

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

FANTASY 5

15, 30, 22, 24, 12

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 9, 4, 7

Evening picks: 7, 7, 5

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 12, Lucky Charms

2nd Place: 5, California Classic

3rd Place: 6, Whirl Win

Race Time: 1:48.85



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

In November, a jury in Montgomery, Ala., ordered Exxon Mobil to pay the state \$11.8 billion in punitive damages based on its conclusion that the company, having allegedly inflated its expenses, underpaid the state \$63.6 million in natural gas royalties (a penalty of more than 18 times the state's alleged loss). Exxon Mobil said its expenses were legitimate, that it owed the state nothing, and that it would appeal. One juror said afterward that the fact that the Alabama government is in such dire financial straits and needs the money might have influenced his vote (though that was not legally proper).



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"First, let me make it very clear, poor people aren't necessarily killers. Just because you happen to be not rich doesn't mean you're willing to kill."

— George W. Bush



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Mystery photo



Del Pastrana/Daily Press

Guess where this building bears this cross. As part of a weekly contest, the Daily Press will give away a free prize to the first reader who can accurately describe where the photo was taken. E-mail answers to sack@smdp.com.

SoCal bucks the trend again as landlords keep upper hand

BY MICHAEL LIETKE

AP Business Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — The Western apartment market continued to tilt in renters' favor during 2003 as the economy's lackluster job growth curtailed demand and forced landlords to make concessions to fill space, according to data released this week.

Average apartment rents in major Western markets

By The Associated Press

Average Dec. 31 rent % change from previous year in metropolitan areas.

San Francisco \$1,544 -4.8%

Los Angeles \$1,346 +3.9%

San Jose, Calif. \$1,284 -6.4%

Orange County, Calif. \$1,273 +3.3%

Oakland, Calif. \$1,188 -1.9%

San Diego \$1,182 +4.0%

See RENTS, page 6

The average apartment rent in 15 of 19 major Western markets either decreased or edged up by less than 3 percent from 2002, based on a survey compiled quarterly by Novato research firm RealFacts. The metropolitan areas surveyed are in California, Washington, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, Arizona, Idaho, Utah and New Mexico.

Southern California was the only exception to the trend, with annual rents rising throughout the region. The West's biggest rent increase of 6.4 percent occurred in San Bernardino and Riverside counties — a rapidly growing California region often called the "Inland Empire." Rents in San Diego, Los Angeles and Orange counties rose from 3.3 percent to 4 percent, the study said.

The heaviest rent decreases persisted in the San Francisco Bay area, where a high-tech bust that began in late 2000 resulted in mass layoffs and pared paychecks, forcing landlords to lower prices to retain and attract cash-strapped tenants.

Rents in Santa Clara County — the hub of the Silicon Valley —

See MARKET, page 6

Shoppers spending more money than ever downtown

However, survey shows homeless still deterrent

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN — Shoppers are spending more money than ever on the Third Street Promenade and throughout Santa Monica's downtown district, despite noted deterrents like outdated parking structures and a large homeless population.

Those were among the findings of a survey of 800 area residents and downtown visitors released on Thursday. Downtown Santa Monica is defined as being situated between Wilshire Boulevard to the north and Colorado Avenue to the south, Second Street to the west and Lincoln Boulevard to the east.

Most shoppers polled spent between \$40 and \$77 on an average visit to downtown. That figure is considerably higher than in previous years, according to the

"It's important that this happen now. The development review process in Santa Monica is thorough."

— KATHLEEN RAWSON

Executive director,
Bayside District Corp.

report, which found many shoppers also frequent competing malls such as the Westside Pavilion, Century City Mall, the Grove, the Bridge and the Beverly Center.

Officials said they were encouraged by the results, which indicated that locals typically shop here more than once a week.

"The fact that most — in fact,

See SURVEY, page 5

Nonprofits banking on over \$220K in donations

By Daily Press staff

DOWNTOWN — A major bank contributed more than \$220,000 to nonprofit organizations in Santa Monica last year, it was announced this week.

The awards — which totaled \$220,610 — were given by Wells Fargo Bank to 16 nonprofits providing everything from support for children's arts programs to funding for affordable family housing, needy children, adults and senior citizens.

Beneficiaries included the Special Olympics, Step Up On Second, Angel's Flight West, Performing Arts for Children, the Santa Monica City College Foundation, the California Heritage Museum and Roosevelt Elementary School, among others.

"We cannot underestimate the

small and often overlooked miracles that nonprofits perform in our communities everyday," said Shelley Benson, president of marketing, in a prepared statement. "Wells Fargo and other funding sources must remain committed to supporting the miracle workers in our communities, whose contributions make a world of difference to the people who need them the most."

Wells Fargo — which has assets totaling \$388 billion — contributed \$10 million to nonprofit organizations in Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara and west San Bernardino counties last year, making it the largest corporate contributor to nonprofits in the greater Los Angeles area, bank officials said. Nationwide, the company donated \$83 million to more than 14,000 nonprofits in 2003.

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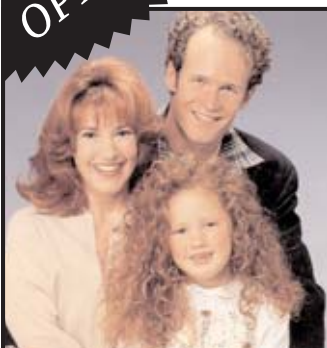
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Avoid making a lot of plans, Aries



JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★ Take some well-earned downtime. You might want to write some letters or reach out for a loved one at a distance. Avoid making a lot of plans, other than staying home quietly with a friend or loved one. You need a break from recent events. Tonight: Be mysterious. You don't have to tell everyone.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Often, you choose a low-key role and are happy being an observer. You get off your duff and socialize with friends and loved ones. You might want to throw a midwinter party or do something that involves a group of friends. Tonight: Let someone know how much you care.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★ While others might go off for a care-free weekend, you might decide to work or handle certain key responsibilities. This will make you feel better. Still, schedule individual time with that special person in your life. Tonight: Out and about.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ You need a break. Take one now, even if it is only a day trip with a friend. You'll enjoy yourself in another setting or a different environment more than you think. You gain a refreshing perspective as a result. Tonight: Do something totally different.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Others have the ideas. Clearly someone wants to be alone with you. Let this person take the lead, and you follow. You might like the treat this person has up his or her sleeve for you. For once, lie back and allow another to dote on you. Tonight: Add a touch of romance.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Others seek you out en masse. You might combine certain invitations or just accept one. In fact, many of you have a special someone who you really care about and would like to be with. Make that choice. Tonight: Just don't be alone.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★ You could be overwhelmed by a project or something you need to do. Carefully think through a decision that involves family and/or your home. Play the next 24 hours low-key and easy. Tonight: Just don't push.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ An invitation or call might start the ball rolling with someone special or a potential interest. What you thought was casual and easy turns exciting and dynamic. Be aware of how much someone cares. Tonight: Let your hair down.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Make it OK to spend a quiet day at home. You don't need to push as hard as you recently have been. Consider what is necessary to make someone more comfortable with you. Be willing to do just that. Tonight: Order in.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ You might like what happens if you speak up. How someone else sees a situation could be a lot different. A talk develops into a loving conversation. You add to the closeness and the bond between the two of you. Tonight: At a favorite spot.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ You opt to spend on something extravagant or a bit different, be it for you or a loved one. Others might think this is an impulse purchase, but it isn't. You have given this matter a lot of thought. Buy a card for a loved one. Tonight: Your treat.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ A friend or loved one tells you something that makes you very happy. Be spontaneous and do what you most enjoy. A romance could be building from a friendship, or you could be adding a lot of friendship to a romance. Tonight: As you like it.

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LOCAL

Crime in Santa Monica at lowest level in 43 years

(Editor's note: Because of printing problems, the SMDP is re-printing this story, which appeared in the Jan. 22 edition. For more of that day's news, log onto smdp.com and download the Jan. 22 edition).

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

SMPD HDQTRS. — Crime in Santa Monica is the lowest it has been in 43 years, according to statistics released Wednesday.

In 2003, serious crimes decreased 4 percent over the previous year, also a record low year, SMPD Chief James T. Butts, Jr., said.

"It's like it's back in 1960," he said. "Most cities are happy if they get to 1980s or 1979 levels, and very few, if any, cities, have posted 60- to 70-percent decreases in the last decade. That's off the charts."

