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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2009

Volume 8 Issue 120

Santa Monica Daily Press

THE TOWN THAT SAID 'NO'
SEE PAGE 14

We have you covered

THE TOUCHING EVERY BASE ISSUE



Photo courtesy Nubia Calvo

GROWTH: **A flatbed full of native shrubs that will compete with exotic plant species in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Some of these shrubs were planted by 'Ecohelpers,' a student outreach program that brings inner-city youth to assist park rangers in their duties.**

Fighting to survive

BY TEDDY LESHNICK
Special to the Daily Press

SM MOUNTAINS These hills are under attack by foreign invaders. Fending off exotic plants, global warming and development are some of the challenges facing the park rangers stationed in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

Luckily these rangers have some back up — students. Through the Parks as Classrooms program, which was launched in 1992, 50,000 students from around Southern California visit the Santa Monica Mountains each year. The objective is to introduce national park resources to students and teachers nationwide.

The relationship between the students and rangers is symbiotic. Students from the inner-city, some who have never been in nature before, learn about their local ecosystems. The rangers in return have new foot soldiers in the battle against non-native plant species.

"The kids love it because most don't get to come to the mountains at all," Jamie Hawkins, a special education teacher from Joaquin Miller Career and Transition Center, said. "It's about seeing their world and being aware."

The Santa Monica Mountains park rangers have a simple motto.

"To preserve for the future while allowing enjoyment," Park Ranger Barbara Applebaum said.

THREATS TO WILDLIFE

Park rangers are trying hard to maintain a balance between private development and the inter-connectivity of the various ecosystems in the Santa Monica Mountains.

However, "humans are serving as barri-

SEE MOUNTAINS PAGE 13

District considers increasing class sizes

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SMMUSD HDQTRS As school district officials continue to address a budget deficit caused by state funding cuts, one area likely to take a hit is class sizes.

The teacher-to-student ratio is expected to increase at nearly every grade level and school starting in September, potentially saving the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District about $1.2 million.

District officials last week presented projected staffing ratios for the 2009-10 academic year, showing that class sizes could jump from 20-to-1 to 23-to-1 for kindergarten to third grade at all schools.

Class sizes at John Adams Middle School are slated to increase from 29-to-1 to 30-to-1 and from 31-to-1 to 32-to-1 for all other secondary schools, including Santa Monica High School.

The staffing ratio change is just one of several cost savings measures the SMMUSD is considering instituting next year, including laying off or reassigning administrators in the district central office, reorganizing the House System at Samohi, and reducing the budget for special education to reflect actual expenditures.

The fourth and fifth grade classes at both John Muir and McKinley will actually decrease to align with the staffing ratios at the other two Title 1 schools. Doing so will reduce the size from 30-to-1 to 25-to-1. Title 1 schools typically have a higher population of students from low-income families who receive some form of federal assistance.

"We believe the district has done a

SEE CUTS PAGE 11



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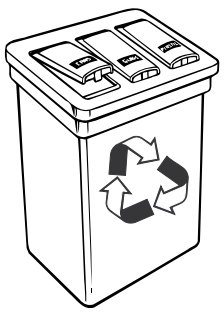
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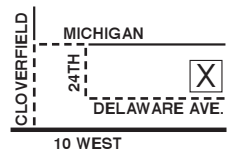
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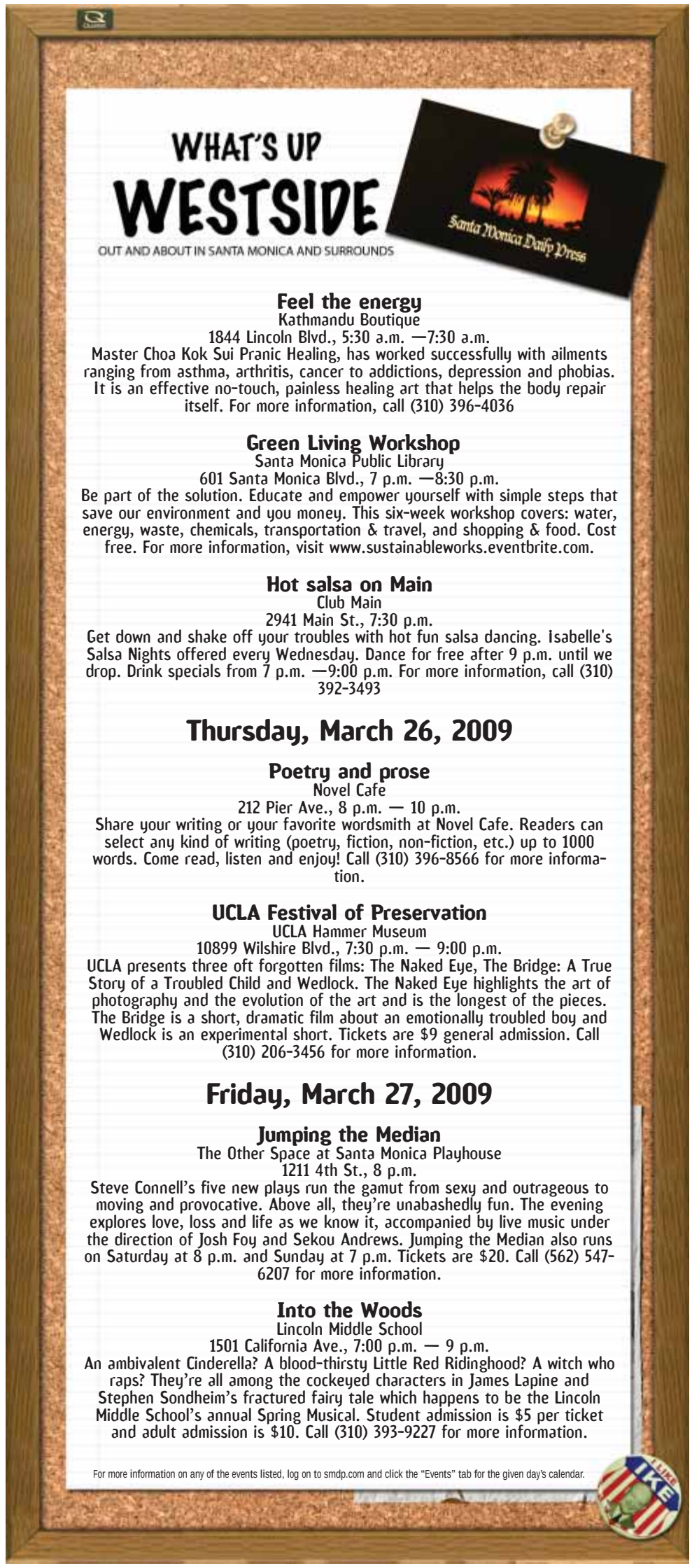
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OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS

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Green Living Workshop
Santa Monica Public Library
601 Santa Monica Blvd., 7 p.m. —8:30 p.m.
Be part of the solution. Educate and empower yourself with simple steps that save our environment and you money. This six-week workshop covers: water, energy, waste, chemicals, transportation & travel, and shopping & food. Cost free. For more information, visit www.sustainableworks.eventbrite.com.

Hot salsa on Main
Club Main
2941 Main St., 7:30 p.m.
Get down and shake off your troubles with hot fun salsa dancing. Isabelle's Salsa Nights offered every Wednesday. Dance for free after 9 p.m. until we drop. Drink specials from 7 p.m. —9:00 p.m. For more information, call (310) 392-3493

Thursday, March 26, 2009

Poetry and prose
Novel Cafe
212 Pier Ave., 8 p.m. — 10 p.m.
Share your writing or your favorite wordsmith at Novel Cafe. Readers can select any kind of writing (poetry, fiction, non-fiction, etc.) up to 1000 words. Come read, listen and enjoy! Call (310) 396-8566 for more information.

UCLA Festival of Preservation
UCLA Hammer Museum
10899 Wilshire Blvd., 7:30 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.
UCLA presents three oft forgotten films: The Naked Eye, The Bridge: A True Story of a Troubled Child and Wedlock. The Naked Eye highlights the art of photography and the evolution of the art and is the longest of the pieces. The Bridge is a short, dramatic film about an emotionally troubled boy and Wedlock is an experimental short. Tickets are $9 general admission. Call (310) 206-3456 for more information.

Friday, March 27, 2009

Jumping the Median
The Other Space at Santa Monica Playhouse
1211 4th St., 8 p.m.
Steve Connell's five new plays run the gamut from sexy and outrageous to moving and provocative. Above all, they're unabashedly fun. The evening explores love, loss and life as we know it, accompanied by live music under the direction of Josh Foy and Sekou Andrews. Jumping the Median also runs on Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 7 p.m. Tickets are $20. Call (562) 547-6207 for more information.

Into the Woods
Lincoln Middle School
1501 California Ave., 7:00 p.m. — 9 p.m.
An ambivalent Cinderella? A blood-thirsty Little Red Ridinghood? A witch who raps? They're all among the cockeyed characters in James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim's fractured fairy tale which happens to be the Lincoln Middle School's annual Spring Musical. Student admission is $5 per ticket and adult admission is $10. Call (310) 393-9227 for more information.

For more information on any of the events listed, log on to smdp.com and click the "Events" tab for the given day's calendar.

PREP SPORTS ROUNDUP

St. Monica softball ends losing streak

BY DANIEL ARCHULETA
Managing Editor

St. Monica Catholic High School's softball team ended a minor losing streak last week with a 3-1 win over Alhambra High School during the Whittier Tournament.

With the win, the Mariners improved its record to 5-4 on the season. Next up for St. Monica is a game against Ramona Convent, also from Alhambra. The game will be played on Thursday and is part of the Memorial Tournament.

ST. MONICA VOLLEYBALL HEATS UP

After a slow start that included a pair of losses to begin the season, St. Monica's boys volleyball team has begun to heat up. The team has won four out of the last six.

