders," Weinberg said.

Local officials also have learned how key communicating with each other, the public and dignitaries can be in getting the proper resources pumped into the community. Capitalizing on the media and the Internet and holding public meetings help keep residents informed on the city's progress in responding and recovery efforts, Weinberg said.

Elected officials and city workers recognized that the governmental steps they take immediately after a disaster can tremendously help residents and business owners get back to normal. Days following the quake, the City Council passed a series of laws and policy changes that enabled residents to repair their buildings without the usual red tape frequently experienced in City Hall. The fees for repairs were waived; "one-step permit centers" were set up so applying for demolition was made easier; a local funding mechanism was created to rebuild within the city; building permits were easier to obtain, and the City Council instituted ordinances designed to prevent price gouging by contractors.

Beyond meeting regularly to fine-tune its preparedness plan, the EOC team now has a new command post from which to operate that is safer and more efficient than what was used in 1994. Directly after the quake and during its aftershocks, city and emergency workers operated out of the basement squad room in the old police building. A new emergency operation center was built in the recently opened Public Safety Facility, which now houses police and fire departments under one roof.

"It was the basement jitters," Weinberg said. "You don't want to be in a basement with no windows during aftershocks.

"It is a much more conducive environment now," he added.

Officials also learned in the past decade how vital keeping meticulous records is when trying to recover money from the federal government, as well as tracking costs, Weinberg said.

Over the past decade, City Hall has made changes to the building code to help lessen the extent and amount of damage to structures within Santa Monica when another quake strikes. The City Council also enacted comprehensive seismic retrofitting codes to make buildings safer.

Today, the city is better equipped to handle terrorist situations, as well as HAZ MAT emergencies and natural disasters.

"It's a multi-hazard preparedness strategy that includes natural and man-made disasters," Weinberg said. "Our response has improved due to federal funding ...

"When a disaster happens, it is less important on what the disaster is than what the training is," he added.

While plenty of lessons were learned from the Northridge Earthquake, city officials are quick to remember what was done right.

"The city is a ringing success story because of the will of the residents and city staff to get Santa Monica back to normal and presentable as soon as possible," Weinberg said.

More earthquake accounts on page 8

The Northridge Earthquake: Where were you?

JAMIE WETHERBE
Special to the Daily Press

Emergency workers had their hands full when they responded to Santa Monica College on Jan. 17, 1994 — a day etched into the minds of Santa Monicans forever.

Snakes and tarantulas were tossed from their cages and running free through the science building, which also was the site of a hazardous waste spill. The business building was flooded, and there was no power on campus — or anywhere in the city for that matter.

Bruce Smith, spokesman for SMC, said he couldn't believe his eyes when he finally got to work that morning.

"My office was trashed," he said, adding that most of the books in the library were on the floor and had to be sorted and reshelved. "I was shocked."

All of the school's Martin Luther King celebrations had been canceled. The campus was shut down for a week and was virtually empty — except for emergency workers and school officials working around the clock.

"We really worked hard to get the campus up and running," Smith said, adding that the Red Cross had set up in the college gym. "It was weird because campus was a ghost town but there was this mini city in the gymnasium."

Luckily, Smith said, it was winter semester at SMC, and there were fewer students enrolled. Spring semester was pushed back.

"It was a very long process of fixing everything," he said.

One councilman — in bed at the time of the quake — rolled over and tried to go back to sleep, unaware of what had happened.

"I'm a native Santa Monican, and (the Northridge Earthquake) made them all look like child's play. It was the worst earthquake I've ever felt."

— BOB HOLBROOK
Santa Monica City Councilman

"I heard glass breaking, but it didn't occur to me that it was my own windows," Ken Genser said. He added that after he saw his neighbors outside with flashlights, he reached for his own.

"I went outside, and I was just astonished," he said.

Genser said he then took a three-block walk from his home on San Vicente Boulevard to check on his mother, who was okay. "I felt like I was in a war zone." He added that with the electricity out, the only lights were from passing cars, "and there weren't many of them.

"Everything was so dark and quiet ... You don't realize how much light you get from buildings and other people's apartments until everything is off."

City Manager Susan McCarthy, also asleep when the quake hit, didn't stay in bed for long.

She said she immediately drove from her Santa Monica home between frayed buildings to set up an emergency camp at the old fire station headquarters on Seventh Street.

McCarthy joined the assistant city attorney and the fire chief, and the three were the first on the scene at the emergency operation center.

Jay Fiondela — who has been in the neighborhood fifty years — collected his wife and 4-year-old son and headed to his restaurant.

Although whiskey, wine and beer flowed out the door and onto the sidewalk, the restaurant still had electricity.

"I opened up for lunch. It was the only place on the street opened up for lunch," Fiondela said. "It was better than the movie of the week with all the action."

He added that there was wall-to-wall business as people cried and worried about their homes.

Fiondela said that one customer decided to order a steak and said "After the shit I went through, it might be my last meal."

And his customers were also telling their war stories. Some continued to tell them for years. And the stories got embellished or changed around, Fiondela said.

He recalled one tale: A customer who drank too much returned home the night of the quake to his dogs barking and pictures tossed to the ground. He started yelling at the dogs for causing the mess until a friend called to check on him after the quake, Fiondela said. "'Thank you,'" he told his friend. "'I was gonna kill my dogs.'"

"I'm a native Santa Monican, and (the Northridge Earthquake) made them all look like child's play," Councilman Bob Holbrook said. "It was the worst earthquake I've ever felt."

