

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

1 12 30 38 40
Meganumber: 2
Jackpot: \$22 Million

FANTASY 5

4 10 14 16 31

DAILY 3

Daytime: 1 1 2
Evening: 0 5 8

DAILY DERBY

1st: 09 Winning Spirit
2nd: 06 Whirl Win
3rd: 11 Money Bags

RACE TIME: 1:41.24

NEWS OF THE WEIRD BY CHUCK SHEPARD

A St. Paul Pioneer Press reporter, interviewing neighbors of the people who shared a St. Croix Falls, Wis., home that was condemned after being overrun with 450 cats, found that most neighbors had failed to notice the house's putrid smell. Several said that the awful odor from the neighborhood's fish hatchery and the awful odor of the neighborhood's sewage treatment plant probably overrode the awful odor of the house.

TODAY IN HISTORY

In 1965, "I Lost It at the Movies," a collection of film criticism by Pauline Kael, was first published by Little, Brown and Co.

In 1977, more than 130 hostages held in Washington, D.C., by Hanafi Muslims were freed after ambassadors from three Islamic nations joined the negotiations.

In 1985, Mikhail S. Gorbachev was chosen to succeed the late Soviet President Konstantin U. Chernenko.

In 1861, the Confederate convention in Montgomery, Ala., adopted a constitution.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Death destroys a man;
the idea of Death saves him."

E.M. FORSTER
ENGLISH AUTHOR (1879-1970)

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Suspects in SM Pier shoot-out await jury verdict

One suspect took 15 hostages at pier arcade on busy summer holiday, shot five people

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN LA — A jury began deliberating Thursday in the case against two gang members charged with shooting five people and taking 15 hostages on the Santa Monica Pier nearly five years ago.

The five-hour standoff began after midnight on July 4, 2000, and ended in the early morning dawn with the surrender of Oswald Amezcua, a convicted felon want-

ed in connection with five other slayings. Three Santa Monica police officers and two civilians were injured in the gunfire.

Lawyers on Thursday delivered closing arguments in the trial against Amezcua, 29, and his accomplice, Joseph Flores, 24, both of whom face laundry lists of felony charges for a string of murders and attempted murders that spanned from their hometown of Baldwin Park to Victorville,

See SHOOT-OUT, page 8



Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Times

SWAT officers work the scene while a crowd looks on after a five-hour hostage standoff on the Santa Monica Pier on July 4, 2000. The suspects, who are accused of killing five people in the greater Los Angeles area before shooting three Santa Monica police officers on the pier, are awaiting a jury verdict on their fate.

Dummy luck



Nicky Five Aces/Five Aces Photo

Mat Wesner (left), a three-year veteran of the Santa Monica Fire Department, and Stan Klopfenstein (right), a captain in the Santa Fe Springs Fire Department, on Thursday pull a mannequin out of a dirt ditch during a drill designed to simulate the rescue of victims buried alive. The drill was part of a four-day trench rescue course at the Santa Monica Airport. The SMFD's Urban Search and Rescue Team and the Santa Monica water/wastewater division practiced the techniques required to remove trapped or injured workers from trench emergencies and collapses.

Santa Monica citizens hedge policy at workshop

BY RYAN HYATT

Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL — Santa Monica residents outraged over a \$25,000 fine for having high hedges were given the chance to do their own landscaping last night.

More than 40 Santa Monicans concerned over hedges, fences and walls that separate them from neighbors showed up at Ken Edward's Center Wednesday for a city-sponsored workshop to voice their views on how their barriers should be regulated.

One participant said the "Hedge Wars" began more than a year ago after City Hall began enforcing a 1948 law that directed

hundreds of residents to cut their hedges or face fines of as much as \$25,000 a day — up to a maximum of \$500,000.

Among those targeted was a group of residents who live in multi-million-dollar homes along Adelaide Drive in northern Santa Monica — including now City Councilman Bobby Shriver, as well as Alvin Sargent, an accomplished film writer. Both had questioned the impetus for the enforcement and City Hall's priorities.

Shriver decided to run for City Council last year after he grew frustrated with City Hall's initial handling of the hedge issue. He

See HEDGES, page 7

Jacquie Banks

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To assist homesellers, a new industry report has just been released called "27 Valuable Tips That You Should Know to Get Your Home Sold Fast and for Top Dollar." It tackles the important issues you need to know to make your home competitive in today's tough, aggressive marketplace.

Through these 27 tips, you will discover how to protect and capitalize on your most important investment, reduce stress, be in control of your situation, and make

the most profit possible.

In this report you'll discover how to avoid financial disappointment or worse, a financial disaster when selling your home. Using a common-sense approach, you get the straight facts about what can make or break the sale of your home.

You owe it to yourself to learn how these important tips will give you the competitive edge to get your home sold fast and for the most amount of money.

To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your free copy of this report, call 1.888.465.4534 and enter ID#1023. You can call any-time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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Let others have control, Libra

Santa Monica Daily Press

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



ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ You feel your Wheaties this morning, and you let others know it. As you claim your power, many people will tap into your mental abilities. You verbalize and express your ideas with force and precision. Don't worry — your message will be heard. Tonight: Your wish is another's command.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Give up the hands-on approach, at least for today. When you stop acting, you might get a totally different perspective. Your mind is like a tickertape. Note all the thoughts and concerns that race through your mind. Perhaps you need to resolve some questions within yourself first. Tonight: Alone or with a trusted confidant.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ You know precisely where you are heading. What you decide to zero in on will be accomplished with ease. Wish upon a star. Share your desires with friends who can help point you down the right path. Tonight: Conjure up what you want.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ The many ideas that go through your mind will need to be orchestrated by you. Make sure you want to commit to a project before you leap into action. Count on being the lead player; responsibilities will tumble into your lap. Tonight: A must appearance.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Dive into research. Your ability to read between the lines takes you to a new level of growth and understanding. Express your interest in a different perspective on life. Opt for a class or trip in order to continually grow. Tonight: Try a different type of restaurant.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ Make dealing with a partner your pleasure. In fact, you might find someone unusually insightful, whether discussing a heavily charged emotional situation or a financial one. Two heads work better than one in this case. Tonight: Go along with another's wishes.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Others have control. Understand that you are only along for the ride, but you can have a very good time or successful day if you buck the trend. Listen to the many chatty and verbal people surrounding you. Tonight: Let others have control.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Follow through on daily errands and what is important to making your life work. Your laughter and sense of humor help you see the issues clearly. Your mind has the ability to grasp the details. Tonight: Choose a relaxing pastime.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★★ Express your creativity in a key area of your life. By sharing more of your spirit, you'll energize anything or anyone. Add that special touch of romance, too. A child enjoys your playfulness. Tonight: Be a wild thing.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Anchor in on what is important rather than focus on work or your daily routine. A family member might need extra time and attention. Carefully check out your investments. A real estate matter could be favored. Tonight: Make your home your castle.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You speak, and others respond. Clear your desk; get your work done. Schedule a long lunch or an early afternoon break to catch up on news. The sign of friendship needs to indulge in camaraderie. Tonight: Be happy.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Learn new financial facts that will help you ease through a problem or your general fiscal life. Be more in touch with your feelings and how you might soothe them through spending. Take better care of yourself. Tonight: Treat a friend to dinner.



