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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2011
Volume 10 Issue 94



Santa Monica Daily Press

We have you covered

BONDS' TRIAL TAKING SHAPE
SEE PAGE 16

THE HUMP DAY ISSUE

Planning begins for Measure Y transfer

BY ASHLEY ARCHIBALD
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL Elected officials and staff from City Hall and the school district met last Friday to begin conceptualizing how to honor voters' wishes to give half of Measure Y funding to Santa Monica and Malibu schools.

Measure Y, approved in November by just over 60 percent of voters, will impose a half-cent transaction-use tax beginning April 1, 2011. A companion measure called YY demonstrated voters' desire for half of that money to be given to the local school district.

The question then became how.

"We think there are legal barriers between revenue sharing between taxing agencies," said City Manager Rod Gould.

That means that City Hall cannot simply hand what is expected to be between $5 million and $6 million to the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District without a mechanism that ensures that the district isn't getting something for nothing.

In that spirit, Mayor Richard Bloom, Mayor Pro-Tem Gleam Davis and Gould from City Hall met with Board of Education President Jose Escarce, Vice President Ben Allen and Superintendent Tim Cuneo to determine an outline of what such a tool might look like.

The group met under the auspices of the annual meeting required by the Joint Use Agreement, which guarantees the district $7.8 million this year alone from City Hall for the use of elementary and middle school sports facilities.

It may be a sign of things to come — to

SEE Y PAGE 11



Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

TICKET TO RIDE: **People hop on the Big Blue Bus Rapid 3 line at the corner of Broadway and Fourth Street on Tuesday afternoon.**

Public hearings to decide fate of Big Blue Bus lines

Some lines are on the chopping block, while some services may be extended

BY ASHLEY ARCHIBALD
Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN Big Blue Bus officials will conduct a series of public meetings this week to gather input on proposed changes in service that involve eliminating some lesser-used lines and stops and extending service on others.

The first meeting will be at the Ken Edwards Center at 6 p.m. today.

The changes are being considered for the BBB's five year plan, which is heavily impacted by both the arrival of the Expo light rail line and different patterns of use along bus routes.

The proposals are the result of a line-by-line survey conducted by Transportation Management and Design Inc., an international firm with offices in Carlsbad, Calif., which is also providing planning services for the Expo light rail line.

Big Blue Bus is required to conduct the survey every three years, said Linda Gamberg, spokeswoman for BBB.

"What that means is we actually contract surveyors to go to every stop and ride every bus," Gamberg said.

SEE BBB PAGE 10

Low pay, big risks for fuel haulers in Afghan war

BY KATHY GANNON
Associated Press

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan On the dashboard of his truck, Nowsher Awan keeps a colorful little box and a toy puppy biting on a candy cane. He says he bought the knickknacks in a market because "they just made me happy."

He's a humble man, this 30-year-old Pakistani in his torn plastic sandals, making a 435-mile (700-kilometer) journey that will take him through the Taliban insurgency to deliver 15,600 gallons (60,000 liters) of fuel for the U.S.-led war effort in Afghanistan.

It takes 100 such truckloads to keep the armies moving for a single day.

SEE WAR PAGE 14

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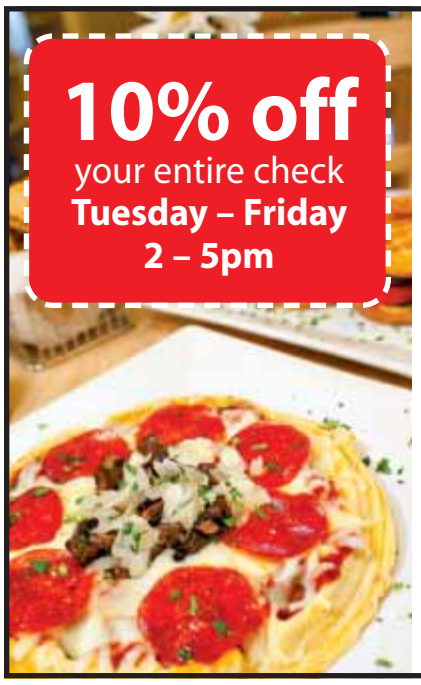
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What's Up Westside

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA

Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Stretching at the beach
Annenberg Community Beach House
415 Palisades Beach Rd., 9 a.m. — 10 a.m.
Yoga at the Beach House is a great place to focus your mind, life your spirits and strengthen your body. Classes are held Wednesday, Friday and Sunday mornings. Free, open to all. For more information visit www.annenbergbeachhouse.com.

Bonus book discussion
Main Library, Community Room
601 Santa Monica Blvd., 6 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.
Trained volunteers will lead a free public book discussion of the novel "The Girl Who Fell From the Sky," a finalist for Citywide Reads 2011. Library staff liked the novel by Heidi Durrow so much that they want to share it with you. Durrow will be on hand to talk about the book.

Singing the blues
Hotel Casa del Mar
1910 Ocean Way, 7 p.m. — 10 p.m.
The incomparable Barbara Morrison sings jazz and blues. This event is free and open to all. For more information call (310) 581-5533 or visit http://hotelcasadelmar.com.

Planning Commission
City Council Chambers
1685 Main St., 7 p.m.
The Santa Monica Planning Commission will discuss extending the hours that alcohol can be sold at outdoor dining areas at Santa Monica Place from midnight to 2 a.m.

Thursday, March 3, 2011

Get connected
Ocean Avenue Seafood
1401 Ocean Ave., 7 a.m. — 9 a.m.
Start the day off right with a little networking with the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce and the Santa Monica Daily Press. Over 40 members will be attending the breakfast. Make new contacts and get a goodie bag. Both members and prospective members are encouraged to attend. To register, visit http://smchamber.com or call Shelly at (310) 393-9825 ext. 10. Cost: $20 in advance for members, $25 at the door.

Mastering dance
SMC Main Campus, Gym 104
1900 Pico Blvd., 10:30 a.m.
The Santa Monica College Dance Department is proud to present the spring "Masters of Dance Series," an eclectic series of master classes and lectures that this semester will include styles ranging from street dance to the Lewitzky Technique. Today's class is "Articulating Bodies: Language, Motion, Meaning." Independent dance artist/scholar L. Martina Young will lead a lecture/movement writing workshop exploring the body as image-maker and the poetic relationships between gesture and language. Seating is on a first-arrived basis. For information, call (310) 434-3467 or go to www.smc.edu/dance.

You are what you eat
Main Library, Children's Activity Room
601 Santa Monica Blvd., 4 p.m. — 4:45 p.m.
Learn about the food you eat with the Santa Monica Farmers' Market. For teens in grades 6 to 12.

To create your own listing, log on to smdp.com/submitevent

For help, contact Daniel Archuleta at 310-458-7737 or submit to editor@smdp.com

For more information on any of the events listed, log on to smdp.com/communitylistings





Ray Solano *news@smdp.com*

BLISS: **Diego Jimenez (rear) and best friend Kenneth Corrales take a break during a shopping spree at Best Buy in Culver City last Saturday to play a video game. Jimenez, 12, who battled a rare form of blood cancer, was treated to the shopping spree by the Make A Wish Foundation.**

Dreams do come true

Make A Wish Foundation sends 12-year-old on shopping spree

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Editor in Chief

PICO NEIGHBORHOOD Maria Solano will never forget the day she was told by doctors that her young son was suffering from non-Hodgkin's Berkins lymphoma, a very aggressive blood cancer.

While the doctors said Diego Jimenez had a strong chance of survival, nothing seemed to comfort Solano.

"I felt like somebody just punched me in the stomach," she said. "All I kept thinking was how is this possible. I immediately had thoughts of, 'Is my son going to die?'"

That was in July of 2009.

Today Diego, now 12, has recovered thanks to treatment he received at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center. The kid who once slept through a baseball game and complained of severe headaches is now playing with friends and enjoying life.

SEE **WISH** PAGE 11

For the Arts puts on a show for kids

Only 200 tickets left to see America, Venice and Mr. Mister frontman

BY ASHLEY ARCHIBALD
Daily Press Staff Writer

SAMOHI Only 200 tickets remain for the eighth annual For the Arts Benefit Concert, to be held Saturday night at Barnum Hall.

The Santa Monica High School choir, orchestra and jazz band will play with musical guests America, Venice, Richard Page of Mr. Mister and one mystery guest in a show-stopping performance to raise money for arts programs in local schools.

Promotional materials for the event were designed by Samohi student Gabrielle Bellini, who won a competition between students in the digital design class to create

SEE **CONCERT** PAGE 10

Officials: Harmful bacteria found at Playboy Mansion

BY SHAYA TAYEFE MOHAJER
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES The bacteria that cause Legionnaires' disease were found at the Playboy Mansion during an investigation into an illness that affected about 200 people who attended an event there last month, a health official said Tuesday.

Other infection sources have not been ruled out as the cause of the illness because the bacteria Legionella is common in moist places, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health director Dr. Jonathan E. Fielding said.

"We are still considering several possible causes of illness," Fielding said in a prepared statement.

County health officials opened an investigation Feb. 11 after attendees of an Internet conference reported symptoms mostly consisting of fever, chills, malaise and coughing.

Playboy did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The DOMAINfest Global Conference took place Feb. 1-3 with events at several hotels, including Santa Monica's Fairmont Miramar, and a fundraiser at the Holmby Hills estate where Playboy founder Hugh Hefner resides.

Health officials have not ordered occupants to leave the mansion. About 700 people from 30 countries attended lectures and workshops at the conference.

Officials in car-centric LA approve bike lane plan

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES Los Angeles officials have approved a plan that aims to get residents of the notoriously auto-centric city out of their cars and onto bicycles.

The bicycle master plan approved by the City Council Tuesday sets a long-term goal of some 1,680 miles of interconnected bikeways and calls for 200 miles of the new bike paths to be added every five years.

Bike enthusiasts have lobbied vigorously for the plan, arguing that sharing streets with cars, as most do now, is too dangerous.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa also became a fierce advocate for designated bike lanes last year after he shattered an elbow in a bike accident with a taxi cab.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Heroes, not saboteurs

Editor:

The "confidential" memo SMMUSD Superintendent Tim Cuneo sent to school board members labeled three district parents as saboteurs ("SMMUSD supe warns against 'sabotage'" page 1, Feb. 23).

He is 100 percent wrong.

In 2007 special education parents told the City Council that the school district imposed gag orders on parents' agreements with the district. Parents were forbidden by contract (!) from discussing with anyone what services their children received. Incredible!

In addition, the district had gagged its former chief financial officer. That agreement prevented the CFO from telling the city manager or the council anything about the district's finances. And yet we were investing millions of dollars per year in the district. Equally incredible.

Tricia Crane was the leader of the special ed parents.

She and other parents described a culture of conflict, intimidation, and expensive legal battles between these families and the district. Convinced the district would not change its practices without outside intervention, these parents appealed to the council for help.

Bob Holbrook, the late Herb Katz, the late Ken Genser, and I voted to withhold city funds until the gag orders ceased. We also asked for an independent review.

That review, called the Barber report, confirmed what Tricia and the parents had said. And it called for systemic changes in the district. In short, it showed the parents were right and the district was wrong.