Holbrook crawled over rubble in his home and cut his hands and feet in the process. He said his neighborhood at San Vicente Boulevard and Vermont Avenue was hit particularly hard and reeked of gas.

"Everyone was out in the street in their jammies — if they had them," Holbrook said.

He added that he and his neighbors searched for a working radio or television to find out what had happened. He eventually found a portable radio.

Holbrook said that many Santa Monicans were so shaken, they left California. "A lot of people moved away. They were saying, 'I couldn't go through this again. I'm moving back to tornado country.'"

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STATE❑NATIONAL

UC officials keep options open on weapons labs

BY MICHELLE LOCKE
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — University of California leaders are keeping their options open on the nuclear weapons labs they've run for decades, telling administrators to get ready to bid on management contracts but stopping well short of deciding whether to compete.

The system's governing Board of Regents voted Thursday to allow UC's president, with the agreement of the board chairman and the chair of a board committee on the labs, to agree to contract extensions, respond to government requests for information and hire outside experts.

The vote doesn't commit UC to competing, but officials called it an important first step.

"If we compete, we want to compete to win and we want to sweep the board," said Robert Foley, UC vice president for laboratory management.

UC has long been tied to the nation's nuclear weapons program, running the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico since it was formed to work on the atom bomb in World War II. It has managed the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Northern California since it was founded in 1952, largely because scientist Edward Teller wanted to speed up work on the hydrogen bomb.

But in recent years, UC's role as nuclear steward has been shadowed by a series of management lapses at the labs, mostly involving sloppy business practices. Last year, the Department of Energy announced it would require bids when the Los Alamos contract runs out in 2005.

A subsequent bill in Congress saying contracts more than 50 years old should be put out for bid means the Lawrence Livermore contract also may go up for bid as well as a third, nonweapons, UC lab, Lawrence Berkeley, founded in 1931 by pioneering physicist Ernest O. Lawrence.

Foley said officials don't know when bids will be sought. The Lawrence Berkeley management contract runs out Jan. 31, but officials are expecting an extension. The Livermore contract runs out at the same time as Los Alamos', but extensions of up to two years are possible.

Money for bid preparation will come from UC's federal lab management fees and won't dip into the system's state funds, which have been cut by hundreds of millions of dollars due to California's fiscal crisis.

Bringing in outside help is an unusual step for UC, but one that Foley said is necessary considering that UC has never competed for the contracts and needs to overcome the perception that, while its science is widely praised, its business and security practices have been lacking.

Bush sees ethanol, methanol as products of forest thinning

BY JEFF BARNARD
Associated Press Writer

GRANTS PASS, Ore. — The Bush administration said this week that it hopes turning small trees and brush into ethanol, methanol and other energy products will eventually help pay for thinning national forests to reduce the danger of wildfire.

Paying for thinning 28 million acres of Western forests considered at high risk for wildfire has been a problem, because the small trees and brush that need to be removed aren't big enough for traditional lumber.

Thinning costs between $250 and $1,000 an acre. Many of the forests are too overstocked to use the cheapest method, prescribed fire, without removing small trees and brush first. Harvesting larger trees to pay for the work leads to lawsuits from conservationists.

"Our hope is the advances in research into the utilization of small diameter and other woody biomass combined with the stability provided by longer-term contracts will allow a blossoming of new infrastructure, creation of new facilities, new economic opportunities and new jobs as we restore healthy forests," Agriculture Undersecretary Mark Rey said from Washington.

Potential products include laminated lumber, wood chips for structural panels, ethanol and methanol, and fuel for wood-fired power plants, Rey said.

At least one ethanol project has already been proposed. Western Biomass Fuels of South Dakota wants to build a $30 million plant in Wyoming to produce ethanol from wood thinned from the nearby Black Hills National Forest.

Generally made from corn, ethanol is added to gasoline to make it burn more cleanly. Methanol is used in fuel cells and as a substitute for gasoline. It is made most economically from natural gas, though it can be extracted from wood and coal.

Rey's remarks came in a teleconference call with reporters on new guidelines for stewardship contracts the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management are offering.

Bidders, which could include conservation groups and local governments as well as timber companies, would be able to keep material removed from the land to meet Forest Service and BLM prescriptions for improving forest and range health and reducing fire danger. Contracts would last for 10 years.

"We realize that Congress hasn't provided any funding for this, so if this is going to work, it's going to need to be economically viable as well," said Stephen Anderson, a spokesman for the Nature Conservancy, which is evaluating the potential of stewardship contracts.

Rey said he hoped within a few years the stewardship contracts would be used as frequently as traditional timber sales and service contracts to maintain healthy forests.

Fifty-six stewardship contracts let over the past two years as a pilot project have produced little of economic value, Rey acknowledged. How much the administration is willing to pay for stewardship contracts won't be released until the 2005 budget comes out, he added.

The Agriculture and Interior departments are holding a conference in Denver next week on new uses for material thinned from forests, said Assistant Interior Secretary Rebecca Watson.

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NATIONAL

Four lives intersect in desert; two die

BY CHRISTINA ALMEIDA
Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS — A few miles southwest of the Strip, where the megawatt glare of the casinos meets a lonely stretch of desert, three young women walked into the night.

Only one would return alive.

In the chilly, early morning hours of March 5, 2003, Kim Choy, her younger sister, Sophear, and friend Priscella Van Dine went to retrieve their belongings from a spacious home in the suburbs.

The women had decided against moving in after determining their host, Alfonso "Slinkey" Blake, wanted more than just roommates. The price of living with Blake, authorities say, was prostitution.

