



Santa Monica Daily Press

March 11-12, 2006

A newspaper with issues

Volume 5, Issue 102

DAILY LOTTERY

SUPER LOTTO

3 16 20 30 34

Meganumber: 13

Jackpot: \$16 million

FANTASY 5

1 4 13 32 35

DAILY 3

Daytime: 3 8 0

Evening: 4 5 1

DAILY DERBY

1st: 07 Eureka

2nd: 03 Hot Shot

3rd: 12 Lucky Charms

RACE TIME: 1.41.74

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NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

A familiar definition of "insanity" (attributed to Albert Einstein) is doing the same thing repeatedly but expecting different results. Donald E. Neff, 38, of Pleasant Township, Ohio, launched his 27-foot boat in the Portage River to access Lake Erie on Nov. 12, but it ran aground, and Neff required a Coast Guard rescue. Despite warnings to wait for higher tide, Neff got another boat the next day and set out again. He of course ran the second boat aground and had to be re-rescued. Two days later, he persuaded a friend to take him out, but naturally the friend's boat ran aground, requiring the Coast Guard once again. Officials were contemplating as many as seven criminal charges against Neff.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is the 70th day of 2006.
There are 295 days left in the year.

On March 11, 1942, as Japanese forces continued to advance in the Pacific during World War II, Gen. Douglas MacArthur left the Philippines for Australia, vowing: "I shall return." (He kept that promise nearly three years later.)

INDEX

Horoscopes

Playtime, Aries 2

Snow & Surf Report

Water temperature: 55° 3

State

Latin-style laughs 4

Opinion

That's amore ... I think 6

Q-Line

Gangs gotta go 6-7

Local

Taking stock in art 12

Comics

Strips tease 20

Classifieds

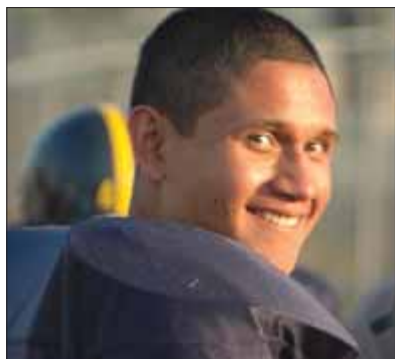
Your place or mine? 21-23

Student's memory spurs a city

BY KEVIN HERRERA

Daily Press Staff Writer

SAMOHI — It was on full display Friday how the school community and city as a whole have come together in the wake of Eduardo Lopez' shocking death, as more than a thousand of his fellow



EDUARDO LOPEZ

Samohi students and community activists took to the streets, joining the family for a peace and unity march through the Pico neighborhood.

Meanwhile, a much more subtle, but no less meaningful gesture was being made in the school's cafeteria.

Five parents gathered with their children to clean and re-arrange lunch tables, collect donated food and decorate the bare cafeteria in preparation for a reception following today's funeral for Lopez, who was gunned down by a suspected gang member on Feb. 28.

Both events, while drastically different in purpose and scope, demonstrate the many ways in which the Samohi community and the city as a whole have come

See LOPEZ MEMORIAL, page 13

Jury: City is responsible for man losing left arm

BY KEVIN HERRERA

Daily Press Staff Writer

WEST LA — A unanimous jury on Friday ordered City Hall to fork over nearly \$2 million to an elderly man whose arm was crushed underneath the wheels of a Big Blue Bus.

After deliberating for nearly two days in West Los Angeles Superior Court, the jury found City Hall negligent in an accident involving a Big Blue Bus and Haroun Mehdipour, 81, who said he was trying to hail down a bus at Barrington Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard on May 5, 2004, when the bus driver slammed the door in his face and drove off, knocking Mehdipour to the ground, where his left arm was run over and the skin ripped off.

The arm was eventually amputated at the shoulder.

The jury said City Hall should be responsible for paying for Mehdipour's medical bills as well as for the loss of his arm and the

life he and his wife Parvin once knew. Parvin Mehdipour sued City Hall as well, contending her husband suffers from severe memory loss.

Still, City Hall wasn't solely to blame. The jury also found that Mehdipour was 25 percent responsible for the accident and deducted that amount from the total award, leaving Mehdipour and his family with \$1.98 million and change.

The verdict was celebrated by attorneys on both sides.

"Our clients are happy, and at the end of the day, that's all that matters," said Shawn Azizzadeh, an attorney representing the Mehdipours. "Finally, Santa Monica will be held responsible."

The Mehdipours had originally asked for \$7 million to settle the case, but City Hall refused, according to a report from the City Attorney.

"We are very happy with the verdict," said Chief Deputy City Attorney Jeanette Schachtner.



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Students walk alongside community activists and members of Eddie Lopez' family during a march for peace and unity through Pico neighborhood on Friday.

Accusations of impropriety push city manager's buttons

By staff and wire reports

SAN DIEGO — Former San Diego City Manager and current Santa Monica City Manager Lamont Ewell responded Friday to conjecture that 9,000 e-mails on his computer were intentionally erased around the time he left for his new job in November.

San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders



LAMONT EWELL

said it was a disturbing development because the U.S. Attorney's Office and Securities and Exchange Commission could demand Ewell's e-mails. Federal officials have sought a variety of employee e-mails and other documents in separate city government investigations in the past two years.

"It doesn't matter who subpoenas us or what they do, all we can reply is that somebody defeated security and erased them," Sanders said Thursday.

He has ordered an investigation into who deleted the e-mails.

Deliberate elimination of e-mail messages would violate state law and the city's records-retention policy.

But according to Ewell, the procedures surrounding the e-mails were legal.

"Prior to my departure as San Diego's City Manager, I understand

See EWELL, page 13

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HOROSCOPES

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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 might be far more volatile than you care to admit. If you are not dealing with your feelings, you might discover that you are somewhat accident-prone. Whatever happens, be it with one person or many, intensity earmarks your interactions. Tonight: Playtime.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ If you want to think before you take action, you might also hear from others. You might not realize just how much control you have. Listen well to what others share. You might want to talk about your feelings. Tonight: Entertain at home.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ You could be jolted by someone or by plans going up in smoke. The smart attitude is to decide to use the free time as a gift, doing something else you'd really like to do. A positive attitude could create a super day. Tonight: Bring friends together.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ You might need to regroup because of news that sends your checkbook into chaos. As a result, you might need to find new ways of furthering your expenditures. Unfortunately, you might try a wild risk. Tonight: A devil-may-care attitude floats into your plans.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ You might be on a tear, invigorated by someone else's actions. Still, would it not be better to be unaffected by others? Claim your power, making what you want happen. Someone needs to share. Are you ready to hear it? Tonight: As you would like.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Take your time, especially if a partner or friend acts in an outrageous manner. Know what to say or when to say nothing. Don't even think twice if you decide to cocoon. That behavior might be most appropriate. Tonight: Listen to your needs.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Jolts of energy mingled with fatigue could define your choices. Though you might want to party and play your day away, you could choose to do otherwise. Instead of stress-ing, mellow out with a special friend. Tonight: A movie might fit the bill.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ A child or loved one could incur another's ire. The important issue here is to accept your responsibilities but still not get into another's issues. Why bother? A partner could be touchy. You know what to do. Tonight: A must choice.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Surely you have to be realistic about your desires. Others might not go along with you. On another level, you could sabotage yourself. Oh, dear! Slow down. Go to the movies. Don't react, OK? Tonight: Music and ethnic food.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Visualize rather than dictate. Brainstorm, and you'll get results. The smart Goat will not react but simply flow with different situations. Investigate possibilities rather than worry about long-term issues. Tonight: Live it up with a special person.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Others clearly dominate. Refuse to get caught up in control games. Your objective needs to be enjoying the moment. Others surround you, and invitations pop up left and right. Be the friend and companion that your sign is renowned for. Tonight: Ever playful.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Know when to call it a down day, a period to relax and do your thing. Sometimes your high energy takes a tremendous toll on you. You are on fizzle right now. Recharge your batteries, and you will be much happier. Tonight: Easy works.



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Comfort for grieving parents, kids

By Daily Press staff

The St. Monica Parish community, pastoral care ministries, through its bereavement and grief ministry will provide small group sessions for parents of high school-aged children who recently were exposed to the tragic news concerning the death of Eddie Lopez. The groups will begin the week of April 3, 2006.

For further information, contact Larry Donnelly, pastoral care coordinator at (310) 319-9764 or e-mail: larry@stmonica.net.

And the parish's youth ministry will provide a special follow-up-support-group meeting to give friends of Eddie Lopez an opportunity to come together, share memories, and continue the healing process. A professional grief counselor will be available to facilitate the meeting on Thursday, March 23, in the Duval Center from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Teens interested in attending should RSVP by e-mailing youthministry@stmonica.net or calling (310) 393-9287, ext. 308.

Pulling the strings on spring

By Daily Press staff

Spring your way into the season with sprinkles of laughter, a story or two and a funny puppet show at the Ocean Park Library.

The program is for ages 3-7. Tickets are free but must be picked up on the day of the program, which is Tuesday, March 14, at 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. There are no phone reservations. The library is located at 2601 Main St. and the phone number is (310) 392-3804

Understanding health issues

By Daily Press staff

Do you have a problem with your health? Want to know more about how to defeat an eating disorder or possibly detoxify yourself?

On March 11 at the Santa Monica YMCA, a class for parents on the awareness of eating disorders and how to be aware of them will be held. From 1 p.m. until 2 p.m., the class will be targeted to kids and teens.

The presentation for the parents will include information on how to be a good role model to your kids; factors that contribute to body dissatisfaction, and disordered eating and suggestions for how you can help your child grow up healthy, happy and free from weight obsession.

The presentation for teens and kids will include information on Hollywood's big fat lies: How the media affects how we feel about ourselves and our bodies, then how to help your friend with an eating disorder.

The Santa Monica Family YMCA will have another event on March 21, from 11:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., called "Detoxification The Key to a Vibrant Heath."

The event is free and will cover the therapeutic value of freshly squeezed juices, living food and whole foods, nutritional supplementation, massage, shiatsu, reflexology and other natural modalities, in creating and maintaining optimum wellness.

Both events will be at the Santa Monica YMCA 1332 Sixth Street.

Dance Theater of the World sashays in

By Daily Press Staff

Santa Monica is about to get hit with a bomb of social political art communicated through dance.

Sherman L. Steward will present the premiere of his multi-national, multi-cultural dance company known as DTW or Santa Monica Dance Theater of the World on March 12.

Steward will reprise two pieces from the September benefit, as well as several newly-created pieces. His themes depict decades of police brutality, lynching, child abuse, love and more. For ticket information, call (818) 997-1184. The show starts at 7:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Theater, 1501 California Ave.

