

FREE

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Santa Monica Daily Press

Picked fresh daily. 100% organic news



Protesters march through downtown

Hundreds march in effort to boycott Forever 21 retailer

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

Hundreds of protesters hit the streets of Santa Monica Sunday asking consumers to join them in boycotting a local clothing store.

Forever 21, a retailer of women's and junior's clothing, which has one of its 100 stores in the Santa Monica Place shopping mall, has been accused by 19 Latino garment workers and hundreds of their supporters that the clothier provided sweatshop conditions in six Los Angeles factories.

The workers, both legal and illegal immigrants, claim they were paid less than minimum wage, weren't paid for overtime and worked in unhealthy conditions.

The Garment Worker Center, which is an independent Los Angeles-based non-profit organization, enlisted politicians, university students and others to boycott Forever 21 since the effort began last fall.

One of them is Santa Monica Mayor Pro Tem Kevin McKeown, who was part of Sunday's protest that was intended to



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press
Protesters line up along Broadway Avenue in front of Santa Monica Place to boycott Forever 21, a retailer accused of sweatshop labor practices. The protesters marched down the Third Street Promenade Sunday.

send a message to consumers.

"I understand wearing something pretty but not by supporting something ugly

See FOREVER 21, page 3

Police provide an OCEAN of support

Resource for battered women widely used by officers in the field

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

When police officers respond to a domestic violence call, many times they have few law enforcement options available to them.

But in Santa Monica, the police department has been using a 24-hour response service called "On Call Emergency Advocate Network," also known as OCEAN, that sends counselors directly to the scene once officers have secured it.

Advocates help victims through the complex legal web of getting a restraining order and inform them of all the services that are available to help victims of domestic violence.

In January, there were 23 verified claims of domestic violence, and in 100 percent of the cases an OCEAN advocate

went to the scene to offer their services.

"It's a tough case to make, and the advocate helps the victim through the process," said Police Chief James T. Butts, Jr. "It takes a lot of time and training to help people escape a life of battering."

In exchange for the service, the police department contributes \$10,000 for the program. However, OCEAN officials said the services they provide are worth at least \$50,000.

"But we want the police officers in the field to use the service whenever they need it so we offer the hotline anyway," said Pat Butler, director of Sojourn services for battered women which runs the OCEAN program.

OCEAN counselors have been attending police department roll call meetings to train officers on the existence of the program and the merits of using it for the past 10 years, officials said. Line officers and senior staff have been receiving special training as well.

See OCEAN, page 4

Running with the law

Santa Monica students finish LA Marathon

BY CHRIS YOUNG
Special to the Daily Press

Some teenagers run away from the police. In Santa Monica, they run with them.

Twelve Santa Monica kids ages 12-19 ran the LA Marathon eight days ago under the training of the Santa Monica Police Department's Police Activities League.

Joking around with each other as they compared their finishing times, the runners seemed to be part of an extended family rather than a motley crew of teenagers.

"I thought it would be really cool to do," said Lizette Urena, 14. "Teens like us, they don't do these kinds of things. But we're dedicated. We can do that."

PAL staffer Don Condon started the training program four years ago so kids could lose weight and stay in shape. Then somebody suggested they all run a marathon.

"I said 'I'll do it if you do it,'" recalls



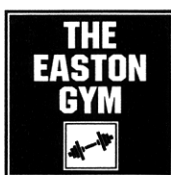
Chris Young/Special to the Daily Press
These students, part of the Santa Monica Police Department's Police Activities League, all finished the LA Marathon last week.

Condon. "They called my bluff. And now here we are."

The group trained three times a week for two hours from September until the marathon March 3. To address the students' busy schedules with sports, school work and extracurricular activities, they all had to commit to two of the three weekly runs.

"I felt like quitting during the end of basketball season," said Lizette Urena.

See MARATHON, page 5



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ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Focus on what you want. Surprises surround meetings. You would be wise not to get too detail oriented and just eye the big picture. What might be told to you in confidence could worry you substantially. Help this person see an alternate point of view. Tonight: Make it early.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Stay in tune with a boss or a higher-up. You might not get what you want. Ultimately, what another demands will work for you — perhaps even better than your original idea. A meeting produces many new ideas and maybe a new friendship. Tonight: Forget that it's Monday.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You'll gain through seeing the big picture. Not everything is as simple as you would like it to be. Reach out for someone you trust and respect. Good advice comes your way. Carefully listen to another, considering your alternatives. Stay on top of your work. Tonight: Burn the midnight oil, if you must.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Listen to a partner right now, even if you find his or her behavior a bit off or unpredictable. This person definitely has a different financial outlook than you. Find experts and seek out key information. Weigh your options. Tonight: Do research on the Internet.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Others do a superb job of jolting you left and right. You have the wherewithal and skill to handle an erratic person in your environment. Zero in on what the real problem is rather than working superficially. Everyone gains as a result. Tonight: Make nice with a special friend.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Imagine yourself making the most of an opportunity that bolts into your life. Once you recuperate from the suddenness, you deal very well with the evolving situation. Let others voice their opinions. Would it be better to agree with another? Tonight: Play diplomat.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ What another feels is a creative, winning idea, you could decide is a sure loser. A meeting of the minds takes you into the realm of details and what might be important. Brainstorm and get as much input as possible. Look for a consensus of opinions. Tonight: Get a good night's sleep.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★ You react to a piece of news and toss your hands in the air. Use your creativity and energy to find a resolution. New beginnings are possible for those who are most imaginative. Speak your mind clearly to a child. He or she needs to hear your opinions. Tonight: Have fun!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Don't let another's reaction hit you as hard as it might seem to. You might need to rearrange your plans in order to handle a budding problem. Discussions within your immediate circle will bring the kind of results you desire. Tonight: Happy at home.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★ Finances take interesting twists and turns right now. Stay in touch with your current feelings. How another expresses him- or herself might help you clear out a problem. Allow others to toss in their ideas during a discussion. Tonight: At a favorite spot.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Discussions take you down an unusual path — even for you. Carefully consider your options, especially if they involve your finances. You feel as if everyone is tugging at you, asking for what he or she wants. Tonight: Pay bills, then decide.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★ You might feel off about what is happening. Keep your mind focused. You might not want to have a discussion for a while. Let another know where you're coming from. Late in the day, clear the air with an associate. Tonight: Visit over a lengthy dinner.