Blake, an aspiring R&B musician, is scheduled to be tried later this month on two counts of murder. His attorney, David Brown, declined to discuss the case.

Although prosecutors have not charged him with pimping, they say Blake's relationship with the three and other women in his house will be a key element of their case.

The defense is fighting to keep any testimony about prostitution out of the trial, arguing it is irrelevant and prejudicial.

"The state is not alleging that either of the women that were murdered or the woman (who) was shot and lived were prostitutes that worked for Mr. Blake, nor are they alleging the crime occurred as a result of prostitution," attorney Pete Christiansen wrote in a Jan. 5 motion.

A judge is expected to rule on the motion Tuesday.

The story of that night can be explained in a word — respect — said Deputy District Attorney Robert Daskas.

"The evidence suggests that, ultimately, Sophear and Priscella were executed simply because they disrespected (Blake)," Daskas said.

Much of the prosecution's case is laid out in court documents based on interviews with Kim Choy, who was shot in the head but survived.

According to the documents, 19-year-old Sophear Choy met Blake a few months before the shootings while working as a cocktail waitress at the Olympic Garden strip club. Choy, her older sister and her friend all needed a place to live, and Blake offered to let them move into his two-story house, part of a new tract on the southwest edge of town. The rent would be $500 apiece.

After moving some of their belongings in late February 2003, the women became suspicious of Blake's intentions.

Prosecutors say he gave them a laundry list of rules: No one could leave without permission. No men were allowed in the house. No one must know where they lived.

Kim Choy responded by calling Blake on March 4 and telling him the three had changed their minds and wanted to pick up their belongings that night. Prosecutors say an angry Blake demanded they bring him $100 in storage fees.

After trying to get their belongings into two trucks, the women decided to return for a second trip that night, this time shortly before 2 a.m. Soon after, prosecutors say, Blake and three other female roommates arrived in two SUVs.

Words were exchanged, there was pushing and shoving and someone produced a knife. Kim Choy, 24, dialed 911 at 2:02 a.m. and told a dispatcher her sister was "getting beat up by a man." The line went dead and "things got quiet," Choy remembers.

She said Blake told his roommates to leave in the three cars, including the GMC Denali that she, her sister and friend had brought for their belongings. The vehicle would be found abandoned a short distance away.

"We're taking a walk," Choy remembers hearing Blake say.

She saw a gun, and the girls began a frightening walk into the desert. Sophear Choy was bleeding from knife wounds to the face, neck, chest, back and hands, and her sister said Blake ordered that she help her walk.

After about another 50 feet, she said, Blake stopped and ordered the women to their hands and knees.

There was a flash, Choy said, and she saw Priscella Van Dine, 23, get shot in the head. She held her sister's hand as Sophear Choy was also shot. Then, when the gun was turned on her, she waved her hands frantically in front of her face and the bullet miraculously ricocheted off her ring.

More shots rang out after that, Choy said, including one that struck her in the back of the head. Then she heard Blake running out of the desert.

He would surface later that day in Southern California, according to authorities, checking into a Pasadena hospital under the name of "Marcus Edwards." Prosecutors say he gave a fake home address in Tustin, Calif., and told hospital workers he was stabbed by an unknown assailant while walking down Hollywood Boulevard.

He was released the next day and picked up by two of his roommates. The three were stopped by police in Barstow, halfway between Los Angeles and Las Vegas, and Blake was arrested for murder. A gun was never found.

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NATIONAL

Bend grapples with future of public transportation

BY JULIA SILVERMAN
Associated Press Writer

BEND, Ore. — The trappings of growth are everywhere in Bend, the resort and retirement Mecca in Central Oregon that tripled its population in the 1990s and will probably double again by 2010.

There are construction sites in every direction, and a gleaming new mall anchors the outskirts of town. There's a new Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course amid a clutch of expensive homes designed for refugees from Seattle and Silicon Valley. And the long-cherished "rush minute" is steadily changing into a full-blown rush hour.

But Bend's transformation from ski-bum backwater to metro area has come without the arrival of any real public transportation system, an expensive, hard-to-fix reality that planners say could have a significant impact on the area's future growth.

Already, with a population of about 62,000, Bend is among the largest stand-alone cities in the West without a traditional city bus system, with scheduled stops and fixed routes.

Researchers at the American Public Transportation Association in Washington, D.C. could find that among similarly sized western cities, only Casper, Wyo., and Bismarck, N.D. also lacked bus systems; both communities are in the process of buying fleets and starting up routes.

Other western cities that also absorbed a deluge of retirees and outdoors-lovers in the booming 1990s are far ahead of Bend when it comes to public transportation. For example, in St. George, Utah, which grew from about 30,000 to 50,000 people in the 1990s, the year-old city bus system makes 60 stops, on three separate routes.

Even far smaller ski resort towns like Aspen, Colo., and Jackson, Wyo., have public buses, with routes that stretch for miles in order to pick up the waitresses, teachers and police officers that serve their towns but can't afford to live there.

In Jackson, the transit system just added service to Alpine, 37 miles away, where many Jackson workers live, said Michael Wackerly, the transit administrator for Southern Teton Area Rapid Transit. Ridership is evenly divided between locals and tourists, he said.

By contrast, in Bend there is no public transit between the city and satellite communities like Redmond, Prineville and LaPine, home to many of the relatively low-paid workers who staff Bend's restaurants and resorts, but can't afford the town's rising home prices.

In Bend, public transportation advocates are up against a steadfast car culture fueled by the influx of Californians, plus a wealthy population that would be unlikely to ride the bus even if one existed.

