



Santa Monica Daily Press

January 28-29, 2006

A newspaper with issues

Volume 5, Issue 66

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

7 14 20 21 47
Meganumber: 24
Jackpot: \$9 Million

FANTASY 5

2 3 6 17 19

DAILY 3

Daytime: 7 7 7

Evening: 6 1 0

DAILY DERBY

1st: 05 California Classic
2nd: 08 Gorgeous George
3rd: 12 Lucky Charms

RACE TIME: 1.44.85

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the winning number information, mistakes can occur. In the event of any discrepancies, California State laws and California Lottery regulations will prevail. Complete game information and prize claiming instructions are available at California Lottery retailers. Visit the California State Lottery web site: <http://www.calottery.com>

NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

With an Oakland Tribune reporter and 20 people looking on in November in a parking lot in Fremont, Calif., Tu Jin-Sheng, 50, "grandmaster" in one of the Chinese arts of Qigong, pulled a rental truck several yards using only a piece of fabric tied to the base of his genitals. Jin-Sheng is supposedly a leader of the branch of Qigong known as "Iron Crotch," whose 60,000 adherents worldwide believe that strengthening the genitals increases energy. To warm up for the pull, Jin-Sheng had an assistant kick him hard between the legs.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 28th day of 2006.
There are 337 days left in the year.

Twenty years ago, on Jan. 28, 1986, the space shuttle Challenger exploded 73 seconds after liftoff from Cape Canaveral, killing all seven of its crew members: flight commander Francis R. "Dick" Scobee; pilot Michael J. Smith; Ronald E. McNair; Ellison S. Onizuka; Judith A. Resnik; Gregory B. Jarvis; and schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe.

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Ad space odyssey 20-22

Kidnapper faces 40 years in jail

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

LAX COURTHOUSE — A jury handed down a guilty verdict on Friday for the man suspected of kidnapping a Santa Monica elderly woman on two separate occasions.

Alfonzo Fitzgerald Taylor was found guilty of all seven felony charges related to the two incidents that occurred on Oct. 18 and Nov. 4, 2004. He faces a minimum of 40 years in prison, according to Kevin Halligan, the district attorney who prosecuted the case.

Taylor walked away from the Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center in downtown Los Angeles the day before a separate jury trial was set to begin last May on charges of receiving stolen property and unlawful driving of a vehicle, an incident independent

of the two alleged kidnappings of a Sunset Park woman that occurred in the fall of 2004.

Taylor, in his 40s, was captured in Georgia and returned to custody in Los Angeles County within

See KIDNAPPER, page 12

Dipping the scales



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Fitness trainer Phyllis Zanichkowsky, who owns Fit-Cheq, performs a 'Hydrostatic Bodyfat Test' on Bee Smith, 42, a nationally ranked bodybuilding competitor, on Friday. In 24 weeks, Smith will compete in the 'Masters National Bodybuilding Competition' and needs to get down to 4 percent bodyfat.



Michelle Lanz/Daily Press

The jacaranda trees lining the Third Street Promenade are safe ... for now.

Making scents of it all on the Promenade

BY KEVIN HERRERA

Daily Press Staff Writer

THIRD STREET PROMENADE — The jacaranda trees are here to stay, as are their ample shade, lilac-blue trumpet blossoms and, well, urine-like stench.

The board of directors for Bayside District Corp., an influential, downtown merchants associa-

tion, voted Thursday night to keep the sub-tropical trees that line the Promenade despite complaints from shoppers and city maintenance staff about their offensive scent and the high-cost of maintaining the jacarandas.

Members of the board felt the benefits provided by the trees, some of which will need to be replaced in the coming months

because of age, outweighed the drawbacks, which include the odorous smell and sticky sap that has stained portions of the Promenade sidewalk.

"It's sort of like dating a beautiful woman, she might be high maintenance, but it's worth it," board member Barbara Bryan

See TREES, page 12

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HOROSCOPES

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Santa Monica Daily Press



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)
★★★★ You might need to make an extra effort toward someone key in your life. Be willing to spend a little in order to gain professionally. Sometimes a gesture or token gift could make more of an impression than words. Tonight: Where you are is where the fun is.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Spend time with family before skirting out the door. You have a wonderful idea that you want to follow through on. This afternoon is perfect. A friend is more than willing to play along. Enjoy the moment. Tonight: Let your hair down.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ Make important calls early. If you need to visit with someone at a distance, take a drive and meet this person halfway. Your high energy helps you forge a new pathway. Talk turkey with someone you respect for his or her opinions and advice. Tonight: The Force is with you.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Make calls and reach out to others. You might want to share more with a friend or neighbor. In fact, you get a lot of feedback. You might want to settle back and relax later in the afternoon. Tonight: Entertain at home.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Deal with one person at a time. You understand a lot more about this person than you realize. Work with an individual rather than groups. Detach and don’t overreact. The end results will be better. Tonight: Try something different.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Do your budget or whatever you deem necessary. In the afternoon, you will want to hang out and visit with others. You laugh and enjoy yourself no matter who you are with. Use care around machinery. Tonight: Favorite place, favorite people.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Let friends and family dominate. Go along with their plans, and you’ll flourish. Others need to feel in control. You have a great time being out and about. Spontaneity works. A male friend could be quite strong-willed. Tonight: Quality time with a special person.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ You are a powerhouse this a.m. By the afternoon, you will want to indulge yourself a little more. Choose what you enjoy the most. A favorite pastime and a fun friend occupy you. Worry less. Tonight: Indulge more.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Finish your must-do errands, loosening up your afternoon. Despite the mood you have generally been in, others invite you along. Let go of your cares and worries, and skip out the door. You will be happy in the company of others. Tonight: Say yes.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ Take your time getting going. Once you are in full form, you are close to unstoppable. You are the personality kid midafternoon. No one will stop you. Make plans and find people who make you smile. Tonight: Enjoy yourself.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Allow your creativity to play a part in making plans. Use your ability to zero in on what you want. Play it easy with plans. You might like to put your feet up. Sometimes you take on way too much. Relax away. Tonight: Don’t push.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Use the early part of the day to clear out a project or to do something you really want to do. Later in the day, you’ll find that you might want to spend some time alone or quietly with another person. Follow your whims. Tonight: Quiet works.



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1427 Third Street Promenade, Ste. #202 • Santa Monica, CA 90401 • www.smdp.com

PUBLISHER Ross Furukawa ross@smdp.com EDITOR Carolyn Sackariason editor@smdp.com STAFF WRITER Ryan Hyatt ryanh@smdp.com SANTA MONICA PARENTING Nina Furukawa nina@smdp.com STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER Fabian Lewkowicz FabianLewkowicz@aol.com NEWS CLERK Michelle Lanz michelle@smdp.com	ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Robbie P. Plubeni rob@smdp.com ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Rob Schwenker schwenker@smdp.com ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Stewart O'Dell stewarto@smdp.com TRAFFIC MANAGER Connie Sommerville ...connies@smdp.com PRODUCTION MANAGER Alejandro Cesar Cantarero II alex@smdp.com	NIGHT EDITOR Lori Luechtefeld lori@smdp.com NIGHT EDITOR Michael Tittinger MoNeY.T.LaRoK@smdp.com CLASSIFIEDS SALES MANAGER Annie Kotok anniek@smdp.com CIRCULATION Keith Wyatt CIRCULATION Glenn Bolan SPECIAL PROJECTS Dave Danforth dave@smdp.com MASCOT Maya Furukawa maya@smdp.com
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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Awarding volunteer ‘spirit’

By Daily Press staff

A group of dedicated volunteers and supporters will receive well-earned recognition in February. The American Red Cross of Santa Monica’s 2006 Spirit Awards recognize a commitment to service.

Reception and silent auction will begin at 6 p.m. with dinner, entertainment and the awards set for 7:30 p.m. Orson Bean and Alley Mills are master and mistress of ceremonies with the Tom Nolan Band providing music for dancing.

In addition to the volunteers, this year’s honorees also include Kitty Dukakis for her humanitarian work. A posthumous Spirit Award will go to Santa Monica Police officer and USMC Reservist, Major Ricardo “Rick” Crocker, who was killed in Al-Anbar province, Iraq. Lions Gate Entertainment and Activision, Inc., will also receive Spirit Awards for their support of the chapter.

The Spirit Awards will be held at the Fairmont-Miramar Hotel, located at 101 Wilshire Blvd., on Saturday, Feb. 11.

