

FREE

TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 95

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTTO

FANTASY 5

02, 12, 19, 21, 34

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 9, 5, 0

Evening picks: 2, 1, 5

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 12, Lucky Charms

2nd Place: 05, California Classic

3rd Place: 10, Solid Gold

Race time: 1:46.33



NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

■ Authorities at Uplands Manor Primary School (Smethwick, England) ordered teachers to use green ink for correcting papers because red was too negative.

■ A 61-year-old female motorist, after causing a major collision with a senior citizens' medical transport van, first tried to flee the scene but then sat down on the curb and began to knit while rescue operations continued (Miami Beach, Fla.).

■ Wiltshire County (England) police, adopting a new tack, hand-delivered letters to 22 persistent criminals asking them for the new year to please stop breaking the law.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Immigration is the sincerest form of flattery.

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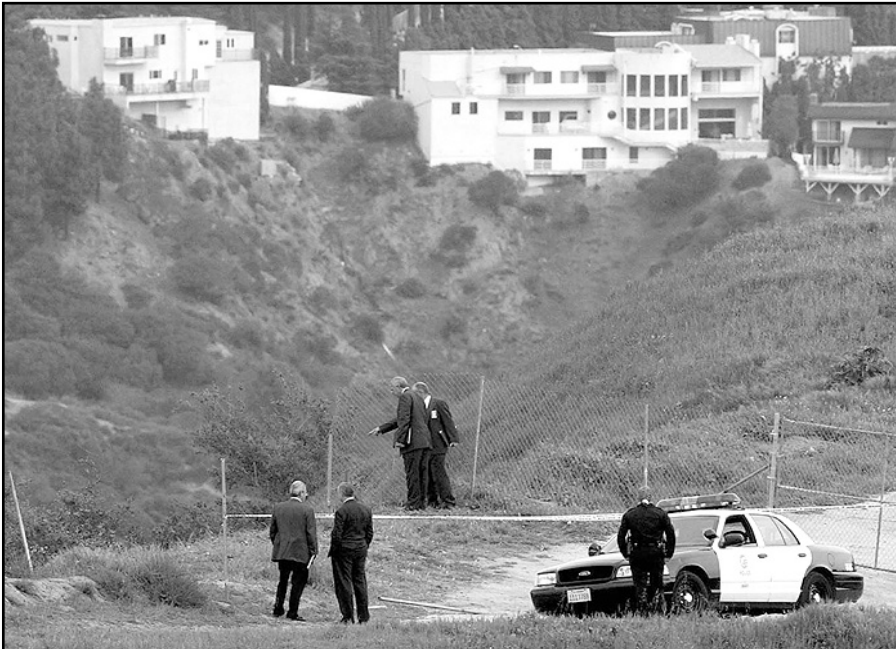
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Woman's body found, police close in on suspect

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer



Anne Cusack/Los Angeles Times

(Above) Los Angeles Police detectives look down at Kristine Johnson's body which was found on a hillside in Hollywood Hills on Monday. Johnson, (left), had been missing since Feb. 15. Authorities outside of Santa Monica have a man in custody who is believed to be in the composite sketch (right) and may be a possible suspect in the murder. The Santa Monica Police Department remains the lead agency in the murder investigation.

The 22-year-old Santa Monica College student who vanished more than two weeks ago was found dead in the Hollywood Hills on Monday — within a block of a house searched by police last week in connection with her disappearance.

In addition, police said they may have located a suspect in the murder, who is being held on an unrelated felony charge by another law enforcement agency.

Hikers found Kristine Johnson's bound body covered with a blue sleeping bag about 70 feet down a steep hillside in the 8500 block of Skyline Drive in Laurel Canyon at about 1 p.m. on Monday.

"Last week, when search warrants were served, an address in that block was one of them," said Santa Monica Police Lt. Frank Fabrega. "The house is in the general vicinity of where the body was found."

"I'm in shock. But I was realistic about this and I had a bad feeling from the beginning. I feel completely wiped out. My heart really goes out to (the family)."

— EDWIN ORTIZ

Kristine Johnson's co-worker

Fabrega didn't know the exact address of the Skyline Drive house or what was specifically found there, if anything. The county sheriff's crime lab is conducting forensic tests on evidence seized from 10 locations where searches were conducted last week.

Santa Monica police last week released a composite sketch of the man they believed Johnson was supposed to meet in Beverly Hills. The man claimed to be a photographer auditioning women for a film.

Fabrega said a law enforcement agency other than Santa Monica has a man in custody who matches the description of the possible suspect in Johnson's murder. Fabrega didn't know

See JOHNSON, page 5

Wedding photographer denies fraud allegations

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

A local wedding photographer who is accused of allegedly ripping off dozens of newlywed couples responded to criminal allegations Monday, claiming she is the victim of an overzealous city attorney's office.

Juli Anne Armitage — whose files, computer, pictures and negatives were seized by city investigators last year — said her clients are suffering while the city attorney's office tries to build a case against her.

"The city down there has got it out for her. She got a little behind and now her hands are tied. What can she do?"

— PAUL COHEN

Bankruptcy attorney

"My only comment is that the city attorney is not helping anybody with this," Armitage said. "My happy clients are now becoming unhappy clients."

The city attorney's office in

December filed 17 counts of fraud against Armitage who allegedly bilked newlywed couples out of about \$2,000 each between 2000 and 2002. The city attorney claims Armitage allegedly promised deluxe

wedding photography packages and then didn't provide the promised goods.

The complaint lists 17 separate couples who allege that Armitage collected money from them but didn't provide photos of their wedding or never showed up to the wedding at all — an allegation Armitage denies. There are an additional 23 couples who the city attorney claims were conned by Armitage. The city attorney's office said it will seek restitution for them.

A bench warrant was issued last week for Armitage after she failed

See ALLEGATIONS, page 6

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HOROSCOPE

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JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

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

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Tuesday, March 4, 2003:

Your ability to deal with changeable circumstances comes to the forefront this year. Often you might want to toss it all in. Don't. Stop and use your excellent mind and unusual creativity. You get where you want because of endurance and follow-through. If you're willing to push, you will get what you want. Some of your friends might believe they are seeing another side of you. You are transforming and will continue to in the next few years. If you are single, a relationship becomes a distinct possibility in the fall. If you are attached, remain sensitive to your loved one's needs. Share a new hobby or pastime together. ARIES helps you make money.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★★ You make up for lost time. Evidence supports taking action in the next few weeks. The unexpected occurs within a group of friends. Your ruler changes signs today into powerful Capricorn. Take the leadership position. Tonight: Whatever makes you happy.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★ Slow down and make more solid choices. Unexpected information involving an authority figure heads your way. You might want to seek out an expert. Follow your sixth sense and your intuition, if need be. Take your time making decisions. Tonight: Take time off from everything.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Reach out for what you want, be it a person or a goal. You discover that someone close might want to discuss a responsibility that has been weighing on him or her. Do be careful, because this problem could be yours. Reach out for others. Tonight: You hit the bull's-eye no matter what.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★ All eyes turn toward you. Evaluate a situation carefully, especially where a partner could be a bit touchy or difficult. Be sensitive to a boss or authority figure you care a lot about. Remember your role at work. Don't undermine yourself. Tonight: Work as late as need be.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ Reach out for a loved one. Consider what might be a more effective or applicable manner to deal with your work. You have many options. Simply acknowledge them. An associate or partner could be a resource. Listen to this person more often. Tonight: Make a call to a relative at a distance.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ With planetary changes, you decide to head in a more beneficial direction, though a partner certainly could give the incentive. Your creativity and hot energy help you deal with unanticipated news coming from left field at work. Tonight: Follow your friends.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Others defer to your expertise. You seem to be more in control than the majority of people. Still, communication remains the critical element in your decision making. Scan co-workers. Gather as much information as you can. Tonight: Off to the gym.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ You might want to be more playful and direct with a child or loved one. A family member could squawk when you least anticipate it. Work with others. Your ideas will be valued, as long as you present them in a forceful manner. Tonight: Show off your naughty side.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Do your best with your dealings involving a child or loved one. You could be most unpredictable to others, even though you believe you're levelheaded. You could demonstrate a devil-may-care attitude in the next few weeks, especially with finances. Tonight: Put your feet up.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★★ Reach out for others. Take a risk, especially if you have a very good idea. Your understanding of a personal financial matter could change. Speak your mind, but also be willing to act on a concept. Use your high energy positively. Tonight: Out and about.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Express yourself, especially if you have been holding back. You could become angrier in the next few weeks. What is important is not to suppress your feelings, but rather to express them in a way that others can hear. Start thinking taxes. Tonight: Buy something you want.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ What seems like a brilliant idea in the morning could become a problem by evening. Loosen up with others. If you have been considering joining a new organization or group, do so. You need a new avenue of self-expression. Tonight: Whatever makes the Fish happy.

