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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2007

Volume 6 Issue 69

Santa Monica Daily Press

TIME TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS
PAGE 17

Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE SWEATY VIKING ISSUE

Retaining faith that gangs can be kicked

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Daily Press Staff Writer

ST. ANNE'S CHURCH Tired of watching fellow parishioners fall victim to random acts of violence, members of congregations in Santa Monica and parts of Los Angeles joined public officials here Tuesday night to jump-start a regional approach to eradicating gangs from their neighborhoods.

Those who believe in a higher power said they are putting their faith in God that, through collaboration, they can give young people hope so that they will be less likely to join a gang and embark on a life of crime.

To do so, local governments will not only have to dedicate financial resources to youth programs, parenting classes and public safety, residents must also do their part, those who attended the meeting said, including walking the streets to show unity and a willingness to stand up to the evil forces that are trying to destroy their communities.

"The violence is real," said Pastor Horace Allen of the First Baptist Church of Venice, located in the neighborhood of Oakwood, which has had its fair share of gang-related crime.

"Violence starts when we don't empower families to be families," Allen added. "Don't be afraid to stand up. Gangs don't like it when people come out of their homes and into the streets ... And don't just stay in Santa Monica. Come over to Venice. We need your help too."

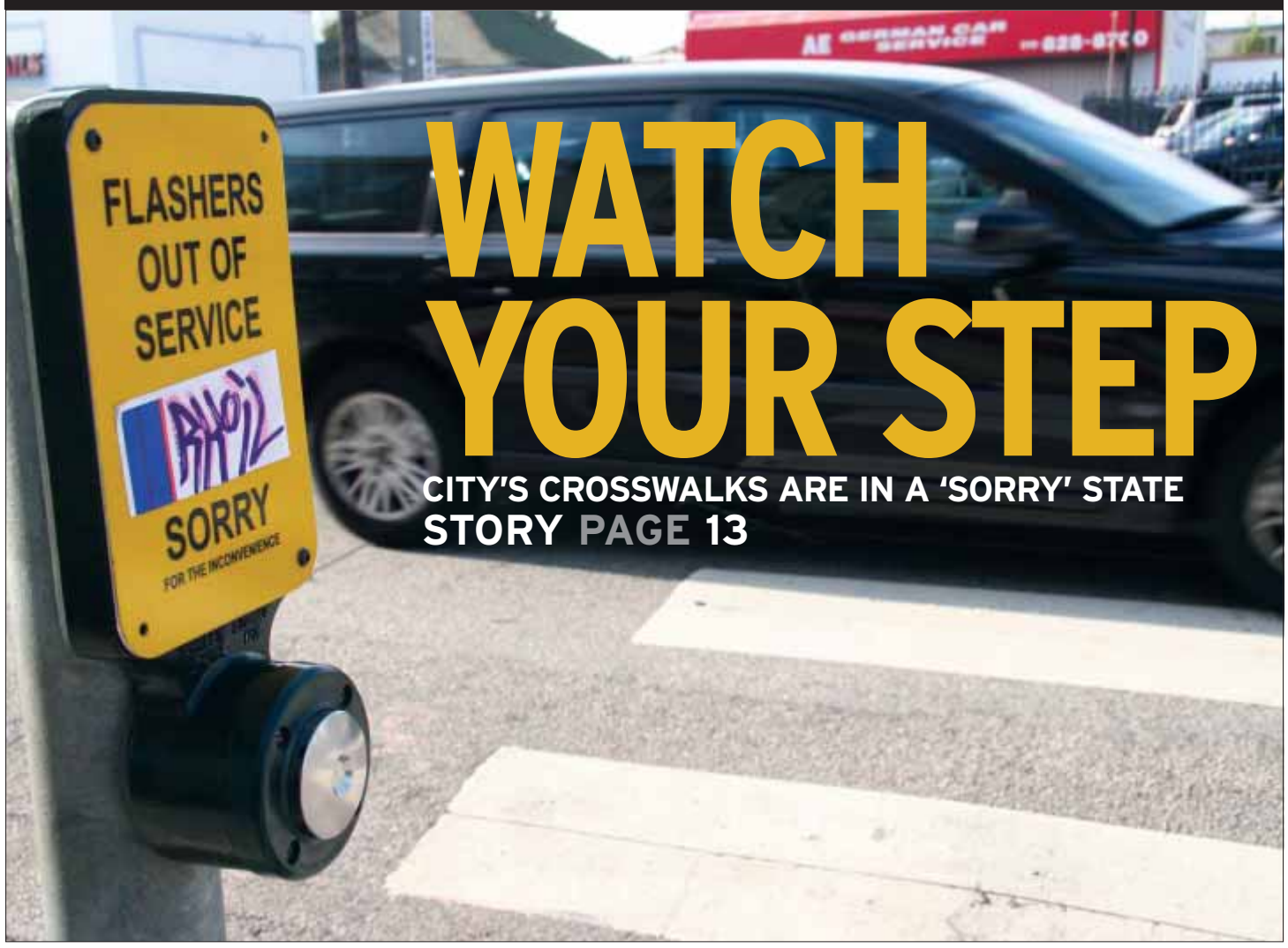
A crowd of roughly 50 came out just weeks after a 20-year-old Santa Monica man was shot and killed by suspected gang members while walking with friends near Virginia Avenue Park.

Organized by L.A. Voice, an interfaith community organization that tackles critical social issues, the meeting was a follow-up to an earlier meeting late last year at St. Anne's where members called on city officials to develop a plan to combat gangs.

City officials distributed copies of City Hall's

SEE **GANGS** PAGE 10

PUBLIC SAFETY



WATCH YOUR STEP

CITY'S CROSSWALKS ARE IN A 'SORRY' STATE

STORY PAGE 13

Christine Chang *news@smdp.com*

HOT BUTTON: **A warning sign notifies pedestrians of broken lights embedded in the crosswalk at Princeton Street and Santa Monica Boulevard.**

Remembering a 'creative spirit'

BY KRISTIN MAYER
Special to the Daily Press

SANTA MONICA AIRPORT Friends and family joined representatives from the Santa Monica Airport and Santa Monica College Wednesday morning to commemorate the life and artistry of aviation muralist Andy Blinn, who died last December at the age of 40 after a life-long bout with cystic fibrosis.

The plaque dedication ceremony spotlighted a mural Blinn painted as a teenager in a stairwell leading to the basement of what was The Donald Douglas Museum and Library of Santa Monica in 1991.

The former museum is now the main building on Santa Monica College's Airport Campus. The aviation-themed artwork, along with other reminders of the building's aviation history, were preserved when the college took over the site from the museum in 1988, according to Bruce Smith, the college's public information officer.

"It's a great, great way to commemorate" the Douglas aircraft, said Rod Merl, planning and administration manager at the airport, about the mural.

SEE **DEDICATION** PAGE 12

Photo Courtesy

WIND-AIDED TIME: **A teen-aged Andy Blinn stands by the aviation mural he completed in 1991. Blinn died in December of cystic fibrosis.**

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The City of Santa Monica is requesting proposals to lease and operate a performing arts venue and/or restaurant operation at 250 Santa Monica Pier. The interior space is 6,069 sq. ft. plus 1,033 sq. ft. outdoor dining patios.

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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS

Nordic LAttitudes
601 Santa Monica Blvd., Main Library hours
The Santa Monica Public Library, Friends of the Library, and Moore Ruble Yudell Architects & Planners are presenting a six-week design and discussion called Nordic LAttitudes, an educational exhibit showcasing the best in Nordic furniture and lighting design. For more information, visit www.smpl.org/nordiclattitudes.

An Evening with John Landis
1323-A Third Street Promenade, check for times
The Westside Eclectic, in collaboration with JibJab, will be hosting director John Landis. Seats are very limited. E-mail vanessa@westsideeclectic.com for more information or call (310) 451-0850. The Westside Eclectic is located in the alley between Third and Fourth Streets, just south of Arizona.

Billy Valentine at the Vic
2640 Main St., 8 p.m. and 10 p.m.
Vocalist Billy Valentine's CD release. $20, plus two-item minimum. For more information, visit www.thevicforjazz.com.

Art Classes
Santa Monica, 11 a.m. — 4 p.m.
Classes at Campbell Art Studio begin today. Visit www.campbellart.com or call (310) 804-0335 for schedules and pricing.

Weekly LeTip Business Networking Group
11th Street and Wilshire Boulevard, 11:30 a.m. — 1 p.m.
Weekly networking over lunch at El Cholo to provide additional leads and referrals to your line of work. Only one person per profession may join. Call to reserve a spot (310) 356-7519.

Church Mice
1220 Second St., 3:15 p.m. — 4:30 p.m.
Music, art projects, Bible stories, games and snacks are offered every Thursday in the Christian Education Building of First Presbyterian Church of Santa Monica. Children three years of age through second grade are welcome. For more information, call Rebecca Hall at (310) 451-1303, ext. 26.

Kundalini Yoga
2309 Main St., 2 p.m. — 3:30 p.m.
This class combines the science of movement, posture, breath, sound and meditation. Donations accepted. For more information, please visit www.shiatsumassageschool.org.

'The Edge of Form'
2903 Santa Monica Blvd., 11 a.m. — 5 p.m.
The debut works of Joe Pinkelman, Susie McKay Krieser and Darlyn Susan Yee will be on display. For more information on the exhibit and/or the artists, visit www.TagTheArtistsGallery.com or call (310) 829-9556.

Enchanted Lunchtime Theatre
1211 Fourth St., 11:30 a.m. — 1 p.m.
For more information, call the Playhouse box office at (310) 394-9779, ext. 2 or visit www.SantaMonicaPlayhouse.com.

Fitness Class (Mambo Mania)
1711 Stewart St., 7 a.m. — 8 a.m.
For more information, call (310) 515-4840.

Friday, Feb. 2, 2007

Trains, Planes and Automobiles: Perspectives on Santa Monica's Rich Transportation History
601 Santa Monica Blvd., 2 p.m. — 3:30 p.m.
Professor Joseph Schwieterman will offer a look at the changing transportation scene. He will also be signing copies of his book, "When the Railroad Leaves Town: American Communities in the Age of Rail Line Abandonment," which has a chapter on Santa Monica. Event to be held in the MLK Jr. Auditorium of the Main Library. For more information, visit www.smpl.org.

For more information on any of the events listed, log on to smdp.com and click the "Events" tab for the given day's calendar.

Schools mull how to break 'BB' bread

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SMMUSD HDQTRS With $268 million coming into the district to improve facilities and classroom instruction, school officials will begin the task of assessing the ideal size of the district in order to utilize the new resources with as little waste as possible.

Discussions at tonight's Board of Education (BOE) meeting and a community workshop in two weeks will center primarily around the size of the district, and its facilities and classrooms. School officials will touch on how the moratorium on permits for out-of-district students has affected funding and enrollment, and whether it should revisit its permit policy.

"If we continue to implement the policy as it exists now, then it has implications for both our budget and staffing," said Superintendent Dianne Talarico.

The district reached a peak enrollment of about 12,800 students during the 2003-04 school year. Currently, there are about 11,902 students — almost 900 less than just three years ago. The losses are largely attributable to new limitations restricting the number of out-of-district students admitted, costing SMMUSD about $5 million over a three-year period, Talarico said.

Tonight's talks come almost three months after voters passed Measure BB, a bond measure that brings in hundreds of millions of dollars to upgrade the facilities in the district. Approximately 67 percent of voters approved the measure.

"If I have a couple of schools that might be under capacity or under enrolled and there are existing portables," Talarico said, "one of the things we promised is we would look at the disposal of those portables and build classrooms to replace them."

Talarico went on to say that replacing the portable classrooms, however, might now be dependent on the district's enrollment figures and whether plans to alter the out-of-

SEE BB BOND PAGE 11

Governor on flex time

Fabian Lewkowicz *fabianl@smdp.com*

Bodybuilder and Arnold Schwarzenegger impersonator Zurab Nebieridze hits a 'front double bicep pose' recently on the Santa Monica Pier. Another picture involving the real governor has landed an Orange County candidate in hot water. **See story on page 7.**

Tourists need love, too

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Daily Press Staff Writer

SM PLACE Looking to enhance the level of customer service tourists and residents receive while visiting Santa Monica's most popular destinations, members of the hospitality industry are considering creating a class at Santa Monica College that would better train the roughly 12,000 waiters, concierges and other service employees who are in constant contact with the public.

Following the completion of the course, a graduate would receive a certificate and possibly a pin or some other symbol to show visitors that they are ambassadors capable of answering just about any question a guest may have about Santa Monica, its public transportation system, the homeless or local laws that may be unfamiliar, such as the new smoking ban.

"When someone is a guest in Santa Monica, they should always feel as if they are a guest of Santa Monica," said City Councilman Kevin McKeown, who joined more than 20 members of an education committee Wednesday to discuss the creation of a customer service course. "There needs to be a higher level of respect for the employees, too.

"We need to make them feel that they are a partner in this."

The customer service program is part of a larger effort to promote Santa Monica as a premier destination for those both living in the region and abroad. To do so, the Santa Monica Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) has joined with City Hall and local businesses to develop a brand that best describes the city and the experience one has when visiting.

Those specializing in the tourism and hospitality industry felt a brand was necessary as destinations face stronger competition for the tourist's dollar and the visitor's time.

A successful destination brand clearly defines the community's distinctive qualities that set it apart from other locations in the region and the world.

The CVB unveiled the city's brand promise in March 2006 after nearly two years of development.

The brand reads: "Santa Monica, the best way to discover L.A.; an unforgettable beach city experience filled with eye-catching people, cutting edge culture and bold innovations. It is the essence of California lifestyle."