Tickets are now on sale for \$150 each. For tickets and information, call The American Red Cross of Santa Monica at (310) 394-3773.

Library postpones mural presentation

By Daily Press staff

A visual presentation on the history of a mural by artist Stanton Macdonald-Wright, scheduled for Saturday, January 28, at the Main Library, has been canceled due to “unforeseen circumstances.” The talk, entitled: “The history of humankind through the eyes of Stanton Macdonald-Wright: The library mural series,” will likely be rescheduled in the near future.

Funding prevention and intervention

By Daily Press staff

The Venice Community Housing Corporation (VCHC) has been awarded a grant to help support programs that keep kids off the streets and out of gangs.

The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF) has awarded a \$150,000 grant over three years to the VCHC to support of its array of gang prevention and intervention programs.

“We are thrilled to receive assistance from The California Wellness Foundation to continue and expand our programs that are effectively serving the youth in our community that need the most help,” said Steve Clare, VCHC’s executive director.

The purpose of the grant is to support VCHC’s gang prevention and intervention programs targeting at-risk youth ages 12 to 24 who reside primarily in Venice and Mar Vista. Specifically, TCWF grant will help VCHC continue to provide job training, life skills training, counseling and support services to at least 25 youth annually, as well as to continue to provide case management and legal advocacy services to at least 35 youth annually. VCHC provides those services through a variety of programs, including:

■ L.A. Bridges — An after school program at the Mark Twain Middle School for youth, who are at high risk for gang involvement. Services include mentoring, tutoring, life and leadership skills, case management and recreational activities.

■ YouthBuild — Trains at-risk youth in the construction trades, helps develop leadership skills, supports them to obtain their high school diplomas or GEDs and connects them to jobs so they can transition into long-term employment or continue educational pursuits.

■ Community Safety Initiative — provides a liaison between law enforcement and at-risk youth and young adults in the community who are not eligible for YouthBuild. The program provides case management, legal advocacy, job training and other supportive services to help young people reach their full potential in life.

■ Teen Court — a peer-based system that provides an alternative to the juvenile system for young people accused of first-time minor offenses, while providing par-

See BRIEFS, page 5

SNOW AND SURF REPORTS

CONDITIONS

DATA PROVIDED BY ONTHESNOW.COM

BEAR MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	12"-12"	8:30am - 4:00pm	15	10/12

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made, Machine Groomed

JUNE MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
1"	96" - 120"	8:00am - 4:00pm	35	6/6

CONDITIONS: Powder, Packed Powder, Machine Groomed

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
2"	144" - 168"	8:30 am - 4:00 pm	150	25/28

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Groomed

MOUNTAIN HIGH

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	12"-30"	8:30 am - 10:00 pm	16	8/16

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made, Hard Packed

MT. BALDY

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	12"-12"	8:00 am - 4:30 pm	4	2/4

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made

SNOW SUMMIT

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	12"-24"	8:30 am - 4:30 pm	18	14/14

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made, Machine Groomed

SNOW VALLEY

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	24"-12"	8:30 am - 4:00 pm	9	5/11

CONDITIONS: Machine Groomed

CONDITIONS

WATER TEMP: 57°

DATA PROVIDED BY WETSAND.COM

SWELL FORECAST (2-4 FT)

This weekend the size drops off considerably with only a small flow of knee to waist high surf around west facing breaks. Being such a small day, it's probably worthwhile to note that there will be a smidgen of SW energy in the water from a system that was swirling near New Zealand a few days ago.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS

NW swell fills into SoCal Friday...
Long-period NW swell due early next week.

TIDE FORECAST FOR SANTA MONICA

SATURDAY	LOW TIDE:	1:22AM	2:1FT	3:01PM	-1.8FT
HIGH TIDE:	7:42AM	6.8FT	9:29PM	4.0FT	

SUNDAY	LOW TIDE:	2:11AM	1.7FT	3:38PM	-1.8FT
HIGH TIDE:	8:28AM	7.0FT	10:03PM	4.2FT	

MONDAY	LOW TIDE:	3:00AM	1.42FT	4:15PM	-1.6FT
HIGH TIDE:	9:14AM	6.8FT	10:38PM	4.5FT	

TUESDAY	LOW TIDE:	3:52AM	1.2FT	4:52PM	-1.2FT
HIGH TIDE:	10:00AM	6.3FT	11:16PM	4.7FT	

WEDNESDAY	LOW TIDE:	4:47AM	1.1FT	5:28PM	-0.5FT
HIGH TIDE:	10:49AM	5.6FT	11:56PM	4.9FT	

THURSDAY	LOW TIDE:	5:50AM	1.1FT	6:04PM	0.2FT
HIGH TIDE:	11:43AM	4.6FT	N/A	N/A	

FRIDAY

N/A

SURF AND SNOW QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? EMAIL ALEX@SMGP.COM



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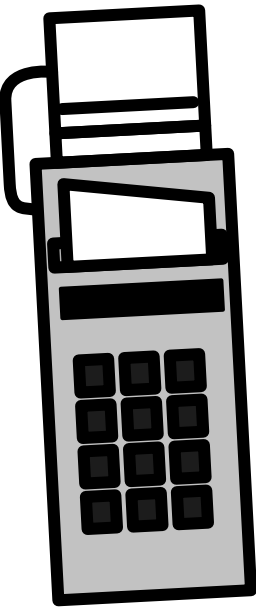
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YOU HAVE THE ANSWERS.
CHECK OUT THIS WEEK'S Q-LINE
RESPONSES ON PAGE 4.

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The QLine

MEAN STREETS OF SANTA MONICA OVERRATED

This past week, Q-line asked:

How well do you think Santa Monica treats its homeless population relative to other cities?

Here are your responses:

© “What were these people drinking anyway? Ninth meanest? Impossible, unless you go by the fact that maybe the nicest city would be putting them bums up in free hotel rooms with room service and show tickets and everything. Then maybe Santa Monica could be the ninth meanest. The reason that there are so many bums in Santa Monica is that they let them get away with everything. They can lounge around and stink up Third Street. They can stink up the alleys and the city doesn’t do a thing about it. That is why there are so many bums in Santa Monica.”

© “It might be interesting if you revisit your old editorial where you call for the city to make it as uncomfortable and difficult as possible for the homeless to live here. It gives you an idea of where you stand; and (Bill) Bauer, (Bobby) Shriver, these are the kind of guys that paint the curb in front of the house red so nobody will park there.”

© “Well, as an ex-captain of the homeless feeding program a number of years back, I think that Santa Monica does a wonderful job. Maybe too wonderful, because they all seem to come here, but I don’t have a problem with it because I think you need to be aware of how other people live. Of course, many of them take drugs like alcohol and cigarettes and booze. My father was an alcoholic so my heart goes out to many of those people because I am the daughter of an alcoholic, and I had an aunt also that was so I don’t excuse alcoholism. As a matter of fact, there was a time that I went to Culver City and one of my clients got up and walked out to where he could have a drink, so believe you me, I know a lot. I am the ex-president of the patients here in Good Shepherd.”

© “No good deed goes unpunished. What did you expect from these self-promoters? Southern California, in thanks to the incompetent bleeding hearts on our city council, is the homeless destination capital of America. Even if the bums were asked to obey city laws, it is the weather they are here for, better than freezing in New York. The Chinese have a saying: “All large problems were once small so take care of all problems before they become large.” Where was our leadership on this issue 20 years ago? Where is our leadership now, more worried about hedge heights? Any bum here more than a year needs a bus right back to their home state. We treat our bums too good. We require nothing of them. How about mandatory work. All homeless outreach services need a basis in faith, this is most important. Few of them many bottom feeders in this category provide that. What they do provide is nice salaries and non-responsibility for making a profit, in other words quasi government all the Westside cities should

donate to a downtown L.A. shelter and bus all bums to that shelter. “

© “Yes, we are so mean to the homeless that we can’t even go over to McDonalds in the morning on the Promenade and sit and have a cup of coffee because every bench and the brand new, beautiful benches are all taken with these people — the homeless people — and they have no respect for anyone or any thing and their language and yelling and screaming and Santa Monica puts up with it so that is how mean we are.

Where are these people from the National Coalition for the Homeless so we can find them and show them how mean we really are with receipts in hand, in the name of hospitality? Give us a break! There was a homeless person with a sign saying: “I vision a T-bone steak” on the Promenade. That is how hard up they are. That is how mean we are to the them.”

