

FREE

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SMPD changes response to domestic violence

Police department will start using city-funded program

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER

Special to the Daily Press

A publicly-funded social services program fell through the cracks of City Hall bureaucracy the past few years, resulting in a waste of taxpayer money and leaving domestic violence victims without a place to turn.

Commanding officers at Santa Monica Police Department knew of the program but failed to advertise its existence to cops working in the field. Even though the city gives annually about \$50,000 to "On Call Emergency Advocate Network," also known as OCEAN, the Santa Monica-based organization has never become

"The chief wasn't interested in using OCEAN because the LAPD were using them; he wanted to use their service because they are an additional resource."

— CAPT. PHIL SANCHEZ
Santa Monica Police Department

part of the police department's procedures when dealing with domestic violence victims. It just wasn't a priority for law enforcement officials.

Embraced in neighboring Venice Beach, OCEAN is

contacted after police respond to a domestic violence call. The program is designed to offer resources to domestic violence victims. The organization gives free legal advice, lock changes, baby-sitting, medical care assistance and counseling.

When officials on the city's Commission on the Status of Women realized last year that the police department wasn't using the service, they wanted an explanation.

At their December meeting, they wondered why battered women in Venice Beach are so different from battered women in Santa Monica. They also wanted to know why the service, used widely just blocks away, is so neglected at home.

"Essentially, we were paying for something they weren't using," said Kelley Hayes-Raitt, a commission member who recently led the investigation into the police department. "But we also wanted to make sure battered

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Greens rallying the troops for living wage battle



Andrew H. Fixmer/Daily Press

Madeline Janis-Aparicio lectures to Green Party activists on how to enact living wage laws in their home communities like the one proposed in Santa Monica. Working for the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, she helped enact living wage ordinances in the city of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County.

Green Party enlists activists for city's proposed ordinance

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER

Special to the Daily Press

Green party activists from throughout the state met this past weekend to find ways to enact living wage ordinances in other California towns.

Santa Monica City Councilman Kevin McKeown, a featured speaker at the workshop, shared his experiences in creating the city's proposed ordinance which will be decided on by voters this November.

Residents here could enact the strongest living wage law in the country. It would require private

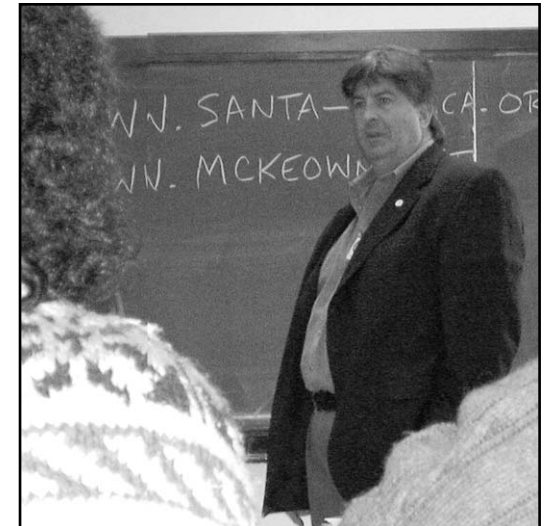
businesses located in the "Coastal Tourism Zone" that gross more than \$5 million annually to pay their employees a higher wage and provide health insurance.

"If we shoot short, we will end up shooting ourselves in the foot," said McKeown. "We don't need another minimum wage, we need to finally enact a true living wage."

The Greens also enlisted the help of Vivian Rothstein, president of Santa Monicans for Responsible Tourism, and Madeline Janis-Aparicio of Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, who helped enact living wage ordinances in the city of Los Angeles and in Los Angeles County.

Opponents of the living wage ordinance say the measure jeopardizes the city's annual \$700 mil-

See GREEN PARTY, page 3



Andrew H. Fixmer/Daily Press

Councilman Kevin McKeown tells Green Party activists he anticipates years of lawsuits from businesses if voters enact the city's proposed living wage ordinance this November.

Curtains for downtown playhouse?

By Daily Press staff

With the threat of a rent increase, the historic playhouse on Fourth Street may have to shut its doors.

The Santa Monica Playhouse, which is celebrating its 40th year providing a host of programs and performances downtown, is looking for close to \$500,000 to buy the facility. The non-profit professional theatre is asking the Santa Monica City Council to help in its plight.

The playhouse's current lease is up and its landlord gave officials 18 months to raise money so they can buy the building. If they can't, they face a 20 percent rent increase. Currently the city gives no money to the playhouse, although it will receive \$9,050 this year from the cultural arts organizational support program and is a regular recipient of the Cultural Affairs Division's Community Arts Grants.

