

FREE

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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Businesses back school bond measure

Santa Monica College wants \$160M to renovate campus

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

Santa Monica College has the backing of local businesses for the school's \$160 million bond measure this spring.

The Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce board voted unanimously Tuesday to support "Measure U," said the chamber's executive director Kathryn Dodson.

"We feel it's going to be good for the future of Santa Monica," she said. "We think it will enhance business here."

Santa Monica and Malibu residents will be asked in March to approve the bond so SMC can use the money to renovate buildings at the aging campus on Pico Boulevard. It also would partially fund the purchase of

the 10-acre BAE Systems property that the college recently bought for \$30 million near the airport for a satellite campus and more parking.

**"We feel it's going to be good
for the future of Santa Monica.
We think it will enhance
business here."**

— KATHRYN DODSON
Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce

The bond's average cost to taxpayers would be \$1.12 per month for renters and \$77 per year for the average homeowner in Santa Monica and Malibu, according to

Graham Pope, the co-chair for the committee supporting the measure.

The bond issue in the first year is estimated at \$16.21 per \$100,000 in assessed valuation and the average cost over the bond's life will be \$19.21 per \$100,000.

A facilities assessment completed earlier this year outlined 21 projects at the college. Priorities are to replace the earthquake-damaged liberal arts building and temporary buildings with modern labs and classrooms. Facilities for the nursing, environmental studies, earth sciences and math programs also need upgrades and improvements are needed to meet standards for campus lighting, security and the American Disabilities Act.

Other pressing needs are to find space for student parking and the emeritus college program, which is geared to students ages 55 years or older.

The emeritus program is housed on the ground floor of a city parking structure on Second Street. But the city has plans to turn the property into a park at Santa Monica

See SMC, page 3

Carjacking suspect eludes police officers

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

A man escaped a police chase early Monday after he carjacked a woman on Third Street and California Avenue.

Just after 2 a.m., a woman was approached by a man, pretending to have a gun, and demanded her purse and car keys, according to Santa Monica Police Lt. Frank Fabrega. The man stole the dark-colored Alpha Romeo and headed south.

Within minutes of the call to police, officers spotted the vehicle near Lincoln

Boulevard and Santa Monica Boulevard. Police followed the car on Broadway headed east until the suspect abandoned it on the 1200 block of Broadway. He then fled on foot.

Despite police blocking off the area, the suspect managed to elude officers. The woman's belongings and the car were returned to her.

The suspect is described as a black male, 5' 10" tall, with a heavy build, dark complexion and dark eyes. At the time of the incident, he was wearing dark clothes, a nylon-type ski mask and a baseball cap.

Elementary school security recommended

Superintendent to ask school board to hire full time guards at elementary schools

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Special to the Daily Press

Officials are expected to recommend that the school district hire full time security guards to patrol and monitor entrances at every elementary school in Santa Monica and Malibu.

Security policies enacted at the middle and high school level would be extended to elementary schools, with guards patrolling the hallways and watching the schools' multiple entrances.

"We need to deal with putting paid people at the gates," said school superintendent

See SECURITY, page 3

Make love to the camera!



Los Angeles-based model Paul Locatelli poses for the camera on the Promenade Tuesday. He will appear in International Male Catalog, a men's clothing publication.

Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press



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ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Finally you can instrument more of your desires. Others run with the ball, excited about your ideas. Your skills and willingness to work with others' views underscores you as a winner. Fatigue hits midday. No wonder, considering how hard you have worked. Tonight: Get some extra zzz's.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Your intuition drives a hard bargain, drawing the results you want. A previously difficult associate surprises you with his or her positive response. Be careful with the financial ramifications of any agreement. You could get the short end of the stick if you're not aware. Tonight: Find a favorite playmate.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Deal with personal and domestic matters first, as they dominate your thoughts anyway. You know exactly what to do to please someone close to you. Establish a stronger bond between the two of you. An investment comes forward. Weigh the pros and cons. Tonight: Go back to the basics.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ You naturally do the right thing at the right moment. Consider opportunities that surround your work. Someone will back you with an idea. Instincts guide you all day. Avoid self-criticism and insecurity. You can do it. Express positive energy. Tonight: At a favorite spot.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Your ability to research and find answers helps convince someone about the "rightness" of your ideas and/or project. Spread good news. Sit on bad news for a while. Given time, new information comes forward. Carefully consider alternatives rather than feeding your funds into an investment. Tonight: Pay bills first.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ You might not realize the power of an investment or partnership. Your efforts pay off. Work with a partner to gain the positive results you want. Invest more time in what counts for you. A boss or higher-up pressures you. Tonight: Do your thing.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ A partner directs his or her outrage, encouraging action and brainstorming. Though your first instinct might be to back off, you don't have to. Work with this person. Don't exaggerate how you feel or make more of a situation. You will gain a better perspective soon. Tonight: Mosey on home.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Work for the group. In fact, a scheduled meeting with many brings better results than individual discussions. Your never-ending efforts demonstrate that you stand behind your words. Others ultimately trust your judgment and ideas. Tonight: Where your friends are.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Bosses act on their power. Listen well, especially as these people mean everything they say. Brainstorm away. Allow the creative process to take place. Don't allow a partner's news to get the best of you. Consider alternatives with this person. Tonight: In the limelight.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Your ability to read between the lines helps you see the inevitable in a different light. A family member throws quite the tantrum to get what he or she wants. You might decide that it's easier to give in. Help a partner or pal spread his or her good news. Tonight: Don't work late.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Handle others in your uniquely happy style. One-on-one relating suggests you go in a different direction. Creativity allows solutions in the workplace. Allow others to chip in with their ideas. A child or loved one might be unusually sour or touchy. Tonight: Go along with someone's plans.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Listen to others with care. Often you might not agree with their logic, though you say little. If feeling unappreciated, recognize how much you create this feeling yourself. Express your ingenuity and creativity in all segments of your life. Tonight: Say "yes" to a request.



WEATHER

Today ...	Sunny	High—55°F	Low—37°F
Tomorrow ...	Mostly Sunny	High—59°F	Low—38°F
Friday ...	Partly Cloudy	High—63°F	Low—41°F



QUOTE of the DAY

**"And that's the world in a nutshell —
an appropriate receptacle."
— Stan Dunn**

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Parents win over administration in plea for security

SECURITY, from page 1

John Deasy. "There should be more of a security presence at all of our elementary schools."

Deasy declined to comment on specifics of the staff's proposal, which will be presented at next Wednesday's board of education meeting, saying only that there would be a budget impact.

"There's a funding factor to take into consideration," he said. "Depending on what the board decides, will

impact the budget differently."

Parents of children attending Roosevelt Elementary School testified before the school board last week that they feared for their children's safety. They cited incidences of violent crime in their neighborhood and two recent security breaches at the school as examples.

"Wow, this is great news," said Mary Beth De Lucia, a parent of a child attending Roosevelt Elementary School. She has advocated hiring security guards at the elementary school level. "This is so cool."

De Lucia, a local freelance photographer, helped organize and staff the all-volunteer security patrol currently in place at Roosevelt, located at Lincoln Boulevard and Montana Avenue.

"But it's too much of a responsibility for volunteers," she said. "To really protect our kids we need full time guards."

Last May, a man broke into the elementary school and held a boy in a bathroom stall for 10 minutes before authorities could intervene. Then last December another strange man broke into the school looking for a boy he had "befriended" during recess.

One parent pointed out that nearly 50 sexual predators lived in Santa Monica's four zip codes and that almost 90 percent of them preyed on children younger than 14 years old.

Another parent, George Rosenthal, was so concerned with safety at Roosevelt, he paid to have a camera system installed to monitor the school's main entrance. However, there is nobody available to watch the camera at all times.

Currently the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District posts security guards at the middle and high schools. The city's police department provides two resource police officers from the Youth Service Division to work in the schools.

De Lucia said after parents approached the school board, administrators asked for her help in researching what kind of security surrounding school districts are provided at the elementary level and in writing grant requests to the state and federal government.

But she said she had no idea her work could make so much happen so quickly.

"This is so great. This is what I have been telling everybody we need to do. I was going to keep going until something was done, but I thought it would take a lot more time," said De Lucia. "Parents at Roosevelt are going to be thrilled. There is a wide spread anxiety among parents concerning safety. This will be a great deal of relief to them."

