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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2011
Volume 10 Issue 106

Santa Monica Daily Press

We have you covered

NO MORE DISTRACTIONS
SEE PAGE 16

THE CLASSY MOVES ISSUE



Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

GREEN THUMBS: **Homeowner Jin Yang (right) stands with gardeners Jeff Sullivan (center) and Patricia Sanders in their shared garden.**

Gardening program yields bounty

Shared garden program links homeowners with a little help

BY ASHLEY ARCHIBALD
Daily Press Staff Writer

SUNSET PARK Jin Yang and his wife, Huili Gao, had a problem that many people in Santa Monica wish they had — a spacious backyard, perfect for gardening.

Unfortunately, they also had no time to tend it.

Step out of their Sunset Park home, and you see a tiered yard with dedicated plots that boast more weeds than roses, or healthy trees that cry out for a good pruning.

"I leave for work at 7 in the morning and come back between 6 and 7 in the evening," Yang said. "The kids go to school. There's no time to take care of the garden."

Enter Patricia Sanders and Jeff Sullivan.

Both enjoy gardening, if for very different reasons. Neither have a garden of their own.

Sanders grew up in South Carolina on a 10-acre property, where farming and tending to the land was a way of life, not a pastime.

"It's just what you did," she said.

Since, Sanders achieved her Master Gardener degree at Clemson University, and took extra sustainable gardening classes through Santa Monica's Office of Sustainability and the Environment.

She views gardening as a way to engage with the plants, soil and earth, and get away from the grind of working on her novel.

Sullivan sells himself as a "lazy" gardener, who focuses on sustainable, perennial plants that produce the expensive fruits and vegetables that you'd otherwise buy in stores.

He works a 12-by-4-foot space in the Venice Community garden, but was looking for something more.

"I don't have a yard, so I've been looking for someone else's yard,"

SEE GARDENS PAGE 10

Heroes support heroes

Firefighters adopt soldiers

BY ASHLEY ARCHIBALD
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE Around Christmas, Dominic Smith began wondering what it would be like to be a soldier in Afghanistan, far from home, family and the comforts of the holidays.

Smith, a firefighter with the Santa Monica Fire Department, was bothered by the fact that the Afghan war had dropped from the headlines, and felt that not enough was being done to support the troops fighting thousands of miles away.

An Internet search revealed an organization, fittingly called "Adopt a US Soldier," that lets private people select one or more soldiers fighting abroad to whom to send care packages and letters.

Smith presented a formal proposal to the Santa Monica Firefighers Local 1109, the union that represents most of the firefighters in the area, asking permission to formally involve the rest of the membership.

The union gave the green light, but one fighter wasn't quite enough for the firefighters.

"I asked for a platoon rather than a soldier," Smith said.

AAUSS obliged.

The Santa Monica firefighters got the 32-member Alpha Company 3rd Battalion 4th Infantry "Warriors," a part of the Army's 170th Infantry Brigade deployed to the remote Camp Blackhorse, which is located near Kabul, Afghanistan.

Deployed from their base in Baumholder, Germany, the troops train Afghani forces from their desert outpost. For many, this was a first deployment, and the young men had never been so far from family during the holidays.

The members began raising money. Local 1109 pitched in the first $1,000, and promised to match donations up to an additional $1,000.

With the support of the fire department, which includes the union members as well as

SEE SOLDIERS PAGE 11

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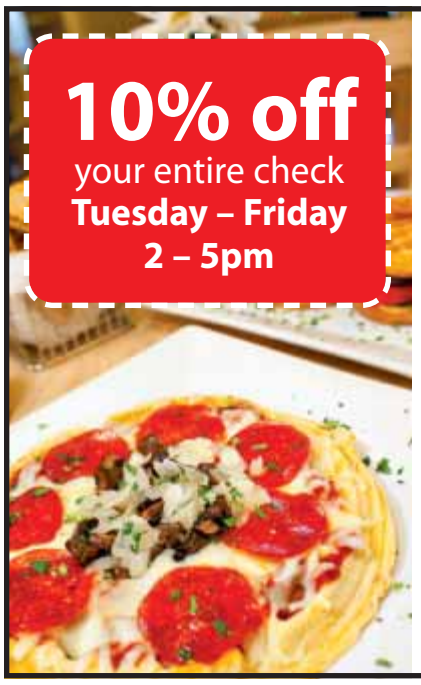
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What's Up Westside

OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA

Wednesday, March 16, 2011

Living right
Main Library, MLK Auditorium
601 Santa Monica Blvd., 7 p.m.
The Santa Monica Public Library is pleased to present the latest in its Quality of Life Forum series: "It's All About Quality of Life: A Psychotherapist/Life Coach Roundtable." Hosted by Quality of Life Project founder Kit Cooper, the forum is a quarterly program that spotlights accomplished, inspiring and grounded guest speakers who share best practices on what they do to get the most out of life. This time, join Kit in conversation with three of Southern California's most respected life coaches and pyschotherapists: Steve Hasenberg, writer and co-developer of the corporate video series "Stress Management: A Positive Strategy;" Jamie Greene, on-screen therapist for ABC's "The Bachelor;" and life coach Alissa Finerman, a former pro tennis player and author of the just-published book, "Living in Your Top 1%." These three professionals will discuss how they improved their own quality of life and inspire others to do the same. To obtain further information about the Quality of Life Project, visit www.qualityoflifeproject.org. Admission is free, and seating is first come, first served.

Oh so fresh
Downtown
Arizona Avenue and Second Street, 8:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.
Get the freshest of the fresh at this weekly Farmers' Market.
For more information, visit www01.smgov.net/farmers_market.

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Peripheral neuropathy talk
Santa Monica Family YMCA
1332 Sixth St., 12 p.m.
UCLA neurologist, William Buxton, MD, will discuss causes, symptoms and treatment options of peripheral neuropathy. Registration in advance is required. Picture ID is required for non-members. Free underground parking is available. For more information and registration, contact Lidia Magarian, Senior Program Director at the YMCA at (310) 393-2721 Ext. 129 or e-mail at lidiam@ymcasm.org.

Data transfer 101
MacMall
1505 Wilshire Blvd., 6:30 p.m.
Experts teach you the latest in sharing data across multiple platforms including the iPhone, iPad and iTouch. This is a free event.
For more information, call (310) 394-7779.

Friday, March 18, 2011

Hug a tree
Palisades Park
Corner of Colorado and Ocean avenues, 6 p.m.
The "Hug a Tree and a Tree Hugger" event celebrates the role trees play in our community. The event will be held at the Children's Tree of Life. This is part of the "Tree Hugging Weekend."

To create your own listing, log on to smdp.com/submitevent

For help, contact Daniel Archuleta at 310-458-7737 or submit to editor@smdp.com

For more information on any of the events listed, log on to smdp.com/communitylistings



SoCal home prices flat in February

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES Home prices in Southern California remained at their year-ago levels in February, as job security worries, tight credit conditions and concerns that prices haven't yet reached bottom kept fearful buyers out of the market, a tracking firm said Tuesday.

February's median home price for the region was $275,000, unchanged from a year ago and up 1.9 percent from $270,000 in January, San Diego-based DataQuick Information Systems said.

The firm said home sales dropped 6.4 percent from 15,359 in February 2010 to 14,369 last month, their lowest level for a February since 2008. Sales fell 0.6 percent from 14,458 in January.

DataQuick President John Walsh said pent-up demand for homes could result in swifter sales in the spring, but only if mortgage rates remain low, credit becomes more widely available and confidence about the economy in general improves.

"Lots of people have been waiting for the right time to buy. But they've got to feel more confident in their jobs, they've got to qualify for a loan and, for some, they need to be convinced prices are at or near bottom," he said.

Foreclosures accounted for 37.1 percent of last month's sales, up from 36.8 percent in January but down from 42.4 percent a year ago, according to DataQuick.

Among February's most active market participants were all-cash buyers, many of them investors who were not hemmed in by tight credit conditions, DataQuick said.

All-cash buyers accounted for 31.7 percent of sales in February, the highest proportion of such purchasers for any month since 1988, when DataQuick's statistics began. The 10-year monthly average for Southern California homes bought with cash is 13.1 percent.

Riverside County-based real estate agent Mike Novak-Smith said he's been involved with sales to investors who are suspicious of the stock market's long-term prospects and see opportunity in the bargain-priced homes now available.

"There's more cash buyers than I've ever seen," he said. "These are people that are not comfortable with the stock market. They want to buy tangible assets."

Absentee buyers, which include investors as well as purchasers of second homes, bought 26.1 percent of the homes sold in February, more than any month in DataQuick's records.

Walsh said the abundance of investors raised hopes that the market was due for a more pronounced rebound, which he predicted could occur in the spring, when home sales typically improve most years.

"What the past two months do tell us is that lots of people have bet, often with cash, that housing at today's prices will prove a solid investment," he said.

Stuart Gabriel, who directs the Richard S. Ziman Center for Real Estate at the University of California, Los Angeles, said the relatively stable, though sluggish, sales and pricing showed that the market was continuing to right itself at an extremely slow pace.

"I would not anticipate that there would be really sizable or significant evolution in the housing market this spring," he said. "My emphasis would be on a kind of slow, steady movement, not over months but over quar-

SEE **HOMES** PAGE 11

City attorney wants to stop tagger from making money off artwork

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES A graffiti vandal who caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage to Los Angeles property is trying to make it in the legitimate art world — but the city attorney doesn't want him profiting from his notoriety.

The Los Angeles Times says the city attorney sued Cristian Gheorghiu and nine others last year. The suit seeks at least $1 million in penalties and a court order barring them from making money off artwork under their street names.

The 34-year-old Gheorghiu has an arrest record dating back to 1999. He was ordered to pay $28,000 in restitution after a 2007 felony conviction.

But Gheorghiu now sells legitimate artworks under his tag, "Smear."

Some graffiti vandals, such as the British Banksy, have become artistic sensations.

Peter Bibring, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, says the suit violates artistic freedom.



CLOSE CALL

Morgan Genser *news@smdp.com*

Crossroads' Michael Rosen is nearly tagged out by Montclair Prep's Max Miller on Tuesday at Clover Park. Crossroads lost the game, 8-1.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Keep an open mind

Editor:

You are entitled to your own opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts.

I am writing to correct misinformation in Kitty Costa's letter ("Calling a spade a spade," March 12-13, page 4) in which she rages against school board member Oscar de la Torre, children with disabilities, and columnist Bill Bauer.

First of all, using the word "Teflon" to describe Oscar de la Torre implies that he is guilty of wrongdoing. The facts are that Mr. de la Torre submitted to an independent review of his police investigation by a highly respected outside agency and was found innocent of any wrongdoing in the way he handled a fight between two students that occurred last year behind the Pico Youth & Family Center.

As to the statement that Mr. de la Torre has done "a whole lot of nothing" to help special education, Ms. Costa couldn't be more wrong. Mr. de la Torre has been steadfast in his commitment to represent all students, which is exactly the position a school board member should take.

As to her statement that "special ed parents move to Santa Monica because they know that SMMUSD has some of the best special education programs," there is no data to support this. This is an urban legend that I have heard since I moved here 20 years ago. Actually, 12 percent of our students have Individual Education Plans, which is the same or less than LAUSD, Beverly Hills, and many nearby school districts.

Finally, Ms. Costa says "you'd think that Bill Bauer would know better after observing him (de la Torre) for all of these years." I, for one, am glad that the columnist judges people by their actions. It seems like the sign of an open mind, which Ms. Costa has not.

Beau Marks
Santa Monica





Meredith Pro Tem

Meredith C. Carroll — Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Don't hate me because I'm beautiful

I DON'T ADMIT THIS VERY OFTEN IN PUBLIC for fear of damage to my gilded and much-revered reputation, but I've spent the better part of the past several years walking around with bloodied, wounded pride as the ever-aloof Pulitzer Prize Board has roundly ignored the artistry of my writing.

Last year, despite my global fan club, agent, manager, publicist, legal team, yogi, accountant, medium, dry cleaner, private chef and stylists (clothing, hair and bed linen) convincing me of my certain triumph, I was dealt yet another harsh blow.