The theatre presents about 10 theatrical performances each week. It also

presents 10 productions each year involving Santa Monica's oldest professional acting company, "The Actors Repertory Program," as well as the New Playwrights Series, the Jewish Heritage Program and the International Cultural Exchange Program. Along with educational programs, the playhouse offers six musicals for children and families each year.

The city council will review the request at its Tuesday meeting.



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

The Playhouse on Fourth Street is asking the city for financial assistance in its effort to stay open.

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ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Expenses cause you to stop in your tracks. Think in terms of gain through an important connection or friendship. Clearly, someone adores you and is more than happy to do whatever he or she can to ease your path. Pressure will build if you assume a carefree attitude. Tonight: Balance your checkbook.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Your smile proves to be a winner, even with a boss or a difficult associate. Use your ability to see through problems. Others can be easily coaxed if you employ a diplomatic tactic. Others respond to your insight and direction. Tonight: In the limelight.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ Take your time when seeking insight. Question what is happening behind the scenes and also within yourself. You sometimes need to stop and be introspective. Well-wishers from a distance confuse the moment, even if they only intend the best! Tonight: Time for you.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Others seek you out. You might have your hands full dealing with a personal or financial matter and when handling a group concern. Use your diplomatic style to merge your two interests. Express your concerns in a meeting. Others will listen. Tonight: Follow a pal's lead.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Take charge at work. Tension could be unusually high with others demanding what they want in a somewhat cloying manner. Keep explaining why your objectives are what they are. Willingly work late if you need to. Remember how often you're a role model! Tonight: Could be a late one.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★ Your efforts go up in smoke because of new information that heads in your direction. You can't change what it is, but you can make decisions as to how to prevent a flub-up like this one in the future. A co-worker means well. Tonight: Relax. Surf the Net.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Deal with someone on a one-on-one level. You find distraction to be a problem. A certain person might feel unduly jeopardized by your response to someone else. Curb your flirting and keep business your highest priority. You will have plenty of time for fun later. Tonight: Play like you're a kid again.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Someone has more control over your day than you might like. Personal and domestic matters need to go on the back burner so you can meet someone's demands. You might be overwhelmed by expectations. Follow someone's lead. Tonight: Out and about.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★ Stay nice and even when dealing with others. You might not be exactly sure what to expect. Though you like what you're doing, you might not appreciate all the distractions. Keep your focus and screen calls if need be. Tonight: Get some exercise, please.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Think about your long-term desires involving a child or new friend. The affection continues to develop. You seem to lose control with this person, especially when it involves saying "no." Maybe now you can identify with others! Tonight: Treat someone to dinner.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Could too much be happening too quickly? Only you know for sure. Understand if you cannot keep your normal organization; you might want to pull back and accept less commitment. Do what you do 100 percent. Don't do anything halfway! Tonight: Relax at home.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Your mind works on overdrive, though you might have difficulty expressing all that you are thinking. Perhaps you need to slow down or close your door. Put some organization into your day-to-day planning. You easily could be overwhelmed. Tonight: Meet a friend after work and relax.



WEATHER

Today ...	Mostly sunny	High—63°F	Low—45°F
Tomorrow ...	Partly cloudy	High—56°F	Low—40°F
Wednesday ...	Mostly sunny	High—65°F	Low—39°F



QUOTE of the DAY

"Don't be humble. You're not that great."

— Golda Meir (1898-1978)

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LOCAL

Poppin' the corn



Del Pastrana/Daily Press

Joanna Turner, youth director of the Trinity Baptist Church, sets up her stand and passes out free popcorn to neighborhood children.

City could face years of lawsuits if living wage is enacted

GREEN PARTY, from page 1

lion hotel industry, and the \$40 million in taxes the municipality receives from it.

"We're not calling to hurt the hotels with boycotts."

— VIVIAN ROTHSTEIN

Santa Monicans for Responsible Tourism

Kathy Dodson, executive director of the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce, has said before that mandating what businesses pay their employees is dangerous and will ultimately hurt them in the long run. Many restaurant owners already have said they will stop serving lunch to get under the \$5 million revenue cap.

The Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce is leading the charge against the ordinance, calling it discriminatory and unfair.

"Here in Santa Monica businesses are always paying above the federal minimum wage rate because the market has already set a (higher) rate," Dodson recently told the

Daily Press. "In this instance they (the city) are targeting businesses geographically and financially, but they conveniently exclude unionized hotels and city employees.

Supporters of the living wage movement argue that the federal minimum wage is ineffective because it is set well below the poverty level, leaving many families on welfare, food stamps and without health benefits.

"Sure, we have brought in all these jobs but the workers who fill the ranks have to turn to government to pay the bills or buy groceries," said Rothstein. "Basically, taxpayers are subsidizing the low wages corporations' pay their employees."

