INSIDE SCOOP
COLOR THIS BUSINESS GREEN PAGE 3

COMMENTARY
ANTI-ROMANCE MANIFESTO PAGE 4

STATE
LUTFI HAS LEGAL HISTORY PAGE 6

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2008

Volume 7 Issue 75



SHAQ HEADS TO PHOENIX
SEE PAGE 14

Santa Monica Daily Press

Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE RESULTS ARE IN ISSUE

Measure R passes by large margin

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE Public education struck gold on Super Tuesday when a parcel tax renewal measure that would continue the annual flow of more than $10 million into the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District received the necessary two-thirds votes to pass, and then some.

With all precincts reporting, Measure R garnered more than 72 percent of the vote, passing by a margin of more than 22,300 supporters to approximately 8,400 dissenters.

Public school advocates from all cross-sections of the community, some who are otherwise political foes, rallied around Measure R, unified in their fear that the district could lose out on the roughly $10 million in annual revenues it receives from both Measures S and Y, both of which are set to expire in 2009 and 2011 respectively.

"I can say there is a great deal of celebration that we had such a high number (in support)," said Shari Davis, the chairwoman of the Campaign to Protect Quality Public Schools. "It does show our community supports education."

The funding measure passed decisively despite rumors that an increasingly growing contingent of Malibu property owners objected because they disagreed with the allocation that Malibu High School received in comparison to Santa Monica High School for Measure BB, a construction bond measure that passed in November 2006.

Malibu City Councilmember Andy Stern, one of the more vocal critics of the Board of Education in recent months, said he spoke with a number of residents who decided they were going to vote for the measure after learning several board members last month had reportedly decided to lend their support for construction funds going toward Malibu Middle School and would discuss making the prospect a reality at an upcoming meeting.

"I'm going to hope that now the election passed they keep their word and move forward," Stern said.

Measure R essentially consolidates measures S and Y, charging property owners roughly $346 per parcel and keeping certain elements of the existing measures — the senior tax exemption of Measure S and the annual Consumer Price Index increase of Measure Y. What the new measure has that is absent in both existing funding sources is the perpetuity clause, keeping revenue flowing into the district forever.

The lack of a sunset date on the measure was an issue raised by the anti-Measure R campaign, an effort mainly funded by Santa Monica resident and Los Angeles area lawyer Mat Millen, who accused the Campaign to Protect Quality Public Schools of disseminating misleading information.

"They put another regressive tax in the pool and now the tenants and the low-income homeowners will have to suffer with

SEE MEASURE R PAGE 11



Alexis Hawkins *news@smdp.com*

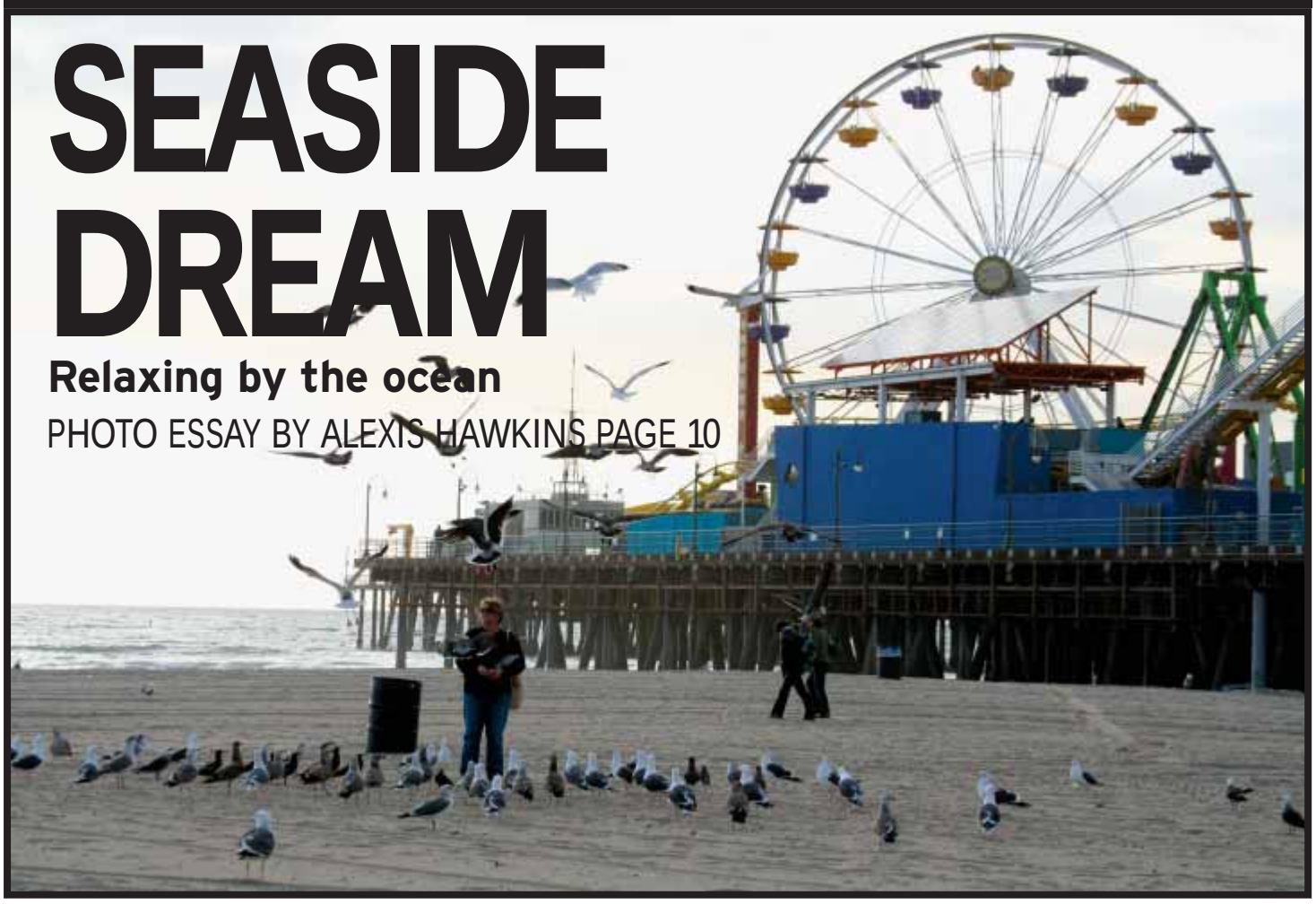
VOTER: **Ronald Lopez, a program coordinator with the 18th Street Arts Center, exits the center, acting as a polling station on Tuesday.**

DAY IN THE LIFE

SEASIDE DREAM

Relaxing by the ocean

PHOTO ESSAY BY ALEXIS HAWKINS PAGE 10



Home market stays strong

BY DANIEL ARCHULETA
Managing Editor

CITYWIDE As the real estate market continues to show signs of weakness, Santa Monica's property values continue to persevere through what has become a protracted decline across the nation.

Local experts have varying opinions as to why, but they do all agree that the primary strength of the area's market comes down to the old saying — location, location, location.

The demand to live in one of the area's premiere cities continues to propel prices upward while many communities across Southern California — and the country for that matter — are seeing their values plummet as the number of available properties goes up due to both foreclosures and the fallout caused by adjustable rate mortgages pricing people out of their own homes. This hasn't been the case in Santa Monica.

There have been few foreclosures in the area during the past fiscal year and many buyers looking to finance a purchase are often affluent and have little problems

SEE HOMES PAGE 12

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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS



Protect your pair
1711 Ocean Park Blvd., 8:30 a.m. — 2 p.m.
Mammograms are held every first Thursday of the month at Westside Family Health Center. Call (310) 450-4773 for more information and to make an appointment. Fees vary.

Lovin' Black History Month
1704 Montana Ave., 7 p.m. — 8:30 p.m.
Local performer Jo Todd celebrates Black History Month and Valentine's Day along with special guest, flamenco guitarist Bill Freeman at the Montana Avenue Branch Library.

Magic Meathands
4455 Overland Ave., Culver City, 8 p.m. — 9 p.m.
The "Magic Meathands" perform an hour of fully improvised hilarity based on audience suggestions and participation — presented by director Bill Johnson. Tickets are $5 at The Spot Cafe & Lounge. For more information, call (310) 559-8868 or visit www.magicmeathands.com.

Improve eclectically
1323-A Third St. Promenade, 7 p.m. — 10 p.m.
Westside Eclectic's Level 1 Improv class is an introduction to the art of improv comedy. The intro covers core improv ideals, concepts and vocabulary such as hyper-listening, give and take, yes-anding, efficient communication and emotional response. The WE teaching staff creates a warm and open learning environment that facilitates establishing the foundation of a seasoned improviser.

What's New This Week
2101 Ocean Park Blvd., 1 p.m. — 2:30 p.m.
A free-wheeling review and discussion of the week's key news stories at home and abroad.

Friday, Feb. 8, 2008

A Valentine from Daybreak
1751 Cloverfield Blvd., 11 a.m. — 4 p.m.
Daybreak Designs will hold a Valentine Sale at Cloverfield Services Center. Items for sale will include a variety of specially designed arts and crafts including hand-painted greeting and holiday cards, one of a kind jewelry items and other collectibles. Daybreak Designs is run by the women of Daybreak Shelter who are working to overcome mental illness. The sale provides the opportunity for these artists and craftswomen to increase their limited income and learn important self-supporting skills. For information, call Donna Miller at (310) 264-6646, ext. 235.

The fairest gem of all
1855 Main St., Noon — 7 p.m.
The finest quality of jewelry, gems, beads, crystals, silver, rocks, minerals, and more from over 80 global exhibitors will be on site. In addition to sales, classes and demonstrations will be held throughout the weekend. Admission $5. For details visit www.gemfaire.com, call (503) 252-8300, or e-mail info@gemfaire.com.

Travelin' Dylan
2701 N. Sepulveda, Brentwood, call for times
Skirball kicks off "Bob Dylan's American Journey" tonight. The exhibit includes handwritten song lyrics, posters, and a recording of his first-ever, never-released concert. Included is an area where you can play drums with Dylan — much like Bono sang with Sinatra. General admission is $10, $7 for seniors and students, and free on Thursdays. Early Dylan photographers, John Cohen and Daniel Kramer, will discuss their experiences on Sun., Feb. 10. Visit www.skirball.org for more information.

Go sister, Soul Sister
1026 Wilshire Blvd., doors open at 9 p.m.
Indie your soul tonight at Temple Bar with Soul Sister, Wayna, Yahzarah, and Sy Smith. Tickets are $12. Visit www.templebarlive.com for details.

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.

CORRECTION

In the Feb. 6 issue of the Daily Press, ("Students rock the ballot box, page 1) a photo of Santa Monica High School students voting in a mock election should have said the students were lined up in front of Barnum Hall.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

DOWNTOWN

Assessing the situation

The Bayside District Corp. will be hosting two public meetings Feb. 12 to discuss an improvement plan for Downtown Santa Monica.

The first meeting for property and business owners is scheduled for 3 p.m. at the Multi-Purpose Room of the Santa Monica Public Library, 601 Santa Monica Blvd. The second meeting for residents and community members is scheduled for 7 p.m. in the Community Meeting Room of the library.