Bond needs 55 percent approval

SMC, from page 1

Airport, where students park and ride shuttles to the main campus a mile away.

Pope said having the support of businesses is important to SMC because the commercial area is a large tax base for the city and business owners are assessed on the value of their properties.

"This measure is probably one of the most important measure to SMC in a long, long time," he said. "It will provide a mecca of modernization for the campus."

SMC's campuses are bursting at the seams with more than 32,000 students enrolled.

Renovations are expected to be completed over the next 10 to 12 years. The college's last bond issue was for \$22 million in 1992 to build an addition to the science building and library. Most of the buildings on campus are more than 50 years old.

The measure will need a 55 percent approval from residents in Santa Monica and Malibu to pass. Proposition 39, approved by California voters in November 2000, decreased the percentage needed to pass a bond measure from 66 and two-thirds percent to 55 percent. It also limits the maximum annual cost to \$25 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation.



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

A city worker skims the water on the Promenade for the previous day's dirt.

Coastal activist prepared to fight music mogul for beach access

By The Associated Press

MALIBU — Coastal activists are pressing music mogul David Geffen to open the gates to a never opened public walkway alongside his estate property to the beach.

"If Mr. Geffen will stand behind his offer to open access, then we want to do this in the most sensitive, tasteful and gentle fashion."

— STEVE HOYE
Access for All

Access for All, a new nonprofit activist group, wants Geffen to make good on a promise of access if the route is properly maintained. Access for All has agreed to maintain the walkway.

The Coastal Act allows nonprofit groups to open and

maintain beach access routes.

The group picked the 9-foot-wide easement on the edge of Geffen's property as a test case because it lies in the heart of a three-mile stretch of Malibu coastline that is walled off by an unbroken string of beach houses.

"If Mr. Geffen will stand behind his offer to open access, then we want to do this in the most sensitive, tasteful and gentle fashion," said Steve Hoyer, a former Sierra Club fund-raiser who formed Access for All.

If Geffen doesn't respond, Hoyer said he is prepared for a fight.

Geffen declined comment, his spokesman Andy Spahn said Monday. Spahn did say he wanted to meet with Access for All to discuss the group's plans.

"We are interested in sitting down with them," Spahn said.

Property records show Geffen made an "irrevocable offer to dedicate public access" in 1983 in exchange for a permit to remodel his home on Carbon Beach.

Hoyer said he wants to install automatic time locks on the wooden gates so they open at sunrise and close at sunset. If the walkway is opened, it will be the first new public access in Malibu since 1981, when Los Angeles County unveiled the Zanker Harris Access Way about 1,000 feet up the coast.



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STATE

Ramo named CEO of movie studios Internet venture

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Veteran satellite TV executive Jim Ramo has been named chief executive officer of a joint venture formed by five major movie studios to offer films over the Internet.

The new company will be called Movielink and is expected to launch by the end of the year.

The company was formed last year and is owned equally by Sony Pictures Entertainment, Universal Studios, Paramount Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and Warner Bros.

Movielink will use technology developed by Sony, and formerly dubbed "MovieFly," to offer movies that can be downloaded over high-speed Internet lines and played on computers using security tools and movie players from Real Networks and Microsoft.

Consumers will be charged a one-time

fee, similar to the cost of renting a video, for a license to watch the movie for a set time. Each studio will determine when their films will become available and at what price.

Ramo has a long career in satellite television. He was a vice president of DirecTV from 1990 to 1997 and served as an executive at TVN Entertainment, a pay-per-view program supplier.

Most recently, he was a consultant for a new media venture capital fund.

A rival venture has been formed by The Walt Disney Co. and News Corp. The company, called Movies.com, plans to offer movies over the Internet and hopes to launch a cable television service as well.

Both efforts say they will have non-exclusive agreement with studios for their films.

Despite such assurances, the Department of Justice's antitrust division is examining both ventures for possible antitrust violations.

Global Crossing defends troubled company's vision

BY SIMON AVERY
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — When AT&T needed an undersea cable to link the United States with Europe in 1997, Gary Winnick saw an opportunity.

The former Wall Street financier started Global Crossing Ltd., and in just more than a year the company was selling space on its new high-speed voice and data link. It raised billions of dollars to create a worldwide fiber optics network.

