



Santa Monica Daily Press

March 4-5, 2006

A newspaper with issues

Volume 5, Issue 96

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

3 16 22 31 42
Meganumber: 18
Jackpot: \$11 million

FANTASY 5

5 12 22 30 34

DAILY 3

Daytime: 9 3 1
Evening: 4 9 3

DAILY DERBY

1st: 09 Winning Spirit
2nd: 03 Hot Shot
3rd: 02 Lucky Star

RACE TIME: 1.40.90

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the winning number information, mistakes can occur. In the event of any discrepancies, California State laws and California Lottery regulations will prevail. Complete game information and prize claiming instructions are available at California Lottery retailers. Visit the California State Lottery web site: <http://www.calottery.com>

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

The Times of London reported in January that according to recently released government files from the 1980s, the administration of Prime Minister Thatcher appeared seriously concerned that poachers posed a threat to the Loch Ness monster (if and when it revealed itself). (Also in those files, as reported in News of the Weird in 2004, was a letter from Swedish officials seeking advice from the Nessie-experienced British on protecting Sweden's own underwater Lake Storsjo monster.)

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 63rd day of 2006.
There are 302 days left in the year.

In 1925, President Calvin Coolidge's inauguration was broadcast live on 21 radio stations coast-to-coast.

In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated president, pledging to lead the country out of the Great Depression.

In 1952, actors Ronald Reagan and Nancy Davis were married in San Fernando Valley, Calif.

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Your place or mine? 21-23

Council's deal with state a shore thing

BY KEVIN HERRERA

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — With the state's finances in the red and a Legislature paralyzed by political partisanship, the City Council has decided to take matters into its own hands when it comes to running one of its most popular attractions — the beach.

Through 2051, the operation and maintenance of Santa Monica State Beach will be the responsibility of City Hall under an operating agreement proposed by city staff and officials with California State Parks. The agreement is in the process of being crafted and finalized.

City Hall currently cares for the beach and has since 1949, so the

renewal of the operating agreement, which will include some minor changes, is seen by those involved as merely a formality.

The dysfunction and financial woes in Sacramento highlight why City Hall takes on the operation of the beach, spending millions each year cleaning the surf and sand, while also upgrading facilities.

"Frankly, the state doesn't have the resources to (maintain and operate the beach)," Councilman Richard Bloom said. "The beach is really a part of Santa Monica so we have a direct and visceral interest in making sure it is maintained properly. We also can do it efficiently and respond to emergencies quickly because we are right here."

See BEACHES, page 6



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

A tractor on Friday combs Santa Monica Beach, cleaning up debris. City officials recently signed a 44-year contract with the State of California to operate and maintain the city's shoreline.

Taking a pass on Pico shops

BY KEVIN HERRERA

Daily Press Staff Writer

PICO BOULEVARD — Whether you have the urge to sew, dine on gourmet cuisine, start a rock band or create the next Oscar-nominated film, you can do it all here ... and at a discount.

Since last November, 59 merchants have participated in a discount card program for residents called "Passport to Pico." There are barbershops, restaurants, beauty parlors and art galleries; virtually anything and everything one could want or need, with businesses offering a variety of specials geared towards saving consumers money.

But what merchants along this culturally and economically diverse stretch of Santa Monica have found out recently is that many people either don't know of the discount program or have failed to use their cards.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Pico Improvement Organization, or PIO — a collection of business owners

united in improving the area's image — 51 percent of the businesses reported less than 10 customers taking advantage of the discount program. Thirty-three percent reported no customers have used the cards.

"It's the beginning of the program, and while there hasn't been much use of the cards, a strong majority of businesses who participated believe in the program and we are trying to find better ways to promote it," said Ruth Talley of Make Believe costume shop, located near Trader Joe's.

While a lack of awareness was to blame for the low participation, merchants said other factors, most of which have plagued Pico for years, also may have played a role. Those factors set the Pico business district apart from other commercial areas in the city, and therefore, require creative solutions — such as the discount program — to boost not only sales, but also the reputation of the boulevard.

Founded in 2000, the PIO is the youngest of all the business improvement districts in the city. It

also has the smallest operating fund, budgeting \$63,000 a year to pay for a wide variety of improvements, such as storefront renovations, as well as programs that build better relationships with merchants and residents, some of whom have been at odds for years over parking.

In comparison, the Downtown Parking and Business Improvement BID, founded in 1966, has an operating budget of \$170,000 a year, with the majority of that money going towards promotions, including holiday decorations.

"We are the youngest BID in the city, so I guess you could say we are experiencing some growing pains," said Talley, who has worked on Pico for more than a decade.

While many BIDS are pedestrian-friendly, Pico Boulevard, because of its length, is not as conducive to walking. The BID stretches from the beach to the easternmost city limits at Centinela Avenue, and not all of

See PASS ON PICO, page 7

NATIONAL

Costs bringing Vegas dreams down to earth

BY KATHLEEN HENNESSEY

Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS — The glossy brochures promised rooftop gardens and posh European spas. Private basketball courts and butler service. The Las Vegas Strip and billions of dollars of hedonism just past your uniformed doorman.

Such is the stuff of high-rise living in the imagined vertical Las Vegas — billed as the next sexy center of condominium living, a 21st century Manhattan or Miami, and an antidote to the sprawl plaguing lesser Western cities.

But developers' lofty dreams have met with some not-so-sexy realities — the cost of cement and copper pipes, a shortage of skilled labor and contractors, indomitable competition from deep-pocketed casinos.

By most accounts, the skyrocketing costs of materials

See VEGAS, page 13

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HOROSCOPES

Do your own thing, Taurus

Santa Monica Daily Press



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

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



ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★ Though you aren't normally possessive, a tendency toward that attitude could cause a huge backfire. You might be surprised at how quickly someone can pull away their good wishes and support. Tonight: Count on picking up the tab.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ Though you might not care about present confusion, it engulfs you, making life difficult, if not frustrating. Ask questions and find out what you need in order to make a solid decision. You might believe that others are acting flaky. Tonight: Do your own thing.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★ Step back and think before you leap. You easily might not have all the facts. Also of consequence, your energy levels might radically change, surprising even you. You have been on full throttle; this too could change. Tonight: Take some downtime.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Friends prove to be a tremendous source of mirth and laughter. A loved one or special partner could be touchy, to say the least. Though you have been happy, much could change quite quickly. Share your caring. Tonight: Don't take anyone or anything for granted.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★ You need to get through a project whether you want to or not. Others have expectations that you will want to fulfill. A situation close to your home or heart is changing right in front of you. Don't make assumptions. Check out the facts. Tonight: A must appearance.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ You talk a good game, and you see much more than others right now. The problem is, you will not be able to convince them of anything. Get off the soapbox and detach. You will be happier and so will those around you. Tonight: Check out a communication or message.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★ Work with others, but know that you cannot be an endless reservoir of support or funds. You need to speak and act accordingly. Help others bottom out and get to the root of a problem. You might want to rethink a question. Tonight: An intimate dinner for two.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Others run the show and understand much more than you realize. Think before you leap. Lady Luck, though still present, might not be there to bail you out quite so quickly. Listen to others. Your popularity soars. Tonight: Sort through information.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Getting through to others takes talent and interest. You might want to understand much more of what makes others tick. Getting to know yourself and your motives much better might very well be step number one. Tonight: Choose something relaxing.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Your creativity surges. How it might impact you depends on your station in life. Others might become the Romeo or Juliet of the social scene. Others will indulge in fun repartee. Your imagination runs haywire. Tonight: Ever playful, no matter what age you are.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ You might be most comfortable cozy at home. You laugh and relax with those in your life. Think positively, and you'll come up with answers. Your ability to run with the moment takes you in a new direction. Tonight: At home.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Say what you think, but don't be surprised if you cannot accomplish what you want to. Take your time with a project or personal matter. Laugh and relax with pals. News from a distance might be slow to arrive. Tonight: Close to home.



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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Feel the love at Will Rogers

By Daily Press staff

It'll be nothing but love and unity today at Will Rogers Learning Community. From 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., the Love and Unity Festival will be happening at the campus, located at 2401 14th St. There will be music, games, arts and crafts, prizes and food.

Local commissioner hopes to warrant bench

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica Superior Court Commissioner Bobbi Tillmon took out nomination papers to run for Judge, announcing her candidacy for the seat currently held by retiring Judge Morris B. Jones. For the past 11 years, Tillmon has presided over the Family Law Department for the West District. Tillmon hears dissolution of marriage proceedings, paternity suits, child custody cases, child and spousal support issues and domestic violence matters. In 1994, Tillmon was ranked No. 1 out of more than 180 commissioner applicants when she was elected to office by the Superior Court judges.

Retiring after 16 years on the bench, Judge Jones supports Tillmon to replace him.

"I've known Bobbi Tillmon for more than 20 years," he said. "She will be an asset to everyone in Los Angeles who uses the legal system. She'll do an excellent job."

Before being appointed commissioner, Tillmon was in private practice for 16 years, compiling a combination of family law, criminal and civil litigation experience. During her years in private practice and continuing after her election to the bench, Tillmon has been a sought-after speaker and trainer on a wide range of topics, serving on local, statewide and national panels and task forces dealing with domestic violence, civil harassment and family law issues. Tillmon served on the State of California Child Support Advisory Task Force, as well as the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Child Support Advisory Council. Tillmon also has trained several local police departments on the issue of domestic violence court procedures.

An alumna of the University of Southern California and USC Law School, Tillmon is married and has two adult children.