SHINY, HAPPY PEOPLE

In efforts to achieve the brand promise, city officials, business owners and members of the CVB discussed the need for a course at

SEE BRANDED PAGE 11

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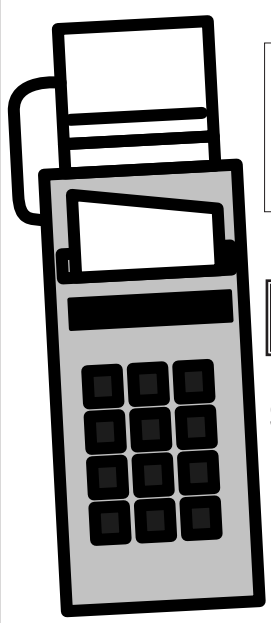

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Iraqi war is all about oil

Editor:

John Legreid's letter ("What are we willing to pay for war?," page 4, Jan. 19) is factually incorrect. Nearly all Islamic states refuse to recognize Israel: Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, to name a few. What he calls the "Jewish bloc vote" didn't support Bush, who got less than 20 percent of that vote both times he ran. So why would the president "pay off?" If anything, he's paying off his buddies in the oil industry. Halliburton is making millions in Iraq.

The Iraqi war is not about Israel. It's about O-I-L. The U.S. has historically pursued interests in the Middle East and they were always based on self-interest. Mr. Legreid should read "Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present."

Harriet Pike
Santa Monica

That '70s show is over, dude

Editor:

Having been a resident and patron for over 30 years of the "famous" surf shop at Bay Street and Main Street, I find it hard to believe that there would be any discussion on making it a historical site ("Defenders of Dogtown digging in," Jan. 30, page 1). Maybe a rehab center or a place for all of us recovering from the '70s hangover to meet. Yes, to commemorate the birth of modern skateboarding and progressive surfing, I am in favor of. A plaque or sculpture would honor all of us nicely. But let's leave the "Hysterical" (sic) Society out of it.

Dave "Woody" Wood
Santa Monica

Don't be hasty about Horizons

Editor:

With respect to the Horizons West Surf Shop controversy ("Defenders of Dogtown digging in," Jan. 30, page 1), a few observations:

I grew up in surf towns across California. I loved my spots. I loved my surf shops and all that it entailed. I loved Mitch's surf shop in La Jolla, old Ned's in Santa Cruz and even that shaky character in the "Boo" that used to peddle balsa boards on PCH. I know and am friends with many former surf legends, both local and otherwise.

I loved the taco stands and liquor stores across the California coast that would nourish us and sell us Sex Wax before the next lineup. Sacred to me were many of these now-lost icons of the surf culture. I guarded them with sometimes veracious "locals only" challenges. I still have my bumper sticker that reads: "Tourists Go Home, but Leave Your Daughters" on the back of my brother's 1941 Ford Woody. I still miss those empty skate pools we used to ride when the surf was down. Yes, I miss all of these things. However, I also understand that when progress takes its aim we must sometimes, reluctantly adjust.

I do not know how much of this current battle over Horizons is hyperbole and how much of this structure is truly historic. I did speak with some folks across the board in this area of expertise and they are skeptical, but are willing to see it play out if it is reviewed by competent and knowledgeable persons without an agenda.

Like "locals only" surf spots precluding outsiders, everyone wants to have their little piece of turf, but does everybody have a right to that claim?

While it may well be that Horizons has a legitimate claim as an appropriate landmark of the Southern California surf/skate scene, please consider that if every skate grommet, surf Goab or Kook would claim sanctity in their area with respect to "being an icon," all in the name of preservation ... well, you know what would happen.

Let the emotions of the day settle down on this, re-evaluate and revisit the situation. But please, do not be taken for a Kook for Kook's sake.

Lance Schmidt
Ocean Park

Iconoclast Blast

Seth Barnes — Send comments to editor@smdp.com

You are not master of your own domain

I HAD AN UNPLEASANT REALIZATION the other day. I was reading a newspaper story about what has become a classic Hollywood story: A movie studio executive was under fire because profits were down. Corporate headquarters was piping mad because his division was dragging down the overall performance of the media conglomerate. This fellow needed to make changes and improvements, pronto, or his bosses were going to can him Donnie Trump style.

For some reason, the fact that an accomplished Hollywood power broker actually had a boss bothered me. I understand that most people in show business either 1) revile these types as artless, empty suits lacking creative vision; or 2) disdain their power with chronic jealousy, but no matter what, nobody doubts their ability to get things done in this town. In the world of entertainment, they're supposed to be the boss, the head honcho, the ultimate decision-maker. It's human nature to assemble in hierarchies of power. It gives us a sense of control and place. But these days, there's nobody at the top. Nobody's the boss. Everyone's accountable to somebody or something else.

In corporate America, this phenomenon is easy to spot. With globalization, rampant mergers and acquisitions, and efficiencies brought about by technology and management improvements, the biggest companies are bigger than ever, so the CEO of any organization is more like a division manager than a corporate leader. And given the huge market capitalization of the Fortune 500, anybody who finds themselves at the top of these organizational flowcharts has a whole host of bosses called shareholders. Not to mention the strict oversight and regulation corporate boards and directors have employed since the accounting scandals of the early part of the Millennium.

Perhaps this business-speak doesn't apply to you. You could care less about the power struggles of corporate America because you're a painter or professional skateboarder. Or you're firmly entrenched in a blue- or white-collar job, but don't have any real ambition to be the boss. You just enjoy doing your work, calling it a day and heading home to your family. You don't ever need the headaches and tension that go along with top management. You don't aspire to climb the corporate ladder.

Well, I hope you're aware that there's no longer such a thing as a boss in the typical American family. Children have become the focal point of families. This isn't necessarily terrible in every respect; after all, most parents really do feel an obligation to raise upstanding, responsible citizens. But this duty has gone overboard. Now, each child's life is an 18-year march to college admission's dominance over their peers. Sometimes, this starts in utero, with eager mothers holding foreign language tapes up to their stomachs. You know, so the kid can get a head start on his career as a diplomat or as a multi-lingual intellectual.

The point is, even if you earn the money in your family and sleep in the master bedroom, in all likelihood, most of your efforts go towards maximizing the potential of the gangly little people wearing head-gear in the next room over. And hey, this isn't a bad thing. Having children is one of the joys of life. But it doesn't make you the boss.

BUT THESE DAYS, THERE'S NOBODY AT THE TOP. NOBODY'S THE BOSS. EVERYONE'S ACCOUNTABLE TO SOMEBODY OR SOMETHING ELSE.

It's even hard to be boss if you go into politics. I'm sure George W. Bush fancied himself the du jour boss of the country at one point. Heck, he made some pretty big decisions on his own about Iraq, and regardless of the consequences, it's undeniable that these are the actions of somebody who is in charge. He even has declared himself "The Decider" on several occasions. Sounds boss-like to me. But given his current political weakening and the inherent lame-duckiness that pervades second term administrations, I think I see the same pattern developing here. You may think you're the boss, but the reality may be something quite different. Not to mention that an extreme idealist might claim that government officials, in fact, serve 300 million to 400 million individual bosses known as the American public.

As for the sphere of religious life, I think we know that, regardless of creed, there's only one true boss in this arena. So if you're a true believer, maybe it's comforting that there is one big boss up in the sky. But regardless, this still doesn't speak well for the realm of mortal, human bosses.

Maybe the fact that we're all accountable to somebody else isn't so bad. It could make us more responsible, considerate and humble. Power taken to an extreme can easily turn into megalomania or a dictatorship. And those aren't any fun. But the fact remains that it's very hard in this world to get some breathing room without a superior breathing down your neck.

Wherever you go, there he is — your boss.

SETH BARNES can be reached at barnes-seth@hotmail.com.

WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR. EMAIL TO: EDITOR@SMDP.COM OR FAX TO (310) 576-9913

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

Word in Edgewise

Kenny Mack
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

If Dems were smart, they'd strike Bush while he's down

THE WHITE HOUSE IS IN SHAMBLES. The President's approval rating is at 30 percent, an all-time low. That means if you put three strangers in a room, two of them will talk about how little they think of the President's job performance (the third will sit quiet, unable to defend him). The most powerful Vice President in American history is a witness for the defense, because his chief of staff lied to the Special Prosecutor. Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld is, for all intents and purposes, as dead as Saddam Hussein. And Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice is in Western Asia trying to do the impossible — broker a peace deal between the Palestinian and Israeli governments on a deadline.

The Republican party is on the ropes. There is nobody to challenge Senator John McCain's bid for the Republican nomination in 2008, and the only man who could potentially turn things around for the party — former Secretary of State and retired Gen. Colin Powell — isn't running because his wife won't let him. And the fact that Sen. McCain opposed overturning Roe v. Wade as recently as 1999 means a civil war is brewing within that party over their litmus test issue: reproductive freedom.

Assuming a "RINO" (Republican In Name Only) like McCain can survive the primary, he emerges a wounded national candidate at best, and a weak national candidate at worst.

No matter who wins their nomination, the Republican party cannot counter the perception that they've moved in ideological lockstep with the President after giving him a Congressional free ride. What do they have that can compare to the applause lines every Democratic candidate will use at every campaign stop when he or she takes credit for keeping their word and passing their "Six for '06" bills in their first hundred hours? The Republican front-runner is damaged goods, the Republican party has no legislative agenda and, most importantly, the Republican President is weaker than he's ever been. Republicans everywhere are isolated, unpopular and out of ideas.

When the President said the Iraqi government would be able to take over security by November, he gave the Democrats a clock which they can simply run out now that they've kept their campaign promises. But that's not the smart play. I know Democrats are not used to thinking like this, but politics is mortal combat. When your opponent is down, you go for the jugular and you kill him until he's dead. The Democrats can deliver a death blow to the President and his party in one fell swoop. When the Chief of the executive branch laid out his asinine challenge to the majority in the legislative branch to craft policy and explain why they think it will be effective, he essentially outsourced his foreign policy to the Democrats, giving them control over the one issue where Republicans had a reliable advantage. What the Democratic majority must do is hit him hard while they have a chance to get the one thing they need: a commitment not to keep permanent or semi-permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq. So when the time eventually comes for U.S. troops to leave that country, the withdrawal will be complete.

Majority Leader Harry Reid and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi can get Republican Senators John Warner and Sam Brownback and Generals George Casey and John Abizaid to go to the White House, sit down with the President and get him on record saying there will be no permanent or semi-permanent U.S. bases in Iraq. He won't want to go back to Congress to re-authorize the use of force in Iraq. He won't want to explain how it's a good idea for American military personnel to stay in Iraq to oversee a civil war between Iraqis. So he'll have to compromise. Let the President call it a surge, an augmentation or "the Real World: Baghdad," he's already put an artificial timetable on the Iraqi government (November). There is a limit to the damage he can do before he leaves office.

It would be ironic for this President, who came to Washington calling himself a "uniter, not a divider," who promised to "change the tone" and to "restore honor and dignity to the office" to leave behind a Democratic majority in Congress which actually united the government, a marginalized Republican party with a murky future and his Presidential legacy blown up along with an un-armored Humvee on Haifa Street in Baghdad. Getting him on the record as being opposed to permanent or semi-permanent bases in Iraq is the first step in getting our brave fighting men and women to the only place where they are truly safe: home.

KENNY MACK is a writer and comedian living in Santa Monica. He can be reached at kennymack@gmail.com.

The Q Line

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Happy endings or just ending?

Within the city's 8.3 square miles, there are currently 57 massage establishments and 575 therapists. City officials estimate that about 15 percent of those working as therapists in the city are prostitutes, and that's not counting those who haven't bothered filing for permits from City Hall and the Santa Monica Police Department. City officials are currently mulling over tougher regulations to govern massage parlors and spas.

So this week's Q-Line question asks:

Should prostitution be made legal, if it is regulated and workers submit to regular health inspections? Why or why not?

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your answers in next weekend's edition of the Daily Press. Please limit responses to a minute or less.

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All the Kings' men urged to take the bus

With downtown construction impacting traffic, Metro's rail service to games at Staples Center could be a viable option. To help fans make their entertainment dollars go further, the Kings hockey team has extended its discount to Metro riders for most home games through April 7 at Staples Center. The Metro will save time and effort and $10 per ticket to the game.

The Kings are offering the $10-off discount on any ticket purchased by fans who show their Metro ticket or pass at the box office. Discounts will apply to all games except those on Feb. 17 and Feb. 24.

Only a five-minute walk from Staples Center and the Convention Center, the Metro rail system connects fans to the comfort and ease of the Metro blue line at Pico/Chick Hearn Station. The Metro blue line travels between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach, with Metro Rail and bus connections throughout Los Angeles County.

For more information on Metro bus and rail timetables, go to www.metro.net.

DAILY PRESS

Eyes on the sky

The moon will continue to be the focus of Santa Monica College's Friday Night Astronomy series in February, but with an eye on future lunar exploration missions and human settlements.

"Returning to the Moon: Part II," which will look at the missions planned starting in 2020 and beyond, is scheduled for Feb. 2 and 16 at SMC's John Drescher Planetarium.

A special program, "Eyeballs on the Moon!," which will focus on what can be learned about our lunar neighbor from a backyard telescope, will be offered Feb. 23. If weather permits, telescope lunar viewing will be offered.

The feature show and special program are at 8 p.m. Each is preceded by "The Night Sky Show" — which re-creates the night sky and provides the latest information on space exploration — at 7 p.m.

The John Drescher Planetarium, which features the state-of-the-art Digistar projection system, is located on the second floor of Drescher Hall, 1900 Pico Blvd.

Tickets are $5 each or $9 for the "double bill," with discounts for children and senior citizens. For information, call (310) 434-4223 or (310) 434-3000.

