

FREE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 80

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 3, 1, 5

Evening picks: 6, 1, 3

FANTASY 5

14, 24, 30, 34, 35

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 12, Lucky Charms.

2nd Place: 08, Gorgeous George.

3rd Place: 01, Gold Rush.



NEWS OF THE WEIRD by Chuck Shepard

■ The Atlanta firm Brighthouse Institute for Thought Sciences regularly runs consumers through MRIs while they look at pictures of products so that researchers can see which parts of the brain are stimulated in order to learn consumers' subconscious thoughts about those products. A Brighthouse spokesman tried to say as little as possible about this "neuromarketing" technology, and which companies pay the bills, and told the Canadian public radio program "Marketplace" (which reported on the Institute in December): "Right now (our clients) would rather not be exposed. We have been kind of running under the radar with a lot of the breakthrough technology."

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Except during the nine months before he draws his first breath, no man manages his affairs as well as a tree does.



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More than 200 school district employees could be laid off

Board may give superintendent power to issue pink slips

BY ANDY FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

More than 200 employees may lose their jobs at schools in Santa Monica and Malibu as educators struggle to cope with a \$13-million drop-off in state funding.

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified school board may give Superintendent John Deasy the power to issue 206 pink slips on Feb. 20, thereby giving adequate notice that the employees are laid off. All told, school district officials are proposing \$13,756,459 worth of layoffs and reductions.

Under state law, notices must be given to the school district's unionized personnel by March 15 if

they are not going to be rehired the following school year.

District officials said they are taking action now in case layoffs have to be made down the road. They said many cuts would not have to be made if a \$225 parcel tax is approved by voters on a June 3 special election, and if the cities of Santa Monica and Malibu double their annual contributions to the school district.

"We actually hope none of them have to be cut," said Superintendent John Deasy. "Unlike many other districts, we are fortunate enough to have some options in front of us."

The proposed cuts and layoffs have been placed into three categories. One would be restored if the parcel tax, which will net the school district \$6.5 million annually, is approved. Another could be restored if Santa Monica doubles its current

See LAYOFFS, page 8

Possible Iraq war figures in economic outlook for L.A.

BY GARY GENTILE
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — A war with Iraq, the fear of terrorism and the state's continuing fiscal problems will put pressure on California's economy this year, although most Southern California counties are poised for a recovery in 2004, according to a report released Thursday by the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp.

Even a short war of about three months would send gas prices skyrocketing and would hurt the state's tourism industry as even local visitors will be hesitant to drive too

See ECONOMY, page 8



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

(Above) A family member of the business owners surveys the damage a fire caused inside of Simply Sofas on Lincoln Boulevard. The furniture store and antique consignment shop next door were gutted after a fire broke out early Thursday. (Right) Investigators inspect the scene looking for clues as to what caused the blaze.



Fire guts local antique business on Lincoln Blvd.

Flames seen as far away as Main Street

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

A fire destroyed a local antique store on Thursday and caused more than \$1 million in damages.

Simply Sofas and Lona Antiques and Furniture — both of which house custom furniture and collectibles — went up in flames just before 2 a.m. The store, which is located on the 2300 block of Lincoln Boulevard, was completely gutted and all of its contents — most of which are one-of-a-kind collectibles from throughout the world — have been reduced to ash.

The Santa Monica Fire Department

responded to the multiple-alarm fire after receiving a call at 1:43 a.m. from a local police officer who was driving in the area and noticed the flames shooting out of the building. Fire crews reported seeing smoke from as far away as Main Street, and flames were visible from the front and south sides of the building. No one was injured.

Nina Fresco, a neighbor who lives across the street from the store, said she woke up to police banging on her door telling her to get out of the house in case the fire spread to nearby buildings.

But Fresco and her husband, Rob, decided to stay in the house so their children, a 4-year-old and a 10-month-old, wouldn't wake up.

"It was probably the scariest thing I've

See FIRE, page 7

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

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Take care of personal matters; be ready to take charge of your personal life. You're up for changes, and you deserve them. Invite favorite people to join you as you decide to let your hair down. Let the good times roll. You've held back long enough. Tonight: Let it happen.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Realize more of what you want by acting on it. You cannot sit on your duff and expect things to come to you. Much changes quickly. Confusion surrounds your family and professional life. Instead of looking at a choice, see how to make both options possible. Tonight: Do something ultimately relaxing.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Deal with funds with a strong hand, not taking anything for granted. Realize more of what you desire by putting your best foot forward. Stabilize your finances with a strong hand. Reach out for others. Talks prove unusually lively and directed. Tonight: At a favorite spot.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ You're personality plus. Use your unique charm to clear out a problem and find strong answers. If you put your best foot forward, you might be amazed by what will happen. Deal with an emotionally possessive situation directly. Tonight: Your treat.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ You might want to discuss what is on your mind with a loved one or a dear friend. Getting a perspective from someone else helps you make up your mind. Take your time, and don't respond to someone else's schedule. Claim your power. Tonight: Now the world is your oyster.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Meetings and conversations help you make the right decisions at the right time. Be proactive in the daytime, when the Moon beams success on you. Move during this period, putting nothing on the back burner. Stay on top of changes right now. Tonight: Vanish. Go for mystery.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Be ready to take a risk or go in a new direction. You find that a boss might have pushed you way beyond your limit. Understand what is possible here. A meeting later in the day could be most instrumental. Go for what you want. Tonight: Where the gang is.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Gain a perspective by pulling back. Think in terms of gain. You might want to discuss a positive change in the near future. By pulling together different forces and different people, you hit the bull's-eye — if not immediately, quite quickly. Tonight: A must appearance.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ You discover that there are many ways to get to the same place. Work with an associate, and you'll get the kind of results you desire. Don't do anything halfway. Talk and think past the immediate. You might not be sure which way to go. Tonight: Try a weekend escape.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Realize what it is you want and desire from others, then ask. By not holding back, you ultimately gain. Don't hem and haw; just aim for more of what you want. Schedule a one-on-one meeting for later in the day. Eliminate mixed messages. Tonight: Go along with another's request.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Clear out work, but count on the fact that it could take the whole day. If you think you can split from work early, think again. Laughter makes a big difference in how you handle a difficult situation. Relax and don't allow tension to ruin your mood. Tonight: Kick up your heels.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Your perspective could change considerably. Plug in your creativity and allow others to give you more feedback. Brainstorm and try someone else's idea. Once you clear a trail, please don't reverse your path. Complete this project. Tonight: Get some extra R and R.

CORRECTION — An article in the Feb. 12 edition of the Daily Press inaccurately reported a donor to the Save Our Neighborhoods campaign as being married to a landmarks commissioner by the same last name. Victor Fresco is a brother-in-law of Landmark Commissioner Nina Fresco.

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LOCAL



Councilman Herb Katz to be married today

By Daily Press staff

City Councilman Herb Katz is tying the knot with his sweetheart and Valentine today.

Katz announced that he is marrying Brenda Lehmann, after an eight-month long courtship. Lehmann, the general manager of W.I. Simonson Mercedes in Santa Monica, met Katz during business dealings with his architectural firm and the car dealership. The two had strictly a business relationship for quite a while.