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

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

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

LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Santa Monican on Hollywood Squares

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica resident Adam Vanderwielen's skills in trivia, strategy, current events and tic-tac-toe will be put to the test when he steps in as a contestant on Hollywood Squares, beginning today.

Vanderwielen will be interacting with Ellen DeGeneres, who will occupy the Center Square this season. The Santa Monica resident will be put through the rigors of a fast-paced game that pays off with cars, trips and cash awards.

Vanderwielen, a stay at home dad, keeps busy by taking care of his three children, Aspen, 4, Ivy, 2, and Tucker, 9 months. To secure his spot on the popular show, he called the Hollywood Squares hotline and auditioned.

When contestants come to Hollywood's CBS Television City to play, they can expect to tape up to five episodes each production day before a live studio audience.

"I had a great time in the Green Room," Vanderwielen said. "Overall, it was a great experience."

His advice to fellow contestants coming on the show? "Your strategic position is much more important than going on a feeling towards a particular star," he said.

In addition to Center Square Ellen DeGeneres, Vanderwielen shared the stage with a wide range of television and film stars, including "Boston Public's" Joey McIntyre, actor Martin Mull, Robert Wagner (Austin Powers), boxer Sugar Ray Leonard, rapper Rob Van Winkle (a.k.a. Vanilla Ice), talk show host Christina Saralegui, actress Florence Henderson, and Jeff Corwin (Animal Planet's The Jeff Corwin Experience). Also, a new bonus round includes all nine celebrities, and gives each day's champion the opportunity to take home great prizes, including brand new automobiles, trips around the world and everybody's favorite, cash.

"If I win big money, I'm going to spoil my wife," Vanderwielen said.

The nationally syndicated Hollywood Squares can be seen locally each Monday-Friday at 7:30 p.m. on Los Angeles' KCAL-TV.

Phil Hill races into Santa Monica

By Daily Press staff

Il Fornaio Restaurant will dedicate a room next week to racing champion and Santa Monica native Phil Hill. The 10-seat banquet room will feature an array of Hill's racing memorabilia — including vintage photos that Hill took himself.

The ceremony is scheduled for Tuesday, March 11, at 5 p.m. at Il Fornaio in Santa Monica. Hill will attend the ceremony. Reservations can be made by calling the restaurant.

Hill is regarded as one of the most respected champions in racing history and was America's first Formula One World Champion. He was among the first dozen members of the California Sports Car Club in 1947, and he won his first victory in a San Fernando Valley rally when he was 19 years old.

In a few short years, Hill developed into a very successful racing driver and had many victories. He won the 24 hours of Le Mans three times and by 1958 was driving in Formula One races. In 1961, Hill became the first American to win the Formula One World Drivers Championship, the ultimate competition in all of motorsports.

For 17 years his record was unchallenged and today is shared with only one other American, Mario Andretti. Hill remains the only American-born Formula One champion.

After retiring from racing, Hill launched the Hill & Vaughn automobile restoration business. Hill now devotes his attention to his own collection of vintage automobiles. He also works as contributing editor for Road & Track magazine and is involved with son Derek's racing career. Derek is currently the principal American in Formula 3000, run concurrently on the same weekends with the European Formula One events.

Hill was born in Miami but moved to Santa Monica in 1928 and has lived in the same house ever since. His father served as the city's postmaster.

Il Fornaio President Michael Mindel, along with Terry Karges, Marketing Manager for Roush, America's largest racing company, thought there should be a tribute to Phil in his hometown. Knowing of Phil's love of Italian racing cars, language and cuisine, Il Fornaio decided to create a special room dedicated to the champion, to commemorate his myriad achievements in racing and his involvement in the Santa Monica community.

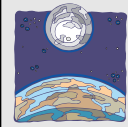
surf report

Information compiled by Jamie Seborer

The swell peaks today and will bring overhead waves on west facing breaks. Unfortunately, Wednesday will be the tail end of the swell which will bring waist-high waves.

County Line will have the best waves along with areas further South. There will be some afternoon blow-out and look for temperatures to remain around 60 degrees. The 72 hour rain advisory is still in effect.

Rain is expected for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday so the beaches will remain at a high bacteria level until next week. Good news — that's in time for a big swell headed this way arriving around March 13.



Today's Tides:

Low	3:38am	1.0'
High	9:39am	5.2'
Low	4:07pm	0.0'
High	10:22pm	4.6'

Location	Tuesday	Wednesday	Water Quality
County Line	5-7' Good	3-6' Fair	NA
Zuma	4-6' Good	3-4' Fair	NA
Surfrider	3-4' Fair	2-3' Fair	NA
Topanga	3-4' Fair	2-3' Fair	NA
Breakwater	3-4' Fair	2-3' Fair	NA
El Porto	5-7' Good	4-6' Fair	NA

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The Q Line

It seems as though every week the news gets worse for our city and school budgets. Deficits grow by the millions and officials say it's going to get to much worse before it gets better.

The local school district is asking the city of Santa Monica to kick in an extra \$3.5 million this year. The city already gives the district \$3.5 million annually. Both entities are facing about the same deficit this year — between \$10 and \$15 million — based on ever-changing estimates.

And as the city continues to fund projects like the new \$56 million voter-

approved library, the schools will lose up to 200 employees because of lay-offs and many educational programs plan to be cut.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know, "Should the city give the district more money? Why or why not?"

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

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OPINION

LETTERS

Don't give up homeowner's power

Editor:

Suddenly the initiative, Proposition A in Santa Monica would appear to have taken on national importance with the recent mailer sent out by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. No one should be fooled by it, especially since it was bought and paid for by the local Save Our Neighborhoods organization which has been fueled (and fooled) by SMRR and related sponsors.

Preservation of valuable community assets is a noble goal and I heartily concur with, and have participated in, such efforts. The political climate in Santa Monica is such that we cannot assume that those who have power at City Hall will use it in a wise and just manner. It has become evident that we need to protect our homes against an unpredictable misuse of our moderate and fair law and the framers of Proposition A have proposed just that. The initiative attempts to guarantee that no one can declare my house, or my neighbor's house, a landmark without our individual approval.

As an example of how the law can be manipulated, I was involved in a case here in Santa Monica where the owners of a "craftsman" style house were denied an agreed upon sale for their home because a neighbor who had coveted it was able to get it declared a landmark and the mere act of "landmarking" caused the buyer to walk away from the sale. Worse yet, the woman who used the law to reduce the price of the house was then able to buy it for herself.

Without Proposition A that could happen again.

James Mount
Santa Monica

Axis of dumbness

Editor:

George W. Bush and Condoleezza Rice: An axis of unsophisticated, oafish, brainless bellicosity and a dangerous deficit of real-world experience.

Add Dick Cheney: An axis of petro-avarice.

Add Donald Rumsfeld: An axis of "old America" cold-war arrogance.

Add Colin Powell: An axis of imperialism.

Toss into this lethal, warmongering mix aggressive ideologues like John Ashcroft and Anthony Scalia — reactionaries whose interpretation of the U.S. Constitution would have made Jefferson and Madison cringe — and it seems that while America's status as the world's most powerful hegemony is not in jeopardy, its reputation as the world's greatest nation is at an Orange Alert level of risk.

I wonder if even today President Bush could say how many nations border Iraq ... let alone name them.

David Stoughton
Santa Monica

Students pay their own way

Editor:

How could anyone be a member of this community and not notice the school district's music students selling gift wrap and candy, holding garage and bake sales and silent auctions, running a weekly Bingo game for years, and pleading for financial support from the City Council and business community? That's what pays for their trips — supplemented by large contributions of time and money from music parents, who pay their own way as chaperones.

I'm sure the Santa Monica-Malibu music students would be happy to send Mr. Trybus a postcard from their various performance locations, if he would kindly reciprocate with one from whatever planet he's been living on for the past two or three decades.

Jean Sedillos
Santa Monica

Bauer off mark with neighborhood groups

Editor:

I thoroughly enjoy reading Bill Bauer's column as a rule and generally find that his comments and observations are pretty sharp. In his recent column on neighborhood groups, however, he is apparently relying on a highly inaccurate source for his comments.

Northeast Neighbors, for example, has constantly been gaining members since its inception about three years ago — not losing members as written by Mr. Bauer. Northeast Neighbors' operating philosophy has been to put its efforts into educating the neighborhood about both sides of important issues, and it has invited spokespersons from opposing sides of various issues to present their cases to the membership. This was recently done, in fact, for Prop. A and was also done with regard to the issue of whether the more protective NOMA zoning standards should be applied to our neighborhood as well.

