



Santa Monica Daily Press

RAINN IN SANTA MONICA
SEE PAGE 12

Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE LOVE IS IN THE AIR ISSUE



TRUE LOVE: Al and Phyllis Weintraud, married for 58 years, sit poolside outside of their apartment at The Shores on Nielson Way.

Together, forever

Local couple proves that marriage can stand the test of time

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

OCEAN PARK Every night before dinner time, Al and Phyllis Weintraud sit out on their beach-facing balcony and enjoy a glass of wine, savoring the beauty of the sunset and the comfort of one another's company, discussing anything that comes to mind.

Communication — it's been the key to the success of this Santa Monica couple's 58-year blissful marriage. Though filled with its ups and downs, surviving illnesses and financial hurdles, their bond has remained intact.

"We're the best thing that's happened to each other," Phyllis, 79, said during an interview recently at the couple's home in Ocean Park.

Their romantic history dates back to 1947 when the couple met on a blind date, arranged by Al's mother after she had learned about a "nice girl" who had moved into a friend's apartment building in West Los

Angeles. Phyllis and her family had moved to the Los Angeles area from New York to follow her father, whose business was based in Southern California but had been traveling the past year, coast to coast.

Surprisingly, there were no magical sparks, no love at first sight kind of fuzzy feeling during that first date. It was instead a casual meeting between two strangers who went on a double date to the movies, followed by dinner.

"It was an expensive restaurant and she picked the cheapest thing on the menu," Al, 85, joked of the first date.

While the chemistry just wasn't there during the first date, sparks slowly started to fly as Al and Phyllis continued seeing one another, Al, growing attracted to her intelligence and wit, and Phyllis, drawn to his kindness.

"The more I got to know her, the more I liked her," he said.

It wasn't long before Al popped the question, proposing to his future

bride while she was hospitalized, an act that Phyllis said made her realize just how much Al loved her.

On April 3, 1949, Al and Phyllis got married at a wedding chapel off the Sunset Strip and spent their honeymoon at the Fairmont Miramar Hotel.

"I thought he was good marriage material," Phyllis said.

The couple spent the next 43 years raising a family in North Hollywood, a family that included three children — Andy, a news cameraman for KCBS, Janet, a nurse in Minneapolis and David, a city planner in a Los Angeles area city.

In the early 1990s, Al retired from his job as a salesman and Phyllis from Kaiser Permanente. The two have been volunteering for various local organizations since then, including the Santa Monica Police Department and Wise & Healthy

SEE LOVE PAGE 12

Complaint won't halt condo plan

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

MID-CITY A proposal to construct condominiums at the site of a former convalescent home got the green light from City Council on Tuesday night, shooting down an appeal filed under the grounds that the developer circumvented the public input process by making a death threat against a project opponent.

The council's denial of the appeal paves the way for the developer to begin constructing a more than 27,000 square foot, 19-unit condominium complex at 1433-37 14th St., which up until November of last year was the Crescent Bay Convalescent Hospital.

The property owner — 1433-1437 14th Street LLC — is proposing to demolish the convalescent home and in its place, erect a three-story, 35-foot tall condominium project that will include a combination of two- and three-bedroom units as well as townhouse-style units. Below the units will be a 42-space partially subterranean parking garage. The centerpiece of the condominium will be a central courtyard, housing a fountain and serving as a common space for occupants.

The proposal has undergone various changes since it was introduced before the Planning Commission in June, most of which have resulted in the reduction of the size and mass of the project relative to the surrounding buildings, an issue that was noted in the appeal.

"The project has gone through many iterations to get to a point supportive of the Planning Commission as well as staff," city Planning and Community Development Director Eileen Fogarty said at the council meeting.

The Planning Commission approved development permits at its meeting in October and that decision was later appealed by neighbor Elaine Antonio, contending that the proposed project is too large for the neighborhood and would only aggravate traffic and create a bottleneck in an adjoining alley.

Antonio also stated in the appeal that there is a need to continue the operation of the convalescent facility because of the loss of such care facilities for the elderly. The Planning Commission is currently conducting a study of convalescent homes in Santa Monica, according to City Councilmember Kevin McKeown.

But it was the alleged threat that took center stage during the public hearing.

Antonio claimed that after a neighbor had submitted a letter to the city planning office opposing the project, a strange man who identified himself as the developer con-

SEE THREAT PAGE 11

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Calendar

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2008

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues



Hours: 6:30 a.m. – 10 p.m. Daily

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WHAT'S UP WESTSIDE

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS

Love is in the air 130 feet above the Santa Monica Bay

Santa Monica Pier, Noon — 9 p.m.

Valentine's Day couples will soar to heights of 130 feet to share a quiet, breathtaking moment together on the Pacific Wheel at Pacific Park. An individual ride on the Pacific Wheel is \$3. Prices and operating hours are subject to change so call ahead (310) 260-8744 or visit paccpark.com.

'Bye Bye Birdie'

601 Pico Blvd., 7 p.m. — 10 p.m.

Tonight is the opening night performance of SaMo High's production of "Bye Bye Birdie." So if you can't get "that good 'old-fashioned' fun feeling" through some romance on Valentine's Day, then see if you can't catch it via a performance of this classic musical. Tickets are \$10 for all students and seniors; \$15 for adults. Call the box office for tickets at (310) 458-5939 or visit www.smclo.org.

Yoga your brains out

2215 Main St., 7:30 p.m. — 9:30 p.m.

YogaWorks Main Street Studio will host its annual "Valentine's Day Partner Yoga" class for couples. Lead by yoga duet Billy and Patti Asad, this evening of partner assisted asanas and meditation will be motivating and interactive. This class is open to new and pre-existing students of all levels and is not limited to romantic partners, nor partners of the opposite sex. It can be practiced with a friend, relative or significant other. Partner yoga also welcomes partners of different sizes and flexibility. The course is \$65 per couple.

'Robots Vs Fake Robots'

3116 Second St., 8 p.m.

It's the year 6000. Robots rule the world, and humans are despised second-class citizens. A young man named Joe abandons his human world in a quest to transform himself into a robot. The Powerhouse Theatre presents a dark comedy that asks the question: What are you willing to sacrifice to fulfill your deepest desire? General admission is \$20. Students, seniors and individual tickets for groups of 8 or more are \$15. To purchase tickets and for information, call (310) 396-3680, ext. 3 or go to www.powerhousetheatre.com.

Calling all docents

5905 Wilshire Blvd., L.A., open times

Finally, a use for that art history degree! The LACMA's Art Docent Council is seeking volunteers to lead tours of the museum's diverse collections. Information and applications can be obtained by e-mailing a request to Admissions@lacmadocent.org. Applications are due no later than February 22, 2008.

Friday, Feb. 15, 2008

Kicking Buffalo at Rusty's

256 Santa Monica Pier, 8 p.m. — midnight

All the way from the UK, The Buffalo Club, are performing at Rusty's Surf Ranch to kick off their West Coast tour.

Sneak a peek at Charlie

1328 Montana Ave., 7:30 p.m.

The Aero Cinematheque presents an early screening of "Charlie Bartlett," followed by a post-film discussion with the film's screenwriter and producer. Anton Yelchin stars as Bartlett, a troubled rich kid who becomes popular with the kids at his new school by positioning himself as a psychiatrist. Robert Downey, Jr. also stars. General admission is \$10, \$7 for Cinematheque members, and \$8 for seniors and students with valid ID. For tickets, visit www.fandango.com.

'A Successful Man'

601 Ninth St., 7 p.m. — 10 p.m.

The political storms in Cuba from 1932 to 1959 threaten the life of a leftist sympathizer (Jorge Trinchet) whose brother (Cesar Evora) tries to remain prosperous by playing both sides of the fence. The upheaval in Havana reveals the stark differences between the siblings, as one remains true to his idealism despite the perils, and one comes to value survival at any cost. Cuba grows increasingly dangerous for both men as Fidel Castro and his revolutionaries threaten the Batista regime. Raquel Revuelta and Daisy Granados also star. Winner of the Grand Prize at the 1986 Havana Film Festival. \$5 donation for The Cuban Five defense. For more information, call (310) 451-2752 or e-mail RachelJay@earthlink.net.

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.



Governor proposes to cut Rogers Park budget

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE Visitors to Will Rogers' former ranch in the Pacific Palisades might soon have their visitation rights temporarily suspended.

Included within Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's controversial budget proposal is a bid to close 48 state parks and reduce lifeguard staffing at 16 state beaches, a move that would ultimately save more than \$9 million to help close a nearly \$14.5 billion deficit.

Among those recreational facilities affected would be Will Rogers State Historic Park, the site of the Hollywood actor's ranch which he purchased in the 1920s and was later transformed into a state park after his widow died in 1944.

The proposal has been criticized by legislators and various outdoor recreational organizations, which see the cuts as doing very little to help close such a wide budget deficit.