QUOTE of the DAY

“Nature has given us two ears but only one mouth.”

— Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881)

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LOCAL

Forever 21 wins federal case; files defamation lawsuit

FOREVER 21, from page 1

and what's been done to these workers is ugly," he shouted at the end of the protest where a rally was held at Wilshire Boulevard and Ocean Avenue. "Don't buy based on greed."

The garment workers launched a national boycott against Forever 21

A woman's day



Franklin Smith/Special to the Daily Press

By Daily Press staff

Hundreds of protesters lined the Third Street Promenade Friday evening to send the message of international peace. March 8 signaled International Women's Day, observed worldwide since 1910, to honor not only the struggle for women's rights but also international peace.

The protesters stood with Israeli and Palestinian women, along with women from more than 50 cities and countries to demand the dispatch of international monitors to the region and to end violence against Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

They also protested to end Israeli occupation of the West Bank in Gaza, which has seen an escalating cycle of attacks that has now claimed the lives of more than 1,000 Palestinians and nearly 300 Israelis.

Protesters called upon the United States government to accept without delay the demand of the international community to bring peace-keeping forces to the area and work with all parties and other countries to bring peace to both sides.

on Nov. 17. Since then, people have conducted weekly pickets against the company.

After months of settlement negotiations, the workers filed a lawsuit against Forever 21 with the help of Asian Pacific American Legal Center in an attempt to have the Los Angeles-based company pay them their owed wages and to ensure that all factories it uses abide by labor laws.

Last Monday, a federal court judge dismissed the workers' suit. The Garment Worker Center plans to appeal the decision.

This past Wednesday, Forever 21 filed defamation suits against the workers, the Garment Worker Center, the Coalition of Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles and Sweatshop Watch, claiming the protests are damaging its reputation.

"We have no way of redeeming ourselves and we want apologies," said Forever 21 spokesman Chris Lee. "Our objective is not about money — we want our name back."

Lee said the sweatshop claims are meritless. The workers were employed by subcontractors who were hired from the manufacturers who make the clothing his company buys and then sells to the consumer.

"The federal court said we are not liable," Lee said. "(The Garment Worker Center's) cause is great but I wouldn't want to volunteer for an organization that doesn't get all the facts."

"I don't know what is wrong with these people," Lee continued. "Are these people idiots?"

McKeown said Forever 21's argument that the subcontractors are responsible for poor working conditions and low pay is bogus.

Santa Monica recently passed a law that requires local grocery stores to make sure their janitorial staff are properly permitted and are treated fairly after city officials learned some stores were underpaying their clean-up crews.

The Forever 21 situation is no different, McKeown said, adding a business should know who is working for it, regardless if there is a subcontractor serving as the middleman.

The protest, which was highly organized with police officers and people on hand to find former workers so they could be interviewed by the press, began in front of Santa Monica Place, continued down a crowded Third Street Promenade and ended at Palisades Park.

Hundreds of people had picket signs and shouted orchestrated mottos like "Forever 21, you are no good. Pay your workers like you should," and "Hey, hey, ho, sweatshop labor has to go."

Erika Contreras, 22, who sewed clothes for Forever 21 for 1 1/2 years, said she was told she would get \$230 for working about 58 hours a week. Not knowing there was better conditions available to her, the Los Angeles resident continued to work for Forever 21.

A friend told her about the Garment Worker Center and she made her story public. She also got a new job at another garment factory where



Carolyn Sackarison/Daily Press

Erika Contreras used to work for Forever 21 sewing clothes for the Los Angeles-based retailer. She claims she wasn't paid minimum wage and wasn't paid for overtime. She protested along with hundreds on Sunday in Santa Monica, asking consumers to boycott the store.

she is paid minimum wage by the hour and \$10 an hour for overtime.

Garment Worker Center spokeswoman Kimi Lee said the organization opened a hotline three or four months ago for garment workers to air their grievances. Lee said a few people from several different factories throughout Los Angeles came forward with the same claims about Forever 21. She said they didn't know each other and came forward individually.

There are 140,000 garment workers in Los Angeles, making it the largest city in the country for clothing production.

Forever 21, owned by Los Angeles residents Do Won Chang and Jin Sook Chang, employ 5,500 workers nationwide. The couple has been picketed by protesters outside their home for months.

"They've even gotten death threats," Forever 21's Lee said. "We don't spend a dime on advertising and they took our name and drove it into the ground, telling everybody that we are scumbags and that's just not right."



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LOCAL

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Public school is a laughing matter tonight

By Daily Press staff

Local parents are making a joke out of helping elementary students — literally. Six professional comedians, who also are parents, will perform tonight at the Aero Theatre to raise money for local schools, according to Alyssa Tennenbaum, Franklin Elementary PTA president, and Lynn Leavitt, the Roosevelt Elementary PTA president. It will be the first comedy event for Franklin and the first adults-only event. Called “Parents with Punchlines” features Bobby Collins, Dave Coulier, Glenn Hirsch, Wendy Kamenoff, Steve Mittleman and Fran Solomita.

The event starts with a reception that offers desserts and coffee at 7:30 p.m. Showtime is 8 p.m. and runs until 9:30 p.m. The Aero Theatre is located at 1328 Montana Avenue at 14th Street.

Tickets are \$20 per person, adults only.

Tickets are sold at Franklin Elementary, and from 7-7:30 p.m. at the Aero Theatre tonight.

Going green this week

By Daily Press staff

The first “Westside Greens Party” of 2002 has added Bill Pietz, co-chair of the California Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) Coalition, to its list of speakers for the March 15 event.

He joins a roster that includes famed activist Julia Butterfly Hill, who spent two years living in a redwood tree to prevent its destruction. She is scheduled to speak on behalf of the Citizen's Campaign for Old Growth Preservation at 7 p.m.