When Green party activists suggested organizing a boycott of hotels who are fighting the living wage ordinance, supporters said that would only hurt employees they are trying to help.

"We're not calling to hurt the hotels with boycotts," said Rothstein. "All we want to do is help the workers, but a boycott would only make their economic hardships worse."

Activists also warned that in order to wage an effective living wage campaign, a solid legal team needs to be in place. McKeown said that even if voters enact the ordinance in November, legal chal-

Commission waits for results on SMPD's new procedures

OCEAN, from page 1

women had access to all the resources available to them."

An internal review was launched this month by the police department into how it trains its officers for domestic violence situations, what information is contained in the reports officers file, and an overall look at the department's protocols on domestic violence.

"We want to continually improve our service to the community," said SMPD Capt. Phil Sanchez, who acted as an intermediary between the commission and Santa Monica Police Chief James T. Butts Jr. "I listened to their concerns, looked at what we were doing and filed a report with my recommendations to the chief."

"OCEAN allows law enforcement to concentrate on the criminal aspects without getting involved in social service."

— SUE WILLIS
LAPD detective

The plan proposed by Sanchez and enacted by Chief Butts is a three-prong approach on changing how officers respond to domestic violence.

First, the entire department has to undergo annual training by OCEAN officials and commanding officers will get specialized training. Police reports now must include why officers did or did not choose to call OCEAN.

OCEAN places advocates at the UCLA emergency room, connects them with the Santa Monica attorney's office and provides a 24-hour hotline for police and emergency workers.

"Our program encompasses an entire response model — as far as we know nobody else is doing our model anywhere in the world," said Pat Butler, director of OCEAN. "We're not here to tell you what to do, but what we're going to do is tell you what services are available and help you get to them any way possible."

At the Pacific division of the Los Angeles Police Department, which covers Venice Beach and the surrounding shore communities, detectives have long been using OCEAN to help domestic violence victims.

Because detectives in that division often have large case loads, many cannot afford the

time to hold a victim's hand through the process of getting a restraining order or answering questions about public assistance programs.

But they can refer victims to OCEAN which gives each victim a personal counselor to talk through the stages of leaving the abusive relationship.

"OCEAN allows law enforcement to concentrate on the criminal aspects without getting involved in social service," said LAPD Det. Sue Willis, who has worked with OCEAN for three years. "We have a very trusting relationship, which is not too common in law enforcement to have with an outside agency."

Willis said the Santa Monica Police Department has nothing to lose by cooperating with OCEAN officials.

"If they begin to use them, I'm sure they will see the benefits quickly," she said. "They bridge police jargon with what a civilian can understand. They are able to really fill an important void in how law enforcement handles domestic violence."

The Santa Monica Police Department brought in OCEAN officials to brief each shift at the roll call meeting, where senior officers brief the officers before going on duty. The question and answer session proved very popular and OCEAN already has been asked back for an encore.

"The chief wants to change the educational curve," said Capt. Sanchez. "We want to show officers this is a good resource for us and the victim."

The LAPD Pacific division responds to many more calls for domestic violence than Santa Monica, giving local officers more flexibility in helping victims and providing a more personalized approach to each domestic violence case.

Last year the Pacific division responded to 740 domestic violence calls in Venice Beach and 540 in West LA. Santa Monica police responded to 317 in 2000 and 236 in 2001.

"The chief wasn't interested in using OCEAN because the LAPD were using them; he wanted to use their service because they are an additional resource," said Sanchez.

However, members on the Commission of the Status of Women want to review the domestic violence calls for January at next month's meeting. Then they will know for sure if the changes are working and OCEAN is being brought in to help.

"All the new training and institutional changes the department is making are very gratifying," said Hayes-Raitt. "But the real test will be at the end of the month when we have new figures."

lenges will likely delay the ordinance for years.

"They will sue the city after voters pass it in a last ditch effort to revoke it," he said. "It'll tie the city up in lawsuits but, hey, that's life in government."

McKeown told activists that it's not just his re-election and the fate of the living wage are at stake this year, but also a measure that would completely rewrite the local election process.

"It's imperative that we win this year. We're going to kick ass," he said. "We're going to do it in a nice way because we're Greens, but we're out to kick ass this year."

The measure McKeown referred to — the Voters Election Reform Initiative for a True Accountability System, or VERITAS — would allow for the direct election of the mayor and divide the city into city council districts.

Incidentally, McKeown said the measure would leave him without a district to run from.

"But I'm sure that's only a coincidence," he joked.

McKeown said just before the council voted to enact the living wage ordinance, a group of hotel owners invited him to lunch and threatened to end his political career if he helped enact the measure.