Instead of recognizing the outstanding achievements of Meredith Pro Tem, including such important pieces as "Overcoming the haircut struggle" and "Picking a costume for a finicky trick-or-treater," it was Kathleen Parker of The Washington Post who was chosen by the Pulitzer Board in the category of Distinguished Commentary (for "her perceptive, often witty columns on an array of political and moral issues, gracefully sharing the experiences and values that lead her to unpredictable conclusions." Blah, blah, blah.). No matter how the Pulitzer snobs want to paint it, I was snubbed. Again.

However, I am now at peace knowing that when the 2011 winners are announced on April 18, the tide will finally be in my favor. My hunch that I will be in possession of Pulitzer gold is not so much because of readers of this column, like David, who wrote to me following the publication of "There's not enough room for the three of us," saying adoringly, "That's it? I was expecting something more. You need to try harder! I felt like I was a kid looking in my lunch bag and seeing a baloney sandwich."

Or Jim, who e-mailed sweetly in reference to the same column: "I have never met your husband, but if and when I do, my first question to him will be, 'What's it like living with Attila the Hun?'"

Nor does my winning intuition stem from someone named TremoluxMax, who effused regarding "An open letter to Al Gore": "Well, that was seriously unfunny … Sort of like Ms. Carroll was asked to write a column and just idly filled space. Weak."

No, I've never doubted that the infinite admirers of this column are awash in love and joy at the sight of the words that I masterfully string together each week. What put my dreams of glory over the top for this year's grand prize are the reactions of the followers I've amassed writing for the parenting website Babble. The response to my work there has been warm, tremendous and nonstop.

Like a reader with the handle "Leo's Mom," who gushed about one of the first contributions I made late last year ("Can you work and still bond with your child?"): "The premise of this piece is idiotic."

Another early composition ("A new lesson in sharing: breast milk for everyone") garnered overwhelming, and equal, if not more praise. Like from Marina: "The entire third paragraph of this article makes you sound like a jerk." Linda couldn't contain her acclaim to just one comment, saying, "Your ignoranace [sic] and attitude both make me GAG … Kindly go back under whatever rock you emerged from." And, "I hope they won't be soliciting you to post here regularly because it'd be a shame to have to inadvertnetly [sic] associate with you." And, "Go drink some nice cow puss."

Stephanie agreed with Linda's lovey-dovey sentiment, piling on the compliments regarding the same piece: "Wow, something is not right in your head … Shame on you for this post. "

As is so often the case with ardent supporters of this column, my Babble fans also fret about how I maintain my health while giving so much of myself to my writing. Like my follower who goes by the name Two-Wong-Make-It-White, who commented with great concern on one piece ("What will the news of the Chinese stealth fighter mean to your kids?"): "Time to take your Prozac, Mere."

Sure, being a writing icon is glamorous, and if I weren't so grounded, I could see how it would be difficult not to get an inflated ego. Some readers inquire with care and advice about the well-being of the literal size of my head, like Mrg, who wrote in reference to "My baby or the world on a string: an easy choice (in the end)": "Try not to be so smug."

Patrick was so moved by "I Have a Dream speech ignored in some Georgia schools" that he couldn't contain his comments to lowercase: "WHY DON'T YOU JUST SHUT UP, MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS AND STOP TELLING US HOW TO LIVE OUR LIVES."

On "The next great TV offering: Al Jazeera for kids," Jessica marveled at how I maintain my sense of balance and fairness when tackling the difficult topics: "Frankly, this post is ignorant and discriminatory, and I'm somewhat appalled, but not surprised … Seriously, you should be ashamed of yourself."

K. Annie said admiringly of "3 friends of 'Teen Mom 2' star expecting babies": "I think maybe your [sic] missing the bigger picture way up there on your high horse-and I don't even fully understand why you claim to care."

Of the same piece, SaxyCollegeGirl effervesced at the level of my evenhanded tone and high level of training and education, "What a judgemental [sic] article. You just made any assumptions you wanted to, and failed to follow up with any facts ... Your condescending tone was hard to read, and it's clear this article was written for sensationalist media. None of your holier-than-thou tone was intended to facilitate thoughtful discussion, and I hate to see so-called 'journalists' spread propaganda like this."

If only the Pulitzer Board sees me as my No. 1 fan Linda did after she read "Blood libel and Sarah Palin: wrong word choice, right sentiment?" and lovingly commented, "You're either … stupid … or … intentionally vile," then victory will assuredly be mine at long last.

More at Meredith Carroll.com

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PUBLISHER
Ross Furukawa
ross@smdp.com

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Kevin Herrera
editor@smdp.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Daniel Archuleta
daniela@smdp.com

STAFF WRITER
Ashley Archibald
ashley@smdp.com

CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER
Brandon Wise
brandonw@smdp.com

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Morgan Genser
news@smdp.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Bill Bauer, David Pisarra, Meredith Carroll, Jack Neworth, Lloyd Garver, Dr. Reese Halter, Taylor Van Arsdale, Dane Robert Swanson, Farzad Mashhood, David Alsabery, Merv Hecht, Cynthia Citron, Amanda Cushman, Steve Parker and Phyllis Chavez

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Fabian Lewkowicz

NEWS INTERN
Patrick Hourihan
news@smdp.com

PHOTOGRAPHY INTERN
Ray Solano
news@smdp.com

VICE PRESIDENT–BUSINESS OPERATIONS
Rob Schwenker
schwenker@smdp.com

SENIOR ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE
Brittney Seeliger
brittneys@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
Steven Stuart
stevens@smdp.com

Theresa MacLean
theresam@smdp.com

ADVERTISING TRAFFIC COORDINATOR
Amber Kessee
amberk@smdp.com

OPERATIONS COORDINATOR
Michele Emch
michele.e@smdp.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Darren Ouellette
production@smdp.com

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
Alejandro Cantarero
production@smdp.com

CIRCULATION
Keith Wyatt
Osvaldo Paganini
circulation@smdp.com

Santa Monica Daily Press
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410 Broadway, Suite B
Santa Monica, CA 90401
OFFICE (310) 458-PRESS (7737)
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Tsunami damage estimate for NorCal county rises

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SANTA CRUZ Damage estimates increased for the two California harbors hardest hit by last week's tsunami, while one Northern California county declared a state of emergency Tuesday because of extensive damage to its waterfront.

Port Director Lisa Ekers revised her estimate to $22.5 million in tsunami-related damage to Santa Cruz Harbor, up from $17 million, the Santa Cruz Sentinel reported.

The figure includes the expected cost of rebuilding damaged docks and other infrastructure but not an additional $4 million in damage to private vessels.

Surging waters caused by Japan's massive earthquake hit the harbor along the state's Central Coast on Friday. At least 18 boats sank and another 100 were damaged, with 10 more missing and possibly lost at sea.

Crews spread boom, or floating dams, to contain any spilled oil on the water's surface, but officials said they've seen little environmental impact.

Meanwhile, officials in Mendocino County estimated the tsunami caused about $4 million in damage to the harbor in Fort Bragg.

Violent surges pounded Noyo Harbor, battering docks expected to be used by salmon fishermen during the upcoming season.

Harbormaster Jere Kleinbach told the Ukiah Daily Journal that 800 to 1,000 feet of docks were destroyed. Kleinbach worried that some remaining docks have been fractured but said that won't be known until divers can inspect them.

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to declare a state of emergency because of the damage in Fort Bragg. Assemblyman Wesley Chesbro said he will ask Gov. Jerry Brown to declare a state-level state of emergency, which would free up emergency funds and fast-track the cleanup and recovery process.

he governor previously declared emergencies in Del Norte, San Mateo, Humboldt and Santa Cruz counties.

In Crescent City, officials once again raised their estimate of the number of vessels damaged by the tsunami to 63. Of those, 16 sank and another 47 were afloat and damaged.

The inner harbor in the small fishing town was almost completely destroyed.

LAPD officer cleared in immigrant's shooting death

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES The Police Commission said Tuesday a police officer was justified in killing a Guatemalan immigrant last year — a shooting that sparked days of protest in the Latino community.

The ruling by the civilian oversight panel put police on watch for renewed unrest, but there were no immediate reports of problems.

The commission accepted an internal report by the LAPD that concluded the Sept. 5 killing of Manuel Jaminez was a proper use of lethal force.

An independent review by Inspector General Nicole C. Bershon also determined the shooting was in line with department policy, Police Commission President John W. Mack said.

"I'm confident, when I speak on behalf of my fellow commissioners, that our review of the case has been exhaustive, conclusive and has left no stone unturned," Mack said. "This has been a long, particularly difficult and sad incident for all involved."

Even before the commission announced its findings, police were mobilizing to face possible new protests, and at least one immigration activist group was calling for a rally at an intersection near MacArthur Park, where Jaminez died.

"We cannot allow the LAPD to murder yet another migrant from our community!" the Southern California Immigration

SEE CLEARED PAGE 8

The Q Line

Building bridges in Malibu

For years some parents in Malibu have said they feel like second-class citizens and have complained about a lack of inclusion in the school district. Some have tried to break away from Santa Monica, and recently parents tried to make Point Dume Elementary a charter school. School board members and district officials are trying to heal old wounds and build bridges by meeting with parents, some of whom want to change the charter so there is always a school board member elected from Malibu.

So, this week's Q-Line question asks:

Do you think Malibu parents have a legitimate beef? Should at least one school board seat be reserved for a Malibu resident? Is the school board sincere this time around?

Contact **qline@smdp.com** before **Friday at 5 p.m.** and we'll print your answers in the weekend edition of the Daily Press. You can also call **(310) 458-7737 ext. 102**.


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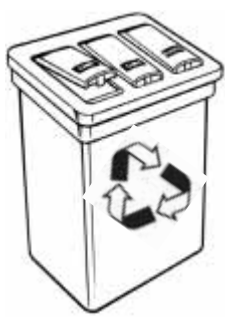
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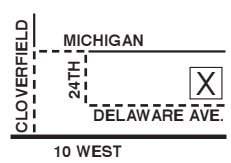
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Mar 15	JV/V	St. Bernard	Marine Park	3/3:15pm
Mar 17	V	Viewpoint	Marine Park	3pm
Mar 18	JV/V	La Salle	Marine Park	3:15/3pm
BOYS GOLF				
Mar 16	V	St. Paul	St. Paul	3:30pm
Mar 17	V	Practice	Penmar	3:30pm
Mar 18	V	Practice	Westchester	3:30pm
Mar 21	V	Serra	Rancho	3:18pm
Mar 22	V	Practice	Penmar	3:30pm
COED TRACK				
Mar 16	V	CSHM	CSHM	3:15pm

Santa Monica High School

Date	Team	Opponent	Location	Time
BOYS BASEBALL				
Mar 17	JV/V	Long Beach Wilson (DH)		3pm(1:30/4:30pm)
Mar 19	JV/V	Redondo Tournament	JV-Carson / V-Torrance	11:00am
BOYS VOLLEYBALL				
Mar 17	V	El Segundo		3:15pm
GIRLS SOFTBALL				
Mar 16	JV/V	El Segundo		4:30/3pm
Mar 18-19	V	High Desert Classic	Lancaster	TBA
Mar 19	JV	North Tournament	North High	TBA
COED SWIMMING				
Mar 17	All	North Torrance		3pm
BOYS GOLF				
Mar 16	All	De Bell Tournament	Burbank	8am
Mar 17	All	Torrance	Los Verdes	2:30pm
COED TRACK				
Mar 17	All	Dual Meet vs. North		3pm
Mar 18	All	California Relays	Cerritos College	5:30pm
Mar 19	All	California Relays	Cerritos College	9am

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STATE BRIEFS

LOS ANGELES

Rockefeller impostor charged with murder

A mystery man who calls himself Clark Rockefeller has been charged with murder in the disappearance of a Southern California man more than 25 years ago.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's office says prosecutors filed the charges Tuesday against German national Christian Gerhartsreiter (GAYR'-hahrtz-ry-tur).

He is suspected of killing 27-year-old John Sohus, who was last seen in 1985. Gerhartsreiter was living in a San Marino guesthouse owned by Sohus' family. His body was unearthed from the backyard of the house in 1994.

Sohus' wife is still missing.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES

UCLA police probe threats over anti-Asian video

Police at UCLA are investigating threatening calls and e-mails a white student says she received after posting a video on YouTube making fun of Asians.

UCLA spokesman Phil Hampton said Tuesday that Alexandra Wallace reported receiving numerous messages after the video went online over the weekend.

Hampton says he hasn't seen the messages himself but declined to characterize them as rising to the level of death threats.

