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Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

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2 5 20 22 47
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FANTASY 5

5 6 9 13 27

DAILY 3

Daytime: 6 9 3
Evening: 9 5 2

DAILY DERBY

1st: 03 Hot Shot
2nd: 09 Winning Spirit
3rd: 11 Money Bags

RACE TIME: 1:49.46

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

In January, Rev. Clarence June Love, 83, pastor of the Assemblies of Jesus church in Bristol, Tenn., ejected sisters Reba Storey, 46, and Mary Steele, 64, from a service, rebuking them as possessed by demons because they were wearing blue jeans (in that Pentecostals believe that women should not wear pants). (Said Storey, "I'm glad I serve a God who can work through my pants.") The sisters were trying to visit with their 88-year-old mother, who allegedly was being kept away from them by a third sister, who is also Rev. Love's girlfriend. A few days later, a local judge urged the family to work things out.

TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1965, Stan Laurel — the "skinny" half of the Laurel and Hardy comedy team — died in Santa Monica, Calif.
In 1997, scientists in Scotland announced they had succeeded in cloning an adult mammal, producing a lamb named "Dolly." (Dolly, however, was later put down after a short life marred by premature aging and disease.)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

MARGARET MEAD
AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST (1901-1978)

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OPCC umbrella about to expand

Homeless services provider will take over at least one program from Salvation Army

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN — Santa Monica's largest provider of homeless services is expanding.

Ocean Park Community Center, which spends \$5.7 million a year helping homeless and other disadvantaged residents, this summer will take over at least one of two Salvation Army programs that operate out of the Big Blue Bus yards on Olympic Boulevard.

Beginning July 1, a shower, locker and laundry program called SWASHLOCK will fall under OPCC's control. Last week, Salvation Army officials asked that OPCC also take over a 110-bed shelter known as SAMOSHEL, saying it made sense to consolidate the programs under one agency.

"It's easy to forget that SAMOSHEL essentially was on loan to the Salvation Army, but all along we were aware that the structure, the land and the majority of funding belonged to the city of Santa Monica," said Major Paul R. Seiler, divisional commander of the Salvation Army for Southern California. "We believe the timing is right to hand the baton to OPCC. One agency overseeing the three programs makes the best management decision."

OPCC, which receives about \$800,000 in funding from City Hall each year, already has a presence at the bus yards. It spends \$900,000 annually to run an "Access Center" that provides 300 people a day with everything from food and clothing to mental health counseling.

Julie Rusk, human services director for City Hall, agreed with Seiler, saying OPCC was a natural choice to take control of SAMOSHEL. She said city staffers received notice that the Salvation Army intended to leave just days ago and were researching how to transfer control to another group.

"Our main concern is that the program continue to

See YARDS STICK, page 6

Schwarzenegger aligning with strange bedfellows

BY ERICA WERNER

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — When California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger nabbed an endorsement from Common Cause for his plan to redraw political district lines, some Democrats and open-government activists were dismayed.

How could the respected good government group sign on with a governor who's been criticized for his supercharged fund-raising? Why was Common Cause embracing a plan that's picked up little or no backing

See CAUSE FOR CONCERN, page 7

On the road to ruin



Devon Meyers/Special to the Daily Press

A woman walks down the middle of the Pacific Coast Highway on Tuesday after the road was closed to traffic. A mudslide just north of Topanga Canyon on the PCH on Tuesday forced the California Highway Patrol to close both lanes of the road to northbound traffic for several hours. CalTrans was on the scene cleaning up the mess throughout the day and working into the evening. Another slide at Big Rock and the PCH in Malibu on Tuesday closed southbound traffic in both lanes, according to the CHP.

Pico Youth Center students dialed into entrepreneur spirit

BY CHRISTINA WU

Special to the Daily Press

PICO NEIGHBORHOOD — Much of society expected Omar Tapia, Brian Jarguin and Cesar de la Torre to lead lives filled with gangs and violence. But the men have defied such predestined stereotypes and negative expectations by starting their own computer business.

The three twentysomethings started taking computer classes at the Pico Youth & Family Center more than a year ago. At the beginning, their computer skills didn't amount to much.

But recently, the trio formed The Computer Collaborative, a business that provides computer service and repair, video editing, production and printing services. The entrepreneurs serve mainly small businesses and residents within the Pico neighborhood, situated on the east-side of Santa Monica.

"It was one of those things that spring up on you ... like a good business idea," said de la Torre, 23. "I've had a couple dollars here and there, but nothing like computer work. I get \$75 an hour and I

See PLUGGED IN, page 6



Photo courtesy

Cesar de la Torre (left), co-owner of The Computer Collaborative, and mentor Sheldon Kretchman repair a computer at the Pico Youth & Family Center. De la Torre and two fellow students started the computer repair company after receiving training at the center.

Jacquie Banks

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The City of Santa Monica and State Senator Sheila Kuehl

invite youth, parents, clergy, neighbors, educators, youth workers, businesspeople, organizations – all who care deeply about the quality of each young life in Santa Monica to participate in a

Community Workshop on Gang Violence in Santa Monica

Saturday, February 26, 2005
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
John Adams Middle School
2425 16th Street

- Come together to seek common ground, craft true community solutions, and hear experts from the trenches reflect on proposed strategies to reduce gang violence.
- Panelists will include gang expert Blinky Rodriguez, educator Bill Martinez, behavioral scientist John McDonald, youth violence prevention expert Leah Aldridge and former State Senator Tom Hayden, author of *Street Wars and the Future of Violence*.

Come Together. Talk. Listen. Partner. Act.

To RSVP or for more information, call 310-458-8301 or visit www.StopGangViolence.smgov.net. Breakfast & lunch, child care (age 5 and up), Spanish translation, and free parking will be provided.

John Adams Middle School is accessible to persons with disabilities and is served by Big Blue Bus lines 8 and 11. To request a disability-related accommodation, please call (310) 458-8701 or TTY (310) 458-8696.

