

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

3 7 29 30 41
Meganumber: 10
Jackpot: \$... Million

FANTASY 5

1 17 21 32 38

DAILY 3

Daytime: 8 0 5
Evening: 0 6 0

DAILY DERBY

1st: 08 Gorgeous George
2nd: 07 Eureka
3rd: 03 Hot Shot

RACE TIME: 1:48.79

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPARD

Although ride-on lawn mowers have been used as transportation to and from crime scenes before (and even as "vehicles" that drunk drivers get charged with DUI while operating), it is rare that a suspect tries to actually outrun police while on one, as Steven W. Coleman, 37, did in Dover, N.H., in December. He was wanted for questioning in an arson at a former girlfriend's house, and when he saw the lights of a police cruiser, he opened the throttle and took off, for a couple of blocks, before a second cruiser cut him off.

TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1936, author Rudyard Kipling died in Burwash, England.
In 1943, during World War II, the Soviets announced they'd broken the long Nazi siege of Leningrad.
In 1943, a wartime ban on the sale of pre-sliced bread in the United States — aimed at reducing bakeries' demand for metal replacement parts — went into effect.
In 1970, Mormon president David McKay died at the age of 96.
In 1975, the situation comedy "The Jeffersons," a spin-off from "All in the Family," premiered on CBS TV.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I love my past. I love my present. I'm not ashamed of what I've had, and I'm not sad because I have it no longer."

COLETTE
FRENCH AUTHOR (1873-1954).

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Landlords try to lock out rent control

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

A group of property owners has filed a lawsuit against City Hall in federal court, claiming Santa Monica's 26-year-old rent control law is unconstitutional because it doesn't distinguish between poor and wealthy tenants.

The lawsuit was filed last month on behalf of Action Apartment Association, a group of about 1,000 area landlords, including landlord Mat Millen, who for 25 years has owned a five-unit apartment building in the eastside

Pico neighborhood.

Millen lives in one of his units, rents another at market rate and rents a third to a low-income family at a reduced rate, with government subsidies. The other two units, he said, are rented at original, low rent-control rates.

"I'm renting these at about half of what the market rate is, but when I call the plumber to come fix something he doesn't give me a 50 percent reduction on his bill. He charges me market rate," Millen said Monday. "It's a burden."

The lawsuit alleges rent control infringes on property owners'

"I think this is just a make-work program for struggling local attorneys."

— DENNY ZANE
Co-chair, SMRR

rights because it "regulates land use but fails to substantially advance a legitimate municipal interest and so is ... invalid under the U.S. Constitution fifth and 14th amendments."

Attorney Rosario Perry said the lawsuit was not designed to raise

the rent on poor tenants, only wealthy ones, adding a judge could create some sort of scale where income would be weighed against the right to rent control protection.

In order to circumvent the two-year statute of limitations on the

See RENT CONTROL, page 7



John Wood/Daily Press

Director Cecile Blanchard on Monday leads the Norsemen Honor Choir of John Adams Middle School during the 20th annual Martin Luther King, Jr. service sponsored by The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. Westside Coalition and held at the First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica.

Leaders urge vigilance, action

Support for gay marriage, stem cell research part of Santa Monica MLK service

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

WILSHIRE-MONTANA — There is a difference between optimism and hope, and it is hope alone that will carry us forward in the direction of justice.

That was the message delivered Monday by prominent local educator Paul Cummins to several hundred Santa Monicans and others gathered to pray, sing and remember civil rights champion Martin Luther King, Jr., born in 1929 and killed 39 years later.

Optimism is important because it reveals good intentions, said Cummins, founder of Crossroads and New Roads schools in Santa Monica. But in hope is a commitment to action, to working hard until equality and justice are reality, he added.

"Where is the outrage?" demanded Cummins, saying economic divides have widened since MLK's assassination, while oppression continues to thrive. "We need to register our outrage and speak out where we see injustice

See MLK, page 6

Special election would test governor's power

BY BETH FOUHY

AP Political Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Odd-numbered years, particularly those that follow presidential elections, are supposed to offer a pleasant reprieve from politics.

After months of being solicited for money, bombarded by ads and called at home by earnest get-out-the-vote volunteers, most Americans appreciate a break

before the campaign cacophony of an even-numbered year comes back around again.

But no such relief is in sight for Californians, who are all but certain to head to the polls this fall in yet another major statewide election.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who in his short tenure has made the threat of a ballot fight his political trademark, is vowing to place an ambitious array of government

reform proposals before voters if the Legislature does not act on them in the weeks ahead.

Schwarzenegger and his team say they fully intend to exhaust the legislative process before pressing forward with a special election. But groups supporting the governor's agenda, as well as a number of other activists anxious for voters to consider a whole host of other issues, already have begun the time-consuming and expensive

process of qualifying several initiatives for the ballot.

That means Californians will be asked to puzzle over another unwieldy set of questions in 2005 on major issues such as legislative redistricting and state pension policy. And that doesn't even count the measures being circulated by other activists, who are likely to crowd the ballot even more.

Last November's ballot

See POLITICS, page 7

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Kristine Johnson Fountain of Joy



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

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

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ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Scheme and brainstorm, especially with those you respect and know. Information comes forward. A friend or close associate might not be grounded. Together you can lose a lot of money. When lending money, don't expect it to be returned. Tonight: Pay bills first, and then decide.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ Examine different ideas with an open mind. A boss might be a tad bit confused; discussions here could be close to impossible. Sort through information. Seek out experts and refuse to get stuck. Tonight: Ask for what you want.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★ You might want to rein in your imagination and listen to more suggestions. A partner is only too happy to take the lead and share his or her logic and concepts. Gossip might be just that and nothing more. Tonight: Take your time. Don't rush to do anything.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ A partner might have the ability to "vaporize" your finances. Don't let this happen; stop being a victim. Discuss long-term goals with those you feel are brainy and enthusiastic. You choose quite a team. Tonight: Do absolutely what you want.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ A friend could lead you down the wrong path. Be careful with this person, as enthusiastic and trusted as he or she might be. Look to long-term goals, especially professionally. Work with key associates, knowing where you are going. Tonight: A force to be dealt with.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ Others run with your vision and ideas. Enjoy the particular space you are in, where creativity flourishes. Clear out any cobwebs or restrictions in your mind. Your need to be valued or of service to others could color your thinking. Tonight: Take the high road.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★ Stick with the basics, and you will not be disappointed. A tendency to take risks or jump to conclusions will backfire. A slow, easy approach with trusted people draws the reaction you want. Someone might try to pull the wool over your eyes. Tonight: Opt for togetherness.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Others beckon; all you need to do is respond. Your humor and smile go a long way. Confusion might surround a domestic matter or real estate investment. You also might not be aware of certain skeletons in the closet. Tonight: Follow the leader.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Dig into work and don't get too entrenched in communication or a hunch. Pace yourself and don't push too hard. Making money might be important, but it's not what is key. Tonight: Enjoy your work.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★★ Your joyful and sometimes wild side emerges. You have answers when others cannot find solutions. Still, avoid a risk, no matter how successful the end results might seem to be. You are likely to have money slip through your fingers. Tonight: Add spice to your personal life.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★ What you might think is happening could be quite different from reality. Perhaps taking some time to center and find solutions will be helpful. A family member supports you, especially after you reveal your fears and concerns. Tonight: Play ostrich.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★ You say it, and others run with the ball. Use your unusually strong verbal skills to energize a group or meeting. Don't cave in to your intuition. Success comes through your direction and ability to win others over. Tonight: Hang out at a favorite spot.



Santa Monica Daily Press

Published Monday through Saturday
Phone: (310) 458-PRESS (7737) • Fax: (310) 576-9913
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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Rip Curl paddles toward tsunami aid

By Daily Press staff

International surfing company Rip Curl, which has a retail outlet on the Third Street Promenade, has created Rip Curl Indian Ocean Aid to provide what it calls "practical support" to the surfing areas of Sumatra and the Maldives.