The team, which is 4-5 on the season, will travel to Brentwood High School today for a 5 p.m. match. Brentwood is an impressive 7-1 this season.

SAMOHI VOLLEYBALL ON MODEST STREAK

Santa Monica High School's boys volleyball team is riding a modest two-game win streak. Victories over Palisades and El Segundo have helped the Vikings even its record at 3-3.

Samohi began the season by losing its first two games to Bishop Montgomery and Granite Bay, but have won three of four since.

SAMOHI SOFTBALL HITS ROAD

Fresh off the High Desert Classic, Samohi's softball team will travel to take on Redondo today at 3:15 p.m.

The Vikings, victorious in its last game against Burbank, began the season 6-3. The team participated in five tournaments this season, but will leave those behind as it completes the rest of its preseason schedule. The team's first Ocean League game will take place March 30 against Inglewood.

VIKINGS BASEBALL TAKES TO THE ROAD

Since beginning the season 4-1, Samohi's baseball team has lost two in a row. The latest setback came at Banning on March 21.

Senior Tyler Skaggs tossed five innings of

SEE ROUNDUP PAGE 12



Morgan Genser *news@smdp.com*

GETTING BACK JUST IN TIME: **Crossroads High School catcher Jake Rosenblatt (right) avoids being tagged out at first base by Sierra Canyon's David Rosenberg on Tuesday at Clover Park. Crossroads won the game 12-1. The game was called after the fifth inning due to the mercy rule, which states that if any team is up by 10 or more runs after five innings the game will end early. With the win, Crossroads improved its record to 5-1.**

Greenopia measures fast food restaurants

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

SUNSET PARK Fast food isn't always considered the healthiest option, but diners can now alleviate at least some of that guilt by eating green.

Santa Monica-based Greenopia recently released a new rating system for the nation's 23 most popular fast food restaurants, evaluating the eateries based on characteristics that include building design and corporate commitment to the environment.

Greenopia runs an online directory of eco-friendly products and businesses and publishes a local Zagat-style guide that includes everything from environmental friendly grocers to pet stores.

"There's a really strong growth of interest in making sure that we're both consuming non toxic and healthy foods but also doing that from organizations that are also conscious about the impact of doing business on the environment," said Gary Bishop, the chief operating officer for Greenopia.

A team of researchers selected 23 of the most popular chains and rated them on a scale of zero to four leafs, evaluating the companies based on factors that include the carbon footprints of products served.

"If a company has a biodiesel fuel fleet of delivery vehicles, that is going to have a different impact from someone using rail or other modes of mass transit," Bishop said.

He said that Greenopia plans to review the fast food eateries again in four to six months, noting that it takes time for restaurants to institute changes.

Among the recognized businesses that received less than four stars are Panera Bread and Peet's Coffee.

Peets, which has locations on Montana Avenue and Main Street, operates a coffee roasting plant that has been certified as LEED silver by the U.S. Green Building Council, The coffee shop, which received two leaves, also provides a discount to customers who bring in their own mug, which cuts down on waste.

SEE FOOD PAGE 12

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Praising the police

Editor:

The tragic shootings in Oakland are a terrible reminder of the sacrifice police officers everywhere (and their families) all too often make in the line of duty. Every day they are willing to put their lives on the line to keep us safe. For this and all they do, we owe them our deepest gratitude and support.

I never knew how potentially dangerous a "routine" traffic stop could be until I took the 14-week Santa Monica Citizen's Police Academy course a few years ago. I learned that a very high percentage of serious criminals were apprehended in the course of a simple traffic stop. I also experienced first hand a taste of the danger presented to the officer(s) when approaching a stopped vehicle.

In a series of role plays, each of us in the class had an opportunity to approach a vehicle, following the procedural instructions that an officer would in a real-life situation. Even in a simulation, the adrenaline starts to pump and there's a feeling of apprehension. Try as we did to follow instructions, most of us at some point made a misstep and got "blown away" by the driver or passenger who produced what fortunately was only a toy gun, aimed, and pulled the trigger. (Even pretending, that action felt very disturbing.) We heard from many seasoned police officers that their first thoughts when going up to a vehicle they've pulled over were about wanting to go home that night to their families. Sadly, the four brave Oakland officers won't be.

Now, when I see an officer approaching a vehicle that's been pulled over, instead of feeling sorry for the driver who got "nabbed," I say a prayer for the safety of the officer who risks so much – and, Thank You. (If you're in a car that gets stopped, please understand that the officer who comes to the window to talk with you is not being unfriendly or bossy, (s)he's just being cautious – with good reason.)

The entire country feels the sorrow of this tragedy. Deepest sympathies to the slain officers' families, colleagues and, indeed, all the citizens of Oakland. And, from those of us who live in Santa Monica, the same to our police force who undoubtedly must be taking the deaths of their "brothers in blue" very hard. Even though we may not show it enough, we do appreciate you.

Kathleen Mulcahy
Santa Monica





Going Postal

Steve "the Mailman" Breen — Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Rolling in the gutter

I AM A DEVOTEE OF OPERA. I WAS fortunate enough to sing as a leading bass-baritone in several regional opera companies for a few years, so I know from personal experience that any opera production is a mad monkey house that would warrant any sane participant a life time prescription of Xanax. I've sung in productions in old Gothic cathedrals, cracker box stages in Hollywood's theater district, an old bowling alley and an acoustically bankrupt supper club.

The life lesson I learned from opera is that the more complicated an endeavor, the greater the exponential probability of something getting royally screwed up.

Our current state of economic travails seem to mirror an operatic parallel universe with all the faux-pathos and toxic comedy of the legislative libretto co-written by Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi while musically underscored on the ukulele by "Tiny Tim" Geithner. All final performance critiques, however, must reasonably be laid upon the podium of Conductor-in-Chief Obama. Is it an inconvenient truth that Reid and Pelosi were given the task of creating a 1,172 page Wagnerian partisan opus which was relegated to a mere five hours of debate before passage and was eventually signed, unread of course, by the president?

And if Obama had actually cared to read it, doesn't it stand to reason that he then wouldn't have been so "surprised" and "outraged" when AIG's monsoon of money bags rained down from taxpayer heaven? Shouldn't we, the taxpayers, be likewise "surprised" and "outraged" that the top two beneficiaries of AIG lobby largesse during the last electoral Gotterdamurung was the chairman of the Senate banking committee, Sen. Chris Dodd ($103,000) and President Obama ($101,000)?

Let me get this straight. A legal contract was signed and duly executed by the president yet he neither bothered to read the fine print let alone the big print and now he demands a legislative remedy to provide him with political plumber's crack camouflage initiated from his own ignorance and incompetence? Now, in a sudden epiphany of self-righteous indignation during this "new era of responsibility," every kazoo player in this clown car concerto, from the White House to Capitol Hill and every cacaphonic corner of the Obamanation's cult-punditry, are trying to get a whole lot of words in edgewise. They are either [A] busily throwing each other under the churning wheels of the nearest public transportation, [B] have developed an acute case of selective cranio-rectal amnesia or [C] both A and B are correct.

Any morally cognizant individual in a position of authority that merely accepts "full responsibility" on a conditional basis is either bereft of the dictionary meaning of "full responsibility" or that individual's cajones dropped off in the gutter of the White House bowling alley. Quite frankly, Obama should stop blaming Bush if he's going to continue to act like him.

AIG makes an easy, lazy target. Most folks prefer this as there is no requirement to think too hard nor to remember the Santayanan historical interlude that they are most assuredly doomed to repeat. Case in point: Sen. Dodd and then-Sen. Obama were both in favor of the original autumn bailout for AIG in 2008 despite their vocal criticisms to the contrary. Both were in favor of Dubya's TARP bail out of Wall Street, which was then used as a template for the current Porkzilla Act of 2009.

A LEGAL CONTRACT WAS SIGNED AND DULY EXECUTED BY THE PRESIDENT YET HE NEITHER BOTHERED TO READ THE FINE PRINT LET ALONE THE BIG PRINT AND NOW HE DEMANDS A LEGISLATIVE REMEDY TO PROVIDE HIM WITH POLITICAL PLUMBER'S CRACK CAMOUFLAGE INITIATED FROM HIS OWN IGNORANCE AND INCOMPETENCE?

Dodd authored the corporate bonus bucks amendment for Porkzilla to provide further financial succor to the captains of finance despite lying about it later. The president's first major legislative embarrassment was then signed behind closed doors without significant press coverage in Colorado. The legislation was then treated as if it were a special needs kid that Obama would have had to keep in the basement so as not to discomfit the rest of the American family but still not too mortified to jest cavalierly about it later on the boob tube with Jay Leno.

And just to demonstrate that the Obamaphiliacs are more than willing to eat their own in order to protect the Bowler-in-Chief's poll numbers, then consider this; in order to deflect public attention from Obama's split frame of economic equivocation and late night TV boot licking, local SMDP columnist, Kenny Mack, offered up former AIG head honcho Joe Cassano as his scapegoat for politically expedient umbrage. Is it an inconvenient truth that Joe Cassano is a fellow Democrat and that Cassano contributed $4,800 to Obama's combined campaign funds as well as $2,100 to Chris Dodd coffers?

Which begs the question: What is the resale value on intra-party loyalty in the wholesale presidential gutter ball bull market of personal responsibility? I wouldn't trust the answer as far as I could throw a bowling ball.

Steve Breen found out that bowling balls are a great deterrent during home invasion robberies but that dogs don't play fetch very well with them and is still "the best looking mailman in the U.S. Post Office." He can reached at dulcamarax@yahoo.com.

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Your column here

Diana Epstein

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Public service is the road to recovery

THIS WEEK, THE U.S. SENATE CAN GIVE final approval to the largest expansion in national service since President Kennedy inspired the creation of VISTA and the Peace Corps.

