

FREE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 83

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTO

FANTASY 5

19, 31, 33, 36, 39

DAILY 3

Monday night : 3, 4, 6

Monday afternoon : 4, 0, 0

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 12, Lucky Charms

2nd Place: 08, Gorgeous George

3rd Place: 03, Hot Shot

Race time: 1:49.46



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

■ Fairway Middle School (Norwich, England) barred students from throwing snowballs at anyone without permission of the target.

■ State judge Dan Ballou, complaining that the recommended punishment for two teenage speeders was too lenient, ordered them to drop down and give him some pushups (about 40) before he issued the sentence (Lexington, Ky.).

■ A Tacoma, Wash., woman told police that when she was about to be raped on Jan. 17, she began to pray aloud; the rapist asked if she was a Christian, and when she said she was, he apologized, pulled his pants back up and left.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Love cures people—both the ones who give it and the ones who receive it.



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Party files complaints against former mayor

Officials say agencies unlikely to take up case

BY ANDY FIXMER

Daily Press Staff Writer



MIKE FEINSTEIN

Formal complaints against Santa Monica City Councilman Mike Feinstein have been sent to two public agencies charged with investigating political corruption.

Green Party members mailed the complaints to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office and the California Fair Political Practices Commission late last week, party officials said.

"I felt I couldn't stand by anymore," said one Green Party member, who asked not to be identified. "I didn't get the sense the state party was taking this seriously and this is something that has to be cleared up."

Feinstein has declined to comment on the matter to the Daily Press. His attorney, Steve Churchwell, did not return phone calls Monday.

However, Feinstein told Surfsantamonica.com, a Web site that covers local news, that some adversaries within the Green Party are

using the issue to embarrass him in the media. Feinstein told the Web site he has followed all of the state's fundraising laws, and he will fully disclose his fundraising next month.

"There are rules for filing fundraising reports, and I have followed them," Feinstein said. "I am doing my own filing, and that's all that's happening, and I guess people aren't willing for that to happen on its own timeline. There is no case."

Several local Green Party leaders' patience has run out with Feinstein. The former Santa Monica mayor has ignored their requests to explain why he

deposited more than \$30,000 in Green Party contributions into a private bank account more than 18 months ago.

They asked him in 2001 to submit statements from the local credit union where the deposits were made, but Feinstein hasn't produced any records, according to leaders of the Los Angeles County Green Party.

The money was reportedly used to pay rent and bills for a storefront at 2809 Pico Blvd., that Feinstein uses as a Green Party headquarters. However, party leaders say the office is not recognized by the Green Party.

Some Green Party members say Feinstein had no right to allegedly use the funds to support a local chapter without their approval because the check was made out to the L.A. County Green Party.

The issue has been under wraps for more than a year, but top party officials are no longer remaining silent about Feinstein's alleged wrongdoing. State Green Party officials signed a letter sent out nationally in January to warn members that

See FEINSTEIN, page 4



John Wood/Special to the Daily Press

Santa Monica's arson task force spent Monday investigating the cause of Thursday's blaze at Simply Sofas and Lona Antiques and Furniture on Lincoln Boulevard. The site has been "red-tagged," and no one is allowed to enter the building until contractors can make it safe for inspection.

Arson may be to blame for fire

BY JOHN WOOD

Special to the Daily Press

The cause of a fire that gutted a local antique store last week is still unknown, though some mentioned arson as a possibility Monday.

"The only thing I know is electricity didn't cause this fire," said Dr. Mansour Eshraghi, whose son owns a computer shop next door. "Somebody did this."

After the blaze — which caused more than \$1 million in damages — Eshraghi said he climbed onto the roof of his son's store, where he could view the inside of the charred building. The burning appeared to be evenly distributed, an indication that an electric spark was not the cause of the blaze, he said.

Eshraghi also said he spoke with Marilyn Nelson, one of the owners of the gutted building, who also suspected arson. Nelson could not be reached for comment Monday.

But workers from the emergency response team called out to patch the crumbling building said it is still too early to say what ignited the blaze.

"Sometimes it looks like arson at first," said a worker at the site Monday. "And two or three weeks down the line, it turns out it was an electrical fire."

Simply Sofas and Lona Antiques and Furniture — both

See FIRE, page 4

State eyes online prescribers

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — State regulators are increasing efforts to stop doctors and pharmacies from issuing prescriptions online without performing physical exams on patients.

In recent weeks, they revoked the license of a cyber doctor accused of issuing 11,000 illicit prescriptions, and levied \$48 million in fines against six out-of-state prescribers — the largest set of penalties believed ever handed down by a medical board.

Regulators say they hope the fines will

deter other doctors but it is unclear whether the sanctions will survive legal challenges.

An attorney for two of the physicians is already arguing California does not have jurisdiction, and some legal experts agree. Court challenges could prevent the state from collecting the fines for years, if ever.

The state faces another challenge. Many people want to obtain drugs for such conditions as baldness, obesity and impotence but are too embarrassed to ask face-to-face, regulators and online prescribers told the Los Angeles Times in

See DRUGS, page 4

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HOROSCOPE

Tonight, dinner with a friend Aquarius



JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

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

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2003:

You might often feel tugged in many different directions. Often, choices could feel overwhelming. You will hit a fork in the road of life this year. Don't hesitate, or both passages could be blocked. You will sometimes feel insecure, as so much heads down your path. Trust yourself. If you are single, a relationship will enter your life late this summer. This person could knock your socks off. If you're attached, you need to keep conversations open, making neither of you right or wrong. Learn the art of communicating rather than disagreeing. VIRGO plays devil's advocate.

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Keep asking questions, with an eye to finding a solution. You could be most uncomfortable with what others share. Pressure might be high, but your ability to diffuse it could be equally as high if you relax more. Take a walk around the block rather than losing your cool. Tonight: Run errands first.

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ You might find it difficult to deal with others financially. Things might not be exactly on target or the way you want them to be. You can push and plead, but nothing is going to change. Look to the high road. Consider your long-term gains. Tonight: Do something ultimately for yourself.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Others do mean well, though you might have a difficult time seeing what is happening here. You could be clouded by a sense of negativity and looking for answers. Understand more of what you expect and want from associates. Tonight: Tap into your creative resources.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ You speak your mind, but somehow you are holding back. Evaluate what you think is necessary in order to tell it like it is. Your understanding helps you expose a problem. Tune in to your higher self and, if possible, detach from your emotions. Tonight: Read a good book. Surf the Net.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Understand the real message behind someone's actions. You might be a bit put out by how someone feels or by what he or she might not do. Think before leaping into action. Later in the day, a conversation could help clear the air. Tonight: At a favorite spot.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Your efforts do count, even if you feel blocked by a boss or supervisor. Realize more of what you want and expect through an open discussion in the afternoon. Keep a perspective on your finances right now, maintaining an even track. Tonight: Whatever makes you happy.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Stepping back might take some extra effort, not knowing which way to go. Information from a distance could define a work situation. Listen to news from someone far away. Consider a new diet or exercise program. Consider your options before committing. Tonight: Whatever you want.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Keep reaching out to friends and loved ones. In fact, meetings and groups add to your popularity and power base. A partner could be reactive. Could this involve this person's jealousy or envy? Don't react. Think. Tonight: Follow the action.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ You might decide that someone close is a full-scale grump. Focus on work and getting the job done. Even your positive thinking might not shake lose a difficult person. Consider your options carefully. Understand what you can and cannot change. Tonight: Clear out of work as soon as possible.

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Speak truthfully to a loved one or a friend. Gain a different perspective through attempting another approach. Not everyone needs to agree with you. Guess what? They won't. Take an overview and let bygones be bygones. Tonight: Listen to news behind the scenes.

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Someone comes down a bit hard on you. Know that although it might be directed at you, it might not have anything to do with you. Emphasize what you do well, not where there is a problem. Handle finances with your unusually dynamic style. Tonight: Dinner with a friend.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Know when to back down — like now! Do it gracefully, and you'll come out way ahead of the game. Realize when you cannot change a situation. With the passage of the sun into your sign, you will re-energize. Trust your strong instincts. Tonight: As you like it.

