

FREE

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Santa Monica Daily Press

Picked fresh daily. 100% organic news.

Hundreds demonstrate at school board meeting

Doubletree employees urge school board to intervene in union effort

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

Local hotel workers want school officials to help them unionize. Nearly 100 Doubletree Guest Suites and Hotel employees showed up at Wednesday's school board meeting, hoping the district can help them in their plight of working in what they describe as

poor conditions. The school district is the hotel's landlord — it leases the land to the Doubletree, located on Fourth Street just West of Santa Monica High School. Wednesday's protest appeared to be an attempt by union representatives to convince school district officials to help the workers unionize. Hotel employees told Santa Monica-Malibu Unified school board members they are paid below \$10 an hour and don't get adequate health insurance. They also spoke of their frustration over a campaign waged by the hotel's management to prevent the Hotel

Employees Restaurant Employees local union 814 from organizing the resort's labor force. Organizers also urged the school district to audit the Doubletree because rent paid by the hotel hasn't increased in nearly four years. Superintendent John Deasy instructed school district attorneys six weeks ago to review the lease with the Doubletree and begin an audit to ensure the hotel has been paying the proper rent. According to a report presented by the union, the 253-room Doubletree paid \$367,029 annual rent in 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001. They compared that to \$468,440

in rent the city of Santa Monica receives from the 148-room Pacific Shore Hotel, which is leased under a similar arrangement. Under the original lease — approved in 1984 — the hotel pays a flat rent that fluctuates based on room occupancy rates and the Consumer Price Index — an annual report issued by the federal government that's widely used to track inflation. However, a clause that allows for additional rent to be charged beginning in 1997 has not been executed by the school district. The union wants the Doubletree's books to be examined closely to determine

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Surfrider Beach gets \$2 million for clean-up

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON
Daily Press Staff Writer

Surfers at a world class beach in Malibu may soon be swimming in cleaner water. Surfrider Beach will get cleaned up thanks to a \$2 million state grant awarded to the city of Malibu on Thursday, said Assembly member Fran Pavley. The grant will reduce bacterial contaminants flowing into Malibu Creek and Surfrider Beach. The State Water Resources Control Board approved the grant as part of the Safe Drinking Water, Watershed Protection and Flood Protection Act of 2000. Surfrider Beach, located at the outlet of Malibu Creek, is one of the three most polluted beaches along the Santa Monica Bay. The other beaches that top the list are south of the Santa Monica Pier and Ballona Creek in Marina Del Ray, according to environmentalists. About 1.2 million people visit Surfrider Beach annually. Three major storm drains that empty

into Malibu Creek are significant sources of bacterial contamination, officials say. It is believed that the storm drains and the bedding material surrounding the drains act as conduits for bacterial contamination to the creek and ultimately, to the beach.

"(Surfrider) doesn't look bad ... I don't see things floating around, but it's the place where you feel sick sometimes after you get out."

— LEIGH KIVOWITZ
Surfer

The city's project would capture the storm drain runoff destined to the creek

See BEACH, page 3



Carolyn Sackariason/Daily Press

Water enthusiasts at Surfrider Beach in Malibu can look forward to cleaner beaches thanks to a \$2 million state grant.

Man defrauds elderly resident, police search for suspect

'Roofer' ran off with roughly \$3,000 in tools and cash

BY ANDREW H. FIXMER
Daily Press Staff Writer

A senior citizen was defrauded of nearly \$3,000 last week when a man said he would fix the victim's roof but ran off with the money and tools without making any repairs.

Santa Monica police officers responded to a call last Saturday at 7:45 a.m. that a man had approached the victim, whose name and address are being withheld by police, and offered to repair the roof of his home. However, when the victim gave the suspect tools he purchased for the job and money to buy lumber, the would-be roofer drove off and never returned. "The man notified the police department several days later," said police department spokesman Lt. Frank Fabrega. "Actually, his daughter is the one who finally

called the police." The police have not offered a description of the suspect, who they are charging with fraud and grand theft. Elderly residents often times are targeted by people running these kinds of scams because they live alone or are physically unable to make the repairs themselves, police said. Elderly victims of fraud generally do not want to report the incidents to police because they are

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Santa Monica's Daily Calendar



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Send your calendar items to the Santa Monica Daily Press!

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Big Event!

Santa Monica School's Music Program presents Stairway of the Stars. Tonight at 7:30 p.m. Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. 1855 Main Street. For information: (310) 450-8338



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★★-So-so ★-Difficult

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ New opportunities appear close to home. You might be confused by another's lack of communication and self-expression. Charge your energy where it makes a difference, as opposed to something futile. Leave work early if possible. Tonight: Rent a movie and order in!

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ You draw positive responses. You might not exactly be sure where another is coming from, but you see his or her frustration. A meeting could get off to a bad start. Give others direction without displaying any frustration. Tonight: Get together with a fun friend.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★ Don't become impatient with a difficult associate who might challenge your leadership. Deal with what you know to be practical and worth the investment of your time. Your intuition directs you with your spending and investing. Tonight: Treat yourself well.

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Your optimism delights many around you; however, someone takes exception to your cheery disposition. Be careful when running errands. Kiss work goodbye as soon as possible and join your friends. You might turn a meeting into a social event! Tonight: Play away.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★ Slow down and let another catch up! You might prefer working alone, under the circumstances. You gain when doing research or any type of project involving concentration. Brainstorm with an associate you respect later in the day. Tonight: Time away from it all!

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ Though a meeting brings better results than anticipated, you might have an unanticipated problem involving someone quite important in your life. Detach, and you'll find solutions that work for you as well as others. Tonight: Where your friends are.

♏ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★ Curb a tendency to overreact before you find yourself knee-deep in a problem. Emphasize your work and/or a public appearance. You will make quite an impression on someone. Count on it. Let another approach you with his or her ideas. Tonight: Work late — sorry.

♐ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ You're on a roll, possibly with everything but finances. You find that another understands much more than you realize. Discussions involve education and a potential trip. Don't say "no" until you get all the facts and figures. Tonight: Opt for a weekend getaway.

♑ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Someone makes an offer that's too good to refuse. You don't want to get upset. Make sure a family member or roommate completely understands what you're about to do. In any case, process a work-related matter with care. Tonight: Another tries to lure you. Let him or her!

♒ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Allow someone to make the first choice. Your sense of direction helps you sort through a problem or misunderstanding. Use more of your creativity when dealing with others. Learn to experience life from others' perspectives. Tonight: Enjoy your friends and loved ones.

♓ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★ Though you're normally a very social and gregarious person, even at work, you decide that you must focus on getting the job done. A project might not be heading in the direction you need it to. Invest more time and energy. Tonight: Soak away stress.

♈ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★★ Use your imagination when dealing with a creative entrepreneur. Together you find answers to issues that have blocked a project for quite a while. Realize, though, your limits with a boss. Clearly another is in charge and lets you know it. Tonight: Romp out the door.



QUOTE of the DAY

"I was gratified to be able to answer promptly. I said 'I don't know.'"

— Mark Twain (1835-1910)

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LOCAL



PTAs urge district to make hotel lease more profitable



Andrew H Fixmer/Daily Press

Doubletree Hotel employees wear headsets to hear interpreters translate the conversation at the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District meeting Wednesday. Workers want school officials to help them unionize.

State grant will fund beach clean-up effort

BEACH, from page 1

and disinfect it prior to its discharge into Malibu Creek and Surfrider Beach.

Cleaning up area beaches is not only about protecting the environment, but also about economics.

"Clean, safe beaches are not only a must for our children and surfers but California's economic health is directly linked to tourism," Pavley said. "If our beaches are dirty and closed because of contamination, visitors will take their spending dollars elsewhere."

Santa Monica has received about \$1.25 million to clean up its beaches, particularly near the Pico-Kenter and pier storm drains.

But Craig Perkins, the director of the city's environmental and public works department, said the project is short about \$600,000. The city is waiting for a few more grants to come through and then the project will begin.

"We are hoping to do it before the next wet season," Perkins said.

