

# Santa Monica Daily Press

*A newspaper with issues*



## NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

### CAN'T POSSIBLY BE TRUE

■ Junior Allen, 63, feels 2004 will be his year. The North Carolina Parole Commission will decide soon whether to grant his application for release, after 25 straight rejections. Allen's only conviction, in 1970, was for stealing a TV set, which today would carry a probable sentence of probation only. Meanwhile, the same commission released Howard Washington on parole in January after 10 years in prison for murder; he committed his crime one week before the state eliminated parole as a possibility for murders such as the one Washington committed.

■ In December, New Hampshire's state drug abuse and prevention program was turned down for a \$17 million grant on the sole ground, said the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, that its application was typed with smaller margins than permitted. The federal agency did not give the state an opportunity to correct the formatting, even though the victims of the rejection were not the grant-writers but drug-addicted patients.

■ Deborah Hayes, who was awarded more than \$1.3 million by a jury in Beaumont, Texas, in November for the heart damage she suffered while taking the Fen-Phen weight-loss drug, said in December that that was too much money and that she thought she had demonstrated only about \$588,000 in damages.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

"One reason I don't drink is that I want to know when I am having a good time."

— Lady Nancy Astor

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## Tuition woes at SMC put college in a bind

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

**SMC** — The cost of earning a two-year degree here is on the rise.

If tuition rates are hiked as expected, international students can expect to pay nearly \$12,000 to graduate from Santa Monica College. Meanwhile, out-of-staters could pay as much as \$10,500 and locals \$1,560.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed an \$8-per-unit fee hike at all 108 community colleges in California next year. The increase, which comes on the heels of a \$7 jump this year, would make each semester unit cost \$26 for locals, \$175 for out-of-staters and \$197 for international students.

"We don't have any control over it," said Don Girard, director of marketing for SMC. He added that students with a bachelor's degree will pay \$50 per unit for most classes under Schwarzenegger's proposal. "We're beefing up our financial aid office so we can get our stu-

**"We don't have any control over it."**

— DON GIRARD

Director of marketing, SMC

dents the money they need."

But Girard said even with all the fees factored in, SMC students are still getting a good deal. Even in 2001, studying for two years at a University of California school cost international students \$45,000 — and at a private school that figure jumps to \$55,000, Girard said. Those figures have surely risen, he added.

Just last year, semester units at SMC cost

locals \$11. But because of the shortfall in funding from Sacramento, that price was raised to \$18. The suggested \$26 rate is a part of Schwarzenegger's proposed budget for next year and likely will be discussed before the budget is adopted this summer.

To transfer to a four-year university or college, students must have a total of 60 units. On average, transferable classes are three units per semester and lab classes count for one or two units. Students from out of state can apply for the lower rate after living in California for one year.

Teacher and student groups have complained that the rising cost of attending SMC — coupled with the loss of six academic programs this year — has gentrified the 26,000-plus student population. They accused president Piedad F. Robertson of acting too quickly to cut the popular automotive program, among others, and thereby disproportionately affect-

See TUITION, page 6

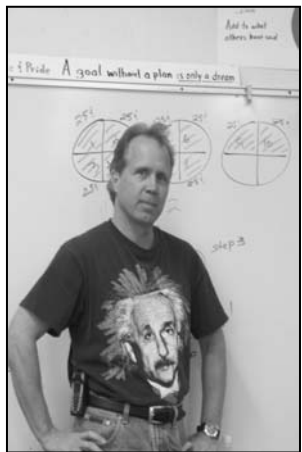


## Marc Sanschagrin: Bridging gaps

*Community profiles is a weekly series that appears each Monday and delves into the people who live, work and play in Santa Monica.*

BY MICHAEL TITTINGER

Daily Press Staff Writer



All too often, Marc Sanschagrin finds himself between a rock and a hard place, namely between the Santa Monica Police Department and the Pico Neighborhood Association, for which he serves as a board member.

Three years ago, the McKinley Elementary School teacher bought a house in the Pico section of Santa Monica, relocating from Mid-City, and was surprised to find a warm, caring community consisting of virtually every nationality in the book; a like-

minded assemblage of hard-working people with a passion for improving schools and improving their community. Sanschagrin said he's found a community that belies its often negative reputation as the veritable stepchild of Santa Monica, where news accounts of shootings and gang-related incidents splash across front pages with a frequency that doesn't reflect the true essence of the neighborhood as a whole.

Born in Detroit, Sanschagrin relocated to Southern California in the late '80s and has seen his fair share of changes within the city. It is in the Pico section

where things are often static, he admits, something he'd like to see change with improvements to the area's perception to the outsiders.

"I've seen changes in other parts of the city," he said during a sit-down interview during his class' lunch break on Friday. "But Pico pretty much remains the same, in two ways — one, in its reality, and two, in its facade. We seem to get most of the bad PR."

It was while walking the streets of Pico a couple years back, trying to drum up support for proposed

See PROFILES, page 6

## Mourning continues at a coastal plane crash site

By The Associated Press

**PORT HUENEME** — Families and friends of 88 people killed when an Alaska Airlines flight spiraled out of control into the sea four years ago gathered on a wind-swept beach Saturday afternoon to pray and reminisce about those lost.

About 60 people gathered around a memorial sundial-and-dolphin sculpture commemorating Flight 261. The names of the dead

were read, and a bell tolled after each name while family members, many weeping, placed a white rose over bronze plaques encircling the memorial.

Flowers, candles and mementos such as Beanie Babies also decorated the shrine.

"It never leaves us. The impact was too great," said William Margiotta, who flew to California from his Long Island, N.Y., home

with his wife, Joan. The couple's only daughter, Carolyn, son-in-law, David, and four grandchildren — Miles, Spencer, Blake and Coriander — were aboard Flight 261.

"We couldn't come for the one-year anniversary. It was too emotional still. Through counseling, we've been able to come today. We cope a lot better," Margiotta said.

The Alaska Airlines MD-80 went down near the Channel

Islands northwest of Los Angeles on Jan. 31, 2000, while en route from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, to San Francisco and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

The National Transportation Safety Board determined the crash was caused by the failure of a jackscrew in the plane's horizontal stabilizer trim system, a part of the plane's tail section that helps control pitch.

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## It's a five-star day, Gemini



JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

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

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



**ARIES (March 21-April 19)**

★★★★ You defer to others right now. All you want is company and/or activity, but plans could rapidly change. News could force you to rethink a decision. Do what you find most pleasurable. Let the good times happen. Tonight: Read or contact friends.



**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)**

★★★★ Indulge and treat others with a great deal of love and caring. Extremes mark your mood and what you choose to do. A partner might object quite clearly. Indulge yourself without worrying too much. Tonight: Your treat.



**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)**

★★★★ You are a powerhouse of magnetism and energy. Someone might get jealous and out of control. Right now, you can handle this person, but later on, you will be more self-centered than in the past. Tonight: Whatever puts a smile on your face.



**CANCER (June 21-July 22)**

★★ Take your time and make a decision with care. You might opt to go down a new path if you like. Debate the pros and cons with someone who understands you and the people in your life. Don't pressure others. Tonight: Get a good night's sleep.



**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)**

★★★★ Your greatest pleasure comes from your friends, even if you want to spend time with a child or loved one. This person is difficult and touchy. Let him or her have his or her space. You will be a lot happier as a result. Tonight: You are the party.



**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)**

★★★ A must appearance dominates your plans. You might not be sure exactly what to do here. Your ability to face facts might become strategic with a child or family member. Trust your judgment. Tonight: Visit with an older relative.



**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)**

★★★★ Take an overview, and you might be delighted by what comes up. You discover that someone close does honestly care about you. You could reverse your decisions about plans at the last minute. Go where the fun is. Tonight: Take in a movie.



**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)**

★★★★ Changes happen rapidly while you think through what is best for you. Listen well to what is happening here. Schedule time with someone close. You don't know how much this gesture will mean to him or her. Tonight: Togetherness works.