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1427 Third Street Promenade, Suite #202 • Santa Monica, CA 90401

PUBLISHER
Ross Furukawa ross@smdp.com
EDITOR
Carolyn Sackariason sack@smdp.com
STAFF WRITER
Andrew H. Fixmer andy@smdp.com
REPORTER
John Wood wood@smdp.com
NIGHT EDITOR
Patrick McDonald PRMcDonald@aol.com
PRODUCTION MANAGER
Del Pastrana del@smdp.com
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Alejandro C. Cantarero alex@smdp.com
CLASSIFIED REPRESENTATIVE
Mitch Troy mitch@smdp.com

CLASSIFIED REPRESENTATIVE
Angela Downen angela@smdp.com
CLASSIFIED REPRESENTATIVE
Paula Christensen paula@smdp.com
ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
William Pattnosh william@smdp.com
ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Rob Piubeni rob@smdp.com
ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Keri Aroesty keri@smdp.com
CIRCULATION MANAGER
Kiutzu Cruz kiutzu@smdp.com
SPECIAL PROJECTS
Dave Danforth dave@smdp.com
STAFF MASCOT
Maya Furukawa ross@smdp.com

LOCAL



Actor Hopper honored at Santa Monica Film Fest



Jamie Seborer/Special to the Daily Press

Santa Monica Film Festival director Michael Cain presents the organization's Lifetime Award for Persistence of Vision to actor-director Dennis Hopper on Saturday at Gotham Hall.

BY SETH KOTOK

Special to the Daily Press

Actor-director Dennis Hopper praised independent filmmakers and the Santa Monica Film Festival last weekend after receiving the organization's Lifetime Award for Persistence of Vision.

In presenting the silver drive-in-theater-speaker-shaped award to Hopper, festival director Michael Cain cited the tremendous risks the Academy Award-nominated Hopper has taken as an actor and director. He also mentioned Hopper's artistic endeavors as a painter and photographer.

The ceremony Saturday followed a screening of Hopper's 1971 directorial effort, "The Last Movie," in which he also starred. A short retrospective of clips from his other work in films such as "Apocalypse Now," "Blue Velvet," "Hoosiers" and "Easy Rider" preceded Cain and Hopper's comments.

In brief remarks to the estimated 250 attendees, Hopper reminisced about his early days in the movie business working for legendary B-movie mogul Roger Corman.

The ceremony was followed by a lively performance by Grammy winners Ozomatli.

The festival came to a close as audience and jury awards for the films were given out Sunday. Audience favorite "No Sleep

'Til Madison" picked up the judges' Community Award. "No Sleep" directors Erik Moe and Peter Rudy shared some of the headaches associated with making an independent movie at a seminar held at the Midnight Special bookstore on Saturday.

"Anne B. Real," directed by Lisa France, took home the judges' Dramatic Feature Award, while the heavily praised "OT: Our Town," about the production of the famous play at Dominguez High School in Compton, was awarded the documentary prize. The Audience Award went to the bluesy "Sounds Of Memphis," directed by Jeff Scheffel as the best documentary.

Jacques Thelemaque and wife Diane Galdry, founders of the Los Angeles based Filmmakers Alliance, which co-hosted several festival seminars, received an award for excellence at the closing ceremonies. Thelemaque's film, "The Dogwalker," has an out of competition screening at the Laemmle-Monica 4 Plex on Wednesday.

The Santa Monica Film Festival is a six-year-old event that the Deep Ellum Film Festival took over in 2002. Festival director and independent producer Cain, who is based in Dallas, has expanded the festival to include music and arts events as well as film. Proceeds from the festival will be donated to cancer charities.

surf report

Information compiled by Jesse Haley

A new northwest swell is set to arrive on SoCal beaches today after making its way south from the northern part of the state. Today promises waves a foot or two larger than yesterday. Look for the best waves in the south half of the bay. Expect low winds and some afternoon blow out.

Water quality has improved drastically since the recent rains, so while beaches aren't the cleanest ever, there's no serious threat to your health.



Today's Tides:

Low- 3:09 a.m. 1.29'
High- 9:08 a.m. 6.10'
Low- 4:09 p.m. -1.05'
High- 10:21 p.m. 4.43'

Location	Tuesday	Wednesday	Water Quality
County Line	2-3'/Poor	2-3'/Fair	A
Zuma	1-3'/Poor	2-3'/Fair	A
Surfrider	1-2'/Poor	1-3'/Fair	C
Topanga	1-2'/Poor	1-3'/Fair	A
Breakwater	1-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	A
El Porto	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	A

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The Q-Line

Millions of people marched the streets throughout the world this past weekend to let their governments know they are opposed to war. Some believe these latest protests and peace demonstrations are only the beginning of a movement larger than any other in history.

Now that the United Nations' inspectors have found no smoking gun in Iraq, President Bush and his administration are figuring out how to proceed in their plans to

attack while everyone in the world watches.

This week, Q-Line wants to know, "What do you hope will happen with the situation in Iraq? Is war inevitable at this stage of the game?"

Call (310) 285-8106 with your response before Thursday at 5 p.m. We'll print them in Friday's paper. Please limit your comments to a minute or less; it might help to think first about the wording of your response.

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LOCAL

Lawyer: Investigators not likely to file warrants soon

FEINSTEIN, from page 1

Feinstein is not recognized to speak for the party or to raise money for it.

Now some Green Party members have escalated the situation by filing the complaints. They are asking for a formal investigation into the events to ensure that Feinstein didn't break the law.

Representatives with both the D.A.'s Public Integrity Division and the state FPPC could not verify on Friday whether the complaints had been filed. Jane Robison, a spokeswoman for the D.A.'s office, said Feinstein's

alleged actions aren't likely to warrant an investigation.

"It doesn't sound like something we would handle," she said. "They way it's been described to us, it sounds like more of a matter for the police. We only get involved when public officials misuse public funds."

A spokesman for the FPPC would not confirm or deny if complaints have been filed against Feinstein. But the spokesman did say almost all disclosures are required to take place every six to 12 months. He did not know of any campaign laws that permit disclosures to be made every two years, as in Feinstein's case.

A local election law attorney, Fred Woocher, said complaining to the agencies probably won't have immediate results, if any at all. He said the DA's office takes on bigger cases and the FPPC's small staff is overwhelmed with complaints.

"Usually, you wait in the dark to find out anything," he said. "These agencies are so backed up and it can be a long time before you see any relief."

"They are all strapped and have bigger fish to fry. It's a long process in both realms, so don't expect to see investigators serving search warrants any time soon."

Officials still unsure of cause of antique store fire

FIRE, from page 1

of which sell custom furniture and collectibles — went up in flames just before 2 a.m. on Thursday. The building, which is located on the 2300 block of Lincoln Boulevard, was completely gutted and all of its contents were reduced to ash.

No one was injured in the blaze.

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

"It was a great business," neighbor Nina Fresco said after the blaze. "Everyone loved it."

Santa Monica officials have deemed

the building unsafe to enter, while detectives from the city's arson task force are interviewing workers in neighboring shop, looking for clues as to how the fire started.

An emergency response team fitted planks over the shop's blown-out windows Friday and will begin to install bracing for the building's crumbling roof today, according to contractors at the site.

Officials could not say when they will be able to get back inside the flame-scarred brick building, which still reeks of burned fabric and melted upholstery.

During the 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.



John Wood/Special to the Daily Press
An arson task force squad car sits in front of the charred Simply Sofas and Lona Antiques and Furniture on Lincoln Boulevard Monday afternoon. No one was injured in Thursday's blaze that reduced the antique store's entire merchandise to ash.

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State attempting to stop doctors from giving drugs without exams

DRUGS, from page 1

article published Monday.

Another barrier is the apparent belief among some doctors that there is nothing wrong with writing a prescription without seeing the patient.

"I did not do anything wrong in treating these patients," said Dr. Jon Opsahl, who became the first California physician whose license was revoked for improper online prescribing. "There was no physical exam that could have been done on these patients that would have altered the treatment."

Opsahl, of Colton, prescribed to 1,500 people a range of medications from Viagra to Vicodin, and insisted that he had

reviewed extensive medical records sent by his patients.

But regulators say there is no consistency in screening from one online pharmacy to another, and that patients are more likely to suffer reactions or complications if not examined thoroughly.

Regulators in California and other states acknowledge that they are catching and punishing only a fraction of the doctors and pharmacies involved. In part, that's because they don't have the manpower to chase online doctors — especially if results are uncertain and patients aren't complaining.

