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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2008

Volume 7 Issue 115



A-ROD TOO?
SEE PAGE 14

Santa Monica Daily Press

Since 2001: A news odyssey

THE LIGHTS ARE SHINING ISSUE

School district quizzes parents on homework

BY MELODY HANATANI | Daily Press Staff Writer

SMMUSD HDQTRS The value of homework can be viewed in multiple ways, serving as both a supplement to the classroom and a preview of the workload expected in college.

It can also at times be a preview of sleep deprivation experienced in college.

Angeli Agatep is the mother of a junior at Malibu High School, a student who spends roughly three to four hours a day on homework for four advanced placement courses.

Her daughter was forewarned about the intense demands associated with four AP classes, hoping it would help her college resume, but Agatep said she believes the course load has taken away from a well-rounded high school experience.

"I just wish that the harsh reality of sleep deprivation and schoolwork were things that would be learned in college rather than in high school," Agatep said.

The Malibu High School student's experience is among the many stories being collected by the Educational Services department at the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District, which is currently conducting a survey to determine whether it should change its homework policy.

"It's been on the books awhile," Maureen Bradford, the director of assessment research and evaluation for the district, said last week. "The guidelines are not hard and fast, but the rule of thumb is about 10 minutes per grade level."

The survey, which went online last week, asks parents questions on how much time their children typically spend on homework each night, whether they receive assignments for the weekend and how much assistance they require. More than 200 parents have responded to the survey, which will continue through the end of April.

The issue seems to center on the disparity in the amount of homework assigned to students taking the same course but in different sections, a result of teachers that might not be communicating with each other, according to school officials.

"There's also the amount of time any given student needs to complete an assignment," Bradford said. "With two students sitting in the same class — one might take 40 minutes, another might take 10 or 15 minutes.

"There's a lot of variability," she said.

Students agree there isn't much consistency in the amount of homework they get.

"Sometimes it's barely any and other times it's a whole lot," Justin Clark, a student at Franklin Elementary School, said on Monday while enjoying the afternoon at

SEE HOMEWORK PAGE 11

Santa Monica resident testifies in murder trial

BY MELODY HANATANI
Daily Press Staff Writer

DOWNTOWN L.A. Meilisa Thompson was fed up with the eyesore cluster of trash bins outside of her Ocean Park home, blocking the entrance to the alleyway and attracting less than desirable activity.

So when the Santa Monican one day found a can of red paint sitting near the garbage cans, the flashy hue splashed all over the wall and on the front driver side tire of a parked station wagon, Thompson decided to snap a few photos, intending to send it to City Hall and finally get the problem resolved.

On Tuesday, the photos taken in



GOLAY



RUTTERSCHMIDT

April 2005 were displayed in a Downtown Los Angeles courtroom, a piece of evidence in a criminal case that could tie a former Santa Monica landlord to the murder of a homeless man in a Westwood alley in June 2005.

The landlord, 77-year-old Helen Golay, lived a few doors down from Thompson, who testified in her ex-neighbor's murder case when it reconvened on Tuesday morning. Golay, who owned three apartment buildings in the Ocean Park neighborhood, and co-defendant Olga Rutterschmidt, 75, are accused of murdering two homeless men in a life insurance scam.

Prosecutors believe the two elderly women concocted a scheme in which they befriended Kenneth McDavid and Paul Vados when they were still homeless, fixing them up in rent-free apartments and gaining their trust. The women then convinced the victims to sign them onto their life insurance policies about two years before they

SEE TRIAL PAGE 11



MISTY MORNING

Alexis Hawkins news@smdp.com

Beachgoers brave cool temperatures and foggy conditions at Santa Monica State Beach on Tuesday. The heavy fog lingered well into the afternoon. The National Weather Service forecasts patchy fog today and temps to remain in the mid-60's.



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Request for Qualifications
Opening Event Production & Promotion

The City of Santa Monica invites responses from event professionals interested in producing and promoting opening events for the new Annenberg Community Beach House.

For project information and requirements, please visit 415pch.smgov.net, or contact Community & Cultural Services at 310-458-8310 to request a copy of the RFP.

Proposals must be received by 3 pm on April 16, 2008

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WHAT'S UP
WESTSIDE
OUT AND ABOUT IN SANTA MONICA AND SURROUNDS



Kulturas anniversary
1700 Ocean Park Blvd., 11 a.m. — 7 p.m.
Transplant second-hand bookstore, Kulturas, is celebrating its first whole year in Santa Monica by having "rolling sales" around different sections of the store. Check out their "sort-of-vintage" clothing corner and the current artist exhibit. For further information, call (310) 450-8707.

'Lose Weight for Good'
1328 22nd St., 7 p.m. — 8:30 p.m.
Saint John's Health Center presents "Los Weight for Good," a comprehensive program for healthy weight management. No food to purchase, no shakes to drink - just a sound approach to lasting lifestyle solutions. Instructed by a dietitian, cost for the 13-week series is $300. Flexible access to the Santa Monica Spectrum Health Club and Santa Monica curves is available to those without a current gym membership. Classes fill up quickly so call today – (310) 829-8453!

Santa Monica on two feet
1436 Second St., 10 a.m.
The Santa Monica Conservancy leads a two-hour tour that explores more than 130 years of Santa Monica history from its wild west frontier beginnings to the metropolis of today. Starting from the 1875 Rapp Saloon, the route includes many landmarks and concludes at the 2003 NRDC building. For information, call (310) 496-3146.

Thursday, March 27, 2008

Tango with Tango
1416 Electric Ave., Venice, 8:30 p.m. — 10 p.m.
Learn Argentine Tango with Makela Tango at the Electric Lodge. No partner necessary. For more information, visit www.makelatango.com.

Getting wild on the Westside
Noon — 5 p.m.
For the first time, the true crime archeologists of the 1947project have set their sights on points west of Robertson Boulevard, and the results are truly astonishing. In this new tour spotlighting some of the weirdest, most horrific and downright unbelievable crimes of historic West Los Angeles. Seats are $55 a person. For more information, call (323) 223-2767.

Rolling with Ray
Westside, 1 p.m.
Novelist Raymond Chandler gravitated to sin and debauchery, so Santa Monica in the 1930s was a frequent stop for Philip Marlowe, one of his most popular characters. From shady doctors to second wives with pasts to crooked cops with a loathing for a mouthy PI, this tour has it all. Chandler's canonization of sin, wealth and sunshine on L.A.'s Westside fed the abiding myths of the American hard-boiled genre and play into the popular conception of the region. For information, call (323) 223-2767.

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.

Outage puts businesses in the dark

By Daily Press Staff



Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

ON THE WAY OUT: **A group of Southern California Edison workers remove a failed transformer from an underground vault on Broadway Tuesday. The equipment failure affected a number of businesses in Downtown for parts of two days. Power was restored on Tuesday.**

DOWNTOWN A blown transformer knocked out power to 30 customers in Downtown, including Fred Segal and the Daily Press, forcing some business owners to close shop early or scramble to find ways to preserve their products.

The 400 block of Broadway lost power around 6 p.m. Monday, Mark Olson, spokesman for Southern California Edison, said. Power was restored at 3 p.m. Tuesday.

What caused the transformer, a device that transfers electrical energy from one circuit to another, to fail was unknown at presstime. Olson said the outage could have been caused by any number of reasons, from water intrusion into the transformer to overloading.

"We won't know until we get a look at the internal components and perform a transformer autopsy," Olson said.

The outage affected a handful of businesses along Broadway and Fourth and Fifth streets. Some closed early and chose not to reopen Tuesday. Chefs from Roll House Sushi had to scramble to save their raw fish.

Karina Freascas at Veronica M, a women's clothing boutique on Broadway, said employees had to close the store early on Monday because it was too dark to see. The next day Freascas closed early when she realized that the power would not be turned on until later in the evening. While the floor was well lit because of the large storefront windows, dressing rooms were too dark to see.

"(The blackout) isn't good because then we don't make sales," Freascas said.

At the DellaRobbia Design Studio & Flower Market on Fourth Street co-owner Jolene Reynolds had no choice but to keep the store open because her shop had three major parties to decorate.

"There's no electricity involved in flower arrangement," she said.

The studio wasn't affected much by the outage except that it cannot receive online or phone orders. The shop had enough orders to keep it going for a few days. The fridge used to store flowers was off and the doors opened to aerate the flowers so they didn't get too hot.

"We're still going to work until we get to the point we can't see," Reynolds said.

The cool, damp weather on Wednesday helped, Reynolds added.

Edison customers that lost money because of the outage can file a claim with the power company, which will evaluate them and make a determination if any refund should be paid. Customers can file claims online at www.sce.com or call Edison by using the telephone number on the latest bill.

When a claim is filed with SCE, one of their representatives will contact the claimant either in writing or by phone within three business days. The customer is then contacted within 45 days or less and in most cases with a final decision.

A statement on Edison's Web site reads:

"We exercise diligence to furnish a continuous and sufficient supply of electricity to our customers, and avoid any shortage or interruption of delivery of service. We cannot, however, guarantee a continuous or sufficient supply or freedom from interruption.

"We will not be liable for interruption or shortage of supply, nor for any resulting loss or damage, if such interruption or shortage results from any cause not within our control."

news@smdp.com

Local Red Cross prepares residents to cope with emergencies

By the Daily Press

DOWNTOWN In celebration of American Red Cross month, the Santa Monica chapter is sponsoring free disaster training for residents, which will include a basic emergency first-aid class that will cover CPR and how to treat everything from bumps and bruises to broken bones and shock.

Two, three-hour sessions will be offered this Sunday, March 30. The first session is from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The second session will be from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. The chapter is located at 1450 11th Street.

Representatives from the Red Cross said there will be 30 to 40 people per session.

To take advantage of the free training, contact the chapter at coryr@redcrossofsantamonica.org or call (310) 394-3773 during normal business hours to enroll.

The American Red Cross of Santa Monica is a publicly supported, nonprofit corporation that provides health and safety education, youth services, CPR and first aid training, disaster awareness and disaster relief efforts. To inquire about other programs, first-aid and safety courses or volunteering, call the center or go online at www.redcrossofsantamonica.org.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

You can always use mine

Editor:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Davis,

Your story of having your new bikes stolen was a sad one ("No fun with Dick and Jane," page 4, March 25). I'm sorry this happened to you in my town and that it blighted your vacation here. I'm also sorry that you won't visit us again because of it. I'd like to think we are nice people – and many of us are. We are part of one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world and tough "big city" realities exist here as they do everywhere in the Los Angeles area.