The vision propelled Winnick and many of his early investors into the realm of the super wealthy. For a brief time, Winnick became known as the richest man in Los Angeles, with an estimated worth of \$6 billion.

On Monday, burdened by a \$12.4 billion debt, Global Crossing became the largest telecom firm ever to file for bankruptcy protection in the U.S.

Today, lenders that include J.P. Morgan, Merrill Lynch, Citigroup and SBC Communications are scrambling to recover a fraction of their original investments. Shareholders gave Global Crossing a value of \$55 billion in its heyday, greater than General Motors at the time, but are unlikely to get anything, the company said.

Global Crossing insists Winnick's strategy of wrapping the globe in 100,000 miles of fiber optics and selling it directly to telecoms and Internet service providers was sound. Rather, the idea fell victim to unforeseen events.

"In the last six months, it's almost a perfect storm kind of environment. Everything crashed at once," said Dan Cohrs, Global Crossing's chief financial officer.

The elements acting against the company, he said, included the recession, a drop in demand for high-speed data transmission, rising debt among the carriers and the collapse of other upstart telecom firms that soured the banking environment.

"The vision was not fundamentally flawed," Cohrs said. "It wasn't just some starry-eyed vision. This was all backed up

by some very detailed studies and financial forecasts. Everybody bought into these forecasts."

Global Crossing spent nearly \$15 billion over the last five years to build the most far-reaching and up-to-date fiber network in the world. It spans four continents and 27 countries and claims more than 100,000 customers.

The project was more far-reaching than what traditional telephone carriers were prepared to launch in 1997.

Winnick, 54, has never lacked ambition or drive. His office in Beverly Hills is reportedly a replica of the Oval Office.

In 1998, Winnick paid what is believed to be the highest price ever for a single-family home in the United States. He spent more than \$60 million for a four-acre estate in Bel Air, a tony neighborhood in Los Angeles, and then proceeded with some \$30 million worth of renovations.

"Money's no fun unless you spread it around," he told BusinessWeek in 2000.

His company went public in August 1998, with shares closing at a split-adjusted \$9.50 the first day. Within seven months, the price hit \$64. Winnick cashed in more than \$600 million worth of stock over the next several years.

When the company filed for bankruptcy protection, the shares sold for about 30 cents. The 8 percent of outstanding shares Winnick still owns are worth about \$10 million.

In the early days, Global Crossing attracted a distinguished set of investors, including former president George Bush and Terry McAuliffe, chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

Last year, the bloom began falling off the rose. Some investors launched suits claiming that Global Crossing and its underwriters illegally pumped up the price of the stock — a charge the company has denied.

In the last quarter for which it reported, ended Sept. 30, Global Crossing lost \$3.3 billion on revenue of \$286 million as demand for high bandwidth cable plummeted still further.



INTERNATIONAL • NATIONAL



U.S. stance on Israel keeps Saudi allies at a distance

By The Associated Press

Saudi Arabia remains a friend of the United States, but the kingdom is forced to keep its distance because of Washington's support of Israel in the conflict with the Palestinians, the de facto Saudi ruler said in interviews published Tuesday.

Crown Prince Abdullah also said Osama bin Laden was a "deviant" who brainwashed young Saudi men to participate in the Sept. 11 terror attacks in an attempt to ruin U.S.-Saudi ties.

Abdullah told the New York Times and Washington Post in an interview conducted Monday in the Saudi capital Riyadh that he was critical of U.S. Mideast policy out of concern from U.S. "credibility."

"America has a duty to follow its conscience to reject repression," Abdullah was quoted as saying.

"As a member of my community, it is very difficult for me to accept what is happening in the (Palestinian) territories because it is inhumane and violates basic principles and tenets," he said.

"In the current environment, we find it very difficult to defend America, and so we keep our silence. Because, to be very frank with you, how can we defend America?" he said.

In Washington, White House press secretary Ari Fleischer acknowledged that differences existed over the issue of Israel and the Palestinians.

"Just as our relations are with many nations, there are many things we agree on. There are others we disagree on and the approach to the Middle East — to peace with Israel and the Arab neighbors — that's an issue on which there is disagreement," Fleischer said Tuesday.