Last year, the SMPD received 4,501 reports of Part 1 crimes, which are the most serious. In 1993, when crime was at an all-time high, there were 10,891 reports of serious crime.

"This year's decrease comes on the heels of nine years of crime dropping in the city," Butts said, adding last year was only 70 crimes higher than what was reported in 1960.

Violent crime — murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault — fell 14 percent in 2003 and 62 percent over the last decade. Crime has declined in nine of the last 10 years, and seven years consecutively. In the 38 years prior to 1994, crime had fallen only two years in a row on three occasions. In the last 47 years, crime has decreased only in 19 years.

Santa Monica's decrease in crime is particularly noteworthy given that crime rose statewide by 2.3 percent for the first nine months of 2003, Butts said. He added that the state saw a property crime increase of 4.7 percent in the first nine months of 2003, yet Santa Monica's property crimes continue to drop. Property crime here reached 1950s levels, falling 58 percent from their 1993 high of 9,446 incidents to 3,946 incidents in 2003.

The overall crime today in Santa Monica has fallen 59 percent in the last decade. The most substantial drop was a 75 percent decrease in homicides — there was only one last year, compared to eight the year before. But compared with 1956, it has dropped 78 percent. The lowest six

years of homicides on record have occurred between 1996 and 2003. Prior to 1996, the least number of murders committed in a year in Santa Monica was six, with the record being in 1980 with 17.

Violent crime in Santa Monica has dropped 62 percent since 1993. Incidences of robberies are down 66 percent and rape is down 57 percent. Property crimes are down 58 percent collectively — led by auto theft, which is down 74 percent and larcenies down 56 percent.

Burglaries are down 47 percent and seven of the lowest eight years on record for burglary have been recorded consecutively in the last seven years. The eighth lowest year occurred in 1956, however, from 1998 to 2001, burglary was lower than 1956 (see chart).

Butts said he's amazed that crime levels have reached levels from four decades ago, especially because there were less than half the amount of people living here then — let alone visiting here. Tourist and other visitations are currently at record levels, with as many as 300,000 people coming to Santa Monica in one day.

"The reality is that we serve a population large enough to be considered a metropolis," Butts said. But Santa Monica, which has close to 90,000 residents, isn't considered a major city because it doesn't reach the mandated population of 100,000. As a result, Santa Monica isn't included in major city crime comparisons.

Butts attributes the low crime rates to several factors, but particularly because the SMPD rid the city of rampant drug dealing in Palisades Park in the early to mid-1990s, when he became police chief.

"It's no coincidence that when we had high crime there was an open air drug market in Palisades Park," Butts said, adding cities that are predisposed to drug activity have more criminals in them.

Butts also suggested that because the SMPD has what are called "community livability" goals that are identified every year, crime in those areas are reduced. One year, auto thefts had increased, so the SMPD focused on reducing that crime, and it was successful. The goals are based on quality of life issues for residents.

This past year, the goals were robbery suppression with an emphasis on street robberies; pursuing parolees with an

See CRIME RATE, page 5

surf report

Look for another day of overlapping WNW swells, with one building and one fading through the day. In the morning look for many of your better exposed winter breaks to see waves in the 3-4-5' range, with some better sets at top spots.

OUTLOOK: Look for the surf to be slowly fading on Sunday — although still overhead at the good spots — and into Monday.

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SUNDAY	5:09 AM	5:51 PM	11:04 AM	N/A
MONDAY	6:09 AM	6:26 PM	12:36 AM	11:49 AM
TUESDAY	7:24 AM	7:00 PM	1:16 AM	12:48 PM
WEDNESDAY	9:04 AM	7:39 PM	2:04 AM	2:20 PM
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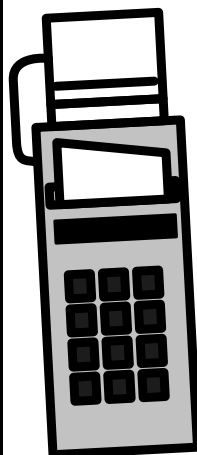
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Santa Monica Crime Rate History Chart

	1956	1960	1980	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	02-'03	93-'03	Lowest Year Since
Person Crimes	139	142	1034	1445	1050	1063	929	835	651	628	645	654	647	666	-14%	-62%	1967
Homicide	8	8	17	9	8	8	4	1	12	1	2	2	8	2	-78%	-78%	1996
Rape	20	6	67	49	46	46	45	39	22	29	31	24	33	21	-36%	-57%	1998
Robbery	55	78	660	716	507	522	438	393	268	279	266	312	299	242	-19%	-66%	1967
Aggravated Assault	56	50	290	671	489	505	442	402	349	319	344	316	307	290	-6%	-57%	1967
Property Crimes	3362	4294	9601	9446	7837	6686	6447	5571	4733	4258	4049	4255	4042	3946	-2%	-58%	1967
Burglary	728	826	2911	1511	1580	1112	1038	767	703	580	603	720	737	789	4%	-48%	1967
Larceny	2235	2971	5403	6181	5091	4795	4469	4005	3300	3120	2962	3020	2811	2718	-3%	-56%	1967
Auto Theft	399	497	1287	1754	1166	1079	940	799	730	576	484	515	494	462	-6%	-74%	1967
UCR Totals	3501	4436	10635	10891	8887	8069	7378	6406	5384	4884	4694	4909	4699	4591	-4%	-59%	1960



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LETTERS

Two thumbs up for school gift proposal

(This letter was originally addressed to the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education).

Editor:

We would like to add our voices to those of the many Santa Monica and Malibu citizens who have expressed support for Superintendent John Deasy's proposal to place 15 percent of gifts to individual schools in an equity fund to help schools throughout the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District.

We have long been concerned about the inequality of private fundraising within the district because it exacerbates the already substantial opportunity and achievement gaps among children in our schools. To address this problem, we became actively involved in the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation, which helps schools throughout the district. Then, in 1993, when our youngest child was a student at Franklin Elementary School, we initiated a scrip sales fundraiser in which profits earned at Franklin were divided 50-50; 50 percent to the Franklin PTA and 50 percent to the foundation. Former Superintendent Neil Schmidt indicated that if our pilot program succeeded, he would ask the School Board to require some sort of gift revenue sharing at all schools. A group of very dedicated Franklin parents helped turn our fundraiser into a major source of revenue, raising approximately \$90,000 over a two-year period — \$45,000 for Franklin and \$45,000 for the foundation.

The Franklin parents who worked in and contributed to the program considered it a privilege, not a tax, even though only half the funds raised were spent at our own children's school. We also believed that our own children benefited from the model of caring and sharing set by their parents. However, due to pressure from those at other schools, the proposal to require district-wide sharing of privately raised funds was quietly dropped.

Since that time, the fundraising gap between more affluent and less affluent schools has widened. For example, we recently read that this year Point Dume Elementary School in Malibu raised eight times more per pupil than John Muir Elementary School in Santa Monica. As state funding cuts and budget shortfalls force the district to make once unimaginable cuts in school programming, the discrepancy between the educational offerings in different neighborhoods will become even more apparent unless the issue of fundraising inequality is addressed without further delay.

Our hope is that under the vibrant leadership of Deasy and the current school



Member: AABC, NCS, SCS, SCS

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board, the equity concerns which were previously tabled will now be firmly addressed. We strongly believe that Deasy's gift proposal is an important step in the effort to bridge the opportunity and achievement divides within our local public schools. We urge the school board to adopt the proposed gift policy at the earliest possible opportunity.

Sonya Fox and Bruse Ira Sultan
Santa Monica

F*#@ that! Revisiting seven dirty words is just a waste



MODERN TIMES

By Lloyd Garver

Thirty years ago, a young comic named George Carlin released an album that listed the "seven words that you can't say on television." Last week, Congressman Doug Ose (R-Sacramento) introduced a bill that would ban seven words from television. The "Seven Dirty Word List" might be the only thing in this country that hasn't been affected by inflation over the past 30 years.

Six of the words are the same on both lists, but Congressman Ose has removed one of Carlin's words and replaced it with another one. Does that mean that now it's OK with the Congressman to say @%*&, but it's no longer OK to say @#!+? (I've chosen to spell these words using these symbols rather than their actual letters because I don't think they're appropriate for this column. The Santa Monica Daily Press didn't tell me I couldn't say them,

and neither did the federal government. It's also fun to type words in silly symbols).