**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)**

★★★★ Others come toward you. You have your pick of what to do; only you might be making life far more complicated than you think it needs to be. Keep your plans and feelings simple right now. Tonight: Where the action is.



**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)**

★★★★ Pace yourself, as you might be a little more tired than you realize. A loved one does care, but has an odd way of showing it. Be understanding and gracious in your dealings with loved ones and friends. Tonight: Make it a relaxing few hours.



**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)**

★★★★ Your playfulness is marked by a special relationship with a friend or loved one. Your perspective changes considerably once you understand what is ailing this person. What could be a big deal for him or her is a minor adjustment for you. Tonight: So what if tomorrow is Monday?



**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)**

★★★★ Others anchor you with their demands. You might want to have a lazy day at home, but an older relative or boss could be asking a lot from you. Know when to pull back and smile sweetly, saying "no." Tonight: Screen calls. Do your thing.

# Santa Monica Daily Press

Published Monday through Saturday

Phone: 310.458.PRESS(7737) • Fax: 310.576.9913

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## LOCAL



## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

## American Film Market returns to SM

By Daily Press staff

The American Film Market returns home to Santa Monica for its eight-day international film marketplace and trade show. The show will be in town from Feb. 25 through March 3, 2004, and for the first time in the convention's history, the marketplace coincides with the Academy Awards, which are scheduled for Feb. 29, 2004. The AFM will also move to an additional calendar slot of Nov. 3 through Nov. 10, 2004.

The extra time slot and Academy Awards timing are expected to bring increased attendance, and therefore increased revenue, to Santa Monica as it welcomes more than 7,000 entertainment industry professionals from more than 70 countries. This city-wide event takes place at the Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, which has been AFM headquarters for the past 14 years.

For this event, nearly all the guest rooms at the Loews, and additional rooms at Le Merigot, a JW Marriott Beach Hotel & Spa, are converted into office and meeting space for production companies to conduct business, which generates more than \$500 million in film production and distribution deals.

With the marketplace being scheduled twice in 2004, the events are expected to generate twice as much revenue for the city of Santa Monica. For each marketplace, the AFM citywide hotel block secures 12,000 rooms and ensures approximately \$250,000 to \$350,000 in transient occupancy taxes to the city's general fund.

All Santa Monica businesses are expected to get a piece of the action. From entertainment to retail to dining to lodging, all businesses will see revenue from the increased traffic to the city. In particular, shopping destinations such as the Third Street Promenade and the city's fine arts districts are expected to see increased traffic during the convention's off-hours.

The AFM is reaching out to the community by offering free public screenings to Santa Monica residents, students and employees. Information on public screenings can be found by logging onto [www.americanfilmmarket.com](http://www.americanfilmmarket.com) or by calling (310) 446-1092.

## Calling all nurses

By Daily Press Staff

Saint John's Heath Center will be holding an open house for experienced registered nurses and critical care charge nurses to learn more about opportunities available at the Santa Monica center. New graduates are also encouraged to attend.

The open house will be held on Thursday, Feb. 12, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the health center at 1328 22nd St.

Opportunities exist at the center in the areas of critical care, ambulatory medicine, labor and delivery, oncology, orthopaedics and more.

James Zalez, MD, will speak about surgical treatment of atrial fibrillation, which qualifies for one continuing education unit. Brunch and refreshments will be served.

Seating is limited, so be sure to RSVP prior to attending. To reserve a spot, call (310) 829-8824.

## Warhol grant supports SM artists

By Daily Press staff

The 18th Street Arts Center has been awarded a \$40,000 grant from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts to support the exhibition of contemporary visual artists in Santa Monica.

Founded in the spring of 1988, 18th Street is Southern California's oldest and largest international art center of its kind—a nonprofit residential arts center in Santa Monica that supports artists and arts organizations dedicated to issues of the community and diversity in contemporary society.

The grant will go in part to support 18th Street's new "Spontaneous Combustion" series, which will introduce the freshest emerging arts and artists from the local art community.

For more information on the center, call (310) 453-3711 or e-mail [18thstreet@18thstreet.org](mailto:18thstreet@18thstreet.org).



Look for the surf to fade further today with knee-chest high surf at many breaks and some shoulder to head high sets at best spots. New NW swell will start to slowly fill in late in the day but looks strongest as we move through the day on Tuesday.

Today, look for 2-3 ft. + - knee to chest high occasionally 5 ft. and fair conditions.

Outlook: S swell fades over the next couple of days. No other significant Southern Hemi swell is expected in the near future.

Write us at [wood@smdp.com](mailto:wood@smdp.com) and tell us what the surf is doing today at your local break. Epic.

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| WEDNESDAY | 1:25 AM   | 2:46 PM | 7:32 AM    | 9:18 PM  |
| THURSDAY  | 1:59 AM   | 3:17 PM | 8:08 AM    | 9:42 PM  |
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## The Q Line

Former U.S. weapons inspector David Kay testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that there were a series of failures in pre-war intelligence on Iraq. He said we were almost all wrong about weapons of mass destruction.

His statements solidify what many people have thought for months — that there was no imminent threat of Iraq building a nuclear arsenal. Now, there's been talk about launching an independent investigation into the United States intelligence community.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know,

"Should an investigation be launched and who should be held responsible if, in fact, the intelligence doesn't support the war effort?"

Call (310) 285-8106 with your response before Thursday at 5 p.m. We'll print them in Saturday's paper (Responses used to be printed on Friday but have been moved to Saturday). Please limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.



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## LETTERS

## Self-righteous strikers

## Editor:

It is truly unfortunate that our community is riven by the supermarket strike, but the self-righteousness on the picket lines is misguided (SMDP, "Crossing picketers gets more harrowing," Jan. 31, page 1). The grocery workers are just the latest casualty of a social benefit system gone awry and union harassing of customers is wrong and futile.

One underlying problem is a corporate tax system that allows employee health benefits to be expensed on the employers' income statement. One National Bureau of Economic Research study has estimated that such tax subsidies have cost federal, state and local governments \$100 billion in lost revenue. So contrary to popular belief, taxpayers have been subsidizing health benefits for grocery workers all along. Consumers and workers pay the rest through higher prices and lower wages. The idiocy here is that we treat a necessary benefit as a cost.

Unfortunately, this cozy structure is breaking down as workers throughout the economy are losing benefits as companies are forced to adjust to competitive economic pressures. Even with the tax subsidies, companies are being forced to jettison the high cost of benefits. The major supermarkets already are not competitive and the result of this strike is that they will be even less competitive in the future. For example, at Albertsons or Vons a half gallon of milk costs \$2.29-2.79 while at Trader Joe's it costs \$1.69. The same cost savings apply to breads, cheeses, wines, cereals, bananas, butter, etc. We have other low cost alternatives nationwide in Costco, Walmart and Target.

I see no justification for grocery workers to ask consumers to pay the price for one side or the other in this suicide embrace between management and workers. One might argue that since we are all taxpayers and all workers (not quite true); why not make all such benefits compulsory? But why cross-subsidize health care for everyone? Wouldn't it make more sense to eliminate the subsidy and just buy our own health care? Then government could target low-income citizens with subsidies. The world is changing and whatever the result of this strike, we will be forced to change with it.

Michael Harrington  
Santa Monica

## Judging cop's daughter

## Editor:

Is Sgt. Heineman serious? (SMDP, letters to the editor, Jan. 30, page 4). "The system" works, in his opinion, because a judge was lenient to the 17-year-old daughter of a Santa Monica cop who says he has had many occasions to appear before the bench. And then writes a letter kissing the butt of that same judge?

Does anyone seriously believe that another 17-year-old who disregarded the law as blatantly and as egregiously as the daughter of a cop would get a mere slap on the wrist?