In the video, Wallace mocks Asian students' languages, accuses them of speaking loudly in the library and of bringing numerous annoying relatives into her neighborhood.

The junior political science major has since apologized.

The university is investigating whether Wallace's remarks violated UCLA's student code of conduct.

Wallace did not respond to e-mail requests for further comment.

AP

LOS ANGELES

Man shoots thief he says stole gas from car

Los Angeles police say a Sunland man has shot to death a thief who was stealing gasoline from his car.

Police spokesman Richard French says Tuesday the man told investigators he heard noises outside his Sunland house Monday morning. He got a handgun, went outside and saw the man stealing gas from his car.

The homeowner says he ordered the man to leave and shot him when he refused.

The man, identified as 54-year-old Edward McMahon of Tujunga, died at the scene from a single shot to the chest.

French says the shooting remains under investigation. The homeowner hasn't been charged with any crime.

There's no word on whether soaring gas prices played any role in the confrontation.

AP

LOS ANGELES

Charlie Sheen expands live tour to five more cities

Charlie Sheen is bringing his live show to five more venues, including New York's famed Radio City Music Hall.

Sheen is adding five dates to his "Violent Torpedo of Truth" tour. Tickets go on sale Thursday for performances in Ohio, Connecticut, Boston and New York City.

The actor's shows in Detroit and Chicago on April 2 and 3 sold out quickly. Additional performances are scheduled for April 5 in Cleveland, April 6 in Columbus, Ohio, and April 8 at Radio City Music Hall. He will also perform at the Oakdale Theater in Wallingford, Conn., and at Boston's Agganis Arena on April 12.

Sheen was fired last week from the hit CBS show "Two and a Half Men." He then sued the show's producers for $100 million for breach of contract.

AP

LOS ANGELES

Medical board reprimands Jackson doctor

The doctor charged with involuntary manslaughter in Michael Jackson's death has received a public letter of reprimand from the Medical Board of California acknowledging actions taken against him in Nevada over child support.

California board spokeswoman Jennifer Simoes said such letters are routine to notify the public of an action against a doctor's license in another state.

The Nevada State Board of Medical Examiners reprimanded Dr. Conrad Murray in December for failing to disclose on his 2007 and 2009 license renewal applications that he was behind on child support payments in California.

Murray continues to practice in Nevada, but his California medical license is suspended pending his criminal trial.

Murray has pleaded not guilty. His lawyer, Edward Chernoff, said he was unaware of the new reprimand letter and declined comment.

AP

LOS ANGELES

Doctors say Zsa Zsa Gabor recuperating at home

Doctors say the blood flow to Zsa Zsa Gabor's left leg has improved since the 94-year-old actress was released from the hospital earlier this month.

Publicist John Blanchette says doctors have been using medications to treat Gabor at home since she left the hospital after declining to have the left leg amputated when blood flow suddenly stopped.

Most of Gabor's right leg was amputated in January because of gangrene.

Gabor has been hospitalized repeatedly since July, when she broke her hip falling from bed.

She appeared in films ranging from "Moulin Rouge" in 1952 to "Queen of Outer Space" in 1958. She also appeared on TV specials, game shows, and guest-starred on various TV series, often playing herself.

AP

LOS ANGELES

Elizabeth Taylor enters second month in hospital

Elizabeth Taylor has entered her second month at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, where she is being treated for symptoms of congestive heart failure.

AP

Some lawmakers pass on perks and seek reforms

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO A record number of state lawmakers are taking a pass this year on a perk unique to California — taxpayer-subsidized vehicles for rank-and-file legislators.

Others have introduced bills taking aim at the Legislature's highest-in-the-nation compensation, the gifts given to them by lobbyists and the state boards and commissions that provide some lawmakers with soft landings — and $128,000-a-year paychecks — after they leave office.

Despite those laudable intentions, there has been little institutional change since The Associated Press and other news organizations began reporting on some of the benefits lawmakers permit themselves and the secrecy they enjoy under the Legislative Open Records Act. Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg said there are no plans for sweeping changes this year.

"I just think we're focused on the budget and job creation," said Steinberg, D-Sacramento, referring to efforts to close a $26.6 billion deficit.

Nevertheless, some individual lawmakers are seeking reforms in a time of widespread criticism of taxpayer-funded largess in California and across the nation.

Robert Stern, president of the Center for Governmental Studies in Los Angeles, thinks legislative leaders will have to make at least some symbolic changes, driven by tea party activists on one side and frugality already shown by Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown, who has cut the state's vehicle fleet, reduced the number of government-issued cell phones and stopped agencies from giving away taxpayer-funded trinkets.

"They have to show that they're cutting back on their perks, on their spending, as well," Stern said.

California is the only state to provide rank-and-file lawmakers with vehicles for their unlimited use. The AP last year reported that Legislature spent $5 million in taxpayer money for its latest fleet of vehicles, including a $55,000 Cadillac sedan and a $52,000 Lexus hybrid.

And only California gives its lawmakers state-issued credit cards that let them charge taxpayers for the cost of gasoline and other expenses, the AP found in a separate investigation in 2008.

The AP obtained the information under the California Legislative Open Records Act. However, lawmakers give themselves wide discretion to deny information that likely would have to be disclosed if the Legislature were covered under the California Public Records Act, which governs other state agencies.

For instance, the Legislature provided cost information for an AP story last year disclosing that legislators billed taxpayers more than $2 million over a 2 1/2-year period for airfare. But officials refused to provide actual documents so the billings could be verified independently or even give lawmakers' flight destinations, citing security risks.

The Legislature also would not disclose lawmakers' daily calendars when the AP tried last year to learn how often they meet with lobbyists and campaign donors.

The Assembly and Senate began posting staff salaries on their Web sites last year and began webcasting budget hearings after the AP and other news organizations in the capital wrote stories about legislative spending.

Some lawmakers are going further.

Eleven of the Senate's 40 members are refusing their taxpayer-subsidized vehicles this year, up from six who declined in 2009 and three in 2005. Seven of the 11 who declined vehicles are new to the Senate.

In the 80-member Assembly, 27 declined any subsidized rides, up from 12 in 2009 and six in 2006. Twenty of the 27 are Assembly newcomers.

"There are people in my district who are sitting around the kitchen table and trying to figure out how to make ends meet," said freshman Assemblywoman Shannon Grove, R-Bakersfield, who refused a vehicle. "To be told basically, 'Go out and buy yourself a new Christmas present' was appalling to me, absolutely appalling."

Between both chambers, 20 Democrats and 18 Republicans declined vehicles.

Most of the bills aimed at reforming the Legislature have been introduced by Republicans. Steinberg spokesman Mark Hedlund said he was unaware of any such bills proposed by Senate Democrats. Shannon Murphy, spokeswoman for Assembly Speaker John Perez, D-Los Angeles, said bills by Democratic Assembly members were primarily aimed at reforming local governments following a corruption scandal in the Los Angeles County city of Bell.

"The speaker is continually looking at ways to make the Legislature more open and efficient. Those discussions are continuing," Murphy said.

Democrats control both the Assembly and Senate, making it unclear whether the Republican bills will advance.

Assemblyman Mike Morrell, R-Rancho Cucamonga, said he has been told by other lawmakers and staff that his AB998 will not survive. It would require that budget bills be publicly available on the Internet three days before they are taken up for a vote.

He introduced the measure after he had to vote on preliminary budget bills that he had no chance to examine, a common practice in the Legislature.

"We're letting citizens have three days' notice instead of things being passed or deals being cut in back rooms," Morrell said of his bill. "It helps citizens become more engaged."

Morrell also declined a subsidized vehicle after he was elected in November.

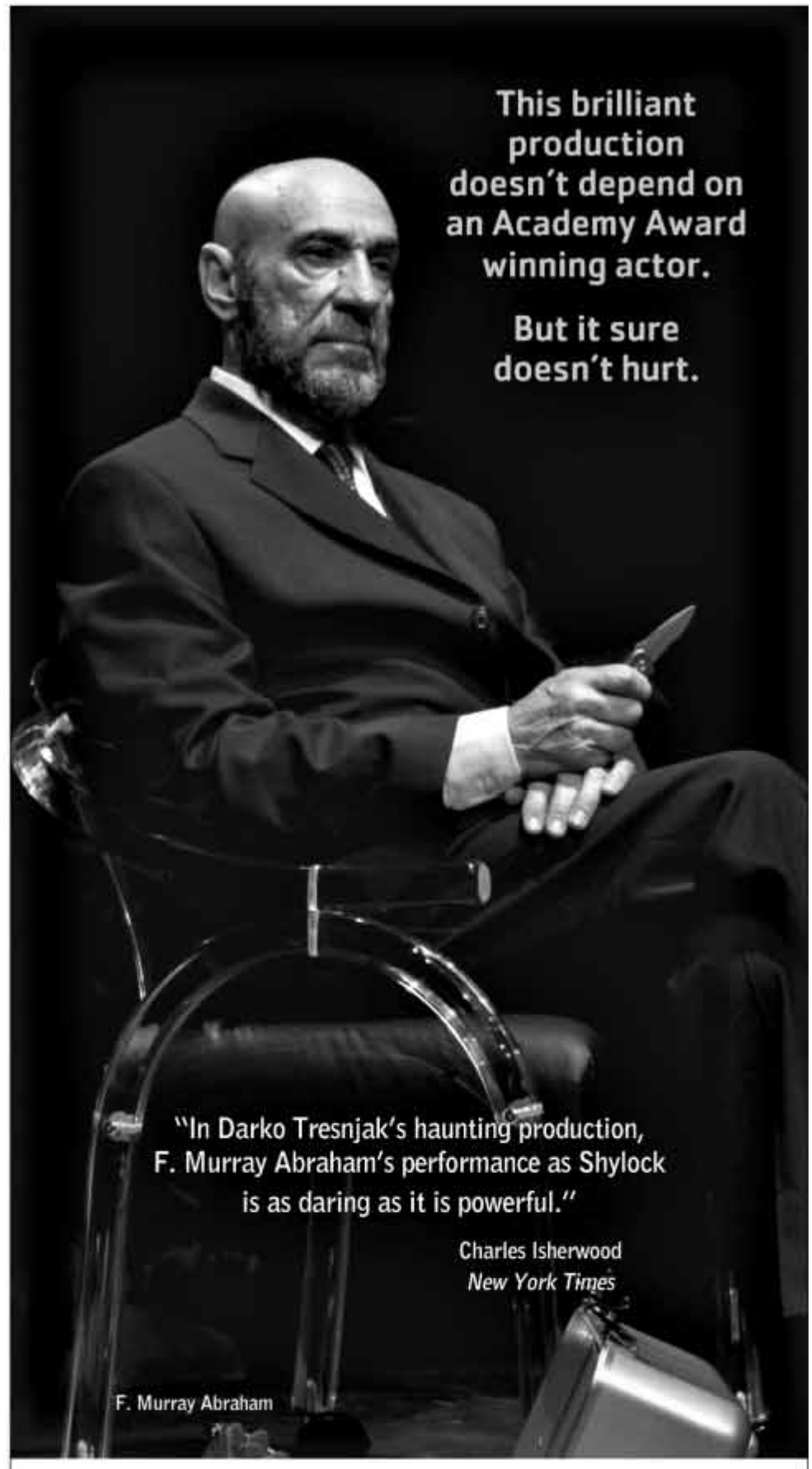
"I knew it would be an unpopular thing right now," he said. "The citizens I think are very skeptical. I heard that the rating here in Sacramento is at an all-time low. I didn't want to do anything that gives an appearance of wrongdoing."

Among other reform bills:

— Grove proposed AB1078, which would prohibit former lawmakers from being paid to sit on a board or commission within four years of leaving office. Currently, it is common for governors and legislative leaders to appoint sympathetic lawmakers to bodies such as the Agriculture Labor Relations Board or Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board. Grove said that creates the appearance of a conflict of interest. Both boards pay $128,109 a year.

— Assemblyman Paul Cook, R-Yucca Valley, introduced AB1012, which would dock legislators' $141.86 daily expense payments each day they are late or miss a legislative session. Rank-and-file lawmakers have annual base salaries of $95,291 a year.

— Sen. Sam Blakeslee, R-San Luis Obispo, proposed SB18, which would prohibit lobbyists and special interest groups from giving lawmakers certain gifts such as sports tickets and spa treatments. His SB17 would require all budget bills to be made public at least 72 hours before a vote.