To paraphrase Justice Potter Stewart's famous comment about obscenity, I can't define bad legislation, but I know it when I see it. And this is bad legislation.

I don't like everything I hear on television either, but Congress shouldn't get involved in protecting us from hearing specific words. Years ago, you couldn't say "pregnant" on television. Language and tastes evolve. If Congress adopts this resolution, I guarantee you that a few years from now it will be amended. Some words will be more acceptable, and new words will be considered offensive. Do we really want to waste Congress' time and our money every few years by having them discuss which seven words should be banned from television?

And why seven? When Congressman Ose was sitting at his kitchen table making his list, what words didn't make the cut? What was "Naughty Word Number 8" that he almost included, but finally said, "Oh, what the, h-e-double hockey sticks, I guess it's not that bad?" Do the "Sleazy Seven" only offend him, or did he poll his wife and kids, or go to his neigh-

bors with a longer list and cuss at them until they slammed the door in his face?

If this thing is actually debated in Congress, it's going to be ridiculous. Everybody has a different opinion about what words are and aren't OK to say on TV. Some members of Congress will want to ban blankety-blank, and others will find blankety-blank-blank more offensive. Some will want a shorter list, and some will want a longer one. And to make their case, they will have to say these words in the hallowed hall of the United States Congress. And the proceedings will probably be televised. So, we'll be able to watch our elected officials swearing on television regarding how terrible it is to swear on television.

Imagine that debate. "While I agree with my honorable colleague from Georgia that !@&# is a bad word, I would like to nominate ##%@!, which I have found offensive ever since I heard my big brother, Harold, use it when we went skinny-dipping with the Randolph twins."

Then, of course there is the slippery slope. (Don't worry, Congressman, that's not the brand name of a lubricant). If Congress has a right to outlaw seven

words, what's to stop them from outlawing 27 words next year, and 127 the year after? Or maybe they'll feel like outlawing all words having to do with a certain subject matter.

In language, context is crucial. This is probably why the FCC has wisely refrained from banning specific words for the past decade or so. And Congress shouldn't start now, especially considering that there is an alternative. Since Congressman Ose should be able to predict pretty accurately which programs are likely to use language that might offend him, all he has to do is not watch those shows. Shouldn't the same people who are theoretically capable of "pushing the button" to authorize a war be capable of pushing the button to turn off a television set? Congressman, your proposal is a bad @#!&* idea.

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

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

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LOCAL



Home-grown shoppers provide boost to area retailers

SURVEY, from page 1

virtually all — of the people surveyed ... had been to the area in the year prior is actually phenomenal,” said Kathleen Rawson, executive director of the Bayside District Corp., a nonprofit that runs downtown with funding from City Hall. “Those are nice, healthy numbers.”

Most of the respondents said they visited downtown because they live or work nearby, an indication of the area’s residential growth, while fewer said they chose

the area for its variety or quality of services — or to see a movie.

Rawson said the data wasn’t a surprise to Bayside board members, but it reaffirmed shoppers are happy with the mix of stores, but dissatisfied with the homeless population, lack of parking and aging movie theaters. She reiterated the board’s priorities, which are in line with what those surveyed want.

“Our market base for theaters has not eroded to the point of no return, but it is certainly imperative that the city and the

community here aggressively pursue theater development in downtown,” Rawson said. “They need to be replaced with state-of-the-art, competitive movie theaters.

“It’s important that this happen now,” she added. “The development review process in Santa Monica is thorough. It will take some years to get this done ... All the stars have to be aligned — these are property deals, these are development deals, the city is interested — I couldn’t give an estimate.”

Bayside paid CIC Research Inc. \$27,000 to conduct the October survey, which consisted of interviewing 400 residents over the phone and 400 shoppers out and about. CIC conducted similar surveys for Bayside in 1997, ’98 and ’99.

Results also indicate that less international travelers and more people from throughout LA County were visiting downtown. Ernest Brazier, director of research for CIC, said despite the fact that Santa

Monicans accounted for a smaller percentage of those stopped on the street in 2003, the general feeling is that more people from all groups are coming to downtown.

The demographics of those polled often differed from the average Santa Monican. For the telephone survey, which targeted households in Santa Monica and other westside areas, the median age was 45, the median income \$74,600 and 48 percent owned their own home. Of those interviewed on the street — generally a younger and less affluent set — the median age was 33, the median income was \$47,500 and 44 percent were homeowners.

Santa Monicans on the whole are still less affluent. According to an analysis of the 2000 Census performed by the RAND Corp., a national think tank based in downtown Santa Monica, only 28 percent of housing units within the city were owner-occupied. The median income was pegged at \$50,714.

Ties that bind: Cops attribute crime dip to close community

CRIME RATE, from page 3

emphasis on tracking and supervision; traffic safety with an emphasis on pedestrian safety and instituting a new “neighborhood-centered policing” program that puts high-ranking officers directly in touch with residents, SMPD Lt. Frank Fabrega said.

Technology and establishing a better tie with the community is what has helped drive down crime levels, Butts said.

“It’s the closeness of the community with residents and police, and computer technology that can help us pinpoint crime, analyze trends and mobilize effectively,” he said. “Before, information was contained in the station but now police units are mobile offices.”

He added that the SMPD has made great strides in reaching out to the community, which is proven by the record low of citizen complaints against the police department this year — 43, compared to more than 100 in 1992, when Butts changed the policy on how complaints were logged. At the time, the watch commander, who works closely with officers,

had the discretion of whether to log the complaint. But Butts changed that so all complaints go directly to the internal affairs department.

“The message that has been sent by this community and this police department is that we intend to make Santa Monica one of the safest communities in the United States and we are on our way,” Butts said.

And despite the fact that incidents of drive-by shootings and stray bullets were commonplace last year in the Pico neighborhood — located on the eastside of town and the site of the year’s only homicide — crime is still down there. Police responded to close to a dozen shots fired calls, most believed to be gang related. In some cases, people were struck by bullets, but no one was seriously injured.

“Historically, violence in Pico is down over the last 10 to 12 years,” Butts said, adding that the eight square blocks the neighborhood encompasses is the most patrolled in the city. “We are steadily making inroads in getting people engaged in anti-social behavior off the streets.”

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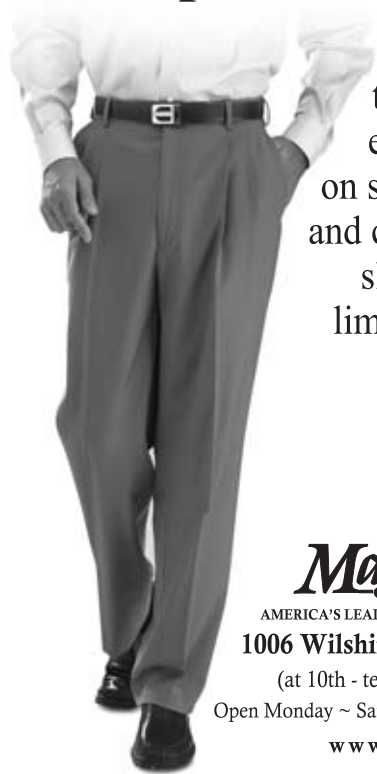
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STATE

Landlords taking heart as vacancy rates decline

MARKET, from page 1

dropped 6.4 percent in 2003 to an average of \$1,284, RealFacts said. Since peaking at \$1,951 in early 2001, average apartment rents in Silicon Valley have plummeted by 34 percent, generating \$8,000 in annual savings for renters.

In the three-county San Francisco metropolitan area, apartment rents dipped by another 4.8 percent in 2003 to an average of \$1,544. San Francisco metro rents have fallen by nearly \$500 per month during the past three years.

Even with the steady erosion, the average price for a San Francisco apartment remains the most expensive in the West, remaining well ahead of the Los Angeles average of \$1,346. The West's lowest apartment rents are in Tucson, Ariz., at a year-end average of \$614.

The stagnant rental market largely reflects a feeble job market, said Caroline Latham, RealFacts' chief executive.

Although the overall economy recently has been expanding at an impressive clip, the recovery still hasn't spurred employers to hire substantially more workers — conditions that make it more difficult for landlords to find renters who can afford their own apartments.