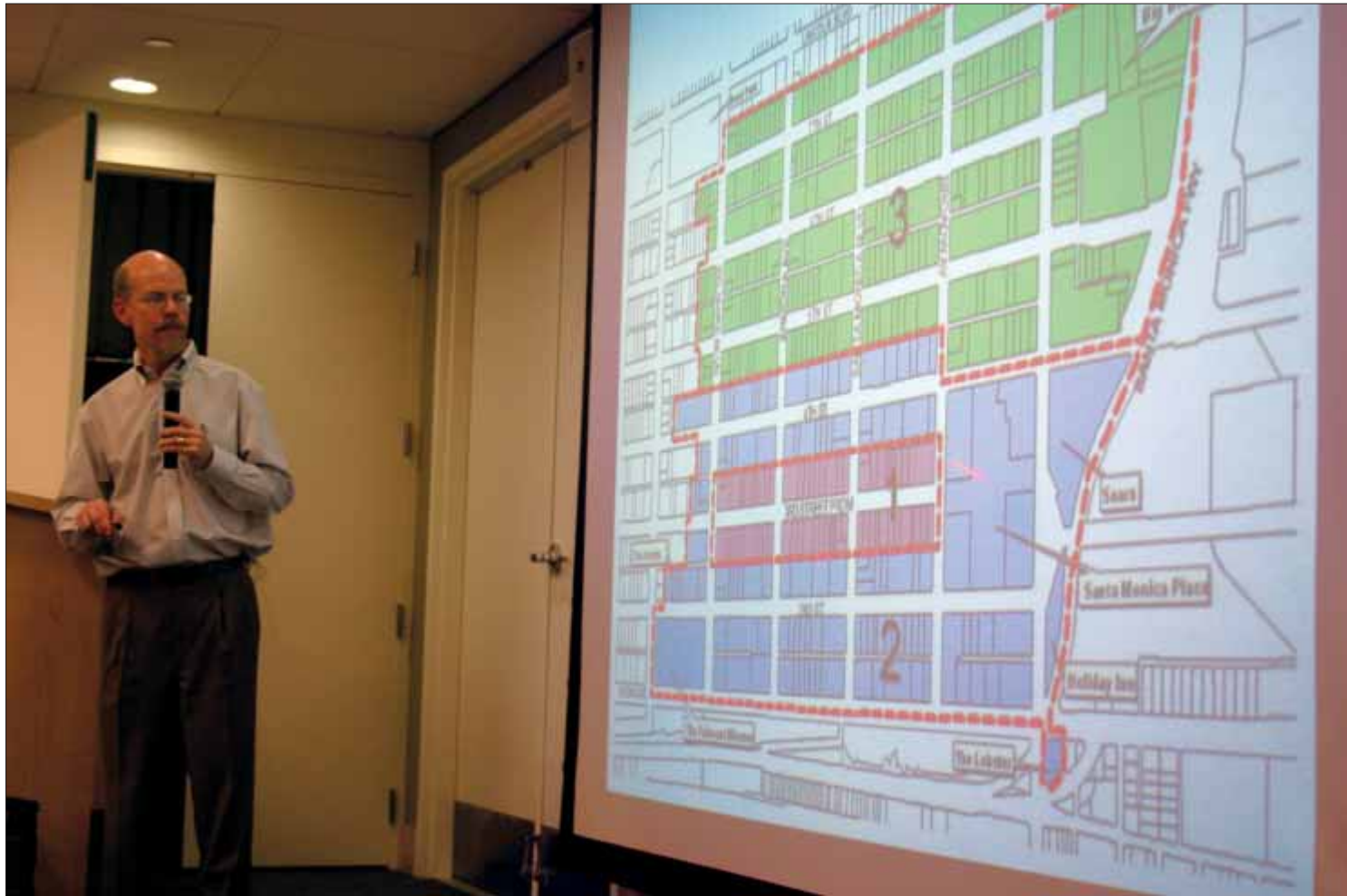
"Will Rogers State Historic Park is a unique treasure," Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, D-Santa Monica, said in a statement on Wednesday. "As Will Rogers' home, it's an early Hollywood museum, housing countless mementos of the wit and charm that made him one of the most beloved stars of early film and radio."

Brownley — who represents Santa Monica and whose district would see three park closures, including Will Rogers State Historic Park, Los Encinos State Park and Topanga State Park — serves on the budget subcommittee for environmental resources, which is expected to meet in the next few months about the proposal.

"I'll fight as hard as I can to make sure that it stays open," she said.

The methodology used to come up with the list of parks to be closed was based on whether the park could be effectively closed physically to vehicular

SEE CUTS PAGE 12



Kevin Herrera kevinh@smdp.com

TALKING IT OUT: Brad Segal with Progressive Urban Management Associates on Tuesday discusses the creation of a new business improvement district for Downtown that would include a new assessment based on square footage. Local residents would also be required to pay.

Uncertain about assessment

Downtown residents, merchants air concerns regarding district plan

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Editor in Chief

DOWNTOWN Everyone here seems to agree that Downtown's continued success depends on making sure it is clean and safe, has ample parking and offers a unique shopping experience that favors the pedestrian.

How to make sure that happens is where things get complicated.

Residents and some business and property owners in Downtown are still unsure if they want to assess themselves to the tune of \$3.7 million annually to pay for additional services that would make the area more

attractive and secure.

"I like what I'm seeing, but I can't support it at this time until I see these suggestions included," said Fourth Street resident Cosmo Bua, who was referring to comments made by residents who wanted some money collected to be set aside for the planting and maintenance of street trees.

The assessment, which would be in addition to the roughly \$1 million collected annually in the Bayside District that covers the Third Street Promenade and surrounding streets, would enhance maintenance with a focus on the alleys, boost marketing and special events, and create an ambassador program to guide visitors to hot spots, answer questions and possibly escort residents and employees to their cars at night.

Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA), a consultant out of Denver, has for the last 18 months been working with the Bayside District Corp., a public-private company that manages and

promotes Downtown, on formulating a new business improvement district. The district would cover the area bounded by Seventh Street to the east, Wilshire Boulevard to the north, Ocean Avenue to the west and the I-10 Freeway to the south.

Members of the Bayside board, which is comprised of residents, merchants and property owners appointed by the City Council, felt a study of the management structure and assessments in Downtown was necessary for the area to remain competitive with shopping districts in the region like The Grove, Old Town Pasadena, Rodeo Drive and Melrose.

One assessment district was formed in the late 1960s, while the Bayside assessment was formed nearly 20 years ago when the promenade was created.

"Downtown has changed," PUMA President Brad Segal said. "(Bayside) has not."

SEE ASSESSMENT PAGE 13

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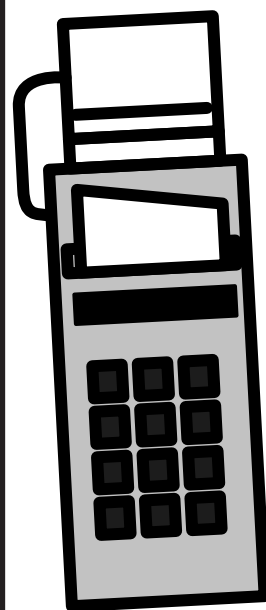
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

A call for more papers
Editor:

I enjoy reading The Santa Monica Daily Press to learn of the happenings in and around Santa Monica. The watchful eye of David Pissarra and Bill Bauer on the shenanigans of the City Council, the tongue-in-cheek comments of the other writers and the gripes of Mr. Mal-Content Ron Lowe is good for a chuckle. Also a crossroad puzzle that is within the realm of my intelligence.

However, being 82 years old and handicapped I can't run down to the corner newspaper rack to get a copy.

I receive Meals on Wheels five days a week and they sometimes bring a copy but it is sporadic. When they don't bring it, and I ask about it they say they didn't get enough copies or they didn't get any. True or not true, I don't know. So I am asking that you see to it that Meals on Wheels had enough copies to cover the route.

Many, many thanks.

Myron Davis
Santa Monica

Enrollment makes a difference
Editor:

Your paper reports that Santa Monica teachers will get a pay raise while student enrollment is declining. Too bad we didn't know this last week – before the election. My vote on Measure R might have been different.

Zina Markevicius
Santa Monica

Tell the truth
Editor:

Let's cut to the chase. Did you see the picture of George Bush embracing John McCain? If you want four more years of Bush policy, vote McCain in November.

The NRA must be at its wits end to come up with more phony excuses to explain away the continuing wave of gun violence.

The anti-immigration movement continues to use patriotism, the flag and security to justify the 700 mile fence along the southern border. What about the 3,000 miles of Canadian border that remains wide open? Is it that Canadians don't have brown skin?

The Republicans tried to impeach President Clinton for lies. The Bush, Cheney, Republican conundrum has subjected America to seven years of lies.

Is everybody in denial or just braindead? Taser guns cause death. Two-hundred-and-fifty (people) didn't die being arrested before tasers became the weapon of choice.

Ron Lowe
Santa Monica



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Ballot brouhaha
could get worse

MUCH HAS BEEN MADE OF NONPARTISAN ballots in Los Angeles County that were cast incorrectly in last Tuesday's California primary. Nonpartisans, or Independents, were allowed to crossover and vote in the state's Democratic primary, but tens of thousands of these voters neglected to punch out a bubble indicating they were voting in either this primary or The American Independent Primary.

At many polling stations, proper instructions were not provided for filling out the ballots. Some have said that the design of the ballot did not make it obvious that a selection needed to be made. Independent voters are steamed that a ridiculous technicality (after all, a scant percentage have even heard of The American Independent Party much less actually desired to vote for its obscure candidates instead of Obama or Clinton) nullified their vote.

"It seems like they added a question just for the heck of it. As if there wasn't enough red tape and confusion with the process already," complained Jane Wilder, of Santa Monica.

In fact, in the course of investigating the issue, Political Playhouse discovered that L.A. County actually plans to add a rash of brain-teasing questions that have nothing to do with politics to the ballot for the general election in November. "Maximum complexity and confusion, that's the goal," claimed an unidentified source in the L.A. County's registrar's office. "Voters will have to answer each and every one of these riddles before they can vote for president. Infuriating, huh? In case you haven't noticed, our job is to gum up the gears of life for our citizens."

Here are the questions voters will have to answer:

■ Are you a sentient being?
Yes [] or No []

■ Are you an oxygen-breathing mammal?
Yes [] or No []

■ Have you descended from Homo Erectus?
Yes [] or No []

■ Do you reside in a three dimensional spatial plane commonly known as "reality?"
Yes [] or No []

■ Do you prefer reality television [] or real reality (your existence) []?

■ Boxers [] or Briefs []?

■ When did you lose your virginity?
Too early [] or too late []?

■ Do you have any dark, untold secrets that are eating away at the fabric of your soul?
Yes [] or No []

■ Are you filled with crushing dread upon waking each day because of your hideous inadequacies?
Yes [] or No []

■ Can you read?
Yes [] or No []

■ Are you willing to admit you aren't good at life?
Yes [] or No []

■ Seriously, what's wrong with you? I know [] or I don't know []

■ Is it possible Mommy and Daddy never loved you?
Yes [] or No []

■ Are you sweating, you paranoid freak?