After Lehmann's husband died in 2001, Katz offered his support to her because he was recently a widower as well. Katz's wife, Ilona Joe Katz, who was a well-known community member, died on April 26, 2000.

"I took her out to a drink to say, 'I know how you feel,'" Katz said.

He then invited her to the fireworks show at Santa Monica Community College.

"And we just hit it off, and we've been dating ever since," he said.

After several months, Katz took Lehmann to dinner at Musso and Franks



Brenda Lehmann and Herb Katz

restaurant in Hollywood. Katz bought a silver fortune cookie and put his own fortune in that said, "Will you marry me?"

Katz, a local architect, has lived in Santa Monica for 40 years and Lehmann has lived here just over two years.

"I am probably the luckiest man in alive to have a wonderful wife like Brenda," he said. "And we are going to have a lot of fun and be very happy."

The marriage ceremony will take place at a private residence on Pearl Street tonight. The reception will be held on Saturday at Shutters on the Beach Hotel.

Santa Monica Film Festival hits the screen this weekend

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica Film Festival is back in action beginning this weekend.

During the past six years, the festival has developed into a world-class event, screening the most innovative works of today's emerging filmmakers, organizers say.

This year, the festival has been expanded into a celebration of film, music and art, along with seminars hosted by Filmmaker's Alliance and is produced by DEFMAN (Deep Ellum Film, Music, Art and Noise.)

DEFMAN is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the independent arts in Dallas and Santa Monica. The festival is now headed by Michael Cain.

With the change in leadership comes a broadening of the festival's mission by promoting the arts while raising funds to help support families affected by cancer. The festival also refocused its mission to

celebrate the visions and visionaries of "American Independent" film.

Thursday, Feb. 13

Location: Laemmle's Monica 4 Plex
Opening night film: SPUN (Directed by Jonas Akerlund and Starring Brittany Murphy, John Leguizamo, Mena Suvari, Mickey Rourke, Jason Schwartzman, Eric Roberts, Patrick Fugit and Deborah Harry)

9 p.m. Opening Night Party: "Maverick Award for Persistence of Vision," presented to Trey Parker and Matt Stone.

Friday, Feb. 14

Location: Laemmle's Monica 4 Plex
7:30 p.m. — LOST JUNCTION and short film A CONFESSION
9:30 p.m. — ANNE B. REAL and short film HEADTRIP

Location: The Yard
7:00 p.m. — Shorts program No. 1

surf report

Information compiled by Jesse Haley

Rain advisory remains in effect until Sunday, so for your own sake, stay away from the ocean for a few more days.

The disappointment will be easier to take when surfers see conditions today. We're looking at mostly small waves, the north half of Santa Monica and Malibu barely cracking waist-high.

For what it's worth, the building northwest swell should put SD in shoulder- to head-high surf, but the angle is simply too steep (290-300 degrees) to do any good for L.A. this weekend.

Choice spots in South Bay offer some shoulder-high sets for the hard-core who fear no infection.

Forecasts show a southwest swell due Sunday, but time of day is hard to predict.



Today's Tides:

Low- 1:03 a.m. 2.22'
High- 7:06 a.m. 5.71'
Low- 2:30 p.m. -0.93'
High- 8:53 p.m. 3.73'

Location	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Water Quality
County Line	2-3'/Fair	1-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	NA
Zuma	2-3'/Fair	1-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	NA
Surfrider	2-3'/Fair	1-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	NA
Topanga	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	NA
Breakwater	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	NA
El Porto	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	NA

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Saturday, Feb. 15

Location: Laemmle's Monica 4 Plex
1 p.m. — SOUNDS OF MEMPHIS; documentary
2:30 p.m. — O.T. OUR TOWN; documentary
4:30 p.m. — Shorts program No. 2

6 p.m. — THE LAST MOVIE — Dennis Hopper tribute film followed by presentation of the Lifetime Achievement for Persistence of Vision Location: Gotham Hall

8:30 p.m. — BRIAR PATCH and short film BOX MAN

10:30 p.m. — GETTING HAL

Location: The Yard

6:30 p.m. — Shorts program No. 3
8:30 p.m. — Chrysler Million Dollar Film Festival Selected Shorts

Location: Midnight Special Book Store
1 p.m. — Directing your First Feature Panel

3 p.m. — The Future of Independent Cinema Panel

Location: Gotham Hall

8 p.m. — "Dirtbox Party." An art and music extravaganza. Featuring live music by Ozomatli.

Dennis Hopper will be in attendance to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award.

See FILM FESTIVAL, page 7

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OPINION

LETTERS

Good job, but a correction

Editor:

I want to commend the Santa Monica Daily Press for its excellent coverage of the smoke-free parks issue as it worked its way through the community process. There are a few corrections I need to note in Andy Fixmer's "Smoking banned in parks" piece in the February 13th edition.

First of all, it was Dr. Lori Kaplan who spoke at the meeting and not Dr. Laurie Kaufman. The City of Huntington Park has adopted a curb-to-curb ban on smoking, not Huntington Beach as reported. My comment during public testimony regarding smokers was that I wanted them to continue to enjoy our parks, but to enjoy their cigarettes elsewhere. Lastly, the name of our group is the Committee for Smoke-Free Parks (not Smoke-Free Zones).

Robert Berger

Committee for Smoke-Free Parks

Look at your neighborhood

Editor:

In a Feb. 11, 2003, article in your paper, real estate attorney Tom Larmore says that evidence of support for Prop. A north of Montana is in the yard signs supporting no landmarks and no historic districts over a developer's or other owner's veto.

I invite ALL Santa Monica residents to look around ALL of our neighborhoods and decide if too many homes are being saved.

Bea Nemlaha

Save Our Neighborhoods spokeswoman

Don't be fooled

Editor:

In response to the column by Evelyn Jerome (Daily Press, Feb. 11), much has been said about the 9,800 signatures that qualified the homeowners "Voluntary Zoning" initiative for the ballot.

It is important to note that the developer interests paid \$65,000 to hire so-called "volunteer" signature gatherers, paid on a per signature basis to create fear and misrepresent the Landmarks Commission and the Landmarks Ordinance. We all saw them at our local supermarkets. They did not work for free!

In addition, signing a petition does not necessarily indicate support for an issue, but rather support for it to be on the ballot.

Don't be fooled. Vote no on "Proposition A" and protect the historic fabric of our city.

Roger Genser

Chair Pro Tem, Santa Monica Landmarks Commission

Not enough members

Editor:

In response to your article entitled, "Neighborhood groups oppose Proposition A" (Daily Press, Feb. 11), I was a very disappointed and disheartened to learn that a few

See LETTERS, page 5



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Thoughts on Iraq, Feinstein and development

The Santa Monica City Council put on the best of its two faces Tuesday night, when they voted to sign a resolution opposing an expected war in Iraq.