Many cases, at least initially, involve undercover stings, for lack of patient "victims."

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Learn how to help homeless

By Daily Press staff

If you want to learn more about how to help or handle those living on the street, a local organization is ready to educate anyone willing to learn.

The Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition will host a training session on Wednesday, Feb. 19 from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The coalition is sponsoring the training for church/temple staff and volunteers to help them understand and connect to the variety of resources in our community for homeless persons, as well as for guidance on communication styles while assuring personal safety.

Step Up on Second is part of a coalition of agencies on the Westside serving homeless individuals. Step Up

staff are finding that churches and synagogues are drawn into being asked to assist homeless persons. Many churches/temples in the community have homeless persons that sleep on the church/temple grounds, as well as approach them for help.

When church staff open up in the morning, they are often the ones that interface with the homeless. This is further complicated because many churches have school programs with kids coming early in the morning too, coalition officials say.

People will learn more about the local resources available to homeless individuals, how local agencies can assist in helping the homeless and communication skills to ensure safety.

The training will be offered at First Presbyterian Church, 1220 Second St. There is parking in the city structure across the street.

SANTA MONICA FACT: Over 200 businesses operating in the Santa Monica Mountains consider themselves dependent on outdoor recreation tied to park resources.

STATE



Ex-port official investigated in conflict of interest deal

By The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A former port commissioner partnered with Duke Energy and his private company in a plan to buy, operate and decommission power plants across the country for profit, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Documents obtained from the computers of David Malcolm suggest he lobbied public officials in Washington and Virginia on behalf of Duke, modeling power plant acquisitions on the energy company's \$110 million lease with the South Bay Power Plant near San Diego, according to copies of the documents obtained by The San Diego Union-Tribune.

Malcolm, who resigned from the Port Commission in 2002 after it was revealed he was on Duke's payroll as a consultant, declined the paper's request for comment. Duke officials have denied any wrongdoing.

In addition to lobbying politicians to help Duke and his private company, Public Benefit Power Co., acquire waterfront power plants, Malcolm also drafted a proposal that would have allowed Duke to walk away from its 10 1/2-year lease with the Port District for a fee that could have earned him millions of dollars, the newspaper reported.

District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis said she will intensify efforts to conclude the office's yearlong investigation, vowing to

pursue conflict-of-interest charges if the evidence warrants prosecution.

Among the documents contained on the computers are: two unsigned copies of contracts between Malcolm and Duke, dated January 1999 and March 1999.

The January agreement guaranteed Duke would have the option of 49 percent ownership of any power plant acquired by Malcolm's private company. The March contract assigned 49 percent ownership to Malcolm's company and 51 percent ownership to Duke of any power plant acquired.

After Duke's April 1999 lease took effect with the South Bay Power Plant in Chula Vista, Malcolm sent letters to elected officials in Virginia and Washington, D.C., as well as to congressional representatives in attempts to acquire the Benning, Buzzard Point and Potomac River power plants, the paper reported.

In a thank-you letter to Mayor Kerry Donley of Alexandria, Va., Malcolm wrote: "Please be assured that the team of Duke Energy and Public Benefit Power will complete this worthwhile endeavor."

Lawyer Michael Aguirre has filed a class-action lawsuit against Duke and other energy companies alleging rampant overcharging of customers during the energy crisis.

"If the port's contract with Duke was procured by fraud or corruption, it might be set aside," he said.

Thousands in San Francisco protest against war in Iraq

BY ANGELA WATERCUTTER
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — One day after millions of people around the world took to the streets to protest a possible war against Iraq, San Francisco provided an encore demonstration when a crowd of 150,000 or more filled downtown to demand peace.

"Finally it seems there is a worldwide movement saying this is obviously a catastrophic path we're on," said Deborah Hoffmann, who attended the San Francisco protest Sunday. "And now everybody is out in the streets."

Anti-war protests occurred in dozens of cities across the globe Saturday, but the San Francisco demonstration was pushed back a day so it would not conflict with the city's traditional Chinese New Year's parade, which was held Saturday.

The delay apparently did nothing to dampen the spirit of protest. The city's downtown streets were packed with a crowd of chanting, sign-waving protesters that stretched for blocks, from the waterfront to the ornate and historic City Hall. Police estimated the crowd at 150,000 people. Organizers claimed 250,000.

"We are the vocal majority," U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Oakland, told the crowd.

After the demonstration, a splinter group of a few hundred people, some wearing bandanas across their faces, marched to the city's posh Union Square shopping area, where they squared off with police officers.

Demonstrators climbed atop a cable car, broke car windows, overturned newspaper racks and pelted officers with rocks, food and other objects. Police in riot gear closed the entrances to some stores to prevent

looting. About 40 people were arrested.

Some in the breakaway protest group squatted in the middle of the street when police in riot gear blocked their progress. Other youngsters milling about behind them lobbed a few empty plastic drink containers at officers.

Some wary tourists caught on the block sealed off by police took refuge in a Starbucks coffee house and peered out the window at the street standoff.

Some of the protesters said the police over-reacted. Police officers said the breakaway demonstrators sought to provoke a conflict.

At the main rally, speakers including actor Danny Glover, writer Alice Walker and singers Bonnie Raitt and Joan Baez, who tied the San Francisco event to the worldwide demonstrations the day before.

"We know that we have not been shown enough evidence for a preemptive strike," Raitt said. "There are a million people around the globe who have shown they feel the same way."

President Bush has said Iraq is concealing weapons of mass destruction prohibited under U.N. resolutions adopted at the end of the 1991 Gulf War. He has said the United States and its allies will disarm Iraq by force if necessary.

But at the protest, marchers said Bush has yet to make his case.

"It is so clearly really on the edge of madness what Bush is doing so you have to be out on the streets," Hoffmann said.

Korean war veteran Don Prell decried the looming conflict as a ploy for big business.

"I think it's stupid. I've already gone through (war) and I could see that it was a war for the rich people then, and this is one now," Prell said. "It's the same thing and it's ridiculous."

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OPINION

LETTERS

Murder signifies problem at Palisades Park

Editor:

Smokers in public parks and the cigarette butts they leave behind may indeed be a health hazard for our children. The City Council's move to ban them will be seen by many as important.

The murder in the Palisades reported in the Daily Press should alert our Council to an even greater health, safety and environmental hazard obvious to anyone who uses the walkways from Palisades Park to the beach. There has now been a murder and probable sexual assault in an area adjacent to the city's most beautiful park that has become a "no man's land" largely ignored by all agencies of government. Because there are overlapping layers of responsibility for the problems to be found there (social agencies, parks maintenance, police, and yes, even the Coastal Commission) no one seems to effectively deal (or want to deal) with this situation.

It has not been a kindness to the homeless to permit these conditions to continue. The homeless should be able to use our public parks but they should not be allowed to camp in them — most particularly on the dangerous and environmentally sensitive slopes of the Palisades. The Council should direct the police department to adopt a zero tolerance for any persons climbing on those steep slopes despite the fact that enforcement will be both difficult and unpleasant. (Note the difficulty of removing the murder victim from the slope.) In order to accommodate the fact that there is an ever-changing transient population, the police will have to make this as regular an assignment as parking enforcement is in Santa Monica. As we now have found out ... people's lives depend on it ... and the Council can actually do something about this long term problem too long ignored. It is already too late for one unfortunate woman.

John Kreiss
Santa Monica

Silverstein's argument for war filled with holes

Editor:

Last week in response of Ed Silverstein's periodic column on nothingness, I referred to him as a fence straddler who never took a side but, rather only criticized. Well, this week his column entitled "Off the fence," states he is now off the fence and ready to go to war with Iraq. I had also refuted his opinion of local liberalism, by referring to some of the good people off Santa Monica as "altruistic" in their pursuit

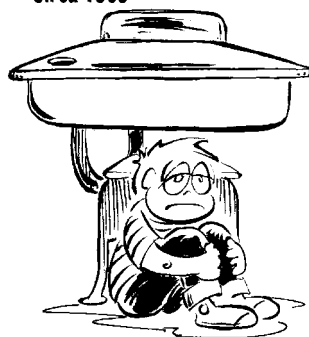
of grassroots endeavors toward change. Therefore I was both amused and dumb-founded to see that Mr. Silverstein used this same word but in a much different context. He states, "I am left with the impression that Bush's key motivation is altruistic, as the President who used the might of the United States to bring about a safer world."