With respect to the NOMA standard, Mr. Bauer omitted to share the fact that the

proposed downzoning was supported at a neighborhood meeting by the very architect that Northeast Neighbors had invited to the meeting for the purpose of opposing the standard. The architect — well known for building very large houses in our area — stated his support for the NOMA standard in our area to everyone's surprise, but offered one or two minor changes that he thought would be warranted.

Mr. Bauer's also erred in characterizing my politics. He has no idea what my politics are and has never asked. I guess I have confused him because I have been driving a zero-emission electric vehicle for five years, am concerned about the steady densification of Santa Monica and don't think we can rely on folks with a private interest in packing us in even tighter. But you can whine and vegetate in front of your TV, or you can try to make a difference and live with the unfounded pot-shots occasionally taken in this town from those who ought to know better.

By the way, I think Mr. Bauer is wrong about neighborhood groups in general, and hope the Daily Press gives the neighborhood groups equal column space to respond. My personal experience while chair of Northeast Neighbors was that the people serving on the boards of the groups were not ego-driven, but truly concerned with genuine quality of life issues in their respective neighborhoods. While there are always disagreements over specific issues, these groups provide a forum for gathering and ascertaining grassroots support for or against issues. Residents who wish to get involved were always welcome in my experience, and can find a place on the board or on a committee if supported by enough neighbors. I am puzzled by Mr. Bauer's continued negativity about the one activity in this city where ordinary people can actually come together to make a difference.

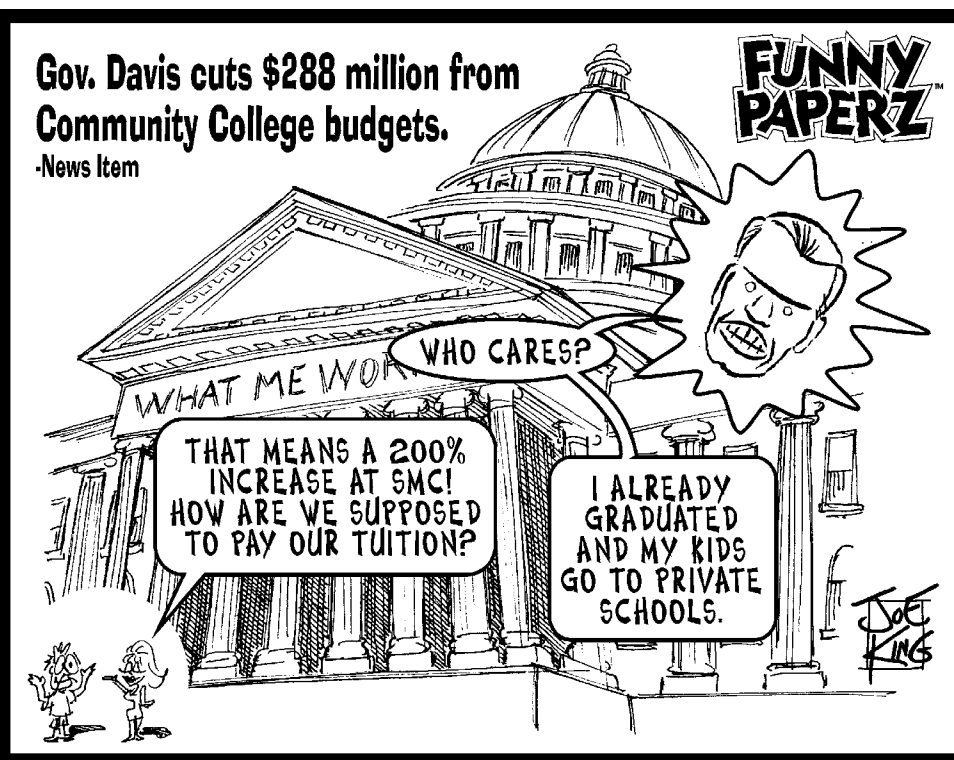
Bob Seldon
Santa Monica

Why a new library over money for students?

Editor:

I was appalled to read last Saturday in the SMDP of the \$13 million in cuts the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District is having to make. Then as I read page 4, I saw the library is getting a \$56 million overhaul to make it more "pedestrian friendly." Well, if the elementary students in SMMUSD are going to have to do without their music programs, maybe they can fill that time staring at the outside of the library. I'm confused as to why money cannot be allocated from one project to another. Wouldn't it be wise to give the library only a \$43 million outside restoration (which still seems excessive to me given the other social problems Santa Monica faces) and the SMMUSD keep the 65 teachers, 56 support staff, 35 department aides, elementary music programs, five nurses that are going to be fired? As well as the 12 special programs, and the increase in class size. It's become hard to recruit college students to become teachers. California is in an educational crisis, how are students expected to use the gorgeous looking library when they can't read because a teacher has 30 students in a class instead of 20? Or the students don't have the skills to go look for a book in the library because they have a disability that isn't being helped because their special courses are canceled. Are we really willing to sacrifice our children's education for a pretty facade?

Joy Miller
Santa Monica



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LOCAL

Parents learn of daughter's body dumped on LA hillside

JOHNSON, from page 1

which law enforcement agency is holding the man or how long he has been in custody.

"The person depicted in the sketch we believe is the same man in custody for an unrelated charge," Fabrega said. "He has no ties to Santa Monica at this point."

After the composite was released last Tuesday, a caller on SMPD's tipline provided information that led police to the man who already was in custody.

Although the coroner's office hadn't conducted an autopsy and the cause of death is unknown, authorities were able to positively identify the body as Johnson's from a tattoo on her lower back.

"We have definitive identification based on a body marking that lets us know that it is the body of Kristine Johnson," SMPD Chief James T. Butts Jr. said.

The body was found in the same area volunteers searched over the weekend. About 100 volunteers, who came from as far away as Sacramento and Orlando, combed through areas in Topanga Canyon and the hillsides of Hollywood Hills on Saturday and Sunday.

A temporary command center was established over the weekend at the Ramada Inn in Culver City that was organized by Johnson's mother, Terry Wark, and Johnson's co-workers.

Wark, who lives in Los Gatos, a northern California suburb, had been in Santa Monica most of last week and over the weekend.

She returned home on Sunday and was on a flight to New York on Monday when her daughter's body was found. When the plane landed she learned that her only daughter was dead.

"Obviously she is destroyed," said Jeff Wark, her husband. "I pray to God she has the strength to go through this. She loved that daughter of hers. She was the apple of her eye, her pride and joy."

Fabrega said Chief Butts had left several messages on Wark's cell phone before he spoke with her. He also contacted Johnson's father, Kirk Johnson, who lives in Michigan.

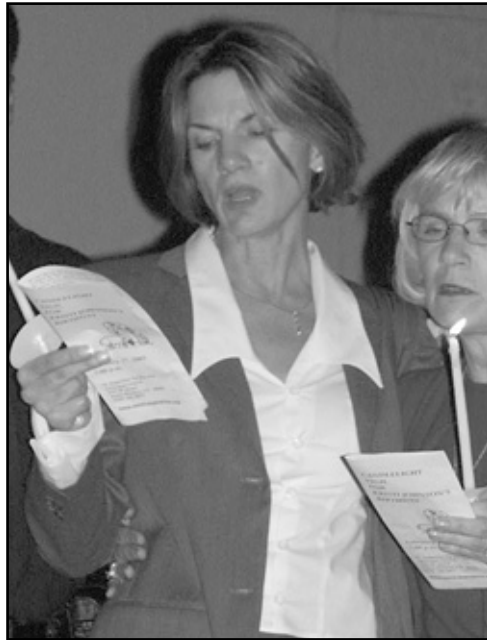
"The chief spoke to the mother and the father and they are very distraught and upset," he said.

Johnson disappeared Feb. 15 after telling her roommate she was going to Beverly Hills to audition for a photographer she met while shopping at the Century City Mall.

Police then learned on Feb. 24 that Johnson's white 1996 Mazda Miata had been valet parked Feb. 16 — the day after she disappeared — at the St. Regis Hotel in Century City by a person strongly resembling the man in the composite sketch. Police know his name but aren't releasing it.

Wark, who pleaded with her daughter's abductor through the media for more than two weeks to return her unharmed, was scheduled to appear on the television talk show, "The View" and CNN on Tuesday in New York. Wark has done countless interviews with local, state and national media in the past week in an effort to find her daughter.