Do you feel like everyone in this polling station is staring at you?
Yes [] or No []

■ What if there was a secret camera in this booth, and all your selections on this ballot were being broadcast live on the JumboTron at the Staples Center?
I care [] or I don't care []

■ Are these questions screwing royally with your head?
Yes [] or No []

■ Tastes Great [] or Less Filling []

■ Who's on first (fill in the blank)?

■ Getting back to the poor choices you've made in life.
I know [] or I don't know []

INDEPENDENT VOTERS
ARE STEAMED THAT A
RIDICULOUS TECHNICALITY
(AFTER ALL, A SCANT
PERCENTAGE HAVE EVEN
HEARD OF THE AMERICAN
INDEPENDENT PARTY
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NULLIFIED THEIR VOTE.

■ Are you afraid your computer might melt because of the amount of pornography you view?
Yes [] or No []

■ Why do you keep stealing office supplies from work?
I know [] or I don't know []

■ Remember that time in your 20s when you thought you could make it as an actor? Ha, ha! You thought somebody would actually pay you to act in movies and stuff! I care to remember
[] I don't []

■ If you really think about it, there's a good chance your spouse/significant other is cheating on you, huh?
Yes [] or No []

■ Do you have a problem with prescription medicine? Be honest!
Yes [] or No []

■ Are you learning more about yourself than you'd care to know?
Yes [] or No []

■ Do you wish you'd just stayed home and avoided this godforsaken election altogether?
Yes [] or No []

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Meredith Pro Tem

Meredith C. Carroll

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Getting over the hill and up a risky creek

BEING MIDDLE-AGED HAS TAKEN QUITE

a beating as of late. The Food and Drug Administration issued a warning last week that Botox injections - the saving grace for those with rapidly maturing foreheads - can result in serious adverse reactions, including death. Forty-seven-year-old Columbia University and Harvard Law School graduate Barack Obama has been dogged in recent weeks by critics who say the junior senator from Illinois is too young and inexperienced to be a replacement for the guy who cites Colgate toothpaste as the thing he has in common with the former prime minister of the United Kingdom. And now comes word indicting the fifth decade of life as the worst.

According to a recent study, people are more likely to be "truly miserable" in their 40s than at any other time. Researchers say one possible reason is that it could be the period in life when people realize their dreams will likely go unfulfilled. Another theory is that people start to die more frequently after hitting the big 4-0, which in turn is a reminder to survivors of their own mortality and impending death.

In further depressing news for 40-somethings, it appears as if the downward middle age spiral doesn't discriminate. It hits those married and single, wealthy and destitute, as well as those with or without children. It remains to be seen whether the information in the study is so depressing that it will negatively affect people in their 30s who are now inevitably becoming painfully aware of what's in store for them.

On a more uplifting note, the study found that those who make it to the age of 70 in good physical condition will enjoy the same mental health and happiness as a 20-year-old, just as long as it's a 20-year-old who hasn't heard what could very well happen once 40 hits (Cue golf claps.)

Of course there are plenty of people who never experience a blue period in their 40s. At least not solely by virtue of being middle-aged. Another recently released study suggests the future is "bleak" for people whose spouses get on their nerves. The research found that the longer a couple stays together, the more they irk each other. Nitpicking that at one time is found to be only mildly annoying can develop into a majorly thorny issue as the years of marital bliss progress.

And it turns out that as the husband/wife

relationship deteriorates, it makes other relationships seem rosy by comparison. The study says that's because people can weed out friends, ditching those who never cease causing aggravation.

Unfortunately, though, it's never quite as easy to scrap a spouse.

But, according to a different study, holding on to a hated life partner could be good for longevity. Preliminary findings from a study out of the University of Michigan show that couples that fail to express their anger toward one another die way before than those who regularly duke it out. Not to mention couples that suppress their ire increase their likelihood of developing high blood pressure and heart disease.

PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE 'TRULY MISERABLE' IN THEIR 40S THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME.

In other words, people who survive the misery of their 40s and make it to 70 in okay shape — just in time to enjoy the same mental benefits of a 20-year-old, still enjoy good life expectancy rates as long as they share the rest of their lives with partners who make their skin crawl.

To be sure, there are plenty of advantages to being middle-aged that none of the studies mention. Car insurance rates are usually lower for drivers with long, clean records (although, of course, life insurance rates jump significantly after the age of 40). Forty-somethings usually stop getting seated at the kids' table at family events, and move to the family table from the singles' table at weddings and bar mitzvahs. Also, 40-somethings are just a handful of years away from those coveted AARP memberships.

And turning 40 means it'll only ever be another five years or so until 61-year-old Cher looks like she's 40, too. Unless the FDA decides to ban Botox outright anytime soon, in which case Cher should age well past her 40s within a few months.

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

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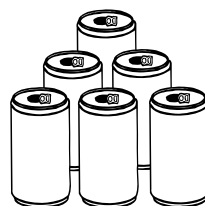
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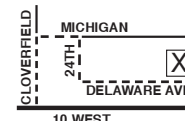


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Writers get back to work

BY LYNN ELBER

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES Hollywood writers' brief moment to savor the end of their 100-day strike gave way Wednesday to the cold reality of a blank page and networks and studios eager for new TV episodes.

"What we're all finding is there's a certain amount of, 'OK, what are we going to do now?' said Shane Brennan, writer and executive producer for the CBS drama "NCIS."

"You go back to your desk, open your computer, look at the last thing you planned, the last thing you wrote," Brennan said, "and figure out how to go from there."

Cheryl Heuton, executive producer for CBS' "Numb3rs," has been making a flurry of calls to muster crew members, writers and others connected with the drama.

"We're just gathering everybody. The offices are pretty dark and lonely and will be for a couple more days," said Heuton.

Members of the Writers Guild of America members voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to lift the union's strike order, allowing the industry to jump-start stalled production of numerous TV sitcoms and dramas.

"It will be all hands on deck for the writing staff," said Chris Mundy, co-executive producer of the CBS drama "Criminal Minds." Actual production won't begin, however, until scripts have been completed, which could take days or even weeks.

For the Feb. 24 Academy Awards, the vote by East and West Coast guild members ended the threat of a boycott by writers and

actors that would have robbed the ceremony of its celebrity luster.

Sid Ganis, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which stages the Oscars, responded effusively.

"I am ecstatic that the 80th Academy Awards presentation can now proceed full steam ahead," he said, and without "hesitation or discomfort" for the nominees.



THESE ADVANCES NOW GIVE US A Foothold IN THE DIGITAL AGE. RATHER THAN BEING SHUT OUT OF THE FUTURE OF CONTENT CREATION AND DELIVERY, WRITERS WILL LEAD THE WAY AS TELEVISION MIGRATES TO THE INTERNET."

Patric Verrone, President of the West Coast guild

The writers' decided overwhelmingly in favor of ending the strike: 3,492 said yes, with only 283 voting to stay off the job. The number of guild members involved in the strike was 10,500, with countless other industry workers forced into unemployment because of the walkout.

Writers did not vote on the tentative contract agreement that already has won approval from the union's board of directors. The contract ratification vote will be conducted by mail and at meetings and will conclude Feb. 25.

Approval is expected, given Tuesday's

lopsided decision and the enthusiasm for the proposed contract expressed at guild meetings held last weekend in New York and Los Angeles.

"At the end of the day, everybody won. It was a fair deal and one that the companies can live with, and it recognizes the large contribution that writers have made to the industry," Leslie Moonves, chief executive

officer of CBS Corp., told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Moonves was among the media executives who helped broker a deal after negotiations between the guild and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents studios, collapsed in December.

Under the tentative agreement, writers would get a maximum flat fee of about \$1,200 for programs streamed on the Internet in the deal's first two years and then get 2 percent of a distributor's gross in year three — a key union demand.

Other provisions include increased resid-

ual payments for movies and TV programs downloaded from the Internet.

"These advances now give us a foothold in the digital age," said Patric Verrone, president of the West Coast guild. "Rather than being shut out of the future of content creation and delivery, writers will lead the way as television migrates to the Internet."

Michael R. Perry, a writer for "Persons Unknown" and other TV dramas, said the deal made him hopeful the guild and studios could be "partners in a growing pie" of Internet revenue.

"I want them to be fabulously, filthy rich. I just want my piece," Perry said.

The strike that began Nov. 5 dealt a financial blow to a wide range of businesses dependent on work from studios.

It took a \$3.2 billion toll in direct and indirect costs on the economy of Los Angeles County, the home of most of the nation's TV and film production, according to a new estimate from Jack Kyser, chief economist for the Los Angeles Economic Development Corp.

The last writers strike, a 153-day walkout in 1988, resulted in an estimated \$500 million in lost wages.

Hollywood's labor pains may not be over: The contract between studios and the Screen Actors Guild is set to expire in June, said Jonathan Handel, an entertainment attorney with the Los Angeles firm of TroyGould and a former associate counsel for the writers guild.

"The signs are mixed whether this is going to be another difficult negotiation," Handel said. "The actors face all of the new-media issues that the writers and directors faced."

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Bitter chocolate

U.S. and foreign regulators probe price fixing claims

BY JANET FRANKSTON LORIN
Associated Press Writer

NEWARK, N.J. If you feel your Valentine's Day chocolates are not such a sweet deal this year, you're not alone. Regulators are investigating price fixing among candy makers in at least three different countries.

In the last week, the German Federal Cartel Office raided the offices of seven of leading chocolate companies including Mars Inc., Kraft Foods Inc. and Nestle SA searching for documents. Three months ago, Canada's Competition Bureau searched the offices of several companies, many of the same ones as in Germany.

The Canadian investigation sparked several American lawsuits accusing the world's biggest chocolate companies of violating antitrust laws.

The U.S. Department of Justice declined to confirm it is investigating, yet several companies confirmed receiving inquiries.