In the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, many Arabs, while condemning terrorism, have suggested the United States brought the violence on itself because it is perceived as blindly siding with Israel in the Jewish state's confrontation with Palestinians.

Bin Laden, the top suspect in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, has tried to exploit Arab resentment by portraying himself as a champion of the Palestinian cause.

U.S. media reports and some members of Congress have accused Saudi Arabia of not doing enough to support the Washington-led anti-terrorism campaign. The criticism stems partly from the kingdom's failure to make any arrests directly related to the terror attacks — though 15 of the 19 suicide hijackers were believed to be Saudi.

"America has a duty to follow its conscience to reject repression."

— CROWN PRINCE ABDULLAH
De facto Saudi ruler

Asked about the 15 Saudis involved in the attack, Abdullah said bin Laden, who was stripped of Saudi citizenship in the 1990s "picked young Saudis, and he was able to brainwash them, he was able to program them for an evil cause."

zenship in the 1990s "picked young Saudis, and he was able to brainwash them, he was able to program them for an evil cause."

"A deviant is a deviant regardless of his nationality. Bin Laden is a deviant regardless of his nationality," said Abdullah, who took over many leadership tasks in Saudi Arabia in 1995 after his half brother King Fahd suffered a stroke.

"Bin Laden's objective was to drive a wedge between the kingdom and the United States," he said. "I believe that what happened — the tragedy — was nor the fault of either government, but was a crime committed by an evil person who wanted to create trouble between two governments."



Associated Press

An Israeli border police officer monitors Jaffa Street, site of this week's bombing attack, from the rooftop of a building on Tuesday. With streets in downtown Jerusalem mostly empty, Israel's national security adviser Uzi Dayan was to submit a plan Tuesday aimed at preventing Palestinian militants from infiltrating Jerusalem from the West Bank.

U.S. can only do so much with journalist held hostage

BY RICHARD PYLE

Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — Although pledged to help win the release of kidnapped Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, the U.S. government will never negotiate with his abductors in Pakistan, says a former journalist who endured a similar kidnapping in the 1980s.

"There is nothing that the American government can or will give them," said Terry Anderson, a former Associated Press bureau chief who spent nearly seven years as a hostage of Islamic extremists in Lebanon. "They have to understand that kidnapping journalists is not a useful tactic."

Meanwhile, in Pakistan, officials said Tuesday they have an investigative team in place to search for Pearl, who went missing on Jan. 23.

"The government of Pakistan is utilizing all means available to find the abducted person and bring the criminals to justice," said Maj. Gen. Rashid Quereshi, a spokesman for Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf.

Press reports in Pakistan said police were questioning everyone who had met with Pearl since his arrival a few weeks ago. In Rawalpindi, police raided the home of Khalid Khawaja, described as a Muslim activist, but he was not there, the reports said.

On Monday, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said that U.S. and Pakistani officials were working jointly to gain Pearl's freedom.

Pearl, 38, was abducted while on assignment in Karachi, Pakistan, by a previously unknown group, the National Movement for the Restoration of Pakistani Sovereignty. It later e-mailed photos of Pearl and a list of demands including better treatment of terrorist suspects held by U.S. authorities at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Steve Goldstein, a vice president and spokesman for Dow Jones, the Journal's parent organization, said the Journal has

had no direct contact with Pearl's abductors and declined to comment on efforts to gain his release.

Anderson was taken hostage in Beirut in March, 1985 by the pro-Iran Hezbollah faction. He spent 6 1/2 years in captivity during which time U.S. officials refused to negotiate for his release on grounds that it could encourage more abductions.

That strategy proved its value through a decline in hostage-taking of journalists for political causes, he said.

"The night before they released me, my captors told me that it hadn't been a useful tactic," said Anderson, who later

wrote a book on his experiences, and taught journalism at Columbia University and Ohio University.

Others dedicated to the safety of journalists also weighed in Tuesday on Pearl's abduction.

The World Press Freedom Committee urged Musharraf in a letter to "do all within your ability" to intervene. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists also called for Pearl's release.

"Targeting reporters who are working independently to report the news will never advance anyone's political agenda," said CPJ executive director Ann Cooper.