To refer to George W. Bush as altruistic by waging war is a totally ludicrous. It is an oxymoron not unlike military-intelligence or Ed Silverstein-writer. He goes on to refer to this theory of harm against America as a justification for war with Iraq. He states, "He marched for peace against Vietnam but, this is a different kind of conflict."

See LETTERS, page 7

"HOW TO SURVIVE AN ATTACK"

Circa 1963



"Duck & Cover"

Circa 2003



"Duct Tape"

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Different conclusions reached on Prop. A



Evelyn Jerome

Maybe if they say it enough it will become relevant: Only 16 homes in Santa Monica have been designated historical landmarks in the past 26 years.

So the fact that government has over-reaching power doesn't matter, unless it is used "too much?" Does that sound right?

Only three people have been arrested for setting the American flag on fire. But the government can arrest you for it. Are three people too many?

The government can permanently impound the car of someone suspected of driving under the influence, without due process. How many cars impounded without due process are too many?

The government can hold foreign nationals, without charging them, for unspecified periods of time. Seven hundred Iranian nationals were held in December by the INS. Was 700 too many?

Someone better call the ACLU — I bet they'd be interested in this doctrine. I think they might even disagree.

Let's take a step back and look at the substance of Measure A, on which we will vote in a mail-in-ballot election beginning this week.

Right now, a home can be designated a historical landmark against the owner's wishes. You can own your home outright, have decades' worth of equity in it, and the value of it can literally be swiped out from under you.

Measure A would require that the owner of the home agree before it is des-

ignated a landmark.

The proposal applies only to single-family homes in Santa Monica; it has absolutely no impact on renters. Think about the people who own 40-year old single-family homes: They are probably the same people who owned them 40 years ago. They probably intend to leave them (and the equity gained) to their children and grandchildren.

I support establishing historical landmarks, protecting the character of our community. But I'm opposed to such declarations when they are not sought by the homeowner. When you buy a home, you should be able to make changes to your property with the appropriate approvals and permits.

Opponents of Measure A have extolled the benefits of having one's house designat-

ed as a historical landmark. Then why have only 16 homeowners done so in 26 years?

What happened to all of that liberal-progressive angst, railing against abusive government power that can take away people's individual rights? Doesn't apply to property rights?

On principle, and on the merits, I support Measure A. If you've ever complained about government having too much power over individuals, you should support it as well, just for consistency's sake.

(Evelyn Jerome is a past president of the Los Angeles County Young Democrats and a member of the New Democrat Network. To respond or to reach Jerome, e-mail her at evelyn_thinktwice@yahoo.com.)



Todd Flora

Let me be clear — I dream of becoming a homeowner.

I sympathize with the plight anyone might feel at the hands of insensitive or ineffective government.

But I do not need a "trust me, son, when you're paying taxes someday, you'll understand" lecture from anyone. Those of us opposed to Proposition A have some solid reasons that do NOT make us "anti-homeowner."

As I see it, there are four distinct groups in the Prop. A fight. I think it's fitting to handicap the pluses and minuses of each group or their arguments as I continue to dissect my opposition to this measure.

1) Well-meaning homeowners con-

cerned about property values and government run amuck. I have heard the stories of horrible cases that would have me join you in the streets with a pitchfork. No one should have their lives, rights, and homes completely destroyed by a city commission. And clearly, if a Landmarks Commission WAS truly out of control without room for dissent or negotiation, proponents would have something there. Advantage: Yes on A.

2) Conservative Land Use Attorneys/"Big Developer" types: Some well meaning homeowners may not want to see the men behind the curtain, but there IS an agenda beyond their "altruistic" fight for property rights and values.

Recently, community leaders have pointed out that RENTERS ARE PUT AT RISK by Proposition A. Apparently, apart-

ment buildings cannot be torn down if they are designated as historic. This has landlords who would love to gut existing buildings to construct more lucrative spaces salivating over Proposition A. Advantage: No on A.

3) Historic preservationists honestly disagree with the merits of Proposition A. Measures like Prop. A didn't work in places like Pasadena. Historic preservation became impossible there, and the measure was revoked.

Here, the "Yes on A" side could already be claiming victory simply because the Landmarks Commission recently responded to public concern by retooling their criteria and guidelines for historic district and landmark rulings.

One could reasonably ask why the Prop A campaign has to continue. Advantage:

No on A.

4) Those of us who will stand up for Santa Monica against group #2: Whether they like to hear it or not, group #2 not only has a financial stake in driving the matter, but they also are using Prop. A as a political tool in an attempt to make any progressive city policy look foolish. Game and match: NO on A.

(Todd Flora has served as personal assistant to then Lt. Gov. Gray Davis, and Regional Director for The Concord Coalition. He is a professional issues manager who has been featured on TV, radio, and in several publications. To respond or to reach Todd, email him at junkfood6@aol.com.)

OPINION



LETTERS

LETTERS, from page 6

Vietnam did not represent a threat to us Iraq does." To wage lethal force on another person as a private citizen one would need a clear threat of imminent physical harm to ones self. Blacks Law Dictionary defines with relation to self defense, "Imminent danger is an immediate danger that cannot be guarded against; such as must be instantly met."

Where is the imminent threat from Iraq? Whatever weapons Saddam has or does not have, the threat is no more imminent than it was a decade ago. This possible threat is, at best, to American interests abroad not to ourselves or to our dwelling homes. I could not legally kill someone for attempting to steal my bike chained to a fence out front of the apartment or for defiling my car in a parking lot because their is no imminent threat to my person, why then should I be able to drop bombs on people for some possible future threat to interests abroad?

Silverstein loves to use the buzz word terrorism and Saddam in the same sentence as if they are so easily interchangeable. Saddam Hussein is no doubt a ruthless dictator but the terrorism facing America today it seems is of a different sort. It is some misguided ideology whose embers smolder not unlike a fire fueled and fed by religious furor and American hatred. This hatred misguided or not stems from, among other things, our foreign policies abroad. You extinguish a fire by taking away its fuel and its oxygen, so why fan the flames of terrorism by waging a horrific war against a country that has as of yet, not given an immediate imminent threat to our person?

Todd Work
Santa Monica

Can I get a second?

Editor:

I nominate Mike Feinstein for Santa Monica City Treasurer.

Grace Peters
Santa Monica

Homeowners spewing rhetoric

Editor:

Once again Greg Poirier repeats the falsehoods the "Yes on A" campaign has been saying for a year: (Santa Monica Daily Press, Feb. 13) That city bureaucrats want to dictate "whether you can add a room on your house, or even change the paint color." So what if in Santa Monica's Historic District only one remodel has been turned down out of 14 requests? So what if the Landmarks Commission doesn't rule on paint colors. Mr. Poirier has a story and he's sticking to it. And it's a better story if the beleaguered homeowner on 18th Street who started this thing wasn't a developer, even though the man builds and sells spec homes. Repeat the rhetoric enough times and you can work everyone into an anti-government frenzy. They're coming for our paint, for crying out loud!

Oscar Niemeyer, the world famous Brazilian architect who designed the United Nations building and the capital of Brazil, designed one home in all of North America — here in Santa Monica. That home was recently purchased for demolition. Under Measure A we could not prevent, or even discuss, its destruction. Under our current Landmarks Ordinance, we can.

Should developers — excuse me, I guess we call them "homeowners" now — have the sole authority to decide what stays and what goes? Should property rights transcend community rights 100 percent of the time? In such a world, I could demolish my north of Montana home and replace it with a gas station or even a firing range. It's my property, right? Only the most extreme property rights advocate would say someone should have 100 percent freedom to decide the fate of their property.

Occasionally, very occasionally, a community should have the right to intervene in the affairs of an individual property owner. Out of 6,500 Santa Monica homes, only 16 have been landmarked in 26 years. And the majority of those have been done through the homeowner's initiation. Landmarking is something that happens EXTREMELY rarely. In fact, at the current rate, it would take over 100 years for even one percent of Santa Monica homes to be landmarked. In any given year, your chances of having your home landmarked are about one in 10,000.

Is the landmarking process perfect? Of course not. But like its proponent's rhetoric, Measure A is too extreme in that it prohibits even the possibility of community input on something which may effect the community. It's a bad law and should be rejected.