If it's any consolation, I've lived in Santa Monica for over 20 years and I've had at least two bikes stolen. Many people I know in the area have had a bike stolen here one time or another. This absolutely doesn't make it right. I didn't have the added injury of surveillance cameras to see who stole my bikes. I often ride my bike around town for pleasure and for errands. It's a joy that I appreciate about my town. I certainly lock it wherever I go.

If you decide to return to our town, I offer the use of one or two bikes (and locks) when you are here so that you too can enjoy our city and beaches the way I am able to on a daily basis. I can't make-up for your loss, but perhaps I can help to restore a tiny bit of faith in humankind.

Carol Hastings
Santa Monica

Take a look at Europe

Editor:

Day in day out you see advertisements on television, in magazines and everywhere else among the media that our environment is discentigrating rapidly and that if we don't change our ways, in the near future, our natural resources will be in real danger. With this we are asked to act upon this, but I believe this action has to start at the top.

In 1990 CARB came up with a plan for automakers to produce 75,000 zero emission vehicles, which one would say is a step in the right direction. Now they are re-evaluating this plan and [potentially] dropping this number down to around 50,000.

Now I realize that these cars are less cost effective than other types and this is the argument that CARB is putting forward. Our nation is currently in a recession but the only people that are ultimately losing money out of the zero emission cars are the oil companies. The consumers would, in the long run, be saving money.

It is the way of the future. USA is 10 years behind the green revolution. In Europe there are zero emission cars and fully self sustainable houses through the use of solar and other alternative energies. In the long run these alternative ways of the future will inevitably be cheaper for the everyday consumer. You can see this evidence with the weakening American dollar compared to the Euro.

This is the ultimate question that CARB needs to answer. Is there not a more economical way to handle this situation? Research and development is all that is needed to drop these manufacturing costs. If our country could just look at the way Europe is handling their environment and adopt some of their ideas we could be in a lot better situation both economically and environmentally.

Trent McArdle
Venice Beach



Going Postal

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

What's so wrong about being so very 'Wright?'

"I have no problems with my enemies … but my friends … they're the ones that keep me walking the floors at night"

— Barack Obama
channeling Warren Harding

I AM NOW WILLING TO CONFESS TO THE Conspiracy of World Domination. Yes, it's true. All of us rich, white, racist, corporate, war mongering cannibal Republicans are spending all our spare time figuring out how to keep minorities from the Elysian Fields of apostolic socialism. I was just talking about this very subject the other day with my good friend Donald Trump while we were getting our haircuts together over at Rudy's Barbershop. This was between conference calls to our brokers over our recent Halliburton and Exxon trades while running guns to Darfur. We're Republicans — because not everybody can be on welfare.

Yup! HIV/AIDS is a CIA plot to kill all colored people! The Rev. Jeremiah Wright got it right! When he inferred in a recent televised sermon that Condi and Colin weren't "black" enough, he got that "Wright," too! Don't tell anybody but Condi and Colin actually are white! It is all part of our superdooper secret plan with our extraterrestrial allies at Area 51 to turn white people black (think Michael Jackson in reverse). They speak "white," they act "white," they dress "white," yet they have no rhythm. We evil white devils are also responsible for climate change and long lines at the DMV.

Conspiracy — it's not just a theory anymore.

This praxis of "Liberation Theology" is delivered from the eccentric "uncle" that escaped from Obama's locked attic. Without going into a major discussion of Rev Wright's polluted distortion of Liberation Theology (or is it "Gibber-ation Theology) and its roots in Marxist class struggle and the Hegelian revival of dialectical materialism vis-à-vis Schopenhauer's antithetical critique ("… a colossal piece of mystification which will yet provide posterity with an inexhaustible theme for laughter [in] our times…"), basically it's all "Whitey's" fault … for everything.

"If you want to understand where Barack gets his feelings and rhetoric from, just look at Jeremiah Wright"

— Rev. Jim Wallis
(Rolling Stone, Feb. 22, 2007)

Lemme get this straight … what possesses a man of Mr. Obama's alleged Messianic demeanor to attend a cultish church as a 20-year member of a perverse reverse racist, knowing that a substantial portion of that pastor's message is an old meat loaf leftover from the 1960's? How can Mr. Obama posit himself as the "candidate of change" when the core of his surrogate beliefs come from the ravings of a minority grievance deviant that holds white people responsible for, not only for 9/11, but for all the ills of the entire world since the birth of Jesus? If I'm not mistaken, blacks and whites were jumping out of the Twin Towers in equal numbers to escape the flames without the benefit of racial quotas.

Mr. Obama has stated publicly that he doesn't, "… make any important decisions without first consulting [Pastor] Wright …" Maybe that's why Mr. Obama has merely acknowledged being "present" rather than rendering a self directed "aye or nay" in his legislative voting record. Pastor Wright was probably sucking the air out of a room somewhere while bombastically asphyxiating his audience with their own self inflicted victim-hood and was subsequently unavailable for consultation.

"[The] issues are rarely simple. One thing I'm proud of is that very rarely you will hear me simplify the issues"

— Barack Obama

For Mr. Obama to softball on his pastor's "controversial" venom in a convoluted, 5,000-word speech, while the liberal intelligentsia grovels in its somnambulistic message of masochistic white guilt and moral equivalency, is like slamming a half dozen shots of tequila before you speak at your next 12 Step meeting. That the minority grievances of the 8,500 moonie-eyed member Trinity United Church of Christ could become the defining social milieu of 300 million other Americans succinctly demonstrates the tyranny of a fractious minority over the plurality. Is this where I get in line for the Kool-Aid?

While Rev. Wright and Mr. Obama preach the ecumenical gospel of Liberal victim-ology, rarely, if ever, will one see the terms, "personal responsibility/accountability" in sermons or stump speeches as a hallmark. Their central themes usually source from the nebulous realm of absolution from ownership of one's own conditional plight. Now Obama's pastor spews racist and anti-American vomitus while the self-professed Party of Tolerance hypocritically intones that we should give Obama and his odd "uncle" an affirmative action hall pass.

After all, it's the "Wright" thing to do.

STEVE BREEN is a "Don't Worry, Be Happy" Republican and a member of the U.S. Postal Service, delivering mail in Santa Monica. He can be reached at dulcamarax@yahoo.com.



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Word in Edgewise

Kenny Mack
Send comments to editor@smdp.com

These seven days were memorable

WHAT A WEEK. WITHIN A PERIOD OF about seven days, we marked the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, the 4,000th casualty of that decision, a government bail-out of an investment bank, reports of record job losses, floods in Illinois, Arkansas, and Missouri, one presidential candidate (Barack Obama) giving the best explanation of how black people and white people talk amongst ourselves, and the vice president responding to the news that two out of three Americans want us out of Iraq by saying, "So?" It's funny these things happened during Easter week because it made me think that a government of the people, for the people, and by the people may have actually perished from the earth, but it can be resurrected.

The Dick Cheney comment really bothered me. I can almost understand why they wouldn't let us see the flag-draped caskets of our dead soldiers and I kind of get the logic behind the president not attending any of their funerals over the last 5 years (although that's the one thing I give Rudy Giuliani credit for after Sept. 11, 2001). But then I remember that 3,880 of those 4,000 people died after the president said that we had "prevailed" in Iraq — and that's when I get upset. It's not like we didn't stick it out with this administration, is it? It's not like they can say we weren't patient, right? We gave them everything they asked for and all the time they could have wanted. We've been in Iraq longer than we were in World War II — and that was a world war! It was almost like the vice president was saying that we just have to accept the fact that we're going to be paying $12 billion every month in Iraq and that 60 or 70 Americans are going be dying in Iraq every month for the foreseeable future and we had all better just get used to it. It made me want to take the prosthetic limb of a wounded veteran and hit Dick Cheney in his crooked, lying mouth with it.

The bail-out of Bear Stearns didn't make me too happy, either. It just annoys me to no end when the government decides that there are some businesses in America that are "too big to fail." It's the second time in the last 10 years this has happened and both times it was a bunch of super-rich speculators who were too smart by half, who had gotten monumentally greedy, and who got burned. The first was a hedge fund called Long Term Capital Management that lost almost $2 billion over the course of the summer of 1998. Not to worry, though. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York stepped in and saved LTCM's bacon. It was that rescue that led Ken Lay and the geniuses at Enron to believe that since they dominated the energy industry, that they would be "too big to fail," also. They were wrong — and most of their employees lost their pensions and their life savings in the process. Now the investment bank Bear Stearns' heavy position in mortgage-backed securities caused their stock price to go from $60 per share to $2 per share basically overnight — a drop that could have caused a panic. The Feds stepped in and guaranteed $30 billion in taxpayer money to JPMorgan Chase if they agreed to buy Bear Stearns and absorb some of those losses. It reminded me of two old expressions, "there are no Libertarians in a financial crisis," and, "when you owe the bank $100, the bank owns you. When you owe $100 million, you own the bank."

Rising above this crappy news week was the next president of the United States, Sen. Barack Obama. They say the third rail of politics is Social Security because if you touch it, you die. For him, it's race. Let's face it, white people don't like talking about the role of race in America. I will add that black people may like talking about it a little too much. But none of us can deny that it is a factor in every aspect of American life. Or at least it has been before this current generation and the big, brown world they're growing up in. Once again, he reminded us that we can actually act like adults, talk about the issues that divide us, and arrive at understanding so we can move forward.

To show us all how important it is that we work together, Mother Nature once again flooded the streets of American cities and towns and reminded us that we aren't black or white or rich or poor or Democrat or Republican. When the waters rise, we're all just wet and helpless — and we need each other.

KENNY MACK is a writer and comedian living in Santa Monica. He can be reached at kennymack@gmail.com

The Q Line

Feeling safe in Santa Monica

A pair of homicides last week has the usually safe city has some on edge. While murders don't happen very often in this city by the sea, the recent murders raises more than a few poignant issues regarding safety.

So this week's Q-Line question asks:

In light of the recent murders do you still feel safe in Santa Monica? If not, what are you doing to protect yourself?

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.

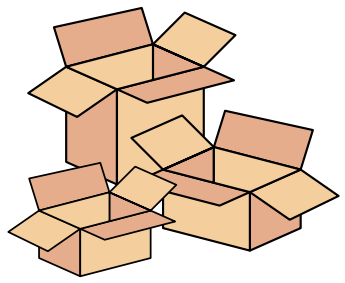
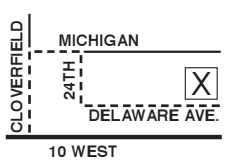

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First trial in BALCO case opens with accusations

BY SCOTT LINDLAW
Associated Press Writer

SAN FRANCISCO Prosecutors on Monday opened the first trial arising from a wide-ranging steroids probe that has implicated dozens of elite athletes with accusations that the grand jury testimony of cyclist Tammy Thomas was so "evasive and misleading" it hampered the federal investigation.