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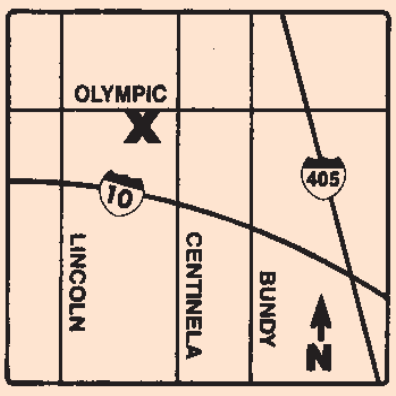

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He's the man

LA County supervisors swipe OC chief, triggering inter-county battle for executive

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES Supervisors offered the $270,000 county chief administrative officer job to Orange County chief executive Thomas G. Mauk and he immediately accepted.

MAUK

But the Board of Supervisors in Orange County is planning a last-ditch effort to keep Mauk.

"You might have the fish on the hook, but until he's in the boat, I would be kind of quiet about it," Orange County Supervisor John Moorlach said after Los Angeles Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky announced Mauk was coming.

"Mr. Mauk has accepted the position and will assume his duties on March 12," Yaroslavsky said in a news release after Monday's board vote.

Mauk, who declined comment, was picked to replace retiring chief administrative officer David Janssen.

Orange County supervisors called an emergency closed meeting for Tuesday to discuss a counteroffer to Mauk, who currently makes $215,000 a year.

"We can't match the financial package from L.A., but there's a lot of considerations when a person considers career options," board Chairman Chris Norby said. "We'd like Tom to continue to serve."

Since taking the Orange County job in October 2004, Mauk has been praised for refinancing the bankruptcy debt and negotiating one of the nation's first agreements to trim nearly $1 billion in unfunded liabilities for retiree medical benefits.

Mauk, 63, of Whittier has also been credited with making the county bureaucracy more transparent and open to the public.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
■ Send letters to **editor@smdp.com**

Wife convicted of poisoning Marine husband for payout

BY ALLISON HOFFMAN
Associated Press Writer

SAN DIEGO In the weeks after Marine Sgt. Todd Sommer collapsed in his bedroom and died, his widow lived like a woman set free, hosting loud parties at their home and using his $250,000 death benefit to finance breast implants and shopping sprees.

That was enough to arouse the suspicion of military investigators who refused to accept that the 23-year-old died of natural causes — and enough for a jury to convict Cynthia Sommer on Tuesday of murdering her husband with arsenic to get the cash.

The jury also found Sommer, 33, guilty of special circumstances counts of poisoning and murder for financial gain, meaning she will be automatically sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Sommer may appeal the verdict after her March 23 sentencing.

Prosecutors argued that Sommer wanted a more luxurious lifestyle than she could afford on her husband's $1,700 monthly salary and saw the life insurance money as a way to "set herself free."

"We have somebody in the end who was not acting aggrieved at the death of her husband," said Deputy District Attorney Laura Gunn told reporters after the verdict.

Sommer stared silently ahead as the verdict was read but wept briefly into her hands after the jury filed out.

In the court's spectator area, her mother burst into tears at the verdict and sobbed. Family members left the courtroom without speaking to reporters.

The seven women and five women of the jury also did not to talk to reporters.

"I'm deeply disappointed," defense attorney Robert Udell said after the verdict. "I don't believe Cindy killed Todd."

Of his client, he said, "She's quite stunned."

During the trial, Udell told the jury repeatedly returned to the absence of any paper trail linking Sommer to the arsenic.

With no proof that Sommer was the source of the arsenic detected in her husband's liver, Gunn relied heavily on circumstantial evidence of Sommer's financial debt and later spending sprees to show that she had a motive to kill her 23-year-old husband.

Todd Sommer was in top condition when he collapsed and died at the couple's home at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego on Feb. 18, 2002.

His death was initially ruled a heart attack. Cynthia Sommer's friends and co-workers testified during the trial that she threw wild parties, got her breasts enlarged and had casual sex with multiple partners in the weeks after her husband's collapse.

Her in-laws testified that she initially objected when they asked her to put the bulk of the $250,000 death benefit in trust for herself, their baby and her three children from a previous marriage.

Gunn asserted that the defendant was the only person with the motive and access to poison the Marine.

"It's not a case where there was a one big smoking gun," Gunn said after the verdict.

Gunn said she had few qualms about prosecuting the case after heavy-metals testing by military labs more than a year after the Marine's death found levels of arsenic 1,020 times above normal.

"From the outset, the fact is that everybody thought it was a natural death," she said. "For so many years, the defendant really did in many respects get away with it."

Todd Sommer spiked a 103-degree fever and visited an urgent care clinic on base complaining of gastrointestinal pain a week before his death.

Candidate's altered photograph putting him on defensive

BY GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press Writer

SANTA ANA A candidate for Orange County's Board of Supervisors is defending himself after a doctored photograph placing him near Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger at a press event appeared in two Vietnamese-language newspapers over the weekend.

The photo, taken in August in Little Saigon, shows candidate Trung Nguyen wearing a blue suit and standing slightly behind and to the left of the governor. A video of that day on Schwarzenegger's Web site shows Nguyen wasn't standing anywhere near the governor as he spoke from a podium.

The photograph ran over the weekend in two dailies, the Vien Dong and Viet Bao Kinh Te, in Little Saigon, the largest Vietnamese community outside of Southeast Asia.

Saulo Londono, Nguyen's campaign manager, blamed a volunteer for the doctored photo, which was created by pasting a photo of Nguyen's head to another man's body. Londono said the volunteer, who he declined to name, had been removed from the campaign.

"There are multiple pictures of Trung at that event with Arnold Schwarzenegger," Londono said Tuesday. "There are so many pictures that volunteer should have used instead and we're conducting an investigation into why the real photo wasn't used."

Schwarzenegger's office was upset by the altered image but wasn't taking any action against Nguyen. The circulation of the doctored photo was reported Sunday by a local conservative blog called Red County.

"It's clearly unauthorized, it's not something we knew anything about," said Aaron McLear, Schwarzenegger's press secretary. "There are strict policies that we have when it comes to the use of the governor's image, but it's our understanding that they've taken steps to rectify it so the problem solved itself."

The controversy comes at a bad time for Nguyen, a school board member and attorney who is running in a 10-way race to replace Lou Correa, who resigned after winning a state Senate seat in November. Voters from the district, which includes Westminster, Santa Ana and Garden Grove, go to the polls Feb. 6.

The photo was discovered Saturday by a campaign worker for Garden Grove Councilwoman Janet Nguyen, who is fighting Trung Nguyen for support among Vietnamese-American voters. The Nguyens are not related.

The original photo was taken months ago, when Schwarzenegger appeared in Little Saigon to sign an executive order that allows the flag of the former South Vietnam to be used at state-sponsored events.

ON THE NET
- **Trung Nguyen's campaign: www.trungnguyen.us**

Longhorns on the loose, butcher may be coming

By The Associated Press

GRANITE FALLS, Wash. It's getting to be almost routine for police to have to chase away a roaming nighttime gang of troublemakers. Four-legged troublemakers. Big four-legged troublemakers.

Officers been called to herd the one-ton Scottish Highland cattle back to their pasture more than 70 times since they began taking advantage of a hole in the fence in early December, the result of a tree blown down on neighboring property.

The shaggy, red-haired beasts have been the source of more than 100 calls to 911 and have been blamed for at least three accidents in which cars were dented and the cattle ambled away, Police Chief Anthony "Tony" Domish said. No injuries were reported.

One night last week, Officer Rich Michelsen said, one of the animals came calling at the police station in this town of 3,100 about 25 miles northeast of Seattle. As he has done following cattle calls from residents, Michelsen got into his cruiser, turned on the flashing lights and began easing the wayward cow home.

"People think it's funny," Michelsen said. "It's tiring, is what it is."

Residents say it's also draining their wallets to cover thousands of dollars in damage to their lawns and to replace rosebushes, shrubs and ivy eaten by the cattle.

One resident, Sharri Matronic said the cows have destroyed a retaining wall in her yard and eaten her azaleas and ivy. She also finds it unnerving to look out her window and be met by the gaze of one of the animals.

"It's not like a milking cow. They're huge — those horns — you don't know if they're going to attack or what they're going to do," Matronic said.

Police have written more than $2,000 worth of tickets to the cows' owner, Hiram Wilburn, 85, and Mayor Lyle Romack said town officials have talked about beefing up local ordinances.

"We're going to have to do something that will give us a little stronger way to deal with it," said.

Wilburn, who was at the center of an earlier animal controversy, could not be reached for comment Tuesday by The herald of Everett, but one of his friends, Robert Echard, indicated that might not be necessary.

A butcher is scheduled to visit the 25-acre property soon, Echard said.

In 2005 Wilburn was charged with unlawful operation of a game farm and release of exotic wildlife for keeping 48 Sika deer, some of which escaped into swampy land along the South Fork Stillaguamish River.

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Residents wait for mighty wind

BY ED WHITE
Associated Press Writer

SALT LAKE CITY Utah's world-class mountain peaks have been barely visible at times from the floor of the Salt Lake valley. A winter storm that won't quit?

No, it's nasty pollution that just won't blow away.

Northern Utah's valleys have been smothered by an "inversion," a blanket of warm air that keeps cold air close to the ground and traps everything: car exhaust, factory emissions, even hard-to-see particles from furnaces or a cozy fireplace.

Together they form a cloudy shroud that has been described as soup, gunk, smog — and a few other titles that can't be printed.

Salt Lake and Davis counties, home to more than 1 million people, have been under a "red" alert for 16 days in January, which means the unhealthy air should be avoided by the elderly or anyone with respiratory problems. Some schools have kept kids off the playground.

Inversions aren't new to Utah, but this one is "wide, deep and dramatic," said Bob Dalley of the state Division of Air Quality, whose daily Web updates are must-reads.

Mike Atwell, 47, of Bozeman, Mont., in town for an outdoor-industry convention at the Salt Palace, looked east toward the barely visible Wasatch Mountains, site of the 2002 Winter Olympics, and shook his head.

"It's a huge bummer. It's not what you see — it's what you can't see. You feel robbed," he said. "Mountains are why we live in the West. I feel like I'm in a foggy daze."

Another convention visitor, Beth Brewster, 36, of Seattle, said: "You expect it in Los Angeles, not Salt Lake City."

Alicia Reichert, 19, typically spends her lunch break skating at an outdoor rink at the downtown Gallivan Center.

> **"I'VE TAKEN CALLS FROM TWO CHILDREN WITH RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS. I'M NOT SURE IF IT'S CONNECTED TO THE INVERSION, BUT I'M SURE IT DOESN'T HELP."**
>
> **Colleen McKnight**
> Parkview Elementary's principal's secretary

"I cough a lot more than I usually do," she said, pausing after a set of tricky spins. "It seems harder and harder to come out here."

Some relief finally may come this week. The remedy is simple: a stiff wind or storm, no matter the direction, to send the stuff elsewhere.

"Just get here," Dalley said.

Salt Lake City, elevation 4,300 feet, is in a bowl surrounded by mountains like much of northern Utah.

The pollution-trapping inversions can stretch 80 miles north to Cache County and 40 miles south to Utah County. Under a red advisory, wood burning is prohibited, and motorists are encouraged to park their cars and choose another way to get around.

There were only three red days posted for Salt Lake and Davis counties last winter, compared to 25 this season, through Tuesday.

The threshold for a red day is lower this year, but the "criteria really are not significantly different," Dalley said.

In the Midwest and East, extreme cold commonly keeps school kids off the playground at recess. In Salt Lake City, however, principals go online to check air quality.

Parkview Elementary's 500 students were inside all last week.

"They get stir-crazy and restless," said the principal's secretary, Colleen McKnight. "On the other hand, you let them run outside and breathe the air and they start coughing.

"I've taken calls from two children with respiratory infections. I'm not sure if it's connected to the inversion, but I'm sure it doesn't help," she said.

Ron W. Smith, a 61-year-old accountant from Sandy, said he's been inside using a treadmill and rowing machine, exercise that is no match for his strenuous 25-mile bicycle rides.

"When it's this yucky, I can feel it in my lungs," he said. "I haven't been outdoors in January. I'm going through withdrawal."

Bacon to differ: Yearlong hunt of pigs kicks off this weekend

BY TARA GODVIN
Associated Press Writer

HONOLULU A yearlong pig hunt, including full-moon hunts with knives and dogs, will begin this weekend above several residential Honolulu neighborhoods plagued by porcine invaders.

Areas to be opened for the hunt are along the Honolulu Mauka Trail System in the Koolau Mountains overlooking the growing Honolulu and Waikiki skyline.

"The Honolulu Mauka Trail System is normally off-limits to hunting due to the level of public use and situation adjacent to the community.

But the persistence of feral pigs requires measures to control damage they have caused to the resources, watershed, and public and private property," said Peter Young, chairman of the Department of Land and Natural Resources in announcing the hunt Tuesday.

Hunting will be allowed on Wednesdays and Sundays from dawn until dusk starting this Sunday and ending Feb. 4, 2008.

Hunting will be allowed in areas spanning the Makiki-Tantalus area across Manoa Valley to Waahila ridge, as well as portions of Pauoa Flats.

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U.S. astronauts ready to step out

BY MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. Let the spacewalks begin.

U.S. astronauts Michael Lopez-Alegria and Sunita Williams on Wednesday were expected to make the first of three spacewalks over a nine-day period outside the international space station.

It would mark the first time U.S. astronauts have attempted the feat in such a short period of time without a space shuttle docked at the station.

"We're going to be knocking out three, one right after another," said Glenda Laws, lead spacewalk officer.

The astronauts plan to connect ammonia loops that keep the U.S. lab cooled from a temporary to a permanent system, and to jettison a sun shade and thermal shrouds during their three trips outside the station. Besides Wednesday's trip, spacewalks are planned for Sunday and the following Thursday.