SNOW AND SURF REPORTS

CONDITIONS

DATA PROVIDED BY ONTHESNOW.COM

BEAR MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	24" - 60"	8:30 am - 4:00 pm	18	10/12

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made, Machine Groomed, Hard Packed

JUNE MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
12"	72" - 96"	8:30 am - 4:00 pm	35	6/6

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Groomed

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
36"	120" - 144"	8:30 am - 4:00 pm	75	10/28

CONDITIONS: Powder, Packed Powder

MOUNTAIN HIGH

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	12" - 24"	8:30 am - 4:00 pm	16	8/16

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made, Machine Groomed, Hard Packed

MT. BALDY

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
2"	12" - 16"	8:30 am - 4:30 pm	0	2/4

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder

SNOW SUMMIT

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	24" - 60"	8:30 am - 9:30 pm	18	10/14

CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made, Machine Groomed, Hard Packed

SNOW VALLEY

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs)	BASE DEPTH	LIFT HOURS	RUNS OPEN	LIFTS OPEN
0"	18" - 8"	8:30 am - 9:00 pm	7	5/11

CONDITIONS: Machine Made, Machine Groomed

CONDITIONS

WATER TEMP: 57°

DATA PROVIDED BY WETSAND.COM

SWELL FORECAST (1-4 FT)

Today the storm should likely clear out, leaving way for a fair weekend. Surf however will also back off, but early AM sessions should still be able to pick up some head high surf.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS

WSW and southern hemi due Monday but...

Tracking southern hemis for week of the 13th...

TIDE FORECAST FOR SANTA MONICA

SATURDAY	LOW TIDE	6:47AM	0.33FT	5:49PM	1.7FT
	HIGH TIDE	12:50PM	3.2FT	N/A	N/A
SUNDAY	LOW TIDE	8:14AM	0.5FT	6:15PM	2.4FT
	HIGH TIDE	12:32AM	5.1FT	2:55PM	2.6FT
MONDAY	LOW TIDE	10:01AM	0.42FT	N/A	N/A
	HIGH TIDE	1:33AM	4.80FT	N/A	N/A
TUESDAY	LOW TIDE	11:29AM	0.1FT	10:35PM	3.0FT
	HIGH TIDE	3:02AM	4.6FT	7:19PM	3.3FT
WEDNESDAY	LOW TIDE	12:26	-0.2FT	11:55PM	2.7FT
	HIGH TIDE	4:36AM	4.6FT	7:40PM	3.6FT

SURF AND SNOW QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS? EMAIL ALEX@SMDP.COM



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The Q-Line

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THE Q-LINE RESPONSES ARE IN!

We have the questions. You have the answers. Check out this week's Q-Line responses on page 4

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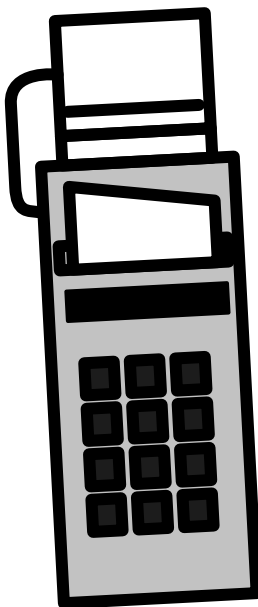

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OPINION

The Q Line

NEW SUPER WILL HAVE TO BE JUST THAT

This past week, Q-line asked:
What major problems does the new superintendent need to address within the district?
Here are your responses:

- Ⓢ “What are the major problems facing the new school superintendent in the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District?”
- Ⓢ “As Santa Monica's only daily newspaper — if the Santa Monica Daily Press has to ask this question, than the press has not been reading its own newsprint. I personally have no idea what it will take to shape up Santa Monica College, but if superintendent (School Superintendent John) Deasy is heading East, contrary to Horace Greeley's advise to ‘Head West Young Man’ — than I suspect the new superintendent will have his hands full and running over.”
- Ⓢ “The major problem in the school district is overcrowding. A conferred effort needs to be made to root out and throw out the so-called students who are nothing but troublemakers who will not learn or cannot learn for one reason or another. They are stuffed into the schools for the simple reason that head count generates revenue. Too bad about the children and young people who are there to learn and have a pleasant school experience growing up. Put the others in boot camps, special schools or jails where they belong and keep the parents out of the decision-making process. Enough is enough. Why not keep the well-qualified assistant, who is now the interim superintendent? Why another search for a replacement?”
- Ⓢ “The problems the superintendent will face is too many troublemakers, too many kids who do not belong in a regular school but belong in a reform school. And another problem he is facing is not enough money. So whoever they are, it should be someone who has no connections with the LAUSD — the Los Angeles Unified School District — because those people are all incompetent fools.”
- Ⓢ “Leadership in this district is abysmal, which happens to facilitate the laziness of staff. Both certified and classified education needs to be run as a business, where people are held accountable and high scoring test results are mandatory. Most of all, school administrators need to access the weakness within their own hierarchy and replace those who lack hard-working, Wal-Mart-style work ethics. Discipline, responsibility and high test scores to prepare students for the harsh reality of life should be the goal.”
- Ⓢ “With Deasy leaving, this would be the perfect time to split this now illegal, non-continuous, joint school district so that Santa Monicans do not have to continue to subsidize Malibu's schools.”

Paging Perry Mason: TV law lacks the order



MODERN
TIMES
BY LLOYD GARVER

Stuck in the middle of all the commercials during the Winter Olympics was a promo they repeated many times for a new show called “Conviction.” The ad showed young lawyers who, presumably, have conviction. At first I was surprised and pleased by the commercials because I thought finally we were going to get a lawyer show that wasn’t from the point of view of the prosecution, that wasn’t about nailing the “bad guy” no matter what. These freshly scrubbed young lawyers with conviction obviously would work hard to make sure justice was served. They would help the downtrodden and the unjustly accused. But I was wrong. “Conviction” in this case, is a pun and also refers to the fact that these young lawyers are assistant DA’s determined to get a conviction.

A show like this couldn’t have existed in the ’60s or ’70s. It would have been a laughable premise, worthy of mocking in “Mad” magazine. Back then, young, idealistic lawyers worked hard to have their innocent clients set free. These lawyers didn’t care about expensive suits or partnerships. They wanted to make sure that innocent people weren’t taken advantage of by the more powerful establishment. Working for “the man” would be a sign of selling out, not a goal for young people. (Donald Trump’s “The Apprentice” would not be a hit back then unless it was about how the apprentice could infiltrate Trump’s organization to make sure all his employees were treated fairly). Today, the young lawyers on TV have been co-opted by the establishment, and historically that is a strange thing. Aren’t young people supposed to rebel, question authority, and be idealistic?

A long time ago, there were such shows as “The Defenders,” “Judd for the Defense,” “Perry Mason,” and even one called, “The Young Lawyers” in which the main job of the lawyers was to see that justice was served. Defense lawyers weren’t bad guys who got in the way of law and order by bringing up the civil rights of their clients. The bad guys were often part of an unscrupulous establishment who didn’t care how they got a conviction as long as they got it. Today, those “I don’t care how we get a conviction” people are the good guys.

So, the pendulum has swung, and it appears to be stuck. Part of the success of

these shows is that we live in a law and order era. Imprisoning bad guys without charging them is OK, as long as we “know” they’re guilty of something. Illegal wiretapping is OK as long as it might help keep us safe. The old maxim in law is that we’d rather set 1,000 guilty men free than imprison one innocent man. Now, it seems that we’d rather imprison a thousand innocent men rather than set one guilty man free.

Despite crime rates going down, we’re somehow meant to feel afraid. The government perpetuates this milieu of fear, but so do all the TV programs that show how the world is filled with evil people ready to pounce on the innocent in unimaginably disgusting ways. In fact, these programs show the most perverse crimes perpetrated by the worst imaginable people. So, it becomes easier to rationalize throwing the “dirtbags” in jail even if their rights get stepped on a little.

Recently, ABC introduced a new show (also with a pun for its title) called, “In Justice.” A promo for this show says that it “offers a completely new take to the procedural drama: rather than merely catching the bad guys, this group of young lawyers and investigators catch the bad guys and frees the good!” It’s so “completely new,” it sounds like it could have been on TV 40 years ago. So far, the show hasn’t been a ratings smash, but if it does succeed, you know every network will start copying it and putting on shows about innocent people, wrongly accused.

And that might mean there will be more of a variety of storylines on TV. That’s got to be a good thing. This glut of snarling cops and prosecutors who don’t care how they toss the “perp” into jail has to run its course soon, doesn’t it? So, the next time someone at one of the networks suggests another show like “CSI Dubuque” or “Law & Order: Decapitated Victims Unit,” I hope some people in the room will raise their hands and say, “Let’s not do the same old thing. Why don’t we do a show about defense lawyers who are good guys?” And I trust whoever makes that suggestion won’t be looking for another job by the end of the day. But if they are, I hope they get a good lawyer.

(Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from “Sesame Street” to “Family Ties” to “Frasier.” He has also read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the “Modern Times” column for CBSnews.com’s opinion page and a weekly column for SportsLine.com. He can be reached at smdp@lloydgarver-moderntimes.com.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Outraged at the persistent violence

Editor:
How did Santa Monica turn into a gang-infested city? Tuesday night, while I was tucking my children into bed, another family’s child was shot and killed in Santa Monica. I am saddened, outraged and want this community to take action. Santa Monica should be able to protect its children better than this. It is time that this violence ended. Where are our community leaders? Where is the outrage? This must end now!

Dr. Lisette Bauersachs
Santa Monica

OPINIONS EXPRESSED are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Santa Monica Daily Press staff. Guest editorials from residents are encouraged, as are letters to the editor. Letters will be published on a space-available basis. It is our intention to publish all letters we receive, except those that are libelous or are unsigned. Preference will be given to those that are e-mailed to editor@smdp.com. All letters must include the author's name and telephone number for purposes of verification. Letters also may be mailed to our offices located at 1427 Third Street Promenade, Suite 202, Santa Monica, 90401, or faxed to (310) 576-9913. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content.