"All she had to do was tell the truth," Assistant U.S. Attorney Matt Parella told a jury of nine men and five women, including alternates.

But her testimony in November 2003 was "on the whole was evasive and misleading to such an extent that it obstructed justice in the grand jury investigation," Parella said.

Parella said Thomas had lied about what performance-enhancing substances she had bought from chemist Patrick Arnold, who created designer steroids THG Thomas and home run king Barry Bonds are accused of taking; and whether she had ever taken anabolic steroids.

Though Bonds' name was not mentioned in opening arguments, and he was not in court, he loomed large Monday. Bonds and Thomas face nearly identical charges, and members of Bonds' defense team were expected to watch the trial intently. Indeed, a larger-than-usual contingent of men in expensive suits scribbled notes onto legal pads in the gallery during the opening statements.

Thomas is charged with five counts of perjury and one count of obstruction of justice for allegedly lying to a grand jury about her steroid use. She sat impassively through the opening statements, fidgeting only occasionally.

Wearing a dark suit and her black hair well below her shoulders, she showed no reaction when Parella said he would call as a witness Dr. Margaret Wierman, who examined Thomas in 2000 and observed "a full beard that was shaved, full chest hair that was shaved," among the "many blatant and apparent physical side effects of anabolic steroids that she saw on the defendant."

Thomas' attorney, Ethan Balogh, said that each of the lies Thomas is alleged to have told the grand jury was in fact "literally true." He blamed prosecutors for not pushing her harder before the grand jury to elicit further information that would have proven it.

Having already been banned from her sport for life, "she had no motive to lie," Balogh said.

Balogh acknowledged to the jury that his client was a "recalcitrant witness," but chalked it up to typical witness behavior.

"It's what witnesses do," Balogh said. "They'll bob, they'll weave."

It is the responsibility of questioners — in this case, prosecutors — "to pin them down," he said.

"The government didn't listen. When they asked questions they didn't follow up — indeed they didn't ask the right questions," he said.

Thomas was swept up in a governmental crusade "to clean up sport" of performance-enhancing drugs, her attorney said. The one-time cyclist was punished for having the "temerity ... to have stood up for her rights, to have challenged sports authority," Balogh added.

Balogh said investigators tactics, including "Dumpster diving," amounted to "abuse of process" because they sought to probe activities outside the scope of the Northern California grand jury. He called his client "an obscure athlete with no sponsorship in an obscure sport.

Parella turned to point at Thomas when he said she was "the one witness" who had "important information" about Arnold in 2003, which is why she was summoned to testify before the grand jury.

Jeff Novitzky, an Internal Revenue Service agent and the lead steroids investigator, sat at the front of the courtroom with the prosecution, but said nothing. He is expected to testify later in the week.

The federal investigation into the performance-enhancing drug scandal has ensnared athletes including track legend Marion Jones and former San Francisco 49er Dana Stubblefield. Many of the same investigators are also looking into whether pitcher Roger Clemens committed perjury when he told Congress he never used steroids.

Eight people connected to the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative, or BALCO, have pleaded guilty to drug charges or perjury.

SoCal city reducing homeless population at popular Tent City

By the Associated Press

ONTARIO Police and city workers swept through a homeless encampment that grew too big to manage Monday, evicting inhabitants, picking up trash and leveling the ground to prepare for a new "tent city."

No arrests were made, police spokesman Jeff Higby said.

City housing officials said the lot near Ontario International Airport can hold about 150 homeless but in recent months has swelled to about 400, creating sanitation and safety hazards.

People from out of town were forced to leave, Higby said.

Those who can prove they are from the city will be able to move back after the land is graded and a gate and portable toilets are installed — work that will take at least two weeks to complete.

In the meantime, occupants of the encampment are staying in a nearby vacant city lot, where many outsiders are also camped out now.

"Where am I going to go? Where am I going to sleep? It's bad enough not having a roof over my head, but now this," Debbie Atwood told KABC-TV.

Ontario officials tried to deal with the city's homeless population last year by letting them stay on the lot.

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Real Estate 101

Mike Heayn

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Sizing up home financing issues

WHEN PURCHASING A HOME YOU WILL probably go to a bank to get a loan. Getting a loan from a bank is known as attaining financing. Just like a car loan, a home loan has an interest rate and set period, or term. When banks get creative, the outcome can be catastrophic — as the subprime mess lays witness to. However, conservative financing is finding its way back into the market place.

When you think of a home loan, you probably think about a 30 year fixed loan. Loans have what are known as amortization schedules, where a percentage of the payment goes to paying down the principal and the remaining amount goes to paying off the interest. Banks figure most people refinance their home loans within five years so they created a amortization schedule where a large amount of interest is paid at the beginning of the loan. If you were to qualify for a $500,000 30 year fixed loan at 6 percent, your payment would be $2,997.75 and over the life of the loan you would pay $1,079,190.95. That seems high, but financing allows you to attain an asset that you wouldn't otherwise be able to purchase.

Other loans exist as well. One type is known as an adjustable rate mortgage, or ARM. ARM products are part of the reason that so many people got in trouble with their homes. An ARM loan typically has a low start rate, but after a fixed period the loan becomes variable. When the loan adjusts, the payment can go up. Many subprime borrowers found themselves in hot water when their payments increased, sometimes to more than double the fixed payment.

If you already have financing with a great interest rate you will not want to do a refinance, but rather add what is known as a home equity line of credit or HELOC. Taking a position behind a first trust deed, a HELOC allows a homeowner to access equity in the property without changing the terms of the first loan. Many homeowners add a HELOC to their homes for large purchases such as other real estate or remodeling. The difference between a HELOC and a home equity loan is a home equity loan takes the second position, but all of the funds are received at the close of escrow instead of an account that can be accessed.

In today's market banks are weary of aggressive lending with creative products. In the right hands a creative loan can offer an investor better cash flow, but in the wrong hands a creative loan can be disastrous. With a return to conservative financing more people will find less loan options, but the options available are safer in today's market place.

MIKE HEAYN is a Washington Mutual Multi-Family Loan Consultant. He can be reached at (310) 428-1342, or e-mailed at michael.heayn@wamu.net.

LIFESTYLE

More pet owners turn to custom-built wheelchairs

BY STEPHANIE REITZ
Associated Press Writer

SHELBURNE FALLS, Mass. When Gary Mikus learned that an incurable nerve disease was starting to paralyze the hind legs of his German shepherd, he immediately dismissed the idea of putting the dog to sleep.

Then he spotted an ad in a pet food store: "Eddie's Wheels For Pets. Help for Handicapped Pets." Now the dog named Bear, which has been Mikus' constant companion for a decade, has a lot of living left to do — much of it in his new pet wheelchair.

"He's healthy in every other way," Mikus said. "Until something tells me otherwise that he's failing, I'll do everything I can to keep him mobile and happy."

A growing number of pet owners are turning to custom-built wheelchairs to restore mobility to furry friends whose legs, hips or backs don't work. The owners' goals are simple: to reward their pets' unconditional love with whatever it takes for the animals to live normally.

The two-wheel carts support the dog's midsection with a padded saddle, and are secured with a shoulder yoke and chest strap. Most dogs have rear-wheel carts to compensate for lame hind legs, though a growing number of front-wheel carts are being ordered for animals with front-leg problems.

Donna Blain's 7-year-old Maltese named Gizmo hopped and hobbled on his deformed front legs before she adopted him a year ago. She ordered his cart after learning the odd gait had damaged his spine and would have required surgery.

Now he wheels himself around for hours on sidewalks, in parks and anywhere he can find treats and praise.

"He's into everything," said Blain, of Woodstock, Conn. "He just wants to live, after all those years of really hobbling and not being able to get where he wanted to be."

Eddie and Leslie Grinnell, founders of Eddie's Wheels, built their first pet wheelchair in 1989 when their 10-year-old Doberman, Buddha, lost the use of her rear legs because of disc disease and spinal problems.

Their veterinarian, impressed by Buddha's revived mobility and vitality, started referring others to the Grinnells. In 1998, they started their own business.

Similar wheelchair makers can be found in Montana, Maryland, Oregon, Washington and elsewhere. Most dog carts start around $250 and can exceed $500 based on the size of the dog, while the cost of wheelchairs for other animals can vary depending on the type and size of animal.

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REAL ESTATE

Former Countrywide boss has a new gig

RYAN NAKASHIMA
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES Stanford Kurland spent nearly three decades helping build Countrywide Financial Corp. into the nation's largest mortgage lender.

Now, the former president of the troubled company and several key colleagues hope to cash in as the housing market collapses.

Kurland, 55, will serve as chairman and chief executive officer of a new company unveiled Monday that will acquire and restructure distressed mortgages.

Private National Mortgage Acceptance Co. LLC, also known as PennyMac, intends to help borrowers restructure loans so they can avoid foreclosure and maintain payments.

"We'll look to restructure mortgages, and as soon as the loans are reperforming, and if there's the capability and the market liquidity, we'll look to sell," Kurland told The Associated Press. "Other properties that may take longer, we're prepared to hold five to seven years."

Backed by prominent investment management firms BlackRock Inc. and Highfields Capital Management, PennyMac has even set up shop in Calabasas, Calif., about six miles from the offices of Countrywide.

The irony was not lost on analysts.

"He won't be the first or the last person trying to make money on both sides of a trade," said Frederick Cannon, an analyst at Keefe, Bruyette & Woods Inc. who covers Countrywide.

"On the one hand you could make the case that he was (with) the company that made all these loans. On the other hand, what we need right now is to find some buyers for these assets," Cannon said. "Is it fair? Hard to say."

Countrywide, the nation's largest mortgage lender and servicer, lost about $1.6 billion in the last six months of 2007 as higher defaults forced the lender to boost its provisions for anticipated losses.

Earlier this year, Bank of America Corp. agreed to acquire Countrywide for about $4 billion in stock.

Kurland, who left Countrywide in late 2006, said he wasn't to blame for problems faced by the company as a result of subprime loans made to people with shaky credit histories.

"My leaving Countrywide has a lot to do with having a different strategic view," Kurland said. "I have a reputation in the market that, unfortunately, is tainted by things that transpired after I was gone."

Mortgage delinquency and default rates have risen rapidly since the middle of 2007, leading to a growing number of foreclosures.

PennyMac is one of several companies attempting to profit from the downfall.

Kurland will lead a team that is heavy with executives from Countrywide and its subsidiary, Countrywide Bank, including chief investment officer David Spector, previously a senior managing director at Countrywide, and chief technology officer Farzad Abolfathi, Countrywide's former managing director of production technologies.