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Be imaginative, Aries

Santa Monica Daily Press

JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ You could be distracted a good part of the day. You are probably responding to the strong energy of the Full Moon. Though tempted to play ostrich, you cannot indulge this whim until you meet certain responsibilities. Tonight: Be imaginative.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ You are about to be tossed out of your comfort zone, as the Full Moon activates your social and personal lives. So much might be happening that you'll want to clone yourself. More importantly, enjoy the attention. Tonight: Choose whom you would most like to be with.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ You have a way of speaking your mind despite others' recommendations. You have a lot of ground to cover and a lot of people to touch base with. Stretch and juggle. You also might need to establish stronger boundaries. Tonight: Head home. You need a break.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Move from uptight to loose and easy. The Full Moon can challenge you. Today's stellar event tosses you into the limelight. Everyone wants you. Still, you need to touch base with someone or make an important call. Tonight: The hectic pace could continue.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ Move on key matters in the early part of the day. You could feel stretched financially, especially as you might want to buy a special item. If you tap into your creativity, you will bypass this hassle and find a less expensive but equally thoughtful gesture. Tonight: Pay bills first.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ The Full Moon in Virgo energizes you until you are like a racehorse at the starting gate. When you finally charge, others will have a difficult time keeping up with you. Some might be difficult and picky. Tonight: Bask in the rays of the Full Moon.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Use the daylight hours to network or push any projects ahead. Schedule a special treat for yourself today or in the next few days. The pressure could intensify during the day. You might need to do a quick yoga exercise or take a walk. Tonight: Vanish. Gaze at the Full Moon from your window.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★★ Your take-charge attitude pays off, though you might have to work very hard. By late afternoon, meetings turn into parties. You have so much to be happy about. Share good news with friends. Tonight: Don't forget a loved one.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ Do research yourself rather than delegate it. You could be a bit frustrated or disappointed by another's efforts. You know what you are looking for. Schedule a relaxing lunch, as you might work late or be out late. Tonight: Do what you must.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★★ Focus on one person and one situation at a time. You will help others relax and add to the quality of your communications. Detach if you hit a tough situation. Many people will make requests that feel like demands. Tonight: Think through a problem and allow yourself to be wrong.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ Others play their cards. You might be surprised at what comes down. Just don't commit to anything financially — even lunch could be more expensive than you'd anticipated. Let others treat. You don't always have to be Daddy Warbucks. Tonight: Be with your favorite person.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Clear out a project or complete as much work as you can. You will find that you are easily distracted more and more as the afternoon passes. Though you find a situation volatile, understand that you cannot control it. Tonight: Let others act out.

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LOCAL



It's in the can



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press
Santa Monica firefighters extinguish a fire that started in the bathroom in parking structure No. 5 on Tuesday.

By Daily Press staff

DOWNTOWN — Twenty firefighters from three Santa Monica fire stations responded to a bathroom fire here on Wednesday afternoon.

SMFD Battalion Chief Carl Bjerke said the bathroom fire in parking structure No. 5 on Fourth Street near Broadway was surprisingly difficult to contain, and spread

through a wall into a small maintenance office next door.

"A pretty well-involved bathroom fire, if you can believe it," Bjerke said. "This was pretty much completely gutted. Anything that could burn did."

The cause of the fire was under investigation.

Two investigators also responded to the fire, along with water and electrical workers, according to Bjerke.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

And no need to worry about late fees

By Daily Press staff

Even though Santa Monica's new Main Library is still months away from completion, the public can still access its online library 24 hours a day, seven days a week with its new Web site, www.smpl.org.

The Web site features a large collection of online resources now available through standard Internet search tools and has been developed to provide a user-friendly experience.

"Just as the library builds a physical collection of books, magazines, and media accessed through the online catalog, we subscribe to online databases covering a wide variety of topics," said Nancy O'Neill, who leads the library's collection development team.

"This online collection far exceeds what could possibly fit into a physical building, and it is always available, whether it's 1 a.m. Tuesday or Sunday at 10 p.m.," she added.

The online resources include thousands of digitized magazines, books, indexes and directories. A new "instant access" feature allows any Web site visitor to do a quick search or perform in-depth research with comprehensive online databases in business,

See BRIEFS, page 7

CAFÉ SPACE FOR LEASE

The City of Santa Monica is looking for a café operator for the new Main Public Library now under construction at 601 Santa Monica Blvd.

The café is located within the building's central courtyard and consists of approximately 750 sf. of interior space and up to 2,000 sf. for outdoor dining.

A mandatory pre-proposal conference and site inspection will be held on:
 Tuesday, March 15, 2005 at 3:30 P.M.

Proposal submissions are due no later than:
 Thursday, April 7, 2005 at 2:00 P.M.

For more information or to request a Request for Proposal (RFP) package, please call (310) 458-8763 or e-mail your request to: elana.buegoff@smgov.net



SURF REPORT

If you head out into the surf today, watch out for floating chunks of land once belonging to California, as well as viral strains and bacteria flushed down from somewhere east of Reseda. It's muddy. Tuesday saw a mix of NW and SW ground swell along with some southerly wind swell along the California coast. Conditions remain highly questionable but should start to improve today, as the next NW swell starts to arrive. The swell is from a high-latitude system that formed near the Aleutians a few days ago. Size is moderate as a result of its trajectory with chest- to shoulder-high sets expected.

Write us at wood@smdp.com
 and tell us what the surf is doing today at your local break.

Today the water is:

59°

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	12:13	2.8	1:41	-0.4	6:11	5.0	8:31	3.6
SUNDAY	12:54	2.5	2:10	-0.5	6:52	5.3	8:47	3.7
MONDAY	1:26	2.2	2:35	-0.6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TUESDAY	1:56	1.9	2:59	-0.7	7:59	5.6	9:22	4.0
WEDNESDAY	2:26	1.6	3:21	-0.6	8:29	5.6	9:40	4.2
THURSDAY	2:58	1.4	3:43	-0.4	9:00	5.5	10:01	4.3
FRIDAY	3:28	1.2	4:05	-0.2	9:37	5.3	10:23	4.5

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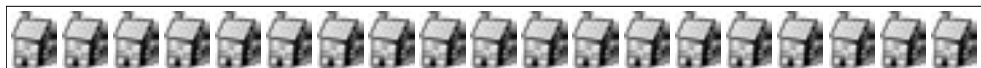
The  Line

Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky urged local politicians last week to consider restricting one lane on each side of Wilshire Boulevard for buses only. He said it works in West LA and it's the only way to reduce congestion on the roads.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know, "Would you support closing a lane on each

side of Wilshire for buses only? Why or why not?"

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your responses in the weekend edition. Please try to limit your comments to a minute or less. It might help to think first about the wording of your response.



Thinking about buying a home?

The question is...

ARE YOU READY?

The Santa Monica Council of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), along with its partners Chase Home Finance and Freddie Mac is hosting a Homeownership Seminar aimed at understanding the components involved in homeownership such as credit, personal financial management, and the mortgage process.

Date: Saturday March 12, 2005
 Time: 9:00 AM - 12 PM
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OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Splintered by Fisher's closing

Editor:

It remains puzzling that a business such as Fisher Lumber, netting, according to your article, \$12 million to \$13 million annually, would simply close its doors (SMDP, Feb. 16, page 1). Less puzzling, of course, is the loss of a landmark and a tradition. A top problem in Santa Monica, from the national chains clogging the Promenade to the permit parking everywhere, is the changing face of the city. Ken Genser's gooey comment that "This is a wonderful day for the people of Santa Monica" because of the city's acquisition of Fisher's lot could only have been made by a promoter or a politician. They're not making any more large pieces of land, Genser said.

They're not making any more full-service lumber yards in Santa Monica anymore, either, Councilman Genser, and now there are none. Whereas we already have Memorial Park, perhaps it's time the city live up to that resentful "People's Republic of Santa Monica" shibboleth of the '80s.