"They said voting in favor of the living wage would be considered a scorched earth policy toward them," he said. "And they will now come after me personally in this election."

McKeown said this year's election could be one of the costliest in city history because the hotel and restaurant industry is likely to pump millions into supporting the VERITAS referendum and defeating the living wage ordinance.

"They are working hard to defeat us in Santa Monica right now," McKeown said. "If it works in Santa Monica, similar legislation could be enacted in other tourism heavy cities. And believe me, that scares them to no end."

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NATIONAL

Sundance heavy on family, strange love and stalkers

BY DAVID GERMAIN
AP Movie Writer

PARK CITY, Utah — Love and family conflict of all varieties were well-represented at this year's Sundance Film Festival, with a dose of self-abuse and self-replication and plenty of stalkers thrown in.

Here are some highlights of films that played the festival, which ended Sunday:

—“Tadpole”: Some movies dead-on nail everything they set out to do, and Gary Winick's smart, raucously funny family farce is one of them. Sigourney Weaver, John Ritter, Bebe Neuwirth and newcomer Aaron Stanford star in this twist on the stepmother yarn, the story of an incredibly precocious 15-year-old with a passion for a certain older woman. Great humor, great heart, great brains and a great cast. Winick won the fest's dramatic directing prize.

—“Personal Velocity”: Kyra Sedgwick, Parker Posey and Fairuza Balk shine in a film trilogy about three enormously engaging women at the biggest crossroads of their lives. Director Rebecca Miller, who adapted the film from her book, makes innovative use of flashback, voice-overs and an artful mix of still and moving images to propel her highly literate, insightful portraits. The film earned Sundance's top dramatic honor, the grand jury prize.

—“Secretary”: Love takes all forms is the message of Steven Shainberg's bizarrely touching story that presents sadomasochism as a viable form of affection — for the right couple. Maggie Gyllenhaal is beguiling as a self-mutilating woman who finds an anchor in her abusive new boss (James Spader), an attorney for whom a good spanking signifies sound office discipline.

—“One Hour Photo”: Robin Williams in a physical and psychological transformation as a bland photo clerk who obsessively dotes on a family of customers, then turns into a menacing stalker when he learns the truth about their seemingly picture-perfect life. Some nice twists from director Mark Romanek, and Williams proves as good at deranged and dangerous as he's been at warm and cuddly.

—“Teknolust”: The adage “nothing in excess” does not apply to Tilda Swinton; when it comes to the potential Oscar nominee for “The Deep End,” the more the better. Here, she handles four roles in Lynn Hershman Leeson's off-the-wall sci-fi tale of a scientist who creates three

adorably self-aware replicants of herself. Swinton delivers with abandon, and Leeson poses thoughtful questions about love, consciousness, loneliness and sex.

—“Rain”: New Zealand director Christine Jeffs evokes a gut-wrenching idyll of childhood giving way to harsh adulthood. Set in the early 1970s, the film follows a sexually awakening teen-age girl on summer holiday with her parents and younger brother. The mother-daughter dynamic is mesmerizing, the climax devastating, and Alicia Fulford-Wierzbicki performs beyond her years as the teen.

—“The Dangerous Lives of Altar Boys”: Worthwhile if only for the chance to see Jodie Foster in nun's habit, playing a stern taskmaster at a Roman Catholic school. Emile Hirsch and Kieran Culkin star as students whose rebellion against school authority leads to tragedy. The movie features fine performances and clever animation depicting the boys' fantasy life as superheroes battling “Nunzilla.” Foster also was a producer on the film.

—“Face”: Director and co-writer Bertha Bay-Sa Pan skillfully weaves the story of three generations of Chinese-American women in two time frames. In the late 1970s, an unwanted pregnancy and forced marriage ruins the business plans of a young woman, while 20 years later, she returns to America from Hong Kong to make a hesitant attempt to connect with her daughter, who was raised by her grandmother. A sweet examination of tradition and modern times at odds.

—“Cherish”: Even as it clings to many clichés of the genre, Finn Taylor's thriller defies enough of the conventions to make it an original take on stalker flicks. Preyed upon by an obsessive pursuer, a woman (Robin Tunney) is wrongly charged in a policeman's death and placed under house arrest, striking up an odd romantic relationship with the cop (Tim Blake Nelson) who tends her electronic bracelet.

—“Anna Is Being Stalked”: Pound for pound, this short film may have been the most entertaining seven minutes at Sundance. A hilarious twist on the knife-wielding maniac, the film presents a strong heroine who ends up as mother hen for her absolutely toothless stalker. Directors Scott Prendergast and Gabriel Rhodes have keen comic sensibilities that should translate nicely if and when they do a full-length movie.