The director of strategic planning will be Adal Bisharat, Countrywide's former senior vice president of strategic planning.

Kurland declined to specify how much capital the firm intends to raise to buy distressed mortgage loans. He estimated the total value of such loans could reach $1 trillion in the U.S. over the next couple of years.

He contended that an infusion of private capital was essential to help resolve the nation's mortgage woes, as lawmakers prepare a plan to guarantee up to $300 billion in refinanced mortgages and the Federal Reserve continued to slash interest rates.

> **WE'LL LOOK TO RESTRUCTURE MORTGAGES, AND AS SOON AS THE LOANS ARE REPERFORMING, AND IF THERE'S THE CAPABILITY AND THE MARKET LIQUIDITY, WE'LL LOOK TO SELL."**
>
> **Stanford Kurland**
> Former president of Countrywide Financial Corp

Laurence D. Fink, BlackRock chairman and CEO, said in a statement that the fund was pleased to sponsor PennyMac, "a company that seeks to bring patient capital to the unprecedented distress in residential mortgages."

BlackRock manages more than $500 billion in fixed income assets, including about $175 billion related to the mortgage market.

Jonathon S. Jacobson, Highfields cofounder and senior managing director, said he expects the volume of bank-held, nonperforming mortgages will grow dramatically over the next three years.

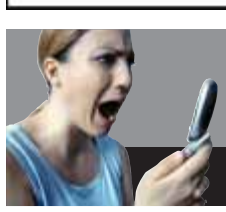
"PennyMac will be extraordinarily well-positioned as both a buyer and servicer of these assets," he said.

Kurland said the new company will have an advantage because it's unburdened by a legacy portfolio and has the flexibility to offer unique solutions to individual borrowers.

In addition, the company is targeting whole loans that aren't tied up in asset-backed securities. Such loans offer increased flexibility for lenders to work out new payment plans for borrowers, he said.

BlackRock's shares were up $18.43, or 9 percent, to $224.53.

Countrywide gained 36 cents, or 6 percent, to $6.14, while Bank of America rose 59 cents, or 1.4 percent, to $42.45.



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A newspaper with issues

Gamblers won't double down

BY KATHLEEN HENNESSEY | Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS In a town enthralled with its own mythology, Las Vegas would like to hold on to one myth in particular these days: Gambling is recession proof.

It's conventional wisdom characteristic of a city and an industry far more accustomed to boom than bust, but it's just not true, experts say. Gamblers, whether motivated by compulsion or hope, don't necessarily double down when the economy spirals and belts tighten.

"It's an old idea that has very little relevance and maybe no relevance to the United States today," industry analyst Eugene Christiansen said.

Christiansen and others trace the notion to decades old economic research conducted when gamblers' options in the U.S. were limited to horse racing and a handful of Nevada resorts. Such tight supply ensured demand for gambling was steady.

"They fared pretty well," said William Eadington, a professor of economics and director for the University of Nevada, Reno Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming. "Part of this was a pent up supply of gaming product."

Not so in 2008, when 48 states have some form of legal gambling and millions of Americans are within driving distance of a slot machine. Casino companies today have moved gambling to the mainstream of the U.S. tourism and entertainment industry and have moved themselves into the competition for consumers' discretionary spending.

MGM Mirage chief financial officer Dan D'Arrigo said his company sees no difference between the way consumers manage their gambling dollars and the entertainment and lodging spending that has grown to make up the majority of casino companies' revenue.

"They're all in one bucket," he said.

With the housing market tanking and gasoline and food prices rising, operators are seeing the effects of that bucket being emptier than it used to be. Still, gambling companies are going ahead with resorts that will add thousands of new rooms in Las Vegas.

A survey of 19 states with casino or race track gambling found about half saw gross gambling revenue drop in December 2007 from the year before. In January 2008, the portion grew to 12 of the 19 states, including Nevada. The state saw gambling revenue fall nearly 5 percent from a year ago to $1.06 billion, although analysts note it's too soon to discern a clear downward pattern.

Harrah's Entertainment Inc., the world's largest gambling company by revenue, noted several soft patches in its fourth quarter earnings report.

Because companies have started to cut budgets for employee travel and conventions, booking cancellations have increased and attendance has dropped at major conventions, Harrah's chief executive Gary Loveman said.

Room rates are "off a bit," he said, and consumers who don't use the company's loyalty rewards card — typically low-rollers — have been the first to drop off.

MGM Mirage noted similar weak spots, despite reporting a revenue increase of 4 percent, which was aided by a rush of foreign investment. Dubai World, the investment arm of the Dubai government, completed a joint venture giving it a 50 percent stake in the $8.1 billion CityCenter megaresort on the Las Vegas Strip.

While the CityCenter development remains a bright spot on the horizon, other smaller projects face uncertain futures due to the shaky credit market. In January, the Cosmopolitan, a casino resort under construction on the Strip, defaulted on a $760 million construction loan from Deutsche Bank and appears to be moving toward foreclosure. Questions also have been raised about the future of The Plaza, a 3,500-room resort modeled on The Plaza Hotel in New York.

Atlantic City properties are more clearly feeling the pinch of increased competition from new Pennsylvania slot parlors and tight credit markets.

The city's gambling halls suffered through a 10-month decline in revenue until a much welcomed 1.5 percent uptick in February. Pinnacle Entertainment recently announced it was considering scraping a $2 billion megacasino project if credit markets don't improve.

Christiansen said such news has precedent. In 1991, when the U.S. was facing a similar mix of economic woes, the casino industry felt the blow. After outpacing increases in personal income for most of the 1980s, the growth in gross gambling revenue fell behind that year.

This time around experts and executives are talking about the industry's resiliency, rather than immunity, to economic downturns.

"Historically, gaming has been extremely resilient, very durable and held up better than almost any other sector during recessions," MGM Mirage president and chief operative officer Jim Murren said recently.

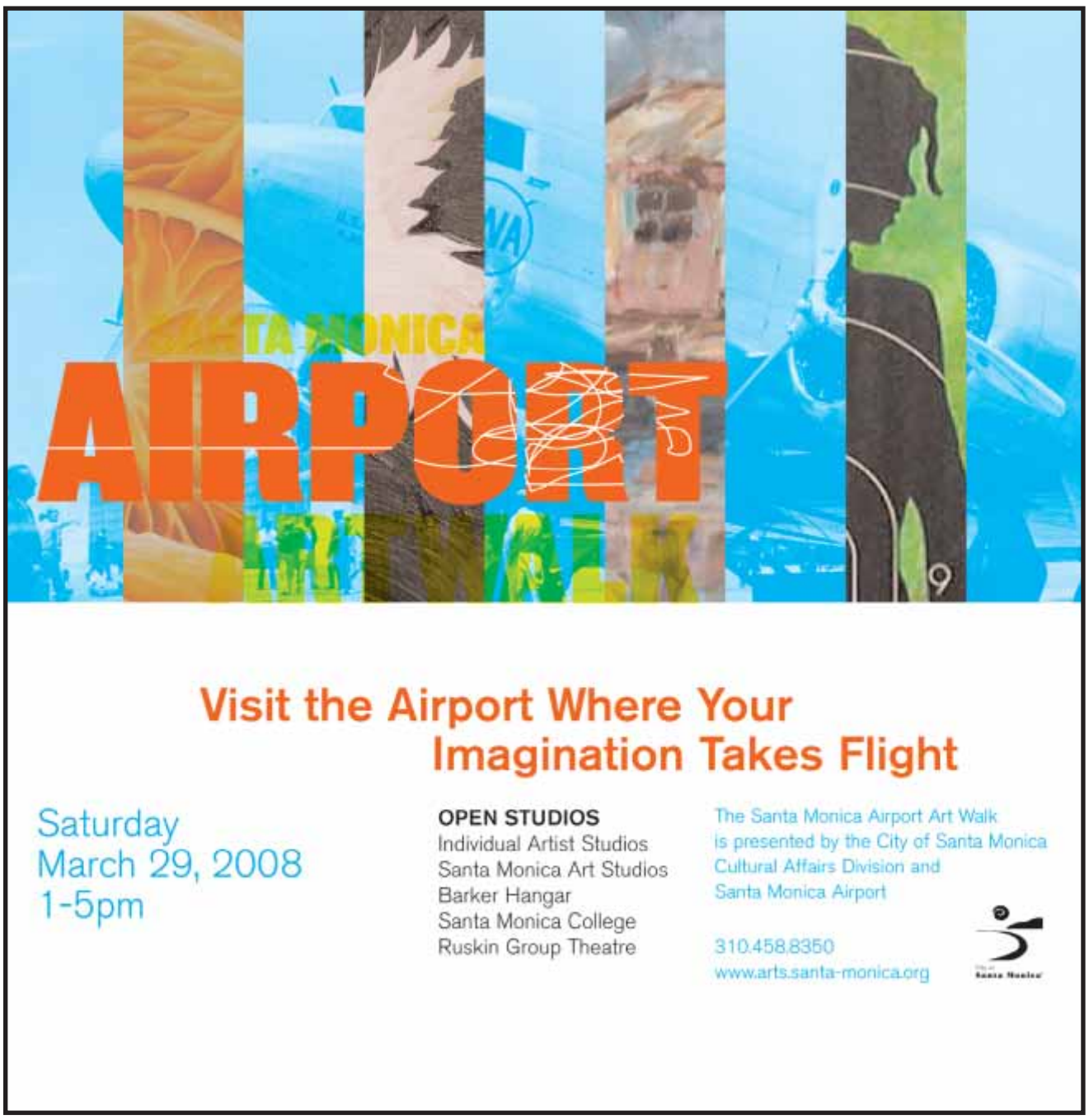
The industry, particularly in Las Vegas, pointed to several factors to bolster the claim.

Compared with other top U.S. tourist destinations, major gambling hubs — Las Vegas and Atlantic City — are still affordable to the bargain traveler.

D'Arrigo said MGM Mirage has seen an increase in comparison shopping for room rates with visitors opting for companies' mid-market properties over high-end luxury resorts.

Meanwhile, the high-end resorts may increasingly fill up with international travelers, thanks to a U.S. dollar so weak that a Las Vegas Strip room at the tony Bellagio can seem like a bargain for tourists from Europe and Asia. Roughly 13 percent of all visitors to Las Vegas are from outside the U.S. and that number is expected to rise.

But Eadington notes Las Vegas' fortunes are often closely tied to the development of new properties that create buzz and draw repeat visitors. In the past, when gambling revenue in the city has bested economic growth it's been in the wake of a building boom.



Lava lovers live in shadow of volcano

BY MARK NIESSE | Associated Press Writer

KALAPANA, Hawaii As fiery lava pours down Kilauea volcano toward Jean Olson's lonely wooden house, incinerating everything in its path, there's no place she'd rather be.