**MY
WRITE**

By Bill Bauer

The resolution, introduced by Councilman Kevin McKeown, cited negative effects on the tourist economy as one of the reasons he opposes war with Iraq. Come again?

An average of 1,200 vagrants and transients per day, camping in parks and on our beaches, urinating and defecating on our sidewalks, alleys and promenades, and exhibiting anti-social behavior doesn't negatively affect tourism?

Was McKeown concerned about tourism when he supported an inflationary \$13.50 hourly "minimum" wage for hotels and restaurants downtown?

Really worried about the economy? I don't think so. Out to promote his personal ideology? Damn straight!

Rumor has it that City Councilman Mike Feinstein's political career might come to a whimpering end before council

elections in November, 2004.

Michael angered many hard-core SMRRs when he supported Josefina Aranda's City Council run last fall. Many SMRR loyalists were backing Abby Arnold. They thought that Aranda would pull votes from Abby and were angry at Mike for ultimately costing SMRR and Abby a seat at the dais.

Feinstein's whining about parking tickets and his latest hissy-fit culminating in him storming out of a City Council meeting a couple of weeks ago didn't win him any respect either. If anything, it demonstrated his petulance and impatience.

Feinstein's alleged mishandling of Green party funds has reared its ugly head again. His reluctance to answer questions about the party's finances has become a public relations disaster for the former mayor and seriously affects his credibility.

Feinstein was the top vote getter in the 2000 council elections. But in the words of one SMRR loyalist, "The Teflon is wearing thin." He might not receive their endorsement come 2004. Still, a lot can happen in the next 18 months. If SMRR thinks he can win again, he'll be back in the political saddle, battle scars and all.

I'd like to clarify and correct some statements made in last week's column about proposed developments at 14th Street and Pico Boulevard, as well as 19th Street and Broadway.

I stated that the two projects would take advantage of more liberal zoning standards just approved by the City Council. They don't. However, they do qualify for incentives and bonuses as approved by the city in year's past designed to encourage housing construction in commercial districts.

Both developments are in commercially zoned districts, and because they have housing components — not because of any retail component — they can take advantage of larger floor areas than if they were strictly commercial buildings. The 19th and Broadway project also can take advantage of an additional density bonus because three of 32 units will be very low-income units, built on site.

Because the 19th and Broadway project is entirely condominiums, it must be approved by the Planning Commission in an open public hearing. And because of the recent changes in the codes redefining "affordable," the Pico and 14th project also has to go before the Planning Commission. Under the old zoning codes, it would've been administratively approved.

The Pico and 14th development is a development with a large proportion of the units designated for senior citizens. Although it is a "moderate" income project, it still qualifies for increased size and density bonuses because it is housing slat-

ed for a commercially zoned lot.

I mentioned the "50 percent reduction in floor space" used in determining whether a development would be approved administratively or by the Planning Commission.

That code only applies to projects in the downtown area — mostly in the 5th to 7th streets neighborhood, south of Santa Monica Boulevard.

Perhaps a better example of how recent changes in the zoning codes benefit primarily developers of low-income housing such as Community Corp. of Santa Monica, is a proposed housing project at Main and Pacific streets in the Ocean Park neighborhood.

This project far exceeds height and density requirements for a similar "non-100 percent affordable development." Recent code changes also pre-empt public review for this development because it is less than 50 units.

Zoning codes are very complicated. The current city zoning ordinance is more than 580 pages long with exceptions to exceptions. There are over 30 zoning districts plus overlays — each with its own set of codes. No wonder even the experts even have problems sorting it all out.

(Bill Bauer is a longtime Santa Monica resident and a freelance writer.)

OPINION



LETTERS

LETTERS, from page 4

board members calling themselves a neighborhood group are making endorsements and voicing the opinion of a large geographical district of the city without even getting any feedback or input from the actual neighbors who live there.

I recently attended the Wilshire/Montana Neighborhood Coalition meeting to hear discussions on Prop. A. The meeting was held in a small apartment building recreation room and was supposed to be the first meeting where both sides of the issue were going to be presented and debated. In attendance were five board members, two people from the press, three people debating the Prop. A issue and only three members of the public. After about 30 minutes of debate and some informative Q & A, I was shocked to see the leaders of the "coalition" unanimously choose right at that moment to endorse a "No" vote on Prop. A.

This was done without any communication or outreach to any of the other members of the group. I am not sure how many members make up the Wilshire/Montana Neighborhood Group, but I am pretty sure it is more than three. Even out of the three members in attendance, they were not asked for their input in the decision-making process or even where they stood on the measure. I found out later one person was for Prop. A and the other two needed more information. Unfortunately, I guess their minds were already made up for them — compliments of their local neighborhood group.

This was also obviously the case with the NOMA endorsement. It is very clear that they also have had no dialogue with the homeowners considering the huge amount of support for Prop. A.

I mean, has anybody on the board of directors actually driven through their own neighborhood? There are only about a thousand YES on Prop A lawn signs.

Oh, but wait, two landmark commissioners sit on that board, so I guess there's no real surprise there.

As if the Landmarks Commission hasn't already angered homeowners enough with their arrogance.

Marc Schrobilgen
Santa Monica

Proud to be a commissioner

Editor:

Margaret Horst, in her letter of Feb. 8, mischaracterizes the position taken by opponents of Prop. A. Hopefully people will continue to volunteer their homes for designation either because of substantial tax savings or because they believe their homes contribute to the richness of our community.

At the same time, opponents of Prop. A believe that its passage could lead to the wrecking ball falling on what few significant homes we have left. Our fears are not hypothetical — the Neimeyer House, the only home in America designed by Oscar Neimeyer, "widely considered one of the world's greatest living architects" (L.A. Times) would no longer exist if Prop. A was in effect. Frank Gehry's ground-breaking design for his own residence here in Santa Monica could meet the same fate.

Ms. Horst states that some homeowners oppose designation because they do not want to appear before the Landmarks Commission "to change the color of the house paint, to put siding on a building at the rear of their property, or to add a skylight." If Ms. Horst had read the minutes of the meeting she alludes to (part of the public record), she would see that no one appears before the commission for such trivial changes.

Finally, Ms. Horst concludes, as other Prop. A proponents do, that landmarking is done to satisfy a political purpose. Our Landmarks Ordinance was written over 25 years ago and enacted by an entirely different City Council. The present commissioners are all homeowners. We have NO political agenda. Our agenda is the same as that of over 1,200 commissions just like ours all over America. Our responsibility is to ensure the survival of our community's few historically or architecturally significant buildings, the buildings which make Santa Monica, Santa Monica.

I volunteered to be a Landmarks commissioner because I believed most Santa Monicans value the unique character of our city and the importance of our past. I still believe this to be true.

Barbara Schnitzler
Santa Monica

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2002: An expensive year of real estate in Santa Monica



DAYS ON THE MARKET

By Jodi Summers

The Santa Monica real estate market took many big leaps in 2002. Property prices jumped up more than 20 percent throughout our fine city and the number of dwellings bought and sold reached record levels.