That simply reflected the landlords' anger at an honorable and American institution — rent control. Now the city has the chance to make the socialist charge real by running Fisher's itself. There'd be no complaints from competition. The city's razing the business anyway. Imagine what all that profit could do for the city's expenditures. Perhaps some of the income could go to parking structures in major business areas, providing parking for employees and patrons, and relieving residents in permitted areas from their excuse for excluding the rest of us from full use of the public streets in front of their homes. "Sometimes progress isn't progress," the outgoing Fisher manager, Eric Jorgensborg, was quoted as saying. Personally, I'm not calling the closure of this reliable business with the familiar employee faces and the lot jammed with contractors' trucks every morning progress at all. Regress, maybe.

Michael Jondreau
Santa Monica



Puzzle inside an enigma: Bush absurdities continue



INCITES

BY ED SILVERSTEIN

Being right has its drawbacks.

Some months ago, I wrote several columns suggesting that President Bush's Christian-centric rhetoric and agenda along with Mel Gibson's historically flawed movie "The Passion of the Christ" would renew U.S. anti-Semitism. Most readers felt I was being paranoid.

But last week, the L.A. Times reported that neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups are openly recruiting new members and trying to recast themselves as mainstream political groups with radio commercials, billboards, commuter train ads and leaflets. Groups such as the National Alliance, whose founder advocated "herding Jews" and "race mixers" into cattle cars and abandoning them in old coal mines," are operating in such diverse states as Florida, Nevada, Utah, Nebraska, Alabama and New Jersey. According to experts, and the groups themselves, their strategy is working and their numbers are rapidly growing.

Even more disturbing is a report by ABC's "Good Morning America" that Jewish cadets at the Air Force Academy are the victims of systematic anti-Semitism. Incidents include verbal abuse, hindered advancement and prevention of religious worship.

One Jewish cadet tells of being confronted by a fellow classmate, one who had no doubt seen Gibson's "Passion," who demanded to know how it felt to have killed Christ. Fortunately, the Jewish cadet was not tortured into a confession.

The victims claim that the anti-Semitism — as well as bigotry of all non-Christians — is not restricted to other cadets, but is being promoted by the instructors, officers and possibly all the way up to the Pentagon.

So don't be surprised if the military soon enacts a "don't ask, don't tell" policy for Jewish soldiers.

A puzzle, wrapped up in an enigma, surrounded by a paradox with a low IQ: The policies of the Bush Administration often defy explanation.

At the same time that corporations are eliminating employee pensions in record numbers, Bush decides to undermine Social Security by cutting benefits and shifting them to risky personal investment accounts. In other words, taking the "safety" out of safety net.

Yet, Bush has all but ignored the Medicare crisis, which is in far more dire straights than Social Security at least, in part, because Bush lied to Congress about the cost of his prescription drug program.

And as corporations slash and burn employee health benefits, their Republican buddies, in both the Federal and State governments, are cutting Medicaid benefits to the poor. The groups that are most often affected are the elderly and disabled.

I guess that's what the GOP means by "compassionate conservative." Here in the blue states we call it selfish, insensitive and downright mean.

To delay or be Delay, that is the ques-

tion: Gov. Schwarzenegger would like to stir things up by taking the process of redistricting out of the hands of state legislators and assign the task to a panel of retired judges. The Governor insists that such a move would make elections more competitive and result in more centrist candidates.

I agree, in principle with the governor, provided that there was some system to insure that the judges were selected fairly and were less partisan than the legislative body they were replacing.

One Jewish cadet tells of being confronted by a fellow classmate, one who had, no doubt, seen Gibson's "The Passion," who demanded to know how it felt to have killed Christ. Fortunately, the cadet was not tortured into a confession.

Where I have a serious problem with the governor's plan — or scheme — is when he would like to initiate the change.

For years, principled state politicians have respected the convention of redistricting only after a new census, which occurs every 10 years. This prevented the turmoil of whipsaw redistricting with each new legislative election and provided some national stability.

That all changed when Tom Delay, the house majority leader who has been cited on three occasions for ethics violations and is the subject of a criminal investigation, ignored the accepted norms for Republican political gain.

Delay — who has consistently lied about his involvement — masterminded an unethical power grab by redistricting only a couple years after the census in order to take advantage of a new Republican majority in the state legislature. By combining disparate districts miles apart and connected by strips of land no wider than a country road, Delay unfairly switched four Democratic congressional seats to Republicans.

When Texas Democrats fled the state in an attempt to block the unscrupulous plan by depriving the state legislature of a quorum, Delay illegally used federal government agencies to try to track them down.

If Schwarzenegger wants to avoid the appearance of being as unprincipled as the reprehensible Delay, then he would be wise to insist that such a policy take effect only after the next census. Or at the very least, make our reform contingent upon Texas doing the same.

Otherwise, the governor will be nothing more than another opportunistic, gerrymandering, partisan shill.

(To reach Ed Silverstein, e-mail him at edincites@aol.com.)

COMMENTARY



GUEST COMMENTARY BY HENRY A. WAXMAN

Social Security fix: Just pay it back

(Editor's note: This is the first column in an ongoing series written by Congressman Henry A. Waxman (D-Santa Monica) on issues being discussed in Washington that impact local residents.)

President Bush has proposed the biggest transfer of wealth in history. He plans to use trillions of dollars in contributions to the Social Security Trust Fund to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy and other Administration spending priorities. And he doesn't want to pay the money back.

The Social Security system works by requiring Americans to make regular contributions to a trust fund. Currently, with more workers contributing to the trust fund than retirees receiving benefits, the Social Security Trust Fund should be accumulating a surplus. If the Bush Administration would leave the trust fund untouched, there would be no Social Security "crisis."

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the trust fund is projected to accumulate a surplus of \$5.8 trillion by 2020. Combined with future employer and employee contributions, full benefits could be paid for decades to come. The CBO, for example, estimates that without any changes to the system there would be enough assets to pay growing benefits until at least 2052.

The real threat to Social Security is that President Bush and Republicans in Congress have raided the trust fund to pay for tax cuts and soaring government spending. Over the last four years, the Republicans have taken almost \$500 billion from the trust fund to pay for tax cuts, the war, and other government expenses. According to the latest estimates from the CBO, the Republicans plan to divert an additional \$2.2 trillion from the trust fund over the next decade.

In Los Angeles alone, \$64 billion paid into Social Security for workers' retirements will be spent by the government over the next 10 years. That's \$15,000 per each worker in the 30th Congressional District.

President Bush and his congressional allies do not want to pay this money back. Instead, they are saying the system

is in "crisis," and that privatization and steep cuts in benefits are needed to "save" Social Security.

Read what President Bush said just this month about the Social Security Trust Fund: "Some in our country think that Social Security is a trust fund — in other words, there's a pile of money being accumulated. That's just simply not true. The payroll taxes going into the Social Security are spent. They're spent on benefits and they're spent on government programs. There is no trust ... And we'd better start dealing with it now."

In his State of the Union Address in 1998, President Clinton proposed that Congress "reserve every penny of the surplus" to ensure the long-term viability of Social Security. This gave rise to the concept of a "lock box" that would protect the Social Security Trust Fund from federal spending. And President Clinton, with the cooperation of Congress, delivered on his promise. By 2000, the last year of his presidency, the federal government was not using a single dollar of the trust fund to pay for government operations.