The grants will be used to install pollution prevention devices at the Centinela Drainage Basin to reduce polluted urban runoff by catching debris and trash before it

hits the Pacific Ocean.

Urban runoff is the single greatest source of water pollution in Santa Monica Bay. In the past, urban runoff flowed untreated into the ocean. Now, cities like Santa Monica and Malibu are responding to the problem.

The Santa Monica Urban Runoff Recycling Facility treats up to 500,000 gallons per day of urban runoff flowing through the Pico-Kenter and pier storm drains. The water is reused for landscape irrigation and indoor plumbing. The result is little or no urban runoff reaches the beach from the storm drains during dry weather.

But when it does rain, most surfers and swimmers know to stay out of the water for a few days because the bacteria from the runoff is dangerous.

Leigh Kivowitz, a Santa Monica resident and an avid surfer, said she is relieved to hear that Malibu's most popular surfing beach will get cleaned up.

"I always try to go up north because I don't trust it (south)," she said. "(Surfrider) doesn't look bad ... I don't see things floating around, but it's the place where you feel sick sometimes after you get out."

UNION, from page 1

if more money should be paid, union representatives said.

"We don't need to subsidize the lease of a multi-million dollar national hotel corporation. We need to look at this as a community and ask ourselves 'are we getting our fair share and are we sponsoring a company that uses unethical labor practices?'"

— ALBERT LOWE
Union spokesman

"We don't need to subsidize the lease of a multi-million dollar national hotel corporation," said Albert Lowe, the union's spokesman. "We need to look at this as a community and ask ourselves 'are we getting our fair share and are we sponsoring a company that uses unethical labor practices?'"

The Santa Monica-Malibu Council of PTAs said through a spokesman Wednesday night that the organization has endorsed the school district's decision to audit the hotel and urged the administration to make the lease as "profitable to the extent possible."

Messages left with Doubletree

General Manager Darren Vaughn were not returned Thursday.

School board president Julia Brownley said board members were not allowed to discuss the workers' request for school board intervention since the topic was not specifically advertised on the school board's agenda.

"But know Doubletree workers that we have heard you," she said.

The school board was told several weeks in advance about the protest and school board members were asked what the best night would be for the school district to hold the demonstration, union representatives said.

Hotel management would like to wage their own campaign against unionization, but union members want a vote by ballot, which would prevent a campaign and the results could not be challenged.

Hotel employees accused hotel management of threatening workers sympathetic to the union by selectively firing and cutting their hours after the economic slowdown related to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

One Doubletree hotel employee said the hotel supplied her and her children with health insurance for \$128 a month but this year the policy was canceled. She was given the option of a more expensive policy that was out of her budget.

"I struggled very hard to pay my bills all year long last year," said Flora Andrade through an interpreter. "I am very worried because my children do not have health insurance and doctors last year found a heart murmur in my son and I don't know if I can afford to get him treated without it."

Police offer tips for elderly

FRAUD, from page 1

embarrassed that they let themselves be fooled, Fabrega said.

The police department recommends the following tips before choosing a roofing professional:

- Never agree to pay for services from an unknown home improvement provider simply because they have a "today only" offer.
- Seek at least three bids on any project, and ask each contractor for references.
- Older residents or those living alone are advised to have a friend or family present to hear the presentation.
- Contact the Better Business Bureau for history and reliability on each company and contractor.
- Never sign a contract that you have not read and understand.
- Keep in mind that the lowest bid is not always the best choice.

Persons with information regarding similar scams or with questions should contact the Santa Monica Police Department at (310) 458-8474.



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OPINION

LETTERS

Harsh words for the parlor

Editor:

This is a response to the Omelet Parlor regarding the farmer's market.

• You expanded into your annex with "help" from the city. (Somehow your appli-
cation to expand was approved without much attention paid to addressing parking
and congestion).

• Perhaps your expansion has not been as successful as you wanted.

• Do you want to make the sidewalk in front of your store impassable every day
now? You use the public sidewalk, (much to the discomfort of strollers and shop-
pers), as if it were an entitlement; an outdoor waiting room, and it is always packed
on weekends.

• The families and babies and organic shoppers are NOT and never have been
your market place.

• The market has evolved into what the PUBLIC wants.

• I love it when "(a)" business tells society what is a "correct" position.

What makes you think that Main Street businesses are the only ones entitled to
the public's money? Have you declared Ocean Park YOUR personal gold mine?

• Spend as much time promoting your business as you do rationalizing your
alleged losses and leave a good thing alone.

You have the arrogance to pay 24/7 rent but you close after less than nine hours.
... get creative ... add menu items that reflect more than breakfast...

• I eat at the Omelet Parlor once in a while, but you know what? On a Sunday
morning I want to be able to eat what I want and where I want for less than 9\$ an
omelet...

• Lemme see ... a few of your customers complain about parking? over 2,000
people per weekend seem to like the market ... and they, as MOST of your clients
do, WALK to Main Street.

• You can try to shut down the food vendors at the farmer's market but it will not
solve your problem.

Mel Bloch
Santa Monica

Housing tough for all economic classes

Editor:

John Deasy with an income of \$150,000 and being Santa Monica Malibu District
School superintendent will surely locate acceptable housing eventually. The people
with the real problem are those who make only a tiny fraction of that amount. Most
of them cannot afford to rent an apartment within 15 miles of Santa Monica.

Joanne Gamlin
Santa Monica

Setting the record straight

Editor:

I would like to correct a mistake that was printed in your paper when you report-
ed that I was starting my second campaign for Santa Monica City Council.

It was 100 percent totally my mistake. I had mistakenly printed information that
thanked the over 6,000 Santa Monicans who voted for me in the last election when
it was actually just over 5,000. Sorry for the mistake.

Guess I'll just have to work even harder. But I plan to. Thanks again for your
good daily paper.

Jerry Rubin
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ENTERTAINMENT



Stars reflect on 'one of the best things Spielberg ever did'

BY SEAN DALY

Special to the Daily Press

Actress Jessalyn Gilsig will never forget the first time saw she "E.T. The Extraterrestrial" at a local theater near her childhood home in Montreal.

"I was crying so much, the man behind me gave me a tissue," recalls the "Boston Public" star, now 31. "I was really young and really freaked out because you weren't supposed to accept things from strangers. I don't remember ever crying at a movie before."

Indeed, there were many glassy eyes during the summer of 1982, when the 3-foot alien botanist first came to Earth and befriended a 10-year-old boy named Elliott.

"I actually had to go to the ladies room to get tissue because I was crying so hard," admits Wendie Malick of TV's "Just Shoot Me." And Backstreet Boy A.J. McLean remembers: "My mom got us the video and I just kept watching it over and over again. I loved it. I would love to go see it again and be like a little kid again."

This weekend, McLean will get his wish, when Universal Pictures and director Steven Spielberg release a special 20th-anniversary edition of the classic movie starring Drew Barrymore, Henry Thomas, Peter Coyote and Dee Wallace-Stone.

"I can't wait to take my kids to see it," says actor Patrick Warburton, better known as Puddy from the TV sitcom "Seinfeld." "I know the effects might not seem as spectacular as they did back then, but I think it will hold up pretty well in the theater 20 years later."

Actually, thanks to a sort of digital makeover from the folks at George Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic, Hollywood's most famous intergalactic traveler now appears not only more animated, but in many ways, well ... more human. There have also been several scenes added. And new state-of-the-art technology has also allowed Spielberg to make other minor adjustments to the film — including the replacement of handguns, in certain sequences, with walkie-talkies.

"I don't know if (making the changes) would be my cup of tea," admits "Death To Smoochy" director Danny DeVito. "But if you want to go in as a filmmaker and re-edit your work, it should be up to you."

"And here's the great thing about it," DeVito adds with a laugh, "I own 'E.T.' on DVD. So I got it without the walkie-talkies!"

John Ratzenberger, who popularized the Cliff Clavin character on "Cheers," has spent much of the past decade voicing animated characters for family movies including "Toy Story" and "Monsters, Inc." He believes there is a good reason for the changes.