"If they are getting around town in their Lexus, they are not too concerned about the next bus stop," said Brian Shetterly, the town's principal planner.

That dims the chances of a "yes" vote for the new taxes that would be necessary to build a true public transit system, city planners said. Oregonians last voted for a new transit district about 15 years ago, in Medford, and have by and large voted against new taxes since.

Wanda Gray, Bend's transportation operations manager, said a new bus system would cost about $2 million for upfront investments, and about $2 million per year to operate. That's a lot to swallow for a city that's already strapped trying to pay for local police, fire and road maintenance.

Plus, under federal regulations the city would still have to pay for separate special transportation for seniors and the disabled.

That's left planners searching for creative solutions, the latest of which is a plan to join forces with the Bend-LaPine school district, and make better use of the school buses that sit idle while students are in class.

A pilot program could be in place by fall of 2005, but there are still plenty of details to sort out: assuming that adults would not want to cram onto traditional yellow school buses, could the money be found to purchase new ones? What about federal regulations that govern how school districts can spend funds earmarked for transportation? And could students be absorbed into the plan, without parents kicking up a big fuss in front of the school board?

In the meantime, Bend has made do by expanding its Dial-A-Ride shuttle, available in most places only to seniors and the disabled, to the general public. With 24 hours notice, a city shuttle van will arrive at your door, and take you wherever you want to go, for just $1.25.

Door-to-door service sounds good, but the system has its limitations, said passengers who miss the spontaneity of being able to walk out the door and hop on the bus whenever the mood strikes them.

"Sometimes you don't know when you might want to go somewhere, and you have to call ahead, 24 hours," said June Slaugenhaupt, a blind senior citizen who uses Dial-A-Ride to get to and from her job at the Department of Human Services in Bend. "That is just a real bummer. It would be so nice to just get on the bus and go on up to the fairgrounds."

A few other grassroots solutions have sprung up to address the region's transportation problems, and increasingly frequent traffic jams. A Bend branch of Commute Options, a national group that advocates telecommuting, ride-sharing, public transit and walking or biking to work, is working with the Mount Bachelor ski resort and other local areas to encourage employee van-pooling.

The city has also become a leader in the use of traffic roundabouts, to slow down speeders and keep cars moving smoothly, a method city planners swear by.

Plus, to keep commuters' minds off traffic and on a higher plane, public art has been placed at strategic intersections across the city, with varying results: One sculpture of a large, red phoenix rising from the ashes has earned the not-altogether-affectionate nickname of "the flaming chicken."

Still, planners in Bend say it is just a matter of time before the growing city must bite the bullet and invest in a full-scale public transportation system. The question is how long the inevitable will take.

"The big thing is money," said Rick Root, the city's transportation planner. "People think improving this is important. But where is the money?"

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NATIONAL

Boise mayor's chief of staff gets six months in jail for scandal

BY DAN GALLAGHER
Associated Press Writer

BOISE, Idaho — The man ousted as the Boise mayor's chief of staff a year ago was ordered to spend six months in jail on Thursday for his role in a city hall spending scandal that ended the political career of former Mayor Brent Coles.

Gary Lyman pleaded guilty to three counts of misusing public money and one for illegally taping executive sessions of the City Council before being sentenced by 4th District Judge Deborah Bail.

The judge also ordered Lyman to serve five years probation and pay $50,000 to cover half the cost of the audit required to determine the extent of the scandal. If Lyman fails to complete probation, he will serve one to five years in prison.

Deputy Attorney General Scott James had asked for two to four years in prison, contending Lyman's achievements as a city official did not erase the fact that "he was not supposed to breach the public trust. He was not supposed to steal from the taxpayers."

The scandal began with a taxpayer-paid trip to New York City that Lyman and Coles took in 2002 with the city attorney and her assistant for dinner and a Broadway show. Lyman also admitted wrongdoing on a separate 1999 trip to the Midwest.

Lyman agreed to plead guilty in exchange for dismissal of nine other felony counts and a misdemeanor count and a guarantee of no more than four years behind bars. Until Thursday, he had maintained that he had broken no law and that others were responsible for any wrongdoing.

But when he appeared before Bail, he accepted responsibility.

"I hide behind no one," he told the judge. "I need to apologize to everybody in this room, to all the citizens of Boise. ... I have failed the citizens of Boise. There's no question about that."

Last week, Coles was sentenced to 180 days in jail and three years probation on two counts of misusing public funds. The judge in that case, Thomas Neville, said the former mayor had accepted responsibility for his acts while being publicly disgraced and financially drained. If Coles successfully completes the sentence, the convictions will be erased from his record.

The former mayor, a one-time president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, is expected to begin serving his jail time Monday.

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Jack Daniel's whiskey now making clothes to boost brand

By The Associated Press

LYNCHBURG, Tenn. — The makers of Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey raise their glasses to cowboys — and hope the icon of the West will return the tribute by buying fancy duds bearing the company's logo.

In an effort to boost sales, the company seeks to tap into the popular connection between the whiskey and the West.

"Cowboys would be more likely to drink Jack Daniel's than the average American," said John Hayes, brand director for the whiskey. "It's always been perceived as a drink with a lot of masculinity to it."

Brown-Forman of Louisville, Ky. owns America's top-selling whiskey brand, made in this small town about 75 miles southeast of Nashville.

The company said about 72 percent of regular Jack Daniel's drinkers are men and most are aged 21 to 34.

