

FREE

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Santa Monica Daily Press

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Boathouse walks the plank in court today

BY CAROLYN SACKARIASON

Daily Press Staff Writer

Just three days before the 50-year-old Boathouse restaurant is set to close permanently, its owner is scheduled to appear in court today to ask a judge to keep her longtime business open.

In a last ditch effort, Naia Sheffield will go before Santa Monica Superior Court Judge Diana Wheatley, who torpedoed Sheffield's ship last week when she ruled the restaurant must get out by Sunday because its lease was terminated by the Pier Restoration Corporation.

The PRC took the controversial action to make way for the movie-themed chain-restaurant, Bubba Gump.

Wheatley also ruled that the Boathouse owes the city \$25,000 in back rent, which the city earlier refused to accept, plus attorney fees.

Sheffield said Thursday that she'll appeal Wheatley's decision and ask that a stay be granted on

"It's already tourist season so why would they want to have an empty shell of a building?"

— KELLY BIXBY
Attorney

the restaurant's eviction.

Sheffield hopes Wheatley will review new arguments in a case that has pit the longtime business owner against the city for years. Wheatley was handed the case — which is several hundred pages thick — late last year. The judge originally assigned to it retired.

"Hopefully she'll review all of (the arguments)," Sheffield said, adding that years of litigation may have

been too much information for Wheatley to digest. She also said her attorney will get another chance to argue the complex issue.

Sheffield and her attorney, Kelly Bixby, have argued that the PRC offered the Boathouse a long-term lease more than three years ago then improperly refused to sign it. It decided to offer her a month-to-month lease only. Then last summer, after it had signed a lease with Bubba Gump instead, Sheffield says, the PRC gave her the boot, effective last fall.

But Sheffield's Boathouse didn't budge, which prompted the city to file a lawsuit seeking to kick it out.

Sheffield had filed a lawsuit of her own in U.S. District Court claiming breach of contract, violation of her right to due process, and unlawful takings. She also claimed that the PRC violated the state's open meetings law and that the city intentionally misrepresented the

See BOATHOUSE, page 4

Mold closes two elementary school classrooms



BY ANDREW H. FIXMER

Daily Press Staff Writer

Two classrooms in the Santa Monica Alternative School House have been sealed shut because they contain high levels of mold.

Initially, a few teachers and children became ill after working in one of the contaminated rooms at the school, located at 2625 5th St. Further tests revealed that an adjoining classroom also was infected with three types of mold — Penicillium, Fungal Spores, and Aspergillus, said Kenneth Bailey, director of finance at Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District.

The mold concentration in the two contaminated rooms was as much as eleven times higher than samples taken outside the building, he said. State guidelines do not address the allowable ranges of mold in school classrooms.

The school district has hired an industrial hygienist to conduct more tests throughout the elementary school, though so far, no other classrooms or hallways have tested positive for high levels of mold, he said.

School district officials have assured parents the rest of the building is safe.

Rain water containing bacteria seeped through the roof and fell through the classroom ceiling,

ings, Bailey said. The water collected in areas where the building's maintenance workers could not easily clean it up, allowing the mold to form.

"We are going to have to identify what is causing the leak as well as remove materials from inside the walls," Bailey said.

Mold also collected on books and classroom objects that got wet. In addition, one refrigerator will have to be completely replaced in the faculty lounge, Bailey said.

Teachers and children reported feeling ill after spending extended periods of time in the classrooms, Bailey said. Some were affected more than others.

"It depends on the person's

sensitivity to this type of thing," he said.

The two classrooms will be gutted to ensure all traces of the mold are permanently removed, taking the rooms out of service until next school year, he said. Classes have been moved into two newly built classrooms at John Muir Elementary, which shares the same campus as the alternative school.

Officials said they are having the carpets cleaned in all the building's classrooms and replacing the air filters in the building's heating and cooling system.

Even so, some parents have opted not to send their children

See MOLD, page 4

Sewage to receive Huntington bleach

By The Associated Press

HUNTINGTON BEACH — Some 25,000 gallons of bleach will be added each day to disinfect treated Orange County sewage before it flows into the Pacific Ocean.

The Orange County Sanitation District board approved the Huntington Beach and Fountain Valley treatment plant plans Wednesday night. The bleach is added to kill bacteria in the 240 million gallons of treated sewage piped 4 1/2 miles offshore each day.

The district move was made after measurements showed a 45-foot-deep bacterial plume from the pipe coming within a half-mile of Newport Beach.

Workers clean up mold on Thursday in one of the classrooms at the Santa Monica Alternative School House.

Andrew H. Fixmer/Daily Press

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Santa Monica's Daily Calendar



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JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

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

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



ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★★ You suddenly have an opinion on everything and everyone. Unexpected information comes from a pal, and it could be delightful. Extremes punctuate your behavior as well as others'. Why not? It's Friday. Kick up your heels. Tonight: Go along with another's plans.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Pace yourself, as you have a lot of ground to cover. You might be over-thinking or worrying way too much. A boss exhibits more spontaneity than you. Follow this person's lead. Extremes punctuate your day. Go with the flow. Tonight: Easy does it.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ You might not be sure as to which way to go with a loved one or friend. Carefully review a matter that involves a child. Spontaneity comes with the territory. Just don't do anything you might regret at a later point. Keep smiling. Tonight: Fly out of the office.



CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Dig into basics. Don't allow another to distract you. Though you might feel that an associate babbles financial gibberish, listen carefully anyway. You could make a mistake out of the blue. News from a distance could be important. Tonight: Hang in there.