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LOCAL



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Sea lions hit the silver screen

By Daily Press staff

The public this weekend has a chance to peer into the lives of sea lions who live off of the California coast.

The aquarium is showcasing the award-winning Rio Films documentary “California Sea Lions — An Unforgettable Encounter.”

The movie is a 40-minute film that journeys through the mysterious world of sea lions off the California coast. The movie is narrated by “Lord of the Rings” actor Sean Astin.

“We are all excited about this partnership,” said Alan De Herrera, director and producer of the film. “The Santa Monica Pier Aquarium is a wonderful organization, and it’s vital that they raise enough funds each year to continue their educational programs. Their willingness to partner with us demonstrates how serious we both are in communicating our environmental message to the public.”

The aquarium is a marine science aquarium located at the beach level, just below the historic carousel at the Santa Monica Pier.

The shows are on March 12 and 13 on the hour from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., with a screening on Saturday at 4 p.m. that will include a discussion with the filmmaker.

To learn more about Rio Films, visit www.riofilms.com.

Video of public meetings archived online

By Daily Press staff

Now you don’t even have to press “record” to watch government in action.

The city of Santa Monica has launched an online archive of video broadcasts of City Council and Planning Commission meetings. The video in the web archive is the same as what Santa Monica cable subscribers watch on CityTV channel 16. The videos are available to any Internet-accessible computer.

The archives are available at smgov.net by clicking on “City Hall” and then clicking on “City Council,” and finally, “City Council netcast.” There will be links to live broadcast and the video archives. The online archives give users search access to the video vault. The system also allows users to jump directly to any item on the agenda, and City Council meetings may be viewed with closed captioning. Agenda items and closed captions are both in the search engine, meaning users can search for anything that was said during the meeting.

Santa Monica was the first city in the world to host interactive services to the public online, officials said. In 1989, City Hall offered information, electronic mail and electronic discussion forums. Today, the city Web site offers a broad range of electronic forms, databases, transactions, information and other e-government services for residents and business at <http://smgov.net>.

‘Bronzed beauties’ come to Santa Monica

By Daily Press staff

There’s some monumental fundraising going on at Bergamot Station today.

Five Californian artists, Charles Arnoldi, Michael C. McMillen, Gwynn Murrill, Sarah Perry and Ken Price, are having their bronze sculptures exhibited. Each artist contributed a small maquette, representative of his or her current work for the collection.

The Frostig Center, a center in Pasadena dedicated to helping children with learning disabilities, is hosting the philanthropic event.

The bronze suites will be available for viewing and purchase at the Santa Monica Museum of Art at Bergamot Station today, March 11, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Bergamot Stations is located at 2525 Michigan Ave., G1. For more information, call (310) 586-6488, or visit www.smmoa.org.

A second public viewing event will be held on Sunday, March 13, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Pasadena Museum of California Art, 490 East Union St., Pasadena. For directions, call (626) 568-3665 or visit www.pmcaonline.org.

For questions regarding the events or the collection, contact the Frostig Center at (626) 791-9163 or e-mail collection2005@frostig.org. For information on the Frostig Center, visit www.frostig.org.



SURF REPORT

The sizable WNW swell continues to back down throughout today, but should still throw some fat overhead sets our way. Smaller waves in the evening. Not all is lost, however: A moderate NW/SW combo swell is on tap for next week.

Today the water is:

63°

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

	LOW TIDES				HIGH TIDES			
	Morning	Height	Evening	Height	Morning	Height	Evening	Height
SATURDAY	12:18	0.7	11:22	2.6	4:24	5.2	7:20	3.4
SUNDAY	N/A	N/A	1:03	1.1	5:36	5.7	7:44	3.8
MONDAY	12:25	2.0	1:43	1.4	6:34	6.1	8:10	4.2
TUESDAY	1:17	1.4	2:19	1.4	7:24	6.3	8:39	4.6
WEDNESDAY	2:04	0.9	2:52	1.2	8:11	6.3	9:08	5.0
THURSDAY	2:49	0.4	3:24	0.8	8:56	6.0	9:38	5.2
FRIDAY	3:17	0.6	3:47	1.0	9:34	5.7	9:57	5.1

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The Q Line

City Hall officials have been tapping the community for ideas on how to improve traffic in Santa Monica. Elected leaders will be pouring over a massive document in the coming year that will govern how development is dealt with for the next two decades. Part of that is how traffic should be handled.

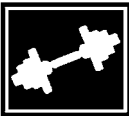
More roundabouts, bike lanes and angled parking have been topics of conversation.

So this week, Q-Line wants to know, “What do you think will improve traffic in Santa Monica?”

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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Incites author incensed over headline

Editor:
I would like it to be noted that I did not author and was embarrassed by the headline: “That’s mighty white of them to put fluoride in our water,” which was used for my “Incites” column (SMDP, March 9, page 4). Not only is it racially insensitive, but it is in no way related to, and belittles of the content of the column that I believe highlights a potentially serious health threat to the community.

Ed Silverstein
Santa Monica

(Editor’s note: Silverstein’s feelings are shared by the SMDP editorial staff, who apologize for the headline.)

Fluoride doesn’t belong in tap water

Editor:
I was very happy to find that one of your writers wrote a piece on this book (“Incites” SMDP, March 9, page 4). I hope contributors continue to write about this issue in the SMDP.
It is very important to me that our city’s fluoridation of our water be discontinued permanently. It is my wish that council members would read this book and deal with this important matter.

There are many working women who do not want to have bone fractures due to ingesting fluoridated water. I have to be responsible for my health and no one else. I wish those who have the power would take care of my drinking water.

Carrie Weil
Santa Monica

Big Blue Bus goes out of its way

Editor:
Sometimes the Big Blue Bus does something special. Last Saturday, the day before the LA Marathon, I was in downtown LA, searching for a No. 10 bus. Because of marathon preparations, plus filming on Flower Street, I knew the bus had to detour.
Suddenly, I saw a white car bearing the name “Big Blue Bus.” “Where is the No. 10?” I shouted to a woman getting out of the car. She walked over to me and said that the driver was probably lost given the number of detours. She then radioed the driver, telling her to wait at Venice Boulevard.
Next, she put me in her car and drove to where the bus I wanted was waiting. Quickly, I boarded and was headed toward Santa Monica.
Seldom does a public bus company provide such extraordinary service.