The House recently voted 321-105 to expand AmeriCorps and other national service programs, and a similar bill called the Serve America Act is currently being debated by the Senate. President Obama has expressed strong support for the bill and is reportedly poised to sign it into law as soon as it arrives on his desk.

It is critical that the Senate passes Serve America so that more Americans have the opportunity to serve in communities all around our country. Expanding service and volunteerism — including adding 175,000 participants to national service programs — would reverse years of neglect and cuts. For AmeriCorps, it means augmenting its capability to make this a better country with a cadre of individuals focused on serving the common good. This is a time when more people than ever need a helping hand, and when more out-of-work Americans would welcome the chance to give back in a very meaningful way.

Americans are ready to serve; applications to AmeriCorps in February were triple the number they were over the same month last year. In addition to expanding full-time service opportunities, the bill includes a Summer of Service program for middle and high school student volunteers, who would earn a $500 education award to be applied toward college.

The legislation would create a volunteer generation fund to train, recruit, and place volunteers strategically, and it provides grants to small start-ups to encourage the sort of social entrepreneurship that has germinated a collection of successful nonprofit organizations.

It creates tax breaks for businesses that give employees paid time off to volunteer, and sets up "encore fellowships" for older volunteers and professionals.

The expansion passage could also be significant by helping to boost public service as a more common career path. This was my experience, and it is one for which I am forever grateful. I graduated from my Ivy League college with a fancy degree in hand and no idea what I really wanted to do with myself.

I had applied to AmeriCorps on a whim, and a few months later I found myself in South Carolina on one of the five regional campuses of the National Civilian Community Corps program. For 10 months, I worked side by side with my team of nine other 18-24 year olds from all around the country. We came from all backgrounds, all walks of life, but we were united in the common purpose of service. Together we built bridges, trained to be wildland firefighters, repaired homes that were crumbling from neglect, tutored the children who had never before been told they could succeed.

I came back for a second year of AmeriCorps, this time to lead a team through another series of direct service projects across the south.

We worked in a children's hospital in Arkansas, built a playground for a school in South Carolina where the kids had never had recess, put hurricane ties on more houses in Florida than I can count, and repaired trails and footpaths in a beautiful state park in Tennessee.

We filled in the gaps, and we met critical needs in communities that could not do it any other way. Brick by brick, shovel by shovel, my teammates and I worked together to make a difference.

It was because of my two years in AmeriCorps that I committed myself to a life of public service; I had seen the problems first-hand and there was no going back. I went on to graduate school in public policy and have continued to work in national service.

I believe in the power of service with such conviction because I've seen the face of a child whose face lights up when a caring adult believes in her. I've seen the joy of a child who can now run safely on the playground, and the tears that flow from a family's eyes when they step into their own home for the very first time.

Yes, we need credit to flow again, and we need to clean up the toxic assets that are clogging bank balance sheets. But more importantly we need to work together for a common purpose. Every single one of us is hurting now, but together we can make it right. Service and volunteerism are the vehicles to get this great country back on track again.

DIANA EPSTEIN was born and raised in Los Angeles and is now a fourth year doctoral student in policy analysis at the Pardee RAND Graduate School in Santa Monica. She did two years of full-time national service in the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) program after graduating from Brown University. She can be reached at Diana.Epstein@gmail.com.

The Q Line

Keeping it local

City Hall and the Bayside District Corp. have recently joined forces to launch the "Buy Local" program, which aims to keep dollars in Santa Monica.

So this week's Q-Line question asks:

Are you inclined to spend locally to help the ailing economy, and why?

Call (310) 285-8106 before Friday at 5 p.m. and we'll print your answers in the weekend edition of the Daily Press. Please limit responses to a minute or less.

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Real Estate 101

Mike Heayn
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Attempting to keep it positive

IT IS EASY TO GET LOST IN THE NEGATIVE headlines. The other day I found myself fall prey to a negative article that spoke poorly about the subprime companies that failed and how they were the impetus for this current financial debacle. This article was specific to one of the largest subprime mortgage companies. Yes, the company made poor decisions and some awful loans, but what the article failed to mention was how so many honest people, doing what they were told, lost jobs.

The article failed to talk about all of the men and women who lost deferred income, bonuses and most importantly — jobs. Some of those people may be your friends, co-workers or classmates. However, sadly, they are marked with the subprime scarlet letter, which reflects a time in our lives that will live in finance infamy.

What I find interesting about the subprime business is the loans that were made and the people that were affected. I work across from a former subprime employee and I asked her what happened. How could so many people let this awfulness take place?

The company, like many companies today, had many layers of management along with different departments and even when things were going south, they still had rules and regulations to uphold. She noted that the reason a lot of bad loans were made was because of a competitive market.

Now I have nothing but respect for my co-worker and I know she is an honest person who was just doing her job, just like so many other subprime employees who believed they were helping people get homes. However, if I cut away at the subprime onion, I think there are two major factors that led to the excesses of the subprime boom and bust — loan structure and pay compensation.

Now coming out and saying the collapse of an industry was due to "x, y and z" is naïve at best, as I have the benefit of hindsight on my side. Regardless, I believe it is important to learn from our mistakes. Taking an unemotional view is necessary in order to prevent these same mistakes from happening in the future.

Competition is great for the marketplace. It was competition and intelligence that helped humans reach and stay at the top of the food chain. In the United States, we have anti-monopoly laws that keep companies from gaining too much market share and buying up too many of their competitors. Regardless, the ugly truth is that competition has a dark side — moving forward with no regard to future consequences.

To survive in a competitive environment you must keep up with those around you. Subprime companies began making decisions over time that sealed their destinies. The first nail in the coffin was a change in loan parameters.

Loans can be great when purchasing a real estate asset as they provide a means of spreading the cost over time with little money upfront. However, when a lender takes all the risk on a loan, the borrower has little reason to continue paying if things go bad. And that is exactly what happened with subprime loans.

Loans went from being full documentation, where a borrower provided tax returns, bank statements and W-2 forms to prove income, to limited documentation. Just as it sounds, a limited documentation loan may not need tax returns or even bank statements. But the granddaddy of them all was what was known as the no documentation loan or no doc loan.

It is said that the best intentions pave the road to hell and there are few examples that exemplify this sentiment as much as the no doc loan. Intended for business owners, no doc loans were loans where no documentation needed to be provided. The only thing the borrower had to do was complete a loan application, usually no more than three pages. These loans had higher rates than full or limited documentation loans because they were considered riskier and usually only reserved for those who could not show income.

No doc loans were brought to a new level when wage earners were allowed to get them. This meant wage earners did not have to prove their income and this is where fraudulent behavior transpired. To top it all off, subprime lenders began selling 80/20 loans. This was a 100 percent financed loan, 80 percent coming in the form of a first trust deed and the additional 20 percent coming from a second trust deed. Ultimately that meant the borrower did not have to put down a down payment, which also meant the borrower did not have to take on any risk, all they had to do was make the monthly payment.

If competition drove the marketplace, compensation was the gas that fueled the greed and bad decisions of the subprime machine. Many of the brokers, loan officers and producers who worked for subprime mortgage companies were paid on a commission only basis. That means they were driven by production and paid a percentage of the loans they closed.

I am for people making money for whatever the market will bear. If a person can make $800,000 a year and do it in a legal manner, it is not up to me or anyone else to tell them to stop. However, it is one thing to make a lot of money and quite another to actively participate in fraudulent behavior.

Luckily, I had the benefit of speaking with my co-worker and getting an inside view of what happened in one of the largest subprime mortgage companies before it collapsed. After speaking with her, I truly feel for all those employees who were "just doing their jobs." Hopefully we will learn from this debacle and future generations will not follow in our mistakes.

MIKE HEAYN is a Commercial Loan Consultant, specializing in Multi-Family Lending. He can be reached at (310) 428-1342 or e-mailed at maheayn@yahoo.com.

GOVERNMENT

Senate Democrats ditching tax credit

BY ANDREW TAYLOR
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON A top Democrat in the Senate announced a budget blueprint Tuesday that would scrap Barack Obama's signature tax cut after 2010 and blends sleight of hand with modest cuts to domestic programs to cut the deficit to sustainable levels.

Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad, D-N.D., promises to reduce the deficit from a projected $1.7 trillion this year to a still-high $508 billion in 2014. But to do so, he assumes Congress will let Obama's "Making Work Pay" tax credit delivering $400 tax cuts to most workers and $800 to couples will expire at the end of next year. Those tax cuts were included in Obama's stimulus package.

Conrad, D-N.D., who has for decades sought to highlight the dangers of permanent deficits and rising government debt, produced a budget plan bristling with both — even after proposing to bring tax rates on income and capital gains to largely rebound to pre-Bush administration levels.

At the same time, Obama's controversial global warming initiative experienced a setback as House Democrats are declining to advance them under fast-track rules that could have effectively cut Senate Republicans out of the debate, Rep. John Spratt Jr., D-S.C., said Tuesday.

The developments come on the eve of debate in the House and Senate budget committees as they take the first steps to pass Obama's $3.6 trillion budget plan for the fiscal year starting in October.

Obama's budget has ignited a firestorm on Capitol Hill, with Republicans assaulting it over record spending and budget deficits, while many Democrats remain wary of his plans to combat global warming.

"It puts us on the path over 10 years for a very different kind of country, one with less freedom, one with more government, one with this extraordinary debt, and one which our children will have a very difficult time affording," said Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn.



INVESTIGATION

Probe finds poor response to earnings complaints

BY SAM HANANEL
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON The Labor Department regularly bungles its handling of complaints from workers who say their bosses are cheating them on overtime pay or committing other labor violations, an undercover investigation found.

The probe by the Government Accountability Office says agency officials often took too long to respond to complaints, failed to record them and, in one instance, lied about investigative work that was never performed.

"This investigation shows that the Department of Labor has left thousands of actual victims of wage theft who sought federal government assistance with nowhere to turn," GAO investigator Gregory Kutz said in prepared testimony, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press.