"My suspicion is that when Spielberg made 'E.T.,' he

didn't have children," the actor says. "Now he has children and he sees the world through a different lens."

Ratzenberger, a father of two teenagers, suggests the director may also have underestimated the impression his film would leave on younger viewers.

"I went home and looked in my closet to see if there was an alien," laughs Victor Webster of the syndicated series "Mutant X." "And I remember the big joke around school was all the kids running around with their finger out going 'E.T. phone home.'"

Ratzenberger, however, recalls different dialogue from the film.

"My son's first swear word came from that movie," he said. "He was 5 years old and he said the 'S' word. I asked him, 'Where did you learn that?' And he said, 'E.T.'"

Still, "E.T." has become a family favorite worldwide, earning more than \$770 million at the box office.

Its secret? "The creature was so sweet and dear to the children," says Linda Blair of "The Exorcist." "It was an endearing movie. It's got a great story ... And Drew and the other kids are so darn cute!"

Malick agrees: "I think it was one of the best things Spielberg ever did."

(Sean Daly is president of Showtime Entertainment and is a regular contributor to Us Weekly and The Toronto Star).

Return of E.T.: Everyone's favorite alien gets a facelift

BY DAVID GERMAIN

AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES — The wrinkly, crinkly munchkin from outer space is coming back to Earth, his fairy-tale journey a bit longer and more benign than when he first landed in theaters 20 years ago.

Steven Spielberg's "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial" returns to theaters today, updated with a couple of previously unreleased scenes, visual enhancements, improved sound and excisions that have annoyed some purists who dislike tampering with beloved films.

And "E.T." is about as beloved as they come. Debuting June 11, 1982, the tale of a lovably homely alien befriended by a 10-year-old boy became a cultural sensation. The sight of E.T. and his buddy flying on a bicycle silhouetted against the moon is one of Hollywood's most memorable images, and the film produced one of the pithiest movie quotes ever: "E.T., phone home."

Nominated for best picture and eight other Academy Awards, winning four, "E.T." remained the all-time top-grossing film domestically for 14 years, till it was passed by the reissue of "Star Wars" and later "Titanic" and "Star Wars: Episode I

— The Phantom Menace."

A film that delighted young children, "E.T." also has been analyzed and overanalyzed, with E.T. examined as a Christlike figure and his fall to Earth compared to a reversal of Dorothy's trip from mundane Kansas to glorious Oz.

"People love to talk about 'E.T.' It holds an important place in their hearts, where they remember it from their childhood or it marks some key moment they remember in their adult lives," said "E.T." producer Kathleen Kennedy.

Many changes in the re-release are cosmetic, relying on advancements in computer imagery to enrich E.T.'s motions and facial expressions, upgrade special effects and refine backgrounds.

In a few instances, Spielberg replaced the animatronic E.T. puppet with a digitized version. That technique allowed him to restore a scene between E.T. and his human pal Elliott (Henry Thomas) in which the little alien splashes into a bathtub; the scene did not make the original film because the E.T. puppet was acting up.

The other main addition is a scene where Elliott's mother (Dee Wallace Stone) goes looking for the boy on Halloween. Cut for length in the 1982

release, Spielberg restored it because it offered a nice comic moment from 6-year-old co-star Drew Barrymore.

Two alterations have mainly bothered hard-core fans. Spielberg digitally removed guns in the hands of the government agents pursuing E.T. and Elliott, replacing them with walkie-talkies.

"The climate for guns was not as inflammatory in 1982 as it is now. ... I notice some people have accused me of being Pollyanna and too soft, and I'm sure the NRA is angry at me for taking out the guns," Spielberg said in a studio interview provided by "E.T." distributor Universal.

Since soon after the film's initial release, Spielberg had "regretted having police chasing children with guns drawn," Kennedy said.

Spielberg also had Wallace Stone record a new line to replace her character's edict that her older son (Robert MacNaughton) could not go out on Halloween dressed as a "terrorist." The word "hippie" was substituted.

The terrorist line had been deleted from the film in video releases, and it was altered in the new theatrical release in light of the Sept. 11 attacks.

"I don't think anybody wants to make

light of that in any way right now," Wallace Stone said.

Complaints circulated among critics and especially on Internet message boards when details of the "E.T." revisions became known last year.

"I feel that Spielberg, who is my favorite director, is going too far. ... Please leave your very best film alone," one fan griped on a Web site devoted to Spielberg movies.

Kennedy notes that both the original film and the updated version will be available on video releases later this year.

"For purists, it's not as though we're erasing any sign of the original," Kennedy said.

The new version of "E.T." opens in about 2,500 theaters, more than twice the number for the original's debut. The film took in \$359.2 million domestically in its initial run, which would equate to almost \$700 million today factoring in ticket-price inflation. "E.T." grossed \$40.6 million more in a 1985 reissue, and its worldwide receipts topped \$700 million.

"Adding the new footage I would guess was a darn good business move," Wallace Stone said. "It's like getting some extra prize for going back to see it again."

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STATE

Defendants guilty on all counts in dog mauling death

BY LINDA DEUTSCH

AP Special Correspondent

LOS ANGELES — A woman whose dogs mauled a neighbor to death in a San Francisco apartment building last year was found guilty Thursday of second-degree murder and involuntary manslaughter. Her husband was convicted of the latter count.

Marjorie Knoller, the first person convicted in California on a second-degree murder charge in such a case, gasped at the verdicts. Her husband, Robert Noel, showed no reaction.

Knoller dropped her head and became tearful. She turned in her seat and sought out the faces of her parents, Harriet and David Knoller, and appeared to mouth, "Help."

A large group of friends of the victim, Diane Whipple, and her domestic partner, Sharon Smith, burst into tears. Smith sobbed and wiped tears from her face.

"I feel justice was done here and that was what I was hoping for," said the victim's mother, Penny Whipple-Kelly.

Knoller, 46, was charged with second-degree murder, involuntary manslaughter and having a mischievous dog that killed someone. She was found guilty on all three counts and faces 15 years to life in prison on the murder count.

Her 60-year-old husband was charged only with the latter two counts since he wasn't home at the time of the mauling in the hall outside the couple's apartment. He also was convicted of both counts and faces up to four years.

Sentencing was set for May 10 in San Francisco.

The case had centered on how responsible Noel and Knoller were for their animals. Murder charges are rare in dog mauling cases, but prosecutors said the two attorneys knew their two huge Presa Canarios were "time bombs." The prosecution put more than 30 witnesses on the stand who said they had been terrorized by the dogs, Bane and Hera, in the past.

The defense contended that Knoller and Noel couldn't have known their animals would kill, and that Knoller tried to save Whipple by throwing herself between her neighbor and the enraged Bane. They also pointed out that the parade of prosecution witnesses didn't

come forward until long after the attack.

The jury reached decisions on four of the counts Wednesday afternoon, but the verdicts were sealed until the final charge was settled Thursday. In all, the jury deliberated for about 11 1/2 hours.

The gruesome case was a sensation in San Francisco from the outset: Whipple, a successful member of the city's gay community, was savagely killed in exclusive Pacific Heights, her throat ripped open by an exotic breed of dog known for its ferocity.

The couple acquired the dogs from a farm in 2000 after Schneider complained the animals were being turned into "wusses" there. The dogs' former caretaker later testified she had warned Knoller that Hera was so dangerous the dog "should have been shot."

Knoller's and Noel's role in their neighbor's horrific death on Jan. 26, 2001, became a subject of wide speculation. The couple quickly went public, defiantly blaming the victim.

In an interview with ABC's "Good Morning America" that was played for jurors by the prosecution, Knoller was asked about her role in the attack.

"It's not my fault," she said. "I would-

n't say I was unable to control them. I wouldn't say it was an attack. ... Ms. Whipple had ample opportunity to move into her apartment. She could have just slammed the door shut. I would have."

In closing arguments, the prosecutor called her tone "cold as ice."