Plan for homeless laid out

By The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The issue of homelessness has plagued — and divided — this city for years.

The first of the plans to deal with homelessness as people announce their bids for mayor has come from Supervisor Gavin Newsom.

Newsom's plan would ban panhandling on median strips in roadways and in parking lots, provide 24-hour shelters and improve shelter conditions, as well as use identification cards and fingerprinting to track who uses the city's homeless services.

There are 7,300 homeless people in San Francisco, and the city spends more than \$100 million a year on services for them. The evidence of homelessness — human feces on sidewalks and people passed out — has led the city's tourist industry and neighborhood groups to push for the officials to clean up the city.

But homeless advocates say the plan doesn't show compassion or an understanding of the plight of the homeless.



Enron: Too much, too fast corrupts a good idea

The rise and fall of a doomed company

BY JEFF DONN
Associated Press Writer

HOUSTON — Several years before the meltdown, something already seemed out of whack to Tom Brigger at Enron's Corp. headquarters here.

Everyone hustled around in a ceaseless buzz. Ideas flew, sparked projects everywhere, ran through hurried testing — and often quickly dropped out of sight. Brigger, who oversaw Enron's mid-Atlantic unit for energy-management services, wondered how much energy was wasted.

"We moved forward constantly. It would change directions constantly, and nobody would ask what this is going to cost. It would just blow my mind," says Brigger, who left Enron in July to form a smaller company. "They were growing ... so rapidly, there is no way they could put a plan together."

Enron succeeded fabulously in the 1990s — or so it seemed — by dreaming up a new model for an energy business. Enron would be light on steel and concrete and even lighter on its feet. In short order, Enron became the new industry's swaggering giant.

Enron grew so big and so fast, pumped up its stock so high, and wooed so many big shots that the company intimidated competitors and intoxicated analysts, business gurus, reporters — and maybe even itself. As clever deals piled up and the money spigot never shut, Enron's leadership came to feel, by many inside accounts, that it could do no wrong and could never be touched by anything.

Yet the company with the tilted "E" logo has tumbled — unbelievably within two months — into the biggest business bankruptcy in American history and a truly Enron-sized corruption scandal.

'Weakling' flexes his muscles

In the old comic-book ad, a skinny weakling gets a faceful of sand, courtesy of a bully, and decides to transform himself. He builds up his muscles, and hits the beach again, this time with an attitude. That weakling was Kenneth Lay.

A Missouri native with deceptively avuncular ways, Lay earned a University of Houston economics doctorate, worked as an economist at Exxon, and took over as chairman of Houston Natural Gas in 1984. The decades-old government controls on the natural gas business were softening up to let in new cost-cutters, and operators were devouring one another in mergers. Lay fought off one would-be merger before he was obliged to hitch to larger Internorth, another natural gas company in Omaha, Neb. Enron was born as the owner of 37,000 miles of interstate pipeline.

Enron would reshape itself primarily into a wholesale buyer and seller of natural gas. Why can't customers be given alternatives: small or big volume, fixed or variable price, length of contract, even time of day for delivery? Enron would offer one-stop shopping for trimmings like built-in credit and hedge investments that could be used to ease losses. With the right computer models, statistical methods and a belly for risk, money could be made by the barrel, without producing a thimble of natural gas.

It was a risky notion that tended to appeal more to Wall Street than to the stodgier, old boy petroleum business of Texas. But Enron's directors, seeing drab prospects otherwise, were willing to endorse radical change.

Enron's timing was good: Federal regulators were heading in the same direction of loosening regulatory reins. When Enron opened trading at its GasBank in 1989, customers also bought into it, and in a big way.

"Skilling said, 'Let's give customers choice.' That was an astonishing suggestion for an industry that had basically dealt in a one-size-fits-all model for decades," says Robert Bruner, who teaches Enron as a case study in business at the University of Virginia.

Lay wanted choice for Enron too. That meant handling lots of buys and sales, pumping lots of capital, and flooding new markets with overwhelming money and manpower.

"Enron exploded out of the blocks and became the 900-pound gorilla," says Bruner. Within five years, Enron was brokering electricity deals.

In its 15-year rise, by the year 2000, Enron boomed into the world's biggest energy dealer and the country's No. 7 company with \$101 billion in annual business, at least according to their method of figuring revenue. It had about 20,000 employees.

Ken Lay and company were the big men on the beach now.

Cash flows freely

Flush with cash, Enron put on business meetings to remember.

Matt Mitchell, 29, still remembers his ribeye steak. Then there was that \$35 shot of whiskey that somebody downed. And the \$700 worth of wine lapped up by his 15-member engineering group at a swank Houston restaurant.