It took courage for these parents to speak up against the entrenched education bureaucracy. Many people said they were "hysterical women."

Those people were wrong. And Mr. Cuneo is wrong too. I say that with some regret because I had thought Mr. Cuneo was using better judgment than his predecessor.

Ms. Crane and her friends were trying to improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens. Their motive was not, as the memo says, "to sabotage the district's efforts" to receive city funding.

The parents who came forward are not saboteurs. They are heroes.

Bobby Shriver
City Councilmember

✉ WHAT DO YOU THINK?

■ Send letters to **editor@smdp.com**

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Meredith Pro Tem

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

When every day is a holiday

WHILE IT MAY VERY WELL BE TRUE THAT everyone loves a parade, I wonder how much they'd really be appreciated if people had to live through the equivalent of a marching band, cheering squad, decorated floats, fireworks, cannons, confetti, costumes, cotton candy and fried dough in their living rooms all day, every day.

Surely any employee of the Magic Kingdom could answer that, but so, too, can members of my family. For nearly seven months we've been celebrating every possible red-letter day nonstop and somewhat against our will.

My daughter didn't understand special occasions until her second birthday. Before then we showered her with all the appropriate embellishments on all the relevant dates, and what we always received in return were blank stares. But ever since last summer we have accumulated each passing holiday and now commemorate them collectively and continually virtually on a daily basis.

About a month before her birthday were the birthdays of three of her friends, at which time something finally clicked in her little mind. All of a sudden my daughter got that birthdays mean cake, presents, candles and being serenaded, and all of a sudden got how much she enjoys cake, presents, candles and being serenaded.

But what she didn't quite comprehend — and still doesn't — is that her birthday lasts for just one day. It didn't help that we ate her leftover cake for about a week, which meant that each time she had another slice she expected a candle and a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday."

The balloons from her party have long since deflated, so she tries to grab one whenever possible in the checkout line at the supermarket. When the presents were all opened, she assumed, and continues to assume, that any box or envelope she stumbles upon are hers for the tearing.

"Big pwesent!" she squeals wide-eyed at the sight of a manila envelope.

To this day, she requires my husband to sing "Happy Birthday" to her and whichever doll or book accompanies her on the potty each morning.

By late September, Halloween was being observed in addition to her birthday. Her bumblebee costume arrived early, and five months later, she still hasn't taken it off, although at this point, the wings and wand (yes, of course bumble bees carry wands) have seen better days. We're still reading "Dora's Halloween Adventure" at least twice daily. If we hadn't hidden Barney's "Halloween Party" DVD, there's little doubt it would be permanently burned on our TV screen.

Between the trick-or-treating, apple picking and various local harvest fairs and festivals, I can't really blame her for being enamored with the traditions of autumn. However, that doesn't mean I want to see another candy corn or round orange squash ever again. She panics when we read "Cinderella," midnight strikes and the coach turns back into a pumpkin. Not because it means the heroine might never see the Prince again, but because the pumpkin gets smashed during the transition.

"Oh no! It bwoke. Poor Halloween pu'kin," she cries.

After Halloween was Thanksgiving, followed shortly thereafter by Hanukkah, which lasted not one, but 90 crazy nights and counting, as we're still reading "My Very Own Dreidel" regularly. To this day she routinely wishes us a happy Hanukkah, as well as a happy Christmas and happy New Year. Both the dreidel song and "Jingle Bells" are sung with regularity by my daughter, generally over breakfast, but each have also been known to make it into the bath time medley.

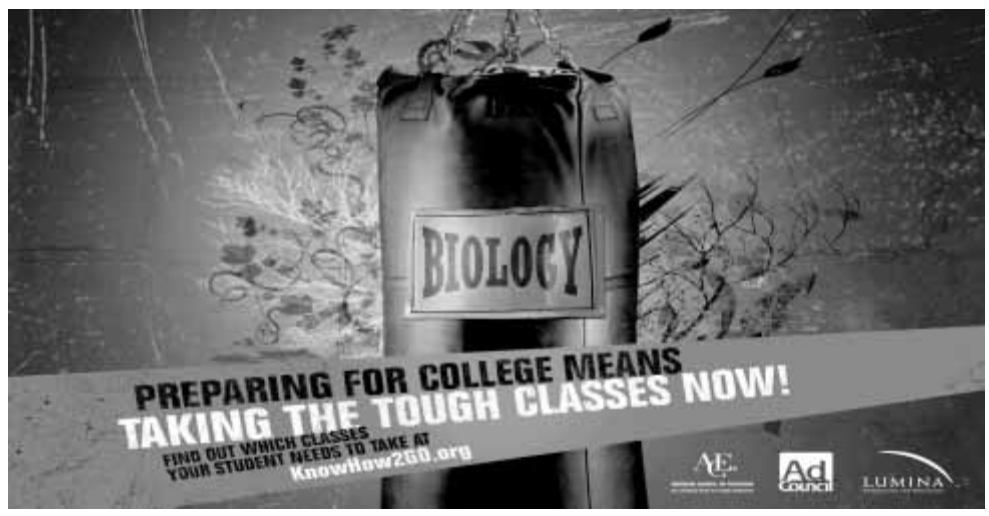
Valentine's Day was over two weeks ago, yet she's still clutching the cards she received from her grandparents and cousins and insists on taking them all to bed, especially if they're dripping with glitter.

Last Monday I could have sworn she was humming "Hail to the Chief." I would worry about what Fat Tuesday will bring if she didn't already go topless two hours before bedtime each night. There's no doubt in my mind she'll dig deep into the Irish part of her heritage and do a jig while hunting for a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow on March 17.

On Friday night I made Shabbat dinner (thanks to a rush of Jewish pride I experienced following Charlie Sheen's anti-Semitic rant), and after I said the blessing over the candles, she said, "Happy Hanukkah!" and tried to blow them out like birthday candles. Which was one step better, I think, than during Hanukkah, when she'd say, "Happy Birthday, Hanukkah!" each night after we lit the candles.

I worry a little that she'll be disappointed when her birthday rolls around again and realizes we're only celebrating a single occasion, but I suppose that's nothing a cake decorated with images of hearts, ghosts, reindeer, latkes, shamrocks, American flags, fleur-de-lis, turkeys and Mt. Rushmore can't fix.

More at MeredithCarroll.com.



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The Taxman

Jon Coupal
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Time for taxpayers to take a seat at the negotiating table

A RECENT EDITORIAL CARTOON SUMS UP the tension between average taxpayers and government employee unions. It shows two guys sitting at a bar. One, head in hand and looking glum, is labeled "public sector" and he says to his companion, "They're trying to cut our pensions." The other fellow, labeled "private sector," replies, "What's a pension?"

If this bar is in California, where the official unemployment rate is 12.5 percent not including those who have completely given up looking for work, Mr. Private Sector might also ask, "What's a job?"

Over time, how much of the public views those who work for government has changed from "respected civil servants" to "militant special interest" dedicated to preserving and expanding their "entitlements" at any cost to taxpayers. In this case, perception is reality.

This change has taken place in large measure since, Jerry "The Enabler" Brown, in a previous incarnation as governor, signed legislation granting government workers collective bargaining rights. The result has been that the public employee unions have been so eminently successful that California now has the highest paid government workers in all 50 states.

And the government employee unions have invested their power in a way that makes them the most powerful political force in the state. Here's how it works. The state extracts dues from the paychecks of workers and turns the money over to the unions. Union bosses then invest this cash, amounting to tens of millions of dollars, in the election campaigns of favored candidates — mostly Democrats — for the legislature and statewide office.

When it comes time to negotiate a new employment contract, the interests of government workers are represented on both sides of the table because the politicians, who owe their careers to the unions, are anxious to please by agreeing to generous raises along with lavish pensions and benefits. For those in the private sector, this would be the equivalent of being able to hire your own boss before you ask for more pay.

As a result, most of the members of legislature — who should be looking out for the taxpayers' interests — have become a wholly owned subsidiary of the unions. If the economy sputters, reducing tax revenue and limiting government's ability to maintain the high-life for employees, these lawmakers look to extract more from already struggling taxpayers. Tax increases guarantee money continues to flow to the unions and back to the campaign treasuries of the agreeable politicians. Howard Jarvis called this part of the "tax, tax, tax, spend, spend, spend, elect, elect, elect" cycle that works to the detriment of taxpayers.

TAXES ARE PLENTY HIGH ALREADY AND TAXPAYERS DON'T WANT TO BE MADE POORER SO GOVERNMENT WORKERS CAN LIVE MUCH BETTER THAN THEY DO.

Those who complain are accused of being anti-union by those who benefit from this system of insider dealing. They try to hide behind the more positive image of private sector unions that negotiate with private business at arm's length until there is a mutually satisfactory agreement. But the two types of unions have about as much in common as the mobster who sells you "protection" and your insurance agent.

However, there is a glimmer of hope. Efforts are under way to insert genuine taxpayers' representatives into the process of bargaining with the government employee union bosses as well as the union acolytes in the legislature.

State Sen. Tony Strickland and freshman Assemblyman Don Wagner have formed the Taxpayers Caucus in the legislature dedicated to limiting taxes in our already high-tax state and protecting Proposition 13, with the goal of creating a united front on critical taxpayer issues. The caucus is open to all comers, but so far all of the 30 lawmakers who have joined are Republicans. That Democrats are not rushing to join is not surprising, considering the position on taxation of their union sponsors. However, the dozen Republicans who have not joined up are giving taxpayers pause. They are not only falling under suspicion from the voters who elected them, they are missing an outstanding opportunity to brand their party with a position on which the majority of Californians agree: Taxes are plenty high already and taxpayers don't want to be made poorer so government workers can live much better than they do.

JON COUPAL is president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association – California's largest grass-roots taxpayer organization dedicated to the protection of Proposition 13 and the advancement of taxpayers' rights.

The Q Line

Restoring public trust

City Manager Rod Gould recently told the City Council that the Santa Monica Police Department mishandled the investigation of school board member Oscar de la Torre. Police leadership promise changes to its practices in the wake of an independent investigation of the de la Torre probe.

So, this week's Q-Line question asks:
Do you think these actions will improve the public trust in the department, or are they window dressing?

Contact **qline@smdp.com** before **Friday at 5 p.m.** and we'll print your answers in the weekend edition of the Daily Press. You can also call **(310) 458-7737 ext. 102.**


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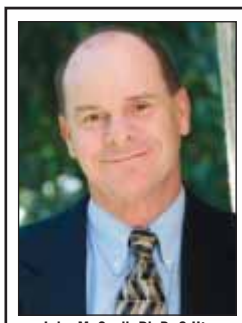

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Gas company memo said valves were of little value

BY JOAN LOWY & MATTHEW BROWN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON Officials for a California gas company involved in a deadly pipeline explosion last September acknowledged Tuesday that four years before the accident they rejected installing valves that could have automatically shut off or remotely controlled the flow of gas.

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. employees were questioned at a National Transportation Safety Board hearing about a 2006 memo that said installing the valves would have "little or no effect on increasing human safety or protecting properties."