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COMMENTARY



GUEST COMMENTARY BY BILL CESSATO

We all help fan the celebrity flame

This weekend, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will host the 78th annual Oscars ceremony.

As usual, fashion-conscious reporters will pepper celebrities with inane questions on the way down the red carpet into the Kodak Theatre.

Once inside, Jon Stewart will, with any hope, offer up a good dose of humor during the epic journey to Best Picture winner.

Glitterati of Academy Awards past will present the statuettes, recognizing the talents of the stars, directors, writers, and other filmmaking folk. And the winners will command the stage to thank everyone — from dearly departed Aunt Gertrude to the coffeemaker on the set.

And what are we, the viewers, going to do to pass the hours? Naturally, we will hang on each and every word.

People take stars' remarks very seriously. Look at January's Golden Globes. George Clooney took a jab at embattled lobbyist Jack Abramoff. The next thing you know, Clooney, a star of "Syriana" and director of "Good Night, and Good Luck," entered Larry King's CNN confessional and defended his "joke."

Such candid behavior from Hollywood's heavenly bodies forms the fodder for awards show apocrypha and legends.

Take Sally Field and her Oscars acceptance speech for best actress in the 1984 movie "Places in the Heart." Popular — and distorted — memory will always have her effusively chirping, "You like me. You really like me." (If you even care to know the actual quote, simply Google it.)

We relish these candid moments with the stars. At those rare times, we see our favorite celebrities' humanity. Really, they seem just like us.

They call out sick: Joan Crawford accepted her best actress Oscar in bed for "Mildred Pierce." They protest when angry: Marlon Brando, through Sacheen Littlefeather, refused his best actor award for "The Godfather" because of discrimination against Native Americans. They suffer with hubris: James Cameron, winner of best director for "Titanic," exclaimed, "I'm the king of the world."

We cannot get enough — on and off the screen. We feel joy at their personal and professional triumphs. We

empathize with their failures. Minus the money and other luxurious trappings of fame, we know exactly what they must go through. Everything they do magnifies the ups and downs of our own existence.

However, their lives appear not nearly as dull as ours. Therein, lies our love.

Do you recall the universal excitement when handsome movie star Brad Pitt married pretty actress Jennifer Aniston in July 2000? "How perfect," we thought. "Not quite," we learned. Enter the new players in the thespians' own melodrama: Angelina Jolie and Vince Vaughan.

The denouement: a whopping multi-million dollar divorce settlement. Like at a B-horror movie, we cringe. But we can't stop watching. Beautiful people split to be with other beautiful people. Does it get any better?

The publicity machine never stops. Neither does our desire to be one step closer to our stars and their magic. We even purchase their costumes.

Just this February, for example, the shirts off of Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal's not-so-broke backs sold for more than \$100,000 on an eBay auction. What next? True-to-life cowboy action figures under the Christmas tree?

Indeed, the stars hold a mesmerizing power over many of us. We shell out money to watch their movies on the big screen or at home. We pour over magazines and online blogs to discover the most up-to-date news about their lives. We write them fan letters and sport similar clothing.

But we should always remember that we — the mere mortals — harness a special power, too. Our money helps pay the stars' salaries. The support fans giveth, they could easily taketh away. Oh dear, no more expensive cars, no more talk show appearances, no more lamenting over paparazzi, no more box office success, and, sadly, no Academy Award.

Yes, without us — "those wonderful people out there in the dark," as Gloria Swanson says in "Sunset Boulevard" — the stars would implode.

(Bill Cessato won best actor in high school. No one cared. Now he's a writer in Washington, D.C. He can be reached at bill.cessato@gmail.com.)

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The Q Line



LOCAL

Pact ensures city stays in control of beaches

BEACHES, from page 1

Many cities enter into operating agreements with the state, according to Ron Schafer, State Parks supervisor of the Angeles District, which covers Santa Monica State Beach.

Doing so allows local governments to have more flexibility and input in the decision-making process, and it makes it easier for cities to qualify for capital improvement grants. The state has ultimate authority over the beach, but the city can make recommendations that carry weight, Schafer said.

"But all that aside, it really just boils down to having

access to their own beach," he said.

City Hall pays for beach upkeep with revenue generated by parking fees, concessions and special events, as well as federal, state and private grants. All money generated or received is invested back into the beach, said Steve Stark, City Hall finance director.

Because some years offer more favorable beach weather than others, meaning more visitors and increased revenues, money coming into the beach fund fluctuates. This makes it difficult to determine if City Hall operates the beach at a loss, Stark said.

"This year, we estimated \$6.18 million in revenues and expect to spend \$5.9 million," Stark said. "I know we are planning to have some renovations of pier restrooms and at a few lifeguard stations, so there are needs that arise. There may be one year when we spend more than we take in depending on capital needs, but in the end, all the money goes towards the beach."

Santa Monica is in a unique position when compared to other cities. The pier and superior water quality of the Santa Monica Bay attract more than 3 million visitors a year, according to city officials, which translates into millions in revenue. Other city-operated beaches may not be as popular and, therefore, can prove to be a financial

drain.

In Long Beach, the city operates its beach at a loss, said Mark Sandoval, manager of marinas and beaches for Long Beach.

"We are definitely losing money, but we've been doing this forever," he said. "It's a service that we provide and our residents have come to demand the best."

Cities in Los Angeles County first entered into operating agreements in the 1950s, Schafer said. During that time, there was a major push to acquire and protect the coast, but many cities did not have the money to purchase beaches. The state stepped in and has offered cities the option of running the beaches ever since.

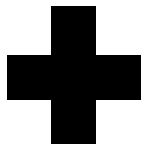
There are some downsides, including increased exposure and liability, which has led to lawsuits and monetary judgments against City Hall.

But losing money hasn't deterred elected officials past and present from maintaining control over the prized assets.

"This city is definitely defined by the beach, so it is important for us to maintain it and operate it at the level that meets our needs," said Elaine Polachek, the City Hall's open space manager. "We work hard at that and I think the public appreciates that every time they visit."

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Passport proponents look to raise profile

PASS ON PICO, from page 1

that stretch is retail.

The Woodlawn Cemetery, Santa Monica College and Santa Monica High School — while assets — create pockets that are absent of businesses, disturbing the shopping flow. That also makes it more difficult to create a cohesive look and feel, merchants said.

“We’re sort of divided at certain spots,” said Robert Kronovet of Kronovet Realty Co. “The city has helped in unifying with landscaping improvements, not to mention the new Virginia Avenue Park, which has been a great addition. But there is still this feeling of disconnect at times.”

Traffic is another problem, Kronovet said.

“It can be a deterrent for some, but I’m proud to say that I think traffic is a good thing, because for me it represents commerce,” he said.

Then there is the issue of crime. Earlier this week, 15-year-old Samohi student Eduardo “Eddie” Lopez was shot and killed by a suspected gang member while walking with friends on Pico Boulevard near 26th Street. The killing has sent shockwaves through the community and reminded people that there is still a problem with gang violence in the area. Gang-related shootings are commonplace in the neighborhood.

“Crime is an issue, and we have worked so hard to give Pico a personality and have it become a shining boulevard,” Talley said. “But then something like (Lopez’ death) happens and immediately the (bad) reputation that Pico has pops right back up. So it’s hard to combat that. (Lopez’ death) was a terrible thing and I don’t know how we can prevent that.”

Kronovet said that by forming the Pico

BID, they hope businesses and residents can work together to improve the look of the neighborhood, and in return, restore some of the Pico pride that has been lost.

Despite the challenges, merchants said Pico is still a vibrant and attractive commercial district because of its combination of long-time, locally owned businesses such as McCabe’s Guitar Shop and Rae’s Diner, and eclectic start-ups like Violet restaurant and Acapillow, which makes custom bedding and furniture.

“We really like it here. For one, it’s not the (Third Street) Promenade,” said Acapillow owner Eleanor Path, who relocated the business to Pico three years ago. “It’s really a great area. We have the stability of stores like McCabe’s, as well as popular chains like Trader Joe’s. Then we have some of the smaller mom-and-pop stores so it’s a good mix.”

Path said people may not be using the Passport cards because they simply forget they have them. “I’ve got one too and I really haven’t used it either,” she said. “I encourage people to use them and I think they will over time.”

Business owners have discussed new Passport promotions to raise awareness about the discounts. There also is talk about advertising in local newspapers and on Big Blue Buses that travel through the area.

Merchants also have discussed creating an art walk to celebrate a recent influx of galleries.

“People who live and work here are some of the warmest, kindest people I have ever met,” Kronovet said. “There are certain folks who find it hard to get to their happy place, but for the most part everyone here is united for the sake of Pico. I know I feel very blessed to be a part of it for the last 20 years.”



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NATIONAL

Land sale plan tilted in favor of Northwest

BY MATTHEW DALY

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — A Bush administration plan to sell more than 300,000 acres of national forest to help pay for rural schools contains a disproportionate amount of land in the South and Midwest — while primarily benefiting schools in three West Coast states, a new analysis shows.

Nearly 60,000 acres in 13 Southern states and another 50,000 acres in 10 Midwestern states would be sold under the plan, while just 18,000 acres in forest-rich

Oregon and Washington would be sold, according to an analysis by the Southern Environmental Law Center.

Southern states received \$37 million for rural schools this year under the program the sales are intended to benefit, while the Midwest received \$41 million, the analysis shows. Oregon and Washington got five times those amounts — \$210 million, with Oregon alone receiving nearly \$162 million.

About 80,000 acres in California would be sold; the state received nearly \$69 million from the Forest Service this year.

David Carr, public lands director for

the nonprofit law center, called the regional disparity unfair, and said the land sale would set a dangerous precedent.

“Selling off America’s natural heritage is not the way to fund government services,” Carr said. “We need to be adding to the public-land base in the South, not holding a bake sale on bits and pieces of our limited national forests for short-term budget needs.”