"I don't think we ever discussed business," Mitchell says of that meeting.

The perks were plentiful at Enron's \$200 million headquarters too. There was dry cleaning and a service that, for a minimal fee, would walk your dog while you worked. The 50-story tower housed a doctor's office — with a free doctor — and a gym.

The money — often in copious amounts — also encouraged loyalty. For Mitchell, who had just joined Enron in June 2000, it was an \$11,000 bonus on top of his \$84,000 annual salary.

For many, the money took the form of Enron stock. They bought it, took it in bonuses, or held it from company contributions to their retirement plans.

Charles Prestwood, of Conroe, a pipeline operator for 33 years first with Houston Natural Gas and then Enron, started watching Enron stock prices daily as he neared his retirement in 2000. "It was going up and going up fast, it made me feel good — more money for me!"

"I'd wear my coveralls with my Enron logo with great dignity," he adds. "Heck, I wore them to town, I wore them everywhere."

At peak, the stock — his retirement fund — was worth about \$1.3 million. It is now worth several thousand dollars, and he has joined one of an onslaught of class-action lawsuits on behalf of employees.

Even in the high-flying times, not everyone prospered, of course. Trader-eat-trader competition rippled through Enron.

The little ones got eaten.

"It had Darwinian elements," says Bruner, at the University of Virginia. If you didn't meet your targets, you were gone."

For some, the competition and atmosphere of overdrive were overwhelming. "Certain employees had lots of fun; others were challenged," says Bill Brendler, a psychologist who trained Enron executives in employee relationships during the 1990s. The comfortable ones had to "thrive on change and chaos," he says.

Sell, sell, sell

Meanwhile, the Enron behemoth kept sprouting heads. The idea congealed at Enron that it could sell just about anything. It began selling fiber-optic cable capacity, coal, paper and pulp, evolving toward a vast private commodities exchange.

Its financial services grew more exotic. It dealt more heavily in investments known as derivatives, which are pegged to the rise-or-fall of something else. In a weather derivative, a restaurant could win a premium, paid by Enron, if snow kept customers home. No snow, and Enron pockets the premium, paid by the restaurant out of healthy proceeds. Enron was always betting that its bets were best.

With so many disparate interests, Enron needed many friends, knew it and tried hard to cultivate them.

It started at home by helping charities and pledging \$100 million over 30 years at a new ballpark for the Houston Astros. The graceful stadium with its brick archways and clocktower was named Enron Field. Enron won a friend in Houston baseball fan Edgar Glenn.

"That was something everyone in Houston could be proud of," he says. "We could boast about it."

Enron also gave money to both Republicans and Democrats, hedging its political bets like trades. During the 1990s, Enron showered candidates with almost \$5.8 million. It has given to almost half of the sitting Congress, according to the

Center for Responsive politics. Lay is a friend of both President Bush and his father, the former president.

You might say all that money bought little, since the company lost on an international accord it wanted on global warming, repealing the alternative minimum tax for corporations, and other issues. But it at least got a hearing in many cases, as when Vice President Dick Cheney was crafting energy policy last year. Even knowing that something it favors won't happen can give Enron an edge, especially because it trades on predictions of future prices.

Tricks of the trade

Meanwhile, Enron's competitors were catching on, offering similar deals, and cutting into Enron's already modest margins. Even so, through last summer, Enron executives were swaggering in their public pronouncements.

Then, in an out-of-the-blue October, Enron acknowledged a \$618 million third-quarter loss, and the Securities and Exchange Commission opened an inquiry into a series of complex partnerships that Enron set up — apparently to throw a veil over its rising debts. Enron acknowledged overstating profits by more than \$580 million since 1997. Its stock crashed, and it requested bankruptcy protection by Dec. 2. Control of its once idolized energy trading business has been turned over to UBS Warburg, a division of a Swiss bank.

Olson, the Houston analyst, says Enron executives became addicted to sophisticated accounting tricks to keep their reputation high. "It became like crack cocaine, where you had partnerships able to gin out synthetic earnings for you if you had a shortfall," he says. "It was a matter of the culture getting carried away with their success."

In a final slight, archrival Dynegy has walked away from an \$8.4 billion merger. In the process, it has stripped away an Enron asset that has stayed valuable: a natural gas pipeline.