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ You might get too much information for your own taste. Slow down some and consider alternatives that surround you. Unexpected news heads your way through that still-unpredictable person. Smile with the jolts. Tonight: Speak your mind.



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Use care with your finances, even if you feel like you have nothing to worry about. You could be having an attack of spring fever. Someone moves with your mood. Just be careful about what you say "yes" to. You could exaggerate a situation. Tonight: Count your change carefully.



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ Your personality glows and radiates. Touch base with a loved one who means a lot to you. Another might have an awful lot to say. Carefully consider options that surround the unexpected. Feelings could be extremely intense. Tonight: Let it all hang out.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ Step back and think through what another is doing. You work well with another. Ask yourself, "Is there more to this relationship than meets the eye?" If you need to step away from an immediate situation, do so. You'll discover a lot more. Tonight: Play away.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Identify what might be going on with you and someone else. Somehow, you might not understand where another's heart is. Consequently, the road could be paved with hurt. Tread carefully. Look at the big picture. Tonight: Let your friends lead you out the door.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ Use caution with those in charge. Though you think you know what is going on, you could have a jolt or two on the way. Be careful with matters involving funds. You don't want to make any mistakes here. Listen to a boss carefully. Tonight: Be OK with working late.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ Justifying what you want to do might be a lot easier than you anticipate. Spread your wings and do the unexpected. Schedule an early day off, if possible, extending your weekend. You'll enjoy the change of pace. Go in a new direction. Tonight: Opt for the very exotic.



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Jump to another's ideas. Discussions could touch you on many levels. Reveal more of what is going on with yourself to a trusted associate or partner. Together you make a great team. Think in terms of gain and change. Indulge another. Tonight: There are many ways to say "thank you."

CORRECTION — The March 27 double homicide story contained errors. The Santa Monica police alerted Nebraska authorities to suspected murderer William Wheeler in Kimball, Neb. Also, Santa Monica police investigated the crime scene where the murder took place in the 2300 block of Ocean Park Boulevard. And despite witnesses' observations to the contrary, the apartment building involved in the crime scene was not evacuated, according to Santa Monica Police Department spokesman, Lt. Frank Fabrega.

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Phone: 310.458.PRESS(7737) • Fax: 310.576.9913

530 Wilshire Blvd., Suite #200 • Santa Monica, CA 90401

PUBLISHER

Ross Furukawa ross@smdp.com

EDITOR

Carolyn Sackariason . . .sack@smdp.com

STAFF WRITER

Andrew H. Fixmer andy@smdp.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Del Pastrana del@smdp.com

CLASSIFIED REPRESENTATIVE

Angela Downen angela@smdp.com

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Steve Kenedy steve@smdp.com

SALES REPRESENTATIVE

William Pattnosh william@smdp.com

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Kiutzu Cruz kiutzu@smdp.com

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Jennifer (JT) Tate jt@smdp.com

TEST SUBJECT

Dave Danforth dave@smdp.com

LOCAL



Police organization aims to educate, nurture youth

BY CHRIS YOUNG

Special to the Daily Press

Hundreds of Santa Monica kids celebrated Easter on Thursday at the 10th annual Spring Fair at Memorial Park.

And while they happily munched hot dogs, chatted with the Easter bunny, hunted for Easter eggs and had their faces painted, many likely didn't realize that the hosts of the event and others like it throughout the year are Santa Monica police officers.

In fact, the Santa Monica Police Activities League offers children ages 6-17 educational, recreational, and fitness programs that foster connections between youth, the police, and the community on a daily basis.

The spring fair is one of PAL's largest annual events — but Halloween and Christmas events are just as popular. Past years have brought between 200 and 500 kids, depending on the weather, said Karen Humphrey, Santa Monica's PAL supervisor.

"It's always a huge success and it gets bigger and bigger every year," Humphrey said.

About 3,000 youth are signed up at PAL, which is located at 1401 Olympic Blvd. Between 50 and 100 students come in to the facility daily during the school year and about 200 in the summer.

A full-time staff of seven, two police officers on rotation, and about five volunteers run PAL. Police assist staff, help run events and act as mentors, counsels and mediators to students. The SMPD and the city's human services department run the center jointly.

Mentoring programs by the staff are particularly directed to at-risk youth in Santa Monica. For some of the kids, life at home isn't stable, said PAL staffer Kermit Cannon.

"PAL targets those kids especially, but is open to everybody ages 6-17 and who lives or goes to school in Santa Monica," he said.

The Junior Police Academy, a six-week class held for local area high school students, lets participants experience all aspects of being a police officer, with ride-alongs, physical training, chances to see SWAT tactics, and a tour of the police department and jail. About 30 teens participate in the yearly program. Some are now training to be police officers.

Another program is the CAL-PAL trip to Sacramento, held annually for high school students so they can learn about state government.



Del Pastrana/Daily Press

Children at the 10th annual Spring Fair, held at Memorial Park on Thursday afternoon, compete in a potato sack race.

Cannon said PAL is funded through private donations, state and federal grants, state and national PAL programs, and the city of Santa Monica.

Santa Monica's PAL program began 13 years ago with a recreation facility at Virginia Park, an area with lots of gang activity.

"The PAL founders saw a need for greater relationships between local area kids and the police, which in turn fosters relations between the community at large, the police, and the city," said Heather Mickelson, PAL's director.

With a wealth of programs for children of all ages and support for the kids at many levels, PAL is a stable, dependable place for kids to hang out in Santa Monica.

"We're very lucky — we have a huge facility and a lot to offer," said Mickelson. "Other PALs in the state come in to talk to us, see how we do what we do. A lot of them try to develop their programs like ours."