With letters like this, reports of the council's outlandish behavior, and general news of the happenings in Santa Monica, this paper is getting to be my main source of laughter.

Kevin Skoglund  
Santa Monica

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## Kicked out of the single girls' club and deemed 'that girl'



## HIP TO BE SQUARE

By Caroline Bodkin

I don't know when I was kicked out of the single girls' club, but it must have been sometime before last Wednesday afternoon, when I found myself in hour two of a phone call with a girlfriend of mine. She was upset with me; she feels I've been neglectful for the past year, since I started dating my boyfriend. She says I've become "one of those girls," that I've been out of touch, don't invite her over, don't call ... That I'm not living for myself anymore. Huh.

It's bothered me ever since. I'm that girl? I've never been that girl. First, "that girl" isn't a good friend. I think I am a good friend. Second, "that girl" has a hard time being single (she's the type who always has a serious boyfriend). I didn't become un-single because I was miserable while single — just the opposite. I was good at it. I had foreign countries to visit, schools to go away to, cities that

held my destiny and I chose all those places and events proudly unencumbered — probably too proudly. My college girlfriends predicted I'd be the last in our group to marry. And as far as I'm concerned, I'm still making choices for myself even though I have someone else I consider. But apparently that doesn't cut it. I'm out. No more membership for me. I'm "that girl."

I felt my un-singleness again over the weekend at Book Club. We, 10 single women around my age, started talking about being single in the big city, far from home, having left our young-to-marry, suburban friends behind. Phrases like "I can barely take care of myself, I can't deal with someone else," "I don't want to have to answer to anyone" and "I like not having to care how clean my apartment is" were bouncing back and forth amongst the group. These phrases were all things I might have said before, but I sat there in a group of peers, feeling unjustly like an outsider, thinking defensively "I came out here alone! I came out here feeling all those things! I'm still figuring things out even though I have a boyfriend! I make my own choices even though now I've got someone."

I'm that girl? I've never been that girl.

When I finally fell in love and got to tell my old friends — the ones who have

been in or are in serious relationships — that I now know what they've been talking about (it's nice to share your life with someone when you're ready to do the sharing), I heard not only joy for me in their voices, I also heard real relief. Caroline's not going to maintain her "I am an island" status forever. Thank god.

So how I got from that place — Caroline Island, USA — to last Wednesday, hour two of my phone-athon, to being ousted from The Single Girls' Club, a.k.a. book club, and verbally spat on by my friend, I have no idea.

Here's the irony: The most constant advice I give to people is "your feelings are valid, do what your heart tells you to do, even if it's not what you think you're supposed to do." Sometimes this means going off to study health epidemics in Edinburgh or chasing your dreams in NYC — just have the courage to be you, by yourself or otherwise.

Well now, for me, it means being me and learning how to do it with someone else. But it's the same advice. I'm still myself, still struggling, still following my heart, but doing it in part by sharing my life with someone else. To me, it's part of the same follow-your-heart idea.

I guess to single girls who are still doing it all on their own, it just looks like

a cop out. But it doesn't feel like one. Once scared to commit, happily single me just moved in with my boyfriend! And it feels like just as much of an adventure and risk as anything else I've ever done.

Where's the line between living for yourself and choosing to share your life with someone?

Back at book club, sitting there amongst 10 women I consider my peers, I realized something. Maybe it's not about doing it alone or with someone, being an island or being that girl. Maybe it's just about doing it, whatever it is, however things change, the best you can. For me, I'm learning how to do this.

When I got home I called the friend and invited her over. We had wine, and when my boyfriend (we now live together) got home, we all spent some time. My life's changed, but my values haven't. Maybe it's just about finding the best way to be a good friend, regardless of how life changes, and giving friends time to accept your changes as they can.

*(Caroline Bodkin lives in Los Angeles and wonders daily if she'll miss her calling. You can e-mail her at [hiptobesquare-bybodkin@yahoo.com](mailto:hiptobesquare-bybodkin@yahoo.com))*

## STATE



# Death penalty opponents speak out after inmate's clemency request denial

By The Associated Press

**BERKELEY** — The day after Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger denied clemency to a Death Row inmate convicted of murder, death penalty opponents vowed to keep up their fight against capital punishment.

"You have the right ... to stop these crimes against humanity," Derrel Myers told an audience of activists and students who gathered Saturday to protest the possible death of Kevin Cooper, who is scheduled to be executed Feb. 10.

"We are going to change the world," said Myers, a death penalty opponent whose grown son was murdered in 1996.

Cooper telephoned the gathering from San Quentin and urged activists to continue the fight against the death penalty, although a bad phone connection made it impossible to understand more of his statement.

Cooper, 46, was convicted of using a buck knife and hatchet to murder a Chino Hills couple, their 10-year-old daughter and their daughter's 11-year-old friend in 1983.

Dealing with his first death penalty case as governor, Schwarzenegger said Friday that he had carefully weighed the issues presented by Cooper and decided against granting clemency, clearing the way for a possible execution.

But about 200 death penalty opponents gathered at a church Saturday to protest the governor's decision and the country's use of capital punishment.

Shujaa Graham, a former death row inmate who said he was freed after his case was overturned, told the crowd that capital punishment is an example of injustice.

"I am here as a former condemned man," Graham said. "We are not here tonight to talk about wrong or right ... It's about humanity."

Relatives of Cooper's victims, howev-

er, objected to the campaign for clemency.

Mary Ann Hughes, whose 11-year-old son Christopher was one of the four murder victims, said Saturday that she and her family have had to endure media headlines and coverage of Cooper's pleas of innocence.

"We've had 20 years of this," Hughes said. "The evidence is overwhelming. He's had his time in court."

Cooper was convicted of murdering Douglas and Peggy Ryen, both 41, their 10-year-old daughter, Jessica, and Hughes' 11-year-old son, Christopher. The Ryens' 8-year-old son, Joshua, survived a slit throat.

Two days before the killings, Cooper escaped from prison, where he was serving time for burglary. Authorities believe Cooper wanted to steal the Ryen's station wagon, which was later found parked in a church yard in Long Beach.

After eluding authorities for two months, Cooper was arrested in Santa Barbara, where he was living on a boat as a deckhand.

Cooper was convicted of the stabbings in 1985 and sentenced to die by lethal injection, but appeals postponed his execution over the years.

Cooper's case has gained the attention of celebrities, including Sean Penn, Mike Farrell, Denzel Washington who actively oppose the death penalty.

"I don't believe they can totally comprehend what this man did," Hughes said.

Cooper — who has maintained his innocence despite DNA testing that indicates he was the killer — has been making his case through activist groups and on the Internet.

Cooper says the DNA evidence was mishandled, a prison inmate confessed to the crime and an expert said it was virtually impossible for one person to commit the massacre. At least three weapons — a hatchet, knife and ice pick — were used.

## Court ruling raises questions over the governor's integrity

By The Associated Press

**SACRAMENTO** — Although he said he could pay for his own race and not take money from special interests, records show Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has a pattern of relying on bank loans and other credit, which some critics say disguises hundreds of thousands of dollars of special-interest donations.

Schwarzenegger's borrowing of millions of dollars before the Oct. 7 recall election was ruled a violation of state campaign law by a Superior Court judge last week because he could raise money to pay off the loans after the election. That ruling may mean Schwarzenegger may have to pay back \$4.5 million in loans with his own money.

Campaign laws compel candidates to disclose their financial supporters before an election and restrict candidates from

loaning their campaigns more than \$100,000.

While Schwarzenegger said Tuesday he never intended to repay the loans with contributors' money, he did just that with his campaign for Proposition 49, a 2002 initiative for state-supported after-school programs.

While the actor — estimated with a personal fortune of more than \$100 million — donated more than \$1 million of his own money to the after-school measure, he also took out two bank loans of nearly \$500,000 each, money that he in turn loaned to the campaign.