The company has chartered a 200-ton ship to carry food, health, sanitation, emergency shelter and personal care items needed by people living along the west coast of Sumatra. The vessel also will carry water drilling kits and other equipment needed to restore drinking water. Contributions to the Rip Curl effort should be sent to:

Rip Curl Indian Ocean Aid
ANZ Bank, Torquay, Australia
BSB: 013839
Account No: 837536464

A picked poem could be grand

By Daily Press staff

Write a poem and win the \$1,000. Hollywood's Famous Poets Society is sponsoring a new poetry contest, open to everyone. There is no entry fee, and nothing to buy.

To enter send one poem of 21 lines or less: Free Poetry Contest, 1626 N Wilcox Ave. #126, Hollywood, Calif., 90028. Or enter online at www.famouspoets.com.

"This is our big contest of the year," said executive director Mark Schramm. "We trust our prizes will encourage new poets, even the shyest out there, to share their talent. We delight in discovering new poets and think that Santa Monica has its share of talent to draw from."

The deadline for entering is Feb. 19. A winner's list will be sent to all entrants. Editors reserve the right to publish winning poems online or in a pamphlet.

Students to go on tour of SM history

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica Historical Society Museum has received a \$3,000 grant from the Kiwanis Club and the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Monica to pay for bus fares on the Big Blue Bus for school classrooms in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District and private schools to take field trips to the museum.

The free docent-led tour of the museum covers Native Americans of the bay area, California missions, founding and developments of Santa Monica Bay cities, as well as early California.

Teachers are encouraged to bring their students to see and learn more about Santa Monica's history. To make a reservation, call the museum at (310) 395-2290. The museum is located at 1539 Euclid St.



SURF REPORT

Today we'll see gradually building WNW ground swell (270-300) mix with secondary W wind swell and a touch of SSW Southern hemi swell. Expect a slow start in the morning for most breaks. As the new, long period ground swell fills in through the afternoon the good deepwater spots, mainly through the north/central part of the South Bay, see inconsistent shoulder high and occasional bigger sets. Your average spots, however, are mainly around knee-waist high. Look for larger waves on Wednesday for all breaks as the new WNW swell continues to fill in. Winds are variable and at times gusty out of the E to NE on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.

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

Today the water is:

59°

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	7:30	1.9	7:16	0.5	1:17	4.6	12:42	2.2
SUNDAY	8:37	1.7	8:01	1.2	2:09	4.7	2:04	3.3
MONDAY	10:19	1.3	8:53	1.9	3:03	4.7	4:03	2.8
TUESDAY	11:42	0.7	9:58	2.3	3:59	5.0	6:10	2.8
WEDNESDAY	12:41	0.2	11:07	2.6	4:52	5.2	7:31	3.1
THURSDAY	N/A	N/A	1:25	0.2	5:40	5.3	8:19	3.3
FRIDAY	N/A	N/A	1:25	0.2	5:40	5.3	8:19	3.3

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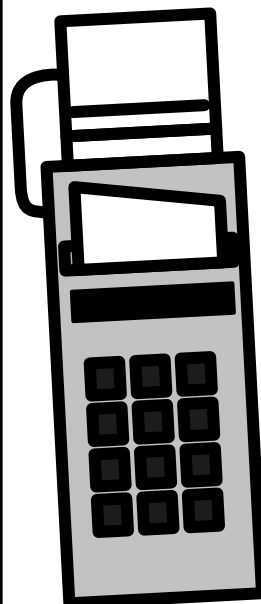
The RAND Corp., a Santa Monica-based international think tank, recently released a report that details the deplorable condition of California's public school system. The state lags behind in almost every objective in education — student achievement, class size, teacher salaries and teacher experience, to name a few. And now, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger wants to cut \$2.8 billion in education to balance the budget.

Despite how poorly school districts perform throughout the state, Santa Monica and Malibu fare

pretty well. But that's because the local community has supported the school district with hundreds of millions of dollars through bonds, parcel taxes, private donations and City Hall contributions.

So this week, Q Line wants to know, "Should it be left up to communities throughout California to fund their own school districts, or is it the state government's responsibility?"

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



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Let the dogs have their day

Editor:

Kudos to Unleash the Beach. I was thrilled to read the article about the strong potential for dogs to frolic in the surf (SMDP, Jan. 13, page 1). With limited open space available, dog parks become overcrowded, relegating many dogs to be leashed in public parks for their daily exercise. The benefit of the outlet dogs get from romping freely prompts good behavior and public manners. I'm not knocking dog parks. I'm applauding the opportunity for local dog owners to take advantage of the beach with their canines.

As a long-time Santa Monica dog owner and dog trainer, I urge the City Council to pass this. Driving to other cities for dogs to enjoy the beach supports other similar business that Santa Monica also offers, such as outdoor cafes and the Third Street Promenade. As an article pointed out in last summer's Santa Monica Magazine, Santa Monica is rather dog friendly. The downside, the article did not harp on was beach restrictions. With an area of the beach dedicated to dogs, what more could we ask for?

Here's to a mutual, respectable agreement between dog lovers, environmental lovers and the City Council.

Bobbi-Lynn Riley
Santa Monica

Macerich redevelopment should be rejected

Editor:

(Editor's note: This was originally addressed to Mayor Pam O'Connor and the Santa Monica City Council.)

Santa Monicans for Renters Rights believes the proposed Macerich redevelopment at Santa Monica Place is out of step with the values of the Santa Monica community and should be rejected.

The project as proposed represents a dramatic and unacceptable intensification of development and congestion in our downtown. The proposed building heights are excessive and the potential increase in traffic that would be generated by this project are unacceptable.

While opening up Santa Monica Place to an open air extension of the Third Street Promenade seems desirable, it is not a sufficiently important goal to justify such a dramatic intensification of the site.

Further, the proposed project should not be treated as the point of departure for subsequent discussions. Rather, existing development standards in the downtown area should be treated as the point of departure for discussions regarding the site as is appropriate for all proposed new development in the downtown, or anywhere else in the city.

Denny Zane
Chair, Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights

Where will all the cars go?

Editor:

Regarding the front page article, "City divided over who deserves affordable units," (SMDP, Jan. 13, page 1) which addresses the issue of who should benefit, residents and those who work in Santa Monica, or people from outside the Santa Monica area. The article also mentions that the City Council voted to give non-profit developers more autonomy in building new housing projects.

Does anyone at all, either on the City Council or the planning commission or anyone in City Hall ever, ever address the issue of where the cars from all these units will go?

The current residents of Santa Monica know that parking anywhere within the city limits is very difficult now. The traffic is terribly, horribly congested now. Will anyone ever, ever address what will happen with traffic and parking if even one more multi-unit apartment or condo is built?

Councilman Ken Genser thought the discussion ought to focus on, among other things, the "... overall density in Santa Monica," which was close, but no cigar. The cars, the cars, the cars, people — the congestion, the congestion, people.

Councilman Bob Holbrook made the statement, "Why do I want Santa Monica more congested that it already is, unless it's directly benefiting Santa Monica residents first?" I'd be happy to learn how more congestion can benefit any resident. It must benefit someone, but not the residents.

And what a surprise. Councilman Herb Katz's suggestion that it be cleared with a public discussion was voted down. Duh.

And by the way, if rent stabilization hadn't been altered to jack the price way up on apartments when they were vacated, there would be many, many existing apartments in Santa Monica that would be affordable. If you really wanted the working poor and minorities to have a chance to live in Santa Monica, you would never have changed the rent control as it existed previously.

Marilyn Brennan
Santa Monica

Gun industry being fired upon

WHAT'S
THE POINT?