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Appeals court reinstates case by Muslim over scarf

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO A federal appeals court unanimously reinstated a lawsuit Tuesday filed by a Muslim woman who accused Southern California jailers of violating her religious freedom when they ordered her to take off her head scarf in a courthouse holding cell.

An 11-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals also said plaintiff Souhair Khatib had the right to wear the scarf unless jailers can show it was a security risk.

Khatib filed the lawsuit in 2007 against Orange County. She had been jailed for several hours in November 2006 after a judge revoked her probation for a misdemeanor welfare fraud conviction.

A trial court judge and a three-judge appeals court panel previously dismissed the lawsuit, saying holding cells aren't covered by a federal law protecting the religious practices of prisoners.

They held it was impractical in transitory settings such as a holding cell to honor religious practices normally allowed in more permanent institutions such as prisons.

But the 9th Circuit judges rejected that argument while allowing the case to proceed.

The court did say the county can still argue that security concerns required Khatib to remove her head scarf, if it can prove the order "was the least restrictive means of furthering a compelling government interest."

Khatib and her husband had appeared in Orange County Superior Court to ask for an extension of a deadline to complete community service, which was a requirement of their probation. They were jailed in a cell adjacent to the courthouse.

During booking, jailers ordered a tearful Khatib to remove her head scarf, and she spent the rest of her time in the cell covering her head with a vest.



Lawsuit over purported Adams negatives settled

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO A California man has agreed not to use Ansel Adams' name to sell posters and other merchandise connected to dozens of glass negatives he bought at a garage sale and claimed were the renowned nature photographer's work.

The agreement by Rick Norsigian is part of a settlement reached with the Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust, a group representing Adams. The parties announced the deal in a statement released Monday.

The Adams Trust sued Norsigian and consulting firm PRS Media Partners in August after a heated back and forth about the provenance of the negatives Norsigian bought at a Fresno, Calif., garage sale for $45.

A team of experts concluded they were Adams' early work, believed to have been destroyed in a 1937 fire at his Yosemite studio, Norsigian said. The Adams Trust disputed that.

Adams, who died in 1984, established the trust in 1976 to protect the integrity of his work and preserve his artistic legacy.

The suit asked the court to order the defendants to pay restitution of their profits from any sales.

Norsigian had set up a website to sell prints made from some of the negatives.

Maurice Pessah, a representative for Norsigian, declined to comment on whether any money exchanged hands as part of the settlement, which is confidential.

Frank Pizzurro, a spokesman for Latham & Watkins, the law firm representing the Adams Trust, also declined comment.

The parties have agreed to assume their respective legal costs, according to the statement announcing the settlement. Norsigian and PRS Media may also continue to sell negatives, prints, posters and other merchandise associated with the negatives subject to a disclaimer approved by the Adams Trust.

Norsigian is giving away commemorative posters that originally sold for $45 each for free until the end of March.

"I want to share this work with as many people as possible," he said in a statement. "I think that the public will appreciate these stunning images."

CLEARED

FROM PAGE 5

Coalition said in a statement.

About two dozen people gathered for the rally.

A Los Angeles attorney for the family of Jaminez in Guatemala, which is suing the Police Department, said he was disappointed but not surprised.

"The script was already written," lawyer Luis A. Carrillo said.

Police Chief Charlie Beck and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said the investigation was thorough and unbiased.

At a news conference, they called for calm and noted that since the incident, police have moved to improve relations with the Guatemalan community in the area where the shooting occurred. Many of the residents speak indigenous dialects and little Spanish or English.

"Be peaceful. Let's not take a step backward," Beck said.

The district attorney's office also announced Tuesday it had concluded last week that Officer Frank Hernandez acted in self-defense and declined to file criminal charges.

Police said Jaminez, 37, a day laborer, had been drinking and tried to stab a pregnant woman and other passers-by before Hernandez, a bicycle officer, shot him near MacArthur Park. A police report said he lunged toward an officer after refusing orders in Spanish and English to drop the knife.

Beck said six witnesses told police they saw Jaminez with the knife and other witnesses said they heard the officer order him to drop the weapon.

DNA testing showed blood found on the knife belonged to Jaminez, which Beck said proved he had held it.

The chief also underscored that Jaminez rushed toward the officer, holding his knife in a stabbing position, and was 12 feet in front of Hernandez when the officer fired.

Hernandez was in a "defense of life" situation, he said, adding "I would never ask them to shoot a knife out of somebody's hand."

Three days of sometimes violent protests were held by activists and immigrants who didn't believe the police version of events or felt that non-lethal force should have been used.

The killing touched a nerve in the Westlake community, a poor and densely packed enclave of Central Americans immigrants who are often suspicious of police.

Japan disaster another blow to global economy

ERIKA KINETZ
AP Business Writer

Japan's earthquake and nuclear crises have put pressure on the already fragile global economy, squeezed supplies of goods from computer chips to auto parts and raised fears of higher interest rates.

The disaster frightened financial markets in Tokyo and on Wall Street on Tuesday. Japan's Nikkei average lost 10 percent, and the Dow Jones industrials fell so quickly after the opening bell that the stock exchange invoked a special rule to reduce volatility.

Yet the damage to the U.S. and world economies is expected to be relatively moderate and short-lived. Oil prices are falling, helping drivers around the world. And the reconstruction expected along Japan's northeastern coast could even provide a jolt of economic growth.

A weaker Japanese economy could help ease global commodity prices because Japan is a major importer of fuel, agricultural products and other raw materials, notes Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics. Oil prices fell more than $4 to $97.18 a barrel Tuesday because of expectations that quake damage will slow Japan's economy and reduce its demand for energy.

Even "assuming a drastic scenario," Bank of America economist Ethan Harris estimates, the disaster would shave just 0.1 percentage point off global economic growth — to 4.2 percent this year.

"Japan has not been an engine of global or Asian growth for some time," says Nariman Behravesh, chief economist at IHS Global Insight. "This means that the impact of much lower Japanese growth on the world economy will be probably limited and small."

Japan is only half as important to the world's economy as it was during its last major disaster, the 1995 Kobe earthquake. And the area hit hardest by Friday's quake accounts for only about half as much economic output as the area damaged by the Kobe quake, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development estimates.

Japan proved resilient after the Kobe quake. Manufacturers returned to normal production levels within 15 months, according to the CLSA. Four in every five shops were back open in a year and a half. All told, Japan's comeback defied dire warnings that it would take a decade to rebuild.

Autos and auto parts make up more than one-third of U.S. imports from Japan. As a result, shutdowns of Japanese auto factories could disrupt production at U.S. plants owned by Japanese automakers.

At the same time, some U.S. auto parts makers could benefit if Japanese plants in the United States substitute U.S. parts for those they usually get from Japan, Behravesh says.

A big wild card is the fate of Japan's damaged nuclear power plants. The Fukushima Dai-ichi plant, the center of the concern, let off a burst of radiation on Tuesday. Radiation levels in the surrounding area subsided by evening, but unease in Japan did not.

"If the nuclear crisis turns into a full-blown catastrophe, then the negative effect on growth this year will be much larger," IHS' Behravesh says.

Another unknown is the impact of the disruptions to Japan's power supplies. Behravesh estimates about 10 percent of Japan's electricity generation could be off line for several months. If so, that would disrupt steel, auto and other production.

Investors fear that Japan will struggle to finance reconstruction, which is expected to cost the government at least $200 billion. The Japanese government's debt is already an alarming 225 percent of the country's economic output.

Some worry that Japan will sell some of its vast holdings of U.S. government debt to raise money. Doing so would push the prices of U.S. Treasury bonds down and yields up, raising U.S. interest rates.

But Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner on Tuesday dismissed the fears of a Japanese fire sale of Treasury debt.

"Japan is a very rich country and has a high savings rate," he said. It "has the capacity to deal not just with the humanitarian challenge but also the reconstruction challenge they face ahead."

What's more, the Bank of Japan has been buying Treasurys and other assets as it pumps money into the financial system.

Foreign box office sales plunge after Japan quake

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Early estimates indicate a steep drop-off in box office revenue outside the U.S. immediately following the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. The country is one of Hollywood's biggest international markets, although industry analysts say the disaster's long-term financial impact on movie studios should be limited.

Box office revenue in Japan plunged about 41 percent last weekend, compared with the prior weekend, according to data from Rentrak Corp. In the U.S., the decline over the same time period was about 3 percent.

Japan is a major market for Hollywood, which looks to international ticket sales to help recoup the costs of producing films. U.S. box office revenue was about $10.6 billion in 2010, while international box office revenue was $17.6 billion.

"Japan is a vitally important part of the international box office," said Paul Gergarabedian, president of the box-office division of the tracking service Hollywood.com. "No question about it that the impact has already been felt."

Among the top films playing on big screens in Japan last weekend were The Walt Disney Co.'s "Tangled," News Corp.'s Twentieth Century Fox's "Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader" and the Oscar best-picture winner from The Weinstein Co., "The King's Speech."

Fox spokesman Chris Petrikin said "Narnia" had been doing well in Japan, but that ticket sales dropped off 66 percent last weekend, compared with the prior weekend.

According to Rentrak data, Japan box office revenue for "The King's Speech" sank 72 percent. It was the first weekend for "Tangled," which brought in $1.7 million.

But the financial impact should be manageable for Hollywood studios, said Tuna Amobi, a media and entertainment analyst for Standard & Poor's Equity Research. He noted there is a relatively small number of films now playing in Japan, many of which have already opened in other markets.

"I don't think Japan as one country is likely to make or break any one studio," he said.



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GARDENS

FROM PAGE 1

Sullivan said.

The three parties found a unique solution through the Garden Sharing Registry hosted by Santa Monica's Community Recreation Division, which hooks up plotless gardeners with homeowners without the time to tend to their yard.

City staff put together the idea for the registry in 2009 and the program got off the ground in 2010, said Wendy Pietrzak, of the Community Recreation Division.

There was a demonstrated need, Pietrzak said.

"The city has three gardens with 120 plots," Pietrzak said. "At one point, the waiting list was above 200."

That number is now closer to 140, but without much turnover at the plots, it's difficult to whittle down the list.

The shared garden program sought to link up those hundreds of willing hands with people who otherwise wouldn't cultivate.

Potential gardeners give information on their gardening background and style when they sign up, and then the registry gives a list of names and profiles to the homeowner to choose from.

The program has only made five matches from the 21 homeowners that signed up.

The system had kinks, Pietrzak admitted, because applications began at the beginning of winter, when no one was thinking about gardening, and the participants were handed a list of a dozen names of gardeners to choose from.

"It was a little intimidating for the homeowner," she said.

Now, the program narrows down the list to around five names based on criteria set by the homeowner.



Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

IN PROGRESS: **The backyard garden of Jin Yang in Santa Monica on Tuesday morning.**

So far, the match has worked well for Yang, Gao and the two gardeners.

Sullivan got started a month ago, putting mulch in on a raised garden bed and working on improving the soil quality by putting down cardboard to promote natural composting.

Sanders, who linked up with the family a week ago, plotted out the rest of the garden with Gao, parsing out which areas got the most or least sunlight and choosing plants accordingly.

She expects to spend two or three hours a week prepping the garden, pulling out weeds and improving the sandy soil, before beginning to plant the vegetation.

Pietrzak hopes that the symbiotic relationship can be replicated elsewhere in the city.

"It's just a matter of doing continual outreach," she said. "Initial matches have been very successful."

ashley@smdp.com





Photo courtesy SMFD

CARING: **Santa Monica firefighters create care packages for U.S. soldiers based in Afghanistan.**

SOLDIERS
FROM PAGE 1

other staff including dispatchers, members of administration and some fire inspectors, the entire system dug deep and came up with $3,900 with which to buy gifts.

Then came the fun part.

Using online forums and the expertise of firefighter Nick Angel — a former Marine who served in Iraq — as guidance, the men began deciding how they were going to spend the money.

They got Power Bars, Cliff Bars, nuts, hard candy, peanut butter and anything else that could stand the four to six week trip from the United States to Afghanistan.

Socks were also in high demand, as was lip balm and baby wipes for showers on the go.

Probably the highlight of the take was an XBox 360 and 20 games donated by Activision, Microsoft and Electronic Arts.

Firefighters also included letters to the troops, encouraging them and expressing their support. They even threw in SMFD stickers.