SNOW AND SURF REPORTS

CONDITIONS

DATA PROVIDED BY ONTHESNOW.COM

BEAR MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs) 4"	BASE DEPTH 24" - 60"	LIFT HOURS 8:30 am - 4:00 pm	RUNS OPEN 18	LIFTS OPEN 10/12
CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made, Machine Groomed, Hard Packed				

JUNE MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs) 4"	BASE DEPTH 156" - 180"	LIFT HOURS 8:30 am - 4:00 pm	RUNS OPEN 35	LIFTS OPEN 6/6
CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Groomed				

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs) 4"	BASE DEPTH 156" - 180"	LIFT HOURS 8:30 am - 4:00 pm	RUNS OPEN 150	LIFTS OPEN 20/28
CONDITIONS: Powder, Packed Powder, Machine Groomed				

MOUNTAIN HIGH

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs) 4"	BASE DEPTH 12" - 30"	LIFT HOURS 8:30 am - 10:00 pm	RUNS OPEN 15	LIFTS OPEN 8/16
CONDITIONS: Hard Packed, Frozen Granular				

MT. BALDY

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs) 0"	BASE DEPTH 12" - 16"	LIFT HOURS 8:00 am - 4:30 pm	RUNS OPEN 0	LIFTS OPEN 3/4
CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made, Machine Groomed				

SNOW SUMMIT

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs) 4"	BASE DEPTH 24" - 60"	LIFT HOURS 8:30 am - 9:30 pm	RUNS OPEN 18	LIFTS OPEN 11/14
CONDITIONS: Packed Powder, Machine Made, Machine Groomed				

SNOW VALLEY

NEW SNOW (24 Hrs) 6"	BASE DEPTH 12" - 18"	LIFT HOURS 8:30 am - 4:00 pm	RUNS OPEN 13	LIFTS OPEN 5/11
CONDITIONS: Powder, Packed Powder, Machine Groomed				

CONDITIONS

WATER TEMP: 55°

DATA PROVIDED BY WETSAND.COM

SWELL FORECAST (1-7 FT)

This system increases more as rain chances climb to 80%. The max size from the diffracted NW looks to be around the chest to head high zone, as long as the winds don't completely blow out the incoming waves.

LONG RANGE SYNOPSIS

Powerful NNW hits NCal Sat., but only brushes by SoCal...

Unstable weather later today through weekend...

Tracking NW swell for 15th-16th...

TIDE FORECAST FOR SANTA MONICA

SATURDAY				
LOW TIDE	6:47AM	0.33FT	5:49PM	1.7FT
HIGH TIDE	12:50PM	3.2FT	N/A	N/A

SUNDAY				
LOW TIDE	8:14AM	0.5FT	6:15PM	2.4FT
HIGH TIDE	12:32AM	5.1FT	2:55PM	2.6FT

MONDAY				
LOW TIDE	10:01AM	0.42FT	N/A	N/A
HIGH TIDE	1:33AM	4.80FT	N/A	N/A

TUESDAY				
LOW TIDE	11:29AM	0.1FT	10:35PM	3.0FT
HIGH TIDE	3:02AM	4.6FT	7:19PM	3.3FT

WEDNESDAY				
LOW TIDE	12:26	-0.2FT	11:55PM	2.7FT
HIGH TIDE	4:36AM	4.6FT	7:40PM	3.6FT

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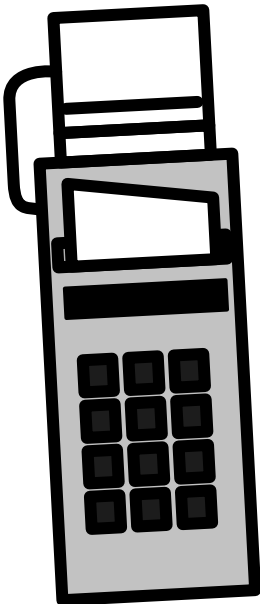
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STATE

Hitting Hispanics in the funny bone

BY PETER PRENGAMAN
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — A bad guy in a bad 1980s Mexican movie is surrounded by rival thugs who hold a gun to his head.

"Gordo, why don't you do something?" he calls out to his partner in a funny dubbed English voice.

"I can't unless 'Simon says,'" answers the partner, also in dubbed English.

"Well then, 'Simon says,'" replies the other.

The silly scene is part of "CircumSIZED Cinema," shown on cable's SiTV, which takes Mexican B-movies and lays down funny scripts that aim to give young Hispanics a laugh in English.

But Hispanics getting their TV in English is no joke these days.

Reaching out to them in English, or in a combination of English and Spanish, is a growing nationwide trend in television, radio and print media.

"Young Hispanics are consuming media in English, regardless of what they speak at home," said Jeff Valdez, co-founder of SiTV, launched in 2004 with English-language programs from sitcoms to music shows that are geared toward Hispanics.

SiTV's tag-line is "Speak English. Live Latin." It now reaches 11 million homes — up from 5 million two years ago — in cities with heavy Hispanic populations such as Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Detroit and multiple Texas locations.

The target is one of the country's fastest growing demographics: millions of young, second- and third-generation Hispanics who've grown up speaking both languages, or in some cases only English.

Cable television stations like SiTV and Mun2, along with radio stations like Latino 96.3 in Los Angeles and New York-based La Kalle 105.9, have bilingual or straight English-language formats targeting Hispanics.

A handful of TV networks are developing English versions of telenovelas — Spanish-language soap operas popular throughout Latin America — hoping to appeal to a wide American audience that includes English-speaking Hispanics.

And English articles sprinkled with common Spanish phrases fill the pages of national magazines like Latina, Hispanic Business and Los Angeles-based Tu Ciudad (Your City).

"The real future of the Hispanic targeted media and advertising is in English," said David Morse, president of New American Dimensions, a multicultural marketing research company.

Catering to that market can be lucrative. In May, Latino 96.3 radio scrapped its Spanish contemporary music for "Spanglish" speaking DJs who play reggaeton, a Caribbean fusion that mixes hip-hop and Latin beats and has become increasingly popular with Americans.

Today the station is No. 1 on weekends and No. 7 overall in one of the nation's largest and most competitive radio markets, according to the latest ratings from research firm Arbitron Inc. Before the switch it was No. 18 overall.

In-house research found that nothing on the FM dial was catering to bilingual or purely English-speaking Hispanics,

despite many Spanish-language stations in Los Angeles, said David Haymore, general manager for Spanish Broadcasting System, which owns Latino 96.3.

Producers also believed that reggaeton, whose artists often mix English and Spanish in songs, was being embraced by young Hispanics, he said.

"Conventional wisdom says that to cater to the Latino market, it's got to be done in Spanish," said Haymore. "But that is simply not the case."

For decades, the growing Hispanic population — now over 40 million people with an annual buying power that marketers estimate around \$700 billion — has been a target for businesses.

But only in recent years have marketers focused on linguistic or cultural distinctions within Hispanic communities, said Mary Griswold, a radio consultant in Los Angeles.

"People often use the word Hispanic and Spanish interchangeably," she said. "But there are many Hispanics who don't speak Spanish."

Jennifer Aaker, a marketing professor at Stanford University's School of Business, said research shows targeting Hispanics in just Spanish can even backfire because the younger generations see themselves as English speakers.

The reaction can be "They are targeting me and assuming I don't speak English," said Aaker. "For younger generations, that may be a condescending assumption."

Of course, there are many Hispanics who still consume media in Spanish; Los Angeles-based Univision is one of the country's most-watched television networks and has purely Spanish-language programming.

In radio, there are nearly 700 Spanish-language stations nationwide. But many of them, especially those with the Hispanic urban format called "hurban," are expanding to include more English.

Targeting Hispanics in bilingual or English formats isn't always successful.

The Latin Grammys were dropped by CBS after 2004 when an English-language format failed to attract high ratings in the first years of the show. Last year, the Latin Grammys were broadcast in Spanish on Univision, increasing the number of viewers to over 5 million compared to 3.2 million on CBS the previous year, according to Nielsen Media Research.

While media experts say the need for Spanish-language programming won't change — millions of immigrants are new arrivals from Latin American countries — the push toward English for younger generations is clear.

About 60 percent of Hispanics living in the United States are U.S. born, according to the U.S. Census of 2000. More than half of Spanish speakers also reported speaking English well, according to census data.

For Nico Jones, a 29-year-old Latino 96.3 disc jockey who was born in Texas to Mexican-American parents, speaking both English and Spanish has always been a part of his life.

"There is a whole generation of bilingual Latinos out there," said Jones. "It's the American influence. Do we watch David Letterman and 'Desperate Housewives'? Of course we do."

See Related Story on page 15

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STATE BRIEFS

Girl killed in school bus accident

By The Associated Press

OXNARD — A 10-year-old girl walking to school was struck and killed by a school bus.

Edith Luna, a fifth-grade student at Curren Elementary School, was alone in the crosswalk at Doris and H streets — a four-way stop — early Thursday when she was hit by the bus, investigators said.

Bus driver Angeline E. Lopez, 31, was making a left turn onto H Street when the bus hit the girl in the crosswalk, said Officer Steve Reid of the California Highway Patrol. The CHP investigates all school bus crashes.

There were five youngsters on the bus. Lopez, who works for Durham School Services, wasn't cited.

Grief counselors and the Oxnard School District's psychologist were at the school Thursday to help students, assistant superintendent Mark Jackson said.

"There were a lot of tears," he said. "Everyone at the school is deeply saddened by the loss."

School officials spoke with the girl's mother, who released a one-sentence statement in Spanish, saying: "Please be careful as you come and go to school."

Woman sentenced after sixth DUI arrest

By The Associated Press

RANCHO CUCAMONGA — A woman with six drunken driving arrests was sentenced to 16 months in prison after pleading guilty to her fifth and sixth offenses.

Ellie Yvonne Gravance, 46, of Victorville was sentenced Thursday by Superior Court Commissioner Ronald Gilbert. The prosecutor wanted her to spend at least two years in prison.

"It seems apparent to us she has a problem. Obviously the four prior convictions didn't have any affect on her," Deputy District Attorney Carlo DiCesare said.

Gravance had four previous drunken driving convictions from 2000 to 2003.

She was arrested again on Sept. 23 in Rancho Cucamonga with a blood alcohol reading of 0.29 percent, more than three times the legal limit of 0.08. That charge was pending when she was arrested on Oct. 29 in Montclair with a blood alcohol level of 0.19 percent.

Gravance was initially charged with a misdemeanor for the fifth offense, but it was raised to a felony after Mothers Against Drunk Driving contacted prosecutors.

"If she's in prison, the roads will be a little safer," MADD representative Joseph Alarcon said. "At the rate she was going she was going to kill somebody."

Policeman writes own check off the force

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A former Long Beach policeman pleaded guilty to felony forgery after stealing a blank check from a car he had impounded.

Richard Rivero, 39, faces up to three years in prison when he's sentenced March 30, said Jane Robison, a spokeswoman for the district attorney's office.

Rivero was charged in October with two counts of forgery, two counts of burglary and one count of attempted grand theft after a Long Beach police investigation found evidence of corruption.

After Rivero's plea Wednesday to the single felony count, Superior Court Judge Ann Jones dismissed the other charges.

Two of the alleged incidents involving Rivero occurred after Long Beach Airport baggage handler Edgar Mejia was arrested for allegedly stealing an estimated \$200,000 worth of items from travelers' luggage.

Prosecutors said Rivero tried to retrieve some stolen items by falsely claiming a theft victim had contacted him to claim an Omega watch and designer sunglasses worth \$3,000.

In May 2004, Rivero allegedly broke into the evidence room and was caught rifling through jewelry and other items from the Mejia case, investigators said.

A police internal investigation uncovered evidence of Rivero's forgery, authorities said. Rivero was working in the Auto Theft Detail when he took a blank check from a car he had impounded, then forged the check for \$500 and cashed it at a local liquor store, Long Beach police spokesman Officer David Cannan said.

Rivero was fired in September 2004.

Mayor's son is chip off old block

By The Associated Press

THOUSAND OAKS — Louis Masry, son of famed lawyer and former Mayor Ed Masry, wants to follow his late father to the council.

Masry, 39, announced this week he was running for council, pledging support for protecting ridge lines, maintaining healthy city finances and properly funding public safety and schools.

Ed Masry died Dec. 5 of diabetes complications. He was 73.

"With his passing, I decided to run now," Masry said. "He was a major influence for me and my family, and working so closely with him on city issues, it seems the right step for me."

The Nov. 7 election will decide three seats now held by Claudia Bill-de la Pena, Andy Fox and Dennis Gillette.