"Why would I live here if I didn't like it? I have the best view of anyone in town," said Olson, who lives just over a mile from fountains of glowing lava spewing into the ocean. "Either she comes or she doesn't. If she comes, we'll pick up and leave."

Thousands of visitors a day come to nearby Hawaii Volcanoes National Park to watch Kilauea erupt, something it has been doing for a quarter-century. But some residents live with the boiling lava every day and revel in the notion that their homes and lives are subject to the whims of earth's awesome underground forces.

The danger has become clearer in recent weeks. Earlier this month, a two-block-wide swath of lava burned through abandoned homes and reached the ocean. And the first gas explosion at Kilauea's peak since 1924 scattered gravel onto a tourist lookout, road and trail before daybreak last week, injuring no one but spreading fear.

Olson and her scattered neighbors have built houses atop blasted land of hardened black crust where previous neighborhoods were destroyed by lava flows in 1990. Most get their power from solar panels, their water from the rain and some of their food from gardens planted between lava rocks. Until a new lava viewing area began drawing big crowds a few weeks ago, they lived in relative isolation.

"This is heaven on earth," said Edmund Orian, who is building a house by hand out of lava rocks in Kalapana. "Living near a volcano keeps you aware that God is in control. If the lava comes, we can always move."

Kilauea has not been the kind of volcano that shoots lava from its summit into the sky, causing widespread destruction for miles around.

Resident testifies in murder trial

FROM **TRIAL** PAGE 1

were each found killed in separate yet eerily similar hit-and-run incidents.

Vados was found killed in a Hollywood alley in 1999 and McDavid in an alley behind Westwood Boulevard in 2005.

The two women were arrested in spring 2006.

Throughout the murder trial, Deputy District Attorney Truc Do has tried to link the silver station wagon pictured in Thompson's photo to the weapon used in McDavid's murder. During opening arguments last week, Do showed jurors a photo of a 1999 silver Mercury Sable that was disposed and later purchased through a lien. The undercarriage of the station wagon was found to have McDavid's DNA and the front driver's side tire had remnants of red paint.

In her testimony, Thompson, who lived about three doors down from Golay's home on the 400 block of Ocean Park Boulevard and shared an alley, recalled seeing her neighbor driving her Mercedes sport utility vehicle. Golay didn't seem like the type of person who worked a 9-5 job, Thompson said.

Thompson snapped photos of the station wagon without knowing the identity of its owner, figuring at the time she could give the owner the pictures to use for insurance claim purposes.

Then one day, she saw Golay in the alley, crouching down and examining the red paint, more intimately than a casual passerby would, said Thompson, who hinted at a strained relationship with her neighbor.

"I thought it was Helen's car and it's karma," Thompson said.

The same car was cited by the Santa Monica Police Department in January 2005 for being illegally parked in an alley. The car was ticketed while it was parked in the alley on the east side of Fifth Street, half a block away from where Golay lived.

Brenda Heavens was the parking enforcement officer that cited the Mercury Sable. Heavens, who also testified on Tuesday, had worked with the police department for 28 years at that point. She is now retired.

A copy of the $47 citation was displayed for jurors, showing that Heavens had received a radio call complaining about the vehicle being parked in an alley.

In the cross-examination of Heavens, Roger Diamond, Golay's attorney, pointed out that the vehicle was not parked in the alley behind his client's residence, but rather was in an alley about a block away.

NO FAMILY CONNECTION

In the various life insurance policies that both defendants took out on McDavid and Vados, the two women claimed to be cousins, fiancés or business partners. Golay was usually the fiancé while Rutterschmidt was the cousin, Do had said last week.

But according to Sandra Salman, McDavid's younger sister, she has no knowledge of being related to either of the defendants.

In her testimony, Salman gave jurors some insight into her brother's childhood. Born in New York, McDavid, one of five children, grew up in Sacramento where he graduated from Sacramento High School and attended Sacramento State University. McDavid worked at the college radio station.

The last time the two siblings saw each other was in the mid 1990s, a few years before their father's death in 1997. The family had attempted to contact McDavid when his father died but received no response, Salman said.

It was in November 2005 when detectives knocked on Salman's door that she learned of her brother's death.

Defense attorneys expressed concerns with Salman's testimony beforehand, questioning whether she would have a financial motive and be biased, possibly filing a wrongful death suit. The district attorney said there was no pending lawsuit and the testimony would speak only to McDavid's background.

"If the testimony is not relevant to Ms. Rutterschmidt's conviction, then why is (Salman) here?" public defender Michael Sklar, Rutterschmidt's attorney, asked.

The murder trial is scheduled to continue today as the prosecution presents more witnesses

melodyh@smdp.com

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
Send Aletters to **editor@smdp.com**



Brandon Wise *brandonw@smdp.com*

STUDY TIME: **Students work on homework in the Teen Center computer lab at Virginia Park.**

District officials to review policy

FROM **HOMEWORK** PAGE 1

The Cove Skate Park. "My mom would say sometimes we do get a lot, and sometimes we don't."

School officials decided to conduct a survey after the Health and Safety District Advisory Committee (DAC) raised concerns about the amount of homework being assigned to students. Bradford noted that some parents had also been contacting the central office, complaining that their children either received too much or not enough assignments.

William McCarthy, vice-chair of the DAC, said committee members became concerned after noticing considerable differences in the amount of homework that was being assigned for the same subjects at the high schools.

"We felt that at minimum, teachers should be speaking to each other what their homework assignments are in terms of requiring hours outside of the classroom in order to make it likely that a teacher inadvertently wouldn't be piling on (assignments)," McCarthy said.

McCarthy also pointed to a possible social justice issue with homework assignments, noting that students in Malibu and north Santa Monica are usually more affluent than their peers in the southside off the district. These are the students who have the advantage of being able to afford a tutor, he said.

"There does seem to be a socioeconomic divide here," McCarthy said.

Elizabeth Anthony, the mother of three children — a sixth and eighth grader at Malibu Middle School and a fourth grader at Point Dume Marine Science School — said she doesn't have an issue with the amount of homework, but would like to see more of an emphasis on writing and critical reading.

"I think you could never do too much writing," Anthony said. "That is an important skill, especially if a teacher is able to provide feedback on writing assignments."

melodyh@smdp.com. Jon Haber contributed to this report





GETTING PERSONAL

Braving the pain for a healthier body

BY TAYLOR VAN ARSDALE
Special to the Daily Press

After my break-up with my ex, a philandering pig, I stop going to the gym and gain a few thousand pounds. The Pig had a BMW motorcycle, and used to reassure me that in the event a terrorist nuke were to hit LAX, we'd swiftly ride to safety. The dreaded nuke crests my top 10 irrational fears list. Now, with the BMW gone, I've got it fixed in my head, I'll have to outrun the blast, so when my zaftig friend "Gerdy" (not her real name) approaches me about joining Santa Monica's Extreme Boot Camp, I think, "Sure. Why not?"

Lea Conserva, a striking blonde with chiseled features, introduced the "EBC" Santa Monica franchise in April 2007. Conserva attended a Simi Valley EBC but longed for a local, outdoor, group fitness program. She met with Linda Taix, the EBC creator, partnered with her cousin, John Bartlett and realized she'd found her calling. Conserva's warm personality spurs me into signing up. In six weeks, if I follow the program I should lose weight. No one however believes I'll be able to outrun residual nuclear fallout. I however remain optimistic.

I "weigh in" and meet my trainers. There's J. Scott Shonka, a West Point grad and former Airborne Ranger. "Yum" is all I can say. If this man wants to knock me around, I'm all for it. Edgar Turner is a former US Marine, who's blessed with a set of pectorals that have me drooling. And August Johnson, a nutritionist and cookbook author, is a sweetheart who could be my look-alike, except that she's a stunning, blonde and has a perfect figure.

EBC has time-slots ranging from 5:30 a.m. to 9:45 a.m., (and a 6:30 p.m. class), but due to job constraints, Gerdy must attend the 5:30 a.m. shift. And like a good friend I go with her. Barely awake, I'm surrounded by my fellow Boot Campers: Krystyna — a taut, flaxen-haired ex-pat, with an acerbic British wit. Think a non-drunk "Patsy Stone" of "Ab Fab." I incorrectly guess she's 35. She's almost 50, married to a hunk in his 20's. My new hero; I want to be her, if only for a one night rumble with her spouse; and Betty, a dark-haired "Sheryl Crow" type, is a dynamo, has run marathons and participated in something called the "Iron Man" which I mistakenly think may be sponsored by Ozzy Osbourne or former members of "Black Sabbath." It's actually a "voluntary" three-part race that involves swimming, biking and running. Ripped and lean, Betty runs circles around us, but she hasn't had a date in two years either. I'm glad to learn my "J-Lo caboose" is not the cause of my dateless doldrums.

THE MORNING BEGINS WITH SOME EASY STRETCHING (DON'T LULL YOURSELF INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY) THIS TRANSITIONS RATHER QUICKLY TO MILITARY STYLE JUMPING JACKS, WHICH BASICALLY MEANS 'TWO JACKS EQUAL ONE.' AFTER 50, I LOSE COUNT.

The morning begins with some easy stretching (don't lull yourself into a false sense of security) this transitions rather quickly to military style jumping jacks, which basically means "two jacks equal one." After 50, I lose count. Then it's abdominals, which I love, not because I'm finally on my back (though that plays a role), but because at 5:45 a.m., the sky's clear and dark, Santa Monica is blissfully serene, and while everyone's counting reps, I lose myself viewing Pleiades and chance to see a shooting star.

The "break" is over too soon. J. Scott's stern "On your feet, People!" has me practically saluting. Over rhyming cadences we perform a hideous triceps exercise that makes me want to cry. Whatever happened to losing weight the old-fashioned way with nicotine, cocaine and a high colonic chaser?

Later, during my lame attempt at push-ups Edgar bends down and asks, "Is that as far down as you can go, Taylor?" His biceps flex slightly and his sinewy frame entices me to push on.

I admit, I signed up to meet a hot guy. Fact no. 1: Only the trainers are hot. Fact no.2: There are only girls in my class — perfect for Gerdy who happens to be a lesbian, but not so much for me. Fact no. 3: Some hot guys are in the 6 a.m. class. The nice thing about EBC is that you can switch it up. If you miss your class time, you can jump into another session.

Calisthenics are followed by 20 of 30 minutes of running. I'm not the fattest, but I'm definitively the slowest, and it's abundantly clear to me now that should there ever be a nuclear explosion at LAX, only Betty will survive.