The retailers and consumers who filed suit allege the companies needed to fix prices because while the costs for raw materials such as milk and cacao have increased, sales of chocolate in the U.S. have remained relatively flat in recent years. Chocolate manufacturer sales grew by 2.9 percent in 2007 to \$16.3 billion, according to the National Confectioners Association.

The cases detail how informants kept letters for years, showing that Canadian executives exchanged confidential pricing information dating back to 2002 through e-mail, phone and meetings.

Marilyne Nahum, a spokeswoman for the Competition Bureau, declined to discuss the details of the ongoing investigation and said no charges have been filed. The companies could face criminal conspiracy charges, which carry penalties of up to \$10 million Canadian dollars and/or five years in prison.

According to affidavits submitted in an Ontario court to obtain search warrants, top executives at Hershey Co., Mars and Nestle met secretly in coffee shops, restaurants and conventions to set prices. The volume of commerce involved is potentially in the billions of dollars per year.

The German Cartel Office has said it suspected the companies had conspired with one another to raise their prices even higher than the increase in the price of raw materials, such as cocoa and nuts, would have demanded. If the office finds evidence of collaboration, the companies face possible fines of up to 10 percent of their annual income.

Several of the companies say they are cooperating with investigators.

Mars North America was contacted in early December by the U.S. Justice Department about a preliminary inquiry concerning pricing practices in the U.S. chocolate confectionery industry, said spokeswoman Alice Nathanson.

"We will fully cooperate with any investigation that may be launched," she said.

She also confirmed German officials visited the company's offices in Viersen last week. In Canada, Mars continues to cooperate the Canadian Competition Bureau's investigation.

"As the bureau has stated, it has not reached any conclusions of wrongdoing and is still at the investigative stage," Nathanson said.

Edie Burge, a spokeswoman for Nestle USA, said the company "is aware of a preliminary investigation into marketing practices in the U.S. chocolate industry being conducted by the Department of Justice," and will cooperate with any investigation, but has not been contacted.

A spokesman for Hershey declined to comment.

Yet in addition to the government investigations, the companies are facing lawsuits from a gaggle of plaintiffs.

A New Jersey confectionery company filed the first lawsuit in late December, charging price fixing by an international cartel of companies — Hershey and Mars, the leading chocolate companies in the U.S., along with other companies such as Nestle and Cadbury Schweppes PLC.

The confectioners claim that a cartel raised prices three times since 2003 and planned another hike for 2008.

German officials said the companies raided this week had agreed at the beginning of the year to raise prices.

At least 45 similar suits have been filed in eight states on behalf of more than 50 consumers and companies like CNS Confectionery Products of Bayonne, N.J.

CNS, a 13-year-old company that manufactures chocolate products, sued its suppliers to get back what it called overpricing, said attorney Hollis Salzman, who represents CNS and whose firm seeks to lead the class action lawsuit.

Direct purchasers like CNS often don't want to sue their suppliers because they fear retaliation, but given the Canadian investigation, CNS's owners felt they had to step forward, Salzman said.

A federal court in Newark next week is scheduled to hear a motion to consolidate the 16 New Jersey cases. Another federal court will determine which district in the U.S. will hear the consolidated cases. After an initial hearing expected in late March, a decision could take months.

If the class action suit is successful, manufacturers like CNS could recover their share of the chocolate purchased, Salzman said.

Other plaintiffs would be eligible to collect damages if they purchased chocolate directly from the companies, either as manufacturers or from company-owned sites such as Hershey Park in Pennsylvania or retail outlets such as Mars's M&M stores. That could involve potentially billions of dollars for hundreds of thousands of consumers, Salzman said.

Yet consumers aren't surprised to hear about the alleged plot.

"Oil and gas prices are fixed, and diamonds," said Owen Cullimore, 37, an accountant from Long Island, N.Y. "Why should chocolate be different?"

He buys about \$50 worth of chocolate per year, including Cadbury bars with nuts. He said wouldn't be bothered if he had been paying more.

Chocolate sales in the U.S. have been essentially flat for the last six years, hovering at just under \$16 billion annually, excluding sales from Wal-Mart, said Marcia Mogelonsky, an analyst with Chicago-based market research firm Mintel International Group. Sales of dark chocolate, which has a perceived health benefit, and premium chocolate have increased and pulled market totals up, she said.

"People have been more educated about what good chocolate should taste like, and they're willing to pay for good chocolate," she said.

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NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR VERIZON WIRELESS SITE AT 404 SAN VICENTE BOULEVARD

The City of Santa Monica has prepared an Initial Study and Negative Declaration for the **Verizon Wireless Site at 404 San Vicente Boulevard**. The City of Santa Monica has prepared this Notice of Intent to provide responsible agencies and other interested parties with information describing the proposal and its potential environmental effects. Environmental factors which would be potentially affected by the project include: Hazards & Hazardous Materials and Mandatory Findings of Significance, and Mineral Resources.

PROJECT APPLICANT: Verizon Wireless

PROJECT LOCATION: 404 San Vicente Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90407

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Verizon Wireless proposes to install, operate, and maintain an unmanned wireless telecommunications facility on the roof of the three-story condominium building at 404 San Vicente Boulevard in the City of Santa Monica. The proposed facility would comprise of twelve panel antennas in three sectors, each sector consisting of four panel antennas embedded into the northwest, northeast and southwest parapet walls. Three sections of the existing mansard roof parapet will be removed and replaced with radio-frequency transparent fiberglass composite material of the same color and texture as the existing roof parapet in order to fully screen the antennas from public view. In addition to the antennas, the applicant is proposing to install related equipment cabinets toward the center of the roof of the condominium building.

AVAILABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION: Copies of the Initial Study and proposed Negative Declaration on the proposed project may be reviewed at the following locations:

- City Planning Division, Public Counter, Room 111, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica
- Office of the City Clerk, Room 102, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica
- Montana Branch Library, 1704 Montana Avenue, Santa Monica

REVIEW PERIOD: As specified by the State CEQA Guidelines, a 20-day public review period for the Negative Declaration will commence on **February 14, 2008**, and end on **March 5, 2008**. The City of Santa Monica welcomes agency and public comments on the document during this period. Any comments on the Negative Declaration must be received within the public review period. **Comments may be submitted, in writing, by 5:30 p.m. on March 5, 2008**, and addressed to:

Lily Yegazu
City Planning Division
1685 Main Street, Room 212
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Fax: (310) 458-8341
E-mail: lily.yegazu@smgov.net

ESPAÑOL: Esto es una noticia de la preparación de un reporte sobre, lo cual puede ser de interes a usted. Para más información, llame a Carmen Gutierrez, al numero (310) 458-8341.

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- PICO/SUNSET PARK
- DOWNTOWN
- MAIN STREET
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Photos by Brandon Wise
brandonw@smdp.com

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Brandon Wise bwise@smdp.com

SITE IN QUESTION: The City Council on Tuesday denied an appeal to stop the construction of a condominium projected located at 1433-37 14th St. The site used to be a convalescent hospital.

Council approves new development

FROM THREAT PAGE 1

tacted the resident, threatening to kill them if they did not rescind the correspondence. Any letter submitted to the city addressing a pending project is public record and can be accessed by any interested party.

Afraid for their safety, the neighbor contacted the planning office on June 19, a day before the Planning Commission met to discuss the project, removing the letter from the commission's correspondence files, Antonio said.

No other neighbor spoke during the council meeting.

"Citizens should be allowed to participate in government without fear of reprisal," Antonio said.

Visibly upset by the turn of events leading up to the council meeting, Antonio expressed her frustration that the June public hearing had even taken place, claiming she contacted a city planning staff member who assured her that a project for which a death threat was made would not be allowed to proceed.

The staff member immediately contacted the City Attorney's Office who then notified the Santa Monica Police Department, Fogarty said. An investigation was conducted by the police department but there was insufficient evidence to back the claims and the neighbor that allegedly received the threatening call refused to speak about the conversation, according to city staff.

City Attorney Marsha Moutrie said that police officers did note the alleged victim seemed frightened during the investigation.

Santa Monica attorney Kevin Kozal, who is representing the developer, said that he has no knowledge of any threats being made and that he learned about the issue for the first time that evening.

He added that while the alleged threat is hearsay and there is no direct evidence, there is no way the developer would allow threats to the public process.

Kozal also countered some of the arguments made in the appeal about congestion, pointing out that an environmental review of the project shows that it will actually generate less traffic than the previous use. He added that there is no legal ground to deny the project based on the previous use of the site.

The issue of the alleged threats concerned several councilmembers, who said it was disturbing and intolerable in Santa Monica.

CITIZENS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT WITHOUT FEAR OF."

Elaine Antonio
Appellant

"This city does not tolerate that kind of behavior," Mayor Pro Tem Richard Bloom said. Councilmember Bob Holbrook added that he has received threats personally since serving on the council, though he doesn't take them seriously. His family members did though.

"It's shocking to hear these allegations," Holbrook said. "I looking forward to (paying) diligence to make sure nothing like this goes on or reoccurs."

The project itself did receive positive comments from some councilmembers. Councilmember Ken Genser said he finds it would add to the neighborhood and appreciated the openness brought on by the courtyard.

"It makes a positive difference," Genser said.

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Wilson gives it his all as host

Co-star of 'The Office' gets revealing during Spirit Awards taping

BY CHRISTY LEMIRE
AP Movie Writer

SANTA MONICA Get ready to see a whole lot more of Rainn Wilson that you ever would have imagined.

The co-star of NBC's "The Office" says he dropped trou for a few comedy sketches he taped as host of the Spirit Awards, the Oscars of independent film.

"When I signed up I said, 'I'm not a

standup comedian. I'm happy to tell jokes and stuff but it's not really what I do,'" Wilson told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

"And you know, they were like, 'Great, let's film some stuff and make it close to what you did when you hosted "Saturday Night Live." That's kind of what we're aiming for — just funny comedy stuff. I assure you, I make an (idiot) of myself."