Gas engineer Chih-hung Lee, author of the memo, said he considered only industry studies, not government studies, in reaching his conclusions. Industry studies, he said, found that most of the damage in gas pipeline accidents occurs in the first 30 seconds.

However, when the pipeline ruptured on Sept. 9 underneath a suburban San Francisco subdivision, gas continued to feed a pillar of fire for an hour and a half before workers could manually shut off the flow. Eight people were killed, many more injured and dozens of homes destroyed.

Investigators pointed to a 1999 Transportation Department study that warned that there is a significant safety risk as long as gas was being supplied to the rupture site and operators lacked the ability to quickly close manual valves.

"Any fire would have greater intensity and would have greater potential for damaging surrounding infrastructure if it is constantly replenished with gas," the government study said. "The degree of disruption in heavily populated and commercial areas would be in direct proportion to the duration of the fire."

Coroner's reports indicate at least five of the people killed in San Bruno were trying to flee when they died.

Keith Slibasager, PG&E's manager of gas system operations, said it took control room employees about 15 minutes following the explosion to figure out what had happened and would have taken about another 15 minutes to shut off the gas using automatic or remotely controlled valves. That's an hour less than it took in San Bruno.

Instead, about 12 minutes after the explosion, PG&E's dispatch center sent an off-duty employee to investigate the reported explosion, but he wasn't qualified to operate the manual valves needed to shut off gas feeding a huge fire that consumed homes, the safety board investigator Ravi Chhatre said.

It took 30 minutes after the rupture for the company to dispatch a crew capable of isolating the pipeline and 90 minutes for them to crank the valves shut, stopping all gas, he said.

PG&E officials acknowledged that after Lee's memo they made no effort to further explore the valves. They said that since the disaster, the company has begun a pilot project to install a dozen of the valves this year and study their effectiveness.

PG&E "is committed to expanding the use of these valves where appropriate and is working with industry experts to study the best use of those valves," the company said in a statement distributed during the hearing.

But Slibasager said there are potential safety drawbacks to the valves. When closed, they could cause widespread gas outages in the region that would put out pilot lights in homes and other buildings, he said. That poses the risk that when gas is turned back on, it could build up in buildings in which pilot lights are not relit right away, he said.

A month after the San Bruno explosion, PG&E wrote California regulators that are about 300 manual valves over the company's 565 miles of pipeline. The company estimated the cost of replacing or retrofitting them with automatic or remote valves at $100,000 to $1.5 million per valve, depending on how difficult the valve installation is.

Lee's memo was at odds with a 1996 report by another PG&E employee, Bob Becken, who was assigned to study the effectiveness of remote-control valves.

In a memo released by the NTSB, Becken said he had "no concerns" about installing remote-control valves. "There are existing places within PG&E's gas transmission system where we should consider installing them in the future," he wrote.

The safety board has recommended the devices for decades to industry and regulators for use on gas distribution lines, which are larger than the transmission line that ruptured in San Bruno.

The utility has said it installed approximately 60 remote-control valves over the past several decades across its 6,700 miles of transmission lines. That averages about 1 valve for every 111 miles of pipeline.

The hearing also focused on PG&E's erroneous listing of the San Bruno pipeline as a "seamless" line, considered stronger than pipelines that have been welded together. It was discovered after the accident that welded pipe was used in San Bruno and that the welds were inferior.

PG&E said in other documents released by NTSB that its personnel improperly relied on records from the utility's accounting department to determine the type of pipeline, rather than engineering documents that showed the correct type.

There were numerous indications coming into PG&E's control room in the hour leading up to the San Bruno explosion that there was a problem with the utility's transmission system. A power interruption at a PG&E terminal 39 miles from San Bruno in Milpitas had caused gas pressure levels to spike in some pipelines in the area.

By 6:02 p.m. — just nine minutes before the blast — a gas control operator identified in control room transcripts only as "Larry" reported those pressure problems had spread far beyond Milpitas.

"We've got a major, major problem at Milpitas and we've overpressured the whole peninsula," the gas control operator said.

The explosion itself seemingly went unnoticed by those in the control room until a dispatcher called at 6:27 to say he'd received reports of a three-story-tall flame towering over San Bruno.

"In San Bruno?" the gas control operator replied. "We have not received any calls yet."

A minute later the operator said he was "watching the (gas) pressure just plummet like a rock" to 56 pounds per square inch from its peak pressure of 396 pounds per square inch.

The pipe that ruptured was allowed to have maximum pressure of up to 400 pounds per square inch. But that assumed incorrectly that the pipe was seamless.

The 396 pounds per square inch in the transcripts is also 10 pounds per square inch higher than previously reported by NTSB and PG&E. Company officials said again at the hearing that the pressure in the ruptured pipe didn't exceed 386 pounds.

Water in Calif. snowpack remains above average

BY JUDY LIN
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. Recent storms have made up for January's dry weather, keeping California's snowpack above average, state water officials reported Tuesday.

Hydrologists from the state Department of Water Resources took manual and electronic readings for the third time this winter and they found that water content in the Sierra snowpack is 124 percent of normal for this time of year.

"We appear to be on a good water supply track as we move toward summer's peak demand period," said Director Mark Cowin in a statement. "Once again, however, we must emphasize that conservation should always be a priority in California."

The snowpack, which provides about one-third of the water for California through its runoff, dictates how much water will be delivered to farms and cities through the rest of the year. The state estimated it will be able to deliver 60 percent of the water requested.

That compares to delivering 50 percent of the water requested last year, when the state initially projected a record-low allocation of 5 percent due to the lingering effects of the 2007-2009 droughts.

The last time the state was able to deliver 100 percent of the water requested was in 2006; a rare achievement even in wet years because of pumping restrictions to protect threatened and endangered fish.

On Tuesday, hydrologists took the third of five manual surveys to complement electronic readings near Lake Tahoe. The snow depth registered more than 7 feet at Phillips Station, located 6,800 feet above sea level. Electronic readings indicate the water content ranged from 115 percent in the northern mountains to 139 percent in the southern Sierra for this time of year.

California got off to a great start this winter with a series of storms from October through December along the 400-mile-long range but the state faced dry weather in January. Recent storms have built back the snowpack and another storm system is expected to head in this week.

Calif. AG asks federal court to lift gay marriage stay

BY LISA LEFF
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO California's attorney general on Tuesday joined lawyers for two same-sex couples and the city of San Francisco in asking a federal appeals court to allow gay marriages to resume while the court considers the constitutionality of the state's voter-approved ban.

The latest offensive against Proposition 8 came when state Attorney General Kamala Harris told the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in a letter that sponsors of Proposition 8 were unlikely to prevail in their appeal of a trial judge's ruling last year that struck down the measure.

Keeping Proposition 8 in effect therefore is a fruitless violation of gay Californians' civil rights, Harris said.

"The public interest weighs heavily against the government sanctioning such discrimination by permitting it to continue," she wrote.

The move also came as supporters of gay marriage grow impatient with the slow pace of court proceedings. The California Supreme Court recently said it would take at least until the end of the year to consider a legal question asked by the federal court as it tries to resolve the appeal.

Gay marriages have remained on hold until the 9th Circuit decides the appeal.

Lawyers for the gay couples who successfully sued in the lower court petitioned the appeals court last week to lift the hold, as did the city of San Francisco.

Harris also said the case for allowing gay marriages was bolstered by the Obama administration's announcement last week that it would no longer defend the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which prohibits the U.S. government from recognizing same-sex marriages.

While not directly relevant to Proposition 8, the administration's new position "substantially diminished" the likelihood the measure's sponsors will be successful in their effort to get the lower court ruling overturned, she said.

"Events have demonstrated that if the stay ever was justified, it is no longer," Harris said in her letter.

Harris, a Democrat who previously served as San Francisco's district attorney and who was a strong supporter of Obama's in 2008, succeeded Gov. Jerry Brown as attorney general in January. Brown had refused to defend Proposition 8 in his previous role, as did then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Last year, both men asked the 9th Circuit to let gay couples marry during the appeals process.

The push by Harris to quickly get same-sex marriage reinstated in California could further enflame conservative activists angered by the administration's declaration that it considered the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional.

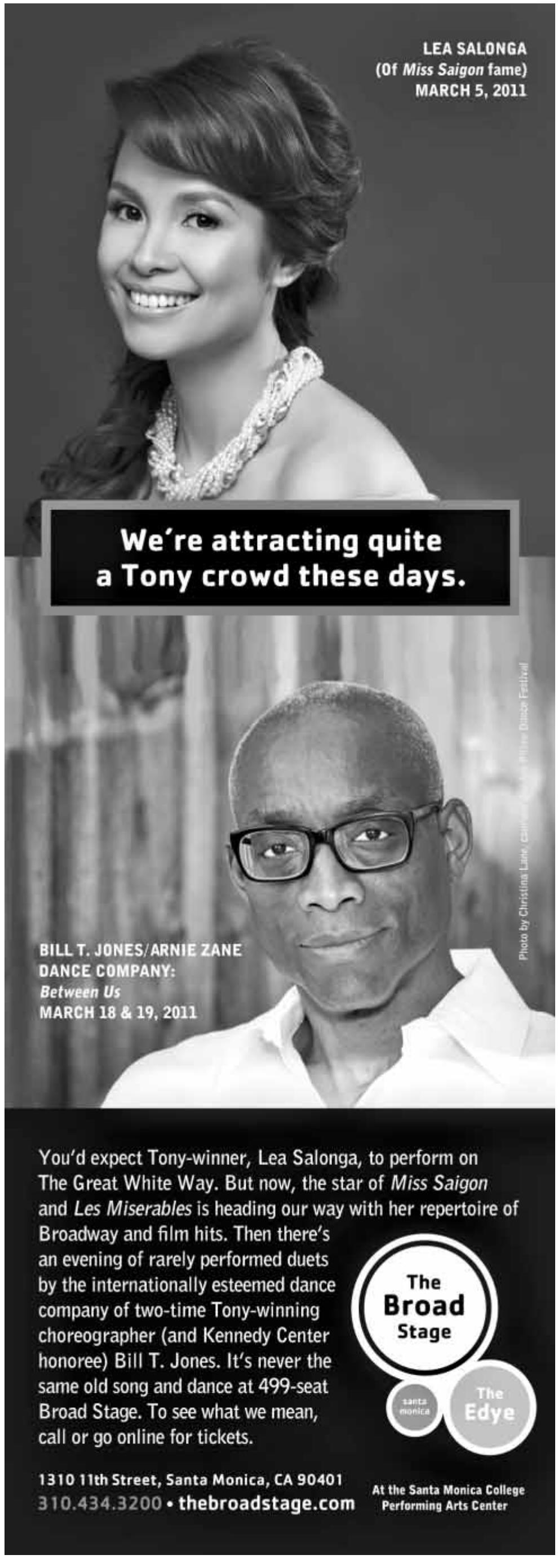
The president of the Family Research Council, a Washington-based advocacy group that champions marriage and family as the foundation of civilization, said Tuesday it suspected the government was colluding with lawyers in the Proposition 8 case.