"It would be cool to see one on pictures on the Facebook page," Smith said. "But if not, it's OK."

The 20 boxes it took to mail the items were sent last week, carefully sorted to avoid contamination. It will take another three to five weeks for the supplies to arrive.

So far, the men have received one e-mail from Sgt. First Class Clifford Jones, the commander of the Warriors, thanking them for taking on his men.

The troops are limited in what they can say about their situation, and how often they can access the Internet or other forms of communication.

The firefighters are planning to continue their support of the troops, perhaps with another fundraiser and mailing later in the year, and hope to hear from the men in Afghanistan eventually.

"We plan to continue supporting the group," Smith said. "Hopefully, they stay connected, but this is so much about them than it is about us."

ashley@smdp.com

HOMES
FROM PAGE 3

ters or years, toward a healthier housing market."

Gabriel said affordable prices and low interest rates were being offset by tight lending standards, uncertainty about the broader economic recovery and distress among borrowers who continue to owe more than their homes are worth.

"The housing market itself is being buffeted by various cross currents, some on the negative side, some on the positive side," Gabriel said.

Novak-Smith said that most of what he is seeing is on the negative side.

"There's been less buyer activity," he said. "They say 'pent-up demand,' but where's the demand coming from."

Although investor activity is up, Novak-Smith said he's seeing few traditional home shoppers because banks are still seen as reluctant to approve mortgages.

"I really think the biggest hang-up in the whole thing is the availability of financing," he said. "If more people could get loans, I think home sales would be through the roof."



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Stocks plunge as Japan nuclear crisis worsens

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK Stocks fell sharply Tuesday as the nuclear crisis in Japan weighed on global markets.

The stock market dropped at the start of trading on news that dangerous levels of radiation were leaking from a crippled nuclear plant. The plant was damaged in last week's earthquake and tsunami. Japan, the world's third-largest economy, accounts for 10 percent of U.S. exports.

Peter Cardillo, chief market economist at New York-based brokerage house Avalon Partners, said fear had taken hold in the market.

"It's a situation where you sell, and you ask questions later," he said.

Intel Corp., National Semiconductor Corp. and other chip makers were among the biggest losers. Many technology companies are dependent on Japanese factories for their products or components. Insurance companies that do business in Japan, like Aflac Inc., also fell sharply.

The Federal Reserve's statement that the economy is on firmer footing gave stocks some support.

After falling as much as 297 points, the Dow recovered and ended the day down 137.74, or 1.1 percent, to close at 11,885.42.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 14.52, or 1.1 percent, to 1,281.87. The Nasdaq composite index fell 33.64, or 1.2 percent, to 2,667.33.

Investors sought the relative safety of U.S. Treasurys, sending prices higher and yields lower. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note dropped as low as 3.20 percent in overnight trading. That's the lowest yield on the 10-year note this year.

Treasury prices soared as stocks plunged during the financial crisis. Treasurys have fallen as the economy has gathered strength and stocks have recovered, but events like the Japanese quake and tsunami send investors in search of safer places to put their money.

Tuesday's trading showed what happens to stocks when investors don't have answers yet about a crisis. The extent of the damage from the quake and the tsunami isn't yet known. And so the impact on the country and its trading partners may not be known for some time.

Stocks have been fluctuating sharply since the quake. The Dow fell 228 points Thursday, and came back 59 points Friday. The market has a long history of bouncing back after a big drop. But an extended period of volatility is likely until the situation in Japan becomes clear.

All 10 company groups in the S&P 500 fell Tuesday. Technology stocks fared worst, falling 1.6 percent. Power outages have made it nearly impossible for Japanese factories to produce semiconductors and other electronics, said Kim Caughey Forrest, equity research analyst at Fort Pitt Capital Group.

Intel fell 3.2 percent, the most of any stock in the Dow average. National Semiconductor also fell 3 percent.

Subaru, Toyota curb output at North American plants

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT Two Japanese automakers are scaling back production at North American plants as they assess their ability to get parts from Japan after that country's devastating earthquake and tsunami.

Subaru of America said Tuesday it has suspended overtime at its only North American plant in Lafayette, Ind. Toyota Motor Corp. also said it was suspending overtime and Saturday production at its 10 plants in the region.

So far, other Japanese automakers say their North American plants are unaffected. Nissan Motor Co., Honda Motor Co., Mitsubishi Motors and Mazda Motor Corp. all say they have not changed their production plans.

But that could change if lingering damage from the earthquake prevents parts shipments. Mitsubishi, for example, has enough parts on hand or en route to operate its Illinois assembly plant through April 3, spokesman Dan Irwin said.

"The situation is fluid, so we continue to monitor our supply chain and logistics," he said.

In Japan, auto companies have shut down production for the rest of the week as they assess damage to plants, ports and roads.

While Japanese automakers with North American plants use locally-based suppliers for many of their parts, others still come from Japan. The U.S. imported $12 billion worth of auto parts from Japan in 2010, from spark plugs to engines, according to the Original Equipment Suppliers Association.

Dave Andrea, the trade group's senior vice president of industry analysis and economics, said some parts had been in short supply prior to the earthquake, including semiconductors, precision bearings and tires. He estimated that most automakers have a three- to four-week inventory of parts in the pipeline.

"Once those start to dry out, that's where you see the shortages in the assembly plants," Andrea said.

Companies can ill afford those shortages. Subaru spokesman Michael McHale said the Indiana plant had been running on overtime because of strong sales of its vehicles. The Outback wagon, which is made at the plant, is currently at a 30-day supply. A 60-day supply is considered ideal.

McHale said he didn't know when overtime will be restored at the plant, which produced 150,000 vehicles last year, or 55 percent of the Subarus sold in the U.S. The plant also makes the Tribeca wagon and Legacy sedan.

Toyota, meanwhile, said the restrictions on overtime and Saturday shifts were designed to conserve Japanese-made parts. About 75 percent of the parts in North American-built Toyotas are supplied locally, but the rest come from Japan.

Toyota spokesman Mike Goss wouldn't specify which parts come are imported, but said the company typically has a two- to three-week supply of them.

Now supplies are uncertain.

"There's some pipeline of parts from Japan to the United States and we're trying not to burn through that too quickly," Goss said.

NYC bus crash spotlights cut-rate transit companies

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK Cut-rate bus companies. Driver fatigue. And the need for safer windows and roofs. The New York bus crash that killed 15 people on their way home from a casino has focused renewed attention on problems federal safety investigators have been warning about for years.

The cause of Saturday's wreck is still under investigation; authorities called the driver in for questioning Tuesday. But officials said this much was clear already: Because of past offenses, his driving privileges had been suspended, and he shouldn't even have been behind the wheel.

The National Transportation Safety Board is studying the crash to see whether new safety technologies that are available, but not required, might have made a difference.

For example, there are collision warning systems that alert drivers to obstacles in their paths and tell them when they are swerving from their lanes. The agency has also urged the U.S. Transportation Department to require that bus roofs be strengthened so that they aren't sheared off, as happened to the New York bus when it hit a signpost. Also, a Senate bill that was reintroduced this year would require anti-ejection glazing windows to prevent passengers from being easily thrown out of a bus.

"We've looked at all of these issues before," said Chris Hart, the safety board's vice chairman.

It's too early to know whether any of the safety recommendations would have made a difference. But the board has given the Transportation Department failing grades for its slow progress in implementing some recommendations, some of which date back more than a decade.

The bus ran off the road along Interstate 95 in the Bronx as it was returning to New York's Chinatown from an overnight trip to a Connecticut casino. In a similar accident Monday night on I-95, a bus that had left Chinatown for Philadelphia crashed in East Brunswick, N.J., killing the driver and a passenger.

Though operated by different companies, the buses were among scores that line up in Chinatown each day for bargain-price trips to casinos and elsewhere. The independently owned Chinatown buses cater to Asian immigrants and often feature Chinese-language films on trips. They offer cut-rate fares — gamblers can pay $12 round-trip from Chinatown to the Mohegan Sun in Connecticut, and get a $60 bonus at the casino.

On a typical weekday in New York, about 4,000 seats are sold on dozens of such buses, and 6,000 on weekends, residents say.

In the aftermath of Saturday's crash, Sen. Charles Schumer and Rep. Nydia Velazquez, both of New York, complained to the NTSB that the wreck was "just one example of an industry that in many cases is operating outside the bounds of city, state and federal transportation safety guidelines."

Federal regulators have long recognized the dangers of fly-by-night bus companies that skimp on safety and skirt the regulations. The Obama administration's transportation secretary, Ray LaHood, has cracked down on "chameleon" bus companies that close down to avoid enforcement and then reopen under a new name.

However, the bus company in the Bronx crash, World Wide Travel, has no history of serious problems. One exception is in the category of driver fatigue, where it is ranked slightly below average by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, based on some recent violations.

Driver fatigue, which has been cited more often than any other reason as a cause or contributing factor to bus crashes, has been the target of a slew of recommendations not just for buses and trucks, but in aviation, rail and marine accidents as well.

NTSB investigators have said they are looking at casino surveillance tapes and gathering other evidence to establish what driver Ophadell Williams ate, what he drank and how much he slept before Saturday's crash. The NTSB would not comment Tuesday.

Investigators said survivors and other witnesses have disputed Williams' claim that his bus was clipped by a tractor-trailer before it ran off the road.

Williams served time in prison for manslaughter and grand larceny, and state officials told The Associated Press that Williams was ticketed in 1995 for speeding and driving without a license and that his driving privileges were suspended when he ignored those violations. The officials spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the investigation.

World Wide Travel didn't return calls for information on how Williams managed to get hired. Telephone calls to Williams' Brooklyn home were unanswered Tuesday. Gov. Andrew Cuomo has ordered an investigation.

Like the NTSB, the police are looking into Williams' activities before the crash and have viewed surveillance video from the Mohegan Sun. New York State Police spokesman Joseph Becerra, would not reveal what police had seen on the recordings or what witnesses were telling police about Williams' activities in Connecticut or his behavior behind the wheel.

He said police were hoping to find still more witnesses to the crash, "anyone who was out on the interstate that day and saw anything."

Federal statistics show that the number of fatal crashes involving buses has been declining somewhat in recent years, from 340 deaths in 2005 to 254 in 2009.

In addition to cracking down on shady bus companies, the Transportation Department under LaHood wants to require all new buses be equipped with seatbelts.

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Somalis plead not guilty to piracy charges in U.S. court

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NORFOLK, Va. Seven Somalis pleaded not guilty to piracy, kidnapping and firearms charges Tuesday in the February hijacking of a yacht that left four Americans dead.

They entered their pleas in federal court in Norfolk, where five other men convicted of piracy in a separate case last year had been sentenced to life in prison a day earlier.

"There's nothing I know about these charges. I do not admit that I was a pirate," Mohamud Salad Ali said through an interpreter.

Each of the men requested a jury trial and all were ordered to remain jailed until then.

Seven others charged in the case with them were expected to enter pleas later in the day. A trial has been set for May 17, although prosecutors want it pushed back because of the complicated nature of trying such cases.

Pirates have rarely been charged in the U.S. The case against the five Somalis sentenced Monday for attacking the USS Nicholas was the first to go to trial since the Civil War, when a New York jury deadlocked on charges against 13 Southern privateers.

If convicted of piracy against the yacht Quest, the 13 Somalis and one Yemeni would face mandatory life sentences without the possibility of parole. Prosecutors have said other charges are also possible.

The yacht's owners, Jean and Scott Adam of Marina del Rey, Calif., along with friends Bob Riggle and Phyllis Macay of Seattle, were shot to death after pirates took them hostage several hundred miles south of Oman.

They were the first U.S. citizens killed in a wave of pirate attacks that have plagued the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean in recent years. The pirates are typically motivated by the potential for millions of dollars in ransom money.

Each of the men who pleaded not guilty Tuesday were in their 20s or early 30s and said they had little or no education. Several said through an interpreter that they did not understand all of the charges they face.

Each was previously assigned a defense attorney by the court.

Amid high demand, some states cut mental health care

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER At the Ohio Department of Mental Health, Christy Murphy's days are filled with calls from people seeking help she can't seem to give.

They plead with her, but budget cuts have trimmed services so much that she is not sure where to send them.