© “I think that Santa Monica is at the top of the list nationwide on treating the homeless. We spend hundreds and thousands of dollars, even up to \$2 million a year, trying to help and feed and give medical treatment and food and all kinds of stuff to the homeless. I think that it is time that we look at the problem of the homeless in a capitalistic way. We have to get bids from people who are organizations that have solutions to help get the homeless off the street in Santa Monica. One of the ideas that I have heard is to purchase land in Palmdale and have a homeless recovery center there and every homeless person found on the streets in Santa Monica would be put on a bus and driven to this homeless center in Palmdale where we would pay the best bid, the organization that says that they will help to either rehabilitate them or get them into an assisted living situation, but I think Santa Monica has really extended itself, the citizens have extended themselves greatly to this problem and I think that it is time now to look at it in a little different way.”

© “Yes, with regards to how Santa Monica treats its homeless, I was curious about the homeless coalition. You made a note that City Hall was considering paying L.A. County Jail for bids for transients convicted of non-violent misdemeanors, and I assume by “transients” which you usually use interchangeable with “homeless,” we are going to pay for jail bids for homeless persons sleeping on the ground. Is that correct?”

© “The 5 percent of the homeless are treated excellent. The 95 percent which are bums, vagrants and transients on drugs and alcohol are treated extra excellent. They are using the help of the city that they do not appreciate. They don’t care about the people or the city of Santa Monica. They are full of hate, making nuisances of themselves. They are rude, arrogant and selfish.”

There she was, Miss America



MODERN TIMES

BY LLOYD GARVER

(Editor’s note: Due to an editing error, the “Modern Times” column in the Jan. 21-22 edition of the Daily Press did not run in its entirety. The full text did appear on Jan. 24 and can be accessed at smdp.com.)

MY COUCH — Intrepid writers will go to extraordinary lengths to get their stories. Some go behind enemy lines, some live on the street with the homeless, some disguise themselves to see what it’s like to be a different race or gender. The sacrifice I made to get my story was to actually sit through the recent Miss America Pageant.

Miss America has fallen on hard times. At the height of its popularity in the ’60s, the contest had a TV audience of more than 80 million people. This year, not one of the major networks wanted to televise it. So, a cable channel called Country Music Television aired it. And to spice things up, they moved the pageant from Atlantic City to Las Vegas.

These moves didn’t make a lot of sense. If you’re going to move it to Country Music Television, shouldn’t there have been some connection to country music — other than the commercials for the show “Trick My Truck?” And why move it to Las Vegas if you’re not going to use the Vegas background in a meaningful way. Not one of the contestants chose shooting craps for the talent competition.

There was a period when Miss America was kind of camp or kitsch. Comics would talk about contestants who’d say in the same breath that they’d like to see world peace and no more split ends. You know something’s outside the mainstream of popular culture when comedians aren’t even making fun of it anymore.

And these young women this year were not “air heads.” They all seemed intelligent and committed to their education. That’s important progress, but it didn’t make for compelling television.

Even though all the women wore bikinis, the swimsuit competition seemed completely sexless. The talent competition provided a chance for me to get up and get a snack. Finally, the contest was narrowed down to three contestants. I couldn’t follow how it got narrowed down, but I was glad that it had. The three were all asked to: “Describe a significant experience from your childhood and the impact it had on you today.” One of them

talked about surviving an awkward childhood when she wore unattractive glasses, one talked about her parents’ values helping her overcome any prejudice towards her for being an Asian-American, and one talked about ballet. Ballet trumped self-esteem and parental values, so Miss Oklahoma, Jennifer Berry, was declared Miss America for 2006. And she got the most scholarship money.

The whole thing ended with Bert Park’s recorded voice being piped in, singing the Miss America song.

I’m sure there were times in my life that I have spent a duller two hours, but never before without having someone trying to sell me a whole life policy. I know it’s sad to see an institution die, but it’s tough to watch this thing choking on life support. It just might be time to let the Miss America Pageant die an almost dignified death. Continue to give out the college scholarships, but do away with the painful smiles, evening gowns and tap dancing.

But if those involved in the “Pageant” want it to continue no matter what, I have some suggestions. To compete with today’s “reality television,” it’s far too tame. I know it’s a tradition for all the contestants to hold hands and act like they love each other, but the ratings would definitely go up if we got to see some bad-mouthing and backstabbing. A hidden camera in the dressing room wouldn’t hurt.

And let the women fight. Literally. A couple of rounds of boxing or wrestling would certainly bring in some viewers.

In the past, Miss America has been no friend to scandals, but now it’s time to change all that. Encourage the contestants to bribe the judges. And if there were a rule that at least one contestant has to fool around with one of the judges, that pageant will be back on network TV faster than you can say “sweeps.”

But is it really worth doing away with all its tradition just to keep it on TV? That’s a question the heads of the Miss America Organization are going to have to answer. But if they don’t do something to change things, I don’t think it will be on Country Music Television next year. It’s quite possible that from now on, the only place we’ll be watching the Miss America Pageant is on the History Channel.

And maybe that’s not such a bad thing.

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



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Residents of California hamlet hit by 2005 landslide file suits

BY GREG RISLING

Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — Residents of seaside La Conchita who lost their homes or relatives during a deadly landslide last year filed lawsuits against Ventura County and a private ranch company, claiming both were negligent in protecting the tiny community from harm.

Eighteen lawsuits were filed late Thursday in Ventura County Superior Court, and another five were expected Friday, covering a total of 39 plaintiffs. Among the allegations are wrongful death, negligence, trespassing and damaged property. The plaintiffs are seeking unspecified damages.

The lawsuits claim Ventura County officials failed to protect residents of La Conchita from a Jan. 10, 2005, mudslide that killed 10 people, destroyed 13 homes and damaged 23 others. The towering bluff above the community became saturated from a series of winter storms and a torrent of earth cascaded into the streets.

The county was aware of the potential threat and had “a sufficient time before the landslide to take measures to protect against or warn of the dangerous condition, but they negligently failed to do so,” the lawsuit states.

“They should have required the hillside to be fixed,” plaintiffs’ attorney Anthony Murray said. “They took no steps to assist residents by requiring the La Conchita Ranch Co. (which owns the hillside) to make the area safe.”

“They have abandoned the people of La Conchita,” he added.

Ventura County Counsel Noel Klebaum declined to comment Friday about the lawsuit. Attorney Frank Sabaitis, who represents the ranch company, said the lawsuit doesn’t have any merit.

“Based upon research, facts and information from experts, there is no factual basis for the ranch’s liability,” said

Sabaitis, who declined further comment.

The lawsuits also are critical of the county’s attempts to prevent another slide. A wall built after a 1995 slide in the same area that destroyed nine homes increased the risk of death and serious injury, the lawsuit claimed.

Murray said the wall altered the course of the 2005 slide that wiped out a row of homes. The county also allegedly stopped using monitoring devices placed on the hillside to detect possible movement and possibly warn residents of a slide.

As a result, the residents “were lulled into a false sense of security by defendants’ conduct,” the lawsuit claims.

County officials have previously stated that they have warned residents about the dangers of living in La Conchita, about 70 miles northwest of Los Angeles, and are unsure there is anything that can be done to prevent the landslides. Several geologists who have examined the hillside believe it will collapse again.

However, residents believe terracing the hill — which would cost tens of millions of dollars — would stabilize it and prevent further slides. Supervisor Steve Bennett, who represents the district that includes La Conchita, said in an interview with The Associated Press last month that even if the county modified the hillside it was unwilling to accept full liability.

State officials also have been reluctant to try to shore up the hillside. The county and state have talked about conducting a comprehensive study of the bluff, but no cost figures or timelines have been set.

Mike Bell, chairman of the La Conchita Community Organization, said residents wanted to work with government officials but the lack of response forced those who had relatives killed or lost homes to file lawsuits.

“The remainder of the community hasn’t done anything yet,” Bell said. “But the county has failed us and if the state and federal government do the same, we have no other choice but to sue.”

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

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For more information about VCHC, contact Kristen Laskaris at (310) 399-4100 ext. 106.

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STATE

Secondhand smoke is declared a pollutant

BY DON THOMPSON
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — California became the first state to declare secondhand smoke a toxic air pollutant Thursday, citing its link to breast cancer. Experts said the decision may have more impact worldwide than it does in the largely smoke-free state.

The decision by the California Air Resources Board puts environmental tobacco smoke in the same category as diesel exhaust, arsenic and benzene.