As evidence, group's president Tony Perkins pointed out that lawyers for the two California couples asked the 9th Circuit to lift its stay just a few hours after U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced the administration's new position on the federal act. Perkins asked the government to provide records of any contact the Justice Department might have had with the attorneys.

"Even the appearance of collusion between the Department of Justice and litigants is highly damaging to the rule of law in America," Perkins wrote.

The couples' lawyers have said the timing was coincidental, noting they scheduled a news briefing on their 9th Circuit petition the night before Holder's surprise announcement.

Same-sex marriages were legal in California before Proposition 8 passed in November 2008. The initiative supported by 52 percent of voters amended the state Constitution to limit marriage to a man and a woman.





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Outages continue for Bank of America's online customers

BY CANDICE CHOI
AP Personal Finance Writer

NEW YORK Customers of Bank of America Corp. were again having problems accessing their accounts online Tuesday.

It was the second outage for the Charlotte, N.C., company in less than two months.

The latest outages, which began Monday and hadn't been resolved by early Tuesday evening, were the result of system upgrades over the weekend, said Tara Burke, a company spokeswoman.

The site was slow to load in some cases, and other customers were unable to log on.

Burke declined to say whether the bank had anticipated that the upgrades would disrupt service. But she said no customer information was compromised.

"We hope to have it restored as quickly as possible," Burke said.

Bank of America, the country's largest bank, has 29 million online banking customers.

The company's online banking service last experienced outages Jan. 14 for almost an entire day. Bank of America said at the time that the problems were the result of routine system changes that were performed overnight. The site was also down for several hours in August as a result of what the bank called a "temporary system" issue.

Burke declined to say when the bank's next system maintenance would take place. But she noted that customers were still able to access account information through mobile banking and ATMs during the outages. She also noted that the service problems were not the result of hacking.

That has been a distant concern for some customers since the company said in December it would no longer handle payments for WikiLeaks, the secret-releasing organization. The bank's actions followed similar moves by MasterCard, Visa and PayPal.

Hacker groups that support WikiLeaks subsequently managed to disrupt the websites of some of those companies, but Bank of America's site did not show any signs of being affected.

Julian Assange, the driving force behind WikiLeaks, has said his organization plans to release information about banks this year. In particular, Assange has said his organization had a trove of files on Bank of America.

Much-needed storage room added to Space Station

BY MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. The International Space Station got a sorely needed storage room Tuesday, a 21-foot-long supply closet packed with goods and a humanoid robot that will remain boxed up for another two months.

The space station and space shuttle crews teamed up to attach the newest module, using a hefty robot arm to anchor it down. It became the 13th room at the sprawling outpost, and the only one devoted entirely to storage.

Built in Italy, the new compartment is named Leonardo, after Leonardo da Vinci.

As Leonardo was bolted into place, the shuttle-station complex soared more than 200 miles above Turin, Italy.

"So far, Leonardo's looking very, very happy to be in his or her new home," said space station astronaut Catherine Coleman.

"It's a big day for us," added Discovery crewman Michael Barratt, "and for Italy, one of the greatest contributions to spaceflight next to Paolo Nespoli."

Nespoli is among the six-person station crew.

Leonardo flew seven times to the space station as a temporary cargo carrier, but always returned on the shuttles. This time, it's staying for the duration. Storage space is at a premium, and Leonardo will provide some relief during the next decade.

The absence of visiting shuttles after this summer will make it harder to clear out the space station. Every time a shuttle returns from the station, it's loaded down with trash and discarded items.

Space station commander Scott Kelly thanked Mission Control for the new storage unit. "It's much needed," he said.

Kelly was the first to enter the compartment Tuesday evening. He shook hands at the threshold with Discovery's commander, Steven Lindsey. "Ready for use," Kelly reported down to Houston.

The robot delivered inside Leonardo — Robonaut 2, better known as R2 — will have to wait until May before being unpacked and tested as a potential astronaut helper. The space station residents are swamped with other chores during this week's visit by Discovery, and Endeavour will be along in April, meaning the robot will stay put for a couple more months.

"So far, space is great — but I suspect it will be even better once I'm out of my box!" R2 said in a Twitter update.

The world's first humanoid in space cannot speak and certainly can't write or post tweets. Human colleagues on the ground are taking care of the Twitter end of things, however, attracting a following of more than 30,000 to AstroRobonaut, the robot's tweep name.

Discovery's mission has been extended a day and will now last 12 days. It's the last flight for NASA's oldest shuttle, which will be retired when it lands next Tuesday and eventually displayed at the Smithsonian Institution.

Leonardo was the last pressurized module to be delivered by a shuttle.

Only two other shuttle flights remain. Endeavour will deliver a major science instrument for the station's exterior, and Atlantis will drop off one last load of spare parts and supplies to keep the outpost going until 2020.

"When it goes away and stops flying, I think we'll all be a little bit at a loss," Lindsey said.

On Tuesday, NASA's mission management team abandoned a plan to send a three-man Russian Soyuz capsule on a photo-taking lap around the space station. There never have been so many countries' vessels parked there at the same time, and it will never happen again given the impending retirement of the shuttle fleet.

The Russian Space Agency recommended the operation be scrapped for safety reasons; engineers were uncomfortable with putting the new Soyuz model through maneuvers it has not previously tested.

Panel told no guarantee against unethical research

BY MIKE STOBBE
AP Medical Writer

ATLANTA Experts say that the kind of unethical medical studies that occurred half a century ago could still happen again despite more than 1,000 rules and regulations that should prevent such abuses.

Bioethicists and researchers spoke Tuesday before a presidential panel in Washington. The meeting was triggered by the government's apology last fall for federal doctors infecting prisoners and mental patients in Guatemala with syphilis 65 years ago.

President Barack Obama ordered his Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues to explore whether such a study could ever happen again.

Speakers noted that over the last several decades, as many as 1,000 rules, regulations and guidelines have been enacted worldwide to ensure the ethical conduct of medical research. In the United States, there are rules to protect people in every study done by federal scientists, funded by federal agencies or those testing a product requiring federal approval to be sold.

But that oversight is inconsistent — ethical rules can vary among federal agencies. What's more, if federal funding or review is not involved, an unethical study could be done and no one in authority would ever know about it.

"We have a leaky system," said Eric Meslin, director of the Indiana University Center for Bioethics.

Dr. Robert Califf, Duke University's vice chancellor for clinical research, agreed there are weaknesses.

"It's night and day and what you could do in the 'good old days' with no one knowing about it. But there's no 100 percent guarantee. There still will be bad things that will happen," he said.

The commission, ordered to report to the president by September, was given two tasks:

—Examine federally funded international studies to make sure research is being done ethically. The commission named a 14-member international panel of experts to study the question.

—Take a more intensive look at the Guatemala study. More than a dozen commission investigators have already started poring through hundreds of boxes of old government documents.

What they will turn up is unknown, but there are doubtless more unethical studies from the past that have never been publicly reported, said Susan Lederer, a medical historian at the University of Wisconsin.

On Sunday, The Associated Press reported on dozens of studies from the past — most of them between 40 and 80 years ago — involving researchers deliberately infecting people to study the effects of diseases or to see if an experimental treatment might work.

The AP investigation itself was triggered by the Guatemala study.

At Tuesday's commission meeting, Lederer was the most pessimistic of five guest speakers about whether that kind of research could happen again.





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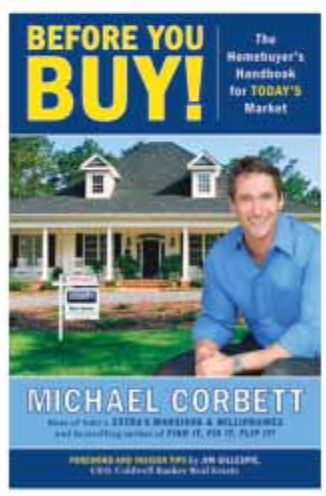
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CONCERT
FROM PAGE 3

the poster now splashed around town.

Proceeds go to a variety of programs including DreamWind and DreamStrings, which pay for a music coach to help with wind and string instruments in low-income schools, as well as the Olympic High School's guitar and drum classes.

"It's a fun way to raise money because the community comes out and enjoys the show," said Linda Gross, executive director of the Santa Monica-Malibu Education Foundation, which helps put on the event.

Organizers hope to sell out the 1,200-seat performance venue, which would raise approximately $50,000 for the evening, Gross said.

Sponsors cover the majority of the $50,000 it takes to produce the event. The artists donate their time.

The event began pulling together seven weeks ago, when the major musical guests signed onto the project.

This will be the first time that Richard Page, the frontman of '80s pop group Mr. Mister, will perform at For the Arts, although he's been meaning to for years.

Page, a Malibu resident, attended grade school in Santa Monica, and had four children go through the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.

"I've been a part of the community, and I'm so thrilled to be able to support this event, because I found my career really became inspired in high school," Page said.

The concert not only raises money for school programs, it inspires students that get to participate and see the show come together from the inside, Gross said.

"We give them an experience they never would have had otherwise," she said.

Remaining tickets cost between $35 and $175, and will be available at the door. Doors open at 6 p.m., and the show begins at 7 p.m.

ashley@smdp.com

BBB
FROM PAGE 1

BBB then analyzes the information in-house and with the third-party transportation management firm to come up with a clear picture of which lines and stops are getting use, and which are slowing the system down.

The emphasis this time is on reallocation of resources rather than cuts, said Stephanie Negriff, BBB's director of transit services.

"We have to make difficult choices because there's not enough money to add more service," Negriff said. "There will be no net reduction, but some lines would be losing some service to redeploy where there's greater demand."

None of the proposed changes will be finalized until after the public comment period ends and the City Council makes the final decision.

Proposals include reducing the number of local buses that run along route 7 from Downtown Santa Monica to the Rimpau Transit Center at Rimpau and Pico boulevards, and replacing them with additional articulated Rapid 7 buses.

Those buses hold 60 passengers rather than the regular 40, but won't stop as often as the current Local 7s, Gamberg said.

All stops along the 7 route will be preserved under this plan, although buses will not stop at some as frequently.

Though the buses will be able to move more people, Rapid service should be used to supplement local routes rather than replace them, said Esperanza Martinez, spokesperson for the bus advocacy group the Bus Riders' Union.

Replacing local buses with Rapid affects families, the elderly and students that need more frequent stops, she said.

"They're waiting longer, the buses are coming less frequently and they're more crowded," Martinez said.

BBB is proposing a reduction in bus stops on Line 10, which connects Downtown Santa Monica to Downtown L.A.

It's becoming more and more difficult to maintain a schedule on Line 10 with the current number of stops as a result of worsening traffic, so the agency will suggest cutting out lesser-used stops so that those that remain are one half-mile apart rather than the current quarter-mile separation.

"This will not be like one whole section going dark," Gamberg said. "We're seeking a balance so no one has to walk too far."

Under the proposal, there will be no changes in the schedule or the buses.

Bus Line 13 will not be so lucky.

Rapid and local line 7 duplicate much of Line 13's route, which runs down Pico Boulevard except for a detour into the Cheviot Hills neighborhood in Rancho Park.

