

FREE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2003

Volume 2, Issue 114

Santa Monica Daily Press

A newspaper with issues

LOTTTO

FANTASY 5

08, 09, 12, 28, 31

DAILY 3

Afternoon picks: 9, 1, 1

Evening picks: 1, 3, 9

DAILY DERBY

1st Place: 11, Money Bags

2nd Place: 09, Winning Spirit

3rd Place: 07, Eureka

Race time: 1:49.22


**NEWS OF
THE WEIRD**
by Chuck Shepard

■ According to a December Federal Trade Commission lawsuit, Mark Nutritionals Inc., of San Antonio, Texas, earned \$190 million in four years selling a \$40 solution that guaranteed weight loss even if the user ate lots of pizza, beer, tacos and doughnuts. And in November, the new Kaiser Medical Center hospital in Fremont, Calif., staged a special ceremony, by the hospital's chaplain, using symbols and inspirational words on rocks, to battle "spirits" that some nurses believed were responsible for beds moving and doors slamming on their own. And at a press conference in Boise, Idaho, in December, Genesis World Energy spokespeople introduced the Edison Device, which they said will produce 20 years' electricity for a home using only a bathtub's worth of water as fuel (but reporters could not examine it or ask any questions about it).

**THOUGHT OF
THE DAY**

Too many pieces of music
finish too long after the end.

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Hotel workers demand a chance to unionize

*Protesters march from
City Hall to Four Points
Sheraton Hotel*

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

About 100 hotel employees and activists rallied in front of City Hall Tuesday, demanding a Santa Monica hotel allow its workers to unionize.

Protesters marched from City Hall to the Four Points Sheraton on Pico Boulevard to deliver a message to the hotel's management that they won't give up their fight to give workers better conditions and benefits in their jobs.

Employees of the hotel — which is owned by the Kor Group — accuse management of mistreating workers and waging a closed-door campaign against unionization efforts. The workers have asked hotel management to let them decide for themselves whether they want to unionize.

"We want to be heard," Maria Mena, an 18-year employee of the Sheraton, said through a translator. "It is unjust what they are doing."

Mena, originally a supervisor of housekeeping at the hotel, said

she was laid off in the wake of Sept. 11, 2001. After months of joblessness, Mena said the hotel brought her back on a contractual basis and at a reduced rate.

Instead of making \$10.25 an hour, as she had before the layoff, Mena said the hotel now pays her \$8.55 an hour.

**"We want to be heard.
It is unjust what they
are doing."**

— MARIA MENA

Four Points Sheraton housekeeper

Organizers say the problem is particularly acute because employees at the nearby Viceroy, an upscale hotel also owned by the Kor Group, are treated much better because they are unionized.

Viceroy employees enjoy pensions and paid half-hour lunch breaks while Sheraton workers, who miss those perks, make less money and can be laid off without notice or cause, they said. Also, the starting wage for a housekeeper at Sheraton makes \$1.30 less than the starting housekeeper at



Rebecca Gross/Daily Press

Approximately 100 protesters march to the Four Points Sheraton Hotel Tuesday to demand a living wage for workers.

Viceroy, organizers said.

But what is even more important is for hotel workers to be given the chance to organize, said

Kurt Petersen, organizing director of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Union Local 814.

See PROTEST, page 6

Dolphins to clear mines from port at Umm Qasr

By The Associated Press

CAMP AS SALIYAH, Qatar — You've heard of bomb-sniffing dogs, but mine-sniffing dolphins?

Coalition forces have brought in two specially trained bottle-nosed Atlantic dolphins to help ferret out mines in the approaches of the port of Umm Qasr, Maj. Gen. Victor Renuart of the Central Command said Tuesday.

The dolphins will help clear the way for the shipment of humanitarian aid to allied-held southern Iraq, Renuart said.

"Our maritime forces are hard at work supporting air operations, maintaining security to the Arabian Gulf for all shipping and completing the difficult task of de-mining Iraqi waters," Renuart said. "They're even using some unique techniques. We have some specially trained dolphins that are out there helping us to determine where mines may be in the channels."

The dolphins, named Makai and Tacoma, were flown into Umm Qasr by U.S. Navy helicopters Tuesday night and were expected to begin searching for mines on Wednesday,

according to pool reports.

The dolphins are taught to avoid touching the mines, which might cause them to explode, said Capt. Mike Tillotson, a Navy bomb disposal expert. He said there was little risk to animals doing this kind of work.

The biggest hazard could come from other indigenous dolphins in the waters of Umm Qasr.

Dolphins are territorial and there is a fear local dolphins might drive the interlopers out, causing them to go AWOL.

The Navy started using marine mammals in the early 1960s, when military researchers began looking into how sea mammals' highly developed senses — like dolphins' sonar — could be harnessed to locate mines and do other underwater tasks.

Dolphins were used in the 1970s during the Vietnam War. In the late 1980s, six Navy dolphins patrolled the Bahrain harbor to protect U.S. ships from enemy swimmers and mines and escorted Kuwaiti oil tankers through potentially dangerous waters.

Dining outside 'crucial to Promenade success'

*City officials recommend
ways to get more
restaurants downtown*

BY JOHN WOOD

Daily Press Staff Writer

The city wants you to eat outside. Officials say dining 'al fresco' is crucial to the success of downtown and are pushing for the expansion of outdoor tables in Santa Monica.

Retailers willing to pay top dollar for space downtown have recently threatened the livelihood of Santa Monica's restaurateurs and, with it, the ambience of downtown, officials said.

The Santa Monica City Council will meet formally in June to discuss how to ensure

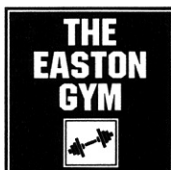
Santa Monica's eateries don't disappear. But before a decision can be made, council members said they must consider several issues that could stifle the plan.

"Clearly outdoor seating in California is the thing that sets us apart — the ability to do it practically year round," Councilwoman Pam O'Connor. "Right now we're still in the middle of evaluating all this. It's all about balancing the mix of (retail and restaurant) uses."

The Promenade Task Force — a group of local politicians, landlords and merchants — last week finalized a series of recommendations to the City Council aimed at controlling the balance of businesses in downtown Santa Monica.

Council members Herb Katz,

See DINING, page 5

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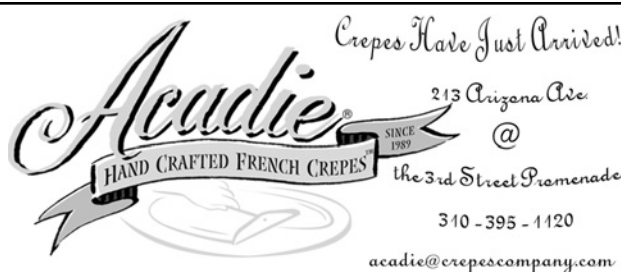
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HOROSCOPE

Gemini, don't be too serious



JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

The stars show the kind of day you'll have:

★★★★★-Dynamic ★★★★★-Positive ★★★★★-Average
★★-So-so ★-Difficult

HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Wednesday, March 26, 2003:

You might want to push plans that you think are a high priority. Even though your ideas might be great, you might need to try very hard to achieve the results you want. Success greets you in the professional realm later this year, after August. Meanwhile, allow your creativity to flow and take on a new dimension. You could be delighted by the net results. If you are single, romance should be knocking on your door anytime, making a new, significant relationship a possibility. If you're attached, you will have a good time with your mate as long as you don't need to play king or queen for the day too often! CAPRICORN pushes you hard.



ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Slow down and manage your work with an eye to completion. You'll take your bows, but look toward a meeting later on. For many, this gathering might not be social, but it will develop into a happening. Note the importance of a group consensus. Tonight: Where your friends are.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Read between the lines with a boss who could see a situation differently than you. What you choose to say could be considerably different. You might opt to defer to this person rather than going into the mind-reading business. Either works. Tonight: A must show.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ Deal with the basics when talking to those close to you. You might find individual conversations far more significant than dealing with groups. Reach out for experts at a distance, especially if you want to get more feedback. Lighten up. Tonight: Don't be too serious.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ You might defer to others, as you have little chance of making waves as you would like to. Your sense of direction could change after an important conversation that occurs later in the day. Clear out work while you're biding your time. Tonight: Be with your best friend.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Go in to work focused on getting the job done. Your ability to clear out work and get a lot done might make a big difference in your choices. Question what might be going on within your immediate circle, especially as others clamor at your door later in the day. Tonight: Take a midweek break.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Investigate what might be the solution to a problem that appears to be blocking others left and right. Touch base with your long-term desires that involve a child or loved one. Postpone a project in order to handle this issue. Tonight: Off to the gym.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Deal with security and finances first. You really cannot give 100 percent at work until you clear your head. Remain positive and optimistic with a child, loved one or creative endeavor. Once you charge your energy into a project, it might be difficult to stop you. Tonight: Play away. Everyone needs a break.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Speak your mind for once and for all. Stop complaining and express what's on your mind. Your ability to understand what happens with others will make or break a situation. Lighten up about events that surround a neighbor or sibling. Tonight: You need a night off.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Take off for the bank. Check out CDs or a new financial plan. As a high risk-taker, you could get yourself into trouble very easily. Understand your limits more carefully. Discussions with those in the know reveal a different outlook. Tonight: At a favorite spot.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ You're empowered, but don't be surprised if you have to repeat much of what you do at a later date. Somehow, others might be distracted. Review personal matters more directly that involve a childlike expenditure. Tonight: Give in. Spend a little.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ You feel as if you're a race horse ready to jump out of the gate. You might not be exactly sure what is workable for others. Listen during the daylight hours; take action as the sun sets. You will be a veritable force to deal with. Tonight: Whatever you want.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ You find that your entry into a meeting could have a great deal more impact than you initially thought. Discussions could be animated but fun. Don't count on making waves that will last. You might not be in control as much as you would like to be. Tonight: Get a good night's sleep.