BY DAVID PISARRA

Tobacco was the income source for many people — from the farmers who grew it, to the retail store owner who sold it. This noxious weed provided home and hearth during most of the last century and the one before it. Today, with the combined efforts of a medical community aligned against it, and under a court order to advertise against, the industry is dying. It was a combined war by those who hate the smell, the ill health effects and the perceived societal costs. The goal was to shut down an industry.

That same war is being fought these days on the front-line of the gun issue. On the one side are the Second Amendment activists who strictly construe its terms. It's a testament to inherent flexibility of the U.S. Constitution that a 27-word paragraph can create such a firestorm of anger, argument and acrimony. It reads simply enough, "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

And this is where the argument starts. One side says the sentence turns on the word "militia," meaning that only those in a militia need guns. The other side argues that when the Constitution uses the words "the people" it means everyone.

But this argument is not very successful for the people who would outlaw all the guns. For those people who believe that in a modern day society there is no need for a gun, they want to make gun ownership a thing of the past. Much like the anti-tobacco people want to make smoking a quaint historical anomaly equivalent to ladies bustles.

The problem is that they are failing to win the hearts and minds of the majority of the people. I don't actually own a gun but I like the fact that I could if I wanted to. And I think that most people, well most men, agree with me on that. Most women are more of the opinion that guns are dangerous and aren't necessary.

The anti-gun lobby has a lot going for it. They get to be on the side of the innocent victims who are killed or maimed. They get the sympathy votes of those of us who are sympathetic.

The gun lobby on the other hand has many things going for it. Besides just having Moses as a spokesperson, (OK it's really Charlton Heston, but you know what I mean), there is the redneck contingent who think that if something is written in a book it must be true. That's mostly because they can't read the book to figure out what it really says, but that's another issue.

The gun lobby has tremendous funding and popularity. Nationally, Americans buy guns, a lot of them. And it's not just the illegal midnight specials either. "Long guns" are defined as shotguns and rifles. They kill just as easily as the pocket-sized handgun. As recently as 1999 in California guns sales were increasing 30 percent over the prior period.

Most guns are not used, thankfully, and when they are, it is either in recreational uses, such as target practice, or hunting for animals.

The actual usage of guns in crimes, compared to the ownership of guns is a small percentage. The problem is that this is a very visible percentage. And when

someone is shot or killed in a crime, it's a heart-rending situation because for the most part, they did not need to be shot. Unless they are the perpetrator, the victim is a sympathetic character.

It's that sympathy that has led to the latest assault on the gun industry. On Aug. 10, 1999 a mentally unbalanced Buford Furrow, a follower of the Aryan Nations, opened fire on a Jewish community center in Granada Hills, wounding five people. Later, he opened fire on Joseph Ito, a Filipino American who was shot because he "looked Asian or Latino" and worked for the government.

Ito's family and the families of three of the children wounded by Furrow have sued the manufacturers for their damages, based on a theory that the gun manufacturers have produced more guns than could be purchased by legal users, and therefore creating a secondary market for the excess guns.

Traditional product liability theory creates a liability on the manufacturer of a product if the product does not act in the manner in which it was designed to act. This is a strict liability, meaning that the manufacturer is liable no matter what the outside circumstances are.

Usually in product liability cases there is the purchaser, the user and manufacturer. If either the purchaser or the user is hurt in using the product, they can sue the manufacturer. For example, if you buy a stock pot, and your spouse is making chili, and the pot melts, causing hot chili to flow out and splatter all over the body of your spouse, they can sue the manufacturer for their damages.

In the Ito case, they are suing the manufacturers not because the guns they built were defective, but because they made too many of them. That made getting a gun easy, and that, in theory, is what led to the mayhem on Aug. 10, 1999 and the murder of Ito.

This case has worked its way up from the trial court to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, to the U.S. Supreme Court, who let stand a ruling that Ito's mother and the families of the three other victims could sue Glock Inc., and China North Industries, among others. The U.S. Supreme Court, by sending the case back for trial, is saying that there might be a theory under which these victims can recover against the gun manufacturers.

It's this type of backdoor assault on an industry that leads to its destruction. Just take a look at the tobacco industry to see what this type of ruling leads to. The tobacco industry is forced to actively advertise that its product is unhealthy.

This type of lawsuit is an unfair attack on a legal business. The more appropriate lawsuit I think would be the victims suing the government for not providing Buford Furrow with the mental help he needed before he killed one man and maimed five, rather than a lifetime of medical care, and room and board in a prison. The liability is the government's failure to act in a timely and effective manner to help the mentally violent, before they do harm.

As a society we naturally put limits on what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. Suing the gun manufacturers for guns that are used by a crazy person makes as much sense as suing the car manufacturers for making cars that are used by drunk drivers who kill people.

(David Pizarra is a business development lawyer in the Santa Monica firm of Pizarra & Grist. He welcomes your questions and comments. He can be reached at dpizarra@pizarra.com or (310) 664-9969).

COMMENTARY



World of stand up comedy will leave you sitting alone



ANY DAY IN LA

BY HEIDI MANTEUFFEL

There are millions of people in LA just dying to make it. Be it the next Jennifer Garner, Jennifer Lopez, or when that doesn't work, Jennifer McCarthy. But few people think about the realm outside of film and music that's just as grueling.

They forget about the thousands who struggle that are not as cute, slightly awkward, but witty observationists — the stand-up comedian.

Hollywood is brim full of hoo-hah factories and comedic cabanas. And trust me, when most of us see our LA paycheck, that's the first place we head for. But while we have comedians coming out of the ear molds in LA, this is the first pro-

fession people overlook on the list of would-be hopefuls.

It takes a lot of guts to put your soul on a platter of buffalo wings and two drink minimums, and for that, all of LA's hopeful comedians, this one's for you.

Yes that's right, just for the day, I will try to see what it feels like to be in their shoes. I'm already scared for all of you. Ahem.

Good day ladies and gents, it's great to be with you today in the great city of LA. Great weather you have out here but what's the deal with the rain? Seven inches of rain a year — maybe this past Monday. I mean what's going on here? A couple more days of this and I was going to have to hire some cheap labor to build me an ark. But then I realized the ark would be 10 times the size of my apartment.

But I'm so glad it stopped when it did, because it really was halting the parade of beauty and delusion I so enjoy — Ashlee Simpson's lip-synching her way through Hollywood, and possibly the Orange

Bowl. Wait, even a hurricane couldn't stop that.

Has anyone noticed there are a lot of dogs in this city? Not only that, but a lot of people seem to have the same kind of dogs: Boxers, bulldogs, Chihuahuas and poodles. It's creepy isn't, how much people kind of look like their dogs? I just wonder which came first — the pug or Rodney Dangerfield.

Did you ever notice how things are always advertised in the positive? Best Chinese food, freshly baked donuts, world's best coffee? I just want to stop by and tell the store in Inglewood with the best French pastries sign that they may have some competition.

How can they all be the best? Wouldn't it be refreshing to have signs that say what they really are? Like 5-day-old bread, didn't-wash-after-peeing fritters and shared-my-bronchitis-phlegm-in-your-chicken-soup? Not that I would eat there, but I would applaud them from the best pasta

place across the road.

And what's the deal with fast food? If it's so full of fat, where is it going in such a hurry? Shouldn't it be like slow, sedentary food? But then again, if Burger King put out a may-cause-hypertension warning, I'd be at the best pasta place across the street.

Can anyone tell me what the deal with these short shorts skirts are? Are we assuming men have no imagination? Wearing one is basically like a Venn Diagram of one's butt. You're saying here's my butt, here's everyone staring at my centrally focused skirt, and here's the man dragging his three young impressionable children away from me. It almost needs clearance from the FCC to run during prime time.

Thank you thank you, you've been a wonderful audience. Don't forget to tip your waitress. Good night.