Sen. Jim Talent, R-Mo., also questioned the proposal, saying there was no guarantee that money generated by the sales would stay within Missouri.

“We need to see more of the benefit of this proposal than we are now seeing,” Talent told Bush administration officials at a Senate hearing last week.

Under the Bush plan, 21,566 acres in Missouri’s Mark Twain National Forest would be sold, with proceeds going to a general fund. The sell-off would be one of the biggest in the country, while Missouri’s share of the school-funding is among the lowest at \$2.7 million.

“Our schools need the money,” Talent said.

Agriculture Undersecretary Mark Rey, who directs U.S. forest policy, acknowledged the disparity, but said the law was devised to help those rural counties hurt by logging cutbacks on federal lands. Parcels proposed for sale are isolated, difficult or expensive to manage, or no longer meet Forest Service needs, Rey said.

“They are not evenly distributed” throughout the country, Rey said, although Congress could adjust the funding formula as it sees fit.

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said he wanted to “keep an open mind” on the land sale idea. But he asked, “Why sell most of the lands in those states that don’t get much money from these payments and very little land in the states that get the most money?”

About 8,000 acres would be sold in New Mexico, which received just \$2.3 million under the plan this year.

Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, one of the chief architects of the rural schools law, called questions raised by Talent and Domenici legitimate, and said they were a key reason he opposes the land sale plan.

“I don’t want to pit your beautiful forest against school stability in Missouri,” Wyden, a Democrat, told Talent at a

Resources meeting last week.

About 10,500 acres in Oregon would be sold under the Bush plan.

Wyden and other Oregon lawmakers say the state receives so much money under the rural schools law because it was hurt the most by federal policies that restricted logging in the 1990s.

Other states “aren’t half-owned by the federal government, and they didn’t see a 95 percent harvest reduction on federal lands,” as happened in Oregon and Washington, said Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore.

Money from the six-year-old “county payments” law has helped offset sharp declines in timber sales in Oregon and other Western states in the wake of federal forest policy that restricts logging to protect endangered species such as the spotted owl.

The law is set to expire Sept. 30. The land-sale plan would reauthorize the law for five years, but calls for a phased reduction in funding to zero by 2011.

DeFazio and other Western lawmakers call that unacceptable, saying consequences of a funding drop would be severe.

“You’ll see jails closed, rural law enforcement virtually go away and the meth problem get worse,” DeFazio said.

But Andy Stahl of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics, an environmental group, said Oregon is reaping what it sowed, when officials allowed its forests to be clear-cut for decades.

“Oregon benefited the most from the pillage of national forests that went on from World War II until ... the courts said they were breaking the law” in the late 1980s, said Stahl, whose group is based in Eugene, Ore.

Stahl said he considers the county payments law old-fashioned pork, Northwest style, and said the land-sale plan puts the law’s inherent inequality in stark relief.

“Special places in other states are proposed to be sold so Oregon can get its pork,” he said.

Carr, of the Southern environmental group, said he would oppose the sales even if funding formulas were adjusted to ensure more revenue for Southeastern states.

“We don’t think they should be selling land in Oregon or Virginia or Alabama,” he said. “The need is to fill in the gaps” of hard-won public land, “not get rid of what they’ve acquired.”

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NATIONAL



Looking for a home? Start with your keyboard

BY ALLISON LINN
AP Business Writer

SEATTLE — Years ago, Molly Bolanos looked for a home the old-fashioned way: She spent hours driving around in her real estate agent's car, hoping for the best and girding for the worst.

One recent morning, though, the process went like this: Bolanos and her fiancé were alerted to a new online listing, checked out the pictures on the Internet, then drove over for a real-life look. Within hours, they were preparing an offer.

"It can be 24 hours — as quick as 24 hours that you're out making the offer — and it's because of the Internet," the Seattle resident said.

Add real estate to the list of industries being forever changed by the Internet.

Home listings — once printed out in books available only to real estate agents — are obtainable to everyone online, accompanied by increasingly sophisticated photographs and virtual tours. Now, a growing number of online services are also cropping up to help people do things like judge house prices, survey neighborhoods and evaluate school districts, long before they ever snap the seat belt in their agents' cars.

With the nation's housing boom expected to cool in some areas, experts say such offerings will only increase. And ultimately, the fact that consumers have more power than ever to do alone what real

estate agents traditionally helped with could even help further drive down agents' commissions. Many also expect online tools for househunters to only become more creative and sophisticated.

"The full impact of the Internet has not been realized, primarily because business has been going up each year," said Steve Murray, editor of the trade magazine Real Trends in Littleton, Colo.

Already, the industry is dramatically different than it was a decade ago. Besides viewing listings online, Bolanos now regularly visits Zillow.com, a new Web site that provides quick, anonymous estimates of home values based on county records and other data. Although the site, which is in test form, isn't always completely accurate, Bolanos said it gives her a good barometer for judging a home's worth.

Less than a month old, the advertising-supported site has already become fodder for office gossip and dinner party chatter, in part because it gives people a voyeuristic look at what their friends and neighbors might be able to get for their homes.

The company's chief executive, Rich Barton, said his goal is to give people the information that can improve their position when they sit down with a real estate agent or consider bidding on a house.

"My motivation, I guess, is kind of power to the people," Barton said.

He acknowledges that the site still has a few kinks, but he says plans are afoot to

make it more accurate, and to give people more tools to correct errors that affect valuations.

Other sites, such as HomePages.com, use interactive maps and other tools to provide information about neighborhoods, schools, local parks and even nightclubs surrounding a particular home.

Ian Morris, chief executive of HouseValues Inc., which runs the HomePages site, said his business aims to reduce the time people spend househunting. But the company — which makes its money in part from real estate agents — stresses that he still thinks buying a home is complicated and valuable enough to require a Realtor's assistance.

"This is a professionally assisted transaction," Morris said. "One hundred years from now, I expect this will be a professionally assisted transaction."

Still, to survive in a world where consumers have more power via the Internet, many in the industry say agents are being forced to adapt new skills.

David Morrell, an agent in Santa Cruz, Calif., said he now has every house he lists professionally photographed for the Internet postings. When he sees an online listing that's been up for several days without pictures, he said, "It's unbelievable to me."

Real estate agents also may find the value of their service dropping, as people begin doing more legwork on their own over the Internet.

Murray's data shows that the average commission paid to real estate agents dropped from 6.1 percent of a home's price in 1991 to 5.1 percent in 2003, the most recent data available. That was mainly driven by the sharp increase in the number of agents vying for business during the booming market, he said. But in a cooler market, he expects the Internet to be among the factors that will drive those commissions down further.

"We don't see any particular stopping point," Murray said.

Murray also expects agents to start spending more money on fancy Web sites and other online promotions, perhaps at the expense of traditional marketing such as newspaper advertising.

Still, no matter how sophisticated online househunting gets, many say the computer will never be able to fully replace the experience of walking from room to room in your prospective house, peeking into cabinets, tapping on walls and trying to figure out how noisy the neighbors might be. Although virtual househunting has grown more sophisticated, Geoff Wood, chief executive of the real estate firm Windermere Services Co., said it's still extremely rare for someone to purchase a house without ever visiting it.

"You can have a ton of pictures, (but) it still doesn't do it justice," Wood said. "You still have to go and look at it and touch it and feel it. It's your house, you know?"

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Entertainment

Chappelle throws ‘Party’ with some serious bang

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

THE MOVIE: Dave Chappelle’s Block Party
THE DIRECTOR: Michel Gondry
THE STARS: Dave Chappelle, Kanye West, the Fugees, Mos Def, Erykah Badu, Jill Scott, the Roots

More than just a kick-ass concert film with hilarious interludes by the host, “Dave Chappelle’s Block Party” is a celebration of community — a reaffirmation in troubled times that music and laughter really do make the world go ‘round. The pairing of the shockingly funny comedian and “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind” director Michel Gondry might not seem an obvious one at first, but boy did it ever work out swimmingly.

Gondry is an accomplished music video vet and his considerable skills are on full-display in the concert footage, featuring rousing performances from Kanye West (performing the hell out of “Jesus Walks”), Mos Def, Dead Prez, Erykah Badu (sporting an Angela Davis afro wig) and a reunited Fugees (“Killing Me Softly” kills). Gondry and his crew shot “Block Party” in grainy Super 16 hand-held cameras to give it a look and feel apropos to the unkempt Bed-Stuy neighborhood where Chappelle staged a surprise one — rainy-day musical extravaganza in September 2004. Chappelle is very relaxed throughout, whether handing out “Golden Tickets” to ordinary folks in his erstwhile hometown of Dayton, Ohio, or joking with his famous friends in the makeshift back-stage area.

Chappelle’s enthusiasm is infectious, his comedic timing sharp as ever, his musical taste impeccable. “Block Party” is 100 minutes of hip-shaking, gut-busting joy, and is hands down one of the most entertaining concert films ever made.

(Rated R. Running time: 100 minutes)



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Donner delivers amid this New York thriller

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

THE MOVIE: 16 Blocks
THE DIRECTOR: Richard Donner
THE STARS: Bruce Willis, Mos Def, David Morse

16 BLOCKS Flawed, but not fatally so, the ho-humming thriller “16 Blocks” offers one of the most unflattering portraits of the NYC Police Department to arrive in theaters since 9/11. What you get is this: An unkempt, paunchy Bruce Willis as a burnt-out police detective in serious need of redemption. Mos Def, affecting an annoyingly nasal rapid-fire burble, is the aspiring baker who happens to be the key witness in a far-reaching police corruption case. A menacing David Morse leads an army of crooked cops who want Mos Def most dead, while director Richard Donner, of “Lethal Weapon” fame, tries on something akin to subtlety to see if it fits (it’s a little loose in the seat). Oh, and the cop-movie clichés fly like bullets throughout. So do bullets.