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1427 Third Street Promenade, Suite #202 • Santa Monica, CA 90401

PUBLISHER

Ross Furukawa ross@smdp.com

EDITOR

Carolyn Sackariason sack@smdp.com

STAFF WRITER

John Wood wood@smdp.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Del Pastrana del@smdp.com

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Alejandro C. Cantarero alex@smdp.com

CLASSIFIED REPRESENTATIVE

Mitch Troy mitch@smdp.com

CLASSIFIED REPRESENTATIVE

Angela Downen angela@smdp.com

CLASSIFIED REPRESENTATIVE

Paula Christensen paula@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

William Pattnosh william@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Rob Piubeni rob@smdp.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Keri Aroesty keri@smdp.com

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Kiutzu Cruz kiutzu@smdp.com

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Dave Danforth dave@smdp.com

STAFF MASCOT

Maya Furukawa ross@smdp.com

LOCAL

UN gets peace award



Martin Rubin/Special to the Daily Press
Peace activist Jerry Rubin designs the eight-foot-tall 'Peace Oscar Award' which was sent on Tuesday by overnight delivery to United Nations headquarters in New York City in care of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The award is meant as a symbolic political statement opposing the U.S. war in Iraq while praising the UN in its attempt to solve the disarmament issue through the extended weapons inspection process, Rubin said.

The Q Line

Now that the United States is engaged in a full-blown war with Iraq, tensions at home are running high.

State and local governments around the country are taking extra precautions in case more terrorist attacks hit U.S. soil as a response to what some see as acts of aggression by us.

So this week, Q Line wants to know:

"Do you feel safe? Are you confident that Santa Monica is prepared to deal with a possible attack?"

Call (310) 285-8106 with your response before Thursday at 5 p.m. We'll print them in Friday's paper. Please limit your comments to a minute or less; it might help to think first about the wording of your response.



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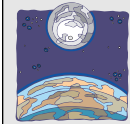
Information compiled by Jesse Haley

The South swell is coming in too steep for LA's mostly southwest exposures. The last northwest continues to fade today, leaving surf on the decline, though there are some fun waves left.

South swell actually peaks today, spilling over into Wednesday, and we could see some increase in size, even with the 180 degree swell angle.

Standout spots are seeing head sets at times, but most locations are hitting waist- to chest-high height on average.

Expect a slight drop in size on today, up to one foot or more at spots that get the northwest exposure.



Today's Tides:

High- 2:45am 4.62'
Low- 10:58am -0.18'
High- 6:16pm 3.37'
Low- 10:30pm 2.72'

Location	Wednesday	Thursday	Water Quality
County Line	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	B
Zuma	2-3'/Fair	2-3'/Fair	C
Surfrider	1-2'/Poor	1-2'/Poor	D
Topanga	2-3'/Poor	2-3'/Poor	A
Breakwater	2-4'/Poor	2-3'/Poor	A
El Porto	3-4'/Fair	2-4'/Fair	A

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Local woman gets distinguished award

By Daily Press staff

The Santa Monica Junior Chamber of Commerce has announced that Kathy Irby was selected as the winner of the 2003 Distinguished Service Award, which honors the area's most outstanding young professional for public and community service.

Now in its 61st year, the DSA annually recognizes Santa Monica's most exceptional professionals, ages 21 to 39, for their exemplary, unselfish, and meritorious service to the local community.

The honor also acknowledges the individual's business achievements, leadership skills, and positive impact on the city of Santa Monica at large throughout the previous year.

"Kathy Irby's unwavering dedication to the service of others has made a tremendously positive and meaningful impact on the community of Santa Monica," said Bob Cornish, president of the Santa Monica Junior Chamber of Commerce. "Her strength, leadership, and commitment to helping others are indicative of the spirit and mission

See BRIEFS, page 6



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OPINION

LETTERS

An exchange of war views

Editor:

I'd like to offer the readers of the SMDP a sample of an exchange of views in America today. The first one is from a curmudgeon but loveable associate of mine. The second is my retort.

My friend e-mailed me with the following subject, "Please read and digest attached." It read, "War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things; the decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. A man who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing he cares about more than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free, unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself." (Author unknown).

I responded, "Beware the leader who bangs the drums of war in order to whip the citizenry into a patriotic fervor, for patriotism is indeed a double-edged sword. It both emboldens the blood, just as it narrows the mind. And when the drums of war have reached a fever pitch and the blood boils with hate and the mind has closed, the leader will have no need in seizing the rights of the citizenry. Rather, the citizenry, infused with fear and blinded by patriotism, will offer up all of their rights unto the leader and gladly so." (Another, but wiser author unknown). Touché.

Actually the quote for my response has been on the Internet for over a year. Some critics have said that it's falsely attributed to Julius Caesar via William Shakespeare. I personally haven't investigated its source. What does it matter? It rings true for me.

Gerard Tretton
Santa Monica

What is a Scud?

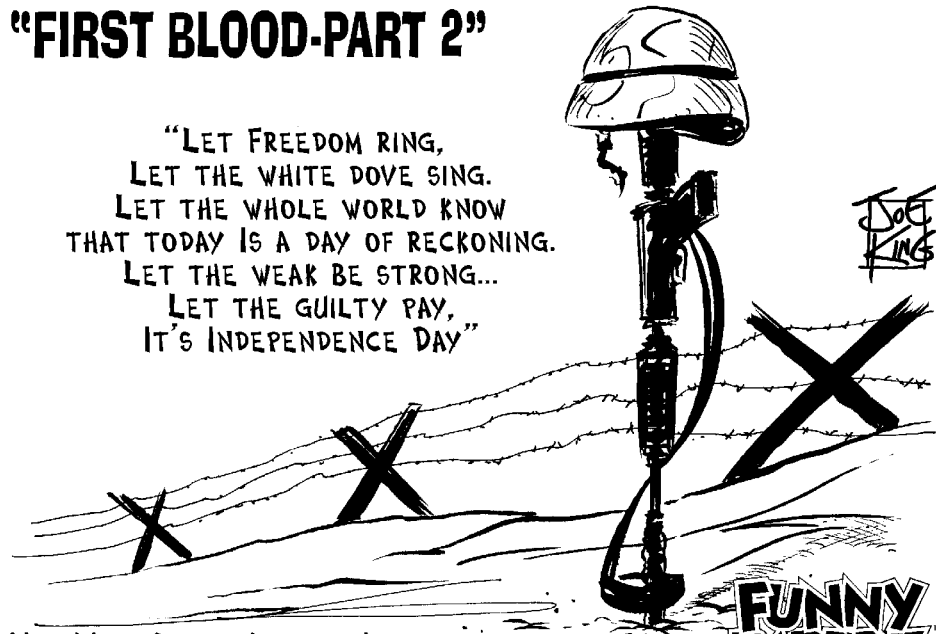
Editor:

It's nice to see the Daily Press take a similar path as the Los Angeles Times when it comes to having an editorial cartoonist from the right wing. It balances a bit the views of most Santa Monica voters and councilmembers. But fyi regarding one recent cartoon from your artist Joe King. Please let him know that a Scud is not a weapon of mass destruction.

Hank Rosenfeld
Santa Monica

"FIRST BLOOD-PART 2"

"LET FREEDOM RING,
LET THE WHITE DOVE SING.
LET THE WHOLE WORLD KNOW
THAT TODAY IS A DAY OF RECKONING.
LET THE WEAK BE STRONG...
LET THE GUILTY PAY,
IT'S INDEPENDENCE DAY"



*Local boys first to die in combat -
Lance Cpl. Jose Gutierrez and 2nd Lt. Therrel S. Childers.

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Israel shouldn't squander high road opportunity



INCITES

By Ed Silverstein

Nearly obscured by the cloud of war, Dr. Mahmoud Abbas, who also is more commonly known as Abu Mazen, has accepted the post of Palestinian Prime Minister. Abu Mazen, credited by many as the architect of the Oslo accords, is a highly intellectual man and is considered to be a pragmatist and a moderate. Mazen has publicly declared the current intifada a disaster for his people and their goal of autonomy, and has called for a halt to Palestinian armed attacks.