The trainers and the program are inspirational. By the third week, thanks to August, I begin to make strides in my running. Edgar is encouraging and talks me through the pain, and J. Scott is a genuine motivational force. All are confident about my progress. I stick out the six weeks. I've lost 2 inches, made some great friends and have never felt better. I'm even dating again. For information on the EBC call (310) 367-8500.

TAYLOR VAN ARSDALE is a writer/producer and movie reviewer for the Daily Press. She can be reached at Tailfish@roadrunner.com

Downtown L.A. dwellers call 'cut' on filming

BY JACOB ADELMAN
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES Ginny-Marie Case can't forget the night she was jarred from her sleep by massive explosions set off by crews filming last summer's blockbuster movie "Transformers."

It was the latest cinematic nightmare that led Case and other residents streaming downtown as part of a population boom to push for tougher limits on filming in the nation's most popular location for movies, TV shows and car commercials.

"It was the loudest explosion I ever heard," Case said. "We had no clue: Was this part of filming? Was this some terrorist thing?"

For decades, filmmakers have depended on downtown's rail yards, brownstones and beaux arts facades to depict urban anywhere. In the process, they have grown used to operating with few restrictions in the long-neglected urban core.

"I do love movies, but sometimes it gets annoying. This is not a Hollywood lot," Oscar Linares, 32, said as he walked his Maltese past a set for "CSI: NY" where Gary Sinise stood before whirring cameras in a bulletproof vest.

The conflict pits the downtown resurgence against the push to stop the "runaway production" that occurs when filmmakers leave Los Angeles to take advantage of hefty tax breaks and other advantages offered by cities from Vancouver to New Orleans.

Jack Kyser, chief economist at the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp., said tighter downtown restrictions could send production companies packing.

"Hopefully they can come up with something the makes everybody happy, but that could be very difficult," Kyser said. "We really run a risk."

The entertainment industry generates $58 billion a year for the Los Angeles-area economy — a figure that has steadily increased in recent years as losses from runaway production leveled off and cable TV production increased, Kyser said.

Hollywood, however, is currently reeling from the estimated $2.5 billion toll taken by the recent writers strike.

City Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes most of downtown, is watching closely as neighborhood activists and studio representatives work to draft the guidelines limiting overnight filming and curtailing street closures.

"People live here now, so at some point you've got to shut off the lights and let people go to sleep," Perry said. The City Council will have the final say on the rules.

Downtown has seen a lot of action over the years.

In "Transformers," giant robots wrestle on the streets, leaving a path of destruction created with a mix of actual footage and computer effects.

Action flicks such as "Die Hard 2" used City Hall as a backdrop, while the Art Deco Union Station was featured in the classic science fiction thriller "Blade Runner."

These days, downtown plays itself on the Fox action series "24" and stands in for New York and Las Vegas in two of the three hit "CSI" shows on CBS.

It's also a hot spot for car commercials featuring the glass-and-steel office towers of Figueroa Boulevard.

In all, there are an average of 23 downtown location shoots each day, according to FilmL.A. Inc., the nonprofit agency that handles filming permits for the city.

"We couldn't do our show without downtown Los Angeles," said Peter Lenkov, executive producer of "CSI: NY." "There's a grittiness to downtown you can't find anywhere else in Los Angeles ... Nowhere else do you get the feeling of 47th Street or Times Square."

Until the late 1990s, film crews could operate with nearly complete freedom downtown, which became a virtual ghost town overnight after government and office workers fled for the suburbs.

But the number of residents in the area has been increasing drastically, growing from about 18,700 before 1999 to more than 34,000 today, according to the Central City Association.

Shopkeepers and residents tolerated the street closures, floodlights and other inconveniences until late 2006, when a cluster of disturbances — including the "Transformers" explosions — pushed many over the edge.

Bert Green decided he'd had enough when film crews monopolized parking spots for months near the galleries where he organizes a downtown art walk.

After his complaints were ignored by city officials and FilmL.A. staff, he met with other merchants and residents who were fed up with filming.

"Crews were coming into the neighborhood and shutting streets down, or taking over whole blocks," he said. "There has to be some accountability."

Some limits exist already, but residents complain they are routinely ignored because they are not formal city ordinances.

One proposal under consideration by residents and studios would bar filming near homes from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. without written permission from residents. It also cuts the amount of curb space crews can occupy and put limits on their use of lights, among other regulations.

Meanwhile, to ease conflicts, FilmL.A. has hired a community liaison to field complaints and asked police to make sure officers who guard filming locations enforce permit requirements.

"CSI: NY" location manager Timothy Hillman said he hits the street long before the cameras arrive to warn residents about the coming commotion and to reimburse shopkeepers who lose business.

"The locations are like my field," Hillman said. "If I burn out a location — if a location says 'I don't want you back' — it's like I'm a farmer throwing salt on his fields."

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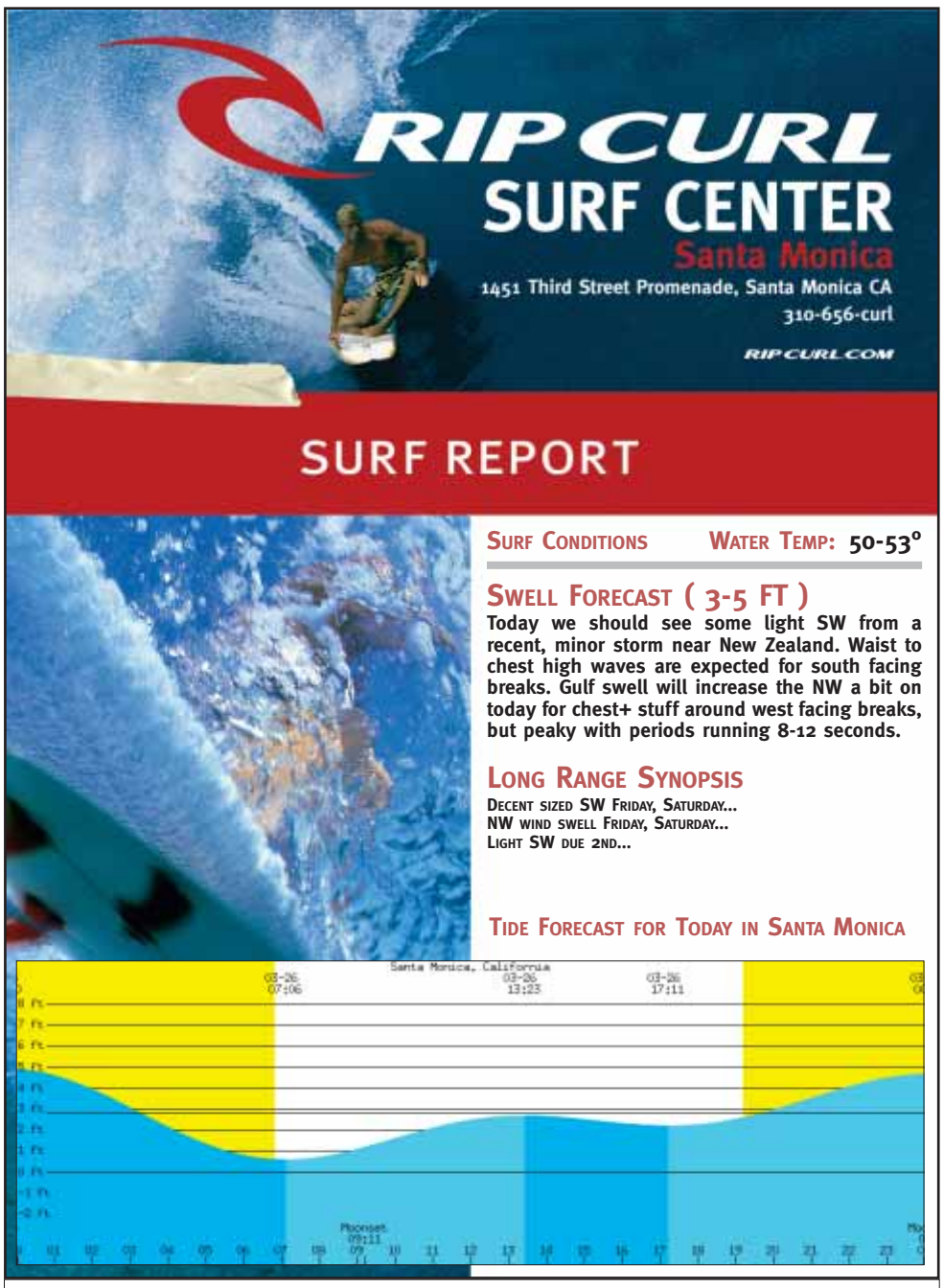




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BEACH REPORT CARD

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 18, 2008**

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 -- 8
- Number of A grades for dry/wet weather -- 33 / 19
- Number of (C,D,F) grades for dry/wet weather -- 11 / 24

The Beach Report Card is made possible by a grant from 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	B	A+
Nicholas Beach at San Nicholas Canyon Creek mouth	A+	A+
El Pescador State Beach, between Lachusa and Los Alisos creeks	A+	A+
Encinal Canyon at El Matador State Beach	A+	A+
Broad Beach at Trancas Creek mouth	C	F
Zuma Beach at Zuma Creek mouth	A+	F
Walnut Creek, projection of Wildlife Rd. (private)	A+	A+
Paradise Cove Pier at Ramirez Canyon Creek mouth	F	F
Escondido Creek, just east of Escondido State Beach	F	A+
Latigo Canyon Creek mouth	A+	D
Solstice Canyon at Dan Blocker County Beach	A+	A+
Puerco State Beach at creek mouth	A	F
Marie Canyon storm drain at Puerco Beach, at 24572 Malibu Rd.	F	F
Surfrider Beach at Malibu Colony fence	A+	F
Surfrider Beach (breach location)- daily	F	A
Malibu Pier - 50 yards east	B	F
Carbon Beach at Sweetwater Canyon	A+	A+
Las Flores State Beach at Las Flores Creek (point zero)	A	A+
Big Rock Beach at 19948 PCH stairs	A	A+
Pena Creek at Las Tunas County Beach	A+	A+
Tuna Canyon	B	ns
Topanga State Beach at creek mouth	B	D
Castlerock Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	F
Santa Ynez Storm Drain at Castle Rock Beach	F	ns
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+	A+
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+	D
Santa Monica Beach at Wilshire Blvd. drain	A+	F
Santa Monica Municipal Pier	D	F
Santa Monica Beach at Pico/Kenter storm drain	A	D
Santa Monica Beach at Strand St. (in front of the restrooms)	A+	B
Ocean Park Beach at Ashland Ave. drain	A+	A
Venice City Beach, at the Rose Ave. storm drain	A+	A+
Venice Beach at Brooks Ave. drain	A	F
Venice Beach at Windward Ave. drain	A+	A+
Venice Fishing Pier - 50 yards south	A+	D
Venice Beach- projection of Topsail St.	A	D
Marina del Rey, Mothers' Beach- lifeguard tower	C	B
Dockweiler State Beach at Ballona Creek mouth	A	C
Dockweiler State Beach at Culver Blvd. drain	A+	A+
North Westchester Storm Drain at Dockweiler State Beach	A+	A+
Dockweiler State Beach at World Way (south of D&W jetty)	A+	F
Dockweiler State Beach at Imperial Hwy drain	A+	A+
Dockweiler Beach- opposite Hyperion Treatment Plant	C	D
Dockweiler State Beach at Grand Ave. drain	A+	B

LEGEND

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

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

Heal the Bay

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

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

NBA

Oklahoma City lease OK'd if Sonics move

BY JEFF LATZKE
Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY Oklahoma City officials will try to convince NBA commissioner David Stern and representatives of four teams that the city is ready to permanently host a franchise.