Joanne Gamlin
Los Angeles

Hope is on the way for downtrodden Democrats



HERE’S THE THING

BY LARA M. BROWN, Ph.D

Tick tock. Tick tock. Tick tock. Time continues its relentless march, turning the present into the past, and the future into the here and now. The clock is ticking on President George W. Bush’s second term, and for those who read the congressional tea leaves, his influence is rapidly waning.
On Wednesday, just as Bush was about to promote energy policy legislation in Columbus, Ohio, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee cast a tie vote on the “Clear Skies Initiative,” handing the president a significant legislative defeat on one of his signature policies. Had the Republicans been acting in concert with the White House, they would have scheduled the vote for days after the president’s trip. They would have given Bush more time to bolster support through public relations — town hall meetings and bully pulpit speeches.
Instead, they voted, hoping there would be enough support to send the legislation to the floor with a committee recommendation. There wasn’t. This isn’t the only congressional loss Bush has

experienced recently.
According to an article in the Washington Post, the Republicans in Congress are finding it hard to come together over Bush’s budget proposal. There’s bipartisan grumbling about the cumulative impact of his tax cut initiatives, as well as his spending priorities, including the proposed reduction in cotton subsidies and health care programs. Despite the Republicans having majorities in both the House and the Senate, one Republican aide conceded: “We just don’t know where the votes are ...”
On top of this, the maneuverings around Social Security reform are looking more desperate by the day. Every Republican member of Congress seems to have a different proposal. It is as though they are all throwing spaghetti against a wall, hoping one noodle will stick. Although none of them can face the prospect of dealing Bush a loss on his top domestic priority, no one seems willing to sacrifice their reelection just so he can proclaim victory. Every member is acutely aware that poll numbers show that only 35 percent of Americans favor the private accounts Bush wants in the legislation.
Why is the mighty Republican coalition crumbling?
Because Bush overreached, and members of Congress are thinking about the future.

Bush believed that the 2004 Republican electoral gains meant Republican support. They didn’t. More people distrusted John Kerry and the Democrats than they distrusted Bush and the Republicans. This was why the GOP won. Neither party won votes on a positive agenda. Only the social conservatives believed in their candidate, and their support was based on Bush’s policy stances on gay marriage, abortion and stem cell research. Everyone else acted out of pragmatism or party loyalty.
The rub here for Bush is that the budget he proposed and the Social Security reforms he is pushing have little or nothing to do with the social conservatives’ agenda. And they were his only supporters. Everyone else he thought was in his base never really was. They just voted.
Complicating the matter are the presidential aspirants. The 2008 election will be the first since 1968 where it is open — wide open — no incumbent or vice presidential candidate in the race. Senators from both parties are strategizing (1) how they can win their party’s nomination, and (2) how they can win the White House. They are looking for ways to distinguish themselves from their opponents, and from the policies of this administration because they want to be seen as a leader, not a follower.
Of course, there also are the usual institutional strains between the branches of

government. All of the members of the House face reelection in 2006, and almost none of those members ran in 2004 on “fixing” Social Security. They have other priorities — constituent priorities — to address in their two short years before they must go before the voters again, and ask for their support.
Here’s The Thing:
Another 10 months without a terrorist attack in the United States, and 43 will likely be a political lame duck. He knows this and that’s why he’s working so hard for Social Security reform, to ensure that he has some domestic policy achievements for the annals of history.
For Democrats, Bush’s diminishing authority is likely welcome news. The only question is: Will the Democrats find a way to capitalize on this opportunity? Or will they remain divided and disorganized, letting this open window close shut because they stayed silent, or worse, went negative? They need a national message, and a rhetorical echo chamber to get the party back on track.
Only time will tell the outcome. Tick tock.
(Lara M. Brown, Ph.D., is a political scientist from Los Angeles, and is teaching this semester at California State University, Channel Islands. She can be reached at larambrown@aol.com.)

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 sack@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



True March Madness: Procrastinating tax time

PISTACHIO PERSPECTIVE

BY SUSAN ANN CONNOR



It was a new dawn and a different day. No more procrastinating. I would start early and eliminate 1040 and its evil twin sister, 540, before St. Patty's Day.

Toasting to their demise would bring on the blarney and give me a mighty good reason to drink green beer. Tackling taxes before the last minute was a good plan. Normally I wobbled into my friendly accountant's office around April 14. This year, proud as a prompt peacock, I made an appointment for the beginning of March.

What was I thinking?

Two full days I gave myself to accomplish this tax task. Forty-eight hours was a perfect amount of time for me to do what we all must do. No stretching it out by filling files throughout the year. No, not me. I like getting the unavoidable over with in one focused clump. Once I get to it, nothing distracts me. The problem is getting there in the first place.

Day one: I awoke ready to go. Warming myself into it, I put on sweats, did my morning push-ups and made strong tea to secure concentration. Steadfastly, I headed for my desk. I was determined.

However, on my way I passed by a window and couldn't help but notice how dang pretty it was outside.

And I shouldn't have answered the phone, because the next thing I knew I was hiking with a friend. Then we took in a quick movie. Then another movie. I was getting to taxes, but first I needed dinner. After all, I did have day two.

Day two: Instead of an early coupling with my Excel program, I went to the batting cages. Eyeing the Cheesecake

Factory on my way home, I couldn't help but stop and buy a slice of Boston cream pie cheesecake for a well-deserved treat upon completion of my tax toil.

Once home I knew I was in trouble, because I cleaned out the refrigerator, usually reserved only for writer's block.

From the fridge, I headed for the sock drawer and rearranged it. Then talking to several heavily accented people about my dysfunctional AOL made me hungry. And after color-coordinating my paper clips, I went grocery shopping for a single item ... three times.

I bought special cleanser to spic-and-span my already spotless bathroom. By that time, I was so tired I flopped on the couch and fell asleep watching a Larry King repeat ... but not before getting a head-start on my cheesecake treat.

Taxes are torture. I feel the same way about them that I feel about peas. They both give me a tummy ache by just looking at them. They are distasteful, boring and need to be replaced with something sweet. I will do anything to avoid them.

Evidently so would Lady Godiva. Lady Godiva was a noble woman who lived in England during the 11th century. As a patron of the arts, she was known for her generosity and kindness. Legend has it that her husband, Leofric, Earl of Mercia, promised to reduce the burdensome high taxes he levied on the residents of Coventry when she agreed to ride naked on her horse through the marketplace. A girl after my own heart.

I wish I could gallop away my taxes. Or, simply shove them behind the kitchen booth, like I did the peas when my parents weren't looking. But they are inevitable, and I did complete them far into the night of day two. I celebrated by watching the sunrise ... and finishing my treat.

Oh yes, the celebration will continue with that green beer March 17. Lalalala ...

(Susan Ann Connor can be reached at pistachiocolumn@aol.com.)

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Confessions of an ex-gergontophobic

BY SKYLER TULCHIN
Special to the Daily Press

(Editor's note: This is the second column featuring senior citizen women interviewed by high school students as part of their March Women's History Month project for the Santa Monica Commission on the Status of Women. The first column ran on March 3, page 5.)

As a counter girl at a ritzy French bakery on Montana Avenue, I often find myself face-to-face with moody, sometimes angry, and sometimes fierce elderly women. Of course, there are customers who are gentle, and remember that I, too, am a human being, with only two hands and a weakness with numbers. But overall, my experience with elderly women had been negative — until I met Mrs. Dorothy Ehrhart-Morrison.

Before meeting Ehrhart-Morrison, I had felt that older women were all rude, impatient and strict. I'm what some would describe as a "gergontophobic," a person who fears the elderly. I knew that I had developed a debilitating fear of the elderly, so when I was asked to participate in the Santa Monica Women's Commission's "We're All Ears" project, I agreed shakily.

