

FREE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 2005

Volume 4, Issue 60

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

2 9 27 30 45
Meganumber: 13
Jackpot: \$7 Million

FANTASY 5

1 16 20 21 32

DAILY 3

Daytime: 4 4 5
Evening: 1 0 4

DAILY DERBY

1st: 12 Lucky Charms
2nd: 06 Whirl Win
3rd: 02 Lucky Star

RACE TIME: 1:42.40

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPARD

William Glenn Barefoot, 40, escaped from jail in Fayetteville, N.C., in October and soon after that called his brother John to report that he hadn't eaten since the escape and that he was cold, in part because he had had to break out quickly and had not had a chance to grab his shoes. (He was recaptured a few days later.) And from the University of Minnesota's Minnesota Daily, 12-2-04: "On Tuesday, University police took a report from a man (whose complaint was) that the word 'loser' was written in the dirt on his car's rear bumper."

TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1793, during the French Revolution, King Louis XVI, condemned for treason, was executed on the guillotine.
In 1924, Russian revolutionary Vladimir Ilyich Lenin died at age 54.
In 1942, Count Basie and His Orchestra recorded "One O'Clock Jump" in New York for Okeh Records.
In 1950, former State Department official Alger Hiss, accused of being part of a Communist spy ring, was found guilty in New York of lying to a grand jury. (Hiss, who always maintained his innocence, served less than four years in prison.)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Nothing is so fatal to religion as indifference, which is, at least, half infidelity."

EDMUND BURKE
BRITISH STATESMAN (1729-1797)

INDEX

Horoscopes	
Get extra sleep, Cancer	2
Surf Report	
Water Temperature: 59°	3
Opinion	
SM's growing pains	4
State	
Swarming squid	8
Entertainment	
Ice Cube in hell	10
National	
Four more years	13
Comics	
Laugh it up	16
Classifieds	
Ad space odyssey	17-18

Criminal probe launched at cemetery



Modrey Floyd/Special to the Daily Press

A city worker hauls dirt at Woodlawn Cemetery, where an investigation into city-controlled finances was launched in December.

Top administrators led out of offices at Woodlawn Cemetery, put on paid leave

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

PICO NEIGHBORHOOD — A criminal investigation is underway at Santa Monica's Woodlawn Cemetery, where two city-paid administrators were led out of their offices last month, authorities confirmed Thursday.

Investigators declined to specify the allegations facing the two workers, though sources close to the cemetery probe said the employees could be accused of anything from mere bookkeeping incompetence to illegally taking large sums of money, either directly from the bereaved or from cemetery funds, which are controlled by City Hall.

The Daily Press is not publishing the names of the city employees under investigation until authorities decide whether to pursue criminal charges. In the meantime, the Santa Monica City Attorney's Office and City Hall's human resources department have launched a joint personnel investigation, while the criminal probe is led by the Santa Monica Police Department. The employees have been on paid leave since Dec. 17.

See WOODLAWN, page 6

Rent control lawsuit on shaky ground, city says

Landlord group sued City Hall last month to have 1979 rent control law declared unconstitutional

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — Attorneys this week rebuffed a federal lawsuit against Santa Monica's 26-year-old rent control law. They claim the suit has no legal footing and comes more than two decades too late.

The lawsuit, filed Dec. 20 by a group of area landlords, alleges rent control violates the constitutional rights of property owners

because it protects wealthy tenants as well as the poor, and therefore infringes on the rights of property owners without returning a substantial benefit to the state.

However, City Hall attorneys said in a prepared statement issued this week the lawsuit comes more than 20 years after the two-year statute of limitations had run its course on the 1979 rent control law. They add that the law has withstood similar legal challenges in county and state appellate courts.

"The Santa Monica rent control law was adopted by the voters of Santa Monica more than 25 years ago," reads the statement prepared by attorney Doris Ganga. "It and similar rent control laws have been upheld as constitutional many times, and this new attack will also prove unsuccessful."

Still, landlord advocates on Thursday vowed to press ahead with the federal lawsuit.

DEFENDING RENT CONTROL

Ganga listed several unsuccessful lawsuits leveraged against City Hall's rent control law, some by

landlord attorney Rosario Perry, who also is handling the current federal case. Perry filed the lawsuit on behalf of Action Apartment Association, a group of 1,000 area landlords.

"In 1999, the (Rent Control) Board prevailed in a California Supreme Court decision brought on similar grounds to the current lawsuit — (it) claimed failure to advance a legitimate state interest," Ganga's statement reads. "Last week, the board obtained judgment in its favor from the Los Angeles

See RENT CONTROL, page 6

Apartment rents in Western markets remain largely unchanged

BY MICHAEL LIEDTKE

AP Business Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Renting an apartment remained a relative bargain in most Western markets during 2004 as weak tenant demand continued to handcuff landlords, according to a survey released Thursday.

The average apartment rent either declined or rose by less than 3 percent in 15 of the 20 major metropolitan areas surveyed by RealFacts, a Novato, Calif.-based

Apartment rents in Los Angeles and Orange counties climbed 4.7 percent in 2004 to end the year at \$1,369 — making the region the West's highest priced rental market.

real estate research firm.

Rent fluctuations in most Western markets lagged behind last year's 3.3 percent increase in a

broader consumer price index tracked by the federal government.

The only places where apartment rents outpaced the govern-

ment's consumer price index were in Southern California, Nevada and the Fresno, Calif. metropolitan area, where average rent increases ranged from just under 4 percent to nearly 7 percent.

"The feeling you get is that everything is in a 'wait-and-see' position," said Caroline Latham, RealFacts' chief executive. "There really isn't anything to complain about or anything to cheer about."

See MARKETS, page 7

Jacquie Banks

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How to Secure Super-Low Downpayment Home Loans When You Buy A Home

WESTSIDE - A new report has just been released which identifies a foolproof 3-point plan which any homebuyer can use to secure the best financing rates when they buy a home.

When you're looking to buy a home, the first thing most homebuyers do is start the process of househunting. However, experience proves that this is one of the last steps you should be taking if you want to get the most home for the least amount of money. In fact, shopping for the best financing should start long before you start shopping for a home.

The experience of thousands of area homebuyers has been summarized in a new report entitled "Best Financing: A 3-Point Plan" This report out-

lines 3 critical steps you must take to obtain the absolute best financing rates when you buy a home. It tell you where you should go, what questions you should ask, and how to manage the process to your personal advantage.

To read a brief message about how to order your free copy of this report, visit www.westsidehomesource.com. Visit this site now to learn how to obtain the best financing rats when you buy your next home.

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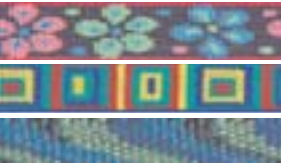
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♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ Don't grumble at a new perspective or a different way of handling problems. Go with the flow rather than fight others' requests. Learn to walk in another's shoes before you condemn or judge. Good will flourishes. Tonight: Make the most of things now that the weekend is here!

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Reach out and work with others. Your sense of humor takes you far. Think happy thoughts rather than get upset with another's approach to a boss. Don't make spending a conflict or struggle of wills. Tonight: Be a team.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ Others could floor you with their attitudes. Use your ingenuity to loosen people up. Once you establish easier interaction, good choices will appear. Plans could radically twist and turn. Remember to claim your power. Tonight: You are a happy camper wherever you are.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★ You might need time to yourself. You have a tendency to run yourself ragged, especially the past few days. Refuse to take out your fatigue by grumbling and becoming the Crab. Please vanish; everyone, including you, will be happier. Tonight: Get extra sleep — you need it.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ An upset with a child might not be easily avoided. A loved one or new friendship could deliver a jolt as well. Remember your long-term goals. Celebrate what is good in your life. Look at the glass as half-full rather than half-empty. Understand that you cannot control others, only yourself. Tonight: Thank goodness it is Friday.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★ You might feel that you cannot do anything right. A partner proves to be touchy, if not downright disagreeable. Family could be controlling. You might have to invest in your home or do some major repairs. Don't get frantic; focus on your work first. Tonight: Chill out.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Others find you to be unusually pushy, a characteristic normally not associated with your sign. Listen to both sides of an argument. Remember, nothing is black-and-white. Your ability to pull back could rescue the moment, if not the day. Tonight: Plans could change.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ Your spending might be akin to a runaway train. Could you be acting out because of frustration or anger? A partner demonstrates wisdom, while you cannot find answers. Trust key people a little more. The bank probably did not make a mistake; you slipped up. Tonight: Let another lead.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ You could be making life more difficult. Instead of pointing a finger, hold up a mirror. What role are you playing in a problem? Inadvertently you could be controlling or difficult. Others hold the cards. Let them play them. Tonight: Go along with plans.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ If you feel like you can't say something positive, don't say anything. You might be hard-pressed to act like a mummy, but you will be happier ultimately. Concentrate on work or a project. Tonight: Take care of yourself.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You prove to be ingenious while others tend to cause themselves problems. A friend's criticism might be stemming from jealousy. Let your ingenuity find the best path toward success. A flirtation builds. Tonight: Dance the night away.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Pressure builds. Play ostrich rather than find yourself at odds with someone who could impact your life. Ultimately, you will be happier and much more upbeat. Think long term rather than prove you are right. Tonight: Opt for peace and quiet.