The trial itself was grim: Jurors saw 77 bloody photos of Whipple's wounds, many of them blown up to wall size on a movie screen. The prosecutors said the 110-pound lacrosse coach had been bitten everywhere on her body except the top of her head and the soles of her feet.

Experts said the 120-pound Bane delivered the fatal wounds, but didn't rule out Hera as participating in the attack. Both dogs were later destroyed.

Knoller testified for three days, crying, shouting and insisting she never suspected her beloved dogs could be killers.

"I saw a pet who had been loving, docile, friendly, good toward people, turn into a crazed, wild animal," the defendant sobbed, referring to Bane. "It's still incomprehensible what he did in that hallway."

Her lawyer, Nedra Ruiz, added to the courtroom histrionics by crawling on the floor, kicking the jury box and crying dur-

ing her opening statement. In closing remarks, she attacked Smith as a liar and said the prosecutor was trying to "curry favor with the homosexual and gay folks."

Noel didn't testify and contended through his lawyer that he had no warnings the dogs would kill.

But his letters to the couple's adopted son, found in his prison cell, were read to the jury. Two weeks before the attack, Noel wrote about an incident in which Whipple was frightened by the dogs while entering the elevator at their apartment building.

The second-degree murder charge against Knoller was unusual, since there had never been a conviction on that charge in a dog mauling case in California. In fact, murder appears to have been proven only twice in U.S. dog mauling cases.

Sabine Davidson of Milford, Kan., was convicted of second-degree murder in 1997 after her three Rottweilers killed an 11-year-old boy and was sentenced to 11 years in prison. Jeffrey Mann of Cleveland was sentenced to 15 years to life in 1993 after he knocked his wife unconscious and ordered his pit bull to attack her.

Dog mauling jury didn't believe defendants

BY LINDA DEUTSCH

AP Special Correspondent

LOS ANGELES — Jurors who convicted a San Francisco couple in the dog mauling death of a neighbor said Thursday they did not believe chief defendant Marjorie Knoller and were surprised that she took the witness stand at all.

"From our point of view, her testimony was not believable," said Don Newton, 64, foreman of the seven-man, five-woman panel that convicted the couple in the death of Diane Whipple, 33, who was attacked by the couple's two huge dogs last year.

Newton said the jurors also found that her husband, Robert Noel, was probably as responsible as she was for the events.

"Robert Noel didn't seem to be a very nice person," he said.

The seven-man, five-woman jury included many dog owners.

Jeanne Sluiman, 52, said Knoller's testimony had so many inconsistencies that the jurors had to go beyond it to other facts in order to make their decisions.

That opinion was echoed by juror Shawn Antonio, 27, who said, "Because her stories were so fabricated, it was

difficult. She'd come up with 10 scenarios of what happened and the only other witness is no longer with us."

The jurors were asked their impressions of Knoller's flamboyant defense attorney, Nedra Ruiz.

"She's an amazingly dramatic person," said Newton. "She's an incredible actress and I think to some extent she was counterproductive."

Several jurors said they felt that Ruiz put on an act of being disorganized and found her antics, such as crawling on the floor, a distraction.

"I believe what she had to work with was hard," Sluiman said, "and maybe

that's what looked like the disorganization."

Antonio commented, "She was so passionate you couldn't help but get involved, but she was so scattered it through you off."

The jurors said they waited until the last to decide the most serious charge — second-degree murder against Knoller — realizing it was the most serious and the most difficult.

"It was a painful decision," said Newton. "The question of implied malice was a difficult question to decide, but we did decide there was implied malice in her actions."

Stars presenting Oscars will receive 'fabulous,' pricey gifts

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Presenters at the Academy Awards will get a pricey thank you for ripping open the envelope and announcing winners on Sunday.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences has assembled gift baskets packed with at least \$6,400 worth of luxury items each.

The Academy keeps details of the baskets secret, but some companies contributing to the packages say the final worth could be as much as \$20,000.

Julia Roberts, Jennifer Lopez and Tom Hanks will be among the dozens of presenters in line for the gifts.

After the ceremony, they can sniff \$400 bottles of JOY Perfume while relaxing in \$160 Loveletters Loungewear spa clothes

and sipping \$100 samples of Mingcha Chinese tea.

Later, they can polish their smiles by cashing in \$600 certificates for BriteSmile teeth-whitening sessions and shield their eyes from glare with \$250 TAG Heuer sunglasses.

Presenters include "Spider-Man" co-star Kirsten Dunst, "The Lord of the Rings" supporting actor nominee Ian McKellen and "The Producers" Broadway star Nathan Lane.

The gift baskets reportedly include chocolate-wrap skin treatments, designer handbags, certificates for \$1,700 shape-conforming mattresses, \$1,600 Ebel Watches and \$300 vouchers for Birkenstock shoes.

The Academy Awards will be telecast live on ABC from the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood.



Kevorc Djansezian/Associated Press

Los Angeles Police officers on bike patrol pause in front of the concrete barricades on Hollywood Boulevard in front of the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles. Security around the theater is at an all-time high as activities continue throughout the week in preparation for the 74th Annual Academy awards show which will take place on Sunday.

STATE



Hollywood in running for best urban comeback of year

BY GARY GENTILE
AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood is ready for its close-up — almost.

The famous neighborhood is undergoing a renaissance along the lines of Times Square's transformation from a seedy haunt for prostitutes and drug dealers to a glitzy destination featuring Starbucks and The Gap.

Tourists can still find tattoo parlors, cheesy souvenir shops and tacky costume stores next to upscale nightclubs and boutiques selling the latest fashions.

But on the eve of the first Academy Awards presentation here in 42 years, residents, businesspeople and tourists are saying hooray for Hollywood for the first time in decades.

"The roots are still here, still strong," said Sylvia Miceli, who with her husband Carmen has owned Miceli's Restaurant, just off Hollywood Boulevard, since 1949. "With a little watering, it will flourish again."

Many of the area's signature features remain.

The purple marquis of Frederick's of Hollywood still shines on the storied street. The beacon atop the Capitol Records building on Vine Street, built to resemble a stack of 45 rpm records, still blinks out "H-o-l-l-y-w-o-o-d" in Morse code each night.

And John Wayne's cement footprints still attract tourists in front of the landmark Chinese Theater.

Joining them over the past two years have been trendy stores like Banana Republic, nightclubs like The Knitting Factory, and eateries such as the refurbished Pig 'N Whistle, where diners can partake while reclining on queen-sized beds.

At Hollywood and Vine, 20,000 people a week have packed the renovated Pantages Theater for nearly two years for sold-out shows of "The Lion King."

The latest addition to Hollywood Boulevard is the \$615 million Hollywood & Highland project, which includes high-end shops and the Kodak Theater, the new permanent home of the Academy Awards.

To be sure, Hollywood is still seedy in spots. And the Hollywood & Highland project is having trouble attracting paying customers, in part because of a general downturn in tourism after Sept. 11 and a \$10 charge to park.

But most observers say the decline that started in the late 1960s has largely been reversed.

"Hollywood has a storied history that few neighborhoods in the world have, and you can't discount that," said Neisen Kasdin, the former mayor of Miami who oversaw the revitalization of that city's South Beach section.

Kasdin visited Hollywood last March to advise local officials on its revitalization. Getting off a bus, he saw the elements of change in place.

"There were a lot of people, very touristy," he said. "It just had that same energy Times Square had 10 years ago, a lot of sleaze."

"What you also realize is that Hollywood has a lot of beautiful architecture, it has the potential. This is something Los Angeles really lacks, a real urban space where people are out there on the sidewalks, walking and gawking."

A number of key challenges remain for

Hollywood, including how to retain its kitschy charm and resist the kind of homogenization critics say has made Times Square into a neon-lit amusement park.

Mary Simpson has lived in Hollywood for seven years and works as a cashier at the Starline Tours of Hollywood booth outside the Chinese Theater. She fears residents are being left behind by some of the renovations.

For example, she said Hollywood & Highland has done little to improve the quality of life. Instead it has brought noise, traffic congestion and parking problems.

"You have an awareness that Hollywood is an interesting place to be again."