"Job growth and apartment demand are pretty closely correlated," Latham said. "It's turning into a much slower recovery than we had hoped for. It looks like it is going to take more time than we thought for things to stabilize."

Apartment demand in recent years also has tapered off as a sharp decline in interest rates made it easier for more longtime renters to qualify for mortgages and buy their first homes.

While the conditions are saving renters money, they are also discouraging developers and lenders from pursuing new apartment construction — a phenomenon that could diminish the future supply of

desirable housing. Latham predicted it will take sustained annual rent increases of 4 percent to 5 percent to encourage more building.

Landlords may gain greater pricing power in 2004 if vacancy rates continue to decline, as they did last year in 12 of the 19 surveyed markets.

A market vacancy rate of 5 percent or less generally gives landlords the leverage to demand higher rents.

All four of Southern California's metro areas have had apartment vacancy rates of less than 5 percent for a long stretch, Latham said. The vacancy rates in the San Francisco and Las Vegas markets also dipped below 5 percent during the final three months of 2003 — an indicator that rents in those markets may be ready to surge.

Got rent?

RENTS, from page 1

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Seattle \$860 +0.4%

Denver \$854 unchanged

Reno, Nev. \$754 +1.3%

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Tucson, Ariz. \$614 +0.7%

Environmentalists sue EPA over permits for oil platforms

By The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Environmental groups filed a lawsuit last week against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, claiming the federal government has failed to update clean water permits for nearly two dozen oil drilling platforms off the California coast.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court here, alleges that the EPA hasn't issued new water permits for 22 oil platforms off Southern and Central California. It seeks to require that the agency issue updated permits under the Clean Water Act.

Clean water permits are intended to control the discharge of pollutants into public waterways under state and federal standards.

Some oil facilities are operating with expired permits issued 20 years ago when pollution control standards were more lax, Schauer said. The lawsuit asserts that the EPA has reported finding several toxic pollutants, including ammonia and arsenic, in discharges from the platforms.

The EPA would not comment directly on the lawsuit, but the agency said it is preparing new water permits for the platforms. An EPA official said the agency is awaiting approval from the California Coastal Commission, which it expects in April or May.

"We are anxious to issue these permits," said Alexis Strauss, director of the EPA's water commission.



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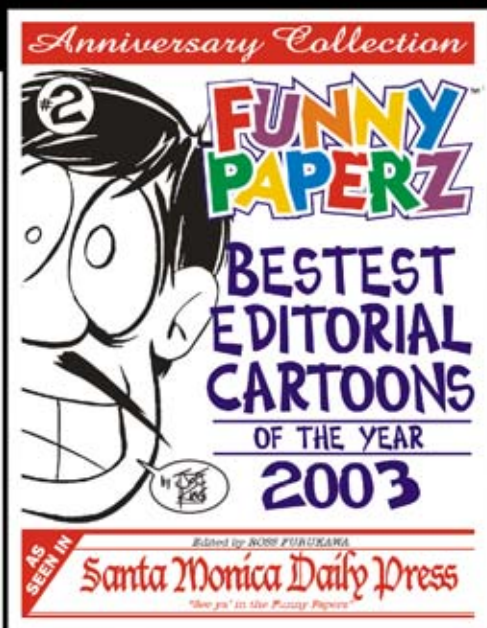
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STATE



Lure of Canadian drugs too strong for state senator

BY JENNIFER COLEMAN
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — California could save as much as \$30 million by buying Canadian drugs for state hospitals and prisons, but would be in direct conflict with federal regulations, under a bill unveiled this week by a state senator.

The bill, by Senate President Pro Tempore John Burton, D-San Francisco, would allow the state Department of General Services to consider Canadian pharmacies when seeking the best price on prescription medicines. The department buys drugs for the California prison system and state hospitals.

If Burton's bill becomes law, it would make California's the first state legislature to approve a plan to buy drugs from Canada, experts said, and possibly create more pressure on the federal government to allow the practice on a wider scale or push for lower drug prices.

So far, seven state legislatures have debated various plans to buy drugs from Canada, but none has passed. Governors of several states have also proposed programs, but no state has started importing the cheaper drugs.

Shopping in Canada for the five prescription drugs — Seroquel, Zyprexa, Risperdal, Depakote and Neurontin — most often purchased for those state facilities could save the state more than \$23 million a year, Burton said.

"Canada is infinitely cheaper than buying drugs in this country," Burton said. "Sooner or later, the federal government is going to have to stand up to the drug companies" and have them account for that discrepancy.

In no other industry, he said, are consumers and government agencies required to buy only U.S.-manufactured goods, which Burton blamed on lobbying by pharmaceutical companies that want to keep prices, and profits, high.

Joe Hammang, a scientist with Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, said it's not fair to compare the drug industry to other industries because bringing a medicine to market is "far more risky and time consuming."

It can take millions of dollars and many years to produce a successful drug, which drives up the price to U.S. consumers, Hammang said.

Because Canada has a national health system, the government negotiates the maximum price for prescription drugs with the manufacturers — often much less than in the United States. The discrepancy has led many people to drive across the border or order online at Canadian pharmacies to save money.

Assemblyman Dario Frommer, D-Los Angeles, has also eyed Canada for prescription drug buys, but would expand on Burton's proposal by including Medi-Cal prescriptions, which he said could save the state even more.

Either plan would require federal regulators to grant California a waiver to import the drugs.

Federal law lets pharmacists and wholesalers import drugs from Canada — but only with the approval of the secretary of Health and Human Services. So far, Secretary Tommy Thompson and the Food and Drug Administration have deemed importing Canadian drugs too risky.

Despite that, the cities of Springfield, Mass., and Montgomery, Ala., are buying lower-cost prescription drugs from Canada and others are considering similar plans.

Seven state legislatures took up the issue last year, said Richard Cauchi, with the National Conference of State Legislatures.

"How do you balance reasonable and adequate incentives for the medical advances we all want?"

— DAVID GOLLAHER
President,
California Healthcare Institute

Only one of those states, New Jersey, tried to ban the importation of the cheaper pharmaceuticals; the others considered how to save money by buying drugs from the north. They include Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island, Illinois, Massachusetts and Florida.

None of the legislation was approved, Cauchi said.

Governors in several states have also proposed similar purchasing plans, including New Hampshire, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and West Virginia.

Burton said he doubted there would be any health risk to consumers because Canada's testing standards are similar to the U.S. standards.

Of the drugs sold in Canada, some are manufactured there and some are imported from other facilities in countries, Cauchi said.

"Quite a number of the drugs are manufactured in the U.S. and then shipped to Canada," Cauchi said.

Importing price-controlled drugs from Canada could hurt California's world-leading biotech industry, said David Gollaher, president of California Healthcare Institute, which represents universities and biotech companies. Fewer research dollars would result a drop in biotech jobs and fewer new drugs, he said.

"There's a lot more at stake here than any other state," Gollaher said. "How do you balance reasonable and adequate incentives for the medical advances we all want?"

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger hasn't taken a position on the bill, said his spokeswoman Ashley Snee.

The administration is concerned about quality control of imports, but also about "the growing cost of prescription drugs," she said. Schwarzenegger's staff would work with lawmakers to "reduce the costs in accordance with the law and in ways that don't sacrifice quality."

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STATE

Arnold's massive borrowing plan has enough muscle

BY TOM CHORNEAU

Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — While polls show only a third of California voters support borrowing \$15 billion to refinance the state's deficit, formal opposition to Proposition 57 appears unlikely to coalesce in the six weeks remaining before the March 2 election.

Despite the polls and the daunting task facing pro-bond forces, none of the state's major taxpayer groups nor the bond's leading critics — state Treasurer Phil Angelides and Sen. Tom McClintock, R-Northridge — say they are planning any sort of opposition campaign.

The bond measure, largest to ever go before any state electorate, is backed by a powerful bipartisan coalition led by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and State Controller Steve Westly, a Democrat.

Proceeds from the sale would be used to pay off the state's existing deficit and help make ends meet next year, but at a cost of about \$4 billion in interest or \$2,000 per California household.

The lack of organized opposition is a boost for Schwarzenegger, whose campaign for the bonds could crumble under even the most modest opposition, observers said.

A survey released last week from the Field Poll found only 33 percent of likely voters favor the borrowing. Similar results were measured in a poll from the Public Policy Institute of California.