I arrived at the Rose Café at 11:45 a.m., even though my lunch with Ehrhart-Morrison was scheduled for noon. I wanted no reason for her to reprimand me for tardiness. At exactly noon, a tap on my shoulder shot the nerves straight down my spine, but when I turned around I was surprisingly relieved. Ehrhart-Morrison's voice was soft and delicate.

"Excuse me, are you Skyler?" she asked. I smiled at her, and I actually received a smile back.

Ehrhart-Morrison is beautiful and petite, with caramel skin and a beret that sat on top of her thick white hair.

"It's so good to meet you," she told me. As we found our table and began the interview, all of my initial fears were released, and I began to feel more comfortable around Ehrhart-Morrison.

We spent two hours discussing her childhood in Bullmont, Tex., during the painful segregation of the South in the 1930s, her life in California, her passion for teaching, her spirituality, her family, prejudice, her memories and her views on life.

Ehrhart-Morrison went to an all-black school and remembers having to drink from colored water fountains and use colored bathrooms. She remembers that when she saw a sign over a water fountain that said "colored," she wondered why the water did not release from the faucet in a rainbow of

colors. Though she was blind to the racism at first, later in life she became involved in many Civil Rights organizations.

When Ehrhart-Morrison was a young girl, her parents divorced and established new families. Her father moved to California and became the first black man to buy a house on a hill that overlooked the Pacific Ocean in El Cerrito. Ehrhart-Morrison spent her summers in that house and fell in love with the ocean and the liberal lifestyle of California.

After she received a B.A. in English at Texas Southern University, Ehrhart-Morrison moved back to California and earned an M.A. in education at UCLA. She began teaching at Santa Monica High School, the school I am currently attending. She later became a member of the Board of Trustees at Santa Monica College.

Ehrhart-Morrison was brought up

Catholic, but does not feel a strong need to belong to any set religion. She is spiritually connected with ideals of many religions, including Judaism and Buddhism. She lives by philosophies that guide her through life. Her favorites are "All things work out in the end" and "Do no harm."

I respect Ehrhart-Morrison because she has been through so many heart-breaking events, but never let her heart break. She's lost both of her parents and the step-parents that she acquired through second

marriages. She has endured a divorce herself, but stood strong and reminded herself, "All things work out."

I learned much from Ehrhart-Morrison, not only about her life but also about myself. I know now that I need to limit the judgments I make about others, because being the recipient of a judgment is the most painful experience. Ehrhart-Morrison taught me how to make lemonade out of lemons that life hands me, whether it may be a sour customer or the bitter loss of a family member. Ehrhart-Morrison changed all my misconceptions of the elderly women of Santa Monica, and I thank her for that and for the opportunity to hear her story.

(Skyler Tulchin, a senior at Santa Monica High School, participated in the Santa Monica Commission on the Status of Women's "We're All Ears" project, created by the commission's young leader, Julia Simon. Tulchin interviewed Ehrhart-Morrison and painted an original oil painting, which will be exhibited throughout Santa Monica to celebrate Women's History Month. The painting, along with art exhibits by four other senior high school girls who interviewed senior women, will be displayed until March 20 at Santa Monica Place.)



DOROTHY EHRHART-MORRISON

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Safety, aesthetic issues raised in hedge debate

HEDGES, from page 1

rallied other upset citizens, who flooded City Hall with complaints, arguing that the hedges provide much-needed privacy, shade and character to their neighborhoods. Although some are only inches above the legal limit for hedge heights, others tower 20 to 30 feet high.

In light of the controversy that followed, City Hall dropped the violations and decided to reassess the law. Part of that reassessment prompted the workshop, the outcome of which city planners will use to recommend a policy that could

update the law for hedges and other barriers on private property. Current law limits front-yard hedges to 42 inches, and side and backyard hedges to 8 feet.

"We're here to find out what the public thinks the city should do about hedges and fences," said Beth Rolandson, senior transportation planner for City Hall.

The questions city planners posed to participants included whether the current law should be changed; whether hedges should be distinguished from barriers such as walls and fences; whether front, side and backyards should be held to the same standards;

how issues with lighting, noise and privacy should be handled; and whether existing hedges, fences and walls in violation should be grandfathered into regulation.

Santa Monica resident Tom Cleys said he supported a hedge policy that would encourage openness.

"Part of living in a pedestrian environment is being able to see front yards," Cleys said. "There's a certain friendliness that comes with it. If you want to live behind walled compounds, like they have on Palisades, you can. But I want to live in a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood."

Santa Monica resident Cynthia Cotton is originally from Texas and is used to openness, but she said others might prefer seclusion and tall hedges.

"A lot of people are moving in these days who don't want to talk to their neighbors," Cotton said. "They'd rather head straight to their car."

Santa Monica resident Valerie Jean Hiss said she was one of the homeowners slapped with the \$25,000-a-day fine for having a 54-inch fence.

"The last 12 inches is a header," Hiss said. "It's for decor, but also because homeless were jumping over the fence to sleep in my garden."

Hiss said she considered applying for a \$2,000 variance with City Hall so she can keep her fence, but remains hesitant because she has had no guarantees it would be approved.

"I've gotten a verbal but not a written approval," Hiss said. "There's no reason to apply if I'm not guaranteed. I'm frustrated, feel like there's no way out."

Hiss said she approves of hedge, fence and wall regulations intended for safety.

"If I'm not hurting anyone, why can't I do what I want on my property?" Hiss said.

Others stressed the importance of the safety issue.

"What we need are not more regulations, but better enforcement," another resident said. "We live in a city and need to be cognizant of one another. Some of the larger hedges could be infested."

Santa Monica resident Rachel Ronn said any attempts to regulate hedges would be very subjective, even on the neighborhood level.

"We all live in Santa Monica because we love Santa Monica, but we love it for different reasons," Ronn said. "When you start talking about a 'neighborhood character' and want to legislate it, it takes away from what each of us might like (on our property). It means something different to each person."

Ronn and other participants recommended a mediation process be put in place in which disputing neighbors could hash out their hedge issues within a 30-day period. The City Council is expected to reconsider the 56-year-old law in the next few months.



CRIME WATCH

By Daily Press staff

ON FEB. 24 AT 1:21 P.M., the Santa Monica Police responded to an alleged theft on the 1200 block of Third Street. When officers arrived, they spoke to an employee who said three suspects entered the store, walked around and removed computer software, which they placed in a backpack. The suspects fled failing to pay for the items. The suspect with the backpack was stopped and later arrested. The two additional suspects fled and were not arrested. Items taken were valued at \$2,129, and were recovered. Jerry Ngoc Bui, a 24-year-old male from Hayward, Calif., was booked for strong-arm robbery for an attempted fight with the employee as the arrest was made. Bail was set for \$50,000.