The Bayside District Corp., a nonprofit organization that manages the downtown area, including the popular Third Street Promenade, has been reviewing options to make the area cleaner, more inviting and more attractive. Through this 18-month process, Bayside and its partners have developed a plan for a new improvement district that would raise assessments on Downtown properties to fund new projects and programs. The proposed district would encompass all of Downtown bounded by Seventh Street, Wilshire Boulevard, Ocean Avenue and the I-10 Freeway.

In addition to the Feb. 12 meetings, those interested in sharing their opinions may participate in the process by taking a five-minute online survey at downtownsm.com.

Participants who complete the online survey will be entered to win a $100 gift certificate to a Downtown Santa Monica restaurant.

DAILY PRESS

SM BAY

County closes local beach

A short stretch of ocean on the border of the Pacific Palisades and the unincorporated areas of Topanga Canyon and Malibu was closed Wednesday due to a small sewage discharge.

Los Angeles County public health officials were notified Wednesday morning that 100 gallons of sewage discharged into a storm drain. As the storm drain empties into the ocean, the ocean water is closed to recreational use 100 yards west and 100 yards east of the intersection at Pacific Coast Highway and Coastline Drive.

"We are asking people to avoid swimming or entering the ocean to surf in this particular stretch of water," said Jonathan E. Fielding, director of public health for the county.

Recorded information on beach conditions is available around the clock at (800) 525-5662 and online at www.lapublichealth.org/beach.

DP



Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

LOCAL BUSINESS GOES GREEN: **Allsteel, an office furniture manufacturer located in the Water Garden complex on Olympic Boulevard, recently received a $25,000 grant from City Hall as an incentive for certifying its new Santa Monica showroom under the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Program. The company will also work with the city to create educational materials, case studies and photos, making the showroom an ongoing resource center for green building in the city.**

Allsteel takes the 'LEED'

'Green' resource center receives hefty grant from City Hall

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

WATER GARDEN While green can be an agreeable color for office furnishings, it's an even more attractive hue when it comes to the rooms that showcase those workplace desks and chairs.

Allsteel Inc., an office furniture designer, recently received a $25,000 grant through City Hall's Green Building Program for constructing a resource center that possessed enough sustainable design qualities to earn an environmental designation by the United States Green Building Council. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) designation certifies the resource center, which essentially serves as a showroom displaying the company's products, as having an ecologically friendly interior.

The resource center, which opened in the Water Garden last summer, received LEED Silver certification in December. City Hall awarded the grant to Allsteel last week.

"The company itself has a strong commitment to sustainability," Brenden McEneaney, the Green Building Programs advisor, said.

The resource center adds to the growing list of LEED certifications in Santa Monica, where there are eight such projects and six more in the pipeline, according to McEneaney.

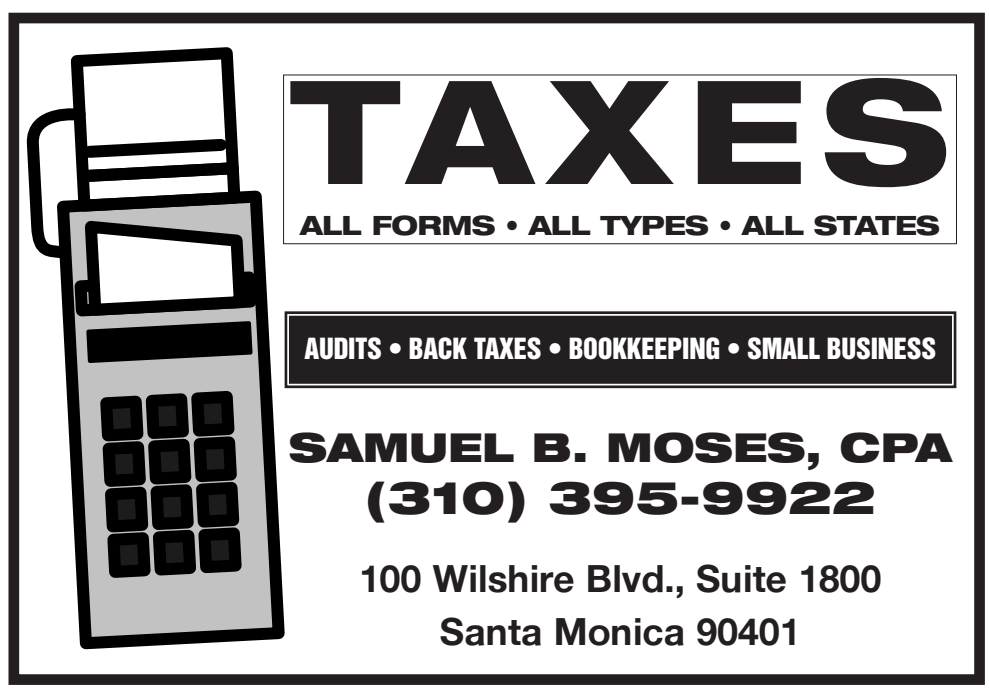
Based in Muscatine, Iowa, Allsteel runs four resource centers around the country that have all achieved LEED certification. The Water Garden was specifically chosen as the site for the Santa Monica showroom because it already lent several "green" qualities that could translate into LEED credits since the certification process looks at the development holistically, including the surrounding area, said Greg Dunlop, the national manager of architecture and design for Allsteel.

"We think it's the right thing to do," Dunlop said. "Many of our clients are trying to achieve (LEED) certification as well, so many clients coming to us want to know what they could do to achieve certification."

In addition to using graywater system for the site, the Water Garden is also close

SEE **GREEN** PAGE 13





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Putting the brakes on development

Editor:

The Feb. 5 article, "Redevelopment raises concerns," sums up exactly what is wrong with the city and its incessant need for development. Recent years have seen Santa Monica grow into a destination for the wealthy, leaving many of us who have lived here for decades with no place to live. Tearing down an affordable apartment building to make way for "environmentally friendly" luxury condominium development does not make any sense with the city's ever increasing rents. What working class citizen will really be able to afford the so-called "affordable" housing units the developer plans to included? Is it green to tear down a perfectly good residence to build a LEED certified dwelling in its place? Seems like another way to greenwash their way into another overpriced development that this city no longer needs. If the City Council will not put a stop to this nonsense, then the residents of this city will.

Sean Jennings
Santa Monica

Development will be good for SM

Editor:

As a nine year resident of Santa Monica, I believe the conversion of the apartments at this location (301 Ocean Ave) to luxury condominiums will be wonderful for the city. The current building is a very undervalued representation of such a prime location. Currently a majority of the building does not even have views of the ocean or park. A newly constructed, environmentally friendly building that maximizes the beauty of Santa Monica is a far superior site to see at the gateway to our great city. I look forward to this improvement and trust that the city of Santa Monica will ensure the outcome is representative of everything positive about our city.

Barbara Dehne
Santa Monica

A slice of Heaven

Editor:

Since moving to Santa Monica from New York years ago, I have longed for a good neighborhood pizza joint. With the recent opening of Joe's Bleeker Street Pizza and now Richie Palmer's Pizzeria (of Beverly Hills' Mulberry Street Pizzeria) just a block apart in downtown Santa Monica, we now have the mother lode of walk-up gourmet, thin-crust New York style pizza. A joyous salute to the simple pleasures in life.

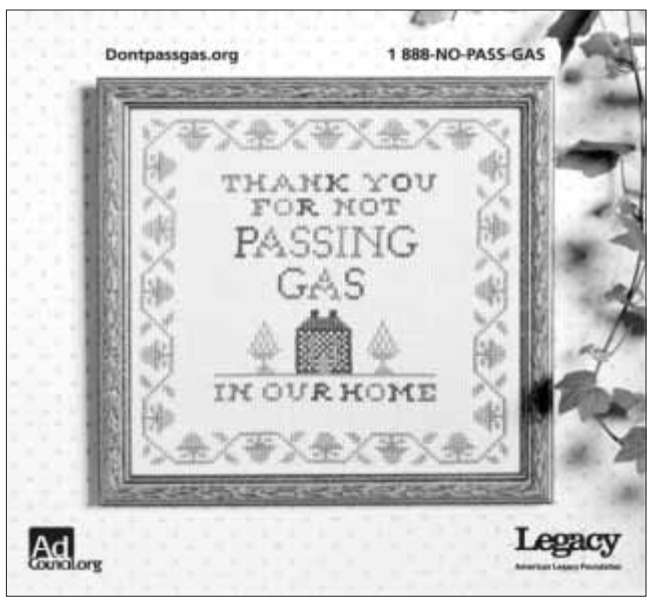
Ted Bonnitt
Santa Monica

Mode of transportation

Editor:

Your article about City Manager Lamont Ewell and Mayor (Pro Tem) Bloom traveling to Washington ("Meeting of the big wigs," page 1, Feb. 6) to meet with legislators about safety concerns at Santa Monica Airport left out one important detail: Did they fly commercial, or take a private jet from Santa Monica Airport? Just curious.

Saul Cohen
Santa Monica





Dispatches from Dystopia

Ryan Hyatt — Send comments to editor@smdp.com

A manifesto against today's idea of love

FINDING ROMANCE ISN'T EASY. IN FACT, I think it's becoming obsolete

What I mean by romance is when two people fall for each other and they are radically shaken as individuals in the process.

Some people fall in love, marry and raise children. Other people fall in love, fall apart and tattoo "N-E-V-E-R-A-G-A-I-N" on their knuckles, like one bar-hopping friend of mine. The tattoo might last forever, but only time will tell if his luck changes in the Great American Dating Scene.

I believe I can speak with some authority on the subject of romance, since I've been in love. It's been wonderful at times, terrible at others. Regardless, the experience has helped me evolve.

I don't see or hear about people falling in love much these days, except in movies or on songs played over the radio. It's as if romance is no longer part of the human experience. It's been relegated to myth, a media induced fantasy.

For those of you whose experiences in the Great American Dating Scene are hedging you toward the "NEVER AGAIN" option, you are not alone. In my travels, I can confirm the state of romance is disastrous. This holds true even in the noble city of Santa Monica, where forces are pitting men and women at odds.

I believe these forces are rooted in part by the breakdown of traditional gender roles. The relatively straightforward process of raising a family with a spouse of the opposite sex is no longer a given as was the case, say, circa 1955

Nowadays men divorce wives of 30 years in exchange for babes barely of consenting age. Same-sex marriages continue to be outlawed, and yet many are more nurturing than heterosexual relationships. Middle-aged, un-married women are giving birth to quadruplets. Newborns conceived via sperm bank are demanding to meet daddy.

As we recede further from the simplicity of the Eisenhower years, these social changes may prove to be for the better. For now, the meaning of family, relationships and sexuality has been tossed into question. The problem is not all of us are finding answers to help us love better.

In fact, it's quite the opposite. We are in the midst of national growing pains to which most of us are clueless, others are in denial and many are left feeling alienated and useless. I dub this the Age of Anti-Romance, a dark period in which men and women are losing faith in the value of falling in love.

Judging by the divorce rate, it's clear preserving families is no longer our highest priority. That means men no longer have the burden of developing social virtues to maintain them. With no need to be carrying and responsible parents, for example, we have a generation of men spending their adulthood as sex-crazed adolescents, trolling bars and Internet for prey, leveraging love affairs with lavish gifts and money.