— PAUL STOCKWELL
Broker with Julien J. Studley Inc.

"But I guess it's here to stay," she said. "We're trying to do the best we can with it."

Boosters say there is no danger that projects such as Hollywood & Highland will completely erase the neighborhood's gritty charm.

"If there is ever a place in the world where 'over the top' and excess is appropriate, it's Hollywood," said David Rockwell, the architect of the Kodak Theater. "Ultimately what Hollywood is about is layers of eccentricity. Hollywood is way too strong for a project to sanitize it. It will find its natural balance."

People are walking in Hollywood again in large part because merchants banded together in 1996 to raise \$3 million and hire armed security guards to patrol the area then populated by drug dealers and prostitutes.

In 1999, the guards made more than 1,700 citizen's arrests, mostly for drug and alcohol-related charges. In 2001, as things improved, that number dropped to 771.

"It feels safer and it is safer," said Kerry Morrison, executive director of the Hollywood Entertainment District. "Hollywood was not a pleasant place to visit (in 1996). They had faith that if they could make it clean and safe, the investment would follow."

Public and private money has been flowing into the area for nearly a decade. A key project was extending the city's subway line to connect Hollywood with downtown and the San Fernando Valley, providing a valuable link for both tourists and commuters.

A major parcel of land near the new Vine Street subway stop is also slated for new development.

This week, the new multimillion-dollar ArcLight 14-screen cinema featuring reserved, luxury seating, an upscale cafe and a \$14 ticket price — the highest in Los Angeles — opened on Sunset Boulevard and Vine.

"Five years ago, no one in the office market wanted to look in Hollywood," said Paul Stockwell, a broker with Julien J. Studley Inc. "Now, Hollywood is back on the map. You have an awareness that Hollywood is an interesting place to be again."

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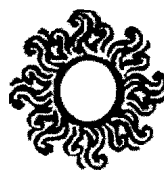
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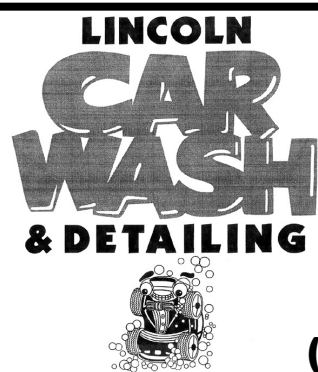
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A STEP AHEAD OF THE INDUSTRY



STATE

Idaho motorists can still drive high, federal court says

BY JESSICA BRICE

Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO — Idaho motorists can still drive high, a federal appeals court ruled Thursday.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals stood by its earlier ruling that it is legal to drive high in Idaho, as long as you can drive straight. In doing so, it shot down a request to rehear the case against an Idaho man arrested in 1998 for driving under the influence of marijuana.

Federal prosecutors asked the appeals court to review its decision after a three-judge panel overturned Matthew Patzer's impaired driving conviction in January because of a loophole in Idaho law.

Patzer was pulled over on Sept. 27, 1998, for a broken tailgate light. At the time, 21-year-old Patzer told a New Plymouth police officer that he had smoked marijuana at a party, but the court found that he had not been driving erratically and had passed two field sobriety tests. When police searched his Chevrolet Blazer, they found a small arsenal of illegal weapons.

Idaho's laws make it illegal to drive under the influence of alcohol and narcotics. But marijuana is not listed in the books as a narcotic, so police cannot assume that a person is impaired just because he smoked pot, the court ruled.

"The entirety of the government's probable cause argument in response to Patzer's appeal was that marijuana is a narcotic," the appeals court wrote. "We resolved this argument adversely to the government, finding that Idaho law consistently defines marijuana as outside the category of narcotic drugs."

"... Idaho law consistently defines marijuana as outside the category of narcotic drugs."

— COURT OF APPEALS

The court's decision also throws out the government's request to reconsider its reversal of Patzer's illegal weapons convictions. The court ruled in January that because of Patzer's unlawful arrest, it was illegal to search his vehicle.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Alan Burrow, in Boise, Idaho, said the government is considering bringing the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Highway projects trim traffic between SoCal and Nevada

By The Associated Press

FONTANA — The governors of California and Nevada teamed up Thursday to launch highway widening projects they said will speed traffic between Southern California, Nevada and Arizona.

California will spend \$160 million to widen 26 miles of Interstate 15 from four to six lanes between Victorville and Barstow.

Another \$24 million will go to traffic relief and safety projects at the Interstate 10-Etiwanda Interchange.

Riverside and San Bernardino counties — which stretch from metropolitan Los Angeles to the Nevada and Arizona borders — now have 52 projects under construction totaling \$678 million.

"Never in the history of this region have there been so many transportation improvements made at one time," said Gov. Gray Davis, who is seeking re-election this year. He was joined Thursday by Nevada Governor Kenny Guinn.

Berkeley considers ban on recycled coffee-cup sleeves

By The Associated Press

BERKELEY — Those outspoken Berkeley residents are at it again. The problem this time? Nasty used coffee-cup sleeves.

A group of people say it's a health hazard to reuse a cardboard heat shield that protects hands wrapped around hot coffee cups.

Some coffee houses in the area have been recycling the sleeves to save paper and trash, meaning people have to use a sleeve that has already been in contact with another human hand.

The issue was brought to the city council meeting Wednesday night. It was delayed until next month, when city officials will ask health officials to research the matter and consider whether to prohibit reusing the sleeves.

Santa Monica Daily Press

A paper that has issues

NATIONAL



Lack of homeless shelters a problem in Palm Beach County

BY AMANDA RIDDLE

Associated Press Writer

RIVIERA BEACH, Fla. — Surrounded by ocean-front high-rises, \$250 hotel rooms and ritzy mansions, Larry Merana goes hungry and sleeps on a scrap of beach.

He's been homeless for a month in Palm Beach County, known for its pockets of millionaires and fancy resorts but a place without enough shelters for its estimated 4,000 homeless.

"When people say Palm Beach they think of wealth," said county commissioner Addie Green. "That's why a lot of our elected officials are putting their head in the sand. They don't want to admit that beautiful Palm Beach has homeless people."

Merana lost his \$17.50-per-hour carpentry job in February and was forced to move out of his \$1,600-per-month apartment and sell his car. He has a college degree, but works day labor for \$32 a day as he looks for a permanent job.

"Who can you call?" scoffed Merana, 49, at a park bench on Singer Island, a tourist destination. "There's no one to call. There's a sign there to call for shelters. It's a joke."

Merana said the county needs a place for the "transient homeless," people who have no security net to fall back on when they lose their jobs.

"They want to get rid of us," he said. "We're a parasite."

A January report by the National Coalition for the Homeless ranked the county among the 12 "meanest" places in the country for the homeless.

"(Elected officials) don't want to admit that beautiful Palm Beach has homeless people."

— ADDIE GREEN
County commissioner

A shelter run by the Salvation Army in Palm Beach County closed in 1997. Since then, a patchwork of non-profit groups provides beds for people who fit a profile, such as those who need mental health or substance abuse treatment, domestic violence victims or women and children.

"They need a place here in Palm Beach County where a person can shower," said Ken Bowers, director of Operation Hope, a nonprofit that operates subsidized

apartments for men and shelters for women, children and people with HIV/AIDS.

County officials are discussing a 24-hour emergency shelter that would take anyone off the streets but there's no consensus on whether the facility should provide meals, beds and a hot shower or be a place that helps the homeless take steps toward becoming self-sufficient.

Either would have helped Granville Dames, a 30-year-old single father of two. He was evicted from his two-bedroom apartment last November when work as an appliance delivery man slowed and he couldn't pay his rent.

He and his two sons, ages 9 and 8, slept in his truck for a day before moving into a drug-infested rooming house.

"I called so many places. These places are for women with kids," said Dames, who recently moved into Operation Hope's apartments and pays \$130 per month in rent. "I was in between a rock and a hard place."

Farther south, Miami Beach commissioners voted Wednesday to ban people from living in public spaces. Police officers must offer violators a chance to stay in a shelter, and they can fine or arrest those who refuse. If beds in shelters are not available, officers cannot arrest offenders or order them to leave.