ON FEB. 24 AT 4:55 P.M., Santa Monica Police vice detectives went to the 800 block of Pico Boulevard regarding a complaint at a massage parlor. An undercover officer went inside the location, asked for a massage, and was taken to a room in which a female provided the detective with a massage. The masseuse allegedly solicited the officer for sex in exchange for money, at which time the detective gave a predetermined signal and the other officers entered the parlor. Hyon Chu Pak was placed under arrest for alleged prostitution. Bail was set for \$5,000.

ON FEB. 27 AT 6:33 P.M., Santa Monica Police responded to a call regarding an alleged stolen vehicle on the 12500 block of the Pacific Coast Highway. An officer who spoke with the victim said the suspect had taken her vehicle without her permission, and that she knew the suspect. Frederick Till, a white male transient, was arrested for allegedly driving a stolen vehicle. He was already on probation for a felony. There was no bail.

ON FEB. 26 AT 2:04 A.M., Santa Monica Police responded to a call on the 2900 block of Main Street regarding an alleged assault and battery. When officers arrived to the scene, they spoke to the victim, who said the suspect punched him in the face with a closed fist for an unknown reason. The victim sustained a swollen eye and bloody nose and was desirous of prosecution. Christopher Joseph Benton, a 27-year-old white male of Culver City, was arrested for alleged assault and battery. Bail was set for \$20,000.

ON FEB. 26 AT 6:05 P.M., the Santa Monica Police responded to a domestic violence call on the 1700 block of Fourth Street. When officers arrived to the scene, they spoke to the victim, who said she was involved in an argument with her husband. During the argument, the victim said her husband struck her. She fled and notified the police. Ricardo Nava, a 22-year-old Hispanic male from Santa Monica, was booked for alleged spousal abuse. Bail was set at \$50,000.

ON FEB. 26 AT 3:39 A.M., the Santa Monica Police responded to a domestic violence call on the 1900 block of Frank Street. Officers spoke to the victim, who said she was involved in an argument with her boyfriend. During the argument, the victim said the suspect retrieved a knife and threatened to stab her. The victim fled, and police were notified. Rafael Antonio Interiano, a 39-year-old Hispanic male from Santa Monica, was booked for alleged assault with a deadly weapon. Bail was set for \$30,000.

— Staff writer Ryan Hyatt compiled this report.

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LOCAL

Jury in SM Pier case to resume deliberations today

SHOOT-OUT, from page 1

Ontario, Fontana and Santa Monica. If convicted, each man might face the death penalty.

"To them, it's nothing," said Deputy District Attorney Darren Levine, who told jurors the pair always traveled together, and always carried with them a black bag full of guns, including a Ruger 9mm pistol and an automatic AK-47 assault rifle. "You think they're willing to kill anybody? Yes. You think they're going to shoot anyone that crosses their path? Yes.

"They are soldiers," Levine added. "They are about doing harm. They're on a mission to kill as many as they can, including cops."

During Thursday's court proceedings, the two tattooed men smiled and spoke with one another, and with their lawyers, turning at times to exchange glances with relatives seated in the courtroom. Each defendant wore an orange, jail-issued jumpsuit and black slippers. They were hand-cuffed and chained at their wrists and waists. Four sheriff's deputies and one plain-clothes officer were present in the courtroom.

Together, Amezcua and Flores face more than 50 felony charges for a violent rampage that began June 7, 2000, and left five people dead. In addition to the murder charges, the two men face charges of attempted murder, robbery, arson, false imprisonment and assault on a peace officer, among others. They also have been charged for allegedly stabbing a fellow inmate with a shank at the Men's Central Jail in downtown Los Angeles.

Amezcua and Flores have admitted to many of the shootings, which were directed mostly at other gang members and police, and openly told prosecutors that Santa Monica Police were "very lucky" to escape the 2000 pier incident without suffering any fatalities.

Attorneys for Amezcua and Flores didn't ask jurors to find the men not guilty of all the charges, but instead urged them to consider each charge carefully, and come to the appropriate conclusions.

"We're not here to delay or trick you in any way. Most of this evidence is pretty easy to understand," said attorney William Ringgold, who nonetheless reminded the jurors of their duty to consider reasonable doubt, adding not all of the charges had been proved beyond that threshold.

"Don't fall into the trap of, 'Oh these are bad guys, I'm going to find them guilty of everything.' That would be a violation of your oath of a juror," added Ringgold, one of two attorneys defending Flores.

Attorney Ezekiel Perlo, one of two lawyers representing Amezcua, said some charges have been proven against Flores but not against Amezcua. He cautioned jurors not to fall into the trap of guilt by association, using the era of Sen. Joseph McCarthy as an example and calling it un-American.

"What we're hoping for is careful analysis," he told the jury of 10 women and eight men, including alternates. "We hope you will do your duty."

Jurors began deliberating Thursday afternoon and were expected to resume this morning. If Amezcua and Flores are found guilty on any charges, a sentencing trial will follow with the same jury. The case is being heard by Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Robert Perry at the Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center in downtown Los Angeles.

The July 4, 2000 shoot-out began shortly after Santa Monica Police received a phone call at 1 a.m. from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department telling them Flores was on the pier. Investigators had located Flores by placing a call to his pager and tracing the call.

Police arrived and, after a fight, took Flores into custody. Amezcua, however, ran into the nearby Playland Arcade. Amezcua attempted to exit the rear of the arcade, but encountered officers and opened fire, according to police. Amezcua then took 15 people hostage, finally releasing the last of the hostages and surrendering at 6:40 a.m. The pier was closed to thousands of tourists and visitors throughout the day.

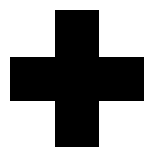
Each of the officers injured in the incident have since recovered. Santa Monica Police officer Chris Coria was shot in the arm, and officer Steven Wong was shot in the leg. SMPD Sgt. Jim Hurt, who was hit in the leg, has since moved to the California Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement. A 17-year-old male civilian also was shot in the leg, as was a 35-year-old female civilian.

Levine asked the jury to consider the injured officers while deliberating.

"No matter what you think of police, there is no more honorable job, when done right, than coming to someone's help when they are in harm's way," he said.

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Entertainment

The 'Other Film Festival' rolls into Venice

By Daily Press staff

The Other Venice Film Festival (OVFF), a community event dedicated to screening full-length, short and animated films that

Review

embody the spirit, energy and diversity of Venice, returns for its second season with three days of film screenings, panel discussions, local artists, parties and live music from Friday, March 18, through Sunday, March 20.

The 2005 festival packs more than twice the punch of the sell-out, inaugural 2004 season with the work of more than 40 filmmakers being highlighted — up from 17 in 2004 — two venues instead of one and a party every night in celebration of the Venice Centennial.

Opening night will celebrate the “mockumentary” form, with the world premiere of the short film “Icetown and M-Boys,” followed by Zak Penn’s “Incident at Loch Ness,” starring Werner Herzog and co-produced by local filmmaker Gary Marcus. A question-and-answer session with the filmmakers will follow, and an after party will complete the evening, with live DJs, libations and food from chefs of Venice. Local band, the Dragonfly Project, will kick the evening off with live music starting at 7 p.m.