The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Green Party office at 2809 Pico Boulevard in Santa Monica. It will feature a Green Party orientation, guest speakers on party platform Issues, live musical entertainment, and vegetarian refreshments.

“On March 5, San Francisco voters overwhelmingly approved instant runoff voting (IRV),” said Pietz. “Two years ago, the same thing happened in Oakland and San Leandro. In fact, whenever voters get the chance, IRV wins by a landslide. Why? Instant runoffs save money, increase turnout, lessen negative campaigning, and, most importantly, IRV ensures majority rule by making every vote count. IRV eliminates the problem of spoiler candidates and wasted votes. If you don't know about this better voting method, you should.”

Future “Westside Green Parties” will feature speakers on issues of Alternative Energy and Economic Justice, as well as green candidates for many state-wide and local offices.

The Westside Greens is comprised of Green Party of California members from the region bounded by the Santa Monica Mountains to the North, Los Angeles Airport to the South, La Cienega Boulevard to the East, and the Pacific Coast to the West.

OCEAN has trained SMPD officers for nearly 10 years

OCEAN, from page 1

“We have long supported programs like this,” said Capt. Phil Sanchez. “The department has always looked at ways to support victims in the community and if that means using outside agencies then we will continue to do that.”

Sanchez said by the time police are called in for help, in most cases domestic violence has been going on for a while or has become increasingly life threatening.

“Typically, a battered (person) won’t call law enforcement until the third time it’s happened,” he said. “Or the life of the victim or the life of a child is being threatened.”

Police officers call OCEAN advocates when the scene is safe and if the victims request their help.

Though police department officials have offered to make the program mandatory for officers, OCEAN officials said that is not how they want the program to work.

“We don’t want this to be an order,” said Butler. “We want the officers to want to call us.”

In addition to making counselors available 24 hours by hotline, OCEAN also has posted domestic violence social workers at emergency rooms and the prosecutor’s office. What makes the counselors unique, said officials, is that they do not advocate any one action.

“We merely call the victims afterwards and say ‘so the police came out, how was

that?’” said Butler. “The last thing we would want to do is come across like we were asking a loaded question.”

“It takes a lot of time and training to help people escape a life of battering.”

— JAMES T. BUTTS, JR.
Santa Monica Police Chief

Butler said in her entire career with Sojourn, she hasn’t heard a bad statement about how Santa Monica police officers treat victims when they respond to domestic violence calls.

“The worst thing I’ve heard is that the police made it all up,” said Butler. “Like officers don’t have enough paper work already, they have to make up stuff too.”

Senior officers in the police department said the lack of complaints is directly attributable to the extensive diversity training officers undergo regularly. All personnel, for example, gets sensitivity training from The Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles.

“That’s why we think that the work that has been done is so important to this community,” said Butts.

LOCAL

Howard honored



Chris Pizzello/Associated Press

"A Beautiful Mind" director Ron Howard, left, holds his award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Feature Films, while standing next to last year's winner, Ang Lee, backstage at the Directors Guild Awards in Los Angeles.

Police training program gets kids in marathon form

MARATHON, from page 1

"But everybody encouraged me."

Gema Santiago's cross-country coach told her she could do either cross-country or the marathon. The marathon would take the fun out of running, the coach said.

"I found out later cross-country took the fun out of running, not the other way around," Santiago said. "I don't like running for competition, just for fun. Running is like meditating for me."

Condon is proud that during the four years of PAL's running program, every kid who started the marathon finished it. And five of them have run marathons in the past.

For Diego Godinez, Simon Hanna, and Bryant Villa, the LA Marathon was their second race. Leon Caballero and Chris Villa have done it four times — ever since the PAL training program began.

"People say I'm energetic, that I should use it constructively, so I ran a marathon," said Bryant Villa, 12, the youngest to run the race.

By experiencing the event and enduring the grueling training that led to it, kids learned teamwork and leadership.

"Since I'm the oldest runner, I've got to be responsible with my actions," Caballero said. "I can't do something bad, like tell a slower runner they're not as fast as me, because it gets passed on — it's a bad influence."

During the race, parents and other well-wishers lined the track about every five miles, keeping the rest stations supplied with water and snacks.

The kids said the encouragement helped them cross the finish line.

"I thought it would be hard, like four or five hours of pain," said Santiago, 19. "But it was easier seeing people support you along the route."

The youth center that brought the teenagers together, PAL, is for kids ages 6-17, and staffed by the Santa Monica Police Department. Its mission is to foster positive relationships between the youth, police, and the community through steady mentoring and a variety of activities.

THE RUNNERS:

Name	Age	Time
Amy Larkin	17	5:59
Simon Hanna	16	7:07
Bryant Villa	12	6:43
Liliana Meza	17	7:06
Diego Godinez	14	4:48
Gema Santiago	19	4:42
Leon Caballero	19	6:40
Fernando Vargas	15	7:07
Edlin Urena	16	6:48
Lizette Urena	14	5:59
Chris Villa	16	6:42
David Ortiz	15	5:29

Staff:

Don Condon	7:06
Lt. Frank Frabrega	4:01
Capt. Jacqueline Seabrooks	6:52
Gary Condon	6:22
Karen Humphrey	7:06
Shirley Tse	5:59

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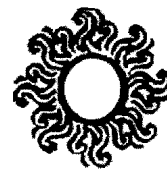
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ENTERTAINMENT

A red-letter day for television swearing

BY DAVID BAUDER

AP Television Writer

NEW YORK — Time to wash the speakers out with soap: This past weekend marked a milestone in televised swearing.

Several profanities were included in the riveting footage on the CBS "9-11" documentary about the World Trade Center collapse Sunday night, the most in memory for a single prime-time broadcast network show.

And ESPN's first-ever original movie, "A Season on the Brink," contained frequent swear words from the lips of actor Brian Dennehy portraying basketball coach Bobby Knight — highly unusual for a basic cable network that has avoided profanity in the past.

Both decisions were debated at length within their respective networks, which ultimately said they opted for realism.

They were notable developments even for a television landscape that has plainly grown coarser over the last few years.