American Civil Liberties Union attorney Ben Waxman said the ordinance "is designed to criminalize homelessness."

State senators furious over loss of dining room privileges

BY REBECCA COOK

Associated Press Writer

OLYMPIA, Wash. — A \$100 million Capitol renovation means Washington state senators will temporarily lose their private dining room and French chefs, and have to eat the same food served to the public.

The response was swift. "THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE," wrote Sen. Don Benton, R-Vancouver, in a letter signed by 36 of the 49 state senators. "We as members of the Senate, have come to look forward to the quality food prepared by Jean-Pierre and Kerri, as well as the quiet camaraderie (sic) of our fellow Senators in a private setting."

Restaurant owners Jean-Pierre and Kerri Simon cook for the Senate part-time. While writing a budget that cut \$685 million in services and laid off hundreds of state workers, the Senate honored its favorite chefs with a standing ovation last week.

Benton and co-signers defended their food fight.

"My lunch breaks are typically 15 minutes to half an hour, then I have appointments," said Sen. James Hargrove, D-Hoquiam. "The point for me is to have some peace and quiet. It seems like much ado about nothing."

Senators pay for meals, which covers most of the operating cost of their dining room, said Tom Cook,

the Senate secretary. The temporary legislative lunchroom will be cramped, with room for about 40 people — not enough for all 147 legislators. Plus, lawmakers will be forced to eat the same food served to the public.

"Oh! The humanity!" mocked TV commentator Ken Schram, who suggested voters kick complaining lawmakers out of office so "the only private dining those senators will have to fret over will be a booth at

"The point for me is to have some peace and quiet. It seems like much ado about nothing."

— JAMES HARGROVE
Senator

Denny's."

"Education just got clobbered in the state budget," said schools advocate Lisa Macfarlane of Seattle after stifling a

laugh. "If it took a private dining room for them to come up with a long-term solution, we'd cook."

Senators who did not sign the letter raised the

possibility that demanding a private lunchroom and chefs may be a bit unseemly for public servants.

"It's very poorly timed at a time we're asking state employees to do more with less," said Senate Minority Leader Jim West, R-Spokane, told The Olympian newspaper, which first reported the letter. "When we're asking other state workers to be frugal ... we should be, too."

Some senators have

talked about driving lawmakers to Jean-Pierre's Garden Room, the Simons' restaurant. Cook said he and facilities committee members are trying to solve the space problem — but shuttling members to a restaurant isn't on the menu.

"The main issue is space," Cook explained. He said the Senate might reserve conference rooms for members to use during lunchtime.



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NATIONAL

Schools contact parents to tell them their child is fat

BY JOANN LOVIGLIO
Associated Press Writer

PHILADELPHIA — Some parents are getting letters home from school these days, but not because their youngsters are acting up or flunking out. The problem is their children are too fat.

The letters are worded with more sensitivity than that, of course, but the idea is to encourage parents to change their children's eating habits and help them get more exercise.

Parents of students in the East Penn school system in Pennsylvania and in Florida's Citrus County district have been getting such weight alerts since the fall.

"When an examination reveals a child has vision problems, hearing problems, we inform the family. We weren't doing anything for weight," said George Ziolkowski, director of pupil personnel services for the 6,800-student East Penn district, about 60 miles northwest of Philadelphia. "If we have information that may have some bearing on a child's future health, why just put it in a drawer?"

Stephanie Hertzog said the letter she received about her 12-year-old son Michael, a fifth-grader, came as no surprise to either of them.

"He's a very husky boy. We know about his weight problem," she said, adding that the notification helped her broach the subject with her son.

About 380 confidential letters have gone out to elementary and middle school students since the program began in the fall, with more expected once high school screenings are completed, Ziolkowski said.

He said it took months to craft the letter, and school nurses and health educators worked to ensure it contained neutral language that would not make parents feel they were being blamed.

Similarly, the letter sent in Citrus County assures parents that the purpose is to "assist in appraising, protecting and promoting the health status of your child. It is intended to encourage good nutritional habits and healthy physical activity."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the percentage of children and adolescents who are defined as overweight has more than doubled since the early 1970s, constituting a public health epidemic.

Nationwide, about 13 percent of children and adolescents are overweight or obese, as are nearly 60 percent of adults, according to a report released in December by then-Surgeon General David Satcher. Being overweight can contribute to diabetes and high blood pressure.

Computer games and television are among the reasons given for the problem, along with busy parents who rely on fast food for their kids.

Florida has mandated that the state Health Department gather data on student health and offer counseling to overweight youngsters. State health officials left it up to local health departments on how to do that.

In Citrus County, about 65 miles north of Tampa, the 15,000-student district and the county health department send every parent the results of a body-mass test, with a box checked indicating whether the child is normal, overweight, at risk of being overweight, or underweight. The letters alert parents of overweight children to the health risks.

Some parents complained that the school system was only calling attention to their child's weight problem, "when the fact of the matter is that they're reminded of that fact every day" by classmates, said Sylvia Byrd of the Florida Health Department's School Health Program.

Magazine touts 13 cities, calling them all the greatest

By The Associated Press

DETROIT — A men's magazine says the Motor City is the Greatest City on Earth — and so are 12 other North American cities.

Maxim printed 13 versions of its April issue, each touting a different city as the greatest. About 75,000 copies of the magazine named Detroit No. 1. It was distributed throughout Michigan, Ohio and Indiana.

"I felt a little guilty," senior editor James Heidenry said.

"We just couldn't bring ourselves to tell the Southies in Boston that they weren't No. 1, or the people in New York that they weren't No. 1. So like a guy juggling different girlfriends, we told them all they were No. 1."

Maxim's circulation tops 2.5 million, three times more than GQ.

Heidenry likened Detroit to the Coupe de Ville and said, "What American guy doesn't love Detroit?"

Students drop pants in class

By The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Some third-grade students said they were made to drop their pants during an in-class search for \$5 in missing lunch money, according to school district investigators.

Kansas City School District spokesman Edwin Birch said at least one set of parents told district officials that a male adult searched boys in a class, while girls searched other girls.

Letters sent this week to parents of all Pitcher Elementary students said district investigators may ask to talk to students who might have witnessed the search.

District policy states students cannot be required to undress during searches, which must be conducted in front of adult witnesses and never in front of other students.

School officials promised disciplinary action if necessary.

INTERNATIONAL



U.S. intelligence suspects Shining Path in Peru bombing

BY JOHN J. LUMPKIN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S. intelligence suspects Shining Path guerillas detonated a car bomb near the U.S. Embassy in Lima, Peru, to embarrass Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo before President Bush's visit on Saturday.

No one claimed responsibility for the bombing late Wednesday. Both intelligence and defense officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it bears hallmarks of previous attacks by Shining Path, a Maoist rebel group.

The car bomb, which was detonated outside a bank, was believed to be made of a potent mix of ammonium nitrate, a petroleum product such as fuel oil, and dynamite, a U.S. intelligence official said.

The blast, from about 66 pounds of explosives, shattered windows and destroyed nearby cars, leaving the street in front of the U.S. Embassy compound littered with bodies and wreckage.

No U.S. citizens were among the nine people confirmed killed. One of the dead was a Peruvian police officer assigned to guard the embassy, which remained open, State Department spokesman Philip Reeker said.

Shining Path is also the likely suspect in an attack early Wednesday on a branch office of the Telefonica phone company in the town of Los Olivos, about 10 miles from the capital, a State Department official said.

Supporters of the group recently were distributing anti-U.S. propaganda and threatening to disrupt Bush's visit, a defense official said. The United States has obtained some other, unspecified information suggesting Shining Path was planning an attack, a U.S. official said.

The Shining Path guerrilla movement — labeled by the United States as a terrorist group — aims to install a communist state through a peasant uprising. It tried to overthrow the Peruvian government in the 1980s and 1990s with waves of bombings, assassinations and peasant massacres.

The fighting, which included the Marxist insurgency of the smaller Tupac Amaru movement, left 30,000 dead.