Five years later, the lock box has been broken and the trust funds stolen. Instead of talking about how to save the trust fund, President Bush presumed in his 2005 State of the Union Address that it's already spent, warning that "in the year 2027, the government will somehow have to come up with an extra \$200 billion to keep the system afloat."

President Bush and the Republican leadership in Congress are the trustees for people's hard-earned Social Security contributions. We need to start asking them some blunt questions. What have they done with the surplus? Why have they squandered the retirement nest egg of American families? And why weren't they more careful or responsible?

The answer to the problems facing Social Security is not to cut benefits or privatize the system. That's a betrayal of millions of honest families who have played by the rules and trusted President Bush and the Republican leadership to do the right thing.

Instead, the answer is three simple words: "Pay it back."

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LOCAL

OPCC may run all three programs at city yards

YARDS STICK, from page 1

operate,” she said.

SAMOSHEL receives a \$418,000 annual grant from City Hall, while SWASHLOCK benefits from \$112,000 in city funding, according to Rusk.

Rusk said the transfer of power likely can happen without a vote of the Santa Monica City Council, as there is a clause in the Salvation Army’s contract that allows them to recommend another social service agency and OPCC is a vetted agency that has already worked with City Hall.

The Salvation Army has run SAMOSHEL for more than 10 years. Capt. Brian West, a spokesman, said the

group hopes to focus on other areas of need in Santa Monica and will continue to provide emergency assistance, and family and youth programs at the Santa Monica Corps Community Center on Fourth Street; a substance abuse program at the Adult Rehabilitation Center on 11th Street; and low-income housing for seniors at the Silvercrest on Fifth Street.

John Maceri, executive director of OPCC, said he was very interested in possibly taking over SAMOSHEL, but added it would be a big undertaking.

“From our perspective, what we would want is to spend some time with Salvation Army and the city,” he said. “We need to really understand how the program operates. What are the resources there? On a

go-forward basis, what is the city’s idea for the program?”

“There’s a lot of focus right now at looking at homeless services and how the system works and functions,” added Maceri, during a Tuesday interview. “SAMOSHEL is a city-funded program on transportation property and, on a go-forward basis, the city is going to have to decide how they see the beds at SAMOSHEL being used in the continuum of care.”

All city-funded social service groups are tied into what’s dubbed the continuum of care, a network that tracks the progress of service recipients.

Before it agrees to accept control, OPCC needs to learn more about the par-

ticulars of the SAMOSHEL program, Maceri added. To make an informed decision, OPCC officials would need to tour the SAMOSHEL facility and review its programs and finances.

Finally, before OPCC can begin running the property, Maceri said it will need to secure the funding. He expressed particular concern over the fact that an unknown portion of SAMOSHEL’s current revenue comes from federal grants — grants that recently have diminished.

“Does it make sense form an operational standpoint?” Maceri said. “SAMOSHEL is a large program and we have a lot on our plate already. Is this the right time and does this make sense? Those are the issues we have to evaluate.”

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Pico students take skills to marketplace in style

PLUGGED IN, from page 1

said, ‘Oh, this works for me.’”

Each of the men are equal business partners, while performing different functions within the company. In addition to service and repair, Tapia is responsible for designing and printing business cards and brochures; Jarquin’s function is graphic design and de la Torre is marketing director. The partners plan to service the Pico neighborhood and gradually expand to other low-income locales.

The Pico Youth & Family Center, funded partially by City Hall, is a non-profit organization that offers classes and support groups for youth ages 16 to 24 in the Santa Monica area. Many of the youths are classified as “at risk,” having had previous run-ins with the law or hailing from single-parent homes. The focus of the center’s programs is to provide youths with skills and tools necessary to give them a sense of value, self-esteem and the ability to compete in the workforce.

Tapia, Jarquin and de la Torre met while taking a computer technician training class at the center. And by all accounts, their story is a successful one as the aim of the class is for the participants to learn how to repair computers and then take their knowledge to develop entrepreneurial skills.

In 2000, approximately one out of five families in the Pico neighborhood were single-parent households, according to a RAND Corp. study. De la Torre’s mother raised him as a single parent. His stepfa-

“We learn together and I teach them about business because it can’t happen overnight. You learn from experience.”

SHELDON KRETCHMAN
Computer training teacher

ther was a drug addict.

Each of the three devote the majority of their time to the seven-day-a-week business, which in itself keeps them out of trouble. They have never been in gangs, but admit they have been affiliated with gang members. Many of their friends have not been so fortunate.

“A lot of my peers are either in drugs, got kids or jail ... Four of my close friends are dead,” said de la Torre. “For change, you got to want to change. Unfortunately, a lot of guys I went to high school with don’t want to change.”

Sheldon Kretchman, 69, teaches computer training classes at PYFC. Now he also serves as a mentor to the three businessmen.

“We learn together and I teach them about business because it can’t happen overnight,” Kretchman said. “You learn from experience.”

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‘Cause’ for concern: Not all groups star-struck

CAUSE FOR CONCERN, from page 1

from other nonprofit groups?

“Common Cause is star-struck and so they’re lending the governor their brand,” said Jamie Court, president of the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights, a Santa Monica-based consumer group that’s among Schwarzenegger’s chief critics. “They’ve given him more credibility than he deserves for a plan that is clearly a power grab.”

But like many political relationships, the endorsement was, in part, a marriage of convenience. Schwarzenegger got what amounted to a Good Housekeeping seal of approval for his proposal, and Common Cause got a high-profile advocate for a key issue that can be hard to put in the spotlight — nonpartisan redistricting.

“We are all looking for ways to put the important issues we care about more squarely in the public dialogue, and it doesn’t mean that every time we get all the policy we want out of that,” said Chellie Pingree,

Common Cause’s president. “But we go behind the scenes and work in the state legislatures, or at the referendum level, or with our citizen activists, to move the debate when the public is paying attention.”

The plan, endorsed by Common Cause at a joint Washington press conference with Schwarzenegger on Thursday, would take the job of drawing congressional and state legislative district boundaries away from lawmakers and give it to a panel of retired judges. The redistricting would happen next year, instead of after the 2010 census, which would be the normal timeline.

Schwarzenegger believes the plan would lead to more competitive districts and to lawmakers who better represent voters. The way district lines are currently drawn in California protects incumbents — of 153 state legislative and congressional seats up for grabs in November, none changed party hands.

Members of both political parties have concerns about the plan. Republicans fear redrawing district lines in Democrat-leaning California could cost the party House

seats. Democrats suspect Schwarzenegger’s motives because of the example of Texas, where a GOP redistricting plan cost four Democrats their seats in November.

Advocacy groups have different reasons for not signing on to Schwarzenegger’s proposal.

Groups including the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Center for Governmental Studies in Los Angeles, and FairVote in Takoma Park, Md., all have problems with the plan. Among them: redistricting should happen only every 10 years and Schwarzenegger’s plan doesn’t adequately provide for competitive districts with diverse voters.