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

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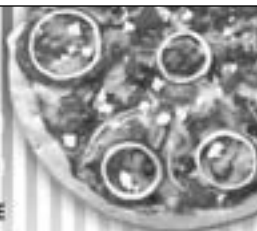
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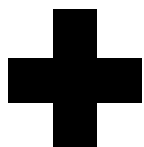
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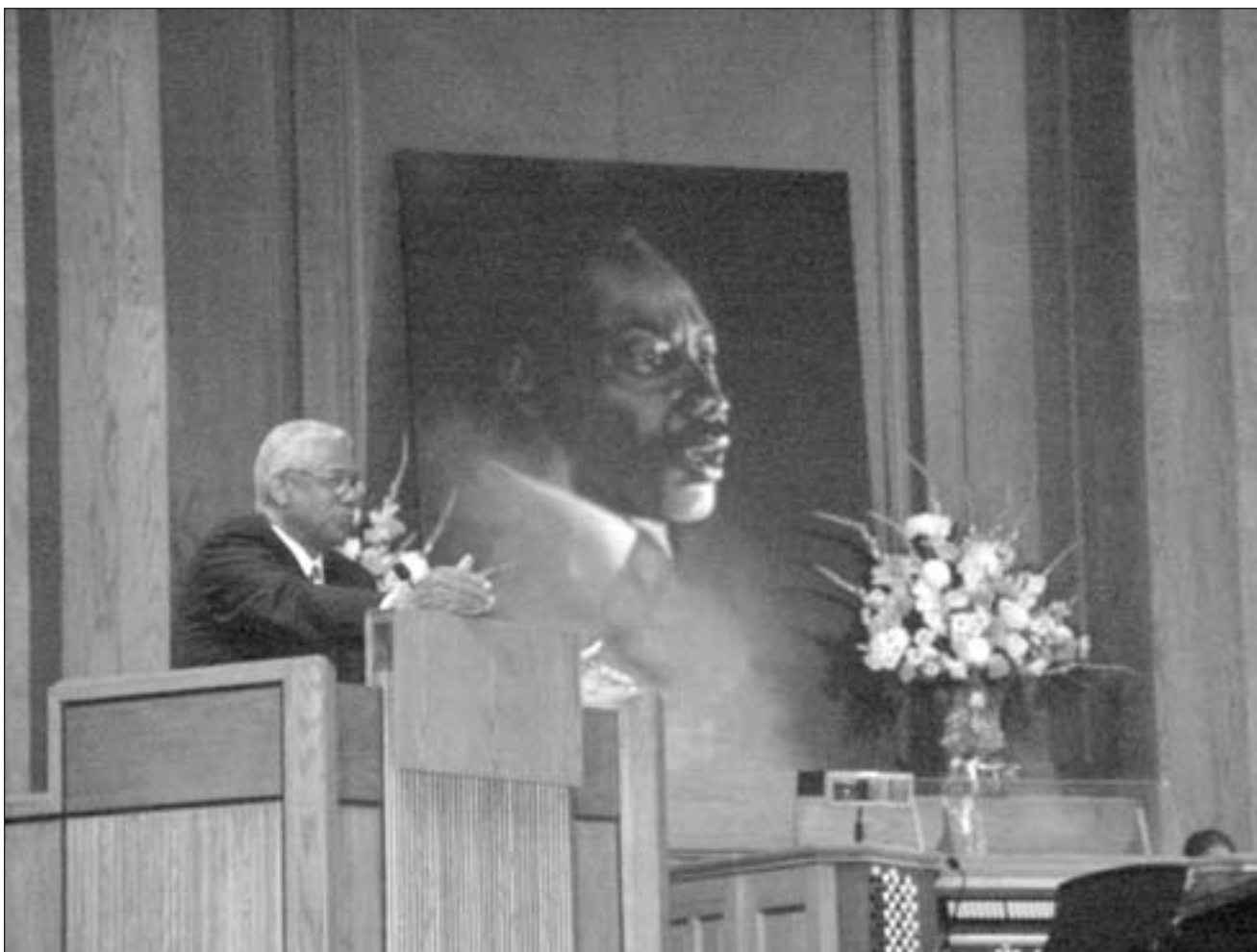


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LOCAL



John Wood/Daily Press

With a black-and-white painting of Martin Luther King, Jr. on the wall behind him, community leader Nat Trives on Monday introduces keynote speaker and local educator Paul Cummins.

National MLK Jr. celebration was 15 years in the making

MLK, from page 1

... Our children deserve that fire, our nation desperately needs it. It is the fire of justice and love."

Cummins and other religious leaders who spoke during the Monday morning service called upon listeners to continue in the quest for racial equality, and urged them to work diligently towards several other goals: To house the homeless, to provide quality education and healthcare for all, to pay workers a real living wage.

Rabbi Neil-Commess Daniels from Beth Shir Sholom Temple added legalizing gay marriage and pushing forward with stem cell research to those goals.

"And of course, the list could go on and on," Daniels said, calling each an injustice and a disaster much the same as the Dec. 26 Indian Ocean tsunami that killed more than 150,000. "There is no need to try to imagine what Dr. King's agenda would be today. We know. It is all the natural disasters around us we have wrought."

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SMRR leader defends 1979 rent control law

RENT CONTROL, from page 1

issue, the lawsuit, which was dated Dec. 20, 2004 specifically targets a Dec. 20, 2002 amendment to the rent control law that reinforces its objectives.

Though Santa Monica City Hall's rent control law has been challenged unsuccessfully in state courts, Perry is relying upon three recent federal cases he says prove it is illegal for wealthy tenants to benefit from city-mandated rent control.

"All of them discuss the formula, which is: Does the law advance a substantial state interest?" Perry said. "If a law that impacts regulation of land does not advance a substantial state interest, then it's unconstitutional."

Perry pinned blame on the powerful Santa Monicans for Renters Rights group, saying after introducing rent control legislation in 1979 its anti-growth policies have

made it nearly impossible for developers to build new housing, exacerbating a shortage.

"SMRR's housing crisis is nothing more than a self-inflicted injury, and conspiracy to keep the housing crisis current so that they can continue their rent control scheme," he said.

"Rent control in 1979 was a much different animal than it is in 2005," Perry added. "If they want to legally control housing with rent control, for anybody, even the poor, then they have to allow the housing providers to build housing first."

City attorneys have for years defended the rent control law against legal attacks. They were not available to discuss the new lawsuit Monday, as City Hall was closed in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.

SMRR co-chair and co-founder Denny Zane said wealthy tenants occupy only a

minority of units, because as people make money they typically buy properties of their own. Besides that, Zane said landlords can choose who to rent to.

"The first issue about rich tenants is a complete canard," he said. "Such tenancies are by far the exception and, if they occur, they are completely at the discretion of the landlord who, after all, chooses the tenants. This is just a case of blaming the rent control system for choices the landlords makes, which is absurd."

As to the allegations that SMRR policies have limited the city's housing stock, Zane said, "The facts of the matter don't justify the claim. Santa Monica is one of the few cities that has consistently met the regional target for housing production."

Perry said \$25,000 has been raised of the \$100,000 needed to litigate the lawsuit. Action Association will drop its suit

without full funding, he added.

Zane questioned Perry's motives in bringing the lawsuit.

"I think this is just a make-work program for struggling local attorneys," he said. "Rent control systems have been taken to the United States Supreme Court multiple times and have been upheld ... I just think the property owners in this case are just being taken for a ride, or whoever's paying for it."

While the issue plays itself out in the courts, several city officials praised the 1979 rent control law for helping to form today's Santa Monica.

"I think, in general, rent control was good for Santa Monica," City Councilman Bobby Shriver said. "It allowed a number of interesting people to live here. The people obviously agreed to that — they put it into the charter. If it weren't there, it'd be a different town than it is now."