Mazen's appointment offers the best chance to end the 30 month-old Israeli/Palestinian conflict. It also provides a rare opportunity for Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. But in order to gain political advantage, Sharon must act quickly and preemptively.

Sharon should immediately embrace Mazen as the new leader of the Palestinian people. More importantly, the Israeli Prime Minister should announce a unilateral end to the violence and offer a schedule for the rapid and ordered pull-out from all the occupied regions. By instituting proactive measures now, rather

than waiting for a negotiated settlement down the road, Sharon, who is viewed by much of the world as an unyielding aggressor, could greatly improve his political standing and that of his country. If Sharon does nothing and peace is later achieved, Mazen will likely receive most of the credit.

An Israeli initiated pull-out would have many other beneficial consequences. By ceasing hostilities it would marginalize Arafat and would bolster Israel's claim that Arafat has been the major obstacle to peace. A secondary benefit would be to strengthen support for Mazen. This could help allow the new Prime Minister to appoint others into his government with similar views and minimize interference from Arafat. Such an action by Israel also has the potential to provide cover for moderate Palestinians looking for a way to condemn terrorism and support peace.

The United States would greatly profit from any movement toward a resolution in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, which most Arabs consider the Middle East's single most important issue. Such a move would help soften opposition to the U.S. Iraqi invasion and somewhat curtail the Arab media's continuous onslaught of anti-American rhetoric.

Israel is also a victim of the constant barrage of anti-Israel propaganda by the Arab media and the United Nations. Through 1989, the U.N. Security Council has passed 97 resolutions condemning

Israel out of a total of 175. Only four resolutions went against all Arab countries combined, including the Palestinians. Under these attacks, American support for Israel is showing the first signs of strain. Despite Israel being our staunchest ally and the only democratic government in the region, there are those who have begun to question the continued expenditure of billions in aid.

Another problem for Israel is the tragic death of Rachel Corrie. Corrie, an American peace activist, was run over and killed when she lost her footing while standing in front of an oncoming bulldozer. The incident, which Israel claims was a terrible accident, threatens to become a public relations disaster. A move toward peace could help diminish the credibility of the strident voices against Israel and focus attention away from Corrie.

The United Nations (or whatever is left of it) would be forced to take a more favorable stance toward Israel. Any Palestinian suicide attack subsequent to a pull out would compel the U.N.'s condemnation or risk, lending credence to Israel's claim that the organization is, at best, negatively biased against Israel, at worst blatantly anti-Semitic. Any such miscarriage would also support the notion that the U.N. (along with France) has become increasingly irrelevant as a world arbiter and human rights advocate. The same would hold true, albeit to a far lesser extent, for the Arab league. An attack would also test

Mazen's opposition to terrorism and his resolve as a Palestinian leader.

No matter what Mazen's appointment brings, it is apparent to any sane human being that it is imperative for the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to end. Aside from the terrible human toll suffered by both sides, the conflict has destabilized the region and is the root of tremendous anti-American sentiment.

If the Palestinian's are to ever have their own country and if the Israelis are ever to again feel safe in theirs, both sides must be willing to compromise. Even more crucial is a courageous leader.

Such a man was Anwar Sadat. The Egyptian leader took an incredible gamble to secure peace with Israel and eventually paid the ultimate price. Arafat, even when offered unheard of concessions by Israel, turned his back on peace. President Bush fumbled his chance when he embraced isolationism over continued diplomacy. With Mazen's appointment we may finally have a light at the end of the tunnel. We can only hope that Sharon will see that light and seize the initiative.

ASIDE: To those "peace" protesters who have been throwing rocks and steel rebar at police officers — you just don't get it.

(Ed Silverstein is a freelance writer living in Santa Monica. Comments and general whining can be e-mailed to edsincites@aol.com).

Opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the Santa Monica Daily Press staff. Guest editorials from residents are encouraged, as are letters to the editor. Letters will be published on a space-available basis. It is our intention to publish all letters we receive, except those that are libelous or are unsigned. Preference will be given to those that are e-mailed to sack@smdp.com. All letters must include the author's name and telephone number for purposes of verification. Letters also may be mailed to our offices located at 1427 Third Street Promenade, Suite 202, Santa Monica, 90401, or faxed to (310) 576-9913. All letters and guest editorials are subject to editing for space and content.

LOCAL

More outside tables may be coming to Santa Monica

DINING, from page 1

Mike Feinstein and O'Connor serve on the task force.

The suggestions were made to encourage the vitality and future growth of restaurants downtown.

"Outdoor dining is a critical component of the success of the Promenade," said Suzanne Frick, head of the city's planning department and a member of the task force.

Among the recommendations:

■ Place dining tables in the middle of the Promenade. Restaurants should be able to compete for the right to put tables in the center of the Promenade, officials say. While there are some legal issues posed by the suggestion, city planning officials said they could probably be overcome.

■ Use the Third Street Promenade's kiosks for cafes. The task force suggested reducing the space allotted to 12-year kiosk tenant and clothing retailer "Mudra" from 750 square feet to 200 square feet. The store is located at Santa Monica Boulevard on the Promenade and is connected to the Santa Monica Police Department sub-station, which could also be relocated so the kiosk can be used for cafe use.

■ Simplify the permit process for restaurants. Restaurants currently have to endure a "fairly cumbersome permitting process" to start or expand their outdoor dining, or to serve alcohol, Frick said. The task force suggested creating a system that would preclude the need for a "conditional use permit," eliminating one bureaucratic step in the approval process.

■ Relax the restrictions on restaurant "sandwich board" signs. The task force supported taking a closer look at making it easier for businesses to advertise their menus and specials to passersby on signs and banners. The task force split over whether sandwich boards should be permitted in the public right of way, where they may impede pedestrian flow.

■ Expand vending carts. The task group favored expanding the downtown vending cart program and allowing for more types of vendors, including incidentals such as flowers and shoe shines. The task force decided against allowing major food vending, saying it would duplicate the offerings of downtown restaurants, detracting from their business.

Council members said they may support the recommendations, but stressed that no formal suggestions have been brought to them.

"I'm in favor of expanding the outdoor dining," Councilman Bob Holbrook said. "And I think streamlining the permitting process is really important. Frankly, we probably ought to consider removing the street portion of the Promenade and having just a wide walkway."

Some city officials have expressed concern over the legality of placing tables in the middle of Third Street, which is still zoned as a roadway. But City Planner Andy Agle said the necessary changes would be relatively easy to make.

"It's a fairly discreet amendment," he said. "We don't anticipate that it be an especially involved process."

Councilman Kevin McKeown said he's concerned over where street performers might go if tables take their place.

"We've heard from the community again and again that outdoor dining is a desirable commodity," he said. "I'd be very interested in researching where we could relocate any misplaced street performers. I think street performers are as much a part of the successful equation downtown as dining and theaters."

Kathleen Rawson, executive director of Bayside District Corp., the non-profit that helps the city manage downtown, said she is pleased with the recommendations but added that the group still needs to look at exactly how the mix of restaurants, street performers and pedestrians would ultimately work out.

"I think it's critical to have outdoor dining. The Promenade has a unique character and that's one of the things that attracts people to it."

— RICHARD BLOOM
Santa Monica mayor

Mayor Richard Bloom said he'd consider anything to help Santa Monica's restaurants make it downtown.

"The root problem as I see it is the economics of running a restaurant make it difficult to turn a profit given the rising rents," he said. "My sense is there's a diminishing number right now and that's not good."

Bloom said he is looking forward to examining the task force's recommendations in detail later this year and said the council will use them as a starting point for further debate.

"I think it's critical to have outdoor dining," he said. "The Promenade has a unique character and that's one of the things that attracts people to it."

While Councilman Ken Genser agrees that it is important to maintain sidewalk dining, he questioned some of the task force's recommendations.

"All this stuff, how does it encourage more restaurants?" he asked. "I just can't see how the little things like putting up sandwich boards could encourage or retain restaurants."

"It might be a good thing to do, or it might be a bad thing to do," he added. "But it really doesn't have anything to do with retaining or attracting restaurants. I hope when we have our discussions (in June) we'll focus on what the real issue is — can we do something to preserve the existing restaurants and encourage new ones to come to here?"

The controversy over dining 'al fresco' is not unique to downtown.

Gary Gordon, the executive director of the Main Street Merchant's Association, said he'd like to see the city encourage outdoor dining throughout the city.

"Sidewalk eating is important on Main Street and elsewhere," he said. "It is part of the celebration of living in southern California."

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LOCAL

Workers rally at City Hall

PROTEST, from page 1

Petersen said Viceroy employees have a "voice" on the job, while Sheraton workers cannot speak without "fear of reprisal."

"Ultimately the boss can match wages and benefits," he said. "But they can't match respect."

Workers at the Sheraton are currently trying to unionize by a "card check" system — the same way the Viceroy did in 2001.

Under the card check system, hotels must recognize a union as the bargaining unit for its workers if a majority of the employees sign cards saying the union represents them.