The House Education and Labor Committee plans to hold a hearing on the investigation Wednesday.

To test the agency's intake process, GAO investigators posed as fictitious workers or companies on 10 occasions. Kutz said the agency mishandled nine out of 10 of the fake complaints.

In one of the fictitious complaints, a meat packer reported children using heavy machinery at a California company. But four months later, officials had not begun to investigate and never even recorded the complaint in a database, as required.

Another case involved a caller, supposedly a convenience store clerk, who left seven telephone messages to complain about not receiving a paycheck. The Wage and Hour Division staff never returned the calls and never recorded the complaint.

Half the complaints were never even recorded in a database, as required, and two of the 10 were marked as successfully paid even though the fictitious workers reported they had not been paid, Kutz said.

The investigation — conducted from July through this month — follows up on a similar study last year that found the Labor Department ill-equipped to respond to worker complaints about labor violations.

The latest probe found major flaws in the way the agency takes in and processes complaints. The Wage and Hour Division is charged with enforcing federal wage, hour, child labor and family medical leave laws.

Democrats blame the Bush administration for using shoddy enforcement practices and reducing funding and staffing levels of the Wage and Hour division. Republicans have called the investigations an attempt to score political points and believe more focus should be placed on staff mismanagement.

Hilda Solis, the new labor secretary, has pledged to step up enforcement at the agency.

"I am committed to ensuring that every worker is paid at least the minimum wage, that those who work overtime are properly compensated, that child labor laws are strictly enforced, and that every worker is provided a safe and healthful environment," Solis said.

> **"I AM COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT EVERY WORKER IS PAID AT LEAST THE MINIMUM WAGE, THAT THOSE WHO WORK OVERTIME ARE PROPERLY COMPENSATED, THAT CHILD LABOR LAWS ARE STRICTLY ENFORCED, AND THAT EVERY WORKER IS PROVIDED A SAFE AND HEALTHFUL ENVIRONMENT."**
>
> Hilda Solis
> Labor secretary

Solis said the Wage and Hour Division has already begun the process of adding 150 new investigators to its field offices to bolster enforcement. Another 100 investigators will come on to make sure contractors funded by President Barack Obama's economic stimulus plan are in compliance with the law.

Those additions are expected to help an agency that lost experienced personnel over the past few years.

Renaye Manley, organizing director for workers' rights group Interfaith Worker Justice, called the latest report shocking and said its findings are the result of a department that is "grossly underfunded and ill-equipped."

One of the most egregious cases involved a fictitious lawn mower who complained that his company did not pay him the minimum wage. He was told the Wage and Hour Division could not intervene because the gross revenues of the employer were not high enough. The agency investigator claimed he looked up the records on an IRS database, even though the company was fictitious and had no such records.

The GAO referred that case to the Labor Department's Office of Inspector General for further investigation.

In one of the few bright spots, the investigation found that once complaints were recorded in the agency's database and assigned to a case investigator were dealt with appropriately.

Separately, GAO investigators identified 20 cases affecting at least 1,160 real employees where the agency failed to properly investigate. In some of those, it took the agency more than a year to respond to complaints.

Overall, the GAO reported lapses including slow response times, failure to record complaints in a database, failure to use all available enforcement tools because of a lack of resources and failure to follow up with employers.



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Sen. Schumer reverses stance on gay marriage

BY MARCUS FRANKLIN
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK Sen. Charles Schumer reached out to gay leaders earlier this month and convened a meeting at an upscale Manhattan restaurant to make an important announcement: He was supporting gay marriage after years of opposing it.

The response from the crowd was swift.

"The room applauded," recalled Alan Van Capelle, the executive director of Empire State Pride Agenda, who helped organize the dinner at Gramercy Tavern.

The reversal marked a significant shift for the Democratic senator and gave further momentum to gay marriage in New York, where every other statewide Democratic official supports such unions.

Schumer's change, some political observers suggested, stemmed from pressure to bring his position on gay marriage in line with the other officials, while coming at a time when support for same-sex unions is strong in New York. Also, it's likely New York's gay rights interest groups, which played a role in Democrats retaking control of the state Senate last November, were pressing Schumer to change his position.

"At this point we have a fair amount of knowledge that supporting gay marriage in the Northeast is not the kiss of death politically" that it could be as recently as a decade ago, said Lee Badgett, director of the Center for Public Policy and Administration at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and research director at the Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy at UCLA.

If anything, Schumer's support for gay marriage is likely to bolster momentum for legalizing gay marriage in New York, where a gay marriage bill passed the Assembly in 2007.

Massachusetts and Connecticut legalized gay marriage while New Jersey and New Hampshire allow same-sex civil unions. In Vermont, where civil unions also are legal, the state Senate on Monday passed a same-sex marriage bill.

Although support of gay marriage is less damaging than it used to be, the normally publicity hungry Schumer did not really promote his change, quietly issuing a three-sentence press release instead. It was Empire State Pride Agenda that made the announcement Monday, followed by a brief statement later that night.

Schumer declined a request for an interview to discuss the change, but spokesman Josh Vlasto released a one-paragraph statement the next day that read: "I have thought long and hard about it. I have always believed that one of the great traits in America is we seek equality and should always strive to achieve it. We may not have been ready in 1996 when this issue first arose in Congress but I believe we are now."

In addition to supporting gay marriage, Schumer said he supported a repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act, which he had voted for in 1996.

"I'm surprised he didn't make more of a splash about it," said Tom McClusky, vice president of the Family Research Council's legislative arm. "Chuck Schumer likes cameras."

McClusky suggested that former Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton's ascension to Secretary of State had something to do with the change of heart. Clinton opposed same-sex marriage, but her replacement, Kirsten Gillibrand, favors it. McClusky said that Clinton provided Schumer "cover" on the issue that disappeared after Gillibrand's announcement.

"He wasn't the only statewide elected Democrat who didn't support same sex marriage," he said.

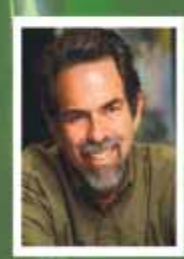
But even with his newfound public position, Schumer's reversal isn't likely to have much impact nationally, political scientists say. The Defense of Marriage Act denies federal recognition of same-sex marriages and gives states the right to refuse to recognize such marriages.

"You'll need 60 votes in the U.S. Senate (to repeal the law)," said Justin Phillips, an assistant professor of political science at Columbia University. "It's hard to imagine at this point where those 60 votes would come from. I couldn't identify 60 senators who would support that right now."

The Empire State Pride Agenda said Schumer told gay leaders he would work "in the interim" toward changing federal laws and regulations to benefit legally married same-sex couples. Such an example would be tweaking federal tax codes to allow gay couples to file join returns.

"His support could not have come at a better time in our community," said Empire State Pride Agenda's Alan Van Capelle.

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Senator Sheila Kuehl spent time as both a State Senator and State Assembly Member representing Santa Monica and the surrounding area. Among her many other accomplishments, Senator Kuehl served as chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee from 2000-2006. She now serves on the California Integrated Waste Management Board.

Andy Lipkis is the founder and president of TreePeople, a nonprofit organization that serves as a guiding light for the citizen forestry movement. Andy's programs include airlifting bare-root fruit trees to Africa, and inspiring the planting of one million trees in L.A. before the 1984 Summer Olympics.

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Change of flight plan under scrutiny

BY MATTHEW BROWN
Associated Press Writer

BUTTE, Mont. Investigators said Tuesday that a pilot's change of course shortly before his plane nose-dived into a Butte cemetery, killing all 14 aboard, has emerged as a potentially crucial factor in the crash.

Flying at 25,000 feet, pilot Buddy Summerfield requested the diversion from Bozeman to Butte half an hour before the single-engine Pilatus PC-12 crashed at the edge of Butte's airport Sunday. Seven children under the age of 10 were among the victims.

National Transportation Safety Board acting Chairman Mark Rosenker says why the plane diverted is at the forefront of his agency's investigation.

"It begins with that question — the 25,000-foot diversion to go to Butte," Rosenker said.

Summerfield said nothing to controllers to indicate he was having trouble, and did not say why he was changing course from Bozeman to Butte, about 75 miles away.

Rosenker also revealed that the plane's landing gear was down but its wing flaps were up at the time of the crash. That's unusual for a landing aircraft but not unheard of, said the investigator in charge of the accident, Dennis Hogenson.

Also under scrutiny are weather conditions that could have caused icing on the plane's wings and possible overloading. The plane was configured to seat just 10 people, but the fact that several of the 14 passengers were small children has dampened speculation that excess weight was a factor.

The investigation has been hampered by the lack of a cockpit voice recorder or data recorder, which were not required on the private flight. Rosenker said his agency may subpoena cell phone records of the victims to see if they could provide further clues.

Federal officials on Tuesday gave a few reporters and photographers their first close look at Sunday's crash site.

Working among rows of charred granite headstones cordoned off by yellow police tape, investigators removed the last of the victims' luggage as they combed through the wreckage. Shredded metal, pieces of propeller and a seat cushion were among the few discernible items left at the scene.

Small pieces of debris were picked up, logged and placed in plastic bags. The larger pieces, including a wing and a section of the plane's tail, will be removed by the end of the week and taken to a Montana hangar for inspection.

Most of the wreckage was confined to a small area, consistent with witness reports that the plane nose-dived straight into the ground.

While descending toward Butte's Bert Mooney Airport, the plane passed through a layer of air at about 1,500 feet that was conducive to icing because the temperature was below freezing and the air "had 100 percent relative humidity or was saturated," according to AccuWeather, a forecasting service in State College, Pa.

Safety experts said similar icing conditions existed when a Continental Airlines twin-engine turboprop crashed into a home near Buffalo Niagara International Airport last month, killing 50.