On Tuesday, City Council members unanimously approved a preliminary lease agreement with the Seattle SuperSonics, contingent on the team's proposed relocation.

Stern and representatives of the San Antonio Spurs, Los Angeles Lakers, Indiana Pacers and New Jersey Nets were set to tour the Ford Center later Tuesday and view a presentation from SuperSonics owner Clay Bennett, Mayor Mick Cornett and Gov. Brad Henry at a downtown hotel.

The task is to convince the league to move a franchise from a large city and television market to one of the smallest. The NBA's relocation committee will recommend to league owners whether to approve the Sonics' move at the April 17-18 meeting.

"A lot of our message is derived around that because if you come from the East or West Coast, your first instinct is probably not to move an NBA franchise from a large city to Oklahoma City," Cornett said.

"We've been a minor-league city for 118 years and to suddenly suggest that we're no longer a minor-league city - that we're a major-league city - I think it's incumbent upon us to say why. What has fundamentally changed in Oklahoma City?"

Cornett said the presentation would include the team's potential business model and a history lesson about Oklahoma City's renaissance launched 15 years ago by a public-funded initiative. That included the construction of the Ford Center arena where the SuperSonics would play. The New Orleans Hornets played two seasons at the arena following Hurricane Katrina.

On Tuesday morning, City Council members approved terms of a 15-year lease with the SuperSonics that would require the team to pay the city $1.6 million annually to use the Ford Center and another $409,000 per year to be able to resell the arena's naming rights.

Former Oklahoma state Rep. Wanda Jo Stapleton voiced concerns to the council that the lease leaves the city in position to pay for any cost overruns beyond the approximately $121 million provided by a sales tax extension approved by voters earlier this month.

The sales-tax extension would also pay for an approximately $24 million practice facility. The lease calls for the SuperSonics to pay $100,000 rent on the building.

"It's in black and white there that the city will pay for the cost overruns, and there could be tens of millions of dollars in cost overruns because they've given the team owners free rein to make any changes, whatever they want, during the entire construction period," Stapleton said. "It's just a blank check, that's all it is."

City Manager Jim Couch assured Stapleton that the lease would allow the city to make any cuts necessary to keep the project within its budget. Cornett said it was the city's intent to keep the renovations within whatever funds are raised by the sales tax extension.

"We have a very good history of building stuff on time and being financially responsible," Cornett said. "I understand that this is going to take a very high level of scrutiny and we accept that and look forward to once again living up to what we said we would do."

Joining Stern during the visit were Spurs owner Peter Holt, Nets owner Lewis Katz, Pacers owner Herb Simon and Jeanie Buss, the daughter of Lakers owner Jerry Buss. Holt, Katz, Simon and Jerry Buss are four of the members on the NBA's relocation committee.

Other members of the relocation committee - Miami Heat managing general partner Micky Arison, Chris Cohan of the Golden State Warriors and Ed Snider of the Philadelphia 76ers - did not make the trip.

MLB

Canseco singles out A-Rod

By the Associated Press

NEW YORK Jose Canseco says in his new book that he introduced Alex Rodriguez to a steroids distributor and that A-Rod pursued Canseco's wife, according to the Web site of freelance writer Joe Lavin.

Lavin says on the Web site that he obtained the book, "Vindicated: Big Names, Big Liars, and The Battle to Save Baseball," on Monday from a bookstore in Cambridge, Mass. The book is due to be released April 1.

Lavin writes Canseco's book discusses A-Rod, Roger Clemens and Magglio Ordonez.

He says Canseco claimed he didn't inject Rodriguez but "introduced Alex to a known supplier of steroids." Lavin also says "Canseco claims that A-Rod was trying to sleep with Canseco's wife."

"I really, absolutely, have no reaction," Rodriguez said Tuesday when asked about the claim relating to the steroids distributor. As far as the allegation regarding Canseco's wife, Rodriguez responded:

"I don't know how to answer that."

Canseco writes about the infamous June 1998 party at his house. Brian McNamee, Clemens' former trainer, has said Clemens spoke with Canseco at the barbecue and soon after approached the trainer about using performance-enhancing drugs. According to Lavin, Canseco wrote that Clemens did not attend.

Earlier this year, Canseco gave an affidavit to congressional investigators stating Clemens was not there and that he had never seen Clemens "use, possess or ask for steroids or human growth hormone."

Lavin wrote the Ordonez reference was "that old yarn of one player injecting another with steroids, possibly in the buttocks." Canseco and Ordonez were teammates on the 2001 Chicago White Sox.

The New York Times reported in January that Canseco offered to keep Ordonez "clear" in the book if the Detroit outfielder invested in a movie project promoted by Canseco, claims Lavin said Canseco wrote he denies.

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1441 Third St.
(310) 458-1506

The Bank Job (R) 1hr 50min
1:40, 4:10, 6:50, 9:40
Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who (G) 1hr 28min
2:15, 4:40, 7:00, 9:20
Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day (PG-13) 1hr 32min
1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00
There Will Be Blood (R) 2hrs 38min
2:30, 6:10, 9:30

AMC 7 SANTA MONICA
1310 Third St.
(310) 289-4262
College Road Trip (G) 1hr 23min
2:30, 4:50, 10:15
Doomsday (R) 1hr 45min
1:40, 4:20, 7:00, 9:50
Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who (G) 1hr 28min
12:30, 1:15, 3:00, 3:40, 5:20, 6:00, 7:40, 8:15, 10:00
Jumper (PG-13) 1hr 28min
1:00, 3:25, 5:40, 7:50, 10:05
The Other Boleyn Girl (PG-13)
2:00, 4:50, 7:30, 10:10
There Will Be Blood (R)
2:30, 6:20, 10:00
Penelope (PG) 1hr 29min
1:10, 3:20, 5:35, 7:45, 10:00

LAEMMLE'S MONICA FOURPLEX
1332 Second St.
(310) 394-9741

Funny Games (R) 1hr 48min
1:25, 4:20, 7:10, 9:55
Juno (PG-13) 1hr 31min
1:55, 7:20
Married Life (PG-13) 1hr 30min
12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:40, 10:006:00, 7:40, 8:15, 10:00
No Country for Old Men (R) 2hrs 02min
4:30, 9:45
The Other Boleyn Girl (PG-13)
2:00, 4:50, 7:30, 10:10

MANN'S CRITERION THEATRE
1313 Third St.
(310) 395-1599

10,000 B.C. (PG-13) 1hr 49min
11:30 a.m., 12:30, 2:00, 3:00, 4:30, 5:30, 7:10, 8:00, 9:40, 10:30
Be Kind Rewind (PG-13) 1hr 41min
2:30, 7:50
Definitely, Maybe (PG-13) 1hr 52min
12:00, 5:00, 10:20
Never Back Down (PG-13) 1hr 46min
11:15 a.m., 1:50, 4:20, 7:30, 10:10
Semi-Pro (R) 1hr 30min
12:20, 2:40, 5:10, 7:40, 10:00
Vantage Point (PG-13) 1hr 30min
11:50 a.m., 2:10, 4:40, 7:00, 9:50

More information email news@smdp.com

Honor differences, Taurus

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ The impact you have on others could make a considerable difference. Be willing to break past current restraints and premises. Invite others into a brainstorming session and refresh your thinking. Tonight: Keep extending yourself.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★★ Evaluate relating on a deeper, more effective level. Understand that when you first feel disappointed, you might not be seeing eye to eye with someone else. At that same moment, you recognize the wisdom of different types of thinking. Tonight: Honor differences. Use them for the whole.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★★ You might want to break past a problem and no longer deal with it. Still, you keep hitting a wall, or tumble over a boulder. Know when to lie back and allow others to do the work. Tonight: Enjoy every minute.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★ Let's not forget giving to yourself. You could feel dry, worn out and unfruitful. If these signs of burnout are present, pull back. Tonight: Remember you are worthless to everyone else if you are not feeling well.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ Your imagination spins in all directions. You might be dismayed by a professional situation, a boss or someone in charge. For now, toe the line. Tonight: Lighten up the mood.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ You might not realize the impact of your attitude on others. You could be making a situation or interaction much heavier or difficult. Tonight: Head on home.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ You might have the very best intentions, but you witness a backfire instead. Ouch! Slow down; perhaps just stop and relax. You will discover that your inner voice might be programmed negatively. Break away from feelings and thoughts. Try hitting "refresh." Tonight: Greet new ideas.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ Curb wildness and back off. A friend might be pushing you down a path where you could feel the ramifications simply are not worth it. You alone can make that call. Know that and trust that belief. Tonight: Think "taxes." Think "finances."

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ Don't feel burdened; instead, delegate. Don't take on more than your share. Your positive attitude sets a standard for others. Tonight: Go for what you want.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ When you seek out information or an expert, you hit a closed door. For now, turn around and let go of the issues that are driving you. Tonight: Give up worry. It won't help.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★★ Work with a key partner. Don't indulge this negativity when it emerges. You might want to distance yourself and let this person sit on his or her stuff. Remain goal-oriented, and you'll get results. Tonight: Where the gang is.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Your ability to lead comes forth. However, you might not want to save someone, because this person dumps everything on you. Tonight: A force to be dealt with.

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 frequently feel that someone trips you up, just when you are on a roll. Detachment proves to be instrumental and important, as at times, these snafus are there for a reason. You might be barking up the wrong tree. Learn to flow and understand why you are blocked sometimes. Rethink projects, solutions or ideas that you cannot push through. Travel, education and a newfound mental outlook define your year. If you are single, you could meet someone very special when you least expect it. Be open and forward-looking. If you are attached, you could find your sweetie difficult at times. Agree to disagree. SAGITTARIUS has the keys to doors to opportunities.

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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 Bronze (easiest) to Silver to Gold (hardest).