Jessica Coleman, a spokeswoman for the hotel who said she wasn't aware of the rally and didn't know the status of the union talks, maintained the hotel's owners have a reputation in Santa Monica for treating employees well.

"(The Kor Group) values every employee," she said. "From their standpoint, employees at both of those properties are treated equally."

"This whole union versus non-union (debate) is all employee choice," she added. "(The Kor Group) values employee choices."

Councilman Kevin McKeown, who on Tuesday had spoken with Brad Korzen,

the hotel's owner, addressed the crowd in front of City Hall and told protesters he had hoped to bring a message that the "log jam has broken."

"The moment has not yet come," he said. "But it will come. The City Council is committed to making sure worker's rights are protected."

School board member Oscar de la Torre also spoke at the rally, encouraging the workers' efforts to be recognized and accusing Sheraton of sending a message to the community that "inequality is OK."

"Fairness and justice can prevail when people organize," he said.

After the speeches, protesters took to the streets and, flanked by four police motorcycles, marched down Pico Boulevard to the Sheraton chanting in Spanish and English, and pounding on plastic drums.

At the hotel, management wasn't available to accept a letter from the workers detailing their complaints.

"The manager was hiding like the Taliban," said de la Torre, who attempted to deliver the letter, along with a collage of pictures depicting similar protests at other hotels. "He didn't want to talk to anyone."

Protesters eventually disbanded, chanting, "We'll be back."

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

BRIEFS, from page 3

of the Santa Monica Jaycees, so she is well deserving of this prestigious honor."

Irby is currently involved in several local community organizations, including the Santa Monica Police Activities League (PAL), the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club of Santa Monica, and the Santa Monica Salvation Army.

As the director of the Santa Monica Kiwanis John Drescher Golf Classic, she coordinated fundraising efforts that generated more than \$25,000 in donations for the Santa Monica PAL. As a member of the league's board of directors, she also actively volunteered to assist the organization with the PAL-loween Carnival, spring faire, and holiday workshop.

In addition, Ms. Irby assisted the members of the local Youth Directors Council, a group of local teenagers active in area community service projects. She is a member of Santa Monica's Homeless Task Force, and has raised money for various local homeless social service agencies. Now a vice president at Encino State Bank in Santa Monica, Ms. Irby was nominated by the Kiwanis Club of Santa Monica.

"I am absolutely thrilled, and extraordinarily grateful, to be honored with this year's Distinguished Service Award," Irby said. "I have always felt that service to others, and the community at large, can truly make a positive difference in the lives of others. As a result, I wish to applaud the outstanding work of my fellow nominees, whose collective efforts in Santa Monica are changing the landscape of this wonderful city. In reality, this award is not just for me, but for all of those who consider community service to be one of the most important priorities in life."

Irby was selected as this year's winner by an independent panel of judges consisting of local business and civic luminaries. The finalists were chosen following a lengthy nomination process that was conducted by the Santa Monica Jaycees, and included all of the area's most prominent leadership, service, and nonprofit organizations.

Fairview library open with new amenities

By Daily Press staff

A renovated Fairview Branch Library reopened in January. Changes include a new reading area, additional wiring for on-line services, new carpeting, paint inside and out, and new landscaping, all made possible with funds from a 1998 voter-approved library bond.

The non-profit Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library hopes to add new items such as shelving, furniture, and a sound system for the community room with private donations from a Brick Fundraiser campaign.

The campaign, with a goal of \$50,000, centers on the sale of 8"x 8" pavers, engraved with the donor's message, such as family names or tributes. The pavers will be placed near the library's front entrance and will form the new floor of the back patio. A similar campaign was launched last summer for the Montana Avenue Branch Library.

To order the brick pavers, or for more information about the campaign or to volunteer, call (310) 392-1306. Forms are available on-line at www.smpl.org/construction/fairview, or at the Fairview Branch, 2101 Ocean Park Blvd. Hours are 12 noon to 9 p.m. on Monday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday.

NATIONAL



Voter initiatives tax state budgets across nation

Editor's note — Nationwide, state governments are struggling with the worst budget crisis in a half-century. This is the latest installment in "Tough Times-Tough Choices," an ongoing series by The Associated Press examining the real-life consequences of the decisions being made in statehouses from coast to coast.

BY PAUL QUEARY
Associated Press Writer

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Higher teacher pay. Smaller classes. More health care for the poor. Longer prison sentences. Lower taxes. What's to hate, right?

Voters across the nation in recent years have passed ballot measure after ballot measure affecting billions of dollars — initiatives that are now causing major headaches for state lawmakers scrambling to stave off huge budget shortfalls. Legislators are also finding that cutting a program with a direct endorsement from the voters is no easy matter.

"We're at one of the most difficult crossroads in initiative states that you've ever seen," said Dane Waters, president of the Initiative and Referendum Institute in Virginia, a nonpartisan organization that tracks initiative politics. "Lawmakers typically in the past have not had the guts to thwart the will of the people."

In Washington state, much of a projected \$2.6 billion budget shortfall can be laid at the feet of a half-dozen initiatives adopted during the economic boom of the past decade.

In 2000, voters mandated smaller class sizes and yearly cost-of-living raises for teachers. The price tag: \$630 million for the biennium. They have also voted for life sentences for three-time offenders and longer prison time for armed crimes. The cost: \$72 million over two years.

"You're talking about a billion dollars right there," said state Sen. Dino Rossi, chairman of the budget-writing Ways and Means Committee. "It came at a time when we were apparently flush with cash. Now we're broke and so is everybody we know."

Such ballot-box budgeting isn't limited to Washington, especially when it comes to education spending.

Florida voters amended their constitution in November to limit class sizes, rebuffing the objections of Republican Gov. Jeb Bush. They also approved expensive mandates for a high-speed train and universal preschool for 4-year-olds.

In California, voters approved a measure backed by actor Arnold Schwarzenegger that would spend as much as \$550 million in state money each year for before- and after-school programs.

In Colorado, a constitutional amendment adopted in 2000 mandates big yearly increases in education spending — about \$175 million in the next fiscal year.

Ever since California's Proposition 13, the 1978 property tax freeze that launched modern initiative politics, voters have been increasingly willing to pre-empt lawmakers on matters of spending and taxation, Waters said.

Initiative campaigns are often an easier way for interest groups to achieve their goals than going to statehouses, where ideas are weighed by thickets of committees and balky lawmakers more inclined to cut taxes than boost spending.

For example, the education initiatives in Washington passed after union teachers

and others came up short in the Legislature for years — even during the prosperous 1990s.

"There had been seven years of decline of per-student spending," said Lisa Macfarlane of the League of Education Voters. "It was very much a last resort."

Initiative backers note that states without direct citizen access to the ballot are also hurting as they economy continues to struggle and costs rise for key services such as health care.

But the ballot process puts several states in a special squeeze. Along with the spending initiatives, Washington's robust tax-revolt movement has passed several measures cutting or limiting taxes, and might well force a statewide vote on any tax increase aimed at paying for the initiatives.

"We're at one of the most difficult crossroads in initiative states that you've ever seen."

— DANE WATERS
Initiative and Referendum Institute

Similar movements are crimping Oregon, Colorado and other states.

Washington state Sen. Ken Jacobsen likens the initiative to a loaded pistol that voters can use to play Russian roulette with states' futures.

"We don't know what initiatives we're going to have next year, or the year after that," he said. "How can any government official make a long-term commitment?"

Despite the headaches, many lawmakers in the two dozen states where initiatives are allowed embrace them as a populist check on lawmakers and bureaucrats.

"People can tell you if you've done something wrong, and they can tell you if you haven't done something," said Rossi, a Republican who represents an affluent district in Seattle's eastern suburbs.

Still, Democratic Gov. Gary Locke wants to suspend the class-size and teacher-pay enhancements. "We simply cannot afford to continue being such a trailblazer," Locke said.

Whether lawmakers around the country will choose the rock of thwarting the voters or the hard place of raising taxes is an open question. Getting rid of initiatives is often easier said than done.

In California, lawmakers can't change them at all. Washington requires a "super-majority" in the legislature to change an initiative within two years of its passage.

Barb Whitaker, a stay-at-home mom in the Seattle suburb of Auburn, voted for the education initiatives in 2000 as relief for the crowded classrooms and harried teachers at the school her children — then ages 9 and 6 — were attending.

The initiatives, she said, were a not-so-gentle reminder: "Legislators, you're not doing the job. You're not making the hard decisions to put the state where it should be."

Whitaker said she knows expensive mandates from the people put lawmakers in a bind, but she doesn't regret voting for them.

"Every time they turn around to cut, they're hurting something that is also important to education," Whitaker said. "We're robbing Peter to pay Paul."

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Santa Monica Daily Press



NATIONAL

Telemarketing block will be available in June

BY DAVID HO

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — People fed up with unwanted telemarketing can sign up in July for a national do-not-call list that will block many sales calls, the Federal Trade Commission said Tuesday.

The FTC will launch a Web site on July 1 so consumers can register online for the free service, the agency said.