Meanwhile, equality of the sexes might have made a more level playing field for the fairer sex, but not to the extent most women are compelled to develop social virtues beyond bedroom or home.

While some ladies are using their freedom to advance their role in society, many have regressed to pursuing their own juvenile agenda, relying on sexuality to secure their lot in life. Instead of seeing a new generation of self-directed mothers, let alone female leaders, we have more women striving to become trophy wives.

IN MY TRAVELS, I CAN CONFIRM THE STATE OF ROMANCE IS DISASTROUS. THIS HOLDS TRUE EVEN IN THE NOBLE CITY OF SANTA MONICA, WHERE FORCES ARE PITTING MEN AND WOMEN AT ODDS.

Pick up a fashion magazine or take a good look next time you're at a restaurant. Women are on strange diets, treatments and plastic surgery programs. We are asking them to transform into mannequins.

The gender wars are bigger and more ridiculous than ever. While some continue to follow their hearts and eventually find love, satisfying relationships and evolution, many are confounded by the obstacles faced in today's Great American Dating Scene.

Hopefully the Age of Anti-Romance is an epoch that will be outgrown, and "NEVER AGAIN" will not become the final solution synonymous with ardor.

My next column will report on an experiment to be undertaking to determine the validity of observations described in this piece.

One question I hope to answer for you: How low are Los Angeles men and women willing to go to get good sex or financial security they need?

We'll find out.

RYAN HYATT is a former staff writer for the Santa Monica Daily Press. He is seeking a publisher for his second novel, "Stay Younger Longer," a political thriller that takes place in LA in 2046. He can be reached at ryanhyatt@gmail.com

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PUBLISHER
Ross Furukawa
ross@smdp.com

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Kevin Herrera
editor@smdp.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Daniel Archuleta
daniela@smdp.com

STAFF WRITER
Melody Hanatani
melodyh@smdp.com

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Brandon Wise
brandonw@smdp.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Bill Bauer, David Pisarra, Meredith Carroll, Kenny Mack, Jack Neworth, Lloyd Garver, Seth Barnes, Taylor van Arsdale, Dane Robert Swanson, Mark Marchillo, Ken Tarr, Mike Heayn, Brian Hepp Mariel Howsepian and Cynthia Citron

NEWS INTERNS
Natalie Edwards
news@smdp.com

Chiara Canzi
news@smdp.com

PHOTOGRAPHY INTERNS
Geoffrey Dunn
news@smdp.com

Morgan Genser
news@smdp.com

Alexis Hawkins
news@smdp.com

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER
Rob Schwenker
schwenker@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
Julie Martinez
juliem@smdp.com

Liam Blume
Liamb@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ASSISTANT
Cynthia Vazquez
advertising@smdp.com

OPERATIONS MANAGER
Connie Sommerville
connies@smdp.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Tessa Vergara
tessav@smdp.com

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Frances Casareno
production@smdp.com

CLASSIFIEDS SALES MANAGER
Annie Kotok
anniek@smdp.com

CIRCULATION
Keith Wyatt
Osvaldo Paganini
circulation@smdp.com

Santa Monica Daily Press
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410 Broadway, Suite B
Santa Monica, CA 90401
OFFICE (310) 458-PRESS (7737)
FAX (310) 576-9913

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Meredith Pro Tem

Meredith C. Carroll
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Trials and tribulations of a cell phone maniac

IT'S BEEN A ROUGH WEEK. NOT because fallen pop star Britney Spears' hospital stay for a mental evaluation was extended (hallelujah!) or because Republican presidential hopeful Ron Paul didn't fare so well on Super Tuesday (shocking!). But because who knew that a cell phone weighing 2.82 ounces and standing 3.88 inches high could be such a pill.

The contract I have with my cell phone provider allows me a new phone every two years. The first headache set in when it came time to choose a new model. I knew I needed to choose wisely. After all, the phone will be my near-constant companion for 730 days.

Unless I break it sooner and my dad has to send me one of his old phones. Which is a distinct possibility since I seem to drop my phone daily (Strangely, I never seem to drop my indestructible keys or my even more indestructible wallet. Just my very destructible phone).

I spent the last two phone-buying cycles avoiding anything gadgety. The more features a phone has, the more things are apt to break when dropped. But after years of teasing from my sister's husband about my phones that always looks as if they were made in the same era as Maxwell Smart's shoe phone, I decided maybe it was time to graduate from the simplest model available.

I didn't get the top of the line. Nor did I go with the middle of the road. Still, the phone I got is closer to the middle than the bottom. It has some sort of music player and it has a camera and a video camera. I've graduated to an early 21st century cell phone at long last.

After I picked out the phone came the task of entering the numbers from my old phone. The process of which, if I were prone to migraines, totally would have triggered one. Besides the agony of physically entering the information using the tiny keypad, I realized as I scrolled through my contacts that there was a fair amount of people I hadn't talked to in a while. Former work colleagues, friends with whom I had grown distant — or just distant enough that did I really need their work, home and cell numbers in my cell phone? Do I transfer their numbers? Or am I ready to admit there are just some people I'll either never talk to again or will speak to so infrequently that I hardly need their numbers programmed in my phone? On the other hand, do I transfer the numbers of the people who I'll probably never call, but whose names I might want to appear on my caller ID so that I can avoid talking to them if they call me?

Then there are the numbers I know I know. Like my work number, my home number, my parent's numbers. Do I bother programming them in? Do I put them on speed dial?

My phone can hold 999 speed dials, which is totally absurd. First of all, I only have, like, 50-some odd contacts in my phone in the first place. But let's just say I had 999 contacts. How would I ever possibly memorize the speed dial number assigned to each person? In the time it would take me to scroll around to find each speed dial number, it probably would be faster to look up the number in an actual paper phone book and then just dial it.

Then there's the ringtone. I only have 11 factory preset options. Among the 11 options, not one even remotely resembles the ring I've been using for the past four years on my last two phones. So I keep missing calls and giving everyone around me dirty looks when my phone rings, assuming it's anyone else's but mine. And they're all giving me dirty looks because I'm the annoying person letting my phone just ring and ring.

Despite the aggravation of the new phone though, it was time. Even set at the highest level, the ringer on my old phone sounded at best like a faint noise from a faraway place. The vibrate mode more closely resembled the groan of a dying bee than an actual buzz. And the whole exterior casing was cracked, and just weeks ago, it finally snapped apart.

Still, it's not heading for the cell phone graveyard just yet. A friend recently dropped her cell phone in the toilet and she isn't eligible for a new one yet. So, she's going to use what's left of my old one. My only concern now is if with my sleek new phone, do I really want to be associated with someone whose phone doesn't even have a microSD™ expansion slot?

E-mail questions or comments to meredithccarroll@hotmail.com.

The Q Line

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Standing with the ban

Does your favorite restaurant still use Styrofoam? The city recently introduced a ban on the ecologically unfriendly packaging, but it will take a while before it begins enforcing the new ordinance.

So this week's Q-Line question asks:

Would you stop going to your favorite eatery if they don't comply with the Styrofoam ban sooner than later?

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



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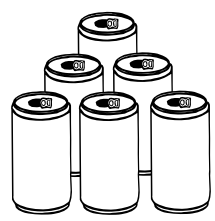
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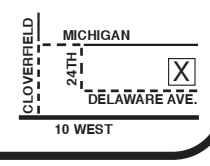


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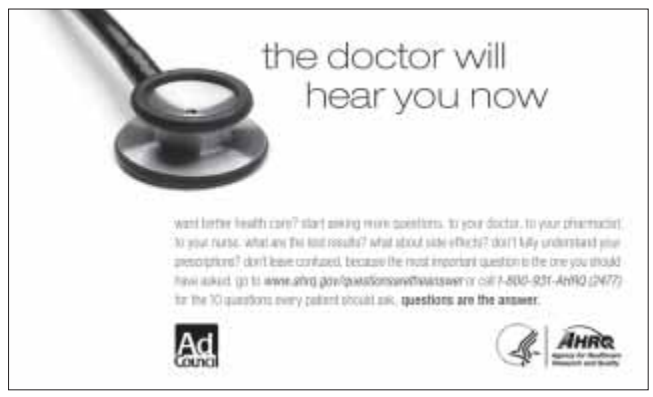
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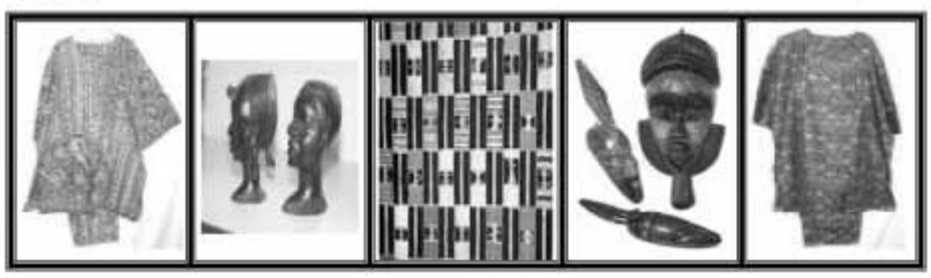
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Spears quietly released from L.A. area hospital

BY RAQUEL MARIA DILLON
For The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES Britney Spears was quietly released from a hospital Wednesday and slipped away unnoticed, only to be spotted hours later driving through Los Angeles with paparazzi and a television helicopter in tow.

Her incognito getaway from UCLA Medical Center — a stark contrast to the extensive police escort that brought her in — required no law enforcement presence, said Capt. Sharyn Buck, commander of the North Hollywood police station that covers Spears' home area.

"There was no media, no paparazzi, and no need for public safety protection," Buck said.

It didn't take long for the cameras to find her.

By late afternoon, Spears had left home in a black Mercedes-Benz and drove for a while, then exchanged seats with an unidentified man, the myfoxla.com Web site reported as it streamed KTTV Fox 11 news helicopter video from overhead.

Paparazzi vehicles zoomed around the car, which photographers swarmed at every stop. Spears' car was observing traffic laws, the helicopter pilot reported.

At one point the Mercedes pulled into the Beverly Hills Hotel entrance, then left. Beverly Hills police Sgt. Mark Miner said a "keep the peace" detail was sent to the hotel, a common practice when paparazzi are causing a nuisance.

The troubled singer was hospitalized Jan. 31 and held for a 72-hour evaluation that was originally set to expire Sunday. Her stay was then extended for two weeks, a person close to the pop star told The Associated Press, which may explain why she was able to avoid attention on her way out.

Until Feb. 14, Spears remains under the conservatorship of her father, an arrangement created after a judge determines a person can no longer care for themselves or their personal affairs. James Spears was named her conservator Monday, and he and attorney Andrew Wallet were made co-conservators of the estate.

As her conservator, Spears' father has been granted access to all of her medical records and authority to determine where Spears lives and who she sees.

Spears, who is in a child custody battle with ex-husband Kevin Federline, was also briefly hospitalized earlier in January after police were called to her home when she refused to return her sons to a Federline bodyguard after a visit. That trip to the hospital occurred amid a swarm of paparazzi.

Spears has since lost all visitation rights to her sons, 1-year-old Jayden James and 2-year-old Sean Preston.

On Friday, a court issued a restraining order against Sam Lutfi, who's been at Spears' side in recent months after the singer's mother declared that he held her daughter hostage in her own home, drugged her, took over her finances and controlled the paparazzi. Lutfi was ordered to stay away from Spears, her homes and her parents' and siblings' homes.