Wark, who remained composed and focused throughout the ordeal, said she believed that Johnson was still alive and was relying on her faith to have her returned safely. Earlier Monday, Wark appealed for more volunteers to search



File photo

Terry Wark, mother of Kristine Johnson, sings 'Amazing Grace' at a vigil held for her last week in Santa Monica.

Southern California for her daughter.

Friends and family gathered in Santa Monica and her hometown of Saugatuck, Mich., for two separate vigils last Thursday, the day of Johnson's 22nd birthday.

Wark, who spoke to Johnson every day by phone, said last week that she shared a special bond with her daughter, who was described as beautiful, fun loving woman.

"I pray to God she has the strength to go through this. She loved that daughter of hers. She was the apple of her eye, her pride and joy."

— JEFF WARK
Husband of Johnson's mother

"I do have a strong connectedness to Kristi," Wark told reporters last week. "And she isn't in my loving arms."

Co-workers say Johnson was extremely close to her family in northern California and visited her paternal grandmother, Kathryn Johnson, at her home in Santa Maria nearly every weekend.

Johnson lived on 29th Street with two roommates. She moved to California about two years ago after a year at Michigan State. She lived with her grandmother for about a year and a half before moving to the Los Angeles area nine months ago.

Johnson had worked at CNCG Cellular, a small wholesale cellular phone company based in Marina Del Rey, for about 2 1/2 months.

Edwin Ortiz, a manager at CNCG and who helped organize the search for Johnson, said it's difficult to think she isn't coming back.

"No one took it well," Ortiz said of Johnson's co-workers. "I'm in shock. But I was realistic about this and I had a bad feeling from the beginning. I feel completely wiped out. My heart really goes out to (the family)."

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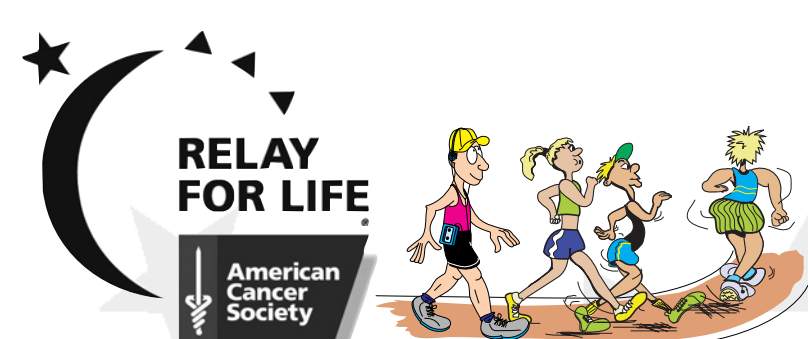
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LOCAL □ STATE

City attorney to consider plea offer in alleged fraud case

ALLEGATIONS, from page 1

to appear at her original court arraignment. Armitage made it to court Monday, but her trial was continued a second time because her public defender didn't make it to court after reportedly running in the L.A. marathon Sunday.

Armitage, who declined further comment, said she asked her public defender to release a statement explaining her side of the case. The public defender's office did not return calls Monday.

But Philip Deco, a past client of Armitage's who showed up in court on Monday looking for his negatives from his 2001 wedding, said Armitage told him she thinks the city has a vendetta against her.

The city attorney's office declined to comment on the case or Armitage's allegations.

Armitage has admitted she made a few bad business decisions in the past, but said the city unnecessarily seized all of her property and is now refusing to give any of it back while they build a case against her.

When they seized the contents of her office, city officials told Armitage to direct clients seeking pictures to the city attorney's office, Deco said. But when Armitage's clients contacted the city looking for their pictures, Deco said the city tried to sign them on to the lawsuit rather than return any of the confiscated items.

Deco said the city attorney's office called him late last year and requested he join the lawsuit, despite that he told city officials that Armitage had delivered everything as promised so far.

"I can testify to that," said Deco, who grew nervous after he was contacted by the city attorney and decided to retrieve the negatives on his own. "But I said 'no' because (Armitage) hadn't done wrong by us."

Armitage, who is involved in a sepa-



Julie Armitage

rate bankruptcy proceeding and has two unpaid small claims judgments against her, told the Daily Press last year that the criminal complaint was brought against her only after she demanded her property be returned if no charges were going to be filed.

"This is a matter of me getting behind on a couple of albums," she said. "This is not a matter of me criminally not delivering on promised goods."

Paul Cohen, Armitage's bankruptcy attorney, called the city's criminal charges "ridiculous" and said he thinks the matter should be pursued in a civil courtroom.

"The city down there has got it out for her," Cohen said. "She got a little behind and now her hands are tied. What can she do?"

If convicted, Armitage faces a maximum penalty of one year in jail and \$2,700 in fines and penalties for each of the 17 counts of grand theft, according to the city attorney's office.

City attorneys wouldn't say if they would seek jail time but did say they were discussing a plea offer.

Pardoned businessman pleads innocent to federal tax evasion

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A Southern California businessman whose 11th-hour pardon by Bill Clinton was one of the former president's most controversial, pleaded innocent Monday to federal charges of failing to pay \$13 million in income taxes.

Almon Glenn Braswell, who owns a mail-order vitamin business in Marina del Rey, is accused of engaging in several elaborate conspiracies to avoid paying personal and corporate federal income taxes. He is scheduled to go on trial April 8 and could face up to 51 years in prison if convicted of tax evasion, filing false returns and conspiracy.

A decision on whether to set bail was postponed pending further proceedings.

Braswell, 59, has been jailed since his arrest in Miami in January.

He served seven months in prison for a 1983 fraud conviction involving claims about the effectiveness of a baldness treatment.

He was one of 140 people Clinton pardoned just hours before President Bush took office in 2001.

The action came under criticism when it was revealed that Clinton's brother-in-law, Hugh Rodham, collected a \$200,000 fee for handling Braswell's pardon request and that Braswell was under investigation for possible tax evasion and money laundering at the time.

Clinton said he was unaware of the involvement of his brother-in-law, who later returned the money.

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Santa Monica Daily Press



STATE



Indicted police chief takes medical leave, won't step aside

BY KIM CURTIS

Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Indicted by a grand jury and warned by the district attorney that “no one in San Francisco is above the law,” most of the city’s top police commanders stepped down Monday, leaving the department in shambles.

Police Chief Earl Sanders was preparing to take a medical leave, and six of his top commanders agreed to step aside as they fight felony charges of conspiring to cover up a street brawl involving several off-duty officers.

Confusion reigned after a contentious Police Commission meeting, where rank-and-file officers lined up to praise their accused leaders and some citizens pleaded with city leaders to clean up what they see as a pattern of police corruption.

“I understand the public feelings of shock, outrage, anger and apprehension,” Hallinan said, rejecting accusations by many police officers and allies of Mayor Willie Brown that he had led a political witch hunt.

Even Hallinan was surprised when the grand jury indicted Sanders and six other top police officials, as well as the three young officers involved in a fight with two men who said the off-duty cops demanded their doggie bag of steak fajitas after the bars closed on Nov. 20.

Sanders and others in the chain of command are accused of obstructing justice by hindering the police investigation into the fight. Three others, including a rookie cop whose father is Sanders’ top aide, are accused of felony assault and battery. All were to be arraigned Tuesday.

Despite official pronouncements that crime-fighting will continue in the city, there was a chaotic atmosphere at the Hall of Justice, a grim building where police and prosecutors must work closely together despite a combative political rivalry between Hallinan and the mayor, who appointed his longtime friend Sanders to lead the department.

Several experts reached all the way back to 1860s New York, when the fall of Boss Tweed’s Tammany Hall took out much of the city’s leadership, for comparisons. A San Francisco police chief was last indicted by a grand jury in 1906, when Jeremiah Dinan was accused of bribery and extortion.

The mayor, who has outspokenly supported Sanders and the police investigation into the Nov. 20 incident that started it all, pulled back from the controversy Monday and did not offer public comment.

But police leaders lined up before the Police Commission to support the indicted officers, countering

citizens who pleaded for swift action to reform a department they say has considered itself immune to criticism.

“This is a cautionary tale for police departments all over the country,” said Jimani Jakada of the group Bay Area Police Watch, who criticized the police for closing ranks around the indicted chief. “They’re saying they’re blue, I’m blue, I’ll stand with you.”

“This is a cautionary tale for police departments all over the country.”

— JIMANI JAKADA
Bay Area Police Watch

But officers representing various segments of the force — black, Hispanic, Asian and gay/lesbian officers — urged the commission to keep the command staff intact.

“This department is up and running and we’ll continue to serve the people,” said Chris Cunnie, president of the San Francisco Police Officers Association. “We stand by these people.”