"My (butt) is actually revealed a couple of different times, so if anyone's curious about what my (butt) might look like ..." he trailed off. "I don't know why they would be. It's all for a laugh. My body being exposed is good for a great deal of laughs. They use it on 'The Office' quite a bit when they need a laugh — they have me take my shirt off."

The Spirit Awards, sponsored by Film Independent, air Feb. 23 on IFC. The show will be broadcast live, uncut and without commercials. Javier Bardem, Cate Blanchett, Josh Hartnett, Forest Whitaker and Kate Beckinsale are among the celebrities expected to attend.

Wilson said the Spirit Awards are fun because they're so completely different in tone from the Academy Awards, which take place the next day.

"It's non-glitz-and-glam so the stars get to be themselves. It's on a beach in a tent in Santa Monica so it's more freewheeling. There's no time limit as to how long people can talk," he said. "It's kind of a ramshackle, crazy awards show that's really about cutting-edge cinema, and it's really for movie

fans and actor fans."

The 42-year-old actor has a small role in "Juno" — which is up for four awards, including best picture — as the clerk at the convenience store where Ellen Page takes her fateful pregnancy test. He refers to the performance as his "four lines or whatever."

"(Director) Jason Reitman is a good friend so I'm happy for him that this has taken off this way. He's worked so long and so hard — it took him six years to get 'Thank You for Smoking' made and now he's rollin'," Wilson said. "It's a great cast and a great group of people. I still go to the 'Juno' celebration parties people throw, that's a lot of fun. I show up for the free food."

Gibson meets plea terms

BY GREG RISLING
Associated Press Writer

MALIBU Mel Gibson has met terms of his no-contest plea to misdemeanor drunken driving after his notorious 2006 arrest in which he made derogatory comments about Jews, a judge found Wednesday.

Gibson will remain on probation for about 18 more months, but won't have to report at Superior Court again after Judge Lawrence Mira approved his progress.

"Assuming there is no violation on the terms of the probation, it will be finished at the end of 36 months," Deputy District Attorney Gina Satriano said outside court.

After his no-contest plea, Gibson was sentenced to three years of probation, paid about \$1,600 in fines and had to attend Alcoholics Anonymous and other meetings.

Satriano said Gibson attended five AA meetings every week for nearly five months and three per week for seven months. He also completed a 90-day program for drunken-driving offenders that included individual and group counseling, Satriano said.

She said Gibson has also volunteered to make a public service announcement.

Gibson has repeatedly apologized for making the derogatory comments about Jews to the sheriff's deputy who arrested him.

Rogers Park lost money last year

FROM CUTS PAGE 3

traffic, whether it had low visitation levels as well as low revenue generating power, said Roy Stearns, the spokesman for California State Parks and Recreation.

"We would prefer to close units with lower revenue to minimize revenue loss," Stearns said on Wednesday. "If you close your highest revenue producing parks, you make the problem worse."

In 2006, the park had an attendance of 203,000. During the previous fiscal year, the park also lost more than \$346,000, which was also the figure used to project the losses in the next fiscal year if the budget is adopted as proposed, Stearns said.

While the parks would remain closed if the proposal is adopted, there will still be some funding for caretakers for the upkeep of the park, Stearns added.

The parks in the area have sustained cuts over the past 15 years, which occurred through a series of reorganization measure that have resulted in the loss of funding for various positions, according to Ron Schafer, the district superintendent that oversees various park land, including Will Rogers.

"It's just a proposed budget right now, we're hoping that through the budget process that perhaps our funding will be restored," he said.

Among the organizations opposing the proposal is the California Parks and Recreation Society, a non-profit organization based in Sacramento.

Jane Adams, the executive director of the organization, said that the cuts will impact Californians who rely on the parks and open space for education as well as recreation and will disrupt the physical and mental health connection people have with nature.

Members have been sending letters in opposition to legislators and the governor, Adams said.

"Many, even historic sites, are old and will need to be upgraded to some level or there will be some damage to the facilities, which cost more (money) to keep them up and running," Adams said. "That's why a complete closure is such a dramatic move, very very dramatic."

melodyh@smdp.com

✉ WHAT DO YOU THINK?

■ Send letters to editor@smdp.com

Couple celebrates Valentine's Day

FROM LOVE PAGE 1

Aging, spending what seems like "countless" hours donating their time, Al said.

The secret to the relationship is keeping the lines of communication open, according to Al, who adds that the couple still fights occasionally, but usually they make up right away. Arguments aren't always a bad thing, the couple said, because through the years and arguments — whether it was over money or other issues — the fights have only made them stronger, Phyllis said. Although the two were polar opposites when they met, she an extrovert, and he an introvert, only on occasion do they butt heads.

For the couples that claim they never fight, it means that "someone is keeping their anger inside," Al added.

To Al, "love at first sight" is highly unlikely, believing that

it's not all about looks, but personality and compatibility.

"You have to know what a person is like," he said.

The couple's fondness for one another was evident, the husband and wife often joking throughout the interview, sometimes locking eyes, speaking of happy memories.

This fondness translates to time often spent together, whether it's preparing dinner, or volunteering for senior services at Wise & Healthy Aging.

"We're closer now than we've ever been," he said.

Today, on their 60th Valentine's Day together, the Weintraubs will mark the special holiday dining out, Phyllis wearing a special necklace that was given to her by Al exactly 25 years ago, inscribed with a special message.

"I love you more than yesterday, less than tomorrow."

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Residents, business owners weigh in on plan

FROM ASSESSMENT PAGE 3

Among the concerns expressed by a handful of residents and merchants during meetings held Tuesday with PUMA and Bayside officials were the make-up of the board overseeing the business improvement district, the weight given to votes cast by property owners with more square footage, and the cost some would have to pay per square foot.

Jeff Segal of Segal Enterprises (no relation to Brad Segal), which owns and manages two office buildings in Downtown, said he didn't see why he should have to pay an assessment that could be as high as \$.81 per square foot — amounting to tens of thousands of dollars — each year since he already does a good job of keeping his properties clean and secure.

"Don't force it on my street," Jeff Segal said.

Residents wanted assurances that the board of the new assessment district, which would need to be approved by the City Council and by property owners and residents in the district, should be prescribed with a set number of residents who do not own property or businesses in the district so as to not be conflicted.

So far the plan is to break the board up into two groups of seven, with one group comprised of council appointees and the other chosen by property owners. The tie-breaker seat would be left to the City Manager to fill, making a total of 15 seats on the board.

Residents also had issues with weighted votes. Under state law, property owners who pay the most in assessments have a greater

say in the process. Residents feared this would mean that a handful of property owners on the promenade, where the assessment would be the highest, would be able to unite and approve of the new business district even though they would not represent a majority of people to be affected.

Under the current proposal being vetted by the public, the district would be broken up into three zones, one covering the promenade, another from Ocean to the middle of Fourth and a third that would cover the eastern portion of Downtown. Those in the second zone would most likely pay an assessment of \$.40 a square foot. Those in the third zone, which is farthest from the Promenade, would pay \$.20 a square foot.

Jeff Segal suggested each zone be given the opportunity to vote on whether or not they want to be included in the district. If zone three or two decided they did not want to participate, that would not stop the others from moving forward. He added that would be the best way to go about it since it would not be an all or nothing.

Brad Segal said he would bring that suggestion to a working group that will make a final recommendation to the council for approval.

"If there's anything kind of crazy, now's the time to address it," Brad Segal told property owners and merchants Tuesday. He said that breaking up the vote so that one zone could opt out of the district was "definitely worthy of discussion."

Dentist Glen Tistaert of Tistaert Dental on Seventh Street said he liked the idea of adding more services but was concerned

about the amount he would have to pay and how he could remain competitive with other dental offices that would not have to pay the fee. Dental insurance companies pay a fixed fee for procedures regardless of the location of the office.

"What's to stop people from going to someone on 20th and Wilshire to do the same procedure for less?" Tistaert asked.

How businesses will be able to sustain the new assessment was a topic of discussion, particularly how it would impact small, family-owned businesses. If the assessment becomes too burdensome, that could force small businesses to close, losing some of Downtown's charm and unique character, some of which has been eroded by the arrival of chain stores on the promenade.

Non-profits also weighed in. Representatives with the YMCA expressed some displeasure at having to pay the assessment, which would be lower for non-profits and residents since they would not be getting the full benefits of the assessment, mainly marketing and promotions.

The current formula has non-profits paying \$.29 a square foot, meaning the Salvation Army on Fourth Street would have to pay \$4,540 a year.

Representatives with the YWCA told Brad Segal and Bayside to put a red light on the proposal and go back to the drawing board.

Residents seemed to be in favor of the assessment and the realignment of the Bayside board because they felt it would set aside money for more trees in Downtown as well as parking. Bayside would also have more say as to what goes

on in Downtown and could better intervene on behalf of residents.

Jacquie Bailey, a resident living on Second Street at Santa Monica Boulevard, said she has a hard time finding parking and would love it if she could get a parking permit to park in one of the structures downtown in exchange for paying the assessment. As a renter, Bailey will have no vote in the process but will have to pay the assessment when it is passed down to her by her landlord.

"If I'm a resident paying for this stuff, I would like (parking) taken care of," Bailey said.

Her neighbor, Jason Oliver is hoping that something can be done about street cleaning during the early morning hours. He understands that he lives in a busy business district with bars and restaurants open late at night, but he feels some consideration should be given to Downtown residents who are trying to get some sleep.

Brad Segal said he would take the suggestions to the working group, which will refine the plan and present it to Bayside. If endorsed, a petition campaign would begin to secure property owner support. The City Council in the summer would then draft an ordinance to create the district and a mail ballot would be circulated.