According to the Multiple Listing Service, which tracks the sale of homes in the Los Angeles area, 1,388 pieces of non-commercial property traded hands in Santa Monica in 2002. The breakdown includes 784 condominiums and co-ops, 463 single-family residences, 118 income properties and 23 pieces of land.

With a total of 463 single-family residence sales, Santa Monica experienced a record number of home sales for one calendar year. By comparison, in 2000, 360 homes sold, and 392 in 1998. Of the 2002 single-family residence sales — 258 were priced under \$1 million, 149 were priced between \$1 and \$2 million and 57 were priced at more than \$2 million.

"The popularity of the Santa Monica market is well known — it is a 'neighborhood' and it has a fabulous public school system," observed Valerie Fitzgerald, one of the top agents for Coldwell Banker on the Westside. "You see everyone out walking — old and young. There are tree-lined streets, the air is cleaner, and it's close to the beach."

This year also saw the sale of the most expensive home in the history of Santa Monica, a 14,000-square-foot residence on La Mesa Drive. The Mediterranean villa features eight bedrooms and 10 bathrooms and overlooks the Riviera Golf Course. It had an asking price of \$14,950,000.

"This was truly an amazing property," Fitzgerald noted. "The house was large but had so much charm ... views, pool, guest house, tennis court ... all on a 1.3-acre flat, so unusual for any area west of the 405."

The least expensive house was a 1922 one-bedroom, one-bathroom bungalow on a 1.285-acre lot on Broadway, which sold for \$300,000.

In the condo market, a total of 784 properties were sold, including 162 listings transacting at \$300,000 or under. That's compared with 234 in 2000 and 413 in 1998. In the \$300,001 to \$600,000 range, Santa Monica saw 473 units change hands in 2002, as compared with 376 in 2000, and 299 in 1998. This year,

there were 130 units selling between \$600,001 and \$1 million, compared to 72 in 2000 and 36 and 1998. Nineteen units sold for more than \$1 million this year. (A total of 76 Santa Monica condos have sold for more than \$1 million.)

Last year's most expensive condo was a 1,846-square-foot ocean front residence along Ocean Avenue. This \$2,050,000 million unit boasts a gourmet kitchen, gym and balcony overlooking the ocean. The least expensive condo was a 474-square-foot bungalow on Cloverfield Boulevard that opened on to "a lush courtyard setting" and sold for \$150,000.

"The popularity of the Santa Monica market is well known — it is a 'neighborhood' and it has a fabulous public school system."

— VALERIE FITZGERALD
Real estate agent

Of the 118 income properties, the big buy was a 47-unit building at 301 Ocean Avenue, which had an asking price of \$9,995,000. At the other end of the spectrum, a four-unit rent control building on 21st Street near the freeway situated on a 7,592-square-foot lot sold for \$405,000. Printed calculations said it will take more than 14 years for the rents to pay for the price of the building.

In 2002, 23 pieces of land changed hands, including the "largest privately owned contiguous parcel in Santa Monica." The 1.91-acre property on High Place sold for \$4,050,000. A 1,995-square-foot piece of property in Ocean Park sold for \$190,000.

"The real estate market will always be consistent in Santa Monica because it is offers so much to families, which is the most stable market," concluded Fitzgerald. "I think prices will level out in the \$1.5 to \$3 million market because there is uncertainty with the economy. Properties under \$1 million will continue to sell because of interest rates."

(Jodi Summers is a real estate agent at Boardwalk Realty. If you have local real estate questions or opinions you'd like to share, e-mail them to Jodi Summers at jodis@boardwalkrealty.com.)

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LOCAL



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press
Fire crews on Thursday morning check out the roof of a building that caught fire earlier in the day, which destroyed all of the contents in the furniture store on Lincoln Boulevard.

Owners 'poured their heart and soul' into store

FIRE, from page 1

ever seen," she said, adding she was afraid her son would be scared if he witnessed the blaze. "I was afraid that he would have nightmares for the rest of his life."

Fresco, who watched the blaze for about an hour and half from her front porch, said the flames were as much as three stories high.

Fire crews were able to extinguish the blaze within 30 minutes, despite the heavy smoke and high heat. Multiple water lines were pulled to fight the fire. However, a fire crew was forced to retreat from the building's roof after the windows facing Lincoln Boulevard blew out.

Robert Evans, who lives directly next to the building, said his father, who is on oxygen, and his sister had to vacate their home because it was too close to the flames. The house suffered smoke damage.

He said the dumpster across the street in the alley had been set on fire four times in the past year and wondered if Thursday's fire was related. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

An employee of the family-owned business, who didn't want to be named, said everyone who works there is in shock. One of the owners, Marilyn Nelson, as well as others, were at the scene early Thursday surveying the damage and unsuccessfully trying to hold back tears.

Fresco said she brought breakfast to Nelson who was standing in the street staring at her store at 7:30 a.m.

"It was a great business," Fresco said, adding the building was a plant to manufacture rivets for Douglas Aircraft. "Everyone loved it."

Filmmakers come to S.M.

FILM FESTIVAL, from page 3

Sunday, Feb. 16

Location: Laemmle's Monica 4 Plex

1 p.m. — Shorts Block No. 4

3 p.m. — NO SLEEP 'TIL MADISON

5 p.m. — MY DINNER WITH JIMI

Closing Night Film — 7 p.m. — THE BLUES; documentary (executive produced by Martin Scorsese)

The store's inventory included thousands of pieces of antiques and collectibles that were as much as 150 years old from places like China and Thailand.

"They put their heart and soul into this place," the employee said. "No one had stuff like they had. She created something special here."

"She had a unique taste and a great eye," the employee added. "They built their own empire here."

But now all that's left of the 10-year-old business is charred remains and a few items that were stored in a space across the street. The owners may use that space they recently leased to open a small operation while trying to figure out their next move, the employee said.

Fire investigators and local police detectives were surveying the inside of the building most of Thursday looking for clues as to what could have ignited the blaze. Meanwhile, professional crews had begun the arduous task of cleaning up the mess.

Several insurance adjusters had made it to the scene by 11 a.m. hoping to sign up the building owners or business owners to settle their claims.

And one customer who had specifically set aside time Thursday morning to cash in her gift certificate was shocked to see the store reduced to ashes when she got there.

"Today is the day I was going to buy a couch," said Deborah Papparau.

All on-duty firefighters in Santa Monica responded to the fire, which amounted to 30 fire personnel on the scene. Crews from the Los Angeles City Fire Department and American Medical Response provided fire and paramedic coverage for the rest of the city during the fire.

7 p.m. — Falling in Love with Pongo

Pongo

9 p.m. — STEVIE; documentary

Location: Midnight Special Book Store

3 p.m. — Digital Video Production

Location: The Yard

6:30 p.m. — Shorts block No. 5

9 p.m. — Awards and closing night party

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LOCAL STATE



Elementary schools risk losing librarians

LAYOFFS, from page 1

school district funding from \$3.5 million to \$7 million and if Malibu doubles their funding from \$227,000 to \$454,000.

The third category can't be restored unless the federal and state grants that pay for those programs and positions are funded. But with California facing an unprecedented \$34.5 billion budget deficit, district officials said the likelihood of that is unlikely.