There was less than one use of rough — not even necessarily profane — language per prime-time hour on all the broadcast networks during the 1989-90 TV season. By the 1999-2000 season, there were nearly five per hour, according to a study by the Parents Television Council.

During four weeks of viewing in 1989, PTC researchers counted 108 uses of "hell" and "damn." By 1999, there were 518, the group said.

The language on "9-11" was much tougher. Firefighters are shown staring at the fireball after the first plane flew into the World Trade Center and repeatedly saying, "Holy (expletive)." Firefighters use vivid language to express their anger at the attack.

At one point, the filmmaker is ordered away from the World Trade Center by a police officer who says, "This ain't (expletive) Disney Land."

Profanity is uttered throughout the footage captured that day by the two French filmmakers who were making a documentary on firefighters. "What you see is quite limited," said Susan Zirinsky, "9-11" executive producer.

The program's host, Robert De Niro, warned viewers at the outset to expect rough language.

"This was uncharted territory," Zirinsky said. "The language was rough but the circumstances were rough."

Brent Bozell, president of the Parents Television Council, said he couldn't object to the language. He compared it to the TV premiere of the movie, "Schindler's List," about the Holocaust. Bozell said he had his twin 14-year-old sons watch that movie with him, despite the violence and full-frontal nudity, because he believed it was so important.

The head of broadcast standards for NBC said he understood CBS' reasoning. "I would have made the same call," said Alan Wurtzel.

Many of his other decisions are harder. What used to be hard-and-fast rules for network standards departments

aren't anymore, he said.

"They have really diverged," he said. "There are some things I hear on other networks that I'm really surprised at, and I hear from my colleagues that there are things on our network that they are surprised at."

The success of HBO's "Sex and the City" and "The Sopranos" has increased the cultural pressure on network executives to air rougher material, and producers constantly try to push things, he said.

"This was uncharted territory. The language was rough but the circumstances were rough."

— SUSAN ZIRINSKY

"9-11" executive producer

If a producer hears something on a competitor's show, they'll use the example as ammunition. Wurtzel said he tries to balance the sensibilities of conservative viewers and advertisers with societal mores.

ESPN was faced with its language decision when a rough cut of the movie was completed about a month ago. ESPN convened focus groups of network viewers, with most preferring the profane version, said Mark Shapiro, an ESPN senior vice president.

"You couldn't produce a movie on Bobby Knight and use phrases like 'aw, shucks' and 'golly gee,'" Shapiro said. "It just wouldn't be believable."

Bozell finds that justification pretty weak.

"Hollywood has done movies involving probably hundreds, if not thousands, of people who were known to cuss," he said. "Were they doing a disservice by not having them cuss? When was the last time you heard people see a movie, and say, if there was more cussing, it would be more realistic?"

ESPN decided to offer parents concerned about the language an option. It simultaneously aired a version with the swear words bleeped out on ESPN2 — the network's less visible younger sister.

Shapiro said the edited version was not offered on ESPN because the movie had been so relentlessly promoted on the main network.

One irony: At the movie's conclusion, ESPN airs footage of the real Bobby Knight — with all his swear words bleeped out. ESPN said the clips came to them with the language already removed.

Don't expect the bad language to become a trend at ESPN, Shapiro said.

"Profanity has never been a fixture in the past," he said, "and it won't be a fixture in the future."

BUSINESS



Lawsuits alleges Coca-Cola bilked employees of wages

By The Associated Press

RANCHO CUCAMONGA, Calif. — Nine former and current Coca-Cola employees have sued the soft drink company, alleging it bilked workers out of at least \$200 million in wages over the past four years.

The three class-action lawsuits also claim that Atlanta-based Coke and its California subsidiaries retaliated against those who tried to stop the practice.

The suits are pending in Superior Court. Peter Santilli, a former district sales manager at a Coca-Cola sales center in Rancho Cucamonga, said he was fired after complaining that the company shaved thousands of dollars in overtime wages from the paychecks of its hourly employees.

Santilli alleges that he and other managers were expected to manipulate an electronic timekeeping system and edit out overtime hours worked by merchandisers, who typically earn \$8 per hour restocking store shelves with Coke products.

"I refused to do it," Santilli said.

Other plaintiffs in the lawsuits claim they worked 11-hour days, only to be

talked out of claiming overtime by company managers.

"We'd get harassed," said Anthony Solis, 26, who worked as a Coca-Cola merchandiser from November 1997 to May 1998. "They'd tell me, 'I can send my mom out there and she'd have it done in eight hours. We need people who can do that.'"

A spokesman for Coca-Cola Bottling

Co. of Southern California, which owns the sales center, denied the claims.

"We provide our employees with excellent compensation package in the marketplace," spokesman Bob Phillips told the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin. "We're committed to creating an environment in the workplace where everyone is respected and valued and is compensated accordingly."

Last year, Coke paid \$20.2 million to settle a class-action suit filed on behalf of salaried account managers and merchandisers, who had alleged the company unlawfully failed to pay them overtime wages.

There are at least two similar lawsuits pending in state courts against Pepsi, Coca-Cola's chief rival in the soft drink bottling industry.

Gasoline prices jump nearly 9 cents

By The Associated Press

CAMARILLO, Calif. — Gasoline prices saw their largest rise in nearly a year over the last two weeks, an analyst said Sunday.

Friday's weighted price per gallon for all grades and taxes was nearly \$1.24, up 8.77 cents per gallon from Feb. 22, according to the Lundberg survey of 8,000 gas stations nationwide. That is the largest jump since April 6-20, when prices rose 12.69 cents.

Prices had been hovering around \$1.14 a gallon since the beginning of the year until the latest spike, which analyst Trilby Lundberg attributed mostly to rising crude oil prices. Another factor was maintenance work performed at some refineries to

prepare for the springtime rise in demand, she said.

"It does seem likely that prices will increase" further, Lundberg said. Whether the increases will be moderate or major depends largely on whether tensions rise in the Middle East, she added.

"It's possible at any moment for the crude oil market to get the jitters and jump," Lundberg said.