Woman finds founding father letter in attic

By The Associated Press

BOSTON — A woman rummaging through papers in her attic has found a letter from a father — a founding father.

Among the dusty documents was the two-page letter, dated Aug. 14, 1811, from Thomas Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, a former cabinet secretary.

"Apparently it was just one of those classic moments where someone went poking into papers that had not been disturbed for 50 years in an attic and discovered Thomas Jefferson," said Kenneth Gloss, who bought the letter recently from members of an estate in Belmont who wished to remain anonymous.

The Belmont house in which the letter was found once belonged to a lawyer distantly related to Dearborn.

In the letter, Jefferson, then two years out of the White House, criticizes Bostonians' lack of appetite for the upcoming War of 1812.

"The powers & preeminences conferred on them are daggers put into the hands of assassins, to be plunged into our own bosoms in the moment the thrush can go home to the heart," Jefferson wrote.

Also among the papers were letters from John Quincy Adams. Those were donated to the Massachusetts Historical Society.

"A sensational little find," said William Fowler, the society's director.

Gloss, owner of Boston's Brattle Street Book Shop, said he expects to sell the Jefferson letter for more than \$45,000.

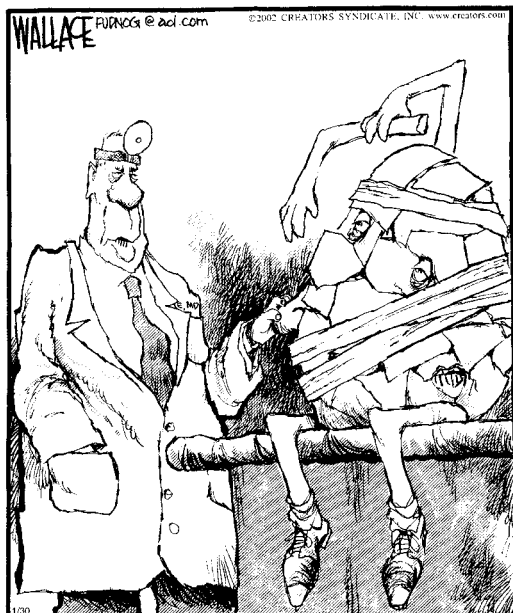


COMICS

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



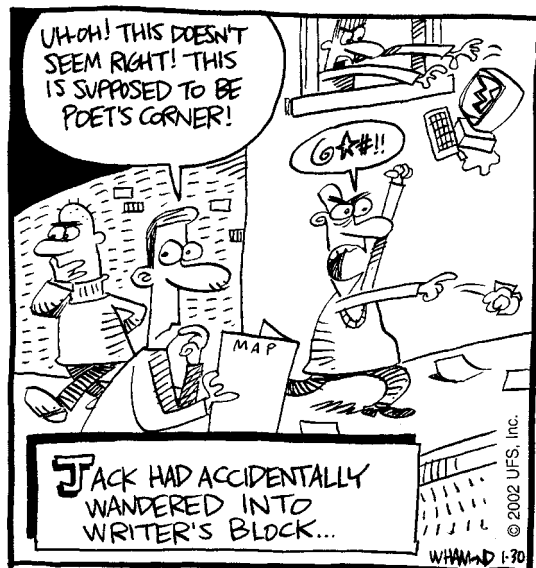
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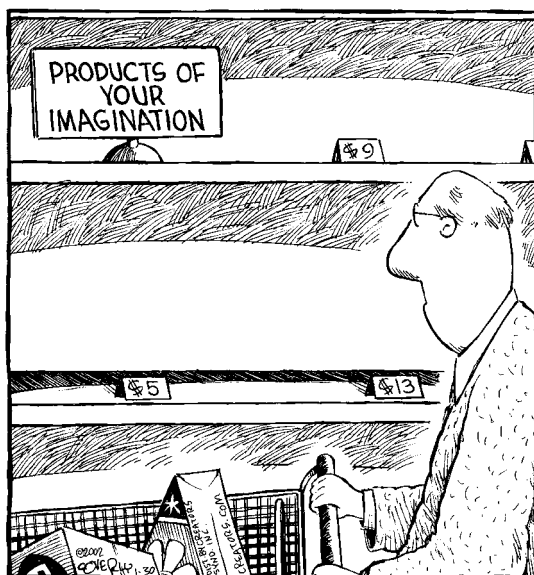
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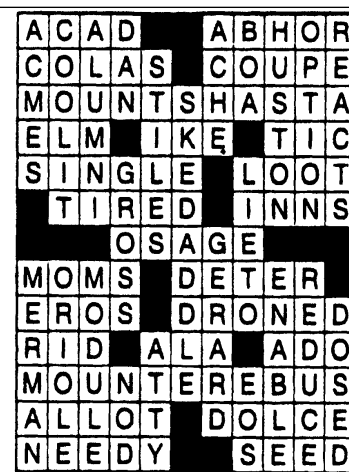
CROSSWORD By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