"Based on what state is telling us at this particular point in time, and if nothing happens with the funding initiative, and if the cities can't come through, well, this is real," said board member Julia Brownley. "On the other hand, we are hopeful that won't happen."

The school district is proposing to eliminate 12 administration positions to save \$1,372,519. One elementary principal and two elementary school assistant principal postings are among those that may be eliminated.

More than 66 teachers would be cut by increasing class sizes districtwide to save \$4,074,368.

Third grade classes would be increased from its current class sizes of 20 students for every one teacher to 30 students for every teacher. Average class sizes at John Adams and Lincoln middle schools would increase from 30 to 35 students for every one teacher. And Malibu and Santa Monica high school class sizes would be increased from 33 to 37 students for every one teacher.

Another 25 teaching positions would be cut, though the school district hasn't specified where or how those positions will be eliminated. The school's district budget would be decreased \$1,803,471 from the additional reductions.

The number of school nurses would be

cut in half under the proposed layoffs. Currently, the school district employs 10 nurses, and five positions could be cut to save \$399,956.

Every elementary music teacher could be laid off to save the district \$503,868. The move would eliminate elementary music programs, delaying students from learning a musical instrument until they reach the eighth grade.

District officials have also requested the school board approve a 20 percent reduction in classified services and positions; like janitors and cafeteria workers, computer technicians and classroom aides. More than 56 classified positions are slated to be cut, which would save the district \$3,242,522.

Another 35 elementary librarians, middle and high school library assistants, all elementary physical education teachers, all trainers and athletic support staff and lifeguards would be cut. That would save the district an additional \$1,421,496.

And all special contract and miscellaneous employees would be eliminated as well to save an additional \$998,257.

Even if the school district receives the funding it needs to keep all of its employees, officials fear by sending out the notices many of its teachers will find new jobs in other school districts.

The situation could create a brain drain for the school district, with many of its employees leaving for more secure positions, officials said.

"It's the risk every district is taking," Deasy said. "It's not germane just to us. We're telling people we do have solutions, we have some solutions in front of us. We hope to get through this without losing a single employee."

Gasoline prices will spike

ECONOMY, from page 1

far from home, according to the report.

"Gasoline prices will spike, people will be hesitant to go any great distance and you have this lurking threat of terrorism," said Jack Kyser, the LAEDC's chief economist and one of the authors of the 2003-2004 economic forecast.

Unemployment should increase statewide to 6.5 percent in 2003, but will improve slightly to 6.1 percent in 2004 fueled by an increase in international trade and manufacturing, the report concluded.

International uncertainty, including political instability in Venezuela and the continuing standoff with North Korea, will depress the economy in the first half of the year, the report concludes.

The state's economic problems will also hurt the local economy as local and county governments cut spending and the state looks to increased business taxes to raise revenue, the report warns.

Increased fees, taxes and demands on business, including paid family leave, will hurt the business climate this year and next and already businesses are talking about moving out of state, the report suggests.

"We know there is a lot of pressure on business," Kyser said. "We are still seeing some larger firms thinking of expanding, but there is so much pressure on the small

to medium-sized business and that's what we're concerned about."

War and terrorism will have a two-edged effect on Southern California's economy.

While an increase in defense spending bodes well for aerospace and defense firms, the increased cost of doing business in California may cause some contractors to think about relocating their operations.

But overall, increased defense spending should be the fuel for a turnaround in the state's manufacturing sector in 2004.

The split between Southern California's more diversified economy and the north's continued dependence on high tech will continue through 2004, the report said.

In fact, Southern California narrowly escaped a recession in 2002 and the economy will grow at 2.7 percent this year and 3.5 percent in 2004, the economists said.

The forecasters said that leading the growth will be the Riverside and San Bernardino area, where economic growth is estimated to be 4.3 percent in 2003 and 2004.

The technology sector will rebound in 2004, the report predicts.

"If you're a savvy investor, you're in the (San Francisco) Bay area scouting out buildings," Kyser said. "The bay area will come back. There's just too much intellectual capital up there."

NATIONAL



Nation's oil stocks decline further to 28-year low

BY H. JOSEF HEBERT
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The nation's oil supply dropped another 4.5 million barrels last week, leaving inventories the lowest since 1975 and below what the industry considers necessary for smooth operation.

The Energy Department said Wednesday crude stocks were at 269.8 million barrels, just below the lower end of an inventory range needed to assure enough oil is available for efficient refinery operation.

While inventories are low, "it doesn't necessarily mean there will be shortages. ... Refineries are still running," said Ron Panting, an economist for the American Petroleum Institute, the trade group of the major oil companies.

He said API's statistics show slightly

more oil in inventory — 271.6 million barrels — than the number released Wednesday by the government's Energy Information Administration, the DOE's statistical arm.

Still, the continued decline of crude stocks — at a time when the Bush administration is preparing for possible war in Iraq — was expected to prompt renewed calls from some members of Congress for drawing on the government's emergency oil stocks in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

The Bush administration has resisted several such calls in recent weeks, saying that the government-held oil — more than 600 million barrels — should only be released if there are significant supply disruptions, such as might occur if fighting erupts in Iraq.

Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham told an oil conference in Houston on

Tuesday the administration is confident it can address any severe oil supply disruptions that might be caused by a war with Iraq.

"While we have not made any decisions about future action, we are confident that we can quickly assess the situation and address any severe supply disruptions if needed," Abraham said.

But war worries have caused crude prices to soar in recent weeks. The price of light sweet crude rose to a 26-month high Tuesday on the New York Mercantile Exchange to \$35.44 a barrel, declining only slightly Wednesday.

The inventory decline stems largely from the continued loss of crude from Venezuela because of internal political strife and refineries pumping out more gasoline. Although the Energy Department said some oil from Venezuela has begun to come into the United States

again, overall oil imports declined last week from the previous week.

World oil output increased by nearly 1.2 million barrels a day in January, according to the International Energy Agency. Saudi Arabia and other OPEC producers agreed to boost production to try to make up for lost Venezuelan oil, but those supplies have not yet arrived in the United States.

Even Venezuela's production rebounded in January after a near shutdown, but oil industry experts warn that exports from that country are likely to be sporadic.

In its weekly oil summary, the Energy Department's Energy Information Administration said that gasoline inventories rose by an equivalent of 3 million barrels and are now "slightly above the low end of the normal range."

United wants to shift 30 percent of capacity to new carrier

BY DAVE CARPENTER
AP Business Writer

CHICAGO — United Airlines intends to shift about 30 percent of its U.S. capacity into its proposed discount airline in an effort to emerge from bankruptcy, a spokesman said Thursday.

Plans for a low-cost carrier were disclosed in December after United filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, but remain in the formative stage.

Delta Air Lines plans to launch a discount airline — named Song — in April, and American Airlines said Wednesday it was considering one.

Major carriers have been reporting record losses, in

part due to increased competition from low-cost airlines such as Southwest. United says it competes with discount carriers on about 70 percent of its routes.