Friday's average price was nearly 25 cents lower than pump prices a year earlier, and prices remain far less than they were before the terrorist attacks. The average price was \$1.56 per gallon Sept. 7, and fell to just under \$1.12 in December.

The national weighted average price of gasoline, including taxes, at self-serve pumps Friday was about \$1.20 per gallon for regular, \$1.30 for mid-grade and \$1.39 for premium.

Disney betting ESPN success can boost media division

BY GARY GENTILE

AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — As The Walt Disney Co. struggles to rapidly resuscitate ABC, the entertainment giant is looking to use the muscle of its ESPN cable sports network to bolster its flagging media division.

Since Disney acquired it in 1996, the sports channel has expanded into an international brand, putting its name on a magazine, restaurant chain and its first original movie, "A Season on the Brink," which aired Sunday.

It has become one of the few bright spots on Disney's disappointing balance sheet, generating profits at a time when Disney's flagship network ABC is losing money.

ESPN was key in a multibillion dollar deal for the rights to air NBA games on the cable network and ABC. Disney also is using ESPN as high-priced leverage in negotiations with cable and satellite television operators as it tries to launch new cable channels.

Disney is even using ESPN's appeal to young males to lure late-night TV host David Letterman to ABC by offering to market the show on ESPN.

Meanwhile, Viacom Inc., which owns CBS, is trying to keep Letterman with a plan to market the show on its youth-oriented MTV and VH-1 networks.

Overall, profits at Disney's media networks division, which includes ABC, ESPN and other channels, dropped 58 percent in the last three months of 2001 as revenue declined by 3 percent.

A weak advertising market, poor ratings at ABC and the increased cost of news programing after Sept. 11 contributed to the decline.

But profits from Disney's cable operations jumped 6 percent on an 18 percent increase in revenue, due largely to subscriber income and the fees Disney is able to collect from cable and satellite operators on the strength of ESPN, The Disney Channel and Lifetime.

"Up until 2001, ESPN has been probably the fastest-growing division with consistency among all the operating divisions at Disney," said Jeff Logsdon, an analyst at Gerard Klauer Mattison.

Disney wants to spread that strength to other parts of the company, including ABC, which has found mixed results while trying to boost ratings.

Ratings at ABC fell precipitously in 2001 after executives bet too heavily on the sustained success of the game show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire," which had helped ABC become the top-rated network in 2000.

Overall ratings have also dipped at ESPN since 1997 as the network expanded into four cable channels, partly cannibalizing its own audience.

But ESPN ratings have increased 24 percent in prime time since October. Executives are hoping a mix of original shows, exclusive rights to key games and a strategy to attract a variety of sports enthusiasts, including bass fishermen, will keep the brand strong.

Disney used ESPN's clout to wage a joint bid with ABC for the rights to National Basketball Association games for six years. ESPN is now the only network that features all four major sports leagues.

"We estimate the deal is worth around \$2.4 billion and think it reaffirms Disney's ABC Sports and ESPN as leaders in sports programming through 2008," Jill Krutik, an analyst for Salomon Smith Barney, wrote in a recent report.

ESPN's dominance has allowed Disney to wield the network like a hammer over the heads of cable and satellite companies.

Disney commands the highest possible price for ESPN and enforces a maximum 20 percent rate hike each year, while using the network as leverage to force

cable operators to accept a host of new channels.

The strategy is alienating some cable operators and is at the heart of a dispute between Disney and EchoStar Communications Inc., which wants to drop the ABC Family Channel from its Dish Network service. EchoStar has already stopped airing ESPN Classic, a channel ESPN acquired in 1997.

"Disney wants to dominate every market they have and charge the maximum price," said Larry Gerbrandt, chief content officer at Kagan World Media, a media research and consulting firm.

ESPN defends its prices and points to a recent study conducted by Beta Research Corp. showing that cable operators consider ESPN the most valuable network carried by their systems.

"We deliver a valuable product to cable operators," ESPN President George Bodenheimer said. "We're very comfortable that we have struck a balance in the price-value relationship with the operators. They make money off of ESPN."

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NATIONAL

Six months since WTC attacks; nightmare relived

BY SARA KUGLER

Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — Joseph Maurer, whose daughter died in the Sept. 11 terror attack on the World Trade Center, said he and his family would stay away from their television set on Monday.

"They're going to keep showing the buildings collapsing and we're not really all that interested in seeing that part of it," Maurer said.

Monday, exactly six months since the attacks, was to



Associated Press

A construction crew views the "The Sphere," in the Battery Park section of the Manhattan borough of New York Sunday, the day before a dedication ceremony today marking six months since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. "The Sphere," which stood in the fountain of the trade center plaza, was gashed and partially crushed by falling debris. It was created in 1971 by artist Fritz Koenig and was dedicated as a monument to world peace through world trade.

be observed with prayers and reflection, the dedication of a scarred memorial and a tribute of twin beams of light. At the same time, many victims' relatives say Monday will be filled with awful memories.

Maurer, a retired firefighter from Brooklyn, lost his daughter, Jill Campbell, in the attack, as well as a dozen firefighter friends. He said his family was considering going to ground zero for the lighting of the beams, which are meant to evoke the destroyed towers.

The city's schedule was to begin at 8:30 a.m., with police officers gathering outside precincts as the names of the 23 officers killed in the World Trade Center attack are read aloud. The day was to end after dark with the ceremonial lighting of the Tribute in Light, two towers of light aimed skyward into the night sky from a spot near ground zero.

The Tribute in Light will consist of 88 high-powered beams of light. The display was created by two arts organizations and will be displayed until April 13. The estimated \$10,000 worth of electricity is being donated by Con Edison.

City officials planned to dedicate another temporary memorial, a 5,000-pound steel-and-bronze sculpture called "The Sphere," near ground zero in Battery Park.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg was to introduce a moment of silence at 8:46 a.m. — the time that the first of two hijacked airliners slammed into the trade center. Gov. George Pataki, former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and some victims' relatives were to speak before another moment of silence at 9:03 a.m., the time that the second plane hit.