Common Cause endorsed the plan only after Schwarzenegger and the proposal’s author, Assembly Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy, agreed to amendments including expanding the panel of retired judges and establishing diversity as a criteria for selecting the judges.

The changes were enough for Common Cause to decide Schwarzenegger’s plan was good enough to go with. Common Cause officials said they had no problem joining with Schwarzenegger, even though not everything he does is to their liking. The group’s California chapter is even considering submitting a friend of the court brief to support the state’s Fair Political Practices Commission.

BRIEFS, from page 3

science, health, biography, genealogy, literature, and full-text magazine and newspaper articles. Users also are able to access a wealth of web resources in the arts, history, education, sciences, health, business, finance, consumer information, and other subjects selected by librarians. Santa Monica librarians can be contacted electronically through e-mail or “Ask Now,” an interactive reference service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Visitors to the Santa Monica Public Library Web site can get a webcam view of the progress of the construction of the new Main Library, as well as information about library branches, collections, services, and programs.

A new direction for homeless vets

By Daily Press staff

New Directions, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing assistance and job training to homeless veterans is celebrating the grand re-opening of its Veteran’s Village Diner on Feb. 25 with music from reggae artist Big D, performing from noon to 3 p.m. The diner is located on the VA campus at 11303 Wilshire Blvd. in building 306 and specializes in home-style cooking prepared by veterans who have completed culinary arts training.

A highlight at the diner is its Jazz Barbecue Friday Series that features home style barbecue, coleslaw, potato salad and cornbread with the accompaniment of live music. Priced from \$4.50 to \$6.50, each entrée includes a beverage as well as a complimentary slice of cake.

New Directions, Inc., recently named recipient of the 2004 Sustainable Quality Award by the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce and the city of Santa Monica, is a long-term drug and alcohol treatment program providing housing, food, clothing, counseling, job training and psychiatric services for more than 800 homeless veterans a year. The agency operates four residential rehabilitation facilities, including the 156-bed Regional Opportunity Center, the 43-bed New Directions North for homeless veterans with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders, and two homes in Mar Vista for homeless women veterans.

School District stars climb Stairway to stardom

By Daily Press staff

Local students are climbing the stairs to musical stardom.

The talents of the local school district’s music students and teachers will be showcased at the 56th annual Stairway of the Stars show on March 10-11 at 7:30 p.m. at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium.

The guest conductor this year is Stephen Tucker Ph.D., director of Orchestras at University of California, Irvine. Tucker developed a varied and successful career as a conductor, pianist, orchestrator, and composer. His formal music training has been pursued at institutions around the world, including the Vienna Conservatory, Austria, and the University of California at Los Angeles. His orchestrations can be heard on recordings and films, with such orchestras as the Slovak Radio Symphony and the Hungarian National Philharmonic, Budapest.

The performing ensembles will include the All-District Honor Orchestra (Elementary), High School Jazz Ensemble, and Middle and High School Orchestras. A finale will include nearly all 1,000 performers.

Tickets go on sale on March 4 and can be purchased at the district’s professional development and learning center at 2802 Fourth St., or by calling (310) 450-8338, ext. 79538.

CLARE opens another piece of serenity

By Daily Press staff

A Santa Monica-based drug and alcohol center has branched out.

The CLARE Foundation recently opened its new Wallis Annenberg Women with Children Center at 3939 Tilden Avenue in Culver City. The center provides six to 12 months of housing for women who are participants in its residential women with children sober living program. The new center focuses on the recovery, health and social needs of both mother and child. The Annenberg Foundation donated a \$750,000 for the purchase of the center. The CLARE Foundation has a center on Lincoln Boulevard in Santa Monica and is a nonprofit organization with 10 programs that address every frontier of addiction.

Gems honor ‘gem’ of a doctor

By Daily Press Staff

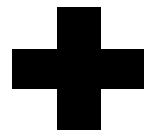
The Santa Monica Gems awarded Lori Wilson, surgical oncology fellow at the John Wayne Cancer Institute, with its Business & Professional Award at the 30th Annual Black Experience Program last week at John Adams Middle School.

The annual event recognizes outstanding African-Americans in Santa Monica in business, community service, creative arts, athletics and youth achievement.

In addition to her clinical research and treatment of breast cancer and melanoma, Wilson is actively involved in community-based programs including the Center for Healthy Aging LA Witness Project and the Women’s Ministry at Double Rock Baptist Church in Compton.

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NATIONAL

‘Minutemen’ to patrol border to curb crossings

BY LARA JAKES JORDAN
 Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Intent on securing the vulnerable Arizona border from illegal immigrant crossings, U.S. officials are bracing for what they call a potential new threat this spring: the Minutemen.

Nearly 500 volunteers have already joined the Minuteman Project, anointing themselves civilian border patrol agents determined to stop the immigration flow that routinely, and easily, seeps past federal authorities. They plan to patrol a 40-mile stretch of the southeast Arizona border throughout April when the tide of immigrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border peaks.

“I felt the only way to get something done was to do it yourself,” said Jim Gilchrist, a retired accountant and decorated Vietnam War veteran who is helping recruit Minutemen across the country.

“We’ve been repeatedly accused of being people who are taking the law into our own hands,” said Gilchrist, 56, of Aliso Viejo, Calif. “That is an outright bogus statement. We are going down there to assist law enforcement.”

Officials concede the 370-mile Arizona border is the most porous stretch on the U.S.-Mexico line. Moreover,

recent intelligence show that al-Qaida terrorists are likely to enter the country through the Mexico border, James Loy, the deputy secretary of the Homeland Security Department, said last week.

“Several al-Qaida leaders believe operatives can pay their way into the country through Mexico, and also believe illegal entry is more advantageous than legal entry for operational security reasons,” Loy said in written testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Of the 1.1 million illegal immigrants caught by the U.S. Border Patrol last year, 51 percent crossed into the country at the Arizona border. The agency increased the number of agents in the Tucson sector, which has its largest staff, from 1,700 to 2,100 over the last 18 months.

But that number is going to grow to try to plug the remaining holes, said Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Robert C. Bonner. About 10,000 federal agents now patrol the 2,000-mile southern border, he said.

Officials fear the Minuteman patrols could cause more trouble than they prevent. At least some of the volunteers plan to arm themselves during the 24-hour desert patrols. Many are untrained and have little or no experience in confronting illegal border crossings.

“Any time there are firearms and you’re out in the

middle of no-man’s land in difficult terrain, it’s a dangerous setting,” said Bonner, whose agency is keeping a close eye on the Minutemen plans.

“The Border Patrol does this every day, and they are qualified and very well-trained to handle the situation,” he said. “Ordinary Americans are not. So there’s a danger that not just illegal migrants might get hurt, but that American citizens might get hurt in this situation.”

Civilian patrols are nothing new along the southern border, where crossing the international line is sometimes as easy as stepping over a few rusty strands of barbed wire. But they usually are limited to small, informal groups, leaving organizers to believe the Minuteman Project is the largest of its kind on the southern border.

It may also prove to be a magnet for what Glenn Spencer, president of the private American Border Patrol, described as camouflage-wearing, weapons-toting hard-liners who might get a little carried away with their assignments.