The unanimous decision relied on a September report that found a sharply increased risk of breast cancer in young women exposed to secondhand smoke. It also links drifting smoke to premature births, asthma and heart disease, other cancers, and numerous health problems in children.

"If people are serious about breast cancer, they have to deal with secondhand smoke. That's what this is all about," said Dr. Stanton Glantz, director of the Center for Tobacco Control, Research and Education at the University of California, San Francisco. He reviewed the science behind Thursday's decision. "This is a seminal, international document. It's impossible to underestimate what a big deal this is."

The report by scientists at California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment draws on more than 1,000 other studies of the effects of passive smoke. It blamed secondhand smoke for 4,000 deaths each year in California from lung cancer or heart disease alone.

The most significant new finding is that young women exposed to secondhand smoke increase their risk of developing breast cancer between 68 percent and 120 percent. The disease kills about 40,000 women in the United States each year.

That finding conflicts with a 2004 report by the U.S. Surgeon General. Sanford Barsky, a UC, Los Angeles, researcher writing on behalf of the R.J. Reynolds tobacco company, told the board during previous public comments that the report "either ignores mentioning or does not give the appropriate weight to studies which refute this association" between secondhand smoke and breast cancer.

California scientists say their research is more current than the Surgeon General's report. The California report went through an exhaustive review that delayed its release for nearly a year but ensures it is based on sound research, said Dr. John Froines, director of UCLA's Center for Occupational and Environmental Health and head of the scientific review panel.

R.J. Reynolds spokesman David Howard said regardless of the dangers from passive smoke indoors, no research supports regulators' decision to declare it an air pollutant.

"No studies exist that show that exposure outdoors leads to any increased risk of tobacco-associated illness," he said.

Next, the air board must consider regulatory steps to reduce exposure, a process that could take years.

"This is no longer some crazy, California, Left Coast way of thinking," said Cynthia Hallett, executive director of Berkeley-based Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights. She cited smoking bans that have been enacted or are being considered across the nation and in other countries.

The effect is likely to be greatest outside of California, which already bans smoking in or near most public buildings, including bars and restaurants. Much of the initial effort in California will focus on public education emphasizing the scientific findings and Thursday's air board decision, said Paul Knepprath, vice president for government relations at the American Lung Association of California.

The association unsuccessfully pushed legislation in 2003 that would have banned smoking in motor vehicles containing young children, and could try for a similar law next year, Knepprath said.

The association may also push for non-smoking floors or wings in apartment buildings, much as hotels offer smoke-free areas, Knepprath said.

"People live in apartments all across California who are exposed to secondhand smoke on a daily basis," Knepprath said. "It drifts from a common area or another apartment."

Hallett said that could one day force regulations requiring separate ventilation systems for smoking and nonsmoking apartments.

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STATE BRIEFS

Sprint defends self in abduction case

By The Associated Press

TEMECULA — The Sprint cellular telephone firm defended its response during a baby-abduction last month, saying the company cooperated with the Sheriff’s Department during the incident.

Sprint came under fire after authorities said the telecommunications company refused to provide information to help locate a toddler who was in his father’s SUV when it was stolen Dec. 23. Councilman Michael Naggar called for new regulations on the wireless industry.

Ten-month-old Wade Cochran was buckled into the back seat of the Lincoln Aviator, and authorities asked Sprint to track the car’s whereabouts because Jason and Stephanie Cochrans’ GPS equipped cell phone was in the front seat.

At the time, the Sheriff’s Department said Sprint wouldn’t immediately divulge the phone’s location, citing customer privacy restrictions. But Sprint said in a letter to Naggar on Thursday that the company cooperated with the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department.

"Sprint never refused to assist law enforcement," Sprint government affairs manager Paul Sieracki wrote Naggar. "At the very time Sprint was working with the Riverside sheriff’s office to locate the phone, the child was found."

"Unfortunately, in this instance, something occurred ... that caused an atypical delay in providing law enforcement with location information," Sieracki said in the letter.

Naggar wants the City Council to approve a resolution at its Feb. 14 meeting asking lawmakers to compel cellular operators to cooperate more fully with public safety agencies in emergency situations.

Naggar said Thursday that he’s satisfied because Sprint responded, admitted a problem occurred and said the company was working with the Legislature to possibly introduce legislation.

Mayor admits lying on resume

By The Associated Press

RANCHO MIRAGE — Mayor Alan Seman admitted lying on his resume about earning degrees from New York University and Northwestern University.

"What I did was wrong. What I did was a bad judgment call," Seman told The Desert Sun in an interview published Friday.

Seman, 81, was accused of deceit by resident Stan Levinson during a City Council meeting last week. Levinson said Seman, a 17-year council veteran, should resigned and drop out of the April 11 council election.

Seman, who said voters should decide whether he continues on the council, told the newspaper he attended New York University for two years but dropped out to deal with family and health issues. Before that, he said, he spent several months at Northwestern for the Army Specialized Training Program while serving in the Army during World War II.

He had long claimed he earned degrees at NYU and Northwestern. Levinson, who lost in a 2002 bid to unseat Seman, contacted the universities last year to verify Seman’s education claims.

Levinson took out papers to run for council this year but later dropped out of the race, saying he would rather support other candidates running against Seman.

Towing company too ambitious

By The Associated Press

SANTA ANA — Prosecutors claim a Stanton towing company illegally towed away more than 200 cars from private property in Newport Beach.

Adam’s Towing owner Marianne Thanhminh Lai, 32, her husband Jaime Abel Chan Ramirez, 32, and employee Jose Rodrigo Torres-Dias, 22, were charged with conspiracy, extortion and unlawfully taking a vehicle.

"These types of practices hurt the consumer and the public," Deputy District Attorney Susan Kang Schroeder said.

The trio violated a state law that bars tow companies from removing illegally parked cars from private lots unless the property owner or an agent is present to authorize the action, investigators said. Drivers were charged up to \$400 each to get back their cars.

The cars were towed from a Birch Street lot between April 2005 and November 2005 when the property owner didn’t specifically request the towing and wasn’t present, Schroeder said.

Couple sues benefactors to sell house

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A couple who got Community Redevelopment Agency help to buy their first home are now suing the agency because they are being penalized for early sale of the house.

Under their CRA loan contract, Larry and Lelissa Shields had to stay in the house for five years or split resale profits with the agency. In their case, that meant paying the agency \$110,000 on a \$45,600 second mortgage.

The couple sold the house after three years.

In a Los Angeles Superior Court lawsuit filed this week, the couple said the CRA is violating California lending laws by penalizing them for reselling their home early.

"It’s a travesty," Larry Shields, 34, said.

CRA officials said the purpose of the "shared equity" provision is to discourage speculators from "flipping" properties. The Shieldses won the right to buy the two-story Jefferson Park home in a CRA lottery.

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NATIONAL

Wyoming is battleground in fight over deadly force

BY BEN NEARY
Associated Press Writer

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Flush with victory after persuading most state legislatures to approved concealed-carry handgun laws, the National Rifle Association now is lobbying to make it easier for people to defend themselves with deadly force.

In Wyoming and 11 other states, mostly in the West and the South, the NRA is backing bills to specify that people have no duty to retreat from an attacker before using deadly force. Twenty-five states already have such laws on their books.

The Wyoming bill is opposed by the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. It plans to write each Wyoming lawmaker urging opposition, making the Cowboy State — where guns are present in more than half of all homes — an unlikely battleground in the fight over appropriate use of firearms.

Neither Rep. Stephen Watt, a Republican sponsor of the Wyoming bill, nor Uinta County Attorney Mike Greer, the president of the Wyoming County and Prosecuting Attorneys Association, could cite a Wyoming case in which someone had been prosecuted who would have been spared if a no-retreat law were on the books.

But Watt says that's not the point. "It's about a right to defend yourself," said Watt, a former policeman. "And that is a right that we all should have, regardless of whether there's been any cases where someone has been prosecuted for using self defense or not. It's something that we should not have to worry about, and this is to give back that right to the citizens of Wyoming."

In a statement this week calling on Wyoming legislators to oppose Watt's bill, James Brady, the former press secretary to President Reagan, called the Wyoming bill "a sham, a farce, a dangerous solution to a nonexistent problem."

"No one's in jail in Wyoming for acting in legitimate self-defense," Brady said. "The only thing this law might do is keep people out of jail who deserve to be there."