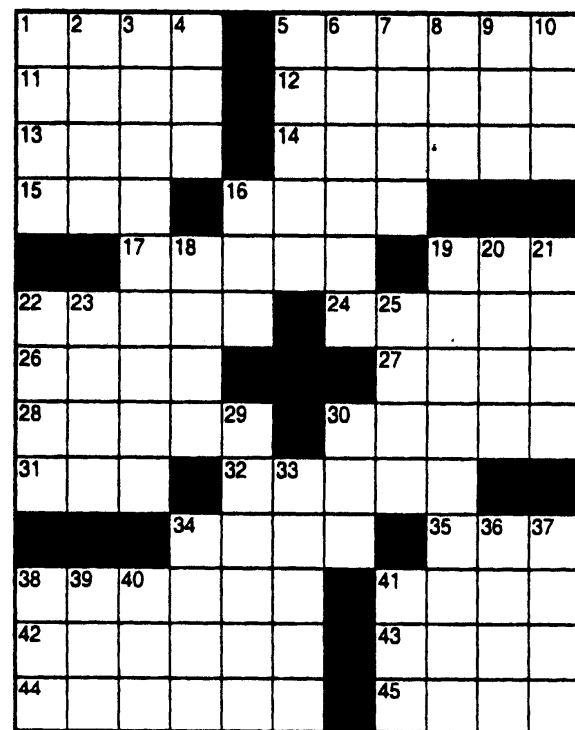
- 1 Poet Ogden
- 5 Phone feature
- 11 Tennis' Arthur
- 12 Former students
- 13 Bridge
- 14 Meeting of candidates
- 15 Invite
- 16 Snaps
- 17 Writer George
- 19 Lingerie item
- 22 Cleaning challenge
- 24 Gown feature
- 26 Angel topper
- 27 New York team
- 28 Signs
- 30 Pester
- 31 Cribbage need
- 32 Show gratitude
- 34 Marsh hopper
- 35 Everything
- 38 Give a hand to
- 41 Lotion additive
- 42 Pinball place
- 43 Corrals
- 44 Tangled up
- 45 Omelet base

DOWN

- 1 Shuttle group
- 2 Nile reptiles
- 3 "Hurry!"
- 4 Brood watcher
- 5 Ham's need
- 6 Chooses
- 7 Nick-names
- 8 "— little teapot ..."
- 9 Tiny worker
- 10 Whopper
- 16 Brooch
- 18 Pride member
- 19 "Good luck!"
- 20 Hamelin problem
- 21 Church part
- 22 Mail business
- 23 Not feral
- 25 Govt. agents
- 29 Walk purposefully
- 30 Play-ground game
- 33 Sharpened
- 34 Level
- 36 Pine
- 37 Minus
- 38 Beaver creation
- 39 Historic age
- 40 Play part
- 41 Copy



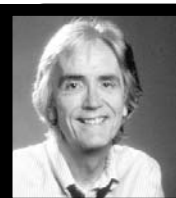
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1-30

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Grizzly bear obsession goes too far

• In June 1997, News of the Weird reported on Troy Hurtubise, a scrap-metal dealer from North Bay, Ontario, who had become so obsessed with grizzly bears that he had embarked on a 10-year, \$100,000 project (sending him into bankruptcy) to build a suit out of rubber, steel and titanium that would enable him to safely wrestle a grizzly.