The desperation on the other end of the line hits painfully close to home for Murphy. Her 19-year-old son, Christopher, suffers from a range of mental problems, including one that's linked to a short-tempered, hostile attitude. Although he has coverage through Medicaid, he can't get the services he needs. His mother says he has no psychiatrist, no case manager and no medication.

"I think it's 100 percent about money," said Murphy, who lives in Columbus with her son.

An onslaught of budget cuts has hit mental health services in states struggling to weather economic woes. Even in better times, help could be hard to find. Now, just as demand is soaring, billions of dollars in cuts have shuttered facilities, prolonged waiting times to get services and purged countless patients from the rolls.

"We're getting some epidemic-proportion demands for services," said Mary Ruiz, chief executive at the Manatee Glens mental health facility in Bradenton, Fla., which has had to cut charity care for the indigent by $2 million a year.

State mental health funding was on a steady upward trajectory for three decades until the Great Recession hit in 2007. Over the last two fiscal years, states have cut a combined $1.8 billion from the public mental health system, according to a recent report by the National Alliance for Mental Illness, an advocacy group that tracks mental health spending in all 50 states.

All of this comes as experts see the dueling economic stresses of job losses and home foreclosures escalating depression, anxiety and suicide. Nine state mental health agencies have reported increased emergency-room visits for psychiatric care since the recession began, and five more reported higher suicide rates, the state mental health association reported.

The cuts have hit every aspect of state behavioral health systems, which served 6.4 million people nationwide in 2009, according to the most current federal government statistics. Only four states made no cuts to mental health services between fiscal 2009 and the fiscal year that will end in 2012, according to the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. As states face the end of federal stimulus spending, mental health advocates expect the situation to get much worse this year and next.

"I'm begging for help. Begging. And there's no one who can help me," said Sandra Roskilly of Denver, whose 15-year-old son Gregory left the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Fort Logan when its children's ward was shuttered last year due to budget cuts.

Roskilly's son has returned home, where his grandmother has moved in to help care for him. But she worries the boy is getting worse without residential treatment, sometimes breaking furniture and shoving his grandmother. She wonders aloud if he might pose a threat to others without the proper care.

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NFL

Locked-out players try to pick up legal system on fly

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS Vikings linebacker Ben Leber is fluent in zone dog blitzes and cover 2 dropbacks.

When it comes to the legalese, however, that's another story. As the NFL labor fight moves from the mediation room to the court room, players are trying to learn the ins and outs of filing a lawsuit and the legal labyrinth that follows.

"For a player it can be frustrating at times, because now we're in the hands of the legal system," Leber said. "None of us are lawyers and we don't always understand the legalities of the dispute, so we just have to learn on the fly."

Leber is one of the plaintiffs in a suit the players filed against the league last Friday and was a Vikings assistant player representative for the union before it decertified. He also sat in on some of the negotiating sessions in Washington a few weeks ago, so he is well versed in the complexities of the collective bargaining agreement.

But now that the dispute is headed to the courts, he finds himself having to do more to stay on top of the developments. Leber isn't reading "Lawsuits for Dummies" or watching "A Few Good Men" to get acquainted with the nuances, but he is consulting agents and lawyers and doing research on the Internet.

"As one of the player reps for the team I'm keeping in contact with the guys and with the union. Trying to amass as much knowledge as I can," Leber said. "Sometimes, honestly, I've had to get on the Internet and (go) to legal websites just to learn what some of these legal terms mean."

Acquiring that knowledge is hard enough for a law student, let alone for a pro football player who has spent his adult life studying game film, not appellate court rulings.

In the most basic layman's terms, 10 players including Leber, Tom Brady and Peyton Manning have sued the league for anticompetitive practices in an attempt to force the NFL to end its labor lockout that began early Saturday.

"Coming into this whole situation with the CBA and the antitrust stuff, it's kind of complicated to us," fourth-year Vikings safety Tyrell Johnson said. "It's like learning a new language. It's very foreign to me and a lot of younger players. The older players probably have a better idea about it. I remember my first couple years, I didn't even know what the CBA was. A lot of it is way over my head."

And it's not just the young guys who are having a difficult time getting the hang of it. Ravens center Matt Birk, who studied finance at Harvard, has tried to stay as educated as possible to help advise his teammates of the developments. But he said there comes a certain point where he has to sit back and let the attorneys do their jobs while he concentrates on readying for what he hopes will be his 14th NFL season.

"I'm not a lawyer and I don't have any desire to be a lawyer," Birk said Tuesday. "I don't get too wrapped up in it. My focus is still working out and going through my routine. My focus is still football. ... Back when we were a union, they would explain to us what was happening and the possible scenarios. We're kind of learning as we go."

Many players find themselves having to lean on former player reps, agents, advisers and attorneys.

"Let's face it, this is a huge and complex issue, so really it's routine with any conversations we are having here with our players, my partner Ben Dogra and I, we are discussing the collective bargaining process," prominent agent Tom Condon said. "I am reinforcing what they are hearing from the players association, and if they need some clarity, we are happy to provide anything we can."

If the players have any advantage in picking things up quickly, it may be that they're used to cram sessions because they face a new opponent every week. Players are often required to learn complex schemes — say, the West Coast offense or the Blitzburgh defense — in just a few days.

"Sometimes football can probably be as complex as the law," Birk said. "But at the end of the day, we're just people like everybody else. We're learning about terms like decertification and injunction, just like fans are who are watching this closely."

Former All-Pro defensive tackle Kevin Williams of the Vikings said he think the players' leaders have done well to keep them informed on the major issues and developments.

"I think for the most part, everybody gets the big picture," Williams said. "The long version is it's complicated and you can't really understand everything that goes into it."

But for players like Ryan Longwell, whose contract with Minnesota expired after last season, keeping up with every little detail has become imperative. He's more than willing to do some extra work.

"What I found out is one word can change the whole meaning of everything," Longwell said. "I think it's important, no matter how long it takes, to understand the facts and not what the PR machine is trying to get you to believe."



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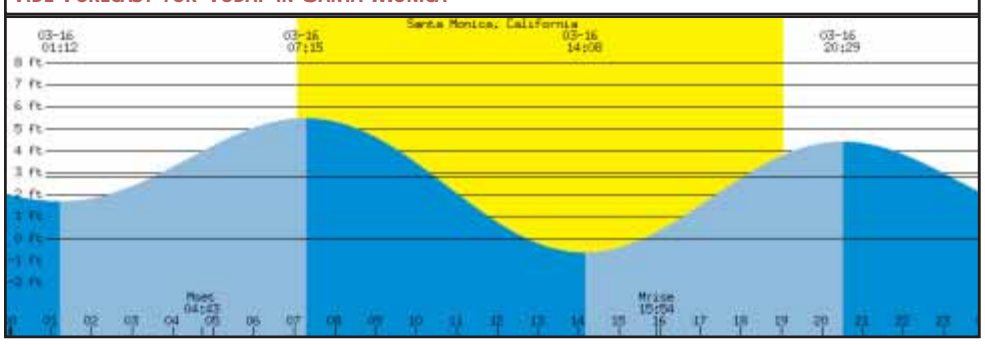
Swell Forecast

NW is expected to back off a bit, more along the lines of chest to at times head high for west facing breaks.

Long Range Synopsis

Most west facing breaks are looking at surf running 1-3' overhead with some DOH sets at standout west facing breaks.

Tide Forecast for Today in Santa Monica



BEACH REPORT CARD

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Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous 30 days up to the ending date of **March 9, 2011**

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QUICK STATS (for the last 30 days)

- Number of sewage spills -- 0
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0
- Number of wet days -- 14
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 37 / 32
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 5 / 13

The Beach Report Card is made possible by: The Diller – von Furstenberg Family Foundation, Groundwork Family Foundation, simplehuman, LAcarGUY, SMA

Heal the Bay reminds you not to swim or surf within 100 yards of any flowing storm drain or for 3 days after a rainstorm. After a rain, indicator bacteria counts at beaches throughout California usually far exceed health criteria in the state's Beach Closure and Health Warning Protocol.

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Leo Carrillo Beach, at Arroyo Sequit Creek mouth.	F	F
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth.	A+	A+
El Pescador State Beach, between Lechasa and Las Alina creeks.	A+	A+
Encinal Canyon at El Matador State Beach.	A	A+
Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth.	A+	D
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth.	A+	F
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildlife Rd. (private).	A+	A+
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth.	B	B
Escondido Creek, just east of Escondido State Beach.	F	D
Latigo Canyon Creek mouth.	A+	A+
Solstice Canyon at Don Blocker County Beach.	A	C
Puerco State Beach at creek mouth.	B	A
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerco Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd..	A	A+
Surfrider Beach at Malibu Colony fence.	A+	A+
Surfrider Beach (breach location)- daily.	F	F
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east.	A+	F
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon.	A+	A
Las Flores State Beach at Las Flores Creek (point zero).	A	A+
Big Rock Beach at 19948 PCH stairs.	A+	D
Pena Creek at Las Tunas County Beach.	A+	A+
Tuna Canyon.	A+	ns
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth.	F	F
Castlerock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach.	A+	A+
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach.	B	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at 17200 PCH (1/4 mile east of Sunset drain).	A+	A+

LOCATION	DRY	WET
Will Rogers State Beach at Bel Air Bay Club drain near fence.	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Pulga Canyon storm drain.	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Temescal Canyon drain.	A+	A+
Will Rogers State Beach at Santa Monica Canyon drain (Chautauqua).	A	F
Santa Monica Beach at Montana Ave. drain.	A+	A+
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain.	B	A
Santa Monica Municipal Pier.	F	C
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kenter storm drain.	B	C
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restrooms).	A+	A+
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain.	B	A
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain.	A+	A+
Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain.	A+	A+
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain.	A+	B
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south.	A+	A+
Venice Beach- projection of Topsail St..	A+	A+
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower.	A	A
Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth.	A	F
Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain.	A+	A+
North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach.	A+	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of D&W jetty).	A+	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain.	A+	A+
Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant.	A+	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain.	A+	A+

LEGEND

DRY -- each location is graded on an A – F scale based on bacterial pollution levels present in the surf zone
WET -- grades for days of recorded rainfall and the following 3 days
ns -- no sample taken

Heal the Bay is a non-profit environmental organization dedicated to making Santa Monica Bay and Southern California coastal waters safe and healthy for people and marine life.

Heal the Bay

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Heal the Bay's Beach Report Card® is based on weekly water quality monitoring data provided by the City of Los Angeles' Environmental Monitoring Division and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Data is analyzed as soon as it is made available to us by the public agencies. Beaches are graded on an A–F scale based on the risk of ocean users becoming ill. Samples are analyzed for bacteria—enterococcus, total and fecal coliforms—that indicate biological pollution. A fact sheet detailing the exact methodology used in determining grades for each location is available from the office or on our web site. The report is not designed to measure the amount of trash or toxins found at local beaches.

The Beach Report Card is an indication of past water quality and is not a warranty of the current safety of those areas surveyed. Our lawyers are happy.

NCAA MEN'S BASKETBALL

USC ready to overcome distractions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DAYTON, Ohio An apologetic Kevin O'Neill is eager to get back to basketball.

The Southern California coach, suspended for the Pac-10 semifinal after a verbal confrontation with a fan, began a NCAA news conference Tuesday by again saying he was sorry for his behavior.

"Let's get it out of the way right off," he said, an instant after sitting down. "I want to apologize once again for getting suspended during the Pac-10 tournament. I'm held to a high standard. The highest standard as the leader of our team. I didn't live up to that (and) suffered the consequences."

The Trojans (19-14) take on Virginia Commonwealth (23-11) in Wednesday's First Four game at the University of Dayton Arena. The winner faces a quick turnaround game against sixth-seeded Georgetown on Friday in Chicago.

But O'Neill, in his second year of a massive rebuilding project, wasn't even certain he'd still be with the team this week.

"Coaches are always fearful of those things," he said of potentially being let go. "I certainly didn't want to get fired. Guys make mistakes. I made a big mistake, and (USC's administration has) been very understanding, very worthwhile in their support."

The Trojan players consider O'Neill's suspension and subsequent apology as a sort of team-building exercise.

"You can tell that he really felt like he let us down," guard Jio Fontan said. "It's something that I think he's glad that he went through for the learning part of it. And we feel like as a team it's kind of something we benefited from, brought us all together, brought us all closer. We definitely got to see another side of the coaching staff that we would not have seen if that altercation hadn't happened."