The NRA says 38 states now have some provision allowing people to carry concealed handguns, up from just 10 in the mid-1980s, and the NRA scored a victory over gun-control advocates early last year when Florida Gov. Jeb Bush signed a no-retreat law in that state.

Andrew Arulanandam, director of public affairs for NRA in Fairfax, Va., said the NRA is behind similar bills that have been introduced in Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, South Carolina, South Dakota and Washington in addition to Wyoming. He said the NRA was eying another five states for possible bill introductions this year but declined to name them.

"It is a priority," Arulanandam said. "In states where the statute calls for victims of crime to retreat, we think that that's wrong."

Arthur C. Hayhoe, executive director of the Florida Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, says defense lawyers there are starting to raise the new no-retreat law to defend shooting cases.

"What they've done is legalized manslaughter here in Florida," Hayhoe said. "It promotes irresponsible, aggressive, and even illegal use of firearms. What's going to happen when the gun-owning community, it settles into them what this is really about, and they discover that these guys are being exonerated when they're charged with manslaughter?"

Despite Wyoming's overwhelmingly pro-gun culture, Peter Hamm, communications director with the Brady Campaign, said the group intends to muster whatever opposition it can.

"This is not really a gun issue," Hamm said. "It's a violence issue."



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Washington Legislature passes gay civil rights bill

BY RACHEL LA CORTE
Associated Press Writer

OLYMPIA, Wash. — The Washington Legislature passed a civil rights measure covering gays on Friday, a victory for gay rights activists who have watched the measure fail for nearly 30 years.

The bill passed the Senate on a 25-23 vote, with a lone Republican joining majority Democrats. The House quickly concurred, and Gov. Chris Gregoire said she planned to sign the bill into law Tuesday.

Cheers erupted from the Senate's balconies, which were packed with onlookers expecting the bill to clear its perennial roadblock. House members and onlookers also broke into sustained applause after it gained final approval.

The measure adds "sexual orientation" to a state law that bans discrimination in housing, employment and insurance.

Sixteen states have passed similar laws for gays and lesbians; six of those states have passed laws for transgender people.

Sen. Bill Finkbeiner of Kirkland was the lone Senate Republican to endorse the measure, a year after it lost by just one vote in the Senate. Two Senate Democrats voted against the measure. One Republican was not present.

"We don't choose who we love. The heart chooses who we will love. And I don't believe that it is right for us to say ... that it's acceptable to discriminate against people because of that," Finkbeiner said in a speech.

Sen. Dan Swecker, R-Rochester, said the measure would "trample unrelentingly" on religious viewpoints that object to gays.

"We, the state, are telling people to accept, actually to embrace, something that goes against their religious views," he said.

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LOCAL



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

New bathrooms stand on the sidewalk in front of Bourget Bros. Materials on 11th St.

Ports of call: City delivers on its promise for potties

PORT-O-POTTIES, from page 1

for them has been difficult, said Elana Buegoff, a senior administrative analyst in City Hall's economic development division. In October, city staff met with residents in the area to discuss the placement of the port-a-potties.

The site agreed on is the west side of 11th Street outside of Bourget Brothers building material and lumber store, where the port-a-potties are now located.

For decades, day laborers have loitered on the sidewalks near 11th Street and Olympic Boulevard, where they keep a watchful eye on traffic coming and going from the Salvation Army outlet, Bourget Brothers, the old Fisher Lumber site and other businesses from which they might be called upon to help with construction, landscaping, home improvement, moving and other fix-up jobs.

However, residents have grown weary of the blight created by the masses, which can number up to 175 people on a given day.

The two port-a-potties will cost the city \$465 per month to be maintained three days a week, Buegoff said.

Recently, tensions were high on 11th Street as activists battled over whether or not undocumented immigrants have a right to work in the country.

Dozens of counter protesters in Santa Monica far outnumbered the three members demonstrating from the Minuteman Project on Saturday, Jan. 7, during that group's "Stop the Invasion" National Protest Day. The Minutemen demonstration was meant to send symbolic messages that the group is opposed to illegal immigration and borders should be tightened.

Santa Monica City Councilman Richard Bloom has urged staff to contact officials in Pasadena, who he said seem to have a successful program for regulating day laborers.

Ann Erdman, a Pasadena spokeswoman, said the city passed an amendment in 2003 called the "No Vehicle Solicitation" ordinance.

It prohibits vehicles from stopping in posted areas along Villa Street, which has had a problem with day laborers congregating there at least since 2001, Erdman said. There also are large signs posted that say "no vehicle solicitations."

Traffic safety problems were the main impetus for creating the ordinance, Erdman said. Other issues related to day laborers, such as littering, defecating, public urination and the rare fist fight, are being handled by a combination of the Pasadena Police Department, organized neighborhood associations and the code compliance office, Erdman said.

In addition, a nonprofit group called the Instituto de Educacion Popular del sur de California has established a day laborer center at 500 N. Lake Ave., just a few blocks from Villa Street. Erdman said the center serves as an organized way for day laborers to find work, and it's very popular. To participate, day laborers must go through a registration process.

Erdman said the combination of law enforcement and providing the day laborers with employment options seems to be working well for Pasadena.

John Bourget, an owner of Bourget Brothers, said he would like to see an enforcement approach undertaken by City Hall, in addition to the placement of the port-a-potties.

Bourget suggests City Hall set up a program whereby the day laborers are welcomed between 7 a.m. and 1 p.m., for example. After lunch, Bourget said those who don't find work likely won't and should be required to leave for the day. If allowed to loiter after lunch, Bourget said the day laborers are likely to drink, gamble and get into other kinds of trouble, he said.

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LOCAL

Taylor gets third strike amid kidnapping trial

KIDNAPPER, from page 1

weeks of his May 2005 escape, according to the District Attorney’s Office.

Taylor’s jury trial for the kidnapping and home robberies that occurred in the 1000 block of Bay Street in Santa Monica began on Jan. 20.

Last February, Taylor was charged for the Sunset Park crimes that included one count of kidnapping, two counts of first-degree burglary, two counts of first-degree residential robbery and two counts of making criminal threats.

Taylor has also faced one count of unlawful driving or taking of a vehicle, one count of receiving stolen property, one count of resisting a police officer and one count of driving as an unlicensed driver. Those charges, which he was to stand trial for last May, stem from him allegedly stealing a car in Las Vegas, according to the District Attorney’s Office.

Taylor will be sentenced by Superior Court Judge James R. Brandlin on Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Due to the length of his prison stay, authorities may forego prosecuting other crimes for which he has been charged, Halligan said.

Halligan said he was pleased with the jury’s decision and felt they realized the evidence pointing to Taylor’s guilt was irrefutable. He thanked Det. John Henry of the Santa Monica Police Department for conducting the extensive investigation that led to Taylor’s successful prosecution.

Charles Elliot, Taylor’s attorney, declined to comment.

Taylor is a twice convicted California felon — he served two years in state prison for a 1991 conviction for burglary and he served 12 years in state prison for a 1994 conviction for burglary. Both crimes occurred in Torrance, said DA spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons.

Former Olympic Silver Medalist Danny Harris was first charged with the crime in November. Harris, who captured a silver medal in track in the 1984 Olympics, spent nearly two months in jail before he was cleared of the charges.

Promenade trees can dig roots as board votes to maintain them

TREES, from page 1

said. “I think the trees add such beauty to the Promenade, and when I speak to people who visit, they always remark about how wonderful the trees look.

“They just add so much to the ambiance.”

Board member Patricia Hoffman agreed.

“As awful as they are, they are so exquisite,” she said. “And they are good for hanging decorative lighting ... I’m all in favor of keeping the jacarandas.”

Board members Kelley Wallace and Rob Radar voted against sticking with the jacarandas, preferring to study other trees that would be easier to maintain, particularly if new sidewalks are installed on the Promenade as part of a future community improvement project.

“Rarely do we get an opportunity to go back and do it right,” Radar said. “It would be terrible to flitter that away.”

“It’s a tough call,” said Edward Greenberg, the supervisor of maintenance at the Promenade. “The jacarandas are exceptionally beautiful and they do make the Promenade, but they pose problems too.”

Greenberg said the trees blossom from early spring to autumn. When the blossoms fall, they saturate the sidewalk, staining the ground black from the sap released. The summer heat also melts the blossoms, creating a smell akin to that of urine.

“Every tree poses maintenance problems, but there are some that require less work. The jacarandas are really a tradition here ... for 17 years, they’ve been a success story and I’m not sure making a radical change is a good thing to do.