Blagojevich hits the air waves

BY DEANNA BELLANDI
Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich certainly isn't acting like a man staring down a federal corruption indictment that could come any day.

Whether promoting his book deal or slamming the man who replaced him, the ousted governor hasn't stopped seeking the spotlight. His latest publicity-seeking move: a one-day gig as a Chicago radio talk show host.

Blagojevich's attention-getting ways are enough to make a lawyer cringe.

"I would just lay low and keep my mouth shut. That's the legally prudent thing to do," said Chicago attorney John Beal, who doesn't represent Blagojevich.

But the former governor, who was impeached and removed from office following his arrest on federal corruption charges, denies any wrongdoing and refuses to fade quietly into private life. The Chicago Democrat hit the national talk show television circuit days before being bounced from office.

"It's not part of his human nature to just sit back, hide in the corner and not do anything," said his publicist, Glenn Selig. "He likes being out and about."

Blagojevich's two-hour gig hosting Wednesday's "Don Wade & Roma Morning Show" on Chicago's WLS-AM comes as his criminal case is poised to heat up. Federal prosecutors have less than two weeks to obtain a grand jury indictment or seek more time.

Blagojevich, who previously has been a guest on the radio show, will take calls from listeners, tell stories and talk with guests from 7 a.m. until 9 a.m. The station had offered Blagojevich his own weekend show in January if he resigned as governor. He didn't quit and he didn't get the show.

Newly retained Blagojevich attorney Terence P. Gillespie declined to discuss his client's plan.

"I think at this point, I won't comment on what my advice to the governor was and whether he accepted it or not," Gillespie said Tuesday evening.

Gillespie said earlier that Blagojevich's defense team was "still in flux" after his former chief defense counsel quit in January. Edward M. Genson had hinted that Blagojevich didn't listen to him.

U.S. Attorney Patrick J. Fitzgerald has until April 7 for a federal grand jury to indict Blagojevich, but it's possible his office could seek a deadline extension. Blagojevich was arrested Dec. 9 on corruption charges that accused him of, among other things, trying to sell President Barack Obama's former U.S. Senate seat.

In recent weeks Blagojevich has blasted Gov. Pat Quinn — the lieutenant governor before his ouster — for proposing an income tax increase. He has also called state lawmakers drunkards and adulterers who don't know how to do their jobs.

It's anyone's guess what he'll say when he has the radio mike to himself.

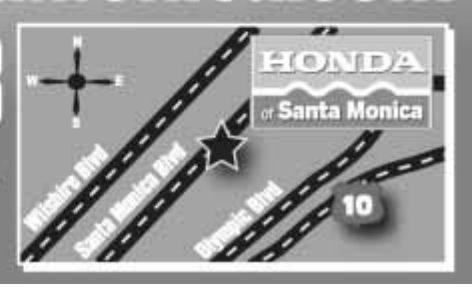
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District could open permits to children of high school alumni

FROM CUTS PAGE 1

good thing in the past by addressing issues in two of the Title 1 schools and we believe it should be spread equally at all Title 1 schools," Mike Matthews, the assistant superintendent for human resources, said.

The staffing ratios are likely to change over the next six months as more information comes in about enrollment levels, which has been increasing from the extra students going from private to public schools.

Officials are also considering loosening permit restrictions on students who don't reside in the district, opening it up to children of Samohi, Malibu High and Olympic High School alumni where at least one parent works in the district boundaries. Those students will be given priority when the officials determine who to admit.

The district relaxed its permit moratorium — which was instituted in the 2001-02 academic year to alleviate overcrowded classrooms — last year, which led to an extra 150 non-resident students enrolling. Matthews said he expects the trend to continue this year if the Board of Education opts to open applications again.

A decision is expected to be made on the permit policy at the board meeting on April 2.

"We won't open permit doors until we have a real solid picture of our residential enrollment," Matthews said.

The Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association recently sent out a questionnaire to teachers in kindergarten through third grade, asking how the class size increase will impact their ability work with children, Harry Keiley, the union president said at a board meeting last Thursday.

"We are very much aware of the challenging economic times we are in and that we're facing," he said. "We didn't have one layoff in this district and that's a great celebration and any type of reduction to teachers we have is going to happen through attrition and natural retirement and that is a real big success story in this environment and we should collectively feel good about that."

School board members stressed that the class size increase should be temporary and restored after the district weathers the financial storm.

"This is something we're doing in a time of fiscal emergency," School board member Ben Allen said. "It's an act of prudence but we understand it's a difficult decision to make and that we're making it in this economic climate and it is a temporary decision."

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Pizza Fusion receives four-leaves for green practices

FROM **FOOD** PAGE 3

"This means that the roasting plant is extremely efficient and has a minimized impact on the environment," the review stated.

Panera, which has a restaurant on Wilshire Boulevard, was recognized for incorporating responsible purchasing into its business practices. The restaurant also has organic and natural choices available on its menu and uses washable flatware for diners who eat in. The business still needs to tackle green building design issues, Greenopia said.

Pizza Fusion and Le Pain Quotidien were the only two companies that received a full four-leaf rating. Most of the chains did not receive even one leaf, meaning they are not considered green at all.

With the motto, "Saving the Earth: One pizza at a time," Pizza Fusion specializes in organic pies, sandwiches and salads. The company currently has 20 locations in the United States, a number that is slated to increase to 75, including one on Ocean Park Boulevard at 29th Street.

According to Greenopia's review of the business, Pizza Fusion delivers using hybrid vehicles. All Pizza Fusion projects are also LEED certified.

The only issue with the business is it lacks a comprehensive sustainability report, the review stated.

David Whitworth, who owns the Santa Monica franchise, said his restaurant will follow in line, buying locally grown organic ingredients, delivering with its hybrid vehicles and having its employees wear 100 percent organic cotton uniforms.

The restaurant, which is being built using green materials, is expected to open in May.

"It's work but it's enjoyable work," Whitworth said. "(The green practices) will hopefully bleed off into other businesses that say 'I may want to do this too.'"

melodyh@smdp.com

Samohi baseball slumps

FROM **ROUNDUP** PAGE 3

two-run ball in the loss. He tallied eight strikeouts and walked a pair.

Next up, the Vikings (4-3 overall) will travel to Palos Verdes Peninsula on Thursday. Palos Verdes Peninsula is 3-3 on the season.

PACIFICA BASEBALL KEEPS ROLLING

Pacifica Christian's upstart baseball squad improved its record to 3-1 with an 11-0 victory over Summit View on March 23.

The team, in its inaugural season, has been surprisingly competitive for a team that is comprised mostly of freshman.

The Seawolves will take on Summit View West Thursday at 2 p.m.

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Non-native species threatening parks

FROM MOUNTAINS PAGE 1

ers," Park Ranger Ray Sauvajot said. "That's a theme across national parks."

The Santa Monica Mountains is essentially a fragmented mosaic of roads, highways, houses and private property that severs the open space, Sauvajot said.

It's especially important to maintain the connectivity between these spaces because of global warming. As temperatures change, plants must move with rising temperatures to higher elevations, Sauvajot said. For certain bird and lizard species, their genetic makeup has changed because of their isolation.

For larger carnivores, a wide range of movement is necessary for their immediate survival. Mountain lions have a traveling range that spans over the whole recreation area, Seth Reily, a park ranger who tracks carnivores, said. Recently, Reily has observed an alarming trend: mountain lions are killing each other more often, possibly because of restricted movement.

When looking at a map of the Santa Monica Mountains, there are small channels where wildlife can move freely into larger areas. Some manmade creations such as U.S. Route 101 sever these connections completely. Through radio tracking, a mountain lion was recorded crossing the 101 at Liberty Canyon for the first time a few weeks ago.

Caltrans might punch a hole through the freeway at the Liberty Canyon exit so wildlife can travel more fluidly, Reily said.

Park rangers hope to coordinate the various government agencies to keep these channels open and connected. The Santa Monica Mountains, Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains might become one park under the "Rim of the Valley" bill that's under review now, Sauvajot said.

"Native species will survive by increasing their resilience by eliminating exotics and increasing inter-connectivity," Sauvajot said.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

The National Park Service will further strengthen its effort to preserve the Santa Monica Mountains' authentic bio-diversity by educating Southern California youth.

The park service coordinates various programs at all different schooling levels to get kids into nature, while having them plant native shrubs to try and fight off the exotics.

"It's a reasonable activity because it's meeting curriculum," Sauvajot said. "It's not just a field trip."

Students learn about the 800 native plants and 300 non-native plants in the Santa Monica Mountains. Out of 300 non-native plants, 19 are considered a significant threat to the area's original plant species.

During the late '80s schools started teaching more towards strict curriculum because of standardized testing, Applebaum said. These programs incorporate biology, environmental science, language arts and math curriculum requirements that help time-starved teachers.

Park rangers want to teach students about ecosystems and animals in their own proximity that aren't taught in school.

The Santa Monica Mountains are considered a Mediterranean biome, a rare ecosystem that encompasses only two percent of the Earth's surface. Despite this, many environmental science lesson plans only teach problems facing tropical rain forests, Applebaum said.

"We've never had a benefit concert for the Mediterranean biome," she said.

Besides helping out teachers, introducing students to wildlife and nature benefits the national parks.

In the past, outdoor recreation in the national parks was dominated by white society, Ron Sundergill, director of the national parks conservation association, said.

"Now we're doing a phenomenal job of bringing minority youth into the parks," Sundergill said. "If parks are going to survive it has to be relevant for everyone."

The National Park Service wants more future voters caring about environmental issues.

"These are the masses ... . We're loosing the battle," Sauvajot said. "They're not going to give a hoot about ANWR [Arctic National Wildlife Refuge] and Yellowstone."

The youth programs try including lots of low income schools, Applebaum said. For a lot of inner city youth it's their first time gardening and observing wildlife, Park Ranger Antonio Solorio said.