"The key is to be cost-competitive and have our costs at the right level so it (a low-cost carrier) can succeed and flourish over a long period of time," company spokesman Joe Hopkins said.

United's unions, however, have resisted the plan and are concerned about the impact on jobs and seniority. "The more we hear of the company's proposal for a low-cost carrier, the less we like what we hear," pilots' union spokesman Dave Kelly said Thursday.

CEO Glenn Tilton told employees on a company hot line Wednesday that the low-cost carrier will benefit all

elements of United.

"The low-cost carrier, the new product, will provide another avenue for growth to United pilots, flight attendants and other employees," he said. "It is a critically important part of our plan to rebuild our company."

Besides starting a low-cost carrier, United also wants to slash annual labor expenses by \$2.4 billion and wants to use more regional jets, which are less costly to operate.

Any of the proposals would have to be approved by the airline's creditors and the bankruptcy court.

United parent UAL Corp. lost a worst-ever \$3.2 billion in 2002, accounting for roughly one third of the airline industry's combined losses.

Reno police seeking liquor-laden truck

By The Associated Press

RENO, Nev. — Reno police are looking for a trailer full of booze — and some thieves who either are lucky or have good taste.

A tractor rig and its 53-foot trailer were stolen from a casino parking lot Wednesday evening.

The tractor was recovered in Reno, minus the trailer and the booze.

Police said the trailer contained 827 cases of imported liquor, the value of which was not immediately known.

It's described as being white and dirty with a logo on its side for C&K Murrish, Great Falls, MT on the rear door.

DID YOU KNOW?: The Vatican is the world's smallest country, at 0.44 square km (0.16 square miles).

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INTERNATIONAL

South Korea wants diplomacy



Ahn Young-joon/Associated Press

A South Korean soldier stands under the national flag at a border observation post near the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in Paju, north of Seoul, Thursday. South Korea said Thursday that it hoped the U.N. Security Council would vigorously pursue a diplomatic solution to the North Korean nuclear dispute.

As war with Iraq threatens, a coalition lines up behind the U.S.

BY WILLIAM J. KOLE
Associated Press Writer

SOFIA, Bulgaria — President Bush's "coalition of the willing" is a mixed bag of nations — some strong enough to provide military help, others limited to offering symbolic support — but their leaders are united in standing with the U.S. threat to remove Saddam Hussein by force.

Bulgaria's foreign minister, for one, looks at Saddam, sees Adolf Hitler and remembers the indecision that kept the Allies from standing up to Nazi Germany early and perhaps averting World War II.

"We all remember the hesitancy of the Allies, who weren't sure whether to attack Hitler. They could have prevented so much," Solomon Pasi said this week. "We're in a situation where we have a moral imperative to act and act now."

He and other coalition leaders are resolute in

"We all remember the hesitancy of the Allies, who weren't sure whether to attack Hitler. They could have prevented so much."

— **SOLOMON PASI**
Bulgaria foreign minister

standing with the Americans, although, as in Britain, just because governments are willing doesn't mean their citizens are.

Many of the partners are weak. Realistically, Washington would rely heaviest on Britain, by far the most powerful coalition member, for military muscle if war comes.

Britain is sending 42,000 military personnel to the Persian Gulf — a quarter of its army, a third of its air force and its largest naval deployment since the 1982 Falklands War.

Australia has ordered 2,000 soldiers to the Gulf and hints it's ready to join a U.S.-led attack with or without U.N. backing. Canada appears closer to joining, and Washington can count on logistical support from Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark, Portugal and Turkey.

But it's the formerly communist "new Europe" whose support has added intrigue to the showdown with Saddam. America is learning it can count among its best friends the fledgling democracies that were once behind the Iron Curtain.

"Now it is probably time the European leaders visit Normandy Beach to see with their own eyes what the United States of America has done on behalf of freedom," said Prime Minister Fatos Nano of Albania, which has offered troops and will let the U.S. military use its airspace and territorial waters.

"People may forget. Some countries in Europe may forget. We Albanians do not forget," Nano wrote in a recent commentary for The Boston Globe.

Other nations that have aligned themselves with the Bush administration include the central and eastern European nations of Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary,

Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia and the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

After Secretary of State Colin Powell laid out his case against Iraq before the U.N. Security Council, most of those countries issued a joint statement saying they had lived under communism, understood tyranny and saw Saddam's regime as a "clear and present danger."

The support is largely symbolic from countries whose armies are weak, poorly trained and armed with outdated Soviet-era weaponry. Even so, their governments seem eager to do what they can.

The Czechs and Slovaks have committed special anti-chemical warfare units for service in Kuwait. Bulgaria, which has a seat on the Security Council, is offering use of a military airport and a 150-soldier non-combat unit. Lithuania has approved U.S. flyovers and hints it might be willing to contribute troops.

The Romanians intend to send nuclear, biological and chemical decontamination specialists as well as military police and mine clearance units and make available air and naval bases on the Black Sea within striking distance of Iraq. Poland could end up using a navy ship in the Gulf to ferry U.S. troops or help set up mobile field hospitals.

Gratitude for U.S. help in shaking off communism as well as preparing for membership in NATO and the European Union is a factor behind the fervor. More to the point is that countries from the Baltics to the Balkans feel as vulnerable as the United States to weapons of mass destruction.

"This is not about gratitude. It's about sharing responsibility for international security," said

Daniel Vaarik, a spokesman for the Estonian government.

Nansen Behar, who runs the Institute for Social and Political Studies in Sofia, Bulgaria's capital, contends there is more pragmatism than sentimentality behind many former Soviet bloc countries' support. Bulgaria, he suggested, hopes that backing the United States will bring badly needed loans and investment.

"There was a gentleman's agreement after the Cold War: America said if we got rid of communism, they'd help us build a normal and prosperous Western society. Instead, people are struggling to survive," Behar said.

However, anti-war activists and opposition politicians — some fearful that joining the United States could subject them to terrorist attacks at home — are whipping up public sentiment against a conflict.

In the Western-oriented Baltics, which broke free of the Soviet Union in 1991 with Washington's help, more than two-thirds of people polled say they are against a war in Iraq.

Three in four Slovaks criticize their government's decision to deploy a chemical warfare unit to the Gulf, and anti-war Bulgarians have staged small but boisterous protests. The head of Bulgaria's Olympic Committee, a son-in-law of the nation's late communist ruler, Todor Zhivkov, caused a stir by saying he'd be willing to fight for Saddam.

Some countries, notably the Czech Republic, fret that supporting Washington risks alienating some in the European Union just as EU membership is within their grasp. France and Germany, powerhouses in the EU, are leading the opposition to U.S. plans.

Still, while talk is mounting about a second U.N. resolution to authorize military action against Iraq, few eastern European leaders are publicly insisting on one.

"I don't want war. Who does?" said Siim Kallas, Estonia's prime minister. "But I believe we must choose sides. And I believe our side is with the United States."

Happy Valentine's Day!

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SPORTS



Old Wizards beat young Clippers on the road

BY BETH HARRIS
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES — Rest doesn't always help Michael Jordan, especially now that he turns 40 next week.