One loan for \$450,000 was repaid sometime between January and June, 2003, records show. Schwarzenegger also held two fund-raising events that brought in \$470,000 for repaying the campaign debt, money owed to vendors and staff as well as the remaining bank loan.

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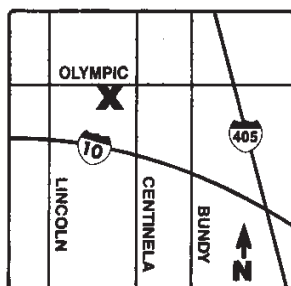
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**DID YOU KNOW?:** Sylvester Stallone's mother said that her dogs, which she believes to be psychic, predicted a victory for Arnold Schwarzenegger in the California recall election.

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Application forms and information are available at the Environmental Programs Division, 200 Santa Monica Pier, Suite J, Santa Monica, CA 90401. You may request an application by mail or fax by calling (310) 458-2213.

**To be eligible, applications must be received at the Environmental Programs Division office by 5:00pm Wednesday, February 4, 2004.**



**LOCAL**

# More financial aid will be needed if SMC fee hike goes through

TUITION, from page 1

ing minority and male students, they said.

College officials have maintained throughout that they did their best with an unruly budget scenario — and hope to restore as many classes and programs as possible.

In the meantime, Kelly Hayes-Raitt, spokeswoman for a group called “86 the Trustees — Put the Community Back in our College” said that although Latinos make up 24 percent of the student body, they made up 40 percent of those majoring in the cut programs. And although

males make up 42 percent of the total student body, 60 percent of those majoring in the cut programs were male. She added a hike in next year’s tuition will further target many students who are already struggling.

“The tuition hike is going to disproportionately affect lower-income students, especially when it gets piggy-backed on to last year’s tuition hike,” Hayes-Raitt said. “I hope our board of trustees can rise to the challenge and make it possible for lower income students to continue to come to Santa Monica College.”



PROFILES, from page 1

school funding initiatives, that Sanschagrin discovered what he said is the reality of the Pico neighborhood situation. It is not the “black and brown” neighborhood of warring gangs, but a melting pot of working-class neighbors who care deeply about education.

Last summer, Sanschagrin was one of eight new members elected to the PNA in a veritable public outcry of “out with the old and in with the new.” Those members swept into office primarily won on the strength of pro-education platforms, as Pico residents blamed the failure of past school funding initiatives on their veteran representatives.

### What attracted you to get involved with the PNA?

“When I was walking the streets and canvassing neighborhoods in support of Measure S, I began to meet people outside my immediate neighborhood. And I didn’t find what you tend to hear in the media — the supposed black lining to a silver cloud. This was a community of warm people.

“The Pico area had the highest percentage of ‘yes’ votes on all of the school measures. That told me a lot. This is a working-class neighborhood that historically gets overlooked. I thought I could help change that.”

### Was this your first foray into politics?

“No, I served with the Mid-City Neighbors Association four years ago. I also ran for Council in ’98 ... lost to (now Mayor) Richard Bloom.”

### What happened with the board elections this past year, that so many new members were swept into office in such a dramatic fashion?

“Well, I think that most people simply felt that the leadership (of the PNA) was out of touch with the constituents, and they voted them out.

“I mean, there are some members remaining, those in the second year of a two-year term. I think that a little continuity is good, but there is a large group of first-timers. Basically, there was a large group with an agenda — pro-education activists — and they got seven

new members voted onto the board. Actually, I was the only independent candidate to win.

“They swept out the old PNA membership because of their vocal and outspoken attempts to defeat the various school bond measures.”

### To what do you attribute the palpable discord that exists between the PNA and local police?

“It’s hard for me to completely understand, but in fairness, most of the members of the board are minorities and I am a white male. They just have a whole different perspective on law enforcement. When I see the police, I feel comforted. They typically do not. I understand the reasons for that, but I don’t necessarily agree with that line of thinking.

“When the police come out to our meetings — sometimes they come and sometimes they don’t — they always seem happy to be there and eager to help. I do have a different perspective than many of the other members. There is an obvious disconnect.

“Also, the police officers in the city typically don’t live here, and I think that could be a problem. They have a different perspective towards things because they’re not so much a part of the neighborhood and the community. They are here doing a job.

“Some feel that when a crime is committed the police just round up the usual suspects. That’s not an opinion I generally share.”

### Do parents within the Pico district need to hold themselves more accountable for the crimes that are committed, and not just point fingers at the police?

“Well, as a parent, a teacher and a neighbor, I’d say parents are absolutely 100 percent responsible for their children and their behavior. Police are there to make the community safe. Parents need to be good role models until their children can internalize all that. And then you see all the truancies and broken curfews and substance abuse ...

“I’d like to be a bridge between the police force and my neighbors of color who are skeptical of their motives. I feel they are here to do the best job they can. Many question whether they are here just to get an arrest or arrest the right

See PROFILES, page 7

## LOCAL



PROFILES, from page 6

people.

"But I do wonder sometimes why the police can't tighten the lid on some notorious hot spots in the neighborhood. The same areas are always in the news. Maybe they need to increase their presence in those spots and be more diligent.

"We've been pretty fortunate in terms of shootings, but there's going to be a real tragedy one of these days, such as a child getting shot, and then everybody will be pointing fingers. Today, we need to do something about that, before it's too late. We need to work together — the police need to get out of their cars and the people need to come out of their houses to get rid of this disconnect.

**What are your feelings on such proposals as the drunk tank that was to be located on Ninth Street and all the other so-called help centers already in Pico?**

"We seem to get a disproportionate amount of low-income housing and support services. They are certainly more concentrated in Pico

than, say, north of Montana (Avenue). It's geography and zip code. I believe the average family income is the lowest of all the other neighborhood groups. It's more blue collar, people holding down two jobs. They have less time for civic duties.

"If they tried to put something like that (drunk tank) north of Wilshire (Boulevard), there would be such an outcry. And most of the residents there are college-educated and aware how politics work. They would raise a hellstorm. In Pico, the people tend to have less experience with that kind of thing, and less time to do anything about it because it's more blue collar. They don't always know how to play the games at City Hall."

**What are the most common concerns you are hearing from**

Marc Sanschagrin is the parliamentarian for the Pico Neighborhood Association board. He has been a teacher within the Santa Monica-Malibu school district since 1988, and is currently instructing fourth and fifth graders at McKinley Elementary. He also serves as vice president of the local teachers' union.

**Age:** Declined to give.

**Residence:** Pico Terrace house.

**Background:** Born in Detroit, Mich., moved to Santa Monica in 1992.

**Family:** Married, two sons, ages 4 and 6.

**PNA residents these days?**

"Oh, it's the same litany — traffic flow, green space and more accessibility to it, and graffiti."

**How will you, this summer, look back and qualify your term — as being successful or not?**

"This is rewarding work. I just want to find ways to allow different groups of people to be heard. Most of the major problems with the PNA exist because of a lack of communication. People are not listening, and people are not being heard. I just want to help everybody try and understand what it is the other is trying to say.

"I see my goal — and this is a young board — as bringing some stability. I know how to run meetings. I just try and keep people civil and, hopefully, with open minds."

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or your rights. Well you are not alone, after an accident, most victims spend more time figuring out how they are going to fix their car and what they are going to drive than on their rights and possible hidden injuries. There are currently thousands of auto accident victims who are living a life of misery and pain because they did not learn their rights and options as an auto accident victim. Don't let this happen to you or your loved one. To receive your free report entitled, "What You Need To Know if You Have Been In An Auto Accident", Call the Toll-Free 24 Hour Recorded Message at **1-888-246-3790**. The call is free and so is the report. Call Now!

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# Rising imports of fresh veggies pressure farmers

BY JULIANA BARBASSA  
Associated Press Writer

**FRESNO** — Americans' growing appetite for cheap vegetables year-round is feeding a steady rise in imports that is squeezing American farmers, according to a recent U.S. Department of Agriculture study.