Commission president Connie Perry ultimately announced that Sanders had accepted the offers of the six commanders to “step aside and go on leave.” Then commissioners adjourned until Wednesday evening, saying they needed to gather more information about what evidence supports the felony charges.

It wasn’t clear Monday if or when Sanders might relinquish control of the department. The mayor did announce that he elevated Heather Fong, one of the few untainted police managers, to acting assistant chief, replacing Alex Fagan Sr.

Fong, a deputy chief and the department’s highest-ranking Asian, quickly left the meeting through a backdoor and did not take questions from reporters.

The case began with a sidewalk confrontation between Alex Fagan Jr., a troubled 23-year-old rookie, and two other officers who had been drinking that night at a police banquet to celebrate the mayor’s promotion of the elder Fagan to the department’s No. 2 spot.

At closing time, Fagan Jr. and officer Matthew Tonsing allegedly accosted Adam Snyder, 22, who tends bar nearby, and his friend, Jade Santoro, 25, as officer David Lee, the designated driver, pulled up in his pickup truck.

Snyder, who said he had no idea the men punching them were police, called 911 on his cell phone pleading

for help. “I need some cops fast,” he said. “They just started fighting us over nothing.”

Police arrived and took the officers away before Snyder and Santoro could identify them. Fagan Jr., Tonsing and Lee also were allegedly allowed to change their clothes and drink large amounts of water before they were tested for alcohol, more than four hours later.

Hallinan, who campaigned as “America’s most progressive district attorney,” began complaining two days after the brawl that the department wasn’t taking it seriously.

The internal police review was led by Lt. Joe Dutto, a by-the-book cop who took police brass at their word when they promised a full investigation. But Dutto ran into roadblocks: He was ordered to submit questions in writing, and denied access to some of the officers, their cell phone records and disciplinary histories. After he refused to let a deputy chief see his case file, Sanders approved his transfer to the vice squad.

“He had been working hard to get at the truth,” Hallinan said at the time. “Taking Dutto off this case is a bad mistake.”

It turned out Fagan Jr. had at least 16 violent encounters with suspects in a 13-month period, sending six of them to the hospital, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. One of his supervisors wrote him up as disrespectful of both his bosses and the public.

But other higher-ups apparently took little action other than to counsel him about his conduct and order anger management training — a course he never took.

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Bishop says dead priest abused minors

By The Associated Press

CALIPATRIA — Church officials have disclosed that a priest who died in 1999 molested several children during his 27-year tenure at a Catholic parish in this small Imperial County town.

A letter from Bishop Robert Brom distributed to parishioners Sunday said an investigation found the Rev. Robert S. Koerner “sexually abused children throughout the years of his pastorate at St. Patrick’s, from 1963 to 1990.”

Brom apologized to Koerner’s victims and their families.

“I wish to reach out to them with pastoral concern and care and to promote healing and reconciliation with them,” he wrote.

Rodrigo Valdivia, the diocese’s chancellor, said “more than two or three” victims have been identified so far. He said the victims were “generally boys.”

Brom, whose diocese includes San Diego and Imperial counties, first learned of the accusations in October dur-

ing a visit to the small, predominantly Latino church.

Valdivia said there was no record of complaints made against Koerner.

The Rev. Amador Lopez, who has been at St. Patrick’s for the past five years, said no one ever mentioned a problem to him.

“I was so surprised when the bishop told me about it,” he said.

In his letter to parishioners, the bishop said no priests who have sexually abused minors are in active ministry in the Diocese of San Diego.

Calipatria, about 100 miles east of San Diego and 50 miles north of the Mexican border, has a population of about 3,800, not including 4,000 inmates at the Calipatria State Prison.

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STATE

California desert town, population 7, up for sale

By The Associated Press

AMBOY — The owners of this tiny desert town hope to get some clicks on Route 66 when they put it up for auction on the Web this week.

Timothy White and Walt Wilson intend to list the postage-stamp, Route 66 town on auction site eBay Inc. The listing should appear later this week, said Rob McManus, estates director for San Marino-based Dilbeck Realtors.

Amboy, population seven, has remained unsold since it was put up for sale for \$1.9 million in October, McManus said Monday. White and Wilson bought the town for an undisclosed amount several years ago.

"We kept it alive — we got it going again. It's just we have a lot of other things we're doing, we're involved in. We thought it was time for someone else to take it over," Wilson said in a telephone interview.

The highest bidder will get a package that includes the 150-acre town, post office, motel, cafe, gas station, church, gift shop, two landing strips and four antique vehicles — a 1964 fire truck is

one — and about 540 acres of surrounding land divided in five noncontiguous parcels, McManus said.

Also included is the towering sign, advertising Roy's Cafe & Motel, that has helped land the town in a variety of television and print advertisements, as well as movies and music videos.

"It's the only thing left on the old highway like that," Wilson said of Amboy's vintage allure.

McManus said his clients opted to turn to the Web after the successful and highly publicized eBay auction of the Northern California town of Bridgeville in December. The winning bid for that town was \$1.78 million.

Since then, a smattering of towns have appeared on the auction site. Many have gone without attracting a single bid, including Carlotta, another Northern California town, currently listed with an opening bid of \$1.07 million. It had no bids as of early Monday.

Amboy was founded in 1858 as a mining town. It is about a 3 1/2-hour drive from Los Angeles. Among Amboy's neighbors is the town of Bagdad.

Ex-police chief, ex-Assembly speaker up for L.A. council

BY ERICA WERNER

Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — Former police Chief Bernard Parks and former state Assembly speaker Antonio Villaraigosa are seeking to restart their political careers with runs for the City Council of the nation's second-largest city.

Wins by either on Tuesday could set up a power struggle with Mayor James Hahn, who beat Villaraigosa for mayor after a nasty campaign two years ago and refused to support Parks for a second term as chief.

Seven of the council's 15 seats are up for election, including four open seats thanks largely to term limits. Term limits on the state level, meanwhile, have forced state legislators including Villaraigosa to run for council jobs.

Meanwhile voters in suburban South Gate, where four local officials were recalled in January amid allegations of abuse of office, will elect three new council members. Nearby in Carson, where two past and two present city officials were indicted on federal corruption

charges, voters will fill two seats left empty by resignations and guilty pleas.

Elections will be taking place in dozens of municipalities around the state.

In Los Angeles, Parks is considered a shoo-in to win his race in the heavily black 8th District. He resigned as police chief a year ago after Hahn refused to back him for a second term. Perhaps the city's most prominent black, Parks is expected to clash with Hahn on the council and possibly challenge him for mayor.

Villaraigosa is running against incumbent Councilman Nick Pacheco, a Hahn ally, in the largely Hispanic 14th District. Villaraigosa, who excited many Hispanic voters with his energetic mayoral campaign against Hahn, is viewed as the more liberal candidate while the younger Pacheco is seen as a centrist. Villaraigosa is also considered a possible challenger to Hahn.

With a third candidate also in the race, it's considered unlikely that either Villaraigosa or Pacheco would get the 50 percent support needed to avoid a runoff. The runoff would take place May 20.

Student charged with murder

By The Associated Press

LONG BEACH — A high school athlete charged with murder after a fellow student died following a fistfight has been released over the objection of prosecutors.

The 17-year-old, whose name has not been made public because of his age, had been held at Juvenile Hall for about a week. He was released to his parents' custody Friday pending a March 10 pre-trial hearing.

He has denied the juvenile court peti-

tion charging him with the murder of 18-year-old Fabian Espinoza of Wilmington.

The Phineas Banning High School student allegedly got into a fight with Espinoza in the school parking lot on Feb. 19.

Espinoza later went home, where he vomited and complained of a headache before going to bed, police said. He was pronounced dead the next morning.

The coroner's office concluded that he died of head injuries.

NATIONAL



GOP argues that \$300B deficits will not be new record

BY ALAN FRAM

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The government is on track to a mass annual federal deficits this year and next exceeding \$300 billion for the first time. Republicans insist the red ink would not be a record, a contention Democrats reject in a linguistic duel less about economics than politics.

"They're not always engaged in an academic search for truth," Indiana University economics professor Willard Witte said of both parties.

Economists agree the most meaningful way to compare historic budget figures is to factor in changes in the dollar's value or the size of the economy. Republicans say that when inflation is considered, there have been nine shortfalls since World War II worse than the projected deficits for 2003 and 2004.

Even so, that argument is part of a weeks-long GOP campaign to downplay their deficit forecasts in hopes of aiding congressional passage of President Bush's proposed \$1.46 trillion in fresh tax cuts over the next decade.