The singer has been in a spiral of increasingly bizarre behavior since November 2006, when she filed for divorce from Federline.

Lutfi has a long legal history

BY SOLVEJ SCHOU
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES He's been seen squiring around a dazed looking Britney Spears, at times acting as her spokesman, referring to himself as her manager and friend, and insisting all the while that her best interest is his only concern.

All the same, Sam Lutfi, the 33-year-old man in the baseball cap who's been behind the scenes throughout Britney's public downfall, has not been easy to define.

Then on Tuesday, accusations in a restraining order cutting him off from the troubled pop star would seem to support at least one theory: that he was a Svengali figure in her life, a shady hanger-on who controlled everything — from doling out her pills to holding the paparazzi's leash.

The day before the court documents were released, Lutfi told The Associated Press in a text message: "I have no problems with anyone writing anything negative against me. My image is not of concern, hers is." Lutfi did not immediately respond to further inquiry.

The restraining order, based on a statement from Spears' mother Lynne, was not the first against Lutfi, who is listed in legal documents as Osama Lutfi. Accusations in at least three prior orders range from obscene messages following a business deal to a neighbor who said he was hounded incessantly and threatened with bodily harm.

Spears remained hospitalized Monday for psychiatric evaluation after being committed last week. The order, which bars Lutfi from contacting her in any way, was granted the same day a court turned control of her affairs over to her father and a lawyer.

Though Lutfi had recently reached out to various magazines and media personalities with information on Spears' condition and state of mind, details on him have proved elusive.

Public records show he was born August 16, 1974 in Los Angeles. Music magazine Blender, in a March cover story on Spears, states that Lutfi grew up in Woodland Hills, where his mother reportedly owns several gas stations.

According to the movie database IMDb.com, Lutfi served as associate producer of 1998 film "Circles" (also known as "Crossing Paths") and 2001's "Crossing Cords." And a profile titled "Sam Lutfi" on the networking Web site LinkedIn lists him as an "Independent Media Production Professional" with education from the University of Southern California. The school's alumni Web site does not list Lutfi as a past student.

How Lutfi connected with Spears in the first place isn't clear.

Brandy Navarre, co-owner of celebrity photo agency and Web site X17, told the AP that Lutfi contacted the agency about nine or 10 months ago — after her head-shaving incident and others — about telling Spears' side of the story.

Since then, X17 photographers have cultivated a close relationship with both Spears and Lutfi, whom they have photographed together numerous times.

Taking a lead

McCain tops GOP delegate count for Super Tuesday

BY STEPHEN OHLEMACHER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON Sen. John McCain won a commanding victory in the Republican delegate race over Mitt Romney on Super Tuesday. Sen. Barack Obama, trailing much of the night, nearly pulled even with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton in the contest for Democratic delegates.

McCain won 511 delegates to 176 for Romney and 147 for former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee in incomplete results. A total of 1,023 delegates were up for grabs in 21 states.

Overall, McCain led with 613 delegates, to 269 for Romney and 190 for Huckabee. It takes 1,191 to win the nomination at this summer's convention in St. Paul, Minn.

Clinton led with 584 delegates to Obama's 563. A total of 1,681 delegates were at stake in 22 states and American Samoa.

Overall, that gave Clinton 845 delegates, to 765 for Obama, with 2,025 delegates required to claim the nomination in Denver at this summer's convention.

The AP tracks the delegate races by projecting the number of national convention delegates won by candidates in each presidential primary or caucus, based on state and national party rules, and by interviewing unpledged delegates to obtain their preferences.

In some states, like Iowa and Nevada, local precinct caucuses are the first stage in the allocation process. The AP uses preferences expressed in those caucuses to project the number of national convention delegates each candidate will have when they are chosen at county, congressional district or state conventions.

Voter turnout records broken in half of states

BY ANN SANNER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON Voters came out in record numbers in about half the states that have voted in presidential primaries so far, according to an analysis Wednesday.

Turnout among Republicans on Super Tuesday toppled a 20-year record in Alabama, according to the report issued by American University's Center for the Study of the American Electorate. More than 16 percent of those eligible voted in the GOP race, compared with about 7 percent in 1988.

The report's findings were based on unofficial results from the primaries held through Tuesday. Caucuses and California primary results were excluded.

Alabama had 58,000 new voters sign up in the three months leading up to Tuesday's race, just one sign of newfound interest in a primary that used to be held in June and had little or no significance.

In Georgia, Democrats came out in droves to support Barack Obama, breaking a more than 30-year-old turnout record. More than 16 percent of eligible voters showed up at the polls Tuesday, compared with less than 15 percent in 1976.

"We are likely to see more records broken until the contests are decided, which in the Democratic Party's case, at least may last until their convention," said Curtis Gans, the center's director who performed the analysis.

About 14 million people voted in the Democratic primaries this year compared with the slightly more than 10 million who voted in GOP primaries, according to the analysis.

Twenty states have held Democratic and Republican primaries so far.

Here are some of the report's findings:

■ Democratic primaries in 12 states set records. They are Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina and Utah.

■ Republican primaries in 11 states saw their highest percentages of voter turnout ever. They are Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Utah.

■ Combining party turnouts, the highest percentage of eligible voters showing up this year came in New Hampshire — 52 percent.

■ Among the record-setting states, New York primaries had the lowest percentage of people voting with just more than 18 percent of all those eligible casting votes.

Richardson: Voters 'thirst for change'

BY DEBORAH BAKER
Associated Press Writer

SANTA FE Gov. Bill Richardson credited strong candidates and a last-minute blitz of visits for the big voter turnout that swamped some polling places on Tuesday.

"The turnout today, nationally and in New Mexico, in my judgment shows that Democrats are going to have a good day in November, when we elect the president," Richardson said at a news conference Tuesday night.

He also said the state Democratic Party did a good job overall on the caucus and blamed glitches on the "unanticipated, last-minute huge turnout."

Richardson also predicted a very close race in New Mexico between Sens. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.

"I think it's going to be within one or two percent either way," he said.

Richardson, who ended his own campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination last month, didn't endorse either candidate and said he's not sure he will.

"I've always said endorsements by politicians ... don't mean a thing," Richardson said. "I think it's how the candidate connects with voters."

Attention Beachgoers

As part of the Annenberg Community Beach House construction project, Back on the Beach Café (445 Pacific Coast Highway) will close for renovation beginning February 4th.

Beach Parking Lot 10 North will be closed February 7th through May 20th. Until the lot reopens, beach visitors are advised to use the beach bike path, or Beach Lot 9, just south of Lot 10.

Questions? Contact Voneelya Simmons, Project Manager, 310-458-8721.
For more information on the project, please visit 415pch.smgov.net.

The Annenberg Community Beach House project is made possible by a generous gift from the Annenberg Foundation at the recommendation of Wallis Annenberg, in partnership with the City of Santa Monica and California State Parks.

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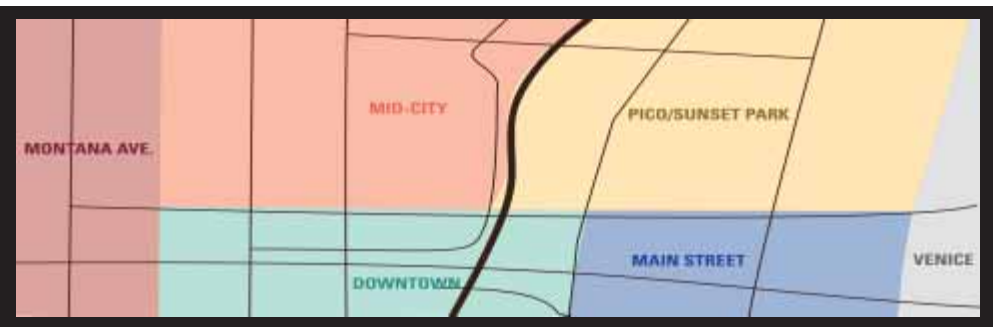
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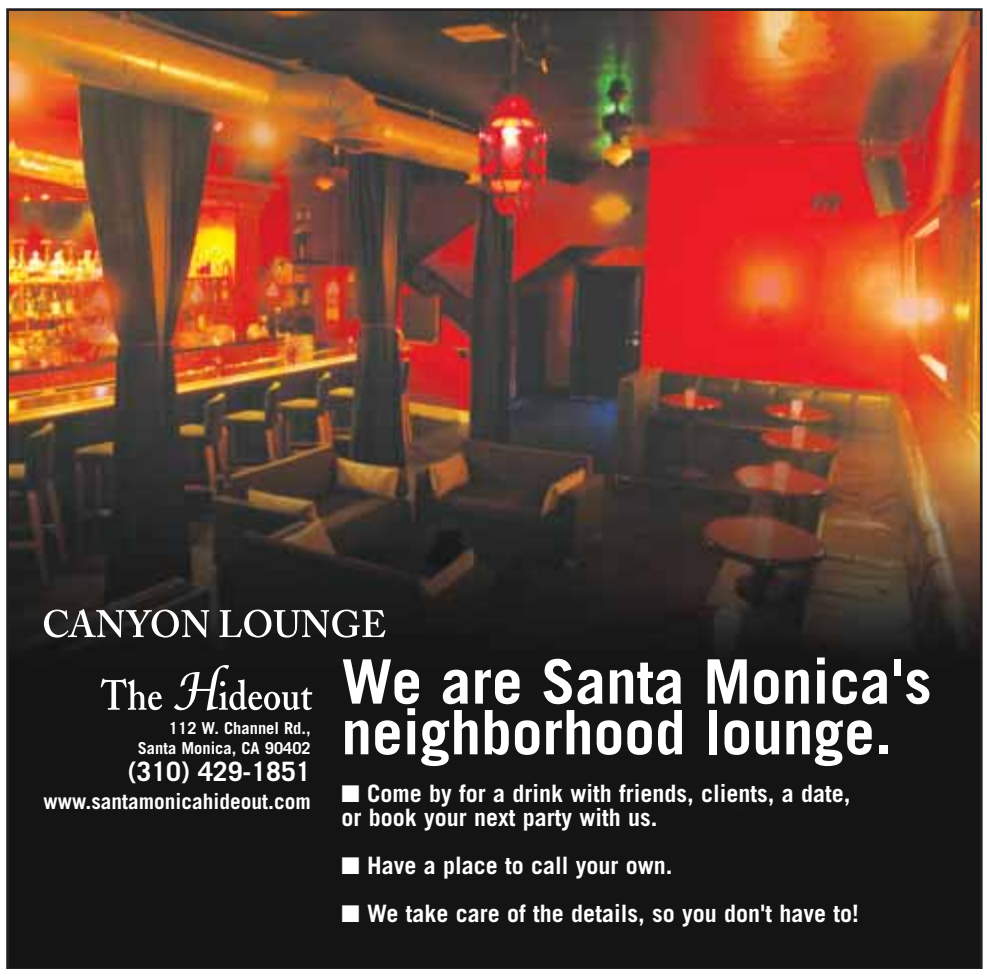
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Benice 1715 Pacific Ave. (310) 396-9938
Big Daddy and Sons 1425 Ocean Front Walk (310) 508-2793
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Danny's Deli 23 Windward Ave. (310) 566-5610
Firehouse 213 Rose Ave. (310) 396-6810
French Market Cafe 2321 Abbot Kinney Blvd. (310) 577-9775
Great Western Steak & Hoagie Company 1720 Lincoln Blvd. (310) 450-4545
Hal's Bar & Grill 1349 Abbot Kinney Blvd. (310) 396-3105
Hama 213 Windward Ave. (310) 396-8783
James Beach 60 N. Venice Blvd. (310) 823-5396
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C & O Cucina 3016 Washington Blvd. (310) 301-7278
Cafe Del Rey 4451 Admiralty Way (310) 823-6395
California Pizza Kitchen 3345 Fiji Way (310) 301-1563
Casa Escobar 14160 Palawan Way (310) 822-2199
Chart House 13950 Panay Way (310) 822-4144
The Cheesecake Factor 4142 Via Marina (310) 306-3344
Chin Chin 13455 Maxella Ave Ste 266 (310) 823-9999
Chipotle Mexican Grill 4718 Admiralty Way (310) 821-0059
Harbor House Restaurant 4211 Admiralty Way (310) 577-4555
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Mercedes Grille 14 Washington Blvd (310) 827-6209
Mermaids-Juice Java & More 14045 Panay Way (310) 306-3883
Rainbow Acres Natural Foods 4756 Admiralty Way (310) 823-5373
Sapori Ristorante 13723 Fiji Way (310) 821-1740
Tony P's 4445 Admiralty Way (310) 823-4534
Tsuji No Hana 4714 Lincoln Blvd (310) 827-1433
The Warehouse Restaurant 4499 Admiralty Way (310) 823-5451