Brad Segal estimates the new assessment and business district would be in effect in January of 2009.

kevinh@smdp.com

✉ **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

■ Send letters to editor@smdp.com



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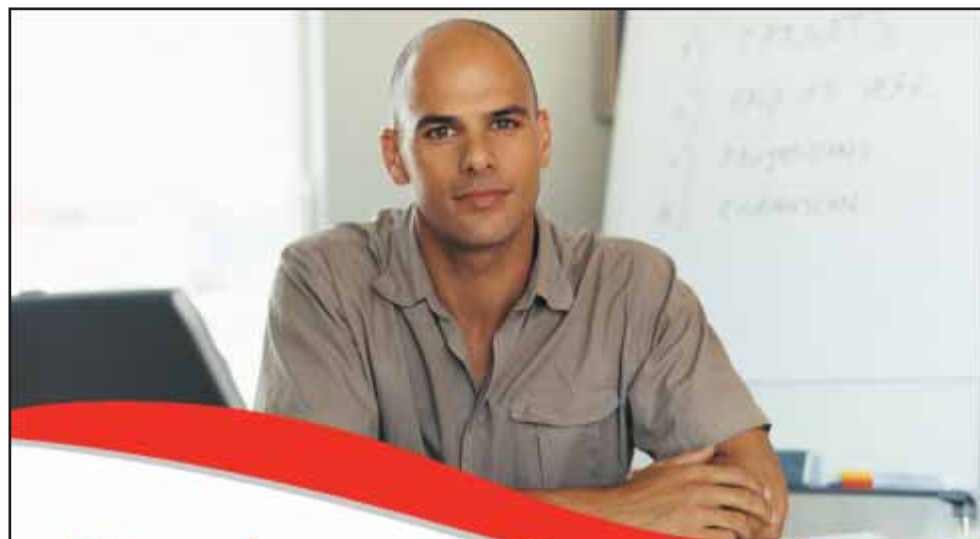
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SURF REPORT

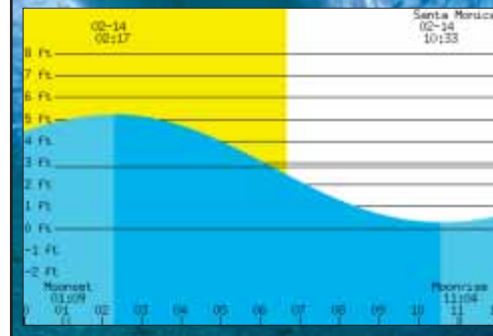


SURF CONDITIONS
WATER TEMP: 56°

SWELL FORECAST (5-8 FT)
Today is when the next NW swell is due from a storm that recently formed off the Kamchatka Peninsula. This, as with recent NW swells, was driven high into the Gulf, but not before throwing us some 14- 16-second periods from 300 degrees. West facing breaks able to work this semi-steep angle can expect head high sets. Standouts could see some sets running a foot or so overhead at times.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS
TRACKING BIGGER NW FOR WEEKEND...

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
February 6, 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 28 days)
Number of sewage spills -- 1
Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 2
Number of wet days -- 14
Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 37 / 13
Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 8 / 31

The Beach Report Card is made possible by a grant from 

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 Closures and Health Warning Protocol.

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Leo Carrillo Beach, at Arroyo Sepulch Creek mouth (Jocarrilla)	A+	C
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth	A+	B
El Pescador State Beach, between Lachase and Las Alitas creeks	A+	A+
Escorial Canyon at El Matador State Beach	A+	A+
Bread 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 Rancho Canyon Creek mouth	B	F
Escandido Creek, just east of Escandido State Beach	A+	C
Lafita Canyon Creek mouth	A+	C
Selkirk Canyon at San Blasco County Beach	A+	C
Puerto State Beach at creek mouth	B	F
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerto Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd.	A+	C
Sunridge Beach at Malibu Colony fence	A+	C
Sunridge Beach (beach location)- daily	F	F
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east	B	F
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon	A+	C
Las Flores State Beach at Las Flores Creek (joint zone)	A+	A
Big Rock Beach at 19943 PCH stairs	F	B
Pine Creek at Los Tunes County Beach	A+	A+
Tuna Canyon	A+	A+
Tepanga State Beach at creek mouth	A	C
Cashrock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	D
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	m	F
Will Rogers State Beach at 17200 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain)	A+	D

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club drain near fence	A+	D
Will Rogers State Beach at Palge Canyon storm drain	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Teneccal Canyon drain	A+	C
Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Chautauque)	F	F
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain	A+	F
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain	A+	F
Santa Monica Municipal Pier	C	F
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Venice storm drain	F	D
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restaurants)	A+	F
Goose Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain	A+	A
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain	A+	C
Venice Beach at Bristol Ave. drain	A+	D
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain	A+	A+
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south	A+	C
Venice Beach-projection of Topical St.	A+	D
Marino del Rey, Mothers' Beach- Wriggall tower	A	F
Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth	F	B
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 GWW jetty)	A+	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain	A+	B
Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant	A+	A
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain	A+	F

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
m -- no sample taken



Heal the Bay is a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to making Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters safe and healthy for people and marine life.
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Heal the Bay's Beach Report Card™ is based on weekly water quality monitoring data provided by the City of Los Angeles' Environmental Monitoring Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Data is analyzed as soon as it is made available to us by the public agencies. Beaches are graded on an A-F scale based on the risk of ocean users becoming ill. Samples are analyzed for bacteria—enterococcus, total and fecal coliforms—that indicate biological pollution. A fact sheet detailing the exact methodology used in determining grades for each location is available from the office or on our web site. The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at local beaches.
The Beach Report Card is an indication of past water quality and is not a warranty of the current safety of those areas surveyed. Our lawyers are happy.

IRS to distribute rebates in spring

BY DAILY PRESS STAFF

WASHINGTON The Internal Revenue Service on Wednesday advised taxpayers that in most cases they will not have to do anything extra this year to receive economic stimulus payments beginning in May.

“If you are eligible for a payment, all you have to do is file a 2007 tax return and the IRS will do the rest,” said Acting IRS Commissioner Linda Stiff.

The IRS will use information on the 2007 tax return filed by the taxpayer to determine eligibility and calculate the amount of the stimulus payments.

The IRS will begin sending taxpayers their payments in early May after the current tax season concludes. Payments to more than 130 million taxpayers will continue over several weeks during the spring and summer. A payment schedule for taxpayers will be announced in the near future.

President Bush signed a \$168 billion economic stimulus package on Wednesday, which extends rebates to taxpayers, gives tax breaks to business and makes mortgages available through the government.

Approved by lawmakers last week, the package provides a tax rebate of up to \$1,200 per working couple, plus \$300 per child.

Stimulus payments will be direct deposited for taxpayers selecting that option when filing their 2007 tax returns. Taxpayers who have already filed with direct deposit won't need to do anything else to receive the stimulus payment.

For taxpayers who haven't filed their 2007 returns yet, the IRS reminds them that direct deposit is the fastest way to get both regular refunds and stimulus payments.

Most taxpayers just need to file a 2007 tax return as usual. No other action, extra form or call is necessary. The agency's Web site, www.irs.gov, will have information on all updates and taxpayer questions.

In most cases, the payment will equal the amount of tax liability on the tax return, with a maximum amount of \$600 for individuals, \$1,200 for taxpayers who file a joint return).

The law also allows for payments for select taxpayers who have no tax liability, such as low-income workers or those who receive Social Security benefits or veterans' disability compensation, pension or survivors' benefits received from the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2007. These taxpayers will be eligible to receive a payment of \$300 (\$600 on a joint return) if they had at least \$3,000 of qualifying income.

Qualifying income includes Social Security benefits, certain Railroad Retirement benefits, certain veterans' benefits and earned income, such as income from wages, salaries, tips and self-employment. While these people may not be normally required to file a tax return because they do not meet the filing requirement, the IRS emphasizes they must file a 2007 return in order to receive a payment.

Recipients of Social Security, certain Railroad Retirement and certain veterans' benefits should report their 2007 benefits on Line 14a of Form 1040A or Line 20a of Form

1040. Taxpayers who already have filed but failed to report these benefits can file an amended return by using Form 1040X. The IRS is working with the Social Security Administration and Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that recipients are aware of this issue.

“Some people receiving Social Security and veterans' benefits may not realize they will need to file a tax return to get the stimulus payment,” Stiff said. “To reach these people, the IRS and Treasury will work closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration and key beneficiary groups on outreach efforts.”

IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A PAYMENT, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS FILE A 2007 TAX RETURN AND THE IRS WILL DO THE REST.”

Linda Stiff
Acting IRS Commissioner

Eligible taxpayers who qualify for a payment will receive an additional \$300 for each child who qualifies for the child tax credit.

Payments to higher income taxpayers will be reduced by five percent of the amount of adjusted gross income above \$75,000 for individuals and \$150,000 for those filing jointly.

Taxpayers must have valid Social Security Numbers to qualify for the stimulus payment. If married filing jointly, both taxpayers must have a valid Social Security Number. And, children must have valid Social Security Numbers to be eligible as qualifying children.

Taxpayers who file their tax returns using an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number issued by the IRS or any number issued by the IRS are ineligible. Also ineligible are individuals who can be claimed as dependents on someone else's return, or taxpayers who file Form 1040-NR, 1040-PR or 1040-SS.

To accommodate taxpayers who file tax returns later in the year, the IRS will continue sending payments until Dec. 31, 2008. The IRS also cautions taxpayers that if they file their 2007 tax return and then move their residence that they should file a change of address card with the U.S. Postal Service.

The IRS will mail two informational notices to taxpayers advising them of the stimulus payments. However, taxpayers should be alert for tax rebate scams such as telephone calls or e-mails claiming to be from the IRS and asking for sensitive financial information. The IRS will not call or e-mail taxpayers about these payments nor will it ask for financial information.

Scam e-mails and information about scam calls should be forwarded to phishing@irs.gov.

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Farewell

Cher says goodbye to tour with extended engagement at Las Vegas' Caesars Palace

CHER said farewell, but not goodbye.

Two-and-a-half years after the final show of her three-year "Farewell" concert tour, the Oscar-, Emmy- and Grammy-award winner announced last week that she'd signed on for a three-year, 200-show engagement at Caesars Palace.