The FTC also will begin an eight-week rollout of a toll-free phone number where people also can register for the list. The number will first work on the West Coast and then spread across the country until it is available nationwide by the end of August.

Beginning in September, telemarketers will have to check the list every three months to determine who does not want to be called. Those who call listed people could be fined up to \$11,000 for each violation. Consumers would be able to file complaints by phone or online to an automated system.

The government said it will begin enforcing the do-not-call list in October.

The Web site address and phone number will be announced in June, the FTC said. People would need to renew their registration every five years.

More than two dozen states already have their own do-not-call lists or legisla-

tion pending that would create them. Most states plan to add their lists to the national registry.

Telemarketers say the registry will devastate their industry, endanger millions of jobs and send ripples through the economy. The Direct Marketing Association, an industry group, has sued the FTC on grounds the registry amounts to an unlawful restriction on free speech.

The registry will be financed by fees collected from telemarketers and cost about \$16 million in its first year.

There are exceptions to the FTC's do-not-call protections.

A company may call someone on the list if that person has bought, leased or rented from the company within the past 18 months. Telemarketers also can call people if they have inquired or applied for something from the company during the past three months.

Charities, surveys and calls on behalf of politicians also are exempt.

The FTC has limited authority to police telemarketing calls from certain industries, including airlines, banks and telephone companies. The Federal Communications Commission, which oversees calls made by those industries, has been working with the FTC and is considering adding its clout to the program.

2 million users logged on for free tax preparation program

BY MARY DALRYMPLE

AP Tax Writer

WASHINGTON — More than 2 million people have used free tax preparation services offered through the Internal Revenue Service this tax season, surpassing the agency's goal for the program's first year.

The program encourages electronic filing by giving taxpayers access to the computer tools they need to send their returns. The IRS expects about 53 million of the more than 130 million returns that will be filed this year to come in electronically, eclipsing last year's record 47 million.

But despite the ease of filing electronic returns, one in five of all taxpayers will probably wait until the last minute to file.

Most of the procrastinators owe the IRS. Last year, 61 percent of the tax dollars owed arrived after the deadline. The agency is now encouraging those people to file early electronically, and then authorize electronic payment of their bill on the April 15 deadline.

"People don't have to wait until 11:59 on April 14," said Terry Lutes, director of IRS Electronic Tax Administration.

To choose that option, taxpayers must file electronically through a tax preparer or a special software program and then authorize payment by an electronic bank withdrawal or by credit card.

For taxpayers who would normally compute their own taxes the old fashioned pen-and-paper way, the IRS free filing program may make the job a little easier.

The service makes free tax preparation software provided by private companies available through the IRS Web site to qualified users, in a bid to get 80 percent of all returns filed electronically by 2007.

The 17 participating companies allow

qualified taxpayers to prepare their returns using the software free of charge, then transmit the return electronically to the IRS.

Most free filing options target low-income taxpayers, including those who may qualify for a refund under the Earned Income Credit (EIC). Those individuals and families can prepare their returns without paying a tax professional and get their refunds faster, said Scott Gulbransen, spokesman for TurboTax software, which is offering free filing services for taxpayers who make less than \$27,000 or qualify for the EIC.

After an individual prepares the return, the company sends the information to the IRS over secure lines.

"We take that very seriously," said Cammie Greif, vice president of marketing at 2nd Story Software Inc., which offers free TaxACT preparation services for taxpayers with more than \$50,000 in income.

Most taxpayers will qualify to use one of the free filing services, based on eligibility requirements that consider income, age and military service. A quick questionnaire at www.irs.gov points taxpayers to appropriate services.

Electronic filing offers other benefits to taxpayers, including a confirmation that the IRS received their return. Some of the free filing software also can offer the same advice given by professional tax preparers and can find tax advantages that might otherwise be overlooked.

Perhaps the biggest advantage of electronic filing is a faster check for anyone expecting a refund. A taxpayer can expect a refund within two weeks if filing electronically, but it can take up to eight weeks if the IRS receives the return by mail during the last weeks of the filing season.

NATIONAL



Civilians are dying in Iraq, but nobody knows how many

BY NIKO PRICE
Associated Press Writer

IRAQ-JORDAN BORDER — Bombed-out cars on highways. Mothers weeping over dead children. A small boy seemingly asleep, the back of his head blown off.

Evidence of civilian casualties is not hard to find in Iraq, but as fierce fighting rages in the south and Baghdad is battered by bombs, nobody can count them.

The Iraqi government reports 194 civilian dead. The Red Cross says it can vouch for 14, but there could be many more. A Web site that compiles Western news media reports says between 199 and 278 are reported dead.

The reality is that none of these figures are complete or accurate.

"There are no solid figures on civilian casualties," Geoffrey Keele, UNICEF's spokesman for Iraq, said Tuesday in Amman, Jordan.

U.S. officials say they are taking great pains to avoid killing civilians. Iraqi officials mock their assertions, and are largely succeeding in convincing large parts of the world that the war is targeting innocents.

As for overall figures, however, there is little information.

The International Committee of the Red Cross says it has counted 14 dead and 110 injured since Sunday in airstrikes on Baghdad. It has no figures for other parts of the country.

"We usually don't give casualty figures unless they're the result of our immediate observation," said Muin Kassis of the Red Cross in Amman.

In the southern city of Basra, where U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has warned of a humanitarian catastrophe, Kassis said: "We have no accurate account of casualties."

The Web site www.IraqBodyCount.net, which compiles news reports, gives a minimum count on civilian casualties of 199, and a maximum of 278. The range is

due to conflicting reports.

Iraqi officials have reported more than 200 civilian casualties.

But most of the evidence of civilian casualties is anecdotal — although no less powerful.

Journalists, taxi drivers and refugees who show up at this border tell of dozens of bombed-out cars lining the highway from Baghdad.

Iraqi newspapers publish photographs of decapitated bodies.

Every day, most Arab television stations show footage from Iraqi hospitals, where men, women and children lie in agony from injuries attributed to U.S. missiles.

"My son was killed in the shelling," wailed a woman dressed in black, lying in a hospital bed next to another son, a toddler. Her image was broadcast on the Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya network.

Perhaps the greatest impact came from Qatar's Al-Jazeera network, which showed an Iraqi boy, maybe 12 years old, his head half blown off and a tranquil expression frozen on his face.

An Al-Jazeera anchor apologized for showing such disturbing pictures, but said: "The world should know the truth."

Still photos taken from the network were carried on the front pages of newspapers across the Arab world. "America's missiles of freedom assassinate the children of Basra," read a headline in Lebanon's leading newspaper, As-Safir.

Syria's official news agency SANA reported that a U.S. missile hit a passenger bus carrying fleeing Syrian workers on Sunday, killing five people and injuring 10. A U.S. Central Command spokeswoman had no information on the report.

Another U.S. missile killed a Jordanian taxi driver on Thursday while he made a phone call at Kilo 160, a rest stop 150 miles west of Baghdad.

Taxi driver Sameer Sabah, a friend of the dead man,

went pale when he heard one of his passengers at the Jordanian border speaking Spanish. Spain has been a key supporter of the U.S.-led war.

"Get out of my car before I do something," he said in a chilling monotone. "Your people killed my friend. He was killed by the cold hands of the American Army."

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List of casualties, POWs, MIAs

By The Associated Press

List of 20 U.S. troops killed and 14 captured or missing in war on Iraq. Sources: U.S. military and relatives. Hometowns may be those of family.

KILLED

■ Nine Marines, fighting near An Nasiriyah, encountered Iraqi troops pretending to surrender, March 23. Sgt. Michael E. Bitz, 31, Ventura, Calif.; Lance Cpl. Brian Rory Buesing, 20, of Cedar Key, Fla.; Lance Cpl. David K. Fribley, 26, Lee, Fla.; Cpl. Jose A. Garibay, 21, Orange, Calif.; Cpl. Jorge A. Gonzalez, 20, Los Angeles; Staff Sgt. Phillip A. Jordan, 42, Brazoria, Texas; 2nd Lt. Frederick E. Pokorney Jr., 31, Nye, Nev.; Cpl. Randal Kent Rosacker, 21, San Diego, Calif.; Lance Cpl. Thomas J. Slocum, age unknown, Adams, Colo.

■ Army Capt. Christopher Scott Seifert, 27, of Easton, Pa., grenade attack at 101st Airborne Division camp in Kuwait, March 23. U.S. soldier suspected in attack, military officials say.

■ Army Reserve Spc. Brandon S. Tobler, 19, of Portland, Ore., non-combat vehicle accident in Iraq, March 22.

■ Navy Lt. Thomas Mullen Adams, 27, of La Mesa, Calif., collision of two British helicopters, March 22.

■ Marine Capt. Ryan Anthony Beaupre, 30, of Bloomington, Ill.; Marine Cpl. Brian Matthew Kennedy, 25, of Houston; Marine Staff Sgt. Kendall Damon Waters-Bey, 29, of Baltimore; Marine Maj. Jay Thomas Aubin, 36, of Waterville, Maine. Helicopter crash in Kuwait, March 21.