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A DAY IN THE Life

A weekly slice of life culled from one of Santa Monica's many cool neighborhoods, "A Day in the Life" turns the focus on the everyday and thrusts the oftentimes overlooked into the spotlight.

SEASIDE | FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2008











Alexis Hawkins *news@smdp.com*

A SLICE OF LIFE BY THE SEA: **(from top left clockwise) Lisa Foux (left) works out with trainer Lily Moler in Palisades Park by the beach. A couple takes in the scenery from the Santa Monica Pier. Nana Lee kisses a friendly dolphin on the pier. Local street performer Ellun Cheng sculpts miniature portraits for customers on the pier. Lyla Fronk enjoys a ride at Pacific Park.**

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Kyle Mathis HAIRDRESSING

Photos and text by Christine Chang

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Local voters OK school measure

FROM MEASURE R PAGE 1

it," Millen said on Wednesday.

The measure, which will go into effect starting with the fiscal year in July, was touted as being able to save more than 50 teaching positions as well as allowing the district to keep a rich elementary school music program and strong libraries with new materials and the necessary staffing to operate them.

While there was a large amount of support behind the measure, the passage was not a gimme considering it needed a two-thirds vote, especially not after a concerning experience in 2003 when the result of Measure S was up in the air until three days after the election, Rebecca Kennerly, PTA Council president, said. Measure S eventually passed with 67.61 percent of the vote.

"That's a very high bar," Kennerly said, referring to the two-thirds requirement. "In my mind, (parcel tax) funding was always in jeopardy."

The campaign to support Measure R was out in full force on Super Tuesday, more than 100 volunteers lending a hand, whether it was making reminder calls, checking polls to see which supporters had not yet voted or standing in front of former polling locations to redirect unaware voters to their new site.

One such location is St. Clement's Catholic Church in the Ocean Park neighborhood, which previously served as a polling location and was split into several new jurisdictions. Several voters mistakenly arrived at the church and were directed to the proper polling location, Davis said.

> **"I CAN SAY THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF CELEBRATION THAT WE HAD SUCH A HIGH NUMBER (IN SUPPORT)."**
>
> **Shari Davis**
> Chairwoman, the Campaign to Protect Quality Public Schools

"We wanted to make sure that any voters didn't feel frustrated," she said.

Kennerly believes the outcome of the event shows the overwhelming support the community has for the public schools.

"It a strong statement of support from every corner of our community, top to bottom, east to west," Kennerly said. "It's a strong statement that our schools have to be protected from inadequate and unstable funding from the state."

melodyh@smdp.com



SPECIAL DAY

Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

Police Chief Timothy Jackman awarded on Wednesday, Feb. 6, the Line of Duty medal to Officer Walter Ramirez at City Hall for his actions while working undercover in the Pico Neighborhood. Ramirez was shot in the hand by a suspect. Officers Doug Theus, Saul Rodriguez, and Michael Federico were also given promotions that day.



Real estate prices stay high despite recent woes

FROM **HOMES** PAGE 1



Alexis Hawkins *news@smdp.com*

ROBUST MARKET: **Despite real estate prices sagging in other parts of the state, Santa Monica's home market continues to remain strong.**

securing a loan.

"In the premium areas you are always going to have that effect. In those areas there will always be demand," said Paul Habibi, a lecturer at UCLA's Anderson School of Management. "Beachfront properties have always been more insulated against downward trends in the market."

Quality schools, top-notch shopping, the proximity to the coast and plentiful employment opportunities have buoyed values with the average median home price in Santa Monica being $950,000, according to the California Association of Realtors. Single family homes are selling for an average of $1,691,750, while condos are fetching an average of $783,000.

The density of the area also plays a role in strong housing values.

"There is a limited amount of space for property," said Larry Weiner, owner of Flans & Weiner Inc. "There is a lot of money chasing property on the Westside. Whenever you have a lot of demand it keeps prices going up."

Some believe that the relative low number of properties currently available in the area keeps prices down. Habibi's take is that with less volume comes increased demand. Considering that many potential buyers consider Santa Monica a desirable place to live and raise their families, there will continue to be plenty of suitors for the scant number of properties on the market.

"When volume is low, it is usually harder to find a bargain in a particular market," Habibi said. "Even at the height of the recent real estate boom, there wasn't much volume being swapped."

At the apex of the market's activity in 2004, there were 333 transactions, according to the Multiple Listings Service. There were just 270 transactions in 2007 and many in the industry believe that number will again decrease in 2008 if current trends continue throughout the year.

"Things have been pretty slow as far as mortgages go. Buyers want to know the value of a property before they place an offer," said Drake Goosby, the owner of Santa Monica-based Goosby Valuation. "The same goes for investors. There is not a lot of turnaround in properties in the area right now."

Goosby said that the decrease in activity is partly due to tepidness by prospective buyers. He believes that negative media coverage of the real estate market has buyers nervous about future home values.

He recently was contracted by a foreign investor who had no plans to buy now, but wanted to gauge the market for potential purchases later in the year depending on what direction the market is headed at the time.

"I'm hearing people say wait until the election is over. They want to see how the recession is going to pan out before jumping into the market," Goosby said. "I don't think people are worried about the market bottoming out, but people just want to make sure before they purchase."

With potential buyers weighing their options more carefully these days a reversal of the area's market fortunes may be inevitable.

Local real estate agent Simon Salloom has noticed a slight decline since August of 2007. While the overall numbers were positive last year, he has witnessed a definite slow down in the local market.

"It hasn't been too remarkable, but there has been a slight dip," Salloom said. "But then again, there hasn't been many foreclosures in the area so things continue to look positive."

While Santa Monica may be in for a soft landing, the rest of the state should brace for a possible protracted decline. UCLA's Habibi thinks things will have to get worse before the market begins to see a rebound.

"I sense that there is going to be a continued decline for the next year to 18 months before we see a stabilization," he said. "Investors have fared better in premium neighborhoods that are coastal, so it remains to be seen if these areas will ever see a decline."

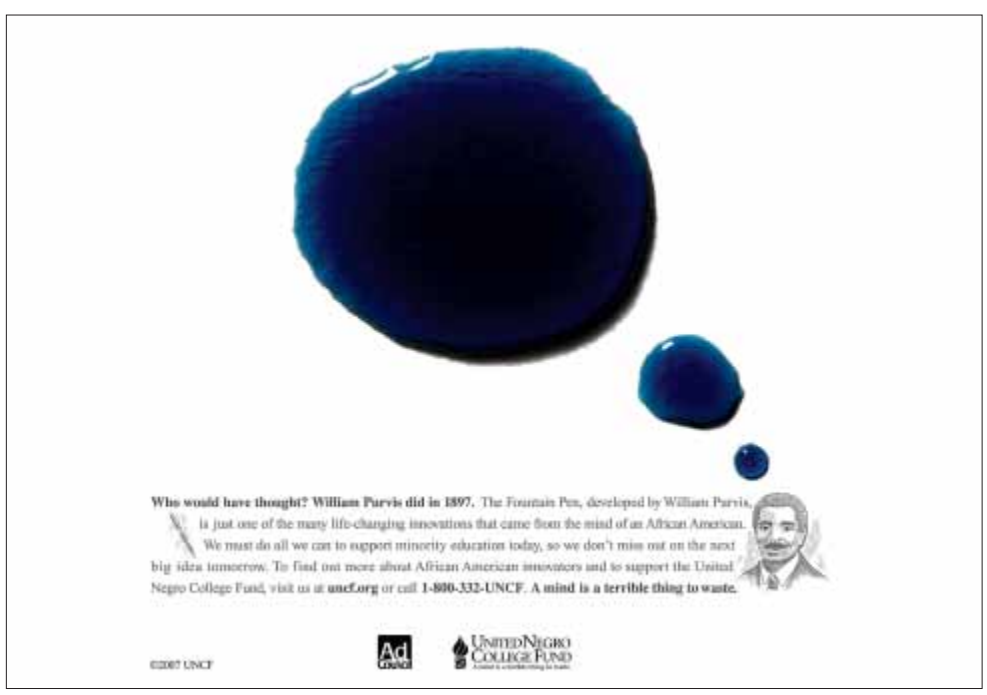
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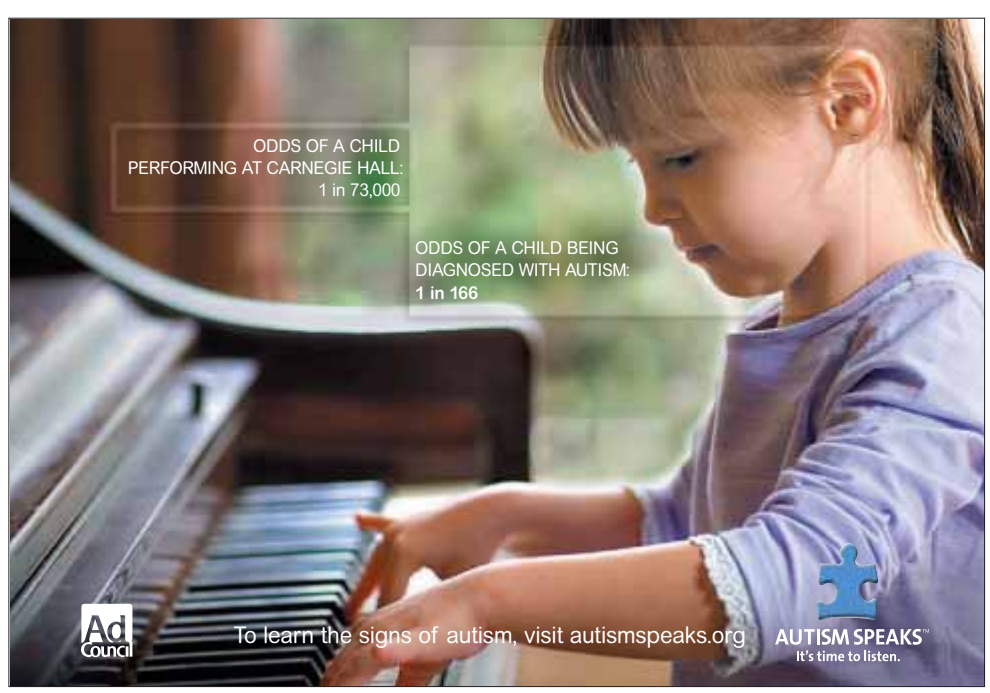
Paul Habibi, UCLA's Anderson School of Management

daniela@smdp.com

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send letters to **editor@smdp.com**





Clinton wins California primary race

BY LAURA KURTZMAN
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES California delivered for Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton in the state's Democratic presidential primary, but even second place may have been fruitful for Barack Obama. The proportional system used by the Democrats means that regardless of the popular vote both Clinton and Obama will take large shares of the state's 370 pledged delegates.