Direct democracy has its share of problems, critics say

POLITICS, from page 1

contained 16 statewide propositions, prompting widespread voter frustration.

Besides being a full-employment act for political consultants, one has to wonder whether all this direct democracy is in danger of diluting its purpose. Even Schwarzenegger, who owes his job to a special election and who champions the populist power of ballot fights, stands a chance of undercutting his own image as a leader who has the power to forge compromise Sacramento.

"The governor can call a special election, he can qualify initiatives and put them on the ballot, but whether it's a process that's good for the state of solves fundamental problems in the state is a very open question," Democratic strategist Garry South said. "At some point, one has to ask oneself if this is about solving problems or about political gamesmanship. I don't know how voters will answer that."

Schwarzenegger and his aides appear to be aware of the danger of appearing to be rushing a ballot fight.

In his State of the State address, the governor vowed to work closely with the Democrat-controlled Legislature. He framed the possibility of a special election as a rebellion by "the people" in which he would simply play a supporting role.

"If we here in this chamber don't work together to reform the government, the people will rise up and reform it themselves," he warned. "And I will join them. I will fight with them."

Schwarzenegger spokeswoman Margita Thompson wouldn't even discuss the timeframe of a possible special election, calling it "hypothetical." But if the governor does call one, Thompson said voters will trust that he is doing it for the right reasons and

will be glad to participate.

"He's always been very fortunate to have a dialogue with the voters, and they understand what his priorities are," she said. "A civic culture has emerged, and that's a great thing. People are paying attention."

Problem is, the reforms Schwarzenegger has proposed target many of the Democratic Party's treasured constituencies. That makes the notion that they can be resolved in the Legislature almost a nonstarter.

Among other things, Schwarzenegger is pushing for merit pay for teachers, a vast overhaul of the state's public pension system and redistricting that presumably would reduce the number of Democratic seats in the Legislature and Congress.

On top of that, none of those reforms addresses the central promise of Schwarzenegger's governorship: that he would fix the state's budget mess and bring true fiscal control to Sacramento.

For a second year in a row, Schwarzenegger has proposed a budget that relies heavily on borrowing and leaves a multibillion dollar deficit — the very practices he vowed to eliminate as governor.

He has rightly complained that the problems are largely due to the state's budget system, which has been constrained by voter-mandated tax policies and rigid spending mandates.

But his proposal to establish a trigger mechanism that would slash state spending across the board when it exceeds revenue gives off a curious whiff of surrender. It suggests that neither the all-powerful governor nor any other mere mortal has the power to solve the state's budget problems.

David Leshner, who covered Sacramento for many years as a reporter and editor and now heads the New

America Foundation's California program, said he doesn't believe Schwarzenegger has proposed a ballot fight to distract attention from his inability to fix the budget.

Instead, Leshner believes Schwarzenegger has come to realize that the state's problems are far more serious and that he appears willing to stake his political career on enacting a broader array of fundamental reforms.

"I think he wants to leave the biggest legacy as governor since Pat Brown,"

Leshner said. "And I think his frustration is that he realizes there's more broken in California than the governor's office, and to have that legacy and prepare for a new generation, he needs to make really substantial changes."

Which brings us inevitably back to a special election, where voters, rather than elected officials, will again be asked to solve a series of vexing policy questions. The result could be a profound change in the way California does business — or merely an extreme case of voter fatigue.



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DEAR DORIE

Doh! The kid eats play-doh

Dear Dorie,

My toddler won't stop eating play-doh. I don't mean a nibble here and a nibble there, I'm talking he would eat the whole container if I let him. When he's got a mouthful he will play with it in the typical fashion (molds, balls, etc.), and seems to really enjoy it. I'm just concerned about the stuff in his tummy. Any ideas?

Yummy Play-doh-eater Mummy

Dear Mummy,

Play-doh, whether commercial or home-made, is non-toxic so ingestion won't harm your loved one. That said, I've seen many children "inhale" crayons, play-doh, soap, etc. and there are a few things you can do. First, stay with your toddler and supervise when the play-doh comes out. This is not the time to pay bills or make phone calls. Second, have his favorite edibles nearby and ready to eat. Next, memorize the phrase, "It looks like you want something to eat." When the play-doh goes in the mouth, use the phrase and provide the right alternative. Move the play-doh away until he's finished eating and try again. Above all, do this with respect and patience — no judgement or guilt please, this is not a serious or life-threatening situation. I've never met a kindergarten that still ate this stuff. Good luck.

Dorie

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

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Don't forget about siblings when baby comes home

BY LYNN SULLIVAN

Special to the Daily Press

Expectant moms and dads are not the only ones who must make adjustments for a new arrival. Brothers- and sisters-to-be also will face changes when a baby is added to the family.

No matter how careful you are with your current children, they can feel neglected or displaced when a new baby comes home from the hospital. Suddenly, they are no longer the focal point of your attention and may believe they need to compete with their brother or sister.

To keep siblings involved and excited about their growing family, try the following age-based strategies that have proved effective over time.

Toddlers:

1) Speak to them in very simple terms. Once your tummy begins showing, talk about the "baby growing inside mommy."
2) Read age-appropriate stories to them. There are many excellent books for siblings.
3) Give them dolls to practice baby care and let them participate in simple chores and tasks while you are caring for the baby.

4) Make child-care arrangements well in advance of your due date and let your toddlers know where they will be staying while you are in the hospital.

5) Visit the hospital with your toddlers to show them where "mommy and your brother or sister will be staying."

6) Refer to the new baby as "our baby," so they will feel included in the process.

7) Show them pictures or videos of themselves as infants so they can better grasp the concept.

8) Encourage visitors to ask about them, not just the baby.

Preschoolers:

1) Use simple but realistic terms to explain about the "baby growing inside mommy." Avoid references to the "stork"

No matter how careful you are with your current children, they can feel neglected or displaced when a new baby comes home from the hospital.

or "cabbage patch."

2) If an older child is getting his or her own room, call the move a "graduation" or "big brother/sister move" and celebrate accordingly. If they will be sharing a room, be sure the older child has his or her own space.

3) Involve preschoolers in discussions about the baby's name and other planning for the birth.

4) Let them make phone calls to announce their brother or sister's arrival.

5) Get celebratory lollipops for them to pass around. A printed T-shirt that reads, "I'm a big brother," is also a nice way to share the announcement.

Adolescents/teens:

1) Use the opportunity to talk about human sexuality, reproduction and the importance of family life.

2) Include them in baby care and infant CPR classes so they gain hands-on training.

3) Reassure them that they are loved and important family members too.

The BirthPlace at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center offers a sibling preparation class designed for brothers- and sisters-to-be ages 3 to 10. For more information about the class or a list of excellent books for siblings, call (310) 319-4947.

(Lynn Sullivan, a mother and former maternity nurse, is community programs manager for The BirthPlace at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center).

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TUESDAYS, JAN. 18 – FEB. 22 – COFFEE WITH MARILYN, 9:30 a.m.

A series of discussions with local early childhood development guru Marilyn McGrath, presented by the SMMUSD Infant and Family Support Program. Geared for alumni of previous parenting classes. Call 452-6132 for more info. At Joslyn Park Craft Room.

SUNDAY, JAN. 23 – BIRDWATCHING for YOUNG CHILDREN and PARENTS

10:00 a.m. at Malibu Lagoon State Beach, 23200 PCH. Get outside and enjoy this special short walk for children and families. FREE! For all ages. 393-6205.

MONDAY, JAN. 24 – DINNER WITH SNOW WHITE at CREATIVE KIDS

6:00 – 7:30 p.m., 11301 W. Olympic Blvd., LA, 473-6090. Includes dinner, dessert, gym play, face painting and fairytale theatre. All ages, reservations required, \$12.