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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Kids asked to 'Pony' up

By Daily Press staff

Baseball season is fast approaching.

The Santa Monica Pony League conducts its annual player registration and try-outs for all age groups on Saturday, Jan. 22, and next Saturday, Jan. 29. Registration and tryouts will be held at Los Amigos Park, located at Fifth and Hollister streets.

Interested boys and girls should bring a copy of their birth certificate and a baseball glove, if possible. Registration times are as follows:

Pintos (ages 7-8) 9 a.m.

Mustangs (ages 9-10) 10 a.m.

Broncos (ages 11-12) 11 a.m.

Ponys (ages 13-14) noon.

Opening day will be March 5 at 10 a.m.

For more information call Paul Feinberg at (310) 717-8163.

Jazz set to raise money for high school band

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monicans are asked to raise money for the local high school band this weekend by eating during a noontime jazz session.

The Santa Monica High School Jazz Band will be playing a lunch-time set at noon on Saturday, Jan. 22, at El Torito, located at Ocean Park Boulevard, near 32nd Street. People are asked to arrive early and bring their appetite for jazz and food. The Samohi Jazz Band will perform a full set. El Torito will donate a portion of the proceeds to the band.

Santa Monica Red Cross comes to the rescue

By Daily Press staff

Volunteers from the American Red Cross of Santa Monica were recently deployed to disaster-stricken Ventura County to provide mental-health services to victims of the La Conchita mudslides.

Dr. Robin May and Dr. Redette Gelish assessed the ways in which survivors have been coping with the aftermath of the disaster and monitored the Red Cross relief workers at the site to make sure they had support during the recovery process.

Seven more Red Cross of Santa Monica volunteers were asked to join the Red Cross of Greater Los Angeles to manage a shelter set up for residents of Santa Clarita.

The volunteers of the Red Cross of Santa Monica come from diverse backgrounds and professions. Among the Santa Monica volunteers helping in Santa Clarita are a paralegal, a screenwriter and a vice president of finance. To learn more about volunteering, call (310) 394-3773.

Over this past weekend, the Santa Monica Red Cross also raised money for those stricken by the tsunami in Southeast Asia during a jam session in Los Angeles.

Jack Black, of "School of Rock," and friends organized a concert to benefit the "Music for Relief Initiative," founded by the band members of the Southern California rock group Linkin Park.

Monday night's sold-out concert at the Wiltern Theatre featured performances by Beck, Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam, Dave Grohl of the Foo Fighters and Josh Homme of Queens of the Stone Age, with comic relief from Will Ferrell and Chris Rock.

By the end of the concert, Red Cross volunteers had processed close to \$3,000 in donations from fans wishing to support Music for Relief. Close to \$1 million has been raised through the initiative so far.

Monday night's benefit grossed approximately \$130,000, and the remaining \$95,000 in proceeds was a result of merchandise sales at the concert and gifts from Universal, MGM, and Jeffrey and Marilyn Katzenberg.

To learn more about Music for Relief, log on to www.musicforrelief.org or call (310) 394-3773.



SURF REPORT

Our WNW swell (270-300) topped out on Thursday, and it will be slowly backing off on Friday. There will still be plenty of chest- to shoulder- to head-high waves for areas with fair WNW exposure Friday morning while well exposed spots through Ventura, parts of the South Bay, parts of North OC and San Diego hit a couple of feet overhead. A 5.6-foot-high tide at 6:30 a.m. Friday will slow things down a bit early on. Look for a gradual decrease in size through the day as the WNW'er slowly losses steam.

Conditions: Light offshore winds blow Friday morning then go light and variable in the afternoon. Winds stay on the light side over the weekend.

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 Q Line

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

Car dealership revving up tempers

Editor:

Would Robert Holbrook, Mayor Pam O'Connor, Ken Genser, Kevin McKeown, Bobby Shriver, Herb Katz and Richard Bloom like hundreds of cars to be unloaded every week in front of their homes?

I bet they wouldn't. Yet why do they allow Kramer Automotive to unload hundreds of cars and trucks in the middle of 19th Street north of Santa Monica Boulevard every week? Even worse, double-decker trucks are parked in front of a music school with children and their parents coming in and out, and in front of a fire station. Can you imagine anything more dangerous?

Apparently, the City Council knows about this. They've held hearings and scheduled more hearings to "discuss the problem." How nice. Each day, dozens of residents are blocked from leaving their driveways, drivers on both sides of the street have their fields of vision blocked and must wait for the unloaded cars to drive off the ramps, and Santa Monica firemen must slow down to make sure they don't hit the precious cars on their way to saving lives.

The noise, the blocked traffic, impeding fire trucks and slowing down or halting traffic are serious problems caused by this illegal unloading. But it gets worse: City Council's blind eye has allowed Kramer Automotive to use public streets for private commerce. Kramer has other options. They recently repaved their parking lot on 19th Street bordering Santa Monica Boulevard. They have two access ramps. Why not park the trucks in the lot and unload there?

That option should be attempted immediately. Suppose someone is injured by an unloading car, hit during an accident caused by the unloading, or a fire truck runs into an unloading car or truck. Who do you think will pay for this? It's very possible the city of Santa Monica could be sued for millions of dollars because using public streets for private unloading of cars isn't legal. Can you imagine this activity being sanctioned by the National Transportation Safety Board? The county of Los Angeles? The state of California?

If Robert Holbrook, Mayor Pam O'Connor, Ken Genser, Kevin McKeown, Bobby Shriver, Herb Katz and Richard Bloom don't think this is a serious safety issue, maybe we should send their addresses to Kramer Automotive and let them unload trucks in front of their homes.

The fact that they let this illegal activity continue is an outrage that demands immediate attention.

Robert Wynne
Santa Monica

Homeless situation not a rosy picture

Editor:

Once again, that boogiemanager called homelessness appears on the front page of the Jan. 19 Santa Monica Daily Press. In it, John Wood writes that critics maintain the "generous" programs offered by the city continue to inflate the local transient population. True, some local residents probably do believe Santa Monica's "continuum of care" and its four food lines are "homeless magnets."

But if this is true, why do only 2 percent (according to "Bring LA Home," a countywide taskforce) of L.A. County's approximately 84,000 homeless reside in our city? Why not 5 percent? 10 percent? After all, we're only an hour's bus ride away from skid row. We should be thankful that Santa Monica really isn't attracting that many homeless.

If anything, the city's approach to "helping" the homeless has been somewhat hypocritical, or at least short-sighted.

The old RAND property could have been used, temporarily, as a homeless walk-in center, shelter and indoor meal site without the time and expense needed to purchase land and construct new structures. Instead, the city opted for the quick demolition of the property so it can be turned into a park, which will probably become the haven of homeless with no other place to go.

The city long ago could have asked our local social agencies to get out from behind their collective desks and provide outreach at all existing food lines, thus providing their much-touted "continuum of care" without driving away President Bush's "volunteers." Has the city issued a warrant for President Bush's arrest as an accessory before the fact for instigating people into committing the crime of feeding hungry people?

The city keeps urging that public meals for our homeless and needy be served indoors, but has never even suggested a location where this might be done.

Even now, as OPCC prepares to move into new, smaller quarters, attempts are being made to somehow accommodate the hundreds who attend public meals within their walls. Will this mean there will be lines of hungry people stretching along Olympic Boulevard? Will this create large groups of people standing around outside, hurriedly trying to bolt down their food? In the past, OPCC's policy regarding eating even their meager brown-bag lunches has been "If you don't have an appointment, move off our property." Are they really ready to change that?

For our homeless residents, times are not as rosy in Santa Monica as some might think.

Kenneth McCrae
Santa Monica

City Hall comes down on Urth

Editor:

I would like to thank Joe Pundyk for his letter and his concern for the Aero Theatre and the Urth Cafe (SMDP, Jan. 14, page 4). He proves that one person can make a difference. And as for the planning department holding up a great (if the other Urth Cafes are any indication) restaurant over changing the paint color, I truly give up on this City Hall. My family and I have been awaiting the opening with bated breath and now that it is ready for opening, it can't, because they painted it white instead of green? Well, whenever — we'll be there when it opens, and we don't care if it's purple with pink polka dots; the food is too great to miss. And like Mr. Pundyk, I too do not have any financial interest in the restaurant, just a big mouth.

Marilyn Brennan
Santa Monica

Santa Monica is experiencing some growing pains



OUR TOWN
BY TED WINTERER

Growth in our town has been a hot topic of late. Many feel new developments need to be downsized, if not stopped all together. Others believe they're necessary to provide more housing and power the local economic engine.