The title is derived from the distance Willis’ perpetually besotted Detective Jack Mosley must travel to transport gar-



rulous small-time crook Eddie Bunker (Mos Def) from jail to a courthouse. Mosley isn’t aware that his charge is about to give damning testimony that could take down numerous high-ranking police officers, but he figures it out after an ambush that sobers him up right quick. Willis has plenty of experience in this hardscrabble genre and he’s effective, if unspectacular, as a broken man hunted by his brothers and haunted by his own past. Something (not sure what, exactly) about “the kid,” as he calls Eddie, lights a fire in his beer belly and he’s as determined to deliver him to that courthouse as Donner is to make this far-fetched cat and mouse game seem plausible.

(Rated PG-13. Running time: 105 minutes)

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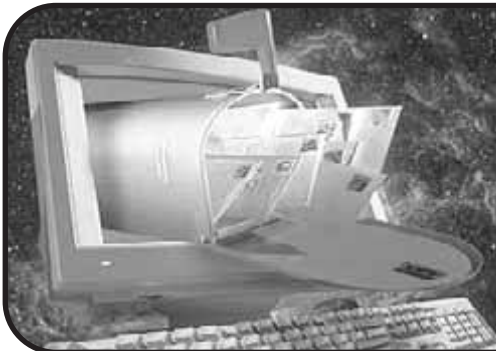
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Hollywood rolling out red carpet ... 5 tons of it

BY SANDY COHEN

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES — Oscar's red carpet — Hollywood's celebrated route of royalty and runway for the world's most-watched fashion show — arrives very humbly: split into dozens of rolls, wrapped in plastic and freighted on two flatbed trucks.

And for the record, this most famous of showbiz red carpets is actually a secret shade of cayenne specially formulated to academy specifications. It's more burgundy than red, but plays red on TV.

The carpet arrived at the Kodak Theatre before dawn on Wednesday, all five nylon tons of it, direct from American Turf & Carpet in suburban Cerritos, Calif. Company owner Walter Clyne was on hand to ensure a smooth rollout.

"No high-profile person is tripping on my watch," says Clyne, a burly guy with a buzz cut and the exclusive supplier of Oscar's regal rug for the past 10 years.

One of Clyne's crew, operating a fork-lift equipped with a long rod called a carpet pole, pierces each 300-pound carpet roll and lifts it off the truck. Workers in matching blue T-shirts — some wearing back braces, others with knee pads — use metal wheelbarrows to haul the rolls into position.

By Sunday night the grunts and groans of Clyne's crew will be replaced by the glitter and glamour of famous feet as they make their way to the 78th annual Academy Awards through a gauntlet of screaming fans and clamoring journalists.

The carpet of dreams' long journey to Hollywood begins in Dalton, Ga., where it's woven together in a natural shade of white. It takes about five days to dye it the proprietary Oscar shade, which veteran carpet queen Joan Rivers describes as "Nancy Reagan red — that wonderful red with a little blue in it."

Then the carpet is treated with a protectant that prevents the rosy shade from rubbing off on the stars' Valentinos and Pradas.

With the rolls unloaded, the carpet guys start their work. Passers-by snap pictures as the crew workers unfurl the tradition-steeped rugs, first with their feet, then on hands and knees. Then they start the meticulous process of piecing the carpet together.

With an oversized putty knife, one worker cuts the edges of the rug so they match exactly. One of his colleagues comes along behind him, picking up the remnants and collecting them in a pile for safekeeping from color copiers or eBay

peddlers.

The carpet looks so fresh it almost glows. And this year for the first time, it will be bordered in gold. A proprietary shade, of course.

Not all the carpet is new. The Academy typically replaces the red carpet every other year, and, pssst ..., this is an old-carpet year.

On new-carpet years, Clyne's crew takes the rug back to the company's warehouse, where they spend up to 10 days giving it a thorough cleaning to return it to its pristine state for the next year.

And by Rivers' account, it needs every one of those 10 days: "By the end, it's just filthy and there's gum on it and there's cigarettes on it."

As for the fate of the old carpets, they're carted back to the California warehouse and disposed, very hush-hush.

Much of last year's rug also got rained on, Clyne said, so at least half of it had to be replaced this year. He won't say which half.

Historical moment: The practice of rolling out a red carpet for royal processions dates back thousands of years. Historians trace one of the earliest mentions to Greek playwright Aeschylus in 485 B.C. In one of his works, Agamemnon walks a red carpet fit only for "the feet of the gods."

And how perfect for Hollywood, too, where a red carpet was first rolled out by famed exhibitor Sid Grauman when he opened the Egyptian Theatre in 1922, seven years before the first Academy Awards.

Back at the Kodak — it will take 21 men about two days to completely install this year's Oscar carpet, including painstakingly sealing the carpet into place by running an industrial iron over every seam.

When all seams are sealed, workers will protect their efforts with a layer of "carpet mask," a clear adhesive plastic that will keep the rug clean until its close-up on Sunday night.

Clyne also keeps a tuxedo-clad carpet worker onsite the night of the show. "It has to look good on TV," he says. "It has to be firm and it has to be good."

Army Archerd, who welcomed celebrities on the red carpet at 48 Academy Awards, says he never gave much thought to the rug under his feet. But he knows it's a place where magic can happen.

"To look at the people who've been on the red carpet with me," he says, "would be a total history of Hollywood and the Academy Awards."

Just electing to cash in

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

THE MOVIE: Our Brand Is Crisis
THE DIRECTOR: Rachel Boynton
THE STARS: James Carville, Jeremy Rosner, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada



One of the recent "hot docs" on the film festival circuit, the provocative "Our Brand Is Crisis" by first-time feature director Rachel Boynton thrusts us into the fray of the 2002 presidential election in Bolivia to illustrate how candidates in foreign countries can be neatly packaged and sold by American strategists-for-hire. The film follows seemingly well-intentioned and undoubtedly well-compensated operatives from the Washington D.C.-based consulting outfit GCS (headed by noted Bill Clinton strategist James Carville) as they travel to South America to turn unpopular former Bolivian president Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (aka, Goni) into a viable candidate.

Though Goni is trailing two populist candidates by a wide margin at the film's outset, GCS strategist Jeremy Rosner and his team are confident victory can be snatched from the jaws of defeat by "branding" Goni — who was raised and educated in the U.S. — as the panacea for all that ails Bolivia, first and foremost its devastating economic crisis. In a move that some, if not all of the principals must surely now regret, Boynton was granted almost unlimited access to the war room.

So we see firsthand how smear campaigns are hatched — a week before the election, unverified information about an opposing candidate's potentially shady financial dealings is surreptitiously leaked to the press — and how focus groups are used to inform virtually every campaign decision. The devaluation of open, honest dialogue in modern politics is exposed throughout as Goni is repeatedly reminded to "stay on point" and avoid discussing anything that deviates from the branding effort. "Crisis" suffers a bit from redundancy — by the fifth focus group session I was ready to scream "I Get it!" — but this is a minor quibble with an otherwise excellent documentary that raises many interesting questions about political salesmanship and the incestuous relationship between Americanized democracy and capitalism. The film has low-budget look and feel (not a bad thing, either), and Boynton and her intrepid camera crew managed to capture some incredible images of rioting in the streets.

(Not rated. Running time: 87 minutes)

Still a jungle out there

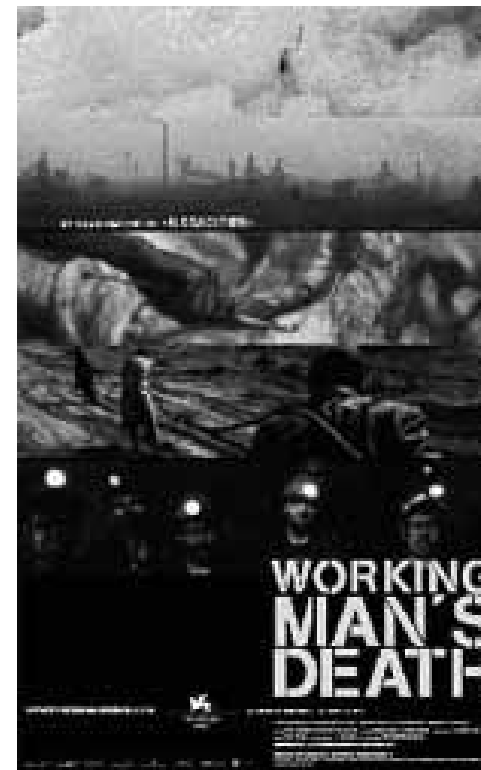
BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

THE MOVIE: The Workingman's Death
THE DIRECTOR: Michael Glawogger

If you think your job is a bitch, take a gander at "Workingman's Death," an art house documentary by Michael Glawogger that vividly showcases some of the most grueling manual labor gigs on the planet. From coal miners digging inside a precarious shaft in the Ukraine to butchers in an open-air slaughterhouse in Nigeria, Glawogger's film attempts to brutally deconstruct myths of the post-industrial age. High-minded purpose aside, this is not an easy film to sit through. Devoid of commentary, filled with stomach-turning sequences, and set to a surrealistic electro-score by John Zorn, it's Sprockets meets Upton Sinclair's "The Jungle." "Workingman's Death" is about as unpleasant an expose on the human cost of globalism as you're likely to ever see.

(Not rated. Running time: 122 minutes)



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NATIONAL



High life in Las Vegas proves to be hard sell

VEGAS, from page 1

and labor have toppled some high-profile luxury condominium projects, turning the market skittish. At least six projects have publicly folded or stalled in a little more than a year, a fraction of the more than 100 once proposed, but enough to make some real estate watchers declare a bust to the boom.

Many in the Las Vegas condo market describe the situation as more of a breather. Seventeen high-rise condominium projects are under construction, they note. Although about half are filled with a time-share hybrid called the condo-hotel, the others are filled with residential units that are 90 percent sold, real estate analyst Richard Lee said.