MONDAYS - NEW KARATE CLASS FOR AGES 4-5; 3:00 – 3:45

Japan Karate Association is expanding their program and starting a new Pre-Karate class for children ages 4-5. This class will teach basic Karate, awareness, Stranger Danger and how to call 911, while helping kids improve their discipline and concentration. Classes are taught in a fun, age-appropriate and uplifting manner. Cost is \$70 per month. For more info call Maria at 394-3544. Located at 1218 5th St.

TUESDAY

Movies for Moms! Jan. 18 – “In Good Company” starring Dennis Quaid, Topher Grace and Scarlett Johansson. Comedy-Drama; Rated “PG-13.”

11:00 a.m., Loews Broadway, 1441 3rd St. Promenade – for Moms and babies newborn – 1 year old. Doors open early for socializing and getting comfortable.

Visit www.enjoytheshow.com/reelmoms for details.

Storytelling

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

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

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

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

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

Lap Time – 11:00 a.m., six-week series for babies 0-24 months, co-sponsored by the SMMUSD Infant & Family Support Programs. Thru Feb.8.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Barnes and Noble at the Grove

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

Classes

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

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA

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

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

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

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

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

Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

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

WEDNESDAY

Storytelling

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

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

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

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

Thru Feb. 9.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Classes

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

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

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45pm, \$15 **Fitness for Moms** –Babies Welcome! Step Aerobics, 10:30 a.m. at the YMCA, 393-2721, ext. 117 for more info. Free for members, non-members pay \$90 for 10 classes.

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Breastfeeding Group

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

Other

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

THURSDAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Classes

YWCA – A Place for Parents – Toddler & Me (1-3 years) – 9:15 – 10:15 a.m. and 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.; classes in partnership with the Infant and Family Support Program. Parent Support (3 – 5 years) – 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. 2019 14th St. Call 452-3881for details and prices.

Yoga & Exercise

Prenatal Aqua Aerobics at the Santa Monica YMCA

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

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

Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Breastfeeding Group

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

FRIDAY

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

Classes

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

Mommy and Me Dance– celebrate the wonderful world of imagination Fridays at the Electric Lodge. 9:45 – 10:45 a.m. ages 14 - 24 months; 10:45 – 11:45 a.m. ages 2 – 4. 6 classes for \$75 or \$14 per class. First class free! 1416 Electric Ave, Venice, 306-1854.

Yoga & Exercise

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

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

Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Other

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

SATURDAY

Storytelling

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

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

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

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

Yoga & Exercise

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

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

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

Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:00 a.m., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

Other

Snow White at the Santa Monica Playhouse

Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m. (thru April); \$12 adults, \$10 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 2 for reservations, www.santamonica playhouse.com

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

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

Precious Prints – Ceramic Heirlooms for a Lifetime

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

Breastfeeding

Working Mother's Support Group

The Pump Station, 2415 Wilshire Blvd. - 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., \$12 fee, led by Ilka Sternberger, certified lactation educator. Call 826-5774 for more info.

SUNDAY

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

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

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

Snow White at the Santa Monica Playhouse

Saturdays & Sundays at 12:30 & 3:00 p.m. (thru April); \$12 adults, \$10 kids ages 12 & under. 394-9779 ext. 2 for reservations, www.santamonica playhouse.com

MONDAY

Storytelling

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

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

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

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

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

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

Classes

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

Breastfeeding Group

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

Yoga & Exercise

Yoga Works, 2215 Montana Ave, 310-393-5150 Pre/Postnatal – 12:15 – 1:45pm, \$15 Yoga Garden, - Restorative yoga for pre/postnatal – 6:30 p.m., 310-450-0133. www.yogagardenstudios.com

Stroller Strides Fitness Class – 9:30 a.m. Mon. – Fri., Palisades Park, call 800-795-6708 or visit www.strollerstrides.com for more info.

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NATIONAL

Poll: Most Americans pleased with Bush's term

BY WILL LESTER

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — A majority of Americans say they feel hopeful about President Bush's second term and have a generally positive view of him personally, but they also express continued doubts about Iraq.

People were most likely to identify Iraq as the top priority for Bush, an Associated Press poll found. But more than half wondered whether a stable government can be established there.

After winning re-election, Bush is preparing to pursue an ambitious agenda that includes efforts to change Social Security, federal tax laws and medical malpractice awards.

Ahead of Bush's inauguration on Thursday, six in 10 people said they felt hopeful about his second term and in response to a separate question 47 percent

said they were worried. Most said they were neither angry nor excited about his final four years in office.

Iraq was cited most often as the president's highest priority, according to the poll conducted for the AP by Ipsos-Public Affairs. Some 53 percent of those questioned said it is unlikely Iraq will have a stable government.

"Iraq remains the kind of thing that could completely take over the term, if the situation gets a lot worse," said Charles Franklin, a political scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "It's a good idea for the president to push new domestic proposals. He has to find a way to have the whole second term be about more than just Iraq."

More than 1,350 U.S. troops have died in Iraq. Deadly attacks by insurgents are on the rise as the Jan. 30 elections near.

"It's best to be hopeful about the next four years," said Kellie Shanahan, a

Republican and a teacher from Wilmington, N.C. "If we're not, it won't be good for our country."

Bush leads a nation much changed from the one when he took office in January 2001. The Sept. 11 attacks have changed everything, from the shape of government and the health of the economy to the conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

Public perceptions of the president's personal strengths are his biggest asset today.

Nearly two-thirds of those polled described Bush as likable, strong and intelligent. A majority said he is dependable and honest.

Bush is likely to need to draw on those personal strengths as he pursues an aggressive second-term agenda.

His domestic wish list — with its focus on allowing private accounts in Social Security for younger Americans, limiting lawsuit awards and overhauling the tax laws — could gain momentum from the

increased GOP majorities in the House and Senate. Republican lawmakers are showing an increased willingness to challenge Bush's proposals, however.

Close behind Iraq in public concerns for Bush's second term is the economy, which moved past terrorism as a top concern in AP polls in the past two months. Social Security was named as a top issue by only 9 percent, taxes by 2 percent.

After picking up in 2004, the economy probably will slow this year, influenced by rising interest rates, higher energy costs and the lack of a new tax cut, economists say.

People were relatively optimistic about their own personal finances in the next year. Four in 10 said they expect their own situation to improve; a similar number said they believe it will stay the same.

The poll of 1,000 adults was taken Jan. 10-12. It has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Expensive FBI computer overhaul hits snag and could be dumped

BY CURT ANDERSON

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — A post-Sept. 11 computer system was supposed to solve problems for the FBI, giving agents, analysts and personnel around the world the ability to share information without using paper or time-consuming scanning of documents.

But the \$170 million Virtual Case File project has proved so inadequate and outdated, it may be shelved.

"I am frustrated by the delays," FBI Director Robert Mueller said. "I am frustrated that we do not have on every agent's desk the capability of a modern case-management system."

The FBI is hoping to salvage some

parts of the project, known as Virtual Case File. But officials acknowledged Thursday that it is possible the entire system, designed by Science Applications International Corp. of San Diego, will have to be built from scratch.

The FBI did not get what it envisioned, according to a senior FBI official who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity because the project is the subject of an internal review by the Justice Department's inspector general. The official said its capabilities were only a fraction of what was sought.

After the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Mueller made improvement of the agency's computer systems a priority. Members of Congress and the independent Sept. 11 commission said the overhaul was critical to enabling the FBI and intelligence agencies such as the CIA to "connect the dots" in preventing attacks.

It is not clear how many more taxpayer dollars will have to be spent. The FBI official said the agency probably will have to ask Congress for additional funds. Some of the necessary software is probably now commercially available, which was not the case when the project began.