Will Martin, 10, said he likes the gym, the homework assistance program, computers, and the pool table, which is his favorite. He started coming to PAL last fall. In the computer lab Monday through Thursday, Will plays Math Blaster, a game that helps kids learn math.

"My mom thinks it's a really good place for kids," he said. "I'll be coming until college."

The computer programs are popular at PAL, Cannon said.

"We used to have four old-fashioned computers and a printer," he said. "Now

we have 15 state-of-the-art computers with three printers, and the lab has DVD and surround sound capabilities, with lots of educational software and Internet access."

PAL also offers mentoring and opportunities for kids to explore careers through a program called "Y.E.S. to Jobs," an

organization that puts minority high school students into entertainment industry summer internships.

PAL hours are 12 p.m.-10 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 12 p.m.-6 p.m. on Saturday. Kids can sign up with PAL for free.

Peter Rabbit Day this Saturday at Douglas Park

By Daily Press staff

Santa Monica families can join Easter holiday festivities this Saturday during an Easter egg hunt put on by the Santa Monica Jaycees.

Peter Rabbit Day takes place from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Douglas Park in Santa Monica, and is for children ages 12 and under and their families.

In addition to the egg hunt, there will be food, costumed characters and numerous activities and games, including Easter egg dyeing, face painting, caricature drawings, and a 3-legged race. The police and fire departments will talk about safety awareness and have vehicle tours. Sparky the Firedog will also attend the festivities.

Peter Rabbit Day, now in its 10th year, is free and attracts several hundred children each year. Last year, about 300 kids participated, said Bill Holbrook, chairman of the event.

"This event has always had positive feedback from kids and parents," he said.

The day is one of the Jaycees larger events and is funded by donations. Last year, about \$400 was raised for the event, with about \$500 budgeted for this year.

The Santa Monica Jaycees, or Santa Monica Junior Chamber of Commerce, is a service organization for people ages 21-39 that lets members gain leadership skills by organizing community service efforts. It also offers members seminars on professional and personal skill.

Douglas Park is located at 25th Street and Wilshire Boulevard.



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LOCAL

Boathouse restaurant fighting to stay afloat

BOATHOUSE, from page 1

lease agreement.

A federal judge dismissed the suit earlier this month.

Boathouse representatives say the restaurant attempted to pay the city its monthly rent, but the city sent the checks back. City officials say they didn't accept the rent checks because the Boathouse, which sits on city-owned land, no longer had a lease.

The PRC voted this past summer to make a deal with Bubba Gump after it considered several proposals — including one by the Boathouse — to occupy the 4,500-square-foot building located on the beach.

The chain restaurant is expected to open next spring after it renovates the building.

The PRC has attracted controversy over the irregular terms of some of its members, who appeared unprepared to step down. Some of them have been serving on the board since the mid 1980s.

Bixby tried to compromise on Monday by offering a settlement with the Santa Monica City Council. He asked that the Boathouse remain open for business until Bubba Gump is ready to move in, which could be as late as the end of the summer. As part of the proposed settlement, Sheffield would accommodate Bubba

Gump any access it needs and would move out on five days notice.

But the city shot down the proposal during a closed meeting Tuesday. City deputy attorney Tony Serritella said he couldn't comment on why the city declined Sheffield's offer.

The decision has Bixby and Sheffield wondering why the city would want to keep a building empty on the busy pier during the summer season. They noted that one restaurant there is closed for renovation and another is high-priced, making it inaccessible to many visitors. Closing the Boathouse would leave only one restaurant available to most visitors, Bixby said.

"It just doesn't make sense that Santa Monica's pier will not have food service for a long period of time," Bixby said. "It's already tourist season so why would they want to have an empty shell of a building?"

"We haven't asked for anything that wouldn't help the city and its people."

Sheffield said the city could collect rent from her when it would otherwise have no revenue coming in from the property.

"I was trying to give them an out," she said. "I don't understand why the city wouldn't want to have a restaurant open for the summer."

Parents concerned about moldy classroom conditions

MOLD, from page 1

back to school because they believe other rooms also may be infected, said Marty Smith, a SMASH PTA officer.

"I think there are a lot of people who are very scared," Smith said. "They don't want their children to be in an environment that they don't believe is safe."

However, Superintendent John Deasy said the rest of the rooms in the school are completely safe. At a recent SMASH parents meeting, Deasy reassured parents and explained the steps the school district was

taking to make the rooms safe again.

Still, teachers who work in the building have been asked by the school district to get checked out by their doctor.

"The teacher that was in there a lot has fallen ill and has been undergoing all these tests since then," Smith said. "And they still haven't found out what's ailing her."

The Santa Monica Alternative School House was conceived as a more relaxed school environment, "where non-authoritarian, non-competitive, non-sexist methods would be emphasized," according to the school's website.

LETTERS

'Oh God! How little we need to change ourselves completely!'

Editor:

The Senior Prom at the Santa Monica Civic Center was a remarkable event in my life.

Coming by bus from West Hollywood, we saw a lot of dancing young volunteers, their smiles and kindness created an atmosphere of a real celebration. The wonderful orchestra with its flattering music magically made all people dance. Volunteers served food and drinks so delicate, nice and easily with smiles. People around the tables introduced each other and even made friends.

The young, strong volunteers appeared everywhere to ask if we needed anything. When a lonely woman didn't dance, they asked for a dance like real gentlemen. A woman didn't believe that it was seriously, but she agreed and they danced.

A volunteer presented me with a

coupon. It said, "I'd be happy if you hug me!" When we hugged each other I felt so much warmth from a stranger that it made me very close to him. Oh God! How little we need to change ourselves completely!