On Saturday, the festival will celebrate “Dogtown-born” filmmaker Stacy Peralta with a screening of his big-wave surf documentary “Riding Giants” at 7:30 p.m. Legendary surf rock band, The Mermen (www.mermen.net), will

set the mood with live music starting at 7 p.m., and follow the film with a second set. The screening will take place at The Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., in Venice, followed by a question-and-answer session with Paul Crowder, the ACE Award-winning film editor who worked with Peralta on “Riding Giants” and “Dogtown & Z-Boys.”

The festival’s first music video series will follow at 9:30 p.m., including the world premieres of Thievery Corporation’s new video, “Fluid Dream,” and the debut of popular local band Sugarbitch’s music video, “Revolution,” shot entirely in Venice.

In addition to the music video series, also new this year will be a special section of Avant-Garde/experimental short films, which will screen at a second venue — Switch Studios, 316 S. Venice Blvd. — at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 19. Also on Saturday at 4:20 p.m. will be world premiere screenings of two feature films: “Naked Brown Men” at the Electric Lodge and “Phoenix Point” at Switch Studios. An after party begins at midnight at The Otheroom, 1201 Abbot Kinney Blvd. in Venice.

On Sunday, the fun begins at noon with a live performance by Sugarbitch (sugarbitch.com) outside the Electric Lodge to set the stage for the Short Film Series from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Also at 2 p.m. at Switch Studios, an ice cream truck will serve chill-out treats before the screening of the short film “The Ice Cream Man,” which will be followed by the full-length film “Road Kings,” starring

Glenn Plummer and featuring music by Snoop Dogg, ODB, Nate Dogg and Mystic. “Road Kings” will be available on DVD from Lion’s Gate Films on March 29, along with the soundtrack from Liquid8 Records.

The upcoming dramatic film, “Lords of Dogtown,” inspired by Peralta’s documentary “Dogtown and Z-Boys” about the birth of skateboarding, which brought the unique community of Venice to the world — will be the topic of Sunday’s 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. panel discussion: “From Doc To Drama: Lords of Dogtown.” Named after Venice founding father Abbot Kinney, the Abbot Award ceremony begins at 7 p.m. Sunday, is free to the public and will be followed by a closing night party.

“We’re extremely excited about the second season of the Other Venice Film Festival, which offers something for everyone — from films, to hot topic discussions, local art and live music performances,” said Gary Ellenberg, the festival’s co-founder and programming director. “We are especially proud to spotlight some amazing, home-grown talent, including Stacy Peralta — professional skateboarder turned successful filmmaker — whose work displays the creativity and intensity that the world associates with Venice, California.”

Tickets are now available for pre-sale online at www.veniceOfilmfest.com, or through Ticket Alternative charge-by-phone at (877) 725-8849 (available 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern standard time). There is a \$2 surcharge for phone orders.

Remaining tickets will be on sale at the door on a first-come, first-served basis. Single event tickets are \$10; tickets for the opening night screening and party are \$20; a full-day pass is \$25; and an all access festival pass is \$50. The Abbot Awards ceremony at the Electric Lodge is free and open to the public. Directions to the Electric Lodge are available at (310) 823-0710, ext. 1.

Just some of the local artists who support the Other Venice Film Festival include actor Seymour Cassel, who will introduce the opening night film on Friday, March 18; Lori Petty, actress and artist, whose work will be on display at the Electric Lodge throughout the festival; Stacy Peralta; renowned director, producer and actor Tony Bill; actress Camryn Manheim; actor/producer Chris Mulkey, who received the 2004 Local Maverick Spotlight Abbot Award, and his wife, actress/artist Karen Landry; director/producer Michael Pressman and his wife, actress Lisa Chess, who won the 2004 best feature Abbot Award for their film “Frankie & Johnny Are Married;” Stanley Mitchell, who won the 2004 Abbot Award for his short film, “Venice, America;” and Sean Welch, producer of the critically acclaimed documentary “Spellbound.”

For a full schedule of film screenings, a synopsis of each film and additional information on The Other Venice Film Festival and its co-founders — Venice locals Ruby De La Casas, Gary Ellenberg and AJ Peralta — go to www.veniceOfilmfest.com.

What’s playing

By Dan Dunn

Special to the Daily Press

THE JACKET

Challenges viewers to execute such strenuous mental gymnastics. It is inevitable most will wind up completely spent by the midway point.

Starring: Adrien Brody, Keira Knightley

THE PACIFIER

Seeing a bald beefcake like Diesel yukking it might be funny under the right conditions, but here it isn’t.

Starring: Vin Diesel

CONSTANTINE

A visually spectacular yet emotionally barren, at times gratingly inconsistent comic book adaptation.

Starring: Keanu Reeves, Rachel Weisz

BECAUSE OF WINN DIXIE

Some might be put off by the film’s anachronistic unreality and manifest righteousness, while others will no doubt revel in the quixotic Bushiness of it all.

Starring: AnnaSophia Robb, Jeff Daniels

IMAGINARY HEROES

What starts out as a kind of poor man’s “Ordinary People” quickly deteriorates into an unintentional comedy of errors filled with virtually every staple of the after-school special genre.

Starring: Sigourney Weaver, Emile Hirsch

HITCH

Smith and James make a good team and hit all the right comedic notes working with very funny material.

Starring: Will Smith, Kevin James, Eva Mendez

HIDE AND SEEK

What is, for a solid 80 minutes or so, a pretty hair-raising and suspenseful thriller, falls apart more quickly and embarrassingly than a drunken “Real World” cast member.

Starring: Robert DeNiro, Dakota Fanning

THE AVIATOR

The second-best biopic Scorsese has helmed, behind the exalted “Raging Bull.” DiCaprio’s portrayal of Hughes stands out as the finest work of his career.

Starring: Leonardo DiCaprio, Cate Blanchett

MILLION DOLLAR BABY

At its core, this is a heart-wrenching story about overcoming impossible odds and realizing dreams.

Starring: Hilary Swank, Clint Eastwood, Morgan Freeman

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Starring: Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet

There’s a lot of upside to this angry film

BY DAN DUNN

Special to the Daily Press

From the mind of “The Mind of the Married Man” creator Mike

Review

Binder comes a smart, funny and at times heartbreaking look at one family’s struggle to reinvent itself in the wake of a father’s sudden, unexplained departure. Joan Allen is extraordinary as Terry Wolfmeyer, embittered matriarch of a newly broken suburban Detroit home. Terry’s convinced her husband split with his Swedish secretary and has taken to dousing her flaming heart with whiskey as she misdirects her anger at her four dishy daughters. They are: Hadley (Alicia Witt), the eldest and least involved in the proceedings; Emily (“Felicity” star Keri Russell), an aspiring ballerina with an eating disorder; sexpot Andy (Erika Christensen of “Traffic”); and Popeye (Evan Rachel Wood), who serves as the film’s narrator.