The company now emphasizes its cowboy connection by sponsoring Professional Bull Riders and Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association events, including bull-riding brothers Cory and Evan Rasch on the pro circuit.

But there's more Western marketing on the way.

Jack Daniel's is rolling out woven printed and solid shirts, T-shirts, and polo shirts bearing the company's name. This clothes will be accessorized with belt buckles, cowboy hats, wallets and watches.

"It's one big Western program."

— JANNA MARKLE
Director of brand licensing, Brown-Forman

Wrangler will manufacture the clothing line, scheduled to be available at Western wear stores by March.

The T-shirts are expected to cost $15 to $20 each. The style-conscious cowboy will have the opportunity to spend up to $130 for a fur felt hat.

"It's one big Western program," said Janna Markle, Brown-Forman's director of brand licensing. "Jack Daniel's always has been connected to country and western."

After sales declines in recent years, consumption of whiskey increased 1.4 percent in 2003, he said.

"What's generally driving the market is a general resurgence of distilled spirits across the board," said David Ozgo, an economist with the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States.

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DID YOU KNOW?: The word checkmate in chess comes from the Persian phrase Shah Mat, which means the king is dead.

NATIONAL

Federal bill includes $2M to market specialty cheese

BY FREDERIC J. FROMMER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Wisconsin Sen. Herb Kohl has inserted $2 million into an appropriations bill to help specialty cheese makers, but a taxpayer group says the funding smells more like pork.

The provision, included in the giant omnibus spending bill awaiting final congressional passage, would establish a center to help dairy farmers market specialty and niche cheeses such as Gruyere and Camembert.

Wisconsin officials say the Dairy Business Center, to be housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, would provide a boon for struggling dairy farmers looking for new income sources. Wisconsin is the nation's leading producer of cheese.

"I've been working in ag development for 25 years, and this is the most major development to preserve the dairy farm structure in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest," said Will Hughes, administrator of the state Agriculture Department's division of agriculture development. "If they want to call that waste, that's their business."

"I've been working in ag development for 25 years, and this is the most major development to preserve the dairy farm structure in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest."

— WILL HUGHES
Administrator of the state Agriculture Department's division of agriculture development

Citizens Against Government Waste is calling it waste.

"Everybody likes new cheese, but not at our expense," said Tom Schatz, the Washington advocacy group's president. He said the spending provision will be included in Citizens Against Government Waste's annual "pig book" of wasteful, pork-barrel spending.

Schatz said he doesn't oppose all government assistance to business.

"If there was a niche cheese program, and Wisconsin and other states were asking for the money under a set of approved criteria, that would be different," he said. "We think this is another example of what's wrong with the omnibus appropriations bill and overspending in Washington."

Kohl, the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations agriculture subcommittee, won passage of the money in the agriculture spending bill. That bill has morphed into the larger omnibus spending bill, which has passed the House and is awaiting final action by the Senate.

"I respect the efforts of groups that scrutinize federal spending, and I work hard to make certain that projects I support are wise investments of our scarce dollars," Kohl said. "If we want our dairy industry to survive, we need to ensure that those products evolve with market demands."

The funding request was made by Daniel Carter, a retired Wisconsin specialty cheese company owner who sees specialty cheese products as the salvation of dairy farmers. He said the goal is to create 50 dairy farms in the Upper Midwest. Milk prices hit a 25-year low last year.

"This may be one of the best investments the government ever makes, to help maintain the dairy farm," said Carter, 73. "Our dairy farmers around the United States need this for survival."

Gates family has taken over surrounding properties

GATES, from page 1

according to property records, 4.2 acres of adjoining properties were acquired for Gates between 1994 and 2003 at a cost of nearly $14.4 million.

"There's not too many non-Gates property owners left here," said Herb Schwartz, a former insurance executive who moved into the Medina neighborhood 13 years ago.

Although Gates and his wife closely guard their family life, their mansion, valued at about $110 million, is the most high-profile home in the Seattle area. A cruise past the Gates house is a fixture on waterfront tours of the city. Gates often entertains business leaders and politicians at his home.

The nearby property purchases are common knowledge among neighbors such as Schwartz, who say Gates employees occupy a number of the homes. At least two of the homes are still occupied by people who sold their property to a Gates representative in 2003.

Most neighbors are unfazed by the acquisitions and say the houses and landscaping have been meticulously cared for since they changed hands.

"Obviously they are people who have some connection with Microsoft or Bill Gates, but (the houses) are occupied by families, which is important because it maintains the character and feel of the neighborhood," said Read Langenbach, a real-estate lawyer and former Medina city councilman. He lives across the street from one of the properties, which has been converted into a plant nursery.

Cerrell said the Gates family attempts to be good neighbors. Gates representatives meet with neighbors occasionally to discuss any potential problems, he said.

But Paulla Upjohn, who has lived in her waterfront home since 1951, is not happy with the changes. She said the home purchases are part of a larger change that began when the Gates family moved into her neighborhood.

There is more traffic on the narrow streets, she said. One home two doors away that was bought by a Gates representative now stands empty, and casual socializing among neighbors has diminished.

"I have been very happy with them as people," she said of the Gates family. "But it's changed the neighborhood."

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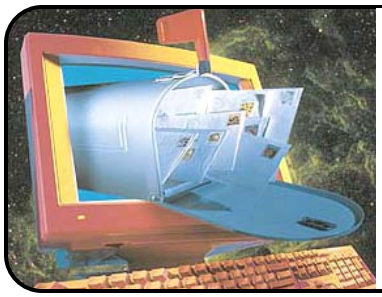
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NATIONAL

Bush to use State of Union to revive tax proposals

BY SCOTT LINDLAW
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — President Bush will use next week's State of the Union address to try to revive a proposal that would allow younger workers to invest a portion of their Social Security taxes in the stock market, the White House said Friday.