There are too few riders to support Line 13, given that the majority of its coverage area is also run by Rapid and local 7, BBB officials said.

Other routes will either be rearranged or extended.

Line 3, which now runs between LAX and the UCLA, and Line 14, which runs between Culver City and Brentwood, may switch routes where they diverge at Wilshire Boulevard.

The survey showed that more students live in Culver City and travel to UCLA, whereas more Brentwood employees live in the Marina del Rey area and commute to Brentwood.

Switching the bus routes to connect Brentwood to LAX and Culver City to UCLA will make the routes more efficient and easier on riders, Gamberg said.

Another big change could make it easier for riders to travel to Downtown L.A. via Koreatown.

The Metro Transit Authority gave permission to extend the service of the Rapid 7 route all the way to the intersection of Western Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard. Riders could then pick up the Purple Line and take it to Union Station.

BBB will incorporate public comment in a report that is tentatively scheduled for the April 26 council meeting where council members will consider the proposed route changes.

Those interested in the changes will get an opportunity to comment at any of the six public meetings held between March 2 and March 10. Exact times and locations are available at bigbluebus.com.

ashley@smdp.com

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Y

FROM PAGE 1

justify giving the schools half of the Measure Y funding, city officials hope to secure an agreement whereby they would gain access to other fields and parks held by the school district for other after-school uses.

The meeting was an opportunity to get the parameters of the new agreement hashed out so that staff could flesh out the details before the final agreement goes before the City Council and Board of Education for approval, Allen said.

"Staff of both the city and the district will be moving forward on the right lines, guided by the leadership of the board and council," Allen said. "Nothing is ever guaranteed until it's approved by the council or the board."

The possible agreement goes in line with the board's commitment to giving the broader community access to its facilities, Allen said.

No specifics on which facilities will be included or how City Hall will value that rental to make up the approximately $6 million have been proposed at this time, Davis said.

"We believe we're getting access to facilities that compensate us for the money that we're giving to the school district," Davis said. "No one's worked it out on the per-square-foot basis."

Access to the fields represents more than money, she said.

"It's the ability to provide access to a wide range of programs. It's not 'This square of grass is worth X,' but instead the invaluable ability to provide increased programing to youth and adults on sites that are owned by the school district for programs run by the city," Davis said.

Also included in the talks was a very concrete monetary value, however.

The school district is requesting that City Hall front it a portion of Measure Y funding before it's collected.

As it stands, the new tax will come into effect April 1. Those revenues will then be transferred to the State Board of Equalization, and then disbursed back to City Hall.

That puts the date that City Hall will actually benefit from the tax money far past the April 1 collection date.

Normally, City Hall would get the tax money from the state on a bi-monthly basis, and then cut the revenues in half and give the school district its portion.

However, recent cuts from the state have put the school district in a bind for its 2010-2011 budget, Gould said, and the district is requesting money immediately to balance its budget.

"We're proposing to make a best estimate of what we think the tax will generate, and will advance the school half of that," Gould said.

None of the points brought up Friday will go into effect until after both the Board of Education and the City Council approve the agreement.

It's expected to appear before both of those bodies in April.

ashley@smdp.com

WISH

FROM PAGE 3

Over the weekend, the two were able to ride in a limo and go on a shopping spree courtesy of the Make A Wish Foundation, an experience that brought some joy to their lives and helped them forget, if just for a day, the struggles of the last year and a half.

"It was really fun to be in a limo," said Diego, who brought along members of his family and his best friend. "I got a really funny shirt that I'm wearing right now. It says, 'A Wookie ate my homework.' You know, from "Star Wars.'"

Quiet, but inquisitive, Diego never seemed to show signs of fear during his treatment, his mother said. He doesn't talk about the ordeal, saying he doesn't remember much of it, but he does consider himself a survivor.

"I think he was more scared for me, more worried about how I was going to react," Solano said. "When you don't know anything about cancer, death is the first thing that comes to your head, but he was very calm and after we learned more, we saw that there were survivors, especially children. They are really resilient."

During treatment, Diego would spend time at the hospital's child care center where patients could watch movies, play video games and interact with others their age who are undergoing similar treatment. It was there that Solano was first introduced to the Make A Wish Foundation.

"I only thought that Make a Wish was for children who were dying, but they told me that it is for any child who has a life threatening illness," Solano said.

Steven Vanderpool, a spokesman with the Los Angeles bureau of the foundation, said he hears that often. Thankfully, treatments have advanced so much since the foundation was created in 1980 that many of the kids who have a wish granted are still alive today and are thriving.

"We're here to help people get through the often terrible things they have to go through to get well," he said.

The foundation, which started in Phoenix when friends and family of a little boy named Chris Greicius got together to help him fulfill his wish of becoming a police officer for a day, has granted a quarter of a million wishes. The Los Angeles bureau recently passed 7,000 wishes, Vanderpool said. The foundation relies solely on donations to provide wishes.

On Saturday, March 5, the foundation will be hosting its largest fundraiser of the year, the Walk for Wishes, at the headquarters of toy maker Mattel in El Segundo, Calif. For more information, go to www.wishla.org/walk.

As for Diego, his wish was to go on a shopping spree with his family and purchase video games and clothes.

"It was really exciting," he said.

Always the mother, Solano said she wanted Diego to buy only clothes, "but it's his wish, not mine."

Solano said her wish, which was for her son to fully recover, has been granted. Her only request now is for more Latinos to participate in the National Marrow Donor Program to see if they are a match for someone in need of their bone marrow.

The importance of the donor program was impressed upon Solano said Diego when they met a young boy who was in need of bone marrow. His parents were unable to find a match and he died. His memory has stuck with them.

"People in the Hispanic community are hesitant to join," Solano said. "We learned that there is a shortage of Latinos who do participate and than makes it difficult to find a match. Signing up the registry is easy to do and makes it so kids like him have a chance."

Future NBA Hall of Famer Shaquille O'Neal is the spokesman for the "Do Something Big" campaign which urges people to join the registry and donate marrow. Learn more at www.bethematch.org.

kevinh@smdp.com



Longtime listings try again in spring

BY DAN SEWELL
AP Business Writer

Spring can be an exciting time for homeowners ready to sell. But not so much when your home has lingered on the market through multiple spring selling seasons.

Years of listings, open houses and showings without offers are weighing on many homeowners this year as the nation's housing market continues to struggle from the Great Recession's prolonged housing slump, credit crunch and high unemployment.

"I would like to move on," said Jim Oliver, who's been trying to sell since 2007. "It's frustrating."

His two-story house, with amenities such as a hot tub, finished basement and a wooded lot where deer roam, sits on 1.4 prime acres in an upscale region northeast of Cincinnati, with a top-rated school district. But the traditional real estate cry of "location, location, location!" has given way in this economy to "price, price, price!"

With new foreclosures and mortgage short-sales still streaming into the market, buyers have a lot of bargain listings to shop through. So that can mean some tough conversations between agents and homeowners about how much they can realistically expect to get for their home — and if it's not attracting much interest after months or years, the need to slash their asking price.

"We have had a problem with sellers who are nostalgic for the way it was," said Ron Phipps, a Warwick, R.I., real estate agent and president of the National Association of Realtors. He recalled homeowners reciting in detail the peak of their home's market value. But that's of little use today.

Sales of previously owned homes fell last year to their lowest level in 13 years, with contract signings last June at their lowest since the Realtors began tracking signed contracts in 2001. January contract signings were also down in the latest report.

The popping of the pre-recession real estate bubble means many people need to list their homes for at or below what they paid for them, said Diane Thomas, senior sales vice president for Comey & Shepherd Realtors. Thomas, who's listing the Olivers' house, said 2010 was the worst sales year of her 27-year career.

"Nothing like it before, not even when interest rates were high," she said.

But spring is coming, and that usually means increased activity, with better weather and more traffic from families hoping to buy and get moved before next school year.

Veteran real estate agents suggest a variety of steps for homeowners heading into spring, and the Realtors association has a website with tips for both buyers and sellers at Houselogic.com.

Among possible to-do tasks for homeowners: spruce up landscaping, update exterior lighting, and paint or replace front doors, all to create more "curb appeal" for first impressions.

For other improvements, Phipps advises owners to listen to their agent's suggestions and heed negative feedback from previous showings — without taking it personally. He also suggests going to open houses or taking online "virtual tours" of similar homes on sale to see how they compare in appearance and price.

"You have to be very realistic about what is keeping your home from selling," Phipps said.





Stocks suffer steep losses as jump in oil prices renews worries

BY DAVID K. RANDALL & MATTHEW CRAFT
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK Stocks suffered steep losses as oil prices surged on Tuesday, renewing worries that higher fuel prices could hobble the economic recovery.

Oil rose $2.66 to settle at $99.63 a barrel amid unrest in Iran and Libya. Iran clamped down on anti-government protesters and forces loyal to Libya's leader Moammar Gadhafi launched counter-attacks against rebels expanding control over the country.

Prices jumped 13 percent last week with a rise in turmoil across North Africa and the Middle East. That pushed gas prices up 20 cents per gallon. As a result, Americans are now paying roughly $75 million more per day to fill their gas tanks than a week ago.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke told the Senate Banking Committee that a sustained increase in crude prices could pose a risk to the recovery. But he predicted only a temporary increase in inflation, not runaway prices. The Fed chief also said he expected the economy to grow this year, although not enough to lower the 9 percent unemployment rate.

The Commerce Department reported that builders began work on fewer homes, offices and commercial projects in January. The annual rate was near its decade low, set in August.

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 168.32 points, or 1.4 percent, to 12,058.02.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 20.89, or 1.6 percent, to 1,306.33. The Nasdaq composite fell 44.86, or 1.6 percent, to 2,737.41.

Three stocks fell for every one that rose on the New York Stock Exchange. Trading volume came to 1.2 billion shares.

Fifth Third Bancorp dropped 4.5 percent after the regional bank said that the Securities and Exchange Commission was investigating its accounting and reporting of commercial loans.

Natural gas driller Range Resources Corp. lost 7 percent after the company's fourth-quarter revenue figures came in below analysts' expectations. Natural gas prices have been in a slump for the past year as a result of an oversupply in the market.

AutoZone Inc. rose 2 percent after the auto-parts retailer said its second-quarter income rose 20 percent as its revenue increased.

On Monday, stable oil prices and more signs of a stronger economy helped lift. All three major stock indexes ended February higher, marking their third straight month of gains. The S&P 500 index had its best start to any year since 1998.

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NOTICE OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
Santa Monica Pier Restoration Corporation
Board of Directors

Wednesday, March 2, 2011 6:30 PM
Ken Edwards Center, 1527 4th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Notice is hereby given that a Special Meeting of the Santa Monica Pier Restoration Corporation the Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, March 2, 2011 at 6:30 PM

No other business will be conducted at the Meeting.



Household Hazardous Waste Collection Comes to Your Door



On February 1, 2011, the City of Santa Monica will launch the **Household Hazardous Waste Door-to-Door Collection Pilot Program**, a pick-up system where the "Haz Mat" technicians come to you. The goal is to expand levels of service for residents while reducing costs. The service will be provided on a free and unlimited basis to home owners and renters alike.