The younger Masry is vice president of a suburban Van Nuys investment management firm and president of the Agoura-Oak Park-Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce. He recently sold his Moorpark home and plans to move to Thousand Oaks next month.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sensitivity needed in news coverage

Editor:
With the senseless murder of Eddie Lopez we have all suffered a great loss. Eddie exemplified kindness, which we have too little of in our community. I am grateful to see so much coverage about the death of this fine young man, but I am struck by how many times the media have to repeat, he was not a gang member. This paper said “family members contend (Eddie) was not a gang member.” Oh please. Would we see this kind of reporting if Eddie had been a North of Montana white kid? I don’t think so. His race, it seems, causes this “guilt by association.” Yes, Eddie was evidently gunned down by an actual gang member, but the only “gangs” he hung around with were the Santa Monica Little League gang, the Samohi football and baseball gangs and that notorious crew, the Santa Monica High School honors students gang. Let’s be a bit kinder in our telling and retelling of this community tragedy. I think Eddie would have wanted it that way. And if our kindnesses start abundantly at home, they will find a way into our streets and into our press, where more of it belongs.

Alan Toy
Santa Monica

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That’s amore ... isn’t it?



MODERN
TIMES

BY LLOYD GARVER

A couple of years ago, my wife and I went to France. (In case anyone from the IRS is reading this, obviously, it was not a pleasure trip. I, uh, went there primarily to write some columns about France). Before going, we decided to take French lessons. I had taken French in college, and even though that was a long time ago (I was surprised to learn that France no longer had a king), it came back to me pretty quickly. The idea that I could speak some French made me feel more comfortable before the trip. I didn’t want to be an “ugly American” who thinks everyone in the world should speak English. It worked out great. I was able to speak with some of the French people I met, and I wrote a couple of columns based on my conversations with them. So now that we’ve started making vague plans about a trip to Italy — as a good place for me to write about — I felt we should take Italian lessons. I believe that when Americans travel, we aren’t just seen as tourists — or in my case as a working writer — but we also represent America. The least I could do was make an effort to learn a little of their language. So, we signed up for Italian classes. But these classes are not like the old-fashioned language classes I was used to. Our Italian class uses the “immersion method.” In immersion classes, the teacher speaks almost totally in the foreign language. She doesn’t say, “Today we’re going to learn how to conjugate the verb ‘to be’ in Italian.” She just starts to conjugate. It’s terrifying and frustrating. Supposedly, it’s difficult in the beginning, but after a while, it’s a much more efficient way to learn a language. Since we’re still in the early sessions, all I can say is that it’s true that it’s frustrating and difficult in the beginning. When I’m in class, I understand why they call it “immersion.” It’s because I feel like I’m drowning. I’m gasping for air,

I’m confused, I’m disoriented — and I’m actually paying to feel this way. When our teacher gives us a homework assignment, she gives it to us in Italian, including the page numbers. So I’m furiously flipping through the book, looking for the page that tells me how to say numbers in Italian while I’m missing out on the specifics of what I’m supposed to do. I haven’t even bought the tickets yet, and I’m already an ugly American in the classroom. I get angry with the teacher just as many American tourists resent the Italian shopkeeper who speaks rapid Italian to them. But in my case, I know with a certainty that she knows how to speak English, but just doesn’t want to. I also know she could speak slower in Italian if she just felt like it. So, what do I do? Just like ugly Joe American, without any apology, I ask my questions in English. And how does she respond? In Italian. So I resent her even more. In other words, this class has had the exact opposite effect than I had hoped. I thought it would make me beloved by every Italian I ran into. I thought they’d appreciate my ability to order a salad and comment on the weather in their language. I thought they’d have a better feeling for America because of my ability to count to ten in Italian. Instead, I’ve only met one Italian, and I’m already wondering why she refuses to speak English to me. I don’t like this attitude of mine. I don’t want to be an “ugly American” tourist. I don’t want to come off as boorish, or as if I believe our culture is better than every other culture in the world. I’ll leave that to our elected officials. So it’s a race against time. Will I learn Italian well enough to speak it before the process turns me into a complete American “boorist?” It’s hard to say. But I’ve already decided that if I get in a conversation with somebody and I can’t understand his or her Italian, I know exactly how I’m going to respond. I’m just going to smile, then ask, “Parlez-vous francais?” It worked last time. (Lloyd Garver can be reached at smdp@lloydgarvermoderntimes.com.)

The Q Line

CRACKING DOWN ON GANGS CAN BE DONE

This past week, Q-line asked:
“What suggestions do you have for law enforcement, parents, school administrators and community leaders in preventing gang violence?”
Here are your responses:

① “Cut off the source of new gang members by doing intervention at elementary and middle schools to keep the kids from going on the streets in the first place, and continue with counseling at the high school to keep them from falling back.”

② “Zero tolerance for graffiti in Santa Monica! All graffiti to be removed within 48 hours after its appearance, even if this means fining personal property owners if they leave graffiti on their building. Same goes for taking it off the city. They have to remove it within 48 hours. And put some teeth in the anti-graffiti law. Make it a community service of 100 hours if you are caught. Make it a fine ... whatever you have to do. Get a police sting out there to catch a few of them and make them an example.”

③ “Gang violence has been escalating for years, and now it’s at an all-time high in the Los Angeles area, including Santa Monica. There is gang graffiti all over the buildings and sidewalks of Santa Monica, and it grows and spreads daily. I sure hope the police are aware of this and tracking it down. How to stop it is a puzzle. It’s like an avalanche rushing down a hill. We just do not have enough police to stay on top of this and especially in this town with all the bums, vagrants and criminals hiding out. The police are spread way too thin.”

④ “Controlling gang violence is entirely the responsibility of the judicial bureaucracy. The unfortunate truth is that uniformed police officers are in the business of regulating vehicular traffic known as traffic cops. These traffic cops generates a great deal of positive cash flow revenue to the local municipalities by writing citations for various forms of vehicular movement violations. On the other side of the municipal profit and loss statement is the arrest of criminals. These criminal arrests create an enormous negative loss of cash flow due to the cost of trials and imprisonment. Arresting a gang member is not good for city business. Other South Bay cities do not have gang violence simply because it is not tolerated. Santa Monica needs a tough anti-gang task force to move into gang-infested areas and spank gang members’ butts with whatever force is needed. Often, a good butt-spanking is a cure.”

⑤ “I think when gang members are arrested, that they should be put into the Army, Navy or Air Force. If they want to kill people, it’s their perfect chance to do it. But I think that would be a good solution to a lot of problems.”

⑥ “I hold the police more accountable because they have not really been doing that much about it. I think gang members should be illegal and stripped of their rights. I mean, they shouldn’t even be around. If it was a business or any other person, they would be held accountable. Gangs should be tried and held accountable for the city of Santa Monica. (Police) Chief Bratton of Los Angeles should do something about Venice and really should take all the gang mem-

bers and send them to Cuba and have Fidel Castro deal with them.”

⑦ “There is a few things they could do to get rid of these gang members. Any time one of them is arrested and turns out to be an illegal alien, they should be immediately deported on the spot, no releasing them back into the community. Then, every time you arrest a gang member, stop releasing them back into the community. Stop bringing them out on bail to commit more crimes. Store them in jail for a few years and let them learn the lesson the hard way. You can set up a graffiti tag, have a nice wall painted white, have a few cops hiding out somewhere they can see them, and until some punk starts to spray paint, you swarm them and throw them in jail. Keep doing that a few times, until you get them all off the street. Otherwise, you just have to put the National Guard out there or grant hunting licenses to hunters and let them hunt the gang members and kill them. That’s the only thing that is going to stop them. Throw them in jail or kill them.”

⑧ “I think the people of Santa Monica should buy a bra for the Santa Monica police chief and the council should stop laying down for developers and get to community affairs.”

⑨ “Prior to the construction of the new police building, I tried to get the police to build a sub-station up on Pico Boulevard and 23rd Street and put their 9-1-1 call center there, and their motorcycle police so they could be police protection there. Because going back to when the rapist was there, there was no police protection. And another thing is I have been trying to do the National Night Out to come down to the Pico neighborhood because I thought it was a far step for National Night Out to walk down the Promenade where we have the least crime anywhere. Yet the police seem to be afraid to even go into the Pico neighborhood for something like this, so this an on going problem that has never been fixed and the police don’t even attempt to fix it, because I think they are afraid to be in that neighborhood. What we need is a sub-station there where people can go somewhere to get away from gang members that are chasing them. It’s ridiculous that you have to go all the way down to Fourth Street and Pico Boulevard. So people should not be getting killed in front of our new park that we spent millions of dollars on, and if we had some cameras by the parks, we would probably have gotten a picture of the kid.”

⑩ “I believe there should be a foot patrol and a bicycle patrol from the high school to Centinela just for the Pico district. For our Santa Monica police officers believe the heightened awareness of them walking though the community talking to the business leaders, managers of the pizza and Subway joints and so forth, would really increase police presence and that our community is behind cleaning up Pico and getting rid of these gangsters and these thugs.”

OPINION



The QLine

Q-LINE, from page 6

© “Yes, I am just very distraught about the gang violence and how it affected Santa Monica High School, and thank God my son left after a year of being in that high school. I think the new superintendent has to work eradicating the gang violence in the schools, because that’s why my son loves where he is now. He goes to Palm Desert High School. This is very said because my friend went though Grant and John Adams and I believe in the school system.”

© “Gang violence is a response to other social elements. It’s natural for young men to rebel against an oppressive force that they view as unfair, ungestured, racist and corrupt such as law enforcement. Parents, if there are two in the same home, have no time, money, patience, strength or training to properly encourage good behavior. Their overtaxed by the system they work so hard to support, while at the same time fails to support them ... What we need are more free activities that should include after school programs, before school programs, mentoring opportunities, jobs, sports and other events that entertain. While engaging these children we could keep them safe, introduce moral behavior, help them make better decisions and to be moral citizens by taking over their free time, teaching them right from wrong. The unacceptability in violent behavior and loving them unconditionally we can reduce crime and raise their self esteem. These examples should be practiced everyday by everyone including

law enforcement personnel, parents, school administrators, community leaders and any person with compassion responsibility and a desire to be happy.”

© “My suggestion for preventing gang violence would deal with school administrators developing more vocational training after ninth grade for at-risk students, for community leaders ... Poor people have few choices in life, starting with uneducated parents who provide no guidance, have too many children and are unable to cope with the everyday stresses of life may become single parents. Military service would bring minorities into greater contact with others of different backgrounds and a chance to see the bigger world view. Different cultures gain an education both culturally and academically but most of all, be part of an organization that requires discipline, responsibility, comradeship and sacrifice. This is worth a lot more than hanging out with their homies defending their turf at 17th and Michigan.”

© “How to prevent gang violence in the schools and the city? Stop overcrowding the schools with out-of-district students. Expel all gang members from the school. Evict the gang members from city housing and allow private landlords to do the same. Pursue nuisance abatement of private houses owned by gang members. The school board should stop coddling racial and gang violence instead of arguing over institutionalized racism. The school should concentrate on teaching good behavior, moral ethics and proper conduct.”

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? SOUND OFF IN THE DAILY PRESS!