Playing his second game in two nights, Jordan had 23 points and 12 assists before fouling out with 18 seconds left as Washington beat the Los Angeles Clippers 108-104 Wednesday night.

The Wizards lost at Sacramento on Tuesday night after having six days off for the All-Star break, where Jordan played in a double-overtime loss.

Jordan, whose birthday is Monday, fouled out for the first time since the 1991-92 season. He smiled at the call, then walked off to a prolonged standing ovation. He plopped on the floor and didn't get up despite the crowd's urging for a curtain call.

"There was only 18 seconds left and I was tired anyway," he said.

Tyrone Lue added a season-high 21 points and Christian Laettner had 17 points and 14 rebounds for the Wizards, who snapped a five-game road losing streak and beat the Clippers for the eighth time in nine meetings in Los Angeles.

Collins played his veterans in the second half after the Clippers tied the game at the break with a second quarter rally against some of the young Wizards.

"When you're on the road, there's a certain poise, a certain confidence you got to have. Our younger players, it's still something new for them," Jordan said. "Our veterans know how to do it. Our veterans gave us a lot of leadership and we needed a win. That's Doug's call. He felt we had to go with some veteran leadership and it worked for us."

Corey Maggette, guarded by Jordan most of the game, scored 22 points to lead six Clippers in double figures. Lamar Odom added 19 points and Andre Miller had 11 assists.

Jordan, who had just six points in the first half, committed two turnovers in the fourth quarter and missed a free throw with the Wizards clinging to a two-point lead with 2:59 left. But he made up for it by assisting on a basket by Brendan Haywood and hitting two free throws to keep the Wizards ahead 103-96.

Elton Brand scored four straight points to pull the Clippers to 103-100 with 39 seconds left. Jordan got fouled again, made the first and missed the second for a 104-100 lead.

Odom hit a 3-pointer to draw the Clippers to 106-104 with 3 seconds left, but Lue made two free throws to seal it.

Local Sports

Samohi hustles for needed win

By Daily Press Staff

There is a difference between finishing in second and third. Third place will usually make a team play a wildcard game. Second place usually gets you to the first round. Knowing this, Santa Monica was scheduled to play its final game against Leuzinger. In their prior meeting, Samohi had traveled to Leuzinger and defeated the 2002 CO-CIF Champions 2-1. So Leuzinger was looking revenge.

The game started at 3 p.m., and the rain was sporadic. Leuzinger opened up the scoring in the 15th minute when the Samohi defense missed a cleared ball into the middle, about 18-yards out from the goal, and a Leuzinger player put the ball in. The Vikings then regrouped.

Playing smarter in the midfield by winning the ball and advancing the attack, the tide soon turned on Leuzinger. In the 30th minute off a Samohi attack, the ball scurried around the Leuzinger goal. Finally senior midfielder Josh Rodriguez shot the ball into the low left-hand corner past the goalkeeper to tie the game. Then four minutes later, Leuzinger gave up a foul 30 yards outside of their goal. Junior midfielder Andrew Martinez sent in the kick, the Leuzinger goalie tried

to bat the ball away, but only was able to knock it straight down. Junior midfielder Ryan Natale shot the ball, which then hit the inside of the right goal post and went in, giving Samohi the lead 2-1 at the half.

In the second half, Leuzinger came out with vengeance. Attacking the Samohi goal for the first ten minutes, they tried to score. Their closest chance came with a low lying shot towards the right corner, but senior goalkeeper Daniel Islas made a diving save. Extending his entire body, he was able to deflect the ball away from the Vikings' goal to preserve the lead and switch momentum.

From that point, Samohi reignited their attack. Using the flanks to advance and then send in the ball, the Vikings kept pressing. Then in the 68th minute, junior midfielder Carlos Lopez crossed the ball, in the air, to senior forward Corey Prost, who stood eight yards away from the goal. With his head, he redirected the cross to the left-hand side of the goal, past the keeper and this gave Samohi the win, 3-1.

The Vikings (16-8-1 overall, 9-4 league) will now wait to see their pairings for the CIF Div. 2 playoffs. It has been two years since the Vikings last played in the playoffs.

Canadian wins the bronze



Diether Endlicher/Associated Press

Canada's Allison Forsyth skis to the bronze medal in the Women's Giant Slalom at the World Alpine Ski Championships in St. Moritz, Switzerland, Thursday.

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 - 18 Bugs
 - 20 Draw
 - 21 A heap
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 - 23 Bounty letters
 - 24 Wish undone
 - 25 Swimmer's place
 - 27 Cabinet department
 - 29 Compass dir.
 - 30 Ogre
 - 32 Restlessly, in music
 - 34 Lyric poem
 - 35 Fizzy drinks
 - 36 Dentist's directive
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 - 39 Steak choice
 - 40 Ships
 - 41 Casserole staple
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 - 6 Lulu
 - 7 Ma Kent on "Smallville"
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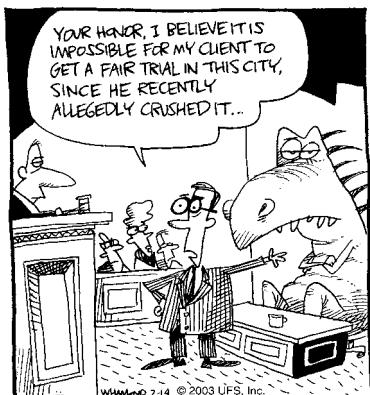
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SANTA MONICA SCENE °CALENDAR EDITION

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2003

TODAY

Santa Monica Film Festival is here! February 13th - 16th. Laemmle Theatre, 1332 2nd St., SM. Gotham Hall, 1431 3rd St., SM. The Yard, 1414 Lincoln Blvd., SM. For more information and times please visit www.smff.com.

Valentine's Day Dance hosted by the Santa Monica Pier! Elaine y su Orquesta Cubaney, will be performing for salsa lovers from 8pm to 10pm. The dance and concert are FREE to the public! For more information on the Valentine's Day Dance, call (310)458-8900.

Valentine's Day Jazz Night with Saxophonist-Flutist Wendell Mew hosted by Kua'aina Burger. Music begins at 8pm. Located at 119 Broadway, Santa Monica. Cover is \$5 and includes a FREE beer or mixed drink. For more information please call (310)394-0100.

One-hour dance class for singles and couples presented by Albert Torres Productions! 6pm to 7pm prior to the Santa Monica Pier's Valentine's Day Dance. Lessons are only \$10! Located at the Santa Monica Pier. For more information, please call (310)458-8901.

Artful Science: The Social-Cultural Relationship Between Built and Natural Environments. Sam Francis Gallery at Crossroads School in Santa Monica presents an exhibition of drawings, paintings, photographs, and sculpture. Mon-Fri, 10am to 4pm through February 14. 1714 Twenty-First St., 2nd Floor, Peter Boxenbaum Arts Building. For more information please call (310)829-7391 ext. 425.