My own perspective is shaped by what I humbly call the "Ted Winterer Theory of Movie-going and Growth." It used to be, in pretty recent memory, that Santa Monica was a sleepy little burg. If you wanted to see a movie, you drove to Westwood or the Marina. Then along came the Third Street Promenade and the rebirth of downtown, large office complexes and new jobs, an expanded tourist industry and a revitalized pier. Suddenly that sleepy little burg was a cosmopolitan city with movie theaters.

I'm not opposed to these consequences of remaking our town. I like the energy of a livelier city. I enjoy a wider choice in nightlife and shopping, and appreciate an increased tax base funding infrastructure

for improvements and more services.

But now many people find it too arduous to see a movie on the Promenade, especially weekends. Rather than battle traffic, difficult parking and crowds, they drive to Westwood or the Marina to catch a flick. Now that we've come full circle on locals' cinema habits, my theory states that we need to slow things down.

So how does one manage growth in a sensible manner that reflects the community's vision? One can write an angry letter to the editor regarding traffic at Fourth Street and Colorado Avenue, or bend the ear of a City Council member about the new towers proposed at Santa Monica Place. Venting gas in a column is another way to reduce stress over these issues and better than kicking the dog or swilling too much pinot noir.

But by far the preferable route is to rewrite the documents that govern the future of Santa Monica. (Warning: What follows here is stuff generally fit for consumption only by policy wonks. But try to resist the urge to put down this paper and refill your latte.)

City Hall is updating two key components of its general plan. Just what is a general plan and why should you care? It's a set of book-length documents that detail the policies and means for attaining

the community's goals in various elements: Land use, circulation, housing, open space, safety, noise, historic preservation and conservation.

Still with me? For the first time since 1984, City Hall is revising what's known as the "Land Use Element," which sets policy for land use and urban design, and its companion document, the "Zoning Ordinance," which executes these goals by specifying building height, mass and the like. Also in the works is a new "Circulation Element" to guide transportation policy. It governs how you get around town, whether by car, bus, bike or foot.

Now I know all of this is about as exciting as making toast. But the revisions to these vital documents will determine whether Santa Monica retains what's left of its small-town atmosphere or becomes another Miami Beach. And community input from all is vital. Otherwise, these decisions will be left to the Planning Commission and the City Council — part-time officials who will have to rely on scant input from the handful of activists and gadflies who regularly show up for their meetings and on feedback from city staff.

And without input from the community, city staff will have to formulate its own recommendations for the plan revisions that might not reflect the goals of the peo-

ple. Now I don't suggest city staff might have a conscious bias toward more growth. But if you had a job for Santa Monica, wouldn't you find it more interesting to shepherd new buildings from plans through construction rather than write code to regulate squirrel feeding? We all share that primal urge to build that made Lincoln Logs and Tinker Toys so fascinating when we were young.

So if you can't navigate downtown without getting a migraine or worry about a soulless condo next door that overwhelms your historic bungalow, get involved. Check out the city's two Web sites: www.shapethefuture2025.net, to participate in the update of development standards, and <http://motion.santa-monica.org>, to provide input on the transportation guidelines. Get involved in your local neighborhood organization's effort to poll the area. And attend the Community Workshop on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at John Adams Middle School at Pine and 17th streets.

I don't care if you want skyscrapers and clogged streets. Just participate and make it our general plan for our town.

(Ted Winterer is a writer and closet policy wonk who lives in Ocean Park. He can be reached at ourtownsmdp@aol.com).

COMMENTARY



Ironing woes: Snap, crinkle and crease

PISTACHIO PERSPECTIVE

BY SUSAN ANN CONNOR



Ironing was never my favorite chore. But sometimes it's a necessity, especially when you can't get to the cleaners and want to maintain a crisp look. It's not that I'm iron-challenged, it's just I never acquired a fondness for it. I'll press, but only when I'm forced.

This week I was forced. Early one evening I received a call about an important meeting that was scheduled for next week. They wanted to see me "tomorrow." Stuttering, I graciously accepted the change, hung up the phone and twirled into a newfangled yoga pose. Yikes! My VIP suit was weeping — begging for wrinkle repair. And there was nobody else to do it but me.

Destined for the ironing board, plus having other preparation to do, I canceled my dinner plans. Popping an energy bar, I muscled my way through the iron drudge. I pressed, pleated and poured myself into the work. Upon observation of the finished product, I felt pretty pleased and even gave the smooth suit a whistle. Then, off to bed I went in order to maximize my brain and beauty rest.

After dreaming I was sentenced alongside Martha Stewart to 30 years of ironing cotton collars, I woke up ready to go. Making my way down the hallway, I caught a glimpse of my garments and smiled. Lookin' good.

There was plenty of primping time before heading out the door. Running through my inner checklist, I felt positive about the various grooming details. A final full-length mirror view gave me clearance for take-off.

I meticulously entered my car. The way I figured it, I was steam-lined and ply-proof. With a fair amount of dexteri-

ty, I swooped my legs under the steering wheel and settled in. Then I saw it. The security and smooch apparatus. Da, dum, da, da ... the safety belt.

Oh, no. My wardrobe was threatened. Big time. What was I thinking? I had forgotten how easily the straps mangle linen. What to do? I could just ignore the belt, but I dismissed that idea quickly. The only solution was to switch suits, but there was no time. So I moved on.

Delicately honoring my press job and holding my breath, I pulled the strap down and over, and clicked in. All I could hear was the snap, crinkle and crease. I felt like cereal. And brightening my morning further was the quintessential boob crunch. Many of you gals know exactly what I'm talking about.

Nils Bohlin, a Swedish engineer, invented the three-point seat belt. Having saved countless lives, it's obviously a most prized patent. But I wonder if somehow our breasts might be spared the squish had a woman created this device? And would we possibly be enjoying wrinkle-free travel? If any female inventors are listening, perhaps they could take up the challenge.

By the way, women inventors rock. Consider what we'd do without the windshield wiper, paper bag, medical syringe, life raft, engine muffler, cordless phone, chocolate-chip cookie, brassiere, jock-strap and of course, the ironing board. This is just a smidgen of what women have already invented. But, now that we can own property (only since the 19th century in the United States) and get credit for our inventions, there's no telling what we'll create.

Anyway, despite crinkled clothes and a smooshed bosom, my meeting went well.

The safety belt might have put my apparel in danger, but it helped get me there alive. So, please buckle up. Lalalala ...

(Susan Ann Connor can be reached at pistachiocolumn@aol.com).

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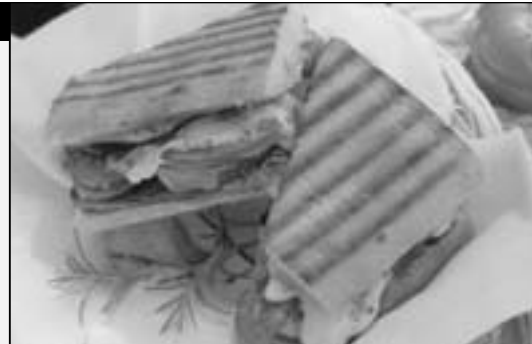
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LOCAL

More than 51,000 Santa Monicans buried in Woodlawn

WOODLAWN, from page 1

Woodlawn is a gated, tree-lined cemetery located between 14th and 17th streets, from Pico Boulevard to Michigan Avenue. City Hall purchased the cemetery in 1897. As of June 2000, more than 51,000 Santa Monicans had been interred on the 26.6-acre site, according to city records.

Sources familiar with the cemetery said after the administrators were removed from their posts, questions were raised about the way customers were charged for everything from tombstones to burial plots. City officials stumbled upon irregularities in Woodlawn's bookkeeping and cash handling, among other things, after

attempting to complete an unfinished audit from previous years, sources said.

Investigators and city officials declined to discuss the details of the case.

"The Santa Monica Police Department is conducting an internal investigation," SMPD Lt. Frank Fabrega said Thursday. "Due to the ongoing investigation, we will not discuss any of the allegations."

Added Judy Rambeau, a spokeswoman for City Hall: "There is an investigation going on, there's no question about that. Anything more than that the attorneys ought to be the ones to comment."

Rambeau referred questions to Deputy City Attorney Barbara Greenstein, who, citing the employees' privacy rights,

declined to comment on the allegations or the individuals involved.

With Woodlawn's top two administrators out, the cemetery's offices are being staffed by Gil Borboa and Jean Higbee of the water resources division of City Hall's environmental and public works management department. Part-time staff members are providing clerical support as needed, according to Rambeau.

The cemetery over the past few years has generated between \$500,000 and \$800,000 annually from the sales of lots and crypts, along with interest and what's listed as "miscellaneous sales/services." Paying the two office workers and four groundskeepers has been the cemetery's major expense,

with money also going to, among other things, benefits, overtime, temporary workers, utilities, tools, office supplies, and two major expenses labeled as administrative indirect costs and special department supplies, budget documents show.

Officials decided in 2000 to continue operating the cemetery as a community resource rather than close it to future burials. Woodlawn oversees about 100 burials a year, and the same number of daily visitors. Several hundred visitors converge on the cemetery on holidays, with 1,000 or more for an annual Memorial Day event.