A 'hard' landing

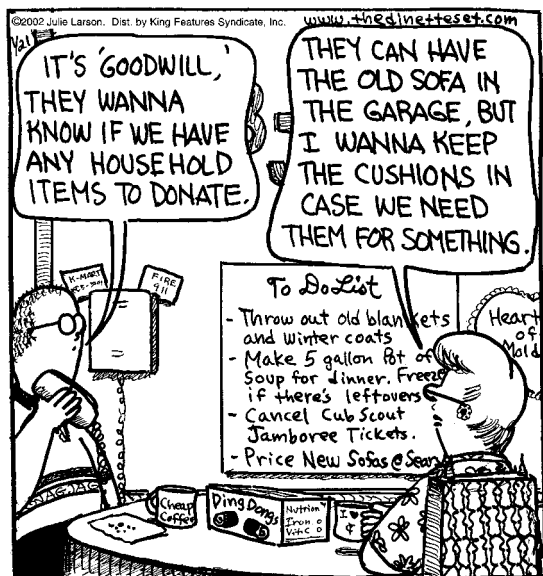


Bullit Marquez/Associated Press

U.S. Army Capt. Tom Bryant stands outside the Bagram Air Base as he confirms an accident involving the "hard landing" of a U.S. CH-53E helicopter about 40 miles south of Kabul on Sunday, killing two Marines from air station Miramar in San Diego — the same base that is still reeling from the death of seven comrades who died in a Jan. 9 plane crash in Pakistan. The portrait of assassinated anti-Taliban leader Ahmad Shah Massoud can be seen in the lower right bottom of the picture.

COMICS

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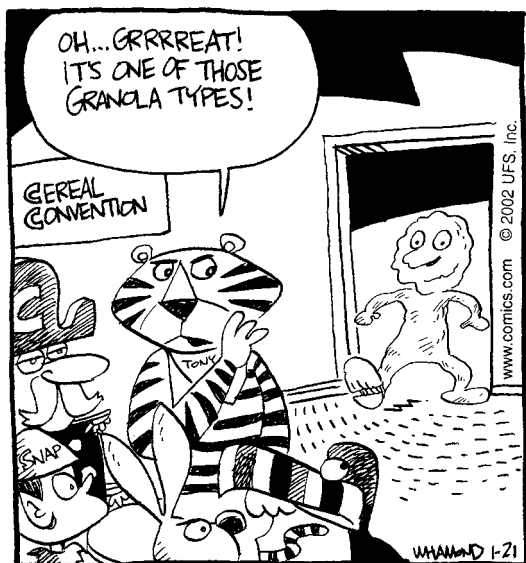
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ACROSS

- 1 Rose part
- 6 Suvari of "American Beauty"
- 10 Without help
- 11 Track shapes
- 13 Dreadlocks wearer
- 14 Iron or tin
- 15 List-shortening abbr.
- 16 Comic Allen
- 18 Dr.'s org.
- 19 California region
- 22 "You there!"
- 23 Helper
- 24 Ed of "Lou Grant"
- 27 Javelin
- 28 Clarinet part
- 29 Golf peg
- 30 California region
- 35 "— Town"
- 36 Dr. Dre's music
- 37 French summer
- 38 Nary a soul
- 40 Nebraska city
- 42 Hole in your head
- 43 Pal of Fido and Spot
- 44 Helper: Abbr.
- 45 Layers

DOWN

- 1 Reduced
- 2 Thrill
- 3 Puccini opera
- 4 Hill insect
- 5 Shoe material
- 6 Family member, familiarly
- 7 Garden evictee
- 8 Wood of Hollywood
- 9 California city
- 12 Buffy, for one
- 17 Wall climber
- 20 Screen vamp
- 21 Jacket part
- 24 Burning crimes
- 25 California tree
- 26 Impulse senders
- 27 Shipping center
- 29 Dam-building org.
- 31 Gain by force
- 32 Depart
- 33 Old anesthetic
- 34 Century components
- 39 Greek letters
- 41 Miss Piggy, to herself

D	R	O	P	Y	A	M	S
M	E	A	R	A	E	N	A
A	C	R	E	S	A	G	R
T	R	E	S	S	E	S	I
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B	A	B	E	L	F	I	B
S	T	E	A	L	O	P	E
A	R	T	S	R	E	S	T

Saturday's answer

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Golf course littered with land mines

- Legal fees had risen to about \$30,000 as of November in the Golden, Colo., battle between ex-lovers David Rosenthal and Barbara Newman over whether their 2-year-old child is named "Kyleigh Rosenthal-Newman" or "Kyleigh Rosenthal Newman."
- Thailand's minister of tourism said a 27-hole golf course would be built at the juncture of his country, Laos and Cambodia, with nine holes in each nation, though the territory is littered with Khmer Rouge land mines; the minister thought golfers would fly in from all over the world for the challenge.
- Leaders of the notorious right-wing death squad of Colombia's United Self-Defense Forces sent e-mail Christmas cards this season to their soldiers across the countryside, wishing them "peace."