If the spacewalks go as planned, Lopez-Alegria would have little time to rest before going on a fourth scheduled spacewalk in late February. It's not uncommon for U.S. astronauts to conduct three spacewalks over a short period of time during a visit by a space shuttle to the station — four were carried out during Discovery's trip in December.

The extra astronauts are handy for helping the spacewalkers prepare their spacesuits and the airlock, and for operating robotic arms on the station and shuttle to provide camera views or move the spacewalkers.

Conducting a spacewalk with just a three-man crew at the space station is a much tougher task. The difficulty is magnified when trying three in such a short period of time — a major reason it has never been done before.

Unlike spacewalks with a docked shuttle, the coordinator during the upcoming spacewalks will be at Mission Control in Houston instead of at the space station.

NASA officials said they scheduled the spacewalks so closely together because the first two are almost identical in nature, and time and energy could be saved on preparation. Timing also played a role, as the U.S. spacewalks were scheduled to take place between the last shuttle visit in December — when the cooling system was turned on — and the next scheduled visit in mid-March.

Lopez-Alegria and Williams will have three days to rest between each spacewalk, although Mission Control could give them more time if they need it.

"These two crew members are extremely fit and we don't think there is any reason for concern that they would have undue physical exhaustion," Laws said.

Because Lopez-Alegria has been at the space station since September, the spacewalkers haven't trained together in the practice pool at the Johnson Space Center since last July. So Mission Control has been giving them extra time to study up and practice computer simulations.

"It's a refresher in every sense of the word in what they last practiced in Houston," said Derek Hassmann, spacewalk flight director.

The spacewalkers need to be especially careful about avoiding ammonia leaks, as the toxic substance leaked out of cooling line in 2001 when astronaut Robert Curbeam was performing a similar task. Curbeam positioned himself so the sun would bake off the ammonia crystals and the shuttle airlock was vented to prevent contamination.

"We are preparing ourselves and preparing the spacewalking crew for the potential that we may have some ammonia leakage," Hassmann said. "We feel that we're ready if it does come."

Chavez will assume powers to remake Venezuelan society

BY FABIOLA SANCHEZ
Associated Press Writer

CARACAS, Venezuela A Congress wholly loyal to President Hugo Chavez met at a downtown plaza Wednesday to give the Venezuelan leader authority to enact sweeping measures by presidential decree.

Hundreds of Chavez supporters wearing red — the color of Venezuela's ruling party — gathered the plaza, waving signs reading "Socialism is democracy!" as lawmakers read out the proposed bill giving the president special powers for 18 months to transform 11 broadly defined areas, including the economy, energy and defense.

"The people of Venezuela, not just the National Assembly, are giving this enabling power to the president of the republic," said congresswoman Iris Varela, addressing the crowd next to the National Assembly.

Chavez, who is beginning a fresh six-year term, says the legislation will be the start of a new era of "maximum revolution" during which he will consolidate Venezuela's transformation into a socialist society. His critics, however, are calling it a radical lurch toward authoritarianism by a leader with unchecked power.

The former paratroop commander has already said he will use the law to decree nationalizations of Venezuela's largest telecommunications company and the electricity sector, slap new taxes on the rich and impose greater state control over the oil and natural gas industries.

A final draft of the law shows Chavez will also be allowed to dictate unspecified measures to transform state institutions; reform banking, tax, insurance and financial regulations; decide on security and defense matters such as gun regulations and military organization; and "adapt" legislation to ensure "the equal distribution of wealth" as part of a new "social and economic model."

Chavez also plans to reorganize regional territories and carry out reforms aimed at bringing "power to the people" through thousands of newly formed Communal Councils, in which Venezuelans will have a say on spending an increasing flow of state money on neighborhood projects from public housing to road repaving.

Lawmakers were scheduled to formally approve the law Wednesday in an outdoor session in Caracas' Plaza Bolivar, next to the National Assembly.

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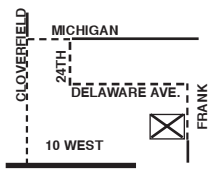

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Congregations unite to end gang violence

FROM GANGS PAGE 1

current budget for youth, along with an update on the actions of community partners who joined forces in 2005 following a series of community meetings called by State Sen. Sheila Kuehl.

Those in attendance seemed pleased with responses from city and school officials, who pledged their support for an interfaith effort that could work in tandem with City Hall and the school district by securing funding from sources the former may not be able to access.

There is also the belief that the faith-based community may be better equipped to work closely with families who have either been victims of gang violence or are living with a troubled youth on the edge.

"I'm heartened to see two communities talking about the need to work together," said Mayor Richard Bloom. "I truly believe that we cannot solve this horrible problem by ourselves. It does begin at home, but also extends outside of the home. We need to embrace all sides of the issue."

Bloom suggested City Hall try to organize a neighborhood watch program that could work with law enforcement in patrolling city streets, whether it be once a month or once a week.

> **"IT'S THAT SENSE OF HOPELESSNESS. THAT'S WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST."**
>
> Oscar de la Torre
> School board member

'LET'S GET IT DONE'

As in prior meetings, focus turned towards education, job training and programs that try to reintegrate youth who have been incarcerated back into society.

The negative effects of poverty and racism also surfaced, as participants tried to uncover why youth are attracted to gangs in the first place.

Oscar de la Torre, vice president of the Santa Monica-Malibu school board and executive director of the Pico Youth & Family Center, said gang violence in Santa Monica and elsewhere has plagued the poorest of neighborhoods, where kids feel they have no chance at succeeding in life in what he called the "jail before Yale" dilemma.

"No gang member is born," de la Torre said. "They are made ... It's that sense of hopelessness. That's what we're up against."

The school district is working hard to close the achievement gap between students of color and their Asian and white counterparts, de la Torre said, and there is some discussion of requiring all new teachers to tour Santa Monica to better understand what types of environments their students are living in.

It was also suggested that more intervention be done at the elementary and middle school levels, with educators identifying those children who are most at risk and dedicating extra resources to keep them in school and off the streets. These students would also be taken on field trips so that they might bond with one another and, therefore, gain a sense of respect for one another.

"I've talked with gang members and they've told me that it's hard to kill somebody when you knew them," de la Torre said.

To assist educators, L.A. Voice recommended school officials look into funding a program in which teachers are paid extra to make periodic visits to the homes of students who are struggling.

Currently, the federal government has authorized $15 million to help fund the Nell Soto Parent/Teacher Involvement Program, however, the local district does not qualify because schools do not perform low enough academically, said Ana Maria Jara, a member of L.A. Voice.

"Oftentimes, parents feel there are too many barriers between them and the school district" Jara said. "Many don't know how to navigate through the system ... Through the home visitation program, teachers can listen to parents and form a long lasting relationship."

As a sign of their commitment, those who attended ended the meeting by chanting "Si, se puede" (or "Yes, we can").

"Let us reflect on these simple words," said Father Mike Gutierrez, the head pastor at St. Anne's. "Let's get it done."

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Set a course

Officials to revisit out-of-district permits

FROM BB BOND PAGE 3

district permit system are in the cards.

"I have to really think about whether that would be in the best interest to do so, because why add space if I have the space there?" Talarico said. "Before I take a thoughtful recommendation forward for projects for Measure BB, I want to get a handle on what the board's thinking is and what the community is thinking about the right size of the district."

The discussion on student enrollment also ties in with the Facilities Master Plan, which is expected to be released for public comment in late March or early April. The Facilities Master Plan assesses the current state of existing facilities.

"I feel like we're in a crunch time," Talarico said.

All of these factors could affect the way school officials spend Measure BB money because declining enrollment negatively impacts funding from the state.

"We have the ability to decide the right percentage of permit students to keep the district at a constant level because revenue fluctuates on the number of students," said Board President Kathy Wisnicki on Tuesday.

In the late 1990s, a "liberal" permit policy resulted in about 25 percent of the entire district's enrollment consisting of students from outside the district, Wisnicki said.

In 2002, the school board decided to place a moratorium on the number of students from outside the district, limiting enrollment to students who were children of employees of the district or in the city governments in Santa Monica or Malibu. Students whose siblings were already permitted in the district were also allowed in.

The moratorium was put into place shortly before Emily Bloomfield took her seat on the Board of Education. The recently re-elected school board member said she was in favor of the moratorium because it was a way of solving a short-term financial problem.

"It was a cost to our facilities and overcrowding the school and classroom," Bloomfield said.

Today, less than 17 percent of students in the district are from outside Santa Monica and Malibu.

> **"WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO DECIDE THE RIGHT PERCENTAGE OF PERMIT STUDENTS TO KEEP THE DISTRICT AT A CONSTANT LEVEL BECAUSE REVENUE FLUCTUATES ON THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS."**
>
> Kathy Wisnicki.
> School Board President

"What are the implications if it continues?" Wisnicki asked. "How do we strategically go about letting students in so we don't have a sudden influx in one year?"

The community workshop is tentatively scheduled for Feb. 13.

melodyh@smdp.com

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
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Lessons in promoting Santa Monica

FROM BRANDED PAGE 3

SMC that would be specifically designed for employees in the Santa Monica service industry. The class would run anywhere from three to 12 hours, with refresher courses available online. The class would most likely be offered through SMC's Small Business Development Center, one of only 35 such centers in the state, which is funded by a grant from the Small Business Administration.

While it is still in the early stages, the customer service class could be up and running in six months, CVB officials said.

"We are lucky because we already have so much going for us," said Misti Kerns, president and chief executive officer of the CVB. "But we cannot afford to have any employees not be familiar with the brand. We need people to believe in this brand across the board."

To do so, both employees and residents need to buy into it. That could prove to be difficult with the high level of turnover in the hospitality and service industries. Businesses may also be reluctant to pay employees to take the course when they already train them on how to interact with customers, those participating in the discussion said.

"We are hoping to establish some kind of scholarship program so that employees can continue with their education," Kerns said.

For residents, it was suggested more community outreach could help change some negative feelings people have about tourists.

"Some residents will say that they hate tourists," said Kathleen Rawson, executive director of the Bayside District Corp., which helps City Hall promote and manage downtown. "I think an education campaign could help residents understand the value tourism brings. That's a big piece."

Some other ideas floated at the meeting included creating a visitor's code of ethics, printing bus schedules and routes on the back of receipts shoppers receive and hiring more youth from Santa Monica, since they have a stake in the community.

To measure progress, the CVB could analyze tax revenues related to tourism, conduct surveys with visitors and residents, pass out comment cards and send in secret shoppers to retail stores to see if employees are practicing lessons learned.

"A lot of the discussion was about career paths, career laddering, meaning these young people who are working for a hotel and a restaurant making minimum wage could have the opportunity to advance and take another career path, and we believe we can help the industry shape the training that is needed for these employees," said Marvin Martinez, the vice president of planning and development at SMC.

"It's all about training good workers, giving them the best skills possible to help themselves and your business."

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Artist remembered for love of aviation

FROM **DEDICATED** PAGE 1

Merl pointed out that Douglas Aircraft was a piece of Santa Monica history. Donald Douglas founded the Douglas Aircraft Company in Santa Monica in 1921, and it remained a major manufacturing employer in the city for several decades.

As a 15-year-old aviation enthusiast, Blinn visited the museum and asked the director if he could paint a mural. The result was a depiction of various Douglas aircraft from the 1920s through the 1790s.

"He was quite a budding artist, and he loved aviation," Smith said.

Courtesy of Santa Monica College

The aviation mural painted by Blinn depicts Douglas Aircraft from the 1920s through the 1970s.

Blinn completed the mural over the course of a year, his parents driving him on the weekends from their home in Manhattan Beach.

"Some weekends he couldn't make it because he was at the hospital with health problems," Smith said. "What makes this so poignant is that he had cystic fibrosis his whole life."

Blinn was diagnosed with the genetic disease when he was 6 months old. Cystic fibrosis clogs the lungs and leads to life-threatening lung infections, according to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. It also obstructs the pancreas and stops natural enzymes from helping the body break down and absorb food.

While trips to the hospital for treatment delayed Blinn's mural project, they didn't stop Blinn from ultimately pursuing his dreams.

A love for art led the Mira Costa High School 1983 graduate to study art and computer graphic design at California State University at Dominguez Hills, graduating summa cum laude.

After computer design-related positions prompted him to move from Santa Barbara to Seattle to San Pedro, Blinn ultimately settled into jobs with Wells Fargo Bank and as a freelancer for American Honda Motor Company in Torrance, according to www.andyblinn.com, a Web site dedicated to Blinn's memory.

"His analytical mind, his artistic creativity, and his calm, nonjudgmental approach to problem-solving made him a trusted co-worker," reads the Web site.

Blinn's parents, Richard and Marjeanne, joined a group of about a dozen family friends and officials who attended Wednesday's intimate, and emotional, ceremony.

"As a representative of the college, we're very pleased and honored to put up this memorial in honor of this work," said Katharine Muller, Santa Monica College's dean of external relations, the administrator in charge of the college's satellite campuses.

> **"HIS ANALYTICAL MIND, HIS ARTISTIC CREATIVITY, AND HIS CALM, NONJUDGMENTAL APPROACH TO PROBLEM-SOLVING MADE HIM A TRUSTED CO-WORKER."**

The plaque in the stairwell, with two pictures of Blinn painting the mural, reads: "Andy lived courageously with the genetic disease cystic fibrosis. He treated each day of his life as a gift. He loved art, airplanes, computers and many friends. He achieved awards in every field he entered. He gave his creative spirit to everything he touched."

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Flashing crosswalks proving costly to city

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE — A crosswalk is not the equivalent of a protective barrier against cars.

Especially not in Santa Monica.