Then, watching a miracle transformation of the elderly dancing people surprised me definitely. As they walked in their proper dresses and high heel shoes, their steps were unstable and it seemed they were about to fall. But since the partner, who was himself in the same condition, took his wife or girlfriend close to him, they danced so nice and even professionally. They looked like one whole thing supporting each other tightly.

The spirit of that unbelievable phenomenon means so much for everyone. Thank you Prom!

Sofia Gelman

West Hollywood

LOCAL



City construction projects on Santa Monica's streets

The following will impact traffic until April 7.

Project	Location of Work
1999/2000 Water Main Replacement Project Punch List Work	• Franklin Street and Bristol Avenue from Montana Avenue to Lipton Avenue • Montana Avenue from Bristol Avenue to Stanford Street • 26th Street from San Vicente Blvd. to Montana Avenue • Mount Olivette Reservoir
1999-2000 Street Improvement Project Street resurfacing (Additional Work)	• 3rd Street from Wilshire Blvd. to California Avenue • 4th Street from Wilshire Blvd. to California Avenue • 26th Street from San Vicente Blvd. to North City Limits • Alta Avenue from 4th Street to 7th Street • Georgina Avenue from 14th Street to 17th Street • Idaho Avenue from 19th Street to 23rd Street • Colorado Blvd. from 20th Street to Stewart Street • Yale Street from Santa Monica Blvd. to Wilshire Blvd.
2000-2001 Street Improvement Project Sidewalk Replacement and Survey Work	• Citywide
2000-2001 Water Main Replacement Project Water Main Replacement	• Yale Street from Washington Avenue to Wilshire Blvd. • Exposition Blvd. from Stewart Street to 34th Street • Yorkshire Street from Exposition Blvd. to Virginia Avenue • Warwick Avenue from Exposition Blvd. to Delaware Avenue • 34th Street from Exposition Blvd. to 200' South • 17th Court from Wilshire Place South to Montana Avenue • 18th Court from Wilshire Blvd. to Olympic Blvd. • Ocean Avenue from Pico Blvd. to Colorado Avenue
Airport Improvements (Phase II) Tie-down Area Paving and Blast Wall Construction	• 33rd Street from Pico Blvd. to Ocean Park Blvd.
City's Main Line Construction Crew Water Main Line Construction and Installation of New 8" D.I.P.	• Santa Monica Municipal Airport
Sewer Project 13 Sewer Pipe Rib loc Lining	• The area bounded by Pico Blvd., Centinela Avenue, Ocean Park Blvd., and 28th Street
Sewer Project 11 Maintenance Hole and Open Cut Sewer Replacement	• Stewart Street bounded by Exposition Blvd., Yorkshire Avenue, and Virginia Avenue • Olympic Blvd. bounded by Colorado Avenue, Euclid Street, and 11th Street
Sewer Project 15A Remove and Replace Existing 6" Sewer with 8" Sewer	• Dewey Street Easement from 4th Street to 4th Court • Marine Street from Highland Avenue to 4th Court
Downtown Transit Mall Street and Sidewalk Reconstruction and Installation of Site Amenities	• Broadway from Ocean Avenue to 3rd Street (South Side) • 4th Street from Santa Monica Blvd. to Wilshire Blvd. (East Side)
PCH Sewer Replacement Installation and Replacement of Sewer Main	• Pacific Coast Highway from 500 feet South of the Incline to Entrada (Three lanes south of the California Incline. All other parts restricted to two lanes northbound and southbound).
Gateway Coastal Corridor Project Landscaping, Irrigation, Painting, and Hardscape Improvements	• Pacific Coast Highway and Ocean Avenue On-Ramp and Off-Ramp from Pacific Coast Highway to Ocean Avenue
Streetlight Assessment Installation of New Electrical Conduits, Pouring New Foundations and Setting New Light Poles along both sides of these streets	• Marine Avenue from Lincoln Blvd. to 17th Street • Robson Avenue from 17th Street to Dewey Street • Dewey Street from 17th Street to 23rd Street
Public Safety Facility Constructing New Public Safety Building	• 4th Street between Colorado Avenue and Pico Blvd.

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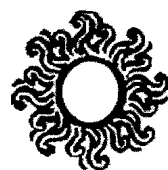
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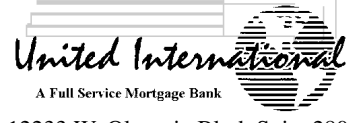
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STATE

Davis orders HMOs to pay for contraceptive pills

BY STEFANIE FRITH
Associated Press Writer

CARMICHAEL — Gov. Gray Davis has ordered HMOs to pay for women's "morning-after" contraceptives, making California the first state in the nation to cover the pills.

"A woman's right to choose must never be held up by red tape," Davis said Wednesday. The Democrat has been trumpeting his support for abortion rights and increased access to contraceptives in his re-election fight against gubernatorial nominee Bill Simon.

Simon's spokesman wouldn't say whether the Republican candidate, an abortion opponent, supported the increased access to emergency contraceptives.

"There are much more important topics," said Bob Taylor, a Simon spokesman.

The morning-after pill can prevent ovulation or fertilization when taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex.

In 1999, Davis signed a bill requiring HMOs to cover federally approved contraceptives. In January, California signed another bill allowing pharmacists to provide emergency contraception.

Under Davis' latest directive, HMOs are required to cover the costs through participating pharmacists within the HMO's network or, in emergency situations, from pharmacists who do not have a contract with their HMO.

"A woman's right to choose must never be held up by red tape."

— **GRAY DAVIS**
California governor

"No other state has actively told their plans they must include emergency contraception," said Kathy Kneer, president and director of the Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California. "They are the first to make sure everyone is in compliance with the law."