Virtual Case File was to be the final piece of the overhaul of antiquated FBI computers, called the Trilogy project. The first two phases of the project — deployment of a high-speed, secure FBI computer network and 30,000 new desktop computers — have been completed.

Science Applications International

spokesman Jared Adams said the company "delivered the Virtual Case File system initial operation capability in December as agreed to" and would have no further comment until the Justice Department review is finished.

Sen. Charles Grassley, a senior member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said the possibility that the system may be scrapped is disappointing.

"I hope we haven't just been pouring money down a rat hole at taxpayers' expense," said Grassley, R-Iowa.

The top Judiciary Committee Democrat, Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, called the FBI computer overhaul "a train wreck in slow motion" and said money alone won't solve the problem.

"The FBI needs to stop hiding its problems and begin confronting them early on," Leahy said.

The computer overhaul was intended to give FBI agents and analysts an instantaneous and paperless way to manage all types of investigations, including terrorism cases.

Under the current system, for example, all FBI terrorism documents are loaded into a central database each night; under Virtual Case File the information would be available much faster.

The FBI officials said that although all essential national security information is available under the current system, it is more cumbersome than it should be.

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Efforts under way to create gay district in Lilac City

BY NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
Associated Press Writer

SPOKANE, Wash. — Gay activists in this staid Eastern Washington city are planning to create a neighborhood of gay-oriented homes, businesses and nightlife, which religious conservatives complain will be at odds with Spokane’s family oriented culture.

A gay district would signal that Spokane is tolerant and progressive, proponents contend, the type of community that can attract the so-called “creative class” that will build the economy of tomorrow.

“We’re talking about an actual physical part of town we would like to establish as a gay district,” said Marvin Reguindin, owner of a Spokane graphic design firm, who envisions an area similar to the Castro district of San Francisco or Capitol Hill in Seattle.

Community Impact Spokane, a network of evangelical Christians, is appalled.

“A gay Mecca is not what we’d like to see Spokane marketed as,” said Penny Lancaster, director of the group. “I’d rather see us promoted as a conservative, family oriented community without any reference to sexual orientation.”

Too late, some say.

“There is a very large gay population here,” said Bonnie Aspen, a business owner who arrived with her partner two years ago to escape the congestion of the San Francisco Bay area.

Even though they face little discrimination, gays stay under the radar, said Aspen, a member of the Inland Northwest Business Alliance, an association of gay and gay-friendly businesses that is pushing the idea.

“Visibility equals freedom,” Aspen said. “Invisibility we have dealt with all our life.”

She predicted a gay district will exist within the next year or two.

Spokane is some 90 percent white, and a gay district will promote the notion that such a community can still be tolerant and have diversity, Aspen said.

The idea arises out of the theories of Richard Florida, an economist whose 2002 book “The Rise of the Creative Class” contends that the economy of the future will be created by the 38 million workers who toil in “creative” industries.

Florida, a Carnegie Mellon University professor, said members of the creative class consider recreation, culture and ethnic diversity, including a large population of gays, as central to where they live. Places like New York, Boston, San Francisco and Seattle have those qualities. Places like Spokane generally do not.

After Florida spoke here a couple of years ago, Spokane civic leaders embraced many of his ideas. They have pushed hard to create a university district and several arts districts near downtown.

Tom Reese, an economic development officer for Spokane, said city government is not exactly pushing the notion of a gay district, but they don’t oppose it either.

“It is our desire to create an environment where diversity and different interests and lifestyles of all types can flourish,” Reese said.

No public funds will be used to create the district, which is dependent on developers, Aspen said. No location has been announced.

With about 200,000 residents, the city has little history of gay activism, other than an effort a few years ago that added homosexuals as a protected class to its human rights ordinance.

Spokane — which in trendy Seattle is shorthand for tragically unhip — has long been dominated by conservative politics that stem from its history as a mining and farming center. But it also has a large core of Democrats who push for social justice, and libertarians who share the West’s live and let live philosophy.

Most of all the city identifies itself as a good place to raise a family. A gay district clashes with that image, opponents contend.

“We are a family friendly, traditional values community,” said former Mayor John Talbott.

Opponents fear a gay district will attract sexual predators who prey on gays, plus lead to increased crime, drug use and other social ills, Walton Mize, bishop of the Christ Holy Sanctified Church, said.

“Most people don’t know about the underbelly of it,” Mize said. “It’s a culture based upon sex.”

Aspen rejected the notion that a gay district will bring

social problems to Spokane.

“I can’t see why they think they will have more of that than is already here,” Aspen said.

Spokane already has a gay newspaper, Stonewall News Northwest, and some businesses that cater to gay residents. It has had an openly gay member of the City Council.

But creating a district is still important, Reguindin said.

“It would help youth struggling with their sexuality to realize they don’t have to go away to a big city to be gay. You can be gay right here in Spokane,” Reguindin said.

Farand Gunnels, local representative for the Pride Foundation, a Seattle-based group that gives grants to sup-

port the gay community, wondered if there were enough gay residents in Spokane to support such a district.

The INBA is also preparing to launch a “visibility campaign,” in which businesses will be asked to display signs in their windows proclaiming their support for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

“We’ll know where we will be welcome and patronize those businesses,” Aspen said. “We’ve had a very positive reaction from the business community.”

Gay customers will be able to leave special cards at businesses they patronize, to let the owners know they were there, Aspen said.

“It will give Spokane an idea of the economic impact gay people have,” Aspen said.