Just a few feet from where an 80-year-old Santa Monica man was struck and killed while making his way through a crosswalk last week at the intersection of Euclid Street and Santa Monica Boulevard, a warning sign affixed to a pole reads: "Flashers out of Service ... Sorry."

But that crosswalk isn't the exception — it's one of 13 flashing crosswalks of the city's 15 that have gone dark.

Only two lighted crosswalks, where pedestrians can activate flashing lights embedded in the street as a warning to drivers, are currently functioning in Santa Monica, according to Lucy Dyke, the city's Transportation Planning Manager.

While the city has already gone through two to three different flashing crosswalk products, with all performing poorly in the past, city officials aren't quite ready to give up on the flashing crosswalk concept.

"We've ordered parts to fix the ones we have and we're going to replace all of them," Dyke said on Wednesday. "We are going to try one more time to replace all of them with something else that's sturdier."

Dyke estimates that it will cost the city approximately $900,000 to replace the entire system. City staff has been working with a vendor to develop a design that would create a more robust and sturdier product. Once that product is developed, the vendor will install them at the intersection of Montana Avenue and 21st Street for a test phase.

"It's a lot of money to replace," Dyke said. "We really need to make a decision on whether this can work or can't.

"It's a last effort to try everything we can to see if there is a way to keep them running more reliably."

The first series of flashing crosswalks were installed along Pico Boulevard around 1998. Over the years, such crosswalks were installed along parts of Ocean Park Boulevard, Santa Monica Boulevard and Montana Avenue.

The only two functioning crosswalks are located at the intersections of Ocean Park Boulevard and 16th Street and Pico Boulevard and 22nd Street.

Not all of the crosswalks were provided by the same vendor, since they were installed over a period of nine years. Some of the flashing crosswalks have been replaced as many as three times, Dyke said.

Many of the current crosswalks were developed by Econolite, a company supplying traffic and transportation improvement equipment. The company no longer offers parts for the flashing crosswalks that are installed in Santa Monica, Dyke said.

A representative from Econolite did not return a request for comment.

When a flashing crosswalk is not functioning properly, it gives pedestrians a false sense of security, since they might cross the street assuming a driver will slow down," said Dan Neuman, who was walking on Pico Boulevard near Third Street on Wednesday afternoon.

Christine Chang *news@smdp.com*

FOLLOW THE LEADER: **Pedestrians jaywalking on Sawtelle Boulevard about 20 feet from a crosswalk at Olympic Boulevard. Some pedestrians bypass crosswalks altogether.**

But when the flashers are working properly, it definitely gets the driver's attention, he said.

"I'm uncomfortable using the crosswalks without the lights because people are preoccupied with those devices and don't see you." Neuman said.

The flashing crosswalk is less of a problem than the "maniac" drivers who are on their cell phones and speeding through crosswalks, said another pedestrian, who asked not to be identified.

"Look at this guy. He's going so fast," the pedestrian remarked as a car sped past on Pico Boulevard.

While the pedestrian commented on how the flashers in the crosswalks are a good safety feature, several others began walking out into the street, afraid to cross all the way until drivers slowed down. One car, driving west on Pico Boulevard, stopped a few feet short of the crosswalk as a pedestrian jogged to the sidewalk.

Just then, a bus sped past.

"The buses I don't play with, even if those lights were flashing," the pedestrian said.

In 2006, there were a handful of incidents downtown involving pedestrians and drivers, three of which occurred at Fourth Street and Wilshire Boulevard, while two more took place two blocks away, at the intersection of Fourth Street and Santa Monica Boulevard.

None of the accidents involved fatalities.

"I wouldn't consider it dangerous," SMPD Lt. Clinton Muir said of the downtown intersections. "There's large vehicle flow."

In fact, many of the accidents involving pedestrians and vehicles occur at signalized intersections, Dyke said.

Last year, there were five pedestrian-related crashes along the entire city length of Ocean Park Boulevard. One involved a fatality.

On Sept. 21, 2006, a Santa Monica man struck and killed a pedestrian in a crosswalk at the 25th Street intersection. Last month, the City Attorney filed charges against the driver, Frank Kalman, 58 of Santa Monica, for vehicular manslaughter without gross negligence, unsafe speed and failure to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk.

Residents in the Sunset Park area have been outraged over the near-miss incidents that occur nearly every day along Ocean Park Boulevard. The city is just about to wrap up a $75,000 traffic study on identifying improvements for the corridor and city staff is expected to report back to the community this month on its findings.

In the meantime, the city's Transportation Management Division is working with the SMPD to install signs that flash the speed at which drivers are traveling. The signs will be installed on Ocean Park Boulevard in the next few months.

The police department is trying to address traffic safety, including teaching senior pedestrian classes at the YMCA. The class instructs senior citizens on being aware when crossing streets and to be sure drivers can see them.

In addition, every week, a plain-clothes officer monitors a specific crosswalk, walking into the painted lines to see if drivers will stop. Another officer will then cite unsafe drivers.

"Pedestrians and vehicles should always be aware, regardless of the intersection," Muir said.

Kristin Mayer contributed to the reporting of this article.

"IT'S A LAST EFFORT TO TRY EVERYTHING WE CAN TO SEE IF THERE IS A WAY TO INSTALL AND KEEP THEM RUNNING MORE RELIABLY."

Lucy Dyke
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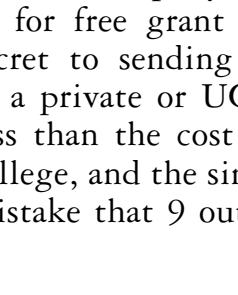

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Free workshop reveals 7 ways to slash college costs

SANTA MONICA – An extremely popular free workshop is being held for the parents of college bound high school students during the month of February at various Santa Monica locations.

The workshop will focus on little-known ways of getting money for college, no matter how much income you make, or how good of a student you have. The class will include such topics as how to double or triple your eligibility for free grant money, the secret to sending your child to a private or UC school for less than the cost of a junior college, and the single biggest mistake that 9 out of 10 parents make when planning for college.

The workshop dates are Thursday, February 8th at the Montana Avenue 7:15PM-8:45PM, Saturday, February 10th at the Santa Monica Main Library 10:15 AM. to 12 PM, and Tuesday, February 13th at the Santa Monica Main Library. The workshop will be taught by Shanee Chavis an affiliate of the College Planning Network, Inc. the nation's leading expert on paying for college.

Seating is free, but limited by the size of the room. To reserve your seat, call 310-581-7954 leave a message and receive a confirmation

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The going rate

Sea change prompts Fed to leave interest rates unchanged

BY MARTIN CRUTSINGER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON Since Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke and his colleagues last met, an economic sea change has occurred that has left financial markets glumly contemplating the central bank's next moves on interest rates.

Analysts didn't expect the Fed to change rates when policymakers wrap up their two days of meetings. But they are braced for the possibility of rate increases later this year, a far cry from the rate cuts they had been expecting just a few weeks ago.

Since the Fed's last meeting Dec. 12, the economic news has been uniformly good, with job growth stronger than expected, energy prices dropping and the overall economy navigating the rough waters of a severe housing slump.

Many analysts have gone from forecasting that the Fed would cut rates possibly three times this year to thinking that the most likely outcome is that the Fed will leave rates steady for a considerable period.

"Some were expecting rate cuts as early as March and now it is possible the Fed will keep the federal funds rate unchanged for the rest of the year. That is the harsh reality that the markets are now facing," said David Jones, chief economist at DMJ Advisors, a Denver-based forecasting firm.

Such an outcome would mean that banks' prime lending rate, the benchmark for millions of consumer and business loans, will remain at 8.25 percent.

The Fed last changed rates back in June when it pushed the federal funds rate, the interest that banks charge each other, up to 5.25 percent.

It marked the 17th consecutive meeting that the central bank had nudged rates up by a quarter-point. Before the Fed started raising rates in June 2004, the funds rate was at 1 percent and the prime rate stood at 4 percent, both the lowest levels in more than four decades.

After raising rates in June, the Fed left the funds rate unchanged, hoping it had done enough to engineer a "soft landing" in which the economy slows and inflation pressures are lowered but the slowdown doesn't deepen into a recession.

For a time, recession worries were on the rise as analysts worried that a severe slump in the housing market might be enough to bring on a downturn.

Many expected growth would remain at that lackluster pace or perhaps dip even further in the final three months of the year.

However, with a string of stronger-than-expected results in recent weeks on jobs, consumer spending and manufacturing, analysts believe the economy managed to rebound in the final three months of 2006 and is growing at a respectable pace of around 3 percent in the current quarter.

> **IF WE HAVE A SOFT LANDING, THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO REASON FOR THE FED TO LOWER INTEREST RATES ..."**
>
> Lyle Gramley
> Senior economic adviser

Many economists believe that all the signals are flashing that Bernanke, wrapping up his first year as Fed chairman, is close to achieving a soft landing.

"If we have a soft landing, there is absolutely no reason for the Fed to lower interest rates and the only question is will we get enough progress on inflation to keep the Fed from raising rates," said Lyle Gramley, senior economic adviser at Schwab Research Group, a financial services firm.

Video is emerging as key to Cisco's steady growth

BY JORDAN ROBERTSON
AP Technology Writer

SAN JOSE, Calif. So far, when it comes to making money, the online video explosion is mostly about potential. Studios selling TV shows and movies for download, and Web sites like YouTube that link ads to user-generated content, stand to reap billions from the Internet's hottest trend.

But a select group of companies whose products exist largely outside the public view are already profiting handsomely. Led by industry powerhouse Cisco Systems Inc., the network equipment makers are seeing their gear snapped up by service providers who must upgrade their networks to accommodate surging Internet traffic and booming broadband demand.

"Cisco would like to see video delivered to every device everywhere," said Zeus Kerravala, a network infrastructure analyst with Yankee Group. "If you're looking to something to create the next wave of network upgrades, video is front and center. It drives bandwidth like we've never seen before."

Video consumes thousands of times the network space of e-mail messages, and demand is growing so fast that it's poised to overtake peer-to-peer file sharing as the dominant form of Internet traffic.

But online video — which is projected to grow from $1.3 billion in revenue last year to more than $7 billion by 2010, according to the market research firm Parks Associates — isn't yet the profit machine the online community envisions. Companies are still grappling with how to generate reliable revenue from content that is largely free and often littered with copyright-infringement land mines.

That's a rich opportunity for Cisco, Alcatel-Lucent, Juniper Networks Inc. and Redback Networks Inc., companies that build the Internet's infrastructure.

Their products help the cable companies and telecoms manage traffic load.

BASKETBALL

Bryant suspended for throwing elbow

BY BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK Kobe Bryant was suspended one game without pay by the NBA on Tuesday for striking San Antonio's Manu Ginobili in the face.

With his Los Angeles Lakers in New York to play the Knicks, Bryant requested an "immediate hearing" with the league office to appeal the suspension. But his request was denied because it would have deviated from standard procedure, and Bryant was still slated to miss the game Tuesday night.

"This is not the process that we use at the NBA. Certainly, in theory, given the fact that the Lakers were in New York, we could have heard an appeal. But again, we never have, as it's not part of our process," said Stu Jackson, the league's chief disciplinarian for on-court actions. "He does have the right to an appeal at a later date. If he were to win that appeal, he would get his money back."

Bryant's absence left the Lakers without their leading scorer when they opened an eight-game road trip.

"I've been waiting to play here. It's always been a fun place for me to play here, and I'm surprised. Shocked, by it, actually," Bryant said after the morning shootaround. "I unintentionally caught Manu Ginobili. What do you say? It's a basketball game. You unintentionally catch people with elbows every once in a while."

Players association spokesman Dan Wasserman said a letter was sent on Bryant's behalf to the league office requesting the hearing, and that Bryant volunteered to review the videotape and talk to commissioner David Stern or the "appropriate league official."

"I'm blown away by it. I really am," Bryant said. "It just makes no sense."

The play occurred with 2.7 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter of the Lakers' 96-94 overtime loss to the Spurs on Sunday.

Jackson disagreed, and offered the NBA's explanation on a conference call.

"Some of the determining factors were the fact that there was contact made with Ginobili above the shoulders and the fact that this particular action by Kobe was an unnatural basketball motion. Following a shot, he drove a stiff arm in a backward motion and struck Ginobili in the head," Jackson said. "We did not view this as an inadvertent action."

No foul was called on the play.

"This blow was so swift in real time that it's understandable why, in fact, an official would have missed the contact," Jackson said. "In our view, this was not an attempt to draw a foul."

Bryant is averaging 28.4 points, 5.5 assists and 5.4 rebounds.

Bryant scored 40 points in his only visit last season to Madison Square Garden, which he called his favorite place to play. Sasha Vujacic started in his place to the disappointment of a sellout crowd that booed when it was announced during pregame introductions that Bryant was not there.

Bonds gives the Giants right to terminate deal

BY RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK Barry Bonds gave the San Francisco Giants the right to terminate his $15.8 million, one-year contract if he is indicted.

The unusual provision, included in the deal that was completed Monday night, protects the team in case Bonds is charged in the federal government's steroids investigation.

Bonds' personal trainer, Greg Anderson, is in a California federal prison because he has refused to testify whether Bonds committed perjury when he told a 2003 grand jury he never knowingly used performance-enhancing drugs.

As part of the agreement, if Bonds is indicted the Giants have the right to terminate it under two sections of the Uniform Player Contract, a baseball executive said Tuesday, speaking on condition of anonymity because the team didn't announce that detail.

Under 7(b)(1), a team may terminate a contract if the player shall "fail, refuse or neglect to conform his personal conduct to the standards of good citizenship and good sportsmanship or to keep himself in first-class physical condition or to obey the club's training rules."

Section 7(b)(3) gives the team the right to end the deal if a player shall "fail, refuse or neglect to render his services hereunder or in any manner materially breach this contract."