■ Marine 2nd Lt. Therrel S. Childers, 30, of Harrison County, Miss.; Marine Lance Cpl. Jose Gutierrez, 22, of Los Angeles. Ground combat in Iraq, March 21.

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Eric J. Orłowski, 26, of Buffalo, N.Y. Machine gun accidentally discharged, date uncertain.

■ Sgt. Nicolas M. Hodson, 22, of Smithville, Mo. Vehicle accident in Iraq, date uncertain.

CAPTURED:

■ Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ronald D. Young Jr., 26, from Lithia Springs, Ga.; Chief Warrant Officer 2 David S. Williams, 30, from Orlando, Fla. Pilots of Apache helicopter downed after not returning from mission March 23. Shown in Iraqi state television March 24, apparently uninjured.

■ Army Spc. Joseph Hudson, 23, of Almagordo, N.M.; Army Pfc. Patrick Miller, 23, of Park City, Kan.; Army Spc. Shoshana Johnson, 30, of Fort Bliss, Texas; Edgar Hernandez, 21, supply truck driver, of Mission, Texas, rank unknown; Army Sgt. James Riley, 31, of Pennsauken, N.J. Shown on Iraqi television after pre-dawn ambush of convoy near An Nasiriyah, southwestern Iraq, March 23.

In addition, seven others were classified as missing from An Nasiriyah. Among them: Army Pvt. Brandon Sloan, 19, of Bedford Heights, Ohio, Pfc. Lori Piestewa, 22, of Tuba City, Ariz., Pfc. Jessica Lynch, 19, supply clerk, of Palestine, W.Va., and Spc. James Kiehl, 22, of Comfort, Texas, family members said. The names of three others were not available.

Iraqi TV displayed four bodies of what it said were Americans from the attack.

The march is on



Cheryl Diaz Meyer/Associated Press

Marine Sergeant Louis DeMarco of New York, Delta Company of the Second Tank Battalion, fuels a tank as a sandstorm rages in preparation for an advance to the north of Iraq on Tuesday. The move north has been one of the most aggressive tank road marches in Marine history.

DID YOU KNOW?:

The city of Santa Monica issues about 27,000 parking citations a month.



INTERNATIONAL

Iraqi television continues to broadcast propaganda

BY DEBORAH HASTINGS

Associated Press Writer

Hour by hour, Iraq TV broadcasts the fierce propaganda of Saddam Hussein and his inner circle. "Slit their throats," is the greeting Iraqi citizens should give advancing allied troops, the leaders advise on the air.

Despite bombs, missiles and thousands of ground troops rumbling toward Baghdad, the government-controlled station operates with only intermittent outages.

But threatened death and mayhem are not the most disturbing words coming over the Iraqi airwaves. The halting responses of captured Americans, their faces etched in fear, are also broadcast. And ultimately, after being picked up by Qatar-based satellite network Al-Jazeera and bounced around the world, they have made their way onto U.S. television.

And into the homes of prisoners' families, who can only watch helplessly.

On Monday, Iraqi television showed farmers stomping on the helmets of two downed Apache helicopter pilots in cen-

tral Iraq.

"A small number of peasants shot down two Apaches," Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed Al-Sahhaf said. "Perhaps we will show pictures of the pilots."

They did. Chief Warrant Officers Ronald D. Young Jr., 26, of Lithia Springs, Ga., and David S. Williams, 30, of Orlando, Fla. appeared on camera but didn't speak. They looked confused, turning their heads and looking in different directions.

"He looked stubborn, mad," said Young's mother, Kaye, standing outside her Atlanta home Monday night. "He probably was frightened though." At first, the mother said, she was hysterical. "Now I'm numb."

American military officials have long promised a war that would take great care to avoid civilian casualties and infrastructures such as power and communications grids. Increasingly, however, U.S. leaders are being asked why allied troops — with their precision weaponry — don't simply knock Iraqi television off the air for good.

The answers have been vague.

On Tuesday, during the daily military

briefing at the coalition's \$1.5 million desert press center in Qatar, a reporter asked Air Force Maj. Gen. Victor Renuart: "Why haven't you attacked those facilities and taken them out?"

"I'm not going to talk about what we target and when," Renuart replied. Besides, he added, he doesn't think such propaganda hurts the allied cause.

"I don't believe it affects us in a negative way," he said. "I think people around the world understand that it is, in fact ... not necessarily reality."

Which may be exactly what coalition leaders are hoping for, and why they haven't yet targeted the television station, say wartime propaganda experts.

"They're trying to allow Iraq TV and the Iraq government to hang themselves," said Garth Jowett, a University of Houston communications expert and co-author of "Propaganda and Persuasion."

On Tuesday night, the Iraqi information minister appeared again, in uniform. "Hit

the enemy, hit them, hit them at times and in places he does not expect," he said. "Fight them, hit them (with) in new ways. These days are the days of your great victory."

Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz held a news conference Tuesday at a Baghdad hotel, broadcast live by Iraqi television as well as by other TV outlets including CNN. Saddam's leadership is in "good shape," Aziz said, and the president is in "full control" of the army and the country.

He did not mention allied reports that the coalition had taken more than 3,000 Iraqi prisoners of war and that a reported 500 Iraqi soldiers have been killed in the past two days.

Iraq has used its television station to try to prove that Saddam is alive and well. Aziz has used it to disprove rumors he had defected.

In the United States, the footage of captured Americans "makes war personal," Jowett said. "The effect that it has in this country is to simply stiffen the resolve here."

Developments in Iraq war

By The Associated Press

■ U.S. Army forces killed between 150 and 500 Iraqi troops after coming under attack near the central Iraqi city of An Najaf, a senior defense official said.

■ British forces surrounding Basra fought with more than 1,000 Iraqi militia, trying to secure the key southern city and open the way for delivery of humanitarian aid. British officials said there appeared to be civilian resistance under way against Saddam Hussein's regime.

■ Sandstorms slowed U.S. and British forces to a crawl and thwarted air mis-

sions Tuesday as U.S.-led forces edged closer to Baghdad. In the south, British forces captured a senior Iraqi official and killed 20 fighters.

■ Turkey will send forces up to 12 miles into northern Iraq to stop refugees, but only if a crisis situation develops, Turkey's foreign minister said.

■ U.S. war strategists are proceeding on the assumption Saddam Hussein is alive even though information on his fate remains inconclusive, Bush administration officials said Tuesday.

■ President Bush, seeking \$74.7 billion as a down

payment for war in Iraq, said coalition forces are "on a steady advance" but that he could not predict how long the fighting will last, but stressed "we know its outcome: We will prevail."

■ Coalition forces have captured nearly 4,000 Iraqi prisoners as of Tuesday night, a senior Pentagon official said.

■ Two British soldiers were killed in a "friendly fire" incident with a British tank near Basra in southern Iraq, a military commander said Tuesday.

■ The United Nations Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting for Wednesday after Arab and nonaligned nations demanded an open meeting to express their opposition to the U.S.-led war on Iraq.

■ With food dwindling for millions of Iraqis, a U.N. aid agency will make its biggest single request for cash — more than \$1 billion to help feed the war-stricken nation for about six months.

■ Eleven of the 20 U.S. military personnel who had died in Iraq by Tuesday were Marines who were stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C. Most were killed in an ambush near An Nasiriyah, the Pentagon said.

■ Two planes from the Gulf brought 27 U.S. injured soldiers to a military hospital in Germany on Tuesday, including five who were wounded in Iraq.

■ The Army sergeant suspected in a deadly grenade attack in Kuwait will be moved to Germany after a military magistrate found probable cause that the soldier committed the crime, the Army said Tuesday. The attack killed a captain and injured 15 soldiers.

Waiting for the raid



Julie Jacobson/Associated Press

Military personnel dressed in their chemical suits sit along a concrete barrier near a bunker outside the command post during an air raid on Tuesday at an air base in the Gulf region. No impact was made during the attack, one of several unsuccessful attacks made on the air base since the war started last week.

Wounded soldier



Dan Chung/Associated Press

British wounded are flown out from 1 CS Medical Regiment based near Basra, southern Iraq, in a Puma helicopter, Tuesday.

Heading out on a mission



Richard Vogel/Associated Press

Flight handling crew prepare to launch an F/A-18 Hornet off the USS Theodore Roosevelt for a CAS (close air support) mission over Iraq on Tuesday. The squadrons of the carrier group have stepped up sorties and have started close air support for ground troops in Iraq.

SPORTS



Mancuso claims victory



Toby Talbot/Associated Press

Julia Mancuso passes a gate in the women's giant slalom at the U.S. Alpine Championships at Whiteface Mountain in Wilmington, N.Y., on Tuesday. Mancuso won the race.

NFL to get rid of all-star officials for playoffs

BY DAVE GOLDBERG

AP Football Writer

PHOENIX — The NFL plans to use intact crews to officiate playoff games next season rather than all-star units — a move that comes after a postseason marked by officiating disputes.