“How are they going to keep the nutcases out of there? They can’t control that,” said Spencer, whose 40-volunteer group, based in Hereford, Ariz., has used unmanned aerial vehicles and other high-tech equipment to track and report the number of border crossings for more than two years.

“There’s a storm gathering here on the border, and there are conditions ripe for some difficulty,” he said.

The border agents agree.

The Minutemen “clearly have every reason to be upset with the federal government for abandoning them,” said National Border Patrol Council President T.J. Bonner, no relation to the commissioner.

But “if anything goes wrong, God forbid, someone does injure an agent, this government is going to be turning both barrels on them and come after them with a vengeance,” he said.

Gilchrist said the Minutemen are under strict orders to merely identify and follow illegal border crossers and alert federal agents. They should not interact with the immigrants except to offer food, water or medical care. If there’s a couple of “bad apples” who turn up in the group, Gilchrist said, they will face prosecution if they step outside the law.

Something dramatic needed to be done to curb the years of crime, property damage and trash dumping caused by the border crossings, Gilchrist said.

“Things are out of control” he said. “And they’ve been out of control for decades.”

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NATIONAL



High court not bridging the gap in Utah clash

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to review a National Park Service policy of asking visitors to avoid walking near Utah's Rainbow Bridge out of respect for American Indian religion.

Justices let stand a lower court ruling that dismissed a 2000 lawsuit charging the policy at the world's largest natural bridge unconstitutionally endorses religion. Two visitors, Evelyn Johnson and Earl DeWaal, had alleged they were forced to leave the area and threatened with arrest several times.

The Denver-based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last March that Johnson and DeWaal suffered no personal injury and thus lacked standing to file suit. As a result, the court did not consider the merits of whether the policy violated the First Amendment separation of church and state.

Navajos, Hopi and other Indian groups consider Rainbow Bridge a sacred site that should be approached closely only during their traditional religious ceremonies. A prehistoric altar once stood near the arch, but it was destroyed in the 1930s.

The Denver-based Mountain States Legal Foundation originally brought suit in 2000 on behalf of members of the Natural Arch and Bridge Society, who claimed the Park Service was illegally restricting the rights of visitors to the bridge, which is 290 feet high and 275 feet wide.

Society members contended that park rangers went beyond the rule's voluntary nature.

Trial and error: Columbine parents unable to go it alone

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to review whether the parents of a teen killed in the Columbine High School shootings can back out of a settlement with the gunmen's parents and others.

Without comment, justices let stand a lower court ruling that rejected Michael and Vonda Shoels' claim that they had accepted the settlement because of a mistake made at their lawyer's office.

The parents had argued that the Denver-based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling unfairly took away their right to go to trial over the shootings.

Isaiah Shoels was among 12 students and a teacher killed by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold in the shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado on April 20, 1999. The gunmen then took their own lives.

In 2001, the Harris and Klebold families agreed to pay about \$1.6 million to more than two dozen families of victims and survivors, and the families agreed to drop lawsuits alleging the teens' parents let them amass weapons used in the massacre.

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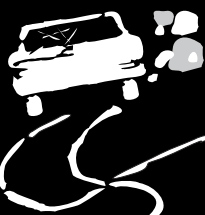
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Options to consider when facing a foreclosure



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BY THOMAS KHAMMAR & BRENT PARSONS

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Should your home go to sale, you could lose any equity that you have put into it. You can try to refinance and pay off the delinquent mortgage or lien. You can try to sell the home yourself

Going into foreclosure is an unfortunate event. However, it's important to be aware of the facts and know about the process in order to avoid losing your home in dire situations.

and keep any equity that you can gain out of the sale. You can try your odds in the bankruptcy courts and hope to receive an adjusted payment schedule.

If you do not succeed at bringing your account current or renegotiating the lien, the home will continue toward the sale. This means that the lender or lien holder will attempt to try to sell the home and satisfy your debt to them. They try to sell the home with a minimum bid of your delinquent amount on the lien. This satisfies their past due balance. The purchaser would then be required to pay off the remaining lien or loan amount. If they bid over the delinquent amount and the lender receives a payment that exceeds your debt to

them, this is your equity and they may pass it on to you.

Once the home sells at the courthouse, it belongs to the new owner. Your items will be removed and stored if they are still there and the locks will be changed. It is in your best interest to secure your belongings outside of the home prior to the sale.

Going into foreclosure is an unfortunate event. However, it's important to be aware of the facts and know about the process in order to avoid losing your home in dire situations.

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Sold	1440 23RD ST #215	SANTA MONICA 90404	
Santa Monica	SqFt: 622	List Price: \$359,000	Bed: 1
02/18/2005	HOD: \$225	Sold Price: \$350,000	Bath: 1.00

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13001 ROSE AVE , LOS ANGELES 90066

Completely renovated Mar Vista Hill home with view toward ocean Large entry Hall Large brand new kitchen with granite counter and new cabinets Vaulted ceiling in living room with fireplace Step down Family room with fireplace 3 bedrooms downstairs Wood and metal bannister Master bedroom and bathroom suite upstairs: special spa tub with skylights, balcony with view, 2 car detached garage with alley access



\$625,000

12506 WAGNER ST , LOS ANGELES 90066

A curb appeal exquisite 1 story home in quiet neighborhood; 2bdrm, 1.75 ba; classy living rm w/bay window & delightful cherrywood color hardwood flr; kitchen w/garden window, granite counter top w/custom built cabinets trimmed petite board; cute charming dining area surrounded w/ vertical window in designer painted wall; flagstone driveway, 1car garage; copper plumbing throughout, 200 amp for your future spa, 1yr old roof; lush landscaping front/back yard w/sprinklers; wood deck off dining area.



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\$925,000

3457 ROSEWOOD AVE , LOS ANGELES 90066

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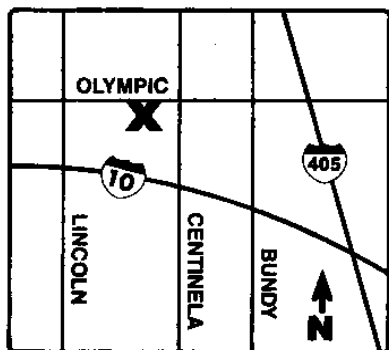
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Investors appreciating second home tax breaks



DAYS ON THE MARKET
 BY JODI SUMMERS

Because of the rapid rate of residential appreciation, some real estate investors feel that one of the strongest areas of real estate investment are rental houses.

Think about it. If you bought in Las Vegas three years ago, your investment would have doubled in value. Same with various other quiet towns like Gilbert, Ariz., Henderson, Nev., Ventura, Calif., and Bethlehem, Penn. If you become one of the millions of U.S. taxpayers with a second residence that you use part of the year, there are tax benefits galore.

To get the benefits, you'll need to have simple tax records for your second home. With records to rely on, the U.S. government now offers four different tax scenarios for your second home.