(To reach John Wood, e-mail him at wood@smdp.com.)

Landlord group still confident in federal lawsuit

RENT CONTROL, from page 1

Superior Court in another lawsuit brought by Mr. Perry, which claimed that the law is unconstitutional because it allegedly has no legitimate state interest when applied to tenants who do not live in their units full time."

Beyond that precedent, Ganga insisted the two-year statute of limitations has long since expired. Perry attempted to circumvent the statute by specifically targeting an amendment to rent control that went into effect on Dec. 20, 2002, exactly two years before his suit was filed.

"Plaintiff is more than 20 years too late in filing this lawsuit," reads Ganga's statement. "Section 1804(b), which mandates rent ceilings on all rent-controlled units, was amended by Santa Monica voters in November, 2002 (effective December, 2002), to conform to state law vacancy decontrol. But the limitations on rent that the lawsuit challenges have been in effect since April, 1979, and this lawsuit is far too late."

Ganga continued by saying the courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, have long held that consumer protection is a legitimate goal of rent control. She goes on to rebuff three federal lawsuits that Perry says prove rent control unfairly vio-

lates landlords' constitutional rights.

"Mr. Perry states that he is relying on three recent 9th Circuit cases," Ganga wrote. "However, the laws in those cases were different than the Santa Monica Rent Control Law, and the 9th Circuit already decided a case alleging that the Rent Control Law does not substantially advance a legitimate state purpose. It found that the Santa Monica Rent Control Law is constitutional. The court in that (1991) case said: 'The Rent Control Law's stated purpose is to help all Santa Monica tenants ... Controlling rents to a reasonable level and limiting evictions substantially alleviate hardships to Santa Monica tenants.'"

"This is just one of many lawsuits brought by Mr. Perry, and there will no doubt be many more. It is convenient for him that he can do free fundraising through the newspaper."

DORIS GANGA
Attorney, Rent Control Board

'A HOUSE OF CARDS'

Perry said Thursday he remained confident his case could prevail. Though the suit challenges rent control in its entirety, Perry said the goal is to protect landlords from having to subsidize wealthy tenants. A judge could establish some income standard by which tenants would be judged, Perry said.

"It is clear that if the Rent Control Board does not get their act together and adjust the rent control protection so that they are for the people that need them, the entire system will fall like a house of cards," Perry said Thursday. "If they wish to fiddle while their city burns, the loss of rent control will be on their heads, and not caused by the housing providers of the city of Santa Monica."

The previous cases cited by Ganga, Perry claimed, either failed to address the specific issue at hand, or were misinterpreted by the lower courts. As to the statute of limitations, Perry had this to say: "Justice is never too late. The wheels of justice grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine ... The fallacy of her argument is that the courts have given Santa Monica 25 years to correct the housing shortage they claim exists. Anybody in City Hall will tell you the housing crisis is worse today than it was 25 years ago."

"The city has squandered their govern-

mental credibility."

Named as plaintiffs in the lawsuit are Action Apartment Association and local landlord Mat Millen, who for the last 25 years has lived in his five-unit apartment building in the eastside Pico neighborhood. One of Millen's units is rented at market rate and another is rented to a low-income family with government subsidies. The other two units, Millen said, are rented at original, low rent control rates, causing him economic hardships.

While Action Apartment Association and City Hall fire the initial legal volleys in the most recent attempt to overturn rent control, Perry said he might have to drop his lawsuit if he fails to raise another \$75,000. Denny Zane, co-chair of the powerful Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights group, which introduced rent control, told the Daily Press on Monday he considered the lawsuit a "make-work program for struggling local attorneys," referring to Perry.

Added Ganga: "This is just one of many lawsuits brought by Mr. Perry, and there will no doubt be many more. It is convenient for him that he can do free fundraising through the newspaper."

(To reach John Wood, e-mail him at wood@smdp.com.)

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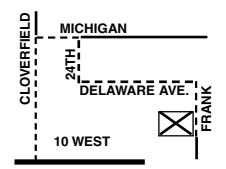
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STATE



Rents in LA, Orange County up 4.7 percent

MARKETS, from page 1

Riverside and San Bernardino counties — a rapidly growing area known as the “Inland Empire” — ranked as the West’s hottest apartment market during 2004, with the average monthly rent rising 6.6 percent to \$1,012 through December, RealFacts said.

The rent run-up in Riverside and San Bernardino counties has been propelled by people who have decided to live there and suffer through longer commutes rather than pay even higher prices for housing in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Apartment rents in Los Angeles and Orange counties climbed 4.7 percent in 2004 to end the year at \$1,369 — making the region the West’s highest priced rental market. Tucson, Ariz., retained its position as the West’s lowest priced rental market at \$625 per month, a 2 percent increase from 2003.

Southern California surpassed the San Francisco Bay area as the West’s most expensive rental market during the past year, reflecting the divergent fortunes of the state’s biggest job centers.

While the San Francisco Bay area has been struggling to recover from a high-tech slump that has dampened the region’s household incomes, the Los Angeles area has been faring much better, largely because the region’s economy draws upon a broader range of businesses.

The Bay Area’s economic weakness contributed to the fourth consecutive year of declining rents in the region, although there are signs the downturn is nearly over.

The average apartment rents in the five-county San Francisco metropolitan area dipped 0.4 percent in 2004 to \$1,309 — the lowest since March 2000 when the figure stood at \$1,301, according to RealFacts. Driven by rapid high-tech growth, average rents in the San Francisco metro market peaked at \$1,628 in March 2001. The 20 percent decline in average rents since then has saved tenants more than \$3,800 annually.

Average apartment rents in Santa Clara County — Silicon Valley’s nerve center — stood at \$1,283 at the end of 2004, down by just 0.1 percent from 2003. Santa Clara County rents peaked at \$1,956 in March 2001. The 34 percent drop has rolled back region’s rents to 1998 levels, according to RealFacts.

The largely unchanged apartment rents prevailing through most of the West contrasts sharply with rapidly rising home prices.

In Southern California, for instance, a mid-priced home sold for \$424,000 in December, a 22.5 percent increase from

Average rents in major Western markets

By The Associated Press

Los Angeles/Orange counties:

\$1,369, +4.7 percent

San Francisco/Oakland:

\$1,309, -0.4 percent

Ventura County:

\$1,298, +3.1 percent

San Jose:

\$1,283, -0.1 percent

San Diego:

\$1,213, +2.5 percent

Solano County:

\$1,069, +0.5 percent

San Bernardino/Riverside counties:

\$1,012, +6.6 percent

Sacramento:

\$913, +1.7 percent

Seattle:

\$878, +1.6 percent

Denver:

\$851, +0.6 percent

Reno, Nev.:

\$784, +4.0 percent

Las Vegas, Nev.:

\$776, +3.9 percent

Portland, Ore.:

\$741, +0.8 percent

Colorado Springs, Colo.:

\$719, +0.4 percent

Phoenix, Ariz.:

\$720, +1.4 percent

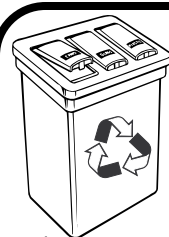
Fresno County:

\$704, +4.0 percent

the previous year, according to DataQuick Information Systems, another research firm. In the San Francisco Bay area, a mid-priced home sold for \$533,000 in December, up 16 percent from the end of 2003, DataQuick said.

Low mortgage rates have attracted more home buyers, including longtime renters seeking to become owners for the first time — a factor that has contributed to the reduced demand for apartments, Latham said. Job growth and personal income also remain sluggish in many Western markets, prompting more people to share a home with other family members or roommates rather than renting their own apartment.

But if the economy continues to gather more steam, the market conditions could suddenly shift in favor of apartment owners, allowing them to raise rents more aggressively later this year. “This might be a good time for renters to consider signing a long-term lease,” Latham said.



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STATE

Thousands of jumbo squid wash onto SoCal beaches

By The Associated Press

NEWPORT BEACH — About 1,500 jumbo squid have mysteriously washed up on Orange County beaches, thousands of miles from their usual South American home waters.

The bug-eyed sea creatures, believed to be Humboldt squid, normally reside in deep water offshore and only come to the surface at night. That means people rarely see them.

They are typically found in South America but have in recent years been spotted in large numbers in the Gulf of California, Oregon and Alaska. Scientists said they aren't sure what prompted the migration.

"These things are invading, and we don't know what's going on," said John McGowan, professor emeritus at Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla. "It may be they're following a warm California current.

Oceanographers don't have a clue why a large population of squid like this is moving north or why they strand themselves."

Although they can bite, the squid are not aggressive by nature and don't attack swimmers. Beachgoers have been surprised to stumble across their torpedo-shaped bodies and elongated tentacles.

"They look like a miniature sea monster, something you'd see out of a Jules Verne novel," Newport Beach lifeguard Capt. Eric Bauer said Wednesday.

The squid have been found since Tuesday on the sands of Laguna Beach, Newport Beach, Crystal Cove State Park and San Onofre State Beach.