Also, beginning February 1, 2011, the **Household Hazardous Waste Center** will be available for drop-off service on **SATURDAYS ONLY**. If the pilot program is successful, the city will transition to a permanent pick-up system in June 2011.

The new service is provided in a few easy steps:

1. Reserve collection service: call **1 (800) HHW-PKUP** (1.800.449.7587), Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM; or e-mail **hotline@curbsideinc.com**;
2. Receive collection kit in the mail (includes detailed instructions with collection day reminder);
3. Prepare collection kit at your doorstep or at a predetermined location on collection day;
4. Leave prepared materials and we'll do the rest.

For additional information or feedback please visit www.sustainablesm.org/hhw or call (310) 458-2213.

The door-to-door collection program is managed by the Office of Sustainability and the Environment and WM Curbside, LLC

City of Santa Monica
sustainablesm.org
City of Santa Monica







WAR
FROM PAGE 1

Awan may not reflect much on his importance in this vast logistical operation. He's in it for the money — $112 a month to support a wife and five children in the distant northwest tribal region of Pakistan. He gets to visit them twice a year. For the rest of the time, he is mostly on the road.

Depending on the Taliban, the Pakistani and NATO armies, checkpoints, congestion and the weather, he says the journey from Karachi to Kandahar can take anything from 4 to 15 days.

Trucks get blown up or hijacked. Drivers are killed. Overall, fewer than one percent of trucks delivering everything from fuel to peanut butter are attacked, according to Lt. Bashon W. Mann, a public affairs officer for NATO forces. But for Awan and other drivers, the fear of ambush and roadside bombs is constant.

Awan has been the recipient of the Taliban's feared "night letters" — pamphlets that warn drivers against hauling supplies to "the foreign invader." He says the message is always the same: "Don't do this job, or else we will do something to you."

Awan isn't entirely alone on this run, his 14th. His younger brother is driving a truck behind him in the convoy and they keep in touch by cell phone. Awan's eyes keep darting to his side mirrors. "I am always watching my brother," he explains.

He also has The Associated Press for company — myself and photographer Anja Niedringhaus, who joined him in the Pakistani city of Quetta for the final 160 miles (255 kilometers) to the NATO base in Kandahar.

Our presence would frequently cause bewilderment among the Pakistani and Afghan soldiers who had never had two Western women cross their checkpoints and border posts. U.S. soldiers on the Afghan border eyed us with suspicion, unaccustomed to Western reporters traveling unaccompanied by soldiers or armed security.

Awan's journey had begun on a comfortable highway out of the port city of Karachi. Now we were in the southern province of Baluchistan, on a narrow and congested road that detours around a long-simmering clan feud. Ahead loomed the Kojhak mountain pass, a long, frightening climb alongside a precipice. Then it would be downhill and into Afghanistan for a final white-knuckle ride through Taliban country.

Awan has never been attacked. But as he chatted in his brightly decorated cabin, between cell phone conversations with his brother and blasts of music on an old cassette player, it became clear that he doubted his luck would last. "It is a very dangerous job," he said. Later he would say in a tone of resignation: "I think one day the Taliban will kill me."

The war, now in its 10th year, consumes roughly 1.5 million gallons (6 million liters) of fuel a day, according to Mann, the NATO public affairs officer. The fuel and other supplies — from peanut butter to armored cars — come on four routes, two from Pakistan and two through Central Asia.

In 2010, 27,073 trucks crossed at Chaman, the border post nearest to Kandahar, roughly a quarter of them carrying fuel, according to Gen. Obeidullah Khan, the inspector general of the Frontier Corps in Baluchistan, which borders on southern Afghanistan.

By his count, 194 of the trucks were

SEE TRUCKS PAGE 15

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TRUCKS
FROM PAGE 14

destroyed in 159 separate attacks — a rate of about three a week. Some of the loot from the hijacked ones — U.S. and British uniforms, military tents and cots — is on sale in the markets of Quetta, the Baluchistan capital.

Last month gunmen with rocket launchers and automatic rifles stormed a terminal outside Quetta and destroyed 14 fuel tankers. Outside the federal capital of Islamabad last year, dozens of gunmen attacked a fuel convoy parked overnight, killing six people.

Assad Sher, a 24-year-old driver, says he is fired at and his tanker is routinely pelted with stones. Fida Hussain, another driver, has been robbed and beaten. "Most of the attacks are at night," he said. "They come and they put a blindfold on our eyes and send us away and then they sometimes blow up our tanker."

The drivers work in an atmosphere of suspicion. They distrust — and are distrusted by — the NATO forces as well as the Taliban, while the U.S. and Pakistani militaries distrust each other. A senior Pakistani military officer who requested anonymity so he could speak freely said the suspicions are reflected in the fact that NATO deals directly with private trucking companies, effectively cutting out the Pakistan authorities.

For the contractors, NATO is a gold mine. At a going rate of 7 rupees a liter, each Afghan trip stands to earn the truck owner about $5,000, says Asghar Khan, who runs a clearing house for trucks on the Quetta-Kandahar run.

Awan's $112 is a tiny fraction of the proceeds, but it's better than a poor Pakistani's monthly wage and he says it has enabled him to enroll his children in school. He dreams of his daughter becoming a doctor.

It's Tuesday, Feb. 8, and at 4:11 a.m. a nightwatchman armed with a shotgun pounds on the trucks parked in the Quetta terminal. Drivers sleeping in their cabins come awake, headlights blaze and one by one the fuel trucks set out, kicking up mud. Next stop, if all goes well, is Chaman, 75 miles (120 kilometers) north, on the Afghan border.

But at Abdullah Khan, a village of monotonous brown mud huts hugging the road, the trucks are waved down at a checkpoint maintained by a dozen privately employed guards. The clan wars have flared again and the guards are there to make sure none of the drivers blunders into the crossfire.

Baluchistan also has a nationalist insurgency, a reminder that Pakistan has other pressing problems besides the Taliban, al-Qaida and the debate in the U.S. about whether the country is pulling its weight in the war on terrorism. Pakistan routinely counters with a reminder that it has lost more than 3,000 soldiers in the war, more than the U.S. and other NATO armies combined.

Once cleared through the checkpoint, the convoy faces an even more daunting challenge: the 2,290-meter (7,513 foot) Kojhak Pass, one lane each way. It holds particularly unpleasant memories for driver Shurab Gul.

On one of his runs he was laboring up the pass, moving so slowly that ambushers managed to run up to his truck and attach an explosive charge.

"I was crying when they blew up my truck. I jumped out and ran. I thought about my family — what would they do if anything happened to me?" he recalled. He has five sons and a daughter.

As the convoy climbs up the mountain, a free-for-all develops among the uphill traffic, the faster cars trying to pass them, and the oncoming traffic barreling downhill. Cars weave in and out, often getting dangerously close to the precipice.

Awan's truck and the AP team reach the border post at Chaman around 1 p.m. It looks like chaos. Trucks barge across. Cars, horns blaring, weave among bicycles and rickshaws carrying passengers and luggage. The poorest push wheelbarrows carrying children and old people.

The first town on the Afghan side is Spinboldak, and traffic is at a standstill. A day earlier a bomb in the customs hall killed an Afghan customs officer and wounded two visiting Americans, and now troops are defusing a bomb on the road ahead.

At the truck terminal, the U.S. soldiers who greet us are jumpy. Who are we? Do we have permission to be on this road? Do we have bodyguards? A soldier tells us of reports that suicide bombers are lurking up the road. They refuse to let us go, threatening to abort our onward trip even though our Afghan documentation allows us to travel freely throughout the country. After an hour, when it becomes clear that they have no grounds to hold us and we will not accept armed security, we are released. But by now night is closing in and the oil tankers are not ready to move onward to Kandahar in the darkness.

The next morning it is bitterly cold as the trucks set off through flatlands flanked by gray streaked hills. Security has become much more intense. Bridges, a favorite Taliban target, are protected by barbed wire. Private security guards in jeeps and trucks weave among the tankers.

On the cassette player, a singer named Shah Zaib Bulbul, a Pashtu like Awan, belts out a tune. The scratchy music puts a smile on Awan's face. Soon he'll reach the relative safety of his destination in Kandahar base, but first he has to pass the village of Takht-e-Pul. This place is dangerous, Awan shouts over the music. "They fire on us. They are unknown people. Their faces are covered."

And don't point a camera at the U.S. soldiers who are in a convoy heading toward us, he warns, "because they will start firing on us. It's a big problem."

The journey ends at the massive Kandahar base built up by U.S. and other NATO forces over the last 10 years of war. The tankers park in a holding area to wait for their number to be called.

It will be hours before Awan's turn comes, so he'll spend the night here and head back to Karachi in the morning to tank up for his 15th run to Kandahar.


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CITY OF SANTA MONICA
NOTICE INVITING BIDS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Santa Monica invites sealed bids for:

BID #3023 LNG/CNG FUEL FACILITY MAINTENANCE, REPAIR & SERVICE AND BID #3024 SUPPLY AND DELIVER LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS (LNG) AS REQUIRED BY THE BIG BLUE BUS.

#3023 A mandatory job walk will be held on Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at 9:00 AM Pacific Time.
#3024 A mandatory job walk will be held on Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at 10:00 AM Pacific Time.
Vendors are to meet Ralph Merced & at the Big Blue Bus Maintenance Training Room located at 1620 6th Street (enter security guard gate on 6th and Colorado), Santa Monica, CA. 90401

The bid packet can be downloaded at:
http://vendors.planetbids.com/SantaMonica/QuickSearch.cfm
Submission Deadline is March 16, 2011 at 3:00 PM Pacific Time.

Request for bid forms and specifications may be obtained from the City of Santa Monica, 1717 4th St., Suite 250, Santa Monica, California, or by e-mailing your request to Kellee.macdonald@smgov.net. Bids must be submitted on forms furnished by the City of Santa Monica.

Vendors interested in doing business with the City of Santa Monica are encouraged to register online at http://www.smgov.net/finance/purchasing/





SURF REPORT

Surf Conditions **Water Temp:** 59°

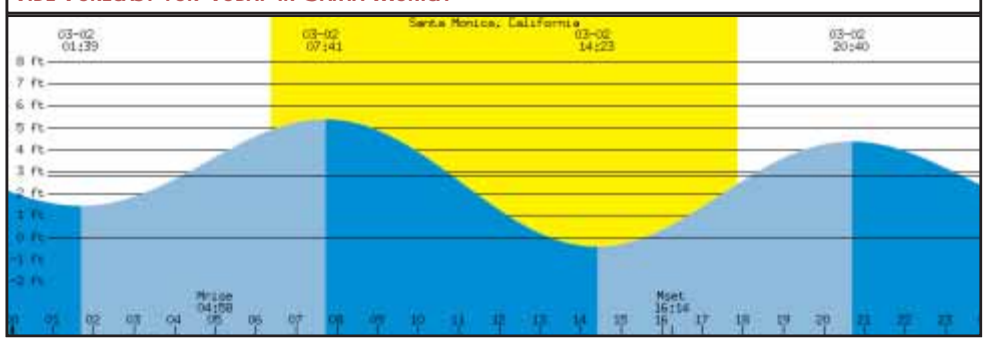
Swell Forecast

Wind swell is looking nil as southern hemi runs waist to chest.