Fresh vegetable imports went up by 7 percent in the first 10 months of 2003 — a trend that may be elbowing U.S. farmers out of production, market analysts said.

"These foreign products flooding in make it very difficult to make a living," said Jeff Dolan, a Newman, Calif., tomato producer who has been in the business for 18 years. "The true independent tomato grower is virtually nonexistent now."

Fresh vegetable imports have been going up steadily — 11 percent in 2001, 6 percent in 2002, 7 percent last year, said Gary Lucier, agricultural economist with

the Economic Research Services branch of the USDA.

An influx of immigrants that favor fresh produce, including Latin Americans and Asians, also have helped drive up demand, Lucier said, but some farmers are clearly losing their grip on domestic markets.

Gilroy, a small town in California's Central Valley whose name has been synonymous with garlic and still elects a Garlic Queen during its annual Garlic Festival, has resigned itself to importing garlic from China, which produces 66 percent of the world's supply.

Last year, California asparagus farmers had to plow under whole fields, because the prices they would get wouldn't cover the expense of harvest.

This year, flooding in China has destroyed 40,000 acres of asparagus, boosting prices all over the world,

**"What our industry is asking our policymakers to do is allow us to have equal opportunities, not to be in a situation where you're managing the demise of your own business until there is nothing left to defend."**

— BOB GRAY  
President of Duda California

California included, but that doesn't reverse the flow of foreign produce. In 1990, 30 percent of all asparagus consumed in the United States was foreign; now 65 percent comes from abroad, mainly Peru and Mexico.

The newcomers don't just fill the off-season gaps, said Cherie Watte, executive director of the California Asparagus Commission. They compete directly with local production, edging farmers out, and they also bring down the prices, making it harder for local farmers to earn a living.

"A great many have left the field, and others are continuing to scale back their operations," Watte said.

In 1999, there were about 36,000 acres of asparagus growing in California. Now there are 24,000.

"The industry is being devastated," Watte said. "It's a natural consequence of supply and demand, we know that, but it hurts to be on the losing side."

Tomato farmers also are pinched, with year-round imports from Mexico and from Canada's greenhouses. Competition of this sort is only expected to increase as new trade agreements are negotiated and other countries have easier access to the U.S. market, said Ed Beckman, president of the California Tomato Commission.

Meanwhile, Beckman said, farmers here are struggling with finding legal and inexpensive workers, with the rising costs of worker's compensation insurance and the general increase in input costs.

"It's not a level playing field," he said.

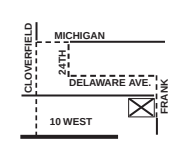
The transfer of production abroad has been felt industrywide for years, and many farmers agree with Beckman, blaming trade agreements that play up U.S. technology at the expense of low-tech horticulture.

"What our industry is asking our policymakers to do is allow us to have equal opportunities, not to be in a situation where you're managing the demise of your own business until there is nothing left to defend," said Bob Gray, president of Duda California, a grower, packer and shipper of fresh vegetables in California and Arizona.

If this trend continues, the United States may find itself relinquishing control over a large part of the produce that feeds the nation, farmers said.

"Control of our food supply should be a security imperative for the United States," said Tom Nassif, president of the Western Growers association.

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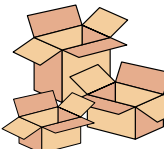
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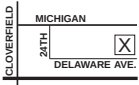
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## Air Force Academy seeing surge in fall applications

By The Associated Press

**AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo.** — A record number of women have applied to attend the Air Force Academy this fall despite a year of turmoil because of a sexual assault scandal.

The academy had received 2,962 applications from women as of Wednesday — 34 percent more than the 2,212 received a year ago and the most since the academy began accepting women in 1976. The deadline to apply is Saturday.

Overall, the 11,838 applications amount to a 14 percent increase over last year.

Academy officials said patriotism, the ease of online admissions adopted two years ago and steps taken since the scandal began are behind the interest.

Academy spokesman Johnny Whitaker said officials hope the surge in female applicants demonstrates a heightened

"trust and confidence" in the overhaul of cadet training and reporting procedures to prevent assaults and deal with attackers.

"We hope some of it is attributed to the attention the academy has gotten over the last year and the action we've taken to alleviate sexual assault — all those things we have done to take this place to the next level of excellence," Whitaker said.

Academy officials will admit 1,300 students this fall.

A year ago, dozens of former and current female cadets alleged the academy ignored their sex-assault reports and in some cases punished them for coming forward. Since then, top commanders have been replaced and the school has made unprecedented changes in how cadets live, train and study.

The allegations also prompted a series of investigations, including a Pentagon inquiry that some officials predict won't be complete until at least March.

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## NATIONAL



# Strange bedfellows in the scramble to survive

BY BEN KIECKHEFER  
Associated Press Writer

**NORTHGLENN, Colo.** — With another year of drought looming, officials charged with managing Colorado's tight water supply met Thursday to find ways to share the increasingly rare commodity.

Meeting at the Colorado Water Congress' annual gathering in this Denver suburb are one-time foes who have been forced to work together to find solutions to the state's water woes.

Compounding the below-average snowpack and already low rivers and reservoirs is the fact Colorado voters this fall rejected a statewide referendum authorizing \$2 billion in bonds for water projects.

The fight over that referendum was expensive and nasty, with many western Colorado groups fearing the unspecified projects would amount to nothing more than a water grab by the ever-thirsty Front Range, the area east of the Continental Divide. Much of the Front Range water is piped from the western part of the state.

"The people of Colorado spoke in Referendum A that you have to give us a proposal that works for everybody, not just one side," said T. Wright Dickinson, chairman of Club 20, a powerful lobbying group of Western Slope business and government leaders.

Now water experts are hoping that by working together they will be able to guide the state through the drought and bring lasting solutions to pressures created by scarce water and the demands from a growing population.

How that goal will be accomplished, however, is still open for debate.

"We have to build storage," said state agriculture Commissioner Don Ament. "Granted, Referendum A obviously wasn't the answer, but we have to find a way

to store the water Colorado has rights to under all these compacts."

Increased storage would provide additional water to the Front Range, ensure farmers and ranchers across the state have the water they need to survive and replenish drying aquifers, Ament said.

He said a number of storage projects could start within a year, including several along the South Platte River Basin, which is currently at just 62 percent of average snowpack.

Melting snow contributes about 80 percent of the water in the state's rivers, streams, lakes and reservoirs. Eight major Colorado river systems also provide water to 10 western states.

Ament said capturing excess water in the good times would help deal with dry times.

"I really feel a need to get going on this," Ament said. "It's just a waste of some precious time."

But water storage is just one part of an equation that also includes conservation and developing new sources of water for the areas that are most in need, said Peter Binney, director of utilities in the fast-growing suburb of Aurora.

Developing new sources includes capturing water from areas currently untapped, or reallocating water already being used. Binney said conservation alone won't provide enough new water.

Aurora will continue its water restrictions this year because of the drought and low reservoir levels.

Agriculture uses 85 percent of the state's water, amounting to about 15 million acre feet each year. The Front Range, including the Denver area, will need only about 500,000 acre feet of that, Binney said.

An acre-foot, about 326,000 gallons, can meet the annual water needs of one to two U.S. households.

# Frontier stock drops off despite third-quarter profit

BY CATHERINE TSAI  
AP Business Writer

**DENVER** — Frontier Airlines Inc. shares fell Friday after the discount carrier reported third-quarter profits that missed Wall Street expectations, even as executives predicted continued growth.

The Denver-based airline posted a profit of \$5.5 million, or 14 cents per share, in the October-December period. That's up from a \$6.4 million loss, or 21 cents a share, for the same period a year ago.

Results included the write-off of deferred loan costs of \$1.1 million, or 2 cents per share, for prepaying the balance of a government-guaranteed loan. Frontier was the first airline to pay off its post-Sept. 11 loan.