Authorities plan to remove them in the next few days and will give at least two to the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History for research. In the meantime, though

seabirds and crabs were feasting on the dead squid, beachgoers were advised not to eat or even touch them, due to possible bacteria contamination.

The jumbo squid have become another headache for beach maintenance crews that just finished digging out of debris washed down from streams and rivers during this month's pounding storms.

"We've found dead raccoons and other animals. I would prefer picking up seaweed instead of these squid because even dead, they squirt you with ink," Newport Beach maintenance director Dave Niederhaus said.

The squid came ashore about a week after an oil spill from an undetermined source coated more than 1,000 seabirds off the Southern California coast. Many of the Western grebes and pelicans drifted onto beaches from Santa Barbara to the Venice section of Los Angeles.

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Heated debate likely to surround inmate next up for clemency bid

BY DAVID KRAVETS

AP Legal Affairs Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has declined clemency for two California death row inmates, one of whom was executed early Wednesday morning while the other was granted a new round of appeals.

While those decisions passed with little public outcry, the next inmate likely to be considered for clemency is expected to be the subject of far more controversy. The case potentially could draw Schwarzenegger or another governor into a fiery debate over whether to commute the sentence of Stanley "Tookie" Williams to life in prison.

The appeals for Williams, the founder of the Crips street gang, are nearly exhausted. But supporters say he's a prime candidate for clemency, in part because he became an author of children's books and was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize while in prison.

How Schwarzenegger might address a clemency petition from Williams — if he loses his remaining court challenges — was suggested in the governor's six-page decision Tuesday rejecting a plea for mercy from Donald Beardslee. Beardslee, 61, was lethally injected at San Quentin State Prison hours later for killing two women in 1981.

The governor, among other reasons, wrote that it did not matter that Beardslee was well-behaved as a death row inmate.

"I am not moved to mercy by the fact that Beardslee has been a model prisoner," Schwarzenegger wrote in his decision. "I expect no less."

Peter Siggins, the governor's legal affairs secretary, cautioned that Schwarzenegger's reasoning in the Beardslee case would not necessarily apply to another inmate. He said clemency petitions would be reviewed on a "case-by-case basis."

Supporters of Williams expect a fierce fight for clemency and said they would flood the governor's office with pleas to commute Williams' sentence, in part because of his record as a model prisoner.

While in prison, Williams was nominated for a 2001 Nobel Peace Prize for his series of children's books and international peace efforts intended to curtail youth gang violence.

Barbara Becnel, who co-wrote those books, said Williams "is a unique death row prisoner and that it is really not fair to compare him with anybody else when thinking about clemency."

She said Williams has received more than 40,000 e-mails since April, when "Redemption: The Stan Tookie Williams Story" aired as a television special. Many messages came from young gang members who said his life story has helped them turn their lives around.

Those e-mails, she said, would be presented to the governor.

Newark Deputy Mayor Ras Baraka said he also would ask Schwarzenegger to commute Williams' sentence.



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STATE



Newspapers get letters claiming firebomb responsibility

By The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO — Three more newspapers have received letters allegedly from a radical environmental group claiming responsibility for firebombs planted at two Northern California construction sites.

Letters purporting to be from the Earth Liberation Front promised more actions “every few weeks.” The letters were received this week by the Auburn Journal, the Sacramento Bee, the Roseville Press Tribune and the Lincoln News Messenger.

Five firebomb-type devices were found by a construction crew working in the office building earlier this month. The devices were disarmed, but investigators said they were capable of causing extensive fire damage.

FBI investigators confirmed that the devices were

similar to those found in late December in three homes under construction in Lincoln.

The FBI says the Earth Liberation Front, or ELF, has caused more than \$100 million in damage since 1996, including an arson at a five-story condominium under construction in San Diego in August 2003 that caused \$50 million in damages.

The letters say ELF’s goal was to cause economic damage to the Lincoln developer and make a symbolic statement against suburban sprawl. The Auburn office building was targeted as “a statement against work and the horror of the (cubicle).”

The FBI, which is investigating the crimes with local agencies, said last week it believed the incidents were the work of eco-terrorists.

“It’s a serious matter,” FBI agent Karen Ernst said.

“The task force is looking at least eight devices that were fully capable of causing not only substantial property damage, but possibly injury to the construction workers.”

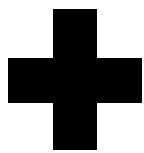
Officials also have warned that eco-terrorism attacks appear to have increased in recent years, and that the attacks have become more bold.

“Certainly, eco-terrorism crimes are becoming more frequent and fierce in the United States,” said Kelly Stoner, director of stopecoviolence.com, an Oregon-based group formed three years ago by companies and individuals who have been victims of such acts. “We’ve seen a definite uptick in such crime.”

Law enforcement and experts say it is difficult to target members because anyone who acts in the name of ELF or the Animal Liberation Front, a related group, is considered a member.

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Entertainment

Ice Cube heads to the silver screen for the ‘kids’

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

Though he entered the public consciousness by storming “Straight Outta Compton” with seminal gangsta-rap group NWA, for Ice Cube the road to Hollywood stardom has veered off in all different directions. Cube, whose birth name is O’Shea Jackson, began his film career in John Singleton’s critically acclaimed drama “Boyz n the Hood.” A few years later, he starred in the hit comedy “Friday,” followed by the action-thriller “Anaconda.” He’s tackled sci-fi in “Ghosts of Mars” and done a war movie, “Three Kings.” It seems the only genre Cube hadn’t attempted — until now — is a kids’ movie. In “Are We There Yet,” he stars as a randy single guy trying to impress a single mom by hanging with her two rambunctious kids. The star sat down recently with a group of inquisitive scribes.

Q&A

QUESTION: Did you enjoy working with the kids on “Are We There Yet?”
ICE CUBE: They were more professional than a lot of the adults I’ve worked with. They know their lines, they’re ready to go, very directable; they (act) bad in the movie, but they’re real good kids in real life.

Q: You’ve got children of your own. Do you ever encounter any of the behavioral problems that your character, Nick, does?
IC: My kids know what time it is with me. They know I’m firm, but fair. They usually don’t get too far out of line before I reel ‘em back in with “The Look.”

Q: Nick’s heavy into sports memorabilia. We hear you’ve got quite an impressive collection yourself.
IC: Being in this position, I get a chance to meet a lot of people I admire, a lot of my heroes from back in the day. Going to all-star games and stuff like that, I’ve got a chance to get jerseys and footballs signed. It’s the icing on the cake of my career that I can rub elbows with some of the sports figures that I’ve watched play and do their thing over the years.

Q: What are the centerpieces of your collection?
IC: I’ve got a (Dallas) Cowboys helmet signed by Emmitt Smith that I’d never give up. I’ve got a jersey signed by Deion Sanders, and a basketball signed by all the greats — from Julius Erving to Oscar Robertson. I’m going to die with that in my casket.

Q: It must have been quite a journey going from rapping in NWA to starring in a family film such as this one.
IC: It’s been a nice progression, to show maturity and growth. You know, not to be stuck in the same thing. To let people know that you don’t have to end at the same place you started. I got four kids. I’ve seen every kid movie there is in life since 1985. Now, it was time for me to try one, and to try and do a good one.

Q: You’re starring in the upcoming third installment in the “XXX” series. Were you prepared for the physical demands of the role?
IC: I don’t know if you’re ever ready for something like that. I was up to the challenge, but that didn’t (prevent) the scrapes and sprains. I got cut, burnt, bruised, sliced, tore a couple of things — tendons, you know, everything. Working on that movie, I felt like I was in the NFL or something. It’s going to be a hell of a movie, though. Real big — bigger than anything I’ve ever worked on.

Q: As one of the first rappers to successfully make the leap from music to film, what do you make of all the young guys who are doing it now?
IC: Rappers are getting a shot in the movies because we’re just an observant breed. To be a rapper, it’s like being a comedian, in order to give people something that they can connect with you have to be observant. So that translates to the screen — knowing situations, and knowing how people act. But we’re not doing nuthin’ new. Nat King Cole, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley ... they’ve all went from music to movies, so it ain’t like rappers are doing something that hasn’t been done before.



Movie theater hell: ‘Are We There Yet?’

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

Diary of a movie-going nightmare:
7:30 p.m. “Are We There Yet?” screening begins.
7:32 p.m. Two siblings, 7-year-old Kevin (Philip Daniel Bolden) and 11-year-old Lindsey (Aleisha Allen), who miss their real daddy, assault one of mom Suzanne’s (Nia Long) suitors before he makes it to the door. Guy leaves, kids high-five, Suzanne apparently forgets she even had a date.