"If you itemize your income tax deductions, your vacation or second home mortgage interest and property taxes will always be deductible," said real estate columnist Bob Bruss. "But there can be additional tax breaks, depending on how much time you personally use the property."

Scenario No. 1: You do not personally spend time in your second home

If you have had it rented or available for rent for essentially all of 2004, then your second home is classified as a rental property. State the rental income and expenses on Schedule E of your tax returns.

If you have not lived in the property, you can deduct most of all the relevant expenses — mortgage interest, property taxes, insurance, homeowner association fees, utilities you paid, repairs and depreciation. You also may deduct reasonable travel expenses to inspect — but not occupy, except for repair work — your rental property. Hawaii anyone?

You'll notice as you calculate your Schedule E rental property deduction that it will probably be a "tax loss," mostly due to the non-cash depreciation deduction.

"If you earned below \$100,000 adjusted gross income in 2004, you can deduct up to \$25,000 of your annual tax loss from your rental property," Bruss said.

Tax losses exceeding \$25,000 may be suspended and used in a future tax year, or when you sell your second home. The rules are different if you are a real estate professional.

Scenario No. 2: You rented your property for less than two weeks

Regardless of what price you got for your property, if you rented out your second home for less than 14 days in 2004, that rent is 100 percent tax-free income and accountants note that it need not be reported to the government.

On top of this gift, use a Schedule E tax form to deduct your mortgage interest, property taxes and any uninsured casualty loss expenses, such as water or mud damage.

Scenario No. 3: Your personal use of your second home is under 15 days or 10 percent of the days rented.

If you need to make reservations to use your second home, there is no limit to your tax loss deductions against your ordinary taxable income, except for the \$25,000 annual passive loss limit explained in scenario No. 1. Report rental income and deductible expenses on Schedule E of your tax returns.

Scenario No. 4: You use your second home more than 14 days or 10 percent of the rental days

Report rental income and expenses on Schedule E of your tax returns, as usual. But any resulting tax loss in this tax category cannot be used to offset your ordinary taxable income. Unused losses are suspended for future tax deduction benefits, as explained in the first scenario.

Accountant Pat Dickey notes that when deducting second home expenses under the fourth scenario, there is an order — mortgage interest first; property taxes second; uninsured casualty losses third; operating expense fourth and depreciation as fifth.

If the mortgage interest, property taxes, and uninsured casualty losses exceed the rental income, you can itemize these remaining deductions on Schedule A.

In any scenario, you'll notice that your second home is not a sensational tax deduction benefit, but it can help you defer some money, and your property is no doubt appreciating in market value, which means you'll have a nice chunk of change if you decide to sell.

As an added bonuses, if you move into your second home for at least two of the last five years before you sell, an individual can take up to a \$250,000 tax deduction, and a couple can deduct \$500,000.

Obviously, if any of these scenarios suit you, consult your tax advisor for the whole truth.

(Jodi Summers is director of the investment division at Boardwalk Realty in Santa Monica. For your real estate needs, e-mail Jodi Summers at jodis@boardwalkrealty.com, or call (310) 309-4219.)



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A tightening apartment market prompts tenants to weigh options



IN YOUR SPACE

BY CHRISTINA S. PORTER

Demand for apartments from investors has been exceptionally strong, and product for sale scarce.

As a result, prices have climbed sharply in recent years, up 17 percent on average in 2004. In the past decade, prices have nearly tripled — up 285 percent — and cap rates, the ratio between the purchase price and the net operating income, have fallen as low as 6.5 percent range.

A number of factors have combined to drive this strong demand, including deflated prices in the mid-1990s; a tightening apartment market in the Los Angeles Basin; low interest rates; a large amount of capital needing to be placed; and low rates of returns from alternative investments. The outlook is for continued appreciation, although at a slower rate than in recent years.

Reasons for slowing include: apartment prices are no longer deflated; interest rates are widely expected to climb in 2005 and '06; and returns from alternative investments may pick up. However, a downward correction in prices is not expected.

Factors that support continued appreciation of at least a moderate pace include projected strong demand for apartments from tenants, driven by a strengthening economy and by very high housing prices; a deep and prolonged shortage of construction relative to growth in demand; construction-cost increases estimated at 10 to 15 percent per year in recent years; residential-land prices that have climbed to the \$150

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1620 26th St	Office	2/16/2005	3,192	\$3.30/fs
2600-2800 Colorado Ave	Office	2/14/2005	122,505	\$2.85/fs
1101-1113 Montana Ave	Office	2/17/2005	2,924	\$3.50/fs*
2716 Ocean Park Blvd	Office	2/14/2005	1,191	\$2.25/mg
2825 Santa Monica Blvd	Office	2/17/2005	12,513	\$3.25/fs*
2915 Santa Monica Blvd	Office	2/16/2005	820	\$2.50/mg
325 Wilshire Blvd	Office	2/14/2005	4,20	\$3.00/mg

to \$200 per square foot range in urban areas; and growing levels of capital that need to be placed. In 2004, the pool of occupied units grew by approximately 0.8 percent in Los Angeles County, 1.6 percent in Orange County and 1.3 percent in the Inland Empire.

Vacancy rates dropped in Los Angeles County to the low 3 percent range, and in the Inland Empire and in Orange County to approximately 4 percent. Those are low rates, generally reflecting that it's a landlord's market. Effective rents grew by approximately 5 percent in Los Angeles County, 4 percent in Orange County and 6 percent in the Inland Empire. The outlook is for even greater tightening. Net absorption is projected to increase, driven by strong employment and household growth. Demand for rental units also will be stimulated by very high housing prices in the Los Angeles Basin and any increase in mortgage rates. Construction will be restrained by competition for available land from for-sale units, high land and construction costs, and an increasingly onerous entitlement process. Vacancy rates are projected to fall to the low 3 percent range in Los Angeles County and into the high 3 percent range in Orange County and

the Inland Empire. Any new construction that will come on-line in 2005 will be for high-end product. While that particular segment may soften slightly, the mid-and-low-rent segments will remain under-supplied. This will place upward pressure on rents, although the actual amount of any increase may be limited by the fact that renters in the Los Angeles Basin are already paying an exceptionally high percentage of their income on rent. While rents are projected to climb and vacancy to drop, developers still will be challenged to deliver product that pencils financially, given the steep increase in land and construction costs in recent years. There likely will be a shift toward larger complexes so as to take advantage of economies of scale in delivering product. We also will likely see a number of tenants forced to consider neighborhoods that they previously would have overlooked, in order to find housing that they can afford.

(The above is an excerpt from NAI Capital's 2004 End Of Year Market Report. Christina S. Porter is in the business of leasing and selling office and industrial buildings she can be reached at (310) 806-6104 or at cporter@naicapital.com.)



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NATIONAL



Working class neighborhood defends homefront

BY PETE YOST

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Residents trying to hang onto their homes in a working class neighborhood of New London, Conn., are waging a battle in the Supreme Court over their city government's attempt to seize property for private economic development.

Susette Kelo and several other homeowners filed a lawsuit after city officials announced plans to bulldoze their residences to clear the way for a riverfront hotel, health club and offices. The residents refused to move, arguing it was an unconstitutional taking of their property.