The park service helps out low income schools by paying for transportation. Through the Recreational Transit Program, the park service covers the $100 it costs to get students to a national park. Many schools couldn't otherwise participate because national parks aren't covered by an approved list of places the Los Angeles Unified School District will pay to take their students, Hawkins said.

Last Wednesday, a group of approximately 20 Miller Career students helped park rangers plant shrubs through the "Ecohelpers" program. This is a student outreach activity where pupils plant native shrubs that will compete and eventually kill off non-native species.

Rangers cleared a plot of land at the base of Zuma Canyon in Malibu for the student helpers. Surrounding the plot was a large expanse of non-native grass that consumed the surrounding area. The students planted pots of native shrubs in groups of three. These clusters will compete with this exotic grass and perhaps kill the invaders one day.

Rangers hope that some student helpers will become full time park service workers.

"A lot of youth think this is just done on a volunteer basis," Solorio said.

If students get hooked in elementary and middle school by park rangers, then they can apply to become assistant field researchers in high school. Over the summer, six students in the Southern California area can receive a week-long, paid internship to assist park rangers in the field.

This is a lot better and more rewarding than flipping burgers or stocking shelves, Solorio said.

It seems the students are starting to understand the importance of nature. On a recent outing, Applebaum said her students encountered a group of mallards.

"The kids behaved and didn't throw anything at the ducks," she said. "They are really getting the stewardship message."

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INTERNATIONAL SPORTS

Denver said 'no thanks' to Olympics

BY EDDIE PELLS
AP National Writer

DENVER They spend millions for the right to spend billions.

These are the Olympic bid cities, congregated in Denver this week to give one of their most important pitches to the people who will award the 2016 Games later this year.

The curious twist is that the city where they're meeting is the only one that ever earned the right to host the Olympics — and then told them to go away.

Yes, Denver owns a slice of Olympic fame — or infamy — thanks to the efforts of a little-known state legislator who led the charge to get voters to tell the International Olympic Committee to look somewhere else.

The voters spoke, rejecting the public funding that was needed to put on the Olympics. That was back in 1972 — about 2Ω years after the IOC had awarded the 1976 Winter Games to Denver at the then-unfathomable cost of $5 million.

Persuaded by Richard Lamm, a group of up-and-coming civic leaders and editorials from the Rocky Mountain News, Denver decided it didn't want the publicity or the hassle, the construction or the traffic, the pollution or the sprawl the games might promote.

What it really didn't want was the expense.

"The organizing committee here was in way over their heads," said Lamm, who rode that populist crusade into the governor's office two years later. "They overestimated the benefits and underestimated the costs. Colorado was generally persuaded that they didn't have an adequate grasp on the figures and Colorado was very much liable to have to fund dramatic cost overruns."

Sound familiar?

Though the template of the Olympics has changed drastically since the 1970s, with corporate and private money now expected to pay most of the bills, almost every government still has to offer some sort of guarantee. In case the sponsors don't come through. Or the costs run too high. Or the economy goes sour.

Sound familiar?

Sebastian Coe, chairman of the London organizing committee, is in Denver this week hoping to reassure Olympic leaders that the 2012 Summer Games are still on track despite the economic downturn.

"I don't need to tell anyone in that room that these are extraordinary times," Coe told The Associated Press on Monday. "Not since the 1970s has a winter or summer games been delivered under such a sudden change in economic circumstances."

The numbers being thrown about may seem staggering for what is supposed to be, essentially, a worldwide sports festival. But in the Olympic world, they are simply the cost of doing business.

Chicago is proposing a $4.8 billion operating budget for the 2016 Games.

Madrid is at $5.6 billion.

Tokyo is shooting for $4.4 billion.

Rio de Janeiro's number is $14.4 billion but includes things the others do not, such as venue construction and security.

History shows that none of those numbers can be depended upon.

For instance, London's number for venues, infrastructure and regeneration is at $13.6 billion. That doesn't include the operating budget of $2.9 billion. The total — $16.5 billion — is more comparable to the Rio proposal for 2016 than the others. No matter how you look at it, it's still more than double the estimate when the British first proposed hosting the games.

NFL

Eric Mangini opens quarterback competition in Cleveland

BY BARRY WILNER
AP Football Writer

DANA POINT Brady Quinn or Derek Anderson? Eric Mangini isn't sure, so he's throwing the Cleveland Browns quarterback job into a free-for-all.

"I don't have a projected starter at this point," Mangini said Tuesday at the NFL meetings. "What we're going to do is we'll have an open competition where they'll both get a chance to establish that they'll be the starter."

Anderson, coming off a Pro Bowl season in 2007, opened last year as the starter. As the Browns struggled, he was benched for Quinn. Both quarterbacks subsequently were injured, and Mangini replaced Romeo Crennel as coach after Cleveland finished 4-12.

Mangini, who was fired by the Jets after they collapsed from 8-3 to 9-7 and didn't make the playoffs, has been on a quarterback carousel before. He had three starters in his three seasons in New York: Chad Pennington, Kellen Clemens and Brett Favre.

"I'm excited about both of them," he said of Quinn, heading into his third season, and Anderson, who will be in his fifth. "I sat down with both of them, been able to spend some time with them.

"I like both guys. I like a lot of the things that I've learned about them in terms of through the conversations and also things that I've seen on tape."

What he also has seen on tape are lots of mistakes and lots of losses as the Browns plummeted from 10-6 in 2007 to last place in the AFC North. Anderson received a big contract after his breakthrough '07 season, a three-year, $24 million deal with a $5 million bonus he collected this month. But he struggled before being replaced by Quinn for the ninth game.

Quinn, who has a five-year, $20.2 million contract, lasted just three games before breaking a finger on his right hand and needing surgery. Anderson returned, but he injured left knee ligaments in the 12th game and was done, too.

Anderson was 3-6 in his starts last year with nine touchdowns, eight interceptions and a passer rating of 66.5. Quinn was 1-2 with two touchdowns, two interceptions, and a 66.6 passer rating.

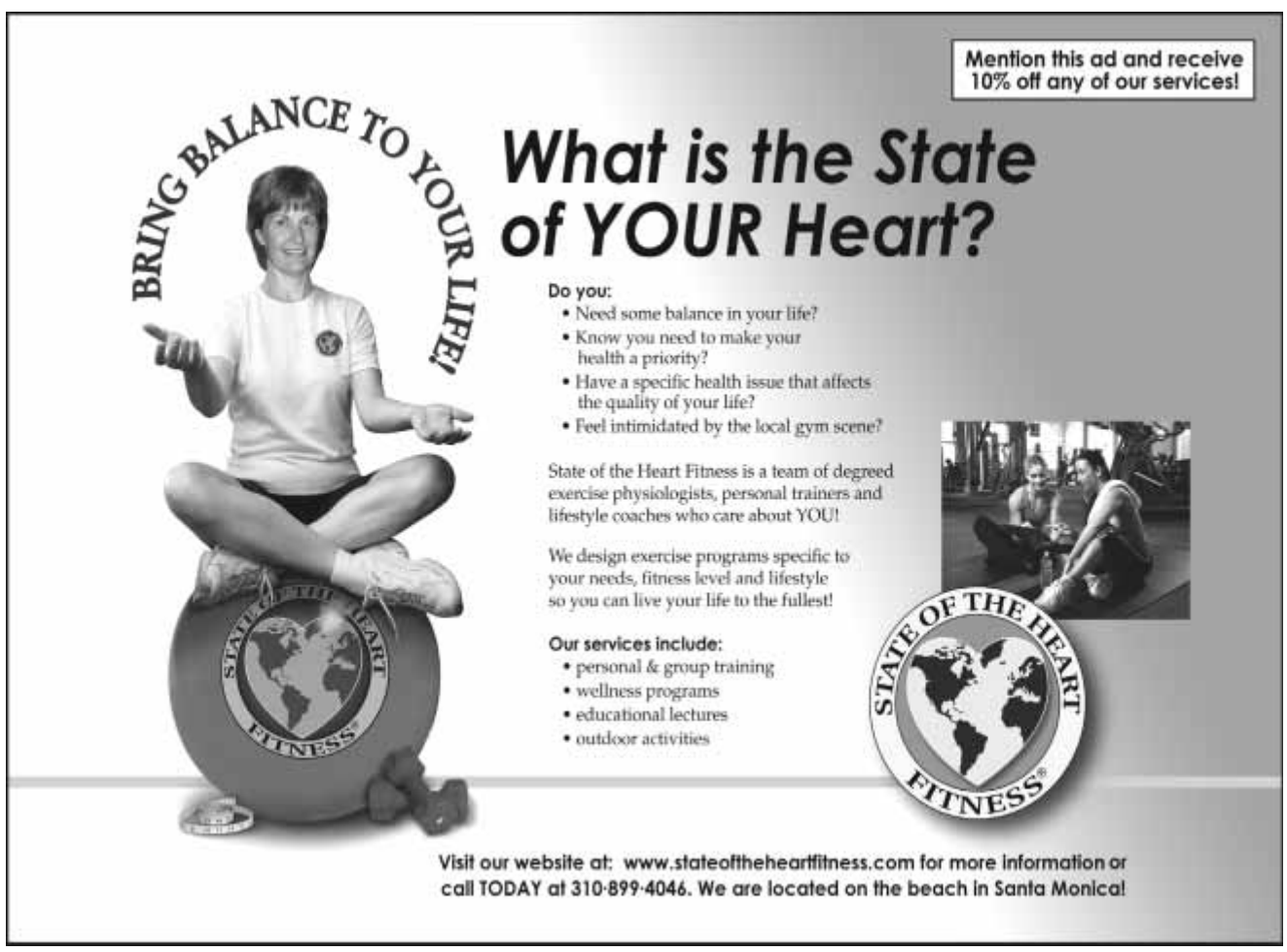
They weren't helped by a leaky line and poor performances by their receivers, particularly with wideout Braylon Edwards dropping many passes.