“People love to sit and read or have coffee under those trees.”

Bayside and city staff are in the process of hiring a consultant to study the trees to develop a replacement schedule for those that are damaged and pose a safety risk. Replacement will be staggered so as not to

detract from the look of the Promenade, board members said.

PUBLIC ART OR PROTEST?

In other action, the Bayside board considered endorsing a public art project — “A Red Line Connects Us” — which is intended to draw attention to the human cost of war.

Local artist Abby Sher, owner of Edgemar, which houses the Santa Monica Museum of Art, wants to lay down a red strip of water-based paint, one inch wide or less, in the middle of sidewalks in downtown to honor those who have lost their lives in war. Sher said she will paint the line while walking at a pace equal to that which a drop of blood drips from an IV. Sher said she will paint every day, except Sundays, for one hour a day, starting on the southern end of Main Street and finish on the Promenade during Memorial Day weekend.

“This will symbolize how we are still at a primitive level when it comes to the way we solve conflict, whether it be between nations, religions or on our city streets,” said Sher, who won the endorsement of the city’s Art Commission. “I feel this is something I need to do.”

Sher said the project is non-partisan and is not meant to be a commentary on the war in Iraq.

Many board members seemed in favor of the idea as long as it remained non-partisan, but the body did not endorse it. During the meeting, it was unclear if Sher would need a city permit for her art project since she will be using a water-based paint that can be removed as easily as a chalk drawing by kids playing hop-scotch.

Bayside’s board is scheduled to meet again on Feb. 22, where they are expected to debate the future look of the Promenade and adjacent Santa Monica Place mall in light of recent improvements to the competing Westfield Shopping Town in Century City. The location of that meeting is still being discussed.

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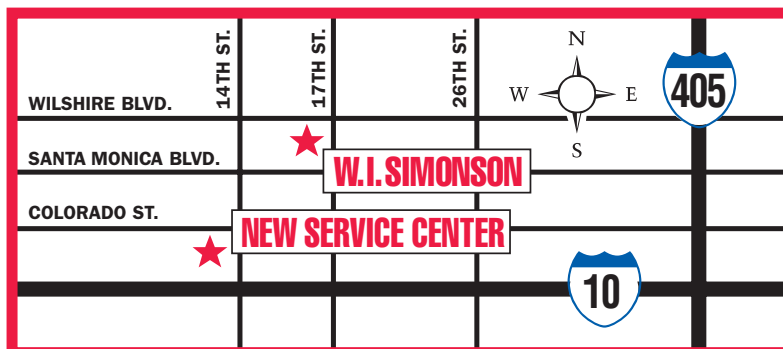
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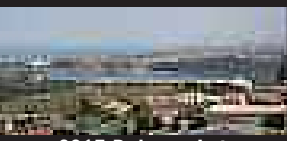
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Tape shows two German hostages seized in Iraq

BY BUSHRA JUHI
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Two German engineers abducted this week in northern Iraq appealed to the German government to work for their release in a videotape broadcast Friday by an Arab TV station. It was the first sign of the pair since they were seized three days ago.

The tape showed the two engineers, identified by relatives as Thomas Nitzschke and Rene Braeunlich, seated on the floor with at least four armed men standing behind them.

The timer shown in the corner of the tape, aired by Al-Jazeera television, indicated it was filmed Jan. 24 at 10:08 a.m., less than two hours after the men were abducted in the northern industrial city of Beiji, 155 miles north of Baghdad.

“The (German) government condemns this cruel kidnapping in the strongest possible terms,” Chancellor Angela Merkel said after the video was aired. “We appeal urgently to the perpetrators to release our two compatriots without delay.”

Violence raged in Baghdad’s tense southwestern suburbs as hundreds of police raided homes hunting for insurgents and clashed with more than 30 armed men for several hours. An Associated Press photographer saw the bodies of at least three people who were shot by insurgents, witnesses said.

The governor of the southern city of Basra threatened to stop dealing with British forces unless they release five Iraqi men detained Tuesday, including policemen suspected of links to local killings and kidnappings. Basra is the main base for the roughly 8,000 British forces in Iraq.

Gov. Mohammed al-Waeli called for a mass demonstration Sunday outside the British consulate to demand the release of the five men. Nine others have been freed.

“Basra’s provincial council and all government offices will suspend all kinds of dealings with the (British) forces at all levels if they don’t release the detainees,” al-Waeli told the AP.

Several hours later, a market bombing killed one woman and wounded three others, police said. Witnesses claimed a man stepped out of a police vehicle and planted the bomb.

Another Iraqi woman was shot dead in

western Baghdad’s Baiyaa district by policemen firing into the air while trying to clear blocked traffic, police Lt. Aqil Fadil said.

A roadside bomb in Youssifiyah, 12 miles south of Baghdad, missed a passing U.S. military patrol but killed two Iraqi civilians and wounded two others, Iraqi Army Capt. Ibrahim Abdullah said.

The German hostages were seen speaking on the tape, but Al-Jazeera did not broadcast any audio and did not report any demands beyond the hostages calling for German government intervention.

A handwritten black banner was shown on the tape reading: “Supporters of Tawhid and Sunnah Brigades,” a previously unknown group. Tawhid is the Arabic word for monotheism and Sunnah refers to the teachings of the prophet Muhammad.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier described the video images as “distressing” and said his government would do everything it could to secure the hostages’ release.

An Al-Jazeera editor, who declined to be identified because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said the tape received by the station was only about 35 seconds long. He declined to say how it was obtained.

Nitzschke and Braeunlich arrived in Iraq on Jan. 22 and only planned to remain “for a short time,” the German Foreign Ministry said.

Their employer, Leipzig-based Cryotec Anlagenbau AG, has a commercial relationship with an Iraqi government-owned detergent company in the industrial town of Beiji, where Brazilian engineer Joao Jose Vasconcelos Jr. was kidnapped Jan. 19, 2005. His whereabouts remain unknown.

The first German kidnapped in Iraq was Susanne Osthoff, an aid worker and archaeologist who disappeared with her Iraqi driver in northern Iraq on Nov. 25. Her release was announced Dec. 18.

In Berlin, Deputy Foreign Minister Gernot Erler told ARD television that no contact had been made with the kidnapers, but a ministry crisis team was “working constantly to save the two engineers.”

At least five foreigners have been kidnapped in Iraq this month.

American journalist Jill Carroll was seized Jan. 7 in the capital. Her translator was killed.

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INTERNATIONAL

Hamas clear on domestic agenda, murky on Israel

BY AMY TEIBEL
Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM — Islamic Hamas militants who swept the Palestinian parliamentary election have a clear domestic agenda: purging government corruption and restoring order to lawless streets.

But they are much murkier when it comes to explaining how they'll deal with a Jewish state whose existence they reject — but cannot ignore.

Hamas' dramatic upset was as much a measure of two decades of dogged grassroots work as it was a vote of no-confidence in the corruption-tainted, ineffectual Fatah Party, which had dominated Palestinian political life for 40 years.

An outgrowth of the militant Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the highly disciplined Hamas scored points with the largely impoverished Palestinian public by offering a wide-ranging network of health, education and welfare services.

Many experts believe Hamas' political and charity wings have been always intertwined with its military wing.

But the group's alternative to the Fatah government's inefficient social safety net allowed it to make inroads even among Palestinians tired of the cycle of violence in which Hamas, with its suicide bombings and rocket attacks, played a major role.

Now, having captured 76 of parliament's 132 seats in Wednesday's election, the politically inexperienced Hamas finds itself catapulted into steering the Palestinians through one of the world's most intractable conflicts.

"What their real agenda is I can't say," said Palestinian lawmaker Hanan Ashrawi, a former Fatah legislator re-elected to parliament on a small party list. "I don't think

they have it fully formulated.

"We know what they say, they want all of Palestine (including Israel) and say that negotiations did not work," Ashrawi said. "They talk about wanting reform. That doesn't mean they will do it."

Talal Okal, a commentator for the Palestinian Al-Ayyam newspaper, said Hamas hadn't wanted to take control of the government, preferring to let Fatah take charge.

Now that it has been forced to take the reins, Okal thinks Hamas will find itself forced to deal with Israel, if only on day-to-day issues in which Israel is involved, such as electricity, water, imports and exports.

"Hamas can't deal with people's daily life without coordinating and dealing with Israel," Okal said.