"The Sphere," which stood in the fountain of the trade center plaza, was gashed and partially crushed by falling debris. It was created in 1971 by artist Fritz Koenig and originally was dedicated as a monument to world peace through world trade.

Bloomberg said the globe probably would serve as a



Charlie Neibergall/Associated Press

Iowa National Guardsman Jeremy Sale inspects a beer truck while working a security gate, at Camp Dodge in Johnston, Iowa. Six months after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Iowa National Guard personnel continue to protect military bases statewide, fill security shifts at airports and maintain helicopters that have seen action overseas.

centerpiece for a permanent memorial.

Also Monday, flags at Port Authority facilities were to be flown at half staff, honoring the 84 employees lost, 37 of whom were Port Authority police officers.

Holli Silver, whose husband David died in the trade center, said she would skip the ceremonies, instead spending the day with her infant and toddler, away from news.

"Look at how we have to live our lives," Silver said. "Every morning you wake up and wonder if they'll find another (body) part that day. I don't want the world to forget, that's for sure, so if this means people will pay attention, that's fine. But as far as for me, six months is still a living hell."

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INTERNATIONAL



Sharon: Israel prepared to discuss cease-fire

BY GREG MYRE
Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM — With Mideast violence at its worst levels in 17 months of fighting, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Sunday he was prepared to negotiate with Palestinians on a truce but won't call off the current army offensive against militants.

The Israeli leader spoke hours after Israeli helicopters pounded Yasser Arafat's two-story, seaside office in the Gaza Strip to rubble. The Palestinian office had been evacuated before the helicopter attack, and no one was hurt.

The helicopter attack was retaliation for a Palestinian suicide attack that killed 11 others near Sharon's Jerusalem residence.

"We are in a war," Sharon told his Cabinet ministers, some of whom are demanding even tougher action. "All of us must stay united and make every effort to stand up to this wave of terror."

In renewed violence Sunday, three Palestinians and one Israeli were killed in scattered clashes in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The United States is pressing for a cease-fire, and U.S. Mideast envoy Anthony Zinni is to visit the region this week for his third attempt in recent months to work out a truce.

"He's going to stay in the region and fight his way through this," Secretary of State Colin Powell said Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation." "We're not going to allow acts of violence to stop Gen. Zinni from doing his work."

Vice President Dick Cheney, meanwhile, was heading Sunday to the Middle East for a visit to nine Arab nations — Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen — as well as Israel, Britain and Turkey.

Cheney will discuss Middle East violence "at every



Charles Dharapak/Associated Press

A painting of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat releasing a dove hangs on the wall as security officers survey the damage to his offices after it was destroyed by Israeli missiles in Gaza City on Sunday.

stop," Powell said.

Sharon has dropped his demand for a week of complete calm before talking about a cease-fire, but made clear the current Israeli military offensive will press ahead.

"We want to make every effort to achieve a cease-fire," Sharon said. "At the same time, we are continuing with our operations ... and if the terror continues our operations will continue."

In Egypt, meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal offered Israel "complete peace from Arab nations" in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands captured in 1967, and the creation of an independent Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital.

Al-Faisal, who spoke after meeting Egyptian

President Hosni Mubarak, offered the most detailed Saudi comments on the kingdom's overture to Israel since it was first made public last month. Israel has expressed strong reservations, but said it is willing to explore the proposal.

Palestinians said the Jerusalem bombing and a shooting attack at a seafont hotel in Netanya, both on Saturday night, were a consequence of Israel's stepped-up military campaign. Recent Israeli raids in several refugee camps have resulted in many civilian casualties.

"This is the normal response from the Palestinian resistance for all the Israelis have done in the refugee camps, to Palestinian civilians, women and children," said Ahmed Abdel Rahman, a top adviser to Arafat. "The Israelis have to expect such operations whenever they escalate their military attacks against our civilians."

In the worst spate of violence since the fighting erupted in September 2000, more than 120 Palestinians and more than 50 Israelis have been killed in the first 10 days of March.

In a highly symbolic response to the Saturday night attacks, Israeli helicopters and gunboats fired more than two dozen missiles at Arafat's large Gaza City compound before dawn Sunday, collapsing most of the two-story office headquarters into a pile of rubble.

Arafat was not in the compound; he has been confined by Israel to the town of Ramallah in the West Bank.

After the attack, workers went through the debris to salvage documents in the complex, one of the leading symbols of the Palestinian aspirations for statehood.

An officer in Arafat's personal security unit wept upon seeing the wreckage. "This went from being a small social club to being the house of the nation, and look at it now," said Lt. Mohammed Youssef.

Arafat had received world leaders, including former U.S. President Bill Clinton and the late King Hussein of Jordan, at the building.

South Africa criticizes Jimmy Carter over AIDS comments

BY MIKE COHEN
Associated Press Writer

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — The ruling African National Congress accused former President Jimmy Carter on Sunday of being arrogant and contemptuous for criticizing the government's AIDS policies, and said he was trying to foist unsafe drugs on South African AIDS sufferers.

ly revered former president.

ANC questioned Carter's motives, saying the safety of nevirapine was still unproven, though it has been approved for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization. A study commissioned by the South African government found the drug to have no negative side effects.

"We find it alarming that President Carter is willing to treat our people as guinea pigs, in the interest of the pharmaceutical companies, which he would not do in his own country," the party said in a statement.

In Abuja, Nigeria, Carter praised that country's leaders at a church service in the presidential villa's chapel Sunday for the work they have done to fight HIV, making a veiled reference to South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki.

"We came earlier this week from another country, which I won't name, where the president has avoided this responsibility completely and AIDS is rampant and growing every day," Carter said.

The South African government has restricted nevirapine's use to a few pilot programs, saying the country does not have adequate infrastructure to administer it properly.

Mandela said he would try to persuade the ANC to change its policies when the national executive committee takes up the matter later this month.

"We have created the impression that we don't care about the thousands of people who are dying," the Sunday Independent newspaper

reported him as saying.

The government estimated last year that 4.7 million South Africans — one in nine — were HIV positive, more people than any other country.

The ANC also accused Carter of reneging on an agreement not to involve himself in the debate over AIDS

drugs and said South Africa could solve its problems on its own.