Cher told AP Television the move was no mere change of heart.

"Well, first of all, there was going to be a big time between ending the show, ending the tour, and going to Vegas," she said. "I wouldn't have to move. I wouldn't have to travel. I could just stay there. Because that's what I really can't do anymore, is I can't go on the road. It's just too much. It's just too impossible hard. And I started there, and I thought that it might be fun."

"Cher at the Colosseum," set to debut May 6, will include 18 dancers, aerialists, and new costumes designed

by Cher's longtime designer Bob Mackie. Choreography will be directed by Doriana Sanchez, a veteran of the "Believe" and "Farewell" tours. But don't expect the same old Cher show.

"They have technology that we've never seen before," she said. "It's like when you went to see 'The Phantom of the Opera' for the first time, and you saw the boat and the candelabra and all that. We can do that stuff. I'm fascinated with being able to do that."

When it was suggested she'd done little between the end of "Farewell" and now – no concerts, movies or albums – Cher laughed: "Little? How about nothing?"

But now along with the Vegas gigs, the 61-year-old is putting out an all-new studio album, her first since 2001's "Living Proof." And she said she's still considering a longtime offer to do a TV musical of "Mame."

"You don't want to stop

if you can keep going," Cher said. "I never expected to be going this long. I have no idea how that happened, but it did. It's like an artist, it's like, when was it time for Picasso to stop painting? He had enough paintings, I'm sure, at a certain age. Why didn't he just stop? I guess because he really liked it, and it was some part of his life. You don't want to give up some part of your life that's that important."

AP

TEXAS FILM HALL OF FAME HONORS JUDGE

MIKE JUDGE, creator of Fox's "King of the Hill," will be inducted into the Texas Film Hall of Fame next month.

Judge, who lives in Austin, and Morgan Fairchild, known for her various film and TV roles, will join previously announced inductees Thomas Haden Church, Jayne Mansfield and the 1980 movie "Urban Cowboy," the Austin Film Society said Wednesday.

The ceremony will be held March 7.

The Texas Film Hall of Fame, located at the Austin Film Society's Austin Studios, recognizes actors, directors, screenwriters, musicians, filmmakers and movies that are from, influenced or inspired by the Lone Star State.

Previous inductees include Dennis Quaid, Marcia Gay Harden, Forest Whitaker, Sissy Spacek and Owen Wilson.

AP

Lee receives \$50,000 award from the Wexner Foundation

SPIKE LEE has been awarded the \$50,000 Wexner Prize, which recognizes innovation, quality and integrity among artists.

The silver hammer sculpture was presented to the 50-year-old filmmaker by Abigail Wexner, wife of Les Wexner, founder, chairman and chief executive of Columbus-based clothing and specialty products retailer Limited Brands Inc.

"Spike Lee exemplifies what the Wexner Prize was created to celebrate: a bold creative spirit who is unafraid to provoke and challenge us. He tests the American mind, and its attitudes, assumptions and values, and in doing so, he has advanced American cinema in remarkable ways," Les Wexner said in a statement.

A selection of Lee's films, including a free showing of "Malcolm X,"

will be presented at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus this month. His documentary on Hurricane Katrina, "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts," will screen continuously in the center's video space throughout the month.

Lee is the 13th artist to receive the award, funded by the Wexner Center Foundation.

AP

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

Happy Birthday!

This year's emphasis will be on your personal and domestic life. It becomes clear that you need a stable and secure base. You will see where strengthening and enforcement might be necessary. Investments in real estate are also highlighted. Familial and domestic relationships in general might come under scrutiny. Be honest with yourself about what isn't working, as difficult as that might be.



Born Today

Journalist Carl Bernstein (1944)
Actor Andrew Prine (1936)
Actress Florence Henderson

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Choose your words carefully. What happens with a touch of diplomacy might amaze you. Fatigue could be overwhelming. Consider calling it an early workday or opting for an easier pace. Listen to your body. Tonight: Fun and games.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★ Don't push yourself. If you're feeling pressured financially or are about to invest, check out various alternatives. You might find that an investment is slow to develop. Your libido and creativity seem off. Tonight: Fun doesn't need to cost.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Listen carefully to what is being shared. Take action on facts rather than theories. Others see you as an excellent leader. Don't allow a sense of heaviness or fatigue to mar the solution of a problem. Tonight: Say yes to living.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★ Think before you do or say anything. Your attitude could impact your words. Be aware that often your gestures and expressions betray your real thoughts. Someone might be getting mixed messages. Tonight: Curl up with a good book.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ You might want to veer off course or do something different. Weigh the ramifications. Brainstorm away but stay in tune with limits. Don't overspend or go overboard. Communication pops. Tonight: Where your friends are.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★ Take a stand if you must. In some sense you feel as if you have lost a beat or turned a situation around. Someone might push you very hard. You also don't need to take on more hassles or pressure. Let go and relax. Tonight: A must appearance.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Eye the long term. Decide that there is no such word as "no," and then look again at a problem. Know that there is a solution and continue to seek it out. Don't allow innate negativity to get to you. You know what works. Tonight: Opt for something different.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Work with a key partner or associate. You don't always need to agree. You do need to understand where the other is coming from. In the midst of a discussion, you might get negative, or an associate does. Tonight: Know when to let bygones be bygones.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Others dominate despite your strong personality. Pretend you are in charge when sorting through others' ideas and actions. You might see a situation quite differently as a result. Tonight: So many choices!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ Easy – you don't need to finish a project today. In fact, taking your time might be helpful, as you could see a problem with some time and detachment. Schedule a doctor's appointment or decide to exercise a little! Tonight: Choose something relaxing.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ Keeping it together might take a lot more than you think. Your playfulness buds, and you might have difficulty reining yourself in. A partner or associate might have an issue with your carefree and fun nature. Tonight: Start the weekend early.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★ Stay anchored, knowing what you want and expect. Don't worry about the moment. Look to the long term. Find positive ways to express your frustration and anger. Communication sizes, forcing you to think. Tonight: Happy at home.

MOVIEGUIDE

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Atonement (R)
1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:50
National Treasure: Book of Secrets (PG)
1:35, 4:10, 6:55, 9:40
Over Her Dead Body (PG-13)
1:40, 4:00, 6:30, 8:50
Untraceable (R)
1:50, 4:20, 6:40, 9:05

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

27 Dresses (PG-13)
1:20, 4:00, 6:50, 9:30
Cloverfield (PG-13)
1:10, 3:15, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50
The Eye (PG-13)
2:30, 5:00, 7:15, 9:35
Fool's Gold (PG-13)
1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 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)
2:45, 6:30, 10:00
Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins (PG-13)
1:45, 4:30, 7:20, 9:55

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
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)
12:20, 2:30, 5:00, 7:40, 10:10
Vince Vaughn's Wild West Comedy Show: 30 Days & 30 Nights - From Hollywood to the Heartland (R)
12:10, 2:40, 5:20, 7:50, 10:30

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

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

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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

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

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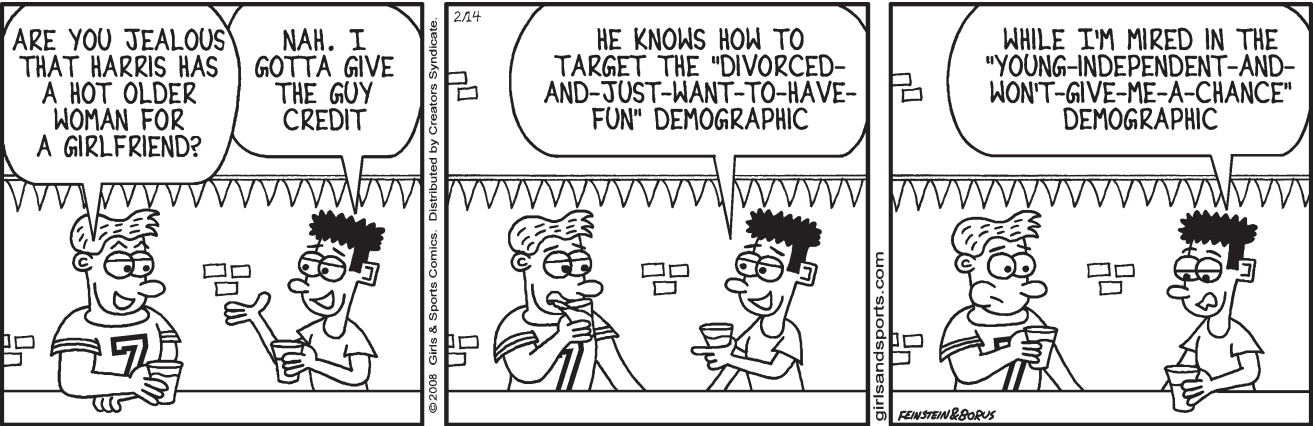
Residential

Interiors

Commercial

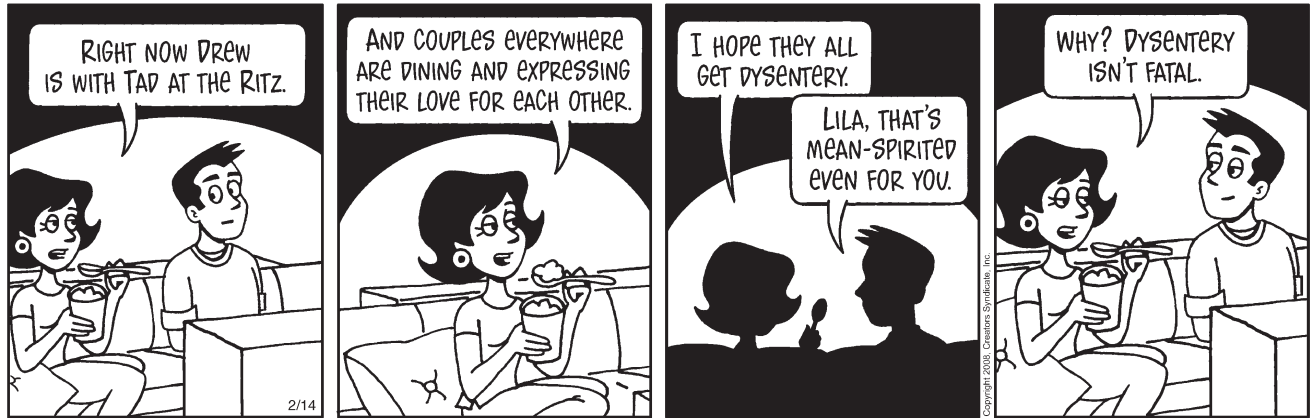
Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