Filling the male void is laid-back neighbor Denny Davies (Kevin



Costner), a retired Big Leaguer turned sports radio host who becomes Terry’s drinking/bedroom buddy, as well as surrogate dad to the girls. And although some of you might balk at the notion of seeing Costner play yet another ballplayer,

I must tell you that his work here ranks among the best performances of his career. Denny is a character in every sense of the word, and Costner’s rendering is near pitch-perfect. His sweet but ungraceful courtship of the Wolfmeyers is the

highlight of this engaging and emphatically human dramedy.

(Rated R for language, sexual situations, brief comic violence and some drug use. Running time: 118 minutes)

‘Hostage’ falls short of Willis’ previous roles

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

“Hostage,” the latest addition to the oft-bloody, pyrotechnically abounding, serially uneven oeuvre of Bruce Willis, is a stylishly rendered collection of action-flick clichés that casts Willis in a familiar role: Burnt-out cop turned reluctant hero. Willis is usually at his best in these sorts of explosive settings, and here he acquits himself soundly as Jeff Talley, an older (naturally) toned down version of his celebrated “Die Hard” character, John McClane. But “Hostage” lacks a convincingly nefarious foil — the villains here are

no match for Alan Rickman’s devilish Hans Gruber and his band of baddies — and relies too heavily on a series of implausible events.

When we meet him, Talley’s a hotshot LAPD hostage negotiator who blows a call resulting in the deaths of a young mother and her child. Devastated, Talley retires to a low-profile gig as a police chief in a tranquil Ventura County hamlet. The move has put considerable strain on his marriage and his relationship with his restless teenaged daughter (played, with conspicuous effort, by Willis’ real off-spring, Rumer) setting up what will be, for our hero, an opportunity for redemp-

tion. It arrives when three troubled teens lay siege to the palatial estate of widowed accountant Walter Smith (Kevin Pollack) and his two children, nubile Jennifer (Michelle Horn) and 8-year-old Tommy (Jimmy Bennett). Smith, it turns out, is the point man in a money-laundering operation for a mysterious cadre of well-connected criminals. Smith’s captivity threatens to disrupt a major deal, the nature of which is never revealed, so the crooks kidnap Talley’s brood and force him to help them retrieve a CD containing critical information.

Though intermittently entertaining, “Hostage” is most grievously ill-served

by a character called Mars (Ben Foster), the leader of the young men who abduct the Smiths and a laughable caricature of a menacing psycho. What promises to be a pretty taut thriller unravels midway through courtesy of Mars’ cannabis-fueled descent into madness. Foster’s performance in a poorly written role is the stuff Razzie Awards are made of, complete with overblown thrash-metal soundtrack and slow-mo tracking shots straight out of a bad music video.

(Rated R for strong brutal violence, language and some drug use. Running time: 102 minutes)

‘Mail Order Bride’ awkward in cast and episodes

BY DAN DUNN
Special to the Daily Press

In this twisted mockumentary, nebbishy documentarian Andrew Gurland (playing himself) decides to make a film about a loutish doorman from Queens named Adrian (Adrian Martinez) who buys a Burmese bride picked from a catalogue. Soon after Lichi’s (Eugenia Yuan) arrival in

America, it becomes clear her role will be more domestic servant than companion. Things heat up after Adrian tries to force Lichi to have her tubes tied, leading to a confrontation with Andrew and the dissolution of the project. Months later, Lichi arrives at his door with a perverted sex tape shot in Adrian’s basement, so a guilt-ridden Andrew takes her in, takes advantage, and a bizarre love triangle is born.

“Mail Order Wife” is an ambitious, but disconnected endeavor. The funny scenes (and there are several) are broken up by either colorless or downright morbid episodes that feel awkward and/or uncomfortable in what should have been a straight comedy. Gurland and co-writer-director Huck Botko scored this deal largely on the strength of a couple of Sundance-endorsed documentaries, which might explain why they come up short in

attempting to skewer the form: They respect it too much to give it the Chris Guest treatment. The cast is a mixed bag, too. Although Martinez nails Adrian as a pitiable, creepy, post-modern Ralph Cramden, Yuan and Gurland are grating and in need of more acting lessons.

(Rated R for language and some disturbing sexual material. Running time: 91 minutes)

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Sangrita: Tequila isn't just for shots and margaritas

THE IMBIBER

BY DAN DUNN

GUADALAJARA, Mexico — Two things to remember while traveling in Mexico: The ornery-looking young men in tattered jeans and second-hand Yankees caps carrying automatic weapons are evidently there for our protection; and a single glass of tap water, when consumed, can mutate into a flesh-eating alien that will rip through your stomach and kill everyone in sight.

Forty miles to the west of Guadalajara, nestled at the base of a volcano, is the tiny town of Tequila, ground zero for the production of the agave-based potable first distilled by ancient Aztec tribesmen. Over the past 20 years in the United States, tequila has evolved from being primarily the unrefined hooch of choice for shot-silly Spring Breakers to a top-shelf spirit that competes with single-malt Scotches and premium vodkas for the hearts and taste buds of sophisticated tipplers with fat wallets. Your Imbiber, of course, is hoi polloi to the core, so I've spent the bulk of my time here talking to "real" Mexicans, trying to discover the "real" best way to enjoy tequila. Really, I did. For real. Too bad my Spanish is limited to asking directions to the toilet and ordering beers, because something tells me these people know there's more to tequila than meets the margarita.

Eventually, and with the help of Charissa, a most affable and adorable translator, I procured what I was after from Jose Ignacio del Real Laborde, the Gerente de Investigacion Y Desarrollo for Sauza Tequila (Translation: "Important dude with long name who makes Sauza tequila"). Jose attests real Mexicans love the "Vampiro," a combination of tequila, lime juice or Squirt soda, and Sangrita — a bloody red mixture of orange and lime juices, spices and hot sauce. He even mixed one up for your ole Imbiber, who found it to be muy excelente, especially for anyone interested in keeping it real!

The Vampiro

1 shot Sauza Hornitos tequila
Sangrita
Lime juice or Squirt soda
Lime wedge

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How to make Sangrita:

1 cup Tabasco Extra Spicy Bloody Mary Mix
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1/2 cup fresh squeezed lime juice
3 teaspoons grenadine
Dash chili powder
Pinch of salt
Fresh ground pepper
Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker or glass pitcher. Add ice and shake or stir well.

(E-mail questions, comments or suggestions for the Imbiber to ddunn@metro.us.)

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Brazilian Girls bring up the tempo at Temple Bar

BY KURT HEIM

Special to the Daily Press

The Brazilian Girls played to a sold-out crowd at Temple Bar this past Tuesday night.

Review

Temple Bar was packed with a line all the way down the block — and that was for people who didn't have tickets. Needless to say, by the time I managed to get in, the atmosphere in the room was already at fervent pitch. The crowd was an interesting mix of pseudo hipsters donning their taxi cabbie hats and young trendy Santa Monicans, most of whom had already seen their 30th birthday.

By the time the band came onto stage, it was clear that this was not going to be a mellow gig. They started off with "Die Gedken Sind Frei."

The bass player and the drummer laid down a groove that instantly sent the crowd into a mad disco brawl. Sabina Sciubba — fully clad in a white ensemble and her trademark "eye mask" — marched around the stage, making it difficult to focus on anything else. When a member of the audience asked her to take off her eye glasses, she refused by replying that "people will die" if she did. Sciubba's distinct euro demeanor is both spell binding and enigmatic. Her sultry tones are like the warm Santa Ana winds on a balmy evening.