Review

7:34 p.m. Sports memorabilia store owner and avowed playa Nick (Ice Cube) purchases macked-out Lincoln Navigator in order to impress the ladies. He places a talking Satchel Paige bobblehead (voiced by Tracy Morgan) on dashboard. Nick better hope the ladies are either very understanding or mental patients.
7:40 p.m. Nick spies Suzanne on street, instantly falls in love.
7:44 p.m. Little Kevin makes a fart joke, the first of oodles of bodily function gags.
7:50 p.m. Starting to become clear why a movie that takes place at Christmas didn’t get a Christmas release.
8:05 p.m. Suzanne must go to Vancouver to host a holiday gala, and in an effort to win her over Nick offers to escort the kids 350 miles so they can all be together to ring in the new year. Having known him an entire week, Suzanne agrees. Kevin shows his appreciation by kicking Nick in the nuts.
8:15 p.m. Satchel Paige bobblehead makes fart joke. Are we there yet? The end of the movie, that is. Sadly, no. Not by a long shot.
8:17 p.m. Nick warns kids not to damage his precious Navigator. Could it be something’s going to happen to it? Hmm ...
8:20 p.m. After Nick reminds them that there’s no eating or drinking in his new ride, Kevin “accidentally” sprays juice all over the upholstery. Didn’t see that one coming.
8:25 p.m. At a truck stop, Kevin pees on a woman in the ladies room. Lindsey commandeers the vehicle and nearly drives into a gas pump.
8:30 p.m. Kids convince a trucker they’re being kidnapped. Trucker runs Nick’s SUV off the highway, sending them hurtling down a steep embankment. Child abduction. Fiery car wrecks. Hardy-har-har!
8:31-44 p.m. Demonic children relentlessly try to murder Nick.
8:45 p.m. They stop off at a random children’s holiday party. Lindsey wows everyone with a chirpy karaoke rendering of “Respect,” marking the 3,147th time that song’s been rehashed in a film.
8:46 p.m. Kids resume attempts to off their inexplicably devoted guardian.
9:02 p.m. Don’t want to spoil the ending, so let’s just say that Cube never does put the smackdown on them devil kids.

(Rated PG for language and rude humor. Running time: 96 minutes)

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Desperation will hit 'The View' this February

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The ladies at "The View" are getting desperate.

During the week of Feb. 7, the five stars of "Desperate Housewives" will co-host ABC's "The View" while the daytime talk show broadcasts from Los Angeles. Teri Hatcher, Eva Longoria, Nicollette Sheridan, Felicity Huffman and Marcia Cross will each join the show for a day.

The Wisteria Lane residents will be filling in for "The View" moderator Meredith Vieira, who will not be making the trip from New York due to family obligations.

Broadcasting live from the El Capitan Theatre, the week is a themed series called "The View Celebrates Los Angeles."

On Sunday, Hatcher won a Golden Globe Award for best actress in a TV comedy or musical. The ABC show also won for best comedy or musical TV series.

The other hosts of "The View" are Barbara Walters, Star Jones Reynolds, Joy Behar and Elisabeth Hasselbeck. The show airs weekdays on ABC.

LONDON — Elton John and Andrea Bocelli are joining several other major recording artists to produce a single to aid victims of the Asian tsunami.

John was to record his contribution to a cover of Eric Clapton's "Tears in Heaven" at a London studio Thursday, with Bocelli recording on Friday.

The single is an initiative of Sharon Osbourne, wife of rocker Ozzy Osbourne, and proceeds will go to benefit aid organization Save the Children's operations in tsunami-affected regions.

Additional recordings for the single — which also will feature singing from Pink, Rod Stewart, actor Robert Downey Jr., Ozzy and Kelly Osbourne, Gwen Stefani, Phil Collins, Josh Groban and Aerosmith's Steve Tyler — are planned in Los Angeles next week, organizers said.

"Tears in Heaven" was recorded by Clapton as a tribute to his 4-year-old son, Conor, who died in 1991 after falling from the window of a New York City apartment.

A release date for the charity single hasn't been set.

AUSTIN, Texas — Country singer Cory Morrow was charged with drug possession and driving while intoxicated after police said they found cocaine in a car he was driving.

Morrow, an Austin resident and favorite with the Texas college crowd, was stopped early Saturday morning after he didn't signal a turn, according to a police affidavit.

The officer reported that Morrow's breath smelled of alcohol and his eyes were bloodshot. Morrow was arrested after failing a field sobriety test, and a plastic bag in the car contained one-third of a gram of cocaine, the affidavit said.

Morrow, 32, was charged with possession of a controlled substance, a felony with a maximum penalty of two years in state jail. He also was charged with driving while intoxicated, a misdemeanor that carries a jail term of up to 180 days.

He was released from jail on \$4,000 bail.

Tour manager Dave Lytle didn't immediately return a message left Thursday by The Associated Press.

Morrow, a Houston native, has released six albums, including "Songs We Wish We'd Written," a collaboration with friend Pat Green.

MONACO — Prince Rainier III of Monaco says he has been advised by his doctors not to attend his principality's circus festival.

"My doctors and my entourage are not in favor of my presence under the big top every night. They worry about me catching a chill," the 81-year-old prince said Thursday in a release from his press office.

"If I am reasonable, I will follow their advice ... but well, we shall see."

However, he will preside over the jury of the 29th International Circus Festival of Monte Carlo, and said he would follow the weeklong event "notably by viewing the tapes of the shows every day."

The festival opened Thursday and was to run to Jan. 28.

Rainier, whose movie-star wife, Grace Kelly, died in a car crash in 1982, has a history of heart problems and has suffered from poor health in recent years.

Monaco, a tiny principality famous for its casinos, Formula One Grand Prix and tax breaks that attract the rich and famous, is nestled on the Mediterranean coast between Italy and the French Riviera. It is smaller than New York's Central Park.

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NATIONAL

Police: Crime linked to medical marijuana

By The Associated Press

DUNDEE, Ore. — Oregon police say the violent assault and robbery of a medical marijuana grower in Dundee this week is indicative of a problem inherent in such programs.

"If you have a product that is legal for some and illegal for others — and they want it — that's an awful big temptation for bad guys," Yamhill County Sheriff Jack Crabtree told The Oregonian. "These marijuana-growing greenhouses aren't exactly reinforced with steel and concrete."

Under state law, an Oregon resident can obtain a medical marijuana card by applying to the state Health Division after receiving a doctor's recommendation. As of Jan. 1, 9,813 Oregonians held cards, with 1,327 applications pending.

But marijuana-growing operations, generally in homes, gardens or outbuildings, are vulnerable to thieves. Law enforcement officials and medical marijuana advocates said they have heard

reports of thieves preying on legal growers.

In this week's case, Ernest R. Holter, 50, who holds a valid medical marijuana card, told police that he heard an alarm Tuesday in his barn, just northeast of the Dundee city limits. When he went to investigate, he was hit on the head and in the face.

He is now in serious condition in the intensive care unit at Legacy Emanuel Hospital & Health Center in Portland.

In September, a Southwest Portland man was shot and wounded by thieves targeting his medical marijuana. In 2002, two Gold Hill residents weathered repeated attempts to steal their medical marijuana. Intruders cut their chain-link fence and stabbed their guard dog.

Oregon is one of 11 states allowing medical marijuana. Other states with similar programs are Washington, Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nevada and Vermont. Arizona has a law allowing medical marijuana, but no active program.

Utah senator tells colleagues polygamy is no laughing matter

BY PAUL FOY

Associated Press Writer

SALT LAKE CITY — Polygamy can bring snickers, but it's no laughing matter, says a state senator who on Tuesday dropped copies of the book "God's Brothel" on Utah legislators' desks.

Democratic state Sen. Ron Allen said he wants to dispel the notion that polygamy in Utah is only "anecdotal — or even humorous." Thousands in Utah, members of breakaway Mormon factions, quietly practice polygamy, although it has been illegal for more than a century.

The book is an indictment of polygamy written by Andrea Moore-Emmett, president of the Utah chapter of the National Organization for Women. She compiled stories from 18 women who escaped from polygamous marriages or families and told of rape, incest, orgies and violence.

"I'm passing this out with no grand agenda. I simply want legislators to have more background on the problem," said Allen. The book were donated by the publisher, Pince-Nez Press of San Francisco, he said.

Allen, the Senate's Democratic whip, helped enact a child bigamy law in 2003 that made forced marriages of minors a

second-degree felony punishable by one to 15 years in prison.

Before, the offense carried only 30 days in jail and was rarely enforced, said Allen. He said the marrying of teenage girls was a common practice among some of Utah's isolated polygamist communities, until the state served notice it was cracking down.

"Several sermons have been given in these communities admonishing men not to take child brides," he said.

No one has been prosecuted under the new child bigamy law, but Allen said he was satisfied by a handful of prosecutions for adult polygamy, and authorities including Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff are trying to help young women escape the subculture.

Allen said he believed Warren Jeffs, leader of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was preparing to lead his flock from Utah because of the crackdown. Jeffs and his agents have been buying ranches in west Texas and Colorado.

Jeffs presides over the border towns of Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City, Ariz., a jumble of unfinished houses on dirt streets, where men have multiple wives and dozens of children, who supply cheap labor for business.

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NATIONAL



Bush vows to continue working against world's tyrannies

BY DEB RIECHMANN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — George W. Bush swore the presidential oath for a second term in turbulent times Thursday and issued a sweeping pledge to spread liberty and freedom “to the darkest corners of the world.”