Most were rural people killed in the cross fire between Shining Path and government troops.

The 1992 capture of Shining Path's founder and leader, Abimael Guzman, and a fierce crackdown by the government, devastated the group. Its last car bombing in Lima was in 1997. But its ideals still inspire a Maoist insurgency fighting a bitter war on the other side of the world, in Nepal.

A man known as "Artemio" is now believed to head the organization, officials said.

The group attempted several bombings of U.S. diplomatic buildings in the early 1990s. It has fallen from its height of perhaps 10,000 fighters to fewer than 500 combatants in scattered bands in jungle valleys of eastern Peru. Many credit the success to former President Alberto Fujimori's iron-fisted tactics, including the use

of secret tribunals. At the time, the United States criticized those tribunals; it is now considering similar courts for alleged al-Qaida terrorists captured in the war in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Peruvian officials announced in December they had broken up efforts to form a Shining Path cell in the capital to plot bombing attacks, including against the U.S. Embassy.

The Tupac Amaru movement is best known for a four-month siege of the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima in 1996-97.

President Bush called the attackers "two-bit terrorists" and went ahead with plans to visit Lima on Saturday to meet with Toledo and leaders from Colombia, Bolivia and Ecuador. He is also traveling to Mexico and El Salvador during the trip.

U.S. fighter jet crashes; pilot killed

BY DAVID RISING

Associated Press Writer

BERLIN — A U.S. fighter jet on night maneuvers crashed in Germany near Trier, killing the pilot, the military said Thursday.

The F-16 jet can carry a crew of one or two, but the pilot, from the 52nd Fighter Wing, was the only person aboard in the crash Wednesday evening, said Maj. Scott Vadnais, spokesman for the U.S. Air Force Europe.

Base spokesman Maj. Francisco Hamm identified the pilot as Capt. Luke A. Johnson, 26, of Powell Park, Wyo.

"As far as we know he was just on a routine training mission," Hamm said. "At this point our thoughts are with the family."

The plane went down about two miles outside Spangdahlem Air Base, near the Luxembourg border between the towns of Landscheid and Hof Hau, while on routine night maneuvers, said Air Force Staff Sgt. Cindy York, a base spokeswoman.

The Air Force said the plane crashed in an unpopulated, wooded area along a logging road. There were no injuries on the ground.

Early reports were that the pilot had been practicing "touch-and-go" maneuvers — touching down on the runway and immediately taking off again — but York said she could not confirm that.

"He was flying a normal training mission, we don't know specifically what he was doing," York said.

There was light rain and fog at the time, York said. It is not yet clear what caused the crash, and investigators were on the scene.



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INTERNATIONAL

Bush says 'two-bit terrorists' will not deter him

BY SONYA ROSS

Associated Press Writer

EL PASO, Texas — President Bush said Thursday “two-bit terrorists” who exploded a bomb near the U.S. Embassy in Peru would not stop him from going there as part of a Latin American trip.

Bush said “we might have an idea” who set off the bomb. “They’ve been around before,” he said. He spoke in the Oval Office minutes before leaving the White House for a flight to Mexico, the first leg of a four-day trip that also will take him to Lima, Peru, and El Salvador to promote democracy and reform.

The President did not identify the group who might have set off the bomb about four blocks from the Embassy in the Peruvian capital. But he nodded when a reporter asked if the terrorist group Shining Path, thought to be in eclipse, was on the upsurge.

Two U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Shining Path is suspected in the Wednesday night attack.

At least nine people were killed and dozens injured in the blast near an open shopping mall. None was American, the State Department said.

“You bet I am going,” Bush said, indicating he wasn’t worried about security for the trip.

“You know, two-bit terrorists aren’t going to prevent me from doing what we need to do, and that is to promote our friendship in the hemisphere,” he said.

White House spokeswoman Claire Buchan said, “We have talked to security

officials on the ground and are satisfied that it will safe for the president to travel there.”

Bush will be the first sitting U.S. president to visit Peru.

Before departing he met privately at Andrews Air Force Base with Milton Green. Green’s wife, Barbara, and her daughter, Kristen Wormsley, were killed when a terrorist set off grenades in a Protestant church in Islamabad, Pakistan, where the Greens worked at the U.S. Embassy. Green had flown back to the United States with the bodies of his wife and stepdaughter.

The first stop on Bush’s trip was to be Monterrey, Mexico, for a two-day U.N. development conference, where Bush was to promote a new aid plan with billions of dollars he plans to distribute to poor countries that demonstrate an intent to fight corruption.

Before crossing into Mexico, Bush visited El Paso to see U.S. operations at the 1,951-mile border. He was announcing that his administration reached a 22-point border agreement with Mexico much like the one Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge signed with Canada in December.

A list of goals, planned technology studies and information-sharing commitments, the U.S.-Mexico agreement to be signed in Monterrey on Friday is designed to tighten border security after the Sept. 11 terror attacks while also preventing border traffic jams and other delays to trade.

In interviews Wednesday, Bush said he has reached no decision whether to con-

solidate federal agencies that handle border duties, as has been recommended. He stressed, however, that the United States wants to tighten processes so that the border, “la frontera,” cannot be violated by drug traffickers or terrorists.

“Here’s what I want to achieve: a border that recognizes how much traffic there is, normal traffic,” Bush told Spanish-language network Univision, referring to trucks and workers who cross the border and back each day to get to their jobs.

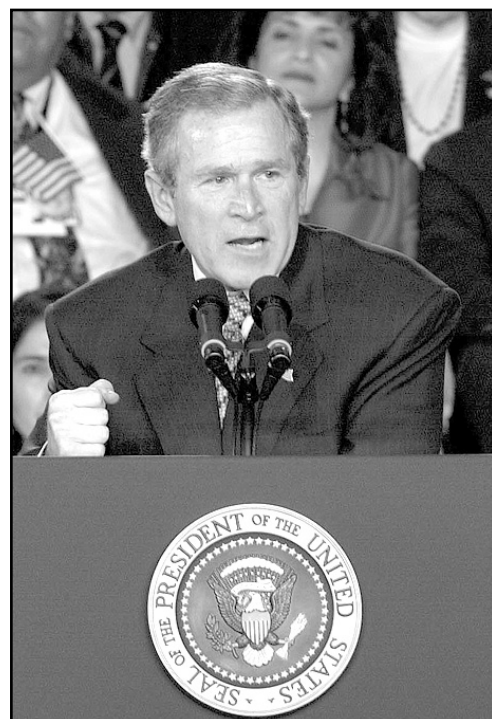
Bush planned to announce minor new initiatives — what Rice called “a lot of small things” — aimed at creating jobs in the poorest areas of Mexico.

Under the new foreign aid initiative disclosed last week, Bush would offer poor countries about \$1.7 billion the first year, about \$3.3 billion in the second year and \$5 billion in the third and subsequent years. If approved by Congress, the money would reward nations that are fighting corruption and implementing political reforms.

Opposition to Bush’s plan awaited him in Monterrey. During a forum of non-governmental organizations last week, officials denounced the proposal and called for an alternative “that puts people in the center of development.”

Cuban President Fidel Castro will be at the summit, but Bush’s national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, said firmly that Bush has no plans to cross paths with the communist leader.

The president also has not decided whether to resume drug surveillance flights over Peru or seek a base of U.S.



Kenneth Lambert/Associated Press

President Bush speaks about fighting terrorism during a speech at El Paso International Airport in El Paso, Texas on Thursday before kicking off a four-day trip through Latin America, traveling first to Mexico.

counterterrorism operations near Peru’s border with Colombia, Rice said.

The flights were suspended after a Peruvian air force jet, working in coordination with a CIA surveillance plane, shot down a missionary plane on April 20, 2001, killing two people and injuring two other members of the same family.

Back-to-back bombings deal blow to U.S. cease-fire efforts

BY KARIN LAUB

Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM — A former Palestinian policeman blew himself up in the heart of Jerusalem’s shopping district Thursday, killing three Israelis, wounding more than 60 people and prompting Israel to call off a round of U.S.- brokered truce talks.