"Lazy Lover" took the tempo down. This scandalous burlesque number is dreamy but still had enough butt-shaking groove to keep the crowd bouncing.

The great thing about watching the Brazilian Girls was the fact that they are all accomplished musicians. Quite often when seeing a band that has an electronic slant they are bound to playing along with a click track and can't sway too far from the sampled computer generated music, and you end up with a show that just sounds like the CD.

The band did a two-song encore, and finished off with "Home." Over all, this was one of the best shows I have seen in ages. The brilliant musicians, Sciubba's frolicking and the punchy sound made it all worthwhile. From now on, if anyone asks what the Brazilian Girls are like, just reply that they are an incredibly good time.



Kurt Heim/Special to the Daily Press
Sabina Sciubba—wearing her trademark "eye mask"—and her band, the Brazilian Girls, rock Temple Bar patrons Tuesday.

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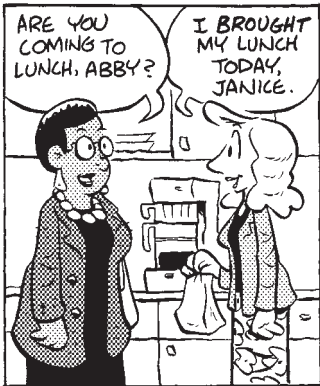
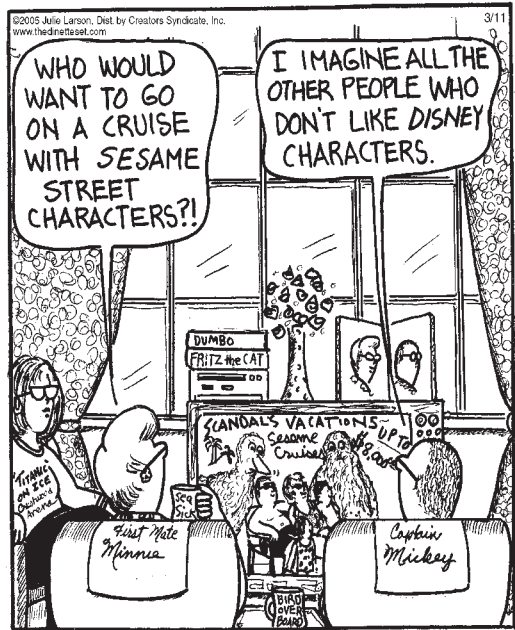
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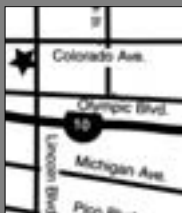
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Clean-cut Morrison resurrected 34 years after death

By The Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Thirty-four years after his death, the state of Florida has found and restored what it believes to be the earliest film of Jim Morrison, shot in the early 1960s when he was a student at Florida State University.

In the FSU promotional film, Morrison plays a clean-cut prospective student who is denied enrollment at the school.

"We would like to accept you," Morrison's character is told. "Indeed, we'd like to offer more courses, more sections, but we just don't have the space — that together with the lack of professors."

"But what happened?" he asks. "How come my parents, and the state and the university didn't look ahead?"

Morrison, who became lead singer of The Doors, attended FSU before enrolling in UCLA's film school. He died in Paris in 1971 at age 27.

The black-and-white clip was discovered last year among films that WFSU, a PBS station operated by the university, donated to the state in 1989. It was recently posted on the state's film archive Web site after being digitally converted.

It will air Friday on VH1.

LOS ANGELES — A former female employee of Madonna's film company is suing the pop star and other executives of Maverick Films on claims she was sexually harassed and wrongfully terminated.

Yael Oestreich said in a lawsuit filed Wednesday in Superior Court that she was never given a promised salary increase by Chief Executive Officer Mark Morgan and that he fired her in July without cause.

The lawsuit seeks general damages, medical expenses, loss of earnings and punitive and exemplary damages. It claims Maverick Films co-founder Guy Oseary and

Madonna, both listed as defendants, "failed to conduct a reasonable investigation into defendant Morgan's background before hiring him and knew or should have known of his propensity for sexual harassment and discrimination."

Phone calls to Morgan, Oseary and a Madonna publicist seeking comment weren't immediately returned early Thursday.

Oestreich, a former vice president of development at Maverick, said she was criticized by Morgan at a Nov. 11, 2003, social outing as being "uptight" for not joining in talks about sex, according to the lawsuit.

In the months that followed, the lawsuit said, Oestreich was the target of "inappropriate sexual inquiries" and also was accused of being insecure when she told managers of the alleged harassment.

NEW YORK — The irony has not escaped Lorraine Bracco.

For five seasons as psychiatrist Dr. Jennifer Melfi on HBO's "The Sopranos," the actress has battled mob boss Tony Soprano's mental demons. For a year and a half in real life, Bracco was fighting clinical depression with medication and therapy.

"If you break your leg, you have it fixed," Bracco, 50, recently told The Associated Press. "If you have a toothache, you go to the dentist. When it comes to mental health, people tend to think they can just get over it."

Bracco's ready to talk about her fight with depression in hopes of knocking out stigmas about antidepressants and their effects. The mother of two went to drug manufacturer Pfizer in hopes of getting the word out, which she'll do with a Web site (www.depressionhelp.com goes live on Tuesday) and a series of commercials.

"I don't blame anything or anyone," said Bracco. "I think it was lack of education about medication. I thought if I need medication, I must be really sick."

Bracco acknowledges she wasn't feeling too keen after battling for custody of daughter Stella with ex-husband and actor Harvey Keitel, dealing with Stella's juvenile rheumatoid arthritis and declaring bankruptcy after splitting with actor Edward James Olmos.

"I just had a lot of really big things that kept pounding me and I would let all these things rule my life instead of my dreams and wishes," said Bracco. "I was doing everything. I was being a good mommy. The laundry was done. They had food. They were driven to school and extracurricular activities, but I was joyless in it. It just became a chore for me."

Looking back, Bracco said she was dealing with depression for over a decade. It wasn't until 1997, after she'd been cast in "The Sopranos," that she followed the suggestion of a friend to seek professional help.

"I was very afraid to go on any kind of medication because I was afraid it was going to dull me, which is not true," said Bracco. "I think a lot of people think you'll become a zombie."

Antidepressants didn't hinder Bracco's performance in "Sopranos," and she eventually escaped the depression.

"I was on the medication for a year and a half and went into the doctor's office and said, 'I don't really need this anymore,'" said Bracco. "I haven't been taking it for five years, six years."

If the story ended here, it'd be a happy ending for Bracco. She bought a house in the Hamptons. Stella's in college. Bracco goes back to shooting the sixth season of "Sopranos" in April. And she's been dating 30-year-old former Syracuse University basketball player Jason Cipolla for almost three years.

"A good relationship doesn't hurt anybody," said Bracco. "Let's be fair, younger or older. That's been very nice for me."



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