"What we're having here isn't a demand constraint," he said of the failed projects. "It's a situation that nobody predicted. The No. 1 problem is construction costs and lack of skilled labor."

The price of steel, diesel fuel and concrete, along with such materials as pipes and wiring, has driven up the costs of building a high-rise tower, said Ken Simonson, chief economist for the Associated General Contractors of America.

The cost of a cubic yard of concrete rose from 10 percent to 15 percent last year and will see a similar increase in 2006, he said. The average cost for diesel fuel used in construction trucks is up 36 cents a gallon from last year. The cost of gypsum, the main ingredient in wall board, rose 42 percent since 2004, and copper used in wiring and fixtures rose about 70 percent in two years, Simonson said.

"We'd have to go back to the '70s to see prices that were rising so rapidly," he said, adding that strong demand, shortage of supply and a shift to a global marketplace were responsible for the increases. "I think it's a sign of new era in which there is going to be worldwide competition for materials."

At the ground level, it means the roughly 25,000 cubic yards of concrete needed to build a 15-story tower costs \$625,000 more today than it did two years ago — when some of the doomed projects were planned and prices for condominium units were set.

In the case of Related Las Vegas' canceled "Icon Las Vegas" towers, a highly anticipated collaboration of two experienced developers, those prices were locked in when the units were sold. While a lawsuit over views stalled construction, building costs nearly doubled and ate into potential profit, said Related Las Vegas President Marty Burger when he scrapped the project in January.

The costs "made it impossible to build Icon based on original pricing without seriously impacting the integrity of the development," he said.

Even one of the most successful high-rise developers in Las Vegas, South Florida-based Turnberry Associates, has had to absorb costs, though the company got into the market before land and construction costs took off, according to John Riordan, vice president of sales.

The company built a reputation, targeted top-tier buyers and benefited from

being one of the first in the market. Turnberry has sold more than 3,000 condominium in Las Vegas since 1999, has six towers under construction and three completed. A 30 percent increase in costs from its third to fourth tower — identical buildings built over two years — wasn't a deal killer.

But materials are only part of the hurdle, Riordan said.

"It's little things — the cost of an electrician," he said, explaining Turnberry's choice to use union workers to "add to the quality." "(Union labor) is a huge factor in the increase in costs."

Plumbers, electricians and ironworkers are hot commodities for union and nonunion jobs. Subcontractors say they've held back from bidding on projects for fear of not getting the labor. Their biggest dilemma isn't winning the bid, but staffing the bids they win.

"We do a labor forecast, we work on it on a daily basis. It's the hardest challenge — you can't take work and just expect that you're going to get 50 or 60 guys for help," said Jim Manning, president of Interstate Plumbing and Air Conditioning. He said he uses nonunion labor but pays union-competitive wages, offers benefits, training and a 401(k) to his workers in an effort to retain them.

"It feels like you're in a bidding war for your own people," Manning said, adding that the shortage keeps him from taking some jobs.

But developers say it's the general contractors and subcontractors who are reaping the benefits of the shortage. With more work than they can handle, contractors can name their price and be choosy. (A \$15 million elementary school put out to bid late last year got no takers.)

Of the few capable of doing the work required for a high-rise, many are tied up on the massive and continual casino expansion projects on the Strip.

"You're competing against a billion-dollar monstrosity," said Jim Stuart, co-founder of Centra Properties and a partner with actor George Clooney in the planned Las Ramblas condo project. "The gaming giants can afford to play in this market and anybody other than the three or four biggest companies in town have tremendous pricing issues to deal with."

The biggest giant is MGM Mirage's planned \$7 billion megaresort Project CityCentre, a development that some predict will tie up as much as 30 percent of the work force when construction is at full force. Work is expected to begin this summer.

The competitive climate has made developers resort to extreme measures, Stuart said. Some have paid as much \$1 million in monthly nonrefundable retainers to key contractors, he said. Turnberry's Riordan said the company had to bring an electrical contractor from Michigan to work on one of its towers.

In the meantime, developers who want to build a piece of the Las Vegas skyline are both humbled and realistic as they confront the challenges of a city not known for either humility or realism.

"What we're really dealing with is the success of our city. It's ironic if you think about it," Stuart said.

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NATIONAL

A pastry with percs: Starbucks does breakfast

BY ELIZABETH M. GILLESPIE

AP Business Writer

SEATTLE — Once premium java percolated into the mainstream, it was only a matter of time before major fast-food and doughnut chains got more serious about their coffee.

Bracing for that threat, Starbucks Corp. started trying out toasty egg and cheese sandwiches in its hometown coffeehouses three years ago.

Now, as McDonald's Corp. and Burger King Corp. offer premium brew, and Dunkin' Donuts sells caramel swirl lattes, the Seattle-based coffee behemoth is more than doubling the number of stores that sell hot breakfast sandwiches this year.

Offering such trimmings as peppered bacon and Black Forest ham, Starbucks added the English muffin sandwiches to stores in Washington, D.C., last year, and in Portland, Ore., last month. That will expand to San Francisco in early April, and Chicago later this year.

By the time its current fiscal year ends in October, Starbucks says it will offer breakfast sandwiches at roughly 600 stores — up from about 250 today.

Industry analysts say it's a sensible move that doesn't involve much risk.

"If Starbucks can get food right, it gives them a whole new leg of growth," said Linda Bannister, an Edward Jones analyst in St. Louis.

The biggest gamble, analysts say, is whether hot food can be served without

slowing down service.

Vendors prepare the breakfast sandwiches daily and deliver them first thing in the morning. The sandwiches are heated up in countertop ovens about twice the size of the average microwave, a process that takes about three minutes, Starbucks spokesman Alan Hilowitz said.

So far, the system seems to be working.

"The last time I got a sandwich and a latte at Starbucks, I waited longer for the latte," said Sharon Zackfia, an analyst with William Blair & Co. in Chicago.

Starbucks has not disclosed exactly how its growing sandwich business is affecting its bottom line — only that on average, it boosts same-store revenues by about \$30,000 a year, or roughly 3 percent.

Drinks remain its primary and fastest-growing revenue source, accounting for 77 percent of \$5.4 billion in sales at company-run retail stores for fiscal 2005. That's up from 61 percent since fiscal 1996, when company-run retail store revenue was about \$599 million.

Starbucks counts sales at company-run stores separate from those at its licensed shops in hotels, malls and the like.

As a percentage of revenue, fresh food has remained relatively constant over the past decade, ranging from 12 percent to 16 percent of annual company-run retail sales. In fiscal 2005, pastries, desserts, sandwiches and salads accounted for 15 percent of those sales.

Meanwhile, Starbucks has beefed up its

corporate-level food division from about a half dozen employees a decade ago to roughly 70 today.

Tom Barr, who heads up the food division, realizes he faces increasingly stiff competition but said that's not the reason Starbucks is focusing more on food. It's just part of the business of keeping its customers happy, he said.

When it first rolled out warm breakfast sandwiches in April 2003, Starbucks got mixed reviews.

Since then, it bagged one egg sandwich with roasted peppers, red onion and Colby Jack cheese and replaced it with others that have proved more popular: eggs Florentine with baby spinach and havarti, and herbed sausage and egg with aged sharp cheddar.

Officially, Starbucks isn't saying how many more markets might get breakfast sandwiches in the coming years. But Barr said, "We're confident in the program," and that he'd be surprised if Starbucks didn't expand the service to at least a couple new markets next year.

Bill Whitman, spokesman for McDonald's USA, said Starbucks' heightened focus on breakfast food comes as a compliment to a company that considers itself the inventor of the fast-food breakfast.

"I think there's much work left to be done to catch up to the industry leader," he said.

Wary of crediting any competitor with forcing the company to revamp its coffee

strategy, Whitman said McDonald's committed to the upgrade once it realized consumers were getting their caffeine fixes throughout the day, not just at breakfast.

McDonald's began adding "premium roast" coffee to stores in most major U.S. cities in recent months and plans to roll it out in all of its 13,700 restaurants nationwide early next week.

Dunkin' Donuts, which used to pride itself on offering just a regular Joe's cup of joe, started selling cappuccinos and other espresso drinks a few years ago, adding iced versions last year.

During peak times of year, the new beverage line has accounted for as much as 10 percent of revenue and has also pushed up sales of regular brewed coffee — a boost the company didn't expect, said John Gilbert, Dunkin' Donuts' vice president of marketing.

Early this year, it added a light latte made with a zero-calorie sugar substitute. It's done so well, a vanilla version is planned for summer.

Doughnuts, of course, have always been the company's mainstay, but much like the competition, Dunkin' Donuts recently broadened its line of breakfast sandwiches.

Those will surely give Starbucks' sandwiches more competition as Dunkin' Donuts expands westward. It has about 4,800 stores today, most of them in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, and plans to open about 800 new stores year, with a nationwide goal of 15,000 stores by 2020.

English-learning issue headed for the judge

BY PAUL DAVENPORT

Associated Press Writer

PHOENIX — Democratic Gov. Janet Napolitano, who vetoed three previous Republican bills to revamp programs for students learning English, said Friday she will let the latest version become law so a federal judge can rule on whether it does enough.

The state is accumulating federal court

finances at the rate of \$1 million a day for failure to have an adequate program for the children of immigrants. Napolitano said the bill remains inadequate but that she decided to let it reach U.S. District Judge Raner C. Collins in hopes that he will reject it.

"We are moving the fight from the Legislature to the courthouse because we think we'll get a better result there," Napolitano told reporters.

Democratic legislative leaders suggested the action, hoping rejection by the judge would break a de facto statehouse stalemate and compel Republicans to accept changes in the legislation.

Collins' predecessor on the case ruled in 2000 that the state's programs for approximately 150,000 students learning English are inadequately funded, violating a federal law that guarantees equal opportunities in education.