Victor Fresco
Santa Monica

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Santa Monica Daily Press



NATIONAL

Stampede at nightclub leaves 21 dead, 57 injured

BY SHARON COHEN
Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO — It was a chaotic scene: Hundreds of screaming people stumbling down the darkened stairs of an illegally operated nightclub, gasping for air and stepping on bodies, only to find themselves trapped at the bottom trying to escape through a single exit.

At least 21 people were killed and 57 injured in the stampede early Monday at the crowded E2 nightclub, authorities said. There were reports that as many as 500 people were crammed into the second-floor club when someone sprayed Mace or pepper spray to quell a fight about 2 a.m.

The nightclub was operating in violation of a months-old court order meant to close it down, fire officials said.

"The owner knows damn well that he is not to open that second-floor facility," said Fire Commissioner James Joyce. City officials said they plan to go to court as early as Tuesday to seek criminal contempt charges against the owner.

The nightclub had been cited for 11 building code violations and the city has been in court with the owners since last July, officials said.

Witnesses described a frenzied scene of some people trying to climb through the ceiling, while others were trampled in the frantic rush for an exit, their faces and bodies flattened against the glass front door.

Some people fainted on the club floor; others were coughing and crying, gagging and blindly groping for any way out.

"People were being trapped underneath you ... so we're actually standing on people's heads and we didn't even know it," said Amishoov Blackwell, a 30-year-old patron. "It was just bodies laying everywhere."

Blackwell said one man crushed between two people told him, "I can't breathe! I want you to hold my hand, man. If I don't make it, tell my mom that I love her! He just basically collapsed."

Some witnesses reported that the lights were cut in the stairwell.

On Monday afternoon, Joyce backed off earlier statements that firefighters had used sledgehammers and pry bars to open other doors in the half-block-long building. He said one or two doors may have been blocked by laundry bags or other items from the first-floor Epitome restaurant.

The crowd apparently surged down a single front exit in the pandemonium.

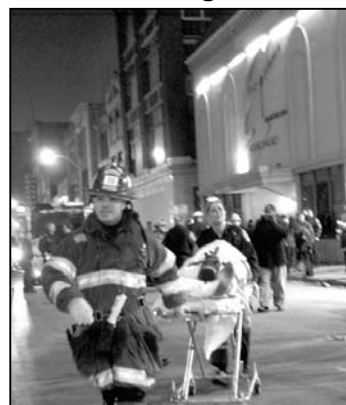
Joyce also scaled down the number of people in the club to about 500; earlier, the fire department had estimated as many as 1,500 people were on the second floor.

Police Commissioner Terry Hillard said investigators were trying to sort out conflicting stories about the source of the Mace or pepper spray and obtain videotape from inside the club. Witnesses said the spray may have come from the club's security guards trying to break up a fight between at least two women.

"Lives were tragically and senselessly lost, pinned down by a stampeding crowd," Hillard said.

"We will get to the bottom of this," he said. "Right now our investigation is at full tilt."

Friends and family of missing patrons flocked to the morgue Monday afternoon, searching for information and holding out hope that their loved ones were still alive.



E. Jason Wambsgan/Chicago Tribune/Associated Press

Emergency personnel carry victims from the Epitome nightclub in Chicago, early Monday morning. Hundreds of screaming guests rushed the exits of a crowded nightclub after someone used pepper spray or Mace. At least 21 people were crushed to death or smothered in the panic, officials said.

"I just can't understand it," said Herschel Blake, who was looking for his 22-year-old grandson, Michael. "His mother called me and said, 'Your grandson is dead. The door was locked. There was only one way out of the place.'"

Witnesses said some people were stomped on; many victims suffered crushing chest and head injuries. By Monday evening only seven of the injured remained hospitalized. Most of the dead were in their 20s or early 30s. At least nine died from multiple trauma and four from cardiac arrest, authorities said.

"Everybody smashed; people crying, couldn't breathe," said club-goer Reggie Clark. "Two ladies next to me died. A guy under me passed out."

Water and ice were passed to some of those trapped as rescuers struggled to pull them from the building.

"You could see a mound of people," said Cory Thomas, 33, who went to the club to pick up two friends. "People were stacking on top of each other, screaming and gagging, I guess from the pepper spray. The door got blocked because there were too many people stacked up against it."

"I saw them taking out a pregnant woman," Thomas said. "She was in bad shape. I saw at least 10 lifeless bodies."

The president of a Chicago entertainment agency that has booked acts at the club said access to the building was unsafe for the number of people reported to be there early Monday.

"The doorway was obviously inadequate for an emergency," said Ron Onesti of Onesti Entertainment Co. "When the place is filled to capacity, the doorway is very thin."

Photographs on Onesti's Web site depict packed crowds at the nightclub. Onesti maintained that his agency had nothing to do with managing the club and hadn't had any dealings involving it in about a year.

The club is located in the Near South Side, a commercial district near the McCormick Place convention center.

The stampede was one of the nation's deadliest.

NATIONAL



Northeast buried by Presidents Day snow

BY ROGER PETTERSON
Associated Press Writer

The worst blizzard in seven years shut down much of the Northeast on Presidents Day with blinding, windblown snow that piled up as much as 4 feet deep and left more than a quarter of a million homes and businesses shivering without power.

At least 21 deaths had been blamed on the storm system since it charged out of the Plains during the weekend, piling snow in the Ohio Valley, producing mudslides and floods in the southern Appalachians, and making layers of ice that snapped trees and power lines.

The storm was headed for New England, where Massachusetts expected up to 2 feet of snow and minor coastal flooding.

Airports for Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York largely shut down, stranding thousands of passengers trying to leave and get into the region. Amtrak's north-south service was halted between Washington and Richmond, Va., and regional bus service stopped in many areas.

The holiday meant there were few commuters, but police from Kentucky to Massachusetts pleaded with motorists to just stay home and some counties banned nonessential travel so they could clear the roads.

"This is going to be days worth of cleanup," said Maryland Highway Administration spokesman David Buck.

The western tip of Maryland was buried, with 49 inches of snow in Garrett County on top of 30-foot drifts left by earlier storms.

"It's no man's land out there," said Garrett County state highway supervisor Paul McIntyre, whose office window in Keyzers Ridge, elevation 2,900 feet, was entirely blocked by snow. "It looks more like Siberia than Maryland."

Elsewhere, 27 inches fell in West Virginia's Berkeley County, the National Weather Service said. The Seven Springs ski resort area on western Pennsylvania had 40 inches. In northern Virginia, Winchester had 30 inches and Linden, on the Blue Ridge, measured 35. To the west, some parts of Ohio reported ice 8 inches thick with other areas under 16 inches of snow.

Ice also ravaged parts of Kentucky. "All the trees are down," Mark Caudill, 21, said at a shelter opened up in Lexington, Ky. "It looks like an avalanche just came through here and destroyed everything."

It was one of the worst snowstorms in a century in Washington, where 16 inches fell. For the region as a whole, it was the worst snowstorm since the blizzard of 1996, when at least 80 deaths were blamed on the weather.

Among the many travelers stranded by the storm, few were as far from home as Lynn Anderson of Belfast, Ireland.

"It's turned into a complete nightmare," said Anderson, who arrived in Philadelphia on Sunday hoping to go to Williamsburg, Va., but had to stay overnight in a downtown Philadelphia hotel.

Staff members at Baltimore-Washington International Airport distributed blankets and pillows to the some 150 travelers who spent the night there. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates Newark, Kennedy and LaGuardia airports, supplied cots and blankets.

Thousands of travelers trying to get

home from vacations were stuck at Florida airports.

"We are not going anywhere," Elizabeth Huffman said at Miami International after finding her flight home to Washington was canceled. Her husband found an alternative: "We are thinking about going to the beach for the day."

"It's no man's land out there. It looks more like Siberia than Maryland."

— PAUL MCINTYRE
Garrett County state highway supervisor

The heavy snow was blamed for several roof collapses in New Jersey, including one that killed a man at a job-training school in Edison. In Maryland, a train roundhouse roof fell in at the B & O Railroad Museum in Baltimore.

Ohio Gov. Bob Taft declared three southern counties disaster areas Monday because of the snow and ice. Disaster and emergency declarations also had been issued by governors in New York, Kentucky, New Jersey, West Virginia, Maryland and Delaware.