Long Range Synopsis

Another shot at some wind swell, which looks to be about waist to chest max at west facing breaks. Conditions though are questionable.

Tide Forecast for Today in Santa Monica



BEACH REPORT CARD

NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous 30 days up to the ending date of **February 22, 2011**

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

QUICK STATS (for the last 30 days)

- Number of sewage spills -- 1
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0
- Number of wet days -- 9
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 31 / 30
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 13 / 10

The Beach Report Card is made possible by: The Diller – von Furstenberg Family Foundation, Grousbeck Family Foundation, simplehuman, LAcarGUY, SMA

Heal the Bay reminds you not to swim or surf within 100 yards of any flowing storm drain or for 3 days after a rainstorm. After a rain, indicator bacteria counts at beaches throughout California usually far exceed health criteria in the state's Beach Closure and Health Warning Protocol.

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Leo Carrillo Beach, at Arroyo Sequit Creek mouth.	A	A+
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth.	A+	A+
El Pescador State Beach, between Lechusa and Las Alisa creeks.	A+	A+
Encinal Canyon at El Matador State Beach.	B	A+
Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth.	C	A+
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth.	A+	A+
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildlife Rd. (private).	A+	A+
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth.	F	A+
Escondido Creek, just east of Escondido State Beach.	A+	B
Latigo Canyon Creek mouth.	A	B
Solstice Canyon at Don Blocker County Beach.	A+	F
Puerco State Beach at creek mouth.	D	A+
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerco Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd..	ns	A+
Surfrider Beach at Malibu Colony fence.	A+	A+
Surfrider Beach (breach location)- daily.	F	F
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east.	D	B
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon.	A+	B
Las Flores State Beach at Las Flores Creek (point zero).	A+	A+
Big Rock Beach at 19948 PCH stairs.	A+	A+
Pena Creek at Los Tunos County Beach.	A+	A+
Tuna Canyon.	ns	ns
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth.	F	F
Castlerock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach.	A+	A+
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach.	B	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at 17200 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain).	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club drain near fence.	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Pulga Canyon storm drain.	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Temescal Canyon drain.	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Chautauqua).	F	F
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain.	A+	A+
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain.	F	B
Santa Monica Municipal Pier.	F	D
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kenter storm drain.	F	F
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restrooms).	A+	F
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain.	F	A+
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain.	A+	A
Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain.	A+	A+
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain.	A+	A+
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south.	A+	A+
Venice Beach- projection of Topsail St..	A	F
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower.	C	B
Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth.	F	B
Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain.	A+	A+
North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach.	A+	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of D&W jetty).	A+	D
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain.	A+	A+
Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant.	A+	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain.	A	D

LEGEND

DRY -- each location is graded on an A – F scale based on bacterial pollution levels present in the surf zone
WET -- grades for days of recorded rainfall and the following 3 days
ns -- no sample taken

Heal the Bay is a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to making Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters safe and healthy for people and marine life.

Heal the Bay

Heal the Bay's Beach Report Card® is based on weekly water quality monitoring data provided by the City of Los Angeles' Environmental Monitoring Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Data is analyzed as soon as it is made available to us by the public agencies. Beaches are graded on an A–F scale based on the risk of ocean users becoming ill. Samples are analyzed for bacteria—enterococcus, total and fecal coliforms—that indicate biological pollution. A fact sheet detailing the exact methodology used in determining grades for each location is available from the office or on our web site. The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at local beaches.

The Beach Report Card is an indication of past water quality and is not a warranty of the current safety of those areas surveyed. Our lawyers are happy.

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Bonds' perjury trial taking shape

BY PAUL ELIAS
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO Barry Bonds pleaded not guilty to perjury charges, his former personal trainer is facing prison and the admissibility of a trove of evidence hangs in the balance after a pivotal hearing in federal court Tuesday, three weeks before the slugger's trial is scheduled to start.

Bonds' renewed plea was a legal technicality made necessary when prosecutors revised the charges for the third time since the initial indictment was unsealed in November 2007. Bonds is charged with four counts of making false statements to a grand jury and one count of obstruction of justice. There was little doubt what Bonds' plea was going to be Tuesday and that the case was going to trial March 21 after Bonds' legal team and prosecutors last month told U.S. District Judge Susan Illston that there was little chance of a plea agreement.

Likewise, there was no doubt that Bonds' former personal trainer, Greg Anderson, would tell the judge Tuesday that he has no intention of taking the stand as a government witness during the trial. Anderson made a similar pledge in 2009 before Bonds' trial was put on hold until a government appeal was resolved in Bonds' favor.

Anderson has previously spent more than a year in prison on contempt charges after refusing to testify before the grand jury investigating Bonds.

The judge said that prosecutors and Bonds' legal team both want Anderson to testify. She said his testimony would spare his former clients, including several retired major league players, from being called to the witness stand to discuss how he supplied them with steroids. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeff Nedrow said he wants to use that evidence to support their position that Bonds was lying when he claimed "he was unwittingly duped by Mr. Anderson" into believing he was taking legal supplements.

"Much of that testimony would be unnecessary" if he testified, Illston told Anderson.

Illston then told Anderson that she planned to find him in contempt of court and will order him jailed during the duration of the trial, which is expected to last at least two weeks. Anderson simply nodded his head when the judge asked if he intended to follow through on his vow of silence.

"He's taking not testifying to the nth degree," said Mark Geragos, Anderson's attorney.

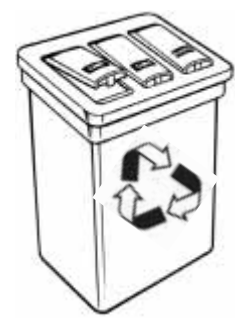
Illston ordered Anderson to return to court March 22, when she plans to order him jailed.

After Anderson left the courtroom, the lawyers got down to highly technical arguments over what evidence will be presented to the jury.

The judge ruled that the jury may hear, among other pieces of evidence:

— That prosecutors granted Bonds immunity from prosecution as long as he testified truthfully about his drug use before the grand jury.

— Bonds' personal surgeon, Dr. Arthur Ting, and former girlfriend Kim Bell testifying that Bonds mistreated them, including Bell allegedly witnessing violent outbursts.

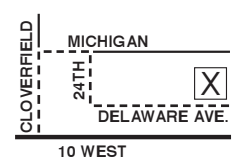


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True Grit (PG-13) 1hr 50min
1:20pm, 4:05pm, 6:45pm, 9:20pm

I Am Number Four (PG-13) 1hr 44min
1:25pm, 4:00pm, 6:30pm, 9:05pm

Unknown (PG-13) 1hr 49min
1:30pm, 4:15pm, 7:00pm, 9:45pm

Mooz-lum (PG-13) 1hr 39min
2:10pm, 4:40pm, 7:05pm, 9:30pm

AMC Santa Monica 7
1310 Third St.
(310) 451-9440

Gnomeo & Juliet 3D (PG) 1hr 24min
11:30am, 1:50pm, 4:10pm, 6:30pm, 8:50pm

Just Go With It (PG-13) 1hr 50min
1:00pm, 4:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:50pm

No Strings Attached (R) 1hr 50min
11:00am, 4:10pm, 6:45pm

I Am Number Four (PG-13) 1hr 44min
11:25am, 2:05pm, 4:45pm, 7:25pm, 10:00pm

Hall Pass (R) 1hr 38min
11:15am, 1:30pm, 2:05pm, 4:40pm, 7:15pm, 9:20pm, 9:55pm

Black Swan (R) 1hr 50min
12:15pm, 3:00pm

Justin Bieber Never Say Never 3D (G) 1hr 45min
12:45pm, 3:30pm, 6:15pm, 9:00pm

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King's Speech (R) 1 hour 58 min
1:10pm, 4:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:50pm

Biutiful (R) 2hrs 27min
1:20pm, 4:40pm, 8:00pm

Illusionist (L'illusionniste) (PG) 1hr 22min
1:10pm, 3:20pm, 5:30pm, 7:40pm, 9:45pm

Cedar Rapids (R) 1hr 26min
1:00pm, 3:10pm, 5:20pm, 7:50pm, 10:10pm

AMC Criterion 6
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Just Go With It (PG-13) 1hr 50min
12:40pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm, 9:20pm

Drive Angry 3D (R) 1hr 44min
1:45pm, 4:45pm, 7:30pm, 10:00pm

Big Momma's: Like Father, Like Son (PG-13) 1hr 47min
12:45pm, 4:15pm, 7:00pm, 9:45pm

Unknown (PG-13) 1hr 49min
12:30pm, 3:15pm, 6:15pm, 9:15pm

Fighter (R) 1hr 54min
1:30pm, 4:20pm, 7:05pm, 9:50pm

Gnomeo & Juliet (PG) 1hr 24min
1:00pm, 3:20pm, 5:40pm, 8:00pm, 10:10pm

For more information, e-mail news@smdp.com

A must appearance, Taurus

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ Keep roaming through possibilities with others. Being open can only solidify an idea, whereas a problem could present itself and you won't see it if you don't test it out. Someone from a distance makes a stern appraisal of a situation. Tonight: Where the action is.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Make sure you handle different segments of a problem. Dealing with one facet is not the answer. Note fatigue. Think about a visit to the doctor, or perhaps establish better sleep, exercise and eating patterns, as boring as it might seem. Tonight: A must appearance.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Your ability to read between the lines, detach and observe singles you out as an astute intellect when dealing with people. Sometimes it might be smarter not to let on about your perceptions. A child or loved one is closed down. Tonight: Ever playful, act on an idea.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Revel in the moment. Understand where a partner or associate is coming from. Instinctively, you might want to pull back and rethink a situation because of feeling vulnerable. Curb a tendency to cover emotional issues with intellectual logic. Root out the real issue. Tonight: Think about taxes, if you haven't already.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Others want to assume a greater role and might not relate to your ideas. Establish new boundaries. Others will listen when they get that you are for real. Cut some of the charm! Tonight: As you like it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ Stay focused on the task at hand. You might want to rethink a decision you made recently, especially if it causes you discomfort. You are coming from a solid point of view. Examine the costs of this stance. Tonight: Do tonight what you didn't do during the day.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Your innate skills come forth. You might be more negative than you realize, creating a somber perspective. Let in the feedback of others; open up to trusting. Get past a present bout of pessimism. Tonight: Add spice to your life.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Listen to your sixth sense with a family member or real estate issue. You might not be in the mood to act on any issue right now, which could be smart. Gather more information and decide what is happening. Tonight: Close to home.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Expressing your ideas naturally is excellent, though someone might misunderstand your words. You will know when this happens immediately because there will be a chill or coldness emanating from that person. Tonight: Tell it like it is.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ Thoughts about money pre-occupy and color a decision. You might feel negative about your job or role in the community. Realize what is happening here, but refuse to make any speedy decisions today. Check in on an older friend or relative. Tonight: Run errands on the way home.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You bloom in the present atmosphere. Someone you seek information from could seem to be withholding something. He or she simply might not be in the mood to talk or elaborate. Deal with a legal matter quickly. Tonight: Let your imagination rock and roll.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Say less and listen more than normal. A partner might be holding back but comes through anyway. You will know what ails this person if you stop and reflect. Joint projects in general could be touchy. Tonight: Your last chance for some extra R and R. You will need it!