Moments after the late afternoon blast, the dead and injured lay on a blood-splattered pavement on King George Street, amid glass shards and twisted awnings from a hat boutique, a shoe store and a candy shop. A policeman screamed for help. Passers-by knelt over a wounded young boy. More than 60 people were injured.

The Al Aqsa Brigades, a militia linked to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat’s Fatah faction, claimed responsibility for the bombing, which came a day after an Islamic militant set off explosions on a crowded bus in northern Israel, killing himself and seven others.

In Washington, the Bush administration said it is taking steps to declare the Al Aqsa group a terror organization. Secretary of State Colin Powell called Arafat and demanded that he denounce the bombing, spokesman Philip Reeker said. Later, Powell called Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, the state department said. Sharon’s office said Powell expressed condolences.

In a rare step, Arafat personally condemned the bombing and promised to take immediate steps to prevent such attacks.

But President Bush said he was “disappointed” by Arafat’s response to calls for

an end to attacks on Israel. “We’ve set some strong conditions,” Bush said. “We expect Mr. Arafat to meet those conditions.”

Thursday night’s scheduled talks between Israeli and Palestinian security officials were called off — by Israel, the Palestinians said — and it was not clear whether the meeting would resume.

U.S. truce negotiator Anthony Zinni met with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and senior Cabinet ministers late Thursday in an apparent effort to rescue his mission.

Israel held Arafat directly responsible. In a veiled warning that retaliation might be forthcoming, a statement from Sharon’s office said, “Israel cannot continue for long a unilateral effort” to enforce a cease-fire. The statement said that Arafat “is solely responsible for the murderous terrorism.”

On Wednesday in an effort not to disrupt Zinni’s mission, Israel refrained from military action after the bombing on a commuter bus that killed the assailant and seven passengers.

“We must act,” Israeli Interior Minister Eli Ishai said Thursday. “We are in a war, and the Americans must understand that.”

Al Aqsa Brigades identified the suicide bomber as 22-year-old Mohammed Hashaika, a former Palestinian policeman.

Hashaika was arrested two months ago by Palestinian security agents as he prepared to carry out a suicide bombing in Israel, the militia said. Hashaika was released from a Palestinian lockup in Ramallah last week, on the first day of an Israeli incursion into the West Bank town.

Israeli security sources said Hashaika was among dozens of suspected militants



Ivan Benitez/Associated Press

An Israeli police officer, right, shouts for help as others tend to an injured man following a bomb blast at a main shopping area in downtown Jerusalem on Thursday. A Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up in a main downtown Jerusalem shopping area Thursday, killing himself and two bystanders. At least 42 were injured, police said.

Israel had asked the Palestinian Authority to arrest.

An Al Aqsa spokesman, who used a nom de guerre, Abu Mujahed, said the militia would not stop attacks until there is a truce agreement. The spokesman said Arafat has not given orders to stop attacks on Israelis.

A weary-looking Arafat summoned journalists to his Ramallah headquarters Thursday evening, and read a prepared statement in Arabic. “We strongly condemn this military operation ... especially since it was against innocent Israeli civilians,” Arafat said, adding that he would take immediate efforts “to put an

end to such attacks.” It was not clear if he made the statement after speaking with Powell.

Wednesday’s bus bombing was carried out by the militant Islamic Jihad group, which has said it would not honor a cease-fire under any circumstances.

Thursday’s explosion went off at about 4:25 p.m. at the foot of Jerusalem’s tallest office tower and near cafes, shops and a falafel stand.

The bomber had raised suspicions of pedestrians, a witness, Adi Aluz, told Israel’s Channel 1 TV. He said the suspect wore a denim coat with a hood and kept smiling and looking backward.

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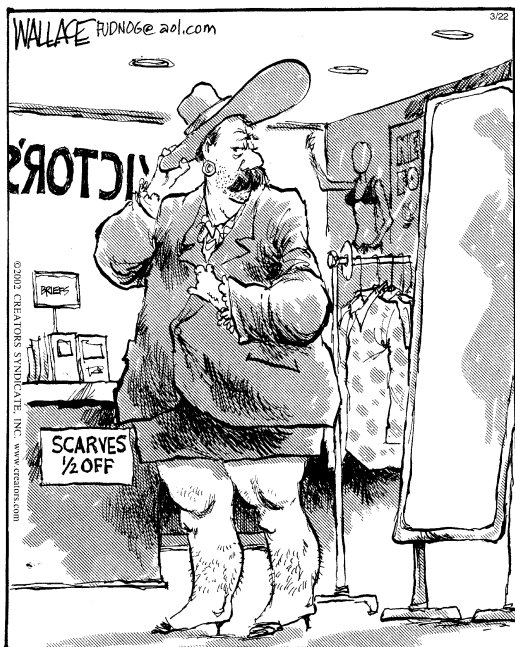


COMICS

The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



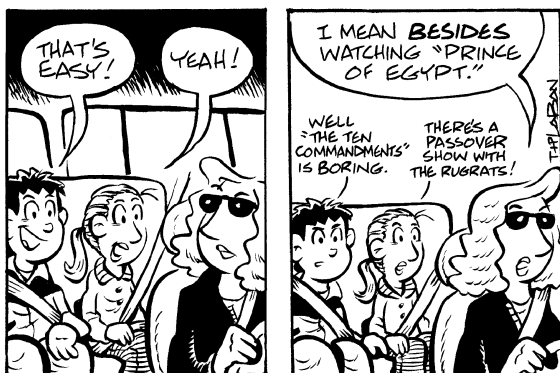
Natural Selection® By Russ Wallace



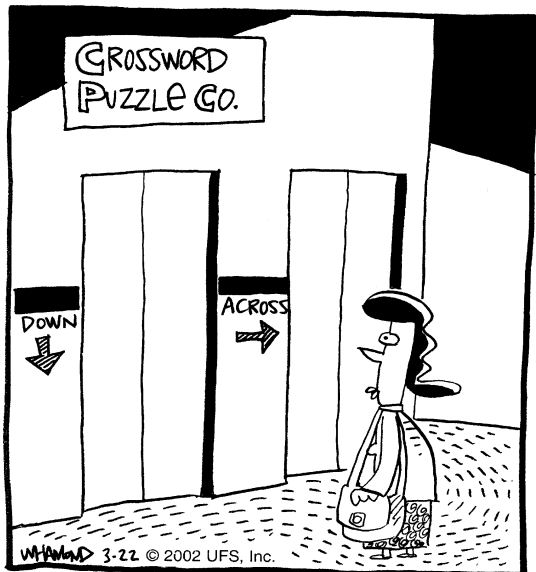
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CROSSWORD By THOMAS JOSEPH

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Yesterday's answer

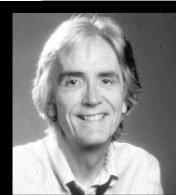
- ACROSS**
- 1 Needed a massage
6 Forehead hider
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12 "Cats" creator
13 Plow pioneer John
14 Reach
15 High hit
16 Relaxing resort
18 Not to mention
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20 Comfy room
21 Brenner of "The King and I"
22 More profound
24 Some NCOs
25 Building worker
27 Bucks, e.g.
29 Be boisterous
32 Time of preparation
33 Apiece
34 Low digit
35 Unruly bunch
36 Poetic contraction
- 37 King of the XVIII dynasty
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5 City of Saxony
6 Kicked off
7 Heady brew
8 Essential details
9 Became known
10 Milking aids
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30 "Mona Lisa" holder
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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Character not an issue in alleged rapist case

Canada's British Columbia Court of Appeal reversed the child sexual assault conviction against Hugo Oswald Castaneda in October, even though he had admitted having sex with a 12-year-old girl, because the prosecutor had gone too far in attempting to persuade the jury that Castaneda was a bad person. According to Justice John Hall, the government delved too deeply into Castaneda's admitted drug-dealing and other unrelated criminal activities when, according to Castaneda's lawyer, his general "character" was not at issue in the trial.



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