One way to do that would be by inviting Fatah to join its government and let Fatah deal with Israel — an idea Fatah rejected on Thursday. Another would be to abandon its violent ideology.

Since the election, Hamas leaders have signaled things could go either way.

One leader, Mushir al-Masri, said recognizing Israel and negotiating with it are "not on our agenda." But Mahmoud Zahar, the group's top leader in Gaza, said he was ready to maintain the ceasefire if Israel does likewise.

Yoram Schweitzer, an Israeli expert on terror, said he expected Hamas to be its pragmatic self where Israel is concerned.

"In principle, they will say they want all the lands back. Pragmatically, they will accept Israel's existence," Schweitzer said. "They will strive not to recognize it officially, and will be willing to accept it in the interim until a final decision is made by future generations."

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INTERNATIONAL



Abbas asks Hamas to form government

BY MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH

Associated Press Writer

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas asked Hamas on Friday to form a new government after his vanquished Fatah Party rejected a role in the Cabinet, and Israel ruled out peace talks in what could be the first steps to isolate the militant group after its election victory.

Acting Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni appealed to the international community not to legitimize a Palestinian government led by Hamas, saying elections are not a “whitewash” for terrorist groups.

Livni said Israel’s withdrawal from the Gaza Strip last summer opened a window of opportunity in peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians. With the election of Hamas, she said, “the Palestinians slammed it shut.”

Thousands of Fatah Party members demonstrated across the Gaza Strip, firing rifles in the air and demanding that corrupt officials resign. About 1,000 angry activists, including 100 gunmen, drove by Abbas’ residence in Gaza, calling from loudspeakers for the resignations and urging Abbas not to form a coalition with Hamas. Abbas was not home at the time.

A prominent Hamas leader in Syria pledged to continue resistance against Israeli occupation and stressed that the group would not yet recognize the Jewish state.

“As long as there is occupation and so long as our people’s rights are usurped, our stand will remain as it is. We would resist the (Israeli) occupation to restore our rights,” Moussa Abu Marzouk, deputy head of the Hamas movement, said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Another Hamas leader, Mahmoud Zahar, also said the group had no immediate plans to recognize Israel.

“Why we are going to recognize Israel? Why? Is Israel ready to recognize the right of return for Palestinian people? Is Israel ready to recognize an independent (Palestinian) state, including Jerusalem?” asked Zahar, an incoming Hamas parliamentarian in Gaza. “We (will) not recognize anybody on the expense of our national interest.”

Two polls published Friday in Israeli newspapers showed strong support among Israelis for talking to a Palestinian government led by Hamas.

Acting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert quickly ruled out talks.

“The state of Israel will not negotiate with a Palestinian administration if even part of it is an armed terrorist organization calling for the destruction of the

state of Israel,” Olmert said.

President Bush and European leaders said Hamas must renounce violence and drop its demand to destroy Israel.

“If your platform is the destruction of Israel, it means you’re not a partner in peace, and we’re interested in peace,” Bush said.

Former President Carter said the United States, by law, would have to cut off direct funding to the Palestinian Authority as soon as Hamas takes control, but it should look for other ways to give money to the Palestinians, such as through the United Nations. Hamas has been branded a terrorist group by the U.S. and Europe.

“United States law would require that the money would be cut off if Hamas is in the government, so that’s a foregone conclusion,” Carter told The Associated Press.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is to meet in London on Monday with U.N., Russian and European leaders as the so-called “Quartet” of would-be international peacemakers evaluates the results and tries to decide how to proceed.

Ismail Haniyeh, another Hamas leader, said he had asked Abbas to meet Sunday to discuss forming a new government. Abbas’ office said no appointment has been made yet, and Abbas said separately he would ask Hamas to lead the next government.

Fatah, turned out of office by Palestinians angry over its corrupt and inefficient government, offered no help to Hamas, catapulted into leadership in its first foray into parliamentary politics.

Fatah leaders decided late Thursday not to enter a joint government with Hamas.

Hamas does not need Fatah to form a government _ it won 76 of the 132 seats in parliament, a clear majority. Fatah, the undisputed ruler of Palestinian politics for four decades, got only 43. But Fatah could help Hamas by serving as a conduit for talks with Israel.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia of Fatah and his Cabinet resigned Thursday to make room for a Hamas government.

Thousands of angry Fatah supporters marched in Gaza City early Friday, shooting into the air and demanding that Fatah leaders resign, while backing their decision to stay out of a Hamas government.

Minor incidents marred an otherwise peaceful political revolution. A large crowd of Hamas supporters clashed briefly Thursday with Fatah loyalists outside the Palestinian parliament in Ramallah, with both sides throwing stones after Fatah activists pulled a Hamas flag from the building.

On Friday, three people were injured as an argument between about 20 Hamas and Fatah loyalists degenerated into gunfire and rock-throwing.

Hamas ideology does not recognize the presence of a Jewish state in an Islamic Middle East.

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When the process is complete, after months or even years of waiting, all these fees and expenses are deducted from the value of your estate before your heirs ever see a single penny. There are many horror stories of estates being eaten up by fees and expenses, the most famous being that of mega film star Marilyn Monroe. Once the probate process was complete (it took nearly 20 years), fees and expenses were more than one million dollars. There was a grand total of \$104,229 left over for her heirs. Do you want this to happen to you??

Watch for our next article.

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‘Walk the Line’ star walks from accident

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Joaquin Phoenix’s car overturned on a canyon road and collided with another vehicle after his brakes went out, but there were no reports of injury, police said.

Phoenix, the 31-year-old star of the Johnny Cash biopic, “Walk the Line,” was driving eastbound above Sunset Strip about 2:50 p.m. Thursday when he realized his brakes were not working, said Officer Jason Lee, a police spokesman.

He lost control of his car, which overturned and hit another vehicle also headed eastbound, Lee said.

The actor’s publicist, Susan Patricola, said in a statement that Phoenix was wearing his seat belt and walked away from the scene after being helped out of his vehicle by a passer-by.

Earlier this month, Phoenix won a Golden Globe for best actor in a musical or comedy for portraying country legend Cash.

Phoenix is nominated for a Screen Actors Guild Award, which will be handed out Sunday. Patricola told *Us Weekly* magazine that he will be at the awards ceremony despite the car accident.

DAVOS, Switzerland — Michael Douglas knows that those who attend the World Economic Forum can move mountains and make mounds of money.

But a little star power — be it Bono, Angelina Jolie or Peter Gabriel — never hurts.

“It’s an impressive group, to say the least, that covers a broad spectrum,” said the 61-year-old actor-producer, adding that the free-flow nature of the event promotes dialogue in a friendly environment.

“People seem to let their hair down a little bit and loosen their ties. And there is a lot of give and share that’s going on both in front on the panels and behind,” Douglas told The Associated Press.

“So it’s a learning experience for me and, I guess my from end, I hope they will recognize as they have from Bono’s efforts and others, that many of us on the entertainment side can talk about the issues,” he said.

Douglas won a best-actor Oscar for his role in 1987’s “Wall Street.” He also has starred in “Fatal Attraction,” “Traffic” and “Wonder Boys,” among other films.

As for using celebrity to advance causes, Douglas said that can be a double-edged sword.

“We obviously help fundraising a whole lot, and as spokespersons you bring the issue on the table as a message of peace from the United Nations talking about disarmament, in particular areas (like) weapons of mass destruction, nuclear disarmament,” he said.

“People tend to get an audience from television when celebrities are involved. That helps. The danger is when you get in over your head and then you lose your credibility.”

LONDON — Pete Doherty, the sometime boyfriend of

Kate Moss, was jailed Friday after pleading guilty to possessing drugs for the second time in a week.

The 26-year-old singer was arrested in east London on Thursday by officers who thought he looked “disheveled and suspicious,” prosecutors said. He pleaded guilty to heroin possession at Thames Magistrates’ Court and was ordered jailed until a hearing on Feb. 8.

Doherty’s band, Babyshambles, had been due to perform in Glasgow on Friday, Bristol on Saturday and London on Sunday. Refusing bail, District Judge Stephen Dawson said he was “sorry if my order will affect your fans and people who go to your concerts.”

It is the latest in a string of drug busts for the troubled singer.

Doherty appeared at the same court a week ago and admitted possessing heroin, crack cocaine, morphine and marijuana. He was freed on bail.

He also is on bail after pleading guilty to possession of cocaine and heroin following a Nov. 30 arrest.