The exact distribution of delegates had yet to be officially determined.

California was one of eight states and American Samoa won by Clinton on Super Tuesday, while Obama won 13 states. An Associated Press projection gave Clinton 492 delegates on the night, compared to 475 for Obama, raising their totals to 753 and 677, respectively.

With 96 percent of California precincts reporting Wednesday morning, Clinton had 52 percent of the vote to 42 percent for Obama.

"Without a doubt California remains Clinton country," said Luis Vizcaino, spokesman for her campaign in the state.

In exit polling by The Associated Press, women favored Clinton overwhelmingly but men were equally divided between Clinton and Obama.

Nearly 7 in 10 Hispanics favored Clinton in the exit survey, while nearly 8 in 10 black voters favored Obama.

"We always knew it would be an uphill battle," said Debbie Mesloh, a spokeswoman for Obama's California campaign, "and we were able to close the gap in these past few weeks, which helps a lot for the race ahead."

Clinton had a built-in advantage because of her husband's presidency and she maintained a wide lead in pre-election polls until the final week of the race.

"I think it's very hard to beat the Clinton brand in California," said Garry South, a Democratic consultant. "California has its own special history with the Clintons."

Hispanic voters, in particular, have fond memories of Bill Clinton. Many cast their first ballots during his presidency.

"They know Hillary Clinton," said Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, national co-chair of her campaign. "They trust her. Both Bill and Hillary have delivered for California time and time again."

Despite the results, Obama's California operation partied into the night at a Hollywood dance club.

"I was hoping for an upset," said Debra Knighten, 50, of Los Angeles. "But he came pretty close to winning, and I don't think it's over."

She and others celebrated Obama's victories elsewhere in the country.

"You don't get elected the president of California," said Michael Kadish, a 34-year-old supporter from Oakland. "You get elected the president of the United States."

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

Furniture designer manufactures 'green' showroom

FROM **GREEN** PAGE 3

to public transportation and has bike racks, encouraging employees in the building to use alternative means of transportation to get to work, Lori Selcer, the LEED project administrator for HOK, the architectural firm that designed the resource center, said. The office complex also has an underground parking garage, which also results in LEED credits because it does not take up extra outside space, minimizing the disturbance, she added.

"The availability of public transportation was very advantageous to us," she said.

Within the resource center, the showroom was constructed out of recycled materials and about 95 percent of the construction materials was diverted from landfills. The resource center also takes advantage of natural light, its windows designed with a sensor system so that when it detects a certain amount of daylight, it automatically adjusts the usage of electrical lighting, Selcer said.

While the grant is typically meant to be a reimbursement for the "green" elements that dictated the design of the resource center, Allsteel intends to use the $25,000 toward promoting education of environmentalism and sustainability, funding research on different opportunities to make the workplace more sustainable, Dunlop said. The grant will also help the company educate its clients on ways they could make their own businesses more green.

"We're looking for ways we can reinvest that money into the city of Santa Monica in initiatives that have some connection to green causes," Dunlop said. "It wasn't so much for getting money as it was an opportunity for us to say we support this effort and initiative."

melodyh@smdp.com

CAPTURING YOUR IDEAS ...
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The Bayside District Corporation seeks your input on an improvement plan that would fund new projects and programs to make Downtown Santa Monica cleaner, more inviting and more attractive. Funds to pay for the improvements would come from property assessments.

There are two ways to participate:

1. Go to **downtownsm.com** and complete a brief survey online.
2. Attend a meeting Tuesday, February 12 at the Santa Monica Public Library 601 Santa Monica Boulevard:

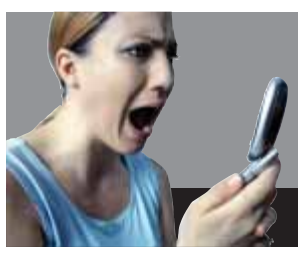
Property & Business Owner Forum
3 p.m.
Multi-Purpose Room

Resident & Community Forum
7 p.m.
Community Meeting Room

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SURF REPORT



SURF CONDITIONS **WATER TEMP: 56°**

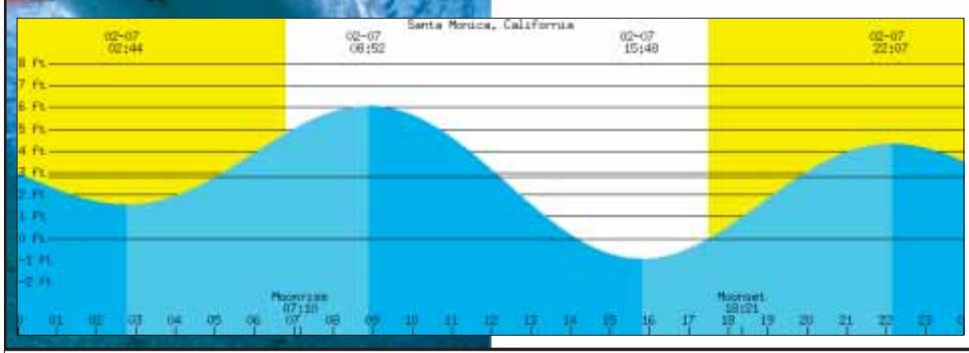
SWELL FORECAST (3-4 FT)

Today looks a bit smaller than Wednesday, waist high or so around west facing breaks, and knee to waist at south facing spots. The tide will be quite high midmorning. Winds should become offshore in the morning, possibly 8-13 mph from the ENE in wind-prone spots, then becoming calm to lightly onshore around lunchtime, and then moderately onshore in the afternoon.

LONG RANGE SYANOPSIS

NW GROUND SWELL BUILDS SATURDAY, MORE SUNDAY...

TIDE FORECAST FOR TODAY IN SANTA MONICA



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 29, 2008**

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

QUICK STATS (for the last 20 days)

- Number of sewage spills -- 0
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0
- Number of wet days -- 15
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 29 / 10
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 13 / 33

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

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

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'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.

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.

Heal the Bay

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NBA

Phoenix Suns pick up an aging O'Neal

BY BOB BAUM
AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX The Phoenix Suns have acquired Shaquille O'Neal in a stunning, blockbuster deal that sends four-time All-Star Shawn Marion and Marcus Banks to the Miami Heat.

The improbable pairing of the speedy Suns and the slow but once-mighty O'Neal became official when he cleared a physical exam Wednesday.

The trade, a dramatic move by first-year Phoenix general manager Steve Kerr, signals an unexpected change in philosophy for the Suns, adding a 7-foot-1, 325-pound center who has won four NBA championships but has been plagued by injuries in recent years and turns 36 next month. O'Neal has been out with a hip injury and underwent an MRI exam in Miami on Tuesday. He flew to Phoenix on Wednesday for the physical.

"I'm well aware that I'm on the line," Kerr told The Associated Press. "That's my job. That's why I'm sitting in this seat. I'm comfortable with the decision. I think it gives us a better chance to win, and a better chance to win in the playoffs."

O'Neal has averaged 25.6 points and 11.5 rebounds in his 14-plus NBA seasons.

This season, plagued by injuries and going through a divorce, he's averaging 14.2 points. His 14-year streak as an All-Star choice came to an end this year.

He missed much of the 2006-07 season with a knee injury and finished that year with career-lows in games (40), scoring (17.3 points), rebounds (7.4), minutes (28.4) and free-throw percentage (.422).

"It was a very, very hard decision for me. When Shaq came to the team four years ago, I always felt it was forever. We won a championship with him. We wish him nothing but the best," Riley said. "We have to move on with our team. We're rebuilding. This is not the most desirable place to be right now."

The Heat have lost 19 of their last 20 games and have the NBA's worst record at 9-37.

Phoenix gambled that Shaq will be healthy and more motivated when he moves to the desert.

For the three-plus seasons since Steve Nash came to town, the speedy Suns have been darlings of NBA fans grown weary of the slow style that has prevailed for years. But the Suns have fallen short in the playoffs, never making it to the finals.

The addition of O'Neal doesn't necessarily put the brakes on the running game, Kerr said.

"We ran when Kurt Thomas was here. He got the rebound, and everybody else ran down the court," Kerr said. "We're still going to run, but we feel like we'll have a better halfcourt team."

Marion, weary of being third fiddle to Nash and Amare Stoudemire, asked to be traded before the season began. He didn't get his wish and, although he refused to talk publicly about it, remained unhappy with his role.

Still, his talents fit well with the fast-paced style that coach Mike D'Antoni wanted, especially with his ability to finish on a fastbreak. He also was the team's best defender, guarding everyone from Tony Parker to Yao Ming. Marion, who has spent all of his 8 1/2 NBA season with Phoenix, made the All-Star team five times, including the last three seasons.

> **"WHEN SHAQ CAME TO THE TEAM FOUR YEARS AGO, I ALWAYS FELT IT WAS FOREVER. WE WON A CHAMPIONSHIP WITH HIM. WE WISH HIM NOTHING BUT THE BEST."**
>
> Pat Riley
> Miami Heat head coach

This year, though, he failed to make it, while Nash and Stoudemire did. Marion has an NBA career averages of 18.4 points and 10 rebounds per game. This season he's averaging 15.8 points and 9.9 boards.

The Suns have the best record in the West (34-14) but have not played up to their own expectations. Their interior defense is among the NBA's worst. Kerr apparently felt that without a large presence inside, Phoenix could not combat the big men, such as Andrew Bynum and Tim Duncan, in the playoffs.

O'Neal's move west adds fuel to the already intense rivalry between the Suns, the Lakers and his old teammate Kobe Bryant.

The trade required a significant financial commitment from the budget-conscious owner Robert Sarver because O'Neal is scheduled to make $20 million this season and $20 million more each of the next two.

Marion makes $16.4 million this year and could opt out of the $17 million final year of his contract after this season. Banks has been in and out of the Suns' rotation the past two seasons.

NBA

Bryant, Nash to take part in contest

By the Associated Press

NEW YORK Kobe Bryant will take part in the 3-point shooting contest at All-Star weekend against a field that includes defending champion Jason Kapono and the last repeat winner, Peja Stojakovic.

Steve Nash, Detroit All-Star Richard Hamilton and Cleveland's Daniel Gibson also were chosen Wednesday to take part in the event, which will be held Feb. 16 in New Orleans during All-Star Saturday night.