But Mangini has to look for the positives heading toward his first season in Cleveland.

"Without knowing exactly what they were being asked to do on each of the plays, you're projecting a little bit," he said. "But they both seemed to have good presence, a good command of the situation. And they each did different things in the passing game and the running game that I liked."

There's always the possibility one of them will be traded; few teams can afford to have so much money invested in one position, even quarterback.

"George and I are looking at any opportunity to improve the team," Mangini said of general manager George Kokinis.



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Surf Conditions

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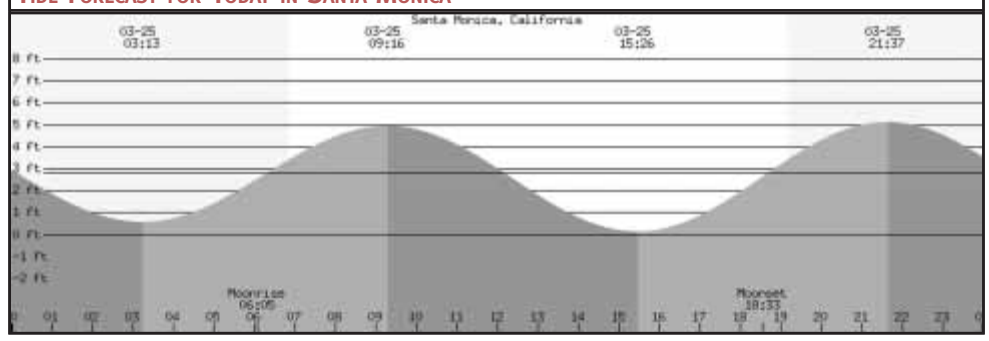
Swell Forecast (3-4 FT)

Wednesday the 25th the wind swell should back down to waist high, possibly still some chest high waves from time to time at the better exposed west facing breaks.

Long Range Synopsis

Thursday the 26th should see continued light southern hemi, but we should also see a decent dose of NW wind swell. West facing breaks are looking at chest high wind swell coming in from 310 degrees.

Tide Forecast for Today in Santa Monica



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BEACH REPORT CARD

NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Grades for this report are based on monitoring data from the previous four weeks up to the ending date of **March 17, 2009**

HEAL THE BAY - 1444 9th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401 - www.healthebay.org - brc@healthebay.org - 800 HEAL BAY

QUICK STATS (for the last 28 days)

- Number of sewage spills -- 1
- Number of beach closures due to a sewage spill -- 0
- Number of wet days -- 5
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 37 / 6
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 8 / 38

The Beach Report Card is made possible by simplehuman, The Goldhirsh Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, Ford

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

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

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'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.

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MOVIE TIMES

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

Adventureland (R) 1hr 46min
7:30

AMC Loews Broadway 4
1441 Third Street Promenade

Confessions of a Shopaholic (PG) 1hr 52min
4:00, 9:25

Fuel (NR) 1hr 55min
1:40, 4:25, 7:05, 9:50

The Reader (R) 2hrs 02min
1:45, 7:00

Gran Torino (R) 1hr 56min
1:30, 6:45

Miss March (R) 1hr 30min
4:35, 9:45

Super Capers (PG) 1hr 30min
2:00, 4:15, 6:30, 9:00

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

Coraline 3d (PG) 1hr 40min
1:50, 4:15, 7:10, 9:35

Duplicity (PG-13)
1:15, 4:05, 7:00, 10:00

Sunshine Cleaning (R) 1hr 42min
2:00, 2:40, 4:25, 5:10, 6:50, 7:40, 9:20, 10:05

The Last House on the Left (R) 1hr 49min
1:55, 4:30, 7:05, 9:45

Race to Witch Mountain (PG) 1hr 39min
1:30, 2:30, 4:00, 5:00, 6:30, 7:30, 9:00, 9:55

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

Slumdog Millionare (R) 2hr 1min
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00

Moscow, Belgium (Aanrijding in Moscou) (NR) 1hr 42min
1:50, 4:30, 7:20, 9:55

Gomorrah (Gomorra) (NR) 2hrs 17min
1:40, 4:50, 8:00

Sin Nombre (R) 1hr 36min
1:45, 4:10, 7:00, 9:30

Cherry Blossoms (NR) 2hr 4 min
11a.m.

Man on Wire (PG-13) 1hr 34min
11 a.m.

Mann's Criterion Theatre
1313 Third St.
(310) 395-1599

Taken (PG-13) 1hr 33min
12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:40, 10:00

He's Just Not That Into You (PG-13) 2hrs 09min
1:00, 6:30

I Love You, Man (R) 1hr 50min
12:30, 1:30, 3:30, 4:30, 7:30, 9:30, 10:20

Knowing (PG-13)
11:30 a.m., 2:20, 4:10, 5:10, 7:00, 8:00, 9:50, 10:45

Watchmen (R) 2hrs 43min
12:10, 3:40, 7:10, 10:30

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

Happy at home, Sagittarius

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ Continue the process of reflecting and receiving more information. Don't hesitate to find an expert and get another perspective. A decision made from an excess of information will be better than "just enough." Schedule a meeting as late as you can. Tonight: You feel revived.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ Use the daylight hours to the max. Surprises reveal that much more is going on than you anticipated. Work with leaking facts and understand what is happening within your immediate circle. Tonight: Make it early.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ Take a stand with a work-related matter. Your ability to move past the issue helps you understand what is going on with those in your immediate circle. Stay focused, and you will have much to celebrate. Tonight: A must appearance.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Read between the lines during conversations. Your best bet is to distance yourself. In that position, you will gather more facts and be able to make a stronger decision. News or an insight could be uncomfortable — work with it. Tonight: Burning the candle at both ends.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★ A partner wants to pull you in. However, you could discover that the lay of the land might not be exactly as you thought. Negativity could float through business and personal dealings. Tonight: Plan a vacation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ Defer to others and listen. Stay centered on your goals, but not necessarily the method to get there. This type of thinking empowers you. Others might have many opinions. Let their ideas play out. Note another's unpredictability. Tonight: Dinner for two.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ Dig into your must-do list. Be aware that you might want to incorporate a different approach or style. Listen to news that heads in your direction involving a partner, boss or key person in your life. How you deal with the situation will determine the result. Try a positive outlook. Tonight: Chill.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Your imagination always adds the salt and pepper to any situation. Be aware of what might be going on around a friend or loved one. Your imagination bubbles up with solutions, as well as far-out ideas. Tonight: Let your inner child romp.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Center on the fundamentals, and you will be much happier than you originally anticipated. How you deal with someone and what you might do could change your direction before you know it. Stop and think about the implications. Tonight: Happy at home.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ Initiate conversations and move forward. How you deal with someone impacts much more than you realize. Be aware of the words and the direction you choose. Your inner thoughts could have you on overload. Tonight: Hang out.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★ Spending remains critical to a balanced budget. You must maintain a steadiness and a reserve for emergencies. Presently, you will see the consequences of ill-planning. Tonight: One more solid look at your budget.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Your popularity continues to speak. However, others do have strong reactions to your quirkiness or unpredictability. If you could be more verbal about the thoughts before a reverse turn, others would relax more. Tonight: A sure-bet winner.

Happy birthday

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

This year, you are able to clear out some major issues, if not problems. You discover that other opinions might not be as necessary as you originally thought. Rather, it is your perspective or how you reframe issues. Touch base with what works for you, and honor those areas of your life. Don't hesitate to zero in on what you want. If you are single, take a full year before you decide you are even in a relationship. People change with holidays and birthdays. The person you like or choose might not be what he or she seems. If you are attached, the two of you benefit from dinners for two and other such romantic dates and weekends. PISCES makes an excellent healer or doctor.

Girls and Sports
By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



The Meaning of Lila
By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



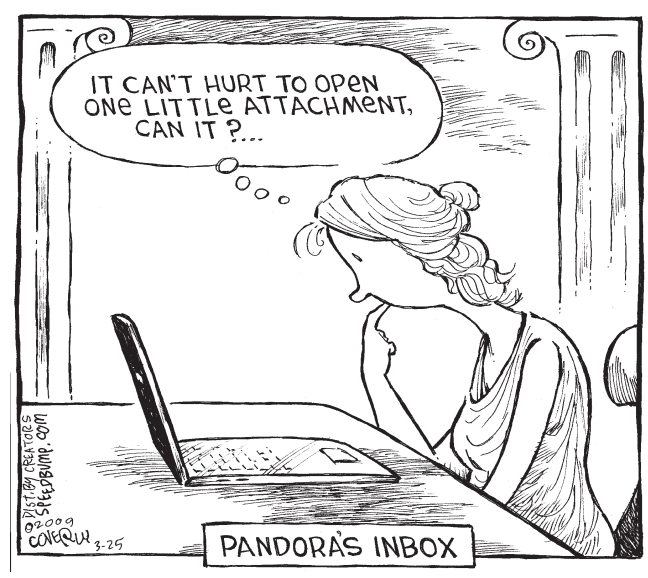
Garfield
By Jim Davis



Strange Brew
By John Deering



Speed Bump
By Dave Coverly



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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 ★★★

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

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.