In addition, the Giants have the less drastic option of converting Bonds' deal to nonguaranteed, the baseball executive said. Players with nonguaranteed contracts can be released before opening day for 30 or 45 days' termination pay, depending on the timing.

As part of the deal, Bonds gave up the right to ask the players' association to file a grievance if he is indicted and the contract is terminated. But nothing would stop the union from pursuing a grievance on its own.

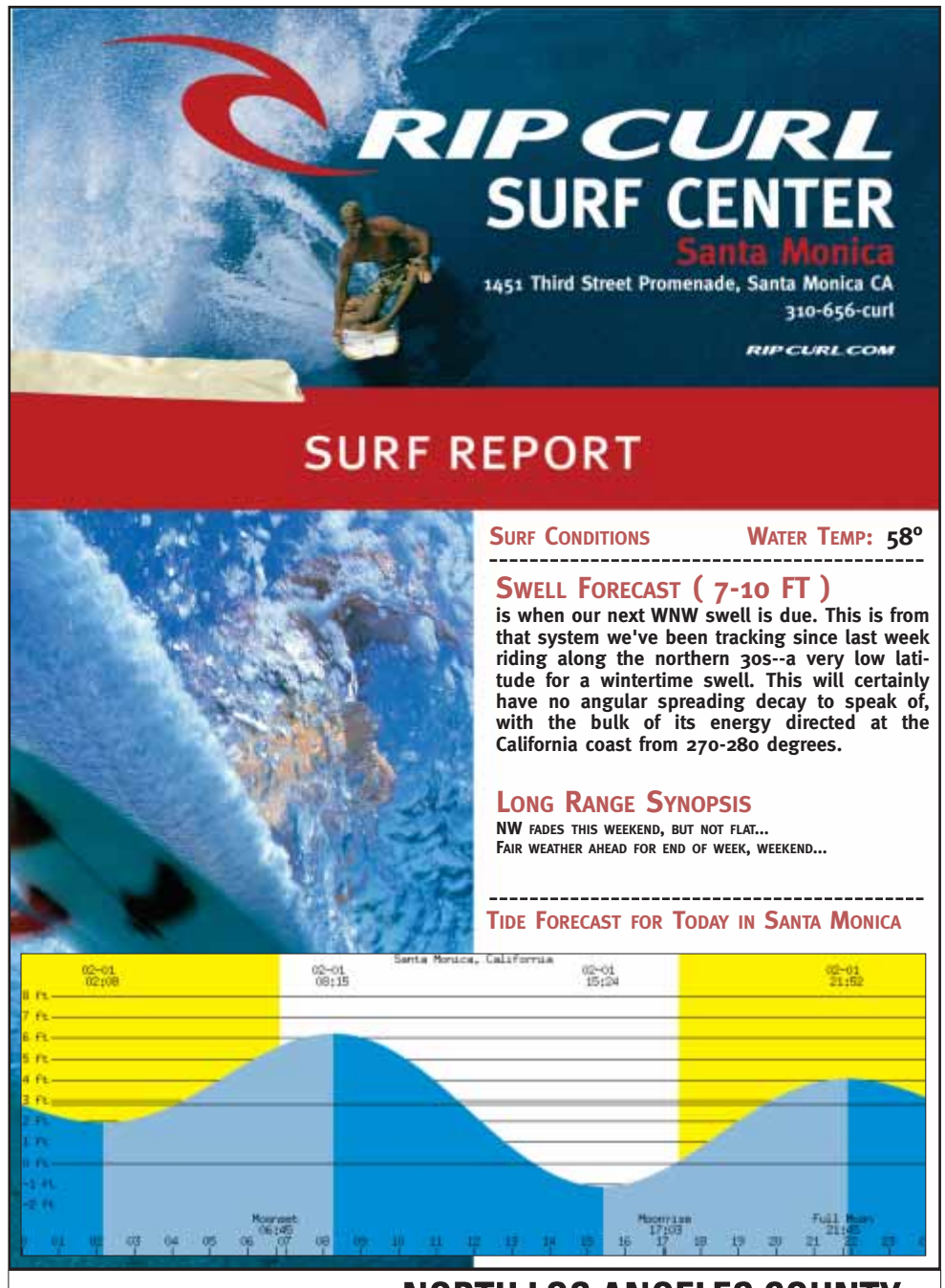
Giants owner Peter Magowan declined comment and Jeff Borris, Bonds' agent, didn't want to elaborate on the inclusion of the clause. Bonds was at AT&T Park on Tuesday and held a meeting with about 100 people from the team's staff, Giants spokesman Jim Moorehead said.

"It was a meet-and-greet session," Moorehead said.

On Monday, as the contract was being finalized, Magowan and Bonds met to put their ill will behind them. A day after the season ended, Magowan had said "we need to go in a new direction" and that "we do need to get younger and healthier."

Bonds was miffed by those remarks, said those around him. Before Thanksgiving, Magowan called the Bonds camp to clarify his comments and say he did not mean to offend the star.

Bonds became a free agent after completing a $90 million, five-year contract, and the sides agreed to the financial terms of a new contract Dec. 7.



BEACH REPORT CARD

NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous four weeks up to the ending date of **January 23, 2007**

HEAL THE BAY - 1444 9th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401 - www.healthebay.org - brc@healthebay.org - 800 HEAL BAY

QUICK STATS (for the last 28 days)

- Number of sewage spills -- 12
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 1
- Number of wet days -- 4
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 32 / 5
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 11 / 5

The Beach Report Card is made possible by a grant from Ford

Heal the Bay reminds you not to swim or surf within 100 yards of any flowing storm drain or for 3 days after a rainstorm. After a rain, indicator bacteria counts at beaches throughout California usually far exceed health criteria in the state's Beach Closure and Health Warning Protocol.

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Leo Carrillo Beach, at Arroyo Sequit Creek mouth	A+	ns
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth	A+	ns
El Pescador State Beach, between Lachusa and Los Aliso creeks	A+	ns
Encinal Canyon at El Matador State Beach	A+	ns
Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth	A+	ns
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth	A+	ns
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildlife Rd. (private)	A+	A+
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth	A	ns
Escondido Creek, just east of Escondido State Beach	A+	ns
Latigo Canyon Creek mouth	A+	ns
Solstice Canyon at Dan Blocker County Beach	B	ns
Puerco State Beach at creek mouth	B	ns
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerco Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd.	F	ns
Surfrider Beach at Malibu Colony fence	B	ns
Surfrider Beach (breach location)- daily	F	F
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east	A	ns
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon	F	ns
Las Flores State Beach at Las Flores Creek (point zero)	A+	ns
Big Rock Beach at 19948 PCH stairs	A	ns
Pena Creek at Las Tunas County Beach	A+	ns
Tuna Canyon	A+	A+
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth	A	A+
Castlerock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	ns
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	B	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at 17200 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain)	A	ns

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club drain near fence	F	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Pulga Canyon storm drain	A+	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Temescal Canyon drain	D	ns
Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Chautauqua)	F	F
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain	F	ns
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain	D	ns
Santa Monica Municipal Pier	F	A
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kenter storm drain	A	F
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restrooms)	A	ns
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain	A	C
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain	A+	ns
Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain	D	ns
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain	A+	ns
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south	A+	ns
Venice Beach- projection of Topsail St.	A+	ns
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower	B	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth	A	F
Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain	A+	ns
North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of D&W jetty)	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain	A+	ns
Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant	A+	ns
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain	A+	ns

LEGEND

DRY -- each location is graded on an A – F scale based on bacterial pollution levels present in the surf zone
WET -- grades for days of recorded rainfall and the following 3 days
ns -- no sample taken

Heal the Bay is a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to making Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters safe and healthy for people and marine life.

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Heal the Bay's Beach Report Card℠ is based on weekly water quality monitoring data provided by the City of Los Angeles' Environmental Monitoring Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Data is analyzed as soon as it is made available to us by the public agencies. Beaches are graded on an A–F scale based on the risk of ocean users becoming ill. Samples are analyzed for bacteria—enterococcus, total and fecal coliforms—that indicate biological pollution. A fact sheet detailing the exact methodology used in determining grades for each location is available from the office or on our web site. The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at local beaches.

The Beach Report Card is an indication of past water quality and is not a warranty of the current safety of those areas surveyed. Our lawyers are happy.

Happy as a cat, Libra

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)

★★★★ No matter which way you turn, you could feel a bit awkward. Though ingenuity certainly plays a role in your life, it might not take some of the difficult moments away. Chalk up discomfort to the planets right now. Tonight: Let off steam.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★ Stay close to home, if possible. Many people and happenings seem to tilt you off-center. You would be happier relaxing and perhaps cocooning. Remember, you don't have to be available to all the people all of the time! Tonight: Homeward bound.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ What you say might be right-on, but one would be hard-pressed to tell it by observing others' responses. Ultimately, what you verbalize and do needs to reflect you and not others. Plans do change. Tonight: Out and about.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Dig into your imagination and deal with issues directly and with finesse. How you handle a money matter might be clear to you, but not to others. What becomes evident is that you cannot control others. Tonight: Don't splurge!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ You are all smiles but do have difficulty handling someone in a more direct and complete manner. You might want to try another approach or do something different. Others challenge your thinking and style! Stay secure. Tonight: Just smile.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★ Know when to cut your losses and say "enough." You could be tired and withdrawn because of what is going on. You might need some personal time. Don't put yourself last all the time. Tonight: Get some extra R and R.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ You know what you want. Though you might want to zoom in and make it yours, this behavior could be a problem. Others are not as compliant as you might like. Sometimes their attitude or gestures say it all. Tonight: Happy as a cat.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★ Though others want you to be in the limelight and take charge, they might not make it easy. Ignore underground currents. Don't be surprised by someone's direct challenge. You can handle nearly anything. Tonight: Expect to be in demand.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★ Taking an overview could be challenging. Others might be reactive and in a difficult mood. You could be out of sorts as well. Events and people don't calm down, but only become more lively. Tonight: Talk up a storm.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ Handle finances as directly as possible. You might want to gain a new perspective or do something a lot differently. Give yourself permission to flow and move with opportunities. Visualize and create with the help of a partner. Tonight: Let someone else make the call.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ You might be more challenging than you realize when dealing with the many people in your life. Know when to step back and make what you would like happen. Listen to what others say, but don't feel like you need to go with the program. Tonight: Just flow.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

HH When your energy is off, you might be well advised to pull back and change directions. Your ability to realize more of what you want might be off. Just hang out or take a personal day. Avoid getting into new projects. Tonight: What would be restful?

Born Today

Singer Don Everly (1937)
Former Russian leader Boris Yeltsin (1931)
Musician Rick James (1948)

Happy Birthday!

You have energy and ideas, though inevitably you'll hit an obstacle or two this year. The smart approach will be to let others have their way, as experience is the best teacher. The only control you can exercise is over yourself. Popularity and opportunity multiply with a laissez-faire attitude. With the right attitude, the world could be your oyster. Try not to scatter, keeping in mind your goals and long-term desires. If you are single, you might give up that status, as many will want to be your forever sweetie. If you are attached, your relationship will benefit from openness and a willingness to try or experience life from your sweetie's side. LEO can be demanding.

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at http://www.jacquelinebigar.com
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Just be 'Cos'

Comedian says state should step up to help New Orleans

Standing on the front steps of one of New Orleans' most troubled schools, BILL COSBY said the education and well-being of the city's children are not getting the attention and support they deserve from the state.

Cosby lent his celebrity status to a group pushing for improvements in city schools. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the state has taken over most of the city's schools from the problem-plagued local school board, and many of those schools are suffering from teacher shortages and overcrowded classrooms, among other problems.

"It's a great disrespect for children," said Cosby, standing in a chilly rain at John McDonogh High School.

The 69-year-old entertainer first visited the school in October to bring attention to the building's condition and the overall education of students.

Local and state education officials met Tuesday with Cosby and a group calling itself the Downtown Neighborhoods Improvement Association of New Orleans. Among the improvements Cosby and the group are requesting are a lower student-teacher ratio, reduction in the number of security guards on school campuses and hiring of more counselors, social workers and psychologists.

John McDonogh is among the city's most run-down schools. Even before Katrina, it had a history of violence. A 15-year-old student was shot to death there in April 2003.

After the storm, it was one of scores of faltering public schools taken over by the state and run by the Education Department's Recovery District.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

'WEEDS' DEEDS

KEVIN NEALON **has welcomed the birth of his first child with his wife, actress Susan Yeagley.**

Gable Ness Nealon was born Monday night at St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica, Nealon publicist Meredith O' Sullivan said in a statement.

"Mom, Dad and baby are all happy and healthy," she said.

Nealon, 53, gained fame during nine seasons on NBC's "Saturday Night Live." The standup comic's current stint on Showtime's Golden Globe-nominated "Weeds" features him as a pot-smoking city councilman.

Yeagley's credits include "Almost Famous" and TV's "Curb Your Enthusiasm." AP

Willis settles suit against childhood pal

BRUCE WILLIS has settled a lawsuit filed against his childhood friend over allegations the man tried to extort at least $100,000 from the actor, Willis' publicist said.

The lawsuit filed in August accused Bruce DiMattia, who was hired to maintain Willis' personal items and memorabilia, of extortion and violation of privacy.

The lawsuit claimed DiMattia "was overcome by greed and jealous of his former friend's success" and threatened to disclose personal information about the star unless Willis bought him a car and paid him $100,000.

Willis' publicist Paul Bloch issued a statement Tuesday that said Willis and DiMattia had reached a settlement and that their dispute was "amicably resolved."

"The filing of the lawsuit by Bruce Willis against Bruce DiMattia was based on a regrettable misunderstanding and was based on misinformation," the statement said. "Bruce Willis wishes Bruce DiMattia the best of luck in the future and Bruce DiMattia wishes him the same."