Nationwide, Planned Parenthood said use of the drugs by its patients rose to 310,000 prescriptions in 2000, from 48,000 two years earlier. About 100 Planned Parenthood clinics in California filled 24,495 prescriptions in 2000, up from 3,419 in 1998.

Consumers concerned as gas prices begin national climb

BY MICHELLE MORGANTE
Associated Press Writer

SAN DIEGO — Drivers across the nation are digging deeper into their wallets to cover rising gasoline prices, which have leapt an average of 23 cents per gallon over the last month — the most dramatic change in more than a decade.

"It hits the pocket book," 36-year-old Cindy Trujillo said as she pumped gas Thursday in Denver, adding she recently switched from a pickup truck to a fuel-friendly Geo Metro. "\$20 to \$10 makes a big difference."

The jump to Thursday's national average of \$1.35 for unleaded, according to a AAA survey, is fueled by a combination of factors. Analysts say a recent decision by OPEC and other oil producers to hold down production, and the traditional spring rise in demand as driving time increases with the warming weather have shaped prices.

The four-week leap is the sharpest seen by the Energy Information Administration, the statistical branch of the Department of Energy, since it began keeping records in 1990.

Part of the reason is that gas prices fell to bargain levels — below \$1 a gallon in some areas — in the wake of the Sept. 11 terror attacks, which hampered travel and slowed the economy.

"Now that the economy has started to recover, and we're starting to head into the summer driving season, the industry is really having to come from behind a little bit," AAA spokesman Geoff Sundstrom said in Orlando, Fla.

Prices still are below the average of March 2001, when it was \$1.43 due largely to the then-strong economy.

"It went down so low, we had a bonus

there for awhile," said Vesper Gibbs Barnes, a Boston attorney who dropped her car off at a Mobile station. "I guess I'll keep driving everywhere. I have to deal with it."

"Now that the economy has started to recover, and we're starting to head into the summer driving season, the industry is really having to come from behind a little bit."

— **GEOFF SUNDSTROM**
AAA spokesman

Crude oil prices have risen to about \$25 a gallon since December, when OPEC decided the \$20 a barrel they were earning then was too low, said Douglas MacIntyre, senior oil market analyst with the Energy Information Administration in Washington.

Every \$1 increase in the price of a barrel of crude oil translates into a per-gallon hike of about 2.5 cents, he said. Based on current trends, motorists should expect to see per-gallon prices rise another 5 cents to 15 cents over the next several weeks, he said.

Californians, who shoulder the added costs of reformulated gasoline mandated by pollution restrictions, are facing the highest prices in the continental United States. Bay Area motorists have seen average prices rise to \$1.68 from \$1.42 a month ago.

STATE □ NATIONAL

Oscar winning director Billy Wilder dead at 95

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Oscar-winning filmmaker Billy Wilder, the Austrian-born cynic whose gifts for writing and directing led to such classics as "Sunset Boulevard," "Some Like It Hot" and "Double Indemnity," died Wednesday. He was 95.

As co-writer, director and producer of the 1960 film "The Apartment," Wilder collected three Oscars, the only person to do so for one film until James Cameron won three for 1997's "Titanic." Among his other classics: "Stalag 17," "The Lost Weekend," "The Seven Year Itch" and "Witness for the Prosecution."

After beginning his film career in Europe, Wilder came to Hollywood in 1934 knowing very little English. His fortunes turned in 1938 when he first teamed with Charles Brackett, a polished, erudite member of New York's literary establishment.

Together they produced such scripts as "Midnight," "Hold Back the Dawn," "Bluebeard's Eighth Wife" and the Greta Garbo comedy "Ninotchka." The collaboration lasted 12 years, then Wilder wrote

with the late I.A.L. "Izzy" Diamond for 30 years.

Wilder began directing with "The Major and the Minor," a 1942 comedy with Ginger Rogers and Ray Milland. With "Double Indemnity" and "The Lost Weekend," he became a major director as well as writer; the latter brought Oscars in both categories.

Wilder's career peaked with "The Apartment," a cynical tale of corporate corruption.

His last film was "Buddy Buddy" in 1981 with Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau.

In his late years, Wilder was laden with honors, including the Motion Picture Academy's Irving Thalberg award for a consistently high level of production and the American Film Institute's Life Achievement Award, both in 1988.

When the film institute ran a survey to pick the 100 best American movies in 1998, four directed by Wilder made the list; when it picked the 100 funniest American movies in 2000, "Some Like It Hot" was No. 1.

Study finds hospital patients sicker, facilities busier

BY MARK SHERMAN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — People visiting hospital emergency rooms are sicker than they were 10 years ago, leading to lengthier treatments that tie up doctors and beds, according to a study by ER physicians released Thursday.

The study, which examined California hospitals, provides what its lead author calls the first comprehensive look at emergency room visits. It takes issue with a common perception that overcrowding results mainly from patients seeking non-emergency care.

"Urgent patients accounted for the largest group of visits in 1999," said Dr. Susan Lambe, an ER physician at the University of California at San Francisco and the study's lead author. "That is contrary to the claim that non-urgent patients clog the system."

The number of non-urgent visits — defined as needing care in two to 24 hours — declined by 8 percent from 1990 to 1999, while critically ill and urgent visits rose by 59 percent and 36 percent, respectively, the study found.

The study is to be published in the April issue of the Annals of Emergency Medicine, the peer-reviewed journal of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

Americans made 103 million emergency room visits in 1999, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's most recent survey of emergency care. Lacking health insurance or a family physician, many patients head to the emergency room when illness strikes, the CDC said.