The state has been accumulating daily fines — \$23 million through Friday — that started Jan. 25 at \$500,000 when the state missed a deadline set by Collins. The fines rose to \$1 million on Feb. 24.

Napolitano's options included signing the bill, vetoing it or let it become law without her signature.

Republican legislative leaders said their bill, like the vetoed ones before it, would satisfy the court.

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NATIONAL



Coast Guard throws wrench into ports deal

BY LIZ SIDOTI
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Republican congressional leaders had hoped to curtail bipartisan outcries over a United Arab Emirates-based company's pending takeover of some U.S. port operations by brokering an agreement for a new investigation of the deal's potential security risks.

Then came the disclosure that the U.S. Coast Guard had raised concerns weeks ago that, because of U.S. intelligence gaps, it could not determine whether the UAE company, DP World, might support terrorist operations.

Bush administration officials say those concerns were addressed and resolved.

Nevertheless, both Republicans and Democrats seized on the Coast Guard assessment, which was released by Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, at a Senate Homeland Security Committee hearing Monday, to launch a fresh round of criticism just as the furor over the ports deal appeared on the brink of subsiding.

"I am more convinced than ever that the process was truly flawed," said Collins, the Homeland Security Committee's chairwoman. "I can only conclude that there was a rush to judgment, that there wasn't the kind of painstaking, thorough analysis that needed to be done, despite serious questions being raised and despite the involvement of a wide variety of agencies."

"If this isn't a smoking gun," Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., said, "it shows that there may be one undetected" by the multi-agency panel that approved DP World's proposed purchase of London-based Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co. The panel signed off on the deal without doing a 45-day investigation into security implications, which critics say the law requires.

More fuel could be added to the fire Tuesday when the Senate Commerce Committee holds a hearing to review the DP World deal. Edward H. Bilkey, DP World's chief operating officer, was to testify.

In February, the Commerce Committee vetted the appointment of David C. Sanborn of Virginia, a senior DP World executive, to be the new administrator of the Maritime Administration of the Transportation Department.

The White House appointed Sanborn, who worked as DP World's director of operations for Europe and Latin America, to the post Jan. 17, the same day the Treasury Department's Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States approved the DP World takeover.

Two Democrats, Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts and Bill Nelson of Florida, have vowed to block Sanborn's nomination unless he testifies again before the Commerce Committee.

The DP World deal has threatened to divide the Republican Party on its signa-

ture issues — national security and fighting terrorism — during a pivotal election year in which the entire House and a third of the Senate faces re-election.

Looking to head off a Republican revolt, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist and other GOP congressional leaders sought to ensure the White House would be able to stand with members of the president's own party and counter Democratic criticism that they were soft on terrorism when lawmakers returned to Washington from a weeklong break.

Under the agreement congressional GOP leaders negotiated over the weekend, the Bush administration agreed to the company's request for a highly unusual 45-day national security review of its business deal.

Initial reviews from lawmakers were positive. Frist, who had said Feb. 20 that he might introduce a bill to delay the ports transaction if the White House didn't do so, told reporters Monday in Detroit, "I don't think it's necessary to legislate."

But a bipartisan group of senators introduced a bill anyway that would delay the deal and give Congress an opportunity to block the takeover. Separately, Democrats introduced legislation that would prohibit companies owned by foreign governments from controlling operations at U.S. ports.

At a Homeland Security Committee hearing, Collins released an unclassified excerpt of a Coast Guard intelligence assessment done before the government approved the DP World takeover.

"There are many intelligence gaps, concerning the potential for DPW (DP World) or P&O (Peninsular & Oriental) assets to support terrorist operations, that precludes an overall threat assessment" of the potential merger, the half-page excerpt said. "The breadth of the intelligence gaps also infer potential unknown threats against a large number of potential vulnerabilities."

The Coast Guard document raised questions about the security of the companies' operations, the backgrounds of people working for the companies, and whether other foreign countries influenced operations that affect security.

"We were never told about this," Michael Moore, DP World's senior vice president, said of the excerpt. However, he said it shows "serious and probing" questions were asked and that the initial approval of the deal indicates those questions were answered.

In a statement, the Coast Guard said the assessment was part of a broader classified Coast Guard analysis that concluded that DP World's pending takeover "in and of itself, does not pose a significant threat to U.S. assets in (continental United States) ports."

"The concerns that you're citing were addressed and resolved," Clay Lowery, the Treasury Department's assistant secretary for international affairs, told Collins.

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RESPONSES ON PAGE 4.



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Montana finds deregulation damage is done

BY MATT GOURAS

Associated Press Writer

HELENA, Mont. — Almost a decade after the utility deregulation fad swept through Montana, the state is learning the hard way it isn't easy to rebuild the broken pieces of a stable, publicly regulated utility once it's gone.

Montana's plight is unique in some ways, but it is not the only state where resentment to electricity deregulation is growing.

When the old Montana Power Co. came to lawmakers in 1997 with a plan to offer consumers a multitude of choices for cheap power, deregulation was seen as inevitable. But power today isn't cheaper — it's far more expensive — and the other promises made that year now ring hollow.

Montana Power sold off its dams and power plants, and then its utility business, to pursue an ill-timed pipedream to become a fiber-optic company. It quickly went bankrupt. The company that bought the utility piece of Montana Power, NorthWestern Energy, filed for bankruptcy itself and reorganized.

Along the way, Montana went from having some of the lowest electricity prices in the country to among the highest in the region.

"It's almost an unbelievable story when you go through all the events that happened there," said Ken Rose, a senior fellow at the Institute of Public Utilities at Michigan State University. "It's much more of a soap opera than in other states."

Backlash, percolating almost from the day deregulation passed the Legislature, has grown and given birth to more efforts to undo the effects of deregulation.

Separate efforts, like one from a group of cities looking to buy the utility from NorthWestern, aim to rein in skyrocketing electricity rates and give public officials more authority. But they all face huge hurdles, big price tags or federal approval.

NorthWestern Energy said it can't be held responsible for decisions made by the old Montana Power.

NorthWestern finds itself in a market-based system with no power plants of its own. Prices will rise as they go up around the country, said NorthWestern spokeswoman Claudia Rapkoch.

"We're just trying to find out what is going to be the best solution for our customers going forward," she said. "And quite frankly they are fairly significant questions."

Options could include changing part of the deregulation law to let NorthWestern build its own power plants, she said.

"It's a difficult position to be in," Rapkoch said. "NorthWestern is the entity people get their bills from and they turn a lot of that wrath on NorthWestern. But the drivers of energy prices are due to forces out in the marketplace."

Montana isn't alone in trying to figure out how to deal with market-based pricing as the full effects are becoming known.

— In Delaware, Delmarva Power has said that customers can expect a 60 percent electricity rate increase when seven-year rate caps expire in May. Republican leaders, under election year pressure, are talking about re-regulating the industry.

— Lawmakers in Connecticut say they may revisit deregulation following news late last year of double-digit electric rate increases.

— Electricity rates in Ohio are expected to rise this year when a provision in that state's 1999 deregulation law that required discounted rates expires, and consumer advocates are looking for ways to ease the effects.

Many states that passed deregulation put a cap on rates at the time, but many of those caps are about to expire. The cap lifted three years ago in Montana, and electricity rates have gone up about 30 percent since then.

It's becoming clear that rate hikes have been higher in deregulated states than those that bucked the late 1990s trend and stuck with a traditional system, Rose said. Deregulation has now been thrown into reverse across the country, he said.

California got all the headlines for its post-deregulation fiasco that was topped by energy market manipulation by Enron Corp., but it's Montana that some point to as the poster child for deregulation gone awry. Montana was seen as the only low-cost energy state talked into deregulation.

In Montana, observers say there will never be a way to return to the days of cheap power generated by regulated dams that had already been essentially paid off.

Deregulation "will be a bone in people's throats permanently," said state Public Service Commissioner Tom Schneider.

Montana Power was one of the biggest spenders on lobbying at the 1997 Legislature. It wrote the deregulation bill, then persuaded lawmakers it was a good idea, said David Ewer, a legislator then and now budget director for Democratic Gov. Brian Schweitzer.

Ewer was among the minority to blast the plan as a bad idea for consumers. He recalled lobbyists rammied the bill through in a month and "bastardized the process."

"I said Montanans are at grave risk here. We risk losing cheap power. We risk losing good jobs," he said. "Now we are going into the ninth year of deregulation and there is still no customer choice. This idea we were going to have robust competition? There is no competition."

"The proof is in the pudding. We are now the most expensive electricity in the region."

The disintegration of Montana Power, and the regulated, cheap power provided by dams and power plants it once owned, is what bothers people the most. Putting it all back together exactly like it was is impossible.

An offer by five Montana cities to buy the Montana utility business from NorthWestern Energy for more than \$2 billion is supported by the public in recent polls.

Backers of the idea say it is important to get the utility under public ownership, and build the base for stable power prices.

"I think there seems to be an understanding if Montana is going to have any say at any time on how this business is operated, this is the last chance," said Alec Hansen, executive director of the Montana League of Cities and Towns. "Any efficiency, any savings, anything we can do will go back to the ratepayers, not to corporate stockholders."

But the offer has been roundly rejected by company executives — even though the largest shareholder has accused executives of spurning the offer just to protect their own jobs. And critics say government ownership would buckle under the weight of the debt used to buy the operations.

Plans to put an initiative on the ballot in November that would force the new owners of the hydroelectric dams, PPL Montana and Avista, to sell to a public agency faces voters who rejected the potentially expensive proposition four years ago. A value has not been set for the dams.

Gov. Schweitzer recently predicted it would fail again under a multimillion-dollar advertising blitz from the energy industry.