The move, announced Tuesday at the NFL meetings, is designed to ensure more cohesion by using officials who have worked together all year. Until now, playoff crews had been made up of officials who rated the highest at their positions but hadn't necessarily worked together before.

The proposal was developed by the officiating department and needs only to be approved by commissioner by Paul Tagliabue, and he is expected to do so.

The most prominent gaffe in the playoffs occurred in San Francisco's 39-38 win over the New York Giants in an NFC

wild-card game.

With six seconds left, the Giants lined up for the winning field-goal attempt, the snap was botched and holder Matt Allen threw a desperation pass downfield. The Giants were called for an illegal receiver downfield, but tapes showed the 49ers should also have been called for pass interference.

That would have resulted in offsetting penalties and allowed New York a second shot at the winning field goal.

In the past, the NFL hasn't wanted to go to full crews for the playoffs because most have first- or second-year officials. Under the new system, the rookies would be replaced by veterans from other crews.

The day after, Tagliabue issued a rare statement criticizing the officiating.

"It might make sense," said Detroit coach Steve Mariucci, who was San Francisco's coach in the game against the Giants.

Els drops out with sore wrist

BY DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. — Ernie Els withdrew from The Players Championship on Tuesday after injuring his right wrist two weeks ago while working out with a punching bag at his home in London.

Els, the No. 2 player in the world, already has won four times this year. His announcement came a day after third-ranked Phil Mickelson withdrew because his wife recently gave birth to their third child.

"Obviously, I'm disappointed I couldn't play this week at The Players," Els said. "But given the soreness I felt earlier today, I knew there was no way I could play this week."

Els is expected to play in two week at the Masters.

The Players Championship perennially has the strongest and deepest field in golf and is regarded as the fifth major. Els has never finished higher than 10th in The Players.

He played in the Bay Hill Invitational and had a 7-under 65 in the second round

to get into contention, four strokes behind Tiger Woods. His wrist flared up again Saturday, however, and Els had to scramble for a 72. He closed with a 77 in a steady rain to finish 19 strokes off the lead.

"I could not be as aggressive as I wanted to be and kind of flinched a couple of times," Els said. "It's like an ankle; it takes time to recover. I've just got to give it some time."

Els said he only recently started using a punching bag as part of his workout routine.

"I'll probably strap my wrists next time," he said.

Els opened the year with back-to-back victories in Hawaii, the first player in 14 years to win the PGA Tour's first two tournaments of the year. He also won twice in Australia against strong foreign fields, and finished runner-up in two other stroke-play events.

The withdrawals of Els and Mickelson reduced the field to 146 at The Players Championship. Aaron Baddeley is the first alternate, but he will not play unless three others drop out.

Reputations can be built in NCAA tournament

BY JIM VERTUNO

AP Sports Writer

AUSTIN, Texas — Rick Barnes will be the only coach at the Alamodome this weekend who hasn't won a national championship.

Not that he's worried.

Besides, the Texas coach has beaten Gary Williams, Tom Izzo and Jim Calhoun at various stops in his career. Only now the stakes are a lot higher.

"We're on center stage," he said.

Of the 16 teams still playing in the NCAA tournament, several have coaches whose names are synonymous with success: Duke's Mike Krzyzewski, Arizona's Lute Olson and Kansas' Roy Williams, to name a few.

But with four wins in the next two weeks, several other coaches could build reputations that would last a lifetime — Barnes, Notre Dame's Mike Brey and Butler's Todd Lickliter are among them.

Barnes is a veteran of 16 seasons with successful stops at Providence, Clemson and now at Texas, where the Longhorns earned a berth in the round of 16 in consecutive seasons for the first time in school history. The Longhorns are the No. 1 seed in the South Regional.

Texas plays Connecticut on Friday night at San Antonio, followed by Maryland against Michigan State.

Connecticut's Calhoun (1999), Michigan State's Izzo (2000) and Maryland's Williams (2002) have won three of the last four titles.

In an atmosphere where the coaches often dominate the scene, Barnes said he'll try to keep the attention focused on his players more than himself.

"I want the identity of the program to be about the players," Barnes said. "It will be like that as long as I'm at Texas."

During the regular season, top teams can count on a number of wins against less-talented opponents. The tournament can be a coach's time to shine. He can't make the shots or grab the rebounds, but he can make the substitutions, call the defenses and draw up the plays that make the difference between a one-point win or a loss.

Krzyzewski, who has won three national titles, said tournament experience can give a coach an edge, whether it's in the nuances of the game or just keeping a team emotionally in check.

"I've coached in 75 games in the NAAs," Krzyzewski said. "That's a lot of games to learn, and you try to use that experience to see if it helps."

"That's not being arrogant because anybody can beat anybody in this tournament — anybody," he said. "That fear, that sense of urgency, if you can get that across to your team along with enthusiasm and competitiveness you've got a chance. That's how we prepare."

Izzo said he was overwhelmed by his first tournament in 1998 when the Spartans lost to North Carolina in the round of 16.

"Since then, I've at least had a clue of what to expect," he said.

Logistical experience, such as just

knowing where to sleep and how to get to the games, also is important, Izzo said. Among active coaches with at least 10 NCAA tournament games, his winning percentage of .818 (18-4) is the best.

Teams should get ticket requests done early and make sure the hotel is near the arena, he said. At Izzo's first Final Four, in 1999 at St. Petersburg, Fla., the Spartans' hotel was a 90-minute drive from the arena.

"I found out the other three teams were staying much closer," Izzo said. "I felt like a sucker after that experience."

Oklahoma coach Kelvin Sampson took the Sooners to the Final Four last season and they're the top seed this year in the Midwest. Sampson said that while some juggling may be required, a coach must focus on the game.

"If you never were part of it as assistant or player, you probably would be a little wide-eyed and distracted."

— MIKE BREY
Coach

"There's some Hollywood coaches and there's ball coaches. Ball coaches aren't going to get distracted," Sampson said. "It doesn't matter if you're Mike Brey or Lute Olson. He's coaching his team, he's taking them to an arena, he's going to play a game."

Notre Dame is the fifth seed in the West Regional in Anaheim, Calif., where the Fighting Irish will play top-seeded Arizona. Brey went to the Final Four six times as an assistant at Duke but this is his first regional semifinal as a head coach.

"I think as long as you've been there in some way, shape or form, you're OK. I've been part of the NCAA tournament so much and some deep runs, so that helps me prepare," Brey said.

"If you never were part of it as assistant or player, you probably would be a little wide-eyed and distracted," Brey said. "I've done this dance a few times."

Izzo said experienced players ultimately make the biggest difference. Nine of this year's final 16 teams made it to this round in last season's tournament.

Williams is back with a Maryland team that won the national title last year. Well, sort of. The Terps won it all but guard Steve Blake is the only returning starter. Kansas got to the Final Four last year and heads to the round of 16 with a lineup built around two savvy seniors, Nick Collison and Kirk Hinrich, that any coach would love to have.

"I've never won it before. I want to, but I never have," Barnes said. "I'll tell you this, they've won it, but they want to win it again."

Barnes also said a national title shouldn't define greatness in a coach.

"There are guys who will never get a chance but are great coaches," Barnes said. "I hope I'm going to have a lot of chances."

DID YOU KNOW?: Volleyball was invented by William George Morgan of Holyoke, Massachusetts in 1895.



COMICS

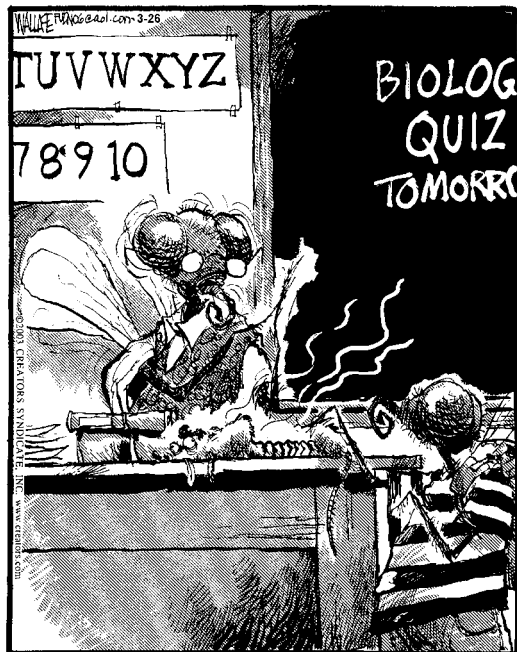
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- Final
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 - Kick a football
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 - Numero —
 - Bad review
 - Moving truck
 - Gone by
 - Roy's bat in "The Natural"
 - Formerly
 - Erode
 - Make do
 - Freshener target
 - "See ya!"
 - "Cut that out!"
 - "How come?"
 - Regions
 - Mosaic piece
 - Different
 - Horse chow
 - Carioca city
 - Series-ending abbr.
 - Manx, e.g.
 - Big galoot