“Our country has accepted obligations that are difficult to fulfill and would be dishonorable to abandon,” said the president, who led the nation to war in Iraq in a first term marked by terrorist attacks on the United States.

In a speech delivered before a vast throng of fellow Americans spilling away from the steps of the Capitol, Bush said he would place the nation on the side of the world's oppressed people. “All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know: the United States will not ignore your oppression, or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for your liberty, we will stand with you.”

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, 80, ailing with thyroid cancer and the subject of retirement speculation, administered the oath of office. The 58-year-old president placed one hand on a family Bible and raised the other as he recited an oath as old as the Republic.

The weather was cold; security extraordinarily tight for the nation's 55th inauguration, first since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Sharpshooters dressed in black scanned the vast crowd from rooftops and hundreds of police stood shoulder to shoulder along the route of the mid-afternoon inaugural parade.

Newly sworn in, Bush offered an implied rebuttal to critics of his foreign policy and the war in Iraq. “Some, I know, have questioned the global appeal of liberty,” he said, “though this time in history, four decades defined by the swiftest advance of freedom ever seen, is an odd time for doubt.”

“We go forward with complete confidence in the eventual triumph of freedom,” he said in remarks that were shorn of all but the most glancing references to the dominant political issues of the day.

Instead, he packed the first speech of a new term with multiple references to freedom and liberty, references to God — and a reminder of Abraham Lincoln's long-ago admonition. “Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves; and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it,” he quoted the 16th president.

The spread of freedom and liberty were the oldest ideals of America, Bush said. “Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security, and the calling of our time.”

Bush, his family and congressional leaders moved into the Capitol following the midday swearing in and speech, joining other members of the nation's political elite for lunch. “I'm looking forward to putting my heart and soul into this job for four more years,” he said in brief remarks that made no mention of the legislative battles that lie ahead over taxes, Social Security, judges and more.

“We're ready to go to work,” replied Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., chairman of the congressional inaugural committee. Eager to begin, the GOP-controlled Senate was convening at mid-afternoon, with confirmation of the first of Bush's second-term Cabinet officers on the agenda.

The president awoke before dawn in the White House, then traveled a few blocks with his wife Laura and their twin daughters, Jenna and Barbara, to the traditional pre-inauguration prayer service.

A few hours later they journeyed 16 blocks along historic Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol, where Bush stood four years earlier to take the office for the first time.

That was before terrorists struck the United States, plunging America into a challenging new era, and prompting the president to order the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. The inaugural pageantry unfolded half a world away from that conflict.

Bush's victory made him the 16th president in American history to win a second term after a full first four years. He led Republicans to larger majorities in the House and Senate, and has outlined a conservative second-term domestic agenda that includes major changes in Social Security and taxes.

He was beginning his new term with the lowest approval rating at that point of any recent two-term president — 49 percent in an Associated Press poll this

month. Bush is the nation's 43rd president.

The Constitution commanded that Bush take the oath of office at the stroke of noon. Tradition dictated the Capitol as the setting, curiosity and celebration accounted for the throng that traditionally spilled down Capitol Hill toward the historic National Mall and the monuments beyond.

Tradition called for Rehnquist to administer the oath of office. His presence symbolized an aging court.

Vice President Dick Cheney took the oath for a second term moments before the president. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert of Illinois swore him in.

The day was the culmination of a hard-won victory for Bush and fellow Republicans, and they were in a mood to celebrate.

Democrats did little to hide their disappointment. “Personally, I don't feel much like celebrating. So I'm going to mark the occasion by pledging to do everything in my power to fight the extremist Republican's destruc-

tive agenda,” House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi wrote in a fund-raising appeal for 2006.

For all the security precautions, officials reported no new information suggesting terror threats to the ceremony or the parade that was following.

There were small demonstrations at scattered locations, including one several miles from the Capitol where anti-war protesters carried coffin-like cardboard boxes to signify the death of U.S. troops in Iraq.

A small group of protesters close to the inaugural stands tried to interrupt Bush's speech, but he ignored their chants.

Bush's speech referred unmistakably to the 9-11 attack and the events that have followed.

“We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion. The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands,” he said.

“The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.”

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NATIONAL

Groups hope U.S. funding restarts after Iraq vote

BY JOHN MILLER

Associated Press Writer

BOISE, Idaho — Washington Group International officials are uncertain if the company will be able to proceed with all its \$3.13 billion in federal contracts to help rebuild Iraq because billions have been diverted to boost

security for the planned Jan. 30 elections.

Up to \$5 billion originally destined for Iraqi electricity and water projects now is going to fight insurgents in the weeks preceding the vote, according to executives overseeing the work. That's part of the \$18.4 billion set aside by Congress to help rebuild Iraq's infrastructure.

"The money that has flowed out of those two sectors

that were named, it's not going to come back," said Craig Johnson, the Minneapolis-based managing director at Stanley Baker Hill, which has a \$1.2 billion contract to provide construction-management services in Iraq, including for the Boise-based Washington Group contracts.

That has left prospects of doing business in a country once viewed as a gold mine of U.S. government contracts more tenuous. Officials from companies including Washington Group and CH2M Hill, an Englewood, Colo.-based engineering firm, are watching upcoming elections — and the months beyond — for signs violence will abate, allowing work to accelerate.

"I can't say the (current) pace would support the expenditure of the \$3 billion," said Tom Zarges, Washington Group's senior executive vice president of operations, who was last in Iraq two months ago. "We have commitments that run through at least 2005 and early 2006 to date. What we think of as work in front of us is probably about half a billion dollars."

Zarges, who plans to return to Iraq after Jan. 30, described the company's prospects in Iraq as an option contingent in part on a return to relative stability.

Rebuilding shattered infrastructure will require \$36 billion in addition to the money the U.S. government set aside, according to a U.N. estimate.

"If things work out, it'll be a total boon," said Ian Zaffino, an analyst at Oppenheimer & Co. in New York who has a "buy" rating on Washington Group shares. "But in a fluid environment, the jury is always out."

CH2M Hill is helping oversee work by companies, including Washington Group, on Iraqi public works and water projects.

Company officials say the election is very important.

"The milestone in our heads is the election, seeing that the Iraqis take over," said Andre Armstrong, a CH2M Hill spokesman.

For Washington Group, pre-election violence has forced it to shrink its non-Iraqi workforce by up to 40 percent, pull employees from dangerous sites north of Baghdad, and limit in-country travel.

It has also begun relying more and more on local Iraqi workers at job sites instead of using its own workers, who are now hunkered down in the relative safety of Baghdad's Green Zone.

"Today, we tend to be a lot less involved with moving our people around the country so freely," Zarges said. "We try to keep them in encampments and on job sites so travel is not so essential."

Mounting pressure on companies was underscored last month when Virginia-based Contrack International, a Washington Group partner on projects in other Middle Eastern countries, opted out of a \$325 million contract to repair Iraqi roads because of security concerns.

Its Iraq headquarters had been attacked and one worker was shot five times in the head.

Contrack's departure prompted speculation others would follow suit.

But Washington Group and others have vowed to stay, and U.S. Army officials say no other companies have followed Contrack's lead.

Nancy Ray, an Army spokeswoman in Virginia, said oversight of Contrack's work was taken over without interruption by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"This looked perhaps more noticeable than it was," she said. "No others have requested out."

Others are less optimistic, saying the Jan. 30 vote could disenfranchise Iraq's Sunni minority. That wouldn't bode well for companies banking on elections as a catalyst for restoring stable construction conditions, said Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C.

"I think it's unlikely to see any major changes as a result of the elections," O'Hanlon said in an interview last week. "The broader point we can safely say is, the insurgency doesn't think about key political events quite as much as we'd like to think."

Still, Washington Group's Zarges said the company is "pretty adamant about completing our mission in the country."

Financial analysts who cover building companies with Iraqi operations say the reason is clear: Large contractors such as Washington Group still could get lucrative rewards — if their nerves are strong enough to wait.

"Most of the companies are staying over there," said John Rogers, a D.A. Davidson analyst in Portland.

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INTERNATIONAL



Israel accepts Palestinian plan to deploy police on Gaza border

BY LARA SUKHTIAN

Associated Press Writer

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — Israeli officials accepted a Palestinian plan to deploy hundreds of police officers along the Gaza-Israel frontier starting Friday, in the first act of security cooperation with Israel under Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas.

Palestinian generals presented the plan during a meeting with their Israeli counterparts late Wednesday, convened in a last-ditch effort to avert an Israeli military offensive in Gaza.

The meeting was a sign of success by Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in defusing their first crisis. Only last week, Sharon announced he was boycotting the Palestinian leadership to protest what Israel said was Abbas' lack of determination to rein in militants.

Abbas has been holding talks with leaders of militant groups in Gaza since Tuesday, and his aides said he was edging closer to a truce deal with them. The militants say they are ready to halt attacks, provided Israel stops military operations.

In the security meeting late Wednesday, Palestinian generals presented a detailed plan for stopping rocket fire and infiltrations of Palestinian militants into Israel.