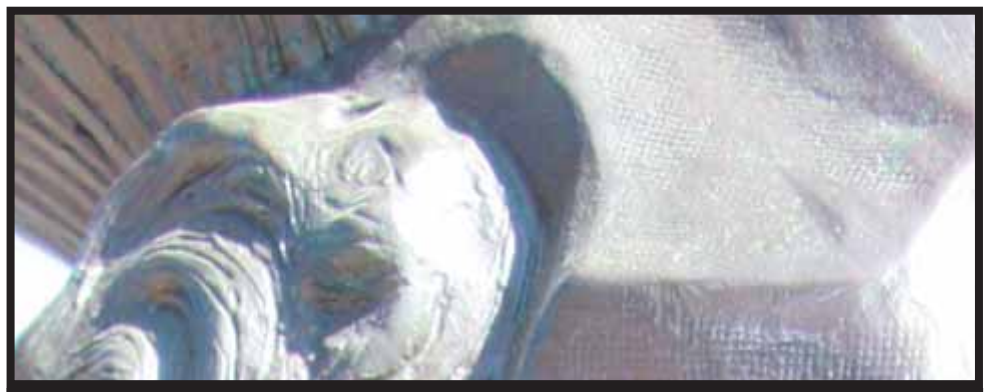
SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLE

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

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MYSTERY PHOTO

Soraya Danesh news@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*.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Word on a red octagon
5 Part
9 King of Judea
11 Paint base
12 Tuscany setting
13 Early Mexican
14 Director Howard
15 Positive or negative
17 Oxford setting
19 Sought a seat
20 Message from the boss
21 Calif. hrs.
22 "Cabaret" director
24 Mouse chaser
26 Layers
29 Toast spread
30 1040 booklet info
32 Oblivious
34 Puzzle
35 Egg buy
36 Lorelei's river
38 Valleys
39 Man of Madrid
40 Sunrise site
41 Bird abode

DOWN

1 Stallone's "Rocky" co-star
2 Wyoming range
3 Grove fruit
4 Vote seeker
5 Make fun of
6 Minks' cousins
7 Ogle
8 One with a record
10 Power-house
11 Come to earth
16 Commo-dore's insignia
18 Headed out
21 Jury member
23 Philly cagers
24 Cooking oil
25 Stuns
27 Deep chasm
28 Dictation takers
29 Gavel user
30 Works leather
31 Wield
33 Departed
37 Brood tender

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

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

1	2	3	4	■	■	■	5	6	7	8
9				10	■	11				
12					■	13				
14			■	15	16					
17			18				■	19		
■	20					■	21			■
■	■	■	22			23		■	■	■
■	24	25		■	26			27	28	■
29			■	30						31
32			33				■	34		
35					■	36	37			
38					■	39				
40				■	■	■	41			

3-25

DAILY LOTTERY

MEGA MILLIONS: 4 25 34 43 44
Meganumber: 45
Jackpot: $24M

SUPER LOTTO PLUS: 7 28 34 38 45
Meganumber: 6
Jackpot: $28M

Fantasy 5: 1 4 7 14 17

DAILY 3: MIDDAY: 0 2 5
EVENING: 1 1 1

DAILY DERBY:
1st: 11 Money Bags
2nd: 04 Big Ben
3rd: 10 Solid Gold
RACE TIME: 1.40.53

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

■ In February, a federal jury in Tucson, Ariz., awarded damages of $77,000 to six illegal immigrants who had trespassed on rancher Roger Barnett's land in 2004 (only one of hundreds of forays onto his land over the years by border-jumpers from Mexico) because Barnett had detained them while he was carrying a gun, which the jury said constituted "infliction of emotional distress" (though Barnett said he was merely protecting his property). Originally, 16 Mexican nationals had sued for $32 million, accusing Barnett of violating whatever civil rights illegal-immigrant trespassers might have.

■ How Could These Victims Have Acquired So Much Money in the First Place? (a) A 27-year-old "psychic" was sentenced to two months in jail in San Jose, Calif., in December after somehow convincing a woman, who had come to her for a $10 reading, to pay her, in ever-increasing increments, $108,000 for a "spiritual cleansing." (b) Charles Silveira filed a lawsuit in March in Morristown, N.J., to recover the $250,000 he had incrementally paid to a "psychic," who said she needed to make a golden statue for him to ward off negativity. The woman also convinced Silveira to buy her a $700,000 home, but that house is in Silveira's name, and he has asked a court's permission to evict her.

■ Crime Doesn't Pay (except maybe $25 an hour): According to police in Longview, Wash., a 57-year-old woman entered a Winco Foods store at 5 a.m. on March 2 and did not leave the store until 5 p.m., and upon exit, paid for about $80 worth of groceries but also possessed about 100 other small, concealed items such as greeting cards, sunglasses and batteries (the total value of which was about $300). She had spent at least part of the day surreptitiously removing the items' packaging so they would not appear to be the store's stock.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1965 the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. led 25,000 marchers to the state capitol in Montgomery, Ala., to protest the denial of voting rights to blacks.

WORD UP!

thaumaturgy \THAW-muh-tuhr-jee\, *noun*:
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Santa Monica Daily Press

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- Wanted
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- Vacation Rentals
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- Houses for Rent
- Roomates
- Commerical Lease
- Real Estate
- Real Estate Loans
- Storage Space
- Vehicles for Sale
- Massage
- Services
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Santa Monica $1895.00 2 Bdrms, 2 Bath , NO pets, stove, refrigerator, parking 2535 Kansas Ave., #205 Open daily for viewing 9am-7pm. Additional info in unit manager in unit #101

SANTA MONICA / Palms Adj. $1250.00 to $1995.00 1 Bdrm, 2 Bdrms, 1 Bath, NO pets For a list of our vacancies, see manager at : 1935 Cloverfield Blvd #19

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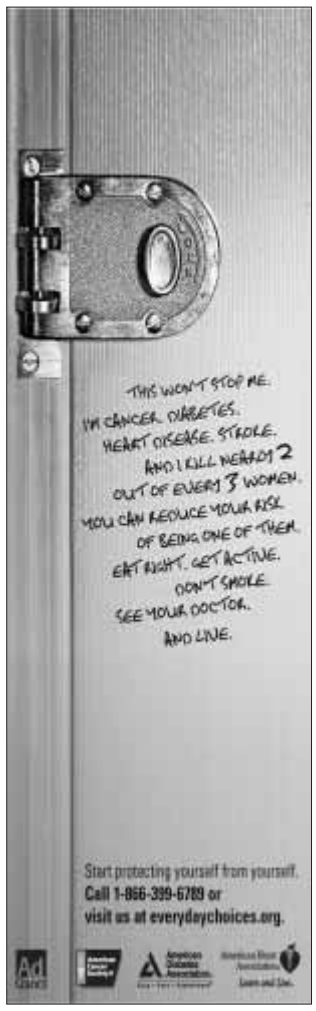
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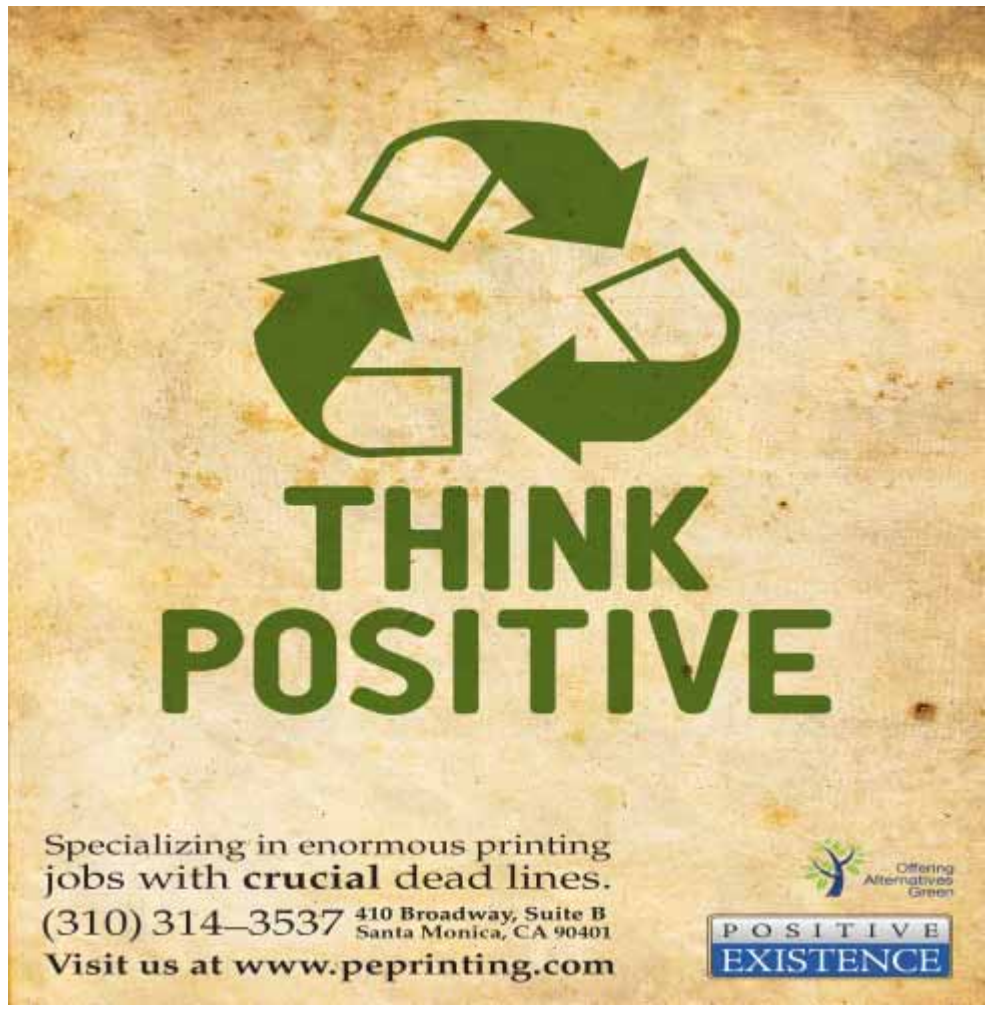
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From 2:00 to 5:00 pm



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	Single Family Homes	Condos & Townhomes
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North of Montana	$3,130,000	$1,198,000
Between Wilshire & Montana	$1,995,000	$779,000
South of Wilshire	$899,500	$759,000
Sunset Park	$1,161,500	$699,000
Ocean Park	$1,282,000	$836,500

Statistics Updated Every Monday

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