"We do not need the interference and contemptuous attitude of President Carter or anybody else," it said. "We are not arrogant to presume that we know what the U.S. should do to respond to its many

domestic challenges. Nobody from elsewhere in the world should presume they have a superior right to tell us what to do with our own challenges."

Mbeki's spokesman Bheki Khumalo refused to comment on the party statement. ANC spokesman Smuts Ngonyama said Mbeki had not seen it.

"We find it alarming that President Carter is willing to treat our people as guinea pigs ..."

— AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Carter, who visited South Africa on Friday before flying to Nigeria, urged the government to do more to fight AIDS and offered to help raise funds for anti-AIDS programs.

Specifically, he said the government should make available at public hospitals the AIDS drug nevirapine, found effective in reducing the mother-to-child transmission of HIV, a major problem in South Africa.

Its refusal to make the drug universally available has brought the ruling party condemnation from many quarters — including from Nelson Mandela, the country's wide-

Cartel lord caught



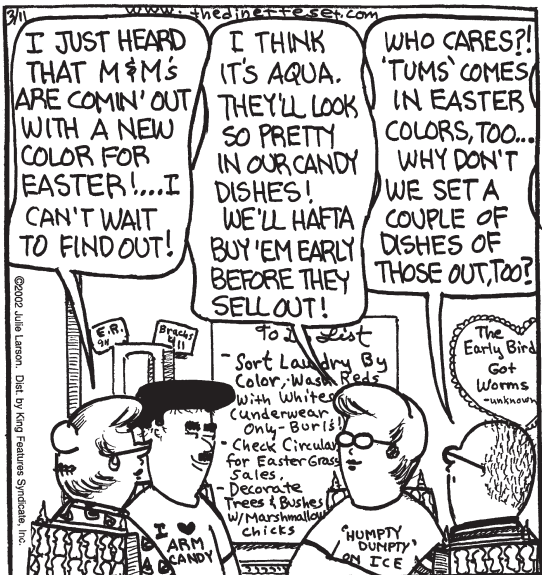
Heesoon Yim/Associated Press

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administrator Asa Hutchinson explains the arrest of drug trafficker Benjamin Arellano Felix in Washington. Soldiers raided a house in central Mexico this past weekend and captured Felix, alleged leader of Mexico's bloodiest drug gang.



COMICS

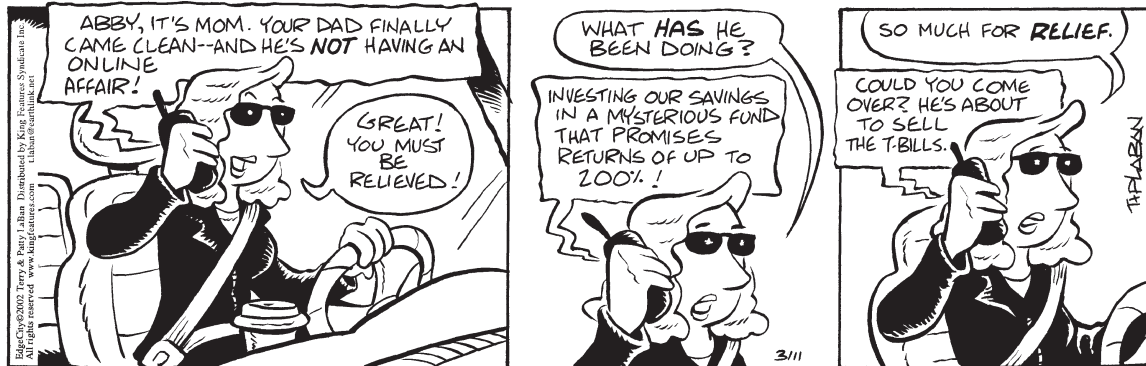
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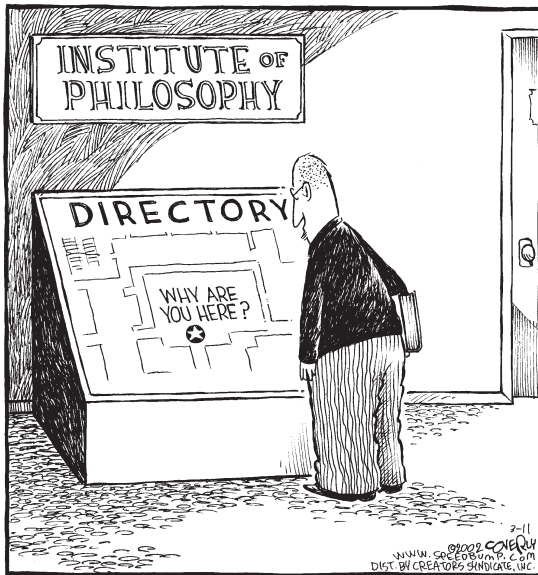
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 - 5 Wrestling needs
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 - 10 Lucy's pal
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 - 13 Suspicious
 - 14 New Orleans university
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 - 17 Mine rocks
 - 18 Andean carriers
 - 21 Newsman Koppel
 - 22 Worldwide
 - 23 Highway sights
 - 24 Elicit a response
 - 26 Lawyer's charge
 - 29 Astronaut James
 - 30 FDR's dog
 - 31 In the style of
 - 32 Home of the Cowboys
 - 34 Layers
 - 37 "48 HRS" star
 - 38 Some pickles
 - 39 "The Tempest" sprite
 - 40 Salinger girl
- DOWN**
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 - 2 Approved
 - 3 Songs for one
 - 4 Be a rat
 - 5 Director Brooks
 - 6 Had lunch
 - 7 Louise's pal
 - 8 Soap opera
 - 9 Cockpit worker
 - 11 Caustic substances
 - 15 With everything taken into account
 - 19 Bird of Canada
 - 20 Stomach muscles, for short
 - 22 Shore-bird
 - 23 Brewed beverage
 - 24 Lassie, for one
 - 25 Uses
 - 26 Join the

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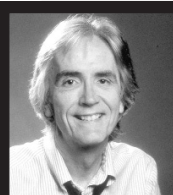
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3-11