Analysts surveyed by Thomson First Call had expected a profit of 19 cents per share, excluding the effects of the write-off.

"Despite the admitted challenges of the December quarter, these are uninspiring results, in our view," J.P. Morgan airline analyst Jamie Baker wrote in a note to investors.

Frontier stock closed Friday at \$9.76, down 24 cents or 2.4 percent, on the Nasdaq Stock Market.

Baker said Frontier remains exposed to competition from United Airlines, whose low-cost carrier Ted begins flying Feb. 12 out of Denver. The two airlines are 1-2 at

the regional hub.

However, Blaylock & Partners analyst Ray Neidl said Frontier competed against United Shuttle, "so they're used to competing with a hybrid United product."

Frontier CEO Jeff Potter said he was pleased with the company's third straight profitable quarter while other airlines reported losses. He predicted 24 percent growth for the quarter ending March 31, and said the airline has seen no significant drop in bookings due to Ted.

During a conference in New York late Thursday, Frontier vice president of marketing and planning Sean Menke said seasonal demand in the markets where both Ted and Frontier are flying has kept business up for Frontier.

United spokeswoman Chris Nardella said Ted bookings to date have been strong. "We've said all along that Ted will be competitive with all carriers in markets that Ted will serve," she said.

Potter said he would wait to see what kind of competition Ted proves to be.

"Whoever provides the best customer service is going to carry the day," Potter said. "We like the fact we have a pretty substantial cost advantage, but it doesn't matter. You've got to treat your customers like they're your family, and we think our employees do a great job at that."



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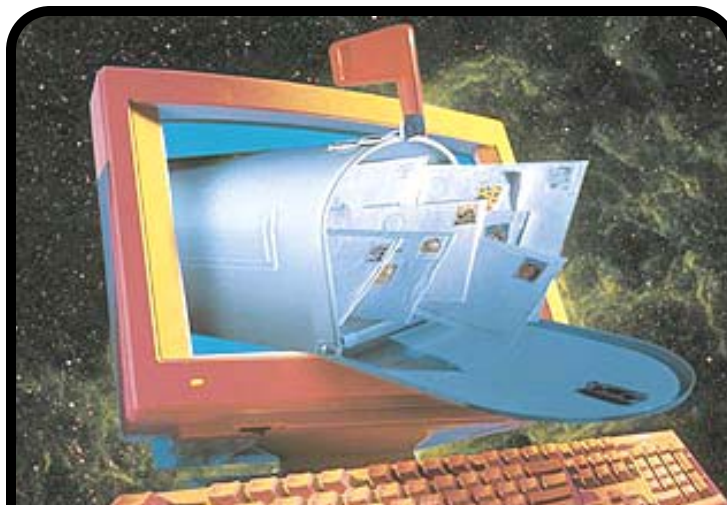
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**NATIONAL**

# Troubled company once a Spokane star

BY NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS  
Associated Press Writer

**SPOKANE, Wash.** — Metropolitan Mortgage & Securities Inc. bought a gleaming white office tower in downtown Spokane in the go-go 1990s and installed its name at the top in large green letters: the color of money.

Now the financial conglomerate has been shaken by accusations of fraud, deceitful selling practices and other scandals. Thousands of angry investors, many from the Northwest, have been left wondering whether they will recover any of their money.

"I feel a little bit betrayed," said Sam Hibbard, a retired timber company executive whose investments are in jeopardy. "If I borrow money from a bank, I have to pay it back. In this case the investors are the bank and we expect we should be paid back."

Prospects for payback are unclear. Last week, independent auditor Ernst & Young LLP resigned after concluding the company's books couldn't be trusted.

Late Friday, Met Mortgage said it will likely file soon for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Met Mortgage and its sister company, Idaho-based Summit Securities, said such a filing would permit them to combine and reorganize their businesses through a "debt for equity plan."

That arrangement would provide their current creditors with ownership of the reorganized company.

Met Mortgage is also the target of two federal court lawsuits that investors filed recently. The investors contend the company deceived them by selling stocks, unsecured bonds called debentures, and investment certificates as safe, conservative investments appropriate for retirees. One lawsuit claims the company was forced to constantly find new investors to pay off the money owed to previous investors, making it the equivalent of an illegal pyramid, or Ponzi, scheme.

Last fall, the National Association of Securities Dealers concluded the company's investment arm used fraudulent, deceptive and unethical sales practices. The investment arm was ordered to pay \$2.8 million in restitution and was prohibited from making future sales.

The American Stock Exchange halted trading on Metropolitan's preferred stock on Dec. 15 and is taking steps to delist the company. The stock was selling for \$25.40 per share last August, but was down to \$4.25 when it was suspended.

The problems prompted C. Paul Sandifur Jr. late Tuesday to resign as president and chief executive officer. Sandifur, the controlling stockholder and son of the company's founder, will remain on the board.

Retired Met Mortgage executive Irv Marcus was appointed acting chairman, president and CEO, and the company said it plans to reorganize and restructure its financial affairs.

However, the company has refused to discuss its financial woes beyond its news releases. Spokeswoman Mary Keller said the company would not discuss issues of "potential or pending litigation" until they had been resolved.

Officials of Ernst & Young declined to comment, saying they could not discuss their former clients. But Met Mortgage in

its news release said the accounting firm "could not rely on the representations of management."

In at least two transactions, Met booked profits between \$18 million and \$24 million that Ernst & Young implied had been inflated, according to the statement.

Met Mortgage once employed more than 500 people in Spokane. The payroll has been trimmed to about 330.

The company and its sister company, Summit Securities, have some 35,000 investors, many of them seniors living in Spokane and the Pacific Northwest, with an estimated \$580 million tied up in investments.

Darrell Scott, a Spokane attorney representing plaintiffs in one lawsuit, said the majority of investors were older people who were giving the company most or all of their life savings.

They are people like Hibbard, 76, a former Weyerhaeuser Co. manager who lives in Post Falls, Idaho, and "invested rather heavily with them" though he would not say how much.

In a practice that is common for the company, a Met Mortgage broker went to Hibbard's home to make the sales pitch. Hibbard said the salesman stressed that even during the Great Depression investors in Met Mortgage did not lose any money. He would later learn the company did not exist during the Depression.

"We were told it was absolutely no risk," Hibbard said. "It turns out it wasn't."

The cash-strapped company suspended all dividend and interest payments to its investors Dec. 26 amid the growing scandal.

The company's fall is a stark contrast to the image it sought in 1997 when it bought the 18-story office tower as part of an effort to become a national player.

At the time, Met Mortgage was riding high with 550 employees, assets of \$1.2 billion and annual revenues of more than \$150 million.

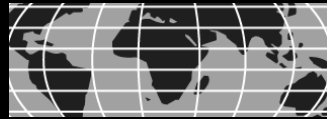
The company has been involved in several high profile projects, such as rehabbing and operating The Met theater in downtown Spokane. It owns a factory outlet shopping center in Pasco and resort properties in Hawaii.

Deborah Bortner, director of the Washington State Securities Division, said the agency worried for years that Met Mortgage's income from operations couldn't cover the required payments on its debt and stock dividends.

The state capped the amount of debt Metropolitan could have outstanding at about \$250 million. The Seattle Times reported recently. But in 1996, Congress passed a law intended to promote uniformity of securities regulation across the country. That law put companies listing securities on a national exchange under the regulation of the federal government, not states.

When Met Mortgage debentures were listed on the Pacific Exchange in San Francisco in late 1999, the company was freed from the state cap.

By the middle of 2003, Metropolitan and its affiliates had nearly tripled their debt, to \$512 million in outstanding debentures, the Seattle newspaper reported. After posting a \$16 million profit in fiscal 1999, the company lost money the next two years, had a \$3.9 million profit in 2002, and lost almost \$20 million in the first nine months of 2003.