Senior Suppers - Discounted meals for people AGE 55 or older are served daily, from 3:30 p.m. To 7 p.m., in the cafeteria at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center, 1250 16th Street in Santa Monica. \$3.69 Info only: (310)319-4837.

SATURDAY

Organic Farmer's Market every Saturday. 8:30am to 1pm, Arizona and Third Street. (310)458-8712

The Red Ribbon Squares, Santa Monica's official square dance club, invites you to enjoy an evening of plus level square dancing, alternating with round dancing, with an A-1 tip during break time. We dance every Saturday at Marine Park from 7:45pm to 10:30pm. Pre-rounds begin at 7:15pm. Admission is \$5 for dancers, including refreshments. Spectators are free. For more information, please call (310)395-3383

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MOVIE °GUIDE

LOEWS CINIPLEX BROADWAY CINEMA

1441 Third St. at Broadway
About Schmidt (R) 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30. Biker Boyz (PG-13) 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45. The Hours (PG-13) 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:15. The Guru (R) 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00.

MANN CRITERION

1313 Third St.
How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days (PG-13) 11:00, 12:45, 1:50, 3:45, 4:45, 7:10, 7:45, 10:05, 10:45. The Recruit (PG-13) 12:15, 3:30, 7:05, 10:00. 12:50. Confessions of a Dangerous Mind (R) 1:00, 4:00, 7:15, 10:15. Gangs of New York (R) 11:30, 3:15, 7:00, 10:30. Darkness Falls (PG-13) 12:00, 2:20, 5:00, 7:20, 9:45.

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1310 3rd Street
Shanghai Knights (PG-13) 1:30, 4:10, 7:05, 9:50. The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers (PG-13) 1:35, 5:15, 8:45. Deliver Us From Eva (R) 2:15, 5:00, 7:30, 10:05. Chicago (PG-13) 1:45, 4:30, 7:20, 10:00. Kangaroo Jack (PG) 12:10, 2:30, 4:45, 7:20, 9:30. Final Destination 2 (R) 2:20, 4:40, 7:10, 9:30. Catch Me If You Can (PG-13) 2:00, 5:15, 8:30.

LANDMARK NU-WILSHIRE

1314 Wilshire Blvd.
The Pianist (R) 12:30, 3:45, 7:00, 10:15.

LAEMMLE MONICA

1332 2nd St.
City of God (R) 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00. Frida (R) 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:05. The Quiet American (R) 1:45, 4:20, 7:00, 9:40. Shanghai Ghetto (NR) 1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:20.

AERO THEATER

1328 Montana Ave.
Far From Heaven (PG) 5:00, 7:30, 10:00.



BACK PAGE

Experts skeptical about 'duct tape' strategy

BY MALCOLM RITTER

AP Science Writer

NEW YORK — Of all the government's tips for protecting yourself against a terrorist attack, it is duct tape that seems to have seized the public's attention. But terrorism experts are skeptical about how much good it would do.

The idea is that tape and plastic sheets could provide a sealed-off room in case of chemical or biological attack. The government recommends keeping duct tape and scissors on hand, as well as pre-cut sheets of plastic for sealing the doors, windows and vents of an internal room at home.

The government says that in the event of an attack, people should turn off all ventilation, go to that room and seal it with the tape and sheeting. If the room has 10 square feet of floor space per person, it should provide enough air for up to five hours, the government says.

In 2001, researchers at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tenn., reported on tests to see if this strategy would help protect people living near stockpiles of chemical weapons.

Results showed that "in some cases it might not buy you much protection, but in other cases it seemed to be buying a lot of protection," said Oak Ridge researcher John Sorensen.

It is not clear why results varied so much between the 10 or so homes where researchers measured how tightly such rooms were sealed against air flow, he said. At best, it was "maybe providing up to 75 to 90 percent reduction in potential

exposure," he said Thursday.

In any case, "we could not envision it being used for more than an hour or two," he said.

Some terrorism experts are wary of the tape-and-plastic strategy.

"It just doesn't make a lot of sense to me," said Greg Evans, director of the Center for the Study of Bioterrorism and Emerging Infections at the St. Louis University School of Public Health.

One problem, he said, is that people wouldn't know when to seal themselves in, because terrorists would release germs or chemical agents without warning.

"We're only going to know about it

when we start coming down sick, and that's too late to go into a safe room," he said. For biological attack, the first symptoms might not appear for days, he noted.

What's more, he said he doubts a room could be completely sealed, meaning tiny amounts of potent chemical or biological weapons could still seep in.

Randy Larsen, director of the ANSER Institute for Homeland Security, a non-profit research institute in Arlington, Va., agreed that the strategy is useless against biological attack as well as bombs or plunging jetliners.

In a chemical attack, "it might be of some limited value," he said, "but do you

have adequate warning? Do you have time to do it? Can you really seal off the room?"

At least, he said, the hoopla trained the public's attention on preparing for a terrorist attack. And authorities have already recommended plenty of more useful steps to take, he said. Among other things, federal officials have said Americans should take basic disaster-preparation steps such as maintaining a three-day stockpile of food and water.

Larsen said that when his mother asked if she should buy duct tape, he told her: "Mom, go do the other things on the list first. Then if you want to do it, go ahead and do it."

Zoo sex tours becoming popular Valentine date

BY KRISTEN WYATT

Associated Press Writer

ATLANTA — From gay flamingos to fish that can give themselves sex changes, animals and their love lives are giving zoos a hot draw for the slow winter season — adults-only sex tours for Valentine's Day.

Zoos across the country are inviting grown-ups for cocktails and racy lectures about mating habits in the wild. The Valentine's Day events are so popular many zoos book weeks in advance.

At Zoo Atlanta, organizers added a second night this year for their "Love In The Zoo" lecture and dance party, with several hundred expected.

"This is science, and it's actually fun," said Nicole Johnson, who works in mar-

keting for the zoo.

It's quite fascinating, too. Zookeepers are finding crowds rapt by the dirty details they didn't hear on their school field trips.

For instance, flamingos often pair with members of the same sex. Mallard ducks are notorious rapists. Groupers can change their gender when the ratio of males to females is off balance.

At Zoo Atlanta, James Ballance grins ear to ear when he talks about the romantic lives of the birds and small animals he cares for.

"Birds are like, totally crazy," Ballance says, waving his arms to imitate a strutting pheasant. "Some we call the backseat-of-the-car guys — they don't stick around. They leave a lot of single mothers. Then we have the guys who will build the house before they even suggest anything."

Outside the zoo's flamingo pond, Ballance points to the pairs who spend nearly all day within a foot or two of each other.

"They pair up, but there's a lot of cheating out there," he said. "You've always got female flamingos coming home with muddy footprints all over their backs."

Ballance's talk is hilarious, and zoos are finding adults will pay up to \$100 to hear about the amorous antics of animals.

There's "The Mating Game" at the Columbus (Ohio) Zoo. In San Diego, a "Night Moves" program sells out seven nights straight in February.

The topic has proven so popular aquariums are getting into the act, too. Starting this year, the New York Aquarium is offering a February "Sex In The Sea" singles mixer.

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