States had thousands of crews plowing and spreading salt. Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich said the storm had cost between \$20 million and \$30 million — and the state was already \$14 million over budget for road cleanup this season.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg estimated the storm already had cost his city around \$20 million.

It could take early three days to clear some side streets in Washington, said District of Columbia Mayor Anthony Williams.

"Once you've plowed this stuff, where do you dump these mountains of stuff?" Williams asked.

Usually bustling downtown Bethesda, Md., was nearly deserted, with sidewalks buried by snow. Jon Gann, 36, got out his snowshoes for a trek to a coffee shop. "This is great. I can walk on top of the drifts and completely avoid the streets," Gann said.

More than 19 inches had fallen by afternoon in New York City's Central Park, and the dense, fine flakes on unshoveled sidewalks made walking feel like a workout on a Stairmaster. Drifts stood chest high on some side streets and the Rockefeller Center skating rink was closed by snow for the first time since 1996.

An estimated 100,000 customers lost power in West Virginia, with 20,000 in the Carolinas, 62,000 in Ohio, 96,000 in Kentucky and 6,000 in Virginia.

"It's by far the worst ice storm that we've had in decades. It's a nightmare down here," said Kimberly Carver, director of Ohio's Scioto County Emergency Management Agency.

Weather-related deaths included two in Illinois, one in Nebraska, six in West Virginia, six in Missouri, one in Ohio, one in New Jersey and four in Iowa.

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INTERNATIONAL

American U-2 plane makes first flight over Iraq

BY HAMZA HENDAWI

Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq — An American U-2 surveillance plane made its first flight over Iraq on Monday in support of the current U.N. inspection mission, marking another concession by Saddam Hussein's regime to stave off a U.S.-led attack.

Meanwhile, Iraqi state television broadcast scenes of Iraqi troops in maneuvers to defend the country from a possible U.S. attack. State television also said Saddam praised last weekend's anti-war protests, singling out those in Italy, Spain and Britain whose governments support the strong U.S. position against Baghdad.

The U-2 flight took place only one week after the United Nations and Baghdad broke an impasse that had kept the reconnaissance plane grounded since the start of inspections in November. The Iraqis agreed to allow U-2 flights last week, fulfilling a major demand by U.N. inspectors seeking to determine if Iraq still harbors weapons of mass destruction.

"At 11:55 a.m., a U-2 surveillance plane entered Iraqi airspace and reconnoitered several areas of Iraq and left Iraqi airspace at 4:15 p.m.," the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "The reconnaissance operation lasted 4 hours and 20 minutes."

The statement did not indicate the plane's flight path.

"A U-2 did fly today," said Ewen Buchanan, the New York-based spokesman for the chief inspector Hans Blix. "It's about time, too. We've been trying to do this for quite a while and we hope that the other reconnaissance aircraft and drones will be up and running shortly, thereby increasing our capabilities."

Iraqi officials had objected to the U-2 flights, contending they couldn't guarantee the safety of the plane if it was flying over Iraq at the same time as U.S.-British air patrols in the "no-fly zones" of northern and southern Iraq. Unless those warplanes were kept out of the sky during the U-2 flight, the reconnaissance craft might be targeted by anti-aircraft fire, they said.

The no-fly zones were declared by Washington, without U.N. authorization, to protect dissident Iraqi Shiite Muslims and Iraqi Kurds from Saddam's forces. The Iraqis consider the zones to be illegal.



Spencer Platt/Pool/Associated Press

Members of the U.S. Coast Guard prepare to board a vessel five miles off the coast of Iraq, suspected of breaking the sanctions placed on merchandise leaving and entering the country on Monday in the North Arabian Gulf. The missions, known as Military Interdiction Operations (MIO), are based on the USS Milius and are intended to impede embargoed items from entering or leaving Iraq by boat.

It was not immediately clear whether the United Nations met conditions requested by the Iraqis in order to let the U-2 flights pass unimpeded.

Gen. Hossam Mohamed Amin, the chief Iraqi liaison officer to the U.N. inspectors, had asked Blix to give Baghdad data on the flight before it entered the country's airspace, including the plane's call sign, its altitude, speed and time of arrival.

Iraq had asked for similar conditions for U-2 flights that occurred after the 1991 Gulf War, but had relented and permitted the flights to go forward.

Baghdad is under strong pressure from the United States to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors or face attack. The United States and Britain reject Iraqi claims to have abandoned all weapons of mass destruction.

On Monday, U.N. inspectors visited six missile sites — including one involved in a rocket system the United Nations has banned.

Blix told the U.N. Security Council on Friday that U.N. missile experts "concluded unanimously" that two versions of Iraq's Al Samoud-2 missile could exceed the 94-mile range limit set by the United Nations — and

were therefore banned.

Under U.N. resolutions adopted after Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, all banned weapons must be destroyed.

Since that report, U.N. inspectors have been marking the banned Al Samoud missiles so that they can be tallied and accounted for. Hiro Ueki, a spokesman for the inspectors in Baghdad, would not say whether the inspectors intended to destroy them — only that they were tagging the rockets as "a way of monitoring" them.

During Blix's visit to Baghdad in January, he said the Iraqis suggested that when they fitted guidance and control systems and other devices to the Al Samoud missiles, they would be weighed down and fly within the legal distance.

The New York Times, however, reported that the United States will consider Iraq's destruction of the Al Samoud, a liquid propellant "mini-Scud" ballistic missile, a litmus test of Baghdad's commitment to disarm.

Destroying the Al Samouds would rob Iraq of a potentially valuable weapon which it considers legitimate for its defense at a time when it faces tens of thousands of American troops poised for a possible invasion.

Other outstanding disarmament issues include allowing inspectors to interview Iraqi scientists without government "minders" present.

Ueki told The Associated Press that inspectors from UNMOVIC, the U.N. Monitoring and Observation Commission led by Blix, have conducted only three private interviews with Iraqi scientists since their return to Iraq in November.

"It's three out of more than 20 attempts," he said. The International Atomic Energy Agency, which is inspecting Iraq's nuclear program, has conducted four private interviews, including one Monday.

Iraqi officials say the scientists are refusing to submit to private interviews because they are afraid their statements might be distorted. The inspectors say the experts would be more forthcoming about Iraq's arms programs if no government officials were present.

In its Monday report, Iraqi television showed scenes of Iraqi Mi-24 helicopters air-to-ground missiles as well as armor and infantry attacks. The report said the maneuvers took place in the Iraqi desert but did not specify where or when.

North Korea threatens to withdraw from Korean armistice

BY SANG-HUN CHOE

Associated Press Writer

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea threatened on Tuesday to abandon the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War, accusing the United States of plotting an attack on the communist state.

A spokesman of the North's Korean People's Army claimed that the United States was building up reinforcements around the Korean Peninsula in preparations to attack the North, said the North's official news agency KCNA.

"The situation is, therefore, getting more serious as the days go by as it is putting its plan for pre-emptive attacks on the (North) into practice," KCNA quoted the unidentified spokesman as saying.

The 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty, leaving the countries technically in a state of war. A North Korean withdrawal from the armistice would remove the main mechanism that is helping to keep an uneasy peace on the peninsula, where the border between the two Koreas is the world's most heavily armed.

The announcement is the latest move in a crisis over the North's recent decision to restart its nuclear programs in violations of international treaties.

Washington and its allies are pressuring North Korea to abandon its suspected nuclear weapon programs. The North has insisted on direct talks first with the

United States, from which it wants a nonaggression treaty.

The North threat followed by a day a declaration by the communist state that it would triumph in the nuclear standoff.

That bluster came as South Korea's outgoing president, Kim Dae-jung, warned that Pyongyang's production of atomic weapons could force his country and Japan to build nuclear bombs as well. As South Korea warned that Pyongyang's production of atomic weapons could force the South and Japan to build nuclear bombs as well.

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld has said that North Korea has one or two nuclear weapons and could

extract enough plutonium within months to make six to eight more. North Korea had never admitted or denied having nuclear weapons, but has said it has the right to develop nuclear weapons.

The spokesman said the "grave situation created by the undisguised war acts committed by the U.S. in breach of the armistice agreement compels the Korean People's Army side, its warring party, to immediately take all steps to cope with it."