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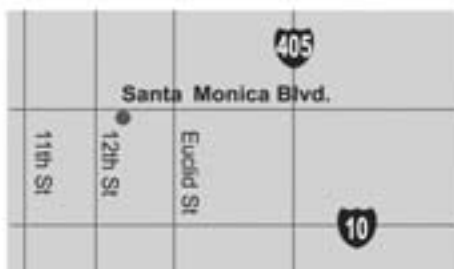
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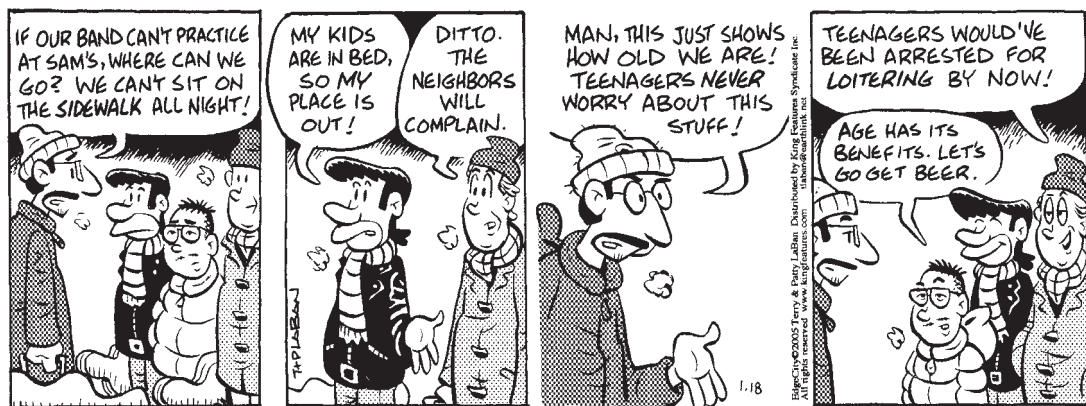
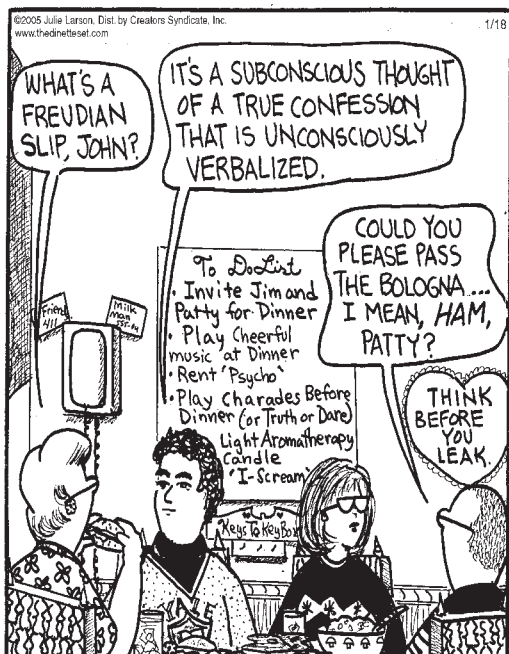
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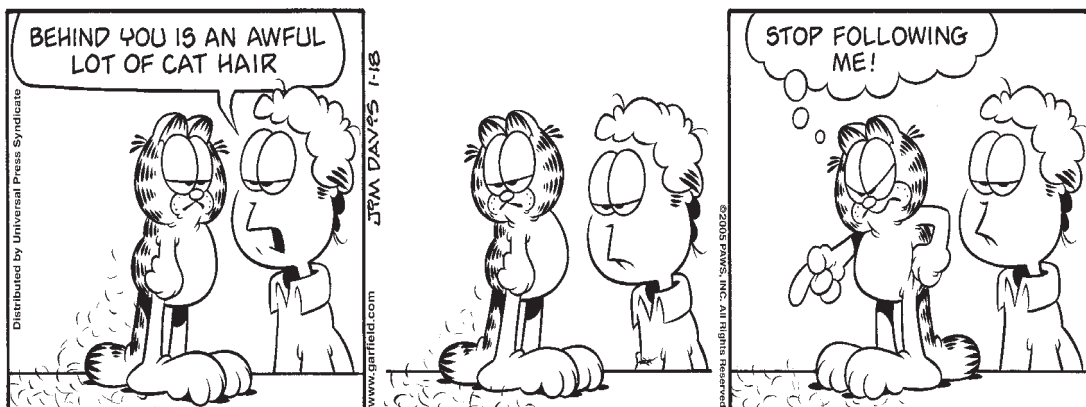
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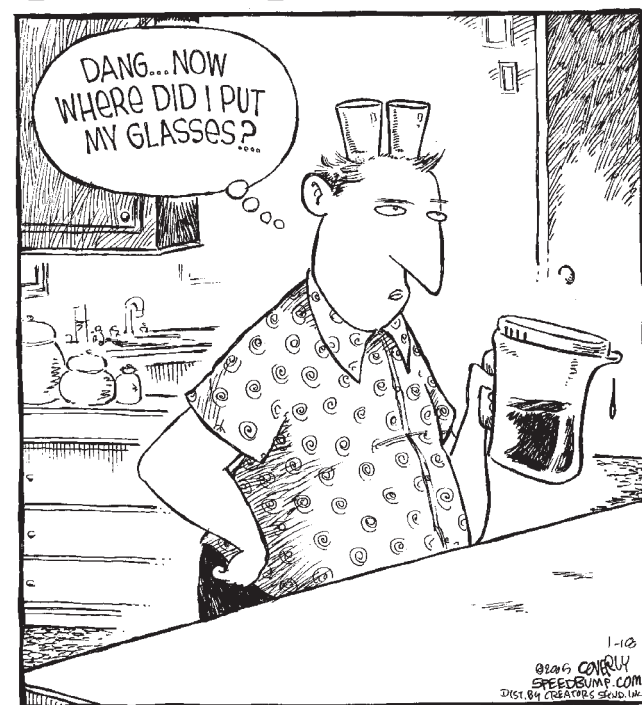
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Lord of the King Kong? Jackson plans remake

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Director Peter Jackson's first attempt to remake "King Kong" featured an Empire State Building constructed out of cardboard and a Manhattan skyline painted on an old bedsheet.

It was an amateur effort, but Jackson was only 13 at the time. He has a bigger budget now, at 43.

Jackson, who directed "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, said remaking "King Kong" has been a lifelong obsession.

The \$150 million remake now in production is a respectful tribute to the 1933 original. Jackson approached Fay Wray, who played Ann in the first film, about making a cameo, but she died before it was possible.

"Obviously, there's a lot of criticism and apprehension about remaking any film, and it has the potential for pitfalls that are greater than 'The Lord of the Rings,'" he told the Los Angeles Times during a short break on the "King Kong" set. "But it's a dream come true. That's the reality of it."

LAUDERHILL, Fla. — When Harry Belafonte met the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1950s, he promised to always assist in his mission.

Thirty-seven years after King's death, the actor, singer and activist is still keeping his pledge.

Belafonte on Saturday met with a group of about 60 people, many of them children, during a celebration of King's life at a Boys and Girls Club. He said the 13 years he worked side-by-side with the civil rights leader were "the most important of my life."

"Each and every one of you has the power, the will and the capacity to make a difference in the world in which you live in," Belafonte said. "You should go through life knowing, 'I am somebody.'"

Freedom was the theme of many questions posed by the kids, and one query left the 77-year-old Belafonte particularly reflective. "How does it feel to be free?" asked 10-year-old Shawn Gordon.

Answered Belafonte: "When I get it, I will tell you."

Belafonte — famous for his blend of rhythm and calypso-inspired music — is well known for his role as a UNICEF goodwill ambassador and as a leader in the civil rights movement.

SAN FRANCISCO — Samuel L. Jackson dies in his next huge film — but he does it in a really cool way.

Director George Lucas assured the actor that his Jedi knight character would go out in a blaze of glory in the forthcoming "Star Wars: Episode III — Revenge of the Sith," and the director apparently made good on his promise.

"It's rousing," Jackson told the San Francisco Chronicle in Sunday's editions. "It's a great light-saber battle with 102 moves in three big rooms."

For now, though, Jackson is enjoying the success of his "Coach Carter," in which he stars as a real-life high-school basketball mentor who shuts down the program to focus on his players' lagging academic education.

The film debuted as the top weekend movie with \$23.6 million, studio estimates released Sunday show. But don't expect Jackson, 56, to get anxious about his shot for an Academy Award.

"I have a place that's pretty much cemented in Hollywood in terms of liability, box-office viability and everything else. The only thing an Oscar would do is jack my check up maybe \$1 million," he said.

NEW YORK — David Simon's HBO series "The Wire" — a fictional account of a police investigation of Baltimore drug dealers — allegedly had some real-life

dealers taking notes.

While announcing a crackdown on Friday of a cocaine ring, police said their investigation was hampered by the suspects' habit of switching cell phones — a technique for evading electronic eavesdropping they picked up from TV.

"Believe it or not, these guys copied 'The Wire,'" one of the investigators, Sgt. Felipe Rodriguez, said at a news conference. "They were constantly dumping their phones. It made our job so much harder."

Police relied largely on wiretaps to infiltrate the gang, which made up to \$15 million a year. The result: 12 arrests and seizure of 43 kilograms of cocaine, 18 handguns, \$500,000 cash and five luxury vehicles.

DENVER — The person who dreamed up a TV series about Kirstie Alley's embarrassing battle with her weight and struggles inside the Hollywood fishbowl might be surprising.

It was Kirstie Alley.

"Actually, the show was my idea," she told the Rocky Mountain News in Saturday's editions. "It was sort of like I could either die — slit my throat, knowing that I could not work for a year or however long it would take to lose the weight — or I could make a series. You know, go with the flow and turn this into something fabulous."

Alley admits friends warned the former star of "Cheers" and "Veronica's Closet" that doing the upcoming Showtime series "Fat Actress" would be show-business suicide.

"I didn't listen. I believe that things will work out when you're honest about something and find humor in situations," she said. "The series is much more than just about coping with being fat. It's about the state of mind of women, while showing how easy it is to sort of prey upon women and their insecurities."

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