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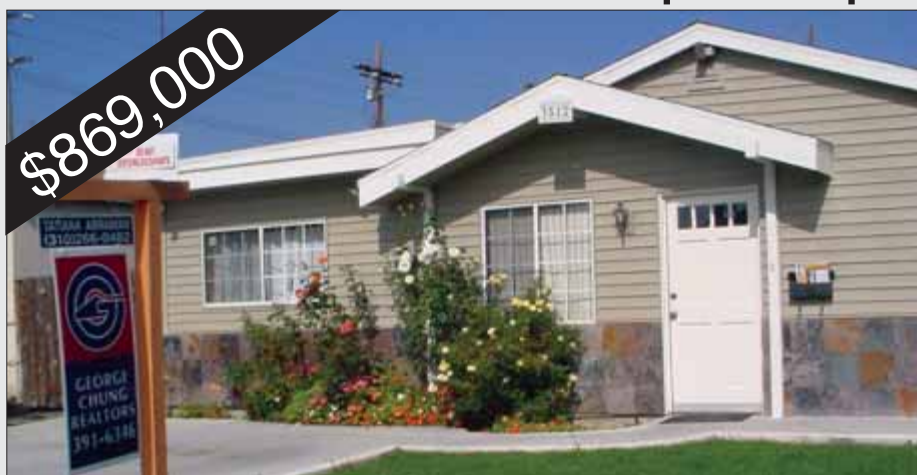


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STATE



Lawmakers, governor 'close' to bond deal

BY STEVE LAWRENCE
Associated Press Writer

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and legislative leaders on Thursday scrambled to try to put together a massive public works bond deal in time to make the June ballot.

"We are very, very close to coming to an agreement," Schwarzenegger said, emerging briefly from his office. "We have some hurdles still to overcome and some obstacles to overcome, but I have great hopes."

He said negotiations might stretch through the weekend.

Both the Assembly and Senate delayed and then canceled their meetings Thursday, but the Senate's leader said he would schedule a vote on a bond bill Friday with or without a bipartisan agreement.

"For sure there will be some action taken by (Friday) night," said Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, D-Oakland. "For sure what, I don't know."

He said lawmakers and the governor "were like college kids. We wait right until the end. We've got another day, so what's the rush?"

Democrats need the votes of just two of the Senate's 14 Republicans to put together the two-thirds majority needed to pass a bond measure.

Approval of a bond bill by the Senate

would put pressure on the Assembly, where at least six Republican votes would be needed to get to a two-thirds majority.

Secretary of State Bruce McPherson had set Friday as the cutoff date for lawmakers to add bond measures to the June ballot. On Wednesday, however, he said there was some flexibility in the deadline, although acting later than Friday "complicates the situation."

Schwarzenegger initially asked lawmakers to approve \$68 billion in bonds to help pay for highway construction, levee repairs, new schools, reservoirs, prisons, courthouses and certain other public works projects.

He later amended his request to ask for another \$3.5 billion for levee improvements, although aides said that wouldn't necessarily increase the overall total of his bond package, part of a \$222.6 billion, 10-year infrastructure plan.

Democrats offered to approve about \$35 billion in bonds that included money for parks, affordable housing and hospital earthquake improvements, as well as more money for public transit than in Schwarzenegger's plan.

"I can't tell you where we are going to end up, with what amount," Schwarzenegger said. "We will meet somewhere in the middle. Everyone has to do a little giving and taking, but we are going in the right direction."

Steve Maviglio, a spokesman for Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez, D-Los Angeles, said Schwarzenegger and Democratic leaders were talking about a bond package that would total about \$47 billion.

Schwarzenegger, he said, had agreed to drop funding for prisons and courthouses and to delete a new water fee opposed by Republican lawmakers. Democrats had given up on funding for hospital seismic retrofits, he added.

Nunez said the governor had also agreed to add bonds for affordable housing and to provide more money for public transit.

"I think we are so close to an agreement here that it really is up to the Republicans in the Legislature to decide whether or not they want to help or hurt the governor," Nunez told the San Francisco Chronicle.

Republicans, at least those in the Assembly, want a pay-as-you-go requirement that would earmark a portion of the annual state budget for public works projects, reducing the need to borrow by selling bonds.

They're also pushing for scaled back environmental reviews of infrastructure projects, new reservoirs, a cap on bond debt payments and expanded use of so-called design-build contracting, a step they say would speed up public works projects.

Kevin McCarthy, a Bakersfield Republican who is the Assembly's minority leader, said this week that the Republican caucus was not to blame for the lack of deal so far. He said Republican lawmakers "don't believe in wasting more money."

Schwarzenegger defended his fellow Republicans, saying they have been "very forthcoming and have been very good in the negotiations. They have concerns that are different than the Democrats. ... The key thing is to bring those two together. I think it's totally doable."

Schwarzenegger seized on upgrading the state's aging infrastructure, most of which was built in the 1950s and 1960s, as his major issue for 2006 after his approval ratings tumbled and voters rejected the four initiatives he promoted in last November's special election.

A deal with lawmakers could boost his re-election chances.

A Field Poll conducted last month found that voters favored by more than a 2-1 margin the idea of a big public works bond plan.

But they opposed the governor's plan to use some of the bond funds to build new prisons and renovate courthouses. They strongly favored using bond money for some things he left out of his plan — new parks, affordable housing and seismic retrofitting of hospitals.

UFW reaches contract with strawberry grower

By The Associated Press

OXNARD, Calif. — One of the nation's largest strawberry growers and the United Farm Workers have reached a labor agreement that union officials said includes some of the industry's most generous benefits.

The new three-year contract gives the 1,650 pickers working for the Coastal Berry Co. better medical coverage with lower premiums and raises wages by 1.5 percent yearly starting in the second year of the agreement, union officials said.

"We are very proud of both the workers and the employer that we were able to sit down and negotiate with Coastal Berry a reasonable and mutually beneficial compromise," union President Arturo Rodriguez said Friday.

Coastal Berry's 1,050 strawberry workers in the Watsonville area and its 600 pickers in Ventura County had their monthly health care premiums drop from

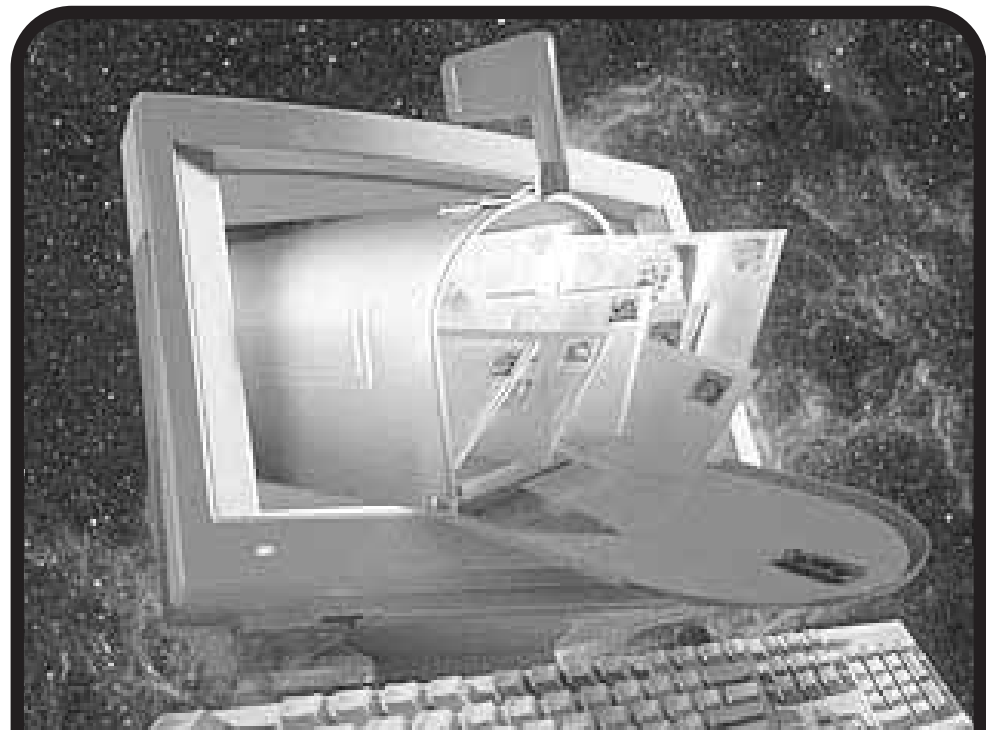
\$25 to \$10 a month under the agreement, Rodriguez said. The coverage also raises maximum insurance pay-outs and offers lower prescription co-payments, he said.

Rodriguez said the union focused on improving health coverage under the contract because wages were already competitive compared to those earned by workers at nonunion growers.

Under the incentive scheme in place from previous contracts, workers at Coastal Berry packing eight boxes in nine hours — an average day's work — would make about \$119, he said. Workers for a nonunion company would make about \$98.

The contract is the first to be negotiated with the strawberry grower since Dole Food Co. Inc. acquired it in 2004.

"We are paying competitive wages, we feel, and we have negotiated a competitive contract," said Dole spokesman Marty Ordman.



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STATE

Toymaker capitalized on strong work ethic

BY ALEX VEIGA

AP Business Writer

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif. — A billion ants carried Milton Levine's three kids through school. In fact, the pesky insects have been making him money for five decades.

"I have a lot of empathy for them," said Levine, 92, the man behind the Ant Farm.

This year marks a half-century since Levine began selling his Uncle Milton Ant Farm — the sand-filled, clear plastic boxes through which ant voyeurs can watch the insects tunnel and eat, and later die.

Levine said more than 20 million of his Ant Farms have been sold, with more than a billion ants shipped to customers eager to bring their toys to life.

"Never in my wildest dreams had I thought it would last 50 years," said Levine, who retired 10 years ago and

left his son, Steve, to run Uncle Milton Industries.

At a time when the hottest new toys are usually powerful electronic devices, updates on Levine's classic in recent years have helped keep kids interested in something that fascinated their grandparents.

"Things come and go, but the Ant Farm is very much like Barbie or G.I. Joe or Hot Wheels that have managed to survive," said Chris Byrne, a New York-based toy consultant. "The novelty was creating a whole world that you can see."

Uncle Milton Industries also sells a variety of educational toys, including remote-controlled tarantulas, an electronic planetarium and intricate habitats for frogs, hermit crabs and small fish.

Over the years, ants have had their digs upgraded with modules that can be linked to create expandable communities. One includes a tiny bungee rope, skating loops, race cars and small stunt bike arena.

Sand has been replaced with cleaner, lighter volcanic gravel that makes it easier to see the ants. A model due out this Christmas uses green translucent gel that serves as food and water for the insects.

A medium-sized version of the classic design now retails for about \$12, while the giant-sized one is about \$20. A vial of replacement ants is available online for \$3, plus shipping.

The family-owned company declined to release financial figures.

Levine became an ant-wrangling mogul almost overnight. He returned from the Army in 1946 and began a mail-order business with his brother-in-law. The duo sold novelty toys — small, plastic Army men, cowboys, Indians and other characters — typically a hundred for a dollar.

A decade later, an insect encounter changed everything.

Levine was at a Fourth of July picnic at his sister's home in Studio City when he spied several ants on the march along a corner of a swimming pool.

"I saw those ants, and it reminded me when I was kid I used to play with ants," Levine said. "I'd put them in a Mason jar, watch them cavort around. I thought maybe an observation kit would be good."

Levine and his business partner made the prototype Ant Farm using a clear plastic handkerchief box with a wood base. He asked his sister to draw a farm house scene from a children's book as a backdrop and plucked some ants from an empty field to inhabit the new world.

Levine placed a 3-inch classified ad in a newspaper and was soon deluged with orders.

"We had so many orders that we couldn't even fill them," he said. "And I had no idea where to get ants!"

Levine eventually found a family to collect harvester ants. He deemed the breed best-suited for the habitats because they are plentiful, dig in the daytime and aren't aggressive like fire ants.

They're also not carnivorous and don't thrive indoors — key selling points for hesitant moms.

"It's like the story of life," Levine said. "They see a whole generation live and die. Even the die part is important, teaches kids nothing lives forever."

In addition to advertising in comic books, Levine also started pitching his ant habitats to school suppliers as classroom teaching aids. The company now sells its products to retailers and no longer markets directly to consumers.

Uncle Milton Industries owns the trademark on the Ant Farm brand, but other companies have come along over the years to sell ant habitats.