"It's a huge plus for the governor not to have anyone spending money on the other side," said Bruce Cain, political science professor at the University of California, Berkeley. "I think any opposition would be very bad news."

"Schwarzenegger has to do something that is very rare in initiative politics — build up the Yes side," Cain explained. "Most measures start off high and come down

— he's got to do the opposite. It's a tough chore under the best circumstance, the last thing he wants to anyone opposing him."

And so far he's got his wish.

Angelides, an outspoken critic of the governor's economic plans and a likely challenger in 2006, said he would not be spending any of his \$10 million campaign war chest to fight the bonds.

"As treasurer, I feel duty bound to express my opinion," Angelides said. "I feel an obligation to fight on the front that does count — making sure that we have a budget with structural balance."

"This is not just about the bond issue — it's a test of Arnold's ability to lead."

— SHERRY BEBITCH JEFFE

Political scientist at USC

If anyone asks, Angelides said, he'll tell them he opposed the borrowing. Beyond that, however, "the voters should decide."

This comes even though the treasurer organized a No on 57 campaign in December and spent close to \$400,000 of contributors' money on TV ads attacking the governor's first plan to borrow the \$15 billion.

McClintock, one of the Legislature's leading conservatives, said he too is not planning to organize a campaign to fight against the bond's passage.

"I expect a very one-sided campaign," said McClintock, who ran against Schwarzenegger in the recall campaign and may run again in 2006. "I intend to speak out every chance I get against the idea because borrowing is not the solution. But I'm not in a position to bring together a campaign."

Taxpayer groups, the other likely source for big dol-

lars to fight the bonds, also appear disinclined to take up the challenge. The California Taxpayers Association is supporting the record borrowing; while the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association has not yet taken a position.

Larry McCarthy, president of CalTax, said his group decided the bonds represent the most efficient and least disruptive method for paying off the deficit. McCarthy is even serving as a co-chair of the Yes on Proposition 57 committee.

But Schwarzenegger is risking much of his newly acquired political capital in the race. He has already begun barnstorming the state to inspire voter support and is expected to push campaign supporters to contribute up to \$10 million for the bonds passage as well as a companion measure, Proposition 58, that mandates balance budgets in the future and prohibits deficit financing.

He and his supporters argue that without the bonds, the state would be forced to impose deep spending cuts and increase taxes dramatically.

The stakes in this campaign are immense, pundits say.

"This is not just about the bond issue — it's a test of Arnold's ability to lead," said Sherry Bebitch Jaffe, a political scientist at the University of Southern California.

Schwarzenegger's sweeping victory in the Oct. 7 recall election has made many Democrats nervous given his many threats to bypass the Legislature and take his issues directly to the ballot and even more, his veiled threats to campaign against them.

Cain noted that some Democrats would like nothing better than to see the governor and his bonds fail, because such a loss would quickly cut the larger-than-life Schwarzenegger down to size. But, he suggested, the governor's opponents may be holding back because they agree with the governor that without the bond money the state faces massive financial problems.

"The reality is that they may not want to go eye to eye with the governor with a huge hole in the budget," Cain said. "The gamble is that in that situation they might get Arnold to blink and go for a tax increase. Then again, he might not, and then he's cutting everything."

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NATIONAL

NYC's Armory back on track with Hall of Fame

BY ANDREA ADELSON

AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK — Norbert Sander ran track at the Armory in high school decades ago. Back then, everyone seemed to go there.

After all, it was the mecca of track and field in the Northeast — where all the top athletes gathered to compete. In 1990, Sander returned to the Armory after learning it had fallen onto hard times. He could hardly believe what he saw.

The home of track and field? Not even close. There was no track to be found. The Armory was now a homeless shelter. Debris littered the floor. Windows were broken, walls were crumbling, and pipes were leaking.

"It was in deplorable condition," said Sander, who won the 1974 New York City Marathon. "A total catastrophe."

Sander decided something had to be done. He wanted to restore the building to its former glory, so he established The Armory Foundation to help raise money to bring track back home.

He has more than succeeded. In 1993, track and field returned to the Armory after a 10-year absence, and the homeless were settled into another shelter.

There's more. The crowning jewel of the Armory is set to be dedicated Saturday: an \$8.5 million National Track & Field Hall of Fame, the first permanent,

**I think it's an amazing place to have our hall of fame.
I'm excited, and hopefully one day I'll be in it."**

— **SANYA RICHARDS**
University of Texas athlete

state-of-the-art home for the sport.

"It's great," shot putter Adam Nelson said. "Track and field has really been a forgotten sport in this country and it really has a strong history. To have a place where they can showcase the history of the sport in one of the biggest cities is a really cool thing."

When Sander started campaigning to restore the track, not many people would listen. He would bring city officials to the building and try to point out where the track used to be.

"I'd have to move the beds, homeless people would be sleeping there," Sander said. "I wanted to show the city official where the old rim was. He said, 'This is a homeless shelter. This was never a track.'"

"There were more doors shut in my face than any man east of the Mississippi. If they shut one door I'd go to the next one."

Slowly but surely, Sander got officials on his side. And he raised enough money to start refurbishing the building. When track and field returned there in 1993, 25,000 high schoolers used the Armory.

Now it hosts nearly 100 meets and receives more than 350,000 visits from student athletes a year.

Over \$20 million has gone into renovating the building. Nearly half of that has gone into the Hall of Fame.

Four years ago, USA Track & Field decided to float the idea of whether a national Hall of Fame could succeed. In 1974, there was a small hall in Charleston, W. Va., and then it moved to Indianapolis in 1985. After failing to draw much interest, the hall became a traveling exhibit before closing down in the 1990s. Memorabilia was kept in boxes and housed in storage closets.

New York bid for the site, along with Houston, Tampa, Kansas City and Eugene, Ore. Selecting New York made perfect sense not only because of the Armory, but because the city had no hall of fame.

"When I started at USA Track & Field, we were virtually bankrupt," said Craig Masback, CEO of USATF. "So something like having a hall of fame in one of the world's major cities, if we would have pro-

posed it people would have just laughed."

The new hall is a three-story, 15,000-square foot facility that features educational exhibits, the history of the sport and the Fred Lebow Marathon Hall. The third floor has a glass wall with the etched names of all 193 Hall of Fame members. The track is visible through the wall.

"It is so awesome," said Chandra Cheeseborough, two-time gold Olympic gold medalist. "When I walked in the door, I had a flashback. I thought I wanted to run again."

For sprinter Sanya Richards, a sophomore at the University of Texas, having the hall of fame at the Armory has special meaning.

She broke two high school records there in the 200 and 400 as a senior.

"The Armory was a turning point for me," said Richards, who is the reigning U.S. champion in the 400. "I love the stadium, it brings a lot of great memories. I think it's an amazing place to have our hall of fame. I'm excited, and hopefully one day I'll be in it."

Sander is grateful not only for the new hall, but for the complete turnaround of the Armory.

"I've been working at this full time since 1990 and am enormously gratified by the success off it," Sander said. "I was a runner here. It affected my life. I see how important it is to kids and even adults. It really reaches out to people of all ages."

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NATIONAL



Bounty hunter wants irresponsible colleagues reined in

BY PAUL QUEARY

Associated Press Writer

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Jon Fitzpatrick looks the part of a bounty hunter — tall, rugged, and occasionally forbidding. He packs a gun, opts for Johnny Cash black when forced to wear a suit and isn't afraid to tackle a fugitive when the situation calls for it.

But he'd really rather you called him a "fugitive recovery agent," and says his profession is mostly about research and shoe-leather tracking than busting down doors and bringing in bad guys at gunpoint.

"I like to find people who don't want to be found," Fitzpatrick said recently. "Ninety-nine-point-five percent of the time, they will say: OK, can I get my shoes?"

Fitzpatrick spends most of his time tracking down small-time bail jumpers for a few hundred dollars apiece. He says television and movie portrayals of big-money bounty hunters give a false impression of his profession as action-packed and glamorous, luring in novices with more aggression than sense.

So he's pushing Washington lawmakers to rein in his shadowy and largely unregulated trade, concerned that the bare-knuckle tactics of his less responsible colleagues might get somebody killed.

"People say: Oh, you're a bounty hunter, so you like to kick in doors and screw guns in people's faces," Fitzpatrick said this month as he testified before the Legislature. "It gives my company a bad name."