But Dr. Brent Asplin, a St. Paul, Minn., emergency physician and member of the ACEP task force on emergency room overcrowding, said the new study demonstrates that even if hospitals could empty their waiting rooms of non-urgent care

patients, overcrowding would persist.

"It's the sickest patients who are holding up the monitored beds," Asplin said. And when those beds are filled, ambulances must be diverted to other hospitals, sometimes delaying care for extremely ill patients.

Lambe's study did not offer a policy prescription for easing the problem. But it noted the number of emergency rooms declined by 12 percent in California, the result of consolidation in the hospital industry and the closing of private hospitals.

"Urgent patients accounted for the largest group of visits in 1999."

— **DR. SUSAN LAMBE**
University of California San Francisco

The remaining emergency facilities increased the number of beds, but that had the effect of making those hospitals busier without, in some cases, a corresponding increase in staffing.

Nationwide, there is a shortage of nurses and a declining number of hospital beds, meaning emergency room patients who are admitted to the hospital can face lengthy waits for a bed.

Lambe did not explain in her study why ER patients are sicker. But she offered a few possibilities in a telephone news conference, including the general aging of the population and a better job by health care organizations of routing less sick patients to other settings.

Information on emergency room visits came from the California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, based on data provided by California's 320 hospitals that offer emergency care.

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NATIONAL

Knife-wielding patient escapes, crashes funeral

By The Associated Press

SELLERSVILLE, Pa. — A hospital patient escaped from a psychiatric ward, stole an ambulance and led police on a chase before he was tackled by officers in a church in full view of mourners attending a viewing, authorities said.

Joshua David Herder, 19, first visited St. Isidore's Church on Tuesday asking to speak to "the cardinal" while brandishing an 18-inch knife, Quakertown Police Chief Jim McFadden said. Police arrested Herder inside the church that day and took him to Grand View Hospital's psychiatric ward for evaluation.

On Wednesday, Herder escaped from the hospital, breaking the lock on the psychiatric ward doors and punching two hospital employees, according to an arrest affidavit.

He then allegedly stole a running ambulance and led seven police cars on a 10-minute chase through Bucks County that ended at the church in Quakertown.

Five police officers tackled Herder near the altar in St. Isidore's, the Rev. John Wackerman said. Herder allegedly punched the police chief during the scuffle.

"These poor folks," said the Rev. Fred Riegler, standing near several cars bear-

ing red "funeral" stickers minutes after the incident.

"I want to become a priest. I love the Lord."

— JOSHUA DAVID HERDER
Psychiatric patient

Riegler said Herder was a former St. Isidore's parishioner.

McFadden said Herder brought the knife to the church Tuesday in hopes of committing "suicide by cop."

"He said he brought it for the purpose of being shot by police," McFadden said. "He wanted to meet God."

As police led him away from his arraignment, Herder told reporters, "I want to become a priest. I love the Lord."

Herder, of Sellersville, was arraigned on aggravated assault, receiving stolen property and related charges and jailed on \$250,000 bail. A preliminary hearing was scheduled for April 5.

Husband who killed his mail-order bride sentenced

BY DAVID FOSTER
Associated Press Writer

EVERETT, Wash. — A man convicted of killing his mail-order bride from a former Soviet republic was sentenced Thursday to 28 years and 11 months in prison.

Indle Gifford King Jr. never admitted guilt or showed repentance during his court appearance in Snohomish County Superior Court.

"I absolutely fully accept the verdict of the jury," the Mountlake Terrace man told Judge George N. Bowden, breaking up. "I don't want my family affected by me."

The mother of Anastasia King had hoped her son-in-law would find repentance. Anastasia's father hoped he would get the maximum punishment possible.

King, convicted last month of first-degree murder and witness tampering in the death of his wife, had faced 21 to 29 years in prison.

Anastasia King, 20, disappeared in September 2000 after returning with her husband from a trip to her native Kyrgyzstan, in the former Soviet Union. Her body was found three months later in a shallow grave on the Tulalip Indian Reservation near Marysville.

King, 40, psychologically tormented his young wife for two years before he killed her, said Anastasia's mother, Alevtina Solovieva.

"Wickedness, wickedness," she wailed in Russian before the sentencing hearing. "To this time, he considers himself to be the wisest, the strongest. To this moment, he fails to understand the pain of another. He has not repented. Let God give him a road to follow that will bring him to repentance."

She and her husband, Anatolyi Soloviev, traveled from Kyrgyzstan to

Everett last year to help investigators. They have been here ever since, and now they want to stay in America, saying they want to be near the grave of their only child.

"To this time, he considers himself to be the wisest, the strongest. To this moment, he fails to understand the pain of another."

— ALEVITINA SOLOVIEVA
Victim's mother

Indle King had filed for divorce from Anastasia before she disappeared and did not want to be "used and abused" by his second mail-order bride, prosecutors said during his trial. King's divorce from his first mail-order bride had cost him \$55,000 and the marriage did not produce the children he so desperately wanted, jurors were told.

Daniel Larson, a boarder in the Kings' home in the Seattle suburb of Mountlake Terrace, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced last week to 20 years in prison. He testified at King's five-week trial that he strangled Anastasia with a necktie while her 270-pound husband sat on top of her.

Legislation prompted by the murder was signed into law Tuesday by Gov. Gary Locke. The law, the first of its kind in the nation, will require mail-order bride companies and other international match-making organizations to give brides-to-be the criminal and marital histories of their prospective Washington spouses.



Arafat ready to work for cease-fire with Israel

BY STEVE WEIZMAN

Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM — Facing a possible military strike, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said Thursday he was ready for an immediate, unconditional cease-fire. But he stopped short of declaring one, and Israel reacted with skepticism.