Still, Levine's classic habitat design remained largely unchanged, except for bigger versions, until his son took over a decade ago.

Levine has little doubt his family can keep selling the Ant Farm.

"I guess another 50 years, the way it's going," he said. "My great-grandchildren will probably do it."

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STATE



C.C. See-ya: Motorcycle gang targeted in massive crime sweep

BY GREG RISLING
Associated Press Writer

RANCHO CUCAMONGA, Calif. — Hundreds of law enforcement officers targeted the Vagos motorcycle club Thursday in a Southern California sweep that netted 25 arrests of leaders and associates of what officials labeled an outlaw gang.

"The Vagos are a ruthless criminal biker gang that virtually held our communities hostage" by dealing in "guns, drugs and death," said John Torres, a special agent in charge with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

"We're going to continue to fight this war on our local terrorists," San Bernardino County District Attorney Michael A. Ramos said at a news conference.

"Operation 22 Green," as it was called, targeted Vagos associates in five Southern California counties. It involved 700 ATF and local police and sheriff's departments.

Green is the club's chosen color and 22 corresponds to V, the 22nd letter of the alphabet.

Authorities said the three-year investigation was among the largest coordinated law enforcement probes ever conducted in the region. More than 80 search and arrest warrants were issued and 25 people were taken into custody Thursday on federal or state charges that included firearms and drug violations. Another five people already were in custody.

Arrestees Thursday included seven chapter presidents, one vice president, one secretary, one treasurer and seven sergeants-at-arms.

The vice president, Ryan Matteson, 29, was arrested for investigation of murder in connection with a home invasion robbery in Lucerne Valley where three people were robbed and one was killed, authorities said.

In a statement, Torres said investigators seized 95 illegal firearms, some illegal drugs, \$6,000 in cash and two

stolen motorcycles.

Ramos said the sweep effectively "dismantled," the club, which he estimated has several hundred members.

Torres said he anticipated that many of those arrested will have their cases incorporated into a federal racketeering case against the club.

An e-mail message seeking comment from the club was not immediately returned.

However, leaders in the past have said that Vagos is a social club, not a criminal enterprise and frequently have complained of being subjected to witch-hunts.

"It's about riding motorcycles together. Spending time as a family, a pack, a club, a tribe," James Cross, 34, former president of the Placer County Vagos told the Sacramento Bee. His comments were published Wednesday.

"The club frowns on criminal activity," said Cross, who is one of three people accused of conspiring to kill a fellow member.

Vagos (pronounced VAH'-gohs), whose patch includes the Norse god of mischief Loki, was founded in San Bernardino in the 1960s. The Spanish name means "traveling gypsy" or "a street-wise person that's always up to something," according to the club Web site.

In the past decade, there have been several sweeps against members and associates in connection with crimes ranging from marijuana sales to murder.

More than 30 have been convicted of various crimes.

In San Bernardino County, two murder cases and two attempted-murder cases have been filed against Vagos associates or members, Ramos said. He did not provide details.

In September 2004, a state investigation involving the gang led to the arrests of 26 people and the seizure of more than \$125,000 in cash, drugs and guns.

In October 1998, a two-year undercover investigation of the gang resulted in the arrests of more than a dozen people for alleged kidnapping, drug and weapons crimes.

Border agents accused of releasing immigrants for \$300K in bribes

BY ELLIOT SPAGAT
Associated Press Writer

SAN DIEGO — Two U.S. Border Patrol agents assigned to a joint effort between the United States and Mexico to prosecute more smugglers were under arrest for allegedly releasing illegal immigrants from federal custody in exchange for \$300,000 in cash bribes.

Mario Alvarez, 44, and Samuel McClaren, 43, released migrants to a smuggling ring that operates in El Centro, about 120 miles east of San Diego, according to a federal complaint filed in January and unsealed Thursday. The smugglers then allegedly took the migrants to Los Angeles.

Some of the illegal immigrants who were released were smugglers themselves, the complaint said.

"The agents arrested today, who are supposed to represent the very best, epitomize the very worst," said Daniel Dzwilewski, special agent in charge of the FBI in San Diego.

Paul Starita, an assistant U.S. attorney in San Diego, declined to discuss the case further, saying the investigation remains open.

The agents couldn't be reached for comment.

The agents were assigned to a joint effort between the Border Patrol and Mexico's attorney general's office under which smugglers arrested in the United States are deported to Mexico for prosecution, the complaint said. Alvarez worked on the effort from November 2002 to the end of last year; McClaren worked on it from July 2003 through last year.

The complaint said the Border Patrol agents brought two smugglers across the border into the United States in a government vehicle in September 2004 and released one of them from federal custody three months later in exchange for \$10,000. In October 2005, Alvarez signed a warrant that falsely stated a migrant was deported to Mexico, the complaint said. The two agents allegedly drove the migrant from an immigration jail in El Centro to a nearby Wal-Mart parking lot for \$6,000.

Both men, of Imperial, were charged with conspiracy, bribery, making false statements, migrant smuggling and filing false tax returns. The complaint said McClaren deposited \$85,900 in personal bank accounts, while Alvarez deposited \$82,000.

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LOCAL

City dissects its art collection

By Daily Press staff

CITYWIDE — Within a few months, officials will be taking stock of the city's cultural assets in an effort to map out the future of the arts in Santa Monica.

Santa Monica's Cultural Arts Master Plan is expected to be a detailed assessment of the city's cultural assets, from playhouses to public sculptures, coupled with an action plan that will seek to promote and expand the arts for the next five to 10 years.

Currently, staff is working on the initial phase of the plan and will involve the public in a series of meetings this summer. The planning process should take a year.

The City Council recently agreed to spend \$90,000 to develop the master plan. Cultural Planning + Group, an art consulting firm, has been selected to lead the process. They have developed plans for Pasadena as well as San Antonio, where they instituted a plan that links economic development with the arts.

Santa Monica is already far ahead of most cities when it comes to supporting the arts, experts said. Particularly at the beach and in its parks, the city is chock full of public art, including sculptures and murals.

Log onto Fotobyfabian.com for a photo essay on public art throughout Santa Monica.



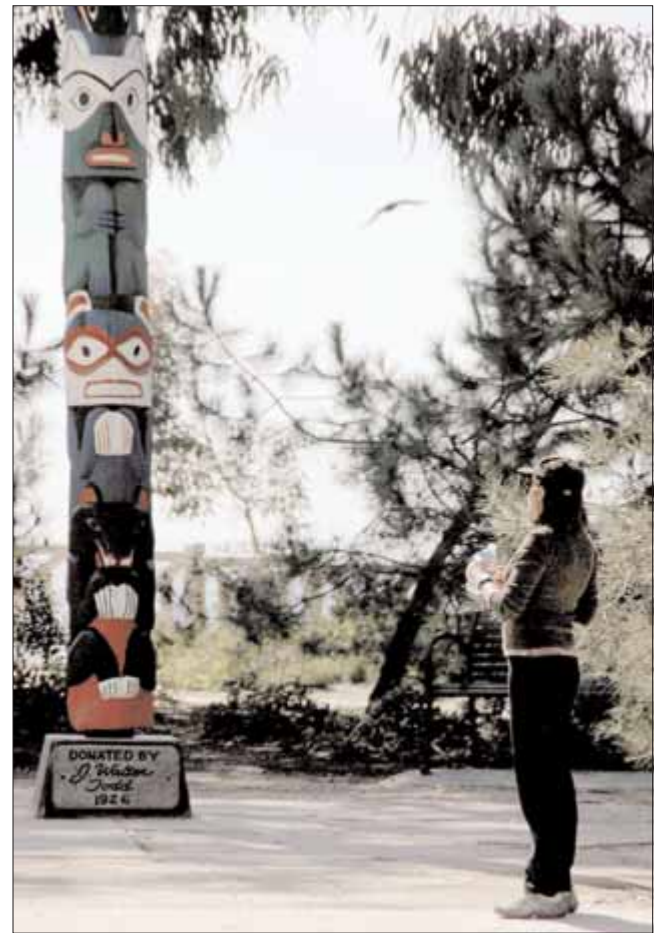
Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

Examples of the city's public artworks abound. (Above) A couple sits inside the wood sculpture entitled 'Gestation III,' created by Baile Oakes in 1991. It stands in Palisades Park on Ocean Avenue.



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT MEETS ART: The city's wastewater crewleader, Val Guzman (left), and Paul Farhadian from environmental and public works management examine the Pico storm drain at Santa Monica Beach as they stand next to the public art project 'The Wave Fence,' part of 'California Wash: A Memorial' by Newton and Helen Mayer Harrison.



Fabian Lewkowicz/Daily Press

CREATIVE STANDS: A lady soaks in the view (above) as she sips water next to the Native American Totem Pole, 1925, located in Palisades Park at Ocean Avenue at San Vicente Boulevard. (Below) A homeless couple camp out under the public art piece entitled 'The Singing Chairs' on Santa Monica Beach. The work was done by artist Doug Hollis.



LOCAL



Lopez funeral set

LOPEZ MEMORIAL, from page 1

together in the wake of Lopez' tragic death.

"Even people who didn't know him or his family are calling asking what they can do to help, sending money, donating food. It's unbelievable," said Tammy Montanari, whose sons were like brothers to Lopez and have spent much of the last week and a half grieving with family.

Lopez was shot and killed by a suspected gang member around 9:20 p.m. on Feb. 28. Police said Lopez was walking with friends on Pico Boulevard near 26th Street when a Latino male approached wearing a hooded sweatshirt and a bandana. He shouted the name of a local gang and began firing indiscriminately into the group of teens. Only Lopez was hit.

Police said Lopez, a star athlete on both the Samohi baseball and football teams, was most likely mistaken for a rival gang member. The suspect is still at large.

Following his death, Samohi held a memorial for Lopez at its Greek Theater that was attended by hundreds of students as well as elected officials such as Police Chief James T. Butts, Jr., and the new City Manager and City Attorney. A fund has also been set up for the family, as well as a Web site (www.eddie28.com), where people can purchase T-shirts, key chains and other items with pictures of Lopez on them. So far, the Web site has sold 40 shirts, many photos and key chains, with all proceeds going to the Lopez family.

"It was Eddie's dream to get a better education so he could provide for his mom and grandmother and find them a better place to live," Montanari said. "I told his mother the other day that this (the donations) is her little angel's way of doing that."

Nikki Donovan, a parent volunteering to help set up the reception immediately following the funeral service today at St. Monica's Church, said while her son was a good friend of Lopez, she would have been affected by his death regardless, and sees the loss of Lopez as an opportunity to unite against gang violence.

"I am just amazed by how people have come together, no matter their age, race, income ... whatever," she said. "We need to let Eddie's spirit live on in the work that we do from here, and I am hoping that the community's collective voice calling for peace will send a strong vibration throughout the city, the state and the world. That is my hope."

The vibrations could be felt by those walking with the Lopez family as they made their way from the high school to the location where he was killed. As they marched and handed out flowers to passersby, the group of thousands shouted, "Shame on you," to all those who have taken a life.

Oscar de la Torre, a school board member and director of the Pico Youth & Family Center, helped lead the march. He said that Lopez' death, while sad, was a gift to every other soul who was touched by him and, therefore, no one should rest until justice is served and peace restored.

"Unfortunately, it takes a death for the community to unite and for everyone to realize that we are all connected to each other and that human life is precious," de la Torre said. "Many times we take life for granted, but we cannot let this opportunity slip away. The Pico neighborhood as been reinvigorated in its quest for peace and we need to continue our work to honor Eddie."

Lopez' funeral will be held today at 10 a.m. at St. Monica's Church, 725 California Ave. The burial will take place at Holy Cross immediately following the service. Those who wish can attend a reception at the Samohi cafeteria beginning at 1 p.m.