VCU, like USC, wasn't considered a lock to be in the NCAA tournament.

Rams coach Shaka Smart said he and his players are driven by all the slings and arrows.

"We use that as motivation with our players," he said. "We have some guys that they love it when people doubt them. It really feeds their competitive juices. The reality is all that is just drama surrounding the NCAA tournament. Now, the fans, the media love drama. As a coach and as players, it has nothing to do with when the ball goes up in the air tomorrow night at 9 o'clock. That drama all goes away."

VCU had lost four of its five games entering the Colonial Athletic Association tournament, shocked regular-season champion George Mason in the semifinals and then fell to Old Dominion 70-65 in the title game.

Regardless, the Rams earned their first at-large berth in the NCAA since 1984.

"It gives us a certain incentive with everybody doubting us and not believing we deserve to be here," guard Bradford Burgess said. "It gives us extra motivation in the game to prove it."

USC, predicted to finish sixth in the Pac-10, did not play in any postseason tournaments last year because of NCAA violations committed under coach Tim Floyd.

O'Neill, known as a fixer-upper in prior jobs at Marquette, Tennessee and Northwestern, was called in to try to revive the Trojans. Led by 6-foot-10 junior Nikola Vucevic, who averaged 17.3 points and 10.2 rebounds a game, they have made a remarkable resurgence.

"This will be a great opportunity for us to show people who we are, what we can do," Vucevic said. "People don't know about us too much, but we can show people we deserve to be in this tournament, that we're a great team, that we can compete with anybody."

And their coach will be right there with them.

City of Santa Monica

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please take notice that the Santa Monica Rent Control Board adopted amended Regulation 8066 at its regular meeting of March 10, 2011.

These changes, as set forth below, will become effective by promulgation the day after publication in this newspaper.

8066. Time of Decision

Pursuant to section 1809(b)(1), the Board shall take final action on any complaint for excess rent within one-hundred and twenty (120) days following the date of the initial filing of the complaint unless good cause is shown or the parties otherwise agree. This regulation is declarative of existing law and practice and does not impose any new requirements or rights, or limit any existing requirements or rights under the Rent Control Law.

[8066 Amended 03/10/11]

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A complete copy of this regulation is available at the Rent Control office, 1685 Main Street, Room 202, (310) 458-8751 or on the website: www.smgov.net/rentcontrol



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OR DRAW A CARTOON.

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smdp.com Santa Monica Daily Press office (310) 458-7737

MOVIE TIMES

Aero Theatre
1328 Montana Ave.
(323) 466-FILM

Free Zone and Disengagement
7:30pm

AMC Loews Broadway 4
1441 Third Street Promenade

Just Go With It (PG-13) 1hr 50min
1:45pm, 4:30pm, 7:15pm, 10:00pm

Adjustment Bureau (PG-13) 1hr 39min
1:35pm, 4:10pm, 6:45pm, 9:20pm

Red Riding Hood (PG-13) 2hrs 00min
1:30pm, 4:00pm, 6:30pm, 9:00pm

Kill the Irishman (R) 1hr 46min
1:40pm, 4:15pm, 7:00pm, 9:35pm

AMC 7 Santa Monica
1310 Third St.
(310) 289-4262

Gnomeo & Juliet 3D (PG) 1hr 24min
11:20am, 1:30pm, 3:30pm, 9:50pm

Rango (PG) 1hr 47min
11:15am, 2:00pm, 4:35pm, 7:15pm, 9:55pm

Battle: Los Angeles (PG-13) 1hr 56min
11:00am, 1:50pm, 4:45pm, 7:40pm, 10:30pm

Adjustment Bureau (PG-13) 1hr 46min
12:00pm, 2:35pm, 5:10pm, 7:45pm, 10:20pm

Mars Needs Moms in Disney Digital 3D (PG) 1hr 28min
12:15pm, 2:30pm, 4:50pm, 7:10pm, 9:30pm

Hall Pass (R) 1hr 38min
11:10am, 1:55pm, 4:40pm, 7:20pm, 10:10pm

Red Riding Hood (PG-13) 1hr 40min
11:45am, 2:30pm, 5:00pm, 7:30pm, 10:00pm

Metropolitan Opera (NR) 3hrs 15min
6:30pm

Laemmle's Monica Fourplex
1332 Second St.
(310) 394-9741

Saint Misbehavin': The Wavy Gravy Movie (NR)
1:00pm, 3:10pm, 5:20pm, 7:40pm, 10:10pm

Over the Hill Band (Meisjes) (NR) 1hr 33min
4:45pm, 9:30pm

King's Speech (R) 1 hour 58 min
1:40pm, 4:30pm, 7:20pm, 10:10pm

Cedar Rapids (R) 1hr 26min
1:10pm, 3:20pm, 5:30pm, 7:50pm, 10:10pm

Phil Ochs: There But for Fortune (NR) 1hr 36min
2:20pm, 7:10pm

AMC Criterion 6
1313 Third St.
(310) 395-1599

Take Me Home Tonight (R) 1hr 54min
12:15pm, 2:40pm, 5:05pm, 7:35pm, 10:00pm

Rango (PG) 1hr 47min
1:05pm, 3:40pm, 6:15pm, 9:00pm

Beastly (PG-13) 1hr 35min
12:30pm, 2:45pm, 5:00pm, 7:20pm, 9:35pm

Battle: Los Angeles (PG-13) 1hr 56min
1:00pm, 4:00pm, 7:00pm, 10:00pm

Unknown (PG-13) 1hr 49min
1:30pm, 4:20pm, 7:10pm, 9:55pm

I Will Follow (NR) 1hr 28min
12:40pm, 2:50pm, 5:10pm, 7:30pm, 9:45pm

For more information, e-mail news@smdp.com

Read between the lines, Virgo

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ Reach for the stars. You will have the correct response, no matter what. Your ingenuity helps you hit a home run. Opportunities seem to sprout. Could you be the common element? Others respond to the merger of intellect and imagination. Why not? Tonight: As you like it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Stay tuned in to your needs, which also might involve a loved one or family member. Many of you could be considering a home office or home-based business. Your intuition is key here. Open up to that inner voice. Tonight: Mosey on home.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ Keep the conversation happening and on target; don't allow someone to interfere. Know when you have heard enough or said enough. Remember what your goal is, and don't go past those limits. Tonight: Talking up a storm.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Be aware of what is needed from someone else and what is going on behind the scenes. A business associate or someone involved with the community could be an unusual source of information. Make sure you're not left holding the bag when picking up a tab. Tonight: Your treat.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★ Allow more sunshine into your life and be slightly less businesslike. Someone at a distance could pique your interest in an unusual adventure. Are you willing to risk that much? Only you can answer that question. Tonight: Go with the moment.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★★ You might want to relate to a loved one and/or friend as directly as possible. You might be amazed by what happens when you are vulnerable and open to new possibilities. Mutuality evolves to a new level in this type of setting. Tonight: Read between the lines.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★★ Meetings could point to new decisions and directions. You have worked hard to achieve a goal that might be on the verge of realization. Allowing more feedback and greater discussion around the topic will be worth it ultimately. Tonight: Celebrating living.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ How you deal with a situation and the end result vary with your ability to take a stand and mean what you say. Others will get the authenticity of your message and leadership. Don't allow details and trivial matters to interfere. Tonight: A force to be dealt with.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Allow your imagination to play out. You might be amazed by what you visualize. Don't automatically negate a thought or dream; rather, see how it can be possible. You are a fire sign, given the gift of acting impulsively. Now is the time! Tonight: Try exotic rather than tried-and-true.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ A key associate or partner could play an inordinately strong role. This person seems to have great ideas, which you must say "yes" to. Even if there is a disagreement, the two of you work well together to create an even stronger project or situation. Tonight: How about dinner for two?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ You know how to make others smile far more easily than you think. Laughter surrounds you, allowing greater give-and-take. Right now, someone in your life seeks to find ways to please you and make you smile. Be receptive. Tonight: There is one invitation you must say "yes" to.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Focus on one task at a time, as others might be slightly distracted. You could be overwhelmed by the financial sheets on a budget. Say so, by all means. A correction or new division becomes possible. Tonight: Choose a quick tension-buster.

Happy birthday

This year, your concerns surround the quality of your daily life, which refers to health, work, hobbies and play. Tweak some areas, if you can, to create greater happiness. Some of you might even change jobs or take up a new outlook on health and diet. If you are single, you could meet someone as easily as while walking the dog. If you are attached, the two of you might take on a new hobby, bonding you even more. LEO gets you off your duff.

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



MYSTERY PHOTO

Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

The first person who can correctly identify where this image was captured wins a prize from the Santa Monica Daily Press. Send answers to *editor@smdp.com*. Send your mystery photos to *editor@smdp.com* to be used in future issues.

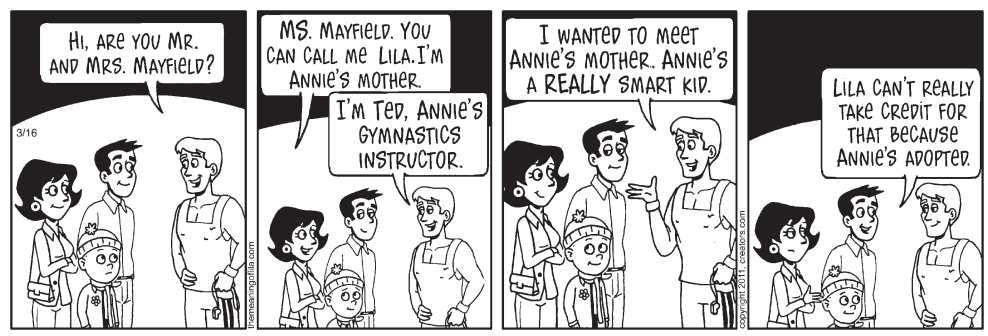
Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



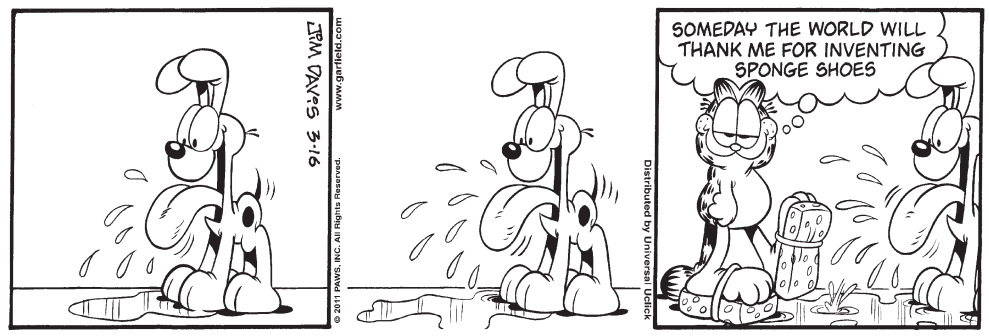
The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



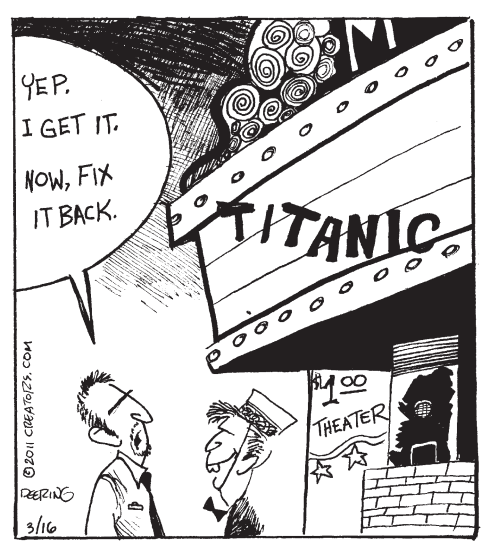
Garfield

By Jim Davis



Strange Brew

By John Deering



Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly



Sudoku

Fill in the blank cells using numbers 1 to 9. Each number can appear only once in each row, column, and 3x3 block. Use logic and process of elimination to solve the puzzle. The difficulty level ranges from ★ (easiest) to ★★★★★ (hardest).