## WORLD BRIEFLY

### Top cleric forsakes terrorism

By The Associated Press

**MOUNT ARAFAT, Saudi Arabia** — Saudi Arabia's top cleric called on Muslims around the world Saturday to forsake terrorism, saying those who claim to be holy warriors were an affront to the faith.

In a sermon that was remarkable not only for its strong language but also its timing — at the peak of the annual hajj — Sheik Abdul Aziz al-Sheik told 2 million pilgrims that terrorists were giving their enemies an excuse to criticize Muslim nations.

"Is it holy war to shed Muslim blood? Is it holy war to shed the blood of non-Muslims given sanctuary in Muslim lands? Is it holy war to destroy the possession of Muslims?" he said.

A large number of the victims of suicide attacks in Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iraq and elsewhere have been Muslims.

Al-Sheik, who is widely respected in the Arab world as the foremost cleric in the country considered the birthplace of Islam, spoke at Namira Mosque, a televised sermon watched by millions of Muslims in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.

The mosque is close to Mount Arafat, where the pilgrims converged Saturday for the climax of their annual trek. This year's hajj has been carried out amid heightened security after a year of terror attacks in the kingdom.

### Two attacks kill 12 in Iraq

By The Associated Press

**MOSUL, Iraq** — A bomb-laden car plowed through a razor wire fence and exploded outside a police station

in the north of the country Saturday, killing nine Iraqis and injuring 45, including policemen there to pick up their pay.

In a separate incident, three U.S. soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division were killed Saturday in a roadside bombing near the northern oil center of Kirkuk. Their deaths brought to 522 the number of American service members who have died since the Iraq war began March 20.

It was unclear if the attack on the police station in Mosul was a suicide bombing or the driver fled before the explosion. U.S. officials have said recent vehicle bombings and suicide attacks in Iraq bear the mark of al-Qaida.

Repeated attacks by insurgents on police, politicians and other Iraqis who work with the U.S.-led coalition have been increasing in an apparent attempt to undermine support for the U.S. occupation authority and frighten the population into avoiding contact with the foreign administration.

### Lettuce a luxury for poor

By The Associated Press

**WASHINGTON** — For the poor, lettuce may be a luxury. Analysts have concluded that people who have to worry about missing meals choose calorie-packed foods such as pasta because they provide more energy for the buck than fruits and vegetables.

"Energy-dense foods composed of refined grains, added sugars or fats may represent the lowest-cost option," said Adam Drewnowski, director of the Center for Public Health Nutrition at the University of Washington. For people in poverty, choosing these kinds of products "may represent a deliberate attempt to

save money," he said.

Drewnowski led a study that compared foods based on the cost of calories in each ounce. Findings were published in the January issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

Water content was a major factor. Nutrient-dense foods like pasta have little if any water; lettuce and other produce are juicy. Lettuce works as a diet food because it lets people feel full on fewer calories. Drewnowski said the poor cannot afford to water down their calories.

### Soldiers need time to rest

By The Associated Press

**WURZBURG, Germany** — Soldiers' spouses complained to the Pentagon's second-in-command Saturday that American troops need time to rest between their frequent missions.

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz spoke to soldiers of the Army's 1st Infantry Division and their families as the division prepared to go to Iraq beginning next week.

Family members of the soldiers told Wolfowitz they needed more stability in their lives.

Bonnie McCarty said her husband is preparing for a yearlong tour of duty in Iraq. "When he comes back, does this mean in another year he's going to go back again because the size of the Army isn't big enough?" McCarty asked Wolfowitz. "We don't want to keep going through this."

Wolfowitz said the Army is considering an increase in the number of combat units to ease the strain.

He said he and other Pentagon officials know that the last several years have been difficult for soldiers and their families and are trying to ease the strain. Wolfowitz said Pentagon officials are not sure, however, that permanently enlarging the Army is the answer.

"There's a big uncertainty about what we're going to need in the future," Wolfowitz said.

# States have very mixed views on crime database

BY BRIAN BERGSTEN

AP Technology Writer

**NEW YORK** — Although privacy worries led several states to pull out of a federally funded crime and terrorism database project, others are actively considering joining and thereby sharing information on their citizens, The Associated Press has learned.

Mark Zadra, chief investigator for Florida state police, which runs the Matrix project, said organizers have given presentations to more than 10 Northeastern and Midwestern states in recent weeks, arguing at each stop that the database is an invaluable law enforcement tool. Officials in Iowa and North Carolina said Friday that they are exploring the system. And documents obtained through a public-records request in Florida indicate Arizona and Arkansas also may have interest in the quick-access information repository, which combines state records with 20 billion pieces of data held by a private company.

For now, Matrix — short for Multistate Anti-Terrorism Information Exchange — involves Florida, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York and Michigan.

Utah's governor said Thursday that she was halting the state's participation, which was launched under her predecessor, and appointing a panel to examine security and privacy issues.

Another state once involved, Georgia, said Friday it is now dropping out completely — after the AP confronted officials with documents indicating the state was continuing to participate despite a public proclamation to the contrary in

October from Gov. Sonny Perdue.

Law enforcement officials say Matrix is an ultra-efficient way for investigators to get information about suspects that authorities previously had to obtain from disparate sources. They insist it includes only public records and does not make predictions about crime or terrorism.

But privacy advocates say Matrix gives law enforcement too much access to private details on millions of people, resembling the Pentagon terrorism data-mining program that drew public rebuke and lost Congressional funding last year.

The likelihood of Matrix expansion remains hard to gauge.

Bill Shrewsbury, a vice president at Seisint Inc., the company that maintains the database, said he expects five or six more states to join the program, though he would not specify which ones.

"I've never shown it to any law enforcement people who didn't say: 'My goodness, this is unbelievable technology. It makes our job so much easier,'" said Shrewsbury, a former agent with Florida state police and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.

He added, however, that if too much controversy follows the project, "all bets are off." The minutes of a Matrix board meeting held Nov. 5 in Atlanta show the attendance of representatives from the seven states participating in Matrix at the time, as well as the federal departments of Homeland Security and Justice, and four other states — Arizona, Colorado, Maryland and West Virginia.

Officials in West Virginia and Colorado said Friday their states had since decided not to participate. West Virginia cited the cost.

Matrix was launched with \$12 million in federal funds, but the documents obtained by the AP indicate each participating state could be forced to spend as much as \$1.8 million per year. Shrewsbury said the long-term cost could be significantly lower.

Arizona's top cop, Dennis Garrett, signed a detailed Matrix security agreement Dec. 16 that paves the way for police in eight Western states to connect to the Matrix if they choose, through a secure computer network that they share and Arizona oversees. But Arizona officials did not say whether the state remains interested in Matrix for itself.

Dennis Schrader, Maryland's homeland security director, said the state eventually will have some type of "data-mining tool" to pool information and would not rule out Matrix.

The meeting minutes quote Florida state police Phil Ramer, an agent with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement who is overseeing the project, as saying North Carolina, Arkansas, Alabama and Iowa were invited but didn't attend.

Officials in Iowa and North Carolina said Friday that they were exploring joining Matrix, while Alabama said it was too expensive.

For now, at least 450 law enforcement agents, mainly in Florida, have access to Matrix. Zadra said federal investigators from the Department of Homeland Security, FBI and other agencies would be among those eligible for access.

As many as 13 states originally planned to be in Matrix, including California, whose attorney general says the system offends "fundamental rights of privacy."

Other states expressed worries about

security. An open-records request in Georgia uncovered an Oct. 2 memo, for example, in which motor-vehicle department staffers noted that Seisint had promised "that every effort will be taken to make the database and the data transfer safe and secure. However, the potential for abuse still exists."

The Florida files include an Oct. 7 letter in which Deputy Superintendent Mark Oxley of the Louisiana state police wrote that his agency would not participate because of "lingering concerns" about the security of the records that would be sent to the database. He also questioned the "ever-broadening scope extending far beyond the original counterterrorism mission."