His election-year agenda also calls for pressing Congress to make already-enacted tax cuts permanent, such as the elimination of inheritances taxes and reductions in capital gains taxes. Bush is likely to renew his push for a new kind of tax-preferred savings accounts that could be used for retirement, college, health care or other purposes.

Bush will address the nation in a televised speech before a joint session of Congress at 9 p.m. EST Tuesday, three years to the day after his inauguration and one day after the Iowa presidential caucuses.

Approaching a battle for re-election, Bush will highlight economic growth and successes in the fight against terrorism, most notably the capture of deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. He also will challenge Congress to address the rising costs of health care, presidential spokesman Scott McClellan said.

It will be a stay-the-course message at a time when his Democratic rivals are urging a change at the White House.

"He needs to make the case as best he can that people are better off and more secure than they were four years ago, and that maintaining the status quo is the better course for the nation," said Phil Trounstine, the director of the Survey and Policy Research Institute at San Jose State University.

"He has to be political but deft. It can't sound like a political speech," said Trounstine, a former communications director for ex-Gov. Gray Davis of California. "He's got to sound like he is a statesman and the leader of the nation, not a politician and the leader of his party."

A day after his speech, Bush will cross the country to emphasize his themes. He will travel to Toledo, Ohio, and Phoenix on Wednesday and then visit Roswell, N.M., on Thursday before returning home.

Bush held his first speech rehearsal Friday and planned to go over his remarks during a weekend stay at Camp David, the presidential retreat in Maryland's Catoctin Mountains.

"We're meeting our priorities at home and abroad," McClellan said. "But I expect the president will say that there is much that remains to be done to continue to make America more secure, more prosperous, and more hopeful."

The partisan atmosphere of the campaign year may diminish the chances of major action on Bush's initiatives, some of which have languished for years. But the administration hopes that last year's approval of sweeping changes in Medicare and the addition of a prescription drug benefit will clear the way for action on Bush's proposal to partially privatize Social Security.

As a candidate, Bush said he would shore up future funding for Social Security by giving workers the option of staying in the current retirement system or investing a portion of their Social Security taxes in individual retirement accounts.

Workers who chose to invest would receive a smaller Social Security benefit when they retire, which would be supplemented by earnings from their investment accounts.

Bush also is considering whether to renew his push for lifetime savings accounts that could be used for any purpose, with tax-free withdrawals, and for retirement savings accounts in which money could not be withdrawn tax-free until the accountholder reached a set age.

As originally proposed last year, contributions to the accounts would not be tax-deductible. Yearly contributions would likely be capped at $7,500.

Bush has already announced two large-scale proposals this month, rather than saving them for the State of the Union address.

On Jan. 7, he asked Congress to grant legal status to millions of undocumented workers in the United States. A week later, he said he wants to establish a long-term presence on the moon to serve as a springboard for ventures deeper into the solar system.

Rolling out those big initiatives ahead of the State of the Union garnered Bush several days of public attention, rather than one or two if he had saved them for Tuesday, Trounstine said.

In the State of the Union speech, Bush is likely to forcefully defend the immigration initiative against criticism from conservatives and from liberals alike, one administration official said.

One conservative activist who talks to White House officials often said Bush is under pressure to call for a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

But Bush is unlikely to wade into such a polarizing issue at the starting gate of an election year, the activist said.

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WORLD BRIEFLY

Marshals to police trans-Atlantic flights

By The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — The United States will try to strike deals with individual European nations to place armed sky marshals on trans-Atlantic flights, a top U.S. official said Friday.

Asa Hutchinson, U.S. undersecretary for transportation security, sought to convince European civil aviation officials that armed guards are needed to thwart terrorist attacks in planes.

While Britain and France were open to the idea, other European nations were not.

Hutchinson said Washington would therefore move "with urgency" to pursue deals with individual European nations to tighten security on trans-Atlantic flights, including when and how air marshals would be used.

"Ultimately it is the safety of the passengers that is preeminent," Hutchinson told reporters.

Hutchinson said he understood European safety concerns about live ammunition on board planes. However, he said the heightened threat of new terrorist attacks overshadowed those concerns.

Animals likely the source of SARS

By The Associated Press

GUANGZHOU, China — Investigators have found evidence that civet cats with the SARS virus were in a restaurant where a suspected patient worked, adding to mounting indications that animals are the source of the disease, a World Health Organization official said Friday.

Also Friday, experts said China's three SARS cases this season — one confirmed and two suspected — are milder than the outbreak that killed 774 people last year, suggesting they might be caused by a different form of the flu-like virus.

But the WHO team that spent a week in the southern city of Guangzhou studying the three cases reached "no definite conclusions" about possible sources of the disease, said team leader Dr. Robert Breiman. He also said WHO doesn't consider SARS a public health threat, a timely assurance as millions of Chinese prepare to travel for the Lunar New Year that starts Jan. 22.

In Guangzhou, WHO investigators tested samples from the restaurant that employed the 20-year-old waitress suspected to have SARS and where civet cat — a regional delicacy — was on the menu. They found evidence of the SARS virus on cages that held the animals, Breiman said.

"Not only were there civet cats there, but at some point civet cats that were carrying the SARS coronavirus," he said at a news conference, adding that experts also found "many, many cages" with the virus at two live-animal markets.