That stereotype hit too close to home last year, when a 19-year-old novice bounty hunter pointed a shotgun at a woman and her baby at a Starbucks coffee shop before handcuffing and hauling away an innocent man — one of Fitzpatrick's friends.

Figuring it was an abduction, bystanders called police, and the bounty hunter wound up charged with assault and kidnapping.

Although prosecutors say such incidents are very rare, it could have gone terribly wrong, spraying a busy street with deadly shotgun pellets.

So this month found Fitzpatrick, dressed in black from shoes to necktie, sitting uncomfortably in a hearing room at the Washington Legislature.

For him, it's more than just the personal affront of having a fellow recovery agent abduct one of his friends. It's the possibility that violent invasions might turn nor-

mally docile fugitives violent.

"The next time I have to come to that house, they're going to be armed, they're going to be booby-trapping the doors," Fitzpatrick said.

Washington and some two dozen other states don't regulate bounty hunters at all, said Scott Olson, president of the National Institute of Bail Enforcement, a 3,000-member organization based in Chicago that supports regulation of the industry.

"What really hurts us is that we get these rogue bounty hunters out there," Olson said. "They go and kick in doors and do their thing."

Without state regulation, bail bondsmen and their agents enjoy broad powers to break into houses and drag away fugitives — known as "bail skips" — without a warrant. Under an 1872 U.S. Supreme Court decision, people surrender many of their civil rights when a bondsman bails them out of jail.

"They become, in essence, property," said state Rep. Mike Carrell, R-Lakewood, the sponsor of the licensing bill. "It's a contract, and the bail bond company says, 'You are now mine. You don't run away.'"

Carrell's proposal would limit the trade to people with appropriate education or experience, including instruction in relevant laws, the appropriate use of force, training in firearms, and no felony convictions.

Agents would need a concealed pistol license, effectively limiting the profession to those over 21. The plan also would require agents to notify police when they plan to force entry into a home.

A look at Fitzpatrick's working life gives insight into why he wants a more regulated profession. Like many people in dangerous businesses, Fitzpatrick is careful almost to the point of superstition.

He doesn't carry a cell phone or pager when he's hunting fugitives because he's afraid an ill-timed beep could break his concentration at a crucial point.

He saves the black suit for formal occasions, mostly wearing jeans and a multicolored fleece pullover that hides his gun and makes him look like thousands of other working-class Northwesterners.

Sometimes his cases are just a matter of walking up to the front door and knocking. In other cases, guile is required. Fitzpatrick says he once bought \$400 in casino vouchers, hired a limo, and told a skip that he'd won a free casino trip. When the sharply dressed fugitive

hopped in the limo, Fitzpatrick and a partner jumped in on either side and nabbed him.

Last month, Internet and courthouse research led Fitzpatrick to a bail skip who was hiding out at his grandmother's house in a rural area south of Olympia.

Unusually, the young fugitive bolted, leading Fitzpatrick on a rough chase through heavy brush before giving up. Fitzpatrick cuffed him, but brushed mud off his face and let him hug his grandmother before hauling him off to the courthouse.

A look at bounty hunting laws

The Associated Press

HOW BAIL WORKS — In most states, bail bondsmen post a bond to guarantee that a suspect will appear for a court date. A friend or relative generally pays 10 percent of the bond amount for the service and puts up something valuable — such as a home — as collateral. If the defendant runs, the bondsman is liable for the entire amount of the bond unless he can track down the defendant, which often requires a bounty hunter.

BROAD POWERS — As agents of bail bondsmen, bounty hunters — or bail recovery agents, as they prefer to be called — enjoy broad powers under centuries-old common law and an 1872 U.S. Supreme Court decision. Because people sign away many of their civil rights to the bondsman, the agent can enter a home and arrest a fugitive without a warrant in many states.

LITTLE REGULATION — About two dozen states have essentially no regulation on bounty hunters, which allows people with little or no experience or training to enter the dangerous trade.

LAWS AGAINST — Several states outlaw bounty hunting outright, and others limit it to employees of bail bondsmen, not freelancers. About a dozen states require some form of license for bail recovery agents, and a handful more limit the trade with requirements related to age, experience, training or criminal record.

WASHINGTON STATE'S PROPOSAL — A bill before the Legislature would limit the trade to people with appropriate education or experience, including instruction in relevant laws, the appropriate use of force, training in firearms, and no felony convictions. Agents would also need a concealed pistol license, effectively limiting the profession to those over 21.

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NATIONAL

Feds to open 8.8 million acres in Alaska to drilling

BY JOHN HEILPRIN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Gale Norton signed off on a plan to open 8.8 million acres of Alaska's North Slope to oil and gas development, some in areas

important for migratory birds, whales and wildlife.

The Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management will use the plan to manage a northwest portion of the government's 23.5 million-acre National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. Geologists believe that reserve may contain 6 billion to 13 billion barrels of oil.

It is located just west of the 1.5 million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which President Bush wants to open to drilling as part of a massive energy bill stalled in the Senate.

Environmentalists said the management plan threatens the health of Arctic tundra, ponds and lakes that are home to wildlife and migratory birds and provide a vital subsistence hunting and fishing ground for native Alaskans.

"What makes this even worse is that BLM has failed to study the effects of oil activities on the environment like it has promised to do," said Cindy Shogan, executive director of the Alaska Wilderness League.

The plan makes 7.23 million acres available for energy leasing, but will defer leasing the other 1.57 million

acres for a decade to see if more environmental studies are needed, Interior Department officials said.

All energy leases will be subject to strict environmental standards, the officials said, while other provisions are meant to protect water quality, vegetation, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitats and subsistence uses.

The Interior Department proposed the management plan in January 2003. With few changes, the plan includes creation of a 102,000-acre Kasegaluk Lagoon Special Area fenced off from leasing. It is considered particularly sensitive, as it is home to beluga whales, spotted seals and the black brandt, a migratory wild goose.

The plan designates special study areas of more than a half-million acres each for the Pacific black brandt and caribou. It also requires habitat studies for eiders, a bird whose existence is imperiled, and yellow-billed loons, and sets restrictions to minimize loss of foraging habitat for raptors around the Colville River Special Area.

Norton said oil and gas from the North Slope will help increase domestic energy production and stabilize prices in the long term.

"This plan will help produce energy in an environmentally responsible manner with the best available technology, while protecting the important biological, subsistence and cultural values found in this area," she said.

The reserve was set aside in the 1920s for potential energy development.

Environmentalists said the management plan rewards Bush administration friends in the oil and gas industry.

"This decision certainly gives big oil and gas plenty to be thankful for," said Eleanor Huffines, regional director in Alaska for The Wilderness Society.

BLM can now modify or waive environmental safeguards on a case-by-case basis for economic reasons, environmentalists said.

The bureau expects to hold a lease sale for oil and gas development on selected tracts next June. The Clinton administration had opened much of the eastern section of the reserve to oil and gas exploration in 1998, with tight restrictions and some areas fenced off.

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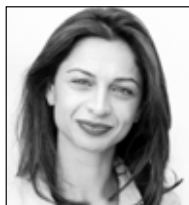
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NATIONAL



Lands chief goes against grain in protecting forests

BY REBECCA COOK

Associated Press Writer

OLYMPIA, Wash. — State Public Lands Commissioner Doug Sutherland has proposed a permanent ban on clear-cuts in old-growth forests, the battleground for years of conflict between loggers and environmentalists.

The proposal affects about 54,400 acres of old-growth forest on state trust land in Western Washington.

"It just seemed to make good sense," Sutherland said this week, adding that his long-term goal is to quadruple the amount of old-growth forest on state trust land over the next 50 years.

Logging is already limited in most old-growth forest on state trust land to protect endangered and threatened species such as the spotted owl. Only about 14,000 acres of old growth are totally unprotected. But Sutherland said his proposal offers more than symbolic value.

"Old-growth forests play a very important role in our healthy ecosystems," he said. "People really are concerned about this."

Washington state manages about 2.1 million acres of forest trust land, selling the timber to raise money for school construction, universities, county government, fire districts and other public needs.

Sutherland said protecting old growth from clear-cuts would only affect about 1

"Old-growth forests play a very important role in our healthy ecosystems. People really are concerned about this."