"They're engaged in trying to carry the day in some policy argument," Witte said of the two parties, "so they're bound to interpret the truth in the light that makes their case most strongly."

Republicans and Democrats always compete for words and numbers that help them define an issue most favorably. Republicans eager to abolish the tax on large estates call it the "death" tax, while Democrats trying to taint Bush's proposed new tax cuts label them the "leave-no-millionaire-behind" plan, a play on his "no-child-left-behind" education initiative.

In the budget Bush sent Congress last month, he projected shortfalls of \$304 billion this year and \$307 billion next — numbers that war and other factors are expected to make worse.

Until now, the \$290 billion deficit of 1992 under the first President Bush has never been surpassed.

"How can they say it's not a record? You don't need a Ph.D. in economics to know \$304 billion is more than \$290 billion," said Tom Kahn, Democratic staff director of the House Budget Committee.

But when Democrats and journalists began referring to the forecast deficits as a "record," Republicans adamantly insisted that the word was meaningless because the label ignored the erosion that inflation has caused in the dollar.

When converted to the value the dollar had in 1996, Bush's budget documents say, the projected \$307 billion deficit of 2004 would be just \$265 billion.

And, using those same 1996 dollars, the \$290 billion shortfall of 1992 becomes \$318 billion; the \$55 billion deficit of 1943 is \$425 billion; and there were bigger deficits in 1944, 1945, 1983, 1985, 1986, 1991 and 1993.

"Many headlines erroneously proclaimed the president's proposals would produce 'record' deficits," chided a newsletter by the Senate Budget Committee, run by Chairman Don Nickles, R-Okla., which cited "a deficit of understanding."

The battle over how best to characterize multiyear budget figures was also waged in 1995 — when Republicans took the opposite view from their position today and Democrats accused them of trying to "cut" Medicare and Medicaid.

Those two huge, popular health insur-

ance programs for the elderly, poor and disabled grow automatically each year to cover medical inflation and growing pools of beneficiaries. In 1995, Republicans' budget-balancing plans culled savings from both by slowing their growth.

GOP Chairman Haley Barbour even took out newspaper ads offering \$1 million to anyone who could prove Republicans would "cut" Medicare. Republicans said those programs were not being cut because spending for both would still rise every year — the opposite of their view today that inflation and other

factors must be considered.

In the current battle, Republicans say the huge forecast deficits are manageable when compared to the size of the U.S. economy.

Next year's projected \$307 billion shortfall would be 2.7 percent of the \$10.5 trillion economy — a proportion many economists don't find alarming by itself.

That would be far less than the 6 percent of the economy the \$208 billion deficit of 1983 ate up, the biggest percentage since World War II. Since 1980, budget deficits have exceeded 2.7 percent of the economy 12 other years.

Major airlines' performance continue to show improvement

BY LESLIE MILLER

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The 10 biggest airlines arrived on time more and canceled fewer flights in January than in December, continuing improvements that result from changes in air traffic control and a drop-off in passengers.

Flights on major airlines arrived within 15 minutes of schedule 84.9 percent of the time in January, up from 78.3 percent in December, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics reported Monday. The airlines' performance improved 4.6 percent from January to January.

Since early 2001, new air traffic procedures and changes in airline schedules to avoid delays resulted in continual improvement, said David Smallen, spokesman for the Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

Storms in February may change that, said David Stempler, president of the Air Travelers Association.

"Weather is usually the factor that causes delays," he said.

Bankrupt carrier United Airlines had the best on-time performance and canceled the fewest flights of all the major airlines for the second month in a row.

Stempler said it's too soon to tell whether new security procedures are reducing the number of mishandled bags.

In January, the airlines reported a 7.7 percent decrease since December in the number of reports of lost, damaged, delayed or pilfered luggage.

To meet a requirement that 100 percent of bags be screened for explosives, federal screeners began on Jan. 1 hand-searching some bags and matching to a passenger all luggage loaded onto a plane.

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INTERNATIONAL

Turkey rejects U.S. troops; U.S. must rethink strategy

BY LOUIS MEIXLER
Associated Press Writer

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey's surprise rejection of a U.S. troop deployment is forcing American planners to rethink a strategy that called for attacks from two fronts to hit Saddam Hussein's army so ferociously his forces could quickly collapse.

Turkey's parliament rejected the U.S. request on Saturday, leaving the U.S. plan to base 62,000 U.S. soldiers on Iraq's northern border in disarray.

by just three votes, despite lobbying by Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The northern front was also considered vital to maintaining stability in northern Iraq. Turkey has said it will send troops into the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq if there is a war, a move that Iraqi Kurds who have autonomy there have vowed to resist.

With a northern front a war "would be quicker, there would certainly be far fewer casualties ... and far less risk of civil tensions in Iraq," said Anthony Cordesman,

"If the U.S. could not launch from Turkey it would be a major although not fatal blow."

— TOBY DODGE

Middle East specialist at Warwick University

Washington was so sure that it would gain Turkey's support that cargo ships carrying U.S. armor are waiting off the Turkish shore and hundreds of jeeps and trucks have already been unloaded in southern Turkey.

In Germany, the top U.S. military commander in Europe said military officials were considering alternate plans if Turkey remains steadfast in its rejection of a U.S. deployment.

"It's very much a wait and see situation at the moment," Marine Gen. James L. Jones, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, told reporters.

A top official in Turkey's governing Justice and Development Party, Eyup Fatsa, said Parliament isn't planning to take up the issue in the "foreseeable future." But Foreign Minister Yasar Yakis appeared to leave the door open for a new vote, saying leaders will conduct a "process of evaluation."

Basing troops in Turkey, on Iraq's northern border, is so crucial to U.S. war plans that American negotiators offered some \$15 billion in aid to try to win over Turkish approval.

U.S. and Turkish generals agree that a northern front would lead to a shorter and less bloody war, but Turkish public opinion is overwhelmingly against a war. Legislators failed to approve the measure

an Iraq expert with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

The northern plan called for the 4th Infantry "Ironhorse" Division and parts of the 101st Airborne "Screaming Eagles" Division to seize the oil-rich cities of Mosul and Kirkuk and drive toward the south when war started, experts said.

Taking the oil cities would be a sharp blow to Saddam and would also be politically important. Both Kurds and Turks have claims to the cities and each side wants to make sure the other does not gain control.

Meanwhile, the 255 U.S. strike fighters that would be based in Turkey would fly bombing missions in Iraq.

Aircraft including attack helicopters carrying anti-tank missiles and machine guns would fly out of Turkish border areas to strafe Iraqi troops and paralyze transport on Iraqi roads, experts said.

"The idea is to seize as much territory as possible," said Toby Dodge, a Middle East specialist at Warwick University in England. "All of this is designed to ... break the command and control of the army and lead to a coup."

After seizing the oil cities, the northern troops would be poised to start moving south toward Saddam's hometown of Tikrit and later Baghdad, experts said.

Without the northern front, an attack could only take place from the south, giving

A young fight against Israel



Nasser Ishtayeh/Associated Press

A Palestinian schoolgirl hurls a stone at the direction of a patrolling Israeli army armored personnel carrier in the northern West Bank town of Nablus on Monday. Israeli troops renewed their operations in the city's Casbah or Old City early Monday, blocking the entrances to the area and taking over homes and buildings to use as lookouts, residents said.

Iraq's army a chance to concentrate its resources and leaving the Tikrit area, a heartland of support for the Iraqi regime, out of reach of U.S. forces until late in the war.

"If the U.S. could not launch from Turkey it would be a major although not fatal blow," Dodge said.

Turkish cooperation would have a large price in addition to the billions of dollars in aid and grants.

U.S. war plans are already leading to serious tensions between Turkey and Iraqi Kurds, and Ankara wants to make sure that if it gives its support, Washington guarantees that there will not be a Kurdish state in Iraq after a war.

Turkey has also demanded that any Iraqi Kurdish fighters who are armed by the United States during a war are disarmed afterward in the presence of a Turkish military officer, reports said. The United States was looking to use the Kurds as scouts, reports said.

Without a northern front, however, tensions could be even greater with less coordination between the sides, in part because Turkey is likely to still move its

forces into Iraq if there is a war.

"In the north you have the prospects of a three or four cornered fight between the Iraqis, the Kurds, the Americans and the Turks," said Dan Plesch, an analyst at the Royal United Services Institute in London.

"Without (U.S. tanks) on the ground it would be very risky to control that," Plesch said.

Kurdish factions in the north can mobilize about 70,000 lightly-armed guerrillas.

A revised war strategy is likely to call for a far reduced northern front.

During the 1991 Gulf War, the United States based hundreds of aircraft and commandos in Turkey, forces that might be acceptable if a new, scaled back agreement is adopted.