The name of DiMattia's attorney was not immediately known, and there was no telephone listing for DiMattia in the Los Angeles area.

AP

Bening hopes for more arts funding

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger should ensure more funding for the arts, ANNETTE BENING told the California Arts Council on Tuesday.

The actress, longtime Democrat and council member told delegates at the group's annual meeting that she is encouraged by the bipartisan approach the Republican governor adopted last year.

Bening and her husband, actor and director Warren Beatty, battled with Schwarzenegger over the special election he called in 2005. Voters rejected all the governor's ballot initiatives, which targeted public employee unions, teachers and state spending.

Bening, a two-time Oscar nominee, said state funding for the arts council has been slashed from a high of $30 million in the 2000-01 budget to about $1.2 million in Schwarzenegger's proposed 2007-08 budget.

The council's overall budget is about $5 million this year, money that includes funding from federal sources and the sale of special arts license plates.

Department of Finance spokesman H.D. Palmer said Schwarzenegger is committed to arts funding.

In his proposed budget, the governor included $105 million in annual funding for arts and music in schools and another $500 million in one-time funding for schools to buy art, music and physical education equipment.

"While the governor shares this passion for the arts, he's also very passionate in his desire to reduce the state's net operating deficit to zero next year," Palmer said.

AP

Polo on board for latest in 'Fockers' franchise

TERI POLO is set to reprise her role as Ben Stiller's wife in "Meet the Little Focker," the third installment of the movie franchise.

"I think he cast me in the role because I play a great straight man," she said. "Actually, I think I'm funnier off-camera."

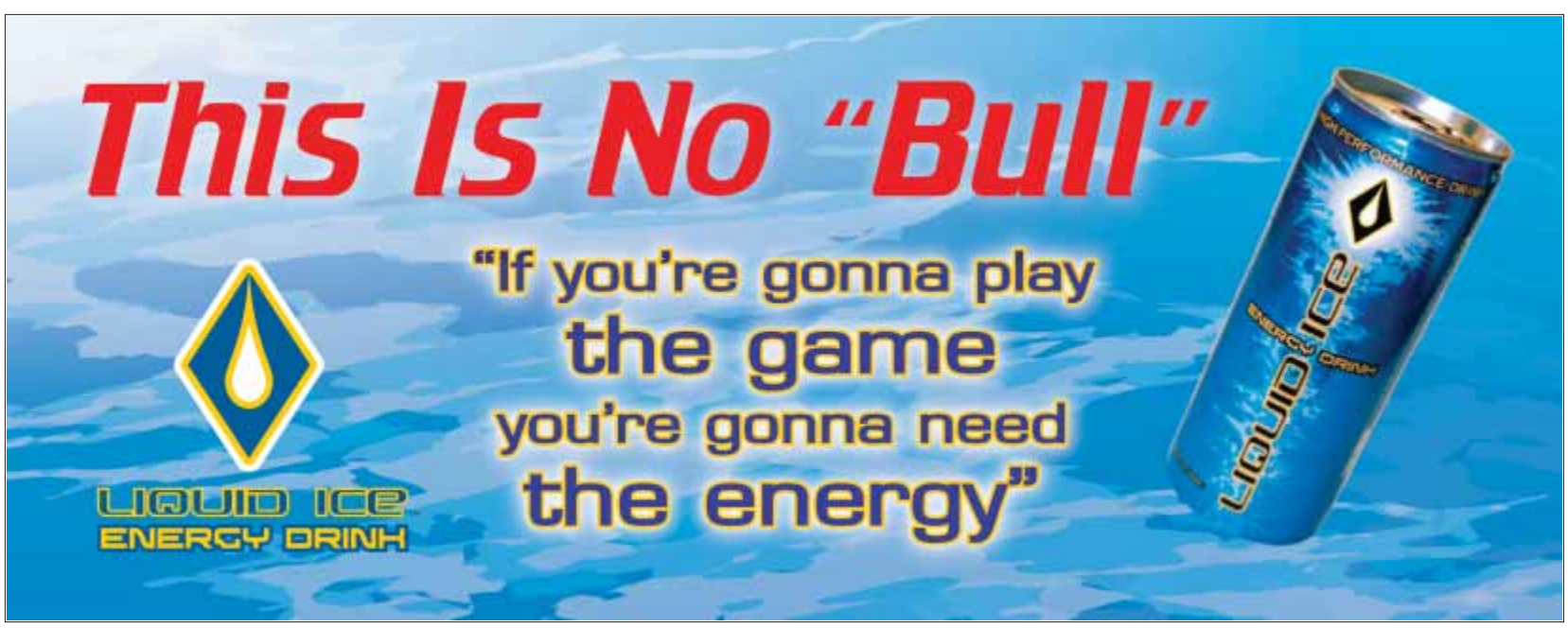
Polo worked with Robert DeNiro in the 2004 sequel, "Meet the Fockers," and in 2000 in the original "Meet the Parents."

"I literally glued myself to his side because I didn't know if I ever was going to get this opportunity again," she said of their collaboration. "I asked him what was more difficult – comedy or drama – and it surprised me when he said it's basically the same thing. It's all in the way you deliver the line."

Polo, a 37-year-old divorced mother of a young son, can next be seen playing a cynical divorce attorney who finds love with her legal opposition in "Love is a Four Letter Word," airing Saturday on the Hallmark Channel.

Love and marriage are recurring themes for Polo's projects this year. She plays one of three sisters running a wedding-planning business on the upcoming Fox series "The Wedding Bells," written by David E. Kelley.

AP



Santa Monica Daily Press

MOVIEGUIDE

AERO THEATRE
1328 Montana Avenue
(310) 395-4990

Wednesday
Dreams
7:30
Thursday
On Her Majesty's Secret Service
7:30

AMC LOEWS BROADWAY 4
1441 3rd Street
(310) 458-6232

Alpha Dog (R)
1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
Babel (R)
1:15, 4:20, 7:30, 10:45
Blood Diamond (R)
1:30, 4:35, 7:45, 10:45
The Hitcher (R)
12:30, 2:50, 5:15, 7:25, 9:45

AMC 7 SANTA MONICA
1310 3rd Street
(310) 289-4262

Catch and Release (PG-13)
2:00, 5:00, 8:00, 10:30
Children of Men (R)
2:10, 4:50, 7:40, 10:00
Dreamgirls (PG-13)
1:20, 4:20, 7:30, 10:25
Epic Movie (PG-13)
1:00, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:30
Night at the Museum (PG)
1:40, 4:10, 7:00, 9:40
Pan's Labyrinth (El Laberinto del Fauno) (R) 1:30, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50
The Pursuit of Happyness (PG-13)
1hr 56min 1:50, 4:40, 7:50, 10:35

LANDMARK NUWILSHIRE
1314 Wilshire Blvd
(310) 281-8228

The Departed (R)
1:00, 4:30, 8:00
Notes on a Scandal (R)
1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:30

LAEMMLE'S MONICA FOURPLEX
1332 2nd Street
(310) 394-9741

Letters From Iwo Jima (R)
1:20, 4:45, 8:00
The Queen (PG-13)
1:55, 4:35, 7:30, 9:55
Venus (R)
1:30, 4:10, 7:00, 9:30
Volver (R)
1:40, 4:20, 7:10, 9:55

MANN'S CRITERION THEATRE
1313 3rd Street
(310) 395-1599

Arthur and the Invisibles (PG)
11:00am, 1:20
Blood and Chocolate (PG-13)
11:50am, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 10:00
Casino Royale (PG-13)
3:30, 7:00, 10:10
Freedom Writers (PG-13)
11:10am, 1:50, 4:30, 7:30, 10:20
The Last King of Scotland (R)
12:50, 3:50, 6:50, 9:50
Smokin' Aces (R)
11:30am, 2:00, 4:40, 7:40, 10:40
Stomp the Yard (PG-13)
11:20am, 2:10, 5:00, 7:50, 10:30

More information email news@smdp.com

Janric Classic Soduku

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column, and 3x3 block. Use logic and process of elimination to solve the puzzle. The difficulty level ranges from Bronze (easiest) to Silver to Gold (hardest).

Difficulty
BRONZE

2			6	8		3	1	
	3				4		2	8
7			2			4		9
1	9		4					3
		7				1		
5					7		9	4
3		2			9			5
9	6		3				7	
	7	4		1	6			2

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GETTING STARTED

There are many strategies to solving Sudoku. One way to begin is to examine each 3x3 grid and figure out which numbers are missing. Then, based on the other numbers in the row and column of each blank cell, find which of the missing numbers will work. Eliminating numbers will eventually lead you to the answer.

SOLUTIONS TO LAST PUZZLE

3	2	6	9	4	1	5	8	7
4	9	8	7	5	6	1	3	2
7	5	1	2	3	8	6	4	9
1	3	9	4	6	5	2	7	8
2	7	4	1	8	9	3	6	5
6	8	5	3	7	2	4	9	1
8	4	3	5	1	7	9	2	6
9	1	7	6	2	4	8	5	3
5	6	2	8	9	3	7	1	4

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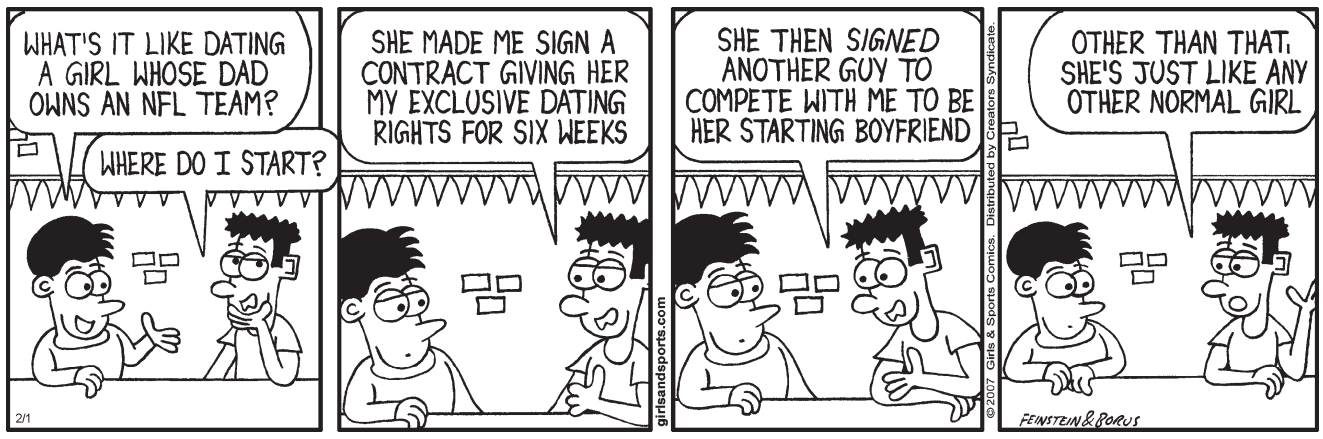
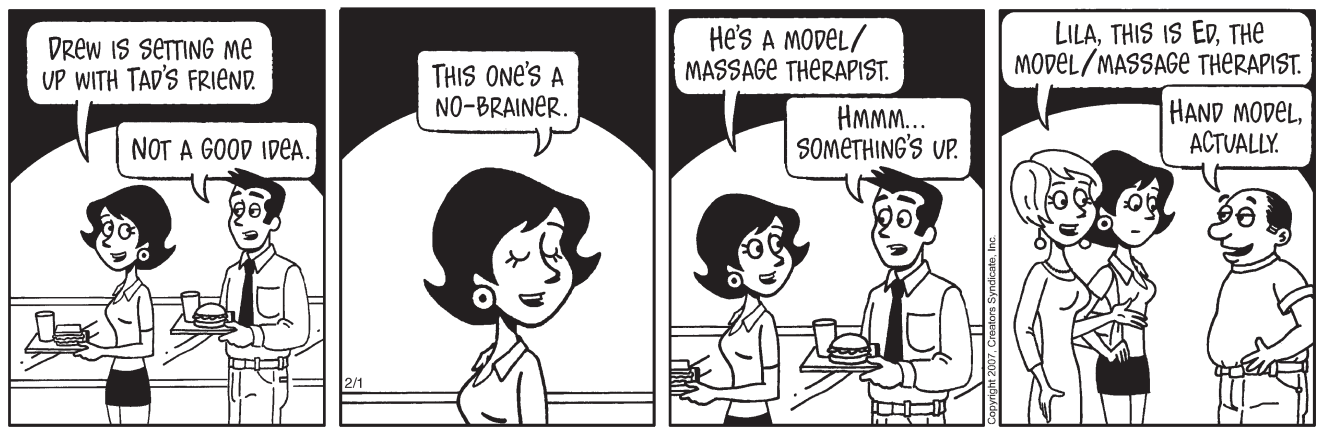
Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