The best hope for stable, regulated electricity prices is an effort by the state to rule that PPL is a monopoly, utilities Commissioner Schneider said. Such a decision could force the company to sell electricity at about cost, rather than at rates determined by the marketplace. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is expected to decide the issue soon.

But even then, "cost-based prices" under PPL are going to be higher than back when the dams had already been paid off and sat on Montana Power's books at decades-old figures.

There is no way to really put "the genie back in the bottle," Ewer said, and get really cheap power again.

"I don't think we will ever get back to where we were," Schneider said. "There's a potential for things to be better than they will likely be — but we'll never get what we had."



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INTERNATIONAL

Bush rewards Pakistan with high-profile visit

BY TERENCE HUNT

Associated Press Writer

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — President Bush rewarded this anti-terror ally Friday, minimizing U.S. concerns about democracy's pace and anti-American sentiment in favor of a high-profile visit to boost Pakistan's global standing.

Bush arrived amid extraordinary security for an overnight stay, following an unannounced visit to Afghanistan and three days in India, Pakistan's neighbor and rival. Air Force One landed after dark, its lights off and window shades drawn to conceal the distinctive aircraft.

A banner strung across an airport building welcomed "President George W. Bush, a friend of Pakistan," and above it were pictures of Bush, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and the prime minister. A motorcade assembled to bring Bush into town included helicopters, but it was not immediately clear which method of transportation he took to the U.S. Embassy. Highways were cleared of all traffic, and military forces stood guard along the route.

The security precautions underscored the continuing terrorist threat in this poor, conservative Muslim country where a U.S. diplomat was killed a day earlier in a bomb attack.

"I will meet with President Musharraf to discuss

Pakistan's vital cooperation in the war on terror and our efforts to foster economic and political development so that we can reduce the appeal of radical Islam," Bush said shortly before arriving in Pakistan. "I believe that a prosperous, democratic Pakistan will be a steadfast partner for America, a peaceful neighbor for India and a force for freedom and moderation in the Arab world."

Later, White House press secretary Scott McClellan told reporters that Bush meant to say Pakistan would be a force in the Muslim world. Pakistan is not an Arab country.

Though Pakistan is a key U.S. partner in rooting out terrorists, Osama bin Laden is believed to still be hiding along its porous, mountainous border with Afghanistan. On Thursday, a suicide car bomber killed the U.S. diplomat and three others in a strike near the U.S. consulate in the southern port city of Karachi, a hotbed of Islamic militancy.

Bush has promised to raise with Musharraf the need to do more to hunt down al-Qaida members. He also was to talk about the need for additional democratic reforms. Musharraf seized power seven years ago in a bloodless coup and has reneged on a promise to relinquish his military post.

A public show of solidarity for the Pakistani leader, a target of repeated assassination attempts in part because of his support for the U.S. war on terror, was likely to take center stage in meetings with Bush.

Another key goal of the Pakistan stop is to boost the U.S. image among Muslims by showcasing American contributions after a devastating earthquake in October.

In Rawalpindi, near where Bush landed Friday night, about 1,000 demonstrators earlier had trampled the American flag and chanted "killer go back" and "death to America." Police dispersed them with swinging batons.

Demonstrators also were prevalent in India, where Bush inked a landmark nuclear deal that is the centerpiece of America's new romance with this 1 billion-strong democracy, the world's largest.

In a speech Friday in the Indian capital of New Delhi

that was billed as the centerpiece of his trip, Bush said Americans should not respond to this nation's exploding economy by closing itself off to global trade.

"The United States will not give into the protectionists and lose these opportunities," Bush said at Purana Qila, a historic fort. "For the sake of workers in both our countries, America will trade with confidence."

An estimated 40 percent of Indians live on less than \$1 a day. The middle class has swelled to more than 300 million and India's exploding economy has created millions of jobs.

The outsourcing industry is expected to bring in \$22 billion in revenue alone this fiscal year. Much of that outsourcing business is generated by U.S. companies. Many have eliminated domestic jobs for cheaper Indian labor.

Bush said the United States should see this rapidly growing nation as a land of opportunity instead of a threat. America's best response to globalization is not to build economic barriers to protect workers, but to educate them to make sure they can compete on any stage, he said.

"In my country, some focus only on one aspect of our trade relations with India — outsourcing," he said.

Bush also urged India to lift caps on foreign investment, lower tariffs that penalize American agricultural markets and protect its workers and children from abuse.

"India has responsibilities too," he said.

Bush spent much of Friday in Hyderabad, one of India's high-tech hubs that's driving economic expansion.

He met with young entrepreneurs at a business school, and visited an agricultural college that is researching biotechnology and ways to increase yields and output. Roughly 65 percent of India's population makes its living off agriculture, but the nation's farm sector lags.

After Bush returns to Washington on Sunday, he must sell skeptics in Congress on the deal reached with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for the United States to provide nuclear fuel, reactors and know-how to help India meet its growing demand for power.

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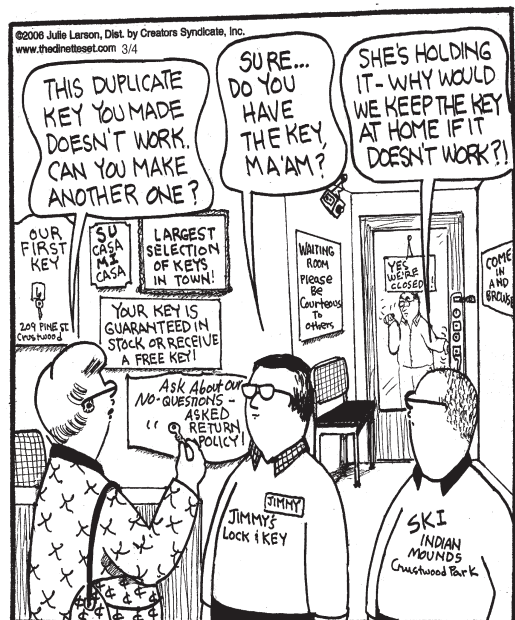
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Notices

**NOTICE OF PETITION TO AD-
MINISTER ESTATE OF SYL-
VIA J. CIERNY**

Case No. BP097013
To all heirs, beneficiar-
ies, creditors, contingent creditors,
and persons who may otherwise be
interested in the will or estate, or
both, of SYLVIA J. CIERNY
A PETITION FOR PRO-
BATE has been filed by Carolyn J.
Bird in the Superior Court of Califor-
nia, County of LOS ANGELES.

THE PETITION FOR
PRO-BATE requests that Carolyn J.
Bird and George Cierny, III be ap-
pointed as personal representative to
administer the estate of the deced-
ent.

THE PETITION re-
quests the decedent's will and codi-
cils, if any, be admitted to probate.

Notices

The will and any codicils are avail-
able for examination in the file kept
by the court.

THE PETITION re-
quests authority to administer the
estate under the Independent Ad-
ministra-tion of Estates Act. (This
authority will allow the personal rep-
resenta-tive to take many actions
without obtaining court approval.
Before taking certain very important
ac-tions, however, the personal rep-
re-sentative will be required to give
notice to interested persons unless
they have waived notice or con-
sented to the proposed action.) The
independent administration authority
will be granted unless an interested
person files an objection to the peti-
tion and shows good cause why the
court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the peti-
tion will be held on March 29, 2006
at 8:30 AM in Dept. No. 5 located at
111 N. Hill St., Los Angeles, CA
90012.

IF YOU OBJECT to the
grant-ing of the petition, you should
ap-pear at the hearing and state
your objections or file written objec-
tions with the court before the hear-
ing. Your appearance may be in
person or by your attorney.

IF YOU ARE A CREDI-
TOR or a contingent creditor of the
deceased, you must file your claim
with the court and mail a copy to the
personal representative appointed
by the court within four months from
the date of first issuance of letters
as provided in Probate Code section
9100. The time for filing claims will
not expire before four months from
the hearing date noticed above.

YOU MAY EXAMINE
the file kept by the court. If you are
a per-son interested in the estate,
you may file with the court a Re-
quest for Special Notice (form
DE-154) of the filing of an inventory
and ap-praisal of estate assets or of
any petition or account as provided
in Probate Code section 1250. A
Request for Special Notice form is
available from the court clerk.

Attorney for petitioner:
DAVID WHEELER NEWMAN ESQ
MITCHELL SILBERBERG & KNUPP
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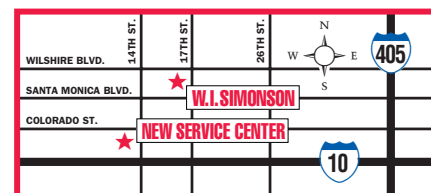
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\$299.88 + tax first months payment for 39 months on approved credit. \$2200 cap cost reduction + \$795 acquisition fee = \$2995 total due at signing (\$0 security deposit). MSRP \$31,365. Tier 1 Credit. 7.5K Miles/yr. 25¢ per mile excess. OTHERS AT SIMILAR SAVINGS.

NEW 2006 R350

\$359 5 AT THIS LEASE PAYMENT
+ 88¢ + TAX PER MONTH
FOR 39 MONTHS

\$359.88 + tax first months payment for 39 months on approved credit. \$2464 cap cost reduction + \$795 acquisition fee = \$3259 total due at signing (\$0 security deposit). MSRP \$48,775. Tier 1 Credit. 7.5K Miles/yr. 25¢ per mile excess. OTHERS AT SIMILAR SAVINGS.

NEW 2006 E350 SEDAN

\$399 5 AT THIS LEASE PAYMENT
+ 88¢ + TAX PER MONTH
FOR 27 MONTHS

\$399.88 + tax first months payment for 27 months on approved credit. \$3716 cap cost reduction + \$795 acquisition fee = \$4511 total due at signing (\$0 security deposit). MSRP \$50,825. Tier 1 Credit. 7.5K Miles/yr. 25¢ per mile excess. OTHERS AT SIMILAR SAVINGS.

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