There are also reports that Washington is looking to fly commandos into the Kurdish autonomous regions of Iraq if there is a war.

Those forces would likely aim to maintain order in the Kurdish areas and could possibly seize the oil cities. But they would not pose the same threat to Iraq as the heavy armored troops.

Rebel group says it won't negotiate release of U.S. hostages

BY SUSANNAH A. NESMITH
Associated Press Writer

BOGOTA, Colombia — Colombia's largest rebel group said Monday it would negotiate with Colombia but not with the United States for the release of three Americans captured after their plane crashed.

The three were seized Feb. 13. A fourth American and a Colombian army sergeant on the plane were killed near the crash site. The four Americans were working for California Microwave Systems, a division of Northrop Grumman, which has a contract to work for the Pentagon in Colombia.

The United States has said that it had no intentions of negotiating with the rebel group, the Revolutionary

Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, which is on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said President Bush began his day with a phone call to Colombian President Alvaro Uribe.

"They both expressed concern about the United States citizens that have been taken hostage by FARC and the need for continued close cooperation to get them released," Fleischer said.

The FARC on Monday reiterated its warning that the Americans' lives were being endangered by Colombian military operations in the area where they were taken. The warning was posted on its Internet page.

The FARC, in an earlier communique, accused the Americans of being CIA employees. Calling them pris-

oners of war, the FARC said they would only be released if the Colombian government agreed to free hundreds of jailed rebels.

The rebels said Monday that they will only negotiate with the Colombian government, noting there are no FARC rebels in U.S. jails.

"The causes and consequences of the internal conflict of our country will be resolved between Colombians," the statement said.

Colombia's war pits the FARC and a smaller rebel group against the government and outlawed paramilitary groups.

The three American hostages have not been identified. The American killed was identified as Thomas Janis of Montgomery, Ala.



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SPORTS



Clippers fire Alvin Gentry, promote Dennis Johnson

BY BETH HARRIS

AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES — Alvin Gentry's roster of young, talented players just kept losing, and that cost him his job as coach of the Los Angeles Clippers.

Gentry was fired Monday with 24 games left in another disappointing season. Assistant Dennis Johnson replaced him.

The Clippers took a five-game losing streak and a 19-39 record into Monday night's game against New Orleans. They're last in the Pacific Division and have blown 20 games when holding a fourth-quarter lead.

"These decisions are never easy, and this one is especially tough, because Alvin and I had a very good working relationship," team vice president Elgin Baylor said.

"But I reached the conclusion Sunday night that the players simply were not responding, and I believe a change is necessary at this time."

Johnson, 48, won three NBA titles with Seattle and Boston during his 14-year playing career. He was in his fourth season as a Clippers assistant.

Gentry had a record of 89-133 since becoming coach before the 2000-01 season. Prior to that, he was 73-72 as coach of the Detroit Pistons. He also coached the Miami Heat, in between 10 seasons as an assistant with three NBA teams.

Gentry, 48, was the Clippers' fourth coach in six seasons. The team last made the playoffs in the 1996-97 season, under coach Bill Fitch.

The Clippers opened this season with a 5-10 record and slumped to 17-32 by the All-Star break. They frequently were booed at home, where they're 12-19.

Adding to the Clippers' woes have been numerous injuries, and questions about whether owner Donald Sterling will keep the team together next season.

Starters Elton Brand, Lamar Odom, Michael Olowokandi, Corey Maggette and Andre Miller are all free agents after the season.

Brand, the team's leading scorer, has a

stress fracture in his left leg, and is day to day. He had missed three consecutive games going into Monday night.

Olowokandi underwent arthroscopic knee surgery Feb. 3 and has not been attending games or practices during his rehabilitation. Backup guard Keyon Dooling and forward Tremaine Fowlkes also are on the injured list.

Odom missed 29 of the Clippers' first 43 games with an ankle injury and a sore right wrist.

Previously, Johnson was an assistant

with the Celtics from 1993-97. He began his head coaching career with the La Crosse (Wis.) Bobcats of the CBA in 1999-00.

Considered one of the best defensive players in NBA history, Johnson won titles with Seattle in 1979 and Boston in 1984 and '86 during a 14-year playing career. Johnson was MVP of the NBA Finals in 1979.

After hosting New Orleans on Monday night, the Clippers begin a six-game road trip Wednesday at Washington.

Ex-Eagles take spotlight in free agency

By The Associated Press

The Philadelphia Eagles could find it a lot more difficult to defend the NFC East title next season.

The team lost two players Monday — linebacker Shawn Barber to Kansas City and Brian Mitchell to the New York Giants. The Eagles also stand to lose their top defensive end and pass rusher, Hugh Douglas, another unrestricted free agent, although they hope to re-sign him.

Barber, one of several sought-after linebackers available this year, signed with a team attempting to bolster a defense that was the NFL's worst statistically last season.

The 34-year-old Mitchell, one of the best return men in NFL history, is expected to provide a major lift to the Giants' special teams, which have been dismal the past three seasons.

Tennessee, meanwhile, re-signed

guard Zach Piller, who would have been one of the better offensive linemen available; Atlanta signed former Cincinnati safety Cory Hall; and the New York Jets re-signed fullback Gerald Sowell, who probably will become their starter at that position.

Marty Mornhinweg, fired Jan. 27 as coach of the Detroit Lions, found a new job Monday, as a senior assistant coach for the Eagles. Mornhinweg and Philadelphia coach Andy Reid worked together on Mike Holmgren's staff in Green Bay in the mid-1990s, and before that in college.

Both Barber and Mitchell are ex-Redskins once removed. Both began their careers with Washington, which dominated the free-agent market in the first three days. The team signed eight players, primarily offensive and defensive linemen, and traded for running back Trung

Canidate.

Barber signed a seven-year deal with the Chiefs, who finished 8-8, excelling on offense but allowing the most yards in the league last season.

"He possesses the skills, abilities and experience that should improve our defense immediately," Chiefs president Carl Peterson said.

Mitchell, who will be 35 next season, gives the Giants the kickoff and punt returner they've lacked since the days of Dave Meggett a decade ago. He averaged 12.3 yards on punt returns last year and 27 on kickoffs. His 21,987 combined yards is second only to Jerry Rice on the NFL's career list.

"It's a great opportunity for me," Mitchell said. "I hope I can bring the same thing I've been doing. I hope I can bring my tenacity on the field and keep making right decisions."

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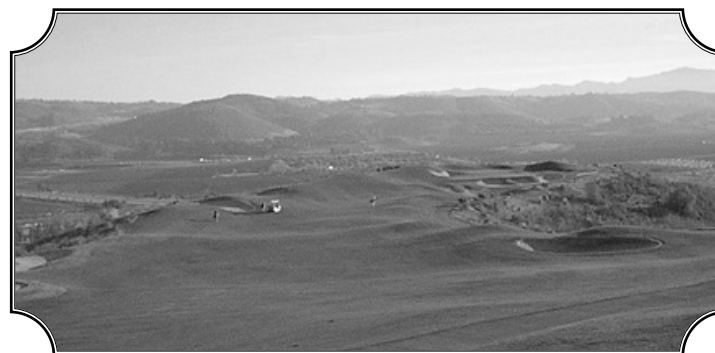
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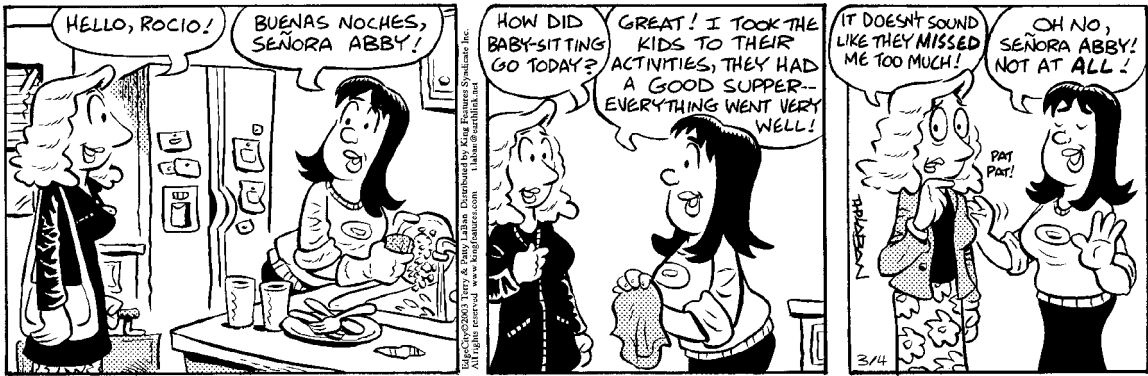


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- 23 Deli choice
- 25 Indian city
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THE FIRST day I put my laptop for sale in your paper, I got several offers and sold it that day! Thank you Daily Press! Jamie Schuler, Santa Monica

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SANTA MONICA SCENE °CALENDAR EDITION

TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2003

TUESDAY

Blue 7 presents 'Near and Far - Photographic Images of Nature.' The featured photographers are Scott Connell, Michael Gordon and Gavin Lauchenauer. Exhibit ends April 5th. Blue 7, 3129 Pico Blvd. (310)449-1444

Ongoing support groups for people 55 and older. Current openings in, So, What Are You Going to Do With the Rest of your Life? Tuesdays, 10:00 to 11:30am. Center for Healthy Aging, 2125 Arizona Avenue. Sliding scale fee. Not drop-in groups. Phone interview required. Call Information and Referral. (310)576-2550.