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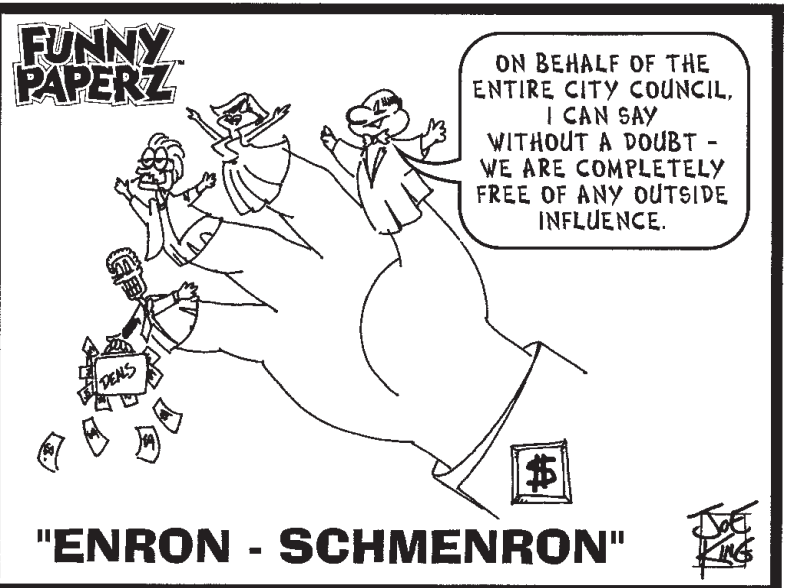


NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Fistfights an old tradition in Russian gala

Licensing officials in New York City declined to issue a permit for the highlight of the two-day Russian end-of-winter gala in February at Prospect Park in Brooklyn because the festival's signature event, the centuries-old "stenka na stenku," calls for two teams of 50 men to engage in vicious fistfights. Said one organizer, "We will have an ambulance standing by (but if) we lose a tooth, we lose a tooth. No big deal."



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BACK PAGE

Cryogenically frozen 'Grandpa Bredo' honored

BY NICK WADHAMS

Associated Press Writer

NEDERLAND, Colo. — The Grim Reaper led a parade float, obstacle-course contestants carried coffins and a frozen corpse was the main attraction.

By all accounts, the first Frozen Dead Guy Days festival was a lively affair.

**"To me it's just a piece of meat.
I know Bredo's off doing
something else."**

— BO SHAFFER
Body keeper

The presence of Bredo Morstoel's cryogenically preserved body seemed a good enough reason for a two-day festival in this quirky little mining town trying to drum up winter tourism.

"Anything that makes us laugh is a good thing," said Mayor Jim Miller, popular in part because his campaign manager is a talking parrot named Jose.

Morstoel died in 1989 in Norway. His grandson, Trygve Bauge, had the body frozen and eventually brought it to Nederland, about 35 miles northwest of Denver, for storage. He had hoped that Morstoel could someday be revived or cloned.

Technology, unfortunately, has yet to catch up with Grandpa Bredo. Bauge was deported back to Norway in 1994 after his visa expired.

Since then, Bauge has paid \$650 a month to Bo Shaffer to keep Morstoel's body on dry ice, at 90 degrees below zero. Shaffer admits he doesn't subscribe to Bauge's belief that Morstoel can be brought back.

"To me it's just a piece of meat," Shaffer said. "I know Bredo's off doing something else."

Local officials initially resisted having the body stored nearby, passing an ordinance against it. But it couldn't be applied retroactively.

Now people have warmed up to the idea.

Anyone who wanted to see Morstoel's resting place this weekend had to pay \$25 and sign a waiver not to disclose the location of the shed where the corpse has been stored since 1993.

The only proof that Morstoel is actually inside the metal box is a picture of Bauge standing over the body just before the coffin was sealed, five days after Morstoel had died.

"I've seen that picture and Bredo doesn't look real good," Shaffer said.

The coffin hasn't been opened since then, and Shaffer said he's considered the possibility that Bauge, known to be an oddball, is just playing a monumental joke on everyone.

Still, several hundred people turned out for the town's macabre parade, featuring floats of coffins and a replica of Morstoel's shed.

In keeping with the frozen theme, there was a polar bear plunge into icy waters and coffin races, with entrants carrying elaborately designed caskets through an obstacle course.

"We've always wanted to have a winter festival and business has been slow," said Teresa Warren, president-elect of the Nederland Chamber of Commerce.

"I know some people think it's morbid," she said, "but we've lived with him for eight years."

'Flag Man' continues tradition with walk

By The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — What began for one San Francisco man as a small sign of patriotism has now turned into a morning ritual.

Jeffrey Orth, known to many commuters on the Golden Gate Bridge simply as the Flag Man, walks a four-mile round trip on the famous span each day with a small version of Old Glory tucked tightly in his fist and held high.

Orth, 52, began the morning walk on Nov. 2, shortly after seeing a television report that the Golden Gate Bridge might become the next targets of terrorists.

Orth sprang into action, grabbed a flag and drove the 10 minutes from his San Francisco home to the bridge. He walked across and back again, and has done so nearly every morning since.

On the few days when the real estate agent couldn't make it, a local radio station enlisted volunteers to fill in

for him.

Orth calls his morning routine a way to remind his fellow Americans how resilient the nation is.

"The wonderful thing is that it's not really me that people are responding to, it's this," Orth said, pointing to his 10-by-12-inch flag. "It reminds people what we really are about in America, how incredibly strong we are as a nation."

Thirty years ago, Orth, a U.S. Air Force veteran, protested the Vietnam War, marching and chanting slogans.

"Back then, it was totally uncool to wave the flag, but that's all changed now," he said. "Since Sept. 11, it's everyone's flag again. Totally."

As a bonus to his patriotism, Orth's routine has gotten him in better shape.

"It used to take an hour and 20 minutes," he said of the trip that now takes him 52 minutes. "But before this I did nothing in the way of exercise. Now I've lost 12 pounds and hardly break a sweat."

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