The maximum sentence for possession of “Class A” drugs such as heroin and cocaine is seven years in prison.

Moss, 31, lost modeling contracts with H&M, Burberry and Chanel after the Daily Mirror tabloid published pictures in September of her allegedly using cocaine in a west London music studio where Doherty, then her boyfriend, was recording.

She later went into a rehabilitation clinic in Arizona and has since resumed her modeling career.

NEW YORK — Bruce Springsteen and Coldplay will perform at the 48th Annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles next month.

Springsteen has five nominations, including song of the year and best rock song for “Devils & Dust,” the title track from his 2005 album.

British band Coldplay has three nominations, including best rock song (“Speed of Sound”) and best rock album (“X&Y”).

Best new artist nominee Sugarland will appear for a special performance, and Hezekiah Walker & Love Fellowship Choir will sing with Mariah Carey, the Recording Academy said Thursday.

Carey has eight nominations, including album of the year (“The Emancipation of Mimi”).

The awards show will be held Feb. 8 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. It will air on CBS (8 p.m. EST).

LOS ANGELES — Tom Cruise led a poll of movie exhibitors aimed at determining the top 10 moneymaking stars of 2005.

Cruise, who appeared in last year’s “War of the Worlds,” has won the annual survey by Quigley Publishing Co. seven times, Arnold Robinson, the actor’s publicist, said Thursday.

Tom Hanks, Clint Eastwood, Burt Reynolds and Bing Crosby have all snatched the No. 1 spot five times. The Quigley Poll, conducted every year since 1932,

asks motion picture exhibitors to vote for the 10 stars who generated the most box-office revenue for their theaters.

Johnny Depp finished second in the 2005 poll. Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt tied for third, followed by Vince Vaughn, George Clooney, Will Smith, Reese Witherspoon, Adam Sandler and last year’s winner Tom Hanks.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — A former member of Motown group The Supremes has a warning for copycat musical groups: Stop, in the name of fraud.

Mary Wilson has urged Illinois lawmakers to make it illegal for impostors to perform as original artists.

Wilson’s visit was part of a national campaign to get bills passed in several states that would ban knockoff groups. The goal is to eventually make it a federal law, she said.

“They’ve crossed the line between imitation and flattery to becoming almost like identity theft,” Wilson told a House committee Tuesday. The committee later unanimously endorsed a bill that will be sent to the House for a full vote.

South Carolina and North Dakota have passed similar laws.

Wilson, who sang with Diana Ross in the 1960s trio, said she has filed several civil lawsuits against groups claiming to be The Supremes. But she lost all the cases, she said, “because there were no laws to protect me.”

Many early performers no longer have rights to their work or famous names because of the language in contracts they signed, said Bob Crosby, president of the Vocal Group Hall of Fame, one of the groups behind the campaign.

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Hank Williams Jr., whose rendition of “Are You Ready for Some Football?” has greeted “Monday Night Football” viewers for 16 years, will make his fifth Super Bowl appearance.

Williams was in Los Angeles on Tuesday filming the opening introduction to the 2006 Super Bowl between the Pittsburgh Steelers and Seattle Seahawks.

“Not many people can say they have performed during five Super Bowl openings,” Williams said in a statement. “I am so happy to have been part of the ABC family since 1989, and with my love for football, this was a win-win partnership.”

Williams said he’ll attend the Super Bowl in Detroit on Feb. 5 with one of his rowdy friends and root for the Steelers.

“My rowdy rebel son Kid Rock and I will be making some noise in Michigan ... everyone should be listening,” he said.

“Monday Night Football” is moving to the ABC-owned ESPN cable network next season. The move falls on a year when Williams’ contract is up for negotiation, and it is still uncertain whether he will continue as the show’s musical host, Williams spokesman Kirt Webster said Wednesday.



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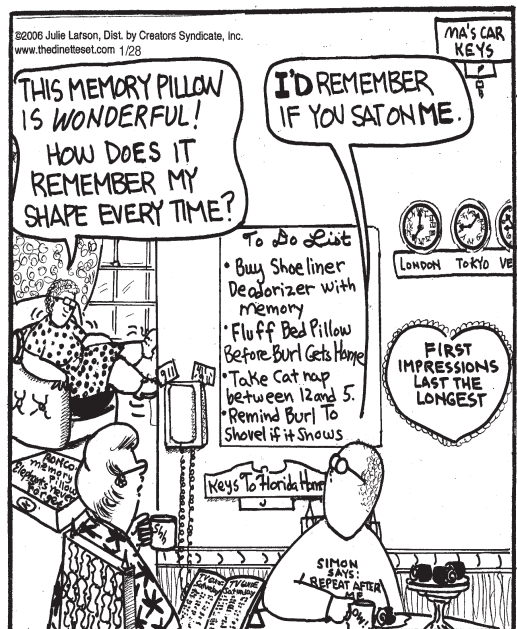
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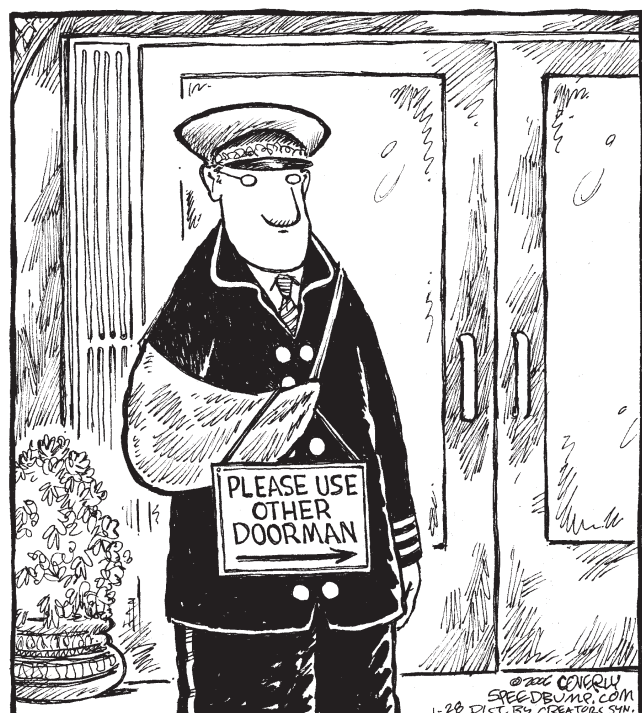
The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



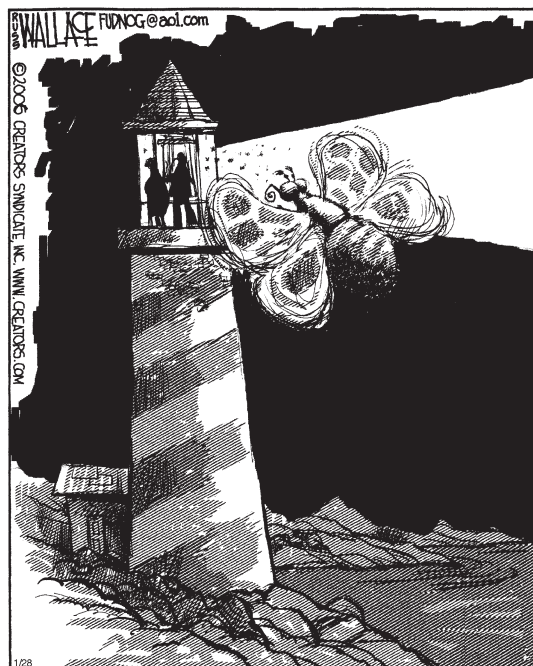
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By THOMAS JOSEPH

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- 22 Squeezing snake
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- 24 Forces
- 25 Region of eastern France
- 27 Maze runner
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- 32 Took the cup
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- 38 Map in a map

DOWN

- 39 Tea cake
- 40 Battery terminal
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- 3 Denali setting
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- 5 Needed
- 6 Rage
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- 9 Old movie

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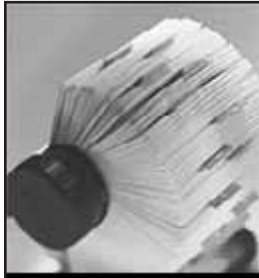
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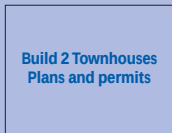
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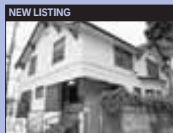
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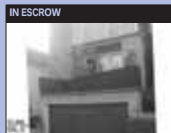
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Photo
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