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

Senior Suppers - Discounted meals for people AGE 55 or older are served daily, from 3:30 p.m. To 7 p.m., in the cafeteria at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center,

1250 16th Street in Santa Monica. \$3.69 Info only: (310)319-4837.

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

TOMORROW

Farmer's Market every Wednesday. 9am to 2pm, Arizona between Second and Fourth Streets. Come and enjoy one of the largest and best farmer's markets in California!

Puppetolio! presented by the Santa Monica Puppet & Magic Center. All ages, 3 and up. This musical revue features marionettes, ventriloquism, magic and more. Shows are always followed by a demonstration, Q & A, and a tour of the Puppet workshop and Museum. Saturdays and Sundays at 1pm and 3pm. Wednesdays and Holidays at 1pm. Seats are \$6.50. 1255 2nd Street in Santa Monica. Reservations/Information

(310)656-0483. www.puppetmagic.com

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

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

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

Santa Monica Strutters, a FREE program sponsored by UCLA Healthcare's 50-Plus Program! Walking programs for adults 50 or older looking for safe, low-impact exercise in a comfortable environment. The Santa Monica Strutters meet Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, from 8 a.m. To 10 a.m., at Santa Monica Place, Fourth St. and Broadway Ave. in Santa Monica.

MOVIE °GUIDE

LOEWS CINIPLEX BROADWAY CINEMA

1441 Third St. at Broadway
About Schmidt (R) 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30. **The Hours (PG-13)** 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45. **Poolhall Jinkies (R)** 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00. **Gods and Generals (PG-13)** 1:00, 7:15.

MANN CRITERION

1313 Third St.
How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days (PG-13) 11:00, 12:45, 1:50, 3:45, 4:45, 7:15, 7:45, 10:00, 10:35. **The Recruit (PG-13)** 1:00, 4:00, 7:10, 10:10. **Gangs of New York (R)** 11:30, 3:15, 7:00, 10:30. **Old School (R)** 11:15, 12:00, 1:45, 2:30, 4:15, 5:00, 7:00, 7:30, 9:30, 10:15.

AMC THEATRE SM 7

1310 3rd Street
Jungle Book 2 (G) 1:45, 3:30, 5:10, 7:00. **Shanghai Knights (PG-13)** 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50. **Chicago (PG-13)** 2:00, 4:45, 7:30, 10:10. **Daredevil (PG-13)** 1:30, 2:25, 5:15, 7:50, 10:10. **Dark Blue (R)** 4:10, 7:05, 9:55. **The Life of David Gale (PG-13)** 1:25, 4:20, 7:20, 10:15. **Cradle 2 the Grave (R)** 1:35, 4:00, 7:00, 9:00, 9:45.

LANDMARK NU-WILSHIRE

1314 Wilshire Blvd.
The Pianist (R) 12:30, 3:45, 7:00, 10:15. **Bowling for Columbine (R)** 12:00, 4:30, 7:30. **Lost in La Mancha (R)** 2:30, 10:30.

LAEMMLE MONICA

1332 2nd St.
Till Human Voices Wake Us (R) 4:25, 9:45. **The Quiet American (R)** 1:45, 4:20, 7:20, 9:55. **All the Real Girls (R)** 1:45, 7:00. **City of God (R)** 1:15, 4:15, 7:10, 10:05. **Spider (R)** 12:30, 2:55, 5:20, 7:45, 10:10.



BACK PAGE



Farmer stumbles upon \$1M rock

By The Associated Press

FAIRFAX, Mo. — Farmer Gary Wennihan may have made a meteoric rise to wealth.

Wennihan, 60, was tossing aside rocks in his soybean field to prevent damage to his combine when he picked up a strange-looking rock in the fall of 2000.

It turned out to be a rare meteorite scientists say could be worth as much as \$1 million.

Ben Rogers, a Northwest Missouri State University student who attends Wennihan's church, offered to take it to his geology professor.

After polishing away the layers of rust, Rogers and assistant geology professor Richard Felton found a shiny metallic surface.

"It was beautiful, almost like chrome, it was so shiny," Rogers said.

Felton's colleague, Renee Rohs, took the rock to a University of Kansas professor who taught her about meteors. Half of it was sent to the Institute of Meteoritics at the University of New Mexico for more analysis.

A leading meteorite expert at UCLA concluded that nothing similar had ever been found.

Rohs said other meteorites have brought \$500 a gram. After small samples were donated to three universities, there still were 1,800 grams — or 4 pounds — left of Wennihan's rock.

Wennihan is enjoying his treasure — whether it makes him a millionaire or not.

"I'm holding onto it until I get a good offer, and it may never come," he said last week. "I'm certainly not holding my breath. And in the meantime, I'm just having fun with it."

Searching for world's best elk caller

By The Associated Press

RENO, Nev. — For a while, it sounded like elk mating season at the Reno Hilton.

Fifty-eight elk buglers from across the country took part Saturday in the 19th annual World Elk Bugling Championship.

The loudest sound wasn't always the top scorer.

"We tell our judges to listen to authenticity of sound — a sound an elk might make in the wild," contest coordinator Fred McClanahan said.

Seven judges rated cow- and bull-calling sounds on a 1-to-20 scale. Each competitor's highest and lowest scores were tossed out and the middle five averaged.

Taking top honors were Corey Jacobson of Boise, Idaho, in the professional division; Steven Stephenson of Meridan, Idaho, in the men's division; and Audrey Hulsey of Luna, N.M., in the women's division.

Hulsey, a six-time winner, said she has been competing since childhood and is encouraged to see many children taking an interest.

10-year-old competitor Scott Hanson, of Reno, also said he's aware some people think the high-pitched sounds are annoying. He learned how to make cow and bull calls in an elementary school elk bugling club.

"At my house, I have to go outside because my brother gets mad," Hanson said.

Field troops stay clean in trenches

By The Associated Press

LOGAN, Ohio — They may have modern military equipment, but a U.S. Army tank company in Kuwait will keep its uniforms clean the old-fashioned way.

The Columbus Washboard Co. responded last week to a request by Capt. Phil Wolford, of Marysville, who commands the company of 75 soldiers.

Wolford explained that his troops out in the field have no way to wash their uniforms. He said members of his family have the company's washboards and they could use some.

Company owner Jacqui Barnett did better than that.

Along with 70 pine-and-spiraled-tin washboards stamped with the American flag and a "Proud to be an American" label, she and her workers tossed in bars of handmade soap, six washtubs, clothesline and clothes pins.

The Army has modern washer-and-dryer laundry services at its bases, but troops in the field often have to improvise.

Hot dogs create a pickle on highway

By The Associated Press

UTICA, Mo. — A tractor-trailer crash caused quite a pickle when hot dogs spilled across a highway in north-west Missouri.

Thousands of Ball Park Beef Franks — some in boxes, some in shrink-wrapped packages and others scattered individually — were strewn across U.S. 36 just west of Utica after the top of the trailer split open.

The truck crashed early Friday as it came over the crest of a hill about 100 feet before the eastbound lanes merge from two lanes into one.

The transition involves a 30 degree curve to the left. The area is marked with a flashing warning barrier, as well as "Construction Ahead" and "Left Lane Ends" warning signs several hundred feet before the transition.

"I didn't notice the sign that said 'Left Lane Ends,'" said driver Charles Dennis, 25. "I thought the lane was going to merge into my lane. As I was going down the hill, I saw the flashing lights. I didn't expect the curve to be so close to the lights. I began braking and my trailer ended up in the median."

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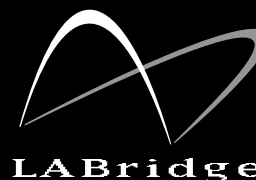
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