Bryant will try to add the 3-point title to the dunk championship he won as a rookie in 1997. He is shooting 35 percent from behind the arc this season.

Kapono signed with Toronto in the off-season and is shooting 51 percent from 3-point range. He won last year in Las Vegas while playing for Miami, falling just shy of the event record with a 24 in the final round.

Stojakovic, from the hometown Hornets, won the event in 2002-03 while playing for Sacramento and was the runner-up in 2004.

Big honor

Hilton attends Harvard Lampoon's 'Woman of the Year' ceremony

PARIS HILTON found herself somewhere she never thought she'd be: Harvard.

"Harvard is hot!" the 26-year-old celebrity heiress said Wednesday as she picked up the Harvard Lampoon humor magazine's "Woman of the Year" award in front of the Lampoon castle.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine standing here, standing on the steps of the Harvard Lampoon. It's really exciting and I've had such a great time," said Hilton, who stars as an attractive best friend to an ugly duckling in the film "The Hottie & the Nottie," which opens Friday.

Hilton, who arrived an hour late for the festivities, told the crowd of about 100 people who greeted her that her "Simple Life" co-star Nicole Ritchie was with her, then added: "Just kidding."

The Lampoon award is a spoof of the annual honors given by Harvard's Hasty Pudding Theatricals. The nation's oldest undergraduate drama troupe planned to present its "Woman of the Year" award to Charlize Theron on Thursday. "Man of the Year" Christopher Walken will be honored Feb. 15.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JENNY EXPECTS TWINS

JENNIFER LOPEZ is expecting twins, her father says.

"They are twins, yes," David Lopez said on Telefutura's "Escandalo TV" program. He said his sister had twins.


LOPEZ

"To be a mother is something Jennifer has wanted for many years," Lopez said. "I feel superproud."

The 39-year-old singer, who is married to Marc Anthony, confirmed her pregnancy during a concert in November. "Marc and I are expecting," she told the crowd in Miami.

Lopez and Anthony, 38, were married in 2004. AP

Judge refuses to dismiss Dr. Phil suit

A judge refused to dismiss a defamation suit Tuesday against CBS and television psychologist "DR. PHIL" MCGRAW brought by two brothers who were questioned in the disappearance of Natalee Holloway.

William Cremer, the lead attorney for Surinamese brothers Deepak and Satish Kalpoe, praised the decision by Superior Court Judge Edward A. Ferns.

"I'm going to take Dr. Phil down," he said outside the courtroom.

The ruling came a day after ABC's "20/20" aired a secretly recorded conversation involving Joran Van der Sloot, who also has been interrogated by Aruban authorities on Holloway's May 2005 disappearance. In the tape, Van der Sloot claims that Holloway died on the beach while they were kissing, and that he tried to revive her but failed. He said that the teen's body was dumped in the ocean and that it would never be found.

Joseph Tacopina, a lawyer for Van der Sloot, said that his client was not responsible for the Alabama teenager's death and that the tapes do not amount to a confession. Last week, Van der Sloot said he was lying in those conversations and denied that he had anything to do with Holloway's disappearance.

The Kalpoes, who have maintained they had nothing to do with Holloway's disappearance, sued in December 2006, claiming the "Dr. Phil" talk show altered portions of a taped conversation between Deepak Kalpoe and a private investigator to "create false, incriminating, and defamatory statements that the plaintiffs engaged in criminal activity against Natalee Holloway."

The brothers also contend the TV show implied they helped kill Holloway and got rid of her body. Their suit claims defamation, invasion of privacy, emotional distress, fraud, deceit and civil conspiracy.

Cremer said the taped remarks by Van der Sloot, which were secretly recorded by a Dutch crime reporter, help his clients' defamation case.

"It pretty much exonerates my boys, doesn't it?" Cremer said.

In their dismissal motion, attorneys for CBS Television and McGraw maintained lawyers for the Kalpoes did not meet deadlines to produce all documents they have demanded concerning the criminal case investigation against the brothers in Aruba.

But the judge gave the Kalpoes' lawyers another five days to satisfy the document deadline.

"The documents are relevant to the most fundamental issues in this case," Ferns stated in his ruling. "There is no other (information) which can substitute for the documents sought by the defendants due to the nature of this case."

In June, another judge dismissed a wrongful death case against the Kalpoes by Holloway's parents.

AP

JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS
The stars show the kind of day you'll have:
★★★★★ Dynamic ★★★★ Positive ★★★ Average ★★ So-So ★ Difficult

Party on this Saturday, Tommy

Happy Birthday!

This year you might not be as "out there" as in the past. In fact, much that goes on will be behind the scenes. Take time out when you're feeling overwhelmed. You might be surprised at everything that comes up if you simply take a timeout or go for a walk. Use this technique when facing a jam or problem. Time is your ally. At the same time, this year is about setting yourself up for a new life cycle.



Born Today

Social critic, novelist Sinclair Lewis (1885)

Author Charles Dickens (1812)

Comedian Chris Rock (1965)

Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at http://www.jacquelinebigar.com
(c) 2006 by King Features Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★ Take your time, as you might be coming from a place of negativity. You have a strong sense of direction, which could be fueled by a problem on the home front. By identifying what you don't want, you already are one step closer to a goal. Tonight: Anchor in.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ Keep your focus, and don't allow someone to distract you. You do best with friends and/or groups. Creativity emerges when dealing with different people and issues. Don't kid yourself — your magnetism radiates. Tonight: Already acting like it is the weekend.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ Don't hold back or attempt to do something in a different manner. Others need and want your ideas and leadership. You could invest much more than you want to give if you aren't careful. Think and take your time. Tonight: A must appearance.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Your strong drive and sense of direction emerge. Explore options that up till now you have not even conceived of. Anything can happen if you relax. Don't say no. Make it your job to explore possibilities. Tonight: Touch base with someone at a distance.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ A key individual in your life wants your attention. The results of an important conversation could set the tone for a project, or your relationship. Tonight: Say yes to a request.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ Defer to others, even if you might be slightly uncomfortable not being a strong player. A friend really needs to demonstrate his or her "stuff." In fact, this person often inspires you to head in a certain direction. Tonight: You might like what someone puts on your plate.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★ Emphasize your strengths by heading in the direction with the least obstacles. You know what your goals are. Get ready to start making them so. Your personal life transforms; don't worry so much. Tonight: Squeeze in a favorite sport.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★★ Many people could speculate as to why there is a twinkle in your eye. Truth be told, you simply feel good. Your magnetism attracts many people to you. Know what you want; be willing to take that new path. Tonight: Enjoy yourself to the max.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★ Disruption can occur within a partnership or with a financial agreement. Though you might feel down, this situation is unlikely to hold. Center and take care of yourself. Investigate an investment. Tonight: Beam in what you want.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Others come forward and test your patience and/or energy. By detaching, you'll gain immense understanding and won't be reactive. New choices will come forward. Tonight: Defer until later if you are feeling pressured.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ Emphasize good money sense, which could look like frugality. You don't know what others might be thinking. Willingly pull back and listen to suggestions. You might like their thoughts. Tonight: Think "taxes."

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★★ You are all smiles, knowing what you want. If you are challenged, relax. You will be capable of quite a few solutions if you brainstorm with friends. A meeting allows for tremendous success. Tonight: Whatever makes you smile.

MOVIEGUIDE

AERO THEATRE
1328 Montana Avenue
(310) 260.1528

Check theatre for showtimes
7:30

AMC LOEWS BROADWAY 4
1441 3rd Street
(310) 458-1506

Atonement (R)
1:15, 4:05, 7:00, 9:50
National Treasure: Book of Secrets (PG)
1:25, 4:15, 7:05, 10:00
Over Her Dead Body (PG-13)
1:35, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00
Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (R)
1:30, 4:35, 7:15, 9:55

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

27 Dresses (PG-13)
1:25, 4:15, 7:00, 9:50
Charlie Wilson's War (R)
1:50, 4:35, 7:15, 10:00
Cloverfield (PG-13)
1:15, 3:25, 5:40, 7:55, 10:15
The Eye (PG-13)
1:30, 4:05, 7:10, 9:40
Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert Disney Digital 3D (G)
1:00, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:45
There Will Be Blood (R)
2:55, 6:30, 10:05
Untraceable (R)
2:20, 5:00, 7:35, 10:10

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

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly (Le Scaphandre et le papillon) (PG-13)
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 9:55
Juno (PG-13)
12:45, 3:05, 5:25, 7:50, 10:15
No Country for Old Men (R)
1:15, 4:05, 7:00, 9:55
Persepolis (PG-13)
12:55, 3:15, 5:35, 8:00, 10:15

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

The Bucket List (PG-13)
11:50am, 2:10, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30
Cassandra's Dream (PG-13)
11:40am, 5:20, 10:30
Mad Money (PG-13)
2:40, 7:50
Meet the Spartans (PG-13)
12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
Michael Clayton (R)
1:10, 4:20, 7:10, 10:20
Rambo (R)
12:00, 2:20, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
Strange Wilderness (R)
12:10, 2:30, 5:00, 7:40, 10:10

Janric Classic Sudoku

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

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

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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 YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

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

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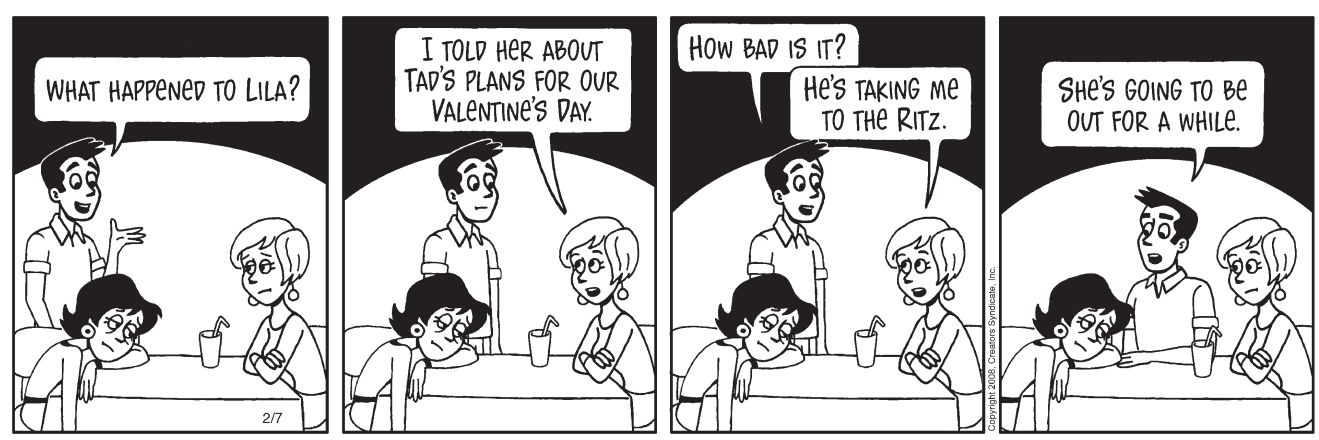
Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