• In a December test at a special facility in British Columbia, Hurtubise hung a version of his long-awaited Ursus Mark VI suit in a cage, where it was promptly ripped up by a 1,200-pound Kodiak bear, forcing Hurtubise to go to plan B, in which he donned another suit and went face-to-face for 10 minutes not with the Kodiak but with a small, female grizzly. He said he would improve the suit and go face-to-face with a Kodiak later this year.

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BACK PAGE

Animal rights group to send furs to freezing refugees

BY SONJA BARISIC
Associated Press Writer

NORFOLK, Va. — People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals is offering fur-wearers a new way to recycle their old mink coats: send them to Afghanistan to help freezing refugees keep warm.

More than 250 coats, shawls, blankets and other fur items valued at \$306,000 have

been donated to PETA for the giveaway.

Normally, PETA would not want anyone wearing fur, arguing that animals suffer in traps and on fur farms. But the group sees this as a way to get good use out of the furs, which will be turned into bedding and cut up to be made into children's jackets.

"Everybody's hearts go out to the people of Afghanistan," PETA spokesman Bruce

Friedrich said. "The images coming out of Afghanistan speak volumes about how much these people are suffering. It seems really that the desperately needy anywhere in the world are the only people left who have an excuse for wearing old furs."

PETA put a request for fur donations on its Web site about a month ago.

The American Friends Service

Committee, a Quaker relief society, will help ship the furs to refugee camps, Friedrich said.

For years, PETA has collected fur coats to give to the homeless. PETA also has given coats to animal shelters for use as pet bedding, burned them in demonstrations, dumped red paint on them and dragged them down streets in front of fur stores.

Taste test: Prune burgers a hit at elementary schools

BY PHILIP BRASHER
AP Farm Writer

WASHINGTON — Hey, kids! Want a prune burger for lunch? Or how about sweet potato pancakes for breakfast?

The government is trying out new products on finicky fifth- and sixth-grade taste testers in an effort to find new ways to use surplus fruits and vegetables in school lunch and breakfast menus.

The burgers, a mixture of ground beef and 4 percent prune puree, and the pancakes passed muster Tuesday with 20 inner-city kids at Washington's Van Ness Elementary School. A raisin-tomato barbecue dip for chicken nuggets also was a hit.

"The hamburger was good. It tastes like a grilled burger," said Mustafa Mattocks, 12, adding that it was better than the usual school fare.

It's also more healthful. A prune burger, which also contains soy, has about 40 percent less fat than an all-beef patty. The prune mixture adds moisture to replace the lost fat. The prune burgers served Tuesday were flame-broiled by the processor to give them the grilled flavor.

James Brown, 11, liked the barbecue sauce. "It tasted like A-1."

The Agriculture Department is under pressure from

Congress to bolster produce prices by buying up surplus crops, including cranberries and prunes, and giving them to schools.

"We like the fact that USDA is testing these products with kids. It adds credibility. Kids' tastes and my tastes are very different."

— BARRY SACKIN
American School Food Service Association

In a similar test last year in the Los Angeles area, the sweet potato pancakes were very popular, as were snack bars made with dates and almonds. Broccoli guacamole was a dud, and so was an asparagus version. The prune burgers and pizza topped with a prune-based sauce got better reviews.

USDA eventually intends to hold regular school taste

tests in seven regions of the country.

"What we're really trying to do is find new uses for the products we've been purchasing," said Robert Keeney, deputy administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

There's such a glut of prunes that the department is paying growers to destroy 20,000 acres of plum trees. USDA also has been paying farmers to destroy potato and sugar crops, and last year sharply restricted the amount of cranberries that could be brought to market.

Schools, however, are leery of trying new products without evidence that kids will accept them.

"We like the fact that USDA is testing these products with kids. It adds credibility. Kids' tastes and my tastes are very different," said Barry Sackin of the American School Food Service Association.

The children at Van Ness tried 11 different items and were asked to grade each on a scale from 1 (worst) to 5 (best) on taste, smell, color and overall appeal.

The kids weren't supposed to know what was in the food until they ate it, but some had seen a display of the products before the test started.

John Lund, a USDA official who oversaw the taste test, said there's no reason for schools to disclose that the burgers contain prunes, since there's too little of the fruit to have the laxative effect for which prunes are known.

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