More violence erupted Thursday night when a Palestinian gunman opened fire at a Jewish settlement near the West Bank town of Nablus, killing four, before being killed himself, the Israeli military said. The militant Islamic group Hamas claimed responsibility.

Speaking at a news conference in his West Bank headquarters of Ramallah, Arafat said the Palestinians had informed U.S. envoy Gen. Anthony Zinni of "our readiness for an immediate implementation of the (U.S. truce) plan without any conditions."

Israel said Arafat's statements were not enough.

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Michael Melchior said Arafat failed to meet Israel's demand that he announce to Palestinians, in Arabic, on radio and television a cease-fire and orders to arrest militants.

"This is nothing," Melchior said.

Arafat's brief news conference was not televised live on Palestinian TV, though it was aired later in the evening.

"I will see the glimmer of hope ... when Arafat starts to take action," Raanan Gissin, spokesman for Israel Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, told CNN. "He has to take real action. Declarations won't do."

Arafat also claimed that the Israelis were planning a major military operation against the Palestinians. The Israelis have warned they are prepared to retaliate for a suicide bombing Wednesday that killed 20 people at a seafloor hotel.

"Unfortunately, there are some aggressive preparations by the Israelis to do a wide military operation against our civilians, our cities and our refugee camps," Arafat said.

He ordered the arrests of key militants from Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, a militia linked to his Fatah movement.

Israeli military positions on the outskirts of Ramallah were reinforced Thursday, but the troops and armored vehicles did not advance.

Arafat said Israeli military action would undermine a peace initiative approved Thursday at the Arab summit, which calls for Arab states to normalize relations with Israel if it withdraws from land captured during the 1967 Mideast war.

Sharon's Cabinet was meeting later Thursday to consider its response to the suicide bombing, which targeted people gathered for a Passover feast in the Mediterranean town of Netanya.

The Wednesday night bombing was widely seen as a watershed because of its deadliness and timing. "They attacked innocent Israelis on one of the most sacred nights to Jewish people, Passover," said Gideon Meir, an Israeli government spokesman.

Israeli officials stopped short of formally abandoning U.S.-backed truce efforts and suggested they were hoping the Palestinians would at the last minute agree to the truce and crack down on militants who oppose ending the 18 months of violence.

But there were also indications Israel was strongly considering military moves even more far-reaching than the incursions into Palestinian towns and refugee camps several weeks ago. That sweep was Israel's biggest military operation in two decades, killed scores of Palestinians and brought on a tide of international condemnation.

Gissin said Israel had made it clear to the United States that it reserved the right to retaliate harshly if Palestinians carried out a major terror attack during cease-fire talks.

"Israel will have the full right to self defense and will use appropriate measures to punish all those who perpetrated and assisted in this attack," he said.

Speaking on Israel TV, military affairs analyst Ron Ben-Ishai said senior army officers and Defense Minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer had come up with a plan to send troops into Palestinian territories to capture suspected militants and deter more attacks. The operation, which needs Cabinet approval, would exceed the scope of previous ones but would stop short of a full reoccupation, he said.

In anticipation of a possible Israeli strike, Palestinian government offices were evacuated in the West Bank. In Ramallah, worried parents took their children home early from school and residents stocked up on food.

Also Thursday, about 600 pro-Palestinian foreigners, mostly European members of a group called Public International Protection, arrived in Ramallah, saying they hoped to serve as human shields against any Israeli action.

Israeli troops tightened blockades of Palestinian towns across the West Bank and halted Palestinian traffic

between the northern and southern Gaza Strip.

Several United Nations foreign staffers, particularly those with young children, left Ramallah, but there was no formal evacuation, U.N. officials said.

Israel has already accepted Zinni's proposal for a truce timetable — which would require Israel to gradually lift the blockade of Palestinian towns and the Palestinians to end violence against Israel and arrest militants.

The Palestinians have suffered more casualties and economic hardship than the Israelis in the conflict that began in September 2000, but Arafat nonetheless faces strong resistance to ending the uprising without a tangible political gain.

Among the "clarifications" requested by Palestinians were that a cease-fire be linked to the resumption of political talks and a total freeze on Jewish settlement activity as recommended by the international commission headed by former U.S. Sen. George Mitchell.

The Palestinian Authority said it "strongly condemned" Wednesday's bombing, carried out by a member of Hamas.

Moussaoui may be put to death in September 11 conspiracy charge

BY LARRY MARGASAK

Associated Press Writer

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The Bush administration said Thursday it will seek to execute Zacarias Moussaoui in connection with the Sept. 11 attacks and appealed to European allies to keep cooperating with terrorism investigations despite their opposition to the death penalty.

Moussaoui, 33, should be put to death because he helped plan "the largest loss of life resulting from a criminal act in the history of the United States," prosecutors said in notifying a federal judge of their intentions.

"Zacarias Moussaoui has demonstrated a lack of remorse for his criminal conduct," prosecutors wrote in setting up a novel effort to impose the death penalty against a defendant charged with conspiracy, not murder.

The decision by Attorney General John Ashcroft, a longtime death penalty supporter, touched off immediate criticism from anti-terrorism allies who oppose capital punishment.

Officials in Moussaoui's homeland of France said they would continue general cooperation with the United States but would not turn over any documents that could be used to support his execution.

"I regret this," French Justice Minister Marylise Lebranchu said of Ashcroft's decision.

In Britain, where execution also is outlawed, a government spokesman said, "Our position on the death penalty is well known."