Earlier research that suggested a possible link between civets and the confirmed SARS case prompted large-scale slaughter of the animals in Guangzhou and surrounding Guangdong province.

Court denies new Texas map

By The Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — The U.S. Supreme Court refused Friday to block Texas from holding congressional elections next fall under a hard-fought new map that could cost the Democrats as many as six House seats.

The map was pushed through the Legislature by the Republicans last year after months of partisan fighting that included two out-of-state walkouts by the Democrats.

Congressional Democrats and others claim the map dilutes minority voting strength, but that was not at issue on Friday; the high court has yet to decide whether to hear that argument.

Instead, the justices rejected an emergency appeal that sought to stop the state from using the new boundaries in next fall's elections.

"The elections will move forward under the new map," said Angela Hale, a spokeswoman for Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott. Abbott has said repeatedly he expects the map to withstand court challenges.

Republicans contend they could capture as many as 22 of Texas' 32 seats in Congress, up from the current 16. The new map was upheld last week by a Texas-based federal panel.

Teen turns over ex-Beatle's autograph

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The estate of George Harrison has settled its lawsuit against a doctor it accused of coercing the dying ex-Beatle into signing a guitar belonging to the doctor's son.

The guitar "will be disposed of privately" and Harrison's estate will give a new guitar to Ariel Lederman, the 14-year-old son of the doctor who treated Harrison for cancer two weeks before his death, according to a joint statement read aloud Friday in federal court. No further details were available.

The settlement came 10 days after the lawsuit was filed against Dr. Gilbert Lederman, his three children and his employer, Staten Island University Hospital.

"George Harrison's music spoke to the heart and soul of my generation," said Judge Nicholas G. Garaufis, who presided over the settlement. He said the agreement "preserves the dignity and protects the privacy of all concerned."

Harrison, 58, died in November 2001 after battling lung cancer and a brain tumor.

Two weeks before his death, the lawsuit alleged, Harrison was coerced by Lederman into signing autographs at a house near the Staten Island hospital. Lederman directs the hospital's radiation oncology department, which is known for treating large tumors with high doses of radiation.

Bush sidesteps filibusters

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In an election-year slap at filibustering Democrats, President Bush sidestepped Congress on Friday and installed Mississippi judge Charles Pickering to the federal appeals court after a two-year battle filled with racial, religious and regional argument.

Bush elevated Pickering by recess appointment, simply putting him in office while Congress was out of session. Such appointments, bypassing confirmation, are valid until the next Congress takes office, in this case in January 2005.

Bush's action will re-ignite the battle between Republicans and Democrats over the direction of the federal courts, a fight already sure to be intense this year because of the presidential election.

If not confirmed by the Senate before the end of the year, Pickering would probably retire, supporters suggested.

Pickering, a 66-year-old federal trial judge whom Bush nominated for a seat on the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, has been waiting for two years for confirmation. But Democrats have repeatedly blocked Republican efforts to bring the nomination to a vote in the Senate.

"I'm grateful to the president for his continued confidence and support," Pickering told The Associated Press from his home in Mississippi. "I look forward to serving on the 5th Circuit."

Labels say, "Where's the beef — from?"

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The food industry offered Friday to develop a voluntary meat, fish and produce labeling system to inform shoppers where food came from, trying to persuade Congress to scrap a government-imposed country-of-origin labeling requirement.

"There is widespread agreement that the mandatory program is too costly and unworkable in the real world," said Tom Stenzel, president of the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association.

The labeling issue has caught renewed interest in Congress with the discovery last month that a Holstein in Washington state had tested positive for mad cow disease. After the discovery, officials had difficulty determining where the cow came from but eventually found that it was born in Canada.

But a 2002 law taking effect next fall, which requires labels on meat, seafood, vegetables and fruit specifying countries of origin, has been opposed by the industry as too cumbersome and expensive.

At first the Agriculture Department estimated the requirement would cost $1.9 billion in the first year but later raised that to $3.9 billion. Industry representatives said the cost would be $10 billion over the first 10 years.

A government spending bill, which the Senate is to take up next week, would delay the labeling requirement for two years. Opponents of the Agriculture Department regulation hoped the offer of a voluntary system would push Congress to approve the delay and subsequently scrap the government labeling rule.

Court to decide on imprisoned Cubans

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court agreed Friday to decide if authorities can indefinitely imprison hundreds of Cuban immigrant criminals and other illegal foreigners with no country to accept them.

About 2,220 such people are in jail now, in limbo because the U.S. government says they're too dangerous to be freed but they have no homeland.

The Bush administration wants the Supreme Court to say that longtime detentions are acceptable, especially in light of post-Sept. 11 concerns about protecting America's borders.

But the government narrowly lost the last time the issue came before the court. Justices ruled in 2001 that it would be unconstitutional to indefinitely detain legal immigrants who have already served time for crimes. In this follow-up case, justices will decide if people in America illegally have the same rights.

Solicitor General Theodore Olson warned justices that they could create a "back door into the United States" for dangerous foreigners.

The test case involves a now-45-year-old man who fled Cuba with thousands of other people in 1980. Daniel Benitez was sent to prison in Florida for armed robbery, burglary, battery and other crimes.