Difficulty
GOLD

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

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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

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

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Girls and Sports

By Justin Borus and Andrew Feinstein



The Meaning of Lila

By John Forgetta & L.A. Rose



The Other Coast

By Adrian Raeside



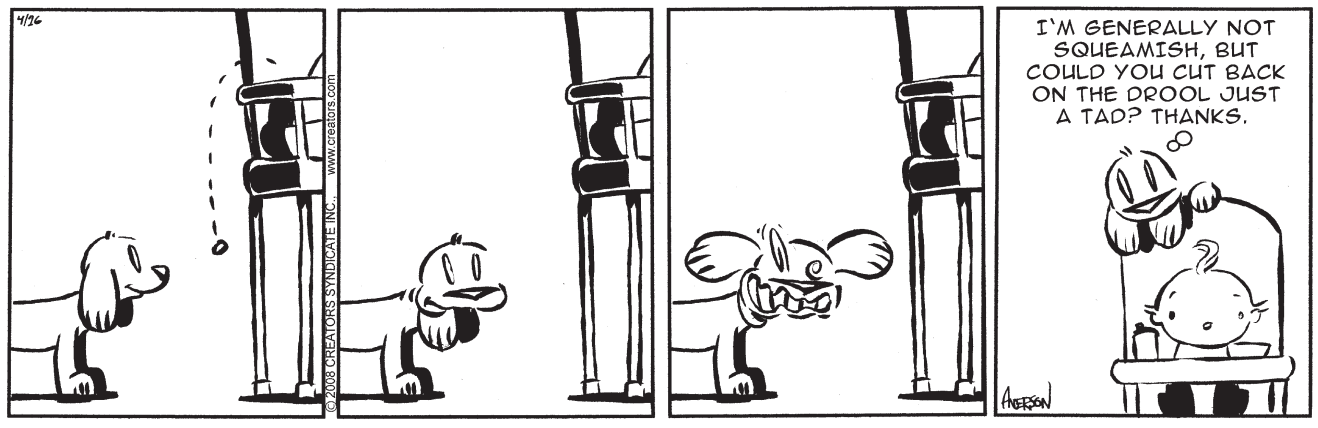
Garfield

By Jim Davis

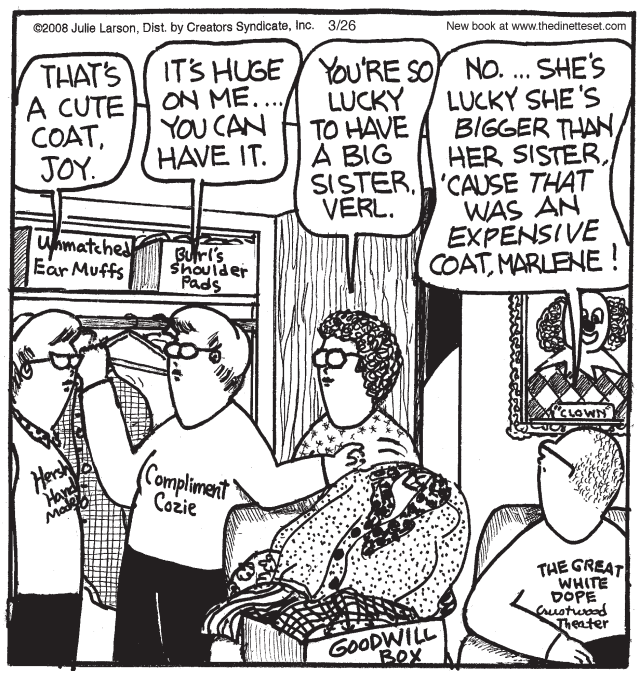


Dog eat Doug

By Brian Anderson



The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



Strange Brew

By John Deering



Speed Bump

By Dave Coverly



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Photog *news@smdp.com*

The first one to identify where this shot was taken wins a prize from the Daily Press. Send answers to *editor@smdp.com*.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Ilk
5 Muscle quality
9 Exemplary
11 Alma —
12 Caesar's land
13 Apse sight
14 Employ
15 Kindergarten's kin
17 Something to mind
19 Tie the knot
20 Parting word
21 Rotter
22 Packing box
24 Hive dweller
26 Fork features
29 Price part
30 Port creator
32 Proceeding as planned
34 Arctic explorer John
35 Reduces
36 Crème de la crème
38 Ludicrous
39 Sprinted
40 Play group
41 Murder mystery find

DOWN

1 Ab strengthener
2 Black Sea port
3 Peruse anew
4 Sea dog
5 Soft mineral
6 Canada's capital
7 Approached
8 Goofed
10 Firefighting aid
11 The Say Hey Kid
16 Marine
18 Pleasant
21 Bit of change
23 Fiddle (with)
24 Split base
25 Crowd-scene actors
27 Fermi of physics
28 Not standing
29 Subject
30 Bud holder
31 Frail
33 Budget amount
37 Research setting

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

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			

3-26

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

BY CHUCK SHEPARD

■ The Classic Middle Name (all new): Arrested and awaiting trial for murder: Bobby Wayne Ledbetter, Northport, Ala. (February); Michael Wayne Adams, Fairfax County, Va. (February); David Wayne Cole, West Nottingham, Pa. (October). Confessed to murder: Calvin Wayne Inman, Houston (February). Sentenced for murder: Jerrell Wayne Stanley, Orange, Texas (October). Executed for murder: Michael Wayne Richard, Huntsville, Texas (September). Already serving time for other crimes but expected to be charged with as many as nine murders based on recent DNA evidence: Timothy Wayne Krajcir, Cape Girardeau, Mo. (January).

■ In February, a Mississippi judge released two convicted rapists of children, who had each been in prison for more than 12 years, based on DNA. The men had been convicted primarily by the "bite mark" analysis of since-discredited dentist Dr. Michael West, who used iridescent lights and yellow goggles to demonstrate that scratches on the victims were bites by the two men. Subsequent independent analysis identified the scratches as scratches, perhaps even made by West himself, according to a director of the Innocence Project. West is a favorite colleague of medical examiner Steven Hayne, who seems always to find evidence of guilt of anyone charged by district attorney Forrest Allgood, according to a Reason magazine investigation. West's bite "technology," in particular, has been widely ridiculed by forensic professionals.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1958 the U.S. Army launched America's third successful satellite, Explorer 3.

1804 the Louisiana Purchase was divided into the Territory of Orleans and the District of Louisiana.

1892 poet Walt Whitman died in Camden, N.J.

1917 the Seattle Metropolitans became the first U.S. team to win the Stanley Cup as they defeated the Montreal Canadiens.

1958 ``The Bridge on the River Kwai'' won seven Academy Awards, including best picture of 1957; its director, David Lean, and star Alec Guinness also received Oscars. Joanne Woodward was named best actress for ``The Three Faces of Eve.''

1971 East Pakistan proclaimed its independence, taking the name Bangladesh.

1979 a peace treaty was signed by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat at the White House.

1982 groundbreaking ceremonies took place in Washington for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

1988 Jesse Jackson stunned fellow Democrats by soundly defeating Michael Dukakis in Michigan's Democratic presidential caucuses.

1997 the bodies of 39 members of the Heaven's Gate techno-religious cult who'd committed suicide were found inside a rented mansion in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.

WORD UP!

repine \rih-PINE\, intransitive *verb:* 1. To feel or express discontent. 2. To long for something.

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GIVE OF YOURSELF volunteers wanted at the discovery shop. Help us contribute to the American cancer society by spending 4 hours per week assisting in our resale shop in Santa Monica. Contact Terry or Shaunna at (310)458-4490

IMMEDIATE POSITIONS available in the Environmental Services Department. Looking for part time housekeepers/ floor techs. Hospital Experience preferred. Call (310)829-8431 for interview.

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Contact: Sullivan-Dituri Co. (310)453-3341

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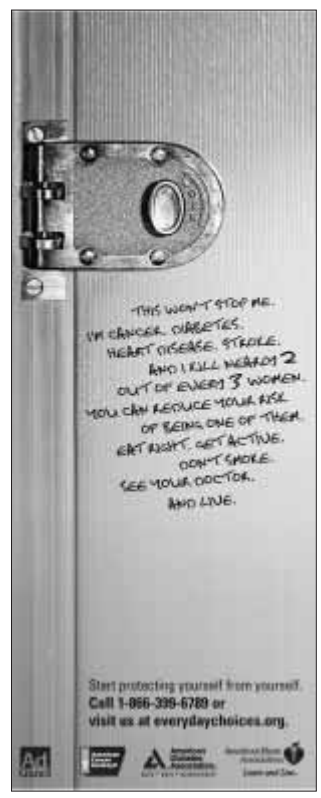
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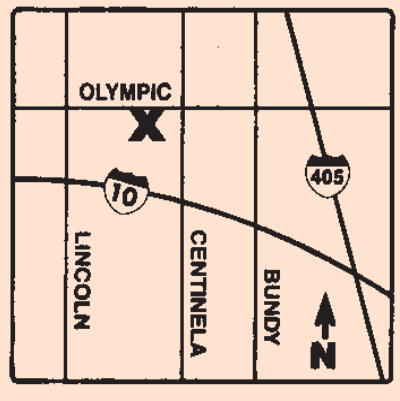
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Kate Bransfield

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785 Linda Flora Drive
$1,599,000
3 + 1.75 Fabulous Lower Bel Air Home

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231 - 18th Street, Santa Monica
North of Montana, Original 3 + 1.75 Home



Letter from Seller:

"Hi Kate, I do want to thank you for all that you have done to sell my house, all the advice and patient explanations of real estate details to a distant novice who loved her home and was reluctant to leave it in someone else's hands. My Daughter, my Financial Advisor and my CPA also think highly of you. I would certainly recommend you to anyone in Santa Monica who is thinking of selling their house in these troubled times."

- Louise

Open Sunday, March 30th
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1012 - 7th Street # 7
$599,000
Updated 2 + 1.75 Condo

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947 - 15th Street # 6
$719,000
Top Floor 2 + 1.75 Condo

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12124 - Goshen Street # 105
$779,000
Spacious 3 + 1.75 Condo

Average Price of Properties Listed for Sale As of Late March 2008

		Single Family Homes	Condos & Townhomes
Santa Monica Canyon	=	$ 2,312,625	$ 1,300,000
North of Montana	=	$ 3,732,261	$ 2,044,714
Between Wilshire & Montana	=	$ 1,881,900	$ 1,000,510
South of Wilshire	=	$ 873,966	$ 768,653
Sunset Park	=	$ 1,416,583	$ 720,231
Ocean Park	=	$ 1,778,900	$ 1,126,256

Statistics updated every Friday

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