Happy birthday

This year, you walk through doors while simultaneously realizing the importance of key partnerships or associations in your life. Many times you could assume a low-key role, but then change your mind and head in a totally different direction. Honor who you are. Also make it OK to vanish or assume a low profile. If you are single, you could meet someone very interesting. This person might not be the easiest to relate to. If you are attached, the two of you might start acting like newlyweds if you just dote on each other a little more. The bond becomes tighter. AQUARIUS makes an excellent healer.

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



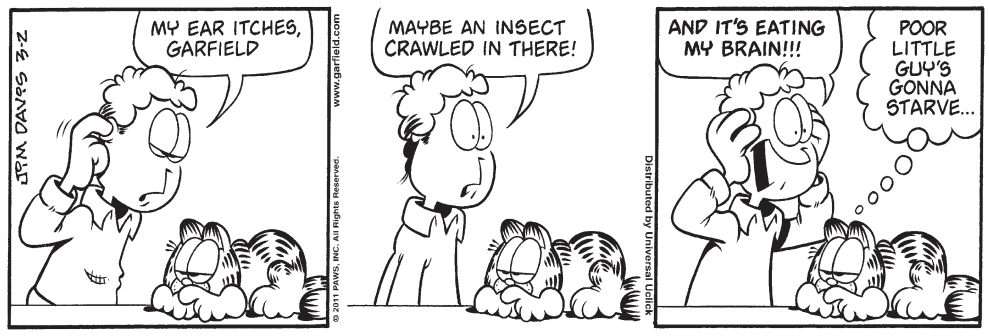
MYSTERY PHOTO

Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

The first person who can correctly identify where this image was captured wins a prize from the Santa Monica Daily Press. Send answers to *editor@smdp.com*. Send your mystery photos to *editor@smdp.com* to be used in future issues.

Garfield

By Jim Davis



The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



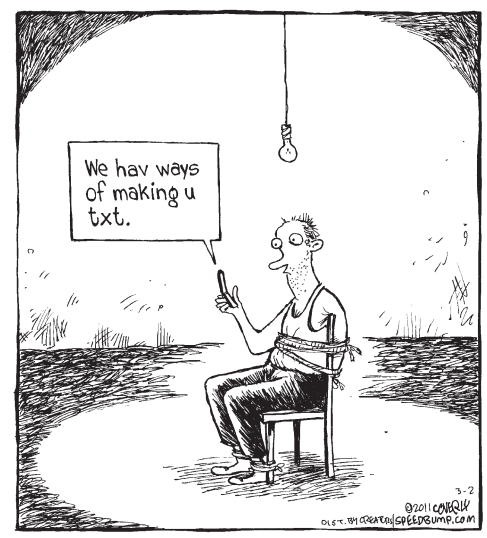
Strange Brew

By John Deering



Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly



Sudoku

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column, and 3x3 block. Use logic and process of elimination to solve the puzzle. The difficulty level ranges from ★ (easiest) to ★★★★★ (hardest).

Difficulty Level ★★★

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

King Features Syndicate

GETTING STARTED

There are many strategies to solving Sudoku. One way to begin is to examine each 3x3 grid and figure out which numbers are missing. Then, based on the other numbers in the row and column of each blank cell, find which of the missing numbers will work. Eliminating numbers will eventually lead you to the answer.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

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

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CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Ambulance sounds
7 Doe's mate
11 Spotted cat
12 Mother of Ares
13 Make less tense
14 Inquires
15 Send home
17 Lunch site
20 Fence supports
23 Quarterback Manning
24 Lettering aid
26 Suffer
27 Victory
28 Count start
29 Chinese boats
31 Warning color
32 School paper
33 Porgy's love
34 Little Big Horn loser
37 Writer Oz
39 Makes ready
43 Naked
44 Surrender
45 Went 80
46 Primly pompous

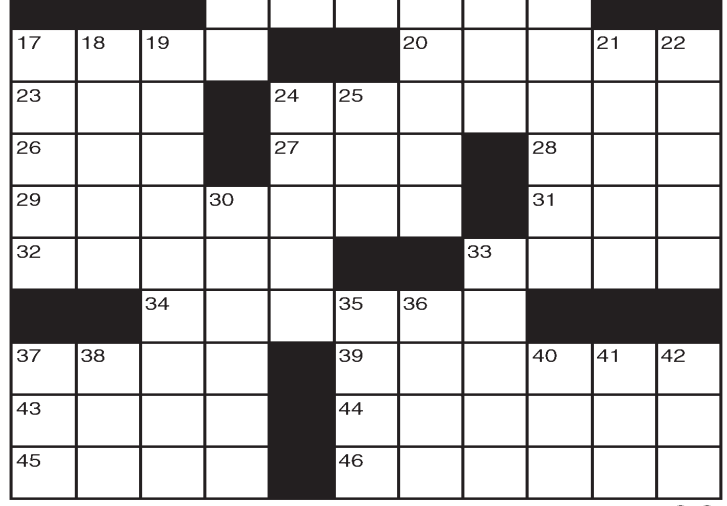
DOWN

1 Lawn material
2 Drink cubes
3 Ump's kin
4 Steer clear of
5 Rocket part
6 Dance move
7 Stone of films
8 College application datum
9 Bible vessel
10 Balloon fill
16 Some tourneys
17 Stop
18 Fake name
19 Soundtrack
21 Fork features
22 Winter gliders
24 Influences
25 Light metal
30 Took a break
33 Cry of encouragement
35 Gift attachments
36 Fix copy
37 Crunch targets
38 Travel aid
40 Walker, on a sign
41 Gentle pull
42 Bond, for one

C	A	R	O	L	■	W	A	L	T	Z
U	H	U	R	A	■	A	L	O	H	A
B	A	S	E	B	A	L	L	C	A	P
A	B	E	■	O	W	L	■	H	I	S
■	■	■	F	R	E	E	S	■	■	■
O	P	A	L	S	■	T	W	E	R	P
N	I	N	O	■	■	■	E	V	E	R
O	N	T	A	P	■	B	E	E	F	Y
■	■	■	T	A	G	U	P	■	■	■
A	R	K	■	C	A	R	■	N	B	A
T	E	N	N	I	S	S	H	O	E	S
O	N	I	O	N	■	T	O	U	G	H
M	O	T	T	O	■	S	E	N	S	E

Yesterday's answer

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3-2

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Fantasy 5: 23 32 33 37 39

DAILY 3: MIDDAY: 3 2 7 EVENING: 7 3 5

DAILY DERBY: 1st: 04 Big Ben 2nd: 05 California Classic 3rd: 10 Solid Gold RACE TIME: 1:40.01

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ David Morice, of Iowa City, Iowa, a teacher at Kirkwood Community College, was best known for a series of "Poetry Comics" until he decided last year to write 100-page poems every day for 100 days, until he had a book totaling 10,000 pages (actually, 10,119). For some reason, the University of Iowa Libraries has published the finished poem, online and in a 2-foot-high hardcopy stack. (Strangely, in a 480-word article describing Morice's feat, the Iowa City Press-Citizen included not even a hint about the poems' subject matter.)

■ In January, Toronto sculptor-photographer Lisa Murphy added to her reputation for devising "porn for the blind" by producing four more hand-molded erotic figures generated by using clay to replicate photographic scenes of nude and lingerie-clad models (accompanied by descriptions in Braille). "The butt was the hardest to sculpt," she said. "I wanted to get it nice and even, and give it a feminine softness so it would actually feel like a woman's butt." Her first book, "Tactile Mind," with 17 such raised erotic works, sells for $225 (Cdn).

TODAY IN HISTORY

1990 Nelson Mandela is elected deputy President of the African National Congress.

1991 Battle at Rumaila Oil Field brings an end to the 1991 Gulf War.

1992 Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, San Marino, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan join the United Nations.

1998 Data sent from the Galileo spacecraft indicates that Jupiter's moon Europa has a liquid ocean under a thick crust of ice.

2002 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan: Operation Anaconda begins, (ending on March 19 after killing 500 Taliban and al Qaeda fighters, with 11 Western troop fatalities).

2004 War in Iraq: Al-Qaeda carries out the Ashoura Massacre in Iraq, killing 170 and wounding over 500.

WORD UP!

masticate \ MAS-tih-kayt \ , transitive verb;

1. To grind or crush with or as if with the teeth in preparation for swallowing and digestion; to chew; as, "to masticate food."

ARITHMO™

CrossMath + × − ÷

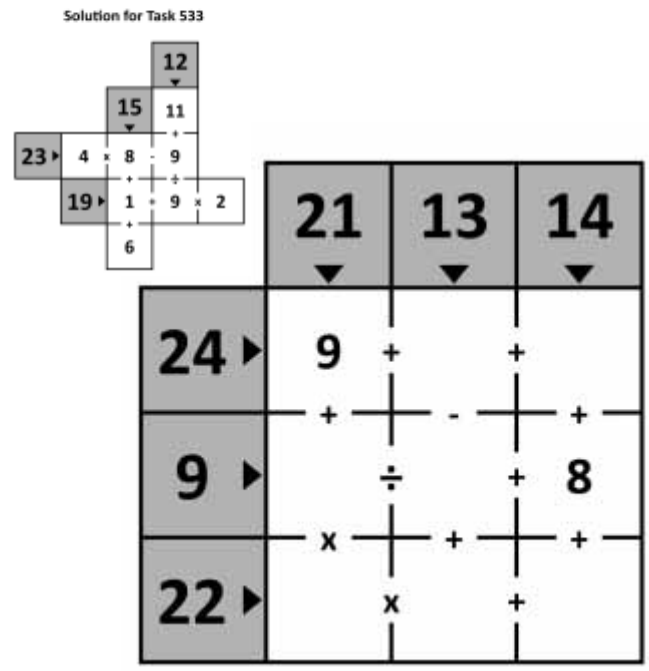
- Fill the grid with the set of given numbers (1 to 12) to satisfy the Equa demands (7 to 24) in the shaded boxes. The Equa demands represent the sum of the digits that you will insert into the empty squares.
- Each horizontal row has one Equa demand to satisfy; each vertical column also has one demand to satisfy. Each empty square in the grid dictates the math operation (addition +, subtraction -, multiplication X, and division ÷) that must be performed to meet the demands.
- You must follow the given math operations for each square and you must make sure all the numbers satisfy the demands in the shaded boxes when connected in adjacent threes and calculated together from left to right, and top to bottom.
- The numbers you insert into the grid must satisfy the Equa demands both horizontally and vertically.

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Fill in the empty fields with the given numbers so when calculated together they satisfy all Equas in the gray boxes:

1, 3, 4, 4, 5, 7, 10

Solution for Task 533



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Open Sunday!

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