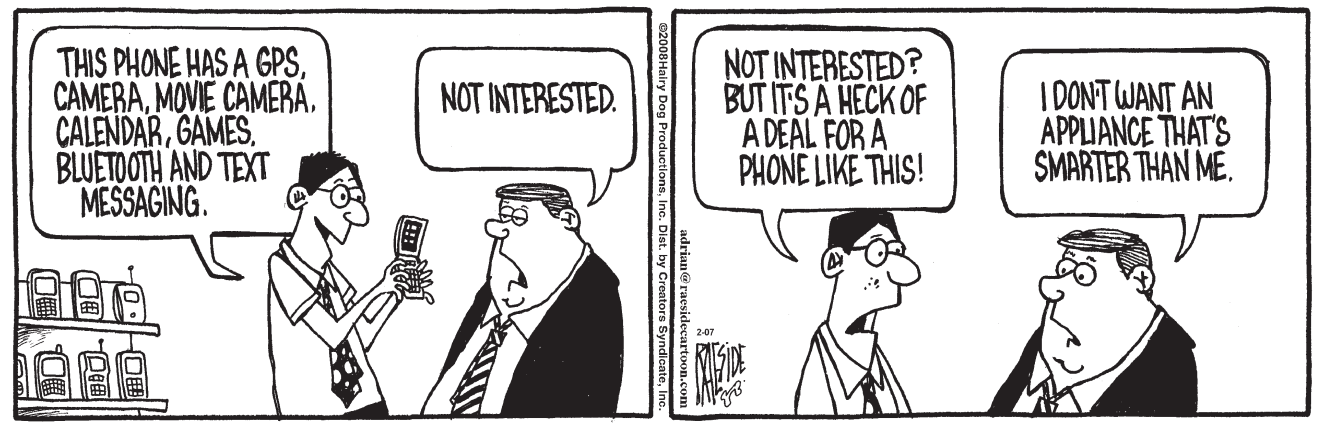
The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



The Other Coast

By Adrian Raeside



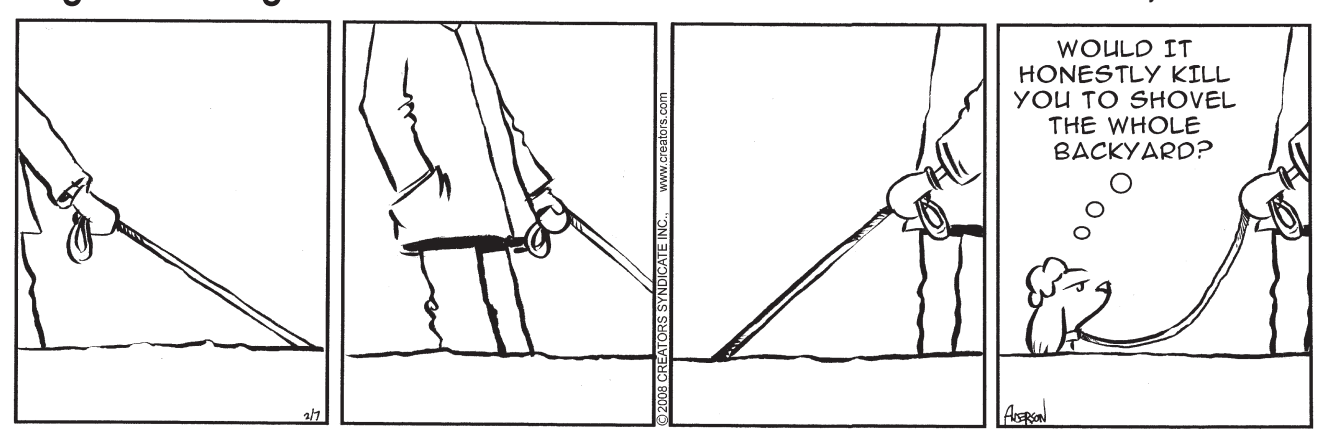
Garfield

By Jim Davis



Dog eat Doug

By Brian Anderson



The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



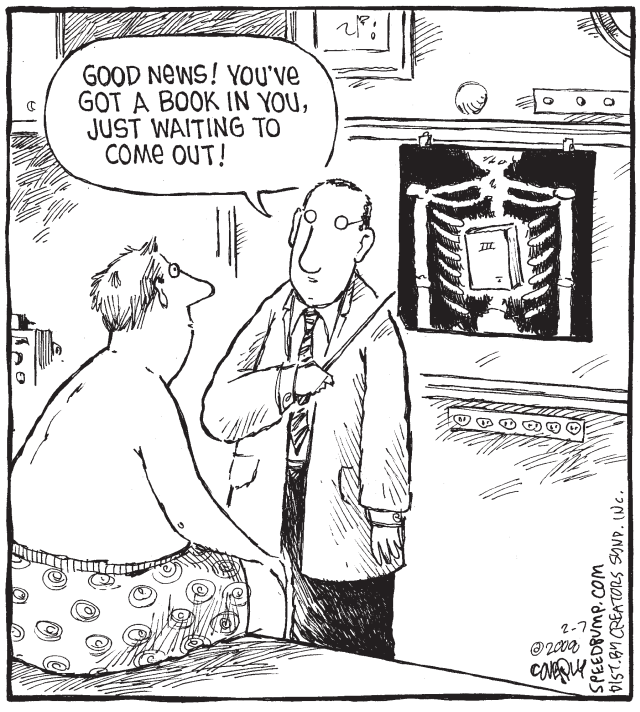
Strange Brew

By John Deering



Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly



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MYSTERY PHOTO

Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

Mark Humphrey is the winner of the Mystery Photo contest, correctly identifying the image above as the former Merle Norman Cosmetics' building at 2525 Main Street, which now houses the Ambiance Salon. Humphrey will receive a prize from the Daily Press.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Commotion
5 Some hits
10 Castle of dance
12 Tube, to Brits
13 Indy events
14 Buenos —
15 Greek vowel
16 Child's place when traveling
18 Conquer
20 Enzyme ending
21 Tarzan's pals
23 Rep.'s rival
24 On this spot
26 Methods
28 Williams of baseball
29 Stops working
31 Hurler's stat
32 Iterate
36 "Piece of cake!"
39 Carnival city
40 Had supper
41 Counting everything
43 Without letup
44 Stand for art
45 Bookish
46 Sacks

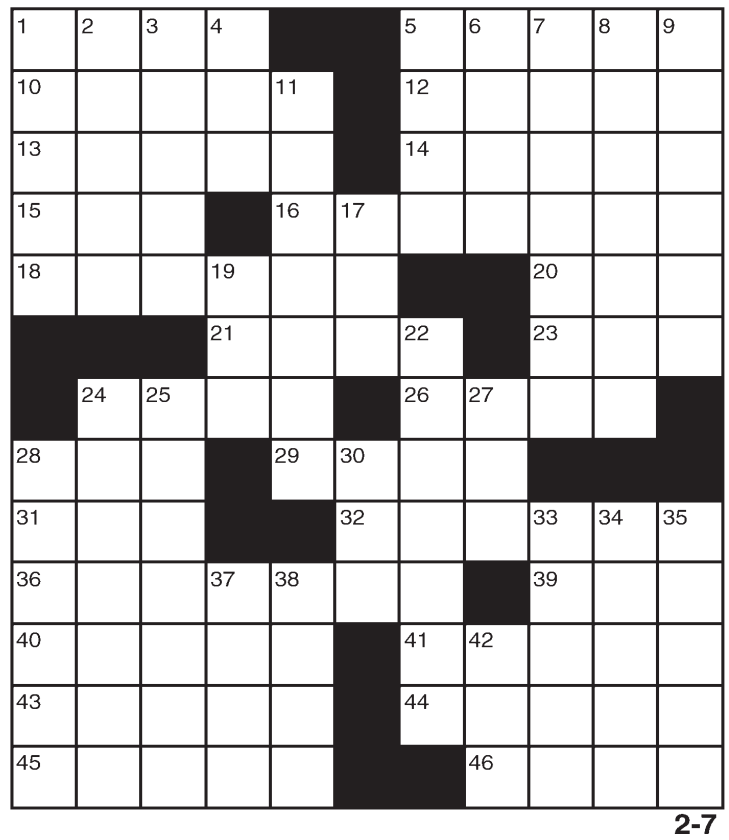
DOWN

1 Trite
2 Give addresses
3 Coffee-bar order
4 Indivisible
5 Big name
6 Maui rings
7 By now
8 Satisfies
9 Method
11 Got away
17 Had supper
19 Plug's place
22 Darling
24 Jane Eyre, for one
25 "Lou Grant" star
27 Nile serpent
28 Sinew
30 Writer Levin
33 Clear
34 Was under the weather
35 Rings
37 Make one's way
38 Whirl of water
42 Collar

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

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



2-7

DAILY LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS: 4 5 17 40 51 Meganumber: 38 Jackpot: $122M

SUPER LOTTO PLUS: 2 20 30 31 46 Meganumber: 27 Jackpot: $60M

Fantasy 5: 2 13 25 26 31

DAILY 3: MIDDAY: 5 7 8 EVENING: 6 0 0

DAILY DERBY: 1st: 07 Eureka! 2nd: 05 Califorina Classic 3rd: 10 Soild Gold RACE TIME: 1.43.17

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

■ Michael Windisch, proprietor of the Maltermeister Turm restaurant in Goslar, Lower Saxony, Germany, solved what has become a crisis for other restaurants since the state extended a smoking ban in August. Windisch opened three holes in an outer wall so that, in cold weather, a smoker need not venture outside but can stick his head and arms through the holes and puff away while remaining inside (according to a December report in Der Spiegel).

■ In December, the city of Bangalore, India, staged its fifth annual marathon, with an elite group of runners that officials thought would bring the city recognition in the world racing community, but problems occurred, the least of which were the city's ubiquitous potholes and pollution. At about the 20 km mark, the leaders were chased down the street by barking dogs snapping at their heels. Twice during the race, runners were forced to stop and take breaks because impatient motorists were disregarding traffic controls to reclaim their roads.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1964 The Beatles began their first American tour as they arrived at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport.

1812 author Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth, England.

1857 a French court acquitted author Gustave Flaubert of obscenity for his serialized novel "Madame Bovary."

1861 the general council of the Choctaw Indian nation adopted a resolution declaring allegiance with the South "in the event a permanent dissolution of the American Union takes place."

1904 a fire began in Baltimore that raged for about 30 hours and destroyed more than 1,500 buildings.

1936 President Franklin Roosevelt authorized a flag for the office of the vice president.

1943 the government announced the start of shoe rationing, limiting consumers to buying three pairs per person for the remainder of the year.

1948 Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower resigned as Army chief of staff; he was succeeded by General Omar Bradley.

WORD UP!

lubricious \loo-BRISH-us\, *adjective:* 1. Lustful; lewd. 2. Stimulating or appealing to sexual desire or imagination. 3. Having a slippery or smooth quality.

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North of Montana	=	$ 3,447,500	$ 2,066,286
Between Wilshire & Montana	=	$ 2,399,500	$ 935,983
South of Wilshire	=	$ 1,109,250	$ 784,736
Sunset Park	=	$ 1,276,167	$ 656,500
Ocean Park	=	$ 1,906,214	$ 865,475

Statistics updated every Friday

What is Your Home Worth? Contact Me to Find Out!

This is not intended as a solicitation if you currently have a broker. The information has been retrieved from the Multiple Listing Service. Some of these properties have been sold or listed with other Real Estate Agents.