Kevin Herrera/Daily Press
Mecca Donovan, 7, helps her mother decorate the Samohi cafeteria on Friday in preparation for today's reception honoring Eddie Lopez.

Ewell: I didn't delete

EWELL, from page 1

that a complete search was conducted of my e-mail and electronic files," he said in a prepared statement. "These e-mails and files were copied and stored, including for use in responding to the federal agency investigations, using search words given to the city by the agencies involved.

"My hard drive was collected and properly secured in the event that it was ever needed," Ewell added. "All of these procedures were conducted by the information technology and communications staff. E-mails on my computer were subsequently deleted due to the sensitivity of personnel matters and discussions with attorneys conducting city business. This was done to preclude unauthorized persons from viewing

them. The main server, where this information resides, would be held permanently in what is known as the 'Manager's Post Office Account.' As far as I know, only Data Processing Corporation has access to this server, which to the best of my knowledge cannot be destroyed by anyone else."

The missing e-mails were discovered when city officials were trying to respond to a Jan. 30 request from The San Diego Union-Tribune for some of Ewell's correspondence.

The mayor ordered an investigation into who deleted the e-mails and why no backup copies were kept. It was Ewell who demanded 14 months ago that every employee retain any document, including e-mails, that could interest federal investigators.

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GOP frets as Bush loses more steam

BY RON FOURNIER

AP Political Writer

WASHINGTON — More and more people, particularly Republicans, disapprove of President Bush's performance, question his character and no longer consider him a strong leader against terrorism, according to an AP-Ipsos poll documenting one of the bleakest points of his presidency.

Nearly four out of five Americans, including 70 percent of Republicans, believe civil war will break out in Iraq — the bloody hot spot upon which Bush has staked his presidency. Nearly 70 percent of people say the U.S. is on the wrong track, a 6-point jump since February.

"I'm not happy with how things are going," said Margaret Campanelli, a retiree in Norwich, Conn., who said she tends to vote GOP. "I'm particularly not happy with Iraq, not happy with how things worked with Hurricane Katrina."

Republican Party leaders said the survey explains why GOP lawmakers are rushing to distance themselves from Bush on a range of issues — port security, immigration, spending, warrantless eavesdropping and trade, for example.

The positioning is most intense among Republicans facing election in November and those considering 2008 presidential campaigns.

"You're in the position of this cycle now that is difficult anyway. In second

term off-year elections, there gets to be a familiarity factor," said Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., a potential presidential candidate.

"People have seen and heard (Bush's) ideas long enough and that enters into their thinking. People are kind of, 'Well, I wonder what other people can do,'" he said.

The poll suggests that most Americans wonder whether Bush is up to the job. The survey, conducted Monday through Wednesday of 1,000 people, found that just 37 percent approve of his overall performance. That is the lowest of his presidency.

Bush's job approval among Republicans plummeted from 82 percent in February to 74 percent, a dangerous sign in a midterm election year when parties rely on enthusiasm from their most loyal voters. The biggest losses were among white males.

On issues, Bush's approval rating declined from 39 percent to 36 percent for his handling of domestic affairs and from 47 percent to 43 percent on foreign policy and terrorism. His approval ratings for dealing with the economy and Iraq held steady, but still hovered around 40 percent.

Personally, far fewer Americans consider Bush likable, honest, strong and dependable than they did just after his re-election campaign.

By comparison, Presidents Clinton and Reagan had public approval in the mid 60s at this stage of their second terms in office, while Eisenhower was close to 60 percent, according to Gallup polls. Nixon, who was increasingly tangled up in the Watergate scandal, was in the high 20s in early 1974.

The AP-Ipsos poll, which has a margin of error of 3 percentage points, gives Republicans reason to worry that they may inherit Bush's political woes. Two-thirds of the public disapproves of how the GOP-led Congress is handling its job and a surprising 53 percent of Republicans give Congress poor marks.

"Obviously, it's the winter of our discontent," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla.

By a 47-36 margin, people favor Democrats over Republicans when they are asked who should control Congress.

While the gap worries Republicans, Cole and others said it does not automatically translate into GOP defeats in November, when voters will face a choice between local candidates rather than considering Congress as a whole.

In addition, strategists in both parties agree that a divided and undisciplined Democratic Party has failed to seize full advantage of Republican troubles.

"While I don't dispute the fact that we have challenges in the current environment politically, I also believe 2006 as a choice election offers Republicans an

opportunity if we make sure the election is framed in a way that will keep our majorities in the House and the Senate," said Ken Mehlman, chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Stung by criticism, senior officials at the White House and the RNC are reminding GOP members of Congress that Bush's approval ratings may be low, but theirs is lower and have declined at the same pace as Bush's. The message to GOP lawmakers is that criticizing the president weakens him — and them — politically.

"When issue like the internal Republican debate over the ports dominates the news it puts us another day away from all of us figuring out what policies we need to win," said Terry Nelson, a Republican consultant and political director for Bush's re-election campaign in 2004.

Bowing to ferocious opposition in Congress, a Dubai-owned company on Thursday abandoned its quest to take over operations at several U.S. ports. Bush had pledged to veto any attempt to block the transaction, pitting him against Republicans in Congress and most voters.

All this has Republican voters like Walter Wright of Fairfax Station, Va., worried for their party.

"We've gotten so carried away I wouldn't be surprised to see the Democrats take it because of discontent," he said. "People vote for change and hope for the best."

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City of Santa Monica Environmental Programs Division



Arizona students struggle as English battle rages

BY AMANDA LEE MYERS

Associated Press Writer

PHOENIX — When Alex Lugo speaks English, he rarely strings together more than a few words and often mispronounces the ones he does know.

When he speaks Spanish, the 9-year-old is eloquent, chatting about his father back in Mexico and why he wants to be a police officer when he grows up.

Like roughly 150,000 other students in Arizona, Alex is struggling to learn English in a program that everyone from educators and parents to legislators and Gov. Janet Napolitano agree is ineffective.

For months, the Democratic governor and Republican-led Legislature have publicly traded insults and argued over a court order demanding improvements in funding for "English language learners," jargon for children who aren't fluent in English.

Meanwhile, the children behind the political fight are facing their own battles.

"This is not about getting re-elected, and it's not about taking a position in one favor or another," said Eugene Garcia, dean of the College of Education at Arizona State University. "It's about trying to understand what's going to make a difference for these kids."

"No child should be left behind," he added. "And the data is very clear. These children are being left behind."

The fight for a decent English program in Arizona, which has a rapidly growing immigrant population, began at least 14 years ago. That's when a group of parents in southern Arizona's Nogales Unified School District filed a class-action lawsuit against the state alleging it was not adequately funding English programs.

The suit led to U.S. District Judge Raner Collins' December order for the state to provide adequate funding for the programs within 15 days of the start of the legislative session on Jan. 9.

As Napolitano and lawmakers argued about a plan to put on Collins' desk, the judge on Jan. 25 began fining the state \$500,000 a day for not complying with his order.

The fines grew to \$1 million a day as of Feb. 24, leaving the state owing \$21 million as of March 1, the last day before the Legislature approved a plan.

On March 3, Napolitano allowed the latest Republican plan to become law in the hopes the judge will rule that it's inadequate and prod lawmakers to do better. That means the battle likely will continue.

Mike Martinez, superintendent for the Cartwright Elementary School District in Phoenix, called the political wrangling "a tragic situation."

"We're shortchanging generation after generation," he said.

At 9,120 students, nearly half of the inner-city school district's 20,500 children are classified as English language learners. At Alex's school, Sunset Elementary, they are the majority.

They are in every classroom. Most teachers don't speak Spanish, and even if they could, bilingual education has been illegal in Arizona since voters approved Proposition 203 in 2000. Instead, children are taught using a technique known as English immersion.

Sometimes when his teacher is explaining a concept in English, Alex said he whispers with a bilingual neighbor to get the Spanish translation. But he speaks in English as often as possible so he can learn the language.

He practices with his mother, who learned English by attending classes. His father, who owns a store, is still in Mexico while his mother works two jobs as a waitress and a cashier in Phoenix.

Many teachers find themselves at a loss when they first arrive at Sunset and discover they have to teach material to students with whom they can barely communicate.

"I knew I would have language barriers," said fourth-grade teacher Angela Saxton, 29. "But this is not in your wildest dreams. ... It's overwhelming."

Alex's teacher, Jeremy MacDonald, explained the difficulties teaching students who speak little or no English.

Some concepts are nearly impossible to explain, said MacDonald. "They might understand the concept in Spanish, but I can't tell them what that means," he said.

And even if students don't know a word of English, teachers are obligated to give them standardized tests in English.

"Bless their hearts," said Sue Tingle, Sunset's language acquisition specialist. "They kind of look around to see what the other kids are doing. They see they're coloring in dots, and so they color in dots. It has to be the most painful thing in the world."

Some educators feel racism is playing a role in the fight.

"I feel like it's an attack on the Mexican-American community," said Enrique Gonzalez, Sunset's principal. "It's just a whole xenophobia with some of our Arizona legislators. They have to realize the majority of English language learners are born in the United States."

A high-ranking Arizona legislator said that's playing "the race card."

"The same people who make these claims haven't been educating the children, apparently," said House Majority Leader Steve Tully, R-Phoenix.

"The fact of the matter is these children who are by and large Hispanic are going to be the next generation of children who run this state," he said. "The best thing for them to succeed is to learn English."

Despite the hurdles of learning English, some students are able to do laps in what educators call a sink-or-swim system.

Valeria Valenzuela came to Arizona from the Mexican state of Sonora two years ago and didn't know any English.

The 9-year-old is fluent now but she said her educational experience was hard.

When she first arrived at Sunset, Valeria sat near the front of the class, but her teacher hardly looked at her. "I felt left out," she said. "I cried before, during and after school."

Valeria changed teachers after a few weeks, and because of hard work and one-on-one instruction, she finally began learning English. Saxton, her current teacher, said Valeria is one of the best students in her class.

But not every child makes it.

Saxton remembered one girl in her class last year who refused to speak to her in English or the limited Spanish Saxton knows. After five months, the girl dropped out.

Saxton hopes the same doesn't happen to a student who recently arrived in Arizona from Sinaloa, Mexico.

Nine-year-old Carmen Ambriz struggles in class. The only friend she's made is the only other student who doesn't speak English, and for the most part, the girl hangs back from the other children.

But Saxton said Carmen is working hard, trying to learn English quickly so she can learn math, science and other subjects.

Carmen said she can't wait until she can speak English. "When they talk to me, I'll be able to understand," she said in Spanish.

Back in MacDonald's classroom, Alex's enthusiasm is unmistakable.

MacDonald explained a book's conclusion that four children didn't understand. The sentence, written on two pages, was: "Fuzzy wants to go ... to me!" The children's story is about a dog and the places he goes.

Once MacDonald explained ellipses and animatedly shouted his explanation of an exclamation point, Alex understood.

"Oh, yeah!" he exclaimed in English with a smile. "I got it."

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Open Sasabe: Migrants dig entryway

BY ARTHUR H. ROTSTEIN

Associated Press Writer

TUCSON, Ariz. — U.S. Border Patrol officials are seeing a significant increase in the number of illegal immigrants being smuggled through what's known as the Sasabe corridor southwest of Tucson.

Agents in the Tucson station, who are responsible for covering the corridor, have arrested some 37,000 migrants so far during the current fiscal year, which began Oct. 1. Spokesman Gustavo Soto of the patrol's Tucson sector said there were about 25,000 apprehensions recorded for the same period last fiscal year — nearly 48 percent fewer.

Over the past few years, immigrant-smugglers had favored routes farther west — through the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation, the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument or other desert areas.