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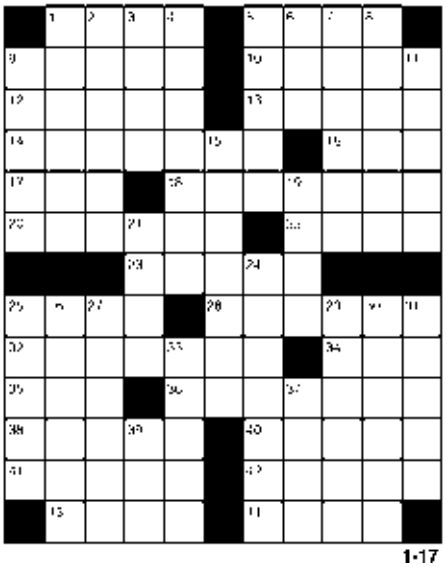

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Jamie Foxx and sister plead not guilty in battery case

By The Associated Press

■ **NEW ORLEANS** — Comedian Jamie Foxx and his sister pleaded not guilty Friday to charges from a fight with police officers and security guards last year at Harrah's New Orleans Casino.

Foxx and younger sister Deidra Dixon both attended the hearing, where a Feb. 3 trial date was set. Neither commented after entering their pleas.

The two were arrested April 26 after police said they and a group of their friends refused to show identification at the door, then entered the casino and refused requests to leave.

The 36-year-old actor and his sister were charged with two counts each of battery on a police officer causing injury, a felony, and one count of disturbing the peace, a misdemeanor. Dixon also is charged with resisting an officer, another misdemeanor.

Authorities said that when police tried to handcuff Dixon, she struggled, freed one of her hands and began swinging the handcuffs still attached to the other hand, hitting a police officer in the face.

A hearing on various motions was scheduled for later Friday but neither defendant was required to attend.

■ **NEW YORK** — Ozzy Osbourne is back home after injuring himself in an all-terrain vehicle accident in England more than a month ago.

His wife, Sharon Osbourne, told her talk-show audience during the episode she taped Thursday in Los Angeles that her husband had returned to their house in Beverly Hills, Calif., the previous night.

"I am so happy he's home I can't begin to tell you, but my poor husband is in so much agony, still in so much pain, he couldn't sleep all night and the one thing is ... he's got this metal rod ... instead of a collarbone now," she said during "The Sharon Osbourne Show" airing Jan. 22.

"I am just so happy that he's home 'cause all the time I ... felt so lonely, like I've lost something," she added. "You know that feeling when you know you've lost something and what is it? It's like, 'Oh, it's my husband!'"

The 55-year-old metal star stopped breathing twice and was in a coma for eight days after the Dec. 8 crash.

He fractured his collarbone, eight ribs and a neck vertebra when the 600-pound vehicle he was riding flipped and landed on top of him at his estate in Buckinghamshire, southern England. He spent a week on a ventilator.

■ **KINGSTON, Jamaica** — Grammy-winning deejay and dancehall rapper Beenie Man was recovering after undergoing surgery for injuries he suffered in a Jamaica car crash, his manager said Friday.

While driving alone on a highway early Thursday morning, Beenie Man's Hummer went off the road at a curve and flipped, police said.

The 30-year-old rapper broke two ribs and punctured a lung, but doctors at St. Joseph's Hospital said Friday he had "improved significantly," said manager Patrick Roberts.

"His lungs are back to normal, and he is speaking," Roberts said. "We hope he'll be out of the hospital in a few days."

Beenie Man, whose real name is Anthony Moses Davis, has been one of the biggest names in dancehall for nearly a decade. In 1998, he broke into U.S. charts with hit single "Who Am I" and accompanying album "Many Moods of Moses," which became a minor hit in the United States.

In 1999, Beenie Man signed with Virgin Records. "Art and Life," his first album for the company, won the Grammy Award for best reggae album in 2001. His last album, "Tropical Storm," was released by Virgin in late 2002.

■ **LOS ANGELES** — LaToya Jackson broke a toe while rehearsing for a music video for her upcoming single "Just Wanna Dance," her business partner said.

Michael Jackson's sister was rehearsing in Las Vegas on Saturday when she broke the big toe on her left foot, Jeffre Phillips said Thursday.

"The base to a microphone stand fell off a speaker and landed right on her toe," he said. "She was rushed to the hospital."

She will be "out of commission" for 10 to 12 days, Phillips said. She was told to stay off her feet until Friday, when she can start walking around. "She is scheduled to go back in the studio in two weeks," Phillips said. There will be another week of rehearsals, then the video shoot will begin, he said.

Her album, "Startin' Over," from Ja-Tail Records, LLC, is due out in early spring.

Jackson, 47, had planned to travel to Santa Maria Friday to support her brother during his arraignment on child molestation charges, Phillips said, but canceled the trip because "she is in so much pain. Her foot is so swollen."

■ **BOSTON** — He's conducted all over the world, but James Levine says when it came time to choose an orchestra to lead, he was drawn to Boston.

"It's a great orchestra, it has a great tradition, a great commissioning tradition, a great hall, a great community, an audience that supports it properly," Levine said of the Boston Symphony Orchestra on Thursday as he discussed his future as the symphony's newest music director.

At a concert Thursday night, the orchestra performed Dvorak's Symphony No. 8, Mozart's Symphony No. 31, "Paris," and "Partita" and "Micomicon," two pieces 95-year-old composer Elliott Carter wrote for the BSO.

Levine was named music director of the BSO in October 2001, replacing Seiji Ozawa. The 2004-05 season begins Sept. 30 with a guest conductor replacing Levine, who will be in New York honoring commitments with the Metropolitan Opera.

Levine will conduct the following BSO concert Oct. 22. He has a five-year commitment with the symphony, and will continue his conducting duties at the Met.

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