Difficulty Level ★★★

	3	5				9	1	
7			6		8			4
			9					8
			5					2
			4					7
		6					8	
	9					5		
4					7			
3	8	7	1		6	2	4	9

King Features Syndicate

GETTING STARTED

There are many strategies to solving Sudoku. One way to begin is to examine each 3x3 grid and figure out which numbers are missing. Then, based on the other numbers in the row and column of each blank cell, find which of the missing numbers will work. Eliminating numbers will eventually lead you to the answer.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

1	9	3	6	5	7	8	4	2
7	5	4	2	1	8	6	9	3
8	6	2	3	4	9	5	7	1
6	1	8	9	7	2	4	3	5
5	3	9	1	8	4	7	2	6
2	4	7	5	6	3	1	8	9
4	2	5	8	3	1	9	6	7
3	8	6	7	9	5	2	1	4
9	7	1	4	2	6	3	5	8

"Do You Know The Jealously Guarded Secrets Banks Hide From You That Could Cost You Thousands?"

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CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 River floater
5 Newspaper section
11 Balm ingredient
12 Luau setting
13 Story
14 Track athlete
15 Terminate
16 Use four-letter words
17 Mirror sight
19 Deli choice
22 Dogpatch boy
24 Replay feature
26 Funny fellows
27 Sesame Street youngster
28 Tickle
30 Dangerous gas
31 Puppy sound
32 Space opera genre
34 Ignored the limit
35 Badminton need
38 Childhood correspondent
41 Eyeball
42 Quantity
43 Reddish brown
44 Hooded snakes
45 Foil's kin

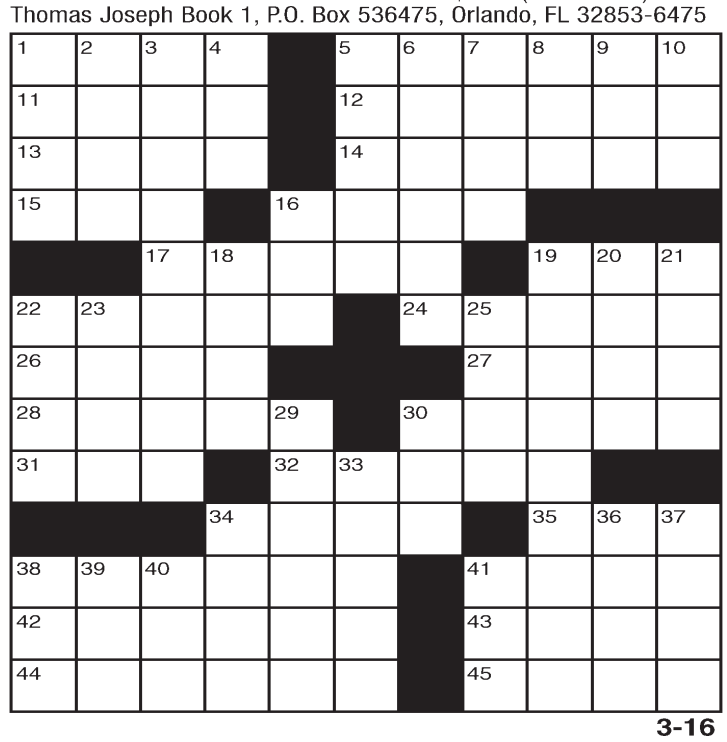
DOWN

1 Assess
2 Arkin or Alda
3 Going out of business
4 Golf support
5 Sign of indifference
6 Respites
7 Possesses
8 Operated
9 Cinch
10 Army address
16 Lot sight
18 Clutter
19 Coping
20 Clip contents
21 Earth circler
22 Not at home
23 Crimson Tide's home
25 Book part
29 Site of Sevilla
30 Disencumber
33 Irishmen
34 Boot attachment
36 Instead
37 Henri's head
38 Ocean off Cal.
39 Punk-rock offshoot
40 San Francisco's — Hill
41 Vein makeup

W	O	N	K	■	■	A	T	S	E	A
A	R	O	O	M	■	T	R	E	N	T
I	D	E	S	O	F	M	A	R	C	H
S	E	X	■	D	A	S	■	M	O	E
T	R	I	B	E	S	■	H	O	R	N
■	S	T	A	R	T	■	O	N	E	S
■	■	■	I	N	E	R	T	■	■	■
T	R	O	T	■	D	E	E	M	S	■
H	E	N	S	■	D	A	L	E	K	S
E	V	E	■	A	I	L	■	T	I	C
M	I	D	D	L	E	M	A	R	C	H
A	L	G	A	E	■	S	T	E	A	M
N	E	E	D	S	■	■	E	S	P	O

Yesterday's answer

NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send $4.75 (check/m.o.) to Thomas Joseph Book 1, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475



3-16

ARITHMO™

CrossMath + × − ÷

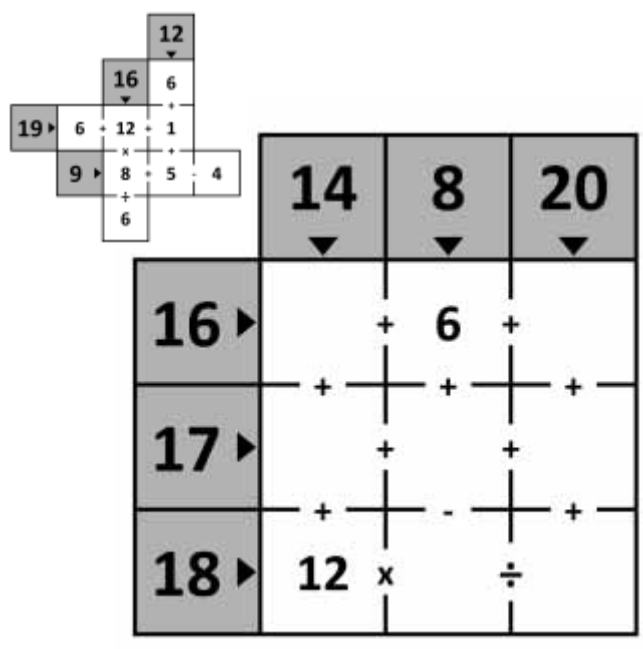
- Fill the grid with the set of given numbers (1 to 12) to satisfy the Equa demands (7 to 24) in the shaded boxes. The Equa demands represent the sum of the digits that you will insert into the empty squares.
- Each horizontal row has one Equa demand to satisfy; each vertical column also has one demand to satisfy. Each empty square in the grid dictates the math operation (addition +, subtraction -, multiplication X, and division ÷) that must be performed to meet the demands.
- You must follow the given math operations for each square and you must make sure all the numbers satisfy the demands in the shaded boxes when connected in adjacent threes and calculated together from left to right, and top to bottom.
- The numbers you insert into the grid must satisfy the Equa demands both horizontally and vertically.

For more games, go to www.arithmo.com

Fill in the empty fields with the given numbers so when calculated together they satisfy all Equas in the gray boxes:

1, 1, 5, 6, 9, 9, 11

Solution for Task 535



DAILY LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS: 10 11 12 28 43 Meganumber: 45 Jackpot: $172M

SUPER LOTTO PLUS: 11 25 26 33 45 Meganumber: 13 Jackpot: $12M

Fantasy 5: 4 10 16 25 30

DAILY 3: MIDDAY: 5 3 7 EVENING: 6 0 9

DAILY DERBY: 1st: 04 Big Ben 2nd: 02 Lucky Star 3rd: 03 Hot Shot RACE TIME: 1:43.93

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

NEWS OF THE WEIRD
BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ "You're not going to like this," warned NPR's Robert Krulwich, about to deliver a February story about visionary robotics developers James Auger and Jimmy Loizeau, who created a carnivorous clock, supposedly able to power itself for 12 days merely on the carcasses of 12 dead houseflies (which the clock traps with fly paper and then mechanically razors in two). The pair also showed a prototype of a coffee table that catches mice by luring them up the table legs with cheese into a hole in the center, where they are guillotined. Auger and Loizeau said their creations are just extensions of TV nature programs showing animals hunting in the wild, but Krulwich fretted about the dangers inherent in "giving robots a taste for (meat)."

■ Scientists have long observed male capuchin monkeys urinating on their hands and then rubbing down their bodies, but researchers were unclear about the purpose (whether for identification, or threat-prevention, or mating) -- until a recent issue of the American Journal of Primatology. Dr. Kimberly Phillips and colleagues found that the practice helps clarify mating priorities, in that, first, males rub down promptly after being solicited by females in heat, and second, based on MRI scans of capuchins' brains, female mating activity is triggered only by adults' urine.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1812 Battle of Badajoz (March 16 – April 6) – British and Portuguese forces besiege and defeat French garrison during Peninsular War.

1815 Prince Willem of the House of Orange-Nassau proclaims himself King of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, the first constitutional monarch in the Netherlands.

1818 Second Battle of Cancha Rayada – Spanish forces defeat Chileans under José de San Martín.

WORD UP!

blandishment
\ BLAN-dish-muhnt \ , noun;
1. Speech or action that flatters and tends to coax, entice, or persuade; allurement -- often used in the plural.

Santa Monica Daily Press

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Autos Wanted

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Notices

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NOTICE OF APPLICATION
TO SELL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Date of Filing Application: February 15, 2011 To Whom It May Concern: The Name(s) of the Applicant(s) is/are: MONTREE KEAWMALEE The applicants listed above are applying to the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to sell alcoholic beverages at: 1509 4TH ST., SANTA MONICA, CA 90401-2310 Type of license(s) Applied for: 41 - On-Sale Beer And Wine - Eating Place Los Angeles 3/16/11, 3/23/11, 3/30/11

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR
ARMED SECURITY GUARD SERVICES

The Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors is seeking a qualified and experienced contractor to patrol outdoor public places, providing armed security guard services in four separate Service Areas in and around Marina del Rey. Selection of a contractor will be based on the qualifications of the firms submitting Proposals as well as their prices for performing the work.

A Mandatory Proposers' Conference will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 15, 2011 at the Boathouse Conference Room, 1st. Floor, 13640 Mindanao Way, Marina del Rey. The deadline for submitting proposals will be 2:00 p.m., March 30, 2011.

Firms submitting proposals must have a minimum of five years' experience providing armed security services and be licensed as a private patrol operator. The County may require additional minimum qualifications. The contract will be subject to the County's Living Wage Ordinance, County Code Chapter 2.201.

Further information regarding the RFP is available at: http://lacounty.info/doing_business/main_db.htm

To view and print a copy of the RFP, please visit: http://beaches.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dbh/doing, and click the ``Request for Proposals`` link. The County reserves the right to cancel the RFP and to modify any and all terms and conditions of the RFP, including minimum requirements. For further information, call Nicolette Taylor at (310) 577-5736.

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DBAS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NUMBER: 20110243738 ORIGINAL FILING This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES on 03/14/2011 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as ANGELICUM HOME CARE SERVICES. The full name of registrant(s) is/are: MICHELLE CABERTE 16737 MAGNOLIA BLVD ENCINO, CA 91436. This Business is being conducted by: an Individual. The registrant has not yet commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above. /s/:MICHELLE CABERTE; PRESIDENT/OWNER. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of LOS ANGELES County on 03/14/2011. NOTICE: THIS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT EXPIRES FIVE YEARS FROM THE DATE IT WAS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK. A NEW FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT MUST BE FILED PRIOR TO THAT DATE. The filing of this statement does not of itself authorize the use in this state of a fictitious business name statement in violation of the rights of another under federal, state, or common law (see Section 14411et seq.,Business and Professions Code). SANTA MONICA DAILY PRESS to publish 03/16/2011, 03/23/2011, 03/30/2011, 04/06/2011.

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Kate Bransfield

Estates Director
Society of Excellence
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As promised, I will remind you twice a year to take care of these important safety issues:

Inside your home:

- Change the batteries in all of your smoke detectors
- Clean and/or change the filters in your furnace.
- Clean out any lint and/or fabric from the vents of your clothes dryer.
- Check electrical outlets for potential fire hazards such as frayed wires or loose fitting plugs.
- Check for overloading of electrical outlets, fuse boxes, extension cords etc.
- Keep a filled and ready-to-use, multi-purpose fire extinguisher accessible.
- Check water heater for leaks and corrosion.

In your yard:

- Remove all dead trees & keep healthy trees & shrubs trimmed & away from utility wires.
- Remove dead leaves and all debris from your gutters and downspouts.
- Repair driveway & walkways that are cracked, broken or uneven to provide a level surface.

As always, please be sure to contact me if I can be of assistance for any real estate needs.





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