Traveling in Miami, Ashcroft announced his decision in a televised news conference and immediately sought to smooth relations with the allies.

"We ask our counterparts in the international community to respect our sovereignty, and we respect theirs, and to the extent that they can cooperate and help us, we welcome that cooperation," he said.

Moussaoui's public defender, Frank Dunham Jr., sharply criticized Ashcroft's news conference as "disgraceful conduct" that could prevent selection of an impartial jury in the Washington area where the trial is slated this fall.



Hillery Smith Garrison/Associated Press

Attorney General John Ashcroft announces that the justice department will seek the death penalty in the case against Zacarias Moussaoui, in Miami, Thursday.

"I am mystified as to why he feels he has to hold a televised press conference other than to influence the jury pool," Dunham said. "I'll stop short of calling it unethical, but it's close to it."

Moussaoui's mother in France accused U.S. officials of seeking revenge. "My son is a scapegoat. They can't find the people who are truly responsible for this crime," Aicha Moussaoui said.

Though Moussaoui never boarded any of the hijacked airliners and was already in custody a month before the attacks occurred, prosecutors said there were several "aggravating factors" why his conduct warranted a death sentence.

Moussaoui participated in the planning "knowing that the act created a grave risk of death to a person," U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty said in his court filing.

The government will seek to prove that Moussaoui committed the offenses "in an especially heinous, cruel and depraved manner in that they involved torture and serious physical abuse to the victims," McNulty added.

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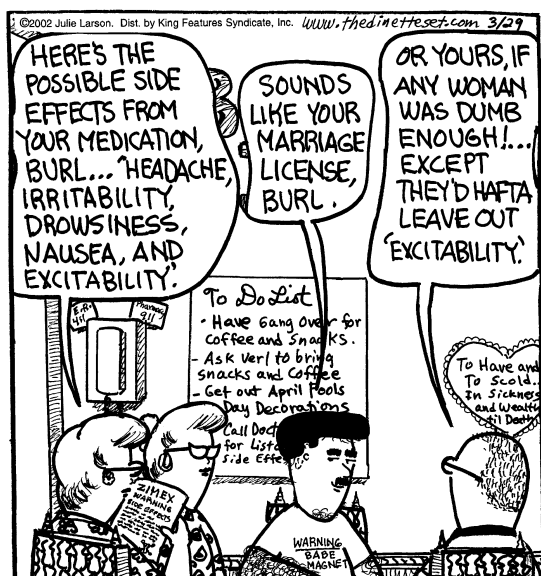
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The Dinette Set by Julie Larson



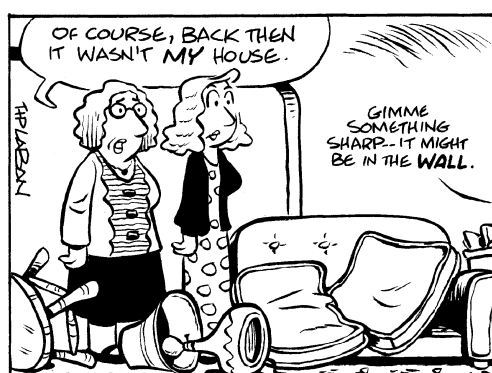
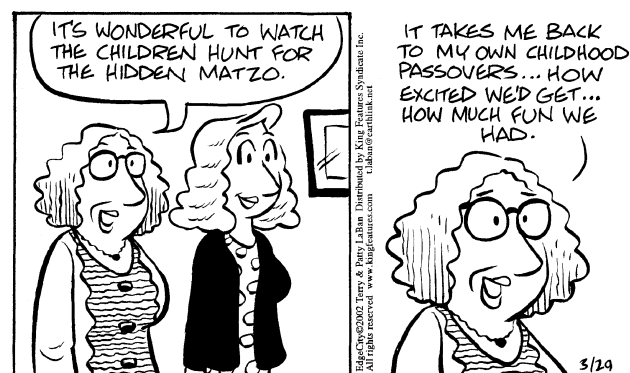
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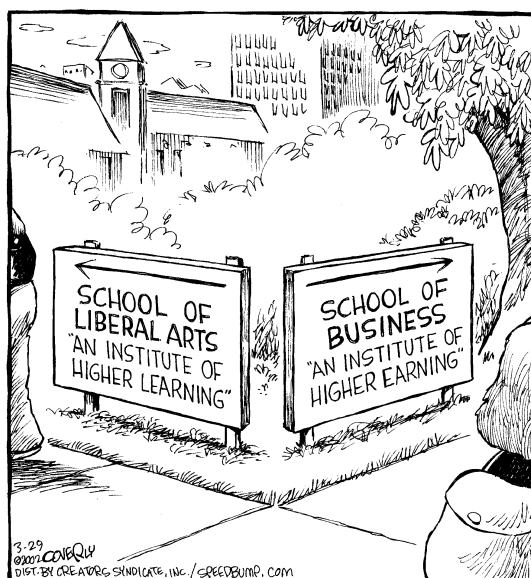
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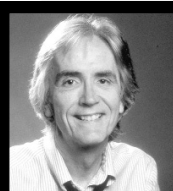
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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

by Chuck Shepard

Painful pulling practices

• In November 2000, News of the Weird reported the startling news that, at a public demonstration in Taipei, three martial-arts masters, without using their hands, had pulled a truck holding 80 people 12 inches with ropes attached only to their penises.

• In January 2002, the Federal Communications Commission fined Seattle radio station KNDD-FM \$14,000 because its morning show personalities had made an on-air offer last year to give free concert tickets to any man who would come to the studio and pull certain heavy objects around with his penis (discussions which the FCC said constituted "indecent language").

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