However, Oxley added that "most disappointing of all" was that Louisiana had to learn from news reports that Seisint's founder, Hank Asher, had admitted piloting flights for cocaine smugglers in the 1980s. Asher has resigned from Seisint's board.

Questions about Matrix still loom even in member states. New York has not shared any records because of questions about long-term funding and privacy laws, said Lynn Rasic, a spokeswoman for the governor's office.

And in Connecticut, where state police are using the system, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal said this month he still wants answers "about privacy, cost, effectiveness and other issues."

Barry Steinhardt, director of the technology and liberty program at the American Civil Liberties Union, said the new revelations make it more important than ever for federal officials to be more candid about their long-term plans for Matrix.

"This is all still very murky," he said.

# COMICS

## The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



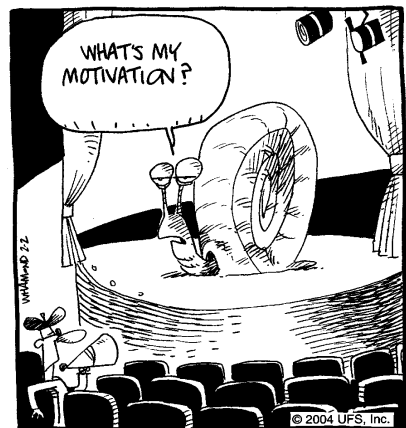
## Natural Selection® By Russ Wallace



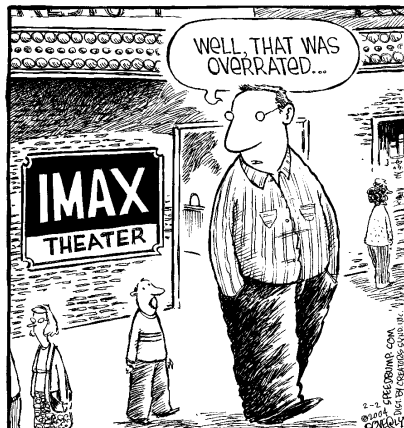
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  - Oklahoma city
  - Lead-in
  - Regions
  - Louisiana area
  - Rascal
  - Pot start
  - Pod veggie
  - Swift acquisition of plots
  - Actor Guinness
  - Crash aid
  - Writer Asimov
  - Bond portrayer
  - Fin type
  - "The King and I" heroine
  - Stage feature
  - Medico
  - Object of worship
  - Big blast source
  - Belt holders
  - Juliet's love
  - Asian land
- DOWN**
- Reeves of "The Matrix"
  - Put right
  - Feeding time need
  - Merkel of movies
  - Pig place
  - Air
  - Green mention
  - Prepare to fire
  - Fancy planter
  - Bound
  - Except for
  - Sailing
  - Singing syllable
  - Put down
  - Not to dance
  - Poorly lit
  - One of the woodwinds
  - U2 singer
  - Italian river
  - Equipment
  - Reindeer
  - Boy
  - Lively
  - Deep sleep
  - Chess pieces
  - Mine find
  - Corral
  - Blue

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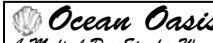
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## PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

# Augusta halts plans to honor the Godfather of Soul

By The Associated Press

■ **AUGUSTA, Ga.** — The city of Augusta doesn't feel good about James Brown.

Plans to build a statue of the Godfather of Soul and to rename an annual music festival for him are on hold after Brown's arrest on a domestic violence charge Wednesday.

Brown, 70, was released from jail Thursday. A widely circulated mug shot showed him wearing a bathrobe with his hair in a mess.

The singer has denied accusations that he pushed his wife to the floor and threatened her with a chair in their Beech Island, S.C., home. If convicted of the domestic violence charge, he could face a \$500 fine and 30 days in jail.

Mayor Bob Young said he is awaiting the outcome of the case before deciding whether to erect the statue of Brown, who grew up in Augusta.

"This certainly is not anything anybody could have planned for," Young said. "It's extremely unsettling and disturbing, but we will have to wait and see how this plays itself out."

Brenda Durant, executive director of the Greater Augusta Arts Council, said her organization will meet with the city and James Brown Enterprises to decide whether to rename the May music festival after Brown.

"We are really in limbo," she said.

■ **PALM DESERT** — Hopalong Cassidy fans have a trail to walk along to honor the late actor who played the cowboy hero.

"It's a bit of a tourist attraction, it's a bit of nostalgia, and a wonderful trail, all rolled together," Councilman Buford Crites said of the one-mile Hopalong Cassidy Trail.

Writer Clarence Mulford created Hopalong Cassidy in novels and short stories, and William Boyd brought him to life in dozens of movies and TV shows from

1935 to '51.

Boyd moved to Palm Desert in the mid-1950s. He died in 1972.

The city's trail system will soon have other paths named after prominent early Palm Desert residents. One will be named after actor George "Gabby" Hayes, who was perhaps best known as Roy Rogers sidekick.

■ **BANGKOK, Thailand** — Oscar-winning Hollywood director Oliver Stone, in Thailand shooting a movie about Alexander the Great, received a career achievement award Saturday at an international film festival.

Stone was presented with a Golden Kinnaree at a ceremony closing the 2004 Bangkok International Film Festival.

A kinnaree is a revered figure in Thai mythology that combines the attributes of a woman and a bird and is believed to come from heaven.

The 14-day festival featured some 150 films from around the world, as well as conferences and lectures on the movie industry.

Stone, 57, is filming scenes for his epic on the life of Alexander the Great, starring Colin Farrell as the Macedonian conqueror. Hundreds of extras, and 20 elephants, have been enlisted for battle sequences.

"Alexander" also features Angelina Jolie, Anthony Hopkins and Val Kilmer.

Stone won best director Oscars for 1989's "Born on the Fourth of July," the 1986 Vietnam War drama "Platoon," and the best adapted screenplay Oscar for 1978's "Midnight Express."

■ **LOS ANGELES** — The man is back at work.

Colin Hay, the frontman for the 1980s Australian band Men at Work, said Friday he is launching his longest North American solo tour in more than a decade. The series of more than 60 concerts started in San

Juan Capistrano, Calif., on Thursday with plans to run through October, hitting cities including Chicago, Philadelphia, Atlanta, New York and Nashville.

Hay showcases his new songs along with old hits like "Down Under," "Overkill" and "Who Can It Be Now?" in acoustic-heavy performances that blend music with comedy and storytelling.

"The idea is to bring the past up to the present and then we can move on from there, hopefully," Hay told The Associated Press on Friday.

That's the philosophy he employed on his last album, "Man (At) Work," which was aimed at new fans while still satisfying the longtime Men at Work stalwarts.

"I have very good relationships with those old songs. They've been very good to me. We look after each other very well," Hay said.

■ **PRAGUE, Czech Republic** — Former Czech President Vaclav Havel plans to spend several months in the United States this year to give lectures and maybe resume his literary career, an aide said Friday.

Havel, who was invited by the Library of Congress, plans to stay from April to July, mostly in Washington, Jakub Hladik said.

He said Havel, 67, is scheduled to deliver a series of lectures but did not provide details.

Havel, whose final term as Czech president ended last February, also hopes to have enough time during his U.S. stay to start writing again, Hladik said.

He has published dozens of plays, books and political essays since the 1960s. They won him critical acclaim around the world, but his literary career was put on hold for the 13 years he held the presidency.

Havel was a dissident playwright when he led the 1989 revolution that peacefully toppled communism. He became president of Czechoslovakia in December 1989 and served as Czech president from January 1993, after the country split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

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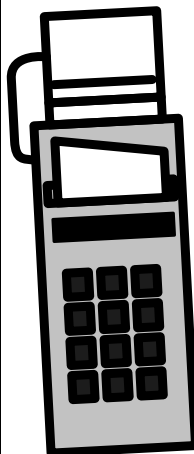
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