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Yesterday's answer

- Formerly
- Erode
- Make do
- Freshener target
- "See ya!"
- "Cut that out!"
- "How come?"
- Regions
- Mosaic piece
- Different
- Horse chow
- Carioca city
- Series-ending abbr.
- Manx, e.g.
- Big galoot

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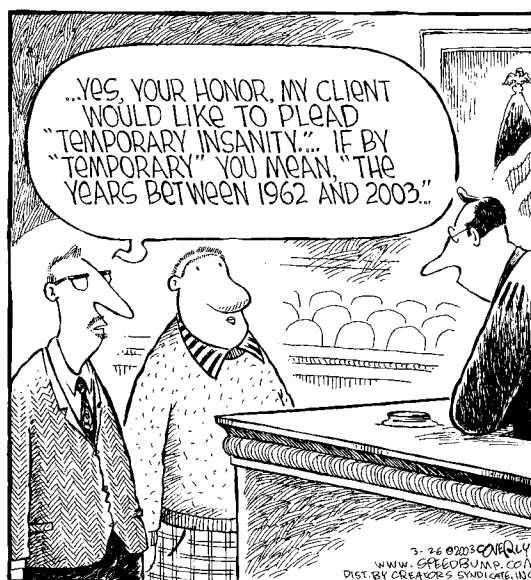
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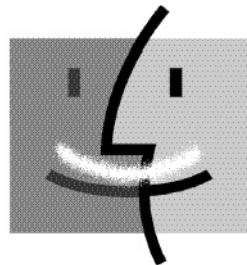
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SANTA MONICA SCENE

your guide to dining, entertainment and events

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2003

EVENTS

BLUE 7 PRESENTS 'Near and Far - Photographic Images of Nature.' The featured photographers are Scott Connell, Michael Gordon and Gavin Lauchenauer. Exhibit ends April 5th. Blue 7, 3129 Pico Blvd. (310)449-1444

FARMER'S MARKET every Wednesday. 9am to 2pm, Arizona between Second and Fourth Streets. Come and enjoy one of the largest and best farmer's markets in California!

SANTA MONICA STRUTTERS a FREE program sponsored by UCLA

Healthcare's 50-Plus Program! Walking programs for adults 50 or older looking for safe, low-impact exercise in a comfortable environment. The Santa Monica Strutters meet Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, from 8 a.m. To 10 a.m., at Santa Monica Place, Fourth St. and Broadway Ave. in Santa Monica.

TORAH READINGS: Hosted by Rabbi Aaron Shaffer. This popular class examines the text of the Bible verse by verse with explanations. Every Wednesday at 12:15pm, 1111 Montana Ave. Fee is \$7 per class. Gourmet salad lunch is served. (310)394-5699.

ONGOING SUPPORT GROUPS for people 55 and older. Current openings in Parents of Adult Children. Wednesdays 2:00 to 3:30. Center for Healthy Aging, 2125 Arizona Avenue. Sliding scale fee. Not drop-in groups. Phone interview required. Call Information and Referral. (310)576-2550.

SENIOR SUPPERS - Discounted meals for people AGE 55 or older are served daily, from 3:30 p.m. To 7 p.m., in the cafeteria at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center, 1250 16th Street in Santa Monica. \$3.69 Info only: (310)319-4837.

MOVIE GUIDE

LOEWS CINIPLEX BROADWAY CINEMA

1441 Third St. at Broadway
About Schmidt (R) 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30. **View From the Top (PG-13)** 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15. **The Hours (PG-13)** 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:45. **Willard (PG-13)** 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00.

MANN CRITERION

1313 Third St.
Bringing down the House (PG-13) 11:30, 2:00, 4:45, 7:40, 10:20. **How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days (PG-13)** 12:45, 3:45, 7:20, 10:15. **Tears of the Sun (R)** 1:00, 4:15, 7:10, 10:00. **Old School (R)** 12:15, 2:30, 5:00, 7:45, 10:30. **Dreamcatcher (R)** 12:30, 1:30, 3:40, 4:45, 7:00, 8:00, 10:00.

AMC THEATRE SM 7

1310 3rd Street
Piglet's Big Movie (G) 2:10, 4:20, 6:30, 8:45. **Agent Cody Banks (PG)** 1:35, 4:00, 6:45, 9:15. **Chicago (PG-13)** 2:20, 5:05, 7:40, 10:05. **Daredevil (PG-13)** 1:50, 7:25. **The Hunted (2003) (R)** 1:40, 4:50, 7:20, 9:35. **The Life of David Gale (R)** 1:45, 4:40, 7:30, 10:15. **Boat Trip (R)** 2:00, 4:30, 7:10, 9:25. **Gangs of New York (R)** 4:05, 9:45.

LANDMARK NU-WILSHIRE

1314 Wilshire Blvd.
The Pianist (R) 3:45, 7:00, 10:15.

LAEMMLE MONICA

1332 2nd St.
Irreversible (NR) 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50. **The Quiet American (R)** 1:45, 4:20, 7:20, 9:55. **Bend it Like Beckham (PG-13)** 12:00, 2:35, 5:10, 7:45, 10:20. **Talk to Her (R)** 2:00, 4:40, 7:15, 9:55.

AERO THEATRE

1328 Montana Ave.
Far From Heaven (PG-13) 5:00, 7:30, 10:00.



BACK PAGE



Love is a zoo

By The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Love was in the air at the San Diego Zoo this weekend.

Gao Gao, an 11-year-old male giant panda who recently arrived from China, mated three times Saturday with Bai Yun, the San Diego Zoo's resident female panda.

"We just couldn't believe that this could come off so quickly," said Don Lindburg, head of the zoo's panda team. "I am beyond surprised."

Researchers are optimistic that the panda mating — a first in San Diego Zoo history — may yield another cub.

Bai Yun gave birth to a cub in 1999 after she was artificially inseminated.

Gao Gao arrived from China in mid-January, replacing Shi Shi, a 26-year-old male, who returned to China earlier this year after years of showing more interest in bamboo than in mating with Bai Yun.

"We had year after year of frustration," Lindburg said. "To have this naive individual at his first opportunity perform in this way was pretty special."

Gao Gao showed intense interest in 12-year-old Bai Yun from the get-go. The pandas were taken off public display and given privacy after biologists determined Bai Yun had entered a rare period of fertility.

Two plus two equals eleven

By The Associated Press

PINE BLUFF, Ark. — Somebody finally started putting two and two together, and when the count was finished, the total was 11.

That's the number of sets of twins in the 520-student seventh grade at Southeast Junior High School.

"I'm not sure any school, anywhere, has as many twins in one grade as Southeast," said Juanita Curry, a school counselor.

Assistant Principal Cheryl Hatley said even the students didn't realize how many look-alikes there were in the class until someone came up with a twin total.

Southeast's twins say they don't consider themselves any different from other youngsters.

"We're just regular people," said 13-year-old Anthony Hatchett, a fraternal twin of Adrienne. "It's not like you see on TV."

Twins Brittney and Whitney Lee are identical in appearance, but disagreed as to whether or not their teachers could tell them apart. They have used the obvious to their advantage at least once, back when they were in the second grade.

"We switched classes once," Brittney said last week, "and switched back at noon. Nobody ever knew."

Senator for a day

By The Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Pennsylvania gained a new state senator this week, but he didn't stay in the state too long.

State Sen. John Pippy, R-Allegheny, an Army reservist whose campaign for office ran headlong into his military duties, was sworn in Monday afternoon during a brief ceremony at the state Capitol squeezed in between stints at an Army post.

Pippy, on a one-day pass, took the oath of office from Superior Court Judge Joan Orie Melvin. Less than two hours later, he was driving back to the Army's 332nd Engineer Company in Aberdeen, Md., for evening training exercises. Pippy, a captain, commands the unit.

"It'll be appropriate to celebrate the victory when I return," Pippy said before entering a Republican party caucus that preceded his departure.

The question of Pippy's eligibility to serve as both soldier and statesman was called into question until Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz issued a waiver permitting Pippy to run for office. The Army at one point had said he could not hold both positions.

Party raid

By The Associated Press

BELLEVUE, Wash. — Call it a \$5,000 panty raid.

That's the estimated value of 300 sets of skivvies taken from Victoria's Secret in Bellevue Square.

"It's very unusual. It's shoplifting to the max," said Marcia Harnden, a police spokeswoman in this suburb east of Seattle.

An employee noticed the panties in a variety of colors, styles and sizes were missing shortly before 5 p.m. Sunday, Harnden said. Each cost \$15 to \$28.

Two display tables at the front of the store were cleared of the frilly, silky merchandise, and two other tables, one next to the cash register, were half-emptied, she said.

Police don't think it was an inside job. "All the employees were busy" with customers, and no one noticed any suspicious shoppers, Harnden said.

"It's probably a crime of opportunity," Harnden said.

Police may check flea markets and online auction sites, Harnden said, "but if I were the consumer, I'd be very leery about buying undergarments from a disreputable source."

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ALWAYS PICK
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—The Councilman

"JOE'S WORK
IS THE
SECOND THING
I LOOK FOR
EVERY DAY."
—The Peace Activist

Anniversary Collection



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