But since last summer and fall, areas cutting through the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, with its diverse vegetation and shorter distances from the border to well-traveled roads in some instances, have gained currency as smugglers try to evade capture by Border Patrol agents.

The corridor, lying in the Altar Valley, stretches north from the tiny border crossing at Sasabe, 65 miles from the Tucson, through the Buenos Aires, a 118,000-acre mosaic of grasslands, wetland, mesquite-covered groves, cottonwoods along streams and some oak and sycamore-lined canyons.

The corridor also takes in the small community of Arivaca, while Arizona 286 cuts through the refuge between Sasabe and Three Points, from where smugglers have a 20-mile trip east into Tucson.

Arizona is the nation's busiest point for illegal immigrants entering the country from Mexico. The Tucson sector, which encompasses all but about the 50 westernmost miles of the Arizona-Mexico border, accounts for most of the crossings. The Sasabe corridor currently has more arrests than any portion of the Tucson sector this fiscal year, Soto said.

The Sasabe Corridor encompasses the southern end of the Baboquivari mountains, near where the Tohono O'odham reservation begins. About 60 miles south of the border, the Mexican town of Altar has become a major staging point for illegal immigrants and smugglers making arrangements to cross into Arizona.

On Tuesday, agents from the Tucson station arrested 483 migrants, a 71 percent jump from the 282 apprehensions the station's agents made on the same day last year.

But that figure is nowhere near the 4,000 migrants a day estimated to be crossing through the Sasabe-Buenos Aires area by the Rev. Robin Hoover, head of Humane Borders.

The humanitarian group maintains water stations in heavily trafficked desert spots to help keep immigrants from dying in the desert.

Hoover attributed the high number to being in "peak migration."

There was no immediate explanation for the wide variance between Hoover's estimate and Border Patrol figures.

The pace of illegal immigration typically picks up significantly during February and March, Soto said.

Even so, while last month's 42,000 arrests were the Tucson sector's heaviest during the current fiscal year, the total represented a 7 percent decrease from the 45,000 for the same month in fiscal 2005, Soto said.

With the trafficking activity increasing seasonally, illegal immigrants caught in

the west desert areas now are being transported to the Border Patrol's Nogales station for quicker processing.

They're entered into the agency's electronic identification systems before being sent back to Mexico unless they have a criminal record.

This is the second year that all west-desert arrests are being processed at Nogales as a centralized location, rather than being brought first to Tucson, Soto said.

The shift uses agents brought in temporarily from other parts of the country with less illegal traffic, allowing more local agents from the Tucson, Casa Grande and Ajo stations to be sent out into the desert areas for patrol, Soto said.

With 15 to 20 agents processing arrested immigrants at any time, the Nogales center will be able to handle up to 2,000 in a 24-hour period, he said. On Tuesday, nearly 1,900 people were caught in the entire Tucson sector — down from 2,100 arrested 12 months earlier, Soto added.

There have been 157,000 arrests sectorwide this fiscal year, an 11 percent dip from the 175,000 recorded through the same period 12 months earlier.

Arizona mulls punishing hiring of illegals

BY JACQUES BILLEAUD

Associated Press Writer

PHOENIX — For the last two years, the Arizona Legislature has failed to pass proposals to crack down on businesses that hire illegal immigrants, a problem that's blamed for encouraging people to sneak across the border.

The idea gained momentum this year as state politicians facing re-election campaigns feel public pressure to confront illegal immigration. On Thursday, an employer sanctions bill was approved in a 35-20 vote by the state House and now goes to the Senate.

"It goes after the violating employer, the dishonest and illegal employer," said Republican Rep. Russell Pearce of Mesa, sponsor of the proposal. "It's about time we start protecting the honest employer."

Under the bill, violators would have to

pay thousands of dollars in penalties and could face the suspension or loss of their business licenses, depending on the number of infractions.

The bill was watered down earlier this week when lawmakers added protections for employers who verify their workers' eligibility to work in the United States.

Federal law already outlaws business from knowingly hiring illegal immigrants, but many lawmakers said a similar state law is needed because the federal government has done a poor job of enforcing its own eligibility rules.

Illegal immigrants account for an estimated 10 percent of all workers in Arizona, the nation's busiest illegal entry point.

Supporters of the proposed punishments say employers are fueling Arizona's vast immigration problems by offering construction, agricultural and service

industry jobs to illegal immigrants who come to the United States to earn a better living.

Business groups say employers want a legitimate process to follow in hiring, but that the government's rules now place unreasonable burdens on employers, such as making them scrutinize records presented by new employees to show employment eligibility at a time when forgeries abound.

Democratic Rep. Steve Gallardo of Phoenix said he supports employer sanctions but voted against the proposal because it wouldn't give state agencies any new money to enforce the rules.

"Until we are able to do that, I just won't be able to support the bill at this time," Gallardo said.

The minimum penalty for a first-time violator would be \$2,000. Businesses with three violations within a year would face an additional \$6,000 penalty.

On second and third offenses, violators also could face a top-tier misdemeanor and have their business licenses suspended. Three-time violators could have their licenses revoked and would face a mandatory one-year jail sentence.

Earlier this week, lawmakers removed a requirement that violators lose their state-issued business licenses and now would give judges the option of imposing similar punishments.

Lawmakers also had stripped out a provision that would have given legal workers the right to sue companies that fire them while keeping illegal immigrants on the payroll.

The bill (HB2577) would protect employers from prosecution if the businesses run their employees' names through a federal database to determine work eligibility and have followed state and federal employment laws.

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Bush concerned about collapse of ports deal

BY LIZ SIDOTI
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — President Bush said Friday he was troubled by the political storm that forced the reversal of a deal allowing a company in Dubai to take over take over operations of six American ports, saying it sent a bad message to U.S. allies in the Middle East.

Bush said the United States needs moderate allies in the Arab world, like the United Arab Emirates, to win the global war on terrorism.

The president said he had been satisfied that security would be sound at the ports if the Dubai deal had taken effect. "Nevertheless, Congress was still very much opposed to it," Bush said. He made his remarks to a conference of the National Newspaper Association, which represents owners, publishers and editors of community newspapers.

"I'm concerned about a broader message this issue could send to our friends and allies around the world, particularly in the Middle East," the president said. "In order to win the war on terror we have got to strengthen our friendships and relationships with moderate Arab countries in the Middle East."

"UAE is a committed ally in the war on terror," Bush added. "They are a key partner for our military in a critical region, and outside of our own country, Dubai services more of our military, military ships, than any country in the world."

"They're sharing intelligence so we can hunt down the terrorists," Bush added. "They helped us shut down a world wide proliferation network run by A.Q. Khan" — the Pakistani scientist who sold nuclear technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya, he said.

"UAE is a valued and strategic partner," he said. "I'm committed to strengthening our relationship with the UAE."

After a storm of protest in the Republican-controlled Congress, DP World announced Thursday that it would transfer six U.S. port operations to a U.S. entity. The move spared Bush from a veto showdown with GOP lawmakers. Yet the larger issue highlighted by the DP world controversy — U.S. port security — shows no signs of going away.

"The problem of the political moment has passed, but the problem of adequate port security still looms large," Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said.

Republicans and Democrats alike welcomed DP World's decision to give up its aspirations to manage significant operations at the six ports, but they warned that the move doesn't negate the urgent need for broad legislation aimed at protecting America's ports.

"I'm sure that the decision by DP

World was a difficult decision to hand over port operations that they had purchased from another company," Bush said.

"There are gaping holes in cargo and port security that need to be plugged," Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., said.

Legislation on the issue has piled up in both the House and the Senate in the weeks since the flap over DP World erupted and divided Bush from the GOP-led Congress.

Before the United Arab Emirates-based company's announcement, the House and Senate appeared all but certain to block DP World's U.S. plan despite Bush's veto threats — a message that GOP congressional leaders delivered personally to the White House.

Facing a disapproving public in an election year, a House committee overwhelmingly voted against the plan Wednesday. And House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., warned the president in a private meeting Thursday that the Senate inevitably would follow suit.

Within hours, Sen. John Warner, R-Va., one of the few members of Congress to back the administration's position on the issue, went to the Senate floor to read a statement from the company.

"DP World will transfer fully the U.S. operations ... to a United States entity," H. Edward Bilkey, the company's top executive, said in the statement. It was unclear which American business might get the port operations.

The White House expressed satisfaction with the company's decision.

"It does provide a way forward and resolve the matter," said Scott McClellan, the White House press secretary. "We have a strong relationship with the UAE and a good partnership in the global war on terrorism, and I think their decision reflects the importance of our broader relationship."

The company's decision gives the president an out. He now doesn't have to back down from his staunch support of the company or further divide his party on a terrorism-related issue with a veto.

It was unclear how the company would manage its planned divestiture, and Bilkey's statement said its announcement was "based on an understanding that DP World will not suffer economic loss."

"This should make the issue go away," Frist said.

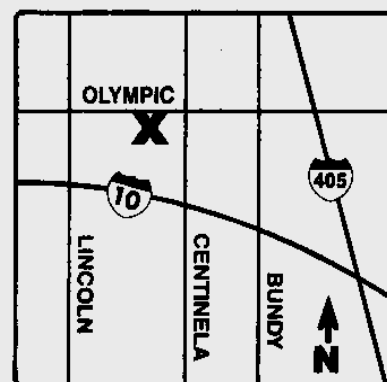
Even critics of the deal expressed cautious optimism that DP World's move would quell the controversy surrounding that company's plan to take over some U.S. terminal leases held by the London-based company it was purchasing.

"The devil is in the details," Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said, echoing sentiments expressed by other lawmakers.

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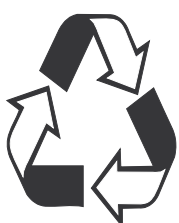


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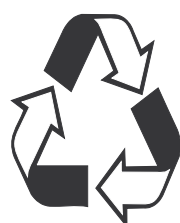
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Interior Secretary expected to resign from Bush Cabinet

BY JOHN HEILPRIN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Gale Norton is resigning after five years in President Bush's Cabinet, The Associated Press has learned.

Norton, a former Colorado attorney general who guided the Bush administration's initiative to open Western government lands to more oil and gas drilling, planned to announce her decision Friday, a senior government official and another source familiar with her decision told the AP.

Both spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they did not want to upstage an announcement from the White House.

Norton told associates she wanted to return to private life in Colorado, the source said.

One of the architects of Bush's energy policy, Norton eased regulations to speed approval of drilling permits, particularly in New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming's Powder River Basin. She also was the administration's biggest advocate for opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on Alaska's North Slope to oil drilling.

Norton, who turns 52 on Saturday, is the first woman ever to head the Interior Department.

Before joining the administration, she was one of the negotiators of a \$206 billion national tobacco settlement

in a suit by Colorado and 45 other states. She was Colorado's attorney general from 1991 to 1999.

Norton was a protege of James Watt, the controversial interior secretary during President Ronald Reagan's first term in office. Watt was forced to resign after characterizing a coal commission in terms that were viewed by some as a slur.

After working for the Agriculture Department for a year, Norton was named an assistant solicitor in the Interior Department in 1985, focusing on conservation and wildlife issues.

In 1996 she sought the Republican Senate nomination in Colorado but was defeated by Wayne Allard, who now holds the seat. Later she cofounded the Council of Republicans for Environmental Advocacy, a group that has become embroiled in the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal.

The leading Republican and Democrat on the Senate Indian Affairs Committee have said that e-mails uncovered by the committee show that Steven Griles, Norton's former deputy, had a close relationship with Abramoff.

Another onetime Norton associate, Italia Federici, helped Abramoff gain access to Griles in exchange for contributions from Abramoff's Indian tribe clients, Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., the committee chairman, and Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., have said.