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BACK PAGE

Castoffs and contraband form Tijuana's accidental zoo

BY BEN FOX

Associated Press Writer

TIJUANA, Mexico — It started with a cage of contraband parrots. Later came the lion taken from an animal smuggler and an abused, albino python seized from a stripper.

A city park in Tijuana has assembled a makeshift zoo of confiscated, abandoned and donated animals that highlights the illicit trade in exotic species that flourishes along the U.S.-Mexico border.

"They had no place to put confiscated animals, so they brought them here," explains Alejandro Cuellar, assistant operations director at Morelos Park. "We ended up with a zoo by accident."

Now the menagerie, which occupies about 2 acres of the 148-acre park, displays nearly 250 animals, representing 46 species, from an opossum found along a highway in Southern California to a 2-year-old tiger rescued from a Mexican circus.

The park's animal collection has simple enclosures, a haphazard layout and none of the detailed explanatory signs that accompany exhibits in more established zoos.

It's more modest than Tijuana's better known private zoo, which is owned by a horse racing track. And it seems a world away from the state-of-the-art collection of 4,000 animals across the border at the San Diego Zoo, considered to be among the world's finest.

But the workers at the city-run Morelos Park have big dreams. Carla Coss y Leon, the veterinarian who presides over the collection, would like to transform it into an up-to-date, interactive lesson on the dangers of the illegal animal trade.

"I'd like to show people how these animals suffer when they are taken out of their habitat," said Coss y Leon. "I'd like to teach people to show more respect for nature."

It will take a lot of work. The entire Morelos Park, which is named for a hero of the Mexican War of Independence, has 126 municipal employees and an annual budget of \$2.5 million. The entrance fee, 50 cents

for adults, free for children, doesn't leave much for improvements.

Stocking the exhibits, though, isn't a problem.

Agents from Mexico's federal environmental agency, Tijuana city code enforcement officers, wealthy collectors whose pets have outgrown their homes and animal-loving citizens who stumble upon a forlorn critter all make their way to the park zoo to offer up contributions.

"I'd like to show people how these animals suffer when they are taken out of their habitat."

— COSS y LEON
Veterinarian

"The animals keep coming," said Coss y Leon.

She says this as two Tijuana code enforcement officers arrive with a pair of cages filled with a half-dozen green parrots, their feathers a mix of brilliant greens and reds. They were confiscated from a street vendor who had no permit to sell the birds, a protected species in Mexico, said Pedro Espinosa, a supervisory inspector.

Espinosa, who in his spare time writes a column on bullfighting for a Tijuana newspaper, let the street vendor off with a warning. It was a first offense, he said.

The veterinarian will work with wildlife officials to see if the parrots can be returned to their native habitat in southern Mexico. If not, the birds will stay.

Parrots like these are often destined for the United States, where they feed a black market for cut-rate or illegal pets, sometimes ending up at swap meets, said Scott Serena, a wildlife inspector for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who works along the California border.

Throughout the American Southwest, inspectors like Serena try to control the trade, regularly seizing rare and

endangered reptiles and birds, and even the occasional large, furry mammal. He knows of at least one white tiger cub found at a border crossing in San Diego.

"They are smuggling to meet a consumer need," he said. "Like any product, you can buy it for less money in Mexico, then smuggle it into the U.S. to undercut people who are importing legally."

Visitors to Morelos Park benefit when the smugglers fail. The first parrots were stored there on a temporary basis in 1995, Cuellar said. Things progressed informally from there, as is often the case in Tijuana, where the hard-pressed civic leaders have more compelling matters than building a zoo.

When the police seized a lion cub from the car of an animal smuggler 5 1/2 years ago, the collection began to take off. Nala, as the lioness is now known, is a featured attraction.

Others soon followed. Billy, a declawed Siberian tiger, was a gift from a wealthy Tijuana man whom park officials declined to identify. It seems he bought the cat from a circus, believing it was mistreated. But the animal outgrew his backyard and he had to give it up.

The park has white foxes confiscated at the airport, crocodiles and peacocks donated from the private zoo. Police brought the albino Burmese python, which was part of a stripper's act at a downtown club. The officers thought the serpent was a danger to patrons, Coss y Leon said.

When the albino python arrived a year ago, it looked dazed and underfed, its translucent white skin marred by what appeared to be cigarette burns, she said. But now it seems fine and has almost doubled in length, to more than six feet.

Others are harder to help. A gray parrot remains somewhat scruffy on its perch in a room that adjoins the veterinarian's office. It has yet to unlearn the habit of spewing profanity.

"It makes me sad," Coss y Leon said, petting a baby boa constrictor like a kitten. "People buy these beautiful animals and they have no idea how to care for them."

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