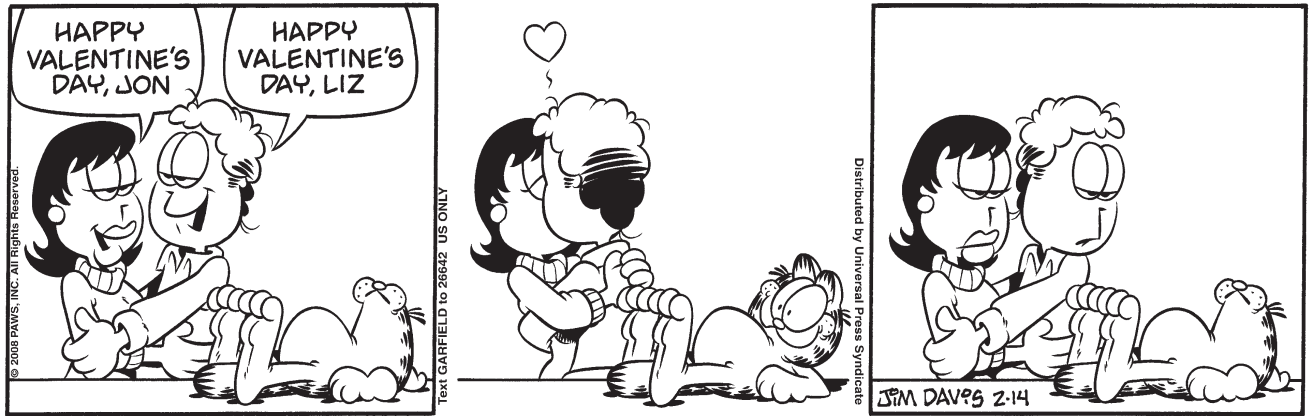
The Other Coast

By Adrian Raeside



Garfield

By Jim Davis



Dog eat Doug

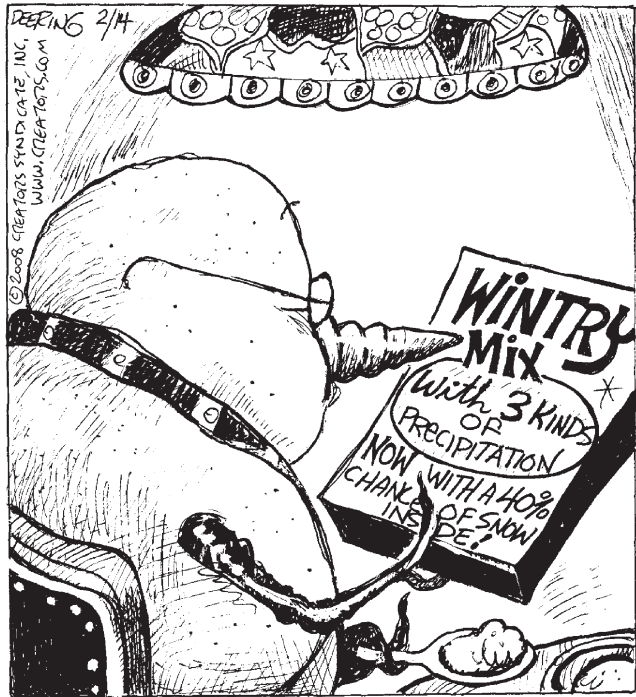
By Brian Anderson



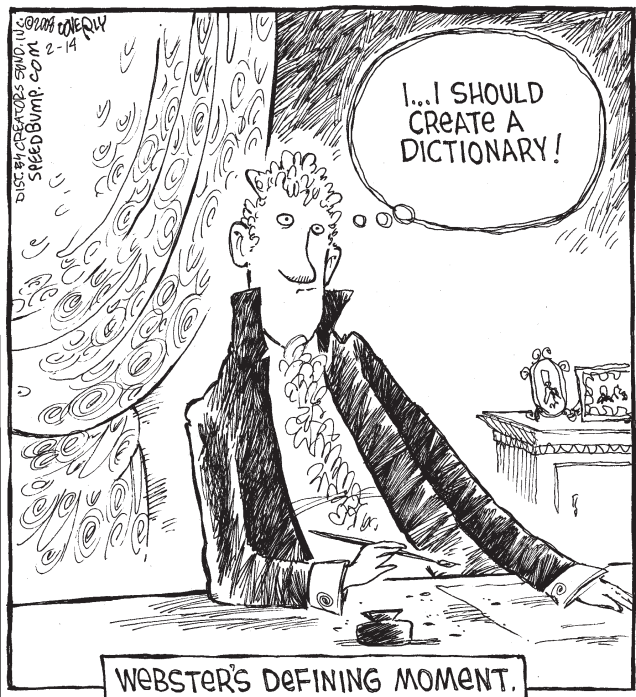
The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



Strange Brew By John Deering



Speed Bump By Dave Coverly



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Brandon Wise brandonw@smdp.com

The first one to identify where this shot was taken wins a prize from the Daily Press. Send answers to editor@smdp.com.

CROSSWORD
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS** 44 Lairs
- 1 Up
6 Knack
11 Thorough investigation
12 Cyclist Armstrong
13 Chart of numbers
14 Early Mexican
15 Puzzle
17 Spring month
19 Squid's defense
20 Chips buy
23 Trembling trees
25 Visitor to Oz
26 Doo-hickey
28 Look after
29 "Romeo and Juliet" setting
30 Road curve
31 Puzzle
32 Went first
33 Famed Florentine family
35 Hayride need
38 "— talk?" (Joan Rivers line)
41 Live
42 Adam of "Life"
43 Circus sights
- DOWN**
- 1 Fitting
2 Refrain syllable
3 Hair holders
4 Qualified
5 Rife
6 Snort source
7 Take it easy
8 Leaf carrier
9 Julep need
10 Kind of room for play
16 Not yet stored on the hard drive

C	H	I	N	A			R	I	F	F
L	O	S	E	R			H	E	N	R
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Yesterday's answer

- 17 Photo finish
18 Grill waste
20 Meadow birds
21 Expiate
22 Spoil
24 Wrap up
25 Road gunk
27 Diego Rivera, for one
- 31 Air outlets
33 Majority
34 Maintenance
35 Drenched
36 Cut drastically
37 Collins base
39 Funny fellow
40 Print measures

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1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10
11						12				
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41						42				
43						44				

Comics & Stuff

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Super LOTTO 2 19 23 45 46
Meganumber: 16
Jackpot: \$69M

Fantasy 5 8 4 5 30 37

DAILY 3 MIDDAY: 8 2 6
EVENING: 5 9 8

DAILY DERRY 1st: 01 Gold Rush
2nd: 07 Eureka
3rd: 10 Solid Gold
RACE TIME: 1:47.64

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ **Clumsy:** (1) A 26-year-old accused shoplifter was hospitalized in Grand Rapids, Mich., in January after he got into a scuffle with a department store security officer. He had allegedly stuffed some knives under his clothes, and when he was knocked to the ground, he accidentally fell on several of the blades. (2) Josue Herrios-Coronilla, 18, was arrested in Durham, N.C., in January and charged with DUI after he accidentally drove through a yard in a residential neighborhood. He then abandoned his car and hitched a ride, but at a later traffic stop, police identified him by his shoes, in that when he ran out of the yard, he had stepped in several piles of the resident's dogs' droppings.

■ **Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre** makes News of the Weird periodically (the latest in May 2007) because the six Christian denominations that share its management become involved in petty but elaborate disputes. A similar problem arises at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Armenian clerics share space at the site thought to be the birthplace of Jesus, and in December, when some Orthodox faithful wandered into the Armenian section during Christmas season, officials of both faiths squared off and flailed at each other with brooms before being separated by Palestinian police.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1929 the "St. Valentine's Day Massacre" took place in a Chicago garage as seven rivals of Al Capone's gang were gunned down.

1778 the American ship Ranger carried the recently adopted Star and Stripes to a foreign port for the first time as it arrived in France.

1859 Oregon was admitted to the Union as the 33rd state.

1894 comedian Jack Benny was born Benjamin Kubelsky in Waukegan, Ill.

1895 Oscar Wilde's final play, "The Importance of Being Earnest," opened at the St. James' Theatre in London.

1903 the Department of Commerce and Labor was established. (It was divided into separate departments of Commerce and Labor in 1913.)

1912 Arizona became the 48th state of the Union.

1920 the League of Women Voters was founded in Chicago; its first president was Maud Wood Park.

WORD UP!

perdurable \pur-DUR-uh-bul; pur-DYUR-\, *adjective*: Very durable; lasting; continuing long.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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Ocean Park 2 + 2.5 Townhome

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1:00 - 4:00 pm



1012 - 7th Street # 7

\$639,000

Updated 2 + 1.75 Condo

Average Price of Properties Listed for Sale As of Mid February 2008

		Single Family Homes	Condos & Townhomes
Santa Monica Canyon	=	\$ 2,305,500	\$ 1,399,000
North of Montana	=	\$ 3,579,923	\$ 2,011,708
Between Wilshire & Montana	=	\$ 3,289,900	\$ 968,471
South of Wilshire	=	\$ 1,047,390	\$ 785,441
Sunset Park	=	\$ 1,297,333	\$ 637,900
Ocean Park	=	\$ 1,876,467	\$ 973,039

Statistics updated every Friday

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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.