For Gulf Shiites, Iraq developments could bring democracy ... or more sectarianism

BY DONNA ABU-NASR

Associated Press Writer

MANAMA, Bahrain — A fleeting smile lit up the stern face of Sheik Abdul-Atheem al-Bahrani when asked if he worried that the sectarian tensions in Iraq would spread to the Gulf.

"The good in Iraq overflows, but so do its evils," said the Bahraini Shiite cleric, quoting an old saying.

The spiral of Shiite-Sunni clashes in Iraq unleashed by last month's bombing of a sacred Shiite shrine has nearly Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait on edge. All are Sunni-led countries with large Shiite communities, and they fear a spillover of tensions or even violence.

Shiites in the Gulf talk with pride about their brethren's rise to power in Iraq, the first such advance for Shiites in an Arab country. They hope it will lead to democratic changes in their countries to end discrimination against them.

But they also are concerned that the sectarian strife next door could have the opposite effect: deepen sectarian divisions at home and set off the same kind of violence as Iraq.

"The situation in Iraq ... feeds sectarian feelings on both sides in a negative manner," said Mansoor al-Jamri, a Shiite who is editor-in-chief of the Bahraini Alwasat newspaper.

Those fears go beyond the Arab world. U.S. National Intelligence Director John Negroponte acknowledged at a recent Senate hearing that a civil war in Iraq could lead to a broader conflict in the Middle East, pitting the region's rival Islamic sects against each another.

So far, there has been no reported Sunni-Shiite violence in the six Arab countries of the Gulf, which are all Sunni-ruled. Shiites are a minority in five of the countries, while in Bahrain they make up 70 percent of the 450,000 people.

The Shiite-Sunni split resulted from a dispute over succession after Prophet Muhammad's death in 632.

Shiites in Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have faced — and continue to face — discrimination, especially in appointments to senior government jobs, according to the U.S. State Department's annual human rights reports.

The restrictions on the Shiites came after the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, which brought Shiite clerics to power in the region for the first time and raised fears of the spread of Shiite militancy.

But in the past year, Shiites in the three countries say they feel freer to practice their religion, as governments realize they must accommodate Shiites in light of the

changes in Iraq.

Sunni and Shiite clerics in the Gulf have become more vocal in calling for moderation and peaceful coexistence. In a first in Saudi Arabia — whose strict Wahhabi version of Sunni Islam shuns Shiites as heretics — officials offered condolences to Shiite clergymen over the Samarra bombing.

In Kuwait, the government is making a serious effort to remove negative references to Shiites from the school curriculum and has ordered preachers to infuse their Friday sermons with "the spirit of unity and respect for the other," according to Shiite lawmaker Salah Ashour.

In the island nation of Bahrain, newspaper commentators warn against the dangers of sectarianism.

"For years, we have been living together — Sunnis and Shiites — as brothers and neighbors," wrote Sayyed Dheya al-Musawi in Bahrain's Alwasat newspaper. "Together, we should turn into firefighters to put out any sectarian flame that could come from a poisonous gust from wounded Iraq."

Yet despite the good intentions, powerful emotions at this sensitive time accentuate the divisions.

Sunnis in Bahrain are upset over banners that appeared to tout the superiority of Shiites last month during Ashoura, an annual Shiite ceremony commemorating the death of the 7th century Shiite saint Imam Hussein in a battle with Sunnis.

"There isn't a single Muslim who doesn't side with Hussein in this battle," said Sunni cleric Adel al-Maawdah. "But why should this battle become the whole history of a nation? Why the implication that if you're not with them (Shiites) you're guilty of Hussein's blood?"

Across the waters, Shiites in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province say they wish they could discuss sectarian issues that openly.

Saudi Shiites, who make up 10-15 percent of country's 19.7 million citizens, acknowledge life has become easier for them, especially since King Abdullah came to power in August.

Shiites participated heavily in last year's municipal election, a ban on some writers has been lifted and Ashoura was celebrated openly. Politically, however, they still play no role in decision-making.

Many Saudi Shiites say the only defense against the spread of Iraq's sectarian tensions is more openness to prevent resentments from festering and fueling extremists on both sides.

"If you don't support moderate forces, radical forces could take over," said Isa Almuzel, a member of the municipal council.

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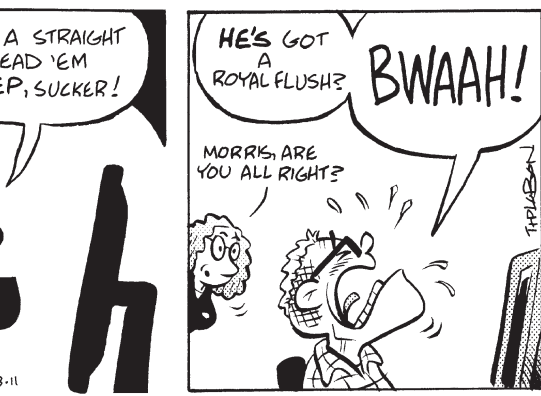
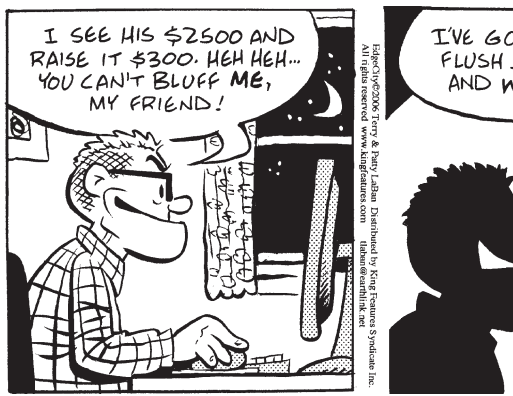
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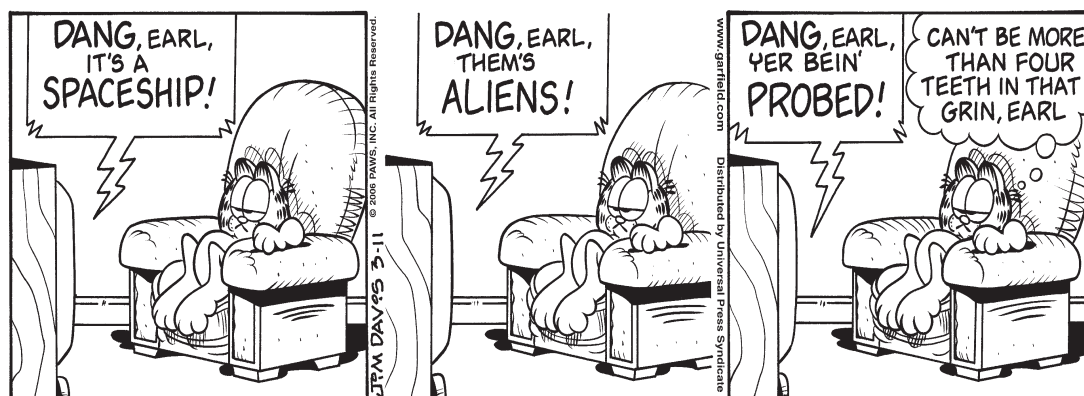
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- 17 Fiction
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- 20 Followed
- 22 Base group
- 23 Get revved up
- 25 Folded food
- 28 Club rules
- 32 Honest course
- 34 Cooking aid
- 35 Badminton need
- 36 Authorize
- 38 Laud
- 40 Cartoon hunter
- 41 Do research
- 42 Brainy
- 43 Sailor's septet
- 44 Some babies

DOWN

- 1 Lenin's successor
- 2 You can bet on them
- 3 Hand or foot
- 4 Irritates
- 5 In the buff
- 6 Historic age
- 7 Business news highlight
- 8 Slot machine feature
- 9 Dieter's device
- 11 Fidgety
- 15 Spotted insect
- 19 Wonka's creator
- 21 Over
- 24 Ever-green tree
- 25 Fixed the piano
- 26 High points
- 27 Livestock
- 29 Missing link
- 30 Spa attraction
- 31 Derisive sound
- 33 Yorkshire area
- 37 Sailor's saint
- 39 Eggs, to Caesar

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Pets

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For Rent

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(310) 922-2408

Personals

MY NAME is Robert and I want any
woman to write me. Where it is really
at so far. Robert Greene 1328 Second
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PRAYER TO St. Jude
May the sacred heart of Jesus be
adored, loved, and glorified, pre-
served throughout the world now and
forever. Sacred heart of Jesus, pray
for us. St. Jude, worker of miracles,
pray for us. St. Jude, helper of the
hopeless, pray for us. Say this prayer
9 times a day, and by the eight day
your prayer will be answered. It has
never been known to fail. Publication
must be promised. Thank you St.
Jude. M.C.

Notices

**NOTICE OF PETITION TO AD-
MINISTER ESTATE OF ALICE
M. RYDGREN aka ALICE
MARIE RYDGREN**
Case No. BP097121

To all heirs, beneficiar-
ies, creditors, contingent creditors,
and persons who may otherwise be
interested in the will or estate, or
both, of ALICE M. RYDGREN aka
ALICE MARIE RYDGREN

A PETITION FOR PRO-
BATE has been filed by Karl B. Ryd-
gren in the Superior Court of Califor-
nia, County of LOS ANGELES.

THE PETITION FOR
PRO-BATE requests that Karl B. Ryd-
gren be appointed as personal
representative to administer the es-
tate of the decedent.

THE PETITION re-
quests the decedent's will and codi-
cils, if any, be admitted to probate.
The will and any codicils are avail-
able for examination in the file kept
by the court.

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

A HEARING on the peti-
tion will be held on April 10, 2006 at
8:30 AM in Dept. No. 11 located at
111 N. Hill St., Los Angeles, CA
90012.

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

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

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

Attorney for petitioner:
MARC A BRONSTEIN ESQ
SBN 75933
MARCO A BRONSTEIN
A PROFESSIONAL LAW CORPO-RA-
TION

3205 OCEAN PARK BLVD STE 200
SANTA MONICA CA 90405
Santa Monica Daily Press
CN747858 RYDGREN Mar 10,11,17,
2006

Notices

**NOTICE OF PETITION TO AD-
MINISTER ESTATE OF GARY
KOHKE**
Case No. BP097144

To all heirs, beneficiar-
ies, creditors, contingent creditors,
and persons who may otherwise be
interested in the will or estate, or
both, of GARY KOHKE

A PETITION FOR PRO-
BATE has been filed by Cathy
Thomer in the Superior Court of
California, County of LOS ANGE-
LES.

THE PETITION FOR
PRO-BATE requests that Cathy
Thomer be appointed as personal
repre-sentative to administer the es-
tate of the decedent.

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

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

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

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

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

Attorney for petitioner:
DANIEL B HERBERT ESQ
SBN 149301
MANNING & MARDER, KASS
ELLROD RAMIREZ LLP
660 S FIGUEROA ST 23RD FLR
LOS ANGELES CA 90017
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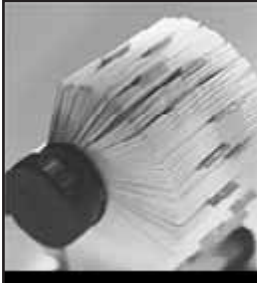
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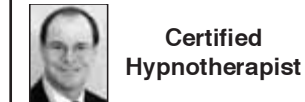
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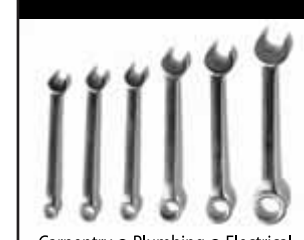
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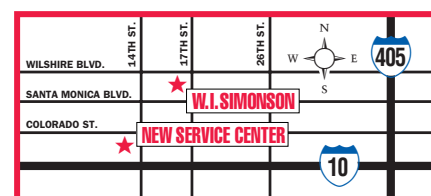
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