The case's outcome will have significant implications for so-called eminent domain actions.

There have been over 10,000 instances in recent years of private property being threatened with condemnation or actually condemned by government for private use, according to the Institute for Justice. The group represents the New London residents who filed the case.

The issue revolves around whether a government is serving a public purpose when it uses its power of eminent domain to take land. The Fifth Amendment pro-

hibits taking private property for public use without just compensation. The New London case is not about the amount of compensation being offered, but whether the government can take the property at all.

Over the years, the Supreme Court has deferred to the decision-making of elected state and local officials.

The court said in 1954 that it is legal for urban renewal to encompass non-blighted commercial buildings in a blighted neighborhood. In 1984, the court upheld Hawaii's land reform law that broke the grip of large landowners, with property being taken and then resold to others.

More recently, many cities and towns have been accused of abusing their authority, razing nice homes to make way for parking lots for casinos and other tax-producing businesses.

New London, a town of less than 26,000, once was a center of the whaling industry and later became a manufacturing hub. More recently the city has suffered the

kind of economic woes afflicting urban areas across the country, with losses of residents and jobs. City leaders say the private development will generate tax revenue and improve the local economy.

"The undisputed facts regarding the steady deterioration of New London's economy from the 1970s onwards demonstrate the dire need for such a development project," the city told the court.

The New London neighborhood that would be swept away includes Victorian-era houses and small businesses that in some instances have been owned by several generations of families.

Among the New London residents in the case is a couple in their 80s who have lived in the same home for over 50 years.

City officials envision a commercial development that would attract tourists to the Thames riverfront, complementing an adjoining Pfizer Corp. research center and a proposed Coast Guard museum.

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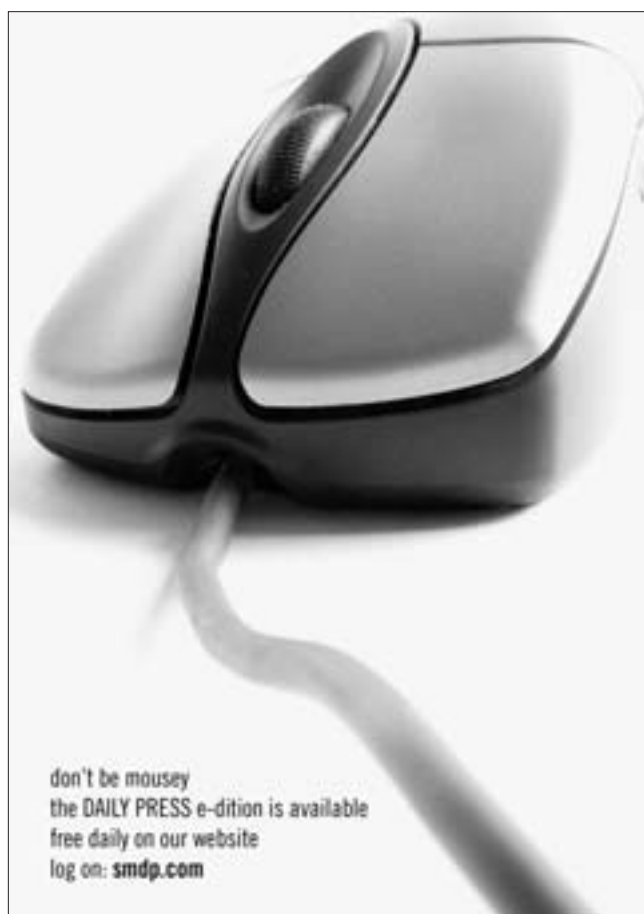
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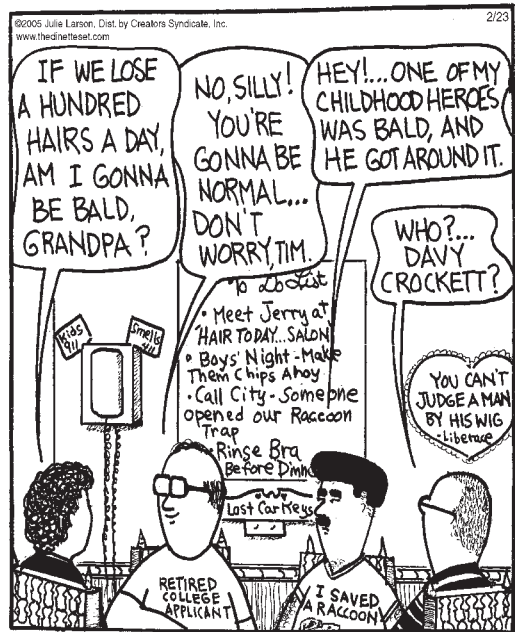
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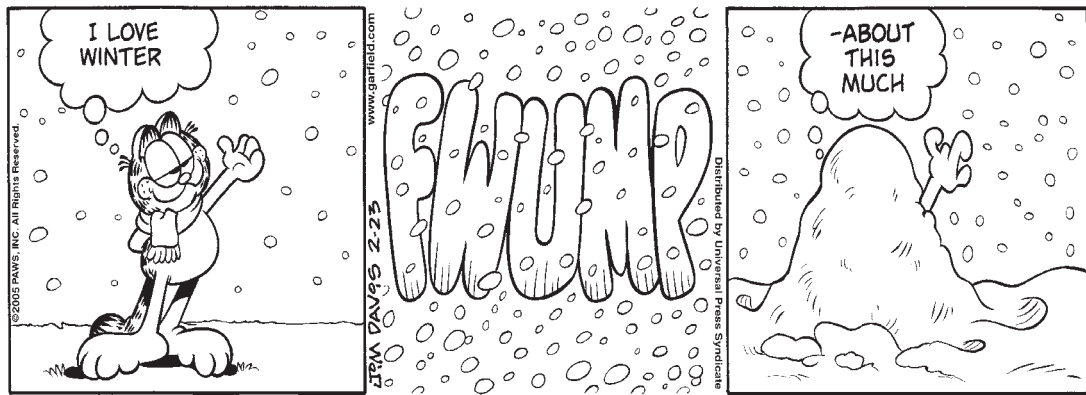
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38 Rafting worry
41 Survey
42 Charm
43 Capital of Italia

- 44 Napa Valley business
45 Acceptable

DOWN

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8 Blvd. cousin
9 Sawbuck
10 Skill

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Yesterday's answer

- 16 Save
18 Cabin material
19 Sign of confusion
20 It beats scissors
21 "My Way" writer
22 Wrath
23 Shrek, for one
25 Not quite closed
29 Fuse together
30 Slack
33 Piquant
34 Dossier
36 — mater
37 Stage doings
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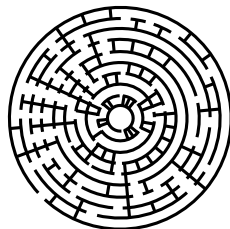
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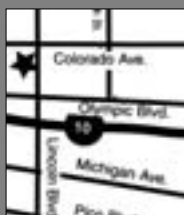
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