"If the U.S. side continues violating and misusing the armistice agreement as it pleases, there will be no need for the (North) to remain bound to the armistice agreement uncomfortably," the spokesman said.

The North Korean statement, which was

carried by KCNA on Tuesday was issued Monday by the spokesman of the North Korean military's mission to Panmunjom, a truce village where the U.S.-led U.N. Command and the North Korean military meet to oversee the armistice.

The North accused the United States of violating the armistice agreement by sending reinforcements around the Korean Peninsula and planning to impose a naval blockade against the impoverished, communist state.

North Korea had previously threatened to pull out of the armistice in an attempt to increase tension with the United States and force Washington to start negotiations with the Stalinist regime in Pyongyang.

Blair's popularity drops by 14 percent in new poll

LONDON — Prime Minister Tony Blair's popularity has slumped amid concern over the Iraq crisis, according to an opinion poll published Monday.

The British prime minister was rated as satisfactory by only 35 percent of respondents to an ICM Survey for The Guardian newspaper. The figure was down from 49 percent a month earlier.

Fifty-five percent said they were dissatisfied, up 12 points from January. The other 10 percent expressed no opinion.

Blair is staking his political future on backing the United States against Iraq,

despite considerable opposition from Britons to war without United Nations backing.

An estimated 750,000 peace demonstrators marched in London on Saturday as part of a global anti-war protest. Politicians, trade unionists and some British newspapers said Sunday that Blair will risk his political future if he ignores the protests.

According to the poll, 52 percent of respondents oppose a war with Iraq, up five percentage points from last month. The poll did not indicate if that opposition depended on U.N. backing for mili-

tary action. Twenty-nine percent said they would support military action, down one point.

Support for Blair's governing Labor Party fell from 43 percent to 39 percent, according to the survey. Support for the main opposition Conservative Party, however, rose only one percentage point to 31 percent, as it did for the Liberal Democrats, which stood at 22 percent.

ICM interviewed a random sample of 1,003 adults by telephone on Feb. 14-16. The margin of error was plus or minus three percentage points.

SPORTS



Orioles pitcher dies of heatstroke following collapse

BY STEVEN WINE
AP Sports Writer

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Baltimore Orioles pitching prospect Steve Bechler died of heatstroke Monday, unable to recover from a spring training workout that sent his temperature to 108 degrees.

An autopsy will help determine whether Bechler had been taking the dietary supplement ephedrine, which has been linked to heatstroke and heart attacks.

Broward County medical examiner Dr. Joshua Perper

acknowledged a published report that a bottle of a supplement containing ephedrine was found in Bechler's locker. Regarding the bottle, Perper said: "My understanding is it exists, but we don't have it."

A workout Sunday left Bechler pale and dizzy, and when his condition worsened, he was carried from the clubhouse to an ambulance on a stretcher. He spent the night in intensive care and died at 10:10 a.m. Monday at Northridge Medical Center.

His wife, Kiley, due to deliver the couple's first child in April, was at his bedside. She and Bechler, 23, married

last year.

William Goldiner, the Orioles' team physician, said Bechler died of "multi-organ failure due to heatstroke."

"He would rebound at times. They thought they were getting ahead of it, and then another organ system would fail," Goldiner said at a news conference at Fort Lauderdale Stadium.

Bechler, at 6-foot-2 and 239 pounds, had battled weight trouble in the past. Asked about the pitcher's conditioning, manager Mike Hargrove was quoted as saying it was "not good."

Pitcher Kevin Brown an expected no-show at Dodgers camp

VERO BEACH, Fla. — Kevin Brown didn't show up at spring training camp Monday, but the Los Angeles Dodgers insisted that wasn't a problem.

Brown, who struggled through an injury-plagued 2002 season, reportedly was going to be at the team's spring training facility. When he didn't show, the team said it wasn't concerned.

"He doesn't have to be here until the 26th of February. It's the player's option," Dodgers general manager Dan Evans said. "We expect him here at some point today or tomorrow."

The biggest question is what kind of physical condition Brown is in. He had a pair of stints on the disabled list last year because of a sore elbow and back problems. He was 3-4 with a 4.81 ERA in just 17 games before ending the year in September with a back injury.

"If he's not OK physically, we move forward," Dodgers manager Jim Tracy said.

Tracy said he didn't think Brown being absent would make a difference in his progress.

"It's not going to make him any better, it's not going to make him any worse," he said.

In all, Dodgers' management claimed the fact their highest-paid pitcher wasn't in camp with the rest of the team wasn't a dilemma.

"If there was an issue, it would be between his teammates and him, not the team and him," Evans said.

Meanwhile, reliever Eric Gagne had an ultrasound taken on his right groin Monday, after feeling tightness recently.

Gagne, who recorded a team-record 52 saves last season, had a bullpen session in the morning, then went for the test following that.

"I'm cleared," Gagne said. "I threw my

bullpen and didn't feel it. I went over there just as a precaution."

Right-hander Andy Ashby sat out drills for the second consecutive day with stiffness in his lower back.

"We held him out of activity today because we thought no activity was better," Tracy said

O'Neal a question mark for Shaq-Yao II

EL SEGUNDO — Shaq-Yao II might not come off as scheduled.

Los Angeles Lakers star Shaquille O'Neal is listed as questionable for Tuesday night's game against Yao Ming and the Houston Rockets at Staples Center because of a sore left knee.

O'Neal sat out Sunday night's 117-110 loss to the New York Knicks and didn't practice Monday.

He is also bothered by soreness in his right big toe.

"It will be a game-time decision," Lakers spokesman John Black said.

Kobe Bryant also sat out practice Monday, but is listed as probable for the game against Houston.

O'Neal said he wasn't close to being 100 percent.

"I want to win the whole thing, not just win games," he said. "I want to get right before I come back."

The three-time defending NBA champion Lakers are 23-15 with O'Neal this

season and 3-10 without him.

They have a busy week — after facing the Rockets, they play Wednesday night at Utah; Friday night at home against Portland, and Sunday night at home against Seattle.

Averaging 25.9 points and 10.6 rebounds, O'Neal underwent surgery on his arthritic right big toe Sept. 11 and missed the season's first 12 games, with the Lakers going 3-9.

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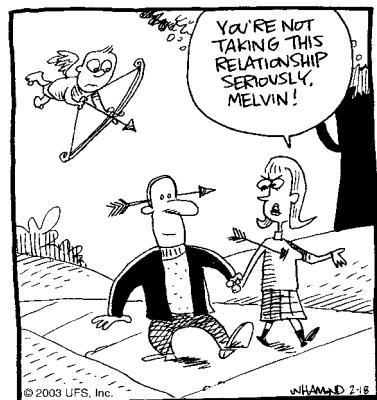
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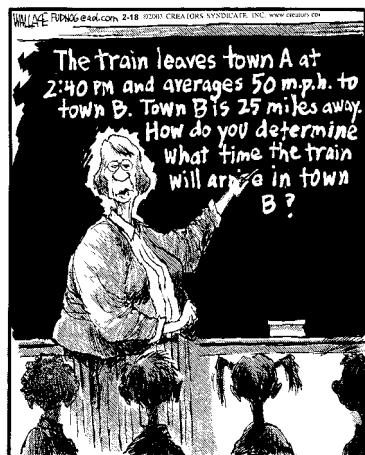
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 - 33 Dictionary word
 - 38 Obtained
 - 39 Bullfight call

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KEEP YOUR DATE STRAIGHT

Promote your event in the *Santa Monica Daily Press* Calendar section.
Fax all information to our Calendar Editor: Attention Angela @ 310.576.9913

SANTA MONICA SCENE °CALENDAR EDITION

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2003

TUESDAY

The Beach Cities Democratic Club will meet on Tuesday, February 25th at 7:30 pm at the David K. Hayward Center, 2000 Artesia Blvd. at Green Lane in Redondo Beach. Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month, all are welcome. Speaker, Asad Farhad, is an Afghani living in the USA who offers an overview of American policies since the Eisenhower administration and how the country got to where we are now. For more info, please call 310.545.7890.

Author Billy Ingram of "TV Party! Televisions Untold Tales," a book based on his award-winning web-site, will appear at a book signing event on Tuesday February 18 at 7:30pm at Barnes & Noble in Santa Monica. 1201 3rd Street Promenade. (310)260-9110

On February 18, the Ann Sagan Tuesdays with Books Program will review "The Angel and the Dragon" by Jonathan Arthuer. Presenter: Jonathan Arthuer.