"We told them (Israeli generals) that we are arranging a plan to deploy the Palestinian security forces into both the northern and southern parts of Gaza," Maj. Gen. Moussa Arafat, a Palestinian security chief, told The Associated Press on Thursday. "In the first stage, it will be in the north, and then we will move into the south."

Israeli officials said up to 1,000 Palestinian officers would be deployed, and that Israel accepted the plan. "We are facilitating it and coordinating it (the plan), so it will go forward," one official said on condition of anonymity.

Palestinian security commanders were meeting with Abbas on Thursday afternoon to finalize the details, officials said. Israeli and Palestinian officials said the deployment will begin Friday.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Nabil Shaath said Abbas has been working hard to persuade militants to halt their attacks, but called for Israel's help as well. "A cease-fire by the Palestinians requires a cease-fire by the Israelis," he told a news conference.

"Israel is prepared to cooperate with the Palestinians on condition that there is no terrorism," Sharon said Wednesday. But he warned that Israel is not prepared to accept the loss of life because of lack of Palestinian cooperation, implying that if talks fail, Israel will take action.

The decision defused rising tensions that appeared to be leading toward an Israeli invasion.

Israel broke off contacts with Abbas' government last Friday, after an attack killed six Israeli civilians at a Gaza-Israel crossing point. A Palestinian suicide bombing that killed an Israeli security agent at a Gaza checkpoint on Tuesday escalated tensions.

Arafat, the Palestinian security commander, said Israel had agreed to re-open some blocked roads in Gaza in exchange for the Palestinian deployment.

The army reopened the Gaza checkpoint targeted in Tuesday's suicide bombing to Palestinian traffic. Israeli military officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Rafah border crossing into Egypt would be reopened on Friday. The crossing, the main exit point for Gaza Palestinians traveling abroad, has been closed since a Dec. 12 attack on an Israeli military post killed five soldiers.

While things were quiet in Gaza, Israeli troops shot and killed a 13-year-old boy near the West Bank village of Tubas.

Residents said the boy, Salahadin Abu Mohsen, was carrying a homemade toy rifle and was in a crowd of youths who were throwing rocks at troops. The army said troops fired at a gunman who was spotted in a crowd of rioters.

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PERSONAL ATTENDANTS, community trainer needed to work with developmentally disabled adults in their home and the community. F/T-P/T in Santa Monica area. \$7.75/hr. Call Sally Brown (818)782-2211 x598.

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1998 VW Jetta GLX, automatic 75kmi, airbags, ABS, AC, PS, tilt, asking price \$8,900 (323) 839-3039

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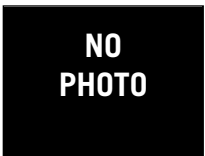
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\$929,000

3259 ROSEWOOD AVE , LOS ANGELES 90066

Completely remodeled home; new roof in Apr/2000, 200amp, copper plumbing from street to all fixtures, 100gal water heater, central heating, all new maple cabinets, granite counters, laundry rm in the garage w/mop sink; hardwood floors; family rm; living room w/wood burning fire place; Dining Room; wired internet to bedrm, living rm & office; Rm addition done in 2000. To view this or any home call Thomas or Brent today 310-943-7656.



\$925,000

3457 ROSEWOOD AVE , LOS ANGELES 90066

Lovely 2 story, contemporary home located on a quite Mar Vista street which features living room with brick, gas burning fire place, formal dining room with pass through window to kitchen, kitchen with built-ins and plenty of cabinet space.

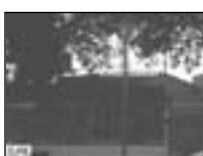


IN ESCROW

11049 LINDBLADE ST , CULVER CITY 90230

Perfect well maintained 1 story home in Tree Line street of Culver City; walk to schools & parks; 4bed, 2.5bath, 2car detached garage; cozy fireplace in living room leading into a cute dining room; inside laundry room w/sink & toilet; front & back yard w/wood fence for privacy; opportunity for a great family home; MOVE IN TODAY WITH YOUR LOVELY CHILDREN IN THIS SWEET HOME. To view this or any home call Thomas or Brent today 310-943-7656.

2614 Chariton Street



\$587,000

This is a very traditional 3bedroom 1 bath home in one of the hottest areas of Culver City. Have you ever visited the HELMS BAKERY? Well now you can walk to it. Take a look at this beautiful home that has a BONUS ill. Converted garage with 2 bedrooms. Electric has been updated but with a good size lot is in need of your own Tender Loving Care. To view this or any home call Thomas or Brent today. 310-943-7656.

3416 Wall Street



IN ESCROW
NO
PHOTO

\$575,000

4 Unit Building, each very large 2 bedroom 1 bath bringing in a net of \$4500.00 per month. This building is a great investment and needs very little maintenance. This is a great investment property, call Thomas and Brent today to find out how you can start investing in income properties without having to do any work!

WE REPRESENT BUYERS AND SELLERS.
Call us for any of your real estate needs.
We can make your dreams a reality.

Inventory

BLOWOUT Sale



as seen at the L.A. Autoshow
'05 mustang

Great Deals!

2005 Freestyle SEL

ABS, Dual Air, 6 disc changer, pw seat,
Msrp \$27,490.00

Sale Net Price
\$24,995.00

ID A26808 - one at this price

**2005 Five Hundred SEL**

Leather Int., 6 disc changer, alloy wheels
Msrp \$25,690.00

Sale Net Price
\$22,995.00

ID 136662 - one at this price

**2005 Focus ZX3**

Air, Am Fm cd,
Msrp \$14,460.00
Sale Price \$12,495.00
Rebate \$2,000.00
Fmcc bonus cash \$500.00

Sale Net Price
\$9,995.00

ID 112619 - one at this price

**2005 Freestar**

Automatic, Air Con. 3rd row seats
Msrp \$25,040.00
Sale price \$ 22,995.00
Rebate \$3,000.00
Fmcc bonus cash \$1,000.00

Sale Net Price
\$18,995.00

ID A13757 - one at this price



Must finance through Ford Motor Credit for bonus cash

1998 Chrysler Sebring LXi Cpe - ID 102828**\$6,995.00**

Moon Roof, auto, air, pw, pdl, tilt, cruise alloy wheels

2000 Montero Sport LS - ID 019831**\$10,995.00**

Auto, pw, pdl, tilt, cruise, cd, rack, running boards, alloy wheels

1998 Mustang GT Conv - ID 198954**\$12,995.00**

Under 37K miles, Auto, leather int, pw, pdl, tilt, cruise, Rear Spoiler, alloy wheel

2003 Grand Marquis LS - ID 697036**\$16,995.00**

Blue Oval Certified pw, pdl, tilt, cruise, cd, leather int alloy wheels - *previously rental/one at this price*

2003 F-150 Super Cab XLT - ID A12864**\$17,995.00**

Blue Oval Certified - Auto, pw, pdl, tilt cruise, mutli-disc cd, bedliner, alloy wheels - *one at this price*

2001 Expedition - ID A73929**\$17,995.00**

Blue Oval Certified - Only 34K miles, lether, third seat, dual air, mutli-disc changer, running boards, tow package, loaded

2003 Ford Escape Limited - ID B86682**\$18,995.00**

Blue Oval Certified - V6 3.0 liter, 4 wheel drive, multi-disc changer, moon roof, towing package, alloy wheels

2003 Mustang GT Conv - ID 308712**\$19,995.00**

Blue Oval Certified - Leather, multi-disc changer, rear spoiler, traction control - *one at this price*

2002 Lexus IS 300 Sport Cross - ID 040162**\$19,995.00**

Auto, air, cd changer, moon roof, ABS, chrome wheels

2002 Lincoln LS V8 - ID 628274**\$21,995.00**

Moon roof, silver with black leather, loaded

2001 Mercedes-Benz C-Class C320 - ID 067984**\$23,995.00**

V6 3.2 liter, rear wheel drive, slip control, mutl-disc changer, Bose premium sound, moon roof, alloy wheels

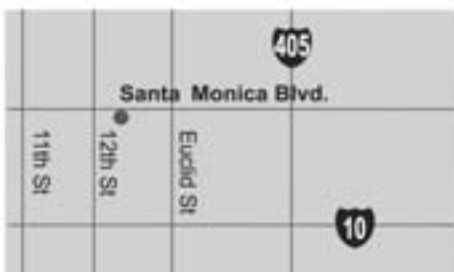
2000 Cadillac Escalade Sport - ID 205492**\$23,995.00**

V8 5.7 liter, 4 wheel drive, premium sound, OnStar, video system, running boards, towing package

2002 Mercedes-Benz SLK-Class SLK320 - ID 251773**\$28,995.00**

V6 3.2 liter, rear wheel drive, slip control, traction control, alloy wheels

All vehicles subject to prior sale. Prices exclude government fees and taxes, any finance charge, any dealer documentation preparation charge, and any emission testing charge. All offers on approved credit. Expires 01/17/05 close of business.



(800) 734-3966

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