— DOUG SUTHERLAND
State Public Lands Commissioner

percent of the trust revenue.

"I know I'm going to anger both sides," said Sutherland, a Republican elected in 2000 with timber industry support. "Some will say it's too much, and some will say it's not enough. But that's the arena we work in."

Indeed, his plan drew instant skepticism from people on either side of the logging-versus-environment debate.

"It's good he understands the public is concerned about old growth, but this is kind of a halfway measure," said Becky Kelley, who tracks state forestry for the Washington Environmental Council.

Sutherland's plan would still allow thinning in some old-growth stands, defined as parcels 20 acres or larger with trees at least 160 years old. He said thinning will help improve forest health and provide better habitat for animals. Environmental groups are pushing for a complete ban on any type of logging in old-growth forest.

"These areas are already functioning as healthy forests," Kelley said. "We don't

believe they need our intervention."

Dave Wernitz, scientific director for the Northwest Ecosystem Alliance, said there's no reason to thin old-growth stands.

"It sounds like an effort to give an impression that old growth will be protected, while continuing to log them," he said.

The reaction from the other side of the battleground was similarly unhappy.

"The industry likes Doug Sutherland a lot, but this is kind of a shocker," said Bill Pickell, executive director of the Washington Contract Loggers Association, which represents many loggers who work on state trust forests.

"What the commissioner is doing is treading on illegal ground," Pickell warned. "Trust lands are not to be used to subsidize public and social priorities, no matter how noble they are."

Meanwhile, leaders of counties that rely on money from logging on trust lands worry about any move that could drain their cash flow.

"I don't think it falls within the law to just set it aside and say, 'sorry,'" said Jefferson County Commissioner Glen Huntingford, who represents timber-dependent counties on the state Board of Natural Resources.

Many rural counties' economies have been crippled by government restrictions on logging, following the 1990 listing of the spotted owl as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Millions of acres of federal and state forest land in the Northwest were declared off-limits to protect the owls' nesting habitat. Thousands of logging jobs disappeared, and those areas are still struggling to recover.

"A lot of those counties are concerned about revenue. It helps create jobs," Huntingford said. "It's really important for them, whether it's old growth or not. What's going to happen to them?"

Sutherland will present his plan on Feb. 3 to the Natural Resources Board, which guides decisions about state trust lands. Sutherland is also a voting member of the six-person board.

Huntingford said he and other board members will consider the old-growth proposal in the context of their larger discussion about setting a 10-year harvest level for all Western Washington state trust land. They're considering a range of options, from passive management to aggressive logging. They hope to make a final decision in June.

DID YOU KNOW?: Samuel Clemens, aka Mark Twain, was born in 1835 on a day when Haley's Comet came into view. He died in 1910, on a day Haley's Comet came into view again.

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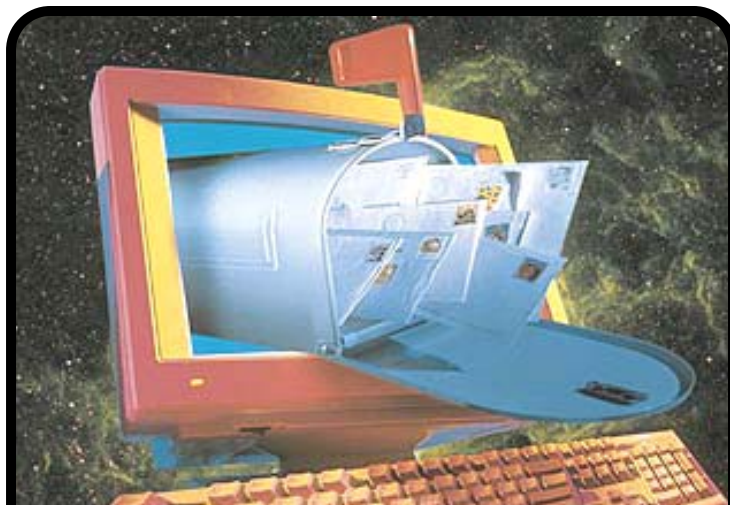
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NATIONAL

Washington's olive branch to U.N. a 'comeuppance' in the eyes of Bush's critics

BY PAULINE JELINEK
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration has alternately fought with, derided and sidelined the United Nations for more than a year as it pursued the war in Iraq, then reserved postwar authority mostly for itself.

But now American officials are asking the United Nations for assistance in getting out of a dangerous political stalemate in the still embattled country.

The plea for help may be a sign "of genuine concern on the part of the United States that things aren't going well," said Christopher Preble, a foreign affairs analyst at the libertarian CATO Institute in Washington. "Before ... I think that U.N. involvement was seen by ... the Bush administration as being more trouble that it was worth."

Others are more blunt. "It's a comeuppance," said Joseph Montville, a U.S. diplomat to Baghdad in the 1960s who now heads a diplomacy program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The United States has asked the United Nations to settle a U.S.-Iraqi dispute over how to select leaders to rule the country after U.S. occupation authorities hand over sovereignty on June 30. Some 100,000 troops will still remain after that.

The United States signed a November agreement with its hand-picked interim Iraqi governing council that says regional caucuses will select a provisional legislature, which in turn would chose the new government to take power July 1 and formally end occupation. But top Iraqi cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Hussein al-Sistani, has demanded direct elections that U.S. officials say would be impossible to organize in time.

Al-Sistani, leader of the country's majority Shiite Muslims, has said he won't budge on the demand unless the United Nations comes and confirms that is so — or, in other words lends legitimacy to the U.S. claim.

The United States had allowed the United Nations to carry out only a mostly humanitarian role until October. At that point, American officials agreed that once power was transferred to Iraqis, the international organization could play a key role in helping organize elections.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan had been pressing for months for clarification of exactly what the role would be. He set a Jan. 19 meeting on the subject.

But then the al-Sistani problem came to a head and the meeting turned into something else. The top U.S. official in Iraq, L. Paul Bremer, attended to ask Annan to help as soon as possible with the

impasse threatening the transition in Iraq.

Annan is expected to announce soon that he will agree to send a delegation to Iraq to look into the question of whether it is possible to hold direct elections.

Not everyone agrees with the Bush administration decision to call the United Nations into Iraq now — or agrees that the world body is that good at what it does.

**Officials are asking the
United Nations for assistance
in getting out of a dangerous
political stalemate in the still
embattled country.**

"I view it with some concern because the U.N.'s role in this issue has been not at all constructive up until now," said Joshua Muravchik, a scholar in foreign and defense studies at the conservative American Enterprise Institute.

He is among those still critical of the U.N. Security Council's failure to vote for the war last year and of Annan's criticism of U.S. unilateralism since then.

Critics also fume that the United Nations pulled humanitarian workers out of Baghdad after a deadly bombing at its headquarters last year, signaling weakness to the insurgents.

Vice President Dick Cheney said on National Public Radio on Thursday that he didn't have "a fundamental objection to the U.N. per se" but thought its role must "be focused" on elections, transition and establishing constitutional processes.

The main U.S. fear in the current political dispute is that an election likely would be won by Shiite Muslims, long persecuted by Saddam Hussein's regime. That could lead to a civil war if it is met by revolt among Iraqi Sunni Muslims, who brutally suppressed the Shiites under Saddam, and among Kurds, who have enjoyed near autonomy under protection of U.S. and British warplanes that enforced a no-fly zone over Iraq.

Another nightmare scenario, analysts say, is that the Shiite majority might insist on Islamic law, doing away with freedoms Iraqis had during Saddam's brutal, but secular, rule.

The United Nations has experience in working with transitional governments, setting up elections, and other areas that fit the bill in Iraq.

"The administration is implicitly admitting it made a mistake in not getting the U.N. involved politically in Iraq earlier on," said James Lindsay a foreign policy and defense expert at the Council on Foreign Relations.

check out your forecast in today's horoscopes ...
page 2



WORLD BRIEFLY

Official to jump-start trade treaty

By The Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland — Government ministers are using the World Economic Forum to try to revive negotiations over a global trade treaty that collapsed largely because of differences over cutting subsidies for agriculture.

Swiss President Joseph Deiss, who also serves as Switzerland's Economics Minister, invited around 25 ministers to meet Friday to discuss the issues that led to the collapse of the World Trade Organization's ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico, in September.