On November 1, 1996, **Charley Aurthur** leaped to his death from a freeway overpass in Santa Monica. He was twenty-three years old. It was the culmination of five years of heartache for Charley and his family. Despite his family's love, intensive therapy and medication, nothing saved him from his encroaching sense of exhaustion and isolation. To be held at the Ken Edwards Center, 1527 5th Street, Room 100, Santa Monica. Begins at 1:30 pm.

Take One! Film and Theater Books presents "Audition Technique," a free Cold Reading technique demonstration by Audition Coach and Casting Director Craig Wallace. The demonstration will be followed by a Q & A about the casting process and the business of being an actor. Tuesday Feb. 18, 7:30 pm at the bookstore located at 11516 Santa Monica Blvd., four blocks west of the 405 freeway (between Butler and Colby) in the 2nd floor. For more info call (310)445-4050 or visit www.take1film-books.com.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS AT SMC'S EMERITUS COLLEGE. Santa Monica College offers free bereavement support groups in the summer session through it's Emeritus College, a widely praised program designed for older adults. Two support groups will meet Tuesdays on an ongoing basis. One group will meet from noon to 1:50 p.m.

and the other from 7 p.m. to 8:50 p.m. For information and registration, call Emeritus College at (310) 434-4306.

Crossroads Schools in Santa Monica invites local musicians (grades 3-7) to join orchestra rehearsals. Rehearsals are ongoing and are held each Tuesday of the school year, from 3:15 to 4:15. Students may join at any time. Cost is free, students must bring their own instruments. 1714 21st Street, SM. For more information please call (310) 829-7391

Santa Monica College Emeritus College Band invites adult musicians who play a band instrument to join the band. Rehearsals are held each Tuesday evening in the Band room at Lincoln Middle School, 14th and California Streets from 7pm to 9:15pm. Concerts are given during the year. For more information call (310) 474-5271.

WEDNESDAY

On Wednesdays this month, the Comedy Underground presents stand up comedy! Ted's Night @ 9 PM. 320 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica
For information or reservations call (310)451-1800!

Torah readings: Hosted by Rabbi Aaron Shaffier. This popular class examines the text of the Bible verse by verse with explanations. Every Wednesday at 12:15pm, 1111 Montana Ave. Fee is \$7 per class. Gourmet salad lunch is served. (310)488-7151.

Free Meditation Workshops sponsored by Sahaja Yoga. Every Wednesday night at 7pm in the Community Room at the Wilshire Wild Oats, 500 Wilshire Blvd. At 5th St. Open to all. (310)395-6443

Santa Monica Public Library presents Preschool Story Time, every Wednesday at 11:15am, 1343 Sixth Street. Stories for children between the ages of three and five who are ready to participate on their own. (310)458-8600

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.

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) 9:15. **The Hours** (PG-13) 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00. **The Guru** (R) 12:00, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15. **Kangaroo Jack** (PG) 12:15, 2:30, 4:45, 7:00.

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. **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. **The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers** (PG-13) 11:15, 3:00, 7:00, 10:45.

AMC THEATRE SM 7

1310 3rd Street
Shanghai Knights (PG-13) 2:20, 5:25, 7:55, 10:20. **Chicago** (PG-13) 2:00, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15. **Final Destination 2** (R) 2:15, 5:35, 7:50, 10:00. **Catch Me If You Can** (PG-13) 2:30, 6:50, 9:50. **Daredevil** (PG-13) 1:50, 3:00, 4:20, 5:25, 6:45, 7:50, 9:15, 10:05. **The Jungle Book 2** (G) 1:45, 3:35, 5:20, 7:10, 9:05.

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) 1:15, 4:15, 10:05. **The Quiet American** (R) 1:45, 4:20, 7:00, 9:55. **All the Real Girls** (R) 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00.

AERO THEATER

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



Implant under the scalp zaps away crippling headaches

BY LAURAN NEERGAARD

AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON — Teresa Lamesch endured a constant, incapacitating headache for almost two years. The slight touch of wind blowing against her forehead caused shocking jolts of pain. Bright sunlight or loud noises could make her retch.

Heavy-duty narcotics and every other treatment failed to help.

Then Dr. Sandeep Amin tried a last-ditch experiment. He hooked a tiny electrode to a needle and tunneled it under the skin by Lamesch's left eye, stopping atop the nerve responsible for her pain. Powered by a battery implanted near her collarbone, the device continually zaps that nerve with electric pulses — blocking the Illinois woman's pain.

"The minute he put it in, the pain was gone," says a grateful Lamesch.

An estimated 20 million Americans suffer severe headaches, and as many as 10 percent of them have intractable head or facial pain. Treatment after treatment fails. Some are true migraines, which stem from inside the brain, but others — mistakenly called migraines — result from damaged nerves along the face or scalp.

Now a few doctors are exploring how well nerve stimulators implanted in different spots along the head could rid some of that crippling, nerve-caused pain.

People feel pain when nerve cells pass signals from one to another until the "I'm hurting" message reaches the brain.

Doctors have long implanted electrodes along the spinal cord to block cer-

tain kinds of pain from the neck down by interrupting those signals. But the stimulator had to be placed above the pain site — so blocking pain in the back, legs or arms was doable, but not in the head.

Then came the discovery that stimulating head and facial nerves at skin-deep levels, not just directly against the spinal cord, could work. First doctors targeted the occipital nerve to alleviate whiplash-like pain or back-of-the-head headaches.

Now they're starting to target frontal headaches and facial pain, at the supra-orbital nerve just above the eye.

It sounds logical, but "it really was surprising" to headache specialists that this new use of the implants seems to work well, said Dr. Robert Levy, a neurosurgeon at Northwestern Memorial Hospital who has implanted stimulators in the foreheads of four people so far. The first two he treated have reached the two-year mark pain free.

Nerve stimulation "has done wonders

for this kind of a headache," agrees Amin, an anesthesiologist and pain specialist at Chicago's Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, who implanted Lamesch and another patient who suffered unrelieved headaches after brain surgery.

It's simple to implant. A battery lies under the skin by the collarbone, and a small wire runs up the neck and into the scalp. Two implants are needed if pain is on both sides of the head.

A magnet turns the electric current on or off. Turned off, pain resumes — but the implant is vulnerable to security devices like those in airports, and must be switched off until patients pass by.

Nerve stimulation for headaches is still highly experimental. But a handful of doctors have asked stimulator maker Medtronic Inc. to fund studies to prove how well it works for different kinds of head pain. Medtronic is considering a study, first, of occipital nerve pain.

A \$5,000 to \$10,000 implant sounds

extreme for headaches. But these are extreme cases: "I see patients who are significantly debilitated, on dozens of medications, with overwhelming medical bills," Levy says.

Levy and Amin doubt nerve stimulation would help true migraines. Instead, they hope to help people with the nerve-caused head or facial pain, whose options now range from narcotic painkillers — including implanted morphine pumps — to nerve-blocking injections into the spinal cord. Some even undergo attempts to surgically destroy the affected nerve.

Some, like Lamesch, fail all those options.

"I had stopped living," says the Wheaton, Ill., woman, who suffered pain in her legs and head after a tricky knee operation. A spinal cord stimulator stopped the leg pain so Amin finally adapted another one for her forehead. Now, she says, "I am bionic. ... I'm getting back on track."

Reptiles evacuated from pet store after blaze

By The Associated Press

SAN JOSE — Firefighters wound up chasing snakes and lizards around the floor of the Reptile Ranch Monday after a two-alarm blaze singed the pet store and killed many of its scaled occupants.

"There were some boa constrictors, and they had some good sized iguanas," said San Jose Fire Department Capt. Joseph Carrillo. "They were big lizards,

and you had to carry them with both hands."

Several of the smaller animals in cages on high shelves succumbed to smoke inhalation and burns. Others slithered out of their enclosures when cool water from the fire hoses broke through the hot glass containers.

The fire was quickly brought under control and some employees of the store

arrived to take control of the reptiles. The larger animals were lethargic from the smoke and were fairly easy to handle, Carrillo said.

There was no immediate damage estimate to the store. Reptile Ranch sells boas, dart frogs, monitor lizards, king snakes, corn snakes and other items for pets, according to the company's Web site.

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