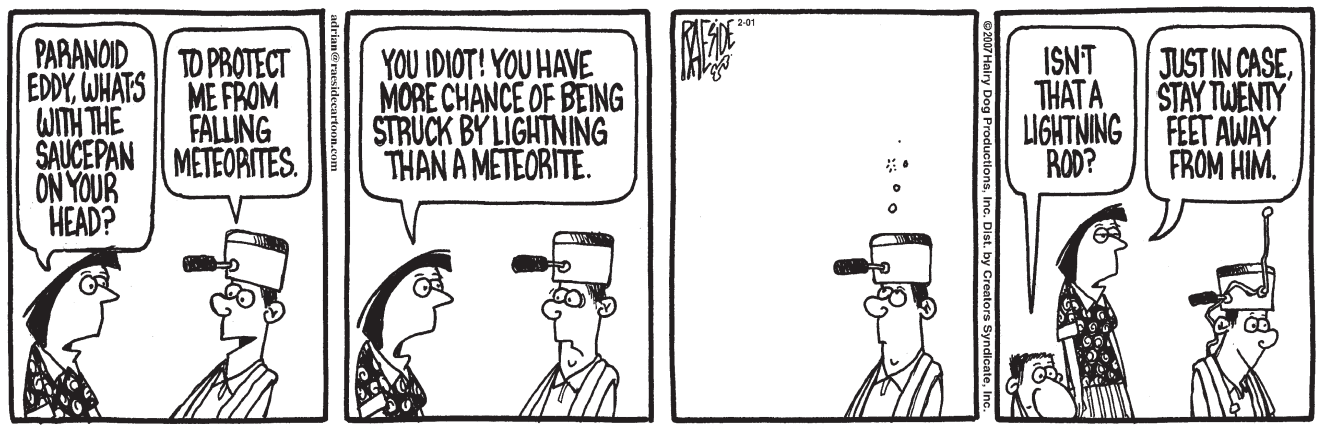
The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



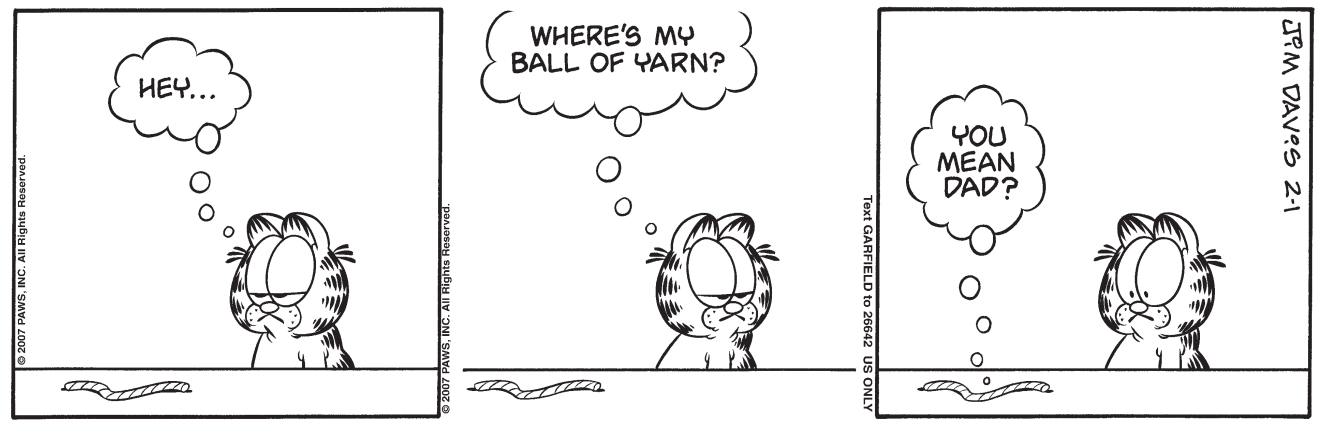
The Other Coast

By Adrian Raeside



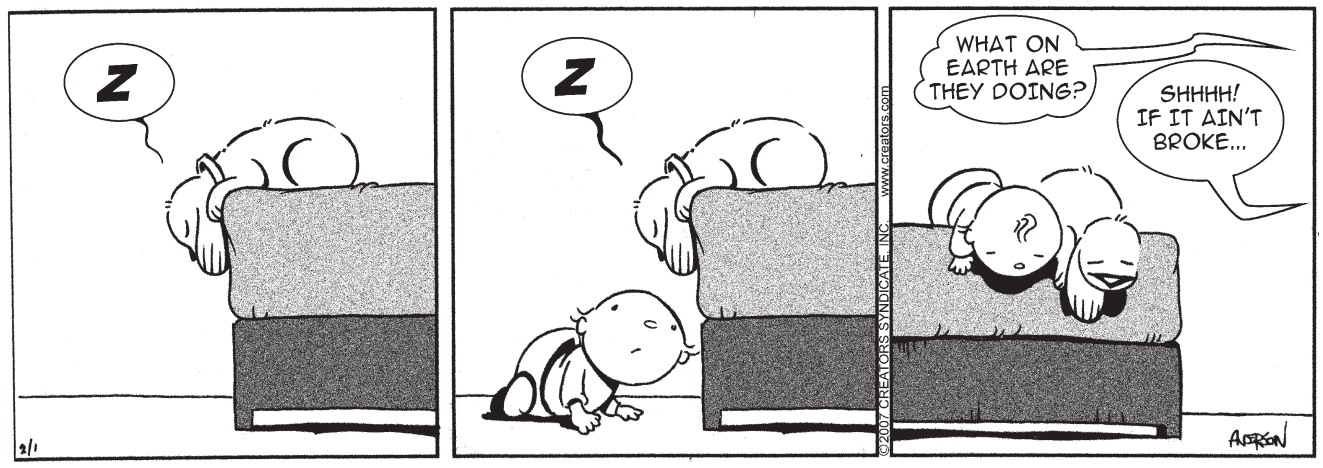
Garfield

By Jim Davis



Dog eat Doug

By Brian Anderson



The Dinette Set by Julie Larson

Natural Selection

By Russ Wallace

Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly

Your ad could run here!
Call us today at (310) 458-7737

Something to crow about

Fabian Lewkowicz *fabianl@smdp.com*

Alice Williams is the winner of the Mystery Photo contest, being the first to correctly identify that this picture was captured of a scarecrow along Ocean Park Boulevard.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Man from Medina
5 Singer Nellie
10 Rx amount
11 Sprites
12 Poll numbers
13 Martini garnishes
14 Sophisticated folks
16 Pieces and a board
20 Patch
23 Wall St. debut
24 Leaves off
25 Superman's real name
27 Use the couch
28 Like some prunes
29 Play site
32 Stocky
36 "Tender Mercies" star
39 Ready and willing
40 "Lose Yourself" singer
41 Shade trees
42 Opera prop
43 Shipshape

DOWN

1 Throws in
2 Act the nomad
3 Nick and Nora's dog
4 Fierce fighter
5 Odometer units
6 Some doors
7 Tyler of movies
8 Worker with wings
9 Fool
11 Tough puzzle
15 That's partner
17 River sediment
18 Foil's kin
19 Narrated
20 Flag maker
21 Put out
22 Falafel holder
25 Ukraine's capital
26 DOJ head
28 Sacred song
30 Gold Coast, today
31 Conger catcher
33 Store event
34 Jane Austen novel
35 Check out
36 — Moines
37 Diamond expert
38 Compete

R	I	P	E	■	■	■	L	E	D	A
E	D	I	T	H	■	T	I	L	E	S
A	L	L	E	Y	■	R	O	A	M	S
C	E	E	■	M	O	O	N	P	I	E
T	R	U	A	N	C	Y	■	S	S	T
■	S	P	R	A	T	■	T	E	E	■
■	■	■	E	L	O	P	E	■	■	■
■	C	I	A	■	B	L	A	N	D	■
D	A	N	■	P	E	A	S	O	U	P
I	M	S	O	R	R	Y	■	D	E	E
R	E	T	R	O	■	U	T	I	L	E
T	R	E	E	S	■	P	A	C	E	R
Y	A	P	S	■	■	■	B	E	D	S

Yesterday's answer

NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send $4.75 (check/m.o.) to Thomas Joseph Book 2, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

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

2-1

DAILY LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS
14 18 44 52 56
Meganumber: 25
Jackpot: $65M

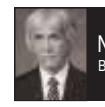
SUPER LOTTO PLUS
7 14 17 18 32
Meganumber: 21
Jackpot: $19M

Fantasy 5
5 9 16 19 20

DAILY 3
MIDDAY: 6 0 8
EVENING: 3 3 8

DAILY DERBY
1st: 03 Hot Shot
2nd: 11 Money Bags
3rd: 09 Winning Spirit
RACE TIME: 1.45.39

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 at http://www.calottery.com



NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ Don Karkos heroically regained sight in his right eye in November after 65 years. A 1941 Navy submarine explosion had knocked him out, and doctors had told him many times that he would never see with that eye again, but Karkos, 82 (a retired horse farmer who works as a security guard at New York's Monticello Raceway), was butted in the head by a horse in November and awoke the next day with sight regained. He told the Times Herald-Record of Middletown, N.Y., in December that the blow he took from My Buddy Chimo was even harder than the one from the concussion.

■ Alarming Science: (1) A researcher at the Minnesota Cancer Center reported in January finding amounts of the carcinogen NNK, most likely from tobacco smoke, in toenail clippings of smokers (and nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke). (2) A researcher writing in the January/February issue of Australasian Science magazine reported that the Toxoplasma gondii parasite, carried by many cats, not only can harm pregnant women (as was previously known) but also can lower the IQ of men and make women more promiscuous.

■ Science Gone Too Far: A December New York Times dispatch reports that among the hottest social status symbols in Tokyo is the cute-but-bizarre dog created by inbreeding, such as a blue Chihuahua or a white dachshund. However, inbreeding also produces a high number of deformities, and to get that dachshund, for example, the litter of five contained four dogs with almost unspeakably gross birth defects. Nonetheless, because of demand, dog inbreeding continues. And a Nottingham University professor warned in January that farmers are now at work in the United Kingdom breeding "stress" and "hostility" out of pigs and cows to make them more obedient en route to the slaughterhouse. The professor said the goal of such breeders is to create animal "vegetables."

TODAY IN HISTORY

2003 the space shuttle Columbia broke up during re-entry, killing all seven of its crew members.

1861 Texas voted to secede from the Union.

1896 Puccini's opera ``La Boheme'' premiered in Turin.

1920 the Royal Canadian Mounted Police came into existence.

WORD UP!

homily \HAH-muh-lee\, *noun:* 1. A sermon; a discourse on a religious theme. 2. A moralizing lecture or discourse. 3. An inspirational saying; also, a platitude.

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Notices

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF BERNEICE COMPTON

Case No. SP007047

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of BERNEICE COMPTON

A PETITION FOR PROBATE has been filed by Michelle Berneice Brown in the Superior Court of California, County of LOS ANGELES.

THE PETITION FOR PRO-BATE requests that Michelle Berneice Brown be appointed as personal representative to admin-ister the estate of the decedent.

THE PETITION requests the decedent's will and codicils, if any, be admitted to probate. The will and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court.

THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administra-tion of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representa-tive to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important ac-tions, however, the personal repre-sentative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the petition will be held on March 9, 2007 at 9:15 AM in Dept. No. F located at 1725 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90401.

IF YOU OBJECT to the grant-ing of the petition, you should ap-pear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the deceased, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within four months from the date of first issuance of letters as provided in Probate Code section 9100. The time for filing claims will not expire before four months from the hearing date noticed above.

YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a per-son interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and ap-praisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

Attorney for petitioner:
HARVEY A GLASER ESQ
PO BOX 643024
LOS ANGELES CA 90064-7181
Santa Monica Daily Press
CN769353 COMPTON Jan 31, Feb 1,7, 2007

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF: THOMAS TROY BURKE CASE NO. SP007051

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the WILL or estate, or both of THOMAS TROY BURKE.

A PETITION FOR PROBATE has been filed by JUDITH J. SCHUMACHER in the Superior Court of California, County of LOS ANGELES.

THE PETITION FOR PROBATE requests that JUDITH J. SCHUMACHER be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

THE PETITION requests the decedent's WILL and codicils, if any, be admitted to probate. The WILL and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court.

THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act . (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the petition will be held on 04/06/07 at 9:15AM in Dept. F located at 1725 Main St., Santa Monica, CA 90401

IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the deceased, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within four months from the date of first issuance of letters as provided in Probate Code section 9100. The time for filing claims will not expire before four months from the hearing date noticed above.

YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code Section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

Attorney for Petitioner
LINDA C. SCHUMACHER
SANDRA M. CHAZEN
LAW OFFICE OF LINDA C. SCHUMACHER
3111 CAMINO DEL RIO NORTH #400
SAN DIEGO CA 92108
1/31, 2/1, 2/7/07
CNS-1079448#
SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF: ABRAHAM H. STERNBERG AKA ALBERT STERNBERG CASE NO. BP102624

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the lost WILL or estate, or both of ABRAHAM H. STERNBERG AKA ALBERT STERNBERG.

A PETITION FOR PROBATE has been filed by ANDREW M. STERNBERG in the Superior Court of California, County of LOS ANGELES.

THE PETITION FOR PROBATE requests that ANDREW M. STERNBERG be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

THE PETITION requests the decedent's lost WILL and codicils, if any, be admitted to probate. The lost WILL and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court.

THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act . (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the petition will be held on 02/28/07 at 8:30AM in Dept. 11 located at 111 N. HILL ST., LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

IF YOU OBJECT to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

IF YOU ARE A CREDITOR or a contingent creditor of the deceased, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within four months from the date of first issuance of letters as provided in Probate Code section 9100. The time for filing claims will not expire before four months from the hearing date noticed above.

YOU MAY EXAMINE the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code Section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

Attorney for Petitioner
ELLIS STERN
6345 BALBOA BLVD #200
ENCINO CA 91316
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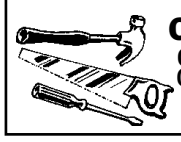

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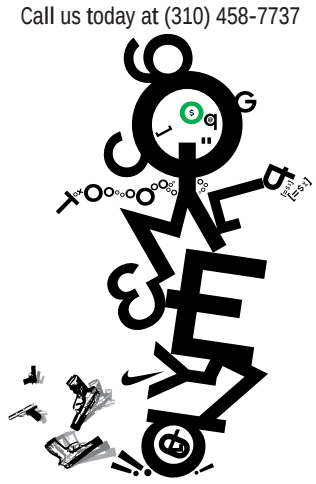

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