The meeting was being held on the sidelines of this year's economic forum in the Swiss resort of Davos, where the agenda also included the war on terrorism, the U.S. economy and how to boost democracy around the world.

"The purpose of the meeting is to take stock of the process and to look for ways to move this process forward in 2004," said Deiss' spokesman, Manuel Sager.

The WTO's round of trade liberalization negotiations is supposed to lead to a binding treaty by the end of the year, but talks have bogged down for months and that deadline is slipping away.

U.S. busts father and son insurgents

By The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. forces have arrested a father and son suspected of carrying out an attack on a forward base that killed two American soldiers, a military spokeswoman said Friday.

The soldiers were among nine people, including four Christian women headed to jobs at a U.S. military base, killed in a spate of attacks on Wednesday and Thursday. South of the capital, the security chief of Spanish troops in Iraq was shot in the head during a raid.

The two suspects were detained Thursday without incident at their home in Hadid, a village close to Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, said Maj. Josslyn Aberle, spokeswoman for the 4th Infantry

Division. No other details were available.

The U.S. base, near Baqouba, was hit by a barrage of rockets and mortars on Wednesday night, killing the two soldiers and wounding another. The deaths raised to 505 the number of U.S. service members who have died since the U.S.-led coalition launched the Iraq war on March 20.

Baqouba is about 80 miles southeast of Tikrit. The two cities are part of the so-called Sunni Triangle, where most of the insurgent attacks against U.S.-led coalition troops have taken place since the invasion.

Dig this: Revolutionary artifacts found

By The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — In just a few hours of digging at Valley Forge National Historical Park, prosecutors said Alfred Lucien unearthed the kind of finds amateur treasure hunters dream of.

A musket ball. A locket. A pewter button. Studs, buckles and fasteners that may once have adorned the uniforms of soldiers at the turning point of the Revolutionary War.

It was the sort of haul park rangers dread to hear about as they try to protect the dwindling number of rare artifacts buried at national parks.

In 2002, the National Park Service recorded nearly 11,000 violations of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, which prohibits people from destroying or removing rare or valuable objects found on federal land, according to Park Service spokesman Al Nash.

Painkillers won't kill the pain forever

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Over-the-counter painkillers work well for most people, but ignoring the directions and misusing them can result in severe, even lethal, side effects, says a new government campaign aimed at educating patients.

The biggest concern: Taking too much of the popular drug acetaminophen can poison the liver.

Some 100 million people a year take acetaminophen, and serious liver damage is rare, manufacturers insist. But more than 56,000 emergency room visits a year are due to acetaminophen overdoses, and about 100 people a year die after unintentionally taking too much, according to Food and Drug Administration estimates.

Some consumers swallow extra pills in hopes of faster relief. Others unknowingly ingest too much by taking more than one acetaminophen-containing remedy.

Best known by the Tylenol brand, acetaminophen is present in more than 600 products that treat pain, coughs, cold and flu. Most are nonprescription, but there are some prescription ones, such as Vicodin. Often the ingredient is listed only in the label's fine print or, for prescription drugs, with the confusing abbreviation APAP.

Food supply ranking system considered

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Worried about the inadvertent spread of new bioengineered plants that produce drugs and chemicals, the Agriculture Department is studying whether to adopt a risk-based system to protect the environment and food supply.

Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman said her agency is doing environmental studies as a first step toward revamping controls over biotech products. Federal regulators must try to anticipate and keep pace with the rapidly evolving science behind biotech crops, she said.

"Our regulatory system must be both rigorous and flexible and based on sound science principles and mitigation of risks," Veneman said Thursday.

The agency aims to protect conventional plants and to ease requirements for monitoring long-term environmental effects of genetically engineered plants. The department issued a statement saying it also may use the process for allowing products onto the market "to provide flexibility for long-term monitoring."

The changes could affect millions of acres of future crops of genetically engineered corn, cotton, soybeans and canola. Experts expect the changes will make it more difficult for companies to get approval for plants that pose a high risk to the environment and human health.

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

DiCaprio takes Active role in Santa Monica, environment

By The Associated Press

■ **SANTA MONICA** — Leonardo DiCaprio wants activists to use the Internet to protect the environment.

The 29-year-old actor and conservationist appeared Thursday at the Natural Resources Defense Council's regional headquarters in downtown Santa Monica for the unveiling of an environmental museum with Internet-ready computers.

DiCaprio hopes activists will use computers in his new "Leonardo DiCaprio e-Activism Zone" to access information about environmental issues and to send e-mails to public and corporate officials.

"For the thousands of young people who will be visiting the building each year, hopefully it will be the start of a lifetime of environmental activism," DiCaprio said at the opening.

Also on hand were comedian Larry David and his wife Laurie David, who dedicated a museum and gift store known as the David Family Environmental Action Center that houses the computers.

■ **STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo.** — Bethany Hamilton, the world-ranked amateur surfing champion who lost her left arm in a shark attack, is tackling another kind of board.

The 13-year-old had always wanted to learn to snowboard, said her mother, Cheri. So after the Oct. 31 accident off the Hawaiian island of Kauai, she told her daughter, "As soon as you're well, you're going snowboarding, girl."

Hamilton did just that for the first time this week at Steamboat Ski Resort in northwest Colorado. Within a few days, she went from sliding down the bunny hill to carving smooth turns on intermediate slopes.

Some snowboarding motions are similar to surfing, Hamilton said, but there are some big differences.

"The (surfing) ride is way shorter and you have to paddle back out," she told the Steamboat Pilot & Today.

With snowboarding, "it's one long run and you take the lift back up."

Also, snowboarding takes less arm strength than surfing because it doesn't require paddling to catch a wave, her mother said.

Hamilton, a Christian since she was 6 years old, said she believes the attack has a purpose, though she may not understand it now.

"For me, I just look up to God," she said. "I should be grateful for what I have."

■ **LOS ANGELES** — First it was a tie, then it was a rematch. Now it's a tie again.

"Mystic River" and "Seabiscuit" were chosen this week to share the annual Scripter Award, which honors the best film adapted from a book last year.

It was the first tie in the 16-year history of the award, which is given by The Friends of the USC Libraries.

Last week, the organization announced it would have a run-off vote between the two films, but that decision resulted in yet another dead-heat.

"Support for both films was incredibly strong and, in the end, the committee could not eliminate either of these worthy contenders," said Robert Towne, the Academy Award-winning screenwriter of "Chinatown," who served as chair of the selection committee.

The award will be presented to "Mystic River" screenwriter Brian Helgeland and author Dennis Lehane and "Seabiscuit" screenwriter Gary Ross and author Laura Hillenbrand at a Feb. 15 dinner.

A group of film and literary professionals selected the Scripter nominees, which also included "Cold Mountain," "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" and "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World."

■ **GUATEMALA CITY** — Mayan poet Humberto Akab'al says he's declined Guatemala's top literature award because it is named for Nobel Prize winner

Miguel Angel Asturias.

Akab'al told the newspaper El Periodico that Asturias was the author of a 1923 essay that "offends the indigenous peoples of Guatemala, of which I am part."

He referred to a work, "The Social Problem of the Indian," that described indigenous cultures as decadent.

"I am not honored to receive this prize," said Akab'al, whose works reflect the cultural vision of the Quiche people.

He said that "racism and discrimination is something that is still very latent in Guatemala and it has neither been reflected upon nor openly discussed."

Asturias, who died in 1974, won the 1967 Nobel Prize for literature.

■ **LONDON** — Singer-songwriter Ryan Adams broke his wrist in a fall from the stage during a gig in Liverpool, his publicist said Friday.

Adams, 29, plunged from the stage during a concert at Liverpool's Royal Court Theater on Thursday. Fans said Adams struggled to continue the show before retiring, clutching his arm.

A spokesman for the Royal Liverpool University Hospital confirmed Adams had been treated for a fracture to his arm.

The office of publicist Richard Wootton said Adams was to be examined by a specialist in London on Friday. The publicist said it was too early to say whether the rest of the tour would be canceled.

The former singer with North Carolina alt-country group Whiskeytown, Adams gained rave reviews for his 2002 album "Gold," which spawned the Grammy-nominated single "New York, New York." He has since gained a reputation for prolific recording and prodigious rock 'n' roll partying.

He began a British tour Jan. 17 in support of his latest album, "Rock'n'Roll," and two recently released EPs.

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